INTRODUCTION

Every Political System well acknowledges the importance of education. In India, the sphere of higher education has always remained an important area where every government, since the days of the English, conceded some stakes. The domain of higher learning in Kerala has also remained delicate and highly sensitive, making it, in fact, too hot for any government to handle. Even the very life-span of some of the governments in the post-independence period in the state got shortened by the wrong way they rubbed their shoulders with some of the strong power centres in the field. Still reforms have been carried out in the sphere of education, generally peacefully and silently, but occasionally causing controversies and conflicts, heartburn and resistance.

In Kerala, any attempt to reform education invariably has had a political orientation and interpretation. The political fabric in Kerala is so unique that the electoral fortunes of parties or alliances depend decisively on the goodwill and support they can muster from those forces or factors which decide the destinies in the educational sector in the state. The political attitudes of some of the major minority communities seem decided by the
interests they retain and the stakes they have in the field of education. The politics and education in Kerala remain so closely intertwined that no dichotomy of the two seems possible as such in the state.

Any academic enquiry into the sphere of higher learning will inevitably involve a probe into the political processes which generated reforms in the sector of education and also the political and electoral consequences caused by such reforms. It also becomes imperative that any endeavour to evaluate the important educational developments should invariably be accompanied by an attempt to understand the social backdrop which helped shape the structure and content of the very educational system in Kerala.

This academic effort is intended to unfold the underlying factors which moulded the shape of things in the sphere of learning in Kerala during the last three decades and to bring out the involvement and importance of politics in all these developments.

This is a humble academic endeavour to learn and to make known the educational development and reforms in Kerala through an impartial academic exploration to the known and to the not so known areas in the field of higher education.

Chapter I makes a historical survey of the growth and development of education in Kerala, discussing the unique characteristics of the educational process in the state. It has to be conceded that almost all changes in the field of education in the region during the preceding period were initiated either by the rulers or their chief administrative advisors. The explanation for the uniqueness of a high rate of literacy in Kerala owes mainly to the educational traditions of the region and partly to the differences that existed in the educational policies and approaches followed in Kerala and in the rest of India.

Chapter II discusses the advent of the English and the consequent changes effected in the pattern of the educational system in India. Lord Macaulay's innovations in the area, his educational experiments and their implications in the educational sector are also briefly analysed in the chapter.
Chapter III deals with the National Renaissance and also the consolidation of nationalism in India and its impact on the field of education. It also discusses the experiments done and the legacies left by Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo Ghosh etc. in the educational sphere in the country. The chapter also traces those educational reforms attempted to in the pre-independence period.

Chapter IV probes into and discusses the reports of the various Education Commissions and Committees, particularly of those in the post-independence period, commencing with the University Education Commission of 1948 upto the National Policy on Education of 1986, initiated by Rajiv Gandhi.

Chapter V goes into the details of reforms in education in Kerala since 1957 with a background study of the reforms in the region in the field of education since independence.

Chapter VI analyses the political bases of educational reforms in Kerala and its religious, political and communal overtones.
Chapter VII makes the necessary summing up of the findings and thus constitutes the concluding chapter of the study.

The methodology adopted in the study is historical-analytical. To substantiate the arguments made in the study, relevant tables are also attached. The data for this study have been collected, as shown in the bibliography, from primary as well as secondary sources. Primary sources include the official documents and reports of the various commissions and committees including original records kept in the archives, Trivandrum and the Kerala Legislative Assembly Library. The secondary sources used in this study consist of books and journals, periodicals and newspapers besides a number of pamphlets and other published documents.