

# Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*: A Communist Critique

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## Abstract

When Arundhati Roy's semi-autobiographical novel, *The God of Small Things*, was published in 1997, it received both praise and criticism. While many critics and reviewers from around the world praised it for its technical virtuosity and thematic concerns, the voices and reactions heard from Roy's native country, India, were disconcerting. In Kerala, a state in the south-west coast of India, where the story takes place, conservative Christians and hardline communists alike stood against the novel's publication and distribution in India, despite the positive media attention Kerala would draw through this Booker prize winning novel. The reactions of the members of the Church and the communist party, who have revolutionized the Kerala society from time to time, make one curious about the moral and ideological controversy of Roy's narration. Was it really her critique of communism that angered the critics, or was it her careful unraveling of something unexpected and hideous in the political and religious establishments in Kerala? This paper shows Roy's promotion for Communism with reference to *The God of Small Things*.

*Key words:* Leninism, Collectivism, Communism, Culture and Postcoloniality

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Even though Abu Abraham asserts, "Arundhati Roy whom I have known for some years is not a political person. She may have just thought of having a little fun at the Kerala communists' expense. And anyway her aspersions, such as they are, are only peripheral to the main story (Abraham, 1997).", one cannot help regarding *The God of Small Things* as an embodiment of Arundhati Roy's views about the politico-economic philosophy of communism because in this novel a lot has been said about communists and communism. The characters described as communists in the novel *The God of Small Things* (GST) range from a former Chief Minister of Kerala, E. M. S. Namboodiripa, to a common party worker named Velutha. Even though the novelist claims "this is a work of fiction...The characters in it are all fictional" (Roy, 1997)<sup>i</sup> yet E. M. S. Namboodiripa is a real historical character in the novel. He was the Chief Minister of Kerala twice, first from 1957 to 1959 A.D. and secondly in the late sixties from 1967 to 1969

(Varkey, 1984), and so is the character bearing that name here though the narrator's report in *The God of Small Things* that E. M. S. Namboodiripa's ancestral home has been made a part of the hotel 'Heritage' and is being used as the hotel's dining room where old communists "worked as fawning bearers in colourful ethnic clothes (Namboodiripa, 1997)"<sup>ii</sup> is incorrect and seems to be based on some misunderstanding. Since E. M. S. Namboodiripa is described by the "Hotel People" as "Kerala's Mao Tse-Tung" (GST, 126) it seems evident that he is a communist. Moreover, the narrator talks of the performance of the government of E. M. S. Namboodiripa on his becoming Chief Minister of Kerala in 1957, and describes the position of the communist rulers of Kerala as "extraordinary", if not "absurd", when she reports

Suddenly the communists found themselves in the extraordinary – critics say absurd – position of having to govern a people and foment revolution simultaneously. Comrade E. M. S.

Namboodiripad evolved his own theory about how he would do this, Chacko studies his treatise on *The Peaceful Transition to Communism* with an adolescent's obsessive diligence and an ardent fan's unquestioning approval. It set out in detail how Comrade E. M. S. Namboodiripad's government intended to enforce land reforms, neutralize the police, subvert the judiciary and 'restrain the hand of the Reactionary Anti-People Congress Government at the Centre'.

Unfortunately, before was out, the peaceful part of the Peaceful Transition came to an end (Nehru, 1965).<sup>iii</sup> The novelist is drawing attention to the fact that there was something wanting in E. M. S. Namboodiripad's postulates as even though he aimed at a peaceful transition to communism (Varkey, 1984, p. 121),<sup>iv</sup> the transition did not remain peaceful even for one year and soon there were "riots, strikes and incidents of police brutality" (*GST*, 67). The implication is that Namboodiripad's views about the situation prevailing in Kerala in 1957 were based on a faulty understanding of that situation with the result that instead of neutralizing the police (Varkey, 1984, p. 117)<sup>v</sup> he had started using it as an instrument to achieve his goals. This also implies that E. M. S. Namboodiripad had realized within a year that at least in the situation prevailing in Kerala in 1957 it was essential for a communist ruler to use the police to achieve his goals and that when he had prepared the treatise *The Peaceful Transition to Communism* he had not been aware of that fact (Varkey, 1984, p. 104).<sup>vi</sup> That signifies Arundhati Roy's suggestion that E. M. S. Namboodiripad's political views were based on an unsound understanding of life and so deserved rejection.

Evidenced in Roy's novel, it can be seen that the core of E. M. S. Namboodiripad's programme as the Chief Minister of Kerala was the land reforms, which he wanted to enforce. By land reforms, obviously he meant transferring the

ownership of the land from the landowners to the landless peasants, and since he feared that the police, the judiciary and the Central Government were likely to come to the rescue of the landowners he wanted to neutralize the police (Varkey, 1984, p. 114),<sup>vii</sup> subvert the judiciary and restrain the hand of the Central government. Since he expected the transition to remain peaceful, it can be presumed that he expected the landowners to accept that their landholdings would be peacefully divested provided they got no help from the police, the judiciary and the Central Government. However, since the peaceful part of the peaceful transition came to an end before the year 1957 was out (*GST*, 67) it is obvious that the government of E. M. S. Namboodiripad had started using the police against the landowners. What the fact signifies is that the property owners did not let themselves be divested of their landholdings peacefully, and that implies that E. M. S. Namboodiripad's postulate – that in case the police, the judiciary and the Central Government did not help the landowners they would remain peaceful – was erroneous. No doubt when one is magnanimous or charitable one lets one's self be divested of one's holdings, howsoever weak one may be, one is very likely to move earth and heaven to retain them. One does not allow one's self to be divested of one's holding that easily. Since E. M. S. Namboodiripad expected the transition to remain peaceful (see *supra*) it is obvious that his understanding of human psychology was not very deep and he seemed to have harboured the notion that if the landlords got no help from the police, the judiciary and the Central Government they would be rendered absolutely helpless and would have no option but that of peacefully surrendering their landholdings to the peasants. What is worth noting here is that the Communist rulers may not consider it at all relevant to try to consider the question of whether they have any ethical justification to divest the property owners of their landholdings? After all no

human being, whatever post he or she is occupying, is above ethics and it is man's moral nature alone that makes him superior to the lower animals.

No doubt, the ruler in a welfare state tries to solve people's economic problems too, but if the ruler does so by snatching the property of some citizens, he will get his name included in the list in which we find the names of Falstaff, Bardolph, Peto and Poin. The landowners who had become the owners of land in Kerala in accordance with the provisions of the law of the land, had a moral duty to honour the law of the land and to recognize the landowners' right to own their landholdings. Simply by making the police inactive by giving instructions not to intervene in the quarrels between a landlord and his peasants, the government was shirking its duty of preventing any citizen take the law into his own hands.

One may say that Acharya Vinoba Bhave was able to make thousands of landlords in the country give away at least parts of their landholdings and, thus, his *bhoodan yaina* was considerably successful. But such a thing is possible, as has been pointed out, when a landlord has been made charitable enough to part with his land through persuasion. He has been made to realise that it is unethical on his part to have large landholdings or has been convinced that it is in his own interest to give away a part of his landholdings. Man is a thinking animal and he agrees to do something only if his desired modifications have been brought about in his thinking. Even a government has also persuaded people to accept its policies and programmes. But if one's thinking is not in agreement with that of the ruler, the steps taken by the ruler are bound to be resented and there is every likelihood of either side resorting to the use of arms. This is one of the reasons why civil wars continue to break out around the world.

What deserves mention is also the fact that a programme--even a policy, is accepted by a

community only if it is in accord with its culture. So far as the Indian culture is concerned it stands on the pillars of the five *yamas*, namely, non-violence, truth, non-stealing, celibacy and non-accumulation of wealth as Maharishi Patanjali enlists them in his *Yoga Sutra* (Yogasutra Sadh. Su. 30)<sup>viii</sup>. So far as the issue of divesting some people of their landholdings and giving them to others is concerned we have two of these five *yamas*, namely the *yama* of non-staling and the *yama* of non-accumulation, to serve us as guiding principles. The communists' programme of divesting the present owners of land and giving it to the landless peasants is based on the postulate that it is not possible to persuade the rich to use their wealth for the welfare of the masses. For instance, while ridiculing Mahatma Gandhi's theory of trusteeship Jawaharlal Nehru wrote:

Gandhiji is always laying stress on the idea of the trusteeship of the feudal prince, of the big landlord, of the capitalist. He follows a long succession of men of religion. The Pope has declared that 'the rich must consider themselves the servants of the Almighty as well as the guardians and distributors of wealth, to whom Jesus Christ himself entrusted the fate of the poor.' Popular Hinduism and Islam repeat this idea and are always calling upon the rich to be charitable, and they respond by building temples or mosques or *dharamshalas*, or giving out of their abundance, copper or silver to the poor and feeling very virtuous in consequence (Nehru, 1965).

No doubt, this programme is a way of making the rich people honour the *yama* of non-accumulation, but it is not in agreement with the *yama* of non-stealing. Therefore the people refused to accept this programme of the Communists silently. As a result the government headed by E. M. S. Namboodiripad had to resort to the use of violence in contravention of its own declaration.

The communist rulers of Kerala is that though they stood for fomenting a revolution

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(Varkey, 1984, p. 114-15),<sup>ix</sup> which means asking people to take the law in their own hands and defy the government authorities. They were also rulers and had, by implication, taken upon themselves the responsibility of protecting people from those who took the law into their own hands. The implication is that these rulers either did not want to foment a revolution or did not want to govern and did not want to prevent people from taking law in their own hands (Varkey, 1984, p. 116).<sup>x</sup> In either case, they were not telling people the truth about their intentions. No doubt, a government levies taxes and thereby divests a citizen of some amount of money by force. However, even a just government has no right to charge anything from a citizen other than the taxes. If a government divests a citizen of any other of his holdings it will be going beyond its rights.

The other communist characters in the novel are not free from weakness, even if they are the weaknesses of different sorts. One of these characters is Chacko. This man, as the narrator reports, has a Marxist mind, no doubt, but he is also a man with a “feudal libido” (*GST*, 168) as he has “his libertine relationships with the women in the factory” (*GST*, 168). If a marxist regards women as objects to gratify hedonistic desires, he is as bad as any feudal lord and, the implication is, deserves to be guillotined like the French feudal of the eighteenth century. Marx rejects the bourgeois social system also on the ground that in it people are of loose morals and have illicit relations with women from both the lower section of society and their own section of society (Mark & Engel, 1992). In Arundhati Roy’s novel *The God of Small Things* this communist factory owner is equally lecherous.

The narrator in the novel charges the Communists of Kerala with having an approach very similar to the caste system: “The real secret was that communism crept into Kerala insidiously. As a reformist movement that never overtly questioned the traditional values of a caste-ridden

extremely traditional community. The Marxist worked from *within* the communal divides, never challenging them, never appearing not to. They offered a cocktail revolution. A heady mix of Eastern Marxism and orthodox Hinduism spiked with a shot of democracy” (*GST*, 66-67). This reflected in the behaviour of the characters, too. For instance, K. N. M. Pillai, who is a communist press-owner does not like Velutha to be there in the party for Velutha is an ‘untouchable’, a low caste Hindu. The narrator reports the fact in the following words:

The only snag in Comrade K. N. M. Pillai’s plans was Velutha. Of all the workers at Paradise Pickles, he was the only card-holding member of the Party, and that gave Comrade Pillai an ally he would rather have done without. He knew that all other touchable workers in the factory resented Velutha for ancient reasons of their own. Comrade Pillai stepped carefully around the wrinkles, waiting for a suitable opportunity to iron it out.

Since Pillai still regards a worker as an ‘untouchable’ and likes him to be eased out of the Party only because the latter belongs to a caste believed to be low, he is not a communist in the real sense of the world as a communist stands for equality and likes the state-power to come into the hands of workers irrespective of their caste, colour, and creed, as Marx, through his *Communist Manifesto*, asked all the workers of the world to unite (Mark & Engel, 1992). Moreover, if these communists are not bold enough to challenge communal divides, it is possible for them to be impartial as governors, though the first qualification of a governor is that he should be absolutely just and impartial (Manusmriti, 7.2),<sup>xi</sup> as a ruler and, unlike Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, he should administer justice not on the basis of the love people bear him but on the basis of their rights and the services they render to the state. When the narrator reports that the communist rulers never challenge communal divides she adds



“never appearing not to” and so she is also charging them with being hypocrites, who preach one thing and practice another and are different from Chaucer’s Parson who is so good that “first he wrought, and afterword he taught” (Chaucer, 2011).

Another weakness that the narrator finds in K. N. M. Pillai is that even though as a communist he wants the workers of the factory Paradise Pickles to organize themselves into a union and “urge(s) them on to revolution” (*GST*, 120) yet he tries to project his own business interests with Chacko the owner of the Paradise Pickles. The fact has been mentioned sarcastically by the narrator in the following words:

Comrade K. N. M. Pillai never came out openly against Chacko. Whenever he referred to him in his speeches he was careful to strip him of any human attributes and present him as an abstract functionary in some larger scheme A theoretical construct. A pawn in the monstrous bourgeois plot to subvert revolution ... Apart from it being tactically the right thing to do this disjunction between the man and his job helped Comrade Pillai to keep his conscience clear about his own private business dealings with Chacko (*GST*, 121).

The implication is that far from being truthful and straightforward Pillai is a tactful and cunning man who does not forget his own economic interests and keeps them above the cause of communism, and thus, he is a bourgeois at heart and pays only a lip-service to communism. When the narrator says: “...Comrade K. N. M. Pillai was essentially a political man, a professional omeletteer. He walked through the world like a chameleon. Never revealing himself, never appearing not to. Emerging through chaos unsheathed” (*GST*, 14), it becomes crystal clear that Pillai is an opportunist who can stoop very low to achieve his goal. When Comrade K. N. M. Pillai is trying to persuade Chacko to terminate the services of Velutha and says to him “you see,

Comrade, from the local standpoint, these caste issues are very deep-rooted,” he is giving expression to his acceptance of the practice of regarding the Paravas and the pariahs as untouchables. But in his speeches he poses to be a champion of the untouchables. He has made himself “Ayemenem’s own Crusader for justice and spokesman of the Oppressed” (*GST*, 303).

Velutha, the communist worker, he presents the muscle-power of the party and takes part in demonstrations “marching with a red flag ... with angry veins in his neck” (*GST*, 71). He may be “The God of Small Things” as the novelist chooses to describe him in the title of the novel, as he is able to make things like a “rosewood dining table” (*GST*, 28), and “intricate toys-tiny windmills, rattles, minute jewel boxes out of dried palm reeds; ... perfect boats, out of tapioca stems and figurines on cashew nuts” (*GST*, 74). He also “mends radios, clocks [and] pumps” (*GST*, 75) but he is Devil of a big thing “a monster” (*GST*, 78) in his father’s eyes as he develops illicit relationship with Ammu, his employer’s sister and pays no regard to the ethical rule that another man’s wife is to be regarded as one’s mother and another man’s property is to be regarded as a lump of soil, with the result that all efforts “to contain the scandal and salvage the family reputation in Inspector Thomas Mathew’s eyes” (*GST*, 259) end in nothing as his Police Inspector starts calling Ammu a *Vesya* (a whore) and regards her children as illegitimate.

It is revealing to note that even though Chacko, Pillai and Velutha are members of the CPM, the incidents have taken such a turn that they have become one another’s enemies; Pillai cannot tolerate Velutha because the latter belongs to a low caste, Pillai cannot tolerate Chacko as he regards the latter as his class enemy and gets his factory closed by making “fervent [and] high pitched speeches about [the] Rights of [the] Untouchables during the Marxist Party siege of Paradise Pickles” (*GST*, 281), Chacko becomes Velutha’s enemy on

coming to know of his illicit relations with Ammu, and Velutha becomes Chacko's enemy when his services as a carpenter have been terminated by Chacko and, then, he goes to Pillai to seek his help. So if the haves are the enemies of the have-nots, as the Marxist claim through their theory of class-struggle, the members of the party fighting for the rights of the have-nots too are also not friends.

The Naxalites are another group of communists mentioned in the novel. They are reported to be engaged in plundering and committing murder: "They organized peasants into fighting cadres, seized land expelled and owners and established People's Courts to try Class Enemies" (*GST*, 68). The description of a murder committed by the Naxalites of Kerala arouses disgust:

That May there was a blurred photograph in the papers of a landlord in Palghat who had been tied to lamp post and beheaded. His head lay on its side, some distance away from his body, in a dark puddle that could have been water, could have been blood. (*GST*, 68-69)

This is tantamount to saying that during the reign of E. M. S. Namboodiripad the Naxalites were indulging in nothing less than plundering and murdering the rich land-owners and had no regard either for law or ethics. Though E. M. S. Namboodiripad refused to defend the Naxalites and turn them out of his party (*GST*, 69), what the Naxalites were doing was the logical outcome of his own declaration, that he wanted to bring about land-reforms or transfer the ownership of that land from the landlords to the tillers and, thus "foment a revolution". The Naxalites had simply transformed his dream into reality by actually diverting the landlords of their landholdings and giving it to the tiller and had, thus, "fomenting a revolution". After all, as Pillai says, a revolution "is an act of violence in which one class overthrows another" (*GST*, 280).

Arundhati Roy seems to suggest that even Marx's understanding of life is not faultless as it is

based on the assumption that workers "have nothing to lose but their chains (Mark & Engel, 1992)" but the fact remains that the jobs the workers have are a privilege which is not available to a large section of the population. The India she depicts in this novel is a country in which there is a host of unemployed persons as compared to whom the employed workers are a privileged section of population. And that must be the reason why Mammachi's remark – "Tell them to read the papers. There's famine on. There are no jobs. People are starving to death. They should be grateful they have any work at all" (*GST*, 121-122) – throws cold water on the workers' zeal for fighting Chacko for better wages (Varkey, 1984, p. 117).<sup>xiii</sup> In other words according to Arundhati Roy the Communists' programme of action is meant for a state of affairs in which "workers have nothing to lose but their chains" but the conditions prevailing in Arundhati Roy's Kerala are not bad for the workers.

The narrator also suggests that what the E.M.S. government was doing for the workers – including giving them land and free education for their children – was nothing new as it was not different from the "Christian munificence" (*GST*, 255) which had benefitted families like those of Vellay Paapen as this member of the Paravan community himself acknowledges: "he started by recounting to Mammachi how much her family had done for his generation. How, long before the communists thought of it, Reverend E. John Ipe had given his father, Kelan, title to the land on which their hut now stood. How Mammachi had paid for his eye. How she had organised for Velutha to be educated and given him a job ... (*GST*, 255) the implication is that the communist 'reforms' are not better than the Christian munificence. And since the Christian munificence made the rich people help the poor out of charity rather than under compulsion, it was obviously much better than the communists' coercion and must have been much more successful.

The novelist also gives the reader a view into the moral degeneration of the people in general in this state rule by the communists. In the chapter 'Abhilash Talkies' the man selling cold drinks has no qualm of conscience in using the hand of a seven year old boy to gratify his carnal desire and in squishing "a cheek of Estha's bottom" (*GST*, 104). The suggestion is that it is the materialistic philosophy of communism that is reigning here and ethics has become an anachronism, so that whether one turn to Chacko or the Ammu or to Velutha of the Novomi Ipe one finds nothing but hedonism supreme in everybody's heart.

The Communists' claim that they can eliminate poverty and will give "to each according to his need" also has been evinced to be false here because even though communists are in power in Kerala, the workers like Velutha are still poor. Rahel and Estha find his house to be without even ordinary conveniences, and Chacko, the factory-owner is not in a position to raise his employee's salaries in spite of his since wish to do that. It means that the communists in Kerala have not been able to eliminate poverty even though they might have been able to deprive a few landlords of their riches.

One may be curious to know why the novelist introduces in the novel only one historical character, namely E. M. S. Namboodiripad, without giving him a fictional name. the novelist singles out one of the communist leaders of Kerala it is obvious that she considers him as the most important person so far as the cothe Communist movement in Kerala is concerned and regards him as the chief, if not the only, leader responsible for the rise of the communist movement in the state and its consequences.

## CONCLUSION

To sum up, Roy's novel doesn't have an agenda as Ahmed claims ["settled ideological hostility" (112)], but it simply fits into her larger plan, critique of the status quo, and empowerment of the ordinary people, whose voice is often suppressed and whose part is often cut from history as they live through the history every day. Roy's unraveling of the personal narrative, identity in performance, reveals their tension with the status quo, the pedagogical narrative, which overpowers all other narratives.

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<sup>i</sup> Back page of the inner title leaf. All the subsequent references to the novel (*GST* for short) are to this edition (Roy, 1997).

<sup>ii</sup> This is not a historical fact, as is evident from the following remark of Abu Abrahah: “In fact E.M.S.’s ancestral home is in Mallapuram, 250 Kms away in the north ... Arundhati overlooked the fact that E.M.S. donated entire proceeds from the sale of his share of ancestral property to the Communist Party” (Abrahams, 1997, op.cit. 3). Dr. Malathi Demodaran, the daughter of Mr. E. M. S. Namboodiripad, is reported to have told the press Trust of India: “ what makes one suspect that the reference is not merely a figment of the author’s imagination is the fact that the hotel described in the novel does exist in Kottayam. The said hotel, till around 1993, was the ancestral home of another gentleman with similar initials –Ezhumavil Subramanian Namboodiripad. My father’s full name, on the other hand, is Elamkulam Manakkal Sakaran Namboodiripad” (Namboodiripad, 1997).

<sup>iii</sup> E. M. S. Namboodiripad’s view of the Congress government at the Centre in 1957 which was working under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru was antagonistic inspite of the fact that Nehru too claimed that he was a socialist and usually spoke against the practice of letting landlords own big landholdings. Nehru expressed his view in explicit terms at the Lahore session of the Congress Party when he said: “... the ownership of large estates by individuals, which the outcome of a state resembling the old feudalism of Europe, is a rapidly disappearing phenomenon all over the world. Even in countries which are strong holds of capitalism the large estates are being split up and given to the peasantry who work on them. In India also we have large areas where the system of peasant proprietorship prevails and we shall have to extend this all over the country” (Nehru, 1965).

<sup>iv</sup> Varkey reports: “ Three times in Kerala’s history in 1957, 1967 and 1980 – Keralaties voted for governments in which Communists has the upper hand. It was under these governments that Kerala experienced the highest number of violent conflicts and murder ... [In 1957] violence was endemic in the state” (Varkey, 1984, p. 121).

<sup>v</sup> Varkey says: “There is something special about the police policy of the CPM. On all the three occasions that the CPM was in power in Kerala, its police policy became highly controversial and it was a major factor in the fall of the three governments. It is superficial to agree that the CPM in Kerala has not learned from its experiences. The CPM’s police policy is well thought-out one, and it is a cornerstone of its LDF programme” (Varkey, 1984, p. 116). He adds ... the CPM believes in the orthodox marxist’s view that the police in a capitalist society are an instrument of oppression in the hands of dominant class” (Varkey, 1984, p. 117).

<sup>vi</sup> Ouseph believes that it is the excesses of communist radicalism that produce anticommunist sentiments in the state as he notes: “The excesses of Communist radicalism which explode when the communists are in power produce pervasive anti-communist sentiment in the state...” (Varkey, 1984, p. 104)

<sup>vii</sup> He must have felt that he would achieve his goal of redistributing land by making the police “not interfere in the ‘agitations and struggles of the people for the needs of their livelihood’” (Varkey, 1984, p.114).

<sup>viii</sup> “*tatrahimsa, satvestya, brahamcharyaparigraha yamah*” (Then non-violence, truth not staling, celibacy and non-accomulation are the five *Yamas* (*Yogasutra* Sadh. Su. 30).

<sup>ix</sup> The government’s efforts to neutralize the police even in the early ‘eighties, as Varkey reports, “emboldened many workers in the rural areas to take the law in the own hands. In may places the headload (porter) and agriculture workers, mostly members of the CITU, demanded exorbitant wages and use extraordinary tactics. That made normal life impossible for merchants, shopkeepers, farmers, and others in the middle levels of society” (Varkey, 1984, p. 114-115).

<sup>x</sup> Varkey explains the basic fact in this regard when he points out:”The CPM is not convinced that its ultimate goal, making India communist can be achieved by parliamentary means alone. So its commitment to parliamentarianism is qualified and conditional ... As a CPM documents bluntly put it united front governments are ‘instruments of struggle’ in the hands of the people, and the CPM’s participations in such government is a ‘specific form of struggle’, to win more support for the proletariat and its allies in the struggle’ for ‘people’s democracy’ and later for socialism. It is perspective of CPM that led the party to the controversial policy of ‘administration and agitation together ‘and resulted in the breakup of the united front of Kerala in 1969 (Varkey, 1984, p. 116).

<sup>xi</sup> While discussing the qualifications of a ruler Manu writes: “*brahamam praptena sanskaram kshatriyena yathividhi sarvasyasya yathanyayam karrtuyam parirakshanam*” (*Manusmriti- 7.2*) (When a warrior attains as much learning as entitles one to become a Brahmin he should protect the kingdom in a just and impartial manner).

<sup>xii</sup> As Varkey reports, the CPM’s policies made life very hard for the middle classes: “The CPM strategy was to build a firm alliance of workers and peasant and to win over to its side all except of small upper class and the handful of the super rich. But its efforts to mobilize the poor in Kerala threatened the lower and middle classes. The politicized poor ignored traditional social relations which included deferential treatment of the propertied classes and aspects of parton-client behaviour. The politicized workers in the rural areas demanded from the employers unrealistically high wages and benefits. Most of these employers were small farmers with only a few acres of land. They resisted the new demands of there workers as the demands were economically ruinous to them”, (Varkey, 1984, p. 117).