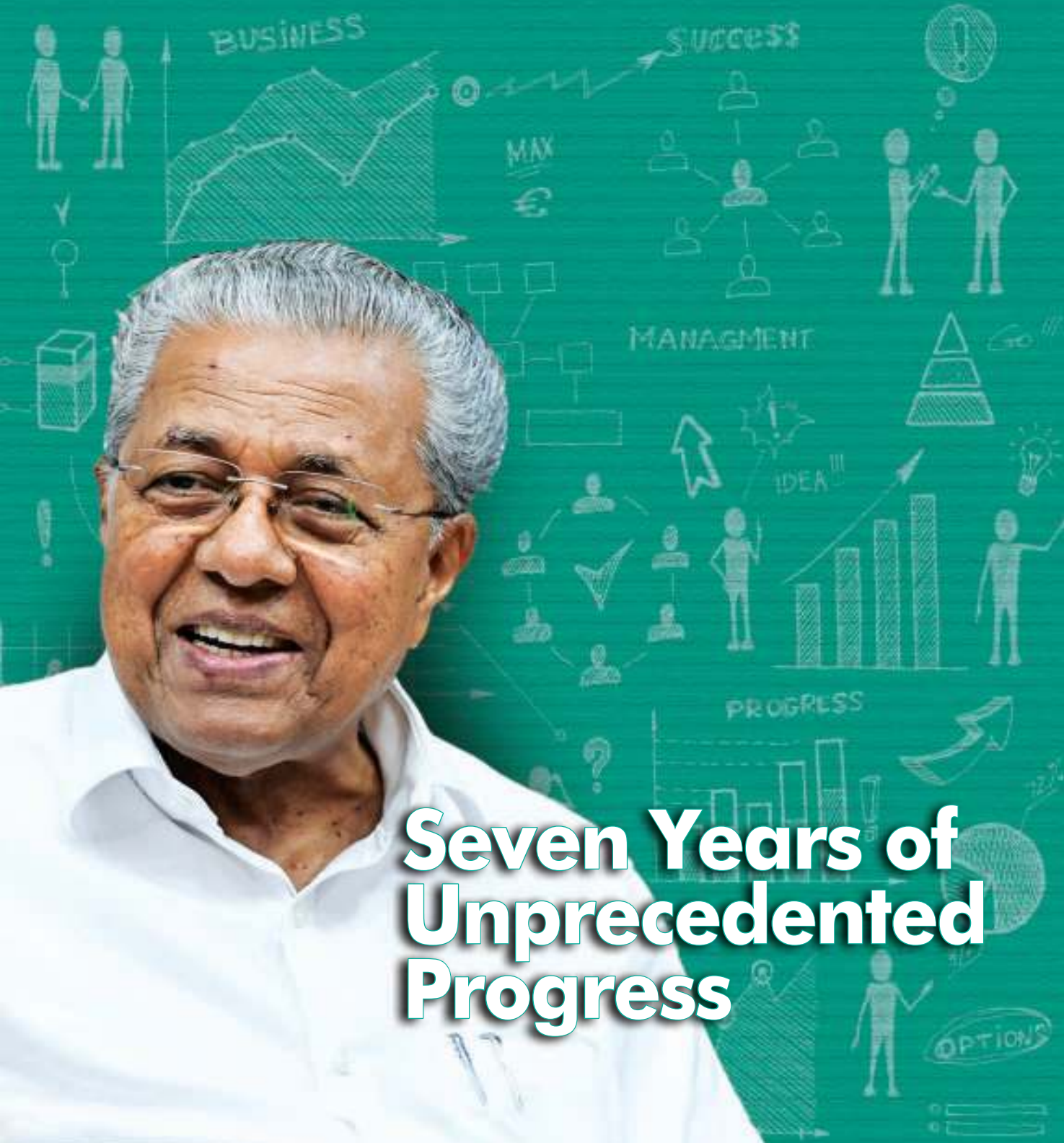


KERALA CALLING

FEBRUARY 01, 2024_VOL_44_No.04



**Seven Years of
Unprecedented
Progress**

Papanasam Beach in Varkala,

heralded by Lonely Planet magazine,
stands among the globe's most magnificent 100 beaches.





Broadening the Scope of Nava Keralam

The government has ambitiously broadened the scope of 'Nava Keralam', steering a diverse array of initiatives that underscore a holistic approach to development. This enhanced vision encompasses a commitment to inclusivity, environmental stewardship, and embracing the digital age, fostering an environment where innovation and tradition coalesce to drive progress.

Central to the state's developmental ethos, the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) has been a catalyst in transforming the infrastructural landscape. Significant strides in connectivity and economic infrastructure, notably in the expansion of National Highways, illustrate the state's proactive measures to enhance its transportation networks, thereby facilitating smoother access and mobility for its people and industries.

In tandem with infrastructural development, the revitalisation of the industrial and IT sectors, propelled by visionary policies, is placing Kerala on the global map of innovation and entrepreneurship. The focus on creating Centers of Excellence and prioritising cutting-edge technologies signals the state's ambition to be a leader in the knowledge economy, fostering a conducive ecosystem for startups and tech-driven enterprises.

Addressing economic challenges with strategic finesse, the government's approach to tax administration and fiscal management reflects a commitment to sustainability and efficiency. Initiatives aimed at boosting revenue, coupled with cost-effective governance, are pivotal in ensuring the continuity of Kerala's developmental trajectory, supporting a range of welfare and upliftment programs.

The government's efforts extend beyond economic and infrastructural

domains, touching the lives of its people through comprehensive social welfare schemes. From housing projects to educational reforms, and from healthcare advancements to environmental conservation efforts, the state is weaving a fabric of development that is inclusive and forward-looking.

As Kerala advances with its expanded vision for 'Nava Keralam', the state exemplifies how governance, rooted in the values of democracy and social justice, can harness innovation and strategic planning to foster a society that is resilient, inclusive, and vibrant. The journey of 'Nava Keralam' is a proof to the collective will of its people and the government's dedication to transforming these aspirations into tangible realities, setting a paradigm for sustainable and inclusive development.

T.V. Subhash IAS
Editor



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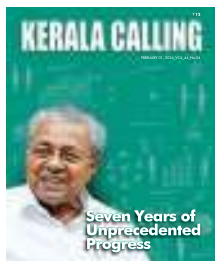
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52 Pages

NAVA KERALAM





NAVIGATOR

06 Setting Forth an Expansive Vision

10 Progress and Resilience
Pinarayi Vijayan

16 A Path to Fiscal Resilience
K.N. Balagopal

20 Kerala Budget at a glance; laying
roadmap to inclusive growth

22 Paving the Way for a Sporting Economy
V. Abdurahiman

24 Fiscal Situation and Development
Priorities

28 Towards Nava Keralam through Local
Economic Development

32 Transforming Kerala's Human Capital for
New Value Creation in the Economy

36 Tourism at its peak

38 Reflecting upon the State's
Entrepreneurial Journey and
Achievements

40 Beyond Barriers and Borders

44 Mahatma Gandhi and His Vision on
Secularism

46 Digital Advancement in Tax Collection

48 Malayalam: Shaping the Modern
Malayali through Rich Classical Heritage

Setting Forth an Expansive Vision

Staff Reporter

In his address to the Kerala Legislative Assembly, Governor Arif Mohammed Khan outlined a detailed vision for 'Nava Kerala', focusing on inclusive growth, sustainability, and technological advancement.

On January 25, 2024, in a significant address to the Kerala Legislative Assembly, Arif Mohammed Khan, the Governor of Kerala, set forth an expansive vision for the state's development, marking the onset of the 10th Session of the 15th Kerala Legislative Assembly. His speech outlined the government's multifaceted strategies aimed at empowering grassroots democracy, instilling a scientific and secular ethos in education, nurturing a comprehensive understanding of history among the youth, and pursuing sustainable development, technological innovation, and social welfare. These elements, the Governor noted, are the cornerstones of the 'Nava Kerala' (New Kerala) vision, which is being sculpted through the collective aspirations and wisdom of the Kerala populace.

The Government took pride in the successful conduct of Keraleeyam 2023, an event that celebrated Kerala's rich cultural tapestry while also showcasing the Government's commitment to secularism, socialism, federal values, and democratic principles. The event, enriched by the participation of globally renowned experts, set a precedent for future developmental discourse in the state.

Highlighting the Nava Kerala Sadas, or "People's Assembly for a New Kerala," the Governor underscored this initiative as a reflection of the Government's firm belief in dialogue, debate, and democratic engagement. These assemblies, organised across all legislative constituencies, drew massive public participation, evidencing the populace's trust in the Government's direction and policies.

The Governor also shed light on the regional review meetings conducted across the state, which brought the full Council of Ministers and senior officials to the forefront of addressing district-specific concerns and interdepartmental challenges. These meetings underscored the Government's resolve to make governance more accessible and responsive to the people's needs.

In the sphere of social welfare, the Governor recounted the Government's pioneering efforts in housing, public distribution systems, and social security pensions, focusing particularly on the upliftment of vulnerable sections of society such as coastal and tribal communities, the disabled,



and the elderly. The Government's initiatives aimed at capability development through education, health, and skill enhancement were presented as key drivers of Kerala's growth narrative.

The Governor proudly noted Kerala's distinction as the least poor state in the nation, as per the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) released by NITI Aayog. He reiterated the Government's commitment to eradicating extreme poverty by November 1, 2025, through targeted interventions for the identified families in need.

In the address, the 'Avakasham Athivegam' project was highlighted as a significant initiative to ensure every family's access to essential documents and services, aligning with the Government's inclusive development agenda. The Governor lauded the Kudumbashree movement, Asia's largest women's collective, for its pivotal role in women's empowerment and economic



advancement within the state and beyond.

Addressing the challenges posed by climate change, the Governor outlined the Government's strategies, including climate-smart agricultural practices, coastal protection measures, and the ambitious Punargeham project aimed at relocating families from high-tide zones. The Ente Bhoomi digital survey project was introduced as a groundbreaking initiative to establish precise land records, facilitating digital delivery of land-related services and resolving boundary disputes efficiently.

The Governor spoke about the Malinyamuktham Navakeralam Campaign, a revolutionary movement towards cleanliness and scientific waste management, highlighting the Government's commitment to making Kerala waste-free. In the health sector, the establishment of the Institute of Advanced Virology (IAV) and the Centers of Excellence in Microbiome (CoEM) and Nutraceuticals were presented as milestones in Kerala's healthcare and research landscape.

The Governor also touched upon the Year of Enterprises Scheme, which spurred a silent industrial revolution in Kerala, challenging misconceptions about the state's industrial potential. The success of Kerala in the global startup ecosystem and the introduction of the K-SWIFT portal for streamlined industrial clearances were cited as evidence of the Government's efforts to foster industrial growth and e-governance.

Kerala's consistent top rankings in the SDG India Index by NITI Aayog

were highlighted, reflecting the state's comprehensive progress and the Government's unwavering commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Governor also discussed the challenges faced by Kerala, particularly in terms of fiscal management and resource allocation, calling for a re-evaluation of the fiscal relationship between the Union and the state

The Governor announced the establishment of the 'Vayojana Commission' to provide guidance on policies for the elderly, emphasising the 'IT@Elderly' initiative for their digital literacy and a revision of the State's policies concerning senior citizens. A unique programme aimed at offering vocational training and skill development for intellectually challenged individuals and self-help groups of Persons with



Disabilities (PwDs) in the Kudumbashree model was also mentioned, alongside a comprehensive Assistive Technology Policy to enhance R&D in assistive technology.

Addressing gender inequality in the workforce, the Governor outlined plans for skilling and reskilling young women in AI tools, conducting 'Sookshman' studies to examine laws through a gender lens, and auditing workplaces and public spaces for gender bias. The establishment of a de-addiction and rehabilitation centre for children in Malappuram was highlighted as a significant step to combat drug abuse among the youth.

The Governor underscored the Government's commitment to a climate-resilient housing policy and initiatives like 'MN Navayuga Scheme' for housing reconstruction and 'Thantheydam' project for children transitioning from shelters. The 'E-Griha' mobile/web application was introduced to provide public information on low-cost housing models, alongside a comprehensive housing module development plan for various terrains within the state.

In the realm of local governance, Kerala's participation in the National Urban Digital Mission was noted, with the state mentoring others in providing digital services. The formation of the 'Kerala Urban Policy Commission' was aimed at creating a comprehensive urban policy, the first of its kind in the country.

Under the 'LIFE Mission,' the Governor reported the completion of 3,65,531 houses and the 'Manassodithiri Mannu' campaign's success in land contributions. The Government's multisectoral approach to lift extreme poor families out of extreme poverty was also highlighted.

Plans to convert Kerala into the first fully digitally literate state, expand

K-SMART solutions, and develop a climate adaptive governance model at the local level were discussed. The second-generation interventions for maintaining a zero-waste state, including blockchain-based traceability for waste management and the advancement of the Extended Producer Responsibility Framework, were outlined.

In the industrial sector, the Governor celebrated the success of the 'Year of Enterprise Scheme,' with over 1,39,840 enterprises set up, injecting significant investment into the economy and creating numerous job opportunities. The industrial growth rate and new investments in the state were also noted, alongside the 'Make in Kerala' initiative aimed at boosting investment and employment across high-potential sectors.

The Governor unveiled the Kerala Industrial Policy 2023, designed to attract responsible investments and offer incentives in priority sectors. The establishment of private industrial parks and the operationalisation of the Kerala Public Enterprises Selection and Recruitment Board were significant steps towards fostering industrial growth



and professionalism.

In tourism, Kerala's post-COVID recovery and record-breaking domestic and foreign tourist arrivals were highlighted, with the 'Tourism Investors' Meet securing substantial investment offers. The state's Responsible Tourism Mission's international recognition and the development of Heli and Cruise Tourism were noted as major achievements.

Efforts in the plantation sector, coir, cashew, and handloom industries to enhance product marketability and innovation were discussed. The digitisation of job seeker information and the development of the e-Employment Exchange portal and Private Job Portal were aimed at improving employment opportunities in the private sector.

The Governor emphasised the advancements in public safety, with the Kerala Police being recognised as one of the best State Police Forces. The successful implementation of the 'Fully Automated Traffic Enforcement System' and the establishment of a dedicated Command Control Centre for real-time monitoring were notable achievements.

In the judiciary, the implementation of Paperless Courts and the integration of advanced systems in courtrooms were highlighted as key modernisation efforts. New judicial facilities aimed at enhancing legal services were also mentioned.

The Governor spoke about the initiatives for 'land for all, records for all land, smart services for all,' with the Pattaya Mission providing land to eligible individuals and the digital resurvey aiming to establish precise land records through the Ente Bhumi portal.

In sports and culture, the new Sports Policy focused on reform, innovation, and creating a vibrant sports economy was introduced. The 'One Panchayat

One Playground' programme and the development of sports infrastructure were emphasised as crucial for promoting sports at the grassroots level.

Concluding his address, the Governor reflected on Kerala's development journey, emphasising the state's commitment to the constitutional promises of human dignity, social justice, and equality. He condemned the crime of genocide and all crimes against humanity, advocating for a world of peace, hope, and respect for human life. The Governor called for adherence to the values of democracy, secularism, federalism, and social justice, underscoring the essence of cooperative federalism in uniting and strengthening the country.

This address, rich in its detailing of the government's initiatives and vision for Kerala, sets a comprehensive agenda for the state's development, focusing on inclusive growth, sustainability, technological advancement, and social welfare, while upholding the constitutional values that form the bedrock of Indian democracy.

Progress and Resilience

Pinarayi Vijayan

Chief Minister

In recent years, the state of Kerala, under this government, has been on a transformative journey aimed at ushering in a new era of inclusive and sustainable development. This comprehensive effort spans across various sectors, addressing the challenges faced by the state while laying the foundation for a future, characterised by equitable growth and environmental sustainability.

The State has envisioned and implemented numerous developmental initiatives and welfare programmes. Striking strides have been made in mitigating poverty, rejuvenating agriculture, restructuring industrial sector, managing resources, developing skills, promoting entrepreneurship, managing waste, and in innovative enhancement of infrastructure. Propelling its holistic development, Progressive and transformative projects have permeated every nook and corner of the state.

KIIFB

The Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) is playing a pivotal role in the State's development journey. Despite facing numerous obstacles, the previous Government has demonstrated unwavering resolve in steering KIIFB, propelling it to adopt developmental projects that surpassed the targeted amount. The total projects approved by KIIFB in past seven years have touched a mark of 83,000 crore.

Standing upon this foundation, the government, has set even more ambitious goals, emphasizing its commitment to robust infrastructure development. Noteworthy is the ongoing National Highway development project which will contribute a significant part in improving connectivity and transportation infrastructure of the state. KIIFB's funding for National Highway projects has facilitated land acquisition.

Infrastructure Development

The government is actively advancing infrastructure development, with a particular focus on enhancing National Highway 66, a critical route connecting Mumbai to Kanyakumari. Overcoming challenges related to land acquisition, the state government obtained approval for the National Highway Development Plan in 2019. The central government's condition to contribute 25% of total cost of land acquisition was accepted by the state, which highlights the State's commitment to infrastructural development. The completion of the Kuthiran Tunnel project, the ongoing Aroor - Thuravoor six-lane elevated highway, and planned projects like the Thiruvananthapuram Outer Ring Road and the



Palakkad-Kozhikode four-lane road indicate Kerala's poised infrastructural growth. The completion of GAIL Pipeline and the Power Highway are remarkable achievements in infrastructure development. The National Waterway Project is also progressing. The Kochi Water Metro became operational. The Vizhinjam Mother Port is reaching to the shore of completion. The Kannur International Airport has started functioning and the Sabarimala Airport is on the anvil. These acts showcase the State's commitment to infrastructure Development.

Industrial Sector

Kerala's industrial sector is undergoing a robust resurgence. It is guided by a comprehensive industrial policy meticulously crafted to attract investments, foster innovation, and to modernise traditional sectors.

The fiscal year 2022-23 was earmarked as



a pivotal investment year, with strategic initiatives designed to create a resilient entrepreneurial ecosystem. The target was to create one lakh enterprises in one year. Through this programme, A total number 1,39,000 enterprises started functioning by attracting a total investment of 8500 crore and by creating around 3,00,000 jobs. The Centre has mentioned the 'one lakh enterprises in one year' programme as a best practice.

The policy is meant to foster responsible and sustainable industries, by incorporating advanced technology. Various schemes, such as reimbursement for AI-driven manufacturing initiatives underscore the State's commitment to advanced technology. Furthermore, the prioritisation of sectors like Aerospace and Defense, Artificial Intelligence, and Renewable Energy poses Kerala as a hub for innovation and sustainable industrial growth.

Kerala has made remarkable strides in improving the Ease of Doing business. Recognising the importance of creating a favourable environment that attracts investments and promotes economic growth, the State has implemented several initiatives that have positioned Kerala as a hub for business innovation and development. One of the State's key achievements in this regard is the introduction of the online platform K-SWIFT. This innovative platform integrates various departments and agencies, streamlining the approval processes and eliminating unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles for investors. Currently, the State is working towards integrating K-SWIFT with the National Single Window system, for further

enhancing the ease of doing business in Kerala.

IT Sector

Kerala's Information Technology sector, with prominent IT parks like Technopark, Infopark, and Cyberpark, serves as a cornerstone for economic growth. The establishment of the Graphene Research Center and the launch of new IT companies reflect the State's commitment to technological advancements. The State is actively driving the development of advanced technology and electronics industries, ensuring that Kerala remains at the forefront of the IT revolution. The commitment to establish a Centre of Excellence in Future Technology further underscores the State's foresight in supporting technological advancements. Kerala's IT sector is witnessing a dynamic



surge. Over the past seven years, the State has reported IT exports amounting to Rs 85,540 crore. The sector has seen investments of Rs 7,304 crore and has created 62,000 jobs in the same timeframe. As for IT infrastructure, an impressive 75 lakh square feet land has been given.

A Digital Science Park by the State, the first of its kind in India, in Thiruvananthapuram was inaugurated in April. The State has approved plans to implement three more Science Parks in Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi, and Kannur. In addition, the State proposes to launch two more major IT Parks at Kannur and Kollam. The State is also implementing a unique proposal of setting up four IT corridors viz: Koratty-Ernakulam, Thiruvananthapuram Technopark Phase-III-Kollam, Kozhikode-Kannur and Ernakulam-Cherthala alongside the National Highway 66.

Startups

The number of Startups in the state has made a boom from 300 to 4500 in last seven years. Kerala has been ranked as one of three best performing states in the Startup ranking 2022 released by the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Kerala has been ranked as the best in Asia and fourth in terms of Affordable Talent in the Global Startup Ecosystem Report.

With incubators, accelerators, and funding opportunities the Startup Mission is flourishing entrepreneurial landscape. Initiatives like the Student Entrepreneurship Policy and the establishment of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Centres (IEDCs) in educational institutions underscore the State's commitment to nurturing a culture of innovation and job creation.

India is the world's third largest Startup ecosystem with more than 77,000 Startups. Each State has a significant role to play in the overall development of our national Startup ecosystem. As far as Kerala is concerned, the State is poised to play our role to perfection by setting up 15,000 additional Startups and creating 2,00,000 more jobs in new and emerging technologies, during the tenure of this Government.

K-FON

K-FON, Kerala's innovative digital infrastructure project, aims to provide high-speed internet to all residents, regardless of economic status. This initiative features an extensive optical fiber network connecting 14 districts, with 375 strategic points of presence. Managed by K-FON Limited, a joint venture of the Kerala State Electricity Board and the Kerala State Information Technology Infrastructure Limited, the first phase connected 28,376 government offices. The project offers free internet to 20 lakh economically backward households and internet at affordable rates for the rest. K-FON emphasises inclusivity, by extending connectivity to tribal and underserved areas. This initiative showcases the State's dedication to bridge the digital divide.

E-Governance

Kerala has successfully achieved complete digitalisation of its administrative machinery, by offering more than 900 government services online. The State has launched K-Smart, a flagship project to digitise the services of local self-government bodies in Kerala. This project enhances the efficiency and transparency of local bodies, helps tackle corruption, and ensures quality services to the people. The Public Distribution System (PDS) has undergone digitisation, with nearly all ration shops utilising Electronic Point of Sale (e-POS) machines for efficient and transparent ration distribution.



The State leads the way in e-governance in India, employing cutting-edge technologies to enhance digital literacy and accessibility. The State prioritises citizen empowerment, transparency, and efficiency through innovative initiatives. These include unified service portals, such as the e-Sevanam portal offering over 900 services, and programmes like e-District, e-Health, e-Procurement, and SPARK, ensuring efficient and transparent public service delivery. Kerala's commitment to e-governance is evident in its numerous accolades received at both national and international levels.

K-SPACE

Kerala is making substantial strides with the ambitious Kerala Space Park (KSPACE), a pivotal initiative aiming to position the state as a hub for space sector industries. With a strategic focus on education, research, and industry, KSPACE is set to create 1,40,000 skilled job opportunities by 2040. Leveraging its historical association with India's space program and the presence of esteemed ISRO institutions, Kerala is well-positioned to foster a thriving space industry. With a vision aligned with India's goal to increase its space sector share, Kerala aspires to capture 10% of the projected \$1 trillion global space economy by 2040, amounting to \$10 billion.

General Education

Education has been a key focus for the State, with an emphasis on empowering citizens through knowledge and skills. The commitment to quality education is reflected in the various initiatives, including the 'Hi-Tech School' project, aimed at transforming schools into technology-enabled centers of learning. Kerala's remarkable achievement of full literacy in 1991 is a testament to the State's commitment to education. The establishment of the State Literacy Mission further underscores the State's dedication to eradicating illiteracy. The people's planning model of governance, initiated in 1996, has empowered local bodies to take charge of education, promoting gender equality, and ensuring effective disaster management at the grassroots level.

The schools in Kerala are inviting global attention with its high-tech class rooms and digital education initiatives. A total of 45,000 classrooms were transformed to Hi-tech class rooms. A total of 4,500 crore has been spent to uplift the infrastructure

of our schools. The Vidhyakiranam project which aims to avail Digital Education for all is also progressing.

Healthcare System

Kerala stands as a global model in healthcare. The State's healthcare indices are on par with those of the developed nations. The Karunya Health Care Scheme (KASP) ensures comprehensive healthcare, benefiting over 42 lakh families. Launched in April 2019, KASP covers medical expenses, including hospital treatment up to Rs. 5 lakh annually. The State's commitment to healthcare is further evident in initiatives like providing Braille treatment cards for visually impaired beneficiaries. The State's focus on healthcare showcases its dedication to the well-being of its citizens.

Kerala has also been at the forefront of embracing digital advancements in healthcare through the e-Health project. By leveraging technology, we have digitised our public healthcare system, enabling efficient management of patient records, seamless information exchange, and improved coordination among healthcare providers. This has not only improved the efficiency of healthcare delivery but has also enhanced patient safety and outcomes. Kerala's successful implementation of the e-Health project stands as a shining example of the effective utilisation of technology in healthcare services.



Kerala Bank

The Kerala State Co-operative Bank, known as Kerala Bank, is a pride of the cooperative sector, serving as the exclusive banking institution for the people of Kerala. Established by the State in November 2019, Kerala Bank operates as a scheduled bank and has restructured the cooperative sector into a more efficient two-tier system. With 823 branches and 1688 Class A member societies, the Bank's total business increased to 121,204 crores in the financial year 2022-23. It offers various loan schemes, including those for agriculture, self-employment, and women empowerment. Kerala Bank has earned global recognition, ranking seventh worldwide in terms of agricultural lending.

Social Security Pension

The State has prioritised social welfare as a crucial aspect of its governance, introducing a range of initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for all citizens. The comprehensive pension provisions, covering various categories of individuals, stand as a testament to the State's commitment to social security. The Social Security Pension Scheme benefits around 60,00,000 people with a monthly disbursement of Rs. 1,600 per person.

LIFE Mission

The 'LIFE Mission' project, initiated to ensure housing for all, has made significant strides in providing homes for the homeless. A total number of four lakh houses were handed over and around 50,000 are under construction.

Land Deeds

Land reforms initiated in the 1950s continue to be a cornerstone of the State's efforts to ensure land for the landless. Around three lakh land deeds were handed over to the landless and the land for the remaining are being acquired through Pattayam Mission, a special purpose programme to serve the land to the landless in a timely manner.

The Public Service Commission

The Public Service Commission (PSC) in Kerala stands as a role model

for ensuring diversity in the public sector workforce. The PSC has been proactive in issuing appointment advice memos and creating new government posts, contributing to the overall development of the state. The Kerala Public Service Commission has served around 2,35,000 job advices, the highest among the public service commissions in India. A Public Enterprises Recruitment Board has also been setup to conduct the recruitment to the public sector units.

Gender Budgeting

Kerala is the first state to introduce gender budgeting with an aim to spend to spend 25% its budget allocation for the schemes aspiring to ensure Gender Equality. The transgender policy, introduced to safeguard the rights and dignity of transgender individuals, is a pioneering step towards ensuring inclusivity and equal opportunities. The government's commitment to ensuring gender justice is evident in its various initiatives, including the 'She Lodge' project, designed to create safe and affordable accommodation for women travelers.

Haritha Kerala Mission

The 'Haritha Keralam Mission' is a comprehensive environmental initiative that underscores the government's commitment to cleanliness, environmental conservation, and waste-to-income initiatives. Launched with the aim of making Kerala clean, green,



and hygienic, the mission focuses on waste management, water conservation, and promoting sustainable agriculture practices. Various missions, such as 'Suchitwa Sagaram' for coastal cleanliness and 'Punargeham' for the welfare of coastal families, demonstrate the State's holistic approach to environmental stewardship.

The State is developing green hydrogen hubs in Thiruvananthapuram and Kochi to promote renewable energy adoption and sustainability. Kerala is the first to announce a scheme for setting up Green Hydrogen hubs in Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram. The State has also been identified as one of the key enablers in manufacturing green hydrogen in India under the National Green Hydrogen Mission.

Migrant workers

Kerala's commitment to inclusivity extends to the welfare of migrant workers, who play a vital role in the state's economy. The 'Welfare Fund for Guest Workers' is a unique initiative aimed at providing financial assistance to guest workers during emergencies. This welfare fund reflects the State's recognition of the contributions made by guest workers and its commitment to ensuring their well-being.

The New Kerala (NAVAKERALAM)

The State's tireless efforts to shape a "New Kerala" represent a holistic and inclusive approach to governance. From infrastructure development to social welfare, the government has left no stone unturned in its pursuit of sustainable and equitable progress. The numerous initiatives undertaken reflect a commitment to creating a Kerala that not only embraces modernity and innovation but also prioritises the well-being and empowerment of all its residents. Through these collective efforts, the State envisions a future where Kerala stands as a model of inclusive and sustainable development for the rest of the nation. As the state continues to evolve and face new challenges, its commitment to the principles of social justice, environmental stewardship, and technological advancement will undoubtedly shape a prosperous and harmonious future for generations to come.

Recognising the transformative power of technology, the State has set its sights on Industry 4.0 and are committed to transforming Kerala into a Knowledge Economy. To achieve this vision, the State has established Centers of Excellence

(CoEs) in emerging fields such as robotics, biotechnology, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity. These CoEs serve as hubs of innovation and learning, equipping our workforce with the latest knowledge and skills required in the digital era. The State has also launched a CoE for Microbiomes and is in the process of setting up a CoE for Nutraceuticals. It launched the Kerala Genome Data Centre (KGDC) that is expected to take Kerala advance rapidly in genomics. The State has set up an India Innovation Centre for Graphene (IICG) in Thrissur, which is expected to be a hub for research and development in the field of graphene. In addition, the work for setting up a graphene industrial park in the state has commenced. By embracing these cutting-edge technological advancements, the State is ensuring that Kerala remains at the forefront of innovation and economic growth.

Historic comeback of KPPL

The Hindustan Newsprint Factory, initially listed for sale by the Centre, was competitively acquired by the State and is now thriving under the name Kerala Paper Products Limited (KPPL). Furthermore, BHEL Electrical Machines Limited, a joint venture operating in the state, which was decided to privatise, has been acquired by State and is now operational as KEL-EML

A Path to Fiscal Resilience

K.N. Balagopal

Minister for Finance

Despite economic headwinds, Kerala has made notable strides in fortifying its revenue streams over the past two years. Efforts to enhance tax administration in Kerala have garnered national attention, particularly with the restructuring of the GST department.

Kerala, famed for its cultural richness and scenic landscapes, finds itself entangled in a financial conundrum attributed to a shortfall in central revenue allocation and complexities in securing loans. This predicament is underscored by both the Accountant General and RBI assessments of the state's fiscal health.

Despite economic headwinds, Kerala has made notable strides in fortifying its revenue streams over the past two years. The state has ramped up tax collection efforts, implemented cost-cutting measures, and steered its financial management towards consolidation. In the fiscal year 2021-22, own tax revenue saw a remarkable 22.41 percent increase compared to the previous year, and this positive trend continued with a 23.36 percent rise the following year. Consequently, the revenue deficit dropped to 0.9 percent, marking the first time it fell below one percent in history.

Efforts to enhance tax administration in Kerala have garnered national attention, particularly with the restructuring of the GST department. This overhaul has not only improved tax administration but has also become a model for other states considering similar reforms. The state's commitment to battling tax evasion is evident, and the success of these measures is crucial for Kerala to maintain its impressive economic growth rates.

Kerala achieved a remarkable 12.01 percent increase in GDP at



constant prices during the fiscal year 2021-22, rebounding from an 8 percent slump during the COVID-19 pandemic. This surge propelled the state's GDP beyond one lakh crore rupees, firmly establishing Kerala among the top five states in per capita income in the country. The state's economic trajectory remains positive in the current fiscal year.

However, challenges persist. Allegations of Kerala lagging behind in the implementation of the GST system and experiencing revenue declines have surfaced. Complicating matters, accurate figures for IGST revenue are elusive due to flaws in the tax system imposed



Cochin Shipyard



Vallarpadam Terminal at Kochi

by the central government. The incomplete operationalization of the GSTN network adds another layer of complexity.

Kerala's distinctive approach to GST administration sets it apart. The successful reorganization of the GST department has not only improved efficiency but has also become a blueprint for other states. Despite this, concerns linger over the lack of a fair share of IGST and the incomplete operational status of the GSTN network.

The International Monetary Fund's warning about India's debt surpassing GDP heightens the economic anxieties. As of March 31, the country's total debt stands at a staggering 155.6 lakh crore, with Kerala's debt representing

The state's commitment to battling tax evasion is evident, and the success of these measures is crucial for Kerala to maintain its impressive economic growth rates.

37 percent of its GDP. While the IMF contends that repayment capability is crucial, the looming debt burden necessitates prudent fiscal management.

The 15th Finance Commission's grant of Rs 53,137 crore as a revenue deficit grant to Kerala is significant but not without context. It compensates for the reduction in resources and tax collection powers resulting from the central government's fiscal policies. However, the actual revenue loss to Kerala is approximately Rs 95,901 crore, exposing a significant shortfall in compensation.



Cochin International Airport



Technopark at Thiruvananthapuram

The diminishing share from the divisible pool further exacerbates Kerala's fiscal challenges. Over successive Finance Commission terms, the state's share has dwindled, dropping from 3.875 percent during the 10th Finance Commission to 1.925 percent in the 15th Finance Commission. This loss amounts to around Rs 48,260 crore for the three-year period from FY 2020-21 to 2022-23.

Additionally, central schemes' allocations to Kerala face cuts, aggravating the financial strain. Funds earmarked for various programs, including UGC salary revisions, urban development grants, and GST loss compensation, are being withheld. This adds

Kerala achieved a remarkable 12.01 percent increase in GDP at constant prices during the fiscal year 2021-22, rebounding from an 8 percent slump during the COVID-19 pandemic. This surge propelled the state's GDP beyond one lakh crore rupees, firmly establishing Kerala among the top five states in per capita income in the country.

to the state's financial woes, hindering its ability to meet essential expenditures.

The transition from VAT to GST has also taken its toll, leading to severe revenue losses for Kerala. The reduction in tax rates and the central government's control over GST-related matters have further constrained the state's fiscal autonomy. The reduction of the revenue-neutral rate from 16 percent to 11 percent and the abolishment of the GST compensatory transaction add to the financial challenges.

Furthermore, Kerala's borrowing authority has been curtailed, ostensibly to reduce extra-budgetary debt. While



Vizhinjam Sea Port



Infopark, Kochi

this move aims to enhance fiscal discipline, the selective application of this principle raises questions. Organizations like the National Highway Authority and the Food Corporation of India do not face similar deductions in the central budget.

In the face of these challenges, Kerala has sought relief from the Supreme Court, highlighting the need for a fair allocation of resources. The central government's actions, or lack thereof, have prompted this legal recourse. Kerala emphasizes the importance of unity in securing even the smallest financial relief, asserting that every rupee matters in the collective pursuit of economic stability.

In conclusion, Kerala's financial challenges

Addressing the gaps in revenue sharing, bolstering fiscal autonomy, and ensuring fair compensation for policy changes are crucial steps in steering Kerala towards sustainable financial health.

require a multi-faceted approach. While the state has demonstrated resilience and achieved commendable economic growth, systemic issues, and external pressures persist. Addressing the gaps in revenue sharing, bolstering fiscal autonomy, and ensuring fair compensation for policy changes are crucial steps in steering Kerala towards sustainable financial health. The call for unity and legal action underscores the urgency of the situation, emphasizing the need for a collaborative effort to safeguard Kerala's economic well-being.

Kerala Budget at a glance; laying roadmap to inclusive growth

The Kerala budget 2024-25, presented by the Finance Minister K.N.Balagopal, unveils a strategic roadmap aimed at fostering inclusive growth, sustainable development, and addressing the dynamic challenges faced by the state. It reflects the government's commitment to prioritize key sectors, propel economic resilience, and enhance the overall well-being of its citizens. From innovative policy initiatives to targeted allocations, this budget sets the tone for a comprehensive approach to governance, encompassing social welfare, infrastructure development, and economic revitalization.

The key budget proposals are the following

- Budget expects a revenue of Rs 1, 38,655 crore and expenditure of Rs 1, 84,327 crore.
- Revenue deficit stands at Rs 27,846 crore (2.12 percent of the state's gross domestic product)
- Fiscal deficit stands at Rs 44,529 crore (3.4 percent of GDP)
- Targets an increase of Rs 7845 crore in tax revenue and Rs 1503 crore in non-tax.
- Allocation of Rs. 34,530 crores in the capital investment sector that includes the KIFB
- Rs. 535.90 crore for crop management.
- 93.60 crores for seven paddy producing farm housing units.
- Rs.78.45 crores for the growth of non-pesticide laced vegetables.
- Rs. 65 crores for development of coconut cultivation.
- Rs.18.92 crore for development of fruit crops, of which 25 per cent beneficiaries will be women.
- Rs.43.90 crores for Agricultural Produce Marketing Scheme.
- Rs.83.99 crore for soil and water conservation.
- Allocation of Rs.277.14 crores for the welfare of the animal husbandry sector
- Animal welfare activities are taking to the doorstep
- Rs. 109.25 crores for dairy development sector
- Rs. 227.12 crores for fisheries sector.
- Rs. 22 crores for providing relief of fishermen during the months of trawl ban
- Rs. 80.91 crore for inland fisheries sector.
- 136.98 crore for coastal development.



Finance Minister K.N. Balagopal presents the Budget for 2024-25 in the Assembly

- Rs. 60 crores for infrastructure and manpower development of fishermen
- Rs. 10 crores for the scheme that provides property and houses for rehabilitation of fishermen.
- Rs. 10 crores for developing coastal infrastructure.
- Rs. 40 crores for executing the annual plan of Punarjeham project.
- Rs. 9.5 crore for fishing ports.
- Rs.11.18 crores for Fishermen's Accident Insurance Cover Scheme
- Rs. 10 crores for renovation works including that of the Muthalappozhi fishing port
- Rs 5 crores for the initial works of a new fishing harbor at Pozhiyur
- Rs.1000 crore for activities to revitalize the manufacturing sector.
- Special scheme for promotion of sandalwood cultivation and protection of sandalwood
- Rs. 232.59 crore for the forest and wildlife sector.
- Rs. 50.30 crore for the Environmental Restoration Infrastructure Development Fund.
- Rs.48.85 crore for human-wildlife conflict mitigation.
- Rs. 6 crores for the Puthur Zoological Park
- State's share of Rs.100 crores for the Kerala Climate Resilience Agricultural Value Chain Modernization Project. A total of Rs.2365 crore rupees will be spent on the project, which will be implemented in 5 years with the assistance of the World Bank.
- Rs. 25 lakhs for Health Insurance Scheme for Journalists.
- Rs 2 crores for establishing a Safari park at Nadukani
- A Tiger Safari Park to come up in 120 hectares of forest land at Muthukad in Peruvannamoozhi
- The share of the Local Self-Government Scheme has been raised to 28.09 per cent of the State plan fund. (Allocation of Rs. 8532 crores)
- Rs. 1768.32 crore for rural development.
- Targets Rs. 10.50 crore labour days under the employment guarantee scheme. The state's share to this will be Rs. 230.10 crore.
- Kerala to eradicate extreme poverty by November 2025
- Rs. 265 crores for Kudumbashree
- Rs. 1736.63 crores for the public education sector



- Rs. 456.71 crores for the higher education sector.
- Rs. 2052.23 crores for public health sector
- Targets to complete 5 lakh houses under the LIFE scheme by March 31, 2025. Allocation of Rs. 1132 crores for next year.
- Scheme of old age friendly housing for senior citizens.
- Rs. 10 crores to make 9004 houses habitable under MN Laksham Veedu Housing Scheme.
- Rs. 75 crore each for Kasaragod, Idukki and Wayanad packages
- Rs. 27.60 crores for the Sabarimala Master Plan.
- Rs. 134.42 crores for the cooperative sector.
- Rs. 588.85 crore for irrigation, flood control and coastal management.
- Rs. 1150.76 crore for the power sector (2024-25).
- Targets to achieve an installed capacity of one thousand Mega Watt through solar energy.
- Rs.1120.54 crores to KSRTC
- Rs. 400 crores for the Dyuti project.
- Rs. 1729.13 crore for the Industry and Minerals sector.
- Rs. 773.09 crore for medium and large scale industries.
- Rs- 2150 Crore for establishing an International Commercial Complex on Kochi Marine Drive
- Rs. 53.36 crores for the cashew industry.
- 2 crores for renovating cashew factory units
- Rs. 40.81 crore as revolving fund for the cashew board
- Rs. 51.89 crores for handloom and machine-loom sector.
- Constitution of a Health and Safety Fund with public participation.
- Rs. 100 crores for implementation of Smart City Mission project
- Rs.1.1 crore for the Plantation workers relief fund
- Rs. 107.64 crores for coir industry
- Rs. 14.80 crores for Khadi industry
- Rs. 127.50 crores to KSIDC
- Rs. 22 crores for investment promotion activities.
- Rs. 6 crore for start-up support initiatives
- New health insurance scheme for Anganwadi employees with coverage up to Rs.2 lakh.
- Office complex to be constructed in Thiruvananthapuram for various offices under the Finance Department
- A new scheme called Annuity will be implemented to provide a sum to the government employees every month after their retirement.
- Rs.35 crores for Life Science Park.
- Rs. 9 crores to Kerala Rubber Limited
- Rs. 300.73 crore for major infrastructure development projects
- Rs. 324.31 crore for Kinfra
- Rs. 20 crores for Keltron
- Rs. 507.14 crores for IT sector
- Rs. 52.50 crores for Kerala Space Park.
- 2000 more Wi-Fi hotspots to be established across the state
- Rs. 23.51 crores to Kerala Digital University
- Rs. 260 crores for graphene based product development
- Rs. 1976.04 crores for the transport sector.
- Kollam port to be developed as non-major port.
- An instalment of DA to be sanctioned to Government employees and pensioners. It will be received along with the salary for the month of April.
- Assured Pension Scheme in place of Participatory Pension Scheme.
- Rubber subsidy to be hiked to Rs.180.
- Rs. 961.14 crores for urban development projects.
- Rs.90 crores as financial assistance to Beedi, Khadi, Bamboo, Cane, Fishing and Processing Cashew, Coir and Palm Handicrafts sectors
- Rs. 2979.40 crores for Scheduled Caste sub-scheme.
- Rs. 859.50 crores for Scheduled Caste Development.
- Rs. 167 crores for the welfare of other backward classes.
- Rs.73.63 crores for minority welfare
- Rs. 35 crores for welfare of advanced class.
- 50 new branches for KSFE
- Programs to attract investment of Rs.3 lakh crore in 3 years.
- Special Development Zones to tap the development potential of Vizhinjam International Port. Investors Summit and Maritime Summit to be organised in this connection.
- Those who complete Post Graduate degree programmes in Digital University to be given an opportunity to study for PhD in Oxford University

Paving the Way for a Sporting Economy

V. Abdurahiman

Minister for Sports, Wakf and Haj Pilgrimage, Minority welfare

Excerpts from the presidential speech delivered during the inaugural ceremony of International Sports Summit, Kerala.

When the Pinarayi Vijayan Government assumed power, it recognised the imperative for transformations in Kerala's sports landscape to serve as a benchmark for the entire nation. Kerala took the lead as the first state to craft a comprehensive sports policy, setting a pioneering example for others.

Inclusive Sports for All

The Sports Policy is designed to propel Kerala to the zenith of sporting excellence and instigate transformative changes in the approach to sports, benefiting both the sports community and the general public. Two fundamental perspectives are emphasized in the policy: inclusive sports/sports for all and sports for change.

The policy underscores the participatory nature of sports for all, irrespective of age, gender, region, occupation, or economic status. It specifically addresses home sports, community sports, women's sports, veteran's sports, and institutional sports to ensure broad participation across the population.

Decentralized Approach

A decentralized scheme aims to disseminate the objectives of the holistic sports policy to all societal strata. The formation of Panchayat/Municipal Sports Councils is instrumental in achieving this, complemented by the 'Project 1000' scheme, ensuring the implementation of at least one sports programme by local self-government institutions.

The Sports Policy envisions the creation of a "Nava Kerala" (New Kerala), focusing on public health and sportsmanship. Each panchayat is encouraged to develop a model footpath, open gym, cycle track, and swimming training exercise system.

Economic Framework

A key objective of the new sports policy is to foster a sports economy. Kerala is pioneering a unique sports economy framework, marking a historic milestone in Indian sports. This approach aims to integrate economic principles with sports development, creating a sustainable sports ecosystem benefiting athletes, sports-related industries, and society at large.

Integration of sports with various fields and disciplines at all levels will generate new income sources. Emphasis is placed on sports tourism and promoting sports-related industries. This comprehensive approach not only establishes Kerala as a major sporting powerhouse but also sets an example for other Indian states, catalyzing a



nationwide transformation in the sports economy. Developed nations, having established a foothold in the realm of sports, have integrated sports into their economic framework. The state government, taking this into account, is for relating economic principles with sports development, giving rise to a distinctive model that surpasses traditional frameworks. This would help the state in not only establishing itself as a major sporting powerhouse but also sets an example for other Indian states, giving impetus to a nationwide transformation in the sports economy. Estimates suggest that at present, our sports sector contribute about one per cent to the GSDP, that is, between 10 billion rupees and 12 billion rupees. In countries like the United States and Australia, the contribution of sports to GDP is even higher. This framework of sports economy, envisaged by the Department of Sports, initially aims at a 5% growth in sports allocation in GSDP.

Kerala's favourable factors, including a deep-rooted sports culture, vibrant talent pool, proud achievements, and robust infrastructure, position it uniquely for implementing the innovative concept of sports economy.

The people in Kerala have always exhibited a profound passion for sports, surpassing not only in sports literacy but also in health literacy compared to other regions. The media and societal emphasis on sports opens up significant possibilities for



athletes, professionals, sports entrepreneurs, and investors. If harnessed strategically, the acceptance of the sports sector in Kerala can easily achieve the set goals for the state's sports economy.

Collaboration with various sectors

Kerala's sports economy utilizes the expansive potential of sports, adopting a multifaceted approach by collaborating with various sectors. This approach manifests in on 25 diverse areas, which includes building and maintaining sports infrastructure, fitness facilities, sports equipment manufacturing, conducting events and championships, imparting training, education, and promoting sports clubs, sports medicine, fantasy games, wellness, high value sports, adventure sports, traditional sports, school/college sports.

Healthy Kerala

Innovations in sports are anticipated to have a substantial impact on the health sector, promoting physical fitness and wellness activities. This strategic integration aims to combat sedentary lifestyles and address health issues, potentially reducing government investments in health. Kerala's unique topography offers extensive opportunities for sports tourism, particularly in adventure and beach sports, further enhancing the state's appeal.

The convergence of sports and wellness sectors, along with global trends in science, technology, and management, enhances the attractiveness of the sports industry to investors and job seekers. Shifting away from being solely a government responsibility, the sports sector becomes a lucrative field for private investment and collaboration. Expatriate investment is seen as a valuable resource mobilization strategy, fostering partnerships for growth.

The sports economy contributes significantly to employment generation, creating opportunities in various sectors, including infrastructure, event management, coaching, and allied industries. The influx of sports enthusiasts stimulates hospitality, transportation, and retail, further bolstering employment growth. Additionally, sports-related services like sports medicine and marketing play a role in job creation.

Socio-economic fabric

Beyond economic contributions, Kerala's sports economy cultivates a culture of sportsmanship, improving the overall socio-economic fabric of the state and acting as a dynamic engine for employment. Skill development is promoted through sports education programs and coaching academies, nurturing both athletic talent and a pool of skilled professionals in sports-related fields.

The introduction of a sports curriculum, coaching academies and other facilities enhances personality development, encourages a healthy lifestyle, and influences career choices for students. A systematic implementation of physical fitness activities in schools correlates with better performance in both co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. The collaboration between the Sports and Education Departments is crucial for achieving these goals.

Integrating the modern world of sports with advancements in science and technology is imperative for elevating Kerala's sports standards to international levels. Global participation and investment are essential for resource mobilization and infrastructure development.

Fiscal Situation and Development Priorities



Dr. Sunitha A.S.
Chief (Evaluation Division),
Kerala State Planning Board

The prudent and multipronged fiscal management of the Government enabled a stable public finance even amidst of financial and pandemic induced adversities.



The last seven years has been marked by occurrence of a series of unprecedented events, including rollout of GST, demonetisation, dismantling of Planning Commission and more, which directly impacted State's fiscal front. In addition, COVID-19 pandemic and resultant fiscal measures in the form of stimulus packages and other proactive mitigation measures affected State's overall fiscal position. The present unfair and unequal Centre-State financial relations imposed severe financial constraints. The Centre's policy including the revocation of GST compensation in June 2022, the cessation of Revenue Deficit grant in 2023-24, the limitation of borrowing space to 3 percent of a State's GSDP, the inclusion of borrowings of SPVs such as KIIFB and KSSPL as borrowings of the State have resulted in a drastic decline in central transfers to the State. This directly impacted the overall economic performance of Kerala. Sustaining the post-pandemic growth amidst of severe resource constraints is a challenge to

the Government.

Despite all, the government of Kerala has been initiating prudent measures to bring about fiscal consolidation through revenue augmentation and rationalisation of expenditure without compromising on its social commitments. This is indicated by the performance of deficit indicators (Given in the Table 1.). Fiscal deficit as percent of GSDP has declined from 4.57 per cent in 2020-21 to 4.11 per cent in 2021-22, and further to 3.61 percent in 2022-23(BE). Similar downward trend is shown in case of revenue and primary deficit (Table.1)

Table: 1 Fiscal Indicators

Sl.No.	Category	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	RE
1	Fiscal deficit	(% to GSDP)	4.57	4.11	3.61
2	Revue deficit	(% to GSDP)	2.6	2.29	1.96
3	Primary deficit	(%to GSDP)	1.85	1.54	1.16

Source: Budget Document

Due to the concrete implementation of revenue mobilisation measures, the State's Own Revenue marked significant hike in 2022-23 compared to 2016-17 (Table .2). However, grants from the Centre did not shown corresponding increase.

Table: 2 Composition of Total Revenue Receipts

Revenue	Receipts	2016-17	% Share	2022-23	% Share	% change in 2022-23 over 2016-17
1	Tax Revenue	42176	81.3 (55.78)	90228	85.65 (68)	113.93
2	Non-Tax Revenue	9699.98	18.7 (12.83)	15121.9	14.35 (11.4)	55.90
3	Total Own Revenue	51875.98	100 (68.61)	105349.9	100 (79.39)	103.08
4	Grant in Aid	23735.37	(31.39)	27344.86	(20.61)	15.21
5	Total Revenue Receipts	75611.35	(100)	132694.8	(100)	75.05

Figures in the parenthesis shows percent of Total Revenue Receipts

Over the last seven years, the Government of Kerala had given due importance to prioritise it expenditure, both in social and economic overheads. The government increased its expenditure on social security pension, public education, health, drinking water and sanitation. Over the past five years, welfare pensions per beneficiary have increased from Rs 600 in 2016 to Rs 1,600 in 2021. The number of social security pensioners has risen from 34 lakh in 2015-16 to 52.38 lakh up to October 2022, with 62 percent of these beneficiaries being women.

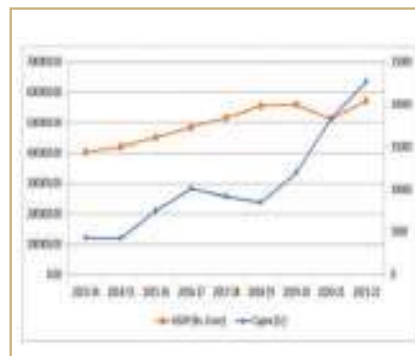
Under 'Nava Kerala Mission', a comprehensive strategy has been initiated for infrastructure development in social overheads. This include construction 425 school buildings, 44,705 high-tech classrooms in Secondary and Higher Secondary schools and 11,257 high-tech labs in LP and UP schools. Under Aardram Mission (2017-18 to 2022-23), 644 Primary Health Centres (PHC) out of 886 were converted to Family Health Centres (FHC), and 49 Community Health Centres (CHC) out of 151 were converted to FHCs. Out Patients (OPs) department of 14 of 17 District Hospitals, 11 of 43 Taluk Hospitals were made patient-friendly. Under LIFE Mission, a total of a total of 3.54 lakh houses have

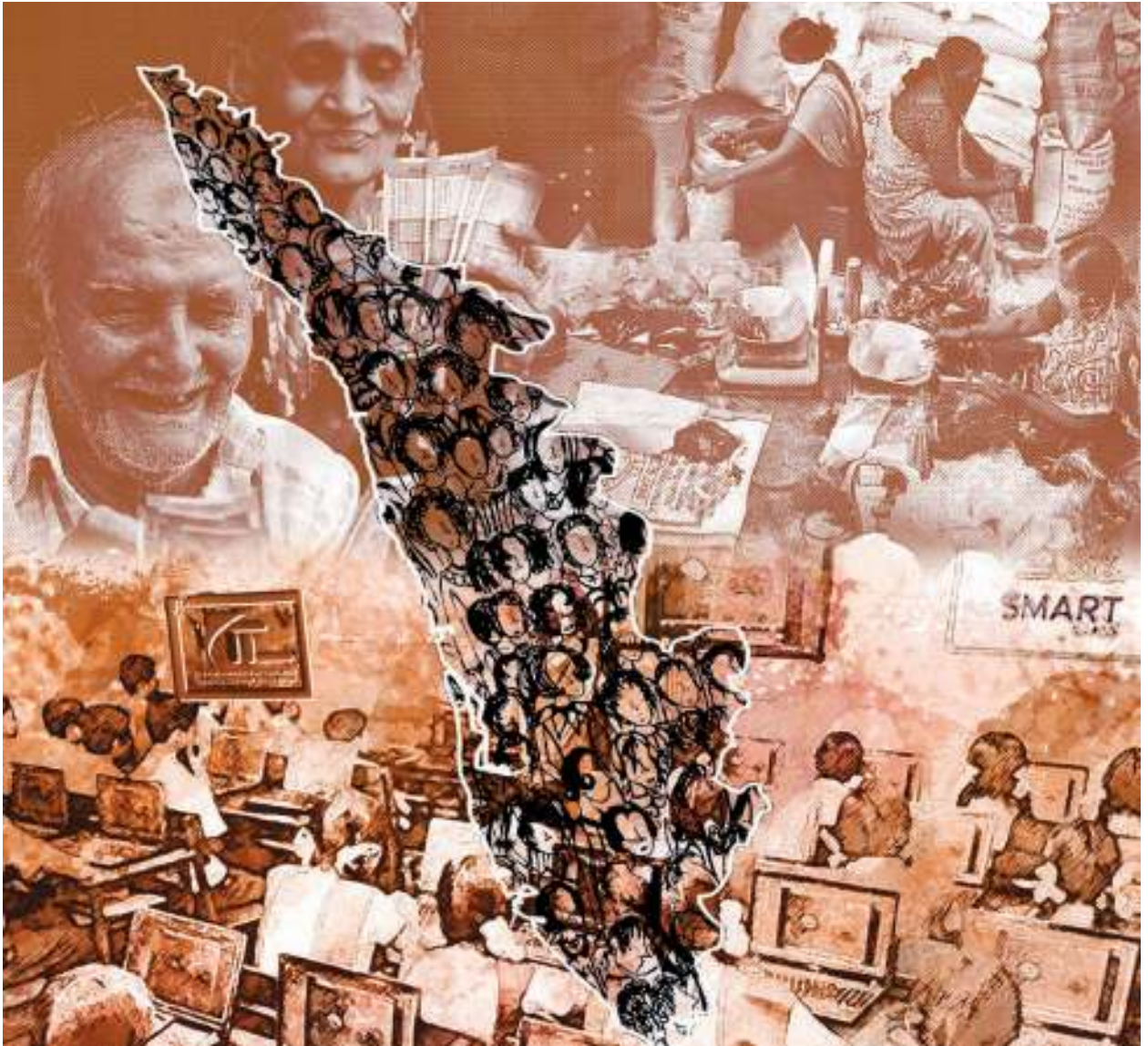
been completed through the three phases and constructed LIFE Towers housing complexes. The significant progress has been achieved in universalising power supply, drinking water, schooling, healthcare services and more.

Government expend remarkable amount on development of economic infrastructure. The major projects include land acquisition for National Highway-66, the Coastal and Hill highways, AM Tunnel Road, Twin tube Tunnel, Life Science Park, Kannur Airport, Water Metro, Industry Park, Food park, Transgrid 2.0, Industrial Corridor and more. Government succeeded in developing an integrated transportation system providing the last mile connectivity to the people. Soft infrastructure including Information technology, IT parks, K-FON, Akshaya, etc., contribute towards inclusive governance.

As a result, capital expenditure increased drastically, led to substantial growth in GSDP as given in the Figure 1. The positive correlation (coefficient of 0.721) between GSDP and capital expenditure indicate the real growth.

Figure 1: Trend in Capital expenditure and GSDP over the years





The Government envisions a 'Nava Keralam', with the emphasis on improving ease of living and ease of doing business and improving economic activities across sectors. Kerala will continue to create more public goods, adoption of trust-based governance, agricultural and industrial productivity without compromising on its social commitments.

The proactive policies of the Government placed Kerala frontrunner among the States in most of the development indicators. For the second consecutive year, Kerala has the least poverty according to NITI Aayog, Multidimensional Poverty Index, 2023 (.002). In HDI also, Kerala ranked top among the states since the inception of the index. All these reveals, the sound fiscal management along with rationalised resource allocation contributed largely to promote growth and equity along the length and breadth of the state.

The Government envisions a 'Nava Keralam', with the emphasis on improving ease of living and ease of doing business and improving economic activities across sectors. Kerala will continue to create more public goods, adoption of trust-based governance, agricultural and industrial productivity without compromising on its social commitments.

Festival of Science



The month-long Global Science Festival Kerala (GSFK) kick-started in Thiruvananthapuram, witnessing the blend of scientific brilliance, curiosity and exploration. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated the festival at the Bio 360 Life Sciences Park in Thiruvananthapuram. The government is giving prior importance to this festival with a vision to spread the scientific temper among the public. The festival is a collaboration between the Department of Science and Technology, Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment (KSCSTE), and Amuseum ArtScience. This curated exhibition promises an informative experience to the visitors.

The festival showcases technologies such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) through a myriad of interactive exhibitions. Some highlights include an immersive model of the universe, a replica of the HMS Beagle pivotal to Darwin's theory of evolution, a life-size dinosaur skeleton model, an immersive experience depicting the scars of war, a brain mega walk-in, explorations into the evolution of language and vision, and an engaging exploration of the human body. 'Museum of the Moon' and 'Mars' by the British installation artist Luke Jerram; 'Molecular Animation' by Melbourne-based animator Drew Berry, an immersive model of the universe, a replica of the HMS Beagle

pivotal to Darwin's theory of evolution and a life-size dinosaur skeleton model are some of the major attractions.

Many informative talks, lectures and discussions are the prime part of this curated exhibition. Many eminent speakers and subject experts are scheduled to contribute their insights to the festival's programme. The language pavilion has received an immense response as it tells the story of the evolution of language. One gets excited to know more about animal communications, newborn babies' language skills, and alarm signals of animals and so on. The Global Science Festival Kerala is the fusion of celebration of arts and science with an interdisciplinary approach to better science communication.

Towards Nava Keralam through Local Economic Development



Dr. Joy Elamon

Director General, KILA

Post-COVID economic uncertainties across the globe have affected all regions, but the need for local economic development in building a new Kerala (Nava Keralam) also emerged. It is there that the local self-governments in Kerala are playing a major role.

The devastating floods of 2018 and the COVID-19 pandemic created havoc but also brought to light the tremendous potential of the local self-governments of Kerala in managing these disasters as well as in rebuilding Kerala. It is to be noted that the People's Plan Campaign launched in 1996 has been a unique initiative that transformed the landscape of developmental politics in Kerala. The campaign and various other initiatives, especially the Kudumbashree movement, empowered the local level leadership and people at large to plan and implement their own development projects, ensuring inclusive development.

Promoting Sustainable Agriculture

As one travels through the various initiatives of the 1200 local self-governments in the state – District, Block and Gram Panchayats, Corporations and Municipalities- we find a large number of initiatives which lead to local economic development with a focus on achieving Sustainable Development Goals. Examples are many like the Nedumangad Block Panchayat's 'Jivagrama Poultry Scheme' implemented with the aim of promoting sustainable agriculture and thereby boosting the rural economy which involves the maintenance



of 1000 high-yielding laying hens of BV 380 category in a state-of-the-art technology-based poultry management. It not only aims to enhance agricultural productivity but also contributes to the local economy and generates employment opportunities for the community. This is supplemented with the Agriculture Business Incubation Centre, which contributes much to fostering the creation of value-added agricultural products. It not only imparts knowledge but also helps these individuals access opportunities in the agricultural industry and explores viable employment prospects within the agricultural domain.

Kulathoor Kuthari, a novel initiative

Kulathoor Gram Panchayat's noteworthy initiative was the integration of Kudumbashree and the agriculture sector, leading to the formation of Kudumbashree Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) that promote banana and paddy cultivation in coordination with Krishi Bhavan. In the rice cultivation domain,



the Nellikonam Pada Sekara Samiti has undertaken distinctive activities, creating its own brand called “Kulathoor Kuthari,” which has gained popularity among the public. By ensuring uniform marketing and distribution of products from these enterprises, Kulathoor Gram Panchayat has effectively promoted local goods in the public domain.

Empowering women in Entrepreneurship

Kunnummal Block’s Theertha Kudumbashree, a unit in Narippatta Gram Panchayat, has proven to be a significant step towards economic empowerment and entrepreneurship for women in the region. With the support of a subsidy of Rs. 25,000 provided by the panchayat, five women who previously had no fixed income have now embarked on a journey to establish their value-added products manufacturing venture. This initiative has not only provided women with an opportunity to venture into entrepreneurship but has also served to enhance their economic prospects and financial stability. The project’s focus on utilizing locally available resources, such as sugarcane and bananas, demonstrates a commitment to sustainable practices and

Among the notable enterprises, there are Apparel Park, Safalam, Nutrimix, Agriculture Karma Sena, and Haritha Karma Sena, with a total of 105 women gainfully employed. These initiatives have opened new avenues for women’s economic participation and have significantly contributed to the local economy’s growth

bolstering the local economy by employing many.

Agriculture par excellence in Mayyil Gram Panchayat

Mayyil Gram Panchayat has demonstrated exemplary progress in the agricultural sector through its strategic and innovative initiatives. Integrated with the schemes of the district and block panchayats, the panchayat successfully implemented a leading to a remarkable production of 3,163,200 kg of paddy with an average yield of 6,002 kg per hectare, surpassing the state average of 2,600 kg. The paddy produced by the farmers was collected and processed into value-added products, addressing the challenge of agricultural products not being priced in proportion to production costs. The panchayat established a warehouse with a storage capacity of 800,000 kg and installed a heavy boiler capable of processing 700 kg per day, enabling efficient processing and



higher prices for farmers' produce. Mayyil Gram Panchayat has been instrumental in supporting farmers through the formation of farmers' associations and providing effective leadership. The establishment of 76 mini rice mills within the panchayat has further strengthened the agricultural sector. The paddy collected is segregated into three different types and marketed under the brand name "Mayyilsamridhi," effectively conveying the quality of the product to consumers and creating awareness, thus avoiding marketing difficulties.

Triumph Tale of Bedadukka Gram Panchayat

Bedadukka Gram Panchayat's success story is through the establishment of 80 enterprises through Kudumbashree, fostering economic independence and empowerment for women in the region. Among the notable enterprises, there are Apparel Park, Safalam, Nutrimix, Agriculture Karma Sena, and Haritha Karma Sena, with a total of 105 women gainfully employed. These initiatives have opened

With the 2024-25 annual plans rolling out, a quantum jump is expected in entrepreneurship development, providing skills and jobs to a large number of educated unemployed and leading to local economic development through local self-governments.

new avenues for women's economic participation and have significantly contributed to the local economy's growth. An exemplary initiative by them is the "Team Bedakam Kudumbashree Agro Farmers Producing Company," a farmer producer company formed under the Bedadukka Community Development Society (CDS) in collaboration with Kudumbashree District Mission and Kasaragod District Panchayat. The company aims to explore new model enterprises in agricultural production and marketing, tapping into the various possibilities in the agriculture sector. A noteworthy aspect of this initiative is that it started with only women shareholders, furthering the cause of women's empowerment in the region.

Towards a New Kerala

These and hundreds of similar interventions across the state have led to another phase in the journey of local self-governments in local economic



development. Overall approach to entrepreneurship, enterprises and local economic development has undergone a paradigm shift. Local self-governments are evolving themselves as facilitating agencies in the entrepreneurship arena, establishing an entrepreneurship friendly environment, leading to new enterprises, job opportunities and local economic development. The aim is to provide jobs at least to five per 1000 population within the coming years.

The strategy for 2024-25 is to ensure new enterprises provide jobs, entrepreneurship development and skill enhancement. These are envisaged to happen through the own investment of the entrepreneurs, supplemented by other funding opportunities, subsidies and also supporting the expansion and rejuvenation of the existing enterprises. Local self-governments can provide support to self-entrepreneurs if their income is below Rs. 5 lakhs. However, no such limit is there if the proposed enterprise provides employment to more than 10 persons. They get support for basic infrastructure development and also for overall entrepreneurship development.

In every local self-government, various institutional mechanisms are being put in place, with an Entrepreneurship-Employment Development Council, Technical Committee, Entrepreneurship-Employment Help Desk, Block Employability Centre and District Technical Committee. These are being supported by various departments and agencies like the Industries department, Kerala Knowledge Economy Mission, Kudumbashree, KILA and many others.

Various modes of resource support can be provided by the local self-governments like the various types of subsidies and interest subsidies for loans. Local self-governments are encouraged to set up special funds for support to access technologies, Technology Upgradation Fund, Innovation Fund, Crisis Management Fund, Rejuvenation Fund, Incubation Fund and Seed Support fund.

With the 2024-25 annual plans rolling out, a quantum jump is expected in entrepreneurship development, providing skills and jobs to a large number of educated unemployed and leading to local economic development through local self-governments. The havoc created by the floods and COVID pandemic are being overcome through a plethora of such initiatives at the local level, complementing the state-level initiatives in rebuilding Kerala towards a New Kerala.

Transforming Kerala's Human Capital for New Value Creation in the Economy



Dr. P.V. Unnikrishnan

Member Secretary, K-DISC

In 2021, the Kerala state government unveiled a comprehensive programme aimed at propelling the state into a knowledge economy, building upon its developmental policy set forth in 2016. This initiative outlines a four-tiered approach focusing on the enhancement of higher education institutions, the establishment of Centres of Excellence in emerging fields, fostering innovation to boost productivity in key economic sectors, and a bold plan to provide employment for two million educated yet unemployed individuals. Additionally, it seeks to accelerate the digital transformation across various economic domains.

The programme is a strategic extension of Kerala's commitment to leveraging its notable human development achievements to generate employment, particularly for the youth, and to stimulate growth in agriculture, industry, and service sectors. This strategy also encompasses infrastructure development to support these goals.

Kerala's labour force is distinguished by unique characteristics, including an aging population that remains active in the economy, a slowing growth in the working-age demographic, and a lower labour force participation rate, especially among women. Despite a highly educated workforce, the state grapples with significant unemployment challenges, particularly among the youth and educated women, including those re-entering the workforce after a career break.

The state's economy is marked by a shift towards the service sector, which, despite income growth, has not translated into proportional employment opportunities. The decline in public sector employment, coupled with a rise in private sector jobs, reflects broader national trends. Kerala's relatively high wage structure in casual employment, influenced by substantial remittances and governmental support, has led to higher reservation wages, making the job market more selective.

In response to these challenges, the Kerala government has adopted a new industrial policy aimed at making the state ready for Industry 4.0 by 2028, with



a focus on nanotechnology, biotechnology, and advanced digital technologies. The state's IT policy seeks to position Kerala as a prime destination for knowledge industries, thereby creating significant employment opportunities.

The agricultural sector is also poised for modernisation through the adoption of technologies such as predictive analytics, precision agriculture, and integrated water management, among others. The burgeoning entrepreneurship in the Micro Small and Medium Enterprise sector, particularly in technology-driven industries, underscores the potential for sustained industrial growth.

Kerala's strategic focus on start-ups, exemplified by the establishment of the Maker Village, the largest hardware incubator, positions the state as an attractive hub for innovative enterprises. Furthermore, the government's commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 through green energy initiatives reflects a holistic approach to sustainable development.

To align with these ambitious goals, the Kerala Knowledge Economy Mission, under the Kerala Development and Innovation Strategic Council (K-DISC), has crafted a detailed strategy. This involves mobilising and skilling 30 lakh job seekers, curating 60 lakh knowledge jobs from local and global markets, and establishing a digital platform to efficiently match job seekers with employment opportunities. This initiative represents a concerted effort to integrate private sector dynamics with state employment



objectives, aiming to transform Kerala's economic landscape within a five-year timeframe.

Realities of the changing workplace and the Job market

The changing workplace refers to the ongoing evolution of the work environment that includes changes in the nature of work, organisation of work, and composition of the workforce. The key dimensions of the changing workplace are increasing use of digitisation and automation in jobs; wider adoption of tele work and flexible work arrangements; diversification of the workforce in terms of gender, ethnicity, age and nationality; increasing insistence of employees on work-life balance and the support from employers for this; emerging new models of work including gig modes; skills development to cope with accelerating technological changes and workplace diversity and the increasing focus on corporate social responsibility. With a greater focus on fair labour practices, social justice and sustainability. The changing workplace has been triggered by a variety of factors. The transition from the Fordist manufacturing regime characterised by centralised, mass production of standardised goods moving on an assembly line using dedicated machinery and semiskilled labour to the Post Fordist regime of distributed flexible production catering to niche markets, specialised products, decentralised decision making and greater emphasis on collaboration and teamwork, address invaried consumer choices through wider use of information communication technologies, lean production techniques leading to wastage reduction and increasing efficiencies;

Increased competition and demand for higher efficiencies and productivity, larger outsourcing leading to changes in the composition of the workforce, global scale of corporates changing the way work is organised and managed, greater cultural diversity in the workplace, accelerated adoption of technologies transforming the workplace, arising out of globalisation; robotics and automation majorly replacing routine and manual tasks, increasing application of data and analytics to optimise production, data driven decision making and continuous improvements in production, digitalisation of the production processes leading to greater flexibility, customisation, agility and responsiveness to dynamic market conditions, wider use of augmented reality and virtual reality for training, customer interaction all arising out of the fusion of the physical, digital, and biological worlds collectively termed Industrial Revolution 4.0.

The changing workplace has led to the emergence of new job opportunities in areas such as technology, data analysis and digital marketing while traditional jobs have declined drastically. There is increased emphasis on skilling and continuous learning for workers to remain competitive in the job market. The new forms of employment like gig work have brought flexibility but have created huge challenges to job security and social security benefits. [ILO, ISSA and OECD. (2023)], ILO has recently brought out reports on the transformation of the workplace around global digital platforms raising a variety of social security issues. The KKEM strategy paper has considered at length the context of the changing workplace and the changing job market during the last several decades and developed a demand mobilisation, skilling, and jobseeker-job provider engagement model based on these.

Transforming the Kerala Skill Ecosystem

Over the last years, Kerala has developed a skill ecosystem which has been strengthened by inclusion of vocational education, technical education, higher education, apprenticeship, recognition of prior learning and institutional-industry linkages.

The skilling strategy of KKEM is based on the overall strategy of the Knowledge Society transition. It covers facilitating

skill infrastructure strengthening and increasing the availability of facilitators and trainers and improving the quality of skilling. The focus of KKEM skilling had been to look for developing high end knowledge skills around Centres of Excellences (CoEs) in Universities and the Higher Educational Institutions established by the higher education department and K-DISC, medium end knowledge skills through strengthening the existing skilling agencies like Additional Skill Acquisition Programme (ASAP) and Kerala Academy for Skill Excellence (KASE) and developing makeshift vocational academies in higher educational institutions; grey collar and blue collar knowledge work around the modernisation of Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) Institutions like Indian Institute of Infrastructure and Construction and around existing programmes of Kudumbashree and KASE and Industry led skilling through Industry Associations, MSMEs and Community Skill parks. Increasing availability of trainers and facilitators is envisaged around the University CoEs in high end skill areas and through establishing Learning Circles, Modified apprenticeships and Internships and Faculty Industry Immersion Fellowship in Higher Education Institutions and through Industry Collaboration Models through aggregation of skill providers, establishing Community Skill Parks, improving quality of training providers through improving skill test, industry connect programmes, industry immersion programmes of trainers and developing trainer pools.

Towards building a new model for skilling and employment in Kerala

The KKEM strategy of skilling and employment revolves around the understanding of educated unemployment. The major issues identified are lack of proactiveness of job seekers, employability issues, inadequate demand and aggregation, limited awareness of gig opportunities and many more. The solution developed based on this involves the creation of an electronic platform of platforms linking the job seeker, the mechanisms for curation and counselling, skilling, job providers, mechanisms for demand side management and aggregators.

The platform called Digital Workforce Management System (DWMS) now manages candidate registration, curation, skilling agency connections, as well as job provider registration entirely electronically. The right skilling and mentoring are provided to the job seekers based on demand and supply availability. For smooth execution, the DWMS engages many companies, including start-ups. In addition, many agencies from around the world have been engaged as Skill Partners.

Building an ecosystem to mobilize jobs based on talent development, leveraging job opportunities to make skilling meaningful, and developing grooming and curation to support job seekers is unique. Here, DWMS brings together skill providers, employers, and employees. In essence, it aims to create the world's largest talent marketplace.

A block schematic of the interventions: four components reflect the verticals of KKEM: Mobilisation, Career Support Services, Skilling and Demand Side Management. Under mobilisation through Kudumbasree community ambassadors, district programme managers and the Programme Management units we have done initial mobilisation of jobseekers and developed community touchpoints in local governments where community gatherings of jobseekers have been organised.

Following this special focus, mobilisation programmes have been initiated for focusing scheduled caste, scheduled tribe, transgenders, fisherfolk, women, people with disabilities and neuro divergent jobseekers. Under curation, career assessment and counselling programmes have been organised to provide 360-degree career profiling for jobseekers as an online service. A web based English language training and app-based certification has been operationalised. AI supported video interviews to provide candidates with real time experience of interviews are available on DWMS. Personality development training to improve interpersonal skills, communication skills and presentation skills are available for jobseekers from trainers of their preference in convenient time slots.

The work readiness programme, a fifteen-hour exposure to etiquette, attitude, resume writing and improving presentation and interview skills is organised in offline and hybrid mode.

A special drive to mobilise students on campuses and introduce them to the DWMS services was done through Career to Connect which has been followed up with intense job provider engagement for internships and placements through an industry supported programme called skill express. Profile visibility workshops for Resume building and support of career support executives for linking students on campuses with internships and job fairs have been initiated.

The skilling programme of KKEM is focussed on revitalising the skill providers and strengthening the skilling system for scaling and quality delivery. The weakness is that most of the courses in the skill ecosystem in the state are skilling for skilling sake and need continuous tweaking to provide talent needed for the industry. The KKEM skill platform has integrated 27 skill providers and 230 courses. 22 new skill providers are being on boarded. A scholarship scheme for women, transgender, fisher folk, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and persons with disabilities has been launched. To develop a new skill culture, Kerala Skill Express has used a gamified approach and launched two tracks for learning and career on campuses. The learning track is for pre-final year students who create learning circles and affinity spaces and undergo skilling through skill exploration workshops and skill boot camps and develop themselves as career ambassadors. The career track for final years integrates the DWMS career counselling and curation services and extends them to intense job fairs, internship fairs, industry challenges and hackathons aiming at high quality conversion. Skill Express has on boarded a new set of 305 employers through industry associations and techno parks. With the support of the higher education department the "earn while you learn programme" has been linked with the local industries and is being launched. Efforts have been initiated to link the Coursera global learning platform covering more than 80,000 skill courses and over 2 lakh micro learning videos to create dedicated virtual training academies with career paths to entry level jobs offered by corporates. The programme aims to proactively link faculty in educational institutions as facilitators and mentors for the coursework and project work of aspiring job seekers.

The central pillar of the KKEM ecosystem is the mobilisation programme which initially kicked off with a focus on regular jobs. Confederation of Indian Industries and ICTAK are the major



partners. Recruit Train and Deploy is an interesting innovation attempted along with hybrid job fairs. The KKEM had set a target of providing employment to 30,000 jobseekers during the year 2022-23 along with its partners. The target has been achieved. KKEM on its own has to date crossed 15000 placements. In the current year till 27th January 2024 KKEM has been able to provide employment to 1,01,703 job seekers along with partners. The contribution of KKEM on its own is 28,395. The crucial aspect of the intervention is the success in mobilising jobs. A confidence has been established that through the jobseeker registration, curation, skilling and placement processes results could come forth and the critical aspect in this had been the mobilisation of aggregators and employers onto the platforms and the vacancies in large numbers operationalising the ecosystem.

During the last few months of its functioning the mission has developed an elaborate strategy and a clear roadmap. Verticals have been developed for mobilisation, curation and counselling, skilling, demand aggregation and technology. Given the large number of stakeholders and complexity of the tasks for improving the outcomes, the team is developing a strategy of microplanning and developing a Micro/Macro grid for decision making. This is sought to help the mission to achieve the exponentially increasing targets before it, in the coming years.

The latest additions to the K-DISC armour in creating the skill ecosystem is the Artificial Intelligence Based Career Optimizer profiling system (AICO) which seeks to create a skill gap and career assessment report for jobseekers registered on the DWMS platform through a process involving feature engineering based career data set construction, AI models for predictions, hyper parameter optimisation for efficient model operation, continuous learning and model optimisation for adapting to dynamic changes in the job market in real time etc. One of the challenges which the mission has been is to develop insights on the trends in the demand market which are dynamically varying and build such insights into the macroplanning and microplanning framework. Efforts are on to create a continuous market watch and draw intelligence from this. The partnerships with the aggregators is likely to help KKEM in a big way in this direction.

Considering the growing significance of freelance work globally, KKEM has looked at opportunities for connecting job seekers with freelance work opportunities. Through ICTAK a proposal for setting up an open talent Centre of Excellence which will create standards, processes and a framework for KKEM to engage with the freelance economy space. The objective shall be to create a talent pool which can tap into the freelance economy space and to negotiate mechanisms addressing the regulatory gaps for decent work as proposed by ILO covering aspects covering freedom of association and collective bargaining, employment relationship,

occupational safety and health, social security, fair remuneration and working time, non-discrimination, dispute resolution mechanism and data protection. The strategy paper has mooted a co-operative platform for innovation collectives of freelancers for achieving this. The open talent CoE would play a major role in architecting this. A policy framework for developing social security programmes to address the vulnerabilities of freelance and gig workers need to be also addressed jointly with the labour and employment department.

Milestone in Kerala's Transition to the Knowledge Society

Providing employment to 20 lakh educated unemployed is an extremely significant milestone in Kerala's transition to the Knowledge Society. One of the major successes of K-DISC had been the mobilisation of vacancies till date the number of vacancies mobilised is 9,59,809. The conversion of applied candidates to those called for interviews is low only 50,610 out of 12,19,187. In order to address this there is a need to rework the demand side pipelines drastically and also enhancing the coverage of skilling. The Recruit Train and Deploy model is the best solution available right now. Skilling efforts needs to be enhanced with skill loans and combinations within the existing skill ecosystem. The Knowledge Mission special programme for developing Pathanamthitta District as a Knowledge Society aims to drive the RTD programme to new heights using the diaspora connects established through the Migration Conclave 2024. The model being built by the KKEM using the digital platforms jointly with local governments, Department of Higher Education, Department of Labour and Skills, Department of Employment and Training, Department of Social Justice, Department of Scheduled Castes, Department of Scheduled Tribes, Department of Non-Resident Keralites and skill providers like ASAP, KASE, ICTAK etc. has started grappling with the problem holistically. The systems for monitoring and inter departmental inter agency co-ordination reviewed at the highest level in the state has created momentum. Closely watching the global and national skills market and towing an appropriate strategy dynamically incorporating new insights would ensure success.

Tourism at its peak



M. Muhammed Haris

Writer

Tourism in Kerala has rebounded from the gloom of COVID -19 and the state has registered a 196 percentage surge the domestic Tourist arrivals and 600 hundred percentage increase in foreign tourists arrival to the state.

The trend firmly establish that the state tourism made a massive surge even compared to the pre-pandemic period. Kerala witnesses 20 percentage rise in tourists arrivals in the first half of the calendar year 2023. The state welcomed a record in domestic tourists of 1,06,83,643 peoples with in the country in the first six months of 2023 compared to 88,95,593 persons in 2022, showing the robust growth of 20 percentage. Among the foreign tourists visiting the state, United State of America comes first and the Kerala has all the possibilities to attract both domestic and foreign tourists . The serenity and beauty of Kerala which include beach, dense forests and hill stations attract people all over the world. The people of Kerala give homely treatment to the visiting tourists and extend whole hearted welcome to them and tourists become brand ambassadors of tourism industry of the entire world. Ernakulam and Thiruvananthapuram districts created a record in attracting foreign tourists in the last two years.

Tourism has emerged as a key driver of economic growth and is one of the fastest-growing economic sectors and has a significant impact on trade, job creation, investment, infrastructure development and social inclusion of all the people living in the society. As part of the service sector, the tourism industry has become an important source of income

for many regions and even for the entire country. This sector is interconnected with other spheres of development, creates employment, promotes traditional industries, brings in revenue and opens society to the rest of the world.

Kerala become a place of dreams for the people all over the world. So the State Government plans innovative method to attract both foreign and domestic tourists to the narrow strip of coastal territory that slopes down in the Western Ghats in cascade of lush, green vegetation and reaches the Arabian Sea. It is also known for the back waters, mountains, coconuts, spices and art forms like Kathakali and Mohiniyattam. It is most literate state in India and a land of diverse religions where you can find Hindu temples, Mosques, Churches and even synagogues. With world-class sporting options, Ayurvedic spas and treatments,





ecotourism initiatives, beautiful tall mountains, pristine rainforests, golden beaches and enormous range of accommodation and infrastructure, Kerala has much to offer the visitor. The state is also considered to be one of the safest regions of India and the living standard of the people is high and the incidents of local people cheating tourists are also non-existence. The education and healthcare of the people of Kerala are on a par with developed nations. Abundant rain fall gives all time greenery. So Kerala was named one of the ten paradises of the world and 50 places of lifetime by the National Geographic Traveller magazine.

The airports, hotels serene place like Adavi, Agastya mala, Athirapally, Water falls, Backwaters, Kettuvallam, Kurvadweep, dams, Muuniar, crafts, Vagamon, vallamkali, mohiniyattam, ports and wildlife make Kerala a God's own country and attract people from all over the world. Now the Kerala Government give much emphasis to the destination tourism in which the State have high potential. Destination Wedding a probably a new thing, but many more people want to enjoy special ceremony in a way just for their close friends and family members. Thankfully, India and Kerala, blend of some exotic and beautiful location of persons like charm and incredible magnificence. To tap this potential of serene beauty of backwaters the Government has chalked out plans to attract tourists all over the world for their picturesque ceremonies. The perfect gateway for a Destination

wedding in Kerala envisage the beaches covered with coconut palms, the backwaters lovely and heavenly house boats.

Tourism in Kerala has experienced continued growth and diversification and finally it has become one of the fastest growing economic sectors. Modern tourism is more connected with development and encompasses growing number of destinations. These, in turn, lead to socio-economic, cultural and environmental progress. The development of human society necessitated socio-economic, political and cultural development which gives holistic development. The encouragement the tourism industry gives us more money and ensures total development of the mankind and spread transnational changes to this dream land

Reflecting upon the State's Entrepreneurial Journey and Achievements



Anoop Ambika

CEO, KSUM

The state of Kerala has been on a remarkable journey in building a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem, and the Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) stands at the forefront of this transformative narrative. Established in 2006, KSUM has been instrumental in propelling Kerala into the national spotlight as a thriving hub for innovation and startups.

Fostering a Vibrant and Diverse Ecosystem

KSUM's primary objective is to promote and support innovative startups by providing essential resources, mentorship, and funding. Over the years, the mission has successfully nurtured a vibrant startup culture in Kerala, with entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds contributing groundbreaking ideas and solutions to address future challenges. The recent accolade of being awarded the Best Performer at the national level in the States' Startup Ranking 2022 by the Union Ministry of Commerce and Startup India is a testament to Kerala's commitment to supporting startups. This recognition surpasses the state's own record as the Top Performer for the past three years, showcasing sustained efforts in providing institutional support to startups, students, and women entrepreneurs.

Over the years, Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) has been dedicated to promoting gender equality and inclusivity in entrepreneurship by organizing various programmes aimed at up-skilling and reskilling women's talents. With a focus on building a solid ecosystem for women, KSUM has implemented various initiatives such as seed loans and innovation grant schemes for women entrepreneurs. In the seed loan scheme, women entrepreneurs benefit from an extended moratorium period of 12 months and under the innovation grant scheme's productization grant category, they qualify for an extra 5 lakhs, aimed at aiding startups in transforming their Minimum Viable Product (MVP) into the final product. Kerala Startup Mission offers five categories of grants within the Innovation Grant Scheme, tailored to the different stages of startups,



providing a maximum grant support of up to 15 Lakhs. The Seed Loan Scheme comprises two categories: KSUM Seed Loan, amounting to up to 15 lakhs, and KSUM Scaleup Seed Loan, amounting up to 25 Lakhs

Notable programmes include WING (Women Rise Together), K-WINS (Kerala Women in Nano Startups), Women Startup Summit, She Loves Tech, Why Hack - InnovatHER (a hackathon), and We Start, a six-month pre-incubation program with over 200 participants. These efforts underline KSUM's commitment to removing obstacles and fostering a conducive environment for women's participation in founding companies.

Diverse Achievements and Milestones

Kerala's startup landscape has witnessed significant milestones, with more than 5,000 startups registered in our state. Notably, over 1500+ of these startups have at least one woman founder, reflecting a commitment to diversity and inclusion. KSUM's focus on various sectors, including renewable energy, eco-sustainability, climate change, and rural development, has led to the emergence of more than 258 startups contributing to these critical areas. The mission's approach goes beyond software and IT, extending its capabilities to sectors like agriculture and industry. This unique diversification aligns with Kerala's diverse economy, contributing to the overall growth and development of the state.

Creating a Supportive Environment for Young Talent

KSUM is nurturing established entrepreneurs and



focusing on cultivating young talent. Special incubation centers for college students (IEDCs) emphasize the importance of entrepreneurship, laying the foundation for a culture of innovation from an early age. With over 466+ IEDC across the state, we are aiming to build an entrepreneurship culture within the state thereby trying to retain our brilliant minds within the state.

In its commitment to innovation and collaboration, KSUM is transforming its incubation centers into LEAP Coworks. This coworking space, standing for Launch Empower Accelerate Prosper, provides startups with state-of-the-art infrastructure, incubation support services, and flexible membership plans. It fosters a dynamic community through events, workshops, and networking sessions, promoting collaboration and knowledge sharing. Incubation centers have also been established in Dubai, Belgium and Australia as part of the Startup Infinity Programme. A testament to our efforts was KSUM winning the Best Public/Private Business Incubator in 2022 from UBI Global.

Research Innovation Network Kerala (RINK) operates actively to mould a culture of entrepreneurship, thus delivering the best motivation for a larger circle of researchers. This, in turn, utilizes the huge research potential of Kerala, RINK will provide an interdisciplinary workspace for 25 research institutions from various industrial sectors. Fab Lab Kerala Network consists of one Super Fab Lab in the Integrated StartUp Complex at Kochi, and 22 Fab Labs across the state and has been designed in such a way that people with minimal training can come and work on developing their own technology products.

KSUM's efforts extend to creating a global platform for entrepreneurs by providing mentorship and conducting exchange programmes. Initiatives like Fail Fast or Succeed enable startups to evaluate themselves and navigate various stages of development. KSUM is gearing up to focus on

Kerala's startup landscape has witnessed significant milestones, with more than 5,000 startups registered in our state. Notably, over 1500+ of these startups have at least one woman founder, reflecting a commitment to diversity and inclusion.

health tech development by supporting healthcare startups and collaborating with reputed knowledge partners. The Corporate Innovate Network, a cohort-based Open Innovation Programme, facilitates startup collaboration to address corporate challenges and industry problem statements.

A Decade of Success

With over a decade of experience in the startup ecosystem, KSUM has efficiently fostered the needs of startups, foreseeing future requirements and framing policies to support growth. The mission's role in creating a vibrant ecosystem with comprehensive support, including incubation space, seed loans, grants, investor connections, and networking events, has solidified its position as the go-to destination for entrepreneurial startups within the state.

In conclusion, Kerala's journey in building a startup-friendly environment under the guidance of Kerala Startup Mission is truly commendable. The state's commitment to innovation, diversity, and sustainability positions it as a beacon for emerging entrepreneurs, not just within India but on the global stage. As we look ahead, KSUM's vision is to elevate the ecosystem to a global standard thereby creating an exciting future for Kerala's startup landscape, attracting large companies and fostering continued growth and prosperity. KSUM consistently endeavours to innovate its policies and schemes, aiming to enhance the Kerala Startup ecosystem.

Beyond Barriers and Borders

An Over View of Kerala Renaissance



Prof.V. Karthikeyan Nair

Historian

The second half of the 19th century in Kerala witnessed the emergence of enlightened middle-class intellectuals who revolted against the prevailing socio-political, economic and ideological order of the state. The primary reason for this phenomenon was the changes in land relations effected by the royal proclamations of the princely states of Travancore and Cochin on one side and the suppression of the peasantry in Malabar by the landlords and the British government on the other.

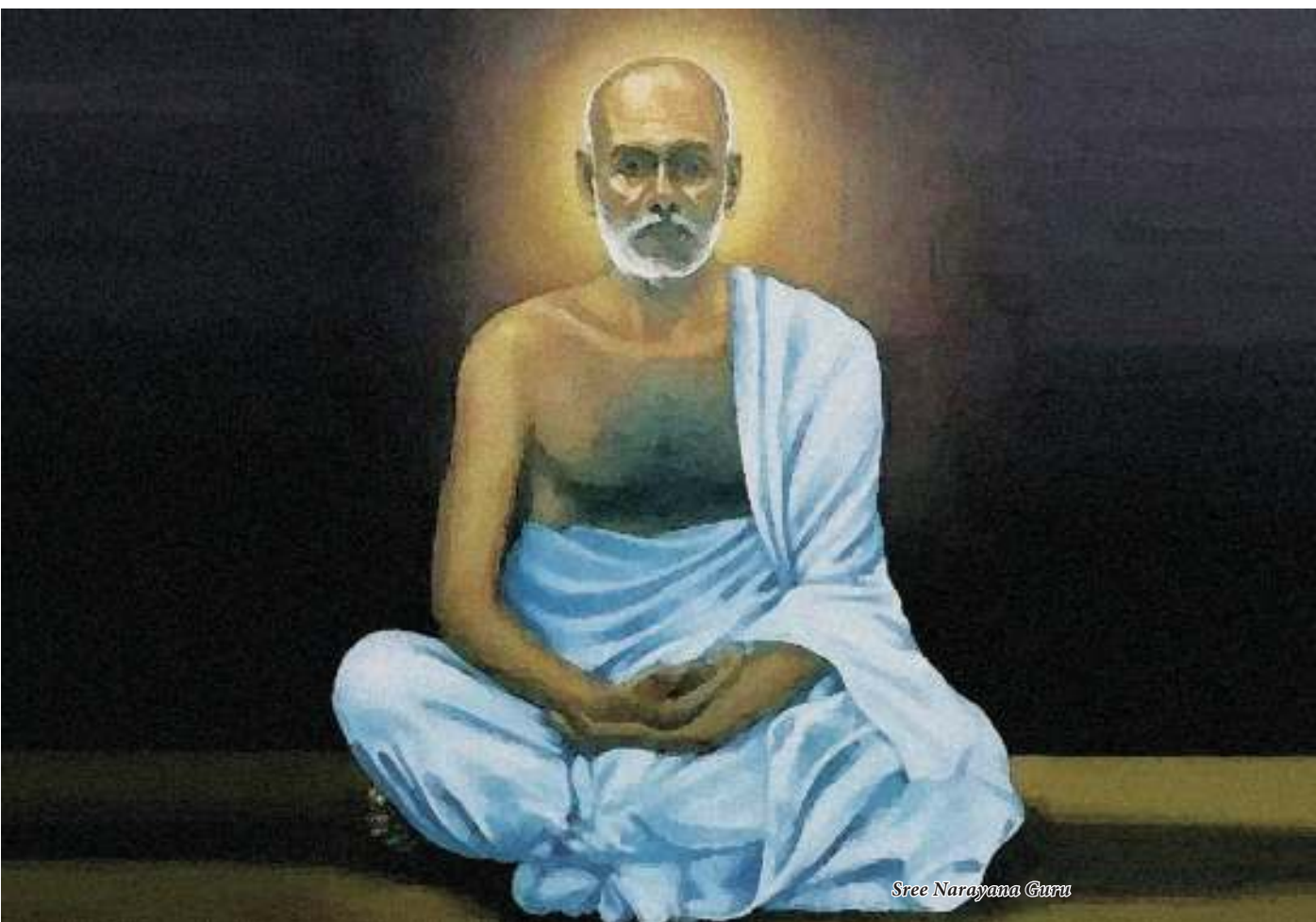
In Travancore and Cochin the proclamations helped the emergence of the land-owning free peasants who could sell and buy the land at their will. This gave way to the inroads of capital both foreign and indigenous in the plantation sector as well as navigation and industries like tile and timber. The net result was a rude form of class polarization with planters and farm workers on the one side and industrialists and labours on the other. This class polarization indirectly acted as a catalytic agent to free the people themselves from the fetters of caste barriers. Both the investors and labourers felt that caste was impediment to the free flow of capital and labour mobility. The newly emerging intellectuals took up their cause and came forward as the champions of freedom, equality and humanism. Modern education, especially university system, enabled the free thinking of these intellectuals imbibing ideas from traditional and modern knowledge systems.

If this was the experience of Travancore and Cochin, the case of Malabar



was slightly different. The prevailing landlord system with the protection provided by the political umbrella of the colonial administration prevented the emergence of free peasants. But in turn, it led to the emergence of peasant consciousness which led the tenants and leaseholders to revolt against the landlords and state demanding prevention of eviction. The cause of the peasantry was raised in the local bodies (Malabar District Board) and the Madras Legislative Assembly by the elected members who hailed from the educated middle class. Caste and religious feelings were no barriers in upholding the cause of the peasantry.

It is not an accidental coincidence that almost all the social reformers were born in the second half of the nineteenth century and so also the intellectuals who founded organisations for the reform of the evils prevailing in each caste in particular and for the creation of the public sphere in general. The preachings of saintly personalities



Sree Narayana Guru

like Chattampi Swamikal (1854-1924) and Sree Narayana Guru (1856-1928) were taken to the people and transferred into powerful weapons for demolishing the barriers of caste practices by these intellectuals. The founders of these organisations, whether they belonged to upper or lower strata of the hierarchical caste organisation of society, worked hand in glove with each other to obtain civic rights such as employment in government service, admission to schools, freedom of travel through public roads, election to the legislative body and entry into public temples. These intellectuals were upholders of humanism and abhorers of caste discrimination.

The advent of printing made knowledge cheap and popular and freed it from the clutches of the traditional intellectuals who were always no-changers. The spread of school and University education was sufficient enough to the emergence of a 'multitude' which was democratic, liberal and secular in attitude. New trends in Malayalam literature such as novels, short stories, dramas, romantic poetry, lyrics and sonnets elevated the

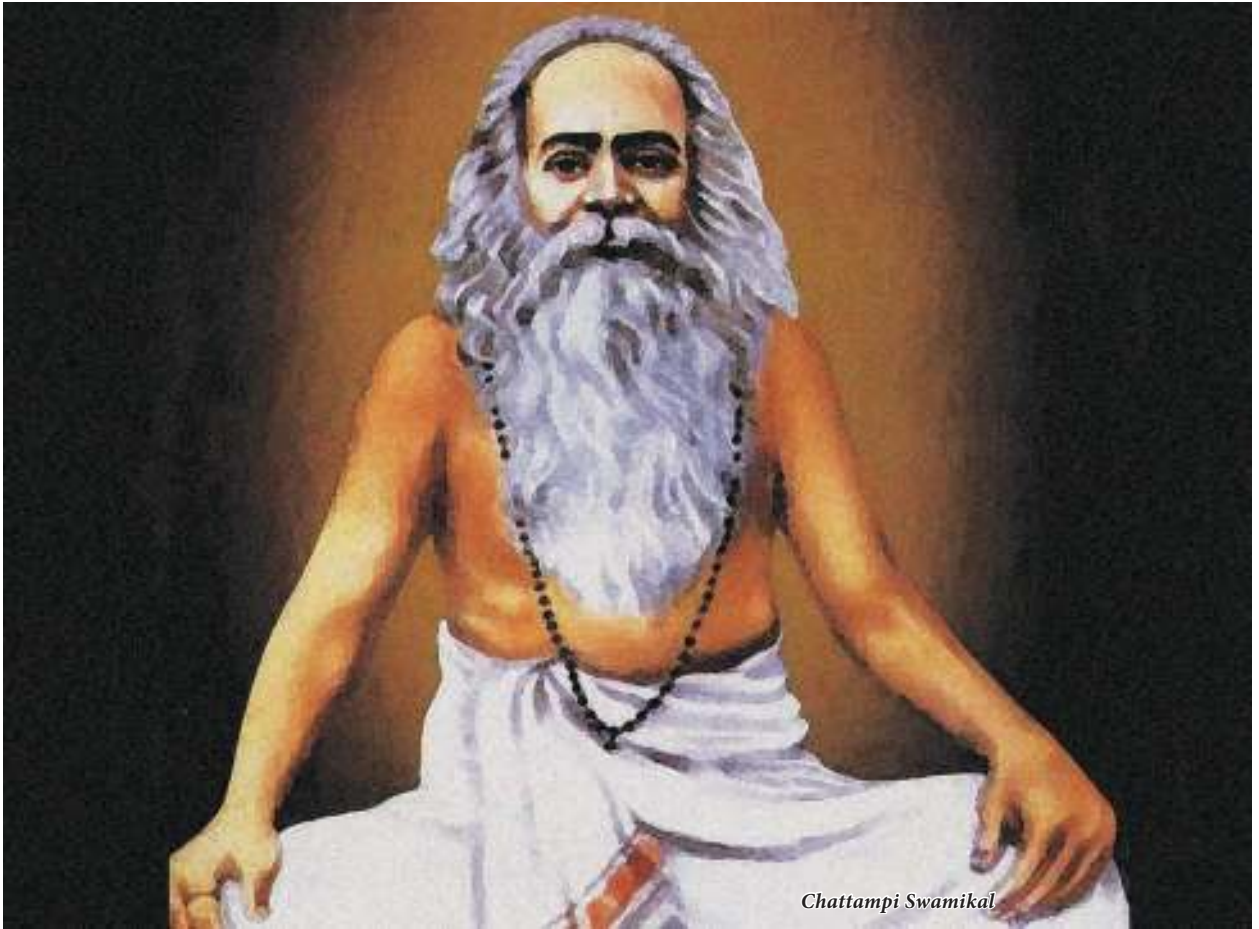
"Liberation is not attained by mere outer symbols, but through the awakening of one's inner consciousness."

-Sree Narayana Guru

literate readers and illiterate followers to the high echelons of humanism and liberalism. The rise of the free press slowly rose to the colossal form of motivating political journalism, dare enough to criticize corruption in the administration, evils of the caste system and anachronistic practices in temples and shrines. The emergence of a consciousness that the prevailing customs and practices, whether economic, political, social or ideological, can be designated as renaissance.

The two events which revealed the secular and democratic character of intellectuals were the Vaikom Satyagraha (1924-25) and Guruvayur Satyagraha (1931-32). The first was to end caste discrimination to travel through roads including temple premises and the second was to enter the temples for worship.

Both these agitators were mass movements consisting of people belonging to all castes and creeds. The



notable feature was that they were political agitators led by the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee with a view to reform social discrimination based on caste. In other words, it was the result of a realisation that social discrimination could be solved only through political means because it was enforced by the political authority. Attempting to reform social and caste discrimination through caste and religious organisations would not be fruitful because each caste can reform the evils within its own order and cannot even peep into the interiors of the other castes. However, the caste barriers were not applicable to political parties as they were working for the creation of a polity based on liberty, equality, fraternity, justice, socialism and secularism. The end product of the Renaissance movement was the emergence of political consciousness beyond all barriers and borders.

The only secular organisation which came up as a result of the Renaissance movement in

" The human mind should be full of compassionate sweetness."

- Chattampi Swamikal

Kerala was the Uralunkal Labour Contract Cooperative Society founded in 1925 on the advice of Vagbhatananda which started its journey with fourteen workers. Now it has grown into an organisation of eighteen thousand employees and feeding about one lakh of their family members. It began at a time when low caste people were denied jobs by the upper caste people and grew up as an alternative to the individual investors governed by motive in profit. It was able to create a work culture beyond barriers of caste discrimination. Caste and religion is not a bar to becoming an employee of the society or to getting elected to the board of directors. The only thing is that only workers can become members of society and only workers can get elected to the board of directors. Even in government services and government-owned public sector undertakings caste reservation is maintained for recruitment. Sree NarayanaGuru encouraged the spread of education, agriculture, industries, trade



Vagbhatananda

and technology and many of his followers started such kinds of organisations which function profitably even today. In such an organisation master-servant relationship is maintained and the surplus produced by the labourer is appropriated by the master. If the message of Guru was implemented in its true sense the difference between the master and servant could have been avoided and a society of one caste, and one religion could have been founded. The teaching of Sree Narayana Guru was truly imbibed by Vagbhanatabada who taught the people that work is worship. An egalitarian and cosmopolitan society can be founded through hard work for the upliftment of the entire people by making them work and paying them according to their work.

Caste originated as a form of professional group which crystallised into an unchanging social order. It had created a consciousness that each caste was to follow a form of social ethics which should be kept immortal. When the material forces of production had undergone changes as a result of the advent technology the prevailing social ethics had to be

**" Man is one race,
communalism is
animalism, not
humanity."**

- Vagbhatananda

reformed accordingly. This mentality to reform and re-form the ethics and values of the previous mode of production is called renaissance.

Renaissance is an ongoing process. Each mode of production generates its own ethics and values. When the mode of production changes it will generate new ethics and the intellectuals will revolt against them. Changes in tools and technology occur incessantly and as a result renaissance also occur incessantly. It is the human being who makes tools and refines them with his tireless, ceaseless and throbbing activity. In that sense renaissance upholds humanism which is generated by the labouring classes. Technology grows beyond all barriers and boundaries and so also renaissance. Technology is secular and therefore the society in which that technology occupies primacy shall be secular.

Mahatma Gandhi and His Vision on Secularism



Douglas Allen

Professor Emeritus of Philosophy,
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On 30 January 2024, the date marking M.K. Gandhi's death in 1948, his vision on secularism remains profound, deeply relevant, and greatly needed today.

To understand Gandhi's vision of a secular world, it is necessary to clarify what Gandhi experienced and how he responded to diverse meanings of "secular" and "religious" in India and the modern West and what he visualised as the proper relationship between the secular and the religious.

In most general terms, "secular" refers to our temporal, spatial, finite, natural, worldly phenomena, as contrasted with non-secular, religious or spiritual, eternal, infinite, supernatural or divine, transcendent views of ultimate reality. In such generalised meanings, secular is not necessarily hostile to religion.

Nevertheless, what developed in the modern West was the view of secularism that critiqued religion as pre-modern, backward, superstitious, irrational, unscientific, intolerant, undemocratic, violent, and a dangerous obstacle to human progress. In short, secularism was separated from and viewed as hostile to religion. This is "Modern Civilization" that Gandhi describes and critiques in *Hind Swaraj* and other writings.

As he repeatedly affirms, Gandhi is deeply religious, although his religion and his beliefs are pluralistic and inclusive, embracing the truths of other religions and even the truths of others who are not religious.

Where does this leave Gandhi's secular vision? Gandhi's secular vision presents a radical critique and revolutionary alternative to two oppositional narratives.

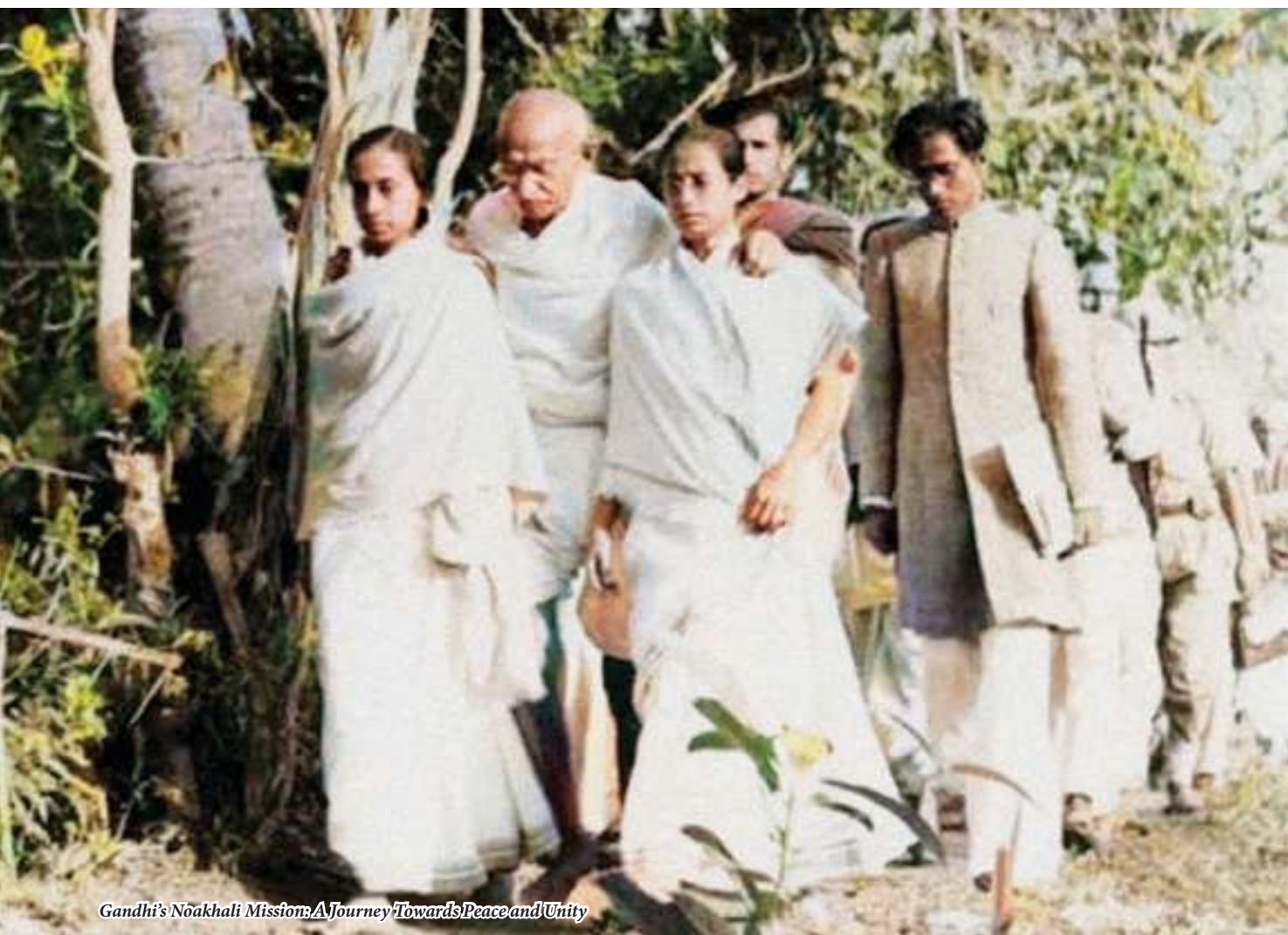
On the one hand, we have dominant non-religious and anti-religious narratives of the secular modern West shared by "modern people." This



includes non-Gandhian and anti-Gandhian secularism of many wealthy and economic elite, advanced scientists and engineers and technology experts, military and nuclear strategists, constitutional and legal experts, medical and educational and environmental leaders. Despite some lip service to appease religious threats, their secularism is not grounded in religion.

On the other hand, we have dominant religious narratives around the world that view secularists as irrelevant in their religious visions for current and future world. This includes non-Gandhian and anti-Gandhian anti-secularism that sometimes pays lip service to Gandhi, but that really rejects Gandhi-informed morality, nonviolence, truth, tolerance, multi-dimensional pluralism, and secularism.

In the Gandhi-informed perspectives on



Gandhi's Noakhali Mission: A Journey Towards Peace and Unity

moral, nonviolent, truthful secularism, we should not reduce and collapse the secular to the religious, nor should we reduce and collapse the religious to the secular. But we should also not separate the religious and the secular as always distinguishable and necessarily unrelated.

Gandhi's vision of a secular world emphasises how all human and nonhuman existence is integrally interconnected, morally and spiritually and non-religiously. We are dynamically and reciprocally interconnected, individually, socially, economically, politically, and this extends to the world of nature and cosmos. Gandhi's secular vision emphasises our existence in this world as open-ended, dynamic, experiments with truth, in which we embrace the essential unifying principle that what unites us is more fundamental than what divides us, and this is a unity with a tolerant mutual respect for legitimate perspectival

Mahatma Gandhi continues to serve as a desperately needed catalyst, challenging us to rethink and transform our dominant narratives, so that a new, creative, profound vision of a secular world will allow us to survive, develop, and even flourish. That is his legacy and gift for us in 2024.

differences.

Gandhi's secular vision is grounded in his philosophy, theory, and practices: Ethical living, Satya (Truth), Ahimsa (Nonviolence, Love, Compassion), Swaraj (Self-Rule, Freedom), Sarvodaya (Well-Being of All), and other key principles. It emphasises unity, harmony, egalitarian relations, real democracy; controlling our ego-desires, attachments, and possessiveness; serving the real needs of others; living nonviolently and truthfully.

Mahatma Gandhi continues to serve as a desperately needed catalyst, challenging us to rethink and transform our dominant narratives, so that a new, creative, profound vision of a secular world will allow us to survive, develop, and even flourish. That is his legacy and gift for us in 2024.

Digital Advancement in Tax Collection



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Digital technology has significantly improved tax collection processes in various ways, leading to increased efficiency, transparency, and compliance.

By leveraging the digital technologies, tax authorities can create a more efficient, transparent, and responsive tax collection system, ultimately leading to increased revenue and improved compliance. Even as the absence of check-posts when the GST law was implemented raised concerns of tax evasion, the time loss in exchange of goods was largely resolved. Here are some ways in which digital technology has boosted tax collection.

E-way Bill System

The e-way bill system, playing a pivotal role in preventing tax evasion and ensuring the smooth flow of goods across the country. The e-way bill system was introduced as part of GST to enhance the monitoring and tracking of the movement of goods. The e-way bill is essentially an electronic document generated on the GSTN portal, containing details about the consignment of goods, the supplier, the recipient, and the transporter. It serves as evidence that the requisite tax has been paid for the goods being transported. The introduction of the e-way bill system significantly curbs the scope for tax evasion in the GST framework. One of the primary advantages of the e-way bill system is that it facilitates real-time monitoring of the movement of goods. Tax authorities can track the transportation of goods from the point of origin to the destination, ensuring that the consignment is accompanied by a valid e-way bill. This real-time tracking feature acts as a deterrent to tax evasion, as any deviation from the prescribed route or any attempt to underreport the value of goods becomes instantly traceable.

Moreover, the e-way bill system promotes transparency in the supply chain. Businesses are required to generate an e-way bill for the movement of goods exceeding a specified value, thus leaving a digital trail that tax authorities



can audit. This reduces the likelihood of underreporting or manipulation of invoices, as businesses are accountable for the accuracy of the information provided in the e-way bill. The e-way bill system not only prevents tax evasion but also fosters efficiency in logistics and supply chain management. By digitizing the documentation process, it reduces the paperwork and associated delays in the transportation of goods, contributing to a more seamless and streamlined movement of commodities across state borders.

E-invoicing system.

An unsolved concern of a consumer in the indirect tax system is whether the tax money paid by him reaches the exchequer correctly. It is estimated that the e-invoicing system implemented in the Goods and Services Tax Act will solve such concerns. While preparing the bill, the details of invoices are given to the government's computer and the bill is issued by recording the invoice reference number (IRN) and QR code obtained from the portal. By implementing the E-invoice system, once electronic invoices are generated, the system



will automatically generate returns, such as GSTR-01, GSTR-3B, Eway Bills etc., in real-time. This streamlined process not only enhances efficiency but also ensures the accurate and prompt submission of tax-related documents, contributing to a more transparent and responsive tax collection framework. Moreover, no physical copy of invoices are required for transporting goods, saving costs related to paper printing and preserving the environment by reducing the need for cutting down trees, creates an eco-friendly environment.

As of now, e-invoicing is applicable to Business-to-Business (B2B) transactions where the aggregate turnover exceeds 5 Crores in a financial year. However, looking towards the future, there are indications that the threshold for mandatory e-invoicing could see a considerable reduction.

The government's vision for the evolution of the e-invoicing system includes plans to broaden its scope to include Business-to-Customer (B2C) transactions. While the current focus is on larger businesses with higher turnovers, the intention is to progressively lower the threshold, making e-invoicing applicable to a broader spectrum of businesses.

Another significant advantage of the e-invoicing system is the creation of a robust repository of data on economic activities across the entire nation. By mandating businesses to generate e-invoices for their transactions, the government has established a comprehensive and real-time database of economic transactions. This wealth of data plays a crucial role in enhancing the government's ability to monitor, analyze, and plan effectively.

This data-driven approach facilitates evidence-based policy formulation and strategic decision-making. The government can identify emerging sectors, assess the impact of policy changes, and tailor interventions based on a more accurate

understanding of economic dynamics.

In conclusion, the marriage of Goods and Services Tax (GST) with digital technologies has ushered in a transformative era in India's taxation landscape. The system-driven approach of GST, facilitated through the robust GST Network (GSTN), exemplifies the power of technological integration in streamlining tax processes. The implementation of the E-way Bill system has emerged as a cornerstone in preventing tax evasion and ensuring the efficiency of goods movement. The introduction of the E-invoicing system takes the digitization of taxation processes a step further. Beyond its current applicability to Business-to-Business transactions, the system's potential expansion into Business-to-Customer transactions showcases a forward-looking vision. This not only enhances efficiency but also promotes a more environmentally friendly approach by reducing the need for physical invoices.

Malayalam: Shaping the Modern Malayali through Rich Classical Heritage



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Tracing the evolution of Malayalam from its classical roots to its contemporary prominence, this exploration examines the language's rich literary heritage and its enduring cultural impact

The Malayalam language, originating around 1500 AD, has earned the status of a classical language, alongside Tamil, Sanskrit, Telugu, and Kannada. This recognition highlights Malayalam's significant historical and cultural heritage. Over centuries, it has carved a unique linguistic identity and accumulated a wealth of literary works. Malayalam thrives in both oral and written traditions, embodying a deep spiritual and intellectual heritage. This has enabled its growth and adaptation even amidst rapid advancements in science and technology, symbolizing the dynamic and enduring nature of linguistic and cultural evolution.

In Indian literature, Malayalam holds a significant position, ranking third among its peers. It stands alongside Kannada and Bengali in terms of its contributions to modern literature. According to UNESCO's language schedule, Malayalam is noted for its unique script and literary achievements, ranking 26th globally. It is the primary language for 96.56 percent of its speakers, surpassing Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada in their respective speaker communities.

Malayalam maintains key phonetic and morphological elements of the Mooladravida Language, the ancestral source of the current Dravidian languages. This connection serves as a bridge to the ancient Dravidian language, enabling exploration of its historical roots.

The Sangha period, from 566 BC to AD 250, was a significant era in South Indian history, uniting Kerala and Tamil Nadu in culture and history. Kerala's substantial



contribution to the literary tradition of this period is evident, with around forty-five poets from this era hailing from the region.

Sangha Literature from this period features masterpieces by Keralite poets, including "Chilapathikaram," "Pathitupattum," and "Aikinoorum." The Tamil-Malayalam language shared during the Sangha period reflects a close linguistic kinship.

The language rules in "Tholkappiyam," an ancient Tamil text, present an interesting aspect. Some rules once relevant to Tamil but now obsolete remain pertinent in Malayalam, highlighting its deep historical roots. Despite influences from Brahmanism and Sanskrit, Malayalam has retained core aspects of the original Dravidian language.

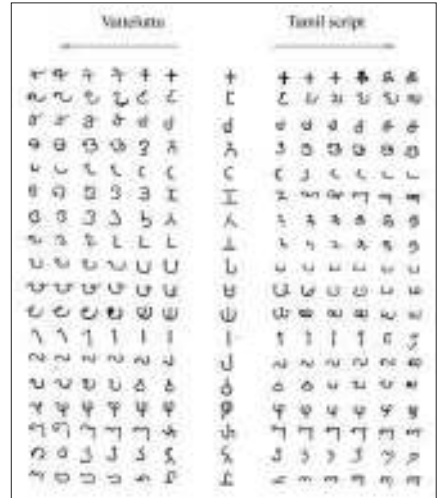
Edakkal, Nilambur, and Pulimangombu inscriptions are venerable relics from the Proto-Tamil and Malayalam period, dating back to the 8th century AD. The subsequent period, from AD 800 to 1300, was a golden era for ancient Malayalam classics, marked by over 100 stone inscriptions and copper plate engravings. Literary gems like "Kramadeepika," "Bhashakautilyam," "Ramacharitam," "Prachina Chabbukal," "Manipravalakrithikal," and "Gadyaprabhandangal" emerged, illuminating the cultural and literary realm of ancient Malayalam.

The medieval classical era witnessed the brilliance of Kannasa writers, Leelathilakakar, Punam Namboothiri, and Cherusseri. Transitioning into modern times from AD 1600, a transformative period emerged, characterized by the evolution of the Malayalam language through Ezhuthachan's writings. This era saw the language becoming more precise and adaptable to various subjects, marked by the first-ever translation of the Bhagavad Gita into Malayalam. Poems, Manipravalam, Kilipattu, and Attakathakal transformed into literary movements in Malayalam. The realms of novels, short stories, dramas, and literary critiques unfolded, woven with modern thoughts and patterns of expression.

From the realms of Brahmanical Aristocracy and Sanskrit influence, the Malayalam language embraced modernism and the English language under colonialism in the 19th century. This period marked a pivotal moment in Malayalam's linguistic evolution, introducing new words, ideas, and literary models. The impact of missionaries was profound, from creating dictionaries to fostering coherence in language and grammar, and introducing the printing press. Their contributions revolutionized and modernized Malayalam.

The history of the Malayalam script is integral to the language's history. Among the ancient scripts, Vattezhuth stands as the oldest. Its name, born from the meticulous chiselling of letters into stones and copper plates, is alternatively known as Vettezhuthu. This script, derived from the Brahmi Script, was limited in writing Sanskrit, leading to the emergence of the Grandha Script, from which the contemporary Malayalam alphabets evolved.

The popularity of Malayalam surged with the advent of the printing press. The modern script, refined for print, first appeared in "Hortus Malabaricus." The milestone in printing was "Samkshepavedartham" in 1772 by missionary Clema Pianius, the first Malayalam book in print. Malayalam printing began in the 18th century at the Courier Press in Mumbai. Initially characterized by the chathuravadivu style, it was transformed



by Benjamin Bailey in 1829 to the Vattavadvu form, a standard until 1960.

Modern technologies have advanced Malayalam printing, enhancing quality, clarity, and speed. The language has evolved, becoming accessible on mobile devices, empowering individuals to share their lives and creativity through social media. This cultural revolution introduced new words and figures of speech, enriching Malayalam and influencing society's thought processes.

Malayalam literature, rich and diverse, spans genres from Sangha literature to modern narratives. Influential poets and authors like Kumaran Asan, Ullur, Vallathol, G. Shankarakurup and M.T. Vasudevan Nair have shaped its landscape. G. Sankarakurup's receipt of the Jnanpith Award in 1965, followed by other Malayali authors, highlights Kerala's literary prominence.

Malayalis value language, integrating proverbs, phrases, and fables into their communication. Their enthusiasm for foreign cultures and scientific knowledge is balanced by the task of translating ancient knowledge and celebrated literary works. Elevating Malayalam to international recognition remains a goal, securing its place on the global stage.



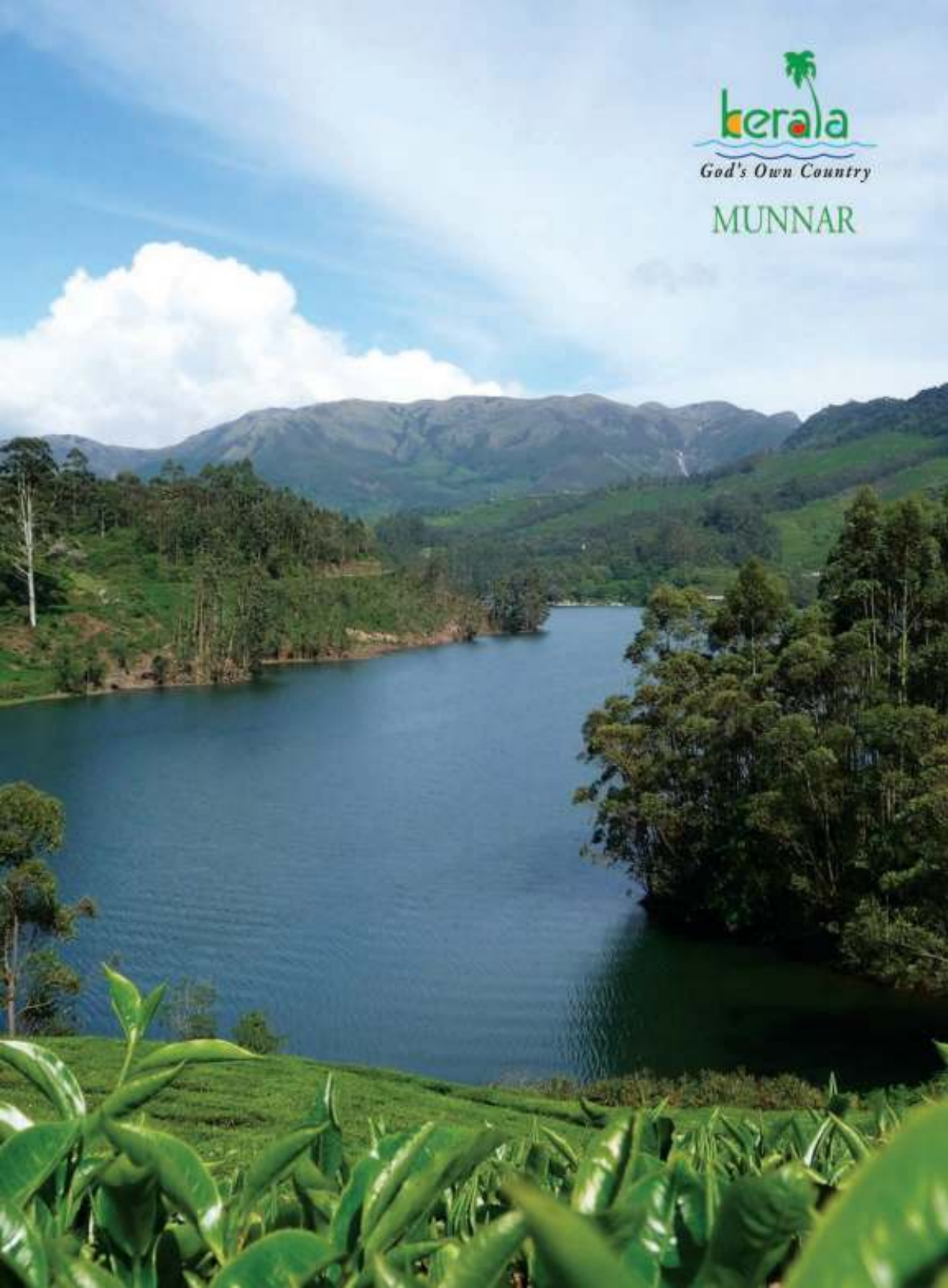
Veena George, Minister for Health and Woman and Child Development inaugurating the Media day celebrations organized by the Information and Public Relations Department.





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