

## BA Political Science Programme

## State &amp; Society in Kerala

## 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 pootathe, 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 22<sup>nd</sup>, Ittoop of Janatha Party withdrew support. On November 27<sup>th</sup>, 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 Eattumanoor 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.

☞ Welfare Schemes for women children environment and backward classes ☞ Door Darshan began telecast of proceeding recordings. ☞ Sri Chithira Thirunal Balarama Varma and C. Achutha Menon died in 1991 ☞ The house discussed Pal Oil Case in which K. Karunakaran was involved.

**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. Shri.A.K.Antony rendered the 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 1st 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 take 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**

Sl. No.	Political Party	No. of Candidates	Seats won	Votes	Percentage
1	All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam AIADMK	5	0	3142	0.02
2	Bharatiya Janata Party BJP	138	0	1053654	6.03
3	Bahujan Samaj Party BSP	122	0	104977	0.60
4	Communist Marxist Party CMP	3	0	161739	0.93
5	Communist Party of India CPI	27	13	1522478	8.72
6	Communist Party of India (Marxist) CPIM	84	45	4921354	28.18

7	Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) CPIML	3	0	1514	0.01
8	Congress (Socialist) CS	1	0	48984	0.28
9	Deseeya Praja Socialist Party DPSP	2	0	788	0.00
10	Indian National Congress INC	82	38	4667520	26.73
11	Others / Independents IND	291	0	253986	1.45
12	Indian National League INL	3	0	95229	0.55
13	Janata Dal (Secular) JDS	5	4	264631	1.52
14	Janata Dal (United) JDU	1	0	2772	0.02
15	Janadhipatya Samrakshana Samithi JSS	4	0	228415	1.31
16	Kerala Congress (Jacob) KCA	3	1	159252	0.91
17	Kerala Congress (Balakrishna Pillai) KCB	2	1	124898	0.72
18	Kerala Congress (Mani) KCM	15	9	861829	4.94
19	Kerala Congress (Anti-merger Group) KCT	3	0	130202	0.75
20	Kerala Janapaksham KJ	4	0	1379	0.01
21	LDF supported Independents LDF	9	2	418619	2.40
22	Lok Jan Shakti Party LJP	1	0	857	0.00
23	Muslim League ML	24	20	1446570	8.28
24	Nationalist Congress Party NCP	4	2	216948	1.24
25	NDA supported Independents NDA	1	0	2078	0.01
26	People's Democratic Party PDP	7	0	14178	0.08
27	Revolutionary Socialist Party RSP	4	2	228258	1.31
28	Kerala Revolutionary Socialist Party (Baby John) RSPBJ	1	1	65002	0.37
29	Social Action Party SAP	1	0	134	0.00
30	Social Democratic Party of India SDPI	80	0	158885	0.91
31	Socialist Janata (Democratic) SJD	6	2	287649	1.65
32	Shiv Sena SS	8	0	3476	0.02
33	Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist) SUCIC	26	0	10034	0.06
34	Samajvadi Janaparishad SVJP	1	0	482	0.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>971</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>17461942</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Sl. No.	Front	No. of Candidates	Seats won	Votes	Percentage
1	United Democratic Front- UDF	140	72	8002874	45.83
2	Left Democratic Front- LDF	140	68	7846703	44.94
3	National Democratic Alliance-	140	0	1058504	6.06

	NDA				
4	Others- OTH	551	0	553832	3.17
<b>Total</b>		<b>971</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>17461942</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Results for the Kerala Legislative Assembly have been:

Year	UDF	LDF	Others	Government (majority)
1982	77	63	-	UDF (14)
1987	61	78	1	LDF (16)
1991	90	48	2	UDF (40)
1996	59	80	1	LDF (20)
2001	99	40	1	UDF (59)
2006	42	98	0	LDF (56)
2011	73	67	-	UDF (6)

#### LIST OF CHIEF MINISTERS THEIR TERM OF OFFICE AND PARTY AFFILIATION

#	Name	Took office	Left office	Term <sup>[5]</sup>	Days In Office	Party
1	E. M. S. Namboodiripad	5 April 1957	31 July 1959	1	848 Days	Communist Party of India
	President's Rule	31 July 1959	22 February 1960			
2	Pattom Thanupillai	22 February 1960	26 September 1962	1	583 Days	Praja Socialist Party
3	R. Sankar	26 September 1962	10 September 1964	1	715 Days	Indian National Congress
	President's Rule	10 September 1964	6 March 1967			
4	E. M. S. Namboodiripad	6 March 1967	1 November 1969	2	972 Days [Total 1820 Days]	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
5	C. Achutha Menon	1 November 1969	1 August 1970	1	273 Days	Communist Party of India
	President's Rule	1 August 1970	4 October 1970			
6	C. Achutha Menon	4 October 1970	25 March 1977	2	2365 Days [Total 2638 Days]	Communist Party of India
7	K. Karunakaran	25 March	25 April 1977	1	32 Days	Indian National

		1977					Congress
8	A.K. Antony	27 April 1977	27 October 1978	1	550 Days		Indian National Congress
9	P. K. Vasudevan Nair	29 October 1978	7 October 1979	1	343 Days		Communist Party of India
10	C. H. Mohammed Koya	12 October 1979	1 December 1979	1	51 Days		Indian Union Muslim League
	President's Rule	1 December 1979	25 January 1980				
11	E. K. Nayanar	25 January 1980	20 October 1981	1	635 Days		Communist Party of India (Marxist)
12	K. Karunakaran	28 December 1981	17 March 1982	2	81 Days		Indian National Congress
13	K. Karunakaran	24 May 1982	25 March 1987	3	1766 Days		Indian National Congress
14	E. K. Nayanar	26 March 1987	17 June 1991	2	1544 Days		Communist Party of India (Marxist)
15	K. Karunakaran	24 June 1991	16 March 1995	4	1361 Days [Total 3240 Days]		Indian National Congress
16	A. K. Antony	22 March 1995	9 May 1996	2	415 Days		Indian National Congress
17	E. K. Nayanar	20 May 1996	13 May 2001	3	1820 Days [Total 3999 Days]		Communist Party of India (Marxist)
18	A. K. Antony	17 May 2001	29 August 2004	3	1201 Days [Total 2166 Days]		Indian National Congress
19	Oommen Chandy	31 August 2004	18 May 2006	1	626 Days		Indian National Congress
20	V.S. Achuthanandan	18 May 2006	14 May 2011	3	1822 Days		Communist Party of India (Marxist)
21	Oommen Chandy	18 May 2011	incumbent	2	1394 Days (Till 23 June 2013)		Indian National Congress



**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)
Minister who has served for the longest period	K. M. Mani
Minister who has served for the shortest period	M. P.Veerendra Kumar
Minister who was not a Member of the House and never faced the Assembly	K. Muraleedharan (son of K. Karunakaran).

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 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 in 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<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>th</sup> 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 Nabothiripad. 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 Nabothiripad. 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

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.

The period immediately after the **first world war** in 1919 was marked in India by **industrial strife** on an unprecedented scale.

(This was followed by **the depression of the 1930s.**)

**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.

**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 **tenant's 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 Pallikkoodam 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 **demanding 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 Chertalai 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 costal 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 Chertala town. The coconut gardens were intersepted 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 Patasekharams 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 21<sup>st</sup>, 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 detainees. 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 shad 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.