

# The Role of the Popular Front of India (PFI) in Terrorism: An Analysis Through GIS

## PART – I: KERALA

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### ABSTRACT

Popular Front of India (PFI), proscribed under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, is in a space of complexity between its avowed nature as a sociopolitical movement and charges of extremist engagement. The role of the PFI in terror, with a specific emphasis on Kerala, is the subject of analysis in this study, employing a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) framework to map its geographical footprint, recruitment networks, and hotspots of radicalization. The article follows the development of PFI from its inception in 2006 as a regional coalition to its expansion throughout India, with key strongholds including Malappuram, Kasaragod, and coastal Karnataka. Through reports and investigative analysis, the research establishes suspected connections to international financing circles, militant group affiliations, and the employment of charitable fronts for weapons training and indoctrination. Through the mapping of these activities, this study emphasizes the spatial nature of terrorism and the significance of GIS to comprehend the radicalization, recruitment, and security threat patterns. The research demonstrates how geographical analysis can enhance counter-terrorism efforts by providing evidence-based information on organizational penetration and operational hotspots, particularly in the socio-political context of Kerala.

**Keywords:** Popular Front of India (PFI), terrorism in Kerala, geographic information systems (GIS), radicalization and recruitment, counter-terrorism strategies

### INTRODUCTION

The Popular Front of India (PFI) finds itself in a mix of adjudged terror organizations and a community sociopolitical organization within the counter-terrorism system of India. Formed in 2006, the PFI portrayed itself as a voice of the oppressed and the minority classes. But in the last ten years or so, several intelligence and security agencies have been ringing alarm bells about it being a seditious organization. Searching for and investigating terrorism-related activities have also revealed structures that are said to have been built by the PFI in different regions, raising fears about the ability of the PFI to maintain its mission in Indian democracy.

This paper examines terrorism in a PFI perspective and attempts to present the territorial ties and how it is geographically spread throughout India along with their so-called hotspots through Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Trends will be mapped from and understood in relation to the geography associated with PFI, primarily focused on its recruitment and radicalization processes and networks in areas identified as high risk. This GIS based framework assists in understanding the other security risks posed by the presence of the PFI

allowing one to look at the presence and the effect of the PFI in the region in a more evidential manner. This paper will look into the measures in place to prevent terrorism both in the regions within and outside the borders of the country, hence emphasizing the need to use geographical space to combat raging extremist elements in a large country like India with many different ethnic groups.

## **BACKGROUND ACTIVITIES**

The Popular Front of India (PFI) history dates back to 2006 or so, when several regional Muslim organizations, which were coastal from the state of Kerala in southern India, joined together. This is a socio-economic organization which aims at establishing the rights of deprived sections of the society. The PFI soon extended its reach across the length of the country and made inroads into states with a fair percentage of Muslim population such as Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. Its primary focusses in the early years were associations that promoted social justice, minority rights and anti-discrimination, especially at those regions with a volatile history of inter communal violence.

Yet, in the following years, great attention was paid to the activities of the organization by law enforcement and intelligence agencies. According to allegations, PFI has been engaged in activities such as organizing communal riots, provoking violence, and radical indoctrination of the youth. The PFI has been associated by the Indian authorities with a number of violent incidents, ranging from riots, protests against government policies, and onslaughts of individuals or groups felt to be enemies of the organizations ideology. A report on the PFI by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in 2022 outlined several training camps and “arms training” conducted by the organization that were intended for the public and cited in connection with the training of extremists for combat (NIA, 2022).

## **GEOGRAPHICAL POCKETS OF TENSION AND VILAS RECRUITMENT**

There are certain regions inherent with problem and socio-political disturbance and these are the regions that the PFI expansion strategy of geographical enlargement has always been directed towards. In the state of Kerala, the districts of Malappuram and Kasaragod have become major hotspots for the PFI, with high levels of activity also recorded along the coastal regions of Karnataka, particularly Dakshina Kannada and Udupi. The activities of the organization have been reported to be connected with the local population, using those areas as recruitment bases.

## **FUNDING AND ALLEGED TERRORIST TIES**

Investigative reports have highlighted that PFI's activities are funded through a complex network of domestic and international channels. Financial transactions linked to the organization reveal significant inflows from unidentified foreign sources, raising concerns about links to extremist entities outside India. Some officials claim that PFI maintains affiliations with international terrorist groups, including alleged connections to ISIS and similar organizations. A series of raids conducted by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and other agencies have uncovered evidence of these financial activities, intensifying government scrutiny (ED, 2022).

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC OUTREACH**

While PFI's public-facing programs often focus on social issues, law enforcement agencies argue that such initiatives serve as fronts for radicalization and recruitment. Programs aimed at engaging youth, conducting community welfare, and promoting religious identity have sometimes led to activities that fuel communal discord. The organization's leadership maintains that it promotes peaceful advocacy; however, accusations persist that PFI's grassroots outreach is used to exert influence and instill an ideology that challenges state authority and communal harmony (Rashid, 2023).

The alleged activities of the PFI underscore the challenges in distinguishing between legitimate social advocacy and actions that pose a potential threat to national security. Through mapping its activities, Indian authorities hope to better understand the geographical spread and local impacts of PFI's operations, supporting proactive measures to counter its influence on communities susceptible to radical ideologies.

## **TRAINING CENTERS**

The Popular Front of India (PFI), a banned organization, has faced significant scrutiny for its alleged involvement in extremist activities and misuse of charitable fronts for unlawful purposes. Investigations by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and Kerala Police have revealed training camps and centers operated under the guise of educational or charitable institutions, uncovering a pattern of arms training, radical indoctrination, and criminal conspiracies tied to the group.

The Kerala police raided a training camp in Narath, district of Kannur in April 2013 and arrested 21 activists from PFI. They found two improvised bombs, a sword, bomb-making materials, and pamphlets of PFI during the operation. The search was carried out in the office building of Thanal Charitable Trust. A document listing many of the eminent personalities and their organizations was also seized, expected by the police to be a hit-list. However, the PFI leadership and those arrested said that it organized a Yoga training programme as a part of personality development scheme and demanded a judicial inquiry by a sitting judge to conduct inquisition on the so-called training camp. The state president of PFI claimed that this police case was fabricated to defame the organization. The NIA came to Narath on the 18th of May 2013 to investigate the alleged extremist activities.

The NIA has seized the Green Valley Academy from Kerala, a 10-hectare training centre being operated by the now-banned Popular Front of India (PFI) under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act as "proceeds of terrorism. Founded by the Green Valley Foundation, the school first operated as the National Development Front before merging with the PFI. This facility was also used for arms training, explosives testing, physical training, peopling ideologies, and indoctrination of cadres with radical ideologies, and it served as a hideout for PFI members involved in crimes including murder. The school had PFI offices and frontal organizations on campus and pretended to be an educational institution. This is the sixth training center of PFI, and this is the 18th property in Kerala attached by NIA. This is after other actions were taken with respect to the other properties linked to PFI-Houses such as Malabar House, Periyar Valley, Valluvanad House, Karunya Charitable Trust, and Trivandrum Education and Service

Trust. The NIA investigation has also revealed the modus operandi of PFI in running such centers in the guise of charities and educational trusts with a chargesheet filed against 59 individuals and the PFI on March 17, 2023. (Hindustan Times, 2023).

## **GOVERNMENTAL RESPONSES:**

### **1. Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) Ban**

In September 2022, the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs declared the Popular Front of India (PFI) as “an unlawful association” under the UAPA, thereby banning the organization throughout the country for a period of five years. This was done in view of the responses received from state governments and law enforcement agencies about PFI being a violent and anti-national organization. With this ban imposed under UAPA, the government was able to punish persons, organizations and activities abated with PFI and also attach and restrain properties related to its operations. This represented a considerable rise in the strategies adopted by the government to combat terrorism as it indicated zero tolerance towards any organization perceived as threatening the country (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2022).

### **2. Raids and Investigations of the National Investigation Agency (NIA).**

After the suspension, the NIA and the state police carried out a series of synchronized attacks on several PFI offices, properties, and associates in various states. Due to these raids, hundreds of PFI members were detained, and the documents obtained during the sweep revealed plans of arms training, radicalism and financial dealings of questionable origin among others. NIA inquiries have proven helpful in revealing the details of the alleged activities run by PFI in states such as Kerala, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, and in providing additional evidence for the UAPA classification (NIA, 2023).

### **3. Actions of the Financial Surveillance and Enforcement Directorate (ED)**

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has made significant contributions in tracing the financial trail of PFI with particular emphasis on identifying foreign funding sources that could be linked to crime or terrorism. Investigations by the ED have unmasked a complex web of financial sources that are usually small in scale, such as donations, remittances from abroad and so-called non-profit organizations that are used as fronts. This has resulted in the freezing of assets linked to PFI and emphasized the policy of the government to disrupt financial networks so as to mitigate the risk of the organization carrying out any harmful activities (Enforcement Directorate, 2022).

### **4. Intelligence and Monitoring Mechanisms**

The government has also developed the capability to spy on individual members of PFI and its local branches including their outreach and social media campaigns. Intelligence Agencies have also employed geographical information system (GIS) technologies to understand the geographical spread of PFI activities within districts and monitor potential radicalizers. In particular GIS, has been used to locate areas of PFI activity assisting the local authorities in patrolling those issues more (Singh & Sharma, 2023).

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

## CONNECTION WITH SIMI (Students Islamic Movement of India) OR IM (INDIAN MUJAHIDEEN)

Post-2001 ban, SIMI has expanded its network, engaging in covert activities and maintaining links with international terrorist organizations, posing a significant threat to internal security in India.

The Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) has been linked to extremist activities across India, with significant connections to foreign organizations like the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) in Riyadh and the International Islamic Federation of Students' Organizations (IIFSO) in Kuwait. It reportedly receives funding from Pakistan and Gulf-based supporters, with expatriate groups like Jamayyatul Ansar in Saudi Arabia facilitating its operations.

In 2010, the PFI was alleged to have links with the banned Islamic terrorist organization Student Islamic Movement of India. The PFI's national chairman and organizations state secretary was the former national secretary of SIMI. Most former leaders of SIMI were either identified with PFI or were holding various portfolios in the organization. PFI also maintain links with the Pakistani Intelligence Agency.

In Kerala, SIMI operates under the guise of religious study centers and NGOs, spreading extremist ideologies and allegedly establishing a women's wing. Hotspots include Malappuram's Kondotty, Thiruvananthapuram, and Kochi. The group reportedly receives funds from Kuwait and Pakistan and uses local organizations to mobilize youth.

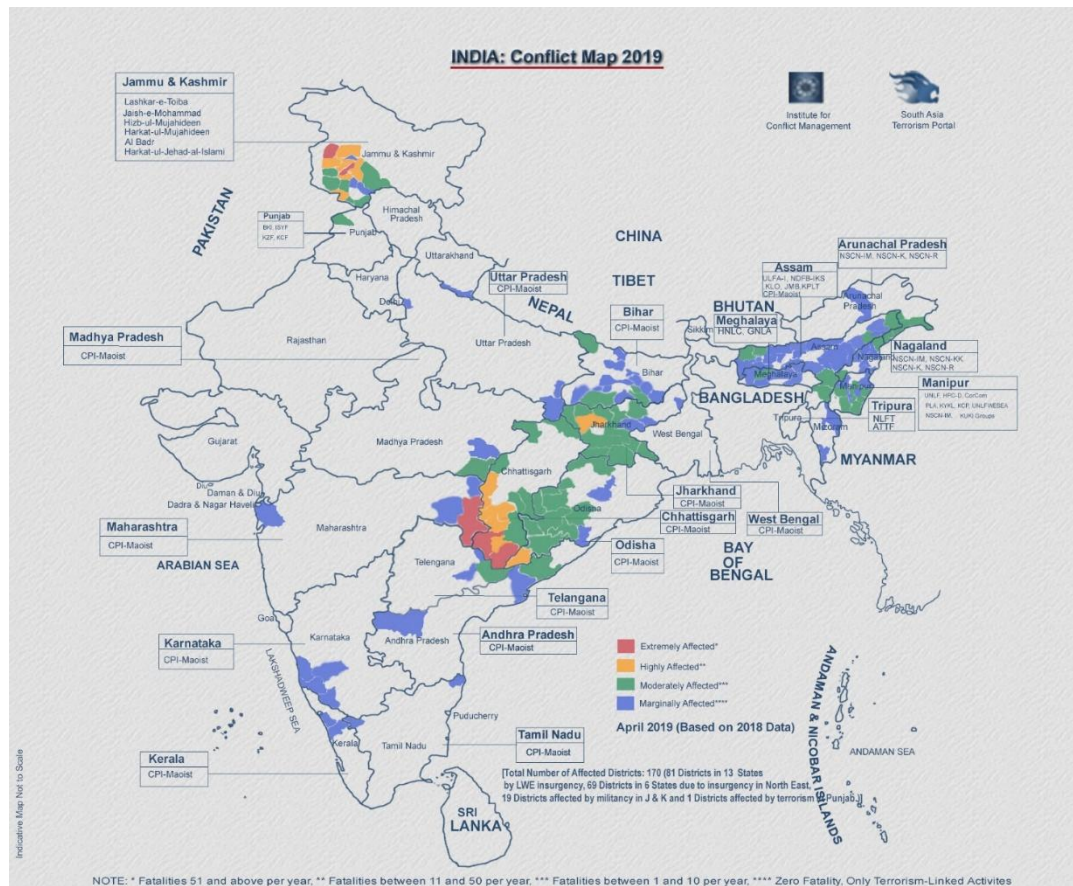
In July 2010, the Kerala Police seized country-made bombs, weapons, CDs and several documents containing Taliban and Al-Qaeda propaganda, from PFI activists. The raids conducted were subsequently termed "undemocratic" and "unconstitutional" by the organization. As of 6 September 2010, as informed to the state high court by the Kerala government, no evidence has been found by the police in its probe into the allegation of links to Hizbul Mujahideen, Lashkar-e Taiba (Let) or Al-Qaeda. However, in April 2013 a series of raids by the Kerala Police on PFI centers across North Kerala found lethal weapons, foreign currency, human shooting targets, bombs, explosive raw materials, gunpowder, swords, among other things. The Kerala Police claimed that the raid revealed the "terror face" of the PFI.

In January 2016, 1 member was sentenced to 7 years and 5 members were sentenced to 5 years of prison by National Investigation Agency (NIA). In November 2017, Kerala Police identified 6 members of PFI who had joined the Islamic State, possibly by moving to Syria using fake passports

Nationally, SIMI has strongholds in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Assam, and West Bengal, often infiltrating madrassas and cultural bodies. It has collaborated with groups like Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), and Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami Bangladesh (HuJI-B) for recruitment, arms smuggling, and spreading extremism. Major bases in Maharashtra include Aurangabad, Malegaon, and Jalgaon, with intelligence agencies monitoring madrassas in these regions for suspected links.

### Figure 1: Conflict Map of India





South Asia Terrorism Portal. (n.d.). Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) / Indian Mujahideen (IM) terrorist group. South Asia Terrorism Portal. Retrieved December 26, 2024, from

<https://www.satp.org/terrorist-profile/india-islamistotherconflicts/students-islamic-movement-of-india-or-indian-mujahideen/>

## Introduction: The Kerala Context

Kerala, a state located along the southwestern coast of India, is commonly regarded as a bastion of high literacy rates, progressive social indicators, and an incredibly rich cultural heritage. However, this reputation sometimes belies the reality, as communal strife and ideological polarization have marred Kerala on occasion. Over the last few years, it has been in the spotlight regarding activities conducted by Popular Front of India (PFI). This organization is accused of propagating radical ideologies and being involved in activities detrimental to national security.

Kerala holds a special place in the analysis of PFI activities since the organization has considerable influence in the state. The PFI was a formation of 2006 and traces its roots back to the National Development Front, an organization based in Kerala from the early 1990s. Since then, however, the PFI had expanded its activities all across India but was deeply established in Kerala, where it enjoyed mobilizing support among people's sections. This influence is made possible by the state's dynamic civil society and political life, which offer fertile ground for advocacy, mobilization, and ideological dissemination.

The present study analyses the spatial patterns of incidents related to the PFI in Kerala with the support of Geographic Information Systems. GIS is a powerful tool for visualizing and making sense of the geographic dimension of terrorism-related activities-locations of reported incidents, recruitment hubs, and areas of influence. This research will reveal correlations between the activities of the PFI and the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the affected areas through mapping patterns.

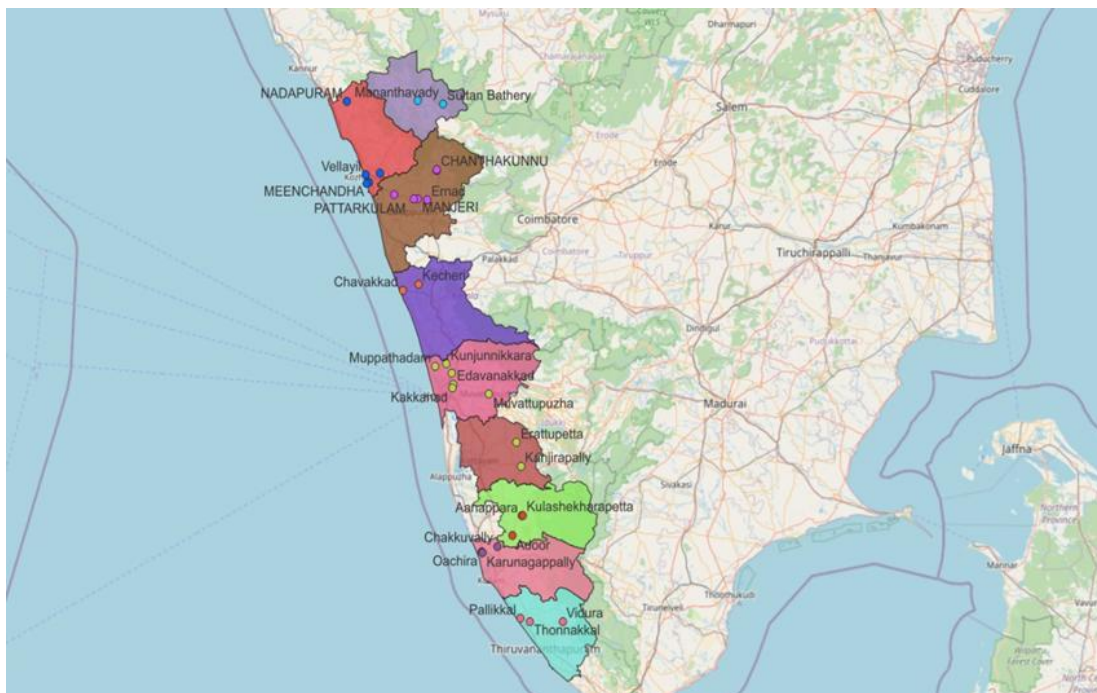
It sets the stage for a complete investigation into the role that the PFI assumes within Kerala's socio-political environment. The research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of its organizational impact on regional security and communal harmony by situating Kerala's experience within a larger national context of countering terrorism efforts.

## DATA ANALYSIS

### GIS MAP ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 1. KERALA

Kerala holds strategic importance for the Popular Front of India (PFI) due to its socio-political environment and demographics. The state has a history of active political mobilization and a substantial Muslim population, making it a fertile ground for the PFI to propagate its ideology and recruit members. Kerala's high literacy rate and dense network of educational institutions provide opportunities to establish fronts under the guise of charitable or academic organizations, such as the Green Valley Academy. Additionally, the state's coastal geography and connectivity facilitate discreet operations and movement of resources. These factors collectively make Kerala a central hub for the PFI's activities. Major hotspot areas of PFIs' activities in Kerala are Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kochi, Pathanamthitta, and Kollam.



**Figure 2: Places where NIA conducted raids. 2022**

SL No	LOCATION	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
1	Ernad	11.1112	76.1784
2	Kondotty	11.1457	75.9643
3	Manjeri	11.1203	76.2386
4	Chanthakunnu	11.287	76.2407
5	Vellayil	11.2588	75.7804
6	Meenchandha	11.2134207	75.7996432
7	Kuttikattor	11.2681	75.8749
8	Nadapuram	11.684	75.6552
9	Marad Beach Area	11.20745	75.78706
10	Thonnakkal	8.6494673	76.8440766
11	Vidura	8.6467618	77.0581627
12	Pallikkal	8.6650054	76.7855686
13	Mananthavady	11.69025	76.11885
14	Sultan Bathery	11.67	76.28
15	Erattupetta	9.6982124	76.7583488
16	Kanjirapally	9.55727	76.789436
17	Kecheri	10.6209613	76.1232906
18	Chavakkad	10.5833186	76.0188726
19	Chakkuvally	9.0896	76.6369
20	Oachira	9.054722	76.535372
21	Karunagappally	9.0518	76.54
22	Aanappara	9.2672	76.7946
23	Kulashekharapetta	9.27045	76.800462
24	Adoor	9.151239	76.730766
25	Nilambur	11.2855	76.2386
26	Pattarkulam	11.1164	76.0928
27	Kunjunnikkara	10.156897	76.304048



28	Uliyannoor	10.102698	76.3391259
29	Edavanakkad	10.0361	76.3468
30	Muppathadam	10.1404982	76.230519
31	Kakkanad	10.015861	76.341867
32	Muvattupuzha	9.979882	76.580307

TABLE NO. 01: These are the major locations that got raid in 2022, by NIA

**INTERPRETATION:** The National Investigation Agency raided several places across Kerala during 2022 as part of its ongoing efforts to investigate and act against activities related to the PFI. These raids were targeted at some of the districts having a massive presence of PFI, especially Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur, and Ernakulam. The choice of locations reflects some of the hotspots from where the activities of this organization are perceived, including recruiting, training camps, and financial transactions.

The spatial patterns of these raids would give crucial insights into the organizational operational geography. The districts with a history of communal tension and a higher concentration of marginalized communities are apparently the focal points of PFI activities. GIS mapping of these raids highlights clusters of organizational influence, thus facilitating the identification of areas requiring enhanced surveillance and community intervention.

### DEMOGRAPHICS OF KERALA

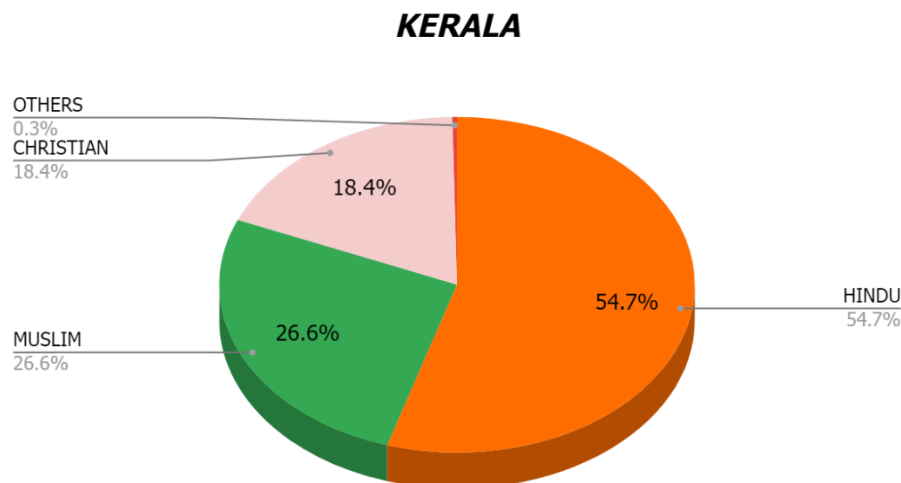


Chart no.01: Demographics of Kerala

**Figure 3: Malappuram**



### MALAPURAM

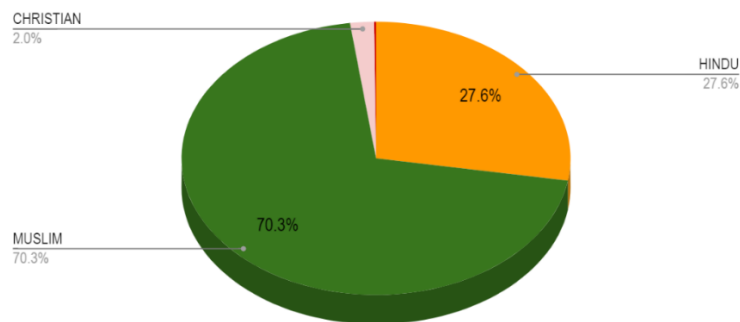


Chart no.02: Demographics of Malappuram

**INTERPRETATION:** Historically and culturally significant, Malappuram has turned into the central place of activities associated with PFI. Areas of concern within the district are identified to be Kondotty, Pattarkulam, Nilambur, Chandhankunnu, Manjeri, and Ernad by the NIA raids. These places show some kind of pattern which is unique to the working of the PFI in its modus operandi:

- **Kondotty:** The major hub for recruitment, which benefits from its access to the transport network for personnel and materials movements.
- **Pattarkulam:** Known to organize and hold community-level meetings with propaganda dissemination to local communities.
- **Nilambur:** A place found as one for secretive camps of training, through the usage of heavily forested areas that cannot be seen.
- **Chandhankunnu:** Financial transaction and logistical provision center to arrange funds for activities to happen here
- **Manjeri:** Digitally, an active region with a sizable amount of propaganda has come

forth connected with the area.

- **Ernad:** Site where political indoctrination had happened. Using local socio-political trends, it made its mark.

These locations point to the diverse techniques that the PFI uses in Malappuram, from physical exercises and financial activities to virtual propaganda. The spatial concentrations of these activities reflect how the organization can leverage local socio-economic vulnerabilities that exist through unemployment and communal tensions.

**Figure 4: Kozhikode**

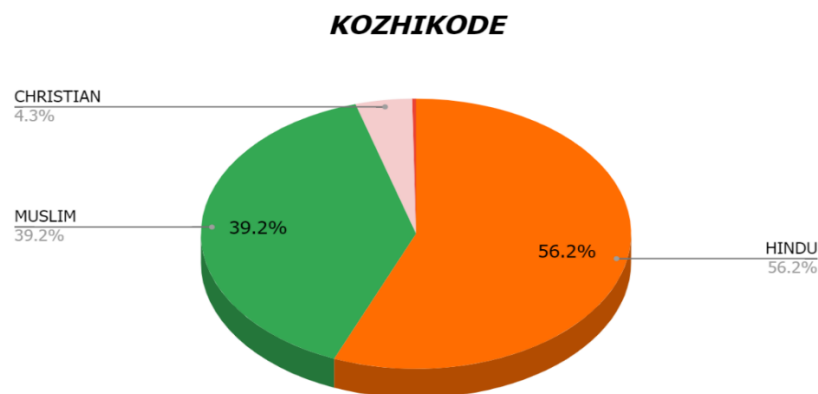


Chart no.03: Demographics of Kozhikode

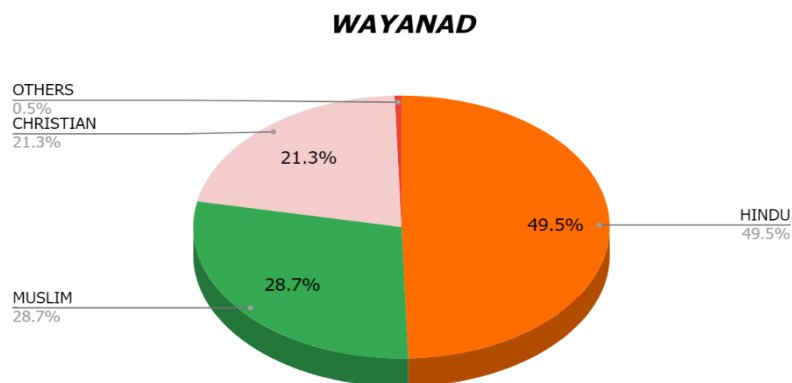
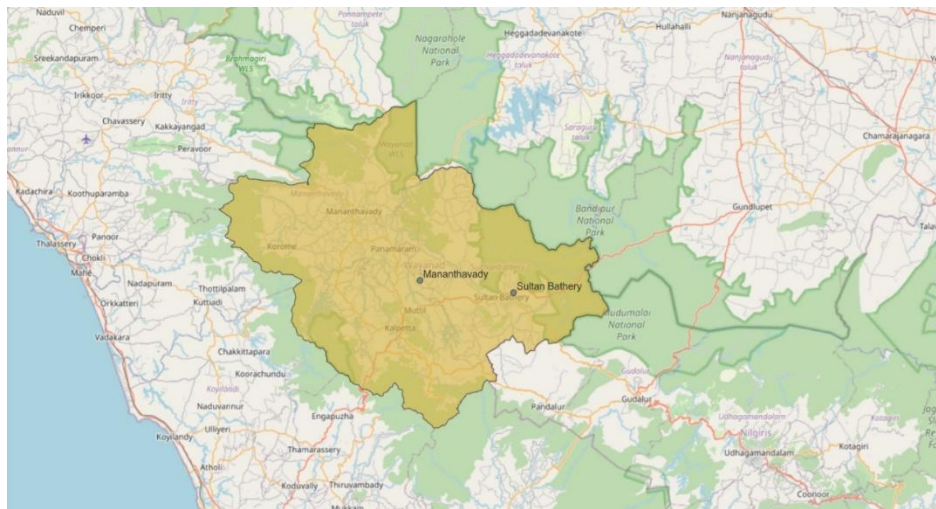
### INTERPRETATION:

Kozhikode is a mixed urban and semi-urban district with multiple communities, making it a good location for social mobilization and political influence.

- Nadapuram: This area is known for regular communal clashes, which have been influenced by political and religious groups.

- Kuttukattor: This area has been identified for social movements and protests linked to ideological groups.
- Marad Beach Area: This area is notorious for the 2003 communal violence; it is sensitive to ideological mobilization.
- Vellayil: Port activities, urban settings make it an area for covert operations
- Meenchandha: Locality to transportation hubs that would help in movement and logistical planning.

**Figure 5: Wayanad**



**Chart no.04: Demographics of Wayanad**

**INTERPRETATION:** Wayanad, characterized by a distinct socio-cultural fabric and strategic geographic position, holds considerable information on the functioning of organizations such as PFI.

- Mananthavady: Located in the northern part of Wayanad, this region is famous for its tribal population and rural setting. Bordering districts such as Kannur and Karnataka make it a potential transit point for cross-border movement. The region faces socio-economic challenges related to poverty and literacy gaps.

- Sulthan Bathery: Major town and an economic center of Wayanad district, situated very close to the Kerala-Tamil Nadu-Karnataka tri-junction. Because of its proximity to forests and national highways, Sulthan Bathery is a big logistical hotspot for covert activities. It has an earlier history of minor communal tensions that could be exploited by extremist groups.

**Figure 6: Thrissur**

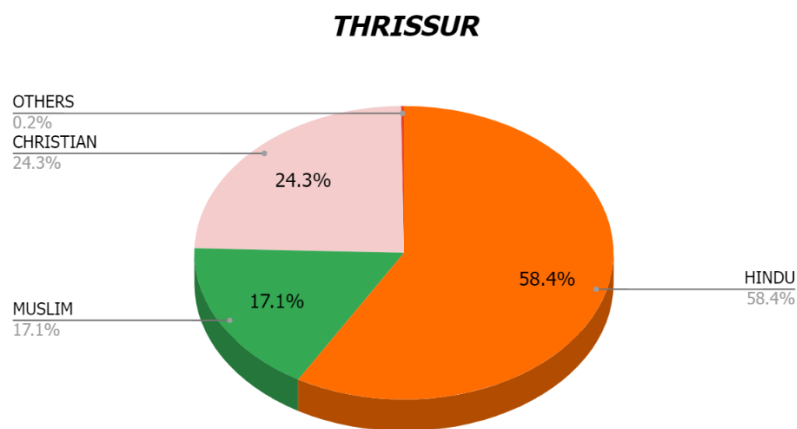
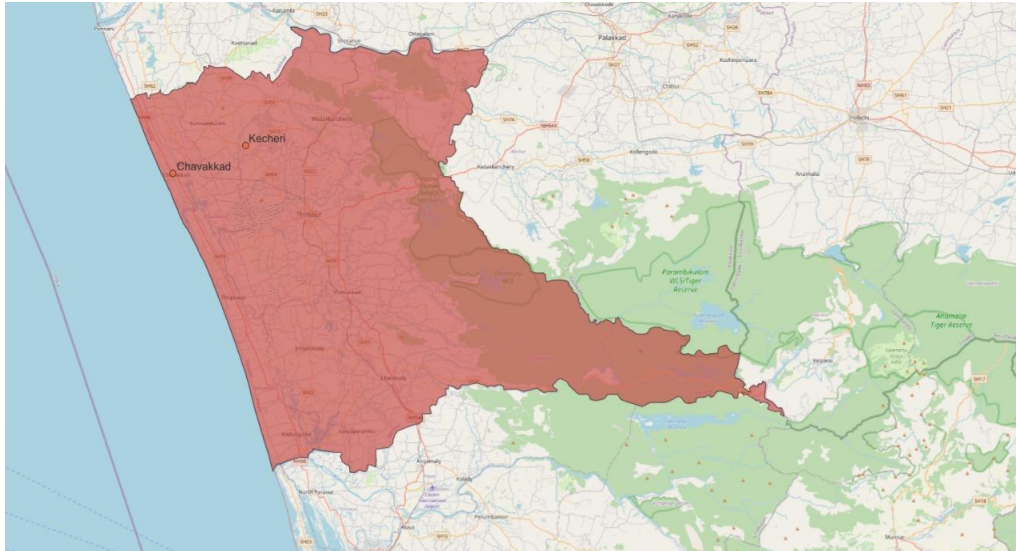


Chart no.05: Demographics of Thrissur

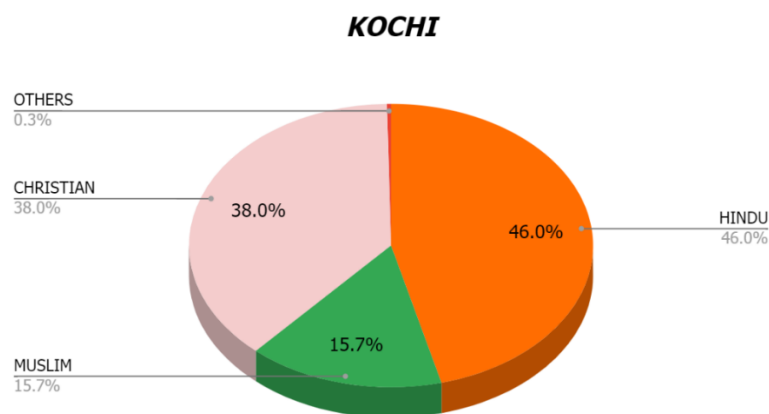
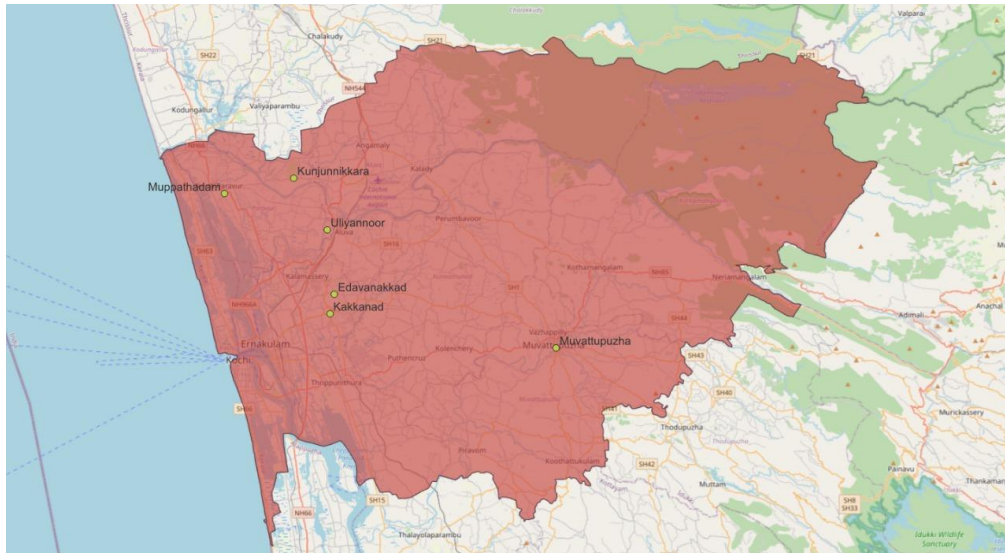
**INTERPRETATION:** In the Thrissur district, Chavakkad and Kecheri are significant hotspots due to their socio-political dynamics and strategic importance.

- Chavakkad - has seen instances of communal tensions in the diverse demographic mix near the coastline and would therefore be a sensitive area to be influenced and mobilized towards radicalization. Additionally, its fishing communities and trade activities make it more convenient to execute covert operations.
- Kecheri - located on main transport roads, is an important center of transit and



communication. Its semi-urban environment and proximity to the other districts make it a probable venue for conferences, recruitment, and dissemination of ideas. If GIS analyzes hotspots, then probably a high clustering effect around the hubs of transport, marketplaces, and religious centers will be obtained, with an indication for interventions that target such regions.

**Figure 7: Kochi**



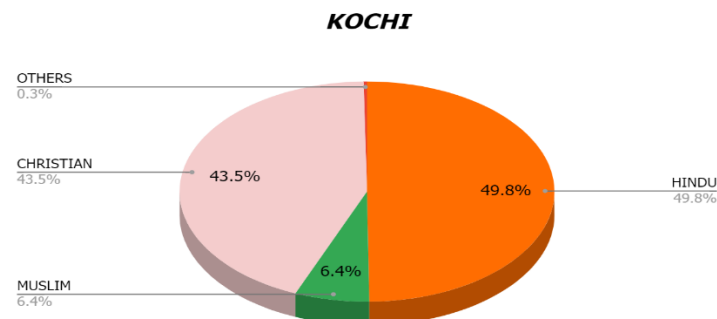
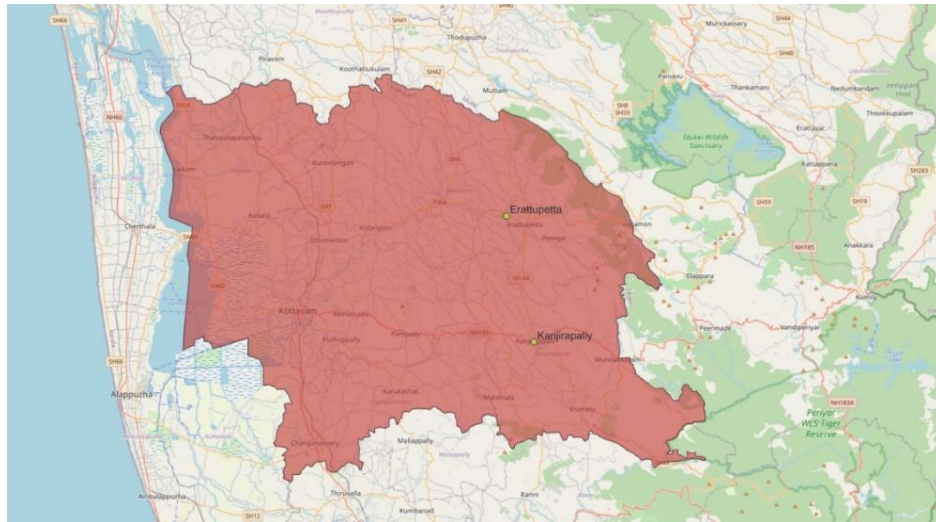
**Chart no.06: Demographics of Kochi**

**INTERPRETATION:** In Kochi, the identified hotspots—Muppalthadam, Kunjunnikkara, Uliyanoor, Edavanakkad, Kakkanad, and Muvattupuzha—reflect the district's unique blend of urban, semi-urban, and coastal dynamics, contributing to their strategic significance.

- Muppalthadam and Kunjunnikkara, located near industrial zones and transport corridors, are potential sites for logistical operations and clandestine activities due to their connectivity and industrial workforce.
- Uliyanoor: the place enjoys proximity to Periyar River. In this region, one would find remote places which might be utilised for a secret conclave or hidden storage space.

- Edavanakkad: the coastline poses issues of security issues connected with smuggling or unlawful nautical business.
- Kakkanad: is an IT hub and center for administrative business. Attention might be attracted to finance or digital-related activities.
- Muvattupuzha: As a point of vital traffic and exchange, one may mobilise movement and mobilise resources.

**Figure 8: Kottayam**

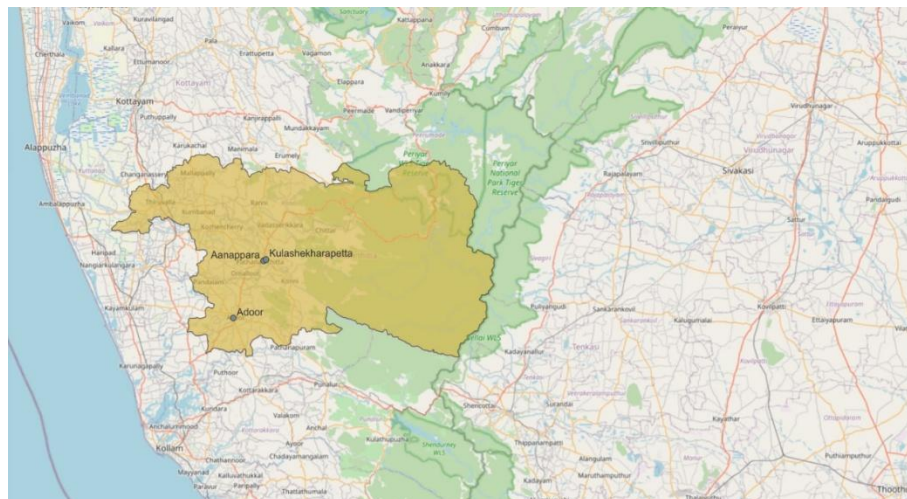


**Chart no.07: Demographics of Kochi**

**INTERPRETATION:** In Kottayam district, two places have emerged as critical hotspots due to the strategic nature of their location and sociocultural contexts.

- Erattupetta: Primarily an agrarian economy located near the Western Ghats, has a history of communal sensitivities and thus has been fertile ground for ideological mobilization and clandestine activities. Its location close to highland routes further facilitates covert movements to and from adjacent districts.
- Kanjirapally: Being a transit city on the crucial Main Central Road (MC Road) connecting central Kerala to eastern highlands, is, therefore, of strategic value in the movement of goods and people.

**Figure 9: Pathanamthitta**



**PATHANAMTHITTA**

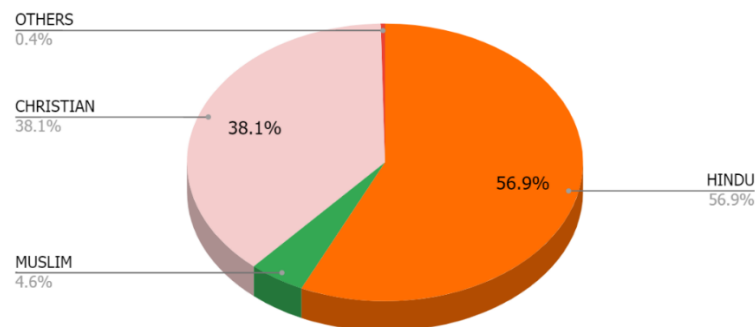


Chart no.08: Demographics of Pathanamthitta

**INTERPRETATION:** Aanappara, Adoor, and Kulashekharapetta in the Pathanamthitta district are significant hotspots, considering their geography and socio-economic characteristics.

Aanappara has a rural background with plenty of secluded areas close to the forested regions, thereby making it amenable to potential hidden assemblies or secret bases for logistics.

Adoor is an important town acting as a transit point through which key parts of Kerala can be communicated and move. Its semi-urban character and vibrant marketplace make it a focal point for activities requiring public interaction.

Kulashekharapetta, with its mix of residential and religious landscapes, may serve as a site for ideological dissemination or recruitment.

**Figure 10: Kollam**

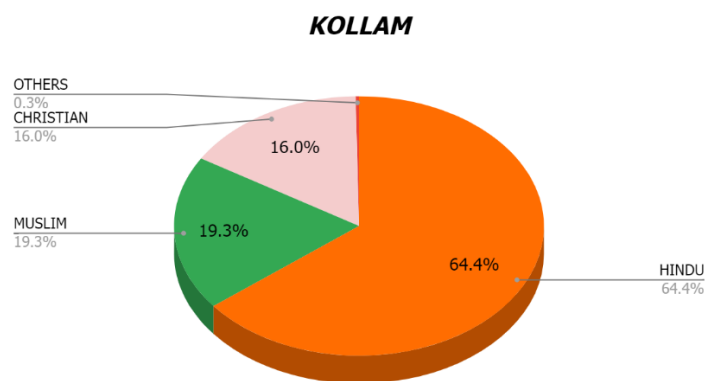
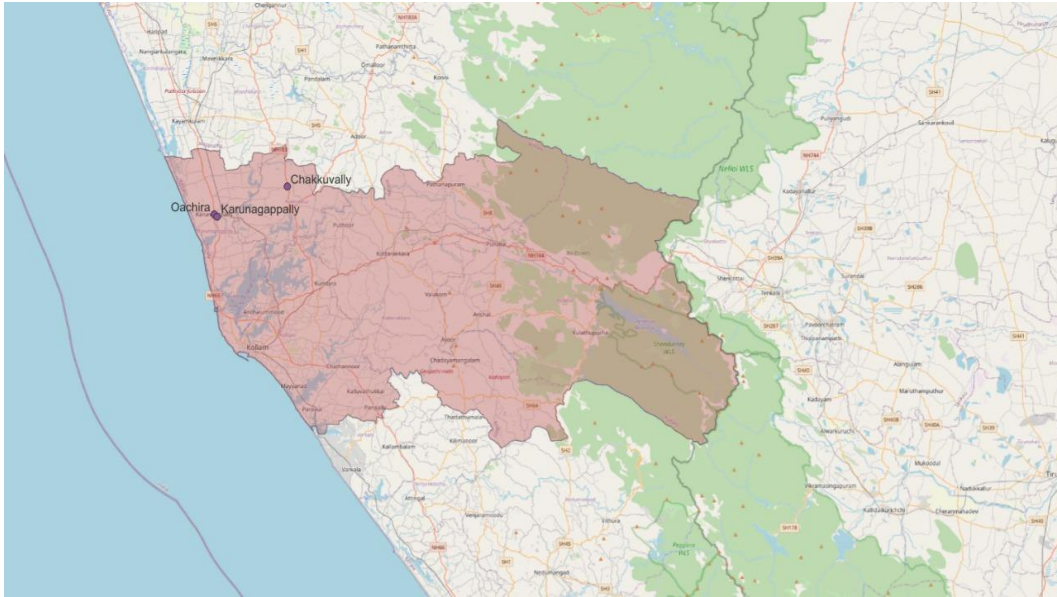


Chart no.10: Demographics of Kollam

**INTERPRETATION:** In Kollam district, the hotspots are Oachira, Kunnathur (Kurnagappally), and Chakkuvalli, each with distinct features that make them strategic locations.

- Oachira, being a place of religious significance with annual festivals, creates huge gatherings, thus giving room for ideological propagation and recruitment.
- Kurnagappally, being a major town close to the coast, is a transit hub, which may facilitate illicit maritime activities or the movement of individuals and resources.
- Chakkuvalli, being located on critical roads in a semi-rural setting, serves as a transit point between urban centers and other distant areas, thus having a potential for covert activity.

**Figure 11: Trivandrum**





### TRIVANDRUM

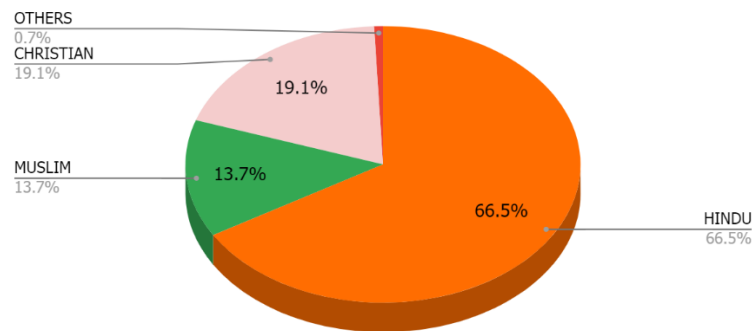


Chart no.11: Demographics of Trivandrum

**INTERPRETATION:** In the Thiruvananthapuram district, critical hotspots include Pallikkal, Thonnakkal, and Vidura because of their strategic locations and sociopolitical relevance.

- Pallikkal, with its semi-rural setting and proximity to transport corridors, is a potential site for covert operations and resource movement.
- Thonnakkal, located on the NH66 highway, is an important transit point, and it is, therefore, amenable to logistical activities and mobilization.
- Vidura, with its rural landscape and relative seclusion, would be exploited for clandestine meetings or storage.

### HEAT MAPS OF KERALA



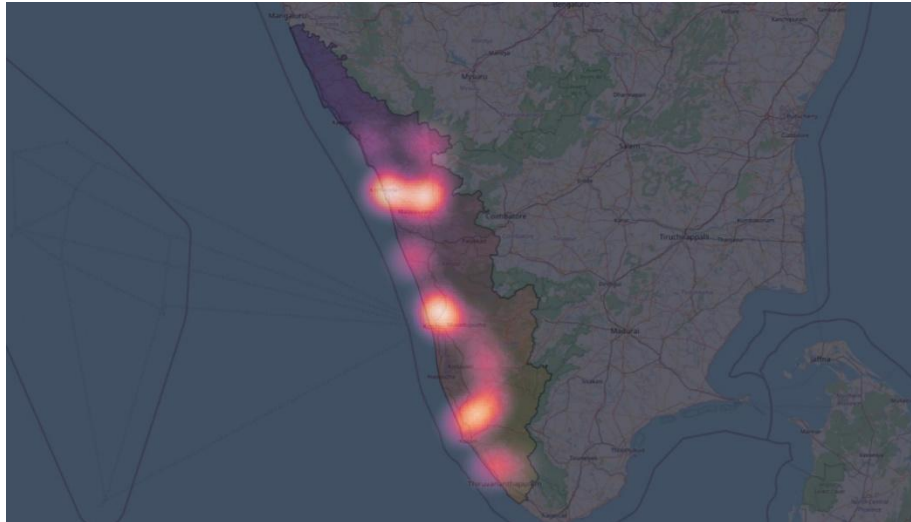


Fig 12. Heat map of Kerala

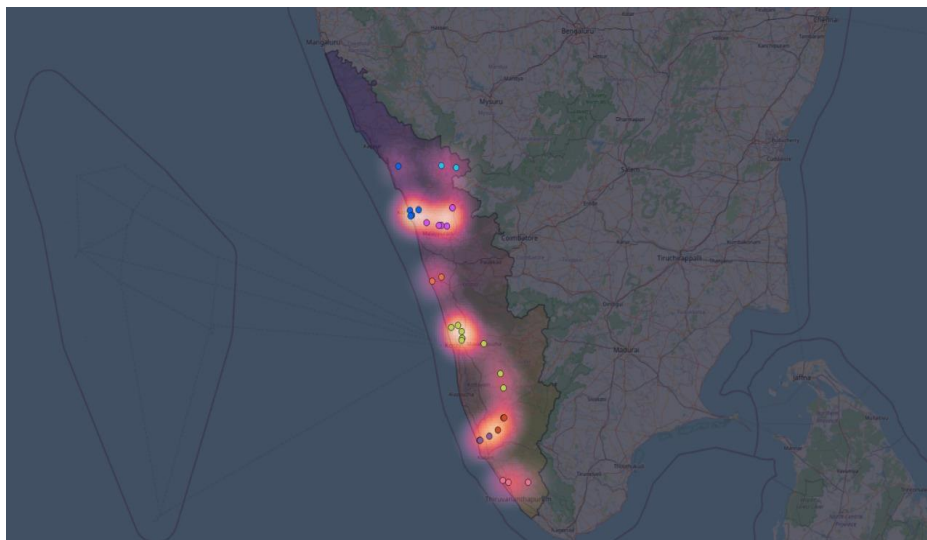


Fig 13. Heat map of Kerala with Hotspots

**INTERPRETATION:** GIS-generated heat maps present the intensity and spread of PFI activities across Kerala in graphic form. They show many crucial points, which are given below:

**Hotspot Clusters:** There are incidents reported in the Malappuram, Kozhikode, and Ernakulam districts, where the activities of PFI are most pronounced. Here, it can be clearly seen that there are heavy clusters of hotspots at Kondotty and Nilambur of Malappuram.

These heat maps not only represent the spatial distribution of PFI-related activities but are also a very useful tool for law enforcement and policymakers. They help in pinpointing critical areas and underlying socio-economic factors, thereby enabling more targeted interventions and resource allocation to counter extremist activities.

This data-driven approach has highlighted the need for incorporating geographic analyses into anti-terrorism strategies. It becomes easier for law enforcement agencies to identify specific areas of concern and, accordingly, utilize resources and devise targeted measures that can help

mitigate the risks brought about by extremist organizations such as the PFI.

## **CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS**

The GIS analysis of hotspots connected to the Popular Front of India (PFI) in Kerala offers important insights into the group's activities and the areas most at risk of extremist influence. The findings show that PFI-related incidents are not confined to specific urban or rural centers; instead, they appear across strategically important areas, such as coastal regions, semi-urban areas, and border zones. This distribution highlights how the organization adapts its activities to take advantage of geographic and socio-economic weaknesses.

Key hotspots include Kochi, Thrissur, Kottayam, Pathanamthitta, Kollam, and Thiruvananthapuram. Each area shows unique patterns influenced by transport networks, community centers, and socio-economic factors. GIS mapping reveals that activity often clusters near transport hubs, religious sites, and economically troubled neighborhoods. These conditions create an environment that fosters recruitment, radicalization, and logistical activities. The concentration of activities near highways, ports, and semi-urban growth centers further indicates the group's strategic focus on geographic accessibility.

The analysis points out that areas along transport corridors, border zones, and locations with heightened communal tensions are especially vulnerable. Social issues like poverty, unemployment, and lack of education create a breeding ground for radical ideologies. Coastal regions raise particular concerns because they can facilitate potential smuggling routes, while urban centers provide logistical support for covert operations.

By combining geography with criminology, this study shows how PFI-related activities overlap with Kerala's socio-political and economic landscape. The proximity of hotspots to border areas, coastlines, and highways not only aids the movement of people but also allows for the circulation of resources that could support extremist aims. This complex vulnerability emphasizes the need for counter-terrorism strategies that are informed by geographic data.

In conclusion, the study highlights the necessity for targeted interventions based on GIS findings. Increased vigilance, focused community outreach, and careful resource distribution to at-risk districts are crucial for countering radical influences. A GIS-based approach improves understanding of the spatial patterns related to terrorism and provides policymakers and security agencies with valuable intelligence for effective prevention, regional stability, and long-term security planning.

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