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Rejuvenated, and now Progressing



V.S. Achuthanandan
Chief Minister

With a bright record of unprecedented success in the spheres of development and welfare, the Left Democratic Front Government enters into the third year. The element, which makes the government unique, is its alternate policies to render optimum solace to the laymen while they face the phenomenon of food deficiency and acute price hike all over India due to globalisation.

From the beginning itself the LDF Government has made it clear that the State cannot go ahead without increasing the production in agricultural and industrial sectors. The most essential elements for the sustainable development of the State are the revitalisation of sick industries, starting new industries, solving agricultural crisis and increasing production. It is a matter of pride that we could start in the aforesaid matters.

The threat on food security is the matter of concern globally. The United Nations itself is coming to the forefront to warn against the ensuing food war. India too, is heading towards an acute food crisis. The rocketing price, leasing out of warehouses to monopoly, ceasing procurement of food grains and the destruction of public distribution system are the main reasons behind this. It is the outcome of the conspiracy

of globalisation to open up market to the foreign monopoly by destroying our agriculture sector. This situation puts Kerala in trouble, as it is absolutely a consumer state. We have to depend on other states for everything including rice. Nor we utilise our possibilities in agricultural production.

The Government are giving utmost emphasis on resolving this crisis. Encouraging paddy cultivation by conserving at least the remaining paddy fields is our aim. Approval of the bill preventing reclamation of paddy fields and wetlands is as part of it. A comprehensive programme is in the pipeline to enhance production of food grains and other food materials.

When the Left Democratic Government came into power, the procurement of paddy was nominal. And the rate was only Rs.7 per kg. The LDF government enhanced the rate up to Rs.10 by this year and thus the procurement has been vitalised. As a result, a 30 per cent increase in production at Kuttanad and Palakkad could be achieved. But, the damage unleashed by the summer rain on paddy cultivation this March is inexplicable. The government could render a compensation of Rs. ten thousand per hectare to aggrieved farmers. Even though the Centre turned a blind eye, the State government could console



the farmers by dispersing due compensation on war-foot.

It is worth mentioning that the various steps taken by the government from its very inception could almost wipe out the suicide tendency of farmers. Three districts of Kerala out of the 36 in the country included in Central Government's list where severe farmer suicides were reported, have now been exempted from the list. The remaining 33 districts still witness farmer suicide that illustrates the difference between government of Kerala and the rest in India.

In order to solve the burning crisis in agricultural sector, Vidarbha model packages could be obtained from the Centre for three districts by providing accurate statistics and exerting pressure unlike the previous government, which was suppressing the facts on suicide due to egoism. The Rural Employment Assurance Scheme has been implemented effectively. Thus a revitalisation in agriculture sector has been materialised. Ours is a land of 7.5 million farmers and 2.5 million agricultural labourers.

A special package worth Rs.1840 crore has got approved for Alappuzha district to drive out the crisis and paralysis. Long-term scientific projects have been prepared for conserving Kuttanad, our granary, Onattukara paddy lands, and for reviving other crops in Alappuzha district and to rejuvenate the fisheries sector. But the

Centre is not willing to grant the amount. However, we are pressurising for the same.

Another special package is approved for the plantation sector in Idukki district. During the previous regime suicides were the phenomenon in plantation sector too. Many plantations were locked off. Workers were destined to starvation. The government could change that situation and reopen the plantations.

Now the Government is striving to hold on the price hike by strengthening public distribution system through

Supplyco and Consumerfed. Rice shops have been started with moderate rate. The State Government grants subsidy without any reservation in order to intervene the market.

The Central Government is persecuting the State by cutting down 82 per cent of the APL rice share of Kerala. The State Government are staging strong pressure against this and are taking all measures possible to avoid scarcity of rice.

Phenomenal task has been going on to recover government land from encroachers. In Munnar alone, it recovered twelve thousand acres of land. Demolished about hundred unauthorised huge buildings and resorts. In the State as a whole, more than 15,000 acres of land has been recovered.

The legendary event of evacuation of encroachments is an unprecedented one in the history of Kerala. The recovered and other surplus land will be distributed to the landless. Each family should have land, home, electricity and drinking water- is the policy of the Government. EMS Total Housing Scheme has been started for all homeless in the State. Within the next three years, Kerala will become a total housing State. One-acre land for each 1717 adivasi families has been distributed in Aralam farm. Medical Treatment for tribals becomes free of cost.

The Right Front ridiculed the Left Front as anti-developmental during the

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- Smart City in Kochi becomes a reality; 90000 job opportunities
- Development of Kochi Infopark; 40,000 new job opportunities
- Kerala State-Wide Area Network becomes a reality
- 3000 Akshaya centres throughout the State to deliver service to common people
- Preliminary procedures for Kochi Metro Rail Project
- Railway coach factory at Palakkad
- Commissioning of Kollam – Kottappuram National Water Way; actions are taken to extend the waterways upto Neeleswaram from Kovalam
- Succeeded in bringing in the educational institutions like Indian Institute of Space Science, Central University, Indian Institute of Science Education Research, National School of Mathematics
- Welfare scheme for NRKs
- Sutharyakeralam programme for the speedy redressal of public complaints

The Government is aware that small scale industries are providing largest number of jobs. The Government has taken a number of initiatives to promote small scale sector.

election time. There existed a circumstance to call us as anti-developmental. The hot protest and agitations against unscrupulous exploitation of land, water and nature were viewed as anti-developmental. Allegations raised against the Smart City project were also important among them. The opposition demanded that the Government might go ahead only without handing over the Infopark, ensuring fair price for the land and rejecting the condition that there should not be any other IT park in Ernakulam. Those statements holding the vast interest of the State, were portrayed as anti-developmental. Then the Smart City became the central slogan of the assembly election.

Now, the Smart City is going to be a reality. Relentless attempt to materialise the project protecting the noble intentions of the State has been undertaken. Thus great modifications in favour of the State could be made in the stands of TECOM. A quantum jump in the field of IT sector could be achieved within the past one and a half year. For establishing Techno City, 507 acres of land is acquiring in Thiruvananthapuram. Technopark sees a development where another 100 acres of land is being acquired. Steps have been taken to establish IT parks at various districts. Many IT companies have already started new ventures in Technopark and Infopark. The target is the creation of two lakh job opportunities in the IT sector. However, the present position reveals that the employment opportunities will be many fold. 40,000 more job opportunities will be generated within next three years at Infopark, the very institution that was decided to handover free of cost by the previous government. Projects are being implemented to make the State totally computer literate. The plan, Akshaya Kendras in every village is advancing.

Implementation of projects to the tune of Rs.1441 crore has been started as part of the Tsunami Rehabilitation. It is expected that the projects will ensure overall development of the costal region and the implementation is on war footing to complete the scheme by March next year. Similar to Farmers' Debt Relief Commission, Fishermen's Debt Relief

All welfare pensions have been hiked upto Rs.200 at a stretch and the arrears are disbursed. Hundreds of thousands of labourers have been brought under Welfare Funds including about two lakh small scale plantation workers.

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The Shops and Establishments Labourer Welfare Fund Law gives solace to one million families in the unorganised sector. This law ensures job security, pension, family pension, leave, delivery leave et. al. Likewise a law which fixes pension and welfare fund for tens of thousands of dairy farmers has also been implemented. A new law is introduced to save the Devaswom Board, which was a corrupted one to a great extent. Devaswom Board appointments are handed over to PSC.

UDF governance was the personification of law and order breaking and goondaism. By making police impartial and implementing innovative reformations, a giant leap could be achieved in maintaining law and order. By rooting out goondaism, crimes could be brought down to a great extent.

The beginning for new international terminal and aircraft maintenance unit at Thiruvananthapuram Airport, the modernisation project of

Thiruvananthapuram and Kochu Veli railway stations, the permission to establish railway coach building unit in the Auto kast unit at Cherthala are all obtained from the Centre through persistent efforts. The clearances needed for the Kannur airport have also been obtained from the Centre. The 2500 acres of land needed for the airport is being acquired through fast track system. ISRO's Institute of Space Science and Technology, the third important space institute in the world, has started functioning in Thiruvananthapuram. The land needed for the space institute has been allotted free of cost. National Fashion Technology Institute has started at Kannur.

Owing to the relentless attempts by LDF Government, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research has been allotted to Kerala. Similarly, Central Government have agreed to grant a Central University, our long cherished demand.

Vallarpadam Transshipment Container Terminal Project and Vizhinjam International Transshipment Container



V. S. Achuthanandan, Chief Minister, inaugurating the wind mill project at Ramakkalmedu in Idukki district.

Terminal Project are vital for comprehensive development of the State. The State Government have cleared out the crisis for the rail connectivity to

Vallarpadam and could obtain environmental sanction. Thus the first international transshipment container terminal is going to be a reality. The earlier agreement for the construction of Vizhinjam International Transshipment Container Terminal was made with a Chinese company. Raising security reasons, the Central Defence Ministry did not give permission to it. But the State Government is marching ahead with stern determination to launch the project. The LDF Government could manage preliminary activities with great enthusiasm so that the construction work for the project can be started within months.

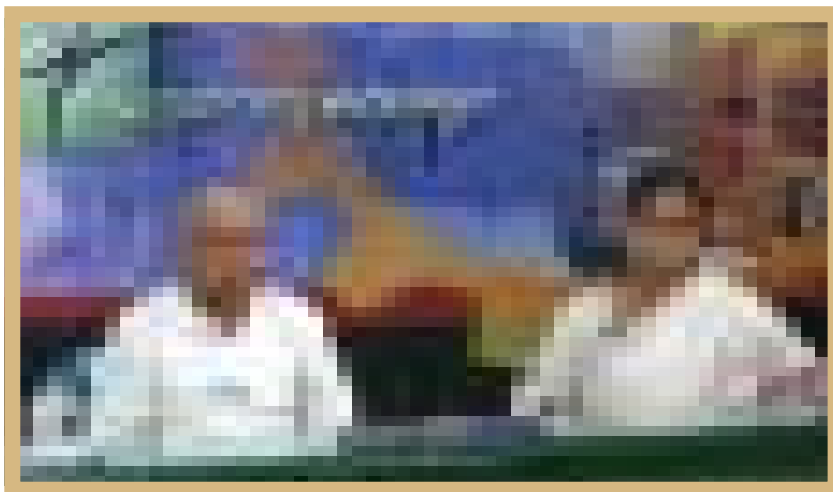
Preliminary works have already started for metro rail in Kochi. Primary steps for suburban train services in Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam and Kozhikode have been taken. The waterway development project between the tail ends of Kerala has been triggered off. Kollam – Kottappuram waterway, a part of the National Waterway – 3 has

been commissioned and the work for Kottappuram-Neeleswaram waterway is going on. Works for Kollam- Kovalam water way project has also launched. The LNG terminal at Kochi, which was in seesaw, has been got out from all obstacles owing to the relentless effort of the state Government.

The State Government could reciprocate strongly against the negligence of the Centre and could fetch a large number of projects, which were entitled to us. Progress made in bringing issues of Kerala to the notice of the Centre better than earlier. Strong protest has been registered against the formation of Salem Railway Division by dividing Palakkad Division. Thus the Railway Ministry was forced to enlarge the boundary of the Palakkad division from their earlier decision.

This protest opens up a way for getting

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Always with the People: The Chief Minister attends the Sutharyakeralam Programme along with his Secretary, Sheela Thomas, to redress the grievance of the common man.

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Rejuvenated, and Now Progressing

a coach factory. Since the railway reached Kerala one and half century ago, no important employment generating institution has been launched here. A coach factory assigned for Kerala a quarter century back had been shifted to Kapurthala in Punjab in the eleventh hour. Now, when we extended great pressure in the case of Salem Division issue, Central Government have agreed to set up a coach factory in Kerala to pacify us. It has already been decided that a modern railway coach factory to be set up with an investment of around four thousand crore rupees at Kanchikkode in Palakkad. For the past fifty years, no such huge Central investment has come in Kerala in the public sector. State Government have initiated primary steps for acquiring land needed for the coach factory.

Rejuvenation and enthusiasm regained in Industries sector. The government could reopen almost all the closed industries. Lock out was common in the past when an industry exhausted with loss. Now the number of profiteering public sector industry is raised to twenty four from the mere twelve. Many new industries have been started. Titanium Sponge Factory has been launched in KMLL. Construction of Integrated Textile Park began at Palakkad. In Thiruvananthapuram, KELTEC has been handed over to Defence Department for BrahMos missile unit.

New projects came in tourism sector. Kerala becomes one of the most important tourism destinations of the world. Endeavour for generating additional 500 mega watt power within three years started. Special attention has been given to utilise non-conventional energy sources and wind energy project is commissioned at Idukki.

Appointment ban has been revoked and steps have been taken to fill all vacancies. There were thousands of vacancies left unfilled in Health Department alone during the regime of the previous government. Thus they

destructured public health system. The reason behind the attacks of chickun guinea and infectious disease was this. The Government have taken immediate steps to appoint doctors and para medical staff. By introducing Clean Kerala project, continuous action has been launched against pollution. A new public health policy is being implemented for saving government hospitals from penury. A scheme has been adopted for upgrading community health centres to national standard. A hospital with state of the art facilities has been started at Sabarimala.

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Many projects have come into existence for the welfare of expatriate Keralites. Procedures started to give identity cards for non resident Keralites who comprise around 2.5 million. The share of the Government in NoRKA – Roots Company has been raised from 26 per cent to 51 per cent. Santhwanam project for the expatriates has been liberalised. A Bill envisaging vast welfare scheme for expatriate Malayalis has been approved.

Initial steps have been taken to establish World Malayalam Mission for coordinating Malayalam teaching among the children of expatriate Malayalis. Chief Minister's Relief Fund has been expanded and implemented speedy and liberal assistance. Thousands of hapless and sick people got solace from that. Consolation money for the families of the farmers who committed suicide, endosulfan victims and those who died of chickun guinea has been given immediately. It could be implemented effectively with utmost generosity by collecting money through a special lottery.

The interest of the State could be upheld in inter state river water dispute with strong interference. The move of Tamil Nadu is to increase the water level of Mullapperiyar Dam from 136 feet to 142 feet and then to 152 feet. In the first phase, the Supreme Court verdict was favourable to them. But, when the apex court was apprised of the fact that the lives of millions of people in five districts were in danger, the Court itself had opined that the states might solve the issue through discussions. At first Tamil Nadu refused to participate in the discussion. But, later they conceded. The well thought out stand of Kerala that building a new dam is the only solution, has been getting more acceptance. The relentless involvement in the Mullapperiyar issue after LDF Government came in power, is about to bring fruits.

Companies like TATA and Harrison Malayalam are exploiting the State's wealth by holding tens of thousands of acres of land for a nominal tenant tax. There exists an allegation that they even try to sell out the land crookedly. Besides, such a few companies have encroached thousands of acres of State owned land. For the last few months, stern action is being taken to recover that. The Thoothampara Estate kept by Poabson Group has been taken over and now run by Plantation Corporation. The measuring process of the land possessed by TATA and others is on with modern technology. Stern action has been taken for recovering Kovalam Palace and to prevent encroachments in Kovalam in disguise of tourism.

In the Moonnar region, Kurinji Garden and Silent Valley Buffer Zone projects have been launched. Comprehensive projects are coined for preventing the decay and pollution of rivers and water bodies including Vembanad lake and Bharathappuzha River.

The corruption free and prosperous Kerala that is rushing towards a comprehensive development -the LDF governance of 24 months could make a giant leap in the journey towards this. The background is set for a comprehensive development. The Government could dispel disappointment from all walks of life and could rejuvenate the State and now onwards it is the time of progress. ■■■■



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Years Of Excellence



M.A. Baby
Minister for Education
and Culture

The last year was one of excellence for the educational field. The left democratic government aims to use the educational sector as a tool to push forward the State and to uplift the sidelined masses and to empower them. The activities are undertaken with the conception that it is the right of the students to get quality education. Government takes a scientific and an overall approach to the issue by paying heed to the opinion of experts. Also the government was able to set up a co-coordinated working culture upholding the democratic procedures.

Initiatives like quality enhancement programme implemented in 104 schools and scholarships for about 10000 economically backward higher secondary students have that the Government is always with the poor and the oppressed. The last year was considered as the enhancement year keeping in regard the aim that quality education should be given to those opting for the public schools.

This government aims at providing equal opportunity and social justice in spite of the inadequacies in the field of higher education. Efforts are being undertaken to start national level institutions in our state. They also aim at converting all higher education institutions into

centre for excellences to provide quality education.

The academic year 2007-08 was proclaimed as the efficiency year keeping in mind the all-round actions in the schooling system. As part of this programme, training programme for teachers during vacation, meeting of all the teachers at the beginning of the academic year, school management training for DDE, DEO, AEO, headmasters and diet principals, implementation of monitoring systems and 100/100 programme under the S.S.A were implemented.

The 104 schools that were at the lowest level in the 2006 S.S.L.C exams were identified and various programmes were implemented to increase their standards after studying their problems deeply. These schools fared brightly in the 2007 exams and the works are still in progress. This plan provided a good atmosphere for studies and created self-confidence in the students that were backward socially and economically. A special quality programme for the backward schools in higher secondary and vocational higher secondary schools are also in progress.

Seats were increased in higher secondary and vocational higher secondary schools of the Malabar region. This was done by increasing the number of schools and by allotting more batches in the



Award winning students at the 20th Science Congress with M.A Baby, Minister for Education.

existing schools. This gave a new breath of life to the higher secondary section. About 26,136 students benefited from this project.

For the first time in the country, socially and economically backward students in higher secondary and vocational higher secondary schools were given a scholarship of Rs 5000 per annum. This programme covering all the schools in the State benefited around 10,000 students.

The single window system for plus one admissions was put up at Thiruvananthapuram in an experimental basis to relieve the problems faced by the school authorities, parents and the students. This attempt was proven successful and actions are being taken to extend the programme to all districts.

The central government provided the states a syllabus framework 2005 for modernizing the school syllabus. Our state developed a draft plan for the Kerala syllabus framework 2007 and kept it for discussion by the people. Thus Kerala also got the credit for being the first state to develop a syllabus framework by the people. Now works are in progress to collect the opinion of various sections of people to complete the project.

It is a new world record in this year's SSLC examination that around five lakh students attended the IT practical

examination simultaneously using free software. It was during this year that free software was made compulsory for studies and examinations. The IT@School project has been undertaken to provide broadband internet facilities to all high schools. The trial run of IT based studies proved to be a roaring success in the implemented schools in 38 educational districts and thus efforts are being made to extend it to others as well. Also, the channel ViCTERS, set up solely for educational purposes, was made available through local cable networks.

Various e-governance programmes are

being held under the IT@ school project. Computerisations of processes like service salary details, noon meal distribution for students, appointments, transfers, online distribution of study materials etc were carried out this year. Also this year the Central government granted the state a project of 56.8 crores to 1016 Government High Schools for a period of five years.

This Government also tries to bring together Central plans like the SSA and the plans formulated by the local self government institutions. Also a programme is in the offing for improving the standard of teaching for English, Hindi and mathematics in selected local self government institutions on experimental basis. The Government also wishes to take in the experiences from the 100/100 plan of SSA and to modernize the syllabus and the textbooks.

The Government is serious in its views on the negligence shown towards our mother tongue. We don't have our mother tongue compulsory in many schools when all countries are upholding education in their own tongue in primary education. Many recognised English schools were teaching special English in the place of Malayalam. The Government put an end to this practice by making Malayalam compulsory till the 4th standard.

Grading system has been implemented in the plus two scheme from

The single window programme for plus one admissions was put up at Thiruvananthapuram in an experimental basis to relieve the problems faced by the school authorities, parents and the students. This attempt was proven successful and actions are being taken to extend the programme to all districts.



- More higher secondary schools and vocational higher secondary schools in Malabar sector
- Special scholarship of Rs.5000 each for 10,000 bright students who come from financially backward families
- Single window system for the admission of higher secondary courses
- Grading for Plus Two sector also
- Broadband internet connection in all high schools
- For the first time in the country, free software for IT practical examination, throughout the State
- Edusat, E-learning - Modern education system with the help of satellite

A higher education council was set up under the noted educational expert Dr. K.N.Panikar to coordinate the functioning of various universities, to give directions to the government on the issues related to higher education and to ensure social justice and quality in the field of higher education.

2007 as a continuation of the introduction of grading system for SSLC. This is in a format that includes the marks of internal assessment as well. 20 per cent weightage is given to the internal marks of the subjects like science, mathematics and social science. Also a guide named 'edumate' was published for all the texts of plus two courses.

In the recent times a lot of discussions took place about the institutions and their powers, which were handed over to the local selfgovernment institutions, as a result of the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments. A handbook will be published soon to clear the misunderstandings prevailed about these institutions.

A lot of changes have occurred since the Kerala Education Act and Rule (KEAR) was formulated in 1958. The addition of plus two to the school curriculum and the transfer of responsibilities to the district/village panchayats are a few of them. This is the main reason why the government decided to modernize the Act and Rules. A committee led by the former chief secretary C.P. Nair was formed for this purpose and it submitted a report to the government. Government plans to approve this report only after putting it to the discussion before the society.

For the first time in Kerala's educational history a three day work shop was held for the whole set of teachers from Std 1 to 12. They got together at the grama panchayat level on the June 1st and created a plan for the ensuing academic year. On the basis of this the teachers got together at school level on June 2nd and formulated the work plan for the year.

Cluster training for the teachers are now being held on Saturdays to save more working days. In the beginning some teachers unions tried to weaken these programmes but later everyone agreed on the need to provide quality education. This is seen as a good sign and it has been agreed to hold the cluster training on Saturdays.

On light of the leakage of question papers of the model exam in February, the SSLC question papers were kept in the treasuries and banks to ensure

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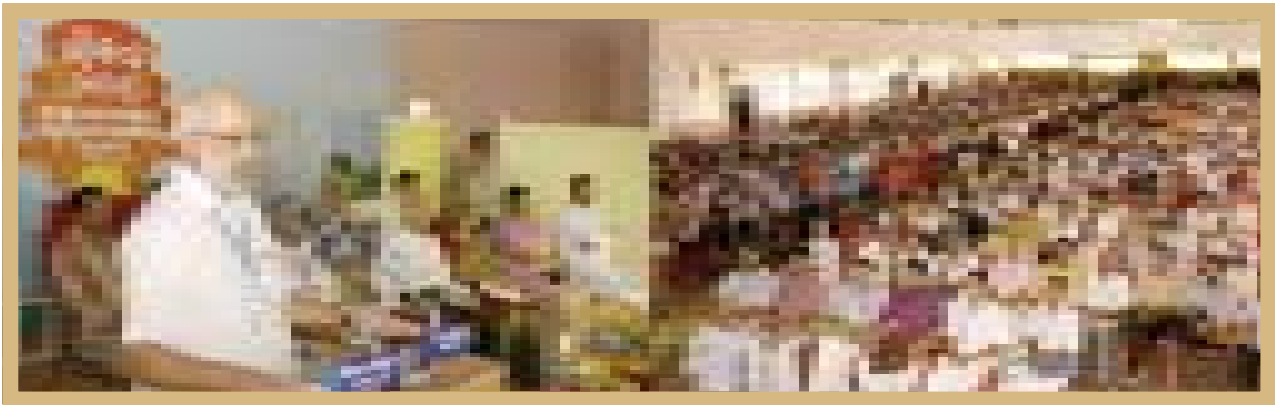
examinations in disciplined manner. Even in short time the government was able to hold the exams well.

Child census held by SSA aims at the total data collection on children upto the age of 18. The process is in the final stages of publishing the draft report based on the preliminary data collected in May 2007.

The directors of public instructions, SCERT, SIET, SIEMAT, SSA, higher secondary department and vocational higher secondary department meet every month under the chairmanship of the secretary of the General Education Department to evaluate previous month's works and to formulate plans for the next month. On the basis of this a state level meeting of the officers up to the DEO level is held monthly.

Also the vacancies for teachers in each district are published in websites to avoid the complaints that vacancies are not filled even while PSC lists are available.

It was the field of higher education that was most severely affected in the UDF rule during 2001-06. By crossing all limits in allotting courses and colleges, they handed over the lion's share of the self-financing educational field to the clutches of educational traders and religious powers. They even paved way to privatise education in government-aided colleges by allotting unaided courses. The balanced growth and quality of education was badly affected by allotting more than the required number of colleges and courses in the professional stream and ignoring the study and research of basic subjects. On top of it all they took up a stand that ruled



M.A Baby, Minister for Education, addressing the Teachers' meet, 'Mikavu 2007-08' at Thiruvananthapuram.

out the role of social justice from the education field.

We have to ensure social justice, quality and diversity in the field of higher education to have a stable economic, social and cultural development. Online counselling was introduced for the first time in the country. Now efforts are being carried out to fine-tune it.

There is an inequality in the field of entrance exams due to the presence of coaching centres. These centres normally charge huge fees and are therefore unaccessible to the economically backward. Thus steps are being taken to restructure the exam model so as to ensure social justice.

This government drafted laws within one month of ascending power to ensure social justice and quality in self-financing educational field. Even though the law couldn't be put into practice in its full form due to the intervention of the court, many restrictions could be made in the case of fee structure and admission procedure. Fifty per cent of the students in self-financing medical colleges were able to study by paying government fees only. The mode of entrance exam is also in the process of modification so as to help the students from rural areas.

A higher education council was set up under the noted chairmanship of the educational expert Dr. K.N. Panikar to coordinate the functioning of various universities, to give advice to the government on the issues related to higher education and to ensure social justice and quality in the field of higher education. The council carries out functions like the

restructuring of degree level education, experimenting the cluster level colleges to ensure quality education to a more number of people, publishing the details on higher education institutions, formulating the higher education policies of the state, collecting a fund of Rs. one crore for providing scholarship to the bright and economically backward students and to create a criterion to provide recognition for colleges and courses from 2008.

A scholarship was allotted for the minority students from the professional field as the part of a central government scheme.

The recruitment of teachers, which was in standstill for the last 10 years, was started again. Attempts are being made to get on a decision on the posting of teachers in the aided courses started during the period 1998-2001. After its completion the government could advance a lot in the direction of providing the social justice and quality in the government / aided field.

Culture

The cultural field in Kerala is in the path of a new beginning. Programmes are being planned to energise all the cultural

organisations. Stages are being set up to facilitate the exchange of cultural symbols and its originalities. The 'Octave' is an example. The Government is planning to encourage the innate cultural forms of our state by including the participation of people.

The main activities of the cultural wing include the reorganization of all the cultural institutions and the inclusion of women in them, celebrations of the 50th anniversary of Kerala Piravi and the first government of the State, the completion of procedures for making 'Kalamandalam' a deemed university, increasing the pension amount and the number of pensions for the ailing artists, medical allowance for the artists who are in ill health, organising of 'Octave 2008', renovation of the regional theatre in the premises of the Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Academy, a new administrative block for the Kerala Folk Lore Academy, commencement of preliminary work of a film festival block with modern facilities, international book festivals organised at Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam, Thrissur and Kozhikode, plans for renovating KSFDC and a modern research centre for Lalitha Kala Academy at Ernakulam.

The Left Democratic Front Government does have the satisfaction for being able to complete several noted projects. We do accept the fact that we still have a lot to complete. We have to gather the support from all sections of the public to continue advancing in all fields, especially in the educational sector.

This Government drafted laws within one month of ascending power to ensure social justice and quality in self-financing educational institutions.



The efforts made by the Government with the active co-operation of Officers and staff have now begun to yield results. It was made sure corruption is rooted out in the implementation of schemes for the welfare of these underprivileged sections of Society. No serious allegations have been raised from any quarter during this period about any irregularities on the part of any official.

Welfare *Ensured* *Power* *Empowered*



A.K. Balan

Minister for Welfare of
Backward and Scheduled
Communities and Electricity

When the Left Democratic Front Government assumed charge in May 2006, we were facing a lot of challenges, to be addressed on a war footing. Corruption was prevailing everywhere in the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Development. Connivance on the part of higher-ups in the shady dealings has given a free hand for the corrupt officials. The Comptroller and Auditor General of India in his reports has time and again pointed out many instances of irregularities involving crore of Rupees. Many such cases are now under the scrutiny of Vigilance and Anti Corruption Bureau.

Another area of concern was underutilisation of Plan funds and non-utilisation of Central allocation. The average utilisation of funds under Special Component Plan for the period 2001-06 was only 76 per cent in Scheduled Castes Development Department and that in Scheduled Tribes Development Department was 67.22 per cent. Out of Rs. 60 crore allocated as Additional Central Assistance during the period 2002-05 for various schemes for Tribal development, an amount

of Rs. 43.74 crore was remaining unspent when this Government took charge. The State has not been receiving Additional Central Assistance from 2006 due to this lapse.

The efforts made by the Government with the active co-operation of Officers and staff of these Departments have now begun to yield results. It was made sure that corruption is rooted out in the implementation of schemes and no serious allegations are arising.

The progress achieved during these two years in the utilisation of Plan allocation was commendable. In 2006-07, Scheduled Castes Development Department utilised 85.98 per cent of Plan allocation and Scheduled Tribes Development achieved 91 per cent. In 2007-08, 97.54 per cent and 93.19 per cent respectively.

Now, Central Assistance can be expected in the coming years as we could clear all pending projects.

Education

First of all, we could make sure that educational assistance is released to all students in time and that the entire arrears are cleared. Educational assistance like lumpsum and stipend were released at the beginning of the academic year itself, that also for four months in advance, both these years.



V.S Achuthanandan, Chief Minister, releasing the software `Oruma`, developed by KSEB for its offices.

When the Government took over there were arrears to the tune of Rs. 40.84 crore toward educational assistance to SC/ST students.

The mess allowances of Pre-metric hostels were raised from Rs. 500 to Rs. 700 and that Post-metric hostels and Model Residential Schools from Rs. 700 to Rs. 900. Steps were taken to provide the basic facilities in all hostels, besides taking up construction of buildings for hostels accommodated in rented buildings.

Students studying for self financing courses are now given full fees concession with retrospective effect from 2004-05. Orders were also issued to provide fees to OEC students getting admission in professional colleges under SEBC quota.

The Government ensured all ST seats for MBBS and BDS filled by issuing order for considering the marks obtained in the qualifying examination also.

Fifty per cent increase made in the Educational concessions like lump sum grant, stipend, pocket money for pre-metric and post-metric students is a creditable achievement.

SC and ST students getting admission in prestigious institutions like National Institute of Fashion Technology and All India Institute of Management were now getting educational assistance.

Housing

It is estimated that more than 60000

Scheduled Caste families and 25000 Scheduled Tribe families are houseless in this State. The Government is committed to provide decent dwelling places to all of them. The Government have increased the housing assistance to Scheduled Tribe families from Rs. 75, 000 to Rs. One lakh and Scheduled Caste families from Rs. 70, 000 to Rs. 75, 000. 8548 houses allowed during the tenure of the previous Government to Scheduled Castes were remaining incomplete when this came to

power. During 2006-07, 5000 families were sanctioned assistance for house construction and in 2007-08, 15165 families were provided assistance. During these two years construction of 10580 houses were completed. The rest of the houses are in various stages of construction and all of them are expected complete construction this year. Local Self Government Institutions are also giving top priority for housing sector. Under Indira Awas Yojana, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes get 60 per cent of the allocation and as a result of all these efforts we hope the housing problem among Scheduled castes can be solved within the next three years.

Rehabilitation

Scheduled Tribes Development Department could provide housing assistance to 1835 families, out of which 753 houses were completed. The problem of housing among Scheduled Tribes is closely related to their rehabilitation as it is estimated 21000 families are landless. The Government is committed to find a lasting solution to the problems these communities deprived of basic human rights face for decades. Land was distributed to 1761 families; 4352 families were given records of rights and pattayams for 302 families. In Aralam Farm 1717 families were given land and assistance.

Government have increased the housing assistance to Scheduled Tribe families from Rs. 75, 000 to Rs. One lakh and Scheduled Caste families from Rs. 70, 000 to Rs. 75, 000. During 2006-07, 5000 families were sanctioned assistance for house construction and in 2007-08, 15165 families were provided assistance.



- Signed PPA with Central Electricity Station, aiming the production of 696 mega watt electricity
- Thirty new sub stations commissioned; actions going on for the commissioning of 32 new substations more
- Actions for the commissioning of 500 mega watt electricity projects within the period of this Government
- Financial assistance for the construction of house to 1734 ST families, completed construction of 722 houses
- 1761 families, including 1717 tribals were given land at Aralam Farm, Kannur; 4352 landless tribals were given possession certificates; 302 tribal families were given pattas

It is estimated that more than 60000 Scheduled Castes families and 25000 Scheduled Tribe families are houseless in this State. With the limited resources available, Government faces a herculean task to provide houses to all of them. But this Government is committed to provide decent dwelling places to all of them.

We hope to get enough forest land to provide minimum one acre of land to each of the landless Tribal family. Government of India have already given clearance for 7693 hectares of forestland for this purpose. Once the case relating to exemption from payment of Net Present Value for the land, pending in the Supreme Court is disposed of favourably, the land will be distributed to the landless Tribals. We are determined not to allow any terrorist outfits or other interested groups to exploit the land issue to achieve their hidden agenda.

Health

An amount of Rs.10 crore allocated by Government of India in 2003-04 for a Health Insurance Scheme for Tribals was remaining unutilised. This Government has evolved a Comprehensive Health Project for utilising the fund to give free medical treatment in all Hospitals including major ones.

Under the existing scheme to provide assistance for medical treatment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes who are below poverty line assistance was provided to 34427 persons utilising 5.09 crore, after this Government came to power.

Other Measures

The Land Reforms in the State could not meet the aspirations of a sizable section of Scheduled Caste families, especially agricultural labourers. The Government have evolved a scheme to provide subsidy to the tune of Rs. 50, 000 to buy agricultural land. Though the scheme has started implementing in 2007-08 in a modest way, it will be made more comprehensive if the situation requires.

Another scheme implemented by this Government is to empower Scheduled Castes women through Self Help Groups. The scheme envisages providing Grant of Rs. 1.25 lakhs to each of such Groups to start units having employment potential.

An amount of Rs. 2.5 crore released to start a Tribal Complex at Ernakulam. This will facilitate the exhibition and sale of products of Tribals.

Commission for SC/ST

Another notable achievement of this Government is the constitution of the Kerala State Commission for Scheduled

Castes and Scheduled Tribes, a statutory Commission to ensure and protect the rights conferred by the Constitution for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Kerala is the second State to constitute such a Commission, after Karnataka.

The publication of the magazine 'Padavukal', restarted.

The electricity dues of Scheduled Tribes have been written off. For providing electricity to all SC/ST households within the next three years, all measures have taken.

For the first time Trade and Cultural Exhibition by name 'Gaddika' was conducted with much fanfare and people participation.

In a one-day workshop 600 pending files could be disposed. Such workshops will be held regularly in future to ensure timely action.

The Kerala State Development Corporation for SCs/STs has provided Rs.14 crore as loan to 2840 entrepreneurs during these two years. The Kerala State Development Corporation for Christian Converts and Recommended Communities has disbursed an amount of Rs. 2.13 crore to 2144 beneficiaries.

The Kerala State Backward Development Corporation for Backward Classes Corporation is certified as the best in India by the National financing agencies like NMFDC and NBSFDC. During 2007-08 the turnover of the Corporation has crossed 100 crore. During the past two years the Corporation disbursed Rs. 163 crore to 24828 beneficiaries.

This Government has already paved the foundation for the all-round development of these sections of population with a view to bring them to the mainstream of social life by the above measures and efforts will continue relentlessly to pursue the steps with the active co-operation of the officers and staff of the Department, in the coming years.

Power Sector

Now the power sector in the State faces so many crises. The Central Electricity Act 2003 was just a natural continuation of the liberalised economic policy in India. The Act insists that the Electricity Boards should be disbanded and new companies

should be established instead, in such a way that structural reforms should be brought in so that the private investment can have the upper hand in the running of these companies. The National Electricity Policy and Tariff Policy, that were formulated as a continuation of the Electricity Act, will lead to the common man being denied electric power. Within these limitations, Kerala was able to make tangible achievements. State Government has decided to follow a development

agree, we have no other legal option but to form three different companies in place of the Electricity Board.

It was in 2006 that the State Electricity Regulatory Commission initiated steps to revise the tariff in tune with the Central Tariff policy and Electricity policy. The gist of the Central Tariff Policy is to reduce cross subsidy and bring it to 20 per cent. If we follow the central pattern, then in Kerala where the average rate of electricity per unity is

Regulatory Commission. Utilising this point, State Government decided to give policy directions to the Commission. The Government of Kerala gave 11 directions to the Commission. They included continuation of cross subsidy, refusing license to private parties in transmission and distribution fields, continuance of priority connections, give special priority to patients in critical stage, and to those people who are economically and socially backward. This effort to ensure social justice in the electricity sector was keenly watched by the whole nation.

Production, transmission and distribution sectors of electricity were stagnant when the LDF assumed power in the state. Those projects started by the LDF long back during 1996 – 2001 periods were also not progressing. The Government had to intervene in a beg way to change this unhealthy situation. Even those applications for electric connection submitted in 2001 were not honoured. This Government was able to grant 912300 connections within two years. But for a few electrical sections, connections were given to applications submitted till received up to January 1, 2007 (where electric posts have to be erected), and applications received till September 2007 where erection of new posts were not needed.

In order to improve the voltage level and avoiding power failures, within the last two years 32000 kilometres of 11 KV lines and 41000 transformers were installed. This is an all time record. During the five years prior to these only 4776 kilometres of 11 KV line and just 6755 transformers were installed.

In the Transmission sector also the Government achieved commendable progress. After assumption of power, 30 new substations have been commissioned. KSEB is now implementing projects and schemes outlined by the then LDF Government in 1998 in a master plan. Even these items of work were pending during the regime of the previous Government.

No efforts were taken to adapt to the situation even though there were marked changes in consumption pattern and load

► Contd. on page 55



A.K. Balan, Minister for Welfare of Backward and Scheduled Communities, presenting gold medal to S. Arya, who won gold in the Saf games at Colombo.

alternative to the Central Government policies and to retain the Electricity Board as a public sector undertaking.

The term of the Kerala State Electricity Board is to end on 9th June 2006 and this was when the Left Democratic Front Government assumed power. The first agenda before the Government was to ensure that the term of the Electricity Board be extended. Thus we were able to manage to get extension four times, to convert the Board into companies. Now the term of the Board is to end on 9th June 2008, and the Government of India is taking an uncompromising attitude in giving further extensions. Converting the Electricity Board into different companies will in no way help to improve the efficiency of the organisation. So we request to the Government of India to grant permission to have the present system of Board continue. But since the Government of India is in no mood to

Rs.3.20, the lowest rate will be around Rs.2.56. To the domestic consumers, whose connected load is 500 watts and monthly consumption less than 20 units, electricity is supplied free of cost, in Kerala. Up to 40 units the rate is Rs.1.15 and for the farmers the rate is just 65 paise. The poor people in Kerala can now use electricity because power is supplied at very low rates. In April 2006, the Electricity Regulatory Commission asked the Board to submit a petition to the effect that all the poor have to pay a minimum of Rs.2.56 per unit.

The Regulatory Commission also insisted on making Own Your Electricity Connection scheme mandatory for all. We do not blame the Regulatory Commission since this alone was what they could do as per the policy of the Government of India.

The Electricity Act 2003, Section 108, says that the State Government can give policy directions on the actions of the

From page 19

Welfare reached the ground

centres. This Government took up works on a priority basis. This Government has also drafted a master plan for the transmission sector till 2020.

A440 KV Power High Way connecting the south to north of Kerala, a 220 KV net work which is a continuation of the 440 KV net work, 110 and 33 KV net works that takes electricity up the village level etc. are part of the transmission system planned. By 2011, around 200 new substations will also become part of the network.

The Smart City, Port at Vizhinjam, Container Terminal at Vallarpadam and a lot of such other ventures are coming to Kerala. The transmission project being implemented now is ensuring quality power without interruption.

In the production sector also the Government of Kerala intervened in a big way. During 1996-01 period, the then LDF Government was able to establish projects to produce 1086 MW electricity. Or else, the state would have faced total power cut. But during 2001-06 electricity production projects that could produce 26.5 MW was the only one completed. Though there wasn't sufficient staff the previous Government retrenched 114 civil engineers on the very same day they were appointed, on the ground that there was no vacancy.

Left Democratic Front Government has decided to give great importance to go in for maximum number of projects to produce electricity. For this all the retrenched engineers were re-appointed and deputed them to project areas.

This Government also took steps to commission new projects with installed capacity of 500 MW. Projects like Kuttiadi Additional Extension (100 MW), Kuttiadi Tail Rise (5 MW) and Nariyamangalam Extension (25 MW) have been completed and final tests prior to commissioning is going on.

The works relating to the Pullivalal Extension (60MW), Adyanpara (3.5

MW) have commenced. The project has been tendered. Thottiyar (40 MW), Barapole (21 MW) also have been tendered. Sanction from Government of India was obtained for the 163 MW Athirappalli project. For the period 2012 – 17, investigation for 500 MW projects has begun.

We were able to get Government Sanction for establishing a 1000 MW power plant in Orissa. Enough coalfields were purchased and an MOU was signed with the Governments of Orissa and Gujaarat to form a company for mining coal. Another project to produce 25 MW power from the wind is being established at Ramakkalmedu in Idukki and at Attappady in Palakkad. It was decided to produce 100 MW during the tenure of the present regime itself. Government also

During the last two years power consumption reached a new record with an increase of more than seven million units per day. There was 15 per cent increase in the power consumed by the industrial sector.

tried its level best to get maximum share from the Central pool and was able to obtain 696 MW.

During the last two years power consumption reached a new record with an increase of more than seven million units per day. There was 15 per cent increase in the power consumed by the industrial sector. Despite huge rise in consumption and cut in the power allocated from the Central pool, through effective management, the LDF government was able to keep load shedding and power cut at bay during 2006-07. On 21st February 2007 the peak load demand was 2742 MW, a new record. In 2008, it is expected

to cross the 2800 MW mark. With the Central Government reducing power quota by 133 MW on April 1, 2001 and another 50 MW on 27th December, 2001. Despite pressure from the State Government we were not able to re-establish the 183 cut from the Central Pool. It became impossible to go forward without reducing the peak hour demand. Government went out to the intelligent general public of the state and implemented the message – Switch off one light and save the State from load shedding. The response from the people was commendable.

By permitting industrial concerns to pay of the arrears of electricity charges in convenient instalments, a lot of industrial concerns under lock out were reopened. To ensure that the plantations and industrial establishments reopen and function effectively and profitably, it was decided to waive the minimum demand charge for the period when the establishment was under lock and key. It was decided to purchase articles from Public Sector undertakings without resorting to re-tender. Thus the Meter company at Kollam, Traco Cables, KEL etc could reopen and function.

The arrears of minimum guarantee of Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribe consumers' was written off. For drinking water projects the LT4 tariff of Rs.3.25 was reduced to the house hold rate of Rs.1.15. The fixed charges were also given up.

Regarding the welfare of the employees and staff, their revision of pay was implemented. Pension was also revised. Rs.750 crore was spent in this was. It was decided not to outsource certain works.

Other organisations like ANERT, EMC and Electrical Inspectorate reported good progress in the last two years.

ANERT was stagnating during the UDF rule and the plan funds only the tune of eight per cent could be utilised. This Government strengthened ANERT and re-established high efficiency choolas. During 2006-07, the Government became richer by eight mega watt power through the Energy Auditing Programme of EMC. In 2007-08, we hope to reduce consumption by about 11 per cent. ■■■■



Through concerted and firm action against thieves, poachers and the criminal mafia in Marayoor, everybody including the criminals, got the message that the Government meant business and no efforts will be spared to bring to book the culprits and ensure that they are brought behind bars.

Conserving **Forest** for **Posterity**



Binoy Viswam
Minister for Forest and
Housing

They performed a magic – make the forests of Kerala vanish in front of our very eyes. To those responsible for this blatant act, the forests were nothing but an easy means to amass wealth. They cared not a hoot to the objections of the public. They managed, by hook or crook, to obtain the patronage of those in power, influence and weapons. And a powerful mafia was formed in Kerala. They became so powerful that they could make and destroy administrators of public trust. When they managed to move unchallenged along the corridors of power, it tolled the knell of forests. And they got the support of some political leaders who worshipped nothing but currency notes. These unscrupulous elements moving hand in hand when the Left Democratic Front assumed power in May 2006.

The LDF perfectly knows the mission of forests, the boon of nature in the form of woods and trees. This Government appreciate the fact that it should be committed to guarding and conserving the forests, which could provide unpolluted air and water, not only to the present generation, but generations still unborn. So the Government formulated an integrated forest

policy, and marched ahead with firm, unerring steps. The response to this policy was mixed. Some were sceptical, some disbelieved, some spread rumours, and the few wise appreciated. After two years, with a sense of satisfaction the LDF Government, looks back and feels it could be proud of the achievement. Whereas forests marked more depletion elsewhere in India and abroad, the satellite surveys show that the forest cover has really increased in Kerala, in Kerala alone. Yes, we became a model for other states and countries to follow in one more aspect. Definitely it was the determined efforts of the Government to defeat the mafia and to afforest more area that brought about this creditable achievement. So many positive actions, like declaring the Kurinjimala Sanctuary comprising of 3200 ha. area in Munnar to ensure complete protection and prevent encroachments, taking over 440ha. land from Vagamon area from the clutches of encroachers, and 9006 ha. forest area of Mankulam, rich in bio-diversity and declaring them as reserve forests, helped in creating another excellent and suitable Kerala model in the field of forest conservation also.

The declaration of LDF Government that there was no question of compromising with forest



Binoy Viswam, Minister for Forest and Housing, addressing the officials of Nirmithi Kendra

mafia and those who destroyed forest, was indeed followed by stern action. Through concerted and firm action against thieves, poachers and the criminal mafia in Marayoor, famous for its sandal wood trees and infamous for sandal wood thefts, everybody including the criminals, got the message that the Government meant business and no efforts will be spared to bring to book the culprits and ensure that they are brought behind bars. And these actions led to the uprooting of the mafia, who had interstate connections. The reports emphasised that the thefts of sandal trees were classic examples of the mafia-political patronage connection. Official reports of thefts at that time were manipulated in such a way that the culprits could escape the law.

There are examples when observations of the Hon'ble courts in sandal wood theft cases lead to the resignation of Ministers from cabinet. When the LDF Government assumed charge an average of eight sandal trees per day had been stolen. But this much trees are not lost even during a month now. It is an all time record. Sandal wood mafia, gunja cultivators and poachers have felt the sting of the actions of this Government. 140 culprits were arrested during the last two years (And many of them were absconding as per records!). The

onus of inquiring into the notorious Walayar sandal wood case has been given to the CBI. The CBI was reluctant to take up this case initially. But the fact that the CBI was ordered to take up the case by the Hon'ble High Court of Kerala after considering the Government's stand in this case shows the determination of the LDF to ensure punishment to offenders. And this should be read along with the

Government's action to send to prisons the people engaged in the sale of tiger skin, snake poison etc.

The Government stand is that not even an inch of forest is depleted, and to ensure this through co-operation and participation of the general public. In social forestry also a new world record was created when about 25 lakhs school children throughout Kerala planted saplings on the world environment day. And this was our humble step to prevent global warming. The planting of a live fence along the Tsunami destroyed sea coast to protect the locals under "Haritatheeram" – Green coast project — is another example. Planting of saplings along the road sides with the assistance of head-load workers under "Vazhiyora Thanal" - road side shade – is yet another step in social forestry. The survival rate of the saplings was very poor in the past. But this Government gave importance not only to planting, but also to maintenance and so the survival rate of the plants are commendable. And with satisfaction Government watch the growth of the plants and the realisation of the ambitious projects.

This Government could not contribute to leaving the tribes high and dry, to their penury and miseries. Crash

The Government stand is that not even an inch of forest is depleted, and to ensure this through co-operation and participation of the general public. In social forestry also a new world record was created when about 25 lakhs school children throughout Kerala on the world environment day planted saplings.



- Planted 36 lakh seedlings outside the forest under three afforestation programmes, 'Ente maram', 'Vazhiyora thanal' and 'Harithatheeram'
- Three per cent increase in total forest area
- The number of illegal sandal tree cutting reduced
- Declaration of 148 sq.km. buffer zone area cordon to Silent Valley National Park
- Declaration of Sanctuary for the peacock at Choolannur

The government constituted the "M.N Laksham Veedu Renovation" programme under which 60,000 houses will be renovated at a cost of 300crore shared between the government and the village panchayats. For this, the budget has set apart 22crore and a M.N Lakshamveedu Renovation Lottery has also been started to raise money.

programmes to benefit the tribes in the forests are being implemented with excellent results. The Department of Forests give all possible assistance to the Government in implementing imaginative programmes for the welfare of the tribes.

The Eco-development Committees constituted under the Department of Forests depicted wonderful achievements during the last two years. Four tons of pepper produced under organic cultivations by the members of the Eco-development Committees of Periyar has been exported to Germany. When the tribes of Periyar prove their might in the world market by introducing pepper produced through organic methods for the first time, many orthodox groups find it unpalatable. In fact, when Government boldly took over areas as and when their lease was over, there were many who opposed this move on various grounds. They complained that the very practice of organic cultivation was at stake. Their intentions were great - that the organic farming certificate obtained must not become invalid. And that only they can really do organic farming! To their dismay, tribes found no difficulty in proving that they could equally succeed in organic farming.

In fact, during earlier days, the middlemen got all the profit where as the tribes got pittance. The middle men from adjacent states used to visit the tribes even before the cropping season and advance nominal amounts to the tribes. These simple folk felt obliged to sell all their produce to these people who had advanced them money. And of course the price was always determined by the agents and tribes never could bargain. Kerala once again becomes role model when the tribes prove that they could compete with those who had the monopoly of organic farming.

The Government also issued order for providing timber for house building to the tribes in the forests at mere 25 percent of the Government rate.

The Government also provided reeds and bamboos at subsidised rates to the traditional artisans among the tribes.

Sale of timbers was a major area where corrupt practices ruled. The rich timber

merchants who participated in the auctions and would pay nothing but a small amount as earnest money deposit. Then they would leave, and come back to remove the timber paying the balance amount and meagre interest levied, when the timber prices were really high. Now they have to pay 50 percent of the auction amount immediately and remove timber after paying the balance amount within a few days. The depot officers and range officers were given the authority to grant extension of time, a maximum of three months to pay up and remove timber. After this date the timber would be re-auctioned.

Moreover the common man has been provided with great many facilities in obtaining timber for constructing his own house. He could buy timber from depots at justifiable price avoiding middle men and timber merchants through the retail sale system of the Government.

The LDF Government also amended the Act relating to growing and felling of trees in private land to ensure that common man did not face much difficulties on the one side and preventing large scale felling of trees utilising the loop holes in the Act.

The Government also gave protective armour to the Silent Valley National Park by declaring a 148 Sq. km. buffer zone area cordon.

Further, the Government ensured the ecological equilibrium of the estuary of the Kadalundi river which is very rich with waterfowl and migratory birds. To enable this the Kadalundi-Vallikkunnu area was declared a community reserve. The declaration of the Community reserve ensured that the labourers of this area engaged in various profession such as fishing, sand mining etc. could continue their profession without destroying the ecological system. This is the third community reserve in India.

The Government took over 22.45 ha. of land previously possessed by the Harison Group in Thoothumpara Estate when they violated the lease conditions. And this sent out the signal that Government would not compromise with the rich and influential.

The LDF also appreciate that the



Binoy Viswam, Minister for Forest and M.A Baby, Minister for Education jointly presenting *vanamithra* puraskaram to the winners.

preservation and conservation of forests is essential for the very survival of human race and that the depletion of forests meant destruction of mankind. And this was the guiding principle behind the legislations and implementation of projects under the Department of Forests. Now we can have the satisfaction to know that the people and Government of Kerala march ahead, hand in hand, to conserve our forests for us, and for generations yet to be born.

The Dream of House for All

'Houses for All' is a very popular aim of the Left government. To achieve this, the government have started innovative schemes including the flagship programme 'E. M. S Total Housing Project'. It is the tears of the homeless that moves the left government to get involved in the housing scheme.

The Housing Minister in the Achutha Menon government, M.N Govindan Nair formulated the 1972 "Laksham Veedu" programme. Houses constructed under this scheme, are now in a state of disrepair and need renovation. The government constituted the 'M.N Laksham Veedu Renovation' programme under which 60,000 houses will be renovated at a cost of 300 crore shared between the government and the village panchayats. For this, the budget has set apart 22 crore and a M.N. Lakshamveedu Renovation

Lottery has also been started to raise money. As this project benefits the poor, I hope it will have popular support.

This government has also increased the Central allocation to the State Housing Board to 35 crore from 10 crore. Steps have been taken to sell the flats and plots of the State Housing Board and it was sold to 632 people. The salary of the employees of the Housing Board was enhanced and the dearness allowance and increments of the Nirmithi Kendra staff were also allowed. After obtaining the "A" class registration from the Public Works Department, the Housing Board has started the works themselves. In addition, the board also takes up consultancy jobs and deposit works. Projects using cost effective production materials and techniques have been started by the Central government. Testing centres for production materials will be upgraded and margin free markets will be started.

For training labourers in cost effective production techniques, short term courses will be started. The syllabus for the courses will be prepared by labour leaders and others.

The Government have increased the subsidy of those who have at least two cents of land from Rs 9000 to Rs 25000 according to the "Suraksha Housing Scheme". As part of the 50th anniversary

celebrations of the Kerala government, people from lower sections who have taken loans from the Housing Board will have them written off or have the interest lowered. The one time settlement scheme of the government have so far benefited 37,517 people and has been extended to March 31 2008, keeping in mind that it is for the lower sections.

Steps to make the joint project of Hudco and the Housing Board in Thiruvananthapuram to materialise Habitat Centre a reality have started. "Jagathy Housing Board", "Pattom Commercial Complex Project", "P.T Chacko Nagar Housing-Finance project", "Pandit Colony Extension Project" and in Ernakulam the "Panambally Nagar project" will be started soon. The works of Nirmithi Gurukulam commenced again after a gap of five years. It was renamed "Laurie Baker Nirmithi Training and Research Institute" and expanded at a cost of 25 lakh. An award in memory of Laurie Baker popularly called "Paavangalude Perunthachan" was also constituted to promote low cost housing. Costford received the first award.

The Housing Task Force was constituted and seminars were conducted as part of this. The problems of the homeless may not be solved by this, but they will help at certain extent in all possible ways. ■■■■



The Government of Kerala will have to depend the Central Government and the neighbouring states for procuring food grains for Public Distribution System since the state produces only 15 per cent of the requirement.

Successful Achievements



C. Divakaran

Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Animal Husbandry

Mandate for LDF rule in Kerala in 2006 Elections was a prelude to change in the history of the state. Greater responsibilities such as uplift of the down trodden and make their future more prosperous are on the shoulders of Sri. v.s. Achuthanandan, Hon 'ble Chief Minister. The Government since received more acclaims from various corners for its uncorrupt and people friendly activities. The victorious journey has yielded results in various fields as the Government is moving towards its third year of incessant activities.

It is a great pleasure for me to see that LDF Government, always with the people, have started a lot of developmental activities that were stagnant during the previous Government. A lot of new projects and programmes to address the problems in 'Civil Supplies', 'Animal Husbandry', 'Consumer Affairs', 'Legal Metrology' and 'Dairy Sector' have been started or in progress. The success of all these programmes rests on the whole hearted support and participation of the people of Kerala.

Food & Civil Supplies Department

In Kerala from 1966 onwards-statutory Rationing system was in force. This system was introduced with a view to distribute essential food

materials to everybody having ration cards. Subsequently in 1997 statutory rationing system was amended as targeted public distribution system on the basis of a recommendation from the Government of India. The Central Government classified ration cardholders as AP L, BPL, AAY depending upon the income of the family. Further in 2001 sugar allotment to APL cardholders were withdrawn.

The Government of Kerala will have to depend the Central Government and the neighboring states for procuring food grains for Public Distribution System since the state produces only 15 per cent of the requirement.

In 2006 when Left Democratic Front Government assumed office, the people of Kerala deserted ration shops because of their poor performance. The Left Democratic Front Government revived the system so that all the BP L ration card holders returned to the ration shops and 65 per cent of the AP L ration card holders began to utilize the ration shops. Only 3 per cent of the AP L card holders taken food grains from ration shops before May 2006. Now all possible steps have been taken to attract all the ration card holders back into the Public Distribution System, but for the hostile attitude of the Government of



Ensuring the Best: C. Divakaran, Minister for Food and Civil Supplies, visits the market to ensure the free flow of food grains.

India.

In connection, with the Onam Festival of 2006, twenty lakhs Onam Kits free of cost were distributed among BPL families. About Rs 6.5 crore was spent for this programme. Onam Kits were distributed through Civil Supplies Corporation and not a single complaint was received so far as distribution is concerned. During Onam 2007 all Cardholders were provided with 25-35 kgs of good quality raw rice and 1.5 kg sugar in excess of normal quota. In connection with the Onam, School children were provided with 5 Kg rice free of cost. About 5 lakh food grain kits were distributed; free of cost among Chikkun gunia affected people. The total expenditure for this account alone is Rs.9 crore. This is in addition to free ration supplied to people affected by the natural calamities and workers in locked out plantations. Rice at the rate of Rs.3/- per kg is distributed among BPL cardholders since March 2006. All efforts are taken to see that this scheme is continued without any disruption. An amount of 120 crore rupees per year is given as subsidy for this programme.

Increase in Central Allotment

The central allotment for AP L rice under the public distribution system at the time when the Government came to

power was 1,13,420 Mt per month which was reduced to 21,334 Mt subsequently and the same was further reduced to 17,056 Mt with effect from April 2008. With this allotment the Government of Kerala can provide an AP L card holders with 3.5 kg rice per month which is far below the requirement. An all party delegation met the Hon 'ble Prime Minister and Hon 'ble Agriculture Minister on 15th April 2008 with a request to restore AP L rice allotment, but the

Government of India took a stand that the responsibility to maintain PDS rest with State Government. It is their duty to procure rice from outside if the production is below the requirement. This attitude of the Government of India is against the principles behind the statutory rationing system prevailing in the State since 1966.

Paddy Procurement

The paddy farmers of Kerala were in a pathetic condition when the LDF Government assumed power in 2006. Paddy fields were converted for non agricultural activities since paddy cultivation has become a non profit making business. Government of Kerala with a view to improve agricultural activities and attain self sufficiency procured paddy at the rate of Rs 8.50 per Kg during 2006 and later raised procurement price to Rs. 10/- during the current harvest seasons. Payment to the Farmers are made only through Bank Accounts so that no intermediary loss is brought to them. The custom milled rice are distributed to ration card holders to the maximum possible extent. Yet there are issues relating to harvest and milling which owes attention of the Government. Sufficient Government owned mills are not available at present but steps are on the way to start rice mills under the public sector. Insufficient storage facility is another hurdle to face in the procurement of paddy. A project for

Government of Kerala with a view to improve agricultural activities and attain self sufficiency procured paddy at the rate of Rs 8.50 per Kg during 2006 and later raised procurement price to Rs. 10/- during the current harvest seasons. Payment to the Farmers are made only through bank accounts so that no intermediary loss is brought to them.



- Monthly distribution of 35 kg. rice to APL card holders at a rate of Rs.8.90 per kg. and 25 kg. to BPL card holders at a rate of Rs three per kg.
- Procurement of paddy at a rate of Rs 10 per kg.
- Price monitoring cell in all 14 districts in the State
- Public distribution system strengthened
- Distribution of essential commodities at lower price through 24000 centres like Maveli, Maveli Supermarkets, People's Bazaars, Labham Markets etc.
- More consumer centric measures in Supplyco

To prevent diversion Food advisory and vigilance committee which was inactive during the previous Government was reconstituted in state and district level, for more effective intervention in P.D.S by including MLA's representative of Local Self Governemnt, NGO's etc. Steps are being taken to form Taluk level committees.

starting paddy yard at Kuttanad is submitted to Government of India with the request for making available funds under the Central Scheme.

One of the problems prevalent in P DS was diversion of ration articles. This is a social problem which can be solved only through the whole hearted support lended by the people of Kerala. 258989 inspections and surprise checks were conducted by the Government so far and licences of 418 ARDs and 40 A WDs were suspended for irregularities. All ARDs were directed to use Electronic balance and exhibit price list of items sold through them. An amount of Rs. 1,43,53,818 was imposed as fine for the irregularities detected. To minimize diversion the Government is exploring possibility to engage Civil Supplies Corporation as the only whole sale dealer. This new projects is implemented in Ernakulam District as a pilot project.

To prevent diversion Food advisory and vigilance committee which was inactive during the previous Government was reconstituted in state and district level, for more effective intervention in P.D.S by including MLA's representative of Local Self Governemnt, NGO's etc. Steps are being taken to form Taluk level committees.

For effective inspections a special squad is formed including officers from Civil Supplies Department, Legal Metrology, Health, Revenue, Police & Motor transport. Ration 'adalaths' were conducted to find immediate solution for public complaints.

During festival seasons such as Onam, Christmas, Ramzan, there is a tendency for price rice in the open market. To prevent price rise in the open market the Government of Kerala took so many steps to intervene in the market very effectively to control price rise. During the previous financial year Government sanctioned Rs. 20 Crore as revolving fund for market intervention to the Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation (Supplyco). Onam Metro People Bazar, Town People Bazar, Onam markets, Onam Mini fair and 140 Onam markets in every constituency of the State were conducted in addition to the existing outlets of Supplyco. These

markets prevented price raise in the open market during Onam 2007. 29 items of vegetables, 1000 MT of Banana, at the rate of Rs. 12 to 15 were marketed through special Onam market. Price of Banana and Vegetables were effectively controlled through these markets.

Allegations of Corruption to the tune of 135 crore during the tenure of UDF Government in supplyco was referred to C.B.lfor further enquiry.

Exhibition of price list at all shops made compulsory and steps are taken to see that the shop owners do exhibit price list without fail. Surprise checks are conducted in all districts under the direct supervision of Secretary for Food Department, Director of Civil Supplies, District Supply Officer etc.

It is proposed to start 68 Maveli Medical Stores. For this 54 posts of Assistant Pharmacist have been created and reported to Kerala Public Service Commission for recruitment.

Privilege cards with insurance coverage has been introduced in Civil Supplies Corporation outlets. Customers will be benefited by minimum 2per cent on using this card. Super Market will work 7 days a week and 2per cent special subsidy is provided.

To Keep the market price steady Supplyco is reviewing the selling price every month and not changing the selling price frequently even when the purchase rate are going up. While fixing the selling rate for essential commodities Supplyco considers the open market price and the selling rate of other leading retail shops of Kerala. Even when the procurement rates are going up Supplyco retain the previous selling rate for maintaining the selling rate so as to control the market. The price are same and stable for the last one and half year in the State. By the above measures, the turn over of Supplyco for 2007-08 is Rs1256 crore which is up by 196 crore of previous year.

Six mobile Maveli Stores were started during one year. Nearly 300 outlets including ARD Sabari Stores have been started functioning under Civil Supplies Corporation.

We are running Maveli Medical stores also. On medicines we are providing

discount upto 30per cent. As a welfare measure from a progressive Government; a discount of 50per cent is offered on Chikungunea medicines.

The Civil Supplies Corporation issued instructions for replacement of items, purchased by customers if there is any complaint. In case a customer is not satisfied, the refund of amount on return of commodity is also permitted.

To prevent the entry of Multinational/ National companies in the retail sector and to provide all facilities according to the modern trends in the market, it is proposed to start four hyper markets in Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam Kottayam and Thalassery with all modern facilities at global standard. Administrative sanction for all the four projects has already been given. In accordance with the change in the food habits of Keralites, the Civil Supplies Corporation is distributing fortified atta instead of raw wheat at very low price. So many private companies are selling atta (non fortified) at an exorbitant price. It has been come to the notice of the Government that these private companies are looting consumers. So it is decided to distribute fortified atta all over Kerala, at the rate of Rs. 11/- per Kg.

To make use of modern trends in food research, an institute with a plan outlay of Rs. 70 Crore is proposed to be started at

Konni in Pathanamthitta district. 35 acres of land were provided for the purpose and inauguration of the project office is made by Hon'ble Minister Sri Subhodh Kanth Sahai, Government of India have provided Rs. 2.5 Crore for the above project.

Government have decided to issue laminated ration cards to seventy lakh families, affixing photographs of the head of the family. Segregation of AP L - BP L families is to be completed by Local Self Government Department. New Ration Cards will be issued on completion of BP L List.

To prevent diversion of LPG a number of discussions were arranged with Oil company authorities and distributors and open forum are held at district level under supervision of District Collector to solve problems of LPG consumers then and there. Trucks containing LPG are allowed to pass through the check post through green channel in consultation with taxes Department to prevent shortage.

Consumer Affairs

Consumer Affairs Department is intended to protect the consumers from unfair trade practice. But due to inefficiency of the UDF government the department was bringing difficulties to the consumers. Stringent actions were taken by the LDF government to rewarm consumers affairs department by

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constituting consumer protection commission, District Consumer Protection Forums and Councils more efficient.

Animal Husbandry

During the tenure of LDF Government 27.46 lakhs cattles were vaccinated against foot and mouth disease under 'Goraksha Programme' Agricultural Training Centres were started in Thalayolaprambu in Kottayam district and Kottiyam in Kollam district. 75lakhs chicken and 7 lakh ducks were vaccinated against Vasantha, 901akh chickens and 7 lakh ducks are expected to be covered under this programme. Under the insurance scheme goraksha two lakh cattles in Palakkad and Alleppy districts insured A farmer need to spare Rs. 100/- to insure a cattle for Rs.1 0,000. Steps are being taken to increase turkey farming all over the State. Turkey farm at Kurippuzha renovated. It is decided to start 50 turkey units per district. Cattle feeds at subsidized rate were distributed among 21,000 calfs, under 'Calf Protection Scheme'. 200 Calf Clinic were conducted Cattle feed and insurance coverage are made available during the year to 15000 calves. A lab with NABL accreditation will be started at Maradu for testing meat products to be exported with an expenditure of Rs. 3 crore. Cattle Census- 18h five year cattle census completed in the State by October 2007. Steps are being taken to consolidate the data.



Always committed to arrest the price rise by timely intervention in the market

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Successful Achievements

Kerala State Poultry Development Corporation

Kerala State Poultry Development Corporation has started for augmentory poultry production in Kerala and to keep the sector more vibrant. It couldn't achieve the objectives as envisaged at the time of formation of this organization. During the last two years of its functioning, the activities has been diversified with corporation taking up both the forward and backward linkages to strengthen this sector. KSP DC is now the implementing agency for step L step IL SGSY (Special), RSVY and Flagship projects assumed at augmentory egg production and providing marginal income to the weaker sections. Nearly 30000 women beneficiaries were associated with backyard poultry units which has resulted not only in gainful employment of them but also to gain marginal income and there by helps in eliminating poverty to some extent.

The Corporation is running a poultry meat plant at Petta for supplying quality poultry meat to the consumer at reasonable price. The broiler breeding farm at Kudappanakunnu has been restarted, feed mixing plant has been installed at Kottiyam, supply to eggs to school children has begun. The egg production has increased by 1.98 crores during last year and this year it is expected that 5 crores of eggs can be produced additionally. In short poultry Development Corporation will intensify the activities in the coming year for the betterment of the poultry farmers in the state and will provide a new face to the poultry sector in Kerala.

Dairy Development Department

Ever since this Government comes into power various steps were initiated to increase milk production and attain self sufficiency in milk production and attain self sufficiency in milk. The induction of high yielding cross bred cows into the state under the schemes "Pasugrammam" and Milk Shed Development Project has started yielding results. The milk

production of the state has increased to 20.04 lakh MTs during 2006-07.

The Government has also initiated steps to promote fodder cultivation on a large scale. During 2006-07 1640 hector of land was newly brought under fodder cultivation and 8,000 farmers were assisted to take up Azola cultivation as a source of feed to their cattle.

During the last one year 64 new primary Co-operatives were registered across the state assuring a ready market and steady price to the dairy farmers.



Dairy Farmers Welfare Fund

The Government also introduced a new Bill forming a Dairy Farmers Welfare Fund Board for providing old age pension to dairy farmers over 60 years of age, this has provided immense relief to the aged dairy farmers and also attracted new farmers to the field of dairying. Along with pension other welfare schemes have also envisaged in the welfare fund. At present 1.7 lakh farmers have been enrolled in this scheme and 21021 dairy farmers are being given a monthly pension of Rs.250/-.

The Dairy Development Department has enforced strict quality control of milk being marketed in the state especially during the festival season and there by ensuring safety of the consumers. All these steps initiated by the Government have made the dairy sector of Kerala vibrant and we hope to achieve self sufficiency in milk production by 2010.

Kerala Live Stock Development Board

Kerala Livestock Development Board

runs in profit. Production and Sale of frozen semen has been increased. Started supplying semen to Tamil Nadu for its entire requirement. The Board has started semen supply to Sikkim. Obtained ISO 22000 Certification to Mattupetty Semen Bank and State Seed Laboratory Certification to Dhoni Fodder Seed Laboratory. Ksheeradhara Project launched through which high value semen is distributed at subsidized rate to high producing cows in the state. Implemented Gosurakha Project to insure cattles of Palakkad and Alappuzha at low premium rate. Construction of Model Livestock Village at Mattupetty is nearing final stage. Animal tissue culture project with Sree Chithra Institute for production of Heart Valves is in progress. Launched Traceable Meat named "Mattupetty Premium Beef" Initiated action for import of Semen, Embryo and bulls from abroad. Distribution of 37.5 MT of fodder seeds to 24 states in India under Government of India Central Minikit Programme has been started.

Legal Metrology

Kerala Legal Metrology Department is another portfolio under me which take care of the interest of consumers in respect of weight and measure of items sold. Enforcement officers of this department make frequent inspection of factories, Oil pumps, retail and whole sale shops to see that the equipments used for weighing and measuring are properly sealed by the Department as per rules in force. In 2006-07 financial year 6940 cases have been registered and an amount of Rs. 22829430 has been fined. To improve the efficiency of the department offices at the District level have been computerised.

A Tanker lorry calibration unit at Kollam is expected to be started very soon. A new building will be constructed by incurring an amount of Rs. 751akh. All the officers of the Department are given inservice training, in addition to seminar, work shops to equip them to the modern requirement. A mobile weigh bridge verification unit up to 10 tonnes weight is expected to be allotted to the Department under centrally sponsored scheme. By this project correctness of all weigh bridges that are in use through out Kerala can be tested. ■■■■



The TECOM has agreed to set up the Smart City in accordance with conditions proposed by the Left Democratic Front. Kerala's prestigious Info Park would remain with State. And there is no condition of exclusivity. That means there is no bar to permit new IT ventures in and around Kochi. Smart City project is an indication of Kerala's changed industrial scenario.

Vision High Yielding



Elamaram Kareem
Minister for Industries
and Commerce

The Government firmly believe that they are able to make the State into an investor-friendly destination within a short span of time. Industrialists and entrepreneurs within the State and outside will recognize the change of attitude of the Government and its pro-active policies. Investors are keen to invest in Kerala if the Government is able to provide basic infrastructure. The allegation that Kerala is a place of labour unrest has been disproved.

The Dubai based TECOM is in the process of a setting up a Smart City in Kochi to provide world-class infrastructure for information technology industries. The TECOM has agreed to set up the Smart City in accordance with conditions proposed by the Left Democratic Front. Kerala's prestigious Info Park would remain with the State. And there is no condition of exclusivity. That means there is no bar to permit new IT ventures in and around Kochi. Smart City project is an indication of Kerala's changed industrial scenario.

Taking advantage of the investor-friendly atmosphere we have to attain economic growth and to create job opportunities in a big way. The industrial policy of the LDF Government aims

at achieving these two objectives. While we endeavour for rapid industrialisation, our emphasis will be on social objectives. We are committed to ensuring fair wages to employees.

I am happy to say that the Government has received firm offers of industrial investment to the tune of Rs. 20,000 crore from private sector. The Shobha Developers Limited, a renowned infrastructure developer, owned by P.N.C. Menon, has decided to set up a hi-tech city in Kochi with an investment to the tune of Rs. 5,000 crore. According to the promoters, the project would generate as many as 75,000 jobs.

The Government have signed an MoU with the Construction Industry Development Board, Malaysia, to set up new generation industries at Kinaloor in Kozhikode district. It is expected that the proposed project would offer 25,000 jobs. The Grasim Industries Limited has informed its willingness to set up modern industries at Mavoor in Kozhikode, where Birla's Pulp and Fibre unit existed. The Government is examining the proposal.

Major industrial hosues in the country are keen to have their units in Kerala for obvious reasons: Kerala is free from labour unrest; availability of high skilled labour; favourable climate; availability



Missile speed to Industries: V.S Achuthanandan, Chief Minister, handing over the key of KELTC to A.K Antony, Union Minister for Defence, for setting up BrahMos Missile factory at Thiruvananthapuram.

of quality power and water; excellent air, rail and road connectivity; pro-active policies of the Government.

Public Sector

Public Sector industries in the State have made an amazing turnaround during the last two years. It has been proved that our public sector units are capable of competing with the private sector provided management is made efficient and employees are motivated. Twenty-six units under the Department of Industries have registered profit during 2007-08. Performance of PSUs with regard to production, sales turnover and productivity is also noteworthy. During 2006-07, production of public sector industries under the Department of Industries has touched the figure of Rs.2000 crore. It is evident from the figures that the PSUs have been playing a significant role in shaping our economy.

The Malabar Spinning and Weaving Mills, one of the companies that shut down during the former UDF regime, was reopened. It shows our commitment towards public sector. The Government is implementing a Rs.12 crore project to modernise the mill. The Government has also decided to revive Balaramapuram Spinning Mill in Thiruvananthapuram.

The success story of United Electrical Industries, Kollam, is really amazing. The UEI was one of the units listed for closure

because of recurring losses. The company is now on the path of growth and diversification. Production of energy metres has gone upto 1.5 lakh a month from 18,000. What is noteworthy is that PSUs have achieved the growth without infusing fresh capital. What the government did was professionalising the management and close monitoring. Trade Unions are wholeheartedly supporting the efforts of the Government to run the PSUs in an efficient manner. Stringent measures are on to curb corruption. Performance of

PSUs are evaluating on monthly basis in the presence of the Minister for Industries.

The Government have decided that PSUs under various departments cooperate each other, mainly in procurement. The KSEB is buying the entire energy metres produced by the UEI. The KSEB is purchasing cables from the State-owned Traco Cable, TELK-Angamaly and Kerala Electrical and Allied Engineering Company. Cooperation among public sector companies is unprecedented.

Tie-ups with Central public sector giants with a view to strengthen State PSUs have made encouraging results. The BrahMos Aerospace has acquired Kerala Hi-Tech Industries in Thiruvananthapuram. The company has been renamed as BrahMos Aerospace Thiruvananthapuram. The BrahMos, a joint venture of India and Russia to produce supersonic cruise missiles, has plans to invest in Thiruvananthapuram in a big way. The joint venture between the National Thermal Power Corporation and TELK, Angamaly, has been operational.

Indian Railways has already decided to manufacture components of wagon bogey in collaboration with the State-owned Autokast at Cherthala. Steel Authority of India, the largest steel producer of India, has decided to have joint venture with Steel Complex Limited,

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- The TECOM has agreed to set up the Smart City in accordance with conditions proposed by the Government; Info Park will remain with the State
- Firm offers of industrial investment to the tune of Rs 20,000 crore from private sector
- Signed MoU with the Construction Industry Development Board, Malaysia, to set up new generation industries at Kinaloor in Kozhikode
- The BrahMos Aerospace has acquired Kerala Hi-Tech Industries
- Government allotted Rs four crore for diversification of Dinesh Beedi, the largest cooperative in the State .

The Government is aware that small scale industries are providing largest number of jobs. The Government has taken a number of initiatives to promote small scale sector.



A high level business delegation from abroad visiting Elamaram Kareem, Minister for Industries and Commerce.

Kozhikode. The State Government and the SAIL would have equal stake in the joint venture. The SAIL is expected to make an investment to the tune of Rs.200 crore to modernise the Steel Complex, the only public sector steel-making unit in Kerala. A rolling mill with an investment of Rs.50 crore would be set up there as a measure to make the factory a viable venture. The Government is also making efforts for tie-up between the State-owned Kerala Electrical and Allied Engineering limited (KEL) and the Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL).

While making concerted and earnest efforts to attract private investment, the Government is determined to promote our traditional industries and make them competitive through modernisation. We have taken imaginative steps to revive handloom and khadi sectors. Handloom and khadi uniforms have been introduced in schools as part of the efforts to explore new markets. Sales turnover of handloom clothes have increased manifold.

The Government have chalked out an action plan to diversify Dinesh Beedi, the largest cooperative in the State. The Government allotted Rs four crore for diversification. The Beedi Cooperative has now entered into the field of garment making and food processing. A scheme to modernise bamboo sector with Central assistance is being implemented with a view to generate more employment and to ensure higher wages for the existing workers.

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Scarcity of land and lack of world-class infrastructure are the main disadvantages of Kerala. The Government wants to overcome these barriers. The industrial policy promises a land bank to provide land for genuine investors. The INKEL was formed with private participation to create world-class infrastructure. ■ ■ ■ ■



V.S Achuthanandan, Chief Minister, inaugurating the project of Smart City at Kochi



Kerala is widely accepted as a labour-friendly State. Redressal of the genuine grievances of labourers is most essential for ensuring a decent livelihood to them, social harmony, industrial prosperity and growth of the economy. There is genuine concern and commitment from the part of this Government to protect the interests of labour class and promotion of their welfare.

Labour Peaceful Adamant Excise



P.K. Gurudasan
Minister for Labour and Excise

When the LDF Government assumed power, the State Economy in general and Labour sector in particular were in total disarray. Earnest efforts were taken to overcome the situation. Most of the programmes implemented in the Department are aimed at the welfare of the working class, especially those from the traditional sector.

Labour

Kerala is widely accepted as a labour-friendly State. Redressal of the genuine grievances of labourers is most essential for ensuring a decent livelihood to them, social harmony, industrial prosperity and growth of the economy. There is genuine concern and commitment from the part of this Government to protect the interests of labour class and promotion of their welfare. The view that labourers in Kerala are an irritant factor posing a constraint on investment is totally baseless. The above propaganda has been unleashed by certain interested quarters who want to push back our State in the matter of industrial progress and thereby isolate the working people.

Our aim is quality production, maximum production and better productivity. We always stand for the protection of the legitimate rights

of the working class.

The labour Department is the statutory agency to bring about and keep up harmonious relation in industrial establishments. Effective enforcement of labour laws and labour welfare schemes is the prerequisite for the maintenance of harmonious relations and creation of an intact atmosphere for sustained developments and investments.

The Labour Commissionerate provides the required support to the State Government in solving the variety of problems confronted by the workforce of the State.

The Industrial Relation Committees (IRCs) functioning in the State as Joint Consultative bodies have been considered as an outstanding contribution of Kerala to the country. During the LDF regime the minimum wages of workers of several unorganised/organised sectors are ensured either through Minimum Wages Committees or by Gazette Notifications as advised by Minimum Wages Advisory Committees. The State Government is taking all efforts for the welfare of the migrant workers and steps are taken to enforce the provisions of the Inter State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979.

There are instances of Child Labour in the



P.K Gurudasan, Minister for Excise, flagging off the two wheelers allotted to excise officials.

State. Child labour in the State is mainly an offshoot of migrant labour. Effective steps are being taken to stop this evil practice.

The Department of Factories & Boilers is the Statutory Authority to ensure safety, health and welfare of factory workers and the general public living in the vicinity of factories by implementing relevant laws.

The Kerala Institute of Labour and Employment (KILE), an autonomous body constituted by the State Government, is performing with a prominent role in conducting training programmes, workshops and seminars on labour related subjects, training to the departmental officers and other stakeholders of industry.

The Overseas Development and Employment Promotion Consultants Ltd. (ODEPC) is the only recruiting agency in the Government sector deploys Indian manpower to foreign countries. It is also doing well in the field of travel agency.

The various labour welfare pensions were in huge arrears when the present Government assumed power. Steps were taken to clear the arrears. As a first step, twelve months' pension in lump was disbursed to the beneficiaries under various schemes. It is the firm resolve of the Government to clear the arrears of welfare pensions and also to enhance the same. In this year's budget speech, it was declared that the monthly amount of

off the two wheelers allotted to excise officials. welfare pension will be enhanced to Rs.200. Our objective is to bring all sections of workers under one or other welfare scheme.

Plantation sector

Kerala is one of the very few States in the country where practically almost all types of plantation crops are grown. At the time of assumption of office by the LDF Ministry the sector was in deep crisis. The worst affected were tea plantations. 22 tea estates including 17 major plantations were closed and thousands of labourers were rendered jobless leading to major social and economic problems. Our

Government lost no time in initiating discussions with the trade unions as well as the owners of the estates with a view to re-open the estates and factories. Several concessions were given by the State Government by way of waiving of minimum demand charges, on electricity, plantation taxes, Agricultural income tax etc. Welfare activities were also undertaken to assist the starving workers. Relief measures were undertaken through the Plantation Workers Relief Committees. Financial assistance to the tune of Rs. one crore has been given for the repair of the layams of workers. Rs. 2.98 crores was allotted for providing drinking water and electrification to the plantation workers in Peerumede Taluk. A revival package has been prepared and submitted to the Government of India and exerted pressure on them to intervene in the crisis. As a result of the efforts made so far by the State Government and Government of India, 10 major tea gardens were re-opened. The Central Government has also approved a scheme for the re plantations and rejuvenation of the tea gardens. "As part of these Rs. 3.44 Lakh per hectare was sanctioned for the replanting of the tea gardens. Steps have been initiated by Government of India to take over the remaining closed tea gardens by invoking section 16 (E) of the tea act for which also we had our own contribution.

Cashew

Cashew Industry is one of the

The Overseas Development and Employment Promotion Consultants Ltd. (ODEPC) is the only recruiting agency in the Government sector deploys Indian manpower to foreign countries. It is also doing well in the field of travel agency.



- Peaceful atmosphere in labour sector through friendly employee-employer relationship
- Strengthening of the enforcement sector, which implements the Labour Acts
- Passed Kerala Shops and Commercial Establishment Labourers Welfare Act; benefited to 10 lakh labourers
- Passed Small Plantation Labourers Welfare Act
- Increased Rs.200 per month in all welfare pensions
- All the tea plantations except eight, opened and started functioning; of them 22 were closed for a long time

Government reiterates its commitment to pursue its efforts even more vigorously to educate the poor and economically weaker sections about the harmful effects of liquor. In this regard, the Government would harness the co-operation of political parties, trade union organisations, Kudumbasree, voluntary organisations etc.

traditional industries in the State, which provides employment to more than three lakhs workers. In order to revive the industry several measures have been adopted by the Government. The minimum wages of the cashew workers were revised with effect from January 2007.

For the promotion of the Cashew Industry, Cashew Special Office was established with headquarters at Kollam. One of the major problems facing the industry is shortage of raw cashew nuts. Over the years the production of raw cashew nuts has come down considerably. In order to overcome the situation Government have constituted an agency namely Kerala State Agency for Cashew Cultivation (KSACC) for expanding the area of cashew cultivation. Government have sanctioned Rs.50 lakhs to the agency and it has taken a concerted effort to undertake cashew cultivation. The KSACC have already signed a MoD with the Kerala Farming Corporation for joint cultivation of cashew in 229 ha. of land owned by the Corporation.

In this connection it is worth mentioning that in the State budget for 2008 - 09 Rs. one crore has been earmarked for promoting cashew cultivation. There is also an assurance on the part of the Central Government to sanction adequate amount for the expansion of the Cashew cultivation.

ESI

ESI is the largest social security Scheme

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of the country. Due to the pressure of the LDF Government the Central Government and ESI Corporation have taken steps to implement the ESI Scheme most effectively in the State. This Government has taken steps to include additional 1.25 lakhs of beneficiaries under the purview of the Scheme.

Another important achievement of the Government is the decision taken to extend ESI scheme to the employees of medical institutions and teaching and non-teaching staffs of the unaided schools and institutions.

With the help of the ESI Corporation we have already formulated a plan to construct buildings to the ESI dispensaries, which are now functioning in rented





P.K Gurudasan, Minister for Labour, inaugurating the training on the overseas job prospects for nurses

buildings.

We have already approached the Central Government and the ESI Corporation with a request to establish a medical college at Parippally in Kollam district. The response is very encouraging. If materialised, the same, will be the first ESI Medical College in the country.

Industrial Training Department

With the advancement of technology the requirement of skilled workers increased. But majority of our job seekers lack skill training. In addition to the five ITIs which were upgraded during the tenure of the previous Government, LDF Government upgraded nine ITIs in the State as Centres of Excellence. A decision was also taken to upgrade seven other ITIs into first grade ITIs.

For several years no new ITIs have been started in the State. Now we have received representation for starting 47 new ITIs where land, building and furniture are made available by the local bodies. New ITIs will be established in as much places as possible.

Excise

The Government is fully committed to eradicating illicit distillation, transportation, possession and sale of illicit liquor, non-duty paid IMFL and preventing its smuggling from other States.

Adequate measures have been taken to prevent such illegal activities. Government is fully aware of the novel methods of operation of the liquor mafia and the department has been fully equipped to meet the challenges posed by them. The Government would further strengthen the enforcement wing by employing additional work force and -providing new vehicles and equipments like pistols, mobile phones, wireless sets etc in a phased manner. Computerisation of the various Excise Offices is already underway. Government proposes to amend the Abkari Act and Rules so as to cope up with

the requirements of the present day. An expert Committee has already been constituted under the chairmanship of former Excise Commissioner and Additional Chief Secretary J. Lalithambika, to study and suggest the amendments required in the Abkari Act and Rules and also to suggest measures to contain the menace of spurious liquor. A Technical Committee has also been constituted to study and report the chemical composition of Toddy so as to facilitate the detection of artificial toddy.

Government reiterates its commitment to pursue its efforts even more vigorously to educate the poor and economically weaker sections about the harmful effects of liquor. In this regard, the Government would harness the co-operation of political parties, trade union organisations, Kudumbasree, voluntary organisations etc.

It gives me great satisfaction to note that the efforts of the Labour and Excise departments during the last two years in solving the variety of issues confronting the workers especially those in the Cashew and Plantation sectors have yielded positive results. I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all those who have extended cooperation and support to the Government in their endeavour. ■■■■

For several years no new ITIs have been started in the State. Now we have received representation for starting 47 new ITIs where land, building and furniture are made available by the local bodies.



Community policing which is being implemented in the State under the title *Janamaithri Suraksha Padhathi* is the embodiment of the idea of popular police. As a first step, the Janamaithri project activities are conducting in the areas coming under 17 police stations.

Police People Friendly



Kodiyeri Balakrishnan
Minister for Home,
Vigilance and Tourism

Gone are the couple of years that marked progress in every sphere of life. We could make quantum leap in basic infrastructure development, agriculture, industry, public health and welfare activities as we witnessed a quite harmonious atmosphere. The studies conducted by *India Today* and others disclosed the fact that Kerala stands first in maintaining law and order. The LDF Government have come into power before the fire and tear of riots including Marad drained out. That was a horrifying period when murders and attacks were celebrated by the hooligans as their right. We stepped out from the fright that Kerala might be tapped in the clutches of underworld, to the present state where even a hapless layman feels the confidence of protection. This is the victory, definitely of solidarity; the victory achieved jointly by a determined government, an effective police force and the people who render timely contribution to ensure law and order.

For the last two years, the activities to shift the police, which had been considered as the torturing instrument of the administration, into

people friendly were fruitful. Community policing which is being implemented in the State under the title *Janamaithri Suraksha Padhathi* is the embodiment of the idea of people's police. As a first step, the Janamaithri project is launched under the jurisdiction of 17 police stations. Activities such as night patrolling, women's vigil committees, school vigil committees, free legal help, traffic warden system, voluntary force for mishaps etc. by associating all resident associations, local self government institutions, social and cultural organisations and educational institutions are implementing as part of community policing. I gratefully bear in mind the appreciations and offers of help extended by opposition parties, media and cultural leaders to this venture that is hailed as a role model to the entire country.

Government have taken stringent actions to control the goonda and mafia gangs who kept the State under their clutches. A stern law has been introduced and all mafias like cutthroat money lending, sand mining, rent collection, CD, destroyers of environment were brought under it. The new Bill introduced by the LDF Government is entirely different and flawless from the Goonda



V.S Achuthanandan, Chief Minister, flagging off the two wheeler police patrol team of Janamaitthri Suraksha Scheme.

Act of the earlier government meant for destroying political opponents and leaders of movements. An advisory committee headed by Justice K.J. Dinesan has been formulated for implementing this law. The Advisory Committee has given recognition to the imprisonment of 80 individuals from those taken into custody under the Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Law.

A comprehensive legal revision has been introduced for revising the police force and for making it more efficient. Through this, the limitations of the outdated police law have been overcome. Crime investigation and maintaining law and order have been detached and implemented in Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikode with the new amendment in the law. It is intended to implement this system in other cities along with the strengthening of police force. The working hours of the police officials has been fixed. The State Security Council formulated by including Leader of Opposition is an ideal example for the lofty democratic consciousness of the Government. A Complaint Authority to scrutinise complaints against police has been formed. It has power equal to civil court and will protect confidential nature of the complaint.

Comprehensive projects have been envisaged and implemented for the computerisation of police stations in the

State as part of modernisation. 150 police stations have been computerised and computer training has been given to police officials. Modern data centre with wireless system has been installed in Thiruvananthapuram. To smarten the police directorates and stations, an amount of Rs.11 crore has been spent. To make crime investigation scientific, forensic lab has been strengthened by giving modern instruments like DNA fingerprint, polygraph, spectroscope, chromatograph etc. Cyber crime graph is ascending in national level itself. Our high-tech Crime

Cell has turned around as the best centre in the country to handle high-tech crimes by finding clues for many complicated crimes. Considering all these, Central aid for Rs. three crore has been offered for establishing a cyber centre of national standard in Thiruvananthapuram.

The Kerala Police Academy at Thrissur, which gives first class training to the police, could be brought to the National attention. More than three thousand persons have been recruited into the police force. Steps have taken to fill the vacancies in the police force without time lag. The present system for recruitment is time consuming so that it is decided to report all anticipatory vacancies each year to the PSC.

The Government gives top priority in the welfare measures of the police force. There existed a situation in which a constable retired decades later in the same rank. This pathetic situation has been solved by giving head constable grade to the constables who completed 15 years of service and ASI grade to the head constables who completed 23 years of service. The policemen who take guard duty in police stations are armoured with revolvers instead of riffle. Eight-hour duty system implemented in 17 police stations is now being introduced in more stations. A mechanism has been introduced to dispose the complaints of police personnel.

Government have taken stringent action to control the goonda and mafia gangs who held Kerala in their hands till two years back. For that a stern law has been introduced. All mafias like blade, sand, rent collection, CC, destroyers of environment etc. were brought under the purview of this law.



- People friendly police; launched Janamaithri Suraksha Scheme to improve law and order situation with the cooperation of people
- Complaint authority to settle the complaints about the police force
- Grade Promotion to police personnel; eight hours duty
- Responsible tourism for reaching the benefit of tourism to native people
- 20 per cent increase in tourist arrivals
- Rs.12,000 crore's revenue income; Rs.1000 crore's yearly investment in the tourism sector

Kerala Police has become the best investigation agency in India by solving lots of complicated cases. The fruitful investigation conducted in the Chelambra bank burglary, which is the biggest one Kerala has ever seen, is a crowning example for the investigative talent of Kerala Police.



Kodiyeri Balakrishnan, Minister for Home, after distributing two wheelers to women police constables.

New quarters have been built for constables and officers.

Kerala Police has become the best investigation agency in India by solving lots of complicated cases. The fruitful investigation conducted in the Chelambra bank burglary, which is the biggest in such type in Kerala, is a shining example for the investigative talent of Kerala Police. The vigilant raids conducted against terrorist activities could save the State a lot.

Government have taken steps to open new jails, taking into account the existing jam-packed ones. The Cheemeni Open Jail where a new building, closed for years and Chittoor – Hosdurg sub jails have been opened. Sufficient staff strength has been allotted for all these three jails. It is estimated that 370 prisoners can be shifted to these jails. Government have decided to build a new central jail also. In all jails, half of the occupants are under trial prisoners. They are forced to stay in jails for long due to the delay in trials. Video conferencing is introduced in this context. Around Rs. 52 lakh has been spent for video conferencing connecting Thiruvananthapuram Central Jail, District Jail and Attingal Sub Jail with the courts at Vanchiyoor, Neyyattinkara, Nedumangadu and Attingal. Steps have taken for amending Criminal Procedure Code in order to empower video conferencing. A committee has been constituted to revise Jail Law. 104 prisoners who completed 14 years of imprisonment have been released.

Fire Force gets new vigour. A rest house has been built spending Rs.22 lakh for

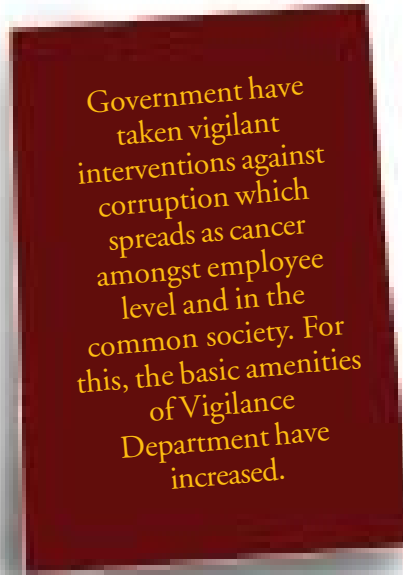
the employees of the Thiruvananthapuram Fire Station. Identity Cards were issued to employees of Fire and Rescue Service.

Kerala became a super brand in the global tourism industry with high rate of growth. This achievement is the outcome of the successful blending of public and private sectors. Investment to the tune of Rs.1000 crore and earnings to the tune of Rs.12,000 could be materialised. There registered a hike of 20 per cent turn out in foreign tourists than in the previous year. To bring down the fruits of tourism to the local people, the Government introduced

For developing tourism in village level, 'My village Tourism Friendly Village' programme has been implemented. In order to promote the dying out genuine art forms, in about one thousand stages, a programme 'Utsav' has been started. The Rs.250 crore International Convention Centre in Thiruvananthapuram is on the pipeline.

responsible tourism. As a first step, responsible tourism is being introduced in the four important tourism centres Kovalam, Thekkadi, Kumarakam and Wayanad. It ensures market for the indigenous products and opens job opportunities. The responsible tourism, which is implemented by affiliating the employees of various departments like Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Tourism Local Self Government etc. and non governmental organisations in broader sense, is a unique example for good governance.

For developing tourism at village level, 'My Village Tourism Friendly Village' programme has been introduced. To promote the vanishing art forms, a programme 'Utsav' for about thousand stages has been started. International Convention Centre to the tune of Rs.250 crore is in the pipeline in Thiruvananthapuram. Kerala House in Mumbai has been inaugurated and the construction in Chennai is going on. The encouragement given to souvenir industry is very much helpful to traditional industrial labourers and handicraft workers. Wayside inns have been launched at important spots for the convenience of tourists. Administrative sanction has been accorded to 250 new tourism projects and bagged 21 Central tourism projects.



Marina project has started in Kochi. The Sarovaraam dream project, which was in the red tape, could be materialised. A tourist information centre has opened at Kolkatta and another one will soon be started at Mysore. It has been decided to give 50 per cent rooms in all guest houses to the public.

For the first time in the history, the returns of KTDC has surmounted above Rs.60 crores. Bakel tourism project got new life by consistent intervention. Steps

have started to establish a separate corporation for the tourism infrastructure development. By realising the importance of coastal areas in the development of tourism, 22 projects have been formulated for the basic infrastructure development of the region. Steps have also taken to prepare master plan for the development of Munnar. The successful Grand Kerala Shopping Festival is meant for blending trade and tourism.

Government have made vigilant interventions against corruption which spreads as cancer amongst employees as well as the society. For this, the basic amenities of Vigilance Department have increased. Since the Vigilance system should be an independent body, it has been freed from outside interference. Steps have taken to build court complexes in Thiruvananthapuram and Ernakulam.

The past two years of tremendous activities fill me with great satisfaction. The Left Democratic Front could be able to stand hand in hand with the laymen and the suffering people. The Left Democratic Front Government could face the developmental problems of the State in the right direction and could lead the land ahead. But this is not the last stop. We have to go ahead much more. That journey continues with stern decision, will and increased public support. ■■■■



Kodiyeri Balakrishnan, Minister for Tourism, inaugurating the Grand Kerala Shopping Festival.



The Public Works Department will give leadership to formulate a comprehensive policy clearly in the road development field by seriously taking into account the increasing need, and the possibilities and situations of Kerala.

Works Resumed *Vision Comprehensive*

Successful measures are being taken under the leadership of Left Democratic Front Government in Public Works Department so as to make its functioning effective and people beneficiary. Priority has been given to maintenance works of the roads, which come under the Public Works Department to make them trafficable.

Government could solve issues relating to road construction and resume works that were clogged up by various reasons as in the case of MC Road. KSTP constructional activities have again started with a time-bound manner as a new project in which various roads in the State where land acquisition has been completed are included. Like way, action plan for completion of construction works of roads and bridges that have been clogged up for years, in a time-bound manner is in the pipeline. This will be a great solace and help to the public.

To find out a permanent solution to the issues relating to railway over bridges in various districts, the Government have envisaged special projects in accordance with the people's aspirations and a

special programme is being worked out by the Government. In the same manner, a special programme has been chalked out to ensure roads with better standard.

Accomplishing remarkable progress in the road development area is the need of the hour. The land acquisition for capital city development has been completed upto 95 per cent. Constructional activities have started according to new agreement. By the time various developmental projects of the government aiming at the future progress of the State materialises, a new road network having state of the art facilities and width should be a reality. As a first step in this direction, Government have given top priority to the development of national highways. For this, Kerala has signed in the State Support Agreement following the discussions with Central Government. As the first phase, by developing NH 47 and NH 17 to four lane / six lane highways, the road development upto the national level from Thiruvananthapuram to Kasaragod will be materialised. Activities will be initiated this year for materialising 'Hill Highway', the long cherished dream of farming people of



Mons Joseph
Minister for Works



MoU is being exchanged in the presence of Mons Joseph, Minister for Works, for the M C Road project.

highlands which links the spices centres of Kerala. Government have also decided to give top priority to the completion of coastal roads that would be advantageous to fisheries sectors.

The number of vehicles is increasing year after year. As the road network is not growing proportionately, grave problems will happen in traffic scenario. When taken into account the future development of Kerala, at least the coming 25 years should be in mind to envisage road development activities. The Public Works Department will give leadership to formulate a comprehensive policy clearly in the road development field by seriously taking into account the increasing need, and the possibilities and situations of Kerala.

Steps have taken to strengthen quality control wing to ensure quality in constructional activities and to envisage global standard for long lasting and environmentally suitable road construction activities. Heavy Maintenance

Project, which includes the binding of betterment of quality standards of roads as well as maintenance for five years, will be introduced this year, starting from the Sabarimala roads. Initial activities have started to make Kerala Highway Research Institute and DRIK Board efficient enough to take steps, which are beneficial nationally and in state level, especially.

Needed steps will be taken to rearrange Roads and Bridges Development Corporation (RBDC) and Kerala State Construction Corporation in order to make effective activities in the construction field.

Since this Government have come to power, during the 2007-08 year, Rs.128.46 have been received as subsidy from NABARD. In order to continue maximum developmental activities, steps have taken to submit project report to the tune of Rs.500 crore before NABARD.

The rates for the public works for the year 2008-09 have been fixed and from now onwards, every year the rates will be

re-fixed time to time. Action has taken to clear arrears of the contractors in a time bound manner. The largest amount has been issued to the contractors in the Roads and Bridges Division during 2007-08. Making it an all time record, Rs.685.95 has spent for clearing pending bills from March 2005 to December 2006. To handle the hazards of monsoon, an estimate to the tune of Rs.21 crore has been approved. Effective measures have taken to prevent illegal encroachment and ensuring effective implementation of Highway Protection Act effectively.

The Government is carrying out many programmes with the sole aim of 'the modernisation of Public Works Department. For that the opinions of administrative-political experts sought and discussions have been conducted with engineers, contractors and representatives of service organisations. The Public Works Department will take earnest attempts to implement novel programmes successfully by coordinating all these activities.



Mons Joseph, Minister for Works, addressing the contractors of PWD.



Enthused by public concerns and with a motivated development programme, we took over the task of refurbishing KSRTC enabling it to provide economic and comfortable transportation facility to the common public thereby lifting it to an enviable status among other public sector undertakings.

On the Road Destination Success



Mathew T. Thomas
Minister for Transport,
Printing and Stationery

Rightly it has been a period of transition leading to development and prosperity that the Transport Department witnessed over the last two years. Amidst complex limitations and severe impasse, KSRTC was limping forward further to acute financial crisis when the LDF regime took over.

Enthused by public concerns and with a motivated development programme, we took over the task of refurbishing KSRTC enabling it to provide economic and comfortable transportation facility to the common public thereby lifting it to an enviable status among other public sector undertakings. It was, of course, a formidable challenge. But the sweating proved smoothening during the succeeding years when it began to show real spikes of bettering buds.

Resorting to purchase of chassis through Open Tender was a bold and effective attempt to save the corporation. It is an indicative of the strong anti-corruption policy of the Government. Besides, KSRTC returned to body building works at its own workshops, after an interval of seven years. This is a major step in the path of development. The Corporation thus enjoys a comfortable financial gain of Rs.2.50 lakh/bus by these effective measures.

So far KSRTC has put on road 606 new

buses since the ministry assumed office in May 2006 and introduced 262 new schedules. The introduction of 'Malabar buses' enabled safe and comfortable journey to the needy in this region. KSRTC could achieve a record collection of Rs.79.47 crores in January 2008 by effectively re-arranging the schedules and introducing new

As part of ensuring road safety, several steps have been taken. The Kerala Road Safety Authority Act passed by the legislature and formation of a Road Safety Fund are major landmarks. Following this, a number of Road Safety awareness programmes were conducted.



Mathew T. Thomas, Minister for Transport, inaugurating the computerised counters at RTO Office, Thiruvananthapuram.

incentive scheme.

As part of the LDF policy of solving unemployment among the youth, 5000 fresh appointments were done through PSC during the last two years. With a view to increase the non-operating income, steps are afoot to construct new 30 shopping complexes on BOT basis, through KTDFC, which will be constructed on viable places. The Chief Minister laid the foundation stone of such a debut attempt having an estimated cost of Rs.30 crores at Angamaly on April 26, 2008.

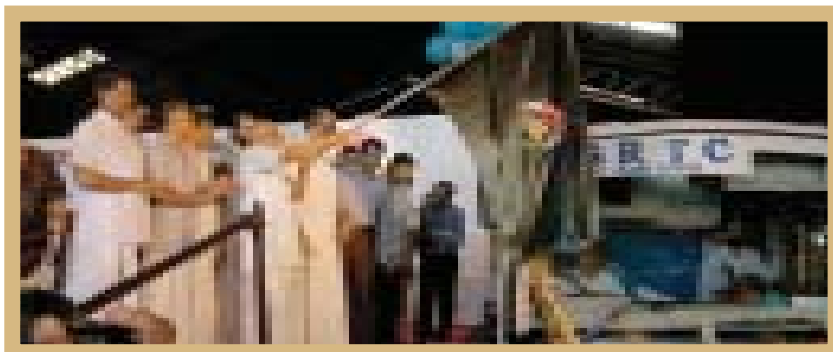
The implementation of FAST (Fully Automated Services of Transport Department) is a major achievement as far as the Motor Vehicles Department is concerned. The project has helped the department to render services speedily and transparently. To enhance the convenience to the public for availing various services of the department, any-counter-any-service system has been introduced recently in some of the RT Offices.

As part of ensuring road safety, several steps have been taken. The Kerala Road Safety Authority Act passed by the legislature and formation of a Road Safety Fund are major land marks. Following this, a number of Road Safety awareness programmes were conducted during the last year.

Web enabled services of Motor vehicles department has been recently introduced (www.keralamvd.gov.in). The public will be at liberty to retrieve the database of the department. The Web Site also provides information on a variety of items related to Motor Vehicles department which are often required by the public, like the licence, registration details, formats, fees particulars etc.

Transport Industry has a vital role in the economic development of the state. The functioning of the department can be made more efficient and the public will be benefited by the application of the latest technology. Therefore, considering the need for a sustained development plan, the industry is being given a holistic view.

The Printing Department has put in a magnificent record by publishing the Gazette Notification online as a model to the other states to follow the line. ■■■■



V.S Achuthanandan, Chief minister, flagging off one of the 20 air conditioned KSRTC buses.



- For the first time in the history of KSRTC, bus purchase through open tenders; profit of Rs.1.5 lakh per bus
- Created record by building 606 bus bodies in KSRTC workshops
- 20 new AC buses for inter-state transport
- Shopping complex of Rs.30 crore at Angamali bus station with the cooperation of KTDFC; action for building 50 such shopping complexes throughout the State
- More buses in Malabar sector
- More than five thousand appointments through PSC

Transport Industry has a vital role in the economic development of the state. The functioning of the department can be made more efficient and the public will be benefited by the application of the latest technology. Therefore, considering the need for a sustained development plan, the industry is being given a holistic view.



Government's decision to collect good paddy at the rate of Rs.10 per kg., the best rate, and to collect all paddy including the damaged has become a blessing to the farmers. Government have also decided to give Rs.10,000 per ha. for damaged crops.

For a *Flourishing Granary*



Mullakkara Ratnakaran
Minister for Agriculture

This is certainly an auspicious moment the Left Democratic Front Government is celebrating its second anniversary. The moment when the relentless activities of the LDF Government bore fruits, are seen everywhere. And, that too is from the circumstances when the farmers of Kerala were totally insecure and disappointed. The Government could cease the suicide of farmers which was the order of the day during the UDF regime. The farmer-prone approaches of the Government by blending will and goal could nurture hopes in the minds of farmers. By exercising incessant contact and by extending protection to the farmer so as to conserve agriculture, a new fellowship could be developed among the farmers which reflected in the productivity. The Government are trying to tide over the remaining problems by increasing agricultural land and by targeting efficiency and versatility in agriculture production.

The summer rain fell upon thousands

of farmers as a bolt from the blue, leaving them in deep dismay. Nevertheless, the relentless and sincere activities of the Agriculture Department and the Government to extend a helping hand and to give compensation to the farmers are unparalleled. The loss to the farmers due to the ransacking of the rain which ravaged the paddy of more than thirty thousand fields, amounts to crores of rupees. Kuttanad, the granary of Kerala and Thrissur, another paddy cultivation centre, cultivated in more place than before. At the time when all were waiting for a bumper harvest, as the production efficiency and area of cultivation were more, the unexpected tragedy occurred. Government's decision to collect good paddy at the rate of Rs.10 per kg., the best rate, and to collect all paddy including the damaged has become a blessing to the farmers. Government have also decided to give Rs.10,000 per ha. for damaged crops. Such grand helps rendered by the Government by waving the existing criteria



File to field: Mullakkara Retnakaran, Minister for Agriculture, in an agricultural field.

are well received by the farmers with great solace amidst the stringent feelings of agriculture loss.

Thousand vegetable villages

The State is a lame duck as far as vegetable production is concerned. With the aim to cut down the dependency with other states, a comprehensive vegetable development project, 'Harithasree,' has been introduced and successfully implemented in Idukki district. To spread the success, '1000 Vegetable Villages' programme will be implemented. Scientific approaches will be taken for the production and sales of vegetables.

One of the grave problems faced by the agriculture sector of the State is the scarcity of trained and experienced skilled labourers. To solve this problem, Government have decided to start Agro Polytechnics which will train to work in agriculture sector, jointly with Kerala Agricultural University and Agriculture Department. It is expected that this project will make the new generation interested in agriculture, create new opportunities for the unemployed and will solve the inadequacy of labourers in agriculture section.

To discuss the problems of farmers and to suggest and implement solutions, district

level *mahasangamams* (great meetings) of agricultural officers, peoples' representatives and farmers were conducted in all districts. In the Agri Bhavan limitations, local agricultural issues were discussed and found out solutions. To discuss and to take necessary decisions

With the aim to cut down the dependency with other states, a comprehensive vegetable development project, 'Harithasree,' has been introduced and successfully implemented in Idukki district. To spread the success, '1000 Vegetable Villages' programme will be implemented.

on the suggestions from agricultural adalats and farmers' meetings, a very attractive agricultural workshop and exhibition of products has been conducted in Ernakulam. For the first time in India, a toll-free system has been introduced to notify the Agriculture Minister about the problems faced by farmers.

Agriculture Debt Relief Commission

First in India, an Agriculture Debt Relief Commission started functioning in Kerala to wipe out the tear of the farmers who are in debt trap. The Commission has collected evidences from Idukki and Wayanad districts. Many recommendations to give debt relief to the farmers are being implemented. The recommendation to write off the debts upto the tune of Rs.25,000 in Wayanad is in active consideration of the Government. This Government have come into power when there were a lot of suicides of the farmers occurred. Now it has almost ended.

The Agriculture Department has given permission to install rice mills at Thakazhi, Alathoor and Vaikkom in order to ensure fair price for paddy and to make rice available at fair price to the consumers. They were the same mills that ground to a halt and were decided to turn into godowns by the UDF Government. The inauguration of Alathur mill is over and the other two are nearing the last phase of completion.

Considering the pressing demand of organic products, Promotion of Organic Farming Project to the tune of Rs. two crore has been implemented. Yields like tomato, plantain, paddy, pineapple etc. are included in this scheme. Action is in progress to establish 100 organic villages.

The Small Scale Storage-Selling Units of Value Added Agricultural Products – Vision 2010 Project – has given economic aid to start 183 tender coconut parlours, 199 outlets and 211 small scale units in order to promote value addition and after harvest preservation of agricultural products.

Promotion of paddy cultivation

This Government have implemented many projects by recovering the lost vigour of the paddy cultivation of Kerala. Kerala



- Government to collect good paddy at the rate of Rs 10 per kg
- '1000 Vegetable Villages' programme will be implemented
- Government to start Agro Polytechnics
- Promotion of Organic Farming Project to the tune of Rs. two crore has been implemented
- Kisansree Suraksha, an insurance scheme has come into force.

We can't ignore the warning that the world is going to face a food crisis. The situation that our country which had once surplus food, is now depending import of food grains, demands a serious thought.



Harvesting time: Mullakkara Retnakaran plucking the fruits at a vegetable garden maintained by the school children

is the first state in India to give interest-free loan to paddy cultivation. The Government have procured paddy to the tune of Rs 10 per kg. Three main paddy cultivating regions were declared as protected areas of paddy cultivation. The production of paddy has increased and farmers are returning to paddy cultivation. The premium for paddy protection insurance has been reduced to half and the compensation has been doubled. This Government have fulfilled the long-cherished dream of the coconut farmers by procuring fresh coconut. Owing to this, the price of coconut in the open market itself has been increased.

Kisansree Suraksha Project

For the first time in India, the insurance programme named, Kisansree Suraksha, has come into practice in Kerala. No premium has to be paid for this prestigious Project which covers five lakh farmers and their families from accidents. Instead, the Government will pay it. This stands as a lighthouse in the ways of development of agricultural Kerala.

Pay Revision, the long term demand of Farm labourers, has been implemented. The largest plantation establishment in public sector, PCK has gained Rs.11 crore net profit last financial year and a new centrifuging factory has started



functioning. The Oil Palm India Ltd. has achieved Rs.12 crore net profit during 2006-07. The State Farming Corporation realised Rs.13 crore, the highest working profit in its history, last year.

The Kerala Agro Machinery Corporation which produces and sells agricultural machineries has achieved Rs.8.75 crore working profit in the last year. The State Warehousing Corporation will commission one rice mill each in Ambalappuzha and Alathoor. The Kerafed, which was running in loss to the tune of Rs two crore in the UDF regime, has gained Rs two crore working profit the last year. Kerafed is the government agency that helps farmers by collecting fresh coconuts. A project under participatory system is envisaging with Oil Palm India for reviving Agro Fruit, the subsidiary company of Agro Industries Corporation.

State Horticulture Mission has envisaged projects to the tune of Rs.187.68 crore and has been implementing them. During the last 15 months, Rs.45.73 crore has been issued to farmers as subsidy under various schemes. For the current financial year, National Horticulture Mission has given word of recognition for the projects to the tune of Rs.192.12 crore.

The Vegetable and Fruit Promotion Council (VFPC) is working actively in the field of fruit and vegetables. During Onam season, the Council averts the price hike of vegetables by intervening in the market. The HortiCorp which also intervenes in the market to ensure fair price in fruit and vegetable selling, has achieved great advantages in the field of honey production. The agency helps to curb price hike in this field by issuing vegetable kits. The HortiCorp has a critical role in controlling the price of vegetables in the market during Vishu season.

We can't ignore the warning that the world is going to face a food crisis. The situation that our country which had once surplus food, is now depending import of food grains, demands a serious thought. To a country which has the second largest population in the world to feed can't be otherwise but, 'food thought is first thought'. To get sufficient food is a human right. The governments have the responsibility to take all necessary steps by utilising the resources to the maximum for fulfilling this. Definitely, the Central Government should take initiative for this. The State Government is doing all efforts in this direction within its limitations. But many of them are depended on the policy decisions of the Central Government. This complicated fact cannot be ignored.



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Almost all the services are now under the guidance and control of local self governing bodies. We have to increase the quality of service. In the 9th Plan local self governing bodies have built over 3.5 lakh houses. Such a meticulous effort is still inevitable. With this aim the government has stipulated the EMS Total Housing Scheme to provide houses to those who do not have it.

Efficiency the Goal



Paloli Mohamed Kutty
Minister for Local Self
Government
and Rural Development

Peoples' planning is a historic achievement of the Left Democratic Front government in Kerala. Kerala provided a model to other states in India in disbursing power to local self government institutions and decentralisation of planning. V.S. Achuthanandan Government, which completed two years, aim to achieve the goal of decentralisation which was initiated by the earlier LDF government. The government have to rectify various measures taken by the UDF government to nullify the decentralisation process. And the local self government institutions have to be equipped to take new responsibilities. The government gives priorities to these efforts.

Almost all the services are now under the guidance and control of local self government institutions. We have to increase the quality of service. In the 9th Plan local self government institutions have built over 3.5 lakh houses. Such an effort is inevitable now also. With this aim the government has stipulated the EMS Total Housing Scheme to provide houses to all those who do not have shelter. To meet this end various schemes under different agencies under the local self

government institutions and their new housing schemes are all being coordinated.

Waste management is another important area deserving consideration. To coordinate activities different agencies, the Sanitation Mission and Clean Kerala Mission are clubbed as a single scheme as Cleanliness Mission. Last year 226 Panchayats had achieved Nirmal Puraskar. The current year 650 panchayats have achieved the standard for Nirmal Puraskar. Besides Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode Corporation, in 17 other cities the waste management system has been implemented. Within the next two years waste processing mechanism will be constituted in all other cities and panchayats affected with waste disposal problem. Waste-free Kerala programme has been implemented since October 2006 with an intention to find an everlasting solution for the waste management problem in the state. The action plan for this was commenced by our beloved President on 1st November 2007. The environment health programmes jointly implemented by Local Administration and Health Ministry will result in improving the health sector.

Availability of drinking water is a major problem in different places. Solution to this problem will be sought through the rural drinking water



Paloli Mohamed Kutty, Minister for Local Self Government, submitting recommendations on Sachhar Committee to the Chief Minister.

schemes. Nutritious food distribution through Anganwadis has been made effective and extensive. Good quality nutritious food was made available in Anganwadis through Kudambasree units. Asraya scheme to protect destitute families has already been implemented in 650 panchayats. This unique programme which got Prime Minister's acclaim, is to be implemented in all the panchayats.

Aiming sustainable development, it is proposed that 40 per cent of the plan outlay of local self government institutions should be utilized in the production sector. The UDF government has completely neglected the production sector. It is with an aim to reiterate the declared goals of the LDF government, the 11th plan has been formulated to be implemented through peoples' planning. Different schemes are being formulated in agriculture and related sectors to create a lot of employment opportunities. Through lease land farming and integrated schemes, a lot of employment opportunities are generated.

Our cities are constrained of drinking water, drainage, sewage and transport facilities. The sustainable city development scheme availing loan from ADB was commenced in this situation.

Under this scheme and the Urban Development Scheme of the Union Government, more than Rs.3,800 crores development schemes are being implemented in different Corporations and Municipalities in Kerala. Improvement has been felt in the infrastructure facilities in the rural sector also. 67.5 kilometres of road work has been completed under Pradhanmantri

Grameen Zadak Yojna. Centre's permission is sought to improve the core network which was formulated unscientifically. With improvement in core network, the activities in this sector will be vitalized. To monitor the central schemes, vigilance and monitoring system comprising MPs and MLAs has been formed at state and district level. The rural employment scheme is being implemented in Waynad and Palghat districts is an imitable model to the whole nation. Contractors and machinery are fully exempted and there is no middlemen. Kudumbasree is running the scheme. All the workers are paid through banks. The scheme is extended to Kasaragod and Idukki districts in the same manner. Till now 80.96 lakh working days have been created. Out of these 56.82 lakh were for women, Rs.96.14 crore was distributed as wages. From this year, the scheme will be implemented in all the districts in Kerala.

Lack of control in the construction sector has created a sort of anarchism in that field. The construction works implemented without taking into consideration the needs of the locals and the environment have created many problems in the fields of drinking water,

Availability of drinking water is a major problem in different places. Solution to this problem will be sought through the rural drinking water schemes. Nutritious food distribution through Anganwadis has been made effective and extensive.



- Launched EMS Housing Scheme with the aim to provide houses for all people in the State
- Implementation of Five Year Plan through people planning project; priority to productive sector
- Comprehensive schemes of Kudumbasree for the growth of productive sector
- Marketing of rural products through Kudumbasree markets
- Kerala becomes model in the implementation of National Employment Guarantee Scheme; Special Mission for the implementation of the Scheme
- Banning of plastic in the State

The Local Self Government Department is trying to strengthen people's planning and to renovate the production sector and thereby empower the local self government institutions. I am fully confident that these efforts will be successful with people's participation.



Paloli Mohamed Kutty, Minister for LSGD, inaugurating the golden jubilee celebrations of the Town and Country Planning Department.

electricity, transport and waste management and thus made the life of the locals miserable. It was in these circumstances, the government has decided to implement construction rules in all panchayats and to modify construction rules.

The aim of reformation cannot be achieved without improving and reforming the administration. To reduce work load, administration and employees have to be provided with more facilities. With this intention, the Corporation Mayors were provided with PAs, Panchayat Presidents were provided with telephone allowance and honorarium of peoples' representatives was increased. The project implementation can be made effective only by improving the administration in Panchayats and Corporations. With this intention, the excess employees from other departments were redeployed. But this was not as effective and speedy as was expected. It is in this situation a special engineering section was formed for local self government departments. This will come into effect from this year itself. The account keeping of the local self governments has been made in order. 620 panchayats are equipped with computer facilities. This will be implemented soon in the remaining panchayats also. Almost all the panchayats are provided with head clerks. To address the grievances of the employees regarding transfer, a transfer policy is being formulated and implemented. Efforts are being taken to make the administration effective with the help of employees.

The Local Self Government Department is trying to strengthen people's planning and to renovate the production sector and thereby empower the local self government institutions. I am fully confident that these efforts will be successful with people's participation.

Minorities' Welfare

It is the declared policy of the left front government that it will take necessary steps to improve the social status and quality of life of the minorities who are sidelined in the society due to historical and social reasons. Kerala state has implemented the reservation in education and government service from the very beginning, Yet the religious minorities remain backward in

Necessary steps will be taken to ensure that fruits of the social welfare measure programmes implemented by the government through the Waqf Board reach the deserved. The activities of the Waqf board will be reorganised and the Waqf laws will be amended as envisaged by the Sachhar Committee Report.

their living standard. Various programmes are implemented to resolve this.

Haj House and facilities

The number of pilgrims performing Haj through State Haj Committee has ever been on the increase. Situation prevails where all the applicants cannot be granted permission. A number of problems are existing connected with the journey of the Haj pilgrims. The main among was to build a permanent Haj House in Karipur near the airport. The entire Muslim communities' desire was fulfilled this year.

The construction of Haj House in Karipur was executed with immediate priority by the LDF government. The construction was begun in 2006 itself. The task was taken up in war footing and the construction was completed before the Haj Pilgrimage 2007. The work was completed in seven months and was inaugurated on 5th November 2007 by Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan. The Haj House with four-storey has facilities for the stay and prayer for 1000 people. The auditorium and canteen is constructed in such a way that it can be utilized for other purposes also. The Haj House built near the Karipur Airport with extensive facilities is useful to Hajis, their relatives and the residents of Kondotty. The state government has already intervened to get permission to all applicants for Haj and to avoid difficulties in getting Zam Zam water and is still dealing the matter with the central government.

Sachhar Report and further actions

Kerala is the first state to act on Rajindra Sachhar Commission Report. The Kerala government initiated to study and take action on the report submitted before the Parliament on 30th November, 2006. In Kerala, the Muslim community is not as backward as the Muslims in other parts of the country. In the national level the backwardness of minority is a serious issue but in the state it is different. Yet there are many backward minority pockets and people in Kerala. The LDF government in the state is implementing developmental programmes to improve their condition. As part of this, the state government has appointed an 11-Member Committee to study and submit reports as to how to implement Sachhar Commission Report in the state, with Local Self Government Minister Paloly Muhammedkutty as chairman. The Committee has submitted its report within three months after collecting suggestions from all the districts in the State.

Realising the main reason behind the backwardness of the Muslim community in Kerala is their backwardness in education, the government have taken necessary steps to tide over this. A Special Cell is formed in the Secretariat for the redressal of problems of the minority communities. The Cell will take steps to provide with scholarships for the backward Muslim students in time. The welfare measures of different departments

It is the declared policy of the left front government that it will take necessary steps to improve the social status and quality of life of the minorities who are sidelined in the society due to historical and social reasons.

for the backward community is being coordinated. The report gives special emphasis to Madrasa renovation and welfare measures for teachers. The report which suggests measures to improve infrastructure facilities in the coastal and hilly areas where religious minorities live in excess, will be implemented with immediate priority.

Waqf Protection measures

Protection of Waqf institutions and Waqf wealth is a matter of prime importance. Sachhar Commission Report also emphasises it. The Waqf institutions in the State are governed by Waqf Board of state stipulated under Central Waqf Act. Activities of Waqf Board are being systematised to carry out the responsibilities effectively. There are wide spread complaints that the interest of the Waqf is not being protected due to the malfunctioning and misappropriation of the Waqf Boards. To scrutinise these kinds of complaints, the government has formulated appropriate system. Waqf institutions and wealth will be maintained properly and believers' concerns will be addressed. Necessary steps will be taken to ensure that fruits of the social welfare measure programmes implemented by the government through the Waqf Board reach the deserved. The activities of the Waqf board will be reorganised and the Waqf laws will be amended as envisaged by the Sachhar Committee Report. ■ ■ ■ ■



V.S Achuthanandan, Chief Minister, releasing people branded products, produced by Kudumbasree



This Government has given form to a water policy keeping in mind the issues like ownership of water, citizens' right on water and the governments responsibility in ensuring these facilities. This water policy, which has undergone discussions on various levels and opinion formation among the masses, is in its final stages of declaration.

for **The Mission** **Water Security**



N.K.Premachandran
Minister for Water
Resources

It is well known that life originated in water. Water is an indispensable element of our nature. It may be even true to say that water is nature itself. This is so because the existence of all forms of life- plant or animal, and all ecosystems- big and small, are based on water and its relative components. Even though there is plenty of water in this world, more than enough for all our needs, the majority of our population is still facing scarcity of water.

The quantity of available pure water is on a decline. And along with that it is being polluted. And when it is coupled with the unchecked and unscientific methods of water consumptions the gravity of the problem increases. The present scenario is one of increasing needs and depleting resources. Thus it is the need of the hour that we pay an attention to scientific methods of water conservation and efficient usage of the same.

The problems like global warming, desertisation, deforestation and destruction of mangrove forests affect the water resources directly. The natural water conservation set-up is facing extinction. Also the inadequacy of sanitation facilities increases the possibility of pollution. We can attain our goal only by conserving as much water as we can and by

maintaining the purity of available water. Also we have to curb the misuse of water. Disciplined use of water and its sensible consumption should be encouraged seriously.

Several large-scale, diverse, well-studied and democratic plans are required to meet the diverse water needs of Kerala. Life giving water is the birth right of every human being. Even by that standard, extreme hard work is needed to satisfy the diverse needs of all people. Water is a necessary commodity in the fields like irrigation, drinking water, electricity, industries, health, ecology etc. the most important issue here is that there is nothing to replace water.

In a state where we obtain a higher percentage of rain than the national average, we have extremely complex obstacles to face. On one side we get much of the rain in a span of a few days. On the other side lies certain geographical features that make the conservation a near impossible. Kerala is a piece of land that slopes down from the western hill ranges to the Arabian Sea. This slope and the peculiarities of the soil types make all the water run away to naught. Thus we face the awkward situation of a six-month drought and six-month flood.

Water conservation is badly affected by the



N.K Premachandran, Minister for Water Resources, inaugurating a workshop on participatory water resources management at Thiruvananthapuram.

decrease and destruction of forests that are the natural water harvesters, agricultural fields, and water bodies. Another important problem that we face is the pollution of existing water resources. We should also see the reports on the depletion of underground water resources seriously.

It has been two years since I took up the responsibility as the Minister for Water Resources of the State. I have started working on the ground that various integrated and scientific plans are necessary to meet the various needs of the society. This government has given form to a water policy keeping in mind the issues like ownership of water, citizens' right on water and the governments responsibility in ensuring these facilities. This water policy, which has under gone discussions on various levels and opinion formation among the masses, is in its final stages of declaration.

The government is planning to implement a plan based on the various water resources of the state. We can attain our goal by the efficient co-operation between various departments, agencies and the masses. We will have to work hard to protect our local water resources. The protection of rivers and other water bodies require special attention. We should also look into the absence of integrated and scientific laws in this field. Thus, various practical and efficient actions on the field of law are necessary alongside the diverse and large scale enlightenment

programmes.

The important issues on drinking water and irrigational programmes are carried out under the leadership of the water authority. Kerala Water Authority is an important role player in the field of drinking water distribution. The Government has undertaken extensive programmes to develop the authority into a professional institution in this field. 143 drinking water programmes, both big and small, were completed in the last two years. 8.5 lakh peoples benefited from this programme. Also completed were the drinking water programmes for 534 rural schools and 1817 'Varsha' units.

The government has given permission to various programmes like Speedy Rural Programme, Tsunami Rehabilitation,

JNNURM, UIDSSMT and Japan Drinking Water Programme. Also we were able to commission the Cochin, HUDCO programmes in good time. And the work for the bottled drinking water programme also has been started.

Scientific renovation process of the Kerala Water Authority has already started. As part of this, distribution of computers has been completed and the pilot project called the Centralised Drinking Water Programme will be started at Thiruvananthapuram. The applicants will get water connection in seven days as part of this project. The government wishes to spread this programme on the basis of its experience.

Measures have been taken to ensure the efficient use of drinking water and to prevent the theft of water. Another important achievement of this government is the revision of the pay scale of the water authority workers.

'Jalanidhi' has taken up its works in around 110 panchayats. Many small-scale projects have also been undertaken in this period. Five large-scale plans were also been commissioned. These plans benefited around 4.37 lakh people of about 66,868 families. The construction of 7569 rainwater harvesters, 8217 toilets, conversion of 2737 trench toilets and 13735 wastewater-recycling plants have been completed.

More than a thousand rainwater harvesters have been completed in various

The government has undertaken extensive programmes to develop Kerala Water Authority into a professional institution in this field. 143 drinking water programmes, both big and small, were completed in the last two years. 8.5 lakh people benefited from this programme.



- Comprehensive water policy and amendment of Water Supply Act to protect and preserve water resources
- Formation of Dam Security Authority; decision to construct new dam at Mullapperiyar
- Completed 143 drinking water projects including 33 big projects; through this, drinking water made available to more than 8.5 lakh people
- 223 small water projects started under 'Jalnidhi'; completed 1550 small projects and five big projects
- World Bank award for 'Jalanidhi'
- Round the clock customs service centre at Kerala Water Authority

More than a thousand rainwater harvesters have been completed in various places like medical colleges, educational institutions, government offices etc under the rainwater harvester programme.



N.K Premachandran, Minister for Water Resources, inaugurating World Water Day celebrations.

places like medical colleges, educational institutions, government offices etc under the rainwater harvesting programme.

Many study-classes and workshops were held under the 'Swajaldhara' programme which was to ensure the quality of rural drinking water programmes. This aims to purify the rural water bodies like wells. These programmes are held under the joint leadership of Kerala Water authority and the communication and capacity development unit.

Several programmes are held under the irrigation department. Sea walls are being built and Rs. 1551.51-lakh worth of work has been carried out in the small-scale irrigation projects. The steps are on for Chamravattom plan and other plans like Tritthala R.C.B, Kuttapuzha tadayana etc. have also been commissioned.

The government has undertaken discussions and other actions regarding the safety of the Mullaperiyar dam and the construction of a new dam. By conducting many programmes like Environment Impact Study, Flows Route Study, Quake Probability Study etc., the Water Authority could strengthen our arguments in the Supreme Court. We are of the stand that a new dam should be built to ensure the protection of the life of people. Efforts should be now taken to gather the necessary legal and public support.

Another achievement that is worth mentioning is the revision of the Kerala Water Distribution and Sewerage Law by putting forward a special ordinance that helped to prevent the misuse of water and illegal water connections. The revenue of the Authority was increased from Rs.138 crore to Rs.170 crore by ensuring the

efficient functioning and without enhancing the charge. Rs. 40 crore from this additional revenue could be used for reliving the deficit incurred from the pay revision.

Ground Water Department completed the construction of 2031 tube wells and 333 filter point wells and located sites for 9652 tube wells. And also constructed 884 tube wells and 819 ordinary wells as part of the hydrology project.

Various programmes were held under the banner 'Water Literacy Year 2007-08'. Quiz competitions were held for high school students under the name 'Spirity'. These are being broadcast every Sunday. Newsletters posters and videos were also distributed.

The Department aims at the wide dream of a Kerala that is self-sustained in the case of water related needs. Thus we plan to undertake long term plans in the water conservation and distribution areas. Scientific water management programmes are to be undertaken, particularly in the Panchayat Raj level. It wishes to attain the aim of providing uninterrupted water supply for all.

During my brief term as the minister I have found that many tiresome activities are needed to conserve water and its judicious use to ensure the survival of mankind and the whole living universe. For that timely action plans and visions are necessary.

The department is keen to undertake different works in this direction. We are on a work path to water security. I beg your wholehearted support and help in the journey to accomplish this great aim. ■■■■



The Revenue Department initiated a new concept to be known as Kerala State Land Bank for the professional management of Government lands. The objectives of the KSLB are to prevent encroachments on Government lands, to ensure transparency on assignment of lands and leases etc., to maintain strict vigil on Government lands by the proposed agency.

Encroachment *Eviction* *Till the* *Goal*



K.P. Rajendran
Minister for Revenue

The Revenue Department plays a predominant role in the administration of the State. The Department is co-coordinating almost all major functions of the State. Apart from the land related issues, the Department deals with law and order situation at local level, coordinating various developmental programmes, relief operations, arrangements connected with elections etc. The Department has had considerable achievements during the past two years.

New Legislations

The first and foremost among various welfare measures is the introduction of a new legislation to constitute a Farmers' Debt Relief Commission, which is first of its kind in our country. The Commission started functioning with effect from 18th January 2007.

Another Bill to protect paddy fields of the State that facing severe threat from reclamation, conversion and various encroachments has been presented before the State Legislature. The Select Committee of the legislature is now considering it.

Four major Ordinances, which were being

re-promulgated for the last 15 years or more, have been replaced with Bills and got them passed by the State Legislative Assembly.

Eviction of Illegal Land Encroachment

The encroachments on Government lands have always been on the rise ever since the formation of the State. The LDF Government have taken stock the entire situation and decided to take stringent action against such encroachments. Consequently, Government have constituted task forces in every taluks to identify encroachers, evict them from the public property, and to resume Government land. Two special task forces have been specially constituted for the work in Idukki district, where large-scale illegal activities were taken place, one for Munnar region and the other for Peermedu region. As a result, Government could resume 11851.80 acres of land. The operations are still going on. The Government is determined to get the entire public property free from encroachment.

Lease Land

Thousands of acres of land are leased out to institutions or individuals. Majority of them did not remit the lease rent due to the unscientific method of rent fixation. A total extent of 5012.18.97 acres of land is under lease agreement,



K.P. Rajendran, Minister for Revenue, inaugurating resurvey pilot project and FMB counter at Village office, Thycaud, Thiruvananthapuram.

except plantations. The arrears of lease rent are worked out to Rs.57.46 crore. Government have issued notice to all defaulters to settle their arrears and to renew their lease agreement, failing which they have to surrender the land. So far 46.29 ha. of land has been resumed by the Government.

Major leaseholders in the plantation sector of Kerala have been allowed the right to hold lease land since 19th Century. Government received several complaints against the FMB counter at Village office at Thycaud, Thiruvananthapuram firms alleging encroachment of public land, illegal transfer and sale of lands. Government decided to conduct detailed enquiry and survey and to resume excess land from such firms/States.

Tsunami Rehabilitation programme

Soon after assuming charge, the Left Democratic Government has taken every measure to rehabilitate the entire affected people in the nine coastal districts of Kerala. State Government could succeed in getting projects approved by the Central Government to the tune of Rs.1442 crore to be completed within five years. Government have started its implementation transparently and administrative sanction for the items of work amounting to Rs.1023,50 crore has already been accorded. The State Level Monitoring Committee and the State Level Empowered Committee are constantly

monitoring the rehabilitation activities. The entire people of 226 villages in the nine coastal districts will be benefited when the rehabilitation programmes are completed in 2009.

The dependents of Tsunami victims were given a financial assistance of Rupees one lakh each during the second anniversary of Tsunami disaster in addition to the financial aid given earlier. Government also implemented three schemes with a financial assistance of Rs.16 crore under Prime Ministers Child Assistance Scheme which provide (i) financial assistance to those children who have lost their parents in Tsunami to the tune of Rs.51,000/- as fixed deposit till they become major; (ii) a special scholarship of Rs.300/- per month to defray school going expenses and (iii) counselling support, special tuition classes and play schools. 63,401 school children have been benefited by this scheme. Altogether Apart from the above, an insurance scheme that would be beneficial to more than 1,58,364 coastal dwellers have also been introduced through the United India Insurance Company.

Land Bank

The Revenue Department initiated a new concept to be known as Kerala State Land Bank for the professional management of Government lands. The objectives of the KSLB are to prevent encroachments on Government lands, to

ensure transparency on assignment of lands and leases etc., to maintain strict vigil on Government lands by the proposed agency. This would further help the Government to make rational use of Government owned lands with a perspective eye on the future development of the State. Various types of land such as Poromboke lands both under lease and without lease, land leased out for cultivation of cardamom and other plantation crops, bought-in-land, assignable surplus land, acquired land that not put into use, escheated land etc. will be brought under the Kerala State Land Bank.

Distribution of Excess Land to landless poor

The present LDF Government gave 60044 Pattas (title document) and Record of Right to landless poor, weaker sections of society and agricultural labourers. Earnest and time bound efforts are under way to take over the remaining excess land within next one year. It is expected that at least 50,000 acres of land can be taken over and distributed to the landless poor during the tenure of this Government.

Land to landless Tribal Families

It is estimated that more than 22000 landless tribal families are there in the State. Action is being taken to allot the land so purchased to the tribes. So far 1847 acres of land has been distributed to 2019 tribal families since the present Government



- constituted task forces in every taluks to identify encroachers, evict them from the public property.
- Initiated a new concept to be known as Kerala State Land Bank
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- 1847 acres of land has been distributed to 2019 tribal families
- Re-constituted Taluk Land Boards with a view to speed up the cases related to excess land
- State Disaster Management Authority constituted with the Chief Minister as Chairman and the Minister for Revenue as Vice-Chairman

The Revenue Department will be made more public oriented. Steps will be taken to change the mind-set of staff so as to keep them in tune with the changes and sprit of speedy and efficient service to the public.

came into power. 7730 tribal families have been rehabilitated since the Tribal Rehabilitation Mission commenced their activities.

Computerisation of Land Records

The necessity for the proper maintenance and updating of land records needs no emphasis. To achieve this goal, latest information technology is a must for storing, processing of information database in land records and its retrieving. Therefore, computerisation of land records is an indispensable step to attain these objectives. A scheme on Computerisation of Land Records (CLR) was started in 1991-92, with the financial assistance of the Central Government. The scheme has been successfully implemented in Kottayam district. The project in other districts is progressing.

Re-survey

Re-survey of the entire land of Kerala commenced in 1964. However resurvey of 740 villages is to be completed. The Government decided to take up the work on war footing and to complete the work within three years. As an experimental measure, Government took up a Pilot Project in the Thycaud Village of the capital city. The experiment was a success and the project will be replicated in other villages on a phased manner.

Land Management Policy

With a view to protect the land and its resources from over exploitation; to protect Government land from encroachment; and its rational use, the Government announced a draft "Land Policy". The draft policy will be finalised after discussing it at various levels. It is also proposed to evolve suitable action plans in accordance with the proposed policy.

Government re-constituted Taluk Land Boards with a view to speed up the cases related to excess land. It also constituted Taluk Development Committees in all the Taluks for monitoring and overseeing the developmental activities.

A Help Desk in each district has been set up in all Collectorates to extend help to the visiting public to get their grievances redressed and to give necessary advice on various issues. The practice of issuing various certificates from the Village Offices

and Taluk Offices specifically for each purpose has been dispensed with and a new system to issue all certificates in a single format with longer validity period has been introduced so that the general public need not approach revenue officials every time for obtaining each certificate.

Disaster Management Authority

In accordance with the Disaster Management Act 2005 passed by the Parliament, Government constituted a State Disaster Management Authority with the Chief Minister as the Chairman and the Minister for Revenue as the Vice-Chairman. The Authority came into existence on 1st March 2007. Action is in progress to constitute the District Disaster Management Authorities and various committees of the Authority as envisaged in the Act. The Authority is now engaged in formulating the State's Disaster Management Policy that will be announced shortly.

The International Disaster Reduction day is observed on 10th October every year. Last year the focal theme was "Disaster Risk Reduction begins at Schools". The day was observed by commencing a training programme to the students through 'Edusat'. A major programme on disaster reduction and mitigation with the financial assistance of U.N.D.P. has been launched in the State from January 2008. The Authority has arranged another training programme on disaster mitigation and capacity building to the selected persons of all districts with the help of National Disaster Response Force. The Authority organised a one-day Workshop on 'Global Warming and its impact on disasters' on 2nd April in the wake of unprecedented summer rains that occurred in March.

The LDF Government had confronted with the havocs of two monsoon seasons; one drought prone summer and unprecedented summer rains during the past two years. Government have taken every measure to ensure drinking water supply during peak summer through revenue machinery. Monsoon flood, which is more serious than drought conditions, affects more than one lakh population every year. Last year, it affected 1794834 people. We lost 263



human lives. and 2812 number of livestock population. 2084 houses damaged completely and 53609 houses partially. 1469 relief camps have been opened throughout the State for providing shelter for 259381 families. 36797 ha. of cropped area affected. Adequate funds have been released to all District Collectors for relief and rehabilitation activities well in advance before the onset of monsoon. The fiscal loss sustained on account of this year's natural calamity alone is estimated as Rs.1528 crore. Government have submitted memorandum seeking financial assistance (in accordance with the norms fixed by the Central Government) amounting to Rs.637 crore. Though it was recommended for an assistance of Rs.136 crore, the Central Government sanctioned

Rs.50.81 crore only.

The State witnessed unprecedented and fierce summer rains during March 2008. The heavy rain caused untold misery and caused extensive damage to crops throughout the State. The disaster has taken 19 lives and caused heavy loss to crops as well as public and private property. The Government machinery acted swiftly and took every possible measure to mitigate the disaster by providing shelters to the affected persons and assessing crop loss. Government declared an interim relief of Rs.10,000 per ha. to the paddy farmers in addition to the procurement of paddy at a moderate price. The Chief Minister and Ministers visited the affected areas and personally monitored relief activities. Ministers met the Prime Minister and other Union Ministers and sought additional assistance from Central Government. A central team visited the worst affected areas of the State for assessing the loss sustained. Government could convince the central team about the loss and submitted a memorandum seeking an assistance of Rs.1431 crore in actual terms and Rs.215 crore in accordance with CRF norms.

River Management Fund

Concerted efforts have been taken for the effective utilisation of river management funds available with the district administration for the protection of rivers and riverbanks. Special package with a holistic approach for the protection of each river is being evolved with the assistance of scientific community.

Two new schemes entitled "Kera Kedaram" (Coconut Grove) and "Nadan Manthoppu" (Mango Orchard of local varieties) have been launched to encourage cultivation of coconut trees and fruit bearing trees in all the vacant space available in the revenue office premises.

In the coming years, the Revenue Department desires to take up several activities with a view to ensure proper service to the people as well as to protect the interest of the State. Taking over the surplus land and its distribution to the landless poor; distribution of land to the tribal folks; eviction of illegal encroachers from the revenue land; full-fledged establishment of the Kerala State Land Bank; completion of re-survey and revenue settlement, computerisation of revenue records; development of a coordinated mechanism with the registration department; resumption of lease land from those who have violated lease conditions; finalisation of land policy; strengthening the disaster management mechanism are some of the priority areas that the Department may take up in future.

The Revenue Department will be made more public oriented. Steps will be taken to change the mind-set of staff so as to keep them in tune with the changes and spirit of speedy and efficient service to the public. Corruption exist among a very few officials will be eliminated and a system for the speedy and transparent disposal of petitions and applications received will be introduced. ■ ■ ■ ■

Adequate funds have been released to all District Collectors for relief and rehabilitation activities well in advance before the onset of monsoon. The fiscal loss sustained on account of this year's natural calamity alone is estimated as Rs.1528 crore.



The consolation measures taken by the LDF government to save the fishermen folk from debt trap reveal the government's commitment to the sector. Kerala Fishermen Debt Relief Bill was passed by the Kerala Legislative Assembly unanimously which can be termed as the Magna Carta of the fishermen in the state.

New enthusiasm *in fisheries sector*



S. Sharma

Minister for Fisheries and
Registration

When the LDF Government came into power, the fisheries sector in the state was passing through an unprecedented crisis. The fisheries sector was in a chaos. Following a supreme court verdict, the exporters were exempted from paying their share to the Fisheries' Welfare Fund; and having no other income, the welfare measures in this sector had come to a standstill. The foreign trolling ships were given licences to fish in deep waters as per the new economic policy and which resulted in dearth of fish in coastal and territorial areas. The UDF government committed an unpardonable mistake in disbursing livelihood support to the Tsunami affected people by diverting the fund meant for the same and this resulted in widespread contempt and rage. The functioning of the Fisheries Department and agencies under it like Matsyafed, ADAK, FIRMA and Matsya Board also came to a halt. It was in such a chaotic situation the LDF came into power.

The LDF government, as a first step, had taken necessary measures to tide over the situation that prevailed in the welfare arena consequent on the Supreme Court Verdict by legislation. Thus, Fisheries' Welfare Cess Act came into being. According to it Rules were formulated to collect

Cess from various sectors functioning in the marketing network. Assisting officers were posted in each district. The left front government in the state is going ahead with strong conviction to collect Cess from all concerned and strengthen the Fisheries' Welfare Board.

In continuation of the Supreme Court verdict the Central Government had directed all the coastal states to implement full and coordinated ban on trolling in the entire coastal area. But realizing that this Supreme Court verdict will affect adversely the interest of traditional fishermen in our state, the government came forward with the legislation viz. Kerala Fishing Protection Act and enabled fishing in monsoon season. Thus, the left front government facilitated the fishermen to reap benefit from 'Chaakara' which is unique to Kerala.

The consolation measures taken by the LDF government to save the fishermen folk from debt trap reveal the government's commitment to the sector. Kerala Fishermen Debt Relief Bill was passed by the Kerala Legislative Assembly unanimously which can be termed as the Magna Carta of the fishermen sect in the state. As per this Act, the Commission has the power to right off the debts taken for the purpose of purchasing fishing equipment, house, education, treatment



etc. It is for the first time in India a debt relief Act for fishermen was brought in. And this is the third legislation within the two years of the LDF government in power. To re-organize the fisheries department which was totally in disorder, the special rules formulated in 1966 were modified to give more opportunities for professional graduates in this field. The process of formulating special rules is in progress and will be finalized soon.

The situation prevailing was such that without registration or licence anyone can go to sea with a fishing boat. Capitalizing this situation, terrorists used our coastal sea for smuggling and terrorism ends. To avoid this, registration and licence were made compulsory for all fishing boats and was given time till 31 March 2008 to avail these. But at the same time, realizing the fact that our sea is over exploited, the government decided that new registrations shall be given only after the scrutiny by an expert committee.

To protect the fishermen from the traps of middlemen and to provide them with permanent livelihood and easy loan facilities, the government is formulating and implementing various programmes. There are over 30,000 fisher women who earn livelihood by selling fresh fish in the

state. They are depending highly on private money lenders who charge cut throat interest. A scheme will be implemented from this month onwards to provide every fisher women with interest free loan of Rs.5000/-. This amount shall be re-paid in 50 equal monthly installments of Rs.100/-. The fishermen equipment insurance scheme implemented this year is unique. 75% of the cost of the boat and equipment that met with accident in the sea will be

reimbursed as insurance relief. To promote self employment schemes and self reliance among the fishermen folk, 1000 micro venture units are being formulated. 400 of these units are already functioning at present. Cooperative Societies of fish marketing women are provided with 300 vehicles. In the coastal area, 1476 beneficiaries are given with boat and net and in inland water sector, 3184 beneficiaries are provided with fishing equipments. In addition to this, 20 sea food kitchens and 45 fish kiosks are to be opened by fisherwomen societies. 750 LPG kits are being disbursed for fishermen groups. With the help of IRTC, soap with the brand name 'Saf' produced by fisherwomen societies utilizing coconut oil has been introduced in the market. To create more employment opportunities for women in the coastal area, 340 Kallummekkaya units and 120 Kallummekkaya Pickle units are being started. 30 ornamental fish hatcheries are opened in Alleppey, Ernakulam and Trichur districts. Besides these, IT kiosks, super markets, community resource centres etc. are also being opened in different districts. More than 40,000 fishermen families will be benefited by this.

Out of 519 insurance claims under

To protect the fishermen from the traps of middlemen and to provide them with permanent livelihood and easy loan facilities, the government is formulating and implementing various programmes.



- Registration and licence were made compulsory for all fishing boats
- • A scheme will be implemented to provide every fisher women with interest free loan of Rs 5000/-
- Rs10.05 crs was allotted for payment of pension in the fisheries sector
- Fishermen's pension was increased as Rs.200/- per month
- Construction of Quilandy and Thalai fishing harbour s started.

This government gives special importance for the infrastructure development in the fisheries sector. After this government came into power, the construction work of Quilandy fishing harbour at a cost of Rs.35.48 crores and Thalai fishing harbour at a cost of Rs.19.26 crores was started.



Matsya Board group insurance scheme, 318 were settled by discussion between the Fisheries Minister and the Insurance Company. And Rs.314.5 lakh was given away to the dependents of fishermen families. During the last two years, Rs.5.5 crore was granted for disbursing pension for fishermen and 63,000 fishermen families were benefited. Rs. 281.8 lakh was granted to pay off the pending pension for fishermen till August 2007, and another Rs.173.28 lakh was granted for the pending pension till December 2007. Thus, total Rs10.05 crs was allotted for payment of pension in the fisheries sector. Fishermen's pension was increased as Rs.200/- per month.

After this government came into power, a budget allocation of Rs.7 crores for the education of children of fishermen was made whereby 1.5 lakh children were benefited. During the current financial year, to pay off the pending educational benefits, Rs.4.5 Crores was also allocated. This government is giving top priority to find solution to the educational problems of the offspring of fishermen.

Under the housing project with the help of National Fishermen Welfare Fund, Rs.1,200 lakh was granted and 3,000 houses are under construction in different stages. 910 houses have been completed. In addition to this, with the help of TSS, works of 225 houses were completed in Trivandrum district. The LDF government is taking appropriate steps to resolve the housing problems faced by

fishermen. To rehabilitate 11,000 fishermen families who are now residing within 200 metres of the coastal line a scheme of Rs.325.54 crores was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri V.S. Achuthanandan in Poonthura in Trivandrum District. The land acquisition process is in progress in fast track under the supervision of the District Collectors. This project will be implemented in war footing. To promote the commercial production and export of ornamental fish, an aqua technology park costing Rs.14.5 crores is being set up in Alwaye, near Nedumbassery Airport forming a limited company named Kerala Aqua Ventures International Limited. Satellite fish farms under this aqua park will be set up in Neyyar in Trivandrum district, Pannivelichira in Pathanamthitta, Pallom in Kottayam District, Ullanam in Malappuram District and Pazhassi in Kannur District. Under these farms homestead farms and backyard hatcheries will be set up. These homestead farms will be under the control of Kudambasree model self help group societies of women. The company will provide adequate capital, technical support and marketing support to these societies. These self help group societies will be the primary producers of this venture. The ornamental fish will be exported to foreign countries through the main hub in Alwaye. The scheme will provide direct employment opportunities for 5,000 and indirect employment opportunities for 10,000

people.

Under the one-rice one-fish scheme fish / prawn cultivation is initiated in 798 hectre area in the state. Rs.93.78 lakh was given to farmers as financial aid. In Odayam near Varkala, a prawn hatchery with a capacity of 15 million was commissioned and 12 lakhs of Karachemmeen offsprings were produced and disbursed. This project is aimed to overcome the backwardness in the inland fishing sector. Under this scheme, 10,000 hector water sheds will be utilized for fish and prawn cultivation by the next year. New water sheds will be utilized for fish cultivation and diversification will be brought into this sector. By this 20,000 ton of fish, 4,000 tone of fresh water lobster and 3,700 ton of prawn and 486 ton of shell will be produced more. The scheme is being implemented with the help of 700 local governing bodies.

Fishing in the sea being more dangerous, 2,000 sea safety kits will be disbursed to fishermen. These kits will include a safety beacon designed by ISRO. Steps to coordinate with Fish knowledge centres organized under Matsyabhavan will be taken in coastal villages. The coastal PURA scheme formulated by in tune with the suggestion of former President Dr APJ

An inland landing centre is completed in Sambranikody in Kollam district. Construction of a fish landing centre in Bakel in Kasaragod district will commence soon. The Kayamkulam fishing harbour will be commissioned soon.

Abdul Kalam is being implemented in the backward district of Kasaragod. Under this scheme, to build coastal roads, dwellings and drinking water facilities, fish landing centre and IT facilities, Rs.1 Crore is allocated. In addition to this, under the integrated coastal area development scheme, Rs.4.27 crores has been sanctioned for the development of coastal areas in Kasaragod district.

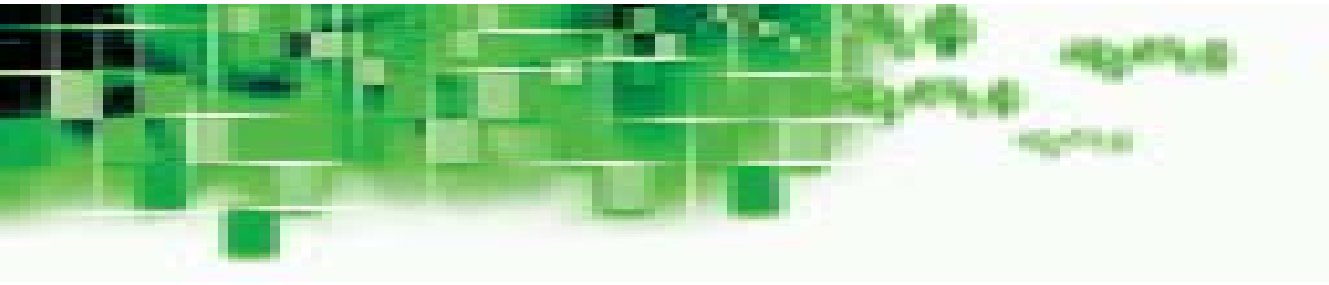
This government gives special importance for the infrastructure

development in the fisheries sector. After this government came into power, the construction work of Quilandy fishing harbour at a cost of Rs.35.48 crores and Thalai fishing harbour at a cost of Rs.19.26 crores was started. Munjamood Thazhampally bridge was completed to facilitate transportation to Muthalappozhi fishing harbour. The harbour dredging works in Vizhinjam fishing harbour is in progress. This harbour will be commissioned soon.

An inland landing centre is completed in Sambranikody in Kollam district. Construction of a fish landing centre in Bakel in Kasaragod district will commence soon. The Kayamkulam fishing harbour will be commissioned soon. A mini fishing harbour at a cost of Rs five crores will be set up in Chetha in Alappuzha district.

Mini fishing harbours will be set up in Chellanam in Ernakulam district and Arthunkal in Alappuzha district under TRP scheme. Under TRP scheme road works worth Rs.21.69 crores have been sanctioned across the state and works worth Rs.9.6 crores have already been commenced. Fishing harbours will be set up with Central aid in Chettuva in Trichur district and Kasaba in Kasaragod district in the year 2008-09. ■ ■ ■ ■





This Government have taken up vigorous steps to fill the vacancies of doctors and appointed 579 doctors in three batches through PSC. PSC has prepared a large new rank list. Besides, more than 700 personnel were appointed through NRHM. Compulsory rural service to degree and PG medical students has been ensured.

New Life for Health



**P.K. Sreemathi
Teacher**

Minister for Health and
Social Welfare

H *Health is a social, political and economic issue. It is a fundamental human right too.* While the health sector has been facing grave threat from the imperialistic globalisation, the International People's Health Congress held in Dhaka eight years back made such a declaration of rights. This declaration is still relevant. The hostile movements generated by the globalisation in India like everywhere else, especially in Kerala, for the last one and a half decade is critical in its nature. The Left Democratic Front Government assumed power when the rulers were viewing covertly that health is not a human right issue and the governments were withdrawing from public health sector.

The mission to change this attitude absolutely has taken up by the new government. To ensure free and standard treatment is the declared policy of the LDF. The present status parading from the primary health centres to the medical colleges stands testimony to the fact that attempts have swiftly been going ahead to realise this.

Community health centres in Kerala even offer in-patient treatment to common diseases. Presently, steps are taken up to upgrade them to the national standard as per Indian Public Health

Standard. The activities to materialise infrastructure facilities, buildings and equipments for five speciality units and 115 community centres are as part of this. Works for the upgradation of about 80 plus CHCs have also started and for the rest will start soon. Steps have also taken to provide round the clock service by appointing specialist doctors. Within one year these hospitals will be emerged to the National criterion.

Besides this, the project to modernise the 126 coastal hospitals using the tsunami fund has also started. The upgradation of 110 block primary health centres to the National level begins next year.

Medical Education arena

The achievements in the field of medical education are better than what we could realise in the last 25 years. We could increase 50 seats each in three government medical colleges. If a new medical college starts it gets only 50 seats. Taking this into consideration, the achievement is equal to starting three new medical colleges. For the first time in the history of the past quarter century, two new nursing colleges could be established in government sector.

As a debut move, an MRI scan unit has been installed in Kozhikode Medical College. With the



P.K Sreemathi Teacher, Minister for Health, watching the functioning of newly commissioned MRI scanning machine

approval of the Central Government, modernisation works to the tune of Rs.120 crore under PMSSY has been started in Thiruvananthapuram Medical College. Modern instruments, including MRI scanning machine, to the tune of Rs.50 crore will be installed as part of this. Permission for the development to the tune of Rs.50 crore at Kozhikode IMCH could be attained.

The UDF Government have thought of selling out the super speciality block of Kozhikode Medical College to private entrepreneurs by placing it on Global Investors' Meet (GIM). By leaving off this move, the Government could finish the first phase of the super speciality block and inaugurated it. To complete this project, Rs. five crore has been allotted. The installation of sewage treatment plant is progressing.

After years of dreaming, the main units of Alappuzha Medical College could be shifted to Vandanam. For shifting the rest of the divisions, work permission to the tune of Rs.50 crore was granted in the last financial year. Kottayam and Thrissur Medical Colleges have also far advanced. Around Rs.30 crore has been spent for the modernisation of medical colleges during the last financial year.

When contagious diseases spread in the State two years back, there was no system even to diagnose them. The Virology Institute in Alappuzha was in a deserted condition. This Government poured new vigour and thus made it work in full swing. Now diseases like chikungunea can be diagnosed here. Conceding to the strong pressure exerted, the Central Government have decided to establish a centre of National Virology Institute at Alappuzha and allotted Rs.20.64 crore for it. And the

State Government have earmarked five-acres of land for the institution.

The employees of the medical colleges were under dual control of Health Department and Health Education Department that affected negatively the day-to-day affairs. This Government issued orders to rectify this and brought all employees under Medical Educational Department. The follow up actions will soon be completed.

Regional Cancer Centre, the titleholder of cancer treatment in Kerala was groping in the total negligence. But now modern equipments like MRI scan, Radio Cobalt Unit etc are installed. Through the installation of bone-marrow replacement unit here, Kerala became the fourth state in the country having such facility. A unit for producing morphine, the elixir for the acute pain, has also started.

House-keeping system to ensure cleanliness is implemented in all major hospitals. The restriction imposed on visitors is meant for avoiding unnecessary hassle as well as infection at some extent.

The Government has taken up speedy measures to fill all the vacancies of doctors by appointing 579 doctors through PSC. PSC has prepared another rank list also. Besides, more than 700 personnel were

Works for the upgradation of about 80 plus CHCs has started. Works for the rest will start soon. Steps have also taken to provide round the clock service by appointing specialist doctors. Within one year these hospitals will rise to the standard of national criterion.



- Improvement in the condition of hospitals in the State from primary health centres to medical colleges
- National status for Thiruvananthapuram Medical College; Rs.120 crore's development projects started
- Rs.50 crore's Central aid to develop Mother and Child Care centre at Kozhikode Medical College
- Upgradation of 115 community health centres, spending Rs.20 lakh each
- New Government nursing colleges at Thrissur and Alappuzha
- Formation of Medical Service Corporation for the transparent purchase of drugs to hospitals
- Installed MRI scanning machine in Kozhikode and Thiruvananthapuram Medical Colleges; scanning facility at lower rate

In the next year's budget, Rs 30 crore has been earmarked for health education against the Rs 13 crore of the last year. The estimate for ayurveda and homoeo sectors has been enhanced from Rs five crore to Rs13 crore.



P.K Sreemathi Teacher, Minister for Health, receiving the report on starting Ayush University in Kerala.

appointed through NRHM. Compulsory rural service to degree and PG medical students has been ensured. Thus the service of about one thousand doctors is available per year.

The 224 doctors in Health Service and 171 doctors in Medical Education Department who were on unauthorised absence have been sacked and steps have taken to fill up these vacancies. Steps have taken to recover the salary and impose compensation from those who deserted the service after completing the PG in service quota and received salary on deputation basis.

Another great achievement is that the National Rural Health Mission could be boosted up. During 2007-08, Rs.133 crore has been allotted through NRHM. This year, Rs.16.9 crore has been disbursed to health and sanitation committees for the cleaning activities in 16009 wards.

Yet another achievement is that the fruitful implementation of Janani Suraksha Yojana. Rs.700 and Rs.600 are given out respectively to urban and rural women belong to poor family for their first two deliveries. Further, Rs.300 will be handed out as travelling expense. Arrangements have made to give the amount before they leave the hospital. More than 2.5 million women availed this dispensation within the last two years.

An action plan has been set off for four months to prevent contagious diseases including chikungunea. More than four hundred new posts have been created in Health Department. The development

committees of district hospital, general hospital, women's and children's hospital and taluk hospital have been granted rupees five lakh each this year and CHC, PHC etc. will get rupees one lakh each.

OP time has been rescheduled and the services of doctors made available even after noon. Transfers and postings made corruption free. More treatment facilities are arranged in tribal areas. Speciality hospitals have started functioning exclusively for scheduled tribes at Attappady and Nallooradu. Basic infrastructure has been developed in many local hospitals.

Corruption allegations were plenty in the dealings of medicines distributed in the government hospitals. Medical Service Corporation has been launched to change this situation. As the Corporation called for tenders transparently the prices would come down to 20 to 30 per cent from the market rate. This amount also can be used for purchasing medicine for the poor. Last year local self government institutions were ordered to purchase medicine from own fund. The government hospitals could issue more free medicine last year compared to the past 15 years by lifting the limitations of the hospital management committees to purchase medicine.

Financial aids have been given to 1700 patients including the pending applicants through a society formulated for helping the poor.

The Government have implemented many a welfare activities in ayurvedic and homoeopathic sectors, mental health

treatment, rehabilitation of HIV affected etc. within the two years.

This year's budget has allocated Rs.30 crore for health education against the Rs.13 crore of the last year. The estimate for ayurveda and homoeo sectors has been enhanced from Rs.5 crore to Rs.13 crore. For various requirements, including modernisation of medical colleges, more than double the amount of the previous years has been allocated in the budget.

Social Welfare Department

More than half of the population in the State are women. This Government assumed power during the time when the harassment against women was on the rise. Besides the general misfeasance, domestic violence and work place harassment are the issues we face. But to handle the problems of women, there is no department even after five decades of the birth of Kerala. Now, Social Welfare Department handles women's issues as one among the hundreds of thousands of issues.

The Left Democratic Front Government have decided to change this pathetic situation by taking up follow up actions. Procedures are on to change Social Welfare Department into Social – Women Welfare Department. Rs.25 lakh has been earmarked for the functioning of this Department. Heralding the formation of a Gender Advisory Committee, a full time Gender Advisor has been appointed.

Empowerment of women is the declared policy of the LDF Government. Rs five crore has been allocated for the

More than half of the population in the State are women. This Government assumed power during the time when the harassment against women has been increasing day by day. Besides the general misfeasance, domestic atrocities and work place harassment are the issues we are facing.

flagship programme for this. The projects are being implemented through Women's Development Corporation, Women's Commission and Kudumbasree. This project aims at legal shield besides permanent campaigning and awareness creation.

Finishing School Flagship Programme is another project for women, which aims at giving training and guidance to job seeking women. Rs. two crore has been earmarked for this in the budget allocation. To implement the *Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005* effectively, 31 District Protection Officers are posted. Nine shelter homes have opened and 43 service providers are appointed. State / district level monitoring committees are

formed to monitor these activities. Government have decided to strengthen the activities of these committees and to implement flagship programme and finishing school programme fruitfully and effectively.

Honorarium of the sisters who work in anganwadis has been increased and opened 6746 new anganwadis, which provide 13,492 employment avenues. Permanent appointment has been given to anganvadi activists having more than six months' experience. Targeting the education becomes more efficient and qualitative, the Government introduced new curriculum for anganwadis. The 20 paise grant for wood fuel per child for preparing food in anganwadis has been increased to 50 paise. Rs.3.37 crore has been distributed equally to 6,746 anganwadis to purchase furniture and grocery. To distribute medicinal kit, Rs.1.92 crore has been allotted. Rs.3.5 lakh each for constructing buildings and Rs.50,000 each for purchasing toys have been allotted to 313 anganwadis in the coastal area under Tsunami Rehabilitation Project. As in the case of anganvadi workers, 37 awards are introduced for anganvadi helpers too. Pension scheme has been envisaged for anganvadi employees.

The 55 supervisor posts lay vacant in Social Welfare Department have been filled up. By spending Rs.22.66 crore, new buildings have been constructed for 861 anganwadis.

► Contd. on page 80



P.K Sreemathi Teacher, Minister for Social Welfare, releasing the draft of the Women's policy.

From page 67

New Life for Health

It can be said that the Women's Commission was stagnant or in an anti-woman stand for the past five years. The Government could change and reorganise the Commission. Vigil societies have already been set up from state level to grama panchayat level. Needless to say, the activities of Women's Commission in the State are alive and kicking.

By the time this Government have come into power, the Women's Development Corporation became a synonym of corruption and incompetence. Works are on to overhaul it from head to toe. For that the Corporation has been reorganised and a new Managing Director has been appointed.

Kisori Sakthi Yojana, the Centrally-envisioned programme to improve health-dietary status and to uplift the social position of the teenage girls, has been started in 163 projects. It was a deserted project

due to the non-allocation of money in the budget by the previous government.

Another section of people, who are hapless in the society like women, are senior citizens. The Government have declared a policy to protect the senior citizens at their sunset of life, ignored by the offspring and relatives. To implement this policy, monitoring cells have been formed in district / state level. A nodal agency has been appointed to implement old age policy.

Pension for the physically challenged has been enhanced to Rs.160. Project for the rehabilitation of physically challenged has been started in Kollam, Palakkad and Kasaragod districts. Reservation has been introduced in Class I and Class II posts for the physically challenged. The power to appoint the physically challenged has been given to PSC. By this, 350 persons got appointments as per filling backlog vacancies. Rs.40.25 has been allotted for the treatment of 1358 physically challenged through Physically Disabled Relief Project. ■ ■ ■ ■

KERALA CALLING

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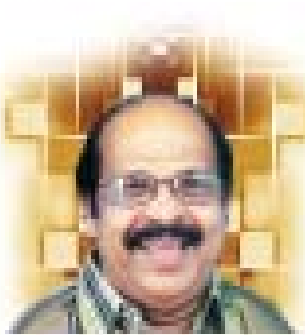
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Book review by eminent personalities will also be accepted.



As part of the Government initiative to reduce bad debt under the one time settlement scheme, interest to the tune of Rs.270 crore was waived. Further, loans upto Rs two lakh given to farmers who later committed suicide were written off. Rs.187 lakh was written off by cooperative societies in this manner.

Co-operation necessary for survival



G. Sudhakaran

Minister for Co-operation,
Coir and Devaswom

Even staunch critics will agree that the Left Democratic Government was able to revive and give new sense of direction to the co-operative movement in Kerala during the last two years in power.

When this Government assumed power, the cooperation sector was in total anarchy. The very credibility of the sector was at stake with bad debt mounting to thousands of crores on the one side and approaches, which were not investor friendly on the other side. This Government adopted uncompromising attitude against the corrupt. Further, the Government took steps to diversify the activities of the co-operation sector.

The LDF Government was able to convince the general public that co-operative movement embraced every walk of the life of the general public and not just promoting investments and distribution of loans. Co-operatives of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women were revived to ensure timely assistance to the weaker sections. These efforts became very strong models against rise in price of essential commodities. More than 3300 sales outlets were established to ensure

that the people got essential commodities at fair prices. The co-operative movement made fruitful interventions in sectors like education, medical treatment, cultural activities, strengthening of the Sahithya Pravarthaka Sahakarana Sanghom and promoting cooperation among cultural activities.

While poverty eradication, food security, availability of employment etc. becomes outside agenda items, international concepts the Government of Kerala was able to become an alternative power. Whereas the projects and schemes progress at snail's pace and activities of the private entrepreneurs lose credibility and fail to give results, cooperative sector managed to get a decent place in every field it entered.

During the last two years, this Department took remedial action in more than 15,000 complaints. This is an indicator of the growing trust people have in the cooperative movement. The Government took strong steps to disperse loans with low interest rates to the farmers. Kerala is the only State in India that was able to provide short-term loans at just four per cent interest. Stern action has been taken against cooperative societies that showed reluctance to disburse loan to the farmers.

As part of the Government initiative to reduce



G. Sudhakaran, Minister for Co-operation, distributing loan under the aegis of Kerala Women's Co-operative Federation.

bad debt under the one time settlement scheme, interest to the tune of Rs.270 crore was waived. Further, loans upto Rs.two lakh given to farmers who later committed suicide were written off. Rs.187 lakh was written off by cooperative societies in this manner. Since this Government took up the reigns the cooperative sector extended benefits to the tune of Rs.3100 crore to the people of Kerala.

A special package was evolved for Wayanad, Kasaragod and Palakkad putting an end to the suicide of farmers. Loans to the tune of Rs.112.15 crore give to farmers from these three districts were written off.

When the people of Kerala were in the grip of diabolic price rise of essential commodities, the cooperative sector came forward with very strong remedial action. The cooperative sector, through Consumerfed and primary cooperative societies, gave commodities to Keralites at prices 35 per cent less than market price. During the four festival seasons when price rise is at the maximum, the market intervention was regularly done. So also when the price of rice rose beyond normal level, rice was distributed at fair prices through cooperative rice markets.

The cooperative sector is all set for a giant leap in the cooperative educational

sector. In contrast to the cut throat exploitation of self financing colleges, cooperative sector runs colleges levying only the fee prescribed by the Government. The Pariyaram Medical College in cooperative sector was notorious for corrupt practices. The Government was able to stop all such corrupt practices through strong interventions. This sector launched many new educational institutions and courses. The Scooter's Factory at Punnapra in Alappuzha district was taken over and a new cooperative

technical educational institution is to be started there.

Steps were initiated to revive SPCS, which is the most famous cooperative of writers. The arrears of due to the literary men were paid and when it was decided to publish 33 more books, the institution shows symptoms of sprouting afresh.

Government also amended cooperative laws and rules wherever they were redundant. Cooperative Congress was organised, after a gap of eight years, to discuss the new trends in cooperative sector. Steps were initiated to appoint a Director General of Audit, with a view to strengthen audit system.

A cooperative vigilance system was set up under police officers in the rank of DIG.

To ensure quality service from the cooperative sector, Government intends to appoint an Ombudsman. Further, it is planned to open 1000 ATM counters with the help of State Cooperative Bank, District Cooperative and other cooperative banking institutions. This sector marches ahead with many programmes including constitution of more cooperative societies and other welfare activates.

Coir

During the last two years, the Government was able to effect long-term changes in this traditional industry field.

When the people of Kerala were in the grip of diabolic price rise of essential commodities, the cooperative sector came forward with very strong remedial action. The cooperative sector, through Consumerfed and primary cooperative societies, gave commodities to Keralites at prices 35 per cent less than market price.



- Strong steps taken to disperse loans with low interest rates to the farmers
- Special package evolved for Wayanad, Kasaragod and Palakkad putting an end to the suicide of farmers.
- Steps initiated to revive SPCS
- Bill to bring all appointments to the administrative posts of Devaswom under the purview of the Public Service Commission

A coir census was completed within specific time limit. The data from the census provide a basis for all further planning in the field. A coir commission was constituted to study and submit recommendations for reorganisation of coir sector in Kerala.



Among traditional industries coir got maximum priority. The Government spent Rs.24 crore to give old-age pension to coir labourers. Whereas the previous government had left unpaid the pension of the coir labourers for 32 months, the present Government has paid pension due to them till March 2008. And the amount of pension per person per month was doubled – from Rs.100 to Rs.200. In the case of other benefits and welfare measures, the amount has been raised by two to three times.

To find international market for the coir products, all efforts were taken to establish a brand image. A coir census was completed within specific time limit. The data from the census provide a basis for all further planning in the field. A coir commission was constituted to study and submit recommendations for the reorganisation of coir sector in Kerala. During yester years, eradicating the exploitation of the 'Depots' was just an oft repeated slogan.

But the LDF Government implemented a strong alternative, Coir Purchase Price Stability Programme and it was found effective. During the regime of the previous ministry coir sector was sadly neglected. Inability to compete and lack of capital led to the crash of the industry. This Government during the first year itself granted Rs.1986 crore for the rejuvenation of coir cooperative society. Whenever coir products were not moving in the market and buffer stocks resulted, Government intervened. Products worth more than Rs.13 crores were bought under distress purchase scheme. A special programme

was organised for the export of coir products. In the non-traditional sector LDF Government took the initiative to establish new defibering units and to increased international consumption of new materials. About 5000 outlets for sales of coir products are being opened in the State. Further, steps to market coir products through out India have been taken. A project to rejuvenate Coirfed, the apex body of coir cooperation has been prepared.

Due importance was given to research and development in coir industry and priorities in the sector were decided. Projects to train labourers in spinning coir and make products that call for great skills have been progressing.

This Government led by labour movements and always in the side of the people is doing its maximum for the progress of the coir sector. But on occasions the retrograde policies of the Central Government lead the industry to face critical situations. Winding up the rebate system, and imposing the minimum export price and minimum purchase price have resulted in cruel exploitation of the labourers. Moves to resist these have to become reality.

Devaswom

The Devaswom administration has been widely discussed during the last two years because of the epoch making legislations and the strong actions of the Government against corruption. For the first time a lady and a member of the scheduled caste were appointed members of the Devaswom Boards of Travancore and Kochi. A bill to bring all appointments

to the administrative posts of Devaswom under the purview of the Public Service Commission was passed.

Further, legislation to constitute a Malabar Devaswom Board was brought in. This was a long-standing wish of the people, a main item of the election manifesto of the LDF and a promise of the minister on the floor of the legislative assembly. The previous government had brought in an ordinance fearing the court, but it was not implemented due to superstitious beliefs.

It was decided to open a super speciality

appointed an Ombudsman to enquire into the corruption in Travancore and Kochi Devaswom Boards.

The cabinet after detailed discussions approved the master plan prepared by 'Ecosmart' on the development of Sabarimala. Rs.85 lakh was distributed for the renovation of the temples of Malabar. Steps were taken for the development of a memorial for Poonthanam.

Steps to set up a super speciality hospital at Pathanamthitta to cater to the needs of the pilgrims to Sabarimala have been initiated. Further, a hospital and

parking complex at Guruvayoor, and a new college at Alappuzha have been opened. The Government also ensured the coordinated service of more than 10,000 service minded officers during the Sabarimala pilgrim season of 2007-08. Better medical facilities were offered utilising the service of the Government, cooperative and private sectors. Medical and paramedical staff from cooperative medical college and hospital were deputed for duty at Sabarimala. Ayyappa Service Centres under five district cooperative banks were set up. Pilgrims were provided



G. Sudhakaran, Minister for Co-operation, inaugurating the total computerisation of Consumerfed in Thiruvananthapuram.

hospital under the Guruvayoor Devaswom Board. The appointments to the administrative service posts of the Guruvayoor Devaswom have been left to the Public Service Commission. Further, this Government opened the way for legislation to ensure that all Hindus under distress in Kerala get relief from the Guruvayoor Devaswom Board. Active discussion and active growth is the slogan of the Devaswom.

After the LDF assumed power, all petitions about corruption in Travancore and Kochi Devaswom Boards have been investigated. In major cases Vigilance enquiry has been ordered. Government requested the Hon. High Court to include corruption in Kochi Devaswom Board also among the terms of reference of justice Paripoornan Commission appointed by the Court. Based on this the Hon. Court

Welfare of the common people, complete transparency of action, strong stand against corruption – the Government will not deviate from these policies and there will be the guiding principles of cooperation, coir and Devaswom departments in future also.

one kg. each rice at Pamba at Rs.14/kg. 'Annadana' or offering of food to pilgrims were provided at three centres set up by Guruvayoor Devaswom. Rs.15 lakh worth of medicines were made available during the pilgrimage season. About 350 lakh people came for darshan at Sabarimala. Revenue was Rs.93 crores, increase of two crores over the previous years.

It was ordered that the stock of gold in the Devaswom should be verified. So also the lands owned by Devaswoms were surveyed and encroachers were evicted.

Welfare of the common people, complete transparency of action, strong stand against corruption – the Government will not deviate from these policies and these will be the guiding principles of cooperation, coir and Devaswom departments in future also. ■■■■



This government is successful in achieving efficiency in financial management. No new restrictions on treasury for expenditure have been brought about. In fact, the existing restrictions have been waived.

Growth ***in*** ***income*** ***and*** ***efficiency***



Dr T.M. Thomas Issac
Minister for Finance

The Left Democratic Front Government have completed two years in power. Three budgets were presented in the Assembly during this period. The first one was a correction to the budget of the previous government. Not small corrections; massive redoing that was demanded by the State was pointed out in the first budget itself. During this period great strides were made in improving the financial status of the State according to the policies of the Left Democratic Front.

The former government adopted the policy of reducing expenditure mechanically. Freezing the welfare incentives and squeezing employees and pensioners, steps to close down and disinvest public sector enterprises and total ban on recruitment were the steps adopted by the former government to improve the financial position of the State. The society in Kerala had made it clear that this approach was not politically acceptable. The approach of the Left Democratic Front is entirely different. In austerity measures, the approach was not unilateral. The approach was towards improving the financial position by increasing the income and improving efficiency.

This approach has become successful and there is considerable increase in the tax income of

the state. The income growth has been achieved at 17 per cent per annum and reducing the increase of revenue expenditure at 8 to 9 per cent, a disciplined system has been brought into effect to abolish revenue deficit by 2010-11. Growth in income is essential for the success of this. The proof of how this can be achieved is the growth in the last two years' income tax collection. In 2006-07, this was 22 per cent and in 2007-08, it was 17 per cent. Value Added Tax (VAT) growth in two years was 74 per cent. By adopting a disciplined and scientific approach in tax collection in the coming year, the success can be repeated.

When the revenue deficit becomes zero in 2010-11, there will be remarkable change in capital expenditure. This will provide great opportunity to invest for developmental projects through loans once the revenue deficit becomes zero. This will help in spending Rs.6,000 crore annually for capital investments even after complying with the central government norms. We should be ready for this giant leap. In this financial year itself initiatives towards this will have to be started. For acquisition of land for developmental programmes and for drinking water projects, roads, bridges etc., sanctions to the tune of Rs.1,000 crore is being given this year. On the



Dr Thomas Issac, Minister for Finance, releasing Citizen's charter for treasuries at Alappuzha.

foundation of an improving financial system, preparations are under way in this financial year itself to take a giant leap in capital expenditure.

Financial Management

This government is successful in achieving efficiency in financial management. No new restrictions on treasury for expenditure have been brought about. In fact, the existing restrictions have been waived. In the last financial year, there were no restrictions imposed to encash for project expenditures. Usually, for clearance of bills above the specified amounts required, the Ways and Means Clearance from the Finance department was insisted upon. But in the last financial year no such restrictions were imposed.

Steps to improve the efficiency of expenditure were undertaken. Efforts are being made to clear the pending arrears of the public works contractors so that competitive bidding tenders can be called for construction works. When the United Democratic Front government left power, the pending arrears for 22 months were due to the contractors. This was one of the major burdens of our government. It took 22 months to clear the bills of the contractors after submission of the bills on completion of the work. The contractors take up the work considering this delay. This delay and non-revision of the PWD

rates on time for the construction materials had led to a situation of Tender Excess. Only after eliminating this, the efficiency of expenditure for construction activities can be improved. So far, the arrears due to contractors have been reduced to below the half mark. In 2007-08, Rs.1,600 crore was paid as arrear clearance to contractors. Initiatives have been taken to renew the PWD rates every year.

Liberalising welfare measures

In its 24 months in power, the Left Democratic Front Government have

distributed 55 months' welfare pensions. This government has released the welfare pension arrears for 31 months kept pending by the previous government. For this Rs.700 crore was spent. All welfare pensions till March were paid. Not only have the dues been cleared but the amount has also been increased. Pensions in the range of Rs.100-110 were raised to Rs.200. Efforts are being taken to distribute this on a regular basis. A new welfare fund has been started for the traditional pre-school teachers (*nilathezhuthu asanmar*) and lime shell workers. Steps were also taken to release the government share to various welfare boards. As part of the welfare funds for the *anganwadi* workers a new pension scheme has been created.

Liberal support to traditional sector

The UDF government adopted an approach which totally sidelined the traditional sector where lakhs of ordinary workers are employed. This government gives special emphasis to ensure sufficient budgetary allocation for coir, handloom and cashew industry.

In the history of the State, highest budgetary allocation for coir sector was made last year. In 2006-07, Rs.51.75 crore and in 2007-08, Rs.53 crore were allocated for this sector. In 2005-06 when the UDF left power, this was merely Rs.23 crore. The finance department has given

In its 24 months in power, the Left Democratic Front government has distributed 55 months' welfare pensions. This government has released the welfare pension arrears for 31 months kept pending by the previous government. For this Rs.700 crore was spent. All welfare pensions till March were paid.



- Planned scheme for wiping our revenue deficit by 2010
- Remarkable increase in revenue collection
- Increase of Rs.1000 crore in sales tax collection in the year 2007-08
- Vat collection increased to Rs.5132 crore from Rs.2946 crore; 74 per cent increase within two years
- Cleared all welfare pensions pending
- Revamp package to KSRTC and Water Authority

The government loan of Rs.22.48 crore given to cooperatives was converted to joint shares. Interest to the tune of Rs.18.40 crore was written off. The pending arrears amounting to Rs.15.27 crore as part of the NCDC were also converted as shares.

full support to implement the special packages aimed at the revival of public sector units and cooperatives in the coir sector. The government loan of Rs.22.48 crore given to cooperatives was converted to joint shares. Interest to the tune of Rs.18.40 crore was written off. The pending arrears amounting to Rs.15.27 crore as part of the NCDC loan were also converted as shares. This step was taken to create a clean balance sheet for the coir cooperatives and allowing them to take loans on commercial basis for proper functioning. The coir cooperative societies were given grants amounting to Rs.19.86 crore. For the revival of Coirfed Rs. eight crore has been allocated.

For the renovation of public sector units such as Capex and Cashew Development Corporation, budgetary assistance was provided. To pay the gratuity arrears of workers, Rs. 24 crore was released step by step to this sector. Tax waivers were also given to protect the industry.

Revival of Public Sector Enterprises

The UDF government had adopted the policy of privatising the public sector enterprises. But the LDF government is following the policy of reviving them. The Finance department has given full support to this by clearing the balance sheet of the companies and giving crucial guidance. In the last two years, great support has been given in the budget to clear the bank loans in a one-time settlement and getting working capital. Our government has spent Rs.102.79 crore during this period to protect the public sector. The budget 2008-09 has allocated Rs.50 crore for public sector unit revival and reorganisation.

Government employees, Pensioners

The government has adopted a friendly approach to government employees and pensioners unlike the past. We have inherited the backlash of the UDF policies which snatched away the welfare measures and rights of the government employees. We were able to correct these and ensure provision of improved welfare measures.

The UDF Government had implemented the pay commission's report without any discussion. The result was

reduction in the salary of the employees. To solve this, the last six scales in the pay structure were improved and an order was issued to this effect. This has benefited the last six pay grades including the part time employees. We have proved our commitment to those who get the lowest salary in service. Orders were issued to solve disparities arisen due to pay revision.

The wages of casual sweepers have been revised to Rs.1,000 from Rs.600. Part time sweepers' posts were permitted in offices with more than 100 sq.m of sweeping area. The norms to assess the sweeping area of an office were also liberalised and thus the casual sweepers were raised to the position of part time sweepers. The government is committed to the protection of last grade employees.

Unlike in the past history of government employees, the arrears of dearness allowance (DA) was brought to nil. The dearness allowance announced by the central government in March is the only pending due. Never in the recent past had employees of Kerala had such an achievement. Many times during the UDF rule, agitations were carried out to claim DA arrears. In this fiscal year, employees and pensioners were paid 27 per cent of their basic pay as DA. In the last fiscal year, Rs. 2,948 crore was paid to clear DA arrears. Of the 32 per cent DA, 10 per

Accident Insurance Scheme for the government employees has come into force. On an annual premium of Rs.50, Rs.7 lakh is the sum assured. This scheme is applicable to employees of aided educational institutions, universities, panchayats and municipal corporations.

cent was the arrears of the former government.

Accident Insurance Scheme for the government employees has come into force. On an annual premium of Rs.50, Rs. seven lakh is the sum assured. This scheme is also applicable to employees of aided educational institutions, universities, panchayats and municipal corporations.

LDF government has a humane approach towards the pensioners. For the first time in the history of the State pensioners received the DA arrears before the employees.

We hope that by August all are benefited from the one rank one pension scheme. Pension has been revised for the

The main reform in the treasury department is the release of the Citizen's Right Charter. On January 15, 2008, the Charter came into effect in 202 treasuries of the state. The Citizen's Right Charter ensures efficiency and timeliness in the services of the treasuries.



time being to give the benefits to all. It has been decided to give interest to the pension arrears due from 1st April 2007.

Steps favouring the employees in identifying the vacancies of aided school and college sector for teaching and non-teaching staff are underway.

Tax department- income from tax

The approach is to increase the income from tax by improving the efficiency of tax administration. In 2005-06, the income from VAT was Rs.2,946 crore and this has increased to Rs. 5,132 crore in 2007-08. This is a growth rate of 74 per cent in 24 months. This is an all-time record even in the country. Entrance tax was the main component in the taxation of goods brought to the State. Following

the announcement that this is unconstitutional, there is a big hurdle in tax collection. Great efforts are being taken to solve this problem. Efforts are being made to implement a rule with the approval of the President of India to collect entrance tax. Also, attempts are made to plug the holes of tax evasion by scientific analysis of the data on goods entry through check posts.

Department of Lotteries

There are two ways adopted in running the lottery. 1) Stringent measures will be taken to control lotteries of other states, 2) Initiatives to develop and strengthen state lotteries.

The State Government has adopted stringent legal measures against illegal

lotteries from other states. The former government took the stand that the State Government could not take action against the violation of the 4th Section of the Central Lottery Act. The case pending with the Supreme Court now. The State Government has made special plea before the Supreme Court for an immediate ruling. Special panel of eminent advocates has been formed to deal the lottery cases.

The tax on paper lottery has been raised from Rs. 2.5 lakh to Rs. seven lakh and for bumper lottery the tax has been raised to Rs.17 lakh from Rs.10 lakh.

Revival of State Lottery

Four new lotteries were started after we came into power. In 2006-07, the turn over from State lotteries was Rs.236 crore. This has increased to Rs.333.85 crore, with a growth of 41.37 per cent.

Many administrative initiatives to strengthen the State lottery department have been taken. Steps for the smooth distribution of prizes have already been taken. Legal steps to develop and ensure inclusion of lottery workers also under the existing welfare scheme for lottery agents were also taken. The government has decided to give one per cent of the tax income of the lottery department to the welfare fund.

Treasury Department

The main reform in the treasury department is the release of the Citizen's Charter. On January 15, 2008, the Charter came into effect in 202 treasuries of the state. The Citizen's Charter ensures efficiency and timeliness in the services of the treasuries. On the basis of this it has been decided to conduct social audit. In the last fiscal year nine more treasuries have become functional for the first time in the history of the state. Among these, the treasuries at Walayar, Nadupponi and Gopalapuram attached to the check posts work round the clock. This is for the first time in the country such a system has become operational. Four treasuries functioning in rented buildings have been moved into government buildings. In 95 treasuries, online system has been implemented in association with banks.

The interest rates offered by treasuries were raised to the equivalent of nationalised

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Growth in income... and in efficiency as well

banks and it was decided to give more interest to senior citizens.

Kerala State Financial Enterprises

The Kerala State Financial Enterprises is on a path to progress and modernisation. The chit collection of KSFE in 2005-06 recorded at Rs.158 crore has been increased to Rs. 187 crore in 2006-07. In 2007-08, it has crossed Rs 260 crore. The Ponna chits introduced during last Onam and the golden jubilee chits introduced last year exceeded their target. In the last financial year chit business exceeded Rs. 110 crore which is a remarkable achievement of KSFE in its history. This is the result of the joint efforts of the employees, management and the government. The additional target decided for the Pravasibandhu chits was Rs.15

crore, this has reached a record of Rs.44 crore.

Kerala Finance Corporation

The payment arrears in Kerala Finance Corporation (KFC) is being solved through one time settlement (OTS). Five hundred such cases have been solved through OTS. Two hundred and twelve units were sanctioned reviving packages.

The Ponna Chits introduced during last Onam and the Golden Jubilee Chits introduced last year exceeded their target. In the last financial year chit business exceeded Rs. 110 crore which is a remarkable achievement of KSFE in its history.

Loans to the tune of Rs.10,080 lakh were distributed till December 31, 2007. The growth rate is 205 per cent compared to the growth in the same period last year.

National Savings Scheme

The Central Government policies are creating hurdles in the National Savings Scheme. Non-increase of the interest rates and stopping the bonus of the monthly income scheme have drastically affected the Savings Scheme. The aim was to collect Rs.2700 crore as surplus funds. Due to these policies no money could be collected. This has led to a situation in which the lives of thousands of people who work for the National Savings Scheme have been affected. The pressures brought by the state government by bringing these people have brought some change. The Central Government was forced to reinstate the five per cent bonus for the monthly income scheme and tax concessions for five-year term deposits. ■■■■



For the construction of Vizhinjam Port, five consortia submitted tenders and the preliminary evaluation is complete. The technical evaluation has been started by a committee presided by the Chief Secretary. KITCO has been entrusted with the feasibility study of Special Economic Zone in Vizhinjam.

Young Blood for Sports Arena



M. Vijayakumar
Minister for Law and
Parliamentary Affairs

The Sports and Youth Affairs Ministry successfully made great strides in the development of sports. The Government is committed to training the sportspersons to compete in international events. The Government is giving special emphasis to modernisation of ports and starting the construction work of Vizhinjam Port. Appointment of the Law Reforms Commission and complete computerisation of Law Department are among the major achievements.

Sports

The State Sports Council and the District Sports Council were formed. The Government took all efforts to bring the National Games in 2009 to the State. If accepted, it will be a rare opportunity for Kerala. Physical education for students from class 4 to 12 made compulsory. The preliminary work for complete Physical Efficiency Programme has been started.

Vision Asia Scheme of the Asian Football Federation has introduced in the State. Thirty students from selected districts are getting training at international standards. This will

be implemented in all the districts within two years.

The Government plans to build a play ground in a ward, a mini stadium or a swimming pool in a panchayat. For this, Rs. 4.10 crore was given to 43 panchayats and 52 schools. Apart from this, through the Sports Council Rs. 4 crore will be given to meet the expenditures for building these facilities. Kerala is selected for the implementation of the pilot project "Khel Abhiyan" of the Central Government.

The first phase of the Rs.7 crore High Altitude Training Centre at Munnar has been inaugurated. This is the third training centre in the world of its kind. The training for the Beijing Olympics is being undertaken here now. The second phase of the centre will be completed within two years with the support of the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and Indian Olympic Association.

The construction of Aquatic Complex, Pirappancode is progressing and it will be commissioned in 2008. The synthetic track in Kochi was completed spending Rs. 4.7 crore. The renovation of the Jimmy George Stadium in Thiruvananthapuram is completed and decided to make it fully air conditioned this year. A



Photo: Rajan Karimoola

Children's display at Kozhikkode as part of the inauguration of *Vision India Project*

swimming pool of international standard will be constructed alongside of the Water Works swimming pool.

In Malappuram, a football academy and sports complex at the cost of Rs. 25 crore will be built. Under the sports quota, 100 persons were appointed covering 20 persons per year which was pending for the last five years. Decision to restart the appointments in the Police Department under sports quota, which was pending for the past one decade, had also been taken.

The cash award arrears are now being disbursed. Seventeen winners of the Asian Games were awarded with a total of Rs.22,50,000. Rs.26,86,000 was spent to give medals and cash award to Malayali sportspersons who had excelled in Asian Games and Cricketer Sreesanth. The awards were given to 242 sports persons for National Games, 44 in SAF Games and 528 sports persons of 2003-04. The State Sports Commission will be appointed soon.

Youth Welfare Board

A project, 'Yuvasakthi,' is underway to provide guidance to youth on employment, coaching classes, sports and so on. Initiatives to create a Youth Centre at the Village panchayat level is underway. For this, Rs.80 lakh was sanctioned.

In 2007, the Youth Forum was successfully organised. The job fair organised as part of this has helped 682 people to find jobs.

The Kerelotsavam has been organised successfully. 'Jalakam', a project to make advantages of information technology, is being successfully implemented in Thiruvananthapuram, Kozhikkode and Ernakulam. A website for this has been designed.

'Yuvakarmasena', a youth team for handling disasters and an adventure

academy at Devikulam and its sub centre in Muzhuppilangad, awards for clubs and individuals by Kerala State Youth Welfare Board to encourage social commitment are established.

To conduct self-employment training, 91 youth clubs selected from all districts were given an amount of Rs. 18,50,000. In 2007, 80 youth clubs were given an assistance totalling to Rs.3,50,000. During the same period steps to provide sports kit to 234 clubs were completed.

For the union leaders of all the Universities in Kerala three camps comprising 100 persons from each region will be conducted in Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam and Kozhikkode districts.

The youth will be provided an opportunity to get trained in boat barge driving and engine mechanism in Kochi and enable them to gain the license issued jointly by the Mercantile Marine Department and Irrigation Department. The Youth Welfare Board will pay the fees and each person undergoing training will be given a stipend of Rs.1, 000. In one batch, 30 students will be trained.

Aviation

Rajiv Gandhi Academy for Aviation Technology

Immediate steps to reopen the Rajiv

The Government took all efforts to bring the National Games in 2009 to the State. The Chief Minister had taken direct initiative in this regard, and paid the bid amount of Rs.1 crore. The State is optimistic that the 2009 National Games will be given to it. This will be a rare opportunity for Kerala.



- Department of Law is fully computerised
- Complete Physical Efficiency Programme launched.
- The first phase of High Altitude Training Center, Munnar, inaugurated.
- 'Yuvakarmasena' has been formed in all districts.
- Land acquisition for construction of airport at Kannur and Kozhikode is progressing .
- A commission is constituted to reform the laws in the State.
- Permanent Lok Adalat established in Thiruvananthapuram.

Developmental activities worth Rs 550 crore are underway at the Trivandrum International Airport. Terminals with aero bridges are planned. The work will be completed this year. KITCO had called the tenders for the construction of the approach road and the bridge across Chaka canal. Land acquisition for this is already on.



V.S Achuthanandan, Chief Minister , presenting G V Raja Sports Award to boxing champion K.C Lekha.

Gandhi Academy for Aviation Technology was taken. Two Sesna aircrafts worth Rs.2 crore had been bought. For flying training, appointments of staff had been made and flying license from the Director General of Aviation had been obtained. Applications for the first batch of trainees have been called. The training which was not conducted for the past six years will be resumed.

Developmental activities worth Rs 550 crore are underway at the Trivandrum International Airport. Land acquisition for construction of airport at Kannur and Kozhikode is progressing. It has been decided to acquire 2,000 acres in Kannur and 137 acres of land in Kozhikode.

Railways

In the Railway Budget 2007-08, Kerala got a decent consideration following the regular interactions made by the Chief Minister, the Minister in charge of Railways, Members of Parliament from Kerala with the Prime Minister and Union Railway Minister after this Government came to power.

Sanction for establishing a coach factory at Palakkad, Wagon factory in Alleppy, EMU car shed in Kollam, upgrading the Trivandrum Railway Station to international standards, Rs.138 crore for the doubling of railway lines, survey of the Nanjankode-Nilambur-Talassery-Mysore lines, modernisation of

Kozhikode station, development of Kochuveli station, electrification of lines in the Trivandrum-Kanyakumari and Thrissur-Guruvayur routes, permission for the construction 67 over bridges and doubling of the Ernakulam-Kottayam-Kayamkulam-Ambalppuzha tracks were our achievements in the 2007-08 budget.

Considering the increasing passenger traffic, building a passenger corridor from Mumbai to Kanyakumari and in view of the Development of Ports, construction of a freight corridor had been requested to the Central Government.

Decision regarding the implementation of Kochi Metro rail service with Central aid has been taken. The Government has decided to form a separate company for this and give the responsibility to Delhi Metro Rail Corporation.

Department of Law

A commission to reform the laws in the State was formed and presided over by former Supreme Court Judge, Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer. This was the second attempt after the formation of Kerala State.

The Department of Law is the first comprehensive, fully computerised department in the State, perhaps the first of its kind in the country. Rare books are digitalised and about 74 lakh pages are thus preserved. Facilities for the common man to access the important rules and

regulations of the Centre-State orders and documents free of cost have been made.

Efficiency increased the income of the Legal Benefit Fund. This had helped to increase the income of the Kerala Advocates Welfare Fund and Kerala Advocates Clerks Welfare Fund.

For the first time in the country, Kerala has prepared the draft policy on intellectual property rights and held an international seminar. The policy paper will be released soon. Also, the first IPR Academy will be opened in Kerala.

The Law-liaison office, the Advocate-General's Office in Ernakulam, the Government Pleaders' offices in all the districts and the Department of Law at the Secretariat were linked online to improve efficiency. This has helped the Department of Law to directly monitor the cases and solve it successfully as in Supreme Court cases for charging service charges from liquor companies in which the Government was able to save Rs.200 crore.

For the first time in the country, in Kerala, seating arrangements were made for the litigants who were treated as criminals, using Legal Benefit Fund. A total of 764 benches in all the courts of Kerala with two benches each in each court were made at the cost of Rs.75 lakh. Building public conveniences for the litigants in the court premises is also planned.

Permanent Lok Adalat

A permanent Lok Adalat was established in Thiruvananthapuram for the first time in Kerala to deal with cases of day-to-day affairs such as transportation, postal, electricity, water distribution and health services.

Official Language (Law making) Commission

Seventeen Central Laws were translated and readied for sales. Bilingual print of the Constitution is ready. The functioning of the Human Rights Commission has been improved with the appointment of the Chairman.

Ports

For the construction of Vizhinjam Port, five consortia submitted tenders and the preliminary evaluation is complete. The technical evaluation has been started by a committee presided by the Chief Secretary. This will hopefully be completed within four months. KITCO has been entrusted with the feasibility study of Special Economic Zone in Vizhinjam.

Investors' Meet was organised and the Chief Minister presided the meet. Forty three companies from all over the country participated in it. An agreement has been signed with 'RITES' to conduct the feasibility study for building connecting roads and rail lines with Vizhinjam Port. The cost of this is Rs.45 lakh. For supply of water to Vizhinjam Port an agreement

has been signed with Kerala Water Authority at a cost of Rs.3.89 crore. Steps to find the land has been taken.

The Maritime Development Corporation which was facing the threat of closure, is now running as a profit-making establishment. The Thangassery Port in Kollam, which was not functional for the past few years, was inaugurated. The steps to restart operations at the port are being undertaken.

Steps to appoint a consultant to make the necessary changes in the project report on Alappuzha Port envisaged as a marina-cum-cargo terminal have been completed. The Cabinet has sanctioned Rs.30 lakh to appoint a consultant to hold feasibility study of Ponnani port.

Steps to appoint a consultant to prepare a detailed project for the comprehensive development of Beypore Port are completed. Cabinet sanction has been given for Rs.11.2 crore to construct breakwater and wharf in the Azheekkal port. This port comes under the maritime development programme of the Union Government. Plans are afoot to open a passenger terminal here.

Parliamentary Affairs

A series of lectures in memory of stalwarts who had made great contributions to parliamentary democracy was started and Prakash Karat did the first lecture in the series on R. Shankaranarayan and Prof. Sukumar Azhikode did the second in the series on V.K. Krishna Menon.

The non-functional Institute of Parliamentary Affairs has been resumed. Posts, including that of the Director-General for the institute were created and appointments were made. This will give training to officials of Department of Land and orientation course to elected representatives. Model Parliament will be organised for students of colleges and schools. The Institute of Parliamentary Affairs will organise an year long EMS birth centenary celebrations. As part of this, international conference, National seminars, discussions and symposiums will be organised. ■■■■



M. Vijayakumar, Minister for Sports, distributing awards to the winner in the special olympics held in China.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS



V.S Achuthanandan, Chief Minister, releasing the book *50 years of Legislation* by presenting a copy to Smt Pratibha Devisingh Patil, the President of India.

Lead Kerala in Industry and Technology

The Kerala Legislative Assembly celebrated its golden jubilee recently. Smt Pratibha Devisingh Patil, the President of India, inaugurated the valedictory function of the celebrations. Here is the excerpts from the speech.

I consider it a privilege to be here with you today to participate in the Valedictory function of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Kerala Legislative Assembly. On this occasion, I would like to extend my warmest greetings to the people of Kerala. Celebrating democracy is always a matter of great pride for India.

India has a long tradition of

participatory functioning and has throughout history shown respect for tolerance and living in harmony. No one can forget that the freedom of India was fought and won with the weapons of truth and non-violence. That was a remarkable achievement in history. As an independent nation we chose a Parliamentary form of Government. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, said "in Parliamentary Democracy, there is

the Legislature to express the voice of the people; there is the Executive which is subordinate to the Legislature and bound to obey the Legislature." The experience of democratic polity of independent India, especially its ability to manage a multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-lingual and multi-ethnic society is drawing global attention.



K. Radhakrishnan, Speaker of the House, presenting a memento to the President.

The Kerala Legislature has given birth to many trail blazing enactments. The debates in the Assembly have reverberated with demands for social justice as well as for the rights of the downtrodden and women. Over the years, the Legislature of Kerala has successfully served as an instrument for political democracy enabling social change. The progressive socio-economic measures like land reforms, labour welfare, debt relief and re-orientation of education initiated by this body have helped in ushering in a modern era of inclusive growth in the State.

The Kerala Assembly has also been a pioneer in the field of introducing innovative practices. It made a unique contribution by introducing the Subject Committees in 1980 as instruments of Legislative control over the Executive. Ever since their formation, the Standing Committees of the Kerala Legislative Assembly have done commendable work and their reports have helped a great deal to ensure administrative accountability and to support the weaker sections of society. In fact, when the Parliament of

India introduced the system of Standing Committees, the Kerala innovation was one of the precedents taken into consideration.

Today, India is regarded as a leading light in the comity of democratic nations of the world. What happens in the legislature, how it works, how productive are its debates and deliberations have a decisive role in shaping the destiny of the State and the country. That being so, it is the duty of the enlightened society and the electorate to constantly watch, and critically analyse the legislative business for strengthening the democratic process. It is incumbent on all members of the Legislative bodies of India to maintain order and decorum in the House. This is important for maintaining the stature, dignity and respect for democratic institutions.

The next challenge for this Assembly is to look at taking the State towards economic, technological and industrial development. I believe that from the platform of its progressive human development agenda, it would be possible

for Kerala to make a big leap forward into the future. The Legislative Assembly could look at steps that encourage the growth of the key sectors of the economy which have the potential of propelling a dynamic growth trajectory for the State. Among these are the possibilities of Kerala becoming the "knowledge hub" of the region, as also the tourism and health sectors. Tourism is already becoming a major contributor for the development of the State. Kerala has a rich cultural heritage of dance and music as well as the traditional system of medicine - Ayurveda. Their preservation and promotion are important for the State. The health care sector in Kerala has gained international acclaim. But now it faces new challenges that require new solutions. The Legislature should become the harbinger to provide an enabling environment, facilitating innovation and development in these priority sectors.

In the last five decades, Kerala has progressed well in the fields of education, health and empowerment of women. Keralites, whether living abroad or in India, and working either as administrators, doctors, engineers, scientists, nurses or construction workers have earned praise from everyone. Kerala can be justifiably proud that it is the first state of India where the sex ratio is above the equality ratio with 1058 females per 1000 males. A favourable sex ratio has to be attained and maintained in all states for a healthy demographic growth of the country.

I am also happy to learn that women in Kerala are at the forefront of many fields including education, medicine, judiciary and engineering amongst others. I would encourage that empowerment of women be made a main policy plank in all the states. At the same time it is a matter of serious concern that female infanticide is often practiced in several parts of the country. It has to be curbed at any cost and the girl child should get equal opportunity

to grow and develop in the society.

Kerala leads the country in literacy levels and has 100% literacy status. Being the most literate Assembly of India, the Kerala Assembly should look at measures that will provide continuous encouragement and fresh opportunities to the younger generation especially in the fields of modern education, employment and entrepreneurship. Students and youth are the future of the country and it is important to prepare them for the ever growing challenges of the future. Living in a globalised world would require that they learn how to deal comprehensively with issues like economic growth with

impede the healthy development of individuals and a stable society would have to be done on a priority.

In facing the challenges of future, the participation of people is of great significance. In fact, for the implementation of the welfare schemes of both the Central Government and the State Governments, the active involvement of people both as beneficiaries and stakeholders is necessary. The Legislature should look at how to facilitate the implementation of socio-economic development programmes in a transparent way, within a stipulated time-frame and in a manner that it contributes to increasing the overall productivity and

will be informative for people, in particular for the students and the youth. It should motivate them to understand their own responsibility in preserving this rich heritage of democratic processes.

Today, democracy in Kerala rests on the solid foundation of an educated and well-informed electorate that has accepted a diversity of views. As we look into the future, it would be realized that elected bodies would need to be institutions that are constantly evolving and responding to new demands in an environment of rapid technological advancements. The Legislative Assemblies, including that of Kerala, will need to look at how to meet the growing aspirations and expectations of the people, especially of the younger generation, to cope with the changing demands of the society without hampering our cherished social and cultural values. How can legislative business be made more effective, and more result-oriented? What improvement can be brought about in the legislative business for example in a critical subject like budget and its utilization? How can performance audit be implemented? How can there be greater transparency and accountability in Government's functioning? How can Right to Information be used effectively for better governance? There are several issues that require evaluation. Legislature is an important platform for articulating concerns and difficulties faced by the people and to get redressal. I am confident that Kerala Legislative Assembly will respond to issues regarding the welfare of the people in an innovative and a pragmatic manner. While working for the people, the words of Mahatma Gandhi - man becomes great exactly in the degree in which he works for the welfare of his fellow-men - should be your guide.

I conclude by conveying my good wishes to all present here, and hope that the Kerala Legislative Assembly can be a model and pioneer in building a modern India.

Thank you,
Jai Hind.



Smt Pratibha Devisingh Patil, the President of India, is being received at Thiruvananthapuram air port by the Chief Minister.

equity, social development, environment protection and preservation of our heritage and age-old values.

The Legislative Assembly could look at addressing social evils and issues confronting society today. The growing incidents of the use of alcohol, drugs and suicides are alarming. Another issue of concern, particularly for Kerala, is the growing population of the elderly. Here, I would like to mention that elders in our society need special care and we must look into their needs and well-being. Those who have spent their entire life productively should not face despair and desperation in the twilight years of their lives. Effective legislative measures to address these issues that

progress of the State. The element of promoting a responsive administration is the need of the hour. In a democracy this is possible only through greater and effective participation of people in governance at all levels. The strengthening of the Panchayati Raj institutions is a way to achieve this objective. The State Legislature has to respond more proactively to it.

I am pleased to note that in connection with the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Kerala Legislative Assembly, an exhibition titled "Parliamentary Democracy - Our Heritage and Achievements" highlighting different aspects of the democratic institutions in the State of Kerala and the various stages in its evolution, has been arranged. This

Farm

R. Hali

India is on the brink of a farm crisis and terming it as a part of a global phenomenon is a feeble attempt to sideline the gravity of the catastrophe. Many reasons, ranging from globalisation to diversion of food grains for bio diesel production, are paraded before the public by each country according to their presentation skill. In 1977, India accomplished a miracle by attaining self-sufficiency and the nation could build up a mighty food grain security system and even help other countries with generous food assistance during 1980s. India became an exporter of food grains during mid 90s and could net Rs. 7000 crores worth foreign exchange from global rice market alone. World got a big jolt in 2006 when India started to import wheat, that too at a

India is on the brink of a farm crisis and terming it as a part of a global phenomenon is a feeble attempt to sideline the gravity of the catastrophe.

high price, after breaking a 30 year old grain import holiday.

The most important reason attributed to the above sensational development is perhaps an unpardonable over confidence emerged due to good grain production. Drastic changes made in the policy front like the near dismantling of the public procurement system and allowing unchecked growth of the private trade into the domain of food grain sector were other important factors. Another very serious flaw was the motivation given to the farmers to get away from the grain culture scene and take shelter under the cash crops for their future welfare. In all the budget speeches made by the union finance ministers since 2002, one of the most prominent pathway suggested for farmer's welfare was an appeal to them to bid good bye to grain farming. This gave a green signal for the total neglect of grain culture sector by all states and now it is identified as a major reason for creating a suicide wave in the country. The subsequent production drop has resulted

ing new culture



The most promising among many activities commenced was creation of a system for debt relief to the farming community.

in the large-scale import of wheat, pulses and vegetable oil to meet the domestic demand.

Kerala is perhaps the worst affected state due to the decay of farming sector. At the time of the formation of the state 50 years back, we were producing only 50 per cent of the rice required and now our contribution is less than 20 per cent. At present we are at the mercy of other states for meeting our requirements of rice,

pulses, condiments, milk, meat, egg, fruits and even vegetables. The faulty national public policies and world and regional trade agreements have very badly affected the prospects of coconut, areca nut, pepper, cardamom, tea, coffee etc. grown in the state. Those who tried to brave the adverse situation have become the worst victims of a debt trap and many of them have chosen to commit suicide, creating an agony wave in the rural life.

In this context, revival of the agricultural sector received very special attention during the last 24 months. It was a Herculean task, as the problems facing the farming sector was so acute that

lakhs of farmers and farm labour have left the scene in search of other enterprises with great sorrow. The efforts put in for rejuvenating agriculture sector by the Government of Kerala deserve very special mention.

The most promising among many activities commenced was creation of a system for debt relief to the farming community. Formation of Debt Relief Commission was much lauded as we had no model in the country to emulate. The entire nation was in the grip of one of the worst disaster due to the ever-growing debts of the farmers leading to a series of suicides. The state succeeded really in creating a model that works with an unbelievable

Another praiseworthy effort is the escalation of the procurement price of paddy from Rs 7.50 to nine and now to Rs 10 per Kg.

courage. The role of Debt Relief Commission as an infrastructure, providing relief and confidence to the farmers for making large-scale investments in the farming sector, is much commendable in the coming days. Hence, the creation of the system may be hailed as a model work done with a vision aimed to stabilize the crisis ridden farm front.

Another praiseworthy effort is the escalation of the procurement price of paddy from Rs 7.50 to nine and now to Rs 10 per Kg. This has created an unprecedented enthusiasm among the farmers and agricultural labourers. There were reports that area under rice made an upward trend in *kole* and *kuttanad*. It would have been a

trendsetter for bringing rice fallows back to cultivation but for the unfortunate summer rain. The most important development created due to the price hike was the working system evolved between the Agriculture, Revenue and Civil Supplies Departments in the production and procurement sectors, which is hailed as a farmer friendly paddy procurement model. Finding the farmer's enthusiasm towards the enhanced procurement price, several private entrepreneurs have come forward to popularise organic rice culture and offer a 25 per cent to 40 per cent price escalation for organically certified paddy. This may pave way for price fixation based on quality of paddy in future by the rice trade agencies.

Another significant contribution made as the part of rice farmer's welfare was the commencement of *Kisansree*, a programme for providing insurance cover to five lakhs farmers. This could be hailed as a trendsetter in the national farming front also. The significance of the programme will come to light only when we scan the details of the programmes created exclusively for the welfare of the farmers. During the last five decades several schemes and projects were implemented for enhancing production and marketing sectors. But it is very difficult to find an exclusive programme with a single objective for farmer welfare. In this context, *Kisansree* programme deserves special recognition even at the national level.

Another noteworthy programme was the mass production of vegetables tried at *Idukki* district, which will be extended to 1000 panchayaths. The programme aims at a micro level linkage between producer and consumer so that the farmer will get premium price and later could enjoy quality produce made available at regulated price. The entire programme will be organised as a movement and so it will

bring to the market over eight lakh tonnes of vegetables creating a significant impact on availability front, providing great relief to the consumers.

Several massive agricultural development programmes like Rs 1630 crore *Kuttanadu* Development Project, *Idduki* Development Project, *Coconut* Rehabilitation Project etc. are on the final stages of clearance. The effort put in by the development systems for its formulations are really products of very strong political will for rejuvenating farming sector in total. As a part of the effort to revamp the extension system to provide strong support to the transfer of technology exercises using the financial assistance provided by the Central Government, Kerala has started an agricultural training institute. Training has now been identified as a very important input to strengthen the micro level agricultural activities to make it more farmer-friendly and profit oriented. This is a long felt need and if properly organised, may prove to be a very valuable asset.

The crisis facing the farm front at the state level is perhaps more complicated than we usually assume. Our problem becomes more troublesome as we have to market 80 per cent of our produce outside the State. The cash crop dominated agricultural system is more vulnerable to the changes happening in the national and international markets. On several occasions, policies taken at the national level prove to be unfriendly to the interests of the farmers in Kerala. Liberalised import of palm oil, rubber, spice etc. may be very important at the national level due to various policy decisions taken as a part of global and regional trade agreements. But it really kill the growth and prosperity of our farming sector. In this context, the agriculture situation in Kerala demands more vigilance and care than ever before.

The writer is former Director of Agriculture, Government of Kerala and former special consultant to M S Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai. ■■■■



EDUCATION

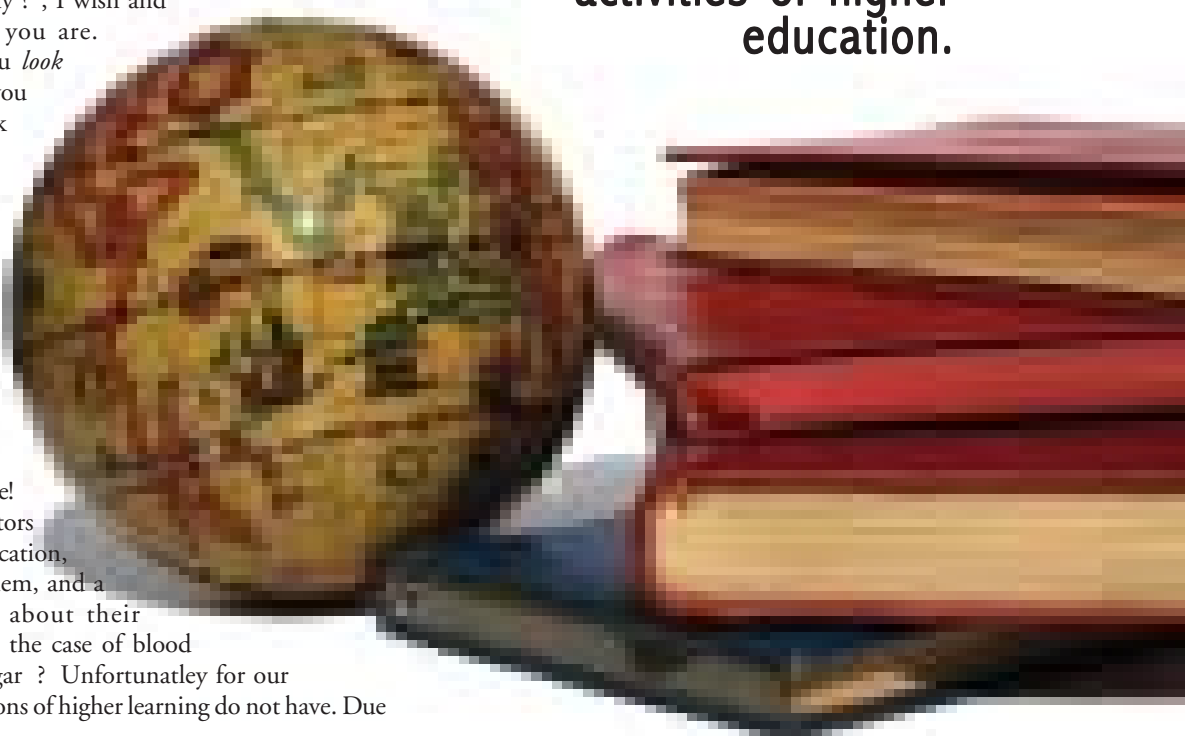
translating Policies into action

Dr. Achuthsankar S. Nair

Quality and Excellence are two key words that have increased their currency in the global age. That crude notions about quality (=good) and excellence (=best among available) still exist in layman's parlance is pardonable. However it is shame that the same is true with many a higher education institution in our country. The problem is that there are not many common-sense approaches to Quality, while scholarly definitions are abound, my attempt here is to turn to common-sense to discuss the topic. I shall expand on the simple notion of quality as *conformance to declared specifications*. Do we have declared specifications for our higher education system ?

Before we discuss the answer to the above question, let us consider a metaphor — the metaphor of health. If I were to ask you, gentle reader, "Are you healthy ?" , I wish and hope you might say you are. Reasons ? Possibly you *look* healthy. It may be that you *feel* healthy. But then, ask a doctor ...he will ask you to first check your blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar... and compare them with acceptable levels before passing any judgement, whatsoever. Meet him an year after, ask the same question and get the same response! Do we have such indicators of quality in higher education, means of measuring them, and a common knowledge about their acceptable levels, as in the case of blood pressure and blood sugar ? Unfortunatley for our country, many institutions of higher learning do not have. Due

The higher education community needs to constantly discuss, debate and evolve a 1000-point scale on the above lines, covering the whole range of activities of higher education.





Instead of deep integration of IT in teaching and learning, many institutions remain at the superficial level of using “Power Point Presentations” which essentially only represent a colorful and convenient replacement of the black board.

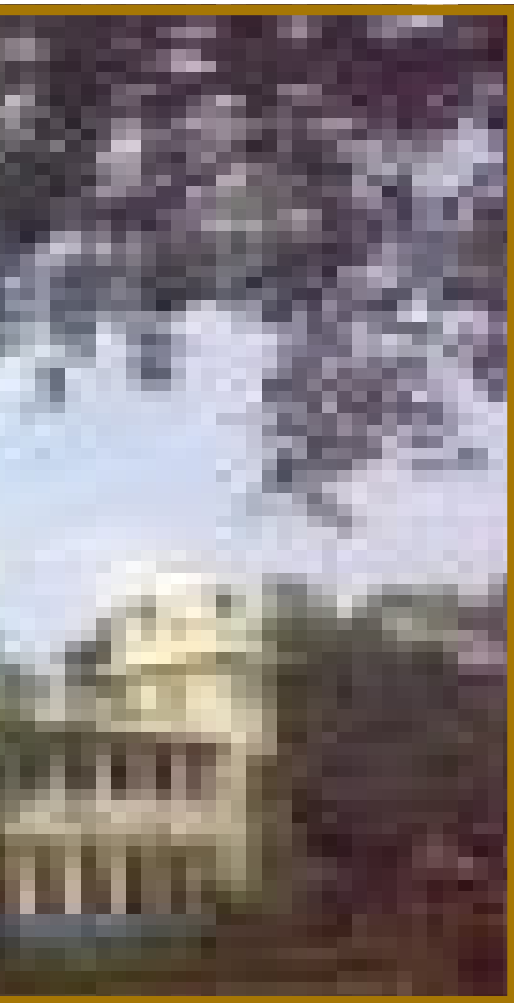
to the welcome awareness about quality, it is quite probable that all institutions today may boast of a *quality policy*. However to translate such policies into action, we need *quality indicators*.

An institution of higher learning can claim attainment of quality when the institution has evolved an exhaustive list of quality indicators; Every stake holder of the institution (students, teachers, administrators, management and parents) is aware of the above; The institution has evolved tools for quantifying and measuring the quality indicators; The institution measures and records the quality indicators at pre-determined regular intervals; The institution monitors the indicators and takes corrective steps based on each and every quality indicator that falls out of acceptable ranges.

The National Assessment and

Accreditation Council (NAAC) has identified the following seven criteria to serve as the basis of its assessment procedures (I would not call them quality indicators yet): Curricular Aspects; Teaching-Learning and Evaluation; Research, Consultancy and Extension; Infrastructure and Learning Resources; Student Support and Progression; Organisation and Management; Healthy Practices.

Under each of the above head, NAAC has evolved *probes* and uses them for assessing institutions of higher education. Due to the statutory status of NAAC, the criteria above have become a sort of blue print for development of the institutions. It shows remarkable success of NAAC in this regard. However, from the macroscopic and often qualitative indicators, our institutions of higher education need to



move ahead to microscopic indicators of quality. If NAAC or other appropriate national/state agencies can propose a 500-point scale or even 1000-point scale, it would become the fine blue print for achieving quality.

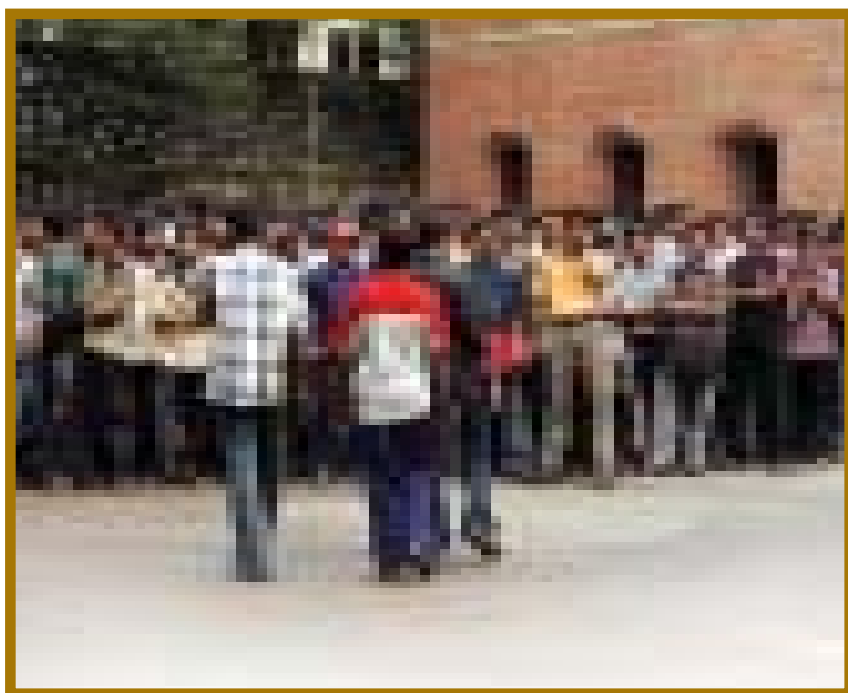
Under extension, we often assess institutions of higher education, say, through number of conferences/seminars organised. We may perhaps assign different scores for international conferences, national conferences, national seminars etc. There are institutions which specialise in conducting seminars as a cottage industry. They might call an event national just because one person from the neighbouring state has participated or international, just because one holidaying foreigner happened was roped in. In a microscopic view, we would not assign a score against number of seminars, but each of them would be scored based on a detailed scale as follows. How strict was the peer-review process? How well in advance and how widely was the event announced? Did the event have participation from at least a few leading national/international centres of learning associated with the theme of the event? Was a proceedings published? Was it published locally or by a reputed publisher? Were any citations of the conference papers observed later?

Another good example is that of use of information technology. We can count number of computers per student, number of hours of computer access available per student, internet connection availability etc. However, unless we prioritise pedagogy-centric use of IT in education, we will be ending up with institutions which merely use computers as a convenient mass media, more fad and distraction than a value addition to teaching and learning.

What would be the microscopic indicators then? Consider teaching of mathematics, for instance. While Mathematics is admired by Mathematicians, every one else seems to be scared. It is simply because the visual aspect of mathematics, its symmetry, its palette of colours, its exquisite beauty and bundle of surprises and even the music of numbers are under arrest, hidden away from the eyes and ears, behind the rigorous symbolism and syntax. Through a handful of softwares such as *Scilab*, it is possible to integrate visualisation into teaching and learning of Mathematics, thereby revolutionising its teaching. Usage of *Rasmol* (a free software to visualise and analyse molecules) to teach Chemistry can likewise add great value. Instead of such deep integration of IT in teaching and learning, many institutions remain at the superficial level of using "Power Point Presentations" which essentially only represent a colourful and convenient replacement of the black board.

The higher education community needs to constantly discuss, debate and evolve a 1000-point scale on the above lines, covering the whole range of activities of higher education. When it is done and popularised by agencies like NAAC or other appropriate national/state agencies, we will be able to talk of real excellence. *Excellence starts to emerge when Quality is achieved and maintained on academically supreme quality indicators.* Importantly, Excellence does not come through declarations (especially self-declaration), or even ISO Quality Certifications. It is to be understood as an automatic national and international peer recognition.

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Ayyappan Theeyattu

Dance Celestial

Dr. M.V. Vishnu Namboodiri

Since ancient times the deity *Sastha* or *Ayyappan* is being adored (Worshiped) in Kerala. It is believed that it was *Parasurama* who brought *Sastha* and *Bhadrakali* for the protection of the land and the worship of the people. '*Keralolpathi*' has also the same view. Hence the presence of numerous temples dedicated to *Sastha* and *Bhadrakali*.

Those places with dense growth of trees considered sacred are the domiciles of deities. Those places where deities like *Naga*, *Sastha*, *Kali*, *Vettakkorumakan*, *Ganapathi* etc are designed as '*Kavus*'. Legend says that *Parasurama* has constructed 108 *Sastha kavus*, 108 *Durga temples*.

Worship Of Ayyappa

Sastha, *Bhoothanathan*, *Bhoothathan* and other names of *Ayyappan* are worshipped in Vedic and non-Vedic lines. '*Ayyan*' is the '*god of hunting*'. We can find references of '*Ayyan*' in many folk songs. *Sastha* has got a place among the '*Saptadevas*' worshipped in the *Thanthric system*. There are varieties of worship connected with the rituals and performance of *Ayyappan*. The '*Sasthampattu*' of *Kallatta Kurups* and *Theyyampadi Nambiars* are the ritualistic performance for the propitiation of *Sastha*. The *Ayyappan pattu* and *Ayyappan Vilakku* performed by the devotees are also form of the worship of '*Ayyappa*'. *Ayyappan Theeyattu* is an entirely different form of ritualistic performance. It is performed by *Theeyati Nambiars*. Normally it is prevalent in Malabar area. But these performing forms have wider range.

Basic Concepts

The deity meant for *Ayyappan Theeyattu* is, *Sastha*, the son of *Hari* and *Hara*. The main item of *Kalampattu/Thottampattu* and the acting away of the *story* of the origin and bravado of *Ayyappan* are the basis of this ritualistic

performance. From the 'Thottam', we get the information that *Sastha*, the deity who is in the acme of knowledge in Heaven came down to the earth to be the god of *Malanadu* under the instruction of *Siva*. Together with *Sastha*, it is said that deities like *Andimahakalan*, *Kokkot Bhrandan*, *Neelan*, *Neelakattari*, *Arayilamme*, *Bhadrakali*, *Maladevatas* and twelve thousand *Bhootas* also came here.

Ayyappan is adored as a hunting god in the *Theeyattu Pattu*. Songs in which He is designated as the General of *Pandi Raja* is also sung in *Theeyattu*. In several places *Ayyappan* is called *Ayyan*, which is a word older than the other one.

Theeyattu Performance

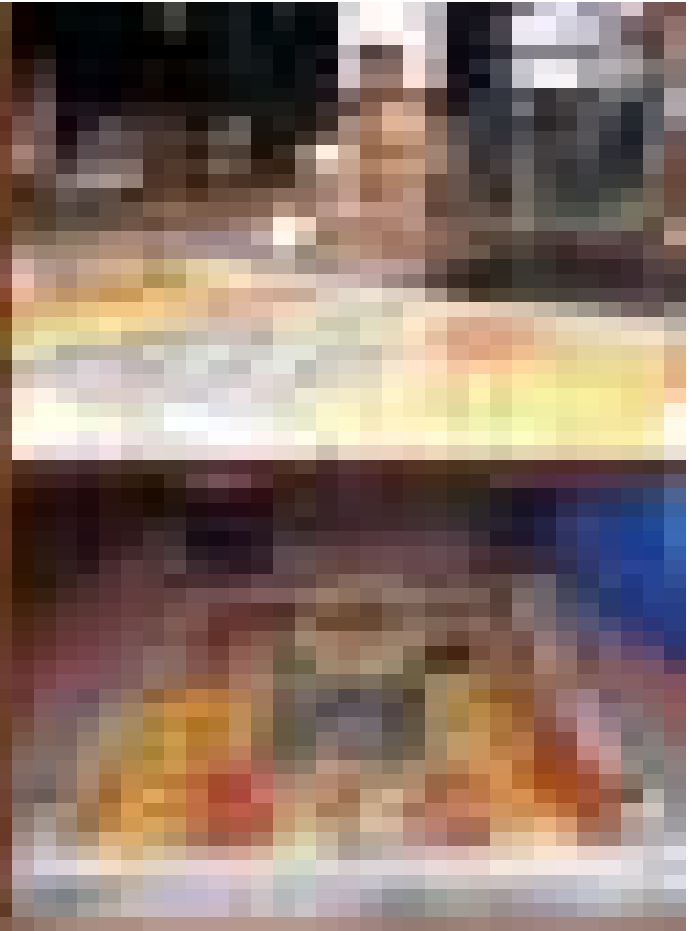
In *Theeyattu*, a lot of separate performance like decoration of *Pandal*, *Uchapattu*, *Kalamezhuthu*, *Sandhyakkottu*, *Ezhunnallippu*, *Kalampooja*, *Kalampattu*, *Kalathilattam*, *Theeyattu* and *Thiriyuzhichil*. A few differences in the order are the differences in the regard varieties of *Ayyappan Theeyattu*.

In *Ayyappan Kavus* there are permanent places in front of the 'Sreekovil' for *Theeyattu*. Otherwise temporary sheds are to be made for drawing the *kalam* and enacting the *Theeyattu*. The place should also be cleaned by cow dung. Ceiling of the *Pandal* is decorated before *Poojas*. After performing *pooja* in favour of *Sastha* and *Ganapathi* the *Theeyadi Nambiar* begins to sing the song with the accompaniment of instruments like *Para* and *Kuzhithalam*. It is called *Uchappattu*. For *Theeyattu*, preparation of *Kalam* is very important. After this function drawing of *Roopakkalam* is begun. For these five colours are used – red, black, yellow, white and green. Different figures of *Sastha* are illustrated. After preparing the *Kalam*, *pooja* will be conducted by the *Brahmin*. After that *Theeyati Nambiar*s themselves sing the *Kalampattu* sitting beside the *Kalam*. All these songs are extolling the life and bravado of *Ayyappa*. Similarly songs praising the hunting's of *Ayyappa* are also sung.

Theeyattu (Way Of Ayyappan Koothu)

In certain areas *Ayyappan Theeyattu* is called *Ayyappan Koothu*. The name is given, taking into consideration the dominance of the acting part of it. *Theeyati Nambiar*s decorates himself sitting in front of the sanctum. In *Ayyappan Theeyattu*, the face will not be decorated. A costume (most often red) similar to *Kathakali* is put on. A small crown is called 'pathiyam' is also worn. There will be a pleated white dress and additional cloths bound round the waist. While dressing and wearing the jewels, the *Nambiar*s sing songs in praise of *Ayyappan*.

Then he turns face to face to the sanctum and begins his acting. This is really *Ayyappankoothu*. The dress of *Ayyappankoothu* is representative and symbolic of *Nandikeswara* dialogue. It is in the model of a story telling



by *Nandikeswara* to *Ayyappa*, the story of *Ayyappa*.
kalathilattam

An important rite associated with *Ayyappan Theeyattu* is *Kalathilattam*. *Theeyati Nambiar*s comes to the *Kalam* in a dress suitable to the *Komaram*. Wearing white cloth, tying red cloth around his waist covering his body and hand with Sandal paste, putting as the garland that he get from the *Sanctum*, and getting the sword, he moves about as *Komaram*. It is a type of sword dance. During his dance he completely destroys the *Kalam*. This is perhaps the most interesting, dramatic, and spectacular scene in the *Theeyattu*. When the *Komaram* dances in the *Kalam*, other *Theeyati Nambiar*s sing songs.

During *Kalathilattam*, *Komaram* speaks in an oracular manner. These words are believed to be the words of God; people present their sorrows and desires in front of *Komaram*; *Komaram* proclaim solutions for their problems. The end of the scene is the return of the sword to the sanctum.

Ayyappan Theeyattu is a performing ritual which has not yet lost its originality. A lot of people gather together in the worship of this village god. Some believe that the performance will keep away the worries, troubles and diseases prevalent in the community. In the perspective of performing theory of *Ayyappan Theeyattu*, undoubtedly it is an excellent art form of supreme quality. ■■■■



Organic Aquaculture Ecofriendly

Dr K.S.Purushan

It is well-known that fish food plays an indispensable role in the maintenance of good health. As such, there is growing awareness today that fish for consumption should be from hygienic and unpolluted sources possessing good quality whether it is captured from nature's bounties or else raised in conducive habitats. Concerned with the deteriorating trend of fish food quality, the UNO and the FAO have been time and again emphasising the need to maintain quality standards for seafood in the interest of public health. The market forces, whether it is domestic or export-oriented, are also acting quite unfriendly on the genuine issues and problems raised by the stakeholders. Furthermore, certification on the source of production of the items is also insisted upon. In short, all the restrictions cunningly imposed for safeguarding selfish motives are to be fully observed while generating fish from the

aquatic sources. In such context, switching over to organic aquaculture has become expedient to make use of the resources on the one hand and to take advantage of the opportunities on the other.

It is a blessing that even in this era of industrialisation and related hazards, the fishery resources tapped from the sea around India is pollution free and is of good quality. However, such a guarantee cannot be ensured in the case of fish yielded from inland water sources. Gradually increasing trend of aquatic impairment

quite often raises doubts whether it is possible to realise uncontaminated edible faunal groups from land-locked aquatic habitats. Therefore, it is imperative to explore the immense prospects of organic farming in such ecosystems.

Organic Aquaculture

The cardinal aspect behind organic aquaculture is to generate edible aquatic faunal groups in tune with environment friendliness. On account of health consciousness, there is an unending demand for seafood items realised from

It is a **blessing** that even in this era of industrialisation and related hazards, the **fishery resources** tapped from the sea around India is **pollution free** and is of good quality.

aquatic media devoid of disease producing microbes, organic or inorganic pollutants and pesticide residues. At present, innovative techniques introducing desirable probiotics to the aquatic environment are also employed to attain sustainable production. Such techniques are not only capable of mitigating pollution impacts, but maintain suitable and conducive environmental factors in the medium. In addition, novel techniques to instantaneously neutralise the metabolites as and when released are also in vogue ensuring healthy status of the ecosystem.

Kerala scenario

As far as Kerala farming scenario is concerned, scientific methods can be well adapted in the aquaculture of shrimps and fishes in tune with environmental harmony. The shining example in this regard is the successful practice of traditional paddy-cum-shrimp filtration going on for ages. The profusely available brackish water environment coupled with a number of gifted and potential species such as *Penaeus monodon*, *P. indicus*, *Mugil cephalus*, *Liza parsia*, *L. macrolepis*, *Chanos chanos* and *Etroplus suratensis* speak well for undertaking organic farming. If good management practices are inducted, optimum yield will be attained sustainably within the stipulated time frame during season. The global seafood production scenario is also encouraging such kind of transformations of fertile ecosystems as aquatic edible crop deriving units for satisfying the human requirements and combating malnutrition.

Food Security

Similarly, by adopting the aforesaid techniques, the freshwater habitats can also be kindled and enlivened suitably. Priority may be given to the large-scale farming of giant freshwater prawn *Macrobrachium rosenbergii* for export. Considering the potential and market demand, Indian major fish such as Catla, Rohu and Mrigal; exotic ones such as grass, silver and common carps can also be farmed aimed at serving food security.

Having endowed with very rich natural resources, human potential and



technological competence, it is still not possible to enhance fish production vis-à-vis our capacities. Analysis of the factors for the slow pace of growth definitely will point towards the weakness of extension programmes. On account of the lack of co-coordinated activities, the break through and innovative techniques developed in the laboratories are not properly disseminated to the end users, who are traditionally engaged in the avocation of aquatic crop generation from the wild sources. Thus, it is advisable that awareness campaigns and transfer of technology need be taken up extensively amidst farmers, in order to achieve commendable success in fish production.

Strategic approach

Wise use of the resources with committed approach is the present need. The threat to aquatic bio-security confronting the globe all around can also be partially overcome by producing potential aquatic varieties irrespective of whether it commands domestic or export market. However, it is significant that the

technology should be sound, ecofriendly and socially acceptable with a view to making it economically viable. An appropriate strategy with the consensus, whole-hearted co-operation and involvement of all

the stakeholders is to be evolved towards achieving the cherished objective. Thus, the situation compels to collectively embark on exploring all chances to produce enough food even utilizing the unexploited habitats. Ample precautions and adequate care should be taken to overcome the ill-effects of emerging clauses and guidelines of World Trade Organisation. Such a pragmatic decision is unavoidable not only to save the farming community, but to ensure national progress also.

Paradigm Shift

To sum up, it is a must to take up renewable source of bio-energy producing projects and programmes with long-term perspectives. The endeavor should be on conserving ecosystem and environment at no time leading to degradation of factors associated with normal condition of air, water and land. Commitment to demonstrate such an attitude towards equilibrium maintenance would alone help to derive healthy fish food perpetually from the undisturbed natural habitats.

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Wings of Fancy Oscillating

T.P. Narayanankutty

Thenmala is endowed with serenity studded with great scenic beauty. It has the rare distinction of having the first planned ecotourism destination in India. The areas with luxuriant vegetations with its rich biodiversity lure the heart of every nature lover. Different varieties of butterflies in the area add beauty to this idyllic location.

The unscientific management of natural resources had resulted in the fast disappearance of our flora and fauna. Due to the wanton destruction of flora and fauna, the population of this beautiful winged insect has started disappearing with a sign of no return. It is appropriate and just to create facility to showcase to our children, this treasure trove of nature by making their population to thrive. Institution of butterfly gardens helps to maximise butterfly diversity and abundance, conserving species that might otherwise become rare or even disappear from this globe. This is by creating host plants and habitat and so as to breed different varieties of butterfly naturally. Artificial environment is created by specific creation of plants, providing humidity etc.

Thenmala Ecotourism Promotion Society (TEPS) in association with the Kerala Forest Research Institute (KFRI) has set up a butterfly safari at Thenmala. The area has been landscaped so as to create different butterfly habitats like open areas, bushes, streams, waterfalls etc. To sustain various stages of

butterfly, appropriate larval and adult host plants have been introduced in specific areas based on preferences by various types of butterflies. A selection of host plants for the introduction in the garden is based on the butterfly fauna present in this region. A preliminary survey has been carried out to gather information on the local fauna. Based on the data already available on the host plant preferences of various butterflies, a list of larval and adult host plants of local butterfly was prepared and they were raised in the nursery. A variety of flowering and ornamental plants such as Begonia, Cuphea, Cycas, Rose, Tabernaemontana, Vincarosea, Zinnia etc. has been introduced in the garden in addition to several herbs and shrubs like Lantana, Crotalaria and Clerodendron and milk weeds.

Creation of butterfly habitats through landscaping and introduction of suitable host plants to sustain different species of butterflies are the major activities undertaken here. By regulating humidity and temperature, it is possible to manipulate local population.

The role of butterfly garden for the conservation of butterflies and is well promoted for the purpose of environmental education. Butterfly gardens and butterfly houses are becoming popular in many countries such as Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, UK, Canada etc. The garden established in about two ha area is located within the TEPS (Thenmala Ecotourism Promotion Society) project area. The area identified for the garden is situated along a slope, bordered by a stream and is suitable for developing various terrestrial and aquatic themes. The Butterfly safari has been set up in three acres.

For guiding visitors to various themes in the park, a nature trail paved with laterite stone has been lay down leading from the interpretation centre. The nature trail is about 500 metre long paths traversing various butterfly habitats such as openings, bushes, lianas, hedges, waterfalls, streams, ponds, and rock garden.

The information centre enjoys full-fledged facility where the visitors can be briefed on environmental and ecological

topics. There are sales counter where pamphlets highlighting various themes present in the garden, souvenirs, curios, plastic models, charts, books, stickers, posters, paintings, animal/plant study and collection kits

etc. are available for sale. Sale proceeds from such items and plants produced in the garden will bring good revenue to make the park self-supporting.

A cascade and stream with ponds and bridges have been artificially built here to create an ambiance of natural eco system and provide sufficient humidity for the butterfly population. Common Mime, Common Rose, Crimson Rose, Lime Butterfly, Blue Mormon, Southern Birdwing, Glassy Blue Tiger, Dark Blue Tiger, Emigrants and Grass Yellows are some butterflies that can be easily sustained in the butterfly garden.

By establishing butterfly gardens, it is possible to gain insight into the life history, behaviour and role of butterflies in sustaining natural ecosystems. The butterfly safari at Thenmala provides ample opportunity to the visiting student community to learn and understand the butterflies and their role in natural ecosystem. This conveys the message how the disturbance caused to a small creature affect the stability of the delicate ecological web of our own earth.

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FLORICULTURE

Fascinating Dove in 3D

Suresh Muthukulam

A white dove rising with wings half spread, as in the very act of taking flight – that too inside a flower – is the real ‘Dove Orchid’. Scientifically named *Peristeria elata*. Peristeria is a genus belonging to the family Orchidaceae. The genus name is from the Greek word ‘peristerion’ means ‘from dove’. Interesting to note that is the fact, this is the flower that fascinated the great Malayalam poet Kumaran Asan. He wrote a poem named ‘kapothapushpam;’ means dove.

Dove orchid, which originates from Panama is very much suited for our home gardens too. It grows as a terrestrial in loamy soil. When grown in pots, it needs a mix that will drain freely. Coarse-grained sand, charcoal pieces and broken tile pieces are the ingredients of the mix. The plant which loves warm growing conditions prefers 30 to 50 per cent light and also tolerates drought. The plant which grows from the pseudobulb at the bottom can have a flower stem five or six feet high with numerous globes white fragrant flowers. The long arching leaf is about 15 cm wide at the middle and tapering at each end. Flower buds usually open from the base of the spike. Even if it lasts for only three to four days, the white flowers with a strong perfume scented fragrance and the central column resembling a dove is really a unique visual in every garden. Dove orchid, which is also called the ‘Holy Spirit Plant’, is the national flower of Panama. ■■■■



BIRDSANCTUARY

Turkish no passport

Dr D. Shine Kumar



Welvetty colours on the waist; feathers spread like a fan, reddish comb and wattles; world named this Mexican beauty as Turkeys.

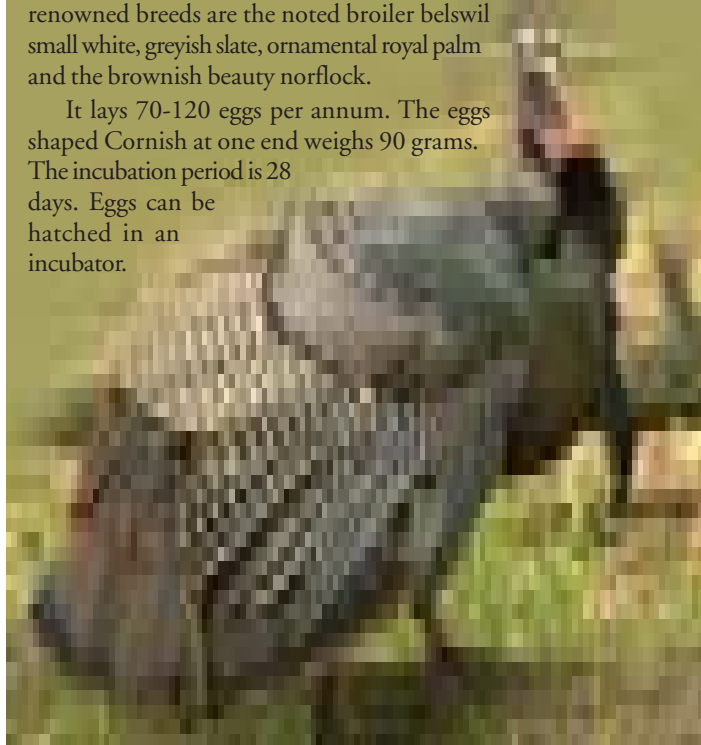
It is a preferred delicacy world over. Turkeys are forgotten throughout the year except from the festival occasions like Christmas and Ramzan.

It was the Mexicans who domesticated turkeys. Turkeys had nothing to claim a Turkish except for its resemblances to the helmet of the Turkish soldiers.

They are most suited to the farmlands of Kerala. Insects, green grass, rotten vegetables, moth eaten food grains are feed for turkeys. With its high feed conversion ratio, they grow into maturity in five months. They gain a weight of eight to ten kg for the cock and five to seven kg for hen at the age of six months. Each turkey requires an area of 200 sq feet and a cage protected with weld mesh.

There are two commercial breeds prevalent all over the world – broad breasted large white and bronze. But the renowned breeds are the noted broiler belswil small white, greyish slate, ornamental royal palm and the brownish beauty norflock.

It lays 70-120 eggs per annum. The egg shaped Cornish at one end weighs 90 grams. The incubation period is 28 days. Eggs can be hatched in an incubator.



HORTICULTURE



Dr T.E. George

Cheera (amaranth) is a popular leaf vegetable in Kerala. It is available in a variety of colours from bright green to dark red. Apart from growing in kitchen gardens, it is widely cultivated as a fringe crop, intercrop and pure crop in the state. It fits well in many crop rotation schemes because of its short duration and extremely high production potential. There are four species of amaranth used as leaf vegetables, namely *Amaranthus tricolor*, *A. blitum*, *A. tristis* and *A. dubius*. The leaves of these species are of considerable nutritional value, being high in vitamins A and C and dietary minerals, calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, zinc, copper and manganese. The fresh tender leaves and stem of cheera are delicious when cooked and are used mainly as steamed vegetable, stir fry and in soups and stews. The seeds of species like *Amaranthus caudatus*, *A. hypochondriachus* and *A. cruentus*, rich in protein and essential amino acids are used as a cereal grain.

Amaranth varieties exhibit high levels of variability with respect to colour, size and shape of leaves, growth pattern and floral characteristics. Kerala Agricultural University has developed four high yielding cheera varieties namely Arun, Mohini, Renusree and Krishnasree suited for cultivation in the state. While variety Arun is having red stem and dark red leaves, Mohini has got green stem and bright green leaves. Krishnasree is characterised by red stem and coppery red leaves and Renusree has got red

Cheera can be grown throughout the year in Kerala. Well-drained fertile loamy soils are ideal for its cultivation.

Cheera Nutrient Colourful

stem and green leaves. A local variety Kannara Local with red stem and red leaves and TNAU varieties Co-1, Co-2 and Co-3 all with green stem and green leaves are also recommended for growing in the state.

Cheera can be grown throughout the year in Kerala. Well-drained fertile loamy soils are ideal for its cultivation. Though it can be grown as a direct sown crop, raising it as a transplanted crop is more rewarding. The seeds are first sown in nursery beds and seedlings are transplanted to the main field when they are 20 to 30 days old. The seed rate varies from 1.5 to two kg/ha. and the spacing recommended is 30 x 20 cm. Amaranth responds well to organic manures as well as fertilizers. The fertilizer recommendation for this crop is 100 kg nitrogen, 50 kg phosphorus and 50 kg potash per hectare, apart from 50 tonnes of farmyard manure. Full quantity of farmyard manure, half dose of nitrogen and full doses of phosphorus and potash have to be applied as basal dose. Remaining half dose of nitrogen is to be applied as top dressing at regular intervals. The crop is to be irrigated at three to four days interval during dry periods. Amaranth is a quick growing crop and the first harvest can be done within three to four weeks after planting. Young shoots of 15–25 cm length bearing leaves are cut, washed and tied in bundles. Subsequent harvests can be done at an interval of 7 - 10 days. *Cheera* leaves are highly perishable in nature and cannot be stored

for long. After each harvest, top dressing, raking or earthing up, irrigation and foliar spray with one percent urea are to be undertaken in order to stimulate subsequent growth.

Early bolting or premature flowering is a constraint in amaranth cultivation. As poor soil conditions and closer spacing mainly lead to this phenomenon, it can be controlled to a great extent by providing adequate plant spacing and adopting scientific soil management strategies. No serious pests and diseases are noticed in this crop except leaf webbers which can be controlled by organic pesticides and leaf spot which can be kept under check by maintaining field hygiene, use of resistant green varieties and avoiding overhead irrigation.

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

Teatime

Jolly

Indu Narayan

MURUKKU

INGREDIENT

Two cups rice
¼ cup urad dal
One table spoon sesame seeds
A pinch of asafoetida
A pinch of sod a-bi-carb
Oil to fry
Salt to taste

Method

Soak the rice for two hours. Drain and pound it to a fine powder. Roast urad dal and powder. Mix both the flour and dal powder. Add oil sesame seeds, asafoetida, salt and soda-bi-carb. Add oil and roll into a soft dough through a murukku mould and deep fry in oil till crisp.

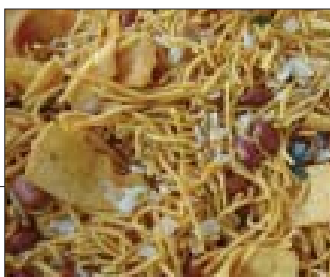


MIXTURE

Two cups gram flour
100 gms flaked rice
100 gms peanut
100 gms roasted channa dal
100 gms maida
A pinch of asafetida
Two tea spoon chilli powder
A few curry leaves
Oil as required

Method

Mix gram flour with a little water to make a soft dough. Add salt to taste and mix well. Make sev by pressing portions of this dough through a sev mould and deep fry each batch. Drain and serve. Sieve refined flour and make into soft dough with water. Add salt to taste. Roll out into thin large circles. Cut into small triangles and deep fry in batches. Fry peanuts and flaked rice separately. Add to the sev and mix. Add the fried triangles and roasted channadal. In little oil, fry asafetida, chilli powder and curry leaves and pour over the mixture. Toss well, check salt. Store in an airtight tin.



OMA PODI

Two cups of gram flour
One table spoon rice flour
One table spoon omum
A pinch of asafoetida
¼ tea spoon turmeric powder
Oil to fry
Salt to taste

Method

Sieve and mix gram flour and rice flour. Grind omum seeds and asafoetida. Add it to the flour with turmeric and salt. Make into soft dough with water. Pass through a mould and deep fry in hot oil. Drain and store in an airtight jar.

UZHUNNUVADAI

Two cups urad dal
Four green chopped chillies
A pinch of soda-bi-carb
One tea spoon ginger chopped
Four chopped onions
A few chopped curry leaves
Oil to fry
Salt to taste

Method

Soak the urad dal in water for two hours. Clean and grind to a smooth dry paste. Add chopped ingredients, salt, soda-bi-carbonate and two table spoon of hot water. Mix thoroughly and make small lemon sized balls. Flatten and make a hole in the centre of each piece. Only a few should be made at a time. Deep fry in batches till golden brown. Drain and serve with coconut chutney.



BOOKREVIEW

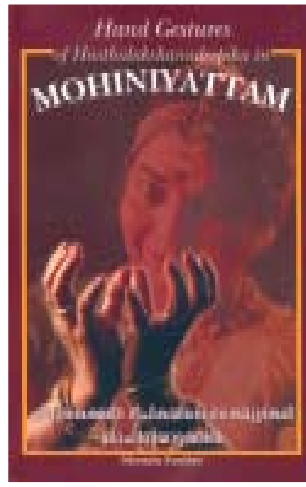
Gestures Unveiling

Vijayakumar Menon

Kerala, with its great heritage of dance performed by women artists, has contributed a number of talented people. Though the artistic acumen of the dancers are praised, deep study about the dance forms are very few. Commentaries and explanatory details have come out but the intricate language of gestures has not been popularised among the art lovers and connoisseurs. *Natanakairali* established by Venu G and Nirmala Panikkar has published a number of books on Koodiyattam, Mohiniyattam, Nangiarkoothu and many other lesser known art forms of Kerala. Venu G, who did his experiments with notating the mudras of Kathakali decades ago was actually introducing another language of communication to study the art form that was scientific and technical as well as aesthetic.

The instructions handed over from generation to generation through oral tradition could get eroded, polluted or even vanished in course of time. Preserving the identity of each dance form is a necessity not only for its own sustenance but also for its evolution and growth. When Nirmala Panikkar, the author of the book, using the notation patterns put forward by Venu G, her life and art partner, to elucidate the intricate form of Mohiniyattam, she is actually communicating the details of the dance form in one more language, namely graphic language.

The art forms of Kerala are very much related to the hand gestures described in the text *Hashtalakshanadeepika* originated in Kerala. The 24 basic *mudras* mentioned in this text are used with all their possible permutations and combinations. But for



Hand Gestures of
Hashtalakshanadeepika in
Mohiniyattam

Nirmala Panikkar

Natanakairali, Irinjalakuda - 680121

Rs: 750/-

a person who wants to study *Mohiniyattam* not only as a dancer but also as an enthusiast, the 'graphic translation' of the gestures in a scientific notation language by the author is a systematic transmission. The use of dance notations has a history of a few centuries and in India, the renowned scholar Kapila Vatsyayan has used it in the Indian context in the modern age. Venu G's venture to use the notation language appeared in the 1960s.

Nirmala Panikkar's book 'Hand Gestures of Hashtalakshanadeepika in Mohiniyattam' is a pioneer work in the study of Mohiniyattam. This dance has an identity of its own. The three-dimensional body language and the hand gestures in space and time are 'translated'

into two-dimensional pictorial language of lines. The very process and the direction of showing a gesture/combined gestures is shown in two visual languages and in two written languages in the book. Photograph of the dancer showing the gesture and the graphic translation of the same in lines indicating the course of space-time factor of the movement of the hands is one, while description of the same in Malayalam and English along with the original lines from the text *Hashtalakshanadeepika* is the other. This quadrilingual explanatory treatise on Mohiniyattam with the emphasis on the text *Hashtalakshanadeepika* is more than a conventional academic text.

The hand gestures are notated in lines showing all the 'sides' of the hands. The frontal view, the vertically upward and downward positions, the inward view with the exterior portion of the palm and the profile of the hands are shown with scientific precision. This system of language of notation is universal in nature because of its abstract graphic quality. The use of one hand (*asamyutha hasthas*) and both the hands (*samyutha hasthas*) are the alphabets of gesture, the details of which are rendered in graphic form so meticulously that the readers get a clear idea of the total movement of hands to complete a 'sentence' in the body language. The communicative and sensitive *abhinaya* (acting/performance) of Mohiniyattam has been a subject of discourse on the basis of the subtle differences of styles of various schools. But the basic language of the dance is undisputed. Hence this book by Nirmala Panikkar on Mohiniyattam becomes a landmark in the study of this unique dance form.

■ The writer is an art historian

FOCUS

Photo: N.V Joy, I & PRD



V.S Achuthanandan, Chief Minister, participating in the sports events organised for the members of the Legislative Assembly in connection with the golden jubilee celebrations of the Kerala Legislative Assembly. K.Radhakrishnan, Speaker, is also seen.





Encouraging two years

E.M. Najeeb

The Tourism Industry in Kerala is fortunate that it has always been receiving good attention from the various Governments that have come to power. All have recognised the importance of this industry as an economic driver. We realised that the nature's bounty, the accessibility, the enlightened society, the culture, heritage and many more, could be favorable components to build up an excellent tourism industry in Kerala. Favourable policies and decisions were taken by the authorities from time to time to promote tourism in Kerala, which became the base for the present day tourism in the State. We have to acknowledge the Ministers, officials and private sector players who have played key

roles in moulding tourism in Kerala during the last three decades.

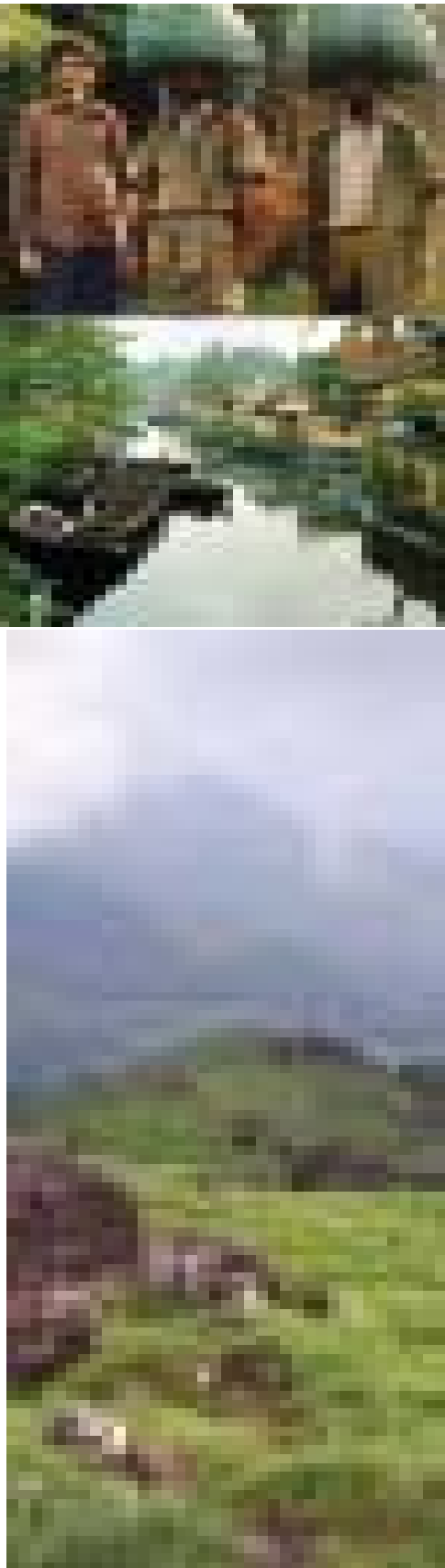
Presently the Left Democratic Front also follows a pro tourism approach, which is nurturing the industry in an admirable manner. The last two years of the ministry has shown that the Government prefers to continue the very supportive policies for tourism, which has been already in place. Also the Government conveys that Tourism industry should be handled professionally above all other considerations including political. To the satisfaction of the private sector industry the Government has been interfacing and sharing thoughts with them and always been there with a helping and supportive hand.

Kerala Tourism has put an effort to nurture the unique and widely emulated

model of public and private sector partnership in Tourism. The Private sector has been consulted and interfaced with for major policymakings and decisions. The promotional measures were strong on the thrust areas already identified, to derive best results.

The continuity in promoting the already identified thrust areas like Backwater Tourism, Ayurveda, Eco-Tourism, Medical Value Travel Tourism and so on, is considered admirable. New products are also identified and given thrust for promotion.

We should recognise the initiatives by the Government to stretch the tourist season by various measures, including promoting and marketing Kerala in selected source markets that would ensure movements even during low seasons. The



Monsoon Tourism promotions have already had its effect in the markets and the results are expected to be seen in the near future.

A very professional policy approach by the Government towards quality enhancement in Tourism is praiseworthy. Kerala has already made it clear that it will not follow the path of irresponsible Tourism development for quick gains. Kerala believes that our land belongs to the future generations. We are only the custodians. Kerala Tourism has declared its commitment to Sustainable Tourism model and has stressed its affinity for Qualitative Tourism. Kerala believes not in mere numbers of visitors, but in the quality derived out of the tourism activities.

The initiatives of the Government in conducting an International "Responsible Tourism" Conference in Kerala recently was a major step towards establishing a responsible tourism mind set in the industry in Kerala.

Kerala Travel Mart the unique Travel Mart conducted every two years to showcase the Tourism products and services in Kerala is taking place in September 2008. The Mart is conducted in partnership between the private sector tourism industry and the Government. KTM is showing encouraging growth by each event. Government is found in all out support to such meaningful efforts that would promote Kerala to the forefront as a destination.

A few days ago the Tourism Minister announced the Government's new initiatives to bring in travel writers and opinion makers from important source markets to visit Kerala and to set up a committee for Media relations, which is an excellent measure for effective promotion. The Government also has been receptive to international products like the 'Volvo Ocean Race' being hosted in Kochi in December.

At the same time Tourism industry in Kerala suggests that the Government should look at the re-launching of the Kerala Tourism brand. The brand perception should be strengthened by qualitative improvement in infrastructure development and facilities build up. Roads, Waste Management, Anti-

pollution, Safety and Security, environment conservation and such primary requirements have to be given priority.

For infrastructure development in tourism we need investments. An investment campaign has to be launched to attract investments.

The industry needs to be consulted with, for inputs in Tourism promotion fund utilisation. International and domestic Road shows participation should also be decided in consultation with the private sector industry. This would ensure maximum participation.

We need to reconstitute and activate the Kerala Tourism Advisory Board to institutionalize the Private-Public sector partnership in Tourism. Expert committees should be established to handle

We need to reconstitute and activate the Kerala Tourism Advisory Board to institutionalise the Private-Public sector partnership in Tourism.

Infrastructure development, Marketing and Promotion, Human Resource Development and Product Development for Tourism.

The Private Sector Tourism industry is in great appreciation of the initiatives of the Government in making Kerala an experiential destination. The officials in the field of Tourism deserve great appreciation in managing Tourism in the State in an enviable manner. ■■■■

The writer is President, Confederation of Tourism Industry in Kerala