

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

Research Response Number: IND34585
Country: India
Date: 3 April 2009

Keywords: India – Kerala – Christians – Muslims – Religious violence – Latin Catholics – CPI-M – Communal violence

This response was prepared by the Research & Information Services Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. This research response may not, under any circumstance, be cited in a decision or any other document. Anyone wishing to use this information may only cite the primary source material contained herein.

Questions

- 1. Please provide background on the general relationship between Muslim and Christian communities in Kerala state. Is there any information which would suggest that communal clashes are frequent, or are relations between the two communities generally amicable?**
- 2. Please provide information which would suggest that the ruling CPI-M government favours Kerala's Muslim population over its Christian population. Please also provide information on the relationship between the CPI-M and Kerala's Muslim and Christian communities.**

RESPONSE

- 1. Please provide background on the general relationship between Muslim and Christian communities in Kerala state. Is there any information which would suggest that communal clashes are frequent, or are relations between the two communities generally amicable?**

Introduction

Kerala is frequently represented in the media as one of India's most peaceful and tolerant states in terms of the relations between resident Hindu, Muslim and Christian communities. In October 2008, for example, the Indian social activist Aruna Roy argued that Kerala, with "almost equal numbers of Hindus, Christians and Muslims" was home to a "visible pluralism" which, in the context of the violence which then affected Orissa state, should serve as a model for the rest of India. In 2003 a visiting cultural studies scholar from New Zealand, Dr Peter Raine, found that "[h]armony between seemingly divergent religious groups appears to be the norm" and that "[v]ery few serious conflicts occur owing to religious differences". In January 2004 Dr David Reynolds of the Center for Urban Studies at Wayne State

University referred to Kerala as “a haven of tolerance and coexistence”; observing that: “While India as a whole has experienced significant Muslim-Hindu tensions, Kerala’s Christian and Muslim minorities live peacefully with the Hindu majority”. Numerous news articles were located which reported on the peaceful celebration of Christian festivals in Kerala by its Christian populace and even by members of the wider Kerala population (for examples of reports which refer to Kerala as a haven of relative tolerance in India, see: Roy, A. 2008, ‘Kerala deserves much better’, *DNA News*, 24 October – Attachment 1; Reynolds, D. 2004, ‘Little Cash, Lots of Riches’, *Yes Magazine*, Summer <http://www.yesmagazine.org/article.asp?ID=871> – Accessed 31 January 2009 – Attachment 2; Raine, P. 2003, ‘A different image’, *Frontline*, vol.20: no.26, 26 April / 9 May <http://www.hindu.com/fline/fl2009/stories/20030509000106600.htm> – Accessed 28 March 2009 – Attachment 3; for examples of the acceptance of Christians and Christian festivals specifically, see: George, S. 2007, ‘Chill, cakes and carols...Kerala peps up for Christmas’, *Hindustan Times*, 22 December <http://www.hindustantimes.com/storypage/Print.aspx?Id=f248dd19-7e01-462d-a74c-00ddb3727d6f> – Accessed 31 January 2009 – Attachment 4; ‘Mourning for some, celebration for others’ 2006, *IndiaBlitz.com*, 14 April <http://www.indiablitz.com/63747/Mourning-for-some-celebration-for-others.htm> – Accessed 31 January 2009 – Attachment 5; ‘Christmas brings back cheer to market’ 2008, *The Hindu*, 27 December <http://www.hindu.com/2008/12/27/stories/2008122756321500.htm> – Accessed 31 January 2009 – Attachment 6; ‘Catholic Church celebrates Alphonsa’s canonisation’ 2008, *The Hindu*, 13 October <http://www.hindu.com/2008/10/13/stories/2008101356541300.htm> – Accessed 27 January 2009 – Attachment 7).

Very few reports of violence between Muslims and Christians in Kerala could be located in the time available to complete this research. Reports of clashes between fishing villages along the Kerala coastline have appeared sporadically over the last two decades and in some instances these clashes have involved Latin Catholic and Muslim villages; such as in Vizhinjam in 1995 and Poovar in 2004 and 2005. Reports vary in the extent to which communal resentment and/or livelihood disputes (over land, fishing territory, fishing methods or other livelihood resources) are presented as the cause of such troubles. Incidents of this kind have reportedly also seen clashes between fishermen from the same faith community; such as in Anchuthengu in 2002 when Latin Catholic fishermen clashed with each other. The most significant outbreak of violence to have occurred between Kerala fishermen is, arguably, the Marad violence of 2002 and 2003 which saw clashes between neighbouring Muslim and Hindu villages and multiple killings. The incidents at Marad became a major political issue involving a number of political parties and networks. The violence at Marad also drew speculation in the media that a hitherto peaceful Kerala was being transformed into a communally divided state. The more recent 2005 attack upon a Muslim fishing village by neighbouring Christians in Poovar seems not to have drawn similar expressions of concern though V.S. Achuthanandan, the leader of the Communist Party of India–Marxist (CPI-M) Kerala state opposition at the time of the violence, is reported to have “urged the Government to take urgent measures to prevent the violence at Poovar deteriorating into a communal conflagration”. It was also reported that: “Mr. Achuthanandan quoted the local people as saying that a priest led the attack and that the police had behaved in a partisan manner”. No further reports of such accusations could be located and *The Hindu’s* coverage of the events seems to present the police response to the disturbances as effective and even handed. Previously, in 1995, an attack by a Christian fishing village upon neighbouring Muslim village also saw the police criticized, by a subsequent commission of inquiry in 2000, for not reacting more effectively too warnings of violence. On this occasion the CPI-M, then in

government, defended the response of the police (for reports on the Poovar violence, see: ‘150 houses gutted, several injured in clash’ 2005, *The Hindu*, 28 February <http://www.hindu.com/2005/02/28/stories/2005022803600701.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2009 – Attachment 8; for the statements issued by the CPI-M Kerala state opposition leader, V.S. Achuthanandan, see: ‘Achuthanandan seeks stern action’ 2005, *The Hindu*, 1 March <http://www.hindu.com/2005/03/01/stories/2005030115500300.htm> – Accessed 1 April 2009 – Attachment 21; for reports noting how land and livelihood matters affected tensions in Poovar, see: ‘Concern over use of explosives for fishing’ 2006, *The Hindu*, 16 April <http://www.hindu.com/2006/04/16/stories/2006041619810300.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2009 – Attachment 16; ‘12 hurt in clash at Poovar’ 2004, *The Hindu*, 17 July <http://www.hindu.com/2004/07/17/stories/2004071714090300.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2009 – Attachment 17; for the Marad reports, see: Iype, G. 2004, ‘Riot-hit Marad goes off netas’ radar’, *Rediff News*, 7 May <http://us.rediff.com/election/2004/may/07gi.htm> – Accessed 6 January 2004 – Attachment 32; for the Vizhinjam violence, see: ‘Dispute over use of land sparked Vizhinjam riots: Commission’ 2000, *The Hindu*, 19 July <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/2000/07/19/stories/0419404o.htm> – Accessed 2 April 2009 – Attachment 25; for the Anchuthengu violence, see: (‘Tense situation at Anchuthengu’ 2002, *The Hindu*, 11 March <http://www.thehindu.com/2002/03/11/stories/2002031105170300.htm> – Accessed 2 April 2009 – Attachment 37; for general information on violence amongst Kerala fishing communities, see: Chekkutty, N.P. 2006, ‘Fishing communities: the economics of impoverishment’, *InfoChange*, August <http://infochangeindia.org/200608315538/Human-Rights/Features/Fishing-communities-the-economics-of-impoverishment.html> – Accessed 2 April 2009 – Attachment 28).

Only one report could be located of communal clashes between Muslims and Christian outside fishing village disputes. The incident occurred in the Trivandrum area of Panamvilla in 2005 when local Hindus and Muslims burned down a church and attacked certain members of an evangelical group. It would not appear that any Latin Catholics were involved (‘Pastor attacked, prayer hall burned’ 2005, All India Christian Council website, 1 April <http://indianchristians.in/news/content/view/156/45/> – Accessed 29 January 2009 – Attachment 29; Hendon, D.W.; Lynn, N.R. 2005, ‘Notes on Church-State Affairs’, *Journal of Church & State*, vol.47: no.3, 1 July – Attachment 30; US Department of State 2005, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2005 – India*, 8 November – Attachment 31).

An overview of the source information which informs this response follows below under the following subheadings: [The Poovar violence of 2004, 2005](#); [The Vizhinjam violence of 1995](#); [The Marad violence of 2002, 2003](#); [The Anchuthengu violence of 1993, 2002](#); [The Panamvilla violence \(near Trivandrum\) in 2005](#); and [Hindus, Muslims and Christians in Kerala – general information](#).

The Poovar violence of 2004, 2005

The troubles in Poovar would appear to have begun in July 2004 when “a clash...broke out between two communities over a coastal road being constructed by the District Panchayat to EMS Colony, near Poovar”. A *Hindu* report provides details:

Twelve persons, including a Circle Inspector of Police, were injured in a clash that broke out between two communities over a coastal road being constructed by the District Panchayat to EMS Colony, near Poovar, today.

The clash reportedly broke out around 10-30 a.m. after one community objected to the construction of the road. This led to arguments and clash between the two groups, the Rural police said.

A police party led by the Circle Inspector (Poovar), S. Feroz, which reached the spot was attacked by the locals. A team headed by the SP (Rural), P. Vijayan, also arrived by the time over 1,000 people armed with fishing gear had gathered. Nine persons from the two communities were injured. The two communities agreed to maintain peace at a meeting held at the Poovar police station by the District Collector, Tinku Biswal. The Rural police said it had been decided to go ahead with the road construction after the holding of discussions with the District Panchayat president ('12 hurt in clash at Poovar' 2004, *The Hindu*, 17 July <http://www.hindu.com/2004/07/17/stories/2004071714090300.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2009 – Attachment 17).

The vicinity of EMS Colony, Poovar, would subsequently be affected by disturbances again in February 2005. On 27 February 2005 *The Hindu* provided the following account of the disturbances:

Two persons were seriously injured and over 150 thatched houses gutted when a mob attacked a fishermen colony belonging to a particular community on Poovar beach near here this evening. Scores, including women and children, sustained injuries. The police are searching for 600 persons in connection with the violence.

Nearly 1,000 people lost their houses and belongings in the fire.

The clash started when a youth was apprehended on the charge of theft from a house in EMS Colony at 3 p.m. The accused was handed over to a police patrol. However, the relatives of the youth freed him forcibly from the police vehicle. The colony residents staged a protest demanding the arrest of the youth. This resulted in a standoff between members of the two communities on the road skirting the beach. Soon the groups started pelting stones at each other.

Fifteen policemen led by the Deputy Superintendent of Police, Neyyatinkara, reached the spot. At 4.15 p.m., more than 600 people armed with paddles, petrol cans and country-bombs stormed the colony. The police party scampered for cover while the residents fled the colony and sought refuge in the nearby Poovar Masjid.

The attackers threw country bombs at youths of the colony who tried to put out the fire that spread quickly due to the strong sea wind. Most of the houses in the colony were burnt to cinders by the time fire engines reached the spot. Nearly 100 coconut trees in the colony and livestock were destroyed in the fire that raged for nearly two hours.

Relief camps

The district administration has opened a relief camp for the residents of EMS Colony at a nearby school. The Collector, Tinku Biswal, said free ration would be provided to the affected people. Nearly 200 policemen led by the Deputy Inspector General, Arun Kumar Sinha, and the Rural Superintendent of Police, P. Vijayan, are camping in the area ('150 houses gutted, several injured in clash' 2005, *The Hindu*, 27 February <http://www.hindu.com/2005/02/28/stories/2005022803600701.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2009 – Attachment 8).

On 28 February 2005 it was reported that “police are investigating a 30-member gang, headed by Johnny alias ‘Karate’ Johnny, 25, in connection with the incidents of arson and rioting at EMS Colony in the coastal village of Poovar”. The report related that “police

suspect[ed] that the gang had set the houses in the colony on fire by using petrol bombs and country-made explosives”; that police had “police resorted to caning to disperse a group of people who blocked the Vizhinjam-Poovar road in an attempt to prevent the head of a place of worship from visiting the relief camp”; and that the violence had been condemned by both the “Thiruvananthapuram Latin Archbishop” and “The Kerala Imam’s Council, Thiruvananthapuram district”. The report follows:

The police are investigating a 30-member gang, headed by Johnny alias `Karate’ Johnny, 25, in connection with the incidents of arson and rioting at EMS Colony in the coastal village of Poovar near here on Sunday.

The police suspect that the gang had set the houses in the colony on fire by using petrol bombs and country-made explosives. The mob that attacked the colony was more than 600 strong and included women. The police said 106 houses in the colony were gutted.

Relief camp

More than 500 residents who fled the colony were shifted late on Sunday night to a relief camp opened by the district administration in a nearby school.

The police today questioned Asim, 19, and Salabudeen, 45, who sustained serious injuries in the attack. An official said the right palm of Asim was shattered in an explosion.

Meanwhile, tension prevailed in Poovar area today. In the morning, the police resorted to caning to disperse a group of people who blocked the Vizhinjam-Poovar road in an attempt to prevent the head of a place of worship from visiting the relief camp.

Four policemen, including the Circle Inspector, Poovar, sustained minor injuries in the incident.

In the afternoon, another set of people blocked the road demanding the release of four youth taken into custody by the police for questioning in connection with the violence.

Security up

As many as 200 policemen are camping in Poovar. Twelve police pickets have been established in the area. The police are verifying all vehicles entering and leaving the area. Temporary police check posts have been set up at Chappathu, T.B. Junction, Pattiyakala and Attupuram.

The police have cordoned off two fisher-folk colonies on the Poovar beach where those responsible for the violence are suspected to be hiding.

Violence flayed

The Thiruvananthapuram Latin Archbishop M. Susaipakiam has condemned the violent incidents at Poovar.

The Archbishop said in a statement here today that those behind the violence should be brought to book. He expressed concern over the incidents and warned the people against attempts to spread canards and inflame communal passions. He called upon them to exercise restraint against such moves.

The Kerala Imam’s Council, Thiruvananthapuram district, has condemned the attack on members of a particular community in Poovar. In a press release here, the council said that

those responsible for the violence had also attempted to attack Hamsa Maulavi Farooqi who was on his way to the relief camp.

A. Neelalohita Dasan Nadar, MLA, visited the area. The Janata Dal and the Communist Party of India have demanded new houses for those who lost their dwellings in the violence ('Police suspect hand of 30-member gang' 2005, *The Hindu*, 28 February <http://www.hindu.com/2005/03/01/stories/2005030115560300.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2009 – Attachment 9).

Also on 28 February 2005, it was reported that the then CPI-M Kerala state opposition leader, V.S. Achuthanandan, had “urged the Government to take urgent measures to prevent the violence at Poovar deteriorating into a communal conflagration”. According to *The Hindu* “Achuthanandan told a news conference, after a visit to the violence-hit area in Poovar, that there was heavy devastation on account of the sectarian violence in the area”; and “quoted the local people as saying that a priest led the attack and that the police had behaved in a partisan manner”. The report continues:

Around 580 houses had been fully destroyed and about 35 men and women were injured. Sectarian violence had been recurring in the area since 1968 as a result of attempts by one section to drive away persons belonging to another community and seize their land.

Violence had erupted in 1968, 1970, 1972, 1980, 2004 and on Sunday indicating that the area was vulnerable to major outbreak of violence in future as well, he pointed out.

Mr. Achuthanandan quoted the local people as saying that a priest led the attack and that the police had behaved in a partisan manner. Unless the Government took stern action against the persons who had indulged in violence, the victims would not be safe to live there.

One of their main demands was that a permanent wall should be constructed dividing the areas where the two communities lived, he said.

Mr. Achuthanandan also requested the Government to give liberal assistance to the victims of violence so that they could resume their normal life.

His information was that the former Chief Minister, A.K. Antony, and former ministers, M.M. Hassan and G. Karthikeyan, had also visited the area. The Chief Minister had also visited the area.

The situation in the locality continued to be tense and called for heightened vigil, the Opposition leader said ('Achuthanandan seeks stern action' 2005, *The Hindu*, 1 March <http://www.hindu.com/2005/03/01/stories/2005030115500300.htm> – Accessed 1 April 2009 – Attachment 21).

On 1 March 2005 *The Hindu* reported that the then the leader of the CPI-M Kerala state opposition, V. S. Achuthanandan, had declared that “there was a definite pattern in the attack targeting a particular community in Poovar”; that: “Outrages similar to the one that happened on Sunday had occurred in 1978, 1980 and 1982”; and that: “The targeted families had to shift their huts from one place to another after each attack and the aggressors had taken over the place like marauding armies”. Extracts follow:

The Chief Minister, Oommen Chandy, today said the Government would build new houses for all the families who had lost their homes in Sunday's communal violence in Poovar village in Thiruvananthapuram district.

He said the new houses would be ready before the onset of the southwest monsoon in June. He gave this promise in the State Assembly while replying to a submission by the Leader of the Opposition, V. S. Achuthanandan. Mr. Achuthanandan said there was a definite pattern in the attack targeting a particular community in Poovar. Outrages similar to the one that happened on Sunday had occurred in 1978, 1980 and 1982. The targeted families had to shift their huts from one place to another after each attack and the aggressors had taken over the place like marauding armies.

He said the victims had told him that only a high wall between their colony and the colony of the rival community could give them a sense of safety. Also, if they were to pitch new thatched huts in place of the ones set ablaze in the attack, they would continue to be in danger. They should be given houses made of brick and concrete, Mr. Achuthanandan said.

The Chief Minister said communal incidents of the sort that had happened in Poovar were a shame to the State. Victims would be given full protection and the aggressors would not be spared, he added.

A 24-hour medical camp has started functioning at Poovar to give emergency medical aid to those affected ('Clash victims to get new houses' 2005, *The Hindu*, 2 March <http://www.hindu.com/2005/03/02/stories/2005030210660300.htm> – Accessed 1 April 2009 – Attachment 19).

On 2 March 2005 *The Hindu* reported that "police have intensified the search for Johnny alias 'Karate' Johnny who is suspected to have headed the 30-member armed gang that went on the rampage in EMS colony"; and that: "police are also scrutinising the members of a sports club in Poovar". It was also related that: "The Jama'at-e-Islami Hind has demanded a judicial inquiry into the Poovar incident" ('Poovar violence: one arrested' 2005, *The Hindu*, 3 March <http://www.hindu.com/2005/03/03/stories/2005030317450300.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2009 – Attachment 11).

On 2 March 2005 *The Hindu* reported that: "Members of the Kannadipally church parish in Karimkulam blocked Vizhinjam-Kanjiramkulam Road this afternoon demanding the release of a youth who was detained for questioning by the police in connection with the violence at EMS Colony in Poovar". The youth was named as "Antony (23) ...from Karimkulam Junction". The report notes the claims from local parish leaders to the effect that the youth was innocent and that "the violence at Poovar was part of a conspiracy to wangle undue benefits from the Government, including new houses and title deeds for seaside 'poramboke' land". It would appear that the youth was subsequently released. It would also appear that police were still searching for "Karate" Johnny and were still attempting to ascertain what had taken place at Poovar and who was responsible for the violence.

The chain of events started when the police took into custody Antony (23) around 8.30 a.m. from Karimkulam Junction. The Kannadipally parish priest, Yesudas Mathias, told *The Hindu* that Antony was detained while on his way to attend an interview in the city. Antony was the driver of an autorickshaw owned by a resident of Poovar who belongs to the community that was most affected in Sunday's violence. The Circle Inspector, Poovar, S.S. Firoz, said Antony was among the several persons taken into custody by the police on Thursday for questioning in connection with the Poovar incident. He said the police let off the youth in the evening after a preliminary verification.

The police suspect that a 30-member "core" group led by one "Karate" Johnny of Poovar was responsible for Sunday's attack. The vice-president of the Parish Pastoral Council of

Poovar St. Bartholomew's Church, A. Lawrence, said the police were arresting innocent youth who had nothing to do with the criminal act in EMS Colony.

...The secretary of the parish council, Antony Devasia, said the violence at Poovar was part of a conspiracy to wangle undue benefits from the Government, including new houses and title deeds for seaside 'poramboke' land. The Deputy Inspector General of Police, Arun Kumar Sinha, said the police were looking into all aspects of the crime. "We are attempting to reconstruct the chain of events that led to the burning of 100 houses in EMS colony before fixing final responsibility in the case," he said. The SP, Rural, P. Vijayan, visited Poovar and took stock of the situation there ('Parishioners block road in Poovar' 2005, *The Hindu*, 4 March <http://www.hindu.com/2005/03/04/stories/2005030417890300.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2009 – Attachment 12).

Another *Hindu* report of 2 March 2005 reports that police had been deployed in the area to keep the peace. The report seems to suggest that police were seeking to facilitate peace talks between the communities rather than arrests as a means of bringing the tensions to an end. Relevant extracts follow:

An uneasy calm was prevailing on Poovar beach, which was the scene of arson and rioting on Sunday. The gutted remains of the EMS hutment colony bear testimony to the violence that has shattered the peace between two communities at Poovar.

The meandering boundary between the two fisherfolk settlements on the beach is being patrolled by policemen in anti-riot gear. Many residents, fearing a retaliatory attack, have abandoned the houses on the perimeter of their respective settlements. A string of police pickets and floodlights mark the "border" that has come up between the communities. The policemen patrolling the maze of narrow lanes that links the two colonies are edgy. On Monday night, unidentified persons had attempted to set on fire a hut on the boundary.

The members of the community that was most affected in Sunday's violence fear that there could be another and more deadlier attack.

Even those not affected by the violence have sought refuge in the Government relief camp. They said the attackers were still at large and the police were not "intent" on arresting them. The community members said the country bombs that were used to attack residents of EMS colony were brought from Tamil Nadu through sea.

Minister's visit

The efforts of the Government to get representatives of both communities to talk peace have failed so far. The Revenue Minister, K. M. Mani, who visited Poovar, today announced new houses, financial aid and pattayam for those who lost their houses in Sunday's violence. However, the relief package has failed to impress the members of the affected community. "First let there be decisive police action to arrest the accused. Then we will talk peace," a community member told *The Hindu* .

Police fear

The police said they were at a loss to raid the settlement and arrest the more than 600 accused persons. Senior officials fear that such an action at this juncture would result in more tension and could work to the advantage of few extreme elements in both communities. Such elements want a "no man's land" dividing the two communities on the beach. The police said they are putting pressure on community representatives to turn in the accused persons at the earliest. The District Collector has issued prohibitory orders at Poovar.

New houses

The Chief Minister, Oommen Chandy, today said the Government would build new houses for all the families who had lost their homes the violence at Poovar ('Uneasy calm at Poovar' 2005, *The Hindu*, 2 March <http://www.hindu.com/2005/03/02/stories/2005030217140300.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2009 – Attachment 13)

On 4 March 2005 *The Hindu* reported that: "The committee members of St. Bartholomew's Church, Poovar, has demanded an investigation into the clashes that occurred in the area on February 27". The report continues:

At a press conference in the city on Friday, the chancellor of Thiruvananthapuram Archdiocese, C. Joseph, protested against an alleged move in some quarters to brand a section of people belonging to a particular community as the perpetrators behind the act ('Parishioners seek probe' 2005, *The Hindu*, 4 March <http://www.hindu.com/2005/03/05/stories/2005030517180300.htm> – Accessed 1 April 2009 – Attachment 20).

On 5 March 2005 it was reported that then Chief Minister of Kerala, the Congress Party's Oommen Chandy, had "visited Poovar and succeeded in getting the residents of EMS Colony, gutted in Sunday's communal violence, to agree to talk peace with their neighbours on the beach". The report follows:

The community members had earlier spurned several offers for peace negotiations made by the police and district administration, demanding arrest of those responsible for the arson and rioting.

Peace talks on Monday

At the Chief Minister's behest, the community leaders agreed to attend the peace conference called by the District Collector, Tinku Biswal, at the Collectorate on Monday.

Mr. Chandy laid the foundation stone for rebuilding 94 houses in the colony in the presence of the Opposition Leader, V.S. Achuthanandan. The construction of the houses would be completed by May 31.

All the affected families would be given a monthly financial aid of Rs. 1,000 till the rehabilitation programme was completed.

Explosive defused

The rural police found a country bomb abandoned near a lamppost on Poovar beach an hour before the visit of the Chief Minister, Oommen Chandy. The police defused the bomb and a case has been registered ('Chandy visits Poovar' 2005, *The Hindu*, 5 March <http://www.hindu.com/2005/03/05/stories/2005030517220300.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2009 – Attachment 15).

On 7 March 2005 *the Hindu* reported that: "Representatives of two communities on Poovar beach today made peace at a meeting convened at the District Collectorate"; and that: "They agreed to alert the police in the event of any dispute in future" ('Peace panel to be constituted at Poovar' 2005, *The Hindu*, 8 March <http://www.hindu.com/2005/03/08/stories/2005030814380300.htm> – Accessed 1 April 2009 – Attachment 14).

On 12 April 2005 events appear to have taken a turn in a different direction with *The Hindu* reporting that police had arrested a Muslim resident, “Asim, 19, a Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) worker” [the youth wing of the CPI-M] and were also “on the look-out for another DYFI member, Ibrahim”. Police reportedly suspected that the men had “stocked explosives in the colony following the first communal clash in the area in July last” and that the men had “inadvertently set fire to their own hutments by throwing the bombs at their attackers”. It was also reported at this time that police were “investigating 30 other people of the neighbouring fisher folk settlement in connection with the attack”; and that: “‘Karate’ Johnny who is accused by the police of leading the attack against the residents of EMS Colony, [was] yet to be arrested” (‘Poovar riot case: EMS Colony resident arrested’ 2005, *The Hindu*, 12 April <http://www.hindu.com/2005/04/12/stories/2005041217450300.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2009 – Attachment 10).

No subsequent reports could be located to indicate that any charges were laid against those arrested and/or suspected of perpetrating the violence in Poova in February 2005. Nor could any reports be located that would indicate that any subsequent court proceedings took place.

In April 2006 *The Hindu* reported from Thiruvananthapuram that: “The rampant use of country bombs called ‘thotta’ to catch fish at sea during the lean season is threatening to upset the fragile peace between traditional fishermen communities along the communally sensitive coastal area of the district”. The report noted police concerns that the bombs themselves became a security concern in outbreaks of violence relating to local tensions noting the Poova incident of 2005:

Police officials said the illegal use of thotta had often resulted in clashes between fishermen at sea. Often fishermen from other States explode country bombs under water when they sight a shoal to make a quick and easy harvest. The explosions set off high-pressure underwater currents that destroy all marine life in a large radius.

The country bombs have also taken a heavy toll on the fragile marine environment. The illegal fishing practice has been identified as the prime cause for the destruction of submarine reefs, which are the natural hatcheries for fish. The indiscriminate method of killing fish also results in the destruction of eggs and fries.

...A large section of fishermen in the district view the use of thotta as a direct threat to their livelihood and any dispute over its illegal use for fishing quickly assumes a communal colour and causes tempers to run high, the police said.

It is also pointed out that country bombs similar to the ones being used at sea had been used during the Vizhinjam riots in 1995. Similar explosives were used to set houses on fire during a communal clash at Poovar (‘Concern over use of explosives for fishing’ 2006, *The Hindu*, 16 April <http://www.hindu.com/2006/04/16/stories/2006041619810300.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2009 – Attachment 16).

It may be of interest that August 2008 saw reports from Poova that the INC had won a by-election for an office in local government (‘Setback for LDF in bypolls’ 2008, *The Hindu*, 20 August <http://www.hindu.com/2008/08/20/stories/2008082058800300.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2009 – Attachment 18)

The Vizhinjam violence of 1995

As is noted above, in *The Hindu* report of April 2006 on the use of explosives by some Kerala fishing communities, “country bombs similar to the ones being used at sea had been used during the Vizhinjam riots in 1995”. This incident, as in the incidents at Poovar, is reported as also involving Muslim and Christian fishing communities. A recent report in *The Hindu*, covering subsequent court proceedings, provides details of this episode of violence. According to the August 2008 *Hindu* report: “a mob of around 500 fishermen belonging to the Christian community gutted nearly 400 huts and vandalised scores of fishing boats and tools belonging to the Muslim community allegedly as a response to an attack on a couple members of the Christian community earlier in the day”. As in the Poovar incident, police reportedly intervened to re-establish order and restore peace to the area. Details follow:

The trial on the over a decade-old Vizhinjam communal riots, that led to the death of two persons and injured nearly 30 others including seven women, started here at the District Sessions Court III on Thursday. Clashes had broken out between fisherfolk owing allegiance to Christian and Muslim communities in the coastal area.

The proceedings began with the court examining four persons who were identified as witnesses. In all, there are 359 witnesses. The entire procedure would last till January next year, said Public Prosecutor S. Vijayakumaran.

According to the prosecution, the incident which led to the communal riots occurred on May 1995 when a mob of around 500 fishermen belonging to the Christian community gutted nearly 400 huts and vandalised scores of fishing boats and tools belonging to the Muslim community allegedly as a response to an attack on a couple members of the Christian community earlier in the day.

The clash also saw Moulakkannu, 48, and Abdul Hameed, 70, members of the Muslim community, being clobbered to death by with wooden poles used for rowing boats. The attack which broke out at around 9.30 a.m. lasted for nearly an hour until the police arrived dispersed the mob by firing into the air. The police also booked 95 accused in connection with the case on various charges including murder, murder attempt, conspiracy, rioting and arson. The damage in the riot was pegged at Rs.1.5 crore.

The riots also led the police to open three outposts on the narrow strip of sea shore, dividing the two communities, to maintain law and order (‘Trial on Vizhinjam riots begins’ 2008, *The Hindu*, 8 August <http://www.hindu.com/2008/08/08/stories/2008080860370300.htm> – Accessed 18 December 2008 – Attachment 22).

In July 2000 *the Hindu* reported on the findings of a government commissioned inquiry into the Vizhinjam violence. “The report which blames the Christian community for the riot in May 1995 says that the Muslim community was prepared for retaliation in the subsequent clash two months later. The report notes that a large quantity of lethal weapons and explosives were used in the riots”. According to *The Hindu* the Kerala Chief Minister, at that time E.K.Nayanar of the CPI-M, had “disagreed with the Commission’s finding that there was no noticeable lapse on the part of the police in taking timely action and dealing with the situation”. It was also reported that: “The Commission’s observation that the clashes were not communal in nature has also been rejected by the Government. Mr.Nayanar said the incidents which led to the clashes revealed strong communal undercurrents”. The report follows:

The R.Gopalakrishna Pillai Commission which inquired into the factors that led to the series of riots at the Vizhinjam beach in 1995 reported that the main cause for the communal clash was the dispute regarding the use of the 'No Man's Land' on the beach.

The report which blames the Christian community for the riot in May 1995 says that the Muslim community was prepared for retaliation in the subsequent clash two months later. The report notes that a large quantity of lethal weapons and explosives were used in the riots.

The Government has disagreed with the Commission's finding that there was no noticeable lapse on the part of the police in taking timely action and dealing with the situation. Tabling the report in the Assembly on Monday, the Chief Minister, Mr.E.K.Nayanar, said there was evidence in the report to prove that the police failed to foresee the situation prevailing in the area after the first clash in which two persons were killed. He said this failure had led to the second riot.

The report says the uncertainty of the boundaries of the 'No Man's Land' had led to frequent disputes between the two communities after the first riot in May despite the presence of the police. It notes that the police also had no clue as to the boundaries of the plot.

The Commission reports that the dispute had come to a head in July after the recalcitrant Christian community refused to heed police instructions to remove their fishing nets from the 'No Man's Land'. "The Muslims were not patient to wait till the police removed the nets. Both sides were ready for a confrontation", it observes.

The Commission's observation that the clashes were not communal in nature has also been rejected by the Government. Mr.Nayanar said the incidents which led to the clashes revealed strong communal undercurrents.

The report which identifies overcrowding on the beach as the main reason for the friction between the two communities recommends the construction of fish landing centres at Muthalapozhy and Chovarakudy to decongest the Vizhinjam coast. It says the Government should take steps to evict all the inhabitants of the A,B,C,D and E blocks and take possession of the entire area for construction of a harbour. It also calls for expediting measures to check encroachment.

The report underlines the need for religious leaders to promote communal harmony and to isolate the forces seeking to exploit the dispute between the two communities. It advises the Government to strengthen the police intelligence network and take steps to prevent stockpiling of weapons and explosives.

Stressing the need to augment facilities for basic education, it suggests the setting up of more schools and colleges in the coastal area and financial assistance for children of fisherfolk to undertake higher education. The Commission has also recommended social welfare schemes with alternative job opportunities for fisherwomen.

A permanent police picket headed by an ASP with a minimum of 100 personnel and equipped with telecommunication facilities and a bomb squad has been suggested. The report also highlights the need to station a Fire Force unit at the 'No Man's Land' with fire hydrants at different places on the beach. Seeking a ban on the use of explosives in the area, it calls for periodic raids.

The Chief Minister informed the Assembly on Monday that the recommendations had been forwarded to the respective departments for follow-up action. He said a high-level committee would be constituted to define the boundaries of the 'No Man's Land' and take steps to prevent clashes ('Dispute over use of land sparked Vizhinjam riots: Commission' 2000, *The*

Hindu, 19 July <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/2000/07/19/stories/0419404o.htm> – Accessed 2 April 2009 – Attachment 25; the CPI-M's Nayanar appears to have had a troubled relationship with Muslim parties and voters during this period, for background see the Kerala section of: Radhakrishnan, M.G. 1998, 'Battle For The South', *India Today*, 2 March <http://www.india-today.com/itoday/02031998/p98south.html> – Accessed 2 April 2009 – Attachment 26).

On 30 November 2008 *The Hindu* reported on the outcome of the trial with regard to those charged over the Vizhinjam violence:

Thiruvananthapuram First Additional Sessions Judge P. Somarajan has acquitted 83 persons accused in the clashes in Vizhinjam in May 1995. Two persons had died and 30 others were injured in the clashes between fisherfolk of two different communities.

In his judgement on Saturday, the judge noted that the 83 persons were being acquitted as the prosecution had failed to prove the charges. Of the 359 witnesses, all except the official witness had turned hostile, the court noted. As many as 95 persons were booked by the police on various charges including murder, conspiracy, rioting and arson. The charge against nine persons is yet to be transferred from the Neyattinkara court. Two of the accused are absconding and one person is dead. The trial in the case commenced in August following the intervention of the High Court.

According to the prosecution, the incident that led to the clashes occurred on May 14, 1995 when around 500 fishermen set ablaze 400 huts and damaged boats and fishing gear belonging to another community. Additional Public Prosecutor S. Vijayakumaran appeared for the prosecution ('Vizhinjam clashes: 83 acquitted' 2008, *The Hindu*, 30 November <http://www.thehindu.com/2008/11/30/stories/2008113060370300.htm> – Accessed 18 December 2008 – Attachment 23).

A July 2006 article published in the South Asian focussed activist publication, *InfoChange*, argues that the poor Hindu and Christian fishing communities of Kerala have become highly politicized by various networks attempting to exploit local tensions as vehicles for wider political objectives. The report makes particular mention of the "the Vizhinjam and Poonthura beaches in Thiruvananthapuram, where Christian and Muslim families now live as separate communities, their areas of operation demarcated by a virtual no-man's land in between".

The famed Kerala model of development has an ugly underside: the egalitarian social model that made the state popular with development economists left a few islands of poverty untouched, among them the tribal people of the hills and the fishing communities along the coast. Both have largely been ignored by the development process, leading to disastrous consequences over the course of time. It is not by accident that some of the most violent clashes in Kerala society have occurred in these two social segments, sharply brought into focus in recent years by the Muthanga adivasi struggles in Wayanad and communal clashes in the northern coastal village of Maradu.

...fisherfolk, who constituted about 85% of fishing communities, have been both socially and politically marginalised. While farmers, workers and landless labourers are organised into trade unions and other progressive political formations, this has not happened among coastal communities. Jona Halfdanardottir, a scholar from the Netherlands, in a study on the social mobilisation of fisherfolk in Kerala, has observed that political parties, both left and right, showed no interest in mobilising fishing communities, nor did they even try to address their problems.

This political vacuum was eventually filled by communal organisations that slowly began to dominate the lives of the fisher people. In southern Kerala, where fishing communities are predominantly Latin Catholic, the church and church-sponsored voluntary organisations took up the task of organising the community. In the north, where the Hindu dheevaras and Muslims dominate, this role was fulfilled by Hindu communal outfits like the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) and various Muslim organisations.

And so, social life along the coast became a hotbed of communal politics, a tragic turn of events as these fishing communities, through generations, had developed their own effective system of self-governance that would have emerged as natural centres of secular social and political organisation. What happened instead was the destruction of these organic structures by the invasion of new forces.

...In the 1970s and 1980s, a new group of priests, some of them inspired by Latin American liberation theology, came to work on the southern beaches and took up a series of struggles for the uplift of fishing communities. Currently there are around a dozen non-governmental organisations working among the Catholic fishing community in the southern beaches from Ernakulam to Thiruvananthapuram. Many have been accused of running partisan and communal campaigns.

The recent tsunami relief operations proved an eye-opener, with religious and caste-based charity organisations overshadowing government efforts. Their style of functioning and community or caste-based approach to the selection of beneficiaries served to further segregate society.

Although trade unions have never been very powerful among fishing communities in the south, an independent trade organisation, the Kerala State Swatantra Matsya Thozhilali Federation (KMSTF), was launched in 1980 with support from the Latin Catholic church. A number of important functionaries of the organisation were church representatives, its leadership accused of taking a partisan position on many issues. In fact, Eugene Kulas, a key functionary of the federation, resigned from his post alleging that the dominant church-sponsored leadership was preventing the emergence of a genuine leadership from amongst the ordinary fisher people. The federation faced a split in its ranks over control by the church hierarchy in its decision-making and activities.

Communal divisions in the south are evident in the Vizhinjam and Poonthura beaches in Thiruvananthapuram, where Christian and Muslim families now live as separate communities, their areas of operation demarcated by a virtual no-man's land in between. If anyone crosses this boundary, the beaches go up in flames, as a series of incidents in recent years have proved.

In the north, where the Muslims and Hindu dheevaras are the dominant fishing communities, social life is controlled by Sangh Parivar organisations like the RSS among the Hindus, and the Jama-at committees among the Muslims. Maradu beach, where over a dozen people were killed in two incidents of communal clashes during 2002 and 2003, provides a graphic picture of the way the two communities are divided and separated on the same beach.

...Dr K N Ganesh of the department of history at Calicut University, who did a sociological study on Maradu after the 2002 carnage, points out that the secular space in the lives of the fisher people has been squeezed out, with even cultural and sports organisations marginalised and their activities taken over by communal outfits.

The first serious outbreak in Maradu began with some minor incidents between youths of different communities during a football match. The subsequent string of events proved that even places of worship had become hotbeds of communal campaigning. A huge cache of

arms was seized by the police from the local mosque immediately after the second major incident and there is strong evidence that a wide section of the community was involved in a criminal conspiracy that went on for many months.

The breakdown of society in Maradu, where members of both communities once lived side by side, is a heart-breaking tale. As nine persons were killed within a short span of half-an-hour – eight of them Hindus – all the Muslim families had to flee for their lives. Around 400 Muslim families from Maradu were forced to live in relief camps for months before they were able to return to their homes. When they did return they found their homes ransacked, every household article destroyed or looted in an orgy of wanton destruction indulged in by their own neighbours.

But this breakdown of social and community relations is not the handiwork of communal forces alone. It is the failure of secular forces at the political level, and the deliberate policy options exercised by these authorities at the economic level, that has left these poorest sections of Kerala society to their fate. To understand the real tragedy, we will have to look at the impact of economic policies on the lives of the people, throwing them into a situation of desperation and bitterness. These people are the abandoned children of Kerala's famed model of development, left behind to fight for the few crumbs that come their way (Chekkutty, N.P. 2006, 'The dark side of the Kerala model of development', *InfoChange*, July <http://infochangeindia.org/200608275537/Health/Features/The-dark-side-of-the-Kerala-model-of-development.html> – Accessed 2 April 2009 – Attachment 24).

An August 2006 article published by *InfoChange* addresses the nature of the violence which has affected Vizhinjam and also provides more general background on the outbreaks of violence which have affected other Kerala fishing communities in different ways. The article relates that the violence "can be divided into two types: those between the traditional fisherfolk and the new class of speedboat fishermen (quite common in the '70s and '80s), and those of a communal nature". It is also reported that: "Vizhinjam and Poonthura in the south are well known as sensitive areas with occasional outbursts between the different communities". Pertinent extracts follow:

...Over the last four decades, the southwestern coast has witnessed a series of violent clashes. They can be divided into two types: those between the traditional fisherfolk and the new class of speedboat fishermen (quite common in the '70s and '80s), and those of a communal nature that took place between the Hindu fishing communities on one side and Muslims or Christians on the other. In the southern parts, it was between the Christians and Muslims. This second type of confrontation became rampant mainly after the '80s, although some flashpoints, like Maradu, have a history of communal violence right from the early-'60s. But these were occasional and rare.

At Naduvattom, near Maradu, incidents of a communal nature led to police firing in 1958; in Madappally, near Vatakara, clashes occurred among the fisherfolk over political disputes between the Communists and the Congress Party, in the late-'60s; in Vatanappally, in Trissur, similar incidents were reported two decades ago. In Thaikal, near Cherthala in Alapuzha, clashes occurred between Hindu and Christian fishermen, resulting in five deaths, in 2002; Vizhinjam and Poonthura in the south are well known as sensitive areas with occasional outbursts between the different communities. Maradu witnessed two violent incidents that left over a dozen Hindus and Muslims dead. Minor communal clashes are common in the entire region, resulting in loss of human life and property. According to police sources, there are dozens of sensitive pockets all along the coast.

The government must take a comprehensive look at this problem, and find solutions in the realm of economics and politics. Already, competition from abroad has added a new

dimension to the already confused scenario: foreign trawlers are entering Indian fishing zones as part of global joint ventures, and Indian markets will soon be flooded with foreign fish products. This will be the next phase of an impoverishment process that started way back in the '70s (Chekkutty, N.P. 2006, 'Fishing communities: the economics of impoverishment', *InfoChange*, August <http://infochangeindia.org/200608315538/Human-Rights/Features/Fishing-communities-the-economics-of-impoverishment.html> – Accessed 2 April 2009 – Attachment 28).

A 1993 article which appeared in the left-wing *New Internationalist* provide anecdotal background on the manner in which issues of caste have affected Kerala's Latin Catholic fishing communities historically in places like Vizhinjam.

It's late afternoon when we reach Vizhinjam. The streets are so busy it feels like all its 10,000 or so residents – 7,000 Christian and 3,000 Muslim – are out and about. The houses are very small. The mosque and numerous Christian churches are very large.

Fish is being sold. Toddy – an alcoholic beverage drawn from the coconut trees – is being bought. In between snatches of conversation and gossip in rapid-fire Malayalam, Magline tells the history of the fisherfolk.

It is a story of extreme marginalization in virtually every sense. For centuries they were the poor people, the pariahs, not allowed into schools, churches or temples, pushed out onto the very margins of the land – into the sea, in fact.

The ruling upper-caste Hindus – who were vegetarian – viewed the fisherfolk as the lowest of the low. These people lived by fish. Dealt in fish. Smelt of fish. And, it must be added, they drank like fish too. Tired after a long night's fishing, the men would come back with their catch at dawn. Fish does not keep – it has to be sold quickly. Waiting for them on the shore were the merchants and loan sharks.

...Nobody took much interest in the lives of the fishing people – until Portuguese Catholic missionaries arrived in the sixteenth century. They – unlike the lofty Syrian Orthodox Christians who had already been in Kerala for about 1,000 years – saw the fisherfolk as souls fit for conversion ('Life on the edge' 1993, *New Internationalist*, no.241, March <http://www.newint.org/issue241/life.htm> – Accessed 2 April 2009 – Attachment 27).

The Marad violence of 2002, 2003

A *Rediff News* report of May 2004 provides brief background on the violence which affected the Hindu and Muslim fishing communities in Marad in 2002 and 2003. The report relates the circumstances in which "one Muslim and eight Hindus were killed in a communal clash" in May 2003 in what appeared to be "retaliation to the violence a year earlier, in which five Muslims were killed". The report notes the political sensitivities associated with Marad; the presence of Hindu nationalist voices in the area; that "police arrested more than 60 Muslims, some of them from a local mosque, in connection with the violence"; and that a local BJP candidate has alleged, nonetheless, that "our community has not got justice so far because the Communists and Congress are protecting the Muslim extremists". Extracts follow:

Fear still lingers in Kerala's Marad village, where one Muslim and eight Hindus were killed in a communal clash last May 2.

The election season is on, but politicians avoid this fishing hamlet, which falls under the predominantly Muslim Lok Sabha constituency of Manjeri.

Locals say it is fear that prevents them from coming.

“Everyone fears that one day there will be more massacres in our village. So nobody wants politics to play a part in our lives right now,” says Hanif Mustafa, a fisherman.

“The Muslim League, the Left and BJP candidates have come here asking for votes. But they came without much pomp,” Mustafa adds.

There are around 2,000 Muslims and 1,700 Hindus in Marad, situated on a sandy beach some 20 km from Kozhikode.

Last year, many Muslims fled the village after Hindus led by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad pledged revenge for the May 2 killings.

The incident was said to be in retaliation to the violence a year earlier, in which five Muslims were killed.

Some compare Marad to Gujarat, where large-scale riots took place in 2002.

“The BJP wants to make Marad a little Gujarat. We will not allow that. We want peace, not communal riots here,” says Indian Union Muslim League candidate K P A Majeed.

Majeed is sure to win the seat, not because of the violence, but because Manjeri is predominantly Muslim. Against him is Communist Party of India-Marxist candidate T K Hamsa.

The BJP’s candidate is Uma Unni, a resident of Marad who local Hindus consider to be the Uma Bharti of Kerala.

The BJP picked her up after she came out in protest against the killings.

“I am a resident of Marad. Though it is one year since eight Hindus were killed, our community has not got justice so far because the Communists and Congress are protecting the Muslim extremists,” she says.

She says the political situation in Kerala prompted the violence. “The Congress is helping the Muslim community to take up arms against Hindus in the state,” she alleges.

...Most of the Muslim families that escaped from the village and lived for months in refugee camps have returned home.

Chief Minister A K Antony had entrusted the rehabilitation of the Muslim families not to political parties, but to a set of Gandhians.

The Gandhi Smaraka Nidhi, Sarvodaya Mandalam and Gandhi Peace Foundation have been working hard to ensure that there are no more killings in the village.

...According to him, the best thing about the rehabilitation process is the absence of politicians.

“If politicians had been entrusted with the job of rehabilitating these poor families, there would have been killings again,” he says, adding, “there is communal harmony here now. We hope to keep it up forever.”

The police arrested more than 60 Muslims, some of them from a local mosque, in connection with the violence. They also shut down the mosque, which has now been reopened. But it continues to be under heavy surveillance.

Hindu groups initially resisted the rehabilitation of the Muslim families. They demanded a hefty compensation for the Hindu victims and a central government probe into the attack as a precondition for resettlement.

Under the peace agreement, the government gave a compensation of Rs 10 lakh (Rs 1 million) each to the families of the dead Hindus, Rs 500,000 for those who sustained severe injuries and Rs 300,000 to the other injured.

One member from the family of the dead would also be given a government job.

...Hindus account for 57.2% of the 31.8 million people in Kerala, Muslims 23.3% and Christians 19.3%. The state also has a small number of people from other religions.

Kerala used to be considered a good example of communal harmony till the violence took place.

On May 2, the first anniversary of the carnage, Hindu organisations held a mass rally on the village beach. "It was the politics of Kerala that led to killings in Marad," well-known Hindu leader P Parameswaran, who heads the Bharatiya Vichara Kendram, said.

He said the massacre and the agitation thereafter have contributed to Hindu consolidation in Kerala. "If the Hindus don't want to become refugees in Kerala, they should organise above political affiliations," he added (Iype, G. 2004, 'Riot-hit Marad goes off netas' radar', *Rediff News*, 7 May <http://us.rediff.com/election/2004/may/07gi.htm> – Accessed 6 January 2004 – Attachment 32).

Similar articles would subsequently appear which expressed concern that the Marad violence might signal that a hitherto peaceful Kerala was becoming increasingly affected by communal politics and violence. A *Hindu* article of May 2003 argued that: "The incident in Marad indicates that communalism has arrived in Kerala"; and that: "The Marad incident is likely to hasten this process, as every communal riot widens the social distance between communities and enhances mutual hostility". In March 2004 a *Frontline* article expressed the view that "The violence at Marad in May was a clear indication that the intervention of a large number of majority as well as minority communal organisations had started showing its ugly results in Kerala" (Panikkar, K.N. 2003, 'Communalising Kerala', *The Hindu*, 13 May <http://www.thehindujobs.com/thehindu/2003/05/13/stories/2003051301111000.htm> – Accessed 27 June 2007 – Attachment 32; Krishnakumar, R. 2004, 'The spread in the South', *Frontline*, Vol 21: Issue 06, March 13 – March 26 <http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl2106/stories/20040326004900900.htm> – Accessed 6 January 2005 – Attachment 33).

Prior to this, in May 2003, an article in *The Hindu* had criticized the Congress led government's management of communal tensions; arguing that the preceding CPI-M led LDF government had done a far better job. The report argues that: "The communal situation in Kerala is not out of hand. However, it will soon be, if the Government does not act strongly and decisively". The report refers, in the main, to the Marad clashes which took place between Hindu and Muslim villages in 2002 but also notes disturbances in 2002 in Pathanamthitta and that: "During the same year, clashes occurred between Muslim and Christian fishermen on the Thiruvananthapuram coast".

The record of the Government in containing communal trouble so far has not been commendable. This was in sharp contrast to the record of the LDF Government which had managed to keep a tight leash on communal developments. During the five years of the LDF rule, no major communal incidents had occurred because the Government minced no words about its determination to check communal trouble and backed its words with action.

On the other hand, the present Government often adopted a softline towards communalists while making high decibel statements against communalism. It was in open liaison with parties such as the People's Democratic Party (PDP). This encouraged communal elements.

The massacre of nine persons at Marad in Kozhikode is the fourth major incident after the present Government came to power. In scale, it was unprecedented.

The first major Hindu Muslim clashes after the present Government came to power occurred at Marad and Pathanamthitta. In the incident that happened at Marad in January 2002, five persons had been killed. At Pathanamthitta, considerable destruction of property, including that of the BJP, occurred. Some Christian shops were also attacked. Attackers included persons belonging to various political parties, but most were activists of the National Democratic Front. During the same year, clashes occurred between Muslim and Christian fishermen on the Thiruvananthapuram coast. There were also a number of relatively minor incidents (Mathew, R. 2003, 'Communal situation can go out of hand', *The Hindu*, 9 May <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/2003/05/09/stories/2003050904560400.htm> – Accessed 3 April 2009 – Attachment 45).

In September 2006 *Rediff News* reported of the Marad violence that “a judicial report has damned political parties for precipitating a minor incident into a major communal issue”, noting the possible involvement of “local leaders of the CPI-M, IUML, BJP and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh”. Extracts follow:

Most Kerala political parties have welcomed the CBI probe. But not many of them would perhaps like to read through the report that damns political parties.

The report is particularly critical of the Indian Union of Muslim League, a coalition partner of the Congress-led United Democratic Front government that ruled the state in 2003. It says some IUML leaders were aware of the conspiracy behind the massacre.

It says activists of the National Development Front – a Muslim organisation with a base in Malappuram – and some IUML activists were actively involved in the planning and execution of the massacre at Marad beach. ‘It was unlikely that the attack did not have the blessings of their leadership at least at the local level,’ says the report.

The IUML is not the only party that the Marad Judicial Commission report indicts.

It says a minor incident – an altercation between fishermen – in communally-sensitive Marad in 2001 was the beginning of a larger social problem, and the subsequent communal killings.

The 2001 altercation was then settled by local elders. But local leaders of the CPI-M, IUML, BJP and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh got involved with the issue which led to a communal riot in 2002 that claimed five lives in Marad.

Local politicians used the 2002 riot to create a further divide between Hindus and Muslims in the area. And the police who operate under strict instructions from local politicians kept quiet, the report says.

The wedge between the Hindu and Muslims led to the communal killings in May 2003, which claimed nine lives.

‘The communal division that existed in Marad beach coupled with the divisive activities of Muslim fundamentalists and other forces contributed to the 2003 violence,’ the report states.

It has particularly flayed the A K Antony government for not ordering a CBI probe into the incident and found serious lapses on the part of the civil and police administration in Kozhikode during the period.

Marxist leaders have claimed that the Antony government did not order the CBI probe because IUML leaders were indirectly involved in the massacre.

But Congress leaders reject the argument. “Our government did not order a CBI probe because we ordered a judicial probe. Now that the judicial report has recommended a CBI enquiry, it should be done,” Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee president Ramesh Chennithala told rediff.com

He said the Marad massacre has exposed the BJP and the CPI-M. “Both parties have been creating a dangerous communal situation in north Kerala all these years. I hope they learn from this report, work for the people and not create communal flare-ups,” he added (Iype, G. 2006, ‘Marad: How politicians fanned a communal riot’, *Rediff News*, 28 September <http://in.rediff.com/news/2006/sep/28gi.htm> – Accessed 2 April 200 – Attachment 33).

The Indian national news magazine *Frontline* has recently provided an overview of the subsequent enquiries into the Marad violence and the trials of those charged (which came to a conclusion in late 2008). “The court said the evidence proved that the eight Hindu fishermen were attacked with lethal weapons and that the prosecution could establish beyond doubt that there was an unlawful assembly of the 62 people with the common objective of committing murder, grievous hurt and other allied offences”. “On January 15, the special court...awarded rigorous life imprisonment and a fine of Rs.25,000 each to 62 of the 139 against whom charge-sheets were filed”. It may be of interest that the report relates a commission of inquiry into the 2002 attacks on Muslims and the 2003 attacks on Hindus found that “activists of the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS)/the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Muslim League, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Indian National League and the National Development Front, were among the accused”. The report follows:

MARAD appears peaceful today, nearly six years after a group of revenge killers hacked to death eight Hindu fishermen (and a Muslim fellow attacker by mistake) there, in what turned out to be the worst communal incident in recent memory in Kerala.

Maybe, time is a healer. But it is more or less certain now that the circumstances that led to the 2003 killings will continue to remain a volatile mystery, with a short fuse.

On January 15, the special court constituted for the trial in the Marad case awarded rigorous life imprisonment and a fine of Rs.25,000 each to 62 of the 139 against whom charge-sheets were filed. On December 27, 2008, the court had found 63 of them guilty of various crimes and had acquitted the rest.

Twenty four of the 62 found guilty of the charges of murder, attempt to murder, promoting enmity on grounds of religion, unlawful assembly, rioting with deadly weapons, causing hurt or grievous hurt with dangerous weapons, among other crimes under the Indian Penal Code, were close relatives. One of the accused, the manager of a local mosque, was found guilty under the law seeking to prevent the misuse of religious institutions.

The court said the evidence proved that the eight Hindu fishermen were attacked with lethal weapons and that the prosecution could establish beyond doubt that there was an unlawful assembly of the 62 people with the common objective of committing murder, grievous hurt and other allied offences.

The court found that Asker Ali, the ninth victim in the incident, was also a member of the group of assailants. However, the prosecution could not prove its charges that there was a criminal conspiracy behind the killings or that the accused had committed offences under the Explosives Substances Act or the Arms Act. The verdict was based on the evidence presented before it after an inquiry by the Crime Branch of the State police.

But, a judicial commission of inquiry appointed in the aftermath of the incident had found that, among other things, the incident was a sequel to the largely politically-motivated murder of five others in the village earlier in January 2002 and a fallout of the then Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) government's "unjustified delay" in the prosecution of those accused of that crime (Frontline, October 20, 2006).

COMMISSION'S OBSERVATION

The commission had said that the delay in filing charge-sheets in the January 2002 incident at Marad was utilised by "Muslim fundamentalists, terrorists and other forces" to capitalise on the grievances of relatives of three Muslims killed and to use it as a cause for vengeance against Hindus of Marad as a whole.

It had also said that the inquiry into the May 2003 incident by the Crime Branch had failed to unravel the "larger conspiracy" and the source of the large cache of arms and ammunitions unearthed subsequently in the area and of the sizeable funds used in the planning and execution of the murders.

The judicial commission had also been critical of the role of the civil administration, the State police and the Crime Branch and had said that despite clear evidence that there was a "long-drawn conspiracy" and that the objective of the assailants was not merely to kill certain persons but "to create bigger havoc and ignite large-scale riot", the Crime Branch team had stuck to its simple theory of revenge killings.

The question as to whether other forces were involved in the massacre was not even an issue for the Crime Branch team, it said.

Much to the discomfiture of all major political parties in the State, the judicial commission that was constituted to inquire into the circumstances that led to the second Marad incident of May 2003, had thus drawn attention on the facts and circumstances of the 2002 incident too, in which, activists of the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS)/the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Muslim League, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Indian National League and the National Development Front, were among the accused (Frontline, November 7, 2003) that had led all the Muslim families there to flee their homes not so long ago, Kerala can find solace in the verdict of the special court and the sentencing of 63 persons alone and believe all will be well (Krishnakumar, R. 2009, 'Verdict on Marad violence', *Frontline*, vol.26: no.3, 31 January / 13 February <http://www.hinduonnet.com/fline/fl2603/stories/20090213260310400.htm> – Accessed 2 April 2009 – Attachment 34).

The Anchuthengu violence of 1993, 2002

In April 2003 it was reported that “Two persons were killed and five others injured when an armed gang drove a jeep into a group of fishermen who were celebrating Easter in front of the Matsya Thozhilali Kshema Sanghom office at Manarkulam in Anchuthengu police station limits late on Saturday night”. The names of those killed, as well as the names of those suspected of the violence, suggest that the actors involved in the dispute were Christians and likely Latin Catholics.

Police identified the deceased as Clement (33) and Paniyadamma Francis (31), both local residents. The injured persons were identified as Satheesh (20), Cletus (35), John (55), Imelda (43) and Solomon (28).

...The police are looking for one Joboy, Freddy, Raju, Suresh, Oscar, Pelis and Sunny in connection with the incident. According to police, the brutal attack was sequel to a stand-off between fishermen belonging to the same community at Anchuthengu on Saturday morning.

Police said that Starry, brother of the main accused, Joboy, picked up a fight with a resident of Manarkulam when the latter tried to take some fish from the net the former had pulled ashore.

Starry had landed a prize catch of huge “Vatta” fish on Saturday morning. Starry was injured in the face in the fight. Police believe that the killing of the two fishermen was a revenge attack by the gang led by Starry’s brother, Joboy.

When contacted, the SP (Rural), Ashok Yadav, who visited the spot on Saturday, said that the attack seemed to have been carried out by persons with a criminal background.

The police have been posted in strength in the area to prevent any further violence.

The rural police are carrying out extensive raids at the SP’s order to arrest the 17-odd persons suspected to be responsible for the incident (‘Two persons killed in clash’ 2003, *The Hindu*, 20 April <http://www.thehindu.com/2003/04/21/stories/2003042107700300.htm> – Accessed 2 April 2009 – Attachment 36).

In March 2002 it was reported from “the communally sensitive Anchuthengu area” that a “domestic dispute in a fisherfolk family in the locality had spilled over to the streets with members of the community taking opposing sides”. The community involved is not stated specifically but the names of the actors involved suggest that those involved were Christians and likely Latin Catholics.

Police have been deployed in strength in the communally sensitive Anchuthengu area following an armed clash between members of the same community in which six persons were injured on Saturday night.

Police said that two groups armed with swords and bottles attacked each other at around 7 p.m. on Saturday leading to widespread tension in the area. The domestic dispute in a fisherfolk family in the locality had spilled over to the streets with members of the community taking opposing sides, police said.

Officials said the fight had occurred when one Pathrose was attacked at a local tea-shop by a group led by one Yesudasan and Saltin. This led to widespread violence in the area with community members attacking each other. Personnel of the Armed Police Reserve (rural) have been deployed to pre-empt any further escalation of violence or retaliatory attacks.

When contacted, the Circle Inspector (Kadavoor), Latheef, said that the situation was well under control and police raids were on to arrest the perpetrators of the violence. He said police were backing peace efforts being made in the area by local religious leaders and opinion makers in the community ('Tense situation at Anchuthengu' 2002, *The Hindu*, 11 March <http://www.thehindu.com/2002/03/11/stories/2002031105170300.htm> – Accessed 2 April 2009 – Attachment 37).

The fishing village of Anchuthengu was also affected by an outbreak of violence during the early 1990s. A report of January 1993 relates that local village fisherman using traditional methods had clashed with fishermen working on trawlers who were seen to be illegally encroaching on waters reserved for traditional fishing methods. It is not clear which community or communities were involved. Nonetheless, it may be significant that it is reported that: "By the end of October, the conflict had become grave enough to attract the attention of the church, which enjoys considerable social and religious authority amongst Kerala's fishing community".

A CLASH of interests between traditional fisherfolk and owners of modern fishing trawlers is nothing new in Kerala's coastal districts. But the normally quiet village of Anchuthengu in Kollam district is caught in just such a struggle and has been riven by unprecedented acts of violence since last October.

The immediate reason for the dispute was an unusually large kannava mada, a shoal of cuttle fish, sighted in the sea near the village. Local fisherfolk eagerly anticipated a rich haul for such large shoals of fish in the past had fetched them daily catches worth as much as Rs 10,000. So their despair and anger were natural when, on the morning of October 2, fishing trawlers moved in and netted the bulk of the shoal, contravening a law that forbids them from fishing within 22 km from the coast.

The fisherfolk had earlier pointed out trawler activity would disturb the cuttle fish to such an extent that any subsequent catch would be impossible. But their warning was ignored by the trawler owners. Continued resistance by the fisherfolk was answered by force. On the night of October 4-5, trawler crews attacked the fishing boats, damaging them and their nets. In retaliation, on October 7, reportedly under the leadership of the Theeradesa Matsyathozilali Federation – the trade union arm of the Trivandrum District Fishermen's Federation (TDF) – the fisherfolk swooped down on the poaching trawlers and set 11 of them on fire.

...The trawler crews raided Anchuthengu on October 11 and attacked the inhabitants with sharp-edged weapons. Four fishermen were taken hostages. Once again, the villagers responded by attacking and confiscating two trawlers.

By the end of October, the conflict had become grave enough to attract the attention of the church, which enjoys considerable social and religious authority amongst Kerala's fishing community. On November 11, the Bishop Father Susaipakam of Thiruvananthapuram initiated talks between the two sides. The rival groups agreed to return stolen equipment and free the hostages. But the peace was short-lived. By mid-November, several more boats being damaged and hostages being taken were reported taken.

...Several concerned observers in Kerala have noted government policies, far from checking encroachment by mechanised trawlers, actually encourage them. "Marine exports form the boom area for Indian exports," said John Kurien, a fishery economist at the Centre for Development Studies in Trivandrum. He pointed out the most profitable items in this export drive such as tuna, mackerel, prawns and cuttlefish are found mostly in waters close to the coast. "If you go only by the profit motive, you cannot keep the trawlers away."

Kurien's point of view is endorsed by Marshall Frank, president of the All-Kerala Mechanised Fishing Boat Owners' Association, whose trawler was among those that raided the fishing waters of Anchuthengu. "The government has asked us to go ahead and fish. They (the government) want foreign exchange and we are providing it." In the face of such seemingly irrefutable logic, peace in Anchuthengu is going to be a difficult proposition (Shajahan, K. M. 1993, 'Feud over fishing starts a fire in Kerala village', Indian Environmental Portal website, source: *Down to Earth*, 30 January <http://www.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/node/15497> – Accessed 3 April 2009 – Attachment 38).

The Panamvilla violence (near Trivandrum) in 2005

On April 2005 the All India Christian Council reported that: "Hindu and Muslim villagers [had] burned down a prayer hall and physically attacked three church members following a baptism ceremony in Kerala on 1 April 2005"; it was also reported that: "Two days later, the villagers manhandled Pastor Paul Ciniraj Mohammed and his 54-year-old assistant". The report related that: "Some church members said the local unit of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a Hindu activist group, was behind the attack". The attack was also noted in the July 2005 edition of Baylor University's *Journal of Church & State*, though no mention was made in the very brief bulletin on this event of any suspected RSS involvement ('Pastor attacked, prayer hall burned' 2005, All India Christian Council website, 1 April <http://indianchristians.in/news/content/view/156/45/> – Accessed 29 January 2009 – Attachment 29; Hendon, D.W.; Lynn, N.R. 2005, 'Notes on Church-State Affairs', *Journal of Church & State*, vol.47: no.3, 1 July – Attachment 30).

It may be of interest that this report was subsequently picked up by the US Department of State's *International Religious Freedom Report for 2005* notes an attack by Hindus and Muslims upon a neighbouring Christian community:

On April 1, Hindu and Muslim villagers burned down a prayer hall and physically attacked three Christian church members following a baptism ceremony in Kerala. Two days later, villagers assaulted Pastor Paul Ciniraj Mohammed and his 54-year-old assistant (US Department of State 2005, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2005 – India*, 8 November – Attachment 31).

Hindus, Muslims and Christians in Kerala – general information

The following reports are provided as examples of the kind of articles which have presented Kerala state as a haven of peace and tolerance for Hindus, Muslims and Christians.

In October 2008, for example, the Indian social activist Aruna Roy argued that Kerala, with "almost equal numbers of Hindus, Christians and Muslims" was home to a "visible pluralism" which, in the context of the violence which then affected Orissa state, should serve as a model for the rest of India. Pertinent extracts follow:

Keralite society left an extraordinary legacy, which has brought in literacy, social sharing and human development into the lives of all its citizens. But the visible pluralism is striking. Kerala has almost equal numbers of Hindus, Christians and Muslims. As you motor down the road, with green all around, you see a dream of what the rest of India should be. Marta Mary Street leads you to Akbar technology and Ramya Sweets.

There are advertisements for the Patriarch of the Syrian Christian Church's visit standing cheek to jowl with the Hindu temples and the mosques, which dot the ride between Cochin

and Trivandrum. The men are all in their dhotis, worn like a lungi and their white shirts, difficult to distinguish unless there is an occasional Muslim cap. The women are more distinct because of the dress code now, having become a contentious issue. Nevertheless, all communities have high literacy rates even amongst women. No one covers their face, irrespective of the religion they belong to (Roy, A. 2008, 'Kerala deserves much better', *DNA News*, 24 October – Attachment 1)

In 2003 a cultural studies scholar from New Zealand, Dr Peter Raine, argued that “[h]armony between seemingly divergent religious groups appears to be the norm” for Kerala’s Hindu, Christian and Muslim communities. Raine finds that: “Very few serious conflicts occur owing to religious differences”; and that: “Not only is there very little inter-religious rivalry, the different communities even share for their respective religious festivals paraphernalia such as decorated umbrellas, musicians and even elephants”. Of the Muslim and Christian fishing communities the report states: “Each morning, Muslim fishermen visit the local teashop run by their Hindu neighbour, to chat and exchange stories after a hard night’s work. Christian fishermen are not excluded”. According to this article the primary problems affecting the Kerala social fabric have less to do with religion that with “increasing environmental pollution and degradation, high unemployment rates among the youth, burgeoning population, poor income distribution, and increasing political disharmony”. The article appeared in India’s *Frontline* magazine. Pertinent extracts follow:

KERALA’S Department of Tourism has coined a slogan: “God’s own country”. This emblem embraces not only the beauty of Kerala’s abundant natural endowment, but its rich and varied cultural and religious traditions. Harmony between seemingly divergent religious groups appears to be the norm in ‘God’s own country’. Conflicts between different villages, communities and religions are not common, even though tensions do rise from time to time. However, most of these conflicts are based on resource allocation and land distribution, as the recent Adivasi protests on the issue of land reveal. Very few serious conflicts occur owing to religious differences.

A characteristic of modern-day Kerala is the seeming cultural paradox of change and stability, which has resulted in a high degree of communal harmony. And, ironically, this is the world’s first State to elect democratically a Communist government (in 1957). The secular communists never dared to intrude upon religious space; indeed, they added to the harmony by ensuring a high literacy rate. Land reform, modern health services, and secular education are part of the ongoing legacy of Kerala’s tryst with communism.

...Hindus, Muslims and Christians appear to live in harmony with each other as communities. Not only is there very little inter-religious rivalry, the different communities even share for their respective religious festivals paraphernalia such as decorated umbrellas, musicians and even elephants. The local Hindu temple priest would suspend his prayer sessions to allow the muezzin at the mosque to be heard, before resuming his amplified chants. All this is accomplished without word or gesture. It is simple common sense here. Why fight if you can cooperate?

In Kerala, Islam is not the ‘enemy’, it is not even the ‘difficult one’; it is just another belief system, a different faith, and nothing special. Hindu, Muslim and Christian children and young people easily make friends with each other. They attend school together, play games with each other, and later do business together. Intermarriage is not unknown. Each morning, Muslim fishermen visit the local teashop run by their Hindu neighbour, to chat and exchange stories after a hard night’s work. Christian fishermen are not excluded.

...The Roman Catholics also live in relative harmony with the followers of the older Syrian and orthodox Churches.

...As we walk along the coast through villages under palm trees, children race up to us. Then begins the invariable demands for “one pen” (they all want `Western’ pens), “one rupee” (to buy sweets), or, “one chocolate”. The enquiry turns to: “What is your name?” After struggling with our strange-sounding names, we hear proud replies: Al Saad, Faisal, Nasreen. A while later the names change, and equally proudly too: Joshua, Mary, Thomas. We have drifted into a Christian village, yet there is no outward sign, no barriers, or different style of dress. There are no `hard lines’ of division between communities of different religions.

...For many tourists, ‘God’s own country’ appears to be some sort of utopia or unaffected paradise, yet this is a simplistic notion. There are many problems, which include: increasing environmental pollution and degradation, high unemployment rates among the youth, burgeoning population, poor income distribution, and increasing political disharmony (Raine, P. 2003, ‘A different image’, *Frontline*, vol.20: no.26, 26 April / 9 May <http://www.hindu.com/fline/fl2009/stories/20030509000106600.htm> – Accessed 28 March 2009 – Attachment 2).

A report in *The Hindu* noted that the Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust had “issued a statement expressing distress over attacks on Christians, stating that: “the saffron brigade is concurrently orchestrating a mass campaign of bigotry and lawlessness that began in Orissa and has now spread to Karnataka and even threatens hitherto tolerant and peaceful Kerala” (‘NCM team for Karnataka’ 2009, *The Hindu*, 17 September <http://www.hindu.com/2008/09/17/stories/2008091761051600.htm> – Accessed 31 January 2009 – Attachment 48; ‘3 churches attacked in Karnataka’ 2008, *Times of India*, 22 September http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/India/3_churches_attacked_in_Karnataka_/rssarticleshow/3510970.cms – Accessed 30 January 2009 – Attachment 49; ‘60 dead in Indian anti-Christian clashes’ 2008, *The Age*, 18 October <http://news.theage.com.au/world/60-dead-in-indian-antichristian-clashes-20081018-53e2.html> – Accessed 30 January 2009 – Attachment 50).

Sources report that representatives of Kerala’s state government – a coalition group led by the by the CPI-M – have condemned the recent outbreaks of anti-Christian violence and have promised to have police track down the perpetrators of the Kerala church attacks. On 22 September 2008 it was reported that “CPI(M) Kerala Secretary Pinarayi Vijayan today said the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government... was committed to book the culprits behind the attacks on minority institutions” and that “‘Sangh Parivar’ groups, who target minority communities, should be dealt with sternly”. It has also been reported that: “The government of the Indian state of Kerala has offered to shelter 56 refugees from Orissa, most of whom had fled the state following threats and beatings by Hindu mobs avenging the murder of a Hindu leader” ‘LDF govt. committed to peace in Kerala: CPI(M) Secretary’ 2008, *webindia123.com*, source: *United News of India*, 22 September <http://news.webindia123.com/news/articles/India/20080922/1059946.html> – Accessed 30 January 2009 – Attachment 65; and: Varghese, R. 2008, ‘Orissa Christians find shelter in Kerala state’, *Christian Today* website, 3 November <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/orissa.christians.find.shelter.in.kerala.state/21796.htm> – Accessed 10 December 2008 – Attachment 66).

2. Please provide information which would suggest that the ruling CPI-M government favours Kerala's Muslim population over its Christian population. Please also provide information on the relationship between the CPI-M and Kerala's Muslim and Christian communities.

Kerala's most recent state government elections took place in May 2006 and ended as a victory for the Left Democratic Front (LDF) coalition. Led by the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) the 2006 LDF coalition also consisted of: "Communist Party of India, Janata Dal-Secular, Kerala Congress-J, Revolutionary Socialist Party, Nationalist Congress Party, Indian National League [a Muslim-based political party], Kerala Congress-S and Congress-S". The victory of the LDF in May 2006 saw the United Democratic Front (UDF) governing coalition removed from office. Led by the Indian National Congress (INC, or Congress) the 2006 UDF coalition also consisted of: "Kerala Congress (Mani), Janathipathya Samrakshana Samiti, Kerala Congress (B), Communist Marxist Party, Revolutionary Socialist Party (Shibu faction) and Revolutionary Socialist Party (Babu Divakaran faction)". News reports have noted that the May 2006 state election result continued a trend wherein the Kerala electorate has swung back-and-forth between the LDF and the UDF at successive elections. It is also worth noting that the INC and the CPI-M, though opponents in Kerala state politics, have until recently been partners at the national level in the INC led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) coalition. This partnership ended in June 2008 when the CPI-M, along with four other left wing parties, withdrew its support from the INC led UPA over the terms of a nuclear energy deal being negotiated with the United States (for an overview of the May 2006 state election results in Kerala, see: Muraleedharan, N. 2006, '2006: Political conflicts in Kerala', *Rediff.com*, 20 December <http://in.rediff.com/news/2006/dec/20year.htm> – Accessed 6 July 2007 – Attachment 39; Lype, George 2006, 'Kerala: Where change is static', *Rediff.com*, 11 May <http://in.rediff.com/election/2006/may/11gi.htm> – Accessed 6 July 2007 – Attachment 40; Election Commission of India 2006, *Statistical Report on General Election, 2006 to the Legislative Assembly of Kerala*, Election Commission of India website http://www.eci.gov.in/StatisticalReports/SE_2006/StatReport_KL_2006.pdf – Accessed 20 October 2008 – Attachment 41; for an overview of Kerala's LDF and UDF coalitions and their various relationships with national political coalitions, see: Iype, G. 2006, 'Kerala's political jigsaw, unravelled', *Rediff.com*, 10 April <http://www.rediff.com/election/2006/apr/10pkerala.htm> – Accessed 20 October 2008 – Attachment 42; for the recent withdrawal of the CPI-M from the UPA over the nuclear deal, see: 'Left pulls out, will meet President Patil on Wednesday' 2008, *Express India*, 8 July <http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/Left-pulls-out-will-meet-President-Patil-on-Wednesday/332876/> – Accessed 20 October 2008 – Attachment 43).

The votes of both Muslims and Christians have been sought by the competing Congress and CPI-M parties and the support of the minority vote blocs are often seen as critical to victory in Kerala electoral state politics. A February 2009 *Hindustan Times* article reports that: "Traditionally, Christians were UDF supporters. But in the last Lok Sabha and assembly elections, they overwhelmingly supported the LDF, helping it to make deep inroads into the Christian heartland". During the 2006 Kerala Assembly elections that brought the CPI-M back into government *The Hindu* reported "that exit poll surveys "found a 7 to 9 per cent swing in the Christian votes in favour of the LDF". The LDF victory in the 2006 state election was also brought about by Muslim votes. A study published by Islamabad's Institute of Strategic Studies in the aftermath of the 2006 Kerala state elections found that the Muslim vote bank had shifted to the CPI-M led LDF coalition and away from the Congress led UDA coalition, and the Indian Union Muslim League, which had won Muslim support in the

previous 2001 Kerala state election (Sarkar, A. & Babu, R. 2008, 'Bengal, Kerala units fear losing 10 LS seats each' 2008, *Hindustan Times*, 27 July

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/StoryPage.aspx?id=c1f09790-5c36-4cc2-a72a-83e774fe17bd> – Accessed 3 April 2009 – Attachment 46; 'Exit polls predict clear majority for LDF' 2006, *The Hindu*, 4 May

<http://www.hindu.com/2006/05/04/stories/2006050413040400.htm> – Accessed 3 April 2009 – Attachment 47; Saeed, A. 2006, 'Emergent Electoral Trends in Indian Politics: Role of the Left and Muslim Votebanks', Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad website, *Strategic Studies*, vol.26, Winter, no.4 http://www.issi.org.pk/journal/2006_files/no_4/article/a1.htm – Accessed 5 October 2007 – Attachment 48; see also: Krishnakumar, R. 2004, 'A minority power crisis', *Frontline*, Vol 21: Issue 10, May 08 – 21

<http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl2110/stories/20040521004512000.htm> – Accessed 6 January 2004 – Attachment 59).

The relationship between the CPI-M and the Kerala Latin Catholic Church is nonetheless, a complicated one. The Kerala Catholic Church has, historically, supported the Congress Party in Kerala (the CPI-M's principal rival in Kerala electoral state politics) and the Kerala Catholic Church is currently embroiled in a struggle with the CPI-M government over control of Catholic education institutions. There have also been accusations issued by the Kerala Catholic Church that the CPI-M's youth wing, the Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI), have attacked Catholic youth groups and educational facilities. Much of the available reportage on the strained relationship between the CPI-M government and the Latin Catholic Church suggests that the animosity is a consequence of the manner in which the CPI-M and the Latin Church leadership have both competed for the loyalties of the Latin Catholic voter; and that while the CPI-M movement has clashed with the leadership of the Catholic Church and with various organisations associated with the Catholic Church, the CPI-M has generally sought to woo the support of the Latin Catholic voter and has sought to encourage Latin Catholics to leave Church organisations for its own social networks (in January 2008 *The Indian Express* reported that: "The Catholic Youth Forum, a body of Communist Christians, has been founded for this cause") (for information of the Catholic Church's historical affinity for the Congress Party in Kerala, see: 'Kerala Latin Catholics sever ties with Congress' 2005, *The Hindu*, 20 June <http://www.hindu.com/2005/06/20/stories/2005062004680700.htm> – Accessed 31 January 2009 – Attachment 52; for information on the struggle over education facilities and youth wing clashes, see: 'Bishop slams CPM after attack by its students' wing on college' 2008, *Gulf Times*, 31 March http://www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/article.asp?cu_no=2&item_no=210183&version=1&template_id=40&parent_id=22 – Accessed 19 December 2008 – Attachment 53; and: 'Catholic forum deplors "attacks"' 2009, *The Hindu*, 14 January <http://www.hindu.com/2009/01/14/stories/2009011453630300.htm> – Accessed 28 January 2009 – Attachment 54; for claims that an outspoken Catholic Bishop was threatened for his opposition to the CPI-M, see 'Death threat promises dismemberment of Indian bishop' 2007, Catholic News Agency, 12 December <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/new.php?n=11249> – Accessed 17 December 2008 – Attachment 55; for reports which note that the CPI-M competes with the Catholic Church leadership for the loyalties of the Catholic voter, see: Rajeev, PI. 2008, 'Holy war in God's Own Country', *Indian Express*, 8 January <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/holy-war-in-gods-own-country/259303/> – Accessed 6 January 2009 – Attachment 56).

A complicated relationship also exists between the CPI-M and the various Muslim parties and political networks which operate in Kerala state politics and India at large. Both the

CPI-M led LDF and the Congress led UDF have included different Muslim parties in their coalition ranks at different times. A *Frontline* report of June 2001 notes that, in the lead up to the 2001 state election: “the UDF wholeheartedly accepted the support of the People’s Democratic Party or PDP (whose leader Abdul Nasser Mahdani is in detention in connection with the Coimbatore blast case) and reaped rich benefits, especially in the southern districts, [while] the LDF supported candidates of the Indian National League (INL) in three constituencies”. In the lead up to Kerala’s May 2006 state elections the *Indo-Asian News Service* reported the support of Mahdani and the PDP had swung back to the CPI-M; and also that the CPI-M had accepted the support of the Indian National League (INL) but “ruled out an alliance with [the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML)], which is considered a party of moderate Muslims, saying it was a ‘communal party’”. The same report observed that: “Kerala’s ruling Congress party [was] bracing for a shock in assembly elections, with at least half a dozen influential Muslim groups throwing their weight behind the Left Democratic Front (LDF)” (for shifting alliances of Muslim Kerala parties in the UDF and LDF coalitions in the successive 2001 and 2006 Kerala state elections, see: Krishnakumar, R. 2001, ‘A record of sorts’, *Frontline*, vol.18: no.11, 8 June <http://www.hinduonnet.com/fline/fl1811/18110240.htm> – Accessed 25 March 2009 – Attachment 57; and: Mathew, L. 2006, ‘Muslims swing to CPI-M in Kerala, Congress worried’, WhereInCity website, source: *Indo-Asian News Service*, 7 April <http://www.whereincity.com/news/16/1575> – Accessed 25 March 2009 – Attachment 58).

There have also been sporadic reports of clashes between CPI-M activists and activists of Muslim parties and networks, such as the National Development Fund (NDF) network (a constituent of the larger militant Islamist umbrella group known as the Popular Front of India (PFI)) and the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML). For example, in September 2008 *Indian Express* reported that “In Kerala, the NDF – a key constituent of the PFI – [had] been involved in political clashes with the CPI(M) and RSS”. In January 2008 *The Hindu* reported on clashes between CPI-M and IUML workers in the Kerala locale of Kanhangad. A February 2006 report in *The Statesman* relates that IUML and CPI-M activists “allegedly threw stones at each other and ransacked shops” in the Kannur district. And in September 2005 *The Hindu* reported that: “Nine persons were injured when clashes broken out between the activists of the CPI(M) and Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) at Ayencheri” (Philip, S. 2008, ‘Fundamentalist Muslim outfit in Kerala plans a pan-Indian political avatar’, *Indian Express*, 27 September <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/Fundamentalist-Muslim-outfit-in-Kerala-plans-a-pan-Indian-political-avatar/366323> – Accessed 25 March 2009 – Attachment 60; ‘8 hurt in clash between CPI(M), IUML workers’ 2008, *The Hindu*, 8 January <http://www.hindu.com/2008/01/08/stories/2008010854790500.htm> – Accessed 3 April 2009 – Attachment 61; ‘The Statesman (India): India Briefs’ 2006, *The Statesman*, 27 February – Attachment 62; ‘Nine persons injured in clashes at Ayencheri’ 2005, *The Hindu*, 30 September – Attachment 63).

List of Sources Consulted

Internet Sources:

<http://www.google.com>

Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)

BACIS (DIAC Country Information database)

REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)

ISYS (RRT Research & Information database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)

RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments

1. Roy, A. 2008, 'Kerala deserves much better', *DNA News*, 24 October.
2. Reynolds, D. 2004, 'Little Cash, Lots of Riches', *Yes Magazine*, Summer
<http://www.yesmagazine.org/article.asp?ID=871> – Accessed 31 January 2009.
3. Raine, P. 2003, 'A different image', *Frontline*, vol.20: no.26, 26 April / 9 May
<http://www.hindu.com/fline/fl2009/stories/20030509000106600.htm> – Accessed 28 March 2009.
4. George, S. 2007, 'Chill, cakes and carols...Kerala peps up for Christmas', *Hindustan Times*, 22 December
<http://www.hindustantimes.com/storypage/Print.aspx?Id=f248dd19-7e01-462d-a74c-00ddb3727d6f> – Accessed 31 January 2009.
5. 'Mourning for some, celebration for others' 2006, *IndiaBlitz.com*, 14 April
<http://www.indiablitz.com/63747/Mourning-for-some-celebration-for-others.htm> – Accessed 31 January 2009.
6. 'Christmas brings back cheer to market' 2008, *The Hindu*, 27 December
<http://www.hindu.com/2008/12/27/stories/2008122756321500.htm> – Accessed 31 January 2009.
7. 'Catholic Church celebrates Alphonsa's canonisation' 2008, *The Hindu*, 13 October
<http://www.hindu.com/2008/10/13/stories/2008101356541300.htm> – Accessed 27 January 2009.
8. '150 houses gutted, several injured in clash' 2005, *The Hindu*, 27 February
<http://www.hindu.com/2005/02/28/stories/2005022803600701.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2009.
9. 'Police suspect hand of 30-member gang' 2005, *The Hindu*, 28 February
<http://www.hindu.com/2005/03/01/stories/2005030115560300.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2009.

10. 'Poovar riot case: EMS Colony resident arrested' 2005, *The Hindu*, 12 April
<http://www.hindu.com/2005/04/12/stories/2005041217450300.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2009.
11. 'Poovar violence: one arrested' 2005, *The Hindu*, 3 March
<http://www.hindu.com/2005/03/03/stories/2005030317450300.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2009.
12. 'Parishioners block road in Poovar' 2005, *The Hindu*, 4 March
<http://www.hindu.com/2005/03/04/stories/2005030417890300.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2009.
13. 'Uneasy calm at Poovar' 2005, *The Hindu*, 2 March
<http://www.hindu.com/2005/03/02/stories/2005030217140300.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2009.
14. 'Peace panel to be constituted at Poovar' 2005, *The Hindu*, 8 March
<http://www.hindu.com/2005/03/08/stories/2005030814380300.htm> – Accessed 1 April 2009.
15. 'Chandy visits Poovar' 2005, *The Hindu*, 5 March
<http://www.hindu.com/2005/03/05/stories/2005030517220300.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2009.
16. 'Concern over use of explosives for fishing' 2006, *The Hindu*, 16 April
<http://www.hindu.com/2006/04/16/stories/2006041619810300.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2009.
17. '12 hurt in clash at Poovar' 2004, *The Hindu*, 17 July
<http://www.hindu.com/2004/07/17/stories/2004071714090300.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2009.
18. 'Setback for LDF in bypolls' 2008, *The Hindu*, 20 August
<http://www.hindu.com/2008/08/20/stories/2008082058800300.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2009.
19. 'Clash victims to get new houses' 2005, *The Hindu*, 2 March
<http://www.hindu.com/2005/03/02/stories/2005030210660300.htm> – Accessed 1 April 2009.
20. 'Parishioners seek probe' 2005, *The Hindu*, 4 March
<http://www.hindu.com/2005/03/05/stories/2005030517180300.htm> – Accessed 1 April 2009.
21. 'Achuthanandan seeks stern action' 2005, *The Hindu*, 1 March
<http://www.hindu.com/2005/03/01/stories/2005030115500300.htm> – Accessed 1 April 2009.
22. 'Trial on Vizhinjam riots begins' 2008, *The Hindu*, 8 August
<http://www.hindu.com/2008/08/08/stories/2008080860370300.htm> – Accessed 18 December 2008.

23. 'Vizhinjam clashes: 83 acquitted' 2008, *The Hindu*, 30 November <http://www.thehindu.com/2008/11/30/stories/2008113060370300.htm> – Accessed 18 December 2008.
24. Chekkutty, N.P. 2006, 'The dark side of the Kerala model of development', *InfoChange*, July <http://infochangeindia.org/200608275537/Health/Features/The-dark-side-of-the-Kerala-model-of-development.html> – Accessed 2 April 2009.
25. 'Dispute over use of land sparked Vizhinjam riots: Commission' 2000, *The Hindu*, 19 July <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/2000/07/19/stories/0419404o.htm> – Accessed 2 April 2009.
26. Radhakrishnan, M.G. 1998, 'Battle For The South', *India Today*, 2 March <http://www.india-today.com/itoday/02031998/p98south.html> – Accessed 2 April 2009.
27. 'Life on the edge' 1993, *New Internationalist*, no.241, March <http://www.newint.org/issue241/life.htm> – Accessed 2 April 2009.
28. Chekkutty, N.P. 2006, 'Fishing communities: the economics of impoverishment', *InfoChange*, August <http://infochangeindia.org/200608315538/Human-Rights/Features/Fishing-communities-the-economics-of-impoverishment.html> – Accessed 2 April 2009.
29. 'Pastor attacked, prayer hall burned' 2005, All India Christian Council website, 1 April <http://indianchristians.in/news/content/view/156/45/> – Accessed 29 January 2009.
30. Hendon, D.W.; Lynn, N.R. 2005, 'Notes on Church-State Affairs', *Journal of Church & State*, vol.47: no.3, 1 July.
31. US Department of State 2005, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2005 – India*, 8 November.
32. Panikkar, K.N. 2003, 'Communalising Kerala', *The Hindu*, 13 May <http://www.thehindujobs.com/thehindu/2003/05/13/stories/2003051301111000.htm> – Accessed 27 June 2007.
33. Krishnakumar, R. 2004, 'The spread in the South', *Frontline*, Vol 21: Issue 06, March 13 – March 26 <http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl2106/stories/20040326004900900.htm> – Accessed 6 January 2005.
34. Iype, G. 2006, 'Marad: How politicians fanned a communal riot', *Rediff News*, 28 September <http://in.rediff.com/news/2006/sep/28gi.htm> – Accessed 2 April 2009.
35. Krishnakumar, R. 2009, 'Verdict on Marad violence', *Frontline*, vol.26: no.3, 31 January / 13 February <http://www.hinduonnet.com/fline/fl2603/stories/20090213260310400.htm> – Accessed 2 April 2009.

36. 'Two persons killed in clash' 2003, *The Hindu*, 20 April
<http://www.thehindu.com/2003/04/21/stories/2003042107700300.htm> – Accessed 2 April 2009.
37. 'Tense situation at Anchuthengu' 2002, *The Hindu*, 11 March
<http://www.thehindu.com/2002/03/11/stories/2002031105170300.htm> – Accessed 2 April 2009.
38. Shajahan, K. M. 1993, 'Feud over fishing starts a fire in Kerala village', Indian Environmental Portal website, source: *Down to Earth*, 30 January
<http://www.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/node/15497> – Accessed 3 April 2009.
39. Muraleedharan, N. 2006, '2006: Political conflicts in Kerala', *Rediff.com*, 20 December
<http://in.rediff.com/news/2006/dec/20year.htm> – Accessed 6 July 2007.
40. Lype, George 2006, 'Kerala: Where change is static', *Rediff.com*, 11 May
<http://in.rediff.com/election/2006/may/11gi.htm> – Accessed 6 July 2007.
41. Election Commission of India 2006, *Statistical Report on General Election, 2006 to the Legislative Assembly of Kerala*, Election Commission of India website
http://www.eci.gov.in/StatisticalReports/SE_2006/StatReport_KL_2006.pdf – Accessed 20 October 2008.
42. Iype, G. 2006, 'Kerala's political jigsaw, unravelled', *Rediff.com*, 10 April
<http://www.rediff.com/election/2006/apr/10pkerala.htm> – Accessed 20 October 2008.
43. 'Left pulls out, will meet President Patil on Wednesday' 2008, *Express India*, 8 July
<http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/Left-pulls-out-will-meet-President-Patil-on-Wednesday/332876/> – Accessed 20 October 2008.
44. RRT Research & Information 2009, *Research Response IND34032*, 30 January.
45. Mathew, R. 2003, 'Communal situation can go out of hand', *The Hindu*, 9 May
<http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/2003/05/09/stories/2003050904560400.htm> – Accessed 3 April 2009.
46. Sarkar, A. & Babu, R. 2008, 'Bengal, Kerala units fear losing 10 LS seats each' 2008, *Hindustan Times*, 27 July
<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/StoryPage.aspx?id=c1f09790-5c36-4cc2-a72a-83e774fe17bd> – Accessed 3 April 2009.
47. 'Exit polls predict clear majority for LDF' 2006, *The Hindu*, 4 May
<http://www.hindu.com/2006/05/04/stories/2006050413040400.htm> – Accessed 3 April 2009.
48. Saeed, A. 2006, 'Emergent Electoral Trends in Indian Politics: Role of the Left and Muslim Votebanks', Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad website, *Strategic Studies*, vol.26, Winter, no.4
http://www.issi.org.pk/journal/2006_files/no_4/article/a1.htm – Accessed 5 October 2007.

49. 'NCM team for Karnataka' 2009, *The Hindu*, 17 September
<http://www.hindu.com/2008/09/17/stories/2008091761051600.htm> – Accessed 31 January 2009.
50. '3 churches attacked in Karnataka' 2008, *Times of India*, 22 September
http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/India/3_churches_attacked_in_Karnataka_/rssarticleshow/3510970.cms – Accessed 30 January 2009.
51. '60 dead in Indian anti-Christian clashes' 2008, *The Age*, 18 October
<http://news.theage.com.au/world/60-dead-in-indian-antichristian-clashes-20081018-53e2.html> – Accessed 30 January 2009.
52. 'Kerala Latin Catholics sever ties with Congress' 2005, *The Hindu*, 20 June
<http://www.hindu.com/2005/06/20/stories/2005062004680700.htm> – Accessed 31 January 2009.
53. 'Bishop slams CPM after attack by its students' wing on college' 2008, *Gulf Times*, 31 March
http://www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/article.asp?cu_no=2&item_no=210183&version=1&template_id=40&parent_id=22 – Accessed 19 December 2008.
54. 'Catholic forum deplores "attacks"' 2009, *The Hindu*, 14 January
<http://www.hindu.com/2009/01/14/stories/2009011453630300.htm> – Accessed 28 January 2009.
55. 'Death threat promises dismemberment of Indian bishop' 2007, Catholic News Agency, 12 December
<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/new.php?n=11249> – Accessed 17 December 2008.
56. Rajeev, P.I. 2008, 'Holy war in God's Own Country', *Indian Express*, 8 January
<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/holy-war-in-gods-own-country/259303/> – Accessed 6 January 2009.
57. Krishnakumar, R. 2001, 'A record of sorts', *Frontline*, vol.18: no.11, 8 June
<http://www.hinduonnet.com/fline/fl1811/18110240.htm> – Accessed 25 March 2009.
58. Mathew, L. 2006, 'Muslims swing to CPI-M in Kerala, Congress worried', WhereInCity website, source: *Indo-Asian News Service*, 7 April
<http://www.whereincity.com/news/16/1575> – Accessed 25 March 2009.
59. Krishnakumar, R. 2004, 'A minority power crisis', *Frontline*, Vol 21: Issue 10, May 08 – 21
<http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl2110/stories/20040521004512000.htm> – Accessed 6 January 2004.
60. Philip, S. 2008, 'Fundamentalist Muslim outfit in Kerala plans a pan-Indian political avatar', *Indian Express*, 27 September
<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/Fundamentalist-Muslim-outfit-in-Kerala-plans-a-pan-Indian-political-avatar/366323> – Accessed 25 March 2009.
61. <http://www.hindu.com/2008/01/08/stories/2008010854790500.htm> – Accessed 3 April 2009.

62. 'The Statesman (India): India Briefs' 2006, *The Statesman*, 27 February.
63. 'Nine persons injured in clashes at Ayencheri' 2005, *The Hindu*, 30 September.