The system of higher education in India comprises universities and other institutions of higher learning. Universities are statutory bodies established by Acts of Parliament, or of state legislatures. The Gnanam Committee has given the following scheme of classification of universities in general.

1. From the sponsoring government angle, universities can be classified into two types - central universities and state universities. Central universities are established under Acts of Parliament while state universities are established under Acts of the state legislatures concerned.

2. From the structural point of view, universities are divided into different categories as given below.

(a) Teaching, residential and affiliating type in which a number of separate colleges are affiliated to the university and the university itself runs its own teaching and research departments.
(b) Federal type university which is usually limited to a city with a number of colleges or departments of teaching and research closely associated with its working.

(c) Unitary type university which has all teaching and research carried out at a single campus, and

(d) Purely affiliating type of university which has a number of colleges affiliated to it.

3. From the status point of view, universities are classified into universities proper and deemed universities.

4. From the scope/role point of view, there are general universities and specialised/technical universities. The second category includes National Institutes such as the Indian Institutes of Technology, the Indian Institute of Science, Medical universities, Women's universities and Language universities.

The universities and the institutes of higher learning are authorised by the state or central
legislatures to award degrees. While universities are established by Acts of Parliament or of state legislatures, institutions of national importance like the Indian Institutes of Technology/Science are declared as such by the Government of India by an Act of Parliament. Institutions deemed to be universities are given university status on the recommendation of the University Grants Commission in terms of section 3 of its Act.

Institutions like Indian Institutes of Management which award diplomas are not established by legislation nor are they deemed to be universities.

The scheme of classification given above is not mutually exclusive. By such classifications, the types, structure and roles of different categories of universities and other institutions of higher learning can be identified from their own perspectives which enable us to understand the relevance of these classes of higher educational institutions and also the various categories of governance in them.

The Act under which a university is established provides for the definitions, objectives of the university,
its jurisdiction, officers, authorities of the university, their members and their powers.2 The basic outline and the general demarcation of university authorities are pronounced in the Act. Any change in the roles and powers of the university authorities can be brought about only by appropriate amendments of the Acts. The Statutes are usually elaboration of Acts which are framed under the authority of the legislature. Changes in the statutes can be made only with the approval of a government level body or authority like the Chancellor.

Acts and Statutes of the different universities are strikingly similar, though not identical, in most of the major respects. "The format and content of the various university Acts in the country shows differences only in degree and not in kind".3 The objectives, the sections, the phrases, terminologies etc., are almost the same. There are only slight variations in length, in detail and in nomenclature corresponding to the authorities or officers of the university, their powers and functions.

The University Grants Commission has accepted the recommendation of the Gnanam Committee regarding a Model Act for the Universities of the country for removing the deficiencies in the existing Acts of the Universities.
and for providing for changes necessary for improving the quality of education as well as for effective governance of the university system.⁴

The Model Act provides a model for the objectives of universities, the officers, the authorities and their constitution and powers. As the present study deals with the authorities of the university, especially the academic bodies, the following discussion provides in detail a comparison between the constitution and functions of these bodies as given in the Model Act and as actually obtaining in the universities in Kerala.

Under the Model Act, there are only two authorities, the Executive Council (restyled as the Board of Management) and the Academic Council. In all the universities in Kerala, the Acts provide for five major authorities, viz., the Senate, the Syndicate, the Academic Council, the Faculties and the Boards of Studies.⁵ The Finance Committee and the Planning Committee are the other two authorities. In all the universities except in the Cochin University of Science and Technology, the Students' Council is also included in the list of the authorities.
THE SENATE

Under the Model Act, the Senate is only a deliberative and consultative body and not an authority and it is renamed as the Societal Consultative Council (S.C.C.). The Senate in the Universities of Kerala and Calicut enjoys the position as the supreme authority of the University. The Acts provide that "the Senate shall be the supreme authority of the University with the power to review any action of the Syndicate or the Academic Council that is not in accordance with the powers conferred on it".\(^6\) The major powers of the Senate in the four universities under study include determining the degrees, diplomas and other academic distinctions to be granted by the universities, making amending or repealing statutes, cancelling or amending ordinances passed by the Syndicate and regulations passed by the Academic Council.\(^7\) Reviewing from time to time broad policies and programmes of the universities and considering and passing resolutions on the Annual Reports and Annual Accounts and rendering advice on matters referred to them by the Vice-Chancellor or other authorities of the universities are the three main functions of the S.C.C. as provided for in the Model Act. These are also included in the powers of the Senate of the four universities in Kerala.
The Senate in all the four universities is a large body representing diverse academic, social and political groups. The number of members in the Senate is large in these universities, with the members being ex-officio, elected or nominated. A wide cross-section of the society finds representation in the Senate, either by election or by nomination. The total number of members in the Senates of both the Kerala and Calicut universities is 117. In the Cochin University of Science and Technology, the number is 75 and in the Mahatma Gandhi University it is 124. Elected members in these universities include college and university teachers, members of the Legislative Assembly, members of trade unions, members of university non-teaching staff and students. Nominated members include representatives from research institutions, cultural institutions, chambers of commerce, industries, authors, journalists, lawyers, sports and linguistic minorities. Ex-officio members include top officers of the university, officers of the government and members of the Legislative Council who are nominated by the Government.

In the Model Act, however, there is no provision for election of members to the S.C.C. The members whose number is limited between 75 and 100 are to be selected by
rotation on the basis of seniority or by nomination. The members are to be representatives of teachers, industry, commerce, legislature, voluntary agencies, agriculture and so on. Representatives of non-teaching staff and students who show excellence in curricular and extra-curricular activities are also given due representation in the S.C.C. The provision in the Model Act for the non-inclusion of elected members in the Senate is contrary to the actual situation in the universities in Kerala where the number of elected members is large. In the Kerala/Calicut universities, out of the total 117 members, 78 are elected. In the Mahatma Gandhi University, 91 out of 124 are elected and in the Cochin University, out of the total 75, 38 are elected members.

The Senate in the universities in Kerala, acts as a forum where the performance of the university is reviewed and appraised and it puts restraint on the powers of the Syndicate and the Academic Council. It ensures proper accountability and audit of the role of the Syndicate. The Gnanam Committee refers to the Senate as "a unique open house wherein we can get the social feed-back about the university from wider cross-sections of the community." The S.C.C. in the place of Senate in the Model Act is only
a consultative body which does not possess the powers to override decisions of the Syndicate or the Academic Council.

THE SYNDICATE

The Syndicate in the four universities in Kerala is a small body consisting of less than twenty members. The members are ex-officio, elected or nominated. The Model Act provides for the Executive Council, renamed as the Board of Management, which is one of the two authorities consisting of not more than 15 members. All the members are to be nominated on the basis of seniority and rotation. The Board of Management under this Act is the chief executive body as in the case of the four universities in Kerala. The members are to be representative of the Government, Principals of affiliated colleges, university faculties and distinguished educationists. The members of the Syndicates of the universities in the State represent teachers from university departments and affiliated colleges and representatives of the Senate, the Academic Council and the Government.
A common criticism levelled against the membership of the Syndicates of the majority of universities in Kerala is that the Syndicates are dominated by elected members. In the University of Kerala, out of the 20 Syndicate members, 15 are elected.\(^1\) The pattern of membership in the Syndicate of the University of Calicut is also the same as that of the University of Kerala, whereas in the Cochin University, only 5 out of 15 members of the Syndicate are elected.\(^2\) In the Mahatma Gandhi University, there are no elected members at all. All the members other than the ex-officio members are nominated, their number being 10 out of 15.\(^3\) In this University, the provision for membership in the Syndicate is seen to be in tune with that of the Model Act.

The major powers of the Syndicate as provided in the Acts of the Universities in Kerala include affiliation of institutions, making ordinances, proposing statutes, establishing, maintaining and managing colleges and institutions of research and other institutions of higher learning, conducting university examination, approving and publishing results, appointing members to the Boards of Studies etc.\(^4\)
In addition to the powers and duties conferred and imposed on it by the Act, the Syndicate has a myriad of powers and functions provided by the Statutes. A major academic function provided by the Statute is the management and control of departments of study and research in the university, university laboratories, institutes of research and other institutions established by the university.15

In the Model Act, though the Board of Management is the principal executive body of the university, the academic functions do not come in its purview. All the academic activities of the university are controlled and managed by the Academic Council which is the sole authority responsible for academic functions. This provision in the Model Act is in sharp contrast with the existing provisions of the Acts of the universities in Kerala. A general criticism against the functions of the Syndicate in these universities is that the heavy concentration of powers in this authority often leads to the erosion of the independence of the academic bodies. The Boards of Studies of the universities and their chairmen are appointed by the Syndicate. The academic regulations as passed by the Academic Council on the recommendations of the faculties or
Boards of Studies cannot be implemented without the approval of the Syndicate. These functions of the Syndicate clearly indicate that the academic bodies of the universities in Kerala do not have the sole authority over the management of academic activities.

THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL

In the four universities in Kerala, under this study "the Academic Council shall be the principal academic body of the University and shall, subject to the provisions of the Act and the Statutes, have the control and general regulation, and be responsible for the maintenance of standards of instruction, education and examinations within the university and shall exercise such other powers and perform such other duties as may be conferred or imposed upon it by the Statutes". The Academic Council consists mostly of representatives of faculties, Principals of affiliated colleges, Heads of University teaching departments, Deans of faculties, members of the Senate, students etc. The pattern of membership of this body is seen to be in accordance with the recommendations in the Model Act in this regard. However, the Model Act provides that there shall be no election to this authority also, as in the case of the Senate and the Syndicate. In the
Academic Councils of the universities in Kerala, the members are ex-officio, elected or nominated. In the Model Act, the number of members in this University has been fixed to be from 50 to 75. The Academic Councils in all the four universities is relatively a smaller body than the Senate, the number being below 75.

The major function of the Academic Council as provided in the Acts is "to make regulations, amend or repeal them". The Academic Council which is the supreme authority with regard to academic matters has a variety of duties and functions as provided in the Acts and the Statutes. These include matters regarding introduction of new courses, prescription of syllabi and text books, institution of teaching posts and teaching departments, admission of students, appointment of examiners, advancement of research and knowledge, award of prizes and scholarships etc. The Model Act also provides for all these functions of the Academic Council. "By virtue of its constitution, according to which it is a body consisting of representatives of the Faculties, Boards of Studies, University Departments and constituent and affiliated colleges, it provides a rich fund of varied experience of the different academic disciplines with the help of which
the university can lay down sound general academic principles for the guidance of bodies like Boards of Studies and Faculties".\textsuperscript{18}

Though the Academic Council is considered to be the supreme authority in the sphere of academic activity, in practice, in the universities in Kerala, it is seen that this body does not have the requisite powers for implementing its decisions. Its decisions are passed on to the Syndicate or the Senate for final approval. Therefore the Academic Council has only recommendatory powers even in matters of purely academic nature.\textsuperscript{19} The provisions in the Model Act with regard to the functioning of the Academic Council differ from those in the Acts of the universities in Kerala in that the Academic Council in the Model Act is the final authority as far as academic matters are concerned. The decisions on all academic matters, framing of statutes, ordinances and regulations relating to academic issues, taken by the Academic Council are final, not needing the approval of any other authority.

\textbf{THE FACULTIES}

Section 26 of the Acts of all the four universities provides that "the university may have such
Faculties as may be prescribed by the Statutes from time to
time". Sub-section (2) provides that each Faculty shall,
subject to the control of the Academic Council, have charge
of the teaching and the courses of study and research in
such subjects as may be assigned to such Faculty by the
Ordinances or Regulations. Sub-section (4) provides that
each Faculty shall comprise such departments of teaching as
may be prescribed by the Ordinances. As far as the
Faculties are concerned, the provisions in the Model Act
and those in the Acts of the Universities in Kerala are
more or less similar. The details as given in the Statutes
are enumerated below.

The different disciplines being taught at the
university are grouped into different faculty divisions.
Each Faculty consists of a number of departments of the
same or related disciplines. The Faculty has a council
known as the "Faculty" chaired by its Dean. The Deans of
Faculties are nominated by the Chancellor in consultation
with the Vice-Chancellor, usually from among the Heads or
Professors of the university departments.

Each Faculty consists of the Chairmen of the
various Boards of Studies and representatives elected from
the Boards of Studies or nominated by the Syndicate. The powers that are to be exercised and the duties that are to be performed by each Faculty are prescribed by the relevant Statutes of each university. The Faculty has powers to make recommendations to the Academic Council in all matters relating to the organisation of university teaching, courses of study, examination and research in the subjects of study comprised in the Faculty and also to propose additions or amendments to the Ordinances and/or Regulations relating to these matters to the Syndicate or the Academic Council. The Faculty calls for proposals from the Boards of Studies in the subjects comprised in the Faculty regarding syllabi and textbooks for the courses of studies and makes recommendations on them to the Academic Council.

Though the Faculty is responsible for all academic affairs of the university regarding teaching, research and examinations, it does not have the final authority in these matters. The Faculty like the Academic Council has only recommendatory powers.

THE BOARDS OF STUDIES

As per Section 28 sub-section (1) of the Acts of all the four universities, there shall be a Board of
Studies attached to each department of study in the university. Sub-section (2) of the Acts provides that the constitution and powers of the Boards of Studies shall be prescribed by the relevant statutes. The Boards of Studies are constituted by the Syndicate and the members are appointed by the Syndicate in the University of Kerala, University of Calicut and the Cochin University of Science and Technology, whereas in the Mahatma Gandhi University, the members of the Boards are nominated by the Chancellor. The Boards consist of Heads of university departments, representatives of the senior teaching staff from the departments as well as affiliated college departments and other experts. One of the members is appointed by the Vice-Chancellor as the Chairman. In the Model Act, which also provides for the Board of Studies, whose members are all nominated, there is an essential requirement that such nominees should include representatives from related industries and other user-agencies.

The Boards of Studies have powers to make recommendations with regard to courses of study and examinations in the subjects with which they deal, to propose improvements and revisions in the courses of study and syllabi, design and innovate new courses of study
periodically, recommend persons suitable for appointment as questionpaper setters and examiners and so on.

The Boards of Studies in the universities in Kerala do not have final authority in their functions. They have the powers only to make proposals or recommendations to the Faculty and the Academic Council.

ROLE-EFFECTIVENESS OF ACADEMIC BODIES

The main function of a university as envisaged in many educational reports and as envisioned by educational experts is to make provision for learning, research and for advancement and dissemination of knowledge. This function is clearly stated in the Acts of all the universities which detail the powers of the universities. The three authorities which carry out this function of the university are the Academic Council, the Faculty and the Board of Studies. These academic authorities or bodies are responsible for the implementation and coordination of academic activities in a university which truly reflect the ethos of that university. A university is judged by the quality of its academic programmes whose standard is determined by the academic bodies of that university. In short, a university can be assessed to have fulfilled its
most important objective only if its academic authorities function effectively and satisfactorily. In this context, a study of the functioning of the academic bodies of universities becomes useful and meaningful.

The foregoing discussion on the functioning of academic bodies in the universities in Kerala is intended to focus attention on the true state of affairs with regard to these bodies in the system of higher education and to find out how far they are effective in carrying out their duties and functions.

In order to get a clear understanding of the functioning of the academic bodies in the universities in Kerala, the minutes of the meetings of the Academic Councils of the three universities, the University of Kerala, the University of Calicut and the Cochin University of Science and Technology for a period of ten years (1976-1985) were examined in detail. The Mahatma Gandhi University was established in 1985 but its Academic Council was never constituted. Hence that university was not included in the present analysis.
Table 4.1 shows the data received from the minutes of the Academic Councils of the three universities listed above, and leads to the following findings:

In the case of the University of Kerala, out of the total number of 1241 items placed before the various meetings during the ten year period, 332 items were regarding the requests of students for relaxation of rules for admission to courses as well as those for admission to examinations. 21.4% of the items, 266 out of 1241, were concerning various matters related to examinations. Items related to examinations included reforms regarding number of chances for the examinations, matters regarding registration of students for the examinations, cancellation of examinations and improvement of marks in the university examinations. 16.4% were concerned with the teachers of the university which included upgradation of posts, norms-promotions of teachers, prescribing qualifications for the teachers etc. Course-oriented items included institution of new courses, revision of syllabi of courses, shifting of subjects between semesters or years etc. The table shows that only 14.4% of items presented were course-oriented. Formulation and amendments to regulations formed 5.5% and items regarding recognition of degrees of other
Table 4.1

Items considered at the meetings of the Academic Councils of the Universities in Kerala (1976 to 1985)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Names of Universities</th>
<th>Course oriented</th>
<th>Admission matters</th>
<th>Students' requests for relaxation of rules</th>
<th>Teacher oriented</th>
<th>Examination matters</th>
<th>Matters on Regulations</th>
<th>Recognition of degrees of other universities</th>
<th>Miscellaneous</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>University of Kerala</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>University of Calicut</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Cochin University of Science and Technology</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data collected by the researcher by content analysis of the minutes of Academic Councils of the Universities in Kerala (See Chapter 3 on the Methodology of data collection).
universities formed 4.5% of the total items considered.

In the case of the University of Calicut, 32.5%, i.e., 324 out of 997 items considered by the Academic Council from 1976 to 1985, were related to examination matters. Course-oriented items came next to the items on examinations. These formed 23.5%. Matters related to admission of students were 17.3%. 122 out of 997 items concerned with special requests from students for relaxation of admission and examination rules and procedures. Teacher-oriented items were only 82. Regulation amendments and formulation formed only 4.1%.

A good majority of the decisions of the Academic Council of the Cochin University of Science and Technology were 'course-oriented'. Under the main heading course-oriented, course-syllabus revisions were the major items. 67.9% of the total items were course-oriented items, out of which more than 70% were course-syllabus revision. Items related to teachers of the university came next to the course-oriented items. These were 14.8% of the total. All other items were below 10%.
The difference between the Cochin University of Science and Technology and the other two universities in the nature of their functioning is seen reflected in the items placed before the Academic Councils. Cochin University is a full-fledged University of Science and Technology which was founded "for the promotion of graduate and post-graduate studies and advanced research in applied sciences, technology, industry, commerce, management and social science". This study reveals that this university gave importance to matters regarding implementation of new courses, course-syllabus revisions and updating of syllabi of courses. This university which has no arts and sciences colleges affiliated to it has therefore fewer number of students and also fewer examinations than the affiliating universities. Hence decisions relating to students and examinations are numerically less than those in the other two universities. The Universities of Kerala and Calicut have a large number of affiliated colleges and have a very large number of students and examinations. Therefore items relating to these headings form the major part of the agenda for the meetings of the Academic Council. It is seen that the Academic Councils of these universities are forced to allot a major portion of the time of their meetings for taking decisions on comparatively less
important matters like students' requests for relaxation of rules and also examination matters. It can be inferred that introduction of new courses, or updating of syllabi of courses gets less importance at the meetings of the Academic Councils of these affiliating universities.

It can therefore be inferred that it is the universities which have fewer students and only a small number of affiliated colleges or none at all that can do better justice to their primary duties and functions as enunciated in the laws of the university. The study further reveals the fact that items relating to the service matters of the university teachers form a major part of the total items in all the three universities.

The minutes of the Academic Councils of the universities include the minutes of the Boards of Studies and the Faculties. A detailed perusal of the minutes of these bodies makes it clear that most of their recommendations are approved by the Academic Council without any modifications. Ninetyone percent of the recommendations of the Boards of Studies which had the approval of the Faculties of the University of Kerala, were approved also by the Academic Council. In the University
of Calicut 93% and in the Cochin University 98% of such recommendations were approved by the Academic Council. The above analysis brings to light the fact that the Academic Councils of universities which have a large number of affiliated colleges are unable to do justice to their academic functions as envisaged in the Acts. They are forced to deal with routine matters like students requests, recognition of degrees of other universities and the service matters of teachers. This analysis also points to a common characteristic in the functioning of the academic bodies of all the universities irrespective of their size or nature. That is, the academic bodies, especially the Academic Councils which are defined as the supreme academic authority in universities, do just routine type of activities.

The academic bodies of a university are responsible for maintaining standards in teaching and they are expected to look after the academic interests of the university. The most important function of the academic bodies of a university as provided in the Acts is to make recommendations in regard to courses of study which includes designing and implementing new academic programmes in the university. Generally recommendations for designing
new courses and for modification of existing courses are made by the Boards of Studies to the Faculty concerned and then to the Academic Council which takes the final decision in the matter.

Question No.1 in the questionnaire prepared for the study deals with the subject of designing new courses in universities. The three groups of respondents selected for the study, the university teachers who are/were members of any academic body, university teachers who are/were not members of any of the academic bodies and some administrators of the universities were requested to mark their preferences regarding the authority taking initiative in designing a new course in a university. Table 4.2 gives an analysis of the views of these three groups.

The scores attributed by the three groups of respondents show that the preference of the groups A and C are almost identical. Groups A and C consider the 'Board of Studies' as the most important authority in a university which is responsible for designing a new course in a university. Group B chooses the 'teachers' as its first preference, whereas groups A and C perceive that teachers
### Table 4.2

Perception of the three groups of respondents regarding the authority taking initiative in designing a new course in a university

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Description of authority</th>
<th>Classes of respondents and scores of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A ( n = 82 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Board of Studies</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Academic Council</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Syndicate</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Local community</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Organised effort of</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Class A - University Teachers who are/were members of any of the academic bodies (Academic decision makers);
Class B - University Teachers who are/were not members of the academic bodies (Academics);
Class C - Administrators of the University (Academic administrators);
\( n \) - Number of respondents;
Score - for each response, the numbers of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th preferences marked by the respondents multiplied by weights of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively and the resultant sums divided by the total weight of 10. Scores are standardised for the purpose of comparison;
F.S.M. - Friedman's statistic - \( M \). \( M \) is an index for making an inference on the acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis \( H_0 \);
\( H_0 \) - The null hypothesis is that there is no difference in the average perception of the three groups.

Tabled value of \( M = 7.68 \)
are the next important agent for designing and introducing new courses in universities. The groups A and C give the third preference to the Faculty while group B gives the third preference to the Academic Council.

The calculated value of $M$ is only 0.84 which is very much less than the tabled value which is 7.68. Therefore the null hypothesis ($H_0$) that there is no significant difference in perception among the three groups is accepted. The three groups consider the 'Boards of Studies' and the teachers as the important agents responsible for designing and introducing new courses in universities. The Faculty and the Academic Council come next in importance as per the average perception. Professionals in the field are also given importance by the three groups. They feel that the efforts of students, the Government and the local community do not play any important role in the matter.

The most important function of the Board of Studies as provided in the Acts of universities is the designing and implementation of new courses. The average perception of the three groups agrees with the statutory provision regarding the major function of the Board of
Studies. It can therefore be inferred that the Boards of Studies of Universities function effectively in fulfilling their role in designing new courses.

Though, in general, the Board of Studies takes the initiative in designing and implementing new academic programmes in universities, many instances can be pointed out of other agencies taking the initiative in the matter. The State Government is often the most powerful agency that takes the initiative in implementing new courses in universities. At times the Central Government also takes an initiative in the matter. A clear instance of the Central Government taking the initiative to start a course is the starting of a highly specialised course in the Cochin University of Science and Technology, the M.Sc. degree in Computer Software in the year 1986, with the sponsorship of the Defence Research and Development Organisation.

The Government of Kerala has decided to implement the U.G.C. sponsored programme of vocationalisation of the existing three-year degree programmes in the colleges affiliated to the three universities from this year.
This scheme involves the introduction of 35 vocational subjects for the first degree course under four disciplines, (1) Science, (2) Engineering and Technology, (3) Commerce, Economics and Management, and (4) Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. Without changing the basic structure of the present three year degree course, a student should be required to offer one vocational subject along with the other two or three already prescribed in the university regulations. This scheme is being started in the colleges purely on the initiative of the State Government.

In the Cochin University of Science and Technology, a specialised postgraduate degree course entitled Master of Bank Management was started in the School of Management Studies in the year 1978. The course was started on the initiative of some of the private sector banks in Kerala and the interest evinced by the then Director of the School.

Another example is the starting of the M.Com degree course in the Cochin University itself on the initiative of the teachers and the then Director of the School of Management Studies of the University. Though the
initiatives have come from external agencies, the formality of applying the scheme is invariably with the academic bodies.

Thus it is seen that, though the designing and implementation of new academic programmes in the universities are functions of academic bodies, the initiative for starting them can come from other sources as well. It can be the teachers of the universities, the heads of departments, the governments and even interested persons or groups in the society, as seen in many cases.

The academic bodies of universities are often criticised by the public on various grounds. A major criticism levelled against them in many committee reports as well as by educationists is that they are constituted with persons who do not have much interest in bringing about positive and qualitative changes in the academic field, as the election or nomination to these bodies is based primarily on political considerations. It is often criticised that the academic excellence of the persons elected or nominated to be the members of such bodies is never considered. The various commissions and committees which have looked into the problems of the higher education
system in our country have unanimously pointed out that politicisation of university authorities is one of the major afflictions of the system. They have recommended in their reports for politics-free university bodies, especially academic bodies, for their effective functioning.

The opinions of the three groups of respondents were sought about the limitations in the functioning of academic bodies of the universities, by question No.21 of the questionnaire. The respondents were requested to mark the limitations in the order of importance as perceived by them. An analysis of their views is given in Table 4.3.

The calculated value of F.S.M. is 2.71 which is less than the table value 7.800. Hence it is inferred that there is no significant difference in the perception of the three groups of respondents.

All the groups of respondents identify the most important limitation of the academic bodies as the fact that many of their members are not true academicians because their election or nomination is based mainly on political considerations rather than on academic
Table 4.3

Limitations of the Academic Bodies of the universities as perceived by the three groups of functionaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
<th>Classes of respondents and scores of responses</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A (n = 82)</td>
<td>B (n = 82)</td>
<td>C (n = 21)</td>
<td>(n = 185)</td>
<td></td>
<td>F.S.M</td>
<td>Inference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Rank order</td>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Rank order</td>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Rank order</td>
<td>Weighted average</td>
<td>Rank order</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Academic bodies do not represent true academicians because of political</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>considerations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>They do not take initiative in the formulation of academic reforms</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>H_0 is accepted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>They do routine type of activities</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>They are not given due recognition by University authorities</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Descriptions same as for Table 4.2

Tabled value of \(M = 7.800\).
excellence. Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah, Chairman of the two commissions for the Universities of Kerala and Calicut has dealt with the problem of politicisation of academic bodies in the universities in detail. He has expressed great concern at the politicisation of the two universities in the constitution of academic bodies, especially the Boards of Studies.24 A recent news item in a leading Malayalam daily is a crowning example of the influence of politics in the constitution of an academic body like the Board of Studies. It has been reported that in the University of Kerala, the constitution of the Board of Studies in Malayalam by the Syndicate with comparatively junior and less competent persons has started a controversy in the university leading to the resignation of the Chairman from the Board. He and many others have alleged that the persons nominated as members are not fit to be the members of the Board and they have been nominated only on the basis of their political affiliation to the ruling party.25 The Gnanam Committee which looked into the problems of university governance has also stressed this sorry state of affairs relating to the academic bodies of universities. The report states that the unacademic members who dominate academic bodies have a tendency to politicise the atmosphere of universities.26 The perception of the
respondents endorses the common view that the academic bodies are not represented by true academicians because of political considerations.

The groups A and C of the respondents identify an important limitation of the academic bodies next to politicisation, that these bodies do routine types of activities, with group C members giving importance to the lack of initiative on the part of academic bodies in the formulation of academic reforms. The overall analysis of the perceptions of the three groups reveals that over-politicisation, lack of initiative and a maintenance-oriented approach by the members are identified as the major drawbacks of the academic bodies.

The three groups of respondents were requested to give their rating of the functioning of the academic bodies of the universities. They were required in question No.20 of the questionnaire to say whether they thought the academic bodies function "completely satisfactorily", "satisfactorily", "somewhat satisfactorily", "neither satisfactorily nor unsatisfactorily", "somewhat unsatisfactorily" and "completely unsatisfactorily".
The analysis of the response of the three groups is given in Table 4.4.

49%, 47% and 62% of the respondents in the groups A, B and C respectively give their rating as 'somewhat satisfactory'. Only 16 out of 82 of group A, 15 out of 82 of group B and 5 out of 21 of group C respondents considered that the academic bodies function satisfactorily. No one in group B and group C considered the functioning of academic bodies 'completely satisfactory'. This rating was given by just one person in group A. 12%, 13% and 9.5% of groups A, B and C respondents rated the functioning of academic bodies 'somewhat unsatisfactory'. The percentage of respondents giving the rating as 'completely unsatisfactory' was 7.3 in group A, 15.9 in group B and 4.8 in group C. 7.3% and 1.2% of respondents in groups A and B respectively thought that the functioning of academic bodies was 'neither satisfactory nor unsatisfactory'. Three respondents each of groups A and B did not respond to the question. An analysis of the response of the three groups shows that the majority of them do not have a high opinion about the effective functioning of academic bodies in the
Table 4.4
Ratings of the respondents on the functioning of Academic Bodies in the universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Completely satisfactory</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Somewhat satisfactory</th>
<th>Neither satisfactory nor unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Somewhat unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Completely unsatisfactory</th>
<th>No response</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group A - University Teachers who are/were members of any of the academic bodies (Academic decision makers);
Group B - University Teachers who are/were not members of the academic bodies (Academicians);
Group C - Administrators of the University (Academic administrators).
universities. The ratings given by the functionaries point to the fact that the present functioning of the academic bodies needs to be improved.

By question No.22 of the questionnaire all three groups of respondents were requested to offer suggestions for improving the functioning of the academic authorities of universities. The responses of the three groups are given in Table 4.5.

The calculated value of F.S.M. is 3.1 whereas the table value is 7.800. Hence the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the average perception of the three groups is accepted. All the three groups of respondents unanimously suggested that membership to these bodies should be based only on academic excellence. It is an accepted fact that election as well as nomination to the various academic bodies is based considerably on political affiliations. Therefore such authorities of the universities are manned mostly by less competent and less suitable persons. Most of the commissions which have enquired into the problems of the higher education system in the country, have proposed that academic excellence should be the sole criterion for gaining membership in
Table 4.5

Proposals put forward by the three groups of respondents for improving the functioning of Academic Bodies of universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Proposals</th>
<th>A (n = 82)</th>
<th>B (n = 82)</th>
<th>C (n = 21)</th>
<th>n = 185</th>
<th>F.S.M</th>
<th>Inference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Rank order</td>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Rank order</td>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Rank order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Academic bodies should meet periodically and review their functioning</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Membership should be based on academic excellence</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Academic bodies should have freedom to discharge their functions effectively</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Decisions of academic bodies should not be vetoed by other university bodies except on the basis of administrative or resource consideration</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description same as for Table 4.2.

Tabled value of M = 7.800.
academic bodies. It is observed that this recommendation has not been put into actual practice in most of the universities. In the words of Dr. M. V. Pylee, it has become "a normal pattern or practice in many state universities to nominate political party representatives on the Syndicates, the Senates and even on the Academic Councils and Boards of Studies".\(^{27}\) He has suggested that the academic bodies should not have any elective elements. The reports on the Universities of Kerala and Calicut suggest that the principle of election to the academic bodies should be replaced by the principle of rotation on the basis of seniority or on the basis of nomination by the Chancellor on the recommendation of the Vice-Chancellor.\(^{28}\) The Gnanam Committee also recommends that "election to university authorities should be dispensed with or reduced to the barest minimum; nomination or representation on the basis of merit/seniority/any other objective consideration should be the process of constituting the authorities."\(^{29}\) Only then will persons with merit and the right academic background gain membership in the academic bodies.

The second preference marked by the three groups of respondents is for the proposal that the academic bodies should have freedom to discharge their functions
effectively. All the respondents are unanimous in suggesting that interference in the functioning of the academic bodies would lessen their efficiency. It is in this context that the concept of university autonomy has to be seen. The Gajendragadkar Committee observes that autonomy is a condition precedent, if the universities are to discharge their duties and obligations effectively and efficiently. As per the report of the Committee there are two aspects of university autonomy—(1) autonomy within a university and (2) autonomy in relation to agencies and authorities external to it, the most important of which is the State.\textsuperscript{30} The positive aspect of university autonomy relates to the functioning of statutory and other bodies of a university. The committee proposes that "academics must enjoy full freedom to express their views on all matters with which they are concerned, independently of any consideration. The various committees and commissions on higher education have endorsed the views of the Gajendragadkar Committee in suggesting that the initiative in academic matters should remain with the academics. In real practice, the academic bodies are not autonomous. Interferences and pressures from various quarters pose difficulties in the implementation of many of the decisions of academic bodies. Many such instances can be cited in
the affairs of the universities in Kerala. Political parties, social and religious groups and students often interfere with the functioning of academic bodies of our universities.

The B.Sc. (Special) degree course was started in the University of Kerala in the year 1966. It was discontinued by a decision of the Syndicate in the year 1969.\textsuperscript{31} This decision of the Syndicate was against the unanimous recommendation of the Faculty of Science to continue the course despite the fact that this faculty was the most competent body to judge the merit or otherwise of the course.

The Cochin University originally being a federal type university had the power to have constituent colleges. In 1978, the Academic Council of the university took a decision to federate all the eligible colleges in Ernakulam. The managements of the private colleges of Ernakulam did not agree to the proposal pointing out that several provisions of the University Act offended the rights of the minorities, guaranteed by the Constitution.\textsuperscript{32} As no college was federated, the federal nature of the university as envisaged in the Act was not given effect to.
A controversy started in the University of Calicut in 1986 when an essay "Christuvinte Avasanathe Pralobhanangal" written by Sri P.A.Warrier was included in the course syllabus of Malayalam at the degree level. Pressure from religious and social groups prompted the Board of Studies and the Faculty to recommend the withdrawal of the essay from the syllabus. The Academic Council rejected the recommendation of both the Board of Studies and the Faculty. The then Vice-Chancellor acting on a resolution of the Senate of the University issued orders to withdraw the essay. The Academic Council rejected the motion to ratify the action of the Vice-Chancellor.

The Board of Studies of the University of Calicut which had recommended the text-book "Manushyan Unarumbol" written by Smt.Godavari Parulekar had later to recommend withdrawal of the text book owing to external pressures. The Faculty recommended that the controversial text be continued and the recommendations of the Faculty were accepted by the Academic Council.

Pressure from student groups also at many times poses difficulties in implementing many decisions of the
academic bodies. The Academic Council of the University of Calicut took a decision to start M.A.-M.Phil and M.Sc.-M.Phil. courses in its teaching departments in various disciplines. The courses were never started in the university owing to the resistance of student groups.

For the improvement of the functioning of academic bodies in universities, the three groups of respondents suggest that the academic bodies should meet periodically and review their functioning. Periodical review will enhance the quality of the functioning of academic bodies.

To sum up,

Of the university authorities, it is the Academic Council that is the principal academic body, assisted by the different Faculties and Boards of Studies. The academic bodies have only recommendatory powers. The recommendations of the academic bodies even in matters of purely academic nature have to be approved by the Syndicate for being implemented.

The main function of a University is to provide for learning, research and advancement of knowledge. It is the academic bodies of the University which have to carry
out this function. This study of the functioning of the academic bodies of the universities in Kerala reveals that they are not efficient or fully effective in exercising their powers and discharging their duties as envisaged in the laws of the University. Politicisation of these bodies makes their functioning less effective. Interference and pressures from various quarters such as political parties, students, social and religious groups pose difficulties in the implementation of many of the decisions of the academic bodies. And when academic bodies which have only deliberative powers, also fail to take initiative in the formulation of academic reforms, because of political considerations, the ineffectiveness of their role becomes abundantly evident. Improvement is called for with regard to the constitution of academic bodies, appointment of their members, and their mode of functioning.
REFERENCES


2. Ibid., p.61.

3. Ibid., p.62.


5. (1) Kerala University Act, Kerala Gazette, Trivandrum, published on 27.7.1974, Clause 16.
   (2) Calicut University Act, Kerala Gazette, Trivandrum, published on 2.4.1975, Clause 16.
   (3) Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala Gazette, Trivandrum, published on 17.4.1985, Clause 16, and
   (4) Cochin University of Science and Technology Act, Kerala Gazette, Trivandrum, 30.11.1986, Clause 16.

6. Sub-section (i) of Section 19 of the Kerala University Act/Calicut University Act.

7. Section 19 of the Kerala University Act/Calicut University Act/Mahatma Gandhi University Act, and
   Section 21 of the Cochin University of Science and Technology Act.

8. Section 17 of the Kerala University Act/Calicut University Act/Mahatma Gandhi University Act and Section
   19 of Cochin University of Science and Technology Act.

10. Section 21 of the Kerala University Act/Calicut University Act, Section 21 of the Mahatma Gandhi University Act and Section 17 of the Cochin University of Science and Technology Act.

11. Section 21, Sub-sections (a) and (b) of the Kerala University Act.

12. Section 21, Sub-sections (a) and (b) of the Calicut University Act and Section 17, Sub-section (i) of the Cochin University of Science and Technology Act.

13. Section 21, Sub-sections (a), (b), (c) and (d) of the Mahatma Gandhi University Act.

14. Section 23 of the Kerala University Act/Calicut University Act, Sub-sections (i) to (xxiv), Section 23 of the Mahatma Gandhi University Act, Sub-sections (i) to (xxxv), Section 18 of the Cochin University of Science and Technology Act, Sub-sections (i) to (xxviii).

15. Statute 3, Clause (i) of the Kerala University First Statutes, 1977.

16. Section 24, Sub-sections (i) and (ii) of the Kerala University Act/Calicut University Act/Mahatma Gandhi University Act, Section 23, Sub-section (i) of the Cochin University of Science and Technology Act.

17. Section 25, Sub-sections (i) to (xiv) of the Kerala University Act/Calicut University Act/Mahatma Gandhi University Act. Section 24, Sub-sections (i) to (ix) of the Cochin University of Science and Technology Act.


19. Section 39 of the Kerala University Act/Calicut University Act, Section 40 of the Mahatma Gandhi University Act and Section 42 of the Cochin University of Science and Technology Act.
20. Kerala University First Ordinances, 1978 notified on 27.9.1978, Chapter V and Calicut University First Ordinances notified on 15.7.1978, Chapter IX.

21. Section 27 of the Kerala University/Calicut University/Mahatma Gandhi University Act. Section 25 of the Cochin University Act provides that the Deans shall be nominated by the Vice-Chancellor.

22. Preamble of the Cochin University of Science and Technology Act, 1986.


31. Minutes of the meeting of the Syndicate of the University of Kerala held in August 1969.
32. Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Council, University of Cochin held in June 1978.

33. Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Council, University of Calicut, July 1986.

34. Ibid.