In an attempt to study working class images of society and its correlates, especially the role of political ideology, the present study has been conducted among the workers of Tamil Nadu and Kerala which have different political traditions. The findings of the study are presented hereunder.

Most of the respondents in both the samples of Tamil Nadu and Kerala think that classes exist in society. While most of the Kerala workers perceive two-class system, the predominant pattern for the Tamil Nadu workers is three-class system. Conceptions of multiple classes are found more among the Tamil Nadu workers.

The 'capitalist/working' class labels are used mostly by the Kerala workers and the 'upper/middle/ lower' class labels by the Tamil Nadu workers. The 'middle' class is, of course, thought of by a few of the Kerala workers, but along with the 'capitalist' and 'working' classes. Mention of 'working' class is much more in Kerala and much less in Tamil Nadu. However, there is a general agreement among both the Tamil Nadu and Kerala workers that money and wealth are the most important criteria of an individual's class membership.
Most of the Tamil Nadu workers see themselves as 'middle' class whereas most of the Kerala workers see themselves as 'working' class. For the Tamil Nadu workers the class structure is open for mobility. The Kerala workers' conceptions of the class structure do not promise such mobility. It is obvious that it is more probable to think of mobility when there are more number of classes than when there are only two. Thus, the Tamil Nadu workers, for most of whom there are three or more classes, think the class structure is open. On the other hand, the Kerala workers, for most of whom there are only two classes, think the class structure is closed. Even for those among the Kerala workers who could think of class mobility, it is possible only through collective action, as said by one-fourth of them; for another 15.00%, only traitors can go up into another class. Thus, for most of the Kerala workers individual class mobility is either not possible or possible only for traitors or possible only through collective action which implies rather collective mobility.

All the three kinds of images—deference, proletarianism, privatisation—are present under both the traditions but in varying degrees. The deferential and privatised images exist more among the Tamil Nadu workers than among the
Kerala workers. The proletarian image is found more among the latter. In both the samples, the old and married workers are more deferential than the young and the unmarried and education is negatively associated with deference. Religion, Caste and income have no bearing on deference. Those who were born and brought up in rural communities are more deferential, but this is true only for the Tamil Nadu workers; the rural-urban background does not make any difference for the Kerala workers. This also holds good when the rural-urban background of present place of residence is considered. Those belonging to joint families are more deferential. Again this influence of family type is found only among the Tamil Nadu workers. Worklife span and length of service in the present organization are positively associated with deference. This should be seen along with the age factor which is found to be positively associated with deference. Migrants are less deferential than the non-migrants. Old age, low level of education, rural background, joint family and geographical stability are traditional characteristics and they are positively associated with deference. This confirms Lockwood's (1966) assertion that the deferential
workers are traditional workers. However, it is noteworthy that two sources, namely, rural background and joint family, are no more significant in shaping the deferential image among the Kerala workers.

As far as political affiliation is concerned, in both the samples the non-members are more deferential and the communist party members are less deferential. While the non-communist party members in Tamil Nadu share a high level of deference with the non-members, those in Kerala have relatively a low level of it. In the Kerala sample where there is complete unionization, the communist union members are less deferential than the non-communist union members. When occupational and intergenerational mobility are taken into consideration, the non-mobile respondents are less deferential than the upward mobile respondents both in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Those who perceive that they have better social position compared to their fathers are more deferential than those who do not think so. Those of the Kerala respondents who see the feasibility of class mobility are more deferential than those who see closure in it. There is no such difference found among the Tamil Nadu respondents. In both the samples, support for private property is positively associated with deference.
The proletarian image is found mostly among the Kerala workers, especially among the young. The female workers in Kerala are relatively less proletarian than their male counterparts; however, these female workers are more proletarian than the Tamil Nadu workers who are exclusively males. As to rural-urban background in terms of brought up as well as present place of residence, the urban are relatively more proletarian than the rural, but only in Tamil Nadu. Rural-urban background does not have any influence on the proletarian image of the Kerala workers. Those from nuclear families tend to be proletarian, but only in the Tamil Nadu sample; there is no such difference in Kerala. Worklife span and length of service in the present organization have no relationship with proletarianism of the Tamil Nadu workers. In Kerala, those who have only up to 10 years of worklife as well as service are more proletarian than others. It has already been noted that the young workers in Kerala are more proletarian than others.

In both the samples members of the communist party as well as communist union are more proletarian than others. The non-members as well as the non-communist party members in Kerala manifest relatively a higher level of proletarianism
compared to their counterparts in Tamil Nadu. Even the non-communist union members in Kerala are more proletarian than the communist union members in Tamil Nadu. Essentially, union membership is different from party membership. The communist unions in Tamil Nadu have mostly accommodated with either non-communist party members or non-party members who might have instrumental orientation in joining the communist unions. However, the non-union members in Tamil Nadu (there are six) are relatively more proletarian than others. It has already been noted while discussing deference that the six non-union members in Tamil Nadu are less deferential. These six workers may be called unorganized radicals sceptical about trade unionism.

Though there are very few, those who have experienced downward occupational mobility in Tamil Nadu tend to be more proletarian whereas in Kerala occupational mobility has no influence on proletarianism. In both the samples, intergenerational mobility is in no way related to proletarianism. It is rather their perceived social mobility which seems to be important; those who think that their social position has not gone up compared to their fathers tend to be more proletarian. Those in Tamil Nadu who see closure in class mobility are more proletarian than those who think class mobility possible. There is no such
difference found in Kerala. It has always been argued by the convergence theorists that open access to higher positions would allow able and ambitious people to rise from lower social positions, acting as a safety valve that would reduce the likelihood of revolutionary collective action. Thus, those in Tamil Nadu who have promotion chances are less proletarian than those who do not have. However, just as in the case of possibility of class mobility discussed above, this difference does not hold for the Kerala workers. Again, those who see the possibility of getting their sons into professional courses are less proletarian, but only in Tamil Nadu and not in Kerala. Support for private property and proletarianism are negatively associated.

Privatisation is found higher among the Tamil Nadu respondents than among the Kerala respondents. In both the samples, the middle-aged workers are relatively more privatised than others. The young workers of the Tamil Nadu sample join with the middle-aged in this respect whereas in Kerala the old workers do so. The more one is educated, the more one tends to be privatised; but this is true only for the Tamil Nadu sample. There is no ground for the assumption that the more one earns the more one
will be privatised; in both the samples income has no association with privatisation. The assumption that the urban workers will have a privatised image of society is also not supported by the present study; rural-urban background (of both brought up and present place of residence) has no bearing on privatisation. The migrant workers are supposed to have a weak network of kinship and neighbourhood and a low participation, if not complete seclusion, in collective activities and rituals of communal solidarity. But the migrants in both the samples are no more privatised than the non-migrants; as a matter of fact, the migrants of the Kerala sample are less privatised than the non-migrants, though the difference is not statistically significant. Nuclear families are believed to be based on intimacy and emotional attachment, free of wider kinship ties and more geographically and socially mobile. Thus family-centredness, characteristic of nuclear families, is supposed to be associated with privatisation. It is found in the present study that those belonging to nuclear families are more privatised than those belonging to joint families. However, this holds true only for the Tamil Nadu sample and not for the Kerala sample. In terms of the overall worklife span and length of service in the present
organization, those who have gone through a short term are more privatised than others, but only in Tamil Nadu. In Kerala those who have a short term are less privatised than others.

In both the samples, the non-party members are more privatised and the communist party members are less privatised. While the non-communist party members in Tamil Nadu are more privatised, those in Kerala are less privatised coming close to the communist party members. Communist union members are less privatised in Kerala but not in Tamil Nadu. In the Kerala sample, those who have experienced occupational and intergenerational mobility tend to have privatised image. The Tamil Nadu workers, who are more privatised than the Kerala workers, do not differ among themselves because of occupational or intergenerational mobility. In both the samples, those who think that they have a better social position compared to their fathers are more privatised than those who do not think so. Among the Tamil Nadu workers, those who see that people in general are moving from one class to another are more privatised; however, this is not found among the Kerala workers. Those who think that they can get their sons into professional courses are more privatised than
those who do not hope so. Again, this is found only among the Tamil Nadu workers and not among the Kerala workers. In both the samples, support for private property is positively associated with privatisation.

Invariably all the respondents in both the samples have mobility aspirations to go up and to bring their children to higher positions. It has been suggested by Lockwood (1966) that for the privatised worker work is a necessary evil to fulfill various other needs. This is not supported by the present study. In fact, no one in the two samples has said that work is a necessary evil. Moreover, the money model is not only held by the privatised workers but also by the deferential and proletarian workers. For almost all of them (93.33% in the Tamil Nadu sample and 98.67% in the Kerala sample), the basic criterion of class membership is money. As Moorhouse (1976:474) says, "Instead of being an alternative to and, indeed, the antithesis of power, it (money) is rather the way inequalities of power and status can be succinctly symbolized or expressed".

In three images—deference, proletarianism, privatisation—are not found mutually exclusive; they overlap on each other in certain respects. The tendency of overlapping is more
likely between deference and privatisation. In both the samples, the deferential workers share the privatised characteristics of money-mindedness and unsociability. The deferential workers in Kerala have, furthermore, the privatised characteristics of consumption consciousness and lack of organizational commitment. The deferential workers in Tamil Nadu have no consumption consciousness; on the other hand, they have organizational commitment. Thus, the convergence between deference and privatisation is more prominent in Kerala than in Tamil Nadu. The privatised workers in both the samples attribute legitimacy to the power exercised by the superiors, which is characteristic of deference. What the deferential workers have accepted from privatisation, that is money-mindedness and unsociability, have been rejected by the proletarian workers. What the proletarian workers share with the privatised are belief in money power and lack of organizational commitment. While the privatised workers believe in money power and are money-minded, the proletarian workers believe in money power but are not money-minded. This shows that the proletarian workers have a negative attitude towards the role of money. Some of the deferential and privatised workers also have class awareness which is characteristic of proletarianism.
The two samples markedly differ in their conceptions of class structures: the Tamil Nadu workers largely have either deferential or privatised image and the Kerala workers largely have proletarian image. The relationships of these three images with the various socioeconomic variables have shown that some of them can be said to determine these images. However, it is noteworthy that while there are certain variables crucial in determining the images among the Tamil Nadu workers, they have no relevance for the Kerala workers. Regardless of the differences in these variables, the Kerala workers tend to have the proletarian image. It follows that the difference in the images between the Tamil Nadu and Kerala workers cannot be seen solely as a consequence of the socioeconomic characteristics or personal mobility experiences. Of course, perceptions regarding social mobility do have a meaningful relationship with the proletarian image of the Kerala workers. However, it is only perception- the subjective element- and not the actual experience. It can be recalled here that actual occupational mobility and intergenerational mobility do not have any bearing on the proletarian image of the Kerala workers.
As the difference between the Tamil Nadu and Kerala workers' images does not seem to be a function of other factors, it can be reasoned out (following Parkin 1971) that it may be a consequence, if only partly, of certain ideological influences, especially of a political kind. An interpretation of the working class images of society in this manner has been given by Scase (1974) who studied conceptions of class structure among the workers of England and Sweden and concluded that the latter's conceptions were influenced by the Social Democratic ideology. It has been found in the present study that the communist party as well as union members in both the samples have a higher level of proletarianism than others. However, in general, not only the communist party members but also the non-communist and non-party members in Kerala are relatively more proletarian than their counterparts in Tamil Nadu. It is this which renders that the Kerala workers are notably more proletarian (There are only 22.00% who are communist party members in the Kerala sample). This embracement of the proletarian image by the non-communists in Kerala is indicative of the position of the communist ideology in Kerala. With the political success of the communist party during the past three decades, the communist ideology has become the dominant political
assumed power in the Kerala State government, provided with the state apparatuses, the party could disseminate its ideology more effectively which could permeate even the opponents of the party.

When asked whether he believed in God, an INTUC (Indian National Trade Union Congress affiliated to the Congress-I party) unionist in the Kerala sample spontaneously came out: "I do not believe in God. But you ask the communists and see what they say. Most of them are God-believers. They are not sure whether communism and God-belief go along the same way; but I am sure, they do not go. I am the real communist. They are communists only by name". In fact, many of the communist party members said that they believed in God. What is noteworthy here is the permeation of the communist ideas, however vague they are, even into the non-communist sections of society.

In Tamil Nadu, the popular Dravidian movement's ideology is basically regionalistic and has the overtones of ethnic identity of the Tamils as a homogeneous society. The Dravidian movement is attributed with 'Cultural revivalism' by some critics. Thus, a pride in the past and the old order of society is deep-rooted in the ideological core of the Dravidian movement. Economic
inequality when expressed often takes the form of 'rich and poor'. Mention of 'working' class is there, but the capitalist-working class antagonism is not fundamental in its popular versions as it is in Kerala. The lower level of proletarianism and the predominance of deference and privatisation in Tamil Nadu can be understood in the this background, when political ideology is considered. In terms of the meaning-systems as provided by Parkin (1971), Tamil Nadu is marked by the 'dominant value system' whereas Kerala is marked by the 'radical value system'.

The proletarian class consciousness has been given in terms of hierarchical levels by Mann (1973) and Giddens (1973). Many studies have shown that workers, in spite of varying in other respects, have the lower level of consciousness, ie class awareness. The present study has also found that the deferential and privatised workers also have class awareness. Hence, it is one of the areas where overlappings occur. It can be assumed that overlappings may occur at the lower levels of the images. If we are able to sort out the dimensions of an image in a hierarchical order, then we can test at which levels the overlappings occur. If they occur at the lower levels, then the higher level dimensions can be taken as the distinguishing features of the images. Indeed, an attempt
was initially made to arrange the items of the three images in hierarchical orders using Guttman's scalogram analysis. The responses of fifty randomly selected respondents from among the two samples were used in the scalogram analysis. The results showed that it was not possible to arrange the items of deference and privatisation in hierarchical orders as successfully as those of proletarianism (The scalograms are presented in the Appendix). This shows that deference and privatisation are not as uni-dimensional as proletarianism. Further researches may be conducted with an eye on this aspect of the problem and specify the overlapping areas in terms of hierarchical levels.

The present study has its own limitations as a time-bound survey research. It is difficult to take all the possible variables into consideration, which may require more time and resources and perhaps other methods besides interview. The general representativeness of the samples covered in the present study is limited to a particular kind of industry in particular locations at a particular period of time, and it is difficult to make any wide generalizations. More studies covering larger samples in different social settings marked by different political ideologies can throw more light on this aspect. The results of the present study suggest
that although workers' images of society may be shaped by their socioeconomic background, and other immediate social experiences, they are also influenced by the interpretations generated by wider social processes, especially of a political kind.