

KERALA CALLING

JUNE 01, 2023_VOL_43_No_8



YET ANOTHER
REAL STORY
TO TELL

KERALA HAS ALREADY CARVED A NICHE IN IMPARTING WORLD CLASS EDUCATION



SMILES

TELL IT ALL

Students overjoyed with the education and facilities of their school. Scene from GHSS for Girls, Cottonhill, Thiruvananthapuram.

EDITORIAL



INSTILLING A NEW SPIRIT AND IGNITING INQUISITIVENESS

The Government has made remarkable strides in the field of education. The state has prioritised infrastructure development, girls' education, academic excellence, and the empowerment of marginalized groups.

Kerala has established a strong network of public schools, ensuring access to education for almost all children. The state has achieved gender parity in school enrollment, with girls often outperforming boys academically. Efforts have been made to provide sanitation facilities, eradicate discrimination, and minimise the gender divide in learning spaces.

The government has implemented various initiatives to address the educational progress of marginalised groups. This includes setting up hostels for tribal students, providing bridge courses for children unable to gain admission to schools, and arranging special travel arrangements for students from remote areas. Programs like 'Enke Enka Koottam' and Padippurassi have been implemented to promote education among tribal communities, leading to positive outcomes in enrolment and literacy rates.

Kerala has also prioritised eco-friendly schools and a progressive learning environment. Schools are being transformed to incorporate biodiversity gardens, kitchen gardens, and eco-friendly practices. The focus on environmental education aims to instil values of nature conservation and agricultural traditions in students.

When comparing the Kerala model with the national education system, Kerala has already achieved significant milestones in ensuring access to education and quality. The state's proactive approach, supported by land reforms and education acts, has helped address infrastructure development and teacher recruitment.

In this education special issue of *Kerala Calling*, we explore the various facets of Kerala's educational journey, showcasing the state's achievements, ongoing initiatives, and future aspirations. From infrastructure development and technological integration to vocational training and inclusive practices, Kerala's commitment to providing quality education for all serves as an inspiration for the nation.

T.V. SUBHASH IAS
EDITOR

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COVER PIC

GVHSS for Girls, Nadakkavu

PHOTO: **Sreejesh K.V.**



My dear children,

Our public schools eagerly await your arrival, ready to open the doors to a vast world of knowledge. May each of you begin your educational journey with immense joy and excitement. You are the future of our country, and schools are here to shape you into the promise of tomorrow. Learning should be as enjoyable as savouring a delicious treat, with books, games, songs, and stories to accompany you.

Education is a wonderful experience that opens up new vistas of knowledge and human tenderness. It is important that everyone grows up to love and help others. Your teachers and the government are working together to make ensure for that.

Grow with friends, like petals of a flower. Keep your classmates close to your heart by going beyond the stereotypes that divide people. Love and respect your teachers and parents. Move forward by asking questions and finding answers. Let Kerala shine through you. May your school entry be a celebration.

Warm greetings to all.

Yours own

Pinarayi Vijayan

Chief Minister

Welfare fund for workers under Employment Guarantee Schemes

Another Kerala Model



M.B. RAJESH

Minister for Local Self Governments,
Rural Development and Excise

Kerala has become the first state in the country to launch a welfare fund for workers registered under the employment guarantee programme. The state has always led the way in ensuring the welfare of its workforce by rolling out many such innovative projects. The new welfare fund serves as a shining example of this impeccable track record.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee came into effect with the enactment of an act passed by the Parliament of India in 2005. In fact, the first UPA government was forced to bring about this act under the pressure exerted by the left parties for a scheme to ensure employment and income to the vast majority of people in the country, who are poor. The scheme was envisioned to provide 100 workdays in a year to any family willing to do unskilled labour for a living and thus improve their lives.

Enacted as a right-based law that guaranteed as many as 10 Constitutional Rights of the workers, the scheme was first implemented in 2006 in 200 districts including Palakkad. It was in this backdrop that Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated the Labour Welfare Fund for workers under the employment guarantee scheme at Palakkad on May 15, 2023.

As many as 26.81 crore workers from 15.03 crore families in the country have been registered under the Employment Guarantee Scheme. However, the number of active workers families are 9.55 crores and workers are about 14.29 crores. Out of these, only around 8.76 crore from 6.1 crore families received employment the previous year.

And that too they got an average of 47 workdays only. Only some 36.01 lakh families (5.8%) could receive the full quota of 100 work days.

The Central Government has been constantly making efforts to weaken this scheme and thus has brought down gradually the allocation of funds towards its implementation. The shortening of work days and setting of new guidelines etc have affected the smooth progress of the project.

Having clearly understood the concerns of its workforce, the state government has come up with steps to ensure timely employment and wages. In fact, the first Pinarayi government itself had thought about the implementation of such a welfare fund and promised steps in this regard in its manifesto for the 2021 elections. Accordingly, the "Kerala Employment Guaranteed Workers Welfare Fund Act" was brought about on November 14, 2021, which came into effect the next day.

As per the scheme, the government will pay an amount equalling the monthly instalment of Rs.50 paid by the worker to the fund. The amount thus paid is spent on disbursing the pension of workers and other welfare schemes.

Any worker, who is aged between 18 and 55 years and who has registered with the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme or the Ayyankali Urban Employment Guarantee Scheme can become a member of the welfare fund. They should have engaged in unskilled labour at least 20 days a year in the year of applying or the two years that preceded.

For those joining the welfare fund are guaranteed the benefits under the Employment Guarantee Workers Welfare Fund Act as listed below;

- 1) Pension for workers who have completed 60 years of age and paid instalments without a break up to 60 years
- 2) Family pension in case of the death of those who paid the monthly instalments for a period of not less than 10 years
- 3) Financial assistance in case of a member dies due to illness or accident

- 4) If a worker is forced to withdraw his membership after becoming unable to work due to physical disability or disease, the person shall be refunded with the instalments paid along with prescribed interest.
- 5) Financial assistance for treatment to the members who suffer from serious ailments
- 6) Financial assistance for the marriage of women members and daughters of members as well as for treatment relating to delivery.
- 7) Financial assistance for the educational needs of members' children.

As per estimates, the state has 24.95 lakh

are also given a festival allowance of Rs.1000.

Kerala is also the first state in the country to implement a full-scale social audit of its employment guarantee projects to ensure quality. As many as 62.99 lakh workers have registered in the MNREGS. Out of these, 38.52 lakh are aged below 55 years while 23.06 lakhs are above 60 years. A total of 8.32 lakh belong to the ST category while 2.23 lakh are SC. 39.67 lakh are women workers.

On the other hand, 3.18 lakh workers have registered in the AUEGS, which together aim to guarantee 100 working days across the rural-urban locations. Most of those depending on these schemes, unlike those in the organised sectors,



active workers from 20.67 lakhs families in the employment guarantee scheme. Out of these, 17.59 lakhs members in 15.51 lakh families are receiving an average annual work days of 63. At the same time, 4.49 lakh families or 29 percent received the full quota of 100 work days.

While the Scheduled Tribe families in the country received 52 work days, Kerala could give them 86 work days. Alongside, the state has also successfully implemented a Tribal Plus Scheme that envisages adding 100 more work days to these ST families by utilizing the Tribal Development Fund to ensure them 200 work days a year.

The state has also been implementing the Ayyankali Urban Employment Guarantee Scheme for its urban areas since 2011. As many as 3,18,463 families have registered in this scheme, which has led to the creation of 41,11,753 work days so far. The families that complete 100 work days a year

have no other means of livelihood. And among these, 47.79 lakh people are aged below 60 years. The Welfare Fund has been created with a view to ensuring the welfare of such workers.

As nearly 90 percent of the employed in these schemes are women, the need to secure their lives has prompted this government in enacting the new act. The state has several welfare boards that together offer succour to hundreds of workers and the poor and has also implemented several Social Security, housing and health schemes for them. The Welfare Board for workers under the rural and urban employment guarantee scheme comes as a continuation of these projects in Kerala -- also the first state to implement an employment guarantee scheme for unorganised workers in the urban centres through the AUEGS. Hopefully, this board will be able to come up with more schemes in future to ensure the welfare of this workforce. ■



WITH A STEADFAST COMMITMENT TO REFORMING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM, THE GOVERNMENT HAS SPEARHEADED NUMEROUS INITIATIVES TO NURTURE YOUNG MINDS AND CULTIVATE A PROGRESSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT. IN THIS INTERVIEW WITH MINISTER FOR GENERAL EDUCATION V. SIVANKUTTY; KERALA CALLING EXPLORE THE VISIONARY APPROACH OF THE GOVERNMENT TOWARDS EDUCATION, ITS EFFORTS TO OVERCOME THE OBSTACLES POSED BY THE PANDEMIC, AND ITS STRATEGIES TO EMPOWER STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE STATE.

THIS IS THE REAL STORY

BEHIND KERALA'S EXCELLENCE IN GENERAL EDUCATION



V. SIVANKUTTY

Minister for General Education & Labour

How much progress has Kerala made compared to other Indian states in terms of infrastructure development, girls' education, and projects for academic excellence?

Kerala's public education system is a very strong and robust network. Almost all children, irrespective of their gender, get admission to school. Among them, almost all make it to the twelfth standard. If we check the national statistics, there is a visible gender gap in terms of access to school education. This gender gap is absent when it comes to Kerala. In fact, girls here often display more academic brilliance than boys. We have been able to ensure schools

till class 12 level in almost all villages. From the first elected government in the state led by EMS to all the subsequent left governments that came to power have played a crucial role in realising this. The involvement of parents, especially mothers, in schools had a significant influence on girls' education. We have come a long way in providing adequate sanitation facilities for older girls, eradicating discrimination for access to schools and minimizing the gender divide in learning spaces. There is still a long way to go and we are making conscious efforts in this regard.

Have the educational goals for tribals, backward communities, and differently-abled individuals been achieved? What steps has the government taken to ensure progress for these marginalised groups?

The government has taken several steps to ensure educational progress for marginalised groups such as tribals,

backward communities, and differently-abled individuals. These include

1. Establishing six hostels for tribal boys, providing accommodation for 50 students in each hostel, located in different districts.
2. Conducting surveys to identify children who couldn't enroll in schools or had to drop out, and offering them bridge courses to catch up and join appropriate grade levels.
3. Arranging special transportation, known as GothraSarathi, for students from remote areas with limited public transport access, especially for those from tribal regions.
4. Implementing Ooru Vidya Kendras under the SSK (Samagra Shiksha Kerala) program to ensure students' attendance in schools and provide learning support.
5. Introducing the 'Enke Enka Koottam' program to promote school education among the Cholanaike community, an ancient tribal community in Nilambur forests. As a result, 12 children from the Pulimunda colony were successfully admitted to school.
6. Implementing the Padippurassi scheme in Idamalakkudi Panchayat, the only tribal Grama Panchayat in Kerala, which has enabled children to learn how to read and write.
7. Developing mathematics modules as part of the Padippurassi curriculum.
8. Establishing the Kudi Thuna Koottam group at GTLPS, Chembakathozhu, under the supervision of the local society and tribal leader (Ooru Mooppan) to ensure education for tribals, with the school's Headmaster serving as the convener.
9. Initiating plans to expand the Padippurassi scheme to districts such as Kasargod, Palakkad, Wayanad, and Malappuram.

These efforts reflect the government's commitment to promoting educational opportunities and inclusivity for marginalised groups in Kerala

Eco-friendly schools are of great importance these days. Whether the government has made any positive interventions in this field?

Education in eco-friendly schools is a proclaimed policy of this government. One of the major focus areas of the education department is to set up eco-friendly school campuses with the aim of learning as much from nature as this government believes that the campus itself is a textbook. Biodiversity gardens, kitchen gardens, bio-fence, vegetable gardens and cultivation of various crops depending on the availability of space are being implemented in the schools. Efforts are currently on to transform school campuses so that all kinds of environmental lessons, such as nature conservation, preservation of biological diversity, and understanding agriculture tradition, are available to the students. In addition, the department has also implemented initiatives like e-file, green office and smart office at the administrative level keeping in mind a comprehensive eco-friendly approach. Green School Clean School is one of our major slogans this academic year.

There is a National Education Policy in place. How far have things come in Kerala?



The land reforms act and education act brought about by the EMS government of 1957 played a decisive role in ensuring that school education is available to all. We are moving forward by providing mid-day meals, free transportation, ensuring clean drinking water and sanitation facilities, setting up better infrastructure, building schools in neighbourhoods, and recruiting trained teachers (at the national level, under the Right to Education Act, the school is the unit for recruitment of teacher whereas it the school complex under new policy document. In Kerala, the class is the unit for recruitment of teachers) and ensuring the participation of the parents and the society in the activities aimed at the betterment of schools. At the national level, the focus of the education policy is on children's access to schools and ensuring the continuation of their education. As a state that has already addressed these issues, our focus is on initiatives to ensure equality and quality in the education sector. We could achieve these results despite constraints with the help of the powers granted by the federal system guaranteed by our constitution.

Kerala has already addressed the issues like enrolling children, who are old enough to attend school, guaranteeing continuity of education, and providing equitable and high-quality education to all children. It is our firm belief that democracy and secularism must be the foundation of

education, and that education must uphold constitutional values. We have already achieved great progress.

The proof of this may be found in the fact that 10.5 lakh more children attended public schools between 2017-18 and 2021-22. It implies that the people stand by the efforts of the state government. It goes without saying that we have made great progress in infrastructure development and modernisation of schools. Even the schools in rural areas have undergone an evident transformation. The idea of school itself has also undergone a complete transformation. The focus is on lifting the academic standards of the students. Despite all this, we have to focus on accelerating our efforts to improve school education from its current state of excellence. It is necessary to identify and overcome constraints. It is also necessary to envisage initiatives to inculcate social values such as civic sense, cleanliness, gender awareness etc., in students.

What progress has been made in rebuilding the flood-damaged schools?

As per official statistics, as many as 520 schools suffered damages in the flood. The Education department was able to make those schools operational again with the help of funds provided by the local self-government department, elected representatives and various corporate companies.

What new additions were made to the curriculum to enable students to handle modern technology?

The aim, while adding Information Technology education to the curriculum was to create a quality learning environment in which the student not only learned about modern technology but also apply it in learning activities. It was in 1997 that IT became a separate subject at the higher secondary level. Later, ICT (Information and Communication Technology) became a subject in the secondary and primary levels. Initially, the focus was on helping the student acquire essential ICT skills that they needed to acquire at each level. The syllabus, textbooks and learning activities were planned



accordingly. Later, recommendations were made in the Kerala Curriculum Framework 2007 on the importance of ICT learning, realising its potential to create a better learning environment. Computer labs were set up in schools with internet connectivity.

Current ICT textbooks are structured with contents based on the proposition of enabling students to handle technology as well as utilising ICT tools and techniques to support the learning of various subjects. Post-2016, things became more dynamic after the government converted 45,000 classrooms into hi-tech classrooms, provided a proportionate number of equipment in computer labs, and launched 'Samagra' portal to include ICT resources in all subjects as part of the state's public education campaign. Along with this, learning activities related to the fields of evolution, development and possibilities of the computer, computer hardware & software, data collection - analysis - presentation, imaging - editing, sound and movies, animation, internet & web page, programming, educational softwares, edutainment softwares etc., were also included as part of IT studies. While at the primary level, edutainment and ICT - assisted learning were given emphasis, from the secondary level onwards ICT - based softwares were introduced in the syllabus. Lessons on the fields such as coding, animation production and computational thinking were included keeping in mind the students who wished to pursue higher education in these fields. The goal was to create a community that could contribute to the IT industry in addition to teaching the students how to use technology. Currently, works are underway to prepare a new curriculum framework. The new framework will also take into account the latest trends such as the Internet of Things, Robotics, and Artificial Intelligence - based technologies.

Vocational education has wide acceptance all over the world today. Can you elaborate on the initiatives implemented by your government in this field?

It is true that until recently, our people gave importance to formal academic education. However, the worldwide importance of vocational education and skill training has its effects felt in our country as well. The first Pinarayi Vijayan government decided to conduct vocational training as per the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSFQ), realising the importance of this situation. NSFQ-based job roles were implemented in all vocational higher secondary schools by 2020-21 in a phased manner. Workplace and technology are undergoing rapid changes. The curriculum and training modules of vocational courses need to be constantly updated in light of technological advances. Some ancient technologies may have to be abandoned. As a result, related courses will also have to be cancelled. Latest technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Blockchain and Robotics offer great potential in the field of employment. There will be deliberate interventions through subjects, textbooks and learning activities to inculcate career orientation and aptitude in the new generation in the early stages of schooling itself. At this stage, our policy is work-integrated learning rather than vocational training. The government envisages vocational education in such a way that as it reaches higher classes,



students can choose the sectors and occupations based on their preferences as well as the employment opportunities within the state or anywhere else in the world. At present, we are equipped to provide vocational education at the higher secondary level to only 33,000 students. However, Skill Development Centres will be opened in 210 schools as part of the STARS programme very soon. A new phase of skill training will commence in each SDC where students aged between 15 and 21 will be provided with facilities to learn a modern vocation.

As mentioned earlier, courses like the Internet of Things, Drone Technology, Electric Vehicles Servicing, Jewellery Designing etc., which have great employment potential will be launched in the SDCs. Vocational courses covering these fields will be made part of the curriculum. New courses will be started for jobs that are needed for society and especially industries. The attitude of our students and parents towards vocational higher secondary courses is changing, albeit gradually. Life Skill Education is also part of the vocational training to mould the student into a better person and team member with good communication skills and confidence. Kerala Academy of Skill Excellence (KASE) under the Department of Labour and Skills will function more efficiently as the agency responsible for skill training



processes as well as creating unique skill training courses required by the state. Steps are in progress to ensure uniform quality for all kinds of skill training under the leadership of KASE. The Industrial Training Institutes in the state are also on the path to excellence. The goal is to transform all government ITIs into centres of excellence. Skill training has become a need of the hour. By 2025-26, the government aims to improve the scope of skill training in the state in such a way that the majority of students can acquire skills for a career of their choice at the higher secondary level. Kerala has created history through the Karmachari scheme, which is being implemented by the Labour and Skills Department in collaboration with the general education and higher education departments. The scheme, which enables students to earn while they learn, is a great start.

The public education campaign and Vidyakiranam were the flagship initiatives of the Pinarayi Vijayan government. How much progress has been made in these initiatives?

The government has achieved amazing strides in the last seven years in infrastructure development. The public education campaign and its corresponding Vidyakiranam

scheme have played a significant role in the development of infrastructure. Around Rs 3800 crore was invested in the construction of buildings in the last seven years. All classrooms from class 8 to class 12 have become technology friendly. Computer lab facilities were set up in all primary and upper primary schools. Efforts are on to develop labs and library systems, modernise schools with changing times, and above all transform schools into places where secularism and democracy flourish and make it an inclusive system that can accommodate all children. This is a completely different situation from the national level.

How many children are expected to be part of the public education system this academic year, and can better education be provided to all children, particularly when a significant number are transitioning from private and unaided schools to government schools?

It is a fact that more and more children are entering the public education stream. We are expecting the same trend to sustain this year too. The Department of General Education will continue to move forward with its efforts to provide better education to all. ■

TOWARDS EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION

KERALA'S EXPERIENCE IN SCHOOL
EDUCATION IS SOMETHING DIFFERENT
FROM THAT IN THE COUNTRY WHICH
ULTIMATELY HELPED THE STATE TO
ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL ENROLLMENT
AND RETENTION.



Dr. C. RAMAKRISHNAN

Asst. co.ordinator, Vidyakiranam

The National Policy on Education 2020 revealed that about 3.22 crores of school-age group children are still out of school in the country. The statistics projected that in Kerala almost all children in the school-age group are enrolling in schools and almost all are continuing their study up to 12th standard. The issue of access to an educational institution and retaining the child throughout the school education stage is settled as far as Kerala but this issue remains in the national context.

It is high time to concentrate on second-generation issues while the nation as a whole is still addressing first-generation issues. Hence Kerala's major concern is addressing quality issues and the issues of equity and equality. To address these concerns Government of Kerala launched a comprehensive education campaign known as Pothuvidyabhyasa Samrakshana Yajnam now known as Vidyakiranam Mission with the active and meaningful support of the community under a broader banner Nava Kerala Karma Paripadi. Kerala has already started addressing this issue by addressing the need for quality infrastructure. As a part of that the state has already invested more than 3800 crores of rupees in developing high-class physical infrastructure that anyone can feel even in rural schools.



If we analyze the data regarding modernization and the availability of modern technology facilities Kerala is far ahead. In our state, 93.3% of Government schools are having functional laptops whereas the all-India average is 5.5% only. If we consider both Govt. and aided schools the corresponding status is 97% in the state and 23% at the national level. 94.6% of the Govt. schools are having internet facilities in our state whereas, at the National level, the corresponding figure is 24.2%. The UDISE data revealed that 96.1% of the govt. schools having functional computer facilities if considering both govt and aided the figure is 99.9 whereas at national level the corresponding figures are 35.8 and 67.5 only. These are all clear indications that Kerala is far ahead in introducing modern technological facilities without having any kind of digital gap. We have provided modern equipment to all the classrooms from 8th to 12th in all the schools and computer labs in all primary schools.

All academic studies pertaining to the quality of education reveal that there are issues in the quality aspects even though we are ahead in various aspects even after having the availability of trained teachers in all classes, the educational background of parents, awareness of parents regarding the need of education, access to schools and the societal support, facilities and so on.

The state is trying to address the quality issues but we have to move forward or excel on the academic front to the extent possible by utilizing all favorable factors. We have to evolve a methodology in utilizing modern technology possibilities in the classroom learning process and developing digital content. To address the academic challenges of this modern era, the transformation of teachers,

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE STATE PREPARES A ROAD MAP TO IMPART THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION SO THAT THE STUDENTS AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL CAN PERFORM AT THE GRADE APPROPRIATE LEVEL.

to cope with the emerging phenomena due to the social and economic and technological factors is inevitable.

It is high time to fix achievable targets and evolve programmes to ensure Justice and Equity in classrooms where all children engage in the process of learning. It implies that in such classrooms every child: gains confidence in facing problematic situations, constructs knowledge to address problem situations or any physical or mental or emotional challenge, negotiates with objective realities which always need not be promotive or favourable, interacts freely, meaningfully and joyfully with her classmates, teachers and the teaching-learning materials, make use of modern technological devices in the knowledge construction process, compares events, things, facts and findings, and arrives at logical conclusions, undertakes tasks on oneself without any hesitation.

As Kerala has impressive achievements in a number of indicators, the State's key challenges are in terms of attaining the second level of reforms in school education. It is essential that the state prepares a road map to impart the quality of education so that the students at the elementary level can perform at the grade-appropriate level. Addressing the concerns of society for quality education with proper understanding regarding quality and reconstruction of the education system anchored on scientific, secular and democratic pillars assumes priority. Hence we have to continue our persistent exploration towards equitable quality education for all children by making schools centres of excellence and by upholding the concept of "quality education pupils' right." ■





EMBRACING THE FUTURE

KERALA'S DEMOCRATIC CURRICULUM REFORM JOURNEY



Dr. JAYAPRAKASH R.K

Director , SCERT

Kerala has embarked on unique projects, such as the Public Education Rejuvenation Mission and the Vidya Kiranam Project, over the past 7 years. These initiatives have been widely acknowledged for their remarkable success. Significant progress has been made in improving school infrastructure, equipping classrooms to adapt to future changes. Textbooks have been distributed well in advance of school reopening, and

efforts have been made to ensure cleanliness and safety through democratic participation.

Curriculum Reform Process.

The process of Curriculum reform is underway, driven by the vision of creating a knowledge society and fostering the setting up of a "Navakeralam". "After many years, we are undertaking a comprehensive revision of the curriculum, starting from the pre-primary level up to the higher secondary section. Our goal is to provide revised textbooks for at least some classes by the next academic

year. The process of curriculum reform in Kerala has been initiated in a democratic manner, actively involving the public through classroom discussions and utilizing technology to gather opinions. For the first time in the history of education in India, over 25 lakh students have actively participated in the curriculum reform process in the state. In recent years, educational thinkers have embraced the notion that students should possess a certain degree of influence in the planning of educational activities that directly concern them. Throughout various educational processes, such as methods, approaches, examinations, and co-curricular activities, students have voiced their suggestions. This is widely regarded as a genuine testament to the democratic nature of the curriculum development process. The government has announced its commitment to provide a curriculum framework and subsequent textbooks that uphold the fundamental principles laid out in the Constitution. This approach aims to preserve the unique history, culture, and constitutional values of our nation.

While children are the focal point of educational endeavours, it is imperative to have well-equipped teachers to guide them. In the current scenario, teachers who fail to update themselves are being phased out of the school system. The department has successfully conducted vacation training programmes to equip our teachers for the upcoming academic year. Notably, a 6-day residential training programme was organized for newly appointed teachers, marking a historic milestone in Kerala's education landscape. Additionally, as part of the government's 100-day programme, Induction Training Programmes for newly appointed Lower Primary School teachers have been scheduled and the first batch of training has already been completed, highlighting Kerala's commitment to ensuring that every teacher receives the necessary training, contrary to the national policy of putting the onus on teachers to get academically updated. This endeavour also exemplifies the government's determination to enhance public education. Furthermore, special training programmes have been implemented for teachers in special schools after several years. This is just one facet of the numerous initiatives aimed at uplifting differently-abled children.

The impact of COVID on the education sector has been significant. While we have managed to mitigate some of the learning loss by providing classes through online platforms, we have not been able to fully recover from its impacts. As a result, this year the education department is placing a strong emphasis on ensuring the foundational skills of children at the Lower Primary (LP) level in the current academic year. The teacher Empowerment Programmes and subsequent Comprehensive Education Programmes

for their foolproof implementation have already been set in motion. Continuous evaluation and departmental monitoring will be integral to this plan. The Brahmapuram garbage dump and fire incident was a shameful episode for a progressing state like ours. It raises doubts as to whether the educated society in Kerala has truly realized that waste generated by each individual is their own responsibility. Therefore, starting this year, a comprehensive programme will be implemented to instill a culture of hygiene as part of personality development, beginning in schools. Through a popular campaign called "Suchithwa Vidyalaya Harita Vidyalaya," we can achieve our goal.

Science and Technology have brought tremendous transformation to children and society. In today's ever-changing society, knowledge is acquired through exchanging information from various sources, supported by technology and new discoveries. Traditional classrooms alone are impractical in a society where data, analysis, and research constantly evolve. Technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Chat-GPT, Google Bard, etc., offer boundless potential, opening endless possibilities for children. Teachers, classrooms, and schools that incorporate these tools thrive,

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY HAVE BROUGHT TREMENDOUS TRANSFORMATION TO CHILDREN AND SOCIETY. IN TODAY'S EVER-CHANGING SOCIETY, KNOWLEDGE IS ACQUIRED THROUGH EXCHANGING INFORMATION FROM VARIOUS SOURCES, SUPPORTED BY TECHNOLOGY AND NEW DISCOVERIES.

while others may naturally fade away. Technology should be embraced as a valuable aid to teaching methods, without dictating our path.

There is an attempt to encroach upon the education sector, which is constitutionally entrusted to the states for policy formulation and implementation. While we strive to shape history, politics, and culture through constructive debates, we must take proactive steps towards curriculum reform. With a strong belief in education as a social process, we are deeply committed to public education, which nurtures a diverse and unified education system. ■

THE STATE STATE IMPLEMENTING THE MID-DAY MEAL PROGRAM IN A DECENTRALIZED MANNER AND BY ENSURING WHOLEHEARTED COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION.

ENSURING BALANCED DIET



SAJIKRISHNAN K

The meal given to a child in schools consists of hot cooked rice along with three side dishes prepared from pulses, legumes, tuber crops, vegetables (including leafy vegetables), coconut, etc. A total number of 12307 schools/institutions in the State are currently registered under the programme.

The State can boast of several innovative and best practices in the implementation and successful conduct of the PM POSHAN.

Additional Food Items- Milk and Egg/Banana are supplied to children as additional food items. Every child is fed 150 ml of milk twice a week and one egg/banana once a week.

Multi-tap water facilities in schools:--All the 12037 schools in the State that are covered under PM POSHAN are equipped with multi-tap water facilities for hand washing.

Breakfast Scheme - Breakfast scheme is implemented in 2400 schools in the state. Local self Government Institutions, Charitable Trusts and in some cases, school PTAs successfully run a scheme for providing breakfast to children in many schools. In the State Capital alone, the scheme of providing breakfast to children is going on in more than 180 schools with the financial assistance of the City Corporation.

School Nutrition Gardens - Around 10301 (85.6%) schools have set up SNGs wherein different types of vegetables are cultivated using organic/indigenous farming techniques. In several schools, SNGs are set up under a programme called "Comprehensive Vegetable Development Programme" conceived and implemented by the Department of Agriculture and its agencies. To



make the younger generation aware of the value and importance of agriculture and to acquaint them with farming and agrarian roots of the State, a novel project named "PadamOnnuPaadathkeku" ("Lesson One-to the Field") was launched in September, 2019 as a joint initiative of State General Education Department & Department of Agriculture. The initiative met with resounding success as many schools have come forward to embrace this novel idea and started to cultivate different indigenous varieties of paddy on leased lands. The rice so produced is used to prepare breakfast and special nutritive dishes for children.

Tasting the cooked food by teachers and members of SMC & Mother PTA- Teachers in charge of PM POSHAN, members of SMC & Mother PTA taste the cooked food and ensure its quality and palatability before it is served to children. A

separate register named the 'tasting register' is maintained at all schools for recording the remarks of SMC/Mother PTA members.

Special Rice distributed during Festive Occasions- all children up to class VIII who are covered under PM POSHAN are provided with 5 kg rice each (one time a year) during the ten-day-long Onam Festival during August/September every year and other festival occasions. The expenditure in this regard is met by the State from its resources.

Higher rate of Honorarium to Cook cum Helpers:
- Honorarium is disbursed at a higher rate than the State mandatory share. A minimum daily honorarium of Rs.600/- to a maximum honorarium of Rs.675/- is paid to a cook-cum-helper.

Testing of Food & Water Samples- food and water samples are collected on a regular basis from schools and tested for microbiological parameters in a NABL and FSSAI-accredited laboratory.

Waste Disposal Facilities in schools - The majority of schools have set up their own waste disposal systems including biogas plants for the effective disposal of organic waste. The idea is to produce a sustainable cycle in schools - the biogas produced would be used in the school kitchen while the slurry got as a by-product could be used as organic manure for the vegetable garden of the students.

Social Audit- Social Audit was conducted in 20 schools each in all 14 districts during the year 2022-23. Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA) was designated as the agency to facilitate the conduct of the audit. Four or five persons among the parents of children were selected and trained to be social audit councilors. The school Sabha meetings and public hearings (for a cluster of five schools) were organized wherein the audit report was read out to the public.

Monitoring Committees at various levels

For the effective management and monitoring of this Scheme, monitoring committees are constituted at the State, District Block, and LSG institution levels. At school level a Committee known as 'School PM POSHAN Committee 'is constituted with the school PTA President as Chairman and the Headmaster of the school as the Member Secretary. SMC Chairman, MPTA President/ Member, representative of the school Manager (if the school is government-aided), parents of SC/ST children, representatives of parents of children belonging to SC/S and minority communities, teachers' representatives, local ward councillor, a representative of the cook-cum-helper and a student representative are the other members. The committee is convened once every month. The team will submit a detailed report once in three months to the Director of General Education. A Noon Feeding Supervisor in the cadre of Senior Superintendent and a Noon Meal Officer in the cadre of Junior Superintendent are posted at DDE and AEO offices respectively to monitor the Scheme and to conduct regular inspections. ■

THE STATE GOVERNMENT IMPROVED THE UNIFORM SCHEME ON ITS OWN BY ALLOTTING ITS PLAN FUND TO THOSE STUDENTS IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS WHO STOOD OUTSIDE THE AMBIT OF THIS CENTRAL SCHEME. THE STATE GOVERNMENT DECIDED TO INTRODUCE SCHOOL UNIFORMS MADE OF HANDLOOM MATERIALS IN SUPERIOR - QUALITY.

IN UNIFORMITY

Inclusive Handloom Uniform Initiative





SUGATHAN K.V.

Free access to textbooks, uniforms and noon meals have been officially acknowledged as the right of students from class 1 to class 8 in the country. The free uniform scheme, envisaged allotment of plan funds for distributing school uniforms to all girl students from class one to eight and all boy students excluding those in the APL category.

The state government, however, improvised on this scheme on its own from the next academic year onwards by allotting its plan fund for those students in government schools who stood outside the ambit of this central

scheme. Accordingly, it has begun distributing free uniforms among the boy students in government schools who belong to the APL category and also to all students, irrespective of their gender and economic classification of families, in the aided schools.

While launching the programme in 2013-14, the government empanelled eight leading companies that were capable of distributing superior-quality uniform materials. These eight companies were also allotted different districts for uniform distribution. They, however, were unable to complete the uniform distribution in a time-bound manner, prompting the government to hand over the allowance for purchasing the uniform materials directly to the respective schools. The allowance per set of uniforms was pegged at Rs.400 at that time.

THE GOVERNMENT THAT CAME TO POWER IN KERALA DURING 2016-17 DECIDED TO INTRODUCE SCHOOL UNIFORMS MADE OF HAND LOOM MATERIALS AND THUS ENTRUSTED THE HANDLOOM COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES THAT FUNCTION UNDER THE STATE INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT WITH THE DISTRIBUTION OF UNIFORMS

The government that came to power in Kerala during 2016-17 decided to introduce school uniforms made of handloom materials and thus entrusted the handloom cooperative societies that function under the State Industries Department with the distribution of uniforms. The move envisioned the distribution of superior-quality uniform materials in schools while also ensuring a sustainable source of income and employment to the family of workers in the handloom sector. As many as 6200 workers under 301 handloom cooperative societies are currently engaged in the preparation of school uniforms for around 9.32 lakh students in the state. This novel scheme, introduced by Kerala, is yet to be launched in any other state.

The handloom uniform was first distributed in the 2017-18 academic year. The scheme was limited to the Government Lower Primary schools in the first phase and benefited about 2.5 lakh pupils. The scheme was extended to the UP schools the next academic year, taking the total number of beneficiaries to 4.5 lakh students. The Lower primary schools in the government-aided sector were brought under the scheme and since 19-20, this scheme has been benefiting about 9.5 lakh students.

When the central and state schemes are taken together, the free uniform programme benefits a whopping 24 lakh students from classes 1 to 8 in the state. Of this, 9.32 lakh are being given handloom uniforms while the uniform allowance for the remaining 15 lakh students is allotted to the respective schools directly. While the uniform allowance per student remains at Rs.600, the state government is spending Rs.1200 per student for procuring handloom uniforms.

From the six academic years since 2017, the state government has expended a whopping Rs. 440 crores on handloom uniforms. This year it has distributed handloom uniforms to 9.32 lakh students including 475242 girls and 457656 boys prior to the school reopening.

That this government has been able to complete the distribution of school uniforms along with that of textbooks to the school students is indeed a proud moment for it. ■





Healthy Habits Rock at School

GEAR UP FOR A FANTASTIC
SCHOOL YEAR FILLED WITH NEW
ADVENTURES, FRIENDSHIPS, AND
A STRONG FOCUS ON STAYING
HEALTHY AND HAPPY



DR. ANJU ANGEL ALEX

Department of Health Service

9-year-old Rasha (name changed for anonymity) was excited as she would be going to buy a new school bag late in the evening. Her mom, a high schoolteacher was worn out after the orientation classes in school but pulled herself to the shopping mall partly because she knew that these little things made a lot of difference to her child and mainly because Rasha was prone to allergic episodes that the dusty, moldy old school bag might trigger. Elsewhere, Dr Susmitha Bai, a Medical Officer in a village in the Vypin Islands went about her routine work in the Family Health Centre apart from issuing health cards as per guidelines to the cleaning staff in schools after examining them and conducting Immunization sessions to reach out to the kids who were due for their shots.

Meanwhile, schools were getting ready as well. "We ensure that all surfaces are made free of any dust particles that might have accumulated during the vacations. Toilets, furniture, and surroundings are cleaned", says Ms. Indu S, Assistant Vice Principal in a reputed school in the heart of Kochi City highlighting yet another means apart from those done by parents and health personnel to ensure children's health and safety during the academic year.

Says Dr Nikhilesh Menon, District Program Manager, Kochi who is also a Clinical Microbiologist, "Dengue is a probability in Corporation area hence source reduction and cleaning the surroundings is imperative. During holidays, closed rooms tend to become mouldy which can precipitate bronchial asthma in those who are prone to it" thus justifying Rasha's mother's concern. "If the child is using last year's bags or clothes, wash them in soap and water after soaking them for a while and sun-dry it well enough with no dampness remaining," he says elucidating often overlooked points.

Dr Divya, Paediatrician, Taluk Hospital Narakkal, Ernakulam has thoughts to share in light of her experience. "Giving children lessons in personal hygiene before school begins will help to prevent fungal infections and head lice infestations. Drinking ample water will prevent dehydration in summer. I continue to see chicken pox cases in my OPD therefore suggest Varicella vaccine. As for the UIP (Universal Immunization Program) vaccines, I say that they are a must and should never be procrastinated", she says, capturing many valid points.

Dr Smitha Murali, Paediatrician, District

Hospital Wadakkanchery, Thrissur jokes good-humouredly "My clientele more than halved once the schools closed for vacations. Apart from Flu vaccine to those who can afford it, there are other things like hygiene and diet that are more important. Using a face mask depending on the situation is always a good option." She vociferously advocates children not being sent to school during illnesses or while still on antibiotics in order to break the chain of transmission. In this context, Dr. Susmitha's relief as a parent and doctor is noteworthy because her son's school officials insist on children staying at home if unwell and coming back only after they are cured.

DR DIVYA, PAEDIATRICIAN, TALUK HOSPITAL NARAKKAL, ERNAKULAM HAS THOUGHTS TO SHARE IN LIGHT OF HER EXPERIENCE. "GIVING CHILDREN LESSONS IN PERSONAL HYGIENE BEFORE SCHOOL BEGINS WILL HELP TO PREVENT FUNGAL INFECTIONS AND HEAD LICE INFESTATIONS. DRINKING AMPLE WATER WILL PREVENT DEHYDRATION IN SUMMER. I CONTINUE TO SEE CHICKEN POX CASES IN MY OPD THEREFORE SUGGEST VARICELLA VACCINE."

"Make healthy-eating a part of your child's lifestyle. Be sure to pack fruits and healthy snacks to school instead of bakery products that can be appetite suppressants but serve zilch nutritive value," says Dr. Smitha as she signs off.

Thus, as our kids fiddle with their new school stationery wistfully and as parents and authorities brace themselves for yet another school year, the queries and worries loom at large. But the silver lining to the cloud is that there are lessons in hygiene that the Pandemic has taught us. Armed with these, let's go back to school! ■

- Identify mosquito breeding places for source reduction in school premises and houses
- Surface decontamination of classrooms and of personal belongings
- Reinforcement of personal hygiene habits in children by teacher and parents
- Assurance of compliance with UIP vaccines
- Healthy eating habits and adequate water intake
- Cough etiquettes and masking wherever needed
- Avoid going to school before complete cure

My school is so dear to me, my friends and teachers make it my ideal place



VINAYAKA BHADRA V

10H
GVHSS Madappally

It has been ten years since I enrolled as a student in the public education stream of Kerala. We all know that the policy of education followed in the state of Kerala is unique in many respects when compared to other states of India. My school life began in 2013 as a class 1 student at B E M School Chombala, Vadakara in Kozhikode district. All the teachers of the school treated us, students, equally. I completed my lower primary education in 2017 and moved on to GVHSS Madappally, one of the biggest government schools in Vadakara Taluk. The six years, from class 5 to 10, I spent there were truly eventful.

I still remember the 'Pravesanothsavam' in 2017. The school was beautifully decorated and we were directed to the big pandal. Teachers, PTA members and non-teaching staff welcomed us with joy and happiness. Sweets and payasam were served to us. The way of teaching and the opportunities provided for us to freely interact with teachers helped me shed all my inhibitions. It boosted my confidence and it improved my communication skills as well. All the students were provided mid-day meals, even students studying in class 10 were given meals if they wanted them. The school kitchen was very clean and hygienic. The 'chechies' who cooked food for us were quite cordial to us. How can one forget the smell of hot rice and sambar! The teachers were assigned the duty to check whether we wasted the food served to us. I should add that the meals served to us were quite homely and tasty.

Our classrooms were high-tech with projectors and laptops. Teachers often use presentations and videos while teaching us.

This helps us to understand concepts better. Our school has also a well-equipped IT lab and science lab. Our school library is really big with nearly 40,000 books. We often get a library period so that we can read books and magazines by sitting in the reading room attached to the library.

The School Kalothsavam was conducted in great pomp. We all participated in different items and expressed our creative talents. Science, Social Science, Maths and IT Fest is another occasion for us to demonstrate our talents in different fields. Our school also gives importance to sports. Special coaching was given to the students interested in football and volleyball. A few trained students got chances to participate in state and national-level events. Extracurricular activities like Kalari and Karate were provided to students in our school.

Our school has an air-conditioned theatre hall with 160 seating capacity. World cinemas are screened in it. When we have free periods teachers take us to the theatre and show us such films. At the end of the 7th standard, the most dreadful disease corona started spreading in the state. Because of this, my education in classes 8 and 9 was fully in online mode. Our teachers tried their level best to make the online classes effective. The class timing was from 7 pm to 9 pm every night because mobile phones would be available only when parents got home. School life got normalised at the end of class 9. When we were in class 10 we again got back to the good old days of sitting together with students in the class and directly interacting with teachers. This year a school radio station named 'Radio Samudra' was opened in our school. It became a good platform for students to show their hidden talents.

Our school is so dear to me, my friends and teachers make it my ideal place. For me, the most valuable person I got from the school is my class teacher in class 10, Jineesh Sir. For me he is not just a class teacher, he is my mentor. His words are always a source of inspiration for us. I can very well say that my school led me to new paths of knowledge and it moulded my personality as well.

My Amazing Kappu School



ARNAV RAJESH

Standard 4
NSS LP School Kappu

My dad wishes he could be in my school because our classrooms are amazing. He has never learned in smart classrooms. Our furniture makes many of my friends in big schools feel envious. The teachers don't just teach, they make learning a happy adventure!

My mom gets a little jealous sometimes because the lunch at school is so delicious. Schools serve sumptuous meals now, but when she was in school, they only had 'Upma'. She wishes she could eat the yummy food too!

The teachers at my school care about us a lot. They want us to be happy and safe. They make learning so much fun!

Before school opened for the New Year,

we got new books and cool, cotton uniforms. We feel so excited and ready for the year!

At my school, we learn about being kind, caring, loving and working together. Math, English, Malayalam, and Science help us become great kids; but the main learning is all about being loving, caring, kind and working together.

My school takes good care of us. Before vacation, we were served rice. The school wants to make sure we have enough to eat. We feel the care even during the holidays.

I love that we can play enough and learn at our own pace. We have big playgrounds and fun classrooms. Every day is an adventure! Each holiday is a disappointment!

When my grandparents see me on the school bus, they get so happy. They know the school keeps me safe.

They feel proud!

I sometimes feel so sorry for my dad and mom. Their school days were just nightmares! They had teachers who used to punish kids so often, for even small issues. I've never been punished at school, and almost none of us will disagree.

Don't worry papa, mom; feel glad that your kid is happy at school. He's lucky to be in the awesome NSS LP School Kappu.



NIHARA S. PRAKASH

X-A
A.V.S.G.H.S.S.Karivellur

The last academic year in A.V.S.G.H.S.S Karivellur School was a memorable one. The school atmosphere and teachers' training helped me to achieve full A plus in SSLC exam. The teachers' support and good academic atmosphere

with Hi-tech classrooms and infrastructure are behind the great success in academic as well as extracurricular activities. Many classroom and group activities helped develop our skills. We had many celebrations on particular days also. The students who were a little backward in their studies were given special attention. All the teachers in our school are the best. Our school has an eco-friendly atmosphere which provides us peace and happiness. We didn't suffer for anything during our school days. We have good classrooms, labs, assembly hall, auditorium, washrooms etc and were happy with all these facilities. All these were a blessing for us. The school's focus on extracurricular activities is incredible. This year our school has made golden achievements in sports meets and youth festivals. All these have helped the students develop their talents. The participants in the youth festival are trained under experts. The playground and other sports training have developed many athletes and sports persons. All these have helped create good mental health and also build confidence in studies without skipping school days. I have got many life experiences and guidance for my future from my school.



The New Ray of Hope in Tribal Education

Sahya Kiranam is a beacon of hope that illuminates the path toward a profound shift in the approach and attitude of all stakeholders involved in the tribal sector.



Dr. SUNIL V.T.
Director, SIEMAT-Kerala

There are as many as thirty-seven tribal sects in Kerala, though their total population in the state is less than five lakhs. It could be possible to spot tribal people even in the non-hilly Alappuzha district, despite the fact that the indigenous people of the State mostly dwell by the Western Ghats, more popularly known as Sahya Parvatham in Malayalam. The Western Ghats form the eastern border of the State, right from Thiruvananthapuram to Kasaragod, and the tribes live in the lap of Sahyanin varying density, speaking different dialects and following dissimilar customs. Wayanad district has the highest number of tribes in Kerala, followed by Idukki, Palakkad, Kasaragod, and Kannur districts.

Though various tribal groups are at different levels on the developmental scale, on the whole, these vulnerable and marginalized sects of our demography lag behind on socio-economic and educational fronts. Issues and predicaments like economic backwardness, geographical hazards and disadvantages, language barriers, health issues including congenital ones like sickle cell anaemia, epilepsy and haemophilia, malnutrition, the multiplicity of customs, socio-economic handicaps, ethnic diversities, acquired habits like alcoholism and historic reasons grossly enmesh them and impede their progress in every sphere.

Tribal development is one of the focal areas of the Government. In line with this vision, the State Institute of Educational Management and Training-Kerala (SIEMAT-Kerala) undertook a rapid study in 2022 to identify the prevailing educational issues in tribal areas of Wayanad, Palakkad, Malappuram,

Idukki, and Thiruvananthapuram districts. Armed with the findings and recommendations of this study, SIEMAT-Kerala conceived an innovative program named RAAP (Re-calibration of Approach and Attitude Program). The primary objective of this program is to provide orientation training to educational officers and school heads operating in tribal regions.

SAHYA CHANGE TEAM

Can we truly address the educational challenges existing in the tribal belt through the sole administration of RAAP training to officers and school heads? The answer, unequivocally, is no. There are several other functionaries in the tribal education system of the state like teachers, teachers of Model Residential Schools, mentor teachers etc. functioning at different levels and capacities.

THERE ARE SEVERAL OTHER FUNCTIONARIES IN THE TRIBAL EDUCATION SYSTEM OF THE STATE LIKE TEACHERS, TEACHERS OF MODEL RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS, MENTOR TEACHERS ETC. FUNCTIONING AT DIFFERENT LEVELS AND CAPACITIES.

Health and education standing committee chairpersons of local self-governments too have a decisive role in tribal education. But SIEMAT-Kerala does not have the mandate and resources to reach out to each such category. Hence we thought of forming a state-level collective of master trainers by the name Sahya Change Team to render RAAP training to various target groups

Formation and training of the Sahya Change Team were included in the third hundred days programme of the State government. Fifty-odd committed persons from the ranks and files of our educational system and a few vibrant functionaries from NGOs were handpicked to form the team. A four-day residential workshop was conducted at SulthanBethery, Wayanad from 16th to 19th May 2023 in round table mode to give orientation to the master trainers.

V.Sivankutty, Minister for General Education inaugurated the workshop on 16th May.

Seven segments were incorporated in the workshop to discuss and acquire awareness and skills in areas like change management, convergence, academic interventions & vocationalization, recalibration of approach and attitude, and micro planning. The team also prepared modules for RAAP training in the workshop, based on the forgoing areas. Besides several case studies and success stories were presented and discussed in the workshop.

Sahya Change Team is envisaged as a state-level resource group of well-trained and properly charged change agents whose service can be utilized by any

SEVEN SEGMENTS WERE INCORPORATED IN THE WORKSHOP TO DISCUSS AND ACQUIRE AWARENESS AND SKILLS IN AREAS LIKE CHANGE MANAGEMENT, CONVERGENCE, ACADEMIC INTERVENTIONS & VOCATIONALIZATION, RECALIBRATION OF APPROACH AND ATTITUDE, AND MICRO PLANNING.

agency including the line agencies of the general education department, tribal development department, forest and excise departments, NGOs, and local self-government as resource persons and motivators for planning innovations and for conducting orientation programmes for any target group or functionaries of tribal areas. Of course, members of the Sahya Change Team are going to be the main mentors and motivators of the RAAP training directly conducted by SIEMAT-Kerala. We are also keen to ensure that their transformative influence permeates every corner of tribal education with the help of line agencies, local self-governments, and through ingenious cascading.

SAHYAKIRANAM

Sahyakiranam represents a harmonious blend of meticulous planning, the convergence of ideas,





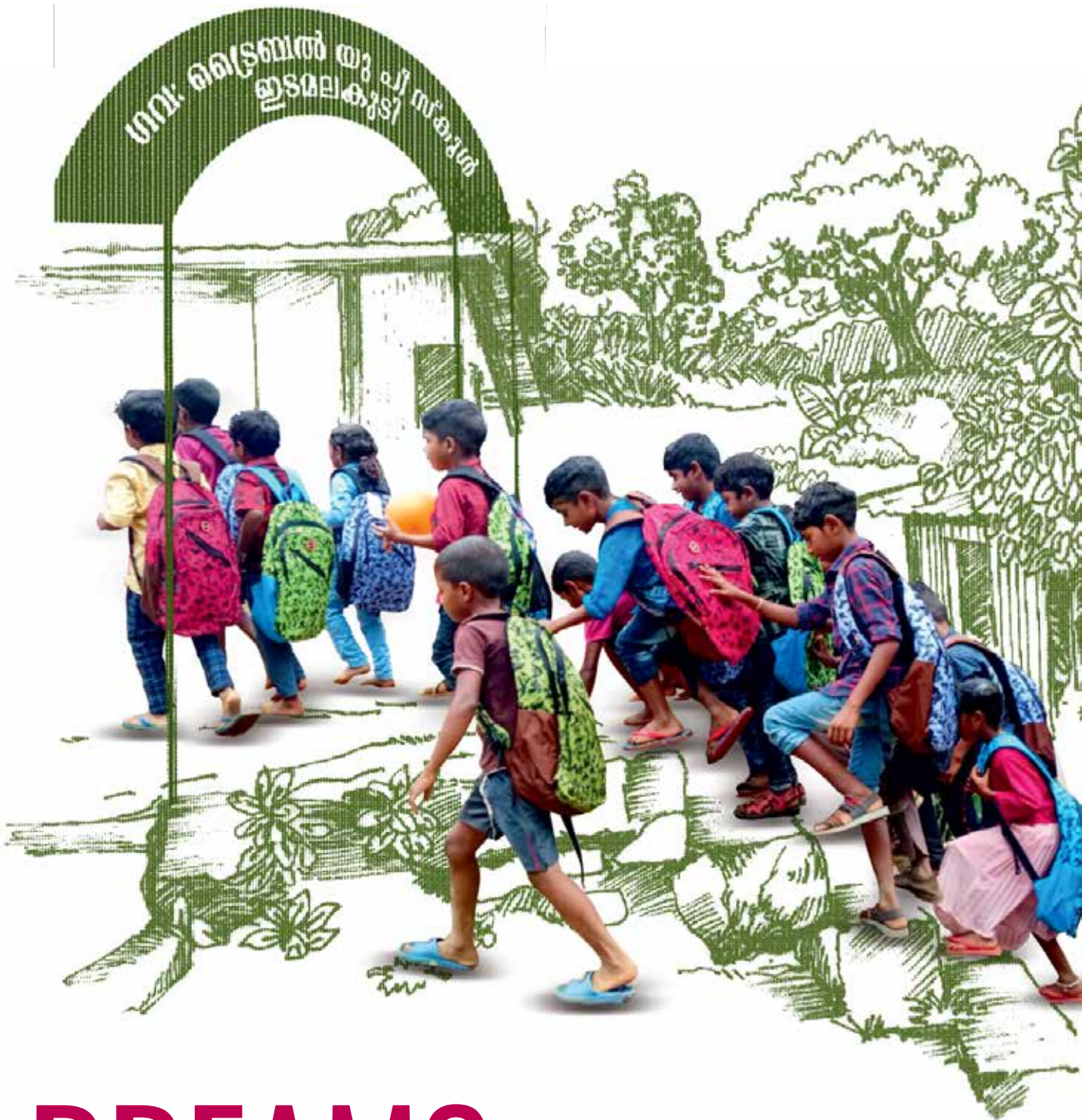
schemes, efforts and resources, remedial measures, nurturing connections, academic experimentations, educational innovations, supportive guidance, and the enhancement of employability. It is a beacon of hope that illuminates the path toward a profound shift in the approach and attitude of all stakeholders involved in the tribal sector.

Sahyakiranam embodies an educational *laissez-faire* approach, inviting the active participation and contribution of non-profit agencies, departments, groups, and individuals. Regardless of their size or resources, all are encouraged to integrate their ideas, schemes, projects, expertise, and resources into this collective mission. (Certainly, there would be

stringent filters to prevent exploiters from entering). Change and convergence will serve as the guiding principles of Sahyakiranam, fostering a dynamic and collaborative movement that harnesses the collective strength of diverse stakeholders.

Sahyakiranam will repudiate conventions, methods, and many sentiments of conformists. Are you still interested in the movement? Then doors are open for you to join the endeavour to make a difference in tribal education and life. Reach out to SIEMAT-Kerala or your local District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) to embark on this transformative journey. Together, we can weave a tapestry of change, igniting a new ray of hope in the lives of tribal communities. ■





DREAMS WITH WINGS



IGNATIUS PEREIRA

Senior Journalist

In a significant step taken by the Kerala Government towards promoting education in the tribal regions of the State, the Government Tribal Lower Primary School at Edamalakudy village off Munnar has been upgraded to an Upper Primary School from this academic year. This transformative move, under directions from Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, marks a milestone in the quest for inclusive education, ensuring that children from marginalised communities receive quality education, nurturing their talents, and enabling them to unlock their full potential.

Nestled within dense forests of the Western Ghats, Edamalakudy is the place where members of the forest dwelling 'Muthuvan' tribe had been living for countless generations. Due to lack of channels for proper contact and communication, Edamalakudy remained isolated and disconnected even from Munnar too for countless generations and that deepened its seclusion within the thick forests.

The formal elevation from LPS to UPS was marked by a colourful function held at the campus on June 1, 2023- the school reopening day after the summer vacation. The highlight of that function was the welcome song in typical Muthuvan dialect rendered by Ms. Anitha Harikumar from the Adimali Block Resource Centre. Though the medium of education at the school is Malayalam, newcomers to the school are not well versed with Malayalam since members of the Muthuvan community speak a tribal Dravidian language that is related to Tamil but not exactly Tamil. Only on reaching Class-III do many of the kids studying there get comfortable with Malayalam. With the school getting upgraded, students there can now hopefully continue studying at the same school till class-VII. The situation till last year was that, after successfully passing out from class-IV, the students had to go to Munnar, Adimali or Marayaur to attend classes from class-V upwards. Because of that problem many turned into dropouts after class-IV. On reopening day there were seven new admissions to class-I and ten out of fourteen who had passed from class -IV took admission in Class-V. In all about 45 students attended the reopening ceremony. Presently the school strength is 67 and those absent could not make it for the function because of the heavy rains in their respective settlements.

A school that lies in the lap of nature

Edamalakudy is a place that remains enclosed on all sides by dense forests- by the Eravikulam National Park on the East, the Anamalai Tiger Reserve of Tamil Nadu in the north, the forests of the Kuttampuzha Range in the west and the Malakkapara forests in the south. The only means of communication with the outside world is a 36 kilo meter rough and rugged track to Munnar that is arduous even for four wheel drive jeeps to navigate. The drive through that



THE GOVERNMENT'S MOMENTOUS DECISION TO UPGRADE THE GOVERNMENT TRIBAL LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOL AT EDAMALAKUDY VILLAGE TO AN UPPER PRIMARY SCHOOL DEMONSTRATES THEIR COMMITMENT TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND EMPOWERING MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES. NESTLED WITHIN THE DENSE FORESTS OF THE WESTERN GHATS, EDAMALAKUDY HAS LONG BEEN ISOLATED, BUT THIS TRANSFORMATIVE STEP AIMS TO PROVIDE QUALITY EDUCATION, UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL OF TRIBAL CHILDREN, AND FOSTER A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR THE REGION.

track is so challenging and laborious that it takes almost four hours for a jeep to cover that distance. Added to that, there are dangerous wild animal threats en route. Jeeps also remain a luxury to the people of Edamalakudy.

The Edamalakudy village comprises an area of 26,000 acres or 106 square kilometers and within it there are 26 settlements of the Mudhuvan community. For many of their daily, but limited, requirements they had made Edamalakudy self-sufficient in many ways. But a basic education facility for their children continued to remain a dream.

Then in the year 1978 the erstwhile Harijan Society based at Edamalakudy initiated steps for providing basic education to those children and started a school there the same year within a settlement called Societykudy. That school was taken over by the State Government in the year 1980 and was christened as the Government Tribal Lower Primary School.

However children from only about four or five settlements out of the 26 could avail of the facility. That was mainly due to the fact that most of the other settlements are located quite far away from Societykudy. Children from those far away settlements faced several travel challenges when it came to reaching the school. One major concern for parents was the presence of wild animals along the terrain through which their children had to travel on foot daily to reach the school and get back home. Additionally, during the rainy season, the situation worsened, as students had to cross a rivulet that often swelled with water, becoming impassable. These factors combined to create substantial obstacles, making it difficult for many students to attend the school.

THE EDAMALAKUDY VILLAGE COMPRISES AN AREA OF 26,000 ACRES OR 106 SQUARE KILOMETERS AND WITHIN IT THERE ARE 26 SETTLEMENTS OF THE MUDHUVAN COMMUNITY. FOR MANY OF THEIR DAILY, BUT LIMITED, REQUIREMENTS THEY HAD MADE EDAMALAKUDY SELF-SUFFICIENT IN MANY WAYS.



This hurdle stood in the way of the educational facility launched there, reaching the intended beneficiaries. To overcome that hurdle the government converted the Tribal LP School at Edamalakudy into a residential school offering separate boarding facilities for boys and girls. The boarding is actually two huts with facilities to accommodate 30 students. While all students are provided with free breakfast and lunch, the boarders are provided with evening tea and supper plus other requirements as a boarder.

Teachers with a different passion

Only those with a passion for working as teachers in such an area will enjoy that life at Edamalakudy. Fortunately all the teachers posted to this school were found to possess that passion. This is in spite of the fact that they have no proper residential facilities there. During the night the teachers sleep in the classrooms and share meals with the students. During their service in the school, they too remain cut off from the outside world. Even mobile phone connectivity is scant. Without



the passion to work as a teacher at Edamalakudy, things could look burdensome and exhaustive for teachers posted there. As of now there are two teachers, Shameer C.A. and Vijin Chandran plus three others drawn from the Samagra Shiksha Kerala unit working as teachers there.

In the year 2010 Edamalakudy was declared as a separate Grama Panchayat and is the only exclusive tribal grama panchayat in the State. With the transition to an Upper Primary School, the institution now boasts improved facilities and resources, tailored to meet the unique needs of its students. Additional classrooms are under construction and to top it all, the construction of a concrete road to Edamalakudy from Munnar is progressing. A Family Health Centre started functioning from Edamalakudy from the month of May 2023.

Says Shameer, "On Friday evenings many of the boarders go to their homes to be with their parents during the weekends. Unfortunately some of those who go from the boarding for the weekend fail to return on Monday and there is no coaxing on

the part of the parents to ensure that they return to school. At this juncture the teachers step in, travel all the way to the settlements to engage in counselling the parents and students so that the students return to school". He said that this is also one of the tasks of the teachers posted at the Edamalakudy School and ensure that the task meets with success.

Shameer said that the elevation to an UP school has come as a big blessing for the Edamalakudy students in that even after passing out from class-1V many students are seen reluctant to leave Edamalakudy and their parents in order to pursue their studies. This was seen as another problem that created dropouts. However with the facility to study up to class-V11 at Edamalakudy itself coming up now, the students will reach a level of maturity that will create an urge in them to go to a high school.

On June 2, 2023, a group of students from the Edamalakudy accompanied by their teachers had travelled all the way to Thiruvananthapuram and had an audience with Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. The students were all thrilled with that journey and meeting the Chief Minister face to face. ■

THE SAGA OF FISHERIES SCHOOLS



ANILKUMAR S.

Deputy Director of Fisheries (PME)

Under the supervision of the Department of Fisheries, ten Government Regional Fisheries Technical Schools are dedicated to uplifting the fishermen community. These schools follow a residential educational system and offer various benefits to students. They receive free textbooks, uniforms, stationary materials, and other essentials. The schools provide newspapers, magazines, and books for entertainment and reading. Additionally, students receive medical care, counseling support, and English proficiency training. Funds are allocated for artistic training, remedial teaching, personality development, and club activities. Motivation and career guidance classes are organized, and special teachers in art, music, and sports are available. The Department of Fisheries also prioritizes allocating funds to provide nutritious food, including fish and meat, to children, emphasizing their well-being.

Dr. V.V Velukutty Arayan Memorial Government Regional Fisheries Technical High School, Karunagapalli

The school consists of a two-storied building comprising of a hostel, mess hall, auditorium and dormitories, a kitchen and a wide enclosure. Government Regional Fisheries Technical High School, Karunagapalli has been leading the way with 100% pass rate for the SSLC examination for the last 7 years with excellent academic standards.

Government Regional Fisheries Technical High School, Thevara

There is a facility to give admission to 120 children in 8th, 9th and 10th classes. This residential school provides free accommodation for boys also. This school has modernized classrooms and library facilities. The school has lab facilities also. Special teaching facility is available for Communicative English and sports and Taekwondo.



Government Regional Fisheries School Valiyathura

Free education is provided to 120 children in classes 8, 9 and 10 with a hostel facility. Becoming a centre of excellence, this school provides the best quality of learning. As part of making Fisheries School a centre of excellence, a new school building was inaugurated in August 2019 and a new hostel building in April 2023.

Government Fisheries School, Arthunkal

This school achieved 100 % success for 15 consecutive years. Activities are being carried out to make the school a center of excellence under the leadership of the Local Self-Government, Fisheries Department, Sports Council, Health Department, Excise Department and Police Department. Yoga, drawing and craft teachers have been appointed to increase the physical fitness and concentration of the children.

GRFTHS, Chavakkad

Students of Chavakkad Government Regional Fisheries Technical High School are given special coaching and counselling to face the exam with more confidence by including in the Vidyatheeram scheme. The students are trained systematically and continuously to clear the exams, which is the biggest advantage of this school. Apart from this, all the students are given special training in communicative English, Special Tuition, Arts, Music, Craft Training, Yoga Training, Special Coaching Caretaker Services for Artistic Training, Motivational Career Guidance Classes and Microteaching by experts for in-depth study of various subjects are provided for the improvement of students.

Government Regional Fisheries Technical High School & Vocational Higher Secondary School, Beypoor

Running in residential mode, this school offers free accommodation for boys also. Being a center of excellence in education, this institution has been achieving 100% pass rate continuously since the academic year 2016-17. Classes are conducted by teachers who are experts in communicative English, yoga and painting. Football training is also provided especially.

Government Regional Fisheries Technical High School, Azheekal, Kannur

Running on a residential basis, girls are given the facility to study as day scholars. The school also has a gymnasium with state-of-the-art equipment for the students staying and studying here to maintain their physical health. This school has been able to produce 100 per cent results in 10th standard for the last 15 years by bringing talented teachers and giving micro-teaching classes.

Government Regional Fisheries Technical High School, Kanjangad

In the academic year 2022-23, 91 students were studying in classes 8, 9 and 10 in three divisions. GRFTHS for Girls Kanhangad has been excelling in extra-curricular areas for the past seven years. The school has managed to excell in fisheries schools in state in SSLC results for the academic year. ■

GRFTHS, Koyilandi

GRFTHS, Koyilandi provides education for children in classes 8, 9 and 10. This residential school also provides free accommodation for girls. The school has a smart classroom, library with a good collection of books, laboratory facility, computer lab and stage. Girls are given basketball training. A caretaker facility is provided to the children staying in the hostel to provide tuition and help them in their studies.

GRFTHS Tanur

A total of 120 boys were admitted to the school with 40 boys in class 8, 40 boys in class 9 and 40 boys in class 10. From 2019, more than 50 per cent of admissions were given to girls. Apart from this, special training in communicative English is also provided to all the students. The excellence achieved by the school in extra-curricular subjects and the excellence of basic facilities attracts more children to the school.



The Changing Landscape

Building a Competent & Innovative Workforce through Skill Development Centers

KERALA'S SUCCESS IN EDUCATION HAS LED TO ALMOST UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO SECONDARY EDUCATION, BUT A LARGE NUMBER OF EDUCATED YOUTHS LACK THE NECESSARY JOB SKILLS, CREATING A SCARCITY OF HIGHLY TRAINED WORKERS AND A SIGNIFICANT UNEMPLOYMENT ISSUE.



DR. B. SHAJI

State Program Officer
Samagra Shiksha Kerala

National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) in General Education Kerala has been implemented successfully in the State of Kerala at the Higher Secondary level from the academic year 2018-19 onwards under the scheme of 'vocationalisation of School Education

under Samagra". The scheme is escalated and 48 job roles from 21 different sectors are being instructed in 1100 batches of 389 Higher Secondary Schools – Vocational, as part of NSQF. Around 30000 students are enrolling in these courses every year. Since the job roles available in the PSSCIVE's (Pandit Sunderlal Sharma Central Institute for Vocational Education, a constituent unit of NCERT) list are insufficient and inapt, the State started to take suitable job roles directly from the National Qualification Register (NQR) too. Kerala has the highest number of NSQF job roles in the school sector, especially at the higher secondary level.



KT GVHSS for Girls, Manacaud, Thiruvananthapuram

Skill Development Centers

The proposed Skill Development Centres in the State aim to produce competent youths below 21 years at a decent work regime that would ensure a good standard of living. Skill Development Centers (SDCs) are to be established under the STARS (Strengthening Teaching Learning and Results for States) Scheme, with 40% share by the State Government and 60% by the Central Government as well as financial support from the World Bank. 210 SDCs will be started soon from the approved 236 ones under this project. The centres in each district were selected by District administrators such as District Collectors, District Panchayat Authorities, and the officials from the Department of General Education. The selection was done by ensuring at least one SDC in every Block so that every student in the State would have access to the skill ecosystem. The list of SDCs was then approved

by the State Government. The suggested courses (Job roles at Level 3/4) were finalized by the State level team under the headship of the Director of General Education by analyzing the skill gap studies and training supports available in different parts of the State. Maximum efforts were taken to select new-generation courses, and these were allotted to schools in such a way that the same course will not be an existing one in the HSS - Vocational.

SDCs offer an opportunity to those who missed formal vocational education during their school days. The centres aim to develop skills among Out of School Children who complete class X, students registered in SCOLE Kerala, and Higher Secondary and Higher Secondary - Vocational students. There will not be any course fee and some seats will be reserved for the students belonging to socio-economically weaker sections. Separate batches / enough reservations will be given to different categories of Children with Special Needs.



There will be 2 job roles from different sectors and 25 students per batch in each SDC. Even though the minimum qualification for entry to the course is Class X, the qualifications prescribed by national curricula are necessary.

Training Delivery

The training delivery will be done by establishing good labs, hiring good trainers, and through good partnerships with industries. Labs with enough tools and equipment will be established in these schools. Construction for 50 SDCs has been approved and will be started soon. Industry Experts' Interactions and On Job Training will be part of the curricula. These activities, along with placements will be done with the support of 'Industry Training Partners' in each Center. Apart from the course curricula developed by SSCs, a foundation module consisting of Life skills, Entrepreneurship Skills etc. will also be imparted to all students who enter the SDCs. Proper career counselling and motivation will also be given for designing their career path.

The assessment process will be done by the Examination Wing of the Department of General Education (VHSE Wing) and the responsibility for implementation is given to the Department of General Education (VHSE Wing) and Samagra Shiksha Kerala. A Research wing in the State will be effective for "skill gap analysis", for Q- filing the required curricula, developing curricula for the job

roles from NQR, ensuring quality in skilling, etc.

Partnerships in Skill Development Centers

Proper implementation of SDCs will be ensured through the fruitful collaboration of various departments such as Industries, Local Self Government and Labour Departments. Quality skill training will be ensured with the help of Industries and Sector Skill Councils (SSC). It is planned to get support from various industry organisations and labour organisations at all levels.

The right skill development can empower the young community of the state of Kerala, reduce un- and underemployment, increase productivity, and improve the standard of living. The development of skills can contribute to structural transformation and economic growth by enhancing employability and labour productivity and helping the state to become more competitive in the Knowledge Economy. In future, these SDCs will be developed as "Centres of Skill Excellence" with the help of the Skill Centre Development Committee to be formed.

Vocationalisation of school education from the primary can be effectively done through these centres in the hub and spoke model. It will also be a great asset for the local community where other skill training of different agencies can also be conducted at the same centre with optimal utilisation of resources. ■

Leading the Way in Education and Innovation



Rasheed Anappuram

PTA President
Government Girls Higher Secondary
School Cottonhill
TVM

Asia's largest school for girl students, a total of 3855 girl students from UP to Plus Two, state-of-the-art learning methods inside high-tech classrooms and excellence in extra-curricular activities along with an unparalleled academic track record, the Govt. Girls Higher Secondary School, Cotton Hill in Thiruvananthapuram stands out as a shining example of the public education initiative of the Pinarayi Vijayan government.

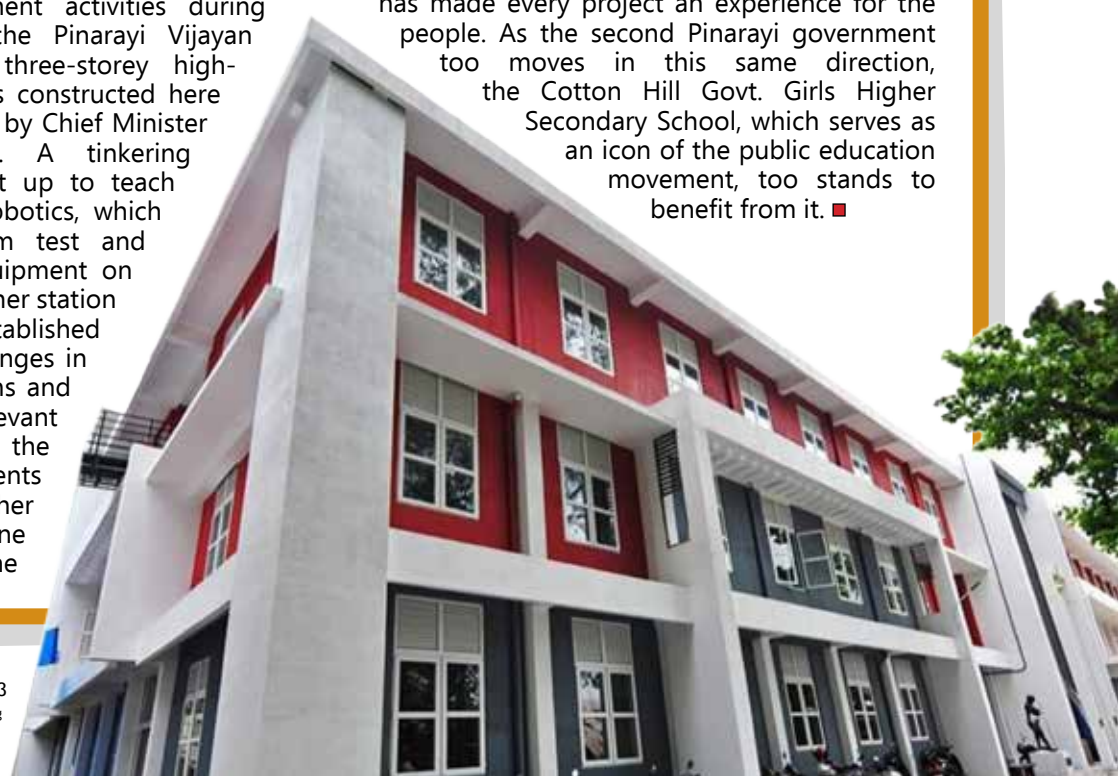
The legacy of this institution is shared by several great personalities, from the likes of poets Sugathakumari and Hridayakumari to the renowned singer K.S Chithra, the first woman IPS officer R Sreelekha and former chief secretary Nalini Neto etc. The school campus here is blessed by the presence of legendary teachers like Parassala Ponnammal, who was a famous musician... Today, this institution is on a development course with the support of the state government.

The school has witnessed a whole lot of development activities during the tenure of the Pinarayi Vijayan government. A three-storey high-tech building was constructed here and thrown open by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. A tinkering lab has been set up to teach children about robotics, which has helped them test and develop new equipment on their own. A weather station too has been established to detect the changes in weather conditions and disseminate relevant information to the public. The students here visit the weather station on a routine basis and examine

and record the volume of rain, wind direction and temperature etc. Works are now on to launch a state-of-the-art clinic to ensure the health of the students here. The project, the works which are being carried out with the support of the city corporation, is being established at a cost of Rs. 38 lakhs. Additional works worth one crore rupees such as the construction of the new roof, laying tiles in classrooms, girls-friendly toilet etc too are being taken up.

To strengthen the security in the school campus, a CCTV network has been installed at a cost of eight and a half lakh rupees received from Minister Antony Raju's MLA fund. A new bus too has been allotted to the school. Rs.3.90 crore has been sanctioned from the KIFB for constructing a state-of-the-art school ground—a project that is expected to give a major facelift to the school. The project, which also comprises an array of other facilities like a kitchen, dining hall, amenity center and sports center along with the ground has already received technical approval. Once the project is materialised, the school is expected to make a quantum jump in the field of sports and games. Other projects including an open fitness centre and an indoor shuttle court are under active consideration by the sports department.

The greatest aspect of the first Pinarayi government is that instead of mere verbose, it has made every project an experience for the people. As the second Pinarayi government too moves in this same direction, the Cotton Hill Govt. Girls Higher Secondary School, which serves as an icon of the public education movement, too stands to benefit from it. ■





Through The

‘LENS’

Revolutionising Education with
Cutting-Edge Content Creation Hub



K. ANVAR SADATH
CEO, KITE & VICTERS

Making technology accessible to all, KITE Lens is paving the way for a more inclusive and innovative education system in Kerala. KITE Lens has the potential to revolutionize the way educational content is produced and



consumed. By providing teachers with the resources and support for creating quality content, the hub helps bridge the gap between traditional classroom learning and digital learning

Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE) under General Education Department has been phenomenal in transforming the schools into (Information & Communication Technology (ICT) enabled knowledge centers at par with global standards. Having successfully implemented the largest ICT projects in Education in the Country-the Hi-Tech projects in 16000 schools, KITE has revolutionized

the usage of Digital Media in Education. The KITE VICTERS channel, operational since 2006, has been the flag-bearer of digital education during the COVID-19 pandemic times, with its 'First Bell' Digital Classes which benefited over 50 lakh students in the State.

The development of quality educational content for schools has always been a daunting task. KITE has been able to create high-quality educational content through a team of in-house producers, editors and graphic designers and predominantly of them are teachers. Most of the content development for KITE VICTERS happens from the Studio located at Thiruvananthapuram. During the pandemic, the 14 district offices of KITE also functioned as regional content creation centers. With the increasing demand for digital learning, the need for quality educational content is higher than ever before. The KITE Lens, India's first Educational Content Creation Hub of this sort was established at the Regional Resource Center of KITE at Edappally, Kochi on 15th May 2023. KITE Lens hub features best-in-class studio facilities including 4K video recording, Sound treated shooting floor, Cyclorama, Chroma facilities, Sound-Visual mixing, Graphics-Editing suite, Sound treatment facility etc.

"KITE Lens evolved as part of our learning during the COVID-19 phase, for the need of decen-tralized educational digital content development. Featuring an advanced studio and the latest audio-video equipment, KITE Lens will act as a single window facility for digital content creation and also empower teachers in creating new-age digital resources. Teachers with innovative ideas can walk into

THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY EDUCATIONAL CONTENT FOR SCHOOLS HAS ALWAYS BEEN A DAUNTING TASK. KITE HAS BEEN ABLE TO CREATE HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATIONAL CONTENT THROUGH A TEAM OF IN-HOUSE PRODUCERS, EDITORS AND GRAPHIC DESIGNERS AND PREDOMINANTLY OF THEM ARE TEACHERS.

THE CONCEPT OF AN EDUCATIONAL CONTENT CREATOR'S HUB IS AN INNOVATIVE AND EXCITING DEVELOPMENT IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION. IT IS POISED AS A ONE-STOP-SHOP THAT PROVIDES ALL THE NECESSARY RESOURCES TO PRODUCE ENGAGING AND INFORMATIVE EDUCATIONAL CONTENT.

KITE Lens and they can see their idea transforming into digital content with the help of the facilities in the Hub", said V. Sivankutty, Minister for General Education, while inaugurating the Hub as part of a 100-day programme of the Government.

The concept of an educational content creator's hub is an innovative and exciting development in the field of education. It is poised as a one-stop-shop that provides all the necessary resources to produce engaging and informative educational content. Teachers can receive training on how to create the content, and access to a fully equipped

studio featuring shooting and editing facilities. Further, the hub also offers support to teachers in publishing their educational content, including assistance with uploading the content to online platforms for a wider audience. Besides helping teachers, the hub will also facilitate students with access to quality educational content that is easy to access and engaging.

KITE Lens has the potential to revolutionize the way educational content is produced and consumed. By providing teachers with the resources and support for creating quality content, the hub helps bridge the gap between traditional classroom learning and digital learning. KITE Lens also supports low-cost educational content creation. Teachers will be able to produce engaging and informative educational content using simple tools like smartphones. The ability to create such cost-effective content using smartphones is a ground-breaking concept in the educational content creation domain. This will democratize the production of educational content, making it accessible to teachers from all walks of life. The use of smartphones for educational content creation is a cost-effective and efficient way to produce





quality content. With the growing demand for online learning, the ability to create content using smartphones will be a game-changer for teachers and students alike. By making this technology accessible to all, the educational content creators' hub is paving the way for a more inclusive and innovative education system.

In addition to content creation, KITE Lens would also act as a Training facility for highlighting the use of smartphones to create videos, animations, whiteboard videos, and even AR and VR content. This will enable teachers to produce content without any limitations, regardless of their location or financial resources. By using affordable tools that are easily accessible, teachers will be able to create content that is both cost-effective and of high quality. This will also have a positive impact on students, who will have access to a wider range of educational resources, regardless of their location or financial resources. KITE LENS is truly creating history in the educational content creation domain.

KITE will provide specific training for teachers in using the innovative facilities at the Hub, making them capable of creating world-class educational content with ease. KITE Lens is a perfect example of a modern video shooting facility which need not require sophisticated equipment which mandates heavy financials but can enable content creation using even common smartphones. KITE plans to set up similar hubs in other districts also. ■

Features of the hub

- 4K video recording capabilities
- Sound-treated shooting floor
- Cyclorama and Chroma facilities
- Sound-Visual mixing capabilities
- Graphics-Editing suite
- Sound treatment facility
- Advanced studio with latest audio-video equipment
- Training facility for teachers on content creation using smartphones
- Support for publishing and uploading educational content
- Enables low-cost educational content creation
- Facilitates production of engaging and informative content
- Promotes accessibility and inclusivity in education
- Offers resources to bridge the gap between traditional and digital learning
- Empowers teachers to create new-age digital resources
- Facilitates the creation of videos, animations, whiteboard videos, and AR/VR content

Nurturing Minds Healing Hearts

THE PSYCHO SOCIO COUNSELLING PROGRAM IS IMPLEMENTED IN THE GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS OF KERALA, BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT, TO BETTER THE MENTAL HEALTH OF ADOLESCENT CHILDREN. THIS PROJECT ALSO INTENDS TO GIVE SHELTER TO MANY HELPLESS CHILDREN WHO FACE MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL TRAUMAS.



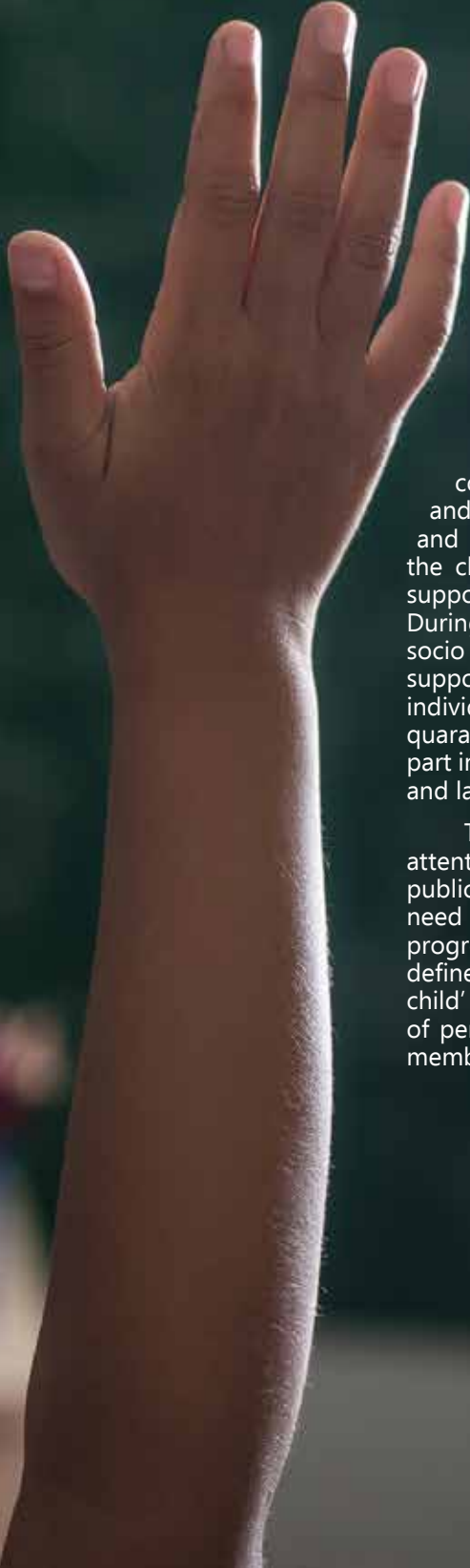
DHANYA ABID

State General Secretary
Organization of Social Workers & Counsellors

Kerala is the only state who has implemented Psycho socio counselling programme exclusively for its student community. It is a project implemented in the government schools of Kerala, by the Department for Women and Child Development, to better the mental health of adolescent children. Approximately 1200 schools benefit from the project started in 2009.

The chances are very high to fall into treacherous and difficult situations for adolescent children who face vulnerable situations even inside their homes. Psycho socio counselling program aims to guide children by providing constant and frequent interventions to find out and analyse the problems they face in their day-to-day life. This project also intends to give shelter to many helpless children who face mental and emotional traumas. Many children who are the victims of mental, physical, or emotional abuse are brought back to normal life and boosted with confidence. Teens, being in the prime phase of their life, face stress due to 'fault finding' and blaming nature of the parents and elders.

THIS PROJECT ALSO CONDUCTS PARENT AWARENESS CLASSES AND PARENTING CLINICS ON A WEEKLY BASIS IN PANCHAYATHS IN COOPERATION WITH ICDS PROJECTS. THERE ARE OTHER TYPES OF COUNSELLING THAT PROVIDE LEGAL SUPPORT AND AID TO THE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION. IN POCSO-RELATED CASES, THE CHILDREN ARE GIVEN LEGAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT WITH MUCH CARE AND ATTENTION



Such frequent maltreatment consequently makes them rebel and drug addicts. Identifying and providing them with individual counselling, group counselling, and referral measures if required, is one of the prime responsibilities of this project. It also coordinates various resources together to face the issues which are beyond the control of mere counselling programmes. This project also conducts parent awareness classes and parenting clinics on a weekly basis in panchayaths in cooperation with ICDS projects. There are other types of counselling that provide legal support and aid to the victims of domestic violence and exploitation. In POCSO-related cases, the children are given legal and emotional support with much care and attention. During the COVID pandemic, the psycho socio counselling community gave unique support by interacting with the quarantined individuals and addressing their stress during quarantine days. This project's staff also took part in the rescue operations during the flood and landslides.

This project has been drawing wide attention from the experts and common public alike as it caters to the most important need of our society,- the comprehensive progress of our children. It may be even defined as an attempt to re-invent the 'lost child' and inculcate in him the positive aspects of personality to make him or her a worthy member of society. ■



COMMITMENT THY NAME IS SPC

Role of SPC in the prevention of drug abuse

THE ROLE OF STUDENTS IN CREATING A DRUG-FREE CAMPUS IS CRUCIAL.

STUDENTS CAN PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN PROMOTING A HEALTHY AND DRUG-FREE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH THEIR ACTIONS, INVOLVEMENT, AND INITIATIVES. STUDENT POLICE CADETS (SPCS) PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN CREATING A DRUG-FREE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT. AS MEMBERS OF THE POLICE CADET PROGRAM, STUDENTS ARE PROVIDED WITH SPECIALIZED TRAINING AND OPPORTUNITIES TO PROMOTE SAFETY, DISCIPLINE, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT WITHIN THEIR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.



They can encourage healthy and drug-free activities, such as sports, clubs, and community service, to divert attention away from drugs.

Vigilance and Reporting: SPCs are trained to be vigilant and observant. They keep an eye out for any suspicious activities or signs of drug abuse within the campus. If they come across any such incidents, they should report them to the appropriate authorities, such as school administrators or law enforcement agencies.

Collaborating with Law Enforcement: SPCs have a strong partnership with local law enforcement agencies to address the issue of drugs on campus. This collaboration can involve joint awareness programs, presentations by law enforcement officials, and providing information about drug-related incidents to the authorities for further action.

Peer Counselling and Support: SPCs provide peer counselling and support to students who are struggling with drug-related issues. They can create a safe and confidential environment where students can seek help, share their concerns, and receive guidance. SPCs can also connect students with appropriate resources such as counsellors, support groups, or rehabilitation centres.

Policy Advocacy: Student police cadets actively advocate for the implementation of strict anti-drug policies within the campus. They work with school administration, student councils,



MOHAMED SHAFI. K

Vigilance Officer, Kerala Excise
Additional State Nodal Officer,
SPC Kerala

The SPC programme in the state has carried out a remarkable role in curbing the threat of drug abuse in schools and public places. The following are some of the effective ways SPCs engage to prevent drug abuse in schools and society.

Education and Awareness: SPCs actively engage in educating their fellow students about the dangers and consequences of drug abuse. They organize workshops, seminars, and awareness campaigns to raise awareness about the harmful effects of drugs, addiction, and the importance of maintaining a drug-free campus.

Peer Influence: SPCs act as positive role models for their peers. By living a drug-free lifestyle themselves, they inspire others to follow suit.

SPCS HAVE A STRONG PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF DRUGS ON CAMPUS. THIS COLLABORATION CAN INVOLVE JOINT AWARENESS PROGRAMS, PRESENTATIONS BY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS, AND PROVIDING INFORMATION ABOUT DRUG-RELATED INCIDENTS TO THE AUTHORITIES FOR FURTHER ACTION.

and other relevant bodies to develop and enforce policies that discourage drug use, such as random drug testing, awareness programs, and disciplinary actions for offenders.

Community Engagement: SPCs engage with the wider community to spread the message of drug-free campuses. They can participate in community events, collaborate with local organizations, and organize outreach programs to involve parents, teachers, and community leaders in the fight against drug abuse.

Interventions and Impact

Counselling Services- SPC is very active in handling the victims by providing them counselling and follow-up assistance. The Chiri helpline set up for dealing with the problems of children has gone miles in this regard. The details of children got counselling through Chiri helpline during the year 2021, 2022, 2023 (till April) is given below.

Year	Total	Below 18 (Children)
2021	2704	52
2022	5783	300
2023 (till April)	1324	81
Total	9811	433

Public Opinion Survey

The public opinion survey conducted by Kerala State Excise Department by engaging 1000 SPC units in the state was an eye opener to the authorities to take strict action against drug abuse. The aim of the study was to find out whether substance abuse is increasing in Kerala and to identify the sources and trafficking of drugs. 20 SPCs from each unit were assigned to collect data from five participants belonging to different categories.

School Protection Groups (SPG)

SPG is a body comprising teachers, police officers, parent representatives, social workers, political leaders, businessmen, and drivers to prevent the spread of drugs by identifying their sources and reporting to law enforcement agencies.

Say YES to the Football Campaign

This is a campaign against drug abuse run by SPC in conjunction with the Vimukthi scheme of the Kerala State Excise Department. Through this, cadets understand that the use of intoxicants destroys both the body and the mind. Through





this campaign, cadets are giving a strong message to society that life is addiction.

Different impact studies conducted by KPMG, Kerala State Planning Board, SCERT Kerala etc have proven that student police cadets take

the lead role in curbing drug abuse on the school campuses. The studies also testify that student police cadets influence their peers and help them to stay away from unhealthy lifestyles. The testimony of the Honourable High Court of Kerala about the interventions of student police cadets in various fields including the prevention of drug abuse is a great source of energy for the stakeholders of the project.

Establishing a drug-free environment requires a multi-faceted approach that involves education, awareness, enforcement, and support systems for those affected by drug abuse. As far as the SPC programme is concerned, it is important to note that while student police cadets play a significant role in creating a drug-free campus, they always work in collaboration with school administrators, law enforcement agencies, and other relevant stakeholders. ■



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TESTIMONY OF KERALA'S COMMITMENT IN ENSURING WORLD CLASS EDUCATION

MUNDERI GOVERNMENT HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL



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