

**FORMATION OF KERALA -  
PROBLEMS AND  
PERSPECTIVES**

**THESIS  
SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT  
FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN HISTORY**

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**2010**

## **CERTIFICATE**

I do hereby declare that this thesis entitled **Formation of Kerala – Problems and Perspectives** is a record of bonafide research carried out by **A. Valsalan** under my supervision at the University of Calicut. This work has not been published or submitted either in part or in whole, for any degree at any University.

Payyannur  
30.06.2010.

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## **DECLARATION**

I do hereby declare that this thesis entitled **Formation of Kerala – Problems and Perspectives** is a record of bonafide research carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. V.V. Kunhikrishnan, Dy. Director of Collegiate Education (Retd.). This work has not been published or submitted either in part or in whole, for any degree at any University.

Calicut University  
.2010.

**A. VALSALAN**

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AICC	:	All India Congress Committee
AITUC	:	All India Trade Union Congress
BEM	:	Basel Evangelical Mission
CMS	:	Church Mission Society
CPI	:	Communist Party of India
CSP	:	Congress Socialist Party
DK	:	Dravida Kazhakam
DMK	:	Dravida Munnetra Kazhakam
HTCC	:	Hosdurg Taluk Congress Committee
IHC	:	Indian History Congress
JVP	:	(Committee consisted of) Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhai Patel and Pattabhi Sitaramayya
KCHR	:	Kerala Council for Historical Research
KE/ME	:	Kollam Era / Malayalam Era
KMPP	:	Kerala Mazdoor Praja Party
KPAC	:	Kerala People's Arts Club
KPCC	:	Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee
KSA	:	Kerala State Archives
KSP	:	Kerala Socialist Party
MPCC	:	Malabar Pradesh Congress Committee
NAI	:	National Archives of India
NMML	:	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
NNPR	:	Native News Paper Reports
NSS	:	Nair Service Society
OHT	:	Oral History Transcripts
PSP	:	Praja Socialist Party
RSP	:	Revolutionary Socialist Party
SIHC	:	South Indian History Congress
SNDP	:	Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam

SNM	:	Sree Narayana Novement
SPCS	:	Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society
SRC	:	States Reorganisation Commission
TC	:	Travancore-Cochin (State)
TCPCC	:	Travancore-Cochin Pradesh Congress Committee
TIL	:	Travancore Information and Listener
TNA	:	Tamil Nadu Archives
TTNC	:	Travancore Tamil Nad Congress

## **INTRODUCTION**

Contemporary Indian scene is marked by an amorphous, vague and confusing conflict between pre independence norms and post independence realities. While the former imply freedom, progress and the revolution of rising expectations, the latter unity, organization, distribution and revolution of growing frustrations. Growth of regionalism, 'Sons of soil' movements, religious fanaticism and communal politics point to the need for a discussion on the norms to be adopted for the formation of new states. The current debate on the formation of Telengana state has made the issue live at the national level. Political scientists have realized that many of their questions concerning contemporary situation are better answered if they are enlightened on their historical backgrounds. Policy makers too derive benefits from such an endeavour for it gives them a feel of the constraints and options which were open at an earlier period and their subsequent mutations.

The present study, 'Formation of Kerala - Problems and Perspectives' is an attempt to reconstruct the history of the genesis and growth of the Aikya Kerala (United Kerala) Movement that emerged as part of the movement for the linguistic reorganization of states in India. The agitation for the formation of states on linguistic basis was one of the most fascinating popular movements launched along with the national liberation struggle.

The redrawing of the frontiers of states to correspond to the linguistic divisions of the population was an event of crucial importance in the history of independent India. Its antecedents need to be examined in a detailed manner. The idea of forming provinces on linguistic lines captured the imagination of the thinking elite of the country in the first half of the last century. The spread of nationalism contributed in a very large measure to the growth of the desire for unifying people on linguistic basis. There are differences in ways of defining 'nationalism', some equating it with 'national



sentiment', others with nationalist ideology and language, others again with nationalist movements. Three classic statements are those of Renan, Stalin and Weber. Earnest Renan rejects the statist concept of the nation in order to identify the nation as a form of morality.<sup>1</sup> Joseph Stalin defines that 'a nation is a historically evolved, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make up manifested in a common culture.'<sup>2</sup> Max Weber examines the nation as a 'prestige community', endowed with a sense of cultural mission. He affiliates nations to ethnic communities as populations unified by a myth of common descent.<sup>3</sup> Benedict Anderson regards nation as an artifact, "an imagined political community".<sup>4</sup> Gellner defines nationalism as 'primarily a principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent.'<sup>5</sup> This political definition is accepted by some others including E.J. Hobsbawm.<sup>6</sup>

Indian nationalism can be understood properly so long as it is duly linked to subnationalism. Subnationalism is theoretically identical to nationalism. But the difference is that the dimension of the desire for political control of a territorial homeland necessarily manifests itself in the desire for sovereign statehood in the case of nationalism, but it could imply the pursuit of greater autonomy within the existing politico-legal frame work in the case of subnationalism. Subnationalism is "we feeling" below the level of the nation state.<sup>7</sup> Nationalism as applied to European countries cannot be applicable to India. Since India is a multilingual country, Indian society has

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<sup>1</sup> John Hutchinson and Anthony D Smith, (eds.) *Nationalism*, New York, OUP, 1994, p.15.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, London, 1936.

<sup>3</sup> Max Weber, *A Nation is a Nation, is a State, is an Ethnic Group, is a .....*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 1/4, 1978 quoted in John Hutchinson *op.cit* pp 21-25.

<sup>4</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Verso, 1991.

<sup>5</sup> Earnest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford, 1983, p.1.

<sup>6</sup> E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, Cambridge, 1993, p.9.

<sup>7</sup> E.Tiryakian and R. Rogowski (eds.), *New Nationalisms in the Developed West*, Allen & Unwin, Boston, 1985.

always been pluralistic in character. Therefore the Indian national movement has had to embody in itself several subnational movements.

That regional identities sought to crystalise into subnationalisms becomes apparent from the early period of nationalist articulation in the late nineteenth century. The partition of Bengal in 1905 not only met with stiff resistance in Bengal but all over the country and sharpened the articulation of regional identities. The clamour that went up in Bengal against the partition not only reinforced the linguistic nationality ideology in Bengal but also catalysed the process in the rest of India. The Andhra Movement in the Telugu speaking areas of the Madras presidency was the first notable linguistic movement that arose after the Bengal agitation. The Aikya Kerala (United Kerala) Movement which manifested the urge for a subnational political identity of the Malayalam speaking people, emerged on the basis of a distinct culture and language.

The uniqueness of the Kerala region was noticed and recognized by the foreign notices and indigenous accounts from very early period. The ecological features like landscape, soil structure, rainfall and seasons favoured the development of a paddy dominated plough agricultural village system in Kerala.<sup>8</sup> By the ninth century Kerala gets defined as a geographical unit with definite boundaries.<sup>9</sup> The emergence of Brahmanical settlements in the river valleys of Kerala was a decisive factor in the formulation of the state and its distinct character. The introduction of the Brahmanical element with the Parasurama tradition is demonstrative of the distinctiveness of Kerala and its departure from the rest of Tamilakam. Parasurama legend portrays Kerala as a “gift from the sea” created long ago (when) the lord Parasurama flung his battle axe far out into the heaving sea, the waters receded and the land of

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<sup>8</sup> R. Rajan Gurukkal and M.R. Raghava Variar, *Cultural History of Kerala* Vol. 1, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, pp. 257-72.

<sup>9</sup> Kesavan Veluthat, 'Evolution of a Regional Identity, Kerala in India' in Irfan Habib (ed), *India, Studies in the History of an Idea*, Aligarh, 2005, pp.83, 84.

Kerala emerged into the sun and air”. Many others have discussed the legend in divergent perspectives.<sup>10</sup>

Malayalam language became the strongest unifying bond for the cultural identity of the Malayalees. Distinguished from other regions, Kerala developed peculiar social institutions like joint family system and matrilineal system of inheritance (Marumakkathayam).<sup>11</sup> Kerala has also developed distinctive art forms and architectural styles. The Malayalam speaking population of the west coast were bound by geography, tradition, language and culture.

The Renaissance movement<sup>12</sup> started during the late nineteenth century laid out the background for the birth of modern Kerala. The reformist movements necessitated an internal reorganisation of the castes, which had been divided as various sub castes, into coherent mass communities. The

<sup>10</sup> For a detailed discussion on the myth of Parasurama and its historical implications, please see: Chirayinkeezh P. Govinda Pillai, ‘Keralathinte Purathana Charithravum Keraleeya Brahmana Mahatmyavum’ in Dharmabodhini (Mal.), Vol. I, Nos. 1, 6, 9, 11 (1909); Chattampi Swamikal, *Pracheena Malayalam* (Mal.), SPCS, Kottayam, 1962 (First edition 1913); K.P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Vol. I*, Ernakulam, 1924; Kambil Anandan, *Kerala Charithra Niroopanam* (Mal.), Edward Press, Kannur, 1935; B.A. Salatore, *Ancient Karnataka I*, Poona, 1936; Ulloor S Parameswara Aiyer, *Kerala Sahitya Charithram* (Mal), 1953, Vol. I, p.34; Thiruvangad C. Krishna Kurup, *Keralacharithram Parasuramaniloode* (Mal.), SPCS, Kottayam, 1962, pp.52-75, 103-131; K. Damodaran, *Kerala Chritram* (Mal.) Vol. I, Current Books, Thrissur, 1962, pp. 2-7; M.R. Raghava Varier, *Keraleeyatha Charithramanangal* (Mal.), Sukapuram, 1990, pp.48-65, Pradeep Kant Choudhary, *Rama with an Axe-Myth and Cult of Parasurama Avatara*, Aakar Books, Delhi, 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Literally means ‘descent through sisters' children’.

<sup>12</sup> The term ‘Indian Renaissance’ is conventionally applied to signify the intellectual awakening and the urge for socio religious reform engendered by the western contact in the modern period. However Barun De treats the term as a misnomer in the sense that the socio cultural regeneration in the nineteenth century India was only occasioned by the colonial presence, but not created by it. (Barun De (ed.), *Perspectives in Social Science - Historical Dimensions*, Calcutta, OUP, 1977). Later, Partha Chatterjee and others prefer to define it as an attempt at modernization in the colonial context which is branded as ‘colonial modernity’. Their contention is that the prepenetration of alien cultural values and knowledge systems was a virtual threat to the indigenous culture of India, (Partha Chatterjee, *Nation and its Fragments (colonial and Post colonial Histories)* OUP, 1994).

reform movements enabled the people to gain self confidence and self respect. The literary renaissance brought about a structural change in the realm of Malayalam language and literature leading to the consciousness of a civil society in Kerala. The growth of vernacular literature and the spread of newspapers provided the masses with the emotionalized link between language and nationalism.<sup>13</sup> Kerala society began to be transformed into a modern civilized society with a distinct cultural and linguistic identity. It was on the foundation of this distinct cultural and linguistic identity that the movement for United Kerala gathered momentum alongwith the national movement of the country.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The present study seeks to comprehend and interpret the various problems and perspectives pertaining to the formation of the linguistic state of Kerala. It is an attempt at putting together a good deal of relevant data on the issue culminating in a discussion of the perspectives upheld by different political organizations and social groups.

The study attempts to explore the feasibility and desirability of making linguistic criterion one of many bases or the sole basis of states reorganization. It enquires into the linkage between the national movement and the linguistic movements. The study endeavours to give an insight into the ideological positions taken by different political parties at various phases of the linguistic movement. The study also attempts to examine the efficacy of the linguistic states to ensure political and economic justice to the groups bound by the linguistic thread. The study invariably attempts to trace the identity of Keralam as a linguistic-cultural region.

### **Significance of the study**

The present study is an exploration into the undercurrents of the linguistic movements, in the background of the national liberation struggle,

<sup>13</sup> J. Fishman (ed.,) *Language Problems of Developing Countries*, New York, 1972, p.166.

with special focus on the United Kerala Movement. No serious attempts have been made to prepare a comprehensive account of the various streams of the movements for the reorganization of states. Hence an objective analysis of some aspects of this movement is a desideratum.

Quite conspicuous by its absence has been a comprehensive study of the linguistic Aikya Kerala Movement in all its diverse phases. An academic analysis of the various strands of the movement with its regional ramifications in a chronological perspective seems desirable.

### **Sources of Study**

Some of the related aspects of the linguistic states movement have already been looked into by well known authors examining the issue at national and regional levels. V.P. Menon in his 'The Story of Integration of Indian States' has presented an administrative point of view on the reorganization of Indian states. 'Thoughts on Linguistics States' by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar endorses Maharashtra's claim as a linguistic state. K.V. Narayana Rao has written a notable work entitled 'The Emergence of Andhra Pradesh' but it is confined to the Andhra Movement. E.M.S. Namboodiripad in his 'Kerala, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow' approaches the problem in a different political angle.

The biographical narratives of the personages directly or indirectly associated with the Aikya Kerala Movement are capable of illuminating certain aspects of the topic in question. To cite a few, K.P. Kesava Menon (*Kazhinha Kalam*), P. Narayanan Nair (*Ara Noottantiloode*), A.K. Gopalan (*Ente Jeevitha Katha*), K. Madhavan (*Payaswiniyude Theerathu*), K.M. Panikkar (*Aatmakatha*), Puthuppally Raghavan (*Viplava Smaranakal*), K.C. George (*Ente Jeevitha Yatra*) Joseph Mundassery (*Kozhina Ilakal*), N.C. Sekhar (*Agniveedhikal*) K.A. Damodara Menon (*Thirihu Nokkumpol*) and Kumbalathu Sanku Pillai (*Ente Kazhinhakala Smaranakal*). These works portray their individual experiences and organizational ventures blended with subjective personal observations. Biographies on K. Kelappan, K.P. Kesava

Menon, E.M.S. Namboodiripad and A.K. Gopalan highlight their role in the Aikya Kerala Movement.

The study mainly hinges on primary sources collected from different archival repositories both inside and outside Kerala. Primary archival data drawn from various archives and libraries across the country are indeed vital. Secondary sources include books, journals, souvenirs, biographies, working papers, articles and unpublished M.Phil/Ph.D theses etc.

The records and other source materials preserved in the National Archives of India, Nehru Memorial Museum and library, Central Secretariat Library, P.C. Joshi Archives on Contemporary History, JNU, Ajoy Bhavan, New Delhi, Tamilnad Archives, The Hindu, Chennai; Kerala State Archives, Kerala University Library, Kerala Legislative Library, Centre for Development Studies, M.N. Smarakam, Thiruvananthapuram; Sahitya Academy, Appan Thampuram Museum, Trichur, University of Calicut, Regional Archives Kozhikkode, Paral Public Library, Kodyeri, Thalassery, Revenue Reference Library Thalassery, Jawahar Library Kannur etc. have been consulted.

Data on opinions, perceptions and attitudes of the various political organizations and social groups were collected through interviews with the leaders and personalities, directly or indirectly associated with the movement including K. Madhavan (Kanhgad), C. Kannan (Kannur) Moorkoth Ramunni, (Thalassery) P. Bhaskaran (Thiruvananthapuram) K. Sadasivan Ex MLA (Maruthwamala near Nagarcoil) and K. Madhava Kurup (Mahe).

### **Approach and Methodology**

The method adopted in the study is largely descriptive and interpretative. The linkage between the movements for linguistic reorganization and the national movement has been enquired into as a background of the linguistic Aikya Kerala Movement. In this respect it stands distinct from the rest.

The present thesis consists of six chapters treating of the central theme apart from an introduction and conclusion. The introduction itself being an outline of the research programme, makes clear the significance and objectives of the study. It also discusses the approach and methodology besides the logical connection of the chapters and their thematic relationship.

The opening chapter attempts to sketch the identity of Kerala as a linguistic-cultural region. The long historical processes involved in the formation of Kerala's regional identity have been examined, incorporating the ideas discussed by the well known authorities on the related aspects. The role of Malayalam language as the strongest unifying bond for the cultural identity of the Malayalees has been explained in the chapter. Due attention has been given to discuss other distinctive features such as social institutions and forms of art and architecture. The Kerala Renaissance which effected a cultural integration of Kerala, also gets special focus in the first chapter.

The second chapter tracks the discussion on the linguistic nationality question emerged along with the national liberation movement. This chapter traces the genesis of the linguistic movement heralded with the antipartition struggle in Bengal. The struggle strengthened the linguistic nationalist ideology, resulting in the emergence of linguistic movements in other parts of India including Telugu speaking Andhra region in the erstwhile Madras presidency. The chapter also discusses in detail how the colonial government and the major political parties in India addressed the linguistic nationality question.

The colonial government responded negatively to the issue through the reports on constitutional reforms. The political parties especially the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party of India initiated serious discussions on the ideological perspectives and organizational strategies pertaining to the question. The Congress Annual Session at Nagpur in 1920 reorganized its provincial committees on linguistic basis. The (Motilal) Nehru Report of 1928 categorically endorsed the linguistic principle for

provincial reorganization. The Communist Party formulated its policy on the reorganisation of provinces by making a series of discussions on the basis of the Leninist theory of self determination of nationalities.

Sketching the origin of the United Kerala Movement, the third chapter examines the aspirations expressed at different quarters and the initial ventures made to see that Kerala was unified. The progress of the national movement in Kerala facilitated the interactions and involvements of peoples of different regions paving the way for the development of Kerala consciousness. The political conferences under the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee (KPCC) passed a series of resolutions underlining the need to form a separate Kerala province in the emerging constitutional set up. The formation and growth of the Socialist and Communist parties exerted profound influence on the nature of the political movement for freedom and democracy. The formulation of the dynamic slogan of linguistic United Kerala was a significant step taken by the Communist Party during the 1942-45 period. The chapter also unfolds the role of the class and mass organizations formed under the banner of the Congress Socialist Party and the Communist Party in widening the scope of political activity to the grass root level.

The fourth chapter is devoted to narrate the historical developments which facilitated and weakened the Aikya Kerala Movement, before and after independence. The discussion in this chapter unravels the class interests of the ruling authorities in the native states, provinces and centre. What the conservative leadership of the United Kerala Movement wanted was not a 'linguistic' state of Kerala, but the creation of a multilingual province on the west coast. They visualized an Aikya Kerala perpetuating 'Parasurama' tradition and memory of 'Perumal' rule. Thus by basing upon the mythological and legendary foundations, the ruling classes and the conservative organizers of the United Kerala Movement happened to unfold their reactionary character. The chapter also shows how the 'Independent



Travancore' proposal of Diwan Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar proved to be a grave hurdle for the Aikya Kerala Movement. It is also pertinent to note that in the post independence period, Congress began to retract from their earlier commitment on the formation of linguistic provinces. Both the Dar Commission Report and the JVP Committee Report recommended not to create linguistics provinces.

The fifth chapter analyses the developments related to the integration of Travancore and Cochin States and the compelling circumstances in which the central government set up the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) in the wake of the martyrdom courted by Potti Sriramulu. It also delves deep in to the discussions revealing the inner contradictions of the Congress organization in regard to the proposal of a Southern State (*Dakshina Samsthan*). The Malabar Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) which demanded the formation of a multilingual Southern State was moving in tune with the central Congress leadership which stood for 'centralisation'. The chapter also sifts the views and perceptions of the major political parties on the question of states reorganization.

The sixth chapter focuses on the debates brought out in the legislatures and the print media on the recommendations of the SRC Report. These debates and discussions amply reveal the reactionary position of the Malabar Congress leadership quite in opposition to the Aikya Kerala Movement. The Travancore Tamilnad Congress (TTNC) reiterated its demand for the separation of Tamil taluks from Travancore Cochin. A section of the Congressmen of Travancore Cochin stood against the separation of Tamil taluks and they wanted to retain the undivided Keralam ('*Akhandam Keralam*'). In spite of these contradictory positions taken by the mainstream national party, states reorganization proposals were primarily based on the consideration of language.

The conclusion sums up and synthesizes the findings of the study with some observations as postscript.



## CHAPTER I

### IDENTITY OF KERALAM AS A LINGUISTIC-CULTURAL REGION

Keralam, the homeland of the Malayalees became a single administrative unit in modern times only on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 1956 when the States Reorganisation Bill was enacted. It came into effect by the integration of the Malabar district and Kasargod taluk of erstwhile Madras State with Travancore-Cochin State excluding Thovala, Agastheeswaram, Kalkulam Vilavancode and Shencotta taluks.<sup>14</sup> Formation of United Keralam (Aikya Keralam) was a long cherished dream of the Malayalam speaking people. It was the culmination of a long process of evolution of Keralam as a linguistic/cultural region.

An elongated strip of land on the south western part of Peninsular India, Kerala lies sandwiched between the Arabian Sea and the Western Ghats. The very antiquity of the term 'Keralam' which has been revived in the modern state of Kerala suggests that the uniqueness of the region was noticed by others. Both foreign and indigenous accounts contain references to this land. The classical Greco Roman accounts of the early centuries of the Christian era mention Keprobotras/Kerobotra/Kaelobotras.<sup>15</sup> Megasthenese refers to the king of the 'Charmae'.<sup>16</sup> Pliny speaks of Caelobotras as the sovereign of this country.<sup>17</sup> The second and thirteenth rock edicts of Asoka mention the name 'Keralaputa' as one of the borderland kings of the south.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Report of the States Reorganisation Commission*, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 1955, pp. 85-89.

<sup>15</sup> R.C. Majumdar, *The Classical Accounts of India*, Calcutta, 1960, pp. 305, 312, 339, 379 and 381.

<sup>16</sup> *Manual of the Administration of the Madras Presidency*, Govt. Press, Madras, 1885, Vol. II, p. 46.

<sup>17</sup> K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *Foreign Notices of South India*, Madras University, 1972, p. 53.

<sup>18</sup> K.M. Panikkar, *A History of Kerala*, Annamalainagar, 1960, p.2.

The term 'Cera'/'Ceramam' occurs in early Tamil anthologies (previously referred to as 'Sangam literature') in the sense of a lineage of chiefs.<sup>19</sup> But there was no concrete notion of Kerala as a geographical unit. Till about the first half of the first millennium A.D. Kerala had remained subsumed within the Tamil macro region called Tamilakam.<sup>20</sup>

The earliest definitive reference to Kerala as a separate geographical entity bearing that name is in the *Avantisundarikatha* of Dandin, the 8<sup>th</sup> century Sanskrit poet.<sup>21</sup> Kulasekharavarman, a ninth century king of Kerala describes himself as 'Keralakulacudamani' and 'Keraladhinatha' in the Sanskrit plays.<sup>22</sup> Kerala gets defined as a geographical and political unit with definite boundaries by the ninth century.<sup>23</sup>

The ecological difference between the agro climatic zones of Kerala and those by the rest of Tamilakam in terms of seasons, rainfall, permeability, landscape, soil structure etc amounted to the difference in the nature of cultivation followed and labour processes required at the places.<sup>24</sup> The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries AD witnessed a series of interrelated socially and culturally significant transformations. The human induced landscape change eventually structured the economic and cultural geography of Kerala. The integration of workforce into occupation groups of hereditary specialisation with agrarian settlement was effected through a long process. The landscape shift symbolised a series of interrelated and culturally significant transformations. The transformation of kin labour into nonkin labour was followed by the transformation of clans into castes. This amounted to the transformation of

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<sup>19</sup> N. Subrahmanian, *Pre-Pallavan Tamil Index*, Madras, 1990, pp. 392-5.

<sup>20</sup> R. Rajan Gurukkal, M.R. Raghava Varier, *Cultural History of Kerala*, Vol. I., Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, p. XXVI, XXVII.

<sup>21</sup> Kesavan Veluthat, 'Evolution of a Regional Identity: Kerala in India' in Irfan Habib (Ed.), *India - Studies in the History of an Idea*, Aligarh, 2005, pp. 83-4.

<sup>22</sup> M.G.S. Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala*, Calicut, 1996, p. 213; Prologues of Tapati Samvaranam and Subhadradhananjayam quoted by Kesavan Veluthat, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

<sup>23</sup> Kesavan Veluthat, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

<sup>24</sup> R. Rajan Gurukkal and M.R. Raghava Varier, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

simple clannish settlement into structured agrarian village. The transformation of the millet dominated economy into the paddy dominated one was part of this process. The transformation of use value based exchange into exchange value based exchange was a corresponding development in the economy. At the political level the transformation of chiefdoms into monarchy was a major development which marked the birth of a new political structure.<sup>25</sup>

Kerala culture attained identity through a long historical process of synthesis and conflicts of different forces. The replacement of the tribal social system by plough agricultural village system, contacts with Brahmanism, Christianity and Islam, the formation and reorganisation of feudal society, the progress of social renaissance movement, the emergence of democratic forces fighting against feudal colonial domination, strengthening of organised working class influenced by left socialist ideology-these are the factors which contributed their mite to the fruitful culmination of the above process having diverse phases.

The basic structure of feudalism in Kerala was introduced through plough agricultural system. Like all other feudal societies in India the feudal system in Kerala also emerged and flourished under the Hindu Brahman religion. The process of formation of Kerala culture as a regionalized community of culture also was parallel to those that evolved politically and linguistically in almost all other parts of India.<sup>26</sup>

Kerala assumed the characteristics of a single political unit with the emergence of the Cera Kingdom of Mahodayapuram or Makotai in the beginning of the ninth century.<sup>27</sup> The rise of the Cera kingdom represents the culmination of a series of complex processes with far reaching consequences

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272.

<sup>26</sup> Cherian P.J. (Ed.), *Kerala State Gazetteer*, Vol. IV Part II, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> By making use of epigraphical sources, Elamkulam P.N. Kunhan Pillai brought out the outline of the history of the Cera Kingdom of Mahodayapuram (800-1102 AD), *Studies in Kerala History*, Trivandrum, 1970.

for economy, society and polity. This kingdom comprising practically the whole of modern Kerala and major part of Nilgiris and certain portions of Salem and Coimbatore districts was the last politico administrative arrangement to give Kerala territories the status of a single administrative entity prior to the formation of the present Kerala state.<sup>28</sup>

The rise of Brahmanical settlements in the river valleys of Kerala was one of the factors responsible for the formation of the state and the peculiar character it had as distinct from the rest of south India. The majority of the Brahmanical settlements took shape only in the period of the transition from the early historical to early medieval period.<sup>29</sup> Much of the fertile land cut up into small compartments by numerous rivers could have been covered by thick forests when these Brahman settlers arrived. The names of many Namboodiri illams carry the terms, *kaadu* (forest) *maadu* (upland) etc., are indicative of the previous presence of dense forests there.<sup>30</sup> Subsequently they reclaimed the land for agriculture. They were largely free to develop the region according to their sweet will and pleasure, unhindered by the resistance of a developed group of people like the Jains and Buddhists, as in the neighbouring states. They patronized the tribal matrilineal system that

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<sup>28</sup> Elamkulam P.N. Kunhan Pillai, *op. cit.*, p. 250. Elamkulam went to the extent of asserting that the Chera rulers built an 'empire' that he named the 'Second Chera Empire' or 'Kulasekhara empire'. The argument of Elamkulam that this second Chera Empire was a highly centralized monarchy has been disputed. M.G.S. Narayanan has recently presented an argument on the contrary, that the Chera Perumal had only a ritual sovereignty and the actual political power rested with 'a bold and visible Brahman oligarchy', thinly disguised as a monarchy to satisfy the sentiments of the lawgivers of India. M.G.S. Narayanan, 'The State in the Era of the Cheraman Perumals of Kerala' in R. Champakalakshmi, Kesavan Veluthat and T.R. Venugopalan eds, *State and Society in Pre Modern South India*, Thrissur, 2002, pp. 111-117.

<sup>29</sup> Kesavan Veluthat, *Brahman Settlements in Kerala*, Calicut 1978; 'Into the Medieval and out of it', Presidential Address, Medieval Indian History Section, Indian History Congress, Bangalore, 1997.

<sup>30</sup> Kodungallur Kunhikkuttan Thampuran, *Pracheena Keralam* in P.K. Narayana Pillai (Ed.), *Keralam*, Keralavarma Mudranalayam, Changanasseri, 1912.

smoothened their passage into the innermost sanctuaries of power within the native society of this region."<sup>31</sup>

The Brahmanas of Kerala cherished the Parasurama tradition and developed a number of unusual practices known as '*anacaras*' which distinguished the Brahmanas of Kerala from those elsewhere in India.<sup>32</sup> The Brahmanical settlements of Kerala developed certain features that were entirely different from those of their settlement in other parts of the Peninsula. The Thiruvallangad Copper Plates describe Kerala as "the land created by Rama who takes pleasure in exterminating the Kshatriyas and where good people live with joy."<sup>33</sup>

The introduction of the Brahmanical element with the Parasurama tradition seems to be the starting point of the distinctiveness of Kerala and its departure from the rest of Tamilakam. The *Keralolpathi* attempts to historicise Kerala as a separate unit with its own defined territory and peculiar institutions. It gives an account of Parasurama's creation of Kerala, the land between Gokarna and Kanyakumari by claiming it from the Arabian Sea with a fling of his axe and settling it by Brahmanas brought from the North in 64 gramas, of which 32 are in Tulu Nadu and the remaining in present day Kerala.<sup>34</sup> Parasurama established a 'Brahmakshatra' in Kerala, where Brahmanas looked after the work of the Kshatriyas, with every arrangement for the welfare of the people, including religion, administration and law. The Brahmanical authority in Kerala was so great that it took Vishnu as Parasurama, a Brahmanical '*avatara*' with sufficient Kshatriya pretensions to

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<sup>31</sup> M.G.S. Narayanan, The State in the Era of the Cheraman Perumals of Kerala in R. Champakalakshmi *et al.*, eds. *State and Society in Pre-modern South India*, Thrissur, 2002, p. 117.

<sup>32</sup> William Logan, *Malabar*, Vol. I, Madras, 1886, pp. 156-7.

<sup>33</sup> South Indian Inscriptions III, p. 398 quoted by Kesavan Veluthat, *Evolution of a Regional Identity*, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

<sup>34</sup> AKTM Valianarayanan Nambudiripad attempts to locate the 32 Nambudiri Villages in the Kerala section, Namboodirimarute Gramangal, in K.C. Manavikramaraja (Ed.) *The Jenmi*, Vol. 7 Nos. 6 & 10 Lakshmisahayam Press, Kottakkal, 1915.

legitimize it. And that underlined the distinctiveness of Kerala with reference to the Tulu country too.<sup>35</sup>

Kerala was referred to as '*Cheraman nadu*', the 'Land of the Cheramans' in the literature of post Chera Perumal period. Each of the principalities that came into existence on the ruins of the Chera Kingdom claimed to be not only a splinter of the old kingdom but also deriving its authority from the donation of the last Cheraman Perumal. Thus Kolathunad in the north and Venad in the South and all other 'Kingdoms' in between partook the same historical tradition and the same identity. It was this tradition which led to the practice of adoptions to the Travancore royal family from one of the branches of the Kolathunad family.<sup>36</sup> Adoptions to the Travancore royal house were made from the family of Kolathiris even from the 14<sup>th</sup> century AD. During the reign of Udaya Marthanda Varma (1313-44) two princesses from the Kolathiri house were adopted to the Venad royal house. A palace was constructed at Attingal where they were installed as Attingal 'Mutha Thampuran' and 'Elaya Thampuran'.<sup>37</sup> During the regency of Umayamma Rani (1677-1684) a prince and two princesses from the Kolathiri house were again adopted by Venad. Subsequently under Ravi Varma (1684-1718) two princesses and two princes were adopted from the Kolathiri house to Venad in 863 K.E (1683-84). The illustrious Marthanda Varma was the son of one of these two princes adopted from the Kolathiri stock. As such he was "a full blooded 'Malayala Raja' and a northerner to the tips of his fingers".<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Kesavan Veluthat, *Evolution of a Regional Identity, op cit.*, p. 89.

<sup>36</sup> *Manual of the Administration of Madras Presidency*, Vol. I, Madras 1885, p. 51.

Nagam Aiya endorses that the illustrious Travancore rulers Marthanda Varma and his nephew Rama Varma (Dharma Raja) were the issue of the princess adopted from Kolathunad. *The Travancore State Manual Vol. 1 (1906)* Asian Educational Services, Madras, 1989, pp. 314-333.

<sup>37</sup> *Trivandurm District Gazetteer*, Trivandrum, 1961, pp. 145-146.

<sup>38</sup> S. Ramanatha Aiyar, *A History of Travancore*, Srinivasa Varadachari & Co., Madras, 1938, p. 26.



The later instances of adoption are those of a princess in 893 KE (1717-18), two princesses in 923 K.E (1747-48) and of two princesses in 964 KE (1787-88). It may be noted that there was '*Pulasambandham*' (observance of pollution) between the two royal houses.<sup>39</sup> In view of such close relations between Travancore royal house and the Kolathiris Logan has expressed the view that the two houses belonged to the same family. "It is not at all improbable therefore that the Northern Kolathiris are descended from a matrimonial alliance between the last of the Kerala Perumals and a lady of the stock of the great southern feudatory, the Travancore (South Kolathiri) Rajas. The two families have always observed pollution, when deaths occurred in their respective houses, and as matter of fact, the southern family would have ceased to exist long ago but for the adoption of heirs on several occasions from the northern family."<sup>40</sup>

Many of the rulers claimed to be the overlord of Kerala. *Mamankam*, a Thirunavaya festival held every twelve years was the occasion where this claim was ritually made and contested. The Kollam Era which originated in the ninth century (825 AD) and later gained acceptance as a standard for reckoning dates all over the land enhanced the concept of cohesion in Kerala.<sup>41</sup> The strong Brahmanical character which marked the earlier power structure is no longer seen in most of the successor states but the cultural identity of Kerala which was forged in the earlier period of Brahmanical hegemony, lingered on. Onam, a festival with a strong Tamil background gets entirely Malayalamised in the post Chera period.

Consequent on the dismemberment of the Perumal Kingdom, political unity of Kerala was never accomplished until the formation of the present linguistic state of Kerala. But there were stray attempts in this direction. K.M. Panikkar observes that politically the most important result of the Portuguese contact with Kerala was that it checked the development of Kerala

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<sup>39</sup> *Cannanore District Gazetteer*, Trivandrum, 1972, p. 72.

<sup>40</sup> Logan, *Malabar Manual*, Vol. I, 1951, p. 235.

<sup>41</sup> Elamkulam P.N. Kunhanpillai, *Studies in Kerala History*, pp. 200-216.

into a single confederacy under the Zamorine. Panikkar becomes sentimental when he laments: 'In the 15<sup>th</sup> century the Zamorine's power was steadily growing towards the south and there was every possibility of a unification of Kerala under the rule of the Zamorines. But the appearance of Vasco da Gama shattered that dream to pieces and checked the advance of the Zamorine to the fort of Idapalli. The next endeavour was that of Marthanda Varma of Travancore who marched his army up to Cochin to attack the forces of Calicut. But before his dream of a united Kerala could be realised, a new eruption, this time from the Mysore side, dashed it to pieces and cut up Kerala into three political divisions'.<sup>42</sup>

The expansion of British power in India ruled out any possibility of a local prince attempting at political unification. While the native rulers of Travancore and Cochin ensured the continuous existence of their realms by agreeing to accept British supremacy, Malabar was annexed by the British after the Treaties signed at Seringapatam in February and March 1792 and incorporated in to the Bombay Presidency. Malabar was transferred from the Bombay to the Madras Presidency in May 1800.<sup>43</sup> The Kasaragod Taluk with a predominantly Malayalam speaking population was included in the district of south Kanara, which had a non Malayali majority in the population. The political unification of India under British rule in reality checked the emergence of distinct nationalities in the subcontinent.<sup>44</sup>

Notwithstanding the political disunity, people of Kerala evolved a uniform pattern of culture and way of life. The development of the cultural distinctiveness of Kerala has been influenced by the peculiar geographical position which prevented excessive external interferences. Indeed there were relations with peoples beyond the ghats and across the seas and the incoming

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<sup>42</sup> K.M. Panikkar, *A History of Kerala (1498-1801)* Annamalainagar, 1960, p. 307.

<sup>43</sup> C.A. Innes, *Malabar Gazetteer (1908)*, Kerala Gazetteer Department, Trivandrum, 1997, p. 71,72.

<sup>44</sup> E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *The National Question in Kerala*, Peoples Publishing House, Bombay, 1952, p. 60.

culture was "absorbed silently through language, faith, art pattern and even race mixture while the settlers borrowed the style of life and thought from the local people.<sup>45</sup>

### **The role of Malayalam Language**

The development of Malayalam as an independent language was the most dominant factor favouring the formation of cultural identity of Malayalees. The apparent geographical isolation of Kerala contributed to the evolution of its own language called 'Malayalam'. The word Malayalam seems to have been formed by combining '*mala*' (mountain) either with '*alam*' (land) to mean 'mountainous land' or with '*azham*' (depth) ie, the sea to mean 'the land that lies between the mountains and the deep sea'.<sup>46</sup> Robert Caldwell suggests that perhaps the best rendering of the term Malayalam is the 'mountain region'.<sup>47</sup> The word 'Malayalam' which was originally used for the area, in the course of time, has come to be used for the language itself. The oldest mention of Malayalam as a separate form of speech seems to be found in Fernao Lopez de Castanheda's *Historia do descobrimento e conquista da India, Coimbra, 1551-1561*.<sup>48</sup>

K.A. Nilakanta Sastri holds that the development of Malayalam into a separate language was the natural growth through centuries from '*Kodum Tamil*' that prevailed in Kerala at the beginning of the Christian era.<sup>49</sup> Many scholars including Robert Caldwell have pointed out the close connection between Tamil and Malayalam and held the view that Malayalam is a much

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<sup>45</sup> M.G.S. Narayanan, *Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala*, Kerala Historical Society, Trivandrum, 1972, p. viii.

<sup>46</sup> Elias Valentine, 'Kerala Land People and Language' in Puthussery Ramachandran (ed.), *World Conference on Malayalam, Kerala Culture and Development*, University of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1977, p.32.

<sup>47</sup> Robert Caldwell, *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Language*, London, 1856, p. 21.

<sup>48</sup> G.A. Grierson, (ed.), *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. IV Calcutta, 1906, p. 350.

<sup>49</sup> K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India*, New Delhi, 1975, p. 377.

altered offshoot of Tamil.<sup>50</sup> The view that though Tamil and Malayalam are closely related, Malayalam is not a dialect of Tamil but a branch of the ProtoDravidian has also strong supporters. Hermann Gundert states unequivocally that Malayalam is a sister of Tamil.<sup>51</sup>

Deviating from the conventional discussions, Rajan Gurukkal and Raghava Varier associate the deliverance of the Malayalam language and the Kerala culture from the Tamil and Tamilakam culture with the 'Great Transformation' of Keralam into an agrarian social formation with the expansion of wet rice agriculture.

"the land emerged an independent cultural entity in the 9<sup>th</sup> century with a homogenous linguistic base called 'malainattuvazhakkam' as distinguished from the language and culture of erstwhile Tamilakam."<sup>52</sup>

By the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries AD a new style of poetic composition in indigenous Malayalam was gradually evolved. This newly evolved style is seen in '*Krishnagadha*' (Song of Krishna) by Cherusseri. The language of *Krishnagadha* or *Krishnappattu* is chaste, simple and dignified with high lyrical quality. The purity of Malayalam expressed in the language and style of *Krishnappattu* distinguishes it from the Tamil and Sanskrit poetic styles.<sup>53</sup>

During the period from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries which is marked out by the advent of the Portuguese and the take over of the political power by the English the feudal society in Kerala was integrated as a regionalised community of culture.

"The formation of the cultural life in Kerala as a regionalized community of culture was definitely a resistance to the foreign

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<sup>50</sup> Robert Caldwell, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>51</sup> Gundert, quoted by Caldwell, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>52</sup> Rajan Gurukkal and Raghava Varier, *op. cit.*, 1999, p. 272.

<sup>53</sup> Raghava Varier and Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charitram* (Mal.), Sukapuram, 1992, pp. 261-262.

elements, but at the same time it was the reorganization of the feudal culture impelled by the new challenges".<sup>54</sup>

The political interference of the Europeans changed the feudal power relations which demanded a transformation in the ideological sphere. The Hindu religion which was transformed into the ideology of Hinduism worked as a motive force behind the linguistic cultural integration resulting in the flowering of a new kind of art and literature. Again this new ideology was set against the old system of temple oriented Brahman centred feudal culture. The works of Ezhuthachan and Poonthanam represent the best examples of this new religious ideology. It was at this time that the emancipation of Malayalam as a literary language got itself proclaimed. The works of Ezhuthachan are also the record of this struggle and emancipation in the realm of language as well as of culture.<sup>55</sup> He has popularised a poetic language as also a special form of verse termed *Kilippattu*.<sup>56</sup> He has been able to combine what is good in the various literary dialects, which were in existence during his time and evolve a new pattern of expression.<sup>57</sup>

With the formation of the Malayalam culture there arose the difference between 'Malayalam' and 'paradesam' (other land). 'Malayalam' denoted the natives and the 'paradesis' signified those who came from outside. It was in the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries that the Brahman-non Brahman traditions came together through conflicts and confluences, resulting in the formation of Malayalam culture.<sup>58</sup> When Malayalam had developed into a

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<sup>54</sup> P.J. Cherian (ed.), *Kerala State Gazetteer*, Vol. IV, part II, Trivandrum, 1999, p. 19.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19-21.

<sup>56</sup> Literally 'parrot song'; a style of literary composition.

<sup>57</sup> K.M. George, '*Malayalam Literature through the Ages*' in the *Souvenir of the World Conference on Malayalam*, Kerala Culture and Development, Trivandrum, 1977, p. 39.

<sup>58</sup> K.N. Ganesh, *Kerala Samootha Padanangal* (Mal.) Prasakti Book House, Pathanamthitta, 2002, p. 32.

distinct language, it became the strongest unifying bond for the people of Kerala and the main factor behind the cultural identity of Malayalees.

As Anthony D Smith would suggest, collective memories which form a major link with past play prominent role in the formation of nations. Shared historical memories play a vital role in modern nationalism.<sup>59</sup> Malayalees from early times often shared memories of mythological and historical representations like Parasurama legend, Maveli's reign, legend of Cheraman Perumal etc. The Parasurama legend attributing a common origin to the entire Kerala region was a strong sentiment at the time of the movement for a united Kerala called the 'Aikya Kerala Movement'. The Mahabali legend illustrates that the Kerala king Mahabali who was deported to *patala* by Vamana, an incarnation of Vishnu, ruled the country in which there was no theft and treachery. The famous folk song which deals with the reign of the legendary king Mahabali begins with the words '*Māveli nādu vāneedum kālam*' (when Maveli ruled over the land) evokes nostalgic memories of a bygone golden age in the minds of the people of Kerala even today.<sup>60</sup> Mahabali, called 'Maveli' in folksongs and folk legends has been considered the symbol of a long lost golden age of social equality, honesty and the joy of life. The legend of the Cheraman Perumal narrates that the last of the Perumals who had ruled over the entire Kerala under a single umbrella partitioned his kingdom among his relatives and dependants and left for Mecca.<sup>61</sup> Innumerable legends like these, transmitted from generation to generation as oral tradition, have spread through out the length and breadth of Kerala.

Festivals and fairs served as an important factor fostering the identity of the Malayalees. As Mona Ozouf observes, festivals and fairs accelerate

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<sup>59</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, Polity, Cambridge, 2004, pp. 73-74.

<sup>60</sup> An anonymous and popular folk song which certainly cannot be ascribed to a period earlier than the sixteenth century because it has been composed in modern Malayalam language.

<sup>61</sup> William Logan, *Malabar*, Vol. I, 1887; rpt. Madras, 1951, pp.227-232.

interaction of the people. Every festival involves reminiscence: often an anniversary, it seeks to reenact the past.<sup>62</sup> The unity of Keralam was and still is closely associated with festivals. Vishu is celebrated by the Malayalees as the astronomical new year day, the vernal equinox.<sup>63</sup> Logan describes Onam as 'the greatest national feast in Malabar.' The good old days when perfect justice, perfect trust and perfect truth prevailed up on the earth, are believed to have been during the reign of Mahabali. And the people attempt in a joyous way to reproduce, if only for one night, a vivid remembrance of the millennium to which they look back with fond longings.<sup>64</sup> L.A. Krishna Iyer observes, " Onam represents the spirit of Kerala. The pervading spirit of the festival was, and is brotherhood and peace. All distinctions of class then vanish into thin air."<sup>65</sup> M.G.S. states, 'This festival (Onam) fitted in wonderfully with the climate and needs of the feudal agrarian society which was developing here. It continues even today, after the abolition of the feudal forms of tenancy, as the symbol of Kerala's regional culture.'<sup>66</sup>

'Bharani' or cock feast held at Kodungallur is described by Logan as the most popular feast in Malabar celebrated in the month of Minam (March-April).<sup>67</sup> Hundreds of pilgrims attend from all parts of Malabar, Nayars, Tiyys, and lower castes alike.<sup>68</sup> Mamankam or Mahamakham festival was held every twelfth year at Tirunavaya temple in the Ponnani Taluk. Gundert compares this tradition with the Greek Olympiads which in ancient times

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<sup>62</sup> Mona Ozouf, 'The Festival in the French Revolution' in Jacques Le Goff & Pierre Nora (eds.) *Constructing the Past*, Cambridge, 1985, p. 181.

<sup>63</sup> William Logan, *Malabar*, Vol. I, 1887; rpt. Madras, 1951, p. 161.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>65</sup> L.A. Krishna Iyer, *Social History of Kerala*, Vol. II, Madras 1970, p. 124.,

<sup>66</sup> M.G.S. Narayanan, 'The Impact of Vaishnava Bhakti Movement on Kerala: Evolution of Onam Festival in Medieval and Modern Times' in *Journal of the Institute for Research in Social Sciences and Humanities*, Nirmalagiri, Vol. I, No. 1, January 2006.

<sup>67</sup> William Logan, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

<sup>68</sup> C.A. Innes & F.B. Evans, *Malabar Gazetteer* (1908), rpt. Madras, 1951, p.147.

united the divided Greece at least for a certain period.<sup>69</sup> Logan considers it the occasion for a Kuttam or assembly of all Keralam, at which public affairs were discussed and settled.<sup>70</sup>

Many of the festivals insist on the participation and representations of different castes and regions. The special events connected with the Kottiyoor (North Kerala) festival are 'Neyyattam' and 'Elanirattam', the former being the pouring of ghee by the Nairs and the latter of the milk of the coconut by the Tiyyas.<sup>71</sup> For the periodical *Murajapam* in the Sri Padmanabaswami Temple, Trivandrum, the 'Addyan' Namboodiris from Northern Kerala are to be invited.<sup>72</sup> These kinds of ceremonial customs facilitated interregional and intra regional interactions.

Most of the centres of festivals were centres of trade also. *Mamankam* functioned as a coordinating force of marketing centres (*angaadisthanangal*). Such facts as 'Nilapadu' (occupation of left side position of Zamorin) of Kozhikod Koya, the ceremony known as 'Kappal Kalasal' (mock fighting among specially arranged ships), the prevalence of a 'Perumchantha' (mega fair) refer to the functioning of Mamankam as a trade festival with port trade interests.<sup>73</sup>

Kerala developed a peculiar custom of reckoning kinship, descent, succession and inheritance in the female line called '*marumakkathayam*' which literally means 'descent through sisters children'. In the early days of the chera kingdom the system of inheritance in Kerala was through the male line, but about the 12<sup>th</sup> century a matrilineal system became regular, according to which the heir to the throne was the son not of the king, but of his eldest

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<sup>69</sup> Albert Frenz, Identity of Malabar as a Cultural Region - Gundert's Point of View, Gundert Memorial Lecture, Tellicherry, 1995.

<sup>70</sup> William Logan, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

<sup>71</sup> A. Sreedhara Menon, Social and Cultural History of Kerala, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1979, p. 171.

<sup>72</sup> K.N. Ezhuthachan, 'Kerala Samskaram, Its Integrity' (Mal.) in *Aikyakeralopaharam*, Mathrubhumi, 1954, p. 40.

<sup>73</sup> *Vaniyamkulam Panchayat Vijnaneeyam*, KCHR, Trivandrum, 2001, p. 188.



sister.<sup>74</sup> The changes in the economic system and patterns of life led to the evolution of peculiar systems of marriage and inheritance.<sup>75</sup> Marumakkathayam was prevalent among the different castes of Hindus including the Namboodiris of Payyannur region (17 illams).<sup>76</sup>

The Kshatriyas, the Ambalavasis, the Samanthas, the Nayars, the Ezhavas and the Thiyyas and a few Muslims followed this system. The joint family system known as '*tharavad*' where the members live under the same roof without partition and the eldest male member of the family called '*Karanavar*' exercises full powers over the affairs of the family is also peculiar to Kerala.<sup>77</sup> Among the *Marumakkathayees* it was customary for the wife and children of a male member of a joint family to reside in the joint family of which his wife is a member. As a result of intense social pressure, legislative enactments sanctioned the claim to partition from the joint family and adopt Makkathayam. (inheritance through male line). But legislation has not extirpated the Marumakkathayam customs and traditions. The divided members still cling on to their old family names and titles.<sup>78</sup>

It has to be emphasised that the observance of caste system with all its rigour and formalities was another social peculiarity of Kerala. Though the system prevailed through out India, no other place was marked by its stringent enforcement than Kerala<sup>79</sup> that Swami Vivekananda referred to Kerala as the 'lunatic asylum'.<sup>80</sup> The majority of downtrodden untouchables and

<sup>74</sup> A.L. Basham, *The Wonder That was India*, Rupa & Co., New Delhi, 1981, p. 94.

<sup>75</sup> Elamkulam P.N. Kunhan Pillai, *op. cit.*, p. 323.

<sup>76</sup> William Logan, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-136, 153-155.

C.A. Innes, *op. cit.*, pp. 96, 97, 193.

<sup>77</sup> *Kerala*, Publication Division, Government of India, New Delhi, 1968, p. 23.

<sup>78</sup> *Kerala State Gazetteer*, Vol. I, Kerala State Gazetteer Department, Trivandrum, 1986.

<sup>79</sup> A. Aiyappan, *Social Revolution in a Kerala Village*, A Study of Cultural and Change, Bombay, 1965, p. 123.

<sup>80</sup> P. Govinda Pillai, 'Dr. Herman Gundert and Kerala's Renaissance' in Albrecht Frenz and Scaria Zacharia, eds., *Dr. Herman Gundert and Malayalam Language*, Changanassery, 1993, p.166.

unapproachables were not only robbed of the fruits of their labour but denied even the blessings of culture.<sup>81</sup> Persons belonging to non caste Hindus called 'avarnas' were not allowed to enter and worship in Hindu temples, were prohibited from walking on the approaches to temples, and were not allowed to mix with caste Hindu called 'Savarnas' in educational and other public institutions. Both sight and touch pollution were in vogue with stiff penalties for any breach in observance of tradition.<sup>82</sup> The peculiar disabilities emanating from the prevailing caste system tended to provide a distinctive character to the Kerala society.

Art forms peculiar to Kerala too developed from very early days. Kerala folk arts are noted for their richness and variety. The primitive folk songs and dances practised by the ancient people to the accompaniment of instrumental music extolled the deities of the forests and hills. Most of the folk arts are ritualistic in character. The *Theyyattam* of North Kerala is unique among the ritual dances of south India. The *Kalarippayattu* developed as the traditional martial art of Kerala. "In this fencing there is much agility and science and there are very skilful men who teach this art who are called 'Panikkars'.<sup>83</sup> Different art forms were tremendously transformed and complexly integrated into new forms. *Kathakali* is the illustrious example for this. The elements of temple ritual art and tribal ritual forms extending from northern to southern Kerala and even the Christian and Muslim elements were brilliantly blended into *Kathakali*. Thereby *Kathakali* became a national art form, transcending the caste-bound ritualism. The colour scheme and delineation of the painted marks applied in *Kathakali* are expressions of the artistic genius of Malayalees. As K.N. Ezhuthachan points out, there is no distinction between south Kerala or North Kerala in terms of *Kathakali* performance. Song, dance and even comics performed in *Kathakali* have a

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Kerala State Gazetteer*, Vol. I (Preface).

<sup>83</sup> Duarte Barbosa, quoted in K.M. Panikkar, *A History of Kerala 1498-1801*, Annamalainagar, 1960, p.11.

uniform pattern.<sup>84</sup> Vivid and eloquent in its characteristic *mudras* (hand signs), natural and impressive in gestures, graceful and rhythmic in movement, pleasing in choreography, and above all delightful in the wealth of imagery, *Kathakali* ranks high among the Indian dance forms. This dance drama draws up on the inexhaustible treasure troves of the ancient Puranas, chronicling the lives, loves and conflicts of the gods and supermen of Indian mythology. Characteristic features of this dance drama are the archaic customs, the weird make up and the grand head gears. *Kathakali* is perhaps the sole style in India where the masculine aspect of the dance is preserved in its elemental vigour.<sup>85</sup>

The Thullal framed by Kunchan Nambiar represents the awakening of the folk traditions and advance in outdating the upper traditions. He composed these thullal songs not at his native place at Killikkurissimangalam but at Chempakassery and Thiruvananthapuram.<sup>86</sup> The new cultural demarcation which gave the Christians and the Muslims their group identity also found expression in their art forms such as *Chavittu natakam* and *Mappilappatu*.

The architectural style in Kerala is special to the land. A striking uniformity is visible particularly in the temple architecture from the far south to the extreme north of Kerala. There is also similarity in structure and sculptural patterns among the temples, mosques and churches. The traditional domestic architecture of Kerala has a certain individuality brought about by the requirements of *Marumakkathayam* and the availability of fine building materials in the country. The traditional house built to suit the requirements of the joint family was called 'nalukettu'. It was built in accordance with the principles expounded in the 'Manushyalaya Chandrika', a work devoted exclusively to domestic architecture. The Kerala texts

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<sup>84</sup> *Aikyakeralopaharam*, Mathrubhumi, Calicut, 1954, p. 40.

<sup>85</sup> *Kerala*, Publication Division, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 1968, p. 29.

<sup>86</sup> Ulloor S. Parameswara Ayyar, *Kerala Sahitya Charithram*, Vol. III, pp. 357-359.

'Manushyalaya Chandrika' by Thirumangalathu Neelankantan Moosad and 'Vastuvidya' by an unknown author incorporate the codes for one and all.<sup>87</sup>

The temple architecture of Kerala has also acquired over centuries a distinct architectural personality or structural individuality which has enabled it "to take its deserved place among the various regional styles that had defined the macrocosm that is the Indian temple order".<sup>88</sup> The Kerala temples look very much different from the temples of Tamilnadu and Karnataka. The majority of the Kerala temples have walls made of laterite blocks. The sloping roof and the lavish use of wood in superstructure also invest the Kerala temple with a distinct personality of its own. The ancient churches of Kerala, small in size and simple in design very much resembled the temple structure. Many of the architectural objects seen in the early churches were reminiscent of those in temples. A significant feature of the mosque architecture of Kerala is the profuse use of wood in construction. The wooden pulpits (*mimbar*) in the old mosques contain exquisite carvings.

Innumerable evidences are there to indicate that Keralities formed a community which lived independently for many centuries. The laws of inheritance, styles of dress, customs, artistic performance, martial arts, systems of medical practices etc., cultivated by Malayalies are some of the reflections of a distinct culture.<sup>89</sup>

Different immigrant sections of people assimilated some aspects of Kerala culture. No where else we could see Muslims accepting matrilineal system of inheritance. Christians had also imbibed many of the early Kerala customs including the obnoxious practice of untouchability. It was only after the Synod of Diamper that they discarded many of the Hindu practices.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> A. Achuthan, Balagopal and T.S. Prabhu, '*The Relevance of Traditional Architecture of Residential Buildings of Kerala*,' *International Congress on Kerala Studies*, Abstracts Vol. 3, Thiruvananthapuram, 1994, pp. 81-82.

<sup>88</sup> K.V. Soundara Rajan, *Temple Architecture in Kerala*, Trivandrum, 1974, p. 2.

<sup>89</sup> K.M. George, *Sahitya Charitram Prasthanangaliloode*, p. 58.

The expansion of transport infrastructure during the colonial rule facilitated the interaction of the people belonging to the different regions of Kerala. The colonial administration was bent on utilizing the transport facilities to exploit and appropriate the resources of the country. Canal projects including the Sulthan Canal, Canolly Canal and Tirur Canal connected different port towns of Malabar. Cochin, Aleppey, Quilon, Vizhinjam etc were also linked by artificial canals. Trans regional roads were constructed linking ports on the west coast with High Ranges. Roads running across the central portions of the land connecting all the important market centres were also constructed. Railway lines were laid to connect all major ports of Kerala from Madras through Palghat and Shencotta. The railway lines to port towns like Bepore, Calicut, Tellicherry, Cannanore, Managalore, Cochin, Quilone and Thiruvananthapuram provided cheap transport facilities.<sup>91</sup>

The introduction of these transport devices facilitated swift movement of the people on a large scale. Social reformers like Narayana Guru, Kumaran Asan, Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi, Vagbhatananda etc made extensive use of these facilities for their propaganda mission.. Pilgrims and traders also hinged on these facilities for their trans regional travels. Another major section who benefitted from these transport facilities were the peasant migrants to Malabar. Among other beneficiaries were the farming families who left their parental villages in Travancore from 1920s onwards to settle in the mountainous expanses of Malabar.<sup>92</sup>

### **Renaissance and its Impact on Malayali Identity Formation**

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<sup>90</sup> Govindankutty Nair, *Keralakshemam*, Vanivilasam Press, Guruvayur, 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1946.

<sup>91</sup> William Logan, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-69.

Innes C.A., *op. cit.*, pp. 267-279.

<sup>92</sup> Sivaswamy K.G. *et al.*, *The Exodus from Travancore to Malabar Jungles*, Coimbatore, 1945.

The Renaissance and reformist movements started during the late nineteenth century laid out the background for the birth of modern Kerala. The nineteenth century Kerala society was one in which tribal, slave and feudal forms coexisted under colonial domination. The caste-sub caste system, untouchability, joint family, serpent worship and all other relics from the coexisting phases of history turned Kerala a living museum under the colonial protection.<sup>93</sup> All the elements of feudalism which had been identified with the custom bound human existence in the past now transformed completely into ideological tools of the new 'jati-janmi-naduvazhi' system reorganised by the colonial rule.<sup>94</sup> Towards the close of the nineteenth century reformist movements were launched to attack these elements of the traditional society.

The social renaissance in Kerala was a multifarious process lasting from the close of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century. The Kerala renaissance was in content a spontaneous and conscious struggle for the creation of primary conditions of a civil society surmounting caste barriers.

The renaissance of Kerala involved the process of the creation of a public sphere through which the people can identify themselves as members of a new civil society. Some historical developments towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century set out transforming the people of Kerala from mere bodies to human individuals endowed with the power of will and self consciousness. Those inceptive radical events were the consecration of the temple in Aruvippuram by Sri Narayana Guru in 1888, the publication of the novel 'Indulekha' written by O. Chandu Menon in 1889 and the presentation of the Malayali Memorial in 1891.

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<sup>93</sup> P.J. Cherian (ed.), *Kerala State Gazetteer*, Vol. IV, Part II, p. 22.

<sup>94</sup> E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *Keralam Malayalikalute Mathrubhoomi* (Mal.), Trivandrum, 1981 (First Edn. 1948), p. 127.

Sri Narayana Guru consecrated a Sivalingam at Aruvippuram, a few kilometers south of Trivandrum in 1888.<sup>95</sup> This was a challenge to Hindu canons empowering the Brahmans of the highest order alone to make temple consecrations. Narayana Guru proclaimed the Aruvippuram consecration to be the foundation of a new casteless society in which all living in harmony with one another:

Devoid of dividing walls of caste or race  
Or hatred of rival faith  
We all live here in Brotherhood  
Such, know this place to be!  
This model Foundation<sup>96</sup>

A Yogam (Association) was registered in 1898 to carry on the affairs of the temple. In January 1903 a special session of the yogam was held and decision was taken to transform the yogam into the SriNarayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) Yogam<sup>97</sup> under the presidentship of Sri Narayana Guru and leadership of Dr. Palpu. The saintly disposition of Narayana Guru, the organisational skills of Dr. Palpu and the painstaking efforts of Kumaran Asan as Secretary conjointly rendered the Yogam well known throughout Kerala. Its annual sessions were held at Aruvippuram, Quilone, Aleppey, Trivandrum (Travancore) Ernakulum (Cochin) Cannanore and Calicut (Malabar). Narayana Guru himself brought out a pan Kerala vision by consecrating temples from Aruvippuram to Kannur, located in Travancore, Cochin and Malabar.<sup>98</sup> The founding of temples by Narayana Guru in different parts of Travancore (Aruvippuram), Cochin (Kooranchery) and Malabar (Thalassery, Kannur, Kozhikode) coupled with the holding of annual sessions through out these three regions had a telling effect on Ezhava/Thiyya community and other communities in regard to the development of oneness

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<sup>95</sup> *Mitavadi*, Calicut, September 1915.

<sup>96</sup> Nataraja Guru, *The Word of the Guru, An outline of the life and Teachings of the Guru Narayana*, Ernakulam, 1968, p. 24.

<sup>97</sup> *Mitavadi*, Calicut, September, 1915.

<sup>98</sup> SNDP Yogam Golden Jubilee Souvenir, Kollam, 1953.

among all.<sup>99</sup> During the early days, members belonging to different sections of Hindu community were enrolled as members of SNDP Yogam.<sup>100</sup>

The Sri Narayana movement acted as an external force in toppling down the structural deployment of the caste system based upon the feudal relations. The pattern set by SNDP Yogam was subsequently emulated by many lower and upper castes of Kerala. The Sadhujana Paripalana Sangham (1907) led by Ayyankali organised the agricultural slaves of the low castes after a militant fashion. The Pulayas of Central Kerala formed their organisation in 1912 under the guidance of K.P Karuppan, a poet and scholar belonging to the fisher folk.

Chattampi Swamikal, the spiritual leader and the social reformer stressed the need of extricating the Nair community from the shackles of the Brahmin domination. He vehemently criticised the Brahmin version of the creation and donation of Kerala by Parasurama to the Brahmanas.<sup>101</sup> With a view to reforming the Nair community, some educated young men in Travancore had started the Malayali Sabha in 1886. They also published a newspaper called the 'Malayali' under the aegis of C. Krishna Pillai and C.V. Raman Pillai. Later, a new association came into being at Trivandrum in 1905, the '*Keraleeya Nair Samajam*' of which C. Krishna Pillai was the Secretary. Since it rendered hardly any effective service to the Nair community, a band of 14 young men including Mannath Padmanabha Pillai met at Perunna to form a new organisation. The result was the emergence of the Nair Samudaya Brithya Jana Sangham in 1914. K. Kelappan was its President and Padmanabha Pillai, the first secretary. In 1915 the Sangham was renamed as the Nair Service Society.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> P.K. Gopalakrishnan, *Keralathinte Samskarika Charithram* (Mal.), Thiruvananthapuram, 2000, pp. 513-536.

<sup>100</sup> K.R. Gowri Amma, *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2007, p. 11.

<sup>101</sup> Chattampi Swamikal, *Pracheena Malayalam*, 1913; rpt. Sahithya Pravarthaka Sahakarana Sangham, Kottayam, 1962.

<sup>102</sup> P.K.K. Menon, *The History of Freedom Movement in Kerala*, Vol. II, Trivandrum, 2001, pp. 562-565.



The Namboodiri Yogakshema Sabha was started in the year 1908. Social activists like V.T. Bhattathirippad and M.R. Bhattathiripad introduced into the Namboodiri community many reforms including widow remarriage. The Malayalam plays '*Adukkalayil ninnum Arangathekku*' (From the kitchen to the forefront) written by V.T. Bhattathiripad and '*Marakkutakku pinnile Mahanarakam*' (The Big Hell Behind the Palm leaf umbrella) authored by M.R. Bhattathiripad were enacted during the annual conferences of Yogakshema Sabha.

Vakkam Abdul Khader Moulavi, an outstanding social reform leader strove hard for the social uplift and moral regeneration of the Muslim community. Founding a press in 1904, he published the famous '*Swadeshabhimani*' newspaper with K. Ramakrishna Pillai as its editor. In 1923 he organised the *Kerala Muslim Aikya Samgham* which provided a forum for kindred spirits to meet for purposes of discussion and provide progressive leadership to the community.<sup>103</sup>

In Malabar Brahmananda Sivayogi and Vagbhatananda founded two modern religious reform movements viz '*Anantha Matham*' and '*Athmavidya Sangham*' respectively, both rooted in rationalism. They stressed that every belief of man should be questioned before it was accepted as immutable faith. Their speeches revealed that it is the caste system and the practice of *anacaras* (superstitions) that made the people unfree. This awareness of the people helped in bringing about the solidarity of toiling men cutting across the distinction of caste and religion.<sup>104</sup> Thus caste, convention and the philosophy underlying them were proved to be irrational, and hence unacceptable. While Sri Narayana Guru consecrated temples for untouchables, Brahmananda Sivayogi and Vagbhatananda were opposed to idol worship. But from different angles they taught contemporary society that all men are equal, and

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<sup>103</sup> P. Govinda Pillai, *Kerala Navodhanam oru Marxist Veekshanam*, Vol. I Chintha, Thiruvananthapuram, 2003, pp 165-170.

<sup>104</sup> Asokan Mundon, "Renaissance and Social change in Malabar – A study with special reference to Ananda Samajam, Siddha Samajam and Atma Vidya Sangham", UnpublISHED Ph.D Thesis, University of Calicut, 2003, p.53.

service of men is superior to worship of god. This was the ingrained message of Kerala renaissance which could effect epoch making changes in Kerala society.

The reformers like Narayanan Guru attempted to integrate spiritual knowledge with social reform and nationalism. It was in the background of the trends engendered by the social reforms that national consciousness gradually emerged in Kerala.<sup>105</sup> One of the direct disciples of Narayana Guru wrote in the early thirties:

'We have to build up a Malayalam nation on the Western regions of the Sahya mountains. May Malayalam be the base of our pride. Let the term 'Malayali' be the asset of our pride.'<sup>106</sup> The renaissance and reformist movements enabled the Malayalis to develop self respect and self confidence and to enquire into their potentials through education and organisation. This in turn prepared the background for the development of a public sphere in Kerala.

The publication of the novel 'Indulekha' effected a structural change in the realm of language and literature which favourably affect the formation of a civil society in Kerala. The modern Malayalam prose which gets its clean and clear appearance in Indulekha, developed to communicate with the people who were outside the folds of the caste Hindu society. Indulekha depicts the conflict between the contradictory value systems of feudal society and of modern capitalist society. The novel dealt a heavy blow to the upper caste literary conceptions. 'Indulekha is not merely a story set in the context of colonial history. It encapsulates the historical process of nineteenth century Malabar into a literary genre consciously borrowed from the English.'<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> K.N. Ganesh, *Kerala Samooha Padanangal* (Mal.), Pathanamthitta, 2002, p. 32.

<sup>106</sup> K.M. Kumaraswamy, *Dharma Prabha*, Thalassery, June 1933.

<sup>107</sup> K.N. Panikkar, *Culture, Ideology, Hegemony*, Tulika, New Delhi, 1995, p. 143.

A parallel stream of Malayalam prose style was developed in the defensive feudal literary atmosphere. This prose style which was complex made profuse use of Sanskrit words. Keralavarma Valiya Koil Thampuram's prose writings provide the best illustrations for this. Gradually Malayalam language began to be respected among the elite as means of poetic communication. The elite literary tradition began to use the inherent strength of Malayalam language to overcome new challenges. The translations of Sanskrit classics including Vyasa Mahabharata indicate the growth and prominence of Malayalam language during this period.

C.V. Raman Pillai's Sanskrit-inspired Malayalam prose had a distinct role to play in the context of the literary renaissance. His three novels (Marthanda Varma, Dharmaraja and Ramaraja Bahadur) made their appearance in the background of the newly emerging national consciousness in Travancore. It was necessary for the emerging class to create a past that would give meaning to their identity. Through a series of essays entitled '*Videsheeya medhavitvam*' (Foreign domination) C.V Raman Pillai vehemently criticised the despicable practice of installing imported non Kerala Brahmins as Diwans of Travancore. These essays were published in the journal 'Mithabhashi' edited by N.K Krishna Pillai.<sup>108</sup> E.V. Krishna Pillai describes the journal as a 'political Raghuvamsa'.<sup>109</sup> As remarked by P.K Parameswaran Nair, C.V.'s intention was to prove that Diwan Raghavayya's administrative programmes constituted a natural perpetuation of the policy of the previous 'foreign' dewans who were totally unsympathetic in their attitude towards the country.<sup>110</sup>

The cultural sphere strove to compromise with new situations in its attempt to sustain the feudal aesthetic concepts against new challenges. This sphere sprang up around the ruling families of Travancore, Cochin and

<sup>108</sup> C.V. Raman Pillai, *Videsheeya Medhavitvam* (Mal.), Dept. of Cultural Publications, Trivandrum, 1994 (First Edn. 1922).

<sup>109</sup> P. Krishnan Nair (ed.), *Gadyakusumavali* (Mal.), Kottayam, 1933.

<sup>110</sup> P.K. Parameswaran Nair, *C.V. Sahityam* (Mal.), Kerala University, Trivandrum, 1960.

Malabar. This cultural tendency attained its clear manifestation through the literary activities under the leadership of Kerala Varma Valiya Koil Thampuran and Kodungallur Kunhikkuttan Thampuran. 'Keralam', a beautiful poem written by Kodungallur Kunhikkuttan Thampuran towards the end of the nineteenth century envisages a Malayala identity by explaining what Kerala is.<sup>111</sup>

A new realm of poetic culture also developed in relation with the Kerala literary renaissance. This new poetic form developed in contradiction with, and perhaps as a strong protest to the poetic form evolved from the feudal culture. N.Kumaran Asan was the best representative of this literary culture which was directly opposite to the Venmani tradition. Kumaran Asan was the pioneer of modern lyrical poetry in Malayalam, who took the initiative in depicting the emotions of ordinary men and women in love situation instead of confining himself to portraying the heroic deeds of gods or kings as conventional poets used to.<sup>112</sup> The poetry of Kumaran Asan reflects the conflicts involved in the Kerala renaissance in considerable depth. Hence Asan has been called the greatest poet of the 'people' to emerge in Malayalam language after Ezhuthachan. "Through his literary masterpieces and active social work, Asan sowed the seeds of a great but silent social revolution in Kerala".<sup>113</sup>

Vallathol Narayana Menon described the rich and beautiful landscape of Kerala with great imagination and stirred the poetic feelings of the Keralites. The most celebrated of his poems are contained in the 'Sahitya Manjari'. The uniqueness of the geographical position of the traditional land of Kerala and the beauty of its landscape are depicted by Vallathol in the following lines which are in the form of a colloquy to Mother Kerala:

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<sup>111</sup> K.N. Panikkar, *Colonialism, Samskaram, Paramparya Budhijeevikal* (Mal.),Chintha publishers, Thiruvananthapuram, 2006, p.99.

<sup>112</sup> Nambudiripad, E.M.S., *The National Question in Kerala*, P.P.H. Bombay, 1952, p. 112.

<sup>113</sup> T.K. Ravindran, *Asan and Social Revolution in Kerala*, Kerala Historical Society, Trivandrum, 1972, p. XVII.

While you sleep with your head on the lap  
Of the 'Sahyadri' clad in green and your feet pillowed  
On the crystal ocean sand, Kumari at one end  
God of Gokarna at the other watch over you, Mother!<sup>114</sup>

Vallathol attempts to awaken the spirit of patriotism through his straight forward verses on India's pride and Kerala's vigour.

Ulloor S. Parameshwara Iyer composed '*Umakeralam*' a Mahakavya of great literary merit. But his magnum opus is *Kerala Sahitya Charitram* (5 volumes). It is a monumental work which deals with the history of Malayalam language and literature through the ages. In 1938, Bodheswaram published a collection of poems under the title '*Swatantra Keralam*' (Independent Kerala) which included the famous 'Kerala ganam', an anthem glorifying Mother Kerala.<sup>115</sup> P. Bhaskaran's powerful poem, '*Aikyakeralathilekku*' (Towards United Kerala) read:

'With firm footsteps, singing aloud, let us march,  
To sound the trumpet of United Kerala to the world  
In our battles, in our sacrifices,  
The new Keralam that we create is beautiful.'<sup>116</sup>

Nalappat Balamani Amma visualises in her poem 'Aikya Keralam', a United Kerala, the home of religious harmony, free from regional dissensions.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> English version by K.M. George in 'Malayalam Literature through the Ages' in the *Souvenir of the World Conference on Malayalam, Kerala Culture and Development*, University of Kerala, 1977, p. 35.

<sup>115</sup> Bodheswaram, *Swatantra Keralam*, Deenabandhu Publishing House, Ernakulam, 1947 (Originally published in 1938 during the struggle for responsible government).

<sup>116</sup> P. Bhaskaran, 'Aikya Kerlathilekku' in Vishnu Narayanan Namboodiri (Ed) *Swathantrya Samarageethangal* (Mal) Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, 2000, p.142.

<sup>117</sup> Indian Writers Union, *Contribution of Writes to Indian Freedom Movement*, Vol.II, Palai, 1988, p.739.

It was the simultaneous growth of the Malayalam language and allied developments in Kerala which gave it a vigorous movement for a separate Malayalam speaking state and a politics based on ideology remarkable for India.<sup>118</sup>

Printing and publishing of Malayalam works contributed much to the growth of Malayali identity. European missionaries engaged in evangelical missions began printing and publishing of Malayalam works during the nineteenth century. Benjamin Baily started the CMS press in 1821 and he published in 1824 '*Cherupaithangal*' the first Malayalam printed work.<sup>119</sup> With his publication of a Malayalam English Dictionary in 1846 and an English Malayalam Dictionary in 1849 Baily came to be credited with the compilation and publication of the first dictionary in Malayalam.<sup>120</sup> The first Malayalam news papers '*Rajyasamacharam*' (June 1847) and '*Paschimodayam*' (October 1847) were published from Thalassery by Hermann Gundert.<sup>121</sup> The editor of *Paschimodayam* declares that the aim of the journal is 'to develop Malayalam to the communicative efficiency of his sort'.<sup>122</sup>

With the spread of printing and publishing, those texts which remained in oral tradition and manuscripts soon got printed. Works of Cherusseri, Ezhuthachan and Kunchan Nambiar were printed and published with the result that a reading public with a pan Kerala character emerged.

The Malayali Memorial of 1891 was the result of a movement which sprang from the resentment of the educated Nair youth against the Tamil

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<sup>118</sup> Prakash Karat, *Language and Nationality Politics in India*, Orient Longman, Madras, 1973, p. 22.

<sup>119</sup> K.M. Govi, *Aadimudranam Bharathathilum Malayalathilum* (Mal.), Kerala Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, 1998, p. 109.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>121</sup> Albrecht Frenz, Scaria Zacharia, eds., *Dr. Hermann Gundert and Malayalam Language*, Centre for Kerala Studies, Changanassery, 1993, pp104, 204-208; G. Priyadarshanan, *Malayala Pathrapravarthanam - Prarambha Swarupam* (Mal.) Kerala Sahitya Academy, Trichur, 1982, pp. 9-30.

<sup>122</sup> Albrecht Frenz, Scaria Zacharia, *op. cit.*, p.207.

Brahmin domination in the government civil service. It was a petition by the 'natives' of Travancore against the mounting influence of non Malayali Hindus most specifically 'foreign' Brahmins- in the state civil service.<sup>123</sup> The Ezhavas and Christians who were also kept at a distance from the civil service also joined hands with the Nairs in the Malayali Memorial. The Memorial was drafted by K.P. Sankara Menon, Dr. Palpu, G. Parameswaran Pillai and others.<sup>124</sup> The pamphlet titled 'Travancore for Travancorians' prepared by G. P. Pillai deserves to be considered as the manifesto of the Malayali Memorial movement, since it contained fierce criticism against the Tamil Brahman domination and the then Diwan Rama Rao who was also a Tamil Brahman. The Memorial charged the administration that it was following a pernicious policy of denying admission to able and educated Malayalees to the various offices and of promoting carefully the interests of foreigners, and of the relatives and caste men of officials in power.<sup>125</sup> Though this movement was apparently motivated by the interest of the Nair youth, politically it was nationalistic. The Malayali Memorial was the first political event which marked out the beginning of the later series of political struggles in Travancore for freedom and democracy.<sup>126</sup> It roused the national consciousness of the Malayalees to a great extent.

Constructing the history of a particular region is an important endeavour to mould regional identity. The *Mushakavamsa*, a *kavya* in Sanskrit, composed in the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD by Atula, the court poet of the Mushika King Srikanta has preserved in an embryonic form the historiographic tradition prevalent in early Kerala. The *Mushakavamsa* is the earliest surviving independent work of dynastic and regional history in

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<sup>123</sup> Paravoor K. Gopalapillai, 'Barrister G.P. Pillai' in *Deepam*, an Illustrated Journal (Mal.), Ernakulam, Vol. I, No. 6, 1930 (M.E. 1105).

<sup>124</sup> P.K.K. Menon, *The History of Freedom Movement in Kerala*, Vol. II, Trivandrum, 2001, p. 9.

<sup>125</sup> T.K. Ravindran, *Asan and Social Revolution in Kerala*, Trivandrum, 1972, p. LXXXIV.

<sup>126</sup> P.J. Cherian (ed.), *Kerala State Gazetteer*, Vol. IV, Part II, p. 25.

Sanskrit literature.<sup>127</sup> It deals with the history of the Mushaka Kingdom of Kolathunad in North Kerala.

Attempts were made to historicize Kerala as a separate unit with its own defined territory and peculiar institutions. The Brahman settlers in Kerala have composed and preserved a chronicle named 'Keralolpathi'. It represents their concept of a history of Kerala. The date of this text is a matter of debate among historians though the surviving shape of this book might go back to 16<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The anonymous work is a 'hotch potch' of legend and history, opening with a reference to Parasurama's retrieval of Kerala from the sea, and closing with an account of Naduvazhis who came to power after the last Cheraman Perumal's partition of Kerala.<sup>128</sup> Logan calls it a 'farrago of legendary nonsense.'<sup>129</sup>

Sheik Zainuddin's Thuhfat ul Mujahidin contains a short history of Kerala, more or less on the lines of Keralolpathi. It has a vivid account of the Nadus, big and small, which existed in Kerala after the disintegration of the Kingdom of the Cheraman Perumal. Vaikkathu Pachu Moothathu, a courtier of the Maharaja of Travancore had composed a history of Travancore in 1867 on traditional lines.<sup>130</sup> It displays neither new method nor sources.

The first serious attempt to reconstruct the history of the region in the modern period was undertaken by William Logan, the Collector of Malabar. He compiled the district manual called Malabar (1887) in accordance with the Imperial Gazetteer scheme of the British empire in India. His report on the Land Tenure of Malabar is a living testimony to his scholarship and meticulous understanding of agrarian relation of Kerala. "It is an essential primary source book for tracing the different stages in the establishment of

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<sup>127</sup> M.G.S. Narayanan, Re-Interpretation in South Indian History, Trivandrum, 1976, pp. 58-66.

<sup>128</sup> M.G.S. Narayanan, Historiography of Kerala: Some Important Issues in K.K. Kusumam (ed.) issues in Kerala Historiography, Trivandrum 2003, p. 192.

<sup>129</sup> Logan, *Malabar*, Madras (1887), rpt. 1951, p. 244.

<sup>130</sup> Vaikkathu Pachumoothathu, *Thiruvithamkur Charithram* (Mal.), Cochin, 1986.



British sovereignty in South India. Further these sources help us in understanding the characteristic features of the indigenous political system and its final transformation into a colonial system".<sup>131</sup> Logan's Malabar, for the first time sought to distinguish 'traditional ancient history' from 'history from other sources'. The imperial British rulers persuaded the native states of Cochin and Travancore also to prepare state Manuals on the model of the District Manuals of British India.

Shangoonny Menon, Dewan Peshkar in Travancore published his History of Travancore (1878) the first endeavour for a complete historical account on Travancore. The language was English, but the method was traditional. Reflecting the spirit of the time, Shangoonny Menon's approach and treatment of historical course appeared more from the point of view of kings and their genealogies, their accessions and deaths, their kindness and mercies, appointments and dismissals of diwans and relations with British. His son K.P. Padmanabha Menon imbibed the spirit of modern research and chalked out a new line. He followed the example of Logan in attempting a critical examination of sources. He ended up with 'Notes on the Letters of Visscher', posthumously published by T.K Krishna Menon under the title of History of Kerala in 4 volumes (1924-1937)

Formation of a History Association under the aegis of the Kerala Janmi Sabha in 1911 was an important attempt to enquire into the historical background of the Kerala region. Many a different aspect of Kerala society and culture was presented and discussed in the Annual sessions of the History Association.<sup>132</sup> The initiation of historical writing and research in modern

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<sup>131</sup> K.K.N. Kurup, 'William Logan: Life and Contributions' in P.J. Cherian *et al.*, (eds.), William Logan's Malabar Manual, Kerala Gazetteers Department, Trivandrum, 2000, p. XXXIV.

<sup>132</sup> Manavikrama Raja (ed.), *The Jenmi*, Lakshmisahayam Press, Kottakkal, Vol. 7, No. 10, 1915, K.P. Padmanabha Menon presented a paper on '*Thirunavaya Mamankam*' in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Session. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual meeting of the Historical Association held at Kottakkal on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1915 AKTKM Valia Narayanan Nambudiripad read a paper entitled 'Villages of the Nambudiri Brahmans'. 'The Serpent Worship of Malabar - Its origin and significance was the title of the paper presented by K.P. Padmanabha Menon in the Third Annual

Kerala started with the political, social and intellectual changes that had ushered in the life style of Malayalees towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Despite the division of the Malayalees into three political units, there were increased association among the people of different units in the social and cultural spheres. All the major communities of Kerala were distributed in all the three major political units. Caste based organisations dedicated to the cause of social reforms like the SNDP Yogam, the NSS, the Namboodiri Yogakshema Sabha, the Keraleeya Kshatriya Mahasabha and the Kerala Muslim Majlis were associations functioned on all Kerala basis. The '*Bhashaposhini Sabha*', emerged out of a '*Kavisamajam*' (poets convention) organised at Kottayam by Malayala Manorama in 1892 was the first all Kerala Association which functioned as a tool for cultural unification of Kerala.<sup>133</sup> The sabha held annual sessions in different parts of Kerala such as Trivandrum, Trichur, Kozhikode, Tellicherry etc.

The expansion of the vernacular press towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was one of the forces that facilitated the development of 'Kerala consciousness'. Several Malayalam news papers and journals bearing terms 'Kerala', 'Malayalam' etc started publication during this period. A news paper named '*Kerala Pataka*' appeared from Cochin in 1870. Devaji Bhimji, a Gujarati businessman of Cochin started publication of a newspaper 'Kerala mitram' in 1881. In 1884 the 'Kerala Patrika' started publication from Calicut as a weekly under the editorship of Chengalathu Kunhirama Menon.<sup>134</sup> Kerala Patrika stimulated the political education of the people and developed in them a critical attitude towards the arbitrary features of government and the prevalent evils of society. Another periodical that was published from Calicut

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Meeting of the History Association.

<sup>133</sup> Puthuppally Raghavan, *Kerala Pathrapravarthana Charithram*, Thrissur, 1985, p. 102.

<sup>134</sup> A.D. Hari Sarma, 'Keralathile Varthamana Pathrangal', in *Mathrubhumi Kerala Samsthana pathippu*, 28 October, 1956.

was the Kerala Sanchari (1886) under the editorship of Vengayil Kunhiraman Nayanar.<sup>135</sup>

In 1887 was published from Mannanam (Kottayam) the '*Nasrani Deepika*', the ancestor of the present day Deepika.<sup>136</sup> The '*Malayala Manorama*' started publication at Kottayam in 1890 with Kandathil Varghese Mappila as editor.<sup>137</sup> The '*Mitavadi*' published from Tellicherry (1907) with Murkoth Kumaran as editor, advocated social reforms. Kumaran Asan's famous poem '*Veena Puvu*' appeared first in its columns. The paper was eventually taken over by C. Krishnan who shifted its publication to Calicut.<sup>138</sup>

'The Malayali' was published from Trivandrum in 1886 as a magazine and later it became a news paper. '*Kerala Darpanam*' printed at the *Keralodayam* press (1899) '*Kerala Panchika*' (1901) and '*Keralam*' (1905) were the other newspapers and journals published from Travancore. K. Ramakrishna Pillai, associating with all these journalistic ventures, attempted to make the people conscious of their civic rights and responsibilities. Later he assumed the editorship of '*Swadeshabhimani*' published by Abdul Khader Moulavi of Vakkom. The paper attacked the policies of the non Malayali Dewan P. Rajagopalachari and hence its publication was banned and its editor Ramakrishna Pillai banished from Travancore in 1910. In 1916 he died at Cannanore, an exile from his home land of Travancore.<sup>139</sup> By his birth and by his death he effected the emotional integration of Travancore with Malabar.<sup>140</sup> In 1911 the *Kerala Kaumadi* started publication from Mayyanad with C.V. Kunhuraman as editor.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Puthuppally Raghavan, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-95.

<sup>136</sup> Deepika Diamond Jubilee Souvenir, Kottayam, June, 1947, p.3.

<sup>137</sup> Malayala Manorema Golden Jubilee Souvenir, Kottayam, 1950.

<sup>138</sup> G. Priyadarshanan, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-126.

<sup>139</sup> B. Kallyani Amma, *Vyazhavatta Smaranakal*, Kannur 1935, pp. 17-99; B. Kallyani Amma, *Ormayilninnu*, SPCS, Kottayam, 1964, p. 12.

<sup>140</sup> P.K.K. Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>141</sup> Puthuppally Raghavan, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-180.

The year 1923 marked another landmark in the progress of Malayalam journalism with the publication of '*Mathrubhumi*' as a national newspaper. The *Mathrubhumi* started under the editorship of K.P Kesava Menon at Calicut assured in its very first editorial statement that: 'since the people of Kerala, speaking the same language and bound together by common history and tradition and observing the same customs are scattered in several political compartments, it is imperative that a feeling of oneness has to be instilled among them so as to promote their common welfare and that *Mathrubhumi* would strive strenuously for the realisation of this objective.<sup>142</sup> The publication of '*Aikya Kerala*'<sup>143</sup> and '*Gomathi*'<sup>144</sup> also unfolded the intention for a united Kerala state. The dissemination of information throughout the three regions viz Malabar, Cochin and Travancore helped create a feeling of oneness among the Malayalees.

All these newspapers and periodicals earnestly made efforts to enrich Malayalam language and literature. Attempts were also made to highlight various facets of Kerala culture and heritage. The publication of these newspapers and allied journals which projected the political disabilities and socio-cultural aspiration of the peoples caught the imagination of the Malayalees. Under their galvanizing influence they began to think and act in terms of transcending the traditional boundaries of Travancore, Cochin and Malabar.

The inceptive bid to have an all Kerala platform for the literary enthusiasts materialized in the formation of the *Bhashaposhini Sabha* emerged out of a *Kavi Samajam* or poets convention in 1891.<sup>145</sup> The Sabha which held annual sessions in different parts of Kerala such as Trivandrum,

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<sup>142</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, Calicut, 17 March 1923, p.4.

<sup>143</sup> Published by R.M. Palat from Calicut during 1934-35.

<sup>144</sup> A journal printed from Vidya Vinodini Press, Trichur. The name '*Gomathi*' was adopted by combining 'Go' from Gosree (Cochin) 'Ma' from Malabar and 'thi' from Thiruvithamkur (Travancore), N. Ashokkumar, "The Press and National Movement in Kerala", Unpublished M.Phil. thesis, University of Calicut, 1993, p.102.

Trichur, Kozhikode, Tellicherry etc functioned as a tool for cultural unification of Kerala. Another venture on this line was the Bharatha Vilasam Sabha which met every year for about seven years from 1906 onwards at Trichur.<sup>146</sup>

The Samastha Kerala Sahitya Parishad owes its origin to Idappally Sahitya Samajam started in 1926. The Samajam convened a conference inviting most of the literary celebrities of the period from all parts of Kerala and formed the *Samastha Karala Sahitya Parishad*. In the realm of literary activities the Parishad which held its annual sessions at different centers from 1927 onwards contributed to the emotional integration of Malayali intellectuals.<sup>147</sup> Some writers with progressive views set up in 1937 an organisation called *Jeeval Sahitya Samiti* and later (in 1944) it came to be identified with the Purogamana Sahitya Samghatana.<sup>148</sup> The Sahitya Pravartaka Co-operative Society (SPCS) Kottayam, which had its origin in 1945 is another literary society of Kerala

A number of artistic and cultural organisations have also made their mark in the various fields of arts and culture. The Kathakali lovers of Kerala have formed several Kathakali Yogams from early days with a view to promoting the art. *Kerala Kalari Sangham* which was later renamed as *CVN Kalari Sangham* was founded in Thalassery by C.V Narayanan Nair to rejuvenate the traditional martial art of Kerala.<sup>149</sup> The CVN Kalari Sangham, devoted to the promotion of Kalarippayattu, has a net work of branches all over Kerala. Several other cultural organisations and societies like *Kerala Kala Mandalam*, *Kerala Grandhasala Sangham*, Kerala People's Arts Club

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<sup>145</sup> P.V. Krishna Variyar, 'Bhashaposhini Sabhayum Bhashaposhini Masikayum' (Mal) Malayalam Manorama Diamond Jubilee Souvenir, Kottayam, 1959, p. 99.

<sup>146</sup> B.S. Kesavan, History of Printing and Publishing in India, Vol. II, National Book Trust India, New Delhi 1988, p. 545.

<sup>147</sup> N. Krishna Pillai, *Kairaliyute Katha* (Mal.), Kottayam, 2002, p. 261.

<sup>148</sup> B.S. Kesavan, *op. cit.*, pp. 549, 50; Indian Writers Union, *Contribution of Writers to Indian Freedom Movement*, Vol. II, Palai, 1988, p.746.

<sup>149</sup> Malayala Manorama Kerala Supplement, Nov. 1, 1956, p. 37.

(KPAC) etc also contributed much to the collective efforts and creative activities of the writers and artists of the different parts of Kerala.

Drawing inspiration from the social reform movements, there began the agitation for the removal of untouchability. Movements were launched for getting the approach roads to temples opened to the 'avarnas' and eventually for having the temples themselves thrown open to all Hindus, irrespective of caste. Two major struggles of the movement were Vaikkam Satyagraha (1924-25) and the Guruvayur Satyagraha (1931-32). Along with T.K. Madhavan and A.K. Pillai several leaders from Malabar also had active leadership and participation in the Satyagraha at Vaikkam in Travancore. Leaders from Malabar including K.P. Kesava Menon and K.Kelappan undertook a propaganda tour in several places in Travancore and they visited Trivandrum, Nagercoil, Kottayam, Alleppey, Kayamkulam, Changanachery etc.<sup>150</sup> T.V. Chathukkutty Nair who created great enthusiasm by observing 3 days Satyagraha at Vaikkam was a leader from Malabar.<sup>151</sup> Though the venue of the Satyagraha was in Travancore, representatives from all over Travancore, Cochin and Malabar actively participated in it. These transcendental experiences had an appreciable role in generating a feeling of oneness among all concerned.

Prior to the Temple Entry Satyagraha at Guruvayur in Malabar, the members of the Temple Entry Committee in the South including Mannath Padmanabhan and C.V Kunhuraman toured all over Kerala. Several other leaders from Travancore including P. Krishna Pillai had active participation in the Guruvayur Satyagraha.<sup>152</sup> On 21 October 1931 a batch of volunteers under the leadership of Subrahmanyam Thirumumbu of Thazhakkatt Mana, Kasaragod Taluk started from Cannanore to Guruvayur temple. The members of the Guruvayur Temple Entry Satyagraha Prachara Committee namely K.Kelappan, KunjuKrishnan, Subrahmanyam Thirumumbu, Miss Kamalavathi

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<sup>150</sup> P.K.K. Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

<sup>151</sup> A.K. Pillai, *Congressum Keralavum* (Mal.), p. 479.

<sup>152</sup> P.K.K. Menon, *op. cit.*, pp. 316-320.

and Miss Devaki Amma made propaganda tour in North Malabar.<sup>153</sup> A.K. Gopalan, Subrhamanyan Thirumumbu and Hariswaran Thirumumbu were actively leading the volunteers in the Guruvayr Satyagraha.<sup>154</sup> On 8<sup>th</sup> January 1933, 'Guruvayur Day' was celebrated throughout Kerala in support of the proposed Bill on temple entry.<sup>155</sup> The Sucheendram Satyagraha (South Travancore, 1926) and Kalppathi struggle (Palghat, 1926) also drew public attention for their being well planned movements against untouchability and caste discrimination.<sup>156</sup> These temple Satyagraha movements had an all Kerala appeal and the Malayalees in all parts of Kerala shared their concern over the developments during the Satyagraha movements. The leaders of these movements like TK Madhavan, K. Kelappan, K.P. Kesava Menon, P. Krishna Pillai, A.K. Gopalan and Nettoor P. Damodaran later became the champions of Aikya Kerala cause.<sup>157</sup>

The most dominant factor for the formation of linguistic-cultural identity of Malayalees was the origin of Malayalam language, coupled with the transformation of Keralam into an agrarian social formation. Malayalam language became the strongest unifying bond for the cultural identity of the Malayalees. The feudal society in Kerala was turned into a regionalized community of culture in the process of resistance to the European political interference. Collective memories combined with legends and traditions concerning Parasurama, Mahabali, Cheraman Perumal etc fostered the regional consciousness of the Malayalees. Festivals and fairs in different parts of Kerala also fostered active interaction between Malayalees regardless of caste and communal distinctions. Distinguished from other regions, Kerala developed peculiar social institutions like joint family system and matrilineal

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<sup>153</sup> T.N.A. Under Secretary's Secret File (USSF) No. 813/1933, dt. 6.2.1933, p. 6.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>155</sup> P.K.K. Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 331.

<sup>156</sup> TNA, Public Dept. File No. 35/82/1926; P. Govinda Pillai, Kerala Navodhanam, *Oru Marxist Veekshanam* (Mal) Trivandrum, 2003, pp 116-120.

<sup>157</sup> P. Govinda Pillai, Deshabhimani, 29 October, 2008 and Interview, Trivandrum, dt. 4.10.2005.

system of inheritance (*Marumakkathayam*). Kerala has developed distinctive art forms such as Theyyam, Kuthu, Kudiyattam, Kathakali, Chavittunatakam and Mappilappattu. The traditional architects have evolved and perfected peculiar styles of domestic architecture (represented by '*Nalukettu*') and religious architecture embodied in temples, churches and mosques. The improvement of transport infrastructure during the colonial rule facilitated smooth movement from region to region. Waterways, roads and railways were utilised by the social reformers, traders pilgrims and migrants. This inturn furthered interaction and intermingling of peoples belonging to different parts of Kerala.

It was due to these functions and interventions of the social forces and cultural forms, that a healthy background was prepared for uniting the people of Kerala sharing the same cultural tradition and language. The Malayalam speaking population of the west coast were thus bound by geography, tradition, history, language and culture.

In its attempt to eliminate the traditional elements of the feudal society, Renaissance movement of our land laid out the background for setting of a modern Keralam. The caste reform movements necessitated an internal reorganisation of the castes, which had actually been divided as sub castes devoid of mutual contacts, into coherent mass communities. These movements enabled the people to gain self confidence and self respect and to rationalize their thinking. Some explosive historical events starting with the consecration of *Sivalingam* at Aruvippuram by Sri Narayana Guru were the manifestations of the development of self consciousness and self respect. The Sri Narayana Movement undermined the structural deployment of the caste system based upon feudal relations.

The literary renaissance beginning with the publication of '*Indulekha*' by Chandu Menon brought about a structural change in the realm of Malayalam language and literature leading to the consciousness of a civil society in Kerala. Printing and publication of newspapers, journals and books



including history works aroused a Kerala consciousness. Kerala society began to be transformed into a modern civilised society with a distinct cultural and linguistic identity. Renaissance caused a cultural unification of different regions of Kerala. It ensured the self realisation of different sections of people of their position in the society. Social consciousness in due course led to the formation of class organisations. The formation of class organisations characterised by political consciousness egged the people on to participate actively in nationalist and anti imperialist movements commencing in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## CHAPTER II

# THE QUESTION OF LINGUISTIC NATIONALITY

The idea of forming provinces on linguistic basis got crystallized among the intelligentsia of the country during the first half of the 20th century. The spread of nationalism intensified the desire for unification of people on linguistic lines. Nationalism has been one of the most powerful forces in the modern world as a concept and ideology.<sup>158</sup> Hans Kohn views nationalism as 'a state of mind permeating the large majority of a people and claiming to permeate all its members. . . Nationalism is just an expression of the antique feeling of man, but national identity is another name for identity as such . . .' The supreme loyalty of man is therefore due to his nationality as his own life is supposedly rooted in and made possible by its welfare.<sup>159</sup> No human group can live without an identity. Identity defines the position of its bearer, which may be an individual or a group and serves as a map or blue print for, a more or less, extensive sphere of the social world, with the help of which this world, in fact is constantly reconstructed.<sup>160</sup>

It was realised that language could act as a bond in uniting people of a common tongue. Language functions as one of the most frequent characteristics which clearly distinguish a nation from other nations and non national groups.<sup>161</sup> As E.J. Hobsbawm observes, language is the crucial criterion of nationality.<sup>162</sup> Language and national identity are inherently and

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<sup>158</sup> John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, eds., *Nationalism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, p.3.

<sup>159</sup> Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism : A Study in its Origins and Background*, New York, 1961, p.64.

<sup>160</sup> Liah Greenfeld, 'Etymology Definitions and Types' in Alexander J Motyl, (ed), *Encyclopaedia of Nationalism* Vol. I, London, 2001, pp. 252-53.

<sup>161</sup> E.H. Carr, *Nationalism and After*, London, 1939 p.7.

<sup>162</sup> E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, Cambridge, 1990, p.95.

inextricably related. Language manifests the deeper underlying factors in society when these factors, economic or political are desirous of change, they naturally reflect on the linguistic aspirations of society as well. Language is an important factor in politics, often more fundamental than caste.<sup>163</sup>

Common language is the best tie which binds man to man and mind to mind. Common language means further common tradition, common customs, morals and religion as a rule common aspiration and ideals and common means of advancement by the help of a common literature. Considerations like these lead logically to the conclusion that the language area is the most natural educational unit and with it the right territorial unit for almost everything as well.<sup>164</sup> Importance of common language in unifying the people was recognised by the leaders of India as early as the beginning of the 20th century. The leaders of the national movement laid stress on the usage of Indian languages as an instrument to unite people and at the same time prevent Indians from getting enamoured of by English.

Provincial division of India by the British was most unscientific. The boundaries of provinces had been drawn in a haphazard manner as the British conquest of India had spanned nearly a hundred years. No heed was paid to linguistic or cultural cohesion so that most of the provinces were multi lingual and multi cultural.<sup>165</sup> Demarcation of territories had been made for administrative, economic and military considerations.

The provincial organisation of British India was meant to uphold the direct authority of the supreme power in areas of vital economic and strategic importance and to fill the political vacuum arising from the destruction of the former principalities. The administrative organisation of these provinces was so designed as to secure their subordination to the central government, which was the agent and instrument of imperial central

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<sup>163</sup> Prakash Karat, *Language and Nationality Politics in India*, New Delhi, 1973, p.24.

<sup>164</sup> Report of the Second Andhra Conference 1914 quoted in K.V. Narayana Rao, *The Emergence of Andhra Pradesh*, Bombay, 1973, p.321.

<sup>165</sup> Bipan Chandra *et al.*, *India After Independence*, New Delhi, 2000, p.88.

exercised from London.<sup>166</sup> Thus it is crystal clear that the formation of provinces was actually grounded in imperial interests or the exigencies of a foreign government rather than in the actual needs, wishes or affinities of the people. The British formed provinces in utter disregard to linguistic considerations. The result was the creation of such unwieldy administrative units as the presidency of Madras which included Tamils, Telugus, Kannadas and Malayalees. As pointed out by Marshall Windmiller, the British provincial demarcations seem to have been much more suitable to India's colonial status than to the functioning of parliamentary democracy.<sup>167</sup> The separation of Assam from Bengal presidency in 1874 was the last successful creation of a province by the British rulers on the pretext of administrative convenience.

The idea of bringing people together on linguistic basis had gained an impetus in 1905 when Bengal was partitioned. Like so many other political movements the agitation for linguistic states had its origin in Bengal. Prior to 1905 the British had grouped Bengal with Bihar, Orissa and Chota Nagpur into one province. The original scheme of partition sought the division of Bengalis between two administrations, Bengal and Assam.<sup>168</sup> The partition, in the words of Lord Curzon, the Viceroy (1899-1905) was 'to dethrone Calcutta from its position as the centre from which Congress party is manipulated throughout Bengal, and divide the Bengali speaking population'.<sup>169</sup> Risely, the Home Secretary to Government of India said on 6 December 1904: Bengal united is power, Bengal divided, will pull several different ways . .

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<sup>166</sup> *Report of the States Reorganisation Commission*, New Delhi, 1955, p.1.

<sup>167</sup> Marshall Windmiller, *Linguistic Regionalism in India*, Pacific affairs, Vol. 27 No. 4, December, 1954, p. 293.

<sup>168</sup> Government of India's Letter No. 3678 of December 1903 addressed to the Government of Bengal. Fully reproduced in Memoranda submitted by Government of India to the Indian Statutory Commission Vol. IV, 1930, pp.566-582.

<sup>169</sup> Sumit Sarkar, *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal 1903-1908*, Peoples Publishing House, New Delhi, 1973, p.11.

One of our main objects is to split up and thereby weaken a solid body of opponents.<sup>170</sup>

The partition of Bengal for purposes of administrative convenience and of checking the growing feelings of nationalism in Bengal, met with stiff resistance not only in Bengal but else where in the country and sharpened the articulation of regional identities. The Bengalis launched a vigorous agitation for reuniting Bengal. The apparent indifference of the Government of India to this issue led some Bengalis to comment: 'The elevation of the question of partition to a higher place than it now occupies, the transformation of it from a Bengalee to an Indian question . . . . This end would be served if the question of the administrative union of the entire Bengali population was merged in the larger question of the desirability of the great administrative division in India being all put on linguistic lines. Of such a course of policy a modification of the partition of Bengal would be a necessary part.'<sup>171</sup>

This agitation gradually grew violent and ultimately the Government of India sent a dispatch to the Secretary of State for India in London recommending the Government to reunite the province of Bengal and separate it from Assam, Orissa and Chota Nagpur. The success of the Bengalis in their agitation for linguistic unification was taken note of by other linguistic groups in India. This was certainly implicit in Lord Hardinge's dispatch which said:

'The opposition to the partition of Bengal was at first based mainly on sentimental grounds, but . . . the grievances of the Bengali has become much more real and tangible and is likely to increase instead of diminish . . . . No doubt sentiment has played a considerable part in the opposition offered by the Bengalis and in saying this, we by no means wish to underrate the importance which should be attached to sentiment even if it be exaggerated.'<sup>172</sup> This dispatch when published was interpreted by other

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<sup>170</sup> S. Gopal, *British Policy in India 1858-1905* quoted by Bipan Chandra *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p.125.

<sup>171</sup> Babu Syamacharan Ganguly, *Modern Review*, November 1991, p.49.

linguistic group as indicating the efficacy of agitation based on sentiment and the amenability of the Government of India to it.

The dispatch affirmed that in course of time the just demands of Indians for a larger share in the government of the country would have to be satisfied. It considered the question of the manner in which this devolution of power could be conceded without impairing the supreme authority of the Governor General in Council and felt that: 'The early possible solution of the difficulty would appear to be gradually to give the provinces a large measure of self government until at last India would consist of a number of administrations, autonomous in all provincial affairs, with the Government of India above them all and possessing power to interfere in cases of misgovernment but ordinarily restricting their functions to matters of imperial concern.'<sup>173</sup>

The clamour that went up in Bengal against the partition led to Swadeshi Movement. Both not only reinforced the linguistic nationality ideology in Bengal but also catalysed the process in the rest of India. The first important linguistic movement to develop after the Bengal agitation was the Andhra Movement in South India in the Telugu speaking area of Madras Presidency.<sup>174</sup>

The Malayalam speaking areas of the Madras presidency and the people of Travancore and Cochin states also responded positively to the events in Bengal. The Malayalee middleclass slowly but unmistakably began to involve in political activities.<sup>175</sup> The language associations having broad mass bases promoted regional cohesion. Thus the question of territorial

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<sup>172</sup> Dispatch of the Govt. of India to the Secretary of State for India, August 25, 1911, *British and Foreign State papers 1911*. London, His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1915, pp. 224-226 in Marshall Windmiller *op. cit.*, p. 294.

<sup>173</sup> Courteney Ilbert, *The Government of India*, Appendix III, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1915, p.449.

<sup>174</sup> K.V. Naryana Rao, *op.cit.*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>175</sup> E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *Kerala Society and Politics*, A Historical survey, National Book Centre, New Delhi, 1984, p.106.

reorganisation and the elimination of linguistic discontent had assumed political significance long before the emergence of the new polity.

The cultural renaissance in the country helped the growth of regional languages which in turn cherished the need for a cultural integration. In moulding anti-colonial consciousness culture plays a paramount part. Resistance against colonialism found its initial expression in culture.<sup>176</sup> The concept of culture mirrors the self consciousness of a nation which had to seek out and constitute its boundaries anew, to ask itself: what is really our identity?<sup>177</sup> The new consciousness at the same time created an awareness among the people of different language groups to identify themselves as distinct cultural groups, and thus the demand for grouping provinces on linguistic principle.

The linguistic identity factor was the most articulate in the two presidencies of Bengal and Madras. In the Bombay Presidency it took a somewhat different form. Bengal was the first linguistic area to find a distinct identity in the modern period and this was accompanied by a renaissance of Bengali and the formation of the *bhadralok*.<sup>178</sup>

Apart from the British ambivalence on the issue of creating autonomous linguistic provinces the major issue in Bengal and Madras involved the dominance of Bengali and Tamil speaking elites throughout the two Presidencies so that employment and other economic opportunities were lost to the non Bengali and non Tamil speaking people.<sup>179</sup> The complaint of

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<sup>176</sup> K.N. Panikkar, *Culture and Consciousness in Modern India: A Historical Perspective*, New Delhi, 1992, p.28.

<sup>177</sup> Norbert Elias, 'The History of Manners: The Civilizing Process' quoted in K.N. Panikkar, *Culture as a Site of Struggle*, Presidential Address, Indian History Congress, 69<sup>th</sup> Session, Kannur, 2008, p.9.

<sup>178</sup> J.H. Broomfield, *Elite Conflict in a Plural Society*, University of California, 1968, Introduction.

<sup>179</sup> Ashis Banerjee, *Federation and Nationalism, A Historical Survey*, Nehru Memorial Museum & Library, New Delhi, 1989, p.11.

the non dominant groups was therefore often not so much against the British as it was against the Bengalis and Tamils.

Unlike the Bengali urge for consolidation after 1905, the dominant Tamils of the Madras Presidency did not develop any such tendency. The predominant mood of the Tamil elites reflected closely the attitude of the British administration, that is the Presidency was well administered and consequently required no restructuring.<sup>180</sup> In the Tamil areas the non Brahmin movement gathered great momentum.

The major factors which strengthened the political consciousness among the Andhras were the diffusion of western education, the emergent spirit of social reform, middleclass participation in the district conferences and the Swadeshi movement. The ground for the Andhra movement was well prepared by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century.<sup>181</sup> In 1910 a Telugu newspaper demanded a united conference of the Andhra country and stated that: 'There should be a separate political conference for the Telugu speaking districts in order thereby to create solidarity among the Telugu people and to discuss the special wants of the Telugus.'<sup>182</sup> It was felt later that the movement to be effective should be broad based and therefore integrated with the question of the linguistic reorganisation of all the British Indian provinces in the wider context of which the Andhras should concentrate on the formation of an Andhra province.<sup>183</sup> Inspired by local writers and scholars from Bengal, Andhra intellectuals in May 1913 convened a conference from which an organisation known as the *Andhra Maha Sabha* emerged.<sup>184</sup> Although the advancement of Telugu culture was its primary aim, the *Andhra Maha Sabha* ultimately became a political organisation dedicated to the formation of a separate Telugu-speaking state.

<sup>180</sup> Deshabhimani (Telugu) 4 February 1910, quoted by K.V. Narayana Rao, *op. cit.*, p.34.

<sup>181</sup> K.V. Narayana Rao, *op. cit.*, p.15.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>183</sup> K.V. Narayana Rao, *op. cit.*, p.38.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, p.49.



The second Andhra conference of Andhra Mahasabha which met at Bezwada (April 1914) resolved that, 'to ensure efficient administration and the promotion of best interest of the people of India, language areas have to be made the territorial basis of provincial administration as far as possible. . that it is desirable to constitute the Telugu speaking areas of the Madras Presidency into a province.'<sup>185</sup> 'The Andhra movement in the initial phase,' observes Selig S. Harrison, 'was led by Telugu Bhramins.'<sup>186</sup> However it gradually began to acquire a broader social base, while at the same time functioning within the overall nationalist movement.

Political mobilisation all over the country against the partition of Bengal drew sections of the Indian National Congress into the movement for redrawing provincial boundaries on linguistic lines. That better governance would result if the administrative areas were compact linguistic zones came to be widely felt, even in British administrative circles. But the Home Rule League seems to have been the first to take a principled position in this regard. Pattabhi Sitaramayya writes: 'Another factor that largely contributed to the great success of the (Home Rule) movement was that from its very inception it reorganised the integrity of language areas, and in organising the country, adopted the linguistic principle as determining the provincial delimitations. In this respect it went ahead of the Congress and was its forerunner in reality.'<sup>187</sup> The Home Rule League advocated inclusion of linguistic provinces in the scheme of self government for India.<sup>188</sup>

The Andhra people sought to have their aims endorsed by the Indian National Congress. Consequently in 1915 they called upon the Congress to recognise Andhra's ambitions by granting it separate status in the

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<sup>185</sup> The Report of the Second Andhra Conference quoted in K.V. Narayana Rao, *op. cit.*, p.52.

<sup>186</sup> Selig S. Harrison, *India, The Most Dangerous Decades*, Princeton, 1960, p.110.

<sup>187</sup> Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress, (1885-1935)*; *The Hindu*, 21 November 1916.

<sup>188</sup> *The Hindu*, 21 November 1916.

administration of Congress affairs. The AICC thereupon recommended the constitution of the 11 Telugu districts into a separate Congress circle. The matter was hotly contested in the subject committee of the Calcutta Congress (1917). Gandhiji felt that the question might await the implementation of the (Montford) Reforms. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who felt that linguistic provinces were an essential pre requisite to real provincial autonomy, strongly supported the issue. In spite of the stiff opposition of Dr. Annie Besant and some Tamils from the South, the Congress approved of the subject after two hours of hectic discussion.<sup>189</sup>

The colonial government began to address the linguistic question in its own way. In 1918 the Secretary of State for India, Edwin Montagu came to India to examine the workings of the Government of India and to propose constitutional changes in tune with the British commitment of the previous year to establish responsible government in India. The prospect of extensive constitutional changes suggested to linguistic advocates that this was an apt time to propose the redrawing of provincial boundaries. Thus in February 1918 a resolution on redistribution was introduced in the Imperial Legislative Council by Rao Bahadur BN Sarma, a representative from Andhra. Only one speaker supported the motion, while rallied in opposition to it were such prominent Indian statesmen of the period as Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru and Surendranath Banerji. They argued that constitutional reform was India's main need at the moment. Mohammed Ali Jinnah referred to the proposal as 'a most mischievous Resolution.'<sup>190</sup>

Montagu, in collaboration with the Governor General, Lord Chelmsford, prepared the report on which the famous Montagu Chelmsford reforms were based. The Montagu Chelmsford Report considered the linguistic reorganisation of provinces impractical, though they were in favour of small homogenous states. However this document contains a significant

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<sup>189</sup> Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *op. cit.*, p. 250-251.

<sup>190</sup> Proceedings of the Imperial Legislature council, Vol. LVI, April 1917 to March 1918, pp. 483-508.

passage on provincial reorganisation. It states: . . . "while we discard as impracticable the idea of coming into existence new provincial states as part of our own constructive scheme, we are impressed with the artificial and often inconvenient character of existing administrative units. We have seen how historical reasons brought them about. We cannot doubt that the business of government would be simplified if administrative units were both smaller and more homogeneous. It is also a strong argument in favour of linguistic or racial units of government that, by making it possible to conduct the business of legislation in the vernacular . . . We believe emphatically that redistribution of provincial areas cannot be imposed upon the people by official action; and that such a process ought in any case to follow and neither to precede nor accompany constitutional reform . . . therefore we desire that it should be recognized as one of the earliest duties incumbent upon all the reformed provincial Governments to test provincial opinion upon the schemes directed to this end."<sup>191</sup>

The demand for reconstituting the Congress provincial units on linguistic basis was raised in Congress annual sessions. The Telugu (Andhra) delegates to the Congress sessions of 1915 and 1916 wanted the formation of a separate Andhra Provincial Congress which was accepted by the Calcutta session in 1917 though some of the South Indian (Tamil) delegates from Madras and the President of the Calcutta Congress session, Dr. Annie Besant were opposed to this. Sind was made a separate Congress circle in 1918.<sup>192</sup>

Following the example of the Andhras securing a separate Congress circle for themselves, Karnataka put forward the demand for a separate Congress circle, followed by others. Thereby the linguistic principle triumphed in the internal ordering of the Congress organisation. It was decided to take the Congress to the masses and to revitalise it so that it could

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<sup>191</sup> Edwin Montagu and Chelmsford, Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms, 1918, para 246, pp. 118-119.

<sup>192</sup> Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

be an effective instrument in the hands of the Indian people in their fight against foreign rule. Gandhiji held that "the Congress could not reach the masses except through their mother tongues and that any freedom movement without popular support would be ineffective." Gandhiji pointed out that he was principally instrumental in securing from the Congress the recognition of the redistribution of the Provinces on a linguistic basis.<sup>193</sup> Every body agreed at that time that once freedom was won provinces should be redrawn on a linguistic basis.<sup>194</sup>

The 1920 Annual Session of the Congress in Nagpur reorganised its provincial committees on linguistic lines for the first time.<sup>195</sup> Thus the new Congress Constitution adopted at Nagpur divided India into twenty one Congress Provinces for purposes of party administration. However, as opined by KM Panikkar, the linguistic Congress provinces which the Congress constituted under Gandhiji's inspiration were significantly incomplete because at that time the Congress excluded the native (princely) states of India from the purview of its operation. Panikkar cites the examples of the Congress provinces of Karnataka and Maharashtra which left out millions of Kannadigas and Maharashtrians living in princely states.<sup>196</sup>

Following the action of the Congress party, further attempts to secure provincial reorganisation were made in the central and state legislatures. They faced stiff opposition from the Government and generally received very little support.<sup>197</sup> In March, 1926 Sir C. Sankaran Nair moved a resolution in the second council of state recommending the constitution of the districts inhabited by the Tamil speaking people in Madras Presidency into a province

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<sup>193</sup> Harijan, 29 March, 1942; Bharatan Kumarappa, *Linguistic Provinces*, Navajeevan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1954, p.6.

<sup>194</sup> K.M. Panikkar, *An Autobiography*, p. 290.

<sup>195</sup> Pattabhi Sitarammayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, *op.cit.*, p.352; Ramana Rao, M.V. *Development of the Congress Constitution*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, 1958, p.33.

<sup>196</sup> K.M. Panikkar, *op. cit.*, p.290.

<sup>197</sup> Legislative Assembly Debates Vol. II, 1921 September pp. 711-723.

with complete self government. This was the first and last time that the question of a Tamil province as such was discussed in the legislatures.<sup>198</sup> Sankaran Nair besides favouring a separate province for Tamils, prepared detailed proposals for the creation of such a province. But to great disappointment, these proposals were negated after two days discussion.<sup>199</sup> However, in March 1927 the Legislative Council of Madras passed a resolution by a vote of 40 to 32 which called upon the Governor General to constitute a separate Andhra Province.<sup>200</sup> The AICC met at Bombay in May 1927 resolved that 'the time has come for the redistribution of provinces on a linguistic basis and that it should be done immediately beginning with Andhra, Sind and Karnataka.'<sup>201</sup>

Late in 1927 the British Government appointed the Indian Statutory Commission, called after its Chairman, 'Simon Commission' to review the progress of the Montagu Chelmsford Reforms. Despite the opposition of the Indian public the Simon commission gathered its evidences and published a voluminous report. The Simon Commission was not unfavourable to the idea of linguistic redistribution. Its report stated:

"There is a considerable body of opinion in India which calls for some readjustment of boundaries and redistribution of areas, and we entirely share the views of those who think that the present arrangement is not altogether satisfactory. The existing provincial boundaries in more than one case embrace areas and peoples of no national affinity, and sometimes separate those who might under a different schemes be more naturally united<sup>202</sup> . . . We therefore propose, and we regard it as a matter of urgent importance, that the Government of India should set up a Boundary Commission with a neutral Chairman, which would investigate the main cases in which provincial

<sup>198</sup> K.V. Narayana Rao, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

<sup>199</sup> The Hindu, 17 March 1926.

<sup>200</sup> Proceedings of the Third Madras Legislature Council, Vol XXV. March, 1927, pp. 62-87.

<sup>201</sup> Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *op. cit.*, p. 528.

<sup>202</sup> Report of the Indian Statutory Commission Vol. II, London, 1930, p. 24.

readjustment seems called for and should endeavour to work out schemes with a view to seeing how far agreement is possible.<sup>203</sup>

Though the Simon Commission Report was sympathetic towards linguistic demands, the issue of provincial reorganisation was submerged in the national politics of the day. When the British Parliament acting on the recommendations of the Simon Commission, passed the Government of India Act of 1935, it created the new provinces of Sind and Orissa. As Coupland has observed, 'the creation of Sind was a concession to communalism.' Sind had a Muslim population of 71 percent and the demand for its separation from Bombay was voiced mostly by the Muslims.<sup>204</sup> The Government ignored the areas in which the linguistic demand was strongest. However, by 1936 the principle of linguistic reorganisation of British Indian provinces gained wide acceptance by all the parties in India.

The new legislatures which were set up under the Act of 1935 became scenes of further linguistic agitation in 1935. Konda Venkatappaya, an Andhra leader introduced a resolution in the Madras Legislative Assembly calling for the creation of separate Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam provinces. The Assembly passed the resolution on 30 March 1938.<sup>205</sup>

The Kannada speaking people also raised a hue and cry for redistribution of provinces on linguistic basis. Kannada speaking areas were divided between the presidencies of Bombay and Madras and the states of Mysore, Hyderabad and Coorg. The desire to be brought under one administration was expressed fairly early and the demand that Karnataka should be brought under one Congress circle was recognised from the second decade of the 20th century. The movement had its genesis among the people of Bombay Karnataka where along with the national awakening, a regional

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<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, p.26.

<sup>204</sup> R. Coupland, *The Constitutional Problem in India*, Oxford 1945 Vol. II, p.65

<sup>205</sup> Madras Legislative Assembly Debates, March 14-30, 1938.

consciousness took deep roots.<sup>206</sup> The Kannada Sahitya Parishat was founded in 1915 which was preceded by the formation of Karnataka Vidya Vardhaka in 1890.<sup>207</sup> The founding of the Karnataka Sabha, the Kannada Sahitya Parishad and the organisation of the Karnataka Political Conference were positive steps in the direction of mobilising the Kannada speaking people.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> session of the Kannada Sahitya Sammelan held in 1923, a resolution was moved highlighting need for the unification of Karnataka and the development of Kannada language and culture. Ideas of this kind gradually matured into political action. While the Indian National Congress held its Belgaum session in 1924, the Karnataka Ekikarana Sangham was made its appearance . By the time the All Parties Conference appointed the Motilal Nehru Committee in 1928 a well organised and broad based movement for the unification of Karnataka had emerged. The Committee made a wide discussion (with the people concerned) a thorough examination of the scheme. While agreeing on the *prima facie* case for unification, the committee highlighted the prospective difficulties of the princely states especially Mysore and other neighbouring regions in the event of forming a single Karnataka province. It further stated that "financially the position of Karnataka was very strong. And even at present there is considerable surplus in the British part of Karnataka."<sup>208</sup>

At the 1944 Karnataka unification Sabha Conference, Sardar Patel had declared that one of the primary measures of free India would be the creation of linguistic states. In 1946 an All Karnataka Convention was conjointly summoned by the Karnataka Unification Sabha and the Provincial Congress committee. This joint convention became the nucleus of the Karnataka

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<sup>206</sup> B. Sheik Ali, 'History of Karnataka from 1600AD,' in H M Nayad and BR Gopal (eds.), *South Indian Studies*, Mysore, 1990. p. 165.

<sup>207</sup> Halappa, G.S. *History of the Freedom Movement in Karnataka*, Vol. II, Government of Mysore, 1964, p.421.

<sup>208</sup> 'Case for Karnataka Unification', All Karnataka Unification League, Belgaum, 1937, p. 11 qtd in *Suvarna*, 58<sup>th</sup> Indian History Congress, Bangalore, 1997.

Ekikarana Maha Samithi which was to urge the constituent Assembly to take steps towards the formation of Karnataka.<sup>209</sup>

All the major political parties of India in the pre-independence period had generally agreed upon the redistribution of states on linguistic basis. As we have already seen, the Indian National Congress had lent support to the linguistic nationality principle as early as 1905 by pressing for the annulment of the partition of Bengal. Three years later it set up the Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee (1908). The concrete issue of linguistic reorganisation made its first official appearance at the Calcutta Congress session in 1917. This was a positive outcome of the Andhra movement which was taken up within the Congress circle by Andhra Congress men in 1915. At the 1917 session the questions of linguistic reorganisation was received with mixed feelings. Annie Besant who presided over the session strongly opposed the whole idea and "even Gandhi thought the question might await the implementing of the Montford Reforms."<sup>210</sup> One of the supporters of the linguistic demand, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, hailing from Maharashtra, felt that it was necessary in the interests of provincial autonomy. By 1918 Gandhi had accepted the logic behind the demand for the linguistic provinces. The Congress in theory first accepted the aforesaid principle at the Nagpur session in 1920.<sup>211</sup>

The Congress in its 1920 Nagpur session passed a resolution accepting the linguistic distribution of provinces as a clear political objective. The resolution mentioned the following linguistic provinces: 1. Madras, 2. Andhra, 3. Karnataka, 4. Kerala, 5. Bombay, 6. Maharashtra, 7. Gujarat, 8. Sind, 9. United Provinces, 10. Punjab, 11. North West Frontier provinces, 12. Delhi, 13. Ajmer Merwar & Rajastan, 14. Central Provinces with Hindustani as the main language, 15. Central Province with Marathi as the

<sup>209</sup> H.V. Sreenivasa Murthy and R. Ramakrishnan, *A History of Karnataka*, Delhi, 1997, p. 350.

<sup>210</sup> Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *op. cit.*, pp. 250-251.

<sup>211</sup> M.V. Raman Rao, *Development of the Congress Constitution*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, 1958, p.33.



main language, 16. Berar 17. Bihar, 18. Utkal 19. Bengal, 20. Assam, 21. Burma.<sup>212</sup>

In 1921 the Congress proceeded to set up its provincial committees based on language. The demand for linguistic provinces was accepted following persistent pressure from the regional units notably Andhra, Kerala and Karnataka.

In response to the appointment of the Indian Statutory Commission (Simon Commission) in 1927 the Congress adopted a resolution expressing the opinion that "the time has come for the redistribution of provinces on a linguistic basis" and that a beginning could be made by constituting Andhra, Sind and Karnataka into separate provinces.<sup>213</sup> The linguistic question was also examined by the Nehru Committee of the All Parties Conference 1928. The Committee propped up the linguistic principle in the following terms:

"If a province has to educate itself and do its daily work through the medium of its own language, it must necessarily be a linguistic area. If it happens to be a polyglot area difficulties will continually arise and the media of instruction and work will be two or even more languages. Hence it becomes most desirable for provinces to be regrouped on a linguistic basis. Language as a rule corresponds with a special variety of culture, of traditions and literature. In a linguistic area all these factors will help in the general progress of the province."<sup>214</sup>

But the attitude of the British Government was negative and it was reflected in its memorandum to the Indian Statutory Commission 1930. "In no case can the linguistic or racial principle be accepted as the sole test, or as supplying in itself the ultimate and final basis for territorial redistribution . .

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<sup>212</sup> Indian National Congress Resolution on States Reorganisation, New Delhi, 1956, p.1.

<sup>213</sup> *The Hindu*, 17 May 1927.

<sup>214</sup> Report of the Nehru Committee, All Parties Conference 1928, p.62.

should be confined to those from which it can be shown that substantial benefit will be derived."<sup>215</sup>

So the Nehru Committee suggested that the main considerations for the redistribution of the provinces must necessarily be the wishes of the people and the linguistic unity of the area concerned. Since the Nehru Report, Congress reaffirmed its sympathy to the linguistic principle on different occasions. In the Calcutta Session of October 1937 the Congress reiterated its policy regarding linguistic provinces and recommended the formation of the Andhra and Karnataka provinces.<sup>216</sup> In a resolution passed at Wardha in July 1938 the Working Committee gave an assurance to the deputations from Andhra, Karnataka and Kerala that linguistic redistribution of the provinces would be undertaken as soon as the Congress had the power to do so.<sup>217</sup>

Gandhiji expressed his view that cultural growth of a people cannot take place except through the medium of their own language. Hence Gandhiji's concern was that without undue delay provinces should be reconstituted on the basis of language and that education should be imparted through its medium. He states . . . 'I was principally instrumental in securing from the Congress the recognition of the redistribution of the provinces for Congress purposes on a linguistic basis. I have always agitated for the acceptance by the Government of such redistribution. I have indeed advised Tamilnad, when such advice was needed, not to resist the Andhra demand.'<sup>218</sup> This view is reiterated by Gandhiji while clarifying his reply to the Maharajkumar by Vizianagaram. "I believe that the linguistic basis is the correct basis for demarcating provinces. I should not mind two provinces speaking the same language, if they are not contiguous. If Kerala and

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<sup>215</sup> Memoranda submitted by the Government of India to the Statutory Commission, quoted in SRC Report, 1955.

<sup>216</sup> The Hindu, 1 and 6 November, 1937.

<sup>217</sup> Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *History of the INC*, Vol. II, p.94.

<sup>218</sup> Harijan, 29 March, 1942.

Kashmir were speaking the same language, I would treat them as two distinct provinces."<sup>219</sup>

In the Election manifesto of 1945-46 the Congress repeated the view that, administrative units should be constituted as far as possible on a linguistic and cultural basis.<sup>220</sup> So the Congress all through the period of the freedom movement accepted the principle of linguistic reorganisation and passed resolutions accordingly. The Congress under Gandhiji realised that if it had to become a mass organisation, it was essential to canalise the linguistic nationality sentiment and to use the national language as vehicle of political communication and propaganda.

The Communist Party of India formulated its policy on the reorganisation of provinces by making a series of discussions on the basis of the theory of self determination of nationalities put forward by Lenin. One of its main objectives, as stated in the Draft Platform of Action of the Communist Party of India published in 1930, was 'the realisation of the right of national minorities to self determination including the right of secede.'<sup>221</sup> The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India held in September 1942 discussed the Marxist Leninist teaching on the national question and the definition of a nation by Stalin: 'A nation is a historically evolved stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make up manifested in a community of culture.'<sup>222</sup> The first Congress of the CPI in 1943 adopted the resolution 'On Pakistan and National Unity.' It declared that India was a multinational country with 17 well developed nationalities which must have the right to form sovereign nations, and that genuine unity of

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<sup>219</sup> Harijan, 19 April, 1942.

<sup>220</sup> Report of the States Reorganisation Commission, 1955, New Delhi, 1955, p.14.

<sup>221</sup> *Indian Communist Party Documents (1930-1956)*, The Democratic Research Service, Bombay and the Institute of Pacific Relations, New York, 1957, p.6.

<sup>222</sup> G. Adhikari (ed.) *Pakistan and National Unity – The Communist Solution*, Peoples Publishing House, Bombay, 1943.

India could be achieved only on the basis of the voluntary union of all these nations.<sup>223</sup>

So the Communist Party put forward the slogan of a consistently democratic solution of the national question, that is, the right of all the nationalities of India to self determination, including the right to secession and the formation of independent states.

"Every section of the Indian people which has a contiguous territory as its homeland, common historical tradition, common language, culture, psychological make up and common economic life would be recognised as an autonomous state within the free Indian union or federation and will have the right to secede from it if it may so desire. This means that the territories which are homelands of such nationalities and which today are split up by the artificial boundaries of the present British provinces and of the so called 'Indian states' would be reunited and restored to them in free India. Thus free India of tomorrow would be a federation or union of autonomous states of the various nationalities such as the Pathans, Western Punjabis, Sikhs, Sindhis, Hindustanis, Rajastanis, Gujaratis, Bengalis, Assamese, Biharies, Oriyas, Andhras Tamils, Karnatakis, Maharashtrians, Malayaless etc."<sup>224</sup>

So the CPI gave a Marxist theoretical tinge to the concept of linguistic states when it said that India was a multi national country where the principle of self determination of nationalities, with the right of secession, should apply. The Communists sharply differed with the Congress leadership and Muslim League on this issue. While the Congress demanded a single Constituent Assembly to frame the constitution of free India, and the League demanded two consistent Assemblies to frame two constitutions, one for India and one for Pakistan, the Communist Party proposed separate constituent

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<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, p.50.

<sup>224</sup> Resolution confirmed by the First Congress of the CPI in May 1943. Reprinted in G. Adhikari (ed.), *Pakistan and National Unity – The Communist Solution*, PPH Bombay, 1943.

Assemblies for each of the well-formed nationalities which numbered about seventeen and included Kerala.<sup>225</sup>

The Communist Party's position on the urgent problem of Muslim self determination and its official stand on this was formulated and expressed in the book 'Pakistan and National Unity' by G. Adhikari. He attributes the growing crisis in the nationalist struggle to the manipulation of the rival bourgeoisie (Hindu and Muslim). He points out the disruptive aspect, that is the use of these bourgeois nationalists by imperialism and its agents for their policy of divide and rule. To him, the healthier aspect is that the all India nationalist movement reaches the peasant masses and brings backward nationalities into its fold. Considering the Muslim demand for self determination, he suggests the need for Congress-League unity and the acceptance of the Pakistan demand based on the just rights of the Muslim people. This is, however, not a step towards separation but a move to strengthen the unity of India. The Muslim nation with full powers of autonomy and right of secession can play its rightful role in the Indian union of states.<sup>226</sup> But there was no question of giving any quarter to the Muslim League theory that India consisted of two nations, Hindu and Muslim. The Communist Party firmly rejected the demand for the division of the country on communal lines.<sup>227</sup> This is an early attempt on the part of the Communist

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<sup>225</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, *The Communist Party in Kerala*, National Book Centre, New Delhi, 1994, p.87. The Communist Party subsequently made a self criticism and identified serious theoretical and political errors on the issue. EMS states, 'The theory of nationalities formulated by Lenin and Stalin had been evolved primarily to meet conditions in capitalist Europe where feudal empires were veritable prison houses for subject nationalities . . . Conditions in the colonial Asian countries were entirely different, self determination for them meant essentially the right to secede from the dominant imperial power. . . Indian nationalities had to unite their forces, strengthening unity against the common oppressor on the basis of complete equality among themselves. This is how the Marxist Leninist theory of nationalities and the principle of the right of self determination is to be applied to actual conditions in our country,' pp. 87-88.

<sup>226</sup> G. Adhikari, *Pakistan and National Unity*, Peoples Publishing House, Bombay, 1943.

<sup>227</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, *The Communist Party in Kerala*, p.86.

Party to apply the classic approach of Marxism Leninism to nationalities in India.<sup>228</sup>

Following the vision envisaged in the Resolution adopted by the First Congress of the Communist Party of India, attempts were made by the party ideologues at undertaking studies highlighting the separate historical, cultural and social identities of different linguistic groups in India. Emphasis was also laid on the forces of material production and the different nationalities. EMS Namboodiripad, in the first serious attempt on the study of Malayalee Identity formation in '*Onnekalkoti Malayalikal*', asserts the distinctiveness of Kerala's political and socio economic evolution.<sup>229</sup> P. Sundarayya in his '*Vishalandhra*' highlighted the right of the 30 million Andhras "with a long history, language, and cultural heritage of their own" to form a sovereign Andhra nation.<sup>230</sup> Bhowani Sen in a similar venture, composed '*Nutan Bangla*' promoting the national identity of the Bengalees.<sup>231</sup>

The Memorandum submitted by P.C. Joshi, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of India to the British Cabinet Mission in April 1946 states, 'We suggest that the Provisional Government should be charged with the task of setting up a Boundary Commission to redraw the boundaries on the basis of natural ancient homelands of every people, so that the redemarcated provinces become, as far as possible, linguistically and culturally homogenous national units, eg, Sind, Pathanland, Western Punjab.'<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Prakash Karat, *Language and Nationality Politics in India*, Orient Longman, Madras, 1973, p.51.

<sup>229</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, "*Onnekalkotimalaylikal British Adimathathilninnu Swathanthryathilekku*' (Mal.), (One Crore and a Quarter Malayalees from British Bondage to Independence), Deshabhimani Publishing House, Kozhikode, 1946.

<sup>230</sup> P. Sundarayya, *Vishalandhra*, Peoples Publishing House, Bombay, 1946.

<sup>231</sup> Bhowani Sen, *Nutan Bangla*. Communist Party of India Bengal Committee, Calcutta, 1946.

<sup>232</sup> Memorandum Reprinted in T.G. Jacob (ed.), *National Question in India - CPI Documents 1942 - 47*, Odyssey Press, New Delhi, 1988, pp. 236-240.

The Communists of Andhra Pradesh had demanded Vishalandhra as early as 1937.<sup>233</sup> In the Manifesto of the (Andhra) Communist Party for the 1946 Elections, P. Sundarayya wrote "the Congress leaders do not recognise the Telugus as a nationality and that they decline to form a Visalandhra including the Telugu areas under the Nizam, Mysore and other states."<sup>234</sup> Towards the close of 1946, Sundarayya vehemently condemned BN Rau's scheme and demanded a Visalandhra Province.<sup>235</sup>

The Socialist Party expressed itself in favour of the redistribution of states on a linguistic basis alongwith geographical contiguity and economic stability. The Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (KMPP) advocated the appointment of a high level committee to go into the whole question of the redistribution of the provinces including the aspect of bilingual border areas. The Hindu Mahasabha believed in the policy of formation of provinces on linguistic basis but was of the opinion that due regard should be given to factors like defence and national stability.<sup>236</sup>

Language forms the most important characteristic factor in the formation of nationalities. The leaders of India had realised the role of language in unifying the people, as early as the beginning of the last century. However the colonial administrators were not ready to recognize the linguistic or cultural cohesion of different regions in India. The unscientific division of British India, aimed primarily at administrative convenience created many multilingual and multicultural provinces.

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<sup>233</sup> New Age, 23 January 1955; A.S. Rao, "Andhra Struggle for their own state", p.107, Quoted by Harrison Selig S, in *India – The Most Dangerous decades*, p. 220.

<sup>234</sup> K.V. Narayana Rao, *The Emergence of Andhra Pradesh*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, p, 281.

<sup>235</sup> B.N. Rau's Scheme provided for the continuance of Madras Province as a single province with its existing boundaries, B.N. Rau, *India's Constitution in Making*, Orient Longman, Bombay, 1960, pp. 171-173.

<sup>236</sup> Report of the SRC 1955, pp. 17,18.

The agitation for linguistic states in India had its origin in Bengal. Bengal was the first linguistic area to find a distinct identity in the modern period. The anti partition struggle in Bengal strengthened the linguistic nationalist ideology in and outside Bengal. The Andhra movement in the Telugu speaking area of Madras Presidency was the first major linguistic movement in South India. The Andhra Maha Sabha which was formed in 1913 became a political organization dedicated to the formation of a separate Telugu speaking state. The Kannada speaking people who were divided between the presidencies of Bombay and Madras and the native states of Mysore, Hyderabad and Coorg also began to demand redistribution of provinces on linguistic basis.

The linguistic question was addressed by the colonial government through the reports on constitutional reforms. The Montagu Chelmsford Report (1918) regarded the linguistic reorganization of provinces as impractical. However the report was in favour of small homogenous administrative units. Demands made in the central and state Legislatures to secure provincial reorganization were opposed by the government. Though the Indian Statutory Commission (Simon Commission) was sympathetic towards the linguistic demands, the issue of provincial reorganization was submerged in the national politics of the period. By 1936, the principle of linguistic reorganization of British Indian provinces gained wide acceptance from all the political parties.

The major political parties in India brought the linguistic question to the limelight by responding to the repeated clamours of the regional peoples. The Indian National Congress accepted the principle of linguistic reorganization of the provinces in its Nagpur Session in 1920. In 1921 the Congress set up its provincial committees based on language. The linguistic principle was incorporated in the Nehru Report of 1928 which endorsed that "If a province has to educate itself and do its daily work through the medium of its own language, it must necessarily be a linguistic area." The Congress



reiterated its policy regarding linguistic provinces in the Calcutta session of 1937 and the Election Manifesto of 1945-46.

The Communist Party, following the Leninist theory of self-determination of nationalities, initiated serious discussions on the national question in India. It took the position that 'India was a multinational country with 17 well developed nationalities which must have the right to form sovereign nations and that genuine unity of India could be achieved only on the basis of the voluntary union of all these nations.' The Indian Communist leaders including Bhavani Sen, P. Sundarayya and EMS Namboodiripad attempted to identify the historical background of the different nationalities. The Communist Party thus envisaged the free India to be a federation or union of autonomous states of the various nationalities such as Pathans, Western Punjabis, Sikhs, Sindhis, Hindustanis, Rajastanis, Gujaratis, Bengalis, Assamese, Biharis, Oriyas, Andhras, Tamils, Karntakis, Maharashtrians, Malayalees etc. In 1946 the Communist Party suggested the constitution of a Boundary Commission to redraw the borders of the provinces on linguistic and cultural bases. The Andhra Communists demanded the formation of a Visalandhra as early as late 1930s.

Other prominent organizations including the Socialist Party, the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party and the Hindu Mahasabha while discussing the linguistic question, suggested that the factors like geographical contiguity, economic stability, defence etc., should be taken into account during the re-organisation of the provinces.

The above discussion shows that the linguistic nationality question loomed large in the national politics from the first decade of the last century. In spite of the negligence of the question by the colonial administrators, the demand for the reorganization of the provinces on linguistic basis was raised on the different platforms of political parties and cultural organizations. All the major political parties till independence endorsed the idea of linguistic reorganization of provinces in principle.

### CHAPTER III

## GENESIS OF UNITED KERALA MOVEMENT

The national movement in the country was another major force next to the social Renaissance, which fostered Kerala consciousness. The national movement in Kerala began to acquire a clear political nature during the last years of the First World War. This development induced the unorganised landless peasantry and middleclass to concerted actions. The organisational activities and interactions of different sections naturally led to the crystallization of Kerala consciousness.

Indian National Congress activities had begun in Palghat as early as 1890.<sup>237</sup> Organised political activities began in Malabar from 1916 onwards particularly in support of the Home Rule Movement. A branch of the Home Rule League started functioning in Malabar under the leadership of Manjeri Rama Iyer and K.P Kesava Menon.<sup>238</sup> In Travancore, students also appeared in the political scene. The political activities initiated by Swadeshabhmani K. Ramakrishna Pillai now assumed a social character in Travancore.

In Malabar the Congress Committees and Tenancy Committees sought to work in close co-operation. The tenant leaders of Malabar organised an All Kerala Tenants Association (Kudiyam Sangham) consequent on an all Kerala Tenants Conference held under the presidentship of Lala Lajpat Rai in April 1928 at Ernakulam.<sup>239</sup> The entrance of the middle class into politics enabled

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<sup>237</sup> The Palghat Congress Committee published in the 'Kerala Patrika' (a Malayalam periodical edited by C. Kunhirama Menon at Calicut), the names of 36 subscribers with the amount of their subscription towards the Congress Fund. TNA, NNPR 1890, *Kerala Patrika*, 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 1890, NNPR 1890; *Mithavadi* Special Issue, 1929, pp.53,54.

<sup>238</sup> A.K. Pillai, *Congressum Keralavum*, (mal.) p.378.

<sup>239</sup> T.V. Krishnan, *Kerala's First Communist*, Life of 'Sakhavu' Krishna Pillai, New Delhi, 1971, p.13.

the people of Kerala to acquire political leadership through the national movement.<sup>240</sup>

The Malabar District Congress Committee and the Home Rule League organised several public meetings resulting in the development of political consciousness. In a meeting at the Calicut Town Hall, convened to aid the war efforts, K.P Kesava Menon, Secretary of both the Home Rule League and the Congress Committee began to address the gathering in Malayalam. But the District Collector, an Englishman who presided over the meeting refused to permit Kesava Menon to speak in Malayalam though the latter asserted his right to do so. In protest against this discourteous treatment, Kesava Menon along with a large number of persons present staged a walkout.<sup>241</sup> This incident gave a fillip to the nationalist movement and ignited the feelings of the Malayalees not only in Malabar but also in Travancore and Cochin.<sup>242</sup>

The Malabar District Conference held at Palghat in March 1916 under the president ship of Dr. Annie Besant was attended by a large number of people from all parts of Malabar and Cochin. In the second District Conference held at Calicut in April 1917, a resolution was adopted according to which the areas in Kasargod Taluk inhabited by Malayalees were to be added to the Malabar district.<sup>243</sup> The Third Malabar District Political Conference held at Tellicherry in May 1918 under the presidentship of Azad Alikhan Bahadur, the Zamindar of Banganappalli passed a resolution which demanded the establishment within a stipulated period, of a government responsible to the people.<sup>244</sup> The last District Political Conference at Manjeri in April 1920 was attended by nearly 1300 delegates representing several parts of Kerala and Madras and was presided over by Kasturi Ranga Iyengar,

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<sup>240</sup> V.V. Kunhikrishnan, *Tenancy Legislation in Malabar 1880-1970*, 1993, pp. 50-57.

<sup>241</sup> TNA, *History of Freedom Movement (HFM)* Vol. 103, p.3.

<sup>242</sup> PKK Menon, *History of Freedom Movement in Kerala 2001*, (1972), pp. 85-88.

<sup>243</sup> A.K. Pillai, *Congressum Keralavum*, 1935, p. 391.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 374.

Editor of the Hindu.<sup>245</sup> Knowingly or unknowingly Kerala consciousness was developing among the delegates who came from different parts of Kerala for participation in these political conferences.

The desire to see that Kerala was united was expressed as early as 1919. When K. P. Kesava Menon made a statement regarding the formation of united Kerala in a meeting of Madras Malayali club it was ridiculed by the president of the meeting.<sup>246</sup> The Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress held in December 1920 adopted the principle of creation of provinces in India on a linguistic basis. The princely states were also brought within the orbit of the organisational activities of the Congress.<sup>247</sup> The old Malabar District Congress Committee was now expanded into the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee.<sup>248</sup> K. Madhavan Nair was elected as the first secretary of the newly formed Kerala Provincial Congress Committee.<sup>249</sup> Kerala welcomed the Non co-operation movement with the added enthusiasm of a newly integrated Congress province.<sup>250</sup> Kerala 'province' was divided into five Congress Districts with their headquarters centred at Tellicherry, Calicut, Palghat, Cochin and Trivandrum.<sup>251</sup> The first conference of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee was held at Ottappalam towards the end of April 1921 with T. Prakasam as the president.<sup>252</sup> It afforded opportunity for the delegates from all parts of Kerala to meet together for the first time. As A.K. Pillai observes, 'it is considered to be the first all Kerala gathering since the days of Mamankam, the gathering of the leaders of Kerala

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<sup>245</sup> PKK Menon, *The History of Freedom Movement in Kerala*, Vol. II, Trivandrum, 2001, p. 97.

<sup>246</sup> NMML, New Delhi, OHT No. 98. K.P. Kesava Menon, dt. 22.11.1971; K.P. Kesava Menon, *Kazhinhakalam* (Mal.) (Bygone Days), Calicut, 1969, p. 358.

<sup>247</sup> A.K. Pillai, *op. cit.*, p. 270.

<sup>248</sup> TNA, HFM Vol. 103, p.11.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12.

<sup>250</sup> Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *op. cit.*, pp. 370-371.

<sup>251</sup> A.K. Pillai, *op. cit.*, p.421.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 424; V.S. Keraleeyan, *Keralathinte Veeraputhran*, Kozhikode, 1959, p.219.

on the banks of the Bharathapuzha.<sup>253</sup> V.T. Bhattathirippad states that the feasibility of linguistic states movement could be felt during the Ahamedabad session of the Indian National Congress in 1921. Accommodation for delegates from different parts were provided on the basis of linguistic regions viz. Tamil, Andhra, Kerala etc.<sup>254</sup>

The formation of the Kerala 'Congress Province' has been described as the first step in the direction of the formation of Kerala state.<sup>255</sup> Though there existed socio cultural organisations of all Kerala character before the formation of KPCC, the term 'Kerala' was not expressive of any political significance. Following the formation of a separate Congress 'province' for Malayalam speaking regions, Kerala including Travancore, Cochin and British Malabar got a recognised position in Indian political affairs.<sup>256</sup>

Kerala State Political Conferences were held in course of time at Palghat (1923), Calicut (1927), Payyannur (1928) and Badagara (1931). Invariably these conferences strengthened the feeling of oneness among the Malayalees. While the Indian National Congress passed resolutions demanding the creation of linguistic provinces in India, the political conferences of the KPCC included in its programme, work for the achievement of a separate province for Malayalam speaking people. Instances of passing resolutions seeking the formation of 'Aikya Kerala' began to appear from 1928, when Motilal Nehru Committee, appointed by the All Party conference was drafting a constitution for India. In April 1928 the State Peoples Conference and All Kerala Tenants Conference were held at Ernakulam. The Conferences were attended by delegates from all parts of

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<sup>253</sup> A.K. Pillai, *op. cit.*, p.424.

<sup>254</sup> V.T. Bhattathirippad, *Malayala Manorama*, Kottayam, 1 November 1956.

<sup>255</sup> K.P. Kesava Menon, *Kazhinhakalam*, p. 359, EMS Namboodiripad, *Communist Party in Kerala*, Trivandurm, 1984, p.55.

<sup>256</sup> P.K.K. Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

Kerala. The Resolutions and speeches of these conferences reflected the desire for united Kerala.<sup>257</sup>

The Fourth Kerala Provincial Conference held at Payyannur on 25, 26 and 27 May 1928 under the presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru, the then General Secretary of the Indian National Congress, passed a resolution which emphasised the need for making Kerala a separate Province in the future constitutional set up.<sup>258</sup> This demand was repeated by subsequent sessions as well. In July 1928 the Southern Railway workers went on strike. The strike spread to Kerala within a couple of days. It was a total success in centres like Shoranur, Palghat, Calicut, Badagara, Tellicherry and Cannanore.<sup>259</sup> It was this strike of the railway workers that inspired the rest of the working class in Kerala to join organised trade unions.<sup>260</sup>

The Salt satyagraha March from Calicut to Payyannur in April 1930 led by K. Kelappan set the pace for organised civil disobedience struggle in Kerala. An ardent sense of nationalism stimulated people throughout Kerala. Ripples of the satyagraha struggle were echoed from Kasargod to Kanyakumari.<sup>261</sup> The Congress had strictly banned civil Disobedience Movement in the princely states. However hundreds of young enthusiasts went to Malabar from Travancore and Cochin as satyagrahi volunteers. The struggle in Malabar was looked upon as a part of the struggle of Kerala as a whole.<sup>262</sup> A jatha from Trivandrum led by Ponnara Sredhar, N. P. Kurukkal and N. C. Sekhar to participate in the salt satyagraha at Payyannur was accorded rousing receptions at Thonnakkal, Chirayinkeezh, Harippad,

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<sup>257</sup> Perunna K.N. Nair, *Congress Prasthanam Keralathil* (Mal.), Cochin (1967), rpt. 1986, pp. 52-53.

<sup>258</sup> A.K. Pallai, *op. cit.*, p. 510; A.V. Sreekanta Poduval, *Athyuthara Keralam Swathanthrya Samarathil*, Kottayam, p.36.

<sup>259</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, 31 July, 1928.

<sup>260</sup> T.V. Krishnan, *Kerala's First Communist*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>261</sup> A.K. Pillai, *op. cit.*, pp. 520-530.

<sup>262</sup> PKK Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

Mayyanad, Aleppey, Kottayam, Ettumannur, Vaikkom and Ernakulam.<sup>263</sup> The Guruvayour Satyagraha for temple entry and equal right of worship which began on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1931 had focussed the attention of entire Kerala on Guruvayoor.<sup>264</sup>

In the native states of Cochin and Travancore also demands were raised to form a state by integrating these native states with Malabar. During 1932-33, EMS Namboodiripad, then a Congressman and a student at St. Thomas College, Trichur published an article in the college magazine underlining the need to form such a state.<sup>265</sup> In 1933 Sir Sankaran Nair argued in favour of a separate Kerala province. With this end in view, his son R.M. Palat (Palat Ramunni Menon) moved an amendment to the Andhra Province Resolution in Madras council. This amendment favouring Kerala province was however lost on 11 November 1933. C. S. Ranga Iyer, moved in vain a similar resolution in the Indian Legislative Assembly in June 1934.<sup>266</sup>

During 1934-35 R. M. Palat published a newspaper titled 'Aikya Keralam' from Calicut. He organised in collaboration with M.C. Krishnan Nair, an All Kerala Association (*Samastha Kerala Sangham*).<sup>267</sup> A book was brought out projecting the necessity of Aikya Keralam. The book embodies a map depicting the regions proposed to be included in the united Kerala.<sup>268</sup>

After the Civil Disobedience Movement came to an end in April 1934, the question of linguistic reorganisation was taken up again in legislature. In

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<sup>263</sup> N.C. Sekhar, *Agniveethikal*, Kannur, 1987, pp. 81-90.

<sup>264</sup> NMML, AICC Papers P.14/1932.

<sup>265</sup> OMC Narayanan Namboodiripad, *Aikyakeralopaharam*, Mathrubhumi, 1954, p.58.

<sup>266</sup> K.V. Narayana Rao, *The Emergence of Andhra Pradesh*, pp. 192-193.

<sup>267</sup> Aikyakeralam, November, 1934, *Normal Printing Bureau*, Calicut, p.2; OMC Namboodiripad, *Aikyakeralopaharam*, 1954, p. 58. "The Aikya Keralam, declares the paper, 'has its exalted ideal the rejuvenation and consolidation of the cultural entity of Kerala and thus pave the way for a United Kerala Province.' Mathrubhumi Special, 1935, Calicut.

<sup>268</sup> C.H. Kunhappa, '*Smaranakal Mathram*' (Mal.) Mathrubhumi Press, Kozhikode, 1981, p.290.

1934 came the demand for the creation of a 'Malabar Province', consisting of the Malayalam speaking regions of the Madras Presidency. Some felt that the formation of a Kerala state by integrating princely states with British Malabar was a remote possibility. Hence the idea of a separate linguistic province for Malayalam speaking people of British India developed as that of the proposed Karnataka and Andhra Provinces. This idea found expression in the resolution moved by C. S Ranga Iyer in the Central Legislative Assembly on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1934.<sup>269</sup> A.K. Gopalan, the Secretary of the first left led Kerala Provincial Congress Committee who undertook a tour of Cochin and Travancore in 1934 for enrolling Congress members, utilized the occasion to popularise socialism. The growth of the left-led Congress movement meant increasing contacts between the political activists of the directly British administered Malabar and the princely states of Cochin and Travancore.<sup>270</sup>

When the Congress Ministry was formed in Madras in July 1937, the demand for linguistic provinces gained momentum. In response to a resolution on the Andhra Province, C. Rajagopalachari, the Premier, made a suggestion for the redistribution of Madras into Andhra, Tamil, Kerala and Karnataka provinces. The suggestion of C. Rajagopalachari for the comprehensive resolution was made most probably in the hope that the Andhra case might be subsumed in the remote and larger question of general linguistic redistribution of provinces in South India.<sup>271</sup> C. Rajagopalachari was never enthusiastic about linguistic provinces, either before or after independence. Later, at the Hyderabad session of the Congress (1953) he characterised as mere 'tribalism', the demand for linguistic provinces.<sup>272</sup>

The seventh Kerala State Political Conference was held at Kozhikode on 28 May 1935 under the presidentship of S. A Brelvi, the Editor of 'Bombay

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<sup>269</sup> Manthrubhumi, 7 April 1934.

<sup>270</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, *The Communist Party in Kerala*, National Book Centre, New Delhi, 1994, p.23.

<sup>271</sup> K.V. Narayana Rao, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-173.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.



Chronicle'. The conference which proved that the leftists had majority in the KPCC passed resolutions demanding the formation of Aikya Kerala and the dissolution of native states.<sup>273</sup> The Eighth Kerala political conference held at Calicut on 26 April 1938 with Jayaprakash Narayanan, the Congress Socialist leader in the chair, passed a resolution requesting the Madras government and the Government of India to take immediate steps to form a Kerala province by integrating the Malayalam speaking areas under British administration and if possible by uniting other Malayali regions with it, if those regions so desired. It also urged the local Congress committees and other public organisations in Kerala to reiterate the demand in order to awaken those in power.<sup>274</sup> Muhammad Abdurahiman, the president of the KPCC expressed doubts as to the feasibility of the integration of the princely states of Cochin and Travancore with British Malabar. In the event of its failure, he wanted all Malayalam speaking regions of Madras to be organised into a separate Kerala province. As a sequel to this proposal was passed another resolution seeking the merger of predominantly Malayalam speaking Kasargod Taluk (South Kanara) with the Malabar district.<sup>275</sup>

The new legislatures constituted under the Act of 1935 became the scene of further linguistic agitation in 1938. In March 1938, the Madras Provincial Legislative Assembly passed the modified resolution recommending the formation of separate provinces for Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam speaking regions.<sup>276</sup> This resolution, moved by Konda Venkatappayya won the support of all members representing Malabar.<sup>277</sup> On 5 April, 1938, the Bombay Legislature resolved in favour of a separate Karnataka province.<sup>278</sup> The deputations of Andhra PCC and the

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<sup>273</sup> A.K. Pillai, *op. cit.*, pp. 562-565.

<sup>274</sup> Mathrubhumi, 27 April 1938.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 April 1938.

<sup>276</sup> *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates* vol. 6, March 14-30, 1938, pp. 1186-1209.

<sup>277</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, Editorial 2 April 1938.

<sup>278</sup> Indian Express, 6 April 1938.

Kerala PCC apprised the AICC their views on the question of the redistribution of provinces on linguistic basis. There upon the All India Congress Working Committee pointed out that the resolution of Madras legislature on linguistic provinces and that of Bombay legislature on the separation of Karnataka province had been passed with the prior sanction of the parliamentary sub committee and the approval of the Congress Working Committee.<sup>279</sup> However the resolution passed by the AICC met at Wardha on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1938 advised the deputationists to keep away from agitations in this regard since the whole attention had to be focussed on India's freedom movement. The Working Committee had assured that the Congress would try to solve the problem as and when Congress acquired the strength to frame the future constitution for India.<sup>280</sup>

In spite of the repeated requests of the popular organisations and resolutions made in the legislatures for the redistribution of the provinces on linguistic basis, the attitude of the British authorities was not at all favourable. When the Madras and Bombay legislative assemblies passed resolutions in 1938 recommending the formation of linguistic provinces, the matter was raised in the British House of Commons. While replying to a question asked by Mr. Cary, the Secretary of State Lord Stanley stated that the reorganisation of provinces would not be beneficial to India. This official view was bitterly criticised by Pattabhi Sitaramayya.<sup>281</sup>

The demand for the integration of Kasargod (which was then a taluk of the South Kanara district) with Malabar was also gained in strength towards the end of 1930s. Kasargod constituted a part of traditional Kerala. Prior to the Mysorean domination, it belonged to the kingdom of the Kolathiris of Chirakkal which stretched upto Kasaragod in the north.<sup>282</sup> While creating administrative districts after the conquest of Mysore by the British, this area

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<sup>279</sup> P. Sitaramayya, *op. cit.*, Vol. ii, p.94.

<sup>280</sup> K.A. Damodara Menon, *Mathrubhumi weekly*, 27 April, 1947.

<sup>281</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, 17 April 1938.

<sup>282</sup> *Cannanore District Gazetteer*, Trivandrum, 1972, p.75.

which had originally been under the Chirakkal Raja was appended to South Kanara district. Many of the land tenures of this area though described by either the Malayalam term common in Malabar or the Kanarese equivalent are virtually the same.<sup>283</sup>

Owing to the efforts made by the *Janmi Sabha* and *Nileswaram Malayali Sabha*, Malayalam assumed status as the court language in the region south of Chandragiri river in Kasaragod Taluk of South Canara District.<sup>284</sup> The hereditary priestly right (*shanthi*) of Sri *Padmanabha Swami* temple, Thiruvananthapuram had been enjoyed by the Brahmins hailing from Pullur village of Kasaragod district. Such cultural ties probably prompted Vengayil Kunhiraman Nayanar to present a resolution in the Madras Governor's Council in 1913 demanding the integration of Kasaragod Taluk with Malabar.<sup>285</sup> In 1917 the second District Political Conference held at Calicut under the presidentship of C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar passed a resolution favouring the incorporation of Malayalam speaking regions of Kasaragod taluk in the Malabar district.<sup>286</sup>

The Constitution of Kerala Province Congress Committee had treated the Malayalam speaking villages of Kasargod Taluk as part of Malabar district since 1921. Hosdurg (sub) Taluk was delimited and V.R. Nayanar, the then General Secretary of the KPCC organised the Hosdurg Taluk Congress committee in 1925. The Kavvayi River of Malabar and the Chandragiri River of Kasaragod respectively constituted the southern and northern boundaries of the Hosdurg Taluk which also unbraced the villages of Muliya and Katakam, north of Chandragiri river.<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> KKN Kurup, *Aspects of Kerala History and Culture*, Trivandrum, 1977, p.90

<sup>284</sup> Janmi, Published by Janmi Sabha, Lakshmisahayam Press, Kottakkal, March – April 1911, p.20.

<sup>285</sup> Kodoth Govindan Nambiar, *Aikyakeralopaharam*, *Mathrubhumi*, 1954, p. 56.

<sup>286</sup> A.K. Pillai, *op. cit.*, p. 391.

<sup>287</sup> Nehru Memorial Museum Library (NMML), New Delhi, AICC file No. G. 64/1938.

Expressing displeasure over the protest by the Karnataka PCC against the formation of the Hosdurg Congress committee, K. Madhavanar, the Kerala PCC Secretary sent a letter to K.T. Kunhi Raman Nambiar (Secretary, Hosdurg Congress Committee) instructing him not to pass on reports and accounts to the Karnataka Pradesh Congress committee. The letter alludes to the records in the custody of the Kerala PCC testifying to the inclusion of the Malayalam speaking areas in the Kasaragod Taluk within the jurisdiction of Kerala Province Committee since 1921.<sup>288</sup> It is worth mentioning here that activities directed to the integration of Kasargod and Malabar regions were also initiated by the *Kasaragod Malayali Seva Sangham* in 1927.<sup>289</sup>

There arose a boundary dispute between Kerala and Karnataka Provincial Congress Committees consequent on the defeat of the candidate of the S. Kanara Civic Board in the District Board Elections in 1935. The South Kanara DCC felt insulted at the non co-operation of Hosdurg Taluk Congress committee and the ignominious defeat of the Congress nominee. A. C. Kannan Nair, president of the Hosdurg Taluk Congress committee in a letter to the KPCC General Secretary charged that the Karnataka PCC had been carrying on a crusade against the HTCC obstructing and interfering in its work and that the agitation for establishing the phantom right of the Karnataka PCC was engineered by a handful of *Gowda Saraswatha Konkanastha Brahmin* merchants settled down in Hosdurg'.<sup>290</sup>

Quoting the Census Report of 1931, the HTCC President pointed out that "the prevailing mother tongue of the revenue taluk of Kasaragod is Malayalam; 16% speak Tulu, 8% Kanarese and 4% Marathi and Hindusthani. The 45 villages constituting the Hosdurg (Congress) Taluk has a population of 160,032. Of this almost 99% speak Malayalam".<sup>291</sup> More over the

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<sup>288</sup> NMML, AICC File No. P. 24/1929.

<sup>289</sup> Kodoth Govindan Nambiar, *op. cit.*, p.56.

<sup>290</sup> Letter No. 48/37 dated, 7.10.1937, NMML New Delhi, AICC File No. G. 64/1938.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4; Census of India 1931, Appendix A.

aforesaid letter refers to the attempt of forming a 'Thuluva' province. "Excepting Coondapur Taluk, which is predominantly Kanarese speaking, and Kasaragod Taluk and Amin Divi Islands, which are Malayalam speaking, all the other taluks are predominantly Thulu speaking areas. And it was because of this that Mr. S.U. Paniyadi of Udipi Taluk once launched an agitation for a Thuluva province. The total population of S. Kanara District is 1,372,243. Thulu is spoken by 562,300; Malayalam by 28,3008; and Kanarese only by 24,3780. Thus the place of Kanarese language in the S.Kanara District itself is second to Malayalam." Regretting over the exparte order of the AICC General Secretary to dissolve the HTCC and discontinue Congress activities, the letter in a warning tone states that " there is a committee working for the amalgamation of Kasaragod taluk with Malabar under an independent organisation which may go heedless of the injunctions of AICC to us". Again the letter laments that "due to the predominant position of the Kanarese language in official matters, Malayalees of Kasaragod Taluk were very much handicapped. South Kanara District Board being dominated by Kanarese speaking people, Malayalee areas are neglected".<sup>292</sup>

During the tenure of Rajaji Ministry in Madras the Kasaragod Malayali Samajam found it a favourable opportunity to revive the attempt to integrate Kasaragod with Malabar with the support of the then Malabar District Board President K. Kelappan. The Kasaragod Malabar Integration Jatha was inaugurated by K. Kelappan on 23 May 1937 at Olora in South Trikarapur, the southern extremity of Kasaragod Taluk.<sup>293</sup> The jatha under the leadership of T. Subrahmanian Thirumumb reached Kasaragod, the taluk headquarters after covering majority of villages.<sup>294</sup> The Kasaragod Muslims represented by the famous poet T. Ubaid offered solidarity to the Kasaragod-Malabar

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<sup>292</sup> Letter From A.C. Kannan Nair, HTCC President to the General Secretary, KPCC dt. 7.10.1937 in AICC File No. G. 64/1938.

<sup>293</sup> T.S. Thirumumb, *Smaranakal, Kavithakal* (Mal.), ed. by K.K.N. Kurup, Thrissur, 1989, p.55.

<sup>294</sup> K. Madhavan, *Payaswiniyute Theerathu*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1987, p.91.

movement. However some Malayali lawyers supported those who opposed Kasaragod Malabar integration. They argued that the Kasaragod Malabar integration would lead to more dangerous Tamil domination than the Karnataka control. Actually they were much worried about the loss of cases related to the landowners in the Mangalore and Kasaragod courts.<sup>295</sup>

A meeting of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee took place on 13 June 1937 at which it was resolved that the portion of the south Kanara District extending up to the Netravati river in the North should be added to Kerala. But as the matter was disputed by the Congress leaders of south Kanara, a committee was formed to negotiate and effect a settlement until-which there was to be no demonstration of any kind. The members of the said committee were E. M. Sankaran Namboodiripad and K. T Kunhiraman Nambiar.<sup>296</sup>

In this context it is pertinent to take note of the developments in Travancore which fostered the growth of Kerala consciousness. Since 1938 the people of Travancore had been struggling for the introduction of responsible government based on universal adult suffrage. Earlier in 1888 a Legislative Council was created for making laws and regulations in Travancore.<sup>297</sup> Three years after the establishment of the Legislative Council the people demanded for the first time a share in the government of the state. More than ten thousand people belonging to all prominent communities signed a memorial in 1891 and submitted it to the Maharaja. The 'Malayali Memorial' pointed out that "this country which used from time immemorial to be administered by a number of native prime ministers, was ruled from 1817 to 1872, for about half a century, by a series of foreign Diwans. Regularly and systematically these Diwans without exception appointed their relatives, caste men and friends into the service of the state".<sup>298</sup> The complaint was against the policy of appointing outsiders as Diwans. The pamphlet, titled

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<sup>295</sup> K. Madhavan, Interview at Nellikkat, Kanhagand, 8 May 1999.

<sup>296</sup> P.K.K. Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 502.

<sup>297</sup> The Travancore Government Gazetteer, 10 April 1888.

'*Thiruvithamkur for Thiruvithamkurians*' written by Barrister G.P. Pillai deserves to be considered as the manifesto of the Malayali Memorial Movement, since it contained fierce criticism against the Tamil Brahmin domination and the then Diwan, who too was a Tamil Brahmin.

The submission of the Malayali Memorial in 1891 signalled the genesis in Travancore of organised political movements in the modern sense. The Malayali Memorial was the first political event which marked out the beginning of the later series of political struggles in Travancore for democracy and self government. The fearless journalist K. Ramakrishna Pillai, who had earned fame under his pen name '*Keralan*', edited a series of journals and newspapers including '*Kerala Darpanam*', '*Kerala Panchika*', '*Malayali*' and the celebrated '*Swadeshabhimani*'.<sup>299</sup> Through his articles and editorials he made the people conscious of their civic rights and responsibilities and contributed to the intellectual advancement of contemporary society.<sup>300</sup> The eminent nationalists, Barrister G.P. Pillai, Swadeshabhimani Ramakrishna Pillai and C. Krishna Pillai, bravely carried forward the political spirit of secularism at the risk of facing bitter challenges from the part of the state.

The Indian National Congress extended its activities in Travancore in the early twenties. The '*Swarat*' founded by A. K. Pillai in 1921 disseminated the ideals of the Indian National Congress among the masses.<sup>301</sup> The Vaikom Satyagraha (1924-25), organised by the KPCC for the recognition of the right of avarna social groups, contributed much to the development of 'Kerala consciousness'. Though the venue of the satyagraha was in Travancore, representatives from all over Travancore, Cochin and Malabar whole-heartedly participated in it. In addition to the leaders of Travancore

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<sup>298</sup> Malayali Memorial Page 1, para 2 quoted in R. Ramachandran Nair, *Constitutional Experiments in Kerala*, 1964, p.5.

<sup>299</sup> K.K.N. Kurup, *Nationalism and Social Change: The Role of Malayalam Literature*, Thrissur, 1998, p.37.

<sup>300</sup> PKK Menon, *op. cit.*, pp. 21,22.

<sup>301</sup> A.K. Pillai, *Congressum Keralavum*, pp. 453, 454.

like T.K. Madhavan, Changanachery Parameswaran Pillai, A. K. Pillai, Mannath Padmanabhan and C. V. Kunhuraman, several leaders from Malabar including K. Kelappan, K.P Kesava Menon and T. V Chathukkutty Nair were associated with the propaganda and organisation of Vaikom Satyagraha.<sup>302</sup>

The Abstention (Nivarthana) movement was started as a protest against the constitutional reforms of 1932. The Ezhavas, the Muslims and the Christians feared that under the new scheme they would get only a lesser number of seats in the state Legislature than they were entitled to on population basis while the Nairs would get more seats than what they really deserved.<sup>303</sup> They wanted the government to divide the seats in the legislature as well as all appointments in the public service strictly in proportion to different sections and denominations among Hindus and Christians. So the movement aimed at securing a due share in government jobs and in the legislature in proportion to their numerical strength.<sup>304</sup> They formed an organisation called Samyukta Rashtriya Samiti (Joint Political Conference) and called upon the voters to abstain from voting in the elections held under the new scheme. C. Kesavan, N. V Joseph and P.K Kunhu were the leaders of the Abstention movement.

The Abstention movement did not result in the transfer of power to the new middle class because of the absence of a political party representing the entire people under its leadership. All the hurdles deliberately placed by the government through the constitutional reforms of 1932 to prevent the emergence of a political organisation of the entire people were eliminated with the culmination of the Abstention movement. The leaders of the Ezhava, Christian and Muslim communities organised All Travancore Joint Political Congress. On 13 May 1935 the Joint Political Congress held their historic conference at Kozhenchery under the presidentship of C. Kesavan. The conference requested the Maharaja to dismiss C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar from

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<sup>302</sup> A.K. Pillai, *op. cit.*, pp. 471-480.

<sup>303</sup> Travancore : *The Present Political Problem*, Calicut, 1934 pp. 29-72.

<sup>304</sup> Nilkan Perumal, *The Truth About Travancore*, Madras, 1939, p.8.



his office of Legal and Constitutional Advisor, as his continuance was considered inimical to the interests of the state. Consequently, C. Kesavan was prosecuted and sentenced to two years imprisonment and payment of a fine of Rs. 500.<sup>305</sup>

In February 1938, the Joint Political Congress was transformed into a new organisation called the 'Travancore State Congress'. Earlier, a branch of the Indian National Congress was formed at Trivandrum. It passed resolutions calling for responsible government and the formation of United Kerala. But it could not move ahead because the Haripura Congress Session put a ban on all Congress activities in the (native) States.<sup>306</sup> Since the struggle could not be organised under the leadership of Indian National Congress in conformity with the decisions of the Haripura Congress decision was taken to constitute the Travancore State Congress.<sup>307</sup> The State Congress began to function as an umbrella organisation which brought together the different classes and groups in Travancore society. It aimed at attaining responsible government in the state. Such a move implied the abolition of the diwanship. To make a divide in the front, the Diwan C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer preached the need for the unity of Hindus and hatched a scheme to serve the purpose. The Government was trying to avert the possible recurrence of coalition of communities against the Government. However the Travancore State Congress carried on its struggle for responsible government.<sup>308</sup>

When the State Congress proceeded with the struggle, the Kerala Congress Socialist party, which was then working with its base in Malabar, actively intervened. By then, the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee had become a supplement to the C.S.P. Leaders of both the bodies were the same. The K.P.C.C set up its Travancore Struggle Aid committee composed of K.A.

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<sup>305</sup> C. Kesavan, *Jeevitha Samaram*, 1971, pp. 134-136, 151.

<sup>306</sup> A.K. Gopalan, *Kerala Past and Present*, London, 1959, p.55.

<sup>307</sup> *Prabhatham*, Kozhikode, 25 July, 1938.

<sup>308</sup> R. Ramachandran Nair, *Constitutional Experiments in Kerala*, Trivandrum, 1964, p.19.

Damodara Menon, P. Krishna Pillai, EMS Namboodiripad and P. Narayanan Nair. The headquarters of the committee was in Ernakulam, the capital of Cochin State.<sup>309</sup> When the Civil Disobedience Movement was in progress in Travancore, streams of volunteers from Cochin and Malabar came to take part in it.<sup>310</sup>

During the last years of 1930s and early years of 1940s tremendous changes occurred both in the political and social spheres of Kerala. During that period, anti imperialist, anti feudal and national movements gained in strength in an unprecedented manner all over Kerala. Besides the middle class, various other sections zealously joined the mainstream of public life. More and more communities began to realise their political identity. Inside the caste and communal organisations there emerged a new force of radical youth who challenged the orthodox hierarchy within their own castes and began to view social problems from a political angle. United political struggles developed among different castes and community groups in Travancore. Modern value concepts had been confined to the upper strata of the society now began to permeate to the lower layers of society.

The formation and growth of the Socialist and Communist parties exerted profound influence on the nature of the political movement for freedom and democracy as well as on the mass movement for land reforms. Uncompromising struggle against imperialism, championing of the cause of democracy, amelioration of living and working conditions of workers and employees, movement for radical land reforms - these collectively constituted a radical outlook with which the Socialists and Communists came to the political scene. This radical programme formed the weapon with which the Communists fought for the reorganisation of the old 'British' and 'Indian' states in such a way as to form Kerala and other linguistic states.<sup>311</sup>

<sup>309</sup> P. Narayanan Nair, *Ara Noottantiloode*, Trichur, 1999 (1<sup>st</sup> edn. 1973), pp. 127-128.

<sup>310</sup> T. V. Krishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

<sup>311</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, *Land Reforms and the Peasant Movement In Kerala*, 1981.

Along with the fight for freedom and responsible government in two princely states, socialist ideologies began making rapid head way. Many young Congress men who participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement in Malabar were attracted by socialist ideas. In jail they came into contact with the revolutionaries from Bengal and those associated with the Lahore conspiracy Case. The acquaintance with such political activists as Chakrabarty, Kapoor and Thiwari infected with the young radicals a revolutionary fervour.<sup>312</sup> The course of the national struggle outside, the heated discussions over it inside the jail, the earnest study of political questions and the close contact with some revolutionaries rendered the satyagrahis into committed revolutionaries by the time of their release.<sup>313</sup>

The Kerala Congress Socialist party formed in the year 1934 declared the establishment of socialist government in India as its principal objective. It decided to work actively inside the Congress and to establish agricultural associations and trade unions to lend strength to the ongoing freedom struggle. The party also espoused the cause of peasants and labourers who were striving for complete independence and socialism.<sup>314</sup>

The first and second conferences of the CSP held in 1935 decided to organise party groups and form organisations of peasants and workers. A peasants organisation (*Karshaka Sangham*) was formed in July 1935 at Kolachery in Chirakkal Taluk (Kannur) under the leadership of V. M Vishnu Bharatheeyan and K. A Keraleeyan.<sup>315</sup> The Congress Socialist party formed a number of labour unions among the workers of various industries - soap

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<sup>312</sup> V.M. Vishnu Bharatheeyan, *Adimakal Engane Udamakalayi* (Mal.) Trivandrum, 1982, p. 66-71; Moyarath Sankaran, *Ente Jeevithakatha* (Mal.) Calicut 1965 pp. 301, 312, 313; A.K. Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakatha* (Mal), Trivandrum, 1999, p.42.

<sup>313</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, *A Short History of the Peasant Movement in Kerala*, Bombay, 1943, p. 15.

<sup>314</sup> Tamilnad Archives (TNA) Chennai, HFM File Bundle No: 101, CID Report on the formation of the Kerala Sociality Party and its Activities, pp. 18-25.

<sup>315</sup> AK. Poduval, *Kerathile Karshaka Prasthanathinte Charithram*, Thrissur, 1962, p. 38.

factory, the Thiruvannoor Cotton Mills, Feroke Tile Works and press workers in Calicut. Beedi workers at Tellicherry and the weavers at Cannanore were also organised under its banner.<sup>316</sup> The first All Kerala conference of Trade unions was held at Kozhikode in 1935.<sup>317</sup> A series of strikes were organised at Cannanore, Calicut, Feroke, Trichur, Cochin, Alleppey and Quilone during 1935-1936.<sup>318</sup>

The peasants organised Hunger Marches (*Pattini Jathas*) to the houses of land lords and to district and taluk head quarters.<sup>319</sup> Unique one was the hunger march from Kannur to Madras under the leadership of A. K. Gopalan in 1936. Ben Bradley gives a vivid description of the March:

On July 1<sup>st</sup> a jatha (band) of 33 hunger marchers set out from Cannanore, Malabar for Madras which is 700 miles away. They arrived in Madras on August 24<sup>th</sup>. These unemployed marchers were drawn from all communities among them were educated and uneducated men wearing Khader Khaki shorts and shirts with the symbol of the sickle and hammer pinned to the shirt. On an average the marchers covered 15 miles a day, each day they utilised the evening for public meetings . . . . The petition in which they were putting forward minimum demands in the shape of steeply graded income tax, insurance against unemployed, unemployment relief, old age pension, maternity benefit etc was to be presented to the legislative council. . . . . These Hunger Marchers represent millions of unemployed workers and peasants in India. The 33 Hunger Marchers had pledged themselves to organise the unemployed and to carry on propaganda through out the country to force the government to take some steps in connection with the mass unemployment in India.<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> TNA HFM File Bundle No. 101 pp. 19-22.

<sup>317</sup> A.K.Gopalan, *Kerala : Past and Present*, London, 1959, p. 48.

<sup>318</sup> A.K. Gopalan, *Ente Jeevitha Katha*, 1999, pp. 70-77.

<sup>319</sup> A.K. Poduval, *op. cit.*, p. 45-46.

<sup>320</sup> International Press Correspondence, INPRECORR, 1210, vol. 6, No. 44, 26 September, 1936, File No. 72/1936, *PC Joshi Archives on Contemporary History*, JNU, New Delhi, The Hindu 30.10.1936.

The third CSP conference held at Tellicherry in 1936 helped to give the necessary ideological clarity to the movement in order to link up its objectives and immediate demands and build up mass agitation.<sup>321</sup> Peasants conferences were also organised during May 1937 in Ponnani and Kottayam (Malabar) taluks. At these conferences were passed resolutions embodying the socialist agrarian programme, besides those on independence, against war etc.<sup>322</sup> On 8<sup>th</sup> April 1937 during the Students Day celebration at Tellicherry, P. Krishna Pillai appealed for unity among the students to fight for independence.<sup>323</sup> The first students union in Kerala was formed consequent on the agitation against the suspension of a student of Brennen College, Tellicherry.<sup>324</sup> It was under the inspiration and assistance of the Kerala Socialist Party that the first All Kerala Students Conference was held at Calicut on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> May 1937 with Soumyendranath Tagore as president. The conference formed an All Kerala Students Federation. Decision was also taken to affiliate the Federation to the All India Students Federation.<sup>325</sup>

The aided school teachers also had a leading role in propagating socialist ideas. A teachers union was organised for the first time in Chirakkal Taluk of Malabar during August 1934. The strikes organised by the Malabar Teachers Union at Kannatipparamba and Parassinikkadavu Higher Elementary schools proved to be grand success owing to the complete unity of the teachers and the backing of the general public.<sup>326</sup>

The All Kerala Labour Conference was held at Trichur on 25 April 1937. It was attended by several delegates from Malabar, Cochin and

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<sup>321</sup> N.E. Balaram, *Early Beginnings of Communist Movement in Kerala*, in Jaganath Sarkar *et al.*, (Eds.) *Indian Freedom Struggle, Several Streams*, New Delhi, 1986, p. 243.

<sup>322</sup> TNA, HFM File Bundle No. 101, p.24.

<sup>323</sup> TNA, HFM Bundle No. 101, p.23.

<sup>324</sup> A.K. Gopalan, *In the cause of the People*, Orient Longman, Madras, 1973, p.91.

<sup>325</sup> TNA HFM Bunle No. 101, p.24.

<sup>326</sup> T.C. Narayanan Nambiar, 'Teachers Union of Malabar - Its Origin and Growth' in Prabhatam, Kozhikode, 4 July, 1938.

Travancore. P. Krishna Pillai was authorised to convene a conference of labour unions in Kerala and to organise an all Kerala committee.<sup>327</sup>

For the propagation of socialist ideology, the Congress Socialist Party started its organ '*Prabhatham*' in January 1935. The defunct weekly was taken over from its owners and converted into a full-fledged C.S P organ.<sup>328</sup> But it ceased publication in August as security was demanded for having published a song entitled '*Athma Sandesam*' appealing for a revolution to end the imperialist domination and to achieve independence. Various pamphlets on socialism were published in *Prabhatham*.<sup>329</sup>

Dramas and songs were composed on different themes including exploitation, poverty, famine etc. The most celebrated plays among these were *Pattabakki*<sup>330</sup> (Arrears of Rent) depicting agrarian struggles and '*Rakthapanam*' (Drinking of Blood) portraying working class struggles.<sup>331</sup>

Library movement also played a leading role in diffusing socialist ideas. EMS appreciates the enthusiasm in setting up reading rooms evinced by the satyagrahis who were imprisoned during the salt satyagraha of 1930s. Every satyagrahi, on coming out of jail set himself up in his own village. He started a small reading room where the young men of the locality would gather every day, read the dailies and discuss politics. He would also tell them what he had learned in jail, whom he had met, what they had talked about and what they had decided to do. This reading room gradually grew into a nerve centre of political activity. "Here it is a boisterous KPR Gopalan setting up a Sri Harshan Reading Room, organising a Kallisserry Youth League, running and participating in foot ball matches; there it is venerable

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<sup>327</sup> PKK Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 488.

<sup>328</sup> T.V. Krishnan, *Kerala's First Communist*, p. 36; EMS Namboodiripad, *Communist Party in Kerala I*, pp. 30, 31; A.K. Gopalan, *In the Cause of the People*, Orient Longman, Madras, 1973, p.114.

<sup>329</sup> TNA HFM Bundle No. 101. p.19.

<sup>330</sup> K. Damodaran, *Pattabakki* (Mal.) SPCS Kottayam, 1952.

<sup>331</sup> K. Damodaran, *Rakthapanam* (Mal.) Sahodaran Press Ernakulam, 1939.

Bharatheeyan with his Ashram and Bhagavat Geetha and Mahabharatham, reciting Sanskrit slokas to prove that the peasant has his rights, going from village to village with his pious and humble personality but effective and uncompromising speech".<sup>332</sup>

K. Damodaran and other socialists organised and took a leading part in the Malabar Reading Room and Libraries Conference held at Calicut on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1937 under the presidentship of K. Kelappan. At this conference it was resolved to start an All Malabar Library and Reading Room Association. The first step in that direction was the setting up of a committee with K. Damodaran as Convenor and several socialists as members.<sup>333</sup>

The journal 'Prabhathan' reappeared on 11 April 1938 from Calicut with EMS Namboodiripad as Editor. It acted as the guiding spirit of all the activities of the CSP in Kerala.<sup>334</sup> The CSP did not confine its activities to the old Malabar area, but extended them throughout Kerala including the two princely states.

*Jathas* expressing solidarity with the Travancore struggle were organised by the CSP. The first one of its kind from Malabar to Travancore under the leadership of A. K. Gopalan started its march on 9 September 1938 from Calicut. In a statement issued in the meanwhile, the captain of the march, A. K. Gopalan remarked, 'Though the Malayalees of Malabar, Cochin and Travancore are divided on administrative grounds, there is a cultural unity among them. Their grievances are the same. They are suffering in the slave system. So their demands and their struggles are identical.'<sup>335</sup> The real significance of these jathas was the levelling down of artificial geographical boundary walls by their political impact. On the way, tens of thousands of

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<sup>332</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, *A Short History of the Peasant Movement in Kerala*, Bombay, 1943, p. 16.

<sup>333</sup> TNA, HFM bundle 101, p.25.

<sup>334</sup> A.K. Gopalan, *In the Cause of the People*, pp. 115-117; N.E. Balaram, *Communist Prasthanam Keralathil*, Trivandrum, p. 145.

<sup>335</sup> *Prabhatham*, 19 September, 1938, p.13.

people were stirred into action. In a sense, political integration of Kerala was achieved through the receptions accorded to the jatha from one end to the other of Kerala.

By 1938, CSP groups were formed in Alleppey, Koothattukulam, Ernakulam and Trichur. Quite active was the participation of the CSP in the prolonged strikes of workers in Amballur (near Trichur) and Alleppey.<sup>336</sup> The third All Kerala Labour Conference was held at Alleppey in February 1939 under the presidentship of P. Narayanan Nair. Delegates from all parts of Kerala attended the congress.<sup>337</sup> The sixth conference of the CSP took place at Tellicherry from 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> June 1939. A total of 170 delegates from all parts of Kerala attended this conference. It was the last CSP conference to be held in Kerala. The conference considerably contributed to the growth of powerful peasant and trade union movements in Kerala. The anti war movement gathered momentum and the meeting and demonstrations of Kisan Sangh gave a big boost to the anti-imperialist struggle.<sup>338</sup> It was on the eve of the sixth conference of the CSP that a 'summer school' was conducted under the auspices of the KPCC at Mankada Pallippuram, which helped greatly to train large number of party workers in ideological discourses and political activities. It helped the left Congress-men to imbibe socialist-communist perception.<sup>339</sup>

Entire Kerala regions witnessed innumerable struggles and the birth of new unions on the labour front. As a result of concerted efforts made during the five years between 1934 to 1939 in many important urban centres of Kerala trade unions were organised industry wise. It was during this period that 80 local trade unions, central trade unions one each at Kozhikode and

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<sup>336</sup> N.E. Balaram, "*Early Beginnings of Communist Movement in Kerala*" in (ed.) Jaganatha Sarkar *et al.*, *India's Freedom Struggle – Several Streams*, New Delhi, 1986, p. 246.

<sup>337</sup> Prabhatham, 27 February, 1939.

<sup>338</sup> N.E. Balaram, *Early Beginnings of Communist Movement in Kerala*, pp. 246-248.

<sup>339</sup> Prabhatham, 3 April, 1939; EMS Namboodiripad, *Communist Party Keralathil*, p. 52.



Kannur and an all Kerala Trade Union Committee for the state as a whole came into existence.<sup>340</sup>

The people of Travancore had been struggling for the introduction of responsible government based on universal adult suffrage. The Travancore authorities led by the Diwan C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar made it clear that it would not allow any agitation for responsible government. Such an adamant stand prepared a fertile ground for the dissemination of radical socialist ideas under the cover of a larger political agenda. By March 1939, the Youth League radicals identified their activities independent of the State Congress. The 1939 struggle of the Youth League and the formation of the Radical group led to the transformation of left and socialist groups into a national political force. EMS Namboodiripad observes, 'The national upsurge of the nineteen thirties and the role played in it by the working class and socialist movements were thus on a really all Kerala scale. Though the form in which and the intensity with which they manifested themselves were different as between Malabar, Cochin and Travancore, they did not remain localised, the political national movement with a really all Kerala leadership was thus slowly emerging. It was the organised working class guided by socialist ideology that was standing at the head of this movement'.<sup>341</sup>

The agitations and organisational activities of the working class and Socialist Party unified the democratic movement of Kerala. The unity in action between workers, peasants, teachers, students and youth was being gradually built up. The infrastructure of all these activities was the integration between national liberation movement and the struggle against feudalism and capitalism with the aim of strengthening the mass movement for establishing socialism. This cohesion in action later formed the basis of the struggle for a democratic united Kerala.

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<sup>340</sup> T.V. Krishnan, *op. cit.*, p.32.

<sup>341</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, *Kerala, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, Trivandrum, 1968, pp. 164-165.

The Kerala unit of the CSP was steadily moving towards Marxism-Leninism. What helped the party cadres in this process were contacts with communist leaders, influence of the Communist literature and the actual experience of leading class struggles. The leftists propagated that poverty was caused by the socio-economic system and not by one's fate or god's will. Leftist propaganda cut across caste, religious and regional boundaries, though not uniformly, and drew the lower and poor people into the political process. Political propaganda and mobilisation democratised the less privileged in the society.<sup>342</sup> The idea of scientific socialism found ready acceptance among the poor masses who were in the midst of waging fierce class struggles in the villages.

At the initiative of S.V Ghate, the Central committee member of the Communist party, a small communist group consisting of P. Krishna Pillai, EMS Namboodiripad, K. Damodaran and N.C. Sekhar was formed at Calicut in September 1937. The members of this communist nucleus purposefully propagated Marxist ideas in the Congress socialist movement.<sup>343</sup> 'Communist Party Day' was observed by trade unions on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1939 in Calicut and Kannur. Demonstrations of Red volunteers and Aikya Kerala volunteers marked the observance of the day.<sup>344</sup>

It was in this background that the conference of CSP leaders held in December 1939 at Pinarayi near Tellicherry. Practically all the important leaders and activists of the party including P. Krishna Pillai, EMS Namboodiripad, A.K Gopalan, K.P Gopalan, K.P.R Gopalan and P. Narayanan Nair attended the conference which was held in strict secrecy. Krishna Pillai and Namboodiripad described the passive line of the Wardha AICC and the inertia of CSP leadership and emphasised that only the

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<sup>342</sup> K. Gopalan Kutty, *Nationalism and Socialism in Kerala: A study in Political Mobilisation*, Presidential Address, 26<sup>th</sup> Session of South Indian History Congress Bangalore, 2006, p.14.

<sup>343</sup> NE Balaram, *Early Beginnings of Communist Movement*, 1986, p. 250; NC Sekhar, *Agniveedhikal*, 1987, p. 327.

<sup>344</sup> Prabhatham, 27 March, 1939.

Communist Party of India possessed a clear perspective and programme of struggle against the war and the increasing economic hardships imposed upon the people by the alien rulers. The Pinarayi Conference took the decision to transform the CSP into the state unit of the Communist Party of India.<sup>345</sup>

Communist Party units were set up in various parts of Malabar and Cochin as also in working class centres of Travancore-Alleppey and Quilon.<sup>346</sup> The period 1940-42 constituted a turning point in the history of politics in Kerala. During this period the Communist party concentrated on the mobilisation of the common people against the sufferings the World War brought in its wake. The left led KPCC issued a call to observe an 'Anti Repression Day' on 15 September 1940. The anti repression demonstrations of September 15 resulted in firings, clashes and even killings at Morazha, Tellicherry and Mattannur.<sup>347</sup> Another militant demonstration in Kayyur culminated in the death of a police constable, which led to the hanging of four activists.<sup>348</sup> Owing to these developments the presence of the Communist Party was felt all over the state-in the two princely states of Travancore and Cochin as well as in Malabar.

The formulation of the dynamic slogan of 'linguistic united Kerala' was a significant step taken by the Communist Party during the 1942-45 period. Though the Indian National Congress had formally accepted the principle of linguistic provinces and made the Malayalam speaking areas a separate Kerala province for organisational purposes, the Congress was prohibited from interfering in the internal affairs of the native states of Travancore and Cochin.<sup>349</sup> This made the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee a virtually

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<sup>345</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, *Communist Party Keralathil*, Trivandrum 1984, p.88; T.V. Krishnan, *Kerala's First Communist*, pp. 68-69; N.E. Balaram, *Kerathile Communist Prasthanam*, 1990; pp. 242-43.

<sup>346</sup> T.V. Krishnan, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74.

<sup>347</sup> NMML, AICC Papers, File No. 58/1940; Mathrubhumi 17 Sept. 1940.

<sup>348</sup> KKN Kurup, *The Kayyur Riot*, Sandhya Publications, Calicut 1978, pp. 46-49, 63-78.

<sup>349</sup> P.K.K. Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

Malabar Congress committee. When the Travancore State Congress and the Cochin Praja Mandalam brought these two states into the realm of active struggle for democracy, the national movement under Congress leadership remained split in three parts. It was the emergence of the Socialist movement and its transformation into the Communist Party that created an all Kerala political leadership.<sup>350</sup>

As we have discussed in the last chapter, the Communist party of India in its first Congress met in 1943 adopted a resolution on the National Question which prompted some communist ideologues to enquire into the identity of different nationalities in India. The Communist Party envisaged a proper ideological perspective in this regard, that there are a number of nationalities in India based on language and culture, transcending the barriers of caste and religion, that though they are integral parts of the country, they have their own national characteristics and that the unity and integrity of the country should be ensured by considering and providing for the uninterrupted growth and development of these national characteristics. 'The party viewed that the main tool for the fight against imperialism was the developing languages of these distinct nationalities. Moreover the party attempted to achieve the unity of the Indian people against British imperialism and the unity among the people of linguistic provinces'<sup>351</sup> The Communist Party had also evolved a strategy to popularise this view among the mass of the people, particularly in Andhra, Bengal and Kerala.

In January 1946 EMS Namboodiripad, the then Central committee member of the Communist Party, published a short book entitled 'Onnekal koti Malayalikal' (One crore and a Quarter Malayalees). It begins with an analysis of the nature of colonial transformation affecting Kerala society and economy.<sup>352</sup> The book was not merely a plea for Aikya Keralam (United

<sup>350</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, *The National Question in Kerala*, 1952, p.176.

<sup>351</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, *Communist Party Keralathil* (Mal.) Trivandrum, 1984, pp. 22-23.

<sup>352</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, *Onnelal Koti Malayalikal British Adimathathilninnu Swathanthryathilekku*, (Mal.) Deshabhimani Publishing House, Kozhikode,

Keralam) but also an attempt to define the aspirations of Malayalees as they evolved in the context of the people's struggle against colonialism.<sup>353</sup> Two year later, in 1948 EMS published another major work *Keralam: Malayalikalute Mathrubhumi* (Kerala: The Mother land of the Malayalees). In this work he attempts to theorise the transitions of the Kerala society from primitive communism to what he described as 'Jati- Janmi-Naduvazhi Domination'. By this he meant a social formation dominated by the upper castes in social relations, the Janmi (landlords) in production relations and naduvazhis (local chieftains) in administration that impoverished the vast majority materially and culturally.

Earlier, EMS had analysed the degeneration of the feudal society in these words: "Here is a higher and more advanced form of society (British) and its perfected machinery of state and culture acting as the tool of history in destroying a decadent social system and a dead or dying culture. Feudal society and medieval culture cannot for long resist the triumphant march of capitalist society and modern culture."<sup>354</sup> So it was EMS who made the first serious attempt to conceptualise the complex precapitalist social formation in Kerala. His historical analysis of social evolution in Kerala was later revised in the work 'The National Question in Kerala' (1952). These writings became the foundations of the Communist Party's position on the struggle for the formation of a united and democratic Kerala.

The Communist party declared (1) 'that the struggle for United Kerala is an indivisible part of the anti-imperialist struggle of the Indians (2) that the struggle for United Kerala is also a struggle for the termination of princely rule and other remnants of feudalism, a struggle for the introduction of full and genuine democracy for the people. (3) that the boundaries of United

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<sup>353</sup> I.S. Gulati, TM Thomas Isaac, "EMS Namboodiripad: Revolutionary Intellectual", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 28 March, 1998.

<sup>354</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, "Minute of Dissent to the Kuttikrishna Menon Committee Report on Malabar Tenancy Reforms", 1937, Reprinted in *EMS Selected Writings Vol. II*, National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1985, p. 228.

Kerala are to be so drawn up that all those contiguous areas of Madras, Travancore and Cochin wherein the Malayalam speaking people are in a majority shall be included, the rest going to neighbouring national area provinces; (4) that the struggle for United Kerala being the struggle for democracy, the common people of Kerala, in alliance with their brethren in the neighbouring nationalities, are the decisive force in that struggle'.<sup>355</sup>

The Communist Party viewed that the unification of Kerala was unthinkable unless the separate identity of the two princely states of Kerala came to an end, and unless the people of these two states secured the right of being governed by an elected council of ministers rather than by Maharajas and their Dewans. United Kerala, in the communist perception, was based on modern republican democratic rule, which puts an end to the autocratic rule of feudal ruling families and their hangers on.<sup>356</sup>

It was the expansion of national movement towards the beginning of the twentieth century that facilitated the interactions and involvements of people of different regions paving the way for the development of Kerala consciousness. By engaging in organisational activities associated with the Home Rule, Non Co-operation and Civil Disobedience movements, the peoples of Malabar, Cochin and Travancore began to share their concerns and build up solidarity in agitations. Several activists from Malabar enthusiastically participated in the Vaikom Satyagraha and allied programmes like jathas in Travancore. Many young radicals from Travancore went to Malabar for participating in Salt Satyagraha and the preceding marches associated with the Civil Disobedience Movement. Annual political conferences and conventions also created a congenial atmosphere for popular interactions and interminglings resulting in the realisation of identical aspirations of Malayalees. At several conferences the participants expressed a keen desire to see that Kerala was united.

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<sup>355</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, *The National Question in Kerala*, 1952, p. 156.

<sup>356</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, *The Communist Party in Kerala*, National Books Centre, New Delhi, 1994, p.92.

The formation of the Kerala Congress 'province' consequent on the decisions of the Nagpur session of the Congress in 1921 was the first step in the direction of political unity of Kerala. Resolutions were mooted in the legislative assemblies since 1933 for linguistic reorganisation of provinces. But the Congress Working Committee advised the ranks to keep away from agitations in this regard. The British government stood against the redistribution of the provinces on linguistic basis.

The movement for the integration of Kasaragod with Malabar gained strength towards the end of 1930s. Land tenurial systems were almost similar in Malabar and Kasaragod areas. Demands were raised in legislative bodies and political conferences for the inclusion of Kasaragod in Malabar district. The Kasaragod – Malabar Integration Jatha from Trikarapur to Kasaragod in 1937 and the meetings held thereafter at Nileswar (1937) and Bakkalam (1939) strengthened this cause.

The native state of Travancore witnessed a series of struggle seeking social and political rights and privileges since the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Malayali Memorial Movement (1891) manifested the feeling of Malayali identity against the Tamil Brahmin domination in the Travancore administrative set up. This sense of Malayali identity was buttressed by Swadeshabhimani Ramakrishna Pillai in his editorials and articles in '*Kerala Darpanam*', '*Kerala Panchika*', '*Malayali*' and '*Swadeshabhimani*'. The Vaikom Satyagraha had an all Kerala appeal. Entire Kerala was eagerly watching the developments during the satyagraha. Several leaders from Malabar area including K.P Kesava Menon, K.Kelappan and T.V. Chathukutty Nair actively participated in leading the movement.

The Abstention (Nivarthana) Movement motivated the Ezhava, Muslim and Christian communities into political action. The Travancore State Congress which functioned as an umbrella organisation to bring together the classes and groups began a struggle in 1938 aiming at the attainment of responsible government in the state.

The United Kerala Movement got a great fillip by the organisational activities of the Congress Socialist Party since 1934. It was the left and socialist forces that practically began organisational activities on all Kerala basis by forming class and mass organisations. The Congress Socialist Party widened the scope of political activity to the grassroot level by organising peasants associations, trade unions, teachers and students unions etc. The strikes and conferences under their banner at Kannur, Tellicherry, Calicut, Feroke, Trichur, Cochin, Alleppey and Quilone roused entire Kerala regions. The actual agitational experiences and ideological propaganda contributed to convince the different class sections about the identical nature of their problems throughout Kerala. The Hunger Marches and allied programmes led by A. K. Gopalan and others also galvanized the people throughout the length and breadth of Kerala. The library movement encouraged by the Congress Socialist Party played a decisive role in developing Kerala consciousness apart from furthering the spirit of literary renaissance.

The Communist Party was instrumental in furnishing the United Kerala movement with a sound ideological basis. In 1943 the Communist party adopted a resolution on the National Question, strictly in tune with Lenin's theory on Self determination of Nationalities. Deriving inspiration from this resolution, EMS made his initial attempt to locate the identity of Kerala in his work entitled 'Onnekal koti Malayalikal'. It was a plea for Aikya Keralam (United Kerala) as well as an attempt to define the aspirations of Malayalees which got crystallised in the context of popular struggle against colonialism. EMS later perpetuated his endeavours to conceptualise the complex pre capitalist social formation in Kerala and to theorise the transition of the Kerala society from primitive communism to what he described as Jati-Janmi-Naduvazhi domination'.

The Communist Party was bent upon treating the struggle for United Keralam as an integral part of the anti imperialist struggle. It also held that the boundaries of United Kerala were to be so drawn up as to embrace all



those contiguous Malayalam speaking areas of Madras, Travancore and Cochin. The United Kerala, as conceived by the Communist Party, was to be based upon modern republican democratic rule.

## CHAPTER IV

### INDEPENDENCE AND AFTER

A major challenge arose in the mid 1940s against the conception of linguistic united Kerala in the form of 'Independent Travancore' pronounced by the Travancore authorities represented by the Diwan Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar. On September 19, 1945 Lord Wavell announced the intention of the British to convene a constitution making body to discuss with those elected the early realisation of full self government in India. Consequently the Congress assumed governmental power in seven out of the eleven provinces in which elections were held in 1945.<sup>357</sup> This thoroughly changed the political situation in the country.

Instead of initiating reforms demanded by this new situation the Travancore authorities dared move in another direction. Thus on January 16, 1946 Sir CP Ramaswamy Aiyar made an unprecedented announcement of constitutional reforms. A bicameral legislature based on universal adult franchise and an irremovable and irresponsible executive (modelled on the American Presidential type of executive as opposed to the British Parliamentary executive) were to be introduced.<sup>358</sup> In the legislature CP Ramaswamy Aiyar had unambiguously declared: 'that it is not the intention of the Travancore government to introduce responsible government on the British model...I felt it my duty to try and persuade the Constituent Assembly to adopt the irremovable executive on the Travancore model.'<sup>359</sup>

The Diwan informed the Maharaja that 'under the scheme as I visualise it... Your Highness' powers of ultimate Governmental control and veto will

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<sup>357</sup> *The Indian Annual Register*, Vol II, 1945, p.149.

<sup>358</sup> *Travancore Information and Listener (TIL)*, Vol VI, No.6. February 1946, p.7.

<sup>359</sup> *Proceedings of the Travancore Sri Mulam Assembly*, Vol XXVII No.1, February 4, 1946 p 30.

be preserved in tact and will be exercised through a duly constituted advisor, the Diwan... the Executive will not be liable to be removed on the adverse note of the legislature but will continue for a fixed term... At the same time it will preserve the status of the Sovereign and its constituted Advisor, the latter of whom, for specific periods, will be in charge of administration. The Secretaries to Government and all Heads of Departments and officials will work under his direction'.<sup>360</sup>

The Travancore State Congress rejected the scheme as unacceptable on the ground that it sought only to perpetuate the autocratic rule of the Diwan.<sup>361</sup> The State Congress and all other organisations and groups of democratic opposition reacted sharply to the scheme, they all wanted Travancore to be part of free and independent India. The struggle for responsible government, in fact, merged with the struggle against an independent Travancore.

Unmindful of the negative approach of the Travancore authorities, the KPCC convened a meeting of the representatives of the Travancore State Congress, the Cochin Praja Mandalam and the KPCC on July 2, 1946 at Ernakulam to discuss various aspects of United Kerala. The meeting presided over by K. Kelappan, KPCC President, also unanimously resolved to mould public opinion in favour of Aikya Kerala.<sup>362</sup> Later the Cochin Praja Mandalam in its annual conference held under the presidentship of E. Ikkanda Warier at Ernakulam on July 21, 1946 adopted a historic resolution on Aikya Kerala: "In consideration of the political, economic, social and cultural identity and development of Cochin and other Malayalam speaking areas, this conference expresses the unanimous view that United Kerala consisting of Cochin Travancore and Malayalam speaking areas of the Madras Presidency should be formed a separate and distinct state taking its position as an integral part of

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<sup>360</sup> File No. DD is 426/1946/C.S. Cellar Records, Secretariat, Trivandrum.

<sup>361</sup> Perunna K.N. Nair, *Keralathile Congress Prasthanam* (Mal) Cochin 1986 p 257.

<sup>362</sup> K.P. Madhavan Nair (ed.), *Kochi Rajya Praja Mandalam* (Mal) Cochin, 1985, p. 218.

the Indian Union. The conference also deems it proper to place the demand before the Constituent Assembly of India."<sup>363</sup>

Soon after the adoption of this resolution by the Cochin Praja Mandalam, the Cochin ruler came out openly in support of Aikya Kerala. On 29 July 1946 the Maharaja of Cochin, Sree Kerala Varma sent to the Legislative Council a startling message, known as '*Aikya Kerala Message*'. In the message, the Maharaja evinced his desire to combine Cochin with Malabar and Travancore to form the province of Kerala: " I have arrived at the definite conclusion that Kerala must unite and be one if it were to save itself from cultural extinction... Malabar, Cochin and Travancore will have to join together and devise ways and means to frame a scheme of government for the whole of Kerala without destroying the connection of the people to the ancient Ruling Houses...with suitable modifications to fit modern political conceptions, the institution of the 'Perumal' can be revived and a link with the proud historic past forged...I am prepared, indeed I earnestly desire, to combine with Malabar and Travancore in order to form the Province of Kerala. This does not mean that the functions of my family are abdicated; but necessarily they have to be modified to suit new circumstances. I am entrusting a grave responsibility to you in the firm belief that in your hands the prestige of my family will be safe and that you will not do anything which will undermine the ultimate constitutional headship of my dynasty."<sup>364</sup>

The message of the Cochin Maharaja and its announcement were generally welcomed by the Malayalees and the national leaders including Gandhiji,<sup>365</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, Sarojini Naidu, Rajagopalachari and V.K. Krishna Menon.<sup>366</sup> No wonder this action of his won for him the epithet

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<sup>363</sup> K.P. Madhavan Nair, Ed, *op cit* p 221-224; P.S. Velayudhan, *Ikkanda Warriar* (Mal.) Trivandrum, 1957, p.57.

<sup>364</sup> *Cochin Legislative Council Proceedings*, 29 July 1946, pp.1-3; Cochin Information, Cochin Govt. Press, August 1948, pp.6-10.

<sup>365</sup> *Harijan*, 1 September, 1946.

<sup>366</sup> *Keralakshemam, Aikya Kerala Special Edition* (Vanevilasam Press, Guruvayur, 25 October 1946. pp. 5-9.

'Aikya Kerala Thampuran' (Lord of United Kerala). However the message of the Maharaja was criticised as politically motivated one for it was issued on the day which was decided to be observed as the 'Responsible Government Day' by the Cochin Prajamandalam. The message was read in the assembly by a European, the Diwan George Boag. It may also be noted that there were only seven members in the House.<sup>367</sup> The Cochin Prajamandalam had decided to boycott the Budget session of the Assembly and to observe hartal and strikes throughout Cochin<sup>368</sup>. In the message, Maharaja kept silence over the issue of responsible government.<sup>369</sup> It has been pointed out that the Maharaja had no independent authority to make such a 'revolutionary' proclamation nor the privilege to appoint the Diwan who read it.<sup>370</sup> By issuing the 'Aikya Kerala' message the Maharaja wanted to divert popular attention from the pressing political problems of the time.<sup>371</sup> The Maharaja significantly added that in establishing a United Kerala, all the hereditary honours and privileges of the ruling families would be preserved.<sup>372</sup> Thus the Govt of Cochin by issuing the Aikya Kerala Message was covertly attempting to enhance its prestige at the expense of national aspirations of the Malayalees. Any how, despite its negative aspects, the announcement of the Cochin Maharaja was looked upon by the Malayalees as a positive step towards the realisation of United Kerala, compared with the reactionary position taken by the Travancore authorities.

In Travancore the Communist Party organised an all out struggle in their strongholds of Alleppey district in a bold bid to put an end to the autocratic rule of the Diwan and achieve responsible government. The general strike in Alleppey - the first political strike in Kerala - was solid and

<sup>367</sup> K.P. Madhavan Nair (Ed), *Kochi Rajya Prajamandalam*, Cochin 1985, p.228

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*, p.224.

<sup>369</sup> M.J. Koshi, *Last Days of Monarchy in Kerala*, Trivandrum, 1973 p.57.

<sup>370</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, '*Kochi Maharajavinte Aikyakeralam, British Kammattathilaticha Kallananayam*, (Mal) Deshabhimani, (Kozhikode, 1946).

<sup>371</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, *The National Question in Kerala*, pp 164-165.

<sup>372</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, *Kerala Society and Politics - An Historical Survey* (New Delhi, 1984) p. 169.

the workers declared that they would not go back until responsible government was won.<sup>373</sup> The Communist Party categorically rejected the new constitutional proposals of January 1946. The State of Travancore witnessed a series of widespread labour strikes, food rallies, student agitations and other mass actions in which two slogans were echoed prominently: '*American Model Arabikkadalil*' (Into the Arabian Sea with the American Model) and 'Terminate the Diwan Rule'.<sup>374</sup> In September 1946 the workers of Punnapra and Vayalar in Alleppey stirred into political action in open defiance of the authority of the government. The Government retaliated by ordering the arrest of trade union leaders including P.T. Punnoose, A.K. Thampi, R. Sugathan and V.A. Saimon.<sup>375</sup> To tackle the situation the Travancore government declared Martial law on 26 September in Alleppey and Shertallai. Diwan C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar went to the extent of assuming himself the supreme command of the police and military operations in the area.<sup>376</sup> Volunteer camps were opened at strategically selected places in Shertallai and Ambalappuzha taluks.<sup>377</sup> The reserve troops and workers clashed at Punnapra on October 24, 1946. On the 27<sup>th</sup> there was terrible slaughter at Vayalar. An unarmed mob was machine gunned.<sup>378</sup> More than 290 people were killed in the police/army operations in course of the upsurge.<sup>379</sup> Though the workers put up a stiff resistance, they were overpowered before long by the army and the police. The revolt no doubt formed a turning point in the prolonged fight

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<sup>373</sup> A.K. Gopalan, *Kerala Past and Present, Lawrance and Wishart*, (London, 1959) p.56.

<sup>374</sup> K.C. George, *Diwan Bharanam Avasanippikkum* (Mal) Deshabhimani, Calicut, 1946.

<sup>375</sup> Confidential Section Files No. 2045/1946 No. 84/1946, Cellar Records, Secretariat, Trivandrum.

<sup>376</sup> The Travancore Gazette Extraordinary, dated 25 October 1946, Travancore Govt. Press, Trivandrum.

<sup>377</sup> For an illustrated description and analysis of the organization of the struggle, see P.J. Cherian, "The Communist Movement in Travancore: From Origins to the Uprisings of 1946", unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Calicut, 1993.

<sup>378</sup> A.K. Gopalan, *In the Cause of the People*, Orient Longman, (Madras, 1973) p. 162.

<sup>379</sup> K.C. George, *Immortal Punnapra Vayalar*, New Delhi, 1975.

under the leadership of the Communist Party and the working class not only to achieve responsible government and to put an end to the rule of the Maharaja and the Diwan but also to thwart the scheme of American Model Constitution.<sup>380</sup> The peasant struggles in Malabar and the struggle for responsible government in Travancore organised by the Communist Party in 1940s indicated that the process of democratisation was gaining strength under the leadership of the working class.<sup>381</sup>

Unmindful of the opposition of the Travancorian administration, people of diverse walks of life lent their unstinted support to the Aikya Kerala Movement in all the three major political segments of Kerala region. K.A. Damodara Menon called upon the Malabar members of the Constituent Assembly that their deliberations should be primarily directed to the fulfilment of the United Kerala ideal.<sup>382</sup> In this background a meeting was convened by the United Kerala enthusiasts at the *Kalamandalam* buildings at Cheruthuruthi on 26 October 1946, to discuss the future course of action. This meeting, presided over by K.P. Kesava Menon, was attended by the great poet Vallathol Narayana Menon, K. Kelappan, K.A. Damodara Menon and U. Gopala Menon.<sup>383</sup> A working committee consisting of K. Kelappan (President), K.A. Damodara Menon (Secretary), U. Gopala Menon (Treasurer), Kurur Neelakantan Namboodiripad, C. Kesavan and others representing Malabar, Cochin and Travancore was formed to devise the steps to fight for the formation of Aikya Kerala. It was also decided to hold a convention of leaders and representatives of the people to buttress the demand for a United Kerala province.<sup>384</sup> The Cheruthuruthi meeting thus marked the beginning of an organised movement for Aikya Kerala.

<sup>380</sup> K.C. George, *Punnapra Vayalar* (Mal.), Trivandrum, 1972.

<sup>381</sup> K.N. Ganesh, *Keralathinte Innalekal*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1997, pp. 398-399.

<sup>382</sup> K.A. Damodara Menon, *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, 30 June 1946.

<sup>383</sup> K.P. Kesava Menon, *Kazhinha Kalam* (Mal), Calicut 1969, p. 306; K.A. Damodara Menon, *Thirinu Nokkumpol* (Mal) Kottayam, 1981, p.210.

<sup>384</sup> K.P. Kesava Menon, *Kazhinha Kalam* (Mal), Calicut 1969, p. 306; K.A. Damodara Menon, *Thirinu Nokkumpol* (Mal) Kottayam, 1981. p. 210.

In the meanwhile attempts were being made for rallying all Keralites living outside Kerala behind the United Kerala demand. 'The Kerala Unification Committee' came up in October 1946 at Bombay with a view 'to supporting and strengthening the agitation for United Kerala'. Dr. K.B. Menon and M. Madhavan were respectively the Chairman and Secretary of the committee.<sup>385</sup> In its Manifesto, the Unification Committee declared: 'There should be no difficulty in bringing about a sub federation where the district of Malabar and the two states of Cochin and Travancore could evolve an administrative system. In such a scheme there need be no great disturbance of the dignity of the present ruling families, but only a readjustment of power for the common benefit of all Kerala...Today such a step would be welcomed by the people, but if, for consideration other than welfare of the people, the ruling dynasties refuse to forgo a part of their sovereignty for the common weal, the time will not be far off when these dynasties will meet with the fate of others like them that have gone by.'<sup>386</sup> Inaugurating the All India Kerala Unification Convention at Bombay, Achyut Patwardhan, General Secretary of the Socialist party observed that "the demand for the unification of Kerala unlike the demand for Pakistan, was not motivated by an urge for separation, but by a desire to become an integral part in a greater entity, which was India."<sup>387</sup>

The advocates of the principle of linguistic states began to intensify their struggle since the inception of the Constituent Assembly of India in November 1946. They demanded that the Constituent Assembly should provide for new provinces on linguistic basis in the proposed constitution of India. A convention on Linguistic and Cultural Provinces in India, presided over by Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya and attended by R.R. Divakar, Dr. M.R. Jayakar and Prime Ministers of Madras, Assam and Central Province and

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<sup>385</sup> NMML, AICC Papers, File No: G-10/1946, p. 309.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid*, p. 286.

<sup>387</sup> *The Hindu*, 18 March 1947.



others also organised on December 8, 1946.<sup>388</sup> It recommended to the Constituent Assembly the acceptance of the principle of linguistic and cultural provinces and setting up of the necessary machinery for giving effect to such a redistribution of provinces immediately after the new constitution had been adopted and the Indo British Treaty had been signed.<sup>389</sup>

The Madras Legislature recommended in April 1947, the formation of Tamilnad, Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra as separate provinces under the new constitution and the early appointment of a Boundary Commission for the delimitation of these provinces. It also called up on the Constituent Assembly to regard the principle of linguistic provinces as 'a necessary requisite in the framing of a constitution for India.'<sup>390</sup> This resolution, moved by Dr. Subbarayan and passed on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1947 considerably inspired the Aikya Kerala Movement.<sup>391</sup>

It was in this background that the historic Aikya Kerala Convention was held at Trichur on 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> April 1947. Representatives numbering 600 from Malabar, Kasaragod, Gudalore and French Mahe, 200 from Cochin and 450 from Travancore took part in the Convention besides 40 representatives of Malayalee associations outside Kerala.<sup>392</sup> The gate of the convention pandal (a four storeyed one) was adorned by a statue of *Parasurama* carrying an axe.<sup>393</sup> The Convention, inaugurated by the Maharaja of Cochin, was presided over by K. Kelappan. T. Prakasam, a former Chief Minister of Madras and V.K. Krishna Menon, the special representative of Govt. of India in Europe were among the distinguished guests. The Maharaja of Cochin in his inaugural speech declared that Cochin

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<sup>388</sup> *The Indian Express*, 10 December, 1946.

<sup>389</sup> *The Indian Express*, 10 December 1946; G.S. Halappa, *The Changing Map of India* (Mysore, 1953) p.35.

<sup>390</sup> *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol 5 (March to April, 1947) p. 641.

<sup>391</sup> *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, 23-4-1947.

<sup>392</sup> K.A. Damodara Menon, *Aikya Kerala Province*, *Mathrubhumi*, Calicut, 1948 pp. 25,28.

<sup>393</sup> *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, 4 May 1947.

would remain as an integral part of the motherland and expressed his readiness to merge his state with British Malabar for the creation of a United Kerala. 'I have no hesitation to declare that Cochin would continue to remain part of the Mother country. It is joining the Constituent Assembly at once. No word or act of mine shall usher in a day when a Cochinite finds he has lost the right to call himself an Indian'.<sup>394</sup>

Deviating from the linguistic principle, K. Kelappan in his presidential address argued for the formation of Aikya Kerala by creating an administratively viable state. 'We are not contemplating a province exclusively based on language.'<sup>395</sup> Kelappan considered language principle only as one of the many aspects of a new state and hence wanted the inclusion of not only Tamil areas of South Travancore but other non Malayali areas of South Kanara, Coorg and Nilgiris as well.<sup>396</sup> What he meant by this was not the unification of the contiguous areas of the Malayalam speaking people, but the carving out of a multilingual province on the west coast. Striking a critical note, EMS observes, 'This chauvinistic interpretation of United Kerala was based on the falsified 'history' of Kerala according to which the ancient empire of Kerala stretched from Cape Comorin in the South to Gokarnam in the north. It is significant that the announcement of the Maharaja of Cochin on United Kerala spoke of that ancient empire of Kerala whose restoration in all its glory was set before the people as the grand objective to be attained. It is also equally important that by the erection of a statue in front of the convention pandal, the United Kerala Convention paid tribute to the mythological hero Parasurama, the traditional 'creator' of Kerala stretching from the Cape to Gokarnam.'<sup>397</sup> Any how, the Aikya Kerala Resolution unanimously passed by the Convention on the second day did not mention the

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<sup>394</sup> *Cochin Information*, Cochin Govt. Press, August 1948, p.12

<sup>395</sup> K.A. Damodara Menon, *Aikya Kerala Province*, Calicut, 1948, p.18

<sup>396</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, 27 April 1947.

<sup>397</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, *The National Question in Kerala*, Bombay, 1952, p.165.

inclusion of non Malayalam speaking regions in the proposed Kerala. The Resolution reads thus:

"This Convention of the Representatives of the people of Kerala declares that the States of Travancore, Cochin and British Indian territories and Mahe which form parts of Kerala on geographical, linguistic, cultural, economic and administrative grounds shall be constituted into an autonomous unit of the Dominion of India and that all the authority and powers of the Government of the said unit shall vest in and be derived from the people."<sup>398</sup> This resolution was moved by T.M. Varghese, Vice President of the Travancore State Congress. It was supported by E. Moidu Moulavi of Malabar and E. Ikkanda Variar, President of the Cochin State Prajamandalam. The Convention also passed two other resolutions, one appointing a council of 100 members to take steps to implement the United Kerala Scheme and (2) protesting against the activities and statements of C.P.Ramaswamy Aiyar, Diwan of Travancore, who in contravention of the desire of the people of Travancore, is opposing the establishment of a United Kerala Province. The Convention also promised full support to the people of Travancore in their endeavour to establish Responsible government in the state.<sup>399</sup>

The Pan Kerala Convention held at Thrissur created great enthusiasm among the Malayalees. EMS states, "Although resenting the domination of the feudal element headed by the Maharaja of Cochin, democratic sections of the people enthusiastically participated in the United Kerala Convention. The United Kerala Committee set up to continue the work of the Convention also became the rallying centre of a large number of democratic organisations and groups. Never before in the history of Kerala had the slogan of United Kerala assumed such wide mass support. It seemed as if every body was for United

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<sup>398</sup> K.A. Damodara Menon, *Aikya Kerala Province* (Calicut 1948), p.27.

<sup>399</sup> *Ibid* pp. 27-28

Kerala.<sup>400</sup> The Convention succeeded to a certain extent in mobilising the democratic elements of Kerala.

Eventhough popular support was mounting infavour of United Kerala Movement, the Travancore administration was moving against the tide. The ruling family of Travancore and its satellites were opposed to United Kerala since it would lead to an undermining of their authority to a certain extent. They were also determined that the Tamilians of South Travancore should not be allowed to join their brethren in the Madras part of Tamilnad. Even before the Trichur Convention, C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar, the Travancore Diwan in a rejoinder to the statement of Cochin Diwan made it clear that the Government of Travancore could not agree to the Aikya Kerala proposal. He pointed out that Travancore's union with Cochin and Malabar would seriously disturb the political programme and economic and industrial development of Travancore.<sup>401</sup> This argument of Sir C.P. is deemed to be a reflection of his anxiety about his own future.<sup>402</sup> Again, the Diwan sarcastically remarked that "the Maharaja of Cochin was described as the direct descendant of Cheraman Perumal and it would only be fit and proper if Travancore is also brought under his sovereignty."<sup>403</sup> It was intended to exploit the sentiment of Travancorians who were loyal to the ruling house of Travancore and to turn them against the Aikya Kerala Movement.

Moreover, the Travancore authorities utilised the sentiment of the Tamilians of South Travancore against the United Kerala Movement. The anger of the Tamil people of Southern taluks against their oppressors, the ruling family of Travancore and its feudal satellites, was successfully converted into hatred for the United Kerala Movement. 'Down with the Malayalees' was the slogan through which the TAMILIAN people of South

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<sup>400</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, *The National Question in Kerala* (Bombay, 1952) p. 166.

<sup>401</sup> Mathrubhumi, 8 April 1947

<sup>402</sup> N. Sreekantan Nair, *Kazhinhakala Chithrangal* (Mal) Vol II, SPCS (Kottayam 1976), p. 346

<sup>403</sup> M.J. Koshy, *Last Days of Monarchy in Kerala* (Trivandrum, 1973) p. 285

Travancore were rallied against the democratic movement (for United Kerala).<sup>404</sup> In the Sri Mulam Assembly Tamilian members, V.S. Krishna Pillai and M. L. Janardhana Pillai moved adjournment motions stating that (Cochin) Maharajas' announcement had roused serious anxiety and alarm among the Tamilian citizens in the taluqs of Tovala, Agasteeswaram, Kalkulam, Vilavancode, Shencottah and Devikulam.<sup>405</sup> This motion provided grounds for the Diwan Sir. C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar to argue against the formation of a Kerala province.

The Diwan pointed out that the linguistic affinity of about one third of the population to Madras province constituted the main impediment to the formation of a United Kerala. In a statement in the Assembly the Diwan President announced his position in unequivocal terms: "One of the main grounds...which are militating against the entertainment of the idea of a Kerala province comprising Travancore is this very matter. Obviously in Travancore one third of the population speaks Tamil and equally obviously those people are more akin linguistically to Tamilnadu than to Kerala. Therefore from Trivandrum to Cape Comerin, the people of Travancore will, if the underlying idea of the Cochin scheme is adopted, become part of the Tamilnad province and obey the orders of the Governor of the province of Tamilnad. Then there is the area from Trivandrum to Parur and that portion will come under the Kerala province envisaged in Cochin.... The idea of Kerala province is therefore unthinkable and would involve a partition of Travancore. Hence this Government made up their minds not recently but many years ago and have reiterated their view that they will not be a party to any Kerala province... Clearly Travancore cannot join the Kerala without also joining the Tamil province. Unless there is a partition of Travancore for the purpose of putting one half or one third into Tamilnad and the rest in the

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<sup>404</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, *The National Question*....p.163.

<sup>405</sup> *Proceedings of the Travancore Sri Mulam Assembly*, Vol XXVIII, No.9, 1 August 1946, p. 284.

Kerala province, the scheme cannot be got through. That is why we emphatically negated the proposition."<sup>406</sup>

These statements and declarations naturally moved the Tamilians of South Travancore. They had serious grievances that their mother tongue was neglected that they were denied equal opportunities in administration and that they were discriminated against in social customs.<sup>407</sup> In 1938 the Tamil leaders had held a conference at Trivandrum and appealed to the Tamils to safeguard their interests.<sup>408</sup> In October 1938 at a meeting held at Rajakkamangalam, they had adopted a resolution, demanding the formation of a separate district for their areas.<sup>409</sup> The All Travancore Tamil Sangham was organised in November 1944 under the presidency of V.S. Subramonia Aiyer, a Tamil scholar. It sought the co-operation of the Tamils of Travancore to work for the welfare of the Tamil children and the introduction of Tamil language as the medium in school courses and offices situated in the Tamil areas of Travancore.<sup>410</sup> In December 1945 some educated Tamilians of South Travancore formed a political party called the All Travancore Tamilian Congress with Sam Nathaniel as its first president.<sup>411</sup> Later, in June 1946 they changed the name of their party as the Travancore Tamil Nadu Congress (T.T.N.C).<sup>412</sup> The party called for the formation of a separate district for the Travancore Tamils, which, following the formation of states on linguistic

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<sup>406</sup> *Proceedings of the Travancore Sri Mulam Assembly*, Vol. XXVIII, No.7, 30 July 1946, p. 825.

<sup>407</sup> Hector S.S, "*The Upper Cloth Revolt in South Travancore*", South Indian History Congress, *Proceedings of the First Annual Conference*, Madurai, 1980 pp.151-154.

<sup>408</sup> *The Hindu*, 3 June 1938.

<sup>409</sup> *The Hindu*, 17 October 1938.

<sup>410</sup> I.G. of Police, Travancore, 30 November 1944, Reports to Chief Secretary to Government and Diwan of Travancore.

<sup>411</sup> *Kanyakumari* (Tamil weekly) Nagarcoil vol 5, No.8, 26 September 1962, pp 16-17 quoted in D.Daniel, *Struggle for Responsible Government in Travancore 1938-1947*, Madurai, 1985, p. 171.

<sup>412</sup> Daniel.D, *Struggle for Responsible Government in Travancore 1938-1947* (Madurai, 1985) p. 171.

basis, should be merged with its parent state of Tamilnad.<sup>413</sup>

However when the Diwan C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar announced 'independence for Travancore', the Tamilnad Congress felt themselves considerably relieved of their anxiety. Sir. C. P was the first to announce the intention of Travancore to remain independent at a crowded press conference on March 15<sup>th</sup> which lasted three hours. He announced that on July 1<sup>st</sup> 1948 when the British would have left and Paramountcy would have lapsed, Travancore would be an independent state.<sup>414</sup> The Diwan emphasised that just as in the year 1795, Travancore was an independent kingdom dealing with the British Government, so in June 1948, she would be an independent kingdom entitled to deal either with the outside world or any Government in that world. In the press conference at Trivandrum on 11 June 1947 the Diwan announced:

"Travancore would resume and maintain its ancient independence after the transfer of power by the British government and the lapse of paramountcy... Travancore wants to live its own life.<sup>415</sup> Travancore wants to pursue its own ideals. It is distinct and separate from the rest of India in its culture."<sup>416</sup> Responding critically to this 'Independent Travancore' declaration by the Diwan, Gandhiji said: "He says that on August 15<sup>th</sup> when India gains freedom, Travancore will be declared independent. And the independence he has in mind is of such a nature that already the Travancore State Congress has been forbidden to hold meetings. According to a report Sir C.P. has declared that all those who are opposed to the idea of independence should quit Travancore. This order comes from a man who himself belongs not to Travancore, but to Madras. How can he say such a thing?"<sup>417</sup>

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<sup>413</sup> Moni. P.S, Tiru Tamizhar Iyakkam (Tamil) Nagercoil, 1956 p. 31. Quoted in Maria John B, *Linguistic Reorganisation of Madras Presidency*, Nagarcoil, 1994,p. 80.

<sup>414</sup> *Travancore Information and Listener* (TIL), April 1947.

<sup>415</sup> *The Hindu*, 18 March 1947.

<sup>416</sup> Government Press note, 11 June 1947, DDis 268/1947/CS; *The Hindu*, 13 June 1947

<sup>417</sup> Speech on 13 June 1947, New Delhi, *Complete Works*, vol 88 pp 146-148.

Though the majority of the Travancoreans felt a cultural unity with the rest of Kerala, Diwan C.P. shrugged off the idea of a United Kerala. His strong resentment in this respect is revealed in the following words: "This will die a natural death...Christians and Muslims would be in a worse minority, so Christians and Muslims were against it." "At this juncture, the path of prudence, the path of safety, the path of glory, the path of achievement, the path of realisation is the path of independence of Travancore."<sup>418</sup> After holding discussions with the Muslim League leader Muhammed Ali Jinnah, the Diwan announced his intention of sending a trade agent to the proposed Pakistan. Accordingly the Travancore Government nominated G.S. Abdul Karim to take charge of the new position.<sup>419</sup> Sir C.P. cabled Prime Minister Clement Attlee on July 6: "Travancore cannot be found to join a Dominion whose leaders have at this critical juncture in world history established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Republic."<sup>420</sup>

The entire propaganda machinery of the state was geared up and made to work round the clock to mobilise public opinion in favour of 'Independent Travancore.' In a message to the people broadcast from the Trivandrum Radio Station on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1947, the Maharaja stated, "All the elements necessary for a happy and prosperous national existence are present, and I feel confident that, with the blessings of providence and the cooperation of my people, Travancore will realise its destiny as a sovereign state working in close collaboration with the rest of India in all matters of common concern."<sup>421</sup> Diwan Sir. C.P. called up on the people to rally round the ruler of Travancore.<sup>422</sup> He directed the public servants to take full part in what he termed as 'a matter of life and death to the state'.<sup>423</sup> Moreover, he appealed to the people 'to forget about individual and communal differences and to stand

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<sup>418</sup> *Travancore Information and Listener*, Vol VII, No.11, July 1947 pp.17-18.

<sup>419</sup> *The Hindu*, 22 June 1947, p.7.

<sup>420</sup> *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol. 3, p. 293

<sup>421</sup> *Travancore Information and Listener*, Vol. VII, No.12, August, 1947.

<sup>422</sup> *Travancore Information and Listener*, Vol VII, No.11, July, 1947 p.44.

<sup>423</sup> *The Hindu*, 13 June 1947.



together with the ruler in this time of crisis.<sup>424</sup> In his subsequent statements and press conferences, he exhorted the people to raise slogans such as 'independence or absolute ruin', 'sacrifice for independence', 'oppose violence and revolution', 'die for independence of king and people' etc.<sup>425</sup> At the concert on July 25, just before he was assaulted, the Diwan publicly spoke of 'a new era of sovereign independent status for Travancore.'<sup>426</sup> The sympathisers of the government held a meeting at VJT Hall, Trivandrum on 11<sup>th</sup> July to mobilise support for 'Independent Travancore'. A.K. Pillai, a former Congress leader, who spoke in favour of independent Travancore in this meeting was interrupted by the audience resulting in utter pandemonium.<sup>427</sup>

The agitation against both the constitutional reforms and the 'Independent Travancore' before long turned into an irresistible mass movement. Then the Government resorted to a series of repressive measures to deal with the political struggle. Several book stalls in the Travancore state were forcibly closed down and books confiscated. The publication of '*Yuva Keralam*' the sole paper run unofficially by the State Congress was banned. P. Bhaskaran, a young poet was arrested for his poem on "United Kerala."<sup>428</sup> In the Malayalam poem entitled '*Aikyakeralathilekku*' (Towards United Kerala) P. Bhaskaran exhorted the Malayalees to fight against the oppressive regime of the Diwan and to strive for an egalitarian, prosperous, democratic and United Keralam.<sup>429</sup>

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<sup>424</sup> TIL, Vol II, No.11, July 1947 p.44.

<sup>425</sup> Narayana Pillai, C, *Thiruvithamkoor Swathanthrya Samara charithram* (Mal), (Trivandrum, 1972)., p. 1159

<sup>426</sup> Saroja Sunderrajan, *Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar: A Biography*, C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyer Research Institute, Chennai, 2002 p. 604

<sup>427</sup> District Magistrate, Trivandrum to Registrar, Huzur Secretariat, 14 July 1947, CS File No. 268/47 KSA; A.K. Pillai who authored the history of Congress in Kerala later came in to conflict with the Congress, opposed the Quit India Resolution, left congress and joined with Sir. C.P. in the propaganda for independent Travancore, Kumbalath Sanku Pillai, *Ente Kazhinha Kala Smaranakal* (Mal) SPCS Kottayam 1985, p. 504.

<sup>428</sup> *Travancore in Travail*, The Travancore Defence Committee, Published by M.M. Cherian, Bombay, 1947, p.12

The prevailing ban orders in Travancore prompted the State Congress to open a camp at Ernakulam for guiding the agitation safely. The Communist Party printed propaganda materials at Ernakulam, Trichur and Calicut and secretly conveyed them into Travancore by the couriers appointed for the purpose.<sup>430</sup> The Travancore Defence Committee in Bombay brought in bulletins and pamphlets carrying reports cyclostyled at the Communist Party headquarters. In a pamphlet, a clarion call was made by the Travancore Defence Committee, Bombay for the final assault on Diwan's regime:

"There cannot be any peace, as each speck of sand in Shertallai and Ambalappuzha cries out against the massacre of patriots, as each violated home and woman quickens the conscience of man, as each hungry man feels impelled to end his starvation, as each and every freedom loving individual feels that the time has come to wipe off this whole execrable edifice of imperialistic exploitation, official corruption and brutality and the rule of the black marketeer over the economic life of the people...There can be no peace until this nightmare is over. There is no peace in Travancore...The people are marching... Shall we in British India march to their help or shall we leave them in the battle alone? ...the freedom of India is invisible and there can be only one answer. We shall not let Travancore people's fight drown in martial law and blood. We shall win with them a Free Travancore in a Free India."<sup>431</sup>

The Communist Party demanded the immediate establishment of Responsible government in Travancore. The Party insisted the State Congress to give leadership to the agitation of the people and made a common cause with the Travancore State Congress.<sup>432</sup> In a pamphlet the Communist

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<sup>429</sup> Interview with P. Bhaskaran on 2 October 2005 at Jawahar Nagar, Trivandrum; Vishnu Narayanan Namboodiri, Comp. *Swatantrya Samara Geetangal*, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 2000, p.142.

<sup>430</sup> I.G. of Police, Travancore, 29 June 1947. Report submitted to the Registrar, Secretariat, Trivandrum, DD is 425/1947/C.S.

<sup>431</sup> *Travancore in Travail*, The Travancore Defence Committee, published by M.M. Cherian, Bombay, 1947, pp 15-16.

<sup>432</sup> K.C. George, *Aasanna Samaram* (Mal) 3 July 1947, C.S. File No. 338/47 KSA.

leader K.C. George unequivocally raised these slogans: 'Sir C.P. should demit office', 'Down with the American Model' and 'Travancore wants Travancore Model'.<sup>433</sup> Pattom Tanu Pillai and T.M. Varghese, the State Congress leaders in consultation with K.C. George decided to launch a campaign against the independence programme of the Travancore government. The State Congress and the Communist Party were willing to work together against the common enemy.<sup>434</sup> But the Travancore State Congress was not then quite prepared for the struggle. There upon the decision to start the movement was taken at a secret meeting of the Travancore State Congress Working Committee held at Parur at the residence of T.K. Narayana Pillai. The meeting held at night was attended by K. Kelappan as president and K.A. Damodara Menon as Secretary of the Aikya Kerala Committee.<sup>435</sup>

As the day of Indian independence approached, all agreed that Diwan C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar must be driven out before August 15<sup>th</sup> so that Travancore could accede to the Indian Union, establish a truly democratic form of government for herself and join with her fellow Malayalees in a United Kerala. They realised that they had to take action amounting to a rebellion, but disagreed on the methods to be used. Pattom A Thanu Pillai adhered to his non violent principles; but T.M. Varghese and C. Kesavan were prepared to adopt violent methods and they were supported by a number of young radicals.<sup>436</sup> Still some others engaged in secret meetings and compacts. Violent and non-violent plots were hatched to get rid of Diwan Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar. Preparations to execute a violent plot went on within Travancore in June and July 1947. Unexpectedly on 25 July an 'unknown assailant' made an attack on the life of C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar at the Swathi

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<sup>433</sup> K.C. George, '*Thiruvithamkoor Bharanaghatana*'...(Mal) Deshabhimani publication 26/47, published in *Swathanthrya Samarasenanikalute Nirodhikkappetta Krithikal* (Mal), Kerala State Archives Dept, Thiruvananthapuram, 2006 pp 330-343.

<sup>434</sup> *Travancore Information and Listener*, July 1947, Vol VII, No II, p.8 KSA

<sup>435</sup> NMML, *Oral History Transcript*, K.A. Damodara Menon, p.10.

<sup>436</sup> Louise Ouwkerk, *No Elephants for the Maharaja*, Manohar, New Delhi 1994, p 261.

Thirunal Music Academy at Trivandrum.<sup>437</sup> The occasion was the death centenary celebrations of Maharaja Swathi Thirunal. A Government press note issued on the incident furnished the following details: ...'The Diwan was leaving the pandal after the music performance and when he neared the entrance where his car was waiting for him, one man rushed at him with a sword stick and hit him on the neck three or four times. The blows fell on the cheeks and neck and the fingers of the hand, which was raised to ward off the blows causing some injuries. Fortunately, his life is safe.....The assailant has escaped. Investigation is proceeding'.<sup>438</sup>

The 'unknown assailant' was K.C.S. Mani of Ambalappuzha, a close associate of N. Sreekantan Nair, a Socialist trade union leader of Travancore. Mani was an activist of the Congress Socialist Party (later K.S.P).<sup>439</sup> Years later KCS Mani reveals the entire plot in a letter addressed to Kumbalath Sanku Pillai, the State Congress leader.<sup>440</sup> Mani had earlier established his credentials to undertake the tough task by mutilating the bust of Sir C.P., installed in the Sachivothama Sathram (Choultry) at Thampanoor, Trivandrum.<sup>441</sup>

On July 30, the Maharaja of Travancore intimated the Viceroy his acceptance of the Instrument of Accession to the Union.<sup>442</sup> On August 13, Travancore acceded to the Indian Union.<sup>443</sup> The attempt on the Diwan's life, despite its criminal nature, had a salutary effect upon the political situations. The attempt came as a sort of dramatic climax to the political agitation that

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<sup>437</sup> *The Hindu*, 27 July 1947, p.1.

<sup>438</sup> Government Press note, 26 July 1947, D. D is. 4944/1949/C.S.

<sup>439</sup> N. Sreekantan Nair, *Kazhinhakala Chithrangal* (Mal) Vol III, SPCS, Kottayam, 1982 pp. 65-70.

<sup>440</sup> Kumbalath Sanku Pillai, *Ente Kazhinhakala Smaranakal* (Mal) SPCS, Kottayam, 1985 pp. 538-560.

<sup>441</sup> G. Janardhana Kurup, *Ente Jeevitham* (Serialised autobiography), Malayalam Weekly, 27 October 2000.

<sup>442</sup> V.P. Menon, *The Story of the Integration of Indian States*, Madras, 1969, p.112.

<sup>443</sup> *The Hindu*, 15 August 1947 p.8.

had been going on in Travancore for over a decade and it had put an end to the issue of independent Travancore. On 19<sup>th</sup> August Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar relinquished his diwanship.<sup>444</sup> None could have described Sir C.P. more accurately than he himself did in a letter he wrote to the ruler from his sick bed on July 28 offering to resign. "It is impossible for me to function here as one of several ministers or what is inevitable under the new Constitution, as a kind of secretary to H.H...By temperament and training, I am unfit for compromises, being autocratic and over decisive. I don't fit into the present environment."<sup>445</sup> These words reveal a lot about his personality and personal views on responsible and democratic government. With the exit of Sir C.P. was dispelled the stumbling block on the path of United Kerala in the form of Independent Travancore.

Independence gave new hope and zeal for the champions of Aikyakerala movement. After independence the Congress leadership was reminded of the longstanding pledge on the linguistic redistribution of provinces. Sreeman Narayanan Agarwal wrote to Gandhiji: 'I cannot understand why the Congress should take any time in accomplishing this linguistic redistribution. The Congress has held since 1920 that this is necessary for the good government of India. And now that we are free to have this redistribution, efforts are being made in some quarters to defeat the purpose'. Endorsing this concern, Gandhiji stated, 'since linguistic redistribution is desirable from almost every point of view, all delay in carrying out the project should be avoided.'<sup>446</sup>

The Madras Legislature had passed a resolution in April 1947 calling upon the Constituent Assembly to regard the principle of linguistic provinces as "a necessary requisite in the framing of a constitution for India" and

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<sup>444</sup> Travancore Government Extraordinary Gazette, 19 August 1947.

<sup>445</sup> *Frontline*, 4 July, 2003 p. 78

<sup>446</sup> Harijan, 30 November 1947; Bharathan Kumarappa, ed., *Linguistic Provinces*, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1958, pp.10-11.

recommended the formation of Tamilnad, Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra.<sup>447</sup> Contrary to the expectations of the Malayalees, the Congress Legislative Party met at Delhi in November 1947 practically agreed that there should be three provinces in the new constitution, viz., Andhra, Karnataka and Maharashtra, in addition to Tamilnad and Gujarat.<sup>448</sup> The KPCC and the Aikya Kerala Committee expressed their concern over the exclusion of Kerala in this regard, by sending a telegram to the AICC on 27.11. 1947. 'Deleting Kerala from the Resolution on Linguistic Provinces against expectations... causes grave heart burning throughout Kerala and will lead to unnecessary avoidable popular excitement. Such deletion is against Congress principles and practice. Let Boundary Commission be appointed delimiting all linguistic provinces including Kerala.'<sup>449</sup>

However, in a speech made before the Constituent Assembly on 27-11-1947 Nehru signalled that he was in no great hurry to move on linguistic provinces. Nehru in this speech turned his back on a quarter of a century's worth of Congress resolutions and actions on the linguistic question. The occasion for the speech was to reply to a question put by N.G.Ranga about governmental policy regarding the creation of new provinces on a linguistic basis:

"Government are fully aware of the demand in some parts of the country for new provinces to be formed primarily on a linguistic and cultural basis. Many years ago this demand was recognised by the Congress and Government accept the principle underlying that demand. In giving effect to that principle, however many other considerations have to be borne in mind. Apart from linguistic and cultural aspects of the problem it is to be observed there is no clear demarcation and cultural and linguistic areas overlap. Hence a very careful enquiry is necessary before a decision can be arrived at... As the

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<sup>447</sup> *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. 5, (March to April, 1947).

<sup>448</sup> G.V. Subba Rao, *Linguistic Provinces and the Dar Commission Report*, The Goshti Publishing House, Bezwada, 1949 p.16.

<sup>449</sup> NMML, AICC papers File No. G-10/1946.

House is fully aware, the country has had to face ever since the new order started functioning, a very critical situation resulting from partition. A living entity had a part severed from it and this unnatural operation resulted in all manner of distempers which have naturally affected the political, social and economic structure of the country...It must be remembered that the creation of a new province inevitably affects all the neighbouring provinces and the interests of these will have to be considered".<sup>450</sup>

So the Congress Party in power began to see things differently than it did before independence. In the post independence days Nehru and Patel felt that the linguistic issue should be postponed while other more pressing matters-integration, refugees, economic reconstruction-should be taken up first. "Before it attained power, the Indian National Congress had dutifully burnt incense to the principle of linguistic states, but Nehru in power began to hold views different from those he had expressed previously; his inclination was to re examine the question and in the mean time to procrastinate."<sup>451</sup>

As decided by the Aikya Kerala Council, a delegation consisting of K. Kelappan and U. Gopala Menon visited Delhi in the first week of February 1948 with a memorandum explaining the urgency of the formation of United Kerala. The delegation made discussions with the Congress President Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Prime Minister Pandit Nehru and Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Patel and sought their support for the cause. Pandit Nehru assured the delegation that the states reorganisation question would be taken up for discussion before the conclusion of the Constituent Assembly proceedings and that the Aikya Kerala issue would be addressed accordingly.<sup>452</sup>

On 20<sup>th</sup> February 1948 an Aikya Kerala Convention was held at Alwaye under the auspices of the Aikya Kerala Council. The Convention

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<sup>450</sup> Linguistic Provinces, *Selected Works of J. Nehru*, II. 4: 530-1.

<sup>451</sup> George Woodcock, *Kerala: A portrait of the Malabar Coast*, Faber and Faber, London, 1967, p 256.

<sup>452</sup> K.A. Damodara Menon, *Aikya Keralam*, Mathrubhumi Weekly, 28 October 1956. p. 57.

presided over by Kelappan was formally inaugurated by Shanker RaoDev. In addition to the members of the Aikya Kerala Council, members of the Legislative Assemblies of Travancore and Cochin, Malabar MLAS and MLCs of Madras Legislatures and Malayali members of the Constituent Assembly attended the convention.<sup>453</sup> The Aikya Kerala resolution moved by K.P. Kesava Menon stated:

"This convention reiterates the popular demand to form a separate province by unifying Travancore, Cochin, Malabar and neighbouring territories by taking into consideration the geographical homogeneity, the economic and cultural development and the administrative convenience of the Kerala region. The resolution also recommended to include a provision for creating the proposed Kerala province in the new constitution which was being drafted by the Constituent Assembly.<sup>454</sup> Since the Aikya Kerala Council with a strength of more than 100 members was considered to be too unwieldy to function effectively, a more compact body of 15 members with power to co opt others was constituted to replace the Aikya Kerala Council. K. Kelappan was the President and K.A. Damodara Menon, the Secretary of this Committee. The new Aikya Kerala Committee was authorised 'to do all that was necessary to expedite the formation of the Kerala province.'<sup>455</sup>

However it is to be noted in this context that although the Always Aikya Kerala Convention had exhibited great enthusiasm for the realisation of United Kerala, the Always Resolution conspicuously omitted the linguistic principle as one of the principal considerations for the Kerala formation. The United Kerala demand had actually led to dissensions within the ranks of the Conventionists and the KPCC, owing mainly to the fact that it had no clear cut idea as to the exact form and shape of the proposed Kerala state.<sup>456</sup> Some

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<sup>453</sup> National Archives of India (NAI) Ministry of States File No: 17(10) P/149.

<sup>454</sup> K.P. Kesava Menon, *Kazhinhakalam*, Calicut 1969, p. 362.

<sup>455</sup> K.A. Damodara Menon, *Aikya Keralam*, Mathrubhumi Weekly 28 October, 1956.

<sup>456</sup> Puthupally Raghavan, *Viplava Smaranakal* (Mal.), Kottayam, 1996, Vol. V, p. 93.



of the members stood for a 'Greater Kerala', i.e., a multilingual state comprising of Travancore, Cochin, Malabar, Tamil speaking areas of South Travancore, Gudalore, South Canara, Coorg and Mahe. Some others insisted that the new state should be created by combining Malabar, Cochin and Travancore except the 4 Tamil majority taluks, which should be ceded to Madras. These discords within the KPCC resulted in its inaction to carry the movement forward.<sup>457</sup> These dissensions among the ranks and leadership of the KPCC can be attributed to the oscillatory positions taken by the national leadership of the Congress after independence.

On 17 June 1948, the President of the Constituent Assembly appointed a committee to explore the desirability of linguistic provinces. The committee, officially known as the Linguistic Provinces Commission, consisted of S.K Dar, a retired judge of Allahabad High Court, Dr. Pannalal (ICS Retd) and Jagat Narayan Lal (Member of the Constituent Assembly).<sup>458</sup> The Commission was commonly referred to as the 'Dar Commission' after its chairman. It was entrusted to examine and report on "the desirability or otherwise of the creation of any of the proposed provinces of Andhra, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra and fixing their boundaries and assessing the financial, economic, administrative and other consequences in those provinces and the adjoining territories of India."<sup>459</sup>

The Dar Commission in its report submitted on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1948 suggested that no new provinces should be formed for the time being. It not only opposed any immediate reorganisation of provinces but also held that the formation of provinces exclusively or even mainly on linguistic considerations would be inadvisable. "The formation of provinces exclusively or even mainly on linguistic considerations is not in the larger interests of the Indian nation and should not be taken in hand...In the formation of new

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<sup>457</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.375-377.

<sup>458</sup> Press Communiqué appointing the Commission, vide Report of the Linguistic Provinces Commission, Constituent Assembly of India, Govt. of India Press: New Delhi, 1948, p. 36

<sup>459</sup> *Ibid*, p. 36.

provinces...oneness of language may be one of the factors to be taken into consideration along with others; but it should not be the decisive or even the main factor... We find that no new Province out of those referred to us should be formed for the present."<sup>460</sup> The Commission pointed out many other factors which should be given due weight like administrative convenience, history, geography, economy and culture.<sup>461</sup> "The first and last need of India at the present moment is that it should be made a nation," said the Commission "Everything which helps the growth of nationalism, has to go forward, and everything which throws obstacles in its way has to be rejected...We have applied this test to linguistic provinces also, and judged by this test, in our opinion, they fail and cannot be supported."<sup>462</sup>

The publication of the Dar Commission's Report evoked widespread opposition. Commenting on the Report, K.P. Kesava Menon, Editor of *Mathrubhumi* stated, "Whatever may be the attitude of the Constituent Assembly concerning other linguistic provinces, there is no valid reason why the formation of the Kerala province should be delayed...We want the formation of our province to take place immediately and there is no doubt we are going to have it."<sup>463</sup> The Report created discontent among sections of Congressmen especially from the non Hindi areas, who petitioned the Working Committee to reconsider the issue. This prompted the Congress Party, whose annual session was being held in Jaipur in December 1948, to appoint its own Linguistic Provinces Committee.<sup>464</sup> The Committee was composed of Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhai Patel and Pattabhi Sitaramayya and its report, known as the 'JVP Report' after the initials of its authors, was submitted on April 1, 1949.

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<sup>460</sup> *Report of the Linguistic Provinces Commission, Constituent Assembly of India*, Govt of India Press (New Delhi 1948) Paras 152 & 153.

<sup>461</sup> *Ibid*, para 131.

<sup>462</sup> *Ibid*, para 147.

<sup>463</sup> *The Hindu*, 16 December 1948

<sup>464</sup> *Report of the Linguistic Provinces Committee appointed by the Jaipur Congress*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, 1948, p.1.

The JVP Report indicated, more or less, the mind of the Government, since two of its three members were the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister. It recommended the postponement of linguistic provinces by a few years. The committee observed that the Congress had in the past not only given its seal of approval to the reorganisation of provinces on a linguistic basis but had actually reconstituted its own provinces on that basis. However in an attempt to defuse the general argument infavour of linguistic states, the committee stated: "While language is a binding force, it is also a separating one."<sup>465</sup> "Taking a broad and practical view...we feel that the present is not an opportune time for the formation of new provinces. It would unmistakably retard the process of consolidation of our gains, dislocate our administrative, economic and financial structure, let loose, forces of disruption, and disintegration, and seriously interfere with the progressive solution of our economic and political difficulties."<sup>466</sup> "We would prefer to postpone the formation of new provinces for a few years so that we might concentrate during this period on other matters of vital importance and not allow ourselves to be distracted by this question."<sup>467</sup>

It was observed that Nehru preferred non linguistic states in the interests of a strong centre. During the course of his work in the JVP Committee (1948) Nehru wrote: (This enquiry) has been in some ways an eye opener for us. The work of 60 years of the Indian National Congress was standing before us, face to face with centuries old India of narrow loyalties, petty jealousies and ignorant prejudices engaged in mortal conflict and we were simply horrified to see how thin was the ice upon which we were skating. Some of the ablest men in the country came before us and confidently and emphatically stated that language in this country stood for and represented culture, race, history, individuality and finally a subnation.<sup>468</sup>

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<sup>465</sup> *Report of the Linguistic Provinces Committee AICC*, New Delhi 1948, p.8.

<sup>466</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 10.

<sup>467</sup> *Ibid.*, p 15.

<sup>468</sup> Quoted in Clifford Geertz, 'The Integrative Revolution', in Clifford Geertz (ed.) *Old Societies and New States*, Amerind, 1963.

It can be seen that the JVP Report did no more to satisfy the proponents of linguistic states than the Dar Commission Report which preceded it. Indeed it appears only to have increased the confusion and added fuel to the controversy. Neither the Dar Commission Report nor the JVP Report was popular in South Indian regions. On December 21, 1949 the Congress Working Committee in a resolution on Karnataka province stated: "Further in view of the vital change in the status of India and the inauguration of the constitution within less than 5 weeks from now, it is outside the range of feasibility or propriety to consider a constitutional change of this magnitude at this stage."<sup>469</sup> The realisation that the general tone was one of postponement intensified the popular agitations for linguistic states.

The developments and discussions in the 1940s, especially before and after independence revealed the class interests of the ruling authorities in the native states, provinces and centre. The Travancore ruling family and the Diwan Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar adamantly stood against the United Kerala movement since they believed that it would be detrimental to their authority and diwanship. The Diwan made it clear that he would not allow any agitation for responsible government since such a slogan would pose a challenge to the authority of the Maharaja. The Travancore Government preyed upon the national sentiments of the Tamilians of South Travancore to debilitate the United Kerala Movement. The Diwan even sought to make use of caste, communal and regional sentiments to espouse the cause of Independent Travancore. The declaration of Independent Travancore rendered the prospects of United Kerala quite bleak.

The Maharaja of Cochin on the other hand utilized the national aspirations of the Malayalees to further the cause of a United Kerala. To him the merger of Cochin in a United Kerala was his long cherished wish. But his declaration to this effect was politically motivated since the Maharaja reiterated that while establishing a united Kerala, all the hereditary honours and privileges of the ruling family would be preserved.

<sup>469</sup> *Modern Review*, January 1950, Vol LXXXVII, No.1, p.18.

The protagonists of the United Kerala movement under the patronage of the Cochin Maharaja visualised an Aikya Keralam perpetuating 'Parasurama' tradition and memory of "Perumal" rule. What the conservative leadership of the United Kerala Movement wanted was not a 'linguistic' state of Kerala by the unification of contiguous Malayalam speaking regions but creation of a multilingual province on the west coast. The new state of their concept was to comprise, the non Malayalee areas like S. Travancore, majority parts of S. Canara, Coorg and Nilgiris. Thus by basing upon the mythological and legendary foundations, the ruling classes and the conservative organisers of the United Kerala Movement happened to unfold their true reactionary character.

Despite the reactionary position of a section of the organisers, the Congress socialists and the Communists managed to rally the democratic and progressive elements behind the United Kerala Movement. Mass actions attained their acme in Punnapra Vayalar and North Malabar. Two episodes of a violent attack on the colonial apparatus, Kayyur in 1942 and Punnapra Vayalar in 1946, in which hundreds of communists were killed, stand out as examples of a brave peasant and working class movement enthusing men, women and children from all communities and classes with an independent political perspective.<sup>470</sup> In less than a year after the sanguinary massacre of Vayalar, revolutionaries all over Kerala shouted: 'Vayalar blood is our blood'.<sup>471</sup> The State Congress camp at Ernakulum, Communist Party organs at Calicut, Trichur and Ernakulam and the Travancore Defence Committee promoted and supported the popular resistance against the autocratic rule of the Travancore Diwan. His scheme of Independent Travancore was tended to weaken the Aikya Kerala Movement. With the exit of the Diwan consequent on an assault on him, was wiped away one of the major hurdles retarding the Aikya Kerala Movement.

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<sup>470</sup> Georges Kristoffel Lieten, *The First Communist Ministry*, K.P. Bagchi and Company, New Delhi, 1982, p.16

<sup>471</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, *Kerala Society and Politics: An Historical Survey* (New Delhi, 1984), p.173.

After independence there was a perceptible change in the policy of the Congress leaders regarding the redistribution of provinces. The Congress leadership now retracted from their earlier commitment on the formation of linguistic provinces. Such an attitude was against the very spirit of the Nagpur Congress (1920), Nehru Committee Report (1928) Congress Working Committee Resolution of 1938, Congress Election Manifesto 1945-46 and innumerable resolutions and statements made by the Congress Committees and conventions from time to time. The Congress had accepted the linguistic principle as an important criteria for redistribution of the provincial administrative units from the days of antipartition agitation in Bengal. The (Motilal) Nehru Committee of All Parties Conference in 1928 had highlighted the obvious advantage of a linguistic province which could educate itself and could do its daily work through the medium of its own language. The Congress had already promised to form linguistic provinces as and when it had the power to do so.

But Nehru in power began to procrastinate the question on the pretext of re-examining the same. In the interest of a strong centre, he favoured non linguistic states. He apprehended that a linguistic state, giving political expression to regional patriotism...might generate an emotional force which would jump constitutional limits and threaten the centres authority.<sup>472</sup> The Congress leadership resorted to delay tactics to deflect the people from the question of linguistic states. The stratagems included the appointment of the Dar Commission, the belated publication of its reports, and the further examination of the issue by the JVP Committee. The Dar Commission Report and the JVP Report turned out to be extremely unpopular in South Indian regions. Whatever be the change in the attitude of the rulers and the leaders, the people, particularly in South India carried on their agitation for linguistic states with unabated vigour.

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<sup>472</sup> Percival Spear, *A History of India*, Vol. II (Hermondsworth, 1973), p. 260.

## CHAPTER V

### TOWARDS STATES REORGANIZATION

A major administrative task which directly influenced the reorganisation of provinces was the accession of the native states to the Indian Union. After independence, the administrative units of former British India had remained virtually in tact. The accession of the native Indian states to the Indian Union became a complex problem. For the realisation of the same, a States Ministry with Sardar Vallabhai Patel as its head was set up in 1947.<sup>473</sup> The Ministry adopted an "Instrument of Accession" by which the native rulers surrendered defence, foreign affairs and communications of their respective states to the Indian Union. The States Ministry wanted to form unions of native states wherever possible. In this connection, V.P. Menon, the Secretary of the Ministry of States visited Travancore and Cochin in March 1949 and held discussions with the rulers and ministers of both states.<sup>474</sup> There were three alternatives for the future administrative arrangement.

- 1) to form an Aikya Kerala (a linguistic province of the entire Malayalam speaking areas of Travancore, Cochin and Malabar)
- 2) to form a union of Travancore and Cochin and
- 3) to leave the two states as they were for the time being.

Among these alternatives, the States Ministry and V.P. Menon preferred the integration of the two states to form a union of states.<sup>475</sup> In the discussion the ministers of both states declared their unanimous acceptance of the proposal to amalgamate Travancore and Cochin into one Union. The local Congress leaders also endorsed the view that the integration of the two states was the best course. They demanded that the people should be given

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<sup>473</sup> *The Hindu*, 29 June, 1947.

<sup>474</sup> V.P. Menon, *The Story of the Integration of Indian States*, Orient Longman, Madras, 1961, p 263.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 263-264.

some indication that this was a preliminary step leading to the formation of Aikya Kerala.<sup>476</sup>

However the leaders of the Travancore TamilNad Congress (TTNC) in a deputation represented that the affinities of the Tamil community which predominated in certain taluks of the state were with those of the Tamil districts of the Madras Province. They were anxious about their position as a minority in the proposed integrated state. They wished that, if steps were going to be taken in this direction, the Tamilian majority taluks should be merged with the neighbouring Tamil district of Madras.<sup>477</sup>

The Aikya Kerala Committee, appointed by the Alwaye Convention met V.P. Menon at Ernakulam and presented before him their proposal for the formation of Aikya Kerala.<sup>478</sup> The Aikya Kerala Committee were greatly disappointed when they were told that the purpose of his visit was not to create a linguistic Kerala Province, but only to find out whether the states of Travancore and Cochin could be amalgamated into one Union.<sup>479</sup> After discussions, V.P. Menon returned to Delhi with the impression that "public opinion was predominantly in favour of the integration of the two states" which he conveyed to Sardar Patel as well.<sup>480</sup>

On 1<sup>st</sup> April 1949, a deputation consisting of the ministers of the two states and representatives of the local Congress organisation met Patel and Menon. Cochin was represented in these talks by the Prime Minister E. Ikkanda Warriar, Minister Panampilly Govinda Menon, K. Ayyappan, C.A. Ouseph and Congress leaders S. Neelakanta Iyer and K.P. Madhavan Nair. The Travancore delegation was headed by the Prime Minister T.K. Narayana Pillai, Ministers A.J. John and V.O. Markose and Congress leaders T.M.

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<sup>476</sup> V.P. Menon, *op cit.*, p. 264.

<sup>477</sup> *Ibid.*, p.264.

<sup>478</sup> K.A. Damodara Menon, *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, 28 October 1956.

<sup>479</sup> V.P. Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

<sup>480</sup> *Ibid.*, p 266



Varghese, C.Narayana Pillai and C. Kesavan.<sup>481</sup> In the beginning, the leaders from both states were opposed to the Integration. Fear of losing identity, anxiety about domination of one state over the other, diverse vested interests etc were the causes for this opposition. Moreover, some believed that the integration would be an obstacle to the formation of United Kerala.<sup>482</sup> V.P. Menon pointed out that the question of linguistic provinces was under consideration by the JVP committee. The Congress leaders raised the issue of a Malayalam speaking province, but it was not pressed. Subsequently, the ministers and the Congress leaders met Sardar Patel and apprised him of their desire to integrate the two states into one union.<sup>483</sup> The next day, the Government of India accepted the proposal.<sup>484</sup> A Reorganization Committee was constituted which consisted of V.O. Markose (Minister of Travancore), Panampilly Govinda Menon (Minister of Cochin) and N.M. Buch I.C.S. (Chairman). The committee was authorised to examine and report the various problems relating to the integration of the two states.<sup>485</sup> Panampilly Govinda Menon, expressed his view that 'If Cochin and Travancore are integrated to form a new state then, by taking action under section 290B a unit can be formed comprising Cochin, Travancore and Malabar in the near future. For this, Cochin-Travancore integration is an inevitable first step'.<sup>486</sup>

In the discussions with Sardar Patel and V.P. Menon, the Maharaja Rama Varma of Travancore insisted that he should be the permanent head of the new union and preferred the title of 'Perumal', head of the ancient confederation of Kerala chieftains, to that of 'Rajapramukh'. He held that he governed the state on behalf of, and as a servant of Sri Padmanabha and that

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<sup>481</sup> Cochin Information, Cochin Govt. Press, April 1949, p16.

<sup>482</sup> K.P. Madhavan Nair (Ed.), *Kochi Rajya Praja Mandalam*, Cochin 1985, p.376.

<sup>483</sup> V.P. Menon, *op. cit.*, p 266.

<sup>484</sup> Press Communique, Government of India, 2 April 1949

<sup>485</sup> V.P. Menon, *op. cit.*, pp 265-267.

<sup>486</sup> Panampilly Govinda Menon, 'A Note on the Constitutional steps to be taken for the formation of a Kerala Province', Cochin Information, April 1949 pp 12-16.

he attached great importance to this position being maintained. He felt that on account of the dedication of the State to Sri Padmanabha and the special loyalty and devotion which the rulers of Travancore owed to that deity, it would not be possible for him to take the usual oath of office as Rajapramukh. He also added that if no satisfactory solution on these points was possible, and if the Government of India still insisted on the integration of the two states he would rather abdicate than act against his convictions.<sup>487</sup> The Cochin Maharaja RamaVarma Parikshith Thampuran readily agreed to the proposal that the Raja of Travancore should be made Rajapramukh for life. An interesting request of his was that free copies should continue to be supplied to him of the '*Panjangam*' or Almanac published by the Cochin Government.<sup>488</sup>

In May 1949, the rulers of Travancore and Cochin entered into a Covenant to provide a legal framework for the union. The privy purses of the Maharajas were also settled (Rs 18 lakhs for the Maharaja of Travancore and Rs 2, 35, 000 for Cochin Maharaja).<sup>489</sup> Thus the States of Travancore and Cochin were integrated with each other on July 1, 1949 to form one state, the United state of Travancore and Cochin with a single executive, legislature and judiciary.<sup>490</sup> On the issue of the capital of the United State, a compromise was reached by which it was decided to have the capital at Trivandrum and the High Court and the law college at Ernakulam.<sup>491</sup> The Maharaja of Travancore became the Raja Pramukh of the new state.<sup>492</sup>

The Rajapramukh and a Council of Ministers responsible to the legislature formed the executive of the new state. The Council of Ministers was composed of members drawn from the outgoing ministries of Travancore

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<sup>487</sup> V.P. Menon, *op. cit.*, pp 265-267.

<sup>488</sup> V.P. Menon, *op. cit.*, p.269.

<sup>489</sup> *Report the Travancore and Cochin Integration Committee*, Government Press, Trivandrum, 1949.

<sup>490</sup> *Ibid.*, Article II of the Covenant.

<sup>491</sup> V.P. Menon, *op. cit.*, p.276.

<sup>492</sup> *The Hindu*, 2 July 1949, p 1.

and Cochin, headed by the Chief Minister of Travancore State. It was consisted of T.K. Narayana Pillai as Premier and six ministers, three each ie, A.J. John, E.K. Madhavan and T.A. Abdulla from Travancore and E. Ikkanda Warriar, K. Ayyappan and Panampilly Govinda Menon from Cochin. The union was inaugurated by V.P. Menon on 1 July 1949.<sup>493</sup>

The integration brought about by the Covenant was part of a general all India scheme to achieve peaceful liquidation of monarchy and princely states in the country, with the ultimate aim of attaining Indian unity.<sup>494</sup> The new state was made a part 'B' State of the Indian Union. The integration of Travancore and Cochin was an epoch making event. The artificial political barrier<sup>495</sup> maintained between the two neighbouring states for centuries was quietly removed.

The integration of Travancore and Cochin was generally considered as the first step toward the realisation of Aikya Kerala. However, there arose some constitutional obstacles before the integration of all the Malayalam speaking areas. The Congress President stated that there was no legal provision for the merger of parts of provinces with Indian states. The fact that there were Rajapramukhs for life rendered it extremely difficult for portions of provinces to merge with Indian States until the future of the Raja Pramukhs themselves was settled.<sup>496</sup> Therefore the multilingual character of the new state of Travancore Cochin was to continue. Again, the division of both the Tamilian and the Malayalee peoples into those living in the state of Madras and in the new state of Travancore Cochin also continued. Moreover the integration at the same time perpetuated the rule of the Maharaja of Travancore as the Rajpramukh of the new state and provided for the payment

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<sup>493</sup> United States of Travancore and Cochin Gazette Extraordinary 1<sup>st</sup> July 1949.

<sup>494</sup> R. Ramakrishnan Nair, *Constitutional Experiments in Kerala*, Trivandrum, 1964, p.33.

<sup>495</sup> The Cochin Travancore boundary stones known as 'Kothikkallus' were removed. 'Ko' stood for Cochin and 'thi' for Thiruvithamkur (Travancore).

<sup>496</sup> National Archives of India, Ministry of States, File No : 17 (10) – P/49; The Hindu 17 November, 1949.

of nearly Rs 40 lakhs per year as allowance to the ruling families of Travancore and Cochin.<sup>497</sup> The inauguration of the Constitution of India in 1950 following as it did the unification of Travancore and Cochin into one state, put new obstacles in the way of United Kerala. The modification of the Covenant of the unification of Travancore and Cochin, the transformation of the new Travancore-Cochin from the status of a part B state to a Part A State, the agreement of the Indian Parliament as well as the legislature of Madras and Travancore-Cochin states-these extremely difficult processes had to be gone through if a United Kerala State was to be formed.<sup>498</sup>

The Travancore Cochin integration caused dissension among the members of the Aikya Kerala Committee. Majority of the members welcomed the integration as the first step toward United Kerala. However, K. Kelappan, the president of the Aikya Kerala Committee opposed this stand and he resigned from the presidentship.<sup>499</sup> Kelappan was of the opinion that the integration would not be helpful to the formation of Aikya Kerala. He opposed the integration of Malabar with the Travancore Cochin State under the direct rule of Rajapramukh.<sup>500</sup> After Kelappan's resignation, the Aikya Kerala Committee held at Trivandrum on 18 September 1949 elected K.P. Kesava Menon as its president.<sup>501</sup> A sub-committee which consisted of K.A. Damodara Menon, M. Narayana Menon, K.P. Madhavan Nair, G. Sankaran Nair and Dr. C.R. Krishna Pillai was constituted to do all that was necessary to expedite the formation of the Kerala State.<sup>502</sup>

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<sup>497</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, *Kerala, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. Calcutta, 1967, p.188.

<sup>498</sup> *Ibid* p 189

<sup>499</sup> K.P. Kesava Menon, *Kazhinha Kalam*, Calicut 1986 p.366; C.K. Moossath, *Kelappan Enna Maha Manushyan*, SPCS Kottayam, 1982 p.179.

<sup>500</sup> NMML, Oral History Transcript of K.A. Damodara Menon p.12; V. Parukutty Amma, *K.P. Kesava Menon*, Trivandrum 1988 p. 375.

<sup>501</sup> K.P. Kesava Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 366.

<sup>502</sup> *Ibid.*, p.367.

Yet another Aikya Kerala Conference was held on 6<sup>th</sup> November 1949 at Palghat.<sup>503</sup> The Aikya Kerala Committee desired the formation of the Kerala State along with the inauguration of the new Constitution in January 1950. Since Travancore and Cochin were integrated, Malabar and the adjoining areas were to be joined with Travancore-Cochin to form Kerala State. But this proposal was opposed by some for two reasons. Malabar, being a part of Madras, a part A state, would be degraded if it was to be joined with Travancore-Cochin, a Part B state.<sup>504</sup> Another point they raised was the position of Rajapramukh. They feared that if Malabar was joined with Travancore Cochin, the Rajapramukh would be the head of the state. This situation cannot be suitable to a time when the popular democratic principles were gathering strength and scope.<sup>505</sup> After heated discussions a resolution was passed in favour of the immediate formation of a Kerala State without Rajapramukh.<sup>506</sup>

Though this amendment would seem to be harmless, K.A. Damodara Menon, who was the secretary of the Aikya Kerala Committee considered this as a deliberate move to sabotage a possibility of Aikya Kerala. The movers of this amendment were quite sure that the Government of India which had just concluded an agreement by which the post of Rajapramukh of Travancore Cochin was offered for life time to the Maharaja of Travancore would not favourably respond to an Aikya Kerala resolution, demanding the province without the office of Rajapramukh.<sup>507</sup>

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<sup>503</sup> National Archives of India, Ministry of States File No: 17(10), p. 49.

<sup>504</sup> The Part A States were the former British provinces of Madras, Bombay and the rest. The part B states were either former Indian states singly (like Hyderabad and Mysore) or groups of these (like Travancore-Cochin). Certain other territories like Coorg, Ajmer and Tripura were classified as Part C states. K.M. Panikkar, *An Autobiography*, *op. cit.*, p.291.

<sup>505</sup> K.P. Kesava Menon, *Kazhinhakalam*, p.368.

<sup>506</sup> V.M. Vishnu Bharatheeyan, *Adimakal Engane Udamakalayi* (Mal.), Trivandrum, 1980, p.306.

<sup>507</sup> K.A. Damodara Menon, *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, 28 April 1966.

The members of the subcommittee went to Delhi in December 1949 and submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Congress President. The national leaders though endorsed the desirability of the idea of United Kerala, advised the deputationists to wait patiently for some more time.<sup>508</sup> In the discussions, Sardar Patel pointed out the practical difficulty of forming a province as demanded before 26<sup>th</sup> of January 1950, and asked the Deputation 'to wait until a more favourable atmosphere was created in the country as a whole'. Answering the question put by the Deputation whether he considered it necessary for the United State of Travancore-Cochin to be merged with the Madras Presidency as a preliminary to the formation of the Kerala province, Sardar Patel replied that he did not think that such step was necessary at all.<sup>509</sup>

During the period after the Palghat Aikya Kerala conference of November 1949, the Congressmen of Malabar were more and more opposed to the Aikya Kerala movement. Just before the General Elections of 1952, K. Kelappan and K.A. Damodaran Menon had left Congress and joined the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (KMPP) founded by Acharya Kripalani and others.<sup>510</sup> After Elections, the KMPP and the Socialist Party joined together to form the Praja Socialist Party (PSP).<sup>511</sup>

In June 1952 the KPCC which took initiative for Aikya Kerala Movement was divided into two units namely the Malabar Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) and the Travancore Cochin Pradesh Congress Committee (TCPCC).<sup>512</sup> A.V. Kuttimalu Amma was elected as the President of the MPCC and K.R. Elankath as the President of TCPCC.<sup>513</sup> The MPCC

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<sup>508</sup> National Archives of India, Ministry of States, File No: 17(10)-p. 49.

<sup>509</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>510</sup> Perunna K. N. Nair, *op. cit.*, p. 126-127.

<sup>511</sup> *Ibid.*, p.130.

<sup>512</sup> K.P. Kesava Menon, *Kazhinha Kalam*, p.368-369.

<sup>513</sup> Perunna K.N. Nair, *op. cit.*

convened a political conference from 22 to 24 May 1953 at Palghat.<sup>514</sup> The conference was inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Madras. At this Conference, resolutions were passed recommending the merger of the United States of Travancore and Cochin and Coorg with the residuary Madras State, and against the formation of an Aikya Kerala Province.<sup>515</sup> This resolution proposing the formation of a 'Dakshina Samsthan' was passed inspite of opposition from a section of Congressmen.<sup>516</sup> The resolution was moved by K. Gopalan and supported by P.P. Ummerkoya, A.R. Menon, P.N. Nambeesan and E. Moidu Moulavi. They argued that linguistic demands would adversely affect the unity of India; Aikya Kerala issue had become a weapon for the Communists; India's unity, integrity, security and economic interests should be considered in the reorganisation of the states.<sup>517</sup> Mathrubhumi published a series of editorials from 30<sup>th</sup> June to 4<sup>th</sup> July 1953 on the background of Aikya Kerala Movement and critically evaluated the adverse stand taken by the MPCC.

The Mathrubhumi editorials strongly criticised the MPCC Resolution as 'thoughtless, meaningless and unauthorised'. Quoting from Bhagavat Gita, the concluding editorial reminds that 'we must not provide chances for the coming generations to regret and blame us for having shown narrow minded selfish interests and preconceived notions.'<sup>518</sup> The Kerala state committee of the Communist Party issued a statement strongly condemning the political resolution of the MPCC. 'The exponents of this Southern State expect that the European and native estate owners, bankers and others with vested interests could exploit the Tamil and Malayali laymen and that confusion and division can be created in the democratic movements of Kerala and Tamilnad.'<sup>519</sup>

<sup>514</sup> *Malayala Pradesh Congress Bulletin*, August 1953, Published by MPCC, Mathrubhumi Press, Calicut.

<sup>515</sup> TNA, Fortnightly Reports (Confidential) G.O.No.p 4/53-10, Public Dept. dt. 13-6-1953 p. 260.

<sup>516</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, 24 & 25 May 1953.

<sup>517</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>518</sup> *Mathrubhumi editorials*, 30 June, 1,2, & 4 July 1953.

<sup>519</sup> *Navayugam Weekly*, 27 June 1953.

Another comment on the MPCC Resolution reads thus: 'Congress was the first organisation which demanded Kerala state. The very same Congress is now the latest to oppose the formation of the state.'<sup>520</sup>

This contradictory position of the Malabar Congress leadership to the Aikya Kerala Movement was in accordance with the attitude of central Congress leadership and government of India which became apparent in the Dar Commission Report and the JVP Committee Report. As discussed earlier neither the Dar Commission Report nor the JVP Report favoured the demand for linguistic states. Moreover their general tone was one of postponement.

As has been seen earlier, it was the Congress Party which gave the linguistic movement its first important fillip by reorganising the party machinery along linguistic lines in 1920. Between 1920 and independence in 1947 the Congress several times reiterated its advocacy of the linguistic principle. In July 1938 the working Committee meeting at Wardha, endorsed the linguistic resolutions passed in the Madras and Bombay legislatures adding these words: "This committee desires to assure the people of the area concerned that the solution of this question would be undertaken as part of the future scheme of the Government of India as soon as the Congress has the power to do so".<sup>521</sup> In July 1939 the All India Congress Committee (AICC) passed an unofficial resolution in its Bombay meeting. "The All India Congress Committee", stated the resolution, "is strongly of the opinion that immediate steps should be taken for the formation of a separate Andhra province".<sup>522</sup> The Congress party election manifesto of 1946 stated that the Congress "has also stood for the freedom of each group and territorial area within the nation to develop its own life and culture within the larger framework, and it has stated that for this purpose such territorial areas or

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<sup>520</sup> K.P. Kesava Menon, *Kazhinhakalam op. cit.*, p.370; Perunna K.N. Nair, *Keralathile Congress Prasthanam*, Cochin 1985, p.131.

<sup>521</sup> Congress Bulletin, AICC, New Delhi, No.4 (16 August 1938) p. 2-3.

<sup>522</sup> *Ibid.* No. 3 (9 July 1939), p. 11.



provinces should be constituted as far as possible, on a linguistic and cultural basis.<sup>523</sup>

But the Congress in power began to view things differently from what it did in the pre-independence days. In the days following independence, Nehru and Patel felt that the linguistic issue can wait while other more pressing matters – integration, refugees, economic reconstruction – should be taken up first. There was a marked reluctance on the part of the Congress administration against rushing through with this reform, influenced by the fear that it might lead to an accentuation of fissiparous tendencies. Thus the Congress began to change its position and adopt the attitude expressed by the Dar Commission, namely that "Congress stands relieved of all past commitments". The Congress Party's programme for the 1951 elections stated that although the policy of the Congress had been "clearly and unequivocally in favour of the formation of linguistic provinces", still the Congress would stand by the conclusion of the JVP Report that 'the time was not opportune'.<sup>524</sup>

The linguistic provinces question became alive on the eve of the First General Elections in India during 1951-52. The manifestoes of various political parties emphasised the formation of linguistic provinces.<sup>525</sup> Due to the intense pressure for linguistic states within the party, the Congress too in its manifesto finalised at Bangalore, included a reference to the practical steps necessary for the formation of linguistic states in South and West India. A meeting of the Congress representatives of Andhra, Tamilnad, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Vidarbha, presided over by Shanker Rao Deo, welcomed it and requested the Government to appoint early the Boundary

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<sup>523</sup> *Ibid.* No. 2 (24 January 1946), p. 15-16.

<sup>524</sup> Vote Congress: Linguistic States, AICC, 1951 p.27.

<sup>525</sup> G.S. Halappa, *The Changing Map of India*, Mysore, 1954, p. 46; Programme of the Communist Party (published on 25 April 1951); the Manifestoes of the Socialists (4 July 1951) the Hindu Maha Sabha (13 August 1951) the Scheduled Castes Federation (7 October 1951) and Forward Block (9 November 1951).

Commission contemplated by the manifesto.<sup>526</sup> However the Government of India neither created an Andhra state, nor took any measures to set right the genuine grievances noted by the Dar Commission. Disappointed by the rejection of their demand the advocates of linguistic states resorted to intense agitations. Emotions in Andhra began to simmer. The Andhras, who felt that they had been losing much by their stay in the composite Madras state, were getting sceptical and agitated about the intentions of Nehru and his government.

Swami Sitaram's fast was the result of such feelings. On August 16, 1951, Swami Sitaram (G. Sitarama Sastry, a respected Gandhian) and several of his followers undertook a fast unto death. One month earlier he had addressed letters to the Government of Madras, the President of India, the Prime Minister and other leaders asking for an assurance, before 15 August, that the Andhra State would be formed. In the absence of such an assurance, he stated, he would fast unto death or resort to any other suitable step.<sup>527</sup> Sitaram received no replies and so began the fast unto death from 16 August 1951.

Prime Minister Nehru was entirely opposed to fasting as a method of finding a solution for political problems and felt, in this particular case, it was 'specially uncalled for'.<sup>528</sup> On 14 September Nehru assured in the Parliament that if the PCCs of Tamilnad, Andhra and Karnataka and the Madras Government could produce a joint agreement on all issues connected with the formation of the Andhra state, the Government of India would not hesitate to take further steps.<sup>529</sup> Kamaraj Nadar, President of the Tamilnad Congress Committee and Nijalingappa of the Karnataka PCC expressed their consent to the creation of the Andhra province on the basis of the Partition Committee

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<sup>526</sup> *The Hindu*, 16 July, 1951.

<sup>527</sup> *The Hindu*, 12 August, 1951.

<sup>528</sup> NAI, Letter to the Chief Minister of Madras, dated 15 August 1951 vide G.O. 2744, Public, 26 October 1951.

<sup>529</sup> *The Hindu*, 15 September 1951.

Report.<sup>530</sup> The Andhara PCC met on 14<sup>th</sup> and resolved on the same lines.<sup>531</sup> These developments made no effect on Nehru. He merely said in the Parliament that he would yield to 'facts but not to fasts'. Statements like these made the Free Press Journal (Bombay) comment editorially a year later on 30 September 1952, as follows:

'Shri Nehru is opposed to the formation of linguistic states and disintegration of Hyderabad....If there is a strong demand for linguistic provinces and rival claims of adjacent areas are settled by mutual adjustment. . . . but Shri Nehru will not step into arbitrate in the event of disputes between adjacent areas.....This is a classic example of passing the buck. Shri Nehru is fully aware that it is easier for the camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for the champions of linguistic states to agree on border areas. By asking for the impossible, Shri Nehru is washing his hands off a major problem that deserves to be satisfactorily settled.'<sup>532</sup> On 20 September after 35 days of fasting, Swami Sitaram gave up the fast at the request of Vinoba Bhave.<sup>533</sup>

During the Election campaign in Andhra in December 1951, there were demonstrations in Visakhapatnam and other places demanding the formation of the Andhra State.<sup>534</sup> 'At Guntur he (Nehru) was shouted down....Mr. Nehru heard nothing, but 'we want Andhra state, we want Andhra state' from everywhere.<sup>535</sup> In the elections to the Madras Legislative Assembly during January 1952, the Congress fared poorly in the Andhra districts.

The Communist Party of India (CPI) had taken up the linguistic states issue for continuous discussions. As we have already seen, the Communist

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<sup>530</sup> *The Hindu*, 13 September 1951.

<sup>531</sup> *The Hindu*, 15 September 1951.

<sup>532</sup> *The Hindu*, 17 September 1951.

<sup>533</sup> *The Hindu*, 9 October 1951.

<sup>534</sup> *The Hindu*, 28 December 1951.

<sup>535</sup> Current, 2 January 1952, p.8, quoted in Selig S. Harrison, *India, the Most Dangerous Decades*, Princeton, 1960, p.235.

Party first became seriously concerned with this question in the days before independence when the issue of a separate Pakistan was still in doubt. Instead of endorsing the Pakistan idea as such, they endorsed 'what was just' in the Pakistan demand, namely the right of self determination for the Pathan nation, the Punjabi nation, the Baluchi nation, the Sindhi nation and so forth. They also gave nation status to the Telugus, Tamils, Maharashtrians and other important language groups of South India. However Indian public opinion failed to appreciate the subtle difference between supporting Pakistan and supporting 'what was just' in the Pakistan demand. The Communist Party itself ultimately came to realise that its policy had been weighted slightly on the Pakistan side. Therefore this line was repudiated at the Calcutta Congress in 1948.<sup>536</sup>

The Communist Party believed that only the fight for linguistic states will succeed in establishing a true Indian federation. The demand for linguistic states arose from a historically evolved process which finally began giving recognition to the regional languages. The Party organ, Peoples' Age stated in 1948: "We support the demand for linguistic provinces because we know that through it the people of the various linguistic units are taking their first step against the central bourgeois leadership and its policy of suppression of national groups."<sup>537</sup>

In the Election Manifesto of 1951 the Party promised: It (the Peoples Democratic Government under Communist Party) will form national states by the abolition of the princely states and reconstruction of the present provinces, grant them wide powers including the right of self determination and create a united India by the voluntary consent of the nationalities and tribal people and national minorities whenever possible.<sup>538</sup> Engaging in a discussion in the Parliament on the resolution demanding the formation of linguistic states,

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<sup>536</sup> Marshall Windmiller, *Linguistic Regionalism in India*, Pacific Affairs, Vol. 27, No. 4 (December 1954) p.310.

<sup>537</sup> *Peoples Age*, Vol. VII, No. 10 (5 September, 1948), p. 16.

<sup>538</sup> Election Manifesto of the Communist Party of India, Peoples Publishing House, (Bombay, 6<sup>th</sup> August 1951).

A.K. Gopalan, the Communist leader remarked: "For inspiring the people, for enthusing the people, for making the people understand that they are part of India, and if the development of the country as a whole must be ensured, distribution of the States on a linguistic basis is very essential".<sup>539</sup>

The Communist Party instructed all its class organisations to conduct mass campaigns and organise agitations demanding linguistic Aikya Kerala. The Kerala State Trade Union Congress (KPTUC) held a convention at Alleppey on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1952 and demanded through a political resolution that a linguistic province should be formed by amalgamating Malabar and Travancore-Cochin regions. The resolution blamed that the Congress ministries of Travancore-Cochin and Madras States were strengthening the negative stand taken by the central government.<sup>540</sup> All the meetings of the trade unions and Communist Party, resolutions were passed demanding Aikya Kerala.<sup>541</sup>

A.K. Poduval, General secretary of the Chirakkal Taluk Kisan Sangham issued a statement enlightening the peasants about initiating Aikya Kerala agitation as their own issue.<sup>542</sup> A resolution passed by the Kisan Sangham requested the local units to organise public meetings, discussions, processions and artistic performances since Aikya Kerala is essential for achieving many life demands of the peasants.<sup>543</sup> The Malabar District Committee of the Communist party issued instructions to its subordinate units to step up the agitation for the Aikya Kerala Movement.<sup>544</sup>

The seriousness which the Communist party attached to the issue was indicated by the Central Committee resolution of January 1953 which stated:

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<sup>539</sup> The Parliamentary Debates, Official Report 12 July 1952, p.3702.

<sup>540</sup> *Deshabhimani*, 7 July 1952.

<sup>541</sup> C. Kannan, Interview at Kannoorkara, Kannur, 16 October 2005.

<sup>542</sup> *Karivellur Bulletin*, Published by Chirakkal Taluk Kisan Sangham (Mal.) Taliparamba, 1953, p.20.

<sup>543</sup> *Ibid.*, p.35.

<sup>544</sup> TNA, FNR D.O.No. P4/53-18 Public Department dated 12-10-1953. p. 334.

"The Communist Party calls upon all its members to immediately take initiative in uniting the broad sections of the people and build a powerful and irresistible movement round this issue. The Communist party desires to emphasize that the demand can become really irresistible only if the organised working class, peasants, students and other sections of the people are actively rallied in the movement and the United Front is built around this core".<sup>545</sup>

The Communists believed that if bourgeois democracy was to be genuinely established, it had to be based on national states clearly demarcated by language. Bourgeois development necessitated the growth of national states and therefore the fight for linguistic states was essentially a step in combating the feudal aspects of society. In the movement for linguistic states, according to Ajay Ghosh, three points had to be noted:

- (i) It is a democratic movement as it allows all the people to participate in government if their own language is the language of the government, which is not possible in a multinational state.
- (ii) being a bourgeois stage of development, it combats feudal elements,
- (iii) finally, democracy demands the full flowering of culture which is possible only in linguistic states.<sup>546</sup>

In line with this policy, the Communists had taken an active part in the linguistic agitation. They were actively associated with the various ad hoc organizations set up to promote linguistic causes and engaged in serious discussions inside and outside legislatures.

The Praja Socialist Party (PSP) had recognised the need for some reorganisation, but it had not favoured a hasty decision on a purely linguistic basis. When the Socialists held their special convention at Betul in June 1953 they adopted a resolution on linguistic organisation. It welcomed the decision to appoint a commission and recognised "the overwhelming desire of the

<sup>545</sup> "Unite People for Linguistic States Here & Now", Cross roads, Vol. IV, No. 38 (25 January, 1953), pp.8-9.

<sup>546</sup> Ajay Ghosh, *On the work of the Third Party Congress of the CPI*, Peoples Publishing House, 1954.

various regions of the country to have states as far as possible on a linguistic basis."<sup>547</sup> It continued: "The convention wishes to emphasize that the redrawing of the administrative map on linguistic basis should be confined to the major languages enumerated in the 8<sup>th</sup> schedule to the constitution. The Convention is further of the opinion that the conditions precedent to the creation of a new state are economic viability and development and administrative efficiency".<sup>548</sup> The Malabar Committee of the PSP held at Kozhikode on 11 October 1953 decided that the party members should not take part in the movement for the formation of Aikya Kerala till a decision on this was taken by the newly elected District committee. K.A. Damodara Menon M.P protested against this decision.<sup>549</sup> The Socialists argued for a cautious approach, giving primary consideration to the problem of national unity.

The two rightwing parties, JanaSangh and the Hindu Mahasabha agreed that some form of reorganization was necessary. Deena Dayalji of Bharateeya JanaSangh stated in a press conference that the party was not favouring the reorganization of India on linguistic basis.<sup>550</sup> The Hindu Mahasabha "does not regard language as the only basis for reformation of states eventhough it recognizes language as the most important basis for such reformation."<sup>551</sup>

The JanaSangh held that "language is important but should not be the sole criterion." It argued for a unitary form of government and favoured the disintegration of Hyderabad.<sup>552</sup> The unitary trend was manifested in the Sangh slogan of 'Akhand Bharath' and Bharatiya Samskriti (Consolidated

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<sup>547</sup> Report of the Special Convention of the Praja Socialist Party (Betul) Bombay: PSP, 1953 p. 123.

<sup>548</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>549</sup> TNA, FNR, DO No. p4/53-20 Public Department dated 13-11-1953.

<sup>550</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, 15 December 1953.

<sup>551</sup> *Hindustan Times* (Delhi) 1 June 1954.

<sup>552</sup> *Times of India* (Delhi) 28 May 1954

India and Indian Culture).<sup>553</sup> The JanSangh was generally considered to be the party of 'Hindu nationalism' with all the implications of this posture: a strong United India with Hindi as the 'national' language (Rashtrabhasha). The Hindu Mahasabha opposed states reorganisation as it "militates against the integrity of India." V.D. Savarkar, the ideologist of the Hindu Mahasabha stated, "I acknowledge only one mother, ie, Mother India and do not treat provinces as subnations."<sup>554</sup> M.S.Golwalker, the leader of the RashtreeyaSwayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) stated that the formation of linguistic states was against national unity.<sup>555</sup> He had condemned the linguistic division of the country and appealed to everyone to stand up for unity and integrity of the country.<sup>556</sup>

Conservative economic interests were strongly opposing linguistic principle. Both the All India Manufacturers Organisation and the All India Exporters Association presented memoranda to the States Reorganisation Commission opposing linguistic reorganisation. Whereas the latter wished to retain the status quo, the former agreed that some reorganisation was necessary but that it should be based on economic and political principles rather than language.<sup>557</sup>

The House of the People (Loksabha) discussed on 7 July 1952, a resolution moved by Tushar Chatterjee, a Communist, demanding the formation of linguistic states. The Congress was opposed to the resolution and got it defeated by its majority. Despite Nehru's clear rejection of the resolutions, many Congressmen like Gadgil, Punjabrao Deshmukh and others supported the formation of linguistic states. However the resolution was

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<sup>553</sup> Motilal Jhangiani, *Jan Sangh and Swatantra: a profile of the rightist parties in India*, Manaktalas, 1967, p.162.

<sup>554</sup> Indra Prakash, *Hindu Mahasabha, its Contribution to Indian Politics*, New Delhi, 1966, p.138.

<sup>555</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, 11 May 1953

<sup>556</sup> TNA, FNR, DoNo.P4/52-3 dt 4-3-1952

<sup>557</sup> *Hindustan Times* (Delhi) 10 and 16 June 1954



defeated, 261 against 77 because the Congressmen prudently decided to obey the party whip.<sup>558</sup>

Intervening in the discussion, Nehru stated:...In these critical days or years we must give topmost priority to developing a sense of unity in India and that anything that might come in the way of that unity might perhaps be delayed a little, till we have laid that strong foundation...At a time when the world hangs on the verge of a crisis...for us to unsettle and uproot the whole of India for a theoretical approach or a linguistic division seems to me an extraordinarily unwise thing.<sup>559</sup> In the middle of July, the Council of States (Rajya Sabha) rejected a resolution moved in favour of the creation of Andhra State by Pydah Venkata Narayana, a member from the Andhra area.<sup>560</sup> These developments clearly illustrate the vacillating attitude of the Congress to the question of linguistic states.

Dr. Lanka Sundaram, an Andhra M.P took a lead role in organising the All India Linguistic Provinces Conference at Amraoti (then in M.P, later in Maharashtra). The Samyukta Maharashtra Conference was also held along with it. The Conferences demanded the immediate formation of the Andhra, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala states out of the undisputed territories and the appointment by the President of a statutory Boundaries Commission to adjudicate boundary disputes.<sup>561</sup>

It was in this background that Potti Sriramulu, a respected Gandhian and a passionate Andhra patriot undertook a fast unto death on 19 October 1952 in Madras.<sup>562</sup> On 8<sup>th</sup> December 1952, after 50 days of the fast, Nehru criticised it. Nehru made a statement in the Rajya Sabha that if a general

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<sup>558</sup> The Parliamentary Debates, Official Report, 7 July 1952, pp. 3338-41, 12 July 1952, pp. 3744-47, 3753-57.

<sup>559</sup> The Parliamentary Debates. Official Report, 7 July 1952.

<sup>560</sup> K.V. Narayana Rao, *The Emergence of Andhra Pradesh*, (Bombay 1973) p.244.

<sup>561</sup> *The Hindu*, 17, 18 and 19 August 1952.

<sup>562</sup> KV. Narayana Rao. *op. cit.*, p. 248.

agreement could be reached, the Government of India were willing to take early steps for the formation of an Andhra State out of the undisputed Telugu areas of Madras state.<sup>563</sup> Appeals to Sriramulu to give up his fast on the basis of Nehru's statement were in vain since Sriramulu remembered that Nehru did not act on his own statements during Swami Sitaram's fast. It was reported that when Nehru's statement was read to him, Sriramulu said, "Nehru is fooling us."<sup>564</sup> There began sporadic disturbances throughout Andhra. Hartals were taking place. The situation deteriorated on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. On the night of 15 December, the 58<sup>th</sup> day of his fast, Sriramulu breathed his last.<sup>565</sup>

The news of Sriramulu's death shocked the people and the disturbances reached the climax on 16 December. Violence broke out in several places. Twelve persons were killed in police firing on demonstrations and violent outbursts.<sup>566</sup> The Central government had till this time refused to accede to the demand stating that it could not be coerced. But finally it climbed down from such an untenable position and Nehru stated that he was willing to take early steps to form an Andhra state out of the Telugu areas but excluding Madras city.<sup>567</sup>

The Communists accepted the offer since it fulfilled their demand for a linguistic state. But many other political forces opportunistically and in violation of the linguistic principle refused to consider the offer. The Raja of Panagal and the Raja of Vizianagaram opposed the proposal. T. Prakasam and the PSP and other smaller parties rejected the offer.<sup>568</sup> On 19<sup>th</sup> December 1952 the Prime Minister announced the formation of Andhra Pradesh and

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<sup>563</sup> *The Hindu*, 9 and 10 December 1952

<sup>564</sup> K V Narayana Rao, *op. cit.*, p.248, 266.

<sup>565</sup> TNA, FNR, DO NO P4/52-53 dt 6 Jan 1953.

<sup>566</sup> G.V. Subba Rao, *History of Andhra Movement*, Vol. II, Hyderabad, 1982, p.511.

<sup>567</sup> *The Hindu*, 19 December 1952.

<sup>568</sup> *The Hindu*, 21 December 1952

appointed Justice K.N. Wanchoo to consider and report on the financial and other implications of this decision.

With the legitimate demands of the Andhra people being granted, the movement came to an end except for the issue of inclusion of the Telugu speaking areas of the Hyderabad state. The attitude of certain political forces and landlord interests showed that a section of the Andhra bourgeoisie and landlords wanted to capture Madras for themselves in view of its trade and port facilities. "This demand failed because it violated the linguistic nationality principle and was not in the interests of the common people of Andhra."<sup>569</sup> The Andhra Communist Party and the Krishak Lok party were the only parties agreeable to abandon Madras city.<sup>570</sup>

It was the widespread violence which broke out after the death of Potti Sriramulu that moved the government to action. The growing violence which reached its climax on 16 December and which could be brought under control only by 19 December must have been the compelling reason that made the Government of India decide. K.V. Narayana Rao observes, 'If the announcement of 19 December had been made some days earlier, the life of Potti Sriramulu might have been saved. But possibly the Government of India felt that they should not yield to fasts and stood on prestige.'<sup>571</sup> Moreover at the Nanalagar (Hyderabad) Congress session in January 1953, Nehru while referring to the Andhra question and Potti Sriramalu, said, "I did not want any one to compel us or coerce us into taking any action".<sup>572</sup> Again, in a meeting at Belgaum Nehru condemned the attempts to put pressure on the government through fasts and Satyagrahas. "If some one believes that the

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<sup>569</sup> Prakash Karat, *Language and Nationality Politics in India*, Orient Longman, Madras, 1973, 1973 p.41.

<sup>570</sup> The Indian Express, 13 and 14 January 1953, *The Hindu*, 20 December 1952.

<sup>571</sup> K.V. Narayana Rao, *op. cit.*, p 253.

<sup>572</sup> *The Indian Express*, 18 January 1953.

Andhra state was formed due to the fast undertaken by Potti Sriramulu, they are living in a fool's paradise".<sup>573</sup>

Some other prominent leaders of the Congress party also looked upon the whole idea of forming states on a linguistic basis as immensely dangerous and harmful. C. Rajagopalachari considered the whole conception a 'tribal idea'.<sup>574</sup> K.M. Munshi stated that the proposal to redivide the country, along linguistic lines was 'fraught with danger' and that "if I had my way, I would maintain the existing political structure till the fear of international war disappears".<sup>575</sup>

Participating in a debate in the Madras Legislative Assembly C.H. Kanaran a Communist member stated that the Government was compelled to decide the formation of Andhra state only after the death of Potti Sriramulu and 12 Andhra fighters.<sup>576</sup> Then he invited the attention of the House on the backwardness of Malabar. 'Malabar has not been provided with a Medical college or an Arts college. No steps have been taken by the Government for improvement of agriculture; Keralites will have prospects only after the formation of a Kerala State'.<sup>577</sup>

Replying to a question by another communist member, K.P. Gopalan as to whether the State Government have made any recommendation to the Central Government for the formation of a Kerala linguistic state, Chief Minister C. Rajagopalachari replied in the negative.<sup>578</sup> T.C. Narayanan Nambiar, another Communist member from Malabar also accused the Madras Government of neglecting Malayalees for many years.<sup>579</sup> 'The price of rice

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<sup>573</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, 29 April 1953, p.142.

<sup>574</sup> Madras Legislative Assembly Debates, 11 March 1953.

<sup>575</sup> *Overseas Hindustan Times*, 19 March 1953.

<sup>576</sup> Madras Legislative Assembly Debates, Official Report, 10 March 1953 p.125.

<sup>577</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>578</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 March 1953, p. 141.

<sup>579</sup> *Ibid.*, p.444.

has been enormously increased in the past 15 years. Therefore the condition of the people was transferred from 'bad to worse' ... 'The budget proposals prove that Malabar has no hope in continuing in this state as a district. It is for this reason that we demand that there should not be any delay in the formation of Kerala State. Malabar was described by a former Prime Minister (O.P. Ramaswamy Reddiar) of Tamilnad as a 'great burden'.<sup>580</sup>

Referring to the statement of Dr. K.B. Menon (PSP) that Coorg and Travancore Cochin should join Madras state, Narayanan Nambiar, states, 'We don't want Coorg. It has to be joined with Karnataka. Malabar and other Malayalam speaking areas of Kasaragod Taluk in South Canara district, Gudalore and Travancore Cochin state could be integrated to form a Kerala State.'<sup>581</sup>

The Andhra State Bill was debated in the House of the People during the summer 1953 and on October 1 the new state was inaugurated.<sup>582</sup> Andhra was the first state to be set up in response to linguistic agitation, an agitation that had been going on longer than any other. The creation of Andhra State strengthened the demand for redistribution of all states on linguistic basis. The decision to allow the Andhras to separate from Madras was the signal for linguistic groups all over India to strengthen their agitation.

It was in this background that the new stand taken by the Malabar Pradesh Congress Committee towards the formation of a Dakshina Samsthan (Southern State) opened up a wide discussion on the Aikya Kerala Movement. Almost all the political parties, groups, influential persons and social sections inside and outside Kerala actively took part in the discussions. Pattom Thanu Pillai, the leader of the Praja Socialist Party (PSP) in a meeting declared that he was against linguistic state and that he endorses the suggestion of K. Kelappan for a 'west coast state' considering the economic, geographical and

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<sup>580</sup> Madras Legislative Assembly Debates, Official Report, 17 March 1953 p. 445.

<sup>581</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 447.

<sup>582</sup> G.O. 3316, Public 30 December, 1953.

defence factors.<sup>583</sup> E.M.S. Namboodiripad in an article, questioned the irrational basis of the 'west coast state' that comprised of the regions between Gokarnam and Kanyakumari put forward on the mythological foundations of Parasurama and Perumal legends.<sup>584</sup> The proposal of Kuttikrishnan Nair, member of Madras ministry, for the integration of Travancore state with Madras was strongly supported by A.P. Udayabhanu, the Secretary of the Travancore Cochin State Congress Committee.<sup>585</sup> Kuttikrishnan Nair unequivocally declared that he was against Aikya Keralam since it would not be an economically sound state.<sup>586</sup>

Responding to the MPCC Resolution on the formation of a southern state, the secretary of the Communist Party Kerala State Committee issued a statement that the common people of Travancore Cochin and Malabar would not be supporting this proposal. "It is unacceptable to all Malayalees born in Malayali soil and who imbibed Malayali culture".<sup>587</sup> The party plenum organised by the Kerala provincial committee at Trichur from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> April 1952 had passed a Resolution on Aikya Kerala demanding the formation of a Malayalam speaking United Kerala State by separating Malayali majority areas from Madras state and Tamil majority areas of Travancore Cochin state.<sup>588</sup> The Party stated that 'language itself should be taken as the basic factor for states reorganisation. Language is the common factor which unites a group of people having common culture, tradition, social, economic and psychological unity. Therefore it is natural to claim a separate government for a people who speak a common language. It is ridiculous to argue that the integration of Travancore Cochin with Madras would enhance administrative

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<sup>583</sup> Mathrubhumi, 12 May, 1953.

<sup>584</sup> E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *Keralthile Desheeya Prasnam* (Mal) (National Question in Kerala), Navayugam Annual special, 1953.

<sup>585</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, 13 May 1953.

<sup>586</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 May 1953.

<sup>587</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 May 1953.

<sup>588</sup> Resolution (Mal.) Kerala Committee of the Communist party of India, Navalokam Press, Ernakulam, April 1952.

convenience".<sup>589</sup> A.K. Gopalan M.P. strongly criticised the MPCC Resolution and stated that the immediate formation of Aikya Kerala was essential for the solution of various problems faced by the Keralites.<sup>590</sup>

The Mathrubhoomi attempted a survey on the responses of the Tamil leaders about the integration of Travancore Cochin with residual Madras state. The Tamil leaders including Congressmen demanded a 'Tamizhakam' on the basis of Tamil Language. 'The main political programme in Tamilnadu is Brahmin-Non Brahmin dispute. The major political parties of Tamilnadu including Congress are led by Non Brahmin leaders. Kamaraja Nadar and Bhakthavalsalam are aware that the integration is not going to be implemented. The very influential Dravida Kazhakam led by Rama Swamy Naicker and Dravida Munnetta Kazhakam led by Annadurai would not include Kerala in their Dravidanadu Republic. Even if the Travancore Cochin people came forward for integration, the Tamilians would not welcome the idea."<sup>591</sup> Regarding the inclusion of Malabar in the Southern State, Kamaraj Nadar is said to have remarked: 'Why should that Communist nuisance to be put on our head?'<sup>592</sup>

K. Kelappan M.P. reiterated that language should not be taken as the lone factor for states reorganisation. Other factors including economic conditions, geography, climate, population etc. should be considered in this regard.<sup>593</sup> A Malayalam linguistic state without the cultivable areas of South Travancore and resourceful forest lands of Devikulam would not satisfy a Malayali.<sup>594</sup>

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<sup>589</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, 30 May 1953.

<sup>590</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 June 1953.

<sup>591</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 June, 1953.

<sup>592</sup> C.K. Moossath, Kelappan Enna Mahamanushyan (Mal.) SPCS Kottayam 1982, p.185.

<sup>593</sup> *Lokavani*, Vol.5, Issue 11, 1953, Thambram, Madras, p. 42.

<sup>594</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, 13 June 1953.

C. Unniraja in a pamphlet charged that the Congress is negating the entire tradition of the national movement. Since 1921 Congress had been demanding linguistic reorganization of provinces through a number of resolutions, decisions and reports. Now one section of the Congress (Malabar) is demanding the integration of Travancore Cochin and Coorg with Madras and another section (Travancore Cochin) willing to remain in the Rajpramukh rule as a 'B' state. This position of the Congress leadership on the Aikya Kerala issue reveals another example for the many betrayals of the pre independent promises.<sup>595</sup>

Prof: Joseph Mundassery after reviewing the progress of the Aikya Kerala Movement lamented that the Congress leadership ignored the Aikya Kerala formation after the integration of Travancore-Cochin States. The central Congress leadership had been refuting the resolutions already passed by the party, including the resolution on linguistic-reorganisation of states. Malayalees should resist the attempt of the MPCC to put a bundle of dirty linen on the shoulder of Kerala, ignoring the popular will.<sup>596</sup>

The Kerala Socialist Party (KSP) issued a statement recognising the reorganisation of states on linguistic lines. Linguistic states would be a solution to many economic imbalances. KSP opposed the MPCC resolution for the integration of Travancore Cochin with residual Madras state.<sup>597</sup> The KSP had declared that its aim was to establish an 'independent Kerala Socialist Republic'.<sup>598</sup>

Kumbalath Sanku Pillai, a Congress leader of Travancore-Cochin state and former president of KPCC remarked that the MPCC demand was simply 'madness'. He also opposed the formation of Aikya Kerala by joining

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<sup>595</sup> C. Unniraja, *Aikya Keralam, Our Immediate Demand* (Mal.), Prabhatham Publishing Company, Kozhikode, 1953 pp. 6-9.

<sup>596</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, 14 June 1953.

<sup>597</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 June, 1953.

<sup>598</sup> 'Swatantra Keralam Vannetheeru' (Mal) (Independent Kerala is Inevitable). Draft Resolution for the Independent Kerala conference organised by K.S.P, Trivandrum, 1952: *Mathrubhumi*, 19 June 1953.



Travancore-Cochin and Malabar since it would lead to the ceding of Tamil areas of Travancore to Madras.<sup>599</sup>

The MPCC Resolution on T.C-Malabar integration and the supporting statement of the law minister K.P. Kuttikrishnan Nair were strongly criticised by the Madras Kerala Samajam.<sup>600</sup> The Madras Chief Minister C. Rajagopalachari strongly opposed the proposal for TC-Madras integration.<sup>601</sup>

Majority of the Travancore Congress leadership desires to continue the status quo of TC state as a separate political unit, without joining with any other segment.<sup>602</sup> The PSP feared that Kerala would be the first Communist state in India if a Kerala state was formed exclusively with Malayalees. Hence they stood for the Southern state.<sup>603</sup>

The Aikya Kerala Committee met under the presidentship of K.P.Kesava Menon at Trichur and passed a resolution that the MPCC Palghat Resolution was unfortunate. Kerala Committees of the Communist Party, Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) and the Kerala Socialist Party (KSP) protested against the Palghat Resolution and exhorted the Keralites to join together for Aikya Kerala, the birthright of the Malayalees.<sup>604</sup>

The Christian community in the TC states, was not much enthusiastic in the Aikya Kerala Movement. They acquired a favourable position in the TC state by earnest efforts through centuries and felt that such a position could be continued only if the state remained as such. But once they realised about the invariability of a United Kerala State, silently they began migrating

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<sup>599</sup> *Mathrubhumi* 14 June 1953.

<sup>600</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>601</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 June 1953.

<sup>602</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, 19 June 1953.

<sup>603</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>604</sup> *Navayugam*, 20 June, 1953.

to Malabar and established educational institutions, hospitals, small industries, churches etc.<sup>605</sup>

The Ezhavas of TC state welcomed Aikya Kerala with great enthusiasm, since it would strengthen their position. In the Golden Jubilee Conference (1953) the SNDP yogam passed resolutions proposing that membership of SNDP yogam should be thrown open to all citizens, that SNDP yogam should be reconstituted on all Kerala basis and that agitations should be started for land reforms.<sup>606</sup> Likewise the Muslims of TC state also aspired to brighten their prospects in the proposed Aikya Kerala.<sup>607</sup>

The Nair community of TC state in general favoured Aikya Kerala. However the Nairs of Travancore living south of Attingal desired to retain the TC state or if possible Travancore alone as such. The Nairs would support the South Indian state if it could reduce communal feelings and domination of some sections in Travancore.<sup>608</sup>

The Tamilians of TC state wanted to go to Tamilnad, whether Aikya Kerala was formed or TC state remained as such. They felt that the forcible attempt to retain them in Kerala was undemocratic and autocratic.<sup>609</sup>

Dr. P.J. Thomas, retired Professor of Economics, Madras University in a statement remarked that matters would become complicated if TC state was integrated with Madras state. "It will lead to unending conflicts between Malayalees and Tamilians'. He proposed the formation of a west coast state as a part A state considering exclusively economic factors.<sup>610</sup>

The joint meeting of the Travancore Cochin PCC Executive Committee and Legislature Congress committee held at Ernakulam kept

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<sup>605</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, 19 June 1953.

<sup>606</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, 19 June 1953.

<sup>607</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 June 1953.

<sup>608</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 June 1953.

<sup>609</sup> *Navayugam*, 20 June 1953.

<sup>610</sup> *Mathrbhoomi*, 19 June 1953.

silence over Aikya Kerala.<sup>611</sup> K.M. Raja, president of the Madras Malayali Samajam pointed out that the Palghat Resolution of MPCC was against the Congress resolutions on linguistic reorganisation. 'It is meaningless to oppose Aikya Kerala by the Congressmen who were the organisers of the Aikya Kerala Convention at Trichur'.<sup>612</sup>

The Kerala State Committee of the Communist Party issued a statement that the Malayalees inside and outside Kerala unanimously protested against the MPCC Palghat Resolution, as an unnecessary commodity. 'The life of one and a quarter crore Malayalees is deteriorating day by day since they are scattered in the Malabar, Kasargod and Gudalur regions of Madras state and a 'B' state ruled by the Rajapramukh of Travancore Cochin state. The Communist party reiterates the demand for the formation of Aikya Kerala state by incorporating Malayali majority regions of Madras and Travancore Cochin states and Mayyazhi (Mahe). As we are not ready to become the tail of Madras state, we never wish Tamil-Kannada speaking areas to make them tails of Aikya Kerala.'<sup>613</sup>

One of the serious arguments against United Kerala State was that it would not be economically stable. Discussing this argument, Mathrubhumi in an editorial attempts to examine the economical and cultural backwardness of Malabar, a tale end of the Madras state.<sup>614</sup> Malabar was an extensive rice cultivating area, second to Tanjavoor. Thanjavoor was transformed into a rice granary through implementing major irrigational projects. But Malabar which had no irrigational projects solely depended upon rain water.

The extent of total wasteland in Malabar was 864167 acres in 1939-40. After spending a lot of money for propaganda to increase agricultural production, the extent of cultivable wasteland in 1943-44 was extended to 944844 acres. During the year 1941-42 the percapita income at Kodaikkanal

<sup>611</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 June 1953.

<sup>612</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 June 1953.

<sup>613</sup> *Navayugam*, 27 June, 1953.

<sup>614</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, Editorial, 2 July 1953.

was Rs. 24.50 whereas the pci at Kozhikode was Rs. 4.50. The living index at Madras was 118 whereas it was 20 in Malabar. The number of Government employees in Malabar was comparatively lesser than in Visakhapatnam, though Malabar was educationally more advanced than the latter.

The allotment to Malayalam in the Madras University budget for the year 1952-53 was a meagre amount of Rs. 4500/- out of the total expenditure estimated at Rs. 40.5 lakhs. A lexicon in Tamil and encyclopaedias in Tamil and Telugu and other precious basic texts were published by the Madras University. But Malayalam was completely neglected. Malabar had no facilities for technical education. There was not a regional museum in Malabar to preserve the historical remains and artifacts. The cities in Malabar had no proper water supply schemes or covered drainages. Roads in Malabar were in a dilapidated condition.<sup>615</sup>

There was a wrong notion that the Malayalees would be deprived of from the government jobs and employment opportunities after the formation of a separate Kerala state. Whatever be the division of states, only one citizenship is allowed in India- Indian citizenship. Anyone who resides in a state for a stipulated period becomes a native of that state and becomes eligible for anything that a citizen is entitled to get. A good number of Keralites are engaged in different fields of employment in the city of Bombay.<sup>616</sup>

Another unnecessary fear was that Malabar would be placed under monarchy, after the integration with Travancore-Cochin State. But the proposed Kerala State by the Aikya Kerala Committee is a part A state in which Rajapramukh has no place as per the Indian Constitution. Therefore the formation of Kerala State as a Part A State means the ending of Rajpramukh rule.<sup>617</sup>

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<sup>615</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, Editorial 2 July 1953.

<sup>616</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>617</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, Editorial 2 July 1953.

Responding to these arguments some leaders of the Malabar Congress attempted to provide ideological basis for their position. Samuel Aron, an industrialist and leader of Malabar Congress published a lengthy article favouring the formation of Southern state and criticising the linguistic state of Kerala.<sup>618</sup> He ridiculed that the Aikya Kerala Committee is acting like the old 'Sunday Congress'. Aron argued that Aikya Kerala was a 'sentimental demand' put forward by the Communists and others. The necessary prerequisite for the successful function of a state should be economic stability. Mathrubhumi's contention that the proposed Kerala state would be more-economically stable than other Indian states seems to be unfounded. The revenues from metals and minerals, Neendakara project, Cochin port etc. come under the jurisdiction of the centre. The high prices and demands for spices may not be stable permanently. Malayalees will have greater prospects if they are made part of a southern state.

K.A. Damodara Menon, Secretary of Aikya Kerala Committee, in his reply to Samuel Aron stated that there is no contradiction in the stand taken by the Aikya Kerala Committee from time to time. There was no dispute among the different political parties as to the necessity of a Kerala state. It is a fact that there were differences of opinion regarding the component units to be included in the Kerala state. It was only after the Palghat Resolution of the Malabar Pradesh Congress committee that opposition was raised against Aikya Kerala State. The MPCC Resolution states that it is not necessary to form a Kerala state. He also pointed out that the Aikya Kerala Committee had not been engaging in agitational activities because of the instruction by Nehru and other Congress leaders to wait for some more time.<sup>619</sup>

Countering the arguments of Samuel Aron and others, NC Sekhar presented the Communist party position through 'Navayugam'. He charged that the exponents of the Southern state are attempting to make division and confusion in the democratic movement to safeguard the vested interests of

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<sup>618</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, 17 July 1953.

<sup>619</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, 21 July 1953.

European and native estate owners, bankers, trading companies and exploit the Tamil and Malayali laymen.<sup>620</sup> They are endorsing the position of the imperialists who divide and exploit the people in the name of 'Indian unity', 'economic stability' and 'southern state'. Quoting from the Census Reports and other official sources, NC Sekhar argues that the proposed Kerala State would be a stable one.<sup>621</sup>

Aikya Kerala conventions were held in Bombay, Ceylon, Delhi and Madras, demanding the formation of Aikya Kerala at the earliest. The Aikya Kerala convention at Bombay organised by the Malayalai associations on 4<sup>th</sup> August condemned the demands for Southern State and West Coast State.<sup>622</sup> The Bangalore Malayali Convention held on 16 August demanded that Aikya Kerala State also should be declared along with the formation of Andhra state on 1<sup>st</sup> October.<sup>623</sup> Dr. C.R. Krishna Pillai who presided over the convention stated that the Malayalees outside Kerala are taking more interest in the formation of Aikya Kerala since they are directly experiencing much difficulties in the absence of such a state. The Communist party is the only political party which is holding a definite stand on the Aikya Kerala issue.<sup>624</sup>

The Bombay Malayali Conference organized at Mattunga on 3 October declared, "Aikya Kerala is our birthright and we will have it".<sup>625</sup> In the Aikya Kerala Conference at Coimbatore under the presidentship of K.P. Kesava Menon, K.A. Damodara Menon replied to the criticism against Aikya Kerala formation. It is baseless to argue that if Kerala state is formed, Keralites will lose their citizenship in other parts of India, since an Indian citizen can move and reside anywhere in India. He also pointed out to the critics of an

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<sup>620</sup> *Navayugam*, 1 August 1953.

<sup>621</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>622</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, 9 August 1953.

<sup>623</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 August 1953.

<sup>624</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>625</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, 20 October 1953.

'economically unsound Kerala state' that neither U.P, the largest state in India nor Coorg, one of the smallest states in India is economically stable. No state can move forward without the assistance of the centre. In the same conference, Joseph Mundassery stated that European states including Italy, France and Germany were formed on the basis of language and culture.

K.P. Kesava Menon reviewed the activities of the Aikya Kerala Committee and reported that taluk wise Aikya Kerala Committees had been formed and that all the political parties who support the Aikya Kerala demand were incorporated in these activities.<sup>626</sup> In the Trichur Aikya Kerala Conference met on 18 October, K.A. Damodara Menon pointed out that 'there is not a Congress committee for the entire Kerala and that Malabar and Travancore Cochin are having separate Pradesh Congress committees. A.K. Gopalan, citing the example of Andhra, stressed on the fact that only agitations by mass organisations could achieve Aikya Kerala.'<sup>627</sup>

The success of the Andhara struggle stimulated the struggle for linguistic reorganisation in other parts of the country like Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and Gujarat.<sup>628</sup> The Karnataka Sahitya Parishad demanded the formation of Karnatak state. Similarly the Kerala Sahitya Parishad gave a call for the realisation of Aikya Kerala.<sup>629</sup> A united front of leftists was formed with the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), Kerala Socialist Party (KSP) and the Communist Party to initiate efforts for an Aikya Kerala together with all political parties and leaders of progressive movements. The popular struggles that were unleashed during this period in many regions forced the central government to appoint a States Reorganisation Commission.

On 29 December 1953, the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of India set up a three man Commission to enquire into the linguistic question. The Commission, known as the States Reorganisation

<sup>626</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>627</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, 20 October 1953.

<sup>628</sup> P. Narayanan Nair, *Ara Noottantilloode* (Mal) 1999 (1<sup>st</sup> Edn. 1973) p. 196.

<sup>629</sup> *The Hindu*, 4 January 1954.

Commission (hereinafter referred to as SRC) comprised of three distinguished Indian Statesmen, Justice Saiyid Fazl Ali (Chairman), Hriday Nath Kunzru, Member of the Council of States and Kavalam Madhava Panikkar, previously Ambassador to Egypt and China.<sup>630</sup>

Though the people of Kerala wished that the integration of Cochin and Travancore to be a preliminary to the formation of Aikya Kerala, the United State of Travancore-Cochin came to be established as a multilingual state under the Rajapramukh. The division of the KPCC into two and the MPCC's position against linguistic Aikya Kerala revealed the inner contradictions within the Congress organisation. The MPCC which demanded the formation of a Southern State (Dakshina Samsthan) was moving in tune with the central Congress leadership which upheld theories of 'centralisation'.

The Communist Party, on the other hand, took the fight for linguistic states as a fight to establish a true Indian federation, a fight against the central bourgeois leadership and its policy of suppression of national groups. The Praja Socialist Party didn't favour a reorganisation on a purely linguistic basis. They argued for a cautious approach giving primary consideration to the problem of national unity. The JanaSangh and Hindu Mahasabha were also not favouring linguistic reorganisation.

In the Parliamentary debates, Nehru ruled out the linguistic division as an unwise thing'. However the fast and death of Potti Sriramulu and the subsequent violence broke out in Andhra compelled the central government to yield to Andhra state demand. The creation of Andhra state boosted the demand for redistribution of states on linguistic basis.

The wide range discussion on the proposal for Southern state revealed that a majority of the Malayalees and Tamilians and their representative political parties were against it. The major aspects came up for discussion in this regard were the economic stability of the proposed Kerala State,

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<sup>630</sup> Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, File No. 53/69/53, Public, 29 December, 1953. p.1.



developmental activities, political prospects, communal interests, employment opportunities etc. The different sections of the society took their own stands taking into account the existing socio-economic conditions in Malabar and Travancore Cochin areas.

Aikya Kerala conventions held inside and outside Kerala demonstrated that popular aspirations were in favour of the formation of linguistic Aikya Kerala. Local level Aikya Kerala Committees were constituted incorporating the activists of different political parties. Class organisations including trade unions and Kisan Sanghams raised the Aikya Kerala demand at the grass root level. The Aikya Kerala Movement became a mass movement towards the end of 1953. The popular struggles emerged in different parts of the country forced the central Government to appoint a States Reorganization Commission.

## CHAPTER VI

### **EMERGENCE OF THE LINGUISTIC STATE OF KERALA**

The Resolution by which the States Reorganisation Commission was appointed, had indicated some broad principles which should govern consideration of the problem of reorganisation. Para 4 of the resolution stated:

"The language and culture of an area has an undoubted importance as they represent a pattern of living which is common in that area. In considering a reorganisation of states, however, there are other important factors which have also to be borne in mind. The first essential consideration is the preservation and strengthening of the unity and security of India. Financial economic and administrative considerations are almost equally important, not only from the point of view of each state, but for the whole nation. India has embarked upon a great ordered plan for her economic, cultural and normal progress. Changes which interfere with the successful execution of such a national plan would be harmful to the national interest."<sup>631</sup>

Regarding the terms of reference the Commission was instructed to "investigate the conditions of the problem, the historical background, the existing situation and the bearing of all important and relevant factors thereon. The Government expect that the Commission would, in the first instance, not go into details, but make recommendations in regard to the broad principles which should govern the solution of this problem and if they so chose, the broad lines on which particular states should be reorganised and submit interim reports for the consideration of the Government."<sup>632</sup> Though the Commission had to take into consideration various factors for making their

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<sup>631</sup> Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, File No. 53/69/53 Public, 29 December, 1953, p.1.

<sup>632</sup> Report of the State Reorganisation Commission 1955 p.1, para2.

suggestion, the popular impression was that the Commission was to decide whether provinces were to be shaped on the basis of language and to recommend the necessary regrouping.<sup>633</sup> This was because of the fact that “the demand for reorganisation of states was often equated with the demand for the formation of linguistic provinces.”<sup>634</sup> The agitation for linguistic provinces was intensified with the Andhra agitation and the formation of Andhra state was the immediate cause behind the appointment of the States Reorganisation Commission.

The States Reorganisation Commission made maximum efforts to get a complete cross section of public opinion regarding the redistribution of provinces by receiving memorandum from interested parties, groups and persons and meeting the representatives of public opinion at various centres. The Commission received 152,250 representations, visited 104 places and interviewed over 9000 persons.<sup>635</sup> The system of assessing popular opinion by receiving communications from people ranging from telegrams, indicating the wishes of particular localities to well considered memorandum dealing with the problem as a whole, resulted into vigorous campaigns for and against the linguistic principle. The factors like administrative convenience and economic considerations were used either to support or to oppose the controversial issue of the application of linguistic principle in state reorganisations.

Heated discussions began at the national level over the states reorganisation plans. Feeling the pulse of Jawaharlal Nehru and his associates a large section of Congressmen including those in power in Central Government and in states, opposed the linguistic division. Nehru declared in a public meeting that the grouping of people on the basis of language was as dangerous as grouping of people on religious or communal lines.<sup>636</sup> He

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<sup>633</sup> K.M. Panikkar, *An Autobiography*, p.288.

<sup>634</sup> Report of the SRC para 44.

<sup>635</sup> The Hindu, 28 September 1954; Report of the SRC para 6 & 7.

<sup>636</sup> Mathrubhumi, 3 October 1956.

believed that Hyderabad state was a pillar of Indian cultural unity and its continuance would be a standing memorial to Indian secular politics. Nehru had stated in the Parliament: “Any attempt at splitting up Hyderabad would upset the whole structure of South India.”<sup>637</sup> But as Hyderabad was made up of three language groups namely the Telugus, the Kannadigas and the Marathi speaking people, without separating these three strands of Hyderabad’s population, any linguistic reorganisation of Southern states was impossible.<sup>638</sup> At the same time Nehru was agreeable to the division of Uttar Pradesh into three or four states.<sup>639</sup> Govind Ballath Pant, then the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and one of the most powerful figures in the Congress Party could state emotionally : “No power on earth can cut up the land of Rama and Krishna, of Ganga and Jumna, which has been shaped by nature to be indissoluble.”<sup>640</sup>

Some of the Congress leaders began to speak of the virtues of larger provinces. The Orissa Congress leader Hare Krishna Mehtab suggested the formation of a ‘Poorva Pradesh’ or Eastern Province by integrating Bengal, Orissa and Assam.<sup>641</sup> The Congress leadership in Maharashtra and Gujarat stood for a bilingual Bombay state. Dr. B.C. Roy, the Chief Minister of Bengal and Dr. Srikrishna Sinha, the Chief Minister of Bihar put up proposals for the unification of the two states.<sup>642</sup> Some Congress leaders under the leadership of S.K. Patel organised the ‘National Unity Platform’ to oppose the linguistic states agitation.<sup>643</sup> We have already seen that the Congress leadership in Malabar demanded the formation of the ‘Dakshina Samsthan’ or Southern state. Leaders like V.K. Krishna Menon supported this demand for

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<sup>637</sup> The Parliamentary Debates : Official Report, 7 July 1952, p. 3356.

<sup>638</sup> K.M Panikkar, *An Autobiography*, pp. 288-289.

<sup>639</sup> Overseas Hindustan Times, 19 March, 1953.

<sup>640</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 April, 1954.

<sup>641</sup> Mathrubhumi, 1 October 1956.

<sup>642</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s Speeches Vol II, pp. 192-93.

<sup>643</sup> Deshabhimani, 15 October, 1955.

the integration of Travancore Cochin and Coorg with Madras.<sup>644</sup> However Dr. B.R. Ambedkar suggested that the then existed larger states should be divided. His proposal was to divide Uttar Pradesh into three provinces, Bihar into two and Madhya Pradesh into two provinces.<sup>645</sup>

During the period of the formation of the States Reorganisation Commission, the Aikya Kerala movement was confined to Malabar. There was no organised work for the formation of Aikya Kerala in Travancore Cochin area. The Government of the Travancore Cochin State was indifferent to the Aikya Kerala issue. When the Andhra movement was at its height, A.J. John, the Chief Minister of Travancore-Cochin, made it clear that the Government of Travancore Cochin would not take any initiative in the Aikya Kerala issue.<sup>646</sup>

We have seen that the opposition of the Malabar Congress leadership to the linguistic Aikya Kerala was in tune with the stand taken by the central Congress leadership and the Government of India. The Congressmen in Malabar feared that if Kerala was formed, that would be a province with Communist domination.<sup>647</sup> Samuel Aron, a Congress leader of Malabar was very optimistic of the all round development of Malayalees in the Southern State and he stated that there was no need for grievances and anxieties on the inclusion of Malayalees in the Southern State.<sup>648</sup>

The Travancore Cochin Government feared that the formation of Kerala province would lead to the separation of Tamil majority taluks of Travancore since the Tamils were demanding for their integration with Madras state. In the four Southern taluks of Travancore namely Agastheeswaram, Thovala, Kalkulam and Vilavancode the percentage of

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<sup>644</sup> K.M. Panikkar, *op. cit.*, p.224.

<sup>645</sup> B.R. Ambedkar, *Thoughts on Linguistics States*, p.19.

<sup>646</sup> Mathrubhumi, 25 April, 1953.

<sup>647</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, Editorial, 2 July, 1953.

<sup>648</sup> Samuel Aron, *Mathrubhumi*, 17 July, 1953.

Tamil speaking people was estimated as above 79%.<sup>649</sup> The Tamils of Travancore who had linguistic and cultural affinities with the Tamils of Madras State wanted the integration of these four southern taluks of Travancore alongwith Neyyattinkara, Shenkotta, Devikulam and Peermade Taluks which also they had claimed as Tamil majority regions, with the Madras state.

The Malayali population belonging to the lower castes including Nadars and Ezhavas also resented the appeasement of upper castes by the Travancore administration. The appointments in services were restricted to Malayali Nairs. Only lower posts were given to the lower castes. They feared that if the Southern Travancore taluks were included in the proposed Kerala state, it would be detrimental to them in a Nair dominated administration.<sup>650</sup> The majority of the Nadars were harassed and ill-treated by the Nair landlords.<sup>651</sup> As observed by K.Balakrishnan, Editor of Kerala Kaumudi and Member, Travancore Legislative Assembly, these landlords were practising the worst forms of feudal oppression without a human face.<sup>652</sup> The natives of these Southern taluks believed that they could get better employment opportunities in Madras State with its lower educational standards when compared with Keralites who are highly educated.<sup>653</sup> The Tamil Congressmen of Travancore had formed a distinct political party known as the Travancore Tamil Nad Congress (TTNC). Its leader A. Nesamony declared, "You go ahead with your Aikya Kerala and we the Tamilians will choose our own destiny."<sup>654</sup>

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<sup>649</sup> Report of the SRC para 293, p.82.

<sup>650</sup> Interview with K. Sadasivan (Sadasiva Swamy, Ex MLA, Travancore Legislative Assembly during 1946 - 1952) at Maruthwamala, Near Nagercoil, Tamilnad dt. 25.12.2005.

<sup>651</sup> P. Viswambaran, Ex M.P. Kerala Kaumudi, 31 October 2004.

<sup>652</sup> Proceeding of the Travancore Cochin Legislative Assembly, 22 Novemebr, 1955, p. 1921.

<sup>653</sup> Kerala Kaumudi, 31 October, 2004.

<sup>654</sup> Proceedings of the Travancore Legislative Assembly, Official Report, 12 February, 1949, p. 9.

TTNC became a decisive political force in Travancore after the General Elections of 1952. In the General Election, TTNC fielded candidates in 12 seats for state Assembly. Out of these twelve Assembly seats, the TTNC secured seven. The Congress party which failed to secure a majority formed its ministry in coalition with the TTNC under A.J. John in March 1952.<sup>655</sup> However differences of opinion came over the demand of the TTNC for the formation of a separate Tamil district for South Travancore. As this issue could not be settled, the Travancore Tamil Nad Congress decided to withdraw its support to the Congress ministry.<sup>656</sup> The TTNC representative A Chidambaranatha Nadar resigned from the ministry on this issue and the A.J. John ministry fell on 23 September 1953.<sup>657</sup> The TTNC then raised the demand for the integration of Travancore Cochin Tamil majority taluks with Madras state without considering whether Aikyakerala is formed or not.<sup>658</sup> In the midterm elections to the Travancore Cochin Legislative Assembly in 1954 the TTNC captured twelve seats out of fourteen constituencies in which they had contested.<sup>659</sup>

The Congress got only 45 seats in a house of 117 members. The verdict was clearly infavour of the Left United Front which had promised a non-Congress government in case they secured a majority. The Convenor of the United Front expressed the view that "the people of Travancore Cochin has completely rejected the Congress and laid their trust in the leftists and it now remains for us to form a peoples government to solve unemployment, land problems etc., as envisaged in the manifesto."<sup>660</sup> But these parties could

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<sup>655</sup> The Hindu, 11 February, 1952.

<sup>656</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, 7 July, 1953.

<sup>657</sup> Kerala District Gazetteers, Trivandrum, Supplement, Trivandrum, 1978, p.16.

<sup>658</sup> *Mathrubhumi*, 28 October, 1953.

<sup>659</sup> 100 years of Legislative Bodies in Kerala 1888 - 1988, A Centenary Souvenir, Kerala Legislative Secretariat, Trivandrum, 1990, p. 90, 679; B. Maria John, Linguistic Reorganization of Madras Presidency, Ajith Publications, Nagercoil, 1994, p.83.

<sup>660</sup> The Hindu, 4 March, 1954.

not form an alternative government. The central leadership of the P.S.P. did not favour their party joining the Communists for the formation of a coalition government in the state. Then Congress declared its responsive co-operation to P.S.P. to form a government. So a minority P.S.P. government supported by the State Congress was formed under the Chief ministership of Pattom A. Thanu Pillai on 16 March 1954.<sup>661</sup>

The TTNC continuously raised in the ministry and outside the demand for the inclusion of Tamil taluks of Travancore Cochin in Madras and resorted to direct action. The party observed 11 August 1954 as 'Deliverance Day' of the Tamils throughout the Tamil areas of Travancore.<sup>662</sup> In protest against a police lathicharge the students of Marthandam damaged the telegraph and telephone lines and burned a portion of a transport bus near the High School.<sup>663</sup> The deployment of military in the disturbed areas of Vilavancode taluk further led to violent incidents. A huge jatha of 10,000 persons shouted the following slogans: "Down with Pattom rule, Down with Police rule, we have resolved to form a United Tamil Nad, we will fight till it is formed, we have started the fight."<sup>664</sup> In the Police firing seven died and several were injured at Marthandam and Puthukkadai.<sup>665</sup> In view of the widespread demand the Government appointed a Commission of enquiry with Justice K. Sankaran of the Travancore - Cochin High Court as its Chairman to probe into the police firing. After three months, the Sankaran Enquiry Commission submitted its report on 28 November 1954, declaring that the police firing on 11 August was justifiable.<sup>666</sup>

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<sup>661</sup> The Hindu, 18 March, 1954.

<sup>662</sup> Petition No. 17 of 1955, In the High Court of Judicature, Mysore, p.3.

<sup>663</sup> Travancore Government Gazette, No. 51, 21 December 1954, p.20.

<sup>664</sup> Report of the Inquiry into the action on the Police in having resorted to firing on 11 August 1954 in S. Travancore, K. Sankaran, Judge, High Court, Travancore Cochin State Inquiry Commission, Trivandrum, 27 November, 1954, para. 21.

<sup>665</sup> The Hindu, 12 August 1954.

<sup>666</sup> The Hindu, 29 November, 1954; Report of the Inquiry Commission, para 38.



When it was convinced that the continued existence of the PSP Government was prejudicial to the interest of the party, the Congress Party withdrew its support. The Congress Party then managed to get a majority in the legislature with the support of the Tamil Nad Congress and a few independents. Thus a Congress Government was installed in power under the Chief Ministership of Panampilly Govinda Menon.<sup>667</sup> The Panampilly Government had to deal with the states reorganisation issue which involved very serious political implications. A crisis was precipitated in the Congress over the question of states reorganisation and formation of United Kerala. A section of Congressmen wanted the merger of the Southern taluks of Travancore with the neighbouring Madras state, while a major section was emphatic on their demand that this area should be retained in the newly formed Kerala State.

A memorandum submitted by the Trivandrum District Congress Committee to the States Reorganisation Commission sought for the continuation of Travancore Cochin State as it was.<sup>668</sup> On the contrary, the Malabar Pradesh Congress Committee urged for the integration of Travancore-Cochin with Madras and Coorg for the formation of the Dakshina Samsthan. The Trivandrum District Congress Committee was opposed to Malabar's union with Travancore Cochin because of their fear that the economic development of Travancore Cochin would be arrested if an economically backward region like Malabar would be integrated with it.<sup>669</sup>

Though the Aikya Kerala Movement initiated by the KPCC had almost debilitated itself due to serious difference of opinion within its own ranks and the opposition of the MPCC after June 1952, the Aikya Kerala Movement was still growing popular. The Communist Party assumed its leadership and

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<sup>667</sup> 100 years of Legislative Bodies in Kerala 1888 -1988. A Centenary Souvenir Kerala Legislative Secretariat, Trivandrum, 1990, p.90.

<sup>668</sup> Mathrubhumi, 25 May, 1954.

<sup>669</sup> *Ibid.*

the agitation became intense and popular..<sup>670</sup> By the end of the year 1954, the Aikya Kerala Committee had a Communist activist, P. Narayanan Nair, as its Secretary.<sup>671</sup> The Communist Party initiated a mass campaign as part of the Movement for Aikya Kerala. Involving the memories of Mahabali or Maveli the legendary ruler of bygone days during whose times there prevailed a society of perfect equality and happiness, the Party utilized the full scope of various popular art forms like Ottan Thullal and folk songs and art festivals.<sup>672</sup> The Party declared that the struggle for Aikya Kerala was a struggle for liberating Kerala from the shackles of feudalism and monarchy.

The Communist Party viewed it as a struggle for a democratic Kerala and raised the attractive slogan, a united, democratic and prosperous Kerala.<sup>673</sup> There arose a new, more broadbased and better organised Aikya Kerala Movement. A well argued case was presented before the States Reorganisation Commission.<sup>674</sup> As A.K. Gopalan puts it, "the Communist Party set to work with redoubled energy to popularise and explain the demand for merging all the contiguous Malayalam speaking areas into one United Kerala Province. And they opposed the disruptive slogans put forward by sections of the bourgeois leadership, who called for a new state in which Tamil and Kanarese areas would also be incorporated. Leaflets were issued, poems composed and rallies held. The Communist Party's proposals met with the approval of the people, as was made clear in the evidence which the States Reorganisation Commission heard when it came to Kerala. Many groups of people gave evidence, the Kisan organisations, the Youth Leagues and the labour organisations."<sup>675</sup>

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<sup>670</sup> Puthuppally Raghavan, *Viplava Smaranakal*, Vol V. p. 93.

<sup>671</sup> P. Narayanan Nair, *Aranooottantilude*, Thrissur, 1999, p. 197.

<sup>672</sup> Victor M Fic, *Kerala: Yenan of India*, Bombay, 1970, p.53.

<sup>673</sup> Puthuppally Raghavan, *Viplavasmaranaki*, Vol. V, Kottayam, 1996, p.94.

<sup>674</sup> EMS Namboodiripad, *Kerala Society and Politics*, New Delhi, 1984, p. 182.

<sup>675</sup> A.K. Gopalan, *Kerala, Past & Present*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1959, p.78.

Other leftist political parties including the Kerala Socialist Party (K.S.P.) and the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) gave strong support to the Aikya Kerala Movement.<sup>676</sup> K.S.P. welcomed the statement of K.A. Damodara Menon, Secretary of Aikya Kerala Committee that the Aikya Kerala formation should be made an election issue in Travancore Cochin's interim election in 1954.<sup>677</sup>

However the Praja Socialist Party (P.S.P.) in Travancore Cochin was against the formation of linguistic Aikya Kerala. The convention of the Malabar Praja Socialist Party held at Badagara on 17th February 1954 was of opinion that the reorganisation of provinces on the basis of languages would be dangerous to the nation.<sup>678</sup> A delegation of Praja Socialist Party which met the States Reorganisation Commission suggested the formation of a western coastal provinces which would include Travancore-Cochin, Malabar, S. Kanara, Guddalore and Coorg.<sup>679</sup> K. Kelappan who presided over the Aikya Kerala Movement till the formation of the Travancore-Cochin State had left Congress and joined the Praja Socialist Party. He was totally opposed to the linguistic reorganisation of provinces. K. Kelappan contended that a Kerala excluding Cape Comorin and Mookambi (Kollur, lying North of Mangalore) would not be justifiable.<sup>680</sup>

The Muslim League of Malabar supported the formation of linguistic states. In 1954 the leader of the Muslim League in the Madras Assembly, K.M. Seethi Sahib stated that he would support the formation of Kerala.<sup>681</sup>

To give a new vigour for the Aikya Kerala Movement, an Aikya Kerala Convention was held at Calicut which was attended by leading political and social activists and literary luminaries of Kerala including K.P.

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<sup>676</sup> Mathrubhumi, Editorial, 30 June, 1953.

<sup>677</sup> Mathrubhumi, 28 October, 1953.

<sup>678</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 February, 1954.

<sup>679</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 May 1954.

<sup>680</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 January, 1954.

<sup>681</sup> Mathrubhumi, 7 February, 1954.

Kesava Menon, Dr. C.R. Krishna Pillai, E.M.S. Namboodiripad, C. Achutha Menon, G. Sankara Kurup and Joseph Mundasseri.<sup>682</sup> Out of 800 delegates participated in the Conference 200 represented the local branches of the Aikya Kerala Committee, 120 were trade unionists, 75 represented libraries and reading rooms, 100 were representatives of literary associations and arts clubs and 25 were outside Malayalis. K.P. Kesava Menon in his presidential address criticised the demand for the Southern province. He pointed out the necessity for balance in population between the provinces in the future set up. He suggested that the population of each province should not exceed 2 crores. The larger states could easily influence the centre and consequently the smaller states would suffer. The resolution passed by the Convention was more pragmatic and did not demand for the inclusion of South Kanara or Coorg in the proposed Kerala but requested the SRC and the Government of India to form a Kerala province by integrating Malabar and other Malayalam speaking territories with Travancore Cochin and also made it clear that the Malayalam speaking regions in Madras did not wish to continue as part of that state.<sup>683</sup>

Nevertheless, there were voices of dissent as well. They had the support of powerful vested interests. The feudal circles in and around the ruling family of Travancore believed that the formation of Kerala state would lead to the inclusion of South Travancore in the Madras state. They could not reconcile themselves to a separation of that region (in which they were directly interested) from the new state, they therefore preferred the continuance of the bilingual state. Certain pressure groups and private interests tried to cloud the issue of constituting a Malayalam speaking province which otherwise did not present any insuperable difficulty. K.M. Panikkar describes the opposition of Travancore Malayalis in general and in particular the Nair aristocracy of Trivandrum in ceding the Tamil majority

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<sup>682</sup> *Ibid.*, 31, May 1954.

<sup>683</sup> Mathrubhumi, 31 May, 1954.

taluks of Travancore Cochin to Madras much against the wishes of the Tamil majority of that regions.<sup>684</sup>

There were sections of professionals and government employees who were apprehensive of lesser employment opportunities since the new state would be smaller in size. It was pointed out that some prominent lawyers were demanding Southern State because they desired the existence of a High Court with maximum area of jurisdiction.<sup>685</sup> Political consideration also were there that since the Communist Party was strong both in Malabar and Travancore Cochin, the new state would be dominated by the party.<sup>686</sup>

Moved as they were by these considerations they stood for as big a state as they could get rejecting the false principle of linguistic state'. Thus among others, representatives of the KPCC led by K.P. Kesava Menon met the States Reorganisation Commission at Calicut in June 1954 and demanded that United Kerala should consist of Travancore, Cochin, Malabar, parts of Southern Karnataka, Lakshadweep, Gudaloor, Ooty, Mahe and Coorg, indeed a multilingual state.<sup>687</sup>

The States Reorganisation Commission submitted its report on 30 September 1955. Officially the report was released on 9 October 1955. The Report of the SRC 1955 contains four parts. Part I and II deal respectively with the history of the problem and the factors bearing on reorganisation. Part IV contains suggestions for minimizing the stresses of transition to linguistic states. The nucleus of the Report is Part III - Proposals for Reorganisation. The recommendations of the Commission were primarily based on the consideration of language.<sup>688</sup>

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<sup>684</sup> K.M. Panikkar, *An Autobiography*, p. 202.

<sup>685</sup> Deshabhimani, 23 October, 1955.

<sup>686</sup> E.M.S Namboothirippad, *Kerala Society and Politics*, New Delhi, p.182.

<sup>687</sup> V. Parukkuttiamma, *K.P. Kesava Menon* (Mal.), Trivandrum, 1988, p.376.

<sup>688</sup> V.P. Menon, *The Story of the Integration of Indian States*, Madras, 1985, p.501.

The Commission also considered cultural homogeneity as well as the geographical contiguity, communication facilities and economic viability in making their proposals regarding states reorganisation. They mainly depended on figures in different census reports in ascertaining linguistic majority in areas of disputes and also in making financial estimates.<sup>689</sup> The Commission advocated the redrawing of India's map into a total number of sixteen states as compared to the then existed twenty seven. In South India, linguistic states of Kerala and Karnataka were proposed in addition to the previously created Andhra. The SRC's proposals for the formation of Kerala were in agreement with the linguistic principle.

The proposed Kerala province was to be composed of Travancore Cochin excluding the five Tamil taluks, the contiguous district of Malabar with the Laccadive Islands and Fort Cochin and the Kasargode Taluk and Amindive islands which were administratively parts of South Kanara District.<sup>690</sup>

"The state thus constituted will have an area of about 14,980 square miles and a population of about 13.6 millions. It will be linguistically homogeneous, about 94 percent of its population will be Malayalam speaking and the state will be geographically compact. It will be well served from the point of view of communications."<sup>691</sup>

On the basis of the census slips of the Tamil speaking taluks of Travancore Cochin the States Reorganisation Commission found the percentage of Tamil speaking people in four Southern taluks namely Tovala, Agastheeswaram, Kalkkulam and Vilavancode situated in what is known as 'Nanjil Nad' as above 79 and recommended these taluks to be included in Madras province.<sup>692</sup>

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<sup>689</sup> Report of the SRC, 1955, paras 9 and 10.

<sup>690</sup> *Ibid.*, para 308.

<sup>691</sup> Report of the SRC, para 308.

<sup>692</sup> *Ibid.*, para 293.

The Commission adopted the district as the basic unit for making territorial readjustments because the districts have developed an organic and administrative unit with an economic life of their own but departed from this rule only when, for ensuring geographical contiguity or for some other important administrative or economic considerations, detachment of part of a district has become imperative.<sup>693</sup> It can be seen that the Commission had departed from the rule of considering the district as basic unit in the case of Tamil speaking taluks. The Shenkotta taluk with a Tamil population of 93% which was physically and geographically a part of Tirunelveli district of Madras was also to be merged with Madras state.<sup>694</sup> Neyyattinkara was proposed to be included in Kerala since the Malayalam speaking population was found to have 86 percent.<sup>695</sup>

The Report of the SRC opened up a series of discussions in the Parliament, State legislatures and in the press, before and after its publication. Comments of the leading national newspapers varied from praises to bitter criticisms. Hindustan Times editorially stated that the Commissions' conclusions will give satisfaction to the majority of the Indian people.<sup>696</sup> The Hindu's critical statement goes thus: "But its proposals are likely to create more problems than they may solve. Though it claims to attempt a careful balancing of all relevant considerations in every case, it has too often improvised explanations and solutions which have no stability."<sup>697</sup>

Just before the publication of the Report of the SRC, the Malabar Pradesh Congress Committee ( MPCC), exponents of the Dakshina Samsthan (Southern State) reiterated their demand once again and they convened a conference on this issue at Cannanore on 18 September 1955.<sup>698</sup> They

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<sup>693</sup> Report of the SRC para 291.

<sup>694</sup> *Ibid.*, para 294.

<sup>695</sup> *Ibid.*, para 299.

<sup>696</sup> Hindustan Times, 10 October, 1955.

<sup>697</sup> The Hindu, 11 October, 1955.

<sup>698</sup> Mathrubhumi, 18 September, 1955.

requested the Central Government to form a Southern State comprised of Madras, Travancore -Cochin, Mysore and Coorg.<sup>699</sup> Mathrubhumi published an editorial entitled "To the Malabar Congress Men," strongly condemning their untimely and regrettable action.<sup>700</sup> "It was meaningful to organise such conferences before or during the visit of the Commission for enquiry. Doing this now is like 'putting fertilizer on the top of the plant.' It is essential to govern the people in their own language. Kerala State which has been the aim of the popular leaders and mass organisations including Congress is about to be emerged. In this context it is highly regrettable on the part of the Congress to be involved in an agitation against the development of Kerala. During these decisive years Malabar Congress may not be blamed for betraying the good interests of the Kerala people. We hope that they would correct their mistakes before it is too late."<sup>701</sup> However the Malabar Pradesh Congress Committee repeated its demand for Southern State in a Conference at Kozhikode under the presidency of P. Vasu Menon.<sup>702</sup>

Malayala Manorama felt surprised on the contradictory position taken by the Malabar Congress Committee which had been strongly demanding Aikya Kerala from the beginning. The paper pointed out that political parties and other organisations including Congress, Communist, PSP, KSP, RSP, NSS, SNDP, Catholic Congress and Muslim League have directly and indirectly supported the formation of Kerala state.<sup>703</sup>

Some prominent men of letters including Kuttikrishna Marar, N.V. Krishna Variyar, N.P. Muhammed, C.P. Sreedharan, M.V. Devan and K.A. Kodungallur declared in a statement that 'Aikya Keralam is the birthright of the Keralites'. 'Darkness deepens just before the dawn. Some try to generate hatred towards Kerala State when the long cherished dream of the Malayalees

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<sup>699</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 September, 1955.

<sup>700</sup> *Ibid.*, editorial, 18 September 1955.

<sup>701</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>702</sup> *Deshabhimnai*, 31 October, 1955.

<sup>703</sup> Quoted by Mathrubhomi, 23 September, 1955.



is about to fulfil'. Southern state would be a hindrance to the development of the Keralites. They also pointed out that Malabar, or the artists of Malabar in particular had no representation in the Madras State Sahitya Academy, Lalitha Kala Academy or Sangeetha Nataka Academy. Very meagre amount was allotted to the preparation of Malayalam Dictionary whereas lakhs of rupees were granted to Tamil dictionary and Encyclopaedia.<sup>704</sup>

The Aikya Kerala Committee convened at the Mathrubhumi office, Trichur under the presidentship of K.P. Kesava Menon, welcomed the Commission recommendations.<sup>705</sup> The meeting was attended by Travancore - Cochin Chief Minister Panampilly Govinda Menon as Chief Guest, K.A. Damodara Menon, P.J. Thomas, K. Kuttikrishna Menon, Komattil Achutha Menon, C.R. Krishna Pillai, Joseph Mundassery, N.V. Krishna Variyar, Leela Damodara Menon and Kurur Neelakantan Namboodiripad. The Committee decided that it would not organise agitation to incorporate in the proposed Kerala State, the areas suggested in its earlier memorandum, considering the request by the Prime Minister. The Committee also desired a sympathetic attitude by the Central Government and Parliament to include in the proposed Kerala State, Gudalore Taluk lying adjacent to Malabar and portion of Chenkotta Taluk which comes within the natural boundaries of Travancore Cochin State.<sup>706</sup>

K. Kelappan M.P. who had earlier argued for a west coast province, now demanded the formation of a Southern State including Madras, Travancore-Cochin and Coorg.<sup>707</sup> After one week, Kelappan suggested in a statement that Mysore also may be included in the Southern state along with Travancore-Cochin and Coorg.<sup>708</sup> Mannath Padmanabhan in a Nair

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<sup>704</sup> Mathrubhumi, 24 September, 1955.

<sup>705</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 October, 1955.

<sup>706</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>707</sup> Mathrubhumi, 2 October, 1955.

<sup>708</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 October, 1955.

conference at Sasthamangalam lamented that he cannot imagine a Kerala without Kanyakumari, Sucheendram and Padmanabhapuram.<sup>709</sup>

Several Panchayat bodies, Arts clubs, libraries, Trade Unions and Kisan Sanghs rejected the Dakshina Samsthan and demanded Aikya Kerala.<sup>710</sup> The Ceylon Malayalee Conference also protested against the Dakshina Samsthan proposal and requested to strengthen Aikya Kerala Agitation.<sup>711</sup>

A.K. Gopalan, Communist leader and M.P. welcomed the Commission proposals since it would foster the development of Malayali culture in a uniform basis.<sup>712</sup> V.R. Krishnayyar, MLA (Madras Legislative Assembly) stated that the states reorganisation would not lead to disintegration, as some feared, since the number of states was reduced from 27 to 16. The reorganisation also would strengthen a new unity among the developing linguistic groups.<sup>713</sup>

E.M.S. Namboodiripad, Polit bureau member of the Communist Party expressed satisfaction over the Commission recommendations. He welcomed the removal of Raja Pramukh and A.B.C. status among states and the creation of linguistic states of Tamilnad, Kerala and Karnataka. However he suggested that if villages were taken as units for reorgansiation, as suggested by the Communist Party, several disturbances could have been avoided. Instead of accepting village as units, the Commission adopted district in some cases and taluks in some other cases. He also added that a state cannot dominate over other stats since states are not having sovereign powers and they are parts of Indian Union.<sup>714</sup>

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<sup>709</sup> Mathrubhumi, 11 October, 1955.

<sup>710</sup> Deshabhimani, 2 October 1955, 10 October, 1955.

<sup>711</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 October, 1955.

<sup>712</sup> Mathrubhumi, 14 October, 1955.

<sup>713</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 October, 1955.

<sup>714</sup> Mathrubhumi, 25 October, 1955.

T.C. Narayanan Nambiar MLA (Madras Legislative Assembly) criticised that the exponents of Dakshina samsthan is surrendering the linguistic state formation as 'Dakshina' (offering) in order to satisfy their own vested interests.<sup>715</sup> K. Damodaran pointed out that the emergence of Kerala State would strengthen the development of democracy.<sup>716</sup> N.E. Balaram lamented that the Constituent Assembly rejected the proposal presented by Somanath Lahiri, the lone Communist member, that the Indian states should be reorganised reorganizing the linguistic and cultural affinity of different national groups.<sup>717</sup>

The report of the SRC recommended that the Kasargod Taluk of South Kanara district to be included in the proposed Kerala State since the Malayalam speaking percentage was about 72 according to the Census slips. The Commission observed : 'Though Kannadiga opinion in South Kanara concedes the claim of Kerala upto the Chandragiri river, administratively it will be more expedient to join the whole taluk to Kerala than to break it up purely on linguistic grounds.'<sup>718</sup> The Kerala claim to the whole of the South Kanara district and Coorg was found untenable.<sup>719</sup>

The Karnataka Samsthaneekarana Samiti protested against the proposal of the Commission to include in the Kerala State the areas north of Chandragiri river. They observed 'Kasaragod Day' on 21 October by organising hartal, pooja, public meeting and procession.<sup>720</sup> A delegation comprising K.S. Hegde M.P. K.R. Karanth, B.V. Baliga MLA, M.S. Mogral MLA, M. Umesha Rao and Dr. P.S. Sastri called on Chief Minister Kamaraj Nadar and protested against the proposal to include Kasargod Taluk in Kerala. They argued that the region north of Chandragiri river formed an

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<sup>715</sup> Deshabhimani 6 October, 1955.

<sup>716</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 October, 1955.

<sup>717</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 October, 1955.

<sup>718</sup> Report of the SRC, para 206.

<sup>719</sup> *Ibid.*, paras 306, 307.

<sup>720</sup> Mathrubhumi 24 October, 1955.

inseparable part of Karnataka.<sup>721</sup> K. Madhavan, Secretary of the Communist Party Kasargod Taluk Committee stated that the argument for incorporating entire Kasargod taluk in Karnataka was against linguistic states principle. He pointed out that in the Kasargod and Kumbala firkas, Malayalis formed majority . But in the Manjeswar firka, majority speak Tulu language and they desire to join with Karnataka. The Communist Party suggests that those Tulu majority areas may be integrated with Karnataka.<sup>722</sup>

The exclusion of Gudalore from the proposed Kerala state invited strong discontent among the Malabar public.<sup>723</sup> It was pointed out that till 1877 Gudalore, earlier known as '*Nambolakkode*' was part of Wynad Taluk in Malabar District. Gudalore was annexed to the newly formed Nilgiri District so as to provide considerable extent to the new district. Prior to the colonial conquest, Gudalore was ruled by Kerala rulers. The aboriginal *Chettis* were following Malayali customs and practices. The largest linguistic group in the Gudalore Taluk was formed by the Malayalees. The land tenure system was that of Malabar. Geographically also Gudalore was part of Malabar since it is located on the western slope of the Ghats. Malayalam was the language in primary schools and law courts. Gudalur was represented in the Nilgiri District Board by Malayalees.<sup>724</sup> According to Census Reports Nilgiris is really a region of aboriginal languages and the Badaga variant of Kanarese but it was thought convenient to illustrate the approximate spheres of influence of the two great plain languages which are surging in from east and west. Malayalam pervades Gudalur Taluk, Tamil the rest.<sup>725</sup>

Since the States Reorganisation Commission took district as a unit and Gudalur was part of a district with a Tamil majority, no mention was made in the Report about the claim of Kerala. During the deliberations on the States

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<sup>721</sup> Deshabhimani 26 October, 1955.

<sup>722</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 October, 1955.

<sup>723</sup> Mathrubhumi, editorial, 5 August, 1955.

<sup>724</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>725</sup> Madras Census Report 1931, p. 290, para 10.

reorganisation, Malabar had no representative in the Madras Ministry to safeguard Malayali interests.<sup>726</sup> The Commission specifically recommended that the Laccaddive Island which formed a part of Malabar district and Amindive group which accidentally had been attached to South Kanara were to be incorporated in the prospective Kerala State.

The twin taluks in the High Ranges, Devikulam and Peermede were found to have 72% and 44% of Tamil population respectively. But the percentage of the floating Tamil speaking population who came as plantation labourers were found 46% and 30% in Devikulam and Peermede, leaving behind a mere 26% and 14% of permanent Tamil population. Considering the economic interest of the Travancore-Cochin Government in that area in respect of forests, plantations and hydroelectric projects, these two taluks were recommended to be included in Kerala.<sup>727</sup> The SRC has adopted the conclusion of the Dar Commission that it would not be proper to describe any area as unilingual unless the majority of the language spoken in that area was at least 70 percent.<sup>728</sup> The Tamil claim on Chittur Taluk in Trichur District was rejected, following this principle.<sup>729</sup>

Discussion on the Report of the SRC began in the Travancore Cochin Legislative Assembly on 21st November 1955. Pattom A Thanu Pillai (PSP) stated that the southern taluks of Travancore-Cochin should not be separated from Travancore-Cochin.<sup>730</sup> T.T. Daniel (TTNC) argued that the wish of the Tamilians in the state was for the merger of the Tamil areas with Madras. "The formation of an Aikya Tamilakam is the political cry of the Tamilian minority. Today our sisters and mothers of Tamil Nad are singing lullabies of their children in their cradles with this political concept. The Praja Socialist Party has only bred communal hatred and widened the gulf between the

<sup>726</sup> Keezhedath Vasudevan Nair, Mathrubhumi, 16 October, 1955.

<sup>727</sup> Report of the SRC paras 295, 296.

<sup>728</sup> *Ibid.*, para 298.

<sup>729</sup> *Ibid.*, para 299.

<sup>730</sup> Proceedings of the Travancore-Cochin Legislative Assembly, Vol XIV 21 November 1955, p. 1775.

Tamilians and the Malayalees. . The bullets fired<sup>731</sup> by the PSP Government not only hit the flesh of the Tamilians but also pierced their souls."<sup>732</sup>

N.A. Noor Muhammed (TTNC) attempted to provide a historical background for Tamil claim. 'The Southern Taluks of Travancore formed part of the ancient Tamil Pandian Kingdom with its headquarters at Madurai. Bhoothapandy, the present headquarters of the Thovala Taluk was founded by and named after the famous Pandian King Bhoothapandian. The Pandian dam on the Paraliar river in Kalkulam taluk but for which mighty work of genius and invention Nanjinad would not have been what it is today, and the Pandian Kal irrigating the rich fields in the taluks of Tovala, Agastheeswaram and Kalkulam are standing monuments of the solicitude of those ancient Kings to the agrarian population of this part of the country.<sup>733</sup> Venad extended to the north, Padmanabhapuram which was the capital was shifted to Trivandurm and Malayalam became the language of the ruling family.<sup>734</sup> Again, M.W.M. Yates was quoted in the Assembly to prove the linguistic affinity of Southern taluks : 'The Malayalam zone includes, of course, Cochin and Travancore states, though probably the extreme south of the last named, where the ghats have sunk to mere billows in the narrowing land where rainfall is low, irrigation necessary and palmyrahs abound, belongs to the Tamil belt as does of course the Shencotta protrusion of Travancore to the east of the Ghats.<sup>735</sup>

A. Kunhan Nadar (TTNC) argued that South Travancore was never part of Travancore state, till 1766. South Travancore consisted of two areas, one called *Purathayanad* and the other *Nanjanad*. The places surrounded by *Mannukottai* was known as *Purathayanad*. It spread round about Cape

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<sup>731</sup> Police firing on 11 August 1954.

<sup>732</sup> Proceedings of the Travancore Cochin Legislative Assembly Vol. XIV 21 Novemebr, 1955, p. 1792.

<sup>733</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 November, 1955, p.1817.

<sup>734</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1818.

<sup>735</sup> Madras Census Report, 1931 Vol. XIV, Part, p. 290.

Comorin. The Nanjanad extended from Mangalam to Manakudy.<sup>736</sup> Further he quotes the inaugural speech delivered by the Maharaja of Travancore at the time of opening of the Puthen Dam which is a continuation of the Pandian Dam. 'The Pandian Dam and Channel under the safest calculations are about 8 centuries old. It is these works of the Pandian Dynasty that chiefly stimulated my illustrious ancestor to construct Puthen Dam and the Puthen Channel'.<sup>737</sup> Kunjan Nadar continued, 'The triangular bit of land from Cape to Kottaram, that is, the southern-most tip of Travancore, Purathayanad and Shenkotta were given to the Travancore King by the Nawab of Carnatic in 1766. Before that, Shenkotta was taken on lease by the Travancore King. Cape and Shenkotta were transferred by the Nawab of Carnatic to Travancore King by the deed of transfer on the 14th December 1766.'<sup>738</sup>

Joseph Chazhikkad (PSP) lamented that if the Southern taluks were to be included in the Madras state, the tomb of Dilanoi who helped to unite Travancore, the proposed memorial for Velu Thampi Dalawa, the birth place of Raja Kesava das, the tomb of Devasahayam Pillai etc would be placed elsewhere in Madras State.<sup>739</sup> He exhorted that the present generation should work for the establishment of an undivided Kerala (*Akhanda Keralam*) by administratively integrating Kerala portions which are geographically, historically and culturally united.<sup>740</sup>

Joseph Mundassery attempted to provide a rational explanation for the linguistic state formation and pointed out that language and culture should be accepted as the basis for state reorganisation. A regionalised community has intimate contact with their land and the language evolved out of the culture of that land. When language and culture are taken as the main criteria, stress is on the social life and relations with the land. There is no justification in

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<sup>736</sup> Proceedings of Travancore Cochin Legislative Assembly, 22 November 1955, p.1904.

<sup>737</sup> Travancore Land Revenue Manual Vol. IV, p. 88.

<sup>738</sup> Proceedings of Travancore Cochin Leg. Assembly, 22 Nov. 1966, p. 1905.

<sup>739</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 November 1955, p. 1797.

<sup>740</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 November, 1955, p.1801.

retaining the southern taluks in the Kerala State, only on the ground that the cultivable lands of that area are owned by the landlords of Trivandurm and Neyyattinkara.<sup>741</sup>

Welcoming generally the recommendation of the SRC regarding Kerala State, K. Balakrishnan pointed out that the demand for linguistic states had integral relation with the modern concept of governments. If language acts as the sculptor who moulds the models to convey feelings, these feelings are to be expressed as such through one's mother tongue. In no time in history existed a Kerala from Gokarnam to Kanyakumari.<sup>742</sup> Dr. A.R. Menon (Congress) hailed that 'the Report is written in a very grand style and gems of literary graces enliven its pages.'<sup>743</sup>

However, M. Bhaskaran Nair (Congress) charged that the Travancore Tamil Nad Congress came into being in 1947 just before the elections of 1947 and the slogan they shouted was 'Malayali Ozhika' meaning 'Malayalees quit'. A good portion of the lands in those areas are owned by Malayalees and a major portion of the people of Nadar community there are enjoying these lands as lessees or mortgagees. The Nadars were toying with the idea that the proprietary rights in these lands would vest in them if the Malayalees were driven out of the area.<sup>744</sup>

Pattom A Thanu Pillai (PSP) frankly admitted that 'whatever be my party's view, I am not a worshipper of the linguistic states idea because I believe that it will lead to the disruption of this great country.'<sup>745</sup> In 1920 or in 1945, the Congress or other parties generally thought of linguistic states. Now why don't you also consider the further development of ideas in regard

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<sup>741</sup> Proceedings of Travancore Cochin Legislative Assembly, 21 November 1955, p.1802,1803.

<sup>742</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194, 1915.

<sup>743</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 November, p. 1954.

<sup>744</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 November, p. 1812.

<sup>745</sup> Proceedings of Travancore Cochin Legislative Assembly, 24 Novemebr, 1955, p.2063.



to this matter? The Madras State does not want Malabar within their territory. They are linguistically obsessed so much that they do not want Malabar within their territory. They do not want South Kannada within their state. Therefore, a Kerala State has to be formed today. . . <sup>746</sup> My hope is that all sections of the House will come to the conclusion that the southern taluks should not be cut off from the rest of the State.<sup>747</sup>

T.V. Thomas (Communist) welcomed the recommendations regarding the removal of the office of Rajpramukh and the A.B.C status of states. Some confusions arose due to the fact that the Commission adopted taluks as units for states reorganisation. These confusion and disputes could have been avoided if villages were taken as basic units.<sup>748</sup> In demarcating the boundary line, the following criteria may be adopted namely:

- a. contiguity of territory with a given linguistic region with the village as unit and the language of the majority of the population therewith
- b. the boundary line should be a continuous one and isolated pockets should be avoided, and
- c. due consideration should be given to the needs of Kerala with regard to the water and other resources.<sup>749</sup>

T.V. Thomas also reiterated that 'as Aikya Kerala is the birth right of the Malayalees, Aikya Tamilakam is the birth right of the Tamilians.' We should accept the demand of the four Tamil taluks to join Madras state.<sup>750</sup>

A major part of the discussion in the Travancore Cochin Legislative Assembly was on the recommendation for inclusion of Devikulam and Peermede taluks in the Kerala State. The Commission stated that the percentage of the floating Tamil speaking population who came as plantation

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<sup>746</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2066.

<sup>747</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2091.

<sup>748</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2096.

<sup>749</sup> Proceedings of Travancore Cochin Legislative Assembly, 24 November 1955, p.2098.

<sup>750</sup> *Ibid.*, 2100.

labourers were found 46% and 30% in Devikulam and Peermede, leaving behind a mere 26% and 14% of permanent Tamil population.<sup>751</sup> The TTNC members challenged this statement of SRC as arbitrary. "It was only very recently that Devikulam and Peermede came under Travancore - Cochin state. Till 1886 Travancore Cochin State had no claim to these taluks. In that year the Kannan Devan Hills Produce Company got the first lease from the Poonjar Chief who was a descendant of the Tamilian Kings at Thenkasi. Till then it was under the supremacy of the Pandyan Kings.<sup>752</sup> Peermede and Devikulam and the neighbouring areas in the Madras State were under local Tamil rulers called Mannadiars. Kannan Devan, from whom Kannan Devan Hill Produce Company claimed its name was one of those Mannadiars who ruled over that area. The Tamil labourers are not just floating labour but they have settled down in the estates for generations. Malayalees are now infiltrating in these areas for purposes of exploitation. To eliminate the Tamils from here, the PSP Government launched on an ambitious scheme of colonisation which has proved to be a thorough failure.<sup>753</sup>

These arguments were refuted by Malayali members. M.P. Menon quoted the Madras Census Report 1891. "The population of the Cardamom Hills shows an increase of 83 percent (ie., excluding Periyar and Thekkady) on the small figure of 1881; but these are mostly temporary sojourners from Madura and Coimbatore districts.<sup>754</sup> In the Cardamom Hills which lie in the Malayalam speaking taluks of North Travancore, 58 to 59 percent of the total population use Tamil as their mother tongue, as a result due, I think, to the large influx of Pandya people from Madura District. The same reason may be assigned to the high population (53.29) in Periyar and Thekkady as most of the workmen (engaged in the Periyar work) are Tamil speaking coolies from

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<sup>751</sup> Report of the SRC, para 295, 296.

<sup>752</sup> Proceedings of the Travancore Cochin Legislative Assembly, 21 November 1955, p. 1794.

<sup>753</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1820, 1821.

<sup>754</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1829.

the either side of Ghats.<sup>755</sup> From the Madras Census Report 1931, M.P. Menon quotes: 'In general labour on these estates bears a marked resemblance to more sedentary forms of activity in which the twelve months include a definite period of holiday, for it is the rule for these workers to return to their village for periods each year varying from 2 to 3 months, but generally 2. The labour comes by families and returns year after year, frequently to the same estate.'<sup>756</sup>

P.S. Nataraja Pillai (PSP) argued that the claim for Devikulam and Peermede as a part of Tamil Nad is absolutely irrelevant and unsustainable. He quoted N. Subramonia Aiyar who was incharge of the Census operations in 1911. "All the hill tribes in this area speak Malayalam. For example, the Uralis, Malavelans, Malapandarams etc., are all speaking Malayalam. And they are the indigenious people."<sup>757</sup> Concluding his arguments, he states, linguistic state, as seen and as explained in the Commissions report is grouping different linguistic areas, grouping the areas in which one language in spoken by more than 70 percent of the people. They decided upon unilingual areas. It is the regions, the linguistic regions that are being grouped. And having come to that, the grouping recommended for this state by the Commission is perfectly just and you cannot get a more just grouping for the state: Therefore the Tamil region in the southern area will have to go with the Tamilians and the Devikulam and Peermede areas will have to be in the new Sstate and the Malayalam area that lies adjacent to the existing Travancore Cochin state must merge with the northern part of the state to form the new state Kerala.<sup>758</sup>

Another area of dispute that came up during the Assembly discussion was Gudalore. Though the Malayalees wanted the inclusion of Gudalur (then

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<sup>755</sup> Proceedings of the Travancore-Cochin Legislative Assembly, 21 Novemebr, 1955, p.1830.

<sup>756</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1871.

<sup>757</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1946, 1947.

<sup>758</sup> Proceedings of Travancore Cochin Legislative Assembly, 23 November 1955, p. 1951.

situated in Nilgiri District of Madras) in Kerala which has a considerable Malayali population, nothing was mentioned in the Report of SRC about this claim of Kerala, since the Commission adopted the district as the basic unit for making territorial readjustments.<sup>759</sup> Panampilly Govinda Menon, the Chief Minister of Travancore Cochin State pointed out that Gudalore Taluk was the part of Malabar District upto 1887. In 1887 it was separated from Malabar and added on to Nilgiri District since Nilgiri was a very small district and Malabar was a large one. "From 1887 to this day the court language of Gudalur is Malayalam. Upto 1955 the voters list was prepared in Malayalam. It was in 1955 that the voters list was printed in Tamil also. The Malabar Compensation For Tenants Improvement Act was passed by the Madras legislature in 1900. It was confined to Malabar only. The people of Gudalur repeatedly demanded that the said act must be applied to them since they also naturally belonged to Malabar. The act was put into effect in Gudalore taluk also in 1930s.<sup>760</sup> Malayalam is the language spoken by greater number of people in Gudalur. So linguistically Gudalur should be included in Kerala. Geographically also Gudalur should be jointed with Kerala since it lies on the western slope of western ghats."<sup>761</sup>

The motion on the issue 'that in the proposed Kerala state the Gudalur taluk in the Nilgiris District be included over and above the territory recommended by the SRC to be included' was carried by a majority of 94 against 12 votes.<sup>762</sup>

Views of the Madras Government were forwarded to the Government of India, after making discussion in both the Houses of the Madras Legislature from 21st to 24th November, 1955. The following were the main recommendations of the Madras Government.<sup>763</sup>

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<sup>759</sup> Report of the SRC, para 291.

<sup>760</sup> Proceedings of the Travancore - Cochin Legislative Assembly, 21 November, 1955, p.1786.

<sup>761</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1789.

<sup>762</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2141-2143.

<sup>763</sup> T.N.A., G.O. Public partition, Dept. No. 167 MS dt. 17.1.1956.

1. The areas of Devikulam and Peermade taluks which form an integral part of Tamil Nad contiguous to the Tamil areas with a large Tamil majority should be transferred to the Madras state.
2. The Gudalur taluk of the Nilgiri Distirct which according to the Commission recommendations, forms part of the Madras state, should not be disturbed for any reason.
3. The forests in the Shenkotta taluk should be transferred to the Madras State along with the people.
4. In forming the Kerala and Karnataka States, the northern arm of the *Chandragiri* river (*Payaswini* river) should be fixed as the boundary and the portion to the north of the river be allotted to Karnataka and that to the south of the river alone be allotted to Kerala.
5. The portions of Neyyattinkara and Chittur taluks of Travancore Cochin State and also the Mudalamadai village of Palghat taluk in Malabar district which have got a predominantly Tamil population should be added to the Madras State.
6. The Laccaddive, the Amindive and Minicoy islands may be constituted into a centrally administered territory in the interests of the economic development of the areas and also from a strategic point of view.<sup>764</sup>

V.K. Krishna Menon a confidant of Nehru alleged that the recommendation of the SRC pertaining to the creation of separate Kerala and Tamil states was inspired by the personal views of one of the members of the Commission (the reference being to K.M. Panikkar) and said that the recommendation was inadvisable for economic, political, administrative, strategic and national security reasons. He argued that the Kerala State would doubtless go Communist after the next general elections with disastrous domestic and international consequences. Krishna Menon added : "We will Balkanise India if we further dismember the State instead of creating larger

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<sup>764</sup> *Ibid.*

units.<sup>765</sup> Again, in his note to Nehru of 28 September 1955, Krishna Menon suggested the creation of "a Southern State, a Dakshina Pradesh, as a corollary to Uttar Pradesh, which could include the present Tamil Nad, Travancore, Cochin, Malabar and possibly Kanara upto Kasargod.<sup>766</sup> To Menon, Nehru wrote: We do not think that the Communists will get a majority there (Kerala). . . But what are we to do? No other neighbouring state agrees to have Kerala; Kamaraj Nadar and the Madras Cabinet absolutely refuse to have anything to do with it. So do the Karnataka people.<sup>767</sup>

Many a people including devotees of the royal house in Travancore blamed K.M. Panikkar, member of the S.R.C. for having alienated a prominent part of Kerala, 'created by Parasurama'.<sup>768</sup> Some believed that Panikkar had one third responsibility in removing Kanyakumari from Kerala.<sup>769</sup> Another charge levelled against Panikkar was that he tried to expand his political basis by allying with the non Hindi people.<sup>770</sup> Panikkar's note on Uttar Pradesh in the Commission Report suggesting the division of Uttar Pradesh had provoked political stalwarts including Govind Ballabh Pant.<sup>771</sup> Some others believed that the inclusion of Kasargod in Kerala was due to Panikkar's emotional ties with the region. His father<sup>772</sup> belonged to an Embrandiri family of Kodakkad village in erstwhile Kasargod taluk.<sup>773</sup> This

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<sup>765</sup> H.Y. Sharada Prasad and A.K. Damodaran (eds), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Second Series, Vol. 30 (September 1 - November 17, 1955) quoted by A.G. Noorani, *Front Line*, 3-16 August 2002.

<sup>766</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>767</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>768</sup> Konniyur Narendranath, *Sardar K.M. Panikkar*, Cultural Publication Department, Government of Kerala, Trivandurm, 1994, p. 277.

<sup>769</sup> Putezhath Raman Menon, *Pavana Smaranakal* (Mal.) NBS Kottayam, 1968, p.107; Interview with Murkkoth Ramunny, Thalassery, 12.4.2007.

<sup>770</sup> Selig S. Harrison, *India, the Most Dangerous Decades*, p. 168.

<sup>771</sup> M. Chalapathi Rau, *Govind Ballabh Pant*, Allied, New Delhi, 1981, p.389.

<sup>772</sup> *Mettakku Perikamana Puthiyillath Parameswaran Namboodiri* of Kodakkad Village in erstwhile Kasargod Taluk, Konniyur Narendranath, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>773</sup> *Malayala Manorama Kerala Supplement*, 1 November, 1965.

family were the managers of the Pallarakavu Temple in Kavalam.<sup>774</sup>

Refuting these charges, Panikkar explains his position in his autobiography. 'I have never thought of myself as a Travancorean nor taken any special pride in being a subject of the Travancore Maharaja. I thought myself only as Keraleeya. Hence I could not consider it unjust to Kerala to give the people of Nanjanad the freedom to decide whether they wished to remain in Kerala or to join Tamilnadu. If language was the desideratum, then obviously that area formed part of Tamilnad.'<sup>775</sup>

Regarding the historical background of the issue, Panikkar observes, 'History does not record that the area from Gokarna to Kasargod was ever part of Kerala. As for Kanyakumari, historically it has sometimes been under Kerala princes and sometimes under Tamil princes. But there has been no doubt that the taluks south of Neyyattinkara were inhabited by Tamil speaking people. Therefore when states were being reorganised on the basis of language, there was no avoiding the inclusion of those areas in Tamilnad. . In the elections held after independence, the candidates who stood for joining Tamilnad gained a clear majority.'<sup>776</sup>

Report of the SRC came up for discussion in the Lok Sabha in December 1955. Initiating the discussion, Acharya JB Kripalani (Congress) surveyed the attempts made by the Congress towards reorganisation of provinces from 1920 onwards, at the instance of Gandhiji. However he remarked that states reorganisation on linguistic basis would adversely affect the friendly relations between the states.<sup>777</sup> A.K. Gopalan (Communist) in his speech compared the Congress positions before and after independence. He observed that it was the Dar Commission and subsequently the Central government which turned away from linguistic principles and suggested economic stability and administrative convenience as criteria for States

<sup>774</sup> K.M. Panikkar, *An Autobiography*, OUP, Delhi, p. 3.

<sup>775</sup> *Ibid.*, p.293.

<sup>776</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 292,293.

<sup>777</sup> Lok Sabha Debates, Official Report, 14 December 1955.

reorganisation.<sup>778</sup> It would be difficult to maintain stability and unity if large linguistic groups are kept in other states. States should be reorganised linguistically, by taking village as a unit.<sup>779</sup> He was optimistic that the linguistic states would not hamper India's unity.<sup>780</sup> M.A. Thomas (Congress) stated that it was regrettable to include 5 Tamil taluks of TC State in Madras.<sup>781</sup>

The Government of India announced their decisions on the Report of the SRC on 16 January 1956.<sup>782</sup> At this juncture some Congressmen aghast at popular reaction<sup>783</sup> to Government's decision began to wonder where this 'linguistic frenzy' would lead to. The Bengal Chief Minister B.C. Roy proposed in place of linguistic states the combination of adjoining states into larger units and offering to bring Bengal into such a grouping with Bihar and Assam.<sup>784</sup> The Congress High Command greeted it as a wise move.<sup>785</sup> Nehru felt that such division of India into zones would be the ideal solutions to this problem. The Government communique released in New Delhi on 16 January 1956 also included the Government of India's resolution to constitute (simultaneously with the creation of the new states) Zonal councils.<sup>786</sup> These Zonal councils, five in number,<sup>787</sup> will be dealing with matters of common concern to the states belonging to the zonal councils.

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<sup>778</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>779</sup> *Ibid.* Deshabhimani, 16 December, 1955.

<sup>780</sup> Deshabhimani, 16 Decmber 1955; A.K.G., *Kodungattinte Mattoli* (Mal.) Chintha Publishers, Trivandrum 1979, pp. 110-127.

<sup>781</sup> Deshabhimani, 16 December, 1955.

<sup>782</sup> India News, 21 January, 1956.

<sup>783</sup> Mob riots in Bombay and resignation of Bihar and Orissa Ministers - The Indian Express 18 & 19 January 1956.

<sup>784</sup> K.M. Panikkar, *An Autobiography*, pp. 299,300.

<sup>785</sup> The Indian Express, 24 January 1956.

<sup>786</sup> India News, 21 January 1956.

<sup>787</sup> The five zonal councils will be (1) Northern Zone: Punjab, PEPSU, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Rajasthan; (2) Central Zone: Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh; (3) Eastern Zone: Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Assam, Manipur, Tripura; (4) Western Zone: Maharashtra, Gujarat, City of Bombay; (5) Southern Zone; Andhra, Madras, Mysore, Kerala and Hyderabad.



C. Rajagopalachari wanted the South to follow the example of Bengal and Bihar.<sup>788</sup> K.M. Panikkar noted that the followers of V.K. Krishna Menon, favouring Dakshina Pradesh also felt elated and hoped that this was the end of Kerala.<sup>789</sup>

The Amritsar session of the Indian National Congress unanimously passed Azad's resolution disavowing language as the exclusive principle for reorganisation and called for the formation of large bilingual states "wherever feasible" in the interest of economic development. Nehru wanted the controversy over these issues to be set aside, if possible, for ten years.<sup>790</sup> However, after some weeks, in May 1956, B.C. Roy, the Chief Minister of Bengal yielded to public opinion and withdrew the scheme of merging Bengal and Bihar.<sup>791</sup> In June, Kamaraj Nadar, the Chief Minister of Madras, declared that those who wanted Dakshina Pradesh only wanted to defeat him and the Congress.<sup>792</sup> The proposal of creating bigger bilingual states or "zonal super states" was no more heard of.

The Congress Party felt the pressure of the various discontented groups during the weeks following the publication of the recommendations of the SRC. The Samyukta Maharashtra agitators demanded the creation of a separate Maharashtrian State with the city of Bombay as the capital. This was opposed by the Gujarati speaking people who dominated the commercial life of Bombay city. They called for the exclusion of Bombay city from the Maharashtrian state. The dispute led to large scale rioting, involving considerable bloodshed and property damage in Bombay city.<sup>793</sup> Bombay riots shocked the country and the Maharashtrians had alienated the

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<sup>788</sup> The Indian Express, 25 January, 1956.

<sup>789</sup> K.M. Panikkar, *An Autobiography*, p. 300.

<sup>790</sup> The Indian Express, 13 and 14 February 1965.

<sup>791</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 May 1956.

<sup>792</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 June 1956.

<sup>793</sup> Lok Sabha Debates, Official Report, 23 February 1956.

sympathies of large segments of the nation by their excesses, which included the burning of the effigies of Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru.<sup>794</sup>

The decision of the Congress High Power Committee regarding Devikulam and Peermede and the western part of Shenkotta taluk to include in Kerala caused widespread disappointment among the Tamilians and came in for severe criticism at the hands of the Tamilarasu Kazhagam, the Dravida Kazhagam and Dravida Munnetra Kazhakam. Demonstrations were organised and hartals were observed at several places in Tamilnad.<sup>795</sup>

When the Report of SRC was discussed in the Madras Legislative Assembly, Dr. K.B. Menon (PSP) unequivocally declared that he was 'dead set against linguistic division'.<sup>796</sup> C.C. Anthony Pillai critically reviewed the Congress attitude towards linguistic reorganisation. "By changing the attitude from time to time, an impression was created in the minds of the people that all that was necessary was a certain degree of agitation to induce the arbitrator to come to a particular decision."<sup>797</sup> . . "There are already several states in India which are linguistically organised and in which no fissiparous tendencies have exhibited themselves. If fissiparous tendencies should come into play, it can only be on account of the fact that the economic programmes and the social programmes of the party in power have failed to satisfy particular linguistic groupings."<sup>798</sup> K.P. Gopalan (Communist) observed: "The States Reorganisation Bill is the outcome of the growth of the democratic movement in our country for the formation of states on linguistic

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<sup>794</sup> Satish Kumar Arora, *The Reorganisation of the Indian states*, Far Eastern Survey, February, 1956, p.29.

<sup>795</sup> TNA, FNR, DONo. P4/56-2 dt. 8 February 1956.

<sup>796</sup> Madras Legislative Assembly Debates, Official Report, 29 March 1956, p. 128.

<sup>797</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>798</sup> Madras Legislative Assembly Debates, Official Report, 29 March 1956, p. 245.

basis, . . . 'In the formation of linguistic states, the regional language will have to play a prominent part and that is the basic factor.'<sup>799</sup>

C. Subramaniam, the Minister of Finance, Madras State admitted in the legislative Assembly that the question of the desirability of having bilingual or multilingual states and the formation of Dakshina Pradesh were discussed with the Prime Minister at Bangalore.<sup>800</sup> Panampilly Govinda Menon, Chief Minister of Travancore - Cochin in a statement revealed that the Madras Government agreed to give away Devikulam and Peermade Taluks to Travancore Cochin states and to retain Gudalur Taluk in the Madras State.<sup>801</sup>

A hartal was called by the All party Convention against the formation of Dakshina Pradesh on 20.12.1956 and about 800 persons were arrested by the police in Tamilnadu.<sup>802</sup> The hartal ended with mass meetings in which resolutions were passed condemning the idea of a Dakshina Pradesh, protesting against exclusion of certain border Tamil areas from Madras and urging the naming of Madras state as 'Tamilnad'.<sup>803</sup> However, E.V Ramswamy Naicker of the Dravida Kazhagam refused to align himself with the other parties organising the hartal since he felt that the denial of Devikulam and Peermade was not such a vital matter, affecting the Tamils as the proposed formation of a Dakshina Pradesh which they should stoutly agitate against.<sup>804</sup> The press criticised the "wobbling attitude of the Prime Minister" who often, instead of leading the Nation with a definite attitude of his own in controversial issues, has been content to be led by it.<sup>805</sup>

At an all party conference convened by M.P. Sivagnana Gramani on 27 January 1956, attended by representatives of the Communist, Socialist, Praja

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<sup>799</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>800</sup> TNA, Public Department File GO No 1480 dt. 26.4.1956.

<sup>801</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>802</sup> Madras Leg. Assembly Debates, Official Report, 6 March, 1956, p. 455.

<sup>803</sup> TNA, Public (General-A) Dept. DO No. P4/56-3, dt. 24 February 1956.

<sup>804</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>805</sup> *Ibid.*

Socialist, Justice and Republican parties, Tamilarasu, Dravdia and Dravida Munnetta Kazhagams, an action committee was formed. They called for a general hartal on the 20 February.<sup>806</sup> The Dravida Kazhagam threatened to withdraw its support to K. Kamaraj, the Chief Minister, if the latter failed to get Devikulam and Peermede.<sup>807</sup> Three leading Congressmen from Kasargod taluk in South Kanara, Umesh Rao, Mahabala Bhandary and Gangadhar Rai resigned in protest against the Government of India's decision regarding Kasargod.<sup>808</sup>

The decisions on the SRC's Report and the repercussions all over India were widely commented upon in the Press. Referring to the proposal of forming a Southern state, 'the Hindu' stated that 'a Southern State based on the positive consent of the constituent elements may be seem as a better alternative than the incongruous and disparate entities which were in prospect.'<sup>809</sup> The Indian Express observed that 'in combating the dangers to the Congress and the country which recent events have made plain, attempts must be made not only to restore discipline in the Congress organisation but also to place before the people new, positive aims instead of mere exhortations to abate the enthusiasm for linguistic states.'<sup>810</sup> However the Viduthalai (Dravida Kazhagam organ), the Tamil Nadu and Nava India (all Tamil newspapers) strongly opposed the move for formation of multilingual states.<sup>811</sup>

The Malabar Committee of the Communist Party at its meeting at Kozhikode on the 4th and 5th February, passed a resolution requesting the Polit Bureau to convene a joint meeting of representatives of the Tamilnad, Malabar and Travancore - Cochin state committees with a view to arriving at

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<sup>806</sup> TNA, Public (General A) Dept DO No. P4/56-2 dt. 8 February 1956.

<sup>807</sup> *Ibid.*, p.2.

<sup>808</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3.

<sup>809</sup> The Hindu, 25 January, 1956.

<sup>810</sup> The Indian Express, 25 January, 1956.

<sup>811</sup> TNA, FNR, DO No. P. 4/56-2 dt. 8 February, 1956.

an agreed solution to the Devikulam and Peermede issue.<sup>812</sup> In Public meetings held by the Dravida Munnetta Kazhagam strong speeches were made criticising Nehru, Kamaraj Nadar, Baktavalsalam and C. Surbamaniam and it was alleged that the Madras Ministers had betrayed the Tamilians by agreeing to surrender Devikulam - Peermede and part of Shencotta.<sup>813</sup> The Tamil daily the Viduthalai expressed the view that Dakshina Pradesh had been proposed because the centre was panic stricken over the popularity of the Dravida Kazhagam in Tamilnad and the Communist Party in Kerala.<sup>814</sup>

Taking advantage of the confusions created by the States reorganisational issues, a small group of 6 members of the Congress legislature Party in Travancore Cochin demanded a change in the leadership. These dissident Congressmen argued that the Panampilly ministry was not making earnest efforts to safeguard the territorial interests of the state. These rebels held that "they honestly and sincerely believed and still believe that the larger interests of the state and the Congress could be safeguarded only by the formation of a new Congress ministry."<sup>815</sup> To press their demand these six dissident members (including TM Varghese, Pattam Thanu Pillai and C. Kesavan) resigned from the Congress legislative Party.<sup>816</sup>

Panampilly's cabinet was in power till 23 March 1956 when due to the resignation of these six members the ruling Congress party lost its majority in the Assembly. President's rule was imposed for the first time on the advice of the Rajpramukh and the Assembly was dissolved.<sup>817</sup> Frequent ministerial changes leading to political instability alienated the Congress Party from the mass of the people.

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<sup>812</sup> TNA, FNR, DO No. p. 4/56-3 dt. 24 February, 1956.

<sup>813</sup> TNA, FRR, DO No. P. 4/56-3 dt. 24 February, 1956.

<sup>814</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>815</sup> The Hindu, 14 March, 1956.

<sup>816</sup> The Hindu, 15 March, 1956.

<sup>817</sup> 100 years of Legislative Bodies in Kerala 1888 - 1988. A Centenary Souvenir, 1990, p.90.

In the meanwhile a joint meeting of the members of Malabar and Travancore Cochin units of the Communist Party held at Trichur in the last week of June 1956. E.M.S. Namboodiripad declared that, 'in order to build up a prosperous Kerala State, the party would strive to unite all democratic forces to defeat the reactionary policies of the Congress Government'. It was decided to merge the Travancore Cochin and Malabar committees of the party to form the Kerala Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of India and a 35 member Committee was formed with 17 members from Travancore-Cochin state and 18 from Malabar.<sup>818</sup>

In Madras, 'Dravida Nad separtion Day' was observed on 1st July 1956 by the Dravida Kazhagam.<sup>819</sup> The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam held a number of propaganda meetings for the separation of an independent 'Dravdia Nad'. They criticised C. Rajagopalachari for creating a split among Congressmen by supporting the Dakshina Pradesh move and appealed to the audience to support the Munnetra Kazhagamites in the general elections.<sup>820</sup> There were differences of opinion among the Congress ranks of Malabar District regarding the question of merging with Travancore-Cochin state Pradesh Congress.<sup>821</sup>

At the Committee meetings of the Communist Party held in Malabar district, resolutions were adopted requesting the Union Government to reconstitute the Travancore Cochin legislature with the MLAs of Malabar and the ex MLAs of Travancore Cochin state with a view to forming a Ministry in the proposed Kerala state. However this demand was not admitted. K. Madhava Menon, President of the KPCC lamented that there was not a popular government here during the emergence of a Kerala state.<sup>822</sup>

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<sup>818</sup> TNA, FNR, DO No. P4/56-13 dt. 24.7.1956.

<sup>819</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3.

<sup>820</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>821</sup> TNA, FNR, DO No. Pdl 4/56-14 dt. 13 August, 1956.

<sup>822</sup> Mathrubhumi, 21 October, 1956.

The last session of the Madras Assembly which was echoed with the speeches in four South Indian language was held on 23 October 1956.<sup>823</sup> The House bid farewell to the departing Speaker N. Gopala Menon. V.R. Krishnayyar noted that the formation of linguistic states was the realisation of democratic movement. C.H. Kanaran stated that the linguistic states were essential for administration according to democratic principles. It was very painful that majority of the Members in the Assembly could not follow Malayalam speeches. He expressed pride and pleasure in making Malayalam speeches in the newly formed Kerala Assembly.<sup>824</sup>

To bid farewell to the Communist members in the Legislative Assembly from the Malabar district, a public meeting was held under the auspices of the Tamil Nad Committee of the Communist Party on 23 October 1956 under the presidency of P. Jeevanandam, MLA. P. Ramamoorthy MLA, observed on this occasion that the object of the Communist Party was to have a strong and United India, to attain which it was necessary that the administration of the state should be carried on in the respective regional languages, so that the common man could take part in it.<sup>825</sup>

The recommendations of the SRC for reorganisation of the states as accepted by the Parliament were given effect from 1st November 1956. The following changes were brought about on the western coast of the Madras state.<sup>826</sup>

- a) Malabar district (excluding the island of Laccaddive and Minicoy) and Kasargod taluk of South Kanara district were transferred from Madras to Kerala.

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<sup>823</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 October, 1956.

<sup>824</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>825</sup> TNA, FNR Public (General A) Dept. DO. No. P4/56-21 dt. 7 November, 1956.

<sup>826</sup> TNA, Madras State Administrative Report 1955-56, p.80.

- b) The Laccadive and Minicoy islands in the Malabar district and the Amindive islands in the South Kanara district were constituted into a new part C state.
- c) The territories comprised in the Agastheeswaram, Thovala, Kalkulam and Vilavankode taluks of Trivandrum district and the Shenkotta taluk of Quilone district of the former Travancore Cochin state were transferred to Madras State. The territories comprised in the first 4 taluks have been formed into a separate district named 'Kanyakumari' district with headquarters at Nagercoil and the territories comprised in the Shenkotta taluk have been incorporated in Tirunelveli district.<sup>827</sup>

Thus a new state known as the State of Kerala was constituted consequent on the reorganisation of States. As per States Reorganisation Act 1956, the State comprises the following territories from 1st November 1956.

- a. The territories of the existing state of Travancore-Cochin excluding the Taluks of Thovala, Agastheeswaram, Kalkulam, Vilavancode and Shenkotta and
- b. The territories comprised in the Malabar district excluding the Islands of Laccadive and Minicoy and the Kasargod Taluk of S. Kanara district of the Madras state.<sup>828</sup>

It was tentatively decided that Trivandrum would be the capital of Kerala State. The forthcoming assembly would take the final decision about the permanent capital.<sup>829</sup> Ernakulam was decided and declared as the Principal seat of the High Court of Kerala.<sup>830</sup> B. Ramakrishna Rao was appointed as the first Governor of Kerala.<sup>831</sup> It was decided to conduct a

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<sup>827</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>828</sup> States Reorganisation Act 1956 (Central Act 37 of 1956) Section 5.

<sup>829</sup> Mathrubhumi, 21 October, 1956.

<sup>830</sup> Govt. of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Notification No. 11/47-56- Judl I dt. 27.10.1956.

<sup>831</sup> Mathrubhumi, 30 October, 1956.



torch ('*pantham*') procession from Kozhikode to Trivandrum.<sup>832</sup> Houses, shops, factories and companies were to be decorated. The authorities of temples, mosques and churches were requested to hold special prayers.<sup>833</sup>

However there were some dissenting tones as well. The Maharaja of Travancore, Balarama Varma, decided to keep away from the celebrations. He expressed dissatisfaction over the division of Travancore. He declined to give messages on the occasion, though many of the media persons approached him. He made it clear that he was not willing to be associated with the inaugural ceremonies of the Kerala state.<sup>834</sup> The Rajpramukh refused to certify Kerala State Budget on the ground that he was in a pledge not to interfere in the affairs of the new Kerala state.<sup>835</sup> Pattam A. Thanu Pillai refused to accept the membership of the Committee constituted in connection with the formation of Kerala State since it was against the wishes of the people to form a truncated Kerala State.<sup>836</sup>

The rebel Congress leaders with the support of K.N. Sankunni Pilla and Kumbalath Sanku Pillai formed a forum called '*Akhanda Keralam*'.<sup>837</sup> They met at Panmana near Quilone and decided to form a political organisation called the Kerala Peoples Party. The meeting was presided over by TM Varghese. Other participants were Kumbalath Sanku Pillai, former KPCC President Sadasivan Pillai, K.M. Kora, N. Narayana Kurup etc.<sup>838</sup> These leaders were known as '*Akhanda Kerala Vadis*' (Exponents of Undivided Kerala).<sup>839</sup> The Kerala Peoples Party was formed with Kumbalath Sanku Pillai as Chairman.<sup>840</sup>

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<sup>832</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 October, 1956.

<sup>833</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>834</sup> Mathrubhumi, 21 October, 1956.

<sup>835</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 November, 1956.

<sup>836</sup> Letter from Pattam Thanu Pillai to Chief Secretary, SRN 5/31678/56 dt. 18.10.1956.

<sup>837</sup> Mathrubhumi, 2 November, 1956.

<sup>838</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 October 1956.

<sup>839</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 October, 1956.

<sup>840</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 November, 1956.

The press and the public generally welcomed the birth of the new Kerala State. The Malayala Manorama released a Kerala Supplement incorporating articles of prominent public figures. Vallathol's poem entitled '*Moonnukoti Kaikal*' (Three Crore Hands) depicts the joyous celebration of the Malayalees who broke the fences which separated the three regions.<sup>841</sup> Panampilly Govinda Menon pointed out that the integration of Travancore Cochin and Malabar to form Kerala was the most important incident in the last thousand years.<sup>842</sup> Prominent personalities like Mannathu Padmanabhan, Swami Bodhanandan, P.A. Seyd Muhammed, I.K. Kumaran, V.T. Bhattathirippad, also released their messages hailing the new state. The Kerala Kaumudi observed that some desired the new state to be that of Parasurama and Sankaracharya. But the Kerala now emerged was one created by the people who fought against feudalism and imperialism to gain popular freedom and fundamental rights.<sup>843</sup>

Deshabandu Kerala State Supplement published an article by Malloor Govinda Pillai strongly criticising K.M. Panikkar for having forcefully given Kerala's possessions to outsiders.<sup>844</sup> Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai remarked that November 1st puts an end to some institutions, beliefs and devotions and discards the distinction of Malayalees as Malabari, Cochiite and Travancorian.<sup>845</sup> Ponkunnam Varkey pointed out that the Crowns which ruled by suppressing, separating and insulting, had been shattered into pieces, before the storm of protests.<sup>846</sup>

I.K. Kumaran, the leader of the Mahe liberation movement observed that the birth of Kerala was a historic moment of great pleasure for all the Malayalees but regretted the exclusion of Mahe from Kerala state.<sup>847</sup> Joseph

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<sup>841</sup> Malayala Manorama, Kerala Supplement, 1 November 1956, p.1.

<sup>842</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3.

<sup>843</sup> Kerala Kaumudi, Kerala State Supplement, 1 November 1956, p.6.

<sup>844</sup> Deshabandhu Kerala State Supplement, 1 November 1956, p.15.

<sup>845</sup> Keralabhooshanam Kerala State Supplement, 1 November, 1956.

<sup>846</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>847</sup> Malayala Manorama, 1 November 1956, p.35; I.K. Kumaran and the *Mahe Mahajana Sabha* had been demanding and expecting the integration of Mahe

Mundassery editorially commented in *Navajeevan* that the Congress leaders in the Aikya Kerala movement were scattered into different sections arguing for divergent demands including Western Province, Southern State, 'Akhandam' Kerala, Independent Travancore-Cochin etc.<sup>848</sup> At the end they strove hard not to form a united Kerala. They feared that they would not come to power in the new Kerala State.<sup>849</sup>

The new state of Kerala, thus came into being on 1 November 1956.<sup>850</sup> P.S. Rao took the oath and assumed charge as acting Governor on 1 November at Trivandrum.<sup>851</sup> The new state extended over an area of 14992 sq miles (95,94,686 acres). The population of the new state, estimated according to the Census of 1951 was 1,35,49,098.<sup>852</sup> Dr. B. Ramakrishna Rao took the oath of office as Governor of Kerala on 22 November 1956.<sup>853</sup>

The whole of the Malayalam speaking region experienced a festive mood and there were celebrations in all parts of Kerala. The Malayalees inside and outside of Kerala felt that the birth of Kerala on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1956 marked the fulfilment of their long cherished dream.

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with Kerala after the departure of the French from Mahe, K. Madhava Kurup, interview, Mahe, 24.10.2006.

<sup>848</sup> Navajeevan Kerala Day Supplement, Trichur, 1 Novemebr, 1956.

<sup>849</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>850</sup> NAI, Govt. of India, Notification SRO No. 2529 dt. 1 November, 1956.

<sup>851</sup> Mathrubhumi, 2 November, 1956.

<sup>852</sup> States Reorganisation Act 1956 (Central Acat 37 of 1956) Section 5.

<sup>853</sup> Mathrubhumi, 23 November, 1956.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is the cardinal contention of this study that in the given circumstances, linguistic basis has been the most realistic and reasonable criterion for the reorganization of the states in India. The demand for linguistic states has a wider purpose in that it sought to secure for different linguistic groups political and economic justice. In multilingual states political leadership and administrative authority remained the monopoly of the dominant language groups and linguistic minorities were marginalized in the governance of their states. Prior to the states reorganization the weal of the linguistic minority was neglected by all on the vantage position. Likewise, in multilingual states development plans were unequally and unequitably distributed, the areas inhabited by the dominant language groups developing at the expense of other areas. The demand for unilingual states that arose along with the national movement therefore aimed at securing for linguistic minorities a fair deal not only in the social and cultural spheres but also in the political and economic fields.

Movements for the formation of linguistic provinces were an integral part of national liberation struggle in India. Since language is the medium of interaction between people, it is also the medium of trade, industry and social life. Crystallisation of the linguistic self awareness of a community of people is essentially a suitable aid in the struggle for power. The demand for linguistic states arose from a historically evolved process which culminated in the proper recognition of regional languages.

States reorganization in India was quite essential in view of administrative convenience because the existing structure during the colonial period was in no way a rational one. It was also imperative to redraw the states boundaries since for years the linguistic states idea had been emphasized as one that would become a reality with freedom.

The anti partition struggle in Bengal strengthened the linguistic nationalist ideology in and outside Bengal. The Andhra Movement in Telugu speaking areas of Madras Presidency was the first major linguistic movement in South India. The linguistic question was also addressed by the colonial government through the reports on constitutional reforms. However the colonial administrators were not ready to recognize the linguistic or cultural cohesion of different regions in India. The unscientific division of British India was motivated solely by administrative convenience. This resulted in the rise of many multilingual and multicultural provinces.

The Indian National Congress accepted the principle of linguistic reorganization of provinces at its Nagpur Session in 1920 and subsequently set up its provincial committees based on language. The Nehru Report of 1928 endorsed the linguistic principle by stating that 'if a province has to educate itself and do its daily work through the medium of its own language, it must necessarily be a linguistic area'. The Congress reiterated the linguistic principle in its reports, resolutions and election manifestos.

The Communist Party upheld an ideological position on the issue in compliance with the Leninist theory of self determination of nationalities. The party initiated serious discussions on the national question in India and identified 17 well developed nationalities which must have the right to form autonomous states with the right to self determination and that genuine unity of India could be achieved only on the basis of the voluntary union of all these autonomous states. The Communist party ideologues such as Bhowani Sen, P. Sundarayya, and EMS Namboodiripad ventured to provide historical basis for the development of national identities of Bengal, Andhra and Kerala respectively. Other political parties also discussed the linguistic question but suggested that factors like geographical contiguity, economic stability, defence etc. should also be taken into account during the reorganization of provinces.

The demand for a separate state of Kerala originated and developed as a linguistic movement. Malayalam language forms the most formidable factor in the formation of cultural identity of Kerala. Basic to this development was the existence of a national geographic unit. Malayalam language acts as the real driving force and it holds together the cultures of Kerala and make them a living unit. Distinguished from other South Indian regions, Kerala developed peculiar social institutions like joint family system and matrilineal system of inheritance. Distinctive art forms and architectural styles were evolved and perfected. The improvement of transport infrastructure facilitated smooth movement from region to region and this in turn furthered interaction and intermingling of peoples belonging to different parts of Kerala. As Robin Jeffrey observed, 'Kerala' is characterized by "a common culture and tradition (that) had developed in the relative isolation imposed by the Western Ghats, the mountainous chain that cut off Kerala from the Tamil and Kannada country to the east".<sup>854</sup> The Malayalam speaking population of the west coast were thus bound by geography, tradition, history, language and culture.

The three major forces in operation behind the linguistic Aikya Kerala Movement were the Kerala Renaissance, national liberation movement and the left socialist movement. The linguistic and cultural unity of the Kerala population engendered by the Malayalam language was instrumental in a good deal in moulding Malayali ideals and aspirations. The social renaissance laid out the backdrop for setting of a modern Kerala. The explosive historical events heralded by the consecration at Aruvippuram by Sri Narayana Guru undermined the structural deployment of the caste system rooted in feudal relations.

The social reform movements enabled the people of Kerala to gain self confidence and self respect and to rationalize their thinking. The literary renaissance in Kerala effected a structural change in the realm of Malayalam

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<sup>854</sup> Robin Jeffrey, *Matriliney Marxism and the Birth of the Communist Party in Kerala, 1930-1940*, *Journal of Asian Studies*, 38, 1 (1978) p.77.

language and literature resulting in the consciousness of a civil society in Kerala. Conscientious endeavours to construct the history of Kerala, formation of a History Association (1911), the printing and publishing of Malayalam works and the emergence of a reading public with a pan Kerala character has salutary effect on the development of Malayali identity formation.

Kerala society began to be transformed into a modern civilized one with a distinct cultural and linguistic identity. It was the anti partition struggle in Bengal that strengthened the linguistic nationalist ideology in and outside Bengal. The colonial government addressed the linguistic question through the reports on constitutional reforms. Though the Montagu Chemsford Report (1918) had side lined the linguistic reorganisation of provinces on the pretext of being impractical, the Report favoured small homogenous administrative units. Demands raised in the central and provincial legislatures to secure provincial reorganization were put down by the colonial government.

Responding to the repeated clamours of the regional peoples, the Indian National Congress accepted the principle of linguistic re organization of provinces in its Nagpur session in 1920. Provincial committees based on language were set up by the Congress in 1921. The Nehru Report of 1928 also put the seal of approval on the linguistic principle. The Congress successively emphasized its policy on linguistic provinces through the resolutions and election manifestoes in the subsequent years.

The progress of Renaissance brought about a cultural unification of different regions of Kerala. The self realization and self consciousness coupled with political awareness induced the Keralites to participate actively in nationalist and anti-imperialist movements.

The Malayali Memorial Movement (1891, which emanated from the sentiments of the native youth against the 'foreign' Tamil Brahmin domination, marked the beginning of a series of political struggles in

Travancore for freedom and democracy. The Movement roused national consciousness of the Malayalees to a great extent. By his birth and death respectively in Travancore and Malabar as well as his journalistic ventures, Swadeshabhmani K. Ramakrishna Pillai stimulated an emotional integration of Travancore with Malabar. His editorials and articles in Kerala Darpanam, Kerala Panchika, Malayali and Swadeshabhmani fortified the sense of Malayali identity.

Through the vigorous agitations against evil customs and practices the Malayalees took a step forward towards the unity of Kerala. In close association, there began movements for civil liberties and removal of untouchability. Such movements as *Vaikom Satyagraha*, *Sucheendram Satyagraha*, *Guruvayoor Satyagraha* and the *Kalppathi struggle* shook the foundations of the traditional caste-structured society. Oblivious of their parochial considerations, representatives from Travancore, Cochin and Malabar had actively participated in these *Satyagrahas*. These transcendental experiences had an appreciable role in generating a feeling of oneness among all concerned. The leaders of these movements like T.K. Madhavan, K. Kelappan, K.P. Kesava Menon, P. Krishna Pillai and A.K.Gopalan later became the champions of the Aikya Kerala cause.

Publication of Malayalam newspapers and journals was one of the forces that facilitated the development of Kerala Consciousness. The names of the newspapers themselves amply signify the Kerala and Malayali consciousness. The newspapers like Kerala Mithram (Cochin, 1870), *Kerala Patrika* (Calicut, 1884), *Malayali* (Trivandrum, 1886), *Kerala Sanchari* (Calicut, 1886), *Malayala Manorama* (Kottayam, 1890) and *Kerala Kaumudi* (Mayyanad, 1911) intensified the urge of the Malayalees for a United Kerala.

*The Mathrubhumi*, started under the editorship of K.P. Kesava Menon at Calicut in 1923, underlined in its very first editorial the pressing need of inspiring a feeling of oneness among the people of Kerala who were scattered in different political compartments. "Such a noble venture alone would serve



the purpose of promoting their common welfare. The Mathrubhumi is duty bound to strive strenuously for the realization of this objective". All these newspapers projected the political disabilities and socio cultural aspirations of the peoples, thereby gaining pan Kerala readership transcending the traditional boundaries of Travancore, Cochin and Malabar. The *Bhashaposhini Sabha*, the *Samasta Kerala Sahitya Parishat* and *Jeeval Sahitya Samiti* provided on all Kerala platform to the literary enthusiasts and contributed their mite to the emotional integration of Malayali intellectuals. It is pertinent to note in this context that the credit of having coined the term *Aikya Keralam* (United Kerala) goes to R.M. Palat who published a newspaper entitled *Aikya Keralam* at Calicut (1934).

It was the antipartition struggle in Bengal that strengthened the linguistic nationalist ideology inside and outside Bengal. The colonial government addressed the linguistic question through the reports on constitutional reforms. Though the Montagu Chemsford Report (1918) had sidelined the linguistic reorganisation of provinces on the pretext of being impractical, the Report favoured small homogenous administrative units. Demands raised in the central and provincial legislatures to secure provincial reorganisation were put down by the colonial government.

Responding to the repeated clamours of the regional peoples, the Indian National Congress accepted the principle of linguistic reorganisation of provinces in its Nagpur session in 1920. Provincial committees based on language were set up by the Congress in 1921. The Nehru Report of 1928 also put the seal of approval on the linguistic principle. The Congress successively emphasised its policy on linguistic provinces through the resolutions and election manifestoes in the subsequent years.

The progress of national movement in Kerala towards the beginning of the twentieth century facilitated the interactions of peoples of different regions paving the way for the development of Kerala consciousness. Though the Indian National Congress had begun its activities in Palghat as early as

1890, organized political activities began in Malabar from 1916 onwards especially in support of the Home Rule Movement. The incident at Calicut, in which K.P. Kesava Menon staged a walkout in protest against the refusal to speak in Malayalam inflamed the feelings of the Malayalees not only in Malabar but also in Travancore and Cochin. The desire to see that Kerala was united was expressed by K.P. Kesava Menon as early as 1919 in a meeting of Madras Malayali Club Menon relentlessly stood for the cause of United Kerala in his capacity as the Editor of Mathrubhumi and later the leader of the Aikya Kerala Committee.

The formation of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee (KPCC) in 1921 was the first concrete step in the direction of political unity of Kerala. Though there existed socio cultural organizations of all Kerala character before the formation of the KPCC, the term Kerala was not expressive of any political significance. Following the formation of a separate congress province for Malayalam speaking regions, comprising Travancore, Cochin and British Malabar, Kerala secured a recognized position in Indian political scene. The resolutions and speeches of the political conferences organized by the KPCC reflected the desire and demand for United Kerala. The Salt Satyagraha March from Calicut to Payyannur in April 1930 headed by K. Kelappan stimulated an ardent sense of nationalism throughout Kerala. The struggle in Malabar was viewed as a part of the struggle of Kerala. The Kasaragod-Malabar Integration Movement had a beneficial effect on the growth of Aikya Kerala Movement. The Kasaragod-Malabar Integration Jatha led by T. Subrahmanian Thirumumb in 1937 and the meetings held thereafter strengthened this cause.

The Abstention (Nivarthana) Movement in Travancore mobilized the Ezhava, Muslim and Christian Communities into political action. Subsequently there sprang up an organization called Joint Political Congress which eventually transformed into Travancore State Congress. The Travancore State Congress which brought under its banner different classes

and groups launched a struggle in 1938 with a view to attaining responsible government in the state.

The dissemination of left and socialist ideas consequent on the formation of the Congress Socialist Party in 1934 converted the United Kerala Movement into a mass movement. By forming class and mass organizations like peasant associations, trade unions and teachers and students unions, they widened the scope of political activity to the grass root level. The actual agitational experiences and ideological propaganda proved to convince the different classes about the identical nature of their problems throughout Kerala. The Hunger Marches and allied programmes led by A.K. Gopalan and others galvanized the people throughout the length and breadth of Kerala. The library movement, patronized by the Congress Socialist Party also played a decisive role in developing Kerala consciousness.

The Kerala Congress Socialist Party was turned into the state unit of the Communist Party of India as per the decisions of the Pinarayi Conference in December 1939. Owing to its leadership in organizing the struggles at Morazha, Tellicherry, Mattannur and Kayyur along with the mobilization of the common people against the world war hardships the presence of the Communist Party was felt all over Kerala. Thus the emergence of the socialist movement and its metamorphosis into the Communist Party created an all Kerala political leadership. The formulation of the dynamic slogan of 'linguistic United Kerala' was undoubtedly a crucial step taken by the Communist Party during the 1942-45 period. In tune with the party's vision of Kerala as a single political unit, the trade union movement and students' struggles, were, from their very inception, organized on an all-Kerala basis.

The Community Party envisaged a distinct ideological perspective on the national question and held that there were a number of nationalities in India based on language and culture cutting across the barriers of caste and religion. The party held that the main tool for the fight against imperialism was the developing languages of these distinct nationalities. The party

laboured to popularize this view among the masses particularly in Andhra, Bengal and Kerala.

EMS Namboodiripad attempted to locate the identity of Kerala through 'Onnekal Koti Malayalikal', later revised as 'Keralam, Malayalikalute Mathrubhumi'. It was a plea for Aikya Keralam and an initial attempt to conceptualise the complex pre capitalist social formation in Kerala. Also embodied in the book is his bid to theorise the transition of the Kerala society from primitive communism to what he described as 'Jati-Janmi-Naduvazhi domination'. EMS was venturing to foil the conservative attempts to make United Kerala a renewed Kerala version of the old caste based feudal-capitalist system. In coining the befitting title 'Keralam Malayalikalute Mathrubhumi' (Kerala, Homeland of the Malayalees) EMS was categorically answering the question as to whose Kerala and what type of state was to be created. As discussed elsewhere some wanted to revive 'Parasurama Keralam' founded merely on mythical concept, embracing all the coastal territories stretching from Gokarnam to Kanyakumari. The native rulers and the allied feudal-aristocratic elements were reluctant to relinquish their pristine privileges and glory.

The Communist Party viewed the struggle for United Keralam as an integral part of anti imperialist struggle. The party conceived a linguistic United Kerala made up of all those contiguous Malayalam speaking areas of Madras, Travancore and Cochin. The Communist Party of the 1940s took a clear and forthright stand on the ideal of United Kerala, the rejection of princely rule and the establishment of democracy. The struggles for the above goals, so believed the party, alone could invigorate the ideological struggle against the destructive, reactionary, feudal, bourgeois and colonial elements.<sup>855</sup>

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<sup>855</sup> P.J. Cherian (ed.), *Perspectives on Kerala History, Kerala State Gazetteer, Vol.IV Part II* Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, p.543.

The Joint meeting of the representatives of the Travancore State Congress, the Cochin Praja Mandalam and the KPCC held on 2 July 1946 at Ernakulam under the presidentship of K. Kelappan unanimously resolved to mould public opinion infavour of Aikya Kerala. Immediately after the adoption of a resolution on Aikya Kerala by the Cochin Praja Mandalam, the Cochin ruler Maharaja Sree Kerala Varma sent a message to the Cochin Legislative Council on 29 July 1946. In this 'Aikya Kerala Message', the Maharaja expressed his desire to combine Cochin with Malabar and Travancore to form the province of Kerala.

This message was marked by several peculiarities – that it was issued on the day which was decided to be observed as the 'Responsible Government Day' by the Cochin Praja Mandalam, that it was read in the assembly by a European (Diwan George Boag), that there were only seven members in the House (owing to the boycott of Praja Mandalam), that the Maharaja kept silence over the issue of responsible government and that the Maharaja was not ready to relinquish the hereditary honours and privileges of the ruling families. In these respects the Aikya Kerala Message of the Cochin Maharaja was criticized as 'politically motivated' and was issued 'to divert popular attention from the pressing political problems of the time'. Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar sarcastically remarked that 'the Maharaja of Cochin was described as the direct descendent of Cheraman Perumal and it would be only fit and proper if Travancore was also brought under his sovereignty'.

The linguistic Aikya Kerala Movement met with stiff opposition from different quarters. The Diwan Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar made it clear that the Government of Travancore could not agree upon the Aikya Kerala proposal. He promulgated the idea of an 'Independent Travancore' after the withdrawal of the British from India. On 11 June 1947 he announced the scheme of 'Independent Travancore'.

The Travancore ruling family and the Diwan adamantly stood against the United Kerala Movement since they believed that it would spoil the

interests of their authority and diwanship. The Diwan tried to make use of caste, communal and regional sentiments for the cause of Independent Travancore. These positions taken by the ruling classes reveal their reactionary approach towards the United Kerala Movement.

The Communist Party organized an all out struggle in their strong holds to put an end to the autocratic rule of the Diwan and achieve responsible government. Two slogans echoed throughout the state: 'American Model into the Arabian Sea' and 'Terminate the Rule of the Diwan'. Consequent on an assault on him the Diwan withdrew from the administrative scene. With his exit was extinct, one of the major hurdles to the creation of United Kerala.

Independence gave new hope and zeal for the champions of Aikya Kerala Movement. However, after independence there was a perceptible change in the policy of the Congress leaders regarding the reorganization of provinces. The Congress leadership was now opposed to their earlier commitment on the formation of linguistic states. This stand was contrary to the spirit of the Nagpur Congress (1920), Nehru Report (1928) Congress Working Committee Resolution of 1938, Congress Election Manifesto of 1945-46 and innumerable resolutions and statements made by Congress committees and conventions from time to time.

Nehru in power preferred non linguistic states in the interests of a strong centre. The Linguistic Provinces Commission known as the 'Dar Commission' (1948) suggested that no new provinces should be formed for the time being. It also held that the formation of provinces exclusively or even mainly on linguistic considerations would be inadvisable. On account of the widespread protests the Congress constituted a Linguistic Provinces Committee known as the 'JVP Committee' comprising Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhai Patel and Pattabhi Sitaramayya to probe the question afresh. The JVP Report which reflected the intentions of the central Government recommended the postponement of the formation of linguistic provinces by a few years. The JVP Report also did not satisfy the proponents of the

linguistic states. Neither the Dar Commission Report nor the JVP Report was popular in South Indian regions. The Congress leadership resorted to various strategies like the appointment of the Dar Commission, publication of its report, its further examination by the JVP Committee etc., as delaying tactics to side track the people from the question of the formation of linguistic states.

The contradictory positions taken by the Congress Party and leaders in the post-independent period tended to delay the formation of linguistic provinces. “Before the attainment of independence the National Congress had dutifully burnt incense to the principle of linguistic states, but Nehru in power began to have somewhat different views from those he had supported in opposition. His inclination was to re examine the question and in the meantime to procrastinate”.

The Kerala faction of the Congress Party was divided over the formation of a United Kerala State. K. Kelappan and his followers demanded the formation of a Kerala State as a Western Coastal State (*'Pashchima Samsthan'*) stretching from N. Canara to Kanyakumari. Kelappan did not endorse the integration of Travancore Cochin States as helpful for the Aikya Kerala cause. So he resigned from the Aikya Kerala Committee. He had never taken into consideration the aspirations of the peoples of those regions which he proposed to include in the Kerala state, including North Kanara and Coorg. They were dead against the idea of their being incorporated into the Kerala State.

Another section of Congressmen in Malabar stood for the merger of Travancore-Cochin with Madras State to form a *'Dakshina Samsthan'* (Southern state). The K.P.C.C which took initiative for Aikya Kerala Movement was divided into two units namely the Malabar Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) and the Travancore Cochin Pradesh Congress Committee (TCPCC). The MPCC political conference at Palghat (1953) requested the central government to form a Southern State composed of Madras, Travancore-Cochin, Mysore and Coorg.

The opposition of the Malabar Congress leadership to the Aikya Kerala was in accordance with the attitude of central Congress leadership and Government of India. This became evident in the Dar Commission Report and the JVP Committee Report. The Malabar Congressmen harboured the fear that if Kerala was formed, that would be a province with communist domination.

The Tamil Congressmen in Travancore formed the Travancore Tamil Nadu Congress (TTNC) and they wanted the merger of southern taluks of Travancore with the neighbouring Madras State. On this issue they withdrew their representative from the Congress (A.J. John) ministry and as a result the ministry fell in September 1953. A major section of Congressmen in Travancore was emphatic in their demand that the southern taluks should be retained in the newly formed Kerala State. These dissident Congressmen who stood for undivided Kerala (*'Akhandam Keralam'*) later formed Kerala Peoples Party.

The Communist Party took the fight for linguistic states as a fight to establish a true Indian federation. 'To make the people understand that they are part of India and to ensure the development of the country as a whole, distribution of the states on a linguistic basis was very essential'. The party instructed all its class organizations to conduct mass campaigns and organize agitations demanding linguistic Aikya Kerala. The Communists associated themselves with the various ad-hoc organizations set up to further linguistic cause and engaged in serious discussions inside and outside legislatures.

In the Parliamentary debates, Nehru ruled out the linguistic division as an unwise thing. However the fast and death of Potti Sriramulu and the subsequent violence broke out in Andhra forced the Central Government to yield to Andhra demand. The creation of Andhra State boosted the demand for redistribution of states on linguistic basis. The decision to allow the Andhras to separate from Madras was the signal for linguistic groups all over India to strengthen their agitation.



The wide range discussion on the proposal for Southern State revealed that majority of the Malayalees and Tamilians and their affiliated political parties and social organizations were against it. The main issues that came up for discussion in this regard were the economic stability of the proposed Kerala State, developmental activities, political prospects, communal interests, employment opportunities etc. Different social groups took their respective stands taking into account the existing socio-economic conditions in Malabar and Travancore Cochin areas.

The Aikya Kerala Committee commented that the MPCC Palghat resolution was unfortunate. The Kerala units of the Communist Party, the R.S.P and the K.S.P protested against the MPCC resolution and exhorted the Keralites to join together for Aikya Kerala, the birthright of the Malayalees. The Aikya Kerala conventions held inside and outside Kerala demonstrated that popular aspirations were infavour of the formation of linguistic Aikya Kerala. Class organizations including trade unions and Kisan sanghams raised the Aikya Kerala demand at their grass root level. The Aikya Kerala Movement became a mass movement towards the end of 1953. The popular struggles emerged in different parts of the country forced the central government to constitute the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC).

In South India the SRC proposed the formation of the linguistic states of Kerala and Karnataka in addition to the previously created Andhra. The SRC's proposals for the formation of Kerala were in agreement with the linguistic principle. The proposed Kerala province was to be composed of Travancore Cochin excluding the five Tamil taluks, the contiguous district of Malabar with Laccadive Islands and Fort Cochin and the Kasaragod taluk and Amindive Islands. "It will be linguistically homogenous....about 94 percent of its population will be Malayalam speaking and the state will be geographically compact".

Kasaragod taluk of South Kanara district was included in the proposed Kerala State since the Malayalam speaking percentage was about 72. *The*

*Karnataka Samsthaneekarana Samiti* registered its protest against the proposal of the Commission to include in the Kerala State, the areas north of Chandragiri river.

The exclusion of Gudalure from the proposed Kerala State evoked strong discontent among the Malabar public. Since the Commission took district as a unit and Gudalur was part of a district with a Tamil majority, no mention was made in the Report about the claim of Kerala. It was also pointed out that during the deliberations on the states reorganization, Malabar had no representative in the Madras Ministry to safeguard Malayali interest.

The Tamil claim for the twin taluks in the High Ranges, Devikulam and Peermede was rejected on the ground that the percentage of the floating Tamil speaking population was found 46% and 30% in Devikulam and Peermede. The Laccaddive and Minicoy Islands were constituted into a new part C state.

While the demand for a linguistic recasting of old provinces had been broadly conceded by the Congress leadership in the pre independence days, the Congress government at the centre became extremely reluctant to follow the same principle consistently after independence. In spite of the martyrdom of Potti Sriramulu and the compulsion to appoint a Commission to study the question, the Union Cabinet headed by Nehru and Pant expressed great concern over the possible resultant 'balkanisation of India'. In the meantime the concern of a dominant pan Indian and multi lingual bourgeoisie arose as a menace to the growing linguistic movement. This section was bent upon retaining its firm grip over the national polity as a whole.

The Congress Party failed to appreciate properly the popular aspirations of the linguistic reorganization movement. It was indeed a lapse on its part that they could not realize that a consistent reorganization of states on linguistic basis was the surest foundation of consolidated national unity, just as the universal achievement of national liberation provided the foundation for real international cooperation.

As pointed out by T.V. Sathyamurthy, 'Even in the actual formation of the Kerala State, as it finally came into existence, it was the Communist definition under the rubric of *Aikya Kerala* (literally United Kerala, following the nationality principle) rather than the Congress definition under the rubric of '*Akhanda Kerala*' (literally, undivided Kerala, following a more mechanical territorial definition that won the day.'<sup>856</sup>

When the Congress was in power in Travancore and Travancore-Cochin between 1948 and 1956 it got itself discredited and humiliated by internal rivalries and differences of opinion. Frequent ministerial changes leading to political instability alienated the party from the mass of the people. Rising to the occasion, the Communist Party acquired the leadership of the *Aikya Kerala* Movement. The party campaigned for a linguistic, democratic and progressive United Kerala. Through their class organizations, the party systematically converted the struggle into a mass movement. Thus it enabled the people to realize their long cherished dream of *Aikya Kerala* and win the confidence of the people. It was this mass base and popular backing during the post independence period that enabled the Communist party to gain majority seats in the first ever elections to the Kerala Legislative Assembly in 1957.

Many people were dissatisfied with the boundaries fixed for the reorganized states. The separation of the southern taluks from Travancore-Cochin was depicted as 'multilating the limbs of Mother Kerala'.<sup>857</sup> Some prominent people expressed displeasure over the transfer to Madras State, of such historical monuments associated with Travancorean history, as Padmanabhapuram in Kalkkulam and Sucheendram in Agastheeswaram.

The Tamil population in Devikulam and Peermede Taluks felt that their legitimate claim to be included in the Madras state was ignored by the

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<sup>856</sup> T.V. Sathyamurthy, *India since Independence-Studies in the Development of the Power of the States*, Ajantha, Delhi, 1985.

<sup>857</sup> B. Hridayakumari recalls her father Bodheswaran who composed many enchanting poems on Kerala identity, observed fast on November 1<sup>st</sup> every year. *Veekshanam* supplement, 28 December 2005.

State Reorganisation Commission for trivial technical reasons. Similarly the Malayalees of Gudalur were also had a grave grievance that their case was not properly heard for want of a Malaylai member in the Madras Ministry during the hectic discussions on states reorganization. The Kannadigars of Kasaragod taluk also remonstrated against the inclusion of the region north of Chandragiri river to the newly formed Kerala State.

Taking a more objective, rational and realistic view, the Communist Party demanded that the borders of the linguistic states be adjusted on the basis of village and contiguity; so that the least number of linguistic minorities be left in another state. When ever there is any serious dispute involving people, it should be solved on this principle and not allow the vested interests to exploit the sentiments or genuine grievances of linguistic minorities.<sup>858</sup>

It may be noted in this context that some of the aforesaid grievances are attributable to the criterion employed by the SRC for the reorganization of the states. In lieu of taking village as the smallest unit, as wisely suggested by the Communist Party, the SRC opted for district or taluk as the basis for treating unilingual regions. Had the suggestion of the Communist Party been duly heeded, the SRC could have averted the situation of leaving huge linguistic minorities in another state.

The existence of the linguistic states for more than half a century has disproved the contention that 'the unity of newly independent India would be jeopardized if the map of India were redrawn with linguistic affinity as the deciding factor'. On the contrary it bears ample testimony to the contention that linguistic principle is the rational criterion for states reorganization. The linguistic organization of states thwarted many fissiparous movements which would otherwise hamper the national stability of India. Such parochial demands afloat in the air during the 1940s and 50s as the ones for

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<sup>858</sup> P. Sundarayya, *National Integration – A Critique of Government Policies*, National Integration Council, New Delhi, 1973.

*Dravidasthan, Telengana, Mappilastan, etc.* could be successfully frustrated in the wake of reorganization on linguistic basis.

In the regions like Maharashtra and Gujarat where linguistic principle was not considered for the states reorganization by the Commission widespread riots and disturbances erupted resulting in heavy loss of life and property. It is a fact that language constitutes the core of some of the prominent contemporary subnationalisms in the Indian subcontinent. "Linguism", as cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz noted, is particularly intense in the Indian subcontinent".<sup>859</sup> The incidence and potency of linguistic subnationalist movements in the region support his claim. Pakistan which was committed to a single state for the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent had to accept the partition in 1971.<sup>860</sup> The successful secession of its Bengali speaking region (now Bangladesh, literally translated as 'the land of the Bengali-speakers'), challenged the religious basis of the Pakistani state which continues to confront powerful subnationalist movements by the Baluchi, Sindhi and Pashto language groups. The struggle associated with the Tamil subnationalist movement has ravaged Srilanka since the 1980s.

Linguistic reorganisation of India was accomplished after prolonged popular struggles, making room for greater political participation by the people. Linguistic reorganisation has also provided a political milieu conducive to the flowering of many linguistically rooted cultures and has thereby evolved a system that greatly enriches the cultural life of the nation as a whole.

The reorganisation of states on linguistic lines provided a strong foundation to the Indian federal structure. It has not in any manner adversely affected the federal structure of the Union or weakened or paralysed the Centre as many had feared. The central government wields as much authority as it did before. The states have also been co-operating with the Centre in

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<sup>859</sup> Clifford Geertz, *Old Societies and New States*, Amerind, 1963.

<sup>860</sup> E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, Cambridge, 1993, pp. 135-36.

planning and economic development. In a sense the national government has been strengthened by the creation of coherent state units. As W.H. Morris Jones remarked, 'the newly fashioned units, it is true, have a self-conscious coherence, but they are willing, thus equipped, to do business with the centre, to work as parts of a whole that is India'.<sup>861</sup>

Rajni Kothari, the political scientist observes: the (states) reorganisation resulted in rationalizing the political map of India without seriously weakening its unity. It created homogenous political units which could be administered through a medium that the vast majority of the population understood.<sup>862</sup> Indeed it can be said that language rather than being a force for division has proved a cementing and integrating influence. The linguistic states reorganization marked the progress of the democratic movement in our country. It also ensured the administration of the state to be carried on in the respective regional languages enabling the common man to take part in it.

However even after the linguistic reorganization of South Indian States, clamour for new states has been gathering momentum. The Telugu speaking people of erstwhile native state of Hyderabad put forward the demand for a separate *Telengana* State as early as late 1940s. *The Telengana Rashtra Samiti* (TRS) has been struggling mainly for this single demand inside and outside legislatures. The Coorgis in Karnataka demand a separate Coorg state as existed prior to the states reorganization.

But a closer look at the problem reveals that these demands have been gaining strength due to the regional imbalances in the developmental policies and programmes implemented by the ruling authorities time to time, repeatedly breaking the assurances made during the states reorganization.

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<sup>861</sup> W.H. Morris Johns, *The Government and Politics of India*, Wishow, England, 1987 edition.

<sup>862</sup> Rajni Kothari, *Politics in India*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1970.

The Aikya Kerala Movement facilitated the enquiries into the identity of Kerala as a separate unit. This in turn fostered the compilations on different aspects of Kerala history and culture, resulting in the growth of Kerala historiography. These ventures provided new insights into the evolution of Kerala's social and cultural formations.

Serious discussions and debates on the economic stability, revenue potential and resource mobilization of the proposed Kerala State initiated during the movement for Aikya Kerala paved the way for the thoughtful and meaningful dialogues on the vision of Kerala's development pattern, leading to the concept of the unique 'Kerala Model Development'. It is worth mentioning here that a serious debate is going on as to how to make this development sustainable.

Certain leaders of the Aikya Kerala Movement have presented an idealist picture of future Kerala. For instance, K.P. Kesava Menon's autobiography '*Kazhinha Kalam*' (Bygone Days) embodies his dream of prospective Kerala state where people lead a prosperous, joyful and morally contented life.

Though such a dream in toto is yet to be translated into reality, Kerala has left its own imprints on divergent sphere in the national scenario. Despite having its low percapita income the people of Kerala enjoy some of the world's highest standard in terms of literacy, life expectancy, appreciable decrease in the infant mortality and the like. Kerala has attracted the attention of the world for its achievements in human development comparable to that of affluent countries.<sup>863</sup> By 1970 Kerala had already become "an object of fascination for scholars and policy makers concerned with development" the world over.<sup>864</sup>

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<sup>863</sup> M.A. Oommen, ed., *Rethinking Kerala Development, Kerala's Development Experience*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1999. p.xv.

<sup>864</sup> Robin Jeffrey, *Politics, Women and Well being*, OUP, 1992. p.xi.

Malayalees viewed the struggle for Aikya Kerala as the struggle for the fulfillment of the true spirit of freedom. Even after independence, they could not enjoy full fledged avenues of democracy. In Travancore-Cochin the vestiges of old feudal monarchical system lingered on as the ruling authority. Malabar continued to be under the Tamil dominated Madras State. In that sense the formation of linguistic Kerala State unleashed the opportunities for the Malayalees to mould their own political destiny in their own language. In such a way the formation of the linguistic Aikya Kerala state accelerated the process of democratization of the Kerala Society. But the process of democratization attains fruition so long as it is extricated from the weeds of casteism and communalism.



# മാതൃഭൂമി.

1923 മാർച്ച് 17-ാംനം

സ്വന്തം പ്രസ്താവന.-

ശുദ്ധീകൃത ബോധത്തിലും, സാമദാരിക ജീവിതത്തിലും, സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യത്തിലും,

മന	.....ഓരോ ഭാഷ സംസാരിച്ച്, ഒരേചരിത്രത്താലും	ലും
വ	ഐതിഹ്യത്താലും ബന്ധിപ്പിക്കപ്പെട്ട്, ഒരേ ആചാരസ	ണ്ടി
തി	മ്പ്രദായങ്ങൾ അനുഷ്ഠിച്ചു വരുന്നവരായ കേരളീയർ	3-4
യ	ഇപ്പോൾ ചിന്നിച്ചിതറി മൂന്നു നാല് ഭരണത്തിൻ കീഴിൽ	1000
ജി	ആയിത്തീർന്നിട്ടുണ്ടെങ്കിലും കേരളീയരുടെ പൊതു	ണ്ടോ
ക	ഗുണത്തിനും വളർച്ചക്കും ശ്രേയസ്സിനും കേരളത്തിലേ	മുണ്ട
	നാനാഭാഗങ്ങളിലും നിവസിക്കുന്ന ജനങ്ങൾ തമ്മിൽ	
	ഇപ്പോൾ ഉള്ളതിൽ അധികം ചേർച്ചയും ഐക്യതയും	
	ഉണ്ടായിതീരേണ്ടത് എത്രയും ആവശ്യമാകുകൊണ്ട്	
	ഈ കാര്യനിവൃത്തിക്കായും മാതൃഭൂമി വിടാതെ	
	ഉത്സാഹിക്കുന്നതകുന്നു.....	

ദാരുണ ശ്രേഷ്ഠമായ ആദേശങ്ങൾക്കും  
പലാകരുടെ ഇടയിൽ പ്രചാരം വരുത്തു

Extracts from the first Editorial statement of Mathrubhumi, 17 March, 1923  
Source: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, Microfilm print.

## Appendix II

### 'Aikya Kerala Message' by Sri Kerala Varma, Maharaja of Cochin, 29 July, 1946.

#### HIS HIGHNESS AND AIKYA KERALA

The interest shown by His Highness and the lead that he gave to the movement for a United Kerala are well known throughout India. His Highness's views on Aikya Kerala were expounded in detail in his message to the Legislative Council on 29th July, 1946.

"The events of the past few months have brought grave issues to the forefront of Indian politics. The statements of the Cabinet delegation and the Viceroy have raised hopes as well as misgivings in the people of this country, and more especially so in the subjects of Indian States. Important constitutional changes are envisaged by those statements, and it is but natural that my subjects and the wider public of India should feel anxious to know my attitude towards these imminent reforms.

I have given deep consideration to these matters and have studied carefully the points of view put forward by various leaders of British India and the States. It is a consolation to know that the integrity of India is not to be broken up and that in framing the future Constitution of India we can proceed on that basis. Personally I have always felt—and nothing that I have read these days has changed my view—that the States are an integral part of India and should therefore act in unison with the British Indian provinces and for the benefit of the whole. For, if India becomes great, every part of it becomes great and the States, too, derive the benefit and the glory.

It would seem that the scheme of linguistic provinces will be carried out. I am in full agreement with this principle. There is in India no more precise, cultural and linguistic unit than Kerala. The people of

Kerala are considerably agitated over the question of redistribution of provinces. Unless a way is found to establish a United Kerala, the neighbouring district of Malabar will find itself attached to a province where culturally it may have to remain a minority. It is good neither for the province nor for Malabar that it should be so. I have said before that if India becomes great every part of it becomes great. It is equally true that, if every part becomes cohesive and strong, it adds to the strength and greatness of India as a whole.

In this context of fateful events and impending changes it has fallen to my lot to direct the destinies of my State. I cannot do it dutifully unless I were to bear in mind the relation of my State and my subjects to the rest of Kerala. My subjects are connected in so many intimate ways with the people of Malabar that it is no exaggeration to say that they are as perturbed by the changes foreshadowed above as the latter.

Studying the problem in this setting, I have arrived at the definite conclusion that Kerala must unite and be one if it were to save itself from cultural extinction. If we remain as we are, our voice in the future Union Government of India will never be heard. It will only be a faint and ineffective murmur. For its own sake and for the good of the country as a whole, Kerala must unite and function as a separate and cohesive unit in the greater Federation of India. In order to achieve this, Malabar, Cochin and Travancore will have to join together and devise ways and means to frame a scheme of government for the whole of Kerala without destroying the connection of the people to the ancient Ruling Houses.

It appears to me this is not difficult if we have the will and the heart to save the culture and integrity of Kerala which was, at one time, being ruled by the common forbear of the ancient Ruling Families, the Cheraman Perumal. Tradition says that the last Perumal, in order to avoid internecine strife, divided his territory into three and enjoined the

Zamorin and the Cochin and the Travancore Rulers to administer their respective territories without electing a Perumal. If this is true, history cannot provide a more disastrous example of an ill-advised injunction to subordinate Rulers by a Paramount Power. It was the beginning of our troubles. For the thousand years thereafter we have reaped a harvest of misery and quarrels, and nothing but that. Is it not time for us to redeem our ancient land from the parlous state into which it has sunk ever since the abolition of the institution of Perumalship? Here is a golden opportunity for us. Another Paramount Power is relinquishing power with the sage advice to unite and be strong. We have, I hope, learned wisdom from our past miseries. We can still get inspiration from our historic past if we care to seek it there. With suitable modifications to fit modern political conceptions, the institution of "The Perumal" can be revived and a link with the proud historic past forged. The idea thrills me as it should every Malayalee. There were in those days many an institution in the polity of Malabar worthy of copying today because of the democratic principles on which they were based.

For my part, therefore, and speaking for my State, I am prepared, indeed I earnestly desire, to combine with Malabar and Travancore in order to form the Province of Kerala. This does not mean that the functions of my family are abdicated; but necessarily they have to be modified to suit new circumstances. I believe in pure constitutional rule

and throughout my life I have sedulously cultivated an attitude towards life and institutions which is antipathetic to autocracy and personal rule. Constitutional rule has been the guiding principle of my family, and more especially so of my immediate predecessor, and in return we have had and I am having the loyalty and love of my subjects in an unstinted measure. I am sure in future, too, this traditional attachment of my subjects to my family will never wane.

With these ideas in view and in order to ascertain how far my desire to bring into existence a Kerala Province will be shared or supported by the people of Malabar and the progressive Ruler of Travancore, I have asked my Diwan to initiate discussions with the Government of Madras and with the Travancore Durbar. These talks and discussions obviously will have to precede the meeting of the final Constituent Assembly.

The only other point remaining to be considered is about the Constituent Assembly and the representation of Cochin in it. It has not been settled yet how many representatives Cochin could send to this Assembly. However, to set at rest all doubts about the method of representation, I am glad to announce that, after mature consideration, I have decided to allow the people to elect their representative or representatives. This election will be by the Council; but, as in the case of British Indian provinces, the candidates may be chosen from anywhere, and they need not be members of the Council. I hope the members will not allow petty motives and party squabbles to influence them in the selection of our representative or representatives.

I have been watching the party politics of the State with great disappointment. The bewildering changes of party label by members of the Council show a lack of political education and laxity of principles which augur ill for the future. Let me hope it is a passing phase. I am entrusting a grave responsibility to you in the firm belief that in your hands the prestige of my family will be safe and that you will not do anything which will undermine the ultimate constitutional headship of my dynasty. There need not be any conflict between a constitutional ruler and his subjects. There is a lot which you and I can learn from the English. You may hate British imperialism; but the sober Englishman is a subject worthy of study and his lack of political fads and fancies is worthy of copying if we want to build up strength.

Let me close this statement. I know the anxiety with which many of you have been awaiting it. I believe I have largely expressed sentiments which will find an echo in your hearts. It is not all generations of

men who get an opportunity to ~~render service of such magnitude to~~ their country and people. To those of you who are young, here is the chance to forget self and work with united effort for the good of Kerala and India. It is something worth striving for and achieving. You have still a future before you and, if success attends our efforts, you can honourably and happily live a life whose pattern you will have designed and constructed yourselves. To those of us who are old it is a great satisfaction to know that we are helping to build a future for Kerala and India which will enure to the benefit of posterity and the greatness of our country. For myself I thank God for vouchsafing me the opportunity to serve my people and my country in a manner which I hope will ultimately add to their strength and glory. I don't seek any reward except the fulfilment of the dream which I have been cherishing all these years—the *Unification of Kerala*. That is all. May God bless our efforts."

Source: Cochin Information, August 1948, Cochin Govt. Press, Ernakulam.

## Appendix III

### Independent Travancore

#### Royal Message

*This message was broadcast by His Highness the Maha Raja of Travancore from the Trivandrum Station at 8-45 P. M. on Friday, the 18th July, 1947.*

#### To My Beloved People

On this epoch-making day, His Britannic Majesty has assented to the Indian Independence Bill by the provisions whereof this ancient State of Ours is enabled to recover its traditional and historic independence. On and from the 15th August, 1947, the close and friendly alliance that has subsisted for over a century and a half between the British Crown and Travancore will be formally terminated by reason of the renunciation by His Majesty of his suzerainty in respect of the Indian States. The mutual rights and obligations arising out of treaties, agreements, and undertakings entered into between the successive Rulers of Travancore and the British Crown and its representatives will also lapse and from that date, Travancore will reassume its independence and sovereignty in full measure. On this solemn and historic occasion, I extend, on behalf of myself and my people, to His Majesty our thanks for the helpful co-operation and mutual service that have marked the relationship of the two countries during many decades and have withstood many trials, including the supreme tests afforded during two great wars.

The State of Travancore is a Priceless heritage and my ancestors and myself have endeavoured to discharge our sacred trust with the sole purpose of labouring for the material and moral progress of its people.

It has been and will be my intention to associate my people with me in the tasks of Government. The material and human resources of this State are abundant. Its people are highly educated and possess intellectual, agricultural, and industrial aptitudes of a high order. All the elements necessary for a happy and prosperous national existence are present, and I feel confident that, with the blessings of Providence and the co-operation of my people, Travancore will realise its destiny as a sovereign State working in close collaboration with the rest of India in all matters of common concern. At this auspicious moment, I call upon all my beloved people to rejoice with me and to join me in dedicating ourselves to build a new and in fuller amplitude the fabric of a great Travancore.

Source: Kerala State Archives, Trivandrum, *Information and Listener*, August 1947.

**Appendix IV**  
**Formation of Kerala State**

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

Notification

S.R.O.No. 2529.            New Delhi, the 1st November, 1956.

The following Proclamation by the President is published for general information.

PROCLAMATION

Whereas by virtue of the provisions of the States Reorganisation Act, 1956, a new State of Kerala is formed on this first day of November, 1956;

And whereas until such time as a general election is held for the purpose there will be no Legislative Assembly for the said State;

And whereas I, Rajendra Prasad, President of India, am satisfied that a situation has consequently arisen in which the Government of the said State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution;

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by article 356 of the Constitution and of all other powers enabling me in this behalf, I hereby proclaim that I—

(a) assume to myself as President of India all functions of the Government of the State of Kerala and all powers vested in or exercisable by the Governor of that State;

(b) declare that the powers of the Legislature of the said State shall be exercisable by or under the authority of Parliament, and

(c) make the following incidental and consequential provisions which appear to me to be necessary or desirable for giving effect to the objects of this proclamation, namely;

(1) in the exercise of the functions and powers assumed to himself by virtue of clause (a) of this Proclamation it shall be lawful for the President to act to such extent as he thinks fit through the Governor of the said State;

(2) the operation of the following provisions of the Constitution in relation to the said State is hereby suspended, namely:—

So much of clause (2) of article 151 as relates to the laying of the reports before the Legislature of the State, article 163 and 164 so much of clause (3) of article 166 as relates to the allocation among Ministers of the business of the Government of the State, article 167 and 169, articles 174 to 186 (both inclusive), clause (3) of article 187 so far as it requires consultation with the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, articles 188 and 189, articles 193 to 198 (both inclusive), articles 200 and 201 so much of clause (3) of article 202 as relates to salaries and allowances of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assmbly, articles 208 to 211 (both inclusive), the proviso to clause (1) and the proviso to clause (3) of article 213 so much of clause (5) of article 320 as relates to the laying of the regulations before the Legislature of the State and so much of clause (2) of article 323 as relates to the laying of the report with a memorandum before the Legislature of the State;

(3) a general election for constituting the Legislative Assembly for the said State shall be held as soon as possible;

(4) any reference in the constitution to the Governor

shall in relation to the said State be construed as a reference to the President and any reference therein to the Legislature or Legislative Assembly of the State shall in so far as it relates to the functions and powers thereof, be construed as a reference to Parliament and in particular, the references in article 213 to the Governor and to the Legislative Assembly of the State shall be construed as references to the President and to Parliament respectively;

Provided that nothing herein shall affect the provisions of article 153, 155 to 159 (both inclusive) 299 and 361 and paragraph 1 to 4 (both inclusive) of the second schedule or prevent the President from acting under sub-clause (1) of this clause to such extent as he thinks fit through the Governor of the State;

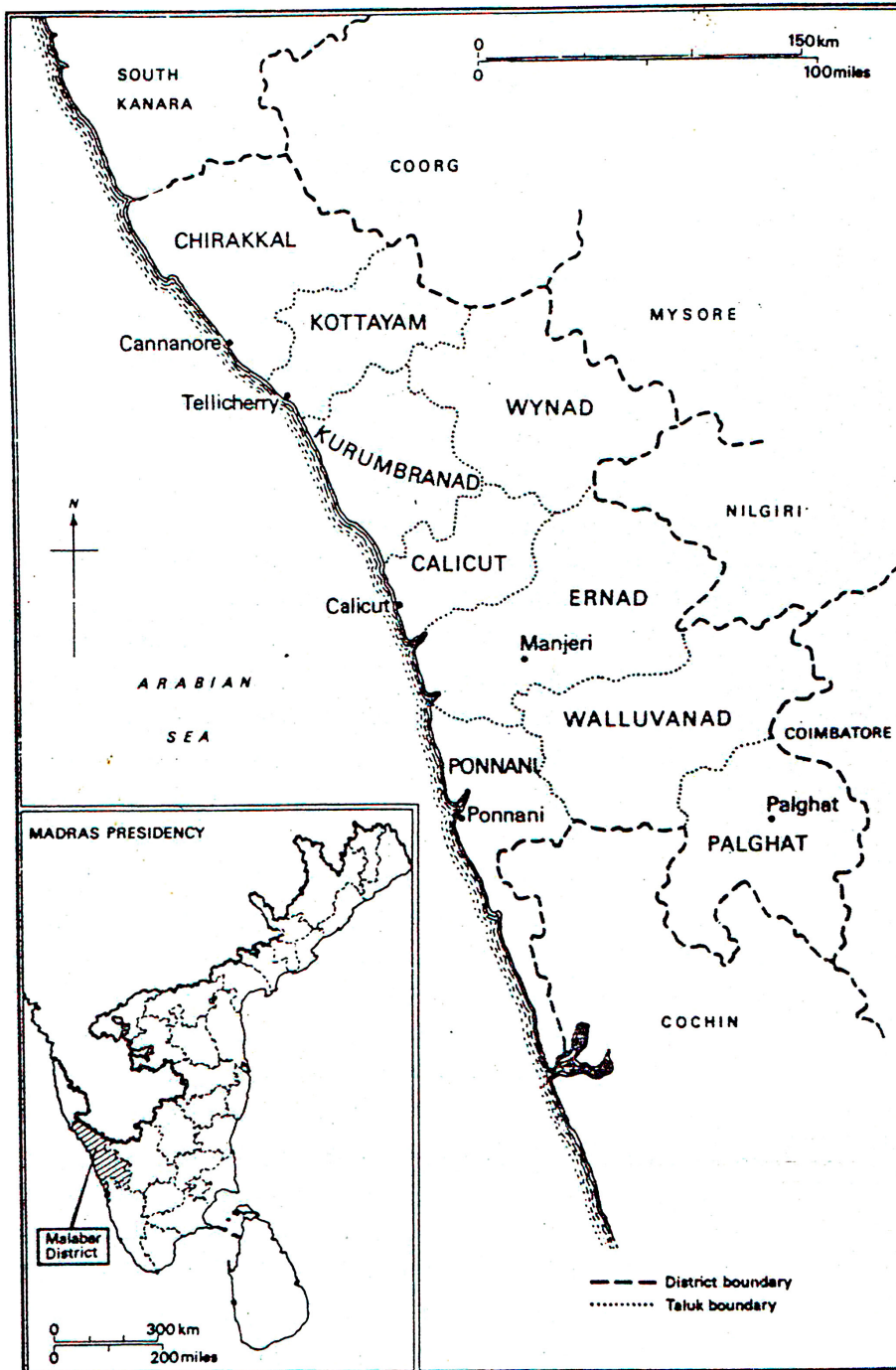
(5) any reference in the Constitution to Acts or laws of or made by the Legislature of the State shall be construed as including a reference to Acts or Laws made in exercise of the powers of the Legislature of the State, by Parliament, by virtue of this Proclamation or by the President or other authority referred to in sub-clause (a) of clause (1) of article 357 of the Constitution.

1st November, 1956.

RAJENDRA PRASAD,  
*President.*

Source: National Archives of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, File No. SRO 2529, New Delhi, 1<sup>st</sup> November 1956.

## Appendix V

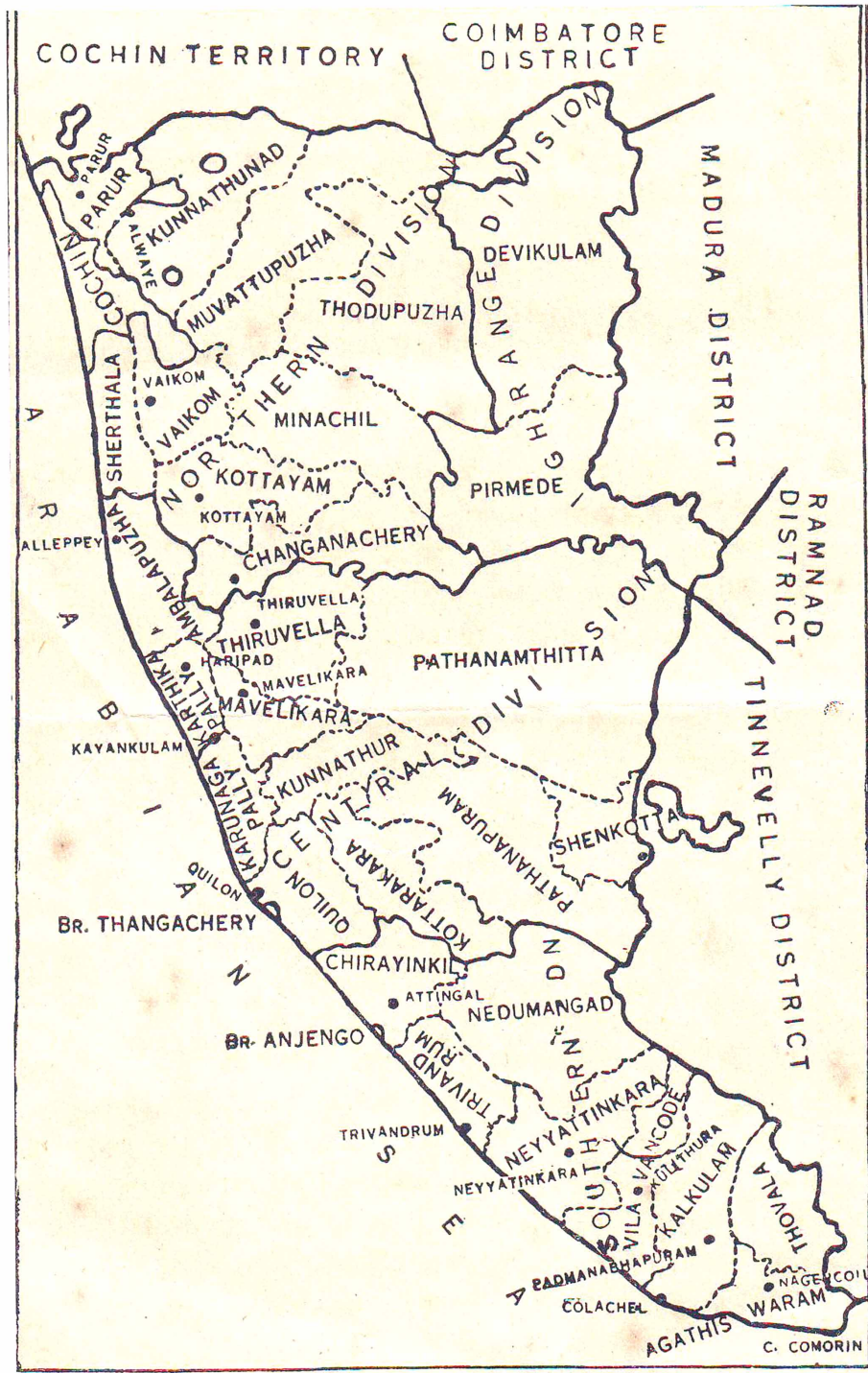


Map of Malabar District prior to 1956

Source: Malabar District Gazetteer



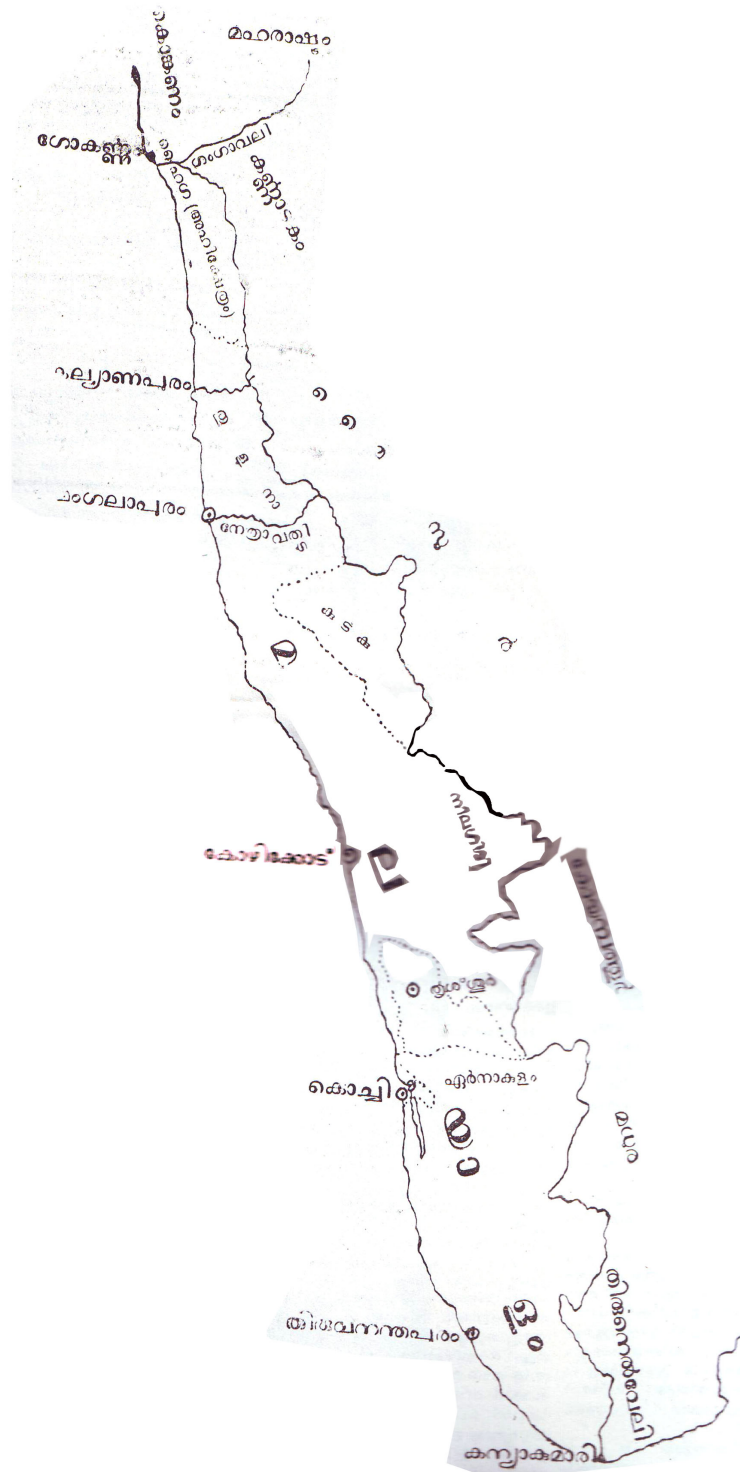
## Appendix VI



MAP OF MODERN TRAVANCORE.

Source : Travancore State Manual

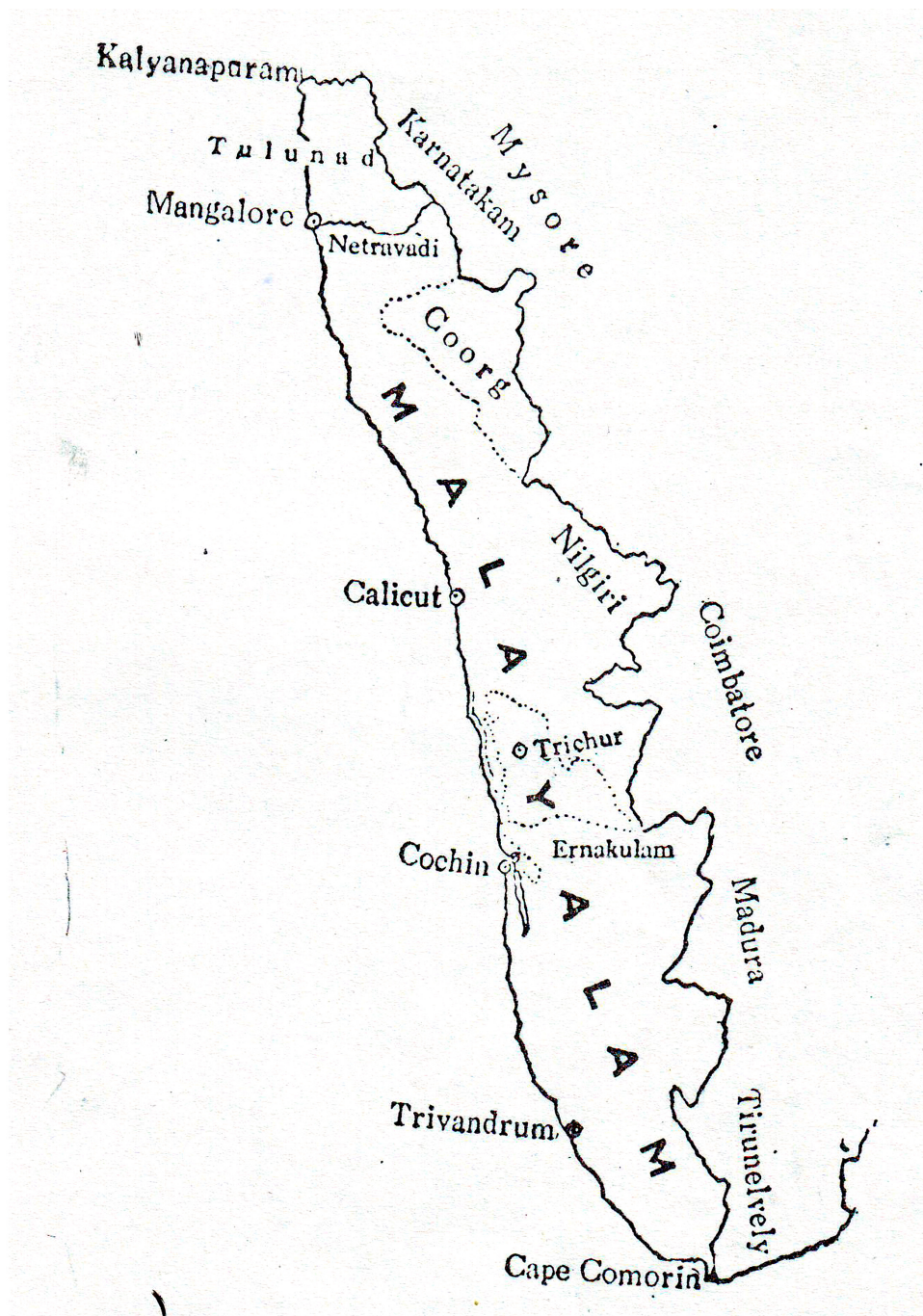
## Appendix VII



Boundaries of Kerala State (from *Gokarnam* to *Kanyakumari*) as conceived by the *Vishala Kerala* (Greater Kerala) enthusiasts.

Source: *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, 27 April 1947.

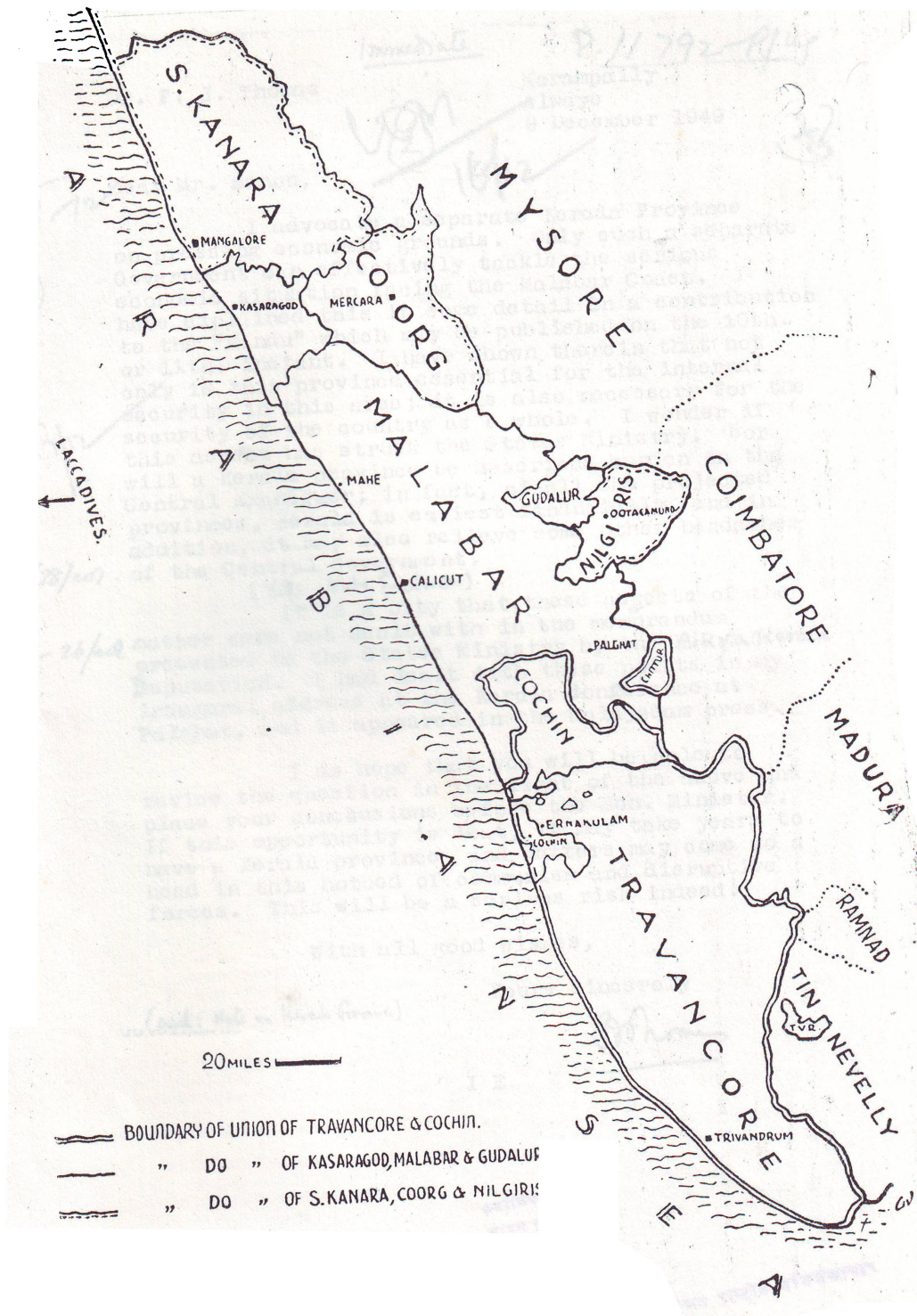
## Appendix VIII



Map of Aikya Kerala Province appended to the Report of the Convention held at Trichur on 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> of April 1947.

Source: *United Kerala* ed., K.A. Damodara Menon, Mathrubhumi Press, Calicut.

## Appendix IX

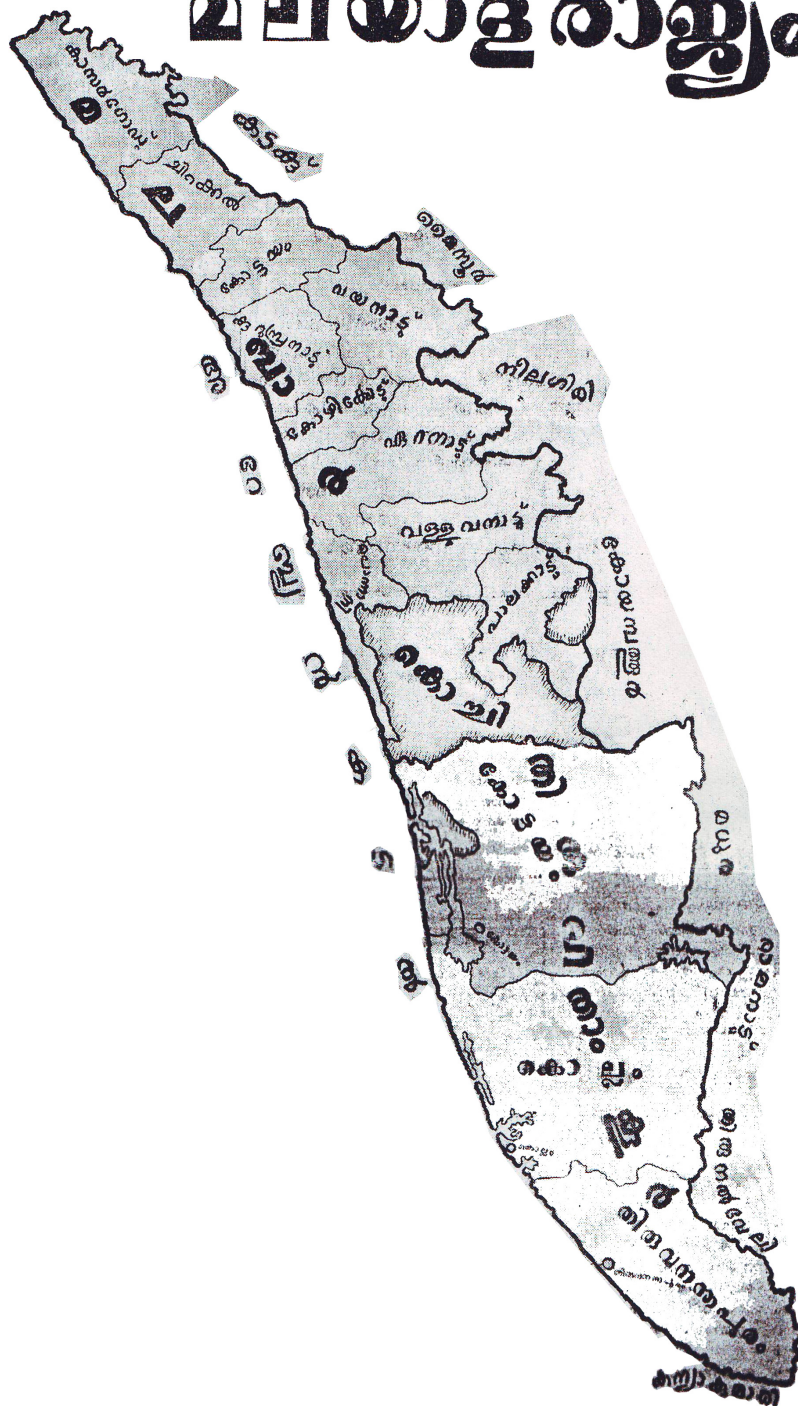


Map of United Kerala as visualised by the Aikya Kerala Committee, appended to the Memorandum presented to the Govt. of India in 1949.

Source: NAI, Ministry of States, File No. 17(10)P/49.

Appendix X

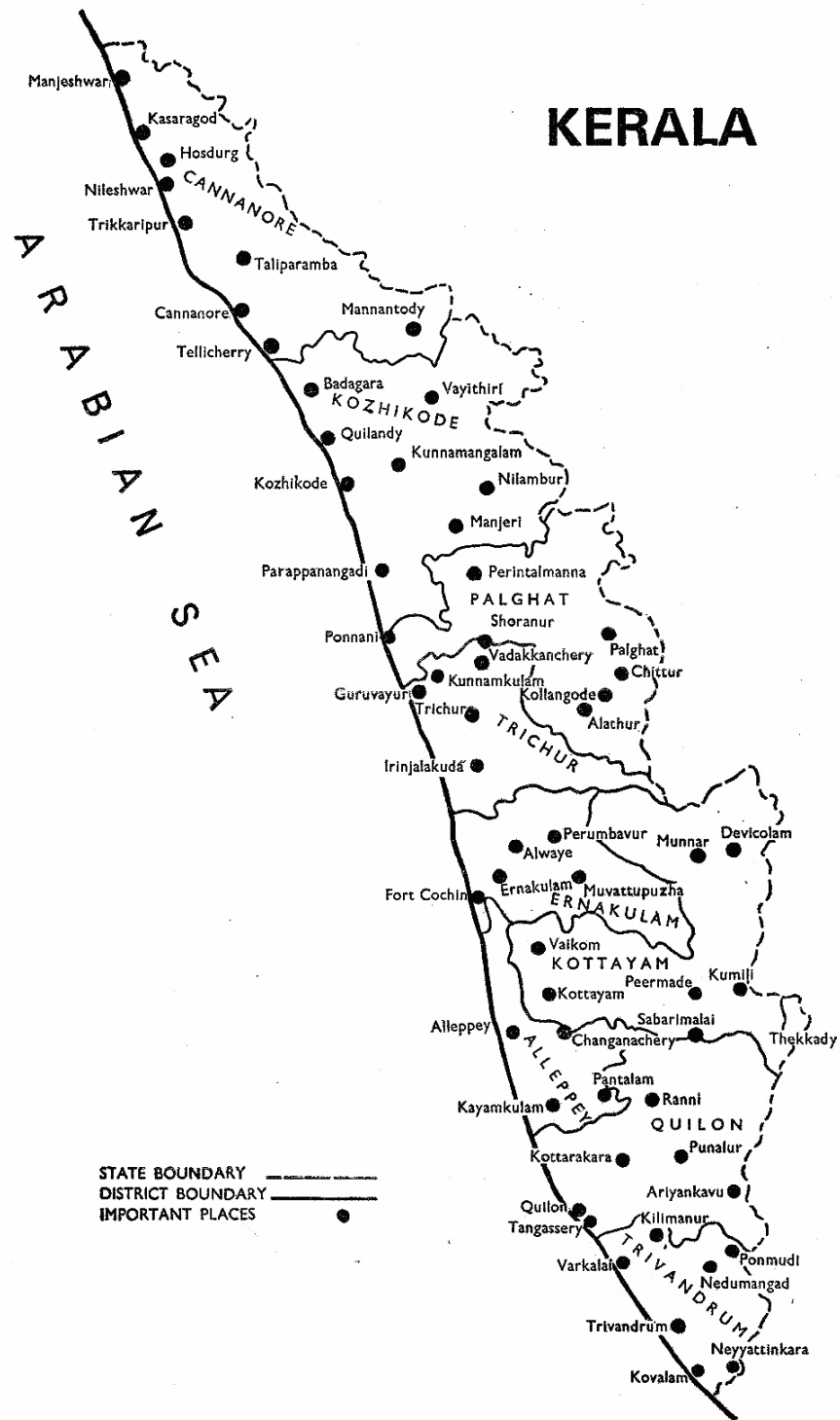
# മലയാളരാജ്യം



Proposed administrative divisions of United Kerala.

Source: Malayala Rajyam, Special Supplement, 1942.

# Appendix XI



Map of Kerala State as on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1956

Source: Kerala State Gazetteer

## **GLOSSARY**

Aathmakatha	:	Autobiography
Avarnas	:	Person belonging to lower non caste Hindus.
Diwan	:	Chief Minister or Chief Executive Officer of an erstwhile native (princely) state.
Firka	:	The administrative (revenue) subdivision of a taluk.
Jatha	:	Procession
Jathi	:	Caste
Jenmi	:	One who holds jenmom land.
Kalari	:	Gymnasium or military academy to train traditional martial art.
Kavi samajam	:	Peets convention
Makkathayam	:	Patrilineal system of inheritance.
Marumakkathayam	:	System of inheritance and descent through the female line.
Mathrubhumi	:	Homeland
Naduvazhi	:	Local chieftain or Raja.
Nalukettu	:	Traditional house built to suit the requirements of the joint family.
Purogamana	:	Progressive
Satyagraha	:	Non violent method of struggle with passive resistance.
Savarnas	:	Persons belonging to upper caste Hindus.
Smaranakal	:	Reminiscences
Sivalingam	:	Phallic emblem of Siva.
Taluk	:	The administrative subdivision of a district under a Tahsildar.
Teyyam/Theyyattam	:	A ritual (folk) art of North Kerala.
Tharavad	:	A matrilineal household.

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Ministry of States File No. 6 (16) PA/51

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Deshabhimani

Dharma Bodhini

Dharma Prabha

Jayakeralam

Kerala Kaumudi

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