

# Kerala Model of Development

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## About Kerala

- Modern Kerala formally emerged as a constituent state of the Indian Union on 1 November 1956, comprising three regions: Travancore, Cochin, and Malabar.
- The Linguistic Reorganization Committee, which recommended the reorganization of India's states based on the majority's common language, created modern Kerala as a state in which Malayalam was the unifying language.
- Kerala 1.5 percent of the total land area in the country, supporting 4.5 percent of the nation's population.

## Kerala Model of Development

- Kerala, a model for other Indian states, has achieved social and educational development comparable to most Western nations; this achievement is not yet matched by industrial growth or economic development.
- Its excellent record in education, health, and land redistribution provides a unique case for arguing that the basis for true development is social and human, rather than economic.
- At independence, Kerala had a literacy rate of 51%, while the national average was 18%. In the post-independence period also, Kerala improved its health and educational parameters because of:
  - Ruled for many years by a democratically elected communist government which broke the backbone of the feudal system by introducing land reforms. It spent heavily on public healthcare and education. Focus was more on redistribution rather than income growth.

- Role of christian missionary, Shree Narayan Guru, Kingdom of Travancore in spreading education.
- As of 2003, Kerala enjoyed a literacy rate of over 90 percent, only slightly higher among males than females.
- Kerala pioneered equitable land reforms and elected India's first Communist state government by democratic means in 1957.
- The population growth rate in Kerala is the lowest in India (0.9 percent per annum), competing with China's near zero population growth rate. Population pressure on Kerala's meager land is very high, however, with 819 persons per square mile (the third highest in India).
- The low level of infant mortality (14 per thousand) is an indicator of the excellent health standards of the population, among both males and females. Life expectancy, averaging over 70 years for males and 75 for females, is the highest in India.
- The social status of Kerala's women is very high, supported by nuclear families, and Kerala has a high rate of females in the workforce.
- The state also recorded the lowest rate of child labor in the country.
- The younger population of Kerala is well trained in both software and hardware programming. Many people born in Kerala work in other parts of India, as well as in the Gulf countries, Europe, and North America.
- One in four Kerala households has received some of its income from the Gulf states since 1973. Of the total of some 40 million people born in Kerala, more than 8 million were living and working outside Kerala State in 2003.
- The per capita income in Kerala, however, is estimated at 19,460 rupees, compared to 16,047 rupees at the national level.
- All the villages and towns of Kerala are electrified and 91 percent of the rural habitations have access to

potable water.

- According to the National Sample Survey, the population below the poverty line constituted only 12.5 percent, the lowest of any state in the country.
- At the political level, Kerala has a healthy tradition of bipolar coalition politics in the backdrop of a multiparty system. The Indian National Congress and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) are the two leading parties.
- Though in 2003 54 percent of Kerala's population were Hindus, it had the largest concentration of Muslims (25 percent) after Jammu and Kashmir. It also had 20 percent Christians and a small but ancient Jewish minority.

### **Why Kerala's high levels of human development are not matched by industrial growth ?**

- The economy became stagnant and nonproductive in many sectors, except tourism.
- Globalization policies had already affected its traditional industries, such as coir, hand-loomed textiles, and cashew nuts, thereby multiplying the number of unemployed in the state (25 percent in 2003, the highest in India). Nearly 4.2 million people were unemployed, and the proportion of nonworkers (including children, the elderly, and the disabled) in Kerala (68 percent) is higher than the national average (61 percent).
- The high rate of education in the region has resulted in a brain drain, with many citizens migrating to other parts of the world for employment. The job market in Kerala is forcing many to relocate to other places.