

BA Political Science Programme

State & Society in Kerala

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:

Kerala is an '**ethnological museum**' According to A. Shreedharan Menon, author of 'Survey of Kerala History'.

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.

Negroids:

The earliest known inhabitants of Kerala were the **Negrito types** (People of the Negroid race).

Members of this race lived by **hunting and by gathering plants and fruits**.

These people have **dark skin, round head, broad nose, and tightly curled hair** and are less than 1.5 metres tall.

Descendants of this race **still inhabit the mountain regions** of the state.

They have a good **knowledge of herbal medicine** and were skilled in interpreting natural phenomena.

Hill tribes such as **Kadar, Kanikkar, Malapandarams, Mutuvans, Ullatans, Uralis, Paniyas** etc

Australoids:

After the Negritoes came the **Proto-Australoids** (Austriacs), who spread over the whole of India. These belonged to the same race as the present-day Australian Aborigines.

They represented a race of **medium height, dark** (in some cases black) complexion with **long heads and flat noses**.

Irulans, Kurichiyas, Mala Arayans, Kaarimpalans, Malavetans

They introduced the **cultivation of rice and vegetables** and made sugar from sugarcane. They introduced **snake-worship** in Kerala.

Dravidians:

By **700 B.C.**, the Dravidians (The **Mediterranean People**), who migrated from the Mediterranean region, spread to the whole of India especially in the south, supplanting the Austriacs and Negritoes alike.

The Dravidians are the **ancestors of majority of the present day Malayalees**. They absorbed many of the beliefs of the Negrito and Austric people, but they were strongly inclined to the worship of the **Mother Goddess** in all her myriad forms: Protector, Avenger, Bestower of wealth, wisdom and arts.

Nair, Vellala, Kammala, Ezhavas as well as SC communities like **Pulayas, Parayas, Kuravas etc** fall within this group.

Aryans:

200 to 300 BC onwards.

Language, physical features, social organisation and religious faith different.

Intellectual ability and organisational skill of high order. (A. Shreedhara Menon)

“There was a conscious effort to achieve racial, ethnological and cultural synthesis of Aryans and non Aryan elements. The story of success achieved in this regard forms a colourful and fascinating chapter in the social and cultural history of Kerala.” ((A. Shreedhara Menon)

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 Aquinas** in clarity of thought and understanding.

The Economy:

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. (**Cinnamon, ginger, cloves, pepper and turmeric**, which were essential for preserving food.

The harbours of **Naura near Kannur, Tyndis near Quilandy, Muziris near Kodungallor and Bacare near Alappuzha** were the important ports.

The Society:

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 **Brahmins 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.

The Polity:

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.

Ninth Century: Mahodayapuram and Kollam.

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 (Muziri), 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 **revival of the Chera kingdom was actually a by product 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 pre existing 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 partition of Kerala.

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**.

In the **absence of a central power**, the divisions of the Chera kingdom soon emerged as principalities under **separate chieftains**.

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.

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.

Rise of Kozhikode:

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* or 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 **captured 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 prince lings 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.

Decline of Kochi:

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**.

Venad, 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. However, the National Sample Survey puts the figure at 32%. 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 childrens 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, **Pohttys**, Non Malayali migrant Brahmins], **Nairs**, **Malayala Kshatriyas**, **Ambalavasis**, Ezhuthassans [Kaduppattan, Kaduppottan, Kadumbattan]

Avarna Jatis (Out of 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 "**Eelam**"), 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 Ezhavas were the **progeny of four bachelors**, that the king of Sri Lanka sent to **Kerala** at the request of the **Chera King Bhaskara Ravi Varma, in the 1st Century AD**. These men were sent, ostensibly, **to set up Coconut farming in Kerala**, Devara, Kanian, Kuruman, Kamallans, Malayan, **Mannan**, Paniyan, Kadar, Parayan, Pulayan

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 overflowing 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.

THE CLASSES, PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM IN THE EARLY KERALA SOCIETY



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, Nediyruppu 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. Swarupam 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 occasion 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 heir 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 Thiruvithamkur 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 punctuation 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 Thalassery. 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 Thalikkettukalyanan, 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 Venganoor 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 news paper 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 feuds**.

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:

He was Kariakkal or **Thahsildar at Mavelikkara**, during the **times of Bala Rama Varma**, who became **king at the age of sixteen** and was under the influence of the noble man, **Jayanthan Sankaran Namboothiri**, who was appointed Dewan after the **murder of Raja Kesavadas**. Jayanthan had **two ministers, Mathu Tharakan, and Sankaranarayanan Chetty**. The trio **demand high income from the Thahsil** and was directed to pay **Rupees 3000**. Velu Tambi asked for three days. He **organised people against the trio** and **demand dismissal** of Dewan Jayanthan and the **ministers be flogged** in public and **their ears be cut off** and put in jail. Soon Velu Tambi was **appointed as Dalava** or Prime Minister of Travancore between 1802 and 1809. He is best known for being one of the **earliest individuals to rebel against the British East India Company's** supremacy in India.

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.

la. 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, Pazzassi Raja's uncle, was appointed as the Raja of Kottayam.

Vira Varma was **forced to collect extreme taxes** from poor farmers.

Pazzassi 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.

Pazzassi 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**,

Pazzassi Raja **finally fell in November 1805**.

By May **1812**, the **revolt was fully crushed**.

The Kurichi **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 enlightenment**.

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)

The struggle, also called the '**Breast-Cloth Agitation**', had the **support of Christian Missionaries**.

The **military and the police had to be rushed** to that area to deal with the situation arising from serious breaches of law and order.

During the Diwanship of **Col. Munro an order was issued** permitting the *Shanar* (Channar) Women **who became converts to Christianity to cover their bodies** with jackets (*Kuppayams*).

Not satisfied with this order they began appearing in **public wearing jackets**, also an **additional scarf** over their shoulders in the manner of the Hindu women of the upper castes.

It was this action of the *Shanar* women that **provoked attacks on them** by Hindus and led to breaches of peace.

The agitation of the *Shanars* eventually led to the **Royal Proclamation of July 26, 1859**, by **Uthradam Thirunal Maharaja**.

There was still the **stipulation that they should not imitate the dress of the women of upper castes**. Even this stipulation was subsequently **removed at the instance of the British Government**.

MALAYALEE MEMORIAL 1891

Influx of **Tamil Brahmins into Travancore civil service**

started from the days of **Ramayyan Dalawa** from the middle of 18th century and it continued right through the 19th century.

In 1882 **three students of the Maharaja's College**, Trivandrum, were **expelled** from the college for **protesting against the policy of the State Government** in appointing non-Travancoreans to the State service.

They were **G. Parameswaran Pillai (Barrister G.P. Pillai** of later days), **R. Ranga Rao** (son of Diwan Peishkar R. Ranganatha Rao) and **N. Raman Pillai** (son of former Diwan Nanu Pillai).

objection raised by the College Principal John Ross, an Englishman.

G. Parameswaran Pillai , 'the father of political movement' in modern Travancore.

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.

A **Memorandum** was submitted to the Maharaja of Travancore in 1891.

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, 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**, 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 **first Malabar District Congress meeting** was held at **Palakkad in 1916** which was **presided over by Dr. Annie Besant**.

The **second meeting** at **Calicut (1917)** which was presided over by **Sir. C. P. Rama Swamy Iyer**.

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 to start Non Cooperation Movement.**

The **Nagpur (special) session** of the Congress (**1920**) decided that the Congress should be organised on **linguistic** basis.

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 co operation movement **operated along** with Khilafat Movement.

The Khilafat movement was a **reaction for 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 Mambaram 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.

WAGON TRAGEDY:

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 Coimbatore jails**.

Every **two prisoners were hand-cuffed together**.

67 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:

The reign of Sri **Mulam Tirunal** (1885 and 1924) was a period of **political unrest**.

The policies of the **Diwan P. Rajagopalachari** created **resentment**.

K. Ramakrishna Pillai, the editor of the **Swadesabhimani**, owned by **Vakkam Abdul Khadir Maulavi**, the popular Muslim leader published a series of articles criticizing the *Diwan*.

The government took series notice of these articles and **deported Ramakrishna Pillai** from the State by a Royal Proclamation issued on September 26, 1910.

The publication of the **periodical was banned** and the **press** was **confiscated** to the Government.

Ramakrishna Pillai **published** in Malayalam a **biography of Karl Marx**.

A Sreedhara Menon writes that after the rebellion, the **Congress work diminished**.

But the period saw the **birth of political journalism**.

1888, Malayala Manorama.

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 Vaikom 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 Vaikom temple by untouchables also.

T.K. Madhavan and **K.P. Keshavamenon** were the major leaders.

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 Vaikom. One **Akali Dal** volunteer group opened free food stalls.

Gandhiji visited Kerala for the second time related to the Sathyagraha.

Police Commissioner Pitt met Gandhiji. 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 Vaikom 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 Purna Swaraj as the goal of the Indian national movement.

SALT SATYAGRAHA IN KERALA 1930: Gandhiji 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 Gandhiji. Gandhiji 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 Warriar and 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.

THE DIWAN: In Travancore, the **Diwan** had plans for an independent **state outside Indian Union**.

To get the support of the people, Diwan **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, Mattannoor, 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 MOVEMENT

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 Jenmis 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 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, 'Karshaka Sabha' was formed during this period. C. Achutha Menon was the leader. Thiruvithamkur 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 un-cultivated 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.

Punnappa-Vayalar Struggles: The Karshaka Sangham was formed in Thiruvithamkur 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 Thiruvithamkur 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

Jenmis 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 Jenmi 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 news paper** 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 Jenmis and distribute** among the people.

The **police retaliated** with all types of repressive measures. Most of the leaders were hiding including **E.M.Sankaran Nampoothiripad, 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 into 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 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 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 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.
- (2) 1947-1956: Phase of Responsible Governments.
- (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** 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 Rs.100 or more.

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, 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).

LEGISLATURE 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.

