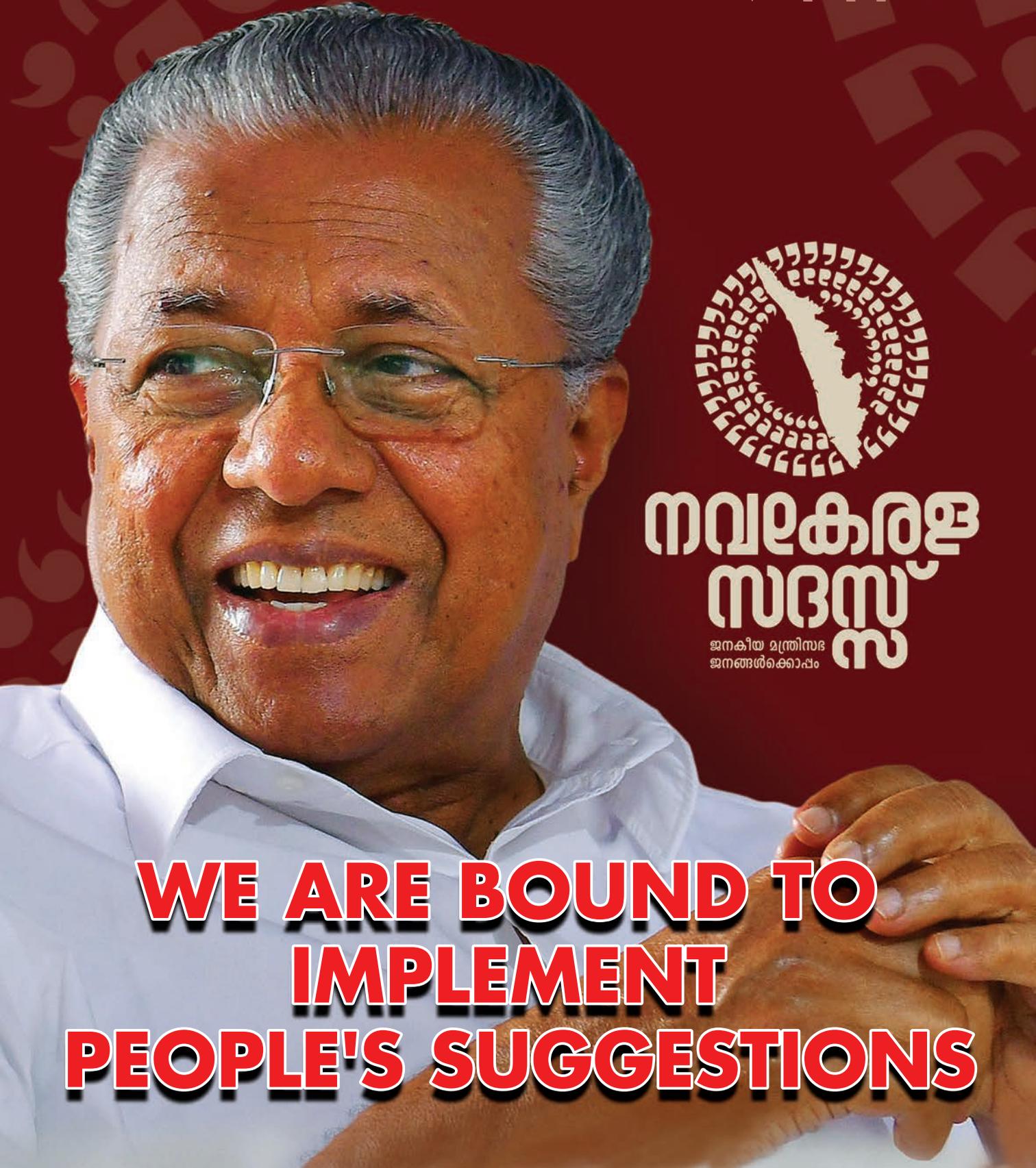


NAVAKERALA SADAS

PROGRESSIVE POLICIES

KERALA CALLING

NOVEMBER 01, 2023_VOL_44_No.01 ₹ 12



**നവകേരള
സഭസ്സ**
ജനകീയ മന്ത്രിസഭ
ജനങ്ങൾക്കൊപ്പം

**WE ARE BOUND TO
IMPLEMENT
PEOPLE'S SUGGESTIONS**

നാടൊരുമിടുന്നു നവകേരളത്തിനായി

ജനങ്ങളുമായി നേരിട്ട് സംവദിച്ച് ഭരണ പുരോഗതി വിലയിരുത്താനും ജനാഭിപ്രായം തേടാനും മുഖ്യമന്ത്രിയുടെ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ മന്ത്രിസഭ ഒന്നാകെ 140 നിയോജകമണ്ഡലങ്ങളിലും എത്തുന്നു. വികസന ക്ഷേമ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്ക് ഊർജ്ജം പകരാനും വേഗം കൂട്ടാനും ലക്ഷ്യമിട്ടുള്ള നവകേരളസദസ്സ് നാടിന്റെ പുരോഗതിക്ക് കരുത്ത് പകരും. നവംബർ 18 മുതൽ ഡിസംബർ 23 വരെ മഞ്ചേശ്വരം മുതൽ തിരുവനന്തപുരം വരെയാണ് ജനലക്ഷങ്ങൾ അണിനിരക്കുന്ന നവകേരളസദസ്സുകൾ. ജനാധിപത്യ ചരിത്രത്തിലെ ഈ അത്യപൂർവ്വ ഭരണ നിർവ്വഹണ പ്രക്രിയയുടെ ഭാഗമാകാൻ ഏവരേയും സാഗതം ചെയ്യുന്നു.

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Reaching out to the people

In the evolving context of India, Kerala's NavaKerala Sadas emerges as a pivotal initiative. This represents a fresh approach in tackling significant issues affecting people. The NavaKerala Sadas goes beyond traditional governmental assemblies, providing a vital platform for engaging the public in meaningful discussions about the state's growth and development. It aims to educate people on various challenges and the state's resilient strategies in overcoming them. This initiative plays a key role in nurturing a knowledge-based economy and fostering innovation in Kerala, aligning the state's advancement with the desires and necessities of its inhabitants.

Over the past 67 years, Kerala has experienced a remarkable transformation, now leading the nation in human resource development, literacy, public planning, and women's empowerment. This evolution is a result of the state's dedication to societal transformation, drawing inspiration from historical movements and rights struggles. The NavaKerala Sadas is instrumental in reviewing this developmental path, serving as a guiding light for the impact of focused interventions and strategic planning on enhancing life quality.

Keraleeyam 2023, held in early November, showcased Kerala's cultural and economic successes. This week-long event included diverse activities such as conferences, exhibitions, and film festivals, celebrating Kerala's rich heritage and traditions. The twenty-five public seminars on various economic topics underscored Kerala's engagement in public discourse and policy discussion. These forums allowed global experts to influence policy-making and review the state's developmental successes, providing perspectives on future goals. Keraleeyam 2023 was more than just a festivity; it symbolised Kerala's commitment to sustainable growth, social welfare, and scientific exploration.

The bedrock of Kerala's progress in the past seven years is its forward-thinking policies, which have reshaped every facet of life in the state. These policies mirror the government's effort to meet the people's needs and aspirations, promoting a model of participatory governance. Kerala's emphasis on comprehensive development, from infrastructure to social welfare, demonstrates the state's dedication to creating a Nava Kerala - a state not just addressing current requirements but also forging a path towards a prosperous and inclusive future.

T.V. Subhash IAS
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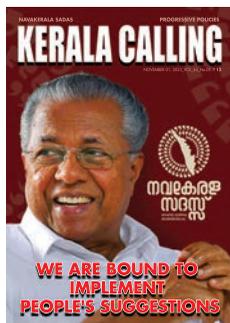
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We are bound to implement them
Pinarayi Vijayan

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നവലകരജ സദസ്സ്

ജനകീയ മന്ത്രിസഭ
ജനങ്ങൾക്കൊപ്പം



People are the ones to offer suggestions We are bound to implement them

Pinarayi Vijayan
Chief Minister

The NavaKerala Sadas represents a pivotal initiative aimed at fostering inclusive growth and sustainable development through collaborative dialogue and comprehensive planning.



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ജനകീയ മന്ത്രിസഭ
ജനങ്ങൾക്കൊപ്പം

The NavaKerala Sadas is set against a backdrop of unique political and social circumstances. Despite facing challenging national conditions, Kerala continues to emerge as a pioneering model by introducing popular alternatives. This resilience is particularly noteworthy considering the concerted efforts to financially constrain the state, which could impede its developmental and welfare initiatives. Nonetheless, Kerala is charting a path forward, tackling these challenges head-on by addressing key inequalities. This approach is crucial in realising the vision of a NavaKerala. The state is crafting a novel model centred on nurturing a knowledge-based economy and cultivating an innovative society.

The NavaKerala Sadas is intended to inform the people of Kerala about the attempts to destabilise the state and how it is overcoming these challenges. Concurrently, these assemblies are designed to capture and reflect the public's perspectives in shaping NavaKerala, thereby guiding future planning. They provide a vital forum for communicating to the public about past achievements and future plans. Importantly, these assemblies are envisioned as a dynamic platform to foster a deep and meaningful synergy between the people and the government, playing an instrumental role in the development and realisation of a NavaKerala.

The NavaKerala Sadas are slated to begin in Manjeswaram on November 18 and conclude in Thiruvananthapuram on December 24. Leading up to these, taluk-level adalats and regional review Sadas have been conducted to resolve critical issues. The next phase is the NavaKerala Sadas. The government is dedicated to laying the foundations for NavaKerala by gathering input from the public in extensive participation Sadas held in each constituency.

Marking 67 years since its formation, Kerala has witnessed transformative changes over these six and three-quarter decades. The state stands at the forefront in human resource development indices nationwide. Matching developed nations in health and education, Kerala is a national exemplar in literacy, public planning, decentralization, and women's empowerment. The state has also made remarkable strides in poverty reduction, decreasing its poverty rate from 40 percent to just 0.6 percent in the last four decades, a record unrivalled by any other state.

At this juncture, it is important to reflect on the challenging path of Kerala's development. The societal changes in Kerala have been significantly shaped by the renaissance movements, which emerged to combat oppression. These changes include the rights movements for agricultural and factory workers, protests against the naduvazhi system, opposition to Diwan rule and imperialism, and proactive interventions in education and health sectors. These collective efforts have been instrumental in laying the groundwork for our progress, culminating in achievements that have gained global recognition.

Now, it is not a time for resting on our laurels. We must deeply consider how to propel our development model forward and shape the future of Kerala. The NavaKerala Sadas serves as a vital platform for this reflection and planning.

Currently, Kerala boasts a per capita income that exceeds the national average. In the fiscal year 2021-22, the state's economy saw a robust 12 percent growth, successfully navigating the economic trials brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic. This growth extends across sectors, a notable over 4 percent increase including in agriculture. Industry-friendly policies have catalysed marked changes in the industrial sector as well. In the past financial year alone, more than 1,39,000 new enterprises began operations in Kerala. The service sector, a key pillar of Kerala's economy, has also experienced significant expansion, recording an impressive growth of over 17 percent.

The NavaKerala concept is deeply intertwined with sustainability. The NavaKerala vision encompasses a holistic approach, targeting poverty alleviation, inclusive economic growth, social justice, public health, excellence in public and higher education, infrastructure advancement, productive employment opportunities, access to land and housing for everyone, waterbodies' rejuvenation, agricultural land restoration, and enhanced decentralization. In line with this ambitious vision, steps are being taken to bring Kerala's standard of living on par with that of developed middle-income countries within the next 25 years.

Leveraging the achievements Kerala has attained, we are currently modernising our economic structure and societal framework to meet contemporary needs. This initiative entails boosting production and productivity, guaranteeing fair distribution of newfound resources, and conducting a thorough reassessment of our economic and societal systems. For Kerala to progress into a productive economy, it must evolve into a society adept at converting knowledge into innovative products and services. Targeted and effective interventions for this evolution are a critical component of the NavaKerala Sadas.

The key to realising seemingly unattainable goals lies in setting lofty objectives and pursuing them with unwavering enthusiasm. This principle is at the core of the Government's strategy. We have achieved numerous milestones previously deemed impossible, exemplified by projects like the GAIL pipeline and the Vizhinjam port. Our focus extends beyond mere infrastructure



development; it encompasses comprehensive welfare interventions as well.

We have delivered social welfare pensions to over 60 lakh individuals, constructed approximately 4 lakh houses, distributed over 3 lakh land titles, and extended Karunya health insurance to more than 43 lakh families, all accomplished within our finite resources. Throughout these initiatives, we have advanced with relentless resolve. Ensuring that no challenge becomes a roadblock, we have charted new courses and achieved substantial progress.

What then is the next chapter in this journey of advancement? It must be shaped by the collective wisdom of the people, rather than solely by those in positions of authority. This government is committed to resonating with the heartbeat of the people. That is why the entire cabinet is proactively reaching out to the people. We steadfastly believe that the directives should emanate from the people, with our role being to realise their aspirations.



KERALA: YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

Kerala has consistently focused on social welfare and inclusive development policies. Landmark reforms in education and healthcare, driven by a strong public sector, have significantly improved literacy rates and health outcomes. The state's emphasis on decentralization, technology, women's empowerment, and sustainable development continues to shape its vision for a '**NavaKerala**' (New Kerala), demonstrating a commitment to equitable and holistic progress.

Progressive Policies

(Compiled by Diyya S., Assistant Information Officer, I& PRD)

E-Governance in Kerala: Revolutionizing Public Service Delivery



Kerala is at the forefront of e-governance in India, with a wide range of innovative initiatives that revolutionise public service delivery. Harnessing state-of-the-art technologies, the government has made substantial

Enhancing Digital Literacy and Accessibility

A key focus of Kerala's e-governance strategy is to enhance digital literacy and accessibility to government services. The state government has launched several programmes to equip citizens with the skills and knowledge necessary to benefit from e-governance initiatives. These include digital literacy training programs, community-based learning centres, and free Wi-Fi hotspots in public places.

Unified Service Portals

To make it easier for citizens to access government services, Kerala has developed a number of unified service portals. These portals provide a single window for citizens to access a wide range of services, including certificate issuance, bill payments, and tax filing. The state's e-Sevanam portal, for example, offers over 900 services from 80 departments.

Innovative E-Governance Initiatives

Kerala has implemented a number of innovative e-governance initiatives to improve public service delivery. These include:

e-District: A one-stop platform for citizens to access revenue-related services, such as land records and court proceedings.

e-Health: A unified framework for providing health services efficiently,

including a centralized database and useful information for healthcare professionals.

e-Procurement: An online tendering system that ensures efficiency and transparency in the procurement process.

SPARK: A service and payroll administrative repository that ensures high transparency in the services of government officials.

Awards and Recognition

Kerala's e-governance efforts have been recognized at the national and international levels. The state has won several awards for its innovative initiatives, including the National Award for Best Portal and the Scotch Award. Kerala's journey in e-governance stands as a testament to its unwavering commitment to revolutionising public service delivery through technology. The state's innovative initiatives have left a significant imprint on the lives of its citizens, providing them government services that are not only convenient but also accessible and transparent.

E-Health: Transforming the Healthcare Sector



E-health has brought about a revolution in Kerala's healthcare sector, making it more efficient, accessible and equitable. This unified framework encompasses a wide range of health services, featuring a centralized database of healthcare-related information and valuable resources for healthcare professionals.

Implemented in 594 hospitals in the state, including medical colleges, affiliated hospitals, district and general hospitals, taluk hospitals, community health centres, primary health/family health centres, and public health labs, the initiative aims to gradually extend e-health to all government hospitals.

E-health helps patients in Kerala to book OP tickets, schedule appointments, and access lab results from the comfort of their homes, ushering in an era of convenient and paperless hospital services. Beyond these basic services, e-health offers a number of innovative features, including the Shaili app for lifestyle diagnosis, the Cancer Grid and Cancer Care Suite for cancer diagnosis and treatment coordination, and the extensive e-Sanjeevani service.

To avail e-health services, patients must first generate a Personal Health Identification Number (PHID) through the e-health portal using their Aadhaar number. Once they have logged in with their PHID and password, patients can effortlessly book appointments, schedule tests, and access their medical records.

The Kerala government's commitment to leveraging advanced technologies in the public health sector is exemplified by the central role of e-health in their vision. This initiative plays a pivotal role in realising a healthcare system that is not only accessible but also affordable for all.

Kerala's Decentralization Model: Fostering Empowerment for Development



Pioneered by the E. K. Nayanar government in 1996, Kerala's decentralization model is a unique and innovative approach to development. Entrusting one-third of the state budget to local bodies with full planning powers, the government has placed the reins of development squarely in the hands of local communities. The people-centric planning model of decentralization has left a profound impact on Kerala's developmental journey. By curtailing the control power of the state government, the decentralisation model has fortified local self-government systems, and transferring decision-making power to the people. This has led to significant advancements have been achieved in crucial areas such as public education, poverty alleviation, and housing.

Kerala's popular development model has also been lauded for its commitment to gender equality and social justice. For example, local bodies in Kerala were the first in the country to set aside 10 percent of the scheme allocation for women.

In recent years, Kerala's local bodies have played a critical role in disaster preparedness and response. For example, after the 2018 floods, local bodies played a leading role in providing relief and rehabilitation to

affected communities.

Kerala's renowned development model stands as a testament to numerous noteworthy achievements, ranging from litter-free public spaces to eco-conscious agriculture and water conservation, and a leap towards food self-sufficiency. As the state continues to evolve, the next challenge lies in adapting this successful model to address the challenges of the new age.

Overall, Kerala's decentralization model is a shining example of how people-centered development can yield remarkable results. This model, marked by its effectiveness and inclusivity, stands as a noteworthy example worthy of emulation by other states and countries seeking sustainable and community-driven progress.

Kerala's Thriving Start-up Ecosystem



Kerala boasts a vibrant start-up ecosystem, with over 4,700 start-ups operating in the state. The government's steadfast commitment to fostering innovation and entrepreneurship and the Start-up Mission plays a key role in this effort. Originally conceived as a Technology Business Incubation Centre at Technopark in 2002, the Start-up Mission assumed the mantle of the state government's nodal agency in 2014. The mission's core mandate revolves around cultivating an entrepreneurial culture and moulding aspiring technology entrepreneurs.

Today, Kerala stands as the preeminent start-up ecosystem in the country achieving notable milestones, including the establishment of 4,700 start-ups, presence of 64 incubators, establishment of 450 innovation centres, and the allocation of 10 lakh square feet for entrepreneurial endeavours. Kerala takes pride in being a pioneer with the introduction of a start-up policy within its state budget, which further solidify the State's commitment to fostering a dynamic and innovative business environment.

In 2019, an Integrated Start-up Complex materialized in Kochi, designed to empower start-ups with cutting-edge technologies, offer skill training, provide expertise, guidance, and comprehensive support. The landscape of start-ups has expanded beyond the conventional boundaries of the software IT sector and now it encompasses electronics, manufacturing and more. Kerala's start-up ecosystem stands as the only sustainable and holistic model in the country, harmoniously integrating academia, industry, research institute, and start-ups.

Kerala's commitment to entrepreneurial success is evident through the various grants and funding option. Entrepreneurs can tap into a range of opportunities, including the Idea Grant, Production Grant, Scale-up Grant, Women Productisation Grant, and Start-up Research Grant. Besides grants, investor support

is extended in the form of seed funding, fund of funds, equity funding and subsidized loans.

The ecosystem thrives through various programs, such as Hackathons, Climathons, CancerTech, HealthTech, FinTech, and Accelerator Incubation initiatives, which are designed to harvest the finest ideas. The Big Demo Day serves as a platform for startups to showcase their products. Notably, the Start-up Mission hosts Huddle Global, the country's largest beach-side start-up festival, Seeding Kerala—an investor meet, investor education programs, expatriate start-up schemes, incubation initiatives, and the Fail Fast or Succeed campaign. Additionally, the Kerala Start-up Mission's flagship project, the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Centres (IEDCs), operates in 450 colleges, fostering a culture of entrepreneurship among students.

Further, the government has taken proactive measures to support women entrepreneurs through targeted programs, schemes, and loans. Events like the Women Entrepreneurs Summit and She Loves Tech have been initiated to specifically empower and encourage women in entrepreneurship. In addition, the government has provided communication support in local languages to ensure inclusivity.

Highlighting its commitment to bolstering the start-up ecosystem, the government has collaborated with over ten key departments such as higher education, police, sports, youth affairs, and tourism. This multifaceted approach underscores the government's dedication to create a supportive environment for start-ups.

Among the remarkable success start-up stories, one is that of Open Financial Technologies, a fintech startup incubated by the Kerala Start-up Mission. It achieved the distinction of becoming Kerala's first unicorn start-up. Open has secured the 100th position on the list of unicorn ventures in India. The Start-up Mission has been recognized as the world's top public business accelerator for the year 2021-22 and has consistently ranked as the Best Performer in Start-up India's national rankings. This outstanding performance was consecrated with a hat-trick of accolades as DPIIT's top performer in 2018, 2019, and 2020. Moreover, it received the Chief Minister's Award for Innovation and Public Policy and was honoured as the second-best science-based incubator globally.

The role of the Start-up Mission in driving social progress is undeniable. It persistently conveys to the state's youth that entrepreneurship is not a privilege reserved solely for those with financial means; rather, it demands diligence, perseverance, and visionary insight.

Social Equality Through Literacy: Kerala's Model for the world



On April 18, 1991, Kerala made history by declaring full literacy, becoming the first state in India to achieve this remarkable feat. This accomplishment was the culmination of years of dedicated effort and grassroots participation. The literacy activity is one of the significant popular movements ever witnessed in Kerala.

Kerala's literacy movement was not just about learning to read and write. It aimed at building a new world and a new life through the power of letters. It emerged as a comprehensive public education program, marking a significant chapter in the country's history. Recognizing the importance of non-formal education, Kerala acknowledged its role in providing opportunities for continuous learning to those who had learned the alphabet. This holistic approach underscores Kerala's commitment to leveraging literacy as a catalyst for social equality on a global scale.

In 1998, the State Literacy Mission was constituted with the emphasis on imparting further education to those who had attained literacy. The same year Kerala launched the Continuing Education Scheme, the first state-

wide continuing education scheme in India. The scheme has been a resounding success, with over 3,500 Continuing Education Centres and 500 Development Centres established across the state.

The Literacy Mission in Kerala extends its reach to those who have missed out on educational opportunities due to various reasons, ranging from personal to socio-economic. Equivalency courses are offered up to the 4th standard, 7th standard, 10th standard, and higher secondary level.

In its commitment to inclusive education, the mission has introduced the 'Sangham' study program, aimed at integrating transgender and LGBTQIA+ communities into the mainstream of society by fostering cultural and academic proficiency.

Additionally, a study house system has been established for transgender students enrolled in literacy-equity courses in the Pathanamthitta district, reflecting the mission's dedication to ensuring education for all.

The Literacy Mission is actively involved in several social literacy initiatives, each catering to specific needs and communities. The 'Navachethana' project targets the tribal communities of Wayanad-Attappadi, while the 'Changathi' project is dedicated to enhancing literacy among guest workers in Malayalam. The 'Pouradhwani' project is designed to raise constitutional awareness, emphasizing the importance of asserting rights and responsibilities among the people of Kerala. Additionally, the 'Braille' literacy project focuses on providing learning opportunities for individuals with visual impairments. It is implemented with the aim of asserting our constitutional rights and responsibilities and bringing all the people of Kerala to a higher civic consciousness.

The Literacy Mission is also initiating a gender literacy course based on the textbook prepared by SCERT. It is also implementing a women's project called 'Munnetam' to bring the politics of gender justice to all levels of society. It is also effectively implementing certificate courses such as 'E-Muttam', 'Good English', 'Acchi Hindi', and 'Pacha Malayalam' to bridge the digital gap.

The Literacy Mission has won the NLM-UNESCO Award and the Kanfed Award for its outstanding work. The mission is currently giving priority to building the knowledge society necessary to make New Kerala possible.

‘Punargeham’: Illuminating Hope for Coastal Residents



‘Punargeham’ stands as a beacon of hope, a project meticulously crafted to rehabilitate the entire population residing within 50 meters from the high tide line. Emerging from the shadows of sleepless nights and the anguish of losses, the state government has successfully relocated 3,917 families, in 3,527 houses and 390 flats. Another 944 flats are under construction, bringing the total families to 4,861, all living near the shores.

Coastal residents always bear the brunt of sea-level rise and coastal erosion. In a determined effort to provide relief to those who have lost their property and destined to live in relief camps due to such disasters, the state government embarked on the ambitious Punargeham project. The Rs 2450 crore Punargeham project aims to rehabilitate all families living within 50 meters of the tidal line along the coast to a safer zone. Of the total fund, an amount of Rs 1398 crore, is sourced from the Chief Minister’s Distress Relief Fund and the remaining Rs 1052 crore is from the budget allocation of the Fisheries Department.

A comprehensive survey conducted by the Department of Fisheries in 2018 found that 18,685 families reside in the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) region. The ambitious Punargeham project aims to rehabilitate a total of 21,045 families, encompassing those already identified and those who have submitted appeal applications. Of these, 8743 beneficiaries have willingly agreed to relocate under the scheme. The District Level Monitoring Committees have granted approval for the cost of land identified by 4283 beneficiaries, and 3527 beneficiaries have completed the land registration process. At present, 3917 families have

been successfully resettled through the construction of individual houses and flats, with each beneficiary receiving a maximum sanction of Rs 10 lakh for land acquisition and house construction.

In addition to individual housing, the rehabilitation efforts include constructing apartments through residents’ groups and flats acquired on government or private land. Housing complexes are constructed and provided to beneficiaries who face challenges in securing their own land. These flats, equipped with two bedrooms, a hall, kitchen, and toilet facilities, offer a secure living environment.

The ultimate goal of Punargeham is to provide a safe haven for coastal residents, freeing them from the threat of natural disasters, and fostering a sense of security while promoting economic growth. As part of the government’s commitment, the plan is to bring 21,045 families into the comfort zone by 2025 through the Punargeham initiative.

Empowering Women and Alleviating Poverty: The 25-Year Journey of Kudumbashree



Kudumbashree is a transformative movement that has significantly improved the social standing of women in Kerala over the last 25 years. It serves as an outstanding example of comprehensive women's empowerment and poverty alleviation, leaving a profound impact on the lives of ordinary women who have successfully transcended the barriers of poverty. This remarkable achievement is a testament to the strength and determination of women. With a membership of 46.16 lakh women spread across over three lakh neighbourhood groups, Kudumbashree stands as the largest women's organization in the Asia. It embodies the collective efforts of women coming together to create positive change, illustrating the potential for transformative impact when communities are empowered and united.

In 1998, the EK Nayanar government recognized the urgent need to eradicate poverty as an integral step towards realising the country's development goals. This realisation led to the formation of Kudumbashree on May 17, 1998, with a primary objective to eliminate poverty and empower women. Kudumbashree undertook the formidable challenge of facilitating women's access to employment, income, and economic self-sufficiency, effectively breaking the chains of poverty. The initiative became a beacon of hope for countless women who were previously confined to traditional household roles, opening avenues

for empowerment and economic independence.

The neighbourhood groups within Kudumbashree have evolved into effective micro-savings banks, providing members with the means to save and access loans for their various needs. The micro-finance scheme implemented by Kudumbashree has yielded significant results, with neighbourhood groups accumulating substantial deposits totalling Rs. 8029.47 crore in various banks. Collaborative efforts with the Life Insurance Corporation and State Insurance Department have further expanded the reach of insurance coverage, benefiting 11.31 lakh members through the 'Jeevan Deepam Oruma' insurance scheme. This multifaceted approach underscores Kudumbashree's commitment to financial empowerment and security for

its members.

Presently, Kudumbashree boasts 1,08,464 micro-enterprises operating across the state under various schemes, with approximately two lakh women members. These enterprises offer diverse employment opportunities in the production and service sectors, ensuring sustainable income for women. Kudumbashree plays a pivotal role in advancing local economic development by creating more employment and income opportunities in each region. It utilizes local resources and the skills of women to provide livelihoods through self-employment and wage-based sectors. Furthermore, Kudumbashree has offered job skill training to 96,864 individuals, leading to employment opportunities for 72,412 participants as part of its various job skill training projects.

Kudumbashree has also ventured into the online business sector, particularly through the ONDC digital platform. This new initiative aims to maximize the sector's potential and boost entrepreneurs' income. Kudumbashreebazaar.com has streamlined product marketing through platforms like Amazon Saheli and Flipkart.

Across the state, Kudumbashree operates 1,108 popular hotels. Additionally, Kudumbashree is involved in initiatives such as the 'Nutrimix' project for manufacturing and distributing Amrutham Nutrimix. Kudumbashree is involved in the Harithakarmasena for non-organic waste management, women's building construction units, and 'Arise' multi-task teams aimed at enhancing women's representation in the construction field. The organization has played a pivotal role in empowering women, enabling their participation as staff at various stations of the Kochi Rail Metro and the Kochi Water Metro.

Kudumbashree is actively engaged in various social security initiatives, aiming to integrate underprivileged, homeless, mentally challenged, and marginalized individuals into mainstream society. Notably, the 'Agathirahitha Keralam' project provides care and support to destitute families. It collaborates with local bodies, health department, and other voluntary organizations to aid 1,57,382 needy families in the state.

Kudumbashree's significant intervention in the field of social security includes BUDS institutions, encompassing BUDS

schools and rehabilitation centers. These institutions train 11,092 differently-abled students in 330 BUDS institutions, helping them integrate into mainstream society. Kudumbashree also focuses on the personal development and social empowerment of 4,26,509 children who are members of 28,528 Bal Sabhas in the state. The 'Kannada Special Project' aims at comprehensive development for women in the Kasargod Kannada region. Additionally, the 'Back to School' project facilitates members in making the most of modern educational opportunities and taking up new projects.

Kudumbashree takes a comprehensive approach to women's safety by establishing a 24-hour Snehita Gender Help Desk in 14 districts and Attapadi, forming 19,326 Vigilante Groups, establishing 803 Gender Resource Centres, 140 Model Gender Resource Centres, Gender Clubs in 304 Schools and 70 Colleges, and deploying 360 Community Counsellors.



The 'Dheeram' project provides karate training to women for self-defence and confidence-building.

Kudumbashree has shown its commitment to societal welfare by donating Rs 11 crore to the Chief Minister's relief fund, despite facing damage to their homes and livelihoods due to natural disasters.

Kudumbashree continues to build a strong youth base through 19,544 auxiliary groups, aiming to shape the future. The 'She Starts' project promotes entrepreneurship by harnessing the potential of educated young women in these auxiliary groups. The NULM project under Kudumbashree has made significant progress in enhancing the living standards of the urban poor and building organizational systems. Kudumbashree has received the national award six times consecutively for the best implementation of the NULM project among all states in the country.

After 25 years of dedicated work, Kudumbashree has achieved comprehensive women's empowerment through economic and social development. It has empowered countless women, enabling them to transition from domestic roles to positions of influence and authority. Kudumbashree continues to lead Kerala's women towards new horizons in development, bolstering the local economic development process. This movement stands as a global example, playing a vital role in social, political, cultural, and artistic development, furthering the cause of women's empowerment. It has moved women from the kitchen to the forefront, ushering in a new era of total empowerment.

Kerala's IT Parks: A Paradigm of Development



The IT parks in Kerala stand as a testament to the state's development, emerging as strong contributors to the economy through a diverse array of IT and non-IT services. With approximately 15,00,00 employees, three IT parks are dedicated to cultivating a sustainable IT environment that fosters growth and innovation.

Technopark, the country's first IT park, is located in Thiruvananthapuram. Infopark is situated in Kochi and Cyberpark graces Kozhikode. Together, these parks symbolise the vibrancy of Kerala's thriving IT sector. Integral to the vision outlined in the 2022-23 budget, these parks are part of the expansive Kerala IT Corridor. This corridor encompasses two additional parks in Kannur and Kollam, as well as several smaller ones. The government's commitment to facilitating entrepreneurial development and growth in the IT sector is realized through these state-of-the-art IT parks, strategically positioned to leverage technology and nurture a sustainable ecosystem for IT advancements.

Infopark, established in 2004, operates with a built-up area exceeding

9.2 million square feet. It has two satellite campuses in Koratty, Thrissur district and Cherthala, Alappuzha district. Also, the Infopark Technology Business Center functions from Kaloor in Kochi. As of now, 67,000 IT professionals are employed in 580 companies. Infopark's goal is to provide a world-class ecosystem in Kerala that fosters information technology. The software export revenue for Infopark in the fiscal year 2022-2023 stands at Rs 9,186 crore.

Kozhikode Cyberpark was envisioned as a pivotal IT hub in northern Kerala and operates as an autonomous entity registered under the Societies Registration Act of 1860 since January 28, 2009. At present the Cyberpark boasts a workforce of 2,100 employees across 84 companies, encompassing a built-up area spanning three lakh square feet. Impressively, it achieved software export revenue totalling Rs 105 crore in the last fiscal (2022-2023). The park stands as a dynamic contributor to the region's IT landscape, embodying growth and technological advancement.

Technopark, an autonomous institution wholly owned by the Government of Kerala, is India's first IT Park with a 34-year history of operations. It is one of the largest IT parks in the country and stands as one of the largest green technopolises globally. Established in 1990 in the Kerala state capital, Technopark employs 72,000 IT professionals across 486 companies. In 2021-2022 fiscal, Technopark's software export revenue reached Rs 9,775 crore. It spans four phases in Thiruvananthapuram and one phase in Kollam, housing world-class IT companies.

Technopark has earned recognition from the Central Government for maintaining proper financial progress and correct GST tax filing and payment. CRISIL (Credit Rating Information Service of India Limited) has also lauded it for its excellent financial position. In 2021, Technopark's rating rose from A grade to A plus, and in 2022, it further improved to A+ stable. Efforts are underway to provide necessary facilities to ensure employment for 30,800 people within the next five years.

The state government is actively laying the foundation for the IT revolution by offering world-class facilities to companies establishing themselves in the IT parks. This serves as a model for development that can be adopted by anyone.

National Highway Development in Kerala: Paving the Way for Progress



Infrastructure development stands as a cornerstone for overall progress of a state, and the Kerala government is actively spearheading planned projects aimed at fostering economic growth. At the forefront of these initiatives is the development of National Highways, with a particular focus on the enhancement of National Highway 66, which connects Mumbai to Kanyakumari and holds paramount importance in propelling Kerala's developmental aspirations forward. The development of the road segment from Manjeswaram Thalappadi to the Karod Tamilnadu border has long been a matter of debate. Efforts to address this issue were initiated by the National Highways Authority; however, in 2015, the project was abandoned due to delays in land acquisition. In 2016, the Pinarayi Vijayan government took proactive steps to revive the scheme. The Chief Minister held several meetings with the Prime Minister and the Minister for Road Transport & Highways to advocate for national highway development in Kerala. Following discussions and persistent efforts, Kerala's request to implement the National Highway Development Plan was granted in 2019. The central government approved the project with the condition that Kerala would contribute 25 percent towards land acquisition costs, which the state government accepted. Funds were also allocated for the project.

The development of National Highway-66 necessitated the acquisition of a total of 1190.67 hectares of land. In a proactive approach, the Chief Minister personally engaged with the local population to address concerns related to compensation, ensuring that it not only met the needs of the affected individuals but also enhanced their overall quality of life. Remarkably, the willingness of people to contribute their land for this vital project has resulted in the successful acquisition and transfer of about 98.5 percent of the required land to the authorities.

Underlining the state government's commitment to this significant infrastructure

project, a substantial contribution of Rs 5580.73 crore was allocated through KIIFB. The development of National Highway-66 is progressing rapidly, adapting to the changing times. The Kazhakoottam elevated highway has been opened to traffic, and 21 projects are underway from Kasaragod to Thiruvananthapuram. Three of these projects have already been completed, two are in the final stages, and work is progressing on others. Notably, a 12.75 km stretch of National Highway 66 in Aroor-Thuravoor is being transformed into a six-lane elevated highway, with construction already in progress.

The state government is actively supporting the timely completion of these projects by collaborating with the National Highways Authority. The Chief Minister conducts regular review meetings to assess progress, and work on several projects is expected to be completed by 2025.

In addition to development of National Highway 66, Kerala is actively prioritizing the development of other National Highways. The successful completion of the Kuthiran Tunnel project, adhering to a precise schedule and rigorous work evaluations, marks a significant milestone in the state's infrastructure efforts. Beyond this, the planning and execution of the Vizhinjam-Navaikulam Outer Ring Road project is underway, strategically designed to stimulate economic development around the capital, aligning with the realization of the Vizhinjam port. The project proposal submitted by Kerala for this initiative has been accepted, paving the way for its implementation through the National Highways Authority.

Project plans are in the final stages of preparation for the Thiruvananthapuram Outer Ring Road, Kollam-Shenkottai four-lane road, Palakkad-Kozhikode four-lane road on National Highway 966, Angamali-Kundannur six-lane bypass on National Highway 544 (Ernakulam Bypass). The first phase permissions for land acquisition are also available.

Tender processes have been completed for developing a two-lane road with a paved shoulder on National Highway 85 in Kochi-Munnar (EPC mode). Additionally, funds have been sanctioned for land acquisition to create a two-lane road with a paved shoulder on the Kozhikode-Muthanga route (National Highway-766). State Public Works Department plans for land acquisition for the development of the Adimali-Kattapana road on National Highway 185 have been approved and funded.

The development of national highways, along with projects such as mountain roads, coastal roads, and eliminating level crossings, will significantly contribute to Kerala's bright future.

Kerala's Digital Science Park: Pioneering a Knowledge-Driven Economy



A momentous leap in Kerala's evolution into a knowledge-driven economy unfolds with the inauguration of the Digital Science Park. Situated in the close proximity to the Digital University on the Technocity Campus in Pallipuram, Thiruvananthapuram, this pioneering initiative heralds the inception of the nation's first third-generation Digital Science Park. This venture stands as a testament to Kerala's commitment to pushing the boundaries of technological and intellectual advancements. The inaugural phase of the Digital Science Park commenced operations in August 2023, offers state-of-the-art facilities to support industries and start-ups engaged in electronic product design and artificial intelligence. The core objective is to bridge gaps, facilitate scientific innovation and applied research that propels Kerala into a forefront position in the realm of technology and knowledge-driven advancements.

Once fully operational, the park will expand its scope to encompass other facets of digital science and technology. A notable advantage lies in its potential to facilitate the integration of education, research, and industry, bolstered by government backing, thereby shaping a model for

future development. This third-generation science park has been meticulously designed, featuring a novel cluster-based interactive-innovation concept. It will establish a network of communication, embracing the triple helix paradigm involving universities, industry, and government.

The initial phase comprises two buildings, with a collective area of 200,000 square feet. The first building, spanning 150,000 square feet across five floors, accommodates research laboratories and a centre of excellence, which includes a digital incubator. The second building, covering 50,000 square feet, is dedicated to administrative and digital experience centres. The estimated project outlay stands at Rs. 1515 crores.

The Digital Science Park's foundations rest on four pillars: Digital Industry, Digital Applications, Digital DeepTech, and Digital Entrepreneurship. These pillars serve as growth catalysts, effectively addressing the evolving requirements of the sector. The organization has embraced the Triple Helix Model of Convergence, focusing on key domains of mutual cooperation and innovation. Notably, the University of Manchester, University of Oxford, and University of Edinburgh have inked Memorandums of Understanding with

Digital University Kerala to formalize their participation in the development of the Digital Science Park. This initiative is poised to play a pivotal role in nurturing centers of excellence, fostering the growth of the knowledge industry, and catalyzing a radical transformation within the higher education sector.

Kerala, renowned for setting the precedent with the establishment of India's first Technopark and Digital University, is now once again at the forefront with the first Digital Science Park. In a world marked by a remarkable surge in knowledge-based industries, Kerala reaffirms its dedication to fostering a new society that adapts to the changing landscape of science, thereby setting an exemplary standard.

Ente Bhoomi: The Land Management Revolution



The government of Kerala pioneers the colossal Ente Bhoomi project, aiming to conduct a digital survey and systematically organize land-related services across Kerala in a swift and efficient manner.

Launched with the motto “Land for all, records for all land, and all services smart,” the Ente Bhoomi digital survey endeavour sets out to accurately survey Kerala digitally over four years and develop precise land records. The prime objectives encompass the provision of all land-related services online for public access, the issuance of digital maps as fundamental documents for various agencies, including the Disaster Management Department, and the creation of survey sketches. The project, inaugurated on November 1, 2022, focuses on fostering social development, economic growth, expediting bank loan procedures, resolving land boundary disputes, and facilitating comprehensive village-level planning.

The initial phase of the survey is in its final stages across the 200 villages chosen for the project, encompassing an assessment of 160,000 hectares. Meanwhile, the survey activities for another 200 villages have commenced in the second phase. Additionally, an online portal Ente Bhoomi has been established.

This digital survey will be the foundation of a map-based system, ensuring transparent availability of survey documents and facilitating

lawful land transactions. The project stands to fairly resolve boundary disputes, offering a lasting solution to grievances surrounding survey irregularities. Precise land assessments will be made, allowing individuals to quickly receive government benefits such as land deed allotment.

The establishment of an Integrated Land Information Management System is enabling single-window service for all land transactions. Upon completion, the project will integrate land services from the Survey, Revenue, and Registration Departments into a unified online platform, providing the public with accurate, transparent, and expeditious land-related services.

The estimated total cost of implementing this state-wide digital survey project stands at Rs 858.42 crore. This initiative falls under the Rebuild Kerala Initiative.

Kerala Bank; The Rise as a Indigenous Financial Powerhouse



**KERALA
BANK**

Kerala State Co-operative Bank

The Kerala State Co-operative Bank, known as Kerala Bank, stands tall with pride and as a testament to cooperative success. An exclusive financial institution for the residents of Kerala, this institution not only provides a secure haven for the common man's deposits but also facilitates a diverse array of credit transactions. From supporting agriculture to self-employment ventures and fostering various industries, Kerala Bank is more than just a bank; it is a cornerstone of economic empowerment. Inaugurated in November 2019, Kerala Bank is the embodiment of the state government's visionary quest to provide the people a banking institution of their own. Prior to this transformation, Kerala's cooperative sector operated under a three-tier structure, consisting of the State Cooperative Bank, 14 District Cooperative Banks, and Primary Agricultural Credit Cooperative Societies. The reorganization of the cooperative sector into a more efficient two-tier system entailed the merger of District Cooperative Banks with the Kerala State Co-operative Bank, the apex institution of the cooperative sector. This bold move aimed at not only centralising the operations but, more importantly, to deliver the invaluable benefits of the cooperative sector more efficiently to the common man.

The origins of the State Co-operative Bank can be traced back to the early 20th century, with the promulgation of the 'Travancore Co-operative Societies Regulation Act' in 1914. The 'Trivandrum Central Co-operative Bank' emerged as the first cooperative bank under this Act. In 1956, when the state of Kerala was formed, the Travancore Central Co-operative Bank was transformed into

the State Co-operative Bank. In the initial phase, all district cooperative banks with the exception of Malappuram, amalgamated into the Kerala State Cooperative Bank. This strategic consolidation marked a significant milestone in the reorganization of Kerala's cooperative sector, streamlining operations for enhanced efficiency and impact.

At present, Kerala Bank boasts an extensive network of operations, comprising 823 branches and 1688 Class A member societies. The bank also has support from the Reserve Bank of India and NABARD. This collaboration has not only laid the foundation for Kerala Bank's inception but has also acted as a steadfast pillar in supporting the continuous growth of the cooperative sector in the state.

In 2022-23 fiscal, Kerala Bank's financial prowess shone brightly as the total business surged to an impressive Rs 121,204 crore. This marked a substantial increase of 10,347 crore compared to the previous year, with current investments soaring to a remarkable 74,152 crores.

The bank has introduced several loan schemes designed to benefit Primary Agricultural Credit Co-operative Societies and the general public. Additionally, Kerala Bank offers specialized loans for the micro and small enterprise sector and exclusive loan programs for women. Since its inception, agricultural loans are granted at lower interest rates, with farmers benefiting from maximum interest concessions through the AIF fund. Mobile banking applications have been implemented to provide common people access to modern digital banking services, on par with those offered by other commercial banks.

The remarkable achievements of Kerala Bank have not only garnered local acclaim but have earned it global recognition. In the prestigious World Cooperative Monitor report, a collaborative effort by the International Cooperative Alliance and the European Research Institute, Kerala Bank proudly stands as the foremost cooperative bank in Asia and holds a remarkable seventh position worldwide. The bank's performance in the financial services sector is assessed based on turnover, GDP, and per capita metrics. At the national level, the National Federation of State Cooperative Banks, the Apex Federation of Cooperative Banks, has received awards for its comprehensive contributions in the financial years 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22. These accolades were conferred based on various criteria, including business achievements and a governance system that prioritizes people's well-being.

KIIFB: Catalysing Sustainable Development and Transforming Kerala's Infrastructure Landscape



The Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) stands as a dynamic force for sustainable development and transforming the infrastructure landscape of the state. Established on November 11, 1999, KIIFB stands as a dedicated institution designed to secure funding from non-government sources to propel infrastructure development. Its fundamental objective is to invigorate the economy and shield the financial sector from potential recessions. The legal foundation of KIIFB is rooted in the KIIFB Act, initially enacted by the Kerala Legislative Assembly in 1996 and subsequently amended in 2016.

KIIFB raises funds through various modes such as Masala Bond, Pravasi Chitty Bond, Petroleum Cess, Term Loan, NABARD Loan and NORKA Loan.

KIIFB's portfolio encompasses a range of projects in various stages of development across all 140 constituencies within the state. These endeavours represent a pioneering stride in developmental history. Notably, within this portfolio, 485 projects with a cumulative value of Rs 29,551.39 crore falls under the aegis of the Public Works Department, significantly enhancing the state's infrastructure landscape. The development of hill highways and coastal highways has notably brightened the state's development outlook. KIIFB has played a pivotal role in revitalizing the long-delayed development of national roads within the state.

Furthermore, the Department of Public Education has witnessed the implementation of 143 projects, collectively valued at Rs 2901.18 crore, leading to a transformative shift in the public school sector, including the introduction of 45,000 smart classrooms. The Water Resources Department has benefited from 96 projects totalling Rs 6487.80 crore, while the Health and Family Welfare Department has seen 73 projects with a combined worth of Rs 5712.57 crore. Additionally, there are 18 projects, representing an investment of Rs 5200 crores, within the energy sector. KIIFB has also allocated funding for 10 projects worth Rs 2239.58 crores to the Coastal Shipping and Inland Water Transport Department.

The Higher Education Department has received approval for 61 projects with

a total value of Rs 1752.35 crore. The IT department oversees three projects with a budget of Rs 1412.86 crore, while the Sports and Youth Affairs Department manages 10 projects amounting to 834.86 crore. The Tourism Department has 12 projects with a cumulative value of RS 506.11 crore, and the Transport Department oversees three projects valued at Rs 600.98 crore. Additionally, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Department administers ten projects with a total investment of Rs 182.23 crore, the Local Self-Government Department supervises 23 projects with a budget of Rs 658.04 crore, and the Revenue Department is responsible for projects valued at Rs 32.62 crore. The Registration Department oversees six projects worth Rs 88.65 crore. The Home Department has six projects with a total value of Rs 225.19 crore, while the Agriculture Department manages one project valued at Rs 21.43 crore, and the Animal Welfare Department administers one project worth Rs 183.06 crore. The AYUSH Department has two projects with a total value of Rs 183.06 crore, while the Backward Classes Development Department oversees one project worth RS 17.73 crore. The Culture Department has 17 projects with a combined budget of Rs 477.28 crore.

KIIFB has also sanctioned various other projects in different sectors, including two projects with a cumulative value of Rs 138.51 crore for Devaswom and 26 projects worth Rs 521.64 crore for the Fisheries and Ports Department. The Industry Department has one project with a budget of RS 62.16 crores and the Labor and Skills Department oversees five projects with a total value of Rs 85.91 crore.

Furthermore, KIIFB has approved land acquisition initiatives totalling Rs 20,000 crore for various projects, including Rs 6769.01 crore for land acquisition related to National Road Development for Public Works and NHAI, and Rs 16,108.16 crore for six land acquisition projects, including three industrial parks, land acquisition from HNL, Kochi Bengaluru Industrial Corridor, and Gift City.

KIIFB has sanctioned a total of 1057 projects, amounting to Rs 80,363.18 crore, in addition to 1050 projects worth Rs 60363.18 crore, along with seven land acquisition projects totalling Rs 20,000 crore. As of April 30, 2023, an estimated expenditure of Rs 24,273.01 crore has been allocated for these initiatives.

This investment by KIIFB signifies a watershed moment for Kerala, heralding a new era of unprecedented infrastructure development. The state is on the brink of a significant surge in progress as these projects, spanning diverse sectors, move closer to completion.

Hridyam: A Solace for Children with Heart Disease



tailored to the severity of each child's condition, become a reality under the wings of Hridyam. Beyond surgery, the project is dedicated to delivering ongoing examinations and care, creating a continuum of support that extends well beyond the operating room.

All children born in government hospitals undergo comprehensive screening for potential birth defects. Children displaying symptoms of congenital heart disease are identified through screenings conducted at Anganwadis and schools and carried out during home visits by healthcare workers. Such infants undergo thorough testing, including echocardiography, under the guidance of paediatricians. The scope of this scheme extends to babies born in private hospitals as well.

Children diagnosed with congenital heart disease are required to be registered in the Hridyam software platform. Upon registration, a paediatric cardiologist promptly reviews the child's medical information and test reports, including echocardiograms. Cases are categorized based on the severity of the condition, and treatment and care, including surgical procedures, is provided. Expedited arrangements are made for those in urgent need of surgery.

Access to heart registration, treatment assurance, and follow-up services is facilitated through District-based Early Intervention

Centres, ensuring comprehensive support and care for affected children.

Hridyam project has received well-deserved recognition for its outstanding contributions. In 2018, the project received the prestigious Scotch Swast Bharat Golden Award and the Express Healthcare Award, both acknowledging its exceptional efforts in the realm of healthcare. Further, the project was honoured with the Kerala State e-Governance Award in 2019. Hridyam project stands as a shining example of how compassionate and innovative healthcare initiatives can make a lasting difference in the lives of those who need it the most.

In a heartfelt commitment to the well-being of children, the state government's Hridyam project, a compassionate initiative launched by the Health Department, is a project with a difference. This endeavour aims to lay the foundation for a healthier society while bringing smiles to the faces of children. Since its inception, this transformative initiative has bestowed the gift of life and health upon an impressive total of 6418 children.

The Hridyam scheme, introduced in 2017, offers a lifeline to children grappling with complex heart diseases. It is crucial to note that congenital heart disease in children is treatable and curable. The key to success lies in early diagnosis, timely surgical intervention, and comprehensive follow-up care. While facilities for disease detection exist, a critical gap persists in ensuring that children receive surgeries promptly and undergo adequate post-operative monitoring. The Hridyam project addresses these challenges with precision and compassion. It facilitates accurate monitoring of children, ensuring that their progress is closely tracked. Timely surgeries,

Public Distribution System: Kerala's Digital Leap in Public Distribution



Aadhaar-based authentication. The cardholder's identity is verified by scanning their fingerprints using the Aadhaar-based biometric e-POS system. Once authentication is confirmed, the allocated quantity of ration specified in the ration card is recorded and distributed. A detailed bill is generated, displaying the quantity, items, and the corresponding amounts provided.

A remarkable 99.5 percent of monthly ration distribution in the state now relies on Aadhaar authentication.

Aadhaar seeding on all ration cards has achieved a 100 percent completion rate, underscoring the transparency and accountability of the system. In cases where Aadhaar authentication encounters an issue, ration distribution is accomplished through a One-Time Password (OTP). By entering the OTP sent to the mobile number associated with the ration card into the e-POS machine, individuals can secure their ration allocation. Additionally, the e-POS machine is equipped to provide manual dispensation in situations where authentication via OTP fails, with such transactions being meticulously recorded in a register and authenticated by the customer. Therefore, individuals have three distinct methods to access their ration share.

Moreover, even during power outages at ration shops, the e-POS machine remains operational due to its six-hour battery capacity. The machine's dual-SIM card capability ensures continuous functionality, and it can also connect via Wi-Fi. The National Informatics Center (NIC) in Hyderabad has played a pivotal role in providing technical

support for ration distribution, including the development of a web portal tailored for this purpose.

Furthermore, the e-POS machine enables shopkeepers to monitor their inventory effectively, as they can access real-time information on the remaining items in their store. This eliminates the need to maintain separate records for billing, stock, and ledger, thereby reducing the potential for fraudulent practices. Consequently, the introduction of e-POS machines has reinforced the Public Distribution System, promoting transparency and precision in the distribution process.

The Public Distribution System (PDS) in Kerala is undergoing a transformative journey, aiming for excellence in ensuring the consistent availability of food to the public. Aligned with the government's commitment to enhancing the efficiency of public services, the PDS has taken up digital advancement. Across the state, a vast majority of ration shops, with only a few exceptions, have transitioned to the use of Electronic Point of Sale (e-POS) machines for ration distribution, ushering in a new era of streamlined processes. Manual ration distribution now remains only at eight ration shops due to network connectivity issues. These shops are located in Idukki, Palakkad, Pathanamthitta, and Ernakulam districts.

In February 2018, the experimental distribution of ration via e-POS commenced in Karunagapally taluk of Kollam district. This initiative was swiftly expanded, with e-POS systems being deployed in all ration shops in Kollam district by March 2018, and subsequently in all taluks across the state by April 2018. Ration distribution is now efficiently facilitated through

Leading the Digital Frontier: Kerala Digital University's Innovation Odyssey



demonstrated its competence by undertaking several government e-governance projects in a short span. However, inherent structural limitations impeded the implementation of contemporary courses, akin to those offered by similar institutions across the country. To address these limitations, the Government of Kerala elevated IIITM-K to the status of a Digital University through Act 10 of 2021 and was officially inaugurated on February 20, 2021.

The institution is resolutely dedicated to the pursuit of education, research, and community outreach, with a network of research centres, centres of excellence, and schools actively contributing to this mission. Giving priority on capacity-building, the university offers masters and doctoral programs in the fields of computer science, electronics, informatics and digital science. All courses are meticulously designed to prepare graduates for the contemporary demands of the workforce. Graduates from the university have achieved an impressive 100% campus placement rate in prominent companies.

The university boasts a distinguished faculty of scholars and technical experts. Numerous projects have been executed, earning approval and recognition from both the central and state

governments. Further, the university has inked Memorandums of Understanding with esteemed international institutions such as Edinburgh University, Oxford University, Manchester University and Xi'an University, fostering collaboration in research initiatives.

With state-of-the-art facilities and innovative learning methods, the Digital University is steadfastly advancing on its path of development with an unwavering support from the state government.

Kerala takes center stage in the realm of modern information technology, and at the helm of this digital revolution is the Kerala Digital University. A hub of innovative academic disciplines, the University of Digital Science, Innovation, and Technology aims at shaping a skilled and forward-thinking generation.

As India's inaugural digital university, Digital University was conceived with a visionary goal — to cultivate a responsible digital world. Its roots trace back to the transformation of the Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management-Kerala (IIITM-K), established in 2000 by the Government of Kerala. IIITM-K was envisioned to evolve into a preeminent educational and research institution specializing in information technology and its allied domains. IIITM-K rapidly



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Democracy in Action!

In a pioneering initiative , the entire cabinet of Kerala embarks on a groundbreaking journey to the heart of its communities. NavaKerala Sadas marks a significant shift in governance - a direct, face-to-face dialogue between the ministers and the people.

Crowds gather in large numbers, an attestation to the event's overwhelming reception. These meeting places buzz with life, as people from all walks of life seize the chance to voice their needs and concerns, engage in meaningful conversations, and directly submit their grievances.

These visuals tell a story of change, of a government reaching out and people stepping forward - a powerful narrative of democracy in action





Kerala's Extreme Poverty Eradication Program: A Comprehensive Approach to Empower the Marginalized



Poverty, in its broadest sense, extends beyond mere food scarcity. It encompasses a deficiency or insufficiency of essential amenities, encompassing nourishment, shelter, clothing, education, human resource development, quality of life, and health. To address this dire situation, the government has initiated the “Extreme Poverty Eradication Program” with the goal of identifying and eliminating extreme poverty within a five-year timeframe. The process involves the active participation of the community, along with gathering comprehensive data about the circumstances of each extremely impoverished family and formulating family-specific micro-plans to enhance their quality of life. This approach is tailored to identify the most destitute and vulnerable members in the society. Special attention is given to those who have been excluded from prior schemes like ‘Ashraya’ and ‘Agathi Rahitha Keralam’ due to various factors. The project is all inclusive, targeting the most marginalized groups such as scheduled caste and scheduled tribe families, coastal residents, urban poor, HIV-affected families, orphaned children, and families with LGBTQIA+ members. The state has identified 64,006 such families, comprising 103,099 individuals experiencing hardships related to food, health, income, and shelter across 1,032 local bodies. The projects are categorized into immediate service ones and short-term ones with a completion window of three months to two years. Micro-plans have been devised for 56,821 families. In response to the dire need for sustenance, cooked meals or food kits are distributed,

considering the health status of family members, with a focus on undernourished children. Local self-government bodies are ensuring the doorstep delivery of food items, and a ‘Food Card’ system has been introduced to guarantee timely access to food-related services for all eligible beneficiaries.

Health workers conduct bi-monthly visits to families grappling with health issues, delivering necessary treatment or medications, and even bringing treatment to the doorstep if required. Those in need of medical attention are shifted to hospitals for treatment. Additionally, disability certificates have been processed and issued, while efforts have commenced to extend benefits under the Karunya Benevolent scheme to individuals excluded from the Ayushman Bharat scheme, along with the issuance of ‘health cards’ to all.

Addressing the issue of homelessness, steps have been taken to incorporate extremely impoverished families into the Life Mission scheme, providing financial assistance for housing construction.

The Ujjeevanam scheme, initiated by Kudumbashree, aims to uplift families entrenched in extreme poverty due to unstable income. Kudumbashree teams visit the most needy families, creating tailored livelihood plans for each household and facilitating income-generating activities. Special revolving funds and subsidies are being considered for enterprises involving extremely poor individuals.

To bolster education, 16,187 children from very poor families between the ages of three and 18 receive necessary support from local bodies and PTAs. Steps have been taken to ensure access to education for 136 children in proximity to their homes, including scholarships, stipends, free college canteen meals, laptops, study materials, and free travel for higher education purposes.

The ‘Avakasham Athivegam’ project, which provides entitlement documents and emergency services to the very poor, is near completion. Almost all eligible individuals, excluding vagrants, the mentally ill, those who have relocated, and the deceased, have applied for these benefits. Services and documents have been extended to all eligible parties, barring a few applications rejected due to technical issues.

The Extreme Poverty Alleviation Project is the latest in a series of initiatives that have played a pivotal role in Kerala’s history, beginning with the Kudumbashree Project in 1998, the Ashra Project in 2002-2003, and the ‘Agathi Rahitha Keralam’ project introduced after 2016. The government remains steadfast in its commitment to making Kerala the first extreme poverty-free state in the country by November 1, 2025.

Advancing Sports Access: Government Initiatives for Fostering Sportsmanship



Participation in sports and physical fitness plays a pivotal role in cultivating a healthy society. Taking this into account, the state government has embarked on a novel project “One Panchayat One Playground” to enhance sports accessibility for all.

“One Panchayat One Playground” represents a visionary undertaking by the Sports Department, with the primary objective of popularizing sports across the state. This project, which was officially launched in April 2023, is committed to the establishment of top-tier playgrounds in every panchayat and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate in sports

The construction of the first playground under the project has already commenced in Kallikadu, situated in Thiruvananthapuram district. Another one is under development at Chirakkara Government High School in Chathannoor Constituency.

An alarming number of approximately 450 local bodies in the state lack a complete playing field. Within a span of three years, these panchayats will witness the development of brand-new playgrounds. In the first phase, priority has been accorded to 124 panchayats. Each playground’s construction will incur a cost of Rs. 1 crore, with the Sports Department

contributing Rs. 50 lakh. The remaining amount will be sourced from MLA fund, local body funds, corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, public-private partnerships and various other channels.

The central goal of the project is to provide sports and fitness amenities that cater to the diverse needs of the entire regional populace, regardless of age. Specific sports facilities required in each panchayat will be meticulously identified and developed. Furthermore, every playground will incorporate essential features such as a walking path, an open-air gym, restroom facilities, and adequate lighting. These playgrounds will also serve as focal points for local gatherings and social interactions.

The “One Panchayat One Playground” initiative predominantly operates within the premises of educational institutions, panchayat-owned properties, and publicly-owned lands. The only prerequisite for construction is the availability of at least one acre of land that adheres to the stipulated specifications. The construction of these playgrounds falls under the purview of the Sports Kerala Foundation, which operates within the ambit of the Sports Department. Upon completion of construction, the respective playground will be handed over to the landowner, who will establish a local management committee to oversee its operation and maintenance.

Active involvement from local clubs, residents’ associations, libraries, community networks, social organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is indispensable for the effective operation of these playgrounds.

The establishment of these sporting arenas promises to significantly invigorate local sports, extending opportunities for participation in games and tournaments, especially benefiting women in rural areas. Moreover, these playgrounds will serve as invaluable venues for organizing regional matches and tournaments, with the potential for discovering and nurturing talented athletes. Training programs will also be facilitated through the collaboration of local coaches and former athletes.

Kerala Space Park: A Vision beyond the Horizon



In the pursuit of long-term vision and sustainable growth, Kerala is venturing into diverse sectors to shape a dynamic future. At the forefront of these ventures stands the Kerala Space Park (KSPACE), a transformative initiative. This ambitious project signifies Kerala's determination to establish a formidable presence in the space sector, with a pronounced emphasis on education, research, and industry. With an anticipated impact of generating 140,000 skilled job opportunities by 2040, KSPACE is poised to be a catalyst for economic growth and expertise development in the state. A landmark initiative, KSPACE, is propelled by the audacious vision of positioning Kerala as a prominent hub for the development of products and services integral to the space sector, as well as related ancillary fields in aeronautics and defence. The roots of India's space program trace back to 1963 when the rocket launch centre was established in Thumba, on the outskirts of Thiruvananthapuram. Within the bounds of the capital city this the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre and ISRO Inertial Systems Unit, all distinguished as preeminent centres within the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). These institutions hold a place of pride in the hearts of all Indians as they continue to contribute significantly to India's space endeavours. Thiruvananthapuram is also home to the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology, the sole space institute of its kind in Asia.

Bolstered by these favourable circumstances and an abundance of retired ISRO experts, Kerala finds itself ideally positioned to foster a thriving space industry. KSPACE is strategically designed to serve as a magnet for investment and the creation of skilled employment prospects through strategic hubs and collaborative endeavours.

Kerala government has earmarked a sprawling twenty-acre in Pallipuram Technocity for Kerala Space Park. Currently, construction endeavours are already in full swing. With financial support of NABARD, the construction phase is about to witness the emergence of two impressive buildings covering

a vast area of two lakh square feet. Designed to cater to industrial needs, the available space will be offered on a monthly rental basis, providing a dynamic environment for businesses to thrive. Beyond short-term rentals, KSPACE is laying the groundwork for long-term land leases, inviting large industries, joint ventures, and a myriad of other applications to join the cosmic journey. With a strategic location within Pallipuram Technocity, KSPACE is poised to act as a catalyst for the expansion and enhancement of more than 150 small and large industries operating within the geographic ambit of Kerala.

The central industrial nucleus of this space park will be in Thiruvananthapuram. However, it will also see subsequent extensions in Ernakulam and Kannur. As the global space economy is projected to surge from its current valuation of \$500 billion to an estimated \$1 trillion by the 2040, India is fervently pursuing its aim of augmenting its share within this burgeoning sector to reach \$100 billion from the present \$8.4 billion (1.6%). Kerala, in alignment with its aspirations, seeks to carve out a significant niche, targeting a formidable 10% share, amounting to \$10 billion in this dynamic and evolving space economy.

Safeguarding the digital realm; Cyberdome initiative takes centre stage



At a time when challenge of cybercrime is escalating, the state government is actively fortifying its cybersecurity measures. At the forefront of this critical mission is the Cyberdome initiative, a high-priority endeavour designed to create a comprehensive and protective cybersecurity framework that encompasses all stakeholders.

Cyberdome stands as a specialized unit established by the Kerala Police with a singular focus on preventing and combating cyber threats. Since commencing its operations in 2016, Cyberdome has evolved into a dedicated technology research and development center seamlessly integrated within the structure of the police department.

More than just a response unit, Cyberdome is committed to proactive measures against cyber threats. Collaborating with various state departments and nodal agencies, it forms a collaborative ecosystem that harnesses collective intelligence and resources to counter the ever-evolving realm of cyberattacks. Cyberdome's mission extends beyond borders as it strategically partners with both national and international security agencies.

At the heart of Cyberdome lies a team of cyber experts, complemented by the involvement of police officers who contribute their expertise to its multifaceted mission. The unit's functional divisions include a Social Media Analysis Section,

responsible for identifying and addressing crimes propagated through social media channels; a Vulnerability Assessment Section, dedicated to evaluating the security of government and semi-government websites; and a Malware and Ransomware Analysis Section, tasked with in-depth analysis of malicious software.

In its commitment to spreading awareness and imparting knowledge, Cyberdome routinely organizes cybersecurity workshops and seminars, targeting the technical departments of government and semi-government colleges. In parallel, it has developed a suite of tools and applications that serve as formidable weapons against cybercrime. Notable among these innovations is Grapnel 2.0, a software application designed for monitoring the dark web, and the B Safe app, which features a mobile app scanner, cyber training resources and a comprehensive cyber awareness guide.

In an effort to combat the ever-evolving landscape of cybercrime, Cyberdome has undertaken the task of training police officers to prevent cryptocurrency-related scams and to pursue cybercriminals effectively. Additionally, it has extended support to various departments in the formation of dedicated cybersecurity teams. Furthermore, Cyberdome has adapted to contemporary challenges by embracing the Metaverse concept.

Beyond its state boundaries, Cyberdome has been instrumental in assisting 21 state governments in the identification and mitigation of security breaches. Its expertise proves invaluable in the identification and mitigation of security breaches within the websites of semi-government institutions.

Another major initiative is the Counter Sexual Exploitation Center established in January 2020. Emerging as a critical addition to the state's cybersecurity arsenal, the Centre's mission is to safeguard children from online sexual exploitation and related crimes. This specialized unit, working in tandem with Cyberdome, maintains a vigilant watch over online crimes against children, implementing robust measures to counter and mitigate such threats.

In summation, the state government has embarked on a comprehensive cybersecurity improvement program, dedicated to safeguarding its citizens from the perils of cybercrime. Cyberdome, as the vanguard of this mission, has made substantial contributions to bolstering the state's cybersecurity posture, producing tangible and positive outcomes.

Vidyatheeram: Empowering Coastal Education



The Vidyatheeram Scheme is a transformative initiative designed to empower coastal students with exceptional educational opportunities. This forward-looking program not only equips students for higher positions but also upholds the dignity of individuals along the coastal regions. To date, the government has successfully elevated 976 students to higher standards through a diverse range of courses.

Since its inception in 2015, the Vidyatheeram project, spearheaded by the State Fisheries Department, has been dedicated to uplifting the fishing community, particularly those facing challenging living conditions as they strive to secure their daily livelihood. The project was thoughtfully designed to offer the new generation the guidance they need to integrate into mainstream society. This comprehensive initiative encompasses various component schemes, including:

- Residential medical entrance training
- NIT/IIT training
- Civil service coaching
- Adoption of deceased fishermen's children for higher education
- Educational support for 10th-grade graduates
- Career counseling for the children of fishermen
- Promoting sports and the operation of 10 GRFTHS schools

Commencing from 2015-16 academic year, 533 students were admitted to the residential medical entrance program. This inaugural batch witnessed noteworthy accomplishments, with 84 students attaining MBBS degrees, 63

securing admissions to BAMS/BHMS/BVSC courses, and 79 enrolling in various medical field-related programs.

Between 2016-17 and 2022-23, 369 students actively enrolled in PSC, Bank, and Civil Services training. Since 2017, 74 students have benefited from the scheme, education of the children of deceased fishermen. This support includes covering study expenses, school fees, uniform costs, and book fees.

A notable sum of 273 lakh rupees has been invested since 2017 to enhance the sports infrastructure of 14 schools. Moreover, the government has allocated a substantial amount of Rs 90.4 crore for the Vidyatheeram scheme from 2017-18 to 2023-24.

The success stories of those who were admitted to the scheme's first batch and subsequently completed their professional courses stand as a testament to the government's dedication to this cause and its commitment to empowering coastal students to excel in various career fields.

Karunya Health Care Scheme: A Global Model



Along with this, various health and welfare schemes are being implemented through the State Health Agency, such as Cancer Care, Arogyakiranam, which provides free treatment for children up to 18 years of age and Shrutitarangam, which provides free implantation for children to gain improved hearing capability up to five years of age.

The scheme covers medical expenses starting from five days prior to the admission to the hospital for examination or treatment and it provides medicines for treatment for a period of 15 days after discharge. Everyone in the family irrespective of their age and gender gets benefit. Free treatment will be available from hospitals empanelled under the scheme regardless of being government or private owned. It also includes medicines, accessories, tests, doctor's fees, operation theatre charges, ICU charges and implant charges.

During the initial phase of the project, 406 government and private hospitals were empanelled. At present 613 hospitals are enlisted in the scheme. More than 42 lakh families in Kerala are

availing health care through this scheme. An amount of Rs 5,238 crore has been disbursed so far through 53 lakh claims.

The State has received various national awards for its excellent implementation of the KASP scheme. Kerala won the 2023 award for the State that provided the greatest number of free treatments in the country. Making treatment cards available in Braille for the visually impaired KASP beneficiaries, the State received an award in the category of Best Activities.

Kerala also bagged the award in the categories of the State that fully utilized the amount allocated for the scheme. The state also got accolade for empanelling the greatest number of hospital beds per 1000 families.

Emerging as a global model in the realm of health, Kerala stands at the forefront of advancements, rivalling developed nations in health indices and public health standards. The state's commitment to provide the best healthcare for all sections of the people is evident in initiatives such as the Karunya Health Care Scheme (KASP).

Launched on April 1, 2019, the KASP scheme is mainly aimed at alleviating the financial strain borne by ordinary families grappling with substantial medical expenses. The scheme marks a pivotal step towards comprehensive healthcare. However, a significant transition occurred on July 1, 2020, as the State Health Agency completely took over the management of the project.

More than 42 lakh families in the State are beneficiaries of the scheme. An assistance of Rs five lakh is provided annually for hospital treatment through the scheme. The whole family can avail the benefits of this scheme. Treatment services are also provided through the Karunya Benevolent Fund for families with annual income less than three lakhs and who are not covered under the KASP scheme.

Ensuring wellbeing and welfare through Social Security and Welfare Fund Pensions



Demonstrating a steadfast commitment to the well-being and welfare of the needy and marginalized, the state government champions social security through the Welfare Fund Pensions. This initiative is not just a declaration of the government's commitments; it's a tangible embodiment of care for people across all sections of society. By prioritizing Social Security and Welfare Fund Pensions, the State stands as a beacon of support, affirming its dedication to providing a safety net for the vulnerable and marginalized members of the community.

With a dedicated focus on the policy of ensuring pensions for those eligible, the State extends its protective arm to 65.19 lakh individuals, ensuring they receive the essential benefits. The state government now provides five Social Security Pensions such as Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension, Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension, Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension, Pension for Unmarried Women above 50 years of age and Agricultural Labour Pension.

The State government also provides Welfare pension for artists and pension for destitute artists, through the Department of Culture. Circus pension and pension for Destitute sports person are disbursed through the Sports and Youth Welfare Department. The Backward class Development Department provides Vishwakarma pension and Tree climbing labourers receive welfare pension through the Department of Labour and Skill.

At present, 52.51 lakh people are availing the benefits of Social Security pensions and a total of 12.68 lakh people receive pension from various sources such as, government-funded Welfare Board pensions and self-funded Welfare Board pensions.

Among the five existing Social Security pensions in the State, Indira Gandhi

National Old Age Pension, Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension and Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension are receiving central assistance at various rates of Rs 200, Rs 300 and Rs 500 respectively. Though the state has not received any central allocation after December 2020, the state government has allotted these pensions without waiting for the Central allocation. The Central share is released in advance by the State government and this amount is later sanctioned as reimbursement by the Central government.

In June 2023, the government sanctioned Rs. 760.56 crore for Social Security pension to 50.90 lakh beneficiaries and Rs. 106.11 crore for pension to 6.76 lakh beneficiaries of 16 Welfare Boards. The government spends around Rs. 900 crores per month to provide welfare pensions. Welfare pensions till the month of July 2023 have already been distributed even at this plight of severe financial crisis.

The welfare pension which stood at Rs 600 in 2016 has now been increased to Rs 1600.

Kerala's Institute of Advanced Virology: A Global Venture to Fight Infectious Diseases

to make lasting contributions to global health security. In 2019, the Department of Science and Technology established the Institute of Advanced Virology with state-of-the-art immunological systems at the Life Science Park, Thonnakkal. With a keen eye on both local and global virus strains, the institute emerges as a crucible of expertise. Led by eminent virologists, the Institute gives preference to epidemic or pandemic preparedness and local capacity building.

In its journey, the Institute places emphasis on the development of antibodies, vaccines, and diagnostic kits and fostering indigenous capacity building. Notably, the institute's aspirations extend to the creation of an indigenous vaccine for Rabies, a testament to its tireless pursuit of scientific excellence and a safeguarded future.

During the second phase of development, 16 Bio Safety Level 2 (BSL 2) labs are ready in the 80,000 sq ft admin/bio block. This block was inaugurated in April 2023. The foundation stone for BSL 3 labs and transgenic animal house complex have also been laid.

Departments of Basic Virology, Viral Applications, Anti-viral Drug Research, Viral Diagnostics and Viral Vaccines are now active.

With the addition of Clinical Virology,

Viral Epidemiology and Public Health, Bioinformatics and Statistics Research Departments, the Institute of Advanced Virology is poised to a centre of excellence in Advanced Virology research. The Institute is destined to stand as a beacon of innovation, shaping the future landscape of advanced virological research with a multidimensional and comprehensive approach.



Kerala's Institute of Advanced Virology, launched by the government four years ago, represents a bold and strategic step to create resilience and resistance in the face of emerging health threats. The institute stands as a defender and a formidable shield in the battle against new and evolving infectious diseases such as Covid and Nipah. In its relatively short existence, the Institute has swiftly evolved into a global Center of excellence, showcasing not only the state's commitment to public health but also its ability to contribute significantly to the global efforts in combating infectious diseases. It stands as a testament to Kerala's proactive approach in the realm of virology, poised

WINGS: A Flight to Aspiration



students from the SC/ST and Backward Classes. It was 2022 that the government started the programme when it was found that some students could not afford the fees. As part of the programme, the department takes over the course fees of the students who qualify for the pilot study at Rajiv Gandhi Aviation Academy, Thiruvananthapuram. By taking over the course fees, the government not only removed a significant obstacle but also paved the way for deserving individuals to spread their wings without the constraints of financial constraints, making the skies of opportunity more accessible for all.

About 33 lakh rupees including fees, scholarship, accommodation and food is required to complete the studies. Earlier, the scholarship was available for only one Scheduled Caste student. Now the government provides scholarship through Wings to three SC, two ST and one OEC student. Since this government assumed power, so far six people have been given scholarships.

In addition, the department has also provided assistance to 150 Scheduled Tribe students enrolled for Airport-Airline Management courses.

In a visionary move, the State government is unfurling wings of opportunity, breathing life into the aspirations of those belonging to backward sections. With an unwavering commitment to social progress through education, the government gives primacy to mainstreaming marginalized communities, particularly Scheduled Castes/Classes and Backward groups, navigating the challenges of social, economic, and educational sectors. This transformative journey extends educational assistance, a lifeline from Vijnanwadis to pilot training courses, ensuring that students from these communities are not just educated but empowered to soar towards their dreams, aligned with their desires and aptitude. Embarking on this journey of empowerment, the SC/ST and Backward Classes Development Department introduces 'Wings,' a visionary scheme crafted to breathe life into the dreams of students aspiring to become pilots. The project aims at creating employment avenues, particularly for students belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, by offering comprehensive training for commercial pilot courses.

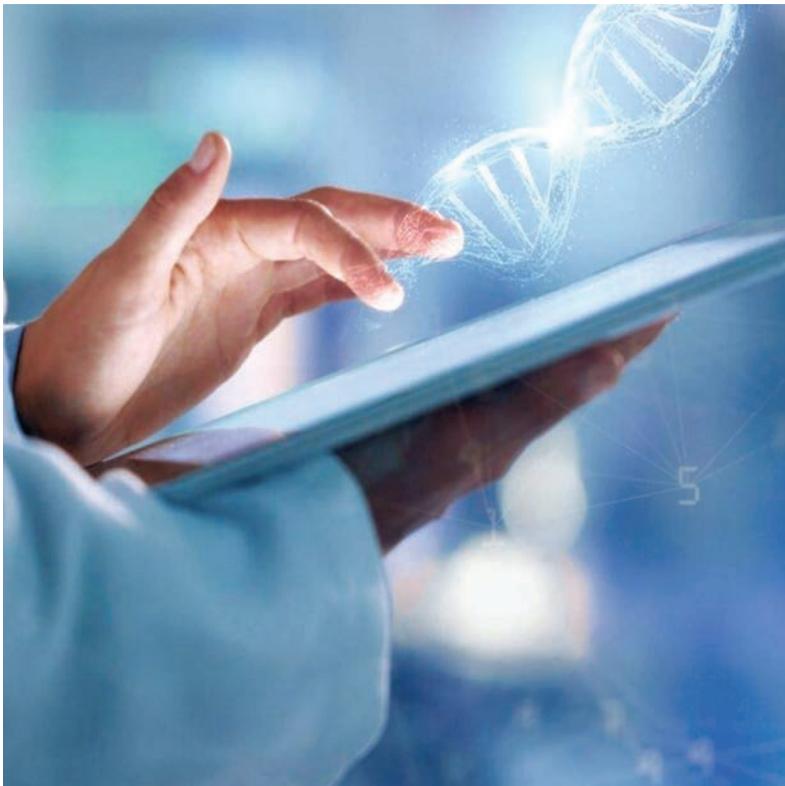
In the pursuit of these wings, the scheme not only aims to nurture dreams but also to uplift communities, providing tangible opportunities for a brighter future. 'Wings' stands as a beacon, symbolizing the government's commitment to ensuring equal access and empowerment for all, fostering a sky where dreams take flight.

Witnessing the formidable challenge posed by the substantial costs of pilot courses, the government gave rise to this transformative project for helping

Since assuming office, the present government has granted scholarships to 425 students to pursue their studies abroad. A generous allowance of up to Rs 25 lakh rupees is extended for covering study abroad course fees, marking a significant stride towards fostering global education. The government also extends support to scheduled category students with grants of up to Rs 35 lakh and backward category students with up to Rs 10 lakh for Post Graduate studies, ensuring that financial constraints don't hinder academic aspirations.

In a groundbreaking move, the scope of scholarships now encompasses students studying in prestigious institutions such as IIM, IIT, and Deemed Universities. Looking ahead, the introduction of Free Ship cards promises a fee-free education for SC/ST students from the next academic year.

Kerala's Gene Odyssey; India's first Genome Datacentre



In a historic first, Kerala takes a monumental stride by establishing India's first Genome Datacentre, firmly securing its status as a trailblazing nation in the domain of health. The forthcoming Genome Datacenter, devoted to the sequencing of genetic information, will come up at the Digital Science Park in Thiruvananthapuram.

This progressive initiative aims to harness the vast opportunities inherent in biotechnology and genetics, propelling both industrial and research landscapes to new heights. Helmed by K-Disc in collaboration with Digital University, the state-of-the-art data center boasts cutting-edge GPU systems adorned with NVIDIA chips, setting the stage for a future defined by groundbreaking scientific exploration and health advancements.

Under the aegis of the Kerala Development and Innovation Strategic Council, the Kerala Genome Datacentre will serve as a centralized hub for researchers, healthcare professionals, and public health officials to access and exchange genomic data. Its creation has been greenlit by KIIIFB.

In the field of medical research, Genomics emerges as a transformative force, propelling immunology, treatments and innovative therapies into uncharted territories. This discipline holds the promise of fortifying traditional medical practices, envisioning a future where healthcare approaches are redefined.

At the core of this development lies a transformative path, leading towards early detection and prevention of genetic afflictions. Notably, it seeks to combat prevalent challenges such as sickle cell anemia in Kerala's tribal regions. Moreover, the Genomic Datacenter will also help in safeguarding the biological diversity of the Western Ghats. Leveraging cutting-edge IR4.0 techniques for synthetic biology biomanufacturing, the center unveils unique genetic information, painting a canvas of possibilities that transcend the boundaries of conventional understanding. In essence, this venture promises not just to decode genetic mysteries but to shape a future where health and biodiversity harmoniously thrive.

The generation of data by sequencing samples from diverse sources, including animals, plants, and environmental specimens, enables the monitoring of disease transmission and the discovery of novel treatments. This revolutionary center will also serve as a springboard for research institutions, hospitals, and biotech enterprises to innovate new products. Further, it will empower bioinformatics, diagnostic startups, and software companies to develop value-added platforms and tools by leveraging artificial intelligence and machine learning.

With the coming up of Genome Datacenter, Kerala is positioning itself to lead the nation in science and technology. This initiative, dedicated to curating a rich repository of genomic data, propels the state into a leadership role, heralding a new era of scientific and technological breakthroughs.

The significance of this center reverberates across various domains. It is poised to identify genetic variants, fortify measures against infectious diseases, and revolutionize disease surveillance and response strategies. Beyond health, its impact extends to bolstering productivity in the primary sector, fostering the creation of pharmaceutical innovations, and supplying invaluable data to research institutions and biotech companies.

Kerala is set to play a pivotal role in the transformation of healthcare, agriculture, and animal husbandry. This groundbreaking center lays the foundation for future investigations into health and genetic concerns, promising to enhance healthcare provisions, catalyze superior agricultural crop development, expedite disease diagnosis, and pave the way for preventive medicine in animal husbandry. Moreover, it stands to contribute to the biosecurity of the state. Kerala's Genome Datacenter emerges not just as a technological marvel but as a cornerstone in shaping a progressive and resilient future.

Kerala's Digital Workforce Management System: Transforming Aspirations to Reality



20 LAKH
JOBS
BY 2026



In a monumental leap, the government is spearheading a transformative initiative to turn academic aspirations into reality. With a dedicated focus on providing employment opportunities that align with individual aptitudes, the state is carving a path towards a future where every job seeker finds their perfect match.

This ambitious mission envisions rendering 20 lakh individuals employable by 2026, a goal propelled by skill development programs and scholarships. Already making significant strides, the government has already created 5.7 lakh job openings through the Kerala Knowledge Economy Mission.

In February 2021, the Kerala Knowledge Economy Mission was launched under the Kerala Development and Innovation Strategic Council. Its aim was to transform the economic landscape of Kerala into a knowledge-centric powerhouse. With a strategic focus on aligning the state's economic trajectory with global dynamics, the mission aims to offer tailored job prospects to its skilled and dynamic workforce.

The Digital Workforce Management System (DWMS), led by the Digital University, has been instituted to streamline candidates, employers, and skill training institutions onto a unified platform for efficient collaboration.

This digital platform functions as a centralized hub for managing the supply and demand of qualified human resources required for the employment sector. Job seekers and employers can both register on the platform. It offers employers the ability to identify suitable talent according to their specific needs, while empowering job seekers to enhance their skills and receive necessary training to meet market demands.

The platform also extends career support services, comprising career counseling, English proficiency enhancement, personality development training, work readiness programs, and robotic interviews. These services aid in job search efforts, application for suitable opportunities, and provide essential training to

equip individuals for their chosen roles.

To bolster job seekers' capabilities and enhance their employability, various skill development programs, including skill courses, internships/apprenticeships, skill scholarships, and learning circles, are conducted. Additionally, scholarships are awarded in diverse categories to individuals enrolled in courses accessible through the platform.

The state is also ushering in a new era with the 'Work Near Home' initiative, a strategic effort to strengthen local self-governing bodies and transform them into vibrant hubs for employment. Backed by a substantial fund of Rs 1000 crore from KIIFB, this initiative aims to establish ten 'Work Near Home' centers by March 31, 2024.

The Kerala Knowledge Economy Mission also implements employment schemes like Pride, Samagra, Unnathi, Thozhiltheeram, Thozhilarangathekku, and Back to Work. These initiatives collectively contribute to a holistic enhancement of the employment sector, fostering sustainable growth and creating a paradigm shift in how communities perceive and engage with employment opportunities.

A Comprehensive Exploration of Kerala's Economy and Development



Priyanka G. IAS

Convener, Seminar Committee, Keraleeyam 2023

As part of Keraleeyam 2023 twenty-five public seminars on different aspects of the economy were conducted in five different venues in five days from 2nd to 6th Nov 2023 was the leading attraction of the event. The seminar series mirrored Kerala's long tradition of public engagement and debate, and provided an opportunity to examine the state's development achievements and ambitions. The seminar series provided a forum for scholars, activists, officials, and others from across the world to explore development concerns and contribute to policy creation in the state. Each session began with a presentation by the Secretary of the hosting Department, detailing the policy, achievements, and vision in the sector.

Kerala Economy

The session "Kerala Economy" was chaired by K.N. Balagopal, Finance Minister. The session showcased the unique achievements of Kerala in various sectors, particularly health and education. The seminar included two sessions and nine papers presented by distinguished delegates. Dr. K. J. Joseph, Director of GIFT, introduced the concept of Keraleeyam and highlighted the state's achievements in various sectors.

The Seminar highlighted Kerala's democratic, socialist, and welfare-oriented approach to growth. The state's high per capita income, the active role of women in democratic decentralization, unique patronage for PSUs, and complementary infrastructure and economic development. Prof. M.A. Oommen, a renowned Kerala economist, presented on the topic of "Rebuilding a Sustainable Kerala Economy - Raising Two Issues," emphasizing the state's achievements since 1957, environmental concerns, and fiscal sustainability. Dr. T. M. Thomas Isaac presented on Kerala's economic transformation from 1957 to 2023, highlighting redistributive strategies of the state in income, asset and land redistribution in achieving a high quality of life. Former Cabinet Secretary K. M. Chandrasekhar highlighted the flexibility of Indian financial federalism in decision-making on economic policy and projects at state and sub-state levels. Robin Jeffrey discussed his fascination with Kerala since childhood, understanding its history, the "Kerala model of development," maintaining expectations, and its place in world history and India's diversity, describing it as captivating and intriguing for the last 65 years. Lekha Chakraborty, highlighted Kerala's emphasizing 'beyond GDP' paradigm and reiterated that owning fiscal risk complements robust economic growth. She suggested regaining lost fiscal space and focusing on the care economy infrastructure in Kerala, emphasizing the importance of fiscal space in the 16th Finance Commission.

Professor Patrick Heller from Brown University, USA, presented on "Development and Embedded Democracy in Kerala," highlighting the state's success as a model for social development and democracy. He emphasized

the state's human capital advantage and its investment in education.

P.C. Mohanan, Chairman of the Kerala State Statistical Commission presented a paper on "Some Statistical Concerns in Measuring Economic Development in States." He raised concerns regarding the non-availability of data at the local level for the implementation of various projects so that the targets cannot be quantified. Prof. R. Ramakumar, a renowned economist from the School of Social Sciences, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai emphasized the importance of enhancing productivity in the agricultural sector and Prof. Vinoj Abraham from the Centre for Development Studies, in his presentation on "Development and Employment: Kerala's Achievements, Challenges and Possibilities" highlighted that the Kerala model of



Seminar on Local Governments in Kerala - Keraleeyam 2023

development paved through public action had reaped exemplary gains in human development. The session was informative and provided a good understanding of the Kerala Economy and the Kerala Model of Development.

Local Governments in Kerala

In the Session on 'Local Governments in Kerala' Minister for Local Self Governments, Rural Development and Excise, M B Rajesh, emphasised the state's decentralisation

timeframe and distinct approach. He emphasised the state's strong foundation of Local Self-Government Institutions, which enabled four missions: LIFE, Ardram, Haritha Keralam, and the Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign. Mani Shankar Aiyer lauded the State's effective implementation of decentralised local governance, and underscored the political significance of Keraleeyam by underlining the state's efforts in reducing poverty and alleviating extreme poverty. Dr. Thomas Isaac highlighted Kerala's accomplishments in local self-government and decentralisation by highlighting good plan preparation, increased local government engagement in state plans, improved service delivery, and asset building. Former Chief Secretary S.M. Vijayanand IAS (Retd.) complimented local governments' disaster relief efforts, saying that planning should also enhance Grama Sabhas and incorporate micro sectors. He emphasised the importance of integrated watershed development, urban health, Tribal Sub-Plan support, and local government control over water supply.

School Education in Kerala

The session on 'School Education in Kerala' was chaired by the Minister for General Education and Labour, V. Sivankutty. He observed that the seminar contributed to showcasing the achievements of the education system of the state which is based on equality and quality, and promotes secularism and democratic consciousness. Dr. Mika Tirronen (Finland), Dr. Terry Durmian (UNICEF India), Prof. Anita Rampal, Prof. Farah Farooqi, Prof. Sonajharia Minz, Gurumurthy Kasinathan, and other eminent personalities spoke on the panel. The minister, while concluding, said that the state will continue to uphold the commitment towards a secular and democratic fabric. The seminar became a platform to present Kerala's achievements to the world and share national and international experiences in the field of education.

Land Reforms in Kerala

The session on "Land Reforms in Kerala" was attended by prominent figures in the domain. The Minister for Revenue and Housing, K Rajan, emphasized the importance of land reforms in Kerala's history and pre-capitalist agrarian relations. He argued that these reforms transformed land ownership limits and led to the distribution of surplus land to the landless. Binoy Viswam MP, and A K Balan emphasized the need for a redistributive Land Reforms process to ensure food security without disrupting the basic agrarian economy. Adv. Kaleeswaram Raj, an eminent lawyer Supreme Court of India, was of the opinion that the Government has to move with the redistributed Land Reforms to achieve the social and economic development of the State. The Minister concluded by stating that the main objective of the government is "Land for all, Documents for all lands and All services are to be smart."

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Kerala: Issues of Socio-economic Development

In the session on 'Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Kerala: Issues of Socio-economic Development', K. Radhakrishnan, the Minister for Welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Backward Classes, emphasized the government's commitment to socio-economic development, social solidarity, poverty eradication, education promotion, and social inclusivity. A comprehensive approach to empower marginalized communities, including education, employment, and infrastructure improvements, and the need for further efforts, was emphasised.

Expanding on these views, Prof. Gopal Guru praised Kerala's efforts to address historical vulnerabilities faced by SC/ST communities, emphasizing the need to combat inequality and hierarchy. He praised initiatives like study room programs and foreign studies fellowships. Sri. Bezwada Wilson emphasized

holistic development, democratic values, equality, liberty, and justice for SC/ST communities.

The session was enriched by the presence of persons with domain expertise and practice. A. Vijayaraghavan discussed the SC and ST communities' situation in Kerala, acknowledging historical challenges but highlighting progress through legal reforms and education. Dr. Basavi Kiro addressed the issues of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups, highlighting alcoholism, health, lack of political power, drug abuse, malnutrition, and malaria, and emphasised respecting tribal rights and indigenous knowledge. Shri O. R. Kelu, MLA discussed the progress and challenges faced by SC/ST communities in Kerala, emphasizing government efforts to ensure access to basic necessities, education, and employment opportunities, and the need for increased funding. Dr. P. K. Jameela, Kerala State Planning Board member, highlighted disparities in SC/ST community progress and the need for increased funding for 14th five-year plan. K Somaprasad, Dr. Meera Velayudhan and P.K.Sivanandan also spoke on the occasion. Dr.Meera praised Kerala's progress in empowering vulnerable groups, highlighting initiatives like Ayyankali Urban Employment Guarantee Scheme and education programs.



Seminar on Empowering Sustainable Growth in the Fisheries Sector- Keraleeyam 2023

Water Resources in Kerala

In the session on 'Water Resources in Kerala, Roshy Augustine, Minister for Water Resources, stressed the importance of stakeholder-public coordination to maximize water resource use. National experts, academicians and authorities attended the seminar. Dr. K.P.Sudheer and Dr. Swapna Panickal, climate change experts, discussed prospective regional changes in the State by highlighting long-term average changes in rainfall, temperature, soil moisture, and

mean sea level. Co-speakers emphasised and discussed excellent practices for integrating in our state. Drs. S.K.Ambast and A.K.Gosain stressed the need for water security and sustainable groundwater management in sustainable development.

Kerala's Fisheries Sector

The session on 'Kerala's Fisheries Sector' focused on aquaculture development and its potential in the state. The Minister for Fisheries Saji Cherian, highlighted the government's welfare initiatives for fishermen and the fishing sector. As stated by former Fisheries Minister S. Sharma, the State administration has passed the most fisheries laws and proposed ideas for regional development. Dr. Antonio Garza de Yta, Oman's government representative, said the state can become an aquaculture reference centre by focusing on genetic advancement, innovative fish farming, and fish health. Dr. Shakuntala Haraksingh Thilsted, winner of the World Food Prize, stressed the necessity for a holistic food system that includes women, youth, and children. Dr. Dung Viet Le proposed that Kerala can successfully use fish farming methods because it has a similar geography to the Mekong Delta region in Vietnam. Vice Chancellor of KUFOS, Dr. Pradeep Kumar discussed KUFOS' aquaculture development efforts. Prof. M Rosalind George highlighted fish farming challenges and infections and offered options. For sustained sector growth, Dr. Leela Edwin stressed the necessity to modernize fishing vessels and nets. Entrepreneurs Mr. Jose Thomas, Alex K Ninnan, and Manoj Sreekanta Kurukkal urged that the government modernise the fish processing sector and seafood value chain.

Co-operatives in Kerala

The session on 'Co-operatives in Kerala' was chaired by V. N. Vasavan, Minister for Co-operation and Registration. Speakers from diverse regions and institutions shared their experiences and reflected on Kerala cooperatives in the session. NABARD Chairman Shaji K V said that Kerala is a model for the whole country. International Cooperative Alliance Asia Pacific Programme Lead Ganesh Gopal noted the co-operative movement's global impact on food, climate change, and environmental protection. Mondragon Corporation representative Mikel Lizamiz stressed social reform and education in the Mondragon cooperation concept. Shambhu Prasad, Professor in the Department of Strategic Management, Institute of Rural Management suggested that the Department of Cooperation and other relevant institutions lead the way in addressing the lack of true cooperation research. Kerala's basic cooperative societies and dairy cooperatives empower women, according to Simel Esim, Head of the ILO Cooperatives Unit. Kerala Bank President Gopi Kottamurikal stressed value-added products from cooperative societies to get farmers fair agricultural prices. Uralungal Labour Contract Cooperative Society chairman Rameshan Paleri emphasised modernization and IT. K.R. Vijaya, Vanithafed Chairperson, stressed democracy, cooperatives, autonomy, and autonomous action.

Agriculture in Kerala

The session on 'Agriculture in Kerala' was chaired by Minister for Agriculture, P. Prasad. The seminar deliberated on introducing Kerala models in the field of agriculture to the world and making us experience innovative perspectives. While Dr. K. C. Bansal of NAAS proposed sustainable agricultural development using genome editing technology, Dr. Kadambot Siddique from the University of Western Australia emphasised a new approach to implementing the innovative concept of carbon trading to promote carbon-neutral agriculture. The World Bank Economist Dr. Chris Jackson suggested appropriate use of fallow lands, leveraging MSMEs and hi-tech entrepreneurs, and prioritising

climate change for increased agricultural productivity. Dr. Cao Duc Phat suggested that the entry of cooperatives and private entrepreneurs into the agricultural sector and investment in value-added products will give a new impetus to Kerala's agriculture. Dr. C. N. Neeraja's lecture on rice farming in India discussed the potential in Kerala for bio-fortified varieties with enhanced nutritional values.

Food Security in Kerala

The session on 'Food Security in Kerala' was chaired by Food and Civil Supplies Minister G.R. Anil, who highlighted the State's excellent public distribution system, including 100% Aadhaar-based ration distribution, and how Kerala is the first State to complete 100% Aadhaar seeding of ration cards. Speakers discussed ensuring food nutrition security and how food security operations can be carried out better. Dr. Glenn Denning of Columbia School of International Studies proposed a five-pronged investment strategy for global food security, incorporating the teachings and ideas of Prof. M S Swaminathan. Former Union Minister for Food and Public Distribution K V Thomas also spoke about the state's public distribution system, which is a model for the country itself.

Dr. Madhura Swaminathan, commended



Seminar on the change of Media in Democratic Society - Keraleeyam 2023

Kerala's excellent work in public distribution and urged to create awareness to make eating habits more nutritionally healthy. Tamil Nadu MLA Ezhilarasan and Tamil Nadu Planning Board Vice Chairman J. Jeyaranjan discussed the public distribution sector in Tamil Nadu, emphasizing the universality of everything for all. Dr. Neetu Sharma presented a State nutritional profile including the nutritional values of children under 5 years of age. Dr. Bhawani emphasised the necessity of moving from "Hunger Free Kerala" to "Malnutrition

Free Kerala'. She also focused on the need to include small grains and pulses like millet in the food basket of the public distribution system. M Mehaboob underlined the importance of having a cold chain system in the State. Mukund Singh, State Secretary of Bihar RJD Party, discussed the challenges faced by the public distribution sector in Bihar and the various schemes implemented by the government to overcome them.

Governance and the Provision of Digital Services in Kerala

The session on 'Governance and the Provision of Digital Services in Kerala' was inaugurated by Minister of Finance, K.N Balagopal, highlighting the need for continuous growth and the government's objective to overcome obstacles by anticipating future challenges. The departmental presentation detailed initiatives by the state. K. Jayakumar IAS, Director of IMG, underscored the importance of good governance training and suggested that efforts should be made for the provision of necessary services within rules and regulations, and should bring necessary amendments to the administrative department. V. P. Joy, IAS (Rtd.), former Chief Secretary explained the need for Joint of Working and Evidence-based Policymaking to provide public services. This was followed by a deliberation by P.V. Unnikrishnan, who emphasized the need for innovation in the state. Santosh Babu opined that by creating a citizen's primary database, all government-related services can be accessed by the public through efficient e-governance solutions.

Rasikan Maharaj, Chief Director of the Institute of Economic Research on Innovation at Tshwae University of Technology, suggested three key ideas for Kerala's development: increasing knowledge intensity, expanding social inclusion, and identifying necessary development practices and laws. Dr. Ajay Kumar, IAS (Retd.), Former Defense Secretary & Advisor, KIIFB discussed the importance of e-governance in providing high-quality real-time governance and public services. S. R. Mohanachandran, General Secretary of KGOA, highlighted the Kerala model of services for the elderly, women, marginalized, and new generation. Concluding the sessions, the Minister of Finance urged the need to implement necessary technological changes and make technology more useful and accessible to people.

Dairy Development in Kerala

In the session on 'Dairy Development in Kerala', the Minister for Dairy Development & Animal Husbandry, J. Chinchurani, highlighted the State Government's efforts to build a more resilient, self-sustaining dairy sector in Kerala. Kerala's State Government is working to build a resilient dairy sector, aiming to adopt sustainable practices and strengthen the rural economy. Dr. Prakash Kalarickal from Sexing Technologies and Dr. S. Ramkumar from ESSCO Educational Initiative also emphasize the importance of a viable "State Dairy Plan" for Kerala. The state is also considering remunerative milk pricing and de-licensing the dairy industry for revolutionary changes. Dr Meenesh Shah from the National Dairy Development Board and Dr R S Sodhi from the Indian Dairy Association also spoke at the session, among other eminent panellists.

Pluralism and Multiculturalism in the Changing Times

The session on 'Pluralism and Multiculturalism in the Changing Times' was chaired by Saji Cheriyan, Minister for Fisheries and Cultural Affairs. Kerala has been a model for development, governance excellence, and education, with initiatives like land reforms and cultural complexes to accommodate cultural diversity. However, challenges like monolingualism and changing textbooks persist, emphasizing the importance of unity in diversity. Culture Department

Secretary Mini Antony IAS highlighted India's diverse culture, while Dr. K. Srinivasa Rao, Secretary of Kendra Sahitya Academy, emphasized India's geographical features, languages, Darwin's theory, and translation as key factors in fostering unity. Writer and journalist KA Bina discussed diversity in language, food, and dress, while Shaji N Karun, Ravi DC, Suresh Rituparna, Parvati Devi, and Anita Nair discussed renaissance, modernity, globalization, and devotional industry. The government implemented resistance measures and the diverse nature of cinema to unite arts and reflect secular culture. Other eminent panellists included M A Baby and Saeed Akhtar Mirza.

Industry in Kerala

In the session on 'Industry in Kerala', P Rajeeve, Minister for Law, Industries & Coir and Chair of the session, commented that the Kerala Government is committed to industrial development in the public, private and co-operative sectors with a focus on creating more employment opportunities for the youth and increasing the income of the workers. Pamela Ann Mathew said that women can participate in entrepreneurship in every field. Chetan Makam, Managing Director, Terumo Penpol observed that Kerala has significant potential in the medical



device manufacturing sector, with 20 per cent of India's medical devices produced there. Kerala's industry's future is shaped by its commitment to sustainable growth, social well-being, and scientific temper, according to prominent figures like Kishor Rungta, Dr. Shinya Takahashi, and Jayan Jose Thomas.

Higher Education in Kerala

In the session on 'Higher Education in Kerala', Minister of Higher Education Dr. R. Bindu highlighted the state government's policies and achievements in the Higher Education sector.

She emphasized the need for student-centred and flexible academic programs to elevate Kerala's Higher Education system to an international hub. Dr. Shyam Menon emphasized the need for higher education to aim towards social justice and pursue higher ideals without profit-oriented practices. Professor Surajit Mazumdar reflected on the need to ensure that the trajectories of development are in keeping with the socio-economic and political trajectory of India.

The Kerala People's Planning Model was discussed, with modifications to facilitate a student-centred approach. Prof. Ishita Mukhopadhyaya suggested a people-centric approach to education's commodification and marketability. Prof. Sathyajit Mayor emphasized the foundation of scientific knowledge and technological and engineering skills for higher education. Prof. Rajan Gurukkal emphasized the importance of a student-centred and internationalized higher education system, while Prof. M V Narayanan urged for a rethinking of current programs and implementation of student-centred policies. Dr. K. Dineshan discussed the growth of public libraries in Kerala.

Role of Media in Democracy: Changing Mediascape in the Country

In the session on 'Role of Media in Democracy: Changing Mediascape in the Country', Antony Raju, Minister for Transport, highlighted Keralites' high media literacy and discerning intelligence, as well as the media's responsibility in society, emphasizing the increasing prevalence of fake news due to competition. I & PRD Director T.V. Subhash presented concept note in detail. He stressed the need for impartial reporting while pointing out the corporate influence in the media sector. Josy Joseph urged young journalists to expose corruption and mismanagement in power, highlighting the media's reliance on corporate for funding and its role in democracy. Vijytha Singh emphasized the importance of journalists in presenting accurate news to the public, stating that citizens have a basic right to correct information. John Brittas warned that India is losing independent media due to government abuse and corporate domination, highlighting the alarming impact of unnecessary raids and the need for a change in the media scene. Asian School of Journalism Chairman Sasikumar argued that a democracy without a free press is incomplete, stating that fake news needs to be called out and that the media must report factually accurate news.

Technological advancements have significantly impacted new media, leading to the need for truth-discussing communities. M K Venu, founding director of The Wire, emphasized the importance of digital devices in maintaining privacy and freedom of expression. Seema Chishti emphasized the importance of print, TV, and digital journalism in addressing the spread of false information and the compromise on democracy caused by media pressure of powerful corporates. R Rajagopal and N P Ullekh also spoke at the session.

Information Technology in Kerala

In the session on 'Information Technology in Kerala', V. Namasivayam, Member of the State Planning Board and Chair of the session remarked that the State's approach to using technological advancements in the field of information technology as a driving force for social development is quite different and exemplary. Speakers at the session included Dr. Palanivel Thiaga Rajan, V K Mathews, Srikanth Srinivasan, Prof. Saji Gopinath, Vinod Dham, Senapathy 'Kris' Gopalakrishnan, S D Shibulal, Suja Chandy, and Sam Santhosh.

This session on 'Workers' rights and welfare in Kerala' was chaired by V Sivankutty, Minister for General Education and Labour. The session unanimously admired the government's action to be a leader in a labour-friendly state. The seminar advocated "Decent Work to All" for workers, especially women. The panellists were T P Ramakrishnan, Justice K Chandru,

K.P. Rajendran, Syed Sultan Ahmmed, R Vaigai, Dr A V Jose, Dr Jayan Jose Thomas, Dr Jajati Keshari Parida, Dr Sukti Dasgupta, and Dr T Geena Kumari.

Tourism in Kerala

While chairing the session on 'Tourism in Kerala', Adv.P A Mohamed Riyas, Minister for Public Works & Tourism, highlighted the new vision of tourism incorporating adventure, wellness, sustainability, and green tourism. Kerala, one of the best examples of responsible tourism is the first state to adopt gender inclusive tourism too. The nine speakers highlighted the rapid growth of the sector soon after the COVID pandemic, and emphasised that the state should be equipped and trained to reap the new opportunities available in the sector.

Public Health in Kerala

At the session on 'Public Health in Kerala', Veena George, Minister for Health and Woman and Child Development, acknowledged the social reform movements led by the leftist government to have a significant improvement in health, education, and social welfare. The session addressed the ways and means of tackling obstacles like the emergence of contagious diseases, the huge need for geriatric health care and increased



expenditure, mental health issues, healthcare care of marginalized populations, etc. PK Sreemathi Teacher, Dr. K Srinath Reddy, Dr. T Sundararaman, Dr. M V Pillai, Dr. M R Rajagopal, Dr. Devaki Nambiar, Dr. V Ramankutty, and Dr. P K Jameela, spoke at the session.

How Kerala Dealt with the Pandemic

The session on 'How Kerala Dealt with the Pandemic' was chaired by Veena George,

Minister for Health and Woman and Child Development. The ways and means by which Kerala dealt with the pandemic bagged the attention of people across the world. To explain it and to address the challenges posed by the state during the time is a matter to be showcased before the world is the urge behind having a separate session on this. The seminar showcased Kerala's adaptability and creative approaches to global health emergencies. The panel included experts such as Dr Richard A Cash, winner of the Prince Mahidol Award for Medicine and Public Health, K K Shailaja Teacher, Dr Soumya Swaminathan, Dr Jacob T John, Dr Priya Abraham, Dr B Ekbal, Rajeev Sadanandan IAS, and Rajan N Khobragade IAS.

Development Issues Concerning Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens

In the session on 'Development Issues Concerning Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens' Minister of Social Justice and Higher Education, Dr. R. Bindu, highlighted the state's progress in social health and wealth distribution, leading to improved living standards and increased life expectancy. A. B. Dey discussed the global shift towards longer lives and the importance of promoting well-being, independence, and dignity for older individuals. Anupama Dutta discussed the development challenges faced by the elderly in Kerala. Meenakshi Balasubramanian highlighted the economic, employment, education, and healthcare challenges faced by people with disabilities, emphasizing the need for equal access, universal design, and social protection. Dr. Mini Sukumar emphasized the need for a comprehensive social education program and strengthening community care systems for disabled and elderly individuals.

Gender and Development in Kerala

The session on 'Gender and Development in Kerala' started with recognizing the status of women in Kerala. The session was chaired by Veena George, Minister for Health and Women and Child Development Department, and included eminent speakers such as Brinda Karat and Syeda Hameed. The efforts of local governments and Kudumbasree in empowering the Kerala women were acknowledged in the session. The session concluded by emphasizing the government's effort to provide economic and social security to women through gender budgeting.

Welfare and Growth: Economic Alternatives for the Future

In the Opening of the deliberations of the session 'Welfare and Growth: Economic Alternatives for the Future' Chairperson Prof. V K Ramachandran emphasized the importance of public action and mass action in bringing these changes. The keynote presentation went through the last six decades' of development experience and highlighted how Kerala's economic growth gave strong emphasis to social welfare. Prakash Karat emphasized the need for an alternative economic and political regime instead of the current neo-liberal regime, which is exacerbating social and economic inequality.

Dr. C Ranga Rajan emphasized that economic growth and equality should be combined, and that economic growth does not necessarily lead to higher living standards without sound economic and social policies. Prof. Prabhat Patnaik argued that the neo-liberal order is irrelevant and cannot save stagnant economies worldwide. Prof. Veeramani of CDS highlighted the complementary relationship between social and production sectors in Kerala, emphasizing land reform and the Renaissance movement's role in setting the state's development trajectory. S Ramachandran Pillai said that Kerala's development status has been influenced by progressive policies and programs, including land reform, administrative reform, literacy mission, peoples' planning, decentralisation,

and Navakerala development strategy, emphasizing the importance of higher education quality. Professor Prabhat Patnaik, and Professor Venkatesh Athreya, also spoke at the session.

Kerala Diaspora

In the session 'Kerala Diaspora' the Minister for Electricity, K. Krishnankutty, co-chair of the panel on Kerala Diaspora, discussed the long history of migration in Kerala and the role of non-residents in the state's development. The Minister for Ports, Museums, and Archaeology, Ahammad Devarkovil, co-chair of the session, spoke about changes in immigration policies, including the launch of a digital data platform, consideration of returnee migrants in policy-making, and the formation of a Diaspora Investment Board. Dave Howarth, one of the 13 panellists of the session, discussed the Enhanced Trade Partnership agreement with India, which allows nurses, doctors, dieticians, radiographers, and occupational therapists to be recruited to the UK.

The 25 seminars conducted in 5 venues in 5 days incorporating different sectors of the economy was an everlasting experience for both the speakers as well as participants. The deliberations at the seminar brought in new perspectives on Kerala's development. This



Seminar on Gender Justice and Development in Kerala - Keralaeyam 2023

has enabled the state to synthesis major issues of each sector and probable solutions thereby bringing efficiency in the Plan formulation. The harmonious interaction of public, policy makers, academicians, students, researchers etc. was another attraction of the event. Since most of the seminars were chaired by respective Ministers, it turned out to be an open forum for mutual interaction on different development perspectives.

Kerala capital set to become a major Tech Hub



The Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated India's biggest beachside startup conclave Huddle Global 2023, a three-day event organised by Kerala Start-up Mission (KSUM) bringing together a wide range of stakeholders, at Vizhinjam. The event also saw KSUM exchanging Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with Belgium and Australia to set up its Startup Infinity Centres in the two countries, opening up immense opportunities for enterprises from Kerala's ecosystem to scale up operations and expand the market. Kerala already stands as a pioneer in India's vibrant startup ecosystem that has been consistently ranked at the top for the last three years due to the state government's proactive initiatives.

An expo on the sidelines of the event displayed products from 100-plus nascent companies and provided an opportunity for them to interact with experts from technology and industry for advice on investment opportunities. A star at the expo is the Aakri app, a solution for residents confused about disposing

of biomedical waste. Bandicoot Mini, the new product of Gen Robotics, which revolutionised India's urban sanitation landscape with its robotics scavenger, is another big draw at the expo. The expo also showcased Fireball of NRI Club Services, an easy-to-use device that self-explodes and extinguishes fire in homes, cars, offices or factories. Apart from the



experience centres, the expo features innovative technologies from government institutes and research and development organisations. The Kufos Business Incubation Centre's value-added seafood products, NIIST's agro-processing techniques, CPCRI's stall of agricultural resources, and Jako by Chocolates' variety of products also make the expo attractive. The expo allows the participants, including around 150 start-ups from various Indian states, to directly interact with the leading people in the technical and industrial sectors and for investors to find the best start-ups to support. A panel session on 'ONDC (Open Network for Digital Commerce) and its Opportunities,' was also held as part of the Huddle Global 2023.



On the 'Write' Track

Heart-warming Tale of an Academy Award Winner



Dr. Aparna Ajith

Assistant Professor in English, S.N.C.W. Kollam



"Either write something worth reading or do something worth writing", says Benjamin Franklin, the acclaimed Statesman. **Akhil K**, who bagged the notable Geetha Hiranyan Endowment Award 2022 instituted by the Kerala Sahitya Academy for his debut anthology of short stories, Neelachadayan exemplifies this adage. Akhil, hailing from Paravanthatta village of Kannur district churns out roads and words efficiently. The stages of real life prompted to him play varied roles as a newspaper boy, sand mining worker, driver, JCB operator and what not. Albeit life had taken a different turn,

Akhil's passion for words lingered. The bipolarity of day and night has bestowed him with the paths of conscious driving and carefree writing. The day makes him work as a JCB driver. Despite the strenuous routine, he attempts a creative flight of fancy with his boundless realm of imagination in the night mode. He is again on the road now but a different road where his stories remain drenched. He enjoys sailing in the ocean of mighty words like a mission possible. Here is Akhil K. in an online conversation with **Dr. Aparna Ajith**

How did the idea to write a short story or novel pop up?

In the initial phase, I started writing for cinema. As I never got an opening in the field, I switched to the field of writing fiction only as a substitute. It was always my plan B.

Could you please share your experience on bagging Kerala Sahitya Academy's award?

I felt happy about the Academy award. I was never over excited like others or what people think. When I shared the cover page of this short story collection in FB, I was criticized, trolled and humiliated for my comment that I will achieve Academy award with the publication of my first five books. People might not say so. I don't know. It was just a calculation of me about myself and my writing. When our calculations big or small turn out to be a reality, we feel happy. Mine is a self published collection with limited copies. It was nowhere in most of the book stores. I feel happy when I think my book has represented and inspired many aspiring writers who are denied the opportunities to come to the limelight and who are not fortunate to publish their works.

What did the process of writing Neelachadayan teach you?

I was always trying to be creative in my life. I was collecting some materials for my writing all my life. I write with the same seriousness even now after the publication. I never thought I would get a chance to come and exist in the field of writing. Almost 13 publishers rejected my Neelachadayan and I had to end up in self publication with limited copies. I faced a lot of hardships in the process. Many books of good quality produced during this time (far better than my fiction) are seen nowhere now, I feel. There are lot many things beyond the quality of the work. What I learnt from my experience is to give an extra 30 or 50 percent effort while in the workshop of writing rather than in the phase of marketing.

What serves as an inspiration for you write and remain creative?

My life is the greatest inspiration for my writing. My canvas is based on my seen and felt experiences. I always try to write about the life around me and the experiences shared to me by others. I am gearing up for the publication of yet another fiction.

How do you effectively manage the tracks of words and roads?

As far as I am concerned, this is quite easy because I don't have any connection with the in between life of roads and words. Job and writing make my day. I don't hangout with friends, go for movies or anything of that sort. I have no connection with the world or I don't live that life. I always feel so. Although the job is tiring, I start



my writing on late night. I face physical difficulties after the strenuous work of the whole day. Still, I can easily get in tune with the world of creativity. The next day is welcomed by the same routine. I face both the tracks with ease.

Your token of advice to the aspiring writers?

Always remain focused on your writing and go to any extent to accomplish your creative smithy.

In our October 2023 issue, the cover photo was incorrectly credited to Dalu Parameswaran; the actual photographer is Jimmy Kamballur. Also, the image on page 29 is of Madhava of Sangamagrama, not Vadasseri Paramesvara Nampoothiri as stated. We apologise for the confusion.

-Editor-in-Charge, Kerala Calling



കേരളീയം
Keraleeyam

The inaugural edition of the Keraleeyam festival in Kerala, hosted in Thiruvananthapuram, was a significant event marked by a surprisingly large turnout. This festival transformed the city into a vibrant centre of cultural activity, showcasing the unique Keralite identity and Malayali culture. The successful organisation of such a grand event within a tight timeframe was made possible by the collective efforts of many individuals who worked diligently to bring the festival to life.

Keraleeyam has played a crucial role in affirming Kerala's commitment to forging a new path that respects secularism, socialist ideals, federal structures, and parliamentary democracy, aligning with the tenets of the Indian Constitution. The festival fostered unity among people from varied backgrounds, bolstering communal harmony and self-respect.





എന്നു കഴിക്ക്
what will you have

- പായസം Payasam
- പാളിയും പായസവും + Payasam
- മുനാടൻ കരിമീൻ റെള്ളിച്ചത് Tanadan Karimeen Ichathu
- പുയ്യും മീൻകറിയും Poppa and Fish Curry
- ബോർ ബിരിയാണി Labar Biryani
- ട്യൂം കടലയും Tum Kadalayum
- ർക്കടക കഞ്ഞി Arkkataka Kanji
- പാറോട്ട ബീഫ് Parotta + Beef



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