

**STATE AND SOCIETY
IN KERALA
(POL4C12)**



STUDY MATERIAL

FOURTH SEMESTER

**M.A. POLITICAL SCIENCE
(2019 Admission onwards)**

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**CORE COURSE : POL4C12
STATE AND SOCIETY IN KERALA**

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MODULE I

SOCIAL AND DEMOCRATIC BASIS OF KERALA SOCIETY

Kerala's Caste-Class Structure in the pre-Independence Period

The social class structure in Kerala is very broad in pre-independence period. Kerala is emerged and flourished under the Hindu Brahman religion. The process of formation of Kerala culture as a regionalized community of culture also was parallel to those that evolved politically and linguistically in almost all other parts of India.

In Kerala, caste ranking places the Nambudiri at the peak of the ritual hierarchy who hold a command ritual status. The most important caste ranking below the Nambudiri is the Nayar, the traditional warrior. The Nairs are a prosperous landowning community. Below the Nairs are ranked the traditional service castes, which are numerically insignificant and the traditional toddy-tapper, the Ezhava, or Tiyyar in Malabar, are the highest of the polluting castes. Below the Ezhavas are the Scheduled Castes. Each of these castes in the ritual hierarchy is in turn sub-divided into a number of smaller endogamous sub castes. Each sub-caste is, within the position of the larger caste unit, ranked hierarchically. Kerala society crystallized into two major caste-based categories, the caste Hindus or 'Savarnas' and the non-caste Hindus or 'Avarnas'. The caste and sub-castes were arranged in a hierarchical order

from the highest and the most sacred to the lowest and the least worthy. The varna system was existed in Kerala even if it was not in the same pattern which was prevalent in all other Indian village societies. If we go through careful definitions of caste and class, caste is a most rigid form of class, and class is a more fluid form of caste. In India, castes are ancient family lines arranged in a hierarchical order, a dominant caste at the top, outcastes at the bottom, and other castes in hierarchical order in between. Those in the lower castes suffer endless social and economic disabilities while the higher castes are endowed with extensive social and economic privileges.

The caste hierarchy and related atrocities are very much part of Kerala society. The travellers who visited Kerala were appalled by the sight of practice of the caste system. According to the statement made by Swami Vivekananda, who visited Kerala in the early 20th century, summaries all the other observations. "In Malabar" writes Vivekananda, "the lower caste was not allowed to walk on the same road which is used by the upper caste. But if he becomes a Muslim or Christian he can go move anywhere. This is happening in a country ruled by a Hindu Raja. This is quite ridiculous". In the words of T. K. Madhavan, one of the reformist leaders who fought against the caste hierarchy and caste atrocities remembers his childhood thus, "When I go to the school I see many Nair men and women. My first memory of childhood is that of giving way for them. I used to go away from the path just be on safe side as I was afraid that Nairs will beat me up if I violate the system".

The text like Kerala Mahatmyam and Keralolpatti attribute the genesis of Kerala to Parasurama, sixth incarnation of Vishnu, who said to exterminated 21 generation of the Kshtriyas. The texts claim that as repentance to the human slaughter Parasurama decided to give some land grants to the Brahmins but as belong to the priestly caste himself he did not posses any land. Parasurama then claimed a new land by throwing axe [parasu] across the sea. The land emerged thus, Kerala, was given as dana [alms] to the Brahmins. Both these text seem to be serving the purpose of glorify the caste system. Interestingly, Kerala Mahatmyam and Keralolpatti pretend to be a historical document where the myths and legends play more crucial role rather than historical facts, yet incongruous facts. According to Kerala Mahatmyam, Parasurama made Kerala for the Brahmins and the lower caste people were brought into serve them. Thereby, Keralolpatti justifies the land ownership of Brahmins in a way similar to the Divine Right theory of European monarchy. In the Keralolpatti also said Parasurama, created the land of Kerala for Brahmins. The gift, made with flower and water for their enjoyment is called the janmam. Parasurama then sent Sudras from various countries and settled them in the land as the Adiyans and Kudiyans as tenants for serving Brahmins.

The Brahmins migrated to Kerala seem to have done a similar process of destruction and regeneration in the Kerala society. In this process they were assisted by the dominant class of Kerala existed at that time. While the Brahmins enter the scene, the Nairs did align with the Brahmins against the

others in Kerala. The result of this struggle is the stratification of the society into savarnas and avarnas where the savarnas divided the land between them leaving the avarnas as landless workers. Unlike the British who believed in power through controlling the ruling class, Brahmins concentrated on the land acquisition and through it indirectly controlling the society. Again, the arguments of EMS regarding the issue regarding the arrival of Brahmins and their dominance on the land through the establishment of Jamni system appear to be the most acceptable.

The acceptance in the society achieved by the Brahmins after they reached through the establishment of brahmanical system of worship and probable alliance with ruling class got further strengthened and structured. Moreover they also might have tried to restructure the society with Brahmin as the head of the social structure. Thus, the dominance of brahmanical system and the dominance of Brahmins over the land rights of Kerala were came into existence. The increase of land tax also prompted the farmers to give away the land to Devasvam and Brahmasvam. By 12th century it can observe that most of the land was either under the Temples, Brahmins or Naduvazhis or local rulers.

The rise of Brahmins achieved the land ownership in the majority of Kerala. The feudal system in Kerala can be called as Janmi- Naduvazhi- Medhavitvam or the domination of the upper castes, the janmis and the local chieftains got established in this period. Brahmins was already started acquiring the land through the route of Devasvam to

Brahmasvam transferring of lands. The Devasvam lands were primarily given to the temples which was obviously enjoyed by the Brahmins. However, by the coming of Christianity especially in Tiruvitankur most of the castes preferred to convert to Christianity which offered them better economical, social and pedagogical opportunities.

The caste system in Kerala followed certain customs to retain the social structure. The system of caste hierarchy aimed at the division of the society and created its own devices of segregation, namely endogamy, laws of inheritance, the laws of sharing the food and the most potent and worst of all, the untouchability. The word for untouchability in Malayalam language is ayittam and Tindal. Ayittam probably came from the Sanskrit word 'asuddha' meaning 'impure', stands for the whole system of caste hierarchy and segregation based on the purity. The word Tindal originated from the Malayalam word todū, meaning touch. Even now visiting the Kerala temples one can get a glimpse of the Tindal when the santhi gives you the prasadam or offering, he drops it into the receiver's hand leaving the distance of at least one feet between the devotee and himself. Here he is keeping the distance of Tindal.

Thereby, the class system in Kerala was based on the social position but not economic status. The social stratification is on by birth which is known as caste.

Socio-Economic Conditions of Kerala

During the colonial period, Kerala was divided into

three areas; Travancore and Cochin were princely states while Malabar was part of the Madras Presidency under colonial rule. The caste system created a hierarchical order and divided society into a number of groups based upon ascription within which mobility was impossible. The status of the individual in society was determined by the norms of caste. In the traditional hierarchy the 'Malayalee Brahmin' known as Namboodiri occupied a foremost place in the social system. Nairs also had a high status in the social structure. Namboodiris and Nairs constituted the major land owning groups of pre-colonial and early colonial Kerala. As a result a rigid and feudal order existed, marked with caste atrocities and several institutional mechanisms were codified and established.

The upper castes controlled the major portion of the land. During the British era, the Janmis (landlords) became more powerful, as the Britishers' wanted their active support and co-operation in sustaining their own authority. The depressed castes received inhuman treatment at the hands of the upper castes, as the law was not egalitarian. Aggressive slavery in the primitive form prevailed even in the beginning of the 19th century. The groups belonging to the lower strata of the society especially, the outcastes had to undergo numerous tribulations because of the caste structure prevalent in the society. Kerala society before the 19th century accepted inequality, discrimination, and caste oppression. The impact of this oppression and deprivation was heaviest on lower castes. These agricultural slaves were the real tillers of the soil. Women of lower castes including Ezhavas were prevented from

covering the upper part of the body. Slaves were denied social privileges like wearing clothes, using public roads, using metallic utensils etc. Even Nairs were denied some privileges like wearing gold ornaments, using certain types of clothes etc. on the ceremonial occasions and on the death of a person; customary payments to Naduvazhi's or landlords were also prevalent at that time.

Holding of umbrella was prohibited to all castes except Brahmins. Backward castes were denied entry to schools, temple and other public services. Untouchability and unapproachability were common practices. All these restricted social mobility including inter-caste marriages and inter-dining between various sub castes. Child marriage and polygamy were institutionalised. Traditionally cultivation or manual labour was regarded as a degraded occupation by the upper castes. Due to these miserable conditions several low caste groups were attracted towards Islam and Christianity. Their degraded condition also invited the attention of missionaries who came to work among them. The East India Company with the help of the missionaries established schools in different parts of Malabar and admitted students regardless of castes and creed. Economic factors also introduced change in the lives of the lower castes. Plantation and cash crops were introduced in the early 19th century, which required agricultural labour. This resulted in the abolition of slavery in the middle of 19th century. The political and administrative policies of the colonial authorities on land and other areas also helped in introducing change in the rigid caste structure. Along

with missionary activities, the new nationalist movements aroused in the early 20th century, fresh kinds of thinking among the educated lower castes and even among some higher castes.

SOCIAL REFORM AND DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENTS IN KERALA

From 1812, subversive forces were forming and developing to question the incongruous social practices existed in Kerala. This social transformation gradually led Kerala into the mainstream of political struggle for freedom and responsible government in the 20th century. The important outcome of this ferment was the awakening of the masses especially the lower orders in the Hindu society, against social injustice and evils. This awakening found articulation in Kerala towards the last quarter of the 19th century. A number of socio-religious reform movements, which were also the earliest democratic mass movements in Kerala, took shape. On the whole, these movements were peaceful and non-violent. These movements were of the utmost significance, because Kerala had, for centuries, tolerated the caste system in its most oppressive form. The rigid caste system existed in such a heinous way that the lower orders were not only 'untouchable' but "unapproachable" as well. In Malabar, social status and economic competence of the individual was still determined by his position in the caste hierarchy. Until the 20th century, governmental positions were denied to lower castes and non-Hindus.

One of the most important social reform movements

was spearheaded by Sree Narayana Guru, the great Hindu saint and social reformer. The Guru was born in 1856 in the Ezhava Community which had a status far below that of the Nambudiris. He fearlessly criticized and campaigned against the rigours of the caste system, the Brahmin hegemony and the numerous social disabilities of the Ezhavas and other lower castes. Soon Sree Narayana Guru became the rallying point for the Ezhavas and other backward classes to unite and organize. The Shri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP), literally the society for the propagation of moral teaching of Shri Narayana came into being on 15th May 1903. Within a short period, the Guru and Yogam drew towards them a brilliant band of dedicated workers, including the poet Kumaran Asan, whose efforts constitute an eloquent testament to what a community, submitted to centuries of tyranny, can do and achieve through unity, realism and organism.

A programme of action founded upon such sublime humanism and social purpose was not destined to remain confined to one caste only; it soon became the philosophy of Hindu reformation, encompassing all castes, including the Brahmin. The Nairs also felt the need for reform. Until the 19th century, the Nairs had a pre-eminent role in Kerala. Institutions like the sambandam (non-legal marriage) and the matrilineal joint family system, which had ensured the strength of the Nair community. The impact of the market economy, the absorption of new values through the new system of education, the self-consciousness being generated among the lower castes and their cry for equality and privileges brought

about a decline of Nair dominance. The sense of decline gave an impetus to the spirit of reform that expressed in the work of religious men like Chattampi Swamikal and later in legislative enactments in respect of marriage, inheritance, property rights etc. Ultimately, the movements crystalized in the foundation of the Nair Service Society in 1914. As a matter of fact in varying degrees, social reform movement impact affected every caste in Hindu society as well as the Christians and the Muslims. There are certain specific events that significantly raised the role social reform initiatives in Kerala.

The 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century witnessed the growth of powerful social reformation movements in almost all communities in Kerala. They could be considered as a cultural and ideological struggle against the retrogressive elements of traditional culture and against the ideological hegemony of Brahmins. Various struggles and reforms among the depressed classes which contributed to the development of consciousness among them. A number of developments combined to make social reform movements possible in Kerala. The reform movements were due to structural changes in the society. Education led to the emergence of a new middle class under the influence of both traditional and Western ideas, which directly influenced social change.

Significant changes in the administrative and economic structure and land relations contributed to the emergence of social reforms in Kerala. Employment opportunities in the public works department and plantation industries were given

to the backward communities. The abolition of slavery and the initial attempts for land reforms also helped in changing the outlook of the people.

The reformers of Kerala belonged to two broad categories. The first group believed that changes in beliefs and behaviour were to be effected through the influence of religion. The second group organised themselves under non-religious leadership and gained their ends through constitutional means. Most of the reform movements were centered on different castes and the aim of these movements were concentrated within the castes. Another notable feature was that the emergence of the communal organisation based on castes caused the evolution of caste consciousness among the different sections of the society. The socio-religious reformers in Kerala realised that religious reform was an instrument through which changes could be introduced in society', for religious beliefs and social practices were closely interlinked. Chattampi Swamikal, who was a Nair reformist, revolted against the existing social order, and wanted Hindu communities like the Nairs and the Ezhavas to attain a status equal to that of Brahmins in the society.

Sree Narayana Guru was an Ezhava Saint who gave a concrete shape and solid foundation to social change in Kerala, revolted against Brahminism, He established temples in several parts of Kerala for Ezhavas and he permitted entry to the Pulayas and other lower castes. His social vision is envisaged in his saying 'One Caste, One Religion, One God for man'. The Muslim community also suffered from

backwardness, especially in the field of education. Reform movements took place in the Muslim Community under the strong leadership of Vakkam Abdul Khadar Maulavi. He worked hard for the social upliftment and the moral regeneration of his community. He worked to discard all un-Islamic practices and to push Muslims towards English education so that they could play an active part in modern progressive movements. His contribution to Islamic literature through periodicals like 'Muslim' and 'Deepika' which initiated translation of few words from the Koran, was a break through in the history of Islam in Kerala. He founded the Travancore Muslim Mahajana Sabha and Chirayankil Taluk Muslim Samajam for the social progress and dissemination of liberal ideas among the Muslim community.

Vaikam Satyagraha (1924-25)

The first major struggle for temple entry was the famous Vaikam Satayagraha led by K. Kelappan and A.K Gopalan. It attracted countrywide attention, people from all parts of India came to Guruvayur in support of the satyagrahis. The Zamorin, who was the trustee, adopted an uncompromising attitude towards the demands for temple entry.

Vaikam Satyagraha is a movement had set on foot to demand admission of the certain sections of the people, the so called 'unapproachables' banned from appearing in public roads adjacent to the famous temple at Vaikom. Conservative opposition was trotted out with obstinate determination. The feeding of Brahmins inside the temple was regarded as an

important offering to the deity, and uninterrupted custom was pleaded by those who opposed the movement. It was contended that if the 'Avarnas' were allowed to come into the approach roads the temple priests would be polluted and the temple consequently defiled. The forward section resolved to try the methods of 'Satyagraha' and several individuals, a large number of whom being Nayars and other caste Hindus, organised a "Jatha" to lay their grievance before Maharani Sethu Lakshmi Bai, the Regent of Travancore. A resolution was moved in the Legislative Council demanding the opening of the temple roads to the 'Avarna' Hindus. Public opinion in the state was so favourable that the government threw open the approach roads to the 'Avarnas'. Mahatma Gandhi call it bed-rock of freedom because the settlement is a document between the people and the state constituting a big step in the direction of liberty in one respect at least.

The movement for temple entry resulted in the overwhelming victory of the reform movement in the history of Kerala when Sri Chitila Tirunna Balarama Varma, the Maharaja of Travancore, issued his famous Temple Entry Proclamation on November 12, 1936. This silent, bloodless revolution in Kerala society sowed warm hopes in the hearts of the downtrodden.

Guruvayoor Satyagraha

The famous Guruvayur Satyagraha is a memorable episode in the history of the national movement. With the blessings of Mahatma Gandhi the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee decided to begin Satyagraha before the famous

temple at Guruvayoor with effect from 1st November, 1931. It was a movement for temple entry and abolition of untouchability. The Satyagraha began accordingly under the leadership of Sri. K. Kelappan. Among the Kerala leaders other than Kelappan were Mannath Padmanabhan, A.K. Gopalan and N.P. Damodaran. Guruvayur began to attract the attention of all India. There were certain untoward incidents during the early period of the Satyagraha. They served to heighten the tension in the minds of the people who were in sympathy with the movement. After the movement had run its course for about ten months, Kelappan entered on a fast before the temple on September, 21, 1932. The fast electrified the atmosphere. On October 2, 1932 Kelappan broke his fast in response to Gandhiji's wishes. There after a referendum was held among the Hindus to find out their views on the question of temple entry. More than 77 percent of the Hindus expressed themselves in favour of temple entry. The Guruvayur temple was thrown open to Harijans only in 1946. Though the Satyagraha did not immediately result in the opening of the Guruvayur temple to all Hindus, the movement helped to create a strong public opinion in the country in favour of temple entry and abolition of untouchability.

Democratic and Temple Entry Struggle

The promulgation of the Temple Entry Proclamation was a reform of far-reaching importance, not only to the teeming millions of Travancore but a momentous act of emancipation and hope to the whole of India.

Due to the changes in society a number of social

reforms Acts were also passed which had a direct impact on the consciousness and position of the lower castes. The system of Marumakkathaym (Matrilineal system of inheritance) led to the revolt of the younger generation as all the powers were exercised by the 'Karnauas' (the senior male member of a matriarchal family) in fact, the joint family system had failed to work harmoniously. The Ezhava Act (1925) and the Nanjanad Vellala Act (1926) followed, providing similar changes in the law of inheritance and polygamy. The Cochin Nair Act of 1937-38 also brought about the complete disruption of the institution of 'Marumakkathayam. The Act also prohibited the marriage of girls under 16 years of age or of a man below 21 years of age in addition to the prohibition of polygamy by the earlier act. According to the Mappila Marumakkathayam Act of 1939, the Mappila tarawad and property was thereafter to be governed by the 'Shariat' Law.

Changes on land also took place, which were beneficial to lower caste tenants. One of the earlier sections of land legislation in Travancore was the Pattam Proclamation of (June 1865). It conferred property rights on the holder of Pandravaka (Sirkat land and protected the tenants against arbitrary eviction. Then Janmi-kudian Regularities of (1896) later amended by the Regulation XII of (1932) conferred full property rights on the kudian subject to the payment of Janmi Karam i.e. rent due to the landlord from the tenants. The Cochin Verumpattamdar Act (1943) protected the interests of the tenants. In Malabar, the Malabar Compensation for Tenants Improvements Act of 1887 was passed to prevent the

growing practice of eviction. The Malabar Tenancy Act of 1930 contained provision to confer security of tenure on several categories of tenants. The Travancore-Cochin government passed the Stay of Eviction Proceeding Act (1950) to give protection to the tenants from arbitrary eviction. On the formation of Kerala, the Kerala Stay of Eviction Proceeding Act (1957) was passed to prevent the eviction of tenants, Kudikidappukar and certain other classes of cultivating tenants. The Kerala Agriculturalist Debt Relief Act (1958) and the Kerala Compensation for Tenants Improvement Act (1958) were also important enactments intended for the benefit of the agriculturist. The Kerala Agrarian Relation Act (1960) was revolutionary, in that the tenants were also given fixity of tenure, freedom from eviction and benefit of fair rent to be fixed by Land Tribunals. The Kerala Land Reforms Act of 1963, then amended in 1969, abolished the Janmi System in Kerala and conferred full right of ownership on the tillers of the soil.

Among political movements in Malabar, the Malabar Rebellion is one of the most important. Martial law was declared and repressive measures were adopted. One of the tragic episodes of the rebellion was the 'Wagon Tragedy', in which 61 of the 90 Mappilas who were carried as prisoners in closed railway goods wagon from Tirur to Coimbatore on November 10, 1921.

However, the socio-religious reform movements described above could not directly address the problems of the depressed sections of the society. Hence it is necessary to look

at the movements among the lower castes and the impact they had on their social status, economic position and self identity.

Shanar Agitation

The agitation by the lower caste Shanars, an untouchable community inhabiting mainly the southern district of Travancore, for the right to dress like the upper castes was an important movement in the late 1800s. In 1829 a Royal Proclamation was issued prohibiting all backward communities from wearing upper garments and ornaments made of gold or silver. There were vehement protests from the Shanar community. After continuous agitation, the then Diwan, Colonel Munro issued an order permitting Shanar women who were converts to Christianity, to cover the upper part of the bodies with Jackets (Kuppayam). Not satisfied with this, they tried to use an additional scarf over their shoulders which again provoked the upper castes. The agitation of the Shanars eventually led to the Royal Proclamation on July 26, 1859, abolishing all restrictions in the matter of the covering of the upper parts of the body by Shanar women, though they were not still permitted to imitate the dress of the women of upper castes. This was an important victory for the lower castes as it provided them confidence and helped in their assertion against upper caste domination.

Role of Ayyankali

One of the early social reformers, who worked for social change in modern times, was Ayyankali (1866-1941) who fought against the social taboo of untouchability among

the downtrodden especially among the untouchables. Born in Venganoor in the Pulaya community, he waged a lifelong crusade against the evils of caste system. He was denied the right to education and throughout his life he had to confront and fight with the existing social order. He gave leadership to the movement started by Pulayas and other oppressed classes for their social upliftment.

Ayyankali initiated an organisation among the untouchables and to agitate for the rights and privileges that had so far been denied to these communities because of rigid social hierarchy. Hence, in 1907 Ayyankali has found Sadhu Jana Paripalana Yogam (SJPY) and established a wide network all over the state and with its initiative a campaign for the upliftment of the untouchables began. Before starting his social reform activities Ayyankali travelled over most parts of Kerala and arranged meetings and emphasised the need for unity and tried to articulate the feelings of untouchables as human being and not as an instrument or a chattel in the hands of an savarna. As a challenge Ayyankali walked through the prohibited roads and eventraveled through the public road in a bullock cart without any fear. He started a Malayalam monthly magazine, Sadhu Jana Paripalini. It was as a result of constant struggle and agitation under his leadership that the Pulaya community secured the right to walk free along public roads in Trivandrum and to enter schools. Ayyankali made a substantial contribution to the educational betterment of the untouchable Pulayas He made them realise that education was the key to their emancipation as in the case of other backward

communities like Ezhavas. In recognition of his outstanding service to society, especially for the welfare of the untouchables, the Travancore government nominated Ayyankali as member of the Sri. Mulam Praja Sabha. This provided him with a respectable position to carry on his fight for social equality and justice with the goodwill and co-operation of the leaders of other communities. Apart from the work of leaders such as Ayyankali, a number of revolts took place during the colonial by the untouchables. Among them the notable revolts were Thonnuramandu lahala, Pullattu lahala, Perinattu lahala, and Munnooramvayal lahala. However, divisions arose within the Sadhu Jana Paripalana Yogam among the various sub-castes of the untouchables. However, divisions arose within the Sadhu Jana Paripalana Yogam among the various sub-castes of the untouchables. Therefore, the Pulayas converted it into the Pulaya Congress and as a result the Travancore Pulayar Mahasabha was formed in 1938. While in Travancore, Ayyankali was their leader, In Kochi K.P.Karuppan and K.P.Vallon led them. However, In Malabar the Pulayas did not have such a popular leader as they had in Kochi and Tiruvitamkur.

In 1919, under the leadership of Pazhoor Rama Channar the Sambhava Sangham was formed. The first organisation of the Pariah community in Travancore was Brahma Prathyaksha Sadhujana Paripalana Sangam under the leadership of Kandan Kumaran. Besides, the formation of the Cheramar Mahajana Sabha in 1921 by N. John Joseph. Another leaders Poikayil Johannan (later named as Kumara

Guru Devan) started a movement in 1909, which later on came to be known as Prathyalscha Raksha Daiva Sabha (PROS). Karamana P. K. Govinda Pillai who was the editor of 'Subhashini', was nominated to Sri Moolam Praja Sabha in 1911. The cultural contribution of the poets likes Pt. Karuppan who belongs to Deevara Community (OBC) and Kumaran Asan who belongs to Ezhava Community could also gave an impetus to the ongoing revolts against the caste atrocities.

GROWTH OF REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS

Modern representative institutions are those that combine lower houses of legislatures elected on the basis of individual suffrage (even if restricted but as distinct from estate or corporate representation), separation of executive from legislative functions, the power of legislatures to convoke themselves (even if they could be dissolved), and the placement of taxing power in legislatures. While recent research dug up a variety of legislative assemblies in various parts of Europe already in the late medieval period and, indeed, in quite a few in other places around the world, systems of representative institutions as defined here first emerged in England and in Poland. The War of Independence in the United States resulted in the first appearance of such institutions in the Western Hemisphere. They were first established in France in 1789 and in Spain in 1812. After Poland lost independence in 1795, England, the United States, France, and Spain became the paragons of institutional engineering for countries in Latin America that became independent after 1810 and in Europe, beginning with Norway

in 1814.

Direct popular representation came about gradually as a result of political, demographic and economic changes, assisted, in the United States, by the ultimate individualistic logic implied by the Constitution. In Britain during the eighteenth century new economic and professional interests had emerged in national life, demanding their share of political power. This gave rise to the concept of interest representation, which became the unacknowledged theme of reform.

Origin of Representative Institutions in Kerala

A glimpse into the evolution of the Legislative Assembly of Kerala indicates different phases of representative institution development, matching the social, political and economic changes over the years.

The Phases

The transition of a small advisory Council to the constitutionally sanctioned law making body of Kerala, through manifestations of structural and functional transformation, spreading across different phases, which could be classified chronologically on the basis of apparently similar socio-political configuration of the respective periods, as:

(1) 1888-1947

(2) 1947-1956

(3) Since 1956

PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD (1888-1947)

The starting point of the formation of a legislative body in Travancore, can be traced to January 1888 when the Dewan T. Rama Rao proposed to the Maharaja, the organisation of a Legislative Council so that "the Dewan would gain the benefit of discussing with and taking the opinion of responsible officers associated with him in matters of legislation, one of the most important functions of Government". This proposal was readily approved by Sri Mulam Thirunal Maharaja and a regulation was passed on 30th March, 1888, creating a Legislative Council, of three year tenure, and composed of 8 members of whom 6 were to be officials and 2 non-officials nominated by the Maharaja. The Dewan was to preside over the meetings.

The inaugural meeting of the Legislative Council was held at 12.00 noon, on the 23rd of August, 1888 (Thursday), in the Dewan's room. In the First Council (1888-1891), there were 32 sittings. Although the bills passed were recommendatory in nature, the number came to 9. The Select Committee constituted to study and report on the bills introduced, marked the origin of the Committee System. Being the primogenitor, this Legislative Council, though not truly democratic was a bold step.

Political awareness and movements for social equality unleashed a popular agitation, which led to the signing of the 'Malayali Memorial' in 1891, for increased representation. The Second Council (1891-1894) had 27 sittings, whereas the Third Council (1894-1897) in which 11 bills were passed, had

22 sittings. By a Resolution passed in 1898, the strength of the Council was raised to 15, 9 officials and 6 non-officials. There were clear provisions regarding the nature of business of the Council. The Fourth Council (1897-1901), held 18 sittings and passed 15 bills. In the Fifth Council (1901-1904), the number of sittings was 16.

In order to widen the opportunities for increased association of the people with administration, on the 1st of October 1904, one more representative body, namely the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly of Travancore was formed. This Assembly "of the representatives of the landholders and merchants", aimed at giving "the people an opportunity of bringing to the notice of Government their requirements, wishes or grievances on the one hand, and on the other, to make the policy and measures of Government better known to the people so that all possible grounds of misconception may be removed". The Members were to be selected by the Division Peishcars (the District Heads). Two representatives were to be chosen for each taluk, from among the landholders who pay on their own account an annual land revenue of not less than Rs. 100, and landholders or traders whose net annual income was Rs. 6000 or above. On October 22, 1904, the Victoria Jubilee Town Hall of Trivandrum became the venue of the first Meeting of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly.

A novel mark appeared on May 1, 1905, when a regulation was issued to grant to the people the privilege of electing members to the Assembly. Of the 100 members, 77

were to be elected and 23 nominated, for a tenure of 1 year. The right to vote was given to persons who paid on their account an annual land revenue of not less than Rs. 50 or whose net income was not less than Rs. 2000 and to Graduates of a recognized University, with not less than 10 years standing and having their residence in the taluk. There were General as well as Special Constituencies.

The Sri Mulam Popular Assembly turned out to be a platform to give vent to popular feelings on matters of administration. Each member could bring forward 2 subjects for representation. The representations centered around enhancement of the strength, powers and functions of the Legislative Council and bestowal of the right to members of the Assembly to elect a fair proportion of non-officials to the Council.

In 1907, the Assembly was conferred the right to select 4 members to the Legislative Council. The year also saw the formation of a legislative committee to look into the system of inheritance and Marumakkathayam. The Sixth to the Eleventh Councils were held during the period from 1904 to 1919.

In 1919, a major structural shift occurred by a regulation aimed at broad basing the administration and the powers of the Council. The strength of the Legislative Council was raised to a maximum of 25, with a bare official majority. Provision was made for election to 8 out of the 11 non-official seats. Besides, the members were given the rights to discuss the annual budget and to ask interpellations.

Further changes appeared in October 1921, when the strength of the Council was fixed as 50, with 28 elected and 22 nominated elements. Among the nominated members, 7 were to be non-officials. Provision was made for the appointment of a Deputy President, not necessarily an officer, to preside over in the absence of the President. Subject to certain limitations, the Members were given the right to vote on the Budget, to move resolutions on matters of public interest, to ask supplementary questions and to bring adjournment motions.

In the 4 Councils (1922-25, 1925-28, 1928-31 and 1931-33), 27 bills were passed. In 1922, 4 Committees were formed for the consideration of the draft-revised rules for the Assembly, assessment of the working of the Government Press, and, consideration of rules governing educational scholarships and the question of accommodation in His Highness the Maharajas College of Trivandrum. A Standing Finance Committee was constituted on 12th January 1923. In April 1923, another Committee was constituted to consider the question of establishing a University of Travancore and to examine the working of PWD Workshops.

A parallel development emerged in Cochin, where the Cochin Legislative Council Regulation Act, 1923 provided for a Legislative Council. The First Council (1925-28), with 45 members (30 elected and 15 nominated), was constituted in April 1925, under the Presidentship of Sri. T. S. Narayana Iyer. The franchise was based on property and allied qualifications. There were General and Special Constituencies. The Council was allowed to introduce Bills, ask questions,

move resolutions and discuss and vote on Budget Demands. In 1926, 2 Select Committees were formed. The First Council passed 8 Bills and the Second Council (1928-31), 20 Bills.

Malabar, which was a district of Madras Province under the British rule, had representatives in Madras Legislative Assembly from 1920's.

In Travancore, freedom of speech was guaranteed in 1930 by an Amendment to the earlier Regulation. On October 28, 1932, a momentous structural addition was made by the Travancore Legislative Regulation. Bicameralism took a new shape, with the creation of a Lower House, the Sri Mulam Assembly, and an Upper House, the Sri Chitra State Council. The earlier bodies were abolished. In the new Assembly, there were 72 members, of whom 62 were to be non-officials. Of the 72 members, 43 were elected by General Constituencies and 5 were from Special Constituencies. 14 seats were reserved for minority communities. The Sri Chitra State Council had 37 members, of whom 27 were non-officials (16 from General Constituencies, 6 from Special Constituencies and 5 nominated). This bicameral setup was established on January 1, 1933. The First Assembly (1933-37) had 9 sessions and passed 102 bills; the First Council passed 58 bills.

Power was given to the Assembly to vote on the Demands for Grants and to reduce or omit any item of the demand. In 1932, a Joint Committee of both the chambers was created. The year witnessed the constitution of the Public

Accounts Committee, heralding a tradition of executive accountability.

Functionally, the enactments made right from the beginning, ranged from the Jenmy Kudiyan Act of 1896 relating to tenancy rights of agricultural lands to the Factories Act, 1914 and the Trade Union Act, 1937, all of which had weighty impact in the socio-economic scenario.

On 12th December 1933, the Viceroy Lord Wellington laid the foundation stone for a new Assembly building at the Northern side of the Secretariat. The new building was opened by Sir. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, on 8th February, 1939. On the very next day, (9th February, 1939), the Second Sri Mulam Assembly (1937-44), in its 4th Session met in the new Chamber. A Proclamation dated 18th March 1939, stated that all regulations till then and future enactments were to be styled as Acts.

In Cochin, the number of Members of the Council was increased by 54 (36 elected and 18 nominated). Four Advisory Committees were constituted in 1935. In 1938, under the Government of Cochin Act, diarchy was introduced. A Member of Legislature was appointed as Minister to administer certain transferred subjects. The total number of Councils from 1925 to 1948 was 6.

In the years from 1930 to 1936, Malabar sent 5 Members to Madras Legislature. Almost all the Congress candidates were elected in the provincial elections in Malabar, in 1936. Sri. Kongattil Raman Menon was a minister in the C.

Rajagopalachary ministry (1937-39).

Going back to Travancore, the 3rd Assembly and Council were held from 1944 to 1947 in 4 sessions each. Bicameral set up continued in Cochin till September 4, 1947. The number of Ministers was increased by 4 in 1946. In 1946, the Public Accounts Committee was founded in Cochin Legislature. The enactments in Cochin and Madras too were reformative.

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENTS (1947-1956)

The waves created by the birth of independent India had stirring repercussions in native States. On September 4, 1947, the Maharaja of Travancore announced the move to establish a responsible Government. A new Assembly, called the Representative Body was to function as the Constituent Assembly. 120 members were elected on the basis of adult franchise. The Assembly (1948-49) held its first sitting on March 20, 1948 under the Presidentship of Shri A.J. John.Sri. G. Chandrasekhara Pillai was the Deputy President. Altogether, there were 36 sittings, in which 20 bills were passed. Considering the desire of the Assembly to be granted the powers and functions of a Legislative Assembly and to have a Ministry responsible to it, the Travancore Interim Constitution Act was promulgated on March 24, 1948, providing for a Council of Ministers headed by a Prime Minister and responsible to the Assembly. The Maharaja was to be the Constitutional Head.

A Council of Ministers, under the Prime Ministership

of Sri. Pattom A Thanu Pillai began to serve from March 24, 1948. In October 1948, Sri. T. K. Narayana Pillai succeeded as the Prime Minister. Among the legislative enactments of the period, the ESI Act, 1948 deserves special mention. In the same year, the Committee on Petitions was constituted.

The Responsible Government in Cochin took form on August 14, 1947. The first Prime Minister Sri. Panampilly Govinda Menon served from September 1, 1947 to October 22, 1947. His successor, Sri. T. K. Nair, had a tenure of office from October 27, 1947 to September 20, 1948. Adult franchise was introduced in 1948. The Legislative Council was renamed as Legislative Assembly. It (1948-49) had 58 members and held 19 sittings in which 29 bills were passed. After the General Elections in 1948, a popular Ministry headed by Sri. Ikkanda Warriar came to power, on September 20, 1948. A House Committee was constituted in 1948.

In the First Legislative Assembly of Madras (1937-46), created under the 1935 Act, there were 16 members from Malabar. The Second Assembly (1946-51) had 20 members.

The merger of Travancore and Cochin was realized on July 1, 1949. The Maharaja of Travancore became the Rajapramukh of the new Travancore-Cochin State. The First Legislative Assembly (1949-51) was composed of 178 members of the Legislative bodies of Travancore and Cochin. Sri. T.K.Narayana Pillai, the Chief Minister of Travancore became the Chief Minister of the new State. The Ministry headed by Shri.T.K.Narayana Pillai resigned on March 1, 1951 and a Ministry headed by Shri C.Kesavan came to power on

3rd March 1951 which continued till 12th March 1952. The Speaker was Sri. T.M. Varghese. In 7 sessions, 71 bills were passed. In 1949, in the place of Standing Finance Committees, the Estimates Committee was constituted. The Committee on Privileges came into being in 1950.

After the General Elections, on December 1951 the Assembly was constituted w.e.f 21st February 1952 having a strength of 109 members. Shri.K.P.Neelakanta Pillai was elected as the Speaker on 24th March 1952.

The Congress Ministry under Sri. A.J.John assumed office on March 12, 1952 and was voted out on September 23, 1953. The Assembly held 5 sessions and passed 28 bills. It was dissolved on September 23, 1953. The Employees Provident Fund Act of 1952 was an important functional output. In the years 1952 and 1953, the Library Advisory Committee and the Rules Committee were formed.

The 1st General Elections to the Madras Legislative Assembly, held in 1951, after the adoption of the Constitution of India, brought in 29 members from Malabar region to the Madras Legislative Assembly.

In the Travancore-Cochin State, elections were held in January 1954 to the 118 member Assembly. Shri.V.Gangadharan was elected as the Speaker on 22nd March 1954. Sri. Pattom A Thanu Pillai, of the Praja Socialist Party, formed a Ministry with the support of the Congress. This Ministry, which fell in 1955, was succeeded by the Ministry of Sri.Panampilly Govinda Menon, who had to end

the term on March 23, 1956, due to the resignation of 6 members. On the advice of the Rajapramukh, President's rule was imposed in the State for the first time and the Assembly was dissolved. This third Assembly held 6 sessions and passed 39 bills. In 1954, 3 Committees-namely, the Committee on Private Members Bills and Resolutions, the Committee on Subordinate Legislation and the Committee on Government Assurances, were constituted.

This phase in the evolutionary cycle has been remarkable for far reaching legislative reforms. The long and arduous journey begun years back, had been moving in the right direction, reflecting the will of the people and establishing the supremacy of the legislature.

THE STATE LEGISLATURE (Since 1956)

An integrated State of Kerala emerged from the fusion on linguistic grounds, demolishing the walls of provincial separations. After the First General Elections held in February-March 1957, the First in the series of the Legislative Assemblies of Kerala commenced on March 1, 1957. The strength of the house was 127 including the lone nominated member. The Speaker of the First Kerala Legislative Assembly was Sri. Sankaranarayanan Thampi and the Deputy Speaker was Smt. K.O.Aysha Bai. On April 5, 1957, the first Communist Ministry, with Sri. E.M.Sankaran Namboodirippad as the Chief Minister assumed office. This Ministry was dismissed on July 31, 1959, after a series of struggles by the Opposition parties. The Assembly was dissolved on July 31, 1959. This Assembly had 7 sessions and 175 sittings. The

major Legislative outputs include the Kerala University Bill, 1957, The Kerala Education Bill, 1957, The Kerala Agrarian Relations Bill, 1957 etc., adding upto a total of 88 passed bills. In 1957, the Business Advisory Committee was formed.

The Second Kerala Legislative Assembly, which commenced on February 22, 1960, had Sri. K. M. Seethi Sahib as the Speaker and Smt. A. Nabisath Beevi as the Deputy Speaker. On the demise of Sri. Seethi Sahib, Sri. C. H. Muhammed Koya became the Speaker on June 9, 1961. After his resignation on November 10, 1961, Sri. Alexander Parambithara assumed office on December 13, 1961. A Ministry with Sri. Pattom A Thanu Pillai as the Chief Minister was formed, giving rise to the first coalition experiment in the State of Kerala, consisting of the Praja Socialist Party, the Congress and the Muslim League. Sri. Pattom Thanu Pillai was appointed as the Governor of Punjab. On September 26, 1962, the Congress Legislative Party leader Sri.R.Sankar became the Chief Minister. A no- confidence motion against the Government was carried in September 1964. The State came under the President's rule and the Assembly was dissolved. This Assembly had 12 sessions and 300 sittings, in which 159 bills were passed, of which the Kerala Panchayat Bill, the Kerala Police Bill, the Kerala Land Improvement and Agricultural Loans Bill and the Kerala Public Servants (inquiries) Bill, 1960 deserve mention.

In the Elections held in 1965, no party had majority. The President's Rule was extended till March 1967. On 3rd March 1967, the Third Legislative Assembly was constituted

after the General Elections in March 1967. There were 134 members in the House out of which one was nominated. Sri. Damodaran Potty was the Speaker and Sri. M.P. Mohammed Jaffer Khan, the Deputy Speaker. The Ministry headed by Sri. E.M. Sankaran Namboodirippad took charge on March 6, 1967. After the resignation of the Ministry on November 1, 1969, a realignment took place, with Sri. C. Achutha Menon as the Chief Minister. The Assembly was dissolved for a fresh mandate on June 26, 1970. The President's rule was imposed. In this Assembly, there were 7 sessions and 211 sittings. 102 bills were passed, among which the Co-operative Societies Bill, 1967, the Kerala Land Reforms (Amendment) Bill, 1968, and the Calicut University Bill, 1968 had special significance. The Committee on Public Undertakings started functioning in 1968. The Assembly held a special meeting in October 1969, to commemorate Gandhi Centenary.

The Fourth Kerala Legislative Assembly was constituted on October 4, 1970. Sri. K. Moideenkutty Haji was the Speaker and Sri. R.S. Unni, the Deputy Speaker. The Ministry was headed by Sri. C. Achutha Menon. On the resignation of the Speaker on May 8, 1975, the Deputy Speaker performed the duties till February 17, 1976, when Sri. T.S. John became the Speaker. The life of this Assembly was extended in 3 stages, till March 21, 1977. Thus, it had a lifespan of 6 years, 5 months and 18 days, in 16 sessions and 322 sittings. The Kerala Children Bill and the Kerala State Rural Development Board Bill of 1971, the Kerala Agricultural Workers Bill, 1972, The Joint Hindu Family

System (Abolition) Bill, 1973 and the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Bill, 1975 were among the 226 bills passed. In 1972, the Committee on the Welfare of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was constituted. On the night of August 14, 1972, the Assembly met for the 25th Anniversary of Indian Independence.

The next in the series was the Fifth Kerala Legislative Assembly, which commenced on March 22, 1977. Since then the strength of the House continued to be 141 including one nominated member. Sri.Chakkeeri Ahammed Kutty was the Speaker and Sri.P.K. Gopalakrishnan the Deputy Speaker. The United Front Government assumed office on March 25, 1977, with Sri.K.Karunakaran as the Chief Minister. On his resignation on April 25, 1977, Sri. A.K.Antony became the Chief Minister. He resigned on October 27, 1978 and Sri. P. K. Vasudevan Nair became the Chief Minister. On October 12, 1979, Sri. C. H. Muhammed Koya became the successor, but resigned on December 1, 1979. President's rule was imposed and the Assembly was dissolved. Totally, there were 6 sessions and 143 sittings. 87 bills were passed. The major ones include the Kerala Headload Workers Bill, 1977, the Kerala Debt Relief Bill, 1977 and the Kerala District Administration Bill, 1978. An all party Committee was appointed by the Speaker in March 1979 to give suggestions regarding the Subject Committees to be formed. As per its recommendation the unique system of Subject Committees was introduced for the first time in India.

The sub-committee appointed to report on the proposal

for construction of the new legislature complex submitted its Report which was approved by the Cabinet vide G.O. dated 19-9-1978. The foundation stone of the Legislature Complex was laid by Sri. Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy, the President of India on June 4, 1979.

The Sixth Kerala Legislative Assembly commenced on January 25, 1980. Sri. A.P.Kurien and Sri. M.J.Zakaria were the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker respectively. The LDF ministry under Sri. E.K.Nayanar assumed office on 25-1-1980. This Ministry resigned on October 20, 1981. President's rule was imposed and the Legislative Assembly was put under suspended animation. On December 28, 1981 a Ministry was formed with Sri.K.Karunakaran as the Chief Minister. The Speaker, Sri. A.P.Kurien resigned on February 1, 1982, due to loss of majority and was succeeded by Shri. A.C.Jose .The Ministry resigned on March 17, 1982. Again came the President's rule. It had 7 sessions and 112 sittings. 47 bills were passed, among which stand the Kerala Advocates Welfare Fund Bill, 1980, the Kerala Marine Fishing Regulation Bill, 1980 and the Kerala Fishermen Welfare Societies Bill,1980.

The Seventh Kerala Legislative Assembly opened session on May 24, 1982. With Sri.K.Karunakaran as the Chief Minister, the UDF Government assumed office. The Speaker, Sri. Vakkom B Purushothaman, when elected to the Lok Sabha in 1984, was succeeded by Sri. V.M.Sudheeran in March 1985. The successive Deputy Speakers were Sri.K.M.Hamsakunju and Sri. Korambayil Ahmed Haji. The Assembly lasted till

March 25, 1987, completing the full term. It had 14 sessions and 249 sittings. 79 bills were passed. The Kerala Public Men (Prevention of Corruption) Bill, 1983, the Gandhiji University Bill, 1984 etc. fall in this group. The Silver Jubilee of the Legislative Assembly was celebrated in 1982. The Administrative Block of the Legislature Complex was inaugurated by Sri. Balaram Jhakar, Speaker of the Lok Sabha on May 21, 1985. The work of the Assembly building was formally commenced when Shri V.M. Sudheeran, the Speaker, broke the clod of earth on 11th August 1986.

On March 25, 1987, the Eighth Kerala Legislative Assembly was constituted. Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan served as the Speaker and Smt Bhargavi Thankappan as the Deputy Speaker. The L.D.F. Ministry under Shri E.K. Nayanar assumed office. The Centenary Celebration of the Legislative Bodies was inaugurated on August 23, 1988 by the then Vice President Dr. Sankar Dayal Sharma. Shri Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy was The Chief Guest in the Valedictory function held on August 22, 1989. The Assembly lasted till April 5, 1991, through 11 sessions and 282 Sittings. Among the 112 bills passed, the welfare oriented ones like the Kerala Coir Workers Welfare Fund Bill, 1987, The Kerala Khadi Workers Welfare Fund Bill, 1988, The Kerala Handloom Workers Welfare Fund Bill, 1988 and the Kerala Construction Workers Welfare Fund Bill, 1989, and the Kerala Public Libraries Bill, 1989 needs special mention. On August 13, 1987, the 40th Anniversary of Indian Independence was celebrated in a special meeting of the Assembly.

Beginning from June 29, 1991, the Ninth Kerala Legislative Assembly had Shri K. Karunakaran as the Chief Minister and Shri P.P. Thankachan as the Speaker from 1991 to 1995. From 1995, Shri A.K. Antony and Shri Therambil Ramakrishnan were the respective successors. The Deputy Speaker was Shri K. Narayana Kurup. On January 1, 1992, the Accident Insurance Scheme for Members was begun. On November 3, 1993, the Banquet Hall and the 6 Committee Rooms in the Legislature Complex were inaugurated by Shri P.P. Thankachan. The Orientation Programme for the Members began on November 12, 1992. The Assembly lasted till March 19, 1996. There were 15 sessions and 264 sittings. The Kerala Infrastructure Development Bill, 1993, the Kerala Panchayat Raj Bill and the Kerala Municipalities Bill, 1994, the Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit Bill, 1994 etc. were some among the 83 bills passed. It may be noted that on April 24, 1994 Shri Cyriac Joseph, Additional Advocate General was invited to the House to give clarifications on certain points raised by Members during the discussion on the Panchayat Raj Bill. This Assembly saw the formation of the Committee on the Welfare of the Women and Children and the Committee on Environment in 1992, the Committee on the Welfare of Backward Class Communities in 1993 and the Committee on Papers Laid on the Table in 1995. The Governor's Speech and the Budget speech were recorded and telecast, for the first time, in 1995.

The Tenth Kerala Legislative Assembly was constituted on May 14, 1996. Shri E.K. Nayanar and the

Council of Ministers from the L.D.F. formed the Ministry on May 20, 1996. On 30th May 1996 Shri M. Vijayakumar was elected as Speaker. He occupied the chair till 4th June 2001, the only Speaker who had completed the full term in Kerala Legislative Assembly. Shri C.A. Kurian was elected as Deputy Speaker on July 17, 1996.

On April 27, 1997 the Assembly celebrated its 40th Anniversary the focus of which was the honour conferred on the living Members of the First Kerala Legislative Assembly. The day of September 18, 1997 has become memorable by the address given by the President of India Shri K.R. Narayanan, to the Kerala Legislative Assembly, the first of its kind in India.

From a small council held in Diwan's Room, the structural growth of the Legislature reached its pinnacle on 22nd May 1998, when the President Shri K.R. Narayanan inaugurated the new Assembly Building. The last meeting of the Assembly in the old Assembly Chamber in the Secretariat campus was held on June 29, 1998. On June 30th the Assembly met in the new chamber in the Legislature Complex inheriting the tradition from the glorious past. On February 24, 2001 the old Assembly Building was declared as a historical monument and was dedicated to the nation by the Vice President of India, Shri Kishan Kant.

In July 1999, the Committee of Privileges was renamed as Committee of Privileges and Ethics and Committee on the Welfare of Women and Children as Committee on the Welfare of Women Children and Physically Handicapped. The Tenth

Kerala Legislative Assembly was dissolved on May 16, 2001. It held 16 Sessions with 268 days of Sittings. 104 Bills were passed. The Malabar University Bill, 1996, The Kerala Board of Revenue Abolition Bill, 1996, The Pre-degree Course Abolition Bill, 1997, The Kerala Prohibition of Ragging Bill, 1998, The Kerala Lok Ayukta Bill, 1999, The Kerala Sports Bill, 1999 are some of the landmark legislations passed by the Tenth Kerala Legislative Assembly.

In the election held on May 10, 2001 the United Democratic Front consisting of Indian National Congress, Muslim League, Kerala Congress (M), R.S.P.(Bolshevik), Kerala Congress(Jacob), Kerala Congress(B), and J.S.S secured 99 seats in the Assembly. The electronic voting machine was used in 140 constituencies for the first time. The Ministry headed by Shri.E.K.Nayanar resigned on May 13, 2001 and the Tenth Kerala Legislative Assembly was dissolved on May 16, 2001.

The Eleventh Kerala Legislative Assembly was constituted on May 16, 2001 and an eight member coalition ministry headed by Shri A.K.Antony was sworn in on May 17, 2001. The Ministry was expanded on May 26, 2001 with the induction of twelve more Ministers. Shri Vakkom Purushothaman was elected as the Speaker on June 6, 2001 and Shri N.Sundaran Nadar as Deputy Speaker on July 4, 2001.

On March 10, 2003, Shri K.B.Ganesh Kumar, Minister for Transport resigned, and Shri R.Balakrishna Pillai was inducted to the Ministry on the same day.

In the same year on June 27, two new Legislature Committees viz Committee on Official Language and Committee on Local Fund Accounts were constituted.

Shri Mammen Mathai MLA expired on September 23, 2003 and his wife Smt. Elizabeth Mammen Mathai got elected in the by election held on December 1, 2003.

The Ministry was expanded on February 11, 2004 with the induction of Shri K.Muralidharan, who was not a Member, as Minister. The portfolios of the Ministers were also reshuffled.

Shri.V.Balaram resigned his membership in the Assembly on February 20, 2004. In the by election held on May 10, 2004 Shri K. Muralidharan lost the Wadakkenchery seat to Shri A.C.Moideen who took oath on May 28, 2004. Consequent on the defeat, Shri K.Muralidharan resigned his ministership on May 15, 2004.

On August 29, 2004 Chief Minister Shri A.K.Antony submitted the resignation of his Ministry. Subsequently a new five member Ministry was formed with Shri Oommen Chandy as the Chief Minister on August 31, 2004. On September 5, 2004 the Ministry was expanded with the induction of fifteen more Ministers. Shri Vakkom Purushothaman who had resigned Speakership on September 4, 2004 became Finance Minister in the new Ministry. Shri Therambil Ramakrishnan got elected as the new Speaker on September 16, 2004.

On January 4th, 2005 Shri P.K.Kunhalikutty, the Minister for Industries resigned and Shri V.K.Ebrahim Kunju

assumed office on January 6, 2005. On April 17, 2005 Shri T.K.Balan, MLA expired and Shri M. Prakashan Master got elected in the by election held on June 2, 2005. Shri. P.Jayarajan also got re-elected in that by-election when his election was declared void by the Supreme Court on January 11, 2005. Shri A.K.Antony resigned his membership in the Assembly on June 8, 2005 consequent on his election to the Rajya Sabha. Nine Members belonging to the Indian National Congress resigned their seats in the Assembly with effect from July 5, 2005.

On August 11, 2005 Shri V.C Kabeer resigned his membership in the Assembly. Shri A. Sujanapal assumed office as Minister on January 4, 2006. Dr. A. Neelalohita Dasan Nadar resigned his membership in the Assembly on April 3, 2006. The total number of twelve vacancies, which thus arose, remained unfilled.

The election to the Twelfth Kerala Legislative Assembly was held on April 22, 29 and May 3, 2006. In the election, the Left Democratic Front secured a thumping majority. The Eleventh Kerala Legislative Assembly dissolved on May 12, 2006. The Ministry headed by Shri Oommen Chandy resigned on that date. The resignation was accepted by the Governor and was asked to continue till alternate arrangements were made.

The Eleventh Kerala Legislative Assembly met for 257 days and passed 165 Bills. The Assembly also witnessed some special events during this period. Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, The President of India addressed the House on July 28, 2005. The

statues of Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar were unveiled in the Assembly premises by Dr. Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister of India on September 3, 2005. A bust of K.R.Narayanan, former President of India was unveiled in the parlour of the House on March 15, 2006 by the Honourable Speaker Shri Therambil Ramakrishnan.

A Museum for Legislature highlighting the various stages in the people representation was formally inaugurated on May 5, 2006.

On May 13, 2006 the Twelfth Kerala Legislative Assembly was constituted. A nineteen member Ministry headed by Shri V.S. Achuthanandan was sworn in on May 18, 2006. The first session of the Twelfth Kerala Legislative Assembly commenced on May 24, 2006. Shri K.Radhakrishnan was elected as the Speaker of the Assembly on May 25, 2006 and Shri Jose Baby was elected as the Deputy Speaker on June 20, 2006.

October 13, 2006 witnessed the untimely demise of Shri. Mathai Chacko, the Member elected from the Thiruvambadi Constituency. Shri. Mathai Chacko had not had the opportunity of attending even one sitting of the Twelfth Kerala Legislative Assembly, as he had been hospitalised even during the Election campaign. The swearing-in ceremony of the late Member was also unique in the sense that it was the first ever instance of an elected candidate taking oath or affirmation outside the State Capital. (The affirmation had been taken on May 29, 2006 from the hospital bed).

Shri. George M. Thomas got elected on December 7, 2006 in the Bye-election held on December 4, 2006. Shri. George M. Thomas took affirmation on December 15, 2006.

Election to the 13 assembly was conducted in three phases on April 22nd, 29th and May 3rd. The LDF won with 98 seats. The 19 member LDF ministry was sworn into power on 18th May 2006 with Shri. V. S. Achuthanandan as the Chief Minister. Shri. K. Radhakrishnan was elected as the speaker and deputy speaker is Shri. Jose Baby.

The 21st ministry headed by Shri. Oommen Chandy as Chief Minister was sworn in by His Excellency R. S. Gavai, Governor of Kerala at a function organised for the purpose at Kerala Raj Bhavan Thiruvananthapuram at 4pm on 23rd May 2011. The UDF lead ministry includes Shri. P. K. Abdu Rabb, Shri. Adoor Prakash, Shri. A. P. Anilkumar, Shri. Aryadan Mohammed, Shri. K. Babu, Shri. C. N. Balakrishnan, Shri. V. K. Ebrahim Kunju, Shri. K. B. Ganesh Kumar, Shri. T. M. Jacob, Kumari P. K. Jayalekshmi, Shri. K. C. Joseph, Shri. P. J. Joseph, Shri. P. K. Kunhalikutty, Shri. K. M. Mani, Shri. K. P. Mohanan, Dr. M. K. Muneer, Shri. Shibu Baby John, Shri. V. S. Sivakumar and Shri. Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan.

The seat of Shri. T. M. Jacob, in the legislative Assembly of the Kerala State, elected from Piravom Assembly Constituency has become vacant on 30-10-2011 by his death and a bye-election is held on 17 March 2012. T. M. Jacob's son Shri. Anoop Jacob won the election.

Shri. Manjalamkuzhi Ali of Muslim League

representing the constituency of Perinthalmanna and Shri. Anoop Jacob of the Kerala Congress (Jacob) representing Piravom were sworn in as ministers in 21th ministry on 12.04.2012.

Shri. K. B. Ganesh Kumar, of Kerala Congress (B), a single-MLA constituent of the ruling UDF, resigned from the Council of Ministers on April 1, 2013 on personal issues. Shri. Ramesh Chennithala representing Haripad Constituency sworn in to the ministry on 1 January 2014 at Kerala Raj Bhavan.

On the demise of G. Karthikeyan, Sri. N. Sakthan elected as the Speaker on March 12, 2015. Shri. K.M.Mani resigned from the Council of Ministers on November 10, 2015. Shri. Palode Ravi, elected Deputy Speaker, Kerala Legislative Assembly, assumed office on December 2, 2015 .

With respect to the outcome of Assembly Elections held on 16 May 2016, Oommen Chandy led UDF ministry tendered its resignation to the Hon'ble Governor of Kerala Shri. Justice P. Sathasivam on 20 May 2016.

The new LDF-led ministry headed by Shri. Pinarayi Vijayan as Chief Minister assumed power on 25th May 2016. The Hon'ble Governor of Kerala Shri. Justice P. Sathasivam administered the oath of office and secrecy to minister-designates at the swearing-in ceremony held at Central Stadium Thiruvananthapuram. Other cabinet members are Shri. E. P. Jayarajan, Shri. Dr. T. M. Thomas Isaac, Shri. G. Sudhakaran, Shri. A. K. Balan, Smt. K. K. Shylaja, Shri.

Prof. Ravindranath, Shri. Kadakampally Surendran, Shri. T. P. Ramakrishnan, Shri. A. C. Moitheen, Smt. J. Mercykutty Amma, Shri. K. T. Jaleel, Shri. E. Chandrasekharan, Shri. V. S. Sunil Kumar, Shri. P. Thilothaman, Shri. K. Raju, Shri. Ramachandran Kadannappally, Sri. A. K. Saseendran and Shri. Mathew T. Thomas.

Shri. E. P. Jayarajan, Minister for Industries and Commerce, Sports and Youth Affairs tendered resignation from the Council of Ministers on 14 October 2016. In the first reshuffle, since it came to power in May 2016, the LDF government in Kerala delegated M. M. Mani, State Secretariat Member and MLA from Udumbanchola, Idukki district as a new member to the Cabinet on 22 November 2016.

Shri. A. K. Saseendran, Minister for Transport tendered resignation from the Council of Ministers on 26 March 2017.

Shri. Thomas Chandy, MLA from Kuttanad Legislative Assembly in Alappuzha district sworn in as minister on 01 April 2017 at a function held at Kerala Raj Bhavan, Thiruvananthapuram. On 15 November 2017 Shri. Thomas Chandy, Minister for Transport resigned from the Council of Ministers. Shri. A. K. Saseendran sworn in as Minister for Transport in the Council of Ministers on 01 February 2018.

These are historical context of representative institutions in Kerala.

MODULE II

THE DEMOCRATIC PHASE

Legislature: the Changing Role and Functions, Political Parties and Electoral Politics

Political parties, Joseph La Palombara and Myron Weiner aptly remark, are a feature of “modern and modernizing societies”. They would appear to be indispensable to representative democracy. Local political institutions of direct democracy can presumably work without parties. However, wherever and whenever democracy is practiced in larger aggregates, it must rely on representational devices through elected officials. For this, political parties cannot be dispensed with. That has at least been the experience of modern democracies in the contemporary world. In Western liberal democracies across the board parties, the leftwing included, are in decline, but no competent observer of comparative politics has diagnosed it as the terminal phase in the life and times of political parties.

Conservatives and liberals and founding fathers of nation-States or mass movements are inclined to express anti-party sentiments, e.g. George Washington, Lord Bolingbroke, Mahatma Gandhi, Jayaprakash Narayan in his Gandhian phase, and M.N. Roy in his Radical Humanist phase. This is for the reason that parties are supposed to be inherently divisive of the organic unity of the national community. However, these initial reservations about political parties did not forestall their

onward march to becoming one of the two major pillars of the nation-State along with bureaucracy. This is because parties are the vital link between the civil society and the State. As organizations, parties are amphibious creatures equally at home in the civil society and the State. The importance of political parties has grown proportionately in accordance with the growing extension of franchise as it typically happened in Western liberal democracies. As political suffrage gradually became universal, parties emerged as the agency through which parliamentary cliques needed them to acquire mass electoral support.

History of Kerala Legislature

When we look back to the history of Indian Legislative set up, we find several things to feel proud of, as we were the first in many a political experiment. Among the Princely States in the country, it was in the erstwhile state of Travancore that the first Legislative Council was constituted in 1888 with six official and two non-official members. In 1898 it was decided that the number of members might be raised from eight to 15 of which two fifth should be non-official members. But the ideal of election in its literal sense was not accepted even in principle. Similar legislative reforms took place in 1920 and 1922.

Abstention Movement

During the regime of Sri. Chitra Thirunal, who was enthroned in 1932, there were some radical reforms in this field. The Legislative Council was divided into Sreemoolam

Assembly and Sri Chitra State Council. In protest against the inadequacy of the Constitutional reforms of 1932, the Nivartana (abstention) movement was started, as the Ezhavas, the Christians and the Muslims who constituted 70 per cent of the population, apprehended that the new reforms, owing to the provisions for restricted franchise on the basis of the area of possession of property and other qualifications, would secure for them only a few number of seats in the enlarged legislature than the Nayars. They demanded apportioning of the seats on the basis of population. When the Government turned a deaf ear to the voice of protest, they organized a Joint Political Congress and exhorted the voters to abstain from voting. The Government at last conceded their demands to a certain extent by introducing communal reservation in appointments to the public service.

The Haripura Session of the Indian National Congress in 1938 had resolved that the party should keep itself aloof from involvement in the affairs of the princely states. This paved the way for the formation of the Travancore State Congress and Cochin State Congress the same year. The peasant and labour movements of the 1930s were responsible for the emergence of a left wing in politics which ultimately resulted in the birth of the Congress Socialist Party. The radical section of the Nationalist Muslims in Malabar lent full support to the leftists. And very soon the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee came to be dominated by them.

In 1925 a 45 member legislature came into being in Cochin of which 30 were elected members. The creation of the

post of a minister responsible to the legislature, and entrusting him with the charge of all the departments related to rural development was the next step forward in 1930 when a diarchical form of Government was established. In the 50 member legislative council, 38 were elected members. The Cochin Congress and the Cochin State Congress were the main contestants. The Cochin congress secured 13 seats, the Cochin State Congress 12 and Independents and the Progressive Party 13. The Cochin Congress and with the support of some independents came to power on June 17, 1938. Ambattu Sivarama Menon was appointed Minister for Rural Development. This earned for Cochin the distinction of being the first state among the princely states to ministerial Government. Sivarama Menon died on August 30 and he was followed by Dr. A.R. Menon. And with the passage of a non-confidence motion on February 25, 1942, he was forced to resign. Shri. T.K. Nair of Cochin congress assumed charge of the ministerial office. Since the Second World War was on, the Maharaja extended the term of the Council and as such he could continue in the office till July 11, 1945.

On January 26, 1941 a new political called Cochin Rajya Prajamandalam was constituted with Sri. V.R. Krishnan Ezhuthachan as its President. In the elections held in 1945, the Prajamandalam could win 12 seats out of the total 19 seats, but it did not claim the ministership. Therefore the Maharaja appointed Shri Parambi Lonappan, Leader of the Nationalis-Group, the Minister for Rural Development. Shri Balakrishna Menon also joined the ministry later. Following the passage of

a no-confidence motion, they had to resign. Though the Prajamandalam was invited to form a ministry they rejected the offer. Thus again the political affairs reached a crisis. On August 17, 1946 the Maharaja declared that all portfolios except law and order and finance would be given to the popular ministers. Thus a 4 member ministry assumed office on September 9, 1946. Sahodaran Ayyappan, T.K. Nair, Panampilli Govinda Menon and C.R. Iyyunni were the members of the Cabinet. Later a 3 member ministry under the leadership of Panampilli Govinda Menon came to power and then the Home Portfolio also was handed over to the ministry. When Home Minister, T.K. Nair used the police force to put down labour struggles and popular agitations, Panampilli, C.R. Iyyunni and Sahodaran Ayyappan resigned from the Cabinet. No longer did the Maharaja dismiss the Council, than he announced that elections with adult franchise would be held in October 1948. In the elections, the Prajamandalam secured overwhelming majority and Ikkanda Warriar was elected leader of the party. Panampilli Govinda Menon, Sahodaran Ayyappan and C.A. Ouseph were his colleagues in the cabinet. On July 1, 1949 the integration of Cochin and Travancore took place. The members of the Cochin legislative council became M.L.As of Travancore-Cochin legislature. In the Travancore-Cochin state a nine member ministry was formed including the four ministers of Cochin, with Shri T.K. Narayana Pillai as the leader.

The end of the Quit India Movement saw Malabar returning to elections and Constitutional Government.

Administratively Malabar was district of Madras Province at the time of Independence. The Malabar district had also representation in Madras cabinets. And among the ministers from Malabar were Shri Kozhipurathu Madhava Menon, Shri. C.J. Varkey, Shri A. Raghava Menon, Shri Kongathil Raman Menon (all Congress) and Shri. R.M. Palat (Justice Party).

The Travancore State Congress launched a campaign seeking dismissal of the Dewan, Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer, on the basis of certain allegations. But the party was forced to withdraw the charges on Gandhiji's intervention. This created a split in Congress. The members of the Youth League left the State Congress to form the Communist party. Travancore, however, was not destined to have a peaceful transition to freedom and democracy. In the last week of October 1946, (October 24 to 27) the State saw the most violent upheavals, the Punnappra Vayalar revolt of the working class, an armed revolt by the poor with a view to ending the police raj under the Dewan. Even after the attainment of freedom the Dewan declared on June 11, 1947 that Travancore would remain an Independent State on the lapse of British paramountcy. When he let loose repression, an unsuccessful attempt on his life was made on July 25, 1947. And forced by the new developments he left Travancore on August 19, 1947.

First Election after Independence

On September 4, 1947 the Maharaja of Travancore issued a declaration to elect Constituent Assembly in Travancore as a prelude to the introduction of adult franchise.

The first election was held in February 1948. Out of the total 120 seats, the Indian National Congress contested 112 and won 97 seats. The Muslim League secured eight, Tamil Nadu Congress 14 and independent one. Though the Communist Party contested 17 seats and the K.S.P. eight, they could not win a single seat. On March 20, 1948 the Travancore Constituent Assembly came into being, the first of its kind formed on the basis of adult franchise in the country. It started functioning under the presidentship of late Shri A.J. John. But as per a declaration of the Raja on March 24, it began to function also a Legislative Assembly. An interim three member Ministry was formed with late Shri Pattom A Thanu Pillai as Prime Minister. The late Shri. C. Kesavan and Shri T.M. Varghese were the other two members of this first popular ministry in Travancore. As a result of the internecine feuds within the Congress, a no-confidence motion was carried, and the Pattom Ministry resigned on October 17, 1948. Then a seven member Ministry under the leadership of the late Shri T.K. Narayana Pillai came to power on 22nd October, 1948.

The movement for a United Kerala gathered momentum. Following the national policy of integration, the States of Travancore and Cochin were merged into Travancore-Cochin state under the Raja of Travancore as the Raj Pramukh on 1st July 1949. A seven member cabinet was sworn in under the stewardship of Shri T.K. Narayana Pillai on that day, the first ministry of the erstwhile T.C. State. Consequent on political troubles within the party the T.K.

ministry had to resign on February 24, 1951. Though the late Shri C. Kesavan formed a three member ministry all of a sudden, he tendered resignation of the leadership on 20th March and was unanimously re-elected as leader. The ministry was expanded on September 6 by inducting four more members.

First General Election in the Republic

India became a Sovereign Democratic Republic on January 26, 1950. Before the 1951-52 general elections, the Socialist Party was formed under the leadership of Shri Pattam Thanu Pillai, and the Democratic Congress Party came into being with the late Shri Mannath Padmanabhan and Shri. R. Sankar as its leaders.

The first general election was held from December 10, 1951 to January 5, 1952 in the erstwhile Travancore-Cochin State. Out of the 108 seats, Congress got 44 seats (three uncontested), Socialist 11 (One uncontested), Communist 25, R.S.P. 6, Travancore Tamil Nadu Congress 8, K.S.P. and Cochin party one each and Independents 12. (The Communist party was then banned in T.C.) On 12th March 1952 a six member ministry was sworn-in with Shri A.J. John as Chief Minister. Later a representative of the T.T.N.C. was also inducted into the cabinet following the alliance made with that party by the Congress. As a result of the disagreement between the Congress and T.T.N.C. which demanded a separate Congress organization for Tamils, a confidence motion tabled by the ruling party on September 23, 1953 fell through. The Assembly was dissolved and the ministry continued as care-

taker Government till the next elections.

The second election to the T.C. Assembly was held in February 1954. Following delimitation, the number of seats rose to 118. When the results were announced the party position was as follows: INC-45, T.T.N.C-12, P.S.P.-19, Communist-23, R.S.P.-9, K.S.P.-3, Independents-6 and an Anglo-Indian member. Though there was an electoral understanding between the Congress and the P.S.P. the latter refused to support the Congress in forming a ministry. Though unsuccessful, this was the first electoral alliance in India. In order to avert political uncertainty, the Congress extended support to the P.S.P. to form a cabinet. Thus a four- member cabinet of the P.S.P under its leader Shri Pattam Thanu Pillai came to power. When the Congress withdrew its support to the P.S.P. ministry, it had to resign. In the meantime, two P.S.P. legislators had joined the Congress. Thus with the support of the T.T.N.C., Shri Panampilli Govinda Menon formed a five member cabinet-the fifth ministry in the T.C. State. That ministry also could not complete its term, and the State came under President s rule for the first time. Shri P.S. Rao was appointed Advisor to the Rajapramukh.

Birth of Kerala

Reorganisation of states on linguistic lines took place on the recommendations of the States Reorganisation Commission. Thus the long-cherished dream of the Malayalees for a United Kerala came true on November 1, 1956. The entire Malabar District of Madras and the Kasargod Taluk of South Canara District were added to Kerala and the Tamil-

speaking southern region of old Travancore State was annexed to the Madras State. The rule of Rajapramukh was ended and Shri P.S. Rao was appointed Acting Governor of Kerala. On November 22, 1956 Dr. B. Ramakrishna Rao assumed the gubernatorial office in Kerala.

1957 General Elections

The first elections to the Kerala Assembly were held from February 28 to March 11, 1957. Out of the total 126 seats, 11 seats were reserved for scheduled castes and one for scheduled tribes. The number of constituencies was 114, of which twelve were two-member ones. The Communist Party of India emerged as the largest single party in the Assembly with 60 seats. It was for the first time in the history of the world that the Communist party came to power through ballot. The first popular ministry of Kerala headed by Shri E.M.S. Namboodiripad, leader of the Communist Party, was sworn in on 5th April 1957. An agitation known as liberation struggle was launched by the Congress-led opposition and the president issued on 31st July 1959 a proclamation under article 356 of the Constitution dissolving the Assembly and introducing President's rule in the State.

1960 Elections

Elections were held on 1st February 1960, for the first time, the polling throughout the state was held on a single day. There was an electoral alliance between the Congress, the P.S.P. and the Muslim League. They fielded 125 candidates and supported an independent sponsored by the Congress. The

communist Party fielded 108 party candidates and supported 16 Independents. There were 102 single-member and 12 double member constituencies. In 63 single-member constituencies and seven two-member constituencies and seven two-member constituencies there were straight fights with only two candidates for each seat, though other parties such as the B.J.S., the R.S.P. and the Socialist (Lohia) party also were in the fray.

Shri Pattam A Thanu Pillai of the P.S.P. took over on February, 22 as the coalition Chief Minister leading a council of eleven ministers. Shri. R. Sankar of the Congress was designated as Deputy Chief Minister. The late Shri. Seethi Shib of Muslim League was elected Speaker, and following his demise Shri. C.H. Mohammed Koya assumed that office. Gradually differences of opinion arose between the Congress and the Muslim League and on November 9, 1961 to quit the coalition. After Speaker Shri. C.H. Mohammed Koya tendered his resignation. Shri. Alexander Parambithara was elected Speaker and the Congress-PSP coalition ministry continued in power. Shri. Pattam A Thanu Pillai relinquished the reins of power on September 25, 1962, consequent on his appointment as Governor of the Punjab. Shri. R. Sankar took over as Chief Minister the next day. On October 10, 1962 the two remaining P.S.P. Ministers bowed out from the Ministry. Shri Sankar continued as Chief Minister for about two years. Following some differences of opinion with the Chief Minister, the Home Minister Shri. P.T. Chacko resigned on 16th February 1964. A political crisis was precipitated in September 1964 which

resulted in the formation of a dissident group in the Congress Legislature Party. This group consisting of 15 MLAs lent support to a no-confidence motion moved by the P. S. P. leader Shri P.K. Kunju against the Sankar ministry. The motion was carried and the legislature dissolved leading to President's rule for the third time in the state. And the dissidents formed a new party, Kerala Congress.

Abortive Elections of 1965

Elections were next held on 4th March 1965. The system of single and double member constituencies had been given up in 1962. A fresh delimitation of the constituencies increased their number to 133. The INC. alone fought the elections in all seats without any alliance. In the meantime the Communist party had been split into two, viz. the CPI and the CPI (M). The CPI had electoral understanding with the S.S.P. and the Muslim League. The CPI. was in alliance with the R.S.P. which had an understanding with the Kerala Congress. The INC won 36 seats, the CPM-40, the S. S. P.-13, the ML-6, the CPI-3, the Kerala Congress-23 and Independents 12. As the final post-election picture emerged, no single party could form a ministry commanding majority. Thus the 1965 elections became abortive. Once again on March 25 President's rule was invoked for the fourth time.

1967 Elections

Kerala next went to the polls two years later along with the March 1967 General elections. A new polarization of political forces had taken place leading to new electoral

alliances. Politically the most potent factor was the new United Front of the CPI (M), the CPI, the ML, the RSP the Samyuktha Socialist Party, the Karshaka Thozhilali Party and the Kerala Socialist party. Then the INC faced the elections single-handedly. The Kerala Congress was reported to have had electoral understanding with the Swatantra Party and the DMK. The Seven-party CPI (M) led United Front won a decisive victory at the hustings. It could win a convicting majority in the Assembly. The second Namboodiripad ministry was thus formed on 6th March 1967. The Cabinet consisted of four members of the CPI (M) two each of the CPI, the ML and the SSP and one each of the RSP, the KTP and the KSP. This ministry soon ran into rough weather and Chief Minister Shri Namboodiripad resigned on October 24 1969.

As distinct from the previous ministerial crises, the fall of the second Namboodiripad ministry left the legislature intact. A fresh alignment of political forces within the Assembly led to the formation of an eight-member cabinet headed by Shri. C. Achutha Menon of the CPI on 1st November 1969. The ruling alliance consisted of the CPI, the ISP, the ML, the RSP and the Kerala Congress.

For the first time in the legislative history of the State, the cabinet was led by a personality who was not a sitting member of the Assembly, but a member of the Rajya Sabha. In a by-election held on April 21, 1970 Shri. Menon was returned to the Assembly from Kottarakkara. In the meantime a split occurred in the ISP and three members of the party joined the PSP. In order to avert a political crisis Shri. C. Achutha Menon

recommended the dissolution of the Assembly on June 26. He tendered the resignation of the Cabinet on August 1, 1970. The State was forthwith placed under President's rule for the fifth time.

Assembly Elections in 1970

Elections were next held on 17th September 1970. The allies of the ruling front now included the INC, the CPI, the RSP, the ML and the PSP. It secured 79 seats. Shri C. Achutha Menon formed his second ministry on October 4, 1970.

The INC and the KC which were allied of the ruling combine did not join the ministry at first, but extended support from without. The Cabinet was expanded on two occasions, when the INC joined it in September 1971, and to induct the nominees of the Kerala Congress in December 1975. The fourth Kerala Legislative Assembly had the distinction of being the first Assembly in the State to complete its normal Constitutional term. Moreover, the normal term of the Assembly which expired on October 21, 1975 was extended on three occasions over six month periods during the Emergency.

1977 Elections

A fresh delimitation of Assembly Constituencies was effected in 1974. As a result, on the eve of March 1977 elections, Kerala had, as at present, 140 Assembly seats. The electorate had gone up to 11,460,901 as against 10,169,467 in 1970. Female voters slightly outnumbered their male counterparts. As in the previous election the main contestants were the ruling front and the opposition front. The former represented

an alliance of five recognized political parties viz., the Congress, the CPI, the ML, the RSP, the KC and the unrecognized political party of P.S.P.

This combine was supported by the National Democratic Party (NDP), a newly-formed political projection of the Nair Service Society. The ruling front fielded 130 candidates of recognized political parties such as the CPM, the BLD (Janata), the ML (Opposition) and the Kerala Congress (Pillai group). (Splits occurred in the ML and the KC before 1977 elections). The unrecognized political parties in the front were: the Congress Radical, the KSP and the National R.S.P. It was the general election after the withdrawal of Emergency imposed on June 26, 1975. Despite the polarization, straight fights were confined to only 33 constituencies. Elections were held on 19th March 1977. A two-member ministry was formed with Shri K. Karunakaran of Congress as Chief Minister on March 25, 1977. All the remaining thirteen ministers were sworn in on April 11, 1977. However, Shri. Karunakaran had to resign on April 25, 1977, following certain references by the Kerala High Court in what came to be known as the Rajan case. Then under the leadership of Shri. A.K. Antony who was not then an M.L.A., a 15 member ministry assumed office on April 27, 1977.

Shri. Antony was later elected from Kazhakkuttom in a bye-election held on October 22, 1977. Shri. Antony himself resigned on October 27, 1978 in protest against the stand taken by the Congress on the Chikkamagalur bye-election in which Smt. Indira Gandhi was the candidate of the party. Shri.

P.K. Vasudevan Nair of the CPI became the Chief Minister when the next ministry was sworn in on October 29, 1978, but his ministry also resigned on October 7, 1979 in order to create an atmosphere conducive to the formation of a Left Democratic Front in Kerala. Shri. C.H. Mohammed Koya of Muslim League assumed office on October 12, 1979, but the four-member ministry was forced to resign on December 1, 1979. The Assembly was dissolved and President's rule was invoked in Kerala for the sixth time and it continued upto 24th January 1980.

Assembly Polls - 1980

The Congress had in the meantime split into two the INC (I) and the INC (U). The Kerala Congress also followed suit, the splinter groups being the KC (M) and the KC (J). The ML (O) assumed the name AIML. When the January 1980 polls were looming large on the horizon, political alignments in the State had undergone a sea-change involving a drastic regrouping of major political parties. The stage was set for the eventual emergence of two political combines the United Democratic Front (UDF) consisting of the INC (I), the IUML, the KC (J), the PSP, the NDP and the Socialist Republican Party (SRP a new political organization of the SNDP), and the Left Democratic Front comprising, the CPM, the CPI, the INC (U), the KC (M), the KC (PG), the AIML and the RSP. The UDF had worked out seat adjustments with the Janatha Party in a number of constituencies, though they were locked in battle in some others. Kerala's total electorate in 1980 was 13,266,064. On 3rd and 6th January 1980 an election was held.

The LDF won the election. The parties in that coalition were CPM, INC (U), CPI, KC(M), KC(PG), RSP AIML. Shri. E.K. Nayanar of CPM, headed ministry having only 17 members which was sworn in on 25th January 1980, revoking Presidents rule.

Again a political realignment took place. The Congress (S) and the KC (M) joined the UDF. An eight-member UDF Ministry was sworn in on December 28, 1981 with Shri. K. Karunakaran of Congress (I) as Chief Minister. It was the twelfth ministry in Kerala since the formation of the State on November 1, 1956. On 15th March 1982 Shri LonappanNambadan of KC (M) withdrew his support to the ministry and consequently the Karunakaran ministry resigned on March 17. The state again fell under president's rule for the eighth time.

1982 Elections

The political alliances had undergone a further change when the Congress (A), the KC (M) and the Janata (G) joined the UDF. The two political fronts emerged in the 1982 electoral arena were the UDF and the LDF. The UDF included seven parties viz., the INC (I), the IUML, the KC (M) the KC (J), the NDP, the SRP, the Janata (G), the RSP (S) and the NRSP. The DLP also declared support to the Front. The LDF comprised the CPM, the CPI, the Congress (S), the AIML, the RSP, the KC (S) a party formed by Shri Lonappan Nambadan, the DSP and the Lok Dal. The Janata party had seat adjustments with the LDF. The number of political parties in Kerala now rose to 25 as against five in 1957.

On 19th May 1982 the electorate of Kerala marched to the polling booth to elect their representatives to the Kerala Assembly for the eighth time. The results of the elections were announced on May 20. The UDF won 77 seat and LDF won 63 seats. The UDF ministry with Shri K. Karunakaran as its leader, assumed office on March 24, 1982. merger of the INC (I) and the INC (A) and of two factions of the Muslim League were the most important events during the regime of the UDF ministry. A faction of the IC (S) joined the INC. Though the merger of the two factions of the Kerala Congress took place, a split again occurred before the time of filing nominations to the 1987 elections. There were splits in the NDP, SRP and the PSP. In spite of those crises, this was the second ministry in Kerala which could complete the full term of office.

1987 Assembly Elections

The ninth elections to the eighth Kerala Assembly were held on 23rd March, 1987. The UDF and the LDF were, as usual, the two major political fronts. The UDF included the INC (I) the IUML, the KC (J), the KC (M), the NDP (P), the SRP (S) and the RSP (S). The LDF comprised the CPI (M) the CPI, the RSP, the IC (S), the Janata and the Lok Dal. And the third front consists of the BJP and the Hindu Munnani. The NDP(P), the SRP (V), the ILP, the AIFB, the SUCI, the CMP, the Socialist, the KSP and some non-political organizations had also fielded their candidates.

The party-wise allocation of seats by the LDF was CPM 70; CPM Independents-nine; CPI-25; CPI Independent-one, IC(S)-14; Janata-12; Lok Dal-2; RSP-7. The political

alignment pattern of the UDF was INC-76; ML-23; KC(J)-13, KC(M)-10; NDP(P)-9; SRP(S)-4; RSP(S).

The result of the elections to 138 seats were announced on March 24, 1987. The results of the other two seats, where elections were held on June 2, 1987, were announced on 3rd June. The LDF secured 78 seats ensuring a decisive majority in the House. The LDF secured 5,735,402 votes whereas the UDF secured 5,567,309 votes.

Assembly Elections 1991

Elections to the ninth Loksabha were held on 22nd November 1989 in Kerala. In this election the UDF and the LDF were, as usual the main contesting fronts. But the Kerala Congress led by Shri. P.J. Joseph left the UDF and the leader himself contested the election from the Muvattupuzha constituency against the official UDF candidate. This started the drift between UDF and the Kerala Congress. As naturally the LDF encashed the situation in their favour and the doors were opened before the KC for an easy entry to the LDF. The allies of both the fronts remained the same except the inclusion of CMP to the UDF and the entry of KC as LDF partner. The elections to the Loksabha and assembly were scheduled to be held on May 23rd. The nation had suffered a great Tragedy in the death of Shri. Rajiv Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of the country at the assassins hands on 21st May 1991. Consequently the election commission of India postponed the election proceedings to 18th June. Having won a majority the UDF formed its cabinet with Shri.K. Karunakaran as the Chief Minister on 24-6-1991. Although Shri. Karunakaran returned to

the leadership, the clamour for change reached its crescendo with the ISRO spy scandal. This resulted in Shri. Karunakaran making an exit and Shri. A.K. Antony was sworn in as Chief Minister on 22-3-1995. Prohibition was the major political plank proposed by Shri. A.K. Antony.

General Election 1996

Changes in the internal political scenario of the Kerala Congress surfaced in the last phase of the UDF ministry, Shri. T.M. Jaobc parted with the KC (M) and contested the next elections separately within the UDF. SRP and NDP disappeared as political entities, with the 1996 general elections. L.D.F. formed its ministry on 20-5-1996 under the leadership of Shri. E.K. Nayanar who was not an elected member of the assembly at that time. Later he was elected from Thalassery constituency. As a measure of strengthening the process of decentralisation of power the number of ministers was reduced and a 14 member cabinet was sworn in.

2001 Elections

Election to the 11th assembly was held on May 10, 2001 in which UDF got 99 seats. The government sworn in to power on 17 May 2001 with Shri. A. K. Antony as Chief Minister. The cabinet comprised of 20 ministers. Shri. Vakkom Purushothaman was elected as speaker. Sri. A. K. Antony resigned on 29 August 2004. A five-member ministry under the Chief Ministership of Sri. Oommen Chandy assumed charge of office on August 31, 2004. In the election held on May 10, 2001 the United Democratic Front

consisting of Indian National Congress, Muslim League, Kerala Congress (M), R.S.P. (Bolshevik), Kerala Congress (Jacob), Kerala Congress (B), and J.S.S secured 99 seats in the Assembly. The electronic voting machine was used in 140 constituencies for the first time. The Ministry headed by Shri. E. K. Nayanar resigned on May 13,2001 and the Tenth Kerala Legislative Assembly was dissolved on May 16,2001.

The Eleventh Kerala Legislative Assembly was constituted on May 16,2001 and an eight member coalition ministry headed by Shri A.K.Antony was sworn in on May 17,2001. The Ministry was expanded on May 26,2001 with the induction of twelve more Ministers. Shri.Vakkom Purushothaman was elected as the Speaker on June 6,2001. The Ministry was expanded on February 11, 2004 with the induction of Shri K.Muralidharan, who was not a Member, as Minister.

On August 29, 2004 Chief Minister Shri A. K. Antony submitted the resignation of his Ministry. Subsequently a new five member Ministry was formed with Shri Oommen Chandy as the Chief Minister on August 31, 2004.

2006 Elections

The election to the Twelfth Kerala Legislative Assembly was held on April 22, 29 and May 3, 2006. On May 13, 2006 the Twelfth Kerala Legislative Assembly was constituted. Election to the 13 assembly was conducted in three phases on April 22nd, 29th and May 3rd. The LDF won with 98 seats. The 19 member LDF ministry was sworn

into power on 18th May 2006 with Shri.V.S.Achuthanandan as the Chief Minister. Shri. K. Radhakrishnan was elected as the speaker and deputy speaker is Shri. Jose Baby.

2011 Elections

The 21st ministry headed by Shri. Oommen Chandy as Chief Minister was sworn in by His Excellency R.S.Gavai, Governor of Kerala at a function organised for the purpose at Kerala Raj Bhavan Thiruvananthapuram at 4pm on 23rd May 2011.

Political Parties and Electoral Politics

Kerala has one of the most stable party systems in India, and represents a clear exception to the Indian norm of volatility, instability and electoral change. The state of Kerala is known for its political vitality and social awareness. Changes in the socio-economic and political sectors in Kerala during the initial decades of 20th century created conditions congenial for the growth of Communist Party.

During the colonial period, two newspapers - 'Mathrubhumi' by Kesava Menon and 'Al Amin' by Muhammed Abdul Rahman - were started with the aim of fostering the spirit of nationalism among Congressmen and Muslim community. On April 28, 1920, in the presence of Dr. Annie Beasant passed a resolution declaring the Reforms as unsatisfactory and disappointing. In 1921, at the all Kerala Political Conference held at Ottappalam, many leaders who attended from various part of Kerala were manhandled by police. The Payyannur all Kerala Conference in May 1928

under Nehru's presidency, called for the boycott of Simon Commission(1928).

A resolution was passed in the conference declaring Complete Independence [Puma SwaraJ] as the goal of the National movement. This resolution and Nehru's speech, which called for establishment of socialism, gave a fresh stimulus to the political activities in Kerala. Payyannur was the venue of Political emergence in Malabar. P.Krishnapillai's heroic activity of defending the national flag from forcible seizure by the police. The Payyannur camp was raided, and prominent leaders like K.Kelappan, Muhammad Abdur Rahman and K.Madhavan Nair were arrested and sent to jail. During second Civil-Disobedience Movement, Congress was declared as an unlawful organisation by the British government. On May 1935, civil disobedience was withdrawn formally.

An important political event was the split in the Congress in 1920 between the Right and the Left wing as a reaction to the withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience movement by the Congress leaders. It eventually led to the formation of the Communist party in Kerala. The Leftists within the Congress formed the Kerala unit of the All India Congress Socialist Party in 1934 and functioned under the guidance of EMS Namboothiripad and P. Krishnan Pillai. The landlords and better-off sections left the Congress and its leadership passed into the hands of extremists who championed for the cause of the peasants, the workers and the middle class. In October 1934, Kerala Provincial Congress

Committee at Shornur, expressed lack of faith in the Gandhian principles of truth and non-violence as a weapon in the fight for 'Swaraj' and denounced it. The Congress Socialist Party emerged as the Communist Party in Malabar in 1939. Kerala Provincial Congress Committee (K.P.C.C.), under Communist leadership, took an unequivocal stand in favour of a mass movement to overthrow British rule. In the violent clash between peasants and police in Kayyur, Mattannur, Morazha and Tellicherry, precious lives were lost. The development in Malabar led to the suspension of K.P.C.C and an adhoc- committee was constituted to re-organise the Congress activities in Malabar. The Leftists now left the Congress enbloc and joined the Communist Party.³⁴ What is important for our purposes is that it strengthened the communist party which after independence mobilised the people of Kerala for land reform and education.

New strains of thought developed as capitalist transformation laid the foundation for the commencement of social reform movements in various sections of society. An attitude against untouchability and casteism and interest in acquiring modern education were evident among all sections. Pressures for the same started developing in the society. Extension of English education initiated by Christian Missionaries in 1906 and later carried forward by government, rebellion for wearing a cloth to cover upper parts of body, installing an idol at Aruvippuram in 1888, Malayali Memorial in 1891, establishment of SNDP Yogam in 1903, activities, struggles etc. all these became factors helpful to accelerate

changes in Kerala society during a short span of time. Movements for liberation from the colonial rule of British imperialism and struggles launched by these movements grew along with them. When social renaissance movements and independence movement caused socialism and Soviet Revolution reached Kerala. Such ideas got propagated in Kerala through the works of Swadeshbhimani Ramakrishna Pillai, Sahodaran Ayyappan, P. Kesavadev and others.

During this period against the background of sufferings inflicted by landlordism and imperialism struggles and organizations of peasants and workers against them started emerging slowly. The practice of collective bargaining by working people also started. The peasant rebellion known as Malabar Rebellion of 1921 and consequent political changes highly influenced the independence movement of Kerala. People were suffering a lot due to persecution by landlords. In 1936 November the first Karshaka Conference of Chirakkal Taluk was held at Parassinikkadavu. In 1937 All Malabar conference of Karshaka Sangham was held in Kozhikode. This awakening among peasants prepared the ground for the advent of a new political movement. During this period trade unions also started to be formed and strengthened. Global economic crisis of 1929 started creating serious consequences in Indian economy as well. First Travancore Labour Association came into being. By the beginning of 1930s some other useful developments were taking place. Important among them was Nivarthana Agitation in Travancore. That was the demand of people suppressed so far as untouchables and weaker sections

for participation in government. This brought to the forefront struggles like proportional representation in government and reservation of jobs. A right wing section of Congress was against the Congress organization being expanded up to the basic level and getting into the hands of ordinary people. It was the left wing which brought Congress into the midst of people. The Kerala unit of Communist Party of India came into being two years and a half after the formation of the first Communist Group in the state. Very elaborate preparations were made for it. The stand of the Congress Socialist Party regarding second world war motivated hastening of the process.

There was a big difference of opinion inside the party in this period in the matter of assessing Indian situation. Those who adopted a right wing position put forward the idea of forgoing unity with Congress. Those who formed CPI(M) later on could not accept this revisionist idea of class collaboration. This was the basis of party split in 1964. The difference of opinion developed between Soviet and Chinese parties on ideological issues at the international level also contributed to intensify the difference here. Soviet party supported the faction which later became CPI.

It was the Communist Party which raised people of Kerala who were suffocating under the iron grip of landlordism to the pedestal of democratic consciousness, development and organization consciousness. Once this was realised new innumerable struggles were organized under the leadership of the party. Popular support to the party is

increasing day by day because this party is always ready to actively intervene in issues cropping up on various occasions and to lead the people in struggles connected with them.

The Kerala Congress (Mani), popularly called the Kerala Congress (M), is a regional political party in the state of Kerala. The mass base of the party is comprised of the working class populations, farmers and peasants of the state. Through their militant war cry revolutionary spirits, the Kerala Congress (M) inclines towards redressing the dismal conditions of the working-class of the state as well as protecting their interests. Many of the members of the Kerala Congress (M) work together with the workers, peasants, trade unions and labourers, as part of a class-struggle against imperialist forces. The party was founded in the year 1979, when veteran Indian politician and the then Minister of Home Affairs in the Kerala government, Karingozhakkal Mani Mani, popularly called K.M. Mani, headed a split faction from the parent Kerala Congress, owing to difference of opinions. He called the faction Kerala Congress (M), of which he became the President. In April 2010, the Joseph-led parent faction of the Kerala Congress, called the Kerala Congress (J) and the Kerala Congress (Mani). The former, which was in alliance with the Left Democratic Front (LDF), split from it and merged with the Kerala Congress (M). The Election Commission asked the merger to operate under the name Kerala Congress (M), with the KC (M)'s Election Symbol.

There are various political parties formed in order to protect the rights and interests of the people. These people

may be from different caste, religion and culture and have different political ideologies. As there are many groups of people, many political parties are formed for each group. There are two types of parties: they are national party and state party. A national party is one which is recognized in 4 or more states. Whereas a state party is one which is confined to just 3 or less states. Each party is represented by separate symbols. The national parties have a permanent symbol and cannot be used by any other party. It is the election commission who assigns symbols for representing these parties. The party that gains the majority support forms the ruling party. The leader of the ruling is then invited by the governor to form the government. The opposition party is also elects a leader. The leader of the ruling party is sworn in as the chief minister of Kerala by the governor. The various other leaders are also selected who are to head the ministries of the government. All together constitute to form the executive of the government.

National Parties

- BJP - Bharatiya Janata Party
- CPI - Communist Party of India
- CPM - Communist Party of Marxist
- INC - Indian National Congress
- NCP - Nationalist Congress Party

State Parties

- CPI(ML)(L) - Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)
(Liberation)
- JD(S) - Janada Dal (Secular)

JD(U)	- Janada Dal (United)
KEC	- Kerala Congress
KEC M	- Kerala Congress (M)
MUL	- Muslim League Kerala State Committee
RJD	- Rashtriya Janada Dal
SP	- Revolutionary Socialist Party
SHS	- Shivsena

Besides these parties, there are number of Registered (Unrecognized) Party exists in Kerala like AKMDMP (All Kerala MGR Dravida Munnetra Party), Janada Party (JP), KEC(B)Kerala Congress Party), SLAP – Social Action Party, LJNSP Lok Jana Shakti Party etc.

COALITIOIN POLITICS

Coalition government is not new or unusual phenomena; either government is formed by one party or two or more parties. The term 'coalition is derived from Latin Word 'COALITIO' which is verbal substance of coalescere, to go together and desire - to grow up, which means to go or to grow together. Oxford dictionary defines coalition as an act of coalescing, or uniting into one body; a union of persons, states alliance. In the strict political sense the word coalition, is used for an alliance or temporary union into a single government of distinct parties or members of distinct parties. A coalition can take place in two phases; pre-election alliances or adjustments between the parties or post-election union to share political power and run the government. The former type of coalition has additional advantages than the latter. A pre-poll understanding provides a common platform to the parties in

order to attract the electorate on the basis of joint manifesto. In developing countries the coalition government has no common programme, cohesion of class composition, uniformity of social composition etc, the parties of coalition government form hands with another to form a united front without any ideological basis sometime coalitions are formed to build up a formidable united front against some other political movement or other political party.

Political Formations: the Kerala Experience

The Indian National Congress in Kerala also was subjected to tremendous changes since independence. As a great movement which strived for freedom the Congress Party attracted communities, groups and individuals irrespective of their loyalties and allegiances. The transformation of Congress to a political party after the Independence forced many of its members and followers to leave the organisation and try to find out alternate fortunes in other political spheres. The Communist Party and the newly established Indian Socialist Party of Kerala formed a united front in Kerala. These two parties made an electoral understanding with the Travancore Tamil Nadu Congress Party in South Travancore. This was the first instance of Congress group joining hands with the Communist Party in Kerala. The Congress Party, on account of its popularity won the elections with a thumping majority.

Shri. Pattom A. Thanu Pillai, the Kerala State Congress president, became the Prime since he occupied two key positions simultaneously, the Prime ministership and the President of State Congress. As a protest he relinquished both

the posts paving the way for the first split in the Congress. Pattom Thanu Pillai later formed the Socialist Party of Kerala.

Travancore-Cochin Assembly was constituted in 1947 by combining the Legislative Assemblies of Travancore and Cochin. All the ministers of former Travancore and Cochin were included in the Travancore-Cochin Ministry. Paravoor T.K. Narayana Pillai became the Chief Minister. Though Shri. T.K. Narayana Pillai achieved to a certain extent in bringing about a balance of regional forces he was unable to maintain the same for long.

In 1951 A new Ministry was formed under the leadership of Shri. C. Kesavan. It was a three-member Cabinet consisting of other than the Chief Minister. Shri. T.K. Narayana Pillai and Shri. A.J. John In his newly formed cabinet, Shri. Kesavan hardly gave representation to the Cochin group. Hence the Cochin group within the Legislative Assembly was irritated and, under the leadership of Shri. Panainpiliy Govinda Menon, threatened to resign from the Assembly if the Cochin group was not given due representation. Shri. Kesavan refused to accommodate demands of the Cochin group and resigned from the leadership of the Congress in protest. A prominent Congress leader, Shri. Pattom A. Thanu Pillai left the Congress Party and joined the Socialist Group. He organised a new political party called Democratic Socialist Party (DSF). There was also another new party known as Democratic Congress Party (DCP) under the leadership of Mannathu Padmanabhan and R. Shankar.

After the formation of Kerala as a state, the first general elections to the Kerala Legislative Assembly took place from February 28 to March 11, 1957. The elections were held to choose 126 members from 102 single member constituencies and 12 two-member constituencies. The Communist Party of India emerged largest single party in the Assembly securing 60 Seats. The first 11 member popular Ministry of Kerala State headed by Shri. E.M. Sankaran Namboothiripad, leader of Communist Party, was sworn in on 5th April 1957. It was for the first time in the history of parliamentary elections a Communist Government came to power through the ballot box in India. It was the first ministry which was formed of a single party in the State of Kerala.

The Congress in the vanguard of the Indian freedom struggle, when transformed to a political party, ran after petty politics and its leaders were striving to capture power at any cost. The emergence of the Christians and Ezhavas alienated the Nair-s and Brahmins from the Congress. They began to embrace the left parties so as to maintain their hold on the power structure of the State. An analysis of the power distribution of the votes cast by the principal communities of the State shows an important shift in the established pattern, which was the main factor responsible for the victory of the Communist Party.

The Kerala Education and the Land Reform Bills introduced by the Communist Government urged some political and communal elements to create an axis against the government. The antagonism and agitation culminated in an

anti-communist movement which came to be known as Vimochana Sarnaram (Liberation Struggle) The Liberation Struggle was the culmination of a series of agitations. The crowds of people attracted by Mannath Padmanabhan, the NSS leader, placed him at the top of the Liberation Struggle with the support of the Church. The struggle spearheaded by all anti-communist forces (communal, political, economic and social) ultimately led to the intervention of the Centre Government and the dismissal of E. M. S. Government on July 31, 1959. Thus after the formation of the state of Kerala, for the first time it came under President's rule.

With the dismissal of the first popularly elected Communist Ministry in July 1959, the political grounds were all set for an anti-communist alliance. The alliance was the result of the polarization of all the anti-communist forces in Kerala society. All non-communist political parties and communal forces gathered under the label *Communist Virudha Munnani* (Anti- Communist Front). In the political sense the new alliance consisted of the Congress, PSP and Muslim League. The inclusion of Muslim League in the new political set up was opposed by the so-called progressive Congress men as they considered the Muslim League a communal organisation. There was also a sharp difference of opinion between the prominent leaders of Congress. Shri. P.T. Chacko and Shri. R. Sankar. The two leaders, as Congress men, were essentially secular in thought and action. But their respective communities rallied behind them with full support giving the impression that they were the leader of their communities, the

Christians and Ezhavas respectively. Differences between these leaders were patched up by the timely intervention and advice of the high profiled Kerala leaders, late Shri. Mannathu Padmanabhan and prominent Muslim leader Shri Bhafaki Thangal. The alliance that consisted of Congress, PSP and Muslim league was whole heartedly supported by major communities in the State .

Elections to the Kerala Legislative Assembly were held on 1 February 1960. The politics of the 1960s must be viewed in the context of Kerala being a State with the largest community of Christians and the highest communist vote. The 1960 elections brought to the Assembly group of MLAs belonging to the Congress and PSP over whom the Church and the NSS had considerable influence. This was significantly the first success of awakening of coalition politics in Kerala after it as a state. The Congress, PSP and Muslim league alliance secured 91 out of 126 seats. The Congress was the most important beneficiary. The Party won 63 seats and PSP, the ally of the Congress secured 20 seats. Muslim League another partner of the alliance had 11 seats. The Communist Party suffered another set back and they had to be satisfied with only 29 seats.

An interesting feature of the 1960 election was that the contest was more or less between the candidate of the two opposing alliances. The influence of the Liberation Struggle still haunted the people. The result was the polarisation of the voters between the two alliances. The overwhelming majority and influence of the democratic alliance can be attributed

mainly to the support and co-operation extended to the democratic forces by eminent Kerala leaders like Mannathu Padmanabhan, Pattom Thanu Pillai. R Sankar, P.T. Chacko. Panampilly Govinda Menon, Bafaki Tharigal and other.

The task of ministry formation proved difficult for the Democratic- Alliance in spite of its massive victory in the elections. The first hurdle was the communal colour of the Muslim League which a section of the Congress men opposed tooth and nail from the beginning of the alliance formation. The second problem was the clash of personalities within the Congress Party itself and among the alliance partners. The third but not the least important difficulty was the lofty claims of the supporting communities for key positions and portfolios, in the government for their men. Claims and counter claims of alliance partners and leaders subsided for a while and the result was the acceptance of a certain formula for berths in the government. Thus, Pattom A. Thanu Pillai of the PSP was chosen as the Chief Minister.

In the history of Kerala State the first coalition ministry took office under the leadership of Shri. Pattom A. Thanu Pillai after the 1960 mid term elections. When the Congress with 63 members could not form a government the PSP the second largest party with 20 seats managed to form a government with the alliance partners Congress and Muslim League. Shri Pattom Thanu Pillai's 11 member coalition ministry took office on 22nd February 1960. Shri. R. Sankar of the Congress Party was designated as Deputy Chief Minister and Shri. Seethi Sahib of the Muslim League was elected

Speaker of the House. The sudden death of Seethi Sahib created new problems in the alliance and it was resolved by giving the Speakership to Shri, Mohammed Koya, another Muslim League leader.

Shri C.H. Mohammed Koya, the new Speaker, resigned on November 9, 1961. The alliance had to find out a new Speaker, while the Muslim League decided to part company with the Democratic alliance. Then Alexander Parambithara, a Congress leader, was chosen as the Speaker. The differences between the Congress Party and the PSP even after the formation of the Ministry by Pattom Thanu Pillai continued. The PSP, finding no other way out quit the alliance leaving the Congress Party alone to run the affairs of the State. Pattom Thanu Pillai's coalition Ministry, which was the first one of its kind In Kerala State, came to an end on 26th September 1962. Thus the people of Kerala witnessed the break down of a coalition that emerged from the ashes of the Liberation struggle.

On the same day of the resignation of Pattom Thanu Pillai's Ministry the Congress Party with 63 members formed a pure Congress Ministry. Shri. R. Sankar was to lead the ministerial team as the Chief Minister of Kerala. The resignation of P.T. Chacko from the Sankar Ministry and his sudden death created mounting problems in the Congress Party. Taking advantage of the quarrel in the ruling Congress Party, the opposition tried to topple the government. On 8th September 1964, Shri. P.K. Kunju, moved a no-confidence motion against Sankar Ministry. 15 Congress MLAs revolted

against the Congress leadership and voted with the opposition in favour of the no-confidence motion. The Sankar Ministry resigned on 10th September 1964. This was the second single party Ministry in the State. Then the Assembly was dissolved leading to President's rule in the State. Later the 15 Christian-Nair dissident members of the Congress Party, formed a new political party called Kerala Congress under the leadership of Shri. K. M. George, on October 9, 1964. The fall of Sankar Ministry before the expiry of its term showed the people the interplay of communal politics and the foul practices of their representatives who cut at the very root of their own party government. The fact of the matter is that 'The coalition government formed in 1960 also consisted of person chosen carefully to represent various communal and regional interests'. Communal factors began to play a major role in Kerala politics and various communities tried to influence decision making of the government.

The communal politics for the time being receded to the back ground. It worked carefully during the elections and later in the ministry formation. While the government began to function apparently no communal colour of the government or of a department was visible. Under the existing circumstances no political party was certain about the shape of things that might develop in future. The Congress Party and the newly formed Kerala Congress Party looked at each other with suspicion and hatred. The split in the Communist Party in September 1964 made a sharp cleavage in the cadre character of the Communist Party. More than that several CPI(M)

Leaders were in jail for their pro-Chinese stand, under the Defence of India Rules. Fearing arrest and detention several other communist leaders went underground.

The imprisonment of communist leaders embarrassed and confused the rank and file of the Party. At that time there was no prominent leader to glue proper leadership and direction to the party followers. Congress and Communist Parties were in a dilemma and they were uncertain about their strength and support base. Under such circumstances alliance or coalition could not take due to misjudgement and prejudice on the part of political parties regarding future course of political action.

In a most complex and flexible political situation, the electorate and political parties of Kerala participated in the next elections which were held on 4th March 1965. A fresh delimitation of constituencies increased their number to 133. There were 14 political parties in the fray. The INC alone fought the elections in all seats without any alliance. The CPI(M) had electoral understanding with the SSP and the Muslim League. The CPI was in alliance with RSP which had an alliance with the Kerala Congress. There was no definite aim for the non-Congress Parties except the removal of the Congress Party from the political scene. With this objective all the other political parties in the State, namely, the Kerala Congress, CPI, CPI(M), Muslim League, Karzhaka Thozhilai Party (KTP) anti Samyuktha Socialist Party (SSP) got ready to play their game in the political arena. The Muslim League had an understanding with the Kerala Congress besides there

having a secret alliance with the CPI(M) The SSP also had an understanding with the CPI(M).

The results of the 1965 elections dismayed all the political parties and alliances in Kerala. No single party or combination of parties could win absolute majority in an Assembly of 133 members. When the combined strength of possible coalitions was taken into account, the number of seats to their credit could not reach the magical figure to achieve absolute majority. The CPI(M) SSP combination had only 53 seats. When the combination of the Muslim League and Kerala Congress added to it the majority could have been workable with a total of 82. But the CPI(M) made it clear that as long as their colleagues were in jail and the Central Government was not prepared to release them immediately, they were not ready to share power in the government. The formation of a coalition government of any combination would not be possible unless a convenient formula is arrived at among the political parties who are prepared to sit together and discuss matters. All political parties after deliberating on 'the minuses and pluses' of the formation of a possible government succumbed to the pressure of prevailing circumstances. Thus the 1965 Assembly elections became abortive. The state ultimately went under President's rule and it lasted until 6th March, 1967.

Coalition Politics: a Permanent Feature in Kerala Politics

Even though coalition politics started in the State of Kerala just after the 1960 Assembly Elections with the formation of a coalition ministry under Pattom A. Thanu Pillai (PSP) it has come to stay as a permanent feature in the State

politics by the Assembly Elections in 1967. After having two one-party governments (1957 CPI Ministry and the 1962 Congress Ministry) the electorate of Kerala never experienced a single party rule in the State hitherto. After two and a half years of President's rule, the Elections to the Assembly were held on February 22-23, 1969 in the State. Learning lessons from the previous election results the CPI(M) successful in forging a vast union of almost all political parties under it against the Congress Party. A new polarisation of political forces had taken place leading to new electoral alliances. Politically the most potent factor was the new United Front of 7 political parties of the CPI(M), the CPI, the ML (Muslim League), the RSP, the Samayuktha Socialist Party (SSP), the Karshaka Thozhilali Party (KTPI and the Kerala Socialist Party (KSP).

The second E.M.S Namboothiripad Ministry was formed on 6th March 1967. The Cabinet consisted of four members: the CPI(M), two each of the CPI, the ML, and the SSP and one each of the RSP, the KTP and the KSP. Altogether there were 13 members in the CPI(M) led Ministry. The initial stage of the United Front Ministry faced no problems and it ran smoothly. But later on they forgot some of the basic elements of a coalition government. The success of a coalition is essentially based on the unity and confidence of the coalition partners. The CPI(M) miserably failed to win over the confidence and courtesy of the coalition partners as a team under its leadership. The coalition partners lost their faith in the CPI(M) and they began to question the big brother attitude

of the CPI(M). As a result there began to emerge a sub front within the UF under the leadership of 4 major coalition partners. This eventually caused the beginning of the break down of the UF government led by E.M.S. Namboothiripad.

As a measure of vengeance the CM declared to enquire into the allegations levelled against 4 Ministers of his cabinet namely B. Billington, M.N. Govindan Nair, T.V. Thomas and P.R. Kurup. Following this, the CPI demanded that the allegations against the CPI(M) Ministers such as K.R. Gowri, Imbichi Bahwa, M.K. Krishnan and also of Mathai Manjooran should be enquired. The event consequently led to a motion presented in the Assembly by the CPI member T.A. Majid. The motion was passed by the Assembly and it led to the down fall of the EMS Ministry on November, 1969. The CPI(M) led CIF Ministry of 1967 made a number of legislations which could make progressive and revolutionary changes in the social, economic and cultural field of the State later. The Comprehensive Land Reform Bill, drafted and sanctioned by the Assembly just before leaving from power in 1969, is still prevailing in the State after having undergone a number of amendment. There were several other progressive measures of reform introduced by the 1967 Ministry. The Kerala University Act. 1969 was passed in response to the demand of the All Kerala Private College Teacher's Association. The Communist Party from the beginning had favoured this organisation. The University of Calicut was established on July 1968 to please the Muslim Community of the State. The formation of the Cochin Corporation contributed to the further development of

the region. The Language Institute was established in Trivandrum. The prohibition law was scrapped. The Kerala Land Reforms (Amendment) Act was passed in August 1968. The purpose of the Amendment was to give ownership of the land to the cultivator.

After the resignation of E.M.S. Namboothiripad's second Ministry a 'Mini Front' was forged to prevent President's rule in the State. The captain of the team was Shri. C. Achuthamenon of the CPI. In fact the Mini Front was a continuation of the Marxist led coalition. The eight-member coalition cabinet headed by Shri. C. Achutha Menon took office on November 1, 1969. The ruling alliance consisted of the CPI, the ISP, the ML, the RSP and the Kerala Congress. For the first time in the legislative history of the State, the cabinet was led by a personality who was not a sitting member of the Assembly, but a member of the Rajya Sabha. Achuthamenon's Ministry of 1969 consisted of 2 CPI members, 2 ML members, 2 ISP members and 1 KC member. The RSP supported the Ministry without participating in it. The Congress Party also supported the Ministry from outside. Not being a member of the Kerala Legislative Assembly Shri. Achuthamenon sought representation through a by-election in the Kottarakara constituency of Kerala which he won with a margin of 26,000 votes. The 'Mini Front' ministry at Shri. C. Achuthamenon was a total success especially in the maintenance of law and order through out the State. The partisan rivalry and the split in the ISP finally led to the downfall of Achutha Menon's Mini Front Ministry on August 1.

1970. The State, then, witnessed President's rule on 4th August 1970.

A notable achievement that can be attributed to C. Achuthamenon's Ministry is that it could give permanent "Pattas" to 2 lakhs of cultivators during its nine month period of administration. Incentives were given to cultivators for increasing production. Effective steps were also taken to implement the Kerala Land Reforms (Amendment) Act, 1969.

In the midterm poll of 17th September 1970 there were three fronts in the fray; the Ruling Front of the CPI, the RSP, the ML and the PSP on the understanding with the Congress(I), the Second Front was led by the CPI(M) with the SSP, the KSP, the KTP and the ISP and the Third Front of the Kerala Congress and the Congress (O) which formed alliance with the-Jana Sangh and the Swathantra Party. The CPI led front secured 79 seats in the Assembly elections. The second coalition ministry under the charismatic leadership of Shri. C. Achuthamenon with the support of the Congress Party took charge on October 4, 1970. The INC and KC which were allies of the ruling combine did not join the Ministry at first, but extended support from without. The fourth Kerala Legislative Assembly had the distinction of being the first Assembly in the State to complete its normal Constitutional term.

During the period of Shri. Achuthamenon Ministry the Muslim League split into two. One faction of the League withdrew its support to the Ministry. Kerala Congress also witnessed, its first split during that period. E. John Jacob and J.A. Chacko who were expelled from the party, formulated the

Original Kerala Congress. The new faction claimed as "National PSP," continued their support to the Ministry. With the Kerala Congress in the ruling front, it came to represent almost all the communities of the State. All these communal factions wanted stability of the front. The Ministry, thus, became the first one in the history of the State to complete its full five year term. In order to counter the influence of the CPI(M) led Karshaka Thozhilali Union over peasants the Kerala Karshaka Congress and the Deseeya Karshaka Thozhilali Federation were formed with the declaration of giving up the agitational path and educating the peasants.

It is interesting to note that the agrarian reform outlined by the CPI during 1957-59 and opposed then by the Congress Party was mostly the same reform implemented by the coalition Ministry of Shri Achuthamenon on (CPI) in the 1970s with the support of the Congress Party. Shri. C Achuthamenon was a powerful administrator who could keep all the diverse elements in the coalition. A fresh delimitation of Assembly Constituencies was effected in 1974. In this election also the experiment of coalition politics was carried further.

It was the general election after the withdrawal of Emergency imposed on June 26 1975. Elections were held on 19th March, 1977. The ruling front won 111 seats, and the opposition won 29 in the election. The election results as shown below clearly shows that the people of Kerala responded positively for a stable arid welfare oriented government of the CPI led coalition. Another reason for the ruling front was the outcome of the consolidation of important

communal parties in the front. Casteism, communalism and regionalism played a very significant role in the determination of voting behaviour in the 1977 Elections of Kerala.

It is paradoxical that when at the Centre the Congress Party was wiped out of power, in Kerala a Congress led coalition came into power with massive majority. The leadership of the coalition was taken over by Shri K. Karunakaran, the Congress leader who was the Minister of Home Affairs in the Ministry of Shri. C. Achuthamenon. The two-member Ministry consisting Shri. K. Karunakaran (INC) and Shri. C.H. Moharnmad Koyil (IUMML) assumed power on March 25, 1975. After the resignation of Shri. K. Karunakaran from Chief Ministership under the leadership of Shri. A.K. Antony, a stalwart of the Congress a 15 member coalition Ministry was formed on 27th April 1977.

When the Indian National Congress split in 1977, Antony was in the rival camp of Indira Gandhi. Shri. Antony resigned on 1 October 27. 1978. Upon the resignation of A.K. Antony the CPI leader P.K. Vasudevan Nair took over as Chief Minister on October 29, 1978. Thus the leadership of the coalition shifted from the Congress Party to the Communist Party. For some time in Kerala the CPI led the Ministry and the CPI(M) led the Opposition and confronted each other. When the Janata Party was split up the CPI(M) parted company with it and seemed to be inclined to forge an alliance with the CPI in furtherance of the cause of leftist unity. The CPI(M)'s victory in the September, 1979 civic elections proved that it had the largest mass base in Kerala The impressive

victory enabled the CPI(M) to demand the dissolution of the Assembly on the ground that the Ministry had lost the confidence of the electorate. The decade of coalition Ministry practically led by the CPI thus, came to an end. The resignation of Vasudevan Nair's Ministry created a favourable atmosphere for the formation of a wider Left Democratic Front.

The Congress camp bitterly criticised the CPI's attitude and they condemned it as a breach of faith on the part of the CPI. The Congress Party decided to avoid every chance for a communist ministry in the State. Consequently, with the support of the Congress led Front the IUML leader C. H. Mohammad Koyil was sworn in as the Chief Minister of the coalition on October 12, 1979. The IUML which was considered a communal party, got an opportunity to experience the leadership of a coalition ministry in the state. The NDP and the PSP were the other partners of the coalition Ministry led by the IUML. The Congress Party had no interest in the Muslim leagues leadership and dramatically withdrew its support and the Kerala Congress (M) also followed the same path. The six member coalition Ministry of C.H. Mohammad Koya resigned on December 1979. This was the smallest Ministry that the State had ever seen from its beginning. The Assembly was dissolved and President's rule was invoked in the State for the sixth time and it continued up to 24th January 1980. After that a complete re-alignment of political forces took place in Kerala. These are historical background of coalition politics in Kerala.

In short, when Kerala was formed, the State was under President's rule. The new State went to the polls for the first time in March 1957. There were 126 Assembly and 16 Parliamentary seats. The Communist Party of India emerged as the single largest party in the Assembly with 60 seats. Shri E. M. S. Namboodiripad formed an 11 member ministry on April 5, 1957 with the support of some independents. A three party alliance comprising of the Congress, the Praja Socialist Party and the Muslim League, was returned to power. Shri Pattom A.Thanu Pillai (PSP) took over as the coalition Chief Minister, leading a council of eleven ministers, in February 1960. Shri R. Sankar (Congress) was designated as the Deputy Chief Minister. Shri. Pattom A.Thanu Pillai however, resigned on September 25, 1962. Shri. R. Sankar was appointed Chief Minister the next day. Shri. Sankar continued as Chief Minister for about two years.

A political crisis precipitated in September 1964. Elections were held in March 1965. The election proved abortive in the sense that no single party could form a ministry commanding majority support. Once again on 25th March, 1965, Kerala was put under President's administration. The State went to the polls two year later at the time of the general elections in March 1967. A new polarization of political forces had emerged in the meantime, leading to new electoral alliances. Politically the most potent combination was the new united front of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Communist Party of India, the Muslim League, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, the Karshaka Thozhilali Party

and the Kerala Socialist Party. This seven-party combine was voted to power leading to the formation of a ministry headed by Shri. E.M.S. Namboodiripad (CPI-M). The ministers belonging to the C. P. I., the Muslim League, the RSP and the KSP tendered their resignation in October 1969. Shri Namboodiripad himself resigned on 24th October, 1969. A fresh alignment of forces with the Assembly initiated the formation of an eight-member cabinet headed by Shri. C. Achutha Menon (CPI) in November 1969. The ruling alliance consisted of the CPI, the KSP, the Muslim League, the R.S.P. and the Kerala Congress. The Assembly was dissolved on 26th June, 1970 on the advice of the Chief Minister who tendered the resignation of his council of ministers on 1st August 1970. Elections were held in September, 1970. The partners of the ruling front now included the Indian National Congress, the CPI, the RSP, the Muslim League and the Praja Socialist Party and were returned with a considerable majority. Shri. C. Achutha Menon formed his second ministry on 4th October, 1970. The Indian National Congress supported the front Government without joining it. Elections were then held in March 1977, the sixth to be held since the formation of the State. The ruling front, essentially a continuation of the previous alignment of forces, won a decisive majority. Cabinet leadership now passed on to Shri. K. Karunakaran of the Congress who formed a ministry on March 25, 1977. But this ministry was short-lived. Shri. Karunakaran tendered the resignation of his cabinet on April 25, 1977 following certain reference by the Kerala High Court in what had been known as the Rajan case. Shri. A. K. Antony

(Congress) became the next Chief Minister. However, in the wake of differences of opinion of the Congress Working Committee on the attitude of the Congress vis-a-vis parliamentary by-election at Chikkamagalur in Karnataka, Shri Antony resigned his Chief Ministership on October 27, 1978. Shri. P. K. Vasudevan Nair (CPI) took over as Chief Minister on October 29, 1978. But his ministry also resigned on October 7, 1979 in order to create a favourable atmosphere for the formation of a Left Democratic Front in Kerala. Shri. C. H. Muhammad Koya was sworn-in as Chief Minister on October 12, 1979, but the four member ministry could continue in office only for a short term. The ministry resigned on December 1, 1979 and the Assembly was dissolved. Again President's rule was invoked in Kerala up to 24th January 1980. Political alignment in Kerala had then undergone a mass change involving a drastic regrouping of major political parties. The stage was set for the eventual emergence of two political combines - the Left Democratic Front and the United Democratic Front.

The history of coalition politics in Kerala State started even before the Fourth General Elections. The first coalition ministry in Kerala was formed in the mid term elections of 1960, when no single political party was able to get a clear-cut majority. A clear cut coalition experiment in Kerala politics began in 1967 when the United Front ministry with seven coalition partners under Shri. E.M. Sankaran Namboothiripad assumed power. From then onwards Kerala Politics was based on coalition politics. Kerala State witnessed only three stable

coalition ministries viz. Shri. C. Achuthamenon's CPI Ministry of 1970-77, Shri K. Karunakaran's Congress (I) UDF Ministry of 19887 and E. K. Nayanar's CPI(M) LDF Ministry of 1996-2001. After 1980 Kerala politics is mainly based on two coalition fronts the UDF and the LDF even though there is the presence of a third force under the leadership of the BJP but it has only little influence.

TRADE UNIONISM

The social revolution occurred great magnitude in Kerala. Historians and sociologists are reluctant to recognise the importance of the momentous awakening in Kerala and they rehes to connect this with national history. At the end of the 19' century, Kerala presented a dismal picture of the social and religious life. A silent revolution was set in motion by Shn Narayana Guru and Kumaran Asan and its upshot was the rise of a variety of social, political, economic and intellectual groupings, all progressive in outlook. this great historical process had revolutionized the life of a larger number of the people than the combined forces Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj, Parthana Samaj and other organizations could effect on people all over India. In Kerala, orthodox Hindu rulers, under the direction of prejudiced Dewans and an unscrupulous priestly class, were not prepared to allow even a slight change in the recognized customs. It was against this background that the reformers had to work in Kerala.

Literary renaissance coincided with social renaissance and both resulted in the growth of political consciousness in Kerala. Freedom can flourish only where equality prevails.

The essential and necessary prerequisite for freedom is social harmony, tolerance and spirit of mutuality. The social and political atmosphere of Kerala, not unlike other parts of India, was waiting to be influenced by a new, refreshing spirit of renaissance. In Travancore, the great reform movement starting from below, from the traditionally depressed classes, have transformed the whole social structure producing a remarkable intellectual and social awakening.

Newspapers, books and literary works which had started appearing in large numbers in Travancore during this period played a major role in accelerating the growth of a very powerful radical trade union movement. Newspapers and journals especially brought out with the intention of educating the working class were numerous during the period. Thozhilali (The labourer) was the most important of all the newspapers published for the purpose of educating the labourers. The printing and distribution of pamphlets among the labourers was another method which accelerated the growth of ideas and latest information regarding day-to-day developments among the working class and created a class consciousness among themselves.

The history of trade union movement in Kerala, spread over several regions and sectors, is closely related with the political movement in the state. The trade unions had played a vanguard role in the political movement for freedom and a responsible government. Political ideologies and beliefs had brought together the various segments of the working classes. From its formative years, trade union movements were

integrally part of politics in the State Also, the socio-political developments in the State helped the early politicalisation of a large segment of the traditional labour force.

Historical Growth of Trade Unionism in Kerala

The trade unions in Kerala started during the time of the trade expansion. James Derm, an English man started a factory "Deras Mail Company" at Alleppey in 1958. Many workers came to the factory from five to six miles away. They came early in the morning and returned at night. Children also worked in the factory. The appointment of the factory workers was made by the supervisors. They could send away the workers without any reason. There was no relation between the factory owners and the working class. The supervisors were "autocrats" in the factory. There were also women workers. The supervisors punished the workers for simple reasons. Once a supervisor gave a worker five rupees fine accusing him that he went for the ceremony of his temple without his permission. The poor workers suffered a lot under these factory owners. They were not allowed to give employment to those who came well dressed.

In Bombay Sri. M.M. Lokhande a follower of Sri. Jyothi Rao Phule who was a Maharashtrian social revolutionary, organised labour unions for the first time. Bombay history repeated in a smaller scale in Alleppey. When Lokhande drew inspiration from Mahatma Phule in Bombay to become father of the Indian trade union movement, his counterpart in Kerala, Sri. Vadapuram B.K. Bhava got inspired by the great Sree Narayana Guru and is considered

father of trade union movement in Kerala.

With the arrival of the British, not only the administration but the monopoly in trade also passed into their hands. Gradually British capital found its way to Kerala and began establishing factories and investing in plantations and banking. Quite a few factories were established at Alleppey, Quilon, Kolachal and other places in Travancore. Along with foreign firms the native bourgeoisie also started establishing factories and banks. At that time P.K. Bhava was appointed as the "Muppan" and yard superintendent of Empire Coir Works. About 300 workers were in the factory. Making use of this opportunity he told about his plan to the factory owner Amber Sett and he also allowed to start a labour association in the factory. On March 31' 1922 the first meeting was summoned under the chairmanship of Advocate P.B. Muhammed. They formed a Workers Association named "Labour Union". This was the first approach to a trade union in Kerala. Then under the chairmanship of T.C. Kesavan Vaidyan an executive committee was formed. An opinion was brought forth that the labour union must be made as "Thiruvandancore Labour Association: Afterwards this union grew as Thiruvandancore Coir Factory Workers Union: The workers were exploited both by agents of owners of factories and local entrepreneurs. Although the production was increased by the hardship of the workers, the workers did not get any increase in wages". This agitated P.K. Bhava. There is some obscurity among the historians regarding the origin of trade union movement in Kerala. According to some historians attempts at organizing

labour in the coir mats and mattings industry in Alleppey began as early as 1920. The organisation was known as the Travancore Labour Association (TLA). The TLA was registered under the Travancore Trade Union Act of 1937. On registration, TLA was renamed as the Travancore Coir Factory Workers Union (TCFW)." The demands of the TCFW were a wage increase, improvement in the working conditions, a guaranteed minimum earnings, abolition of contract labour and prohibition of unauthorized deduction from wages by labour contractors and recognition of the union. The Dewan of Travancore had taken a personal interest in the settlement of this strike and the government appointed a Board of Conciliation.

Towards 1938 the condition of the labourers became pathetic. The police beat up the workers mercilessly and produced the first martyr of the labour movement in Travancore - Bhava was killed in this lath-charge.

Kerala, formed in 1956 is a union of three regional areas, Travancore, Cochin and Malabar. Of these Travancore and Cochin were ruled by the Kings, while Malabar was part of the Madras Residency ruled directly by the British. The socio-political elements and conditions were totally different in the three regions. Trade union movements have originated independently in these regions and later, because of the Communist ideologies, to which the masses were attracted at a period of time, got amalgamated. Even from the outset, there was an interlinkage between trade union movement and the political movement. The evolution of trade unionism happened

in different segments Alappuzha is the birth place of trade unions in Travancore. The trade unions emerged in Cochin and Trichur had significant variation with the trade unions in Travancore There was also no uniformity in the movement in Malabar, Cochin and Travancore The untiring work of P Knshna Pillai imparted a new vigour and vitality to the trade unions and he was responsible for integrating the movement in a systematic and organised manner Social reform movements, nationalist politics accompanied by a radical political movement, Indian National sectors of the traditional labouring forces in Kerala and proletariat of a large segment of the labouring poor and organised them in trade unions In Kerala, in the first decade of twentieth century the farmers and tenants of Malabar registered their protest against exploitation by the landed gentry and supported by the British Several farmers' struggles were conducted at Panthaloore, Nenmem, Paaval, Meppathur, Thirkkalloor, Malappuram, Ponnampal, Keezhumuri, Mannarkad, Perinthalmanna and Kuttichira Backward classes and castes also initiated struggles against inhuman treatment meted out to them by the superior forward classes and castes The struggle was for securing social equality and freedom from enslavement of one class or caste by another Some of them were closely linked with the freedom movement.

The entry of Swadeshabhimam Ramakrishna Pillai in the political arena was a milestone in the history of Kerala A fearless journalist, he was determined to fight against corruption, nepotism, and moral turpitude He was a champion of popular liberties. He edited the Malayalam newspaper.

‘Swadeshabhimam’ published by the great Muslim social activist Vakkom Abdul Khader Moulavi. The Government confiscated the newspaper and the press and deported Ramakrishna Filial from the State on September 26, 1916. He was the first to bring socialist thought and a biography of Karl Marx to Malayalees long before the appearance of Mahatma Gandhi in the Indian political scene and almost a quarter of a century before the birth of the Communist Party in Kerala. *The Indian National Congress spearheaded the national freedom movement since its inception, in 1885. It attracted the attention of the people of Kerala Chettur Sankaran Nair, G P Pillai, V. Raiyur Namibar, Mannath Krishnan Nair, C. Kunhirama Menon, Dr T M Nair, C. Karunakara Menon, K P Achutha Menon and several others used to attend the annual sessions of the Indian National Congress. The Congress was more active in Malabar as it was directly under the British administration.*

The Congress workers in Malabar were enraged when the Government declared the Indian National Congress unlawful and resorted to a series of repressive measures. The withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1934 saw a realignment of forces within the Congress on ideological basis. The younger sections of Congressmen accepted the socialist ideology. They felt that the Gandhian method of nonviolent non-co-operation would not help. They wanted to bring peasants and workers into the movement. For this, they formed the Kerala Congress Socialist Party within the Indian National Congress on May 12, 1934. C. K. Govindhan Nair agreed to be its President, though the main forces behind were P. Krishna

Pillai, its Secretary and EMS Namboodiripad as a member. In September 1937 when C K Govindhan Nair resigned, EMS was made the President.

Following the economic depression of 1930s, the hardship of common man became worse. Peasants, workers, teachers and even students joined the struggle under the banner of Kerala Congress Socialist Party dominated by leftists. Soon the Congress in Malabar had three groups, the dominant Leftists, the Rightists and the Nationalist Muslims, the last one led by Muhammed Abdur Rahman. Many alleged that communists were masquerading as Congress Socialists and their aim was a proletarian revolution to establish a classless society.

In fact, the Congress Socialists, kindled by Marxist-Leninist ideology and the experience of Soviet Union building up a socialist state, wanted to build up a similar society in the country. A K G described his observations on the day-to-day life of the classes of people exploited by capitalists and feudal landlords. Soon A K Gopalan, E M Sankaran Nampoothirippadu and P Krishna Pillai came together and took over the responsibility of bringing the exploited classes into the mainstream struggle for independence and also tried to build a socialist society founded on equity and justice. As early as 1935 several trade unions had been formed. Mention must be made of the Weaving Workers of Azhikode, Company Union in Feroke, Devadar Malabar Reconstruction Trust etc, in Malabar and the Travancore Labour Association (TLA) in Alappuzha and the Kollam Labour Union. They conducted

several struggles to establish the right to form unions and fight for decent wages and working conditions including the limiting of working hours to 48 hours a week.

EARLY PHASE IN TRAVANCORE

A Royal Proclamation abolished predial slavery in Travancore in 1855. A system of money wages was gradually established. It recognized freedom of contract. That marked the first stage in the improvement in the conditions of workers and their wages of labour. The passing of the Factories Act in 1913 brought further benefits to labourers. During the first quarter of the twentieth century, the State was under the grip of poverty and unemployment on a large-scale. Conditions of labour deteriorated still further with the onset of the economic depression of the 1930s. There is a certain amount of obscurity regarding the origin of the trade union movement in Kerala. One version is that it began from the attempts at organizing labour in the coir mats and matting industry in Alapuzha which began in 1920's. The organization was known as the Travancore Labour Association (TLA). The post-war prosperity of the industry had come to an end with the mushroom growth of uneconomic units and decline in the market for coir goods. Some of the units were constrained to close down and wages paid to labourers were deliberately reduced. There was also widespread unemployment. It was under these circumstances that the TLA was formed. The Travancore Labour Association was the first to get registration under the Travancore Trade Unions Act of 1937. On registration, the TLA was renamed as the Travancore Coir

Factory worker's Union (TCFWU) The history of industrial disputes in Travancore dates back to the year 1938 when the first ever general strike was held by workers in the coir mats and matting manufacturing industry under the auspices of TCFWU This strike was used as a means of ventilating the many grievances of workers The District Magistrate of Kollam was asked by the Government of Travancore to conduct a preliminary enquiry into the grievances of the workers. As soon as the Travancore Trade Disputes Act was passed in 1938, the Government decided to appoint a Board of Conciliation to conduct a detailed investigation into the trade disputes in the coir industry so as to promote a settlement of all issues.

The development of the trade union movement and the emergence of the communist wing in it must be considered as part of the mainstream of freedom struggle and the subsequent growth of political democracy. A number of Malabar leaders of the communist party started a youth league and carried its message to Travancore. Meanwhile, a vision known as the progressive group emerged in the state congress in Travancore. It particularly emphasized the need for mobilizing workers for the freedom struggle and openly alleged that the state congress was trying the line of Gandhism and non-violence and that it was not agitated enough. Subsequently, a rift in the state congress between left and right came to limelight.

The all Travancore Trade Union Congress (ATTUC) provided a platform for all left wing unions in the state. Following the stand taken by the communists in the Quit India

Agitation, the union movement split into two, one led by the radical left and the other by left socialists. The operations of the communists concentrated on the working class and the student community. They widely spread the messages of the class struggle, violent agitations, and even mass media revolt. Alleppey was the chief centre of the Communist.

THE PUNNAPPRA-VAYALAR REVOLT

“The Punnappra-Vayalar Revolt was no doubt an integral part of the freedom struggle in Travancore and the working class, which was mobilized by the communists, played a leading role. The revolt became inevitable, when the Dewan Sir CP Ramaswamy Iyer started becoming a dictator. He was bent on wiping out the Communists from Travancore, and, as a first step, he wanted to destroy the link between the trade unions and the communists. On October 19, 1946, the Government issued a Gazette Notification declaring the Communist Party and also the trade unions controlled by it as unlawful and strong action would be taken against subversion under the provisions of the Criminal Law Amendment Act. The Punnappra-Vayalar revolt of 1946 is considered as an important landmark in the history of trade unionism in Kerala. The workers in Alleppey declared a general strike in September 1946. The police and the workers clashed and the police got the worst of it. On October 24, 1946 the bloodiest of armed conflicts, a battle between an organized group of workers and police took place. Though started as a trade union agitation, the Punnappra-Vayalar revolt was part of a political struggle for achieving freedom and responsible government’.

Though the trade union movement in Travancore had its origin at Alappuzha, it did not take much time to spread to other centres in the State. Industrial development in early Travancore was located in Alappuzha and Kollam and so was the trade union movement. The early growth of the trade union movement in Kollam is also largely obscure as in Alappuzha. There is reason to believe that the movement as well as the leaders in Alappuzha largely influenced the movement in Kollam. The trade union movement that originated at Alleppey soon spread to the other parts of the state. The first trade union to emerge at Quilon was the Quilon Labour Union (QLU). The office of the QLU provided a common meeting ground for active social and political workers particularly from the Travancore state congress which was spear-heading the movement against the Dewan and Maharaja. The chief activity of the QLU was to hear the grievances of workers and help them to submit memoranda to the employers.

Alappuzha is considered as the cradle of trade unionism and from Alappuzha leaders were deputed to many other places for the formation of trade unions. In the case of Kottayam, though no industries were started during that period it had developed a reputation as a cultural centre. The trade unions that took birth in the early periods, worked in the areas of beedi, printing, rickshaw pulling etc. First labour union was of beedi workers. It was on the initiative of Sri C.S. Gopala Pillai and Shri B. K. Nair, a messenger from Alappuzha, Sri Kottayam Bhasi was elected as the first leader of Beedi Workers Union.

CASHEW INDUSTRY

The conditions in the cashew nut factories were inhuman and deplorable, the work commencing at 5.30 a.m. forcing the workers, mostly women, to leave their homes at 3 a.m. Most of the cashew factory workers were from Scheduled Castes. Women workers used to carry babies and small children when they went to work and kept the babies on their lap or laid them on a gunnysack nearby during work. The unhygienic conditions of the factories and exposure to cashew shell oil and fumes made many sick. The wages were based on 'piece rates', which varied according to the output of whole and unbroken kernels. No wages were paid for broken kernels. Workers were cheated by false weighing of output and low wages. The Trade Union Bill proposed to be presented to the Travancore Legislature had provided for the registration of industry-wise unions. Thangal Kunju Musaliar, who owned a large number of cashew nut processing factories, took cue from this and formed the All Travancore Cashew Workers Union in 1940. Though some workers joined this Union, they did not fall into Musaliar's trap. They held meetings and elected P. N. Krishna Pillai as President. The Kollam Labour Union supported the formation and development of a separate trade union of cashew factory workers. Gradually, within a few years, the trade union came under the control of Communists. Once the Kollam Labour Union got registration and became Kollam Factory Worker's Union, the struggle for control became heated, particularly between N. Sreekantan Nair, the central figure in the Kerala Socialist Party and the R. S. P., and M. N.

GovindanNair of the Communist Party of India By this time, the major trade unions in the Kollam area were the Navika Thozhilali Union, the Cashew Nut Worker's Union, the Punalur Paper Mill Worker's Union and the Timber Worker's Union.

By the middle of 1935 an important initiative was taken to bring the working classes in Travancore, Cochin and Malabar under a common platform and a unified central leadership, though these territories were under the jurisdiction of separate governments In May 1935, the first All Kerala Trade Union Convention was held at Kozhikode The second convention on similar lines was held in Thrissur in 1937 and the third was held at Kanjikukkuuzhi in Alappuzha district on February 19,1939

PLANTATION SYSTEM

In Travancore, plantation estates were established in around 1860 in the Veil Hills under the guidance and direction of Visakhm Thirunal Maharaja and his Dewan (Chief Executive) Madhava Rao. In 1878 the Maharaja of Travancore had assigned 215 square mile territory from the land held by the Poonjar Edavaka (branch of royal family) in the Devicolam Taluk in the high ranges to one Sir Daniel Munro In 1897 this estate came under the control of the Kannan Devan Hill Produce Company (KDHD Co)

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, plantations were set up in Wayanad too The trade union movement in Kerala has recently witnessed an interesting debate on the

independence status of trade unions vis-a-vis the political parties It is generally believed that the political parties in India as well as in Kerala usually nurse “their” trade unions In other words, the public are made to believe that the trade unions are mere appendages of political parties but In reality the parties always treat the trade unions as feeder and supporting organizations Thus the INTUC, is believed to be linked to the Congress, AITUC to the CPI, CITU to the CPI (M), BMS to the BJP /RSS, UTUC to the RSP, AICTU to the CMP, STU to the Muslim League and so on As the political parties started splitting, causing the emergence of innumerable factions, the public got a confused picture about the trade unions and their link to political parties.

In the early 1950s itself, the trade union movement in Kerala started getting divided on political as well as petty political and ideological lines. Each political party tried to create a trade union wing of its own and treated it as a supporting force rather than allowing the union to function as an independent organization with the chief objective of serving the interests of the members of that organization This often led to serious confrontation at times between those who were at the top of decision-making bodies of the political party and the trade union The problem got complicated when there arose ego clash between the two sets of leaders In the old day’s either political leaders or social activists formed the trade unions In later years this changed when new cadres of trade union leaders arose from the ranks of the working class

The Communist Party of India split into CPI and

CPI(M) and, the Indian National Congress into the Congress (I), Congress(A) and Congress(S) The other political parties like the Kerala Congress, the Revolutionary Socialist Party and the Muslim League have also split in recent years Kerala has also witnessed the proliferation of craft/category unions that caused further sub-division and fragmentation in the union movement With the emergence of accommodative and compromising strategy of coalition politics becoming the order of the day, two major groups, namely the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Left Democratic Front (LDF) have captured the centre of attraction The Congress both (I) and (A) factions currently lead the UDF together while the CPI(M) calls the tune in the LDF The inter-party and intra-party politics of the two groups and their constituent allies have made their impact on the unions under them, those supporting them and those friendly to them In the course of last five decades, the number of trade unions has increased very rapidly

Contemporary unionism is far different from what it was in the thirties or forties There has emerged now a growing gap between the leadership and the rank and file The spirit of evangelism, sacrifice and service that the older generation of leadership had shown has now been replaced by a measure of irresponsibility, disloyalty and petty graft of the younger generation The political misadventures of a few leaders have further harmed the interests of steady union growth There is also a moral degradation on the part of the working class Respect for authority and conscious need for discipline are fast losing in importance Class consciousness is

not strong as it was in the earlier years While the union leadership is engaged in direct negotiations with the employer, the so-called irresponsible elements among the workers launch direct action in defiance of the leadership There are cases when workers join one union and later leave it in order to join another There are also workers who pay the membership fee to more than one union and as a result the data on membership become unreliable There is no unanimity on the issue of adopting secret ballot or verification for ascertaining member support for unions.

The union members are reluctant to attend union meetings and participate in its deliberations. They are more concerned about maximizing their economic gains This has encouraged multiplicity of unions, aggravating inter-union rivalry and conflicts thereby bringing a bad name to labour relations in the state There was a demand for a legislation to deal with the problem of union recognition either through secret ballot or membership verification The Trade Union Act is found to be out of date in dealing with the new issues

Despite the political divisions, rivalries and other structural weaknesses, there exists a positive feature in the trade union movement in the State and it is considered somewhat unique when compared to the rest of India On major issues in industrial relations, the trade unions, irrespective of their political affiliations, had come forward to form joint action councils and programmes This is reflected even in the process of collective bargaining at the enterprise level Here all the unions at the enterprise might sometimes file a joint

Demand Notice, sit together and form joint bargaining committee to wrest a deal from the employer/ management In such cases, it is difficult for the employers to drive one union against another when issues of common concern arise.

Post-Independent Period

The objective basis for the trade union movement and the struggle by the working class of Kerala was provided by the extreme economic hardships and the poor and inhuman conditions of work particularly during the pre independence period. But with independence of the country, the cause of the struggle reverted again to economic demands. In 1948, the ban on 29 out of 35 unions that was imposed by Dewan, was lifted. Industrial unrest was revived. Unionism began to spread to new areas like plantations, agriculture and even to service sectors. The AITUC and WC made its roads into plantations. The United Trade Union Congress (UTUC) also emerged on the scene. The Hind Mazdur Sabha (HMS) was another late entrant into the trade union scene. The states of Travancore and Cochin were integrated in July 1949 and preparation for the first general election was being made when the industrial relations scene was turning turbulent.

The emergence of an independent unionism in Alwaye, a fast growing industrial town in 1940's is considered as a significant turning point in the history of Trade Unionism in Kerala. Modern industries and security of employment brought a refreshing influence on the union movement in Alwaye. The new movement stood for two principles: (a) non-affiliation to political parties and (b) one industry one union. This new

movement has checked the growth of pro-Communist unions. But very soon, it was realized that the independent unionism could no longer survive in the highly complex state politics and politically conscious working class.

The first communist Ministry, which came into power in 1957, introduced three controversial legislative bills; the Agrarian Relation Bill, the Education Bill and the Industrial Relations Bill. But this resulted in anti-Communist unrest all over the state² in the form of the (Vimochona Samara). The president of India dismissed the ministry. But political instability and industrial unrest continued. Gradually a new era of trade unionism has emerged in Kerala. Following the split of the Communist Party in 1964 the AITUC led unions began to split all over the state. The trade union arena in Kerala has become completely politicised. Each political party formed and nourished its own trade union wing. This resulted in unhealthy inter union rivalries. It is clear that trade unionism in Kerala has been entering into a new phase of growth which continues till now. With the increase of industrialization, expanding labour force, growing trade union consciousness, increasing rate of literacy among the workers are some of the causes that led to a tremendous growth in trade union in Kerala. Kerala is now witnessing less of militancy in its labour movement, which was its bane in the past. Strikes and agitations for increase of wages and improvement of service conditions are on the decrease.

The Trade Union movements in Kerala because of their close nexus with politics and freedom movement acquired

some unique and salient features. The Trade Unions, irrespective of their affinity to different political parties were quite democratic. They were not despotic or hierarchical in organizational and structural matters. They produced a type of idealism, quite different from the materialistic and capital obsessed attitude of affluent middle class Karalites of today, which gained a lot of social, political and intellectual space in social debates among people of yesterdays. The average Keralite of the mid twentieth century was better informed and had a sense of belonging to his fellow beings. Because of the high percentage of literacy in the state, the members of the various trade unions became very conscious of their rights and privileges and also aware of the new philosophical ideas and different happenings in the world outside and therefore, nothing, in their opinion was impossible and unachievable. Hence they set great aims and their demands also became very high which the managements and the government found difficult to satisfy and that finally led to the closure of many factories and industrial units in Kerala. The spirit to unify and accomplish their long cherished aims manifested in every walk of life and spread to all activities of the people including the press which in course of time, paved the way for the formation of journalists' associations in the state. The growth of trade union in Kerala has a kind of revolutionary success. History shows that only with unity the workers overcome all those difficulties confronted them.

MODULE III

GRASS ROOT LEVEL DEMOCRACY

People from various places visit Kerala to learn about the democratic decentralisation process shaping up in the State. They include academicians, researchers, development practitioners, policy makers, elected representatives, students and activists.

‘Local self-government is essentially the empowerment of the people by giving them not only the voice, but the power of choice as well, in order to shape the development which they feel is appropriate to their situation. It implies maximum decentralisation of powers to enable the elected bodies to function as autonomous units with adequate power, authority and resources to discharge the basic responsibility of bringing about “economic development and social justice”. It is not enough to formally transfer powers and responsibilities to the LSGIs. They have to be vested with the authority to exercise them fully which requires concordant changes not only in the appropriate rules, manuals, government orders and circulars governing development administration, but also in the conventions, practices and even, the value premises of the government agencies. Decentralisation does not mean just deconcentration where subordinate is allowed to act on behalf of the superior without a real transfer of authority, or delegation, where powers are formally conferred on a subordinate without any real transfer of authority. It implies

devolution; where real power and authority are transferred to enable autonomous functioning within defined areas’.

The concept of Panchayati Raj attained wide attention during the period of the struggle for independence. The vision of Mahatma Gandhi on ‘Grama Swaraj’ deeply influenced the leaders of the national struggle for independence and there was a strong belief that village panchayats should be treated as the primary units of grass roots democracy.

Decentralisation

Decentralisation of democracy will prevent centralisation of power, and the state will be reduced to co-ordination of the activities of the other autonomous social institutions. So far democracy in India was confined to parliamentary democracy; it was elitist in nature, with muscle power, money power and caste playing a critical role in the elections. Decentralisation is the felt need everywhere.

Gandhian decentralisation is a process of limiting the power of the state as well as the creation of people's institutions and processes. Decentralised institutions became an end in themselves because they guarantee non-violent participation as well as institutions for self-improvement. Gandhian decentralisation, means the creation of parallel polities in which people's power is institutionalised to counter the centralising and alienating forces of the modern state. Decentralisation process is supposed to promote local welfare, i.e., the welfare of local citizens. Decentralisation would provide the training ground for future political leaders of the

country. Decentralisation is a means of transferring political responsibilities to address unresolved conflicts originating from regional and local issues and addressing local needs on the principle of subsidiarity.

Decentralisation is an effective means of involving local people in improving the local delivery system of local public goods. It allows greater representation for various political, religious, ethnic, and tribal groups in decision making that can lead to greater equity in the allocation of government resources and investments. Decentralisation can lead to more flexible, innovative and creative Administration.

Participation

'People's participation' has become a rhetoric today. Participation should include the notions of contributing influencing sharing or redistributing power and of control resources, benefits, knowledge and skills to be gained through beneficiary involvement in decision making. One of the founding fathers of the concept of grassroots democracy, J.S. Mill, wrote, "The only government which can fully satisfy all the exigencies of the social state is one in which the whole people participate". Methods of participatory development and participatory needs assessment are based on ideas of consensus and common priorities. Participation is rarely a result of 'spontaneous grassroots initiative' where there is consensus between all participants or potential participants. The essence of participation is exercising voice and choice, and developing the human, organisational and management capacity to solve problems as they arise in order to sustain improvements.

Participation must be therefore understood as a process by which the people are able to identify their own needs, and share in the design, implementation and evaluation of participatory action. Participation should not only stop at information sharing or consultation, but decision-making and initiating action are important and essential components of participation.

Initiating action by the people represents the highest level of participation that surpasses involvement in the decision-making process. Self-initiated actions are a clear sign of empowerment. Once people are empowered, they are more likely to be pro-active, to take initiative, and to display confidence for undertaking other actions to solve problems beyond those defined by the project. This level of participation is qualitatively different from that achieved when people merely carry out assigned tasks. As people participate in making new decisions and solving problems, learning takes place. It leads to changes in attitude, behaviour, confidence and leadership. Newly acquired knowledge is therefore the first outcome of participation. Empowerment is a result of participation in decision making. An empowered person is also one who can take initiative, exert leadership, display confidence, solve new problems, mobilise resources and undertake new actions.

Participatory development is generally premised on the assumption that the benefit of participation are self-evident, and outweigh any costs. The costs and benefits of participation are likely to be different for women than for men, and are likely

to be assessed differently. The barriers to women's participation are indeed substantial. Poorer women and women from low status social groups are more disadvantaged than other women. There are places where women who were emotionally or materially dependent on their relationship with a man were often prevented from undertaking any activities outside the home or without his permission.

Participation is crucial to the success of projects; it can transform development, it empowers poor people. Participation facilitates local people's acceptance of new policies and technologies promoted by outsiders. People's participation should be encouraged owing to the fact that people in the villages know their needs better than government officials working at state or central level. Gram Sabhas constituted so far have not been endowed with significant powers. Therefore even if people are ready to attend and take active interest, when they find that Gram Sabha's opinion is not binding even on the Gram Panchayat, they fail to develop a sustained interest.

PANCHAYAT RAJ INSTITUTIONS

Kerala has passed through several stages of political development. Apart from the institution of Kingship another important political institution which developed during early centuries of the Christian Era was that of a Manram. Each village had a Manram. Its meetings were held and presided by the elders under a banyan tree while settling local disputes. Local assemblies called 'Munnuttavar', 'Anjuttavar' etc., existed during the Chera dynasty (9th century to 12th century

A.D.). This exercised a check on the powers of the provincial governors. For administrative convenience the whole kingdom was divided into 'Nadus', 'Desams' and 'Tara'. The lowest administrative unit was the 'tara' and it was administered by a panchayat. The local 'tara' organization acted as a check on the powers of the chieftains.

Before the formation of the state in 1956, village panchayats were functioning in Travancore, Cochin and Malabar areas. Obviously, these were not known by the nomenclature of panchayat. The panchayat system in Kerala existed in the form of 'tara' or village which functioned through its 'kuttam' or Assembly. Higher than the 'Tara' were the 'Desams' and the 'Nadu' having their respective organs the 'kuttarns' for discharging routine duties such as legislative, executive and judiciary.

The present Kerala Panchayat Act was passed in 1960. It was a product of the historical evolution of the Cochin Panchayat Act, 1914, The Travancore Village Panchayat Act, 1925, The Travancore-Cochin Panchayat Act, 1950 and the Madras Village Panchayat Act, 1950. The Kerala Village Panchayat Act, 1960 came in force from January 1, 1962 in all the then 922 village panchayats and fresh panchayat elections were held in the year 1963. The Act, provides a uniform system of decentralized administration at the village level.

Features of Kerala Panchayats

One of the salient points of difference between the panchayats of Kerala and those from other states is that the

panchayats of Kerala are comparatively bigger in population and income. This has helped them to become viable units of local self-government both administratively and financially. High literacy even in rural areas is also its distinguishing feature.

Kerala village panchayat possesses certain unique features such as high population, with a high level of rural literacy, political consciousness and comparatively low level of rural urban dichotomy which distinguish it from the rest of India. The high level of literacy and political consciousness are also reflected in the type of leadership that these institutions have thrown up. Village panchayats of Kerala have achieved substantial progress in the fields like social education, family planning, public health, rural housing etc. Even in case of community amenities, village panchayats in the state are much ahead when compared with their counterparts in other states. The Kerala village panchayats have built their own infrastructure for economic development. Kerala was one of those states which has not adopted the three-tier structure of Panchayati Raj as recommended by the Balwantrai Mehta Committee (1957).

Organizational Structure of the Kerala Village Panchayats

The panchayats in Kerala are constituted for one or more revenue, villages, the normal population ranging between 8,000 to 45,000. Representatives to panchayats are elected wardwise. The minimum number is 8 upto 10,000 population, with one additional representative for every 4,500 population in excess of 10,000 subject to a maximum of 15 members.

Members are elected on adult franchise with a qualifying voting age fixed at 18 years.

The term of office of the members of panchayats is 5 years and the President and Vice- President are elected from amongst the elected members of the panchayat. In addition to normal functions, the President of the village panchayat has to forward an annual report of the functioning of the panchayat to the Panchayat Director and a half-yearly report to the Deputy Director about the work and conduct of the panchayat Executive Officer.

There are special provisions in the Panchayat Act, 1960, towards the reservation of seats for the scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes and women. One seat is reserved for the scheduled castes in every panchayat and also for scheduled tribes where their population is not less than five per cent of the total population of the panchayat. According to the Panchayat Act, 1960, only one seat was reserved for women. Declaration about a reserved ward for women is now based on women activities in the ward. This gives authorities, an opportunity to manipulate such wards. Earlier the criterion for reservation was based on women population of the ward. The Kerala Panchayat Act, 1960, provides an effective bureaucratic network to supervise, control and carry out the decisions of the elected panchayat bodies.

Panchayats in Kerala are classified into four grades on the basis of their annual income. This classification gives a clear idea of the general financial position of village panchayats. It helps the state government to transfer additional

functions to panchayats based on their grades. It also helps standardization of grants and formulation of viability criteria while assigning functions to village panchayats. The major sources of income of panchayats are taxes, fees and government grants. Building tax, profession tax, vehicle tax on non-motorised vehicles, land cess are the four compulsory taxes which panchayats levy. Among these, receipts from the building tax form the lion's share. In addition to these taxes, panchayats can levy fifteen different kinds of fees. They also receive grants-in-aid from the state government such as establishment grants, building grants, block grants and road maintenance grant. In addition, they receive a long term loan facility from the State Rural Development Board. Such loans carry minimum interest and provide finance for remunerative investments and developmental activities of the panchayats.

Implementation of Decentralization at Panchayat Level

Kerala has been a trend setter of implementing decentralization and democratic local governance for the whole country during the last two decades. The Government of India (GoI) has widely acknowledged its achievements in decentralized participatory planning and transforming local government system with innovative democratic institutions and practices. During the pre- 73rd Constitutional Amendment period the progress of implementing the Panchayati Raj system in Kerala was in no way different from that of any other Indian States. The initiative of the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government to implement democratic decentralization project in Kerala was not an accidental decision. Various motivating

forces and a wide range of factors influenced the policy makers of Kerala to choose decentralization as a reform measure and policy option to strengthen the local government system. The democratization and developmental potential of decentralization to ensure participation of all sections of society in local governance was clearly accepted by the first democratic government assumed power in Kerala in 1956.

After the formation of the Kerala state, several attempts have been made to give a strong legal framework to the local government system. The political instability that existed in Kerala and the frequent change of governments and the dissolution of state legislative assemblies prevented the passing of the Panchayati Raj Act in Kerala. The first democratically elected government in Kerala strongly believed that democratic decentralization is the best possible alternative to de-bureaucratize governance and to ensure people's participation. The intrinsic values of decentralization was clearly endorsed by this government in the appointment of the first Administrative Reforms Committee (ARC) in the state formed in 1957 under the chairmanship of E.M.S. Namboodiripad, the then Chief Minister of Kerala. The effect of decentralization and its modernizing potential to transform the social and political life of the common people was clearly internalized by the first democratically elected government, which influenced the whole process of deliberation of the ARC.

The legislative efforts on the part of the first democratically elected government to strengthen the

Panchayati Raj system in Kerala was focused its attention to end bureaucratic domination at the district and local level and to strengthen people's representation and participation in development decision making at the district and sub-district level. Traditionally, there were self-governing units at the village level in different parts of the state of Kerala, exercising different degrees of control over the lives of the people. The northern part of Kerala, Malabar was part of the Madras Presidency and even before independence there were some efforts on the part of the British colonial rulers to give self-governing powers to the Panchayats, including authority in matters of education, revenue and other development subjects. The political and economic changes took place in the nineteenth century and the Gandhian ideals of the Panchayati Raj system as a system favorable to promote democratic rights and self-governance of the people vis-à-vis the bureaucratic interests, contributed significantly as an environmental force to influence the policy decisions to strengthen the local government system in Kerala. Decentralization is also influenced by the individual interests of the policy makers that control the governmental structures and other societal institutions.

E. M. S. Namboodipad as the first chief minister of Kerala and a lead left political ideologue, strongly believed that democratic decentralization is an essential part of local development, because it facilitates the protection of interests of the working class and other common people. His writings and other intellectual contributions on decentralization acted as an

important motivating force in all the legislative and policy reforms of decentralization in Kerala, during more than four decades after the formation of the state. The successive state governments in Kerala were forced to express the political will to implement decentralization reforms due to the continuous facilitative influence of this political personality. The intellectual contributions of E.M.S. significantly influenced in designing the policy framework and systems and procedures of decentralization in Kerala.

Various environmental factors positively contributed for designing the legislative framework of democratic decentralization and local government system in Kerala. Important among them are, the long tradition of public action for political and social development, social reform movements for democratization and modernization, associational life and multiple membership of people in different political, social, religious, occupational and civic organizations, strong sentiments and faith of people in secular political culture, vibrant democratic politics, cadre based political parties and voluntary organizations with grass -roots level formation, universal education and total literacy, conscious reduction of social inequality, high density of press and media and its proximity to common people etc. have been positively contributed to create a strong legal foundation for democratic decentralization and democratizing local governance system in Kerala.

The Kerala Panchayat Act, 1960

During 1960 and 1961, when Shri. Pattom A. Thanu

Pillai was Chief Minister, the Kerala Panchayat Act, 1960, the Kerala Municipalities Act, 1961 and the Kerala Municipal Corporation Act, 1961 were enacted unifying the existing laws in the Malabar and Travancore – Cochin regions of the state and enlarging the functions and financial resources of local bodies. The Kerala Panchayat Act incorporated several recommendations of the Balawantray Mehta Study Team. The Panchayats were conceived as a political organization at the village level between the State Government and the people and they should be the institutional system through which the villagers come in to contact with the State Government. Large number of development responsibilities were entrusted to the Panchayats such as, control and supervision of elementary schools, public health and sanitation works, development of agriculture, animal husbandry and cottage industries.

The Kerala Panchayat Act, 1960 clearly points out that the staff employed at the Panchayat level of the Government will work under the control and supervision of the Panchayats. In accordance with the Objectives and Resources the Kerala Panchayat Act as finally passed contained an impressive list of duties and functions. The Act also provided that the Government could authorize the Panchayats to exercise other functions such as collection of land revenue, maintenance of survey and village records, collection of village statistics, supervision and control over Government Primary schools, medical, public health, child welfare, maternity institutions and execution of community development work including improvement of agriculture, animal husbandry, communication

and village industries. The employees of the Panchayat and officials of the different departments were not accountable to the elected council and they were totally controlled by the concerned administrative departments. As conceived by the ARC, the Kerala Panchayat Act 1960 entrusted large number of functions to the village panchayats. Village Panchayats everywhere, are found discharging a wide variety of functions which have, however, been broadly divided in to two categories viz, obligatory and discretionary, as can be seen in the concerned laws of the different states.

The scope and extent of functions assigned to the village panchayats by the Kerala Panchayat Act, 1960 are not confined to ‘civic functions’, but include “developmental responsibilities’ and other activities related to ‘social welfare’ of the local community. Therefore, the Kerala Panchayat Act,1960, stipulate mandatory or obligatory functions, agency functions and regulatory functions. Even though, the panchayats in Kerala faced several institutional constraints to discharge their responsibilities, including the lack of financial resources, the legal framework designed as part of the Kerala Panchayat Act, 1960 was adequate to do large number of responsibilities relevant to the life of people.

Another noteworthy feature of the Kerala Panchayat Act 1960 was the provision of reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women. Section 7 of the Kerala Panchayat Act 1960 stipulate that,” where the number of electors belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in a Panchayat area is not less than five

percent of the total number of electors in that Panchayat area, one seat shall be reserved in the Panchayat for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. It was also provided in the Act that one woman member could be co-opted by the Panchayat over and above the number already fixed for it, in case no woman was already elected to the Panchayat (Kerala Panchayat Act, 1960). The Kerala Panchayat Act stipulated certain powers and authority of the President and he has full access to and can deal with all records of the Panchayat and no official correspondence between the Panchayat and the Deputy Director and authorities above him may be conducted except through the President.

The powers of the President to oversee the discharge of official functions of the Executive Officers and their Assistants are stipulated in the Kerala Panchayat Act, 160. The Kerala Panchayat Act came in to force from January 1, 1962. Based on the new Kerala Panchayat Act the first panchayat election in Kerala state was held by the end of 1963 and the new panchayats came in to existence on January 1, 1964. Though, there was an elected council, the administration of the Panchayats had been highly bureaucratic. The executive authority of every Panchayat had been vested with the Executive Officer. He was not accountable to the elected council and the system of transparency and responsiveness was very weak. The Executive Officer has been entrusted with a wide variety of duties and responsibilities as well as powers (Visalakshi 1967:100). He was directly accountable to the Taluk and District level officials of the department concerned

and other higher authorities. The elected head of the Panchayat council can only report the laxity or negligence on the part of the Executive Officer to the Deputy Director of Panchayats for necessary action. The Panchayat employees were also placed under the control of the Executive Officer and he is empowered to take disciplinary action against any Panchayat employee after a due process. One of the glaring features of Panchayat administration is the almost complete absence of training facilities for the staff (other than the Executive Officers) employed in various Panchayats in the state. The administrative system of the Panchayats was therefore, highly bureaucratic and democratic accountability has not been existed in the functioning of the Panchayats.

Panchayat Raj Act – 1994

Panchayat Raj Act - 1994 In March 1994, the state government introduced a Kerala panchayat raj bill in the state legislature. The provisions of the bill were very restrictive and led to a great deal of criticism from both the intellectuals and public men. As a result of this, considerable changes were made in the bill by the select committee. The new bill, was passed in the legislature, and the new Act conformed to the mandatory provisions of the constitution. Following are the main features of the Kerala Panchayat Raj Act 1994.

Gram Sabha

The Gram Sabha is made the basic spirit and soul of the panchayati raj institutions in the state. It will approve the annual budget and the plan of the developmental programmes,

annual statement of accounts, seek clarification from the president or members about the works undertaken by the panchayats. It is compulsory to hold at least two general meetings in a year presided over by the president of Gram Panchayat.

Gram Panchayat

As per section 7 of the Kerala Panchayat Raj Act, 1994, there should be a gram panchayat for a village or group of villages. The total number of members of Gram Panchayats will be decided on the basis of population. Total number of members of the Gram Panchayat shall be between 8 and 15. All members are elected directly by the people. A fixed number of seats should be reserved for SC's and ST's depending on their population. The reserved constituencies should be changed on rotation basis. One third of the total seats of the Gram Panchayat should be reserved for women. The members of the Gram Panchayat will elect its president and vice president from among themselves.

Block Panchayat

Section (8) of the Kerala Panchayat Raj Act states that there should be a Block Panchayat at the block level. Total number of members in Block Panchayat shall be in between 8 and 15.

District Panchayat

Section (9) of the Kerala Panchayat Raj Act state that there should be a District Panchayat at the district level. Total number of members in the District Panchayat shall be in between 15 and 25.

Officials

According to section 179(1), every panchayat will have a secretary. He must be a government employee Section 179(4) also states that, state government can transfer a secretary. If the panchayat committee passes a resolution with simple majority, the state government should transfer the secretary. Following are the functions of the secretary. (a) attend the meetings of the panchayat committee and standing committee without voting right. (b) implement various decisions of the panchayat committees (c) give administrative leadership to the subordinate employees

Standing committees

The Act also envisages that, there should be a standing committee for each Grama Panchayat Block Panchayat and District Panchayat for fixing taxes, checking accounts, and for all kinds of planning activities. Chairman of the standing committee will be elected from among its members.

Accounts and Audit

Section 215(1) of the Act states that, accounts of the panchayat should be kept separately by the panchayat committee. Section 215(3) further states that, audit examiner of the local funds will be the official government auditor of panchayats.

Finance

The Act also ensured that, the state government will transfer to the panchayat, the state annual plan and budgetary allocations for the subjects transferred to them. But with only

token powers and responsibilities transferred to the panchayats, the actual devolution of funds for them will not be even a fraction of the 40% transfer of the annual plan outlays for panchayats recommended by the expert group of the National Development Council.

MP's and MLA's

At the Block level MLA's will be ex-officio members and in the District Panchayat the local MP's will be the ex-officio members.

Allowances

According to section 160(4) of the Act, president and vice president of the panchayats are entitled to the allowances of a class I employee of the state government. The government of Kerala appointed a Finance Commission on 22nd April 1994 for the panchayati raj institutions as mandated by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act. The commission submitted its report in the first week of July 1996 with the recommendations on the following areas, viz building and property taxes, entertainment tax, fees and licences setting up of rural and urban pools and Regrouping of Panchayats. Decentralised Planning In Kerala, many brave attempts were made at district levels, to practice the principles of decentralised planning. According to Thomas Issac (1998) though the commission for decentralised planning appointed by the planning commission in 1969 and 1978 respectively did not give proper recognition for the roles played by local self governments, a few experiments made in three districts of

Kerala deserves special mention.

1. Kerala Panchayat Raj Amendment Act 1999. The main features of the Kerala Panchayat Raj Amendment Act 1999 are summarized below. The Kerala Panchayat Raj amendment Act 1999 specifically insisted that, Grama sabhas should be convened at least once in every three months, (amendment to Article-3) at the place suggested by the grama panchayath, and it is compulsory that the representative to the Block and District panchayat committee members from that ward must be invited to the meeting by the convener. The power, functions, responsibilities and rights of grama sabhas are also explained in the sub clauses of article 43 A and 3B. 1
2. The functions and responsibilities of standing committee members of village Block and District panchayat are defined clearly in sub clauses of Article 162-A, B and C respectively. Accordingly, the responsibility of planning vests on the standing committee for development in all the three tiers of panchayat.
3. The cancellation of resolutions passed by a village panchayat and the cumbersome procedures involved in it is dealt with clearly in Article 53, clause 191, sub clause (1) and (2) of the 1999 Act. It specifically mentions the role of ombudsman and appellate tribunal in settling the issues. Hence the state government can take action, only on the basis of the reports and suggestions of Ombudsman and appellate tributional on the subject.
4. Article 271 B of the Act ensures the right to information

of every citizen, regarding any matter, on which he has full confidence, from the panchayat, as permitted by the law. Article 271 D(1), specifies the penalties which can be imposed upon the secretary or any other official, in case of his deliberate denial of information to the citizen.

5. The qualification, responsibilities and duties of Ombudsman are clearly mentioned in article 271-F., 271F, 271 G, 271 H, 271 I, 271 T and 27 1 K. Thus the accountability, and transparency of panchayat office authorities are ensured by the institution called Ombudsman in the 1999 Amendment Act
6. The appointment of an Appellate Tribunal for local self government institutions is another feature of the Amendment Act of 1999. Article 271-S,T and U describes the functions and domain of activities of the tribunals. The ultimate purpose of the Appellate tribunal is to settle and resolve the complaints put up by people against the resolutions and actions of local self government institutions. Such tribunals can be appointed for each district or for a group of districts

The Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP)

The Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP), a voluntary organization committed to the popularization of science among the people of Kerala and propagated the role of science in social revolution, supported decentralization since its inception in 1962. Collaborating with the Centre for Development Studies, the KSSP organized a major workshop

on Decentralization of Powers at Trivandrum in 1981. All the leading actors of the later People's Plan Campaign, including E.K.Nayanar, E.M.S. Namboodiripad, Dr. S. B. Sen and Prof. I. S. Gulati were present in this workshop. This workshop discussed the importance of the strategy of empowering people to handle responsibilities of local development and to take power. After that KSSP published a large number of books and booklets on decentralization and Panchayati Raj as part of the 'kalajatha' and annual conferences. All these publications covered different issues like, development problems of Kerala, decentralization of power, natural resources, human resources, pachayat level resource mapping, people's participation in plan formulation and implementation, financial devolution to local governments etc. Prior to the implementation of decentralized planning in 1996, some initiatives for participatory local level development programmes have been started by the KSSP with the support of Centre for Development Studies (CDS). These programmes were carried out together by the local governments and the KSSP. In 1991, the KSSP launched the resource mapping program in collaboration with the Centre for Earth Science Studies (CESS) and with support of the state government. The program aimed at initiating more efficient and sustainable management of local resources.

The International Congress on Kerala Studies organized by the A.K.G. Centre for Research and Studies in August 1994 provided an opportunity to bring together scholars of all ideological manifestations discussed and deliberated on issues related to the development of Kerala and

set the strategy for future policy decisions. One distinctive feature of the International Congress was its wide participation and openness. The Congress ended with a general agreement that Kerala is facing a grave development crisis which needs public action. Reorientation of the focus of planning towards strengthening material production and improvement in the quality of services required through overhaul of the sectoral policies that were being followed and a decentralized development strategy was more suited for the petty production sectors and for basic services. The International Congress laid the strong intellectual foundation for People's Plan Campaign and democratic decentralization in Kerala.

The People's Plan Campaign and Democratic Decentralization

The Constitutional Amendment Acts created a favorable enabling environment for legislative reform and policy initiatives for strengthening people's participation in local governance and development. It has also provided a strong legal framework for Grama Sabha as a grassroots level institutional structure to facilitate citizen interaction with local governments and to ensure democratic accountability of elected representatives and officials at the local level. When the LDF government came to power in 1996 has been took a strategic initiative to creation of political structures and representative institutions below the state level and to the district and lower levels will provide opportunities for participation of the common people including the poor in the

decision making process which affect their life. At the same time, the left leaders were very much aware of the complexity involved in the decentralization reforms and the influence of the countervailing forces which work against decentralization. Therefore, the LDF government decided to initiate a mass movement immediately after assuming power in the year 1996 to accelerate the process of decentralization with the support of a mass movement, popularly known as People's Campaign for Decentralized Planning. The immediate agenda coined by the LDF government to start this mass movement was to empower local governments and the people to prepare local plans in a transparent and participatory manner. The People's Plan Campaign (PPC) created a favourable political environment towards political consensus on issues related to democratizing and decentralizing local administration with maximum people's participation.

The PPC was used as an instrument for implementing democratic decentralization in Kerala and for mobilizing people in the planning and implementation of local plans. Democratic decentralization in Kerala upholds people's right to initiate their own projects and the power to execute and operate them and provides good number of institutional arrangements for community participation and public management of Local Self- Governments. It was expected to facilitate local level development by mobilizing both people and resources to strengthen the productive base, especially in the primary sector by creating and maintaining public and collective goods such as in land and water management and

agriculture extension.

The 1994 Kerala Panchayat Raj Act and Kerala Municipality Act indeed created a legal framework for decentralization and local government system in tune with the Constitutional Amendment Acts. Some of the provisions of the 1994 Act are undemocratic and deadly against the spirit of decentralized democratic governance. Section 159 of the Kerala Panchayat Raj Act 1994 enabled the Government to remove the President, Vice-President or any member of the Panchayat from his office on grounds such as misconduct in the discharge of his duties, abuse of powers and persistent default in the performance of duties.

The Government of Kerala appointed the Committee on Decentralization (popularly called Sen Committee after its first chairman S. B. Sen) almost at the same time of launching of the PPC to recommend the necessary institutional reforms (activity mapping, performance audit, ombudsman, state development council, right to information, citizen's charter etc.) and legislative framework for functional, financial and administrative autonomy. The Sen Committee laid down the key principles of devolution of functions which have been adhered to by government in practice. The committee followed a rigorous methodology in identifying the critical issues of decentralization and suggested legislative measures to make decentralization in Kerala more effective and meaningful based on certain principles. The most important principles listed by the committee are; autonomy, subsidiarity, role clarity, complementarity, uniformity, people's participation,

accountability and transparency. The focus of the committee was to create an empowered democratic system with effective systems of accountability and responsiveness.

Decentralization in Kerala also provided opportunity for local governments to take innovative efforts to systematize local governance and to introduce new management practices to improve the quality of service delivery functions of transferred institutions. In order to make local administration more responsive to the expectation of the people, an effective Management Development Mechanism shall be innovated and practiced.

Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA)

Located at Thrissur, KILA is the nodal agency identified by the Government of Kerala for capacity building for decentralisation. It is an autonomous body under the auspices of the Government of Kerala. KILA is engaged in the capacity building activities like training, research and consultancy in decentralized governance and administration for the Local Self-Government Institutions in Kerala, both rural and urban. It is one of the key players in the decentralisation process in Kerala as well as India. It functions as a knowledge management center through trainings, publications, seminars, workshops and discussions. KILA has expertise in areas like decentralised planning, local governance, good governance, local economic development, poverty alleviation, gender and development, empowerment of marginalised groups and sustainable development including rainwater harvesting. In addition to the in-house faculty, the

institute has a pool of resource persons at the state and district levels drawn from academicians, administrators, researchers and former elected representatives. The recent activities of KILA can be summarized as decentralised district level training programmes through district implementing institutions, training of trainers programmes, on-line monitoring of decentralised training, library and information system, certificate course for elected representatives, courses in decentralisation in various regional languages, national level course in decentralisation, international course in decentralized governance and poverty alleviation, international course in decentralisation, urban governance and poverty alleviation, action research programmes, seminars, workshops, conferences and various programmes on decentralisation outside the state. Research activities include replication of best practices, resource mobilization by local governments, training needs assessment for elected representatives and officials and action plan with resource requirements, asset management in local governments and citizen report card. KILA publishes a quarterly English journal named Journal of Local Governance. It has a well established Library and information division. It has books, reports, journals related to local governance and decentralisation. It also provides CD- ROM publications on the theme. It uses digital archiving technologies in sectors related to local governance. KILA collaborates with various national and international agencies like the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), HUDCO/HSMI, National Institute of Urban Affairs and various other government departments and institutes.

Objectives

Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA) has been engaged in the capacity building activities for local governance in Kerala since its establishment in 1990. The institute is supported by the government of Kerala, as its nodal agency for training, research and consultancy for the local self-government institutions. The institute engages in different capacity building activities of the local bodies, both rural and urban. As a training and research institute, KILA is committed to the following objectives.

- To undertake various training programmes for the elected representatives and officials
- To facilitate and strengthen the process of de-centralized planning
- To undertake action-oriented research activities
- To document best practices on local governance for wider dissemination
- To organize seminars, workshops and discussions

Kerala State Planning Board

The Kerala State Planning Board is an advisory board under the Kerala Government. It was constituted in 1967 with the Chief Minister as the Chairman and a non-official as part-time Vice-Chairman. The board assists the State Government in formulating a development plan based on a scientific assessment of the resources available to the state. A comprehensive economic review report of the state is prepared

by the board every year.

The official duties of the Board are performed by eight important divisions. They are:

1. Plan Co-ordination Division
2. Agriculture Division
3. Evaluation Division
4. Social Service Division
5. Industry and Infrastructure Division
6. Decentralized Planning Division
7. Perspective Planning Division
8. Information and Technology Wing

State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD)

SIRD is an autonomous body under the auspices of the Government of Kerala with the objective of developing managerial skills, organisational abilities, leadership qualities and decision making skills among different categories of Government officials, elected representatives of Panchayats and members of non-governmental organisations who are engaged in developmental activities in the State. It is also a major research and consultancy center on various facets of rural development. SIRD is located at Kottarakkara in Kollam district.

Institute of Management in Government (IMG)

The Institute of Management in Government, Thiruvananthapuram is an autonomous body under the auspices of the Government of Kerala with the objective of developing managerial skills, organisational abilities,

leadership qualities and decision making skills among different categories of employees of Government, Private and Public sector. It offers a variety of quality and need based training programmes for Civil Service Personnel at the State and National Level. It also undertakes research and consultancy assignments with social orientation and commitment. The IMG offers quality management and functional programmes for middle level and senior level functionaries (including All India Services). It also offers various training programmes targeted at different levels and for an array of Departments, Public Sector Undertakings and Local Self Governments on IT enabled governance. With hiruvananthapuram as its Head Quarters, IMG has two Regional Centres at Kochi and Kozhikode.

Ombudsman for LSGI

The Institution started functioning in the year 2000 as a 7 member body with a Rtd. Judge of the High Court as its Chairman. The successor government amended the constitution and made it a single member body through an amendment of the Panchayath Raj Act in the year 2001. This is a high power institution which has been given vast powers to check the malpractices in local governments in the discharge of developmental functions. This is a high powered quasi judicial body functioning at the state level with its Head Quarters in the State Capital. Possibly no other State in India has such an institution to oversee the functioning of Local Self Government Institutions. Under the present law, only a former judge of High Court can be appointed as Ombudsman. He can

conduct investigations and enquiries into instances of mal administration, corruption, favouritism, nepotism, lack of integrity, excessive action, inaction, abuse of position etc.

Kerala Local Government Service Delivery Project

To enhance and strengthen the institutional capacity of the local government system in Kerala to deliver services and undertake basic administrative and governance functions more effectively and in a sustainable manner, the Government of Kerala has formulated Kerala Local Government Service Delivery Project (KLGSDP). The Project will benefit all the 978 Grama Panchayats (GPs) and 60 Municipalities in the State. Investments made by the GPs and Municipalities will indirectly benefit the entire population of the State outside the five City Corporation areas. The estimated cost of the Project is Rs 1195.8 crore and the project cycle is four years from 2011 to 2015.

Suchitwa Mission

The Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) in the state was coordinated and monitored by the Kerala Total Sanitation and Health Mission (KTSHM) and their activities were confined to the rural Panchayats. The Clean Kerala Mission (CKM) was enabling the urban and rural local bodies in establishing solid waste management systems. In order to avoid duplication of efforts and tackle the existing and emerging challenges in various sanitation aspects for an overall health and environmental outcome, it was felt necessary to have a professional institution. Accordingly, the above Missions were

integrated as Suchitwa Mission, which started functioning since April 2008. This institutional reform has enabled the up scaling of initiatives envisaged in the Malinya Mukta Keralam Action Plan. The Mission is taking steps to strengthen its technical capabilities in various aspects of sanitation.

Non Governmental Organisations

There are a host of NGOs involved in Panchayati Raj processes. Their involvement ranges from organizing training programmes for the elected representatives and the citizens, advocacy initiatives, research and studies and providing technical support to local governments.

In conclusion, decentralisation envisaged in the system of Panchayati Raj makes possible the extension of democracy to the grassroots level and also serves as a charter for rural government. With the introduction of the Panchayati Raj system, the pattern of non-official and official relationship is regarded as the most sensitive and potentially explosive problem area.

The Gandhian vision of Gram Swaraj and self-governance of villages significantly influenced the nationalist movement and laid the intellectual foundation of Panchayati Raj system in the country. Strengthening village panchayats and ensuring people's participation in development planning and local governance became one of the ideals enshrined in the constitution of independent India. The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments paved the way for democratic decentralization and local governments attained constitutional

entity. The initiative for decentralization and strengthening local governance in Kerala attained national and international recognition and Kerala became one of the promising democratic decentralization models in the developing societies of the world. The policy initiatives taken in Kerala during the last two decades significantly transformed the development planning process and initiated new democratic practices in local governance and development.

The 73d Constitution Amendment was a logical step towards integration of the concept of people's participation and taking democracy closest to the people. Democratic decentralisation was accepted as key to the planning process in Kerala. Rural development programmes started in the ninth plan have reckoned with this reality and have made mandatory provisions that the rural local and participatory bodies should play the key role in planning, implementation and beneficiary selection. It may also be noted that the nineties witnessed a general trend in favour of greater decentralisation all over the world. The institution like gram sabha would herald a new beginning in the history of decentralization in the country.

Until 1995, however, Kerala had only a single tier Village Panchayat and lagged behind most other states in the implementation of Panchayati Raj. In August 1996, the Kerala State Planning Board was entrusted with the task of spearheading a 'campaign' for decentralised planning, under the leadership of the Ministry of Local Self Governments. The 'campaign' was aimed at making the Ninth Five-Year Plan of the State of Kerala a 'people's plan'. The 'campaign' hoped

that as the plan process moved forward, the institutional, legal and procedural bottlenecks to effective decentralization of power would be removed as and when they arise. The Sen Committee designed the institutionalisation of the decentralisation process in the State. Guided by eight principles of decentralisation - autonomy, subsidiarity, role clarity, complementarity, uniformity, people's participation, accountability and transparency, the Committee suggested clause by clause amendments for the existing laws, a scheme for redeployment of the staff, a system for improving the auditing of the accounts of local bodies and guidelines for revision of rules.

PEOPLE'S PLANNING PROGRAMMES- CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

GRAMA SABHA

'Gram Sabha' means a body consisting of persons registered in the electoral rolls relating to a village comprised within the area of Panchayat at the village level. This was a model for democracy at the grass roots based on direct participation by the people. Democracy has been defined as, 'a government where everybody has a say'. A democratic administration by a Panchayat cannot be a good substitute for it. The extension of the process of democracy to the people in the real sense, should mean that the Panchayat function as the executive body to give concrete shape to the wishes and aspirations of the village community as represented by the Gramsabha. Gram Sabha provides an institutional basis to popular participation. It provides a base for the three-tier

structure of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. To Jayaprakash Narayan, the *sarvodaya* thinker, Gram Sabha signifies village democracy. To him representative Government from the village to Delhi was no good substitute for direct democracy. Gram Sabha, being a primary body would be a face to face organ of direct democracy, not made up of representatives but comprising all adult residents. The primary body of people's democracy has to be an active body, meeting regularly, discussing common problems, and evolving cooperative and collective forms of action to manage their affairs. Gram Sabhas no doubt could be used as a centre for voter's education and to educate the people. Gram Sabha is a basic tier to popularize development programmes. The Gram Sabha would establish an active dialogue between the village people and their elected leaders at the village Panchayat level regarding development programmes to be undertaken.

A meeting of the Gram Sabha will be presided over by the Chairperson (Pradhan/Sarpanch/ President) or in his absence Vicechairperson of the Gram Panchayat. The secretary of the Gram Panchayat will act as secretary of the Gram Sabha. He will prepare the resolutions and place them before the Gram Panchayat meeting for follow-up. A Gram Sabha may exercise such powers and perform such functions at the village level as the legislature of a state may by law provide. There is diversity of provisions with regard to the functions of the Gram Sabha, though there are some common features in the Acts of most of the states. After the enforcement of the Kerala Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 in many Panchayats, a notable

feature is the formation of Ayalkkootom, - neighborhood groups - comprising 20 to 50 houses of a particular locality, which meet frequently and deliberate on the plan schemes. Many Panchayat members find neighborhood groups as a training ground for Gram Sabha. It is also seen that in some Panchayats or wards where they had experience of Ayalkkootom, the attendance in the Grama Sabha was good.

The essence of Gram Sabha lies in the regeneration of the village community. The Gram Sabha as an institution, and as envisaged, will have to deal not only with the problems of a particular group or segment, but with those of the village community as a whole. There have been instances of Panchayat members being beaten up in the Gram Sabhas in Kerala. Unable to bear the inordinate criticism and the unparliamentary behaviour from the male participants, some women members had literally wept in full view of public. It is the Gram Sabha which has the power to identify beneficiaries. The selection of beneficiaries should follow a transparent procedure any exercise of discretion or arbitrariness is The idea of a powerful Gram Sabha got more currency after the Amendment to the constitution and particularly after extension of this to the fifth Scheduled Areas by means of Panchayat (Extension of the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996.

Kudumbashree

Kudumbashree is the poverty eradication and women empowerment programme implemented by the State Poverty Eradication Mission (SPEM) of the Government of Kerala. The name Kudumbashree in Malayalam language means

‘prosperity of the family’. The name represents ‘Kudumbashree Mission’ or SPEM as well as the Kudumbashree Community Network. What is commonly referred to as ‘Kudumbashree’ could mean either the Kudumbashree Community Network, or the Kudumbashree Mission, or both.

Kudumbashree was launched in 1998 as a community network that would work in tandem with local self governments for poverty eradication and woman empowerment. Kudumbashree was set up in 1997 following the recommendations of a three member Task Force appointed by the State government. Its formation was in the context of the devolution of powers to the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Kerala, and the Peoples’ Plan Campaign, which attempted to draw up the Ninth Plan of the local governments from below through the PRIs.

Kudumbashree has a three-tier structure for its women community network, with Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs) at the lowest level, Area Development Societies (ADS) at the middle level, and Community Development Societies (CDS) at the local government level. The community structure that Kudumbashree accepted is the one that evolved from the experiments in Alappuzha Municipality and Malappuram in early 1990s.

Kudumbashree community network was extended to cover the entire State in three phases during 2000-2002. The Kudumbashree network by 15th March 2017 had 2,77,175 NHGs affiliated to 19,854 ADSs and 1073 CDSs with a total

membership of 43,06,976 women. Kudumbashree membership is open to all adult women, limited to one membership per family. In 2011, the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India recognised Kudumbashree as the State Rural Livelihoods Mission (SRLM) under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM).

Kudumbashree Community Network

Kudumbashree is essentially a community network that covers the entire State of Kerala. It consists of a three tier structure with Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs) as primary level units, Area Development Societies (ADS) at the ward level, and Community Development Societies (CDS) at the local government level. It is arguably one of the largest women's networks in the world. While the community network is formed around the central themes of poverty eradication and women empowerment, its main features include democratic leadership, and support structures formed from the 'Kudumbashree family'.

History and Evolution

Kudumbashree means different things to different people. For some, it is the poverty eradication project of the State government of Kerala. Some others view it as an exclusive domain of women engaged in social work. Yet in some others, the term Kudumbashree evokes the image of the women in uniform who come to collect waste from their door steps.

For several people, Kudumbashree is like a blessing; a

God-send. It appears as food to the hungry, as medicine to the sick, as a helping hand to the ailing. Sections of men also see Kudumbashree as an unwanted platform that made women arrogant. There are politicians who think Kudumbashree as a channel to reach the poor; there are also politicians who see Kudumbashree as a hindrance to decision-making process. Certain others see it as a platform from where women enter politics.

The poverty eradication mission is called Kudumbashree. In a village setting, a NHG is called Kudumbashree. The CDS is called Kudumbashree. CDS chairperson is referred to as Kudumbashree chairperson. Women believe that it is Kudumbashree that supplies nutrimix to Anganawadis. If all of these is Kudumbashree, then, what is its history? How did it evolve? What we are trying to understand is how Kudumbashree – the community network of women and the Mission that supports it – came into being. Tracing it would amount to placing it in context, and examining the experiments and experiences from which the idea called Kudumbashree evolved.

Evolution of the Kudumbashree Idea

Set in the context of the People's Plan Movement which was a state strategy for mass mobilisation for bottom-up planning in the wake of the decentralisation of powers, Kudumbashree has been an outcome of its specific context. From the perspective of a government programme, Kudumbashree was the extension of the CDS experiments in Alappuzha and Malappuram. At the same time, the CDS

initiatives themselves had drawn lessons and strategies from the NABARD led initiative of SHG Bank Linkage Programme. As an idea, its base has been neighbourhood groups (NHGs); the NHG idea had its own history within the State's civil society domain.

The NHG idea stayed in contrast with the SHG concept that had been promoted in many countries as well as in several States of India. The NHGs here were to be forums for planning and development action too. The concept of such NHGs too has peculiar roots in Kerala's development history. And the very concept of forming groups around neighbourhoods had been ingrained in traditional forms of community organisation in the state. In sum, the Kudumbashree idea appears to have evolved through the community mobilisation experiments in Alappuzha and Malappuram, also drawing in from the various civil society initiatives in community mobilisation for different purposes. The Kerala CDS model, as recognised widely, evolved from the Alappuzha and Malappuram experiments. However, these initiatives themselves were informed by the experiences of certain traditional community organisations and practices.

As pointed out by Rajeev Sadanandan, who was the district collector at Malappuram during the experiment there, women in NHGs fixed 2 percent interest rate on the credit availed from the groups based on their experience in traditional organisations. Eventually it was the decentralisation of powers to PRIs and the People's Plan Campaign set the stage for Kudumbashree's formation.

Kudumbashree was conceived as a joint programme of the Government of Kerala and NABARD implemented through Community Development Societies (CDSs) of Poor Women, serving as the community wing of Local Governments. Kudumbashree is formally registered as the "State Poverty Eradication Mission" (SPEM), a society registered under the Travancore Kochi Literary, Scientific and Charitable Societies Act 1955. It has a Governing Body chaired by the state minister of LSG and an Executive Committee chaired by Principal Secretary, Department of Local Self Government. Governance of the Mission is done by the Governing Body and Executive Committee. The Governing Body takes policy level decisions and reviews performance of the Mission on a regular basis. While the executive directions for scheme formulation and execution are taken in the Executive Committee. The Mission has a State Mission Office located at Thiruvananthapuram and 14 District Mission Teams, each located at the district headquarters. This official structure supports and facilitates the activities of the community network across the state.

Kudumbashree, the Kerala State poverty eradication mission has started working since 1998 and addressing the three levels of empowerment of women in the states – Economic Empowerment, Social Empowerment and Women's empowerment. Kudumbashree is essentially a community network of Neighborhood Groups and its federations that covers the entire State of Kerala. It consists of a three-tier structure with Neighborhood Groups (NHGs) as primary level

units, Area Development Societies (ADS) at the ward level, and Community Development Societies (CDS) at the local government level. Kudumbashree membership is open to all adult women, limited to one membership per family.

Women play a vital role in the development and sustenance of society at large. On account of the traditional patriarchy followed since time immemorial, often their contribution is not accounted and valued. With the changing times, the status of women both in the oriental world as well as in the occidental world has changed. Along with equality, and empowerment, today's woman has also to tackle new challenges and shoulder responsibilities manifold specifically in the context of developing nations. Unlike other poverty's alleviation programmes, Kudumbashree has a multi-pronged design and strategies that empower women in socially, economically and politically. Further, the three-tier federated community structure adds to its authenticity, accountability and commitment towards the poor and marginalized. Kudumbashree recognizes that capacitating women to understand and exercise their rights is a basic requirement for the success and sustainability of any poverty eradication programme. Kudumbashree has attempted to bring every poor woman in the state to federations of NHGs and capacitate them to address the issues of women by enhancing or improving female work participation, health and nutritional status, participation in decision making, local governance and their role in planning in addition to make them as local entrepreneurs for finding their livelihoods.

Kudumbashree is further play an active role in bringing women in to local governance. The participation of Kudumbashree members in Gram Sabhas and development works of GPs providing them the space for involving in local governance. This participation is giving opportunity for them to involve as a community interface for local economic development lead by GPs in the areas of social infrastructure development, welfare programmes based on rights and entitlements, employment generation, from food security, health insurance, housing, enterprise development, MGNREGS and Jagratha Samiti for enduring the safety and protection of women. Convergence with Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) has been one of the central themes within the Kudumbashree idea. Convergence means seamless working together of the Kudumbashree and the PRIs; it includes institutional and programmatic convergence as well as sharing of resources.

Self help Group

A self-help group (SHG) is a village-based financial intermediary usually composed of between 10-20 local women. Most self-help groups are located in India, though SHGs can also be found in other countries, especially in South Asia and Southeast Asia.

Members make small regular savings contributions over a few months until there is enough capital in the group to begin lending. Funds may then be lent back to the members or to others in the village for any purpose. In India, many SHGs are 'linked' to banks for the delivery of microcredit.

SHGs are member-based microfinance intermediaries inspired by external technical support that lie between informal financial market actors like moneylenders, collectors, and ROSCAs on the one hand, and formal actors like microfinance institutions and banks on the other. The group members use collective wisdom and peer pressure to ensure proper end-use of credit and timely repayment. This system eliminates the need for collateral and is closely related to that of solidarity lending, widely used by microfinance institutions. To make the book-keeping simple enough to be handled by the members, flat interest rates are used for most loan calculations.

Goals

Self-help groups are started by non-profit organizations (NGOs) that generally have broad anti-poverty agendas. Self-help groups are seen as instruments for a variety of goals including empowering women, developing leadership abilities among poor people, increasing school enrolments, and improving nutrition and the use of birth control. Financial intermediation is generally seen more as an entry point to these other goals, rather than as a primary objective. This can hinder their development as sources of village capital, as well as their efforts to aggregate locally controlled pools of capital through federation, as was historically accomplished by credit unions.

Advantages of financing through SHGs

An economically poor individual gains strength as part of a group. Besides, financing through SHGs reduces

transaction costs for both lenders and borrowers. While lenders have to handle only a single SHG account instead of a large number of small-sized individual accounts, borrowers as part of an SHG cut down expenses on travel (to & from the branch and other places) for completing paper work and on the loss of workdays in canvassing for loans

The march of Kerala's neighbourhood network 'Kudumbashree' in the last 12 years is an inspiring story of social and economic empowerment of Indian women. The self-help chain, started on a modest scale in 1998, has grown over the period as one of the mighty women's movements in Asia with a full-time membership of 3.7 million, engaged in an array of gainful activities. It was initially conceived as a community based women oriented initiative with Neighbourhood Groups (NHG) as its base.

'Kudumbashree' has since then emerged as the driving force for most of the community activities at the grassroots in Kerala, where 40 per cent of plan funds are spent through the local self-government (LSG) institutions. Self-employment and poverty eradication were set as the goals of 'Kudumbashree' when it was launched. Since then it has been able to elevate the role of women in society and made them the controllers and managers of money in their family.

Self Help Group (SHG) is a homogeneous group of rural poor voluntarily formed to save small amounts out of their earnings which forms all the members and agreed upon by all to form a common fund corpus to lend to its members to meet the emerging credit needs. The concept of SHG comes from the

Grameen Bank of Bangladesh founded by noted economist Mohammad Yunus. It provides large scale micro finance compared to all other banks in Bangladesh.

Leaving the traditional line of assistance to the weaker sections of the society by bank linkage programs, the SHGs have taken up activities like agro processing, tissue culture and hardening units, cultivation of ornamental plants and bee keeping. By providing training to farmers in emerging fields of crop science, the SHGs also help in capacity building of the weaker sections.

Women Empowerment through SHGs Women can form Self Help Groups, voluntarily for solving their common problems, through self-help and mutual help. SHGs here in India provide forums for women, especially from the poorer sections of society, to develop space and support to each other. SHGs provide savings mechanisms especially to suit the needs of the members. It also provides a cost effective delivery mechanism for small credits to its members. SHGs with bank linkage are formed catering to the poorer women sections of society. But this does not mean that only poorer women can develop SHGs. SHGs can be formed by poorer women alone or with the mixing up of women from upper strata of society who can provide the needed assistance. The Self Help Groups (SHGs) Guiding Principle stresses on organizing the rural poor especially women, into small groups through a process of social mobilization, training and providing bank credit and government subsidy. The main objective of SHG concept in India is to improve the economic development of women and

create facilitating environment for their social transformation in the lift of gender discrimination in work and the household. In India, SHGs are doing their best for the economic growth of the country.

In Kerala, there are a number of SHGs working, which include registered ones as well as unregistered ones. SHGs here work as channels for ensuring micro finance assistance to the poorer groups of the state for the rural development and at the same time it act as stimulants ensuring women empowerment in the state. The women of the state are directed through SHGs with regard to the usage of their smaller savings. The SHGs in Kerala though concentrate mainly on rural women; the basic aim is to make use of the talents and capabilities of women, completely, and to benefit their homes and indirectly the whole society. SHGs bring together those women category that have limited financial resource s but abundant capabilities and make optimum use of them. Some of the activities/businesses of SHGs in Kerala include, tailoring, pickle making, garbage removal, vermin compost manufacturing, broom stick making, jewelry making, preparation of snacks, bamboo products’ design and manufacturing, etc. Many SHGs now even do IT businesses as well. In Kerala, “Kudumbasree” is the main SHG or Neighbourhood group Project, which means prosperity of the family, is the name of the women oriented, community based, State Poverty Eradication Mission of Government of Kerala. The mission aims at the empowerment of women, through forming self-help groups and encouraging their entrepreneurial

or other wide range of activities. The purpose of the mission is to ensure that the women should no longer remain as passive recipients of public assistance, but active leaders in women involved development initiatives.

Challenges and Prospects

The stressed 'bargaining' by organising homogenous interest groups such as workers, government employees, farmers, castes and communities in hierarchical organisations. The bargaining model found favour with political parties, irrespective of their hue and colour. The tension between these two paradigms is now manifest in the controversies surrounding the decentralisation process.

Developmentalism is in sharp contrast to the dominant paradigm of development politics. The former stressed people's participation, awareness creation, popularisation, sensitising structures of government to people's needs, and the need to debate alternatives to existing models of development. The issues it took up were cross-cutting, broad-based and relevant to the common people. The perennial issue of inefficiency and corruption was a major one. Access to and enhancing the quality of education and health care were two other common concerns, as was the adverse impact of environmental degradation. While women's issues were highlighted, it is 'women's groups' which were, and still are, in the forefront of this agenda. People's participation was sought to be advanced through taking up local level development work. Instances of corruption and favouritism were leveled against many panchayats. The complaint was that

the coalition partners were not being given their share.

Hierarchical organisations such as employees associations, trade unions, students organisations and the cooperative bodies have not been enthused to support and strengthen the decentralisation process. Many organisations, especially the associations of government employees, are openly antagonistic, as revealed in their opposition to several attempts to deploy departmental staff to various tiers of panchayat raj. The peoples' planning variant of decentralisation has also brought into the open the tension between the role of voluntary organisations and the political parties and their affiliate organisations such as trade unions.

MODULE IV

PROBLEMS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

LAND REFORMS - INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

The Kerala's land reform movement enables the Kudikidappukaran. This term refers to a person "who does not have an estate or any land exceeding five cents in value, and who has been allowed to use and occupy a small portion of land as his shelter by the lawful owner of the land, as owner or as tenant, with or without an obligation to pay rent". The aftermath of land reform was not only for the landless and the poor to have a new piece of land to cultivate or an increase in their family income but also to acquire the ownership right of the farmstead where they have been living on for a long time. This, to a great extent, provided some relief to the poor peasants. It should be reckoned that the reform measures had dismantled the fortress between different economic classes and minimised the caste inequality in Kerala society. To a great extent, landlordism and the janmi system had been removed, and ownership of land holdings had been extended to the majority.

It also provided protection to those who leased land from eviction and provided more land for building of housing for thousands of families. Land reform also included social security schemes for workers in the agricultural sector. The Kudikidappukars could now possess land ownership which

was a unique feature of land reform in the Kerala state. The Kudikidappukars and their families were free from fear and anxiety. It also abolished bonded labour system in land. The proportion of land owners who own fewer than 5 acres increased, whereas the percentage of owners of bigger land areas (more than 5 acres) reduced. Land is the essential and often only productive asset of poor people.

The agrarian system just prior to initiation of land reforms in the state had the following characteristics:

- There was a highly skewed distribution of land in support of the rich and powerful landowners (e.g. the Brahmin and the Nair) who cultivated their land with the help of tenants;
- There were a large number of landless agrarian households; and
- There were small, poor and powerless farmers who were allotted only small pieces of land for making their living.

HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK OF LAND REFORM

Kerala comprises of the erstwhile princely states of Travancore and Cochin and the Malabar district of the former Madras Presidency. The economy and society of the Sangham period characterised by subsistence production based on redistribution and reciprocity and co-operative labour but these were gradually transformed into a society based on Brahmin landed households and then into a temple centred one.

By the 11th century, Kerala came to be known as a Brahmin country. The Brahmin immigrants organised themselves into sixty four groups associated with old chieftaincies scattered all over the region. They began acquiring land for building temples. Gradually they were able to convert these institutions into the nerve centres of social and political life in Kerala. They introduced 'Chathurvamya' (four caste system) into the region and encouraged the spread of joint family system among them. In order to preserve their property rights they introduced non-partible matrilineal joint family system among the Nayers while they themselves practised the non-patrilineal joint family system. They also gave the ruling chieftains the status of Kshatriyas, the warrior class (Nayers) who protected the system was given only a low caste status and all others were reduced to the status of social untouchables.

The Brahmins seem to have been able to acquire land for temples and through the temples, for themselves. Land was either gradually transferred or taken away by the chieftains. Some of the Nayers who helped to implement this transfer also acquired land in this process. When the control of land was transferred to chieftains under coercion, the cultivators were given to understand that they were to do it as a token of allegiance or respect. "That is how one of the important tenures of Kerala namely '*Kanom*' originated. The beginning of *Kanom* could be traced to *Kanikkar* that is the respect shown to superiors by subordinates. The new owners felt free to confer *Kanom* rights over such lands to anyone

they liked. The main beneficiaries were Nayers in the south and Nambiaris in the north. These people considered cultivation beneath their status.

Therefore the whole land under their control was leased on '*pattom*' and other inferior kinds of tenure to the lower communities like Christians and Ezhavas in the south and Muslims and Theeyas in the north. In the medieval Kerala, the basic organisation of land was as follows. Temples and Brahmins together with Natuvazhies (chieftains) held most of the available lands on permanent hereditary rights (janmom) and such lands were classified as Devaswom~B, rahmaswom and Cerikkal /Pandaravaka/Circar lands. These lands were leased out for cultivation. Leaseholders paid a share of the produce to the Janmi. The right of the Janmi over the land was expressed by 'Kiliyakkam' (traditionally accepted norms of the region) and obligations of the tenants were determined by custom/local 'Maryadai'. Even the Brahmins could exercise control over land rights only within the limits set by local 'Maryadai'.

This new system of land relationship was controlled by status rather than contract. Though all-important rights connected with the land were: vested in the hands of the higher castes, they never asserted their rights in a way that infringed on the rights of the inferior leaseholders. The 'Kanamdars' were required to pay only a nominal share of the produce: to the Janmies and so also inferior tenants, a very small rent to the 'kanom holders. Therefore the cultivators who were deprived of their landed properties did not feel the full

significance of the change till the coming of the British.

By the 17th century changes in the agrarian economy were taking place within the context of overseas trade. Cultivation was extended to forest and uncultivated areas. There were frequent quarrels and clashes among different chieftains, which negatively affected production and disrupted the payment of customary dues. Increased flow of cash from overseas trade added to the growth of land mortgages (otti), Kanom etc. New intermediaries emerged and the tenurial relations began to be redefined. The system of 'patlom -- panayam' (tenure otti) became popular in the place of simple pattom system. New forms of land tenure like 'kuzhikanom' evolved. The *kanom* holders subleased their lands. The customary owners like the temples, Brahmins and rulers held janmom rights and the intermediaries acquired controlling rights. However janmom rights meant only customary interest on land and never meant absolute rights on the holder of janmom. Land was never treated as a private property of an individual prior to British period.

When the British supremacy was established in Malabar as elsewhere in Kerala, land relations based on caste system were almost well entrenched. The English East India Company annexed Malabar in 1792. Prior to that the company had entered into treaties with Travancore in 1788 and Cochin in 1791. On northern regions the company imposed tax heavily unlike on the south. Travancore with the help of the East India Company succeeded in uniting all the neighbouring principalities south of Cochin and west of the mountain. Thus

it has become the largest of the three political units. Most of the land conquered by the Travancore Raja was annexed by the State and converted it to the state owned 'circar lands' or 'pandaravaka' and in due course, the state became the largest 'janmi' by the end of the 18th century. Most of the lands of the circar were leased out on 'pandaravaka pattom' and 'pandaravaka otti'. The land so acquired for cultivation by the tenants had to pay only the land revenue assessment. They also enjoyed occupancy rights on the land. The Travancore rulers gave active encouragement to cultivators of wasteland owned by the state through exemption and concessions. The class of circar tenants in Travancore was gradually increasing in number as population increased. However, the position of the tenants of private janmis was more or less oppressive.

As the Travancore monarchy was more powerful and the state the largest owner of land, the state was able to follow a policy of curbing the landlords favouring the cultivators. The raja's progressive and enlightened policy together with its position as the largest owner of land made attempts in land reforms more successful and less arduous. To bring further increase in the area under cultivation by ploughing marginal lands and to mitigate the evils arising from the powers enjoyed by private janmis 'Pattom Proclamation' was issued on 2nd June, 1865. It conferred ownership title to all the tenants of pandaravaka land. (subject to the due payment of land revenue) and made land a heritable, saleable and mortgageable commodity.

This had broad based the peasant proprietorship in

Travancore. Conferring absolute ownership on the tenant of circar land was "a measure comparable in purpose, comprehensiveness and radicalism to any measure undertaken since then in India. And further this had the effect of diffusing even more widely the ownership of land in this region to inferior castes. The new land owning class, in particular, Christians took initiative in organising indigenous credit institutions such as 'chitties' and 'kuries' and later banking institutions on modern lines. These institutions granted loans against the security of land and therefore the capitalist development was furthered in Travancore. This, in turn, facilitated further growth of agricultural and non-agricultural activities. Though, land reforms in Travancore created a broad base of peasant proprietorship, leasing and subleasing developed in this area.

The proclamation of 1885 provided security to the tenants of janmom lands and the Janmi Kudiyan Regulation Act of 1896 provided security of tenure to the tenants of private lands. In consequence by the beginning of 20th century 75 per cent of the farmers had their own land in Travancore. And by 1880 there were only 44 pure janmis in Travancore. Later, Travancore promulgated the Nayar Regulation Act of 1925, which permitted partition of joint families into different sub families called 'thaivazhees'. This was followed by a number of acts, in permitting the Ezhavas, Vellalas and Malayalam Brahmins to partition the property of their joint families. These measures have a crucial role in the evolution of the land as a property or commodity in the modern sense.

Thus the transition from the multiple hierarchical, conditional rights to hold land to absolute unconditional ownership though began by the 'Pattom Proclamation' of 1865, it was complete only by the 1930s with the break up of the joint families. These measures brought a significant change in the capital investment on land and encouraged commercial cultivation that resulted in phenomenal increase in the area undercultivation and also in the sale and diffusion of land in Travancore. However, the tenure conditions in the northern regions were not conducive for the expansion of cultivation as obtained in Travancore. But in Cochin, adjacent state to the north of Travancore, it was more favourable than that in Malabar. The tenants in Cochin were in a deplorable condition as 60 per cent of the land was under janmis and the state followed a policy of non-intervention in the affairs of the janmis, the holders of 'circar' land also had no ownership rights. The tenants of 'janmom' lands (puravaka) were also subject to arbitrary eviction. Though the Royal Edict of 1863 prevented arbitrary eviction, the tenants had to face eviction after 12 years. However the land revenue settlement of 1899 - 1905 provided some relief to the 'pandaravaka' tenants by conferring ownership rights. Later in 1909 by a Devaswom Proclamation provided security of tenure to another 5 per cent of the total occupied area under obligation to pay a higher rate of land revenue than on 'circar' lands. However the landlord tenants relationships in the 'janmom' land was left uncontrolled. Some important legislations achieved in first half of 20th century in the other two regions with regard to tenancy reform. They were the Cochin Tenancy Act of 1914,

The Cochin Tenancy Act of 1938, The Cochin Verupattomdans Act of 1943 and The Devaswom Verumpattom Proclamation in 1943. Despite all these there were sufficient lacunae in these legislations for evasion. Absentee landlordism continued to prevail in extreme form as jannzom lands. Tenancies at will with the characteristics of sharecropping and mortgaging became predominant in Cochin.

The British land policy in Malabar was faulty right from the beginning of their origin. In Malabar with the establishment of colonial rule, the British pursued a vigorous policy of maximising land revenue by creating a feudal class as their agents. The bulk of the cultivators was 'verumpattomdars' and reduced to mere tenants at will and 'kanamdars' were treated as mortgagers. Thus the British had done a great injustice to the cultivating tenants. However tenancy reforms in Malabar had undergone some changes in favour of the tenants in the latter half of the 19th century. The first such reform was in Malabar Compensation and Tenants Improvement Act of 1887. But the Act and its modifications in 1900 could not limit the arbitrary exercise of power of the landlords. Eviction continued and they (the landlords) manipulated the devices like '*melcharthu*' (overlease) and '*polichezhuthu*' to exploit the tenancy. The end result was, Malabar turned out to be the most oppressive and rack-rented region on the face of the earth. The agrarian discontent fanned by fanatic and communal feelings culminated in the Revolt of 1921 in what is called 'Mappilah Rebellion'. The period

between 1920-1930 was an active mobilisation phase of the tenants resulting in the passing of the Malabar Tenancy Act, 1929. The Act conferred fixity of tenure and fair-rent on all cultivating 'verumpattomdars'. The main beneficiaries of the Act were 'kanom ' tenants and did not provide security of tenure to inferior tenants. Under the leadership of Mannath Krishnan Nair, K.P.Rarnan Menon, G. Sankaran Nair and others, a tenancy movement began during the late 1920s. As a result, the government passed the Malabar Tenancy Act in 1930. After the foundation of Indian National Congress in 1886 it played a vital role in Malabar. The district committee of Malabar was formed in 1908 with K.P. Kesava Menon as the secretary, along with the Home Rule League of Dr. Annie Beasant.

There were some important differences in the agrarian structure in the three different regions prior to independence. In the southern most part of the region the position of the state being the largest owner of land made attempts in land reforms less arduous and more effective. It conferred ownership rights to all the tenants of state land as far back as 1865. Land was made heritable, saleable and a mortgageable commodity. This has resulted in the land transaction on a substantial scale. The breaking up of the joint family system through the Nayar Regulation Act of 1930 facilitated such transactions. The ownership of land got diffused among the various castes. The state also encouraged the effective cultivation and occupation of wastelands and forestlands, including shallow areas of the backwaters. Capitalist form of production intruded into

agriculture in Travancore.

In sharp contrast is the Malabar District, which came under direct British governance where most of the lands were in the hands of private janmis. Attempts at tenancy reforms, therefore were more arduous and less effective. Oppressive land tenure continued as late as the 1930s. Though the administration encouraged the occupation of waste and forestland the result was not encouraging as in Travancore since most of the land was in private hands. Malabar lagged behind Travancore and Cochin with respect to economic development. In regard to the question of tenancy and related problems, Cochin occupied an intermediate position between Travancore and the Malabar. Malabar was the region where the rate of economic development was the lowest and the land tenure was identified as the most important factor. In short thanks to tenurial changes that had taken place in different times, Travancore was transformed to a region of peasant proprietors, Cochin to a tract of peasant proprietors - cum - absentee landlords and Malabar to an almost absentee landlord tract.

Land Reform Process in Kerala

Kerala is hailed as the only state in India that has legislated and implemented land reforms of a radical nature. Land reform attempts in Kerala are believed to have been more far-reaching and effective than elsewhere in India though carried out within the same administrative and political framework as in the rest of the country. After the launching of Five Year Plans, land reforms have accorded a pivotal place in

its programme for the economic development of the country. The planning commission formulated a broad approach to land reform as a part of the first and second Five Year Plans to be implemented by the states concerned. The major objectives were: abolition of intermediaries (landlordism), tenancy reforms and the imposition of ceilings on ownership and its redistribution and supplementary objectives like consolidation of holdings and co-operative reorganization of the agrarian economy.

After the termination of the British rule, princely states of Travancore in the south and Cochin in the middle merged into one composite political unit in 1949 and later with some territorial adjustments, integrated with the Malabar district of Madras Presidency in the north to form the Kerala state. The need for ceiling on holdings in these regions was recognised even before the Planning Commission recognized it. In 1954 a Ministry headed by the Praja Socialist Party in the Travancore - Cochin State introduced a bill limiting the extent of existing as well as future holdings. This bill was not enacted into law as the ministry had to resign mainly on this issue.

The first general election held after the formation of the state of Kerala brought the Communist Party of India to power. Land reforms became the centrepiece of the programme for the social and economic transformation in the state. The first legislative measure, as a stopgap one, immediately after assuming power was to stay the eviction of tenants by the landlords. In addition to tenants and sub-tenants proper, hutment dwellers (kudikidappukars) that did not have the legal

status of tenants hitherto were brought into the jurisdiction of this legislation. This ad hoc measure was followed by a comprehensive set of proposals embodied in the Kerala Agrarian Relations Bill introduced towards the end of 1957 (December) and passed on June 10, 1959.

It sought to give fixity of tenure to all tenants including hutment dwellers, 'varamdars' (share croppers) and even fugitive cultivators. Even tenants evicted after 1956 were entitled to have their position retained. Fair rents were laid down: tenants were given the right to purchase ownership rights (of course subject to ceiling) by paying compensation - not more than sixteen times of the fair rent fixed: ceilings were fixed (22.5 acres of single crop land, 30 acres for dry land, 15 acres for garden land that a family unit can hold). However, small owners were protected with less than 5 acres. They could resume ownership from tenants by evicting them for self-cultivation. Further, land held by plantation or cashew estates and by religious and charitable institutions was given exemption from ceiling provisions. Land Boards were constituted for the speedy implementation.

Such exemptions and dilutions made the proposed reform of agrarian relations in effect a programme of reforms for tenancy with a view to its abolition. The rest of the agrarian structure was to be left largely untouched. Even in the measures envisaged for tenancy reform there were compromises and dilutions. Tenants of landowners having not more than 5 acres were denied of the opportunity to acquire ownership right.

After the dismissal of the first communist government, a new coalition government headed by the Congress party came into power. Though the government introduced a new land reform bill it was without any drastic change in the provisions of the earlier bill. Kerala Agrarian Relations Act (IW) was accordingly passed in 1960. It introduced new exemptions regarding land transfers, ceilings and evictions. But even the enactment did not deliver any good as the High Court of Kerala declared it ultra vires of the constitution of India in 1963. The defunct Act was then replaced by a fresh one viz, the Kerala Land Reforms Act of 1963 after its inclusion in the Ninth Schedule of the constitution. It was placed outside the purview of the courts. The Act came into force soon as it was free from legal challenges.

However, political instability set in soon after the Act came into force. Hence implementation, largely left to the bureaucracy without any political direction, turned out to be very slow. Meanwhile land transfers were taking place on a substantial scale by transfer of ownership through sale, partition and gift, and transfer of possession by means of mortgage, sub-leasing, surrender of leased land etc. This was made possible since the Act gave no protection from eviction with retrospective effect between the period of the Act of 1963 and its coming into force in 1964 April.

A new government led by the CPI(M) came into power in 1967. It immediately introduced legislation to restore tenants evicted after 1964 as well as to prevent future evictions and retained, to a large extent, the original provisions of the

1959 bill. It ensured fixity of tenure to hutment dwellers and the right to purchase land up to one tenth of an acre at a nominal prices. The amended Act (Kerala Land Reforms Amended Act - KLRAA 1969) is the land reform law that has been in force since then. The amended Act vested ownership in the government, of all lands held by the tenants. Tenants became de facto owners of the land they held and denied the option to settle the issue with the owners in any form; burden of the proof of tenancy shifted from the tenant to the landlord; small owners' (with less than 5 acres) right to resume the land was retained and lowered ceilings on ownership holdings subject to a maximum of 20 acres to a family". Exemption from the ceiling remained but was reduced. Though plantations remained exempt, definition of the plantation was Narrowed

From 1970, peasant unions and other organisations of the CPI(M), which was no longer in power, began a state wide intensive campaign to ensure that the land reforms were implemented. Because of the government failure to implement ceiling provisions, the CPI(M) started 'excess land agitation' in 1972.

Impact of Land reforms Kerala has been way ahead of the rest of the country in conferring ownership right on all tenants¹⁹. The thoroughness and speed with which landlordism has been abolished with little aggregate slippage has no parallel elsewhere in India. The abolition of a rentier class who enjoyed the highest rank in social status in a caste ridden society and 3,00,000 kudikidappukars, a sizeable portion among them, aggreestic slaves or attached labourers got 1/10 of

an acre and local habitation and an address of their own heralded a new era of relations of production.

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The land reforms both in the pre- and post-independence periods have had a significant role in the changes in land relations. Institutional reforms such as land reforms gave access to land for all irrespective of the caste status. The land reforms since the beginning of the 20th century created a class of small landowners, especially among the intermediaries who combined agriculture with nonagricultural occupations. The cultivating tenants per se and agricultural labourers got ownership rights only in the land reforms of the post-independent period. The land reforms in the post-independence period were largely the culmination of a series of reforms enunciated by the monarchy in different regions at different points of time.

The land revenue settlement (1898-1905) had given full ownership rights to all Sirkar tenants in Cochin state. The Cochin Tenancy Act of 1915 and 1938 gave fixity to Kanom tenure and the Verumpattom Act of 1943 provided fixity to Verumpattom tenure to the tenants of the private landlords in the princely state. After the integration of Travancore and Cochin in 1949, several acts were enacted to bring in uniformity in laws in the two regions. However, it was the Kerala Land Reforms Act of 1969 that has made drastic changes to the legislation in the post-independence period and is the most radical of any land legislation in India.

The tenancy laws in the beginning of the 20th century, which intervened in the relationship between private landlords and tenants, were also not beneficial in terms of creating a new class of landowners. As in the case of Sirkar tenants, these tenancy laws succeeded in creating a class of landowners among the intermediary classes only. Most of the superior tenure landholders in private janmom lands were Tamil brahmins, Ambalavasis and Nairs. Only such upper caste groups could benefit from the conferment of occupancy rights to Kanom tenants through the Cochin Tenancy Act of 1915. The act gave fixity of tenure to Kanom tenure, which was formed before 1885 and also made provisions for compensation for the improvement of land in case of evictions.

The landholders with inferior tenures such as Verumpattom did not benefit from the tenancy reforms in the middle of the 20th century. Most of these inferior tenure landholders were reduced to the status of crop sharers with the Verumpattomdars Act of 1943. These cultivating tenants, mostly belonging to the lower strata of the society were subjected to arbitrary evictions and rack rent. They did not enjoy any fixity of tenure. According to this act, these tenants could be evicted only for the non-payment of rent or destructive acts of waste or wilful denial of jenmi's rights, etc.

Apart from land reforms, there are other interlocking sets of historical factors, both exogenous and endogenous, that include commercialisation, migration, the Depression of the 1930s, the second world war, spread of modern education and

salaried employment, disintegration of the joint family system and demographic pressures that have played a major role in the transformation of landownership. The “marketisation” of land over a period of time has changed the character of land from a factor of production to a speculative commodity. Such transformations have widened the distance between the ownership of land and actual tillers of the soil. The changes in landownership together with the transformation in the character of land could be the reason for the existence of innumerable “paradoxes” in the agriculture of Kerala.

The Kerala Land Reform mainly consisted of three sets of provisions. The first was to confer the ownership rights on the cultivating tenants of the land leased in by them. The act brought within its ambit all kinds of tenancies including crop share tenure. It was envisaged to abolish landlordism, tenancy and intermediary rights in land. Second, the act provided for granting ownership rights to kudikidappukar, (attached labourers to janmies) mainly agricultural labourers, over their homesteads. The third scheme was to take possession of surplus lands and redistribute these among landless labourers and land-poor peasants. The first two schemes were implemented, but the last remains largely unrealised.

KERALA MODEL- CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

The phrase 'Kerala model' refers to the impression of a specific set of policies that created a unique development record in Kerala with respect to the attainment of a better quality of life as compared to other poor states of India, without achieving a substantial increase in investment,

production and technological change of the productive and public sectors. The demographic indicators of development i.e. birth rate, death rate, infant mortality rate, life expectancy etc. in the decades that immediately followed the state's formation were all favourable. Integrally connected to the radical notion triggered by Kerala in its course of development post its first Communist ministry and the much disputed re-distribution of farm- land, is that the state need not gain amply in per capita *domestic product* to implement good levels of health, education and nutrition to its people made it the focus of attention. The per capita domestic product of Kerala, the primary units of economy in other words, has stayed stagnant, even as development took a steady trail upward in the lifestyle and outlook of the population. In fact, this model is a ready contradiction to the nationalist's view that industry- based economic development is mandatory for human development. The state testified for the fact that the elimination of undesirable conditions of life does not have to await that "distant day in development when growth has taken place to a sufficient extent for its 'trickle down' to make an impact upon the people". In other words, the admiration for the Kerala model was not synonymous with accounting for its economic growth. What it was synonymous with was a host of 'mentalities' entailed as a result of its rejection of the view that 'growth' is essential for development.

The radical reductions in infant mortality and population growth rates and eliminating acute poverty without significantly eroding the ecological balance evidence

practicing development, Kerala could be counted as a model for development. In 1994, Dr. Amartya Sen observed, In respect of certain variables like average levels of literacy, life expectancy, infant mortality etc. conditions in India are enormously adverse compared with China, and yet in all these respects, Kerala does significantly better than China. Sen suggested further that the Indian government should try to emulate the Kerala experience.

Kerala had a very distinct model of development in its early decades is vouched by many analysts in the field. This becomes an important model in the contemporary history of the nation, since, in other states of India, the project of modernity was practically nonexistent. The people viewed the 'modern' as uncomfortably different. The Kerala model is also the result of a meticulously evolved history of caste and community based movements. Or, it could be said that Kerala was able to afford the model of modern development defying an industrial growth- oriented model propagated by the national model of development, because the ground had been prepared in almost a century long history of social struggles that addressed modes of production in a revolutionary manner.

The history behind the statistics of the 'Kerala Model' is replete with a wide variety of forms of public action. These start intensively from the era of British colonialism in India which had its influences on the region which presently constitutes Kerala state. The reform movements among many of the lower castes and communities were matched by actions of the native rulers of the region who responded to these

demands by providing basic social services to a wide section of the population. These initial social movements laid the foundation for the emergence of more secular movements along class lines among the peasants and workers which were led by radicals with leftist leanings. In the post-independence period this led to the creation of political history when the world's first democratically elected communist government came to power in Kerala State in 1957.

The various social and communal changes that created new equations and attitudes in Kerala regarding centers of production, before the 1960s when the region actually began working as a modern state and people, and evolved its specific sense of citizenship. The social movements of the various castes and communities of Kerala which began at the end of the 19th century, represent an important point of transition in the de-structuration of the former overtly casteist system.

It is possible to order in succession the general character of these movements, the organization and ideology of each movement, and the way in which they are linked with the emergence of new social relations as a result of the introduction of capitalist relations of production. The caste system had been the most dominant element in the social formation of Kerala, since it was in correspondence with the relations of production. The ownership of the means of production and their use depended on caste-belonging. The main lines of the division of labour were also defined by the caste system. In turn the relative positions of the various castes in the sphere of production reinforced the hierarchical social structure.

Varying skin-colour and the differences in physical features were still important elements in determining social status. The system was characterized by the list' of symbols to indicate social distances between groups, arising out of the religious definition of the Brahmins and the consequent use of the opposition: 'pure/impure'. The most obvious of these was the pollution code in which social distances were symbolized by the structure of pollution-relations which in their turn were justified partly by the nature of economic activity pursued by each group and partly by certain religious doctrines like that of 'karma'. This was necessary, given the arbitrary character of the relations of production and the cascade-type social system, in which each group performed a dominant function in relation to the next below it, down to the slaves who could not have anyone below them.

British colonization principally broke this structure down. It undermined the basis of this edifice by attacking first of all, its economic and secondly its ideological aspect. By levying taxes on landed property in order to provide for the colonial administration, the British authorities transformed the material foundation of existing social relations. This had a chain of consequences, leading to the progressive changeover from existing feudal relations between castes to new contractual relations. On the other hand, the abolition of slavery gradually led to new juridical relationships, without fundamentally modifying the existing social structure. This abolition had two motives: an economic one - the need to liberate a work-force for the mines or the plantations and a

humanitarian one - the prevailing liberal ideology, and the pressure exerted by the Christian Missions. The measures taken by the British in the territories which they administered directly were almost immediately echoed in the kingdoms of Travancore and Cochin.

Besides the impact of the abolition of slavery, the attack on the ideological basis of the older system was also manifested in the sphere of education. The ideological zeal of modernity and its possibilities were soon taken up by the Nairs of Travancore. As early as in 1903 the first Society for Nair welfare was constituted. This was called the Travancore Nayar Samajam, and was almost immediately followed by the Kerala Nayar Samajam in 1905. Pressure was brought to bear on the Legislature to alter the matrimonial system. In 1912 Mannath Padmanabha Pillai, founded in the first *Nayar Kamyoyam*, the caste's local village association, which was extended into the more widely based taluk associations and finally to the *Nayar Samudaya Bhrithya Jana Sang ham* in 1914. In the following year, the present title of *Nair Service Society* was adopted. This society undertook several tasks, the principal one being the appeasement of quarrels within tarawads, Teams with missionary zeal toured the region. In 1918 the women organized their own Hindu Mahila Mandhiram. In Malabar, the North Kerala Nayar Samajam was inaugurated the same year. The objective of all these associations was to get the matrimonial system changed so as to make inheritance and the division of land possible. The NSS quickly became financially powerful, and in 1925 the NSS Bank was founded. The local

associations or karayogams multiplied. However the NSS itself remained rather restricted and never became a mass organization.

Within the structure of the social ensemble, the goal of NSS was to abolish the dependence of the Nairs on the Nambudiris, whose matrimonial system was designed to maintain Brahmin property intact. But as a natural consequence it also promoted the entry of Nairs into posts made available by the new socio-economic situation in the government which had remained a Brahmin monopoly, and also in business and in local industries.

The internal re-organization of the group was another goal of the Nair Societies. Seeing the functional character of the family system of the Syrian Christians who, thanks to this, had succeeded in rising rapidly in the economic field especially at the beginning of the 20th century, the Nairs rejected their own marumakkatayam system. Their aims were to regularize Nair marriages and to put a stop to the matrimonial habits of the Nambudiris, to allow the male members of the tarawads to inherit or to take their share of the family property, to give women equal rights to the personal assets earned by their husbands, to put an end to internal inequalities, to resolve conflicts, to reform the educational system of their children, and finally to suppress some of their religious customs, such as the *padayani* and social customs like the thirandukuli and others involving the life stages of the women.

Even more strongly, the NSS aimed at encouraging

education and economic progress while retaining its loyalty towards the king and its belief in religion. The basis of the ideology was modernization, understood in a liberal sense: the abolition of the system of feudal relationships founded on caste, and of the untouchability taboo for the lower castes. But this movement too had its religious sources in the likes of Sri Chattambi Swamikal. Sri Chattambi Swamikal worked out a reinterpretation of Hindu beliefs, deriving from them a religion of salvation for all, and consequently the abolition of the caste system. His influence in the intellectual circles was profound. In Cochin in 1916 and 1917 another religious leader, Sri Bodhananda Swami also declared his opposition to untouchability and demanded the same privileges for the untouchables as were enjoyed by the Christians and the Muslims. At the level of practice, the ideology reflected itself in an opposition to animal sacrifice, in the foundation of schools to teach belief in God and to combat atheism, in the restoration of temples and the building of new ones in the villages through the efforts of the *kamyogams*, in the opposition to the extravagant expenses undertaken for festivals, and finally in attempting to obtain converts to Hinduism. According to Sri Chattambi Swamikal, too, all Hindus ought to be admitted to the temples without distinction of caste, and all should be permitted to offer puja and even to officiate as pujaris. The religious doctrine and its leanings were quite clear in the case of the Nair movement, at least in its early stages. There was simultaneously an insistence on faith in God, on the desire to eliminate non-orthodox forms of religious expression, and on the necessity of making converts

to Hinduism - an element obviously linked with the movement for conversion to Christianity among the Pulayas and the Parayas.

Large sums of money were collected for the schools. In 1929 sixteen schools depended on the NSS in Travancore alone. Then hostels for students, and later colleges came. Literature and the theatre were used on a large scale, as for instance the novel *Indulekha* by O Chandu Menon, and the plays of Edasseri Govindan Nair. The Press also played an important role: the daily paper *Malayali*, founded before the end of the 19th century by the Malayali Sabha; *Subhashini*, another daily in Changanachery; the magazine *Service*, also published as a daily at one time, and the *Monthly Review* – all ensured NSS doctrines a decent coverage.

On the educational plane, there was a group which was able to adapt itself easily to the modern trends in education. In 1911 the number of Nairs educated in English was 5446 (constituting 26.8 percent of all those educated in English); in 1921 it was 14,169 and in 1931 it was 18,606. The laws governing the Nairs were also changed. In 1913 a Nair Regulation in Travancore introduced alterations into their matrimonial system. The same alterations were made in Cochin in 1920.

It was time to call a halt to the peculiar kinship relations with the Nambudiris, the economic basis of which had already been shattered by the changes brought about by the British. However, this could be achieved only by calling into question the whole of the caste system, including its

symbolic expressions such as pollution, and its religious references such as the belief in the exclusive possession of moral excellence by the highest group and the exclusion of other groups from certain forms of worship. On the other hand, in order to enter into the new class system it was necessary to promote education and to ensure for the group some access to the sources of wealth. These sources were at that time to be found in agricultural property ('capital' in juridical definition), and also in commercial, financial and industrial activities. Since commerce and finance had always been primarily the domain of the Syrian Christians and the Muslims, the Nairs were unable to take a large share in them. Industry was now developing in the traditional sectors dependent on agriculture, and here the Nairs were able to take the initiative. But in the event it was the State administration which, both in Travancore and in Cochin, provided them with the opportunity to retain a position similar to that which they had previously enjoyed.

The Nair community succeeded in their transition to the new type of social structure, and they remained the principal dominant group in the beginning of 20th century Kerala. The revolt of the Mappilahs, the Muslim peasants of Northern Kerala, which dragged on episodically from 1836 to 1923 was another social struggle in pre-modern Kerala that transformed the feudal relationship into a contractual relationship. The greatest blow to the pre-modern systems of production and caste-based power relations, however, came in the form social struggles from lower castes, especially from the Izhavas. The flag bearer of this powerful restructuring of

Kerala society was the ascetic Sri Narayana Guru. The intervention of Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Sangham in the lives of lower castes was of revolutionary significance: it affected both a spiritual re-sorting and a will to social mobilization.

It was in 1903 that the S N D P (Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Sangham) was founded by Sri Narayana Guru. The name could be translated as "The Association for the propagation of the Dharma according to the interpretation of Sri Narayana Guru." In 1888 he consecrated a temple to Siva, at Aruvippuram. Following this 64 new temples were consecrated by the Guru. S N D P was meant to take care of these temples and spread the ideas of Sri Narayana Guru.

SNDP, in its social functioning, expressed varied, sometimes even contradictory, positions. It could be seen that there was a double motive behind the emancipation movement of the Izhavas: on the one hand, the desire of the new middle classes to destroy the caste structure which prevented their progress in the class structure and on the other, a religious inspiration, nourished by Bhakti, whose main aim was to obtain access to the high gods for the low castes and the outcastes. The first objective entered the SNDP program in the form of social interventions, whereas the second one was established through religious symbolism. The latter method had a mass dimension, because the pollution code affected the entire lower caste and they strongly wished to wrestle their way out. The first objective had only limited reach; it ended up in a minority's attainment of government

employment. However, in both dimensions, the SNDP emancipation program aimed a dismantling of the existing social hierarchization under Brahmin dominance. Colonization had already laid the foundations for a break-down of the system, but it was still necessary for the lower castes to attain a certain level of social perception before a true mass movement could be launched.

The opening of the temple of the Maharajah to individuals of the lower castes signified a social rather than a religious victory. K Aiyappan, a later leader was instrumental in orienting the S N D P in a more obviously political direction. In 1917 he founded the Sahodara Movement, with the aim of opposing the division into castes (whence the title Sahodaran which Aiyappan adopted at this time). In 1918 Aiyappan called together a huge lunch attended by 5000 persons of different castes, with the object of breaking the taboo of non-commensality. He also urged the Izhavas not to make any offerings to the temples which did not admit them. He introduced a rationalist line of thought, and brought more socialist ideas into the movement. His alliance with Sri Narayana Guru is often compared to that between Gandhi and Nehru. 59 Even though, as K Vivekanandan affirms, the religious content of the SNDP did not last long, it had an essential function: that of creating a link between social emancipation and the system of religious practices and beliefs common to the mass of the Izhavas.

Guru was conscious of the link between socio-economic emancipation and religious system, and though his

expressed self was often religious, the social aspect that supplemented his actions was more than a coincidence. For instance, the temples that he built were not meant just for Izhavas, but for all the lower castes to perform their devotions. It meant as much socially as religiously.

As the supreme expression of caste discrimination, temple entry was invested with an extremely powerful social significance: that of the supremacy of the Brahmins in the moral order, on which - ideologically speaking - all the rest depended. The actual consecration by a non-Brahmin of a temple to Siva was therefore a demonstration of the overthrow of that order. In the temples, the offerings were of flowers and fruit-which again was a prerogative of the higher castes-while the Guru strongly opposed offerings of fermented drinks (toddy), (although this was the produce of the most traditional occupation of the Izhavas) and their age-old sacrifices. It is clear that the rituals he proposed were identical with those of the higher castes. This is not without significance in relation to the type of movement that was launched, which was clearly concerned with caste and not with class problems.

To the abrogation of old practices was added the establishment of new ones, always with a double objective, religious and social. Teetotalism, proclaimed in 1921 as a basic rule, was in accordance with the requirements of the dhrama as interpreted by Sri Narayana Guru, but it was also aimed at the real social scourge of drunkenness among the Izhava workers. Vegetarianism, on the other hand, was more a symbol of identification with the higher castes. Sri Narayana Guru's

actions indeed led to a real religious organization.

The foundation of the first temple was followed by that of a monastery at Aruvippuralll in which advaita was taught and commensality practiced between members of different castes. He sent missionaries all over Kerala to preach the Dharma; their instructions were to treat the following subjects in order: religion, social customs, education and economic activities (agriculture, crafts, trade). From 1909 he was endeavouring to recruit monks, but it was only in 1928 that the first group was assembled, the Sri Narayana Dharma Samgham. However it was always the SNDP which formed the principal organization of the Izhavas as a group.

At the time of its foundation SNDP had had a strongly religious character, although it also pursued social objectives. But as time went on and a new leadership arose it took on a definitely more secular orientation, especially after T K Madhavan transformed it into a mass movement.

The directly social innovations of SNDP were in the educational sphere. Guru founded a school at Aruvippuram and another at Varkala, in which the medium of instruction was English. From his point of view, education offered a means of improving the position of the group in society, of transforming irrational social customs involved in the social situation of the group, of fighting against avidya (ignorance) and so achieving moksha (deliverance), and finally of combating the "superstitions" of the popular groups. His social activities included the encouragement of economic initiatives, either through preaching or directly, around the temples and in

the monastery, where various crafts were established and agriculture was carried on.

Sri Narayana Guru had at heart the emancipation of all the lower castes. Even his religious message integrated this dimension. In his contacts with Gandhi he showed himself perhaps even more radical than the leader of the Indian nation, for he hesitated to affirm the principle of non-violence and was apt to make apparently contradictory statements on this Subject. Indeed he declared to Gandhi in the end that the emancipation of the outcastes must be carried through by every available means.

The first results of the movement for emancipation were seen in the sphere of education. In 1910 the government schools of Travancore were opened to the Izhavas. By 1917, the statistics show that at least a small part of the group was entering the English-speaking middle class. It was principally this section which would benefit by their emancipation, while literacy in Malayalam was gradually penetrating the masses.

On the professional level, the Izhavas were at this period passing through a profound transformation. One might say that their access to the liberal professions and to the administration was largely the fruit of the emancipation movement, while the progressive change-over of the majority of the Izhavas to the position of workers in agriculture or in the small industries (coir, weaving, and so on) linked with coconut production was the direct result of economic changes on which the movement had practically no influence.

Beyond challenging prevalent socio-economic assumptions, the effects of the community movements supplied the state and its subjects with the idea that human development is superior to capitalist projects, and this implied culturally heavily in the 60s and 70s. For the large part, we could consider this to be the core groundwork towards the rooting of Leftist ideas among the lower castes. George Mathew argues in his introduction to *Communal Road to Secular Kerala*, that the "distinctive, demonstrated Kerala model of identity and social development" was "built on the premise that communities can acquire or share political power in the state." This process, which eventuated in the Leftist government of 1957, began with communities organizing and exerting themselves on the basis of religion and caste. He continues when this ran its full course, communities or collectivities began to transcend their religious identities to increasingly reflect secular ideologies," Amartya Sen also tried to put the special case of Kerala in perspective when he observed the way community movements in the region could change into something that is more sociopolitical than religious: The opposition to caste inequalities took a particularly pro- mass education form. There was a dialectical response: the spread of education helps to overcome the traditional inequalities of caste, class, and gender, just as the removal of these inequalities contributes to the spread of education. There was an upper caste combative move.

Kerala's radical politics in the 1950s grafted the combative issue of caste and class inequality onto one of

public activism and educational construction. Sen identifies that, due to these changes, there were dramatic consequences in the society of modern Kerala such as "enhancement of day-to-day human freedom, capacity for asserting other rights such as health care, demands for more public services and monitoring their delivery, a better climate for gender equity, and above all, much faster reduction in income poverty than in many other States." The 'Kerala model' of development in that sense, is the actuation of a development paradigm that, in extra-economic implications, creates and addresses this specific subject, a thorough product of the cultural overtones emanated from the earlier community-based movements.

A historicizing of the various social as well as cultural ways through which the subject positions evolved in Kerala till the 1950s, takes one to the next stage, where the subject comes to engage with the modern state. Unlike the Plans laid out for the nation by the National Planning Commission, the state's first Five Year Plan (1951-56) looked at development with minimal importance to industrialization of the state. And also, unlike in national level, politics and ideological thrusts played a seminal role in forming the first Plan. It was framed in the context of 'continuous propaganda against capitalists' which resulted in the popular acceptance of the theory that 'private investment is a bad thing for society'. Obviously, the major emphases of the Plan strategy were "promotion of social welfare, termination of tenancy, reduction of regional disparities and uplifting of the vulnerable sections of the society."

In fact, the first five Five Year Plans (1951-79) are all shown to have similar objectives reflecting anti-capitalist political ideology, irrespective of whether the state was ruled by LDF (Left Democratic Front) or UDF (United Democratic Front with Congress at the helm). The Parishad survey corroborates the observation. "The effect of the first Leftist government has been registered deeply in the people's consciousness", the survey says. For the next three to four decades Kerala politics had a clear Leftist inclination - whichever party ruled the state."

To proceed with the examination of how state's Plans and policies created and addressed a specific subject, a summary overview of the discussions on Kerala's developmental model in the wake of modernity and Globalization may be taken.

A good deal of discussion has taken place on the question of the causes of the specificity of the developmental experiences in Kerala, its consequences and failings and crises. It may be noted that the question is asked whether the 1950-1960 Kerala qualifies as a model at all, since the period and its attitudes is sometimes seen as the interactive outcome of a varied set of factors specific to the community movements in the region.

It could then be assumed that the experiences in Kerala cannot be replicated somewhere else unless the selfsame cultural history backdrops the new context. Added to this, is the range of skepticism expressed by the newer set of analysts regarding the effectiveness of the model in imbuing the subject

positions with a better quality of life. For instance, Gail Omvedt in her 1998 article "Disturbing Aspects of Kerala Society" maintains that the development model of Kerala does not qualify as 'real development' because of the critical exclusion of welfare of dalits, tribals and fisherfolks from its purview. John Kurien has previously written about the same issue in 1995. He shows how the central tendency of the Kerala Model, namely the paradox of 'low economic growth and high quality of life', does not apply to 'the outliers' like fisherfolk, Adivasis etc. CK Janu exacerbates this criticism by citing in her various writings how both the Left and the Congress have repeatedly sidelined and exploited the Adivasis. In "Women, Kerala and some Developmental Issues" in 1994, K Saradamoni showed that, in spite of the advancement in female birth ratio, the Kerala women were far from partaking the distribution of gains of the development model. Even before that, in 1993, KK George expressed grave disbelief in the sustainability of Kerala's social development, lacking economic advance in "Limits to Kerala Model of Development". BA Prakash says in a reassessment in 1999, that the earlier champions "have taken a narrow approach (towards the analysis of Kerala model) without considering the hard realities of the lives of the people." He questions the ethical basis of the model, primarily supported by financial remittances of migrant workers toiling in other parts of India and abroad, often in highly exploited conditions. In an extensive social survey that Kerala Sasthra Sahitya Parishad conducted, the resultant Keralite subject, after decades of development, was far from comfortable and settled.

Agricultural growth suffered badly. Equally stunted was industrial growth. The government allotted little for a second stage of developmental programs. As a result, public health system and public education deteriorated. The middle class that arose from the earlier decades of development completely rejected public services, and embraced private investment-based services. The employment sector broke down completely.

To this confusion and debates, the Structural Adjustment Reforms (SAR) of the decade added more unrest. In the earlier decades, to go by the opinions of the scholars, the state and its subjects had a rather closed way of battling out their development: development was possible either because of the enlightened aristocracy of Travancore (as Robin Jeffrey generally argues in *The Decline of Nair' Dominance*) or because of the presence of Communists in the state. In both cases, the problems and solutions could be thought from within the confines of the context of Kerala. The SAR altered the scenario. The policies pushed the already troubled development paradigm to find suitable answers to the questions posed by pro-Liberalization national policy.

Prabhat Patnaik in "International Context and the Kerala Model" identifies a general lacuna in the analyses of Kerala's responses to the SAR: "a significant number of economists who write approvingly of "Kerala Model" is either entirely silent on this debate or view this as being altogether irrelevant to the main issues, a 'red herring' that distracts attention." Any conceptualization of the Kerala model in

isolation from the national/international context is myopic and misleading in the wake of Globalization policies. The praise for Kerala Model, whenever some surfaced, was majorly due to the model's belief that that fiscal growth is not essentially desirable if it is realized in anti-people context. Ironically, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, whose interventions in Kerala the champions of the model condone, have diametrically opposite results. These represent the view not only that (economic) growth must have absolute priority, but that the only means of bringing about growth is by creating incentives for capital, even at the expense of a massive redistribution of resources away from the people's welfare services.

The insistence upon 'commercial viability' of various government projects denies many social infrastructure facilities to the rural poor. The so-called 'targeting of subsidies' and keeping them focused upon the 'really poor' most of the time function as a camouflage for the cutting down of subsidies for everyone. The 'reliance upon the market' and the whittling down of the public distribution system typically removes whatever insulation the poor have against the exploitation resulting from monopoly-dominated markets. It could be argued that a country can always identify the dividing line between a general reduction of subsidies and transfers and a trimming of them that nonetheless more purposively directs them towards the really poor, i.e. a cut in social expenditures need not be identical with a cut in transfers to the poor. But this does not withstand historical analyses.

Different economic regimes have different organizing principles. They are driven by particular overarching considerations. The 'market-friendly' regime which comes into being in accordance with the Fund-Bank programmes is driven by the overarching consideration of creating appropriate 'supply-side incentives' for capitalists, especially multinational corporations and banks, and this necessarily entails a jump in the rate of surplus value in the economy through a curtailment in the form of 'social wage'.

The mechanism that modified the state of Kerala into a particular model of development had to do with the original orientation of the state's planning. It is worth noting that the first Plan, in concurrence with the strategy of expanding the public sector that we have noted earlier, commenced a number of undertakings. Majority of these later incurred heavy losses and many were liquidated. By the time the Sixth Plan (1980-85) was floated, the strategy of expansion of public sector undertakings had suffered much backlash. The Sixth Plan accordingly changed the strategy cautiously in favor of private investments in commodity producing sectors, such as agriculture and industry. The Left in Kerala appeared to be losing their battle of ideas, becoming just another political party, waging power-political wars with its opposition.

The globalization program has a component which directly and specifically affects the Indian agrarian economy, apart from its general effects, in that it sustains an illusion of development where the rural and the urban poor will generally be placed at the receiving end of non-availability. The Kerala

model's adaptation to the SAR, in the context of the Left struggling for a perspective, did not resist this evil very well. The period between 1989 and 2000 that saw the loosening of Leftist ideological constraints was a period of Capitalistic ascendancy in Kerala. In the line of the New Industrial Policy (NIP) Statement in 1991 that nationally announced a range of pro-capitalist measures, Kerala's Industrial and Investment policies also changed. As summed up by KP Rajesh, the major changes introduced in the NIP include "the abolition of industrial licensing, amendment of the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act, contraction of areas reserved for the public sector and liberalization of foreign investment." The major factors, which influenced the economy during the first half of the 1990s, were the implementation of the new economic policy reforms of central government since 1991, the spurt in migration to the Gulf countries and the consequent increase in the flow of remittances, a steady increase in the price of most agricultural products, and an increase of exports. On the whole, the state economy experienced an inflation-oriented economic growth during the first half of the 1990s.

The trade unionism in Kerala rooted in stronger terms during the 1990s, and established itself strongly in the society during this decade. As a consequence, the unions gained more visibility, gathered more power in its political affiliation-cum-dependency and in popular wisdom even acquired the role of militant organizations that work on the line of managerial barons. The state's lack of industrial growth during 1990s even

as moderate growth in economy happened, and when most other parts of India were witnessing prolific industrialization is generally attributed to this development.

The industrial backwardness of Kerala owes to the 'technologically backward structure of the industry' and 'low labour productivity'. The enquiry into Industrial backwardness has been explained also as a product of the colonial conditions that Kerala experienced. This latter view was recommended by the early Marxists of the state. They also persist on the discrimination on the part of Indian Government to the provincial government in the distribution of central funds. Another stream of Marxists, looked at Kerala's lag in industrial growth as resulting from the traps of pan-Indian multi-national capital that control most cash crop growing high lands, the raw material bases and the vast consumer market of the region.

To sum up the general scholarly opinion, then, by the end of nineties the categories of examining Kerala's 'model' society started to become bleaker. The attempts from the part of political parties, bureaucracy and media in general to thwart the Decentralization program, started so eagerly, makes the scene more sinister. The context in which Janakaeeyasoothranam was implemented has already been discussed in the previous chapter. Though well-received by the people, the initial stage frictions became a major roadblock for the program. The Media succeeded to a large extent in propagating an anti-state agenda for petty political gains. Sasthra Sahitya Parishad also shows how negative propaganda

ruined the possibility of realizing the People's Planning program: "Small errors were magnified beyond proportion. There have also been attempts to make Janakeeyassothranam an invisible and inaccessible 'regular' government program. Instead of repairing the errors in the program, the subsequent governments sought to dismantle the entire system. People's Planning practically ended in the early 2000S. Nothing as innovative as Janakeeyassothranam was initiated by the state afterwards.

To conclude, the history of the state of Kerala, a recounting of its revolutions and re-organization, and its distinct course of developmental progress locates the various ways in which modernity in Kerala differs from the earlier models of modernity in other states and identifies how the state came to address a subject who did not have to be uncomfortably moulded into modernity, but was ready by culture to be grafted onto modern living. Kerala's early tryst with institutional modernity is probably one reason why the state is ever vigilant in its political stances. Kerala has never been totally in favor of the Communist party, nor has it sided completely with the Congress. The changing governments of the state and the meager percentage of votes that decide the winners every election may be taken as indicators to demonstrate the vigilant political observation of the population. It should also be noted that in the social of Kerala, the mode of articulation of a cause matters much. Communism with its association with literature and cinema became a major factor in shaping the sensibility of the subject in the state's

formative period. As it lost its ability to intervene in the social, and limited itself increasingly to a power politics, people have grown more cynical and critical towards it.

The focus of the forthcoming chapter is an ambiguity in the delineation of subject- positions in the social space of the state of Kerala after the installation of state's first installment of governmental policy implementation or, simply, policing. The state adopts modernity as its conscious project. It had launched policies in the newly formed channel: the social, where families and other 'insides' of modernity communicated with the state. The Marxist party, a vital intervention in the social has gained power, and lost it. The subject has come to regulate his life with respect to the institutions of modernity. Even as the citizen feels that he is modern, there is also a sense of being suppressed. The popular concepts of normality revolve around a specific sense of repression. Along with taking forward the legacies of earlier political movements, the subject has to also digest the fact that she/he inhabits a low growth economy, an era of peaking unemployment and backlash of Gulf prospects, and a rising statistics of suicides and cases of insanity.

In addition to above analysis, the topic 'Kerala Model' also add up these factors as well: Kerala, a model for other Indian states, has achieved social and educational development comparable to most Western nations; this achievement is not yet matched by industrial growth or economic development. Its excellent record in education, health, and land redistribution provides a unique case for arguing that the basis for true

development is social and human, rather than economic.

Kerala enjoyed a high literacy rate with only slightly higher among males than females. Kerala pioneered equitable land reforms and elected India's first Communist state government by democratic means in 1957. The population growth rate in Kerala is the lowest in India, competing with China's near zero population growth rate. Population pressure on Kerala's meager land is very high, however, with 819 persons per square mile (the third highest in India). The low level of infant mortality is an indicator of the excellent health standards of the population, among both males and females. Life expectancy, averaging over 70 years for males and 75 for females, is the highest in India. The social status of Kerala's women is very high, supported by nuclear families, and Kerala has a high rate of females in the workforce. The state also recorded the lowest rate of child labor in the country.

All the villages and towns of Kerala are electrified and 91 percent of the rural habitations have access to potable water. According to the National Sample Survey, the population below the poverty line constituted only 12.5 percent, the lowest of any state in the country.

At the political level, Kerala has a healthy tradition of bipolar coalition politics in the backdrop of a multiparty system. The Indian National Congress and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) are the two leading parties. Smaller parties, like the Communist Party of India, the Indian Union Muslim League, the Kerala Congress (M), the Kerala Congress (J), and the Kerala Congress (B), compete for power in the

coalitions. The State Legislature has 140 seats, besides 9 seats in Delhi's Rajya Sabha (the Upper "House of the States" in Parliament) and 20 seats in Lok Sabha (the Lower "House of the People").

There are certain factors Historically contributed to the said changes that Travancore led the other regions in terms of social development. Its maharaja welcomed Christian missionaries, who established churches, schools, and colleges, offering a liberal Western education to the masses. The missionaries also pioneered the state's struggles against harsh Hindu practices, including untouchability and slavery. The struggle for responsible government in Travancore and the national freedom struggle in Malabar gave Kerala a galaxy of social and political awakening. Kerala's Communist Party transformed itself into a powerful social democratic force, and adapted to India's parliamentary democratic framework. It headed seven coalition state governments, besides its own brief interlude of Communist rule, implementing land reforms and decentralization measures long before other states. High wages for workers and powerful trade unions were also contributions of the Communist Parties in Kerala.

The Kerala model of social development is unique in several respects. Its nearly egalitarian society, positive records in health, education, decentralization, and population planning, and its active coalition system of governing have made the state a vibrant civil society, transforming itself from traditional, ancient feudal roots. Kerala concentrated more on investing in its people rather than in markets. Human resources are the

mainstay of its development. The Kerala model of social development is unique in several respects. Its nearly egalitarian society, positive records in health, education, decentralization, and population planning, and its active coalition system of governing have made the state a vibrant civil society, transforming itself from traditional, ancient feudal roots. Kerala concentrated more on investing in its people rather than in markets. Human resources are the mainstay of its development.

However, as mentioned earlier, Kerala's high levels of human development are not matched by industrial growth or generation of employment opportunities within the state. The economy became stagnant and nonproductive in many sectors, except tourism. Globalization policies had already affected its traditional industries, such as coir, hand-loomed textiles, and cashew nuts, thereby multiplying the number of unemployed in the state.

The 'crisis' of the Kerala model has been highlighted by many scholars. 'The Kerala model of development has almost reached the end of its tether. The paradoxical phenomenon of rapid social development unaccompanied by corresponding gains in economic growth has been exhausting itself. The national schemes for unemployment reduction largely did not suit the peculiarity of Kerala's situation. In addition, the growing fiscal crisis faced by the region from mid-1980s, added to the state's problems. The Kerala model is plagued by many negative trends viz: stagnation in industrial and agricultural production, out-migration of industries,

exceptionally high unemployment rates, acute power shortages, persistence of poverty, unresolved tribal land question, and all-round reduction in the quality of services and the debilitating fiscal crisis of the state. The long drawn out nature of the crisis has also led observers to question the very sustainability of the underlying model of development.

There is a serious problem of quality of education at all levels and most of the unemployment problem is that of the educated especially those without any skill or specialised knowledge. Kerala's image as an 'investor-unfriendly state' has persisted even after six decades of the formation of the state. Although political parties and trade unions are taking halting steps to change this image, the change of perception of especially prospective investors, seems to take time. A sustained campaign highlighting Kerala's favourable factors backed by the provision of high quality infrastructure facilities and a vibrant industrial and investment promotion mechanism is imperative to alter this negative image. The fiscal crisis faced by the state is leading to a declining share of capital expenditure in total public expenditure. This has exacerbated the state's capacity to enhance the quality and quantity of public and collective goods especially in infrastructure. From every possible parameter of measurement Kerala has the worst record of unemployment in the country even though lately there is some improvement. Given Kerala's dependence on employment outside the state and the country, one would have expected the educational system to cater to the needs of these job seekers. However, Kerala's facilities for providing

the needed training are meagre and underdeveloped forcing a large number of Malayalees to go outside the state for the required training. For instance, at least since the 1950s Kerala's nurses have sought and found employment in many parts of India and abroad including Germany, Canada, USA and the Gulf. Public sector enterprises do not work in conformity with economic rationality nor educational institutions with norms of academic standards and priorities.

In sum, Kerala has left behind the phase of rapid human development improvement and low economic growth but it faces many a hurdle in translating its existing high human development status and relatively high growth into meaningful developmental outcomes. Thus, human development and overall achievements of Kerala are now under serious threat from: an almost stagnant economy, widening gap between the aspirations of the people and actual achievements, the fiscal crisis, threat of falling gulf remittances and increasing return of the immigrants, increasing anarchy in administration and in society, growing apathy to manual work, growing consumerism, general lack of appreciation and creative response to these threats by the people and their leaders. Though Kerala does not face a severe ecological crisis, so far, environmental problems have become more visible and started to affect environmental sustainability. Increasing consumerism and rising imports from other states, boosted by the influx of Gulf remittances, suggest that Kerala is increasingly externalizing environmentally unsound industrial production.

However, The Kerala Model Development had its logical roots within the socio-political history of the pre and post colonial period, which drastically altered the state's land relations, social milieu and largely contributed to the high human development.

From a very low profile, Kerala achieved remarkable progress in the field of human development, reaching the level of advanced economies elsewhere in the world. Kerala's high human development experience is devoid of a sharp rural-urban divide or obvious gender disparity. It has respectable food and nutritional security and a social security system covering most organised and unorganised sectors. The state's female-male ratio has been consistently well above that of the all India average and even above that of Japan. A remarkable fertility decline achieved as a matter of choice, exceptional cultural attainments like greater learningtime and wider reading habit with a library in all the villages are the hallmarks of this social development. The state has achieved virtual emancipation of the 'lower' caste/strata of the social order, abolition of feudal relations in the agrarian sector and has evolved into a multi-religious, multi-cultural population flourishing in a symbiotic relationship. These are significant achievements.

MODULE V

NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: DALIT, OBC, WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

NSM is a late twentieth century phenomenon. It is also a new paradigm in the social movement literature. The new social movement theorists argue that contemporary movements represent fundamentally new forms of collective action, with new goals, values and constituents. The term 'new social movements' refers to a cluster of movements that began to emerge in the 1960s under an assorted banner of students' movements, peace movements, environmental movements, second-wave feminism, animal rights and so on. Jurgen Habermas offered a more detailed exposition and critique of his argument on the NSMs.

It is also a new paradigm in the social movement literature. Many scholars try to theoretically account for the appeals to identity in the new movements in relation to individual or group autonomy or particularity. The NSMs embody the efforts for identity building vis-à-vis the political institutions. As such, through struggles to attain collective autonomy and freedom from the state intervention, NSMs uncover those issues that have been excluded by and from political decisions. They are movements for a new democracy. Their self-limiting concept of emancipation allows these movements to offer the concept of the “democracy of everyday life” and perceive democracy as the condition for recognition,

autonomy, and self-affirmation. The NSMs characterise primarily as identity-claims and their actor's assertion of their particularity against pre-constituted universal identities (e.g. nation or class), as well as their demand for universal social recognition and political inclusion. The NSMs have a special relationship with identity. As a cultural force, identity defines a group's particular needs that challenge the social control of needs. The NSMs represent forces of democratisation in which identity forms the emblem of the contemporary collective action.

The NSM theory of Italian sociologist Alberto Melucci deems identity as the cardinal characteristic that distinguishes the 'New' from the 'older' social movements. Melucci tries to theoretically account for the appeals to identity, in the new movements in relation to a specific criterion with respect to a shift from the industrial to the post-industrial societies in the West and in terms of the class origins of the new movements' actors and finally, in relation to individual or group autonomy or particularity. The NSM theory goes beyond the Marxist paradigm to understand the variety of social movements that had emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. Although NSM theory does not employ the language of identity politics, it represents a major theoretical effort to understand the role of identity in social movements. It has, eventually, prevailed upon the more rationalist strands of social movement theory, resource mobilisation and political process theory to attend to issues of identity and culture. NSM theory attempts to explain mobilisation as "why and when people act." By taking this

approach, NSM theory both challenges and affirms the idea that identity politics is a distinct political practice. NSM theory distinguishes class-based movements, especially past labour and socialist movements from contemporary movements organised on the basis of ideology and values such as peace, environmental, youth, and anti-nuclear movements as well as movements organised around status.

NSM theory focuses upon the ways in which social movements seek to achieve change in cultural, symbolic and sub-political domains by collectively and by way of self-change. It takes seriously the feminist slogan ‘the personal is political.’ It is not correct to say that NSMs are any more concerned with local and sub-political issues than certain branches of the labour movement. Historical critiques of NSM theory have identified significant examples of 'identity politics' far back in the history of the labour movement. The point is that NSM theory has been instrumental in drawing that aspect of movement activity into clear relief. It has abandoned the model of politics developed within Marxism, wherein it focused upon parties, revolutions and states.

NSM theory views the movements as historically new forms of collective action resulting from the macro-structural changes of modernisation and a shift to a post-industrial society. These macro-structural changes produced values concerned with achieving democracy rather than with economic survival. Thus, NSMs are viewed as the efforts to regain control over decisions and areas of life increasingly subject to state control. They seek to resist the colonisation of

the life-world and to transform it into civil society. NSM theory views the movements as the efforts to “fight to expand freedom, not to achieve it; they mobilise for choice rather than emancipation.” It focuses primarily on expressing identity to seek “recognition for new identities and lifestyles”. The NSM theorists attempt both to move beyond the tendency to afford a theoretical privilege to the working class in social movement analysis and to identify other conflicts and movements at the modern social order. NSMs are said to advocate direct democracy, employ disruptive tactics, and enact the democratic organisational forms they seek to achieve. New social movements can be divided into four general areas: goal orientation, forms, participants, and values. Each characteristic reflects with the intervention by the system of state social control and a desire to replace these intrusive formal organisations with cooperative community networks. NSM theorists stress that the new actors struggle for collective control over the process of meaning and are primarily concerned with symbolic issues and the constitution of new identities.

According to NSMs theorists, the NSMs differ from past movements not only with respect to what they direct their energies against, but also with respect to whose interest they represent. They are interested in the provisions of collective or intangible goods that would enhance the quality of life for all sectors of society. The member of NSMs rather falls into two categories: one those who are paying the costs of modernisation and have marginalised by the development of

the welfare state and the new middle class. The NSM perspective presents a non-reductionist approach to the study of modern societies, offering important insights into the nature of contemporary social conflicts. By moving beyond economic and class reductionism, the new perspective can identify new sources of conflict that give rise to new actors. The emphasis on processes of constitution of new identities and on the novelty of some features of contemporary movements has allowed NSM theorists to underline the degree to which these movements represent a break with past traditions. However, NSM theory has tended to ignore the organisational dimension of SMs. NSM theorists have little to say about organisational dynamics, leadership, recruitment processes, goal displacement.

Dalit, Tribals and OBC Movements in Kerala

The word Dalit evokes controversies. Many scholars defined the word in different ways. The word Dalit is used for the untouchables, ill-treated and humiliated castes. A touchable is one who is culturally, socially, economically and politically suppressed and exploited in the name of religion. In India there are approx 240 million dalits, ie. 25% of the population is Dalit. Dalits have different names in different parts of our country. They are called as Holaya, Panchama, Chandala, Samagara, Chammar, Adikarnataka, and Adidravida etc. There are about 150 castes in Karnataka as per the list of Constitution of India. Dalits are not a homogeneous group, they have a number of divisions among them. It is probable that these internal divisions made their contribution being unable to voice

their problems effectively.

Social and economic inequality still occupies the centre-stage of Indian reality. The ideals of social democracy and distributive justice, in their essence, remain elusive. On the contrary, the vast majority of the Indian population is deprived socially, economically, politically and educationally. The social opportunities, offered to the citizens by the state, are confined to the privileged sections of society. The deprived and disadvantage groups are still exposed to the experiences of cumulative inequality. These marginalized groups have yet to experience fully the so-called fruits of modern development. As far as the social status of Dalits is concerned, no substantial changes have taken place during the six decades of development planning. They are still rated at the underside in the socioeconomic structure. It is widely acknowledged that traditional Indian society was based on varna and jati. This system is very ancient in origin and through the passage of time it has undergone profound changes, but caste still a very powerful institution in our socio-economic, religious and political organization. The most disturbing feature connected with the caste system has been the concept of untouchability. For centuries Dalits have been positioned at the bottom of the rigid Indian caste society. People from other castes, who considered themselves to be higher, believe that Dalits are impure by birth and that their touch or sheer presence could be polluting hence, they are assumed to be untouchable. For centuries, Dalits were excluded from the mainstream society and were only allowed to pursue menial occupations like

cleaning dry latrines, sweeping tanning or working as landless labour for meager daily wages. Many of the atrocities were committed in the name of religion, like pouring molten lead into the ears of a Dalit, who happened to listen to some mantra. To retain the stronghold on people, education, especially religious education, was the monopoly of the Brahmins.

For years, the Dalits suffered from social injustices and exploitations so as to prevent them from rising above the social status fixed for them. The Dalits being on the lowest rung of the social ladder were denied entry into several occupations which were relatively cleaner. They were associated with a variety of specialized traditional occupations such as scavenging, cobbling and disposal of carcasses etc. The problem of untouchability and exploitation of Dalits in social, economic and political areas has been a stark reality of Indian society. Various efforts have been made so far by visionaries in this direction by launching movements and forming organizations to highlight and find solution of the problems of the Dalits in India. As a result we can see a constant growth of awareness among the Dalits who have started asserting their identity and demanding their due share in power.

In the book “Modernity of Slavery” elaborately discusses about the dalit plight in Kerala. In the book, ‘SLAVERY’, to the lay Indian reader, is an alien, loathsome concept associated with horrors and atrocities in distant lands a vile, despicable practice that characterised imperial rule in the previous century.

In the book, the author, challenges such notions in his remarkable work on the “slave castes” of Kerala and their rebellion against the caste system that legitimised and institutionalised slavery. Without mincing words, he employs a language that is shocking in its candour yet essential to understanding the opprobrium of the system that existed and the revolts against it. By eschewing established usages such as “oppressed people” and “marginalised sections”, he distresses our comfortable views by plainly stating that what was in existence for a very long time in the region that constitutes present-day Kerala was nothing but slavery, and that its victims were “slave castes”. But Sanal Mohan has not just written a history of Dalit suffering and their continuous battle to free themselves of the shackles of the status quo; it is also a history of the histories of his own people written by missionaries and upper-caste elite and the failings therein, because the outsider is never able to fully articulate the lived and shared experiences of the oppressed. Black struggle for equality has a long and chequered history in the United States, right from the time slavery was abolished in the mid-19th century after protracted opposition, followed by a civil war and segregation and then the civil rights movement of the 1960s, to the most recent Black Lives Matter movement in response to police brutality that has victimised hundreds of black people.

The Dalit crusade for equality in India has a similar history, but unlike the anti-racism movement in the U.S., it has always been relegated to the sidelines, swept aside by the overarching themes of nation-building and progress. And in

the case of Kerala, where the modern movement had its origins, it has been subsumed by a pan-Kerala paradigm that consistently ignores the elephant in the room. So, the Dalit cause is not only one seeking a rightful place in society but also an effort to prevent authentic Dalit voices from being drowned out by the noise of the mainstream. “The Government is saying that it does not have enough land to distribute among the Dalits and Adivasis. At the same time, it is allowing big companies like the Tatas and Harrison Malayalam Plantations to keep tens of thousands of hectares of encroached land and is also refusing to take over from them plantation lands whose leases had expired long time back.

The Adivasis in Kerala, mostly inhabiting the mountains of the Western Ghats, constitute around one percent of the total population, while the Dalits form about 9 percent. Marginalized and oppressed by social and economic factors, the Adivasis have never been the real beneficiaries of the government schemes implemented to reduce landlessness among them. Instead, they have been deprived of their customary rights over their natural resources and traditional knowledge systems, leading to several struggles for land across a timeframe of several decades.

Certain Constitutional Provisions for SCs, STs and OBCs

Article 14 of Indian Constitution which provides equality before law - The state shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the law within the territory of India.⁸⁶ Further, in Article 15, the state prohibits the discrimination on the grounds of religion, race,

caste, sex, or place of birth.⁸⁷ This Article seems to be the first Article which indicates the reservation for Dalits. It provides that the state can make special provisions for the upliftment of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes some selected people and nothing in the Constitution comes in contradiction to this provision. Article 15 (4) and 16 (4) of the Indian constitution has made provision of reservation for backward classes in educational institutions and public employment. Article 16(4): This clause allows the state to reserve vacancies in public service for any backward classes of the state that are not adequately represented in the public services. According to Article 17 of the Constitution untouchability abolished and the practice of untouchability in any form is forbidden.

Article 15(5) - this clause was added in 93rd amendment in 2005 and allows the state to make special provisions for backward classes for admissions in private educational institutions, aided or unaided.

Article 16(4) – this allows the state to reserve vacancies in public service for anybackward classes of the state that are not adequately represented in the public services.

Article 16(4B) – this allows the state to consider unfilled vacancies reserved for backward classes as a separate class of vacancies not subject to a limit of 50% reservation.

Article 17 – this eradicates untouchability and its practice in any form.

Article 340 – Permits the president to appoint a

commission to investigate the condition of socially and economically backward classes and table the report in the parliament.

The Department of Welfare of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes and Minority is fully committed to the highest standard of excellence and transparency in providing the benefits to the people belonging to SC's/ST's/OBC's/ Minorities. Numbers of schemes are being implemented by Govt. of NCT of Delhi for socio-economic development of residents of Delhi belonging to SC's /ST's / OBC's / Minorities. The constitution of India does not define the term backward classes. It is up to the centre and the states to postulate the classes that belong to this group. However, it is assumed that classes that are not signified passably in the services of the state can be termed backward classes. Statutory Provisions for Other Backward Classes are the National Commission for Backward Classes Act 1993 and the National Backward Classes Finance Development Corporation.

Further, the President can, under Article 340, can establish a commission to scrutinise the condition of socially and educationally backward classes. Structural standards are attached to the different relationships between the subordinate and the prevailing group in every society. The norms act as structural obstacles giving rise to various forms of disparity.

There is some structural discrimination faced by these vulnerable groups. In India, members of gender, caste, class, and ethnic identity experience structural discrimination that has adversely impacted on their health and access to healthcare.

Women also face dual discrimination being members of specific caste, class or cultural group apart from experiencing gendered susceptibilities. Women have less control on the resources and on important decisions related to their lives.

The SCs, STs and OBCs have been forced to remain as the Weaker Sections of India, and the women confined or oppressed to be the most and multiply exploited sections of the country, for many decades. This worst situation cannot and should not continue anymore. There is a need for the Government to act to free and unshackle the weaker Sections, from the lethargies of oppression, marginalisation and backwardness.

Article 46 has been framed with the particular attention paid to the promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the weaker sections. It says: The state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker section of the people, and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. There shall be special officer for SC, and STs to be appointed by the President. It should be the duty to the officer to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for the SCs and STs under the Constitution. It has been provided in Article 338 of the Constitution that all matters relating to the safeguards provided to SCs will be reported to this officer, who, in turn, will report the same to the President. Further, Article 340 provides for the appointment of a Commission which will investigate the

conditions of backward classes in the country. Reservation of seats, right from village Panchayat upto the level of the Parliament has integrated the Scheduled Castes into the political mainstream of the nation. The efforts of social reformers and the adoption of various Constitutional measures, legal and governmental policies and programmes, have helped to bring about a certain amount of development and change among the Dalits.

The Backward Class Movement was widespread in the Indian Sub-continent as a whole and was particularly strong in peninsular India, where it had a distinctive ideology and pervaded every area of social life. Maharashtra was one of the first states to witness the organised protest movements among the low-castes. There were mainly two trends in the social reform and protest movements in Maharashtra. Dadoba Pandurang Tharkhadkar represented the trend of humanism and Mahatma Jotiba Phule represented the trend of mass-line.

The method Narayana Guru adopted was the process of 'sanskritisation', raising the untouchables to the status of Brahmins. He established a set of religious institutions parallel to that of the teetotalter and vegetarian variant of Brahminical Hinduism. He even stressed the importance of secular pursuits like education and building of unions and associations to empower the lower classes. He transformed the outlook of the people of Kerala by giving them a new philosophy, religion, code of conduct and programme of action, which formed the basis of 'Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana' movement. The broadening of this movement came as two new leaders, Dr.

Palpu and Kumaran Asan joined Swami Narayana.

Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, the redoubtable champion of social equality and the foremost ideologue of anti-caste movement in the North saw caste as a crucial aspect of domination and exploitation. He launched a 'destroy caste system' movement. He rejected traditional liberal notion of equality saying that in a traditionally unequal society, equality can not be established by merely providing equal opportunities to all. He strongly held to the view that for a long time to come, the Backward Classes, women, harijans, adivasis and the backward sections among minorities will have to be given special opportunities to bring them up to the level of the advanced. In his political battle against the Congress, Lohia was the first national level leader who realised the political potential of those classes and advocated the view that the surest way to dislodge the Congress from power was to mobilise the Backward Classes against it.

The Backward Class Movements of South India were mainly directed against the Brahmins, such a trend was not found in North-India. In several parts of the North, Brahmins were backward in terms of modern education and government employment compared to certain non-Brahmin castes. The traditions of semi-feudalism in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have enabled the forward castes to keep a tight control over smaller backward castes and prevent them from joining the mainstream of the Backward Classes Movement. This is not so in the South.

The Government of India Act 1935 has made the

category of Other Backward Classes much more complex. With the inclusion of several lower backward communities within the category of Other Backward Classes, it became much more numerous and dispersed. Their inclusion provoked Other Backward Classes to launch a vigorous movement for the adoption of caste criterion in determining the status of OBCs. The framers of Indian Constitution saw democracy as a powerful instrument for emancipation. To end existing form of discriminatory practices and to overcome effects of centuries of segregation and subordination, they envisaged a system of reservation in the constitution as a part of its policy of positive discrimination. However, the system of preferential treatment has been the principal means addressing the problems of backward castes long before independence. In the Resolution on the Aims and Objectives of the Constitution itself introduced by Pandit Nehru an assurance was given that adequate safeguards would be provided to the depressed and Backward Classes. The problems of Backward Classes including the issue of distribution of political and administrative power through a policy of reservation and other benefits enjoyed by them till the attainment of independence and the future of these policies were debated by the constituent Assembly. The Constitution of India identified the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as beneficiaries of positive discrimination and the sub-clauses (24 and 25) of Article 366 define those two categories respectively. Although it took cognisance of the problem faced by the Backward Classes, the constitution did not define the term Backward Classes.⁹⁶ In the case of Scheduled Castes there was at least a common

referent about the idea of including castes which, as groups had been subject historically to numerous discriminations at the hands of caste Hindus summarised by the term 'untouchability'. But with regard to backward castes, there is no such single criterion which could be easily applied throughout the country, for the status and economic well-being of those groups vary greatly from region to region.⁹⁷ However, Article 340 of this Constitution authorises the President of India to appoint a commission to investigate the conditions of Backward Classes. In 1953 a Backward Classes Commission was appointed by the Central Government with Kaka Kalekar as the chairman. This eleven member Commission struggled with the daunting task of creating a master list of the country's non-tribal and non-untouchable 'backward' populations.

The Central Government ultimately took a decision that no all-India list of Backward Classes should be drawn up, nor any reservation made in the central government service for any group of Backward Classes other than Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The state governments were requested to draw their own lists using the tests of income and occupation instead of caste. While the state governments were given the discretion to choose their own criteria for defining 'backwards', the view of the government of India was to favour economic tests than to go by castes. The central government again took up the issue of preferential treatment for the backward castes and appointed Backward Classes Commission on January 1, 1979 under the chairmanship of B. P. Mandal. This

commission, which submitted its report in December 1980, unlike the first, explicitly recommended the adoption of “caste as a criterion” and identified 3,248 castes or communities comprising 52.4 percent of the population of India.

The South had a long history of Backward Class Movements and various measures for their welfare were taken on a phased manner. The caste quotas had received general acceptance because there a small elites of Brahmins had monopolised all access to power and resources and it was easy for the non-Brahmins to unite against the Brahmin domination and press for caste and communal quotas. It is to be noted that while reservations have made an impact on the power structure, they have also strengthened the construction and articulation of caste identities, giving radical ideological justification for a framework of social justice. They have greatly enhanced political power of OBCs and their ability to influence state and national politics. It has led them to invent a new ‘political community’, which could exert a decisive role in democratic politics.

The trend of downward spread of democracy in terms of social anchor brought a great many new entrants and middle castes or the OBCs into the game of electoral politics, making it truly competitive, and OBCs taking a very decisive role in this competition, due to its numerical strength. Consequently, the OBCs are the biggest gainers in the race of political parties to accommodate them in their organisational and legislative wings, the different sections of OBCs gaining at different times and situational contexts.

Muslim groups currently bracketed under the category "OBC come essentially from non- Ashram section of the Muslim population. They are the converts from the middle and lower caste Mindus and are identified their traditional occupation. In Kerala, the Mappilas of Malabar are divided in to five ranked sections called the Thangals, Arabis, Malabaries, Pusalars, and Ossans. The Thangals trace their descent from the prophets daughter, fatima RA), and arc of the highest rank. Next in rank are the Arabis, who claim descent from the Arabian men and local women and retain their Arab lineage. The Malabaries arc next in rank. They have lost their Arab lineage and follow matrilineal descent. The Pusalars are the converts from Hindu fishermen called Mukkuvan, the new Muslims. They have low status. OBCs in Kerala have been classified under different groups and categories in the state. At present OBCs Kerala are grouped as follows for the purpose of reservation in government service; 1. Ezhava, 2. Muslims, 3. Latin Catholic/Anglo-Indian, 4. Nadar, 5. Converted Christians, 6, Viswakarma, 7. Dheerava 8. Other Backward Hindus.

Certain Dalit Collective Initiatives

Kerala Harijan Federation (KHF)

It was Peerumedu Thaluk Harijan Federation (PTHF) which organized lower caste people living in Peerumedu taluk in the beginning, which eventually became the High Range Harijan Federation, which functioned without the consideration of sub-castes, religion and politics. After two decades, this organization changed its name to All Kerala

Harijan Federation (AKHF) by merging similar organizations. The All Kerala Harijan Federation (AKHF) changed its name to Kerala Harijan Federation (KHF) shortly. KHF was an organization aimed at working for the liberation of lower class in Kerala - dalit, adivasi and other depressed Christians- who were the target group; it was formed without considerations of party politics and hierarchies based on subcaste. They worked more in the trade union mode since majority of its members were workers. Later they formed a trade union for dalit workers in order to strengthen the activities of KHF and political empowerment of dalits . Kerala Harijan Federation changed its name in to Kerala Dalit Federation in the late eighties, appropriating dalit politics that unfolded at the national level.

KHF had led various agitations during the seventies and eighties. In various dharnas, marches and fasting campaigns during these decades, KHF demanded equal rights for dalits in all spheres of life. Their major focus was human rights violations on dalits and adivasis. Their major demands were to consider any atrocities of ‘Harijans’ as crime, to give legal protection for dalits, and to implement the law pertaining to the restitution of land to adivasis in 1975 - which suggest giving back alienated land to Adivasis. Further demands included reservations in cooperative societies, rejecting gift deed and formulating an integral agricultural land reforms in Kerala. On the issue 112 atrocities against dalits, KHF demanded establishing special courts or mobile courts, if necessary, in sensitive areas to check atrocities against

‘Harijans’ and deployment of special police squad under IPS officers to investigate such cases.

Adasthitha Navodhana Munnani (ANM)

Adasthitha Navodhana Munnani is an organization founded in 1987 under the leadership of K.M. Salimkumar. This organization focused on the self esteem of dalits and making dalits proud of their identity. It also rejected the idea of approaching dalits as lower class. They have conceived dalits and Adivasis as a common group and worked towards the politicization of both communities. They have conducted many meetings to discuss the internal issues of dalit community. They published a magazine Adhasthitha Navodhana Munnani Bulletin in which they have published many articles relating to dalit and adivasi issues. ‘Burning of Manusmriti’ was a protest staged mainly by the ANM to protest against the Hindu hegemony and the prevailing caste system. They have raised issues relating to land, protested against fascism by right wing Hindu groups and struggled for restoration of alienated Adivasi land. In analyzing and placing caste question, this organization depends much on left ideology. ANM has created a corpus of writings on dalit issues through various publications such as bulletins, magazines, booklets and books.

Other important shift was marked by the embracement of dalit identity; there was a strong articulation that dalits share a cultural identity irrespective of subcaste differences. The history of oppression and slavery, commonality in social status, ritually formed subordination they face and outcaste status in established religions provide them scope for a

collective feeling and claim for a common identity. Dalit identity created during this period was based on Ambedkarite ideology. Other important shift was marked by the embracement of dalit identity; there was a strong articulation that dalits share a cultural identity irrespective of subcaste differences. The history of oppression and slavery, commonality in social status, ritually formed subordination they face and outcaste status in established religions provide them scope for a collective feeling and claim for a common identity. Dalit identity created during this period was based on Ambedkarite ideology.

In short, dalit as an identity was articulated in three aspects - first is its relationship with modern spaces like educational institutions and community organizations. Second is its relationship with state and third is about internal reforms. Identity here was imagined in a collective way and rights are defined within community.

Dalit Maha Sabha (DMS)

This organization is formed in 2000 and functions as a community organization. Community organization [Samudaya Samghatana] are crucial in building solidarity among its members, formulating codes and standards of both individual and community life. Sub-caste organizations have huge influence on common dalit people since they function as regulatory force among them. Community organizations are usually based on sub-castes. It generates some kind of negative pride among its members and limits the possibility of dalit identity formation and politicization of community.

Subcaste organizations are working within the Hindu fold in general and keeping a closed feature by promoting endogamy and other ritual practices imposed by Hinduism. DMS was formed to make a space for individuals who believe in dalit identity and provide them a community life with new ideals and moralities based on Ambedkarite ideology and a way of life as imagined by both Ayyankali and Poykayil movement . Here, rather than sub-caste identity, a new political self - ‘dalit’ - is considered for community identity.

In the Initial phase , dalit discourses formulated ‘dalit identity’ as a homogenous essentialist category which is based on idea of shared slave experience and shared culture among dalit sub castes. In this phase we could see a trend to articulate similarities than differences. The effort was made to interpret all social experience of dalits- irrespective of gender, in terms of caste. Thus dalit self here was considered as a ‘collective self’ based on community identity through which the ideas like social justice, equity and freedom were articulated for the liberation of the community. Thus this identity is shaped up around the experience of dalits and a peculiar meaning applied to it by interpreting it through specific discourses.

Contemporary phase dalit discourses flourished during the 2000s, further taking advantage of the conceptual apparatuses and terms from ‘black criticism and structuralist philosophy’ and arguments foregrounding resources and representation and subjectivity. These were more in the nature of initiatives by small groups, predominantly in the intellectual domain rather than mass based movements. Such political

debates significantly altered the intellectual domain of Dalits and to a certain extent the domain of knowledge in the Malayali public sphere. In this phase we could see emergence of different selves within dalit selves. The articulations of dalit self from different corners like religion, gender, sexuality appeared. These interventions posed challenges to the established notions of ‘dalit self’ which is explicitly based on essentialism.

CERTAIN DALIT-ADIVASI STRUGGLES IN KERALA

Muthanga Land Struggle

In 2001, the shocking death of 32 Adivasis from starvation forced the Adivasis in Wayanad to renew their struggle for land. One of the reasons cited for the starvation deaths among the Adivasis was the lack of land for cultivation. Resultantly, a new organization - the Adivasi Gothra Maha Sabha (AGMS) was formed. On August 30, 2001 the agitators gathered in the capital city of Thiruvananthapuram and began a campaign with the slogan “Right to live in the land one is born.” After several weeks of protest, a seven-point agreement was reached with the then Chief Minister, AK Anthony, who promised to give 5 acres of land to each Adivasi family. Even after 45 days, when the government failed to abide by the agreement, AGMS protestors encroached into the Muthunga Wildlife Sanctuary in Wayanad on January 5, 2003. The government didn’t pay any attention to the protesters until February 17, 2003, when a large contingent of police forces entered the forest and began evicting the protesters violently without any warning. In the ensuing battle, several hundred

tribals were injured, one Adivasi was killed and a policeman died. Such criminal injustice and brutality by the police had been unheard of in Kerala's recent history. Thus, a mammoth struggle that began with a long pending demand for the Adivasis' right to land became a short one that lived for only 44 days, brutally suppressed and brought to a halt using police force.

Although the Muthanga land struggle has completed a decade, the AGMS continues to lead many other land struggles across the state. The Adivasis' dream of regaining their land turned out to be a horrid experience, as many of them who took part in the struggle were falsely accused in several cases. For the past eleven years, many of them have been trekking once in every month to Kochi, for the routine hearings in various cases. Acute poverty and joblessness have reduced them to skeletons and have paralysed their morals. Out of the more than 70 accused in many cases, 22 have already died. Meanwhile, the court cases drag on and on without any meaningful end in sight.

Aralam Farm Protest

With the rising demands of the tribals for their rightful land, the Kerala Government signed an agreement with the State Farms Cooperation of India in June, 2004 to use the 3,060 hectares of the Central State Farm in Aralam for the resettlement of the Adivasis. The rehabilitation process was to incorporate the tribals of Kannur and Wayanad districts into the project. However, in 2006, the Left Democratic Front (LDF) came up with the plan of establishing an ecotourism

project on the farm to exploit it for tourism purposes. It also decided to exclude the Adivasis from Wayanad district from the rehabilitation agreement. The delay in the process of rehabilitation and the exclusion of the tribals from Wayanad instigated a fresh movement by the Adivasis. Thousands of Adivasis encroached into the farmlands and stated living there, which put the State Government under pressure to start the process of distribution of title deeds. The rehabilitation plan promised each eligible family one acre of land, along with basic facilities like drinking water, roads, transportation, schools and electricity. But even after two years, the promise of basic facilities remained unfulfilled and led to the death of 14 people in the farm. The government's offer to provide employment also saw no progress. Today, the community's primary demand is five acres as alternate land and the inclusion of Adivasi areas in Kerala in the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution. But, the Government does not seem to be very keen to alleviate the pains of the struggling Adivasis in the Farm.

Tribal Land Struggles in Kannur

The Adivasi land struggles in Kannur (a district located in the northern part of Kerala) that began in 1999 were led by Adivasi Vimochana Munnani, an Adivasi organisation at the forefront of several land movements in Kerala. The movement was started by 9 landless Adivasi families who occupied 9.25 acres of land in Thiruvonappuram in the Peravoor region of Kannur. They encroached into the land as a result of the Government of Kerala capturing it to implement the Kerala

Land Reforms Act, 1970. On December 22, 1999 representatives of Adivasi, Dalit and several other organizations took part in a convention held in Peravoor. During the convention a formal resolution was passed for a land seizure movement whereby, the protestors would attempt to recapture surplus land, reserve forest land, government project lands and lands of large landowners. However, recently, the AVM's orientation towards the revolutionary people's movement in Kerala has come under the scanner of the Home Ministry of India. The Central Government had in fact sent a watch-list to the State Government to closely observe their activities. AVM's name also appeared in that list and now, their activities are being closely monitored by the State Government and the police.

Chengara Land Struggle

The agitation at Chengara in Pathanamthitta district began on August 4, 2007, when 300 families from various parts of the state converged on the rubber estate owned by Harrison Malayalam Plantations Ltd. The agitators alleged that the company was in possession of much more land than the actual extent under the government's lease. Their demand was five acres of land for cultivation (later reduced to one acre) and Rs 50,000 as financial assistance per family. During the more than two-year long protest, lack of food, scarcity of water, absence of medical facilities and hostile weather conditions led to the death of 13 people. After 790 grueling days, the agitation was settled during a discussion between the then Chief Minister, V S Achutanandan, Laha Gopalan

(leader of the Chengara Land Struggle) and others of the Sadhu Jana Vimochana Samyukta Vedi (SJVSV) – the organization that led the land struggle. Oommen Chandy, who was then the Leader of the Opposition in the Kerala State Assembly also participated in the talks. As a part of the settlement, 1,432 out of the 1,738 families that had started living on the rubber plantation were enlisted for receiving financial assistance to build houses. However, the distribution of land amongst the various tribes and castes was uneven. Some received one acre of land, while others received only 25 cents. The SJVSV also alleged that the Chengara Package had been accepted under pressure, as CPI (M) leaders had been intimidating and paying off their activists. Despite bitter allegations of betrayal and conspiracy by the ruling and opposition parties, the Chengara land struggle was a success. The Chengara agitation was withdrawn in two schedules in October, 2009 and August, 2011 following an agreement by which the ST, SC and backward community people were to get one acre, half an acre and 25 cents of land respectively per family. However, the lands allotted to most of these families were uncultivable.

Arippa Bhoosamaram

In 2009, the Kerala Government decided to set aside 21.54 acres of the 90 acre Arrippa Revenue Forest in Kulathupuzha village for the beneficiaries of the Chengara Package. The remaining 68.46 acres was kept aside for institutional development. On December 31, 2012 around 1,300 Adivasis, Dalits and landless poor encroached into the

remaining land in Arippa Forest and began their protest by building shanties and living there. The protestors claimed that a part of the forest was surplus revenue land meant for redistribution among the landless tribals. Under the banner of Adivasi Dalit Munetta Samiti (ADMS), the agitators raised the slogan “We do not want 3 cents of land; all we want is land for cultivation.” Among the protesters were people who had taken part in the historic Chengara land struggle and were given title deeds, but found themselves cheated, when they realized that the land allotted to them was neither fit for cultivation nor was it suitable for habitation. After one and a half year of relentless struggle, a discussion was called by the Chief Minister of Kerala with the representatives of the Adivasis and the Dalits protesting in Arippa, which ended without reaching any final decisions. The suggestion by the Chief Minister, Oommen Chandy, to give 3 cents of land to each protester was summarily rejected by the representatives. At the moment, the protesters are living in the Arippa Forest in shanties to press their demand of land for cultivation. “The authorities are interested in giving land only to big corporate firms and encroachers. A move is now on to provide four acres of land to every encroacher of public land but the same Government is asking the poor people to be satisfied with three cents,” said an office-bearer of the Arippa agitation council.

Puyamkutti Land Struggle

Some 218 Adivasi families had been residing in the 939 acres of the Uriyampetty forests in Puyamkutti. In order to evacuate the Adivasis from the biodiversity rich forests in the

Western Ghats, the State Government made an agreement with them that in place of the forest land, the Adivasis would be given financial assistance and fertile land for agriculture. However, the promised 545 acres of land meant for Adivasi rehabilitation actually is in the possession of Kerala Forest Department, which does not want to let go off the prime land. To get their right due of land and proper rehabilitation packages, the Adivasis came down to the streets of the Kochi District Collectorate and began their protests. The Adivasis have been caught in the infinite loop of bureaucratic procedures, and the inaction of the government has invigorated them into strengthening their protests.

Adivasi Welfare Forum

The Adivasi Welfare Forum in Kerala has been undertaking a relay protest strike in Pottanachira for land for the Adivasis. In 2002, protestors encroached into the Jersey Farm in Pottanachira demanding land titles for 24 acres of excess land in the farm. When the LDF government did not pay heed to the agitators, the protest slowly died down. However, the district Panchayat's decision to convert the 24 acres of land into a high-tech farm caused the AWF to renew its protests. On January 25, 2013, when the Deputy Collector came to the farm to collect evidence, the AWF protested by erecting more shanties at the farm site. Currently, while the Adivasis are fighting for land, the villagers and farm employees have begun a counter protest at the farm junction.

Perinchamkutty Land Struggle

On February 10, 2012 a batch of government officials arrived at the Perinchamkutty Adivasi Colony with a mighty police force, and proceeded to mercilessly beat up the residents and to forcefully evacuate them from their huts. 62 Adivasis of all ages and genders were arrested and imprisoned. The government's reasoning for the violent evictions was "illegal encroachment into government land". The Adivasis were released months later, and in protest against the wrongful eviction, they gathered in front of the District Collectorate on October 1, 2012 and began a non-violent, indefinite protest. Under the direction of the Adivasi Bhoomi Avakasa Samyukta Samiti (ABASS), they submitted a list of the landless Adivasis residing in Perinchamkutty. Accordingly, the District Collector of Idukki selected 161 Adivasis for the land distribution scheme and promised to allot an acre of land to each family. However, in the last two years, the government has not met with its promise. So far, 7 people have died in the struggle to reclaim their lands, but the government has still not reached a consensus on rehabilitating these innocent people. Meanwhile, the protesting Adivasis have reiterated their demand for land and have decided to intensify their struggle till they achieve their aim.

Impact of Land Reforms on the Adivasis

Although the Adivasis and Dalits form the backbone of the agricultural economy of Kerala, they have not yet benefitted from the land reforms that the Kerala Government initiated in the 1950s. Various land distribution schemes and

programmes that were meant to minimise landlessness among the Adivasis and the Dalits, did not actually relieve them. As far as the landlessness in Kerala is concerned, the Dalits and the Adivasis form around 85 per cent of the landless in the state. The state has been witnessing a steady decline in food production and farming. Since agricultural activity has hit a bottom low the state is largely dependent on the neighbouring states for its food requirements. As such, the Government of Kerala, instead of bringing back the Adivasis and the Dalits to agriculture and farming, has thrown them to the fringes of the society and has reduced them to living in colonies. A close look at the way the state has fared in implementing various reforms and how it has impacted the Adivasis and the Dalits reveals that:

- i) There was a lack of will among the successive governments that came to power in Kerala to properly implement various land legislation policies and to honestly redistribute land among the Adivasis.
- ii) A look at the various legislations initiated shows that there is a huge gap in the introduction of the policies and their actual effective implementation. For example, The Kerala Scheduled Tribes (Restriction on Transfer of Lands and Restoration of Alienated Lands) Act was adopted in 1975, but it was only implemented after 1986, causing a huge delay.
- iii) Adivasi lands have been lost due to encroachments, land grabbing, forest notifications and the formation of private plantation companies.

- iv) Alienation of Adivasis from forest and nature, and restriction on access to forest produce has increased the Adivasis' dependence on other sources of income, and has forced them to migrate to other places for work such as casual labour etc.
- v) Frustration among the Adivasis due to gradual land loss over the years has led to loss of livelihood, hunger, malnutrition and starvation deaths.
- vi) Denial of livelihood and the struggle for sheer survival has led to the formation of several Adivasi struggle groups for land rights across the state and the rise of Adivasi land rights movements.
- vii) Ghettoization of the Adivasi communities through creation of Adivasi and Harijan colonies. According to CK Janu – one of the prominent Adivasi leaders in Kerala – although the

Kerala State Government decided to limit the individual possession of land to 15 acres during the Land Reforms in the 1960s, excluding plantations from the purview of this law effectively led to the ghettoization of the Adivasi communities, as they were either pushed to the reserves or to three cent plot colonies. In spite of several provisions in the law, the State Government has failed to provide enough land to the Adivasis to ensure their survival. Instead, what one gets to witness is the apathy of the state and its indifference to the Adivasis. Even the mainstream society at times looks at the Adivasis and their dissenting voices as a nuisance and a

disruption to India's development story.

Apart from these large struggles, there were also many small-scale protests across Kerala that continue even today.

The present trend of Adivasi awakening is a defining characteristic of contemporary Indian politics. He sees the new awakening as a positive sign of the democratic transformation in India. Yet, a large section of the Indian polity does not treat the Adivasi struggles as a positive phenomenon, but are caught in the whirlpool of mainstream India's development and growth. Thus, caught between the apathy and inaction of the state and a section of the mainstream society that looks at the Adivasis as a nuisance, their struggle for their right to life continues amidst a confused state of affairs.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The concept of gender as capital is a useful tool for understanding contemporary gender relations in Kerala. women's "gender capital" is identified with traits of femininity, such as domestication, passivity and subordination to male superiority. At the national level, gender equality was highest in Kerala. Even though the status of women in Kerala is better, in terms of demographic and social spheres, the female work participation has been on the decline and even much steeper than the male work participation. the male work participation rate in Kerala is increasing continuously but also it is substantially higher than that of the female work participation rate. Educated unemployment among both males

and females in Kerala is increasing substantially and the extent of increase in unemployment among female work seekers has been relatively much higher.

Women's occupations are often extension of women's domestic roles (cooks, domestic servants), mothering and nurturing roles (teachers, nurses, midwives) or supportive roles (secretaries, typists, assistants). Women are absent from administrative and political occupations that entail large amounts of authority and power over others when compared to males. They are concentrated in activities with low levels of productivity, income, stability and security of employment.

Many jobs are categorised as men's and women's on the basis of traditional norms rather than own assessment. In rice cultivation, low paid jobs like seeding, transplanting, weeding, etc. are female jobs and ploughing is a male job. In house hold industry females work as helpers. In construction males are employed in high paid skilled works and females in low paid jobs like mixing mortar and carrying head loads. Regarding the status of employment, women occupy a low share of jobs in secure and stable category of regular wage and salary earners. They also have poor representation in public sector employment compared to males. Kerala's male and female literacy rates are well above the all India rates both in rural and urban areas.

In Kerala, unlike the rest of India majority of deliveries take place in institutions and this has contributed considerably to low infant and maternal mortality. The status of women in Kerala, in this regard, is not better than that of women at the

national level. Violence against women in Kerala is very high when compared to India. In spite of 100 per cent literacy and increased rate of women's education, atrocities against women have become the most serious social evil of the contemporary Kerala society. Crimes against women in Kerala have increased at an alarming rate. Kerala women have less household decision making power than men but she has more decision making power compared to Indian women.

Historical Perspective

The present Kerala State consisted (ME three distinct political entities, viz., Malabar as part of the then Madras Presidency and the two princely States of Cochin and Travancore. Organised political movements were started in these regions at different times. The political activities of each region had certain special features too, unique to that area and linked to their social and political systems. The influence of traditional factors was also very much in evidence in the case of women's participation in politics in the three regions. The impact of caste and religion, the family structure among the different communities, the family status, the familial and social role of women among these communities etc. on the nature and degree of political participation of women in the three regions was very marked. One such writer Jacob Canter Visscher wrote about the living conditions of women in Kerala in the middle of the 18th century as follows:

The women marry at a very early period of life and are to be seen sitting with babies on their knees at an age when in our country they would be playing and running about with

children. A girl is considered marriageable when she has attained her 13th year; and then all the suitors begin to flock around her. As she obtains womanhood earlier, her bloom is proportionately sooner over than in our country.

The dominant features of the Hindu society during the 19th century were based on the predominance of the upper castes and the relatively subordinate position occupied by the lower castes. The Brahmins were dominant and they declared that the duty of a woman was to serve her husband and be confined to the kitchen (458, p.12). The outcome was that the status of women became one of favoured slaves. People of the lower castes were condemned to lifelong slavery. The lower class women were even prohibited from clothing themselves properly. They were prohibited from covering the upper part of their body. It was taught that every man and woman must die in the caste or religion in which he or she was born. It was caste that generally decided the nature of social relationships and status of individuals.

The question of women rights began to get articulated during the reform period in the wake of inception and spread of colonial modernity. The socio-religious reform movements of the nineteenth century played a crucial role in improving the condition of women in the society. Further, all leaders of the reform movements worked for the eradication of social evils and social customs which altered Malayali life in a major way. Educated men and women from elite upper caste groups started to form women's associations during the nineteenth century. Each community had their own women's association

in which women were encouraged to participate in community mobility movements. The formation of such organizations helped women to come out of their traditional roles in the society. It provided them a space for self expression outside family. During late nineteenth century, there were several magazines published in Malayalam and many of them propagated the need for women education, freedom and mobility for women and so on. Thus women's magazines and journals of this period widened the mental horizon of women of the dominant castes. The influence of colonial modernity compelled different communities to take steps to overcome existing backwardness and pre-modern characteristic of their life in order to compete with the 'new' changes. This resulted in a positive change in the life of women, especially those belonging to elite upper castes. However, Lower caste women were not part of these developments; they were only able to overcome their subhuman status through the reform process, and all other deprivations remained same for them.

The 1980s is a crucial period in the history of feminist movement as women's organizations began to get established under the leadership of educated middle class women, who were influenced by Marxist ideology. These organisations began to develop a critique of Kerala society from women's stand point. Highlighting the lower status of women in society and family these organizations posed challenges to the mainstream left's understanding of society. Drawing from Marxist idea of society, these women's groups tried to extend such debate to understand the gender dimension.

Discrimination faced by women in all spheres of life was the focal point of debates of such organizations. They discussed a wide range of issues which affected women's life in general. The topic ranges from domestic violence, mobility, property right, dowry and domestic division of labour. There had also been discussions about cultural implications of gender in Kerala. A kind of 'sisterhood' celebration could be seen in the initial years of feminist movements. The role of patriarchy in ascribing the status of secondary citizenship of women is widely discussed. During this time, a number of women's organizations were formed all across Kerala. The first meeting of independent women at Vavannur, in 1982, was organised by women who were active in left politics. They influenced the formation of many early women's organisations such as Prachodana, Thiruvananthapuram; Bodhana, Calicut; Manushi, Pattampy; Chethana, Thrissur and Grameena Vanitha Prashtanam, Thiruvalla and Prabudhatha, Payyanur (Chandrika 1998: 34). These organizations mainly took up the issues such as rape cases, domestic violence, dowry deaths and other kind of atrocities against women. For instance Manushi under the leadership Sara Joseph had taken up the case of murder of a teenage girl named Lata. It demanded for an enquiry into the death of Latha and formed an action council to lead the agitation. Their activities were more in a popular mode, seeking support of the social organisations including political parties. They organized many hunger strikes seeking justice for victims of rape. Through these activities Manushi could seek support from all sections of society especially women of all strata of society. By giving an emotional undertone to the

entire Lata rape case protest, Manushi could establish the subjective elements of women's politics. It succeeded in establishing rape as social crime connoting its gender implication in Kerala society and it demanded for a new language to speak about such atrocities against women, which was new to the political practices of Kerala society. Manushi published a handful of materials on the women question and they had attempted to write songs on the idea of women's empowerment and a good number of short stories were also published by them. For instance the popular song 'unranneneekkuka sodari' (wake up dear sister from the century long oppression) became an 'icon' of women movement later. This song first appeared in the Manushi magazine.

Devika and Mini Sukumar (2006) say: The decade of the 1990's also saw the firming of the feminist presence in the arena of politics in Kerala. The implementation of the 33 percent reservation of seats for women in local bodies. 'gender mainstreaming' has also proceeded space, and now 'gender training' is an eminently familiar, technical and mostly nonthreatening term. The Kerala governments 'women – oriented poverty mission' has been lauded as a successful innovation in women's empowerment. Yet the extent to which these initiatives have been successful in politicizing women is still doubtful; the possibility they offer, too, appear mixed. It is also important to remember that the Government's efforts to mainstream gender took place precisely in a period of accentuated confrontation between the feminist movement

in Kerala and almost all sections of entrenched political society, which was certainly a major way in which feminists grabbed the attention of mainstream media. In these struggles, the feminist movement relied heavily up on the judiciary and the media, which did bring certain gains.

In 1990's feminist groups found new rhythm in articulating their concerns. Sexual harassment cases reported in this period became a main focus of this period for feminist movements. Feminist groups also raised the issues such as property rights, sexual harassment at work place, domestic violence, gender division of labour and Women's Reservation Bill in parliament. There were emergence of new feminist organizations which focused on intervening in issues of women with a gender perspective. Later in the middle of 1990's a network of autonomous women's organizations and individuals were formed, known as Kerala Sthree Vedi. It became the face of women's struggle in Kerala. Vedi raised issue such as sexual harassment cases, representation of women in various political structures so on. Here are some organizations formed during this time.

Anweshi

Anweshi is a women's organization set up under the leadership of K. Ajitha, a notable women activist and leader in Kerala. She was a leader of CPI (ML) groups and was a revolutionary activist during 60's and later she left the extreme left organizations and established herself as a feminist. This organization established an important wing called Anweshi Women's Counseling Centre in November 1993. Anweshi is

part of a network of small, radical women's emancipation groups in Kerala called Kerala Sthree Vedi.

Its work in the Kozhikode district of North Kerala, over the years its activities have been extended to adjacent districts of Malappuram, Wayanad, Kannur and Kasargod. Anweshi has been collaborating with other NGOs and government departments in its efforts to highlight the issue of growing violence against women in Kerala and in its struggle to get justice for women and children who are victims of such violence. This organization attempts to address the issue of gender based violence in the state of Kerala and committed towards gender justice and women's rights. It works among women from all economic classes, castes and religious communities, especially from the poorer and marginalized sections of Kerala. The organization is located in Calicut and extends its activities to nearby districts.

Kerala Sthree Vedi Kerala Sthree Vedi (Kerala Women's Forum) was formed in 1996. It is a common platform for diverse women's groups to plan joint action for political demands of the women's movement. Sakhi Resource Centre for Women It was established at Thiruvananthapuram in 1996, under the leadership of Aieyamma Vijayan and Mercy Alexander. Sakhi established an exclusive women's library. It involves in many activities including gender training for both men and women, training in Panchayati Raj and organising workshops and seminars regarding women's issues. They offer capacity building programmes to various target groups such as adolescence people, young women and men, people

representatives, government employs on gender and governance. They also publish a newsletter in which contemporary women's issues are discussed.

Sahaja

Sahaja is an autonomous women's group operating from Kottayam. They constantly engage with women's issues. They have conducted many seminars and discussions on national and international issues concerning human rights. Sahaja co-ordinates with other women's groups with similar political agendas. It has a reading room and discussion group for promoting critical thinking and interventions regarding women's issues and other democratic issues. Sahaja as a group extended multi level supports to the various struggles in Kerala, especially by women and marginalized group. They also played a major role in addressing sexual harassment cases in Kerala. They offer support to the victims of atrocities and sexual harassment.

Sahayathrika

The concept of 'Sahayathrika' was shaped a decade ago in a context when social activists initiated several studies and enquiries into the growing number of suicides among women from different social, economic, and vocational backgrounds. The idea of an independent collective arose as we realized the need to address the gravity of human rights violation they had faced in their private as well as public lives, both directly and indirectly.

Sahayathrika aims at a deeper and inclusive approach

regarding their rights in order to understand the specificity of the problems faced by women of varied identities. As a queer support group, Sahayathrika believes that in a pluralistic state like Kerala there is need for comprehensive political intervention at multiple levels to address the issues of differing identities. Being an independent organisation, it studies women's diverse lives, identities and sexualities in relation to their varied social situations.

Initially, Sahayathrika focused on women's human rights issues but later widened its scope to discuss issues regarding alternate sexualities. 'Sahayathrika', through its regular interventions, brought to light that queer sexuality as 'natural' as heterosexuality. It also believes that sexuality is one's choice and part of basic rights. The collective has stood by those women who with their lives have questioned the conventional definitions of gender and sexuality and it has also brought such people to the forefront of the mainstream society.

Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society including participation in the decision making process and access to power are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace. It has been hypothesised by many that woman's agency and autonomy have been one of the major factors that contributed to the success of Kerala's development model. In fact, Kerala has often been referred as the "land of women." The state has never had a female-male ratio below unity for a century. In terms of literacy, life expectancy, and mean age at marriage, women in Kerala score higher than any

other state in the country. In 1950 when India became a democratic republic, the female literacy rate at the national level was merely 7.9 percent while in Kerala it was 47.1 percent. The state has achieved remarkable progress in female literacy rate as seen in data from 1951 to 2011.

After the enactment of the 73d and 74'h Constitutional Amendments in 1993, women's role in governance has increased in India at grass root democratic institutions, namely, Panchayati Raj and Nagarapalika Institutions. However, Due to less political awareness among women, the male members of the panchayats as well as their husbands and other family members keep them away from meetings, take signature at their residence and treat them as dummy participants.

‘Janasree’ and other Programmes

In addition to ‘*Kudumbashree*’ which is the official state programme a private initiative called ‘*Janasree*’ has been launched in recent times for empowerment and for grassroots development through people’s participation. Registered as an NGO in 2006, it has organized 60190 ‘*Janasree Sanghoms*’ which encompass an approximate beneficiary participation of 12.5 lakhs. 65000 SHGs formed in the villages has federated themselves to be part of Janasree through district level apex federations. Microfinance is one of the major activities of the *Janasree* Mission.

In short, in a society woman's status is very much connected with their economic status and their participation in productive work. Though women were always engaged *in*

some sort of worked they were considered economically inactive as long as they work at home. In comparison with women of other states women of Kerala have greater literacy, and at the same time, the percentage of the educated unemployed, is also higher. To tackle t h i s problem, the government of Kerala introduced many programmes for women particularly through the Department of Industries.

Participation of women in the administration and other activities of the churches on terms of equality with men, is not common. In Protestant churches women's participation in decision making bodies as well as in liturgical services is being allowed. Women's ordination into priesthood *is* sanctioned and encouraged by some Protestant churches, of late, whereas in the Orthodox and Catholic churches women are not considered for elections to any of the decision making bodies. They are not considered equal with men. Political parties have no definite outlook on women's issues. Meetings on important matters are convened late at night. Women cannot attend these meetings and *so* crucial decisions are taken in their absence.

The women's movement under women's own leadership is a recent development in Kerala. These autonomous women's groups play a great role in strengthening the women's movement in Kerala which is still in its infancy.

