

## **Abstract**

In this work, an attempt has been made to study the interplay of religion and politics in the Indian state of Kerala. In particular, I have done a case study on Kottayam, the district with highest literacy rate in Kerala. While outlining the social dimension of religion, the work attempted to explain the interaction of individuals and institutions of religion with electoral politics. By doing the field study, my work examines the interplay of religion and electoral politics. In the process, my work participates in scholarly debate on democracy, secularism and electoral politics in India in general and Kerala in particular. Kerala has been understood in scholarly works as representing deep democracy with strong civic ties and participatory politics and governance. The multi religious character of Kerala society with large presence of Muslims and Christians and the relative communal harmony in the state has been understood as a result of strong civic ties and electoral participation. The state had earned a distinction of a 'model' of development that included other than social and economic development, the high levels of political participation and activism within democratic framework. Given the presence of multiple religious communities, the prospect of electoral mobilization along communal lines and the role of religious institutions in the political process have not been explored in studies on Kerala. My work attempts to fill this void by looking at the role of religious institutions and individuals in electoral politics in Kerala.