Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Education is an important agent for the social, economic, political and industrial development of a country. "Education within any society must be considered as a unified whole, its parts in balance and the balance in turn reflecting society's requirements and the resources available to meet them".\textsuperscript{1} Being at the apex of the educational pyramid, higher education has a key role to play not only for academic pursuit and augmentation of knowledge, but also for national development. It contributes to national development through dissemination of specialised knowledge and skills. The efficient functioning of the system of higher education is vital for the progress of the country. Without good institutions of higher education, the country will not have effective, efficient and well-equipped manpower required for the progress of the country.

The panorama of Indian higher education from ancient time spreads over more than two millennia. Over the years, the growth of higher education, involving qualitative as well as quantitative changes, has been
Rich tradition of learning, predominantly religious in character was the main feature of ancient educational system in India. The education was Brahminical and Buddhist. Takshashila, Nalanda and Vikramshila were famous centres of education in North India and Ghatikas, Buddhist Viharas and Jaina Pathas in South India.

In the mediaeval period, together with many social and cultural changes that were effected, a large number of educational centres also were started. Together with Pathsalas, Madrassas also came into being and emerged as centres of higher learning which produced scholars of excellence in almost all branches of contemporary science.

The education system in India had a major structural change in its shape, size and content during the colonial period. The first three universities came into being at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras during this period and higher education was greatly influenced by the British education system. The main focus of the system was to create a class of educated Indians who could act as interpreters of the British people with the millions of Indians to help them govern India effectively.
The system of higher education underwent rapid development in the post-independent era. When the first Five Year Plan was launched in the year 1950-51, there were in India only 28 universities, 695 colleges and 174,000 students. Today there are more than 200 universities, more than 7000 colleges and nearly five million students. In spite of this already large size, the system is still expanding year after year with about 200 colleges being started every year.3

The system of higher education in India is one of the largest in the world. Every eighth student enrolled for higher education on the globe is an Indian. The absolute size of enrolment of Indian higher education may be gauged from the fact that it accounted in the early years of the eighties for about 43% of the total enrolment in the developing countries.4 Since independence, there has been a rapid expansion in enrolment in the country. Both Central and State governments initiated several measures not only to enlarge the base of higher education, but also to remove in-built deficiencies and inadequacies in the educational system which was inherited from the colonial period. The rapid expansion in enrolment of students for higher education during the last twelve year from 1980-1992 is given in Table 1.1.
### Table 1.1

Higher Education: Total Enrolment in India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrolment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>27,52,437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td>29,52,006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-83</td>
<td>31,33,093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-84</td>
<td>33,07,649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-85</td>
<td>34,04,096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-86</td>
<td>36,05,029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-87</td>
<td>37,54,409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-88</td>
<td>39,10,829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-89</td>
<td>40,74,676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-90</td>
<td>42,46,878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>44,25,247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-92</td>
<td>46,11,107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


With the great increase in student enrolment, the unplanned proliferation of institutions of higher learning also occurred simultaneously in the country. This is illustrated by the statistics given in the report of the
Task Force on Higher Education, appointed by the U.G.C. in July 1992. The number of universities in 1985-86 was 149 which rose to 176 in 1990-91. The number of colleges went up from 5,816 to 7,121 and the enrolment of students from about 36 lakhs to over 44 lakhs during the same period.

It has been observed by several educationists and academicians that though the number of higher educational institutions have increased by leaps and bounds, the quantitative expansion has been accompanied by qualitative deterioration and the standards have declined enormously. It is generally complained that when compared to standards in advanced countries, Indian standards seem to be much lower. The low and poor efficiency of the system of Indian higher education system is borne out by the fact that most of the products of the system are not absorbed into the agencies where educated manpower is required. The products of the system, it is said, are not equal in quality and competence to the turnouts of the system of higher education in developed countries. The Policy Frame of the University Grants Commission highlights the major weaknesses of the Indian education system in the following words:

"It still continues to be dominated by models and value systems adopted during the colonial regime. It
places an almost exclusive emphasis on the formal school (with its single-point entry, annual sequential promotions, insistence on full-time attendance and almost exclusive use of full-time teachers) and neglects both non-formal and recurrent education. The system is a gigantic monolith, very difficult to move or change; and in spite of its achievements, which are by no means inconsiderable, it has proved itself to be inadequate to meet our national needs and aspirations." Adverse comments on the system of higher education in our country are not only about qualitative deterioration, but also about uneasy campuses, excessive politicisation, non-teacher like teachers, lack of credibility of examinations, inadequate facilities in the institutions, socially irrelevant courses and the like.

DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN KERALA

The earliest known places of learning in Kerala, as in many other parts of the country, were expressions of a religious culture. The educational institutions of those times were 'Kudipallikudams' (elementary schools), 'Kalaries' (physical and military training schools) and 'Pathsalas' (vedic schools). Kudipallikudams were of Buddhist origin, Kalaries carried on a Dravidian tradition
and Pathsalas were Brahmanical. Higher education was imparted in separate institutions called 'Salais' in South Kerala and 'Subh Matts' or Temple Universities in Central and North Kerala. These seats of higher learning came into existence in the 9th Century A.D under the patronage of the King. They were residential institutions in the nature of Gurukulas. Education was imparted only to Namboodiri youths in these institutions. Subh Matts conducted examinations and awarded degrees. Candidates were required to submit a thesis or present themselves before scholars and prove their proficiency in learning. Seminars were held regularly in temple precincts and scholars from different places gathered at these places of learning and exhibited their learning and skill in debate and were granted formal recognition or other honours and titles. Eminent scholars were awarded the degree of Bhattathiri. These centres of higher learning resembled the famous universities in North India like 'Nalanda' and 'Takshasila', in many aspects.

Protestant missionaries from Europe who settled in various parts of Travancore and Cochin in the early nineteenth century laid the foundation for modern higher
education in Kerala. The Governments in these two states, were run by the British Residents who encouraged missionary activities. The missionaries opened English schools in Nagercoil (now in Tamil Nadu), Quilon, Alleppey and Kottayam in Travancore and in Ernakulam and Trichur in Cochin. These schools got the approval of the University of Madras to present candidates for the Matriculation examination and in due course they developed into colleges affiliated to the University of Madras. In 1818, Rev. Mead founded the Nagercoil Seminary which was the first institution in Travancore to start regular English education. This later grew into a first grade college. In 1816, the Syrians established a college at Kottayam. In 1834, H.H. Swathi Thirunal, the then Maharaja of Travancore took the initiative to start an English school at Trivandrum, which was later raised to a college, the Maharaja's College, affiliated to the University of Madras. This period witnessed a few efforts made by the Government to promote vernacular education. A few government vernacular schools were started with the objective of creating a cadre of clerks and accountants for service in the various government departments of these states.
In Cochin, English education had a starting in 1818, when the missionaries started a school in Mattanchery. The Maharaja's School started in 1845 became a college in 1875. English schools were being started in the Malabar area also in this period, which later developed into colleges. The Brennen high school started in 1862 became a college in 1890. The Government Victoria College was also started as a school in 1816. It developed into a college in 1838. H.H. Sir, P.K. Manavikrama Maharaja Bahadur, Zamorin of Calicut also started a school in 1877. This was converted into the Zamorin's College in 1888.

The first university in the princely state of Travancore was the University of Travancore which was established under an Act promulgated by H.H. the Maharaja of Travancore, Sir Bala Rama Varma, in 1937. Three committees had been set up earlier, in 1919, 1923 and 1932 to look into the feasibility of establishing a university in the State. The chief aims of the university were to effect a reorganisation of the system of technical and technological education in the State, to make more systematic provision for furtherance of original research in the various branches of applied science and for the promotion of Malayalam literature, Kerala art and
The Maharaja was the first Chancellor and Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer, Dewan of Travancore, the Vice-Chancellor. Ten colleges which were formerly affiliated to the University of Madras transferred their affiliation to the Travancore University. In the year 1939, the Government transferred to the University additional control of all the government colleges thitherto managed by the Director of Public Instruction. In 1949, after the merger of the princely states of Cochin and Travancore, the colleges in Cochin which were affiliated to the University of Madras also came under the University of Travancore.

The Kerala state was formed on November 1, 1956 by merging the princely states of Travancore and Cochin and the Malabar region of the former Madras Presidency. The University of Travancore was reconstituted into a teaching, affiliating and federal university for the whole State and renamed as the University of Kerala under the Kerala University Act of 1957. The main objectives of the university were to provide for conservation, promotion and development of Kerala art and culture and for the gradual change of the medium of instruction into Malayalam in all educational institutions of the State and to provide for greater facilities for post-graduate studies and research.
in different parts of the State. Nineteen institutions were transferred back to the Government and the University functioned with affiliated colleges and teaching departments without constituent colleges. The administrative control of the Government colleges were brought under the Directorate of Collegiate Education in 1957. The Kerala University Act 1969 replaced the Act of 1957. With a view to provide more representation to students from the southern districts of Kerala, in academic and administrative bodies of the University, the Kerala University Act 1974 replaced the Act of 1969.

By 1968, the University of Kerala had become one of the largest institutions in the country with about 149 affiliated colleges. To provide for urgent development of higher education in the northern districts of the State, the University of Calicut was established by Ordinance No.5/68 of Government of Kerala, ratified by Act 24/1968 of the Kerala Legislature. This Act was replaced by Act 5 of 1975. The University of Calicut took over from the University of Kerala all the affiliated colleges in the six northern districts of Kerala, Cannanore, Kozhikode, Malappuram, Palghat and Trichur. The chief aim of
the university was the reorganisation of the system of education in the State for the development of technical and technological education and research in applied sciences and for the promotion of Kerala art and culture and for the upliftment of higher education in the comparatively poorly developed regions of the northern districts of Kerala.\textsuperscript{14}

In the year 1971, the Kerala Agricultural University was established under the Kerala Agricultural University Act 1971 with the aim of furthering agricultural education, research and extension in the State. The university began in 1972 with 22 constituent colleges and 21 research stations transferred from the Department of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry of the State Government.

Another university started in the year 1971 was the University of Cochin, established by the Cochin University Act 1971. This university, started as a federal type university, originally comprised the teaching departments of the University of Kerala located at Ernakulam. The University laid major emphasis on postgraduate studies and research in applied science,
commerce, industry and technology. This university was reorganised as the Cochin University of Science and Technology under Act 31 of 1986. The university has the main objective of promoting study and research in the applied sciences, technology, industry, commerce, management and social sciences that are relevant to the changing needs of the society. The territorial jurisdiction extends to the whole State of Kerala.

By bifurcating the University of Kerala, another university named the Gandhiji University was established in 1983 by the Gandhiji University Act (Act 12 of 1985). This teaching and affiliating University was founded in order to provide for the urgent development of higher education in the areas comprised in the revenue districts of Kottayam, Ernakulam and Idukki and the Kozhencherry, Mallappally, Thiruvalla and Ranni Taluks of the Pathanamthitta revenue district of the State. The Gandhiji University was renamed as the Mahatma Gandhi University by the Mahatma Gandhi University Act 1985.

Another university was started in the State in 1993 at Kalady, the birth place of Jagat Guru
Sankaracharya. This university, named the Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, was established by Act 5 of 1994. The main objective of the University is the study of Ancient Sanskrit Literature and Modern Indian Languages.

Although among all the States of Republic of India, Kerala has the highest literacy percentage, the number of the universities in the State is very small. And in a state where a good number of the students who pass the S.S.I.C. examination automatically opt to continue their studies for the pre-degree course, either by joining the affiliated colleges or by private registration, the need for establishing more universities of the conventional pattern or with a vocational bias does not have to be over-emphasised.

It is an accepted fact, that it is the Malabar region of the State, which earlier was part of the former Madras Presidency that does not have enough facilities for higher education. There is only one university now, the University of Calicut, to cater to the needs of the region. Considering various aspects of the desirability of
establishing one more university in the State, the Government of Kerala has taken the preliminary steps already by constituting a task force of educational experts to study the feasibility of starting a university in one of the northern districts of the State, preferably Cannannore, without much delay.

Higher Education System in Kerala

The development of higher education in the State of Kerala which was at a slow pace till the late fifties gathered momentum during the sixties. There has been a steady increase in the number of Arts and Science colleges in the State with the massive enrolment of students from the Third Five Year Plan onwards. Table 1.2 shows the growth in the number of Arts and Science colleges and enrolment of students in the State of Kerala for the period 1956-57 to 1991-92.

It is seen that at the time of the formation of the Kerala state in 1956, there were only 32 colleges with an enrolment of 26,402 students. But during the past 30 years, the increase in enrolment has become sixfold with the number of colleges increasing to 173 during 1991-92.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Colleges</th>
<th>Enrolment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1956-57</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26,402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-62</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>41,739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966-67</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1,12,485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-72</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>1,59,216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-77</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>1,76,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>2,69,207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-87</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>1,39,480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-92</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>1,62,334</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.3

Structure of Collegiate Enrolment in Kerala
1960-61 to 1991-92

(in thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pre-degree</th>
<th>Degree (General)</th>
<th>Post-graduate (General)</th>
<th>Degree (Professional &amp; Technical)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>121.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td>101.5</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>177.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>146.6</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>257.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-86</td>
<td>197.3</td>
<td>106.5</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>16.3*</td>
<td>312.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>191.4*</td>
<td>78.9*</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>17.0**</td>
<td>288.6*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes private registration
** Excludes private registration

'Professional and Technical' includes Law, Teacher's Training, Engineering, Medicine (Allopathy, Ayurvedic and Homoeopathy), Agriculture, Horticulture and Veterinary.

Table 1.3 gives the structure of collegiate enrolment for the period 1960-61 to 1991-92 in Kerala. The table shows that general education constitutes nearly three-fourths of the share in total enrolment in the State. It also shows a steady increase in the rate of enrolment in all the stages though there is a slight decrease in the pre-degree and degree levels for the year 1990-91.

The structure of higher education in Kerala is not different from that of the country as a whole. This State too has laid high emphasis on quantitative expansion in terms of number of institutions, students and teachers. Deterioration of standards is the main criticism levelled against the system of higher education in Kerala also. The report on higher education by the State High Level Committee on Education and Employment has identified many causes for the falling of standards in the sphere of higher education in the State. Among these, overcrowding in the institutions of higher education owing to unrestricted admission has been identified as the root cause for the phenomenon. With the granting of the facility for private registration for university admission for those students who were unable to get admission to regular courses, the
number of students opting for conventional higher education increased greatly. This led to a mushroom growth of coaching institutions euphemistically called "Parallel Colleges". The growth of the parallel colleges of the State as 'operating in the free market unaided by any form of government direction and unfettered by any government control'. The parallel colleges have grown largely as a result of the prospect of making 'quick profits' owing to excessive private demand for higher education.

The High Level Committee on Higher Education considers the rationalisation of fees the next important factor for the swelling of the admission to higher educational institutions. Compared to the conditions in other states, Kerala has an abnormally low fee structure.

Dr. M.V. Pylee, an eminent educational administrator has listed the main evils that afflict our higher education system. They are poor quality of teaching, indiscipline and poor motivation among teachers, appointment of teachers in colleges on the basis of donations, instead of on the basis of merit, politically-oriented trade unionism among
teachers, politically-oriented trade unionism among students, qualitatively poor examination and evaluation systems, meagre infrastructural facilities in the universities and colleges, political interference in the autonomy of higher educational institutions such as in the appointment of Vice-Chancellors and other top functionaries of the universities and in the constitution of the different authorities of the universities, poor leadership at the higher levels of administration both in the colleges and the universities and indifference on the part of parents and the public.

It has been agreed by most of the academicians and educational administrators that the quality of education depends largely on the quality of teaching. Ineffective teaching and high standards of students do not go together. The selection of teachers by the private colleges of Kerala on the basis of donations rather than on the basis of merit has resulted in the intrusion of a large number of academically not-so-bright persons to the noble profession of teaching. Those who are not really motivated as teachers and who lack the calibre, competence and commitment to teaching, play havoc with the system. The High Level Committee emphasises some more reasons for the
decline of quality in teaching. Absence of a system of periodical assessment of the work done by faculty members, system of non-cadre promotions without any concern for merit and the practice of undertaking private tuitions by teachers are some of them.²¹ There are no student-reaction surveys on the merit of teachers in Kerala as employed by some well-known universities in the West. The procedures for selection of teachers in our colleges and universities when compared to those prevailing in the advanced countries is poor mainly because our system is secretive and closed in contrast to the open system of the West. Negative attitude among teachers towards quality improvement programmes, poor motivation and politically-oriented trade unionism and other vested interests among them are also considered important factors contributing to the poor quality in teaching.

Next to the quality of teaching, the quality of the academic programmes and courses in the universities is an important factor which decides the quality of higher learning in a state. As far as Kerala is concerned, there is a general feeling that the courses offered in the colleges are more or less of the traditional pattern at the undergraduate, graduate and the postgraduate levels.
Though a few of the teaching departments of the universities in the State have some professional as well as specialised courses, it is seen that greater emphasis has been given to courses of a general nature. There is great shortage of varied courses which are useful and relevant to the present conditions of the State. This has resulted in the expansion of higher education quantitatively, leading to massive qualitative deterioration. The universities at present do not have mechanisms for revision and regular updating of the syllabi and content of courses which is very much essential for the upkeep of quality in higher education. Periodical evaluation of the courses offered in the universities is also not carried out. Though experts in the field of higher education are of the opinion that such measures are essential for the improvement of the quality of higher education, these have not been given much importance either by the government or the universities in the State.

Eminent educationists agree that the poor examination and evaluation system of our State is one of the many reasons for the fall in academic standards. Our examination system is complex, complicated and unscientific as compared to the system prevailing in advanced countries.
In our State, the examination system has become a totally corrupt and discredited one. In the words of Dr. Pylee, "it is a gigantic racket in which students, parents, teachers, college principals, non-teaching employees, university officials at various levels, members of the university authorities such as the Syndicate, Boards of Studies and several others including different types of politicians are involved". The academic community and the public have become accustomed to the phenomenon of "irregularities" in the examination system prevailing in the State. The major reforms in the examination systems recommended by the U.G.C. such as internal assessment and the semester system have not been successfully introduced in the affiliated colleges of the State, though the universities have adopted them in the teaching departments.

Excessive politicisation is an accursed evil that pervades the system of higher education in Kerala. The universities which form the apex of the higher education system and which are meant to be centres of academic excellence have become major spheres of political patronage. Selection and nomination of members to the university bodies are made not on merit or academic excellence, but mostly on the basis of political clout.
Appointments of the top functionaries of the universities such as the Vice-Chancellor, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar are made by the State government on the basis of their political affiliations.

It is a well-known truth that there is practically no area in the higher educational system in Kerala, where the influence of the government is not seen. Governmental interference in the autonomy of the universities has become the order of the day. The Gnanam Committee of the U.G.C. describes the term autonomy of the universities as that "which broadly emphasises the freedom to function, to achieve academic excellence and to administer the institution through its own rules and regulations". It has been observed that in the recent years there has been a massive erosion of the autonomous status of the universities in the State.

The academic scene in Kerala today is in great turmoil and a number of repeated attempts of the government to interfere in the affairs of the universities in the State have aroused great concern in all walks of society. Two of the four affiliating universities in the State have been functioning without the elected supreme bodies - the
Senates - for several months and are being run by the Syndicates which have predominance for 'pro-government' nominees. It has been alleged that the State government had been unofficially preventing elections to the Senates of the universities on the plea that a new common legislation for all the universities in the State was about to be introduced. The government was unable to make into law the Kerala Universities Bill, introduced in the Assembly, owing to great protests from all the strata of the university community against its provisions to enhance the government's powers in the affairs of the university.

The latest example of State governmental interference in the affairs of the university, which has caused a major controversy in the State, is the government's attempts to force the three universities in the State and the Chancellor to grant affiliation to a list of 71 colleges; 54 of these colleges were to be unaided institutions to be run entirely on the sale of payment seats of admission and teacher posts. The government is pressurising the universities to grant affiliation to the colleges which have not followed the rules and procedures while applying for affiliation. The matter was taken to the Kerala High Court which passed an interim order
directing the Government and the universities not to sanction or grant affiliation to any new college which had not strictly followed the prescribed procedure in the matter.

The private colleges in Kerala are associated with the four major communities which make up the social spectrum of the State, viz., the Christians, the Muslims, the Nairs and the Ezhavas. Over the years, the communal character of the managements of a large number of private colleges had created for them an important role in the politics of the State, because of their ability to mobilise political resources and support. It is no wonder the government stoops to any level to cater to the interests of these communities. It is in this context that the government's attempt to order the universities to grant affiliation to a long list of colleges, associated with these different communities of the State, has to be seen.

A new concept in the field of higher education which is assuming great importance in the present times in Kerala is that of self-financed education. A large number of private colleges in the State have recently started self-financing courses and even State-financed universities
have begun to introduce new, specialised as well as
genral, courses styled self-financing courses. For these
courses, exorbitant admission and tuition fees under
various heads such as donations, capitation fees, paid
seats and the like are charged. The State government has
moved in the direction of giving sanction to a large number
of colleges which are self-financing institutions. "A
self-financing institution can be defined as an institution
or college which meets its promotion and maintenance costs
by itself by raising the required finance through donations
and contributions by the promoters, philanthropists and the
affluent sections of society. Part of the required finance
may also be raised through the fees charged on students.
Such institutions are thus promoted and run independently
of State assistance".26

The system of self-financed education which is
spreading fast in the higher education sector of Kerala is
the system where the students meet the cost of education
through payment of high fees in the form of donations,
admission and tuition fees. The policy of the State
government to promote this system of higher education has
started a controversy in the State. A vast majority of the
students, teachers and the general public oppose the policy
for the reason that higher education will become out of reach for the intelligent students who belong to the middle and lower income brackets and the poor classes of the society. Kerala today is witnessing a struggle between those within and outside the university system to control its education policy and resources.

THE PROBLEM

The discussion in the previous pages about the system of higher education in Kerala reveals to some extent the various issues and problems in the present day situation. An in-depth study of this complex system and its problems in their totality is difficult and time-consuming. The Kothari Commission in its report expressed the hope that in future, academicians, administrators and interested persons would come forward to study seriously the problems of academic management and suggest ways and means to bring about a radical improvement in the chaotic situation.27 Now "institutions that can be brought within the purview of higher education are degree and diploma awarding universities, institutions of national importance, deemed universities and colleges of general and professional nature".28 By and large, higher education is imparted mainly through institutions of higher learning,
namely the universities. Therefore a study of the structure and functions of the universities will bring to light a realistic picture of the complex problems in the system of higher education as also ways and means to solve them.

For the present study, therefore, it is the functioning of the universities in the State, especially that of their important authorities that has been chosen for analysis mainly and of the influences that are brought to bear on them. In the following pages an attempt has been made to explain how these objectives have been fulfilled.

Social changes take place in the society so rapidly that the university system is always exposed to new processes of change. The universities should be sensitive to the changing conditions of society and shifting patterns of thought and behaviour and must be ready to meet new demands and challenges. Therefore administrators, educationists and research students connected with higher education have to examine the problems of the governance of the universities and the content of university education from time to time. The pattern of governance of the
universities should not remain static. With the rapid advance in knowledge, the governance of universities as well as the content of education has to be dynamic. In this context, it is essential that the dynamism of higher educational system requires suitable changes in the existing administrative and academic machinery in the universities. For this purpose, the pattern of university organisation needs continual review and adjustment. The system has to be so framed and evolved as to enable the academics as well as the administrators to introduce appropriate changes, from time to time, in the organisational set-up of the universities as well as in the content of education. This involves improvements in the structure and functions of the governing bodies of the universities and also a radical change in the content, syllabi and structure of the courses. It also involves the responsibility of introducing diversified courses to cater to the changing needs of the society in tune with the explosion of knowledge.

Universities have manifold functions to discharge. Pursuit of excellence in knowledge, advancement and dissemination of knowledge are considered the main functions of universities. Carrying out these functions
involves governance of the academic functions and policies of the universities. The academic governance of the universities is discharged through three of the authorities of the universities — the Academic Council, the Faculties and the Boards of Studies. It is the responsibility of these academic bodies to take decisions and implement the academic activities of the university which truly reflect the ethos of the institution.

An equally important aspect of the academic governance is the designing and implementation of academic programmes of the universities. The term 'academic programme' means a course designed, implemented and run by a university at any level - the undergraduate, graduate or postgraduate stage, as the case may be. There has been a veritable explosion of knowledge in diverse fields and the courses in our universities cannot afford to remain stagnant. They should have relevance to the world in which we live and should keep pace with the progress of knowledge in every field and discipline. There is an urgent need for the re-orientation of traditional subjects to the needs of the community and the introduction of relevant applied disciplines. A university in modern times cannot discharge its responsibilities unless it has an inbuilt mechanism for
revision and updating of courses on a continual basis. "For the improvement of curricula and restructuring of courses, a university merely degenerates itself into what may be called academic book keeping". 29

In the present day context, a systematic enquiry into the two main aspects of the universities, given in the preceding discussion, viz., the different aspects of the academic bodies and the academic programmes, is most appropriate and relevant. The various education commissions and committees appointed by the University Grants Commission, the central and state governments, at different times have attempted to go into the details of some elements of the subjects mentioned. A few researchers have also made studies on the weaknesses of the higher education system in a general way. No systematic enquiry into these aspects of higher education, mainly dealing with the structure and functions of the academic bodies of the universities and their effectiveness in introducing qualitative changes in the organisational set-up and also in the designing and implementing of varied academic programmes, has been conducted so far in our State. Very little effort has been directed towards understanding the
different dimensions of this particular aspect of the university organisation either on the part of the government or on the part of academicians.

BROAD OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study attempts to analyse the multifarious aspects of the academic bodies of the universities with regard to their structure, powers and functions in bringing about qualitative improvement in the university governance and to suggest methods and approaches for their efficient functioning. This study also aims at the scientific analysis of the different aspects of academic programmes in terms of their designing and implementation. An in-depth study of the problems involved in the implementation and management of the academic programmes in the universities would enable the researcher to suggest ways and means for their improvement in tune with the needs of society.
REFERENCES


12. Ibid.


15. Cochin University of Science and Technology Act, 1986, Sections 2, sub-sections (i),(ii) and (iii) and Section 5.


18. Ibid., p.12.


23. Government of Kerala appointed in 1984 Justice M.P. Menon Commission to enquire into the irregularities in the conduct of examinations, as an immediate response to the serious situation created by the 'mark-sheet scandal' relating to admission to professional colleges.


