CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

Farmers movements, both political and independent are important to the modern day social and political decision making processes. In the context of national and international pressures all social movements including farmers movements are crucial to the national agenda setting. For over a century social analysts and peasantologists have been predicting the disappearance of the small farmers as capitalism advances. However the peasants have refused to disappear and today they exercise tremendous influence in the civil society. They have learnt to come together in the background of marginalization. The birth and the organizational activities of the INFAM in Kerala are significant for these reasons. It also proves the theoretical fact that whenever there is a crisis in the agricultural front it will bring about a new farmers movement. The INFAM, an independent farmers movement is the product of such a crisis.

Although the farmers movement in the state could make some gains after independence like ‘land for the landless’ through land reform legislations, the 1990’s brought about new problems for them. Now it is a question of survival and remunerative prices for their products. The farmers face stiff competition from WTO and ASEAN countries. The liberal economic policies adopted by the Central government work against the dreams of the farmers in general. The developmental aspirations of the state too has resulted in the conversion of agricultural land into industrial areas.

The INFAM has adopted a two fold method to gain the attention of the state to protect the farmers. Firstly, it has led Gandhian model agitations
against the state government, for example, boycotting soft drinks like Coca cola and Pepsi cola. Secondly, it has lit upon utility oriented innovative ideas like producing soaps and detergents from coconut oil.

In Kerala the farm sector has become the most risky field of engagement as the prices of farm produces are open to fluctuations. Farmers have been committing suicide in the two districts of Wayanad and Idukki. The lack of remunerative prices and the difficulty in repaying loans along with shortage of seeds and water and increasing prices for chemical fertilizers have all put the farmers to much difficulty. They find it difficult to comprehend the changing nature of social and economic structures.

**General Features of Farmers Movement**

Farmers movements have played a major political role in influencing national politics in the twentieth and twenty first centuries. In many of the countries farmers organizations have been instrumental at different moments in setting national agenda. For example in India farmers and their movements play decisive role in general elections. Also the National Budget of 2013 and annual budgets of Kerala in 2011, 2012, 2013 are pro-farmers budgets.

There are both objective and subjective reasons for the prominence of farmers movement today. In the first place, neo-liberal policies have had a pincer effect on the farmers. They facilitate the importation of heavily subsidized food and other agricultural products, driving down agricultural prices, and bankrupting peasant produces. While the drive to accumulate foreign exchange leads the neo-liberal regimes to encourage the expansion of the agro-export sector, resulting in the expulsion of peasant produces it means not only unemployment or decline in income, but loss of place of
residence, community and family ties. It means uprooting, a deeply alienating experience. The threats posed by neo-liberalism are especially profound in rural areas as there are no alternative sites of habitation and employment. The destructive effects of neo-liberalism are more strongly experienced in the countryside than in the city.

Over the past sixty years, the peasantry has re-emerged playing a central role in changing regimes, determining national agenda, leading struggles against international trade agreements, as well as establishing regional and local bases of power. In many countries the coalition of landless farm workers, small family farmers and peasants has been central to national struggles against neo-liberal regimes. Farmers movements have detonated larger struggles, activating urban classes, trade unions, civic groups and human rights organizations. Data collected from different parts of world over the past sixty years demonstrate that farmers and other rural movements have become increasingly central to any process of social change and resistance to neo-liberals. Scholars on the farmers have emphasized their “local” “parochial” or sectoral interests as opposed to national, universalistic and class interests.

Most farmers movements are directly engaged in one or another form of political action. Majority of the peasant leaders think and act to accumulate political power and hopefully, to transform, share or take state power.

Farmers movements vary in their attitude towards direct action and electoral strategies. In some cases, the movements modify their strategies, depending on external circumstances and internal changes. Generally farmers movements rely mostly on direct action strategies – occupying large estates
(Chengara incident), blocking highways (Mullaperiyar incident), taking over government offices (occupation of Agricultural Minister office by INFAM leaders on April 2002). Electoral activities take various forms; creating new political organizations or supporting an existing political party or coalition fronts (support given by INFAM to LDF in 2001 and support to UDF in 2006). A careful analysis of the farmers movements experience with different political strategies leads to the conclusion that direct action methods have been far more effective and positive than electoral strategies in securing short and medium term peasant goals.

Nowadays a new peasant leadership has emerged. It is much better educated, politicized and independent of the influence of urban cities and party machines than past peasant leaders. Unlike the older urban trade union and their leaders who have been bureaucratized and become embedded in tri-partial commissions, the new farmer’s movements have emerged on the basis of independent class ethnic struggles and religious consideration which challenge trade agreements, between the local ruling classes and imperial state.

The upsurge of farmer’s movements during last three decades is uneven in time and place. Major farmer’s movements have passed through high and low moments of organization and activity. Likewise the relative strengths of the movements vary greatly from country to country depending on the nature and policies of the state. Given this complex picture, it is difficult to make universal generalization about the farmer’s movements at any particular time and place.

Historical experiences over the last sixty years indicate that the most effective alliances and actions have involved ‘horizontal coalition’ engaged in extra parliamentary actions. While horizontal coalition between peasant
and urban organization have produced positive results they were not easy to come by.

Many critics have written off the strategic role of farmers and minimized their political impact because their political activity contributes a small percentage of the GNP (General National Politics) or political activity. Farmer’s movements have led the struggle against fermigcation of food crops. Farmer’s movements have played a decisive role in forcing the resignation of a series of corrupt bureaucrats who were responsible for impoverishing the country, giving away natural resources and strategic sectors of the economy to foreign multinationals and indebting the country. They have also led the fight against genetically modified and chemically based agriculture promoted by Monsanto in favour of ecologically sound cultivation.

The relative strength of the farmers movements vary greatly from one political system to another, depending on the nature and policies of the political system. We can have three types of peasant movements based on their impact on national politics and socio economic policy. At the apex level, there are some farmers movements which are engaged in long term, large scale struggles which try to overthrow regimes. At the middle levels of organization and struggle there is militant and active moments which have regional power and which would be stronger if they had not suffered severe repression. At the bottom end there are peasant movements which are less active and have lesser influence on the political problems of the country.

The power of farmers has been most manifest as a negation of existing rulers and has been very much weak in affirming a strategy of taking over power. Farmers have carried out significant protests and even achieved
reform but lacking state power, these reform have been reversed when the movements ebbed.

From Indian perspectives over the past quarter of a century farmers and their organization have succeeded in asserting their presence in the social and political processes. The revolutionary potentiality of the farmers have increased in the present than in the past. In India all the peasant movements engage in local, national and even international struggles and campaigns. Local struggles over immediate grievances like human rights violation become the basis for national mobilizations and international solidarity of campaigns. Most of the farmers movements have built local basis of political hegemony as a springboard to national power and challenges for state power. However both the micro and macro conception of peasant struggles are mechanical and one sided, and fragmented perception of dialectical activity in which farmers movement combine local and national struggles, social and political demands, class and ethnic consciousness. One cannot extrapolate these patterns of peasant activity from specific times and places. Peasants have often played a crucial and decisive role in India in accelerating the pace of national liberation and transformation. Jawaharlal Nehru said “peasantry turned to congress and gave it its real strength.”

The Indian farmers and their movements appeared as a formidable force against foreign domination ever since the first intrusion by the British in to the agrarian relation in India through the acquisition of Diwani rights of Bengal by the East India Company in 1765. The great Fakir and Sanyassi rebellion that brokeout during 1772-1789 was India’s first agrarian and national revolt after British had subjugated the land. The role of the struggle for agrarian reform is the main axis of the movement for national liberation. The farmers the most numerous class in the countries of East had forced the
main driving force of the national liberation movement which overthrew the colonial system of imperialism. Its participation in the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggles, the powerful support which it gave to the revolutionary force ultimately ensured the victory of the National Revolution in India.

In India more than fifty percent of people engage themselves in agricultural or allied activities. The farmers if united, can exercise their influence on the government. If now they stand deprived and face a set up which continuous to be exploitative and oppressive, it has none else to blame than itself. In India farmers are a divided house and the common ground of agriculture does not necessarily provide a base for unity of interests and objectives. The most important fact is that the farmers indeed do not form a class. The farmers in India is historically divided into castes which in the changed context often entertain conflicting political and economic interest and aspirations. Farmers movement in the past were strong only in those areas where the land was concentrated in the hands of a small minority and vast masses of peasantry were tenants and sharecroppers. With the abolition of zamindari and imposition of land ceiling the situation changed and henceforth any widespread farmers movement was not possible along the earlier lines except in certain states and areas where big land lords continued to exist in spite of land ceiling laws.

In the context of commercial farming there has been mass movements of peasants in different pockets of the country. The movements revolve round the demand of remunerative products, particularly for the commercial crops. In some parts of the country farmers have agitated for writing off loans or reducing the irrigation and electricity charges. These agitations are regional and occasional which are led by the richer section of the peasantry. A section of the marginal and small farmers may join the organization or participate in
the demonstration because to some extent they are also hit by the falling price of their produce and rising cost of inputs. Any how the farmers at the village level remains divided as before. It is to be noted that they are divided along the caste lines in the village and in the region or state. They are also divided along their political affiliation everywhere. Their alliance is shifting and changing and governed basically by the caste ideology. There is always a conflict of interest between the employer farmer and the farm labourer as the employer farmer has the tendency of extracting more work with minimum of wage. Rich farmer is also urban oriented. These rich farmers have the means and aspirations to urbanize. They also take interest in political activity. The leadership of the new farmers movement is urban oriented though rural based. They have greater stake in farming and would join or lead an agitation in order to pressurize the government which cannot afford to be harsh to the farmers folk.

The farmers’ movement in Kerala has a glorious tradition of having conducted a relentless struggle against feudal oppression and has played a leading role in the freedom movement. One of the important features of the movement was that it was able to unite the entire working farmers in this task. The very history of Kerala is the history of farmers movements. Farmers movements accelerated national movements and social reform movements. The prime occupation of Keralites was always agriculture. It is the emergence of socialist movement which provided impetus to farmer’s movement in the state. Farmers are the real strength of majority of political parties in the state. So they try to influence them sometimes by propaganda and sometimes by piecemeal legislation. The existence of powerful farmers movements are a nightmare for Politicians. So they try to block the growth of independent farmer’s movements. Majority of farmers movements in Kerala
are either directly or indirectly connected with political parties. To a certain extent they are the “servant’s of political parties. As a result the bargaining of power of the farmers movements is very weak in Kerala. The “syllabus” of a good number of farmers movement are prepared and executed by political parties. Political parties keenly watch the performance of farmer’s movements in the state. The growth of powerful independent farmers movements are blocked by political parties. Farmers are the real basis of rightist political parties of Kerala and Powerful independent farmer’s movements will negatively affect the destiny of such kind of political parties. Since the Political participation and political consciousness are very high in Kerala, majority of farmers have a clear political view. The emergence of powerful independent farmer’s movement is a unique phenomenon in Kerala.

Farmer’s struggle in Kerala

The very name Kerala has an agricultural significance. Kera means coconut. Kerala is the land of “Keras”. Agriculture is the life breath of Malayalam speaking people. The first known native peasant revolt that took place in Kerala was the Kurichiar revolt of 1812 I.C, just two hundred years ago. Then, it was Ayyankali, the champion of the backward communities who spearheaded the most important revolt in 1917. The world witnessed a great economic crisis in 1930s. The world economic depression affected very badly the farmers of Kerala. The economic depression and the arrogant behaviour of the colonial masters accelerated the process of mobilization of farmers along with other sector of the society. The formation of Kolecherry Karshaka Sangam in 1956 was a historical event in the history of farmers movements in Kerala. The Pattini Jatha which was organized by Karshaka Sangam under the captaincy of A.K. Gopalan to protest against foreign rule was a glorious event. The Kayyoor incident of 1943 revealed the vigour and
revolutionary outlook of farmers movement in the state. This farmer’s movement made revolutionary changes in the agricultural field and in agrarian relations. It is an undisputable fact that the children of the soil gained their due place in the democratic process of country. The origin of the national movement and independence struggle itself is in agrarian distress. Among the Indian states, Kerala has the credit of having passed the first comprehensive Land Reform Act in 1957. This was the first fruit of farmers struggle in the state.

The early years of nineteenth century witnessed a number of farmers struggle in different part of the Kerala. The most prominent among them were Pazhassi Riots of Malabar, Riots of Veluthampi Dalava of Travancore and Riots of Paliathachan in Kochi. There were anti-British and anti-Governmental agitations initiated by local kings. Agricultural distress was the fundamental cause for these revolts. The reason behind Veluthampi Dalava riots was the agrarian dissatisfaction over the Land Reform Act passed by British government. Kurichiar Revolt (1797-1812) was against the practice of levying land tax in the form of money. The background of Malayali Memorial Agitation of 1891, was the agricultural distress in Travancore region. Mappila Rebellion (1921) is the mother of peasant uprising in Kerala. The agrarian distress is chief reason behind Mappila Rebellion. A series of Mappila uprisings against both Hindu land lords and the British occurred throughout the nineteenth century and culminated finally in the greatest sustained armed revolt to breakout in Malabar in the first quarter of twentieth century. With the independence of India, different political parties organized farmer’s movements for themselves. The failure of political parties and politicized farmer’s movements paved way for the origin of independent farmer’s movement in the state. The further the evil
effects of new economic policy of the 1990’s paved the way for the birth of independent farmer’s movement in the state

Kerala is blessed with a number of farmers movements. Farmers movements in the state may be classified in to two, i.e., political farmers movements and apolitical farmers movements. Political farmers movements are led by partial political parties and they are working in accordance with programmes and policies of the parental political party. They have to blindly support the policies of the concerned party even if they are anti-farmer in spirit. Independence of opinion and action are alien to these farmer’s movements. They are only silent observers when their parental political party taken anti peasant policies. The two important political parties namely Indian National Congress and Kerala Congress claim themselves to be the party of farmers. Kisan Sabha, the peasant wing of Communist Party of India (Marxist) conducted a number of revolutionary agitations for the cause of farmers in the state. The Morazha incident, Elleringi agtation, Kayyoor agitation, Karivalloor agitation, Kavumbai agtation, Punnapra-Vayalar agtation were the most prominent among them. The Kisan Sabha succeeded in uniting dissatisfied farmers of Kerala through these agitations. As a result the common people came to be influenced by socialistic parties. This is the major factor which culminated in the installation of first elected Communist government in the state in 1957. There are a number of independent movements in the state. A critical analysis of these independent movements revealed that they are well structured in comparison with political farmer’s movements. They entirely stand for the cause of farmers. They aim at the integral development of farmers in the state. A good number of farmer oriented political parties envisage a potential threat to their existence in these movements. Naturally these political parties keep a negative attitude towards
such movements. Majority of independent farmers movements originated in the background of new economic policy which was launched in 1991 in India. The most prominent among them are Farmers Relief Forum (F.R.F.), Karshaka Vedi, Karshaka Raksha Samithi, Kuttanadu Farm Association, Upper Kuttanadu Farmers Association, Palaghat Farmers Association, Kerala Farmers Federation, Kerala State Farmers Congress, Kuttanadu Development Samithi, INFAM etc. These movements promote and propagate the idea of sustainable agriculture which protects soil, water and air. They also stand for bio-fertilization. They are ardent exponents of the practice of mixed crops and food security.

Even though majority of these movements have lost their past glory they have made a remarkable imprint in agricultural scenario of the state. The problems of farmers are highlighted once more through the efforts of these movements. Political parties now cannot overlook the problems of farmers. The Farmers of Kerala have regained their past pivotal position.

INFAM is one among them with all Kerala relevance. INFAM is the sun in galaxy of independent peasant movements in the state. Small scale farmers of the state expected a redemption for farmers through the birth of INFAM. The birth of INFAM can be attributed to a spontaneous farmers movement on the part of the small farmers in Kerala who were adversely affected by the introduction of new economic policies in India by 1990s. The neo liberal reform measures crippled the farmers folk in the state. In Kerala there are a large number of small scale farmers with small agricultural holdings. They themselves till the land and cultivate it. The important products are rubber, coconut, coco, cardamom, cinnamon etc. But unfortunately the yield is not up to the expectation. The cultivation expenses outweigh the yields. The increasing cost of cultivation compelled them to take bank loans.
But repayment has turned into a nightmare. So some of them has committed suicide to have eternal peace. At this pathetic situation there were no good Samaritans. The Central and state governments expressed their helplessness. The political parties spoke much but with minimum action. It is these factors, which paved the way for the origin of INFAM in Kerala.

Within short span of time INFAM illuminated in the galaxy of farmers movements in the state. The programme and policies of INFAM are excellent. The vision of creating a joint society ensuring dignity and sustainability of life was a new gospel for the aggrieved farm community. The commitment to integrate rural development, livelihood security and sustainable development increased the relevance of INFAM. The aim of establishing an equalitarian and just society through ecologically sensitive development and people based micro level planning attracted the attention of the entire farmers community in the state. The objective of advocating the cause of the last to come first was something revolutionary. These innovative programmes and policies of INFAM increased the charm of INFAM. The mission of enhancing the quality of life, especially that of farmers, women and children and other marginalized communities through decentralized institution building and participating development process and application of sustainable technologies respecting environment, culture, and heritage made INFAM an independent farmer’s movement par excellence. The speciality of INFAM is that it is a farmer’s movement of the farmers, by the farmers and for the farmers. But majority of farmers movements are movement of the political leaders, for the party and by the party. The creation of warehouses, network of the collection centres, processing, conservation and trading of commodities, promotion of exporting and obtaining bank loan for deposited commodities of farmers have given new hope to the farming communities in
the state. The campaign for the production of food crops, propagation of organic farming participatory research in pepper, cardamom and vegetables, agricultural nursery and seed bank are some of the hallmark features of INFAM which separate INFAM from other farmers movements of India. The promotion of vermin culture, organization of farmers co-operatives agro industrial employment generating programmes made INFAM something unique compared with other farmers movements.

**INFAM leads agitations**

The strong theoretical foundation of INFAM enables it to conduct a number of agitations for the cause of farmer’s community in the state. The birth of INFAM itself is the result of such agitations. There was a huge march at Koorachundu in Kannur district on the birthday of Gandhi (October 2, 2000). In Koorachundu, a small village in the northern region of Kerala witnessed some very special type of protests in favour of farmers in crisis. Many thousands of farmers under the leadership of Dr. Antony Kozhuvalan marched together pleading their solidarity, ventured to boycott the imported ‘palm oil’ that caused the disastrous crash of the price of coconut and proclaimed Koorachund, the first “palm oil free village of Kerala”. This event gave enthusiasm for a subsequent and similar demonstration in other parts of Kerala, especially in northern Malabar. In Thiruvambadi another centre of small farmers in north Kerala, thousands of farmers who gathered together promised to boycott the products of multinational like cocoa cola, pepsi-cola and instead vowed to use only locally produced products like tender coconut water as soft drinks. It also pledged to use soaps and detergents made out of coconut oil. Besides, voluntary youth groups launched intensive conscientisation programmes visiting house after house, distributing local products and diffusing the need of valorizing the local
Conclusion before being taken away by the attraction of the foreign that eventually turn to be an instrument of under development and exploitation.

The “Mullaperiyar Dam” across the river of Periyar of Kerala at Thekkady in Idukki District is one of the oldest and most important irrigation projects of Kerala. The Dam, as situated in the border region of Kerala is always a point of controversy between Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu demanded the increase in the height of dam to channel greater amount of water for their irrigation purposes. After verifying the danger hidden in raising the dam’s height, by visiting the dam together with Members of Parliament and Kerala Legislative Assembly, INFAM took initiative to convince the state and central government officials concerned and the common people about the seriousness of the problem. It sent an appeal signed by one lakh farmers to the Prime Minister of India and dispatched 2000 post cards to the President of India, requesting to halt the proposed construction activities. Besides INFAM also joined as a partner in the law suit filed in Supreme Court of India questioning the decision of the Central government to raise the height of the dam. On 19 February 2001, around 5000 farmers of INFAM led a peaceful “Jeevan Raksha March” to the dam. They were arrested and soon released. Another noteworthy incident in the history of INFAM was the participation in Bharath Yathra conducted by veteran farmers leader Prof. Nanchunda Swamy and Mahendra Singh Tikkayath. INFAM gave complete support to the march and conducted awareness in different station during the four days time when the march passed the state of Kerala from 19 to 21 January 2001. Declaration of Farmer’s Rights is another important contribution of INFAM. In 28 March 2001, Dr. George Valiyamattom made the declaration of farmers rights at Kozhikode. This had been widely published by the media in Kerala and it
created a serious impact upon the 2006 Assembly election in the state. The arrest and imprisonment of INFAM leaders brought out the dedication of INFAM towards farmers. For the purpose of alleviating the suffering of rubber farmers in crisis and to encourage the export of rubber from Kerala, INFAM exported 1198 tonnes of rubber. But the promised money was not given to the INFAM. A group of six leaders visited Minister for Agriculture, to demand the unduly delayed subsidy. While sitting in the office in satyagraha was unjustly arrested and jailed by the order of the minister. In 2013 April the INFAM unit of Pala sent an appeal signed by one lakh farmers to Prime Minister of India to take appropriate decision to check the steep fall of prices of agricultural products.

The INFAM and new suggestions

During its short span of activity INFAM has suggested a number of suggestions to revitalize the agricultural scenario in the state. The idea of farmers self help group was suggested by INFAM in 2001 Cochin seminar. Thousands of farmers self help group are actively functioning at the guidance of INFAM. Coconut cultivation is the most cultivated tree in Kerala. But the coconut cultivation is facing several problems like pest infestation, low yield and steep fall in price. INFAM suggested various measures to save the coconut cultivation of the state. The INFAM brought to the attention of the government the defects in collecting kopra (dried coconut) from farmers and the negative impact of palm oil imports. But the government neglected the recommendation of the INFAM. In order to save the farmers INFAM decided to start a Kerala Complex to produce and sell different coconut based products. The foundation stone of INFAM Kerala Complex was laid on 29th May 2002. Another recommendation of INFAM is to start Neera (Tender Coconut Soft Drink). Another important recommendation of
INFAM is to export rubber at a subsidized rate. Ferro-cement tanks to meet the drinking water problem is another important recommendation of INFAM. Having abundance of rain fall during the monsoon which is not properly utilized, INFAM suggested the construction of ferro-cement tanks for the collection and conservation of rain water. The concept of organic poultry farm is another praiseworthy recommendation of INFAM. Besides the promotion of organic chicken farm, INFAM is also promoting whatever livestock raring that helps the all round development of farmers. It has launched and recommended bee keeping and honey collection, fish growing, rearing of pigs, rabbits and goats. Later governments and local self governing bodies put into practice the recommendations of the INFAM.

**INFAM and Gandhian Principles**

The INFAM has accepted the Gandhian principle. It accepts a kind of development already proposed in the 1930’s by Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation. This model is known as ‘Swaraj’. According to Gandhi swaraj is an integral revolution that encompasses all spheres of life. It is the swaraj ideals, though not explicitly declared, that substantiate the manner of action of INFAM and upon which it has built its concept of participatory and sustainable development. Besides INFAM gives utmost importance to the Gandhian principle of non-violence. The advantage and relevance of adopting a method like that of Gandhian non-violence in the multi-religious context of Kerala is very essential to maintain the secular character of a people’s movement like INFAM. The ideals of a person like Gandhi – who could integrate - in a superb way into his vision of life and faith, the best elements of Hindu philosophy and fundamental principles of Christianity is widely accepted and followed. This explains why INFAM too has adopted
the Gandhian model in starting the reawakening of farmers to check the evil effects of globalization.

The methodology of development action of the INFAM is predominantly Gandhian in its style and character. If the ideals of swaraj and ahimsa of Gandhi advocate values like self discipline, moral character and solidarity, denouncing injustices through conscientisation and peaceful protests, and a kind of development that does no harm to man and nature, INFAM follows more or less the same non-violent principles. The priority of INFAM are conscientisation programmes, promotion of simplicity of life and love and respect for environment, promotion of local potentialities, peaceful marches and passive resistances. The boycotting of products of exploiters and enabling poor people to be autonomous and self-sufficient through simple projects appropriate to them that INFAM propagates have their origin in Gandhism. Therefore what INFAM has adopted is a style that harmonises moral values taught by Indian culture with values preached and lived by Gandhi. So INFAM is an everlasting practical example of Gandhism.

The state government and the INFAM

Kerala is predominantly an agricultural state. Majority of laws and programmes proclaimed by various state governments give priority to agricultural sector. The Various budgets of the state governments prove this fact. The INFAM has its own stand for the protection of the rights of farmers. The INFAM is not ready to dilute its objectives for political motives. Majority of the demands of the INFAM were accepted by the succeeding state governments. INFAM stands in favour of farmers pension. The 2013 state budget accepted the concept of farmers pension. The small scale farmers of Kerala are largely benefitted by this new scheme. Another
The demand of INFAM is to write off the loans of the small scale farmers the leaders of INFAM presented a memorandum to the Finance Minister on January 1, 2013. This memorandum consisted a number of demands in favour of farmers in Kerala). The state budget accepted the demand of INFAM and had written off the loans of small scale farmers. INFAM had also argued for the propagation of tender coconut water in the place of coca cola and pepsi cola. Neera drink is obtained by tapping coconut plants. The 2013 Kerala government budget accepted this proposal of INFAM and has declared the proposals to start Neera units in ten districts of Kerala. Accepting the demands of the INFAM the present state government has declared the project of risk insurance in repaying agricultural loan.

**INFAM includes all communities**

The bylaw of INFAM speaks about the secular character of this movement. Bylaws of INFAM article no. 6 says that the aim of INFAM is to organize farmers irrespective of the consideration of their caste, creed and political affiliation in order to inculcate in them the organizational consciousness and to protect their interests by making them to act as a catalyst to create a society based on human values. This bylaw clearly emphasises the secular character of INFAM. The INFAM has always tried to protect its secular character from its very origin. The first Vice Chairman of INFAM Mr. Moydeen Kutti hails from Muslim community. Mr. P.K. Venugopal was selected as the first Secretary of INFAM. He belongs to Hindu religion. Majority of members of INFAM self help groups also come from religions other than Christian community.

The first hypothesis of the study is that the agricultural policies of central and state governments have been often unsatisfactory. No general
development can be achieved without the development of agriculture. The path of development adopted by the Indian state had different consequences. One of the important consequences is that agriculture continues to receive a raw deal in the hands of the governments. The Indian public investment in the agriculture over the last one or two decades has drastically come down. Even the budgetary allocation does not cross two percent of the total budget. The average budgetary allocation for irrigation has remained more or less at 0.35 per cent. It may be noted that the unclear path of development in India has increased the debt of farmers. The anti-agricultural policies of the government has further widened the gap between different sections particularly between the urban and rural areas. Further farmers commit suicide because of anti-agricultural policies of the government. Farmer’s suicide reflects the deep rooted agrarian crisis which is entrenched in the path of neo liberal development policies pursued by the Indian governments. The liberal policies of the Indian government has sharpened the crisis of agrarian economy; it increased rural indebtedness; further marginalised the rural categories and trapped the rural categories in the larger network of global capital through mediation of seeds and new technology. Thus it is proved that the agricultural policies of Indian government are often unsatisfactory.

The second hypothesis is that important political parties of India especially Kerala has failed to protect the interest of farmers. Majority of the political parties have their own peasant wings. The Indian National Congress, the most powerful political party of India does not have a separate peasant wing. It clearly exhibits the lack of commitment of that party towards farmers in India. The famous slogan raised by Lal Bahadur Sastri the well known Congress leader and late Prime Minister was “Jai Jawan and Jai
Kisan”. Even though the leaders of Indian National Congress (INC) claim that it is an organization of farmers, the past experience reveals that it has failed to protect the interest of farmers in the country. Majority of the farmers suicide which are reported from the states are ruled by Indian National Congress (eg. Andhra Pradhesh, Maharashtra, Kerala etc.) The other political parties also follow the same route of congress party. It is these negative attitude of political parties towards farmers that paved way for the birth of independent peasant movements in Kerala. The major political parties of India especially Kerala are now trying to promote the interests of industrialists. Democracy in India has become a playground for growing corruption, criminalization, repression and intimidation of large masses of people. The role of the state in social transformation has been undermined (retreat of the state). As a result, the farmers have started asserting their rights through various types of struggles. So the study proves correctly the hypothesis.

The third hypothesis investigates the relation between globalization and agriculture in India. In the mid 1980’s late Prime Minister Mr. Rajeev Gandhi tentatively began a process of economic liberalization which reached its culmination in 1991. The Indian elite generally welcomed economic liberalization. The new economic policy brought about major changes in the macro economic policy frame work of India’s planned economy.

Through globalization, the agricultural sector in India neither experienced any significant growth subsequent to the initiation of economic reform in 1991, nor did it derive the expected benefits from trade liberalization. As a matter of fact, when compared with the immediate pre-liberalisation period (1980-83-1990-93) agricultural growth in India recorded a visible deceleration during the post-liberalization period (1990-93 to 2003-2007). Agricultural
growth during 1990-93, 2003-2006 reflected the impact of economic reforms on agricultural performance. The most important feature of this period is that agricultural growth decelerated sharply at the all India level. At the all India level the output growth decelerated to 1.74 per cent during 1990-93 to 2003-2006 compared with a growth rate of 3.37 per cent during 1980-83 to 1990-93. In India, there are competing demands on area available for cultivation from increase in rural habitation, urbanization and industrialization. As a result new sown area in the country has registered a rapid deceleration. The globalization initiated during the early 1990s hastened the process of crop diversification from low value food grain to high value non-food grain crops. While globalization promises a consumer’s heaven, it can also dry up his resources in the long run. Globalization has changed the structure of our agriculture. The state of Kerala gives a fine example. Paddy cultivation is dwindling in Kerala, while rubber is getting popular. With almost 70 per cent Indians still living off agriculture as against five per cent in advanced countries, it would be difficult to write off the WTO regime on the farmers who still contribute 25 per cent of the GDP. Thus it is proved and concluded that globalization has a negative effect on Indian agriculture.

The fourth hypothesis enquires about the theoretical cause behind the origin of INFAM. The survey which has been conducted to understand the pulse of Kerala farmers spoke about the incompetency of political parties and farmers movements to protect the interest of farmers. The farmers community of Kerala was seriously affected by the evil effects of globalization. It led to the indebtedness of farmers families. There were practically neither the local nor the state and central governments, political parties or other agencies to render a helping hand to the lives at risk of many thousands of families who depend exclusively on agriculture for their livelihood during this crisis. The
immediate victims of this inescapable agrarian economic crisis are the lakhs of small scale farmers of Kerala. The immediate effect of the new liberal economic policy was a deep economic crisis. The agricultural products witnessed a steep fall in price. The impact of the economic crisis was greater felt by the immigrant farmers of the north Kerala. The repeated appeals made to both state and central governments seeking solution for the problems of farmers remained a cry in the desert. Together with the steep fall in prices of agricultural commodities, the policies of the state and national governments also stand against the interests of farmers. The World Trade Agreement, especially AoA is favourable mainly to developed countries. They often exploit the developing countries under the label of these agreements. It is to be doubted that even the financial help of IMF and World Bank too are leading the farmers of India into slavery. It is this illfeeling and discontentment which led to the establishment of the INFAM. Thus it is proved that the farmers are a discontented lot in Kerala.

The next hypothesis argues that INFAM aims at empowering the farmers of India. The by laws of INFAM Article 6 states that “the very aim of INFAM is to organize farmers irrespective of consideration of their caste, creed and political affiliation in order to inculcate in them the organization consciousness and to protect their interests by making them to act as a catalyst to create a society based on human values. It’s vision is to create a joint society and to ensure quality of life of farmers through sustainable agriculture. Further Article 6 enumerates the 12 objectives of INFAM. The fifth objective is that “make the farmers capable of reacting when problems arise for the farmers anywhere in the country and of facing them unitedly by organizing themselves under the movement. The 10th objective is also worthy of note which states “impair trading, technology and encouragement
to farmers; study the modern farming techniques and start research centres for agricultural improvement. Thus it is proved that INFAM is instituted for the empowerment of farmers.

The INFAM has undertaken a number of practical steps to actualize these objectives. The most important method made use of by INFAM in this realm is the conscientising through various seminars. INFAM has recognized that the major drawbacks of the majority of farmers in India are, their inability to distinguish the unjust structures existing in society, their impossibility to respond to the anti-farmer legislation and to defend their rights against agents of exploitation as they are un-organized. With the objective of making awareness among farmers, INFAM conducted, conscientisation seminars at the local level. Besides the local level seminars INFAM organized a number of international, national and state level seminars. For the purpose of empowering farmers a number of enterprises were initiated by INFAM. INFAM Kera Complex, INFAM Rubber Societies and Exports, INFAM Paddy Collection Centres, INFAM Rice Mill Company, INFAM Coffee Growers Society, INFAM Cashew Collection Society, INFAM Tea Societies and INFAM Tea, INFAM Farmers Shops, INFAM Marketing Network, INFAM Green Bogy, INFAM Publication, INFAM Training and Research Institute, INFAM Self Groups, INFAM Bio-gas Plants, INFAM Bio-gas Lights, INFAM Ferro-Cement Tanks are the some of the major initiatives of INFAM in the process of empowering farmers.

‘Jeevan Raksha March’ to Save Mullapperiyar Dam, participation in Bharat Yathra conducted by Prof. Nanchunda Swamy, Declaration of Farmers Rights on 28th March 2001, INFAM’s Karshaka Munnetta Yathra, the formation of INFAM Anti-Corruption Cell, various interventions of INFAM through media and participation in electioneering etc. are other
endeavours of INFAM to empower the farmers community in India, especially in Kerala.

The last hypothesis of the study is that the efforts of INFAM has improved the prospects of farmers in Kerala. Within a very short period of time after its institution, INFAM as a farmers movement has manifested its positive impact and influence in the social, political and cultural life of the people. Through its initiatives and various developmental activities INFAM could alleviate to a great extent, the sufferings of millions of marginalized farmers in Kerala and aroused all to keep them organized as a force. It has generated the decision in the farmers for simple life, taught a kind of development that respects the nature, enthusiasm for organic farming, for autonomous growth through self help groups and above all the energy to stay together against injustices and exploitation. INFAM also could create in the farmers, the dignity in valorizing the local economy and to appreciate ones own native and indigenous products, before going behind the ‘foreign’ attractions. Though its conscientisation campaigns and by proposing simplicity of life and group action, INFAM promotes formation of conscience and transformation of consciousness by creating a critical consciousness among people as well as fosters a culture of solidarity in a world characterized by growing individualism. The birth of INFAM reflects the birth of farmers solidarity in Kerala. Farmers reorganized their collective strength through the various activities of INFAM. The INFAM also increases the relevance of independent farmers movement in a state where the interests of farmers are negatively articulated by political party affiliated farmers movements. The basic lesson of collective bargaining are taught by the activities of INFAM. The mask of the farmers friendly parties are unveiled by INFAM. INFAM introduced the primary lesson of a ‘farmer friendly
movement.’ The negative and even hostile attitude of some political parties towards the organisation prove this fact. So it can be said that through its intellectual, social and environmental activities, INFAM has increased the relevance of farmers in the state.

The following are the important suggestions to vitalize the working of farmers movement in India especially in Kerala

**The Role of NGOs**

There are numerous social groups keenly interested in uplift work among farmers, but they mostly shy away from promoting class organization for the fear of class conflict and violence. The NGOs can and should take strong initiative in promoting the farmers organization of the rural people.

The following administrative and financial support will smoothen the effective working farmers movements in the state.

(a) To set up a special administrative machinery sympathetic to the rural farmers for the implementation of the various legislative proposals.

(b) To promote steps aimed at changing the antagonistic attitude of the rural administration towards farmers movement and organizations.

(c) To provide financial assistance for peasant organizations. The state should establish a ‘rural farmers fund’ out of which assistance may be made available to all recognized peasant associations, especially for the education and training of members of any carders who will undertake the various leadership tasks.

Farmers association should be increasingly involved in planning and implementation of state sponsored development programmes at grass root level. They should also be encouraged to develop their own programmes
especially for the protection of their rights. Funds for development activities to be initiated by farmers association should be made available from the provision for programmes for small and marginal farmers participation by peasant organization in planning, development and execution of these programmes will not only fill a major gap in poor peasant’s participation in the programmes but will also provide for an initiative by and encouragement to farmers organization and ensure more effective implementation of the programme.

(a) **Research:** We have a lot of enriched agricultural experience. Exchange of these experiences should be of great value. Arrangements should be established for the exchange of national and international experience in developing farmers association.

(b) **Training:** Leadership training should be given. NGO should take initiative. The possibility of setting up a national body whose task should be to organize research training and educational programmes of leadership.

(c) **Education:** A peasant education board should be constituted to provide facilities for undertaking programmes of training and education both for leaders and members of farmers organization.

(d) The mass media of education should be employed to create awareness among the rural farmers.

Through the institution of INFAM, the leaders of INFAM are trying to take up the challenge of establishing a new social order by reawakening and renewing the conscience of farmers. INFAM as a people’s movement, has always been vigilant in placing the human person at the centre of its initiative for farmers in crisis. Against the tendency of globalization that at
times turn to become instrument of dehumanisation in contexts like Kerala, INFAM wants to venture the creation of a more human and just society. It bases itself on the principles of charity and human solidarity, which are also the values of true humanism. In its socio-developmental endeavours, all are taken into account, especially the weak, the oppressed the exploited and the marginalized. By making farmers, protagonists of their own growth, INFAM plays a liberating role for those overburdened and marginalized by the exploiting agents. INFAM is called to actualize such a mission of liberation.

Thus INFAM becomes an ardent propagator of Gandhian philosophy. In the contemporary era, we discuss much the critical question, how much actually is enough for a dignified life. The INFAM testifies that even a low-level economy can create decent life, using fewer resources and utilizing local potentialities, opting for a simpler life by living lightly on earth, creating less waste thereby causing less damage to the planet. It creates a platform where the middle class and the poor meet, share and participate in a decent life. Such a life is less egoistic and oriented for the good of the others, the common good of all men in the world.

There are a few observations that are leveled against INFAM. The first is that as an independent farmers movement it has become a threat to farmers based political parties. As a result, it has acquired the displeasure of politicians and some social organizations. It is for the first time that a movement at all Kerala level, comprising even states outside the Kerala boundary is born to unite all farmers ‘under one banner’. Kerala, being an agrarian state, the influence of farmers upon state politics is very significant. Besides Kerala is a typical model of coalition politics. Here two fronts are having power alternatively. Besides the vote margin between two fronts is very low. In such a context, each vote is crucial. Because of the reason that
they were not united, all political parties could take advantage of them so far by making promises at election time and then forgetting them conveniently. But now that INFAM has organized them, even against those political parties for whom farmers became mere objects of exploitation. INFAM has generated criticism from almost all political groups. The political parties are suspicious of a possible new wave that INFAM could provoke in the Kerala politics, especially by uniting the farmers force, and the majority of small farmers in particular.

Secondly, the political dimension of a farmers movement ‘under the control of Catholic Bishops’ is another reason for controversy. So the critics give a religious colour to INFAM. It is a well known fact that INFAM is born and brought up by the initiative of the Catholic Church in Kerala. Besides, the Christian church leadership is invariably present in encouraging the movement and sustaining its cause. Majority of people who participated in the survey expressed this view.

But when we analyse the nature of the movement more closely it is really very secular. The by laws of INFAM clearly establishes the secular character of INFAM. “A pastoral letter was issued by Catholics Bishops by the name “All the farmers should be organized.” This is the official letter which in time paved way for the origin of INFAM. But this letter lacks any Christian theology or philosophy. The absolute absence of any Christian philosophy makes the letter secular and this proves that the organization is secular.

**Some Concrete Proposals**

Even though the Kerala Christian Church has taken initiative to launch INFAM, it is not founded as an ecclesiastical organisation or ecclesial movement. As defined in its bylaws. It is secular in its character that includes
farmers of all religious denominations. This secular character of INFAM may be maintained and safeguarded. Being a secular movement, INFAM need not be Christianized. In other words, there is the need to de-clericalise INFAM in the pluri-religious context of Kerala. At present, as a national consequence of being a church initiated institution, the catholic clergy tends to dominate the control of INFAM. The search for peaceful co-existence and working together for justice and peace in dialogue and collaboration with other religions and farmers movements is one of the priorities of INFAM in Kerala.

The encouragement that Christian community extends to the Christian farmers endeavour to overcome the economic crisis should not lead to the social alienation of Christian farmers and to religious rivalries. The direct intervention of Bishops for the economic development of Christian community alone can generate competition between various religious groups and may foster religious fundamentalism and communalism. This does not mean that the Christian leaders should be indifferent in facing the problems of farmers. They have the obligation to encourage and strengthen any creative initiative from the part of Christian farmers aimed at the common good and construction of inter-religious fellowship, peaceful and creative collaboration. The most important aim of INFAM should be reawaken public conscience against exaggerated consumerism, poverty, social injustice and marginalization.

The INFAM should contribute to make the movement more human that can illuminate in a noble way the depths and heights – the horizontal and transcendental dimension – of human life. The INFAM should ensure and promote the sense of justice, charity and solidarity in their service.
It seems that the farmers instead of clergy, have the greater opportunity of involvement in the affairs of economy and socio-political sector it is better that the first line task of INFAM should be entrusted to them. Such a role, to be leaders and protagonists, is safer in their hands. This may facilitate declericalisation of INFAM, while the leaders of Christian community can remain as the inspiration and support to the movement by ensuring the ‘inspiring role’ of Christian religion in creating a new social order.

There should also be greater representation from non-christian religions in the governance of INFAM. In the multireligious context of Kerala, the unified action of various farmers from various religions becomes a *sine qua non* to facilitate inter religion dialogue with members of other faith.

In order to resist, the powerful tides of globalization, INFAM needs to transcend mere localism while remaining local. It should be ‘glocalised’ which mean to be globally oriental which remaining authentically local.

Kerala is a deficit state as far as food production is concerned. Kerala has to depend upon other neighbouring states for vegetables. INFAM should take proper steps to propagate its concept of “Kitchen Vegetable Garden”, which cultivates necessary vegetables and fruits. The vegetables and fruits produced by small scale farmers are not provided with reasonable price. INFAM shops are functioning throughout Kerala. INFAM can make necessary arrangements in collaboration with INFAM shops for the selling and buying of agricultural products produced by small scale farmers.

Besides in order to resolve many of the problems that INFAM faces, wider support becomes essential because the issues are complex and need to confront formidable opponents. This can be resolved by an alliance with like
minded farmers movements. So an alliance should be forged after the example of NAPM (National Alliance of People Movements).

**A peasant model-not a corporate model**

“I think that really unites us is a fundamental commitment to humanism, because the antithesis of this is individualism and materialism. For us in the INFAM the human aspect is a fundamental principle, so we see the person, man and woman, as the centre of our reason for being and this is what we struggle for – for this family that is at the centre of all common problem unite us… But what also unite us are great aspirations… We aspire to be better world, a more just world, a more human world, a world where real equality and social justice exist. These aspirations and solidarity in rural struggles keep as united in the INFAM”. These words, spoken by peasant leader Late Fr. Mathew Vadakkemuriyil, the founder of INFAM, tell us a lot about what is perhaps the most significant and largest peasant and farm movement to have emerged in recent times.

The presence of INFAM has not gone unnoticed. It is a transactional movement embracing organization of farmers, small and medium scale farmers rural women, farm workers. These groups are linked together through their intimate connection to the land. INFAM has become an increasingly visible and vocal voice of radical opposition to the globalization of a neo-liberal and corporate model of agriculture. According to INFAM liberalization is a war on peasants, it decimates rural communities and destroys farming families. The growing visibility of INFAM as a key actor, strongly rooted in local communities while at the same time increasingly engaged and non skilful on the international stage, has attracted the attention of many rural organization in search of alternatives. The INFAM’s concept
of food sovereignty (which was taken from Lia via Campesina) has spread widely and is now embraced by local, national and international movements around the world. The concept is also being explored by global institution such as FAO, and recent reports on the United Nations Commission on Human Rights advocate food sovereignty as a means of ensuring the Human Right to food and food security. INFAM is filling an important void. Its every existence is evidence of a new structure of collective action in the countryside, its strategies defy traditional patterns of organizing in the rural sector; and the sheer magnitude of its international presence – its dynamic nature; cultural diversity speaks to its transformative potential.

INFAM did not appear, nor does it operate in a vacuum. It’s collective identity, positions, and strategies were further defined through its opposition to globalization and interaction with other civil society organizations. A close look at INFAM experience allows glimpses into the unequal distribution of power and resources within civil society and the power struggles there in. INFAM has also demonstrated the importance of a delegitimization that stems from disengagement a strategy first articulated by Mahatma Gandhi a century ago. INFAM struggles for inclusion and greater participation in defining a different world order as it strives for greater access to and control over productive resources for farming families everywhere.

The main goal of INFAM is to build a radically different model of agriculture, one based on the concept of food sovereignty. INFAM believes that this can only be done by building unity and solidarity among the great diversity of farmers and farm organization around the world. Through solidarity and unity, INFAM has consolidated a collective peasant identity as “people of the land” mounted radical opposition to multilateral institutions,
defined alternative policies on key issues of concern to rural communities and engaged in collective action in efforts to build food sovereignty. INFAM also represents diversity in how farm and peasant organization are organized. One of INFAM’s main strengths is how it weaves together farmers embedded in their own particular, economic, social and cultural contexts – but still manages to establish unity within this diversity. From INFAM’s point of view the neo-liberal model is causing the collapse of the peasant economy. It is destroying natural resources, and the environment. It also undermining peasant movements around the world. Much of the INFAM’s success is due to how it balances – with great care and effort – the diverse interests of its membership as it openly deals with issues such as gender, race, class, structure.

According to INFAM the conflict is not between two competing models of social and economic development; on the one hand, a globalized, neo-liberal, corporate driven model in which agriculture is seen exclusively as a profit making venture and productive into the hands of agro-industry and, on the other, a very different, more humane, rural model based on a “rediscovered ethic of development” stemming from the “productive culture” and “productive vocations” of farming families.

The peasant model advocated by INFAM does not entail a rejection of modernity, or of technology and trade, accompanied by a romanticized return to an archaic past steeped in rustic traditions. Rather, INFAM insists that an alternative model must be based on certain ethics and values in which culture and social justice count for something and concrete mechanisms are put in place to ensure a future without hunger. INFAM’s alternative model entails recapturing aspects of traditional local or farmers knowledge, and combining that knowledge with new technology when and where it is
appropriate to do so. INFAM rejects a tradition of modernity in which everything is privatized and local knowledge has no place; INFAM is engaged in the process of exploring new ways of living in the contemporary world, building different concepts of modernity from its members own alternative and deeply rooted traditions.

By integrating careful borrowings with traditional practice; peasant and small such farmers everywhere are reaffirming the lessons from their histories and reshaping the rural landscape to benefit those who work the land as they collectively redefine what food is produced, and where and for whom.

INFAM formed in India around common objectives, an explicit rejection of the non-liberal model of rural development, an outright refused to be excluded from agricultural policy development, and a firm determination to work together to empower the voice of the farmer. Through its strategy of “building unity within diversity” and its concept of Gandhian principles, the farmers are working together to ensure the well-being of rural communities – in particular by working to establish an alternative model of rural development, a model based on small scale family farmers and peasant agriculture. INFAM insists that farmers have a unique place and critical role in redefining agricultural policies.

The formation of INFAM provides living proof that farmers and farmers families have not been compliant accomplices during the process of economic restructuring, nor have they been passive victims in the face of increasing poverty and marginalization. INFAM is actively resisting the globalization of a corporate model of agriculture. The farmers are using three traditional weapons of the weak – organization – cooperation, and the
community – to redefine ‘development’ and build an alternative model of agriculture based on the principles of social justice, ecological sustainability and respect of peasant culture and peasant economies. INFAM involves building viable alternatives ranging from small agricultural co-operatives, local seed banks, and fair trade ventures to reclaiming traditional farming practices. INFAM is filling that space with peasant voices, articulating peasant demands and peasant alternatives in efforts to resist the imposition of a corporate model of agriculture. The solidarity and unity experienced with INFAM yield perhaps the most precious gift of all, hope. Hope that ‘another’ agriculture is possible. Indeed, INFAM enables us to imagine that change is possible and that an alternative project is being created.

Conditions for the successful working of INFAM

The INFAM has been able to make an impact in the social life of Kerala through its programmes and policies. Being an independent movement it will have to maintain its vigour and vitality through new ideas and programmes. The new economic conditions brought about by the liberalization of the 1990’s has created fresh problems for farmers. The INFAM must concentrate on finding a solution to such problems. The following conditions will have to be fulfilled if INFAM is to maintain its about among farmers.

1. There should bee a vibrant leadership to carry on the activities of the organization.

2. INFAM must think of new ideas and programmes.

3. INFAM must concentrate upon the fresh issues brought about by new liberal measures adopted by the central and state governments.

4. The organization must maintain its secular character.
5. The INFAM must effectively lobby for realizing its goals with the members of the legislature and the executive.

6. Any organization must have enough agitational tactics to succeed in its endeavours.

7. The INFAM must conduct continuous conscientisation programmes for the small farmers.

8. Being an independent farmers movement it must be able to develop enough channels of communication with the political establishment.

**Major Findings of the Study**

1. Farmers movements are produced by agricultural crisis. Farmers movements are very active at the time of crisis. The INFAM was born out of such long standing crisis for farmers.

2. The lack of group dimension of agriculture is an obstacle to the vigorous performance of farmers movement.

3. Eventhough, India is predominantly an agricultural country of farmers movements are weak in comparison with Latin American countries.

4. Gandhiji is the father of farmers’ movements in India. The National Movement was provided enough vitality by farmers. Gandhiji succeeded in channelising the strength of farmers for the cause of the country.

5. India lacks powerful independent farmers movements. The ‘syllabus’ of farmers movements in India is prepared by political parties.
6. Kerala has a long history of farmers movements. The early years of nineteenth century witnessed a number of farmers struggle. Eg: Pazhassi riots of Malabar, Riots of Veluthampi Dalava in Travancore.

7. The dissatisfaction of farmers in Kerala is the primary cause of early riots in Kerala. Eg: Mappila rebellion, Kurichian revolt.

8. It is agrarian distress that paved the way for the origin of national movement in Kerala.

9. There have been a number of farmers movements in different parts of Kerala.

10. The first scientific, comprehensive Land Reforms Act in India was passed by Kerala. This is actualized by the unending effort of farmers movement in Kerala especially by Karshaka Sangam.

11. The Karshaka Sangam could exercise enough control over the political machinery of Kerala in 1950s and 1960s.

12. The socialist parties of Kerala took positive efforts towards the cause of farmers movement in Kerala.


14. The introduction of new economic policies produced some significant farmers movement in Kerala. Eg: INFAM. The governments and political parties failed to protect the farmers at the time of economic depression.

15. INFAM is the most powerful independent farmers movement in Kerala.
16. INFAM has been able to lead a number of farmers agitations in the state.

17. INFAM is the first Indian farmers movement which incorporated Gandhian principles in its ideology.

18. Many of the recommendations of INFAM were seriously taken and implemented by Central and State governments. Eg: Neera proposal, rubber subsidy etc.

19. INFAM upholds the Gandhian philosophy and it almost always prefers Gandhian protest methods.

20. The religious colour of INFAM hinders its growth.

21. The political parties of Kerala fear the popularity of INFAM. So they have tried their best to weaken INFAM in the state.

22. INFAM is the only hope of small farmers in Kerala.

Thus in short the INFAM has been able to bring together under one banner a large number of small farmers. It has an identity of its own. It has been successful in awakening the farmers and lead agitations to secure their interests. The demands made by farmers have been mostly accepted by the succeeding governments of Kerala. INFAM has succeeded where political parties have failed as far as the protection of farmers interests are concerned. It has made its presence felt in the state. It is well known that Kerala practices coalition politics which in turn has created political instability. In such a situation each and every vote counts and hence this factor increases the political influence of INFAM.
Relevance of Further Investigation

The slow performance of independent farmers movement in Kerala can be a subject matter of further investigation. The relation between INFAM and Malabar Migration is another realm which should be scientifically investigated. The relation between coalition politics and independent farmers movements can be another area of future investigation.