KERALA CALLING

We are in this together

Veteran Haritha Karma Sena member Ponnamma joins actor Mohanlal, symbolising unity in building a cleaner Kerala

Stronger Local Governments, Smarter Governance

Kerala's decentralisation experiment has been both successful and distinctive. The state adopted decentralised governance early and applied it with vision, shaping a system that is efficient, inclusive and deeply rooted in civic life. Today, local self-governments do more than administer services. They empower citizens, resolve problems and improve lives.

The days of repeated visits to government offices are over. With e-governance embedded in local institutions, service delivery is faster, more transparent and highly efficient. Citizens can now access essential services without bureaucratic delays, reinforcing Kerala's reputation for responsive governance.

Yet rapid urbanisation presents new challenges. The government is addressing these through a comprehensive urban policy focused on infrastructure, sustainability and liveability. Planned growth is essential to maintaining Kerala's progress.

Waste management, once an Achilles' heel, has undergone a transformation. Kerala has eliminated vast dumping sites and introduced a scientific, sustainable disposal system. With stronger surveillance, structured collection and community participation, the state has turned waste management into a model of efficiency.

But governance is about more than infrastructure. The Kerala model ensures that as the world evolves, no one is left behind. Local self-governments work at the grassroots level, ensuring equitable development. Kudumbashree, one of the world's largest women-led cooperatives, is now establishing Happiness Centres to strengthen family welfare and social well-being.

This edition of Kerala Calling celebrates the power of people and the success of the People's Planning initiative. Kerala's decentralisation model is not just about governance. It is about empowering communities, transforming lives and setting a benchmark for inclusive development.

T.V. SUBHASH IAS
EDITOR

52 Pages including Cover

NAVIGATOR

Minister M.B. Rajesh playing cricket in the reclaimed land at Brahmapuram dumping yard

Catalysts of Transformation

M. B. Rajesh

Minister for Local Self Governments, Rural Development, Town Planning, Regional Development Authorities, KILA

Students with essential commodities pooled as part of the 'Orupidi Nanma' project in Alappuzha.

The local self governments in Kerala have permeated every facet of our rural life. Our local governments have been empowered through decentralisation and equipped with power and funds. And over time, they have become the catalysts for the social and economic transformation of the state. The Department for Local Self Governments has taken a leadership role in meaningfully engaging our citizens in the developmental activities of the state and empowering them in the process. The Department has taken up some very noble initiatives which have become the hallmark of our people-centric development.

Extreme Poverty Eradication is a flagship project of the second Pinarayi Vijayan government. Kerala has been the leading state in the country in taking earnest measures to eradicate poverty. We are aiming for the complete eradication of poverty. The government is striving hard to achieve the ambitious goal of becoming the first state without extremely poor persons by November 1, 2025. This will be an achievement even developed countries would find hard to attain.

The extremely poor families of the state were identified through a survey on the basis of factors like food, housing, health and income. Out of the 64,006 families identified, 46,197 families (72.18%) have been pulled out of the vicious cycle of poverty. The remaining 17,809 families are given continuous assistance and they will soon be lifted from extreme poverty.

Special Micro-plan for Each Family

Kerala's Extreme Poverty Eradication Project becomes unique in that a special micro-plan was designed for each family after careful consideration of their condition

and needs. A total of 56,697 micro plans have been thus prepared.

Services related to food and health care are being provided to all. Food kits are distributed to families which are able to cook food for themselves. Those who are not able to cook food on their own are provided with food through *Janakeeya hotels* and community kitchens. Local self-governments ensure that there is no disruption in the provision of these services.

> **The government is working to achieve the goal of Kerala without extreme poverty by November 1, 2025.**

Medicines, health care equipments, essential health care and palliative care are provided to the needy. Assistance was also given to people who needed organ transplantation.

Efforts to ensure income for everyone are in the final stages. So are the efforts to provide secure housing.

Under the initiative *'Avakasham Athivegam',* necessary documents like Aadhar card, ration card and voter identity card were granted to 21,263 beneficiaries of the project. They were also given documents required for health insurance and social security pension. Employment cards were provided to those who could join employment guarantee scheme.

The students in these families are provided with necessary study materials, bag, umbrella, lunch and other facilities to continue their studies through the Department of General Education. They have also been provided with free travel passes for K.S.R.T.C. and private buses.

> **Since January 1, 2024, K-Smart in municipal areas has processed 27.31 lakh files, with 20.37 lakh files already resolved, a 74.6% resolution rate.**

Empowering Women

The Kudumbashree program, formed for poverty alleviation, has become the largest women's collective in the world, making significant contributions to Kerala's production sector and women's empowerment. Through 3.17 lakh neighbourhood groups, 48 lakh women are members of Kudumbashree.

Building LIFE

Another flagship project of the LDF government is the LIFE Housing Scheme, which aims for a Kerala without homeless. So far, 5,39,042 homes have been allotted under the LIFE scheme, with 4,27,736 homes completed. 1,11,306 homes are in various stages of construction.

Ensuring Employment

There is also a major initiative underway to provide employment to educated people in rural areas through the Knowledge Economy Mission. This major project aims to provide employment to 2 million people in Kerala by 2026. It is a project that aims to enhance employment skills in areas of interest for educated job seekers and enable them to secure better employment in global workplaces.

K-Smart Expansion from April

The K-Smart initiative, which has revolutionized e-governance, will be expanded to all Panchayats from April. From January 1, 2024, K-Smart is successfully operating in all municipalities across the state.

With the expansion of K-Smart to Panchayats, Kerala's

e-governance will experience a significant leap. Already, K-Smart has garnered national attention. As ILGMS (Integrated Local Government Management System) is already in place in the Panchayats, transitioning to K-Smart will be smooth. The system allows citizens to avail all services online without having to visit the Panchayat offices, offering significant benefits. It also reduces the workload of employees. A comprehensive training program for employees from 941 Gram Panchayats, 152 Block Panchayats, and 14 District Panchayats has been launched.

A total of 17,288 complaints were received in the Adalats, of which 15,643 were resolved

Since January 1, 2024, K-Smart in municipal areas has processed 27.31 lakh files, with 20.37 lakh files already resolved, a 74.6% resolution rate.

Permanent Adalat

It has come to government's notice that there are a lot of complaints regarding delays in receiving timely services from local self-government institutions. To address this, a permanent Adalat system under the name 'Citizen Assistance' has been established. Adalats are functioning at Taluk, District, and State levels, comprising of officials from local self-government departments. Through the portal adalat.lsgkerala.gov.in, anyone can easily submit complaints and obtain replies.

Local Adalat

As a continuation of the permanent Adalat system, Local Adalats were held in all districts and in Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi, and Kozhikode municipal corporations. Local Adalats helped resolve long-pending complaints related to various issues. A total of 17,288 complaints were received in these Adalats, of which 15,643 were resolved.

Addressing the Problem of Waste

The government is going all out to create a waste-free Kerala by March 30, 2025. Compared to March 2023, the collection of door-to-door waste from institutions and households has increased from 47% to 89%

by November 2024. The collection of user fees has increased from 34.9% to 72% during this period. Mini MCFs increased from 7,446 to 19,447. The number of MCFs increased from 1,160 to 1,323 and RRFs increased from 87 to 190. The number of Haritha Karma Sena members increased from 33,378 to 37,363. The number of private agencies empanelled went up to 118 from 74. 3,557 CCTV camera surveillance systems have been installed. 32,410 waste bins have been installed so far.

Full on efforts are being made to fulfil our goal of a state free from waste dumpsites. 24 sites have been fully cleaned through bioremediation, removing 3.57 lakh tons of waste. Work is ongoing at 10 sites, and work will soon begin at 25 other locations.

A total of 11,465 schools and 169 colleges have completed waste management assessments in collaboration with the Departments of General and Higher Education.

The departments of Transport, Tourism, Fisheries, and Health have also launched extensive initiatives to address waste management and cleanliness issues.

This is not supposed to be a one-time cleaning operation. The government envisages sustainable sanitation management of each area. Camera surveillance will have to be strengthened; bins should be widely installed for depositing waste. Local self-government bodies will have to continuously ensure that the waste in the bins is collected and disposed of properly.

Urban Development

According to the data from central-state agencies, and the Census data, it is estimated that by 2035, 90% of the areas in Kerala will be urbanized. It was in this context that the decision was made to form an urban policy for Kerala. Following this, the Urban Policy Commission was formed in December 2023. The Commission has submitted its interim report. The recommendations of the Commission will help us build sustainable cities and promote the wellbeing of citizens.

The Local Self Governments, thus, leave no stone unturned to improve the living standards of the citizens and create a safe and peaceful environment.

Realising People's Dreams

Dr. Jiju P. Alex
Member,
Kerala State Planning Board

The decentralized planning experience of Kerala stands as a beacon of success in the realm of democratic decentralization. Initiated 29 years ago with the People's Plan Campaign, it has garnered international acclaim as a successful strategy for participative development.

The success of decentralized planning was made possible by leveraging the provisions of the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments and crafting unique, innovative policies to empower local governments with more administrative and financial power. Kerala's journey towards democratic decentralization, culminating in this significant step, inspires other regions. As the state continues to reinforce its commitment to decentralization, it is vital to highlight these successes, identify areas for improvement, and pave the way for further modernisation.

Initiated by EMS Government

Because of its wider reach and superior responsiveness in meeting the basic needs of the communities, the Kerala local governance system has been considered participatory compared to other development approaches. Although the introduction of participatory planning during the Ninth Five-Year Plan marked a new phase in efforts to guarantee public participation in local governance, following the constitutional amendments, Kerala had an impressive record of democratic decentralization even before. The first government, led by E M S Namboodiripad had a broader understanding of decentralization that went well beyond the conventional notions, which were confined only to the civic functions of local governments. The first Administrative Reforms Committee in 1957 under the chairmanship of EMS had recommended clear measures for the decentralization of power and methods of democratisation of the government organs at various levels, intending to ensure the effective participation of local governments in development. However, the decentralization agenda had remained stalled for an extended period in Kerala. Even though there

have been initiatives towards democratic decentralisation through Panchayat Raj institutions at the national level, as recommended by committees led by Balwantrai Mehta in 1959, Ashoka Mehta in 1978, etc., nothing notable happened in Kerala except for the short-lived experiment of creating district councils during 1990-91.

Accelerated by Constitutional Amendment

The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments in 1992 had provisions for a three-tier system in rural areas with grama panchayat at the village level, block panchayat at the intermediate level and district panchayat at the district level. Local administration in urban areas would be under municipalities and corporations. The 74th constitutional amendment also rendered the setting up of District Planning Committees (DPC) in each district mandatory, with the role of preparing district-level plans encompassing both rural and urban areas. The amendments also listed 29 government functions to be handed down to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). The constitutional amendments mandated that the State enact conformity legislation to integrate the provisions in the respective domestic acts.

> **The first election to the 3-tier Panchayati Raj system was held, and the Panchayati Raj Institutions came into existence in 1995.**

Accordingly, the Kerala Panchayat Raj Act, 1994 and the Kerala Municipalities Act, 1994 were enacted with exclusive features like devolution of most of the functions specified in the amendments to the local bodies. The first election to the 3-tier Panchayati Raj system was also held, and the PRIs came into existence in the last quarter of 1995. A comprehensive general government order issued in September 1995 placed institutions of major development departments and personnel, both professional and ministerial, under the control of local self-government institutions. Going by the spirit of financial devolution to local bodies, the government also devolved plan grant-in-aid (including untied funds) to local self-government institutions by notifying the details exclusively as Appendix 1V of the 1996-97 budget document.

> **The massive decentralized planning process was rolled out in five phases of distinct activities to enable participatory planning of local development interventions.**

The process of democratic decentralization envisaged in Kerala was evaluated in 1996 by a committee on decentralisation of powers (popularly known as the Sen Committee), which submitted its reports in December 1997. In compliance with the committee's recommendations, comprehensive amendments to the Kerala Panchayati Raj Act of 1994 and the Kerala Municipality Act of 1994 were enacted in 1999.

Emboldened by People's Plan Programme

The devolution of administrative and financial powers to LSGIs was accompanied by the People's Plan Programme (*Janakeeyasoothranam*), a massive campaign to draw out local plans at the grassroots level to formulate the Ninth Five-Year Plan. As part of this innovative exercise, LSGIs were oriented

to develop development projects and regional plans by utilising 35 per cent of the total outlay of the Ninth Five-Year Plan earmarked for LSGIs. The methodology for participatory planning evolved through extensive consultations among experts, people's representatives, volunteers, and ordinary people in light of lessons drawn from previous field experiences in local-level planning.

The massive decentralized planning process was rolled out in five phases of distinct activities to enable participatory planning of local development interventions. In the first phase, grama sabhas were convened, and people at the local level mobilised to assess the needs of the locals. In the second phase, development seminars were held in every village panchayat, followed by the formation of task forces to prepare development projects. About 12,000 task forces were formed, and around 12 were worked out per village panchayat. Close to 120,000 people participated in these task forces. In the third phase, 'development reports' were prepared according to a format suggested by the State Planning Board, giving details such as the nature of activities envisaged and financial and organisational aspects. The lower tiers' plans were prepared during the fourth phase. The fifth phase was meant to prepare annual plans for block and district panchayats by integrating the lower-level plans and, presumably, to develop their plans to complement the village panchayat plans. Afterwards, during the sixth phase, a Volunteer Technical Corps (VTC) consisting of volunteers with expertise in selected fields was

> **Local governments are provided with as much as 30 per cent of the plan funds.**

formed to evaluate the feasibility of projects formulated by LSGIs and suggest modifications. Expert committees at the Block, Municipality and Corporation levels were formed by drawing from VTC members to help the DPC appraise plans and projects on the one hand and render technical assistance to local-level planning on the other hand. There had been modifications in subsequent phases of the programme from time to time to address emerging issues.

Resolving People's Problems

The paradigm of decentralized planning in Kerala has been regarded as a practical framework for addressing development problems involving people. It was also intended that decentralised planning with the people at the centre would accelerate local-level development by harnessing human, natural and financial resources to strengthen the productive base of the state. It was proposed that this be done by creating public assets and managing common property resources through better land and water management, forming the basis of primary sector development. Development administration was anticipated to become responsive, transparent and efficient as people plan and implement various interventions. The social security systems and service delivery were also expected to improve substantially as beneficiaries would be identified based on actual needs through transparent processes. The Twelfth Five-Year Plan approach envisaged concrete steps using information technology to strengthen the planning process.

It is important to note that the Thirteenth Five Year Plan witnessed massive efforts by the state to take on unprecedented natural calamities hitting the state and the Covid-19 pandemic inflicting a severe blow to the economy.

No sooner had the state embarked on recovering from the impact of two consecutive floods than the pandemic hit the state. This led the state to redefine its development priorities to recover the livelihoods of people devastated by natural calamities and reconstruct the state from the ruins. Against this backdrop, the Fourteenth Five-Year Plan was initiated in Kerala. The 14th Five-Year Plan envisages decentralization as the most effective tool for economic growth and aims to transform local governments into the hubs of local economic development. This increased significance is underscored by the government's decision to provide local governments with as much as 30 per cent of the plan funds by enhancing the proportion by 0.5 per cent annually from 2021 to 22.

Effective Transfer of Power

Democratic decentralization has become the principal point in debates on development strategies in the developing world, as it signifies greater access to power and resources by the people. Among the different pathways to this objective, greater devolution of authority and resources to the lower strata of government is viewed as a prudent option. However, this is a tricky proposition as political and bureaucratic leadership at upper hierarchical levels will not easily part with the power and privileges vested with them. It is pretty unlikely that power will devolve independently unless and until law mandates it.

Getting the ideals of democratic decentralization translated into a pragmatic programme calls for a radical political process, fundamental policy changes and a great deal of re-engineering of governance systems. Ensuring people's actual participation warrants such fundamental changes in polity and governance. Kerala took the decentralization task seriously, much unlike the rest of the country, and the process has continued since then with modification as time warrants. It has received acclamation within the country and globally for successfully transferring power to the third tier of governance, enabling public participation. More importantly, Kerala could institutionalise democratic decentralization and seamlessly integrate it into the state's administrative structure. A host of institutions have been established to strengthen this unique model of democratic decentralization. It is surprising that no other state in the country has been able to attempt this transformative process to this level.

Democratic decentralization in Kerala has evolved into a powerful and self-sustaining system with a robust organisational structure, constant financial support, and the capability of the departments and personnel transferred to the local governments. However, the decentralization process should now focus on some essential responsibilities bestowed upon them because of the people's growing needs and the state's broader development goals. They include local economic development through supporting the productive sector, fostering entrepreneurship, generating employment, conserving natural resources, managing disasters, and addressing the impact of climate change. The growing urbanization and the need to address the issues of the aged population also pose serious challenges. All these new challenges and responsibilities call for increased capabilities of local governments to devise suitable strategies to address them and implement the resultant actions. The role of local governments will be more decisive as the state is heading towards a phase of faster economic growth with greater emphasis on equity and sustainability.

Empowering Lives for a Brighter Future

Seeram Sambasiva Rao IAS
Principal Director, Local Self Government Department, Kerala

A comprehensive look at Kerala's mission to eradicate extreme poverty through community solidarity, targeted interventions, and transformative government initiatives.

Kerala's people have consistently shown remarkable resilience when faced with life-threatening challenges, highlighting the importance of community solidarity and effective government interventions in tackling poverty. This collective strength, combining individual determination and systemic support, exemplifies the state's ability to overcome adversity and emerge stronger.

A Life Saved Through Community Effort

Sri. Kunhumuhammed Kottilil, from *Vattamkulam* Gram Panchayat in Malappuram, faced a critical battle with chronic kidney disease. The life-saving transplant he needed cost Rs.30 lakhs, a sum beyond his means. His community stepped in, forming a fundraising group with contributions from kind-hearted individuals and businesses. Supported by the Extreme Poverty Eradication Project (EPEP), Kunhumuhammed underwent a successful transplant. While post-surgery care remains expensive, government aid and community support ensure access to essential medication. Today, he runs a stationery shop, his life transformed by solidarity and compassion.

In *Chazhur*, women like Prajitha and Santha have reshaped their lives through perseverance. Despite 75% visual impairment, Prajitha gained independence by joining Harita Karmasena, learning skills like QR code scanning. Similarly, Santha, whose husband suffered a debilitating injury, now supports her family through this initiative.

Kerala has significantly reduced poverty, from 59.8% in 1973–74 to just 0.55% in 2019–21, according to NITI Aayog. A five-year plan launched in 2021 under Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan aims to eradicate extreme poverty, showcasing the state's commitment to uplifting marginalised communities.

Unveiling Hidden Struggles: The Process of Identifying Extreme Poverty

Kerala's approach to tackling extreme poverty involved detailed, household-level data collection to identify the most vulnerable. The process assessed factors like health issues, food insecurity, lack of assets, irregular income, disability, old age, and livelihoods. Marginalised groups, including Scheduled Castes and Tribes, were evaluated on additional criteria like geographic isolation and malnutrition.

The Local Self Government Department spearheaded the Extreme Poverty Identification Process (EPIP), starting with 118,309 nominated households, later shortlisted to 64,006 across four deprivation categories: income (35%), health (24%), food (21%), and shelter (15%). This rigorous process ensured targeted interventions for the extremely poor.

Bridging the Gap: The Micro Plan Development Initiative

To eliminate extreme poverty in Kerala, the creation of an Extreme Poverty Sub Plan was essential. Led by local governments with the State Poverty Eradication Mission–Kudumbashree's support, the plan addressed deprivations identified through the Extreme Poverty Identification Process (EPIP). Tailored micro-level plans were developed for each household, outlining short-term, intermediate, and long-term programmes. Immediate care plans provided urgent services, while intermediate ones aimed for solutions within two years. Long-term plans were developed where necessary. A total of 56,821 micro plans were approved. Additionally, the 'Avakasam Athivegam' campaign ensured 21,263 individuals received key documents to access vital services.

Nourishing the Soul, Promoting Wellness: Food and Health Support in the First Year

The initiative's first year focused on addressing food and health deprivation, offering crucial support for survival and dignity. Food assistance reached 15,276 families with food kits and 5,336 families through community kitchens. Health support included medications, palliative care, organ transplantation help, and medical treatment for 21,027 families. Additionally, 693 individuals were relocated to shelter homes. These interventions provided the means for families to break free from extreme poverty.

'Ujjeevanam' – Revitalising and Empowering Communities

In its first year, the 'Ujjeevanam' Campaign, launched in October 2023 with Kudumbashree's support, focused on creating sustainable income opportunities for the extreme poor. It assisted 841 families by providing access to vocational training, microfinance, and entrepreneurship support. This helped participants gain skills, build assets, and increase their earning potential, improving their well-being and resilience to economic challenges. The campaign aims to offer long-term financial stability, reducing

vulnerability to poverty and enabling families to meet basic needs and invest in education and healthcare.

Homes for Hope: Tackling Housing Insecurity Among the Extreme Poor

For the extreme poor, access to safe housing is a significant challenge, reinforcing the poverty cycle. Many live in informal settlements or makeshift shelters due to a lack of affordable housing, inadequate infrastructure, and insecure land tenure. These conditions lead to overcrowding, poor sanitation, and health risks, while the stress of housing insecurity affects mental well-being. Addressing this requires affordable housing, community development, and support services. The 2020 LIFE list identified 2,930 families in need of housing and 1,531 needing both land and housing. In the programme's first year, 15,667 families received new homes, with 1,558 starting construction and 104 completing theirs.

Departmental Collaboration for Uplifting the Extreme Poor

The success of the initiative to uplift the extreme poor in its first year was largely due to the collaboration and support of various government departments, each addressing different poverty-related challenges. The Health Department provided free healthcare, medicines, and follow-up care, as well as health insurance and disability certificates. The Civil Supplies Department distributed ration cards and food kits to 5,132 families, ensuring no one was left behind. The Education Department facilitated access to educational materials, school admissions, and scholarships for higher education. The Transport Department provided free travel passes to 1,340 students. The Social Justice Department focused on rehabilitating nomadic communities and supporting vulnerable groups. Finally, the Kudumbashree State Mission distributed food through 'Janakeeya Hotels' and launched the 'Ujjeevanam' project to support income-generating activities. This multi-departmental approach provided holistic support, empowering the extreme poor to overcome challenges and work towards a better future.

Government Increases Funding to Strengthen Support Initiatives

The government allocated Rs.50 Crore for the 2023-24 period to support micro-plans developed by Local Self-Government Institutions. Funds included Rs.45 Lakh for high-cost healthcare, Rs.16.43 Crore for the Kudumbashree Mission's *Ujjeevanam* Campaign to create sustainable livelihoods, and Rs.33.12 Crore for the LIFE Mission to build homes for the extreme poor. This financial support demonstrates the government's commitment to addressing healthcare, housing, and livelihood needs for the extreme poor.

First–Year Milestones: Laying the Foundation for Lasting Success

On 1 November 2023, Kerala achieved a significant

milestone, with 47.89% of identified extreme poor individuals moving out of poverty. This success reflected the first phase of the Extreme Poverty Eradication Project, led by Local Self Governments. The state government aims to complete the initiative by 1 November 2025, focusing on food security, medical assistance, secure housing, and income support through continued collaboration between citizens, community organisations, and government departments.

Second Year of Implementation: Expanding Reach and Amplifying Impact

The government's commitment to eradicating extreme poverty has ensured the successful continuation of its flagship poverty alleviation scheme into its second year. New interventions include expanding the Ujjeevanam Campaign, introducing skills training, and promoting community-led entrepreneurship. Partnerships with local organisations and NGOs have enhanced service delivery. The government is also addressing shelter challenges with targeted solutions, dedicating additional resources to achieve the goal of an extreme poverty-free state.

Ensuring Food Security and Access to Health Support

Local Self Governments, voluntary organisations, and Residents' Associations continued providing cooked meals and food kits to the extreme poor, ensuring no one went hungry for the second consecutive year. Special Onam kits were distributed, with 21,682 food kits and 2,318 cooked meals given. Health staff and volunteers provided essential healthcare, including medicines, palliative care, and medical check-ups. Nine organ transplants saved lives, and 440 cases required health equipment, with 239 receiving devices. Tri-scooters also doubled as income-generating tools.

Promoting Education and Providing Scholarships for Children

The educational needs of 5,583 children from extreme poverty were addressed by forwarding their details to the Department of Public Education. For children aged 14 to 16, the department provided meals, school uniforms, tuition fees, and support for arts and sports. Financial support for 1,424 children was also arranged for the 2024-25 academic

THE PROGRESS OF THE EXTREME POVERTY ERADICATION PROGRAM AS OF 29.01.2025

District	Total number of identified extreme poverty households	Total number of micro-plans	Number of households freed from extreme poverty	Progress
Wayanad	2931	2454	1796	61
Idukki	2665	2392	1650	62
Pathanamthitta	2579	1990	1626	63
Kasaragod	2768	2091	1795	65
Kollam	4461	3962	2894	65
Thiruvananthapuram	7278	6250	4815	66
Palakkad	6443	5632	4596	71
Ernakulam	5650	5079	4153	74
Kozhikode	6773	6372	5137	76
Kottayam	1071	978	829	77
Malappuram	8553	7699	6545	77
Thrissur	5013	4649	3952	79
Alappuzha	3613	3176	2885	80
Kannur	4208	3973	3524	84
Total	**64006**	**56697**	**46197**	**72.18**

year. Additionally, 554 students from the poorest families were guaranteed admission to +1 courses. Study materials were distributed with LSGIs' help. Furthermore, 331 orphaned children will receive stipends and scholarships under the "Snehapoorvam" scheme to aid their education.

Providing Transport Assistance for Students

In 2024-25, the Department of Transport issued travel passes to 556 students from extremely poor families, adding to the 1,767 provided in the previous year. These efforts, alongside other interventions, have significantly improved the living conditions and education of the extreme poor in Kerala.

Promise Fulfilled: Government's Continued Funding for Two Years in a Row

In the 2023-24 budget, the government allocated Rs. 50 Crore to the Extreme Poverty Eradication Project, reinforcing its commitment to supporting the most vulnerable groups. The funding covers healthcare for high-cost treatments, contributions to Kudumbashree's Ujjeevanam Campaign, and support for LIFE Mission's housing initiatives. This allocation reflects the government's focus on addressing the diverse aspects of extreme poverty, including healthcare, livelihood creation, and housing, ensuring resources are available to uplift the extreme poor and improve their long-term well-being.

The Path Ahead

Kerala's historic mission to eradicate extreme poverty is powered by democratic decentralisation, enabling Local Self Governments to take decisive action at the grassroots level. By 1 November 2025, Kerala aims to reach a key milestone in equitable development through successful micro-plan implementation. This will make it the first state to fully achieve two vital Sustainable Development Goals: 'No Poverty' and 'Zero Hunger'. The state has already lifted 64,006 families from extreme poverty, positioning Kerala as a global model of sustainable development. Its efforts aim to inspire others, ensuring that no one is left behind and setting a higher standard of living for all

No More Homeless Nights

Sajeendra Babu J.
Programme Manager
LIFE Mission

Progress and Initiatives of the Life Mission: Land Distribution, Housing Projects, and Solar Energy Integration

The objective of the Life housing scheme is to provide secure housing for all the homeless in the state. Various housing schemes implemented through different departments of the state, such as the centrally funded PMAY (Rural) and PMAY (Urban), which receive minimal central share, are also included under this initiative. Under this scheme, beneficiaries of PMAY (Rural), which provides Rs 72,000, and PMAY (Urban), which provides Rs 1,50,000, are also entitled to an additional benefit of Rs 4,00,000 under the Life scheme. Since these schemes have been integrated into the Life housing project, the beneficiaries will receive the Rs 4,00,000 financial assistance from the Life scheme. For Scheduled Caste families living in settlements and difficult areas, an enhanced benefit of Rs 6,00,000 is provided instead of Rs 4,00,000.

As of 31st January 2025, a total of 5,41,316 families have been granted housing construction financial assistance, of which 4,29,425 families have completed the construction of their houses. The construction of 1,11,891 houses is currently in various stages of progress.

Life 2020

Under Life 2020, a total of 9,20,260 applications were submitted online. After eligibility checks, re-evaluations, and the first and second-phase appeals, the final list was prepared with the approval of the Gram Sabha/Ward Sabha and local self-governments. On 16th August 2022, the list of beneficiaries was officially published by the local self-government institutions.

Homeless with Land	**3,69,262**
Homeless without Land	**1,96,446**
Total	**5,65,708**

A total of 1,13,064 beneficiaries included in the Life 2020 list have entered into agreements with local self-government institutions.

People in the Below Poverty Line Category

Among the homeless beneficiaries identified through the extreme poverty determination process, 5,514 beneficiaries have entered into contracts for house construction, of which 3,459 beneficiaries have completed the construction of their homes.

Housing Cluster Construction Progress

For the resettlement of homeless individuals included in the Life beneficiary list, housing clusters were constructed through the Life Mission. Four housing clusters have been completed and handed over to the beneficiaries. The construction of 21 housing clusters is progressing at various stages. The details of the housing clusters constructed and completed through Life Mission, local self-governments, partnerships, and sponsorships, as well as the local self-governments where these housing clusters are located, are listed below.

Housing Clusters Built/ Purchased through Life Mission

Housing Clusters Built/Purchased through Life Mission	
District	**Grama Panchayat/ Municipal- Address**
Kollam	Punalur Municipality, Punalur, Kollam 691 305
Kottayam	Vijayapuram Grama Panchayat, Vadavathoor P.O., Kottayam 686 010
Idukki	Adimali Grama Panchayat, Adimali P.O., Idukki 685561
Idukki	Karimannoor Grama Panchayat, Karimannoor P.O., Idukki 685581
Kannur	Kadampur Grama Panchayat, Kadampur, Kadachira P.O., Kannur 670621

Housing Clusters Built through Local Self-Government Institutions	
District	**Grama Panchayat/ Municipal- Address**
Thiruvananthapuram	**Venganur Grama Panchayat, Venganur P.O., Pin 695523**
Ernakulam	**Keezhmadu Grama Panchayat, Erumathala P.O., Ernakulam 683112**
Ernakulam	**Angamaly Municipality, Ernakulam 683572**

Housing Clusters Obtained through Sponsorships	
District	**Grama Panchayat/Municipal- Address**
Ernakulam	**G.C.D.A., Kochi Municipal Corporation, P.B. Number 1016, Kochi, Ernakulam 682011**
Malappuram	**Perinthalmanna Municipality, Manzhi Bus Stand Building, Pathaikkara P.O., Malappuram 679322**

Housing Clusters Obtained through Sponsorships	
District	**Grama Panchayat/ Municipal Address**
Thiruvananthapuram	**Mannanthala, Thiruvananthapuram Municipality, Vikas Bhavan P.O., Thiruvananthapuram 695033**
Thrissur (Carehome)	**Pazhyanur Grama Panchayat, Vatakethara, Pazhyanur P.O., Thrissur 680587**

Manassodithiri Mannu Campaign

As part of the *Manassodithiri Mannu* campaign, until 31.01.2025, 3,208.739 cents (32.08739 acres) of land have been pledged to the Life Mission. Of this, 2,038.185 cents (28.38 acres) of land have been registered and provided to local self-governments/beneficiaries.

Life Chittilappilli Housing Scheme

For the resettlement of the homeless, numerous organisations and well-wishers have expressed their willingness to participate in the government's *Manassodithiri Mannu* campaign. The K. Chittilappilli Foundation signed a memorandum of understanding with the government in December 2021 to provide financial assistance of Rs 25 crore to purchase land for 1,000 homeless families, with a maximum amount of Rs 2.5 lakh per family. Accordingly, land has been made available to 1,000 homeless families.

Following this, the second phase of the Chittilappilli Life Housing Scheme has commenced with the signing of the agreement to provide land to an additional 1,000 homeless families.

Priority will be given to EPIP (Economically Poor and

A total of 1,13,064 beneficiaries included in the Life 2020 list have entered into agreements with local self-government institutions.

Vulnerable) beneficiaries in this phase.

Lions – Life Housing Scheme

The government has issued an order allowing Lions International District 318-E to build homes for 100 homeless individuals included in the Life beneficiary list. In this regard, agreements have been signed for constructing houses on land owned by Chirayinkeezhu Block Panchayat in Mudakkal Grama Panchayat, Kilimanoor Grama Panchayat, and Kadakkal Grama Panchayat in Kollam district. Construction activities have already begun.

Solar Energy Project for Life Beneficiaries

In collaboration with ANERT (Agency for Non-Conventional Energy and Rural Technology), the Life Mission has included 500 houses that completed construction under the Life scheme in a free solar energy programme. Solar energy plants are being installed for free, providing electricity and additional income opportunities.

The solar energy project is being implemented under ANERT's Green Energy Income Scheme for Life beneficiaries. A 2-kilowatt solar energy plant, capable of producing an average of 8 units of electricity per day, is being installed in each of the 500 houses in the first phase. The cost of each solar plant is approximately Rs 1.35 lakh.

These 500 homes, which have completed construction and received electricity connections, are part of the initial phase. The electricity produced by the solar plants can be fully used in the homes, and any excess electricity can be sold to the grid to generate income.

For households with an average monthly consumption of 100 units, this project can generate an additional 1,200 units of electricity annually, resulting in an annual income of up to Rs 4,000 from the excess electricity sold to the grid. Additionally, homes with solar plants will also receive induction stoves.

Solar plants have been installed in public areas of the four completed Life housing clusters for electricity use.

As part of the 'Manassodithiri Mannu' campaign 3208.739 cents of land have been pledged to the Life Mission.

The Symphony of Sisterhood

H. Dineshan IAS
Executive Director, Kudumbashree

Kudumbashree, the largest women-led collective in Asia, stands as Kerala's pillar of grassroots social and economic empowerment

The largest women's conglomeration in the continent of Asia, Kudumbashree, is the pride of Kerala and the iconic symbol of the state's grassroots-level social and economic development. It is the ultimate paradigm of women's empowerment and poverty eradication initiatives that can be proudly showcased before the world. The movement, which has completed 26 active years, continues to ignite the social and economic progress of women and society as a whole. 46.16 lakh women are part of this awe-inspiring establishment. The model of Kudumbashree can be emulated anywhere in the world, as the joys and pangs of womanhood are ubiquitous.

1. Institutional Building and Capacity Building

The greatest strength of Kudumbashree is its three-tier organisational structure, viz. the Neighbourhood Groups (NHG), Area Development Society (ADS), and Community Development Society (CDS). Apart from the mainstream NHGs, transgender NHGs and differently-abled NHGs have also been formed for the upliftment of these sections.

Auxiliary Groups for Youth

19,422 auxiliary groups were set up to mould a strong generation of youngsters and encourage entrepreneurship. As part of this, the ambitious She Starts project was launched.

Coastal Area Development

Special focus is given to empowering women in coastal areas. Through 8,000 coastal NHGs, with a grant of Rs 15,000 for each individual, Rs 12 crore revolving fund has been expended in the coastal region.

Model CDS

Out of the 941 CDS in Kerala, 319 have been developed as model CDS. This accomplishment has improved the governance capability of these organisations and enhanced their financial stability.

Village Prosperity Resilience Programme

Kudumbashree has successfully implemented projects in these 941 CDS and integrated them into the developmental plans of Gram Panchayats.

2. Financial Independence

Kudumbashree, through its various schemes, offers substantial financial assistance to its members. The members are regularly given financial literacy classes, helping them build financial discipline and stay updated about banking reforms. Last year, 15 lakh Kudumbashree members attended training. Kudumbashree, along with the State Insurance Department and Life Insurance Corporation of India, has instituted the Jeevan Deepam Oruma insurance project.

Microfinance

Microfinance is one of the prominent activities of Kudumbashree. Through this initiative, Rs 9,054 crore has been invested in various banks in the state. To enhance efficiency, NHG grading and Financial Inclusion Clinics were introduced. More than 12,500 loan repayment issues were resolved through these clinics.

Bulk Loan

The Kerala State Backward Classes Development Corporation, Kerala State Women Development Corporation, and Kerala State SC/ST Development Corporation grant bulk loans to Kudumbashree CDS. These agencies provide a maximum loan of Rs 3 crore at an interest rate of 5% to CDS, which then extends the loan at a rate of 6% to NHGs. This enables NHGs to access credit at a discounted rate for self-employment schemes, enhancing livelihood opportunities. The CDS, in turn, can utilise the 1% interest margin for its operations. In 2024, loans worth Rs 255 crore were disbursed to 131 CDS. Over the last seven years, Rs 17,369 crore has been provided as loans. Kudumbashree has deployed a community-based repayment monitoring system to oversee loan repayments. As an interest subsidy for all NHG loans, Kudumbashree has disbursed Rs 636.19 crore to its members.

A revolving fund of Rs 28.87 crore has been granted to 19,253 NHGs. Additionally, Rs 60 crore has been allocated as a Vulnerability Reduction Fund.

Rs 7,540 crore in seven years

When COVID-19 inflicted losses on NHG assets and loans, special efforts were made at the CDS level, resulting in Rs 7,540 crore in investment. Additionally, NHG members received internal loans worth Rs 8,282 crore. Also, Rs 30,611 crore worth of linkage loans were

given to 3.87 lakh NHGs. Since members were able to receive loans swiftly through NHGs, their dependence on loan sharks was minimised.

3. Non–Agricultural Livelihood Sector

Kudumbashree has devised several livelihood operations for the financial empowerment of women. The most important among these is self-employment ventures. Kudumbashree plays a significant role in finding employment opportunities in the manufacturing and service sectors, thereby ensuring sustainable income flow and accelerating regional economic growth. Today, Kudumbashree facilitates 1.43 lakh micro-enterprises, employing around 3 lakh women.

> **The largest woman conglomeration in the continent of Asia, Kudumbashree, is the pride of Kerala and the iconic symbol of the state's grassroots-level social and economic development.**

Apart from conventional small enterprises like Apparel Park, cafés, food processing, handicrafts, soap making, lotion making, event management, daycare, etc., Kudumbashree has ventured into new-age enterprises. K4 Care, which integrates domestic care services, Lunch Bell, which provides meals at reasonable rates, and Café Premium restaurants are examples of innovative entrepreneurship.

Haritha Karma Sena, Micro Enterprise Resource Centres, Take A Break, Public Service Centres, Santhwanam, Amritham Nutrimix units, Building Construction units, the Pearl project for Non-Resident Keralites who returned for good, Prathayasha, Arise Multi-Task Team, etc., are some of Kudumbashree's major ventures. The One Stop Facility Centre, Incubation Centre in the micro-enterprise sector, and the Startup Village Entrepreneurship Programme have gained traction in the state.

Kudumbashree's venture into online marketing has revolutionised the sales of its products. Kudumbashree successfully introduced its own brands, and the Pocket Mart mobile application brought all Kudumbashree products and services onto a single platform. Kudumbashree products are also available on major online platforms like Amazon, Flipkart, Saheli, ONDC, Meesho, etc. Sales are further supported through nano markets, marketing kiosks, national Saras fests, food fests, trade fairs, etc. In the latest Saras fest organised at Chengannur from 20 to 31 January 2025, product and food sales amounted to Rs 17.54 crore. So far, a total of

Rs 97.36 crore has been collected through all Saras fests.

Startup Village Entrepreneurship Programme

This programme, aimed at encouraging rural entrepreneurship, has been highly successful. A total of 35,978 enterprises have been established and continue to receive support from trained consultants. Another initiative, the Rebuild Kerala Initiative – Entrepreneurship Development Project, assists entrepreneurs in flood-affected areas. Under this project, 20,047 enterprises have been set up.

4. Agricultural Sector

Kudumbashree has made significant strides in agriculture and animal husbandry. Kudumbashree operates 91,018 farmer groups, involving 4,15,314 women cultivating 18,432.42 hectares. Additionally, Kudumbashree runs initiatives such as Nature's Fresh Agri Kiosk, producer groups, integrated farming clusters, agri-business units, value-added units, etc. Members are also trained in drone operations to advance smart farming. Several funding schemes are available to promote agricultural entrepreneurship.

5. Social Development and Inclusion

Kudumbashree has undertaken numerous initiatives to integrate marginalised sections, such as destitute individuals and differently-abled persons, into the mainstream.

The Destitute-Free Kerala project aims to provide emotional and social support, as well as livelihood opportunities, to the destitute. This initiative has benefitted 1,57,382 destitute families in Kerala.

6. Gender

Kudumbashree not only ensures women's financial independence but also implements several projects that promote their overall personality development. The 24-hour *Snehitha* Gender Help Desk, Vigilant Groups, Gender Resource Centres, and Gender Clubs in schools and colleges have become highly impactful.

7. A Helping Hand in Crisis

Kerala has witnessed numerous instances of Kudumbashree's compassion and commitment during crises. Whether in floods or the COVID-19 pandemic, Kudumbashree has been at the forefront of relief efforts.

As Kudumbashree completes 26 years, women have transcended the periphery of domicile inertia to claim their space in the mainstream, gaining visibility in all spheres, particularly in the social and cultural realms. Kudumbashree continues to shine through its members and their contributions, illuminating the state as a whole.

Towards a Cleaner Tomorrow

Arya Rajendran
Mayor, Thiruvanathapuram Corporation

Innovative solutions, community efforts, and proactive measures to tackle waste and protect water bodies in the capital city

The Thiruvananthapuram Corporation's initiatives to protect canals, water bodies, and other natural resources as well as its consistent actions against illegal waste disposal and unregulated waste collection, have been instrumental in improving environmental conditions. One of the major thrust areas is to tackle the waste issue along the banks of the Amayizhanchan stream. The stream which starts from the vicinity of the Kanakakkunnu– Observatory region, flows through the Palayam Bakery Junction, and passes through key areas such as the KSRTC Bus Stand, Thampanoor Railway Station, and Pazhavangadi, ultimately joining the Ulloor stream, stretches over a distance of 6.8 kilometers.

In order to prevent the plastic waste floating through Amayizhanchan stream from reaching the sea, comprehensive measures have been taken up by the Corporation. To address the floating waste in these locations, trash booms and metal mesh systems have been installed. Along with the efforts of the Corporation's staff, Plastic Fischer agency has been appointed for waste collection and disposal since 2022. Since January 2024, 23 full-time staff has been engaged in collecting and processing 72 tons of waste per day.

Mini MCFs (Material Collection Facilities), container-based MCFs, and other waste management units have been established in various locations along the Amayizhanchan stream. Furthermore, the Haritha Karma Sena has been actively collecting waste from houses and establishments in these areas.

However, on July 13, 2024, a tragic incident occurred. A

contract sanitation worker employed by the Railway drowned during the cleaning operation near Amayizhanchan stream. The Corporation had previously sent multiple requests to the railway department to take responsibility for clearing the waste from the railway-controlled tunnels. Post-incident, a series of measures have been undertaken to prevent such mishaps in the future.

The aim is to tackle the waste issue along the banks of the Amayizhanchan stream

In addition to the initiatives along the stream, the Corporation, in collaboration with Plastic Fischer, is in the process of installing new trash booms near Rajaji Nagar bridge. The development of an Advanced Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) in Rajaji Nagar is underway as part of the AMRUT scheme. The STP will benefit 856 households and 71 establishments in the area.

To date, 25 AI-powered Face Detection cameras have been installed across various sections of the Amayizhanchan stream with support from the Smart City initiative. Stringent action has been taken against illegal waste collectors and 31 vehicles confiscated for illegally dumping waste. The Corporation has also imposed a fine of ₹41,41,580 as part of its enforcement operations.

In addition to raising awareness, the Corporation has been engaged in restoring water bodies and maintaining canals through community-driven initiatives.

Recently, 4 OWC (Organic Waste Converters) have been installed at the Palayam Market and 3 schools, and 2 RDF units at Chalai and Chenthitta. Ten new Thumboormoozhi units (100 bins) are being installed, and several MCFs are under development. Additionally, 14 mobile portable Thumboormoozhi , each with a 1-ton capacity, have been set up in four locations in Rajaji Nagar, with cleaning staff deployed for both day and night shifts.

To date, 25 AI-powered Face Detection cameras have been installed across various sections of the Amayizhanchan stream

These ongoing efforts will continue to make Thiruvananthapuram a cleaner, greener, and more sustainable city for future generations.

Towards a Waste-Free Future Campaign

Muhammed Huwaiz M.
Joint Director, State WM Cell
Principal Directorate -LSGD

Kerala's innovative decentralized waste management system empowers citizens and local bodies alike, fostering civic responsibility, promoting sustainability, and setting a new benchmark for environmental care in India.

Kerala has taken the lead in implementing a decentralized model for waste management, understanding its crucial role in environmental conservation. This innovative approach empowers individuals to take responsibility for their own waste, promoting a sense of civic duty through the principle, "my waste is my responsibility." By adopting this model, the state aims to foster a culture of scientifically managed waste disposal, encouraging active participation from all sections of society. The Indian Supreme Court, through several landmark judgments, has declared that the right to a clean environment falls under the fundamental right to life as outlined in Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. This includes the right to clean air, soil, and water. The Court has further emphasized the correlation between these rights and the duties defined under Article 51(g), which obligates citizens to protect and improve the natural environment, including forests, rivers, and lakes. This balancing act between rights and duties has been affirmed by the Supreme Court, especially in the case of the Vellore Citizens Welfare Forum, where the Court underlined the significance of the precautionary and polluter pays principles in sustainable
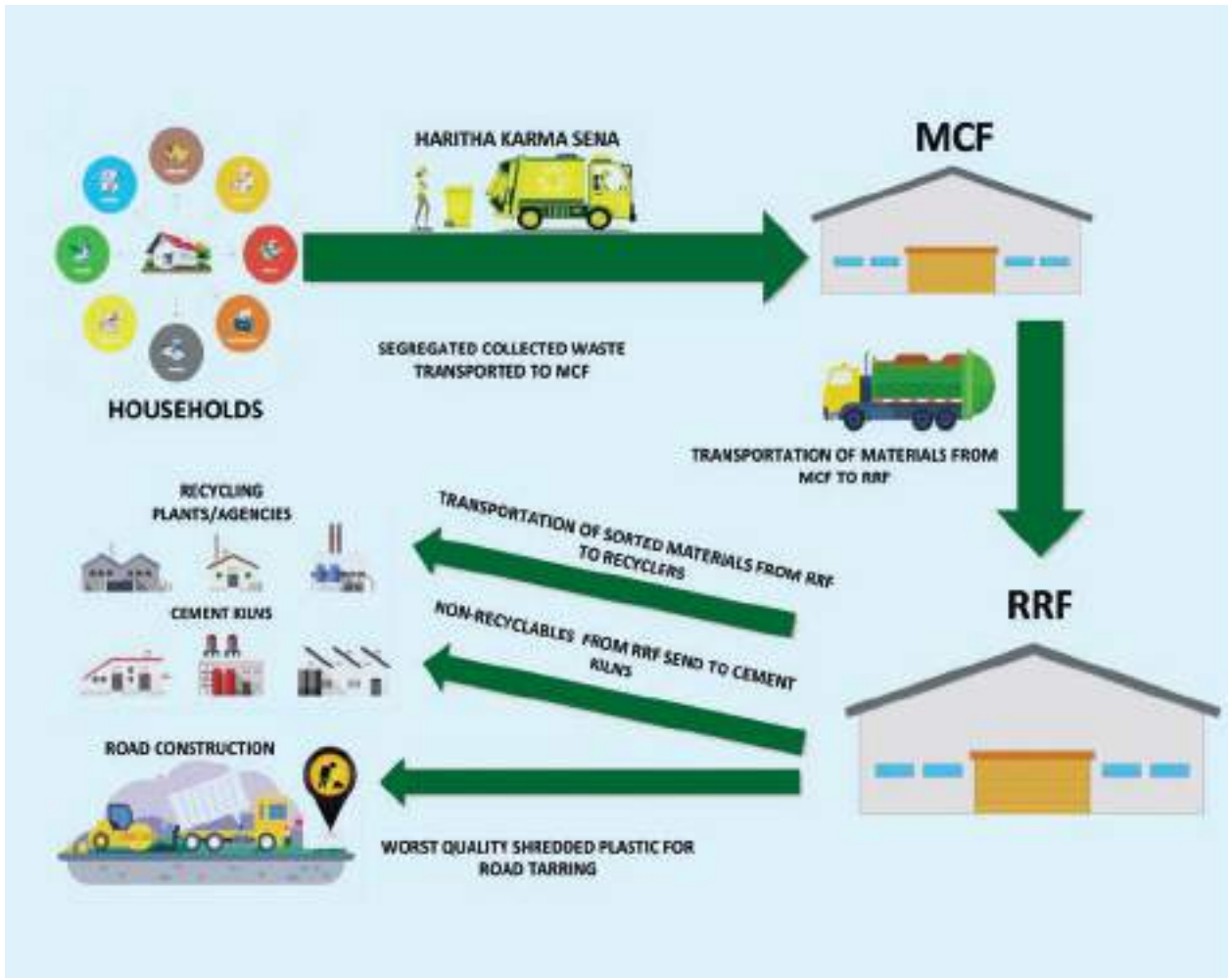
development.

The fire that broke out at the Brahmapuram waste treatment plant in February 2023 prompted a reassessment of the safety standards and operational protocols for waste management facilities. Several challenges emerged, including a shortage of land for setting up waste management units and public opposition to their establishment. In response to this, the Kerala government launched a pioneering programme aimed at achieving a waste-free state, known as "*Maalinya Muktham NavaKeralam*" (Clean Kerala Mission). This campaign has been implemented in a coordinated effort across various levels of government, including State, District, and Local

A WhatsApp number, 9446700800, has been established for the public to report instances of waste dumping in public spaces and water bodies.

Self-Government Institutions (LSGIs). The involvement of several organizations such as the Local Self Government Department, KILA, Haritha Kerala Mission, Kudumbashree Mission, and Suchitwa Mission has accelerated progress in this initiative.

Initially, the Kochi Corporation struggled to find land for Material Collection Facility (MCF) centres. The issue was addressed by deploying Container MCFs in places like Ernakulam, Thiruvananthapuram, and Kozhikode, where space was unavailable. The primary goal was to strengthen the Haritha Karma Sena (HKS) in both urban and rural local bodies to improve waste collection. As a result, the number of HKS members increased from 33,378 in March 2023 to 37,363 by January 2025. This growth has helped raise the door-to-door waste collection rate from 47% to 97%, and user fee collection has also risen from 35% to 72%.

One of the early initiatives in the campaign focused on clearing garbage vulnerable points (GVPs) and transforming them into butterfly gardens called "*Sneharamams.*" Students from schools and colleges, particularly those involved in the National Service Scheme (NSS), participated enthusiastically

in this endeavour, resulting in the transformation of nearly 3,000 GVPs into these Sneharamams.

An essential part of the waste management system involves the segregation and storage of non-biodegradable waste. Local bodies have increased the number of Mini MCFs, MCFs, and Recycling and Refuse Facilities (RRFs). In locations where land is limited, the authorities have opted for Container MCFs or leased land for waste management purposes. A system has been set up to ensure the timely clearance of waste from these facilities. To facilitate efficient waste handling, a mandatory transportation and lifting plan has been introduced, linking the MCFs and RRFs to cement factories and recycling centres through the Clean Kerala Company Limited and other agencies authorised by the Suchitwa Mission.

> **The Kerala Panchayati Raj Act and Kerala Municipality Act were amended in 2024 to ensure stringent penalties for those violating waste management rules.**

To streamline waste management services and improve public access to information, the HarithaMithram app was introduced. Currently, 1,018 LSGIs use the app to deliver services to citizens, and 15 more LSGIs are set to integrate their systems with the app. Furthermore, a WhatsApp number, 9446700800, has been established for the public to report instances of waste dumping in public spaces and water bodies. This system is integrated with the War Room Portal and is being monitored by the State Control Room, ensuring effective response and resolution of complaints.

The decentralised system for processing bio-waste, which had been in place, has been further strengthened. Inoculum for composting waste at the household and institutional level, through systems like biobins and ring composts, is being provided. Overflow waste is processed at the community level using aerobic units and *Thumboormoozhi,* with Bio Shakti& OWC plants also incorporated into the system. To manage poultry waste, 39 rendering plants with a combined capacity of 898.25 tonnes per day have been set up in collaboration with private entities. These plants convert poultry waste, including feathers, into animal and fish feed through steam cooking.

Centralized waste processing is also being scaled up. For example, Kochi Corporation, in partnership with Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), is developing a Compressed Bio Gas (CBG) plant, expected to be operational by March 2025. Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode Corporations are also working with BPCL to establish similar plants. Additionally, construction of a Waste-to-Energy (WtE) plant has begun in Kanjikode, Palakkad, under the Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC).

As part of the state's policy framework, green checkposts have been established at interstate borders, and a ban on single-use plastic has been enforced in tourism destinations

and hilly areas. These measures aim to reduce plastic waste and protect the environment.

The growing urban population in Kerala, coupled with the increasing availability of products from manufacturers and importers, has intensified the need for waste management systems capable of handling all types of waste. The inclusion of Producer-Importers, Brand Owners (PIBOs) under the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) framework will play a crucial role in addressing this issue.

A key challenge remains the indiscriminate dumping of mixed waste and a general lack of awareness about the environmental consequences of polluting public spaces and water bodies. To counter this, targeted public awareness campaigns are essential to educate citizens about the importance of proper waste disposal and the benefits of adopting eco-friendly practices. The implementation of Green Protocols at public events and functions can significantly contribute to reducing waste. Behavioural changes are necessary to make these initiatives effective, and it is crucial to assess the success of these campaigns through tangible changes in waste management practices across society.

Despite efforts to raise awareness, non-compliance continues to be a problem. As a result, the government has introduced stricter measures, including heavy fines and the possibility of prosecution for offenders. The Kerala Panchayati Raj Act and Kerala Municipality Act were amended in 2024 to ensure stringent penalties for those violating waste management rules. Vigilance squads have been set up in all LSGIs and districts to ensure proper enforcement.

Addressing these challenges requires effective waste management strategies, such as waste segregation at the source. Active public participation is essential for the success of these initiatives. To this end, extensive cleaning drives are being organized in partnership with local bodies, community groups, and organizations. These initiatives aim to create a cleaner and healthier environment while fostering a culture of sustainability and responsible waste management. Achieving a garbage-free Kerala requires a collective effort from all sections of society, involving a shift in habits and practices towards more sustainable waste management methods. By working together, Kerala can lead the way in waste management and environmental protection, paving the way for a cleaner, greener future.

CAMPAIGN - PROGRESS		
CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS	2023 March	2025 January
DOOR TO DOOR COLLECTION	47%	97%
USER FEE COLLECTION	35%	72%
No. of MINI MCFs	7446	21013
No. of Container MCFs	0	197
No. of MCFs	1160	1325
No. of RRFs	87	190
No. of HARITHA KARMA SENA	33378	37363

Unique, Yet Universal

Sivajith K.
LSGD Waste Management Secretariat

It was a scorching day in mid-January. Members of the Haritha Karma Sena of Panayam Gram Panchayat in Kollam district stood around a conveyor belt inside a 3,000 sq. ft. Material Collection Facility (MCF) established by the local self-government. This conveyor belt was installed as part of a gram panchayat project aimed at enhancing the efficiency of segregating non-biodegradable materials collected from households across the region.

The installation of this facility led to a noticeable increase in the segregation of recyclable items from plastic compared to the previous month. Consequently, the revenue generated from selling recyclable materials rose, directly boosting the individual incomes of the workers. On the other side of the MCF, two Haritha Karma Sena members were loading

segregated plastics into a baling machine. This machine also installed by the gram panchayat, added value to the materials and significantly reduced transportation costs.

Just then, the sound of a pickup truck approaching the facility caught their attention. Two members who had been segregating materials rushed outside. The truck driver, a fellow Haritha Karma Sena member, announced that this was the second load of the day. She also mentioned that another three-wheeler pickup was on its way from the field. These vehicles, procured by the gram panchayat and handed over to the Haritha Karma Sena, played a crucial role in transporting collected waste materials efficiently.

The consortium president, in charge of the facility, oversaw

the unloading of the materials with the assistance of other members. Each sack was carefully weighed, and the details were recorded by the accountant in the inward register of the MCF. By tracking the collection points from various wards and cross-referencing reports from the Harithamithram application—used to monitor door-to-door collection and service coverage—the consortium president strategized how to complete the month's collection and segregation before the 28th. This was crucial as the contracted agency responsible for purchasing the segregated plastic and reject waste (non-recyclable waste used as fuel in cement kilns through controlled incineration) would arrive on that date for the first batch of the month.

She decided to discuss the action plan with other members in the upcoming weekly review meeting at the Haritha Karma Sena office. This office, newly constructed by the gram panchayat, was fully digitized with computers, internet access, and printers. She believed that, as a team, they could resolve any challenges—an understanding shaped by years of collective experience. This sentiment was shared by the entire team.

The story of the Panayam Haritha Karma Sena is not unique. Across the state, similar teams operate with well-equipped material collection facilities, transportation vehicles, and effective monitoring systems, ensuring efficient waste management services in every local self-government(LSG).

The Pheonix that rose from ashes

The Malinyamuktham Nava Keralam Campaign significantly expanded waste management facilities and activities in the state. Launched on March 15, 2023, in response to the Brahmapuram fire incident, this campaign was not entirely new but rather an extension of the waste management initiatives under the Haritha Keralam Mission, which had been active since 2017. However, the most significant transformations occurred post-2023. Over the past two years, the number of collection and processing facilities, Haritha Karma Sena members, and private sector participants in waste management has surged. Additionally, Kerala became the first state to implement state-wide full digitalization of door-to-door waste collection.

Beyond numbers, there has been a substantial improvement

in the quality of waste management services delivered by each LSG through the Haritha Karma Sena. This model stands as Kerala's unique contribution to the world—a demonstration of how waste management and climate resilience can be leveraged for women's empowerment and local economic development. Originally established as a micro-enterprise under the Kudumbashree Mission, the Haritha Karma Sena has grown into the highest income-generating single enterprise under the mission. Currently, it generates an average monthly income of ₹38 crore and continues to expand.

Among the various Haritha Karma Sena consortiums in the state, several successful models have emerged. Ongoing studies are exploring the feasibility of replicating these models to other groups. With sustained efforts, the Haritha Karma Sena is poised to reach new heights in the future.

Some of the key identified models apart from Panayam Panchayat are as follows:

Purathur Model
of Economic and Social Security

The Haritha Karma Sena model in Purathur Gram Panchayat, Malappuram district, is a highly successful and distinctive initiative in waste management. One of its major achievements is source-level waste segregation in 80% of households. Since segregation is done at the source itself, the time spent by Haritha Karma Sena members on segregation at the Material Collection Facility (MCF) has significantly

In total, 37363 Haritha Karma Sena workers are involved in the collection, transport and segregation of waste materials all over the state, handling almost 1.55 Lakh ton non-biodegradable waste per year. Thus, it becomes a highly successful model of circular economy and one of the biggest climate actions through waste management in the whole world. Another unique Kerala Model!

reduced. Another notable innovation is the introduction of an Annual User Fee system. The three-tier organizational structure of the Haritha Karma Sena is another significant feature of the Purathur model. To ensure efficient and timely waste collection and high-quality service delivery, the consortium has implemented a decentralized system. This includes:

- 170 clusters, each consisting of 50-60 households.

- 17 ward-level organizing committees, formed by combining multiple clusters.
- A panchayat-level organizing committee, consisting of representatives from all ward committees.

This well-structured system ensures smooth communication of service updates and waste collection-related notifications, minimizing delays and improving efficiency.

Additionally, the consortium has introduced Employee State Insurance (ESI) and Provident Fund (PF) benefits for all members by setting aside a portion of the income.

Irattayar Model:
Elevating Kerala's Reputation

The Haritha Karma Sena of Irattayar Grama Panchayat in Idukki district has gained national attention after being recognized in this year's Economic Survey Report for its achievements in waste management. Through a well-structured approach, the Haritha Karma Sena has successfully provided waste management services to 5,030 households and 495 institutions within the local self-government area, ensuring 100% coverage. Despite the challenges posed by the terrain, their relentless dedication and the strong support of the local self-government have made this success possible.

Every month, the Haritha Karma Sena collects segregates and processes between 4.5 to 10 tons of waste, handing it over to Clean Kerala Company and private agencies for recycling and disposal. A total of 28 different types of non-biodegradable waste are currently being segregated, which increases their market value while significantly reducing the volume of reject waste.

In addition to non-biodegradable waste collection, the Haritha Karma Sena Consortium manages a community composting system as a separate enterprise.

Muttar Model:
Overcoming Limitations with Innovation

Muttar Grama Panchayat in Alappuzha district stands as a remarkable example of how effective waste management can be achieved despite various limitations. Muttar is a small, rural panchayat with no major commercial or industrial establishments. With only 13 wards and 26 Haritha Karma Sena members, the panchayat operates in a flood-prone area, where waterlogging occurs during the monsoon season. Despite these challenges, Muttar has developed a unique and resilient waste management model. Over the past one and a half years, the Haritha Karma Sena and local governance system have successfully ensured 100% door-to-door waste collection. Operating from a rented 520 sq. ft. building without any advanced machinery, the Material Collection Facility (MCF) processes an average of 2 tons of non-biodegradable waste per month. To generate additional income, the panchayat introduced innovative initiatives such as banana leaf cultivation, renting out newspapers for public events and weddings, and establishing tailoring units.

Wasting No Time

N. Jagjeevan
Campaign Consultant, Suchitwa Mission

Kerala is moving towards the goal of becoming a waste-free state. The success of Kerala's initiative comes from the combined efforts of government departments, local bodies, private entrepreneurs and community organizations.

The 'Malinyamuktham Navakeralam' campaign was launched through the activities of the Haritha Keralam Mission. The efforts made between 2017 and 2021 helped establish the necessary atmosphere and basic infrastructure for decentralized and integrated waste management. At a time when efforts were underway to declare Kerala as a waste-free state, the Brahmapuram fire incident occurred on March 2, 2023. Following this, the government restructured its campaign and goals, setting a target to achieve a waste-free Kerala by March 30, 2025, coinciding with International Zero Waste Day.

Instead of viewing waste as an unusable material, the approach considers it a resource for agricultural and industrial development. The first step in transforming waste into a valuable product is source-level segregation. Activities such as composting organic waste, maximizing recycling and reducing waste generation help reinforce the responsibility of waste producers.

Collaborative Effort

Key government agencies like the Local Self-Government Department, Haritha Kerala Mission, Suchitwa Mission, and Clean Kerala Company have worked together to manage waste effectively. Kudumbashree has also played an important role. Private businesses have stepped in by investing in waste processing for items like meat, fish, hair, electronic waste, and medical waste. Now, they are expanding into other areas such as construction waste and sanitary waste. New start-

ups are also emerging in recycling and alternative product manufacturing. Different government departments have started their own waste management projects. Educational institutions are creating awareness by including waste management topics in their curriculum and campus activities. Departments like Transport (KSRTC), Forest, Fisheries, Tourism, Public Works, Agriculture, Health, and many others are implementing strategies to reduce and manage waste in their operations. Overall, Kerala has turned waste management into a collective effort.

We are Reaching There

The state has made significant progress in waste management over the past few years. The door-to-door collection of non-biodegradable waste, which was 47% in 2023, has increased to 89% in 2025. The collection of user fees has also improved, rising from 35% to 72%.The use of the Harithamithram application for waste management services has expanded significantly. In 2023, 11 lakh people across 376 local self-government institutions used the app. By 2025, this number has grown to 76 lakh users across 1,019 institutions.The number of temporary mini MCFs for non-biodegradable waste storage has increased from 7,446 to 21,013. Larger MCFs have grown from 1,160 to 1,325, while the number of RRFs has more than doubled, from 87 to 190. These expansions have improved both the speed and efficiency of waste management.

Towards a Circular Economy

The number of Haritha Karma Sena members has risen from 33,378 in 2023 to 37,363 today. Clean Kerala Company has also increased its waste handling capacity significantly. While it managed 30,217 tons of non-biodegradable waste in the financial year 2022-23, it has already processed 45,197 tons this year, with two months still remaining. Additionally, the company's storage capacity has grown from 87,300 square feet to 231,799 square feet. The number of Suchitwa Mission-approved waste management companies has grown from 74 to 188. Infrastructure for non-biodegradable waste management has expanded, with 83 warehouses built for 53 agencies, offering a total storage capacity of 612,128 square feet and sorting facilities for 306 tons of waste per day. Special waste treatment plants have also seen growth. There are now 35 rendering plants for chicken waste and one plant for processing hair waste, all run by private entrepreneurs.

Sustainable Model

Along with setting up an efficient waste management system, Kerala has also focused on ensuring its long-term sustainability. The key steps taken include raising public awareness and strengthening legal enforcement. As part of this, significant amendments were made to the Panchayat and Municipality Act, and special enforcement teams were set up at both local and district levels.Strict legal action has resulted in a major increase in inspections, from 1,138 in 2023 to 50,559 in 2024-25. The fines collected have also risen sharply from ₹3 lakh to ₹5.5 crore. Additionally, surveillance has been tightened with 3,557 locations now equipped with CCTV monitoring.

Kerala has also made great progress in organic waste management. Currently, 271 public biogas plants process 142.26 tons of organic waste daily. Another 1303 public composting units handle 149.36 tons of waste per day. Two Black Soldier Fly units process 100 tons of organic waste daily. At the household level, 1,591,563 home composting systems process 4,016.39 tons of waste daily, while 42,290 institution-level composting units manage 143.70 tons per day. Additionally, 1,288,182 compost pits process 1,293.38 tons of waste, and 34 large composting units handle 306.66 tons daily. Digital technology has been effectively integrated into waste management through platforms like Harithamithram, War Room Portal, and a dedicated WhatsApp number for reporting violations.

Clearing of Legacy Waste

Another major achievement is bio-mining, which has been launched in 59 locations. So far, 345,793.15 tons of waste have been processed, with work completed in 24 locations. In the 2024-25 financial year, 37,615 new projects are planned, with a total budget allocation of ₹3,326.5 crore.

Other key priority projects include:

- Sanitary Waste Treatment – 54 units
- Refuse-Derived Fuel (RDF) Plants – 19 units
- Faecal Sludge Treatment Plants (FSTP) – 42 units
- Sewage Treatment Plants (STP) – 290 units
- Material Collection Facilities (MCF) – 486 units
- Underground STPs – 19 units
- Container MCFs – 260 units
- Micro Treatment Units (MTU) – 25 units

Robust System Changes

These efforts highlight Kerala's commitment to a well-structured, technology-driven, and legally reinforced waste management system, ensuring a cleaner and more sustainable future.

Kerala has already implemented essential policies, laws, and guidelines to ensure a sustainable and efficient waste management system. Efforts are underway to introduce policies for scrap management, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), and Green Enterprises.

The state has also been actively working to expand the recycling industry. As a result, initiatives have been taken to produce value-added products from various waste materials and develop markets for them. Clean Kerala Company has also entered this sector. Currently,75 private enterprises are engaged in recycling.

Kerala has focused on developing waste management strategies tailored to each region's lifestyle, occupations, economic activities, and geographical conditions. This approach has allowed for localized adaptations in waste management methods, infrastructure, and collection systems. Local self-government institutions (LSGIs) have played a crucial role in implementing creative, region-specific solutions.

Kerala's initiatives align closely with global zero-waste goals, making it a model state in waste management.

A Policy to Address Urbanizing Kerala

Adv. M. Anil Kumar

Mayor, Kochi Municipal Corporation &
Co-Chair, Kerala Urban Policy Commission

Urbanization has taken a unique form in Kerala as it is spread across smaller and intermediate towns. The Kerala Urban Policy Commission aims to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the state's urbanization process.

Rapid urbanization is a feature of any developing nation especially fast-growing economies. It is the transformative process through which a growing population transitions from traditional rural societies to more advanced and modern urban centres. Currently, over half of the global population resides in urban areas. Urbanization, without doubt, provides opportunity for economic growth and subsequent developments but the unique challenges that it brings about needs to be properly addressed. In this context, it is essential to examine the specific urbanization patterns of Kerala and the need for a comprehensive urban policy for the state.

Kerala, An Ever Growing Town

As per the 2011 Census, 47.7% of Kerala's population resided in urban areas, surpassing the national average. Kerala demonstrates a distinctive urbanization pattern. Contrary to other states where urban growth is concentrated in large metropolitan cores, urbanization in Kerala is more spread across smaller and intermediate towns showcasing varied settlement patterns. This unique trend is commonly referred to as the rural-urban

continuum. The out migration of youth from the state and in migration of unskilled workers from other states is also a developing pattern in Kerala which further affects the urbanization trend.

The National Population Commission projects that by 2035, 92.8% of Kerala's population will reside in urban areas. Effectively leveraging the opportunities this presents, while ensuring preparedness to rise to the occasion and address the complexities it entails, is essential. The impact of urbanization on the state's economic, social, and environmental fabric is undeniable. Key issues such as urban mobility, climate change, and environmental sensitivity particularly for an eco-sensitive region like Kerala, disaster response

> **The National Population Commission projects that by 2035, 92.8% of Kerala's population will reside in urban areas.**

preparedness, infrastructural and spatial developmental concerns will become more pronounced and challenges related to issues of pollution, water supply, waste management, housing, traffic congestion, sanitation, open green spaces, phenomena like urban heat islands and urban flooding, financial strain on urban local bodies will only exacerbate. A multidisciplinary approach that covers all aspects of urban planning, striking a balance between the rising levels of urbanization trends and sustainable growth, is necessary. It warrants the need for a comprehensive analysis that can lead to an urban policy for the state that can guide urbanization in a less challenging manner.

Urban Policy A Guideline

The Kerala Urban Policy Commission aims to undertake a comprehensive analysis and deeper understanding of the state's urbanization process with the help of ten thematic pillars: urbanization spatial planning and place-based design; people, culture, and heritage; habitat and built environment; sustainable infrastructure

and basic services; health and well-being; climate-resilient spaces; drivers of growth; urban economy and development; innovative and sustainable urban financing; and collective local governance. The urban policy is to guide the development activities in Kerala for the next 25 years.

Kochi provides an example of a city that underwent rapid urbanization in a short span and the subsequent infrastructural, spatial, and environmental difficulties it continues to face in the absence of any directive to guide the process of urbanization. Being a coastal city, the consequences of climate change impacts are eminently felt and unsustainable growth only contributes to exacerbate the problem. Local bodies become the first stop in dealing with the situation. Urban governance requires financial support, human resource as well as operational freedom to be able to tackle the growing needs such a scenario presents in

> **The urban policy is to guide the development activities in Kerala for the next 25 years.**

terms of not only infrastructural developments but also delivery of services. Every local government needs an innovation centre to address these challenges outside of the existing conventional system. The Centre for Heritage, Environment and Development (c-hed) is such a model working as the research and development wing of the Kochi Municipal Corporation addressing pressing urban challenges in the sustainability forefront aiming to improve and enhance the liveability of the city.

Malappuram, Kollam and Kozhikode were identified as three among the top ten fastest growing urban areas in the world according to the survey by The Economic Intelligence Unit. It highlights the rate and speed at which urbanization is taking place in the state and reflects the trend of growth in Kerala that is peri urban growth rather than urbanization strictly based on city centric development.

The establishment of the Kerala Urban Commission in 2024 marks a significant moment, coming 38 years after the National Commission on Urbanization, chaired by Charles Correa. Kerala becomes the first state to formulate an urban policy with the setting up of the

Key Recommendations in the Interim Report

- **Professionalization of Urban Governance**
- **Formulation of Special Project Design Teams to ensure effective financial management of projects**
- **Metro Planning Committee for cities like Kochi, Thiruvananthapuram, and Kozhikode, and extending this to Kollam, Thrissur, and Kannur in the next ten years**
- **Business Development Council for Urban Areas**
- **District-level mapping to connect industries and technical-education institutions**
- **Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for implementing specific projects under Municipalities**
- **Establish Business Development Councils in all districts**
- **Amend Section 299 and 300 of the Kerala Municipality Act, and the Kerala Loan Act, to encourage investments**
- **Renew the credit rating of six corporations**
- **Introduce Kerala Municipal Bonds for major municipal corporations**

commission. The commission, chaired by Dr. Satish Kumar from Queen's University, Belfast, is composed of experts with national and international experience. While fragmented efforts under various state and national policies have addressed specific aspects of urbanization, a holistic approach that considers its overarching impacts has been long overdue. The Kerala Urban Commission strives to develop an inclusive urban policy that not only addresses these multifaceted challenges but also serves as a model for other states to study and replicate.

Interim Report Submitted

The interim report submitted by the Kerala Urban Policy Commission includes clear recommendations for the balanced progress of the rapidly urbanizing Kerala over the next 25 years. This is the first time in the country that such a report has been prepared by a government.

The commission confirms that Kerala is witnessing a trend of urbanization where it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish where cities begin or where villages end. According to the spatial development trends assessed by the commission, this change is happening primarily in the direction of the Western Ghats to the east and towards North Malabar in the north, with new urban clusters emerging. These trends are projected to shape development until 2050.

The commission has put forward several recommendations to support integrated planning. It evaluates that only by strengthening Kerala's decentralized democratic institutions—its local self-government bodies—can the issues and opportunities of urbanization be addressed. The final report will be more comprehensive after considering the government's feedback on the interim report. The recommendations provide a roadmap for Kerala's urban development and governance to ensure sustainability, inclusivity, and resilience in the face of growing urbanization.

Malappuram, Kollam and Kozhikode were identified as three among the top ten fastest growing urban areas in the world according to a survey.

First Step Towards Predictive Governance

Dr. Santhosh Babu IAS
Executive Director & Chief Mission Director
Information Kerala Mission

As the saying goes Governance should be felt, it should not be seen. This government believes that public need not see the government offices; rather they should be able to experience the quality of its service delivery.

The best form of governance is that which needs the least interaction between the common man and the government. When the governance is done right, we create joyful citizens and joyful employees. In the current scenario, the ideal mode of administration would be one in which people can access all the government services through a smart phone or computer at their own comfort. Even after computerization was introduced in government offices, the public was forced to visit government offices numerous times to avail government services.

Kerala is relatively better in the delivery of e-services. Over the years, Kerala has earned the reputation of being the best e-governed state in the country. Every government office in Kerala, even Panchayat office and Village office, is connected through e-office. Nearly 900 government services are accessible online. But the hassle here was that a citizen needs to access multiple platforms to elicit the online services.

Introduction of ILGMS

In the early days of computerization, Information Kerala Mission had developed around 20 software like Sanchaya, Soochika, Sachithra, Sulekha etc. The development of these applications was a huge landmark in the e-governance history of the state. However, since these applications were not connected to each other, the citizens had to visit separate online platforms to avail each service. This made the job of the government officers too tedious, since they had to scan through numerous software to complete their file work. In order to make their work easy, Information Kerala Mission introduced the web-based application software Integrated Local Governance Management System (ILGMS). This

software integrated all the activities of the Department of Local Self Government and made it transparent and efficient. This software, now used in 934 Grama Panchayats, makes the functioning of Panchayat offices more effective and improved the speed and quality of service delivery.

K-SMART, A Ground-breaking Initiative

In order to get rid of multiple platforms for various government services, all the software applications for online service delivery have been integrated into a single mobile-based application called K-SMART. Kerala- Solution for Managing Administrative Reformation and Transformation or K-SMART is a data centric solution for Local Self Government Institutions (LSGIs) using latest, cutting edge technologies. It is a single app, with a single sign-on, and a dashboard for every citizen & employee. K-SMART, available both on mobile and web platforms, replaced the various existing independent software.

K-SMART offers both iOS and Android platforms, providing seamless access to its e- Governance services on mobile devices.

The application has been developed by Information Kerala Mission on behalf of the Local Self Government department. It is based on Java Technology and employs the micro-services architecture and DevOps engineering.

Smart & Swift Service

K-SMART has, in effect, realized the government promise to make service delivery available at the fingertip of citizens.

- Citizens are now able to apply for all services online through K-SMART without visiting the local bodies and using the acknowledgement generated, they can track the status of their application online and receive services through SMS and WhatsApp. Citizens can avail services such as online payments, certificates, permits, and other file & administrative functions.

- Citizens are able to apply for registration of their marriage fully online without visiting the office of the local body. Wife and husband can even complete the registration from different locations and download the certificate from anywhere in the world. This has been made possible by the introduction of video KYC which is a unique feature introduced first time in the country. Above 15000 marriages have so far been registered using this feature in Kerala.

- Kerala is one of the first states in the country to successfully implement digital building plan mapping. K- SMART facilitates the expedited issuance of building permits to the public by digitally preparing information on plots and buildings using GIS technology. Almost 70% of the buildings come under the low-risk category (Below 10 meters in height and 330 sq.mts in area) and permits are issued in under 10 seconds on K- SMART.

- Before planning to purchase a plot, the general public is able to know within seconds about the various spatial regulations that are applicable to that particular plot through the 'Know your land' module in K-SMART.

- In a first-of-its-kind initiative anywhere in the country, K-SMART facilitates online mass petitioning by the public using the Public Grievance Redressal module. Under this provision, a person will be able to share a petition prepared by him/her with others in the form of a link. People can become part of that petition by simply clicking on the link. The status of the petition and details about further action taken on it will be delivered to each petitioner individually through a dedicated messaging system.

- K-SMART has been a boon to Non-Kerala Residents who were earlier forced to come to Kerala every time they needed a government service.

On a Mission

K-SMART is envisaged to have over 23 functional modules covering the entire gamut of services and functionalities of local governments. The process of making all the modules functional is progressing at a steady pace.

The vision of K-SMART is to create a comprehensive, integrated & intelligent data centric e- governance platform having combined features of an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Government Process Re-engineering (GPR) and Citizen Relationship Management (CRM) to establish a well governed & sustainable, people centered & service oriented, efficient & responsive, accountable & transparent, financially sound & competitive, smart & digital local governments towards ensuring Ease of Living for the people, Ease of Doing Businesses and Ease of Working for Employees. Additionally, cutting edge technologies like Geographic Information System rule engine, Block Chain Technology, Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, Cloud Analytics have been integrated into K-SMART application.

Logon to: https://ksmart.lsgkerala.gov.in/ui/web-portal for K-SMART Web Platform

Predictive Governance

The next step for K-SMART would be applying emerging technologies in governance. The government can put its enormous repository of data to greatest public advantage using these technologies. The servers of Information Kerala Mission store data of the Department of Local Self Government since 1947. Through Machine Learning, we can derive new patterns from these data and create new algorithms. The Block Chain Technology can be utilized for data security.

From e-governance, we can leap to Predictive Governance. This implies that the citizen need not apply for a service,

Guruvayur Municipality is famed for giving the maximum number of marriage certificates, owing to the scores of weddings taking place every day in Guruvayur temple. The majority of the couples getting married are from outside the district or even state. The Municipality had set up a dedicated counter in the premises of the temple to apply for marriage certificate. The newly-weds, straight after the ceremony, used to approach this counter or else they would have to revisit the city for this. After the introduction of K-SMART, it has become super easy for youngsters as they can apply from anywhere in the world.

the government, through data management, can know beforehand his need and deliver the service on time.

Once all the 23 modules of K-SMART become operational it will be a full-fledged application and will become capable of achieving predictive governance.

Functional Modules

1. Civil Registration (birth-death-marriage registration)
2. Business Facilitation (licenses for trade and industries)
3. Public Grievance Redressal
4. Citizen Welfare (including social security pension)
5. Tax (Property, Professional, Entertainment and other)
6. Building Regulation (Building Permits)
7. Know Your Land (Spatial Regulations)
8. Financial Management (records financial transactions in real time, making all transactions transparent)
9. HR Management (Employees Service Mapping)
10. Digital File Management
11. Meeting Management
12. Feedback

K-SMART STATISTICS AS ON 31/12/2024	
Details related to Files in K-SMART	**Count&%**
Total Files	27,72,193
Total Approved Files	20,74,540 (74.83%)
Holiday Approved Files	1,49,553
Outside Office Hours approved files	7,25,902
Closed Within 1 Hour	4,72,250
Closed Within 24 Hour	9,12,845
Total Birth Registration Related Files	6,14,600
Total Birth Registration Related Approved Files	5,29,211(86.1%)
Total Death Registration Related Files	1,26,799
Total Death Registration Related Approved Files	1,18,583(93.5%)
Total Marriage Registration Related Files	57,014
Total Marriage Registration Related Approved Files	48,865 (85.7%)
New Applied License Files applications	44572
Approved License Files	33575 (75.32%)
Renewal License Files applications	193503
Renewal approved	185414(95.8%)
Total Property tax related applications	892471
Approved applications	789018(88.40%)
Total Building Permit Applications	64922
Total Approved	45000(69.31%)
OTHER FEATURES	
Total Amount received through KSMART	1759,31,36,311
Total Buildings Generated by K-SMART	70,040
Maximum Door numbers in a single application	340
Total Building certificate generated	16,73,639
Highest transaction Amount in a single transaction	45,45,383
Total Number of Citizen KSMART Accounts	11,14,200
Total number of Organization Registration	10,189
Marriage Through Video e-KYC	15,487
Fastest Birth certificate–Irinjalakuda Municipality	6.45Min
Fastest Death certificate–Trivandrum Corporation	8.54Min
Fastest Marriage certificate– Guruvayur Municipality	23.56Min

Kerala's Journey To Total Digital Literacy

Suraj Shaji IAS
Director (Urban),
Principal Directorate,
Local Self Government
Department

Digi Keralam aimes to enhance digital literacy for all citizens aged 14 and above, adopting an inclusive approach that empowered entire families, rather than focusing solely on training one member per household.

Kerala has long been a leader in education, consistently setting benchmarks for the nation. The state's dedication to inclusive growth and empowerment has been exemplified by its educational achievements. In 1991, Kerala became the first state in India to achieve total literacy, a milestone that set an inspiring precedent. The state's continued focus on education is evident in its 2011 Census, which recorded Keralas' highest literacy rate in India at 93.91%. This was well above the national average, with the literacy rate for women at 91.98% and men at 96.02%, compared to the national averages of 65.46% for women and 82.14% for men.

However, in today's digital age, literacy extends beyond reading and writing. The rise of technology has ushered in a new form of literacy—digital literacy. This essential skill encompasses more than just basic computer or smart phone usage; it involves the ability to navigate the internet, engage with digital platforms, and use technology to access essential services. As technology becomes intertwined with nearly every aspect of life, digital literacy has become a crucial skill for people of all ages, impacting education, work, communication, and daily transactions.

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of digital skills. With schools, workplaces, and essential services moving online, access to technology and digital proficiency became more vital than ever. The pandemic also highlighted the digital divide, particularly in India, where a significant portion of the population lacked basic digital literacy. In response, the Indian government launched the Digital India initiative in 2015, aiming to create a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. This initiative introduced several digital literacy programs, including the National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) and the Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (DISHA), designed to equip citizens with essential digital skills.

In alignment with Digital India, Kerala launched its own campaign, Digi Keralam, to ensure that every citizen in the state became digitally literate. This initiative was inspired by

the success of the *Digi Pullampara* campaign, which made Pullampara the first Grama Panchayat in the country to achieve total digital literacy. Recognized nationally, Digi Pullampara became a model for the broader Digi Keralam program.

Digi Keralam aimed to achieve digital literacy for all citizens aged 14 and above, taking a broad and inclusive approach. Unlike many programs that focus on training one member per household, this initiative targeted entire families, ensuring that digital literacy reached a diverse group, including students, working professionals, and senior citizens. This inclusive model was key to its success, as it guaranteed that no one was left behind.

The implementation of Digi Keralam was organized in three key phases: data collection, training, and evaluation. During the first phase, local authorities conducted surveys to identify citizens without basic digital skills. This helps to ensure that the program reached those most in need. In the second phase, training sessions were provided to participants, covering essential skills such as smartphone usage, internet navigation, and online access to government services. The training was designed to be user-friendly and conducted in local languages to maximize engagement.

In 1991, Kerala became the first state in India to achieve total literacy.

The third phase focused on evaluating the participants' progress. After completing the training, participants were assessed through a mobile app and web portal, where they demonstrated their newfound skills by completing tasks such as using smart phones to access government portals or make digital transactions.

The success of Digi Keralam was largely due to the involvement of thousands of volunteers and local organizations. In true Kerala fashion, community participation played a central role, with over 2, 57,000 volunteers taking part in the initiative. Youth groups, Kudumbashree volunteers, Kerala State Literacy Mission Preraks, members of the Library Council, NSS, NCC, IEEE and various other organizations collaborated to ensure the program's success. Local government representatives and ward committees played an essential role in implementing the initiative, reaching every corner of the State.

Recognized nationally, Digi Pullampara became a model for the broader Digi Keralam program.

The results of Digi Keralam have been extraordinary. A survey was conducted involving 8,332,343 families (1, 50,64,296 individuals). As of the latest estimates, 21, 88,385 citizens who lacked digital literacy have been trained in smartphone usage, with 21, 84,985 passing the evaluation an impressive completion rate of 98%. This achievement makes Kerala the first state in India to attain total digital literacy, positioning it as a leader in digital empowerment.

Kerala's achievement in digital literacy is not only a testament to its educational commitment but also to its ability to leverage technology for social empowerment. By ensuring that all its citizens are digitally literate, Kerala paves the way for a more inclusive and digitally connected future.

Looking ahead, Kerala's success serves as a model for other states and regions to follow. With over 98% of its population now digitally literate, the state is leading the way in digital education and laying the foundation for a digitally empowered society. Through initiatives like Digi Keralam, stare has demonstrated that with the right vision, collaboration, and determination, it's possible to ensure that every citizen has the skills necessary to thrive in the digital world.

Kerala once again leading the Nation

Gopakumar M.
Senior Superintendent, LSGD
Principal Directorate

"Service to mankind is the best form of worship"
-Mahatma Gandhi

The Government of Kerala has recognised that the services required for the safe life are often not available for some people and a marginalised section of the society is left behind. In Kerala ,about 13% of the population is elderly , about 7.5% of the population is bed ridden patients and people with deadly diseases and about 2.4% of the population is differently abled and about 2% is extremely poor .These sections of the population are often without access to essential services in a timely manner. To the people who are disadvantaged due to various reasons such as old age, serious illness, extreme poverty , lack of knowledge and other helpless conditions and do not get proper government services , the Government of Kerala has started DOORSTEP SERVICE DELIVERY (Vathilppadi

Sevanam) project with the aim of carrying out activities under the supervision of Local Self Government Institutions and with the help of volunteers to deliver the services in a timely manner.

The meeting on 18.01.2021 chaired by the Chief Minister of Kerala , Sri. Pinarayi Vijayan, discussed the procedures regarding the implementation of the project. According to the decision of the said discussion, the Government has issued the guidelines regarding the implementation of the project . .

5 services are included as the first phase of the project. Most of these services are available through Akshaya Kendras, but the scheme aims to help those who cannot reach the Akshaya Kendras in time due to physical disabilities or old age.

1. Mustering

The Local bodies have implemented the system of going to homes to conduct the mustering for pensioners who

are suffering from physical disabilities or old age. The project is in a way that the Local Bodies will bear the additional fees that have to be paid in Akshaya Kendras.

2. Life Certificate

The project envisages to get life certificate for those who cannot do mustering through biometric system by bringing them to the concerned Officer or bringing the Officer to the beneficiaries' house with the help of volunteers.

3. Social Security Pension

It is envisaged that the volunteers or the concerned persons of the Akshaya Kendra , go to the beneficiaries house with a laptop and upload the completed application through online or submit the application directly to the Local Self Government Institutions.

4. CMDRF

Assistance from the Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund – It is envisaged that the volunteers or the concerned persons of the Akshaya Kendra ,go to the beneficiaries house with a laptop and submit the application through online.

5. Life Saving Medicines

The project aims to find money to buy medicine for those who are unable to buy medicine and deliver the medicine to their home or deliver the medicine to their home from Palliative or NCD Clinics.

Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries are mainly those who are included in the list prepared by the Local Bodies including the extreme poor, social security pension beneficiaries, family of children coming to BUDS school, vayomitram beneficiaries and other eligible persons identified through Grama Sabha, Ward Sabha or Ward Council . This list is a Dynamic Database.

The Local bodies have implemented the system of going to homes to conduct the mustering for pensioners who are suffering from physical disabilities or old age.

Co-Ordination

A committee including the LSGI secretary, health inspector or health supervisor, SHO of the concerned Police Station, VEO , ICDS Supervisor, representative of Akshaya Kendra, representative of palliative Committee, representative of elderly, representative of the organisations and institutions and representative of the prominent persons of the society will co-ordinate the activities. An official from the LSGI is the Co-Ordinator , a dedicated volunteer is the general convenor and the representative of Akshaya Kendra is the joint convenor of the Committee

Finance

A separate joint account must be opened in favour of the President/Chairperson/Mayor and the Co-Ordinator . Local bodies can make special fund collection for this purpose and deposit in the joint account. More over LSGI's has the power to formulate special projects for doorstep service delivery. For that Grama Panchayath can utilise up to one lakh rupees , municipalities can utilise up to 2 lakhs and municipal corporation can utilise up to 5 lakhs rupees from their fund. In addition to that CSR fund , Sponsorship, Donations etc can also be used for the project. Special guidelines have been issued on financialmatters .

The Government decided to include more services and to include more beneficiaries from different sectors by elaborating the project in the second phase. In this scheme we can see the will power of the State Government to fulfil the goal that , there should not be a single person who faces delay in accessing government services.

This is just a beginning...... Long way to go....

The Government decided to include more services and to include more beneficiaries from different sectors by eloborating the project in the secone phase.

Mending Lives

Dhanuja Kumari
Haritha Karma Sena member and Writer

I am a resident of Rajaji Nagar colony, earlier known as *Chengalchoola*, in Thampanoor ward of Thiruvananthapuram district. The most important decision that transformed my life was to first join Kudumbashree and then Haritha Karma Sena. It has been truly the biggest blessing of my life. And I can vouch for the fact that scores of women in our state feels the same way.

All my life, I have seen women struggling to make ends meet with the income that the men in the family brought. With this income, they ran the household, met children's education expenses, health care expenses, unexpected emergencies and what not. On most days, it fell short and the women had to find the extra money, pulling them into a perennial juggle of household management. And whatever needs they had or desires they nurtured were eternally brushed under the carpet. With the relentless chastisement that they received right from infantile days, these poor souls were conditioned to always sacrifice their interests for the larger good. And make no mistake; this was the plight of educated women too.

That's when a movement called Kudumbashree extended a ray of hope for us. Women, educated and uneducated, started earning income on their own and what a huge difference it brought to their lives! Today, the money we earn defines our freedom, our dignity. We have the freedom to spend it on our own. We do not have to depend on anyone else. Many members of Haritha Karma Sena are not much educated, but today they are far ahead in calculations. For they earn not in thousands, but in ten thousands and more. There are Haritha Karma Sena members who earn up to ninety thousand rupees a month.

I work in *Kudappanakunnu Chettivalakam* ward. The Haritha Karma Sena here consists of 13 people. There are 2900 houses in the ward. The initial days of Haritha Karma Sena were a real struggle. There was a form of resistance from many. We had terrible experiences from the residents and that too, to my surprise, mostly from educated people. Many have ridiculed us and some has even intimidated us. But they didn't know how many families in Kerala are living happily with this income. Slowly things started changing for the better and now we receive great acceptance. Today, we have an income of around twenty thousand rupees a month.

We are eternally grateful to our government for starting such a movement and we are extremely satisfied with our work. Self-reliance is the key to self-esteem and today we walk with our heads held high.

Brahmapuram Yard Now-February 2025

Information &
Public Relations Department
Government of Kerala

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Every Donation Counts

Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund Account

No.	Bank	Account Number	IFSC Code
1.	State Bank of India	39251566695	SBIN0070028
2.	South Indian Bank	0721053000003020	SIBL0000721
3.	Federal Bank	10210100422271	FDRL0001021
4.	HDFC Bank Ltd	50100350210557	HDFC0002485
5.	ICICI Bank	626201089884	ICIC0006262
6.	CSB Bank Ltd	00 9603981212190001	CSBK0000096
7.	Axis Bank	920010023834712	UTIB0000784
8.	Dhanalakshmi Bank	003700100156782	DLXB0000037
9.	IDBI Bank Ltd	0889104000111454	IBKL0000889
10.	Indian Overseas Bank	009901000002020	IOBA0000099
11.	Union Bank of India	502902010900782	UBIN0550299
12.	Canara Bank	5842132000007	CNRB0005842
13.	Kotak Mahindra Bank	1815162037	KKBK0009206
14.	Bank Of Baroda	29860100006714	BARB0PEROOR
15.	Standard Chartered Bank	43710072419	SCBL0036099
16.	Kerala Gramin Bank	40341101051311	KLGB0040341
17.	IndusInd Bank	159900002020	INDB0001599
18.	Bank Of India	853810110007599	BKID0008538
19.	Punjab National Bank	3301000104118534	PUNB0330100
20.	Kerala Bank	110110801000339	KSBK0000101
21.	Central Bank of India	5652206185	CBIN0280937
22.	UCO Bank	02880110077641	UCBA0000288
23.	Indian Bank	7839343398	IDIB000P030
24.	Covid-TSB A/c (1475)	799010100191475	
25.	Special Treasury Savings Bank	799010100193172	

This contribution is eligible for deduction under Section 80G of the Income Tax Act.

Let's join hands to rebuild lives and restore everything that has been shattered.

Contribute to the Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund, which ensures that your assistance reaches those in need, transparently and is subject to auditing

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