CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the backbone of human civilization and as such no community can underrate its significance. India’s independence was born against the backdrop of the great Bengal Famine of 1942-43 when about three million children, women and men perished in hunger. Indian famines are not only famines of food but of work also. When there is work there is money and when there is money there is food. Therefore Gandhiji urged independent India to provide work for all citizens. After 1947 the dire need to invest more money in agriculture was felt by our planners and political leaders. Thus Nehru said: “Everything else can wait but not agriculture.”

The farmer especially the small farmer thus plays a crucial role in the social and economic context of India. Thanks to the work of agricultural experts and dedicated farmers India witnessed an agricultural revolution called ‘Green Revolution’. Hunger could be eliminated to a great extent the farmers received good returns also. However the average Indian farmer even today faces several challenges. The farmers thus, usually a quiet set of people, are forced to come together to bargain so as to save themselves and their products. The ‘INFAM’ is the result of such a response made by the farmers of Kerala who are reeling under various domestic and international pressures.

The origin of Agriculture

It is estimated that human race originated in the earth 50 billion years ago. The evolution of humanity from wanderers and hunters to modern man
is intimately interlinked with agricultural activities. Very recently man began to earn his livelihood from agriculture. By the advent of agriculture, the face of world and humanity has undergone tremendous changes. It is agriculture which created the institution of family, villages and cities.\textsuperscript{2}

In the beginning stage of agriculture man began to plant ‘wild plants’ and began to tame wild animals for household activities and agricultural purposes. It is believed that by BC 7000 man started agriculture. Mesopotamia, Turkey, Egypt, West Asia and Europe were the early centers of agricultural activities.

It is the thought about the prolongation of human race on earth persuaded man to begin agricultural activities. The ancient man discovered that more people could live in limited space by agriculture. Through hunting and food collection five persons can live within one sqkm while by agriculture 1000 persons can live within the same area. He also discovered that certain grains are edible and so people began to cultivate such varieties of plants. The wild plants were domesticated and introduced different kinds of breeding to produce suitable varieties of plants.

India has got a very ancient tradition as far as agricultural activities are concerned. It is estimated that agriculture was started in India by 3000 BC at the banks of Sindhu River Valley. At the initial stage Wheat and Barley were cultivated in Mohanjo Daro and Harappa, the so called ancient twin cities. Gradually, the concept of village and township emerged. The most important contribution of India to world agriculture may be the introduction of rice cultivation. Sugarcane and mango also were first cultivated in India.\textsuperscript{3} Agriculture was started in South India by 2000 BC. It is also believed that Natafian’s people of Palestine first used different kinds of
equipments for cultivation. They used knives made out of stone for agricultural purposes.

1.1 The development of humanity in relation to Agriculture

9000 BC  -  The first city was established in Jericho.
8700 BC  -  Goats were tamed in Central Asia.
7700 BC  -  People began to pasture sheeps.
7500 BC  -  Wheat and barley were cultivated in Central Asia.
            -  The use of equipments made out of stone were first introduced.
6400 BC  -  Production of pots started.
4220 BC  -  Mizar was cultivated in Mexico.
3000 BC  -  Potato cultivation started in South America.
2900 BC  -  Starting of irrigation and use of plough.
2700 BC  -  Cereal cultivation started in China.
2300 BC  -  The dawn of Mohanjodaro and Harappa civilization at the banks of Sindhu River Valleys.
            -  The cultivation of rice started. People began to tame wild animal and birds for agricultural purposes.
2200 BC  -  Harappa civilization spread over Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat.
1800 BC - Agriculture started in South Asia.

1725 BC - Agriculture started in Rajastan.

1600 BC - The invasion of Aryan culture and taming of horses for travelling.

1500 BC - People started digging of wells for irrigation purposes.

1400 BC - The iron equipments were introduced in agriculture.

1000 BC - The widespread use of agricultural equipments for cultivation.

1.2 Indian Agriculture at a Glance

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>1028.7 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>127.3 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agricultural workers</td>
<td>106.8 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Area</td>
<td>329 million hectares</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total agricultural land</td>
<td>162 million hectares</td>
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<tr>
<td>The land which is cultivated more than once</td>
<td>31 million hectares</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total cropped area</td>
<td>193 million hectares</td>
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<td>Forest</td>
<td>6.7 million hectares</td>
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<td>Per capita agricultural land available</td>
<td>0.2 hectares</td>
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Total income from agriculture - 35%
India in percentage of world area - 2.5%
Percentage of India’s food grain produce - 10%
Water scarcity area - 37%
Flood affected area - 10%
Per capita forest land available - 0.11 hectares
Soil erosion per year - 4.7 billion to 12 billion tonnes.

1.3 The Contemporary Position of Agriculture

World over agriculture is today clearly characterized by three basic and mutually contrasting development trajectories;\(^6\)

(a) A strong tendency towards mechanisation.

(b) A widespread, though often hidden, process of repeasantization.

(c) An emerging process of deactivation.

These three processes each affect albeit in highly contrasting ways, the nature of agricultural process. By doing so they place a specific imprint upon employment levels, the total amount of produced value, ecology, landscape and biodiversity and the quantity and quality of food. They interact in many different ways and at several levels, thus contributing to the overwhelming impression of chaos and disorganization. These development trajectories interlink with a certain segmentation of agriculture. So there are three types of farming.\(^7\)
1.3.1 Peasant agriculture

It is basically built upon the sustained use of ecological capital and oriented towards defending and improving peasant livelihoods. Multifunctionality is often a major feature. Labour is basically provided by the family (or mobilizing within the rural community through the relation of reciprocity), and land and other major means of production are family owned. The production is oriented towards the market as well as towards the reproduction of the farm unit and the family.

1.3.2 Entrepreneurial type of Farming

It is mainly built upon financial and industrial capital (embodied in credit, industrial inputs of technologies) while ongoing expansion, basically through scale enlargement is a crucial and necessary feature. Production is highly specialized and completely oriented towards markets. Entrepreneurial farmers actively engage in market dependency (especially in markets on the input side of the farm) where as peasants try to distance their farming practices from such markets through a multitude of often very clever mechanism. This type of entrepreneurial farming often arise from state driven programmes for ‘modernization’ of agriculture. They entail a partial industrialization of the labour process and many entrepreneurs aim at a further unfolding along this pathway.

1.3.3 Capitalist Farming

This is the constellation composed of large scale corporate (or capitalist) farming. Once having disappeared, among other things through the many land reform process that swept the world, it is now remerging everywhere under the aegis of agri-export model. The corporate farming sector comprises a widely extended web of mobile farm enterprises in which
the labour force is mainly or even exclusively based on salaried works. Production is geared towards and organized as a function of profit maximization.\textsuperscript{8}

The difference between the above mentioned three constellations resides in the dimension of investment. Peasant agriculture then would represent the tiny and vulnerable unit of production, the relevance of which is only of secondary importance. It is assumed that the peasantry and peasant farming belong to the past, while entrepreneurial and corporate farming represent the future.

The study of the history and specific features of farming is an essential component in the study of farmer’s movements. Historical studies testify that farmers’ problems lead to the formation of farmers’ movements. Agriculture has its own specific features. The great saga of agriculture is man’s own saga. It is the specific issues of farming that leads to agriculturist’s problems.

There was a time when the Indian agriculture had reached the stage of development and maturity than the now advanced countries of the world. At that time there was a proper balance between agriculture and industry and both flourished hand in hand. The situation continued up to the eighteenth century. The interference from the alien British Government and its deliberate policy of throttling the village handicrafts and industries destroyed the fibre of balance and the economy of the country was badly shattered.\textsuperscript{9} The British had pursued a typical colonial policy in India and did nothing to develop agriculture. Instead they created a class of intermediaries known as Zamindar who sucked the very blood out of the rural poor. A substantial part of the produce was taken away by this parasitic class and the actual cultivator
was left only with subsistence income. The cultivator had neither the resource nor the incentive to invest in agriculture.

After independence agricultural progress was considered a sine-qua-non for India’s overall development and agricultural growth was to play a major role in achieving the objective for numerous reasons. Agriculture is a biological industry and in India even after six decades of the planned economic development agriculture is by and large, still a way of life of the people of the country. The economic regeneration attempted in successive five year plans has made agriculture the pride of national economy. This sector provides employment to about 65 percent of the population and contributes even today 25 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and accounts for a sizeable share of the total value of country’s export. All these go to prove that agriculture is the bed-rock of Indian economic activities. The last six decades have amply demonstrated the strong correlation between agricultural growth and economic prosperity.

Agriculture is the source of energy of humanity. Because of the heavy pressure of population in labour surplus economies like India and its rapid increase, the demand for food increases at a fast rate. The existing levels of food consumption in these countries are very low and with a little increase in per capita income, the demand for food rises steeply. In other words, it can be stated that the income elasticity of demand for food is very high in developing countries. Therefore, unless agriculture is able to continuously increase its supply there will be crisis. Many developing countries are passing through this phase and in a bid to meet the increasing food requirements they have been compelled to import large quantities of foodgrains.
In India the domestic demand for foodgrains is expected to increase from 207 million tonnes in 2004-05 to 235 million tonnes by 2011-12 (The end of Eleventh Five Year Plan) and further to 280.6 million tonnes by the end of 2020-21. Meeting this demand would require 1.86 per cent annual growth in food grains production during the Eleventh Plan and 2 percent per annum beyond that. The challenges facing the economy would be clear from the fact that during the recent ten years (1997-2007) food grain production increased annually by a meagre 0.48 per cent.\textsuperscript{11}

There is general agreement on the importance of capital formation in economic development. Unless the rate of capital formation increases to a sufficiently high degree, economic development cannot be realized. As agriculture happens to be the largest industry in developing countries like India, it can and must play an important role in pushing up the rate of capital formation.

Since majority of population of developing countries like India live in rural areas, increased rural purchasing power is a valuable stimulus to industrial development. Ragnar Nurkse the world famous economist, emphasises this fact when he says “the trouble is this; there is not a sufficient market for manufactured goods in a country where peasants, farm labourers and their families, comprising typically two thirds to four fifth of the population are too poor to buy any factory product or anything in addition to the little they already buy. There is a lack of real purchasing power reflecting the low productivity in agriculture”.\textsuperscript{12} So it is a fact that if adequate steps are taken to expand agricultural output and productivity, the income of the rural people will increase causing in turn an increased demand for industrial products and the process of industrial development will also receive a boost up.
For a number of years agriculture based exports of India, especially cotton textiles, coffee, vanilla, cashew kernels, tobacco, coffee etc., accounted for more than 70 percent of export earnings of the country. However with further economic progress and consequent diversification of production base the share of agricultural goods in total exports has consistently fallen.

The share of agricultural exports was 44.2% in 1960-61. This fell consistently to 30.7% in 1980-81 and 11.4% in 2007-08. To put it briefly, a growing surplus of agricultural produce is needed in the country to increase supplies of food and agricultural raw-materials at non-inflationary prices. This can widen the domestic market for industrial goods through increasing purchasing power within the rural sector, and facilitate inter-sectional transfers of capital needed for industrial development including infrastructure so as to increase foreign exchange earnings through agricultural exports.

But today Indian agriculture is going through a tough period. The farmers find it very difficult to make their both ends meet. The distress of farmers is due to several factors like the changing nature of agriculture, economies of production, policies of the government and the ongoing reforms in the country. The spate of suicides is considered a tragic manifestation of the deteriorating conditions of farmers. The National Agricultural policy of Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of India states: “Agriculture has become relatively an unrewarding profession due to a generally unfavourable price regime and low value addition, causing abandoning of farming and increasing migration from rural areas to cities.” The Commission on Farmers’ Welfare set up by the Government of Andhra Pradesh in 2005 came to the conclusion that “agriculture is in an advanced stage of crisis... The most extreme
manifestation of this crisis is the suicide of farmers”.\textsuperscript{15} The Chairman of the National Commission of Farmers M.S. Swaminathan says “something is terribly wrong in the countryside”.\textsuperscript{16} The situation assessment survey of farmers carried out by the National Sample Survey Organization 2004 came out with several startling findings on farmers condition. “Half of the farmers are indebted and much of the indebtedness is due to agricultural expenses. Inequality increase between the rural and urban households and between cultivators and non-cultivators has been growing; the monthly per capita consumer expenditure of about three fourth of the farmers was less than ₹615. The growth rate of agriculture has decelerated over the last few years; there has been no employment growth in agriculture; the proportions of the marginal and small holdings has been on the rise and the share of agriculture G.D.P has been going down while the proportion of people dependent on agriculture for their livelihood has remained more or less stable”.\textsuperscript{17}

Farmers’ suicide in different parts of India has become a recurring phenomenon over the past one decade or so. Farmers’ suicides are the concrete expressions of farmers’ problems. India has the highest number of reported cases of farmers’ suicides. It makes the Indian agriculture different from the affluent farming sectors of the developed countries. Globalization has affected Indian agriculture considerably and it has given Indian agriculture a different dimension. While farming problems united farmers, globalization created problems in the farmers’ movements, leading them to deterioration and sometimes disappearance from the realm. However, it reflects the deep rooted agrarian crisis which is entrenched in the path of capitalist development pursued by the Indian state. The beginning of such a crisis can be traced back to the decade of 1980s when farmer’s movement in different parts of India began demanding remunerative prices and writing off
loans. What has added to the crisis in recent years is globalization. In fact, all these crises have paved the way to farmers’ suicide. There are farmers who can be called market oriented autonomous farmers, belonging to different social groups or backgrounds. The issue of farmers’ suicide has slowly become a major issue in the academic narratives and policy prescription. The trend of committing suicide has sharpened with globalization enveloping different continents or the countries. There is a direct connection between the severe economic crisis of African continent, struggle of indigenous population of Latin America, farmers committing suicide in Australia, England and in India. This connection is established with globalization connecting each continent including different social categories within the larger framework of global capital or capitalism. The most important reason is that globalization has created a volatile economy and it has displaced a large number of peasants.

India after independence deviated from the path of Gandhi and embraced the vision of Nehru. Nehruvian policy emphasized rapid growth of heavy industries which required continued exploitation of agricultural and forest product. The village economy by then was sufficiently broken down. It was not possible for it to satisfy this enhanced demand for urban industries. Institutions were set up in the cities with the help of western countries to harness modern science for rural production. The new production process that were to get introduced, required products from urban industries as inputs. The knowledge of production as well as inputs for production were now controlled by the urban industrial complex. The rural society was no longer self-sufficient. It is said that “India represents Nehru and Bharat represents Gandhi.” India is not attempting to determine each and every aspect of the life of Bharat.
After Green Revolution the rate of growth of agricultural production for the country as a whole has fallen instead of increasing. The production did go up in some areas, but it declined in other areas.

Our agriculture depends on thousands of seed varieties, which had been tested for all conditions over thousands of years. These were quickly replaced by fine varieties of seeds developed and tested in a controlled environment for a few years. If a disease strikes, the production of the whole province or whole state or even the whole region could be wiped out within days. The artificial fertilizers and pesticides that are being used today are fast depleting the soil. Lastly it is said that by the uses of these seed varieties, pesticides and fertilizers, “One is eating one’s future”.

The new economic policies further intensified the miseries of the farmers. The initiation of economic reforms brought about major changes in the macroeconomic policy framework of the planned economy that existed in India from 1950-51 to 1990-91. It was argued that the new macroeconomic policy framework in particular, changes in exchange and trade policy devaluation of the currency, gradual dismantling of the industrial licensing system and reduction in industrial production would benefit tradable agriculture by ending discrimination against it and by turning the terms of trade in its favour. This, in turn, was supposed to promote exports leading to rapid agricultural growth.

But despite these changes in the macroeconomic policy framework and trade liberalization, the agricultural sector in India neither experienced any significant growth 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 to 1990-93) agricultural growth in India
recorded a visible deceleration during the post-liberalisation period (1990-93 to 2003-2008).

1.4 The Concept of Farmer

In Oxford Dictionary a peasant is defined as “one who lives in the country and works on the land either as a small farmer or as a labourer.” In Encyclopedia Britannica the term has been defined “as a countryman either working for others or owning or renting and cultivating by his own labour a small plot of ground.” In Indian conditions a peasant may, thus, be defined as a person who lives in a rural area, works predominantly in agriculture, wholly or in part, on other’s land for his livelihood as agricultural labourer, sharecropper, tenant or works in his own small piece of land. Peasants also include most rural artisans who generally work part time in agriculture. International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines peasant as “a rural worker” (conventionary recommendation adopted in 1975). The peasants or the rural poor are those composed of diverse social and economic groups and the one common factor among them is their dependence upon land for their livelihood. They constitute the majority of the rural population.

In Greek culture, the peasant was a freeman farming in a proud and independent way. The Greek Word YEPYO’s (Gheongan) represented the sublime. But in contrast, in the Roman tradition the peasant was subordinated, a condition echoed in the current Italian word for peasants ‘contadini’ which literally means the men of the lord (subordinated), who are ugly and unable to control their own destiny. In today’s world, the peasantry is no longer a self-evident reality and the tensions inherent in the concept no longer seem relevant. Those who depend on agriculture are differentiated in terms of their relationship with the ownership of land, such as absentee landlords,
supervisory agriculturalists, owner cultivators, share croppers, tenants and landless labourers. In local parlance they are known as Kisans or KHEDUTS. Thanks to the influence of western scholarship ‘Kisan’ is often translated as ‘peasant’. The term peasant is ambiguous and is used differently by different authors or variously by the same author in different studies. On the one hand it is used for those agriculturalists who are homogeneous with small holdings operated mainly by family labour and on the other hand it includes all those who depend on land including landless labourers as well as supervisory agriculturists. To club together agricultural labourers and the peasantry raises some problem. An agricultural labourer in contemporary India is generally no longer tied down to the same master, as was the case during the colonial periods in pre-capitalist agriculture. In capitalist agriculture, a vast majority of labourers are not attached or bonded. The process of proletarianisation of agriculture labourer has accelerated during the last few decades and they are more dependent on wage labour while losing the extra-economic relations with their employers which govern the conditions of their work and life.

In sociological and social anthropological literature peasants have widely been described as culturally unsystematic, unreflective, unsophisticated and the non-literati-constituting the mosaic of the little tradition,”22 the incomplete and a “part society with the part cultures.”23 Politically, peasants are found to occupy an “underdog position and are subjected to the domination by outsiders”24 and unorganized and deprived of the knowledge required for organized collective action. Economically, they are identified to be the small producers for their own consumption, subsistence cultivators who produce predominantly for the need of the family rather than to make a profit.25 Historically, peasants have always borne the brunt of extreme form of subordination and oppression in society.
Chapter 1

According to Karl Marx peasant’s or farmer’s mode of production had isolated them from one another. For him “they are formed by simple addition of homologous magnitude, such as potatoes” in a sack form a sack of potatoes. According to Lenin Russia in 19th century was differentiated by the unequal patterns of land holdings; income and by their contact with the market as well. Kautsky has highlighted the process of the dissolution of self sufficient peasant household in the wake of penetration of capitalist urban industry, increasing rural and urban divides and the growing indebtedness and landlessness of the peasantry in Russia. Antonio Gramsci has seen the peasants in the context of Italy as a part of larger socio-political order and not a discrete entity whose subordination could be broken through the development of class consciousness. Frantz Fanon studied the peasantry in the context of Algeria and highlighted that peasants are posited to a situation where “they have nothing to lose and everything to gain.” Alavi highlights the crucial role played by the middle peasantry in the Russian and Chinese revolutions. He continues that the peasant finally and irrevocably takes the road to revolution only when he is shown in practice that the power of his master can be irrevocably broken; then the alternative mode of existence becomes real to him. According to Barrington Moore “In India because of caste and religion and other ethnic considerations the peasantry has not been able to play any revolutionary role in the country.” Much attention was given to the peasantry during the grand transformation of last two centuries, and many of the resulting theories centred on the peasant as an obstacle to change and thus as a social figure that should disappear or be actively removed. Theoretically, peasants have been cut off from the land and their place is taken by agriculture entrepreneurs. The worldwide population of farmers is now about 1.2 billion.
The term peasantry is inextricably linked with the agricultural operations. It is true that in modern agricultural operations, technology and highly sophisticated techniques are employed. But the term peasants can nevertheless be used for those who are engaged in agricultural operation of all kinds.

Definition of peasantry varies in view of the varieties of peasant studies taken up at present. Anthropology discovered the subject of peasantry and elaborated it. Cultural and social anthropologists, historians, economists, rural statisticians and ethnographers got involved in the problems of the peasantry. The anthropology of peasantry developed into peasant studies in gigantic proportion in different parts of the world.

In the anthropological studies on the peasantry, the roots were based on the human conditions. When studies in the discipline of anthropology developed, the focus was not on the rich and the powerful, but on the poor and the down-trodden. European anthropologists took much interest in the study of the peasantry.

Teodor Shanin is a sociologist recognized for his studies of the Russian peasantry and is considered to be a founding figure in the field of peasantology. So peasantology may be a hybrid between anthropology and peasant studies. Peasantology may be defined as the study of informal economy and peasants.

The concept of informal economy emerged in Africa twenty five years ago. Here researchers began to notice the fact that there was no economic explanation for how the majority of the population survived. The poor farmers did not own land. They did not seem to have any assets. According to conventional economics they should have died of hunger long
ago, but they survived. To understand this, researchers looked at how these people actually lived, rather than at economic models. They found that their way of life was completely the opposite of how a human being in an industrial society survives. The farmers did not have a job, pension, study, place to work or regular flow of income. Families were engaged in a range of occupations from farming and selling in the market to doing odd jobs of handicrafts. Their aim was survival rather than the maximization of profit. The scientific study about peasantry and informal economy is known as peasantology.

Paradoxically peasantry as an analytical category has been rediscovered in recent years with the emergence of peasant studies as a subject in its own right. The urgency and importance of such studies are self-evident by the very fact that peasants constitute the majority of global population and nearly 35% of the total global area is still involved with some kind of social transformation. Peasantry as a historical entity within the broader frame of society, with a structure, consistency and momentum of its own has emerged as a major socio-political category representing at some stage the prevailing mode of social organization or social movements, disintegrating and re-emerging with intervals.

It must be specially stated here that peasants have often played a crucial and decisive role in accelerating the pace of national liberation and transformation. Jawaharlal Nehru said “peasants turned to the Congress and gave it its real strength.” The peasantry had played a significant role in world politics. The real strength behind bourgeois French Revolution and proletarian Russian Revolution and Chinese Revolution was the might and uniqueness of peasantry community. In the case of China Mao TseThung gave a significant place to the peasants who were economically more
prosperous, intellectually more virile and socially more homogeneous. He had read about the long tradition of peasant revolts in China and was impressed by them.

The Indian peasants appeared as a formidable force against foreign domination ever since the first intrusion by the British into the agrarian relations in India through the acquisition of Diwani rights of Bengal in 1765. The Great Fakir and the Sanyasi rebellion that broke out during 1772-1789 was really India’s first agrarian and national revolt after the British had subjugated the land. The role played by the struggle for agrarian reform was the main axis of the movement for national liberation.

The peasantry, the most numerous class in the countries of East, formed the main driving force of the National Liberation Movements which overthrew the colonial system of imperialism in Asia and Africa. 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. This was indeed the golden role played by the peasant community in India. But these heroes of independence struggle were thrown out from centres of power to utter miseries of human life and some of them found relief by ending their lives by suicides.

In order to come to a meaningful understanding of the present crisis one has to understand the past. One of the chief defects of the Indian political system is that they have overlooked the sociological dimension of the political system. As a result a number of social movements unnoticingly died out. Even those movements which have a direct political character explicitly directed against the government not to speak of social movements in general, have largely been considered by Indian political scientists to be beyond the
purview of their academic discipline. Political discourse in India has largely concentrated on political institutions, such as the executive, legislature, political parties and election. The study of the politics of the people, their wishes and demands, the articulation of their problems and their modus operandi in the assertion of their demands outside the formal institutional framework, have been by and large, ignored by political science academia. The focus is on the objectives and role of the government rather than the process of the formulation of the policies. However, the politics of the state cannot be better understood without an understanding of politics of the masses and their different movements. Empirical studies, including the functioning of the institutions are of recent origin, influenced by the behavioural school which developed in America.

Agriculture is very much important from the economic viewpoint also. Agriculture provides employment to large number of people, raw material to industrial units and food for survival of all. The performance of agricultural sector is crucial to realize the goal of raising GDP growth for two reasons. Firstly, agriculture continues to be the largest sector of Indian economy contributing 22.6 percent of total national output. Secondly, due to strong forward and backward linkages with rest of the economy, the performance of agriculture causes significant effect on growth of non-agricultural sector, particularly to the industry.

So in order to have a true picture of Indian political process, a study of the movement of farmers is a necessity. The mainstay of the Indian economy being agriculture, farmer’s problems should be analytically studied and suitable remedies should be suggested. Otherwise there is the possibility of breaking down of the very political system. A systematic analysis of recent government policies reveal the fact that agriculture sector is
overlooked and undue importance is given to non-agricultural sector. Movements are the creations of circumstances. The origin of a good number of peasant movements reveal that farmers in India are a discontented lot. The analysis of various movements will shed light on their actual problem. And settling their problems will increase the stability of the political system. A majority of changes in agricultural sector was initiated by powerful peasant movements. For example, the abolition of zamindari system was actualized by the mighty efforts of peasant movements.

The peasants have made their presence, felt very much in Indian politics especially in north India. If they stand united they form a power to be reckoned with. But in reality they form a divided house. They belong to different castes and groups.

It is natural for people to complain about the things they dislike. Sometimes they do more than complain; they band together with others in society to change things. In modern societies more than ever before people have organized themselves to pursue a dizzy array of goals. There are the strikes, pickets and rallies of the labour movement which are aimed at unionization and achieving political goals. Some of the movements have looked for opportunities to claim new rights while others have resorted to mere threat and violence. Some have sought political or economic emancipation and gains, while others have fought life style choices they disliked or feared. Some have formal organizations while others have relied upon informal networks and some have used more spontaneous action such as riots. These movements had to choose between violent and non-violent activities, illegal or legal ones, disruption and persuasion, extremism and moderation.
Social movements play a critical role in occasioning such a shift not only by mobilizing public support for reforms but also by popularising more participatory institutions and processes through prefigurative actions. Moreover, democratic decentralization goes beyond legislative Acts and resources reallocations and its effectiveness, and most importantly its sustainability, requires far more than the capacities of the state. Civil society organizations and social movements have a critical role to play in making the state more democratic. Firstly, the associational networks of civic organizations and movements can provide vital information about social needs as well as the mobilizational infrastructure that makes contentious and meaningful participation possible. Secondly, civil society organizations, by rotating credit schemes or by leading the contentious social movements, help develop and nurture the democratic and technical capacities of individuals, and often promote forms of demand-making which is far more deliberative than those of more hierarchical organizations.

1.5 Social Movements

Social factors are the most important stimulants of social movements. Social movements are conscious, concentrated and sustained efforts by ordinary people to bring about changes in some aspects of society by using extra constitutional means. They are more conscious and organized than fads and fashions. They are composed mainly of ordinary people as opposed to army officers, politicians or economic elites. They need not be explicitly political, but in reality, many are. Political action is a paradigm of social action that gives direction for actions in other spheres of life.

According to Ganashyam Shah social movements maybe classified in to nine types on the basis of the socio-economic characteristics of the
participants and the issues involved. One of the most important social movements is farmers’ movement or peasant movement.\textsuperscript{36}

The Chinese Revolution and the series of agrarian movements in Latin American countries led Western political sociologists and anthropologists to initiate studies on farmers’ movement. With regard to India, intellectual stimulation on the one hand and the Naxalite movement in the late 1960s on the other provided impetus to Indian scholars to study various farmers’ movements. Farmers’ Movement is a social movement involved with agricultural policy. Anthony Pereira, a political scientist has defined a peasant movement or farmers’ movement as a “social movement made up of peasants (small landholders or farm workers in large farms) usually inspired by the goal of improving the situation of farmers in a nation or territory.\textsuperscript{37} Early peasant movements were usually the result of tension in the feudal and semi feudal societies which resulted in violent uprisings. Many of the recent movements, more in tune with the definitions of social movements, are usually much less violent and their demands are centered around better prices for agricultural produce, and increasing agricultural production. It is D.D. Kosambi and R.S. Sharma together with Daniel Thorner who brought peasants into the study of Indian history for the first time.\textsuperscript{38}

Farmers’ movement in India can be broadly classified into three viz. party front organization, semi-official organization and non-political organization.\textsuperscript{39}

Almost all the national and regional political parties have their Kisan wings. But so far only the communist and socialist parties had taken the organization of peasantry seriously. All India Kisan Sabha, before its split, was a formidable peasant organization of Communist Party of India. The
non-communist parties have tried to articulate the agricultural interest more through party apparatus than by their kisan fronts. In some states the peasant dominated political parties became quite strong. For eg: Kisan Mazdoor party organized by Acharya Kripalani and N.G. Ranga in Bombay state and Charan Sing’s B.K.D and B.L.D. At present, Lok Dal is a peasant oriented party. Akalidal in Punjab is almost exclusively a party of farmers.

The second type of farmers’ group is illustrated by Bharat Krishak Samaj Farmers Forum, India, with its head office in Delhi. It is a semi-official organization, the Union Minister for Food and Agriculture being its ex-officio president. It does not always support the official policy in agriculture. It has sometimes opposed the government policies.

There are a good number of independent non-party organizations existing at national and regional levels in India. In the 1950’s some of the leading agriculturalists organized, ‘All India Agriculturalist Federation. It’s president was Lal Sing M.P. The federation stood for economic, social, educational and spiritual advancement of rural people in general and farmers in particular. It promised to adopt “a non-communal, non sectarian policy and not-to-align- itself with any political party.”

East Indian Cotton Association, United Planters’ Association of India are also important non-party farm groups in India.

1.6 Statement of the Problem

Kerala, a small state in India, consisting of only 1.2 percent of the country’s total area and about 2.5 percent of its population had attracted world wide attention from time immemorial. Kerala was well known to travellers from Arabia, China and Greece and other ancient civilizations. Election of the Communist party to power for the first time in the world
through the ballot box is another political significance of the political system of Kerala. Kerala’s economic status is unique due to the existence of a high human resource in spite of a poor economic performance. Thus the so called ‘Kerala Model Development’ is the unique contribution of the state to the entire developmental scenario of the world. The beautiful landscape and its religious tolerance have given it a pet name, ‘God’s own Country’.

In contrast to the achievements, Kerala has been facing a good number of problems. Poor industrial developments, lack of adequate private investment, deteriorating government finance are some of the alarming problems of Kerala economy. The growth of agricultural sector continues to witness volatility. Food grain production in the state has been declining and Kerala stands at the mercy of neighbouring states for vegetables and other food grains. The predominance enjoyed by Kerala in the export of traditional agricultural commodities has been lost. The shift of food grain to commercial cash crops, high cost of cultivation, low productivity, high land cost, the conversion of paddy fields to commercial uses are some of the alarming problems faced by Kerala’s agriculture. These problems culminated into the sociological phenomenon of farmers’ suicide. The percentage of farmers’ suicide is very high in Kerala, when compared to that of other Indian states. Majority of the farmers of Kerala are literate in comparison with other Indian states. The suicide of a literate farmer is something shocking. It is very much evident that farmers today face a series of problems, some of which are peculiar to modern day living. This crisis faced by an important section of the population need to be carefully analysed. The constant fluctuating price of agricultural products too destabilizes the agricultural scenario of the state. Amidst the strong political consciousness the bargaining power of farmers is meagre and not upto the mark. It necessitates a structural framework that can
give energy to the agricultural scenario. Here lies the significance of peasant organisation and farmers unions in the state. Before independence farmers’ movements were very powerful in the state. Farmers’ organizations provided vigour to national movement in the state. They stood as the real motivating force behind the national movement. After independence many such organizations became weak due to the affiliation with political parties. Independent farmers’ organizations disappeared from the scene. It has become clear that Independent farmers’ organizations are necessary for the revival of agricultural sector in the state. “Indian Farmers’ Movement” (INFAM) is one among them. Such organizations can speak for the causes of farmers. Only such organizations can better understand the language and aspirations of alienated farmers in the state. The sociological and political relevance of farmers’ movement in the state should be a subject matter of academic investigation. This study tries to investigate the political relevance of farmers’ movement in the state.

In Kerala majority of farmers’ movements are intimately interlinked with political parties. But such movements are labour dominated movements against farmer dominated movements. In Kerala here and there, there are some farmers’ movements which come under the categories of New Farmers’ Movement’. INFAM is such a farmers’ movement. The aims and objectives of INFAM are very relevant. In the history of farmers’ movements INFAM occupies a special position with its vision of the integral development of the farming community. Gandhism has been accepted as the core of its ideology. INFAM advocates the separation of politics from the activities of farmers’ movement. The INFAM could exert a great influence among the farmers of Kerala. A good number of farmers saw it as a movement of hope. This study attempts to understand the political relevance of farmers’ movement in Kerala.
in the background of INFAM. The political space of farmers’ movement in Kerala politics is being theoretically analysed. The peculiar origin, peculiar way of activity, and peculiar ideology, gives INFAM an identity of its own.

1.7 Hypothesis

1. Agricultural Policies of the Central and State Governments have been often unsatisfactory.

2. Mainstream political parties have failed to protect the rights and interests of the farmers.

3. Globalization has an adverse impact on the interests of the farmers.

4. The birth of INFAM reflects the fact that farmers are a discontented lot in Kerala.

5. INFAM aims at empowering the agriculturalists.

6. The efforts of INFAM has improved the prospects of farmers in Kerala.

1.8 Objectives

1. To find out the major problems of agricultural sector in Kerala.

2. To understand the role of agriculture in Kerala’s economy.

3. To find out the relative importance of farmers movement in the state.

4. To find out the peculiarities and the changing role of farmers’ movement in Kerala.

5. To find out the contemporary relevance of INFAM.

6. To examine the new initiatives on the part of INFAM to save the farmers.
1.9 Relevance of the Study

Majority of the people of Kerala are engaged in agricultural activities. It is a fact that agricultural activities have a priority over other professions. If there is a strong movement based on farmer’s interests it would rewrite the political, social and economic history of Kerala. A well-knit farmers’ movement is bound to exert more influence on Kerala’s politics. If majority of farmers unite together under a single organization that would have direct influence on the policy making process of the government also. A good number of influential political parties derive their influence from farmers’ community. If farmers detach themselves from these political parties, many of these political parties may lose their relevance in Kerala politics.

Besides, Kerala is a typical model of coalition politics. Both the fronts (L.D.F and U.D.F) come to power alternatively in the state after elections. The emergence of a strong farmers’ movement may topsy-turvy this coalition politics and may cause the disintegration of the so called L.D.F and U.D.F. Further the unification of farmers may lead the way to the formation of a third front. INFAM has been formed as a result of an awakening among the farmers for the protection of their rights and interests. Many of the farmer oriented political parties actually feared the emergence of the INFAM. Some of the political parties even tried their best to destabilize the movement.

It is a fact that the unification of farmers may help them to withstand the exploitation exerted by powerful industrialists and merchants. Further, it may increase their collective bargaining power and provide fair prices for their produce. This may raise their standard of living. The rise in standard of living of farmers will increase their political consciousness and thereby
political participation too. So the emergence of a free farmers movement based totally on their interests will completely change the social, political and economic picture of Kerala.

The pathetic plight of farmers in Kerala is a subject of academic interest. One of the important specialities of farmers of Kerala is that they are educated when compared to their counterparts in other parts of the country. Another significant matter of academic interest is that farmers here though politically conscious are an unorganized lot. Inadequate financial facilities together with lack of efficient leadership is the cause for this pathetic plight.

The increase of farmers’ suicide is a sociologically significant matter. This fact must also be analysed academically. In Kerala, in recent years a good number of farmers committed suicide due to serious setbacks in agriculture. This is one of the important factors which compelled the farmers to get united under a single banner irrespective of the colour of their political flags. Many social and public leaders felt the need for a non political farmers movement at this juncture. The outdated farmers’ movement should be replaced by new movements. This awakening gave rise to the formation of a number of movements in agricultural sector. INFAM represents such a type of farmers’ movement. It has tried to mobilize farmers under one single organization.

1.10 Review of Literature

Review of literature is considered as an important aspect of research work. It helps the researcher to understand the specific problem and draw some hypothesis. The literature reviewed in the context of present study mainly consists of books, articles and publications concerned with
agriculture and farmers movements. There are many works on farmers’s movement in India and Kerala.

*The Rural Urban Dynamics and Land use pattern* (2008) written by Jose V.T. presents an overview of economic analysis of rural urban land use change, the consequent conflicts and the possible solutions. It also offers an introduction to economic perspectives of rural urban land use and also focuses on past and recent trends of land use dynamics in Kerala, which is noted for unique urbanization trend in India.


*Globalization and the Church’s Social Mission: The role of INFAM in Kerala* (2005) written by James Chitteth deals with an important farmer movement in Kerala. The book traces the origin of INFAM in Kerala. The book discusses the origin, growth, philosophy and problem of INFAM. It also examines the significance of INFAM as an independent religious sponsored peasant movement in the state.

*Max Weber A Biography* (1975) is written by Marianne Weber. Max Weber is considered as the father of political sociology. His writings on the role of protestant asceticism in shaping modern capitalism and on the connection of rational science to social action have had clear impact not only on today’s sociology but on the study of religion, economic, political science and social movements as well. This book speaks about the philosophy of Max Weber. He explains philosophy of social movements in this book. The evolution and development of sociology together with social movements is
explained in this book. This work is blessed with his original ideas, as it was written by his wife Marianne Weber.

*Social Movements, Old and New*, (2001) is written by Rajendra Singh. This book is both about social movements and collective action, and about the discipline of sociology and prevailing concepts of Indian society, presenting a post-modernist critique of the study of Indian social movements. The author of the book maintains that it is these social movements which truly represent the contemporary nature of Indian society. The book challenges the dominant view that these struggles are expressions of disruptions and a breakdown of the established social order. The first part of the book deals with conceptual issues involved in articulating a generic perspective for an understanding of social movements. The author examines current theories relating to old and new social movements, highlights the conflictual and transformational matrix of Indian society; and discusses various dynamics such as the movements from modernity to post-modernity, from society to post society and farm sociology to post-sociology. The second part presents a conceptual critique of various studies on social movements including the neo-classical model, Marxist paradigms and historical approaches.

*Social Movements in a Globalising World* (1999) is authorized by Donatella Dellaporta. The author of the book argues that the growing interdependence on a global scale, which characterizes the human conditions at the turn of twentieth century, constitutes a challenge for both the mobilization of social movements and social movement theory. The book attempts to adjust the perspective of the political process approach to a world in which political opportunities, mobilizing structures, framing processes and collective action of social movements are no longer confined to national
political contexts. The book discusses various implication of a globalizing world on the mobilization for collective action within national contexts as well as the creation of transnational mobilizing structures, collective action for supranational issues and the mobilization of social movements in the supranational arena. The book provides us with the very philosophy of social movements.

The book *Social Movements*, (2005) written by June Nash, provides a firsthand ethnographic knowledge of struggles in the anti-globalization movement, including the indigenous, peasants, women industrial and urban workers. Globalization has spurred people to mobilize in order to protect their lands, cultural identities and autonomy. The book traces the origin and development of various social movements. The connection between globalization and social movements is discussed in detail. The author establishes that miseries brought about by globalization powered way for the origin and development of social movements. The central point is that new peasant movements are nothing but a protest against globalization. The book and its contents is quite illuminating since it includes a few case studies also.

The *Social Movements, Reader, Cases and Concepts* (2004) is authorised by Wiley Blackwell. The book not only expands on the collection of classic texts, but also provides the most important and readable articles on social movements from recent decades. The book includes definition of key concepts, biographies of exemplary leaders, new developments in the field and timelines of several social movements. Analyzing the specific resources, networks, structures, and environments of social movements, as well as the motivating psychology, ideas, political debates, emotion and personal and collective identities behind them, this book is an illuminating work on social movements. Social movements play a crucial role in contemporary society,
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this book explains, why and how they contribute to social cultural and political change.

T.S. Timothy has written a beautiful book on social movement by the name *Social Movements in Development* (1999). National movements in south have been superseded by a plethora of social movements. This book examines the new social movements from different vantage points. The focus of the book is on social movements among underprivileged and middle class groups who aspire for sustainable and democratic development. The author of the book considers emerging patterns of organization and mobilization, which are related to the role that movements play in economic and political development. A number of cases are analysed, such as the Chinese students movement, election watch movements in Philippines, environmentalism in India and peasant and farmers movements in Latin America and India. Broad perspectives on social movements across entire continents are also presented.

*Peasant Movements, Peasants, Political Economy and Law* (2007) is another important book on peasant movement. It is written by Peter Robb. This book explores the interconnections between agrarian policy, revenue and property law, commercial production and the emergence of related political identities. Focusing on Indian encounters with colonial economy and governance, it brings together seminal writings of a distinguished academician. The author studies the definition of interest groups, peasant movements and the limits on colonial and modern influence in the context of land revenue and legislation, survey and settlement proceedings, international trade and commercial cropping. He stresses the importance of acts of omission as well as commission - the role of colonial inquiry, of errors, and inadequacies of policy - in defining pressure groups, peasant movements and influencing identities. The book further analyses such areas
as economic development, tenancy acts, peasant stratification, capitalist agriculture and definition of peasants. It also investigates existing and imported socio-economic categories and the politicization of famine.

*Farmers Movements in India* (1985) is authorized by M.V. Nadkarni. This is a critical study of farmers movements that took place in several states in India since 1970s. Apart from documenting the major events which should be of historical interest it interprets and assesses these movements and examines their contentions particularly on price issues, their demands and ideologies.

The book probes into the class basis of the movements both in the rural and inter-sectoral perspectives and presents the reaction of the leaders of important movement namely that of Dalits to the farmers movement. An assessment of farmers’ movements from the point of view of the impact that they and their demands could make on economic development in general and rural development in particular, is also made. The book tries to evaluate whether and to what extent the movements have a progressive potential and their role as evidenced in practice. The book provides us with knowledge about peasant, peasant movements etc.

*Peasant Movements in India* (1985) - Sunil Sen is the author of the book. This book may be the first full-length account of Indian peasant movements from the mid-nineteenth century to the collapse of Naxalite insurgency in the 1970s. Written by a distinguished economic historian who was for years an activist in the peasant movement, this book focuses on the role of peasant movements in determining not only the direction of agrarian changes but also rural politics. The author argues that Indian nationalism, based on the support of thousands of peasants in hundreds of villages, was
not a myth. There is a considerable emphasis in the book on the peasant movements that flared up in different regions in the wake of the nationalist movement. The author stresses the fact that peasant movement which seemed to be quiescent in the Nehru era flowered with renewed force with the formation of non Congress governments in a number of states.

*Peasant Movements in India* (1983) is written by D.N. Dhanagare. The main theme of the book is to analyse the role that different classes of the peasantry play in revolutionary or near revolutionary movements in India; the kinds of social structures and historical circumstances that are conducive to peasant revolts and movements; and finally, how the mobilization of peasants can lead to peaceful, constitutional agitation. In this book the author has drawn an important distinction between the ‘lower middle’ and ‘upper middle’ peasant and shown how the mobilization of a particular group has affected the character of the revolutionary movement it was involved in.

*Peasant Organization in India* (1984) is another book on peasant movement. It is written by A.N. Seth. This book is an in-depth study of the peasant organization in India – the forms it has adopted and the direction it has taken. It examines the measures and action programmes adopted during the first development decade for agrarian reforms and also a recommendation of the policies and strategies to be ensured for rural upliftment and the development of related institutions during the second development decade. It appraises existing peasant organizations and ascertains the possibility of their sustenance. While it traces the history of peasant organizations, it also offers a rare insight into the complex truisms and stark relation of the movement in the present context. A complete cross-section of its structures and functional processes is displayed, that marks the banal, fragmentary nature of peasant awakening. It views deep-rooted feudalism as a stigma that infuses petty
sectarian biases like caste and class to slacken its pace. The author records the important factors that stand in the way of peasant unity. Some of the major factors it records are lack of ideological identification on the part of the farmers, lack of politicization, the stoic attitude of the middle peasantry, the domination of the rural elites in rural administrative and all governmental bureaucratic structures, paucity of funds to gear trade unionism and group action and finally, indifference of the progressive elements towards peasant organization. The oddities are immense.

*Peasants and Globalization* (2009) is written by A. Haroon Akram. This book assembles a group of internationally eminent scholars in the field of rural development and social change in order to explore historical and contemporary processes of agrarian transformation and its consequent impact on livelihoods, poverty and well beings. The book also explores continuity and change in the debate on the agrarian question, from its early formulation in recent times. The author argues that in deepening the market imperative governing contemporary agriculture, neo liberal social and economic policies have not only failed to tackle the underlying causes of poverty, but also have deepened the agrarian crisis currently confronting the livelihoods of peasant farmers and rural workers around the world. This crisis does not go unchallenged, as rural social movements have emerged, for the first time, on a transnational scale. Confronting development policies that are unable to reduce inequalities transnational rural social movements are attempting to construct a more just future for the world’s farmers and rural workers.

*La Via Campesina, Globalization and the Power of Peasants* (2007) is another book written by Annette Aurelic Dermaras on farmers movement. This book provides an insider’s look at one of the most important rural social peasant movements of the recent times. La Via Campesina has become a
powerful and radical opposition to the globalization of a neo-liberal model of agriculture. The book analyzes La Via Campesina’s strategies and actions as peasants and small scale farmers are engaged in a desperate struggle not only for survival but also to keep people on the land and to build viable rural communities everywhere. The book is a comprehensive, informative and intelligent analysis of the current global agrarian resistance to the industrialization and corporatization of farming. The book takes us inside the organizational dynamics to reveal the courage, commitment and imagination it takes to build coherent resistance. This book is a ground breaking study and a significant contribution to our understanding of globalization, food system, and social movements, agrarian structure, movements and peasant organizations in India.

Farmers Movement in India (2005) is a book written by Boudhayan Chattopadhyaya. The book studies the post globalization scenario and focus on the changing agrarian structure in the wake of agrarian tension and movements. It discusses the role of peasant organizations and bring out the policy implications of the evolving situations. The book also amply demonstrates the need for ensuring a more egalitarian distribution of land and resources among the peasants with a view to increasing their participation in development process. By providing valuable insights into the agrarian scenario, the book sketches out a perspective for future research in the area.

Kerala Economic Growth and Investment Opportunities (2007) is authorized by Jayan Jose Thomas. The book attempts an indepth study of Kerala from the perspective of development parameters, the political environment of policy making as well as opportunities available in the state. The book provides us with the basic information about the state. It narrates
the important challenges of the state and chalk out the solution to these problems.

*Kerala’s Economy, Crouching Tiger, Sacred Cows* (2005) is given by Sunil Mani. This book is a refreshing addition to the understanding of Kerala’s economic development, with a clear focus on the future. He provides fresh insights and understanding to the problems of the development of the state. The case studies presented are really the icing on the cake and show in a fascinating manner how an impossible mission can be made possible if there is a will and commitment. The book also has taken a critical look at Kerala’s growth story that continues to fascinate everybody. Besides the book brings out in detail the remarkable potential that Kerala has in terms of the new economy and some of the pitfalls it has to avoid. The author argues that economic success in Kerala in new direction will be exemplary for much of the rest of India, and this book is a major attempt at exploring the possibilities and challenges.

*Social Movements in India* (2004) written by Ghanshyam Shah is an important book on social movements in India. The author is of the view that social movements primarily take the form of non-institutionalised collective political action which strive for political and social change. India is blessed with many such movements over the centuries. The book divides studies on social movements in India into nine categories based on the participants and issues involved, peasants, tribals, dalits, backward castes, women, students, middle class, working class and human rights and environmental groups. Each of the nine chapters is divided according to the major components of most social movements; issues, ideology, organization and leadership.
Based on these divisions Shah critically examines and reviews social movements in India from 1857 to the present. In the process he discusses the theoretical issues raised by various scholars while analyzing major trends in different movements. Proposing a logical classification of social movements in modern India this book helps us to understand the philosophy of social movements in India. His theoretical study about peasant movements which is given in the second chapter is a study par excellence.

Tom Brass has written a book on farmers movement in India by the name *New Farmers Movement in India* (2008). This book traces the origin of new farmers movement in India. This book discusses the concept of farmers movement at four levels-First, the extent to which the farmers mobilization in India are part of a general global trend towards new social movements; second, the historical background and future direction of the new farmers movement in India; Third, their class composition and regional specificity; and fourth, the kind of mobilizing ideology (anti-state, anti-urban, anti-capitalist)

The review of literature shows that there are a large number of books available on farmers’ movements in India and abroad. All the above mentioned books are very much helpful for critically analyzing farmers’ movements in India. However books are very few which analyse the origin and role of the independent farmers’ movement in the state of Kerala. Hence the present study assumes significance.

1.11 **Methodology**

The main focus of the study will be on farmers’ movements since independence. The methodology adopted consists of historical and analytical methods. The books and periodicals relating to the birth and activities of
various farmers movements in Kerala are critically reviewed. An attitudinal survey is also conducted inorder to ascertain the views of the agricultural community in Kerala. Moreover as a primary source, interviews with the leaders of the various political parties and leaders of various farmers’ movements are also conducted.

This study is primarily an attempt to understand the character of movements and the implication of farmers’ demands and ideology for economic development in general and indeed for rural development. In the process, it traces the historical, social, political and economic context of the farmers’ movement especially that of INFAM. It also evaluates the factors behind such movements, documents the course of major events, examines the issues raised, their objective base and the government’s response to them.

1.12 Plan of the Work

The whole thesis is divided into six chapters. The introductory chapter provides with a birds’ eye view of the subject including the basic features of the study. The Second Chapter discusses the Indian agriculture with its contemporary challenges and expectations. Farmers suicides and globalization are pinpointed as the background for the emergence of new farmers movement in India. Chapter Three is a theoretical study on farmers movements. It traces the philosophy of farmers movements. A detailed study of major farmers movements functioning in the state and their mobilization are the subject matter of Chapter Four. It also discusses the important programmes and policies of these movements. Chapter Five traces the origin, development, programme and policies of INFAM. It also analyses the political significance of INFAM in the state. The concluding chapter discusses the opinion of the people from different walks of the life towards farmers movement in general and INFAM in
particular. It also summarises the major findings of the study and pose the suggestions to revive and revitalize the farmers movement in the state especially INFAM.

1.13 Limitations of the Study

As an academic enquiry, the study has following limitations. First, non availability of adequate literature and official records on the subject has been a constraint in conducting the study. Due to many reasons including financial difficulties all farmers movements do not publish or maintain necessary literature and records regarding their activities regularly. An exhaustive study of the entire farmers movement of the state is a difficult task, as there are several farmers movements, belonging to different regions of the state. According to the nature and dimension of the study, it is confined mainly to those farmer’s movements which are effectively working in the state. Again, no previous serious research has been so far conducted in the concerned subject.

Similarly, non availability of the latest statistical data is another limitation of the study. As a result, the researcher has to rely on the available data. Lastly, INFAM is a recently originated farmers movement. As a result, programmes and policies of the movement are not well coordinated. Many a time, it has changed its objectives and policies.
End Notes

15. Briefing by Agriculture Ministry Officials in Hyderabad on April, 10, 2006, DNA, April , 2006.


