



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF KERALA -A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

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ABSTRACT

Kerala has achieved some material conditions of living that were reflected in the indicators of social development and they are comparable to those of developed countries, even though the income of every individual in the state is nominal. The paper tries to examine the features of social development of Kerala with a critical appraisal. This paper is descriptive and analytical in nature based purely on second hand information. To examine social development of Kerala, the researcher primarily depends on Literacy Rate, Life Expectancy and Infant Mortality Rate - the important parameters of PQLI.

KEYWORDS Dropout, Education, Foreign Remittance, Health, Infant Mortality Rate, Life Expectancy, Literacy Rate, Social Development.

INTRODUCTION

The social development achieved by Kerala particularly in the areas of education, health, housing and sanitation is praised not only in India but also all over the world. The achievements of Kerala in some areas of social sector is equal to the development of the most advanced countries of the world (Salim 1997). The development witnessed

by Kerala in the last few decades is sometimes even called a model of Development which was formulated by the Centre for Development Studies (CDS), Thiruvananthapuram in 1970s. Even the World Development Report acclaimed that the Kerala Model of Development is adaptable for the low-income countries of

the world to raise their standard of living. The economists, who studied this model of development praised it as a hope to mankind to fight against the worsening global poverty, squalor, ill-health and illiteracy (Alan,B.1989 quoted by P.P.Pillai 1994).

The social development achieved by Kerala is a paradoxical one. That is, Kerala achieved high level of social development with low level of economic development. Generally the social development of a nation depends on its economic development (Govindan et.al., 2007). So the social development achieved by Kerala is totally contrary to the conventional model of development developed by Colin Clark (1940) and Simon Kuznets (1979). The conventional model of development passes through three stages. In Stage 1, the entire economic activity of the country revolves around agriculture and allied activities and a large majority of people find their employment in the primary sector. Stage 2, comprises that there may be a shift in both economic activity and employment in favour of the secondary or industrial sector and in stage 3, economic activity and employment may be further shifted in favour of service or tertiary sector. In Kerala, the development particularly social development has occurred even before the growth in the productive sectors and domestic income.

Objectives of the Study

1. To observe the features of social development of Kerala
2. To examine the achievements of Kerala in social sector
3. To examine the reasons of high social development of Kerala
4. To analyse the trend of social development of Kerala
5. To examine the apprehensions of lop-sided social development

Methodology

This study is descriptive and analytical in nature. The study is purely based on second hand information collected from books, journals, research papers, Census Reports of India and Kerala Economic Review of various years. For the study the statistical tools tables, diagrams and simple averages were applied.

THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS OF KERALA

The important parameters of Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI-developed by Morris D.Morris) are:

- **Literacy Rate**
- **Life Expectancy**
- **Infant Mortality Rate**

In PQLI Kerala stands at par with the developed countries of the world but at the same time the productive sectors, namely agriculture and industry are totally neglected. Therefore the achievements of high physical quality of life (in the form of

education, medical care, housing and sanitation)in the midst of stagnation or near stagnation in agriculture and industrial sector is what the Kerala social development model is all about.

The conceptual features of social development of Kerala

- Economic growth is not a pre-condition for economic development (A country can attain higher physical quality of life even at low economic growth and domestic income)
- Socio-economic awareness of the people may be a pre-condition for economic awareness.
- The transfer of land resources from landlords to tenants or agricultural labours may be a pre-condition for

sustaining social justice which in turn leads to economic justice and prosperity

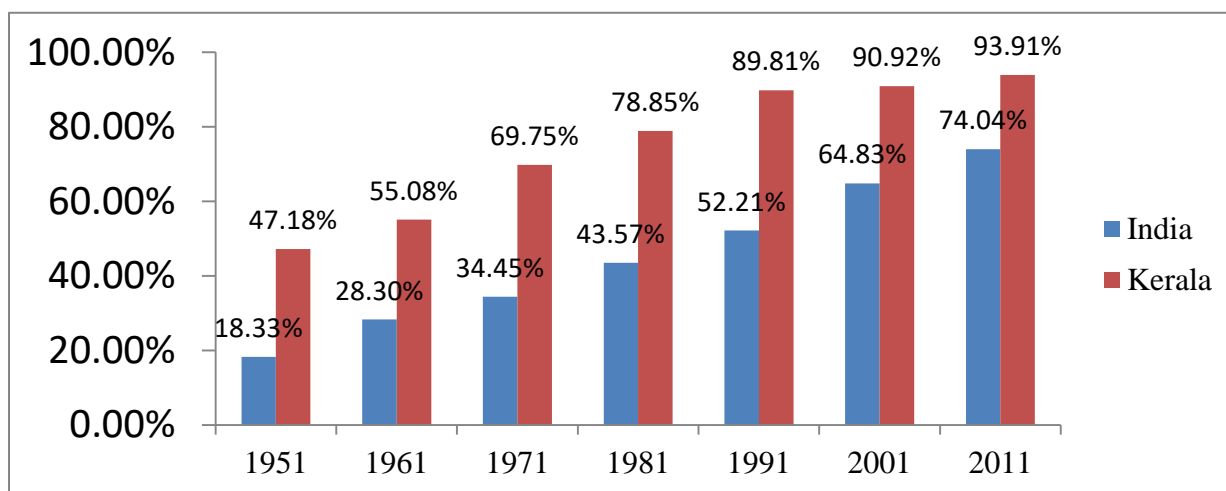
- Rapid investment in social infrastructure like education, health care, housing, road and communication along with productive infrastructure is a pre-condition for development.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF KERALA

High Literacy and Education

Even at the time of independence, the rate of literacy of Kerala was far above the national average, being 40.7 percent as against 16.7 percent at the national level. As per 2011 census Kerala has 93.91 percent literacy while 70.04 percent is the all India rate. The following figure.1. exhibits the trend of literacy rate of Kerala and India.

Fig. 1. Trends of Literacy Rate: India vs Kerala



Source: Census Report of India 2011

Literacy Gap

In 1951, the literacy gap of Kerala was 21.92 percent which has reduced to 4.04 percent in 2011. The reduction in literacy gap is the sign of gender equality in education in Kerala. The trend of literacy of men and women and literacy gap is given in the following table 1.

Table.1. Literacy Gap of Kerala (1951-2011)- Percent

Census Years	Male	Female	Literacy Gap
1951	58.35	36.43	21.92
1961	64.89	45.56	19.33
1971	77.13	62.53	14.6
1981	84.56	73.36	11.2
1991	93.62	86.17	7.42
2001	94.24	87.72	6.52
2011	96.02	91.98	4.04

Source: Census Report of India 2011

Dropout Rate

As per the MHRD , Govt. of India report on Educational Statistics at a Glance, 2018, in India the average dropout rate of primary school students is 4.13%, upper primary school students is 4.03% and 17.06% in secondary level. But Kerala has achieved the lowest dropout rate of school students among the Indian States. In the year 2017-18, dropout ratio among school students in Kerala was only 0.16%.(Kerala Economic Review 2018).

Health Care

Kerala has made commendable achievement in the areas of health care and immunization, and created a wide network of hospitals under govt., private and co-operative sectors. The services of doctors and hospitals are spread all over the state. Generally Keralites are more health conscious and hence Kerala stands first among Indian states in the provision of hospital beds and fourth (1:535) in doctor-population ratio (Kerala Economic Review 2018)

Success in Family Welfare

Kerala's performance in family planning and family welfare is commendable. The execution of family welfare programmes is not an easy task in a rigid community. The decadal growth rate of population of the state is only 4.86% while it is 17.64% in India (Kerala Economic Review 2016). Since 1971, Kerala proceeded towards the third stage of Demographic Transition, when the rest of the country lagged behind in the second stage. The demographic indicators of Kerala and India is given in Table.2.

Table.2. Demographic Indicators- Kerala and India

Indicators	Kerala	India
Population (in crore)	3.34	121.06
Decadal Growth Rate of Population (%)	4.86	17.64
Sex Ratio	1084	943
Child Sex Ratio	964	919
Birth Rate	14.3	20.4
Death Rate	7.6	6.4
Infant Mortality Rate (28 days-1 year)	10	34
Neo Natal Mortality Rate (0-28 days)	6	24
Child Mortality Rate (1 year – 5	2	9

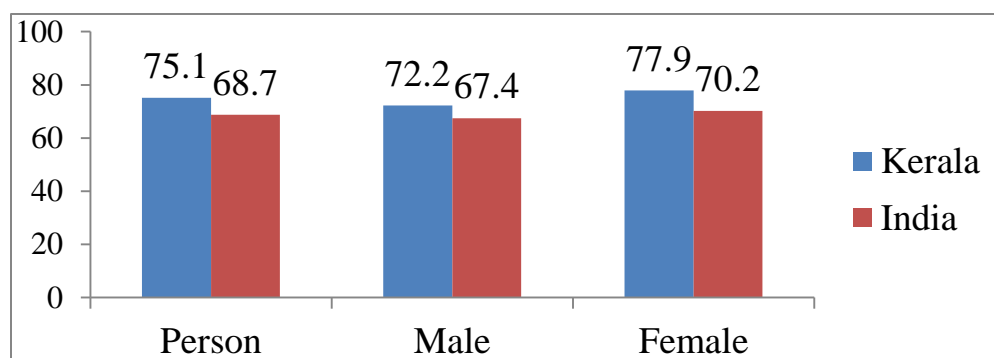
Year		
Couple Protection Rate	31.8	40.4
Maternal Mortality Rate (in 100000 live birth)	46	130

Source: Kerala Economic Review 2018

Long Life Expectancy

The ultimate aim of every human being is to lead a long and healthy life. In Kerala, the average life expectancy or longevity of males increased from 39.9 years in 1951 to 72.2 years in 2018 and that of females from 42.3 years to 77.9 years over the same period. The following Figure.2.depicts the life expectancy of Kerala and India.

Fig. 2. Expectancy of Life at Birth-Kerala and India



Source: Kerala Economic Review 2018

FACTORS BEHIND THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF KERALA
Non-formal Education of Kerala

A kind of non-formal system of education existed in all the three regions – Travancore, Cochin and Malabar before the

formation of Kerala. In every village, private individuals called ‘Assans’ (means teachers) conducted classes in their homes or nearby places for children and taught them to read and write. This system was

known as 'Kudippallikkudams'. Children learnt to read and write in vernacular language (Malayalam) and do basic arithmetic. A sub-caste namely, 'Ezhuthassans' (meaning teachers of writing) helped the children to learn writing. This informal system of education was too helpful in spreading literacy in those olden days. However, this was not accessible to the lower caste Hindus, as most of them were kept away from the society as 'untouchables'. This indigenous system of education that prevailed in Kerala in the 18th century and earlier, had contributed significantly to the increase in the literacy level among the high-caste Hindus, Brahmins and Nairs, and probably in a section of the Ezhavas and Ganakas too.

Early Formal Education

Role of Christian Missionaries

The Roman Catholic Missionaries arrived in Kerala by 1543, and started seminaries, theological institutions and primary schools. The real efforts in providing education were started with the arrival of the Protestant Missionaries (English) by the early 19th century. They believed that providing education is a necessary pre-requisite for propagating religion. The Church Mission Society of the Protestants therefore started a primary school in 1806. By 1840, there were 94

schools run by Protestant Missionaries in Travancore. They started the first girls' school in Kerala by the year 1819 (Jaleel 1982)

Role of Princely States

The proclamation of the Queen of Travancore in 1871 was the first bold step in the educational history of Kerala, which paved the way for modern educational system and also offered financial support to the private sectors in education. The government of Travancore then started a girls' school in 1859 and a training school for women teachers in 1887. Another remarkable historical event in the field of education was the development of the Scheme of T.Madhava Rao (Divan of Travancore) in the 1860s. An important feature of this Scheme was the linking of government jobs with educational qualifications. And this caused a major break in the existing practice of confining government appointments to high-caste Hindus and to the privileged families. As part of this development scheme, the government of Travancore started 29 vernacular schools during 1866-69. By 1881, there were a total of 598 vernacular schools in Travancore. By 1905, this went up to 1483. In 1904 the Travancore government declared that education for all the children irrespective of caste, creed or

race was the primary responsibility of the state. In the early 1940s, the government also introduced the mid-day meal programme in schools. The Cochin state also had similar developments in the field of education.

Due to the wide spread of indigenous schools and enormous support from British rulers, even as early as 1890 the literacy rate in the Cochin State was the highest in India. However, the condition in Malabar was different. The British rulers did not follow any positive policy towards the educational boost up of Malabar. However, the situation slowly changed after the formation of Kerala state.

Role of Community Leaders

Whenever there was a proposal for opening a school, the community leaders found no difficulty in getting funds. Local people liberally contributed in the form of land, timber and money and in kind. Community leaders carried out door-to-door fund mobilization drives over months and months and started schools, colleges and hospitals. These mobilization drives had two impacts, viz., it created money and materials and also an awareness among the people about the necessity of education. In Kerala each community had one organization to fight for their rights and efficient leaders led them. For instance, the establishment of Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP)

Yogam in 1903 and the pioneering work of their leaders Sree Narayana Guru, Kumaran Assan and Dr.Palpu helped to spread education among the Ezhava / Thiyya community. The Hindu agrestic slave community had Ayyankali as their leader. The establishment of the Nair Service Society (NSS) in 1914 and the activities undertaken by its leaders, particularly, Sri.Mannath Padmanabhan made education available to economically poor Nairs and other sections of the society. The Christian community had Mr. Kuriakose and the Muslim community had Sri. Abdul Khader Moulavi as leaders. The Muslim Educational Society (MES) was established in 1964 and it established educational institutions for the benefit of Muslim community. These organizations and the leaders created awareness among the people of their community on the importance of education and schools, colleges, hospitals etc.

Role of Foreign Remittances

Human resource is the biggest asset of Kerala. Keralites are bold enough to go anywhere and everywhere for a job. More than half of the Indian migrants in the Middle East are from Kerala. In per capita income Kerala remained in the 9th position during 1970-1992. But, the per capita consumption expenditure had moved from the 10th position to the 4th position during the same period. This rise was primarily the

result of foreign remittances by Kerala workers who had migrated to the Gulf region after 1974 oil boom. In fact, in 2007, Malappuram district was the place of origin of 336,000 emigrants or about 18.2 per cent of the total number of emigrants from Kerala. Huge foreign remittances led to a drastic decline in the poverty ratio and made it possible to a large section of the people to seek better education and health (Jaleel.1997)

Early Health Practices of Kerala

Kerala has a long history of indigenous medical system, called the 'Ayurveda system of medicine'. There were well known families throughout Kerala known as 'Vaidyans' (Doctors), who practised medicine as private practitioners even without the support from the government. The state of Travancore introduced vaccination against small pox by the middle of the 19th century.

APPREHENSIONS IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF KERALA

At present Kerala's economy is in the midst of appreciations and apprehensions associated with the social development of Kerala.

Chronic Unemployment:

Unemployment is all-pervasive both for males and females in rural as well as in urban areas. About 45.2 lakhs job seekers had registered in employment exchanges of

the state of which 25 lakhs are females as on 30.06.2009. The unemployment rate in the state is more than that in India for male and female

Unemployment among the Educated

The rising rates of unemployment among the educated in Kerala are a strong negative attribute of the development of Kerala. Surplus output of arts and science graduates, generous subsidization for education, preference for white-collar jobs, preference for public sector jobs etc. are regarded as the most important factors for the increasing unemployment among the educated.

Increasing Morbidity and Deteriorating Public Health Services

In spite of high health status indicators, it is a paradox that Kerala has been identified as the state with highest prevalence of morbidity in India. 181 out of every thousand people in Kerala are morbid due to illness. However, some experts in the field of social and community medicines opined that high awareness among the people of Kerala was responsible for the hike in morbidity. And it is also argued that high morbidity rates are due to decline in mortality rates.

Agricultural Stagnation

Share of agriculture and allied activities in GDP in Kerala is continuously decreasing. In 2012-13, there was 13.77

percent share of Agriculture to GDP in Kerala and it diminishes to 10.04 percent in 2017-18. The following Table 3 provides the trend of agriculture and the share of allied sectors to GDP in Kerala and India.

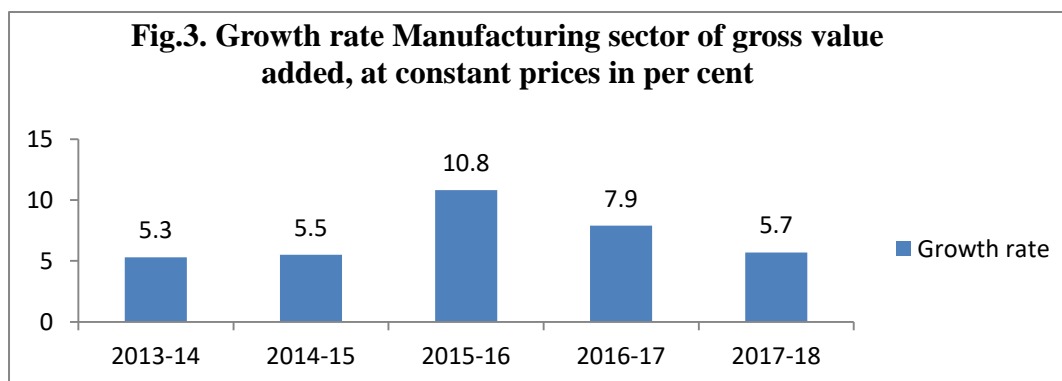
Table.3. Share of Agriculture and Allied activities (India and Kerala)

Year	Share of Agriculture and Allied Sectors in VAGDP (India)	Share of Agriculture and Allied Sectors in SVAGDP (Kerala)
2012-13	17.8	13.77
2013-14	17.7	12.37
2014-15	16.5	11.92
2015-16	15.4	10.74
2016-17	15.3	10.26
2017-18	NA	10.04

Source: National Accounts Statistics 2018, GoI and Directorate of Economics and Statistics, GoK

Stagnation in Industrial/Manufacturing Sector

A striking feature of Kerala's economy is the relatively low size of its manufacturing sector. Although manufacturing contributes only 7.5 per cent to Kerala's GSDP, this sector employs approximately 14.0 per cent of the State's total workforce in 2011-12. The trend of growth rate of Kerala's manufacturing sector is depicted in the following Figure 3.



Source: Kerala Economic Review 2018

More over Kerala's economy is facing the problem of power deficiency ie., Kerala's record is below the all-India average in the crucial sector of power. Public sector inefficiency- prior to 2001, the government had decided to close down nine State Level Public Enterprises (SLPEs). However, the process of their shutting down is still under way. The other hurdles to the

development of Kerala are frequent hartals and bandhs, environmental deterioration, poor waste management, obstruction of technological advancement, poor allocation of central funds, and state finances, practice of dowry system, consumerist culture, higher suicidal rate, low rate of women's participation in work, shortage of national education institutes and so on.

CONCLUSION

The social development of Kerala may be regarded as a development without proper foundation in terms of economic advancement. Many researchers acclaimed that Kerala's social development model can be adopted by countries, with lower income but it has to be noted that, Kerala had a proper foundation in the prime areas of social sectors like education and health. Kerala has laid the foundation by the leadership of efficient community leaders, efficient education and health policies of princely states, efforts and sacrifices of farsighted Christian missionaries before the formation of Kerala state and adequate foreign remittances after the oil boom of Middle East in 1974.

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