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THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL KILLINGS IN KERALA ON DEMOCRATISATION PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

Political killing is not a new element in the life of Keralaites. Soon after the formation of the state following the strike on RSS meetings at Trivandrum in 1948 and Alapuzha in 1952, a series of attacks were made on people having the RSS ideology as a result of which many innocents were killed. This phenomenon is again nothing new for the democratic process. Kerala had three stages during which political killings took place, including the current one. Initially the naxalite movement checkmated the newly formed state and the inexperienced communist government. Thereafter during the period of emergency many who switched over to RSS ideology or BJP were eliminated. Youth disillusioned by unemployment and under employment are brain washed to undertake the heinous crime of eliminating adversaries of political parties. Earlier UPA government at the centre turned a blind eye, but with a serious government lead by BJP which does not see anything funny in the political killing, seem to be serious about eliminating this menace.

The paper aims at giving an insight into the political killings in Kerala and deeper study into the increase in such incidence when a party with a specific ideology comes to power in the state.

Key words: political killings, democratization process, unemployment, disillusioned youth, political ideology

Introduction

1. Kerala is metaphorically called 'God's own country'. Why I am bringing this cynicism is not out of sarcasm or utter disgust, but for many other reason. Few years back, not long ago I happened to interact with a person who was a contributor to creating this logo for tourism industry and he said some truly mesmerizing facts. This Indian state is lying to the extreme south-west part of the Indian sub continent and sand witched between the Arabian Sea and the Western ghats. Any where you go the area is lush green for most part of the year. Leaving aside the mountainous area, reserved forest and back waters the land available is meager for a large population. These areas towered by the coconut palm trees and ornamented by the rubber plantation are often garlanded by the pepper, banana or tapioca cultivation. Water and high temperature was never the characteristic feature in the past but have become a regular countenance now a days. So it is common one finds that a sizeable population is expatriates to other parts of the country or else in the Middle East etc. A fall out of the land forms is a relatively high density of population in remaining available areas. New age revolution

is characterized by innumerable transformations. It is not that earlier changes were not taking place, but these were set at a pace matching to the time. But none of these characteristic changes have affected the way of life of Keralites.

2. Way of thinking of a Keralite is very much different from his fellow countrymen or at least those from the neighboring states. Because he has a question for anything and everything. Sarcastically if it is put across one may say that 'if sun rise's from the east he asks why so and if it does not levitate he asks why again'. Let us forget it, and take it as a case of inquisitiveness. Another flavor in the behavior pattern is that 'you cannot beat his ego'. More often than not you would find it difficult to digest but as traveler one may brush it aside as lack of vision or exposure and continue for the desired destination. Despite all these characteristics, the warmth and friendliness expressed to his fellow people and visitors are quite exemplary, this is the reason for it being a big tourist destination. Even in villages you find quite a number of persons who can converse in English or for that matter Hindi, because of which you will not get stranded like many other parts of the country.

3. When you travel by the National Highway which in many parts is comparable with narrow village roads of industrially developed states of the country it is a delight. You can stop at any point and have a beautiful view of the sea. If you are fortunate to be near the sea shore towards the evening sun appears to be a red bubble on the back drop of sea whose water level seems to be mesmerizingly at a height. Then there are the fishing boats, small or the big trawlers which are busy with their engagement and after dusk the anti-collision light appear to be small pearls adorning the sea goddess. Most of the tourists prefer coconut water to the aerated drinks for its nutritional value. For their satisfaction they are equally benefited by having to pay lesser amounts for quenching their thirst.

4. Advent of communism has transformed Kerala in a big way. Ever since it emerged out of the erstwhile Madras state, it has stepped on a new platform. Here we see the new philosophy of giving total attention to the worker taken as an entity, and neglecting the owners. Owners have been denominated as exploiters of the working class. As a result most of the entrepreneurs left the state for greener pastures in the adjacent areas thus leaving it as a consumer state. Such a change has combined the individual needs and aspirations of the worker but could not match the expectations of the natives. People who believed in this myth never realized that one or the other day there will be generation which will be devoid of employment or under employment due to this approach. Outcome of this was high dependency on other producer states and low bargaining power, which are the two important deciding factors of sustainability of any population whether big or small.

5. What is the in-thing called political killing? Generally we can call it as a pre-meditated killing of a person from a different political ideology. Those targeted may not be prominent leaders, but mostly persons identified with strong political ideology of that party. It may also be Hannibal's rule 'an eye for an eye'. There may be occasions when personal scores are also settled this way. Whatever may be the reason one is not sure but the net effect is that a peaceful state has been thrown to a pack of hounds. RSS ideology has been of very less relevance in the state due to the communist way of thinking and having no strong political structure hence it remained dormant. But the emergence of BJP as a strong alternative in the center as well as a series of scandals in the state government machinery led people to go for an alternative. This resulted in an otherwise bipolar political set up to look for the third choice and their choice did so successfully in its maiden attempt by securing a seat and becoming close second in large number of seats in the assembly election. This could be the most notable reason for the spurt of political killings.

6. The state can boast of having more number of high ranking police officials than even the most internal security troubled states. Despite all the support the central government is providing we find a logjam as far as security of citizens is concerned. An ordinary citizen may not be interested in the reasons for it, all he requires is safety. As for the Maslow's hierarchy of needs it is one of the basic needs and a necessary one. Leaving aside, which party is ruling the state the question before all its

citizens is; when will this bloodshed end? Often people ask do we have to shift out or can our next generation find a peaceful set up

7. Credit should be given to the development of education in the state by the Kings of Travancore. Rather than enriching their coffers, they created educational institutions. One can boast that one of the first few universities created in the British India was Kerala University. But what is the use, because of over politicization or excess political activity, youth prefer to take admissions in colleges located in other state even if they have to pay higher fees. What is the reason for it? Purely simple, lack of accountability. Exams are not held in time, results are declared almost a year or sometimes even more after the exams have been concluded. All these things result in wastage precious time at crucial stage of the career of an adult being disrupted compared to his counter parts in other regions of the country. To top it up we have frequent 'hartals', 'bundhs' and all sorts of disruptions which are not conducive to educational pursuits. At this juncture the reader may be prompted to ask the question; then why is it called 'the most literate state'? It is not that the defining feature for judging literacy is not quite practical, but people have a desire to learn. There was a time when each village in the State had a library and the numbers of libraries were more than the video cassette library. Of course now the situation has changed. Possibly someone sitting besides the book only and never exploring the world outside must have created the new parameters. It is like the case of intelligence. Before the advent of multiple intelligence theory all believed that only those who are good at mathematics were intelligent. Slowly someone realized that a linguist or a musician is also equally intelligent. So we change our belief. Similarly would be the case of literacy.

8. If at any point of time of the day one takes a walk through the city or town or village for that matter you will find people dressed up in blue, red or sometimes green coloured half shirt sitting idle. It is natural to think that it is moral policing because they are not generally found doing any job except chatting. But that is not the case. Their true worth and responsibility can be seen if you happened to unload a cargo at the bus stand or the railway station or at your own door step. Then like a swarm of locusts they would encircle you with a demand of exorbitant rates to assist you in handling the cargo. Suppose you commit that you have made your own arrangements or you will do it on your own, then the counter proposal would be to make a donation to them for as over heads. The bargaining stops there and after that for them it is 'my way or the high way'.

9. Political violence is not a new phenomenon, but the topic has caught interest because of the recent spurt. One can say that it has increased to an alarming level in the state despite its characteristic religious tolerance and high awareness level. Hence this paper intends to study different causative facets of the case and arrive at concluding parameters to work out a way to if not obliterate but to reduce the political killings.

10. Considering the magnitude and impact of political killings on the growth and development of a the society at large and people in general, the area of interest has been taken as the aspect of its impact on these recurring political killings on the established democratic process which has withstood the challenges of an impoverished state which came into existence sixty years back and has been fabric of the society. Evolving this thought process into a research proposition was the challenging task. From the analytical point of view insight into the topic was obtained through collective effort and group discussion in various platforms.

11. Surprising to every one of us, the problem was associated with multitude of reasons. It was quite interesting to develop the idea with informal talks whether with a tea shop manager, the retailer at the fish market, students or seasoned politicians. Ubiquitous causative factor was polarisation of the population. Surprisingly the rise of certain parties having lineage with strong religious ideology compared to th etolerant hindus in Central Kerala seems to have been considered as the trip wire. This according to many this when followed by the evolution of parties with another ideology in the North Kerala made a dent in the political scenario. Whereas the slender majority of the people who were Hindus still remained mute spectators of which quite a few were still maintaining a practical

view of keeping politics and religion, separate certain appeasing policies of the government at the state and centre took them to a point of no return. Surprisingly with BJP gaining prominent status running a successful national government at the centre fence sitters from the majority fell out from their parties and drifted away to BJP. When BJP was voted out of power and the UPA alliance ruled the nation for ten long years the political killings continued. At this point of time may be because of lack of interest or caused by the fact that political killings were mostly confined to CPM and RSS workers the state government remained mute spectators. Probably with government at the centre and state being from same political alignment, they could have worked in tandem and used the sledge hammer to end the political killings. Like the inefficient way Militancy is being tackled in Jammu & Kashmir surprisingly they did not do so and like a cancer it is eating into the life of common people. We generally associate incompetence with absence of purpose. Here also similar things happened and political (rivalry) killing became rampant and parties started taking sides.

12. It is not that efforts were lacking. A general talking point was that some of the capable police officers and others from the law enforcement agencies tried to prevent this form of collapse of a system and attempts to belittle democratic principle. But their attempts were washed away unnoticed like a drop in the ocean. Now with majority of the administrators lagging behind and not having any commitment or purpose, those committed also decided to turn a blind eye. Initially people seem to find no way out and considered it as a recurrence of the old atrocities during the 'naxal' movement of the sixties when heads of opposition or people who turned a blind eye to a particular political ideology were picked up from home and hacked to death. At that time seeing no end to this tyranny and misery to the people, possibly both the centre and state government joined hands picked up and locked up some people who were considered to be responsible and the menace thus ended once and for all never to re-appear. An action required now is also of a similar nature.

13. It has been found that the vulnerable group in the case of political killings is generally people of the age group 20-35. Why do these people fall into the group? Reasons are many. Some of which can be;

- The state has poor infrastructure as a result industrialists prefer to seek neighboring states to develop industries.
- Frustration amongst the educated youth due to unemployment and underemployment
- Religious fundamentalism
- Exploitation of youth by political parties in the garb of job security and related rewards
- Lack of trust in political leaders
- Existence of numerous parties
- Lack of intensity in the administrative machinery
- Disparity in income group
- Information overload by multimedia, which are unverifiable except for the usage of mechanical Turks.
- Advent of nuclear families

14. The series of political killings in Kerala had three clear phases. They are as follows:-

- a) Inception Phase.
- b) Trial phase.
- c) Consolidation Phase.

15. **Inception phase.** When the first left government in Kerala came up people had lot of hope. Probably rather than having a vision to take the state forward and thinking for the future, the rule was as if the government was a temporary one, which would last for few days only. As a result rather than transforming a newly formed state with a committed population to a model state, they tried to situate the foreign communist philosophy to the Indian condition. This was not wrong as it resulted

in a large majority of youth are victims now being unemployed. In order to eliminate the rival parties naxal movement was initiated and large number of people were eliminated. It was in 1968 that naxalite movement set its footprints in Kerala, exactly a year after the pleasant revolt in the village Naxalbari, located thousands of kilometers away. It was the 'palm impression inked by blood on the decrepit walls of Pulpalli police station' in Wynad district which was the most publicized event. This area is forested. The author of the imprint is reported to be a 19 year old college girl who dropped her studies when the call of revolution convinced her. There is more to it that her parents apparently were already involved in the movement, which probably must have initiated her as well in to the act. The blood was that of a policeman on duty at the police station. This was the decisive moment after which a series of killings took place in Kerala. For the first time in power CPM government it was a bolt from the blue. Till now they were on the other side of the fence, targeting duly elected government for inefficiency. A determined Chief Minister E.M.S. Namboodiripad and his government misread the situation and tried to crush it. Unfortunately success was very little and the movement continued as there is no quick fix solution to such problems. Due to the worsening situation amongst other reasons possibly center had to intervene. The naxal movement had appreciable following amongst the college students and peasantry. This movement received support and large following owing to the appeal of 'termination of exploitation by the land lords'. It is a sad fact that most of them who were involved in this movement are now living in pecuniary shock, due to the large gap between their expectation and the after effects of revolution. Some of the Naxalites are out of jail and have reconstructed their life, but large majority have a sense of being out of place and wasted their life. The mark left on the walls of the police station was the beginning of the first set of political killings in a newly formed state having the taste of its own interpretation of democracy. Unfortunately rather than condemning the act of killing a policeman who was on a legitimate duty, the irony was that the girl got in to prominence as a hero? How strange it is? No one knows the fate of the poor policeman's family. It must be the fate similar to that of a little girl waiting at the door step for her father/mother returning from the factory but finding a cloth bag with the body inside caused by an industrial accident. It is surprising that no one either from the political arena or researchers who dealt with the subject gave any value for the feelings of a child awaiting the return of her father from work. Definitely someone would have supported them. As characteristic even the researchers are not aware of the name of the policeman, but uncharacteristically mention the name of the college girl who committed the act. She may be living a comfortable life unlike many others, who have realized their mistake and joined the main stream. One can say that the seriousness with which the central government took action on the case considering an impoverished or one can say an inexperienced state government wiped out the naxal movement and posted it in to oblivion. Numerous people were killed for no reason, but the state government or the government machinery never matured or developed a policy against political killing, which was the greatest mistake and what is seen now is a legacy left by them. 'Amidst the debris of the Naxalite movement he survives - the last icon'.

16. **Trial Phase.** Political clashes in Kerala started taking center stage when way back in 1948, a time when RSS started establishing its base. The trial phase of political killing as an instrument of political policy emerged when NDA with BJP in the driving seat came up as a strong party and ruled the nation. Let us now see the militant action during this period. It would be seen that all through this period political killings continued but with less intensity and frequency. The attack on an RSS gathering in Trivandrum during 1948 can be considered as the beginning of political violence in this phase. Another attack in 1952 at Alapuzha can be considered as the continuation of this illegitimate trial on democracy or democratic principles. This was followed by series of murders of RSS workers but did not graduate in to endless bloodshed. Fortunately the series of attacks surprisingly did not spread rather it remained confined to Kannur only. Some scholars link the localization of political killings to Kannur as a result of the martial tradition of Kalaripayattu or the folk dance of Theyyam. Others even want to defame the old warrior king Pazhasi Raja's heroics against British rule. But as I

see it, the reason may be different. It has to do with the remoteness of the area and the distance from the state capital. Of course terrain and local support also aided the political killings. Without much consideration, it may also be the effect of a defective internal administration agency. The epicenter of the political killing in Kannur is Thalaseery. Actual cause can be seen to be having an economic interpretation. Muslims were actively engaged in this part as traders. The RSS cadres came as followers and helpers of Mangalore based businessmen who were making inroads into trade. This was resisted by the former, which led to killings, and culminated in 1971 as a major communal riot. One ideology cries foul stating that they are protecting the minorities or as one of the prominent leader said that RSS cadres are attacking them, whereas on the contrary RSS states that political killings have been going on even before the 1971 communal riot. Congress yielded the field to CPM and RSS seeing the opportunity stepped into the vacuum. One cannot forget at this stage the impact of 'Central Beedi and Cigar Workers' Act by the Communist-led government in 1968'. Emergency period was important in this context because it was at this time that the resistance towards the policy of central government was resented by both BJP and CPM. Unlike the arrest of CPM leaders and detention, same did not happen to the RSS cadres as they were not prominent people. Seeing this as an opportunity to rise in to fame many who found lack of opportunity in their party's rank and file switched over to BJP. This made them desperate and started targeting the people who were switching over by eliminating them to prevent the exodus. RSS on the other hand counter attacked by eliminating communists to show to the people and their supporters that they are not sitting ducks. It is true that desperation set into them and at this time and absence of a sensible leader who could have prevented the exodus led them to intolerance and political killings. As pointed out they were always in opposition and the experience they had under British rule and Congress regime made them consider anyone who opposed them as enemies. The treatment identified by them for enemies was elimination. It is estimated that by 2015 the political killings in Kerala had crossed 200. Owing to the neglect by successive government, industrialisation had taken a back seat. To add to this was the repressive measures which prevented any industrialist to start a business venture in Kerala. Both added to the calamity of unemployment. The unemployed youth who could not manage a berth to Gulf region, were desperate and were the targets of political parties. They used their desperation as a tool to settle political scores. It is said that in over 100 villages of Kannur, cadres of certain party do not allow other party cadres to enter the village during election, so exercising democratic rights is a farfetched dream. What is our election commission doing? So it can be seen that due to the poor indulgence by the government machinery from both CPM and Congress, the local bureaucratic set up turned a blind eye to the political killing. With the emergence of BJP as a strong alternative to the Congress at the centre, the State government also turned a blind eye to the problem. This action was very much different and placid to the state government and centre's action during the naxal movement, which can be considered as the reason for its growth.

17. **Consolidation Phase.** This period started from say from 2010 or so when a sign of weakening of strength was observed in the UPA. By non-interference of central government and state government, becoming mute spectators strengthened the rigor of the extremists to take control on the proceedings. Elimination of potential competitors in the political arena is not something which is unusual. Here what is alarming is that the state machinery is silent on the subject and thus gives a fillip to the perpetrators of this heinous crime. A conversation on the conclusive evidence of a particular political killing which took place not so long ago leads us to clear evidence of intolerance. The response of the individual was that after being in the political ideology, grown up and reached a stage of being recognized, how can a person move to a political party of a different ideology or for that matter switch his loyalty. Possibly there are two angles to it; firstly the self or ego has taken over his rational thinking or else he is misinformed. Definitely credit should go to the party for uncovering the potential in the individual, but more than that the consideration required to be given is for the fact that change is dynamic. So any rational individual will seek opportunities presented before him, it

may not be to sabotage the interest of the group to which he initially belonged to. It is true that when you have change, you have stress. Why is that? It is because human being per se is uncomfortable with uncertainty; and, they are very comfortable with things which they have done before, things which they are used to doing; that means, things which are stable. So, anything which is unstable is uncomfortable being; discomfort is caused. And, when you have change, what is happening? The stability is being disturbed. You are having disequilibrium. Therefore, human beings feel uncomfortable with change. So, the unfortunate part of it is in life. If there is anything constant they say, what is that change? Change is constant; and, all of us – we feel uncomfortable with change. So it is only few who are intellectually superior goes on to a new path and challenge the system to adapt a new set of condition. This becomes appreciative when the individual has reached possibly the esteem stage of hierarchy of needs.

18. During this period under consideration the political killings have increased. Till the time Congress was in the centre the matter never came into prominence, but no sooner the BJP government took office the matter was highlighted. It would be a matter of great concern to many that during the last one and a half years lot many people died due to political killing of which a sizable majority is RSS workers.

Methodology

19. The methodology used in formulation of this paper is largely qualitative and to a very miniscule portion quantitative. A research depends on the primary sources as well as the secondary sources. The secondary and tertiary data comprised of compilation of already published material; in the form of books, magazines, periodicals, papers, reports, seminar material, newspapers, and yearbooks. The matter has been collected from home and other sources so as to present a viewpoint from all angles. Voids in the secondary data were filled by using primary data. Primary data collection was done by telephonic survey and interviews. Questionnaire was prepared and structured so as to reveal the information related to the political killings and its influence on democratisation process.

20. Since the object of this research is to arrive at a solution for the given problem, the available data and the unknown aspects of the problem have to be related to each other to make a solution possible. After collecting the data then statistical techniques were used for establishing a relationship between the data and unknowns, thereafter evaluate the accuracy of the results obtained. We have adopted a scientific method because it relies on empirical evidence, aims at formulating most general axioms or scientific theories, utilize relevant concepts and are committed to only objective considerations, presupposes ethical neutrality which results into probabilistic predictions. The idea behind the whole exercise was to encourage a rigorous, impersonal mode of procedure dictated by demand of logic and objective procedure. This method implies an objective, logical and systematic method, i.e., a method free from personal bias or prejudice, a method to ascertain demonstrable qualities of phenomenon capable of being verified, a method wherein the researcher is guided by rules of logical reasoning, a method wherein the investigation proceeds in an orderly manner and a method that implies internal consistency.

Formulation of hypothesis

21. Based on the focus of study following hypothesis has been formulated: -

- (a) Political killing is an established phenomenon in democratic process.
- (b) Political killings in Kerala have increased whenever a particular political party forms the government in the state.

Specific Question

22. After formulation of general statement the next step is to frame specific question. For this research work the specific question formulated is as given below: -

“Has political killings become a facet of democratization process in Kerala? If so, can it be stated that the whenever a particular party has assumed power political killings have become more rampant?”

Literature Review

25. As gained from various articles written on the subject, politics rivalry between parties due to political ideology, commitment, team spirit is a facet from the very embryonic stage. So we can consider it to be a matter of natural activity. This sort of rivalry can be best used for the people being governed because it improves governance. Take for example the stage at the center between the two major political parties namely; BJP and Congress. When it comes to policies, promotions and matters concerning national interest they differ to agree. From their mutual criticism comes a qualitative improvement in matters affecting large majority of population. But sadly there are important places where they differ just to differ and create bottle necks.

26. Can we call political killing as a conflict? Definitely no. Knowing the nature of criticisms each one has for the other we may consider that if properly managed by maturity it can improve the outcomes. But in the case of Kerala the stage set between CPM cadres and RSS workers is a little bit different and each one aims for a win-lose orientation of conflict. Due to the existence of a communication gap, party mediation approach is (PDM) particularly suited in this case, especially due to the deep-seated interpersonal conflict, multicultural or multiethnic disputes. There is also a feeling among many contrary to the generally accepted Harmony model of conflict management that, both the parties are adopting a Confrontational model. With CPM being in the state as a ruling party it may not be possible to have a realistic solution of the problem in the near future unless centre steps in as was done during naxal movement.

Research Objectives

27. The statement of the problem and the hypothesis contains the research objectives. It is to identify the correlation between political killing and influence of a particular political ideology as the causative factor.

Limitations of the Research

28. Political violence has taken a very heavy toll in Kerala. The serious of the matter is now understood when few years back when someone said to me be careful on your visit to Kerala, unsuspectingly you may become a target of political violence if there is any resemblance to a political worker from these two rival groups. Hence the interviews with affected population especially in Kannur have not been conducted. The data in this respect has been purely that form known sources provided with confidentiality clause.

Findings

29. Recent surge in political violence and visit of Union Defence minister to Kerala has made many interested on the issue of 'political killings in Kerala'. Kerala the "Gods own country" has witnessed numerous cases of killings in the past on this account. Surprisingly this phenomenon is not unique with Kerala alone, but is spread to larger areas. An assassination is a deliberate, premeditated murder of a prominent figure, often for religious or political reasons. Here are some of the prominent ones. Starting from the assassination of Hiempsal, co-ruler of Numidia in 117 BC to the assassination of Abdelkader Hachani, Islamic fundamentalist on November 22, 1999 Algeria had witnessed 22 prominent assassinations. Other details are Angola 2, Benin 1, Burkina Faso 2, Burundi 9, Cameroon, CAR one each, Chad 2, Comoros 3, Congo 8, Egypt 16, Kenya 10, Nigeria 12, Somalia 6, South Africa 11, thus making a total of around 120 in Africa alone. As for America it is 206 with USA alone accounting for 46.

30. India is not far behind with 23 prominent figures being assassinated since independence. The prominent ones are Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Pratap Singh Kairon, K. Kunhali, Krishna Desai, Lalit Narayan Mishra, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Nagina Rai, Prem Kumar Sharma, Beant Singh, Alimineti Madhava Reddy, Abdul Ghani Lone, Phoolan Devi, Krishnanand Rai, Pramod Mahajan, Madan Tamang, T. P. Chandrasekharan, VidyaCharan Shukla, Nand Kumar Patel, Mahendra Karma. If one has a closer look on the life of these people we would find that none of them are related to the ideology of violence. Possibly they were killed because they were too good for their competitors and

their rivals had to kill them for the individual goals. History is replete with incidents of menial acts to gain positions or wealth. There are incidents where legal heirs in Royal families, influential families or the wealthy were targeted either by inducing drug or mercury to make them imbeciles. There after we would find a situation whereby the legal heir is sidelined or in some cases send to mental asylums. Principally it is a schematic way by which the cowards or the incompetent gaining positions or power by evil means. Can it be accepted? The answer is NO because these category of people will never be useful to the society or social work as they would always be thinking of themselves and 'what they can gain from a situation (*mere lie ismein kya hai*'). So in a democratic country and people with adequate awareness such a means to achieve individual aspirations are suggestive of failure of internal security machinery.

31. Now let us take the case of Kerala. It is a vibrant democracy, does not believe in dynastic politics and claims to be one of the most literate regions of the country. As per police records over 170 killings have taken place in the last few years and during the most recent one and a half years 10 RSS or BJP workers, and four CPI (M) workers have been murdered, allegedly for their political affiliation. Congress and their allies have been ruling the State of Kerala for more than half a century since the formation of the state and BJP not even once till now, hence the figures on political killings do not show any correlation. If a breakdown of party wise loss is taken it would surprise us with statistics stating that 50% of those killed i.e. 85 of the 170 had CPM political affiliation, BJP nearly 40% and Congress a staggering inconsequential figure as low 6%.

32. Kerala is a politically vivacious State with a socialistic society. A hard working lot, but the sad truth is that Keralites prefer white collar jobs to harder ones which are clear from the fact that almost 20 Lakh immigrant workers provide labour for running various areas of the economy in the state. From the days of single party rule by Congress and CPM, a shift took place in 1980 to two coalition fronts: the Communist Party of India(Marxist)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) and the Indian National Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF). Since 1982 these two fronts are governing the State. In 2016 a further development took place with BJP gaining one seat in the Kerala Legislative Assembly election. This was unexpected and a shock to both the fronts, which have a total of 19 or so parties altogether in their coalition. BJP's emergence was realistic considering their success in civic polls over the years. Another feature of Kerala politics worth mentioning which is also a feature of some of the States in the North East is direct action and political violence. They have become the characteristics of Kerala which have resulted in many business houses reluctant to open manufacturing facilities in the State despite having a large pool of educated manpower. At an average annually 100 hartals takes place which means that more than half the year is un-productive. A consumer State like Kerala thus loses thousands of millions of rupees. In 2006 alone it lost 2000 crores due to hartals. Besides the economic costs which a consumer state like Kerala can ill afford, it causes inconveniences to the common public and most importantly on the education.

33. Kerala University was one of the first to come up in India during the British period due to the conscious effort by the rulers of the State who wanted their citizens to be educated and obtain educational qualifications; which is one of the reasons that the State claims to be the most literate. The adverse impact of hartals on education is the unscheduled conduct of curriculum which mostly remains unfinished and students are compelled to select alternative means, non adherence of calendar for conduct of examination and over-delayed publication of results. In most of the cases the examinations are delayed and result declaration postponed to the magnitude of more than year from the due date. Net outcome is that generations after generations lose opportunities. Student politics is active everywhere in the world and throughout India, but it never compromises the principal needs of the student. Here the politics does forget the primary need of the student which is transfer of knowledge, learning, curriculum, evaluation and most importantly behavioural changes.

33. After having collected the data let us move ahead to compare the data available collected using the formula given above. We are testing the impact of political killings in Kerala on democratisation process. By using a one percent alpha level we intend to reduce the chances of Type I error. Let us get the values to be used for calculating the z value. Assume that during the naxal movement (which is our inception phase) 100 people have been killed. The number of people killed during the trial phase was in excess of 200. As for consolidation phase or through current phase it has been around 24 were killed during the last one and a half year, which approximately comes to a figure of 170 and is continuing.

34. We have evaluated the hypothesis. In this we had proposed two qualitative statements to ascertain; firstly whether political killings has become a facet of democratization process in Kerala and then "Whenever a particular political ideology assumed power political killings have become more rampant." Seeing the emerging trends over a period of time and with the alarming rise in the number of political killing in Kerala and more specifically Kannur, it can be claimed that political killing has become an essential element of democratization process in Kerala. Coming on to the second major criteria we are looking for, we can say that based on the data available with the test conducted, it can be safely considered that there has been an increase in political killings in Kerala when a certain party comes to power.

35. At this juncture it is pertinent to discuss certain other issues related to democratization process. Though India is the largest democracy, it is yet to reach stability like UK or USA. Similar is the case at state level. Why it is so can be assigned to some pertinent reasons. Firstly best of the citizens generally do not like to become political leaders. The next reason is that there are lots of bottle necks for people who work from grass root level to rise up to the decision making levels. Then there are cases where caste plays an important role in political roles whether it is the centre or state.

Solution

36. There has been lack of commitment on the part of the centre and state government in tackling the menace of political killing in Kerala. Why is it so? The question is relevant when like all democratic nations we also want to mature into a fully democratic country. It assumes further importance when we consider the fact that the naxal movement of sixties was prevented from gaining momentum and wide spread influence, by effective interference from both the state and centre cutting across party lines. As a result we found that even though it had developed and gained momentum did not last long, hence lot of lives were saved. So it is not difficult to achieve the same standards in this case and eliminate the political killings which have been hounding the state for quite some time especially since the first BJP government came into power almost 17 years back. Records indicate that more than 170 lives have been lost on this account in the recent past.

37. Political violence started in Kerala in 1948 when for the first time they attacked an RSS gathering in Trivandrum during 1948 which was followed by another attack in 1952 at Alapuzha. These events can be considered as the continuation of this unlawful trial on democracy or democratic principles. Thereafter a series of murders of RSS workers took place. So essentially it has been started by weak elements and tried to carry on the policy of intimidation of political opponents by use of force. In order to legitimize their activities they went ahead with the propaganda of protecting the minority. In Kerala the concept of majority and minority is skewed. In actuality there is no real majority community or minority community because of demographic discontinuity. There are places where religious polarization has taken place. It may even be said that political parties with religious ideology became a norm in Central Kerala and North Kerala. Even the so called secular parties could not escape from this negative impact, and the cadre based parties also had to go by the demographic and religious divide of the population in these two regions. One may say that if they did not have attempted at political killings whether as tit-for-tat or otherwise, they would have been able to arrest the polarization of the state on religious ideology. But by the abhorrent act of violence initially during the state formation by silently neglecting the naxal movement and then again during the period after

emergency people became disillusioned and thus more and more fence sitters started moving towards BJP. The gap is slowly going to widen when more of these killings along with the alarming unemployment rate are going to provide more and more mercenaries for the job.

38. At this juncture it may be worthwhile to considering the complacency by the law enforcing agency. In Punjab when the militancy developed it built-up into a point of no return and almost making the duly elected government ineffective, Centre and state garnered a plan to first reduce, then eliminate and finally terminate the militancy. All resources of the state were used and best set of police officers were chosen for the task. It soon met the desired end and militancy its fate. The task of terminating militancy from this State was very difficult considering its geographical location, porous borders and religious fanaticism. How did it happen? All happened because of dedicated people whether it is those in the Armed forces, Para-military, bureaucracy or most essentially the state police force. Contribution of the intelligence services cannot be ruled out. So where there is a will, there is a way. Hence it is not difficult to end this culture of political killings in Kerala which found its way into the state almost seventy years back. All what is required is dedicated team of people both in the centre and state government. Starting from bureaucracy to police there is revamp required and people with zeal should replace the largely incompetent force. It is rumoured that the state has far too many high ranking police officials and very less number at the lower level. In such a moribund condition it is natural that no effective and dedicated action can take place. Marching orders to the incompetent is not a suggestive step. Rather they should find place in less important jobs and efficient people should be posted in places affected by political killings. All these joint party meetings are of no use when they are not translated on the ground. The peoplet should become more self confident and realise that their strength lies in garnering popular support and good governance rather than violent, rash and dastardly acts. As their opponents are not very strong they should understand that they have nothing to fear, and this mad race may be giving other parties more opportunities to consolidate.

Future Implications

39. Democracy takes two forms: rule of the people, by the people, for the people (in which parties peacefully campaign and establish a connection with the electorate, based on their past performance and future governance) and autocracy. The first form has authenticity and definitely well accepted but its existence in the presence of hardliners is circumspect. The other forms result in political killings or elimination of opponents by other than peaceful means. It is this form of democracy which one should be careful about because in such cases most essentially we have a case where deficiency in governance or cases of bad governance is brushed under the carpet by creating chaotic situation. In that state of affairs the common mass gets preoccupied with their own safety rather than assessing the performance of the government. With the emergence of more hardliners and the likelihood of polarisation of electorate on the basis of religion taking place it is for sure that unless such cases are handled with extreme seriousness one may find it spreading its tentacles in greater form and destroy the essence of democracy and leaving its peripherals to the electorate. The situation is alarming, so if the state does not wake up to the situation the centre should reinforce the law enforcing agencies to tackle the situation. With no vulnerable borders, eliminating political killings from the state will not be a difficult task. This aspect will be considered in detail in the next paper on the subject.

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