IV. SOCIAL CHANGE; THE EFFECT OF THE FISHWORKERS’ MOVEMENT

The fourth component of a social movement is social change. As explained in the theoretical frame, social change is the effect or consequence of a social movement on the culture and socio-economic structure of a society. This section discusses the social changes brought about by fishworkers’ movement, and examines how the fishworkers’ movement fulfills the conditions of a social movement.

According to Rao (1984) there could be four types of social changes effected by a social movement. There are restorative movements which aim at maintaining the status quo, reform movements which aim at partial changes in beliefs and styles of life, revolutionary movements which work for radical and total changes, and transformative movements which work for middle level changes. Transformative movements aim at middle level structural changes in the traditional distribution of power and in the system of differentiated allocation of resources, rights and privileges by attacking the monopoly of
the upper classes and castes in different areas of life including religion." (Rao 1984: 13)

The changes could be for the members of the movement or for the wider society. It is important that these changes are made permanent and officially recognised by suitable state laws. So legal changes are important criteria for structural changes in a transformative movement. Thus there can be five ingredients for a transformative movement. They are changes in laws, in distribution of power within a society, in social relationship, in the distribution of rights and privileges, and in the values, behaviour and life style of a people.

The social change of fishworkers’ movement is being analysed based on the above theoretical criteria. The broad division of the chapter is changes among the members of the movement and those in the wider society. The social changes effected by the movement is traced through the analysis of secondary and primary data. The latter consists responses of 150 respondents mostly fishworkers recorded in an interview schedule, and of 100 respondents mostly non-fishworkers through semi-structured interviews conducted by the researcher himself among seven categories of people. They are fishermen’s trade unions of political parties, government officials, fisheries scientists, boat owners, supportive groups, religious leaders, and voluntary organisations. The interview schedule had seventeen specific questions regarding the effect of the
fishworkers' movement. The responses of these questions were added to the responses from semi-structured interviews, to find out the overall impact of the fishworkers' movement on the society and the people.

1. Social Changes Among the Fishworkers as a Result of the Fishworkers' Movement.

The fishworkers form 3.2% of the total population of Kerala, who are spread over the sea coast and the inland waters. They are a subaltern class marginalised in all aspects of life. The goal of the fishworkers' movement, as stated earlier, was to liberate them from the socio-economic bondage and to bring about their all round development. How far did the movement succeed to achieve this goal? The answer to this question forms the social change which has taken place as a result of the fishworkers' movement. This section analyses the changes effected in five areas of life of the fishworkers. They are changes in law, in distribution of power within a society, in the social relationship, in the distribution of rights and privileges, and in values, behaviour and life style of the fishworkers.

A. Legal Changes Brought about by the Fishworkers' Movement.

The fishworkers' movement representing the traditional fishworkers in Kerala brought about many legal changes in the fisheries sector. In fact, one of the objective of fishworkers' struggle was to pressurise the government to pass laws to
control the operation of mechanised vessels in the sea, and thus to protect the interests of the traditional fishworkers and the fish resources. The important laws passed by the efforts of the movement are the marine regulations like the ban on purse-sein boats, night and monsoon trawling, welfare measures like lumpsum grant and old age pension, compensation for fishworkers affected by fish disease, and transport facilities for women fish vendors. Each of these laws needs a brief explanation to show its significance for the fishworkers' movement.


Some of the basic demands of the fishworkers' movement from the beginning were to have marine regulations to control destructive mechanised vessels on the Kerala coast. It was soon after a mammoth rally organised by Kerala Swathantra Malsya Thozhilali Federation (KSMHF) in Thiruvandrum that the Kerala Marine Regulation Act of 1980 was passed by the state government. The Act gave exclusive right of fishing to the traditional fishworkers over coastal waters up to 10-20 kilometers fathom depending on the nature of the shore while the mechanised vessels would operate only beyond this zone. This was a landmark legislation since the traditional fishworkers regained their right over the inshore waters, and the operation
of mechanised boats in the sea was controlled. Besides, many of the subsequent laws about mechanised vessels were based on this legislation.

The ban on night trawling and the purse-seine boats were based on the marine regulation act. The night trawling was causing trouble for traditional fishworkers and was destroying their nets often. The law was passed after the agitation of 1984 in which this was an important demand. A similar law was passed in 1985 to ban purse-seine boats up to 20 kilometers from the shore. This again was a basic demand of KSMTF because purse-seining was causing overfishing. So the marine regulations were the effects of the fishworkers' movement. "One of the significant achievements of KSMTF, through its agitations and demonstrations of strength is the passing of the Kerala Marine Fisheries Regulation Act of 1980". (Abraham 1996:86) The respondents of the interview expressed the same view when 83% of them fully agreed with a statement that, "the marine regulation act including the ban on night trawling was due to the fishworkers' movement."

b. The Ban on Monsoon Trawling

The monsoon trawling was directly causing fish depletion as it was destroying fish and fish habitat. So it was an important demand of the fishworkers' movement with its basic slogan, "to ban mechanised trawling during the spawning season of June, July and August." The government conceded to this
demand only in 1988 after almost a decade of continuous yearly agitation, and after the study of the issue by three expert commissions at different times. The ban was not a permanent one, but only for 48 days during that year. So from 1989 onwards agitations had to be organised by KSMTF before the government enforced the ban.

Though the fishermen unions of political parties also contributed towards the ban on monsoon trawling, as was admitted by the members of KSMTF themselves, it was mainly due to the persistent struggle of KSMTF that the government banned the monsoon trawling all the years up to 1994. Besides, whenever the ban was challenged in the court by the boatowners, KSMTF was a joinder of the party with the government in the case. It was due to the argument of KSMTF based on facts and data that these cases were won. The supreme court judgement in 1993 on the issue upheld the right of the government to ban monsoon trawling. About the court cases 92% of the respondents fully agreed with the statement that, "only due to the effort of KSMTF that the cases about mechanised trawling were won in the high court and supreme court." Therefore, the ban and its protection in the court were the fruit of fishworkers' movement. In the interview 82% of the respondents fully agreed and 15% somewhat agreed with the statement that, "monsoon trawling was banned in Kerala because of the fishworkers' movement." If both responses were taken together 97% of the respondents were
of the opinion that this change took place due to the fishworkers' movement. Even non-fishworkers acknowledged this fact. "The monsoon trawling and other welfare benefits were achievements of the fishworkers' movement," said a former fisheries minister of Kerala.

The significance of the ban on monsoon trawling together with other marine regulations can be seen from two angles. Firstly, the law controlled mechanised vessels from using the marine resources and partly restored the right of the fishworkers over the coastal waters. It was related to the change in the control over means of production. Thus it was a legal change leading to structural change in economic sphere. Secondly, if three expert commissions appointed by the government within eight years studied the issue on mechanised trawling, it shows the seriousness of the problem and the great pressure exerted by the fishworkers' movement on the government. As one deputy director of fisheries said, "No other sector had such a lot of commissions within such a short time." In the interview schedule, 92% of the respondents fully agreed with a statement that, "the government appointed different commissions to study the issue of monsoon trawling only due to the fishworkers' movement."

c. The lumpsum Grant and Old Age Pension

Old age pension and lumpsum grant for the education of fishworkers’ children were welfare measures, but they were
important legal protection for a people who did not enjoy any special welfare benefits from the government. It was during the agitation of 1984 that the government announced its decision to grant them. Accordingly, the government passed the Kerala Fishermen' Welfare Fund Act of 1985, through which these two benefits together with many others were given to the fishworkers. The old age pension was in recognition of their contribution to the country's wealth. Lumpsum grant was important for the fishworkers since they were the most illiterate group in Kerala after the tribals. A few years after it was introduced the enrolment of fishworkers' children in the schools increased manifold.

It is widely acknowledged that lumpsum grant and pension were given by the government only due to the fishworkers' movement. One former president of Malsya Thozhilali Congress, the fishermen union of the Congress party, and a member of then ruling front, said,"It was only because of the struggle of KSMTF led by priests that the decision of the government to give pension to the fishworkers was taken." A state office-bearer of CITU fishermen union said candidly, "Lumpsum grant and pension were granted during the agitation of 1984 led by KSMTF. With the statement, "Lumpsum grant and pension were given to fishworkers by the government only because of fishworkers'
movement," 97% of the respondents, mostly fishworkers totally agreed, affirming their conviction that they were the fruits of the fishworkers' movement.

d. Compensation for Fishworkers Affected by Fish Disease.

It was KSMIF that took up the issue of fish disease which appeared in many inland waters in Kerala in 1991, and organised a state level agitation. The inland fishworkers experienced the worst crisis as they became jobless due to the large scale death of fish. As a result of the agitation, the government granted compensation and free ration to the fishworkers affected by the disease. In the interview, 99% of the respondents fully agreed with a statement that, "it was only due to the struggle of KSMTF that the awareness about fish disease was created in the state, and fishworkers received compensation and free ration from the government."

e. Transport Facilities for the Women Fish Vendors

Transport facility for women fish vendors especially in southern districts of Kerala, was a big problem as they had to walk several kilometers daily to sell fish. KSMTF took up the issue as part of the movement, and the government granted several buses to carry fish. The women fish vendors also received a train boggy in 1990 to transport fish from Trivandrum to Kollam, only due to the appeal made by KSMTF. (Malayala Manorama 22-6-1990) About this achievement, 91% of respondents
expressed full agreement with a statement that, "women fish vendors got special transport facilities from the government due to the fishworkers' movement."

B. Changes in the Distribution of Power Within a Society

This section deals with changes in the power relations of fishworkers with other sections of society. Since fishworkers were a subaltern class they were unorganised and powerless. One of the most significant effects of the fishworkers' movement was that fishworkers in Kerala became an organised force. This helped them to be aware of their rights and to struggle collectively to wrest them.

Most of the respondents in the interview acknowledged that the organisational strength was acquired by fishworkers through the fishworkers' movement. To a statement, "The fishworkers in Kerala became an organised strength and right conscious only due to the fishworkers' movement", 77% of the respondents expressed their full agreement. The non-fishermen respondents expressed this fact in many ways. While the fishworkers were an unknown entity earlier they became known as a result of fishworkers' movement. A group which was considered unorganisable even by the Marxist parties became the most
organised power build-up under the leadership of KSMIF. Awareness and education of fishworkers were maximum as a result of the fishworkers' movement.

When the fishworkers became an organised strength they got empowered to assert their rights and to challenge their exploiters. This was expressed in various ways in their life. Firstly, they raised their demands before the authorities boldly and loudly. They asserted their right to participate in the decision making process of the state with regard to the fisheries, so that for any major policy decision the government had to make wide-ranging consultation with them. This was a big change from earlier times when the government unilaterally made policy decisions for them.

Secondly, they got rid of their fear of public authorities. When they were powerless they were afraid of authorities. As a result of fishworkers' movement the fear was, to a great extent, removed. In one interview a group of fishworkers proudly narrated an incident in which they burned two mechanised boats in the sea and themselves immediately reported the matter in the police station. The police inspector sent them away without filing any case against them. The very same fishworkers in earlier time ran for life at the first sight of a police. Similarly, they felt confident to meet any government official for their needs.
Fishing Operators Association organised a demonstration and a 'dharna' with a 'bandh' at Neendakara against the monsoon ban.

On 23rd June KSMTF members picketed trains in Kollam. They were arrested and removed. In Alapuzha Fishworkers blocked the national highway. The inland fishworkers held a dharna and torch light rally at Mavelikara in support of the fasting leader. The president of the Malsya Thozhilali Ayikavedi, Mr. M. Gopalan, went on an indefinite fast in Alapuzha with the demand on the ban on monsoon trawling. (Deepika 24-6-1990)

As the agitation was going on the railway authorities announced that one boggy of a train would be set aside for women fish vendors from Trivandrum to Kollam, in response to the memorandum from KSMTF. (Malayala Manorama 22-6-1990) This was an indication of the concern of KSMTF for the needs of the women fish vendors and the influence it had even on railways.

On 25th June, the fisheries minister, Mr. T.K. Ramakrishnan, announced in the state assembly that the monsoon trawling would be banned from 28th of June and that relief would be given to the unemployed boat workers. In the light of the minister's announcement, KSMTF stopped all agitations including the fast by Mr. Lal Koilparambil.
The change in social relations from olden times was narrated by fishworkers themselves in the interview with the researcher. "In olden times when we were asked in the streets about our occupation we were reluctant to reveal our identity as fishworkers. Instead we would say that we were doing business or farming. Today we are not ashamed about our occupation." About the attitude of others towards them another fisherman said, "In olden times when we gave coins to the shopkeeper for purchasing things, we had to put the coins in a vessel with water, so that he could wash and take it. Nobody would dare to behave in the same manner today." Yet another old man said, "Before the fishworkers' movement started we would put our head down while walking in the city areas. But today we walk anywhere with our raised head." The interview schedule confirmed this when 83% of the respondents fully agreed with a statement that, "fishworkers experienced equal status with others, and recognition of their dignity by others due to the fishworkers' movement."

The equality of status in social relations was also experienced by fisher women. As they were active participants in the fishworkers' agitations and organisation their active role was recognised by the movement and the public. Besides, women had organisation and agitations of their own specifically for their problems like transportation facility for fish
vendors. Thus they got empowered by the movement. The social change which took place could be gauged from the fact that even the Muslim women who normally did not participate in any public functions, took part in large numbers in the agitational tactics like blocking of trains and roads in an orthodox Muslim city like Kozhikode. The organisational growth of women was complemented even by representatives of political parties. Among the respondents of the interview, 47% fully agreed and 35% somewhat agreed with the statement that, "women were brought to the organisational work in par with men in the fishworkers' movement."

D. Changes in the Distribution of Rights and Privileges

Fishworkers' movement was basically a struggle to regain control over marine resources which were almost taken over by mechanised vessels. When some of the demands of fishworkers were met by the government it was a change in rights and privileges. The laws on monsoon trawling and purseining curbed the unrestricted privileges enjoyed by mechanised vessels. They helped the traditional fishworkers to get back their right over inshore waters. Thus the rights over the coastal waters and its resources got distributed among fishworkers and boat owners.

Another area where the distribution of rights and privileges took place was the marketing field. Through the
fishermen cooperatives established by the voluntary organisations, the fishworkers were able to control the marketing of fish and their prices. This was a change from olden times when they had no control over marketing of their own products. Welfare measures like lumpsum grant and old age pension were material benefits which fishworkers received as a result of their constant struggles. So they were social changes expressed in the distribution of rights and economic privileges by the government in the fishing community.

E. Changes in the Values, Behaviour and Life Styles

Social movement brings about changes in the values and behaviour pattern of the members. In the case of fishworkers, this could be seen in the change of their fatalistic attitude, political awareness, behaviour pattern and life style.

As the fishworkers were powerless, they attributed all their socio-economic problems to fate or God. They were passive and resigned to their exploitative situation. With the consciousness acquired through the fishworkers' movement, they realized that these were man-made problems which could be solved by collective action. Thus they got rid of their fatalistic view of life. This was confirmed by them in the interview. As a response to a statement, "by removing the fatalism and helplessness the fishworkers felt confident of solving their
social problems through their collective action in fishworkers' movement. 57% of respondents fully agreed and 41% somewhat agreed with it.

Another sphere where change took place among fishworkers was political consciousness. Earlier the fishworkers were mere votebanks of political parties. As an effect of the fishworkers' movement they became critical of political parties. They made choices of the parties on the merit of what they did for the fishworkers. So the parties could not take them for granted as they did in the past. Political awareness was based on their consciousness about the unjust situation in the fisheries sector where mechanisation was introduced only for the benefit of the capitalist class. One former president of the Malsya Thozhilali Congress, the fishworkers' union of Congress said, "The awareness about protection of fish resources is the result of the work of the KSMTF led by priests." This awareness was connected with their solidarity with working class in other sectors. This was a growth for the fishworkers to open themselves beyond their fishing community. Responding to a statement, "fishworkers' movement enabled fishworkers to cooperate and work with other working class organisations for common issues," 50% of respondents expressed full agreement.
Yet another sign of the social change was the personal growth and behaviour pattern of the fishworkers. As a result of the conscientisation programmes of KSMTF and voluntary organisations there was development in their personality. They became confident of performing difficult tasks in cooperative societies and projects. They organised disciplined and orderly agitations for longer duration than those organised by political parties. The fishworkers who were mostly illiterate acquired skills like public speaking and writing of articles and poems. They were trained for cultural programmes like street theatre, paintings and music. The leadership grew from them with the fishworkers' movement, so that by 1994 most of the office-bearers of KSMTF at state level were fishworkers.

The behaviour pattern of fishworkers was yet another area where change took place as a result of fishworkers' movement. They were considered rude and rough people. They became gentle and polished in their behaviour. This was acknowledged by non-fishermen. One noted Malayalam poet said in the interview, "Fishworkers became a little more human and others started considering them as human beings." Another state leader of CPI has this to say, "There is a new generation of fishworkers who read newspapers, discuss intelligently and dress neatly in the meetings, as a result of the fishworkers' movement." The President of the Indian Trawler's Association, who was always facing opposition from fishworkers said," Due to
the work of the fishworkers' movement the traditional fishworkers' became 'polished' and 'refined', and they were able to speak and behave in a decent way in conferences." No greater testimony is needed about changes in behaviour of fishworkers than this from the leader of the opponents of the traditional fishworkers, who earlier considered the fishworkers a polluting caste.

There was change in the life style of the fishworkers as an outcome of the fishworkers' movement. Fishworkers settled many of their disputes and quarrels by themselves. Saving habit was fostered through fishermen cooperatives started by voluntary organisations. They began to give greater attention to the education of their children especially after they got lumpsum grant from the government.

As an effect of fishworkers' movement there were social changes among fishworkers, the members of the movement. The changes were in law, in the distribution of power, in social relations, in distribution of rights and privileges, in values, behaviour and life style of the fishworkers. Some of these changes could be due to other factors. But as revealed in the interviews of the fishworkers and non-fishworkers, the fishworkers' movement was the most important factor for the above changes.
2. Changes in the Wider Society as an Effect of the fishworkers' Movement

As mentioned above, social change due to a social movement could also be for the wider society. What was the impact of fishworkers' movement on the wider society of Kerala? The following section answers this question. The fishworkers' movement effected changes in the wider society represented by different sections of people. They are the government and bureaucracy, political parties, fisheries scientists, boat owners, the public, and the Catholic Church and religion.

A. The Effect of fishworkers' Movement on the Government and the Bureaucracy.

The fishworkers' movement had an influence on the government in various ways including its policies, its bureaucracy, its general elections, and through the research and publications of KSMTP.

The policies of the government of Kerala for the fisheries were very much changed after the fishworkers' movement raised the issues of mechanisation. As mentioned earlier, the government was following the modernisation model of development with high technology for increased production for export. So the problems of the fishworkers were considered a welfare issue to be dealt with welfare programmes, and not an economic issue. That their issue was basically an economic issue affecting their
occupation and livelihood was brought home by the fishworkers’ movement. When the government passed many legislations about trawling and purse-seining as a result of constant agitations of fishworkers, it was definitely being influenced by the movement.

Apart from legal changes, the general policy of the government about fisheries also got influenced by the fishworkers’ movement. When the government of Kerala prepared a policy of the fisheries sector in 1993, a fisheries scientist who was closely associated with fishworkers’ movement was appointed by the government, as a member of the drafting committee. The researcher learned from this scientist himself that he wrote the first draft for the policy. As a result, many demands of the fishworkers’ movement were incorporated into the policy. One such demand was “to give fishing right only to those who actually go for fishing.” It had far reaching implications like the slogan ‘land to the tiller’. The reason for this influence, according to one scientist, is “the ruling government of the day takes KSMTF seriously for its policies and programmes.” Another fisheries official said, “KSMTF has influenced the fisheries policies of both state and central government.” He gave the example of joint venture on deep-sea fishing. Thus fishworkers’ movement influenced the policies of the government, which led to legal and structural changes in the fisheries sector in Kerala.
Secondly, the fishworkers' movement developed a sense of accountability in the minds of government officials towards the people. Officials were made accountable to the people. Earlier fishworkers were passive about the government policies and programmes. When their consciousness increased about fisheries sector, they were alert about them. They questioned the bureaucracy if they did not perform according to the declared policies. As one deputy director of fisheries said, "KSMTF makes issues known to the government at proper time." They brought to light malpractices and corruption in the fisheries sector. As a result, the government officials were made responsive to the people.

Thirdly, the movement influenced the government by its research and publications. It was this scientific base of the fishworkers' movement that made it credible before the government. Speaking to the researcher about deep sea fishing a high fisheries official complemented the wide information base of KSMTF about fisheries in India and other countries. Referring to the fish disease in the inland waters of Kerala, one deputy director of fisheries and a scientist said, "KSMTF has brought out many studies about fish disease which political parties will not be able to do." Even in the court cases connected with trawling KSMTF was giving scientific facts and data for the government.
Lastly, the fishworkers' movement was also able to influence the voting pattern in the general elections. It is said that in the assembly election of 1987, the Left Democratic Front got many seats in the coastal areas due to the awareness created by the fishworkers' movement. So also in the panchayat election of 1995 the fishworkers are reported to have influenced the electorate considerably. "The coastal belt, another traditional support base of the Congress (I), also seems to have swerved to the Left Democratic Front, and the opposition front was able to secure control of many panchayats for the first time. This shift is attributed mainly to both the heightened political awareness among the Latin Catholics who constitute a chunk of the fisherfolk in recent years and the fisherfolk's ire over the Centre's decision to allow foreign vessels to fish in coastal waters." (Hindu 8-10-1995)

B. The Effect of the Fishworkers' Movement on the Political Parties

The fishworkers' movement had also an influence on the political parties in Kerala. Its influence consisted in projecting new agenda for the parties, in its innovative agitations and grass-root level conscientisation work.

The first area in which the movement brought about change on the political parties, was the agenda it projected for the parties. The issues like trawling and purse-seining were basic to the livelihood of fishworkers, and were questioning the
basic policy of the government for the fisheries. Besides, all political parties had a stake in them. So all of them initially opposed the stand of KSMTF. But when it persisted with its demands supported by scientific backing and agitations, the political parties had to accept them. After a few years practically all parties agreed on the issues like trawling, and were ready even to support the agitations of KSMTF. Thus KSMTF raised issues which political parties had not been able to raise in their programmes. As one fisherman said, "The parties have taken over our slogans". Thus the parties were forced to include these issues in their agenda. When the same parties came to power they had to implement the demands based on them. This ideological influence was perhaps the most important change the fishworkers' movement was able to exert on political parties.

KSMTF also took leadership to bring fishermen unions of political parties together to work collectively for the cause of the traditional fishworkers. So one deputy director of fisheries said, "In the fisheries sector all trade unions stand united on the basic issues unlike in other sectors." Joint agitations of all unions were expressions of this unity in action. Also for the issue of deep-sea fishing KSMTF and National Fishworkers' Forum were instrumental to bring various
fishermen unions together at state and national level. This definitely strengthened the cause of fishworkers and its movement.

The inspirational role of fishworkers' movement for the political parties was expressed in the increasing interest the parties showed in the fishing community. They had shown little interest in them earlier. The main reason was that they found the fishworkers too difficult to organise. But after the agitation of 1984 led by KSMTF, all the parties started working among them. As one CITU fishermen union state leader remarked, "Political parties started working among the fishworkers due to the fishworkers' movement."

The second area in which the fishworkers' movement exerted influence on the political parties, was the innovative strategies used by the movement. They were an eye-opener for them. It was revealed in the interview that the genuinness of 'Satyagraha' as real hunger-strike was revived in Kerala as a result of fishworkers' movement. As one social activist said, "KSMTF was a unique trade union in Kerala with its new style of agitations like indefinite fast, corner meetings, support by prominent citizens and new style of slogans."

A third area in which the fishworkers' movement influenced the political parties was its grass-root level work of conscientisation. The style of KSMTF and the social workers consisted of working with fisherfolk as one of them especially
in agitations. For the hunger-strike it was the leaders who used

to volunteer first for the sacrificing act. Naturally a new
type of leadership emerged in the movement. The new type of
grass-root level work and of leadership had a positive impact on
the political parties.

In the interviews the respondents confirmed the impact
of fishworkers' movement on the political parties. Fifty
percentage fully and forty percentage somewhat agreed with a
statement that, "KSMTF was able creatively to influence
political parties and trade unions in Kerala." One former
president of Malsya Thozhilali Congress admitted frankly, "After
KSMTF became popular the Malsya Thozhilali Congress was almost
extinct." A former CPI(ML) national leader said in the
interview, "KSMTF succeeded where political parties failed."
Thus the fishworkers' movement had a multiplier effect as its
influence motivated political parties to bring about legal
changes through their government. This is the role a non-party
political organisation like KSMTF should be playing in a
democracy.

C. The Effect of the Fishworkers' Movement on Fisheries
Scientists

The fishworkers' movement had its impact on the
fisheries scientists because the movement was based on
scientific principles. The scientists have a great role to play
in the socio-economic development of a people. When the
mechanised trawlers and purse-siners were introduced in Kerala by the government they were meant to modernise the fisheries sector. The fisheries scientists in Kerala and India supported them without checking their evil effect. It was the 'common sense knowledge' of the fishworkers that discovered its destructive nature for the fish resources. But when it was brought to the notice of the scientists they were not ready to accept them. Then a few scientists who supported the movement gave a scientific explanation for the experience of the fishworkers. Later due to the struggle of fishworkers the government appointed three commissions at different times. All of them had as its members eminent fisheries scientists from Kerala and outside. The commissions recognized that mechanised trawling and purse-seining were destructive for marine wealth, and that they should be curbed. The third commission recommended ban on monsoon trawling, which the government did in 1988 and later. Thus the stand taken by fishworkers' movement about mechanisation was vindicated by these scientific reports. "KSMTF got recognition and acceptability before the government due to its scientific base and the presence of scientists," said a fisheries officer.

Many scientists of the fisheries research institutes were forced to accept views of the fishworkers' movement once the reports of the expert commissions appointed by the government were published. It is noteworthy what one fisheries scientist
who represented India in the Food and Agricultural Organisation said, "The attitude and ways of Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute changed due to the fishworkers' movement. Scientists also got awareness about peoples' participation for micro-level planning from KSMTF". If scientists of a pioneering research institute in India changed their attitudes due to fishworkers' movement, it is a telling testimony of the impact of the movement on the scientific community.

D. The Effect of the Fishworkers' Movement on the Public

The fishworkers' movement is said to have played an educative role for the public of Kerala. As revealed in the interviews, people in Kerala were not aware of the pathetic situation of fishworkers, though they were fish consumers. It was the fishworkers' movement which brought out many scientific facts about the fisheries and its mechanisation process. With its ecological implications, the issue of trawling was highlighted so much that a wide spectrum of population came forward to support the movement through various organisations. The results of the interviews support the fact of public support to the fishworkers' movement. There was near unanimity in the opinion of the respondents when 94% of them fully and 5% somewhat agreed with a statement, "Through scientific analysis fishworkers' movement made the public conscious of the problems of fishworkers and of the need of protection of fish resources."
E. The Effect of the Fishworkers' Movement on the Boat Owners

The mechanised boat owners had to respond to the fishworkers' movement. As some of them admitted in the interviews with the researcher, the fishworkers' movement gave inspiration to the mechanised boat owners to get organised and to face the new legal challenges. This was particularly so in the case of joint agitation against deep-sea trawlers. The mechanised sector did not have a national level organisation. It was the National Fishworkers' Forum which brought them together on this issue and formed the national fishworkers' action committee for the struggle against joint venture deep sea fishing. Besides, the boat owners, though grudgingly, became aware of the need of control on mechanised vessels. As one office-bearer of mechanised boat owners' association told the researcher, "We also agree that there should be a seasonal holiday like the ban on monsoon trawling for mechanised fishing. We have disagreement only on its duration and timing." This change of attitude from those who opposed tooth and nail any control on mechanised vessels, could have come only as an effect of the fishworkers' movement.

F. The Effect of Fishworkers' Movement on the Church and Religion

The fishworkers' movement had a great impact on the religions especially on the Catholic church. The reason
was that the fishworkers were deeply religious, and initially the Catholic priests and nuns had a leading role in the movement. Its influence on religion can be seen in three areas—on the Church's concern for the poor, on a new interpretation of Bible and faith, and on the faith of the fishworkers. The constraints of religious aspect of the fishworkers' movement is also given briefly in this section.

The religious dimension of the fishworkers' movement was highlighted by the print media due to the active involvement of Catholic priests and nuns in the movement. Unlike earlier times the priests and nuns were actively participating in hunger-strike, and all other forms of agitations of the fishworkers. This created a stir in the otherwise orthodox Christian community in Kerala. Naturally the question was raised about the reason for such a new phenomenon. As mentioned earlier some media persons attributed this to liberation theology, which, according to them, was the inspiration for the fishworkers' movement. This new trend in theology and the conflict of priests and nuns with the Church hierarchy created a lot of debate in Kerala about the role of the Church and religion for human liberation. The impact of the movement on the Church was expressed in many ways.

Firstly, the fishworkers' movement created awareness in the Christian Church about the need of 'preferential option' for the poor. As one Bishop in his interview with the researcher
The fishworkers' movement opened the eyes of the Church to the problems of the fishworkers. There was criticism that the Church was serving the rich and their interest. Fishworkers' movement, with its ideas of liberation challenged the traditional Church to open itself to the social change for the benefit of the downtrodden.

Secondly, a new understanding and interpretation of Bible and faith began to emerge in the context of the fishworkers' movement. The topics like cross as a consequence of working for the liberation of the poor, justice as an integral part of faith, and 'fast unto death' for the cause of the poor as an expression of supreme love were widely discussed in ecclesiastical and secular circles. In other words, a different model of the church other than the highly institutionalised Church in Kerala was projected. Many groups of youth and students got inspiration from this new vision of the Church to work for social justice. Later, in spite of reservations about the fishworkers' movement and liberation theology, the official Church supported the issue of deep sea fishing, spearheaded by KSMTF and the National Fishworkers' Forum. Kerala Catholic Bishop's Conference (KCBC), the representative body of the Kerala Catholic Church, and Catholic Bishop's Conference of India (CBCI), the representative body of the Catholic Church in India, formally supported the fishworkers' struggle against foreign trawlers, and many coastal dioceses of Kerala took part in the agitations. As one former CPM (L) leader said, "As a
Marxist I considered religion as a class enemy of the proletarian cause. After my contact with the fishworkers' movement I have changed that idea. I found priests and nuns were working for the liberation of the poor as they did in South America. Now I feel that religion can be a force for social change and justice for the working class."

Though this new understanding of religion was mainly in the Catholic Church, it had its repercussions on other Christian Churches and religions in Kerala. Many youth and student organisations of Protestant Churches received inspiration from the fishworkers' movement. As one Protestant student leader said, "The fishworkers' movement helped us to make our faith relevant and meaningful by social commitment and involvement." The wide discussion on liberation theology in secular press in Kerala had a positive impact on all other religions.

Thirdly, fishworkers' movement effected changes in the religious attitude of the fishworkers. Earlier they used to follow the dictates of the church even with regard to the choice of political parties in elections, and the Church was known to be pro-Congress. The leftist ideology of the fishworkers' movement made the fishworkers critical of political parties and the Church leaders. They started making their own choice of the political parties irrespective of the reactions from the Church leaders. As one Catholic priest said, "The fishworkers' movement has helped the process of secularisation among the
Catholic fishworkers in Kerala." As a result of this critical attitude to religion they attained certain 'religious maturity', as one parish priest remarked, and were able to solve many of their problems by themselves without depending on the priests like in olden times. The changes among the Catholic fishworkers had its indirect influence on the Hindu and Muslim fishworkers also. That is why the respondents of the interview mostly fishworkers acknowledged their change of attitude to religion, when 45% of them fully and 33% some what agreed with the statement, "As a result of fishworkers' movement, the fishworkers acquired a critical approach to religious leaders, beliefs and practices."

Some respondents of the interviews were critical about the negative impact of the fishworkers' movement on religious faith. According to them, the movement tried to be secular by transcending religion but perhaps did not succeed because fishworkers were basically religious. The movement was considering religion as a liability and not as an asset. The idea of religion as a liberative force as enunciated by liberation theology was not made use of by the movement. Others countered this argument by saying that KSMIF was a secular movement and so religion could not be brought in especially due to its communal overtones. Secondly, according to them the need of the hour was a secularising process to liberate the fishworkers from their blind allegiance to religion and
religious authorities. That is why some others said that the fishworkers' movement kept a tactical distance and independence from religion.

Conclusion

Social change is an important component of a social movement. The change can take place among members of the movement and in the wider society. As an effect of the fishworkers' movement, both these types of changes took place. There was a comprehensive change touching the socio-political and cultural life of the fishworkers. Change also took place in the wider society represented by the government, political parties, fisheries scientists, the public, the boatowners and the religions. Since the fishworkers' movement representing the most marginalised group in Kerala, was a source of change in many sections of the society, it was a significant social phenomenon in Kerala.

From the above analysis a question could be asked as to what type of a social change the fishworkers' movement brought about. There were several legal changes touching the basic policy of the government with regard to fisheries and its structures. They were radical and 'middle-level' changes in the socio-economic structure of the society. Besides, there were structural changes in the distribution of power, in rights and privileges, in values and behaviour pattern of the fishing community. Through these changes the subaltern class were able
to break the power exercised over them by boat owners, political parties, the government and the religious authorities. The result was an increase in the hegemony and strength of fishworkers leading to an experience of equality with other sections of the society. Thus the social change was radical and integral touching all aspects of life. So one can conclude that the fishworkers' movement led to transformative changes and so it was a 'transformative movement'. Fishworkers' movement is a social movement also from the point of view of social change.

In this chapter an attempt was made to show how the fishworkers' movement is a social movement based on the four components of a social movement namely collective action, ideology, strategy and social change. Fishworkers' movement was a collective action with a well-knit state level organisation and collective leadership. It had a well defined and adaptable ideology. It had a systematic strategy with a combination of both confrontational and conciliatory approaches. The effect of the movement was transformative social change in the fishing community and the wider society in Kerala. Thus fishworkers' movement fulfils the four basic components of a social movement, and, therefore, it is a social movement.
Fishworkers' movement can also be classified on various criteria mentioned in the first chapter. Based on the classification on locus, scale and space, fishworkers' movement was a movement of a working class engaged in the occupation of fishing, developed as a regional movement spread throughout the state of Kerala and affiliated to its national organisation called the National Fishworkers' Forum. It could be considered a 'cause group movement' as it worked for social changes in fisheries sector in Kerala. The movement was an 'organisational movement' since its success very much depended on its statewide organisation called KSMTF. Based on strategies, it was predominantly a non-violent movement. It was also a secular movement comprising of fishworkers of all major religions, though religious people were actively involved in its functioning.