A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE

CPI (M) AND CPI LED COALITION GOVERNMENTS IN KERALA

POLITICS AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE
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P R E F A C E

This dissertation "A Comparative Study of the CPI (M) and CPI led Coalition Governments in Kerala: Politics and Policy Implementation" is an analytical study of the communist coalition governments in Kerala. Since 1967, the CPI (M) and the CPI were experimenting with the coalition form of governments. The communist coalition governments in Kerala were a product of the socio-economic and political situation in the state. This work assesses the compulsions of coalition politics of the communist parties and the politics as well as the policy implementation of the communist governments.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapters		Pages
	PREFACE	I II
	LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	III IV
	INTRODUCTION	I XVII
CHAPTER I	UNIQUENESS OF KERALA POLITICS : A HISTORICAL SURVEY SINCE INDEPENDENCE	1 - 31
CHAPTER II	COALITION POLITICS AND COMMUNIST PARTIES	32 - 65
CHAPTER III	THE CPI (M) LED COALITION GOVERNMENTS IN KERALA	66 - 130
CHAPTER IV	THE CPI LED COALITION GOVERNMENTS IN KERALA	131 - 191
CHAPTER V	POLICY IMPLEMENTATION	192 - 239
CHAPTER VI	CENTRE - STATE RELATIONS	240 - 276
CHAPTER VII	CONCLUSION	277 - 294
	APPENDICES	295 - 315
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	316 - 332

A B B R E V I A T I O N S

AICC	All India Congress Committee
AIML	All India Muslim League
BJP	Bharathiya Janatha Party
CPI	Communist Party of India
CPI (M)	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
Congress (I)	Congress (Indira)
Congress (S)	Congress (Socialist)
Congress (U)	Congress (Urs)
Congress (R)	Congress (Ruling, Reddy)
Congress (A)	Congress (Antony)
CRP	Central Reserve Police
DCC	District Congress Committee
DMK	Dravida Munnetta Kazhagam
IUML	Indian Union Muslim League
INC	Indian National Congress
IAS	Indian Administrative Service
ISP	Indian socialist Party
ILP	Indian Labour Party
KLA	Kerala Legislative Assembly
KTP	Karshaka Thozhilali Party
KC	Kerala Congress
KC (M)	Kerala Congress (Mani)
KC (J)	Kerala Congress (Joseph)
KC (P)	Kerala Congress (Pillai)
KPCC	Kerala Predesh Congress Committee
KSP	Kerala Socialist Party
LDF	Left Democratic Front
(M)	Malayalam

MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
ML	Muslim League
NSS	Nair Service Society
NDP	National Democratic Party
PSP	Praja Socialist Party
RSS	Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh
RSP	Revolutional Socialist Party
SSP	Samyuktha Socialist Party
SRP	Socialist Republican Party
SNDP	Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam
TTNC	Travancore Tamil Nadu Congress
UPSC	Union Public Service Commission
UF	United Front
UDF	United Democratic Front

INTRODUCTION

Coalition governments constitute a significant part of the political process in a parliamentary system. Kerala has been experimenting with coalition governments since 1960. Owing to the presence of a large number of faction-ridden political parties with their unending scramble for power, as also to the pressure of caste and religious interest groups, the coalition form of governments has almost become unavoidable in Kerala.

In a parliamentary democracy the aim of a party should be to implement its socio-economic programmes and objectives. Therefore, the government's ability in implementing its policies is considered the criterion with which to assess and judge its effectiveness. The idea of coalition arose in Kerala because of political compulsions and racial, communal, religious, economic, social and political conflicts. When a single party fails to secure an absolute majority in a multi-party system, the alternative is a coalition government. The Communist Parties have experimented with coalition governments since 1967. Their ideas of coalitions in Kerala were shaped by the unique features of Kerala politics though they tried to evolve a theoretic formula for their coalition. As Victor.M.Fic says, "coalitions are no more fought on ideological grounds and as meaningful alternative programmes of development, but

are reduced to struggle for power, in which the victory falls into the hands of those who understand the art of coalition politics"[1].

Political parties in general, seek to enter the legislature in a bid to get governmental power. This quest originates at the electoral level as the parties seek popular support for their respective candidates. At the electoral stage each party proclaims a political programme which is designed to attract a political following so as to maximise the party's legislative strength. It is this quest for power that prompts a party or a coalition of parties to form the cabinet and to maintain successfully the control of the government for a time sufficient to enact and administer their legislative programmes. Consequently, this quest can be perceived as an attempt by each party to maximise its participation in electoral alliance and maintenance of government.

Kerala's heterogeneous and fragmented society and the multiplicity of economic, political and social problems have made the evolution of a two party system a remote possibility. The coming together of differing interests in Kerala society into two or three large political parties

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1. Victor.M.Fic, Kerala: Yenan of India-Rise of Communist power, 1937-'69 (Bombay : 1970), P.407.

with more or less uniform machinery on a national level is not to be easily realised. But the consolidation of the two major parties, the CPI (M) and the Congress (I) within the two fronts is worth mentioning.

The work in general is an analytical study of the coalition governments led by the CPI (M) and the CPI in Kerala. A unique feature of the political situation in the state is that both the Communist Parties experimented with coalition governments as part of their political metamorphosis. But their theoretical and functional approaches towards coalition governments were different and consequently the working and policy implementation were also different and varied.

The pattern of politics in Kerala has significantly differed from the all-India pattern. While the Congress was the dominant party in India except for some short intervals, Kerala was bold enough to experiment with various types of coalitions. There were communist coalitions, non Marxist coalitions and anti-communist coalitions. The coalition politics in the state reflects the influences of interest groups such as the Catholic Church, the Nair Service Society (NSS) the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP) etc. At the same time coalition politics was also tried as part

of an effort to prevent these interest groups from coming together.

Basically the CPI (M) and the CPI accepted the possibility of a peaceful transition of society into a socialist pattern in India. Though with differing-emphasis, they conceded the parliamentary front as an area of popular struggle in the process of revolution. After the split of the CPI in 1964, both the parties aired their ideological differences publicly and expressed their contrasting views of the nature and role of the Indian bourgeoisie.

The CPI (M) has always cared to regard the Congress as their Chief political enemy. The destruction of the Congress was the prime objective of the United Front of the non-congress parties. In the 1967 and 1980 elections they were prepared to align with parties which were in some respect more reactionary than the Congress itself. In general, the CPI (M)'s approach approximated to the strategy of 'United Front from below' grouping small parties with a popular base together for common action on immediate popular grievances.

At the national level the chance of the communists to form a government by themselves remained rather a remote possibility. Thus attention was turned on the meaning and

utility of holding office at the state level. The independence and autonomy of the states within the constitutional frame in India is also somewhat limited. The Constitution divides legislative powers into three lists, union, state and the concurrent list of which the longest and the most important is the Union List. Of the 66 items chartered in the State List, 30 deal with ordinary police of functions and 22 with taxation. The remaining functions are of developmental nature like education, health,agriculture, industry etc. The Concurrent List adds economic and social planning, trade, finance etc. but when there occurs conflict between the state and Union laws, the laws passed by the Union Parliament prevails. At the executive level there are clear constitutional limits to state's autonomy. The state's executive power is normally exercised by the Council of Ministers but the Governor has important discretionary functions. He may reserve a bill passed by the state legislature for the consideration of the President and he has the right to advise the President to assume the government of the state. Thus CPI (M) argued that no real reforms in the social, political and economic conditions were impossible in the existing constitutional set up. But the CPI consistently argued that some fundamental changes in social relations were possible within the existing frame

itself. Given the weakness of the organised left, the CPI was logical to pursue the tactics of the 'United Front from above'.

The communists had some unique experience in state politics. Even before the emergence of the present Kerala State, the CPI began to fight in elections and since 1957 it has accepted the parliamentary path of socialism. Though the first coalition government in the region was formed by the congress party, a broad alliance of all non-congress parties was formed by the CPI (M) in 1967. The first decade of the independence of this state was a period of political instability, the emergence of multi-party system, the decline of the monopoly of the Congress, the ascendancy of the CPI and the realignment of communal forces. The age-old dynastic rule of monarchy in Travancore and Cochin had come to an end. With independence the cherished desire for a united Kerala got realised in 1956. The Communist Party of India (CPI) came to power through the democratic means but was overthrown after 28 months. For the first time the people of the principal communities of the state viz., the Christians, Nairs, Ezhavas and the Muslims organised themselves under one banner. Coalition politics found its possibility in 1960 and most pathetically it collapsed

within two years. The myth of the monolithic unity of the CPI also broke down when the party was split in 1964. In the 1965 elections no party or a coalition of parties could manage a majority. In 1967 the first non-congress United Front was formed. The strategy was a grand success and it secured 113 seats in the Assembly of 133. But within two years the government fell due to constant war of nerves amongst the partners of the coalition. In 1969 a Mini Front under the leadership of the CPI came to power. It was the beginning of the CPI led coalition in the state. In the 1970 elections the CPI - Congress alliance continued and it swept the polls. Though with some hesitation, the Congress Party joined the Government in July 1971 and the government continued in power till 1977. A coalition on similar lines was voted again to power in 1977. The Congress leader, K.Karunakaran assumed power on March 25th as the Chief Minister, but after a month he also had to submit his resignation. On April 27, 1977 A.K.Antony, another congress leader, assumed power as Chief Minister but he also tendered his resignation on October 27, 1978. Once again the chief ministership was offerred to the CPI and P.K.Vasudevan Nair assumed office. But he, too, resigned on October 7, 1979 and it paved the way for the Left Democratic Front (LDF) aligning all anti-congress parties including the CPI.

In the 1980 elections the Left Democratic Front (LDF) secured a majority and assumed office under the leadership of CPI (M) leader E.K.Nayanar on 25th January 1980. But within two years it also collapsed as a result of the withdrawal of the Congress (A) and the Kerala Congress (M) from the LDF Government. The next election in 1982 was in favour of the congress led United Democratic Front (UDF). It formed the government under the chief ministership of the Congress (I) leader K.Karunakaran.

Again Kerala witnessed the coming back of re-organised LDF to power in the 1987 elections. For the first time since 1970, the state formed a government not propped up by any section of the Muslim League, the Kerala Congress or the Congress. It brought about a major upset and change of government that would make a profound change in the rules of the electoral game in the state. The government tried to prove from its record of constructive decisions and positive formulations that a stable government was still possible within the present political set-up in the state with the two warring coalitions contesting consistently for the control of the government.

This thesis makes a detailed and objective indepth study of the apparent and dormant political factors involved in the process of coalition politics of the major communist

factions in the state, analysing the underlying factors of unity and also the forces of conflict in the communist coalitions. The study also proposes to probe into the policy formulation and implementation of the CPI and the CPI (M) led coalition governments in the state in an attempt to bring to the fore the causes and consequences of their respective policies and also the forces and situations which prompted those policies and the convictions and interpretations that accompanied them.

The academic analysis is unfolded in the seven chapters of the thesis.

Survey of Literature

Studies on state governments and its politics eventually facilitate the building up of a comparative theory of political development in the Indian states. It will provide the much needed meterial for testifying and modifying theoretical formulations and models developed at the All India level. It gradually was giving rise to an empirically sensitive typology of political behaviour in India. At the same time, there is an equally important need for moving the research effort at the next level of Indian politics, namely, the state level. Since 1967 a number of studies have been undertaken dealing with the different

aspects of state politics[2]. These studies give us the different aspects of state politics, especially, the typology of political game in the various states in India.

In the regional level there are a large number of studies contributing to the different aspects of state politics[3]. Generally these studies give importance to

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2. Some of these studies are : 1. Bipan Chandra, The Indian Left: A critical appraisal (New Delhi : Vikas, 1983); 2. Victor. M.Fic, Peaceful Transition of Communism in India-Strategy of Communist Party (Bombay : Nachiketa Publications, 1969); 3. K.L.Kamal, Party Politics in Indian States (New Delhi : Chand & Co., n.d.); 4. K.P.Karunakaran, ed. Coalition Politics in India (Simla : Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1975); 5. Sukadev Nanda, Coalition Politics in Orissa, (New Delhi : Sterling Publishers Pvt.Ltd., 1977); 6. Iqbal Narain State Politics in India (New Delhi : Meenakshi Prakasan, 1976); 7. A.P.Pandhi, Indian State Politics : A study of Orissa Politics (Delhi : D.K.Publishers, 1985); 8. Jawaharlal Pandey, State Politics in India (New Delhi : Uppal Publishers House, 1982); Profulla Roy Chaudhary, Left Experiment in West Bengal (New Delhi : Patriot Publishers, 1985); 9. T.R.Sharma, Communism in India (New Delhi : Sterling Publishers Pvt. LTD, 1984); 10. Moin Shanker, State Politics in Contemporary India (New Delhi : Ajantha Publications, 1986); 11. _____, Religion, State and Politics (Delhi : Ajentha Publication, 1989); 12. Myron Weiner and John Osgood, Electoral Politics in Indian States (New Delhi : Manohar Book Service, 1975) Vol I to V.

3. 1. Jose Chander, Dynamics of State Politics : Kerala, ed. (New Delhi : Sterling Publishers, 1986); 2._____, Legislative Process in Kerala (Trivandrum : 1981); 3. K.G.Krishnamurthy and G.Lakshmana Rao, Political Preferences in Kerala (Delhi : Radhakrishna Prakasan, 1968); 4. Ramakrishnan Nair, How Communist Came to Power in Kerala (Trivandrum : Kerala Academy of Political Science, 1965); 5.C.P.Suresh, Political Behaviour in Kerala (Trivandrum : Institute for the Study of Public Policy and Management, 1983); 6.G.Gopakumar, Congress Party and State Politics (New Delhi : National Book Centre, 1984); 7.Victor.M.Fic, Kerala: The Yenan of India, Op. Cit.

the electoral performance and behaviour of political parties and the political process of each state. This study emphasises the politics and policy implementation aspects of the coalition governments.

As far as the communist coalition governments were concerned, studies undertaken by T.J.Nossiter, P.John John, K.V.Varghese, E.J. Thomas and E.M.S. Namboodiripad, which invariably deals with the coalition governments in general and cover the period till 1969[4]. They analyse some aspects of communist governments in Kerala but do not enter into the governmental performance and policy implementation areas. Hence this study.

Major Objectives

This study academically seeks.

1. To explore the social, economic and political situation in Kerala and its effects on the communist coalitions as also to attempt a historical analysis of the

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4. T.J.Nossiter, Communism in Kerala (New Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1982); 2. _____, Marxist State Government in India (New Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1989); 3. P.John John, Coalition Government in Kerala (Trivandrum : The Institute for the Study of Public Policy and Management, 1983); 4. K.V.Varghese, United Front Government in Kerala (Madras : ISRS, 1978); 5. E.J.Thomas, Coalition Game Politics in Kerala (New Delhi : Intellectual Publishing House, 1985); 6.E.M.S.Namboodiripad, Kerala : Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow (Culcutta : National Book Agency, 1967); 7._____, Marxistithara Munnani Annum Innum (M) Trivandrum : Desabhimani Publication, 1969).

democratic governments in this region after independence.

2. To work out a theory of coalition to suit the dynamics of state politics and the theories and experience of Communist Parties and its governments.
3. To bring out the compulsions of coalition politics in this state and the attitude of the communist parties towards coalition politics.
4. To examine the working of the CPI (M) and CPI led coalition governments and its politics and policy implementation.
5. As it is impossible to make a detailed analysis of all policies of the governments, it make a comparative analysis of the legislative implementation of policies, in the field of land reform and education.
6. To examine the differences of centre-state relations and the policies and strategies of CPI (M) and CPI led governments.

Hypotheses

The major hypotheses of the study are the following.

1. The Communist Coalitions in Kerala like the non-communist coalitions have a close connection with the social, economic and political situation of Kerala.
2. The Communist coalition governments were a part of the general coalition process in Kerala. But the CPI

proved more expedient and practical than the CPI (M) in its style of functioning and policy implementation aspects.

3. The coalitions of CPI were more adaptive than those by the CPI (M) but the stand of the CPI (M) was more communist-oriented than that of the CPI.
4. The CPI (M) led coalition governments initiated many progressive legislations but they had not much interest in implementing the same. The CPI led coalition government was more interested in policy implementation.
5. Inter-party rivalries and differences within the coalition governments were the reason for the downfall of CPI (M) led governments.
6. Kerala has been discriminated against in many spheres. But the policies adopted by the CPI (M) or the CPI led governments were incapable of securing a fair deal for Kerala.

Data Collection

The non-availability of published materials on the subject and the lack of sufficient information through articles on journals or newspapers created stress on fulfilling the work. Hence the methodology applied was not entirely conventional but comparative and analytical.

Various documentary sources like books, journals, research papers, published and unpublished Ph.D dissertations, news papers etc. provided a considerable source of secondary data. The official publication of political parties, their reports, the publications of governments, the report of the proceedings of the Kerala Legislative Assembly, Bills passed by the Assembly, the report of the Commissions of Enquiry etc. were the main source of primary data. However, interviews with leaders of political parties, former officials of government, and office bearers of political parties, academecians were very useful for confirming the veracity of the data.

Chapter Division

The thesis has been written in seven chapters and with an introduction. The unique socio-economic and political situation in Kerala forms a determining factor in coalition politics. Politics and policy implementation of communist governments are shaping the socio-economic and political situation here. Casteism, communalism, regionalism etc. are the guiding factors of Communist led regime also. So the first chapter analyses the unique features of Kerala politics and makes a historical survey of democratic governments in this region since independence.

Though the CPI came to power in Kerala singlehandledly in 1957, it could not continue for a full tenure. But since 1967 the existing circumstances compelled the CPI (M) and the CPI to accept the realities of coalition politics. Their success in Government was dependant on the co-operation of the non-communist parties and their capacity to resist internal and external threat. Thus the second chapter analyses the theory of coalition and the theories and experience of the Communist Parties and governments.

Political developments in Kerala since 1967 took a different direction. The era of coalition politics under the leadership of CPI (M) began in 1967. In the election the non-congress United Front had decisively defeated the Congress Party. Again in 1980 the LDF under the leadership of CPI (M) secured a clear victory over the UDF. But the United Front strategy of 1967 and the LDF strategy of 1980 were failures. The coalescing parties had their own reasons for joining the coalition and there was no unanimity of opinion on the major issues facing the government. Yet in the 1987 elections, the re-organised LDF again came to power and its performance was more or less satisfactory. The third chapter is devoted to the rise and fall of CPI (M) led coalition governments, its politics and policy implementation.

After the collapse of the CPI (M) led United Front Ministry, the Mini Front under the leadership of CPI came to power. There was an understanding between the Congress and the Mini Front in the 1970 election. The CPI led coalition governments were a success in the area of policy implementation. The CPI adopted a policy of utilising the existing constitutional machinery to bring about socio-economic development. It had a record of progressive legislations to its credit. But the CPI (M) in the opposition during the eight years. So the IV chapter deals with the CPI led coalition governments (1969 to 1977) and its politics, policy implementation and the opposition it faced from the CPI (M).

The fifth chapter examines the policy implementation of the CPI (M) and CPI led coalition governments with special reference to two vital policies - the land and educational policy of the governments. It proves that the success of policy implementation depends upon the support it receives from non-governmental agencies and the government's ability to face the threat of vested interests. The legislative implementation of land reforms and education of the Communist governments illustrated this fact.

The issues, trends and differences of the Centre -

State relations of the CPI (M) and CPI led governments constitute the theme of chapter six. The State of Kerala has been discriminated against for years. The CPI (M) adopted a policy of agitation and struggle against the Central Government whereas the CPI followed the policy of pressure and persuasion. The tendency had changed a lot and Kerala got a preferential share when the Janata Dal came to power at the Centre.

Chapter seven states the conclusions arrived in this study.

This thesis confines itself to the pre - 1989 political scene as it was deemed beyond the scope of this work to attempt an indepth analysis of the working of the present government. However, a general discussion of the present government has been included. No attempt has been made here to discuss party organisation or electoral statistics. It exclusively gave importance to the political issues and policy implementation aspects of the coalition governments.



CHAPTER I

UNIQUENESS OF KERALA POLITICS : A HISTORICAL SURVEY SINCE INDEPENDENCE

Kerala, the southernmost state of the Republic of India, is unique in many ways with its apparent contradictions and known diversities. It has the highest rate of literacy as also the highest rate of unemployment. The people of Kerala are generally peace-loving and the political changes here have produced little physical friction or violence. Governmental instability has practically become a permanent feature of Kerala politics since independence. This is well illustrated by the repeated Governmental changes and by the fact that no single party or even a coalition of parties completed its stipulated term of five years until 1970. The State of Travancore and Cochin witnessed the rise and fall of six ministries within the short span of nine years from 1948 to 1957.

Kerala has a long tradition and history as a distinct cultural, linguistic and ethnic unit, distinguisned from the rest of India. With the establishment of British suzerainty in this part of the country, the three political units, Travancore, Cochin

and Malabar became rather emotionally united though the people had to wait for many generations to have their political integration as one unit. Being a district of the then Madras Province of British India, Malabar had no constitutional development of its own till independence. But Travancore and Cochin went through a phase of constitutional experiments before the dawn of freedom in 1947. The supreme authority lay with the ruler in each of these native states. All powers--executive, legislative and judicial emanated from him ultimately. He rules the state with the aid and advice of officers appointed by him, who were responsible to him alone. Consecutive constitutional reforms did not substantially affect the real form of the government in these states. The creation of a Legislative Council--a non-sovereign, subordinate law-making body--and the gradual enlargement of its strength, powers and functions subject to the overall authority of the ruler--this sums up the reforms till 1947[2].

From 1947, the pace of constitutional development was rapid but its pattern was rather different. The

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1. Ramakrishnan Nair, Constitutional Experiments in Kerala (Trivandrum : 1964), P.4.

2. Ibid., P.6.

native states became automatically independent. The Dewan of Travancore, Sir C.P. Ramaswami Iyer, wanted an Independent Travancore and was prepared to declare its independence on August 15, 1947. But quite contrary to his expectations politics took such a turn at the national level that on 19th August he had to resign the Diwanship of Travancore. Consequently, the Maharaja constituted a 'Reforms Committee' consisting of 15 members drawn from various communal, social and political interests[3]. The committee submitted its reports on 12th November 1947. The committee proposed that there should be 120 members in the representative body, so that there should be one member for every 50,000 of the population[4]. The Committee recommended that there should be atleast one nonreserved seat for every constituency. There were altogether 80 constituencies of which 40 were single member constituencies with no reservation and the remaining were multimember constituencies with reservation[5].

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3. Reports of the Travancore Reforms Committee, ROC No 210/47/ARC, 12th November 1947, Trivandrum.

4. Ibid., No.8

5. Ibid., No.10

6. The Official Reports of the Proceedings of the Travancore Representative Body, 20th March 1948.

The Government accepted the recommendations of the 'Reforms Committee' and elections to the Representative Body were held. The new legislature held its first meeting on 20th March 1948 and elected A.J. John as its president[6]. On 24th March 1948 an interim constitution was promulgated by the Maharaja which was known by the name "The Travancore Interim Constitution Act, 1112". The prime feature of the Constitution was that it established constitutional monarchy in Travancore. This meant that the executive authority was theoritically vested with the Maharaja but was practically to be exercised by the Council of Ministers, responsible to the legislature[7]. The Constitution said that "there shall be a Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister at the head to aid and advise us (Maharaja) in the exercise of our functions"[8]. The Assembly was given the power to make laws for the whole of Travancore and to

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7. Travancore Interim Constitution, Adopted on 24th March 1948, Para 1, Sec. 3.

8. Ibid., Para 1, Sec.5. The first Council of Ministers assumed office on 24th March 1948. The congress got the majority and Pattom A. Thanu Pillai, who was the President of the Congress became the first Prime Minister.

9. Ibid., Para II. Sec. 9.

exercise control over the budget of the state[9]. But on Ist July, 1949, a historic event occured viz, the integration of Travancore and Cochin. The immediate result was the lapse of Kingship. This was the beginning of drastic constitutional changes in Kerala.

Monarchy was the first form of government in Cochin also. The political as well as constitutional changes that ensued in Cochin were remarkable for their peaceful transition. The first Legislative Council of Cochin was inaugurated in April, 1125[10]. The Government of Cochin Act 1113, remained in force until the native state of Cochin was integrated with Travancore. The first Council consisted of 45 members, 30 elected and 15 nominated. The franchise was based on property qualification. The Council had the power to introduce bills and to move resolutions. In 1935 the Government of Cochin Act was passed. By this Act Cochin set up a responsible government in the form of a dyarchy. H.E.Kerala Varma, the Maharaja of Cochin, continued as the supreme head of the state and government. the supreme executive adviser to the Maharaja was the Diwan,

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10. Report of the Proceeding of the Cochin Legislative Council, Vol 1, 1125.

who appointed by him, was expected to be responsible to him.

Soon after independence, the Maharaja decided to grant the maximum governmental responsibility to his people which he expressed in clear terms in a message to the Legislative Council on 14th August, 1947. Not much later than this he transferred to his Ministers under the Government of Cochin Act, all matters except the Palace, Devaswoms, Police and Jail. As a result practically a responsible system of government was established in Cochin.

United Travancore and Cochin State

The states of Travancore and Cochin were integrated on July 1,1949 and a single executive, legislature and judiciary were also established for the United Travancore-Cochin State[11]. It was part of a general all India Scheme to achieve a peaceful liquidation of princely states in the country with the ultimate aim of forming an integrated India. Thus the system of monarchy gave way to democracy. The Maharaja of Travancore was made a titular head of the new state with a new designation-the Raj-Pramukh. Yet he had none of

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11. The new state was made a part 'B' State of the Indian Union.

the powers he had enjoyed as the Maharaja of Travancore. The Raj-Pramukh and a Council of Ministers responsible to the legislature formed the executive of the new state. The legislature of the state consisted of the Raj-Pramukh and Legislative Assembly. The new Assembly was composed of all persons who, immediately before the appointed day ie, July 1, 1949 were members of the representative bodies of Travancore and the Legislative Assembly of Cochin[12]. The Legislature was given full powers to make laws for the state including provisions to frame constitution of the United State[13].

Meanwhile on January 26, 1950 when the Indian Constitution was adopted and India was proclaimed a Republic all states became units of the Indian Union under the same Constitution. After the inauguration of the Constitution general elections were held in Travancore-Cochin State in December 1951. As a result of the allocation of seats on an all India frame the Travancore-Cochin State was to have only 108 seats for its Legislative Assembly.

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12. The Covenant of Travancore-Cochin State. Article 10. The United State of Travancore and Cochin were inaugurated on 1 July, 1949 and end on Ist November 1956.

13. Ibid., Art 10, Clause 2.

In the 1951 General Elections numerous parties li the Indian National Congress (INC), the P a'n Socialis Party (PSP), the Karshaka Thozhilali Party (KTP), the Travancore Tamil Nadu Congress (TTNC) etc. fielded their candidates in large numbers. As the Communist Party of India (CPI) was banned at the time of the elections, it fielded its candidates as independents and organised a United Front with the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) and KSP in the elections[14]. Among the 38 independents elected 31 were said to be communists or supported by the communists. Hence it was the largest single group in the Assembly. Their success was mainly due to the United Front of Leftists. The INC formed the Ministry with the support of the TTNC and the independents. Thus the coalition Ministry was experimented in Kerala first in the shape of a minority party government. The Ministry was headed by A.J. John. But the ideological difference between the INC and the TTNC estranged them. On September 13, 1953, the TTNC

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14. In the elections the Congress won 44 seats, PSP 11, RSP 6, KSP 1, TTNC 8 and Independents 38.

decided to withdraw their support to the Government. A non-confidence motion was passed in the Assembly against the Ministry[15]. The State Assembly got dissolved on September 4, 1953. Thus the INC--TTNC coalition Government failed to fulfil its responsibility towards the electorates. This failure on the part of the Congress naturally strengthened the leftist parties in the state.

The second general elections in Travancore-Cochin were conducted in February 1954 for an Assembly consisting of 118 seats[16]. Once again, the KSP, the RSP and the CPI formed a United Front of Leftists and entered into an electoral understanding with the PSP. The INC fought against the alliance. No party secured a majority in the elections[17]. To avoid a Communist-led

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15. 47 Congress members and four independents voted for the motion and 32 members of the United Front of Leftists, 8 TTNC, 10 socialists and 5 independents voted against the motion.

16. There are 95 single member and 11 double member constituencies, and one member was nominated.

17. The Congress Party secured 45 out of 118 seats. The CPI 23, PSP 19, RSP 9, TTNC 12 and Independents 9.

government and to prevent President's rule a minority government of the PSP headed by Pattom Thanu Pillai, who had with him only 19 members in the Legislative Assembly, was sworn in on March 16, 1954 with the 45 members Congress Legislature Party supporting him. A combination of the PSP and the United Front of Leftists had a chance to form a government as they constituted 59 out of 118 seats. But the Congress agreed to support the PSP ministry without joining it. It was the first Socialist Ministry in India as was also the first non-congress Ministry in India. But within one year the PSP government was defeated on the floor of the Legislature by a vote of non-confidence[18]. Then with the support of the TTNC, two PSP legislators and one nominated member, the INC managed to get the support of 60 members and its leader, Panampalli Govinda Menon became the Chief Minister in February 1955. But the scramble for political power continued. Within 13 months it fell when 6 Congress members withdrew their support to the Government. Panampalli Govinda Menon had

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18. A motion of non-confidence in the Ministry moved by Shri. T.S. Ramaswami, resigned from the PSP and adopted by the Assembly on 8th February 1955. The INC voted in favour of it.

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no option but resign and he did so on March 11,1956 and President's Rule was imposed on the state. The Legislature was dissolved on 23rd March, 1956.

Formation of Kerala State

Aikya Keralam or United Kerala was a long-cherished dream of the people and the efforts for its realisation was rather a prolonged struggle. The creation of Kerala as a political unit in 1956 brought about unprecedented changes in Kerala politics[19]. On the one hand, there was the growing strength of Communism from the Malabar region and on the other the Muslim-League emerged as a decisive political force to be reckoned with in the state.

President's rule was in force at the time of the creation of the new state. The office of the Raj Pramukh was abolished. A Governor was appointed as head of the state. For the first time in the administrative set up, Kerala was brought under one single government.

The new state went to polls in March 1957[20]. All the parties contested on their own. The CPI was voted to power.

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19. The formation of the State of Kerala through the incorporation of Malabar and Kasarghod into Travancore-Cochin State and the seperation of four Tamil speaking Taluks form Travancore and their merger with Madras State, officially came into existence on November 1, 1956. Kerala became a State of the Indian Union in 1956 as a result of the re-organisation of states on linguistic lines.

20. The result of the elections are shown in appendix . II.A.

Apart from the tiny Italian principality at San Fransisco, this was the first instance in the world where the Communists took the reins of power through the democratic process. Political developments in this period clearly show that the CPI had started believing in peaceful and constitutional means to achieve their political end[21]. The party prepared itself to function as a responsible parliamentary group.

In the Assembly out of 127 seats the CPI won 60 seats with five independents supported by it. On April 5, 1957 a Communist Ministry with E.M.S. Namboodiripad as Chief Minister was sworn in.

Though the Communist Government had initiated some progressive legislations it could not complete its full term of office, since the opposition parties--the INC, the Muslim League and other opposition groups-pressed the Union Government to dismiss the Communist Government. They aligned themselves with the Liberation Struggle Committee. The Liberation Struggle Committee or the Vimochana Samara Samiti announced its programme to bring 25,000 volunteers accompanied by 3,00,000 people to the capital city, and besiege the Secretariat building and the residences of the Ministers till the Communist Government quit office[22]. At

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21. Ramakrishnan Nair, How Communists Came to Power in Kerala, The Kerala Acadamy of Political Science (Trivandrum : 1965), P.52.

22. Kainikkara Padmanabha Pillai, The Red Interlude (Trivandrum : 1959), P.40.

this juncture, the Central Government made its much disputed interference and dismissed the Communist Ministry. The action of the Centre let loose a volley of opinions both in support of and against it.

The most important reform attempted by the Ministry was the Agrarian Relation Bill. This was the first comprehensive measure of this kind undertaken in India. The Government's first step was to proclaim a stay of eviction ordinance to protect tenants and hutment dwellers. The Bill aimed at creating a free peasantry but provided for compensation to the landlords. The Legislature passed the Kerala Education Bill, which also was met with severe opposition.

D.R.Mankekar has stated that at the state level the Communist Government was less corrupt and more efficient and that its record of progressive legislations on land reforms, labour and education had endeared it to the common man, even though the vested interests and the professional classes disliked those measures[23]. It is to be pointed out that the social and educational reforms enunciated by the Government lay the foundation stone for considerable changes in the days ahead.

The next general elections were held in 1960. It witnessed a clear political polarisation in the state as

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23. D.R. Mankekar, The Red Riddle of India (Bombay : 1965), P. 106.

primarily all non-communist forces rallied under one banner and the Communists and their Leftist allies on the other. Though this well-planned United Front strategy, the Congress came on top at the elections with 63 seats to its credit[24]. The Congress-PSP coalition Ministry assumed office on 22 February 1960. The PSP leader Pattom Thanu Pillai became the Chief Minister. The Ministry consisted of eight congressmen and three PSP members including the Chief Minister. The Muslim League which was a partner in the electoral alliance was not given any berth in the Ministry. The League was compensated for with speakership of the Assembly. The tug of war between the Congress and the PSP Ministers started shortly. It was not based on any ideological grounds but on personal interests or prejudices. The rivalry was between Chief Minister Pattom Thanu Pillai on one side and the Congress Deputy Chief Minister R.Sanker and Home Minister P.T.Chacko on the other. The trouble shooting talents of the then Union Home Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri got strikingly proved when he manipulated the appointment of Pattom Thanu Pillai as Governor of Punjab to defuse tension and avoid a crisis. R.Sankar became the Chief Minister but the PSP high command demanded PSP members to resign from the Ministry 15 members of the Congress

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24. For detailed election results see Appendix II.B.

legislature party formed themselves into a group and demanded the resignation of the Chief Minister. The 15 dissidents then voted in favour of a non-confidence motion against the Ministry moved in the Assembly by the PSP and supported by all the opposition members. The motion was adopted by the House on 8th September 1964 by 73 votes against 50. The Ministry resigned and president's rule was imposed. On 10th September 1964, the Assembly dissolved. Immediately disciplinary actions were taken against the dissident MLAs. They were suspended from the party for 6 years[25]. On the initiative of the dissident group the Kerala Congress was formed. Though the party had the blessing of the NSS leader Mannath Padmanabhan the Kerala Congress was essentially a party of the well-to-do catholics, most of whom were either rich rubber planters or wealthy landlords. These catholics had a suspicion that they were not getting an adequate share in the leadership of the congress. So they allied themselves with the Kerala Congress.

The period from 1964 to 1967 was one of unprecedented developments in Kerala politics caused by the split of CPI, the Congress and the Muslim League, as also by the confusion in the Socialist camps. In the 1965 elections the CPI (M)

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25. The Hindu (Madras), 9 September, 1964.

was prepared to exploit the contraditions within the Congress by reaching electoral understanding with the Muslim League and the Kerala Congress which aroused wide criticism and controversy.

In the elections the INC contested all seats (133) while the Kerala Congress fielded candidates for 54 seats the, CPI 78, the CPI (M) 73, the SSP 29 and the Muslim League 16. The INC secured 36 seats, the CPI (M) 40, the CPI 3, the Kerala Congress 24, the SSP 13, the Muslim League 6, the Swathantra party 1 and Independents 11. The strategy of the CPI fizzled out, it tasted defeat by winning only 3 seats. The CPI (M) obtained 40 seats with another 13 for the SSP and five for allied independents. In examining its defeat in 1965 the CPI admitted that it had failed to display enough flexibility in Kerala's concrete situations on such question as adjustment and alliance with the Muslim League. We over estimated our strength and underestimated the capacities of the rival party[26].

No single party or combination of parties was able to form a ministry commanding majority support. So the President of India dissolved the still-born legislature.

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26. Political Reports, In documents adopted by the 8th Congress of the CPI, Patna, February 7-15, 1968.P77.

This proved a great experience for all parties especially the leftists in the political arena of Kerala and cast clearly a far-reaching influence in its further political developments[27].

II

Kerala may probably be termed the most politicized state in India, with a distribution of partisan loyalties that has remained high and relatively stable since the state came into being. Politically, Kerala is not a typical Indian state. Socialists and Communists captured power in Kerala when an alternative to congress rule was unthinkable in India[28]. In each of the elections since 1957 the Congress has maintained a fairly steady one third of the vote. Like the Congress the Communists have also maintained approximately one third of the vote except in 1965 when it got only 28% in the election immediately following the party split in 1964. Only in the Muslim League strongholds of Kozhikode and Malapuram districts did the CPI and the Congress receive less than 30% of votes. The split of the

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27. Samuel.J.Eldersueld The Party System and the Citizen in Kerala (Chicago, 1967), P.7.

28. R.Ramakrishnan Nair, Socio-Economic base of Kerala, Journal of Kerala Studies, Vol IV June-September 1977, Trivandrum P.455. In 1954, the PSP formed a minority government in the former Travancore-Cochin State. The PSP Government was supported by the Congress Party and fell within a year when the Congress withdrew its support. In 1957, the CPI formed a government with the support of 5 Independents.

CPI affected the relative distribution of the two parties' strength in thosc districts. The CPI was left with the base of support in the areas of Communists' weakest centres of strength, the cultivator dominant areas, whereas the CPI (M) base was concentrated in the traditional communist strongholds particularly the areas of agricultural labourers. These distinctions within Kerala reflect the All India pattern, wherein the CPI (M) retained dominance in the states with the heaviest Communist support (Kerala and West Bengal) while the CPI hold the edge over the CPI (M) in the Hindi heartland, where the Communists had never gained an effective foothold.

The policies and programmes of the political parties in Kerala are moulded out of numerous factors like the parties' ideology, the nature of the problem of the state and the demand of the party organisation[29]. The Communist Party of Kerala had been originally committed to the confiscation of all surplus lands of landlords without compensation; later they realised that the policy was too radical to suit the Kerala society and, therefore, accepted the principle of compensation. The Congress Party's policy regarding land reform is very much influenced by the norms set by the Central Government, planning commission etc. In Kerala, it favoured land reforms by the pressure of the time.

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29. N.Jose Chander, The Legislative Process in Kerala (Trivandrum : 1981), P.43.

The social infra-structure which manifests itself in social pluralism of the country is another important dimension of state politics[30]. The level and pattern of economic development is another crucial factor. The resource potential, the level of economic growth, the pace of industrialisation and the crystalisation of class consciousness of a state may go a long way in shaping the form and substance of its policies on the one hand and on the other the pattern of its relations with other states and the Centre[31]. Political participation in Kerala has been consistently the highest in India. Kerala is also a political paradox in that powerful religious organisations and powerful Communist Parties co-exist[32].

Geographically, the State of Kerala is somewhat isolated from the rest of India and therefore, it has a distinct socio-economic and political entity. It is generally held that four major Communities--Nair, Ezhava, Christian and Muslim--are contending for a place in the social, economic and political life of the region. These major communities seem to be getting differentiated and

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30. Iqbal Narain, State Politics in India (New Delhi : 1976) P.5.

31. Ibid., P.6.

32. John.R. Wood, State Politics in Contemporary India (London : 1978), P.104.

consequently divided. Christians constitute 21% of Kerala's population as compared to the national figure of less than four percent. They are educationally and economically more advanced than the Hindus and Muslims in the state.

Traditionally Kerala Christians have overwhelmingly supported the Congress. The Muslim Community constitute 19% of Kerala's population, as compared to the national figure of about 12%. They are educationally and economically behind the Christians and Caste Hindus. But their regional concentration and class consciousness make them a major factor in Kerala politics. No major political party can ignore their importance in election and their communal background. The Muslim League suffered a split in 1975 but in 1982 they again re-organised[33]. Yet a large number of Muslims are supporting the Congress and the Communist Parties. Hindus, who constitute almost 60% of Kerala's population, consist of innumerable castes. They may be divided into three broad groupings: the high caste (mainly Brahmins and Nairs) the middle caste (mostly Ezhavas) and the low caste (castes below the Ezhavas). Most of the high caste Hindus in Kerala have traditionally supported the non-Communist Parties. Most of the middle and low castes

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33. The split in the Muslim League in 1975 produced the All India Muslim League and the Indian Union Muslim League.

identify themselves with the Communist Parties.

The close affinity between religion and politics in Kerala continued after 1947. This interplay has been strengthened by some new factors. The first is the existence of religion based political parties like the Muslim League, the National Democratic Party,(NDP) the Socialist Republican Party (SRP) etc. Such parties freely make use of religion for the attainment of the political power. They didnot subscribe to secular form of politics. When universal adult franchise was introduced under the Constitution of India. These political parties found it convenient to use religion to mobilize political support during the elections.

The other political parties, regional as well as national, maintain an apparently secular posture and do not justify the use of religion for political purposes. Atleast in theory they vehemently oppose the use of religion to achieve political goals[34]. The INC, the CPI, the CPI (M), the Janata Dal etc.advocate and emphasise the delinking of religion and politics. However, compulsions of electoral arithmetics often compel these parties to compromise with these principles and make use of religious symbols and

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34. Moin Shankir. (Ed), Religion, State and Politics. (Delhi : 1989), P. 52.

slogans in their political battles. In the nomination of candidates for elections to parliament, State Legislatures and even local bodies, all these political parties are forced to reckon with the demographic spread of the electorate in terms of religion and caste.

Thus casteism and communalism have been genuinely institutionalised in Kerala. Here, every community is organised and communal organisations have been acting as powerful pressure groups in Kerala politics[35]. The organised pressure groups in Kerala may broadly be classified into communal and occupational groups. Organisations like the NSS, the SNDP and the Christian Organisations are included in the first group. Organisations like trade unions, peasants organisations, teachers unions, employee unions etc. being to the second category. The local leaders of all parties have realised the influence that the communal groups can exercise. So the

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35. At present there are innumerable communal organisations. There are Nair Service Society, All India Kshatriya Maha Sabha, Brahmin Sangam, Yoga Kshema Sabha, SNDP, Nadar Maha Sabha, All Kerala Viswakarma Maha Sabha, Kerala Pulaya Maha Sabha, etc. For Christians there are organisations like All Kerala Latin Christian Association, Catholic Congress, All Kerala Yakobaya Samoogham and All Kerala Avasa Christava Federation, Samvarana Samudaya Munnani etc.

ambitious politicians belonging to all political parties have always tried to exploit communal feelings. One consequence is that the leaders of these organised communal groups get easy access to Government officials by virtue of their importance as leaders of communities. There is also a correlationship between this trend of ministerial instability and the level of various socio-religious and economic interests.

In this way, the caste associations had to transform themselves into political interest groups to protect the socio-economic interests of their members and political parties had no choice but to exploit the prevailing institutional system to attain and retain power[36]. So the caste organisations and political parties are to be blamed for the excessive interaction of caste and politics in the Country. On the eve of independence all the four major communities were backing the Congress[37] which in return made several compromises to satisfy caste and communal pressures

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36. Velayudhan Pillai, Caste and Communal Forces in State Politics of Kerala, from the Book "Political System in India" Vol. 7 by Verinder Grover (Ed.), (New Delhi, 1989) P. 511.

37. According to the report of the Backward class Reservation Commission, Kerala, the principal communities in Kerala are Nairs 14.46%, Syrian Christians 16%, Ezhavas 22.18% and Muslims 19.12%.

in the first Travancore elections held in 1948. The formation of the first Travancore Ministry by Pattom Thanu Pillai fully reflected the whims of the leadership of the major communal interest groups. Yet within seven months the Ministry collapsed when Ezhava and the Christian Communities withdrew their support. Then another Ministry was formed with Parur T.K. Narayanapillai as Chief Minister. The Ministry survived nearly two and a half years and later due to the lack of support, from the NSS and the SNDP who together formed an anti-Congress front under 'Hindu Mahamandalam' to oppose what they considered was the Christian domination of the Congress this ministry had to bow out. The Syrian Christians of Kerala sought political leverage through the church hierarchy.

The Muslims in Kerala, mostly concentrated in the Malabar region had organised themselves into the Muslim League and after the formation of Kerala State they expanded their influence all over Kerala. The Nair-Christian combine backed Kerala Congress formed in 1964 secured 24 seats in the 1965 elections. On the eve of the 1977 elections NSS formed the NDP and the SNDP the SRP. The caste communal forces helped to emerge a multi-party system in the State. The weakening of the Congress in early 50's was the result of a Nair, Ezhava shift to other parties such as PSP, RSP the Kerala Congress etc. Because of the multitude of interests and the insufficient level of ideological

polarisation, the scope of the emergence of a multi-party was bright in the political horizon of Kerala.

The pertinent question here is the cause of the emergence of these communal forces as bargaining forces in Kerala. The reservation policy of the Government can be cited an example in this ongoing exercise. Because of the numerical strength of the major communities in Kerala, most of the political parties are in a dilemma. The Nair and the Christian communities complained that the system of reservation in public services, originally meant for generally poor people of the backward communities was exploited by the affluent sections of these communities, too. Therefore, they argued that the system of reservation should be rationalised so as to give special consideration, to all economically poorer sections of the society whether backward or forward. This demand of the NSS is supported by a section of the forward communities. The SNDP Yogam and all other backward communities feel that any change in the existing reservation policy will be deemed an attempt to harm the interest of all the backward communities in the state[38]. This controversy naturally has been affecting the State politics since independence. The Communist Parties cannot ignore the claim of poor Nairs, poor Christians, or poor Namboodiris simply because of the fact that they do not

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38. G.Rajendran, Ezhava Community and Kerala Politics (Trivandrum : 1974), P.8.

belong to the backward community. At the same time the Communist Parties cannot favour the change in the system of reservation for backward communities because that would estrange many of its supporters belonging to the backward communities, mainly Ezhavas and the Harijans. So they are silent about economic reservation and support the continuation of the system. The Congress also seems afraid to take a decision in the matter because that would result in the loss of support from the Muslim and the Ezhava Communities. So, both the Communist and the Congress Parties cannot ignore the importance of these communities in the electoral map. When these communities realise that they can effectively control the policies of political parties they become a force in the Kerala politics.

Thus the interaction between caste-communal organisations and politics in Kerala represents an inevitable phase, in the social and political fabric of Kerala. In the absence of other effective interest groups formed on the basis of non-caste communal considerations, the communal organisations have played an effective role in state politics.

III

Kerala is a microcosm of India with all the variables pushed to their extremes. Kerala has a high density of population consequently there is heavy pressure on land. In spite of the abundance in agricultural wealth, it has to

import half of its food supply. The export of its cash crops brings in a large portion of India's foreign exchange earnings. Yet, Kerala's per-capita income is one of the lowest in India. It has the highest rate of unemployment. It is at once a bastion of Orthodox Hinduism with the most elaborate system of caste-ranking in India, and a region deeply affected by the processes of social mobilization and change.

Kerala's industrial proletariat associated primarily with low-productive, non-machanical industries, handloom, coir, cashew etc--is concentrated in small and middle towns. The state has a highly developed communication infra-structure. Intense party competition and frequent campaigns have sustained a high level of political literacy throughout the state, as reflected in the average voter-turnout of 74%--perhaps the highest in India.

Despite its small size, Kerala is highly differentiated in terms of its social structure. These regional differences reflect the long history of Kerala's political division. Before independence Kerala was divided into the princely states of Travancore and Cochin on the one hand, and Malabar district of the Madras Presidency on the other. This regional division into Travancore, Cochin and Malabar caused historical and social factors to play major roles in the history of the country. The educationally advanced

Travancore, the princely ruled Cochin and socially backward Malabar offered a diverse social spectrum. Since the emergence of the Communists and Muslim League, Malabar began to play an effective role in the independent Kerala State. The integration of Travancore and Cochin into one state in 1948 and the formation of the Kerala State on linguistic basis in 1956, have not destroyed its historical identities, which, in spite of merger have made themselves felt in the politics of the state.

In their analysis of regional diversities in Kerala, Lakshmana Rao and Seetha Lakshmi characterise the states three distinct regions in capsule form[39]. The northern region of Malabar (Cannoore, Kozhikode, Kasargode, Malappuram, Palghat and Wayanad districts) is predominantly rural and has a high ratio of agricultural labourers. The region is also the traditional stronghold of Communism. It is the least industrial and urbanised region in Kerala. The central region of Cochin (Trichur and Ernakulam) is highly urbanised and is the most industrialised part of the state. In this region both the Communists and the Congress parties have a balance of strength. The southern region of Travancore (Alappuzha, Kottayam. Kollem, Idukky, Pathanamthitta and Thiruvananthapuram) is characterised by

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39. G.Lakshmana Rao and R.Seethalakshmi, "Socio-economic Basis of Communists in Kerala, The Indian Journal of Political Science, October-December 1968, Vol 29, PP. 342-43.

a pattern of fairly even land distribution and owner cultivation with the lowest ratio of agricultural labourers in Kerala. No party can claim the monopoly of political power in this region also.

The working of the political system in Kerala has shown that the two political parties--the Congress and the CPI (M)--have been at the centre of political power. Although various splits in these parties have shattered their political cohesion, they have a social base and considerable strength in state politics[40]. The other political Parties have simply joined hands with these two political parties for the formation of Ministries. Even when the two major political parties didnot join the ministries, they extended their tacit or implied support of one or the other of the ministries.

The conservative rightist forces in Kerala have not always looked up to their counterparts at the national level, instead they have chosen to align themselves with the Congress and the Muslim League or the Kerala Congress. One reason for this is that, in Kerala, unlike elsewhere in

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40. The split in the Congress Party resulted in the creation of Kerala Congress (1964), Congress (O) in 1969 and the Congress (I) in 1978. The Congress (O) eventually disintegrated as its supporters joined other parties. The Kerala Congress and the Congress (S) again suffered splits. The communist Party also suffered split in 1964 resulted the formation of CPI (M). The Party again suffered splits resulting in many Communist splinter groups. Only the CPI and CPI (M) are electorally significant in Kerala.

India, the competition is clearly between rightists and leftists and therefore the former are aware that any excessive intra-rightist factionalism is liable to add to the advantages of the latter.

Conflicts at various levels in industry, agriculture and community life are a common phenomenon in every society. Arbitration is regarded as the best way of resolution of conflict in Kerala's mass political culture. When opposition groups and parties organise civil disobedience or strike to elicit mass support for their political demands, the government rarely tries to establish a more responsive relationship with the organised groups and to use demands as an opportunity to classify policy issues rather than treat them as threats to authority[41]. Agitational politics has also become outmoded in the state. Agitation in the name of trade unionism is no longer appreciated. People have started to judge political parties by what they do and not by what they profess or promise.

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41. L.S.Rathore, Myron Weiners Model on Indian Political Culture--A Critic (New Delhi : 1986), PP.58-59.

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Thus, the politics in Kerala has been a struggle for power between two distinct forces--The Communists and their allies on the one side and the anti-Communists led by the Congress Party on the other. Voting in Kerala has been seldon been an act of affirmation since voters have usually rejected their previous rulers. Most voters seemed to be activated by the negative impulses of either anti-communism or anti-congress sentiments. The excesses of communist redicalism which explodes when the Communists are in power produce pervasive anti-communist sentiment in the state; alternately the governmental behaviour of the Congress Party and its factionalist struggles generate wide-spread anti-Congress feelings. The challenge for party leaders in Kerala is to gauge the strength of their two contradictory impulses of the electorate and to form alliances that can fully exploit them. Such alliances have been the key to power in Kerala Politics. The Political preferences of the people of Kerala are also seem to be just a reflection of the intensity of their socio-economic, demographic, religious and occupational problems.

CHAPTER II

COALITION POLITICS AND COMMUNIST PARTIES

Coalitions are, essentially, part of the political process in a parliamentary system. A close examination of the working of the Indian parliamentary system would reveal that each state has in fact been undergoing its own pattern of political development and making its own political experiments[1]. A coalition is formed when two or more parties wish to come together on a common platform, narrowing down their differences to the minimum and thereby forming an alliance to capture power. Usually coalition governments are formed on the foundation of either pre-electoral or post-electoral alliances. In the coalition game each party, while opposing every other party, tries to arrive at a consensus on some minimum programme, seeking its own political advantages.

Coalition - Problems of Definition.

The term 'coalition' is derived from a Latin word 'coalitio', the verbal substantive of 'coalescere' which means to grow together[2]. The term 'coalition' as employed in the political sense, commonly denotes a co-operative

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1. Myron Weiner, State Politics in India (Princeton : 1968), P.6.

2. Frederic. A. Ogg, "Coalition" Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, Vol. III (New York : 1963), P. 60.

arrangement under which distinct political parties unite to form a government or ministry[3] . Coalition, thus, means a combination of political groups or forces, temporary in nature and for specific objectives. In other words, it is a combination of political parties none of which has an absolute majority in the legislature, and which put aside their political differences to form a government with a minimum programme acceptable to all of them[4] .

The game-theoretic definition to the term coalition, which is defined as a subset of players in a game situation, who chooses to combine their resources to affect the outcome of the game in accordance with some decisions accepted by the whole set of players[5] .

William.H. Ricker believes that, in order to discover the trends patterns or designs of a coalition it is advisable to make an assessment of the human behaviour of the members, constituting a coalition, specially of those who are at the helm of a coalition[6] . Ricker states that

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3. Ibid, P.61.

4. Readers Digest - Librery of Modern Knowledge Part II, London, P.684.

5. Mahendra.P.Singh, "Models of Coalition Behaviour", The Indian Journal of Political Science, April/May, 1977.

6. William.H.Riket "The Theory of Political Coalition", Oxford & IBH (New Delhi : 1970), P.207.

the general decision making policy of a coalition depends upon its leader, who might be an opportunist, a power hungry man or a status seeker or one who is a self-less worker, who believes in duty and devotion and who wants neither material gain, nor power, nor prestige[7].

In a political system one group may wish to preserve the status quo, and another may wish to completely alter the existing social and economic structure, but they both may agree that to achieve either of these ends political power should be captured only through an agreed process of election and parliamentary majorities[8].

In a parliamentary democracy the aim of a political party is to implement programmes for socio-economic development. When this interest becomes vested it results in cleavages and in the formation of different political parties which compete among themselves to capture governmental power. This results in giving greater importance to capturing political power than to party ideology.

The formation of a coalition government depends on shared values. Different coalition partners are rewarded with different payoffs. In a parliamentary situation, for

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7. William.H.Ricker, Op.Cit., P.208.

8. Alan.R.Ball, Modern Politics and Government, The Mac Millan (New York : 1978) PP. 31-32.

example, one party may obtain legislation that it deems important, another will receive visibility, that will help it in the next election and yet another will achieve useful recognition for one of its leaders. The coalition formation in Kerala during the period 1960 to 1970 illustrates this theory. Coalition theory is also less successful with respect to specifying how pay-offs are divided among the members of a winning coalition. Sometimes there may be simple rules such as equal pay-offs to all members. But it is usually found that the pay-offs are weighed in favour of the bigger parties in the coalition. It affects, usually the smooth working of coalition governments.

Coalition Governments -- Problems and Possibilities

A coalition is in essence a system of government in which actual policies are the result of an attempt to synthesize the conflicting views of different parties. It can take place only within the context of mixed motives in which both conflict and common interest are simultaneously present[10]. Coalitions, having political objectives of contesting elections, capturing the reins of power, implementing particular ideologies and programmes, removing definite actors from seats of power, blocking particular

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10. International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences Vol. I, (New York : 1972) P.531.

legislations and undoing specific policies of a government hostile to the constituents of the coalitions are political coalitions[11]. Actors do not take recourse to coalitions in normal circumstances; it is only when the achievement of the objective is problematic and only joint action may help, that they seek coalitions. The art of forming a coalition involves passing through various bargaining counters, continuing the coalition by scrupulously upholding some principles for which the coalition is formed and ultimately destroying the coalition at some opportune moment[12].

In a coalition government the line of demarcation between the government and the opposition is not clear. Despite the final agreement on a common programme there is an ever-continuing threat of defection and some ally failing to support the government. The coalition government in the wake of split within its own ranks encourages defection in the ranks of opposition to secure success on a particular issue and save the government from being toppled[13]. There are continuing intrigues and plans to subvert the esxisting

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11. Sukadev Nanda, Coalition Politics in Orissa (New Delhi : 1977), P.12.
12. Ibid., P.13.
13. K.P.Karunakaran, Coalition Government in India : problems and prospects (Simla : 1975), P.31.

aliance and to replace it by a different combination. Members of the ruling coalition join such intrigues as much as the opposition groups. The opposition itself is loose alliance of groups wedded to different doctrines and political programmes. So there are no solidarity in the camp of the opposition to put up a united fight against the government.

As regards the relationship between the allies in a coalition government, a distinction has to be made between their formal relationship and their actual relationship. Formally they are bound by certain institutions in the government where they try to establish common attitude; they co-operate in the matter of voting inside the legislature and they are also united against their opponents in the opposition. If an electoral alliance has been effected along with the government alliance, this formal relationship is generally extended to the level of pooling of votes, supporting a common candidates etc..

But behind this formal relationship is the complex actual relationship where each party wants to preserve its independence, individuality, distinct entity and freedom of action as different from the collective assembly of the coalition. In the actual power relationship it outlines its independence by putting emphasis on its party programme of

the coalition. It doesnot want to get submerged in the totality of the coalition. In the actual power relationship it is guided by the consideration of elections and its popular image. Since the parties in the coalition retain the freedom of political propaganda in consonance with their electoral programme it gives them sufficient opportunities to criticize the government for unpopular acts or an issue. Outside the coalition these parties are anxious to show to the electorate, that they are sincerely wedded to the facts of their electoral programme.

Thus each participant in the coalition tries to excel the others and takes the maximum credit for the achievements of the coalition and exposes the weakness and contradictions of the other partners at the same time. All the same, coalition politics makes it the responsibility of each participant to ensure the continuance of the coalition and also to destroy the coalition when its existence outlives its utility. It involves the emergence of new crises and new conflicts and their resolutions. Great tact and resourcefulness are the basic necessities in such a situation in coalitional politics. Very minor deviation from the expected role by a participant upsets the prospects of the coalition resulting in its premature death. It has been a feature of Kerala politics since independence.

In Kerala, it is a trend that communal and caste groups, irrespective of the parties have been becoming politically assertive demanding direct participation in government. It was a feature of the coalition politics in the state to seek to accomodate all bargainers at the electoral and ministerial level, to encourage the emergence of such politics.

Quite often coalitions are formed to prevent a common enemy from capturing power. In this context the coalescing parties having ideological differences are compelled to come to an understanding. Sometimes capturing power is the motive behind the formation of a coalition. There have been instances of the rightist and leftist parties coming together to challenge the citadels of the ruling party. Parties like Kerala Congress, Muslim League and their factions often rally round either the communist or the congress coalition in order to get a share in political power.

There are parties which consider coalition politics as a tactic to consolidate their ideological position in their relationship with the other coalescing parties. For example, the Communist Parties do not consider coalition as an end but only a means. They hold that coalition helps in

ideological confrontation with the other coalescing parties, who may be drawn more and more towards maximum ideological positions.

In a democratic system political parties function under the imperative of universal adult franchise. They may not make a pure and dogmatic ideological approach to each and every issue. The parties try to get the support of the various segments of society. Being broad-based they try to bring different interest groups under their control. The result is that in actual practice ideological stands get dilated. Parties also make technical and pragmatic adjustments and compromises. For some parties these technical adjustments are only a steping stone to achieve their well defined ideological goals. For others ideology ceases to exist in the process of adjustment and compromise.

But the main reason which motivates people to stand under a particular banner is their belief that the party would protect and further their interests. The interest may be economic, religious or ideological. Peasants and labourers have common economic interests and as such they are likely to support a party which stands for more remunerative agricultural prices and higher wage rates and social benefits. Similarly businessmen and traders have

identical interest--how to improve their profit margins. They are likely to support a party which provides free competition and fully secured property system. These factors are important in party allegiance and in the working of various political parties.

Methodology of Coalition

A political group desirous of forming a coalition is confronted with several alternatives or options among which the most attractive one is to be chosen. Each group has its own specific interest and they are desirous of coalescing for some specific purposes Groennings indicated four factors of coalition building. These four factors are situation, motivation, compatibility and interaction[14].

Situation refers to the political position of the state representing the respective strength of different political parties measured in terms of number of seats won. It should be a fluid situation where no party can independently act to form a government.

Motivation indicates the propensity or desire to coalesce. Uninterested actors cannot be forced to join a

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14. Groennings, Notes Towards Theories of Coalition Behaviour in Multi-Party System (New York : 1970), P. 460.

coalition unless they change their opinions in favour of the coalition. The party desirous of forming a coalition has to study whether the other possible partners have a sincere desire to form a coalition and enjoy its rewards. In Kerala, for example, the ultimate end of a party is not to attain power through coalition but a coalition becomes a necessity as an interim stage to break some actors hegemony and capture the seat of power whereas the party continues a natural quest for self-identity and power.

The desire of an actor to form a coalition can be measured by its modalities of adjustment. Infra--structure attitudinal gaps like parochialism, casteism and communalism along with mutual distrust need to be banished first in order to make the process of negotiation for a coalition smooth and successful.

Camptibility with regard to the attitudes and ideas is of vital importance for consideration at the time of negotiating for the formation of a coalition. The possible actors need take into consideration ideological similarities and dissimilarities and attitudes of the other possible partners to problems of social, economic and political importances. The greater the ideological space between one and the other, the more difficult becomes the process of negotiation.

The actor makes a careful study of the possible partners in analysing their aspiration level and success estimate and also his own propaganda and influence strategy. This is normally followed by the bargaining strategy like pay-off preferences. The formation of a coalition involves comparatively more time because it is not easy to accomodate different hopes, aspirations and interests in a short time. Such a situation warrants greater adjustment, understanding and compromise and hence longer time for a successful conclusion of the negotiation.

In Kerala when a fresh election is announced political parties search for a formula that brings victory to their party and the community they support. Even the Communist Parties are not above board in this respect. Usually these alliances are sought not on the basis of common political programme and action programme for the future, but on the basis of a minimum programme and maximum acceptability among the various community shades 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. Finally, the life-span of a ministry in the state to a great extent, rests upon how effectively it can accomodate the various communities in the state's political set up.

Yet some coalitions were formed with a definite minimum action oriented programme but the constituent groups could not afford to extend a spirit of mutual concessions for the excercise of such programme[15]. The attitude of mutual distrust among the coalition partners and the resultant non-performance of coalition governments had a definite bearing on the cosequent instability.

Coalition--a Form of Political Instability

A coalition whether small or large appears directly antegonistic to stable governments[16]. To an average Indian the term 'coalition government' irresistably evokes an image of instability, ineffectiveness, slowness, indecisiveness and attributes of such negative colour[17]. David Sanders is of the opinion that corruption, expansion of political communication net works, increase in urbanisation and a high rate of economic growth are sources of both stability and instability[18]. The instability of a coalition government results in immobility when the government is incapable of facing fundamental social, and economic issues and of

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15. S.R.Maheshwari, Political Development in India (New Delhi : 1978)., P.72.
16. Jean Blondel, An Introduction to Comparative Politics (New York : 1969), P.342.
17. Lawrence.C.Dodd, Party Coalitions in Multi-Party Parliaments American Political Science Review, Vol. LXVIII, No 3, 1974, P.1093.
18. David Sanders, Patterns of Political Instability (New York : 1981), P.1.

drawing up a plan of action. Because of the constant danger of split within its own ranks and attempts of the opposition to topple it, it tends to avoid any commitment on explosive issues.

The empiricist approach operates upon the assumption that instability varies in direct proportion to the frequency of occurence of certain types of political events[19]. Rapid economic change produces severe social instability which in turn leads to conflict and a high potential for political violence.

During any given time period, the more coups, the more government changes, the more demonstrations, riots, deaths from political violence which a state experiences, the more unstable it is considered to be. Infact, stability consists in the non-occurrence of these various destabilizing behaviour or events. The stability of a political system is calculated on the basis of its capacity to take 'challenges' like strike, violence etc at a specific period of time. So the coalition of CPI during the period of 1970-'77 may be considered more stable than any other coalition government since the inauguration of the state of Kerala.

The existence of a coalition government depends largely on some other factors too. Usually the elected members of the ruling party unwilling to run the costly risk of

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19. Ibid., P.50.

breaking the coalition government by losing their membership in the legislature, give unconditional support to the government. In spite of this the stability of the coalition governments in Kerala largely depends upon the supports of the minor parties.

The stability of a coalition government considerably depends upon the leadership (Chief Minister) because it is "an ongoing machanism" for co-ordinating some or all the actions of the members. In short, it is an organisation of organisation[20]. Unlike one-party governments, in a coalition ministry, the right to select the ministers is with the respective parties and not with the Chief Minister. The policies that are adopted by the coalition governments are made by the coalescing parties together and merely finalised by the Chief Minister. But the Chief Minister must be able to solve the differences between the parties and groups within coalition thereby keeping its stability.

Front Politics and Communist Theories

In 1936 the Communist Party decided that, its members should join the Congress Socialist Party. During 1937 to 1939 when there were congress ministries in the provinces

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20. James.Q.Wilson, Political Organisations, (New York : 1973), P. 267.

the Communist Party was able to function semi-legally.

But the Indian Communists who joined the Congress Socialist Party after the policy of United Front was adopted, couldnot continue in that party for long. In March 1940, the National Executive of the Congress Socialist Party resolved to expel the Communists. It led to the formation of an independent CPI.

In the declared programme of the CPI of India in 1951 it was specifically stated :

> The past years have taught us that the existing government and the set up cannot find any solution for the problems of the people. So, in the place of the existing government, a new people's democratic government should be set up. This government and the force behind it should be able to give effective assurance to the rights of the people, to save the national industries from the competition of foreign commodities, to industrialise the country, to give better living conditions to the working class, to save the people form unemployment[21].

> We must contest the parliamentary elections--we must contest any type of elections that can argue for the rights of the people, that can bring together the large masses. We have to be there where the masses are, we have to be there where people want us to be[22]..

At the Amritsar Congress in 1958 the CPI adopted "a peaceful transition line". The emergence of the Communist

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21. Declaration of Party Programme of the CPI (M), 1951 (M), (Trivandrum : 1951, P.1.

22. Ibid., P.18.

Ministry in Kerala after the 1957 elections was a major factor in national politics. The Kerala communist movement had learned how to use representative institutions within the federal framework to operate them within a fragmented society[23]. It learned to exploit the possibilties of government and opposition to provide immediate relief to the people and stengthen the party. In this way it combined agitation with parliamentary and administrative work and to pioneer the forms of transitional collaboration with other parties without substantially impairing the organisational autonomy of the CPI.

Split and its Effects in the United Front Strategy

Before the general elections in 1951 there had developed within the CPI what may be called the rightist section and leftist opposition. The rightist section was led by S.A. Dange and P.C. Joshi who felt that conditions in India were not ripe for a revolution on the Chinese model. The differences between the extremist militant wing and the moderate rightist section of the party became acute during 1948-'50. The crucial difference related to the appraisal of the role of the Indian bourgeoisie which centred round the question whether the bourgeoisie could still play an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal role, or whether they had

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23. T.J. Nossiter, Communism in Kerala (New Delhi : 1982), P.107.

gone over completely to counter-revolution[24].

When the National Council of CPI met in Hyderabad, the Sino-Indian border dispute was live and tense. The National Council pledged support to Nehru's efforts to bring a peaceful negotiated settlement of the border question. The rightist draft as adopted by the national council branded China as the aggressor because it crossed the Mc Mohan line.

When the emergency meeting of the executive of the party was called on 9th April 1964 to discuss the ideological crisis the leftist leaders walked out from the committee. The national council decided on the explusion of 7 of the 12 members who had walked out. The 12 members who had walked out from the National Council issued a statement which claimed that they were united not only against the factionalism and anti-party organisational methods of the leadership but also against their political line of falling behind the bourgeoisie through a general United Front with the Congress[25].

Although, the ideological schism between the Soviet and

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24. Sankar Ghose, Political Ideas and Movements in India (Calcutta : 1975), P.478.

25. Mohan Ram, Indian Communism--Split Within a Split (Delhi : 1969), P.120.

Chinese Communist Parties had its repercussions on the CPI, the fundamental cleavage within the CPI pre-dated the Sino-Soviet rift[26]. Among the dimensions of conflict during 1950's two stand out. The differences in assessments of the role of the party in relation to the national bourgeoisie, and so to the Congress. The right faction favoured closer collaboration with the Congress. Likewise, there were those who rejected constitutionalism and those who wholeheartedly welcomed a parliamentary framework re-inforced by mass--struggle.

On 20 October 1962, the Sino-Indian border dispute took a more serious turn creating an acute dilemma for the party. On Ist November the National Council, adopting an unequivocally nationalistic stand, condemned Chinese aggression and called on the people to unite to defend the motherland. The split finally came in April 1964.

Front Politics, Communist Theories and Accommodation

From 1965 onwards both the Communist Parties have been trying to assert themselves in electoral politics. In Kerala the dilemma for both the Communist Parties has been that the combination of their mutal competition and the

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26. Ibid., P.180.

pressure of the rank and file for the fruit of office, has tended to transform both from parties of principles into parties seeking power. Both the parties accepted electoral competition and governmental power are the major areas of mass action.

The Rightists central slogan was the establishment of a National Democracy through a front of all patriotic and progressive forces, including the national bourgeoisie, from its different perspective. The Left argued that there could be no national democratic road because this was barred by big bourgeoisie dominance and its compromises with imperialism. Thus the Leftist's slogan was People's Democracy formed and led by the working class.

The two drafts of programme reflect two distinct trends on important questions. While the Right draft saw in India's independence "a historic event not only for our people but for all mankind" and believed that India was now on the "path of Independent development". The Left draft saw in the tranfer of power a mere "settlement" between British Imperialism and the Congress. Subsequent economic development in India was an attempt of the bourgeoisie to strengthen itself "not by decisively attacking imperialism and feudalism by eliminating them, but by attacking the

people and compromising with a conciliatory imperialism and feudalism".

On economic development the Right draft held that, "while growth had been insufficient, Indian economy didnot present a picture of stagnation or a growing dependence on imperialism but one of consolidation of political independence and a step forward to economic re-generation".

The Left draft stated that no kind of planning was possible under capitalism and Indian planning was wholly subordinated to the profit motive of the Indian and foreign exploiters.

On the character of the Indian state the Right draft said it was "the organ of the class rule of the national bourgeoisie as a whole". But to the Left, "it was the organ of the class rule of the bourgeoisie and the landlords led by the big bourgeoisie". The Right draft attached much importance to the existence of a parliamentary system while the left didnot. But both the drafts believed in peaceful transformation of socialism.

The Right draft's slogan of power was a national democratic government for a state of National Democracy through peaceful means. The Left draft stated that the path of National Democracy was barred for India because the

bourgeoisie had compromises with imperialism and therefore had no progressive role to play. The slogan of power was 'People's Democracy' and the people's democratic front to achieve it. It was to be a coalition of all genuine anti-feudal and anti-imperialist forces headed by the working class.

The CPI and the National Democratic Front

The communists believe that the destruction of capitalism and the establishment of socialism in its place are inevitable and are in accordance with the laws of history. The party programme of 1951 specifically says:

> Socialism is achieved after the working class gain power and after the working people's state nationalises the capitalist means of production and turn them into public socialist property. Though the working class is the most decisive force to bring about the socialist revolution, it doesnot act alone. In as much as its interests coincide with those of all working people, the working class as the leader of the revolution can enter into alliances with other working people[27].

The people's democratic front included the working class, all strata of peasantry, the middle strata of urban population, a section of the intellectuals and a part of the middle bourgeoisie.

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27. Declaration of the Party Programme of the CPI (M), 1951.

Nationally, the CPI's tactical line after the split was the United Front from above and its slogan the National Democratic Front. It reflected its reading of the course of post independent history of India, the CPSU's geopolitical interest in friendly relation with India's ruling Congress Party and the reality of CPI's mass base.

At a crucial meeting of the CPI Central Executive at Patna in April 1968, it was agreed that no one tactical line was universally applicable and that the party's actions should be governed by the objective possibilities in each individual state.

In 1969, the National Council of the CPI decided for the unity of all progressive forces including Congress men and struggle against "right reaction" on the one hand and the CPI (M) on the other. According to this formula the CPI formed a Mini-Front in Kerala after the breakdown of CPI (M) led United Front in 1969.

The CPI believes that the parliamentary democratic system and democratic rights are really valuable and give the masses a chance of advancing to their goal through sweeping struggle[28].

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28. A Course of Party Education, CPI (Calcutta) PP. 77-78.

In order to effect a national democratic revolution, the CPI pleads for a broad based democratic front. The enemies of this front are the imperialists. Almost all other classes can be won over as allies of this National Democratic Front. According to the CPI the class who can be included in this front are the working class, the entire cultivating peasantly, the rising classes of urban and rural intelligentia and the non-monopoly sections of the national bourgeoisie[29].

The programme of pursuing the non-capitalist path of development to socialism through the National Democratic Front would involve (1) elimination of foreign capital (2) the extension of state sector in key and heavy industries, nationalisation of banks, general insurance, foreign trade and plantation (3) Breaking of Indian monopoly companies for destruction of the power of land lords by the abolition of land lordism and distribution of surplus land to the agricultural labourers and to the peasants and (4) provision of facilities for the development of non-monopolist private sector enterprises and small scale industries.

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29. Ibid., PP. 101-102.



In the words of E.M.S. Namboodiripad to a large extent the Government of India is controlled by the landlords and the capitalists-at the state level by the feudal lords and at the central level by the capitalists. So the government can be made an instrument to fight against the vested interests of these landlords and the capitalists. In this context it is not against the national bourgeoisie party (The Congress) but against the vested interests it thinks that the Communists and other progressive elements should unite. This is the approach of the CPI. But the CPI (M) does not agree with this. The accepted policy of the Congress is to provide opportunities to the capitalists of India for joint trade and commerce with foreign merchants. So, the Congress, which protects and strengthens the united interests of the landlords and bourgeoisie must be opposed and defeated. The approach of the CPI is that, it is not the Congress, but the Rightist reactionary parties and their communal organisations that are the main enemy. But the CPI (M) considers that their main enemy is the Congress.

National Democratic Front : CPI and Congress--1969-'79

The year 1969 saw a dramatic change in the state politics of Kerala; for the CPI an entirely unexpected come back; for the CPI (M), an unanticipated decade in the

wilderness; and for the Congress its first collaboration in government with the Communists. After the split the tactical line of the CPI and the CPI (M) had become increasingly differentiated. Nationally the CPI's line was the United Front from above and its slogan was the establishment of a National Democratic Front. In 1964 the party had agreed that no national democratic front would be real unless the vast mass following of the Congress and the progressive sections of the Congress at various levels take their place in it[30].

In 1968, the CPI Central Executive had agreed to allow the state unite flexibility in interpreting the party line in the light of the objective possibilities of each state. In Kerala the party maximised the possibilities of peaceful transition. The decision to form a Mini-Front in 1969 was approved by the national leadership but it was a still state level initiative. Kerala offered the opportunity to experiment with national democracy without a formal commitment to sharing power with the Congress.

The CPI (M) regarded the CPI's position as

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30. Resolution Adopted in the Central Committee of the CPI, 1965, P.43.

self-delusion[31]. To them India's economic problems had matured to the stage of political crisis. The Congress split in 1969 and Mrs.Indira Gandhi's leftist sloganising were merely a manoeuvre by the Country's ruling class.

The CPI, though modestly claiming only to be fulfilling the 1967 elections manifesto and restoring law and order and administrative impartially was equally determined to destroy the CPI (M) hegemony on Kerala politics. Obligingly, the Central Government expedited the presidential approval of the Agrarian Reform Bill which became law on 1, January 1970.

In Kerala, the CPI led Mini-Front Ministry was being maintained in office with the connivance of the Congress. The split of Congress could be read as the differentiation of the bourgeoisie into progressive and reactionary wings. Then in 1971 came the Indo-Soviet Defence Treaty, the Socialist Congress election compaign and in 1972 Congress entry into the CPI led Kerala Ministry.

Yet discontent within the party grew when Mrs. Gandhi arrested communist trade union leaders and ruthlessly put

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31. E.M.S.Namboodiripad, Marxistithara Munnani - Annum Innum (M) (Trivandrum : 1969), P.1.

down the 1974 railway strike and declared National Emergency in 1975. In Kerala the CPI-Congress Ministry continued in office and the CPI was therefore, bound to be held responsible for whatever excesses committed. With the rise of Sanjay Gandhi, his role in slum clearances in Delhi and pro-capitalist economic policies proved too unbearable and sections of the CPI began to engage in public criticism. On the eve of the 1977 elections, the CPI re-endorsed its existing stand of unity with struggle and alliance with the Congress wherever possible. Except in Kerala, the result was unfavourable. The party's national vote fell from 4.7% to 2.8% and seats were slashed from 23 to 7.

Finally, at the 11th party Congress in April 1978, the CPI admitted that its support of the emergency under the belief that it would only be used, against extreme reactionaries was wrong [32].

The Party was beginning to re-evaluate a line which had produced no shift to the left at the national level but on the contrary had led to the resurgence of anti-democratic and anti-labour and reactionary forces.

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32. Report of the Party Congress, CPI, 1978, P.4.

Yet in October 1978 a new CPI Chief Minister took office in Kerala and it was not until October the following year that the CPI finally pulled out of a ministry supported by the Congress and opposed by the CPI (M) for a decade. It was the beginning of left and democratic alliance under the leadership of CPI (M).

People's Democratic Front and the CPI (M)

The CPI (M) claims that the CPI is a revisionist Party which has deviated from Marxism--Leninism [33]. In Kerala the CPI (M) would remain committed to electoral competition as a major strategy for atleast three reasons. (1) The majority wing of the Kerala movement had inherited a tradition of exploiting the representative institution to wage the class struggle so as to strengthen the party. The emergence of leaders of low caste origins tended to strengthen the practical orientations of Kerala Communism [34]. (2) The CPI (M) supporters who included a disproportionate number of the unprivileged saw little prospect of any improvement in their condition without a powerful pressure in the Assembly.

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33. B.T. Ranadive, The two Programme-Marxist and the Revisionist (Calcutta : 1966), P.1.

34. T.J. Nossiter, Op. Cit., P.243.

(3) Given Kerala's high level of literacy, newspaper readership and political sophisticiation, a platform on the hustings and in the Assembly was a crucial means of communication for a mere Communist party.

In October 1964, the Left Communist held their first congress at Calcutta and the programme adopted by them said:

> The Communist Party of India (Left) strives to achieves the establishment of people's democracy and socialist transformation through peaceful means. By developing a powerful mass revolutionary movement, by combining parliamentary and extra-parliamentary forms of struggle, the working class and its allies will try their utmost to overcome the resistance of the forces of reaction and to bring these transformations through peaceful means .

Any possibility or independent action by provincial governments was minimal. The purpose of participating in electoral competition therefore, was primarily to publicise this idea.

But the CPI argued that the CPI (M) underestimated the autonomy of the State Government and their fundamentally different reading of the class-character of India at the time.

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35. Party Programme of the CPI (M), Calcutta, 1968.

The CPI (M) policy towards participation in state government argued that people's democratic governments gave the revolutionary movement a fillip and strengthened the mass movement but did nothing to solve the fundamental economic and political problems of the Nation. All they could hope to achieve was "immediate relief to the people" [36].

The CPI (M) comments that the National Democratic state of the CPI wouldnot be under the exclusive leadership of the working class, but would be under the joint leadership of the bourgeoisie and the working class. The offer of the leadership to the bourgeoisie is the betrayal of the revolution. The CPI (M) sees the Congress leadership in this way.

According to the CPI (M) the CPI doesnot wish to destroy the Indian state as it believes that the leadership of the State is mainly in the hands of anti-imperialist sections of the bourgeoisie and that the landlords, in alliances with the big bourgeoisie, donot control the state, but only influence it.

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36. New situation and Party's tasks, CPI (M) (Calcutta : 1967) P.70.

Formation of Left Democratic Front

The formation of the Left Democratic Front (LDF) in Kerala in late 1979 represented a significant political breakthrough. The Front brought together the CPI (M), the CPI, the Congress (S), the RSP, the Kerala Congress (Mani group) (KC (M)), the Kerala Congress (Pillai group) (KC (P)) and the All India Muslim League (AIML). Together these seven parties constituted a formidable political force in Kerala in 1979.

The Party Congress of 1982, and the political resolutions of the CPI and the CPI (M) show much common ground in advocating a left and democratic front including the Congress.

The Congress of CPI (M) took place in a profoudly changed domestic and international environment in Calcutta in December 1986. The CPI and the CPI (M) broadly agreed in their analysis of the new Indian situation but subtle differences of emphasis continued from the 1982 Congress lines. The CPI (M) continued to criticise the authoritative tendencies of the Congress regime but acknowledged a tendency among certain sections of the party comrades to underestimate the danger of the growth of communal parties and their fundamentalist character.

The CPI argues that there must be a radical realignment of political forces in favour of the working class, the peasantry and the agricultural labourer. It is these classes and their alliances that can play a pivotal role in drawing other democratic forces to their side to build up the Left Democratic Unity[37].

In fact the CPI could not afford to stand on its ideological dignity notwithstanding its numerical superiority in terms of membership[38]. The fact is that its independent capacity to mobilize mass support is far less than that of the CPI (M).

So in the words of E.M.S.Namboodiripad, the main conclusion that can be drawn from the Kerala experience for the development of mass democratic movement in the country as a whole is that, while it would be a dangerous illusion to think that a state government formed by the Communist Party together with its allies can transform the economic and political set up in the State, the formation of such a government in any state can play a positive role, both in that particular state itself and in the country, as a whole, and that apart from leading to the solution of a number of

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37. Report of the resolution adopted Central Committee of CPI, 1986, P.20.

38. According to the Parties records the strength of the CPI in 1985 was 480000 and the CPI (M) was 3,67,828.

local problems its existence will give greater morale to the democratic masses everywhere and thus strengthen the democratic movement"[39].

In Kerala, the dilemma for both the Communist parties has been that the combination of their mutual competition and the pressure of rank and file for the fruit of office have tended to transform both from parties of principle into parties seeking power. Both the Communist Parties tried to get support from regional groups communal leaders as and when they found it suitable to their electoral interests.

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39. Notes for the Programme of CPI (M), 1986, P.27.

CHAPTER III

THE CPI (M) LED COALITION GOVERNMENTS IN KERALA

The period from 1964 to 1967 was a period of unprecedented developments in Kerala politics caused by the splits in the CPI, the Kerala unit of the Congress, and in the Muslim League as also by cofusion in the socialist camps, the long spell of President's rule and finally by the abortive Assembly election in 1965. In the 1965 elections, the CPI and the RSP proposed a United Front of Leftist Parties based on a minimum programme and wedded to the common cause of waging struggles against the Congress, the Muslim League and the Kerala Congress. The Left Communists CPI (M) on the otherhand, were prepared to exploit the contradictions within the Congress and to defeat the Congress by reaching an electoral understanding with the Muslim League and the Kerala Congress[1]. It was the controversy over the allocation of seats which finally broke up the negotiations. Unable to reach a compromise the Communists faced each other in opposition. The CPI (M) had an understanding with the SSP and the KTP. At the same time, the candidates of Muslim League and the Kerala Congress were to be opposed anywhere[2].

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1. E.M.S.Namboodiripad, What Really Happened in Kerala (Calcutta : 1966), P.19.
2. Ibid., PP.33-34.

In the election in Right Communist's (CPI) strategy failed disastrously. Of the 78 seats contested they won only three seats and lost deposits in 67. The Left Communists won 40 seats and SSP 13 and allied independents 5. But if we combine the figures for the two parties the Communists went down in the total votes secured from 38.9% in 1960 to 28% in 1965. The two parties faced each other in 45 constituencies.

The 1967 general elections can be stated as a landmark in the history of state politics. The CPI (M) had systematic alleances with the CPI, RSP, SSP, KTP, KSP and the Muslim League. Each party was allowed to contest those seats which it had won in the 1965 mid-term elections [3]. They agreed to sit together to chalk out the anti-Congress election strategy. The various parties in the United Front were forced to forget some of their difference on the basis of minimum programme. The outcome of the 1965 elections and

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3. In the 1965 elections 14 parties contested. The Congress contested in all the Constituencies, the Kerala Congress in 54, CPI in 78, CPI (M) in 73, SSP in 29, ML in 16, Jana Sangh in 16, PSP in 7, RSP in 11, Swathantra in 18, and KTP in 5.
In the elections the Congress secured 36 seats, CPI (M) 40, Kerala Congress 23, SSP 13, CPI 3, ML 6, Swathanthra Party 1, Independents 11. More details of the election are shown in appendix.

the resulting political uncertainty convinced the progressive forces of the need for this common minimum programme[4].

The failure of the Congress Governments partly led to the growth of a multiplicity of parties with a strong feeling of anti-Congresism. This feeling was another reason which brought all the parties together. There are other considerations as well. The quest for power was one of them. So far as the smaller parties were concerned, the United Front appeared to be the only hope of participating in power. Even the bigger partners knew that they would not come to power without the help of the smaller parties, whose marginal and regional influence was decisive in winning the polls.

The Calcutta Congress of the CPI (M) accepted the idea of People's Democracy as their declared aim. On the theoritical basis E.M.S. Namboodiripad developed the concept of a broad coalition against the Congress which found a place in the election strategy of CPI (M)[5].

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4. Link, Vol. 12, No.11, October 29, 1969.

5. See the CPI (M) Election Manifesto, Calcutta, 1964, P.44.

The seven non-Congress parties in the coalition met at Ernakulam on 16th and 17the of September, 1967 and issued a statement signed by the leaders of these parties[6]. The parties in the United Front had their own particular interests and circumstances leading to the formation of the coalition. The split of the CPI (1964) created a tension between the two factions-the CPI and the CPI (M). In their mutual competition the CPI suffered more in the 1965 election. So it was their only alternative to join the United Front. The RSP leader Sreekantan Nair was one of the architects of United Front. He felt that the party could not get power in Kerala without an alliance with other parties[7]. The policy declaration of these parties applied only to state matters, leaving each party free to bring out its distinctive position on national and international questions. All would assume a common approach with respect to Kerala issues. In securing the common policy declaration the CPI (M) made a number of compromises, especially with

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6. Forwarded to a non-Congress Democratic Governments in Kerala, Ernakulam, 1967. This statement was signed by E.M.S. Namboodiripadu (CPI (M)), C.Achutamenon (CPI), C.H.Mohammad Koya (ML), K.Kunjirama Kurup (SSP), G.Gopinathan Nair (RSP), B.Willington (KTP) and Mathai Manjooran (KSP).

7. The RSP is a party which works on the basis of Marxizm-Leninism but it supported the Congress Party in the 'liberation struggle' against the Communists.

the more conservative Muslim League. Yet the CPI (M) was unwilling to meet the demand of the CPI for a constituency in the Malabar area, where the Front was virtually a two Party alliance consisting of CPI (M) and Muslim League[8].

The KTP was a party led by Fr.Vadakkan. Most of the party members were Roman Catholics, whose hostility towards the Communism was well known. Yet the KTP held an electoral alliance with the Communist Party in 1965 and continued it in 1967. Fr. Vadakkan could very well understand that since the Congress Party had lost the support of the Catholics on one side and the Muslims on the other, the party would begin to decline in strength in state politics. By this alliance, the Communist could create an inroad into the Catholic Community.

The SSP was a Nair dominated party which ideologically falls between the Communists and the Congress[9]. The party had support from the middle class and the working class. In the 1967 elections the primary aim of the SSP was to overthrow the Congress Party even if it meant siding with the Communists. In loyalty and ideology the party was PSP

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8. Horst Hartman, "Changing Political Behaviour in Kerala" Economic and Political Weekly (January : 1968), 169-171.

9. D.R.Mankekar, The Red Riddle of Kerala (Bombay : 1965), P.93.

but retained the SSP label[10].

The Muslim League was willing to come into the CPI (M) led Front because it was the best opportunity that was available to make their party an important factor in Kerala politics. The Muslim League had a political polarisation in the Malabar area. In the 1960 elections the League was a partner of the Congress led coalition but after the elections the league was ignored and was being called communalists. They were not represented in the Cabinet. They had to satisfy with the speakership of the Assembly.

In the 1967 elections, the CPI (M) won eight seats in Quilon, and the CPI (M) one. The CPI was routed in Malabar altogether, and of the 23 seats contested by the CPI (M) in the three Malabar districts, 22 were secured.

The election results reveal that the political preferences in Kerala were reflection of the intensity of their socio-economic, demographic, religious and occupational problems rather than political

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10. The Party, originally set up in the state by Pattom Thanu Pillai, was a faction from the Indian National Congress. The PSP split into ISP and PSP and after the appointment of Pattom Thanu Pillai as Governor of Punjab, into the PSP and the ISP merged into SSP. In 1959 the party co-operated actively in pulling down the Communist Government. In the 1960 election it fought against the Communist Front. In 1965 it had an electoral adjustment with the Communists and the Muslim League. In 1967 the SSP became a partner of the United Front.

problems[11]. It was also alleged that the Communists sacrificed their principles to maximise their chances in winning the elections.

Every political party in Kerala has a social base and every major community has a political base[12]. Usually their election formula are sought not on the basis of common political ideology and action programme for the future but on the basis of a minimum programme and maximum acceptability among the different community forces in the state[13]. The search for a formula continues even after the election at the time of the formulation of the ministry. The life span of a ministry in the state rests upon how effectively it can accommodate these various communities and interests in the state.

The CPI (M) was ready to form alliance with any party or groups to end the Congress monopoly of political power It found as the only alternative the formation of a coalition of non-congress parties and groups which agreed to defeat the Congress. Each party was to be allowed to bring

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11. K.G.Krishna Murthy and G.Lakshmana Roa, Political Preferences in Kerala (Delhi : 1968), P.3.

12. E.J.Thomas, Coalition Game Politics in Kerala (New Delhi : 1985), P.16.

13. Ibid., P.66.

out a separate election manifesto[14].

In the general election held from 15th-20th February, the Front won an overwhelming victory with 116 seats out of 133 in the Assembly. In terms of votes the congress secured 35.43% of the votes cast and the Communist Parties combined 32.08%. The CPI was a definite gainer, capturing 19 seats while it had just three in the 1965 elections. the SSP was also a gainer. It captured 19 seats as compared to 13 in the 1965 elections. The RSP which had drawn blank in the 1965 elections now bagged six seats. The KTP had doubled its strength from one seat in 1965, to two in 1967. The KSP too managed to secure a seat in the Kannoor district. As for the Muslim League it can be said that it reaped rich dividents from its alliance with the United Front. The party which had no chance of capturing more than 5 or 6 seats now captured 14. Thus the non-Marxist opposition parties which fared badly in the 1965 elections secured a definite advantage by their association with the United Front.

The Congress Party fought on its own in all the constituencies but they got only 9 seats. The Kerala Congress with which its regional strength in the Travancore

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14. E.M.S., Kerala Yesterday, Today and Tommorow (Calcutta : 1967), P.245.

region, had entered an electoral understanding with the PSP, the Swatantra and the DMK, got 5 seats out of the 62 seats it contested. The total strength of the opposition in the House was reduced to 16.

Formation of the Ministry

A political mandate in a parliamentary system is highly dynamic in nature. The cabinet must be alert to the changing moods of the electorate. This is because, the legislators, both within and outside the majority coalition, may change their loyalities in response to the changing moods of the electorate on which they depend for re-election. Government maintenance, therefore, probably is as challenging a job as government formation. While the latter involves the formulation of a policy declaration that will win the support of the majority in the election, the former involves the delicate task of shifting that policy frame continually to maintain the support of a winning coalition.

In a coalition the Chief Minister does not always enjoy any freedom in the distribution of portfolios. The major parties in the coalition will have their own favoured portfolios, which is the most difficult part of the ministry

forming exercise[15].

A ministry headed by E.M.S. Namboodiripad was sworn in on March 6, 1967. There were problems for the Chief Minister in selecting the cabinet members. It was a real problem to give representation to the various parties, big as well as small, in the cabinet. The ministry had also to represent the various regions and communities. Allocation of portfolios was the next problem[16].

Finally the Government gave representation to all the parties in the cabinet whose strength in the Assembly ranged from 1 to 54. For the allocation of portfolios each party seemed to be anxious to have Home and Revenue but nobody was willing to accept the portfolio of food which was difficult to handle in view of the acute shortage of food materials. Finally, the CPI (M) was assigned Home, Revenue and Food portfolios. The speakership was divided between the SSP and the CPI each getting two and a half years of the five year term. The deputy speakership was assigned to the Muslim League. Yet the cabinet composed of different party

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15. Iqbal Narain, "State Politics in India and the Political System", Political Sciences Review, Jaipur, Vol No. 10.

16. See Appendix.

nominees with divergent interests couldnot get on as a team[17].

The initial struggle over the allocation of portfolios indicated the shape of things to come. There were continuous allegations that the CPI (M) was either interfering in or frustrating the work of other ministers[18]. The division of portfolios shows that neither the SSP Finance Minister nor the CPI minister for agriculture was able to operate independently of the CPI (M) Minister for Revenue and Food[19]. The unscientific and unjust division of portfolios was resented to when the SSP Chairman openly denounced in a statement issued at Trivandrum that agriculture income tax and sale tax were handled by the revenue department run by the CPI (M) Minister though the finance portfolio was given to the SSP Finance Minister[20].

Industrial and labour policy paved the way for another conflict, mainly between the CPI Minister and the CPI (M) Chief Minister. Six week after the government took office

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17. Indian Express (Madurai) September 13, 1967.
18. Kerala Kaumudi (Trivandrum) May 15, 1967.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., 16 May, 1967.

T.V. Thomas of CPI outlined his policy after the formal approval of the cabinet for implementing the programme. He announced that he would be visiting Japan to explore the scope for collaboration in trade between the two countries. This was not acceptable to the CPI (M) because they considered Japan as a Capitalist country[21].

T.V. Thomas vehemently defended his policy of giving priority of support to trade unions for industrial peace. The other partners accused that the declared policy of the government that there would be no interference by the police in labour disputes was implemented only when the struggle was led by the CPI (M).

The CPI (M) as the leading partner took the key departments; Chief Minister took Home, Revenue and Law as well as Transport and Harijan Welfare. The CPI was given more important nation building departments, like Agriculture, Electricity and Industry. But their success depended on the goodwill of the marxist controlled supervisory departments.

Achievements

Though the government had completed only half of its life-time, it had several achievements to its credit.

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21. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol, XXI, No.11, November 11, 1969.

During the first six months the government eagerly tried to solve many of the problems of the state. The food problem was the immediate and the most serious one that confronted the government. In a policy statement of the Chief Minister, E.M.S. Namboodiripad said that the State Government would not only have to reject the centre's proposals to enhance the price of rice but also ensure the availability of rice to the poor at comparatively lower prices. The Central Government raised by 11 paise the price of rice distributed through the ration shops. But the State Government did not raise the price of rice. The government paid attention to the strict enforcement of the prevention of Food Adulteration Act by appointing food inspectors. The government also set up Popular Civil Supplies Committees at the Panchayat, Municipal and Taluk level. These Committees consisted of the representives of various political parties. The government also ordered that the Committees should have the following functions. (1) Submission of proposals for the improvement in the working of the schemes of rationing and procurement of paddy by levey. (2) Assisting the civil supplies authorities in varification of ration cards, ration permits etc. (3) rendering all assistance and co-operation for procurement of

paddy by levy. (4) Bringing instances of violation of statutory orders to the notice of the civil supplies authorities[22]. To increase the internal procurement of rice, the government took strong actions and collected 14,901 quitals of rice within six months of the formation of the government. The government exempted the ordinary peasants owing less than two acres of land from the levy. But from those peasants owning more than five acres of land the Government levied the whole of their surplus produce.

In proportion to the increase in the expenditure of the cultivation the delivery bonus was fixed at Rs. 8.19 per quintal and the production bonus at Rs.13. Those who produced surplus of paddy and rice were directed to submit the details of the stock with them. In this way the Government look certain steps for internal procurement.

The United Front, according to their promise in their election manifesto, took steps to distribute uncultivated cultivable government lands to the landless people. Till May 1969 about 1,826 hectares of land was distributed to 36,248 applicants[23]. Abolition of landlordism is essential

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22. Kerala State Administrative Reports, 1967-'69 Government of Kerala (Trivandrum : 1969), P.171.

23. Question Hour, Proceeding of the Kerala Legislative Assembly Reports, Vol XXV, Part I, P.102.

to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor which is essential for democracy. With this intention the Government presented the Kerala Land Reforms (Amendment) Bill, 1968. The Bill was intended to give the cultivators ownership of land to eliminate all the intermediaries among cultivators. The Bill was presented to the Assembly on 18th August 1968 and finally passed on 17 October 1969[24].

In the field of education the government could boast of some achievements. The government introduced the Kerala University Bill, 1967 and it was finally passed on 21 January 1967[25]. This Bill assured security of employment to the teachers under private management. It also created an Academic Council invested with powers to advise the syndicate on all academic matters. It increased the power of government over the University and the private colleges. The Calicut University, the second University in the state, which came into being on 23 July 1968 was another achievement[26]. The government gave representation to the students in the university Senate. At school level students of the 9th and 10th standards of secondary schools were exempted from payment of tuition fees. About 1,400 new

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24. Ibid., No.12, P.876.
25. Proceeding of the KLA, Vol.XXIV, No.11, P.972
26. Mathrubhumi (Cochin), 24 July, 1968.

school buildings were constructed. To encourage the rise of the Mother-tongue the State Language Institute was established. A three year LLB course was introduced in the law colleges of the state. The government established a Hindi Training College at Trivandrum[27].

In the industrial field, the ministry started an intensive campaign for starting small scale industries. The scheme was conducted by the Government through the National Small Scale Industries Corporation. Consequently within two years 857 new industries were started. It was estimated that these factories could give employment to 8,718 persons[28]. With the help of Japan an industrial Unit, Thoshiba Anand Factory was started in the state to produce lamps, batteries and other electrical goods[29]. Further, under the industries department four corporations, the Handicrafts Development Corporation, the Kerala State Small Scale Industries Corporation, the Kerala Handloom Development Corporation, and the Industrial Development Corporation were formed[30]. To improve the cashew industry

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27. C.Achuta Menon, What Happened in Kerala, Review of 30 months of E.M.S.Government, (New Delhi : 1969) P.7.

28. Question Hour, Kerala Legislative Assembly, Vol XXIV, No 7, P.482.

29. Ibid., No 13, P.1097.

30. Ibid., No 20, P.1730.

the Cashew Development Corporation was registered on 19th July, 1969.

The Labour Policy of the United Front promised a need based minimum wage for Kerala's working class, and the creation of suitable machinery for its strict implementation. The government provided a new old age pension scheme instead of the provident fund scheme. The government passed the Recognition of Trade Union Bill in 1969, in order to give recognition to trade unions which represent the majority of workers in the particular industry. The multiplicity of trade Unions in each industry and units weaken the strength of the workers for bargaining.

The Government abolished the system of police verification in the case of appointments of public services in the state. Though this had been abolished by the Communist Government of 1957, it was re-introduced by the Congress--PSP Government which succeeded the Communist Ministry. Consequently, 1,105 persons did not get government jobs for political reasons after 1960[31]. So the Government put an end to this practice and further re-considered all the previous cases. The Government also issued orders to re-appoint those who had been denied a job on the basis of political affiliations.

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31. Question Hour, K.L.A., Vol XX, No 4, P.197.

The Government gave the freedom of political activities to the teachers of aided schools. A minimum wage system was implemented in the small scale industries of printing, cashew etc. The Chief Minister inaugurated the Corporation of Cochin in November 1967 covering the area of Ernakulam, Mattancheri, Fort Cochi, Willington Island, Edappalli, Palluruthy and Vytila [32].

The Central rates of dearness allowance were granted to all State Government employees as well as to aided school teachers with effect from January 1967. Considering the case of unemployment the government brought down the retiring age from 58 to 55.

It was the primary duty of the government to enforce law and order in the state. The Government succeeded in a large measure in preventing the unnecessary interference of the police in the day to day life of the common man. But the general feeling was that the Government failed to maintain law and order in the state and that the police was made subservient to the CPI (M). The undue interference of local leaders of the CPI (M) with the police was considered responsible for the ineffective functioning of the police machinery in maintaining law and order. Further, from the

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32. Mathrubhumi (Cochin), 2nd November, 1967.

time the Ministry came to power till October 1969, the police opened fire at six places and used lathi at ten places. As a result of this ten people were killed and 132 injured[33].

Inter-Party Relations

The constituents of the United Front were guided by different motives and opinions. The formation of the seven party coalition consisting of parties having very little in common was not an easy task[34]. So far as the CPI was concerned it was an offer of re-habilitation particularly at a time when its fortunes were at the lowest ebb following the poll debacle in 1965. Thus, leaving aside their ideological rivalries and stopping temporarily their mutual enemity, the CPI and the CPI (M) decided to work together in the front.

The food problem was a reason for inter-party clash. Kerala was passing through a situation of grave food scarcity when the United Front Government was sworn in. Even after two months of the assumption of office the United Front, instead of finding a solution to the problem by the joint endeavours of the Front partners, was criticising

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33. Question Hour, Vol XXVI, No 23, P.1749.
34. K.V. Varghese, Op.Cit.

each other on this issue. The constituent parties came out with a statement accusing the CPI (M) of mishandling the situation. In a public meeting at Quilon C. Achutamenon, the State Secretary of the CPI, stated that the Kerala Government had failed to convince the people that they had been earnest and sincere in taking effective steps to solve the food problem. He also admitted the failure of the United Front Government in procuring paddy through levy[35] .

During the course of a discussion in the Assembly B. Madhavan Nair (SSP) squarely blamed the government for the grave food problem[36] . The CPI state executive went to the extent of asking the Chief Minister to take over the food portfolio from K.R. Gawri. The Pro-CPI newspaper Janayugam through their editorials and articles put the blame entirely on the CPI (M) food Minister for bungling on the food problem. The Muslim League suggested the removal of check posts as a remedy to solve the problem which was also supported by the CPI. But the CPI (M) opposed this on the contention that the market price in the surplus areas would increase as a result of the lefting of check posts. The CPI

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35. Mathrubhumi (Cochin), 20 July, 1968.
36. Ibid., 21 July, 1968.

(M) also tried to wash their hand by putting the blame entirely on the Centre. They also tried to convince the people that the Congress Government at the Centre was using the food problem to discredit the Kerala Government. Though their argument was somewhat correct they didnot succeed in rallying the other partners of the front behind them.

The industrial policy of the Government was also a reason for inter-party rivalries. P.Sundarayya, the General Secretary of the CPI (M), during a press meeting at Ernakulam termed the United Front Government's industrial policy as anti-labour, pro-capitalist and reactionary in nature[37]. The main objection of the CPI (M) to the industrial policy was that it violated the fundamental principles of trade unionism by banning strikes and extending undue concessions to the monopoly capitalists to grow at the expense of the working class[38]. At the same time the constituent parties like the ML, SSP, KTP and RSP came out strongly in support of the industrial policy of the CPI. The visit of Industries Minister, T.V.Thomas, to Japan seeking Japanese collaboration in starting industries in Kerala was not favoured by the Chief Minister. The CPI (M) preferred the assistance from Socialist Countries and

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37. Malayala Manorama (Kottayam), 15 July, 1967.
38. Malayala Manorama (Kottayam), 6 February,1968.

according to them Japan was an ally of America. In October 1967 the Industries Minister made a policy statement regarding his signing of an agreement with five industrial concerns of Japan for developing mining of iron ore in the Kozhikode area with the idea of eventually setting up a steel plant there. The CPI (M) immediately criticised it as a violation of United Front policies and called upon the Ministry to make up a firm stand[39]. The All India CPI (M) directed the state unit of the party to launch a vigarous campaign against the objectionable features of the industrial policy statement as well as the activities of Industries Minister. It further developed a controvercy between CPI (M) and CPI.

The attitude of the CPI (M) towards the police and the way they handled the police machinery created widespread apprehensions. Some of the United Front partners considered the policy of intentionally "neutralising" the police as an attempt to blackmail them.

The labour portfolio under the KSP nominee Mathai Manjooran generated controversies within the United Front. The policies of the Labour Minister came in for criticism from the CPI, RSP and SSP. He was acused of taking

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39. People's Democracy, November, 1967.

decisions favourable to the CPI (M). Trade unions leaders like P.Balachandra Menon, Vice President All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), Kerala Unit, publically criticised the Minister for his pro-Marxist leanings[40]. In a statement to the Press, Menon accused the labour minister of indulging a division within non-Marxist trade unions and deleberately encouraging the growth of pro-marxist trade unions. In reply to this criticism Manjooran criticised the CPI Industries Minister T.V.Thomas for interfering in the affairs of his department and complained to the Chief Minister about T.V. Thomas through a letter sent on 9 December 1967[41].

The agricultural portfolio was held by a Ministers belonging to the CPI. Here again the conflict of rival points of view expressed itself. The CPI Minister took up his job with the specific objective of increasing productivity. As a result of his enthusiasam, rice production increased from 11 lakhs tonnes to 14 lakhs tonnes in the course of two years[42]. For the purpose of increasing production the CPI Minister adopted higher prices for landlords and capitalist farmers; permission to sell in

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40. E.M.S.Namboodiripad, Anti-Communist Gang up in Kerala, CPI (M) (Calcutta : 1970), P.15.
41. Mathrubhumi (11 December, 1967).
42. C.Achuta Menon, Op.Cit., P.20.

the open market rather than to government at controlled prices, large subsidies for seeds, fertilisers, pump sets etc.

The CPI (M) took a more communist stand that the benifits at government cost should be restricted to the small and middle peasants while the landlords and rich peasants should be made to pay for the assistance received from the government[43].

The CPI interpreted this as a move to sabotage the good performance of the agriculture minister. When the CPI (M) organised the agricultural labourers to protest against the displacement of labour through tractorisation of agriculture at the instance of agriculture minister, the latter attached the CPI (M) for falling a victim to the traditional outlook against modernisation. When the CPI (M) attempted to mobilize the agricultural poor against the CPI's policy of pampering the upper classes on the agricultural scene, the CPI sought to counter this by sponsoring the demand for housing of the agricultural labourers. Here, the CPI (M) sought to show that the CPI was aligned with the landlords and rich peasants in their confrontation with agricultural workers; which the CPI held

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43. E.M.S.Namboodiripad, op. cit., P.21.

the CPI (M) led government guilty of not providing adequate housing for the workers.

The United Front partners like the CPI and SSP publically echoed their displeasure over the performance of the Government in various areas In a talk with newsmen at Kottayam on September 13, 1967, P.K.Kunju, Finance Minister and SSP nominee in the cabinet stated that the Government's policies were against the interest of the state. He also stated that if anybody quit the Government he would be the first man to do so[44]. CPI leader like S.Kumaran and P.T.Punnose also issued statements to the press expressing strong displeasure over the ineffective performance of the Government[45].

There were also constant struggle between the CPI (M) and the RSP. The RSP presented a ten point charge sheet against the Government including corruption. Eight of them were against the CPI (M)[46]. The conflict between KSP and the CPI had also affected the coalition. T.V.Thomas the CPI minister for industries, didnot care to include a representative of the KSP in the Khadi and Village

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44. Ibid., 13 September,1967.

45. Malayala Manorama (Kottayam), 22 and 23rd September, 1967.

46. Ibid., October 1, 1967.

Industries Board. The KSP criticised that the CPI minister violated the directive of the co-ordination committee namely that in any committe the representatives of all the parties in the coalition government should be given representation.

The Fall of the Ministry

The CPI was first to bring to public notice certain serious lapses in the functioning of the Government particularly the problem of corruption and the 'hegemonistic aspiration' of the CPI (M). The formation of the 'inner front' chiefly stemmed from the souring of CPI (M)-CPI relations. The CPI was also anxious that the CPI (M) was abusing its ministerial powers in favour of its partisan interests beyond an acceptable level.

The formost reason for the downfall of the ministry was ideological. The United Front was a hotch-potch alliance of parties which had nothing in common, except the spirit of anti-Congressism[47]. The Marxist didnot hide the fact that their main aim in joining the Government was to convert it into an instrument of revolution. Whereas the non-marxist partners wanted it to function as a happy family. The group

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47. K.V.Varghese, U.F. Government in Kerala, ISRS (Madras : 1978), P.202.

under the leadership of CPI rejected the CPI (M) opinion, M.N.Govindan Nair of CPI made it clear that "Administration and struggle cannot go together; either give up the administration and continue the struggle or give up the struggle and carry on the administration"[48]. In April 1969 the CPI presented 13 point ultimatum to the CPI (M) behalf of the Inner Front of which the gist was that "only the CPI (M) rules ... all others have either to fall in line or get out"[49].

The Muslim League always demanded the setting up of the Calicut University and the formation of a district which had a Muslim majority. The Muslim middle class demanded a few schools, ration shops and representation in services. It was in the fulfillment of these demands that the new Malappuram district was created[50]. Thus the district was the price the Chief Minister paid to the Muslim League for its continuing support of the United Front Government.

The working of the government was also affected by the allegations of corruption against several ministers not only

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48. B.T.Ranadive, Lessons of the Breakup of the Kerala United Front CPI (M) (Calcutta : 1969), P.10.

49. Malayala Manorama (Kottayam),18 April, 1969.

50. Link, Vol.II, No 24, January 26, 1969, P.49.

by the members of the opposition but also by the members of the ruling parties. The charges assumed prominence in early 1969 when the polarisation within the Ministry as pro-CPI (M) and anti-CPI (M) lines. On September 7, 1969, John Manjooran of K.S.P. and on September 8, 1969, Varkey Vadakkan of KTP presented to the Home Minister memoranda of assusations against P.R. Kurup asking for an enquiry. On October 3, 1969, P.Govinda Pillai of the CPI (M) made accusactions in the Assembly and demanded an enquiry regarding the conduct of P.R.Kurup. On October 17, 1969 the Chief Minister ordered enquiry not only against P.R.Kurup but also against T.V.Thomas and M.N.Govindan Nair, P.R.Kurup resigned his office as minister on October 21. Again the Chief Minister ordered enquiry against P.K.Kunju and according to the demand of the CPI, against B.Willington.

The Commission of Enquiry came to the conclusion that B.Willington was found guilty of corruption and favouritism. On 9.9.1969, K.Sekharan Nair (CPI) presented to the Home Minister memoranda of accusations against K.R.Gowri and E.K.Imbichi Bava and wanted the Government to order enquiries against them under the Commission of Inquiry Act. After a few days N.K.Seshan (ISP) and M.Moideenkutty Haji (Muslim League) presented a memorandum of accusations against Mathai Manjooran (KSP). It showed that the

corruption issue was one of the forms in which the developing conflict of interests between the CPI (M) and its allies, one the one hand and the CPI and its allies on the other.

On 4.10.1969 the Government appointed S.Velu Pillai, retired judge of the Kerala High Court, as Commission of Inquiry under section 3 of the Commission of Inquiry Act, 1952 to enquire into the allegations of corruption raised in the Assembly against K.R.Gowri, E.K. Imbichi Bava, M.K.Krishnan, Mathai Manjooran, T.V.Thomas and M.N.Govindan Nair. As a result of the order of enquiry M.N.Govindan Nair (CPI), T.V.Thomas (CPI), P.R. Kurup (ISP) and B.Willington (KTP) resigned. In addition to the resignation of these ministers, two Muslim League and one RSP minister also submitted their resignation. Then there were only 5 ministers in the Cabinet, four of them belonged to the CPI (M). The fifth was the labour minister Mathai Manjooran (KSP). On 24th October, 1969 the Marxist led coalition government resigned when the Muslim League ISP, CPI and KSP withdrew their support to the Ministry. Upon the ruins of the CPI (M) led coalition government, a Mini Front was built under the leadership of the CPI.

The Formation of the Left Democratic Front

The formation of the Left and Democratic Front (LDF) in

late 1979 was another landmark in the political history of Kerala. The CPI (M), the CPI and the Congress (S) had been the advocates of the unity of left and democratic forces in the state since 1978, but they differed on how to achieve it[51]. The CPI and the Congress (S) had argued that the LDF could be formed in Kerala including the CPI (M) in the ruling Front [52]. But the CPI (M) insisted on starting with a "Clean State" [53]. Since the CPI (M) was in the opposition it had nothing to lose and much to gain, by starting with a "Clean State". It was not so in the case of CPI and the Congress (S) as they already had power and would lose it with the resignation of the government. Yet, that was the pre-condition set by the CPI (M) for the formation of the LDF.

Several political developments in the state in 1979 compelled the parties in the ruling front to change their tactics. Four bye-elections to the State Legislature were held in May and the opposition front led by the CPI (M) won

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51. Political Resolution Adapted by the 10th Congress of the CPI (M) (Calcutta : 1978) P.37. and The Political Resolution Adopted by the CPI, 11th Congress (New Delhi : 1978), P.18.

52. The Ruling Front in 1979 consisted of the Congress (S), CPI,RSP,IUML, the KC (M) and KC (P).

53. A "Clean State" meant that the ruling front must resign and dissolve the Legislature for a new election before negotiations to form the LDF could start.

all four [54]. In September, elections to the Panchayats and Municipalities were held. The results confirmed the growing popularity of the CPI (M) and the declining popularity of the front[55]. These election results compelled the CPI and the RSP to accept the "Clean State" demand of the CPI (M). The ruling front Government headed by CPI leader P.K. Vasudevan Nair resigned in early October. The Congress (S) and the KC (M) then decided to support a minority government headed by C.H. Muhamed Koya of the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML). The purpose of the KC (M) was to pass the Land Gift Bill which it soon accomplished. Then the K.C (M) withdrew its support to the Koya Government and joined negotiations for the formation of the LDF. Later the Congress (S) also withdrew its support to the Koya Government and the government resigned. The Governor dissolved the State Assembly and it led to the 1980 mid-term elections.

The coming together of the two Communist Parties after 10 years of feud and hostility, with the CPI in power all along at the head of the coalition government and the CPI

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54. The four seats were Tellichery, Parasala, Thiruvalla and Kasarkode.

55. Of the total of 3,911 seats the CPI (M) won 2,961 : Kerala Kaumudi, 24 September, 1979.

(M) in opposition all the while, made all the difference in the correlation of forces[56]. The Legislative Assembly elections held in Kerala on January 21, 1980 had special significance in the context of the 7th Lok Sabha elections and its results. It was the first election held in a state in India after the amazing victory of Mrs. Indira Gandhi in the Lok Sabha elections. The LDF was headed by the CPI (M). The other parties of the LDF were CPI, All India Muslim League (AIML) Congress (S), K.C. (M) and K.C (P). The United Democratic Front (UDF) was headed by the Congress (I) which consisted of IUML, KC (J), PSP, NDP, SRP and Janata.

The election manifesto of the LDF called upon the workers and the supporters of the LDF and the general public to stand united in their fight against the authoritarian and reactionary forces which the UDF represented[57]. It provided constitutional guarantee for employment or unemployment compensation, decentralisation of administration, and a master plan for the industrialisation of the state. The 20 point manifesto said that the Front would have a time-bound

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56. Link, January 6, 1980, Vol 22, No. 22 P.14.

57. Manifesto of the LDF, Kerala State Committee of the CPI (M) (Trivandrum : January 1980), P.3.

programme for the full implementation of the Land Reforms Act[58]. Steps were to be taken for the speedy distribution of surplus land. It promised the drawing up of a comprehensive scheme for the development of agriculture. It assured to protect the interest of religious minorities. It assured that the Agricultural Labour Act would be implemented.

The Front would take steps to rehabilitate the traditional industries like coir, cashew and handloom. It assured that the police would not interfere in labour agitations.

Other items included in the Manifesto were re-constituting Road Transport Corporation, continuing communal reservations, setting up public sector farms, legislative and administrative steps against corruption, action for checking rising prices, housing scheme for various sections including fishermen, workers, teachers and government employees.

The six party UDF on January 10, 1980 released its "programme of action". It promised an efficiant, clean and stable government that would strive its utmost for raising

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58. Indian Express. (Madras), January 15, 1980.

the living standard. It pledged to allow greater freedom to corporate and private agencies for running schools etc. They said that the UDF is an extension of the old United Front both in its composition and in its policy positions.

In the election, of LDF alliance polled 50.70% of votes and UDF 43.53% . (For the result of the elections, see the table.)

The result of the election was a signal victory for the LDF, especially in the context of Indira Gandhi's re-doubled effort to defeat it. The concept of a broad front of democratic parties has been converted into a living reality with the CPI (M), CPI and the Congress (S) as its core[59] . The biggest gain was that of the CPI (M) which won of the 50 seats it contested. As the major partner of the LDF it made a massive improvement on its strength of 19 in the dissolved Assembly.

On 24 January, 1980 the 17 member LDF Ministry headed by E.K. Nayanar, the State Secretary of the CPI (M) assumed office. The Congress (S) with 21 members in the Assembly and the CPI (M) having 35 members got four ministerial berths each in the cabinet. The CPI with 17 members was

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59. Link, Vol 23, No 26, February 3, 1980.

given 3 ministers; the K.C. (M) and RSP having 8 and 6 seats respectively, got two ministers each, the AIML with 5 members and K.C. (P) having a solitary member got one minister each[60].

In the division of portfolios of the major departments were evenly distributed.

Achievements

During the first year, the Nayanar Government took many steps to give relief to the poor and the middle classes. Reviewing the record of his government at the end of its first year, Nayanar wrote that it was working as an effective team and that he was satisfied with it progress[61].

The old age pension for farm labourers was a unique social benefit measure in the state. The agricultural workers who had crossed sixty years were entitled for the pension of Rs.45 per mensum. Their number was over 20 lakhs. Local bodies as the implementation agencies, were to receive and scrutinise applications from elegible persons and the amount was to be distributed by the district labour

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60. Kerala Calling, June 1980, Department of Public Relation, Trivandrum.

61. Desabhimani (Calicut),25th January, 1981.

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officer by postal money order. They earned it as a matter of right for the hardwork of the lifetime each one of them had put in[62].

The Government claimed that during its short span of life, over 26 lakhs of workers in factories, plantations and farms received a total wage increase of Rs.71 crores[63]. The public sector industries which had made a total loss of Rs.144.78 lakhs in the previous year made a total profit o Rs.370.37 lakhs. Unemployment wages were introduced for t unemployed who had registered themselves in the employm exchanges. Pensions were given to journalists, film, dra and circus artistes etc. The dearness allowance of stat government employees was increased six times. Part-time government employees were declared elegible for maternity benefits pensions/gratuity etc. Instructions were issued that due promotions of Harijans and Girijans should not be barred even if they had not passed the necessary departmental tests[64].

For the first time a welfare scheme for the coir and handloom workers was instituted and Rs.1 crore earmarked

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62. Link, Vol 26, No 29 June 15, 1980 P.10.

63. Kerala Calling, Department of Public Relations, Trivandrum, February 1981, P.3.

64. Ibid.

for it. Rebate sales period was extended from 30 to 60 days.

Land reforms were given due stress. Upto 3.7 lakhs of tenants were made owners of the land they tilled. Arrears of rent dues from them was abolished. 4.5 lakhs of hutment dwellers were made owners of the small plots on which they had built their home. During 1980-81 one lakh title deeds were issued to those who were assigned new land. Of these 15,000 were fishermen families and 20,000 Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes families. Compensation for small land owners whose land was assigned to tenants was increased from Rs. 5,000 to 10,000.

Group insurance scheme was introduced for the fisherman who met with accidents while fishing. The insurance amount was increased from Rs. 5,000 to 10,000. A scheme was launched to 4,000 bicycles to petty fish-hawkers and special buses for woman were introduced for the fish-hawking women. A scheme of scholarship for the college education of the children of fisherman ranging from Rs.300 to Rs.1,000 was started. Moreover 10,000 houses were completed for the fisherman and the constuctions of another 10,000 was started during 1981-82. Again, the Government organised the entire sea-going fisherman community into 400 fishermen's co-operative villages. These co-operatives were to be in

charge of the development activities of the village [65].

To the agricultural side the Government gave due stress and implemented many legislations. The Governments had proposed to enhance the subsidy for pumping operations in Kuttanad and the cole lands of Trichur and Ponnani. The Government appointed a one man Commission to go into the difficulties of paddy cultivators in the State. Subsidy for pumpset had been extended to all blocks. The price of sugar cane had been enhanced by Rs.20 per tonne [66].

Kerala is a major coconut producing State. The production of coconut in Kerala is 321 millions nuts per year (1979). This constitutes 65% of the country's total production. The processing industries and other activities centre around this crop provides direct employment to a million people. According to a comprehensive development programme they included cutting and removal of diseased and uneconomic palms for which the subsidy of Rs.75 per palms were given to owners [67]. The price support for paddy was raised to Rs.140 per quintal and that of sugarcane to Rs.180. Sales tax on fertilisers for paddy cultivation was

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65. Ibid.
66. Indian Express (Cochin), March 22, 1980.
67. Kerala Calling (Trivandrum), April, 1981.

withdrawn. Crop and cattle insurance scheme was launched[68]. From 1981-82 onwards interests on agricultural loan was reduced to 6% for due repayment, the state paying a subsidy of 5%.

The import of cash crops like copra, rubber, cocoa, pepper and other spices seriously affect the economy of the state. The Kerala Legislative Assembly repeatedly passed unanimous resolutions against the import of these commodities.

Following the issue of licence to import cocoa, free of any import duty, the multi-national Cadbury's stopped buying cocoa from Kerala. The cocoa cultivators became helpless and the State Government made arrangements for the purchase of cocoa at Rs.5.30 per Kg incurring a total loss of about Rs.1 crore. The Government announced a subsidy of Rs.1 per Kg. Purchase tax was also abolished.

1,35,000 peasants families were allowed an interest relief of 4.53 crores of rupees on loans taken from Co-operative societies. Thirty one co-operative societies for Harijans and Girijans were established. Lumpsum grants amounting to Rs. 15 to 70 at school level and Rs.130 to 550 at college level were distributed to Harijan and Girijan

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68. Indian Express (Cochin), March 22, 1980.

students every year. In 1980-81 the interest on loans taken by Harijans and Girijans was completely written off benefiting 20,000 persons.

The LDF Government revised the pay scales of part-time contingent employees from October 1980. The pay-scale of part-time and full-time employees in Panchayats was revised with effect from July, 1978.

The pay and allowances of the employees in private hospitals, dispensaries and pharmacies in the state had not been fixed till 1980. The LDF therefore constituted a Minimum Wages Advisory Board for the purpose. In accordance with the recommendation of the Board the minimum rate of wages payable to the employees in these institutions was fixed with the effect from September 10, 1980. The minimum wages of head load workers and the workers in the timber and plywood industry were revised with effect from August, 1980. The Government instituted a welfare fund for advocates. In 1980-'81 Rs. 24.45 crores was spend on housing of these and 50% was spent on the weaker sections[69]. Rs.50 lakhs was sanctioned for the construction of working women hostels in major cities of the state. 41 primary co-operative housing societies were established and Rs.4.85 lakhs sanctioned for it.

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69. Indian Express (Cochin), March 22, 1981.

Agricultural income tax was revised, giving exemption upto annual income of Rs.15,000. Monthly pension for the disabled was raised to Rs. 75. 3% of government jobs in class III and IV were reserved for the physically handicapped.

The entire agriculture in Kerala is cash-crop oriented. Hence, Kerala has been dependant upon other states for its food materials. The Centre is committed to supply a monthly quota of 1,35,000 tonne of rice a month but the average monthly supply was 84,362. In these circumstances, to provide the essential commodities at the lowest price the Government established a chain of 'Maveli' stores and co-operative stores, numbering 1500, atleast one in each Panchayat. It was to check the rising price of essential commodities.

In short, the LDF Government during its short span of life, tried to solve many of the problems and to implement many social welfare activities.

Inter-Party Relations

Only after 10 months of the LDF Government there arose a public clash between the two leading partners of LDF, when the Trivandrum DCC (U) office was attacked by the CPI (M) on

20th November 1980[70]. The students and trade union wing of the CPI (M) and the Congress (U) clashed at two places in the Trivandrum city[71]. Many persons were injured. The trouble started at University College, Trivandrum when the student's wing of the Congress (U) and the CPI (M) clashed for 4 or 5 days on the issue of the arrest of a teacher, said to be a Naxalite[72]. While the Congress (U) students wanted the teacher to be released, the Marxist students opposed the move.

There were a large number of issues on which differences existed not only between the CPI (M) and the Congress (U) and the other partners of the LDF. The CPI (M) was in disagreement with the line adopted by the constituents of the LDF on the question of diesnon as applied to government employees. During this time the CPI adopted an isolated line and asked the CPI (M) to keep the CITU men in control.

Analysing the one year rule of the LDF, M.Murali, the president of KSU (U) stated that the Government failed to perform to the expectation of the students and youngsters[73]. The CPI (M) state Committee denounced the behaviour of the

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70. Indian Express, (Cochin) 21 November, 1980.
71. Kerala Kaumudi, 23 November, 1980.
72. Indian Express, 21 November, 1980.
73. Malayala Manorama (Kottayam), February 10, 1981.

KSU (U) leaders which seriously hurt the unity of the LDF. Again the KPCC (U) warned the Government that it should take effective steps to restore the law and order situation which was in the grip of a grave and frightening situation[74].

After the Trivandrum DCC (U) office attack on November 20, 1980, the Congress (U) alleged that the law and order of the State had collapsed. They also complained that the police behaved in a partisan way. So the feeder organisations of the Congress (U) like the INTUC, KSU, Youth Congress etc demanded publically the removal of Home portfolio from T.K. Ramakrishnan, the CPI (M) Minister. Later the CPI also raised the same complaint. The CPI leader P.K. Vasudevan Nair on July 6, 1981 said in the Legislature that the CPI (M) was helping the political murder in the State and that the CPI (M) was not helpful to the attainment of the LDF goal[75]. Moreover, the constituent parties of the LDF had an allegation that the CPI (M) made the police association function like a trade union. When the Home Minister, T.K.Ramakrishnan went to attend a parade, he was greeted with red flags and "Inquilab Zindabad"

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74. Indian Express (Cochin), 30 July, 1981.

75. Ibid., 24th July, 1981.

shouting and "Comrade T.K.Zindabad"[76]. Howls of protest came from the LDF partners to put an end to this practice because it affected the discipline of the police force.

After that the CPI (M) indulged in the campaign of character assassination against A.K.Antony. The pro-CPI (M) daily, Desabhimani, published an article attacking Antony[77]. On 15th October, 1981, the CPI (M) publically appologised to Antony over the editorial comment in Desabhimani. It was the time of the Congress (S) in session. Most of the members favoured the exit from the LDF[78].

On 16th October 1981, the K.C (M) leader K.M. Mani also suggested that the Home Portfolio be taken away from the CPI (M) and entrusted to another constituent[79]. But the CPI (M) didnot accept it. V.S.Achutanandan, the State Secretary of the CPI (M) said that his party would not relinguish the Home Portfolio because the demand was made with the intention of repressing CPI (M) workers. He also told K.M.Mani that in the present circumstances a change in the

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76. Caravan (New Delhi),1 December, 1981.
77. U.N.I. Backgrounders (New Delhi), 24 December, 1981.
78. Malayala Manorama (Kottayam), 17, October, 1981.
79. Kerala Kaumudi (Trivandrum), 18 October,1981.

Home Portfolio would be unnecessary and unpracticable[80].

In January 1981, a scandal in which a CPI (M) Minister was allegedly involved caused a major crisis in the LDF Government[81]. In the following months, an increase in violent clashes in the state, particularly between the followers of the CPI (M) and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) severely strained the relations between the CPI (M) and the other parties.

Fall of the LDF Government

In an editorial of the first year of the Nayanar Government the Kerala Kaumudi wrote that the Government had nothing to be apologetic about; "On the contrary it has plenty to be proud of". But the tact and skill of Nayanar were not sufficient to sustain the team spirit of the LDF for long.

Opposition leaders used a variety of arguments to whip up public sentiments against the Government. They argued that law and order had broken down in the state and accused

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80. Kerala Kaumudi (Trivandrum), 21 October, 1981

81. The scandal arose from the import of rectified spirit to Kerala from Tamil Nadu. The opposition alleged that M.K.Krishnan of CPI (M), the LDF excise Minister, was involved and demanded his resignation. The CPI (M) felt annoyed when the Youth Congress (S) demanded a judicial enquiry into the matter. Kerala Kaumudi, 21 January, 1981.

the Government of dividing the citizens into two classes, of ignoring the interests of religious minorities and of misusing the administrative machinery for the benefit of the CPI (M)[82]. During their visits to Kerala, some Central Ministers also openly criticised the LDF Government on these grounds. The Congress (I) leaders also warned of the Central intervention.

The LDF was thrown into a crisis when on September 16, A.K. Antony, leader of the Congress (S) issued a statement sharply criticising the police policy of the LDF Government. The Home Minister replied that Antony's criticisms were baseless. But Antony repeated his charges and accused the CPI (M) of fomenting class struggle in the rural areas. On October 16, the Congress (S) legislature leader Mr.Omman Chandy formally communicated his party's decision to quit the Marxist-led ruling front[83]. The exit of the Congress (S) from the LDF reduced the Government's strength from 93 to 71 in the Assembly of 141 members, including the speaker[84]. In the next day the resignation letters of the

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82. Kerala Kaumudi (Trivandrum),25 January, 1981.

83. United News of India, Vol VI, December 24, New Delhi, 1981.

84. The party position then was CPI (M) 35, CPI 17, KC (M) 9, RSP 6, and AIML 5. The opposition UDF strength was 41 comprising Congress 17, IUML 14, KC (J) 6, NDP 3, PSP 1.

4 Congress (S) Ministers were submitted to the Chief Minister. On October 20, the 9 member KC (M) withdrew its support at the pressure of the ruling Congress at the Centre[85]. Within an hour, E.K.Nayanar submitted the resignation of his Ministry. The KC (M) leaders said that though many welfare measures had been implemented during its 21 months rule, there had been serious lapses, particularly in dealing with the law and order problem.

Thus the State of Kerala was brought under the president's rule for the seventh time in the 25 years of its existence on October 21, 1981, following a report from the Governor, Jyothi Venkatachellam that the formation of a viable alternative ministry was not immediately possible[86].

Nayanar accused Central Ministers and leaders of the Congress (I) of engineering the fall of his ministry. He said the withdrawal of the Congress (S) and the KC (M) from the LDF and the Government was a 'betrayal' of the voters[87]. Mr. Nayanar said that the resignation of his ministry did not negate the relevance of the LDF.

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85. U.N.I. Backgrounders, (New Delhi), October 29, 1981.
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid.

The KC (M) said that the decision to quit was taken as it was felt that the party's continuance in the LDF would be against the interest of those sections which the party represented and of the people of the state in general.

In a joint statement, leaders of the CPI (M), CPI, RSP and the AIML alleged that the breakup of the LDF was the result of a conspiracy of the Central Government and that both the Congress (S) and the KC (M) had become tools in the hands of the enemies of the LDF. E.M.S.Namboodiripad, general secretary of the CPI (M) alleged that the Congress (S) left the LDF because it couldnot get the police to serve the interests of the capitalists and the landlords and to supress the mass struggles[88].

Since the formation of the CPI (M) in late 1964 the Congress had seen the CPI (M) as their chief rival in the State. That perception continued to shape their political outlook till the end of the 1970's when the Congress party split. Then the leaders of the Congress (S) in Kerala saw the rival Congress (I) as their chief enemy. This led to a search for new allies, which resulted in the Congress (S) party's decision to join the LDF. It was political pragmatism not political conviction, that le

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88. Kerala Kaumudi (Trivandrum), October 15, 1979.

the Congress (S) to the LDF [89]. It joined the LDF in awkward circumstances and against the will of some of its most prominent leaders including Vayalar Ravi. It was the desire to win the 1980 elections that pressed the Congress (S) and the CPI (M) into a team.

But the triumphant return of Indira Gandhi to power in January 1980 changed the attitude of Congress (S). The return of some Congress (S) leaders like Y.B. Chavan to the Congress (I) made many of the Congress (S) leaders desire for the unity of the Congress. The common programme of the LDF said that the police would not interfere in the agitations and struggles of the people for the needs of their livelihood and that the police would be given the freedom of organisation [90]. The way the CPI (M) Home Minister applied this policy caused widespread criticism. The opposition leaders argued that the new police policy would destroy discipline in the police. The escalating violence in Kerala prompted the Malayala Manorama to write an editorial "Atmosphere of Terror" [91]. The Kerala Kaumudi

89. Ibid, 15 October, 1979.
90. People's Democracy, 20 January, 1980.
91. Malayala Manorama, April 3, 1981.

bluntly reminded the government that it had the responsibility to ensure a peaceful life to the people[92]. In many places the headload and agricultural workers, mostly members of the CITU demanded very high wages and used extra-legal tactics. This made strong discontent among the merchants, shop keepers, farmers and other middle class people who were the main supporters of Congress (S) and KC (M) in Kerala. As these groups became hostile to the CPI (M) the Congress (S) and the KC (M) found it imperative to leave the LDF.

After the fall of the LDF Government, the Congress (S) the KC (M) and a faction of the Janata Party decided to join the UDF to form a government. The UDF claimed the support of 71 members and formed a government with K. Karunakaran as Chief Minister. But after a month a member of the KC (M) withdrew his support for the Government and the Government resigned. This led to the mid-term election of May 1982.

Reconstitution of LDF and the 1987 elections

Since the formation of the UDF Ministry on May 24, 1982, the State witnessed polarisation and splits of political forces. The merger of the two factions of

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92. Kerala kaumudi, May 7, 1981.

INC, viz, the INC (I) and INC (A) in November 1982 marked the beginning of this polarisation. Another important event was the re-union of the IUML and the AIML in August 1985. Similarly the merger of two groups of KC (M) and KC (J) in early March 1985 paved the way to end the political factionalism. But on the eve of the 1987 elections the party again split into two. Each faction decided to remain in the UDF. A faction of the Congress (S) under the leadership of P.C. Chacko returned to Congress (I). When the split took place in the Janata (G) one faction under the leadership of M. Kamalam joined the INC (I) in December 1985. Another event was that M.K. Raghavan, president of SNDP Yogam with a group of his collegues, took membership in the INC (I).

Owing to certain ideological differences the CPI (M) took disciplinary action against M.V. Raghavan MLA. He constituted a new party under the title Communist Marxist Party (CMP). The emergence of the third Front the BJP--Hindu Munnani Front was another landmark. This was the political ambience on the eve of the 9th Kerala legislative Assembly election.

In the election held on 23 March, 1987, the fight was mainly between the UDF led by the Congress (I) and the LDF led by the CPI (M). The LDF had lost a section of the

Congress (S) led by P.C.Chacko and the AIML. The UDF included the INC (I), the IUML, KC (J), KC (M), NDP (P), SRP (S) and RSP (S). The LDF comprised the CPI (M), CPI, RSP, The Congress (S), Janata, and Lok Dal. The third Front consisted of the BJP and Hindu Munnani. The SRP (V), the ILP, the AIFB, the ILC, the SUCI, the CMP, the KSP and some non-political organisations had also fielded their candidates. A record number of independent candidates were also in the fray.

The UDF led by Congress (I) leader K.Karunakaran faced a serious crisis. First, the Kerala Congress was on the throes of a factional dispute between P.J. Joseph and K.M.Mani, each leading a group. Secondly, there was a boycott call of Muslim League on account of Babri Masjid. Thirdly, there were differences in the Congress (I) itself. There was a Karunakaran lobby which was strongly opposed by young leaders belonging to erstwhile Antony Congress[93].

Karunakaran's announcement of job reservations provoked resentment and criticism, not only from his own party members, but also from allied parties. He had announced that 15% of government jobs would be reserved for those with

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93. Iqbal Narain and Nilima Dutt, "Assembly Election in Kerala and West Bengal", The Indian Journal of Political Science, Vol XLVIII, July-September 1987, No.3, P. 375.

an annual income of less than Rs.6400--irrespective of the community they belonged to. The decision was taken due to the strong pressure of NSS who were the strong supporters of Congress party. But the decision was vehemently opposed by the Muslim League and the RSP. They believed that the scheme would undermine communal reservations.

The Congress (I) feared the threat from Hindu Munnani, which was bent upon creating an atmosphere of Hindu revivalism in politics in the State. In this circumstance the NDP parted company from UDF on the reservation question, and Karunakaran had no choice but to appease the NDP. Hence on the reservation issue, be said, "we stand by the (Cabinet) decision. It will be implemented by the new government and in consultation with all the concerned, a Commission will be appointed to work out the modalities of implementation"[94]. In view of this statement, the NDP gave up its decision to quit the UDF.

The Christian dominated Kerala Congress was divided and both factions were up in arms against each other. Congress demanded more seats than the Congress (I) could give and it, therefore, broke its electoral understanding with the alliance. Candidates of KC (J) filed nominations

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94. The Times of India, 18 February, 1987.

against the UDF and also against KC (M). But on the eve of the election the problem was partially settled. Yet the UDF could not work as a team during the election compaign.

The LDF led by the CPI (M) had no such rivalries. It could work as a team. The main thrust in the LDF compaign was "vote for politics devoid of communalism". It was the LDF's claim that it had purged itself of communal parties while the UDF was a conglomeration of communal and regional pressure groups[95].

The LDF had three clear advantages in Kerala.

(1) The ruling coalition's image was not satisfactory. It was alleged that the UDF was a coalition of communal leaders rather than political parties[96].

(2) The LDF had adopted for a change, a postare of secular idealism, severing all its links with and putting itself against what it records as forces of communal fundamentalism. They had excluded the Kerala Congress and Muslim League from the LDF.

(3) The presence of BJP-Hindu Munnani Front and its election strategy was also advantageous to the LDF.

The LDF had adopted all conceivable forms of propagands

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95. Shiv Lal, India: Electoral Behaviour, (1987-88) (New Delhi : February 1988), P.34.

96. Mathrubhumi, (Cochin) March 29, 1987.

techniques to tell voters stories of rape and corruption and former government's-police brutality that was witnessed in 'Thankamani' in Idukki district. The LDF also took, advantage of majority Communalism. In an article in the state CPI (M) organ on March 1, Mr.Namboodiripad had said that these "tens of thousands" of voters would realise that the best way to achieve the objective of safeguarding Hindu interests and resisting Muslim, Christian communalism would be to vote the LDF to power.

The LDF manifesto called to defeat the communal and caste forces and reiterated that it could have no alliance with any caste or communal groups[97]. The party blamed the ruling front for all the economic reversals in the State. It also pointed out that industrial and agricultural production had come to a standstill under the Government. It also held the view that the reservation policy announced was to divide the people on communal lines. They opined that reservation was no solution to the problem of unemployment, poverty and economic backwardness[98]. E.M.S.Namboodiripad pinned his hopes on the infighting of

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97. Manifesto of the LDF, Trivandrum, 1987.
98. Patriot, 9 February, 1987.

the Congress and the general sentiments of the people against communalism, and failures of Rajiv Government. The LDF didnot have to make any compromises with any communal factions. It was free from party squabbles and rebels.

The LDF was seeking a fresh mandate for political and economic stability and security for the people.

The outcome of the poll was significant in many ways. At the National level the Congress lost the only southern state where it was in power, although as a main partner in a coalition. And for the first time since 1970, the state had a government not propped up by any section of the Muslim League, the Kerala Congress or the Congress. The results proved that despite the deep inroads made into the state politics by parties based on regional, communal and other parochial considerations, it was still possible to establish a government free from their control.

The LDF got only 1,51,265 votes more than the UDF[99]. The LDF could capture 78 seats and secure 57,35,402 votes which form 44.97% of the total valid votes. The Congress (I) put up 74 candidates to gain 33 seats or 24.81% of valid votes. The CPI (M) fielded 68 candidates and won 38 seats with 22.84% of votes.

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99. See the Appendix. II.

The BJP-Hindu Munnani Front had fielded 127 candidates but it could not won even a single seat. It secured 8,25,607 votes which constituted 6.47% of total valid votes. Ironically the Front which was discribed by the LDF as representing "majority Communalism" seemed to have contributed indirectly to left front's success. The Front had both widened and deepened its support and increasing its share of votes from 2.75% in 1982 to 6.57% in 1987.

The UDF made an understanding with the CMP of M.V.Raghavan which was a break-away group of CPI (M). The ruling front had withdrawn its candidates of Azhikode and Thaliparambu in favour of CMP give a direct fight to the CPI (M). In Azhikode M.V.Raghavan was elected with the support of UDF[100].

The LDF strategy was masterminded and spearheaded by Namboodiripad, the CPI (M) General Secretary. The LDF appealed to the voters from a secular and non-communal platform. The Congress (I) on the otherhand, fell a prey to its own deeds, lack of co-operation and disorganisations. The UDF had to spend a lot of time trying to balance the different communal and religious segments-ML, KC, SRP and

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100. The Azhikode seat was given to the IUML and the Thaliparambu seat to the KC (J).

NDP which stood for the Muslim, the Christian, the Ezhava and the Nair respectively. The UDF was further handicapped by its educational policy.

The bickering amongst the UDF partners was responsible for its downfall. The split in the KC came at the time of seat allocation. It was evident from the poll results that the UDF failed to evoke a favourable response from the people in its own stronghold-Travancore and Cochin. It had won only eight seats out of three districts in Trivandrum, Quilon, and Ernakulam. It failed to channelise non-left and non-marxist votes in its own favour. The image of the Prime Minister projected during the election compaign had little impact on the voters. The election had brought about the marginalisation of the small parties particularly the small casteist groups such as the NDP and the SRP in the UDF. Their share of popular votes has declined and they have been able to take only a small proportion of the new votes. One of the major trends of the election was the consolidation of two major parties, the CPI (M) and the Congress (I) within the two fronts[101]. They continue to be way ahead of the other partners and each has drawn one third of the increase in the votes polled in 1987 over 1982.

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101. Frontline, April 18, 1987.

The LDF's foremost task would be to consolidate its position by reviving the working of traditional industries and maintaining the law and order in the state, and to introduce correctives in educational institutions and administrations, the formost of all to curb the process of communalisation in the state.

A five member ministry under the leadership of E.K.Nayanar as Chief Minister was sworn in on 26the March 1987. The remaining 14 members of the Cabinet assumed charge on April 2, 1987. The first session of the House was held on 28th March. Varkala Radhakrishnan was elected Speaker and Bhargavi Thankappan Deputy Speaker. The Ministry faced its first threat when M.P.Veerendrakumar of the Janata Party resigned his ministership on 4th April 1987, in order to accommodate N.M.Joseph, the nominee of Janata Party in the Cabinet. But this reshuffle did not affect the unity of the Government.

The initial working of the Government was somewhat satisfactory though there were communal clashes and inter-party struggles. The first crisis started when the Government re-structured the Managing Committee of the Guruvayoor Sreekrishna Temple on March 23[102]. The State's Hindu organisation accused the government of having violated the law, which says only the Hindus who believe in God and

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102. The State Government has the power to nominate 5 of the 9 members of The Guruvayoor Temple Managing Committee.

temple rites should be appointed to the Committee. But K.N.Vasudevan Bhattathiripad, a devotee of Lord Krishna filed a petition to the Kerala High Court. His contention was that, Devaswom Minister Viswanatha Menon, a marxist non-believer had no right to nominate the members to the Managing Committee. The High Court then asked the Education Minister and Janata Party MLA, K.Chandrasekharan, the only 'believer' among the 15 Hindus among the 19 member State Cabinet, to nominate the members. But Chandrasekharan accepted the recommendations made by Menon, and the CPI (M) had their way.

Chandrasekharan had his reason for doing so. The coalition partners of the ruling front have a system of sharing key posts in the public sector companies and corporations and the Guruvayoor Temple could not be treated differently[103].

However, there was trouble as the CPI (M) insisted that its candidate should be made chairman, while CPI's Malayattoor Ramakrishnan wanted the post as well. But under pressure from the CPI (M), the CPI withdrew their nominee. Finally, prof.P.N.Narayanan, a leader of the CPI (M) teachers' union, was elected Chairman. The angry Ramakrishnan resigned as chairman of the Kerala Tourism

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103. India Today, 15th May, 1988.

Development Corporation and also from the CPI.

But what angered the Hindus most was the selection of Thoppil Thampi-Christian by birth--as a scheduled caste nominee. Meanwhile, critics have accused the Government of asking the temple authorities to deposit daily collections of the temple in the state treasury instead of in a nationalised bank. The Hindu organisations began an agitation and wanted to retrieve the political control of Hindu religious institutions. But getting the temple out of the government's reach was going to be difficult, CPI (M) leaders argued that there were as many Hindu organisations as there were Hindu Gods, and it would be impossible to decide which one should be entrusted with the temple[104]. But the agitation could not succeed in getting any control of the temple administration. The Government effectively suppressed the agitation.

The Government's Initial Advantages

The LDF Government instituted a judicial and official enquiry into the purchase of rice from Punjab, Indian made foreign liquors, water pipes, contacts regarding Edamalayar and Kallada projects, indiscriminate filling of trees from the Machikundu forest, implementation of IRDP and NREP

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104. Ibid.

scheme and other cases of misappropriation of funds[105].

The Government prescribed some norms for the transfer and posting of government employees[106]. Special orders of transfer were very common in the days of the former Government. On the basis of this common norm each department was to evolve separate criterion of its own considering the exigencies therein. According to this criterion each officer will be asked to intimate his place of choice. If there are more than one applicant to this place, posting would be according to the duration of service of the said employees. This will enable all employees to serve in the place of their choice at least for a specific period. This common criterion willnot be applied to employees who are handicapped, the dependents of Jawans and couples of inter-caste marriages. They will continue to get the special consideration of the government.

Major Industries in the public sector like Kerala Soaps and oils, Scooters Kerala Ltd. Kerala Ceremics, Metropolitan Engineering Company, Trichur Seetharam Textiles, Mavoor Rayons which were under lockout were re-opened[107].

On the farmfront the Government opened 'Krishi Bhavans'

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105. Mathrubhumi (Cochin), July 11, 1987.

106. One hundred Days, Department of Public Relations, Government of Kerala (Trivandrum : 1987), P.11.

107. Kerala Calling, Vol 10, No 2, December 1989, P.4.

in every panchayat assisted and guided by a functional advisory body with the local Panchayat President as Chairman. The group farming programme was extended to 61,224 hectors during the kharif 1989 with the active involvement of 1.63 lakh cultivators[108]. The Government formed the Horticultural Products Development Corporation for implementing various schemes in the sector. In order to safeguard the interest of coconut growers of the State the Kerafed commenced a project viz, Integrated Coconut Development Project at an estimated cost of Rs 93 crores. The project aims at the increase of the yield of coconut and the processing of the yield in the State itself.

The Government gave priority to the development of small scale industries and village industries. It has also identified electronic industries, food processing industries, light engineering industries, rubber industries etc as thrust industries and as a measure to promote them the Government decided to give a special capital subsidy to the above industries.

Under the auspices of the KSIDC five major industries costing Rs. 124 crores were set up in private sector. They include the Rs. 73 crore newsprint and glazed magazine

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108. Ibid.

paper unit in Kozhikode district, Rs. 9 crore aluminium extraction plant at Allappuzha, Rs.5.25 crore Iron powder factory at Kollam and Rs.7.10 crore suramal foods at Kollam.

Following the re-organisation and modernisation of major industries such as forest industries, TELK, Travancore Cochin Chemicals, Malabar Cements and Travancore Cements, productivity went up, with the result job security to about 6850 labourers could be ensured.

The Gwalior Rayons labour disputes could be settled amicably. The factory provided employment to 3500 workers directly and to thousands indirectly.

Under the regime of the LDF Government, 16352 small Scale Units were registered and consequently jobs could be provided to 98,112 persons. The government has sanctioned rubber based industries 3% relaxation in salestax. With the starting of a large number of Khadi and Village Industries Units jobs could be given to 30,893 persons. In 1987-'88 the Khadi Board could give assistance to 15 Harijan-Girijan co-operatives and provide relief to about 750 families. By the self-employment scheme financial assistance was given to 26,000 persons with the help of banks.

The most serious problem faced by the public distribution system in Kerala was insufficient supply of rice and other essential commodities. So the Government

opened one 'Maveli Store' in each block, and distributed essential commodities through these stores.

The LDF Government has introduced group insurance coverage for all school children, which is unique in the country. This is to cover accidents occuring to the children anywhere at anytime. During the period the scheme relating to supply of noon meal to lower primary and upper primary student was rationalised, and conducted with active participation of the public.

The Government now proposes to achieve 100% literacy in Kerala with the active participation of voluntary agencies and governmental machinery.

Distribution of pension to cashew, coir and handloom workers has started. Minimum wages have been revised in respect of several employments and four committees are working for revising the minimum wages in employment in major industries.

The Government also conducted elections to the Panchayats, Municipalities and Corporations in the State. The District Council came into force. Though there was severe criticism on every activity of the Government, it can rightly be claimed that the Left Front was able to deliver some benefits to its credit and to strengthen the base of democracy.

CHAPTER IV

THE CPI LED COALITION GOVERNMENTS IN KERALA

The CPI's approaches to coalition governments have been the result of its analysis of the present stage of the Communist revolution i.e, the struggle between the contending class forces. It holds the present stage of the revolutions in India as a transition to socialism. Accordingly, the classes that can be united at this stage of the revolution are the working class, the peasantry, urban pettey bourgeoisie and the non-monopoly strata of the Indian bourgeoisie[1]. The main driving forces of revolution would be the working class, the toiling peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie.

The aftermath of the Communist split was visible mainly in the distinctive differentiation of the tactical line of the CPI and the CPI (M). Nationally the CPI's line was the United Front from above and its slogan the establishment of a National Democratic Front. In 1964 itself, the party had agreed that "no National Democratic Front would be real unless the vast mass following of the Congress and the progressive sections of the Congress at various levels take their place in it".

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1. Programme of the CPI, Patna, February 1968.

In 1969, on the eve of the formation of a Mini-Front Ministry, the CPI was of the view that the right reactionary parties and forces which were trying to consolidate their ranks were the main enemies against whom the main blow has to be directed. According to the CPI, the United Front should prove to be a real alternative to the discredited Congress rule in the sense that the administration should be clean, more alive to the grievances and needs of the people, more efficient and quick in the redress of such grievances, more democratic and responsive to the demands and representation made by various sections of the populations, in short, a real contrast to the Congress[2]. They also agreed that the powers and resources of the State Government's functioning under the constitution of India were limited but that within all these limitations some relief, a better administration than the Congress had to be given to the people[3]. Only in this way can the United Front Government act as a political instrument of power, in the hands of the people.

The United Front Government must have a common minimum programme for action and implementation. It is through the implementation of programme that the United Front must

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2. C.Achutamenon, What Happened in Kerala (New Delhi : 1969), PP.1-2.

3. Ibid.

consolidate itself and individual constituents should increase their strength.

The Patna Congress of the CPI (1968) also agreed to allow the state units flexibility in interpreting the party line in the light of their objective possibilities. In Kerala the party maximised the possibilities of peaceful transition. The decision to form a Mini Front in 1969 was approved by the national leadership. Thus, Kerala offered the first opportunity to experiment with national democracy without a formal commitment of sharing power with the Congress. Here, the CPI discarded non-congressism for the sake of necessity and for retaining power. The ideological differences among the coalescing parties did not at all pause any problem for the formation of the Mini Front.

On 2nd November, 1969 Achuta Menon was sworn in as Chief Minister of the Mini Front Government. The Front consisting of the CPI, the Muslim League, the ISP and the Kerala Congress (KC) had a combined strength of only 54 members in the Assembly of 134. Obviously a ministry without external support was just out of the question. Finally, the Ministry got the support of the Congress and the RSP. The same policies and programmes of the CPI (M) led coalition were the basis of the Mini Front, which was to be continuation of the same ministry.



It was quite discernable that the CPI was chosen to lead the government as the other coalescing parties had no interest to head the government. The Congress had only nine members, and so its heading the government was out of the question. The next alternative of the Congress was to give support to a party which was nearer to its ideologies. It was the CPI, a rival to the CPI (M) which was the next dominant party in the State. Thus the CPI was entrusted with the task of leading the government. The Ministry consisted of two CPI members, two Muslim League members, two ISP members and one representative from the Kerala Congress[4].

In fact, the Mini Front was the continuation of the CPI (M) led coalition Government as the Front leaders accepted its "minimum programmes" as target. The Ministry was also implementing the programmes proclaimed by E.M.S. Namboodiripad in 1967[5]. The CPI (M) a section of the SSP, KSP and KTP left the Mini Front. The bulk of the United Front parties had clearly come over to the new Front.

Achievements

Despite the contentions of the CPI (M), the Front had major achievements to its credit. Soon after the assumption

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4. The portfolios of each Minister are given in Appendix.

5. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.No. 49, December 6, 1969, P.1879.

of office, the Government gave permanent ownership rights (Pattayam) to Kudikidappukars with a limit of 10 cents in villages and 5 cents at the district head quarters[6].

It also undertook distribution of title deeds (Pattayam) to two lakhs poor settlers, and granted ownership right to 1 lakh hutment-dwellers[7]. Till 1967, 4 lakhs acres of land were under the ownership of foreign planters. Out of these 76,000 acres of waste land were under the control of the biggest plantation industrialist called the Kannan Devan Company. As the state Government was not empowered to nationalise the land. It successfully persuaded the Company to part with 23,000 acres of land[8].

The Government revised the minimum wages of labourers in various industries. It revised the existing rate of minimum wages payable to employees in tea and rubber plantations in the State with effect from 1 April 1970[9]. The Government also constituted the Minimum Wages Advisory Board with V.R.Pillai as chairman to co-ordinate the work of various committees and sub-committees constituted under the Minimum Wages Act and to advise the Government in the matter of fixing and revising the rates of minimum wages[10].

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6. Ibid., 23rd February, 1970, P.403.
7. Link, 21 June, 1970.
8. Indian Express (Madurai), 16 June, 1970.
9. Indian Express (Madurai), 2 April, 1970.
10. Ibid.,19 April 1970.

The Kerala Land Reforms (Amendment) Act, 1969, received President's assent on 16th December 1969. The Government successfully implemented the Bill. The Bill benefited more than a lakh of people. During its nine months rule, the Mini Front give permanent Pattayam for two lakhs cultivators who possessed Government land. The land known as 'Sreepadam' under the possession of the Travancore Royal Family was also distributed to the landless[11]. The Front also passed the Gratuity Bill for the distribution of gratuity to the industrial labourers. It was one of the first of its kind in the Country. The gratuity was to be paid according to individual agreements or conventions. There was no uniform scheme in this regard. There was also no law to compel the management to give gratuity to the workers. So there existed a large number of units whose workers were denied of the benefit[12]. Under these circumstances an ordinance was promulgated on 8th December 1969 to authorise the Industrial units to give gratuity to their workers. Later, it was replaced by the Kerala Industrial Employees payment of Gratuity Bill, 1970. The Bill provided for the payment of gratuity to the employees

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11. Land Reforms in Kerala, Public Relation Department, Government of Kerala (Trivandrum : 1970), P.2.
12. Indian Express (Madurai), 17 January, 1970.

in factories, plantations and other establishments, with a stipulation that they should have five years of service to their credit.

The Government re-opened the Malabar Spinning Mill and the Cannanore Spinning and Weaving Mill. A corporation was set up for the healthy development of cashew industry.

The Mini-Front abolished check-posts in Palghat and Trichur districts. Awards were instituted to the Malayalam Films for the first time in Kerala[13]. Chittis were started under the auspices of the Kerala State Financial Corporation[14]. To make planning more effective, the Government re-organised the State Planning Board. For the development of fisheries, a master plan was prepared with an expenditure of 306 crores of rupees and was sent to the Central Government for its approval. For the development of sports a committee was constituted with V.R.Krishna Iyer as Chairman[15].

Interim machinery was evolved for dealing with charges of corruption against the Ministers and the representatives of the people. Anyone could send a petition to the Chief

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13. Indian Express (Madurai), 8th March, 1970.
14. Mathrubhumi (Calicut), 9 December, 1969.
15. Ibid.

Secretary with a deposit of Rs.500/- and the petition was to be referred to a serving or retired judge for deciding whether there was 'prima facie' case. If there was one it would be sent to an enquiry commission for a full-fledged thorough enquiry. The Chief Minister also came under the purview of such enquiry.

The teachers in the government as well as private schools who had two or more years of service were protected and confirmed in their posts. All private school teachers were given the freedom to take part in state politics. Students were given representation in the University Senate. Education was made free for the secondary stage.

With the aim of developing agriculture, particularly in the villages, the work of the agencies of Agro Industries Corporation, District Co-operative Bank and Co-operative Units was co-ordinated. An agreement was reached for Rs.18 lakhs share participation with the Thoshiba Lamb Factory to establish a dry cell factory[16]. So the Mini-Front could claim that it undertook a number of measures giving relief to the working people and gave an impression that they know how to rule the state.

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16. The U.F. should come back to Power, Why?, The CPI Kerala State Council (Trivandrum : 1970), P.11.

Break up of Mini-Front

ISP Split:- The Government faced a strong crisis within months, when the State Parliamentary Committee of the ISP, decided to withdraw its Finance Minister, N.K.Seshan from the Cabinet. Seshan and his supporters walked out of the ISP State Committee and it resulted in a split in ISP. With this split the Ministry would find it difficult to survive another Assembly Session. Following the split the larger faction of the party threatened to withdraw its support to the Government unless the Finance Minister, who belonged to the other faction was dropped[17]. To save his Government the Chief Minister Achutamenon persuaded the Minister to resign, though that didnot solve the problem.

Then the ISP dissident faction, including Mr.Seshan merged itself with PSP and the PSP unit thus formed, began to press the Mini Front to admit it into the Government or atleast into the co-ordination committee of the Front. The demand was opposed by ISP which told the Chief Minister that it would leave the Government and withdraw support to it if the Front had anything to do with the PSP. With this slender majority he couldnot afford the loss of the support of either faction of ISP.

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17. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. V, No.27, July 4, 1970, P. 1037.

In the meantime, the Congress (O) had moved from a neutral position to one of the active opposition to the Government. At its two day session in Cochin, the party appealed to all political forces in the State to join hands to oust the Ministry[18]. The odds weighed heavily against the Government. The Ministry surviving the next session of the Assembly was doubtful. If Congress (O) voted with the opposition the majority of the Government would be reduced to 4[19].

This was the background of the dissolution of the Assembly on June 26, 1970. But Achutamenon claimed that he advised the Governor to dissolve the House and order fresh elections because he wanted a large majority so as to carry through more confidently his Government's progressive policies[20]. Yet, this was the first time in the history of the State that a Ministry which had a majority in the Assembly opted for the dissolution and a fresh mandate.

Though the Mini-Front headed by C.Achutamenon was formed after considerable hesitation, it was not in a strong

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18. Indian Express (Madurai), 15 June, 1970.

19. The parties actually represented in the Government had only 46 members in the 133 member Assembly.

20. Economic and Political Weekly, Op. Cit. P.1037.

position. The CPI was not very happy to have the Kerala Congress in the Mini Front but without their support, the new government would not have been possible. Since there was no alternative, the CPI and the Kerala Congress came into the fold of the Mini Front.

The real power behind the curtain was the Muslim League. The League had persuaded the CPI (M) to give it the Muslim majority Malappuram district, but it fellout with them over the land reforms which would have reduced its influences in many part of the State. It was difficult to imagine a conservative party like Muslim League and professed revolutionaries working together for long because the Muslim League had only one interest to secure, that was their communal interest.

Since the original Communist Party split, the controversial question had been as to whether the CPI or the CPI (M) was the real Communist Party. Under these circumstances cordial relation between the two Communist parties was impossible. The CPI had developed the feeling that if the CPI (M) was not checked, it would even swallow the CPI. Though the Mini-Front mainly operated on the 'Minimum Programme' that the CPI (M) dominated coalition, the CPI (M) opposed its continuance in office.

Mutual conflict in coalitions is inevitable and success rests upon the process of reconciliation and adjustments among the coalition partners. Adjustments could be possible within the ambit of the coalition cabinet. But if they go out of control the Ministry falls. Both the parties and the coalition partners have mutually to contribute to its existence. Nothing can be done when a particular party splits. This was what happened when a split arose in the ISP which culminated in the breakup of the Mini Front.

The II CPI led Coalition Government (1970-1977)

In the eve of the 1970 elections the Congress High Command insisted that the need to defeat CPI (M) and to demonstrate the parties progressive character in the first Assembly elections after the Congress split outweighed all other considerations. The new Congress, therefore, agreed to back the CPI led Mini-Front.

The final party line up in the elections consisted of twenty two parties loosely arranged into three fronts-The CPI led Mini Front composed of CPI, Muslim League, PSP and RSP backed by the Congress (Congress R). The CPI (M) led People's Democratic Front (PDF) made up of CPI (M), SSP, ISP, KSP, and KTP and the Right wing, Democratic Front (DF) comprising Congress (O), Kerala Congress, Jana Sangh and

Swathantra party. The confusion was worse confounded when the PDF and the DF agreed to avoid victory for the Mini-Front. It was also interesting to note the coming together of the former enemies-the CPI, the Congress and the Muslim League[21].

Among the 22 parties that contected the only ones that really counted were the CPI (M) and the Congress (R). The Mini Front had 36 of the 113 seats--the CPI 16, the Muslim League 11, RSP 6 and PSP 3. The CPI (M) led PDF got 41, the CPI (M) alone secured 28 seats, SSP 6, KPS, ISP 3 and KTP 2. The DF won 15, the Kerala Congress alone secured 12 and Congress (O) 3[22].

The Congress (R) confirmed that it was the dominant wing of Congress in Kerala. It had contested 56 seats and won 32 and so formed the biggest group in the new Assembly. Their impressive victory was fundamentally the product of Front tactics. The other 14 parties failed to win even a single seat.

Yet the Congress (R) victory was not a triumph over the CPI (M). The CPI (M) was reduced from 49 to 28 seats but

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21. Link, September 27, 1970.
22. For detailed election results see appendix.

retained the 23.4% of the vote that it had captured in 1967[23]. In the Malabar region the CPI (M) suffered severe losses at the hands of the Congress (R). The Congress (R) with an understanding with the Muslim League tipped the balance against the CPI (M). Palghat remained the greatest locus of CPI (M), strength , giving 41.1% of the vote. The CPI (M) confronted serious dissensions in the wake of the Congress (R) victory. Despite the fact that the CPI (M) had repeatedly called for fresh elections after the Mini Front Government took power, the CPI (M) was unprepared for the mid-term election[24].

The Formation of the Government

Achutamenon's second ministry consisting of 4 CPI ministers, two each from the Muslim League and the RSP and one from PSP took office on 4th October 1970[25]. In tune with CPI's policy of National Democracy 4 Congress (R) representatives were included in the nine member co-ordinatin committee. The Congress (R) decided on 24th September 1970 to support but not to enter the CPI led

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23. Indian Express, September 28, 1970.

24. Link, Op. Cit., P.191.

25. The nine members were C.Achuta Menon, N.E.Balaram, P.S.Sreenivasan and P.K.Raghavan of the CPI, T.K.Divakaran and Baby John of the RSP, C.H.Mohammad Koya and Naha of Muslim League and N.K.Balakrishnan of PSP.

Government[26]. The legislative wing of the Congress (R) held the view that it should share power in the Government, while the KPCC and the Youth Congress argued that the Congress should wait and watch before joining the Government. The leader of the legislature party, K.Karunakaran, took the view that to face a well-organised CPI (M), the Congress should be a part of the broad-based coalition with the CPI. On the otherhand, the KPCC leaders maintained that the Congress could take on the CPI (M) single handed and that in this kind of direct confrontation, the supporters of numerous small parties, including the CPI, would mostly back the Congress. But in Kerala such a clear polarisation wouldnot materialise as the Muslim League and the Kerala Congress have communal and political strongholds. But the basic fight in Kerala had been always between the Congress and the CPI (M).

If the party had joined the Ministry, the Legislature Party faction would have gained enormously, and through their control of important government departments, its leaders would have been able to strengthen their position within the party. Yet there were corruption charges also against CPI Government. The charges were fully proved by

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26. Kerala Kaumudi (Trivandrum), 25th September, 1970.

the enquiry Commission in one case. It related to the appointment of relatives of the Chief Minister in the government owned Travancore-Cochin Chemicals. In another case, the acquisition of 1,000 acres of a rubber estate for the Agricultural University at Trichur at a grossly inflated price allegedly in consideration of a large donation to the CPI was also found to be irregular. The Assembly reports of the two cases had been used by the KPCC in support of its argument of not joining the Government. If so it would tarnish the image of the party, it argued.

The Congress (R) had another benefit if it didnot join the Government. When it joined the coalition it would have to share both the responsibility and authority; when it only supported the Government from outside, without participating in it, it could enjoy power without responsibility.

Finally, the joint meeting of the Congress MLAs and KPCC agreed to give the party's High Command the freedom to decide upon the right time of joining the Mini Front Government. Getting the green signal from the Congress High Command the KPCC, met at Ernakulam on 3 july 1971 and decided to join the Government ending the controversy[27].

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27. Ibid., 4 July, 1971.

The CPI's role as the head of such a coalition deserves to be studied. It is easy to see why parties like Muslim League and the Kerala Congress were happy to have their role in it. Firstly, it effectively split the Communist votes and confused a considerable section of committed Communist voters. Secondly, it gave a progressive outlook to the coalition in a state with a large leftist vote. Finally, if the main enemy CPI (M) was to be crushed it was an advantage for others under the protective umbrella of the CPI Chief Minister. This was what Home Minister Mohammed Koya of the Muslim League found to his satisfaction during the term of the Achutamenon Ministry[28]. As for the CPI, it had no choice, but to accept this role as its primary aim was to maintain the Government.

At the same time, it couldnot hope to organise a viable front against the CPI (M) in Kerala without the Muslim League and the Kerala Congress. The logic of Kerala politics had convinced the CPI leaders that they had to accept the dominance of junior anti-leftist parties in the coalition. This was the price they had to pay for its survival. The Muslim League members frankly stood for the interest of their community. In this connection it is worth

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28. Indian Express (Madurai), 8 July, 1971.

remembering the claim of Congress (R) leaders, including Indira Gandhi that it was CPI which had accepted the Congress (R) programme and not vice versa .

Among the supporters of the coalition certain other parties also created difficulties for the CPI. Some of these parties hadnot given even verbal alliance to any programme. Their sole concern was with factional politics. The previous ministry of Achutamenon didnot face a similar problem because it didnot introduce any new legislation. It only tried to implement the laws passed by the United Front Government.

In Kerala the Congress (R) members might well feel disinclined to act in accordance with the CPI Chief Minister's directive because they knew that CPI's strength in the Assembly was only half of theirs. But in 1969 Achutamenon tried his best to avoid any conflict by not displeasing the bosses of other parties.

With the inclusion of Congress (R) in the Government, the Cabinet was expanded from 9 to 13. The Congress had been given five Ministers with the Home portfolio[29] . For

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29. They were K.Karunakaran, K.T.George, K.G.Adiyodi, Vella Echaran and Vakkom Purushothaman.

the first time in the history of state politics, the Congress shared power with the CPI and the Muslim League. The Congress justified the communal nature of the Muslim League by saying that while in the rest of the Country the party was communal and reactionary, in Kerala it was not so[30].

Political Issues

The important socio-political issues that the coalition Government had tackled during 1971-77 were the private college teachers' agitation, the communal riots in the north and southern parts of Kerala, the NGO strike in 1973, the KSEB employees strike, the promulgation of the maintenance of Internal Security Act order, amendment of the minority rights, the split of the Muslim League, the entry of the Kerala Congress in the Government and its split etc. These were all of a serious and grave nature.

All the parties of the coalition admitted that there were differences of opinion among them on many matters. In the same breath, they claimed that there was a firm understanding among them to implement a time-bound minimum programme. As Chief Minister, Achutamenon should be

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30. Economic and Political Weekly, August 1972, Vol. V, P. 1481.

directing the Government but in practice it was doubtful whether he could decide on even the agenda for a Cabinet meeting without getting clearances from the Liaison Committee consisting of nominees of the allied parties[31]. The Committee had become a sort of super-cabinet and was dominated by the Youth Congress. The allied parties were not unaware of this. But it was the only alternative for sustaining the Government.

The ruling front faced some opposition when the issue of the nationalisation of education by amending Article 30 (1) of the constitution. The Muslim League and the Kerala Congress opposed the amendment. The Christian Bishops, the NSS and the SNDP formed a strong opposition. In the field of education there was great disparity between the government-run educational institutions and those run by the private managements. Corruption and bribery continued in the admission of students, selection of teachers etc. At last in 1974, the Government passed the Kerala University Act which curtailed the powers of the private managements in favour of private college teachers.

On 10th January, 1973, the pro-marxist non-gezetted

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31. Ibid., Vol. VII, No 44, October 28, 1972, P. 2181.

officers union started a strike demanding the checking rising prices of essential commodities. It also demanded the appointment of a pay-commission and for getting interim relief to government employees. The Government opposed the strike. Negotiation failed and atlast the NGO union withdrew their strike on 5th March 1973 unconditionally[32].

The non-detailed text book Bharatha Retnam[33] for the 7th standard created much problem in the coalition as well as in the relation between the Muslim League and the Congress (R). The pro-Muslim League, Muslim Student's Federation (MSF) demanded the repeal of certain portions of the book, alleging that it contained certain derogatory remarks on the Muslim League's role in the partition of the Country. The edition of 1973 carefully avoided such portions. Meanwhile the MSF demanded the withdrawal of the book itself. Soon the Youth Congress and the KSU came to the scene and decided to oppose the withdrawal of the book. Mediation began for the settlement of the crisis. The Liaison Committee was convened to settle the issue. At the

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32. Mathrubhumi (Cochin), 6th March 1973.

33. The book was a 76 pages bibliographical sketch of Jawaharlal Nehru, written by G.Govinda Pillai, which explain the vast life of Nehru during the freedom struggle.

meeting of the Committee held on 12 July, 1973 a compromise was arrived at. It was decided that both the earlier and the later editions of the book, the former carrying the passages objected to by the Muslim League and the latter without them should be in circulation. Thus the crisis ended without affecting the stability of the Government.

The CPI (M) led opposition called for a Kerala Bendh on 2nd August 1973 to highlight the crucial problem of food shortage and soaring prices of essential commodities. In September, 1974, the KSRTC employees agitated demanding higher wages and better living conditions. The government resorted to its earlier policy of 'no work no pay' (dies-non) and the agitation was suppressed.

A charge of bribery against K.G.Adiyodi, the Congress Minister, rocked the politics for sometime. Finally the Government appointed an Enquiry Commission headed by Justice Eradi. The Commission found that the allegations were false and misleading.

The introduction of Kerala University Act in 1974 brought new developments in the state politics. It was under the strong pressure of Congress (R) that the Kerala University Bill was brought before the Assembly. The Muslim League opposed the clauses 68 and 69 of the Bill. It was

debated in the Legislature and outside. Finally, the Government succeeded in persuading the private management to accept the governmental nominee and a University nominee beside the college and staff nominee in the committee for the selection of teachers. In the case of admission to the students the Government put forward some rules to prevent corruption, which were also accepted by the managements.

Split in the Muslim League

There had been differences of opinion within the Muslim League in its attitude towards Congress sine 1973. By the middle of 1974, the President of India by an Ordinace declared the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA). Many of the Bafaky group leaders who were engaged in smuggling were arrested. C.H.Mohammed Koya appreciated the action of the Central Government against the anti-social elements[34]. The Bafaky group State Council of the Muslim League met in Calicut on 9th March 1975. They attacked the policies of the Home Minister, the attitude of the police and the misuse of MISA by the State Government. Six dissident MLAs of the League boycotted the Kerala Assembly. They withdrew their support to the Government[35] and were

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34. Desabhimani (Cochin), 25 January, 1975.
35. Ibid., 3 April, 1975.

suspended from the party. Thus a new party was formed, the opposition Muslim League, which was later known as the All India Muslim League (AIML). But it didnot in any way affect the stability of the Government.

The internal fighting tarnished the image of the Congress. The split in the Muslim League affected the unity of the Congress also. The KPCC and the Youth Congress demanded the resignation of the coalition Government. Meanwhile the President of India issued a proclamation under 352 (1) of the constitution declaring that a grave state emergency existed whereby the security of India was threatened by internal disturbances[36]. A number of preventive arrests were made by the Central and State Government. The Centre had directed the State to use the emergency powers for the maintenance of law and order. The MISA was implemented. The KPCC which met soon after the emergency decided to sink their differences and to stand united. Law and order was maintained. There was a keen silence in all fields of industry and academic life. Elections were postponed. No threat to security actually existed in Kerala. Yet hundreds of party activitists from the CPI (M) and Socialist Party were detained. For the Chief Minister the emergency offered the opportunity to go

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36. Ibid., 27 June, 1975.

ahead with constructive measures. But the real danger was that the senior Congress Minister, K.Karunakaran, in charge of the Home portfolio, was becoming the de facto, Chief Minister[37].

On 26 December 1975, the Kerala Congress also joined the Ministry, though factionalism within Kerala Congress caused continuing difficulties[38]. Yet it gained two ministries, Finance from the Congress (R) and Transport from the CPI. The Kerala Government Completed its full tenure and more in office. 73 months in office was a new record in the history of the State.

Achievements

The CPI's programme of National Democracy and the progressive policies of the Congress (R) tied them solidly in a coalition government. So the Front had a record of constructive legislation in social, economic, educational, industrial and political fields.

The Kerala Agricultural Workers Act of 1975 was considered a 'Magna Carta' of the agricultural workers and was praised by the International Labour Organisation. The

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37. T.J.Nossiter, Marxist State Governments in Inida (New York : 1988), P.99.

38. Indian Express, 27 December, 1975.

Act prescribed the maximum hours of work, establishment of provident fund scheme, prescribed wages for labourers, security of work, creation of permanent machinery to settle agricultural disputes etc[39].

In the industrial sector, four wholly owned government companies and 3 partly owned government companies were added to the existing twelve. The Industrial Development Corporation gave financial assistance to 34 companies to establish new projects - twenty nine to begin production and 13 other to expand. It also set up twelve state sector companies.

The Government started the first batch of mini industries programme during the financial year 1975 - '76. The programme envisaged the establishment of 10,000 small scale industrial units within 5 years. The Industries Minister T.V. Thomas announced that average investment in each unit would be Rs.1 lakh and each unit would employ 10 to 15 persons[40]. The Government also arranged training programmes for the new entrepreneurs under the above 10,000 small industries programme.

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39. Kerala Agricultural Workers Act, 1975, Section IX Sub Section 2 and 16.

40. Indian Express, July 7, 1975.

In the field of agriculture steps were taken to improve the production of all food crops and cash crops in the State. Supply and service facilities such as distribution of improved varieties of seeds and seedling, planting materials and plant protection chemicals were extended to the farmers. The Intensive Paddy Development Scheme made a significant impact on the production of paddy[41]. The Government secured the approval of the Union Government for a scheme of Rs.16.5 lakh for the spices development programme of Kerala[42]. The scheme included large scale multiplication of high-yielding varieties of ginger and raising quality seedlings of clove and nutmeg.

Kerala is producing 96% of pepper in India, but the average yield is remarkably low, about two quintals per hectare[43]. The reasons are attributed to the attack of pests and diseases, cultivation of low yielding varieties, overage and poor plantation management. The yield can be easily doubled by adopting scientific methods of cultivation and plant protection. With this object, the Government

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41. Administrative Reports, Government of Kerala, (Trivandrum : 1974), P.5.
42. Mathrubhumi (Cochin), July 4, 1975.
43. Indian Express, July 4, 1975.

sanctioned the package programme with a financial outlay of Rs.8.9 lakhs for the intensive cultivation of pepper in an area of 10,000 hectares during 1975-76 in Kerala.

There were rapid changes in the field of education. The Kerala University Act, the Calicut University Act etc improved the educational opportunities of students and service conditions of teachers. Introduction of direct payment of salaries to the teaching staff of the private colleges, improvement of examination models, starting of sports schools etc. were impressive achievements. The students were given representation in the syndicate and a student council was provided for in the University Act.

The Government decided on October 10 to abolish the system of separate pass minimum for all subjects in the SSLC examination and introduced a group system from March 1976 onwards. Under the new system languages would form one group and subject another. The language group would carry a total of 250 marks out of which 90 would be required for a pass. The subjects group would carry 350 marks and the pass minimum would be 120.

Equalisation of fees in government and private colleges was another important measure. The demand was mooted by the

Youth Congress[44]. In 1971-'72 of the 117 colleges in the State 105 were under private management and a good number of them were managed by the minority communities. The Government, it was estimated, was spending Rs.650 a year per student in government colleges while the grant in aid given to private colleges was only 200 per student. To make it possible for the private management to pay the college teachers the scales of pay prescribed by the University, the Kerala University has been allowing the private colleges to charge higher tuition fees than those charged by the government colleges[45].

The Youth Congress demand was based on the assumption that private college managements had the resources to bring down the tuition fees to the levels prevailing in government colleges. The private college managements challenged this assumption. They were even prepared to collect the fees and to hand over the collections to the Government if it would take the responsibility for payment of salaries to the teachers[46]. 68 private colleges under Christian missions and the NSS didnot re-open in June after summer vacation. They began to strike. It was thus clear that, the

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44. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.VII, No.44, October 28, 1972, P. 2181.

45. Ibid., P.2182.

46. Ibid.

Government would have to ensure the responsibility of paying teachers directly, if the tuition fee was to be equalised. Finally, the Government decided to give direct payment of salary from public exchequer and equalised the tuition fees with those in government colleges.

The question then, was what control the government should have on managements in the matters of admission of students and recruitment of teachers. The private management contended that if government insisted on appointing its representatives in appointment committee it would be a violation of the minority rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

Finally, a settlement was reached. There would be a managing committee of five members all of whom would be appointed by the private management. One of the five members would be appointed from a panel of government officers of the rank of District Collectors and Secretaries. The University would suggest an expert member with the option of the management to ask for another. Everybody agreed to this scheme. Thus an important item of the minimum programme was thus implemented.

The carrying out of the agrarian laws by the Government threw upon the flood-gates of emancipation for the tillers of the soil, the poor peasantry and the farm labour. About

25 lakh tenant cultivators became owners of the land they were toiling upon for generation for others. Over five lakh hutment dwellers, who were virtually bonded labourers, were liberated from their old fetters giving them the opportunity to enjoy the fruits of their labour.

The State Government decided to handover for the purpose of cultivation 1,600 acres of surplus Kayal lands of Kuttanad to 1,600 agricultural workers forming themselves into three co-operative societies. The surplus lands which were in three blocks originally belonged to Murikkan. They were taken over by the government following the enactment of the Land Ceiling Statute.

Another significant development was the taming of the landlords of Kuttanad. Faced with the demand of the agricultural workers for a wage increase they threatened to leave large areas uncultivated. The Government immediately responded that they would take over all uncultivated land under the Defence of India Rules[47]. The result was that in the first week of the month, a meeting decided that the existing agricultural labour wage rates would be revised upwards on the basis of the rise of the cost of living index between July 1970 and June 1972. This is the first

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47. Ibid., No.45 Vol.VII, November 4, 1972, P. 2227.

time that in fixing the wages of the rural workers the rise in the cost of living index had been taken into account.

One of the most remarkable mass movements in India's post-independence history was taking place in the State. That was the movement to provide one lakh houses for the homeless agricultural proletariat--half of the number being reserved for Harijans[48]. Land acquisition had been completed in most cases by October 2. If any member of the public felt that the site was bad or that the price was high, he had the option to suggest a better site at a lower price. Along with the fixing of sites, applications were called for from eligible persons and the list of these persons was made available to the public for scrutiny. A Chief Minister's 'Housing Fund' was created for collecting money to purchase construction materials. Block level committees were formed to co-ordinate the activities of the panchayats of each block. The responsibility of the contract work was entrusted to the works committees formed at the panchayat level. The construction of houses was begun by the panchayats in October 1972 and the first batch of houses were distributed to allottees in Ernakulam district in January, 1973.

The actual construction work was to be the

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48. Ibid., P. 2226.

responsibility of the special committees set up in each panchayat. The district collector had the responsibility of arranging for the supply of cement, tiles and timber to the panchayats falling within their jurisdiction while at the state level the scheme was put under overall charge of a special secretary reporting to the Housing Minister.

The Public Accounts Committee of Kerala Legislative Assembly observed that the scheme was a unique one and was an example of how major problems in developmental schemes could be solved by the active participation of the people[49].

On April 2, 1972, Kerala started a collective farm--the first of its kind in India. The farm is at Illithode in Ernakulam district. In an area of about 200 acres, 250 families of landless agricultural labourers, half of them Harijans were settled. Every family had two adult workers-husband and wife. They owned the land alloted to them. But they had no right to alienate the property. The management of the farm was vested with an electoral committee of farmers. A co-operative society was also registered under the co-operative societies Act to look

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49. Administrative Reports, Government of Kerala (Trivandrum : 1974), P.33.

after the credit need of the farm. The land would be cultivated collectively, each member of the farm performing duties assigned to him by the management committee. Every worker would get Rs.25 per week in advance which would be later adjusted against wages calculated at the rates prevailing in the locality. The net profit at the end of the year would be divided among the members equally. A two member family might thus get Rs.8000 to Rs. 10,000 a year.

But unfortunately it proved that this type of farming was not suited to Kerala. Only a true socialist state can provide such a kind. This experiment might help to create an illusion in the beginning but they would end in disillusionment.

The Menon Government passed some major social welfare legislations and it was unique in the case of any other state government. The most important legislation among them was the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act of 1975. The bonded labour system represents the vestiges of feudalism prevailing till recently in the interior parts of Malabar. Under this system the land owner used to secure the personal services of a person and his family for a specific period by advancing money. The poor members of the scheduled tribes were often the victims. They would not get wages apart from the money advanced. If at all they got wages they would be

nominal. The illiteracy, ignorance and penury of the downtrodden hilly tribes were thus mercilessly exploited and they were kept in perpectual bondage by the land owners. The Bill abolishes the obligation of a debter to perform labour or personal service arising from any receipt of cash or any other payment under the bonded labour system. Thus the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act was enacted to put an end to this most unwholesome practice.

A new department of Tribal welfare started functioning in the state from July 1, 1975 to deal exclusively with the welfare activities for tribals. The special officer for Tribal Welfare would be the head of the new department and also the ex-officio special secretary. Nearly, 1.26% of Kerala population consisted of Scheduled Tribes. The formation of a new department followed the greater stress laid in the Vth plan on tribal welfare activities. Special steps were needed to ensure the tribals really benefited from activities intended for their welfare[50].

The Kerala Harijan Development Corporation evolved a scheme to construct 2,200 houses for Harijans and tribals in the State[51]. The Corporation got Rs.116.60 lakh from the

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50. Indian Express (Cochin), June 23, 1975.

51. Ibid., July 9, 1975.

Housing and Urban Development Corporation, New Delhi. Rs.98 lakh was sanctioned by the State Government for this purpose. Besides this the State Government had sanctioned Rs.54.15 lakh for the implementation of the various schemes envisages by the Corporation to ensure a better life for the Harijans and tribals.

The Kerala Scheduled Tribes (Restriction on Transfer of Funds and Restoration of Alienated Lands) Act 1975 was another piece of legislation intended to save the Scheduled Tribes from exploitation. The extent of land which had been under the traditional occupation of the Scheduled Tribes in the State was steadily on the decrease due to alienation, lease, mortgage and mostly due to unauthorised occupation by other people. In tribal areas, the unsophisticated tribals were duped into transactions which resulted in the loss of their traditional lands. The law permited transfer of traditional land only between scheduled tribes. Any other transactions would be invalid. The transactions made from January 1960 to the date of effect of the Act are also invalid.

In the religious field the Government passed the Guruvayoor Devaswom Act 1971, The Koodalmanickam Devaswom Act, 1971, The Travancore-Cochin Hindu Religious Institutions (Amendment) Acts of 1974, 1976, The Kerala



Joint Hindu Family System (Abolition) Act 1975 etc[52]. The Guruvayoor Devaswom Act was enacted to make provisions for the proper administration of the Guruvayoor Devaswom. Before this enactment, the Guruvayoor Sree Krishna Temple was managed by two heriditary trustees viz, the Zamorin Raja of Kozhikode and the Mallissery Namboodiri. There had been presistent complaints of mismanagement of the temple and its properties by the trustees. So the administration, management and control of the Devaswom were vested in the Guruvayoor Devaswom Managing Committee by the Act. The Koodalmanickam Devaswom Act was passed for the purpose of reducing the administrative expenditure of the Devaswom.

The 26th Amendment Act 1971 of the Constitution of India abolished the status of rulers of the princely states; consequently the powers of the former rulers of Travancore and Cochin States to nominate a member each to the respective Devaswom Boards had to be taken away. The 1974 amendment Act of the Travancore-Cochin Hindu Religious Institution was passed to transfer this power to the Hindu members of the Council of Ministers. The second amendment

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52. Administrative Report, IV Kerala Legislative Assembly (Trivandrum : 1979), P.19.

was passed to enable the two Devaswom Boards to raise loans for the establishment and maintenance of religious or educational institutions and for the implementation of schemes undertaken by them.

The Kerala Joint Hindu Family System (Abolition) Act, 1975 was the result of Kerala Law Commission's recommendation to unify the personal laws of Hindus in Kerala[53]. The Ezhava, Nair and other section of Hindus were covered by the Marumakkathayam System. The Bill abolished the system and according to it each member of a family with a Tharavad property will have the right to dispose of his share of the property.

The Kerala Assembly also passed an amendment to the Hindu Marriage Act[54]. It made divorce more difficult. There were different customs prevailed among the various sections of Hindus on securing dissolution of marriage. The Ezhavas who could obtain a divorce by a mere declaration of intention followed by a nominal compensation are said to have the easiest wayout of a marriage. Under the amending bill mutual consent of the partners was made obligatory for

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53. Indian Express, August 1, 1975.
54. Ibid., August 2, 1975.

all these sections as well. Now they have to present a joint petition to a courts. they have to wait for a minimum of 2 years after they make up their mind before getting a divorce.

The Government enacted the Children Act in 1972 governing the care, protection, maintenance, welfare, training, education and rehabilitation of neglected or delinquent children and the trial of delinquent children in the State[55].

The Kerala State Housing Board Act, 1971 contains provisions for organised direction and planning in the preparation and execution of housing and for the establishment of a board called "The Kerala State Housing Board"[56]. The Board is empowered to undertake the execution of any housing or improvement schemes which the government may transfer to it. Similarly the Board may take over for execution any housing or improvement scheme undertaken by the local authority on mutual agreement. The Board can grant loans and advances to private parties, local bodies

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55. The Kerala Children Act 1972 was applicable to the whole State which replaced the Travancore Children Act, 1120, The Cochin Children Act 1111, and the Malabar Children Act 1920.

56. Administrative Reports, Op. Cit., P.13.

etc for housing purposes. The Board had its own fund. The Government may make subscriptions or advance loans to the board. The Board can borrow money from the public or from any corporation owned or controlled by the State Government.

The Government also constituted a Rural Development Board. Many essential activities of rural development like schemes for providing drinking water, drainage system, construction of bus stands, markets, shopping centres etc in panchayat areas could not be taken up due to scarcity of funds. To provide these essential requirements the Kerala State Rural Development Board was constituted. The Board was empowered to raise loans or borrow money from any banks or other financial institutions approved by the government.

The Kerala Debtors (Temporary Relief) Act 1975 was another Social Welfare legislation. The indebtedness of the Indian peasantry is said to be a curse befallen on them, the effect from which they will never be able to recover. The Kerala Agriculturists Debt Relief Act, 1970 which extended the relief in respect of debts incurred before 14th July 1970. The Kerala Debters Act 1975 extended relief from the burden of debts incurred till that date. The Act widened the range of beneficiaries entitled to relief by including other sections of the community like artisans and landless labourers. The Act bars suits and other proceedings in

respect of debts for a period of one year from the commencement of the Act in October 14, 1975.

On 4th August, the Kerala Legislative Assembly passed a bill for creating a welfare fund for the workers[57]. The fund was constituted with a contribution by every employee and the employer with which various welfare measures were to be provided for the workers. All factories, commercial establishments and plantations were covered by the legislation[58].

The Kerala Agricultural Workers Act, 1974 was a Magna Carta of Agricultural labourers in the State. By their determined struggle and strong organisation, built up by decades of sacrifice, the agricultural labourers of Kerala pioneered in this sphere. The leadership of this vital process came from the communists of Kerala-mainly the CPI (M)[59]. In the agricultural sector uncertainty of wages and insecurity of job prevailed; the Act brought security of employment, higher fixed wages and defenite hours of work and rest. The law also provided for a welfare fund for agricultural labourers. Thus the agricultural workers became the wage-labourers in the true sense of the word.

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57. Indian Express, August 2, 1975.
58. Ibid., August 3, 1975.
59. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.IX, No.22, June 1, 1974, PP 857-59.

Section 7 of the Act, which offers security of job, is an important provision of the law. The land owner is bound to give preference in the matter of employment to those who worked in his land during the previous agricultural season. In effect, the workers are attached to the land. Though the ownership of the land may change, the workers remain unchanged unless they desire otherwise. However, the landowner is not bound to employ those who do not offer themselves for employment, the overaged (above 60 and 65) the incapacitated and those who intentionally cause loss to the land owners.

The Act also provides for the formation of the Agricultural Workers Provident Fund Scheme. Besides, the Act contains provisions for keeping registers of agricultural workers by local authorities and the land owners, recovery of damages for default of payment of contribution to the provident fund, penalities for breach of the provisions of the Act etc[60].

The Kerala Cashew Factories Aquisition Act, 1974, was enacted mainly to save the cashew workers from unemployment and to enforce labour laws in cashew factories. The cashew factories in the state depend much on imported raw

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60. Administrative Reports, Op. Cit., P. 12.

cashewnuts for their existence. In many cases, the imported raw-cashew nuts allotted to factories in Kerala were smuggled out of the state for processing thereby rendering a large number of workers unemployed. In several cases, the labour laws were also thrown overboard by the factory management. Consequently such factories lost their allotment of raw cashew nuts. In such cases, it was found necessary to acquire the cashew factories in order to save the workers from unemployment.

There has been severe public criticism against the method of recruitment to public undertakings and quasi-government institutions like Kerala Khadi and Village Industries Board etc. The Kerala Public Service Commission (KPSC) (Additional Functions as Respects of Certain Corporations and Companies) Act 1970 was passed to bring the recruitments to these institutions under the purview of the KPSC. Similarly, the KPSC (Additional Functions) Act, 1973 brought the recruitment to the service under the local bodies under the purview of the KPSC.

Inter-Party Relations

Though the coalition government completed its full tenure and had a record of progressive legislations to its credit, there were also some instances of inter-party

differences. The Congress branded Muslim League as communal and the Youth Congress demanded severance of relations with the Muslim League even if it might mean the collapse of the coalition. In 1974 there was an occation for the Muslim League and the Congress to come to a clash. The Muslim League held that the clauses 68 and 69 of the Kerala University Act, 1974, invalidates some of the rights of the minority community. So they wanted to delete both the clauses of the Act[61]. The Congress at first opposed the demand. But finally it yielded to the demand of the League and the issue settled. The Laison Committee of the ruling parties on 24th January 1974 decided to drop clause 69 of the Act.

It might be noted that the CPI, the most vocal in the CPI (M) led Ministry of 1967, behaved like a sleeping partner and virtually played a second fiddle to the Congress. For instance, the CPI agreed to the amendments in the Land Reform Bill, including legalisation of land transactions between 1957-1963, thereby diluting the content of the Bill to take over plantations, and the reversal of United Front's police policy by the Congress by asking the police to treat strikes as law and order problem[62].

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61. These clauses empowered the State Government to take over the mismanaged private colleges for a fixed period.

62. The Statesman, 14 June, 1972.

Misunderstanding at ministerial level and brawls at rank and file level culminated in December 1971 in the worst outbreak of communalism seen in Kerala since 1971-72.

During July and August of 1973 rice was not available at any price and the coastal areas of Travancore were offically designated famine zones. By the autumn the Ministry was under siege from its own supporters as well as from the CPI (M) and the Kerala Congress. The CPI also decided to start an agitation against the Central Government. The CPI was asked not to intensity the struggle which was a part of the all India agitation especially in view of the coalition set up in the state. the CPI in its part soft-peddled its agitations and the Central Government raised a small quantity of food supply.

Advance forecaste of Kerala's food situation in 1974 was as bleak as the economic prognosis and on 6th January five opposition parties--the CPI (M), the Kerala Congress, the Socialist Party the KSP and the KTP--formally met at Cochin to organise virulent and far-reaching agitation on food, prices and another postponement of panchayat elections[63]. Their first public action was mass picketing of government offices on 28th January. Three days later,

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63. Indian Express, January 7, 1974.

the CPI (M) pressed matters further by an attempted gherao of the Governor as he tried to open the budget session of the Assembly. On October 14, 1974 the CPI (M) led a march on the Assembly to demand the investigation of allegations that the police had beaten up two CPI (M) and Socialist Party MLAs and the newspaper reports of Minister's curruption[64]. E.M.S.Namboodiripad announced that five party opposition front would boycott the Assembly since no self-respecting person could take part in the proceedings when four ministers charged with corruption sat on the treasury benches[65].

CPI (M) in Opposition

The Government had to face serious opposition from the CPI (M) from within and outside the Legislature. During the first session of the IV Kerala Legislative Assembly (KLA) a CPI (M) member alleged corruption and nepotism in some of the appointments in the Handicrafts Development Corporation. Industries Minister N.E. Balaram denied the allegation as entirely unsound[66].

During the 9th session of the KLA, police lathi charge and firing on the Kerala Bandh day was a big issue. In her

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64. Hindu, October 15, 1974.
65. Indian Express, October 17, 1974.
66. Kerala Legislative Assembly Proceeding Reports (M), I Session, Vol. XXVIII, No 4, April 1971, PP 213-217.

question K.R.Gowri (CPI (M)) enquired whether the Pandalam Sub-Inspector Das received any injuries in the Bandh day incident. The Home Minister, K.Karunakaran stated that an enquiry was ordered into Pandalam firing.

On March 1974, P.G.Purushothaman Pillai (CPI (M)) raised a discussion regarding the shares of Travancore-Cochin Sugers Ltd. The Industries Minister T.V.Thomas on the subject maintained that the Government had defeated the attempts of Dalmia to corner the shares and pocket this company with its assets running to Rs.10 to 12 crores.

The CPI (M) alleged that the Government had paid more than the market price for the share. The market price as quoted by the officers of the government in their circular to share-holders was only Rs.7.40 for ordinary share and Rs.5.90 for the preferences. The CPM alleged that the government purchased the shares at Rs.9.85 for ordinary and Rs.6.80 for preference shares[67].

In reply to this allegation, the Minister said that Dalmia, who had no share in the company till 1971 came to own 51858 shares by 1973 constituting nearly 10.75% of

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67. Ibid., 10th Session, Vol. XXXVI, No.27, 13 March 1974, PP. 3013-3014.

total shares. It was clear that he was trying to secure the majority of shares by investing Rs.5 lakhs. The Government which had only 11% of shares wanted to prevent such acts and the cabinet decided to enter the share market and buy up the shares at face value[68]. The officers then approched those who had more than 500 shares and asked them if they would care to sell share to the government. The officers said that the market price of the shares pushed up, when the share-holders came to know that the government was interested in buying up the shares. The government brought up 74,758 shares, so the Minister said that the member should withdraw his allegation.

When the CPI (M) was in opposition during 1969-77 the Government faced three no-confidence motion. The first no-confidence motion was moved on April 6, 1971 by a CPI (M) member C.B.C Warrier[69]. The motion indicated the Menon Ministry for "institutionalising corruption". A two day debate on the motion (6th and 7th April) concentrated mainly on the reports of the two I.A.S officers, one relating to the sanction for the aquisition of a rubber estate in Trichur for the Agricultural University and the other on the

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68. Ibid., PP. 3014-3017.

69. Ibid., II Session, Vol. XXVIII, No.17, April 6, 1971, P. 1672.

appointment of some of the relatives of the Minister in the public sector concern of Travancore-Cochin Chemicals.

The Home Secretary Narayana Swami held that the appointment in Travancore-Cochin Chemicals was irregular. In his report he declared that one of the appointees secured only two and a half marks in the qualifying test. The opposition members quoted the report and tried to make out the government was curruption ridden[70].

The Revenue Board member K.K.Ramankutty, said that the sanction for the purchase of the estate at Rs.2 crores was "midsummer madness" and referred to a report in Trichur that the owner of the estate promised 15 lakhs to the CPI for the deal[71]. So the opposition demanded with one voice the resignation of the Ministry.

The Achutamenon Ministry had to face the second no-confidence motion in December the same year. This time John Manjooran of KSP was selected to move the motion with the support of the CPI (M). Police repression was the key note of opposition's attack. Describing the police as "partisan" he charged that there was descrimination among the people in the matter of police protection.

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70. Malayala Manorama (Kottayam), April 7, 1971.
71. Indian Express (Madurai), April 7, 1971.

The third no-confidence motion was moved on 26th December 1972. Moving the motion E.Balanandan CPI (M) said that the state's economy was in doldrums. The people were put to great hardships because of the fall of cash crops prices and the rise in the prices of essential commodities. He also raised grave charges of corruption favouritism and nepotism against the government[72].

In reply to these allegations the respective ministers refuted all the charges and the motions were rejected with sufficient majority.

The CPI (M) also moved a number of resolutions against the government. In the third session of the Assembly a resolution was moved by E.Balanandan (CPI (M)) on July 1971 which requested the Central Government to annual the MISA[73]. The next resolution was moved by CBC Warrier (CPI (M)) requesting the government to take necessary steps to control the price rise of essential commodities[74].

In the third session, the CPI (M) launched a severe attack on the Muslim League by moving a resolution on smuggling. Moving the resolution M.V.Raghavan (CPI (M))

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72. KLA 6th Session, Vol. XXXII, No.3, 26 December, 1972, PP. 73-78.

73. Ibid., III Session, Vol. XXIX No.5, July 16, 1971.

74. Ibid., 6th Session, Vol.XXXII, No.6, 29 September, 1972, P. 542.

remarked that during 1970-71 smuggling reached the high watermark. Those officials employed to prevent the smuggling were ruthlessly assaulted by the persons engaged in smuggling. The Home Minister denied the charges and pointed out that the government had already taken necessary steps to prevent this menace[75].

In the 9th session of the KLA K.Balanandan moved a resolution on NGO's strike and characterised the 'Dies non' policy as a blow against the fundamental rights of the collective bargaining of the workers.

The police administration was the main target of criticism in the 7th session also. The resolution moved by A.P.Kurian (CPI (M)) pointed out the incidents in the M.G.College, Trivandrum, Guruvayurappan College, Trichur, and Government Arts College, Kozhikode. He declared that these incidents proved the brutality of the police. So he urged the government to take urgent steps to pass necessary legislations prohibiting the police from entering the premises of educational institutions without the permission of the head of the institution[76]. After the Home Minister's reply the resolution was put to vote and lost.

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75. Ibid., III Session, Vol. XXIX, No, 28, 20 August, 1971, P. 3396.

76. Ibid., 7th Session, Vol.XXXIII, No.11, 23 March, 1973, PP. 978-982.

Working of the Coalition

Senior officers of the government, on their part were critical of four aspects of ministerial conduct: corruption and nepotism, politically motivated breaches of rules and interference with orders; lack of ministerial interest in developmental plans once they had been inagurated and a disobedient approach to discipline among the non-gazzetted officers.

It is not difficult to understand why the Chief Minister of a multi-party administration would tolerate corruption and nepotism. He didnot give any support to comprehensive anti-corruption legislation in the Assembly. And a bill had been introduced in the Assembly in 1968 when the E.M.S Ministry was in office.

Achuta Menon Ministry survived in Kerala because of the blessing of the Congress administration at the Centre. The strength of the CPI coalition lies in the weakness of the coalescing parties[77] . Till the Congress (R) joined the Government the Home portfolio had been with the Muslim League. The Congress (R) Home Minister K.Karunakaran had been a trade union leader and he was compelled to announce that his police policy would be nearer to the CPI (M). But the result was different. The police had often been not

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77. Ibid., Vol.VII, No.8, February 19, 1972, P. 455.

available when it was most needed and when available it had resorted to the use of excessive force. There have been severe lathicharges on students. The police opened fire at fishermen near the rocket launching site at Thumba. All political parties admit that the lathi-charge on students in Quilon within the College premises and the three days of arson and looting in Tellicherry were "unparalleled" in Kerala during the post-independence period.

There could also be seen the elements of communalism. The decision of the Kerala High Court on a writ petition filed by an employee of the Devagiri College in Calicut was an interesting one. The minimum qualification prescribed by the government for senior superintendents was SSLC and passing the accounts test. One of the members of the non-teaching staff was a graduate and had also passed the accounts test, but the government directed the principal to appoint one Abdulla Koya Thangal who had passed neither the SSLC nor the accounts test. The court finally set aside the appointment. (The education department was under the control of Mohammad Koya).

During the emergency, everyday's newspaper came out with the news of the arrest of people under the provisions of MISA. Most of these arrests were kept secret and the newspapers had no freedom to write about it without the

sanction of the authorities. The Viswanatha Iyer Commission which enquired into the disappearance of 4 persons during the emergency came to the conclusion that two of them (Vijayan Nair and Kumaran) died in police custody as a result of torture[78]. The Rajan Murder case proved that Rajan also was one of the crualties of emergency.

During this period a racket developed for the promotion and transfer of officers at all level. Politicians and their agents operated as brokers in this much to the dismay of the officers[79].

They couldnot hold the Panchayat elections. The last elections were held in 1963 and the panchayats had lost their representative character. Further, the existing panchayat system gave little scope for the involvement of the people in the formulation and implementation of development plans.

At the ideological level of communism also the CPI Government was criticised. The CPI, instead of organising the working class in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, appealed the working class to collaborate with the bourgeoisie[80].

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78. Indian Express, August 2, 1978.

79. Ibid., Op.Cit., Vol.VIII, N.44, November 3, 1973, P. 1951.

80. E.K.Nayanar, My Struggles (Trivandrum : 1982), P. 96.

The true revolutionary unit of the working class can only be achieved by holding aloft the banner of Marxism-Leninism and its principles. The unity achieved by sacrificing principles and by collaborating with opportunits is not working class unity. On the contrary, "it is the alliance of a small section of a privileged workers with their national bourgeoisie against the working class masses[81].

Political Development 1977 to 1979

Internal emergency was relaxed on the eve of the 6th General Elections and opposition leaders were released. At the national level the major opposition parties merged together to face the Congress and formed the new Janata Party (merging Congress (O), Jana Sangh and the BLD).

In Kerala the ruling coalition was extended to accommodate the NDP. The Kerala Congress (Pillai) (KC (P)) and the AIML entered into an electoral understanding with the Janata Party and the CPI (M). The contest was straight between the two fronts. The ruling coalition consisted of Congress CPI, RSP, PSP NDP, Muslim League and the Kerala Congress. The opposition which stood united with a common programme consisted of the CPI (M), Janata, KC (P) the AIML

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81. Lenin Opportunism and the Collapse of Second International (Moscow, 1918), P.241.

and the KSP. The election to the 140 Assembly seats and 20 Parliament seats was conducted on 19th March, 1977.

The Kerala State renewed their strong support to the Congress and the partners enabling them to win 111 seats out of 140 and all the 20 Parliamentary seats. The strength of the CPI (M) was reduced to 17 from 28, while the Congress increased its strength from 32 to 38 seats. The Muslim League, the Kerala Congress, the CPI and the RSP also improved their position considerably compared to the previous polls. The newly formed NDP got 5 seats out of the 8 seats contested.

On March 25, 1977, the leader of the anti-Marxist Front K.Karunakaran (Congress), who was Home Minister in the Achuta Menon's Ministry was sworn in as Chief Minister. There were 15 members in the cabinet. The Congress had 5 Ministers, the CPI 3, the Kerala Congress 3, the Muslim League 2 and RSP 2. The Muslim League got the speakership and the CPI deputy speakership. The NDP and the PSP was not offered any berth in the Government.

On the 33rd day since the Congress led Government assumed office, the Chief Minister resigned following a public uproar over his alleged role in the torture and death of an engineering student P.Rajan during emergency and the verdict of Kerala High Court in the Rajan Case.

A.K.Antony, then KPCC President, who was a non-member of the Assembly was sworn in as the Chief Minister. On 22 October 1978, he was elected to the Assembly from Kazhakoottam constituency.

On 1 January 1978, the INC was subjected to a great split and the grouping took place in the name of Mrs.Indira Gandhi and Brahmananda Reddy, the then party President. In Kerala K.Karunakaran became the leader of the Congress (I) in the Legislature and sat in the opposition while the Congress (Reddy) (Congress (R)) under the leadership of A.K.Antony remained in the Government. Meanwhile A.K.Antony resigned the Chief Ministership in protest against the Congress (R) Parliamentary Board's decision to support Mrs.Gandhi in the Chikamangalur bye-election. This marked the Chief Ministership slipping away from the Congress to the CPI and P.K.Vasudevan Nair was elected as the new Chief Minister. The Congress representatives in the Ministry comprised KPCC Chief S.Varadarajan Nair, M.K.Raghavan A.L. Jacob and Damodaran Kallassery. The Ministers of the other coalescing parties, the Muslim League, RSP and the Kerala Congress continued to retain their earlier portfolios.

During this period the CPI (M) was trying to form a leftist Front which included the CPI, RSP and other groups



and parties who wished to come together as a front against the Congress (I). The CPI initiated a step in this attempt and P.K.Vasudevan Nair resigned on October 7, 1979.

On October 11, C.H. Mohammed Koya, leader of the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) formed a three member cabinet. He had the support of Congress (I), Congress (U) [82], KC (M) and KC (J). The Congress (U) though they expressed their commitment to the leftist alternative to eliminate the Congress (I) and defeat the rightist forces, decided to join hand with Congress (I) to support the Minority government of the IUML. This was the first government headed by the Muslim League in the Country. He resigned on December 1, 1979 and advised the dissolution of the Kerala Assembly when the KC (M) withheld its support and the Congress (U) followed suit and both parties aligned themselves with the CPI (M). The State came under President's rule on December 5, 1979. The mid-term election to the Legislative Assembly was ordered to take place on 20 January 1980.

Policy Implementation-1977-'79

The period of 1977 to '79 was the worst period of governmental instability and Kerala witnessed the rise and

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82. Known since the election of Divaraj Urs as the Congress (R) President.

fall of 4 Ministries. Yet, the period can claim certain legislations that have an impact on Kerala society. The Government raised the upper age limit for recruitment of government jobs in Kerala from 30 to 35[83]. A long term agreement on revision of pay scales, dareness allowances, staff pattern and work norms in the KSEB was finalised by the Electricity Minister P.K.Vasudevan Nair[84]. The agriculturists who lost their crop in the floods were given short term loans of Rs.400 per acre. The Government issued an ordinance to ensure the production and preservation of forests when the Silent Valley Hydro-Electric project would be taken up[85]. The Government launched Rs.20 crore scheme to develop tourism in the State. It decided to sanction 306 new schools. This included 95 high schools 91 upper primary schools and 116 lower primary schools.

For the democratization of grass-root level administration, the Assembly unanimously passed the District Administration Bill. It provided for a decentralised system of administration at the district level by constituting district council[86].

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83. Indian Express (Cochin), August 10, 1978.
84. Ibid., September 18, 1978.
85. Ibid., November 16, 1978.
86. Mathrubhumi (Cochin), March 8, 1979.

A number of concessions were allowed under a package of measures for the promotion of industries in the State. These included subsidies for capital investments, procurement of Cashew, development and modernisation of industries, concession on electricity tariff, sales-tax relief and help for acquisition and development of land.

The Government introduced shift system in 62 colleges to accommodate more students in these colleges. 500 'Kerala Stores' spread over 278 Panchayats in 15 Taluks were set up. It was to ensure the availability of essential commodities at fair prices but also provided avenues of self-employment to educated unemployed youth.

The Cabinet approved a Rs.93 lakh scheme for the cultivation of cashew on an area of 1,470 hectares at Cannoor district. The Government announced a number of special benefits to personnel in police, jail, fire force and excise departments. As a step to implement the provisions of the Kerala Agricultural Workers Act the Government constituted the Provident Fund Scheme for the agricultural workers.

The Government faced the strikes of college and school teachers, state government employees, strikes of policemen and CRP. Yet, the Government couldnot attain its objects in



its real effects. The Government was steadily yielding to the influencial pressure groups, mostly with communal overtones. A number of policies of the Government once acclaimed as progressive, had to be diluted. These included vital issued like validation of gift deeds, de-nationalisation of the liquor policy, and the distribution of surplus land to the landless.

CHAPTER V

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter deals with the policy implementation of the Communist Governments. As it is impossible to analyse in detail all the policies of the governments, the researcher has taken two cardinal policies--Land and Educational policies--that have had far-reaching impact in the social, economic and political set up of the State.

Radical legislations like that of land reforms are a necessary machanism to speed up social change. In a society, the state bureaucracy, the press and other social institutions are likely to be so heavily entrenched with vested interest forces, that, even if a political leader, responsive to the demands and expectations of the poor, initiates radical legislations, its implementation would be subverted, unless there is pressure built from below through strong mass movements[1]. So the survival of any progressive policies depends on the support it receives from agencies such as political parties that have a basis of mass support and on the strong support extended to it by the government through its law and order agencies.

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1. T.K. Oommen, "Agrarian Legislation and Movements as Source of Change", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. X, No.40, October 4, 1975.

Progressive legislations in the field of land refrom and education would affect the vested interests in the society. The Government must have sufficient capacity to resist the opposition and must get the support of coalescing parties. The CPI (M) led coalition governments failed in this respect. They failed to communicate their policies to those people who would get the benefit from the legislations and to ensure their support from them. The coalition partners of the CPI (M) led coalition had no unanimity of opinion about the policy implementation. Parties like the Muslim League and the Kerala Congress could not tolerate progressive policies like land reform. The support basis of each party was different. So while implementating a policy the party always thinks how it affects their mass support basis.

Land Reform in Kerala

The land tenure and tenancy system which was in vogue in the erstwhile State of Travancore was very complicated. The tenants were at the mercy of the landlords and they were liable to be evicted at the will and pleasure of the landlord[2]. However, the Jenmi-Kudiyan Act of 1071 allowed

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2. Twenty Five Years of Kerala Legislature, Secretariat of Kerala (Trivandrum : 1983), P. 5.

the Kudiyan permanent occupancy right. The tenants had to pay Jenmikaram to the Jenmies and basic tax to the State. The Travancore-Cochin Stay of Eviction Proceedings Act of 1950 stayed eviction of tenants for a period of four years. The Travancore-Cochin Prevention of Eviction of Kerala Kudikidappukars Act 1955 (Act XIII of 1955) prevented the eviction of Kudikidappukars from the Kudikidappu land. Yet at the time of the formation of the State of Kerala the tenants and Kudikidappukars had to face the threat of eviction. Hence the Stay of Eviction Proceeding Bill, 1957, had to be passed.

In the Cochin State and the Malabar area the tenants enjoyed fixity of tenure under the Kanam Tenancy Act, 1955 and the Malabar Tenancy Act, 1929.

From 1953 onwards, the agrarian movement had been organised on a continuous basis and on many fronts. Regularly there were meetings which discussed the grievances of small peasants, seminars and study classes which propagated the progress of landreforms in socialist countries. In 1953, the Kisan Sangh under the leadership of CPI began to press for the following demands.

1. Suspension of all evictions. 2. Conferring of ownership rights on those having 12 years possession

rights[3] ceiling of 5 acres on family holding. In order to maintain the vitality of the movement the All Kerala Kisan Conference (CPI) adopted several resolutions in December 1956, demanding.

1. Ceiling on land holdings.
2. Distribution of waste land to the landless.
3. Stopping of all evictions.
4. Cancellation of all agricultural debts.
5. Stabilization of the prices of essential commodities.
6. Marketing of commercial crops to foreign countries on a contract basis.

Thus the movement gradually widened into one which pursued the overall interest of the agrarian poor.

The era of land reforms through governmental agencies was started in 1957 when the CPI was voted to power in April. The Ministry attempted to get passed some radical tenancy reforms through the introduction of the Agrarian Relation Bill and Jenmikaram payment (Abolition) Bill in the Legislature. But it could not enact them due to its dismissal in 1959. The dismissal of the ministry was because of an upsurge launched by the vested interests, in which landed interests formed an important element. It is significant that radical legislations, which directly

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3. The Kisan Sangh and its Programmes, CPI, Culcutta, 1964.

threaten the organised vested interests are practically impossible in a parliamentary political set up unless they are assiduously supported by the government. In the case of Kerala, while the state ministry was formed by Communists, the Union Ministry was manned by the Congress Party which drew its support largely from the landed interest. Given the class character of the Congress Party, it couldnot have supported the radical measures initiated by the Communist Ministry and therefore, the landed interests opposed the government and particularly the Agrarian Relation Bill[4].

The communists in Kerala made tremendous efforts to mobilize the peasants and the workers in support of the bills they introduced, but their efforts couldnot match the combined efforts of the local landed interests and the mighty constitutional weapons of the Union Government. Thus even when the legislation is followed by a social movement, the successful implementation of legislation depends on the nature and content of the opposition it faces.

The coalition ministry of the Congress and the PSP, which came into power in 1960, introduced the Kerala

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4. The provisions of the Agrarian Relation Bill, which evoked the greatest opposition were the following :-
1. The restriction of ownership in land to 15 acres per family.
2. Restriction on resumption of land by owners.
3. Tenants were given the right to purchase the land they cultivated by paying 16 times the fair rent fixed under the Bill.
4. Fixity of tenure to hutment dwellers.

Agrarian Relation Act. But it deviated from the Agrarian Relation Bill in several ways. The Act didnot provide for the rehabilitation of tenants who had been evicted after the formation of Kerala State, as provided for in the Agrarian Relation Bill[5]. Hutment dwellers could be evicted from the plantation area. Finally, the Agrarian Relation Act of 1960 was declared ultra-vires of the Indian Constitution by the High Court in 1963. The then Government formed by the Congress Party, introduced a new piece of legislation, the Kerala Land Reforms Act 1963, which further diluted the provisions favouring the agrarian poor. The CPI and the KTP opposed the implementation of the 1963 Act. Thus the introduction of the new Act led to the crystalization of new interests and the formulation of new associations.

During the first CPI (M) led Government, the CPI (M) had no real hope to implement any progressive legislation. The CPI (M) policy towards participation in state government in 1967 was conditioned by its experience of the 1957-'59 ministry. The party's programme of 'Peoples Democracy' argued that people's democratic governments gave a revolutionary movement to fillup and strengthen the mass-movement and couldnot solve the fundamental economic

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5. Land Reform Survey in Kerala, Government of Kerala (Trivandrum : 1968), P.20.

and political problems of the State. All they could hope to achieve was immediate relief to the poeple on the basis of minimum programmes that would include agrarian reform and popular participation in state and lower level administration[6]. In April 1967 after the installation of the United Front Government in Kerala and West Bengal, the CPI (M) Central Committee decided that the new government should be seen as instruments of struggle rather than agents with real power to give substantial relief to the people[7].

But the CPI's opinion was different. They held that their government should prove in actual practice to be a real alternative to the Congress rule and they tried earnestly to implement many progressive legislations[8].

Yet the CPI (M) campaign of mass-agitation for the speedy implementation of land reform is also to be considered. The governmental machinery couldnot suppress the popular uprising; so the combined efforts of the governmental machinery and the CPI (M) mass-agitation were necessary for this analysis.

As soon as the United Front Ministry of 1967 came to power it received a number of complaints about eviction and

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6. New Situation and Party's Tasks, CPI (M) (Culcutta : 1967), P. 70.
7. Ibid., P. 82.
8. C.Achuta Menon What Happened in Kerala, (New Delhi : 1969), P. 2.

such other difficulties experienced by the people. On the basis of these complaints the Government examined a number of cases that were before the tribunals. The Kerala Land Reforms Act 1963 had allowed the right of resumption of holding lands for certain specified purposes like personal cultivation and construction of residential buildings for the land lords. This affected the interests of the tenants detrimentally. It was considered necessary to suspend all resumption proceedings and proceedings of eviction of tenants and Kudikidappukars.

The Act of 1963 also granted concessions for pa nt of arrears accrued till 1st April 1964. But the arrea ad to be paid within 3 months from that date failing which the tenants had to pay the entire arrears. With a view to mitigating the hardships of tenants, it was necessary to stay all suits and proceedings for recovery of arrears of rent accrued before the 1st April 1964 the Kerala Stay of Eviction Proceedings Bill 1967 was passed[9].

In their 1966 Joint Declaration the United Front partners committed themselves to an amendment of the 1963 Land Reforms Act in favour of tenants, and small landlords with no alternative means of subsistence[10]. It was very

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9. KLA Bill No.12 of 1967. The Bill introduced in the Assembly on 7th July 1967. It referred to the Select Committee on 12 July 1967. It received the President's assent on 25th July.

10. People's Democracy, 9th October,1966 PP.6-8.

difficult to implement many of the provisions of the Act, so the Government introduced the Kerala Land Reforms (Amendment) Bill, 1968[11].

The key features of the legislation were the abolition of landlordism by the compulsory vesting of proprietorial rights in the governments and their subsequent assignment to the cultivating tenants. It broadened the definition of 'tenant' to include those without documentation, mortgages, and several kinds of share croppers. The hutment dwellers were granted security of tenure, and arrears of rent were reduced to one year. Future annual rent was fixed at as little as two days' wages. The rights to resume land were heavily circumscribed and lapsed, six months after the effective date of the Act. Small holders were allowed to resume up to half the land cultivated by a tenant to bring them up to six acres, eventhough the tenants' holding might be less than the ceiling. No land could be resumed at all from the hutment dwellers nor from tenants of the SC and ST. The terms of compensation to the landlord were fixed at levels which were admittedly expropriating; in general sixteen times the fair rent, on paddy land 50% of the contract rent or 75% of the pre 1961 contract rent whichever was less and 75% of the contract rent on other lands.

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11. KLA Bill No.35 of 1968. It was presented to the Assembly on 18 August 1968 and finally passed on 17 October 1968.

The compensation was to be paid in instalments to the government who would then pay the landlord. Default didnot prejudice the tenants right to land. Instalments would then be collected as arrears of land revenue. The Kudikidappukars were granted the right to purchase their plot at 25% of the plot's market value, half of which would be paid by the government, the remainder being payable in 12 annual instalments.

The ceiling set by the Act were the lowest in India. It ranged from five 'standard acres' for a single adult to a maximum of 20 ordinary acres for a family with three minor children. But in relation to the pressure on land the ceiling was quite high. In 1962 nearly 31% of rural households were landless compared with the national figure of 12%. Kayal lands were now subject to the ceiling; while in the plantation sector land cropped with pepper, cashew and coconut-previously exempt-was brought within the ceiling provisions relating to the size of holdings.

Yet the implementation of the Act raised a number of issues. Although the Bill was central to the programme of the CPI (M) and the Ministry as a whole it was not introduced in the Assembly until August 1968 and did not complete its legislative stages until October 1969. Among the factors which delayed the drafting of the Bill were the

acute food crisis in 1967, and desire to see the results produced by the land reforms survey, the disagreement of the Muslim League whose leadership included significant land lord interest etc. The collapse of the United Front Ministry coincided with the passing of this all important Bill into an Act.

In order to distribute the agricultural land to the landless peasants and agriculturists and to give Pattayams to the Kudikidappukars, the Government passed the Sreepadam Lands Enfranchisement Bill, 1968 and the Sree Pandaravaka Lands (Vesting and Enfranchisement) Bill, 1968.

The Sreepadom Lands belonged to the ruling family of the former Travancore State. These Lands which lie scattered in the Trivandrum district consisted of about 14,578 acres fetching an annual income of Rs. 31,075. The Sreepadam lands were not liable for basic tax. The Sreepadam Lands Enfranchisement Bill abolished the rights of the Sreepadam Palace on the Sreepadam Lands and conferred on the holders of such lands full proprietory rights in respect of their holding with no liability to pay any rent to the Palace. For the estinguishment of the rights of the Palace the Government would pay compensation to the palace in the form of an annuity of Rs. 31,075. For the vesting of Tharisse lands in the Government, the Government also would

pay the palace an amount calculated at the rate of Rs. 200/- per acre[12] .

The Sree Pandaravaka Lands were the lands owned by the sree Padmanabha Swami Temple at Trivandrum and held in trust by the Maharaja of Travancore. These lands were scattered in the Trivandrum district consisted of about 12,630 acres fetching an annual income of Rs. 61,568 to the temple. The tenants had to pay "Rajabhogam" to the government had Pattam to the temple. According to the provisions of the Act all rights, title and interest of the Temple on the land were extinguished and vested in the Government. The holders of the land got full properitory rights in the lands held by them. The Act proposed to give the temple an annuity of Rs.58,500 as compensation.

The United Front Government also introduced the Kerala Stay of Eviction Proceeding (Amendment) Bill, 1969. The Bill became necessary as it had taken more time to get the Kerala Land Reforms (Amendment) Act 1968 passed into the law to extend for a period of one year the validity of the Kerala Staty of Eviction Proceeding Act 1967, which expired on 31.12.1968.

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12. Clause 5, of the Sreepadam Land Enfranchisement Bll, 1968, KLA Bill No. 25 of 1968.

The Government also took some steps to distribute uncultivated cultivable government land to the landless people. Till May 1969, about 1,826 hectares of land was distributed to 36,248 applicants[13]. Further 40,000 Pattas which included both permanent and temporary, were distributed since the Government came to power. For the purpose of distribution of the land the Government constituted popular committees to assist and advise the Government. Such committees were formed by 24 July, 1968. But the committee did not work well due to the lack of co-operation among the coalition partners.

The Government did not succeed in implementing the Bill Conflict over land policy became a fundamental issue between the CPI and the CPI (M). Agricultural workers, landless peasants and the poorer strata of the agrarian scene constitute the bulk of the CPI (M) mass base and to a much lesser extent that of the CPI. The essence of the struggle was the attempt made by the non-CPI (M) partners of the United Front to dislodge the CPI (M) from its commanding position among the poorer strata of the agrarian scene.

The CPI (M) Revenue Minister distributed a large number of titles of land to the peasants, the bulk of whom were CPI

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13. People's Democracy, March 17, 1968.

(M) supporters. The CPI (M) justified this by saying that the CPI (M) commands the support of a much larger percentage of the rural poor than any other party in the State. But the other partners accused the CPI (M) of following a favouritist policy towards its supporters.

On November 1, 1969, the Mini Front led by the CPI assumed power and the new Government declared that the Kerala Land Reform (Amendment) Act, 1969 would be implemented with effect from January 1, 1970. The Bill became an Act on 16 December 1969[14]. The Government constituted proper machinery and appointed necessary personnel for the immediate and effective implementation of the Act. One Tahsildar in each of the 56 Taluks of the State was appointed as Special Land Tribunals in their respective Taluks[15]. Further the Principal Sub-Judge of Ernakulam was appointed as the Appellate Authority. The Appellate Authority started functioning in Ernakulam at the land Tribunals Office very soon. Through another notification, the Agriculturists Rehabilitation Fund and the Kudikidappakars Benefit Fund were created[16].

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14. Land Reforms in Kerala, Government of Kerala (Trivandrum : 1970), P.2.
15. KLA, Vol.XXVI, Part I, PP. 39-40.
16. Indian Express (Madurai), 1 January, 1970.

The Government also took steps to constitute popular committees at Panchayat, Township, Municipal and Corporation level to help the authorities in implementing the Act. These committees included representatives of all parties, MPs, MLAs, Presidents of Panchayats, Chairmen of Municipalities or Mayors of City Corporations. The work of these committees included educating the public about their rights and obligation under the Act, helping the authorities and reviewing the progress of its implementation[17].

Further, the Government made some amendments to the *Land Reforms (vesting and Assignment) Rules* to enable the speedy settlement by the land Tribunals of the claims of all landlords for compensation and rights of all tenents for assignment. According to the amendments the landlords and the tenents can mutually agree about the amount of price payable to the landlords for vesting their rights, title and interests with the government[18].

The Government through a non-official resolution of the Assembly requested the Central Government to give judicial immunity to the Act by including it in the 9th schedule of the Indian Constitution[19]. The Challenge from the courts

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17. Ibid., 9 January, 1970.
18. Ibid., 17 July, 1970.
19. KLA, Vol. XXVII, No. 10, P.739, 23 January, 1970.

was serious. In a series of judgements in 1970 the Kerala High Court invalidated important sections of the Act. As yet the Act was not protected by incorporation into the 9th schedule of the Constitution which precludes judicial review of state land reform. Its sole protection under the Constitution was Article 31 (a) whereby agrarian reforms cannot be challenged on the ground that they interfere with the Fundamental Right to Property guaranteed by the Constitution. But the High Court of Kerala argued that the Article was intended to protect orderly and peaceable progress in accordance with the law in the interest of the general public not to protect a law which treated agrarian rights as it pleases.

Yet within this short span of 9 months land was assigned to 5 lakhs of poor agricultural families. This included two lakhs of hutment dwellers and 7,000 others belonging to SC and ST[20]. Further the government also assigned more than 50,000 acres of forest land to the landless poor and 49,000 acres of forest land to the low income group at nominal value.

The period from 1970-'77 was the era of land reform implementation. The governmental Machinery and the Land Grab agitation under the leadership of CPI (M) resulted in radical changes in the field.

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20. Indian Express, 31 July, 1970.

The Land Reforms Acts in force at the commencement of the IV Kerala Legislative Assembly were the following.

1. The fixing of ceiling area for the land which a person or family can hold.
2. The vesting of excess land in the government on a date to be specified by the government.
3. Transfer of ownership of the land to the tenant.
4. The assignment on registry of the land on which a Kudikidappu is situated to the Kudikidappukars.
5. The distribution of excess lands vested in government.
6. Payment of compensation in respect of the land vested in government in the form of bonds to the persons who surrendered their lands on a sliding scale.
7. Payment of annuities to religious, charitable or educational institution of a public nature which surrendered their lands to the government.
8. The constitution of a Kudikidappukar's Benefit Fund to assist the Kudikidappukars.

The land reform legislations passed by the IV Kerala Legislative Assembly were intended to remove some of the impediments which came up at the time of the implementation of the programmes. In 1971, in the face of mounting protests from its own ranks and continuing opposition agitation the Government passed an Act to speed up the

implementation of 1969 land reform measures. Among the more important provisions of the land reform (Amendment) Bill, 1971 certain categories of land transfer made since 1969 were nullified and the rate of compensation was halved and fixed according to a scale thus avoiding delays and difficulties of fixing a market value. It protected the right of the Kudikidappukars to purchase the Kudikidappu when the land on which Kudikidappu was situated was alienated.

Stimulated by the CPI (M)'s launching of the 'Excess Land Agitation and threats of militant action from the CPI's Karshaka Sangham the Government passed a further Land Reform (Amendment) Act in 1972[21]. It was mainly designed to enable popular participation in land reform programmes. It decentralised the functions of the landboard through Taluk level Boards and Advisory Village Committees, and a cabinet level Land Reforms Review Board. The Act also provided for the assignment of lands by the land owner to the tenants by mutual agreement and for filing of statements by persons in respect of lands in excess of the ceiling area.

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21. Act 17 of 1972. On Oct 29, 1972 Shri. Baby John, Minister of Revenue introduced the Bill in the Assembly. It received the assent of the president on 1 December 1972.

The Act provided that the Sc and the ST should include converts to Christianity from such castes and tribes. According to the provisions of the Act, lands reserved for or assignment to SCs and STs have to be assigned to convert to Christianity from such castes and tribes also.

According to section 2 (a) of the Act a person who on the 16th day of August 1968 was in occupation of any land and the dwelling house thereon and continued to be in such occupation till the first day of January 1970 should be deemed to be a Kudikidappukaran. But no such person should be deemed to be Kudikidappukaran in cases where :

1. The dwelling house has not been constructed by such persons.
2. Such dwelling house was constructed at a cost at the time of construction exceeding Rs. 750.
3. Such dwelling house could have at the time of the construction yielded a monthly rent exceeding Rs. five.

The Act provided for the constitution of a Village Committee. It should consist of the Village Officer and six other members nominated by the government. The Village Officer was the convener of the Village Committee.

Section 100 A of the Act provided for the constitution of a Taluk Land Board. It consisted of an officer not below

the rank of Deputy Collector appointed by the Government, who was the chairman of the Board. There were six members nominated by the Government. According to section 100 D of the Act a Land Reform Review Board was constituted. It consisted of the Minister in charge of Land Reforms, the members of the Land Board and six non official members nominated by the government.

The provisions made in the legislations for popular participation in land reforms and the constitution of Land Reform Review Board received appreciation from all quarters.

In 1973 the Assembly passed the Land Reform (Amendment) Bill with the intension of extending the period for filing statements by the persons who held lands in excess of the ceiling area. Though the 1972 Act provided for the constitution of a Taluk Land Board, the quorum of the Taluk Land Board had not been fixed. This caused difficulty in the smooth working of the Taluk Land Board. Hence the Kerala Land Reforms (A) Act 1974, the quorum for holding sittings of Land Board was fixed [22]. The task of taking over the excess lands from the land holders was vested with the Taluk Land Boards constituted under section 100 (a) of the Act. The Land Board's function was to verify the

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22. Indian Express, 1974, March 2.

ceiling returns, determine the extent and identify the land to be surrendered and to order the vesting of the excess lands in the Government. For the consideration and disposal of the ceiling cases, the meeting of the Taluk Land Boards, have to be conducted very frequently. According to sub-section 2A of section 100A of the Act, the Chairman and any two of the other members of the Taluk Land Board shall constitute the quorum at any meeting of the Board in order to ensure that the work of the Board may be performed by the Chairman alone or by the Chairman and any one of the other members of the Board. In this way the decision of the Taluk Land Board become easy.

The Government passed the Kannan Devan Hills (Resumption of Lands) Act 1971 which enabled the Government to take possession of and distribute agricultural land in the possession of Kannan Devan Hill produce company to the poor people of the State. The Kannan Devan Company claimed ownership 1,27,905 acres of land situated in the village of Kannan Devan Hills. There was a large extent of land which was not put to use by the company. By the Act the Government was empowered to resume agricultural lands in the Kannan Devan Hills Village which had not been converted into plantations or were not utilised for the purpose of plantation.

According to the provisions of the Act, all land other them plantation land, appartenant to buildings, playgrounds, burial and burning grounds and land in the possession of Central Government,any state government or the Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) would be transferred and vested in the government. No compensation would be paid for the extinguishment of the rights in respect of the lands vested in government.

Extensive lands in the Malabar area compring private forests were owned and controlled by private persons. The private forests did not come under the provisions of Land Reforms Act 1963. According to the judgement of the Kerala High Court, the lands compring the private forests were also agricultural lands. The surplus land avilable for distribution was not sufficient to meet the demands for land for agricultural purposes. By passing the Private Forests (Vesting and Assignment) Act, 1971, the Government was able to take over the private forests as part of the agrarian reform measure. No compensation was paid for such transfer and vesting of private forests in the government.

The Government passed the Kanan Tenancy Abolition Act 1976 which was one of the most progressive legislations of the Government. The Jenmies under the Kanan Tenancy Act

1955 were intermediaries between the State and the cultivators[23]. The Kanan tenants had full proprietory right in their holdings. But they were liable to pay Jenmikaram to the Jenmies. The Stay of Recovery of Arrears of Jenmikaram Act, 1975 was enacted to provide for the temporary protection of the kanan tenants. The Jenmies who received Jenmikaram from the tenants were actually intermediaries between the State and the cultivators. The Kanan Tenancy Abolition Bill, 1976 was passed to abolish the payment of Jenmikaram and to remove intermediary rights on lands. In lieu of the extinguishment of right to receive Janmikaram the Government would pay eight and one-third times the aggregate of the annual amount of Janmikaram to the Jenmies.

Hence the IV Kerala legislative Assembly tried its utmost to give shape a comprehensive measure to implement the land reform policies.

Meanwhile the CPI(M) launched the Land Grab Agitation on a large scale with a strong support from Kudikidappukars. In a joint state convention of the Kerala Karshaka Sangham (farmer's association of CPI(M)) and the Kerala State

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23. Indian Express, March 2, 1974.

Karshaka Thozhilali Union (Agricultural Labour Union of CPI(M)) held at Punnapra, in Allappuzha on December 13 and 14, 1969, which was attended by 15,000 delegates, the following decisions were taken.

1. No rent should be paid by hutment dwellers to landlords or land owners.
2. All excess land should be forcibly occupied.
3. Ten cents of land around their huts should be fenced by hutment dwellers and they should start taking yields from such plots.
4. All steps by the government, courts, police and landlords against these attempts should be resisted.

Meanwhile Marxist volunteers commenced encroachment of government and private lands and constructed houses in many places of the State. In several areas, hutment dwellers took forcible possession of 10 cents of lands each around their huts and constructed fences.

As the tempo of agitation was going down, CPI(M) led Kerala Karshaka Sangham held a three day state convention in the last week of May 1970, with a view to reviving the agitation. The convention gave a call to commence the second phase of the struggle for land. The hutment dwellers were asked to negotiate with all lordlords who had gone to the courts against the tenents for the recovery of arrears

of rent and to agitate in front of the houses of such landlords who refused to compromise.

The hutment dwellers were impressed by two arguments put forward by (CPI) (M) workers. (1) The legal procedure took a long time and there was no need to wait, and (2) if the hutment dweller took to the legal procedure it was incumbent upon him to pay 12.5% of the market value of land as compensation whereas if he resorted to forcible occupation both these requirements could be overlooked.

That the hutment-dwellers were easily convinced of these arguments was not surprising. They were in any case victims of bureaucratic red-tape; quick result attracted them easily. So the Land Grab Agitation appealed to hutment dwellers.

The Excess Land Agitation of 1972 was initiated by the CPI(M) because of the implementation lag in the ceiling measures of the State[24]. According to the records of the District Collector of Allapuzha till the end of 1973, only 13 families surrendered 392.54 acres of excess land, of which 285.86 acres were distributed[25]. In addition to this,

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24. Economic and Political Weekly, Op. Cit., P.1579.

25. See the table. It may be argued that the committees estimate of excess land was exagerated. Even so it cannot dismiss the claim made by the committee as being totally false. The details given in the table about a few cases will illustrate this point.

six families held land in excess of the ceiling limit totalling nearly 3,348 acres. The revenue authorities conceded that families which owned excess land had made early arrangements by way of gift deeds etc. The total excess land that the revenue authorities could locate in the district aggregated only 4,740 acres. In contrast, the Samarasamiti (The Committee for struggle) of the Excess Land Agitation of the district submitted a list of 89 owners with excess land holdings. It was very clear that the estimates by the Council varied substantially as compared to those of government[26].

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26. Differences in Excess Land held by seven owners between Government Record and the records of Excess Land Agitation Council (in acres).

Cases	Excess land according to revenue records of Alapuzha	Excess land according to excess land agitation council	Differences
1	2064	3500	+1436
2	244	3000	+2756
3	148	1320	+1172
4	166	1000	+ 884
5	387	532	+ 145
6	126	267	+ 141
7	507	369	- 138
	3592	9988	+6396

The Excess Land Agitation Council also submitted a comprehensive list of demands-partly to accelerate the process of implementation and partly to bring in new legislation of which some are noted below :-

1. The copies of the ceiling returns received by the Land Board be made available to the people's committees so that ommissions and evations if any, can be investigated into and reported.
2. The Land Board should be expanded in order to take non-official members.
3. The distribution of excess lands under the Act should be done through popular committees.
4. No part of the purchase price of Kudikidappu should be collected from the hutment dwellers.
5. Landlordism should be abolished without any payment of compensation.
6. The Act should be amended with a view to wiping out the entire rent arrears due to the landlords.

The Government favourably responded to most of the demands. The governmental response in regard to the demand are listed below.

1. Recognising that the implementation of socio-economic measures such as land reforms cannot be done

exclusively through official agencies, the Government decided to publish the ceiling returns received by the State Land Board, in the hope that non-official agencies would actively co-operate in identifying evasions and omissions.

2. The work of the Land Board was decentralised by creating Taluk Land Board which were the main agencies for determining the excess land in their respective Taluks. The Taluk Land Boards had a majority of non-official members.

3. While the government insisted that the distribution of excess land should be done by the Land Board which in effect meant the district revenue officials. It agreed to constitute advisory committees consisting of people's representatives.

4. The government refused to concede the demand that no amount should be collected from hutment dwellers when ownership in land is transferred to them.

The general point is that the process of implementation of any legislation uncovers several loopholes in it. Then the leaders of the movement demanded suitable amendment to the legislations or introduction of new legislations. It is also noted that successful implementation of socio-economic legislations cannot be done by official agencies alone.

Active co-operation of the people with the implementation of legislative measures is necessary. Once the grievances of the particular section are legally met, the attempt of the movement leaders will be to insist on the effective implementation of the prescribed legal provisions. Alternately the movement may expand its scope of activity to press for the introduction of new legislations in favour of other deprived categories. This means that any continuing movement should undergo the process of intermittent goal transformation.

During this period, the Government led by the CPI was largely responsive to popular agrarian demands and to the movements led by the CPI (M). The rate of social change was much higher due to the fact that the vested interest forces were largely identified and isolated as a continuous militant struggle was led by the CPI (M) against them and as the government led by CPI was responsive to the movements demands.

Similarly, the landless labourers have undergone a vigorous process of politicisation which was rendered them capable of articulating their demand. The newly emerged owner cultivators were highly organised and politicised. Thus an important consequence of the mass movement was the wider participation of people in the implementation process

relating to agrarian legislation.

During the period of the second CPI (M) led coalition government also tried to implement some of the policies of land reforms. The Government amended the Land Reform Act, 1963 in order to protect, the rights of the tenants[27]. There was no provision in the Act prohibiting the landlords from collecting rent from their tenants after 1-1-1970, for a holding in respect of which the right title and interests of the landlords have not vested in the government. The landlords had filed suits for realisation of arrears of rent for the holdings in respect of which resumption applications had been rejected for a period after 1-1-1970 till the date of such rejection. So the amendment Act prohibited all rights of the landlords for collecting rent from the tenants.

The Government abolished the payment of Rajabhogam to Thekkemadom Swamiyar Mathapram by an Act[28]. For about 212 hectares of land in Manikamangalam village in Alwaye Taluk, Ernakulam District consisting of about 300 holdings belonging to an institution called "Thekkemadom Swamiyar Sankethan". The tenants of these lands were paying Muppara

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27. A Digest of Kerala Laws, Legislative Secretariat (Trivandrum : 1981), P. 13.

28. The payment of Rajabhogam to Thekkemadom Swamiyar Mathapram Abolition Act 1980 received the assent of the President on April 15, 1981.

at three Edangazhies per para of paddy field in respect of wet lands and one eighth of Verumpattom in respect of dry land to Thekkemadom Swamiyar, Trichur as Rajabhogam. In 1084 ME, the Government of Travancore had abolished the system of paying the Rajabhogam to the Swamiyar and assessed the lands to land tax.

To give full proprietory rights to the tenants of Oodupally lands, the Government passed the Oodupally Lands Enfranchisement Bill, 1981 certain lands which were owned by the Government of Kerala as the successor of the Government of Cochin[29]. These lands were situated in the Kunnathunadu, Alwaye, Moovattupuzha and Kanayannoor. The Government of Cochin granted these lands for cultivation of certain persons after executing different kinds of lease deeds such as Kanam, Verumpattom, Adima, Panayam etc.. Persons who obtained such lands under leases from the Government of Cochin had subsequently sub-leased them and there were also intermediaries having interest in these lands. With the integration of Travancore and Cochin states in 1949, the payment of land revenue to the government had been discontinued by an executive order of the former Government of Travancore-Cochin. So the Government passed the Bill to

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29. A Digest of Kerala Laws, Op. Cit., P. 45.

enfranchise these lands and to confer full proprietary rights on the holders of the land.

During 1980-81 one lakh title deeds were issued to those who are assigned new land. Of these 15,000 were fishermen families and 20,000 were scheduled castes and tribes families. Compensation for small land owners whose land was assigned to tenants was increased from Rs.5,000 to 10,000.

The election manifesto of the LDF in 1987 proposed that the surplus lands would be identified with popular support end distributed. Arrears of lease rent, purchase price to landlords, loss of compensation of hutment dwellers etc. would be cancelled[30].

During the first two years 2082 acres of surplus land were distributed to more than 10,000 farm workers of whom 49% belonged to SC and ST. Amendments were made in the Land Reform Act to give entitlements to a particular type of tenants in the Malabar area and to certain families in the Kasargod area over the lands under their possession. With the amendment the Government was empowered to and the system of purchase price given to landlords by hutment dwellers. The liability for making these payments was taken over by government.

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30. Election Manifesto of the LDF, (Trivandrum : 1987) P.7.

A draft bill was submitted for the consent of the President of India, by which a special tribunal would be constituted to dipose of the long pending surplus land disputes.

As a result of an intensive campaign, title deeds could be given to 21,011 persons. Steps were taken to rehabilitate 69,750 persons inhabiting the Puramboke lands of local bodies. More than one lakh settlers in the state got the benefit of the Government's decision to issue possession certificates to those who had settled down in the forest areas before 1977. As many as 75,000 acres of land belonging to the Forest and Revenue Departments would come into the hands of the settlers. By the possession of certificates, the settlers would be able to get loans. The Government started issuing possession certificates to 42,000 families for 20,000 hectares.

Educational Policy

The spectacular achievements made in the field of education in the State were not due to any sudden spurt of activity but by the sustained efforts made by all governments over a long period of time. The first Ministry of the State of Kerala introduced the Kerala Education Act, 1958 which aimed at the control of the Private educational

agencies in the State. There were numerous malpractices in the privately owned schools. Managers often misused their power for selfish motives. In Travancore and Cochin areas when there was no direct payment, teachers were never paid regularly. They therefore, pressed for the direct payment of salary by the government[31].

The Bill was the first comprehensive one in the field of education. The most important features of the Bill was that it sought to impose certain responsibilities on managers of private schools such as to maintain records of properties of their schools and submit a list of such properties to the concerned authority. Section 9 Clause 1 of the Bill required the government to pay the salary of teachers and non-teaching staff directly or through the headmasters of the school. The selection of teachers was entrusted to the PSC. The PSC selected the candidates for each district separately and the list of selected candidates would be published in the Gazette. Teachers of aided schools would be appointed by the Manager only from the selection list. Section 12 of the Act specifically prescribed the pay scale of private school teachers. They would get the same salary as government school teachers.

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31. S.C. Joseph, Kerala-the Communist State (Madras : 1959), PP. 151-52.

The teacher of an aided school could not be dismissed or removed, reduced in rank or suspended by the manager without the previous sanction of the government.

Section 14 of the Bill sought to enable the government to take over private schools on a temporary or permanent basis. The government could take over the school for the purpose of standardising general education of the state or for improving the literacy of any area or for public interest. So the Bill was a comprehensive one intended to the overall change in the system of school education in the state.

But the Governor reserved the Bill for the consideration of the President of India. As the Bill affected the minority rights, the President returned it to the Governor under Article 201 of the Constitution for the reconsideration of the Assembly. Meanwhile, the Government was suspended by the Central Government and on 22 February, 1960 a Congress-PSP Coalition Government assumed office. As soon as the Ministry came to office the church and the NSS started exerting pressures on the Government to get the Education Act amended. They insisted on the restoration of the power of the managers to punish teachers, the removal of provisions regarding the selection of teachers and to end

the direct payment of salary to teachers.

Finally the Government introduced the Kerala Education (Amendment) Bill 1960. The Bill sought to amend section 11 and 12 of the previous Act. It gave the managers complete power to appoint teachers from among qualified hands. They could also suspend the teachers without the previous sanction of the government. The Bill was signed by the Governor on 26th December 1960. Thus the first attempt of the Communist Ministry to check the powers of the Private School Management was a failure. The Government did not get any support from the beneficiaries of the Bill and the tactics of the pressure groups in education find its way to resist the government's actions.

During the first CPI (M) led Coalition Government, it passed the Kerala University Bill, 1967[32]. During the time of the passing of the Bill, the Kerala University had the jurisdiction extended to the whole of Kerala. The Act was aimed at increasing the Control of Government over the University and the private colleges of Kerala.

The Act was an all comprehensive one. It changed the composition of the Senate and the Syndicate. In the Kerala

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32. Legislative Assembly Bill No. 8 of 1967. The Bill finally passed on 26th February, 1969.

University Act of 1957, all the Principles of 100 affiliated colleges were the ex-officio members of the Senate. The 1967 Act proposed that there should be only 15 members elected by the principles of colleges. The non-teaching staff of the University and affiliated colleges were given the right to elect one representative each.

The Act sought to constitute an Academic Council. The Council consisted of the Vice-Chancellor, the Director of Public Instruction, Director of Technical Education, Director of Collegiate Education, Deans of Faculties, Heads of University Department of Study and Research, Principals of affiliated colleges. The powers, duties and functions of the Academic Council was :

1. To advise the Syndicate on all academic matters
2. To make regulations and to amend the same
3. To prescribe the courses of studies in the institutions maintained by or affiliated to the University.
4. To prescribe the qualification of teachers.
5. To prescribe the qualification for admission of students for various courses of studies and to the examinations.
6. To make proposals for research and advancement of knowledge.
7. To make proposals for the institution of fellowships, scholarships, studentship, medals etc.

8. To decide what examinations of other universities may be accepted as equivalent to those of the University.
9. To arrange for the co-ordination of studies and teaching in affiliated colleges and recognised institutions.

The Act increased the powers of the Government over the University and the private colleges. It also empowered the Government to take over the management of private colleges for temporary or permanent basis.

Here also the Government amended a large portion of the Bill due to pressure from private management. The Government accepted the amendement relating to the power of Government to take over private colleges. The power of the pro-chancellor to visit colleges was also deleted. The only substantial reforms that remained after the amendment were those relating to the organisation structure. The condition of services of private colleges had not materially improved. The High Court and the Supreme Court thought that chapters VIII and IX of the Act violated Art 30 (1) of the Constitution as regards minority managements[33]. The Court

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33. The provisions in Chapter VIII that challenged in the court dealt with the following things. (1) The composition of the governing body and the managing council of private colleges (2) appointment of managers (3) affiliation of Colleges (4) condition of probation for teachers in private colleges (5) conditions of service of teachers in private colleges (6) disputes relating to the service condition of teachers (7) the right of teacher in private colleges to the member of legislative Assembly (8) non-teaching staff of private colleges (9) penality for colleges not obeying with the provisions of the Act.

observed that the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice guaranteed to minorities by Art 30 (1) of the Constitution could not be regulated in the interest of the institution. In Chapter IX Section 63 was challenged. It empowered the Government to take over the management of private colleges under certain conditions and vest it in the University for a period not exceeding two years without compensation. The power of taking over private colleges was invalidated on the ground that it violated the guarantee against compulsory acquisition or requisition as provided by Article 31 (2) of the Constitution since it had not provided for compensation. Hence it was void in respect of all managements[34]. So the first step of the CPI (M) led Government's to check the powers of the private management in University education was also failed by the combined effort from the management.

To establish and incorporate a university at Kozhikode, the Government introduced the Calicut University Bill, 1968[35]. A University at Kozhikode was necessary for the urgent development of higher education in the underdeveloped region of the northern districts of the state. In view of

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34. Indian Law Reports, Kerala Series Indux, 1968, Vol 2, PP. 653-654.

35. KLA Bill No. 37 of 1968.

the phenomenal growth in educational facilities in the last decade, the number of institutions at every stage increased during the ten years from 1957 to 1967. The enrolment at the collegiate level which was 00.31 lakhs during 1957 had come upto 1.4 lakhs by 1967[36]. So it was impossible for a single University to cater efficiently to the expanding needs of higher education in Kerala.

The Government constituted a committee in November 1967 to investigate the setting up of a University. It submitted its report in February 1968. The Committee recommended that two universities could be established in the State. One should be an affiliating-cum-teaching University at Calicut and the other, the University of a federal type at Ernakulam. To start the University in the academic year 1968-69 the Government promulgated an ordinanace on 23rd July 1968. The organisational set up of the University was the same as that of Kerala University.

During the CPI-led coalition Government the Assembly passed four important bills relating to the field of education i.e., the Cochin University Act 1971, the Kerala Agricultural University Act 1971, the Kerala University Act 1974, the Calicut University Act 1975. By the Cochin

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36. Mathrubhumi (Cochin), 24 July, 1968.

University Act the Government established a University of a federal type at Cochin for the development of higher education with particular emphasis on post graduate studies and research in applied science, technology, industry and commerce[37] . The Kerala Agricultural University Act authorised the Government to start an Agricultural University at Mannuthy near Trichur for the development of agriculture and other related subjects like animal husbandry and dairy science. By passing the Kerala University and Calicut University Act the Government re-organised the two universities in the State.

The organisational set up of all the four universities was more or less the same. The Governor was the Chancellor of all the four Universities. Besides the Acts provided that the Minister in charge of education or agriculture would be the pro-chancellor of the respective Universities. The authorities of the universities were constituted in such a way as to give due representation to the various interests and trade. The Senate is the supreme authority of the University and it has the power to review the actions of the Syndicate and Academic Council in case these authorities

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37. The Acts and Ordinances of Kerala, 1970, The Law Department (Trivandrum : 1972), P. 257.

exceeded the powers conferred under the Act, statutes, ordinance or regulations. The Senate has also the powers, with the previous concurrence of the Government, to regulate the emoluments and prescribe the duties and conditions of service of teachers and non-teaching staff including that of private colleges affiliated to the respective universities[38].

The Constitution of the University Senate was made more broad-based, representation in the Senate being given to the local authorities, University Unions, Legislative Assembly, Trade Unions, non-teaching staff of the University and affiliated colleges. It was also provided that members elected by the General Council of the University Union would consist of representatives of post graduates, professional college, research scholars and lady students. Besides the Chancellor was empowered to nominate members representing research institutions, cultural associations, chambers of commerce, industries, authors, journalists, lawyers and linguistic minorities. In the General Council of Agricultural University representations were given to farmers, agricultural labourers, plantation labourers and women social workers. Thus, the hitherto unrepresented sections and trades were given representation in the supreme

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38. IV Kerala Legislative Assembly, Acts, Secretariat of Kerala (Trivandrum : 1974), P. 17.

authority of the University which paved the way for more radical changes in the University administration.

The constitution of the Syndicate, the Chief Executive bodies of the Universities also underwent some changes in tune with the time. Subject to the provisions of the Acts and Statutes, the executive powers of the Universities including the general superintendence and control over the institutions of the Universities were vested in the Syndicate. For the first time in the annals of academic history provision was made in Kerala to give representation to students in the Syndicate[39]. Representation was also given to the students in the academic council by nominating the General Secretary of the University Union to the Council.

Provisions were also made for the constitution of Student's Council under the Chairmanship of Vice-Chancellors to make recommendations to the Syndicate and Academic Council in all matters affecting the academic work of the students and to make suggestions in respect of all the rules relating to the discipline or welfare of the students[40]. In Kerala and Calicut Universities the Council consists of 24

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39. Indian Express, April 19, 1974.

40. Ibid., April 20, 1974.

members of whom 15 shall be students. One of the elected student members shall be the secretary of the Council.

A new Clause in the Bill authorised the Government to constitute a 10 member Board of Management to run the affairs of a private college for a maximum period of two years where the management had made the working of the institution impossible either by wilful closure or persistent default or refusal to carry out the duties cast on them by law or by gross mismanagement[41]. Where the institution involved happens to be run by any minority community the members to be nominated by the Government to the Board could be only from the concerned minority community.

The Kerala University Act 1974 also conferred on the private college teachers the right to contest election to the Assembly and parliament, retain the lien on their jobs and provided for communal reservation in top academic posts under the University[42].

During the Second CPI (M) led coalition Government there was no major policy implementation in the field of

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41. Ibid., April 20, 1974.

42. A Digest of Kerala Laws, 1980, Secretariat (Trivandrum : 1982), P. 20.

education. The Government amended the Calicut University Act 1975 in order to enable the members of the Syndicate to continue to hold office until their successors were elected[43]. The Kerala Agricultural University Act was also amended. It provided that if the General Council considers it necessary to have a Pro-vice Chancellor to assist the Vice-Chancellor in the discharge of his duties it may appoint a Pro-vice Chancellor. The term of the Syndicate of the Kerala University expired on 5th February 1980. So the Kerala University Act of 1974 was amended to enable the members of the Syndicate to continue to hold office until the next syndicate was constituted.

The University Laws (Amendment) Bill, 1981 provided that a teacher relieved from a private college on or after the 14th day of March, 1974, due to the abolition of course of study in that private college or due to the cessation of period for which he was appointed should be given preferences in the matter of future appointments in such private college under the Management of the educational agency within the University area.

The LDF Government again came to power in 1987. The present CPI (M) led Government tried to crush the stronghold

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43. Ibid., P.3.

of religion and communalism in the educational sector. It declared that new educational institutions would be sanctioned only on the basis of a scientific study. Priority would be given in the public sector. Educational structure would be made job-oriented. The decision to start the pre-degree Board would be cancelled. A comprehensive scheme would be evolved and implemented to eradicate illiteracy.

As an initial step the LDF Government cancelled the decision to form the Pre-Degree Board which was a controversial issue of the previous ministry and appointed a commission to probe into the allegations of irregularities in the valuation of papers and tabulation work in the Universities.

Due to the unscientific sanctioning of new schools a huge number of protected teachers were added. Several measures were taken to absorb these supernumerary teachers. So it took a firm decision that no aided or unaided schools in the private sector would be sanctioned during the academic year 1987-88 and 1988-89. It further evolved norms for the transfer of teachers.

The procedure for staff fixation has been simplified. It has been decided that TTC holders alone should be

appointed as LPS teachers. The Government extended the noon-meal scheme to the UPS pupils. Pupils of Std.I numbering six lakhs are being given slates, pencils and text books free of cost.

Provisions in the Kerala and Calicut Universities regarding inter-university transfer of teachers were enforced. The UGC approval for the Mahatma Gandhi University has been secured.

New courses have been started in engineering colleges and polytechnics. Three new polytechnics have been started. An intensive programme for eradication of illiteracy has been started.

The Government appointed a one-man commission to study and report to the Government on the question of introducing UGC scales of pay to college teachers. After getting the report the Government implemented U.G.C scales to the college teachers.

The Government brought the 59 lakh school students in government and aided schools under the purview of Group Accident Insurance Scheme. The entire premium expenditure will be met by the Government. Those who die in accidents or sustain injuries will get compensation upto Rs. 10,000/-

The vocational higher secondary courses have been started in 27 more High Schools totalling the number to 100. The Parent Teacher Association, local bodies and co-operatives have been permitted to conduct nursery classes in Government schools having adequate accommodation facilities.

CHAPTER VI

CENTRE-STATE RELATIONS

In a federal political system the Union-State relations are a significant pointer to the pattern of political processes. This has to be viewed in the context of parliamentary democracy wherein the ruling parties at the Centre and in the States are likely to be different. The ruling parties at the Centre and the States maintain their own support basis and political gain. When the CPI (M) led Coalition Government came to power in the state in 1967, the Congress Party was in power at the Centre. The Congress was in opposition here. In such circumstances, there was no possibility of cordial and friendly relations between them. Both the Governments may use the machinery of government for their own political gain and to maintain their political ideology. The Kerala Government criticised the actions of the Central Government as politically motivated and alleged discrimination against Kerala.

During the first two decade of independence, the issue of Centre-State relation was relatively dormant and it generally received low political awareness from the political parties. The major reason for this was that the INC was in power at the Centre and in the States. But the situation changed with the 1967 General Elections. The election manifestos of non-congress parties pointed out that



the Congress was responsible for all the mass in the country, for regional imbalance, for linguistic controversies, inter-state disputes on boundaries, river water etc..

The CPI stood against all injustice and discrimination of the State by the Central Government. It demanded that wider powers and authority, particularly in financial and economic matters, be given to the states. It argued for the amendment of the 7th schedule of the Constitution.

The CPI (M) Manifesto said : "The Congress Government denies real autonomy to States and Union Territories, by transferring more and more powers to the Centre, the Government is negating the autonomy of the constituent units and turning the federal structure of Indian Union into a Unitary one"[1].

In 1971 the leaders of the Congress (I) retained their traditional belief in a strong Centre. But they implied that the Central Government was not objective and impartial in its dealings with the states. The party demanded some impartial machinery for settling inter-state border disputes. It sought to establish the accountability of

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1. Election Manifesto of the CPI (M), CPI (M) State Committee (Trivandrum : 1964), P. 8.

Governors and to ensure impartiality in the exercise of their powers[2].

The SSP demanded a new Constituent Assembly to frame a new Constitution with greater emphasis on de-centralisation of administration. It advocated the principle of election for all key executive posts and demanded the abolition of the post of Governor.

In the 1970 election the CPI (M) condemned the existing framework of the Centre-State relations and the role of the Governor[3]. It wanted fundamental changes in the system of Centre-State relations and made these specific demands.

1. Abolition of the post of Governor and Presidential rule in State.
2. Revision of the allocation of powers and function between the State and the Centre with a view to making the state's power real.
3. Most of the subjects of the concurrent list of the 7th schedule of the Constitution should be transferred to the State.
4. 75% of the share of all the taxes centrally collected should go to the State.

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2. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.VI, No. 24, June 12, 1971.
3. People's Democracy, February 12, 1970.

5. Complete control by the State Governments over all its officials including those who belong to All India Services.

According to the concept of People's Democratic Government, the key features of Namboodiripad's outline were the following[4].

1. The Indian Union shall be a federation based on democratic contralism.
2. The people are sovereign. All organs of the State power shall be answerable to the people. The supreme authority in exercising state power shall be the people's representatives elected on the basis of adult franchise and the principle of proportional representation.
3. All States shall have real autonomy and equal powers.
4. The People's Democratic State, in the field of local administration shall ensure a wide net-work of local bodies provided with adequate finances.

In this way the CPI (M), CPI and other opposition parties were trying to criticise the Congress for all the irregularities in Central-State relations. The CPI (M) was trying to institutionalise the class character of the

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4. Ibid.

Indian society. It followed an anti-centre policy during the I and II CPI (M) led Governments. This was widely criticised by the CPI and other non-communist parties in and outside the government.

There were two issues brought up at the time of the first CPI (M) led Government - first, State Government's Policies in handling popular agitations and second with regard to the demand for financial distribution. The Ministry was against the using of police as a means to suppress popular agitations. The Union Government, on the other hand, wanted law and order to be maintained and its assets and property protected. The clash came soon after the Central Government Employees went on a strike in September 1968. The Union Government, without informing or seeking the consent of the Chief Minister of Kerala, moved the Central Reserve Police into the state. As maintenance of law and order was the obligation of the state, this step of the Centre was considered a serious violation of the constitutional provisions[5]. There were several such instances of the Centre imposing on the state politics in violation of the federal spirit[6].

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5. Ibid., Vol 20, 28 September, 1968, PP. 1465-66.
6. Ibid.

The State Government launched a struggle protesting against the Centre for insufficient quota of foodgrains and delay in releasing foodgrains for distribution. The food situation in Kerala has become grave and the Government was compelled to reduce the quantum of ration from 160 grams a day to 80 grams.

Rice is the staple food of the people of Kerala. The State produces only 40% of its rice requirements. After the breaking up of the Southern Food Zone consisting of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Mysore, and Kerala into separate State Zone in 1964, Kerala has been under statutory rationing, the ration quota being 160 grams of rice. The Central Government knows perfectly that Kerala's huge food deficit is due to concentration on cash crops, which earn valuable foreign exchange for the country. While Kerala sacrifices her food production in favour of producing cash crops it is the moral responsibility of the Centre and the neighbouring states to ensure the Keralites their normal ration of food[7]. Kerala also claimed that when the single state food zones were established the centre implicitly assured the state of the responsibility of maintaining the normal ration of 160 gram. But the Central Government

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7. D.R.Mankekar, The Red Riddle of Kerala, (Bombay : 1965), P. 46.

decided to cut short the monthly supply of rice from the usual 80,000 tonnes to 45,000 tonnes[8].

The joint declaration of policy adopted by the united front parties before the IV General Elections had pointed out that though Kerala earned foreign exchange needed for the country by producing cash crops, the Centre's wrong policies had given rise to acute food deficit in the State[9]. They asserted that "to solve the food problem, substantial changes have to be made in the policies at present pursued by the Central Government. For instance it is necessary to bring wholesale trade in food grain into the state sector, ensuring that small traders and co-operative societies are not adversely affected, guarantee fair prices to the cultivating peasants. While at the same time organising distribution in such a way as to make food available to the consumers at low prices. All these could not be done by State Government alone especially the Government of a deficit State like Kerala. What the Government of Kerala will do is to exert pressure on the Centre to concede the demand that Kerala should get the rice it needs at low prices".

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8. E.M.S.Namboodiripad, Anti-communist Gang up in Kerala, CPI (M) (Calcutta : 1970), P. 54.

9. Indian Express, April 4, 1967.

There were two aspects of the problem. The first was one regarding the basic policies pursued by the Centre in relation to food including that of keeping of supplies to Kerala. The second was the internal procurement policy of the State Government. The joint declaration tended to place the blame at the door of the Centre, which implied a policy of pressure on the Centre by the parties of the united front. This policy line was best suited to the ideological position of the CPI (M).

In this period, polarisation arose on this question with the CPI (M) continuing to blame the Centre and the CPI finding fault with the internal procurement policies of the CPI (M) food minister[10]. By spearheading the campaign against the food minister the CPI increasingly mobilised with it the other parties of the United Front. About the poor record of the State Government on the procurement of food Achuta Menon of the CPI asked : "what moral right can we have to criticise the Centre for not stepping up internal procurement so as to supply us with rice[11].

Another aspect of food policy is the control over the movement of foodgrains. Such control has been in force even before the Ministry assumed office. This control over

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10. Ibid.

11. C.Achuta Menon "What Happened in Kerala, CPI Publication (New Delhi : 1969), P. 20.

movement from a surplus to a deficit state has been imposed to fecilitate state procurement of foodgrains for supply through fair price shops. However, after the Ministry assumed office the demand for free movement grew popular, because the system of control in no way seemed to ease the food supply position. This demand was fulfilled as considerable pressure was built up for it both inside and outside the Government. Though at the all India level the CPI stood for a policy of control over food grain trade, in Kerala it supported the removal of control along with the other anti-CPI (M) parties.

On 20th March 1967 and 8th May 1968, the Kerala Legislative Assembly passed resolutions in favour of the CPI (M) opinion[12]. The first one urged the Centre to ensure adequate supply of food materials and the second one requested the Centre to make good the increase in the price of rice allotted to the state by granting subsidy.

One of the demands made by the leaders of the United Front in the matter was the permission from the Centre for direct import of food materials. The argument put forwarded by them in this connection was that since the state was earning a considerable amount of foreign exchange, a part of

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12. Indian Express, 9th May, 1968.

it should be allotted to the State for import of food materials[13].

But the Union Food Minister (Jegajivan Ram) categorically said that no state would be permitted to have direct import from any country[14].

The United Front, to voice its protest against the discrimination of the Centre was to resort to dharna inside the Parliament as well as at the residence of the Prime Minister. This idea was mooted by the CPI (M). On June 1967, fifteen opposition MPs began an indefinite dharna outside the residence of the Prime Minister demanding immediate solution to Kerala's food problem.

In September 1967, at the initiative of the CPI (M) all the United Front Parties organised joint meetings, demonstrations, mass satyagrahas etc. before the Central Government Offices, in protest against the Centre's alleged indifference to the food situation in Kerala. All these culminated into a state-wide 'Bandh' on 11th September 1967.

Following the dismissal of the West Bengal United Front Government in the last quarter of 1967, the Kerala CPI (M)

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13. Hindu, March 9, 1968.
14. People's Democracy, April 16, 1967.

stepped up its anti-centre campaign. After listing some of the Centre's derelictions such as the failure to procure surplus food grains from the landlords in all states, rejection of Kerala's demand to let it purchase rice from wherever it was available, refusal to meet the cost of increased D.A. to State Government Employees, it stated that "the continuance of our party in the coalition under these conditions without leading the entire people into a struggle against the Centre for adequate food at reasonable prices would be compromising its position in the extreme"[15].

In May 1968, the CPI(M) started another campaign against the CPI for its unwillingness to concentrate on the struggle against the central government. In June, the CPI (M) accused the CPI of hatching a plot to overthrow the CPI (M) led United Front Government with the support of the Congress Party. On June 28, again E.M.S. Namboodiripad and A.K.Gopalan declared in a joint statement that while the CPI and the other parties thought of good relation with the Centre somehow or other, the CPI (M) believed that the existence of non-congress Government itself depended on the struggle against the centre government as proved by the experience of West Bengal and other non-congress states[16].

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15. Ibid., May 14, 1968.
16. Ibid., June 2, 1968.

The CPI(M) campaign against the Centre reached its high watermark in September, 1968, when the CPI(M) refused to arrest central government employees for taking part in a strike. These differences continued to sour the relations between the CPI and the CPI(M) to the last days of the United Front Ministry in Kerala. All these methods adopted by the leadership of the CPI(M) were not at all successful because there was no unanimity among the coalescing parties in fighting for the rights of the State. There was also no consensus among them regarding the methods to be adopted for achieving the goal. Even the CPI was very critical of the CPI(M) agitation programme. Minister P.R.Kurup (CPI) said that a Bandh was essentially a war imposed on the people. It cannot be accepted in the name of a struggle against the Centre[17]. The CPI(M) believed that the State Government could not find solutions for any of the fundamental problems without leading a determined struggle against the centre whereas the CPI was of the view that the United Front could and must give necessary relief to the people within the framework of the State Government. On the food issue, for instance, the CPI felt that the CPI(M) should instead of leading a futile struggle against the centre try to perform better on the internal procurement of food.

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17. Ibid., October 7, 1968.

In a statement to the Government the CPI(M) declared that "the basic reality is that the levers of economic powers are in the hands of the big capitalists, landlords, and that the entire might of the law, constitution, bureaucracy and administration supports the maintenance of these vested interests" and that "Every issue of the people's food will be an arena of class struggle".

Thus the attitude of CPI(M) and the other partners of the United Front Government towards the Centre was different. Though there were severe irregularities and discrimination by the Centre the CPI(M)'s characterisation of class differences and its agitation against the Centre did not get enough support from the other partners of the Government or the people.

In the period of CPI led coalition Government, the Government of Kerala continued to accuse the Centre of discrimination against Kerala. But the Government preferred "pressure and persuation" to agitation against the Centre[18]. The Government called for a thorough review of centre-state financial relations in their entirety. It was due to the fact that the continuance of the Mini Front Ministry was

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18. K.C. John, Anti-Delhi Feeling in Kerala" The Times of India, 19 May, 1971.

wholly dependant on the external support of the Congress Party and since 1971 the Congress was the major partner of the coalition Government. So there was no agitation against the Central Government.

Accordingly, the Ministry had to tolerate situations in which it was content to pressurise and persuade the Centre to concede Kerala's rightful demands, whereas the centre chose to go slow. Some of the major issues related to Centre's consent to bills for nationalisation of private forests and plantations owned by foreigners for, granting constitutional protection to Land Reforms Act, raising the price of locally grown rubber, expediting the building of Cochin Shipyard and other development projects, and extension of projects for the unemployed.

Supply of food grains continues to be a critical issue and both the major coalition partners, the CPI and the Congress-are often mutually collaborating in their bid to make the Centre agrees to the demands of the State Government. The requirement of Kerala for providing a 160 gram rice ration was 90,000 tonnes a month. The allotment to Kerala till December 1973 was 80,000 tonnes. However, the allotment of rice from January 1974 was reduced to 60,000 tonnes which was still further cut down to 45,000 tonnes in May. The state Government thus cut down the rice

ration to 100 grams a day[19].

The wheat allotment to Kerala was also cut down by the centre from the monthly 80,000 tonnes to 30,000 tonnes since January 1974[20]. Out of this quantity about 5,500 tonnes were issued for conversion into wheat products by flour mills. The balance left was only 2,500 tonnes which was hardly sufficient to give a wheat ration of 5 grams a day per adult[21]. Merchants in the State were unable to bring wheat from outside on account of the restriction imposed on wheat movement and the take over of wheat trade by the Government[22]. The state was therefore to meet its entire requirement from Central allotment. On 8th February, 1974 the Kerala Legislative Assembly unanimously urged the centre through a resolution to supply enough foodgrains to ensure a 160 gram ration per head per day in the State. Further a ministerial team headed by the Chief Minister went to Delhi to press the demand. The KPCC President, A.K.Antony also accused the Government of India of evading its responsibility to provide adequate food for the State.

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19. Indian Express, January 5, 1974.
20. Ibid.
21. Mathrubhumi, February 9, 1974.
22. Ibid., October 7, 1968.

On January 1974 the Chief Minister condemned the credit squeeze of the Reserve Bank of India as irrational and injurious to the balanced development of industry in the State[23]. As in 1972, the outstanding credit of the scheduled, commercial Banks was announced to be Rs. 5300 crores. The Four States of Maharastra, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Delhi had managed to secure more than 70% of the total advances. Kerala, on the other hand, got a mere 2.9% of the total (Rs. 154 crores). Of this Rs.66 crores was for industry and in Kerala, industry only meant shall scale industry. But imposing carbs on this sector of small scale industry production would stop and unemployment would the result[24].

On March 14, 1974, the Chief Minister said in the Assembly that the share of Kerala in the central taxes had gone down in the sixth Finance Commission also. Kerala's per-capita income was one of the lowest in India. During the discussion of the V Five Year Plan, per-capita income was also considered for the share of Central taxes. Then it was decided to give a 10% weightage in the allocation of states whose per-capita income was less than the national

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23. Indian Express, January 1, 1974.
24. Ibid.

average. But this low rate of per-capita income was not considered by the VI Finance Commission.

During the CPI-Congress coalition, the Congress was the ruling party at the Centre. In spite of that the CPI could carry independent campaign and struggles whenever it felt that the policies of the Central Government were wrong. The party carried out a large number of campaigns against the Central Government in September-October 1973, through Jathas, public meetings, picketing of government offices etc. In all these it came out sharply against the policy of the Central Government not taking over the wholesale trade in food grains. In March 1974, the CPI conducted state-wide mass march against price rise and inflation.

The most significant of such struggle was the railway strike in which the CPI fully participated and lent its full support. On this occasion the party came into sharp conflict with the Youth Congress. Some members of the Congress even asked the CPI to quit the Kerala Government to struggle against the Centre. But they simply carried on their agitation and struggle without affecting the stability of the State Government.

It may be concluded that the State was discriminated against during the period of CPI led coalition Government also. But the Government was not ready to lead an agitation

against the centre like that of CPI(M). They preferred the way of persuation and compromise.

During the period from 1977 to '80 the centre-state relation was not so smooth. The then Chief Minister A.K.Antony said that all parties must unite in putting pressure on the Centre to forsake policies harmful to the State economy. He said the very foreign exchange earned by Malayalees working abroad was being used to import rubber and copra to detriment of farmers in the state[25]. The price of agricultural commodities, produced in the State was controlled by trade Manipulators outside Kerala.

The next Chief Minister of CPI, P.K.Vasudevan Nair also requested the Central Government to adopt a more liberal attitude to the State in the matter of plan funds, financial assistance etc[26]. He was ready to follow friendly relation with the centre and requested the attention of the Centre regarding the new Industrial Relation Bill, the sons of soil theory, import of rubber, coconut oil and copra and questions of coastal railway and the Calicut Airport. Yet the period was not stable to pressurise the Centre to get real benefit from the Centre.

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25. Ibid., October 23, 1978.
26. Ibid., November 2, 1978.

In 1980 Mrs. Indira Gandhi came back to power at the Centre and once again Kerala witnessed the cameback of CPI(M) led coalition Government. After assuming power, on 26 January 1980, the Kerala Chief Minister, E.K.Nayanar stated that his Governments effort would be to build good relations between the State and the Centre on the basis of a federation [27]. But, when the Central Government dissolved the nine non-congress State Assemblies, A.K. Antany, President of the Congress (U) described the dissolation of the State Assemblies as an authoritation step cutting at the root of federal set up in the country[28].

The CPI called for massive agitation against the anti-democratic action of the Central Government. The workers of the LDF observed February 25 as the 'black day' by holding demonstrations and meeting in several centres in Kerala to protest against the dissolation of nine State Assemblies by the Central Government[29].

The LDF's relation with the Centre became strained again on the question of Preventive Detention Act. The Central Government put back the Act on the Statute Book as a measure to prevent hoarding and price increase. But the LDF

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27. Ibid., January 27, 1980.
28. Hindu, 19, February 1980.
29. Ibid., 26 February, 1980.

Government refused to implement the Act on the ground that it was no solution to the above problem. They asserted that only an effective public distribution system could solve the problem.

Meanwhile, C.M.Stephen, an outstanding leader of the Congress(I) strongly reminded the LDF leaders that Centre would intervene if Kerala Government failed to act. But justifying the stand on Kerala Government, A.K.Antony remarked at a press conference that the state Government wasnot liable to implement all the policies of the Centre[30].

Another serious problem which made the Centre-State relation tough was the Centre's policy of import. The LDF Government considered the decision of the Central Government to import rubber, copra, cocoa and cashew as evidence of an anti-Kerala attitude of the Central Government. K.R.Gouri, State Agriculture Minister said that the Centre helped the Private Units at the cost of the cultivators by withdrawing the import levy on cocoa[31]. The Kerala Legislative Assembly unanimously passed a resolution requesting the centre to stop the import. An all party delegation led by the Chief Minister, met the Prime Minister on 24th August 1981 and submitted a memorandum. Though the Prime Minister assured

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30. Kerala Kaumudi (Trivandrum) 22 March, 1980.
31. Link (New Delhi) 27 June, 1980.

the delegation that the Government should do everything possible to rectify the mistakes in the import, nothing was done in the field.

In response of the call of the Kerala Karshaka Sangham, thousands of volunteers and agriculturists of Kerala picketed the post offices all over the State on August 25 as a protest against the centre's import policy of crops [32].

The other area of tension was the decision of the Central Government to exclude Malayalees from recruitment to the Central Reserve Police (CRP). The Central Government justified it by stating that such a decision is to give adequate representation to other regions and not against the Malayalees as there are enough Malayalees already in the CRP [33].

The relation between Central Government and Kerala further deteriorated as a result of an order issued by the Central Government to all Ministers, Heads of the Departments, the Institutions like the UPSC, PSC, Central Vigilance Commission, Supreme Court, Intelligence Bureau, Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, and Planning Commission to

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32. Kerala Kaumudi, 26 August, 1981.

33. Ibid., 15 March, 1981.

investigate about the character and early history of the candidates recruited to Central Services from Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura[34]. The action was protested that it was against natural justice and a clear violation of equal rights guaranteed by the Constitution. This circular sowed the seeds of disintegration and ruin[35]. In a democratic country it is not justifiable to investigate a persons political affiliations for the recruitment of government post[36].

The Kerala Legislative Assembly passed a resolution asking the Central Government to withdraw the verification system relating to the appointment of candidates from the three states.

Meanwhile, the LDF Government collapsed from internal clashes. Though the Government's agitation against the Central Government is justifiable on many grounds they failed to secure the co-operation of the coalescing partners and in mobilising the popular support. Major partners like the Congress (S) The K.C. (M) and the CPI had no unanimity of opinion with the CPI (M) on Centre-State Relation. The re-organised LDF came back to power in 1987 under the

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34. Ibid., 16 March, 1981.
35. Mathrubhumi (Trivandrum) February 6, 1981.
36. Indian Express, 15 February, 1981.

leadership of CPI (M). The Food problem was the major area of disagreement between Kerala and the Centre during the third CPI (M) led Ministry also. The rice allotment to this State was 1.25 lakh tonnes when the Government took over the administration. In view of the lean months the monthly rice allotment was enhanced to 1.45 lakh tonnes as usual in June 1987 and this quota continued till January. An additional allotment of 20,000 tonnes was also sanctioned to the State during the Onam Season of September 1987. However, the allotment was cut down to 1.35 lakh tonnes in February 1988 and subsequently to 1.25 lakh tonnes from March. There was no additional allotment during the onam in August 1988. From February, 1989, the rice allotment to state was further cut down to one lakh[37].

During 1977-'81 the Centre used to allot on an average 16 lakh tonnes of rice every year. In those years, the State had 40 lakhs family ration cards comprising 4 crore units. In 1988 the number of ration cards and units increased by 90 lakhs and 64 crore respectively. The difficulties can easily be guessed as the ration requirement increases without a corresponding increase in the supply.

The Central Government argued that the reduction in rice allotment is attributable to fall in rice production

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37. Interview with E.Chandrasekharan Nair, Food Minister of Kerala.

and the consequent fall in the buffer stock. But the figures of Union Agricultural Ministry's Annual report of 1988-89 indicate that rice production stood at 638.3 lakh tonnes in 1985-86 but went down to 605 lakh tonnes in 1986-87 and to 567.3 lakh tonnes in 1987-88[38]. But the report indicate that during 1988-'89 rice production went up considerably and reached 695 lakh tonnes. Similarly, in 1987-88 the Government could procure only 47.7 lakh tonnes of rice. But the Government could procure 80 lakh tonnes of rice during 1988-89. The Central Government used to allot 1.45 lakh tonnes of rice to Kerala every month even in 1987-88 when rice production was the lowest. But the rice allotment was reduced to one lakh tonnes in 1989 when production considerably increased.

Another argument of the Central Government was that the rice allotment was cut down to all states due to the increased availability of rice in the open market following higher production. The argument may be correct in some states but the state of Kerala had no chance to increase their production due to the increasing cultivation of cash crops and the maximum utility of agricultural land.

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38. Administrative Report, Ministry of Agriculture New Delhi, P. 10.

The import policy announced by the Central Government in March 1988 was another point of differences between the Centre and the State. The policy had far reaching consequences on the agriculture economy of Kerala[39]. The Government decision to allow import of copra, coconut oil, rubber, cloves and nut neg affected the cash crops, the main agricultural products of Kerala.

The Kerala Government and the political parties including the Congress (I) and the KC (J) and farmers' organisations were unanimous in saying that the new policy would have very harmful effects on the agricultural economy of Kerala. They said that it would break Kerala's backbone. The new announcement came when Kerala was complaining of discrimination by the Centre. The state economy was already in doldrums and any fall on the price of cash crops would further put the economy in shambles. For example a fall of one rupee per coconut would result in a loss of Rs.400 crore to the farmers of Kerala in a year.

The omission of Kerala from the package plan for enhansing agricultural production from the centre's programme to dig a million wells, and refusal to accept the plea to declare coconut as oilseed were allegedly deleberate

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39. Link (New Delhi) May, 1988.

acts of discrimination. Almost all cash crops produced in Kerala were being imported under the new import policy. It was alleged that the central government succumbed to pressure from the industrial lobby and the policy was compounded by the denial of any benefit to the consumer of manufactured goods[40]. Even when the prices of natural rubber fell steeply, the prices of tyres and other rubber products remained the same. In the same way the price fall of coconut oil was not reflected in the price of soaps and other such goods made of coconut oil.

The grave repercussions of the import policy on the state's economy came up for discussion in the state Assembly through an adjournment motion moved by the KC (J)[41]. They said that by bringing this adjourment motion they were not orchestrating the ruling LDF's anti-centre stands. They were echoing the apprehensions and sentiments of the entire farming community. It also launched a state-wide campaign to protest against the new import policy. The KPCC President, A.K.Antony urged the Central Government to amend its import policy which went against the very interest of Kerala.

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40. Ibid.

41. Malayala Manorama (Kottayam), March 20, 1988.

The fall of coconut price was also a serious problem of Kerala. About 35% of the state's income is derived from the agricultural sector, and its 20% is contributed by coconut. It is estimated that there are more than 25 lakh coconut cultivators in Kerala and 24% of the total agricultural land is used for coconut cultivation. 10 million people in Kerala depend on coconut cultivation and allied industries directly or indirectly for their livelihood[42].

The total vegetable oil requirement of the country is around 45 lakh tonnes. The total internal production comes to 33 lakh tonnes. The contribution of coconut oil comes to around two lakh tonnes. To bridge the gap between demand and supply, nearly 12 lakh tonnes of vegetable oil costing Rs. 1500 crores is imported. The Central Government had been implementing short term and long term schemes to increase production of oil seeds. The Agricultural Pricing Commission studies the price level of oil seeds and suggests floor price for them. But Kerala's request to accept coconut as oil seed was not included by the central government. It did not fix the floor price for coconut. So the price of coconut products remains unsteady all the time. The State Goverment's efforts like Coconut Replantation

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42. Kerala calling, Department of Public Relation, Government of Kerala Trivandrum, September 1989, No.11, P.6.

Scheme, establishment of Coconut Development Corporation, Coconut Marketing Societies, procurement of copra through state co-operative federation had not been effective. The State Government said that the strong oil lobbies of Calcutta and Bombay controlled the oil market. These lobbies are capable of exerting strong influence on the import policy of the Centre.

Finally on 19th May 1989, the Central Government decided to procure coconut through NAFED at open market price. But the copra procured by NAFED in a month's time was only 1000 tonnes. Though the KERAFED controlled by the State Government also entered the market for procurement of copra the coconut cultivators could not be saved from the ill-effects of the price fall. Finally with the change of the Central Government Kerala's demands were accepted. The new government declared Rs. 1500/- as floor price per quintal of copra. On October 17, 1990 it also accepted Kerala's demand for declaring coconut as oil seed.

The frequent increase of the price of newsprint produced in India and imported from abroad also affected Kerala. The crisis in the availability of newsprint would affect the freedom of the press as also the development of newspapers. It would have a disastrous effect on the educational and cultural field of Kerala. The Kerala

Legislative Assembly adopted a unanimous resolution on July 7, 1989 requesting the Central Government to solve the crisis and make available printing paper[43]. But the centre was not willing to review the price rise of newsprint.

The drought and the flood affected the agriculture of Kerala and the Central assistance for it was also a question of Centre-State relations.

The drought and floods during 1988-89, affected agricultural crops and caused severe damage estimated to Rs.184.73 crores[44]. An amount of Rs.one crore was required. for preventing the out-break of water borne diseases. Similarly, employment generation programme had to be undertaken to create two crores man days at a cost of Rs.50 crores by undertaking works in the field of soil conservation, irrigation, repair of roads, social forestry etc. So the LDF Government submitted a memorandum for Rs.119.50 crores by way of central assistance.

After a deeper analysis of the drought situation, the state government submitted to the Centre another supplementary memorandrum for a further assistance of Rs.143.64 crores. The memorandum pointed out that the total

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43. Indian Express, July 8, 1989.

44. Drought and Central Assistance, Department of Public Relation, Kerala State (Trivandrum) 1987.

loss in the agricultural sector was estimated to be Rs.59,590.82 lakhs. Out of the total assistance of Rs.25,414.36 lakhs sought from the Centre, the latter approved only Rs. 365 lakhs for drinking water supply. When Rs.95 crores was demanded for providing relief to the drought affected farmers, the amount sanctioned by the Centre was Rs. 3.45 crores. The Union Government released an amount of Rs. 20 crores in two instalments as ways and means advance assistance for drought. Thus the Central assistance for relief scheme was completely inadequate to the state.

The award of the Finance Commissions was disadvantageous to Kerala. A comparative approach of the share of Central Government investment in non-departmental undertaking was a clear example of this fact. Till 1970 Kerala got 3% of Centre's investment which was similar to Maharashtra then. But in 1985 March, the share of Maharashtra was raised to 16.1% while that of Kerala was reduced to 1.7%[45]. The share of Andra Pradesh was fixed at 8.4% Assam 5.2% and Bihar 12.3%. But, Kerala did not get a preferential share but Kerala was discriminated against. The 36% of the young people of Kerala were unemployed. But

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45. Mathrubhumi, December 5, 1987.

the unemployment rate in Madhya Pradesh was 2.8% and Tamil Nadu was 19.6%. Yet the Union Government did not give any preferential share to Kerala.

In the case of welfare activities for poor people Kerala ranks first among Indian States. In compulsory education for children below the age of 14, child and family welfare activities, Harijan welfare activities, adult education programme etc., Kerala had clear advantages over other states in India. So it is argued that the Finance Commission should allot an additional amount as maintenance, grant to Kerala for the continuation of the programme.

Yet the award of the eighth and ninth Finance Commission was disadvantageous to Kerala. In the eighth commission report Kerala's share of income tax was brought down to 3.76% of the divisible pool as against 3.95% under the award of the 7th Finance Commission[46]. Kerala share of Union Excise Duty was also scaled down from 4.03% previously to 3.8% of the divisible pool. Kerala was deemed a surplus state and was consequently excluded from entitlement to Revenue Gap Grant under Article 275 of the Constitution. As a result of this Kerala's share of central taxes went down from Rs.233 crores in 1984-'85 to Rs. 208 crores in 1985-86.

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46. Memorandum to the 9th Finance Commission submitted by the Kerala Government to the Finance Commission, Dept : of Public Relations Trivandrum 1988, P.5.

The state which was relatively a backward one with good record in tax effort had to suffer a decline in its share of tax transfers.

Regarding the assessment of the revenue gap, the Eighth Finance Commission assumed that the following revenue would accrue to the Government during the five year period. Return on investment in KSEB and KSRTC were assumed at 7% and 3% respectively, while these undertakings actually were running at a loss. Divident was assumed at 8% and 5% respectively in respect of investment in commercial undertakings and co-operative societies and it was stated that these rates were also unrealistic. Irrigation receipts were assumed to cover the cost of the maintenance of the projects while no substantial receipts assumed by the commission were very much on the high side considering the restriction necessary to impose on the clearance of forests on urgent ecological grounds. Allowances of government employees were not made adequately for liabilities arising on account of D.A. rivisions and pay revision.

The position of Kerala State is that raising of additional taxation is very difficult. In the matter of per-capita taxation, Kerala ranks quite high. There is hardly any scope for undertaking new taxation policies

during the period covered by the award of the 9th Finance Commission[47].

Kerala also faces a very difficult situation for the re-payment of Central loans already taken. The loan owned by the State Government to the Centre outstanding on 31-3-1987 was Rs.1,496 crores. The amount due for repayment on this account in 1986-87 was Rs.171.34 crores while interest payment amounted to Rs.104.28 crores making a total of Rs.275.62 crores. Against this, Rs. 285 crores were received by the State by way of Central loans, this included Rs.75 crores as advance plan assistance. The normal central loan during the year would have been only Rs.210 crores. Thus the repayment to the centre, exceeded the Central loan received by the State during 1986-'87 by Rs.66 crores. The position during 1987-'88 was more or less similar except that the state received no advance plan assistance.

The first report of the 9th Finance Commission was fully disadvantageous to Kerala. Even on the report of the previous Finance Commission, Kerala should have got 34 crorres more than the 411 crores allotted to it[48]. If we take into consideration the rate of the population growth

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47. Ibid., P.8.
48. Mathrubhumi, December 15, 1988.

the state deserves to get 120 crores. In proportion to population Kerala should have got 3.3% as its share but it got only 3.1%. According to the 9th Finance Commission the State's share was reduced from 22.4% to 21.1% from the Central revenue[49].

Thus Kerala has been discriminated against during the years of communist Governments. But neither the CPI (M) nor the CPI could effectively check the process and to secure a fair deal for Kerala. The arguments of the Governments of Kerala were somewhat justifiable but the attitude of the Central Government towards the problem of Kerala was indifferent.

Centre-State Relations and the Governor

The Governors are the heads of member states of the Union of India. They are formal heads of the system of Parliamentary Government. Constitutionally and legally the executive power is vested in them but because of the law and conventions of Parliamentary Government, they should exercise their functions on Ministerial advice only. The Governor is appointed by the President and holds office during the pleasure of the President. This appointment is

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49. Ibid.

in fact made on the advice of the Central Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister at its head. Thus the Governor is really a nominee of the ruling party that forms the Central Government.

The Technical problem that arises is this: has the Governor any discretionary role to play or does he have to act solely on the advice of the States Council of Ministers. The point is essentially whether the Governor, as agent of the Central Government should or should not have the power to intervene in the day to day political development in a state.

Subjected to his limited powers which he can exercise as discretion he is intented to act only constitutionally. In relation to the State Chief Minister and the State legislative assembly, he is placed much in the same position as the President is place as the head of the Union in relation to the Prime Minister the Union Council of Ministers and the House of the people.

But the Governor's office makes him a Janus like double faced functionary and he can look to the State interest in front as well as to the responsibility to the Centre on the back. He looks to the President for his office and exercise of high constitutional functions in the State, and within

the State he maintains a close formal relationship with the State Chief Minister and Ministers responsible to the State Assembly[50].

In respect of the Governor of the State, he is intented to receive no instructions from the Prime Minister. He should act for the State and only in accordance with the law and practice of responsible Cabinet Government.

The General Elections held in 1967 changed the political scenario of the country when the non-congress Governments were formed in different states of the Indian Union. At the result of the change, the appointment of Governor became a cause of tension between the Union and the States. The non-Congress Government of the state wanted the convention of consulting the State Ministry should strictly be observed. They wanted the 'consent' of the State Ministry concerned for the appointment of Governor[51]. The Governors have come under attack by the non-Congress (I) parties as a plank of voicing dissatisfaction in respect of the Centre-State relations. They began to criticise that the Governorship has become a "prize Post" for the ruling party at the Centre[52]. The parties like CPI (M), CPI, SSP

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50. M.C.Jain Kagzi, The Present Constitutional Issues and Views (New Delhi : 1987) P. 91.

51. The Patriot (Delhi), May 28, 1967.

52. The Times of India, July 21, 1972.

etc. in their Election Manifesto of 1971 for the Lok Sabha election put the demand for the abolition of the office of the Governor. E.M.S.Namboodiripad, who headed the first CPI (M) led Coalition Government also demanded it[53]. On the otherhand, P.Sundrayya, the leader of the CPI (M) suggested that the Governor should be elected by the State Assembly for a specified period[54].

But the Constitution of India adopted the nomination procedure for the appointment of the Governor to maintain the unity and integrity of the country and also to avoid the clash between the elected Ministry and the elected Governor. The Provisions of the Article 163 make it clear that the Governor of a State is expected to act as a constitutional head and carry out the advice of the Council of Minister because Article 164 explicitly reads that the Council of Ministers shall be collectively responsible to the state legislative assembly for its actions. This is the key principle of parliamentary system. Thus in normal times he acts according to the norms of parliamentary system.

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53. The Statesman (Delhi), March 24, 1969.

54. The Times of India, March 10, 1969.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The State of Kerala has a long tradition and history as a distinct cultural, linguistic and ethnic unit from the rest of India. The socio-economic and demographic diversities and disparities among the three regions of Kerala viz., Travancore, Cochin and Malabar are demonstrably pronounced. In respect of religion, occupational distribution of working force, unemployment, density of population, location of Industries and even in the layout of natural resources, the region shows great variation. Regionalisation of politics is an important result of this diversity.

Caste and Communal organisations, which owe their origin to the state's cultural and ethnic diversity, play an important role in the politics of Kerala. Communal organisations like the NSS and the SNDP, the christian religious heirarchy and the Muslim League have been active political interest groups which have strengthened the process of politicisation and democratisation in the state. The balance of power among the four Major Communities viz., the Syrian Christians, the Ezhavas, the Nairs and the Muslims is an important factor in the state's politics.

While political parties such as the Kerala Congress, the NDP and the SRP represent sectional and caste oriented interests, the Muslim League procalims itself as the sole protector of Muslim interest.

Kerala seems one of the most politicised states in India. The State has a high level of political mobilization and people's participation in political affairs. Yet political preferences keep on changing consequent on economic, social and religious considerations. The pressure of Major Communities resulted in the formation of caste-based political parties. The Communist and the congress parties are always trying to get the support of these communities.

It has been proved by a series of election that there are only two major political forces in the state and that they are the CPI (M) and the Congress (I). But neither of them can claim on its own majority in the election. Other parties like the CPI, the Kerala Congress, the Muslim League, the RSP and the Janata Dal have their own pockets of support. This reality of Kerala politics was accepted by both the CPI (M) and the Congress (I) and it led to the pragmatic alliances with the other parties. The CPI (M) and the CPI experimented with the coalition form of government in a special way.

Coalition politics in Kerala is responsible for the growth of communal and factional politics also. The Communist coalition governments too offered ministerial berths to one-man parties and communal groups. The voters cannot reject communal parties when they appear in alliance with major parties. In predominantly Muslim or Christian Constituencies both the fronts have fielded Christian or Hindu candidates. The class character of communist theory did not at all came into play in the electoral game.

With the formation of the first communist government in the region the CPI began to think of the parliamentary and peaceful ways of socialism. The party prepared itself as a responsible parliamentary group and accepted the bitter realities of Kerala politics. The ideoligical rift within the CPI led to a split in 1964 but both the factions came together in the United Front government under the CPI (M). But the ideological differences between the CPI and the CPI (M) remain strong and is reflected in their performance *within and outside the government*.

Regarding the nature of the United Front and its leadership both the CPI (M) and the CPI were in agreement. Both agreed on the peaceful parliamentary way of socialism. They agreed that the United Front should be an alliance consisting of the workers, peasants, middle class and

non-big bourgeoisie directed against the big bourgeoisie. However there was a crucial difference between them since 1969 in envisaging the process of struggle involved in the United Front. The CPI favoured the progressive tendency of the Congress Party and the United Front was formed by the joint leadership of the CPI and the Congress. The CPI (M) formed the United Front of all non-congress parties to defeat the Congress in 1967 and in 1980, but the efforts prov d a failure.

Ideologically the CPI (M) was committed to a class analysis of society. Thus in 1967, the CPI (M) believed that their government would not be able to solve the major problems of the people like food, employment etc. It believed in the dialectical unity of administration with agitation. They did not equate office with power. Through election what they got was only office. According to them the real power was handled by the Central Government which was influenced by the various vested interests. So any radical reform was impossible by the state government. But the CPI government in 1969-77 adopted a policy of utilizing the existing governmental machinery to bring about socio-economic changes and had succeded in it, to a considerable extent. Its alliance with the Congress (R) led

to a new phase of political development and political experiment.

The 1980 witnessed the polarisation of the communist forces in the state. The CPI came back to the CPI (M) led LDF. The CPI (M) accepted the inevitability of electoral politics for the advancement of their political interests. The re-organised LDF of 1987 was almost an alliance of the leftist forces alone.

Differences of opinion among partners are inevitable in coalition governments. But their success depends on the capacity to settle them within the machinery of the government. The CPI led coalition government succeeded in it but the CPI (M) didnot much the CPI in that game. Clashes between parties and among the members of the same parties were a regular feature of CPI (M) led government in 1967 and 1980. The coalescing parties has their own particular ambitions and there were no unanimity of opinion on the major issues facing the government. The United Front had no clear ideological unity; anti-Congressism was the guiding principle inspiring the coalition. The 1967 government promised a clean administration, but went down on charges of corruption against all the 13 ministers. There

were sharp differences among the coalition parties especially the CPI and the CPI (M) on questions like food procurement, agricultural production, industrial development and land reforms policies.

In the policy implementation aspect the CPI (M) led governments had many achievements. The CPI (M) government set up popular civil supplies committees consisting of representatives of various political parties which ensured popular participation in the rationing process. In the industrial sector, it started many small scale industries and four industrial development corporations. The government abolished the prejudiced practice of police verification in public services. It also succeeded in preventing the unnecessary interference of police in the day to day life of the common man.

In the field of land reform it took several steps to distribute uncultivated cultivable land to the landless people. The Land Reform (Amendment) Act 1968 eliminated all intermediaries on land and ensured the ownership of cultivators on the land they tilled. The 1980 government abolished the payment of Rajabhogam. By the Oodupally Lands Enfranchisement Bill 1981, the government distributed the land among cultivators. It

distributed thousands of permanent Pattayams to the Kudikidappukars.

In the educational field, the CPI (M) led governments tried to increase the control of government over the university and Private Colleges. The students and staff were given representation in the University senates and syndicates and constituted an academic council. The formation of the Calicut University enabled the educational development of the backward Malabar area.

In Social welfare legislation, the 1980 government instituted pension for farm labourers. By the initiative of the government the workers in factories, plantations and farms received a considerable wage increase. The public sector industries made profit. Unemployment wages were introduced. Pension was granted to journalists, film, drama and circus artistes. Minimum wages had been fixed for the workers in private firms and small scale industries. Dearness allowance of the state government employees was increased six times. Group insurance scheme and housing scheme were introduced for fishermen. Thus the II CPI (M) government tried to raise the standard of living of the working class and the middle class.

The CPI's approach to coalition government was more practical and adaptive than the CPI (M). The Mini Front of 1969 and coalition government of 1970 had many progressive policy implementations to their credit. It proves that the success of progressive policy implementation depends upon the support it receives from non-governmental agencies and on the governments ability.

In the agricultural field, the Agricultural Workers Act changed the living conditions of the workers. It prescribed the minimum hours of work, prescribed wages and security of work. A provident fund was also constituted. Thus the agricultural workers became the wage labourers. The government abolished the system of bonded labour among the tribals of Kerala. A tribal Welfare Department was formed to take case of the welfare activities of tribals.

The one lakh house scheme for the agricultural proletariat was a remarkable achievement. It shows how major social problems like housing can be solved by the active co-operation of the people. The Kerala Children Act of 1972 provided for the care, protection, welfare, training, education and rehabilitation of neglected or delinquent children in the state. The Kerala Debtors (Temporary Relief) Act 1975 provided temporary debt relief

not only to the peasants but to other sections like artisans and landless labourers. The Kerala Cashew Factories Aquisition Act of 1974 enforced labour laws in cashew factories.

The Devaswom Acts of the government did away with the mismanagement of the Devaswoms. The Hindu Marriage Act of 1975 made the mutual consent of the partners, obligatory for divorce.

In the educational field it introduced the direct payment of salary to the teaching staff of affiliated colleges. It could considerably control the appointment of teachers in private colleges by formulating a guideline for appointment. It abolished the system of separate pass minimum for all subjects in the SSLC examination and introduced group system. It equalised the tuition fee of private colleges with government rates. The establishment of the Cochin University enabled the development of higher education and research in science and technology. The Agricultural University also provided for the study and research in agriculture and other related subjects.

The University senates were made more broad-based giving representation to local authorities, University Unions, Legislative Assembly, trade unions, non-teaching

staff of University and affiliated colleges etc. Students were given representation in the syndicate. The formation of the Students Council under the chairmanship of the Vice Chancellor provided opportunity to the students to advise the syndicate and Academic Council on academic matters.

In the field of land reform, the period witnessed radical legislation by the government and militant movements by the CPI (M). The CPI government was largely responsive to the demands of the Land Grab Agitation led by the CPI (M). At the same time, the government passed the Land Reforms (Amendment) Acts which fully protected the right of Kudikidappukars on Kudikidappu land. It Constitut[illegible]opular Committees at various levels. The rate of compensation of landlords was halved and fixed at the minimum rate. It decentralised the functions of the Land Board through Taluk Level Boards and advisory village committees and a cabinet level Land Reforms Review Board. It enabled t[illegible] speedy implementation of the Land Reform Act and settled disputes.

The Kannan Devan Hills (Resumption of Lands) Act 1971 [illegible]abled the gover[illegible]nt to distribute the agricultural lands in the possession of Kannan Devan Company. By an Act, the government took over the private forests owned by private persons for distribution for agricultural purposes. The

Kanam Tenants were given full ownership of the land by the Kanam Tenancy (Abolition) Act. It abolished the payment of Jenmikaram and intermediary rights on lands.

Thus the land reforms in Kerala begun by the 1957 Communist Government was brought to legislative fruition by the United Front Ministry. They were implemented by the CPI led government which gave more attention to the most radical, comprehensive and far-reaching changes in Kerala. In Kerala the former Kudikidappukars were converted into an agrarian labour force. Most of the agricultural labourers today own atleast 5 cents of land around their huts. It abolished landlordism and intermediaries of all types. 'The land to the tiller' theory was realised in at least one state in India. Tenant cultivators numbering 30 lakhs were freed from the fetters of landlordism. They have become owners of the land they toiled on. All kinds of bonded labour had been abolished. In this way the former landless labourers have undergone a strong process of politicisation which has rendered them capable of articulating their demands.

The Centre-State relations were a significant point of difference among the partners of the coalition government. Kerala has been most vocal in alleging politically motivated descrimination in the distribution of plan expenditure.

All parties argued that not only had it not received a share proportionate to its population but that no consideration was given to its contribution to Indian foreign exchange earning or its backwardness.

In India the Central Government enjoys the most important and growing source of revenue. The states depend on three limited sources-their own taxation, a share of centrally raised taxes divided on the basis of Finance Commissions Reports and plan allocation. The main taxes are land revenue, agricultural income tax, local excise and sales tax. There is no possibility to increase the land revenue and agricultural income tax. The sales tax, as it is an indirect one, is not easy to be raised as its revenue. So the state's capacity to raise revenue by taxation is politically highly constrained. So Kerala expects a preferential treatment from the centre. But the plan allocation and tax division are always disadvantageous to Kerala. The CPI (M) and other left parties were criticising the Congress Party for all the irregularities in Centre-State relation.

Rice is the staple food of the people of Kerala but it produces only 40% of its food requirements. Kerala sacrifices its agricultural lands for the cultivation of

cash crops and it provides valuable foreign exchange to the Nation.

The CPI (M) also argued that, now that the Southern Food Zone was abolished, the Central Government had the responsibility of providing adequate food to the state. It demanded movement of food grain from surplus to deficit states. It also sought permission from the Central Government to import food grains from other countries. Yet none of the demands were accepted by the Central Government. The government resorted to dharna, demonstration and state-wide Bendh but all such protests were futile in the absence of support from the coalescing parties. Though there were serious irregularities and discrimination, the CPI (M)'s agitation against the centre did not produce its expected response.

As the ruling congress was also a partner in the Kerala Government during 1970-77, Kerala's demand for adequate food material was met by the Centre. It followed a policy of pressure and persuation. Food supply was worse than in the days former government. The share of central taxes also had go down. In these years the CPI was almost a sleeping partner.

During the second CPI (M) led government, there was an

order by the Central Government to examine the biodata of the recruited candidates to the Central Services from Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura. This faced vehement criticism from all quarteres and consequently the order was withdrawn.

The import policy of the Central Government was another major factor involving the centre-state relations. The import of cocoa, copra, coconut oil, rubber, cloves, nutmeg etc. seriously affected the interest of the agricultural economy of Kerala. The Kerala Legislative Assembly unanimously passed several resolutions against it. Kerala's demands were justifiable because, it was the producer of these cash crops who suffered the most as price fell deeply. But the price of goods in other states has almost been steadily increasing. The central assistance for drought and flood was also inadequate. The award of the Finance Commissions was disadvantageous to Kerala. Thus, it proved that Kerala had been discriminated against, during the CPI (M) and CPI led governments.

The role of Governor is a question drawing keen attention in centre-state relations. If the Governor is the head of the state in the parliamentary system, he must also act according to the advice of his Council of Ministries.

But the Constitution has given him some discritionary power. He need not always act according to the advice of his council of ministers. Experience shows that the very nature of the appointment of the Governors strikes at the root of the freedom of this constitutional head of the state more obligingly submits himself to the wishes of the Union Government than please the State government which is technically his own government. As far as Kerala was concerned the relationship between the CPI (M) led government and the Governor was not very smooth.

The Social and political set up and the divergence of communist coalition politics and its possibilities are worth considering. It seems the preservation of peace, law and order etc are the factors that the people of Kerala expect from their government. The extreme ideology of the CPI (M), the policy of annihilation and theory of class war were generally unpopular in the state. The role of religions in place of political ideology became an essential part of Kerala's political culture.

Except for a small group of communist revolutionaries, almost all communists prefer peaceful ways of change in the system. The communist parties have a dignity and credibility in Kerala society. It is virtually identified

with the soci and political movement of the state and as a vanguard of progressive forces. More than any other political party in this state, it preserved a very high ideological, intellectual and moral standard. But its lack of influence in some of the major communities, particularly the Muslims and Christians had acted as reason for its loose political hold on the people of the state. The middle class elements like landed agriculturists, government servants and the organised working class took sides with the communists. But its traditional supporters like poor peasants, tenants and unskilled workers seem to be shifting their political allegiance. Yet one must accept the lasting contributions made by the Communist movement in Kerala.

Its role in the politicisation and mobilization of the havenots and the underprivileged cannot be under-estimated. The communist governments did much to liberate the poor and free the society from the evil system of casteism and feudalism. At the sametime, it must be pertinent to point out here that the chief beneficianries of communist rule have been the peasants not the labourers, the government employees not the workers.

National and secular political parties have only a limited appeal in Kerala and the two main forces of the

state, the Congress and the Communist are no more a viable alternative. Regional parties are developing, because people are becoming more conscious of caste, religion, localism and particular interests. Yet, all these regional parties come under the democratic process and it enables the state to form coalition governments.

The future prospects of Indian Communist movement as a whole and of Kerala in particular would depend heavily on the course of events in the country and on the success of the governments in solving problems like hunger, disease and unemployment. However, the great linguistic and cultural diversities combined with economic, social and political conditions in different parts of the country stands in the way of Communist development. Their ideological regidity and theoretical formulation of Indian politics are no longer a benefit to them.

In recent years, the trend of democratisation of of Communist ideals shows consistent growth in the Communist movements. Though Marxian concept of society is based on the theory of "class antegonism" the Kerala Communist movement accepted the rigidity of caste and communal forces in the state and exploited them to gain political leverage.

It accepted the co-operation of management and workers in Industry and thus gave up the theory of class war among them. It proves that the communist governments can change the social and political conditions of state and strengthen the democratic process. The present coalition governments led by the CPI (M) with left parties in the state seems to have a positive political prospect in the pluralistic society of Kerala and the changing nature of CPI (M) led governments illustrates this.

APPENDIX I

COMMUNIST COALITION MINISTRIES AND PORTFOLIOS OF MINISTERS

A. Portfolios of the Ministers in the Coalition Government of 1967.

E.M.S.Namboodiripad: Chief Minister -
General Administration, Integration, Planning, Home (Police, Election, Anti-corruption) Administration of Civil and Criminal Justice, Information and Publicity, Stores Purchase, Village Courts, Subjects not mentioned elsewhere.

K.R.Gouri: Revenue Minister -
Revenue (excluding Registration), Law and Legislation, Food and Civil Supplies, Social Welfare (excluding Harijan Welfare)

K.K.Imbichi Bava: Transport Minister-
Transport and Communication (including Ports, P and T and Railways, Motor Vehicles, Jails, Archaeology, Museum and Zoo.

M.K.Krishnan: Forest and Harijan Welfare Minister -
Forests, Harijan Welfare, Colonisation and Settlement Schemes, Housing (excluding Industrial Housing).

M.N.Govindan Nair: Agriculture and Electricity Minister -
Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development, Electricity.

T.V.Thomas: Industries Minister -
Industries and Commerce (including Industrial Co-operatives) Cement, Iron and Steel, Industrial Housing, Handloom and Coir, Sports and Sports association, Mining and Geology.

P.R.Kurup: Irrigation and Co-operation Minister -
Irrigation, Co-operation (excluding Industrial Co-operatives) Devaswom.

P.K.Kunju: Finance Minister -
Finance, Insurance, Registration.

C.H.Mohammed Koya: Education Minister -
Education, Wakf Board.

Ahmed Kurikkal: Panchayats and Community Development Minister - Panchayats (with allied subjects), Community Development, Fisheries.

T.K.Divakaran: Works Minister - Public Works (General Administration, Buildings and Roads) Town Planning, Tourism and Tourist Department, Printing, and Stationery, Corporations and Municipalities, Trivandrum City Improvement Trust.

B. Portfolios of Ministers in the Coalition Government of 1969.

C.Achutha Menon: Chief Minister - General Administration, All India Services, Integration, Planning, Inter-State River Waters, Law and Legislation, Electricity, Subjects not mentioned elsewhere.

P.Ravindran: Minister for Industries and Labour - Industries and Commerce (including Industrial Co-operatives), Cement, Iron and Steel, Industrial Housing, Handloom and Coir, Sports and Sport Associations, Mining and Geology, Labour, Employment and Training, Factories and Boilers, Forests.

K.T.Jacob: Minister for Revenue - Land Revenue, Excise, Food and Civil Supplies.

N.K.Seshan: Minister for Finance - Finance, Stores Purchase, Commercial Taxes and Agricultural Income Tax, Lotteries, Chitties and Chit Funds, Registration and Insurance, Information and Publicity.

O.Koran: Minister for Irrigation and Agriculture - Irrigation, Co-operation (excluding Industrial Co-operatives), Devaswoms, Flood Control and Anti-sea Erosion, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development, Harijan Welfare, Colonisation and Settlement, Housing (excluding industrial Housing).

C.H.Mohammed Koya: Minister for Education and Home - Education, Home (Police, Election and Anti-corruption), Administration of Civil and Criminal Justice, Wakf and Haj Pilgrimage, Tourism and Tourist Department, Printing and Stationery.

K.Avukkaderkutty Naha: Minister for Local Administration - Panchayats (with allied subjects), Community Development, Fisheries, Village Courts, Jails, Rehabilitation, Social Welfare (excluding Harijan Welfare), Public Works (General Administration, Building and Roads), Town Planning, Corporations and Municipalities, Trivandrum City Improvement Trust.

K.M.George: Minister for Transport and Health - Health, Ayurveda, Public Health Engineering, Transport and Communications (including ports, P and T and Railways), Motor Vehicles, Archaeology, Museum and Zoo.

C. A. Portfolios of the Ministers in the Coalition Government of 1970 - 1971.

C.Achutha Menon: Chief Minister - General Administration, All India Services, Integration, Planning, Inter-State River Waters, Law and Legislations, Finance, Stores Purchase, Commercial Taxes and Agricultural Income Tax, Lotteries, Chitties and Chit Funds, Insurance, Subjects not mentioned elsewhere.

T.K.Divakaran: Minister for Work and Tourism - Public Works, Irrigation, Flood Control, Tourism and Registration.

C.H.Mohammed Koya: Minister for Education and Home - Education, Home (Police, Election and Anti-Corruption) Social Administration of Civil and Criminal Justice, Wakh and Haj Pilgrimage, Social Welfare (including Harijan Welfare) Gaols, Sports and Sports Associations, Museums, Zoo and Archaeology.

N.E.Balaram: Minister for Industries - Industries and Commerce, Cement, Iron and Steel, Industrial Housing, Handloom and Coir, Mining and Geology, Information and Publicity, Printing and Stationery.

Baby John: Minister for Revenue and Labour - Land Revenue, Excise, Labour, Employment and Training, Factories and Boilers.

P.S.Sreenivasan: Minister for Transport and Electricity - Transport and Communications (including Ports, P & T and Railways) Motor Vehicles, Electricity, Forests.

K.Avukader Kutty Naha: Minister for Food and Local Administration -
Food and Civil Supplies, Panchayats, Town Planning, Corporations and Municipalities, Trivandrum City Improvement Trust, Fisheries, Public Health Engineering, Rehabilitation.

P.K.Raghavan: Minister for Harijan Welfare and Housing -
Harijan Welfare, Colonisation and Settlement, Housing (including Industrial Housing) Community Development.

N.K.Balakrishnan: Minister for Agriculture and Health -
Agriculture, Animal Husbandary and Dairy Development Health, Ayurveda, Devaswoms, Co-operations.

C. B. Portfolios of the Ministers Since 1971 to 1977

C.Achutha Menon: Chief Minister -
General Administration, All India Services, Integration, Planning, Inter-State River Waters, Subjects not mentioned elsewhere.

K.Karunakaran: Minister for Home -
Home (Police, Election and Anti-Corruption) Administration of Civil and Criminal Justice, Information and Publicity, Museum, Zoo and Archaeology, Village Courts.

K.G.Adiyodi: Minister for Forest and Food -
Food and Civil Supplies, Forests, Rahabilitation.

K.Avukader Kutty Naha: Minister for Local Administer and Panchayats -
Town Planning, Corporations and Municipalities, Fisheries, Public Health Engineering, Ports.

Baby John: Minister for Revenue -
Land Revenue, Excise.

N.K.Balakrishnan: Minister for Health and Co-operation -
Health, Ayurveda, Co-operation.

T.K.Divakaran: Minister for Works -
Public Works (General Administration, Building and Roads) Irrigation, Flood Control and Anti-Sea Erosion.

Vella Eacharan: Minister for Harijan Welfare and Community Development -
Harijan Welfare, Community Development, Colonization and Settlement, Devaswams.

K.T.George: Minister for Finance -
Finance, Stores Purchase, Commercial Taxes and Agricultural Income Tax, Lotteries, Chitties and Chit Funds, Insurance, Law and Legislations, Printing and Stationery, Registration.

M.N.Govindan Nair: Minister for Transport and Electricity -
Transport and Communications (including P & T and Railways) Motor Vehicles, Electricity, Housing.

C.H.Mohammed Koya: Minister for Education -
Education, Wakf, Haj Pilgrimage, Social Welfare, Goals, Sports and Sports Associations, Tourism and Tourist Department.

Vakkom Purushothaman: Minister for Agriculture and Labour -
Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development, Labour, Employment and Training, Factories and Boilers.

T.V.Thomas: Minister for Industries -
Industries and Commerce (including Industrial Co-operatives) Cement, Iron and Steel, Handloom and Coir, Mining and Geology.

D. Portfolios of Ministers in the LDF Government of 1980

E.K.Nayanar: Chief Minister -
General Administration, All India Services, Integration, Planning, Co-operations (excluding Industrial Co-operatives and Fishermen's Co-operatives) Handloom, Coir, Information and Publicity.

K.M.Mani: Minister for Finance -
Finance, Store Purchase, Commercial Taxes and Agricultural Income Tax, Lotteries, Chitties and Chit Funds, Law and Legislation.

Lonappan Nambadan: Minister for Transport -
Transport, Communication (excluding P & T and Railway) Motor Vehicles.

P.C.Chacko: Minister for Industries -
Industries, Commerce (including Industrial Co-operatives) Cements, Iron and Steel, Mining and Geology.

Aryadan Mohammed: Minister for Labour and Forests -
Labour, Factories and Boilers, Forests.

Vakkom Purushothaman: Minister for Health -
Health, Ayurveda, Tourism, Town Planning and Development.

A.C.Shanmughadas: Minister for Community Development -
Public Health, Engineering and Training, Ports, Sports and Sports Associations.

Baby John: Minister for Education -
Education.

R.S.Unni: Minister for Local Administration -
Panchayats with allied Subjects, Town Planning, Corporations and Municipalities.

P.S.Sreenivasan: Minister for Revenue -
Land Revenue, Fisheries (including Fishermen's Co-operatives).

E.Chandrasekharan Nair: Minister for Food and Civil Supplies -
Food and Civil Supplies, Housing.

Subha Rao: Minister for Irrigation -
Irrigation (excluding Minor Irrigations) Flood Control and Anti-Sea Erosion.

P.M.Abubacker: Minister for Public Works -
Public Works (General Administration) Building and Roads.

R.Balakrishna Pillai: Minister for Electricity -
Electricity.

T.K.Ramakrishnan: Minister for Home -
Home (Police, Election and Anti-Corruption) Administration of Civil and Criminal Justice, Village Courts, Jails.

K.R.Gowri: Minister for Agriculture -
Agriculture, Minor Irrigation, Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development, Social Welfare (excluding Harijan Welfare).

M.K.Krishnan: Minister for Harijan Welfare -
Harijan Welfare, Excise, Devaswoms.

D. Portfolios of Ministers in the Coalition Government of 1987

E.K.Nayanar: Chief Minister -
General Administration Department, (except Tourism), Planning and Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and

Environment, Personnel and Administrative Reforms, Election, Home (except Administration of Justice), and subjects not mentioned elsewhere.

Baby John: Minister for Irrigation and Water Supply - Irrigation, Water Supply and Sanitation.

K.Chandrasekharan: Minister for Education and Law - Education, Higher Education, (except Sports and Youth Affairs) and Law.

E.Chandrasekharan Nair: Minister for Food and Civil Supplies - Food and Civil Supplies, Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development.

K.R.Gowri Amma: Minister for Industries and Excise - Industries, Vigilance, Excise, Social Welfare and Administration of Justice.

T.K.Hamsa: Minister for Public Works - Public Works, Transport (except Transport), Wakf Board and Haj.

N.M.Joseph: Minister for Forests - Forests and Wild life.

Lonappan Nambadan: Minister for Housing - Housing and Stores Purchase.

A.Neelalohithadasan Nadar: Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs - Youth Affairs, Sports, Museum and Zoos, Railways and Telecommunication.

K.Pankajakshan: Minister for Labour and Rehabilitation - Labour and Rehabilitation.

P.K.Raghavan: Minister for Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe Development - SC/ST Development and Registration.

V.V.Raghavan: Minister for Agriculture - Agriculture (except Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development and Kerala Warehousing Corporation).

T.K.Ramakrishnan: Minister for Co-operation and Fisheries - Co-operation, Fisheries, Ports (except Ports and Harbour Engineering) and Cultural Affairs (except Museums and Zoos)

K.Sankaranarayana Pillai: Minister for Transport - Transport (except Railways and Communications).

A.C.Shanmugha Das: Minister for Health and Family Welfate - Health, Family Welfare, Ports and Harbour Engineering.

T.Sivadasa Menon: Minister for Power and Rural Development - Power and Rural Development.

P.S.Sreenivasan: Minister for Revenue and Tourism - Revenue (except Devaswoms and Wakf Board) and Tourism.

V.J.Thankappan: Minister for Local Administration - Local Administration (Except Water Supply and Sanitation) and State Warehousing Corporation.

V.Viswanatha Menon: Minister for Finance - Finance, Taxes (Except Excise, Registration and Stamps) and Devasoms.

Source : Kerala Gazette

APPENDIX II

Party Position of Seats Contested, Won and Percentage of vote at Various Elections form the first to the Eighth Kerala Legislative Assembly, at the time of Constitution of the Assembly.

Table 1

First Kerala Legislative Assembly (1957 - 1959)

Party	Number of Seats Contested	Number of Seats Won	Percentage of Votes
INC	124	43	37.84
CPI	100	60	35.28
PSP	62	9	10.76
RSP	28	--	3.22
INDEPENDENTS	75	13	12.87
INDEPENDENT ELECTED UNOPPOSED	--	1	0.80
TOTAL	389	126	100.00

Table 2

Second Kerala Legislative Assembly (1960 - 1964)

Party	Number of Seats Contested	Number of Seats Won	Percentage of Votes
INC	80	63	34.84
PSP	33	20	14.14
ML	12	11	4.96
CPI	108	29	39.14
RSP	18	1	1.20
KSP	12	--	0.06
SSP	4	--	0.26
Jana Sangh	3	--	0.07
INDEPENDENT	42	2	5.84
TOTAL	264	126	100.00

Source : Department of Public Relation.

Table 3

Third Kerala Legislative Assembly (1967 - 1970)

Party	Number of Seats Contested	Number of Seats Won	Percentage of Votes
INC	133	9	35.42
CPI (M)	59	52	23.51
CPI	22	19	8.57
SSP	21	19	8.43
ML	15	14	6.76
RSP	6	6	2.72
KTP	3	2	1.12
KSP	1	1	0.52
KC	61	5	7.56
Jana Sangh	24	--	0.88
PSP	7	--	0.22
Swatantra	6	--	0.21
Republic Party	3	--	0.02
Independents	62	6	4.05
TOTAL	423	133	100.00

Source : Department of Public Relations.

Table 4

Fourth Kerala Legislative Assembly (1970 - 1977)

Alliances/ Parties	Number of Seats Contested	Number of Seats Won	Percentage of Votes
Mini Front			
Congress (R)	56	32	18.29
CPI	31	16	9.34
RSP	14	6	4.40
PSP	7	3	2.42
ML	20	12	7.72
TOTAL	128	69	42.17
Peoples Democratic Front			
CPI (M)	72	28	23.43
SSP	14	6	4.08
KSP	3	2	0.65
ISP	11	3	3.25
KTP	4	2	1.20
TOTAL	104	41	32.63
Democratic Front			
Congress (O)	39	--	3.48
Jana Sangh	8	--	0.60
Swatantra	2	--	0.09
KC	31	12	5.90
TOTAL	80	12	10.07
Independent	163	11	15.13
GRAND TOTAL	475	133	100.00

Source : Department of Public Relations.

Table 5

Fifth Kerala Legislative Assembly (1977 - 1979)

Party	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Percentage of Votes
Ruling Front			
INC	54	34	19.39
CPI	27	23	9.82
KC	22	20	8.59
ML	16	13	6.65
RSP	11	9	4.19
PSP	4	3	1.43
NDP	6	5	2.27
TOTAL	140	111	52.34
Opposition Front			
CPI (M)	68	17	21.40
JP	28	6	8.42
KC (Pillai Group)	16	2	4.69
ML (O)	16	3	4.44
KSP	2	--	0.30
Congress (Parivarthana Vathikal)	2	--	0.55
National RSP	2	--	0.27
Independent	6	1	1.78
TOTAL	140	29	41.85
Independent	107	--	3.93

Source : Department of Public Relations

Table 6

Sixth Kerala Legislative Assembly (1980 - 1982)

Party	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Percentage of Wotes
LDF			
CPI (M)	50	35	19.33
INC (U)	30	21	10.94
CPI	22	17	7.79
KC (M)	17	8	5.24
AI L	11	5	3.13
RSP	8	6	3.02
KC (P)	2	1	0.80
TOTAL	140	93	50.25
UDF			
INC (I)	51	17	17.35
KC (J)	15	6	4.94
IUML	20	14	7.17
NDP	11	3	3.72
SRP	6	0	2.03
PSP	4	1	1.08
Independents	8	1	2.32
Janata	25	5	7.82
TOTAL	140	47	46.43
Others	314	--	3.32

Source : Department of Public Relations.

Table 7

Seventh Kerala Legislative Assembly (1982 - 1987)

Party/ Front	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Percentage of Votes
UDF			
INC (I)	35	20	12.24
INC (A)	28	15	9.27
IUML	18	14	6.11
KC (M)	17	6	5.85
KC (J)	12	8	4.55
Janata (G)	8	4	2.75
NDP	8	4	2.70
SDP	6	2	2.10
RSP (S)	4	1	1.19
DLP	1	1	0.40
PSP	1	1	0.30
NKJP	1	0	0.40
Independents	1	1	0.40
TOTAL	140	77	48.26
LDF			
CPI (M)	51	26	18.78
CPI	26	13	8.76
INC (S)	18	7	5.49
AIML	12	4	3.34
Janata	13	4	4.00
RSP	8	4	2.75
KC (S)	1	1	0.40
DSP	1	1	0.40
Lok Dal	1	0	0.20
Independents	9	3	3.79
TOTAL	140	63	47.91
BJP	68	0	2.70
Others	351	0	1.13

Source : Department of Public Relations.

Table 8

Eighth Kerala Legislative Assembly (1987 - 1991)

Front/ Party	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Percentage of Votes
LDF			
CPI (M)	70	38	22.84
CPI (M) Ind:	9	4	2.87
CPI	25	16	8.07
CPI Ind:	1	1	0.34
IC (SS)	14	6	4.01
Janata	12	7	3.78
RSP	7	5	2.43
Lok Dal	2	1	0.61
TOTAL	140	78	44.97
UDF			
INC	76	33	24.81
IUML	23	15	7.72
KC (J)	13	5	3.53
KC (M)	10	4	3.33
NDP (P)	9	1	2.23
SRP (S)	4	--	1.21
RSP (S)	1	--	0.23
Independents	2	2	0.58
TOTAL	138	60	43.65
CMP	84	1	1.11
BJP (HM)	127	--	6.47
Independents	1	1	0.32
Other Independent	764	--	3.48
GRAND TOTAL	1254	140	100.00

Source : Assembly Election Reportage, 1987. Department of Public Relations, Government of Kerala, Trivandrum.

B. District wise Performance of UDF in 1980 Assembly Elections

District	No.of	LDF	UDF	Cong	IUML	KC(J)	Janata	PSP	NDP
Kannanore	16	13	3	1	1	-	1	-	-
Kozhikode	14	9	5	2	1	-	2	-	-
Malappuram	12	2	10	1	9	-	-	-	-
Palghat	11	5	5	3	1	-	1	1	-
Trissur	14	9	5	4	1	-	-	-	-
Ernakulam	14	11	3	1	1	2	-	-	-
Idukki	5	3	2	1	-	1	-	-	-
Kottayam	10	9	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
Allapuzha	14	9	5	1	-	2	1	-	1
Kollam	16	15	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Trivandrum	14	8	6	3	1	-	-	-	2
Seats Won	--	93	46	17	14	6	5	1	3
Seats Contested	--	140	140	53	21	17	25	6	9

Note : Supported by the UDF, the SRP put up 7 candidates but won no seat.

Source : Figures from Newspapers.

C. District wise Performance of LDF in 1982 and 1987 Assembly Elections

District	CPM	CPI	ICS	Janata	RSP	Lok Dal	UDF Ind and AIML	LDF Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Kassaragod	1(2)	(2)						1(4)
Cannanore	5(5)		(1)	1			(1)	6(7)
Wynad				1				1(-)
Kozhikode	6(3)	1(1)	1(1)	1(1)			(3)	9(9)
Malappuram	(1)	-						-(1)
Palghat	4(5)	(2)	(1)	(1)				4(9)
Trichur	3(2)	4(2)	(1)	1(1)			(1)	8(7)
Ernakulam	4(1)	2(1)	2(1)					8(3)
Idukki	1(2)	-						1(2)
Kottayam	3(-)	2(2)		1			1	6(3)
Alleppey	5(3)	1(-)	1(-)		(1)			7(4)
Pathanamthitta	1(1)	-	1(1)	1(-)				3(2)
Quilon	2(1)	5(1)			4(2)			11(4)
Trivandrum	7(2)	2(2)	1(1)	1(1)	1	1	(1)	13(8)
TOTAL	42(28)	17(13)	6(7)	7(4)	5(4)	1	(7)	78(63)

(Contd.)

* CPM and CPI include Independents
Figures given in brackets are the seats won in 1982.

D. District wise Performance of UDF in 1982 and 1987 Assembly Elections

District	INC	IUML	KC(J)	KC M	NDP	SRP	RSP (S)	UDF Indts, Janata (G) and others	UDF Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Kasaragod	2	2(1)							4(1)
Cannanore	3(2)							(1)	3(3)
Wynad	2(2)							(1)	2(3)
Kozhikode	2(2)	1(1)							3(3)
Malappuram	3(2)	9(9)							12(11)
Palghat	5(1)	1						1(1)	7(2)
Trichur	5(5)	1(1)			(1)				6(7)
Ernakulam	3(6)	1(1)	1(2)	1(1)	(1)				6(11)
Idukki	2(2)		1(1)	1(-)					4(3)
Kottayam	1(1)		(2)	2(3)			(1)		3(7)
Alleppey	3(3)		1(1)		(2)			(1)	4(7)
Pathanamthitta	1(2)		1(1)		1(-)			1(2)	4(5)
Quilon	(2)		1(1)	(2)			(1)	(1)	1(8)
Trivandrum	1(5)	(1)							1(6)
TOTAL	33(35)	15(14)	5(8)	4(6)	1(4)		-(2)	2(7)	60(77)

Source : Assembly Election Reportage.

Appendix III

Communist Performance by District in 1967 and 1970

District	Total Seats	1967				1970			
		No of Candidates Contested		No. of Seats Won		No. of Candidates Contested		No. of Seats Won	
		CPI(M)	CPI	CPI(M)	CPI	CPI(M)	CPI	CPI(M)	CPI
Trivandrum	14	5	2	4	2	9	4	2	3
Quilon	15	1	9	1	8	6	7	-	6
Allappuzha	15	8	1	7	1	9	3	5	1
Kottayam	14	8	4	4	4	8	5	3	1
Ernakulam	15	8	2	8	1	9	2	2	1
Trichur	13	5	5	5	3	5	4	2	2
Palghat	14	10	-	10	-	11	2	8	-
Kozhikode	20	6	-	6	-	5	1	1	1
Kannoor	14	8	-	7	-	9	2	5	2
	133	59	22	52	19	71	30	28	16

Source : Manorama Election Guide, 1970.

Appendix IV

Details of District wise Performance of the LDF and the UDF in 1980, 1982 and 1987 Assembly Elections

A. District wise Performance of LDF in 1980 Assembly Election

District	No.of	LDF	UDF	CPI(M)	CPI	Cong:U	AIML	KC(M)	KC(P)	RSP
Kannanore	16	13	3	7	2	3	1	-	-	-
Kozhikode	14	9	5	2	1	3	3	-	-	-
Malappuram	12	2	10	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Palghat	11	5	5	4	-	1	-	-	-	-
Trissur	14	9	5	1	3	3	-	2	-	-
Ernakulam	14	11	3	6	-	4	1	--	-	-
Idukki	5	3	2	1	1	-	-	1	-	-
Kottayam	10	9	1	2	1	1	-	5	-	-
Allapuzha	14	9	5	4	2	2	-	-	-	1
Kollam	16	15	0	4	5	1	-	-	1	4
Trivandrum	14	8	6	3	2	2	-	-	-	1
Seats Won	--	93	46	35	17	25	5	8	1	6
Seats Contested	--	140	140	50	22	30	11	17	2	8

APPENDIX V

GOVERNMENTS AND ITS DURATION IN KERALA

TRAVANCORE-COCHIN

T.K.Narayana Pillai (Congress)	1 July 1949 to 3 March 1951
C.Kesavan (Congress)	3 March 1951 to 12 March 1952
A.J.John (Congress)	12 March 1952 to 16 March 1954
Pattom Thanu Pillai (PSP)	16 March 1954 to 14 February 1955
P.Govinda Menon (Congress)	14 February 1955 to 23 March 1956
President Rule	23 March 1956 to 5 April 1957

KERALA

E.M.S.Namboodiripad (CPI)	5 April 1957 to 31 July 1959
President's Rule	1 August 1959 to 22 February 1960
ttom Thanu Pillai (PSP)	22 February 1960 to 25 September 1962
ankar (Congress)	26 September 1962 to 10 September 1964
esident's Rule	10 September 1964 to 6 March 1967
E.M.S.Namboodiripad (CPI(M))	6 March 1967 to 24 October 1969
Achuta Menon (CPI)	1 November 1969 to 1 August 1970
President's Rule	4 August 1970 to 4 October 1970
Achuta Menon (CPI)	4 October 1970 to 25 March 1977
K.Karunakaran (Congress)	25 March 1977 to 25 April 1977
A.K.Antony (Congress)	27 April 1977 to 26 October 1978
P.K.Vasudevan Nair (CPI)	29 October 1978 to 7 October 1979
C.H.Mohammed Koya (IUML)	12 October 1979 to 11 December 1979
President's Rule	11 December 1979 to 24 January 1980
E.K.Nayanar (CPI (M))	24 January 1980 to 20 October 1981
President's Rule	21 October 1981 to 28 December 1981
K.Karunakaran (Congress I)	21 December 1981 to 17 March 1982
President's Rule	17 March 1982 to 24 May 1982
K.Karunakaran (Congress I)	24 May 1982 to 23 March 1982
E.K.Nayanar (CPI (M))	26 March 1987 --

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Government of Kerala

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