

**CONFLICT OVER ENVIRONMENT AND CRISIS:
MAN AND NATURE IN IDUKKI**

*A dissertation submitted
to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award
of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in History*

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Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled “**CONFLICT OVER ENVIRONMENT AND CRISIS: MAN AND NATURE IN IDUKKI**” is a bonafide record of the project work done by Nimmy Joseph, M. A History Semester **IV** (2019-2021) Pavanatma College, Murickassery, Idukki, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in History from Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam.

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DECLARATION

I Nimmy Joseph, do here by declare that the project entitled **“CONFLICT OVER ENVIRONMENT AND CRISIS: MAN AND NATURE IN IDUKKI”** is a bonafide record of the project work done by me under the supervision of Mr. Jijo Jayaraj, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Pavanatma College, Murickassery, Idukki and that it has not been submitted earlier to any other university/institution for the award of any Degree or Diploma.

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GLOSSARY

Coffeeia etymologically	- is an Arabic term in which the term coffee Originated
Glory lily	- glorious superb
Hibiscus	- Is a genus of flowering plants which means the shoe flower
Kino tree	- a large deciduous tree
Neelakurinji	- it is a Shrub that is found in the shola forests of Western Ghats In Kerala
Pattom	- land leasing system
Tectonic Grandis	- scientific name of teak

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

AIADMK	-	All India Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
BJP	-	Bharatiya Janata Party
CESS	-	Centre for Earth Sciences Study
CM	-	Chief minister
CPI	-	Communist party of India
CPI (M)	-	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
CSMRS	-	Central Soil and Material Research Station
CWC	-	Central Water Commission
CWPRS	-	Central Water and Power Research Station
DMK	-	Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
EFL	-	Environmentally Fragile Land
ESA	-	Ecologically Sensitive Area
ESZ	-	Ecologically Sensitive Zones
FRL	-	Full Reservoir Level
GOI	-	Government of India
HLWG	-	High Level Working Group
KDSA	-	Kerala's Dam Safety Authority
KFD	-	Kerala Forest Department
KID	-	Kerala Irrigation Department

KIFBI	-	Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board
LDF	-	Left Democratic Front
MB	-	Member of Parliament
MLA	-	Member of Legislative Assembly
MoEF	-	Ministry of Environment and Forest
MOWR	-	Ministry of Water Resources
PM	-	Prime minister
UDF	-	United Democratic Front
VACB	-	Vigilance and Anti- Corruption Bureau
WGEA	-	Western Ghats Ecology Authority
WGEEP	-	Western Ghats Ecological Expert Panel

INTRODUCTION

Idukki District is a densely forest Mountain region in the south Indian state of Kerala. The Idukki District is founded in 1972 January 26 and less capital is painavu. Idukki has a bit of history attached to it too. The name Idukki is derived “Idukku” which means “Narrow”. The geography of Idukki categorized into two, Midland and High range. In 1972 Idukki formed on the basis of geographical features. By Historical literacy sources they termed “High range” mention the symbol of silence. Comparatively better climate in Idukki, because which is situated 5,061sq.km. Idukki is one of the last loksabha constituencies in the state. Until then the territories of present day Idukki district were part of other loksabha constituencies. The loksabha elections were held in the country in late 1951 and early 1952. Dual constituency was elected from the constituencies with one in the general seat and another in the reserved seat. Devikulam remained a two member constituency in the two elections held after the birth of united Kerala. The united Kerala was born on November 1, 1956.

This study goes on about the Political environmental history of Idukki. How was the election in Idukki, what are the characteristics of Idukki related to elections, election history, geography of the district, environmental problems, how it affected to the election, analysis of the environmental problems, difference between old voting system and new voting system etc are studied to this dissertation. The District is marked by undulating hills and valleys. The High range varies in altitude from 2500 ft. The Higher peak in Kerala Anamudi is in the District. The Western Ghats also protects and prevents the climate heritage of Idukki, Periyar, and Thodupuzhayar were three important rivers of Idukki District. The whole history of Idukki has been related to its geography. When the word “History” comes to Idukki it becomes silent. Idukki is known for its natures and surroundings. Idukki being the second largest district in Kerala. On September 4th 1947 the Maharaja of Travancore issued a declaration to elect constituent assembly in Travancore as a prelude to the introduction of adult franchise. The first general election was held in Idukki on 1952 .

United Kerala was born on November 1, 1956. With this land belonging to the district from Thiruvananthapuram to kasargod became the state of Kerala. The Kerala legislative assembly election of 1957 was the first legislative assembly election in the

Indian state of Kerala. The first election after the formation of Idukki district was held in 1977. During the first election, the present day Idukki district is divided into two constituencies. When the new Idukki constituency formed the Karimannur disappeared. The Devikulam constituency was part of the Kottayam district and the Thodupuzha constituency was part of the Ernakulum district of these Devikulam is dual constituency.

The reason that the development of High range has reached so far is because of politics and popular opinion. Congress, CPM, CPI, Different Kerala Congress, BJP, Muslim League, Aam Aadmi party, DMK, ADMK were active in Idukki. The first legislative Assembly elections were held on April 5 1957. In 1957 president rule ended, thus the communist party came to power. E M S Namboodiripad came to power as the chief minister. The time period taken as 1952 – 2014, because gadgil kastoori rangar report affected in 2014s election. Before the formation of the district, political parties were active in various parts of the state. The CPI (M) initially worked in idukki as part of the Kottayam district committee. T K Ramakrishnan was in charge of first. Before the formation of the district, the congress had various taluk committees. K.K Devisa was the district secretary of the communist party of India when the district was formed. The B J P district unit was formed in 1980. Rama Michael was the first president.

The formation of the district, the politics of the district, important parties, political organizations are detaily discussed through the chapter. Through the first chapter we can understand that politics is very strong in this district with the support of common people. It has understood how political parties influenced peoples in high range. Every political party's growth on the support of common people. From the formation of district there is no strong politics in this area. But today all political parties are more active and strong in high range. This second chapter mainly focuses on how environmental issues affect political level. This is a description of the environmental issues that have taken at the political level during the period from the formation of the district to 2014. Because the reason is the major environmental problem that appended high range in this year. It also explains how environmental issues affected politics in this region. Maniyangadan forest environmental issues, Madhav gadgil Kasturirangan report, Mullaperiyar dam issues, Munnar – Devikulam issues and Anakkara airport issues are handled in this chapter. All of these problems include in the environmental issues, what changes have been created at the political level and how people have been able to do so. It describes the causes of each environmental problem, its important commissions, intervention of government and the

historical background of environmental threats. The third chapter discussed about Analysis or discourse of environmental issue. In this chapter mainly looked the analysis of each environmental issue. Public, government and political parties has different approaches and opinion about the all environment issue. Some agencies supported and some has dissuported on the issues. All have different opinion about the issues. Mainly in this chapter take five environmental issues.

Area of Study

Since the election is taken as the matter of subject. The political History is followed. The area was before known as the High Ranges of Travancore. The study concentrates on the Historical inquiry of political history of Idukki. The study tries to understand the social, political, economic and environmental factors of election Politics in Idukki.

Objectives

- To study the ecological background of Idukki.
- To study the environmental problems faced by the District.
- To understand the different environmental movements arose in the district.
- To study the public opinion that has taken place in the environmental issues.
- To analyze the politics of the issues and the end result.

Scope of the Study

The project Entitled with ‘Conflict Over Environment and Crisis: Man and Nature in Idukki’ deals with the environmental history of the district. No studies have been conducted on the topic. The topic is relevant and live in the academic sphere. The study helps to identify political history of election in idukki and changes in election. The first investigation of the research to understand the political background of election in Idukki. This project helps to study about how the environmental issues influenced the elections.

Review of Sources

For the study this works both primary and secondary sources were used.

‘Digital Archive or Kerala Legislative Assembly Proceedings’ it is a technical report version 4.4. This record jointly prepared by C.S Sathikumar, he is a chief librarian of Kerala legislative secretariat and centre for informatics research and development. It published on March 2007. The contents of this record are introduction historical perspective, Digital Archive/ library: hardware/ software, digital archiving process, consulting from CIRD work specification, time frame, phasing of the projects, implementing mechanism financial terms, related documents etc. in this record the introduction part consisting of legislative assembly proceedings, law and regulation. In this records mentioned Kerala legislative councils and Assemblies from the year 1888 to 2011, legislative records, types of legislative documents, parliament proceedings etc are discussed. This sources is the important primary sources related to election.

The text **Western Ghats on Gadgil Kasturirangan** written by **P. Krishnaprasad**. This text mainly deals with environmental problems of Western Ghats. Western Ghats is the part of Kerala. He mention the consciousness that preservation of nature and environmental is essential for the existence of human life is getting strengthening day by day the world over. He only mentioned the reports of the gadgil Kasturirangan environmental issues. Krishnaprasad did not mention the problems of the peasants.

A. J. Thatheyus authored the text **Inter - State Dispute over Water and Safety in India: The Mullaperiyar Dam**. It published at the year of 2013. In this text mention the conflict between the two southern most states of India, Kerala and Tamil Nadu over Mullaperiyar dam is for safety and water. I take only the conflict problem of the dam. The main drawbacks of this work are he not mentioned the background of the Mullaperiyar dam and population the people.

Another one is **Munnar Rekhakal** written by **T. Damu**. In this work only take the background of Munnar. It publishes at the year 2010. It published by D. C books. Munnar is a tourist place it attracted for others. He also mentioned the illegal encroachments and illegal construction of Munnar. Munnar Devikulam facing is facing issues of encroachments, illegal construction, unscientific tourism flow and contamination of river water.

Next one is **Giriparvam** this work written by **D Babu Paul**. In this the work detaily mentioned on Western Ghats and the main environmental problems. Western Ghats mainly parts of the six states. He mainly discussed to protect the Western Ghats. People and the higher authority destroyed the environment. It also mentions the political influence on each

environmental problem. The main negative of his work he miss some important environmental problems.

Sunny Ilanjimmattam published a work is **Lokam Arinja Kumily**. It deals with the background of the Kumily, population, geographical features and the Anakkara Airport issues. It is the major environmental problem in Anakkara. People faced the big problem is Anakkara Airport issues. People depend on their livelihoods is to the part of Environment. In Kumily the Airport come people and environmental faced lot of problems especially the pollution problem. At the concluding part of this work he detaily mentioned the problems of Anakkara.

The text **Idukki Desham Charithram Samskaram** written by **Manoj Mathirappally**. He is one of the famous historians in Idukki. The first publication of this book was December 2017 published by Geo books at Kattappana. This book gives large information about the history of idukki. It deals with pre-historic period, tribal culture of idukki, beginning and developments of migration, politics, election and popular strikes Periyar river culture and tourism in idukki were also detaily discussed in this book. In this book the 7th chapter discussed election history of Kerala and idukki. It deals with major election, peasant strikes, different parties and leaders also mentioned. But only few things are discussed related to the election. The author refers prominent historian works, government records and census reports to write this book. The author Manoj Mathirappally used in simple and attractive language to describe the history of idukki. His other famous texts are ‘Idukki Desham Charithram Samskaram’, ‘charithravum charithrathithavum’ and Idukki: Chithrarekhakal Samskaram. Totally he covered all the areas of idukki history in his text.

Another dependable book relating to election is **Malanadinte Ithihasam** written by **Mathew Mannarakam**. He is one of the famous historians in idukki. The first publication of this text was July 30, 2019 published by Turn books at Kottayam. This text discussed cultural history of idukki ,place on history, chera empire, tribal’s, different religions, early social life, contributions of Christians for education, migration tourism, colonization scheme, construction of roads and developments of high range, different cultivation etc are detaily mentioned. In the 30th chapter of third text contain Kerala and election. This chapter includes important political leaders and their roles in election, origin of political parties, language of leaders; legislative assembly election, Emergency period,

chief ministers in Kerala and their roles etc are discussed. He used very simple language. Every person has easily understanding what he presented his book. But he does not mentioned roles women in election. All over he used all the points about idukki and simply completed his work.

Next text is **Sahathriyilninnu Madakayathra Idukki Mannum Manushanum** by **K.T. Rajeev**. The first edition published on August 2007. This text mentioned the local history of idukki. We cannot easily understand history of one place. This text refers people's social life of idukki from pre historic period to modern period. He collected many sources from different areas. Only few details he writing about history of election and he mentioned only some pages how elections in idukki and Kerala. Pre historic to monarchical administration in high range, adhivasi tribal society, Tamil life of desert, cardamom cultivation, migration, Pattom colony and poverty strikes, origin of idukki district etc are the index of this text book. This text is the best example of local history in Idukki. The last page of text includes a table. The table shows a list of candidates name and results in Thiruvithamkoor - Kochi legislative assembly in 1951. He used very simple language and simple style of writing.

Nixon and Baby the two authors of the work **Idukki the Heaven of Kerala**, it published by N and B Publication at Kambilikandam in the year of 2005. It book mentioned the geographical features of the district. He mentioned Idukki as god's own district. Different varieties of flora and fauna in Idukki. Many of the specialties the authors discussed in this text. Both are the local historians in the district.

Next source is 'Aruthyillatha Adhivasi Samarangal' it is journal Mashithandu by Stalin V.K Stalin published in 2014 march at Kattappana. This journal 20 to 26 page refers to tribal strikes. This strikes mainly against congress ministry of the government. The reason of this strike the government not agrees to give land to the tribal's. The author mentioned tribal strikes against congress government in his journal. But he does not mentioned history of election in their journal. Very understanding language he used in his journal.

Hypothesis

The environment in Idukki is a debatable topic from the time of the peasant migrations from the low ranges of Kerala. Idukki has got a varied and rich biota different

from that of the other districts. The presence of the Western Ghats and the hill ranges, monsoons, slopes etc., the district has been attractive to the tourists as well as the peasants. This peculiar environment has created conflicts between the state, people and environment. What is the real politics behind the issues is the conflict between the interests. It is not the environmental interest but personal interest or better can be termed as the vote bank politics. The end result of these are the effects on peoples life and property. Recent environmental disasters including the Pettymudi and heavy landslides occurred in the different parts of the district during 2018 flood is a point of caution.

Research Questions

In this project, the following questions are attempted to answer.

- What is the significance of environment in Idukki?
- What was the role of different Government towards environmental problems?
- How the environment affect in economy and the peoples life?
- What was the role of local agitations? How much it was successful?
- What changes did the environmental issues made in the election?

Methodology

This dissertation is going to use Historical Narrative Methodology. The primary sources including Legislative Assembly Proceedings, voters list, census Reports, Gazetteers, District Handbook etc along with oral history are going to be used Apart from the primary sources, secondary Literature including books, Articles, Journals, newspaper reports will be extensively used. Oral history because there are large memory regarding election and its procedures among the people and this will give as the emotionalized experienced mental history on the elections.

Summary of Chapters

The present study is a detailed research on the topic Conflict over environmental and Crisis: Man and Nature in Idukki. The entire research works will run into three core chapters along with an introduction and conclusion. The introduction of the present study will introduces the research problem will discuss the methodology used for the study.

The first chapter entitled *Idukki: the Eco Political Setting* will discuss the ecological background of Idukki. This chapter includes Geography of Idukki, background of the politics and the formation of the state will be studied in detail.

The second chapter entitled *A Glance on the Environmental Issues* will discuss the narration of environmental issues in Idukki district. There are five main Environmental problems are take to study on this research. It is the narration model of all environmental problems. Background of the each problems and different committees appointed by the government are discussed in the chapter.

The third chapter is entitled as *Environmental Struggles in Idukki: An Overview* will discuss the different opinions about the environmental issues. It also tells as the different opinions such as government, public and religious opinions.

The dissertation ends with a separate conclusion chapter were concluding.

Limitation of the Study

The main limitations faced during the research are inavailability of sources relating to the subject. Due to corona the collection of information was not fulfilled. But however these problems will be solved through the further research in the higher studies.

CHAPTER – I

IDUKKI: THE ECO-POLITICAL SETTING

The first chapter of this project deals with the political setting of the district. There are many hill stations that come under Idukki district and it is very rich place in flora. The hill other large species of floras. Idukki is especially known for its floras as they are also a major part of tourist attractions. Half of the area is fully covered by the tea estates and vegetation. There is unmatched verity of floras and it is a lack of different flowers plants. There are more than 150 verities of flower plants among which some of the major flowers are like Dahlia, sun flower, marigold, petunia, Silesia, dianthus, roses, impatiens, perennial, phlox, verbena, hibiscus, portwala etc.¹ the district is other numbers of attractions among which wildlife sanctuary hill stations dams, mountain treks and spice plantations Idukki begins the second largest district it holds the rich variety of flora and faunas.² It is the largest district of Kerala covering an area of 4,497 sq. km.³ Idukki one of the 14 districts of Kerala state India, created on 26 January 1972. At that time headquarters was at Kottayam in June 1976 it was moved to Painavu. Idukki which lies amid the Western Ghats of Kerala. The environmental problems are highly motivated in politics, because the reason is political environment can change the policies and actions of the prevailing government at every federal to local level. Some environmental issues benefit them at the political level. It has brought about positive changes in their political election. Environment and politics are closely connected. The environmental threats are highly influenced in political level

Addressed in the god's own country, Idukki is known for its rich nature and surroundings. It is one of the top hill destination and a perfect place to experience the true colors of the verdant greenery. Idukki is also known as the home to nature. The place others the perfect ambiance to the nature and captivates more than thousands of tourists through the week end. It is a promoting destination in Kerala tourism.⁴ Kerala known as the paradise to the south never fails in presenting the attraction among which Idukki remains in

¹ T. K Velupillai, *The Travancore State Manuel- Administration Vol. IV, Kerala Gazetteers Department*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1996, p. 24

² Ibid., p. 15

³ Ibid., p. 7

⁴ Nixon and Baby, *Idukki the Heaven of Kerala*, N and B Publication Kambilikandam, 2005, p. 10

one. All these species are seasonal flowers and important attraction of Idukki. Apart from the flowers it also offers a gigantic gallery of vegetation. There are many parks for preserving the rich variety and are well developed Idukki covers many hill stations which also offer various types of floras. The hill station Munnar offers the world famous flower called Neelakurinji which blooms every 12 years.⁵ The flora of Chinnar sanctuary includes a stunning variety of flowering plants numbering up to 965 species. Rare medicinal plants, many of them endemic to the Western Ghats, can also be found in the sanctuary. The vegetation of the sanctuary falls under six categories. They are southern tropical thorn forest, southern dry mixed deciduous forest, southern moist mixed deciduous forest, tropical riparian fringing forest, southern mountain wet temperate forest and southern mountain wet grassland.⁶ The predominant vegetation in dry deciduous forest is followed by scrub forest. Together they constitute about half of the total area which is in the low altitude areas. The riparian fringing forest is found on the hill folds and shoal forest constitutes a small portion. The vegetation in the Periyar tiger reserve includes evergreen, semi evergreen and moist –deciduous forests, grasslands, an aquatic eco-system and eucalyptus groves. There are 1966 varieties of flowering plants including angiosperms. Both dicots and monocots have been included in this count, there are about 171 grass species and 140 species of orchids.⁷

United Kerala was born on November 1 1956. With this land belonging to the district from Thiruvananthapuram to Kasargod became the state of Kerala. On September 4 1947 the Maharaja of Travancore issued a declaration to elect constituent assembly in Travancore as a prelude to the introduction of adult franchise. The first election was held in February 1948. The Kerala legislative assembly election of 1957 was the first legislative assembly election in the Indian state of Kerala. On November 1, Thovala, Agastheeswaram, Kalkulam, Vilavankodu taluk of Thiruvananthapuram district were merged with Thiruvananthapuram which was excluded from Paliyur half of the Chendur taluk in Kollam district came into existence. Mahe French occupied territory within the state. The final decision was based on several changes to the state reorganization recommendation. Rajapramukh status that appointed P. S. Rao as Governor and retained the presidency was

⁵ <https://Idukki.nic.in/history>, accessed on 20/9/2018

⁶ Report of the Committee of Parliament on Official languages, government of India, New Delhi, 1958, p. 678

⁷ T. Rajesh, *Idukki Charithrarekhakal*, e-Lion Books, Kattappana, 2008., p. 10

removed from office on November 1 1956.⁸ When Kerala was formed, the state was under president's rule. The new state went to the polls for the first time in March 1957. There were 126 Assembly 16 parliamentary seats. The Communist Party of India emerged as the single largest party in the Assembly with 60 seats. Sri. E.M.S. Namboodiripad formed an 11 member ministry on April 5, 1957 with the support of some independents.

Idukki one of the 14 districts of Kerala state India, created on 26 January 1972. The first election after the formation of Idukki district was held in 1977. During the first election, the present day Idukki district is divided into two constituencies. When the new Idukki constituency formed the Karimannur disappeared. The Devikulam constituency was part of the Kottayam district and the Thodupuzha constituency was part of the Ernakulum district of these Devikulam is dual constituency. At that time headquarters was at Kottayam in June 1976 it was moved to Painavu. The reason that the development of High range has reached so far is because of politics and popular opinion. Congress, CPM, CPI, Different Kerala Congress, BJP, Muslim League, Aam Aadmi party, DMK, AIADMK were active in Idukki.

In this chapter mainly deals for, geo settings and politics of the district. It's we know how politics is more powerful high range. Many of the political parties were formed on the support of public. It examines how environment is benefited in politics and its background

Historical Background of the District

Idukki one of the 14 districts of Kerala state India, created on 26 January 1972. At that time headquarters was at Kottayam in June 1976 it was moved to Painavu. Idukki which lies in the Western Ghats of Kerala. Idukki is the second largest district in area but has the lowest population density Idukki has a vast forest reserve area; more than a half of the district is covered by forests. The urban areas are densely populated whereas villages are sparsely popular Idukki is also known as the spice garden of Kerala density Idukki has a

⁸ Dr. Joy Balan Vlachangara, *Kerala Samsthana Roopikaranam(mal)*, Chintha Publishers, Thiruvananthapuram, 2018, p. 239

vast forest reserve area; more than a half of the district is covered by forests.⁹ More than 350 medicinal plants, including trees shrubs and herbs, have been identified at the Periyar tiger reserve, mainly in the evergreen and moist deciduous forest. Plants belonging to the family of fabaceae and euphorbiaceae are the major ones among them. Glory lily (glorious superb) and Kino tree (pterocarpus marsupium) are two plants with medicinal value found here. Medicinal plants and their natural habitat are under threat of over exploitation than ever before.¹⁰ Indian herbal industry has an annual turnover of US \$ 1 billion. Several tones of medicinal plants are harvested every year from about 165000 ha forest. Kerala is one of India's largest producers of traditional medicines. There is an unprecedented sprout of manufacturing units of Ayurveda products in Kerala and about 1700 manufacturing units are registered with government. The Periyar tiger reserve is surrounded by tea, cardamom, pepper and coffee plantations. The arresting green of the plantation adds considerable charm to the region.¹¹

The ecologically important grass lands which are facing various kinds of threat could be effectively countered and there is enough provision for it in the Madhav gadgil committee report categories the entire region into three zones based on the topographical features, cultivation, soil condition and its biodiversity spread. The grassland forest and cultivated and populated areas are all given due importance while specifically underlining the natural phenomena like earth quake could burst and climatic changes for a long term plan. As for Idukki, the western Ghats played a major role as on the boarding the rain shadow area is spreading and based on the ecological sensitivity, the report has plan for rejuvenation of the green cover to a scientific conservation approach on the western Ghats he said.¹² Even as the massive flowering of Neelakurinji is stated near year vast area of grassland where the plants grow were found destroyed at Jaldapara in Kottakamboor in the Western Ghats in Munnar local people said they had noticed smoke emanating from the area nearly a month ago. The area comes under the Kurinji national park for which the final

⁹ A Sreedharamenon, *District Census Handbook Idukki*, Directorate of Census Operation Kerala, 2011, p. 22

¹⁰ Manoj Mathirappally, *Idukki: Charithravum Charithrathithavum* (Mal), Kazhcha Books, Kattappana, 2001, p. 92

¹¹ Ibid., p.93

¹² A Sreedharamenon, op. cit., p. 24

notification on awaited.¹³ About 300 acres of grasslands with Neelakurinji were destroyed in the fire. It is alleged that land mafia that has encroached upon the government land and cultivated Grandis there set fire to the grasslands with the aim of keeping the area out of the park when the final notification is issued. The place includes the top wildlife sanctuaries of the god's own country which is Idukki wildlife sanctuary. The sanctuary is a perfect home to different herds of animals like sambas, dears, elephant, bears, bison, cat, wild boars, wild dogs, tiger, wild boars cobra, and many more. There are also many birds sanctuaries which include birds like kingfisher, myna, block bulbil, wood pecker, thrush, peafowl, monkeys etc.¹⁴ Overall, Idukki is a perfect place to watch the rich variety of faunas at their natural habit. These sanctuaries are the best way of preserving the species of animals and birds which also plays a virtual role in Idukki tourism.¹⁵ The Chinnar forests support a diver's variety of mammals, reptiles, birds and butterflies. The star among them is the Grizzled Giant squirrel.¹⁶ A large tree squirrel in Kerala, the Grizzled Giant squirrel is only found in the riparian forest of the Chinnar sanctuary. The rare Manjampati, white bison, a gaur noted for its distinctive ash-gray color is another special inhabitant spotted in the sanctuary.¹⁷ Other important mammals found are the rusty spotted cat, Nilgiri Tahr, Elephant, tiger, leopard, gaur, wild boar, samba, Deer, wild dog, jackal, sloth bear, bison, sambar, and so on.¹⁸

Leopard also live in the sanctuary but don't assume that the tiger is an inhabitant of the sanctuary if you spot some there are visitors from the neighboring forest. Bonnet macaques, elephant, and gaur are also present. White bison has been recently sighted in the Chinnar plains. 28 species of mammals have been found in the sanctuary. Idukki wildlife sanctuary which came into existence in 1976 is located in the Thodupuzha and Udumbanchola taluk in Idukki district. An enchanting place marked with steep mountains and undulating hills and valleys. The world famous Idukki arch dam and the vast increase the importance of the area. Temperature varies from 13degree c to 29 degree c. hottest period is March to April. Forest types include west coast tropical evergreen forest, semi

¹³ K.K. Ramachandran, *Kerala District Gazetteer, State Editor Kerala Gazetteer Trivandrum*, 1986, p. 15

¹⁴ Nixon and Baby, op. cit., p. 13

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ K.K Ramachandran, op. cit., p. 17

¹⁷ Ibid., p.10

¹⁸ Ibid.

evergreen forest, moist deciduous forest, hill shoals and grass lands.¹⁹ Tropical Evergreen Forest usually occurs in areas receiving more than 200 cm of rain fall and having a temperature of 15 to 30 degrees Celsius. They occupy about 7% of the earth's land surface.²⁰ Major tree species are dipterocarpus, palamquium elliptium, calophyllum polyanthus, veronica arboreal, measufarrea, hopea parviflora, tectonic Grandis, dalbergia latifolia, pterocarpus, marsupium etc. The common animals found are elephant, labor giant squirrel, wild dog, porcupine, jackal, India giant squirrel etc.²¹ the tourism has been well developed in Idukki and the place can easily accessible by vehicles. The state is well connected with all the major cities of Indian state like Delhi, Bangalore, Calcutta, Mumbai, Chennai and many more. The nearest rail station to Idukki is Thalasseri station which is about 35 km away from Idukki. The best time to visit Idukki is between the months of October to June. There are several buses running from the different states and cities to Idukki bus stand.

Large number of taxis is available Idukki which you can take on hire and reach up to sanctuary and your desired distinction. If you are looking for an adventurous and nature holidays, then do not hesitate to travel towards Idukki. It is more than your desired destination. More than 200 species of birds nest at Idukki national park located in Kerala south India.²² Quite a few of these birds are migrants and the others are indigenous feathered species. Among the commonly sighted birds at the Idukki national park the ones that merit a mention are the Indian swift let oriental partner, hawk eagle, Eurasian Eagle owl, grey heron, little spider hunter, refocus Babbler, great eared Nightjar, laughing thrush, spotted dove, jungle fowl, fishing Eagle darters, Malabar trogon, white bellied tree pie, Nilgiri flycatcher, broud tailed grass bird, Nilgiri wood pigeon, Nilgiri pipit, Malabar parakeets and other birds.²³

Thattekad Bird Sanctuary also known as the Salim Ali bird sanctuary, after the internationally renowned ornithologist, is one of the richest birds habits on peninsular India spread across 25 sq.km, it is home to over 300 species of birds like the sir Lankan frogmouth, white bellied Tree pie, shama, yellow-browed bulbul, rufous babbler, Malabar

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ A Sreedharamenon, op.cit., p. 25

²¹ Nixon and Baby, op.cit., p. 9

²² Ibid., p. 15

²³ K.K Ramachandran, op. cit., p. 22

parakeet, white bellied blue flycatcher and Malabar grey hornbill. The abundance of greenery makes Idukki an avian paradise over 500 species of birds –both resident and migratory can be found in the lush green tropical forest in Idukki. The high altitude mountain forest and grasslands are home to many of the endemics of the Western Ghats like the Nilgiri wood pigeon, black and orange flycatcher, Nilgiri flycatcher, white-bellied shorting, broad tailed grass birds, yellow throated bulbul and the black eagle. At Munnar you should sight the endemics Nilgiri wood pigeon, Nilgiri pipit, white bellied sorrowing and the broad tailed grass bird.²⁴

A land locked district, Idukki is one of the most nature – rich areas of Kerala .the Idukki wildlife sanctuary here spreads over an area of 105.364 sq. km in the Thodupuzha, Idukki and Udumbanchola taluk of the district situated at an altitude of 450-748 m above sea level, this sanctuary occupies the forest land between the Cheruthoni and Periyar river. There is a scenic lake around the sanctuary, covered by an enchanting canopy of tropical ever-green and deciduous trees and offers boat rides. Elephants, sambar deer's, wild dogs, jungle cat's wild boar etc. are seen here apart from various species of snakes including cobra, viper, kraits and numerous non-poisonous ones. Bulbuls, flycatchers etc., the wildlife here is similar to that of Thekkady. This sanctuary lies adjacent to the world renowned Idukki arch dam.²⁵

It is another wild life sanctuary proclaimed as a national park .It supports the largest population of Nilgiri Tahr in the world .Heavy rain and gushing winds makes the area inaccessible during the monsoon season. The famous Neelakurinji grows here. It has a flowering cycle of 12 years. 26 species of mammals have been recorded in the park including the largest surviving population of Nilgiri Tahr, estimated at above 750 individuals. The other ungulates are gaur, Indian muntjac and sambar deer. Golden jackal, jungle cat, wild dog, dholes, leopard and tiger are the main predators'. Some little – known animals such as Nilgiri langur, stripe –necked marmoset, Indian porcupine, Nilgiri marten, small clawed otter, ruddy mongoose and dusky palm squirrel are also found. Elephants make seasonal visits. Endemic butterflies confined to the shoal grass land ecosystem like the red disk bush brown and plain four wringer among the 101 species in the

²⁴ Ibid., p. 25

²⁵ Manoj Mathirappally, op. cit., p. 95

park.²⁶ April to June is the duration of this season which has pleasant atmosphere due to the large mountains. During March to May temperature ranges from 25 to 30 °.²⁷ People can find pleasant and moderate atmosphere all-round the year winter season in Idukki. Winters are very cold and people wear heavy woolen clothes in these days 15° c it 25°c is the average temperature in winters. So the best time to visit Idukki is all through the year.²⁸

During monsoon this city receives large amount of rainfall. Ambience and atmosphere of the city become amazing which allows you to view its scenic beauty. About 250-400 cm of average rainfall is received by the city annually. The district receives an average annual rainfall of about 5677mm, ranging from less than 1000 (Maryoor, Kanthalloor, Chinnar areas and the areas north east of Anamudi) to around 5000 mm (Peerumedu, Neriya Mangalam etc.). The rainfall increase from east to west. Eastern part of the district lies in the rain shadow region of the Western Ghats. The major rainfall contribution is from south west monsoon from June to September which contributes about 60% of the total annual rainfall. The north east monsoon from October to December contributes 24% of the annual rainfall and the balance during the period January to May.²⁹

Idukki is one of the 14 districts of Kerala state, India created on 26 January 1972. At that time, the district headquarters was at Kottayam. In June 1976 it was moved to Painavu. Idukki is the second largest district in area but has the lowest population density. Idukki has an area of 4,358km (1,683 sq. m) and is the second largest district of Kerala (the largest being Palakkad) Rugged mountains and forest cover about 97% of the total area of the district. Idukki district consist of five taluk Thodupuzha, Devikulam, Idukki, Udumbanchola and Peerumedu. The district boarder's the districts of, Pathanamthitta to the south Kottayam. In to the south west, Ernakulum to the northwest and Trissur to the north and Coimbatore, Dindigul, Thiruppur and Thenni districts in Tamilnadu to the east. The district is accessible only by road. Rail and air link is not available.³⁰ National highway NH49 and state highways 13 and 33 pass through the district.³¹ Anamudi is the highest point in Idukki district and Kerala and south India. Anamudi and Meesapulimala are the 2

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Nixon and Baby, op. cit., p. 29

²⁸ Ibid., p. 32

²⁹ T. Rajesh, *Idukki Charithrarekhakal*, e-Lion Books, Kattappana, 2008, p. 10

³⁰ Nixon and Baby, op. cit., p. 13

³¹ Ibid., p. 15

highest peaks in India south of the Himalaya; Anamudi is in the Kuttampuzha Panchayath of Adimali block, in the Kannan Devan hills. Village of Devikulam taluk bordering Kothamangalam taluk of Ernakulum district. Thirteen other peaks in the district exceed a height of 2,000m (6,600ft) the Periyar, Thodupuzhayar and Thalayar are the important rivers of the district. Idukki dam, Asia's largest Arch dam is located at Idukki Township of Idukki taluk. The point where the Periyar flows through the formed between two high massive rocks known as "Kura van" and "Kurathi" is the site of the Idukki arch dam. The Idukki hydroelectric project caters for more than 60% of the power requirements of the state of Kerala. The Idukki district covers a total area of 1,971.14sq. Miles or 5,105.22km making it the second biggest district of the state of Kerala after Palakkad.³² The district forms 12.9% of the total area of Kerala. Its geographical coordinates are 9° 51' 0" north, 76°58' 0".approximately 97%of the overall area of the Idukki district is encompassed by jungle and mountains. The attitude of the place is 1200meters or 3900 feet above sea surface. The community development blocks are further divided into taluk.³³

State formation and political Background

United Kerala was born on November 1 1956. With this land belonging to the district from Thiruvananthapuram to kasargod became the state of Kerala. On September 4, 1947 the Maharaja of Travancore issued a declaration to elect constituent assembly in Travancore as a prelude to the introduction of adult franchise. The first election was held in February 1948. The Kerala legislative assembly election of 1957 was the first legislative assembly election in the Indian state of Kerala. On November 1 Thovala, Agastheeswaram, kalkulam, vilavanakodu taluk of thrivuvanathapuram district were merged with Thiru Kochi which was excluded from Paliyar half of the chenkot taluk in kollam district came into existence. Mahe French occupied territory within the state. The final decision was based on several changes to the state reorganization recommendation.

³² A Sreedharamenon, op. cit., p. 28

³³ Directorate of Public Relations, Kerala Yesterday and Today, Government of Kerala, 1981, p.

Rajapramukh status that appointed Ps Rao as Governor and retained the presidency was removed from office on November 1, 1956.³⁴

According to the state reorganization Act of 1956 a number of files relating to border disputes between madras and Thiru Kochi were proposed to be resolved. It was decided to continue the status regarding where the capital and the high court should be state of Kerala 14980 mile covering an area of 1 million 36 lakhs. For the first time in the history of Kerala the area from Neyyatinkara taluk to Kasargod taluk was formed under a single ruler a common law and a common boundary. When the state of Kerala came into existence there were five districts namely Thiruvanthapuram, kollam and Malabar. On January 1 1957 the Malabar district was divided into three districts Kannur, Kozhikode and Palakkad on August 17 of the same year the Alappuzha district came into existence.³⁵ Ernakulum district on April 1 1958, Malappuram district was on June 16 1969, Idukki district on January 26, Wayanad district on November 1 1982 and kasargod district on May 24 1984 was formed. All the privileges and considerations of the 26th Amendment to the constitution dated 31st July 1971.³⁶

High Range: An Election Scenario

The first election after the formation of Idukki district was held in 1977. During the first election, the present day Idukki district is divided into two constituencies. When the new Idukki constituency formed the Karimannur disappeared. The Devikulam constituency was part of the Kottayam district and the Thodupuzha constituency was part of the Ernakulum district of these Devikulam is dual constituency.³⁷ The reason that the development of High range has reached so far is because of politics and popular opinion. Congress, CPM, CPI, Different Kerala Congress, BJP, Muslim League, Aam Aadmi party, DMK, AJDMK were active in Idukki. The first legislative Assembly elections were

³⁴ Dr. Joy Balan Vlachangara, *Kerala Samsthana Roopikaranam(mal)*, Chintha Publishers, Thiruvananthapuram, 2018, p. 239

³⁵ Ibid., p. 65

³⁶ K. M Munshi, *Indian constitutional Documents*, Pilgrimage of Freedom, Vol. 1, Bombay, 1976, p. 564

³⁷ Proceedings of the Kerala Legislative Assembly, Official Report, Vol. XXXVI, No. 6, library archives, Kerala legislative Assembly, Thiruvananthapuram, February 7, 1974

held on April 5 1957. In 1957 president rule ended, thus the communist party came to power. E M S Namboodiripad came to power as the chief minister. Before the formation of the district, political parties were active in various parts of the state. The CPI (M) initially worked in idukki as part of the Kottayam district committee. T K Ramakrishnan was in charge of first. Before the formation of the district, the congress had various taluk committees. K.K Devisa was the district secretary of the communist party of India when the district was formed. The B J P district unit was formed in 1980. Rama Michael was the first president. Idukki is one of the last loksabha constituencies in the state. Until then the territories of present day Idukki district were part of other loksabha constituencies. The loksabha elections were held in the country in late 1951 and early 1952. Dual constituency was elected from the constituencies with one in the general seat and another in the reserved seat. Devikulam remained a two member constituency in the two elections held after the birth of united Kerala. The united Kerala was born on November 1, 1956.³⁸

Etymological Origin

The name of the district is derived from the Malayalam word ‘Idukku’ which mean “Narrow gorge”³⁹ Idukki District came into existence on the 26th January, 1972 as per the notification No. 54131/C2/71/RD dated the 24th January, 1972, carving out Devikulam, Udumbanchola and Peerumade Taluks from erstwhile Kottayam District and Thodupuzha Taluk (excluding Kalloorkad Village and portion of Manjalloor Village included in Kalloorkad and Manjalloor Panchayats) of erstwhile Ernakulum District. The jurisdiction was slightly altered by a subsequent notification No.7754/C2/72/RD dated the 14th February, 1972. The name Idukki was derived from the word ‘Idukku’ which means a gorge. As per G.O. (MS)/No.1026/82/RD dated 29.10.1982, North Pamba Valley area and the area around Sabarimala Sannidhanam in Mlappara Village of Peerumade Taluk were transferred to Pathanamthitta District. At present, the District consists of 5 Taluks viz., Devikulam, Udumbanchola, Thodupuzha, Peerumade and Idukki. The pre-history of the District is shrouded in obscurity. We have no clear evidence about the Palaeolithic

³⁸ Manoj Mathirappally, *Idukki: Charithravum Charithrathithavum* (Mal), Kazhcha Books, Kattappana, 2001, p. 169

³⁹ <https://Idukki.nic.in/history>, accessed on 6-6-2021

period. The uru burial, the vaults called pandukuzhies, menhirs, dolmens and graves found in high ranges and hills date back to the Megalithic period.⁴⁰

The excavation of the State Archaeology Department in Marayoor in the Anchanadu Valley of Devikulam Taluk, Thengakkal near Vandiperyar, Bison Valley and Thondermalai show distinct characteristics of pre-historic civilization. The dolmens and menhirs discovered from these places show the cultural and well developed civilization of inhabitants of the Megalithic period. It is worth mentioning that, this District had an important role in the spice trade of ancient period as spices such as pepper, cardamom, etc., grow more in abundance in this District than elsewhere in the State. Some historians believed that Kuzhumur, the capital of early Chera Empire, is the present Kumily in Peerumade Taluk of the District. During the age of Kulashekhara, Nanthuzainad inclusive of Devikulam, Udumbanchola and Peerumade Taluks, Vempolinad and Manjunad of Kottayam District and Kuzhumelainad inclusive of Thodupuzha Taluk formed part of Kulashekhara Empire. By about 1100 AD, Vempolinad was split up into Vadakkumkur and Thekkumkur and Karikkode in Thodupuzha Taluk became the capital of Vadakkumkur Rajas. The Vadakkumkur was subordinate to the Perumpadappu Swaroopam for a long period.⁴¹

The Thekkumkur was the most powerful Kingdom in those days and occasionally they had quarrels between Cochin and Vadakkumkur Kingdoms. The Dutch East India Company was attracted by the enormous growth of pepper in high ranges. According to the formal treaty signed on June 16, 1664, Dutch East India Company had trade contracts with Thekkumkur Rajas on spices, cinnamon, opium, etc. Manavikramakulasekhara Perumal, the Pandya King with his family had to immigrate to Kerala and was settled in Vadakkumkur as refugees. With the help of Vadakkumkur Rajas, the Pandya King purchased the land lying to the West of the Western Ghats known as Poonjar from Thekkumkur Rajas. The territory of Poonjar was transferred to the Pandya King with all its rights and dignitaries and the coronation of the Raja was performed at Poonjar in the presence of the Thekkumkur Rajas. In the 15th Century, Poonjar Raja acquired the extensive areas in the high ranges from Peerumade to Devikulam which form part of Idukki District. Immediately after the annexation of Thekkumkur and Vadakkumkur,

⁴⁰ S. N Sadasivan, *political and administrative integration of states*, Delhi, 2005, p.345

⁴¹ Ramachandran Nair and K.K Adoor, *Kerala State Gazetteer*. Vol.1, Government of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1986, p. 87

Poonjar Principality was also annexed to Travancore in 1749-50 and afterwards its history was associated with that of Travancore. The participation in the freedom struggle by the people of this District is less as compared to other parts of the State. At the turn of the Century, there were four Revenue Divisions in Travancore State. Though not a revenue unit, Cardamom Hill was treated as a separate Division for magisterial, general, planning and census purposes. In 1909, a fifth Division in the State viz., Devikulam was newly carved out taking regions of adjoining Taluks of Kottayam Division and pruned Devikulam was renamed as High Range Division. In the next decade, there were no changes in jurisdiction. However, during the period 1931-41, the High Range Division was amalgamated with the Northern Division. There was no major change in jurisdiction till September 1956. On the 1st October 1956, Udumbanchola taluk was newly constituted taking two villages from Devikulam taluk and one village from Peerumade taluk.⁴²

The history of the present population is very recent. It is a history of colonization braving inclement weather, wild animals and epidemics. It is also a history of the exploitation of labour and labour struggles. Settling in the district began with seriousness during the ministry of Sri. T.K. Narayan Pillai as a sequence to the grow-more food campaign in the State. These migrants who constituted a few planters and a cross section of the people became the nucleus of the present population. During the ministry of Sri.Pattom Thanu Pillai systematic colonization started. Kallar Pattom Colony in the Udumbanchola taluk bears the imprint of his name. The earliest human habitation of the district which started from Tamil Nadu in the first two decades of the present century can be gauged from the story that while Maharaja Sree Moolam Thirunal was personally supervising the construction of the Dam on Mullaperiyar river he felt thirsty and a shepherd called Ankur Rauther gave him milk from Udder of the sheep. The delighted Maharaja gave him title over extensive forest lands which his descendants sold to land owners in Tamil Nadu and with the help of cheap labour these were converted into Cardamom or Tea plantation. The area around Munnar was developed from time to time when British made it their summer resort. As the immediate accessible population was from Tamil Nadu, Munnar became a Tamil pocket in Kerala.⁴³

⁴² Ramakrishnan Nair, *constitutional Experiments in Kerala*, Thiruvanthapuram, 2004, p. 34

⁴³ <https://Idukki.nic.in/history>, accessed on 6-6-2021

Formation of the District

Idukki district was formed in 1969 under the minister ship of C. Achuthamenon and he was the revenue minister. Sri.V.T Sebastian was the Panchayath president of Kattappana and he was the candidate of Kerala congress in 1970 and he represented peasants of the High range and he competed with Ex-minister Sree K.T Jacob and he proclaimed or argued for development of High ranges and formation of Malanadu district on this campaign V.T Sebastian won.⁴⁴ He protested against the formation of Malanadu district that early proclaimed by K.M George and he co-ordinate people against the protest and they got support from all parties finally they conducted discussion about the formation of new district under the leadership of chief minister C Achuthamenon, MLA 's like K.M George , Sree A.C Chacko, Sree V.T Sebastian.⁴⁵ When Malanadu district is formed through the Joining of Peerumedu, Devikulam and Udumbanchola taluk, may causes to the losing of Idukki project area because of the low majority of Malayalis. It brought to the notice of chief minister MLA's that there would be huge losses in Kerala. When the opinion was raised the MLA Mr. P.J Joseph assured that the K.M George, a K.P.C.C chairman would form the district including Thodupuzha taluk and assured him that it would be a positive step. The district administration in the name Idukki district is the name of the all Indian state of Malanadu district. If the district headquarters is set up the govt. will get land subsidies and reduce the financial liability commented.⁴⁶

On the basis the decision to form Idukki district was created and the new district will be inaugurated on 26, 1972 chief minister of the revenue department has been appointed 54131/62/71/ Rd dated Jan 1972 form Idukki district by government order. The Devikulam Udumbanchola Peerumedu taluk were part of the Kottayam district and included some parts of Thodupuzha taluk except Manjalloor and Kallorkadu part of Ernakulum district.⁴⁷ New district was formed four revenue divisions Thodupuzha, Udumbanchola, Devikulam, Azhutha, Elam Desham, Adimaly, Idukki, Kattappana, Nedumkandam and 64 Gram Panchayat in 53 blocks and 53 Grama Panchayat eight blocks and the state has 64 revenue villages the only Municipality in Thodupuzha district As of

⁴⁴ J. Kurias, *Highranginte Kudiyetta Charithram(mal)*, A.K.C.C Diocese of Idukki, Idukki, 2012, p. 29

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 30

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p.31

2001 the population of Idukki 1129221 scheduled caste scheduled tribes. Section has around 2100000 lakhs people living in Idukki.⁴⁸

Political Organization for the Children

Desa Seva Bala Bhart Sangh formed in 1936 at peelikode in kasargod district was the first children's organization based on political affiliation. This is recorded in the book communist movement in Kerala. It also results the memory of sri Krishnan Nair a senior leader of the communist movement itself. Desha Seva Bala Bharat Sangh is a group of children between the ages of 12th and 18th on the instructions of PC Kunjiraman Adiyodi a leader of the communist agrarian movement in the peelikode area. This organization was formed at the present Peelikode Government UP School. Its main aim is Act against national independence, caste system and jenmis system. This group had a constitution. It was written by PC Kunjiraman Adiyodi.⁴⁹

P. C Narayan Nair was the secretary of this organization and payidakan Kunjuambu Nair was the president. Sri Krishnan Nair was the youngest 12 year old joint secretary. Desa seva Bala Bharat sangham activist was gone to form children's groups in many other places. A group was formed in kaiyur. The sangham presented by dramas for social transformation. Drama's at up school grounds at peelikode with tickets for the group's anniversary. Following the formation of the peelikode sangham, kasargod, chirakkal, Kottayam and kurumbrunad the total number of children's groups grew up in the north Kerala.⁵⁰

Communist socialist ideology was strong in congress as early as the 1930s and they remained in the party and continued to function as the socialist group in congress. There was a special meeting of the Bala Sangham of the Karshaka Sangham meeting held on 14th & 15th January 1939 at Kodakkad. Sri Krishnan Nair a sangh activist organized the Kodakkad conference at the age of sixteen and participated congress meeting in 1938. In

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp.32-33

⁴⁹ N Santhoshkumar, *Desappazhama Chila Chithrangal (Mal)*, Kerala Sahitya Akademi, Thrissur, 2017, p. 117

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 118

1940 the Desha Bala Bharth Sangham became inactive as the rest of the group turned to work as adult and Sri Krishnan Nair became active in the communist Karshaka Sangham.⁵¹

Non Political Parties in Idukki

Q Idukki state assembly constituency is one of the 140 state legislative assembly constituencies in Kerala state in southern India. It is also one of the 7 state legislative assembly constituencies included in the Idukki Lok Sabha constituency.⁵² As the emergence of local collectives like Twenty20 was much talked about in the local body elections in the state, the political space for similar ones had only a short life in Idukki. The main non-political entities that came to the electoral front in the district in 2015 local body elections were the High range Sanrakshana Samithy (HRSS) a collective of various religious groups under the church and pengal outrumai, a platform of women tea estate workers based in Munnar. While HRSS which contested the local bodies elections in 2015 as a partner of Left Democratic front (LDF) got rich dividends, pengal outrumai, which stood independently also proved its might in Devikulam taluk. Both of them, however, withdrew from electoral scene this time. Usually when a non-political organization enters the political space, it loses the base on which it stood. Both of the collectives came to the public realm through the massive agitations they launched and were supported by the general public. The independently elected members of pengal outrumai in Munnar joined with the UDF as their support was needed in the otherwise hung council. The pengal outrumai also witnessed a vertical split and the main group returned to its shell 'to achieve the goal for which it was formed'.⁵³

An office-bearer of HRSS said it would continue its agitations for protecting the rights of farmers for which it was formed. In addition, the AIADMK, a political party based in Tamil Nadu also widely fielded candidates in the plantation areas of Devikulam, Udumbanchola and peerumedu taluk where majority of people are of Tamil origin. The party which had a President in Peerumedu grama Panchayat in 2015 did not even get a member this time. According to a mainstream political leader, those organizations that

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 119

⁵² <https://idukki.nic.in>, accessed on 20/4/2021

⁵³ [https:// WWW.thehindu.com](https://WWW.thehindu.com), accessed on 20/4/2021

come to political scenes at the height of their activities soon lose relevance as they have no political plans.⁵⁴

Communal Politics

The year 1980: Kerala congress (M) leader K.M. Mani, the aligned with the left, is engaged in a life or death political battle with congress (I)'s M.M Jacob at Pala. The congress (I) decides to use the ultimate weapon: it persuades the then Bishop of Pala to release a pastoral letter against the candidature of Mr. Mani. But to the surprise of many, Mr. Mani comes out unscathed and wins the election with a margin of 4,566 votes.

The year 2014: The Bishop of Idukki issues an ultimatum against congress's star MP P.T. Thomas for speaking on behalf of the party's environmental policy, which is questioned by the church. The congress meekly withdraws Mr. Thomas from the arena even as the left parties support the candidate fielded by the church sponsored agitations organization. In the past three decades both the major coalitions in the state have increasingly come under pressure from religious and community based groups and have often give in. the pressure groups they represent remain the same the selection of the congress candidate in the idukki segment. In spite of opposition from within the party, sometimes the leaders find it difficult to experiment with new faces from other religious or caste identities since it would upset the equilibrium they have established through the decades.⁵⁵

When Kerala was formed, the state was under president's rule. The new state went to the polls for the first time in March 1957. There were 126 Assembly 16 parliamentary seats. The Communist Party of India emerged as the single largest party in the Assembly with 60 seats. Sri. E.M.S. Namboodiripad formed an 11 member ministry on April 5, 1957 with the support of some independents. Political agitation and unrest extending over several months, culminated in the taking over of the administration of the state and the dissolution of the Legislative Assembly, under Article 356 of the constitution, by the president of India, on July 31, 1959. Mid-term elections followed in February next year. A three party alliance comprising of the congress, the Praja Socialist Party and the Muslim League, was returned to power. Sri Pattom A.Thanu Pillai (PSP) took over as the coalition. Chief Minister,

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ [http:// WWW.thehindu.com](http://WWW.thehindu.com), accessed on 20/4/2021

leading a council of eleven ministers, February 1960. Sri R. Shankar was (congress) was designated as the Deputy Chief Minister Sri Pattom A Thanupillai however, resigned on September 25, 1962 consequent on a gubernatorial appointment, Sri R Shankar was appointed chief minister the next day. Sri Shankar continued as chief minister for about two years.⁵⁶

A political crisis precipitated in September 1964, when about 15 congress legislators lent their support to a no-confidence motion against the ministry. The motion was carried. The legislature was dissolved on September 10 and the state there upon passed under president's rule. Elections were held in March 1965. A fresh delimitation of constituencies had taken place in between. There were 133 assembly proved abortive in the sense that no single party could form a ministry commanding majority support. Once again on 25th march 1965 Kerala was put under President's administration. The state went to the polls two year later at the time of the general elections in March 1967. A new polarization of political forces had emerged in the meantime, leading to new electoral alliances. Politically the most potent combination was the new united front of the communist Party of India (Marxist), the communist party of India, the Muslim, league, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, the Karshaka Thozhilali Party and the Kerala socialist Party. This seven-party combine was voted to power leading to the formation of a ministry headed by Sri E. M. S Namboodiripad (CPI-M).⁵⁷

The cabinet consisted of four members of the Marxist Party, two each of the CPI, the Muslim League and SSP and one each of the RSP, the KTP and the KSP. Sri Namboodiripad second Ministry had a chequered tenure until one of the ministers of the original SSP constituent, who had inter alia left party to join the newly formed Indian Socialist party group, had to resign from the cabinet to face a judicial enquiry. The ministers belonging to the C.P.I., the Muslim League, the RSP and the KSP tendered their resignation in October 1969. Sri Namboodiripad himself resigned on 24th October 1969. As distinct from previous crises, the legislature was intact. A fresh alienated of forces with the assembly initiated the formation of an eight-member cabinet headed by Sri. C.Achutha Menon (CPI) in November 1969. The ruling alliance consisted of the CPI, the KSP, the

⁵⁶ <http://www.stateofkerala.in/districts/idukki>, accessed on 21/4/2021

⁵⁷ K N Ganesh, *State Formation in Kerala A Critical Overview*, southern Regional Center, Bangalore, 2010, p. 45

Muslim League, the R.S.P and the Kerala Congress. The assembly was dissolved on 26th June 1970 on the advice of the chief minister who tendered the resignation of his council of ministers on 1st august 1970.⁵⁸

Elections were held in September 1970. The partners of the ruling front now included the Indian National Congress, the CPI, the RSP, the Muslim League and the Praja Socialist Party and were returned with a considerable majority. Sri C. Achutha Menon formed his second Ministry on 4th October 1970. the Indian National Congress supported the front Government without joining it. The cabinet was expanded on two occasions, once when the Indian National Congress joined it in September 1971 and for the second time in December 1975 to accommodate Kerala congress nominees. The fourth Legislative Assembly was unique in many respects. It emerged as the first assembly in the chequered post independence history of the state which completed its normal constitutional term. Moreover the normal term of the assembly was extended on three occasions for a period of six months from 22nd October 1975, for a second period of six months from 22nd April, 1976 and for yet another six months from 22nd October 1976.⁵⁹

Elections were held in March 1977, the sixth to be held since the formation of state. The ruling front, essentially a continuation of the previous alignment of forces, won a decisive majority. Cabinet leadership now passed on to Sri K. karunakaran of the congress who formed a ministry on March 25 1977. But this ministry was short lived. Sri K.Karunakaran tendered the resignation of this cabinet on April 25 1977, following certain reference by the Kerala High Court in what had been known as the Rajan case. Sri A.K Antony (congress) became the next chief minister. However, in the wake of differences of opinion of the congress working committee on the attitude of the congress parliamentary by election at chikkamagalur in Karnataka, Sri Antony resigned his chief minister ship on October 27 1978. Sri P.K Vasudevan Nair (CPI) took over as chief minister on October 29 1978. But his ministry also resigned on October 7, 1979 in order to create a favorable atmosphere for the formation of a left Democratic Front in Kerala. Sri C.H Muhammad Koya was sworn in as chief minister on October 12 1979, but the four member ministry could continue in office only for a short term. The ministry resigned on December 1, 1979 and the assembly was dissolved. Again president's rule was invoked in Kerala up to 24th

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ K. Gopalan, *Kerala Past and Present*, London, 1959, p. 283

January 1980. Political alignment in Kerala had then undergone a sea change involving a drastic regrouping of major political parties.⁶⁰

The stage was set for the eventual emergence of two political combines the left Democratic Front and the united Democratic front. In the 1980 assembly poll, out of the 140 elective seats in the assembly, 13 were reserved for scheduled castes and one for scheduled tribes. The LDF bagged 93 seats. Sri E.K.Nayanar leader of the LDF headed a 17 member ministry which assumed office on 25th January 1980. Despite the thumping majority for the LDF, there arose ideological differences among the ruling partners and it cumulated in the withdrawal of support to the ministry by the congress(S). the curtain fell down on the 20th October 1981 when the eight member Kerala Congress (M) also withdrew support to government.sri E.K. Nayanar tendered resignation of the ministry and president's rule was introduced on 21st October 1981.⁶¹

Again political realignment took place. The Kerala congress (M) and the congress (S) joined the UDF. An eight member UDF. Ministry was sworn in on 28th December 1981 with sri. K.Karunakaran (congress-I) as the leader. It was the 12th ministry in Kerala since the formation of the state. The congress (S) broke into two factions. The major group supported the government. Another split took place in the Janatha party and also a section lent support to the ministry. Election to the 13 assembly was conducted in three phases on April 22nd, 29th and May 3rd. the LDF won the 98 seats. The 19 member LDF ministry was sworn into power on 18th may 2006 with Sri.V.S Achuthanadan as the chief minister. Sri K. Radhakrishnan was elected as the speaker and deputy speaker is Sri. Jose Baby.⁶² The new LDF- led ministry headed by sri. Pinarayi Vijayan as chief minister assumed power on 25th may 2016. The hon'ble Governor of Kerala Sri. Justice P. Sathasivam administered the oath of office and secrecy of minister designates at the swearing in ceremony held at central stadium Thiruvanthapuram. Other cabinet members are Sri. E.P. Jayarajan, sri. Dr. T. M. Thomas Isaac, Sri G Sudhakaran, Sri A.k Balan, smt. K.K Shaylaja, Prof. Ravindharanath, Sri Kadakampally Surendran, Sri T.P Ramakrishnan, Sri A.C Moitheen, Smt. Mercykutty Amma, Sri K.T Jaleel, Sri. E Chandrasekharan, Sri. V.S Sunil Kumar, sri P. Thilothaman,Sri, K. Raju, Sri Ramachandran Kadanappally, Sri. A.K Saseendran and Sri.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ E. M. S. Namboodiripad, *The National Question in Kerala*, Calcutta, 1967, p. 98

⁶² A. Ayyappan, *The Personality of Kerala*, Kerala university, 1982, p. 49

Mathew T.Thomas⁶³ Sri. E.P Jayarajan Minister for industries and commerce, sports and youth affairs tendered resignation from the council of ministers on 14 October 2016. In the first reshuffle, since it came to power in May 2016, the LDF government in Kerala delegated Sri. M.M Mani, MLA from Udumbanchola, Idukki district as a new member to the cabinet on 22nd November 2016.⁶⁴ Sri. A.K Saseendran, Minister for Transport tendered resignation from the council of ministers on 26 March 2017. Sri Thomas Chandy, MLA from kuttand Legislative assembly in Alappuzha district sworn in as minister on 1st April 2017 at a function held at Kerala Raj Bhavan, Thiruvananthapuram. On 15 November 2017 Sri Thomas Chandy, ministers for transport resigned from the council of ministers.⁶⁵

From the beginning to the end of this chapter we looked the geography and politics of the district. The formation of the district, the politics of the district, important parties, political organizations are detaily discussed through the chapter. Through this chapter we can understand that politics is very strong in this district with the support of common people. It has understood how political parties influenced peoples in high range. Every political party's growth on the support of common people. From the formation of district there is no strong politics in this area. But today all political parties are more active and strong in high range. In this chapter try to attempt to understand the background and political of the district.

⁶³ Sreedhara Menon, *A Concise Political History of Modern Kerala*, Viswanathan Printers, Madras, 1987, p. 22

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 23

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 24

CHAPTER - II

A GLANCE ON THE ENVIROMENTAL ISSUES

This second chapter mainly focuses on how environmental issues affect political level. This is a description of the environmental issues that have taken at the political level during the period from the formation of the district to 2014. Because the reason is the major environmental problem that appended high range in this year. It also explains how environmental issues affected politics in this region. Maniyangadan forest environmental issues, Madhav gadgil Kasturirangan report, Mullaperiyar dam issues, Munnar – Devikulam issues and Anakkara airport issues are handled in this chapter. All of these problems include in the environmental issues, what changes have been created at the political level and how people have been able to do so. It describes the causes of each environmental problem, its important commissions, intervention of government and the historical background of environmental threats.

The Maniyangadan forest environmental issues mainly affected for the ordinary people. On 1965 this issue was started, the main aim is to protect forest and people on the surrounding areas. The recommendations, which were prepared without questioning or denying the need to protect the forest, were very favorable to farmers. This is the first environmental issues that discussed in this chapter. Another issue is The Anakkara Airport issue that was held on 2013. This report mainly affected for the lives of ordinary farmers and agricultural laborers in the area went into crisis. Another issue is the gadgil kastoori rangam issues started on 2013, the government appointed by committees to look the issues on the Western Ghats. Gadgil and kastoori rangam are the two main important leaders appointed by the government.

Gadgil Commission an environmental research commission is named after its chairman Madhav Gadgil. Mullaperiyar dam issues started at the year of 2014, Mullaperiyar dam is a portmanteau of Mullaiyar and Periyar as the dam is located after the confluence of the Mullaiyar and Periyar rivers. These issues also affected for the poor peoples. The last issue is environmental issues in Western Ghats on Munnar Devikulam. The main reason of this issue is land encroachments and illegal construction etc. The environment must always

be protected. Peoples mainly depend on the forest resources and environment played important role in their life. Environmental problems have been experienced in all areas of the high range. The neglect of officials and politicians the peoples face a lot of environment issues. Because of this method people oppose some political parties and supported other political parties stand by them. Maniyangadan environmental issue, the Mullaperiyar agitation, the agitation against the Anakkara airport, Munnar environmental issues and Kasturi rangan issues were all concentrated in certain areas, and then the street agitation was active in all parts of Idukki. Simultaneously, millions of people went on strike. It examines whether environmental issues are good or bad for political parties. Various types of environmental problems have occurred in many parts of the high range. This chapter mainly highlights each of the environmental issues and each issue is discussed in detail.

Maniyangadan Environmental Issue

Historical background of the issue

With the leadership of Fr. Vadakkan and A.K.G the anti- immigration movement quickly escalated and the issue reached the central government. Following this, the central government has decided to set aside forest lands in the states for cultivation and allotment for cultivation. Gulsarilal Nanda appointed a committee as chairman. Kottayam MP has been appointed as the sub-committee of the central committee. Mathew Maniyangadan will be the governor and Cherian J. Kappan, P.K Vasudevan Nair, G. Ramachandran, B. K Sinha, Joseph Mathen, P.K Koya and others were also appointed as members. The first meeting of the sub committee convened at the Kottayam collectorate on December 20, 1965 decided the course of action. Sub collector visited 22 to 26 immigrant places. In the following days, extensive evidence was taken from political parties and organization at the Kottayam collectorate. B. Wellington, K.T Jacob, Panthalam P.R, Madhavanpilla, Fr. John Vallamattam, A. Krishnan, Dr. P.V. Rajan, Pothan Thomas Kumily, K.U. Markkose, P.V. Kurian, M.M Thomas, P.D Sebastian, Devisa Pumattam, J.C Perumana other cardamom planters, SNDP organization, NSS, Panchayat members, and farmers union gave evidence before the committee.¹ Detailed evidence was taken from about 100 people.² On January 4,

¹ J Kurias, *Highranginte Kudiyetta Charithram*, A.K.C.C Diocese of Idukki, Idukki, p.348

1966, the committee held discussions with the officials of the Forest Electricity Board and the Revenue Department. Between January 22 and 23 in New Delhi the joint committee discussed and decided on all that was reported. On February 10th the final report was making. The recommendations, which were prepared without questioning or denying the need to protect the forest, were very favorable to the farmers. The committee said it was not surprising that people had migrated to kerala in the wake of the growing population, even though the government had initially encouraged immigration and leasing.³

The committee pointed out that there was a problem in allocating land without surveying and demarcating the boundaries. Moreover farmers who were first given agricultural land by the government have repeatedly done so. The committee warned that if the order was implemented, at least 15,000 families would have to be evacuated, which could lead to serious problem. As per the recommendation of the committee, the government issued a new order dated June 7 1961 as 10 29/ Agh. The government also took up Thiru Kanam on the recommendations of the sub- committee. It was decided in principle that the emergency lands would be vacated for the project purposes and that those who and cultivated in the forest land would be treated as equals irrespective of the method or time acquired. Prepare a list of farming families who been living there for years and issue an identity card for the period of 1961, pay compensation to the evictees as per the law, wait for eviction from the kallarkutty area and relocate the Perinchamkuttty project area to the settlers. Reduce the number of evacuees from the saline area from 119 to 21, make the transfer of allotted land applicable to the regular rules of the government and allow all the cardamom plantations outside to continue began. The government complied with the 22 recommendations of the committee.⁴

The biggest obstacle in preparing the report to the Maniyangadan committee was the lack of vehicular traffic in these areas. Immigrants were united in their passion for living. Under the leadership of the peoples committees and working hard night and day, Idukki, pattikkuli, kutiralla, vimalagiri, upputeat, kiliyarkandom scene a few days. The exciting

² Ibid., p.349

³ Ibid., p.400

⁴ J Kurias, *Highranginte Kudiyetta Charithram*, op.cit, p.401

construction work of the day involved road construction and the destruction of food items in the evening. The committee visited the areas along the road built by the settlers in the hilly villages where the community members were and prepared a report and submitted it to the parliament. This report in favor of the farmers was approved by the parliament in 1965. As a result, few in the high ranges get pattayam to the property.⁵

Environmental issues connected with Anakkara

Historical Background of the Issue

This is the first environmental issues discussed in this chapter. The Anakkara environmental issue was held on the year 2013. Anakkara is a geographic area of around 50 square kilometers (12,000 acres) that spans across Vandanmettu, Chakkupallam Village in the Udumbanchola Taluk of Idukki District.⁶ Anakkara is the administrative capital of Chakkupallam Gram Panchayat and Anakkara Revenue Village. Situated at about 18 Kilometers from Thekkady wildlife sanctuary on the Kumily-Munnar state highway, Anakkara is a fast-growing tourist destination for its unique spice gardens and many picnic spots in and around. It is one of the 36 distinct places identified by Government of India and United Nations Development Programme for exploring and promoting the unique tourism potential (For Anakkara the spice plantations) of these places. As per 2001 India census, Anakkara village had about 5523 households with a total population of 23934 with 11951 males and 11983 females. The current population of the village is estimated to be around 30,000.

This is a strike by farmers who will be evicted if the plan materializes against the government's decision to build an Air port on the embankment near Vadenmedu. Negotiations on the dam began in 2008 during the LDF government. On February 20, 2009 the then Finance minister Dr. TM Thomas Isaac made the announcement in the budget. The

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Manoj Mathirappally, *Idukki: Desham Charithram Samskaram* (mal), Geo books, Kattappana, 2017, p. 195

district headquarters painavu and pathammal was also considered for the construction of the airport, but it was decided to implement the dam project as a more suitable site. All parties in the left and right front unanimously supported the plan. The government announced the construction of an airport on the dam after the necessary feasibility study. As a part of this, the state government sent a letter to the Airport Authority of India on January 22, 2009 requesting a feasibility study. Following this the Airport Authority of India has appointed a high level team comprising M. Irulappan, N.VAttale and Pradeep Sharma for feasibility study. Committee visited the Anakkara and conducted the necessary study and submitted a report to the government. The committee assessed in detail the geographical features of the region, wind patterns and potential for runway constructions. As part of the study the Pune-based central meteorological department examined reports of winds and intensities from 2004 to 2008. Subsequently, the report submitted to the government stated that it was possible to build an airport at the proposed site on the Anakkara. With this, the lives of ordinary farmers and agricultural laborers in the area went into crisis. Government announcements in connection with the constructions of the Anakkara Airport.⁷



Figure 2. 1: Anakkara Peoples Protest, taken from the website

But the locals were not given any notice that the process of constructing an airport here was in progress. Following this, all the groups arriving for the construction of the airport were blocked by the Janakiya Samara Samithi. The government has announced plans to build a Greenfield airport on the Anakkara that can land small planes.⁸ The government has said it will have to acquire 500 acres of land for this. But later moves were made to acquire more than a thousand acres of land. This was also made clear in the pamphlet of KSIDC. But according to a preliminary sketch prepared by the Airport Authority with the help of satellite,

⁷ Manoj Mathirappally, *Idukki: Desham Charithram Samskaram* (mal), op.cit., p.196

⁸ Ibid., p.197

more land will be required. The runway is marked from Anakkara sultankada to myladumpara. This runway is marked from pampupara, Achankanam, Chellarukovil, Naduvanakara, kuruvikattupara, palakandam and Nettithozhu this includes all areas such as the forehead. Amid fears that thousands of farming families will be evicted if the project materializes, locals have intensified their agitation under the leadership of the Janakiya Samara Samithi. Eventually, the district administration reported that the construction of the airport would not be possible in the face of public protests. Attempts for the project were subsequently abandoned. The Anakkara is now a symbol of the struggle to overthrow the government through a resistance with strong. But it does not have to be this way tomorrow.⁹

The Greenfield airport project at Anakkara in Idukki has gathered steam with members of several panchayats nearby extending their support to the venture, which was bogged down by protests over land. An all-party meeting held at Thekkady on Sunday has constituted a 100-member committee for the smooth implementation of the venture. The project was mooted by the central government nine years ago and had received approvals from all concerned agencies, including the Airport Authority of India. The Union government had then offered to bear 20% of the total construction cost. The previous UDF government had allotted Rs 5 crore in its first budget and Rs 50 lakh in the second budget for conducting a primary survey for the project. But as locals protested, the government had dropped the project. The project came to the limelight recently with the state government announcing an airstrip at Idukki in the last budget. Members from Kumily, Vandiperyar, Peerumade, Elappara, Upputhara, Chakkupallam, Vadenmedu, Kokkayar and Peruvanthanam panchayats attended the all-party meeting held on Sunday and extended their support for the project. Vandiperyar, Peerumade, Upputhara and Kokkayar panchayats also expressed their willingness to provide land for the project.

“The project requires 100 acres. One family has already offered 50 acres. The Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIFBI) has been selected as the implementing agency. When the project becomes a reality, tourism development in the district will rise rapidly,” said E S Bijimol, Peerumade MLA. “If an airport comes up in the district, it will help the development of tourism and agricultural sectors. We can send organic vegetables and other products in flights to other countries and that will help the farming sector. Tourism income will double if an airport

⁹ Ibid., p.196

comes up in the district, “said K, former Idukki MP and Janadhi patya Kerala Congress chairman.¹⁰ Airport Authority of India and government (both central and state) are cheating the peoples of Anakkara. We need the clarification about the proposed Green Field Airport in Anakkara we think the proposal cancelled. 1000 acres of paddy plants, cardamom, and pepper coffee planted here but there is no security for their crops because the authorities never give any clarification about the project. All the authorities cheating the villagers of Anakkara. And how the government settles the people.¹¹

Gadgil Report and Kasturirangan on Western Ghat

Historical Background of the Issue

One of the most widespread protests in the history of the High Range was the street protests against the anti-farmer references in the Kasturi Rangan report. Under the leadership of the High Range Protection Committee, farmers took to the streets in all parts of the district, even in the countryside. Millions of people took part in the 48-hour (November 11, 2013, midnight, November 19, 2013) non-partisan-caste-religious protest. Women and children went on strike. Farmers raised awareness against the Kasturirangan report and cooked food in makeshift ovens on the streets, strengthening the struggle for survival. The people demanded that the Centre withdraw the order of the Ministry of Environment and Forests declaring the settlements in the Western Ghats as Ecologically Vulnerable Areas.¹² Farmers believe that if the Kasturirangan report is implemented, they will be evicted from their native soil or face severe restrictions on life. The immigrant community believes that the Kasturirangan report will be another disaster for the farming community who have sacrificed their wealth and lives in the highlands. The High Range witnessed first-hand the struggles of survival in the homeland. Various agitations took place in Kattappana, Adimali, Rajakkad, Nedumkandam, Kumily, Anakkara, Peerumade, Kuttikanam, Cheruthoni, Erattayar, Karimpan, Murickassery, Thopramkudy, Chelachuvad and Mankulam. Street

¹⁰ Manoj Mathirappally, op.,cit. p., 197

¹¹ Manoj Mathirappally, *veno Ankkarayilum oru vimanathavalam(mal)*, Madhiyam Azchapathipp, Kozhikode, 2013, p.47

¹² Jojo Kaavilpurayidam, *Tgeruvilirangiya Malayorajanatha*, Mashithand Vol. 1, issue 1, Ed. Manoj Mathirappilli, J. B Printers, Kochi, 2014, p. 35

plays and musical performances were performed in many places. All this has sent a message to the people that the Western Ghats Conservation Project will have a major impact on farmers. In this regard, the youth also joined the struggle along with the adults. Along with this, the ancient arts related to agricultural culture were also introduced.¹³ Among the protests in Kattappana and Cheruthoni, the most popular was the street play '*manninte shambdham*'. Madhav Gadgil, Kasturirangan and the peasantry lined up together in a street drama about the pain of the peasants migrating from this land and the strength of their resistance. Unlike the regular struggles, the farmers' enthusiasm did not diminish for 48 hours. The strike, led by the High Range Protection Committee, was led by the Catholic Church and the NSS.¹⁴

The presence of both the NDP and Muslims was active. Priests, nuns, community leaders, priests and all joined the strike. The voices of the people who have been cultivating and living in the hills for generations have been heard from every village. There were no internal incidents of any kind in the perfectly peaceful struggle.¹⁵ During the 48 hours of the street protests, no vehicles were seen on the streets of High Range. shops markets, educational institutions and government offices were closed. The reality is that the struggle has been transformed into the sentiment of the entire high range people. Following this, the governments that understood the sentiments of the people also had to reconsider. The state government has appointed an expert committee to study the problems of farmers. The Central Government has made it clear that it will solve the problems of the High Range people. Such attempts are being made. However, the people of the High Range are still concerned about the final outcome of the Western Ghats.

The term Western Ghats refers to the practically unbroken hill chain running roughly in a north-south direction, for about 1500 km parallel to the Arabian Sea coast from the Tapi down to just short of Kanyakumari at the top of the Indian Peninsula.¹⁶ The major problem solving committee was K. Kasturirangan led 10 member High Level Working group

¹³Ibid., p. 36

¹⁴ P. Krishnaprasad, *western ghats :on Gadgil- Kasturirangan repots*, 2014, p. 34

¹⁵Ibid

¹⁶ Kerala State biodiversity Board, *understanding report of the western ghats ecology expert panel Kerala perspective*, p.3

(HLWG). The panel was tasked with finding a “holistic” way of protecting the biodiversity of the Ghats and addressing the “rightful aspirations for inclusive growth and sustainable development” of the “indigenous residents”.¹⁷ This article attempts to critically assess these reports and to remove the misconceptions among sections of pro-environment activities as to why the peasant movement, which always stood for conservation of environment, took a position against the implementation of WGEEP-HLWG reports by the ministry of environment and forest (MoEF) of the government of India.¹⁸

Mandate of Panel

In view of the environment sensitivity and ecological significance of the Western Ghats region and the complex interstate nature of its geography as well as possible impacts of climate change on this region, the ministry of environment and forest, government of India constituted by an order dated 4 March 2010 a Western Ghats Ecological Expert Panel (WGEEP). The panel was asked to perform the following functions. To assess the current status of ecology of the Western Ghats. To demarcate areas within the Western Ghats region which need to be notified as ecologically sensitive and to recommend for notification of such areas as ecologically sensitive zones under the environment (protection) Act 1986. In doing so the panel shall review the existing reports such as the Mohan Ram committee Report, hon’ble supreme court’s decisions, recommendation’s of the National Board for wildlife and consult all concerned state Governments. To make recommendations for the conservation, protection and rejuvenation of the Western Ghats region following a comprehensive consultations process involving people and government of all the concerned states. To suggest measures for effective implementation of the notification issued by the government of India in the ministry of environment and forests declaring specific areas in the western ghats region as eco- sensitive zones under the environment (protection) Act 1986. To recommend the modalities for the establishment of western ghats ecology authority under the environment (protection) Act 1985 which will be a professional body to manage the ecology of the region and to ensure it sustainable development with the support of all concerned states. To deal with any other relevant environmental and ecological issues pertaining to

¹⁷ www-gktody-in.kasturranganpanel.cdn.amproject.org, accessed on 21-05-2021

¹⁸ P. Krishnaprasad, *western ghats :on Gadgil- Kasturirangan repots*, 2014, p. 36

Western Ghats region including those which may be referred to it by the central government in the ministry of environment and forests. The ministry has subsequently asked the panel to include in its mandate (a) the entire stretch of Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts including the coastal region and to specifically examine the (b) Gundia and (c) Athirappilly Hydroelectric projects. (d) Recommendations with regard to the moratorium on new mining licenses in Goa.¹⁹

Organization of the Report

This report is divided in two parts, part I and part II. Part I is the main report of the WGEEP which deals with all the terms of reference while part II contains elaborate discussion on current status of ecology of western ghats and specific detailed write up on various sectors such as Land Use and Human settlements, water resource, Agriculture (including horticulture and plantations) forestry and biodiversity, industry-organized, mining, power and energy, tourism, Transport and communication, education, science and technology and information management on which the recommendations of the panel made in the main report were based.²⁰ Section 1 of this part 1 summarizes the issues dealt with in part 1.²¹ Section 2 provides an introduction; section 3 deals with the mandate; section 4 explains the organization of the report; section 5 deals with the activities undertaken, section 6 deals with the boundaries of the Western Ghats region, section 7 deals with the overall setting of the western ghats and section 8 outline an inclusive approach to conservation / development issues that WGEEP believes should guide further development when the western ghats ecology authority (WGEA) has been put in place. Section 9 and 10 discuss the concept of ecologically sensitive zones and lay out the specific proposals of WGEEP for areas within the Western Ghats region which need to be notified as ecologically sensitive zones 1, 2 and 3 under the environmental (protection) Act, 1986. Section 11 reviews the current pattern of management of ecologically sensitive areas. Section 12 goes on to review the experience of

¹⁹ Report of the western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel, *The ministry of environment and forests government of India*, 2011, pp.3-4

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Boby Thomas, *protection of western Ghats and Gadgil Report*, Kuttikanam, 2016, p. 5

as yet to protected areas of Western Ghats. Sections 13 outline an inclusive approach to conservation of Western Ghats. Section 14 puts forward our proposals for the establishment, composition and functioning of the Western Ghats ecology authority in the centre and associated state level Western Ghats ecology authorities as well as District Ecology Committees. Section 15 provides reviews and recommendations of WGEEP with respect to Athirappailly and Gundia hydroelectric projects. Section 16 provides a review of the prevalent situations in and recommendations of WGEEP with respect to Ratnagiri and sindhudurg districts. Finally section 17 provides a review of the prevalent situation in and recommendations of WGEEP with respect to mining leases in Goa. The appendices, annexure and reference conclude part 1 of this report.²²

Highlights of Gadgil Report

The western ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) designated the entire hill range as an Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) The panel, in its report, has classified the 142 taluks in the Western Ghats boundary into Ecologically Sensitive Zones (ESZ) 1,2 AND 3. ESZ-1 being of high priority, almost all developmental activities was restricted in it. Gadgil report recommended that “no new dams based on large-scale storage be permitted in ecologically sensitive zone 1. Since both the athirappailly of Kerala and Gundia of Karnataka hydel project sites fall in ecologically sensitive zone 1, these projects should not be accorded environment clearance” it said. Gadgil committee report specifies that the present system of governance of the environment should be changed. It asked for a bottom to top rather than a top a bottom approach. It also asked for decentralization and more powers to local authorities. The commission recommended constitution of a Western Ghats Ecology Authority (WGEA) as a statutory under the ministry of environment and forests, with the powers under section 3 of the environment (protection) Act 1986.²³

²² Report of the western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel, *The ministry of environment and forests government of India*, op. cit., p.4

²³ Ibid.

Recommendations of Kasturirangan Panel

The Kasturirangan panel had the advantage of using a finer remote sensing technology to make distinction between the so called ‘cultural landscape’ and ‘natural landscape’. Thus instead of declaring entire western ghats as ESA the panel said that 90 per cent of the ‘natural landscape’ should be protected. The identification of ESA was based on the fragmentation of the forests, population density of villages and the richness of the biodiversity in villages. This would be around 60,000 km.sq ecologically sensitive area spread over six states. Thus it diluted the protection of 137000 km sq areas as stipulated in the gadgil report. This implies that according 37.5% of the total area of the Western Ghats is ecologically sensitive. This committee said that economic options should not be forbade, but answer to protection of the Western Ghats lies in providing better incentives to move businesses/livelihood towards greener and more sustainable practices. Establish a Decision Support and Monitoring Center for geospatial analysis and policy support in the Western Ghats, which will supervise changes and propose state government on policy reform and all such reports, must be in the public domain. High resolution map, delimiting ecologically sensitive areas, down to each village settlement, must be put in the public domain so that people can be involved in taking decisions about environment. A ban on all polluting industries categorized as most hazardous in the water Act 1974 and Air of Act 1981. The Forest Rights Act, 2006 that recognizes the rights of dwellers on forest resources will be implemented in letter and spirit and the consent of Gram Sabhas concerned will be mandatory for any project. Strict regime for Hydro-power projects. These include cumulative impact assessment of such projects and ensuring minimum water flow in the rivers in the lean season Set up a body to assess and report on the ecology of the region and to support the implementation of ESA to be set up. The Kasturirangan report recommended ban on mining, quarrying, thermal power plants and highly polluting industries within 60,000 sq km of the ghats. Projects will be allowed only after the approval of the gram Sabhas concerned.²⁴

²⁴ www.gktoday-in.cdn.amproject.org/recommendations/of/panel, accessed on 21-05-2021

Committees on Western Ghats

MoEFCC has lifted the restrictions imposed on new projects and activities in 3,115 sq km of human settlements, plantations and agricultural land in Kerala that are included in the Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA). It was identified by the Kasturirangan committee on the conservation of the Western Ghats. The Kasturirangan committee had recommended the demarcation of a total of 59,940 sq km as ESA in the six states bordering the Western Ghats. The extent of ESA in Kerala was pegged at 13,108 sq km, an area spread over 123 villages.²⁵ The Kerala government on the basis of ground level verification had proposed that the ESA be limited to 9,993 sq km. the Western Ghats is an extensive region spanning over six states. They are Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Recognised by UNESCO as one of the world's eight most important biodiversity hotspots, it is the home of many endangered plants and animals. These forested hills are sources to numerous rivers.²⁶ Madhav Gadgil Committee Report on the Western Ghats: Ministry of environment and forests of India set up it in March 2010 to find a strategy for conserving Western Ghats. Gadgil commission, an environmental research commission is named after its chairman Madhav Gadgil. The commission submitted the report to the government of India on 31 August 2011. Gadgil report doesn't give a solution for revenue losses due to the implementation of its recommendations.²⁷

Kasturirangan Committee on the Western Ghats: The Kasturirangan committee was constituted to examine the WGEEP report. The committee is often called HLEG, 10 member high level working group (HLWG), headed by Kasturirangan. Only 37% of the total area is brought under ESA instead of the total area of Western Ghats under Kasturirangan report. A complete ban on mining, quarrying and sand mining in ESA. Distinguish between cultural and natural landscape. No thermal power be allowed and hydropower projects are allowed only after detailed study. Red industries which are highly polluting be strictly banned in these

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ministry of environment and forests government of India , *Report of the high level working group on western ghats*, vol 1, 2013, p.18

²⁷ K J Joseph, *Reflections on the Kasturirangan working group Report*, central for Development studies, Trivandrum, 2016

areas. Kasturirangan report on the Western Ghats has made several pro-farmer recommendations including the exclusion of inhabited regions and plantations from purview of ecologically sensitive areas (ESAs). The Kasturirangan panel used remote sensing and serial survey methods for zonal demarcation of land in the Western Ghats without examining the ground reality has caused many errors in the report. The power is vested with the bureaucrats and forest officials and not with grama Sabhas.²⁸

Oommen V Oommen Committee: Appointed by the then chief minister of Kerala to study the Kasturirangan report in detail its report to chief minister Oommen Chandy (CM). The committee recommended the government to make changes in the clauses of Environmentally Fragile Land (EFL) in the Western Ghats. Serious lapses happened in determining the EFL areas and the committee adopted a satellite survey to determine EFL. It also recommended stopping land acquisition proceedings according to the Kasturirangan committee report. The panel has made several pro farmer recommendations including the exclusion of inhabited regions and plantations from the purview of ecologically Sensitive areas (ESAs). A field survey should be held in places that the madhav gadgil and Kasturirangan reports have identified as ESAs to demarcate forest land human settlements. Human settlements should be exempted from the category of ESAs after examining the population density of these areas. It also said farmers should not be stopped from rearing hybrid varieties of milking animals and suggested that the grace period to shift to organic farming be extended from five years to 10 years. The report said forest areas should be fenced to prevent the animals straying into it.

²⁸ Ibid., p.19

Mullaperiyar Dam Issues

Beginning of the Issues

Mullaperiyar dam, Idukki and the Lower Periyar hydel projects and the Periyar Valley Irrigation Project of Kerala are located in the main Periyar River. There are densely populated human settlements along the downstream stretch of this river including the metropolitan township of Kochi. The total drainage area of the Periyar river basin is 5398 sq.km of which 114sq.km lies in Tamil Nadu.²⁹ The idea of diverting waters of Periyar to Madurai was proposed by James Caldwell in 1808 but was abandoned because of its cost.



Figure 2.2: Protest in Mullaperiyar, taken from the website

Later on, in 1850, construction of a small dam and a channel began to divert a small tributary of the Periyar, the Chinna Mulayar, based on the proposal of Captain Faber. However the work stopped due to high construction cost. In 1867,

military engineer Captain J.G. Ryves carried out a study and drew up a plan to construct an earthen dam across the Periyar. His plan did not receive much attention until the region was hit by the devastating Madras famine of 1876-78. The construction of the dam commenced in 1887 after the Secretary of the State of India for Periyar irrigation (British Government) and

²⁹ A.J. Thatheyus, Delphin Prema Dhanaseeli and P.Vanitha, *Inter - State Dispute over Water and Safety in India: The Mullaperiyar Dam*, a Historical Perspective American Journal of Water Resources, Vol. 1, 2013, p.18

the princely state of Travancore (now Kerala) entered into an agreement, a lease indenture, for 999 years.

As per the agreement 8000 acres was leased by Travancore to Madras for constructing a water reservoir across Periyar River in Kerala. The project in its final form was carried out by Col. John Pennycuick, of the British Army Engineering Corps. Pennycuick said: "I am going to be only once in this earthly world, hence I need to do some good deeds here. This deed should not be prorogued nor ignored since I am not going to be here again".³⁰ The proposed structure consists of a main dam and a saddle dam on the left flank with the growing water vulnerability and changing nature of hydro-politics in India, the Mullaperiyar dam conflict has brought out some other issues relevant for dam management in India. In this sense, the study conflict serves as a case to explore the complex and multilevel web of hydrology, technicality, legal and institutional realities influencing the way water is accessed and controlled in India. It is therefore necessary to tease out the sub-text of the dominant discourses defining the vocabulary of the Mullaperiyar Conflict.³¹ On 29 October 1886, a lease agreement for 999 years was made between the maharaja Travancore, viakham, Thirunal Rama Varma and the British secretary of state for India for Periyar irrigation works. The lease agreement granted full right, power and liberty to the secretary of state for India to construct.

After independence 1947, the Kerala government said that the earlier agreement signed between British raj and Travancore was invalid and needed to be renewed. The agreement renewed in 1970 when C.Achutha Menon was Kerala chief minister and accordingly Tamil Nadu government has been operating the dam and has been paying to Kerala government for the past 50 years.³² The road from Cumbum to Kumily, now part of the Kollam- Theni national highway, was constructed for bullock carts to move equipment to the dam site.³³ The Left Democratic Front gave a promise to construct a new dam during the 2011 assembly election. The live storage at 152 feet level is 10,600 mcft and the dead storage

³⁰ C. E. Buckland, *Dictionary of Indian Biography, swan sonneschein and cooperate*, London, p. 334

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.25

³² Chandrika Choudhary, *on the Mullaperiyar Dam Dispute*, Vishakhapatnam, p.64

³³ www.thehindu.com/periyarriver, accessed on 26-5-2021

at 104 feet is 5100 mcft. At 136 feet storage level, the irrigation potential is 70,000 acres. Even after independence both states renewed the agreement without any compulsion. If the dam site is in an earthquake prone area, the new dam is also at risk.³⁴

The Kerala Irrigation Department (KID) approached the Kerala Forest Department (KFD) for the allocation of 50 hectares of forest area as the site for the proposed dam; but the KFD is in a fix as the site encloses Periyar Tiger Reserve which is one of the thirty eight reserves dedicated to the tigers and an elephant reserve and fears that the construction of a new dam would result in ecological imbalance in this area. Constructing a new dam and decommissioning the old dam in the Periyar Tiger Reserve area would alter the habitat of local flora and fauna.³⁵ The basin receives an average rainfall of about 800 mm and relies mainly on the north-east monsoon which is erratic and is subjected to vagaries of nature.³⁶

Background of the Conflict

As it was built with lime surkhi mortar and without any provision for inspection because of the absence of scouring sluice to drain the reservoir fully, fear about safety of the dam was raised. Later a joint inspection was made in 1964 and it was decided to limit the water level at 152ft instead of 155ft. In spite of this, the seepage through the dam caused a sense of insecurity among the people living in the downstream. When Kerala raised the issue of safety of the dam with the Central Water and Power Commission (CWPC) in 1964 it made an inspection along with engineers of both the States who decided to lower the Maximum Water Level (MWL) to 152 ft from 155ft. Later, in 1978 the Central Water Commission (CWC) directed to keep the MWL to 145ft. The safety issue came to public domain when Kerala press reported major leaks in 1979. The feeling of insecurity was further aggravated by the Machhu II dam failure in Gujarat in August 1979. The technical officers of both the States with the then CWC Chairman Dr. K.C Thomas inspected the dam and suggested

³⁴ A.J. Thatheyus, *Inter - State Dispute over Water and Safety in India: The Mullaperiyar Dam*, op.cit., 17

³⁵ The Hindu, *Daily Newspaper*, 2009 to 2011

³⁶ Jayanthi Pushkaran, *Hydro political Vulnerability of The Mullaperiyar Dam: Institutions Involved and Options Explored*, p.24

emergency, medium-term and long-term measures. In 1980, the CWC suggested to increase the water level to 145ft after completing emergency and medium-term measures. Later in 1986, the CWC again issued a “Memorandum on Rehabilitation of Mullaperiyar Dam” to increase the water level to 152ft after executing the strengthening measures.

In 1981, reinforced concrete capping for the entire length of the main dam was provided.³⁷ In March 2006, Kerala Legislative Assembly passed the Kerala Irrigation and Water Conservation Amendment Act, 2006 which empowered Kerala’s Dam Safety Authority (KDSA) to evaluate safety of all dams in Kerala. KDSA was also empowered to advise the government to suspend the functioning or to decommission a dam if public safety demanded. KDSA brought about 22 dams constructed between 1895 and 1963 under its jurisdiction and fixed 136ft as the safe storage level for Mullaperiyar dam. The experts from IIT, New Delhi in 2008 reported the dam as hierologically unsafe and scientists from IIT, Roorkee viewed that the dam is in a quake-prone area. When Kerala proposed to build a new dam on 14 August 2007 and the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India (GOI) granted permission to conduct a survey on 16 September 2009. Tamil Nadu objected to this idea of new dam and approached the GOI and the Supreme Court; its appeal was rejected on 21 October 2009. On 10 November 2009 a three judge-bench suggested to hear the Mullaperiyar dam issue by a five-judge bench as it involves substantive questions of constitutional law.³⁸

After consulting legal experts Tamil Nadu government decided to participate in the committee and the retired Supreme Court judge, A.R.Lakshmanan was nominated to represent the state. The Empowered Committee visited the dam site on 21 December, 2010 and made a recommendation to inspect the dam wall immersed in water. As per the direction of the Empowered committee, the team from CWPRS (Central Water and Power Research Station) and CSMRS (Central Soil and Material Research Station) under the leadership of Dr. Rajpal Singh inspected the dam along with the divers from Orissa, who were led by Ratnakar Dalai on 5 December 2011. The five judges Constitution Bench extended the tenure of the

³⁷ Iyer R, *Water Conflicts and the Laws in India*, Training Programme on Understanding and Resolving Water Conflicts, Kerala, 2010, p. 45

³⁸ Ibid.,

five member Empowered committee by another six months from 30 April 2011. The five members Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court on 24 August 2011 extended the tenure of the Empowered Committee till 29 February 2012.³⁹ In addition, the judgment also declared that if it is necessary and possible to use hydropower, the lessee has the right to generate and use electricity for irrigation purpose only (Mohanakrishnan, 1997).⁴⁰

Both the Central Water Commission (CWC) and the Centre for Earth Sciences Study (CESS) had reported leaks and cracks in the dam. In 2000, the Ministry of Water Resources (MOWR) constituted an expert committee headed by CWC to go into the details of the safety of the dam and discuss the issue of raising the water level in the Mullaperiyar reservoir. This committee submitted its report in the same year (Madhusoodhanan and Sreeja, 2010). However, In March 2006, the Kerala State Legislature amended the Kerala Irrigation and Water Conservation Act, 2003 and empowered Kerala Dam Safety Authority (KDSA) to evaluate safety of all dams in Kerala. The Mullaperiyar issue highlights the challenges of supply side approaches of river basin planning in India.⁴¹

Court Judgment

The Supreme Court on May 7, 2014 upheld its earlier decision and allowed Tamil Nadu to raise the water level in the controversial Mullaperiyar dam to 142 feet (43.28). The court quashed the Kerala irrigation water conservation Act 2006 that restricted raising the water level in the dam above 136 feet (41.45) on safety grounds.⁴² Tamil Nadu receives about 640 Mm³ (about 22.5 TMC) from the Periyar River annually for power generation and irrigation of lands. Tamil Nadu is depending upon the waters of Mullaperiyar for paddy cultivation in 2, 47,000 acres in the five districts. As the new dam is going to be constructed below the existing dam, the water storage level would be below 136ft and hence it would be

³⁹S.V Jayaraj, *Periyar Dam Project*, Mani Offset Printers, Uthamapalayam, Tamil Nadu, India. 2003

⁴⁰ Forum for Policy dialogue on Water Conflicts in India , *The Mullaperiyar conflict: Meeting to understand the issues and explore a common ground*, SOPPECOM, Pune , 2019, p.27

⁴¹ Forum for Policy dialogue on Water Conflicts in India , *The Mullaperiyar conflict: Meeting to understand the issues and explore a common ground*, op. cit., p.30

⁴² Ibid., p. 67

difficult to withdraw water for Tamil Nadu.⁴³ In 1979 the dam showed signs of distress level was brought down to 136ft. after the requisite repairs were completed TN wanted the water level to be raised to 152ft which Kerala did not agree to on grounds of safety.⁴⁴ Various writ petitions were filed before Kerala and Madras High Courts regarding Mullaperiyar dam issue during 1997-1998 and they were transferred to the Supreme Court of India to avoid the possibility of conflicting orders from the two High Courts. When the Minister of water resources convened a meeting of the chief ministers of both the States as per the direction of the Supreme Court in 2000, no consensus was reached and hence an Expert Committee was announced with CWC member B. K. Mittal as chairman to analyze the issues of safety and water storage level of the dam.

This committee recommended raising the water level to 142ft and the Supreme Court gave its final verdict on 27 February 2006 to keep the water level at 142ft. It also viewed that after completing the strengthening measures the level could be raised to 152ft. Finally on 18 February 2010, the Supreme Court constituted a high level Empowered committee to study the issues of safety, water storage level and the dam safety act of Kerala. According to the announcement, Tamil Nadu and Kerala would nominate a member each, who could be either a technical expert or a retired judge. This Empowered committee headed by the former Chief Justice of India, A.S. Anand was asked to look into all issues concerned with the dam's safety and storage level. This decision of the Supreme Court was opposed by the then Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, M. Karunanidhi and his party. He refused to nominate a member to the Empowered committee and wrote a letter to the Congress President Sonia Gandhi to mediate between the two States. But it was opposed by the then leader of opposition, J.Jayalalitha who argued that such a move would be advantageous to Kerala in this issue. N.K. Premachandran, the then water resources minister of Kerala spoke in the Kerala State Assembly that Kerala has the right to construct, own, operate and maintain the proposed dam, while being ready to provide water to Tamil Nadu on the basis of a new agreement. Former Supreme Court judge, K.T Thomas was announced as the member to represent Kerala in the five member committee. On 20 February 2010, the then DMK

⁴³ Ibid., p.18

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.28

government in Tamil Nadu pitched for central intervention in the Mullaperiyar dam dispute and it was necessary for an amicable settlement to maintain national integrity, sovereignty and for ensuring cordial relationships among states⁴⁵

Committee Appointed by the Government to Take Care the Issue

Supervisory Committee: A three- member supervisory committee was appointed by the centre and the Supreme Court in 2006 which was headed by senior central water commission (CWC) officer, LAV Nathan. The commission consisted of one representative each from both the states. It was constituted to make periodic visit to inspect the dam before and after the monsoon and to supervise the safety of the dam. The committee was appointed to oversee the repair work and allowed to take the required necessary safety measures for the benefit of both the states and the dam. It was also free to issues necessary directions to the safety of 119 years old Mullaperiyar dam.⁴⁶

A.S. Anand Committee: A.S. Anand committee was set up by the Supreme Court in February 2010 during the course of agreement in Tamil Nadu's suit questioning the law enacted by the Kerala to restrict the water level of the dam to 136ft. the committee was constituted to look into the dispute and prepare a report within six months. The committee was mandated to study all the aspect of the 119 years old dam including its safety. Meanwhile the Tamil Nadu government also requested to scrap the idea of formation of a new committee which the Supreme Court refused to do.⁴⁷ **Joint Inspection committee:** The Supreme Court also constituted a joint inspection committee on Mullaperiyar dam to conduct a chemical test of the samples of seepage water from over the 119 years old dam. This committee was constituted to supervise the restoration of full reservoir level (FRL) in the Mullaperiyar dam to the elevation of 142ft. Its report was based on the studies and investigations done by man agencies. According to the report of the committee appointed by the Supreme Court which was headed by former chief justice of India A.S Anand the dam is structurally and hydrological safe and Tamil Nadu can raise the water level from 136ft to

⁴⁵ Meena Pillai, *the Mullaperiyar Dam: Risking Media*, Mediating Risk, p.31

⁴⁶ Damodaran Pradeep, *The Mullaperiyar water war*, Rupa publication, New Delhi, 2014, p. 16

⁴⁷ Ibid., p.66

142ft after carrying out certain repairs. The report also says that the dam is seismically safe. On demand of Kerala for the constructions of the new dam, the committee said that in view of the age of existing reservoir building a new one could be considered as an alternative proposal. If the new dam will be constructed the maximum water level of that dam should be fixed at 155ft and a fresh agreement should be signed between the two states on water sharing and maintenance.⁴⁸

Therefore the empowered committee has concluded the existing Mullaperiyar dam is safe on each of the hydrologic, structural and seismic consideration and said that the water level can now be raised to 142ft from the existing 136ft. On 18 February 2010, the Supreme Court decided to constitute a five-member empowered committee to study all the issues of Mullaperiyar Dam and seek a report from it within six Months. The Bench in its draft order said Tamil Nadu and Kerala would have the option to nominate a member each, who could be either a retired judge or a technical expert. The five member committee will be headed by former chief justice of India A.S. Anand to go into all issues relating to the dam's safety and the storage level. The then late Tamil Nadu chief minister M. Karunanidhi said that immediately after the Supreme Court announced its decision to set up a committee he had written to set up a committee he had written to congress president asking the centre to mediate between Kerala and Tamil Nadu on Mullaperiyar issue. However the then leader of opposition the late chief minister of Tamil Nadu J. Jayalalitha objected to the TN government move. She said that this would give advantage to Kerala in the issue. Meanwhile, Kerala water resources minister N.K Premachandran told the assembly that the state should have the right of construction, ownership, operation and maintenance of the new dam, while giving water to Tamil Nadu on the basis of a clear cut agreement. He also informed the media that former Supreme Court judge K.T Thomas will represent Kerala on the expert panel constituted by Supreme Court. On 8 march 2010, Tamil Nadu told the supreme court that it was not interested in adjudicating the dispute with Kerala before the special "empowered" committee appointed by the apex court for settling the inter-state issue. However, Supreme Court refused to accept Tamil Nadu's request to scrap the decision to form the empowered committee. The Supreme Court also criticized the union government on

⁴⁸ S.V Jayaraj, *Periyar Dam Project*, op. cit., p. 67

its reluctance in funding the empowered committee.⁴⁹ The supervisory sub-committee is headed by an engineer from the cwc and two other members from the respective states.⁵⁰

Mullaperiyar Inter-State water Dispute

The dispute between Kerala and Tamil Nadu states is because of the control and safety of the dam and validity and fairness of the lease agreement. The dispute began in 1998 when Tamil Nadu wanted to raise the height of water level and Kerala opposed to it. The dispute came to Supreme Court on 27 February, 2006 after being tried in the Madras and the Kerala High Court. The Supreme Court in February, 2006 allowed Tamil Nadu to raise the water level of the dam to 152ft. in response to which Kerala government enacted irrigation and water conservation (Amendment) Act, 2006 to ensure safety of all endangered dams in the state, according to which the second schedule of Mullaperiyar dam which was constructed in 1895 as endangered and fixes its maximum water level to 136ft and restrain from obstructing Tamil Nadu government to raise the water level. According to Kerala government, if the water level would be increased then it will have more pressure to be handled by the already leaking dam. While the Tamil Nadu government wanted the 2006 order of Supreme Court to be implemented so as to increase the water level to 142ft. Kerala in its suit also claimed that the Periyar River was an inter-state river. So Tamil Nadu cited a 1950 report signed by then Kerala state irrigation minister VR Krishna Iyer recording the Periyar was an inter-state river since drainage area lay in Madras.

For Tamil Nadu the Mullaperiyar dam is like a life line for the people of Madras presidency for irrigation, drinking and also for the generation of the power in lower Periyar water station and as we know the region of Madras presidency is shadow and arid. So the government of Tamil Nadu instead of raising the water level in the dam to 142ft. pointing out the failure of crops. According to an estimate the crop losses due to the reduction of the dam between 1980 and 2005. Tamil Nadu has also raised an issue that the dam is given to Tamil Nadu in lease for 999 years. So, it has right over the control of the dam and its water

⁴⁹ J Venkatesan, *Supreme Court constitutes empowered committee to go into Mullaperiyar issues*, The Hindu. Chennai, India, 2010

⁵⁰ Kerala Government's arguments, expert-eyes.org, accessed on 27-5-2021

but Kerala obstructs Tamil Nadu to do so by calling the lease as invalid. And Kerala has the issue about the fairness of these agreements. According to them lease agreement which was signed in 1886 was unfair and they have challenged its validity in the Supreme Court. Kerala's main concern is the safety of the 119 years old dam and the people living around the reservoir. As it has been already mentioned above that there is a National Periyar Park nearby the dam reservoir which consists of animals which has been declared as endangered species. So, if the height of the dam water will be increased then it will also be a great threat for these endangered species. Kerala proposed for decommissioning of the dam and construction of a new dam which has been challenged by the Tamil Nadu.

The Land Encroachments on Western Ghats

Historical Background of the Issue

Devikulam is a small hill station about 5 kilometers from Munnar in idukki district of the southern state of Kerala, India. It lies 1,800 meters (5,900 ft) above sea level. The name Devikulam is a conjunction of the words *Devi*, from the goddess Devi and *kulam* meaning pond. According to legend, the goddess sita Devi of the Ramayana epic bathed in the beautiful Devikulam lake waters surrounded by lush, green hills, now named Sita Devi Lake. The lake draws tourists not only because of its sacredness but also for the curative powers of its mineral waters. Most of the inhabitants in this town speak Malayalam and Tamil. Nearby, are the scenic Pallivasal Waterfalls, dense, green tea plantations, and the natural vegetation of slim red and blue and yellow gum trees. Munnar-Devikulam is facing issues of encroachments, illegal constructions, unscientific tourism flow and contamination of river water. The issues require both administrative and scientific remedies. A master plan with focus on environmental sustenance of the region is essential.⁵¹

After a gap, the district administration has started action against illegal construction in Munnar, this time with the attachment of property. District collector H. Dinesan has cancelled the title deeds of three resorts at Pallivasal including one under construction for violating the rules of the title. The conditions in the title deeds issued as per the 1964 rules specifying that the land should be used only for agriculture purposes and any constructions

⁵¹ Sulochana Nalpatt, *Munnarinte Kadha(mal)*, Mathurubhoomi Books, Kozhikode, 1976, p. 87

should be for residential purpose and any constructions should be for residential purpose have been found to be violated. The construction of multistoried buildings for commercial purposes is against the rule. The constructions include the Plum Judy resort that has been renamed as Amber Day madaparambil resort and one under final stages of constructions.⁵² Mr. Dinesan told The Hindu on Saturday that there is a report by the Director, vigilance and Anti- Corruption Bureau (VACB), to the government specifying the violations of the rules and action has been taken as per it. The tahsildar has been asked to take over the resorts. They would be attached to the government. Environmentalists raised the issue of illegal and unauthorized constructions in Devikulam taluk after Bijo Mani had complained to the VACB promoting it to investigate the cases.⁵³

The recent tussle between an elected representative and a district official in Munnar in Idukki district in Kerala once again brought to focus the problem of land encroachment in the mountain town. Munnar was severely affected by the August 2018 floods. It was also scarred by the 1924 floods, but the encroachers are unwilling to learn nature's lessons. The Idukki region of the Western Ghats has been the hotbed of the controversy surrounding the demarcation of the ecologically sensitive areas, and it is likely to reappear with the coming elections. As communities in the Western Ghats prepare for the national elections, the Munnar-Devikulam region and its fragile ecology are turning hot subjects of political debate not only in Idukki constituency but also in entire Kerala. With settlers and land mafias resisting any governmental action against encroachments and illegal constructions, an environmental catastrophe is now lurking behind in areas like Chinnakanal, Pallivasal, Anayirankal and Bison Valley in addition to Munnar and Devikulam Munnar, plantations, and resort and hotel mafias are causing massive changes in land use patterns. A few weeks ago S. Rajendran, member of Kerala's legislative assembly from Munnar, was caught on camera insulting publicly a sub-collector who opposes encroachments and illegal constructions in Munnar and eleven surrounding village panchayats.

⁵² Giji K. Raman, *spotlight again on illegal constructions in Munnar*, Idukki, 25 January 2020

⁵³ Ibid.

The target of his slander was sub-collector Renu Raj and the provocation was her decision to stop construction of a shopping complex without required permissions on a river bank. As per the visuals aired by leading Malayalam television channels, Rajendran, a member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and R Karuppusami, the local Panchayat president, who incidentally belongs to the rival Indian National Congress (INC) party, had blocked the revenue officials who came to prevent the construction and launched the tirade against the sub-collector unmindful of the presence of television cameras. The environmentally sensitive Idukki was represented in the outgoing Lok Sabha by Joyce George, a lawyer associated with High Range Protection Council, an organization formed by apolitical vested interests exclusively to lead agitations against the implementation of both the Madhav Gadgil Committee and Kasturirangan Committee reports for the conservation of the Western Ghats. Conservation of the Western Ghats and the Kasturirangan Committee report on it were the main poll issues in Idukki during the previously held Lok Sabha election.⁵⁴

Encroachment and Illegal Construction on Environment

The hilly region was severely affected by the August 2018 and 1924 floods and illegal constructions could become an election issue this year. As communities in the Western Ghats prepare for the national elections, the Munnar-Devikulam region and its fragile ecology are turning hot subjects of political debate not only in Idukki constituency but also in entire Kerala. With settlers and land mafias resisting any governmental action against encroachments and illegal constructions, an environmental catastrophe is now lurking behind in areas like Chinnakanal, Pallivasal, Anayirankal and Bison Valley in addition to Munnar and Devikulam. In Munnar, plantations, and resort and hotel mafias are causing massive changes in land use patterns. A few weeks ago S Rajendran, a member of Kerala's legislative assembly from Munnar, was caught on camera publicly insulting a sub-collector who opposes encroachments and illegal constructions in Munnar and 11 surrounding village panchayats. The target of his slander was sub-collector Renu Raj and the provocation was her

⁵⁴ T. Damu, *Munnar Rekhakal (mal)*, D.C books, Kottayam, 2010, p.123

decision to stop construction of a shopping complex without required permissions on a river bank.⁵⁵

As per the visuals aired by leading Malayalam television channels, Rajendran, a member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and R Karuppusami, the local Panchayat president, who incidentally belongs to the rival Indian National Congress party, had blocked the revenue officials who came to prevent the construction and launched the tirade against the sub-collector unmindful of the presence of television cameras. The environmentally sensitive Idukki was represented in the outgoing Lok Sabha by Joyce George, a lawyer associated with High Range Protection Council, an organization formed by apolitical vested interests exclusively to lead agitations against the implementation of both the Madhav Gadgil Committee and Kasturirangan Committee reports for the conservation of the Western Ghats. Conservation of the Western Ghats and the Kasturirangan Committee report on it were the main poll issues in Idukki during the previously held Lok Sabha election.⁵⁶

From the beginning of this chapter we have seen each and every environmental issue and its reports on various types of commissions and interventions. All of these issues are mainly presented with a narration model. It says whether it is good for the political parties or not. Each and every political party formed in high range on the support of peoples. At this end of this chapter it is already stated that in one way or another each environmental issues has been beneficial and detrimental to the growth of the party. The reason of theses environmental problems affected in the polling ratio of elections. Because the people can always support for the good working of political parties. . If the Mullaperiyar agitation, the agitation against the Anakkara airport and the Munnar Devikulam issues were all concentrated in certain areas, then the street agitation was active in all parts of Idukki. Simultaneously, millions of people went on strike. This chapter explores how environmental issues have contributed to the growth and delay in politics. The next chapter is the continuation of this chapter.

⁵⁵ Malaya manorama, 17 April 2017

⁵⁶ K. A. Shaji, *Despite nature's protests, encroachment and illegal construction are rampant in Kerala's Munnar*, 2014

CHAPTER – III

ENVIRONMENTAL STRUGGLES: POLITICS

In this project 1st chapter deals with geo- setting and political history. The second chapter deals with narration of the environmental issues. There are five important issues are discussed. The third chapter discussed about Analysis or discourse of environmental issue. In this chapter mainly looked the analysis of each environmental issue. Public, government and political parties has different approaches and opinion about the all environment issue. Some agencies supported and some has dis supported on the issues. All have different opinion about the issues. Mainly in this chapter take five environmental issues. They are Maniyangadan forest environmental issues, Madhav gadgil Kasturirangan report, Mullaperiyar dam issues, Munnar – Devikulam issues and Anakkara airport issues. This chapter is going to tell how each environmental issue affected in each area. Through this chapter try to understand analyzing each environmental issue.

Environment and Public

Various types of environmental problems have occurred in many parts of the high range. Many problems have taken place against the safety and life of the people. The people have staged many problems and protests against the government. People have come forward against every environmental problem irrespective of caste or creed. As all these issues affect the lives of the people, people have come forward together and people from different parts of the high range. Many spoke out against each environmental issue and expressed their views. Maniyangadan environmental issue, Anakkara Airport issue, Kasturirangan report, Munnar Devikulam environmental issue and Mullaperiyar issues are most important environmental issue affected by the people lives. People have different opinion about each environmental issue. The Kasturirangan problem was one of the biggest problems directly faced by the people in many parts of India and it created many problems in the environment and lives of the people. The madhav gadgil Kasturi rangan report was about every issue where everyone is losing their own land. One of the most widespread protests in the history of the High Range was the street protests against the

anti-farmer references in the Kasturi Rangan report.¹ Under the leadership of the High Range Protection Committee, farmers took to the streets in all parts of the district, even in the countryside. Millions of people took part in the 48-hour (November 11, 2013, midnight, November 19, 2013) non-partisan-caste-religious protest. Women and children went on strike. Farmers raised awareness against the Kasturirangan report and cooked food in makeshift ovens on the streets, strengthening the struggle for survival.² The people demanded that the Centre withdraw the order of the Ministry of Environment and Forests declaring the settlements in the Western Ghats as Ecologically Vulnerable Areas.³

Various agitations took place in Kattappana, Adimali, Rajakkad, Nedumkandam, Kumily, Anakkara, Peerumade, Kuttikanam, Cheruthoni, Erattayar, Karimpan, Murickassery, Thopramkudy, Chelachuvad and Mankulam. Street plays and musical performances were performed in many places. All this has sent a message to the people that the Western Ghats Conservation Project will have a major impact on farmers. Kerala priests and politicians unite to oppose Gadgil report on Western Ghats. People started strike against through this issue. On November 18 2013 the LDF and its allies called for a Bandh as a state sacrifice. Thousands of protesters mainly from Idukki and Wayanad districts took to the street protest of the government's decision to turn the Western Ghats into a forest.⁴ Another issue is Anakkara Airport issue, this also an important environmental problem. The Anakkara environmental issue was held on the year 2013.

Anakkara is a geographic area of around 50 square kilometers (12,000 acres) that spans across Vandanmettu, Chakkupallam Village in the Udumbanchola Taluk of Idukki District. People started raise their sound against on this issue. This is a strike by farmers who will be evicted if the plan materializes against the government's decision to build an Air port on the embankment near Vadenmedu. The Greenfield airport project at Anakkara in Idukki has gathered steam with members of several panchayats nearby extending their support to the venture, which was bogged down by protests over land. An all-party meeting held at Thekkady on Sunday has constituted a 100-member committee for the

¹ Manoj Mathirappally, *Aa Jalabomb ippozhumundo Talakkumukalil*, Madhiyam Azchapathipp, Kozhikode, 2013, p. 56

² Manoj Mathirappally, *Veno Ankkarayilum oru Vimanathavalam (mal)*, Madhiyam Azchapathipp, Kozhikode, 2013, p.67

³ Jojo Kaavilpurayidam, *Tgeruvilirangiya Malayorajanatha*, Mashithand Vol. 1, issue 1, Ed. Manoj Mathirappilli, J. B Printers, Kochi, 2014, p. 35

⁴ D Babu Paul, *Giriparvam*, Kottayam, 1976, p.47

smooth implementation of the venture.⁵ This issue mainly affected for the common people and they have lost their lands. People never supported for this report. Next issue is Munnar Devikulam land encroachment. After a gap, the district administration has started action against illegal construction in Munnar, this time with the attachment of property. Many of the trees were cut down and clear the forest this is purpose of government. People not supported continue these land encroachments. Misusing the fears of the local community, land mafias are now thriving in Munnar and other parts of Idukki causing enormous damage to the land and livelihood. They started fight against the authorities and government. Maniyangadan environmental issues also a most important environmental issue in high range.

The recommendations which were prepared without questioning or denying need to protect the forest were very favorable to farmers. The farmers not given land to the government and they started to fight against the issues. Mullaperiyar dam issues is the another environmental problem faced by the people. Mullaperiyar dam, Idukki and the Lower Periyar hydel projects and the Periyar Valley Irrigation Project of Kerala are located in the main Periyar River. Farmers are a group of human beings who cannot lives as if they were either nature or man. The contention is regarding the safety of the dam, the insecurity amongst the downstream population in kerala and the water needs of a large section of people from the vaigai basin. There have been reports of occasional violence and disruption of movement of vegetables and some other essential commodities from Tamil nadu to Kerala. Peoples not supported for the government decision they started protest against on the issue. People have different opinion about each environmental issue. Because all problem are mainly affected their own life. Mainly People are depended on the forest resources.⁶

Environmental Issues: Impact

In high range most of the peoples are farmers their main work is cultivation. There is lot of impacts in environmental issues; mainly socio- economic cultural impacts are faced people through the issues. All environmental issues are affected for ordinary people. Social impacts are impacts on the livelihood of people and the services the natural

⁵ Sunny Ilanjimattam, *Lokam Arinja Kumily*, Kumily, 2013, p. 12

⁶ J Kurias, *Highranginte Kudiyetta Charithram*, A.K.C.C Diocese of Idukki, Idukki, p. 82

environment provides to people. The unsustainable use of natural resources.⁷ Using resources in a manner that conflicts with existing uses. Affecting the ability of people to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change. Environmental problems are simultaneously social problems as they way they affect different social groups is associated with inequality. The incidents of violence and destruction of public property started off with the issuance of directions by the MoEF on the 13th November 2013 under Section 5 of the Environmental Protection Act 1986. Kannur and Kozhikode districts witnessed widespread violence on the 15th November. Forest offices, government vehicles and public transport buses were set fire by the angry mob in several places in North Kerala. Whatever the environmental problem, the most important challenge is for people to lose their land. All environmental issues affected in socio economic sector of people.⁸

The government and higher land mafia groups will buy their land from less money and sale from high price to other groups. Due to such problems the prices of the land here are falling and demand is declining. When people have no other choice, they give their own land to members at a lower price. Environmental problems are one of the biggest problems in their daily lives. People face a natural social crisis when they do not have the opportunity to sell their produce and buy it. The economic problems are also one of the biggest environmental impacts facing the people. When people cultivate and the goods become priceless and no more comes to buy, they face economic problems. Political impact also the important problem affected the each environmental issue. Peoples are against the political parties and they not give vote to the representatives. It will affect the voting pattern of the parties. Political impact also the major environmental issues and some peoples have move from party. Some of the major issues are associated the daily inhabitants and their life. All environmental issues are created socio economic and political impacts of people's life.⁹

Environmental and Political Opinion

Party leaders have different opinion about each environmental issue. Some political parties have supported the environmental issues and others are not supported the issues.

⁷ Ibid., p. 84

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

On the madhav Gadgil Kasturi rangan issues political opinion on the method of Harthal strategy. Possibly for the first time in the history of Kerala, a hartal led by the unlikely combination of a powerful section of the Church and the Left Democratic Front has rejected both the Western Ghats Panel Report (WGEEP) and the High Level Working Group Report (HLWG) claiming it as anti farmer. On November 18, 2013, the LDF and its supporters called for a state wide Bandh which brought normal life to a standstill. Thousands of protestors took to streets, mainly from Idukki and Wayanad Districts. Events that are unfolding in Kerala hold significance for the entire country.¹⁰ Firstly it reveals the extent to which forces are trying to decide the fate of a common natural heritage like the Western Ghats through short sighted political means. Secondly it reveals the lack of democratic process by which the people of a region as diverse and ecologically significant as the Western Ghats are not taken into confidence by the Governments while introducing a new governance process.

Thirdly the Western Ghats and the two reports on it has become the oven hot political weapon in an election year for Kerala.¹¹ Another one is Mullaperiyar issues the opinion of political parties. A serious incompatibility between proper democratic, legal and administrative mechanisms to deal with the shared water resources within the country has become more evident with the raging river water dispute between Tamil Nadu and Kerala over the Mullaperiyar dam issue. The issue has blown out of proportion with political administration involvement of the centre and ineffective implementation of the Supreme Court judgments. Despite its history, century-old dam construction and an ongoing economic renaissance in the region, the issue is more concentrated towards the political differences. Instead of dealing with Mullaperiyar as a geo-political conflict, it should be tackled as an institutional, legal and administrative failure in the region.¹² Munnar Devikulam land encroachment today also continued, but some political parties strongly supported the issues. As communities in the Western Ghats prepare for the national elections, the Munnar-Devikulam region and its fragile ecology are turning hot subjects of political debate not only in Idukki constituency but also in entire Kerala. With settlers and land mafias resisting any governmental action against encroachments and illegal constructions, an

¹⁰ Deepika, 2013 November 19. P. 4

¹¹ Jojo Kaavilpurayidam, *Tgeruvilirangiya Malayora Janatha*, op. cit., p. 45

¹² <http://www.ias4sure.com>, accessed on 10- 7-2021

environmental catastrophe is now lurking behind in areas like Chinnakanal, Pallivasal, Anayirankal and Bison Valley in addition to Munnar and Devikulam. Whatever be the stand of major political parties, two recent official reports, one prepared by a parliamentary sub-committee and another by the Kerala Revenue Department, detail the macro- and micro-level impact of human activity in Munnar. The reports say the region has already lost much of its natural wealth and warn that any further delay in addressing the encroachment issue would mean the end of the hill station. Another is Anakkara airport issue.

An all-party meeting held at Thekkady on Sunday has constituted a 100-member committee for the smooth implementation of the venture. The project was mooted by the central government nine years ago and had received approvals from all concerned agencies, including the Airport Authority of India. The Union government had then offered to bear 20% of the total construction cost. The previous UDF government had allotted Rs 5 crore in its first budget and Rs 50 lakh in the second budget for conducting a primary survey for the project. But as locals protested, the government had dropped the project. The project came to the limelight recently with the state government announcing an airstrip at Idukki in the last budget.¹³

Changes in Voting Pattern

The people of idukki constituency have so far been opposed to the elections as response to the policies of the central and state Governments, but this time the situation is different electoral constituency defeat. The fact is that the election result in the Idukki constituency is a matter of pride for both the congress and the LDF. The last minute stand taken by the kerala congress on the issue of seat sharing will be a setback to the congress politically if it loses under pressure from the congress leadership. In the case of the LDF, the constituency that was abandoned last time must be recaptured. In spite of such favorable circumstances, if it is not able to win, it may never be able to do so again. Moreover the notoriety at the Idukki LDF candidate could not win without the support of any Kerala congress can be changed with this. But the High Range protection Committees

¹³ Manoj Mathirappally, *veno Ankkarayilum oru vimanathavalam*, Madhyamam Weekly, Kozhikode, 2013, p. 56

sees this as more of a life and death struggle than LDF.¹⁴ If the committee that crushed P T Thomas desire to be candidate again in Idukki and openly challenged to the government and the UDF to become a member, then the congress will not be able to stand tall in front of P T Thomas if it wants to win this election.¹⁵ The LDF High Range Protection Committee is now facing only elections but the fact that the troubles caused by fielding a joint candidate against the congress are yet to come should not be overlooked. In general, the political tradition of the hill people is leaning to the right.

Idukki is also a stronghold of the Kerala congress MLA and the Joseph group along with the congress. Since the formation of the Idukki Lok Sabha constituency, the LDF candidates have won only three elections so far. C. M Stephen, P J Kurian, Pala K. M Mathew, A C Jose, P C Jacko, P T Thomas the congress leaders who came to parliament from here said that the LDF candidates M. M Lawrence once and Francis George twice represented the constituency and M .M Lawrence was won. The hill people were with the congress and the Kerala congress in most of the elections held in Idukki, whether in the Lok Sabha or the Assembly. The two parties, which have a decisive influence in the constituency, have good relations with the majority Christian voters in the constituency. However for the pattayam issue and for the protection of Western Ghats, the church leadership was split between the congress and the kerala congress.¹⁶

P T Thomas did not support the 90 % hill people in the idukki Lok Sabha constituency who were concerned about the protection of the Western Ghats. With this, P T Thomas, who had advocated for the Gadgil Report, could not justify his position without intervening in any other environmental issues, including large- scale land grabbing, deforestation, river pollution and water exploitation. To make matters worse, P T Thomas return to the scene on the same day as the High Range residents 48 hour street strike over the protection of the Western Ghats in favor of the panel's report. The congress leadership has removed P T Thomas from the list of candidates who had been active in the hope of contesting the Lok Sabha once again with the anti- people.¹⁷ The church leadership's communication with A K Antony, who had a decisive influence even in the policy making

¹⁴ Personal Interview with Mr. Jiji K Raman, Local Correspondent, The Hindu, aged 45, Idukki on 14/05/2021

¹⁵ Manoj Mathirappally, *Idukkiyile Janavidhi Arkkoppam*, Mashithand vol.2, 2014, p. 54

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 53

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 54

of the congress, also backfired. Even the chief minister could not protect P T Thomas, who is very close to Oommen Chandy. In fact, the congress and P T Thomas had two views on the panel report. When he demanded that Gadgil report be implemented as it was, the KPCC was of the view that it contained anti-farmer remarks and should be avoided. In such a situation, the party leadership decided to get rid of seat Thomas. Wayanad MP M I Shanawas is back with the people on the gadgil issue. Idukki is the seat where the CPM unexpectedly got back the change of front of the kerala congress Joseph group. But the state leadership is well aware that it will not be easy for the party, which has lost face in the district through MM Mani's controversial speech in the Ancheri Baby murder case, to win its own candidate here. Therefore, the CPM leadership indicated that it was ready for a retail compromise in the Idukki seat. When the CPM announced the candidates for the 15 to 14 seats it is contesting, expects for Idukki.¹⁸

The kerala congress MLA was in the kerala congress today with the congress draft notification of the Kasturirangan report and the division of seats. The High Range protection Committee, which announced that it would field its own candidate in response to the betrayal by the congress and the CPM, also had this hope. However, the LDF and the high range Protection Committee calculated that Francis George known to the public would be the candidate. But in the face of KM Mani's ingenuity, P J Joseph and his associates were disappointment with the work they had been waiting for. The High Range Protection Committee then considered the names of PC Cyriac, a member of the state Government- appointed expert committee appointed to study the Kasturi rangan report and a former chairman of the Rubber Board and a vested interest in the agricultural sector. But the CPM wisely made some maneuvers to adapt to the changed situation and it succeeded.¹⁹ The CPM has started that the person nominated by the High Range Protection Committee will contest as the LDF candidate in Idukki. Subsequently, the leaders of the two sides exchanged views several times.

That's how Advocate Joyce George, the legal adviser to the High Range Protection Committee, came to be known. Following the Agreement, the CPM announced Joyce George as an independent candidate for the LFD, and George was soon nominated for the High Range Protection Committee. The new alliance strengthens the allegation that the

¹⁸ Manoj Mathirappally, Idukkiyile Janavidhi Arkkoppam, op. cit., p. 55

¹⁹ Personal with Mr. Roy Kurian, Party Member, Thopramkudy, United Democratic Front, aged 56, on 12/05/2021

High Range Protection Committee is with the UDF government on behalf of the LDF. The stand taken by the High Range Protection Committee on the protection of the Western Ghats and the pattayam issue was supported by all sections of the people apart from politics. This includes those from the congress, the CPM and the BJP. There is no other reason why strikes like 48- Hour Street protects are so successful. However, the committee backtracked on its decision to field its own candidate against the current political system. This is the changes in the political system of Idukki.²⁰

Environmental Issues and Religion

In the context of the report, the common sloganeering refrain was that ‘houses will turn green’ and ‘leopards will roam free in human habitations’. The High Range Protection Council led by the Roman Catholic Church organized a 48-hour road blockade under the banner ‘occupy the streets’ at Kattappana the district headquarters in Idukki district on the 18th ad 19th of November. In fact the Wayanad MP Sri M. I Shanawas called on Mrs. Sonia Gandhi in New Delhi along with Bishop Remigius Inchananiyel of Tharamassary Diocese, patron of the resistance group spearheading the campaign in north Kerala, to convey the anxieties of the people Before the Kasturirangan report submitted in 2013, the government had considered the madhav gadgil report of 2011. The 2014 Lok sabha election was won by LDF backed independent candidate Joice George with a margin of 50,000 votes.

The Catholic Church, an influential pressure group in district had openly supported Joice George. In the 2019 general election, he was defeated by a huge margin by Dean Kuriakose of the congress. Importantly the HRSS looks to be entirely out of the polls scene this time. It had stayed away from the recent local body elections too. It had fielded candidates in the 2015 local body elections under the banner of the LDF. HRSS general convener Fr Sebastian Kochupurakal said, “HRSS members will not support any front in the coming assembly election. The members will not support any front in the coming assembly election. The members can decide on whom they should supportn²¹. However, the HRSS is active as a non-political entity for protecting the interest of the farmers”. In the last assembly election, the congress did not get an MLA from the district even though the Kerala congress (Joseph) and Kerala congress (Mani) had secured wins in Thodupuzha

²⁰ Ibid., p. 56

²¹ Personal Interview with Mr. Selvam Raj, Advocate, aged 34, Thayikayil (H), Vathikudy on 13/05/2021

(P J Joseph) and Idukki (Roshy Augustine). Out of the five assembly seats in the district, Devikulam and Peerumedu were won by the LDF. CPI (M) leaders M.M Mani and S Rajendran won from Udumbanchola and Devikulam respectively and CPI leader E S Bijimol from Peerumedu.²² The Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, the state's largest church which accounts for the maximum number of farmers living in villages located in Western Ghats, too has strongly opposed the report. Both the Congress and the CPI (M) issued specific statements rubbing the WGEPP report, saying it did not consider the livelihood issues of thousands of people who lived there. "We will physically beat back anyone who comes to our area to implement this report" threatened PC George, MLA and chief whip of the ruling Congress-led United Democratic Front government.²³

Conflict on Environmental Issue

The conflict between Kerala and Tamil Nadu over Mullaperiyar dam issue deepened over time. Its ramifications spread into other realms when the legal battle between Kerala and Tamil Nadu gained momentum in 2000. It could reach its peak in 2006 when Kerala passed the controversial amendment. As a result the tussle came into public sphere and led to issues revolving around economic dependency. In 1976, Kerala built a mega dam in Idukki with a height of 555ft and water storage area of 16,000 acres with a hydel power project of 800 MW capacities. But the dam was not having much catchment area and water supply. Hence Parameswaran Nair, the then chief engineer of Kerala electricity board made a recommendation to reduce the level of Mullaperiyar dam from 152ft to 136ft and to divert the 16ft water to Idukki reservoir. Hence Kerala induced K.K. Thomas the then MLA of Peerumedu constituency to gather local people's support in making a propaganda that the dam was weak and its breach would cause damage in the downstream of Periyar.²⁴

The issue has become a point of focus for within and interstate power politics. For pressing Kerala to raise the level in the dam, several political parties in Tamil Nadu threatened to stop the food supply to Kerala and the transport between the two States. In 2006, against the amendment, Tamil Nadu made a unanimous political call to block all

²² <https://www.thehindu.religiousorg>, Accessed on 10-7-2021

²³ K. T Rajeev, *Sahiyarthiyil Nennu Madakayathra: Idukki Mannum Manushanum (Mal)*, Thrissur, 2007, p. 143

²⁴ <https://www.thehindu.mullaperyardam conflict org>, Accessed on 10-7-2021

routes to Kerala. The new dam proposal again created similar moves in Tamil Nadu towards an economic blockade against Kerala. Tamil Nadu leader's reason out as Kerala depends on Tamil Nadu for its food supply; Tamil Nadu has the right to use the waters of Kerala. V. Gopalsamy the leader of Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK) party in Tamil Nadu involves himself in the protests against the new dam construction. He gave a petition to Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh in 2004 and 2005.²⁵ When Kerala enacted the new dam safety act in 2006, he organized a protest march from Madurai on 19 September 2006 and from Theni on 8 November 2007. He also made a protest walk in connection with Mullaperiyar dam issue from Madurai to Gudalur in December 2006. He participated in a fast in 2007, 2009 and 2011 and organized economic blockade in 29 December 2009 at Cumbum. On 9 February 2010, he organized demonstration against the issue at Tamukkam, Madurai. With several organizations he could organize obstacles in thirteen roads connecting Kerala on 28 May 2010. But the political leaders of Kerala are of the view that the farmers of Tamil Nadu depend on Kerala for selling their produce. These moves indicate that the Mullaperiyar conflict is a sensitive issue and the emotions of local people can be exploited by politicians according to their whims and fancies. Thus the dam issue has much space for the party leaders in the local politics both in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.²⁶

Kerala's Arguments the 1886 lease deed was forced upon the Travancore ruler. The power generation in Idukki reservoir will come to a halt if the Mullaperiyar dam level is increased from 136ft to 152ft. Kerala argues that the gross area irrigated by the Mullaperiyar dam increased from 24,280 ha in 1896 to 69,200 ha in 1970 - 71 (when the water level was 152ft) to 92,670 ha in 1994 - 95 (when the water level was reduced to 136ft). Premachandran, the then Kerala Minister for Water Resources suggested that a more equitable solution to the issue would be to create excess storage capacity within Tamil Nadu's territory.²⁷ According to Mining and Geology department of Kerala and the Centre for Earth Science Studies Thiruvananthapuram, Mullaperiyar dam stands over deep-seated fractures vulnerable to earthquake. Failure of Mullaperiyar dam would pose threat to 3 millions of people living in Idukki, Kottayam, Ernakulum, Pathanamthitta and Alappuzha and to a number of dams in the downstream including the Idukki dam. Kerala

²⁵ A. Achutha , *mullaperiyarum Anthersamusdhana Nadhijalaprashanagalum(mal)*, Kerala shasthra Sahitya Parishad, Kozhikode, 2006, p. 45

²⁶ Ibid., p. 46

²⁷ E. K. Karunakaran Nair, *Idukkiyude Kadha*, National Book, Kottayam, 1987, p. 76

also wants to have a hike in the lease amount on water supplied to Tamil Nadu as it earns Rs.170millions from cultivation using Mullaperiyar dam water. According to the agreement, the lease amount is thirty rupees per acre and it is subject to revision every thirty years. The Left Democratic Front gave a promise to construct a new dam during the 2011 assembly election. The live storage at 152 feet level is 10,600 mcft and the dead storage at 104 feet is 5100 mcft. At 136 feet storage level, the irrigation potential is 70,000 acres. Even after independence both states renewed the agreement without any compulsion. If the dam site is in an earthquake prone area, the new dam is also at risk.²⁸

Technical Failures of Mullaperiyar Dam

Liquefaction of the materials used in the dam. Liquefaction in the foundation of soil. Inability to estimate performance of the dam and foundation characteristics by comparison with case histories of dam failures. Slope failures induced by ground motions. Sliding of the dam on weak foundations materials Disruption of dam by major fault movement in the foundation. Loss of free board due to slope failures or soil compaction. Piping failure through cracks induced by the ground motions. Over topping of dam due to slides into their serviouir. Over topping of dam due to failure of spillway of failure of dams upstream.²⁹ Water Level – The maintenance of water level at Mullaperiyar dam is one of the main points of disagreement between Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Kerala argues that the century-old dam is not structurally strong enough to withstand water above 136 ft. and Tamil Nadu claims that since the strengthening work ordered by CWC has been done, the water level should be restored to its original height of 142 ft.

The amendment of the Irrigation and Water Conservation Act of Kerala restricting the water level at Mullaperiyar permanently at 136 ft. aggravated the conflict as Tamil Nadu complained that the reduction in the water level since 1970s, has led to crop failure in 8000 ha of agricultural lands relying on Mullaperiyar waters (GoK, 2006). Kerala countered this by pointing out that the Mullaperiyar waters are now being used to irrigate more land than what it was originally planned for (MoWR, 2010). Tamil Nadu has the counterargument that cultivated area has expanded due to better water management practices on their side.

²⁸ Chandrika Choudhary, *On the Mullaperiyar Dam Dispute*, Vishakhapatnam, p. 87

²⁹ Alex George and Aparana Mohan, *Mullaperiyar Dam Issue*, Technology Sports, 2011, p. 25

Safety – One of the primary technical issues has been the safety of the people living in Kerala, downstream of the dam. The safety concerns are built on the fact that the dam has outlived its life and that it was built with old technology. Adding to these apprehensions of the resident population were the instances of leaks observed in the dam, leaching of the Surki mortar, seismic disturbances and severe floods. According to Kerala, if the dam collapses, it would wash away a stretch of about 25 km between Mullaperiyar and Idukki dams affecting about 0.1million people. If this causes damage to Idukki dam, it would further destroy human settlements of millions of people. In 2006, Kerala employed experts from IIT Delhi and IIT Roorkee to study the safety related parameters and they concluded that the dam was vulnerable to seismic activities. Tamil Nadu has read Kerala's arguments on dam safety as a ruse to deny them water. They asserted that after the strengthening works the dam is safe and that even if it breaches, the downstream dam at Idukki will be able to contain the waters.³⁰

Role of technical Institutions – The Mullaperiyar conflict has brought into fore the inadequacy of the Indian State to formulate a legally binding accountability mechanism to assess the safety of dams. The dam safety issues falls in the domain of Ministry of Water Resources. However, it does not have a comprehensive strategy to address dam safety related issues which have serious implications to rivers and dependent populations. In the case of Mullaperiyar dam, the technical matters pertaining to safety were presented before the technical authority at the Centre which acted by restricting the water level and suggesting the strengthening measures. Ambiguity in the role of technical institutions led to the tussle between Kerala and the Centre over the authority to decide on the safety of the dam. To make the matter worse, the CWC-led expert committee with representatives from Kerala and Tamil Nadu failed to reach an amicable solution. Later on, Kerala approached other technical institutes to conduct independent assessments and based on their findings, passed legislative measures to restrict the water level at Mullaperiyar to ensure its safety. These moves have led to increasing mutual distrust and public panic in both the states.³¹In Mullaperiyar conflict, the primary issue for Kerala is the safety of the people living downstream of the dam. It argues that the dam has outlived its life which was built when dam building technology was in its infancy. The leaks observed in the dam,

³⁰ D. Daniel, 'The Travancore Tamilnadu Congress- Early History', The South Indian History Congress Proceedings, Vol. 1, Hyderabad, 1986

³¹ T. Damu, *Munnar Rekhakal*, D.C. Books, Kottayam, 1976, p. 96

leaching of the Surki mortar, seismic disturbances and severe floods have enhanced the fears of Kerala over the safety of the dam. According to Kerala, if the dam breaches it would wash away a stretch of about 25 km between Mullaperiyar and Idukki dams affecting about 0.1million people. If this causes damage to Idukki dam, it would further destroy human settlements of millions of people. Kerala also complains that no repair work has been carried out in the main dam below 112 ft due to stagnating water.³²

Encroachment as a Threat to Environment

Munnar and Devikulam are biodiversity hotspots known for unique natural attractions such as the Neelakurinji, a rare purplish blue flowering plant that blooms once in 12 years, and the highly endangered Nilgiri tahr. Misusing the fears of the local community, land mafias are now thriving in Munnar and other parts of Idukki causing enormous damage to the land and livelihood. They seem learned no lesson from the worst floods of August 2018 in which Munnar resembled almost a ghost town. Shops and hotels were shut with people remained in their homes or in relief camps. Devikulam Taluk had witnessed 12 major landslides and 18 monsoon-related deaths in the floods. Two dozen foreign tourists were rescued from hotels and resorts, presumably illegal constructions, in Munnar with the support of Army during landslides. Change in land use patterns had aggravated misery in Munnar according to experts. Whatever be the stand of major political parties, two recent official reports, one prepared by a parliamentary sub-committee and another by the Kerala Revenue Department, detail the macro- and micro-level impact of human activity in Munnar.

The reports say the region has already lost much of its natural wealth and warn that any further delay in addressing the encroachment issue would mean the end of the hill station. According to botanist Jomy Augustine, botanist and professor at St Thomas College in Palai, massive changes occurred during recent years in land use pattern as a result of encroachments, which have started badly affecting the famous Neelakurinji plants that blooms once in 12 years. “There is a sharp reduction in the geographical area where Neelakurinji blooms. Along with encroachment, climate change caused by environmental degradation is also affecting the geographical distribution of the plant that brought Munnar in the world tourism map,” he said. However, Augustine, who has conducted studies on Munnar’s plant species, said there was no scientific basis to the argument of a section of

³² Ibid., p.27

environmental activists that the plant was divided into several sub-species in recent years, resulting in frequent blooming. “No frequent blooming of the species as reported. In different localities, maturing of the plant happens in different occasions,” he added. Until a few years ago, the Nilgiri tahr was common in Chokramudi, a popular trekking site in Munnar. Now, a portion of the mountain range has many encroachments and the tahr population has come down drastically.³³

Criticism of Madhav Gadgil Environmental Issues

The major criticism faced by Gadgil committee report was that it was more environments friendly and not in tune with the ground realities. Recommendations were cited as impractical to implement. Gadgil report has asked for a complete eco- sensitive cover for the Western Ghats which hamper different states on energy and development fronts. There was a criticism against the constitution of a new body called WEGEA. States insist that protection can be given under existing laws. Gadgil report doesn't give a solution for revenue losses due to the implementation of its recommendations. Gadgil report is against dams in the Western Ghats, which is a crucial blow on the ailing power sector.³⁴ Considering the growing energy needs of India, critics argue that this recommendation cannot be taken. And the most important the gadgil committee report adversely affects the various mafias. When the gadgil committee report was first made public there were a lot of protests against it from the sand mining and quarrying lobbies in Goa. Many mafias created fear among farmers in Kerala that the gadgil report is against them and that they will lose livelihood if its recommendations are implemented.³⁵

The methodology adopted by Kasturirangan were criticized because the use of remote sensing and aerial survey techniques for zonal demarcation of land in Western Ghats without examining the ground reality. Demarcations of Panchayath as cultural and natural landscape is not a proper method as both areas having population clustering and tribal people living inside forest and their livelihood is much adapted to nature. The report suggested giving the power to bureaucrats and forest officials and not with Grama sabha to take decision for the developmental activities on the Western Ghats region. As per the

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Personal Interview with Mr. Eby Mathew, aged 36, Thodanmakal (H), Thopramkudy on 8/06/2021

³⁵ Ibid.

report many villages by using remote sensing technology green wash areas considered as forest and ecologically sensitive areas (ESA) though there is only rubber plantations and no forest land. Kasturirangan report left out many ecological sensitive areas as the village manthavady in Wayanad district of Kerala has been included in the WGEEP report as 40% of the area under protected area and the rest 60% in ESZI. But when the HLWG report was published the area was exclude from ESZ.³⁶

The major criticism of gadgil committee report is that it was more environmental friendly and not considers the ground realities. Recommendations were impractical to implement because it is consider entire Western Ghats region as environmentally sensitive were discard the concentration population and economic activities of people. Gadgil report asked to stop new proposed hydro electric project which will hamper the development of power sector. It is also against construction of dam without considering growing energy need and potentially of hydro electricity in the Western Ghats region. The report doesn't give solution for revenue losses due to implementations of its recommendations. The report created for among the farmers that if the recommendations are implemented they will lose their livelihood.³⁷

From the beginning to the end of the third chapter is the continuation of first and second chapter. It includes an analysis of each environment problem. The first chapter deals with the political background and geographical structure of Idukki. As the continuation of second chapter is added to each of the environmental issues, positive and negative impacts on issues. This last chapter deals with the analysis model of each environmental issues and how it affected in each area. We can understand that every environmental problem mainly affected for the poor people. The government has put forward the reports that are harmful to the people and the environment. As a result, people have faced many problems in agriculture sector also. Every environmental problem has affected the common people, politicians and most of the government. Mainly there are five major environmental issues were taken up. They were Maniyangadan forest environmental issues, Madhav gadgil Kasturirangan report, Mullaperiyar dam issues, Munnar –

³⁶ Ahammed P and Jayapal, *Conservation of Western Ghats: Contradistinctive Approaches Adopted by Expert Committees of MOEF*, International Journal of Research in Economics and Social Sciences, Vol. 8, 2018, p. 9

³⁷ Jojo Kaavilpurayidam, 'Theruvilirangiya Malayora Janatha', Mashithand Journal, Kattappana, June 2014, p. 23

Devikulam issues and Anakkara airport issues. This chapter describes each of the environmental issues and the views of the people, as well as the views of the government. This explains why each issue was supported and what was not supported. However, it was the common people who were most affected by the environmental problems. This chapter looked at the views of general public and politicians on each environmental issues of the government and how it has affected each area. By the end of the chapter we can understand how important each environmental problem and how it will affect people's lives.

CONCLUSION

The project entitled 'environmental problems affect the voting pattern' is the study about the political history on Idukki especially the problems environmental study of the district. The five major environmental issues are detaily discussed in this project. They are Maniyangadan environmental issues, gadgil Kasthuri rangon report, Anakkara Airport Issues, Mullaperiyar issues, land Encroachments on Western Ghats. The Analysis of the environmental problems also provides valuable information about the environmental history of Idukki.

The first chapter is the study about the district and political history. Idukki belong to the part of the southern Western Ghats. There are many hill stations that come under Idukki district and it is very rich place in flora. The hill other large species of floras. Idukki is especially known for its floras as they are also a major part of tourist attractions. Half of the area is fully covered by the tea estates and vegetation. There is unmatched verity of floras and it is a lack of different flowers plants. There are more than 150 verities of flower plants among which some of the major flowers are like Dahlia, sun flower, marigold, petunia, Silesia, dianthus, roses, impatiens, perennial, phlox, verbena, hibiscus, portwala etc.

Congress, CPI, BJP, AIADMK etc are the major political parties that had come into existence after independence in Idukki district. When Kerala was formed, the state was under president's rule. During the first election, the present day Idukki district is divided into two constituencies. When the new Idukki constituency formed the Karimannur disappeared. The Devikulam constituency was part of the Kottayam district and the Thodupuzha constituency was part of the Ernakulum district of these Devikulam is dual constituency. In every election Government measures, policies and procedures followed by each political party during the election time, this helped the election to go better. The reason that the development of High range has reached so far is because of politics and popular opinion. With the advent of the first election the current presidential rule was changed and the government rule came to power. Through the election the Grama Panchayat, municipality was formed into a division and duty responsibility was assigned to one of its agencies. Ever had right to the opportunity to contest in the election. Women and men had the same right to contest. There are reserved seats in it. All categories had the right to contest the election. After the formation of the state a political movement was

formed for the children and there was a special age limit to join it. Desa seva Bala Bharat sangham activist was gone to form children's groups in many other places. Communist socialist ideology was strong in congress as early as they remained in the party and continued to function as the socialist group in congress. The Desha Bala Bharth Sangham became inactive as the rest of the group turned to work as adult and Sri Krishnan Nair became active in the communist Karshaka Sangham. Non political parties also gained strength in the district with the support of the people which led to a decline in the support of the rest of the parties. As the emergence of local collectives like Twenty20 was much talked about in the local body elections in the state, the political space for similar ones had only a short life in Idukki. The main non- political entities that came to the electoral front in the district in the local body elections were the High range Sanrakshana Samithy a collective of various religious groups under the church and pengal outrumai, a platform of women tea estate workers based in Munnar. The pressure groups they represent remain the same the selection of the congress candidate in the idukki segment. In spite of opposition from within the party, sometimes the leaders find it difficult to experiment with new faces from other religious or caste identities since it would upset the equilibrium they have established through the decades. Each of the political party's strengthening through the support of popular opinion.

The second chapter is the review of the environmental problems. Maniyangadan environmental problem was help at idukki district. This problem was in the order to protect the forests which affected the lives of the people and nature plays a role in their daily life. So it was a plan to cut came to destroy it. The government commission reported to study this. The people were against the government elsewhere. The recommendations, which were prepared without questioning or denying the need to protect the forest, were very favorable to the farmers. The committee said it was not surprising that people had migrated to kerala in the wake of the growing population, even though the government had initially encouraged immigration and leasing. The biggest obstacle in preparing the report to the Maniyangadan committee was the lack of vehicular traffic in these areas. Immigrants were united in their passion for living. As a result, few in the high ranges get pattayam to the property.

Madhav Gadgil Kasturi Rangan problem lies at western Ghat. This environmental issue was a major issue affecting the people. The people opposed the government's policy of deforestation in all areas and government appointed various

commissions to study this and how it would be affected positively and negatively. One of the most widespread protests in the history of the High Range was the street protests against the anti-farmer references in the Kasturi Rangan report. Under the leadership of the High Range Protection Committee, farmers took to the streets in all parts of the district, even in the countryside. Millions of people took part in the 48-hour non-partisan-caste-religious protest. Women and children went on strike. Farmers raised awareness against the Kasturirangan report and cooked food in makeshift ovens on the streets, strengthening the struggle for survival. The people demanded that the Centre withdraw the order of the Ministry of Environment and Forests declaring the settlements in the Western Ghats as Ecologically Vulnerable Areas. At last the government took a decision supported for the peasants.

The next problem was to build an airport at Anakkara. More and more specialities on this place. It is a tourist place also. This problem affected people in all parts of Anakkara and if an airport came there it would affect their population and inhabitants. A committee of experts has situated and submitted a report to the government on the impact of man and animals on the environment. This is a strike by farmers who will be evicted if the plan materializes against the government's decision to build an Air port on the embankment near Vadenmedu. Eventually, the district administration reported that the construction of the airport would not be possible in the face of public protests. Attempts for the project were subsequently abandoned. The Anakkara is now a symbol of the struggle to overthrow the government through a resistance with strength. But it does not have to be this way tomorrow

Another problem was held at Munnar Devikulam it is the part of Western Ghats. It was a group of people who opposed the policy of clearing forests and constructing new building. It was supported by some group of political parties. Forest plays a big role in daily life as they collect resources from the forests. So there are still protests against this problem. Some political parties who are buying their land from the common people to a low price and turning it over to the big land mafias. After a gap, the district administration has started action against illegal construction in Munnar, this time with the attachment of property. The recent tussle between an elected representative and a district official in Munnar in Idukki district in Kerala once again brought to focus the problem of land encroachment in the mountain town. With settlers and land mafias resisting any governmental action against encroachments and illegal constructions.

Mullaperiyar Dam problem is also the environmental threats. This problem has affected the people of Kerala and Tamil Nadu alike. This was a problem between the two states and it caused financial loss to the people. The expert committee submitted its reports and the government itself was responsible for causing such an environmental problem. Mullaperiyar dam, Idukki and the Lower Periyar hydel projects and the Periyar Valley Irrigation Project of Kerala are located in the main Periyar River. There are densely populated human settlements along the downstream stretch of this river including the metropolitan township of Kochi. The lease agreement granted full right, power and liberty to the secretary of state for India to construct. Constructing a new dam and decommissioning the old dam in the Periyar Tiger Reserve area would alter the habitat of local flora and fauna.

Each of the environmental has affected the lives of the people the most. In their daily life they collected resources from forests. Some authorities and political parties supported to clear forest. It strongly opposed the poor people.

The last chapter of this project is the Analysis of each environmental problem. In all the environmental problem people, government and others have different opinions. Some was supported the government policy and others had not supported to the problems. Each of the Environmental problems the people protested against the government through elections. The government implemented some policy it destroyed peoples life and people lost even their own land. With each of the environmental issue people have different opinions. Because it was something that affected their lives and people are protesting against it. Men, women, youth, children and elderly all came forward to protest day and night. The government has different views on environmental issues. Some parties will support each issue and some will opposed it. The government suffered a major setback due to each of the problems as it reduced the election results of each party. Environmental issues have affected not only the people but also the government. This led to a slight change in the electoral landscape and many parties which had good popular support from the beginning lost support for the issue. Religious sects commented on each and every environmental issue and the religious sects came forward in protest as these issues were affecting the people. Socio- political and economic impacts every environmental issue affects the community and state. We can understand that every environmental problem mainly affected for the poor people. The government has put forward the reports that are harmful to the people and the environment. As a result, people have faced many problems

in agriculture sector also. Every environmental problem has affected the common people, politicians and most of the government. The people of idukki constituency have so far been opposed to the elections as response to the political policies of the central and state Governments, but this time the situation is different electoral constituency defeat. The analysis of each environmental issue included Public, government and political parties have different approaches and opinion about the all environment issue this project tries to present how the environmental problems affect the election.

APPENDIX – 1

Original Reports on Different Environmental Issues

REPORT BY GADGIL KASTURIRANGAN COMMITTEES

പതിമൂന്നാം കേരള നിയമസഭ
ചരിത്രാലോചനാ സമ്മേളനം

നക്ഷത്രചിഹ്നമുള്ള ചോദ്യം നമ്പർ. 601

29.07.2015-ൽ മറുപടിക്ക്

കസ്തൂരി രംഗൻ റിപ്പോർട്ട്

ചോദ്യം

മറുപടി

ശ്രീ. സാജു പോൾ
ശ്രീ. കെ.കെ. അഹമ്മദ്
ശ്രീ. കെ. കുഞ്ഞുരാജ് മാസ്റ്റർ
ശ്രീ. ബി.ഡി. വാസുദേവ്

ശ്രീ. തിരുവഞ്ചൂർ രാധാകൃഷ്ണൻ
(വനവും പരിസ്ഥിതിയും ഗതാഗതവും സ്പോർട്സും
സിനിമയും വകുപ്പു കണ്ണി)

(എ) കസ്തൂരി രംഗൻ റിപ്പോർട്ട് നടപ്പിലാക്കുന്നതുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട് പരിസ്ഥിതി മുൻകരുതലുകളെ തക്കത്തിൽ വീണ്ടും റിപ്പോർട്ട് നൽകാൻ കേന്ദ്ര പരിസ്ഥിതി കുറ്റാലോചനാ ആവശ്യപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുണ്ടോ ;

(എ) കസ്തൂരി രംഗൻ റിപ്പോർട്ട് നടപ്പിലാക്കുന്നതുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട് പരിസ്ഥിതി മുൻകരുതലുകളെ തക്കത്തിൽ റിപ്പോർട്ട് നൽകാൻ കേന്ദ്ര പരിസ്ഥിതി കുറ്റാലോചനാ ആവശ്യപ്പെട്ടിട്ടില്ല. എന്നാൽ അന്തിമ വിജ്ഞാപനം പുറപ്പെടുവിക്കുന്നതിന് മുമ്പായി പരിസ്ഥിതിലോല വിമതലക്ഷ്യങ്ങൾ അതിർത്തിവിവരണ റിപ്പോർട്ട് ലഭ്യമാക്കണമെന്ന് കേന്ദ്ര വനം-പരിസ്ഥിതി കുറ്റാലോചനാ ആവശ്യപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുണ്ട്.

(ബി) പരിസ്ഥിതി കുറ്റാലോചനാ ഇത് സംബന്ധമായി 2015 ജൂലൈ 7 ന് വിജ്ഞാപനം യോഗത്തിൽ സംസ്ഥാനത്തുനിന്ന് ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട കുറ്റാലോചനാ കമ്മിറ്റികൾക്കുണ്ടായോ; കോടതി അനുമതിയുടെ അധിക പരിഹരിക്കാൻ പ്രസ്തുത യോഗത്തിൽ സ്വീകരിച്ച നിർദ്ദേശം വേണ്ടിയിട്ടുണ്ടോ ;

(ബി) പരിസ്ഥിതി സംരക്ഷണവുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട് പരിസ്ഥിതിലോല പ്രാദേശികതയുടെ അതിർത്തി നിർണ്ണയം സംബന്ധിച്ച പ്രവർത്തന പൂർവ്വപരിശോധനാ കമ്മിറ്റിയിലാണ് 2015 ജൂലൈ 7-ന് പരിസ്ഥിതി കുറ്റാലോചനാ യോഗം വിജ്ഞാപനം. നിയമസഭാ സമ്മേളനത്തിൽ വനം-പരിസ്ഥിതി വകുപ്പിന്റെ പരിശോധനയിലുണ്ടായിരുന്നതിനാൽ വനം-പരിസ്ഥിതി വകുപ്പ് പ്രിൻസിപ്പൽ സെക്രട്ടറിയായി യോഗത്തിൽ പങ്കെടുത്തത്.

(സി) ഇക്കാര്യത്തിൽ അന്തിമ വിജ്ഞാപനം എപ്പോൾ പുറത്തിറക്കണമെന്നാണ് യോഗം തീരുമാനിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളത്; കൂടെ വിജ്ഞാപനത്തിന്റെ കാലാവധി കഴിയുന്നതെപ്പോഴാണ്;

(സി) അന്തിമ വിജ്ഞാപനം 2015 സെപ്റ്റംബറോടു കൂടി പുറപ്പെടുവിക്കാനായെന്ന സൂചനയാണ് ലഭിച്ചിരുന്നത്. വനം-പരിസ്ഥിതി കുറ്റാലോചനാ യോഗത്തിൽ നൽകിയത്, കൂടെ വിജ്ഞാപനത്തിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ പരിസ്ഥിതിലോല പ്രാദേശികതയുടെ അതിർത്തി വിവരണം അടങ്ങിയ റിപ്പോർട്ട് സമർപ്പിക്കുന്നതിന് 2015 ജൂലൈ 30 വരെ മാത്രമേ സമയം നൽകുകയുള്ളൂ എന്ന് അറിയിക്കുകയാണ് ചെയ്തത്.

(con d2...)

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(ഡി) സർക്കാർ നിയോഗിച്ച ഉമ്മൻ വി. ഉമ്മൻ കമ്മിറ്റി (ഡി) നിപ്പോർട്ടിലെ ശുപാർശ കേന്ദ്ര പരിസ്ഥിതി മന്ത്രാലയം അംഗീകരിക്കുകയുണ്ടായിട്ടുണ്ടോ; ഇതു നിലനിൽക്കെ വീണ്ടും നിപ്പോർട്ട് ആവശ്യപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുകയാണോ; ഇക്കാര്യത്തിൽ സ്വീകരിച്ച നടപടികൾ വിശദമാക്കാമോ?

കന്യാശിരംഗൻ ശുപാർശകൾ സംബന്ധിച്ച് പാതം നടത്തി അഭിപ്രായം സമർപ്പിക്കാനായി സംസ്ഥാന സർക്കാർ പ്രൊഫ. ഉമ്മൻ വി. ഉമ്മൻ കമ്മിറ്റിയെ നിയോഗിക്കുകയുണ്ടായി. ടി കമ്മിറ്റി ശുപാർശ ചെലുപ്പിച്ചതും സംസ്ഥാന സർക്കാർ അംഗീകരിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളതുമായ നിപ്പോർട്ടിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിലാണ് കേന്ദ്രസർക്കാർ പരിസ്ഥിതിലോല പ്രദേശങ്ങളുടെ കരട് വിജ്ഞാപനം പുറപ്പെടുവിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളത്. കരട് വിജ്ഞാപന പ്രകാരം പരിസ്ഥിതിലോല പ്രദേശം ആകെ 9993.7 ച.കി.മീ. ആണ്. അതിൽ വിജ്ഞാപനം പുറപ്പെടുവിക്കുന്നതിന് മുമ്പായി പരിസ്ഥിതിലോല വില്ലേജുകളുടെ അതിർത്തി വിവരണ നിപ്പോർട്ട് സമർപ്പിക്കുന്നതിനാണ് കേരളത്തോട് ആവശ്യപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുള്ളത്. അതിർത്തി വിവരണ നിപ്പോർട്ട് 30.07.2015-ന് മുമ്പായി നൽകാനുള്ള നടപടികൾ പുരോഗമിച്ചുവരികയാണ്.

സെക്ഷൻ ഓഫീസർ

REPORT ON ENCROACHMENTS FROM FOREST LANDS

GOVERNMENT OF KERALA ABSTRACT

Forests – Recommendations of the Sub Committee appointed by the Consultative Committee of Parliament on Kerala Legislation – eviction of encroachers from Government Forest Lands – orders issued.

Agriculture (Forest Estt.) Department

G.O.(P)289/68/Agri.

Dated, Trivandrum, 7th June, 1968.

Read : 1. G.O.(P)98/63/Agri.dt.30-1-1963.
2. Report of the sub committee appointed by the Consultative Committee of Parliament on Kerala Legislation.

ORDER

The Government have considered the recommendations of the consultative committee of Parliament on Kerala Legislation on the report of the sub committee (The Maniyangadan Committee) on the question of eviction of encroachers etc. from Government forest lands and are pleased to issue the following orders:-

1. The sub committees has recommended that the number of families to be evicted should be reduced to the utmost minimum by limiting such eviction to areas which are absolutely essential for projects and that those evicted should be paid adequate compensation and provided with rehabilitation facilities.

The Government accepts the recommendation in principle but consider that it should also cover a few areas which are indispensable for forest conservation. In fact the evictions should be only from areas essential for project purposes and from a very few areas which are indispensable for forest conservation, limiting the number of families to be evicted to the minimum possible.

2(a) The Sub Committees had recommended that any attempt to draw a distinction between the encroachers and losses on the one hand and encroachers before and after a particular dated (i.e. 1-1-1960) will only lead to further confusion.

The Government agrees that the occupation as listed in the recent survey and enumeration work of such area be accepted as the basis except that the date 1.1.1960 will be changed to 1st January 1968.

2(b) The Sub-committee has recommended that all resident cultivators should be treated on the same footing irrespective of the time or manner, they came into possession.

The sub committee's recommendation is accepted. Where however the compensation payable is less than Rs.250/- (Rupees Two hundred and fifty hundred and fifty).

2(i) The Sub-Committee has recommended that sufficient area of private forest may be purchased by the Government at negotiated price for the resettlement of evicted persons.

This recommendation is not accepted.

2(j) The sub-committee has recommended that a regular colonization scheme on a planned basis may be drawn up. Eviction should take place only after the areas purchased in cleared surveyed and divided into blocks to the price of the land may be realized from those resettled therein easy instalments beginning after a period of ten years.

The Government order that eviction should be carried out only after the land is cleared surveyed and allotted.

3(a) The Sub Committee has recommended that Government should look into the question whether eviction from that ten chain belt of projects could be prevented by accepting effective soil conservation measures.

The Government has considered this question and order that evictions should be carried out in the ten chain belt area of projects. Exceptional cases may however be reported to Government for orders.

3(b) The Sub-committee has recommended that the area within the Upputhara Panchayat may be exempted from eviction but if he may be paid land value and the value of improvements just as on acquisition of registered holdings.

The Government order that the eviction from the Upputhara Panchyat should restricted to the minimum Land value need be given only to the registered holders.

3(c) The sub committee has recommended that no eviction is necessary in Kallarkutty area.

The orders on paragraph 3 (b) above will apply in this case also.

3(d) The sub committee has recommended that the people in Perinjankutty Project area may be paid compensation for their improvements and resettled in some other place as early as possible.

The sub committee recommendations are accepted.

3(e) The sub committee has recommended that the lands in Neyyar dam (in Trivandrum District) area should be given to the occupations on permanent registry and that there should be no eviction before that.

This recommendation is not accepted. The secretary Board of revenue will report to Government immediately on the extent of eviction required in this area.

3(f) The sub committee has recommended that no eviction should be done from the area between Periyar –Chinnar and Kalayana Parathandu either for forest conservation or for future projects and that the whole area should be assigned on registry to the occupation and that if the Government of Kerala state Electricity Board required the land at a later date the same may be acquired then.

The Chief Engineer (Irrigation) and the Secretary, Kerala State Electricity Board are requested to report about the possible new projects of extension of projects in these areas before further action is taken on this recommendation.

3(g) The Sub committee has recommended that the area called Pampa Valley food production area "Lying on both sides of the river Pampa need not be included in the same Sanctuary and its occupants need not be evicted.

The recommendation of the sub committee is accepted but strict measures should be accepted to see that there is no further encroachment.

3(h) The sub committee has stated that Kerala has one of the best game sanctuaries in Peermade and as such the state need not have the luxury of another game sanctuary in Peechi.

The Eviction proposed from this area is not for the wild life sanctuary. The proposed eviction is primarily for protection of the Peechi Irrigation Project and to clear a very small number of pocket occupations in the reserved forests which clearance is absolutely essential for forest conservation. Action will be taken accordingly.

3(i) The sub committee has recommended that the boundary demarcated in Trichur District should coincide as far as possible with the boundary demarcated by the popular range committee. Occupations outside the line demarcated by the popular Range Committee should be excluded from the forest area.

The sub committee's recommendation is accepted.

3(j) The sub committee has recommended that the number of families to be evicted from Thoppipala should be reduced from 139 to 37 and that the boundary fixed along the road from Kattppana to Idukki should be changed and fixed along the top of Kalayana Parathandu ridge.

The sub committee's recommendation is accepted.

3(k) The sub committee has recommended that alienation of land made by the allottees should be recognized and the land registered in the names of the parties to the land was sold or otherwise disposal of by the original allottees

The Government orders that the police regarding this matter will be in accordance with the land assignment rules of the state Government.

3(l) The sub committee has recommended that the eviction of non hill men occupying hill men settlements should be dropped and the land should be assigned to actual occupants

The Government cannot accept this recommendation. If this is accepted to due course the entire hill men settlements would be in the hand of non-hill men and this will be against the fundamental principles of protecting the interests on scheduled castes and hill tribes. Action will be taken accordingly.

3(m) The sub-committee has recommended that the present occupants of Kollamala 9 and 10 colonies should not be evicted.

There is no proposal for eviction of any of the occupants at present but the disposal of the land will be decided after the question of liquidation of the co-operative societies of the colonies is settled.

3(n) The sub committee has recommended that the plantation corporation should be asked to pay adequate compensation to the families evicted from Kodumon reserve.

The Government considers that this question has been settled and no further action is necessary.

3(o) The Sub Committee has recommended that the cardamom plantations outside the reservoir areas may be permitted to continue and that if there are cardamom plantations in reservoir areas, yield from such areas may be allowed to be taken until projects are commissioned.

The sub committee's recommendation is accepted.

4(a) The subcommittee has recommended that the Government of India should come to the aid of the state Government by providing funds for the implementation of the recommendations of the sub committees.
No, action is necessary.

4(b) The sub committee has recommended that the demarcation of forest boundaries should be completed expeditiously and no further encroachments should be permitted. The Government have already accepted this recommendation and issued necessary instructions. The Chief Conservator of Forests will report urgently the sanction taken and

submit further proposals if necessary to ensure that the Government's interest are fully protected.

4(c) The sub committee has recommended that the trees standing on lands proposed to assignment should be removed by the forest Department or sold to the occupants as these are likely to be destroyed, if not removed soon.

This recommendation is accepted.

The Secretary, Board of Revenue and the Chief Conservator of Forest will take necessary action for the implementation of the above orders.

By Order of the Governor

K.K.Ramankutty
Secretary to Government.

To

The Secretary, Board of Revenue
The Chief Conservator of Forests
All District Collectors
The Chief Engineer (Irrigation)
The Chairman, Kerala State Electricity Board
The Accountant General, etc. etc.
This is the document referred to in the original as exhibits

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Sd/-
Advocate,

APPENDIX - II

POLITICAL MAP OF IDUKKI DISTRICT



Map 1: map accessed from idukki map <https://idukki.nic.in> on 14/06/2021

APPENDIX - III

MAP OF WESTERN GHATS



Map accessed from <https://www.india.com> on 15/06/2021

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