

CHAPTER I

PREFACE

The Government of Kerala, *vide* GO (Rt) No 168/05/I&PR dated 28.10.2005 constituted a Committee to study and furnish recommendations for the expansion of visual media and web sections of the I&PR Department as follows:

1. Shri. K. Kunhikrishnan, former Deputy Director General, Prasar Bharathi Corporation of India as *Chairman*
2. Shri. K.L. Sreekrishna Das, former Director, Public Relations, Press Information Bureau, Government of India as *Member*
3. Shri. S. Biju, Regional Editor, Asianet News as *Member*
4. Shri. K. Manoj Kumar, Information Officer, was assigned to assist and liaise with the Committee for its functioning and Co-ordination.

Shri V.P. Pramod Kumar, Assistant Cultural Development Officer, has also assisted the Committee for its functioning.

Terms of Reference

1) Modernization programme for the Information and Public Relations Department for the next ten years.

2) Organisational structure in the Department to meet the challenges of the changing media scenario. Arrangements for positive utilization of different media for PR management. Recommendations on Consequential changes.

- 3) Modernization of existing Organizational structure.
- 4) Steps to be taken for optimum utilization of visual and web media.
- 5) Assessing the feasibility of establishing a Television Channel for Government of Kerala.
- 6) The need for human resources for a modernized organizational structure.
- 7) Enhancement of Budget allocation for the activities of I&PR Department for the changing media needs.

The committee held 13 meetings as follows:

Sl.No	Date	Venue	Target Group
1.	14.11.2005	PR Chamber	Interaction with Shri K.C. Venu, DPR
2.	17.11.2005	Gorky Bhavan	Interaction with Shri Oommen Chandy, Hon''ble Chief Minister
3.	24.11.2005	South Conference Hall, Secretariat, Trivandrum	Interaction with the officials of PRD
4.	30.11.2005	Ernakulam	Interaction with the PRD officials
5.	12.12.2005	Kozhikkode	Interaction with the PRD officials.
6.	13.12.2005	Kasaragod	Interaction with the Press
7.	14.12.2005	Kannur	Interaction with the Press
8.	22.2.2006	PR Chamber	Interaction with the Press
9.	23.2.2006	North Committee Room, Secretariat, Trivandrum	Video Conferencing with Delhi Office

10.	24.2.2006	P R Chamber, Secretariat, Trivandrum	Discussion with Shri B. Jayachandran, President, Press Club, Trivandrum.
11.	24.2.2006	P R Chamber, Secretariat, Trivandrum	Discussion with Shri C. Gouridasan Nair, President, Kerala Union of Working Journalists.
12.	25.2.2006	P R Chamber, Secretariat, Trivandrum	Discussion with Shri N.P. Chandrasekhar, Executive Editor, Kairali TV
13.	10.3.2006 11.3.2006	Hyderabad	Discussion with the Commissioner of Public Relations and Other Officials, Govt of Andhra Pradesh.
14.	27.5.2006	Govt. Secretariat, Trivandrum	Discussion with Shri Jiji Thomson, Principal Secretary and Senior Officers of I&PRD, Govt. of Kerala.

Apart from the above mentioned discussions, the Committee met eleven days to draft the final report. The Committee has submitted an interim report to the then Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Oommen Chandy on January 18, 2006.

Minutes including significant points and suggestions that emerged in the meetings are attached at Annexure – I. Copies of representation received from individuals, associations etc. are at Annexure – II.

Chapter – II

INTRODUCTION

2.1 There has been an enormous and unprecedented change in the global media scene. In fact, media have become a major driving force for the economy of all the major countries with the emergence of globalisation and liberalisation. In India, the media, especially the

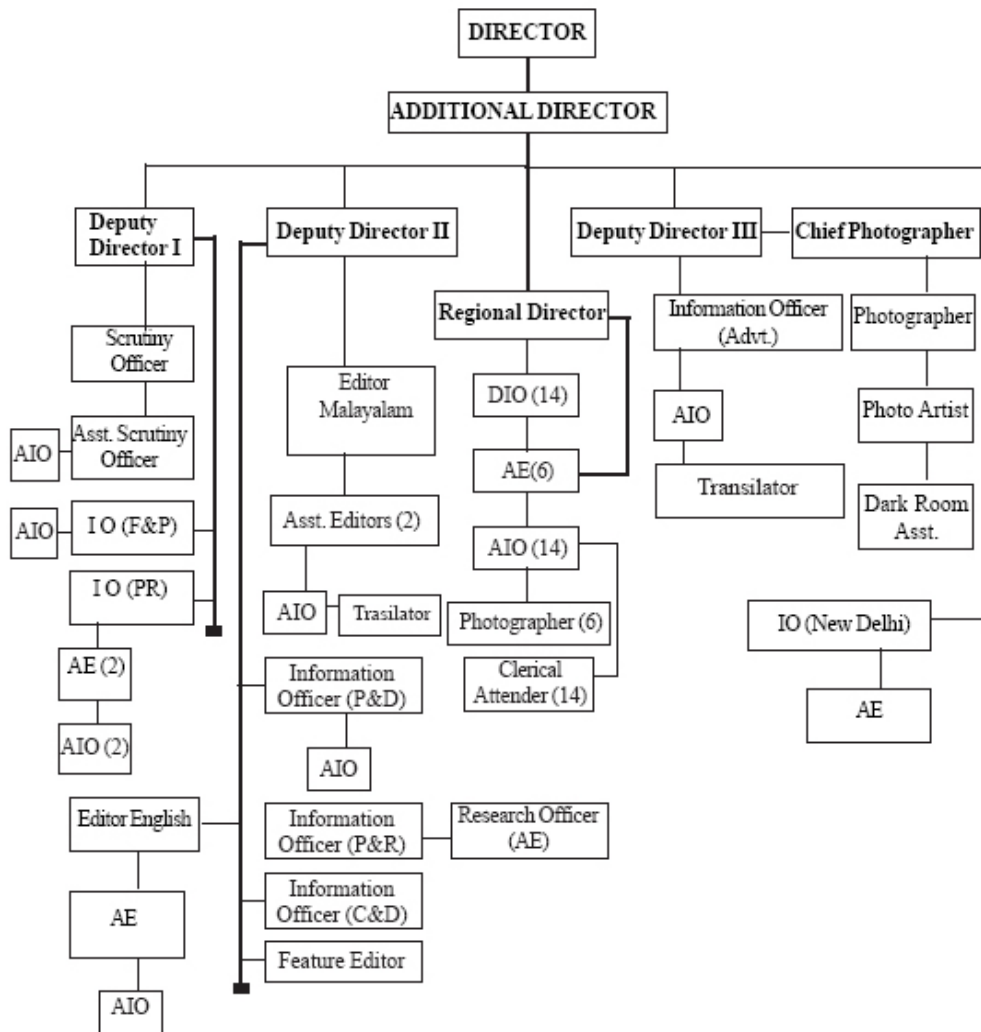
electronic media, have been growing at a Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of nearly 20%. The importance of the dynamic and emerging media hence needs no reiteration. Changes in the communication media are occurring in all sectors *viz.*, traditional, print, electronic, conventional and New Media. The New Media and Multimedia have made geographical barriers non-existent, as media like the Internet (World Wide Web) can be accessed from all over the world. While physical barriers have become irrelevant, media have also become more localised. They have become interactive and more personal. Information has become available through the Electronic and Print Media by the click of a mouse. To cite the example of electronic media, till the early 90's, Kerala had only one television channel, Doordarshan, which used to telecast only limited hours programmes in Malayalam. With the advent of the satellite television in the early 90s, and the resultant changes in transmission and delivery/distribution, the number of Malayalam television channels running round the clock, presently has gone up to 14. Out of these, at least three are exclusive news channels, catering to insatiable interest of Malayalees for news and news related programmes, current affairs, analysis and comments. The number of radio stations had also gone up from 3 to 6 during the last decade. Kerala, as with the rest of the country, is also poised for a revolution in radio, with 17 new FM Radio Stations, coming up in the private sector in the immediate future. Six more Television Channels are in the pipeline, making the total number of TV Channels to 20, for an audience of 30 million.

2.2 In accordance with the changes in the electronic media scene, it is imperative that the Information and Public Relations Directorate of

Government of Kerala is also restructured and re-organised to cope up with the needs of the changed media scenario. The number of newspapers and periodicals has grown up from 742 to 1483 and the total circulation of news papers and periodicals also increased manifold in several millions. There are newspapers and periodicals catering to various interest groups. All the major dailies in the State have, in the last decade, started district editions and each of these district editions has four to five local editions and pages carrying local news, leading to localisation of content. The expansion in all the media sectors has been at an all time high and it is poised for further growth. There has been growth not only in size but also in quality, and technological expansion resulting in innovative presentation and in content to attract the viewer/ reader/listener. These have been done to capture the market and cannot be whisked away. Any activity relating to any sector, private or public, has to change with the dynamics of the media and the Government media sector has to swim according to the tide. Creativity and innovation should be the watchwords for achieving success in any aspect of the media sector. Connectivity to the last mile and reaching the maximum number of eyeballs is the *mantra* of media now. The existing facilities and structures of the Information and Public Relations Directorate do not offer scope for these as they are stretched beyond justifiable limits making it difficult for the officials of the Directorate to cope up with the changes. It is also worth noting that for more than one decade no change has taken place which is worth noting in the Directorate, while the media scene underwent unprecedented changes. Nor, there were any serious attempts to re-orient the Directorate and modernise the machinery available with it. As the information and media arm of the

Government of Kerala, the Information & Public Relations Directorate has to play a vital and proactive role in publicising the policies and programmes and in the positive image building of the Government, and to meet the ever-increasing needs of both the media and the public.

2.3 The existing organisational structure of the Information & Public Relations Directorate is as follows:



Existing staff position in the Department is as follows:

Directorate

Sl. No.	Designation	Sanctioned Strength	In position	Vacant
1.	Director	1	1	
2.	Addl. Director	1		1
3.	Deputy Directors	3	3	
4.	Information Officer	7	7	
5.	Editor (English)	1	1	
6.	Editor (Feature)	1	1	
7.	Editor (Malayalam)	1	1	
8.	Scrutiny Officer	1	1	
9.	CDO	1	1	
10.	Chief Photographer	1	1	
11.	Assistant Editor	6	5	1
12.	Research Officer	1	1	
13.	Assistant Scrutiny Officer	1	1	
14.	Assistant Information Officer	7	7	
15.	ACDO	1	1	
16.	Manager (Tagore)	1	1	
17.	Translator	5		5
18.	Accounts Officer	1	1	
19.	Deputy Secretary	1	1	
20.	Confidential Assistant	3	3	
21.	Section Officer/ Superintendent	8	8	

22.	Assistants	23	23	
23.	Designer	1		1
24.	Artist	1		1
25.	Photographer	1	1	
26.	Computer Operator	1		1
27.	Photo Artist	1	1	
28.	Cinema Operator	4	3	
29.	Photo Printer	1	1	
30.	DTP Operator	1		1
31.	Photo Attender	1	1	
32.	Clerical Attender	5	5	
33.	Dark Room Assistant	1	1	
34.	Roneo Operator/Packer/Peon	27	23	4
35.	Driver	4	4	
36.	Publicity Officer	1	1	
37.	Binder	1	1	
38.	Typist	1	1	

**District Information Office / Regional Deputy Director's Office /
New Delhi Office**

Sl. No.	Designation	Sanctioned Strength	In position	Vacant
1.	Regional Deputy Director	7	6	1
2.	District Information Officer	15	15*	
3.	Asst. Editor	7	5	2
4.	Asst. Information Officer	14	13	1
5.	Confidential Assistant	1	1	
6.	Cinema Operator	15	12	2
7.	Clerk / UDC	22	20	
8.	Photographer	6	6	
9.	Photo Attender	2	2	
10.	Typist	21	21	
11.	Clerical Attender	10	10	
12.	Driver	21	19	
13.	Peon	22	22	

14.	Van Cleaner	2	2	
15.	Roneo Operator	4		
16.	Adrema Machine Operator	1		
Total Staff strength of Department				= 306

* including Information Officer in New Delhi.

Source: Appendix I to the detailed budget estimates 2006 – 07 (Details of Staff), Finance Department, Government of Kerala, Page 319.

Chapter III
FUNCTIONS

The objectives/functions of the Directorate of Information & Public Relations of the Government of Kerala are as follows.

- 1) To inform the public about the activities of the Government and its various Departments through media and other agencies/sources
- 2) To serve as a vehicle for providing feedback to the Government from the responses from the public through media and other sources.
- 3) To serve as an effective link between the public and the Government.
- 4) Publicizing the policies and programmes of the Government.
- 5) Giving wide publicity of the developmental and welfare programmes undertaken by the Government through print, visual, and. audio media.
- 6) Publishing of two monthlies viz., “Kerala Calling” in English and “Janapatham” in Malayalam and two monthly

news letters, viz., “Vikasana Samanwayam” in Malayalam and “Kerala Interface” in English.

- 7) Maintenance of Kerala Government’s Official web portal www.kerala.gov.in which receives millions of hits monthly.
- 8) Publishing of brochures on social and developmental issues.
- 9) As a feed back agency of the Government for public opinion on its functioning.
- 10) Publishing of books on subjects relating to culture, education, traditional art forms etc.
- 11) Functioning of information offices and news dissemination centres in all districts of the state and in the National Capital, New Delhi.
- 12) Organising Cultural Programmes in and outside the State, Screening of feature films, documentaries and short films either produced or purchased by the Department, in conformity with the social and cultural interests of the state.
- 13) Conducting study tours of journalists to culturally and developmentally significant places and also arranging their inter-state visits.
- 14) Extending financial assistance to the Kerala Press Academy which conducts Post Graduate and Diploma courses in Journalism and Advertising.
- 15) Function as the professional agency for Government advertisements.

- 16) Issuing of various Departmental advertisements to newspapers and settling advertisement charges.
- 17) Fixing advertisement rates of different media through negotiation
- 18) Awarding media professionals of excellence; extending financial assistance to journalists and their dependents in distress.
- 19) Pension to retired journalists
- 20) Pension to eminent journalists
- 21) Pension to non-journalists in newspaper establishments.
- 22) Providing facilities to media persons for reporting Government functions.
- 23) Organizing publicity programmes with the multi media technology including visual arts.

2.2 In order to achieve the mission and vision, the Department was rechristened as Information and Public Relations Department and was assigned tasks specifically as follows:

Directorate functions through 13 divisions:

The department functions mainly through 13 sections, District Information Offices and Kerala Information Centre, New Delhi. The activities are:

1) Press Release

- To cover official events of Ministers and Senior Officers
- To issue press releases and news follow up
- To impart Press Accreditation facility for journalists

- To arrange Press tours
- To provide video clippings to channels
- To provide Newspapers for Ministers & Senior Officers
- To cover VVIP visits
- To provide News agency service to CM's office.

These activities necessitate working on all days of the year.

Man power provided for the work:

Information Officer	: 1
Asst.Editor	: 2
Asst. Information Officer	: 3

2) Scrutiny Wing

- To give feed back to the Govt. from Press
- Daily & Weekly summing up of News
- To file News papers
- To publish Economic News Digest
- To consolidate news from Other state dailies
- To prepare press clippings for various ministries
- To prepare press clippings in connection with VVIP Visit
- To prepare feedback from the input received from DIO's

Man power provided for the work:

Scrutiny Officer	: 1
Asst. Scrutiny Officer	: 1
AIO	: 1

3) Field Publicity & Exhibition

- To organize thematic exhibition & Film / Video shows

- To preserve audio – video output for the programmes produced by the Department.
- To organize discussions and seminars on Current Affairs
- To produce documentaries on famous personalities
- To purchase audio visual equipments
- To maintain film library
- To distribute films
- Distribution of TV sets and other accessories to DIOs

Man power provided for the work:

Information Officer : 1

4) Advertisement

- To prepare window advertisements from tender notices
- To prepare copy for display ads
- To negotiate with Media on rates of ads
- To fix ad tariff
- To make payment to News Papers for ads published
- To prepare media list
- To procure ad for PRD publications

Man power provided for the work:

Deputy Director : 1

Information Officer : 1

AIOs : 2

Translator : 1

5) Research & Reference

- To monitor periodicity of periodicals and dailies
- Registration of periodicals and books as per PRB Act

- Running a Reference Library and an Information Centre
- Supervise modernisation activities
- Provides examination results to the public
- Compilation of mailing list & Information regarding the State
- To prepare catalogue on writers and their works
- To provide reference library facilities
- To obtain public reaction report
- To purchase reference books
- To collect subscription for PRD publications.

Man power provided for the work:

Information Officer	: 1
Research Officer	: 1

6) Malayalam Editorial

- Publishing of *Janapatham* monthly
- Production of publicity materials
- Preparation of style book
- To maintain rapport with writers at publishing houses
- To prepare speeches and messages for ministers.

Man power provided for the work:

Editor	: 1
Asst. Editor	: 2
Translator	: 1

7) English Editorial

- Production of “Kerala Calling” monthly
- Production of publicity materials in English
- Production of Research books

- To maintain rapport with writers at publishing houses
- To prepare election guide and election report
- Interstate Public Relation work

Man power provided for the work:

Editor	: 1
Asst. Editor	: 1
AIO	: 1

8) Printing & Reprinting

- Production of monthly news letter *Vikasana Samanwayam*
- Monitor printing and reprinting works

Man power provided for the work:

Information Officer	: 1
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9) Feature Editor

- Production of monthly English news letter 'Kerala Interface'
- Compilation of Handbooks

Man power provided for the work:

Information Officer	: 1
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10) Planning & Development

- Preparation of plan schemes
- Content development for Government web portal
- Monitoring *Sutharyakeralam* programme
- Production of Video films
- Development of Digital Archives
- To provide assistance for budget preparaton.

Man power provided for the work:

Information Officer : 1
 AIO : 1

11) Circulation & Distribution

- To give post-printing support to editorial wing
- Monitor circulation & mailing list
- Improve circulation
- Distribution of Publicity materials

Man power provided for the work:

Information Officer : 1

12) Cultural Development Division

- Organizing cultural programmes in and outside the State
- Interstate cultural exchange
- Maintenance of Tagore Theatre
- Republic day float
- Preservation of films
- Compilation of data on Kerala Culture
- Preparation of Audio and Video cassettes
- Co-ordination with other cultural organizations of the State Govt.

Man power provided for the work:

Cultural Development Officer : 1

Asst. CDO	: 1
Manager	: 1
Cinema Operator	: 3

13) Photographic wing:

- Photo documentation
- Photo coverage for News programmes
- Preserve Photo Archives
- Renewal of Contract Photographers
- Indexing of colour transparency and slides.
- To provide Photographs to public on price.

Man power provided for the work:

Chief Photographer	: 1
Photographer	: 1
Photo Artist	: 1
Photographic printer	: 1
Photographic Attender	: 1
Darkroom Asst.	: 1

14) Functions of District Information Officers:

1. Attend meetings convened and functions arranged by District Collector and other Government authorities and releases hand-outs to the media.
2. Co-ordinate media and facilitates coverage of programmes conducted by government departments.
3. Provide photo coverage on significant district/state level government

programmes.

4. Organise cultural activities, seminars, cinema shows, exhibitions at different parts of the district.
5. Maintain Press Release Register and photo register to record the coverage of photos and news stories released by the office everyday.
6. Issue special press-releases on certain occasions
7. Prepare Work – Diary incorporating the activities of a month and send to the Head Office.
8. Attend queries of the public regarding various government activities and welfare schemes.
9. Operate Career News Corner at the Information Centre at the Office of the District Information Officer, which provides for reference almost all publications related to career options in India & abroad.
10. Provide PSC lists and results of various entrance examinations for reference to the public.
11. Sends press cuttings of adverse reports relating to government activities to the concerned ministers & HoDs.
12. Arrange Media Conference for ministers, District Collector and District Panchayat President and other top authorities.
13. Attend sittings of Commissions and Legislative Committees and to give wide publicity.
14. Prepare Public Response Report every month and send to the Head of Department.
15. Dealing with the files of journalists in respect of Press Accreditation,

Journalist Pension Schemes and distribution of different kind of pensions to the journalists.

Function of New Delhi Information Office:

- Arrange media coverage for all Govt. functions including meetings of state ministers with central ministers-arrange press conference-photo coverage- video coverage etc.
- Scrutinize national news papers for news regarding the state or relevant to the state
- To provide required information regarding Kerala
- Organise on behalf of GoK- mega events such as India International Trade Fair, Participation in Republic Day Parade.
- Organise cultural programmes like Malayalam day, Malayalam film festival, Charchavedi programmes etc
- Actively involve in welfare activities of Malayalee community in New Delhi.
- Nodal officer of Malayalam Learning Centres (New initiative of GoK to facilitate learning of Malayalam among non resident Malayalees – More than 100 centres are looked after).

Chapter IV

PRESENT SCENARIO

4.1 The existing structure and the organisation of the Department remains almost the same since its inception. There has been no concomitant development in the number of personnel though their assigned tasks have undergone multifarious changes with the emergence of new media technologies. Training has also been far from adequate. These have resulted in stretching the output of the personnel in the Directorate beyond any limits and tend to affect the quality of output. It is worth mentioning that the Government of India's media organisations have undergone changes in tune with the emerging media scenario dynamics and the personnel have been exposed to training for the new media practices. But it is yet to happen in Kerala, where media awareness is at a high level. While the media technology changed totally, resulting in what is universally called the 'third wave' (as significant as the epoch making Industrial Revolution) and knowledge industry developed manifold, resulting in convergence of

media. The officials of the Directorate have not been exposed to the media technological innovations which should be practiced in a significant manner.

4.2 As stated at 1.2, there has been a quantum jump in newspapers both in quality and look, and it has been unprecedented. Investment in media is on the rise and to cater to the needs of the media, the Government has to refurbish and restructure the image building exercise.

4.3 From the eight hour long duration, Malayalam Television programme are now telecast round the clock with 18 hours of originated programmes on 14 channels resulting in a total of 352 hours of software everyday. With 20 channels this would go up to more than 450 hours a day – in Malayalam. Already six radio stations are functioning and another 17 are in the pipeline . They will broadcast more than 600 hours daily. For a State with a population of 30 million this is very significant. The newspapers, periodicals and television channels and radio stations offer tremendous opportunity for exploitation by the Information and Public Relations Directorate for the Government of Kerala. All the media, print, electronic or broadcast, are looking for content including on developmental items, Government projects, success stories etc. Media are anxious to use them on print or in their schedules. The avenues open to the Government are innumerable for proper use. In order to exploit the full potential of the media for the benefit of Government of Kerala, the Information and Public Relations Directorate is the nodal point which should be

strengthened, and restructured to meet the needs of the changing technology.

4.4 Considering the enormity and complexity, a thorough understanding of the issues involved is necessary. Sweeping changes would be essential to modernise the Directorate to make it function in a more technology savvy manner. The Directorate should be modernised with a mission and with a vision for the future. This modernised dynamic structure should find acceptability by the media, market and society, in tune with changing times and the future.

4.5 The committee was privileged to have substantially useful interactions with the Press and Electronic Media representatives at Kannur, Kasaragod and Trivandrum. Very useful, practicable and significant recommendations emerged out of these interactions. The media are fully seized of the new technological developments and of the need to change with the times and to adjust. More and more young blood is infused into the media who have a clear idea of utilising the media.

4.6 It was heartening to note that the media practitioners, the press and media representatives, who are consumers and users of Information and Public Relations Directorate materials, emphasised the need to modernize the I&PRD to meet the latest challenges of media functioning. Despite the constraints of working style of Directorate, it was noteworthy that the press corps in unison commended highly on the activities of the Directorate and praised

the regional and district level officers. Several instances were mentioned where the officials sacrificed their own personal conveniences and comforts to meet the challenges necessitated by the media. Instances were quoted during the occasion of natural calamities and troubled times. It is worth recording that the press, who normally are critical of Government functioning, were singing paeans for the officials. This is stated specifically to highlight that the views of the consumers of Government information have also been reflected in this Report.

4.7 The feed back mechanism in the I&PR Directorate is not adequate to advise the Government on public issues, and policy matters. The Andhra Pradesh Government mechanism, Media information and monitoring system, is a role model in this regard. In Andhra Pradesh a separate division at the state level has been formed for monitoring all the newspapers as well as electronic media. The division has District level offices where the news is analysed, classified into positive and negative stories and submitted to the Director of Public Relations in early morning itself. This report, in turn, will be submitted to the Secretaries concerned and to the Chief Minister. In the case of negative stories, the mode of response to counter the allegation is decided. Details are furnished in this Report and recommended for adoption.

4.8 Both in Andhra Pradesh and in Maharashtra, a Joint Director is the Head of the Electronic Division. This Division is fully equipped with the state of the art audio and video facilities, including post production with necessary technical support. Field Publicity and

Visual Media scrutiny are also a part of this Division's functions. VIP coverages are arranged by this Division with a view to preserving the same for archival purposes. Two vehicles have been provided for every District Office to meet any type of urgency with regard to Publicity and Public Relations.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Periodic Review

5.1.1 As stated elsewhere in this Report, there has been a sea change in the last decade both in technology and presentation and content, in print, electronic and New Media. The fact that, information is power is a reality that is sweeping societies. With the emergence of convergence of media and the strides in various sectors in the Information Technology industry, the whole media scenario has undergone a revolutionary transformation. "The Third Wave" described by Alvin Toffler, has made sweeping changes in the whole world. The digital divide has narrowed down to such an extent that the future societies will be only of the information haves, and even in rural areas the information have-nots will hardly be there. The technology in information and media has become simpler and user friendly that it can create job opportunities, if information kiosks are operated by the rural youth who can provide service to all sections of the people. Hence, strengthening the media

apparatus and modernizing the infrastructure will be in the interest of the Government, as communication is the most vital agent in the process of accelerating social development. The Directorate of Information & Public Relations acts as a bridge between the people and the Government and creates awareness among the people of all strata of society on Government policies, plans and programmes intended for the welfare and development.

5.1.2. The fact that there has been a media explosion in Kerala cannot be lost sight of, and that opens up possibilities of a vision for the Directorate to function with a view to strengthening its mission for the next decade. Perspective media planning, keeping both the vision and mission in mind, has to be an integral part of the system so that on any occasion, the Government is ready to utilize the emerging technologies and modify its functioning and policies. **Therefore, we recommend that at least once in five years, an expert committee should be constituted for better and effective utilization of the media technologies; even now the convergence technology has enabled text, data, and images to be conveyed through both wire free and fibre technology.** Kerala has the best density of optical fibres and terminals to take the services to the maximum eyeballs/last mile, if effectively utilized. Obsolescence rate is high and quick in this sector and period of five years is the optimum.

5.2 Penetration at lower levels:

Studies made by the Committee on the functioning of Information & Public Relations Departments in other states like West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu *etc.* indicate that models available especially in both West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh could be adopted in

Kerala with suitable changes. In West Bengal, the stellar success of the Information & Public Relations Department is reflected in the fact that even at the grass root level the public are aware of the achievements and activities of the Government. This is because of the relentless and dedicated work done by the Information, Public Relations and Culture Directorate. The Department in West Bengal is treated on priority, to the extent that it plays a key role in formulation of the policies and programmes of the Government. This prominence given to the Department has resulted in the successive continuation of the Government in power for the last three decades. It fulfills its mandate in making the people informed and knowledgeable of Government activities and elevating the level of mass consciousness towards a positive stand of social understanding. Thus, the Government of West Bengal has shown as to how best the Department of Information & Public Relations Department can be used as an effective instrument of mass consciousness. The success of the system lies in the fact that it has percolated in such a way that it is operational even at the village Panchayat level where an official is assigned the duty of information, public relations and culture.

5.2.2. Upgrading the System

In Kerala, media penetration is the highest in the country, both in print and electronic. Media has become an essential habit with every Keralite and the Government's arm which services it should, therefore, put its best foot forward.

The Information & Public Relations Directorate should be given its due importance among all the Government Departments and placed on a

higher pedestal, as it serves as the eyes and ears of the Government. From the present status of being an attached office of the Government, the level of the Officer heading the Directorate should be upgraded to that of a Director General, appointed from among the professionals, who are experienced and working in the Directorate. All the Departments/Directorate dealing with related subjects should function as separate offices under the umbrella of this Director General: viz., Information & Public Relations, Film, Culture and the Press Academy. They should continue functioning as autonomous institutions and the Director General should only be the nodal head for effective liaison with the Government. The Committee recommends that the revised organisational structure at Annexure - III be implemented and put in place as soon as possible.

5.2.3. As stated elsewhere in the report, there is a high penetration of media in Kerala. There are 1483 newspapers and periodicals already in the State. Three national newspapers viz., The Hindu, The New Indian Express (these two have nearly a million copies of circulation) and The Pioneer also devote substantial number of pages in their national edition and the Kerala editions are almost completely devoted to news on Kerala. All major Malayalam newspapers have not only district editions but also local editions in which pages are devoted to local news. Within the next few months there will be 23 radio stations in Malayalam. Even at present there are 14 television channels and another six are in the pipeline. The website of the Government of Kerala has a record number of hits every month, on an average 1.8 million. In the month of May 2006 the I&PRD website alone has got 41,90,757 hits owing to the successful online publication of HSE, VHSE, SSLC results. The official web portal of

Kerala Government has recorded 1,22,27,236 hits during the month. Kerala is also receiving very high attention and share in all the national media and international media, in print, electronic and broadcast. All these are pointers that necessitate a very effective and efficient media monitoring, response and feedback system. The enormity of the media requirements to be handled by Information & Public Relations Directorate is reflected in the figures stated above.

5.2.4. We recommend that, with its vital role as a bridge between the people and the Government and in creating awareness among all sections of the people on Government policies and programmes on welfare and development, the Directorate be re-designated as **Directorate of Information, Media & Public Relations**. In the Information & Public Relations Directorate, a new Electronic Media Division should be made operational within the soonest possible time. This Division should be able to cater to the heavy demands being placed on them by the electronic media *viz.*, television channels, broadcast radio and New Media.

5.3. Media monitoring and feedback system:

5.3.1. In Andhra Pradesh, the APONE (Andhra Pradesh Online News for Everyone) is a model which is worthy of adoption by the Kerala Government, as it is the best operating one in the country. In Andhra Pradesh the feedback monitoring and response mechanism followed in addressing grievances of public and of criticism of Government policies is commendable, and again worthy of emulation by the Kerala Government. Under the system in Andhra Pradesh, on every morning, all reports that appear in all the media, including local editions of Newspapers and television channels are compiled and a report summing

them up is sent by the District Information Officers to the Director of Public Relations, who in turn submits it to the Principal Secretary/Secretary & Information Commissioner of the Government. He in turn briefs it to the Chief Minister and the concerned Ministers and the Government's response based on this feedback is decided during the course of the forenoon and remedial or corrective measures on grievances taken and redressal mechanism starts operating. All the reports including positive, negative, neutral, fair, and objective on Governmental functioning, are fed on line and they are available to all the concerned officers and the Ministers. This direct system of feedback and response mechanism puts the officers concerned on alert all the time and as a mirror of the public opinion, through the media. The reports in the newspapers and television channels pave way to formulate opinions on the policies, programmes and functioning of the Government. In true spirit, every Government views media reports as a feedback to review its performance.

5.3.2. This system enables the Government both for feedback and for reviewing its performance. The reports also enable the Government to formulate/modify the programmes and policies and the functioning of the Government machinery, in true reflection of the public view points. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has already agreed to the Committee that the software developed by them for this would be shared and this can be used in a modified form as suitable to the Government of Kerala.

5.3.3. We recommend that a media information monitoring system (MIMS) be introduced in the State through the Information & Public

Relations Directorate. The details of the system available in Andhra Pradesh are at Annexure IV.

5.3.4. We recommend that, at the Directorate and district-level office the shift system is introduced to effectively implement this recommendation, from 6 am to 2 pm and from 1 pm to 9 pm. This will ensure continuity and access to the media and public all the time.

5.4. Co-ordination at higher levels

The importance given to the Information, Public Relations & Culture by these two State Governments and in Tamil Nadu, which are under the direct charge of the Chief Minister concerned, is again a matter that Kerala Government is requested to consider. This will help in overall inter-Ministerial and Inter Departmental co-ordination in a better manner. To ensure effective functioning periodic co-ordination meetings can be taken regularly at the highest level and more frequent regular meetings at the district levels. This mechanism of co-ordination is also recommended for adoption in Kerala for better streamlining of inter and intra departmental/ministerial functions, at the Directorate level and at District levels.

5.5. Upgrading technology:

In the present scenario of speedy, prompt and real time dissemination of news to electronic media, the existing set up within the Information and Public Relations Directorate is very inadequate and time consuming. At present, the Information and Public Relations Directorate, hires the services of TV stringers in all the 14 districts. Delivery of the news clips to the TV channels is through very obsolete methods like courier service

etc. which results in time lapse and thus rendering it outdated and thus useless. To cope up with the need of the hour the Information and Public Relations Directorate should equip itself with modern technological gadgets which deliver on real time. The news and events covered from any part of the State by using a digital video camera can be transmitted through a Server to be installed in the Information & Public Relations Directorate or fed live to the TV Channels. Channels can also be permitted to access the Server by using separate access passwords. Later, this can be considered to be made on payment basis so that the Government earns revenue from the users. For effectively carrying out these activities, the entire Directorate and Field Offices should be digitally interconnected. The office should also be electronically secured through an internal mail system so that the target of paperless office is achieved as soon as possible. Optical fibre connectivity should also be provided in all Offices, so that they can transmit images, text and data to the Directorate and media.

5.6. The New Electronic Media Division:

5.6.1. The media explosion that has taken place in recent times has been referred to in this Report elsewhere. This would be evident from the fact that in Kerala where there were just three radio stations, the number goes up to 23, from one television station, the number of channels goes to 20 and web portals from zero to multiple numbers; besides the community radio policy also offers scope for opening up of community radio stations in the State, in university campuses, NGO and other community organizations promoting public interest and participation.

5.6.2. All the media will require software/content which is appealing, more specialized both aesthetically and technologically, than the press. Even press releases are now demanded electronically and hard copies will cease after a few months. E-Governance, e-commerce and e-education are in practice much more with the development of information technology and more and more people turning to IT. The Web portals of the Government Departments will become more user-friendly and would provide e-service in all sectors of public utility. Interaction is a built-in service in the system where the service and the media would directly deal with the portals to meet their demand/services. All the above facts are imperatives in shifting the orientation of the Information & Public Relations Directorate to the electronic mode. Therefore, we strongly recommend a full-fledged Electronic and New Media Division be set up by the Government of Kerala under the Information and Public Relations Directorate. We feel that this is inescapable and can not wait.

5.6.3. The Committee understands that the Directorate has plans of starting a Government Gateway through which various services to the public and media could be rendered through Internet kiosks across the State. It also has a project of developing a web channel with live news. This will not be an expensive proposition, given the fact that Internet would soon become the least expensive communication medium.

5.6.4. In the very near future, people will not have to use their telephones for getting access to the Internet. It would only be wise to take necessary steps well in advance to utilize the advanced communication facilities for disseminating the Government programmes, services, achievements and the projects. Therefore, we strongly recommend the Government to start a

state-of-the-art Web wing in the Electronic Media Division for the benefit of not only the Department but also for the entire Government machinery.

5.6.5. The Website of the Government of Kerala has a record number of hits every month, on an average 1.8 million. The new Division should also have a separate wing for Web Media and Multimedia, which should exclusively look after the web portals of the various Departments, Organizations and agencies of the Government of Kerala as a services gateway. The website of the Government of Kerala has a record number of hits every month, on an average 1.8 million. While the content creation for the portal will be the function of the concerned agency, the Government portal managed by the Information & Public Relations Directorate should be serviced by them and links to all other sites provided. Multiple log-in facility enabling every kind of interactivity, making some sites pay for revenue generation and self support after a period of time should be part of the Portal system. By releasing advertisements, tender notifications, etc. the Government also save considerable expenditure. A vision for the next decade is definitely the gateway of the Web portal which will serve as an information high way for Kerala. Both streaming audio and video should be available with sufficient bandwidth so that the portal will prove useful to anyone seeking information across the world. The details of proposed set up are appended.

5.7. New Look:

This new look Directorate should also have a separate logo and all the vehicles of the Directorate at the Headquarters and the Districts should have a uniform name board and colour. This identical pattern will give a

separate identity for the Directorate. Name boards, letterheads, visiting cards *etc.* of all offices of the Directorate should also be uniform in colour and pattern for developing a distinct identity.

5.8. Accreditation to Officers:

While the department offices facilitate and service the press by way of accreditation for enabling them for access to sources of information, they themselves are not extended this facility. The Committee strongly recommends that Departmental officers from the level of Assistant Information Officers are given press/media accreditation. This would substantially improve their functional efficiency and also take proactive role.

5.9. Essential Service:

Since the Information & Public Relations Directorate is to function as the eyes and ears of the Government, other media, departments, organizations and the general public should have access to them to meet their information demands. This access is essential as the media, print, electronic and new media, have to carry Government information, messages and reports on projects in different editions, bulletins, programmes, features *etc.* round the clock in all the media. In order to achieve this objective, it is absolutely necessary that the Information & Public Relations Directorate is treated on a better pedestal, different from that of other government departments which, work, mostly, according to routine office timings. Unlike all of them, a media organization which services the entire media needs of the Government should have access at any point of time round the clock. It has also to rise to the occasion on emergent and unforeseen occasions on news falls like natural calamities,

tragedies and events of similar unforeseen nature. With a view to strengthening the feedback mechanism as recommended in the previous paragraph, the Information & Public Relations Directorate should have the functionary role as an **essential service provider** throughout the day and night. For the purpose, a mechanism should be evolved, wherein there are shifts and no dearth of proper financial powers. The Directorate should be exempted from restrictions like Treasury ban on expenditure within the overall sanctioned budget. They have to be delegated powers for emergency expenditure at the district-level within the overall sanction limit of the budget allocations. Necessary administrative orders in this regard are recommended. Again this is a system that is available in other States. There should also be a crisis management system in place which should become automatically operational, when the need arises, within minutes without waiting for approvals/orders. Separate funds and officials should be earmarked for the purpose. During crises, management of media is an integral part of meeting challenges and hence a well oiled mechanism should always be operational and in readiness.

5.10.1. Spokes Persons:

In the Central Government, officers belonging to the Indian Information Service are posted in each of the Ministries, Departments, and national organizations where they function as Spokes Persons of the Ministry/Department/Organization. These are tenure posts and they are directly under the control of the Principal Information Officer of the Press Information Bureau, who is also Special Secretary to Government of India. We recommend that on similar lines, Officers of the Information &

Public Relations Directorate should be posted in all 24 major Departments of the Government of Kerala. The Officers, thus posted should be at appropriate levels and ranks. This will facilitate and ensure continuity, co-ordination and help for a true projection of programmes and policies of the Government. This will also be beneficial to the Government in so much as that the Spokes Persons, who are on tenure, will ensure that the feedback, monitoring and response of the Ministry/Department/Organization are correct and objective. The Spokes Persons will carry out the required level of media relations and maintain good equations with the media; above all it will ensure better media relations for the Government.

5.10.2. Accordingly, we recommend that under the overall control of the Director General of Public Relations, officers at proper level from the Information & Public Relations Directorate are posted in the various ministries/departments/ organizations on tenure basis. They should function as the Spoke Persons of the various Ministries/Departments/Organizations. Two way communications between these Ministries/Departments/Organisations should be channelised through these spokes persons.

5.11.1. Electronic Media Orientation and Training:

The spokes persons should be under the overall control of the Director General of Public Relations. The major activity of the Directorate has only been issuing press releases, conducting press tours, organizing press conferences, conducting exhibitions, organizing film shows and cultural activities. With the cataclysmical changes in media technology, as stated earlier, convergence of media has brought the communication of images

and data and text into prominence, placing texts only in the third position. The media explosion which is taking place has eliminated the old system to faster and newer modes of communication, calls for reorientation of the whole functioning and activities of the Directorate. In order to achieve this and to inculcate changes in the mindset of the officials, seminars and workshops may be conducted at different levels.

5.11.2. The entire Directorate should be reorganized and restructured to meet the growing demand placed on them in the Electronic and IT sector. We recommend that the officials of the Directorate are given hands-on training towards this orientation. In areas where there are deficiencies of personnel to meet these demand, expertise should be outsourced at appropriate levels.

5.12.1. Training for officials:

Since the orientation of the Directorate is recommended into an electronic mode and since a new electronic media division is expected to come up it is necessary that the officers of the Directorate at all levels are given professional training to achieve the required level of expertise. The level of training will vary according to the positions occupied by them. At the senior level media management training would be necessary while at the lower cutting-edge level hands-on doing and learning will be essential. A properly structured training programme may be implemented on priority to equip the officials with the new technology. Premier institutions should be contacted and their services availed of for the training programme. At the management level it is suggested that the services of IIM-K and IMG, Thiruvananthapuram, be roped in, with special tailor-made modules of Media Management. For actual cutting edge level

training it is recommended that organizations like DECU, Ahmedabad, FTII Pune, SRFTII, Kolkata, Madras Film Institute, Adayar, IIMC, Delhi *etc.* could be contacted. It is also worthwhile considering international agencies like Asian Broadcasting Union, Asia Pacific Institute for Broadcast Development (AIBD), Thomson Foundation *etc.* as they would be in a position to impart global level training at reasonable rates or even free of cost.

5.12.2. Officers should be attached with the premier organizations including private sector organizations for hands on training and work experience. This is especially important for electronic media officers, as this is a new area in the Directorate. The officers should also be attached to institutions like IITKM, Technopark, Thiruvananthapuram, as this is an organization where media convergence is effectively implemented, and an exposure will definitely help for an attitude change.

5.13.1. New Television Channel:

One of the terms of reference of this Committee is about the feasibility of running a television channel by the State Government. Though, there are more than 300 television channels beaming into the country, including large number of foreign channels, State Government *per se* are not allowed to run television channels, as Broadcasting is in the Central list. This is a contradictory policy of the Government of India as private sector does not have any such restrictions. With the advancement of technology and proliferation of channels operating in the private sector, it is only appropriate that State Government also runs a television channel through cable and television delivery mode to put forth its programmes, policies

and achievements. There is heavy penetration in cable television in Kerala. This will facilitate smooth and objective flow of information, and provide education and entertainment to the public. It is also worth noting that TRAI (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India) have recommended that even the terrestrial monopoly of Government of India should come to an end and terrestrial TV stations should come up in the private sector. It is understood that this recommendation of TRAI is under active consideration of the Government of India. The Electronic Media division recommended at 4.6 would be producing substantial content of software. While it may find use among the private television channels and Doordarshan for which payment of slot fee would be necessary; and the channels will not necessarily allot slots on prime time as all these channels operate on market-driven commercial basis. Prime time is entirely devoted to crass commercial programme by all the private channels. The Government should have its own vehicle to convey its policies through the medium of television. Nothing else would better serve this purpose than a television channel.

5.13.2 In order to project the policies programmes and activities of the Government of Kerala the powerful medium of television channel should be appropriately used. Kerala's rich heritage and culture, which is documented by the Information & Public Relations Directorate, should also find a venue/medium to reach the general public, which is possible only through a free to air television channel. We, therefore, strongly recommend that the Government of Kerala sets up its own television channel. Since the State Governments are not allowed to run channels, it is recommended that this should be done through a company set up and run professionally for the purpose either in the public sector or through

joint venture, under the direct control of the Information and Public Relations Department. The channel could be made self-supporting after a few initial years. It is reiterated that the channel be run on completely professional lines and managed by professionals and they be given full functional freedom in running it, and it should not be just another channel adding to the fecundity of existing Malayalam channels. Contents produced by the channel can also be used for the Web portal/IPTV. The objective of the channel should be to make popular programmes good and good programmes popular with an underlying motif of public service.

5.13.3 The Television channel should also have programmes on education, culture, development and should also supplement the educational institutions of higher learning. During the night when viewing in the State is limited, the time could be used for teaching Malayalam language. Channel could also have programmes on coaching on various competitive examinations, and on similar education development and IT and career oriented courses.

5.14.1. Restructuring Press Academy:

The Press Academy in Kochi is now imparting training to aspiring journalism students. The administrative control of the Press Academy vests with the Information & Public Relations Directorate and it is headed by an officer of the level of Deputy Director of the Directorate. The courses offered are Postgraduate Diploma in Journalism and Communication and PG Diploma in Public Relations and Advertising. The annual intake is 100. It is imperative that an institution with huge infrastructural investment should function properly and deliver the desired objective. While the academic faculty of the institution is not

adequate in number and incentives, the number of supporting staff is far more than the academic staff without concomitant workload.

5.14.2. In order to attract professional faculty of standing it is essential that they are provided proper pay structure and perquisites. It is recommended that the teaching faculty of the Academy is given better incentives and outsourcing of such professionals on contract/tenure will be better.

5.14.3. The revamping should begin with modernizing the tools for training to cope up with the new technological requirements. The course curriculum should be restructured in tune with the modern media requirements so that the students who pass out find placement and absorption. The Press Academy should also be in a position to offer bridge/short term courses for filling the vacuum or void between the traditional and modern media. Such courses have also to be planned in a manner which will make the trainees better qualified to be absorbed in new media terrains.

5.14.4. The Academy is ideally located that it can be developed into an IT and media industry interface, as the location is emerging as a major IT industry hub. Course contents in the Academy should also be planned for meeting this objective and short term courses. There are no courses in subjects like technical writing, web journalism and allied fields, which are in demand in the job market. All these will not also involve additional financial burden to the Government. Instead, it will generate more income, which may be used for subsidizing other training programmes.

5.14.5. The existing manpower is recommended to be utilized for digitizing and building the newspaper archives. It is an essential requirement for all media and academic requirement.

5.15.1. Restructuring New Delhi Office:

The New Delhi office of the Information & Public Relations Directorate, currently housed at the Kerala House is assigned with an unenviable task. It not only represents the State Government information machinery as a whole but also has to function as a media hub catering to the representatives of media from Kerala and the national and international media, which have a substantial interest on Kerala. The Delhi office also has to undertake media coverages of the State Government functions and also in the participation of Kerala Government functionaries in New Delhi. In the capital city of New Delhi, security clearances for such coverages entail very cumbersome procedures. Meeting the deadline is again a task which is achieved by sheer hard work.

5.15.2. Organizing participation in the India International Trade Fair and also organizing fairs on occasions like Onam *etc.* are activities of the Information Office. The office also organizes cultural functions, film festivals and caters to the visits of dignitaries including artists and writers who visit New Delhi.

5.15.3. The New Delhi office also functions as the information and resource centre on every aspect of Kerala including its culture, history and Governmental activities.

5.15.4. The present staff strength at New Delhi is far from adequate to cope up with the increasing demand placed on them. From a mere

information office, it has to be transformed into a media and communication office. It is recommended that the New Delhi office is restructured and reorganized in a manner that befits their duties and functions. The nomenclature is recommended to be modified into a Media & Communication Office. The Committee recommends that the Delhi office is placed under the charge of an Officer equivalent to that of an Additional Director in the Information and Public Relations Directorate. The office should also be provided with better amenities to suit the task called upon to be performed by them.

5.15.5. The Committee recommends that the proposed Media & Communication Centre be developed into a powerful set up which will reflect Kerala culture, arts, literature, Government policies and programmes *etc.* in their entirety and as a media hub and as a window to India and the world at large. Facilitation and servicing world media to attract economic investment, tourism potential, cultural interface *etc.* should be the changed objective than being a mere information centre.

5.15.6. It should also be the focal point which should work in a proactive manner to ensure that Kerala gets its due share and positive attention in the national and world media including press, radio, television and the new media. The officials in the New Delhi office should aggressively and proactively undertake this activity rather than merely facilitating media coverage for the government functionaries of Kerala. In fact their performance at every level should be assessed based on their contribution in this regard. The New Delhi office should also undertake a project to educate the second generation non-resident Keralites and others to educate them on Malayalam language, literature and Kerala culture. The

headquarters at Thiruvananthapuram should provide them timely and substantial support in this regard.

5.15.7 Video conferencing facilities at the New Delhi office should be substantially improved so that all press conferences conducted in New Delhi at the Kerala House/Media Centre could have participation by media men who have access to this facility especially at Thiruvananthapuram.

5.15.8 The Committee recommends that a state-of-the-art building with facilities required for a communication office should be available in New Delhi. This should showcase the State's information, culture and media face in Delhi, for a national and international clientele.

5.15.9. It would be highly desirable if all officials posted in the New Delhi office are fluent in Hindi, as this is an essential pre-requisite for successful functioning at New Delhi.

5.16. Co-ordination at District level

It is essential that the district information offices are substantially strengthened and adequate budgetary allocations made and financial power delegated. They should be free from the hurdles of rushing proposals for mundane matters like fuel, vehicle repair *etc.* The Committee felt that the co-ordination between headquarters and district offices is not functioning satisfactorily at the present level. It is recommended that there should be a quarterly meeting to strategize a more aggressive functioning of the system and to make it percolate down to the grass root level.

5.17.1. Taluk Information Offices:

The State has gone for the decentralized administrative set up by introducing the three-tier system in the local bodies a few years ago. Though considerable developmental activities are taking place in Grama Panchayats, Block Panchayats and at the District Panchayat level, the district-level offices have not been able to give adequate publicity and promotion to these developmental activities due to the shortage of staff and due to the lack of officers at the taluk level. It is in the interest of the Government that adequate publicity is given at the grass root level for all its developmental activities at State and district level. In West Bengal, as stated earlier, Panchayat level functionaries are assigned this job. Since Kerala has the highest literacy and media penetration, we recommend that an official at the taluk level be available for publicizing/projecting governmental programmes and policies and developmental activities.

5.17.2. With a view to ensuring adequate publicity for the development activities at the grass root level, we recommend that the Department sets up taluk level offices with officers at the rank of Assistant Information Officers or Reporters. There are 64 Taluks in Kerala and these one man Offices, which should function electronically, will prove to be an asset for the Government in the long run in reaching out to the general public at the grass root level. However, in case it is not possible to create large number of posts, the work may be outsourced as it exists in All India Radio where stringers are outsourced. We recommend that the Government should consider this as a long term investment which will pay rich dividends in the years to come as Government programmes and policies will reach the real masses.

5.18.1. District level Information Office positioning:

The Committee had highly useful interactions with the press and electronic media at the district level, during its visits to District Information Centres. In fact, the entire press and representatives of the electronic media, who are very active at the district level, were highly appreciative of the district level offices, during the interactions. They were in unison in singing paeans about the department officials. This is of significance as the media are generally critical of government functionaries. It is essential that the district level set up is completely restructured, modernized and adequate facilities provided. The Committee also places on record its appreciation for the way in which the District Information Centre at Kozhikode Civil Station is maintained. The Committee recommends this as a model for all District Information Offices. They should function as data banks on information not only on the government departments but also on every aspect of Kerala, its culture, people, society, infrastructure art and literature, education, health related issues etc. The information centre should become a resource centre and reference point where all publications, dailies, magazines, periodicals, both at the regional and national level are available. A system should be developed for storage of information and for updating data for quick retrieval in a digital mode. There should be a common computer program/intra web site which should facilitate data access of the whole State, so that any body can access any information from any point. Necessary strengthening of these infrastructural facilities is recommended.

5.18.2 The district level offices should be able to monitor print and electronic media and function in a key role towards the implementation of

the proposed media monitoring system. They should also develop a data bank on the district for dissemination of information system. They should also work in two shifts as recommended earlier.

5.19.1. Improving allocation for vehicles:

The present allocation of expenditure on fuel for vehicles is a meager amount of Rs.5000/- per year at the district level. This is pitifully low, unrealistic and archaic. This ceiling was fixed in 1987 when the fuel price was less than one tenth of the existing fuel cost. In this connection, we draw the attention of the Government to the GO issued by the Government of Andhra Pradesh (General Administration) (I&PR Department) dated 23/05/1994 wherein the Government have agreed to increase the fuel limit to 250 litres per vehicle per month in respect of Information & Public Relations Department as a special case. (Annexure – V). The GO has rightly mentioned that ‘the vehicles of the Information & Public Relations Department move throughout the district more intensively’. This is true of Kerala also. The Committee recommends that all district level information office vehicles be allowed fuel of 250 litres per month per vehicle irrespective of the price of fuel.

5.19.2. Maintenance & Repair: Speedier system to be in place:

For repairs and maintenance of vehicles and equipment like video projectors, the present practice is highly impractical and cumbersome. Besides being time consuming, it results in wastage of precious manpower and idling of such facility. A district/regional functionary of the department sends proposal for repair and maintenance to the

headquarters where the processing is bureaucratic and delayed as it has to go through several officers. Those who deal with this matter at the headquarters generally do not realize the urgency of the matter for speedy clearance. This inexcusable delay and wastage should be avoided by assigning a senior functionary of the department with proper delegation of powers for taking speedy decisions. With modern gadgets of communication like e-mail, fax etc. such clearances and sanctions should be issued within two days of receipt of such a proposal from the district.

5.20.1. Better Communication facilities

Whether in districts or in the headquarters the Information & Public Relations Directorate functions round the clock and the officers should be accessible to the media and public during day and night. Their work is not restricted to offices alone or office timings. For the purpose of getting access to them and for contacting them by the media and the public, they have to be provided proper communication facilities. The Committee was dismayed that even the District Information Officers are not provided with residential telephone and mobile phones. We recommend that officials from the level of Assistant Information Officers onwards should be provided with residential telephones and mobile phones. In an age where communication and information hold the key, such facilities for them are absolutely essential. In this connection we also draw the attention of the Government to the GO issued by the Government of Andhra Pradesh dated 26-10-1998 (Annexure - VI) wherein *vide* serial No. VI, they were allowed 1500 calls per month inclusive of free calls, both at the office and residence. We again draw the attention of the Government that even as early as 1998, officers of the AP

Government had provided residential phones to District level officers. We recommend that this pattern on the number of calls is followed in Kerala.

5.20.2. With the facilities for connectivity being vastly improved and with the media convergence moving at geometrical proportions, officials at the level of District Information Officers and above should be provided with laptop computers, as they will use them as effective tools for functioning. These are essential in transmitting images, data and text by using the facilities of connectivity.

5.21. *Sutharya Keralam*

As a media-public interface for grievance- redressal mechanism a programme called “Sutharya Keralam” is being transmitted through Doordarshan. While the underlying principles of the programme are highly laudable, the quality of production and presentation could substantially be improved, so that the programme fulfills the aspirations of the public and empathises with them. We recommend that similar programme be telecast on other private satellite channels, if necessary by paying for time slots. The district level cable channels with whom we had interactions had volunteered that they would telecast government functions live for the benefit of local viewers. This offer should be availed of. We recommend that at the district level similar grievance redressal programme should be got prepared and presented by the District Collector or Superintendent of Police and other functionaries of the Government with the co-operation of local channels. Similarly, grievance redressal mechanism with interaction either live or recorded should also be broadcast through All India Radio and private Radio stations as well as the Web Portal.

5.22. Empanelling stringers and utilizing their services

During the interaction with the media at the district level, major television channel representatives wanted news coverages to be arranged by the District Information officers in such places where they cannot directly undertake coverage of Government functions. It is, therefore, recommended that the district level offices should arrange such coverages through stringers who should be properly empanelled for the purpose. A system of empanelling qualified and experienced stringers who have their own equipment and facilities should be put in place.

5.23.1. Press releases by e-mail

The Directorate at the headquarters and at the district level now issues large number of press releases daily. These releases are in Malayalam and only hard copies are delivered. In the current age of speedy delivery through electronic gadgets, these press releases should be available on e-mail so that the media can access them directly. However, for a while till the entire print media are in a position to access such releases through e-mail, hard copies could also be continued to be delivered for a few more months.

5.23.2. Kasaragod and Idukki – special needs

The following specific recommendations are made for the districts of Kasaragod and Idukki. In both districts there are representatives of minority language media in Kannada and Tamil, respectively. There is a marked presence of Kannada media in Kasaragod and Tamil media in

Idukki. At present press releases in both the districts are issued only in Malayalam, which do not meet the demands of both Kannada and Tamil media. As such there is a possibility of not using Malayalam releases. In order to make sure that press releases are used by the media, it is necessary that the releases are made in Kannada in Kasaragod and Tamil in Idukki. It is recommended that a Kannada knowing person is appointed in Kasaragod and a Tamil knowing person in Idukki. If such officers are not available within the Directorate, outsourcing of persons on contract basis may be resorted to.

5.23.3 Press Releases in English

National news agencies like PTI, UNI etc. appoint non-Malayalees in their bureau. Sometimes, news of national importance originating in districts has to be credited. This also happens at the headquarters. To meet the requirements of such national news agencies/media for effective dissemination of important events/stories that require national level coverage, releases should be issued in English also.

5.24.1. Re-designating Officers

At present there are 17 cinema operators posted in different districts and in Headquarters. They are not able to conduct regular film shows/video shows in rural areas due to non-availability of equipments, films and vehicles. In fact, they are idling without work. A good number among them has volunteered to work as Videographers. The Committee places on record the excellent work done by them in the district offices. Their services should be efficiently utilized. This is possible by re-designating them as Information Assistants/Videographers. This does not involve any

financial liability and would be a morale booster for them. The Committee, therefore, recommends that they be re-designated as Information Assistants/Videographers.

5.24.2. The post of Assistant Editors may be re-designated uniformly as Deputy Information Officer in the district offices, Regional Deputy Directorate and at the Directorate. Those who are carrying out actual editorial work, however, may be retained as Assistant Editors, in true reflection of the nature of their duties. But equivalent posts at the headquarters like Research Officer, Assistant Scrutiny Officer, Assistant Cultural Development Officer etc. may be retained as they are. Their posts may also be upgraded to the level of a Section Officer (Pre revised Pay Scale Rs.6500-10550). There are posts of Dark Room Assistants, Photo Printer *etc.* which are now nonfunctional because of the obsolescence in technology. We recommend that their services be utilized as Videographers/Cameramen, as they are qualified and experienced in the field. The posts of Translators should be re-designated as Assistant Information Officers, as they are without any journalism background required and as they are from the feeder category of lower posts of Assistant Editor.

5.25. Streamlining issue of advertisements

5.25.1 The Electronic Media Division recommended can generate income by curtailing expenses. In the present scenario, the pressure from the visual media cannot be lost sight of by the Directorate. A centralized Visual Production Unit for Government Departments can estimate, co-ordinate and execute all visual media needs of every Department of the State Government. The starting of the Electronic Media division in the

Information & Public Relations Directorate and the video wing therein, will automatically lead to saving a huge amount by way of curtailing the expenditure for production of advertisements to a considerable extent. If all the advertisements are routed through the Information & Public Relations Directorate, which has an effective liaison with the visual media, the Government would be able to save at least half of Rs.70 million that it now spends on advertisements through visual media.

5.25.2 If the State Government routes all the advertisement of the various departments and the public sector undertakings through the Information & Public Relations Directorate, the Directorate will have a better bargaining power, which could be used for the benefit of the Government. We recommend that all the Government advertisements should be got released to electronic media, through Information & Public Relations Directorate. With its experienced professionals, the Directorate would be able to do what the other Departments and Public Sector Undertakings are not able to achieve and this will also bring down expenditure. Advertisements targeted towards international markets like those of tourism promotion, exports *etc.* should be continued as they are currently done.

5.26. Streamline reporting of administrative staff

Presently, the administrative/supporting/ministerial staff working in the Information & Public Relations Department both at the headquarters and in the districts are drawn from various other government departments like General Administration, Revenue *etc.* Though they carry out the work properly, they are not accountable directly to the officials of the Information & Public Relations Directorate. Unless they are made to

report directly to the Directorate, officers under whom they are working, their accountability, and thereby efficiency and responsibility in work become a casualty and detrimental to the service. The functional necessities in a media organization are entirely different from a normal routine desk work and extend well beyond office hours in the Information & Public Relations Directorate. The anomalous and erroneous situation now existing can be remedied only by making them report to and accountable to the Information and Public Relations Directorate. The performance assessment of the staff during the period of their service with the Directorate should be the responsibility of officials under whom they are subordinate and directly answerable and accountable, in the present context the Directorate of Information and Public Relations. We recommend that the administrative procedure in this regard making them directly accountable and responsible to the Information & Public Relations Directorate Officers is streamlined and suitable orders issued for orientation of these officials.

5.27. Welfare measures and servicing of journalists

The welfare schemes implemented through the Information and Public Relations Directorate are the following:

1. Awarding media professionals of excellence; extending financial assistance to journalists and their dependents in distress.
2. Pension to (i) retired journalists, (ii) eminent journalists and (iii) to non journalists in newspaper establishments.

This was a matter on which some officials of the Directorate expressed dissenting opinion, stating that this is not part of their professional job and that it is only an administrative item of work. The Committee

strongly disagrees with this view. We reiterate and recommend that in addition to the Pension Scheme, which should be made applicable to those working in the electronic media also, the Government should implement a health insurance scheme for working and retired journalists. The term journalists should also cover not only those who work in print media but also those who work in electronic media *viz.*, radio and television. It should be possible to obtain group medi-claim policy, which is offered by any of the public sector insurance companies, like the General Insurance Company/Oriental Insurance Company/M/s United India Insurance Company Ltd, *etc.* The model followed by the Government of Andhra Pradesh *vide* their GO Ms No.203 dated 27.07.2004 could be adopted on which further improvement can be made (Annexure - VII).

5.28. New Building Complex

For achieving the results expected of the new look I&PR Directorate and to enable their functioning as an Office with a vision and a mission, it is absolutely necessary that the Directorate is housed in a proper building, which should be architecturally traditional and functionally ultra modern. The Committee understands that there is adequate land available for the purpose in the Tagore Theatre Complex, where the suggested Office Complex can be built without affecting the ecology and functioning of the existing system. May be, we can call it a ***Madhyama Bhavanam***.

5.29. Finally, for the successful implementation of the recommendations made in this Report, the infrastructure and human resources in the Directorate should be substantially strengthened. The present professional staff strength in the Directorate is only 108. It should definitely be

increased to 248 including Information Assistants, who are now Cinema Operators. For the new Electronic Media web division services of skilled professionals should be outsourced. A comparative analysis of the present staff strength has been shown in Annexure – VIII.

5.30. The total annual budget allocation for Information & Public Relations Directorate under Plan Scheme is an amount of Rs.5.13 crores for the Financial Year 2005-2006 and Rs.4.85 crores for the Financial Year 2006-2007. This amount is deplorably low as compared to that of 0.7% in West Bengal and 0.37% in Andhra Pradesh. Out of the total annual plan outlay of Rs.8024 crores the West Bengal has earmarked Rs.58 crores, in Andhra Pradesh Rs 48 crores in their plan budget of Rs.15,647 crores for the Information Department. In Tamilnadu the amount allocated for Information and Public Relations department for the financial year 2005-2006 is Rs.28.86 crores, out of the total budget grant of Rs.16,840 crores.

The Committee recommends that the total allocation be raised to at least 0.5% of the State's total Plan Budget, which may approximately work out to an amount of Rs 25 crores, which will be adequate to implement all the recommendations of this committee. This amount is justifiable on any count in the era of modern technology in communication and creating mass awareness.

Chapter VI

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 It has been estimated that implementation of the recommendations herein will cost the exchequer an amount of Rs. 58.5 million in the immediate future, out of which an approximate amount of Rs. 39.5 million would be a one time investment for infrastructure development alone, the remaining being recurring expenditure. The break up is at Annexure – IX.

6.2 Apart from the above, a new building complex with a carpet area of 20,000 square feet for the Directorate would cost an approximate amount of Rs. 50 lakhs. Besides, installations technological gadgets and equipments would cost an approximate amount of Rs. 30 lakhs. Providing laptops as recommended would cost an amount of Rs. 20 lakhs, thus totaling to Rs.1.00 crore.

6.2.1 The Centre at New Delhi would also cost an approximate total amount of Rs. One crore for a state of the art and technologically savvy set up and building complex.

6.2.2 An amount of Rs.25 lakhs would be necessary for meeting the training requirements and for improving

the set up in the district offices. These are one time capital investment costs, which would be assets to the State and the benefits derived out of these would enormously and qualitatively benefit the Government.

6.3 Initial expenditure on starting a television channel would be around Rs. 15 crores and in three to four years, the television channel can be self sustaining and can make profits, if run professionally and imaginatively and with an eye on the market, and implemented in a phased manner, with minimum operational professionals. The Channel, which should run public service programming, should telecast good programmes popular and also make popular programmes good, and establish a distinct identity as a role model for any other TV Channel.

List of Appendices

1. Minutes including significant points and suggestions that emerged in meetings.
2. Copies of representations received from various associations, staff members etc.
3. Recommended staff pattern for Information and Public Relations Department, Government of Kerala
4. Media Analysis Information System (MAIS) of Information and Public Relations Department, Andhra Pradesh.
5. GO regarding usage of vehicles.
6. GO regarding usage of telephone.
7. GO regarding Health Insurance Scheme for journalists.
8. Comparative analysis of proposed and present staff strength.
9. Expenditure split up for reorganisation.
10. Study report on Information and Public Relations Department, West Bengal.
11. Brief on Andhra Pradesh Online News for Everyone (APONE).
12. Hit report on Kerala Government Website
13. Departments identified where DPOs to be appointed from I&PRD
14. Staff pattern of Information and Public Relations Department, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal.
15. Brochure on Kissan Kerala.

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The Committee gratefully acknowledges the suggestions made by the representatives of the various interest groups, including print and electronic media, whose lists would be long in this brief acknowledgement.

K.L. SREEKRISHNA DAS
Member

S. BIJU
Member

K. KUNHIKRISHNAN
Chairman