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Low productivity and shrinking of land area under food crops have resulted in reduced food production in recent years in Kerala. A drastic reduction in net cultivated area under rice (8.88 lakh ha in 1975-76 to 2.89 lakh ha in 2004-05) is recorded. Reduction is also visible in total area under tapioca (3.57 lakh ha in 1975-76 to 1.04 lakh ha in 2004-05) and cashew (1.09 lakh ha in 1975-76 to 0.86 lakh ha in 2004-05). Area under coconut has gone down from 9.26 lakh ha in 2000-01 to 8.98 lakh ha in

2004-05. Productivity(s) of major crops in Kerala are one of the lowest except rubber (1437 kg/ha). In rubber, Kerala has shown outstanding performance. Productivity of rubber in Thailand (1362 kg/ha), China (1089), Indonesia (655), Sri Lanka (857) and Malaysia (980) is below Kerala's 1437 kg/ha. Success story in rubber in respect of research, development, extension and product development needs emulation in other sectors.

Productivity in rice (2301 kg/ha), pepper (327 kg/ha), cardamom (217 kg/ha), coconut (6379 nuts/ha/year) and

cashew (740 kg/ha) are lower compared to other Indian states and other producing countries. Cost of production is also higher in Kerala. The productivity(s) of vegetables (< 10 ton/ha) and fruits (< 10 ton/ha) are also lower. Low productivity associated with high cost of production make Kerala Agricultural products less competitive. Percentage contribution of agriculture to total States GDP is likewise going down (26.23% in 1994 to 13.00% in 2004). Government investment in agriculture is also going down (below 6% of total plan expenditure).

Food sufficiency

A must target

The labourers are attracted to more remunerative sectors like infrastructure and services. Reduced holding capacity and low farm gate price are other hurdles.

Kerala agriculture is characterised by homesteads (marginal < 0.02 - 1.0 ha = 59.19 lakh; small 1.0 - 2.0 ha = 2.61 lakh; semi-medium 2.0 - 4.0 ha = 9.40 lakh; medium 4.0 - 10.0 ha = 0.19 lakh; large 10 - >50 ha = 0.03 lakh). Each homestead is a unit of livelihood and nutritional security. It sustains crops, animals including goats and rabbitry, fishery and fuel wood trees. Homesteads are conceptually ideal to sustain a family, but it does not derive the benefit of scale, in a price competitive market.

Migration of labour from farming to non-farming sector is a matter of concern. The labourers are attracted to more remunerative sectors like infrastructure

and services. Reduced holding capacity and low farm gate price are other hurdles. Value addition and product diversification have not been given priority and would remain so till a situation of benefit of scale is created by social and political action. This area should be given prime importance as it helps the farmers to realise premium price. Erosion of biodiversity especially in land races of medicinal rice, cereals, millets and medicinal plants is also a matter of concern.

Above said distresses and weaknesses of Kerala Agriculture call for corrective action.

As India's first Prime Minister

Jawaharlal Nehru emphasised "Everything else can wait, but not agriculture" and the much quoted slogan of Lal Bahadur Sasthri "Jai Jawan Jai Kissan" need to be repeated to give the much needed recognition to farmers and farming.

Decades long experiences and social developments point to the following:

- Science based agriculture is the only correct pathway to salvage out from the present crisis. Intensive intercropping with compatible high value crops need to be encouraged.
- Value addition and product diversification should be promoted.
- Organic cultivation should be encouraged. For getting premium price to organic produces, certification of organic produces should be done in an organised way.
- High tech agriculture like high density planting, precision farming and protected cultivation will certainly increase the crop productivity and



reduce cost of production.

- Export oriented production of fruits, vegetables and spices should be organised on the basis of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP).
- Soil testing should be done prior to farming. Each Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) in the State should co-ordinate

Centre” in the model of “International Trade Centre” may be formed.

Kerala is proud of its literate and risk taking farmers with whose help we can achieve the above goals. Kerala is blessed with natural resources like water, biodiversity including microbial diversity

Presence of commodity boards (Coconut, Coir, Spices and Rubber), Research Institutes (CTCRI, CPCRI, IISR, CIFT, CMFRI, KFRI, CWRDM, TBGRI, Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology, CESS, CDS etc.), a large number of pro-active non-government organisations like PDS, Malanad Development Society etc., and an exclusive State Agricultural University with 36 research stations spread all over the State and exclusive research stations for pepper, cardamom, coconut, rice, horticultural crops and cropping systems are knowledge assets which farming community should make use of. We do have the qualified and trained scientific manpower to take up any of the above challenges.

Even though we have all the above strengths, there are threats too:

- Flow of agricultural goods both raw and processed at cheaper rates from neighbouring States.
- Globalisation leading to free trade is causing havoc to traditional crops like coconut, tea, rubber, coffee etc.,
- Escalating land values and consequent greed for unrealistic money are to the detriment of Agriculture.

- Traditional food habits are giving way to western food habits and the food habits of other States.

The above threats also throw opportunities for a new and continuing agricultural revolution -land saving, water saving, labour friendly and eco-friendly. The target of an annual growth rate of 4% in Agriculture during the 11th Plan period is achievable in a climate of more investment in agriculture and loans to farmers at 4% interest rate. Gandhiji remarked ‘If we import agricultural goods to India, we are also importing unemployment’ which would lead to social unrest and India will not be able to meet the Millennium Development Goal of reducing poverty level to half the existing by 2015. Let us strive for a Kerala capable of feeding its people by its own sweat.

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this activity and soil card to be distributed.

- An Authority on Horticultural Crops Seeds/ Planting Material Production need to be established. The existing research stations/ farms may be used for production of quality planting materials.
- “Spices Banks” may be established in spice districts of Wayanad, Idukki, Kozhikkode and Kannur, especially for black pepper, cardamom and nutmeg. When prices fall down, the commodity can be deposited at Spices Banks and when prices go up, the commodity can be released for sale.
- Water is a limiting factor. Water has to be declared as a public good.
- Energy is costly and emphasis should be given on plants for renewable sources of energy.
- Agro eco- tourism without disturbing the natural ecosystem would be a source of additional income to farmers.
- Marketing is key to high production and productivity and a “Kerala Trade

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and Kerala has the production potential as demonstrated by many successful farmers. We should be able to cash on the great brand name “Kerala” for spices and ayurvedic herbs. Availability of seaports, airports and reasonable road and railways should help in export of agricultural products.



Accommodating the Changes

If we look at the curriculum of our students, we will find that most of them are able to add value in terms of providing technical suitability in jobs. However, the focus of curriculum strategies in the years to come also needs to reorient our prospective employment seekers with an attitude facilitating and conforming to the new work culture and success.

Dr V. Mukunda Das

The Kerala landscape is not the same now as it was 10 years back. Changes are rolling through Kerala because of globalisation. A revolution is taking place in information technology and other technical advances the world over.

Added to this are the drastic changes in the demographic pattern that are likely to be witnessed in the next five to 10 years in Kerala. All these changes emanating 'from within Kerala or outside Kerala', impacting on Kerala, are unprecedented and probably, not so much foreseen by thinkers and

politicians. The logic of evolution of these changes, mostly technology induced, which are likely to shape up Kerala, should not be seen as unimportant. Unlike in the past, changes that have positive impact on development are made transparent by sophisticated assessment of such developments by technology savvy professional experts.

Keralites today are much more closely linked to their relatives and friends all over the world through the click of a mouse. Communication to such people that used to take weeks together in the past, with lot of difficulties, is now taking less than a few seconds. It is, therefore

time for all of us, who are interested in the future of Kerala, to understand these dynamic changes impacting on Malayalis and reorient ourselves to make Kerala reach the top by utilising growth opportunities existing the world over.

Countries and Societies all over the world have planned to imbibe these changes after evaluating opportunities. Countries like China are focusing more on the growth strategy and maximising employment using the best and most modern technology in the world. This will add strength to their people and country. I am told that if a Chinese or Japanese works for one extra hour, he or she will have a happiness feeling. This feeling is because they think they are contributing to the country's growth by utilising the time at their disposal for creating more output. This spirit of nationalism, which trickles down to every inch of mind space of these people have substantially contributed to the very fast changes in society's growth, and well being otherwise dilapidated economies. The signs of this nationalist pride in their work orientation are contributing to better future of their country. When you put in extra work and if you feel that this extra work means being more productive in the growth of your own country, you will feel proud. This is a positive chord affiliating citizens' work pattern with country's future strength in a world where each country is competing with other in terms of utilising resources for the welfare and benefit of their citizens.

One could logically ask a question; can Kerala lead the country in this pursuit towards creating a new 'work value' system? Kerala become a role model for health and population control in India. Similarly, Kerala has enough intellectual fibre in society, which can assimilate these new philosophies related to work culture. How many of us think that if we work for one more hour and increase productivity, the multiplier consequences of this will be positive for developing our society/state. Increased productivity orientation is just a matter of attitude than a Herculean physical task. Kerala's white-collar workers must try to increase their productivity by imbibing this new philosophy, contributing to the growth of the state, as well as the country. When a Keralite increases productivity, he will

be able to indirectly contribute to reducing poverty and increase societal welfare, not only in the short run but also in the long run, in the economy. Productivity increase is a new mantra, which each one of us needs to assimilate because of the changes caused by globalization. Whereas work culture in private sector is changing towards high productivity, it is high time that our systems in public administration,



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including human resources and its components, also focussed on enhancing productivity. While saying this I know that it is difficult for a state with democratic processes and procedures to enhance productivity easily compared to a country like China where everything is dictated and controlled. But we can begin this.

The information technology based productivity enhancement is mostly seen taking roots in private sector. This has implications in terms of time management, commitment to work, productivity perceptions in society and interpersonal relations. If an attitudinal reorientation, conforming to enhanced productivity and success as a value system of every employee can emerge in Kerala, it will be auguring a new era of social change. If we look at the curriculum of our students we will find that most of

them are able to add value in terms of providing technical suitability in jobs. However, the focus of curriculum strategies in the years to come also needs to reorient our prospective employment seekers with an attitude facilitating and conforming to the new work culture and success. Studies done on IT professionals in Kerala, by the author, has shown that almost 95 per cent of them are happy because they have a work culture which

brings them pride, as also satisfaction. They feel that the valuable time of their life is not wasted but devoted to creating output in their organisations, which, in the ultimate analysis, will add to the strength of the country. This is a welcome attitudinal reorientation of Malayali professionals who are some of the best paid in the country. This reorientation has come to them after joining the private IT organisations.

Similarly, if we can provide inputs, both from psychological and social angle, to define a 'smart youngster' from the angle of attitudinal reorientation, this will do wonders for the future generation of Kerala. It must also be stated that it is not difficult for us to bring in this reorientation in the attitude. Probably, we have to put more focus on positive thinking. The development balance sheet of Kerala will show the output from this, in future.

In the emerging scenario of technological changes linking people and places through speedy information transfer and responses, Kerala's social system also need to change. This change in social system could come either through introspection by each individual or by a collective set of individuals. Development of a 'new consciousness', where in, right from the child rearing to the stage of taking up employment, an attitudinal reorientation needs to occur. In order for this to happen the domain of development planning and action need to move away from the 'myopic' worldview and its fully short-term orientation, mostly dictated by the politicians. Scientific, analytical and innovative approaches of outstanding professionals (who have genuine interest for the strength and welfare of Kerala society, as also the country) need to get priority.

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Umang Patodia

Kerala's economy can be best described as a democratic socialist welfare economy. However, Kerala's emphasis on equitable distribution of resources has resulted in slow economic progress compared to neighbouring States. Relatively few major corporations and manufacturing plants are headquartered in Kerala. Remittances from Keralites working abroad, mainly in the Middle East, make up over 20% of State Domestic Product (SDP). Because of this Kerala Economy is sometimes called as

"Money Order Economy".

Agriculture dominates the Kerala economy. Kerala lags behind many other Indian States in terms of per capita GDP (11,819 INR) and economic productivity. However, Kerala's Human Development Index and standard of living statistics are the best in India. Indeed, in select development indices, Kerala rivals many developed countries. This seeming paradox of low GDP and productivity figures juxtaposed with relatively high development figures in social indices is often dubbed as the "Kerala Phenomenon" or the "Kerala

Model" of development by economists, political scientists, and sociologists. This phenomenon arises mainly from Kerala's unusually strong service sector.

Kerala has the competitive advantages in few sectors like Agriculture and Food Processing, Tourism and Medical Tourism, Knowledge Industries - IT & ITES, Biotechnology, Construction, Textile & Readymade Garments, Infrastructure – Shipping & Logistics, Value Addition in Exports, Financial Services and Organised Retail. Concerted medium and long term initiatives and policies are required to attract and sustain

Destination of the Future



investment into these sectors.

With the world-renowned growth patterns in social, healthcare and educational indices and standards of living, this is the best time for Kerala to catch up with the rest of the high growth States in India in terms of economic and industrial growth. This can happen only with a pro-active and fast government that can outperform other States in competition for investment and with effective sectoral policies and a working culture of 24/7.

Various studies have revealed that migration from Kerala to foreign countries and to other parts of the

Recent national and international economic developments point to a new era of growth and opportunity for companies operating in Kerala. Rising costs in the Far East and other world markets have also further highlighted Kerala as a good choice for both commercial and industrial entrepreneurs.

country has been one of the positive features of the Kerala Model of development. The State's dynamic social and cultural development in the past half a century and relative stagnation in its productive sectors have created an ideal condition for acceleration of migration from the State. As a result of this unique phenomenon, Kerala has become virtually integrated with the world economy. The inflow of foreign currency by way of remittances made by Keralites working abroad has positively transformed the economy of the State to a great extent.

Industrious, innovative and ever responsive to opportunities, the Keralites, professional and technically skilled, have been exploring the horizons of career opportunities outside Kerala. Nearly 25,00,000 Keralites (about 10% of Kerala population) have immigrated to various countries. They contribute their expertise and innovative skills to their States of domicile, bringing in additional

income to the motherland. The Non-Resident Keralites remittance was Rs.18465 crore in 2004 and it constitutes substantial part of the income of the State.

Kerala, the small South Indian State with three international airports and one international seaport, is a pioneer in various infrastructure projects in the country. Kerala has the highest telephone density in India. Almost all the Panchayats are linked by a network of computers and provided Internet facilities. Despite the fact that Kerala is highly literate and the social infrastructure is one of the best in the country, the activities required to develop the facilities essentially needed to attract investments to the State were relegated to the backseat. But in the recent past, things have got a new turn.

With the realisation of Cochin International Airport, the first International Airport in the country built outside the ambit of the Government of India, Kerala has proven the fact that the Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) can provide efficient and successful commercial solutions to the problems that have been plaguing the infrastructure.

With its excellent Inland Water Transport system and air, road and rail



connectivity along with the new projects such as the Vallarpadam and Vizhinjam International Transshipment Terminals, extension of the Golden Quadrilateral to Kerala, etc the industrial and the economic position of Kerala as a whole will witness a remarkable change, by attracting more and more investments to

the State.

The Industrial Infrastructure Development Company set up by the Government of Kerala to take up major infrastructure projects in the sector will be a landmark in the history of infrastructure development of the State.

The 'Signature' (Must Happen) Infrastructure projects like improved domestic air connectivity with major metros and cities and direct international connectivity; provision of sky-bus Metro for Kochi; development of Vallarpadam International Transshipment Terminal by PPP; more number of tolled road bridges connecting all hinterland to bring exportable products like spices, tea, etc. and speedy development of NH 47, NH 17 and NH 49 would change the entire visage of Kerala to the outside world. If these projects do take off, with Non-Resident Indian's support through Public Private Partnership Model, it could accelerate the State's movement into a robust economy.

With its strategic location, world - wide connectivity, rich resources, highly skilled manpower, extremely low operating costs, developed infrastructure, proactive Government policies with pro enterprise incentives and an excellent quality of life, Kerala has already become one of the best investment destinations of the world. Today, Kerala is one of the leading commercial and trading centres in India. The State offers unparalleled attractions as a base for doing business to cater to the booming global markets.

Recent national and international economic developments point to a new era of growth and opportunity for companies operating in Kerala. Rising costs in the Far East and other world markets have also further highlighted Kerala as a good choice for both commercial and industrial entrepreneurs. Core competency areas like electronics and software, bio technology, tourism, agriculture, food processing, minerals, petrochemicals and so on make Kerala one of the least cost producers in the global economy.

With professional and time bound action plans in place, Kerala has all the potential to be the destination of the future.

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Dr B. Ekbal

The colleges in India were virtually autonomous until the establishment of the three affiliating Universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1857. The Universities were formed chiefly for the purpose of holding common examination and to ensure common standards. The Indian Universities adopted the affiliating pattern from the London University (1835), which was discarded in 1857. The affiliating system was designed at a time when both the number of colleges as well as those of the Universities in the country were small.

The Universities in India are classified as Unitary, Federal and Affiliating. Unitary Universities are campus Universities. There will be constituent colleges under the Federal Universities. In affiliating Universities there will be a number of affiliated colleges under their academic control. In India most of the Universities are affiliating in nature and they also have a

number of University departments under them.

Concept of Autonomous Colleges

Over the years the number of colleges affiliated to the Universities multiplied, consequently causing enormous hurdles in the smooth functioning of the very affiliating system. Steep decline in the academic standards, profiteering by the college management, low level of the quality of teaching, vulnerable examination systems etc were reported from a number of institutions from several states. It was felt that the affiliating system stifles academic freedom and innovations in higher education. Nevertheless it was also felt that in the existing circumstances affiliating system is the only practical option before us.

It is in this context that ways to increase the academic standards in the affiliating colleges without radically altering the system itself was explored. The first specific recommendation in this regard was made by Dr. K. S. Kothari Commission (1966). This was followed

later by similar recommendation made by the Gajendragadkar Committee (1971) and the National Education Policy (1986) and also envisaged the establishment of autonomous colleges.

Kerala Experience

In Kerala the first serious initiative in the matter of autonomous colleges was made in 1987 when the Government constituted an Expert Committee with Dr. K. Gopalan as Chairperson to study various aspects of the proposal to have autonomous college in the state. The Committee in effect recommended the establishment of autonomous colleges. No follow up action was taken on the recommendation of this committee.

The Inter University Consultative Council (IUCC) appointed a committee in 1999 chaired by Dr KKN Kurup the then Vice Chancellor of Calicut University and Dr Cyriac Thomas the Pro-Vice Chancellor of Kerala University as Convenor to study and report the feasibility of granting autonomous states to affiliated college. The committee

Educational Reforms



submitted its report in 2000 and in this case also no further action was taken. The Government made amendments in the University Acts in 2004 so as to empower them to grant autonomous status to the affiliated colleges.

What is Autonomy?

All the reports suggested above and the UGC protocols take a fairly uniform approach with regards to the concept of autonomous colleges. The words of an eminent educationalist well sums up the essence of autonomy as the academic freedom given to teachers is to decide “what to teach, how to teach, whom to teach and how to evaluate.”

It should be understood very clearly that autonomous colleges does not come under the category of self-financing colleges. Autonomy means only academic autonomy, not administrative or financial autonomy.

Kerala Situation

While implementing the autonomous concept the present educational scenario in Kerala should be taken into consideration: The following points need be looked into:

- It is generally agreed that in Kerala there is an academic stagnation within the University system and the affiliated colleges with the result that the academic standards and

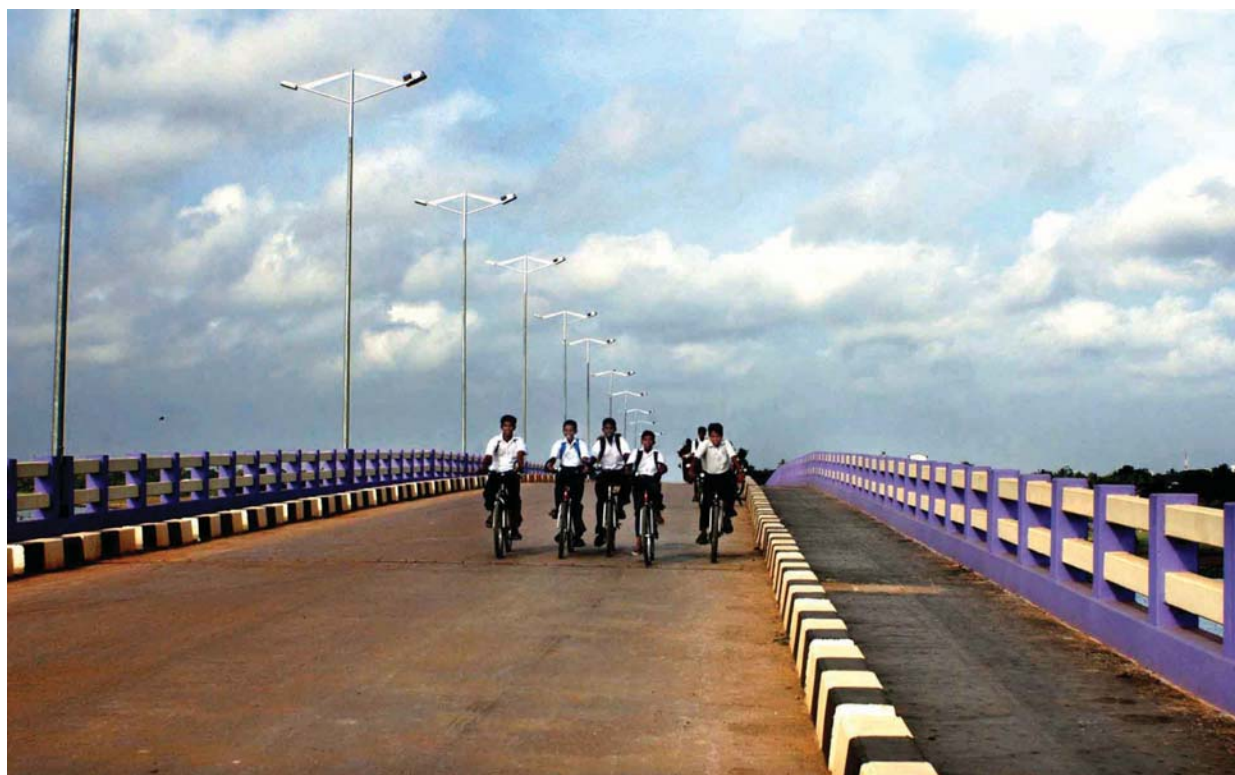
Autonomy to the departments and academic faculty in the universities and affiliated colleges is a desirable educational reform. However, this should be implemented only with the concurrence and consensus of all concerned like the teachers, students and the management of the affiliated colleges.

employability of our graduates are coming down day by day.

- It has to be conceded that the University governance system is not conducive enough for achieving academic excellence.
- There is a general neglect of the arts and science colleges where the majority of students are still studying whereas there is an over emphasis on professional education. There is a total anarchy in the courses run by the affiliated colleges that run into the following categories either with our without the concurrence of the Universities.
Traditional courses
UGC sponsored courses
Self financing courses
Off campus courses
Courses run by other Universities.
- Semesterisation was introduced in the

PG courses but many undergraduate courses are still run on the old mode of terminal summative examinations. The Choice Based Credit and Semester System are introduced only in a few University departments.

- The refresher and orientation courses conducted by the Academic Staff Colleges and the National Seminars being organised by the departments in the colleges and Universities have not resulted in the academic improvement of the teachers. Teachers also lack the knowledge about the modern teaching methodologies and technologies since there is no training programme to upgrade their pedagogical skill. The result is that the academic caliber of many teachers is so poor that they cannot enthuse the students.
- In many colleges modern courses especially conducted under the self-





financing mode are run by guest and contract lectures much to the erosion of academic standards.

- The recent spurt of self-financing professional colleges, the attitude of the management of some of these colleges, the court verdicts in effect denying educational opportunities to the poor have all contributed to a chaotic situation within the educational sector in Kerala. This has resulted in a feeling of suspicion and fear regarding any innovation that is brought in however well intentional and relevant they may be.

What to do now

Before embarking on any new reform agenda the following steps need to be taken urgently as regards the Arts and Science Colleges.

The words of an eminent educationalist well sum up the essence of autonomy as the academic freedom given to teachers is to decide "what to teach, how to teach, whom to teach and how to evaluate."

- Mapping of all courses conducted by the colleges under the various Universities.
- Academic assessment of the courses and the caliber of teachers and the availability of infrastructure facilities.

- Students assessment with regards to upward mobility, drop out rate, pass percentage, perception of the study, skill level and employability.

- Semesterisation to be completed in the degree level also and move to Choice based Credit and Semester System.

- Government should take a final decision regarding excess and or the lack of teachers in various colleges. Redeployment and fresh appointments where necessary will have to be made.

- To improve the academic caliber of teachers a massive teacher training programme on modern developments in various academic disciplines, modern teaching learning technologies based on IT will have to be initiated.

- The academic possibilities opened up by Edusat, Infnlibnet and granting of Add-on Courses by UGC should be exploited to upgrade the skill and academic caliber of students and teachers.

- Formation of Cluster of Colleges to share resources and jointly plan modern skill based vocational courses.

- Linking colleges with research institutes and sharing of faculty and infrastructure like library and laboratory, designing joint courses.

- Initiate University, industry, College, Government interaction.

Conclusion

Autonomy to the departments and academic faculty in the Universities and affiliated colleges is a desirable educational reform. However, this should be implemented only with the concurrence and consensus of all concerned like the teachers, students and the management of the affiliated colleges. Definite norms and protocols should be laid out for giving autonomous status to affiliated colleges.

The government should grant additional funds to the autonomous colleges for payment of salary of teachers and other supporting staff and extra expenditure required for conduct of examination and also supports the colleges after the termination of the funding by UGC.

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T.R. Dilip

Priorities given to health sector in successive budgets since late 1960s aimed at building health care infrastructure and trained manpower, are widely acknowledged. This has created a demand for health care and subsequently brought the population closer to health system. The private health care sector has grown rapidly since 1980s capitalising on this newly created demand for health care services.

Kerala is well equipped in terms of hospital bed facilities. There are nearly 33 beds per 10,000 population in the State, which is equal to that in US and other developed regions. The present age structure of the population and the current hospitalisation rates together underline the State's potential to emerge as a major destination for medical tourism. Prior to seeking this goldmine the inter-district disparities in access to hospital infrastructure needs to be addressed for the welfare of the residents of the State. The districts of Palakkad, Malappuram, Kasaragod, Wayanad and Kollam are still backward in terms of access to hospital infrastructure.

Further out of the 1.08 lakh hospital beds in Kerala as in 2004, 59 per cent are in private sector and remaining 41 per cent in the government sector. Trends in bed availability in the State point out that when the increase in number of government hospital beds was in tune with population growth, there was a virtual decline in both number of hospitals and hospital beds in the private health care sector. Data indicate the number of institutions in the private sector having inpatient treatment facility

Infrastructure Care More

has declined from 2274 in the year 1995 to 1942 in the year 2004. This itself cautions us about the uncertainty in the profit motivated private health sector's participation in delivery of health care services.

One reason for this decline in private hospitals is the public policy on medical education, facilitating opening up a large number of private allopathic medical colleges. Until the year 1994 there were only five government medical colleges in the State. After that 13 more new self-financing medical colleges were started. This along with opening of specialty hospitals, lead to relatively small hospitals or nursing homes losing their significance and a large number of them have been phased out.

Kerala with more than one decade of experience in decentralised planning is in a unique position to promote the NRHM agenda. The decentralised planning enables the district managers in easily identifying the gaps in infrastructure, manpower, and equipments and supplies.

Considering the age transition induced epidemiological profile of Kerala, the demand for long term nursing care as well as rehabilitative care for chronic illness is likely to come up in future. Adding to this is ageing of population, migration of working population and shift from nuclear to joint family system. The large specialty hospitals and private medical college hospitals will not be able to cater to this demand for long term nursing/rehabilitative care in a cost effective manner. Therefore the recent consolidation of large private hospitals is expected to be a temporary phenomenon and demand for small hospitals and nursing homes are likely to improve in near future. Public policy aimed at promoting these types of institutions will be helpful in reducing the overall out of pocket expenses on health care.

The Reproductive and Child Health Project- Facility Survey (2001) throws some light into availability of infrastructure, staff, supply and equipments in District Hospitals, First Stage Referral Units (FRUs), Community Health Centres (CHCs) and Primary Health Centres (PHCs) in the State. Shortages were severe in the case of supplies (vaccines, contraceptives and selected drugs) as only less than 10

per cent of FRUs, CHCs and PHCs in Kerala were found to be having 60 per cent of items listed in supply. The district hospitals were adequately equipped in terms of infrastructure and staff. But they require more drugs and equipments whereas FRUs, CHCs and PHCs suffer staff shortage.

If we examine availability of doctors, then Kerala enjoys an advantageous position. As per Medical Council of India, 27,718 doctors are registered with the Kerala Medical Council till 2006. The public policy on medical education has resulted in a huge increase in seats for MBBS degree course in Kerala (from about 750 seats in 1994 to 2100 seats in 2006). Despite this, the irony is that our government institutions are facing

policies should aim at improving the service conditions of medical professionals working under the government system by bringing in necessary reforms. The service condition and environment needs to be upgraded to retain the doctors and other related manpower in the public health system.

As per NRHM, the District Health Plan is the principle instrument for planning, implementation and monitoring, formulated through a participatory and bottom up planning process. Kerala with more than one decade of experience in decentralised planning is in a unique position to promote the NRHM agenda. The decentralised planning enables the district managers in easily identifying the gaps in infrastructure, manpower and equipments and supplies. This will enable the programme managers to target the public funds for health care in filling these gaps. However, the gaps in manpower for delivering medical care will still remain even after improving



severe shortage of medical doctors, including specialists. Therefore a medical education policy aimed at boosting export of medical care services and doctors are not helpful in improving the access to health care in the State. The recent efforts by the Government by ensuring compulsory rural practice for students graduating from government medical colleges and contractual appointments of doctors (including specialists), using funds available from the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) is a temporary solution. Public

service conditions mentioned above. Here district level recruitment of medical professional is the need of the hour to overcome this hurdle hovering over the public health system. Health care infrastructure built during 1970s and 1980s are poorly maintained and public sector facilities in rural areas are in depleted conditions. Additional funds available under NRHM should be used to renovate and modernise the hospital buildings.

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Dr P. Mohanan

State is a very large organisation. It touches almost every aspect of an individual's life. Obviously, management of a State is a very complex job. A decision of a state administrator impacts lives of millions and that too, frequently, over long period of time. Hence, each decision has to be arrived at after investing sufficient time and thought to analysing its consequences, positive and negative. It requires an integrated approach to governance. Implementing professional management in statecraft is a huge task. But it is worth taking the pains. It is going to make a difference to the lives of many millions.

Professional management is all about setting the right goals and involving every one in contributing his or her level best in attaining those goals. It is, thus, the art and science of engaging people of an organisation in activities that enrich individuals and organisations. People are most productive personally and organisationally when they do things that are close to their hearts. There is, therefore, a need to understand individuals properly and assign them to the right jobs. Professional management assigns strategic role to HR function because of the key role that people play in shaping the destiny of organisations.

Involvement and ultimately engagement of people depends on what he or she would get from goal fulfilment. Each one looks at the goal for some personal benefit. Hence, creating stakes for individuals is an important part of goal setting. If the goal is meaningful to an individual, he is more likely to commit his best efforts for the achievement of

the goal. The task of state administrators is to create stakes for all sections of people so that they have something meaningful to work for and feel fulfilled.

For that, they should act as benefactors of the entire people. Taking all the people into confidence and getting them put their shoulders to the task on hand is a big challenge.

The task of state administration is made more complex by the fact that people's expectations are different at different times. Demands are more. Resources are always less. Tendency to work for short-term goals costs the state dearly in the long run. Development requires a vision for 20 to 50 years and commitment to that vision. It should be consistently followed. There should not be haphazard approach to development. Experimentation is also needed. But, each experiment is to be given sufficient time. Similarly, there should be a balance between short-term and long-term goals. There is a limit to individual's willingness to sacrifice short-term gains to long-term promises. A person has only one life. He has to live it meaningfully and happily. Too much sacrifice for future benefit is like asking for moon.

The administrators of the State have to be both great managers and leaders. They must be able to see the entire people as their clients and serve the best interest of the people. The entire bureaucracy has to be made accountable for results. Discipline is the first thing that any person who joins the state service should have. Trade unions have their role in keeping the members comfortable. They should not be allowed to overshadow the organisation and usurp decision-making power.



Managing Administration Professionally

There should be hope and dream of a great future. Motivated people can achieve any task. If doom is spread, society perishes. Professional management of the State should work on this. Create a dream for the State's people to identify themselves with and draw inspiration from.



The paramount duty of a State is to ensure security, peace and stability for its people to engage in satisfying and fruitful activities (that is freedom to pursue things of one's choice). Key result areas for the State are law and order, education, healthcare, infrastructure and ultimately welfare of the people. Peace is the most valuable of all things. Proper maintenance of law and order is essential for security and peace. State has a responsibility to ensure availability of good quality education and healthcare to its entire people. Another area where State can contribute significantly is infrastructure. State should spend adequately on these sectors.

Hope and Dream

There should be hope and a dream

of a great future. Motivated people can achieve any task. If doom is spread, society perishes. Professional management of the State should work on this. Create a dream for the State's people to identify themselves with and draw inspiration from. There should be something for everyone in it. It should not leave out any group. When a great unifying dream is put in place and properly communicated, people gradually identify themselves with it and discover their potential to excel in delivering results for making that dream come true.

Managing a progressively weakening State

There was a time when State was the only agency to work for growth and development. But today, private sector

and NGOs are taking on themselves some of the roles that State performed well in the past. The ambit of state administration has grown beyond recognition in the past couple of decades. These days, State cannot be expected to do everything for its people. But the state administrators should know what the State ought to do and what it can do better. The state administration is growing weak. The finances of the State are eaten up by salary and pension payments. Efforts to shore up finances always end up charging more tax and raising service charges.

Meddling to Managing

The State is a major regulator. That is a role it cannot delegate to others. State may withdraw from running colleges,

hospitals, steel mills etc. But it should not withdraw from regulating them adequately. Instead of setting up enterprises in the state sector, it can regulate access to and quality of these services through its grants. The State should understand the knack of creating enough bangs for its bucks. Spending public funds on nonviable public sector and cooperative enterprises is like looting State's exchequer. The state administrators should ensure that the hard earned revenue is wisely spent and it creates tangible results for the community.

Problems and Solutions

It should be possible to anticipate problems much in advance and implement solutions before the problems go out of hand. The root cause of problems in the State can be traced to lack of discipline in educational institutions and social spheres.

Organised politics and unbridled trade union activism destroyed the social discipline. Any heinous crime or corrupt practice is ultimately justified for political

discourses. Religion and spirituality are downplayed and empty ideological symbols are floated as real. This has robbed the people of their sanity and tranquillity. Suicide, rising crime graph and rampant corruption can be traced to some of these social problems.

The development of the state needs a radical approach. Education is the corner stone of that programme. Access to quality education is a birth right of any citizen. Facilitate setting up world class educational and training institutions or support them with State grants. Let the youth study and imbibe right values at these institutions peacefully and ensure disciplined behaviour.

State and Challenges of Growth

The State of Kerala is preparing itself to seize growth opportunities. IT and tourism have come handy for the State. But growth is sure to throw up huge challenges for the State.

Problems that the State may face and their likely consequences in the next ten years are:

- 1) Huge shortage of workforce,

within the State for the youth.

- 2) Growing elderly population.

The population dynamics is becoming adverse for the State. The burgeoning old age population is a grave concern for the State. They have to be kept happy. But the number of people to support them (the number of youth) is fewer. Care for the old may not match the requirement.

- 3) Migrant labour and settlement issues.

Shortage of labour will force the State to depend increasingly on migrant labour. It may have its negative consequences like increasing incidence of crime, social and law and order problems.

- 4) Managing e-waste and environment

Electronic gadgets have limited life. Unless they are recycled properly, they may soon cause environmental disaster.

- 5) Managing yawning economic inequality

With economic growth, economic inequality is very likely to widen. This may cause new social problems. There must be measures to help the poor to improve their economic lot.

Conclusion

The economy of our nation, and that of our State, is on a boil and chaotic uncertainty is a rule rather than exception. Professional management has a critical role to perform in state administration in such fast changing environments. State administration is a very broad area that impacts every one's life for long years. Hence, there should be long-term vision and action plans for governments to follow from term to term rather than cobbling together a make belief administration. Giving professional management adequate room in public administration can bring about amazing results. Political leadership should show the courage to induct professional managers into state administration. There are examples of people who have transformed organisations, take for instance what Sam Pitroda has done to telecommunications in India. The more professional state administration becomes, with proper checks and balances, the more the administration become transparent, effective and efficient.

■ The writer is Head, Department of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Calicut.



Professional management has a critical role to perform in the State administration in such fast changing environments. Hence, there should be long-term vision and action plans for governments to follow from term to term rather than cobbling together a make-belief administration.

gains. Rank and file of political parties and their affiliated youth organisations and trade unions have been rallied around for display of political power. A pall of doom has been deliberately spread by those who were hankering after political power. Social and political spaces are maligned by empty and gloomy

particularly youth. The state administration and its services to people will take the major hit. This is going to affect delivery of all services badly. The cost of goods and services will also rise. Solutions may include tapping women power, creating the right job opportunities and incentivizing working



Infrastructure

Integrated Plan Demanded

Being a thickly populated State, it is essential to build helipads in all the districts and also at the thickly populated and commercial districts, to develop even economy airports.

Dr G.C. Gopala Pillai

Kerala is a small state where land is a scarce commodity. When we speak about infrastructure development or industrial development, there is a need for land utilisation. There have been occasions where the industrial investors have gone back with disappointment due to non-availability of land for industry. Nowadays we are hearing about land mafia. We are aware about the fact that in some of the areas land is available. The creation of land bank is worth consideration.

Today any visitor from other states or other country generally criticises on the road condition of the State. It is not only the maintenance aspect of the road but also the bottlenecks on account of lack of wide roads. The width of the road is yet another issue. There is a real need to widen most of the roads and also to maintain the highest standard of the road condition. Take an example of the two bypasses in the southern parts of Kerala, the Kollam and the Alappuzha Bypasses. People speak about and lament about it. But hardly any consequential effect. It is about 20 years that nothing happened

on these two bypasses. Similarly, the transportation sector. It is high time that a dedicated railway freight corridor is established from Kochi to Coimbatore or even to Bangalore. This will speed up the cargo movement and consequent positive result in the industry. Another example is the non completion of the seaport-airport road at Kochi. It is half completed and no action for the last about 10 years regarding the completion of the road. Let us look at the overcrowding of the National Highway from Aroor to Edappally. How much time we are wasting sometimes! Is it not better

to create an elevated road developed above the existing roads from Aroor to Edappally?

Now Let us look at the tourism infrastructure. It is high time to mobilise private investment in the tourism sector. What about the developments in the modern technology field like nanotechnology, biotechnology, stem cell research, plasma technology etc.? Being a small state with 14 districts, today we do not have any fast track mechanism to

the other side, we speak about five million unemployed youths. The latest scenario is that the companies as well as business houses need skilled people in the various domains of expertise and knowledge but hardly people are available in the State. What does it indicate? It shows that the so called five million or above unemployed people don't have skill to do any job. Their employability is a big question. Hence there is a need for large-scale skill development institutions in the

are the centres of anti-social elements. General public are suffering since there is no alternative. Is it not better for the State to bring private investment in all these bus stations for providing better toilet facilities and sanitation, top class shopping malls, high tech facilities and many other infrastructure. This is possible without losing the right on the land by the Government.

One more aspect is there. The public is suffocating for want of adequate



In Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi or Kozhikode and even in many other towns, if we can provide multilevel parking facility utilising some Government owned land by attracting private investment, the advantage would have been tremendous for the public.

physically reach between the districts. Being a thickly populated State, it is essential to built helipads in all the districts and also at the thickly populated and commercial districts, to develop even economy airports. If infrastructure is available, people can move fast and develop fast business which ultimately results in faster business activities.

Kerala always used to boast itself as a centre of excellent human resource. On

State. Even we can think of a skill university for the State. Today even in the domestic household field, skilled people in the areas of carpentry, plumbing, electrical, gardening, interior furnishing and allied fields, are not available.

Let us look at the various "bus stations" in the State. No toilet facilities. Dilapidated buildings! No proper shopping facilities! Often these places

parking facilities in every part of the city which culminating to inconvenience, traffic jams and even accidents. In Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi or Kozhikode and even in many other towns, if we can provide multilevel parking facility utilising some Government owned land by attracting private investment; the advantage would have been tremendous for the public. Private investment can be attracted to create multi level parking facility by giving land on lease basis. Private investor can make his return on investment from advertisement spaces, car wash and clean facility and some other services. In this way, the scope of creating infrastructure in the state of Kerala is unlimited.

■ The writer is Managing Director, InKEL, Thiruvananthapuram



Get Ready for Hi-tech era

The major attraction of Thiruvananthapuram is that it is easily accessible to the international community through the Gulf route or the Singapore route, and, both Singapore and Dubai are well connected to US by non-stop flights.

R.P. Lalaji

Just before the installation of the current ministry the portfolio allocation of the ministers were announced. That raised a furore and the rumour mills started working over time and they put out a lot of mischievous news snippets. None of these was made in good taste, especially the one about the portfolios held or not held by the Chief Minister. However one nasty piece was specially connoted for us in the IT industry. And vested interests gleefully conducted it to a few here. It was then told and re-told and untold number of times so that its negative impact swelled to its maximum potential. "Wasn't the incoming Chief Minister militantly anti-automation and anti-western?". "Would he allow a cosy area in the capital to remain a special island populated with our youngsters serving the American capitalists?" "Would his pro-farmer sentiments compel him to

divert the money now spent on IT development to the starving farmer and farm labourers"? The questions went on and on, and it was punctuated by one common answer; any time this year he will put his foot down and show who is the boss here. "And he will then order everyone around to set their priorities right."

This canard was then repeated over and over again and it really did disturb us. And, some of us who had very ambitious expansion plans with firm financial commitments put our plans on the back burner. Then like every other Chief Minister, the new Chief Minister



also made his customary visit to address the CEOs of Technopark, Thiruvananthapuram. So, on the appointed day we all took our positions around the now famous large oval conference table at the Park centre.

Nobody had a clue as to what he was going to tell us or how the meeting would end up. There was a tense silence around the table as we waited for him with all the forebodings in our minds. The tension around the table was palpable. We didn't exchange even the usual pleasantries and finally when he entered the conference room everything went on like clock work. He spelled out his game plan for IT and it was more ambitious than what we could hope for

Within weeks TCS, IBS and my own group of companies, Softex started building our own complexes in the plots allotted to us earlier. As Bangalore and Kochi with constructions saturated and over filled, this place is a welcome addition to Kerala's IT infrastructure. And it made several companies to abandon their plans to move out of Kerala to realise their expansion plans. Thiruvananthapuram is now known internationally and it is very much on

hours. The second major attraction is the green ambience of the city and the low-costs. A rupee goes a long way here than it other IT destinations in the south. A large number of good engineering colleges could prepare smart men and women for the IT industry to ensure that the labour pool is well supplied and replenished.

When the deal for Smart City was renegotiated everybody thought that Kerala would lose it. Now it is back.



and finally when he left he had won our hearts. However there was no press report about this momentous visit and strangely no journalists came to ask us about what happened at the meeting.

After the meeting we gave a lusty sigh of relief and went back to our offices and got busy typing out our future plans.

the world IT map. The major attraction of the city is that it is easily accessible to the international community through the Gulf route or the Singapore route, and, both Singapore and Dubai are well connected to US by non-stop flights, which mean a client can fly down to Thiruvananthapuram in less than 15

And IIST is coming. KELTEC has become BrahMaos, the transshipment terminal is on. Yes, we are very much on our way to become the hi-tech State. But a lot more remains to be done as the IT front.

■ The writer is Chairman, Softex Group, Technopark, Thiruvananthapuram

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Dr. Fr. M.K. George S J

The State of Kerala is awakening to the tremendous growth possibilities opened up by an increasingly globalized world. As a people always open to growth possibilities and willing to take risks as manifested by the varieties of migration throughout history, the State is intensely responding to economic growth challenges. Some of the very recent Governmental initiatives like Special Economic Zones, Smart City and other Policy changes point to a paradigm shift which could radically transform the face of Kerala. At the same time, as a people who are deeply conscious of social justice and equity, social security issues are also being raised.

Social Security

Social security primarily means securing a basic minimum level of security for the employed so as to protect them from economic distress. It was meant to be a support in the event of an economic crisis caused due to the loss or substantial reduction of earnings, which may arise due to the loss or substantial reduction of earnings, either due to unemployment, sickness or old age. However, this assumed that all the labour should be absorbed in the organised sector. In our case, records show that almost 92 per cent of Indian labour force is unorganised and remains outside the



Not Charity But Right

Nine per cent of our population is the elderly and sixty seven per cent of those elderly are widowed. By 2021, about 20 per cent of our population would be elderly and the demand on the social security system would be really enormous.

purview of social security measures. It is this awareness that led to a redefinition of social security by the National Commission on Labour in 1969. The Commission said, "The term social

security envisages that the members of the community shall be protected by collective action against social risks causing undue hardship and privation to individuals whose private resources can

seldom be adequate to meet them. The underlying idea behind social security measures is that a citizen who has contributed or is likely to contribute to his country's welfare should be given protection against certain hazards. The same has now been reiterated by the recent report of the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector and the draft national legislation to extend social security to unorganized workers.

Eminent economists like Amartya



vulnerabilities of this group too can be ameliorated.

The Kerala Legacy

It is the unique legacy of Kerala that the State has been in the forefront of providing reasonable equality for human and social development. It has evolved innovative social security schemes like welfare funds, pensions, universal (Public Distribution System) PDS etc. The case of PDS alone is a magnificent example of how the State responded to social security concerns already in the 1960s by covering almost 93 per cent of the population under its food security measure. Be it the twenty three odd welfare boards or pension schemes, health care or other social welfare schemes, the State has always been in the forefront of social security. The crucial question is whether in the changing social and

Social security primarily means securing a basic minimum level of security for the employed so as to protect them from economic distress. It is now seen as a basic entitlement of all beings.

Sen (1999) endorsed the view and claimed that social security has the potential of equalising economic disparities. He in fact suggested widening of the social security net as a means of reduction of social and economic inequalities. Social Security is now seen as a basic entitlement of all beings. It is now accepted that the social security measures are to be extended to the unorganised sector so that the

economic scenario the State can both maintain and scale up the social security measures.

'God's own Country'- A reality Check

Any discussion on social security measures should begin with a reality check. This small state, which has achieved a developmental status on par with the developed world, is now facing unprecedented crises. About 26 per cent of our population is still below the poverty line. Almost 40 per cent belong to the category of low middle class. The educated unemployed come around 40 lakhs.

We have become a people who have controlled mortality, but morbidity rates are high. Life style diseases are on the increase. Emotional health is low, with about 10 to 15 per cent mentally sick, highest suicide rate, and highest alcoholic consumption rates. Divorces are on the increase, and the family courts bear witness to this. While unemployment is rampant, the number of migrant workers is also increasing. Unofficial statistics put them anywhere around two lakhs or more. Nine per cent of our population is the elderly and sixty seven per cent of those elderly are widowed. By 2021, about 20 per cent of our population would be elderly and the demand on the social security system would be really enormous. In brief, the State seems to hide a rather horrendous seamy side, which needs to be attended to. Any discussion on the social security of the State should take into consideration this underbelly of the State.

The Challenges ahead

What would be the challenges ahead and who will be the priority groups who will be need to be attended to? One primary premise on which we should begin this exploration is the fact that designing and implementing viable social security measures is a daunting challenge, partly because of the numbers involved and the bewildering variety of needs and contexts of the needy citizens. Basic political commitment and consequent political will are essential in this effort.

Assuming the basic premise, what would be the major precautions for the Kerala State? The first and foremost priority would be to attend to the most vulnerable and the marginalised. From a socio-political perspective, they would be the B P L group, particularly the fisher folk, the adivasis and the elderly. Women and children, follow considering the reportedly increasing violence and denial of human rights to this section of humanity. The forces of the market govern the policies largely. Thus, the greatest challenge in front of the State and the Civil Society is not to forget the substantially large portion of the people, who need to be assured of basic securities.

It is very important to remember that social security to the people, especially the unorganised workers is not charity. It is their basic human right.

■ The writer is Principal, Loyola College, Thiruvananthapuram



Mega event for a high jump

Sanil P. Thomas

National Games curtains were down with scintillating fireworks in Thiruvananthapuram. It was in 1987. And it is 2008. In a long span of two decades what else infrastructure we did build?

International stadium at Kaloor, Indoor Stadium at Kadavanthra, synthetic track at Maharaja's College ground - all in Ernakulam district. Swimming pool at Alappuzha and a few more are in the offing. High Altitude Training Centre at Munnar, swimming pool at Pirappankode, Thiruvananthapuram. Over?

And, how long we have to wait for yet another sporting extravaganza, at least a National Games. It was proved many a time that only with a mega sports event, sporting facilities would come into being. The surprise, if any, will dissolve when one examines at least the history of National Games. Even under dreadful economic crisis host States were able to mobilise funds in plenty.

I would like to recollect what Suresh Kalmadi, told me in an interview during the 1994 Pune National Games. "It was not my idea alone to build the sports city. Sharad Pawar and I simple-mindedly mooted it. No more help from the Government. All the rest from the private sector."

In between the braving criticism that Maharashtra can ill-afford to spend extravagantly when the State reels under the shock of a natural calamity, Suresh Kalmadi set up a Rs.50 crore sports city in a record 10 months in Pune for the 1994 National Games. The sports city was built on 200 acres.

Kerala too has shown meticulous organisation in 1987. The demerit was that the venues were scattered throughout the State. And, shall we dream it again, another National Games with high tech infrastructure i.e., stadium and equipment. Kerala sports ministry is all set to win the chance to host yet another National Games. It may materialise in a few years. But couldn't we think, rather dream 10 years down the line?

Even before hosting the first Afro-Asian Games, Chandra Babu Naidu and Andhra Pradesh started dreaming about an FI car rally in Hyderabad. Later Maharashtra followed. But with Kalmadi



Revival of famous All India tournaments, at least in football is the need of the hour. By the time, Kerala Games (College Games), Mini Games type melas should not find a place in Kerala Sports Calendar. It is anticlimax to host such meets after inter university meets and state and National School Games, especially in exam season.

and Vijay Mallia think together it will probably be Delhi.

It is super dreaming. We with talents upbeats in athletics, football, volleyball, swimming, badminton etc. must dream for infrastructures. Catch the talents young. Groom with meticulous planning. Ensure bright future in Kerala itself.

Kerala Sports Council and Kerala Olympic Association should contribute a concerted effort so as to achieve the goal.

As the education, sports ministries started thinking together about school sports, KSC and KOA must think together for Kerala sports. After the boom in 1970s and 80s, one sports school, divisions and hostels didn't rise to the expectations. Operation Olympia or Olympic Gold as the name changes as per differing interests won't revolutionarise Kerala Sports what so ever.

Let's study how the Chandigarh sports college works. And see, how the small residential sports school, forwarded on cooperative line in a hamlet near Belgaum in 1984 grew. It was probably

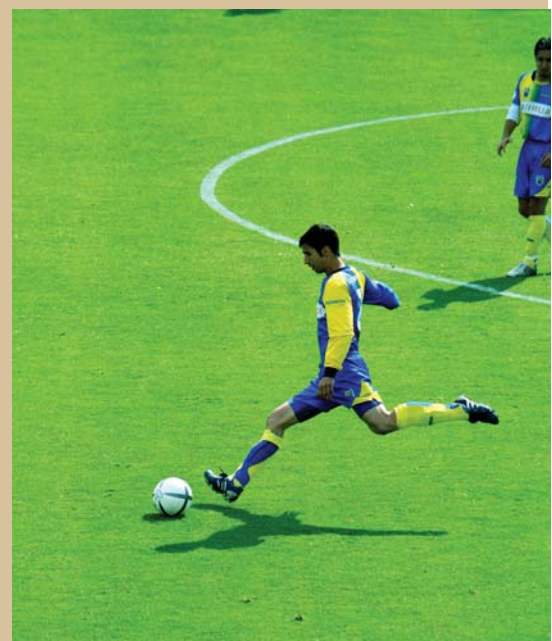


the first time in the history of cooperative societies that one schools was formed solely for the purpose of promoting sports. We too can try what the aforesaid Sports Promotion and Environment cooperative Society did.

Of course, sports lottery brought some enthusiasm. No need to wind up the idea. Meanwhile we must tap the private sector, cooperative sector and of course the NRIs.

Cricket Association is planning it in a big way with Rs.50 crores from BCCI alone for a stadium. Asian Football Confederation will join hands with KSC for 'Vision India' in February. Some private Corporates are in full swing for volley ball.

Revival of famous All India tournaments, at least in football is the need of the hour. By the time, Kerala Games (College Games), Mini Games



type melas should not find a place in Kerala Sports Calendar. It is anticlimax, to host such meets after inter university meets and State and National School Games, especially in exam season.

Let me conclude. We need a mega sports event in the near future. Targeting it, develop infrastructure. Reschedule the sports calendar deleting unwanted events. Tap in the private money. Look for the cooperative sector as well. Politicians to guide, professionals to see, it is done. Utilize the expertise of ex-stars, especially superstars and veteran organisers. And, *chak de Kerala*. ■

K.G.Padmakumar
L.Bindu, P.S.Manu

Aquaculture is the fastest growing food producing sector that accounts for almost 50 percent of the world food fish production with abundant potential to meet the growing demand for aquatic food. As most inland fish produced is consumed locally and marketed domestically, freshwater fish forms unique source of high quality animal protein for marginally food secure communities. Despite a high percentage (77%) of population in Kerala consume fish and high level of fish consumption, fish in requisite quantities is beyond the reach of the poor. Food insecurity is the most visible dimension of poverty and is a sign of extreme destitution.

Although, among the maritime states of India, Kerala occupies foremost position in marine fish production, accounting for over 20 % of the total landings in the country, contribution to inland fish production is only negligible (2.20%) and this is primarily due to the inadequate attention received by this sector. However, in the context of the crisis situation in marine capture fisheries and growing uncertainties concerning its sustainability in recent years, people are turning towards the inland fish and the state has to give due emphasis for development of inland fisheries and freshwater aquaculture.

The scientific management of inland fishery resources essentially needs to consider the community ownership of the resource. Owing to the degraded nature of the aquatic environments, the thrust of the management strategy should be on conservation of stocks and biodiversity. While in the lacustrine system, the focus should be on optimisation of production by various bio-manipulation practices, in the open water fisheries, the focus may be on enhancement strategies.

Unique Endemicity

Out of the 670 freshwater fish species reported in India, 210 are found in the inland watermass of Kerala, of which over 25% ie, 53 are exclusively endemic to the region. These endemic forms include several rare fish species such as blind catfish, Eettilakandai, Karimpachi. Cultivable food fishes native to Kerala waters include kooral, Tooli, Yellow



catfish, kuyil, Katti, manal waaha, puliwaaha, Pachialavetty, Wynad mushi and Naadan mushi. Streams and rivers of Kerala are also the 'gold mines' of several ornamental fish species.

Reservoir Resources

Constructed mainly for hydel power generation or irrigation, the fishery potential of reservoirs is much higher than reservoirs. Unlike the neighboring state, Tamil Nadu, Kerala does not have a history of ancient irrigation reservoirs,

as traditionally rice farming has been practiced in the rain fed wetlands. Storage of rainwater for irrigation and power generation has been relatively a modern concept in Kerala and most of the dams were constructed after independence. There are 35 reservoirs in the state, spread over 42890 ha, 21 of them are below 1000 ha and among the rest, Idukki reservoir is the largest with area over 6168 ha. Owing to manageable size, all these reservoirs are logistically

Aquaculture for Food Security

Successful resource management undoubtedly depends on the increased participation of stake holders, groups and communities. Such an effective partnership and linkage by close involvement of the local interests will go a long way to ensure protection of the resources and environment.

suitable for fish production. Despite the existence of many such small and medium reservoirs in the state, efforts to develop them on scientific lines for fish production are wanting..

Although the average yield in the managed reservoirs is 23.38kg/ha, the average per ha yield of the total reservoir area in the state is only 5kg/ha. The hydel reservoirs built in high land locations have deep basins portraying oligotrophic tendencies as compared to that on the plains which are in transient phase of eutrophication. In deep basin reservoirs such as Idukki,, a substantial part of the storage is always held up as dead storage and nutrients such as phosphate and nitrates is deficient or totally absent. Standing crop of plankton being extremely poor, fish production tends to be low in such systems. The

irrigation reservoirs in midland locations in the state being shallow and spread over rich alluvial soils with and high nutrient loading from allachthonous sources, and high primary productivity may be conducive for fish production.

D e s p i t e abundant and varied resources, the inland fisheries production in the state is only at a subsistence level. The main challenges in enhancing production are tackling issues such as 1).Degradation of aquatic environment 2).Increasing competition for resources and 3) Inadequate institutional system

Mastering the challenges

Integrated management of resources shared by fisheries and other users is essential to facilitate sustainable inland fish production. In order to enhance fish production, there is a dire need for integration of inland fisheries, aquaculture and agriculture. This can add value to the shared resources. Integrated fish farming techniques and farming system models tested and developed

during the past decades can be utilised at the farm and community level. This can help recycling of nutrients and utilization of byproducts and waste for production of crop- livestock-fish systems.

In the context of shrinking land bases and water resources, time-tested technologies of integrated farming involving aquaculture has great relevance to Kerala. The rice-fish farming model developed and popularised by Kerala Agricultural University in Kuttanad is such a widely acclaimed farming model as rice and fish are staples in the diet of the people in these places. Operated in a structured manner, this could not only enhance income base of the farmer and sustain rice cultivation but also help to protect water resources. It has been demonstrated that rotational farming of rice and fish could help to convert low land rice fields temporarily into water storage and harvesting structures. Introduction of herbivorous and macrophagous fish species in rice fields can help to control weeds and bring about significant savings on fertilizer cost making rice cultivation more organic.

Intensified stocking of natural and manmade water bodies, habitat improvement and open water culture are some of the other identified strategies. Observations on open water fish culture in cages and pens, taken up in 1998 for the first time in Kerala in Vembanad lake, has shown that enclosure fish culture can play a significant role in augmenting yield from capture fishery. The advantage of this captive aquaculture is high production owing to dense stocking and intensive feeding. Cage fish culture has great potential in large water bodies such as lakes and reservoirs. The endemic fish *E.suratensis* has been demonstrated to grow upto 230- 350 gm in seven to eight months when reared under a feeding regime using commercial pellets. Since open water bodies are used for diverse activities involving wide range of stake holders, such farming strategies should take into consideration the carrying capacity of the water body and developed through artisanal fisher groups.

The low productivity of most of the reservoirs in Kerala is attributed to undesirable species mix, lack of scientific database, inadequate stocking, wrong selection of species and multiple

Fish population studies in the engineered fish sanctuary indicate that fish utilise sanctuary habitats and the deposited substrate materials for breeding. While developing this engineered habitat, co-operation of the local fisher communities were sought and their participation ensured.

ownership. The State Electricity Board has control over the reservoirs under hydro-electric project and those in the reserve forest are under the forest department. Fisheries department has access only to the irrigation reservoirs. This multiple ownership comes in the way of scientific management of reservoirs. Introduction of fast growing species to colonize unutilised niches is considered a pre-requisite for fisheries development in reservoirs. A three-pronged strategy for reservoir fisheries comprising production of seeds of appropriate species and creation of breeding and rearing facilities at the reservoir sites is essential.

Waste water fed Agri-aqua Production

Inland fish farming can also help to utilise wastewaters and agro-based industrial effluents. This will add a new dimension to inland aquaculture rendering it eco-restoring, environment compatible and economic. By 2020, it is estimated that over 50% of our population will be urban whereby, human food chain and nutrient cycles are going to become unstable as waste and by-products are not going to be returned to soil leading to ecological problems. Utilisation of sewage and urban wastewater for aqua-farming is one of the suggested methods for treatment of such effluents. Such waste water reuse system that promote waste water fed production units near our urban centres is one strategy to alleviate environmental problems.

In the context that fishery decline in natural waters is due to environmental

degradation of aquatic habitats and poor fisheries management, conventional fisheries management measures such as regulation of mesh size, closed areas or closed seasons cannot be the right option for enhancement. Ranching and open water fish culture are considered options in such a context. The phenomenal rate of growth of the lake fishery in China has been attributed to such effective management programme involving setting up of fish protection zones and promotion of artificial stocking.

Protected Sanctuaries

Studies carried out by the Kerala Agricultural University in the Vembanad lake have revealed that by providing simulated breeding habitats, fishery recruitment and production of endemic fish species can be enhanced. The development of an we A variety of artificial nest and substrates deposited on the lake floor in the engineered fish sanctuary, has been found to provide nesting surfaces for Karimeen (*Etroplus suratensis*), the commercial fish species of the lake. Fish population studies in the engineered fish sanctuary indicate that fish utilise sanctuary habitats and



the deposited substrate materials for breeding. While developing this engineered habitat, co-operation of the local fisher communities were sought and their participation ensured. These experiences highlight that successful resource management undoubtedly depends on the increased participation of stake holders groups and communities. Such an effective partnership and linkage by close involvement of the local interests will go a long way to ensure protection of the resources and environment.

■ The writers are with Regional Agricultural Research Station, Kerala Agricultural University, Kumarakom



Development

Dr (Prof) I.S.Bright Singh

The Nobel laureate Dr. Amartya Sen's statement 'development must be environment inclusive' brings forth the reality that development cannot be divorced from ecological and environmental concerns, as both are interrelated. Every citizen has the freedom to lead a pollution free life, and preservation of a pollution free atmosphere must be an important objective of development. This brings to us the focus of development, which invariably the God's own country has to recognize.

Water

Kerala is in the process of transforming in to an ideal residential place with much thrust on habitat development. However, we often forget the prime requirement of healthy living - water. It is a non-controversial fact that the major thrust in the developmental activities must be on protecting the freshwater resources, their conservation and sustainable utilization. This becomes much more important when we realize that the average per capita utilization of freshwater per day in the State is not less than 1000 litres! If we have to continue with this demand, all our freshwater

resources have to be protected at any cost from the pressures of anthropogenic activities, industrialization and agriculture.

The State has to make sure that the hydrological cycle gets completed with a steady state in ground water table to support the water demand of the people and environment, for which the State must undertake water literacy mission with all its seriousness to educate the public in the modest and restricted usage of water and protection of the resources.

Forest

It has been estimated that for sound environmental health 33% of earth must be under forest cover. However, in reality it has shrunk to less than 20%. Ability of modern man to alter landscapes and interfere with natural ecosystems has increased manifold in the recent past and this has made inroads into forest ecosystem as well. Even though extensive

Kerala is in the process of transforming into an ideal residential place with much thrust on habitat development. However, we often forget the prime requirement of healthy living - water.

areas were kept as natural reserve forest without much alteration, the forest mass outside this zone has suffered badly in the recent past. Plantations of many commercial crops came up in such places and caused severe damage to the forest cover, its continuity and biodiversity values. Migration to such forest areas and settlements has completely altered the landscape. Ironically during the post independent era it was the forests, which became the major scene of encroachments.

Forests were once looked upon as zones for production of timber for the State. This approach has to change.

Sustained yield of water and its release into rivers could be made the primary objective of forest management; the other objective must be biodiversity conservation.

There is a burgeoning manufacturing sector these days utilizing all kinds of non-wood forest produce, including medicinal plants. The expanding trade and increasing exploitation will sound the death knell of many of our forest biodiversity if not checked in time.

It is necessary to encourage the production of these resources outside forest as a buy back arrangement between manufactures and local growers.

Another major action plan to be undertaken is the reestablishment of wild life corridors presently under private

Environment inclusive



ownership. Many of these can be reacquired paying adequate compensation and restored as forest.

Wetland ecosystem

Uniqueness of the State is its wetland ecosystem, the hub of biodiversity, rice bowl of Kerala and livelihood of bulk of the population. But the post independent era witnessed extensive reclamation in the name of development without considering the sensitivity of the region. One of the biggest drawbacks in the existing land use policy is the exceptions given, which are misinterpreted and misused culminating in unscrupulous conversions. The public has to be educated on the importance of wetland ecosystem and all the associated

environmental and ecological problems due to its destruction. Besides the loss of biodiversity, which will affect the livelihood of common man, there will be severe scarcity of drinking water too. The different types of wetlands existing in the State are paddy fields, mangrove forests, kole lands, lakes, lagoons, backwaters etc. These wetlands, especially paddy fields, have been extensively converted during the last two decades for human habitation, perennial crops etc. One has to realize that conservation of wetlands has greater significance in mitigating the problems of draught and drinking water scarcity and in making the State a sustainable ecosystem.

It has to be remembered that conversion of paddy fields for non-agricultural purposes is none other than the reason for the scarcity of rice now being experienced in the State and the hike in price.

Mines and quarries

With the expansion of human habitat there has been steep rise in the demand of construction materials. This has resulted in greater pressures on mines and quarries, but without any appropriate impact assessment of the mining process.

If not properly managed this will lead to ecological disasters as earth quakes and land slides.

Sand and rock being natural non-renewable resources, their judicious use has to be assured.

Industrial Development

Industrial development in the State is an essential requirement considering the economic development. But having a limited land area with a fragile ecosystem this has to be implemented with great care. World wide there is a surge of technology with zero emission and zero effluent discharge. It has to be mandatory to have such technologies implemented in the industries in the State.

It has to be appreciated that a pollution free environment is the birth right of every citizen.

Transportation

If the State of Kerala has to be recognized as a region of better living, transportation sector has to be strengthened with much focus on the public transport. One of the blessings of the State is the long stretch of backwater system from one end of the State to the other in parallel to the coast.

On strengthening the water transport much of the pressures on roads in the movement of goods can be lessened.

Earth Quakes and Land Slides

Kerala is endemic to earth quakes and landslides. However, proper demarcation of seismic zones and land slide prone areas has not been accomplished.

Maintenance of forest cover and discouraging agriculture in those areas are some of the measures to be taken for avoiding landslides.

Implementation – Development is environment inclusive

It has to be realized that the perils in the environmental management of the State is not due to lack of policies, but

Kerala shall become the *God's own country* only if the people of the State deliberately work hard from all quarters realising that development is environment inclusive.

due to lack of their effective implementation. The major reason is the lack of cooperation from public, may be because of the lack of awareness on the ecological damage, which might cause if proper care is not taken in the appropriate time. The ecosystems and the biological diversity contained within them provide a stream of goods and services, the continued delivery of which remains essential to our economic prosperity and welfare, which are often undervalued. They must be valued and integrated into any kind of developmental activity as the poorer sections of the society depend on these ecosystem based goods and services for livelihood. Moreover, a participatory approach has to be taken for the sustainable management of the resources of the State.

Kerala shall become the God's own country only if the people of the State deliberately work hard from all quarters realising that development is environment inclusive.

■ The writer is Director, School of Environmental Studies, Cochin University of Science and Technology, Kochi



S. Harikumar

The development pattern of Kerala has close relation with all India pattern in terms of growth of state domestic product and the sectoral composition of growth. The SDP growth rate of the State was eight percent during 2005-06 and the GDP growth rate 8.4 percent. The State derives the main stimulus for its growth from the tertiary sector, at the national level the secondary and tertiary sectors contribute a major share. Kerala remains an industrially backward State even after the completion of 10th Five year Plan. The establishment of large number of public sector undertakings also could not achieve the desired level of development. To overcome the slackness, a major shift in emphasis was made especially from the ninth plan onwards. New schemes have been evolved and implemented with a view to attract more investment to the State.

During the post reform period, some argued that the State could not attract mega projects due to many reasons. Some



Dress up the Project

of the reasons were overemphasized and some sidelined. A comparison of development initiatives taken among the south Indian states reveals that Kerala is lagging behind and the pace of development is very slow. This happens in a State with high literacy and all indices of social development are comparable to that of developing countries. This slowness in the development initiatives will further dampen the interest of investors.

When we look at the development efforts in the State during the last five years many new projects are coming up

When new projects are mooted for initial discussion, the most important question that arises from the people is how much advantage will be it for the people in terms of hike in real estate prices.

to enjoy the specific advantages. However, many of the investment proposals fades away in the initial stage itself. Most of these projects have gone to other neighbouring states. Some projects have come up and the initial efforts for some are going on. The success of Techno Park emphasizes other schemes such as Smart city, Vizhinjam project, Vallarapadma projects, Biotech Park and many IT parks. All these projects aim at huge investment and this would change the retarded growth of the State and will attract further investments. However, the basic question is, are we prepared to receive these projects from the

development perspective. Whether the Government is ready to provide their requirements and act as a facilitator? Whether the people are ready to accept these efforts to enjoy the real benefits?

In Kerala, the land available for non-agricultural purposes is very scarce. Further the density of population is also very high. This leads to scarcity of land for agricultural purposes and land value is very high considered to other states. When new projects are mooted for initial discussion, the most important question that arises from the people is how much advantage will be it for the people in terms of hike in real estate prices. All discussions and decisions hang around this. This leads to enormous increase in land prices and in turn this affects the cost of future projects. The real benefit of any development project is not the short-term gains, but the real benefit in terms of increase in employment and income and the multiplier effect. The linkages generated out of these will be tremendous. Hence, any project, which can have positive impact, is to be welcomed and accommodated at the earliest.

As noted earlier, number of investment proposals received and implemented in the State, when compared with other states and or even with south Indian states, Kerala is at the bottom. The State is yet to prove that the implementing mega projects will be successful. The basic question is do we have any arrangements for the promotion of investment activities like in other states. What we have is a system, which will create delay in implementation and this leads to flight of proposals. The state government and people have to gear up for receiving new projects. As far as the State is concerned, the state government cannot remain simply as facilitator of

development. Taking into consideration, the Government must act as the leader and responsibility for providing the facilities, which are essential for implementation. The role of the Government as facilitator is possible only after a stage of development is reached. All neighbouring states, which are well ahead of Kerala in development, are eagerly waiting for a chance to receive mega projects. In this circumstance of this it is useful to have following suggestions:

1. The State must have clear picture on the developments that can be accommodated. If possible a list of sector wise interest could be prospered and shown in the website. District wise availability of land for projects is to be identified and notified in advance. All environmental problems and other related issues must be studied in advance before listing of land in each district. For this people's participation through local bodies must be taken and it will be advantageous even in later stages.
2. A State level agency, quasi governmental, will be useful to workout and identify the projects and respective districts.
3. A single window clearing system is essential to minimize administrative delays
4. The infrastructure support required for the projects must be provided. The development projects will lead to urbanization and this requires many civic amenities. This has to be arranged by the State. Local transportation is serious problem in all cities in Kerala. This leads to multiple problems. A solution to all these must be identified well in advance.
5. A policy framework is to be decided for each district to protect the interests of negatively affected people is highly appreciated. For these people's participation can be utilised.

For getting ready to receive any new project for development a clear long-term vision is essential. The government, people and political parties should consider that development projects are for the State and the people, and the effects of this will percolate to lower level and the basis of the economy gets strengthened in the long run.

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COVER STORY

Rural Kerala be focussed

Dr P.K Manoj

The State of Kerala in the Indian union is characterised by a number of significant socio-economic, industrial and political peculiarities. These include, inter alia, the very high level of technically qualified and skilled manpower, near full literacy rate, extremely high level of NRI population and hence high level of foreign remittances, very high levels of social development as well as living standards comparable with advanced countries, high PC penetration, highest telephone intensity in the country, 100 percent digital connectivity etc. to name a few. A vast network of micro finance institutions promoted either by the government or by private organisations is another positive feature as far as Kerala is concerned. Of late, in December 2007 Kerala has become the first State in the entire country to achieve total banking status or full financial inclusion.

In spite of these favourable features, there exists high scope for further advancement in respect of industrial

development in general and rural development in particular, given high unemployment rate especially among the educated. In the wake of information and communication technology (ICT) revolution sweeping across the world, the above features of Kerala economy makes it the ideal location to utilise its vast and unique socio-cultural and knowledge infrastructure for leveraging the immense potential of ICT. By means of a rural development network (RDNet), computerisation of all the 152 Blocks in

Given the special features of the Kerala economy, one of the best strategies for industrial development and employment generation appears to be that of stimulating the market for the service sector. It is widely recognised that this market offers the largest growth opportunities for the State in the immediate future.

the State and its networking has already been initiated. Some strategies for rural development that Kerala might adopt in the knowledge era of today, considering its special features and also replicable developments elsewhere in the world, are discussed below.

- Specialised advice to farmers on scientific methods of cultivation, value added crops, export potential of various crops, high-tech agricultural products, etc. needs to be provided. (For instance, the immense potential of organic crops,

procedures for getting requisite certification from the government etc.). The State is yet to start an Open University on the lines of IGNOU (Indira Gandhi National Open University) – a central University offering quality distance education courses. YCMOU, the open university of Maharashtra is a role model in this regard which has got vast infrastructure to train the farmers, the state-of-the-art technology in respect of scientific farming, in local language, mostly through virtual mode. Such a university can provide traditional as well as vocational education and training to the rural masses. ICT initiatives that are already in place, like, Kiosks for farmers (KISAN), schemes for promotion of Agriculture (e-Krishi) etc. have to be further streamlined on the above lines.

- ICT adoption in micro finance and women empowerment is another promising area. The State's micro finance initiative for women empowerment (viz. Kudumbasree) and a number of similar initiatives by various other agencies have been found to be quite successful and the banks are ready to finance such initiatives. In a state like Kerala which is already having an enviably high level of gender equality, ICT can bring about

Appropriate public-private partnership (PPP) models for rural development needs to be looked into in view of the presence of an array of powerful socio-cultural organisations and NGOs with elaborate branch network.

economic growth for developed and developing countries alike. For a country like India, particularly for Kerala which is suffering from poor industrialisation, high unemployment and low productivity, the need for ICT adoption for improving the efficiency and expanding the market of the SMEs as well as providing employment to the masses need not be overemphasised.

- Given the special features of the Kerala economy, one of the best strategies for industrial development and employment generation appears to be that of stimulating the market for the service sector. It is widely recognised that this market offers the largest growth opportunities for the State in the immediate future. As such, this strategy needs to be implemented on a war footing, primarily because it enables the use of ICT as an enabler of fast socio-economic development of the State. The vast prospects of engineering service outsourcing (ESO), legal service outsourcing, medical transcription etc. are just a few.

- Promotion of ICT as a production sector is also an alternative, though may not be as effective as the services sector. This broadly includes three major sectors viz. IT Service,

ITES and IT Hardware. Urgent steps need to be taken for creating the requisite infrastructure, human capacity and urban amenities, including life style options. Of late, the increasingly favourable industrial environment of the state have already started attracting many companies.

- Co-operative sector in the State, particularly co-operative housing needs

to be further promoted. Rural housing shortage can be effectively met only with the active support of co-operative housing sector through its affordable housing schemes.

- Other areas wherein ICT could be employed meaningfully in Kerala for rural development include, inter alia, the following: (a) Tourism and Medicine: Believed to be the 'God's Own Country' by the foreigners, Kerala is one of the most sought after tourist destinations of the entire globe. Similarly, Kerala is quite popular for its traditional medicine (Ayurveda). Thus, e-tourism and e-medicine initiatives offer tremendous scope for the State. (b) ICT initiatives in handicrafts and other indigenous products etc.

Concluding Remarks

The scope for further advancement in rural development in the State is quite vast, in view of the really appreciable overall achievements of the State in adopting and implementing various ICT initiatives, despite the low per-capita income and considerable financial constraints that it faces. The achievements in e-governance front can be effectively translated to those in rural developments through suitable linkages and policy initiatives for utilising the "e-infrastructure". In view of the quite favourable socio-economic environment of the State, particularly the abundant amount of technically qualified and skilled human resources and high level of social equity, the State has got excellent potential for bringing in ICT-led rural development in a balanced and equitable manner, and hence to achieve rapid prosperity sans digital divide. The ongoing governmental initiatives themselves appear to be quite successful and sustainable in the long run. However, the State needs to raise resources to meet the huge financial outlay required for the full fledged maintenance of the ongoing schemes; and further, it has to take immediate steps to further improve the PC penetration rate in the State. Appropriate public-private partnership (PPP) models for rural development needs to be looked into in view of the presence of an array of powerful socio-cultural organisations and NGOs with elaborate branch network.

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very fast social change through women empowerment and hence contribute towards the rapid rural development of the State by tremendously improving their efficiency and reach.

- ICT for promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs): An active SME sector has widely been recognised as one of the most crucial factors for attaining long-term and sustainable

Chief Minister Presents Development Agenda

Excerpts from the speech made by the Chief Minister at the National Development Council.

V.S. Achuthanandan
Chief Minister

Honourable Prime Minister, Chief Ministers, Members of the Union Cabinet, Deputy Chairman and Members of the Planning Commission, Assembled Dignitaries, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a matter of gratification that the Draft Eleventh Five Year Plan, though much delayed, is finally ready for presentation to the National Development Council. Notwithstanding the difference that undoubtedly exists between the approach of my Government and that of the Government of India on issues of plan strategy, I am glad that the planning process in the country can finally get underway on the basis of a concrete five year plan document.

At the same time, however, I shall be failing in my duty if I do not underscore the difference in outlook and approach between my Government and that of the Union Government as enshrined in the plan document. This difference was outlined by me in my comments on the Approach Paper to the Eleventh Five Year Plan presented to the NDC a year ago, and also in a document submitted by the Kerala State Planning Board to the Southern Regional Conclave on the Approach Paper, convened by the Planning Commission at Thiruvananthapuram in July 2006. Looking at the Draft Eleventh Five Year Plan, I find that this difference still persists. The difference begins with the very title of the Plan document "Towards Inclusive Growth". The suggestion here is that the growth process had hitherto

excluded many but is now to be made more inclusive; that it had left several sections of society untouched whom it must now incorporate within its benevolent embrace; that it had by-passed them, and therefore left them in a state of persisting poverty and misery, unlike the rest of society whom it had touched and who had consequently prospered. My point is that there are no sections untouched by the growth process in a modern society. The persisting misery of some is the



changed drastically during this period, as has the condition of those who have prospered, but only for the worse. But this change too has been a consequence of the same growth process which has produced the other phenomenon, namely the prosperity of the "included". It is significant that according to the National Sample Survey data the proportion of rural population accessing less than 2400 calories per person per day has increased from 74.5 per cent in 1993-94 to 87.0

A major role is assigned to the proposed increase in the agricultural growth rate from two per cent under the Tenth Plan to four per cent under the Eleventh. Towards this end the Draft Plan document suggests a number of measures, from watershed management to research and development.

outcome of the same growth process which has brought prosperity to others; that the growth process which our country is witnessing necessarily has differential impacts on different sections of society; that the misery of those in misery is not because of their pristine state of being untouched by growth, but precisely because they are victims of the very same growth process which has brought prosperity to others. In short, the "included" and the "excluded" are both created by the same growth process.

An obvious manifestation of this proposition is the fact that the "excluded" are not where they were, say, a decade and a half ago. Their condition too has

in 2004-05, precisely during the period when the growth rate is supposed to have picked up. Since accessing 2400 calories is the definition of the poverty line in rural India, it follows that rural poverty in the country, strictly speaking, is both much higher than is officially claimed, and rising, instead of falling as claimed in the Plan Document.

Other statistics too show a significant change for the worse for the lower segments of the rural population. Again, according to the NSS, the percentage of rural households operating nil land area was 21.9 in 1993; it has increased to 32.0 by 2002-03. Lest it is thought that this rising landlessness is merely a



symptom of occupational diversification, and hence of dynamism in rural India, I should mention that according to every single one of the various concepts of the unemployment rate used in India, whether “usual status” or “current daily status” or “current weekly status”, there was a significant increase in unemployment of both males and females in rural India between 1993-94 and 2004. Thus landlessness in terms of operational area was increasing in the very period when unemployment was also increasing, which suggests a process of immiseration that is systemic and not separate from the celebrated process of growth acceleration. The same trend towards immiseration can also be observed with respect to owned area, where again the extent of landlessness has increased. And it is confirmed too by the decline in the number of bovines, ovines and milch cattle per 100 households between 1991-92 and 2002-03 (since peasants in distress typically first lose their cattle and then their land).

The immiseration I have mentioned is not confined to the marginal farmers,

the landless or the agricultural workers. It affects large segments of the peasantry, as is evident for instance from the spate of peasant suicides all over the country. Thus the growth process has affected a very large segment of the rural population adversely even as it has increased the number of billionaires and brought some prosperity to the upper echelons of the urban middle class. But if this differential impact is endemic to the growth process we have been experiencing, then more of the same can hardly have a favourable impact on the “excluded”.

This becomes clear when we look at the specific elements of the Plan strategy which the Planning Commission expects will engender “inclusiveness”. A major role is assigned to the proposed increase in the agricultural growth rate from two per cent under the Tenth Plan to four per cent under the Eleventh. Towards this end the Draft Plan document suggests a number of measures, from watershed management, to irrigation, to research and development, to contract farming. While watershed management, irrigation and research are undoubtedly of great importance, one measure that is

conspicuous by its virtual absence in the document is the offer of remunerative prices to the peasantry. Instead of assured procurement at remunerative prices, the document talks only of “greater predictability in measures designed for price stability”. In the absence of such assured remunerative prices, credit flow to small and marginal farmers will not increase, even if the Vaidyanathan Committee recommendations are implemented. It is the collapse of price support that is responsible to a large extent for the phenomenon of agrarian crisis that has been haunting the country of late, but the Plan document fails to meet the problem head on. As a result, the four per cent agricultural growth it expects to prevail over the Eleventh Plan period is unlikely to materialise. Even if perchance, it does materialise, then that can only be through the agency of large farmers, in which case the employment generation that the Plan document expects in agriculture is unlikely to occur. What is more, the license proposed to be given for contract farming in a situation

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CM presents Development Agenda

where the State does not provide assured prices, will only entail a squeeze on the small and marginal farmers (whose bargaining strength is much lower than of the contracting corporate entities), whether or not they produce enhanced output. In short, the “inclusiveness” visualised in the Plan document for the indigent agricultural population will remain a chimera.

What a combination of debt relief and assured agricultural price can achieve is illustrated by the example of Kerala itself. We can not of course provide assured agricultural prices for cash crops which are internationally traded. But we have provided an assured price for paddy @ Rs nine per kg. This year it is higher than what the Government of India have announced. This, together with the promise of debt relief which the newly constituted Debt Relief Commission of Kerala has brought to the peasantry, has put an end to peasant suicides in Kerala. We must not of course be complacent, because the appreciation of the exchange rate of the rupee, on which more later, portends further hardships for the peasantry. But Kerala's case shows the general way forward for alleviating peasant distress, without which all planning becomes meaningless.

Realising the Draft Plan's objective of “inclusiveness” depends crucially upon the absorption of the labour reserves into gainful employment. The Draft Plan's employment strategy however is suspect. The emphasis on skill upgradation and training is welcome, but it can make only a small contribution to the gigantic task of absorbing the massive labour reserves in the country. For this the two main mechanisms suggested in the Plan document are the increase in agricultural growth and a shift of the work-force out of agriculture into rapidly growing manufacturing and services sectors. Employment absorption in agriculture, we have seen, is likely to be a chimera. When it comes to the shift of workers out of agriculture into the rapidly growing non-agricultural sectors, the record till now has been poor, as the Plan document itself demonstrates. Some have argued that things have begun to change in the very recent period, but the recent shift out of agriculture has been into such

low-paid jobs that it should more appropriately be considered a shift in the location of the labour reserves rather than a diminution of the labour reserves through absorption into quality employment. And even if this shift in the location of labour reserves is counted, for argument's sake, as gainful employment, the unemployment rate has nonetheless increased in the recent period, so much so that one can quite legitimately say that the current rate of unemployment is the highest ever in post-independence India.

While doing nothing palpable to make a dent on unemployment, the Draft Plan suggests a change in labour laws for introducing “labour market flexibility” as a means of reducing unemployment! There is

We can not provide assured agricultural prices for cash crops which are internationally traded. But we have provided an assured price for paddy @ Rs nine per kg. This year it is higher than what the Government of India have announced.

neither any theoretical argument nor any empirical justification for the assertion that labour market flexibility has a favourable impact on employment. Insecurity of employment and denial of trade union rights have the ultimate effect of reducing the wage rate compared to what it otherwise would have been. This not only directly increases inequality in income distribution and hence militates against “inclusiveness”, but also has a restrictive effect on employment owing to the reduced

purchasing power in the hands of the workers. Indeed several ILO studies conducted in the context of the European Community have shown that measures of “labour market flexibility” have not had any favourable impact on employment. And yet the Draft Plan not only proposes such “flexibility”, which is a euphemism for an assault on the rights of the workers, but puts forward the argument that the absence of such “flexibility” constitutes a “psychological” block for entrepreneurs. To restrict workers' rights for provide “psychological” satisfaction to the



capitalists can scarcely qualify as an “inclusive” growth strategy.

The Draft Plan expresses apprehensions about oil prices, but an even more serious and immediate threat to the people comes from the appreciating exchange rate. The appreciation which has been quite substantial over the last few months has brought loss of markets and closures to a host of small units, with seriously adverse consequences for employment, and a squeeze on the incomes of the cash crop growing

peasantry. In Kerala which has a strong export crop base, this has brought great hardships to the growers: if coconut growers have been hit by the Centre's edible oil import policy, the growers of other crops like cashew have suffered on account of the rupee appreciation. Public sector industrial units in the State which have been making profits for decades are suddenly faced with losses and are asking for budgetary subsidies for survival. We have here a classic example of speculation throttling enterprise, indeed of ordinary people being victimised by the caprices of a bunch of international financial speculators. This is what the Union Government's adherence to neo-liberalism and hence to the policy of making India a part of the vortex of speculative global financial flows has entailed for the common people of the country.

I welcome the Plan Document's recognition of the problems arising from the FRBM Act. Theoretically it is the revenue deficit which is supposed to capture "excess consumption" on the part of the State that arguably needs to be curtailed, and not the fiscal deficit whose size is affected by public investment. In practice, as the Plan document recognizes, since a number of welfare expenditures which have important productive effects figure in the revenue account, putting curbs on the revenue deficit can be counter-productive. Neither deficit therefore constitutes an obvious target for control. In any case, to have a statutory ceiling on any deficit whatsoever that is binding in all seasons, come hell or high weather, is patently unreasonable. It is time therefore that the whole question of FRBM Acts both at the Centre and the states is looked at afresh in the light of reason rather than the purely ideologically-inspired principles of "sound finance".

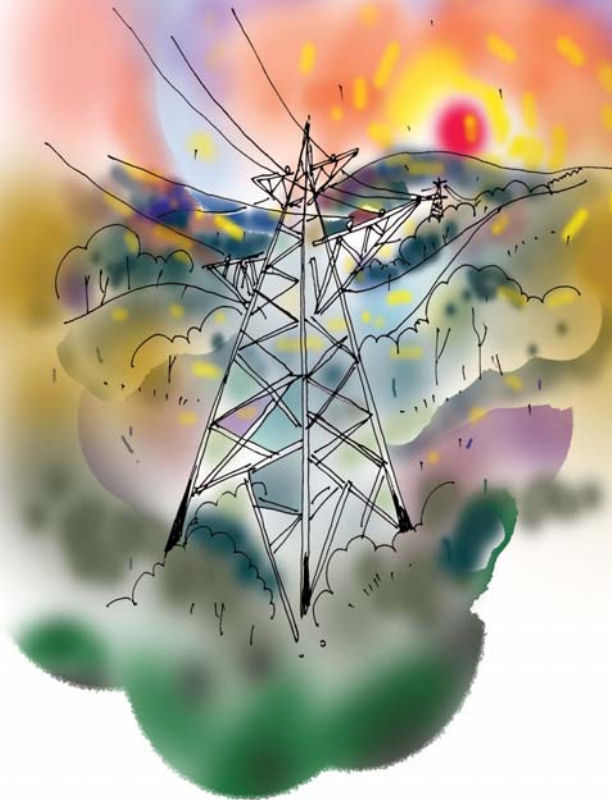
As is clear my government has serious difference with the entire approach and outlook of the Draft Plan. Supply-side economics within a neo-liberal regime in our view will never overcome disparities but will only accentuate them. A policy of control over financial flows; of enlarging the domestic market through a boost to peasant agriculture by making it remunerative; of instituting a relatively egalitarian pattern of landownership through appropriate land reforms; and of enhancing the purchasing power in the hands of the poor by taxing the rich who are in the process of becoming super-rich; is in our view the preconditions for curbing the rampant growth in inequalities and the pervasive immiseration that currently characterises the Indian society. Nonetheless, I welcome the fact that the Eleventh Plan document is ready and we can resume the process of planning on the basis of some concrete signposts. ■

KERALA CALLING

It is decided to increase the subscription rate of *Kerala Calling* from January, 2008.

Annual subscription charge will be Rs 80. Subscription charge for five years will be Rs 300. Amount can be remitted by cash in the District Information Office at Civil Stations or at the Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Thiruvananthapuram. Single copy of the issue costs Rs 8.

The amount may also be sent by money order to the Director, Information and Public Relations Department, First Floor, Secretariat Annexe, Thiruvananthapuram - 1.



InKEL

(Infrastructure Development Kerala Ltd) is an initiative of the Government of Kerala. It is formed with the objective of undertaking large scale infrastructure development projects. Whereas infrastructure development requires large capital and it involves long gestation period, the Government have no such huge money available for investment, it was felt necessary to mobilise private investment in the infrastructure sector. This has paved way for the formation of InKEL.

InKEL has 26 per cent of equity from the State Government and 74 per cent from the private investors. During December 2007, the board was reconstituted with Elamaram Kareem, Minister for Industries as Chairman and Dr.G.C.Gopala Pillai as Managing Director. Other Board members are T. Balakrishnan, Principal Secretary, Industries and Commerce, P.H..Kurian, Managing Director , KSIDC Ltd, Dr. P. Mohamed Ali, M.A.Yusuffali, C.K. Menon, Varghese Kurian and C.V. Rappai.

The present equity of the Company is fixed as Rs100 crores. Last date for receiving shares has been extended till 15th January 2008. The response from the private investors including the small investors appears to be overwhelming. There is an overall request from many quarters to increase the equity base to 200 crores or even up to 500 crores. This request will be presented to the Board for taking an appropriate decision.

The InKEL's focus today is to prepare a business plan after analysing Kerala's requirement in the infrastructure sector. Priorities will be fixed and each of the projects will be implemented with the blessings of Government and other professionals. ■

Information Commission interprets Privacy

The State Information Commission has decided that a person who had appeared in the written test and interview for the selection of Assistant Public Prosecutor Grade II is entitled to get the information regarding the marks obtained by the candidates. The Commission directed the PIO of the Home Department to provide the information sought for within 15 days.

The candidate has a right to information regarding the marks secured in the test

M. Hari Kumar, who was a candidate for the post of Assistant Public Prosecutor Grade II, requested the Principal Information Officer of the Home Department, Government of Kerala, for the split up marks obtained in the written test and interview by the candidates in the APP list. The PIO rejected the request. The appellate authority also rejected his appeal under Section 8 (1)(j) of the Right to Information Act.

Hari Kumar approached the State Information Commission against the decision of the appellate authority. Deciding the petition, the Commission observed that the interpretation of the first appellate authority that furnishing of the mark list and marks obtained in interview would amount to an invasion on the privacy of a person is fallacious and hence unmaintainable. Privacy refers to decency and social morality and self-responsibility of an individual and it cannot be extended to an examination or of an interview.

Miracle Muringa

Dr T.E. George

It is not for nothing, a campaign called “Muttathoru Muringa” meaning “A Drumstick Tree for every Homestead” has been recently launched in Kerala to further popularise the cultivation of the already popular tree vegetable *Moringa oleifera* Lam. This graceful tree that adorns our landscape is an exceptionally nutritious perennial vegetable, all parts of which

having a variety of potential uses. The immature green pod, called drumstick or “muringakka” is an indispensable ingredient of a variety of South Indian dishes like sambar, avial etc.

Scraped drumstick pulp can be made into a very tasty dish, drumstick bhurtha. The seeds are consumed like peas or roasted like nuts. The flowers are edible when cooked which taste like mushrooms. The leaves are cooked and used like amaranth leaves. The leaves are also dried and crushed into powder and used in soups and sauces. The drumstick leaves are highly nutritious, being an excellent source of Vitamin A (6.8 mg/100g), Vitamin C (220 mg), protein (6.7 g), iron (seven mg), calcium (440 mg) and potassium (260 mg). It would be no exaggeration if one says that the leaves, pods and flowers of this tree have seven times the Vitamin C found in oranges, four times the Vitamin A of carrots, three times the iron of spinach,

four times as much calcium as in milk and three times the potassium of bananas. The tree's bark, roots, fruit, flowers, leaves, seeds and gum are also used medicinally, as an antiseptic, for treating rheumatism, for controlling blood pressure, for strengthening the immune system and for curing head aches. The seed oil called ben oil is used in cooking, cosmetics and lubrication. The seed cake after oil extraction can be used as a manure or as a flocculant to purify water. A number of muringa products, namely fresh fruit, canned fruit, fruit powder, seed, seed oil, seed cake powder, leaf, leaf powder, muringa pickle, muringa tea powder and root are exported from our country.

Muringa, a native of India, comes up very well in tropical conditions and can be grown in any type of soil, provided it



is well drained. The major planting season is May-June. The ecotypes under cultivation are Jaffna, Chavakacheri, Chemmurunga, Kodikalmurunga and Palmuringa while the varieties cultivated are KM-1, PKM-1 and PKM-2. Kerala Agricultural University has developed two high yielding types namely MO-144 and AD-4. While PKM-1 and AD-4 are annuals or short duration types, all other ecotypes and varieties are perennials. The annual types are propagated by seeds, the seed rate being 625 gm per hectare. In the perennial types, stem cuttings of 1.0 to 1.5 metre length and 15 to 20 cm girth are used as the planting material. It is better to plant the cuttings first in poly bags and transplant them into the main field after sprouting. A total of 625 cuttings are required for planting one hectare at a recommended spacing of 4 x 4 m.

Generally, muringa does not require irrigation, as it is a drought tolerant crop. However, during dry spells, irrigation can be given once in 10 to 15 days. Every year, the plant needs 60, 80 and 40 g of nitrogen, phosphorus and potash respectively, apart from 10 to 20 kg farmyard manure. The tree basin is to be cleared of weeds once in a year and slight hoeing of the soil under the trees will be beneficial. Plants with overgrown branches experience difficulty in harvesting and hence pruning is to be done before harvesting. Muringa is a fast growing tree and starts bearing pods within six months after sowing in annual types and within eight to nine months after planting perennials. Young fruits are to be harvested as mature fruits will be fibrous and inedible. The main harvesting season is January – May. The yield is around 200 to 250 fruits per tree in annual types. In perennial types, the yield will be generally low (80 to 90 pods per tree) in the first two years of bearing, after which it increases progressively to about 400 to 500 fruits per tree in the fourth and fifth years. No serious pests and diseases are noticed in this crop except leaf eating caterpillars which can be controlled by spraying organic pesticides like neem kernel suspension or neem oil - garlic emulsion.

■ The writer is Professor & Head, Department of Olericulture, College of Horticulture, Kerala Agricultural University, Thrissur



Cockatoos

the companion birds

Dr Shinekumar

Remember seeing those cuddly birds on the circus ring. The birds with the spectacular head crest entertaining you by pulling toy carts and peddling little cycles.

They are the legendary cockatoos. The birds from the parrot family capable of spreading out their crests and captivating anyone with the mesmerising looks. Cockatoos, in fact, are one the longest living members of the parrot family. There are records showing that cockatoo had lived even upto 119 years. Native to Australia and New Guinea, Cockatoos are lovable and affectionate birds. The crests are their insignia. They are instantly recognised by their crests, which are raised or spread out when excited or alarmed.

Depending upon the hue and beauty of the crests cockatoos fall under four groups. These are greater Sulphur crested, Lesser sulphur crested, Umbrella and Roseate.

The prime attraction of its crest that spreads out like small crest, the Lesser following the world over. about umbrella is that its

the Greater sulphur crested is, of course a fan. Though with a comparably sulphur crested has a big fan

The unique feature crests curved backward and falls over the head The umbrella is also known as the Loud Cockatoo because it loves screaming. The striking pink plumage gives the Roseate its name.

These are relatively docile cockatoos.

Bear in mind that Cockatoos are intelligent and also possess strong beaks. For this reason secure the door of the cage with a padlock rather than just a hasp. The bird has a prehensile tung and may well learn to undo simple catches without difficulty and once free in room may cause damage to furniture.

Parrot food, green stuff fruits are the feed for cockatoos. Two eggs for normal clutch and these should hatch after an incubation period of 25 days. Both adult birds take turns at this task.

Under proper training cockatoos become great companion birds. They simply overwhelm you with their response to commands and attractive movements. Though cockatoos are birds priced at five figure, their owners take pride in owing them and hence don't care much about the price.

Bite Crispy



Achappam

Maida-four cups
fine rice powder-one tablespoon
coconut milk-two cups
eggs-two
sugar-1 ½ tablespoon
sesame seeds-1 ½ tablespoon
salt (to taste)
oil (to fry)

Method: Sift together maida and rice powder. Take enough coconut milk to make a loose batter with rice flour. Whisk eggs and add to batter. Add sugar, salt and sesame seeds. Mix the batter well till it becomes thick. Heat the achappam mould in oil. Dip ¾ of the mould into the batter and then immerse in hot oil. When the achappam leaves the mould, dip it again in the batter, and then in oil. Repeat till all the batter is used up. Drain extra oil by placing them on paper.

Cheeda

Pressed rice (aval)-four cups
ground nuts-one cup (roasted and skinned)
1" coconut slices (sundried)-two cups
raisins-1/2 cup
sugar-two teaspoons
a pinch of turmeric powder
salt to taste
oil-to fry
curry leaves (chopped and fried)

Heat oil in a thick-bottomed pan. Put a small quantity of aval at a time, fry and transfer to a plate. Sprinkle turmeric powder on it and toss. Fry groundnuts also in the same oil. Then fry coconut pieces and mix raisins, sugar, salt and curry leaves with the fried ingredients. When cooled, store in an airtight container.



Omapodi

Bengal gram dal flour-two cups
butter-1/2 teaspoon
salt-to taste
oil-for frying

Mix all ingredients except oil in a bowl. Add enough water to the mix to make a thick dough. Press through the seva press and prepare omapodi in hot oil.

Chemmeen Murukku

Prawns-1 ½ tbsp (soaked)
button onions-1/2 cup
garlic flakes-¼ cup
coconut milk-two cups
maida-four cups
roasted bengal gram-two (powdered)
ghee-¾ tablespoon
sesame seeds-¼ tablespoon
salt-to taste

Grind the prawns to a fine paste. Next, grind the onions and garlic. Steam maida and transfer to a plate and crush all the lumps of powdered bengal gram. Sift the urad dal with a fine sieve. Mix everything together. Add the coconut milk and knead well. Add all the other ingredients to the dough and mix. Press the dough through seva press in the shape of muruks. Use the lid with small star-shaped hole. Deep-fry the muruks in hot oil. Drain and store in airtight container.





Black-eyed Susan

Suresh Muthukulam

A twining perennial vine having colour flowers with dark brown 'eyes'; or centres - it is the black-eyed Susan, which grows quickly and easily in full sun. The annual is available in white, cream, yellow and gold and is usually started from seed.

Black-eyed Susan is a good plant of hanging baskets or for trellises, against a sunny fence or look spectacular growing up on obelisk in a container. It is a native to tropical Africa which has become naturalised in Asia.

Botanically named 'Thunbergia alata', the species name is from the Latin, 'alatas', meaning 'winged' which refers to the winged petioles but it could also allude to the seeds that have projections looking rather like wings.

Susan is propagated by cuttings or by seeds. Plants from seeds are more vigorous than those from cuttings. Seeds germinate easily in a damp mixture of fine humus-rich soil with some sand. A glass sheet on top helps the soil moist but do allow some air to circulate. Newspaper on top of the glass will help germination by keeping the seeds dark. Mature plants may have seedlings underneath ready for transplanting. Used light soil rich in humus but with good drainage and add some super phosphate. Water the plant well at first and then moderately all year but especially in summer. Add compost or leaf manure at planting time and again two or three times per summer, as a mulch. Give an occasional dressing of fertilizer mixture like 18:18:18 or 19:19:19.

Black-eyed Susan grows quickly and starts flowering at an early age. It can be trimmed if it gets too big. Light trimming in spring will encourage flowering.

The main varieties are Susy (mixed colours), alba (white), aurantiaca (yellowish orange) and Bakeri (white). 'Susy' is one of the most popular varieties. The plant also has a name 'Clock vine' as has been honoured in the standard set of South African postage stamps. This ornamental friendly vine attracts bees, butterflies and birds; birds also often nest in the thickly tangled stems.

In African countries Black-eyed Susan is used as a vegetable or stock feed. Medically it is used for skin problems, cellulites, back and joint pains, eye inflammation, piles and rectal cancer. Gall sickness and some ear problems on cattle are also treated with this plant. For cheerful mornings, give black-eyed Susan a try in your garden.

Dr S. Hemachandran

Buddhism, now almost defunct in India as an organised institutional religion has left its vestiges scattered all over the land in what are now 'archaeological remnants. Buddhism was introduced in Kerala by missionaries sent by Asoka the Great who was the first Indian emperor to become a convert to Buddhism. The first historical evidence about Kerala is found in the inscriptions of Asoka who cited four kingdoms viz. Coda (Cola), Pada, (Pandya), Ketala Puto (Keralaputra), Satiya Puto (Satyaputra) in the south of his empire. Keralaputra is mentioned in the rock edict II and Girnar of Asoka. The Buddhist images discovered from the coastal district of South Kerala manifest the influence of Buddhism in the state.

The region between the districts of Kollam and Alappuzha had preserved to the posterity a number of beautiful stone images of Sree Buddha like Maruturkulangara, Bharanikkavu (near Mavelikkara), Mavelikkara and Ambalappuzha. The place names in the region like, Karthikappalli, Karunagappalli, Mainagappalli and the presence of 'Kavus' are the evidences of a glorious past of the Buddha Culture in this region (Palli is the reminiscence of the word Pallichantham ie. donation of properties to the communities except the Hindu religion. for example Jewthappalli, Christian Palli and Muslim Palli. The presence of Buddha vestiges are also found in other regions in Kerala like Kodungallur (Mathilakom premises and at Kottappuram). Wayanad etc. Certain Rock-cut temples are also attributed to Buddhism.

The stone images of Buddha found in the region around Kartikappalli taluk clearly indicate the prevalence of the faith of 'Sakys simha' in all these parts and very likely that these images represent at least as many temples of Buddha in as many places. T.A. Gopinatha Rao, the well known Epigraphist suggest that the Ay King Vikramaditya Varaguna who ruled in the third quarter of the 8th century hand granted landed properties to the temple of 'Srimulavasam' which he argues that situated in the above said region which had been evoked by the turbulent sea in course of time.

The most illustrious sculpture of Buddha found in Kerala is

'Karumadikuttan', in Karumadi near Ambalappuzha. The image (a portion of head and chest is lost) is in yogasana with ushnisha and jwala on the head and traces of uthariya (upper cloth). The Buddha image discovered from Mavelikkara is nearly 3 feet in height and belongs to 9th century AD. The ushnisha and jwala and the upper cloth worn in the upavita fashion is rendered sumptuously by the gifted hands of the sculptor. It is now preserved inside a chaitya like structure at Mavelikkara junction.

Seated Buddha representation was a popular mode of depiction of Buddha. The figure of Buddha at Bharanikkavu near Mavelikkara is also in a seated posture. The many folded upper cloth passing over the left shoulder and lying flat on the chest is carved naively and elegantly. There is also a protuberance (ushnisha) at the top. The total height of the sculpture including pedestal is two

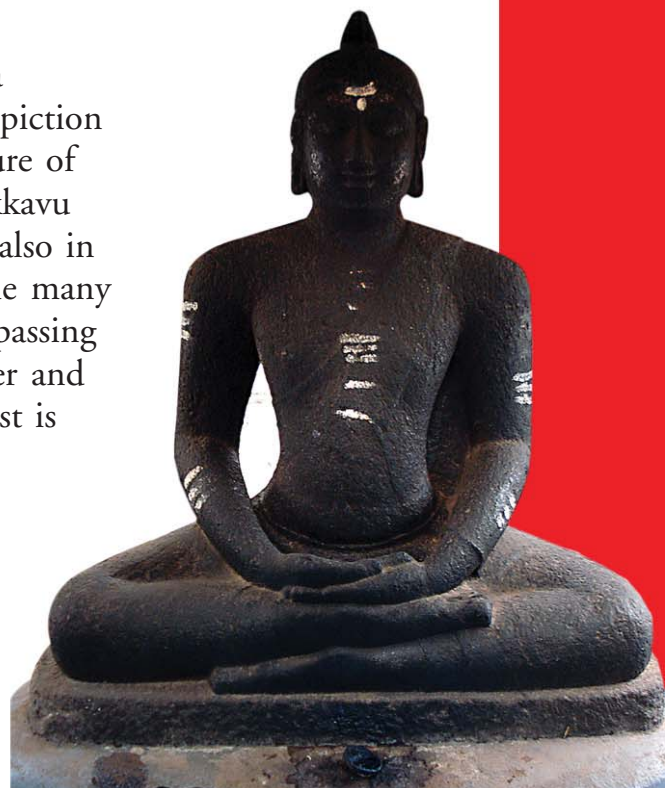
feet and is in a good state of preservation.

Another image of Buddha was discovered from the village of Maruthurkulangara in Karunagappally. The sculpture has no protuberance on the head. The diaphanousness of the carved upper cloth is superlative and worth mentioning. The image is now kept in the garden of Krishnapuram Palace.

During the recent exploration conducted near Kottappuram by the Department of Archaeology we have encountered a headless sculpture of seated Buddha. It is now kept at the Directorate of Archaeology, Thiruvananthapuram. Buddhism gradually faded away and completely disappeared from Kerala of Hinduism. But the grandeur of this religious faith is treasured in glorious relics they have left behind in this small land strip. ■

Carving the Buddha

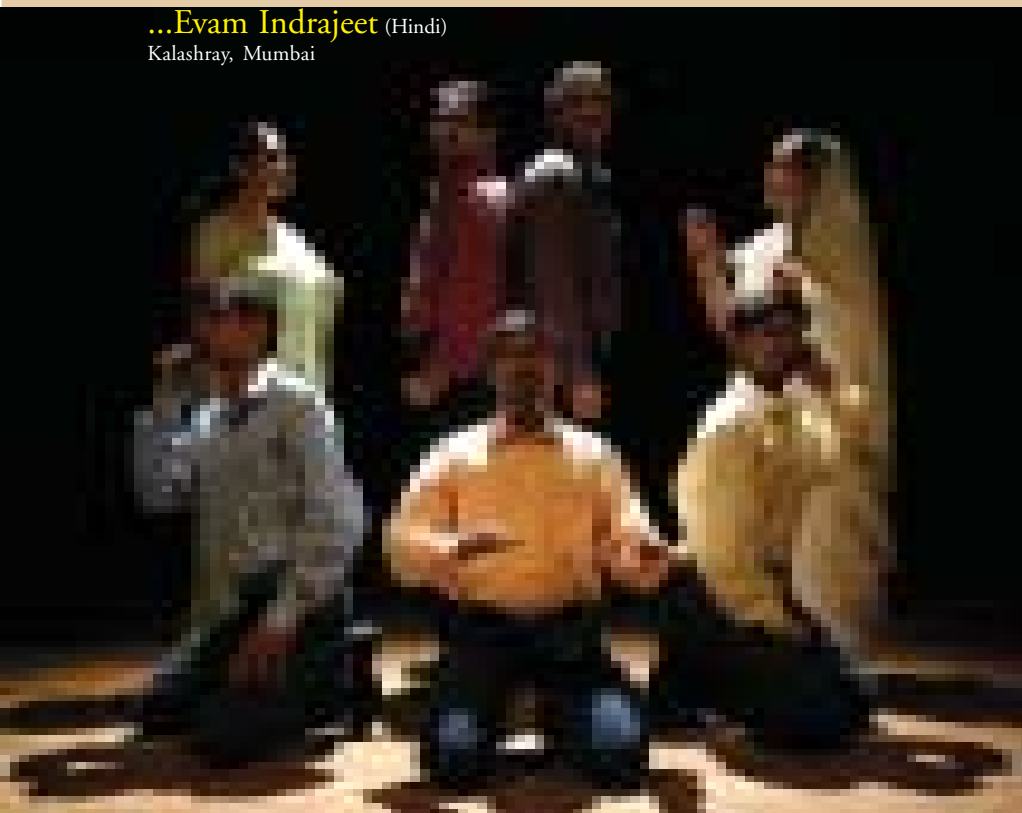
Seated Buddha representation was a popular mode of depiction of Buddha. The figure of Buddha at Bharanikkavu near Mavelikkara is also in a seated posture. The many folded upper cloth passing over the left shoulder and lying flat on the chest is carved naively and elegantly.



Tritiya Juddeha (Bengali)
Alternative Living Theatre, Kolkatta



...Evam Indrajeet (Hindi)
Kalashray, Mumbai



Super Market (Malayalam),
Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Academy,
Thrissur



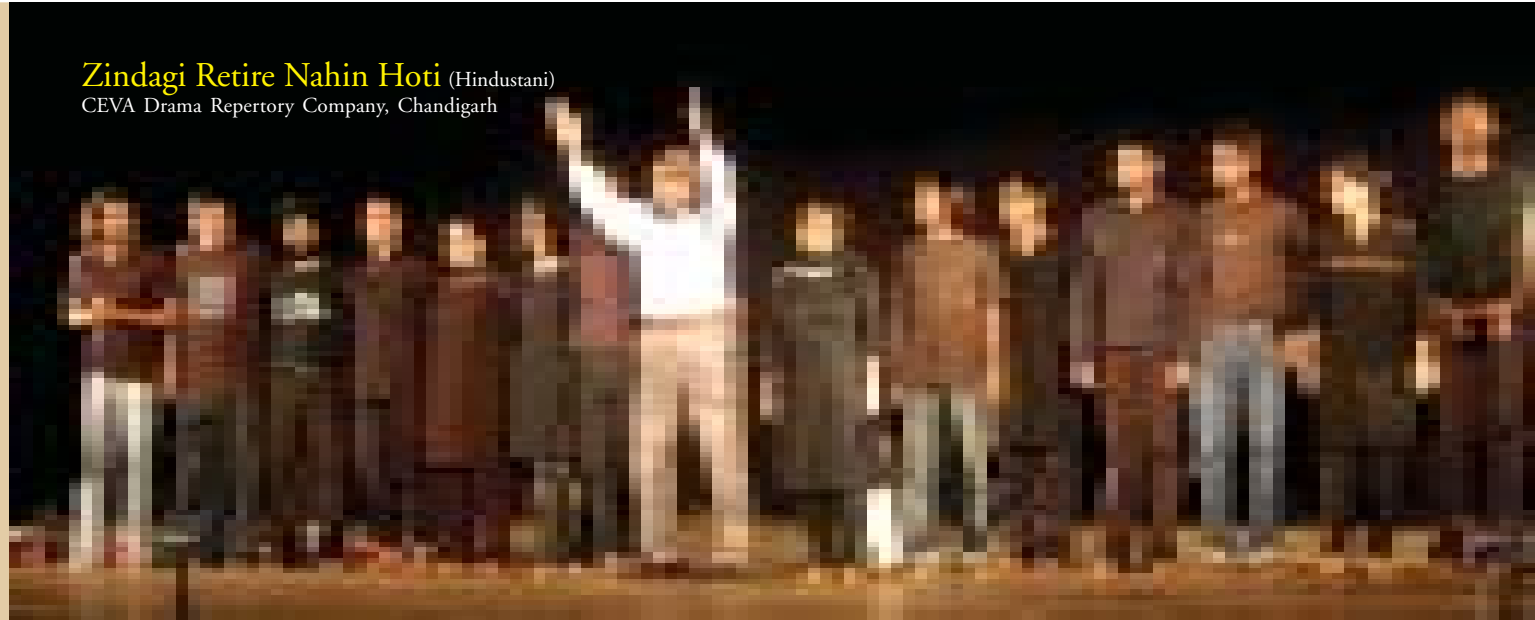
Quick Death (English)
Theatre Roots and Wings, New Delhi



Indian Theatre performance as part of the National Drama Festival conducted jointly by Information and Public Relations Department and Kendra Sangeetha Nataka Academy at Tagore Theatre, Thiruvananthapuram became an experience for the lifetime to the spectators.

Dalu Parameswaran
flashes light on the stage

Zindagi Retire Nahin Hoti (Hindustani)
CEVA Drama Repertory Company, Chandigarh



 **PHOTOFEATURE**



Ghumayee (Dogri)
Natrang, Jammu





V.S. Achuthanandan, Chief Minister, inaugurating the National Theatre Festival in Thiruvananthapuram. Sheela Thomas, Secretary, I&PRD, Amol Palekar, Cine Artist and P. Venugopal, Director I&PRD are also seen.

Indian Theatre Resurrects

DRAMA LOVERS in the State Capital have enjoyed the year-end by watching a handful of much acclaimed dramas from across the country. The festival unfolded new trends in the world of drama. V.S. Achuthanandan, Chief Minister, has inaugurated the seven-day long National Theatre Festival organised by the Information and Public Relations Department in Thiruvananthapuram. Kavalam Narayana Panicker, renowned theatre exponent, was the festival director.

Eight plays in six languages were performed. Noted actor Amol Palekar has made his presence in the inaugural function. Noted directors Balwant Thakur, G.S. Chani, Sankar Venkateswaran, J. Shylaja and Probir Guha have made their contributions.



P. Govida Pillai releases a book on Barister G.P. Pillai, written by Malayinkezhu Gopalakrishnan, by handing over a copy to Indira Ramakrishna Pillai, grand daughter of G.P. Pillai. P. Venugopal, Director, I & PRD, Rubin D'Cruz, Director, State Institute of Children's Literature, P. Abdul Rasheed, Additional Director, I & PRD are also seen. The book edited by P.S. Rajasekharan is an I&PRD production.



Tom Jose, Secretary, Publics Works Department and K. Ramachand of T.R.D.C.L exchanging the MoU for modernisation of roads in Thiruvananthapuram in the presence of Mons Joseph, Minister for Public Works.

Readers' Festival

HUNDREDS OF BOOK lovers in the city of Thiruvananthapuram has got a New Year gift as the one week long book fair has hit the city once again. It was a rare occasion for children owing to the prominence given to Children's literature. A wide collection of books ranging from comics to general knowledge was available in the festival. CDs on various topics were sold like hot cakes.

Prof. Hamid Ansari, the Vice President of India, has inaugurated the book fair, which was presided over by R.L. Bahtya, Governor of Kerala.

Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Academy, State Language Institute, Kerala Folklore Academy, Kerala University and Kerala Sahithya Academy have participated in the book fair.



Prof. Hamid Ansari, the Vice President of India, inaugurating the Book Fair.



K.P Rajendran, Minister for Revenue, inaugurating the formation of disaster management team.

Mitigation Team

K.P RAJENDRAN, Minister for Revenue, pointed out the necessity to have a coordinated effort to mitigate disasters in the State. He was inaugurating the formation of disaster management team at Thiruvananthapuram.

Not only the land, but the people are also affected by calamities like earthquakes. Efforts should be made to wipe out the agony of the minds, the minister said. Presiding over the function, M. Vijaya Kumar, Minister for Law, said that the Youth Welfare Board has taken initiatives to get the participation of youth clubs for this exercise.

The project will be developed with the support of kudumbashree and anganwadi workers and also with the help of resident's association. The project is being undertaken by the Revenue Department with the help of Union Home Ministry and United Nations Development Programme.

Tsunami Documented

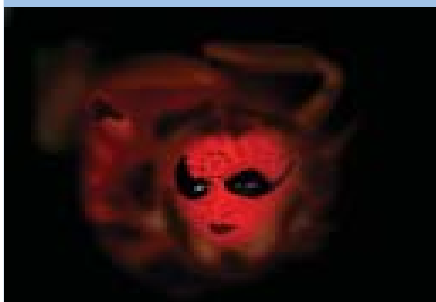
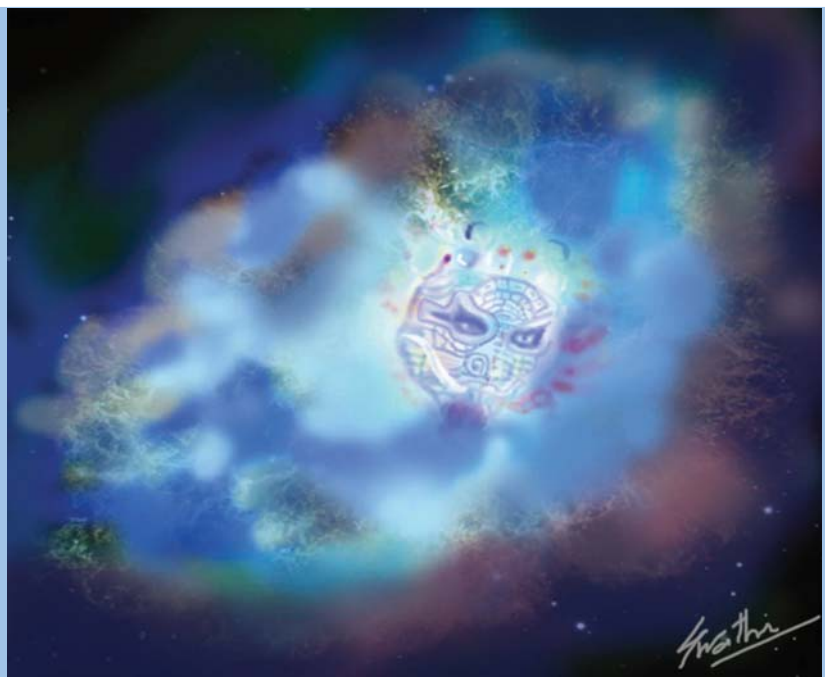
THE FIRST TSUNAMI museum in the country, named the Kerala Tsunami Museum, was opened at Alappad. The museum, which is the third one of its kind in the world was dedicated to the Nation by C. Divakaran, Minister for Food and Civil Supplies. K.P. Rajendran, Minister for Revenue presided over the function. The museum was constructed at a cost of Rs 10.50 lakh.

The tsunami museum is designed to function as an authoritative information provider on disaster indications which can serve to reduce devastation and casualties in areas vulnerable to tsunami. The other two tsunami museums in the world are the Pacific Tsunami Museum in Hilo, Hawaii and the International Tsunami Museum in Thailand.

The Kerala Tsunami Museum has been set up by a team from the Pacific Tsunami Museum led by tsunami expert Walter Dudley who chairs the Scientific Advisory Council of the Pacific Tsunami Museum.

Between crab-ness and God-ness

OURS IS AN ERA of tremendous changes. Technical advances are in progress in every walk of life. Artists, being part of it tend to move according to the events happening around them and might set new conventions. Swathi Jayakumar is no exception. Swathi Jayakumar's recent show at the Vailoppilli Samskrithi Bhavan drew our attention mainly because of the unconventional paintings that he brings out with perfect rhythm and balance adopting digital technology.



The images are undoubtedly something very close to the village rituals of Kerala. The Empirical realities of his paintings are not very complex. We witness a

swarm of crabs being transmuted, to a kind of extraordinary forms. The familiar crabs turned looking weird in many aspects. On the canvas all the crabs tell the same

story of transition but the transformation is not an end in itself. It offers a world of 'affects' in between the becomings of crab-ness and god-ness.

Missile Speed to Industries

The Kerala Government's efforts to forge tie-ups between State and Central public sector undertakings start giving fruits. The inauguration of BrahMos Aerospace Thiruvananthapuram Ltd. is a prestigious reward for the State Government for its bold steps to revamp and make profitable all those public sector units. The high-status defence production unit is established in the Kerala capital by taking over the State-government-owned Kerala Hitech Ltd. (Keltec). It was a positive and creative step when the State Government decided to hand over Keltec to the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) under the Ministry of Defence last year.

The Government also envisages joint ventures with Transformers and Electricals Kerala Ltd (TELK) and the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC), Steel Complex Ltd and the Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL). Similarly, the process for establishing a rail bogie unit at Autokast by the Railways is progressing.

The Chief Minister of Kerala, V.S. Achuthanandan anticipated an investment to the tune of 1000 crore from the Central Government, while inaugurating the BrahMos aerospace jointly with A.K. Antony, Union Minister for Ministry for Defence.

Thiruvananthapuram becomes the second centre in India to produce high range supersonic missiles. It is



A.K. Antony, Union Minister for Defence, receiving the symbolic key of KELTEC from V.S Achuthanandan, Chief Minister.

expected an investment of Rs.1500 crore in the second phase besides the 150 crore first phase. The State Government has shown magnanimity by handing over the State Unit for only one rupee as a formality. It is the part of a strategy adopted by the State Government to revamp all public sector units holding it in the public sector itself.

When the existing Government assumed power eighteen months back, only 12 public sector units were profit generating. Now the number of profitable units have doubled within a short span.

The Government have made the State conducive for investors from within and outside the country, bearing in mind the future of Malayalis. The Smart City, Vallarppadam and Vizhinjam projects open new avenues with the sky as the limit.

