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CORE COURSE
STATE AND SOCIETY IN KERALA

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MODULE – I

Social and Democratic basis of Kerala society:
Caste and Class structure in the pre independence period.
Role of Missionaries
Social reform movements of Sree Narayana Guru, Ayyankali and others.
Temple Entry Struggles, Democratic Movements and Nationalist Movements
Communist and Peasant Movements
Rise of Representative Institutions.

The Historical Setting:

Earliest history: The earliest archaeological findings from Kerala are strikingly similar to the megalithic monuments of West Europe and Asia, which are comparatively younger falling between 10th century BC and 5th century AD.

The Cheras: The Cheras ruled over the central portion of the present day Kerala. They seemed to have attracted a good deal of Roman trade. There were a number of other minor chieftains who flourished in different parts of Kerala.

Trade: The geographical advantages, i.e., the abundance of pepper and other spices, the navigability of the rivers connecting the high mountains with the seas and the discovery of favourable trade winds, which carried sailing ships directly from the Arabian coast to Kerala in less than forty days, combined to produce a veritable boom in Kerala's foreign trade. The harbours of Naura near Kannur, Tyndis near Quilandy, Muziris near Kodungallor and Bacare near Alappuzha were the important ports.

Brahmin Settlement: By about the 8th century, a chain of thirty-two Brahmin settlements had come up, which eventually paved the way for the social, cultural and political separation of Kerala from the Tamil country, in due course. These colonies were capable of producing a great philosopher, Sankaracharya. Shri Sankara was born in the village of Kaladi in central Kerala. He was an intellectual giant of the 9th century, who saved the Hindu orthodoxy through the synthesis of cults and who can well be ranked with St. Thomas of Acquinas in clarity of thought and understanding.

By the advent of Brahminical Hinduism, the whole of Kerala came to be covered by a network of temple centered Brahmin settlements. Under their control, these settlements had a large extend of land, number of tenants and the entailing privileges. With more advanced techniques of cultivation, sociopolitical organization and a strong sense of solidarity, the Brahmans gradually formed the elite of the society. They succeeded in raising a feudal fighting class and ordered the caste system with numerous graduations of upper, intermediate and lower classes. In due course, the consolidation of these settlements and the establishments of their ascendancy gradually led to the evolution of a new Malayalee language and a new Malayalee culture, the separate identity of Kerala was in the making.
Ninth Century: The ninth century raised the curtain of a new epoch in Kerala history. The ancient capital of Vanchi fell into the hands of the Pandyas. The vanquished rulers founded a new capital near the old harbour city of Muciri (Muzirī), now known as Kodungalloor. The new capital was called Makotai or Mahodayapura. It was built around the great Siva temple of Tiruvanchikulam. No trace of the palace at Makotai remains today.

The Political Set Up: The revival of the Chera kingdom was actually a byproduct of the Aryan Brahmin settlements and assumption of the socio-political dominance they had established. The Perumal was the Lord of Mahodayapura and the overlord of Kerala (Keraladhinatha). But his sovereignty was constrained by the preexisting power of the Brahmin settlements and the hereditary chieftains. Each Nadu had its own hereditary or nominated governor. Thus the great feudatories were the hereditary governors of Kolathunad, Purakizhanad, Kurumpanad, Eranad, Valluvanad, Kizhamalanad, Vempalanad and Venad.

A new harbour city, named Kollam, was established here in AD 825. In the course of time, it became the second capital of the Cheras of Makotai. Kollam gradually gained in trade and prosperity under the leadership of Mar Sapir Iso, the Syrian Christian merchant prince. The founding of Kollam city marked the beginning of an era, the ‘Kolla Varsham’. The Kollam era came to be known as the Malayalam era.

Twelfth Century: The beginning of the 12th century marked a period of troubled times for Kerala. The attack by the combined forces of the Cholas and the Pandyas and internal conflicts in the Chera kingdom made Rama Kulasekhara the Perumal, decided to leave the country in the company of some Arab Muslims. He is believed to have been converted into Islam and have died at a place called Sapher in Arabia. This event has been referred to as the partition of Kerala.

In the absence of a central power, the divisions of the Chera kingdom soon emerged as principalities under separate chieftains. These were crucial events, which shaped the destinies of Kerala, for many centuries to come. In this period, Kerala was chiefly a land of agricultural villages. Society had a feudal complexion with a graded hierarchy, hereditary occupations and well-defined duties and responsibilities for each class of people. Proprietorship of land was closely related to political power and administration.

An interesting social set up was the matrilineal form of inheritance. In spite of the predominantly agrarian character of society, trade and commerce flourished. Hill products from the Western Ghats carried down, by the many rivers, to the natural harbours on the Arabian Sea secured an expanding market in West Asia and Europe. A number of Jewish and Christian traders exploited this situation with the help of the monsoon. The native chieftains overlooked the differences in faith and race and extended them religious tolerance as well as social equality. These merchants were not inclined to or capable of disturbing established order. In fact, Syrian Christian and Jewish leaders like Mar Sapir Iso and Joseph Rabban came to the rescue of Chera kings in times of war and thereby earned their gratitude in full measure.

The loss of political unity did not lead to the loss of political independence in Kerala during the fag end of 14th century. The ghost of the Chera kingdom haunted the destiny of Kerala as a guardian deity for many centuries to come. Each minor chieftain claimed the gift of the last Cheraman Perumal as the sanction behind his throne. It was essentially a game of power politics.

Within a generation of the decline of Chera power, the governors of Eranad shifted from their interior headquarters at Nediyiruppu to the coastal strip of Kozhikkod. Gradually, the Eradis (rulers of Eranad), now known to the world better as the Zamorins of Kozhikkod, grew in prosperity and power. The locational advantage enjoyed by their new headquarters with its
proximity to Kozhikkod was a decisive factor in attracting a growing number of Arab traders. The rulers also exhibited a measure of statesmanship in quarantining religious tolerance to all sects and creeds in the big international mart at Kozhikkod. In due course, they roped in the chieftains of Parappanad and Vettattunad in the south as well as Kurumbanad and Puranad (Kottayam) in the north, within their sphere of influence.

The Zamorin also succeeded in their venture to capture Tirunavaya region from the Valluvanad rulers. This victory brought the Zamorin directly into contact with the rulers of Kochi. It opened up a long chapter of protracted Kozhikkod-Kochi wars. The contest could not stop until one of the powers could eliminate the other. The support of Arab wealth and equipment favoured Kozhikkod against Kochi during the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries, until this was counter-balanced by the Europeans - the Dutch and the Portuguese - on the other side.

Not only the princes and princes of Kerala, but the entire population had to take sides. In fact, the big Brahmin community split into two, with the Panniyur faction supporting the Zamorin and the Cokiram faction throwing its weight in favour of the Raja of Kochi.

The central portion of Kerala, over which the rulers of Kochi held sway, was the seat of Namboothiri (Brahmin) orthodoxy. Though the Raja of Kochi was respected all over Kerala as the direct descendant of the Perumals and the noblest representative of the Kshatriya race, the inhibiting weight of tradition made him incapable of initiating new strategies and policies to suit the changing times. He remained the highest patron of Brahminical ritual and scholarship. In the process, wealth and power slipped out of his hands and made way for art and literature.

In the southern part of Kerala, Venad was the rising star. Geographically and culturally, the kingdom of Venad remained partly in Keraladesa and partly in Pandyadesa. The Venad area was definitely at a disadvantage in the absence of the original settlements of Tulu-Kerala Brahmins, whose leadership and dominance had been responsible for the distinctive character of Kerala society and culture. However, in course of time, the immense wealth of the Venad kings could attract some of the Kerala Brahmins (Namboothiris) to settle down at Thiruvananthapuram. Nevertheless, excessive involvement in Tamil politics weakened the impact of Venad on the rest of Kerala.

KERALAS CASTE CLASS STRUCTURE IN THE PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

| Scheduled Castes (SC): Scheduled castes generally consist of former "untouchables" (the term "Dalit" is now preferred). Present population is 16% of total population of India i.e. around 160 million. |
| Scheduled Tribes (ST): Scheduled tribes generally consist of tribal groups. Present population is 7% of total population of India i.e. around 70 million. |
| Other Backward Classes (OBC) The Mandal Commission covered more than 3000 castes under OBC Category and stated that OBCs form around 52% of the Indian population. There is substantial debate over the exact number of OBCs in India. It is generally estimated to be sizable, but many believe that it is lower than the figures quoted by either the Mandal Commission or the National Sample Survey. |

Uzavar, Panner, Parayar, Paravan (fishermen), and Kurumber were the main castes of the olden times. The majority people were Uzavas and Paravans who followed Buddha dharma which is believed to have come from Eelam (Sri Lanka). A later majority of Uzavas stayed as Ezhavas/Thiyyas (people from Ezham, "deep") and a significant portion of Paravans became
Christians and Muslims. Jainism came through Mysore and Karnataka. Muziris, Maduri, PanthalayaniKollam, Vizinjam and such cities and costal areas had Roman, Jewish, Arab, Chinese settlements. There were also a few Brahmins who settled in these cities but at that time they were neither influential nor had any significant presence in society. Brahmin settlement started at a much later stage around AD 7-10 centuries. They came to Kerala from Tulunadu under Kadamba Raja Mayurasharma's directions and settled in 32 gramams (villages). (A Kadamba record of the 5th century at the Edakkal cave in Wayanad bears testimony to the Kadamba presence in Kerala.)

Then came 100 years of war between the Cheras and the Cholas, and at first the Cheras lost heavily; and Chera power started to vanish. This time with the help of Nairs, cheras formed "Chavers" (suicide squads) and finally the Cholas were defeated.

During this time, the social system started to change, with Brahmins elevating their position in society. The Cheras lost many men in the battlefield and Chera women started to have Brahmin partners. Thus, the matriarchal system (Maru-makka-thayam) started. The Brahmins received local customs and imposed their Vedic knowledge and became Namputhiris. Their children and relatives from the Cheras became Nairs. Adi Sankara established Brahmin supremacy among other ideologies.

The Classification of Castes: In old Kerala society, the castes were classified as Brahmins, Shudras, and Panchamas ('Fifth' Varna). However, for practical purposes, sections of Shudras were declared Savarna and all other Shudras and Panchamas were declared Avarna. Even non-Hindus were considered Panchama in old days. Many native rulers, most of whom were Nairs, were inducted into Kshatriyahood (Malayala Kshatriyas) by the Tulu Brahmins.

Savarna Jatis (Classified Castes): The following castes were the 'upper castes' of Kerala who were permitted temple entry:

- Brahmins: [Namboodiris, Pohtys, Non Malayali migrant Brahmins], Nairs, Malayala Kshatriyas, Ambalavasis

Avarna Jatis (Out castes): The following were the out castes.

- Aasari, Moosari, Karuvan, Thattan, Ezhava (known as Thiyyas in northern Kerala) The largest Hindu community/ethnic group in Kerala. The word "Ezhava" or "Thiyya" can be traced to many words. The word "Eshwar" is one such word, denoting early Shiva worship. Other words are "Ezham" (or "Elam"), or "Dweep" (a Pali word for Sri Lanka). There is a hypothesis that Ezhavas are descendants of Buddhists from Sri Lanka, who refused to convert to Hinduism. However, historian K. Purushottama Chon traces the term Ezhava to "Azhuva" from the Azarbaijan and Armenian province of South Russia. According to Ezhava folk songs, the Ezhas were descendants of Buddhists from Sri Lanka, who refused to convert to Hinduism. However, historian K. Purushottama Chon traces the term Ezhava to "Azhuva" from the Azarbaijan and Armenian province of South Russia. According to Ezhava folk songs, the Ezhas were descendants of Buddhists from Sri Lanka, who refused to convert to Hinduism. However, historian K. 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THE CLASS IN KERALA

The economic class in Kerala could be well understood with its essential linkages with the Caste system. The customs, practices, and festivals of the times were examples of expression of a society interwoven with caste and class.
The Ruling Class and the Power Politics of Bloody Mamamkams: Mamamkam was a riparian festival. It was held once in 12 years along the banks of Bharatha-Puzha. Kings, nobles, Brahmins, traders, artists etc. from different Desams constituted the over flowing crowd on the sands of Thirunavay. The patronage of ‘Mamamkom’ was known as ‘Raksha Purusha sthanam’. It was a position of great honour and prestige. Valluvakonathiri of Valluvanad was the Rakshapurusha of Mamamkam before the Zamorin of Calicut coveted this prestigious position. Zamorin defeated the Valluvakonathiri and became the Rakshapurusha of Mamamkom. This was a great blow to the self - respect of the people of Valluvanad. Everytime the Zamorin took his position as Rakshapurusha at the Mamamkom, the Chavers of Valluvanad reached there to fight against him. Death was a certain. Still they came ready to die, to protect the prestige of their ruler. They became martyrs.

The Supporting Fighting Class: ‘Win or die’ Chavers: The Chavers were fighters who came to be known in Kerala history from 11th century AD. Their primary duty was to assist the king or the naduvazhi in battle. They were also known to have defeated the Portuguese. The Chavers even rendered service as police, volunteer troop and fighting squads.

The Intra-Class Contradictions: The Feudal Lords and the Family Feuds: If a person died in an encounter, his relatives nurtured feelings of revenge against the assassins and took revenge on him and his family. The feud lasted for generations.

Duels Till Death to Settle Disputes: ‘Ankam’ is a fight between two warriors. Each side in a dispute would engage warriors to fight for them. They would fight for them at a fixed place and at an appointed time for a prefixed amount of money. The victorious warrior would be declared to have won the dispute. Usually the ankam ended with the death of one of the warriors. The warriors charged high prices for fights. They were professionally trained fighters. They got training from Kalaris.

Thus the Medieval Kerala was one of feuds, suicide squads, Mamamkom, Ankams, and Kalaris.
After the decline of Perumal rule in the 12th century, a decentralised system of government under the leadership of Naduvazhis came into force. The following were the major Nadus.

Attingal, Venad, Kayamkulam, Chempakasseri, Kollam, Kochi, Kodugallur, Kolathunad, Kozhikode, Kannur, Desinganad, Thekkumkur, Vadakkumkur, Perimpadappu Swarupam, Nediyiruppu Swarupam, Kadathanad, and Valluvanad were the Nadus of Medieval Kerala.

**Medieval Settlement Pattern:** The medieval Kerala settlement depended on agricultural production. Besides the agricultural labourers, there were blacksmiths with expertise in making metal tools, masons, carpenters, astrologers who fixed the time for a variety of new ventures etc. There were Apothecaries and men who performed the rituals related to agricultural and household activities. This was the basic unit of a society.

The settlement area consisted of a temple complex where the Brahmins had a prominent status. In the basic units, there were people who assisted the priestly class as well. The economic/class hierarchy of the society was as follows:

**Naduvazhi:** Ruler of a Nadu, which consisted of many Desoms. Swaroopam was the power centre. He had control over Desavazhis.

**Desavazhi:** Ruler of a Desam; having supervisory control over Karalar.

**Karalar:** The tenants of the land, which was owned by the Naduvazhi, Desavazhis, Brahmins, or temples.

**Adiyalar:** The slaves and workers who tilled the soil. The lowest economic class.

In the centers of royal power and in the centers of trade the royal servants and the traders formed part of the basic unit of society.

Until the medieval period, such castes as Nayar and Ezhava had no rigid differentiation. Different professional groups like Ambalavasis, Kammalas became Nayars when they joined the troops. With an increase in the number of Naduvazhis and with the growing importance of militarism, a major section of the soldiers turned Nayars.

**Sanketams and Changathams:** The Yogams (councils) of the Namboothiri trustees of temples and temple lands and their privileges were together called Sanketam. In the absence of sovereign authority of the government, the Sanketams became real rulers. They administered law and justice in their jurisdiction. The Changatham was a group of warriors who ensured protection and safety to a Desam and to the Sanketam property. They were rewarded with a share from the offerings that were received at the temple. The share was called “Kaaval Panam” or Rakshabhogam. It was with the military backing of these changathams that the Brahmins established social and political hegemony.

**The Social Classes and Unapproachability:** The hierarchy was regulated in accordance with the interest of the hegemonic classes. There was even a regulation, which fixed the distance to be kept by each caste from a Namboothiri. The rule of unapproachability insisted on 12 feet of distances for Kshatriya, 24 for Nayar, 36 for Kammala, and 60 for Paraya. Conveniently, as artisans were essential for the construction of temples and royal households and for manufacturing dress and ornaments, they were given a place close to Nayars. Businessmen, traders, artisans and Muslims, Christians and Jews who controlled foreign trade were given important status in the society in spite of their religion and caste. The high and the low castes were decided based on the production potential of each caste. The Brahmins had their own justification for all these.
‘Satygraha’ for Immoral Social Control: There were occasions of disputes between temples and Naduvazhis and between Brahmin and non-Brahmin landlords. At a time when the Brahmins felt that the others might override their norms, they resorted to a technique of fasting as a last resort. Until and unless their requirements were fulfilled or unless the non-Brahmins repented, the Brahmins would refuse to take food. Abandoning the served food, the Brahmins would indulge in rituals and poojas. In many of the temples, there were houses for fasting.

The Class, Castes, and an Unjustifiable Judicial System: The impact of the caste system could be seen in the trial and punishment of the accused. The following methods of Trial and Punishments were prevalent.

**Trial by Water:** The accused will have to swim across a tank full of crocodiles. If he escaped unhurt, he will be declared innocent.

**Trial by Fire:** The accused has to dip his fingers in boiling oil or ghee. This is the trial. If he escapes without burns, he will be declared innocent. Otherwise, he will be punished.

**Trial by Poison:** The accused has to put his hand inside a pot where starving poisonous snakes are kept. If he is not bitten, he is declared innocent.

**Trial by Balance:** The accused person will be weighed first. Then the charges against him will be written in a palm leaf and then tied to his body. He will be weighed again and if he does not weigh more, he will be acquitted. Among these, trial by balance alone was given to Brahmins.

These were only the methods of trial and the punishments were stranger:

**Chithravadham:** It was a method of executing a person by piercing his body with an iron rod and fastening his body to a tree. Interestingly, this punishment was meted out only to the lower classes. This method was also called ‘kazhuvettal’ and were given for even minor crimes like stealing a coconut. Other sorts of punishments were as follows:

Excommunication, fine, enslavement, mutilation of limbs, plucking out the eyes, trampling by elephant, whipping and then applying chilly powder in the wounds and making him stand in the sun. Of these, Brahmins were given only the first two punishments. Thus, it can be seen that Class and Caste considerations existed in the administration of justice.

Men, Women, Freedom and Power in a Caste System. (Mannappedi/Pulappedi):

The classical example of the status of women can be traced in the social customs of Mannappedi or Pulappedi. It was a custom, which existed until 17th century. An upper caste woman could lose her caste if any male from the castes like Pulayan, Parayan or Mannan happened to see her or touch her or threw a stone or a stick at her and called out that he had seen her. He could take her with him. Then she would be expelled from the caste or will be under discretion of the elders to decide. This would apply especially on the night of a specific day that fell in the month of Karkatakam (roughly corresponding to the dates 15 July to 15 August) in the Gregorian calendar. Given the social and economic status of lower caste people of that era, it is believed that this practice could not be perpetuated without social sanction, and definitely not without the connivance and/or tacit support of the men of upper castes. Thus, the men folk used this in the garb of a custom to stifle the freedom or rights of women belonging to upper castes such as the Nairs. Another view of the practice is that it was a route provided by tradition to the oppressed Pulayan class for registering their intentions of revenge as a symbolic act. A more convincing interpretation is that it was a convenient method of the upper castes to get rid of ‘smart’ women even within their community. The practice was abolished by Kerala Varma in 1696. It should be remembered that this was the plight of women even among the upper classes.
It can be seen that in the pre-independence period, especially in the Middle Ages, the Kerala society was a classical example of a land strewn on class, caste and gender basis. Perhaps that made the great 19th century saint Swami Vivekananda to term the land as a lunatic asylum.

MISSIONARY CONTRIBUTION TO KERALA SOCIETY IN THE PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD.

Christianity reached Kerala even before it reached Europe. Ever since, the religion was part and parcel of Kerala society. The Church adopted many customs and practices of the native Hindu community. However, when the Portuguese came in the 15th century, they were interested in large scale conversion. There was a positive effect for this. The missionaries did not pay attention to the caste system in Kerala. They converted people from different castes into Christianity. They were more or less treated alike. Moreover, to treat people as upper or lower was against basic Christian values. Besides this, the Kerala Christians were brought under the Roman Catholic Church by the Synod of Diamper of 1599. The Roman Church was known for its efficient administrative set up. Thus, the Church in Kerala came under a good administrative mechanism. However, this in turn led to the growth of factionalism within the Church in Kerala. But, on the other hand, it promoted freedom of thought and expression within the Church.

The Missionaries were interested not only in conversion. As a course of their work, they wanted to establish educational institutions as well as hospitals and other social service centres. For this, they received the patronage of local rulers. Homoeopathic medical system was brought to Kerala by the missionaries. Now, there is full fledged practice of this system in the State.

The following is a discussion of the Missionary contribution to Kerala society in the field of education in the pre-independence period.

A Prussian missionary by name W.T.Ringletaube established schools in Nagercoil and nearby areas in the period between 1806 and 1816.

Rev. Mead of the London Mission Society (LMS) is known for his work in the field of education in Thiruvithamkurd during the period 1817–1873.

Bailey, Baker and Fenn belonged to the Christian Missionary Society (C.M.S) which was active in Kottayam between since 1813 and 1930. They set up a Grammar School at Kottayam and School for girls at Alapuzha during this period.

With the help of the CMS missionaries, the Syrian Christians set up a College and a Seminary at Kottayam for training their priests. Kottayam turned into a literary hub since then.

British missionary, Rev. J. Dawson set up an English School at Mattancherry in 1818 with financial aid from the Cochin Government.

In the Malabar area, the Basel German Evangelical Mission started a primary school in Kallayi at Kozhikode in 1848 and an English school in Thalassery in 1856.

Dr. Hermann Gundert (1814–1893) the German Basel Evangelical missionary, is well known for the compilation of Malayalam grammar book, Malayalabhaasha Vyakaranam (1859). He also prepared the first Malayalam-English dictionary (1872). Dr. Gundert translated the Old Testament of Bible from Hebrew and the New Testament from Greek into Malayalam. He published around 13 books in Malayalam. He is the one who brought punctuations marks like full stop, comma, semi colon, colon and the question mark into the Malayalam language. He traced Malayalam language to Ramacharitam, the poem pre-dating the Sanskrit alphabet. He worked from
Illikkunnu at Tellicherry. There is a Gundert Bungalow and statue in Thalasseri. His grand son is a Nobel Prize (literature) winner.

The works of missionaries in the field of education paved the foundation for the radical changes in the Kerala society.

SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENTS IN THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY KERALA.

The egalitarianism that we find in the Kerala society today is the result of the work of many social reformers like Sree Narayana Guru and Ayyankali. They attacked the very core of the caste system in the society. They refused to accept the superiority of the upper castes. They fought against the social disabilities faced by the lower castes. Under their leadership, the lower castes fought for Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship. The lower castes began to believe in equality of status and of opportunity. They wanted fraternity among individuals, assuring the dignity of man. The following is a discussion of the major social reformers in Kerala.

SREE NARAYANA GURU (1854-1928): Sree Narayana Guru is known as the Father of Kerala Renaissance. He was born at Chempazhanthy in Trivandrum on 20 August 1854. Guru is famous for his message ‘One Caste, One Religion, One God for Man’. He spread this message at a time when people were identified on the basis of caste and religion. The Aruvippuram Consecration of Siva was in the year 1888. Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (S.N.D.P Yogam) was founded in 1903. Guru was the life time President and Kumaranasan was the Secretary. Sree Narayana Guru founded the Sarada temple at Varkala in 1915. He also founded the Advaitasramam at Aluva. Upon the Upanishadic principle of Tat Tvam Asi—Know Yourself—he made the Kannadi Prathishta (consecration of Lamp and Mirror). Atmopadesha Satakam, Nirvriti Panchakam, Darsanamala, and Jatimeemamsa are his major works. He met Gandhiji, Tagore as well as Swami Vivekananda. He also had close contacts with Chattampi Swamikal. He fought against such practices like Thalikettukalyanan, Thirandukuli and Pulikudi. Direct face to face method of marriage was brought by him among the Ezhavas instead of the proxy system. He also urged the community to give up the trade of toddy tapping. He believed that “Whatever be one’s religion, it is enough for him to be good”. His reform measures among the Hindus reduced the increasing number of conversions to Christianity and Islam. Other communities also began to be organised upon his model. Sree Narayana Guru died on 20 September 1928 at Sivagiri. Uloor said that Sree Narayana Guru is not just an asset of the community or the State but he is a Paramacharya of modern India.

CHATTAMPI SWAMIKAL (1853 - 1924): Chattampi Swamikal was a social reformer who was born in the Nair community. He was born in Kannammoola in Thiruvananthapuram. He believed that a Sanyasi can do good to the people by working among them. He taught that spiritual salvation is possible to the Grihasta also. Chattampi Swamikal gave an intellectual appeal to the reform movements in Kerala. Because of that, he was called the Vidyadhiraja. According to him, the legend of creation of Kerala by Parasurama is false; it was made to keep the upper caste hold on the society. He was against untouchability, subcaste barriers and against the observances of practices as Talikettu Kalyanam, Tirandukuli etc. In Vedaddikara Nirupanam, he denies the Brahmin monopoly of the Vedas. His Kristumata Nirupanam is a work on the teachings of Christianity. He searched for Sat Chit Anandam. His faith in Advaita Vedanta can be seen in his work Advaita Chinthapaddhathi. He attained Samadhi at Panmana in Kollam district. Vidyadhiraja Chattampi Swamikal was both a scholar and a reformer.
AYYANKALI (1863-1941): Ayyankali was born at Venganore in Trivandrum district. In 1905 he founded the Sadhujana Paripalana Sangham, which later became Pulaya Mahasabha. The public roads were open to the Pulayas because of the works of Ayyankali. He made the Pulaya women to get rid of the Kallu Mala which was worn all over the upper body like a dress. Ayyankali urged them to wear proper clothes. He was a member of Sree Moolam Prajasabha for 25 years from 1910. He can claim credit to the Temple Entry Proclamation of 1936. He was motivated by Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji wished to call him ‘Pulaya Raja’.

SAHODARAN AYYAPAN (1890-1968): Sahodaran Ayyappan was born in Cherayi near Cochin. In 1917 he started the movement for Misrabhojanam (interdining) and founded the Sahodara Sangham. He gave the revolutionary message -No Caste, No Religion, No God for Man. He founded the Vidhya Poshini Sabha, and a newspaper by name Sahodaran.

COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS:

SNDP YOGAM: The Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam came into existence on May 15, 1903, under the inspiration of Sree Narayana Guru. Dr. Palpu and Kumaran Asan were the leaders. The basic aim of the Yogam has been to popularise the message of Sree Narayana Guru.

NAIR SERVICE SOCIETY: The N.S.S. was founded on October 31, 1914, by Mannath Padmanabhan. NSS worked against practices like Talikettukalyanam, Tirandukuli, etc. It also fought against the evils of the joint family system among the Nairs.

YOGAKSHEMA SABHA: The Yogakshema movement was started among the Namboothiris in 1908. Its aim was to motivate the junior Namboothiri males to marry within the community itself. It worked to popularise the study of English. It wanted to abolish the purdah system from among the Namboothiri females. The leaders of the Sabha in its early days were E.M.S.Namboothiripad and V.T.Bhattatiripad. The slogan of the Yogakshema Sabha in those days was “Make Namboothiri a human being”.

TEMPLE ENTRY STRUGGLES, DEMOCRATIC & NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS

INTRODUCTION: The Perumal rule declined by 12th century AD. Kerala got divided into many Nadus. Each Nadu had its own Naduvazhi and administrative set up. These Nadus were involved in internal feuds and wars. They were totally unaware of the changes taking place in other parts of the country. They were unaware of the Afghan, Pathan and Mongol invasions in other parts of India. These invasions uprooted the ancient society in India. The kings and people in Kerala were immersed in their own petty feud.

Portuguese traveller, Vasco da Gama landed at Kozhikode on May 21, 1498. The rulers or people of Kerala did not realise the long term implications. The Portuguese wanted monopoly of the trade. They wanted to drive out others. They wanted to oust all Muslim traders. But the Zamorin did not agree. He explained that for centuries Kozhikode had been a free port. The Portuguese could not understand that. They were greedy. The profits were 60 times of the expense. They wanted to turn the situations in their favour. The internal feuds among the Nadus were ideal situations for the Portuguese. But, the Zamorin with the naval power of the Kunjalis retaliated. Zamorin also attacked Kochi who was supporting the Portuguese. At one time he was fighting against the Kujalis with the help of the Portuguese.

In the meantime, the Dutch and the English appeared in the scene. Situations became difficult for the Portuguese. By 1663, the Dutch overthrew the Portuguese from Malabar. In Kochi, the Dutch interfered not only in the administration but even in Kochi succession of princes. The Princes and nobles opposed the Dutch. The Dutch power gradually diminished by 1750s.
By this time the English had already landed in Kerala cost by 1615. In 1682, they settled at Thalassery. In 1694 they settled at Anjengo (Anchuthengu) in Travancore. These settlements were significant. The English used these settlements to spread their influence over Kerala. Slowly the East India Company began to take sides in the local feuds. They assisted Marthanda Varma as well as Zamorin to fight against the Dutch.

Meanwhile, by around 1750s, the Mysore invaded Malabar. It was a big opportunity for the Company to interfere in the affairs of the land. The Company said that the Third Anglo-Mysorean War was undertaken by the Company, to defend Travancore. Therefore, the Raja of Travancore should meet the entire expenditure of the war. The Treaty of 1795 was signed. It reduced Travancore from the position of a friend to that of a protected country. Like the Portuguese, the English East India Company also claimed monopoly in the pepper trade. Travancore plunged into severe financial crisis. The Raja was forced to raise loans from bankers and merchants to pay the Company. The Raja of Travancore soon became Raja of financial miseries.

VELU THANMPI DALAVA AND KUNDARA PROCLAMATION 1807: Velu Thampi became the Dalava of Travancore in 1802. At this period, Travancore was under great financial crisis. The reasons are explained in the above paragraph. The Dalava (Prime Minister) decided to take strong financial measures. He decided to stop the allowances paid to troops during peace period. But, the troops revolted. Dalava put down the revolt with firm hands. The British demanded that the British troops should be used to put down troubles. They wanted to interfere more in the affairs of Travancore. They wanted changes in the treaty of 1795. A new treaty was signed in January 1805. The Dalava did not like the developments. He wanted to defend Travancore and the King. He began to recruit soldiers and collect arms. People supported Dalava.

On January 16, 1807 Velu Thampi issued the famous Kundara Proclamation. He wanted the people to rise against the British. The response was positive. The British troops were in great trouble. But, the British brought in additional troops. The Raja of Travancore was worried about his safety. He wrote to the British Resident to stop military actions. As a result of it, peace was concluded in March 1809. Velu Thampi, who was hiding in the Mannadi Temple, committed suicide.

Other than this, there were few incidents of violent resistance against the British. The revolts at Anchuthengu in 1695 and 1721 and at Thalassery in 1704 are examples.

PAZHASSI REVOLT: The “First War of Independence” or the “Sepoy Mutiny”, as the British called it, took place in the year 1857. It did not create any impression in Kerala. However, 52 years before the mutiny, Kerala Varma Pazzassi Raja of Kottayam of North Kerala led a series of struggles against the British.

The background of Pazzassi revolt is as follows. In 1792, the Third Anglo-Mysore War was over. Kottayam of north Kerala came under British rule. Vira Varma, Pazhassi Raja's uncle, was appointed as the Raja of Kottayam. Vira Varma was forced to collect extreme taxes from poor farmers. Pazhassi Raja decided to oppose this. Kurichiya tribal warriors supported him. Talakkal Chandu was the leader of the tribal warriors. They were good at guerilla warfare. There were many attempts to kill Pazzassi Raja. The British finally requested for peace in 1797. However, the war was renewed in 1800 because of a dispute over Wayanad. The Guerilla warfare continued in the forests of Wayanad. Pazhassi Raja could actually stop the British administration in Malabar. To defeat Pazzassi, the British had to bring troops from Canara and Mysore. After the war that lasted for five years, Pazhassi Raja finally fell in November 1805. By May 1812, the revolt was fully crushed. The Karachi tribes men were treated very badly by the British troops.
Baber, the Thalasseri Sub Collector, got a special gift of 25,000 pagodas or gold coins from the British Government for his leadership against Pazzassi. Col. Arthur Wellesley was Commander in Chief of British Army in Malabar. He is the one who defeated Napoleon in the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. It is believed that he got a lot of lessons in guerrilla warfare during his campaign against Pazzassi Raja.

A Sreedhara Menon, the famous Historian writes, “By all accounts, it was a real people’s war, in which all classes of people, irrespective of caste or religion, took an active part for the vindication of a noble cause”. He fought for Rights, Liberty and Justice.

By 1812 British control was effectively established all over the three regions of Kerala - Malabar, Kochi and Travancore. For about 100 years, it was a period of peace in Kerala history. The foundation of the “New Kerala” was laid during this period. Many changes took place in the administrative, social and cultural fields in Kerala. These changes happened with the support of the enlightened Kings and colonial rulers. Most important contribution was in the field of education. The intellectual isolation of Kerala was over. Keralites were now exposed to a bigger world. This was a period of enlightment.

Many socio-cultural and political events took place in Kerala by the end of 19th century. These events shaped the future of Kerala state and society in many ways. The following is a discussion of the major democratic movements and nationalist movements that shaped Modern Kerala.

**CHANNAR REVOLT (1859):** Channar Revolt was for the right of Channar women to cover their upper body like other upper class women. The agitation led to the Royal Proclamation of July 26, 1859 by Uttradham Thirunal Maharaja. Vaikuntaswamikal gave leadership to the agitation.

**MALAYALEE MEMORIAL 1891:** In Travancore, majority of the government jobs were occupied by Tamil Brahmins. But, the educated Nairs also wanted government jobs. A political agitation under the leadership of Nairs began. The Malayali Memorial, A memorandum was submitted to the Maharaja of Travancore in 1891. It is known as Malayali Memorial. It was prepared by G. P. Pillai and K. P. Sankara Menon. It was signed by over 10,000 people. It was signed by some Ezhavas, Christians and Muslims also. The memorial was of no use.

**EZHAVA MEMORIAL 1896:** The Malayali Memorial was followed by the Ezhava Memorial. Dr. Palpu was the leader. It was submitted to the Maharaja of Travancore It contained signatures of over 13,000 people. They wanted civic rights and Government jobs.

The Ezhava Memorial also was of no use. However, they laid the foundation for the constitutional style of political agitation in Travancore.

**INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS IN KERALA:** In the initial period of Indian National Congress, the leaders discussed mainly about British mal-administration. They did not discuss much about getting the British out. They also decided not to interfere in the internal affairs of Princely States which were ruled by the local rajas. Thiruvithamkur and Kochi were ruled by the local Princes. Therefore, there were no much of activities of the Congress in these states. However, Malabar region, which consisted of the northern parts of Kerala, was under the direct rule of the British. Sir C. Sankaran Nair was one of the leaders of Congress in Kerala. He was the President of the Amaravathi session of the Indian National Congress in 1897. A political Conference was held in Calicut in 1903. Malabar District Congress Committee was formed in Malabar in 1908. The Malabar District Congress meeting was held at Palakkad in 1916 which was presided over by Dr.
Annie Besant. The second meeting was held at Calicut which was presided over by Sir. C. P. Rama Swamy Iyer. The annual meetings of the Congress kept the nationalistic spirit alive.

HOME RULE MOVEMENT IN KERALA 1916: The Congress and the Home Rule League worked together in Malabar. K. P. Kesava Menon was the Secretary of both the League and Congress Committee. Units were organised all over Malabar. Menon opposed the War fund collection of the Empire. The League and the Congress opposed the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms. The reforms were the basis of Government of India Act of 1919. The Act brought Diarchy. It meant that important ministries like Defence and Finance will be ruled by the Viceroy. Less important ministries like Health will be ruled by the Ministers. The Congress was unhappy. The Rowlett Act of 1919 gave the British Government, the power to keep anyone in prison for two years without trial. The Jalianwalabagh massacre also took place at this time. The Indian National Congress in 1920 approved and decided to start Non Cooperation Movement.

The Nagpur (special) session of the Congress (1920) decided that the Congress should be organised on linguistic basis. As a result of it, the Malabar District Congress Committee was re-organised as Kerala State Congress Committee. It included Travancore and Cochin also.

NON-COOPERATION AND KHILAFAT MOVEMENT IN KERALA 1920: The non-cooperation movement operated along with Khilafat Movement. The Khilafat movement was the reaction against the British for their treatment of the Sultan of Turkey. The Sultan was the spiritual leader of Muslims.

Khilafat Committees and Congress Committees worked together. It was a sign of Hindu Muslim friendship. Mohammed Abdul Rehiman was the prominent leader of Khilafat Movement. Mahatma Gandhi visited Kerala to strengthen the movements.

The All Kerala Political Conference was held at Ottappalam in 1921. It was attended by delegates from all over Kerala. This was a true beginning of Aikya Kerala Movement. The British reacted with brutal police atrocities.

MALABAR REBELLION & WAGON TRAGEDY 1921: The Congress-Khilafat movement was truly nationalist. The movement was strong in Eranad and Valluvanad Taluks. At this period, the Mappila Rebellion broke out. It was an agricultural movement. Variankunnath Kunjahammed Haji was the leader. Government declared 144. Atrocities followed. Muslims were the special targets. To arrest the Secretary of the Khilafat Committee, Vadakkeveettil Mohammed, the police entered the famous Mambararam Mosque in Thirurangadi. Police actions hurt the religious sentiments of the Muslims. They reacted fiercely. Mappilas attacked the police stations and looted treasury. Gurkha regiment was brought in. Martial law was declared. Rumours spread that the Hindus helped the police. It affected religious harmony. Congress leaders like K. Madhavan Nair, K. P. Kesava Menon, K. Kelappan and Mohammed Abdul Rahiman tried to calm down people. However, thousands of people were killed. So many were imprisoned. Many were deported to Andaman. Finally, the rebellion was crushed. Gandhiji funded the relief operations which run for about 6 months. Carnatic nightingale M.S. Subha Lakshi is one of the many who contributed.

It was a practice then to transport prisoners in closed railway wagons. The Nazis packed usually 50 people in a wagon. In Kerala, the British also practiced the same. About 2500 prisoners were transported in about 32 trips. K. Kelappan was once transported like this from Calicut to Kannur. In November 1921, 70 Mappila prisoners were packed in a closed railway goods wagon. It was attached to No.77 Calicut-Madras Passenger Train. The size of the wagon was 18 x 9 x 7.5 feet. They were being and carried from Tiroor to Coimatore jails. Every two prisoners were handcuffed together. 61 of them died of suffocation on the way. The wagon was then sent back to
Tiroor with dead bodies. Police Supdt. Hitchcock, along with two others, was in charge of the transportation. Interestingly, Hitchcock had his memorial statue in Malappuram till 1936. It was removed upon popular protest.

The Mappila Rebellion was nationalist in character. But the British considered it as a local uprising.

**BIRTH OF POLITICAL JOURNALISM:** A Sreedhara Menon writes that after the rebellion, the Congress work diminished. But the period saw the birth of political journalism. In 1923, K. P. Kesava Menon started Mathrubhumi from Calicut. In 1924, Mohammed Abdur Rahiman started Al Amin from Calicut. The newspapers supported the Congress and the national movement.

**VAIKKOM SATYAGRAHAM 1924:** In the 1923 Kakkinada session of the Indian National Congress, T. K. Madhavan presented the case of untouchability in Kerala. In Kerala, K. Kelappan was the Secretary of the anti-untouchability aithochadana committee. The movement demanded that the temples should be open to all castes. The movement reached Vaikkom. Suddenly, boards appeared on the roads leading to the temple. They read that the roads are not open to avarna Hindus.

The Vaikkom Sathyagraha was started on 30 March 1924. It was against untouchability and for the right of worship in the temples. It also demanded the right to use the road before the Vaikkom temple by untouchables also. T.K. Madhavan and K.P. Keshavamenon were the major leaders. Supporting the Sathyagraha a ‘Savarnajatha (March of upper castes) was led by Mannath Padmanabhan from Vaikkom to Thiruvananthapuram. Volunteers from different parts of the country and Kerala reached Vaikkom. One Akali Dal volunteer group opened free food stalls. Gandhi visited Kerala for the second time related to the Sathyagraha. Police Commissioner Pitt met Gandhi. An agreement was reached. The Sathyagraha ended. The approach roads to the temple were formally opened to all Hindus, irrespective of caste. But the temple was not open to the avarna Hindus for the time being.

The objective of the Satyagraha was not fully achieved. But, the Vaikkom Sathyagraha was a true training in non violent strikes and Gandhian methods.

**SIMON COMMISSION AND KERALA:** In February 1928, the Royal Commission under the leadership of John Simon landed in India. The aim was to report whether India is ripe for self government. At this time, the fourth All Kerala Political Conference was held at Payannur. The conference was presided over by Jawaharlal Nehru. The conference passed a resolution requesting Indian National Congress to adopt Poorna Swaraj as the goal of the Indian national movement.

**SALT SATYAGRAHA IN KERALA 1930:** Gandhi started Salt Satyagraha in 1930. It was a non violent Civil Disobedience movement against high taxes on common salt. Salt was used by every Indian. The taxes accounted for nearly 10% of British revenue in India. K. Kelappan was the leader of Salt Satyagraha in Kerala. Payyannoor was the venue. The Satyagraha was a great success in Kerala.

**GURUVAYUR SATYAGRAHAM 1931-32:** With the support of the All India Congress Committee, KPCC President K. Kelappan and A. K. Gopalan decided to fight for temple entry rights. As the first step, the Congress requested the Zamorin, who was the Trustee of Guruvayoor Temple for temple entry rights for all Hindus. When the request was turned down, Kelappan began his fast unto death for 12 days. However, it was withdrawn under the request of Gandhi. Gandhi requested so because proper prior notice was not given to the temple authorities.
An interesting incident related to the Satyagraha was that a referendum was conducted among the caste Hindus of Ponnani Taluk regarding temple entry. More than 25000 people participated in the campaign. More than 75% of them supported free temple entry.

The Sathyagraha was not a failure. It created lot of public opinion and conscience about a social problem. The Temple Entry Proclamation of 1936 opened the doors of temples for all Hindus in Travancore. The Temple entry law of Madras Assembly of 1946 had the same effect in Malabar.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT: The Civil Disobedience Movement of 1932 had tremendous impact in Kerala. The Congress was declared unlawful. All the delegates of the 5th All Kerala Political Conference held at Calicut were arrested.

A significant aspect of the civil disobedience movement in Kerala was the entry of women in the active politics. The name of Kuttimaluamma is worth mention.

Another significant impact of the Civil Disobedience Movement was the formation of Youth League in Travancore. They later became leaders of Travancore State Congress.

ABSTENTION MOVEMENT IN TRAVANCORE: During this period, needless to say, Travancore and Kochi were under Dewan rule. A parallel movement for responsible Government began in Travancore and Kochi. In Travancore, it was known as the Nivartana (abstention) movement. It began as a protest against the inadequacy of the constitutional reforms (1932). The reforms proposed franchise on the basis of possession of property and other qualifications. The Ezhavas, the Christians and the Muslims believed that they are going to get less number of seats than the Nairs. They formed an All Travancore Samyukta Rshtreeya Samiti, which later changed into Joint Political Congress. They demanded that the seats should be distributed on the basis of population strength. The Government, however, did not view their demands favourably. The abstentionists appealed the voters to abstain from voting. The three communities together formed about 70 per cent of the population. Their agitation had the characteristics of a mass movement. The Government at first adopted a repressive policy. But later yielded to some demands of the abstentionists. In the election held in 1937, most of the candidates fielded by the Joint Political Congress were elected.

ELECTRICITY AGITATION 1936: Dewan Sir R.K.Shanmukham Chetti of Kochi decided to entrust the distribution of the electric power in the Trissur town to a private company. People of all castes and communities came together on a common platform. It was a popular movement. E. Ikkanda Warrier and Dr. A. R. Menon were the leaders.

FORMATION OF TRAVANCORE STATE CONGRESS 1938: The Haripura Session of the Indian National Congress 1938 resolved that the Congress should keep away from the affairs of the princely States. The struggle for responsible Government in the States would be the responsibility of the people of the respective States. The leaders of the Congress decided to form a new organization. Thus, the Travancore State Congress came into being in February 1938. The objective was achieving full responsible Government for the people of Travancore. In Kochi, the Kochi State Congress was formed.

SPLIT IN CONGRESS: The Congress split in Kerala following the withdrawal of Civil Disobedience movement. The Rightists and the Leftists came into existence. The Leftists formed the Kerala unit of the All India Congress Socialist Party in 1934. They functioned as a separate group within the Congress under the leadership of E. M. Sankaran Namboothiripad and P. Krishna Pillai. They met in a secret enclave at Pinarayi and in December 1939. The Communist Party was born.
In Travancore, the Dewan had plans for an independent state outside Indian Union. To get the support of the people, Dewan offered administrative reforms. He also offered legal and social protection for working class. But he put forward one condition: the popular struggle should be stopped. He was so much against the Communists. He declared that he would wipe out the Communists. The moderates were in favour of withdrawing it. The Youth League decided to leave the Congress. They formed the Kerala Socialist Party (KSP), Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) and Independent Socialist Party (ISP). The Communists were planning a final assault. The coir factory workers and boat workers formed armed battalions in Alapuzha.

When the Second World War broke out, Gandhiji called for “Individual Satyagraha”. But, Kerala Provincial Congress Committee under the Communist leadership decided to observe “Anti-Imperialist Day” on September 15. Many violent incidents took place in Morazha, Mattanooor, Kayyur and Thalassery. Many lives were lost. The Congress Committee was suspended. An Ad-hoc committee was formed. The leftists left the Congress en bloc and joined the Communist Party.

QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT IN KERALA 1942: The Quit India Movement was not very strong in Kerala. Russia joined the Allied Powers including Britain, against the Axis Powers including Germany, Italy and Japan. The Communists in Kerala decided to support the British. Many Communists were released from jail. A few within the Congress under the leadership of Dr. K. B. Menon organised some resistance. A secret journal ‘Swatantra Bharatam’ was published during this period.

STRUGGLE FOR RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT IN TRAVANCORE AND COCHIN: The struggle for responsible Government had begun in Travancore and Cochin by 1938-39. In Cochin, the rulers adopted a lenient policy of political concessions. It avoided violent incidents. Therefore, the struggles in Cochin were less in intensity. In June 1938 a diarchial form of Government was established allowing popular ministers to control some departments. This arrangement did not work. The Cochin Praja Mandalam was founded in 1941. The objective was agitation for full responsibility in Government.

The Travancore State Congress launched a campaign seeking dismissal of the Dewan, C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer. The Congress had raised few charges against him. The State Congress and the Youth League were banned. The State Congress organized a civil disobedience movement. The Government withdrew the ban. The Dewan refused to open negotiations. He wanted that the charges should be withdrawn. The charges were finally withdrawn following Gandhiji's intervention. This created a split in the Congress. The members of the Youth League left the State Congress to form the Communist Party.

PUNNAPRA- VAYALAR REVOLT 1946:

The coastal Taluks of Alappuzha and Chertala were the strongholds of the Communist Party. By the middle of 1946, there were many camps of party workers at Punnapra in Alappuzha and at Vayalar in Chertala. Volunteers from the working class were recruited and given training. This increased the tension in the area. The Government deployed not only the police but the military also. It worsened the situation. The All Travancore Trade Union Congress called for a general strike on October 20, 1946. Martial law was declared in the area. The Dewan himself assumed the functions of the Commander-in-Chief of Army. The workers and volunteers organised with stones, bamboo spikes, areca spears and swords. They were to confront machine guns. Violent incidents took place from 24 to 27 October. Hundreds were killed. The revolt was suppressed.

A political crisis precipitated when the British announced their decision to leave India. The Dewan announced that Travancore will be an independent country. He will be the head of state; forever.
The democratic population was not in a mood to accept this. As usual, the Dewan started repressive measures. Meanwhile, an unsuccessful attempt on his life was made. Dewan left the State. Democracy prevailed. Travancore became part of the Indian Union.

THE MOVEMENT FOR UNITED (AIKYA) KERALA: States of Kochi and Travancore were merged into the State of Travancore-Kochi on July 1, 1949.

The States Reorganization Commission recommended for the formation of States on linguistic basis. The Malabar district of Madras and the Kasargod taluk of South Canara were merged with the State of Travancore-Kochi. Thus the new State of Kerala was formed on November 1, 1956.

COMMUNIST AND PEASANT MOVEMENTS

Introduction: It is not clear whether private ownership of property existed before colonial period. However, in the traditional land system, the net produce was shared as follows: one-third to the Jenmi (owner of land), one-third to the Kanakkaran (tenant, lease holders or the one who has taken land for cultivation on rent), and one-third to those who actually worked on the land, -- peasants or labourers.

Mysorean invasion and land relation: During the Islamic Mysorean invasions between 1766-1792 in Malabar, the Hindu Jenmis left Malabar for Travancore. Then, the Muslim tenants or Verumpattakar stopped paying rent.

British Colonialism and land relations: In 1793, when the British assumed power in Malabar, they had two things to do. Firstly, recover the cost of war through taxes. Secondly, establish a social base for their rule. To establish social control, the British took steps to re-establish the Nair Namboothiri land-lordism. As a result of it, the Jennis could evict the Mappilas at any time. The real farmers lost all their rights over land. Moreover, the taxes were very high. There were taxes for everything including knives, boat travel and fishing nets.

Beginning of Peasant Struggles: Many Mappila rebellions took place between 1836 and 1921. These were rebellions against land lords as well as colonial powers. The most important one was the rebellion of 1921. It was closely associated with the Khilafat Movement. However, Gandhi considered it as a perversion of the nationalist Khilafat movement.

In Travancore and Cochin, during the period of Marthanda Varma, it became necessary to raise funds for the State. The state owned land (Pandaram vaka) was thus leased out to Christians and Muslims on rent. It was expected that they will cultivate on the land and pay good rent to the state. But soon they wanted complete possession of the land. Thus the Pandarapattam Proclamation was made. The proclamation made them owners of land.

The Malabar Kudiyan Sangham MKS (tenants' association) was formed at Pattambi in 1920. The leadership was predominantly of the Nair caste. Activities consisted of public debates and memorials, letter-writing campaigns and agitations. Educated middle class consisting of lawyers and government servants were the participants. The Malabar Tenancy Act of 1930 was a victory for tenants and the MKS. It fixed fair rent.

In 1932-33 period there were some resistances at Kodungalloor. Basically, it was to support the peasants who were suffering after the Great Depression of 1929.

In the 1930s, the Rightists and the Leftists came into existence within the Congress, which was leading the national movement. The Leftists formed the Kerala unit of the All India Congress Socialist Party in 1934. They functioned as a separate group within the Congress under the leadership of E. M. Sankaran Namboothiripad and P. Krishna Pillai. They met in a secret enclave.
at Pinarayi and in December 1939 to form the Communist Party in Kerala. Under the influence of the leftists, the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee decided to observe a protest day in September 1940. There were violent incidents at Thalassery, Morazha, and Mattannoor. These incidents created class consciousness among the peasants. The national movement helped this.

Kayyoor Incident 1941: On March 28th, a protest march was going on at the village Kayyoor. It resulted in the death of a police man who happened to come in front of the march. He was forced to jump into the river. Later, 4 party members were hanged to death by the court on 29th March 1943. Then on the day is observed as All India Kissan Day.

In Kochi, ‘Karrsha Sabha’ was formed during this period. C. Achutha Menon was the leader. Thiruvithamkuran Karshaka Sangham also was formed.

Quit India Movement and Peasant Struggle: During the Quit India Movement, the Communist Party decided to support the British. The reason was that the British were fighting the fascist Italy and Germany. Because of it, the peasant movements were stopped in Kerala. The condition of farmers became worse.

Mangattuparambu incident 1943: Mangattuparambu was in Chirakkal Taluk. Some 10,000 acres of Government land was lying vacant. The Karshaka Sangam started Tapioca cultivation in 50 acres of land. But, when the crop was about to be harvested, Government sent Malabar Special Police. Entire crop was destroyed. Violent incidents took place.

Cheemeni Estate incident: Someone from outside bought some 1900 acres of the estate in Kasargod. The new owner prevented people from collecting firewood and green manure. Peasants gathered and forcibly entered the land. They resisted police and goondas.

Situation after World War II: The Second World War ended in 1945. This was followed by great famine all over Kerala. The Communist Party came up with the slogan “Land for the Tiller”. Importance was given on producing more food. The peasants wanted the right to cultivate on uncultivated lands. Only 50% of the cultivable land of 35 lakh acres in Malabar was under cultivation. But the 1945 Malabar Tenancy Act gave the Jenmi, the right to evict a tenant. This was in the name of Jenmi’s right to cultivate for himself. The government did nothing to bring uncultivable land under cultivation. The divide between the rich and poor only widened.

Revival of Strikes after World War II: After the War in 1946, the Malabar Kissan Sangham under the leadership of E. M. Sankaran Namboothiripad decided to go ahead with strikes. They wanted to fix rents, stop eviction and declare un-cultivated land as government property. They also wanted the government to take strict actions against Black Marketing. December 15th 1946 was declared as “Kari Dinam”-Black Day against black marketing.

International Dimensions for Peasant Struggles: Historian K.K.N. Kurup agrees that the peasant struggles were much more intensive than even the Quit India Movement. However, it widened the gap between the Communists and Congress men. This divide had some international dimensions also. In the world level, there were two factions namely the Socialists and American Capitalists. Thus the peasant struggles achieved some international meaning also.

Punnapra-Vayalar Struggles: The Karshaka Sangham was formed in Thiruvithamkun in 1943. The peasant resistance was very active in Kuttanad. They were against the Diwan C. P. Ramaswami Iyer’s plan to establish American Model Executive. He wanted to declare Thiruvithamkun as an independent state for himself. Between October 24-27, 1946, peasants and trade unionists united against police atrocities. 800 people died. Many were missing. Following the
incident many strikes were organised all over Malabar also. All these were organised by Communists.

Karivellur Samaram 1946 December: Karivellur was the northern most village of Malabar. Rama Varma Raja of Chirakkal Kovilakam was the greatest Jenmi here. His collection was more than a lakh Kilograms of rice. Those days, special permissions were needed to transport rice. Raja got permission in the name of the temples under him. Peasants under the leadership of A. V. Kunjampu and V. V. Kunjampu decided to oppose the move. They wanted the rice to be sold in the village itself at fair prices. Police intervened with rifles and machine guns. Many were dead. Police atrocities continued. Communists were hunted all over Malabar. The nature of the struggles were such that the poor peasants were on one side and the Jennis and the government were on the other side. It acquired the nature of a class war.

Continuing strikes: Many violent incidents like this took place all over Malabar. Mass meetings and protest meetings were conducted all over. Government and Jenni land lying vacant were occupied and tilled. Black market sales of rice was opposed. They were confiscated and sold at locally determined prices. Sales of forest land to private parties were opposed. It was mainly because the private owners of forests restricted fire wood and green manure collection. Agricultural development was made the responsibility of government. It included matters like dewatering or irrigating land, credit for land clearing and cultivation, distribution of fertilizers etc.

Struggles after Independence: Soon after independence, the Communists were released from jail. The Desabhimani newspaper which spread Communist ideals was allowed to continue publication.

Black marketing and hoarding continued. Prices continued to rise. The Communists continued their work. The major work of the Communists was to confiscate rice hoarded by the Jennis and distribute among the people. The police retaliated with all types of repressive measures. Most of the leaders were hiding including E.M. Sankaran Namboothiripad, C. Achutha Menon, K. A. Keraleeyan, and K. Madhavan. In September 1949, the Madras Government banned Communist Party with shoot at sight orders. Situations became worse than the colonial periods. The communists decided to observe the Republic Day, 1950 as black day and anti-constitution day. However, when the constitution came into being, Communists tried to use Art.21 - right to life - against Preventive Detention Act. During 1950-51, the major concentration of the party was for individual freedom of the leaders and freedom of speech and expression for the party. This was truly a constitutional measure. The Indian constitution guarded the rights of the communists. The Karshaka Sangham continued with constitutional struggles.

Communist Party and Land Reforms: In 1956, the Kerala State was formed. By combining the peasant movements in Malabar and Travancore-Cochin, the Kerala Karshaka Sangham was formed. The Sangham mainly worked for land reforms. In April 1957, Communist government under EMS came to power. Within two weeks, Ordinance was produced preventing forceful eviction. To counter black-marketing and hoarding, fair price shops were opened. Out of the 30,000 shops all over India, 6,000 were in Kerala.

In 1959, the Assembly passed the Agrarian Relations Bill. The Bill was sent for the consent of President. The provisions of the Bill were against the interests of the land lords and major communities. Liberation Struggle or Vimochana Samaram followed. The Ministry was dismissed in July 1959. This was a major shock for the peasant movement.

The Party decided to conduct a propaganda Jatha from Kasargod to Thiruvananthapuram. A. K. Gopalan, the leader of the Jatha, in his book titled “Manninu vendi” gives a detailed account
of the Jatha. According to him, the Jatha was well received all over Kerala in cities towns and villages. He specially mentions about Thiruvalla, which was known for the presence of ‘Niranam Pada’, a Jenmi sangham for suppressing peasants. In the meantime, the Bill was sent back by the President. The Karshaka Sangham decided to continue with its struggles. The Jenmis all over the state began eviction.

The government also evicted peasants for some reason or other. At Ayyappankovil, 1700 families were evicted from 8000 acres of land. It was in the name of Idukki dam area. Only some of them were sent to Amaravathi, near Kumili, without providing any basic facilities. Newspapers supporting the government wrote editorials more than ones. AKG started fast unto death. Finally, the government had to meet the demands of the people.

Another incident was the Churuli-Keerithod incident of 1963 November. 4000 families were evicted in the name of protection of forest. But the same land was given back to them when the EMS ministry came back to power in 1967. The Communist Party continued its activities within the provisions of the Indian Constitution.

In the meantime, many amendments were made to the Agrarian Relations Bill of 1957. Bills were brought in 1960 and 1964. These bills actually weakened land reforms. The reasons are as follows: Firstly, plantations were put outside the scope of the bill. Plantations included coconut, areca nut, rubber, coffee, cardamom and Kayal. So the Jenmis converted excess land under their possession in to plantations. For that purpose, they planted some rubber tree or other, somewhere in the excess land. Secondly, Jenmis partitioned excess land (Micha Bhoomi) among individual members of the family.

In 1969, K. R. Gouri, the then Revenue Minister presented the Land Reforms Act. It resulted in the Land Reforms in the 1970. It came to effect on the 1st of January 1970. It contained mainly three aspects: Jenmis ceased to be owners of land. The lease holders were given ownership of the land. Leasing of land became unlawful. The Jenmis who lived by collecting lease became extinct. A few big farmers who had cultivated on the leased lands became owners of the land. Secondly, it contained strict provisions to take over excess land (a family can hold maximum 20 acres of land). Thirdly, it gave the hutment dwellers (kudikidappukar) the permanent right over land. That means, he could not be evicted. They were given right over 10 cents of land around his hut. Now, he is the owner of the coconut tree and the plantain tree in front of his house. At some places, peasants forcefully occupied the land. At other places, the Jenmis co operated with them. At some other places, police intervened to prevent peasants. Suppressive measures continued. Some of the Jenmis possessed more than 1 lakh acres of land. Some others 10,000.

Because of the government failure to implement the act, the CPI(M) started ‘excess land agitation’ (Micha bhoomi samaram) in 1972. In June-August alone, 1,60,000 demonstrators were arrested. 10,000 were sentenced to jail.

National Emergency was declared in 1975. The negative effect of emergency was that the agitations were effectively suppressed. However, many changes took place. Firstly, the right of Jenmi over the land (paattabhumi) was taken away. Jenmi system became extinct. Thus, nearly 19,70,000 acres of land were transferred to 12,70,000 households. Secondly, 20,000 acres of homestead land (kudikidappu) were transferred to 2,70,000 households. Thirdly, by limiting ownership, 50,000 acres of land were transferred to 90,000 households. The third aspect was not a great success.

Land Reforms resulted in many other changes also. State agencies began to invest in irrigation, and cooperative banking system. Agricultural labourers began to be organised in trade
unions for collective bargaining for higher wage rate. Kudikidappukars became free people. Thus, it created a labour market. Crop production continued to increase till 1974-75 (it decreased after that). The landless agricultural labourers were brought under the Agricultural Labourers Pension Scheme (1982) and One Lakh Housing Scheme from early 1972. Kerala Agricultural Worker's Act of 1974 gave preference for existing workers in employment, regulation of working conditions, and permanency of employment.

The foundation of the Communist Party in Kerala is in the peasant movements. Peasant movements in Kerala flourished through the Communist Party. The party strives to keep its working class base intact.

RISE OF REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS

In 1857, the First War of Independence (Sepoy Mutiny, as the British called it, to belittle the incident) was crushed by the foreign power. The queen of Britain took over charge of Indian administration. Accordingly, the Indian Council Act was passed in 1861. It included provisions to include Indians also in the British administration. The democratic process took place slowly and steadily. The rise of representative institutions in Kerala took place in three phases as follows:-

1. 1888-1947: Pre-independence period.
3. Since 1956: Phase since the formation of the State

1888-1947: Pre-independence Period
Travancore Legislative Council 1888.
Sree Moolam Thirunal Rama Varma became the Maharaja of Travancore in 1885. The responsibility of making rules and regulations for the country was with the Raja. Dewan T. Rama Rao proposed to the Maharaja for the organisation of a Legislative Council. The Royal Proclamation was given in 1888. The Travancore Legislative Council of 1888 was an advisory body for the Dewan. It consisted of 6 official and 2 non-official members. It had a tenure of 3 years. The Bills passed by the Council were only advisory. An important development during the period was the formation of Select Committees. These committees studied and reported on bills introduced. The Malayali Memorial and Ezhava Memorial took place during this period. In 1898, the membership of the Council was increased to 15. The membership of the Council was increased from time to time. Many Councils were constituted.

The year 1921 was important in the history of Legislative Council. 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.

Sree Mulam Popular Assembly of Travancore 1904 (Sri Moolam Praja Sabha)
Sri Mulam Popular Assembly of Travancore was formed on the 1st of October 1904. It was an Assembly of landholders and merchants. The Members were selected by the Division Peishcars (the District Heads). Two representatives were chosen for each taluk. The basic qualification for selection was the payment of an annual land revenue of more than Rs.100. Annual income of Rs. 6000 or above was another qualification. It was a communicative mechanism. On one hand, ‘people’ can bring before the Government, their requirements, wishes or grievances. On the other hand, the policies and programmes of the Government were made known to the people.
In 1905, some changes were brought in membership. People got the right to elect 77 members to the Assembly. Of the 100 members, 23 were to be nominated. The tenure was 1 year. Three types of people were given voting rights: persons who paid an annual land revenue of Rs.50 and above, people who had a net income of not less than Rs. 2000, and graduates of a recognized University.

In 1907, an organic relationship between Council and the Assembly was established. Now, the Assembly could elect 4 members to the Legislative Council. The members were elected from the four divisions (districts) of Travancore. An important development was the formation of a legislative committee to look into the system of inheritance and Marumakkathayam.

Meanwhile in Cochin, a Legislative Council came into being in 1923. Voting right was based on property and other qualifications.

In Malabar: People of Malabar also were initiated towards legislative culture. Malabar, was a district of Madras Province under the British rule. Malabar had representatives in Madras Legislative Assembly from 1920's.

Back in Travancore, many developments took place in 1930. In the Legislative Council, freedom of speech was guaranteed. Voter’s List was prepared. Voting right was given to three types of people: those who give land tax above Rs.5, those who give professional tax and degree holders.

In 1932, bicameralism was introduced in Travancore. Two houses came into existence namely, Lower House, the Sree Mulam Assembly, and an Upper House, the Sree Chitra State Council. The earlier bodies were abolished. In Sree Moolam Assembly, 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. This system continued till 1947.

In Cochin, Diarchy was introduced in 1938. In Malabar, 5 Members were sent to Madras Legislature. Sri. Kongattil Raman Menon was a minister in the C. Rajagopalachari Ministry (1937-39).

LEGISLTURE DURING THE RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENTS (1947-1956)

(Between Independence and formation of the State of Kerala)

On September 4, 1947, the Maharaja of Travancore announced the move to establish a responsible Government. A new Assembly was to be formed. It was to function as the Constituent Assembly. It was called the Representative Body. 120 members were elected on the basis of adult franchise. The Assembly in 1948-49 held its first sitting on March 20, 1948 under the President ship of A.J. John. The Assembly acted as the Legislative Assembly. In 36 sittings, 20 bills were passed. It had a Council of Ministers headed by a Prime Minister. Pattom A Thanu Pillai was the Prime Minister. The Maharaja was the Constitutional Head.

The Responsible Government in Cochin took form on August 14, 1947. The first Prime Minister was Panampilly Govinda Menon. Adult franchise was introduced in 1948. The Legislative Council was renamed as Legislative Assembly.

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

The State of Travancore-Cochin was formed on July 1st 1949, by merging the states of Travancore and Cochin. The Maharaja of Travancore became the Rajapramukh of the new Travancore-Cochin State. The Legislative Assembly was formed by merging the legislative bodies of Travancore and
Cochin. The First Legislative Assembly (1949-51) consisted of 178 members. The Chief Minister of Travancore, T. K. Narayana Pillai became the first Chief Minister of the new State of Travancore-Cochin.

On March 23, 1956, due to the resignation of 6 members, President's rule was imposed in the State. For the first time the Assembly was dissolved.

The long journey which began 69 years back in 1888, had been moving in the right direction. It reflected the will of the people. It established the supremacy of the legislature.

THE STATE LEGISLATURE (Since 1956)

On 1st November 1956, the State of Kerala was formed merging Travancore, Cochin and Malabar regions. The first general election in the Kerala state was held in February–March, 1957. The first Kerala Legislative Assembly was formed on April 1, 1957. The assembly had 127 members including a nominated member. After the formation of Malappuram and Kasargod districts, the number of seats was raised 140.

The Travancore-Cochin Legislative Assembly had some rules and procedures for the conduct of the House. Kerala Legislative Assembly adopted these rules initially. Presently, the House functions according to the provisions of the Constitution of India, especially Article 208, the rules made by the House according the Article 208 of the Constitution, the directions given by the Speaker, the Ruling by the Speaker and Conventions of the House. There is a Rules Committee of the House to make recommendations for changes in the rules and procedures. Later it was also decided that as far as possible, the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Parliament and State Legislatures in India should be uniform.

The greatest development in legislative history that happened after the formation of the state is the growth of Committee System. The evolution of the Committee system is briefly discussed below. A Public Undertakings Committee was formed in 1968. In 1992, the Committee on the Welfare of Women and Children and Committee on Environment were formed. In 1993, Committee on the Welfare of Backward Class Communities was formed. In 1995, the Committee on Papers Laid on the Table was formed. In 2003, two new Legislature Committees namely, the Committee on Local Fund Accounts and the Committee on Official Language were formed. In 2009, four new Welfare Committees viz., Committee on the Welfare of Fishermen and Allied Workers, Committee on the Welfare of Non-Resident Keralites (Pravasi Malayalees), Committee on the Welfare of Youth and Youth Affairs and the Committee on the Welfare of Senior Citizens. In 2009, it was also recommended to enhance the number of Subject Committees from ten to fourteen. The Legislature functions efficiently through an effective Committee System.
MODULE – II

Party System and Electoral Politics:
Emerging trends
Coalition experiments
Factional Politics
Role of Caste/Community Interest Groups
Trade Unionism

PARTY SYSTEM AND ELECTORAL POLITICS: EMERGING TRENDS, COALITION EXPERIMENTS AND FACTIONAL POLITICS

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The first ministry with support from outside: When Kerala was formed, the State was under President's rule. The first poll was in March 1957. There were 126 Assembly (+1 nominated member) and 16 Parliamentary seats. In the election, the Communist Party of India emerged as the single largest party in the Assembly with 60 seats. Shri E.M.S.Namboodiripad formed the ministry on April 5, 1957 with the support of some independents. C. Achutha Menon, Joseph Mundasseri, T. V. Thomas, K. R. Gauri, V. R. Krishna Iyer were some of the prominent members of the ministry.

The anti-communist forces however could not stand the administration which took many revolutionary decisions. Under the leadership of Mannath Padmanabhan, “Vimochana Samaram” took place. Political agitation and unrest extending over several months, culminated in the taking over of the administration of the State and the dissolution of the Legislative Assembly, under Article 356 of the Constitution, by the president of India, on July 31, 1959. Mid-term elections followed in February next year.

The second ministry with a weak coalition (and internal dissention within Congress): In the Second Legislative Assembly, a three party alliance comprising of the Congress, the Praja Socialist Party and the Muslim League, was returned to power. Though Congress had a majority (63/127), Shri Pattom A.Thanu Pillai of PSP (20/127) (third Pattom Ministry) took over as the coalition Chief Minister, in February 1960. It was a minority government. PSP and Congress were members in the government. However, Pattom faced non co-operation from the congress. He resigned (on September 25, 1962), consequent on appointment as the Governor of Punjab. Shri.R.Sankar (Congress) was appointed Chief Minister the next day. However, Congress policy of non co-operation continued towards Shankar also. In the meantime, PSP left the ruling front. Virtually leading to single party Congress rule.

Fifteen Congress members under the leadership of K. M. George and R. Balakrishna Pillai, formed a rebel group, which later transformed into Kerala Congress. A no-confidence motion against the Government was carried. (in September 1964). The State came under the President's rule. Assembly was dissolved.
The second house marked the end of single party rule and the beginning of coalitions.

**Elections and no-win situation:** Elections were held in March 1965. Each party singularly faced the elections. No party had majority. The Assembly was dissolved. This was the first time in Kerala when the Assembly was dissolved without being convened. The President’s Rule was extended until March 1967. (Longest period of President’s rule. 2 ½ years)

**Third assembly and a strong coalition (and internal dissensions within parties), 1967:** The third legislative assembly was constituted after the General Elections (in March 1967). 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 (Saptha kakshi) won 113 of 134 seats leading to the formation of a ministry headed by Shri. E.M.S. Namboodiripad (CPI-M). The opposition benches were occupied by Congress with 9 seats and Kerala Congress with 5 seats.

Shri. Namboodiripad’s second ministry had a difficult tenure. **Muslim League became a member of the ministry first in history.** Seethi Sahib became speaker, upon whose death C. H. Muhammed Koya took charge. There were **plenty of corruption charges** against many ministers including T. V. Thomas, K. R. Gauri, Mathai Manjooran et. al. ‘Bhakshya Samaram’, and contempt of court charges against EMS were the major problems during the term. Many ministers resigned on various grounds and Shri Namboodiripad himself resigned on 24th October, 1969. The chief Minister did not recommend for the dissolution of the Assembly. The legislature remained intact.

T. V. Thomas and M. N. Govindan Nair had marathon discussions with the Congress and Kerala Congress to avoid a serious political crisis in Kerala. Idea for the formation of a new ministry was formed. C. Achutha Menon, a member of Rajya Sabha was brought in.

**Remaking of the coalition and a new ‘mini’ ministry 1969:** An eight-member cabinet headed by Shri. C. Achutha Menon (CPI) was sworn in. (November 1969). [a prominent journalist wrote “Mukya mantri aakanulla vaartha ketta udane, delhiyil thante muri polum poottathe, achutha menon thala stana nagariyilekku yatra thirichu. C. Achutha Menon was well known for his administrative abilities] 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. The President’s rule was imposed.

**The fourth Kerala legislative assembly 1970-77 and anti-Marxist fronts:** 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 became Chief Minister for the second term. (on 4th October, 1970). EMS was the opposition leader. Initially, Indian National Congress supported the front Government without joining it. The cabinet was expanded on two occasions, once when the Indian National Congress joined it in September 1971 and for the second time in December 1975 to accommodate Kerala Congress nominees. K. Karunakaran was in charge of Home ministry.

The fourth Legislative Assembly was unique in many respects. It emerged as the first Assembly in the chequered post-independence history of the State, which completed its normal constitutional term. Moreover, the normal term of the Assembly was extended on three occasions - for a period of six months from 22nd October 1975, for a second period of six months from 22nd April 1976 and for yet another six months from 22nd October 1976, totalling 1½ year.
The house saw a 30 hour mass ‘satyagraha’ by the opposition members ever in the history of the Kerala Assembly. Opposition wanted all the five ministers facing enquiry to resign.

Number of bills: 227. It was truly a ‘model house’

**Fifth Kerala Legislative Assembly 1977, and four anti Marxist fronts (1977-1980):**

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, while Congress lost in the center. A ministry under the leadership K.Karunakaran of the Congress came to power. (on March 25, 1977) . But this ministry was short-lived. Shri.Karunakaran tendered the resignation due to Rajan Case Verdict by the High Court (April).

Shri. A.K.Antony (1977-78) (Congress) became the next Chief Minister. However, in the wake of Congress Working Committee policy towards Indira Gandhi regarding parliamentary by-election at Chikkamagalur in Karnataka, Shri Antony resigned his Chief Ministership (on October 27, 1978).

Shri.P.K.Vasudevan Nair (CPI) (1978-79) took over as Chief Minister (on October 29, 1978). Oommen Chandi was a minister. K. Karunakaran was exonerated in Rajan Case by the Ernakulam CJM Court.(1978 March) Kerala congress split into Joseph Group and Mani Group (1979 July). CPI and RSP left the front in favour of CPM. The reason was severing connection with Congress and Muslim League. This policy obviated any chance for realignment after the fall of C. H. Muhammed Koya Ministry. The ministry resigned on October 7, 1979 in order to create a favourable atmosphere for the formation of a Left Democratic Front. (There was the ‘clean state’ idea by EMS).

Shri.C.H.Muhammad Koya (1979) was sworn-in as Chief Minister on October 12, 1979. Congress supported the ministry for passing ‘ishta daana bill’ and to avoid President’s Rule. Mani Group withdrew support in November 14. K. A. Mathew of Mani group joined Joseph Group to support ministry. On November 22nd, Ittoop of Janatha Party withdrew support. On November 27th, Congress withdrew support. The ministry resigned on December 1, 1979. K. M. Mani tried for a ministry. But, Assembly was dissolved. Again President's rule was invoked.

Since the Congress alliance had a majority in the Vth KLA, there was no need for an election in the first three times. But this period was characterized by instability.

This period was also characterized by a special phenomenon in the Keala political history. It happened during the period of A. K. Antony. The Indira Congress, which was formed in 1978 under the leadership of K. Karunakaran, left the ruling front. Indira Congress had more members than the major party in the opposition, CPM. Thus K. Karunakaran became the opposition leader. EMS lost the position.

Indian Union Muslim League also split during the time. The All India Muslim League joined CPM.

The concept of ‘Subject Committee’ was conceived during this period. (Bills: 87)

**Sixth Kerala Legislative Assembly (1980-1982) and Formation of LDF and UDF:** The stage was set for the eventual emergence of two political combines - the Left Democratic Front and the United Democratic Front. In the 1980 Assembly polls, out of the 140 elective seats in the Assembly, 13 were reserved for scheduled castes and one for scheduled tribes. The LDF bagged 93 seats. Shri.E.K.Nayanar, leader of the L.D.F. headed a 17-member ministry, which assumed office on 25th January 1980.
Despite the thumping majority for the LDF, there arose ideological differences among the ruling partners and it culminated in the withdrawal of support to the ministry by the Congress (S) and Kerala Congress (M). The curtain fell down on 20th October 1981. Shri. E.K. Nayanar tendered resignation of the ministry and President's rule was introduced on 21st October 1981.

Again political realignment took place. The Kerala Congress (M) and the Congress(S) joined the U.D.F. U.D.F. ministry was sworn in on 28th December 1981 with Shri K. Karunakaran (Congress-I) as the leader. It was the twelfth ministry in Kerala since the formation of the State.

The Congress (S) broke into two factions. The major group supported the Government. There was a split in the Janatha Party also and a section lent support to the ministry. A member of the Kerala Congress (M) later withdrew his backing to the Government and it resulted in the resignation of the ministry and dissolution of the Assembly on March 17, 1982. The State fell under President's rule for the seventh time.

Seventh Kerala Assembly (1982-1987): Mid-term elections to the were held on May 19, 1982. The nominees of the UDF and the LDF were the main political contestants. The U.D.F. won 77 seats. The 19 member U.D.F. Ministry with Shri. K. Karunakaran as its leader assumed office on 24th May 1982.

During the regime of the U.D.F. Government the major events that took place, were the merger of the INC (I) and INC (A) in November 1982, the merger of the two rival factions of the Muslim League (IUML and AIML) in August 1985 and the splits in the N.D.P., the Janata (J), Kerala Congress and the SRP. That ministry could complete the full term of office.

- Highest number of exit and entry of ministers: 7 each.
- The electricity minister R. Balakrishna Pillai made his infamous “Punjab Model” during this period.
- Speaker V. M. Sudheeran made many remarks, which the Chief Minister did not like. Many ordinances were promulgated many times.
- M. V. Raghavan, a member was expelled from the party for his attempts for a “badal Reghs”.
- Complete its full term constitutionally.

The U.D.F. Ministry resigned office soon after the announcement of the election results on March 24, 1987.

Eighth Kerala Legislative Assembly (1987-1991): Election was held on March 23, 1987, about two months in advance of the due date. The electorate numbered 1,59,94,280 as in the case of the two previous elections, the U.D.F. And the L.D.F. were the contestants. The U.D.F. consisted of INC, IUML, KC(J), KC(M), SRP(S), NDP(P) and RSP(S). It fielded two independent candidates. The KC(J) and the IUML had given one each of their seats-Thaliparamba and Azhikode - to the Communist Marxist Party with which they had electoral adjustments and understanding. The LDF comprised of CPI(M), CPI, RSP, IC(S), Janatha and Lokdal. A third political front had also emerged with the B.J.P. And the Hindu Munnani, as constituents, which put up 127 candidates. The presence of 84 candidates fielded by the newly born Communist Marxist Party led by Shri. M.V. Raghavan who was expelled from the CPM, added a new dimension to the poll.

In the elections, the LDF came out victorious by securing 78 seats, pushing the UDF to the opposition with 60 seats. An independent and one CMP candidate also won the elections. A five-member ministry under the Chief Ministership of Shri. E. K. Nayanar assumed charge of office on March 26, 1987. The ministry was expanded on April 3, 1987 by including 14 more members in the
Cabinet. Later the Janatha Dal recommended to the Cabinet, the name of Prof. N.M. Joseph in the place of Shri M.P. Veerendra Kumar.

In a move to decentralize power, the L.D.F. Ministry brought in the District council. In the elections to this council held in December 1990, LDF came out victorious. Subsequently, early general elections to the assembly were declared and were scheduled for 23rd May 1991, though the tenure of the ministry extended up to March 1992.

- The Ministry faced serious financial crisis. The overdraft from the RBI could not be paid back in time.
- The Governor Ram Dulari Sinha was censured for her decision in the issue of nomination to the Kerala University Senate.
- Kerala Congress split. P. J. Joseph left UDF. R. Balakrishna Pillai remained in UDF. He lost the membership in the house on account of Defection Law. This was the first time a member is losing his membership.

Ninth Kerala Legislative Assembly (1991-1996): Consequent to the assassination of Shri. Rajiv Gandhi, former Prime Minister, on 21st May 1991, barely two days before the dates fixed for the polls, the elections were postponed to 12th June, 1991. Elections were held as per the revised schedule in 139 constituencies (as polls in the Ettumanoor constituency was countermanded, because of the death of one of the candidates there). The total electorate numbered 1,95,12,248 and the votes polled were 1,43,33,377 (73%). In the elections, the U.D.F. emerged victors with 89 seats, their constituents being INC, ML, KC(M), KC(B), CMP, NDP and independents. The 9th Kerala Assembly was sworn in to power on 24th June 1991, with Shri. K. Karunakaran as the Chief Minister. The ministry comprised of 19 ministers, drawn from INC, ML, NDP, KC(M), KC(B), KC(J) and CMP. Shri. P.P. Thankachan was elected speaker. This ministry completed its full term of five years with a change of Chief Minister and Speaker in between. On 22nd March, 1995, Shri. K. Karunakaran took up a berth in the union cabinet, making way for Shri. A. K. Antony to take up the Chief Ministership.

- ISRO espionage case and K. Karunakaran resigned Chief Ministership and membership. He lost his Union ministership when Narasimha Rao resigned.
- Accident Insurance for members was introduced.
- Ombudsman to enquire into corruption charges in local self governments.
- Kerala Lok Ayuktha to look into corruption charges against public workers.

Tenth Kerala Legislative Assembly (1996-2001): As in previous years the L.D.F. Were the main contestants in the elections to the 10th Kerala Assembly. The L.D.F. Consisted of CPI(M), CPI, Janatha Dal, Congress (S), Kerala Congress (J), R.S.P. And the U.D.F. Consisted of INC, ML, KC (Jacob), KC (M), KC(B) and CMP. Tilting the balance, the L.D.F. Emerged winners and the 10th Kerala Assembly was sworn in to power on the 20th of May 1996 with Shri. E. K. Nayanar (third and the last times, longest ruling CM)) as Chief Minister. The cabinet comprised of 14 ministers drawn from CPI (M), CPI, JD, INC(S), K.C.(J) and RSP.

- Ombudsman to enquire into corruption charges in local self governments.
- Kerala Lok Ayuktha to look into corruption charges against public workers.

Eleventh Kerala Legislative Assembly (2001-2006) Election to the 11th assembly was held on May 10, 2001 in which UDF got 99 seats and the 11th Kerala Assembly was sworn in to power on the 17th of May 2001 with Shri. A. K. Antony as Chief Minister.
resignation of his cabinet on August 29, 2004. A five-member ministry under the chief-ministership of Oommen Chandy assumed charge of office on August 31, 2004. KPCC President K. Muralidharan joined ministry but could not continue since he could not secure a seat in the by-election (2004 May). In the Lok Sabha election, LDF got 19/20 seats. INC faced a split in 2005, a new party DIC[K] was formed under the leadership of veteran congress leader K. Karunakaran on May Ist 2005.

Twelfth Kerala Legislative Assembly (2006-2011) Election to the 12th assembly was conducted in three phases on April 22nd, 29th and May 3rd 2006. In the 140 member house, the LDF secured 98 seats, the UDF secured 41 seats and the DIC (K) secured 1 seat. The 19 member LDF ministry was sworn into power. with Shri. V. S. Achuthanandan as the Chief Minister. The LDF has got 48.63 percent of the votes polled and the UDF got 42.98 percent. The difference between the two fronts is 5.65 percentage points.

The Elections to the Kerala Assembly in 2011 took place after the United Democratic Front (UDF) had routed the Left Democratic Front (LDF) in the elections to the Lok Sabha held in 2009 and elections to the local self governments in 2010 and certain realignment of forces during the period. The Kerala Congress (J) quit the LDF and merged with the Kerala Congress (M) led by K. M. Mani prior to the Parliament elections. However, a faction of the Kerala Congress led by P. C. Thomas remained in the LDF. (The election commission gave it the name Kerala Congress (Anti-merger Group). The Kerala Congress group led by P. C. George had earlier merged with the Kerala Congress (M). The Janata Dal (S) decided to quit the LDF following failure of seat sharing talks for the Parliament elections. However, the party split with the parent remaining in the LDF and the dominant group led by M. P. Veerendra Kumar joined the UDF with the name Socialist Janata (Democratic). Within the LDF, the Revolutionary Socialist Party-Bolshevik (RSP-B) merged with the RSP in 2008 while the Kerala RSP (Baby John) continued with the UDF. Formation of the Nationalist Congress Party with support from the Congress (S) and subsequent merger of Democratic Indira Congress (DIC-K) with it had resulted in the NCP quitting the LDF. A Congress (S) faction remained in the LDF. However, after K. Karunakaran and his son K. Muraleedharan, who had formed the DIC-K left the NCP, the NCP returned to the LDF fold. Another development was the formal entry of Indian National League into the LDF.

Kerala Assembly Elections - Results Summary -- 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Front</th>
<th>No. of Candidates</th>
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<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>140</td>
<td>17461942</td>
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Results for the Kerala Legislative Assembly have been:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>UDF</th>
<th>LDF</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Government (majority)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>UDF (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>61</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>LDF (56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>UDF (6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kerala Assembly enters the Golden Jubilee year in April 2006. Here are some of the records as on April 27 (49th anniversary of the first session).

- The Assembly that had the longest tenure: Fourth Kerala Legislative Assembly (1970-77)
- The Assembly that had the shortest tenure: Sixth Kerala Legislative Assembly (1980-82)
- The Longest serving Member of the Assembly: K. R. Gouri Amma
- The Member who served for the shortest term: C. Haridas (Ten days in February, 1980)
- The Member who got the highest margin of votes: P. Jayarajan, (45, 865 votes in the bye-election of 2005)
- The Member who got the lowest margin of votes: A. A. Azeez (5 votes in 2001 as per court verdict)
- The Cabinet that had the longest tenure: C. Achutha Menon Ministry (1970-77)
- The Cabinet that had the shortest tenure: K. Karunakaran Ministry (March- April 1977)
- The Chief Minister who served for the longest period: E. K. Nayanar
- The Chief Minister who served for the shortest period: C. H. Mohammed Koya (October- November, 1979)
- The Minister who served for the longest period: K. M. Mani
- The Minister who served for the shortest period: M. P. Veerendra Kumar (April 1987- five days)
- The Speaker who served for the longest period: Vakkom B. Purushothaman
| The Speaker who could complete a full term | M. Vijayakumar |
| The Speaker who served for the shortest period | A. C. Jose (February – June 1982) |
| The Member who served in the maximum number of Assemblies | K. R. Gouri (12 Assemblies since 1952). |
| The Member who has been elected from the same constituency for the maximum number of times | K. M. Mani (Ten times since 1965 from Palai Constituency) |
| The Finance Minister who presented the maximum number of Budgets | K. M. Mani (Eight Budgets) |
| The (only) member who has been elected to the Assembly unopposed | M. Umesh Rao from Manjeswar in 1957 |
| The eldest Member to serve in the Assembly | K. R. Gouri Amma (turned 86 on July 14, 2005) |
| The youngest Member to enter into the portals of the House | R. Balakrishna Pillai at the age of 25 in 1960 |
| The Anglo-Indian Member who served for the longest period | Stephen Padua |
| The longest session | The First session in 1959 of First Kerala Legislative Assembly - 72 days |
| The shortest Sessions | (1) Tenth Session of the Ninth KLA- one day (May 26, 1994).  
(2) Ninth Session of the Eleventh KLA- one day (September 16, 2004)  
(3) Tenth Session of the Eleventh KLA - one day (December 1, 2004)  
(4) Thirteenth Session of the Eleventh KLA- one day (November 21, 2005) |
| The longest sitting | The sitting held on December 12, 1987 during the Third Session of the Eighth Kerala Legislative Assembly - it commenced at 8.30 am on December 12 and continued up to 4.35 AM on December 13. |
| The shortest sitting | The sitting held on October 8, 1979 two minutes. |
| The year in which, though elections were held, the Assembly could not formally be constituted | 1965 |
| Ministry which served the longest term | C. Achutha Menon Ministry (1970-77) |
| Ministry which served the shortest term | K. Karunakaran Ministry (March 25- April 25, 1977) |
Kerala Congress leader K. M. Mani became the longerest serving member of the Assembly on July 13, 2010, surpassing the record of K. R. Gouri (15544 days). However, if one counts her tenure as legislator in the Travancore-Cochin Assembly(1130 days), Ms. Gouri still has the longest innings as legislator. Mani has been winning from the Palai constituency continuously (11 times) since the formation of the constituency in 1964. The borders of the constituency have changed for the 2011 elections following fresh delimitation.

Eight-seven year old Chief Minister V. S. Achuthanandan became the eldest member to serve the Assembly on August 18, 2010, again breaking the record of K. R. Gouri who was 87 years old when the tenure of 11th Kerala Legislative Assembly, to which she was a member, ended on May 12, 2006

ROLE OF CASTE COMMUNITY INTEREST GROUPS

The role of caste and community interest groups in the state and society of Kerala is second to none. It is often said that the Kerala society is an 'ethnic museum' because of the presence of varied and heterogeneous kinds of Caste and community elements present in the society of Kerala. Historically speaking, the formation of the society in Kerala itself is a proof which would legitimize the presence and role of communal and caste interest groups in the state. It cannot be said that they play a negative role in the state. As a matter of fact, these groups constitute the state itself. Therefore, nobody can deny their role or presence in the society in Kerala. That is what the society is Kerala is made of. Therefore, their influence on the state in Kerala is only a natural fall out. Our concern is how far these interest group help build the society in Kerala. How positive is their indulgence in the politics in Kerala. We cannot jump into a categorical conclusion that they are devoid of negative presence and influence. Certainly there are negative roles played by various caste and communal interest groups in the state. Our issue is how well the mosaic of Kerala state and society is defined by these caste and communal interest groups.

Our approach towards caste and communal interest groups can be summarised as follows:-

1. The mosaic of Kerala society is made of many varied and heterogeneous caste and community interest groups.

2. The presence of large number of caste community interest groups in the state is a historical reality. The society in the state is the product of these caste and community groups.

3. The history of the society in the State is the history of caste and communal groups.

4. The caste and communal interest groups play both negative and positive role in building the society of the state.

5. The influence of Caste and communal interest groups in the society is reflected in the state also. The state politics is very much defined and often decided by these caste and community interest groups.
6. The influence of caste and community interest groups in the politics of the state is less likely to reduce in the future. The general trend is in the increasing mode.

The Sangham literature provides evidence to the fact that during the early centuries around 1
st to 5
th century AD, the Kerala society was divided on the basis of occupational groups. The occupational groups transformed into various occupation based castes by the arrival of the Brahmin settlers around 9
th century AD. While the Brahmins controlled the hierarchy of the society, the Nair community became the ruling class. By the arrival of the British, they found it difficult to appreciate the caste based hierarchy. The existing system in no way helped their colonial ideas and ideals except for the fact that it naturally divided a suppressed population. Social reform movements and political movements including Channar agitation, and Pazzassi revolt followed. Khilafat movement, Malayali Memorial, and Ezava Memmorial etc are examples of the positive power of various caste and communal groups in the state. All these groups played a very positive decisive role in the democratic and nationalist movements in the State.

One glaring example of the power and influence of the caste and community interest groups in the state in the post independence period is the Liberation Struggle of 1958-59, against the Communist Ministry of EMS Naboothiripad. The Catholic Church, NSS, and Indian Union Muslim League led by Indian National Congress Party purportedly supported by the Central Intelligence Agency of USA struggled against the land reform and educational policies of the government. The struggle culminated in the dismissal of the government in 1959.

As ever, no political party in the state can choose to ignore the various caste and community interest groups in the state in their policy making or administration.

NSS, SNDP, the various Christian churches especially the Catholic Church, are the major community interest groups in Kerala. A glaring example of the power and influence of interest groups in Kerala was the Liberation Struggle of 1958-59, against the Communist Ministry of EMS Naboothiripad. The movement was against the land reform and educational policies of the government. The struggle culminated in the dismissal of the government in 1959.

Analysing by the communal presence, the Namboothiris occupied a position at the peak of the caste hierarchy. A community which once controlled the economy and administration of the land is presently the least powerful economically as well as politically. The Nair Community, the traditional warriors of Kerala with their communal pressure group by name Nair Service Society had been part and parcel of democratic and nationalist movements in Kerala. They remain quite powerful and articulate, especially in the recent times. Another Hindu community, which is quite assertive especially in the recent times, is the Ezhavas. The social uplift of the Community effected with the advent of Sree Narayana Guru who spread the message of communal harmony. Christians who comprises 19% of the population still remains a powerful interest group in the State with the Catholic Church dominating in terms of economic as well as power of population. A large percentage of educational institutions are owned and run by the churches. The Muslim community with its political manifestation, the Muslim League wields tremendous influence in the state and society of Kerala.

In the recent times, there are efforts from major Hindu caste interest groups to advance their concern with joint efforts. The NSS and SNDP, both with a history of more than a hundred years have done many attempts for a unified Hindu agenda.

In the past, the interest articulation and aggregation of various communal groups in the state was mainly through peaceful means, there is every reason to believe that the scene is changing very fast. There is increasing intolerance from the part of various sectarian groups in the State. There is
increasing minoritarianism as well as majoritarianism in the state. Most of them carry a very secular name for their organisation besides holding objectives which appear secular in nature.

**TRADE UNION MOVEMENT—THE EARLY PHASE**

The period immediately after the first world war in 1919 was marked in India by industrial strife on an unprecedented scale. Prices were going up. The working class and the student community organised themselves and led marches and demonstrations. The Indian Trade Union Act was passed in 1926 and registered trade unions could carry out trade unions activities. The developments at the all India level influenced those in the provinces and princely states.

In Travancore a Royal Proclamation abolished predial slavery in 1855. A system of money wages was gradually established. It recognised freedom of contract. That marked the first stage in the improvement in the conditions of work and wages of labour. The passing of the Factories Act in 1913 brought further benefits to the labour. During the first quarter of the 20th century, the State was under the grip of poverty and unemployment on a large scale. This was followed by the depression of the 1930s.

Alappuzha and Kollam were the major centres of trade union activities in Travancore. It is believed that the Travancore Labour Association (TLA) which organised the coir workers in the 1920s is the earliest trade union. The earliest company was Darragh & Co which was established in 1859. The major foreign companies were the Aspinwall & Co, Pierce Leslie & Co. Empire Coir Works was the major Indian company. The wages were as good as Rs.40 a month.

The post war situation was fast deteriorating. The demand for coir products declined. 85% of the workers did not have any land of hut. Before reporting for work at 6 am, they had to do the work at the tenants house and land free of cost but for a mundu once in an year. The Mooppans or work agents extorted commission from the labourers. In 1907, at the Darragh Smail Company, the workers protested for reduction in the working hours. This was the first instance of organised effort. Employers resorted by cutting down wages and shifting companies to smaller towns to employ the poorest at lower wages. All sorts of illegal and illegitimate activities went on right from mooppukaasu to molestation to nepotism and despotism.

Vadappuram Bhava who was born in 1886 was the founder of TLA. After his Kudi Pallikoodam education, he got his first job at the Darragh Smail Co after presenting himself well dressed; the job was earlier denied to him when he presented himself in a dhoti. But he kept of changing the companies. As a follower of Ezhava rights and Sri Narayana Guru, he was involved in social activities also. He convinced the Indian factory owners that a labour organisation is good to organise the workers for the good of all. Bhava also succeeded in convincing the workers to contribute from their meagre wages some amount for the funds of the association. He also collected funds from the traders. His own earnings were not sufficient to run the show.

TLA worked like a social organisation. The first organised activity was conversion of a number of toddy tappers into honourable factory workers, training them under the expense of the association. Then they organised special death allowances to the workers besides organising Allopathic and Ayurvedic dispensaries. They also set up a Reading Room. When small pox epidemic erupted in Alappuzha in 1930, the TLA came out with educational pamphlet. In the annual conference, they organised reading, elocution, handwriting, music and drawing competitions. After the conference the TLA faced financial crisis and the founder was alleged of financial misappropriation. He resigned leading to a decline in TLA.
TLA also demanded representation for labour in the Travancore Legislature, a ban on untouchability practices, free medical care, free primary education and adult franchise. In the meantime, the membership grew to 20,000. New laws and regulation also were made. At times, the employees surpassed the association to get their demands met.

In the course of time, the organization also demanded legislations on Factories Act, Workmen’s Compensation Act, Trade Dispute Act and Wage Act.

TLA was the first to get registration under the Travancore Trade Unions Act 1937 and came to be known as Travancore Coir Factory Workers Union (TCFWU). The activities of the Union continued unabated under the leadership of R. Sugathan, T. V. Thomas and P. N. Krishna Pillai.

**GROWTH OF THE UNION MOVEMENT**

In the initial periods, the trade union movement was confined to the coir industries workers. But soon it spread to other areas. However, the years after the second World War saw lot of retrenchments, unemployment and poverty. 2000 died of starvation in Cherthalai Taluk alone.

The Travancore Coir Factory Workers Union (TCFWU) got affiliated to the All India Trade Union Council. People were largely looking up at the AITUC to come out of their trouble. They lost their faith in the State Congress. They had some affection towards the Communists. The ATTUC declared a General strike for three days in July 1946. Dewan offered some respite; but wanted to finish off the communists. The Police along with the goondas of some factory owners and landlords started their sinister measures. The army made a route march through Cherthala town. The Dewan wanted the leaders to concentrate on trade union activities and keep out of political activities. He wanted their support for his American Model rule. But the ATTUC went ahead with their demands. Dewan reacted with black laws. He was acting like a native Hitler. He got himself ordained as the Supreme Commander in Chief of the Armed forces in the State. The idea was to provoke the Communists and then suppresses them with all force.

In Punnapra, the coastal village, a church was the biggest land lord. A church-landlord nexus existed which exploited the fishermen. A member of a crew of 11 could secure only 1/11 of 50% of the total catch, which he had to share with many elements. It was Simon Asan, who came with the idea of organising the fishermen against the exploitation.

Vayalar was closer to Chiertala town. The coconut gardens were intercepted by small canals. The upper class formed few families with the support of NSS, SNDP and the Church. The middle was formed by the Ezhavas. The lower class consisted of farm workers weavers, tree climbers etc. The coir workers and the farm workers were the most exploited class. When the farm workers were about to form unions, the NSS convened their Karayogam and decided to train their members to work in the farm and deny work to the labourers. Many trade unions came into existence in the region in the 40s.

Kuttanad was the granary of Travancore and the land was water logged and cultivation is possible only by extensive de-watering and preparation of bunds. Thus it was a labour intensive job. The land was prepared mainly by pulayas. Sowing and harvesting were done by the Ezhavas. During the season, the coir workers of Alapuzha used to migrate to the Patasekham or units of cultivation. It encourages the spread of political ideology and class consciousness and solidarity. Syrian Christians and Brahmins were the major land lords. In the early 1940s, the communist ideology spread in the region. The labourers began to resist. They became conscious of their rights.
They started not to remove the head gear when the landlord arrived, they started wearing moustaches and the women started to cover their chests.

The Dewan followed a carrot and stick policy. At one time, he greeted the representatives of the lower classes and at the same time, used all measures to suppress who support the lower classes. Police atrocities with the help of army of goondas, false cases, mass destructions and molestations and murder were the major weapons at Punnapra, Vayalar and Cherthala. The workers also retaliated with counter attacks on the house and properties of landlords. Large scale armed struggles were planned under the leadership of the Communists. October 22, 1946 was fixed for a general strike under the leadership of T. V. Thomas, K. C. George and Varghese Vaidyan. On October 21st, the Dewan imposed military rule. Armed men attacked the Punnapra Reserve Police camp killing many. On October 24, military fired at Punnapra and on October 27, fired at Vayalar. There were police firings and brutalities in Muhamma and Mararikkulam. The All Travancore Trade Union Council was banned. The Dewan tried to paint a picture that the communists cheated the workers by drawing them into violent struggle. The State Congress in the meantime did not show any sympathy in the whole episode. Pattom Thanu Pillai visited Cherthala and was a guest of a big landlord.

Thakazhi on Punnapra-Vayalar: “Punnapra Vayalar revolt was the result of a demand for a comprehensive revolutionary change in society. Feudalism of the worst order was a factor that kindled it.”

“Sir” C. P. Ramaswami Iyer wanted to destroy the link between the communists and the trade unions. Thus in October 1946, before the Punnapra and Vayalar episodes, he declared Communist Party and also the trade unions controlled by it as unlawful.

In September 1947, a Reforms Committee was appointed with Pattom Thanu Pillai as President. It was predominantly an anti-Communist and communal committee which recommended for adult suffrage, multi-legislative constituencies, plural voting system and protection of minorities.

In April 1951, a Travancore-Cochin state wide Trade Union Conference was held at Alappuzha. Fifty two trade unions formed the Trade Union Workers United Committee. This development was the spirit behind forming a left democratic front in the State constituting the Communist Party, the revolutionary Socialist Party and other left groups.

In the first general election held in 1951, the Communist Party, RSP and KSP formed the United Front and won 32 seats. Congress secured 32 seats. No party had the majority to form the government. In 1952, the Congress secured the support of the Tamilnad Congress and formed the ministry under A. J. John. The situation of the working class did not change much. A. K. Gopalan, then a member of the Parliament raised the issue of poverty and starvation in the region. When in 1952, the ban on the communists were lifted, the TCFWU had to struggle to get back its registration as it could file annual returns for many years.

The A. J. John Ministry had to resign after 18 months in September 1953 as the Tamil Nadu Congress withdrew its support. In the general election of 1954, the Pattom Thanu Pillai’s Indian Socialist Party joined the United Front but defected after the elections to join with the Congress to become the Chief Minister. It was during the Pattom Ministry that the police opened fire at the striking employees of the State Road Transport at Marthandam. This incident led to a split in ISP. Panampilli Govinda Menon of Congress secured the support of ISP and Tamil Nadu Congress MLAs to form a ministry in 1955, which lasted for only 10 months. It was believed that He had colluded with the Tamil Nadu Congress to surrender some parts of Kanyakumari to Madras. Pattom, in order to save his ministry had already contacted T. V. Thomas and accepted all his
demands including the release of all Punnapra-Vayalar detenues. In November 1956, B. Ramakrishna Rao took charge as the first Governor of Kerala.

The election manifesto of the CPI was impressive. It included employment generating modern industries, development for traditional industries like coir, handloom and small industries, increase in wages and bonus, comprehensive land reforms, nationalisation of foreign coffee and tea estates, revamping the entire educational system, decentralisation and fundamental changes in public policy. The first Communist Ministry led by E.M. Sankaran Namboothiripad was sworn in at 12.30 pm on April 5th 1957. K. R. Gauri introduced the Land Reforms Bill, to abolish the intermediaries in land, protect tenancy rights, fix fair rent impose ceiling on land holdings, distribute surplus land to the landless and confer ownership rights to the kudikidappukar. Joseph Mundasseri introduced the Education Bill to establish social control over educational institutions. T. V. Thomas introduced the Industrial Relations Bill for the promotion of Trade Union Rights, collective bargaining, voluntary arbitration, bipartite industrial relations and minimum bonus and curbing the rights of owners to shut down the units. These bills attracted much opposition from land lords, private school management, and communal organisations like NSS, SNDP and the Church.

In the meantime, schism in the trade unions gave rise to RSP and KSP. INTUC also came to the scene under the able leadership of C. M. Stephen. It was followed by mushrooming of trade unions in the Kerala scene.

The Kerala polity was at a boiling point with the problems of food shortage, strikes by anti-communist students groups, protest by private college managers and catholic bishops, division of trade union movement and protests against police intervention, lathi charge and firing on the workers, and marches and demonstration by a NSS, SNDP, and Muslim Organisations.

The first trumpet of Vimochana Samaram was blown in December 1958 when a meeting of private school managers was held at Mammen Mappila Hall at Kottayam presided over by Mannath Padmanabhan, against passing the education bill. The anti communist front included NSS, SNDP, Malayala Manorama, Deepika, Desabandhu, Kerala and believably, Moral Rearmament Agency (MRA) and the CIA, the American Intelligence Agency. Even RSP joined liberation struggle as it was not happy at the growing influence of INTUC all over Kerala. On July 31st 1959, the President of India dismissed the Communist Government.

In the 1960 elections, the Three party anti communist United front was formed with the Congress, PSP and the Muslim League. Congress had to allow Pattom to become the Chief Minister. Pattom was alleged as dictatorial. When in 1962, the state was to go for the Parliament elections, the Muslim League decided to support the CPI. One section of PSP also left the Union. In this juncture, Pattom was offered the Governorship of Punjab, for which he left the state signalling the death of PSP. R. Sankar became the Chief Minister. But PSP, RSP and the Muslim League turned against him. EMS moved the no confidence motion in October 1962 which was defeated. Following the Chinese attack on the borders, the Government of India declared a National Emergency. The Congress began to see petty groupism. This was followed by another no confidence motion, which also was defeated. Soon the Congress split into two groups, one led by R. Sankar, the Ezhava faction and the other led by C. K. Govindan Nair (President of KPCC), the Nair faction. C. M. Stephen backed R. Sankar, R. Balakrishna Pillai and K. M. George supported C. K. Govindan Nair. Those who backed K. M. George left the Congress and formed the Kerala Congress Party. The CPI and the Muslim league tabled separate motions of no-confidence. The Sankar ministry resigned in September, 1964. Kerala once again came under President’s Rule.
When China made some intrusions in the border in 1958 and 1959, there were some ideological differences among the leaders of CPI. When the Soviet-Chinese differences surfaced, the Central Committee of the CPI said that China had no imperialist ambitions and that India should protect her territories and extended full support to the Central Government. There were pro Moscow members and pro China members and some neutralists. At last. From October 5, 1964, the CPI(M) began to function. CPI was the right group and the CPM, the left group.

There were frantic efforts to take control of the trade unions as well. TCFWU with T. V. Thomas as the President was accused of all ills in the Coir Industry. Soon in 1967, the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) was formed. The strategy of the right wing was to capture the leadership of unions and if failed, they formed rival unions and attracted members through attractive demands. Soon the strength of the CITU outstripped AITUC.

**UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN THE 1960S.**

In the early days, the leadership of the trade unions emerged from the working class itself. But in the late 1930s and 40s, the working class was subjected to political mobilisation from outsiders who wanted to fight the British, the Raja and the Dewan. Fighting the employers and the establishment were complementary. This thinking spread all throughout Travancore, Cochin and Malabar. They had the common bond of communist ideology. In the process the working class could not distinguish between political issues and economic and industrial issues. It was quiet natural that these could not be separated from each other.

As far as patterns of initiation is concerned, almost all trade union leaders in Kerala have had strong political affiliations. Often the trade union activity is used as a stepping stone into political leadership sometimes, both the positions have come in conflict with each other. And in turn almost all the political parties have used the organised forces of working class and student movement for political purposes. In Kerala the trade union movement has strengthened the left movement involving the CPI and the RSP and in turn these political parties have championed the cause of working class. In Kerala in the period 1947-65, irrespective of the political uncertainties and splits in the union movement, the trade union shad come to adopt a common united stand whenever their broad interests were affected. Increasingly they had come to believe in the method of collective bargaining.

As far as the question of affiliation is concerned, all the trade unions in Kerala are affiliated to the central trade unions like the Indian Trade Union Congress (INTUC), All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), United Trade Union Congress (UTUC), Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) and Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS). They have close links with the Congress, CPI, CPI(M), RSP and Socialist Party.

The pattern of financial flow between the union movements and political parties explain the degree of political involvement of organised labour. The surplus budget of the trade union is a regular source of political party expenditure. The Kerala State Trade Union Council, the subsidiary of AITUC had many times raised funds for the party. The CPM and CITU have amassed several crores of rupees worth of property, buildings, vehicles, and other assets.

As far as the leadership conflict is concerned, since the formation of the CITU, the Marxist unions concentrated in enhancing their political clout by organising and building up an extremist movement. But soon the militancy spread to other unions. This caused considerable damage to the reputation of the State. (incidences of the party taking control of the trade unions were evident in the cases of V.B. Cherian, O Bharathan et al and CPM)
Along with militancy, irresponsibility also crept in. It was common for one worker to take membership in more than one union and shift his loyalty according to his wish. At times, non-union strikes also took place against the advice of a recognised union. Despite political and ideological differences, inter-union rivalry, politics of the union and leadership conflicts, a great degree of unity of goals was evident among the trade unions in Kerala. Multiplicity of trade unions has resulted in low incidence of political strikes.

As B.R. Munshi, formerly of Tata Oil Mills said, “Kerala worker is literate and loquacious….He cannot take a statement lying down. He wants every statement to be proved to his satisfaction. Experience has shown that if one can satisfy his curiosity, he is a loyal and disciplined worker….”

The trade union movement during 1920-67 was running parallel to the freedom struggle in the first phase and direct involvement in the socio-economic development of the state in the final phase. But political instability in the state tarnished its image as a progressive force.

**TRADE UNIONISM AND WORKING CLASS POLITICS TODAY**

Trade Union Act is out of date in dealing with the new issues. There was a demand for legislation to deal with the problem of union recognition either through secret ballot or membership verification. Almost all the central trade unions are concerned about the possible fall out of Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation on the Indian working class. They are deeply concerned about the retrenchment, cuts in wages and benefits enjoyed by the working class for a long time and also restrictions on legitimate trade union rights. Hence they have planned to form joint action councils and launch agitations against the Government’s New Economic Policy.

On major issues of industrial relations, the trade unions in Kerala have come forward to form joint action councils and programmes. In such cases, it was difficult for the employees to drive one union against another. In some cases, some of the management had even signed agreements with unregistered unions.

It is observed that once “the trade unions are militant, employers are legalistic and state tender minded”. But now it seems that after economic reforms were initiated, the unions are becoming more legalistic, employers more aggressive and militant, while the State continues to be soft and tender minded. The state must project itself as a facilitator rather than a provider of social protection. The employers are compelled to formulate new strategies to become more competitive. The trade unions have been compelled to accept the reality of reforms and change and are advised to make appropriate adjustment to their attitudes and policies and also to make little sacrifices to make production efficient and keep industries running instead of forcing them to close down. The State is becoming more capital friendly and reversing its earlier labour friendly approach.

One important result of economic reforms is the decline of trade unions. Jobs in the organised formal sector are being lost all around. Workers are now more concerned with keeping their jobs than demanding further improvements.

Many trade unions are witnessing declining membership and lack of interest even in paying their membership fees. Unions are deliberately kept out of joint consultations and decision-making process. To some employers, unions have become a nuisance. The workers have failed to understand the underlying threat that these labour laws are in the process of modification in favour of the Capital.
The trade union movement today stands divided and fragmented. The political parties treat the unions as appendages to boost their vote banks. In Kerala, a new generation of workers is emerging. There is little concern for larger issues like growing unemployment, declining industries, loss of investor confidence and worsening wage relativities and even re emergence of contract system and pre capitalist modes of production. There is little democracy at the work place as well as in the day to day functioning of trade unions. In some unions there is no internal democracy. Basic issues concerning the working class in general and specific group of workers in particular are not discussed and debated.

In Kerala, the trade union movement today is trying to establish a common platform for launching a “save industry” campaign and build trade union unity cutting across political differences. They know that the employer also is threatened. So unless both the partners join together, survival becomes difficult. The focus must be on larger organisational goals rather than personal or individual gains. What we need is a work culture based on mutual trust and good work and opportunities to grow, both for the employer and the employee.
MODULE – III

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Role of Legislature in Social Change

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HISTORY OF LEGISLATIONS

The history of legislations in Kerala begins with the Rajakeeya Vilambarams of the Rajas of Travancore and Cochin. It took the shape of Regulations once the Travancore Legislative Council came into being in 1888. In 1939, the Maharaja announced the usage of the term “Acts”.

The initial Travancore legislations were centered around the welfare of different communities in Kerala. Examples are Janmi-Kudiyan Niyamam, Nayar Niyamam, Ezhava Niyamam, Najinaadu Vellala Niyamam, Thiruvithamkur Kshatriya Niyamam etc. Besides there were legislations aimed at economic welfare like The Chitties Act.

The 1904 Sri Mulam Popular Assembly and the 1932 Bicameral house were the major leaps in this direction. Further, on October 28, 1932, the promulgation of the Travancore Legislative Reforms Regulation II of 1108 by Sri Chithira Thirunal Maharaja of Travancore heralded another transformation by which bicameral legislature came into being. The legislature was thereby given opportunity to expose the irregularities and misappropriation on the part of the executive.

Several historical enactments were also made during the reign of Sri. Chithira Thirunal, who had authored the Temple Entry Proclamation on the 12th November, 1936, which came to be known as the spiritual Magna Carta of Travancore. Eversince the change of terminology of Regulations to Acts by the Proclamation issued on 18th March, 1939, there has been a flow of several Acts among which the Travancore Village Panchayats Act, The Travancore Insurance Act, The Travancore Child Marriage Restraint Act, the Travancore District Municipalities Act, The Travancore Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act, The Travancore Maternity Benifit Act, The Travancore Primary Education Act, The Travancore Hoarding And Profiteering Prevention Act, The Travancore Local Authorities Loans Act etc. deserve mention. By the Travancore Interim Constitution Act of 24th March, 1948, the Maharaja proclaimed establishment of responsible Government and the creation of a new Assembly, namely the Representative Body of Travancore, which was to function as the Constituent Assembly also. The legislation corresponding to this period, extending upto 1949, which included The International Monetary Fund and Bank Act, The Travancore Minimum Wages Act, The Travancore Industrial Disputes Act, The Travancore Factories Act, The Travancore Opium Smoking Act etc, Village-Panchayath law, Child Marriage Prohibition Act, District Municipalities Act, Immoral Trafficking Prohibition Act, Maternity Benefit Act, Hoarding and Black Marketing Prohibition Act, Minimum Wages Act, Industries Dispute Act, Factories Act, Opium Smoking Act etc.

In the neighbouring Princely State of Cochin, the first Legislative Council was inaugurated in April 1925. The Cochin Census Regulation, The Cutchi Memons Regulation, The Cochin Prevention of Food Adulteration Regulation, The Cochin Trade Union Regulation etc were
important among the regulations of the initial period. Two Acts, The Cochin Tenency Act, 1938 and The Cochin Agriculturists Relief Act, were landmarks in the history of land reforms. In 1938, a system of diarchy was introduced in Cochin by the Government of Cochin Act, 1938. On August 14, 1947 the Maharaja of Cochin constituted a full responsible Government Consisting of a Council of Ministers and a Prime Minister as its head. Adult franchise was introduced in 1948 and Legislative Council was termed Legislative assembly. A popular ministry assumed office on September 20, 1948 after the general elections and it remained in office till the integration of Travancore and Cochin on July 1, 1949.

The region of British Malabar, was a district of the Madras Province. It continued to be under the State of Madras after independence. The Malabar District was being represented in the Madras Legislative Assembly and several legislations were made there safeguarding the welfare of the region in general and the various interests in particular. The Malabar Tenency Act of 1930, with elaborate provisions to confer security of tenure on tenants was perhaps the most significant among them. The Madras Tenency Act, 1937 was made applicable to Malabar in 1947. Madras Legislative Assembly was significantly represented with 29 members from Malabar in the first general elections to the assembly held in 1951.

On July 1, 1949, with their integration Travancore and Cochin ceased to be separate entities. Some of the major legislation from Thiru-Kochi were as follows: Sarkar Bhoomo Pathichu Kodukkal Niyamam, Bhoo Vikasana Niyamam, Co Operative Act, Maternity Benefit Act, Public Health Act etc. A legislative Assembly of the new Travancore- Cochin State came into being with the Maharaja of Travancore as the Head of the State. The legislation by the new representative body was extensive and underlined land reforms and public welfare. Examples are The Travancore-Cochin Government Land Assignment Act, 1950, The Travancore Cochin Land Development Act, 1950, The Travancore -Cochin Temple Entry (Removal of Disabilities) Act, 1950, The Travancore -Cochin Co-operative Societies Act, 1950, The Travancore- Cochin Maternity Benifit Act, 1952, The Travancore -Cochin Public Health Act, 1955, the Kanam Tenancy Act, 1955 etc.

On November 1, 1956 the state of Kerala was formed by the integration of Travancore- Cochin and Malabar. Marking the continuation of a glorious tradition of representative bodies and the beginning of the widely represented Legislative Assembly, the first Kerala Legislative Assembly was formed on April 1, 1957. In the years spreading across the period from 1957 to 2006 (First KLA to Eleventh KLA) the Kerala Legislative Assembly has served as a model for progressive and reformative legislation in diverse areas with bearings on social, political, and economic environment. The major fields which have been covered by these legislative outputs include land reforms, labour welfare, Public Service Commission, Education, Resource mobilisation, local bodies, social welfare etc.

Since the formation of the state, there were nearly 900 Acts.

**Land Acts:**

1960: Agricultural Relations Bill


**Education Bills:**

1958: Kerala Education Bill 1958 (direct payment to private school teachers), University Acts, acts about Pre-degree separation.
1970-77:
The four University acts, 1974: Karshaka thozhilali Act (The magna Carta of agricultural labours), 1974: Karshaka thozhilali Act (The magna Carta of agricultural labours), Kerala Sisu niyamam, Kerala State Rural Development Board Niyamam, Acts which prohibited hindu joint family system and bonded labour
Panchayati Raj Acts:
1960: Panchayath Act, Municipalities Act
1980: Act regarding district administration.
1994: Kerala Panchati Raj Act, Kerala Municipalities Act: Three Tier Panchayati Raj system was first introduced in Kerala—Formation of Gram-Sabhas in Kerala—Democratisation of local administration in Kerala.— appointment of a finance commission on the economic development of Panchayathi raj system—a separate state election commission for panchayathi raj institutions
Social Welfare:
The various acts were regarding: controlling moneylenders, soft loan to agriculture, eye donation, rehabilitation of orphans, control of drugs, banning bonded labor, welfare fund of lawyers, slum area eradication, juvenile delinquency, control of prices, reclaiming land of adivasis, backward commission (1993), Vanitha Commission (1995), water supply and sewage act, Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Act, Banning Ragging in the Colleges.
Financial Resources:
Surcharges on sales tax and agricultural income tax, plantation tax, entertainment tax, building tax, luxury tax for hotels and restaurants, toll for bridges, tax on vehicles, stamp act. Stoppage of Revenue Board (1997)
Miscellaneous:
Co operative acts, high way protection act, Hindu religious and charitable societies acts, Hindu joint family acts, banning of arrack, destruction of public property, civil court acts etc, etc.
Conclusion:
The Legislative Assembly is not just a house for legislations. The Legislative Assembly is a place of public debates on popular issues. It is a house of policy decision. It is a house of assessment of the performance of governments. It is the place where the future of the state is being determined. It is the sanctum sanctorum of parliamentary democracy. In the short history of evolution of the modern state and government system in Kerala, the legislatures have played a very decisive during the pre independence era as well as since the formation of the state.
SOME STATISTICS
CONFIDENCE OR NO-CONFIDENCE MOTIONS: From 1956 to 2005, there were 19 (except in the 1st, 5th, 10th, and 12th KLAs)
RESOLUTION FOR REMOVAL OF SPEAKER: There were 4 resolutions in the 3rd 6th and 8th (2Nos) KLAs.
ADJOURNMENT MOTIONS DISCUSSED SINCE 1957: 14
MOTIONS UNDER RULE 130: 87
MOTIONS ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE ON THE BASIS OF DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 130: 39
DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 58: 42
PETITIONS PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE SINCE 1957: 18

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BILLS PASSED SINCE 1957: 1335 +
- First Kerala Legislative Assembly 88 (1957 - 59)
- Second Kerala Legislative Assembly 161 (1960 - 64)
- Third Kerala Legislative Assembly 102 (1967 - 1970)
- Fourth Kerala Legislative Assembly 227 (1970 - 77)
- Fifth Kerala Legislative Assembly 87 (1977 - 79)
- Sixth Kerala Legislative Assembly 47 (1980 - 82)
- Seventh Kerala Legislative Assembly 118 (1982 - 87)
- Eighth Kerala Legislative Assembly 129 (1987 - 91)
- Ninth Kerala Legislative Assembly 84 (1991 - 96)
- Tenth Kerala Legislative Assembly 104 (1996 - 2001)
- Eleventh Kerala Legislative Assembly 165 (2001 - 2006) 15 sess
- Twelfth Kerala Legislative Assembly 23 (2006 - )

ORDINANCES PROMULGATED SINCE 1957: Every Year.

Governors: 17
Chief Ministers: 20 change overs.
Number of Ministerial Positions: 325

COMMITTEE SYSTEM IN THE LEGISLATURE:
The Kerala Legislature follows an efficient Committee system. It has the following Committees:-

1. Public Accounts
2. Estimates
3. Public Undertakings
4. Business Advisory Committee
5. Committee on Private Member's Bills and Resolutions
6. Committee on Petitions
7. Committee of Privileges and Ethics
8. Committee on Subordinate Legislation
9. Committee on Government Assurances  
10. Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes  
11. Committee on the Welfare of Women, Children and Physically Handicapped  
12. Committee on Environment  
13. Committee on the Welfare of Backward Class Communities  
14. Committee on Papers Laid on the Table  
15. Rules Committee  
16. Library Advisory Committee  
17. House Committee  
18. Committee on Local Fund Accounts  
19. Committee on Official Language  

It has the following Subject Committees:-  
1. Agriculture and Integrated Rural Development  
2. Land Revenue, Forests and Fisheries  
3. Irrigation and Power  
4. Industry and Minerals  
5. Public Works, Transport & Communications  
6. Social Services  
7. Food, Housing and Labour  
8. Economic Affairs  
9. Local Administration and Co-operation  
10. Home Affairs
MODULE – IV

Grass root level Democracy:
Working of Panchayathi Raj Institutions
Peoples Planning Programme
Neighbourhood Groups.

PANCHAYATH RAJ INSTITUTIONS

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment was enacted in 1992. The constitutional amendment brought three tier (level) Panchayathi Raj system in India. Accordingly, the Government of Kerala enacted the Kerala Panchayati Raj and Municipality Act 1994. The government also brought 40% of financial out lay of the 9th five year plan under the Local Self Governments (LSG).

The three levels of Panchayaths came under the Panchayati Raj system accordingly. 10,732 Grama Sabhas, 991 Grama Panchayaths, 152 Block Panchayaths and 14 Zilla Panachayaths came under the Act. A Grama Sabha consists of all voters of a Ward. The Gram Sabha must convene its meeting at least two times an year. The Ward Member is the Convener. There shall be a Grama Panchayath for a Gramam or a group of Gramams. The Grama Panchayath must produce a plan for the development programme in the Ward area in the first meeting of the Grama Panchayath. The number of members is according to the population. There are reservations for SC/ST and women. The Block Panchayath is at the Block level. There also is a reservation of 1/3 seats for women as well as SC/ST. The Zilla Panchayath is at the District level. The State Government also has certain responsibilities. The government has the powers to remove a resolution passed by a Panchayath under certain circumstances. The Government also has the powers to dissolve a non performing Panchayath. There is a Finance Commission to look into the resource and disbursal matters of Panchayaths.

PEOPLE’S PLANNING PROGRAMME

After the enactment of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, Govt. of Kerala enacted the Kerala Panchayati Raj Act and Municipality Act 1994. These Acts have been amended during the years 1995, 1999, 2000 with a view to empower the local bodies to ensure peoples participation in the planning and development process and remove the restrictions and control upon the local bodies by the State Government.

The Kerala Acts provides powers, authorities and responsibilities wider in some respects than those envisaged under the above provisions of the Indian Constitution. A peculiar feature of the Act is the predominant role given to the ‘grama sabha’ through which the common people get a direct participation in the development administration of local bodies. The important landmarks in Kerala’s decentralisation, inter alia, include the transfer of powers, functions, institutions and staff to local self governments (LSGIs), adoption of separate budget documents for LSGIs, decision to devolve 35 to 40% of the Annual Plan funds to LSGIs, launching of People’s Campaign in August 1996, institution building at different tiers and levels, restructuring.
In 2002-03, the peoples Campaign Programme was renamed “Kerala Development Plan”. The important features of Kerala development Plan are 1) Institutionalisation and building sustainable capacity in LSGIs 2) Catalyzing economic development through these institutions and 3) Improving the quality of Services.

PROCESS OF DECENTRALISATION:

The decentralisation programme was implemented in a very systematic manner, phase by phase.

In the first phase, Gram Sabhas (village constituencies) were convened and people at the local level were organised to report on their immediate needs.

In the second phase, development seminars were convened at the village Panchayath level. Task Forces were formed for the preparation of the various development projects. 12,000 task forces were formed that worked out to around 12 task forces per village panchayat. Close to 120,000 people participated in these task forces.

In the third phase, development projects were prepared according to a format suggested by the Kerala State Planning Board. However, there were a number of problems faced by these Task Forces. Firstly, there were no enough number of experts at the service of the Task Forces. Secondly, the members already present in the task forces were not properly trained, especially in technical and financial aspects. Thirdly, the official participation was not up to the expectations.

At the fourth phase, phase, from March to May 1997, it was expected to prepare five year plans for the panchayats based on their development projects. But this was a tremendous task involving planning at the Panchayath level, and coordinating at the Block Level and district Panchayath level.

In the fifth and final phase, preparation of annual plans for block and district panchayats was planned. It had to be done in co ordination with the Block as well as Gram Panchayath levels.

The end results showed that the panchayats could not spend more than 10% by March 1998, the end of the first year of people’s planning. The government extended the period for expenditure by three months and later up to 31 March 1999.

During the second year too, the panchayats could not spend more than 10% of the earmarked funds of around Rs750 crore. The period of expenditure was extended by another three months to the end of June 1998. In 1998–99, and 1999-2000, the funds allocated were Rs 970 crore and Rs1020 crore respectively.

The budgetary provision for grant in aid to the local bodies has three components Tribal Sub Plan (TSP), Special Component Plan (SCP) and General Sector Plan. Between rural and urban local bodies, funds were distributed on the basis of the population share. As for the rural LSGIs, the total general sector allocation is apportioned among the Grama, Block and District Panchayats in the ratio of 70:15:15. For the Special Component Plan the share of 20 per cent each was fixed for the higher tiers.

During the period, the Government also launched many programmes also in a festive mood. They may be summarised as follows:-

Modernising Government Programme – LSG Initiatives

The Government of Kerala began the Modernising Government Programme in 2002 in a Mission mode to bring about basic reforms in the administrative and governance machinery and to improve basic services to the citizens particularly to the poor and the marginalized. Government
recognises that public services have to be delivered in a manner that is people centred, efficient, effective, equitable, affordable, sustainable and accessible to all.

**Service Delivery Project**

The Service Delivery Project is a fast track project covering 22 categories of institutions in 8 Departments. The number of institutions targeted for improvements is 2587. The Service Delivery Project (SDP) seeks to improve the quality of services in 103 Grama Panchayats, 14 municipalities and 5 Municipal Corporations under LSGD. The objective is to make them models in terms of Service Delivery.

**Asraya – The Destitute Plan**

The destitutes are the poorest of the poor who constitute less than 2% of the total population in any local body. The Government of Kerala through State Poverty Eradication Mission has designed an innovative programme to address the varying problems of the destitute families in the state. The programme is known an ‘Ashraya’. At present 391 local self governments 385 Grama Panchayats and 6 municipalities – have prepared projects that benefitting 30192 families at a total cost of Rs.159.27 Crore.

**Akshaya**

Akshaya is a programme for bridging the digital divide, promoting digital literacy, connecting communities, providing access points in an effort to establish a knowledge society in Kerala. The project intended to set up around 3000 multipurpose Community Technology Centres across the state. The project has implemented in eight districts in the state. Around 3.5 lakh people have completed the eliteracy programme and about 1300 Akshaya centres have been set up in Eight districts. Government have announced that Akshaya shall be implemented in the remaining 6 districts also.

**Information Kerala Mission**

The Information Kerala Mission (IKM), established in June 1999, for computerising the local bodies in the state had been pursuing one among the most ambitious egovernance programmes in the country. Visualised as a sequel to the decentralised plan campaign which has been acclaimed as one of the most deep rooted and extensive initiatives in strengthening grassroots level democratisation, the Mission during its initial phase, had put in considerable efforts in building up its perspectives and strategies. The new processes of participatory developmental planning increased the workload of local government personnel substantially. Additional workload of the local government personnel was sought to be balanced by automating various local government processes. Decentralisation had created a unique paradox in the matter of expertise. It was at the grass root level that the largest chunk of plan resources was made availabale for planning and resolution of citizen problems through decentralisation. However the staff in the civil service available at this level were the junior most, who lacked the experience of planning ad developmental administration. Building up Expert Support Systems and Decision Support System was looked upon as a possible mechanism for tackling the lack of talent in the short run. The relevance of application of ICT in the context of decentralisation had emerged from these concrete necessities.

**Capacity Building: Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA)**

Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA), an autonomous institute under the Department of Local Self Governments, Govt. of Kerala is the nodal agency of training, research and consultancy in the area of local governance. Apart from training and policy oriented research
activities, KILA organizes seminars, workshops and discussions on various issues of local governance and development. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India has initiated steps to declare KILA as a SAARC Centre for Local Governance and Development.

**Decentralisation Support Programme**

The Decentralisation Support Programme was a project of Local Self Government Department implemented on a mission mode. The project aimed to facilitate the process of institutionalisation of decentralisation initiatives in Kerala. The project was implemented in two phases. During the phase 1, the Decentralisation Support Programme documented and analysed the experience of decentralisation in Kerala through literature survey, stakeholder consultation and case studies. The phase II sought to address the needs, concerns and opportunities identified during phase I. The phase II was started in August 2004 and completed in November 2006. The activities taken up under phase II was confined in three main categories namely (i) Gender and Development issues in Local Governments (ii) Improving Planning Process in Local Governments for Sustainable and Equitable Management and (iii) Institutional and Staffing Policy.

**Kerala Grama Panchayat Arranges Loan for BPL Families**

Mangattidom Grama Panchayat near Koothuparamba in Kannur district has accomplished a novel task by providing subsidised micro finance from a leading bank to people living below the poverty line for renovating their old houses or building new lowcost houses. The SBI Life Insurance Company has covered the beneficiaries under its home loan insurance policy.

**Canara Bank adopts village Panchayat**

As part of its centenary celebrations, Canara Bank has decided to adopt Vengappalli Grama Panchayat, one of the backward panchayats of Wayanad district.

**Kole land development**

The Karuvoduchira kole land extending over an area of more than 370 hectres is Water logged due to inadequate drainage facility. A study conducted by CWRDM, Kozhikode, recommended mainly to do the deepening and widening of the main drain and connected lateral drains for adequate drainage of water from ayacut area.

**Special funds for panchayats in backward regions**

The union government is going to set up a Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF). A sum of Rs.50,000 crore would be sanctioned every year for this. The money would go to the states’ consolidated funds, from where it would be directed to panchayats. The BRGF would cover 250 districts across the country, which have been identified as backward areas. The fund is aimed at removing regional disparities and inequalities among various income groups by catalyzing development in backward areas through providing infrastructure, promoting good governance and making agrarian reforms.

**Initiative to make Panchayat – Karakulam and Nellanadu as ‘litigation free’**

Elected representatives, voluntary activists and women’s representatives along with legal experts and judicial personals are sitting together as sworned members of the Grievance and Dispute Redressel body of the Karakulam – Nellanadu Panchayats. In addition to this there is a Vigilance Cell, with the support of official / non – official members such as sub – inspector of police, doctors, ICDS officers etc. so as to deal with status and dignity of women.
Identifying Scattered Tribal Families – Through Genealogy Method

An analysis of fund utilization under different projects during 2005-6 reveals that it is very difficult to spent plan outlay under TSP due to nontraceable of tribal people. The Panchayat Committee felt that there exist disparity in the number of Scheduled Tribe families (scattered) in the Panchayat. Hence they decided to seek the support of experts in finding a solution to this. Identification of Scheduled Tribe families through a detailed survey in the area was initiated with the help of an Anthropological expert. The expert made use of ‘Genealogy method’, generally used in Anthropological studies. In the beginning, the available list of tribal families at each GP was verified. Then, by using the genealogy method, location of other tribal families in the area was gathered. After identifying all tribal families in the area, their details were gathered using a detailed questionnaire.

A New Approach on Tax Collection Through Grameena Patana Kendram

The rapid urbanization and the increase in the building and professional taxes, which are the main sources of the own resource of the LSGs, has made the tax collection a hectic task for the limited number of functionaries of LSGs. Karakulam Grama Panchayath, a semi urban Panchayath in the outskirts of Thiruvananthapuram city, has come out with a remarkable example of people’s participation in own resource mobilization. Financial Standing Committee of the Panchayath took the leading role for the efforts. The special efforts helped the Panchayath to collect 5 lakhs rupees, which is estimated to be the half of its arrears, within a short period.

District Panchayat to take up milk distribution:

Thiruvananthapuram District Panchayat is to launch programmes to foster milk production in 50 panchayats with the support of Kudumbasree groups. It is a 45 crore project which would help 5000 families.

Conclusion:

The greatest advantage of People’s Planning programme was that the village panchayaths were freed from the red tapism of the Public Works Department in matters relating to construction works. Moreover, the local planning could take place at the local level with popular participation. It was truly a felt need programme. The needs were determined at the local level.

KUDUMBASREE & NEIGHBOURHOOD GROUPS

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. There is a state mission with a field officer in each district. This official structure supports and facilitates the activities of the community network across the state.

Kudumbashree differs from conventional programmes in that it perceives poverty not just as the deprivation of money, but also as the deprivation of basic rights. The poor need to find a collective voice to help claim these rights.

The grassroots of Kudumbashree are Neighbourhood Groups (NHG in short) that send representatives to the ward level Area Development Societies (ADS). The ADS sends its representatives to the Community Development Society (CDS), which completes the unique three-
tier structure of Kudumbashree. Today, there are 1.94 lakhs NHGs, over 17,000 ADSs and 1061 CDSs in Kudumbashree.

It is this network that brings women to the Grama Sabhas and helps them bring the needs of the poor to the attention of the local governments. The Community Development Societies are also very active in Government programmes and play significant roles in development activities ranging from socio-economic surveys and enterprise development to community management and social audit.

Though its efforts to engage women in civil society in development issues and opportunities, Kudumbashree in association with the local self government of Kerala is charting out new meaning and possibilities for local economic development and citizen centric governance.
MODULE – V
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Kerala Model of Development: Features, Challenges and Prospects.

The Kerala Model or Kerala’s Development Experience

What is meant by ‘Development”? Does it mean having more mobile phones and bikes? The answer is ‘No’. The reason is that even if you have many riches, if you don’t live long, if your health is bad, if your child does not cross the age of 1, if you are not educated, there is no meaning in life. So Development does not mean having more and more money. But it means good quality of life. This is the lesson Kerala is giving to the world today. What is meant by “Quality of Life”? Take for example, when a Keralite has 10 rupees in his pocket, an American has 700! Now let us compare their Quality of Life. An average American lives up to 72 years. An average Keralite lives up to 70 years. Not much less. Remember, length of life is an indicator of ‘Quality of Life’. There are other indicators of ‘Quality of Life’ like education, Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) etc. All these indicators are very close or more than the standards of money rich countries. So what is the lesson? You need not be super rich to have good ‘Quality of Life’. But how did Kerala achieve this? This is exactly what development experts are trying to learn from Kerala. They call this ‘Kerala Model of Development’.

Kerala is 100 percent literate. Kerala's birth rate hovers near 18 per thousand, compared with 16 per thousand in the United States—and is falling faster. In the rest of India, the birth rate is about 40 per thousand.

In Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI), the Kerala score is nearly 90. For the rest of India it is 60. Literate women are better able to take charge of their lives; the typical woman marries at 22 in Kerala, compared to 18 in the rest of India. Infant mortality in 1991 was 17 per thousand, compared with 91 for low-income countries generally.

Kerala's attitude toward female children is an anomaly as well. Of 8,000 abortions performed at one Bombay clinic in the early 1990s, 7,999 were female fetuses. Girl children who are allowed to live are often given less food, less education, and less health care, a bias not confined to India. In China, with its fierce birth control, there were 113 boys for every 100 girls under the age of 1 in 1990. There are, in short, millions and millions of women missing around the world--women who would be there were it not for the dictates of custom and economy. So it is a remarkable achievement in Kerala to say simply this: There are more women than men. In India as a whole, the 1991 census found that there were about 929 women per 1,000 men; in Kerala, the number was 1,040 women, about where it should be. And the female life expectancy in Kerala exceeds that of the male, just as it does in the developed world.

Kerala has the highest newspaper-consumption per capita in India. People are politically conscious. In each town square political parties maintain their icons--a statue of Indira Gandhi or a portrait of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Strikes, agitations, and "stirs," and “arthals” are so common. Kerala demonstrates that a low-level economy can create a decent life, with good health and education.
Bill McKibben** writes that if Kerala and the United States managed to achieve the same physical quality of life, Kerala is the vastly more successful society. One of the reasons for the success of Kerala is the equitable redistribution of resources.

**Kerala Model of Development: Challenges.**

- There is a sharp decline in the expenditure on education and on health and family welfare.
- There is an issue of sustainability of Kerala Model of Development. It means how long we can keep our development achievements steady without losing it.
- There is a problem of ecological over-kill. Kerala is one of the most bio rich areas in the world. The state has some of the rare varieties of plants and animals. Development programmes must consider this fact very seriously. Forest lands are destroyed for development purpose and agriculture. Wet lands and paddy fields are fast disappearing. Large scale road constructions threaten the natural environment in the state. The long cost line of Kerala is under threat.

**CRITICAL LOOK AT THE KERALA MODEL:**

1. Kerala has one of the highest per capita consumer expenditure. That means, Kerala is increasingly becoming a consumer state which is a drain on her economy.
2. The high growth rate in Kerala is only because of production of service and construction. It is not because of other income generating production facilities.
3. The income levels of various Castes and Tribes, traditional fishermen, and section of Muslims is very low.
4. There is an increase in the crime levels. Family violence, crime against women, mafia gangs, day light robbery are increasing.
5. Public spending on education was as high as 29% in 1982-83. It is declining now. It was only 17 % in 2005-06.
6. Spending on health and family welfare also is declining. As a result of it, there is a decline in the quality of public health care resulting in poor health status of the poor. Even the poor utilize only 30 to 40 % of the public health care because of the poor quality of service. As a result of it, the poor end up spending 40% of their income on health care, while the rich need to spend only 2.5%.
7. Corresponding to the above, there is tremendous commercialisation in the fields of education and health care resulting in a large divide between the rich and the poor.
8. There is an increase in the number of income based private un-aided educational institutions in the state. There is a mushrooming of self financing professional colleges also in the state.
9. In 1990-91, out of a total student population of 5.9 million, private unaided schools accounted for only 2.5 per cent. In 2005 -06, it was 7.4 per cent. The student intake in the government schools declined from 39 per cent in 1990-91 to 31.5 per cent in 2005-06. However, there is a reduction in the number of non literates among various Castes and Tribes. More than 80 per cent of engineering seats and 65 per cent of seats in medical colleges in the self-financing sector. There were efforts from the part of various governments to rationalise the fee structure; but in vale.
10. Affordability and accessibility of public health care and education is on the decline ever since the neo-liberal policies of the governments. Just like inflation, there is a kind of “mediflation” also in the cost of health care.

11. There is something called “ecological over kill”, which means over exploitation of the ecology and heavy stress on the environment by means of growth of the economy. There is heavy stress on forests and the river systems. The water rich wet lands, which are called the “kidney of the economic system” are fast disappearing. The paddy lands of Kuttanadu and the related water bodies have become an ecological and environmental disaster. Interestingly, despite the heavy annual rainfall, Kerala has the lowest per capita availability of fresh water. Above all, there is powerful forest and sand mafia functioning in the state, which lets no government to take any meaningful action against them to control their activities. Levelling of paddy fields, and mountains, over quarrying and sand mining are the major ecological threats.

12. There is increasing stress on the environment because of domestic waste disposal and public waste management. There is effort to curb the plastic menace. The hospitals alone produce nearly 2 lakh tonnes of solid waste per day. Vector-borne diseases like chikungunya and dengue fever are the result of bad management of wastes and garbage. The greatest health hazard the Kerala population facing today is from Mosquito. In controlling the mosquito also we are a big failure.

13. The traditional know-how is virtually vanishing. There is no meaningful effort from the part of governments to protect and record traditional knowledge. Except for the efforts of few NGO’s, there is no much of efforts in this regards. The sewage produced in the coastal areas alone is about one million cubic metres per day.

Above all, the greatest issue is the sustainability of a model. If a model cannot be sustained for a long period, it is of no use and it cannot be called a model at all. Nobody can learn any lesson from it. The sustainability of Kerala model is under question. A model which is not sustainable is not dependable. Whether the Kerala Model is sustainable is a big question now.
MODULE – VI

NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AMONG DALITS AND ADIVASIS

Dalits were the fifth caste which fall outside the Indian traditional caste system and were regarded as low caste and ‘untouchables’. Dalits are a mixed population of numerous caste groups all over India. Dalits include leather-workers (called chamar), carcass handlers (called mahar), poor farmers and landless labourers, night soil scavengers (called bhangi or chura), street handcrafting people, folk artists, street cleaners, washermen dhobi, etc. Currently, there are an estimated 160 million Dalits in India. Discrimination against Dalits still exists in rural areas all over India where majority of the population live. The situation in Kerala may be different, but discrimination of all sorts exist in the state also.

In the all India scenario, it was Baba Saheb Ambedkar who began the efforts for bringing human identity for Dalits. It was Mahathma Jyothi Rao Phule, the social reformer of 19th century Maharashtra used the term ‘Dalit’ to mean the oppressed, the exploited, and the suppressed untouchables who formed the foundation of the Indian society. In Kerala Ayyankali warned that if Dalit are prevented from education and other civil rights, the paddy fields would produce only weeds. In the mean time, there were large scale conversion from among the Dalit communities to escape the caste frame work. On all India basis, the conversion was only 4% of the Dalit population in India. Conversion was not a solution to the problem.

The political parties also did not come up to the expectations of Dalit aspirations. In 1956, the Republican Party which was formed after the death of Ambedkar was split after its electoral alliance with the Congress. In 1970 s the Dalit Panthers in line with Black Panthers of USA was formed in Maharashtra. They also split owing to Marxian ideals in the Party. In Kerala in 1999, the Dalit united meet held at Kochi generally agreed that Ambedkarism was the best course of action for Dalits. Presently, Dalit movement with its various manifestations in politics, ideology, art, and literature is an omnipotent force in the Kerala society today.

It was in the 1970 s that the Government of Kerala passed the Adivasi land act. The objective was to restore alienated Adivasi land back to them. It was mainly lost due to migration of peasants from other parts of the state to hitherto Adivasi areas. The settlers also brought with them a new concept alien to the Adivasis. It was the concept of personal ownership. Those who does not believe in it was bound to get no benefit from it. As a result of it, the land and its treasures were lost to the
migrated farmers. However, the act was given effectiveness only from 1982. The act was supposed
to give effect from 1960. As a matter of fact, no efforts were taken to implement the same. In 1988,
the High Court of Kerala was moved to implement the act with necessary amendments. In 1996, the
amendment act was passed by the legislature. But it did not get the sign of the Governor. Again in
1999 the Kerala legislature passed another amended act.

An irony about the much acclaimed Land Reforms in Kerala is that it did not in fact make the
farmers in any way powerful. I was only the upper and middle class tenants who could become
owners of land by proving their tenancy by presenting rent receipts. Dalits and Adivasis being the
laborers could not prove their ownership. They were only given hutment rights for a small piece of
dwelling land. It was said that the total area of land thus transferred was only to the tune of as low
as 0.04 hectors in a village. This legal denial of ownership and access to land meant that Dalits
would never evolve as land owning peasants despite their continued role in the agrarian society.

In the 1980 s, the demand was for cultivable land rights for Dalits and Adivasis. Though various
political parties appear to support the move, on the practical front, nothing could be done because
of vote bank politics.

The constitutional struggle of the Adivasis were well received by the general public. Coherent and
articulate leadership also arose from among the Adivasi and Dalit communities. M. Geethanandan
from Kannur and C. K. Janu from Wayanad are examples of objective leadership for Dalit and
Adivasi movements in Kerala. Under their leadership, the Adivasi Gotra Maha Sabha occupied
Eucalyptus plantation of Forest department in Muthanga in Wayand in 2003. The incident resulted
in the death of an Adivasi and a policeman. Following this, the leadership launched another
struggle in Aralam in Kannur District, where there is a large Paniya population.

On particular nature of the Adivasi struggle in Kerala is that while Adivasi rights are advanced by
Maoist leadership elsewhere in India, in Kerala, it is still in the form of constitutional struggle.
However, there were reports that Maoists are trying to woo Adivasis to adopt their methodologies
for struggle.

In 2007, Dalit activist by name Laha Gopalan, under the banner of Sadhujana Vimochana Munnani
launched a struggle at Chengara in Pathanamthitta district. This time, it was a rubber plantation
leased by Harrison-Malayalam Plantations. The siege lasted for months. They had to face a two
pronged opposition. While the government considered it as illegal, the plantation workers thought
that it is against their rights. It is out of question, whether the struggle was a success or not; as a
matter of fact, it brought Adivasi and Dalit land right into the lime light once again. At least, the
land rights became a political issue rather than a marginal issue of a marginal community.

The nature of Adivasi and Dalit movements in Kerala could be summarised as follows:-

1. The new social movements of Adivasis and Dalits in Kerala are fundamentally targeted
towards land rights.

2. There is coherent and articulate leadership for Dalit and Adivasi movements in Kerala
today.

3. The various struggles led by the leadership has brought Adivasi Land rights to the lime
light. It is no more considered as a marginalized issue.

4. Lot to be done than done. Majority of the demands of Adivasis and Dalits still remains
unresolved. The struggle is to continue in the future.

5. Generally speaking, the methodology adopted by the leadership is constitutional in nature.
6. The constitutional struggle of Adivasis and Dalits are increasingly getting public support and sympathy.

7. No particular political party could fully take the credit of protecting Adivasi and Dalit rights.

WOMEN

The following table gives the conventional indicators for comparing the status of women in Kerala in comparison with that of India.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Kerala</th>
<th>India</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex Ratio (for 1000 males)</td>
<td>1058</td>
<td>927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>88% for women and 94% for men</td>
<td>54% for women and 74% for men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy of women</td>
<td>73.1 (67.1 for men)</td>
<td>65.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal mortality Per 1000 live births</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child death rate/1000</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>73.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth rate/1000</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work participation rate</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at marriage</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In spite of the positive demographic indicators mentioned above there is every reason for working for women’s rights in the state. The history of women’s rights can be traced back to the era of social reform movements and democratic movements in the state when women from both the lower castes and upper castes imbibed the ethos of national movement. The Channar agitation and movement against the purdah system among Namboothiri women are some of the oldest movements for women’s rights. Today, many are the women’s organisations working for the rights of women. Thanal, SEWA, Anweshi and RASTA are examples of active women’s organisations in the State. Though they may slightly vary in their approach and style of functioning, the fundamental objectives remains the same. All of them work towards alleviating the gender and other discriminative practices still prevalent in the society.

There are organisations working among marginalized groups also. An example is that of Women ’swing of Kerala Swatantra Matsya Thozhilali Federation (KSMTF). The objective is to promote leadership among women and to raise issues faced by the women - fish workers. One of the objectives of the groups is anti-liquor campaigns.
The crisis women face today is discussed below.

1. The sex ratio favorable to women is declining. The number of men for 1000 women is now in an increasing trend. Though sex determination and infanticide is not much heard in the state, the trend is alarming.

2. Increase in gender based violence against women: There is an increase in the number of gender based violence against women in Kerala. Molestation and rape cases are reported almost every day. Even atrocities against girl children are on the rise. These are apart from domestic violence perpetrated against women. Women are also at the receiving ends of alcoholism and other drug abuse. Alarmingly, a study on domestic violence in Kerala found that more than 60 % women in Kerala are subjected to physical torture and mental harassment in the state. The national average is only around 35 %. The capital city Thiruvananthapuram ranks among five cities in India for domestic violence against women.

3. One poignant concern is about the mental status of women. Studies showed that poor mental health status of women is reported owing to degeneration in the status of women, emotional deprivation, and de-empowerment due to economic and social reasons. Large scale migration of men for work outside the state is one of the reasons for poor mental status of women in Kerala.

4. Statistics also suggest that even when expectation of life is high for women, the physical health status of women is not as good as men. There are more chronic and acute medical cases among women.

5. Studies also indicates that the economic output in terms of domestic work by women is tremendous and beyond calculation. Apart from the usual domestic chores like washing, cleaning, and looking after children, more often they have to shoulder other responsibilities which are normally taken care by men, due to the absence of men folk at home because of job outside the state and also because of alcoholism. Looking after the elderly is another increasing responsibility for women folk as the life span is on the increase in the state.

6. Paradox to the domestic work input of women, there is an interesting fact about work participation of women in the state. The women in Kerala are known for their high educational status as compared to the rest of the state. Ironically, their work participation is less than the national average.

7. In spite of the education and awareness levels of the women in the state, the participation of women in politics is less than expected. Statistics shows that the number of women representatives in the state legislative assembly had never been more than 10%.

8. Another interesting aspect about gender discrimination is regarding professional education. The proportion of girl children in regular colleges is increasing while that in professional colleges is decreasing.

9. Another inequality is in terms of wages for women. The wages for women in the manual labour is always less than that of men even in equal labour. Even when the woman is the income earner in the family, the decision making power vests with men. Higher wages and salary for women also is not tolerated within the family. Especially in the marriage market, men want women with less salary.

10. Gender bias in family planning is another issue of contention. It is the women who are always made to undergo contraception even though the medical procedure is cheaper for men.
11. Apart from the above, the condition of women from the marginalized sectors like Adivasis and fisher folk is worth mention.

**FISHERFOLK**

Kerala fisher folk consists of more than 25% of the total fisher folk in India. They are equipped with more than 17,000 country boats and 14,000 mechanized boats. They form about 3% of the total population of the state and belongs to all the prominent religious sects in the State. Many are the organisations which work for the advancement of interests of fisher folk in the State.

The earliest social formation of the fisher folk was rather communal in nature. In the northern parts, most of them were Muslims. In the central parts of the State, most of them were Hindus and in the Southern parts of the State, most of them were Christians. As a matter of fact, especially in the southern parts, the Christian church was successful in organizing the fisher folk in the early periods. Since most of them belonged to a particular sect of the Catholic church namely Latin Church, the organisation of the fisher folk was rather easy. It was not very much so in the northern and central parts of the state. Thus the Kerala Latin Catholic Fishermen Federation was formed in 1977 by amalgamating the Church formed unions in different districts. In the 1980s many social service organisations were formed among the fisher folk. The Kerala Independent Fishermen Federation was formed in 1988. It was actually a changeover of the earlier church formed union of 1977. All Kerala Dheevara Sabha also was formed during this period by unifying Hindu fisher folk like Valan and Arayan communities. As a matter of fact, the unions formed by Congress, Communist Party, Muslim League or Revolutionary Socialist Party are as powerful and militant as the Federation formed in 1988.

A special mentions should be done about Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA). Its work among the fisher women is worth mention since women are the most exploited among the fisher folk.

Some of the pertinent issues the various fishermen organisations are addressing today are as follows:-

1. Severe inter union rivalries which often fought on religious lines. Many a time, the conflicts result in violent clashes. Sometimes, parts of coastal region remains quite volatile for months.
2. Over exploitation of sea results in lack of jobs for months.
3. Over mechanization in the field had made the traditional fishermen jobless.
4. Compulsion to opt for deep sea fishing to earn a living as coastal fishing proves useless.
5. Exploitation of fishermen in terms of price they obtain for the product. They don’t get even 10% of the market price of fish they catch and bring to the shore. There are a chain of exploitative middlemen who take the majority share.
6. There is severe trade unionism among traders as well as owners of large fishing boats.
7. Security threat in the deep sea is another serious issue which sometimes goes out of proportion. The large vessels often mistake the fishermen for pirates.
ENVIRONMENT

The landscape of Kerala falls within the eco system of Western Ghats. It is one of the most bio-diverse eco systems in the world in terms of the diversity of species as well as topography. However, it is one of the most threatened ecological systems in the world also.

The eco system of Kerala is so heterogeneous. The ecological problems Kerala facing today also are heterogeneous and so varied. Popular actions to protect the environment with the objective of sustainable life acquire the shape of state level action to very local level resistance in the form of action against a local sand mafia who sieve sand from the narrow village stream.

The following is a discussion of the environmental threats Kerala is facing today.

Lakes and Action Groups in Kerala

Vellayani, Sasthaamkotta and Pookode are some of the 34 lakes in the State. The case of Saasthamkotta lake is quite pathetic and local population as well as NGOs and governments have taken serious note of the fast depletion of the lake due to drainage and over exploitation.

Mining

Environmental depletion due to mining in stone quarries and sand mining are major issues in Kerala. Quarries leave large open areas as water bodies. Sand mining results in the fall in the bottom levels of rivers. Clay mining results in total wastage of fertile lands. Besides the above, there are industrial mining also. For example, Kerala Clays and Ceramics Products Ltd in Kannur district makes use of clay deposits. The top soil deposited as a result of mining pollutes air as well as water.

Deforestation

Kerala has less than 10,000 sq Kilo Meters of forest area which comprises of less than 25% of the state’s area. A healthy situation should be more than 30%. Unfortunately, even the government had resorted to converting pristine forest lands into Eucalyptus and Teak plantations resulting in the total de balance of the eco system resulting in climate change and depletion of food resources to animals and birds. At the same time the strict environmental laws prevent the development of roads and other amenities. NGOs all over the state are quite conscious about these developments.

Drinking Water

In spite of the fact that the State gets the highest rain fall in an year, the provision for safe drinking water is still an issue. Lowering of ground water levels is reported from all over the state except in Wayanad. There is total dependence on bore wells neglecting the traditional open wells, ponds and lakes, is the usual practice in the state. Low pH, high iron content, high salinity, high TDS, are the common problems not only in the coastal areas. In Alapuzha and Cherthala, the fluoride content is very high. Iron and magnesium also are very high. The existing safe water sources are polluted by water released from prawn farms. 80% of water prone diseases are caused due to pollution of water sources due to release of human faeces, bathing water etc into water sources.

Oil Pollution

Oil Pollution from refineries and by transportation has not received much attention from NGOs. Benzene is toxic and Sulphur causes damage to Liver and Kidney. People living near Southern refineries at Parassala in Thiruvananthapuram have reported health problems. IIT Madras and Cochin University were engaged to study the issue.
Water borne diseases

Water borne diseases form 40% of communicable diseases in Kerala. Acute Diarrhoeal Diseases (ADD) including Cholera and Typhoid are common in the State. They are caused due to lack of safe drinking water.

Bio Medical Waste issue

Kerala accounts for 3% of national population but 27% of hospital beds. There are more than 5000 medical establishments in the state. Bed capacity is more than 30,000. Safe disposal of waste, solid waste, water waste, bottles, syringes, needles, bio wastes is a great challenge.

Coastal Erosion

Sea coasts cover 10-15% of the total land area of the state with a total length of 560 Kilo Meters. Costal soil erosion acquires uncontrollable proportion during monsoon rains. One of the reasons for the situation is uncontrolled construction activities along the coasts.

Plastic Waste

There are 65 lakh families in Kerala. Three to twenty carry bags of different sizes reach each family every day. Moreover, there are 10 lakh tourists and 50 lakh pilgrims who visit the state every year. All of them dump carry bags, plastic bottles and other such plastic wastes into the environment. The greatest hazard due to plastic waste is caused due to carry bags below 20 microns. Components like benzene and vinyl chloride are cancerous.

Water bodies in Alapuzha-Kuttanad region

There are great water bodies in the Alapuzha–Kuttanad region with the inter linkage of lakes, rivers and canals. But the irony is the lack of fresh water sources. Floating African Algae has proved itself to be the greatest menace in the region. About 200 tonnes of waste material are dumped into the fresh water canals every day. This adds injury to insult. Local environmental organisations are really concerned about the situation.

Urban waste problem

The capital city alone produces around 4 crores litres of sewage every day besides non recyclable solid waste material. Dumping of waste in the nearby rural areas has invited violent opposition from the public. Vilappinsala issue is an example. Permanent waste management system based on scientific principles is a must. When waste management is a political issue than a technical issue, the solution is far away.

Apart from the general issues, there had been a number of particular cases which attracted much attention and public action. Some of them are briefly discussed below.

1. Silent Valley Movement of Kerala

In the 1970s the State Government decided to construct a Hydro Electric Project in Silent Valley in Kerala. The dam site included some 10,000 hectares of pristine forests which is the habitat to innumerable number of flora and fauna including the lion tailed macaques, horn bill etc. The monkey could survive only in silent Valley because of its particular nature of diet. Voluntary organizations like the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parisad picked up the issue. They tried to educate the public about the evils of deforestation. In 1979, the Kerala Government finally decided to drop the plan and protect the ecosystem of the area. Later, the State Government declared Silent Valley as a National Park in 1985. Perhaps it was the first time in the history of the State, a ‘man vs monkey’ situation culminated in ‘man and monkey’ situation.
2. The Mullaperiyar Dam Issue

The Mullaperiyar dam in Kerala was constructed over the river Periyar in the year 1895. The dam was constructed with rubble and lime surkhi. The life span is 50 years. However, after 111 years of its existence, the State of Tamil Nadu has demanded for the raising of water level in the dam. The plea was to meet rising demand for water for the agricultural fields. Apprehensive about the safety of the dam, the Kerala Government did not accept this proposal. The dam is located at a place which has high seismic potential. So the people of Kerala living in the down stream areas of the Dam started agitations demanding reconstruction or decommissioning of the Dam. The matter was brought to the attention of the Supreme Court.

3. Gwalior Rayons and Pollution in the river Chaliyar

The Gwalior Rayons factory at Mavoor was situated by the river side of Chaliyar. The factory producing synthetic yarn was accused of polluting the environment beyond repair. In December 1998, Rahman, the leader of agitation, who later died of Cancer, marched to the factory along with 7,000 villagers behind him. In 1999, many villagers were hospitalized after inhaling sulphur dioxide gas leaked from the factory. Kerala’s human rights groups called for the boycott of Grasim products. Finally, the ‘man or machine’ situation was decided by closure of the plant in 2000. This is another success story of people’s science movement in the state.

4. Movement against Endosulfan

The villagers of Padre village of Kasaragod district in Kerala had been fighting against the usage of endosulfan, in the cashew nut plantations of the Plantation Corporation of Kerala and around the village. Since the method of usage was aerial spray, the toxic pesticide poisoned almost everything on the surface and beneath the earth including wells and fresh water ponds. It was raining hazardous pesticides in Kasaragod rather than mountain dew water. The practice had been continuing for decades since 1976. New borns were born crippled, retarded and less than human. Those who could take birth normal were cursed to live a scary life, if death does not beckon them early enough. Men would never take their bride from the villages. No man would send their daughter married to the villages. Finally the nozzle of death was closed after 25 years in 2001. Central agriculture ministry banned the chemical in Kerala since. It was possible only through the concerted efforts of the local people, the general public of the state, NGOs and the media alike. It was an ‘end or endosulfan’ situation.

5. Plachimada agitation against Coca Cola

A 40-acre plot at Plachimada of Palakkad District, Kerala was the site of the unit of Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages Pvt. Ltd since 1998-99. Every day 15 million liters of ground water was extracted by Coca Cola at free of cost. Bottle washing involves the using of chemicals and the effluents are released without treatment contaminating the surface water. The area was already short of fresh water supplies. As a result of over exploitation of ground water, the situation worsened. The foul smelling slurry waste was sold as fertilizer to the unsuspecting farmers who were already suffering from water shortage. The struggle against the Plachimada Plant of Coca Cola was launched in 2002, which demanded the closure of the Coca-Cola Factory.

6. Industrial Pollution at Eloor, Kochi

In 1999, international NGO Greenpeace declared the Eloor industrial area one of 35 Global Toxic Hotspots. The Periyar river carried the entire brunt of effluents from the factories. In August 2004, the Supreme Court Monitoring Committee threatened Kerala State Pollution Control Board officials with contempt of court proceedings. It served closure orders on 32 industrial units and
ordered over 100 more to tighten up hazardous waste disposal. Periyar Malineekarana Virudha Samiti was among many environmental groups which protested against large scale pollution in the area.

7. **Haritha Keralam Programme**

The objective of **Haritha Keralam Programme** was to grow one crore trees outside the forest area with the help of all the 999 Grama Panchayats of the State. The aim of the programme was to reduce and control environmental pollution to a certain extent.

8. **Tourism Industry and Environment in Kerala**

One particular threat the environment in Kerala is facing today is from the Tourism industry. The threat is particularly visible at the high lands and the back water region where large scale encroachments were reported. While mountain ranges are encroached to build tourist resorts, the back waters are encroached by filling up. In the Munnar hills alone, encroachment was to the tune of more than two lakh acres. The anti-encroachment drive was not a complete success. The problem with resort mafia is that it totally disturbs the eco balance by unwanted human presence.

As far as the back waters—the unique feature of Kerala ecology—are concerned, conservative estimates shows that more than 65 percent of the lake has fallen victim to reclamation projects. There are only 23 percent of its backwaters left. In the Kumarakom bird sanctuary, there were large scale destruction of mangrove forests resulting in the reduction in the number of bird species in the sanctuary from 189 to 66. Only 1% of the original size of mangrove forests is left. There is a mushrooming of hotels and resorts in the area. The house boats in the area cause environmental pollution by means if waste disposal and oil pollution.