

# KERALA MODEL DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATION:AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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## Abstract

The State of Kerala is known all over the world as an educationally advanced part of the country which has many outstanding achievements in the field of education, health, habitat, land reforms etc, generally constitutes what is widely known as ‘Kerala Model of Development’. Kerala is the only State in the country with very high Human Development Index of 0.709 in all the three dimensions of Health, Education and Income both with and without adjustment for inequality. The index of education, health and per capita income is the symbol of social development and are inter-dependent. Together better education and health has an implication on better per capita income. In fact, Kerala is far ahead of the national objectives in the Primary and Secondary education and is striving for attaining international standards in Higher education, Technical education and Research. Deviating from its trajectory, the Twelfth Plan document states that the private sector will be encouraged to establish larger and higher quality institutions. It also states that new models of Public–Private Partnerships (PPP) in higher education will be encouraged. The Kerala model shows that comprehensive interventions pertaining to nutrition, health, sanitation, and early stimulation can help to achieve sustainable growth in human development. Even the Incheon Declaration expects member states to spend 4-6 per cent of their GDP on education to achieve SDG4. India is a signatory to this declaration. In contrast to the rest of India and most other low-income countries, people in Kerala enjoy education and health at levels close to those in the West. Women in Kerala are generally far better off than women in the rest of India, and people at all levels of society have greater access to education – as well as a greater say in their governance – than can be found in any other Indian state.

## Introduction

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in Article 26(1) and (2) by the General Assembly of the UN emphasis in clear terms that every individual has the right to education and that it should aim for holistic development which in turn would evolve respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Even Seven decades after the UDHR, 58 million children are out of school globally and more than 100 million children get eliminated from the schooling system before completing primary education. India tops the list of countries with out-of-school children. The 2011 Census affirmed that 84 million children in the country do not go to school at all and 47 million children get eliminated even before Class 10.

The state should defray the entire cost of the education of its people in order that there might be no backwardness in the speed of enlightenment among them, that by diffusing education, they might become better subjects and public servants...”

The above statement is neither from any UN declaration nor from the budget speech of any finance minister of a “welfare” state. This is from Kerala’s royal rescript by the regent queen of Travancore, Rani Gouri Parvati Bai in 1817. Even after 200 years, the discourse in the economics of education continues to oscillate between defraying education and education cess. The historic royal rescript of 1817 proclaimed education as the “responsibility” of the state. Simultaneously, it emphasized that “political will” is more important than the political economy to decide the expenditure on education.

Education with all its idealist moorings, when it comes to its institutionalization, is shaped by the political economy of the state. But, why is it that an ideological dispensation that fought and won the election on a plank of nation-first and nationalism and is considerate of “right” education in nation-building, is unable to negotiate with the compulsions of a liberal economy. Nation and nationalism with an ethnic and religious core is the philosophical and political perspective that has guided the formulation of New Education Policy, 2020. It is strange that while Travancore, a princely state in colonial India, could appreciate the genuineness of public funding of mass education, the government of a democratic welfare state cannot realise the very NEP it has produced.

### **Kerala Model Development in Education**

The State of Kerala is known all over the world as an educationally advanced part of the country which has many outstanding achievements in the field of education, health, habitat, land reforms etc, generally constitutes what is widely known as ‘Kerala Model of Development’. Kerala model is defined as the Kerala’s high standard of living (comparable to US or Europe) at very low per capita income which is only 1/80th of US citizens’ per capita income (Ratcliffe 1978, Amin 1991, Frank and Chasin 1994). Much of the uniqueness of the Kerala model of Development is contributed by the pre-eminent achievements of Kerala in the education and health sectors.

Kerala is the first State to have achieved universal literacy. In this respect, Kerala is often compared not only with the other Indian states or developing countries but also with some of the developed countries. Education accounts for more than one third of the total revenue expenditure of the state Education sector is also one of the biggest employers in the state. A sum of rupees 1325.7 crore had been earmarked for Education sector during XIth five year plan.

### Educational data of Kerala State

Category	Govt	Aided	Unaided	Total
No. of schools (LP, UP, HS)	4693	7216	1042	12951
No. of students (1 to 10)	1168586	2158452	389859	3716897

Category		KERALA
Aided	HS	1432
	UP	1873
	LP	3911
	TOTAL	7216

Category		KERALA
Un-Aided	HS	458
	UP	242
	LP	342
	TOTAL	1042

Category		KERALA
Total	HS	3118
	UP	2985
	LP	6848
	TOTAL	12951

Source: DPI, schools 2019-20, enrolment 2019-20 (provisional)  
<http://www.education.kerala.gov.in/>

Kerala is known for its highest literacy rate in the country and one hundred per cent enrolment of children in primary and secondary education. With around 46 lakh students, 16,000 schools and 1.69 lakh teachers, the student-teacher ratio and student-school ratio reveal a desirable scenario. With more than 20,000 non-teaching staff, the teachers are not burdened with non-teaching or administrative work and are free to concentrate on their pedagogical roles. Along with another flagship programme for adult education, Athulyam helped Kerala to achieve universalization of primary education.

This universalization could be achieved with the prioritization of education by successive governments. It is the fruition of the total literacy campaign started by the then Left Front government in 1989. The successful implementation of PRISM (Promoting Regional Schools to International Standards through Multiple

Interventions) and whooping allocations to develop one school in each assembly segment to international standards is what can be seen as the reason behind the tectonic shift of 2.35 lakh students from private to public schools. Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen has written extensively on the “Kerala Model” of education and attributes Kerala’s economic and social success to the consistency with which school education expanded, based on sustained public policies and action.

The state government has succeeded in bringing world class education facilities in schools in every village in the state. The real beneficiaries of the general education sector are poor people. The students in every village in the state will now get world class education due to the government’s initiatives. Hence the government introduced a rejuvenation mission to protect government schools and students belonging to marginalized communities. Now, fresh enrolments in government schools have shown a spurt. And there is a positive change in the foundation of school education and the attitude of the new generation towards the future Kerala. In future, they will be fully skilled and talented due to the quality education provided in government schools. In the last five years, the excellence of students in education was evident.

### Literacy Rate as per 2011 Census

As per the 2011 census, Kerala has a literacy rate of 93.91%. In Kerala, 96.02 % men and 91.98 % of women are literate as against 82.14% of men and 65.46% of women at the all India level. Among Districts, Kottayam tops in literacy with 97.2% followed by Pathanamthitta with 96.5%. Lowest literacy rates are in Wayanad and Palakkad with 89% and 89.3% respectively. Even the lowest literacy rate of Wayanad (89%) is higher than the national average.

#### Literacy Rate

Year	Literacy rate
1951	47.18
1961	55.08
1971	69.75
1981	78.85
1991	89.81
2001	90.92
2011	93.91

### Literacy Rate as Per 2011 Census

Rural	Urban
92.98%	95.10%

### Literacy Rate of Male and Female

Gender	Rural	Urban
Male	95.36%	96.95%
Female	90.81%	93.43%

### Enrolment in Kerala

The All-India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) in guidance of MHRD performs a survey showing multiple factors related to higher education in India as well as in each state. Kerala provides higher education at multiple levels. The table below depicts the enrolment of students at various levels in Kerala as per AISHE final report 2018-19.

### Enrolment at Various Levels

Course Level	Number of Enrolment
UG	641914
Diploma	63190
PG Diploma	507
Certificate	2912
Integrated	4877
PG	39907
M.Phil	565
PhD.	3599
Total Enrolment	757471

Kerala is the only State in the country with very high Human Development Index of 0.709 in all the three dimensions of Health, Education and Income both with and without adjustment for inequality. The index

of education, health and per capita income is the symbol of social development and are inter-dependent. Together better education and health has an implication on better percapita income.

The table below reflects actual position of the per capita, education and health index of Kerala among its districts. As per the table, the per capita income is highest in Ernakulam followed by Kottayam and Thiruvananthapuram. Likewise, Kottayam lead in education index trailed by Parthanamthitta and Wayanad. In Health care amongst 14 districts, Idukki is followed by Kottayam and Thiruvananthapuram. Malappuram District with 33783 in percapita income, 0.772137 education index and health index of 0.647 is the least developed district in Kerala.

SL.	Districts	Per Capita Income	Education Index	Education Index
1	Thiruvananthapuram	57563	0.941539	1.222
2	Kollam	48795	0.924303	0.921
3	Pathanamthitta	56994	1.259546	0.928
4	Alappuzha	53535	0.978822	1.188
5	Kottayam	61668	1.39152	1.541
6	Idukki-	51367	1.187519	1.634
7	Ernakulam	79553	1.031705	0.997
8	Thrissur	56087	1.032621	1.032621
9	Palakkad	49825	0.966515	0.686
10	Malappuram	33783	0.772137	0.647
11	Kozhikode	50389	0.936743	0.854

12	Wayanadu	38341	1.122099	1.314
13	Kannur	50623	1.037223	0.759
14	Kasargod	44588	0.920151	1.364

Source: Census of India 2011

Development in the education sector is part of the government's '*Pothu Vidyabhyasa Samrakshana Yajnam*' (mission to protect public education). The projects under this mission aim to reshape public education in the state by ensuring quality education with skills that equip the state's students to compete with students around the world. The mission aims to regain lost public trust in government and state-aided schools, and provide free education to the entire student population of Kerala.

All 16,030 public schools in the state are now equipped with 3,74,274 IT equipment, including 1,19,055 laptops, 69,944 multimedia projectors, 23,098 projector screens, 4,545 LED TVs, 4,578 DSLR cameras, 4,720 Full HD webcams and 4,611 multi-function printers along with high-speed, broadband Internet connectivity to 12,678 schools, as per government figures.

The approach to learning itself is different. Rather than the traditional way, the students get a chance to experience what they are being taught using technology. Also, through continuous trainings and workshop, the education department ensures to improve the quality of teachers in government schools. Through these developments in infrastructure and quality of education, five lakh new students have enrolled in government schools in Kerala in the last three years. In the past, there were discussions in society about the closure of government schools. But now, the schools were being improved and attracting more students. Last year the government has dedicated 90 schools as "Centers of Excellence" and laying the foundation stone virtually for 54 school buildings as part of the government's Public Education Rejuvenation Campaign.

Significant schemes to explore possibilities of digital technology and innovations in the post-COVID scenario and tap the potential of the work-from-home culture was also proposed. In fact, Kerala is far ahead of the national objectives in the Primary and Secondary education and is striving for attaining international standards in Higher education, Technical education and Research. Deviating from its trajectory, the Twelfth Plan document states that the private sector will be encouraged to establish larger and higher quality institutions. It also states that new models of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) in higher education will be encouraged.

**Population (18 – 23 years) 2018 - 2019**

State	All Categories			SC			ST		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Kerala	1486785	1476319	2963104	134773	133546	268319	22592	23809	46401

**Number of Universities during Last 8 Years**

State	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
kerala	17	17	18	18	20	21	22	23

**College Indicators during Last 8 Years**

State	Number Of Colleges							
Kerala	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
		1033	1064	1151	1259	1302	1334	1306

**Estimated Enrolment in Colleges**

State	Post Graduate			Under Graduate		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Kerala	15782	55147	70929	262883	382284	645167

Successive governments in Kerala have increased the capital outlay to education and simultaneously decentralised financing of education through local bodies. The per capita expenditure on education is also on a steady rise. The Kerala model shows that comprehensive interventions pertaining to nutrition, health, sanitation, and early stimulation can help to achieve sustainable growth in human development. Even the Incheon Declaration expects member states to spend 4-6 per cent of their GDP on education to achieve SDG4. India is a signatory to this declaration.

However, the Union Budget reflects otherwise. The 2021 budget allocates only 2.75 per cent of the GDP to education. It is understandable that education being on Concurrent List needs to be prioritised more in the state budget. But the crunch in allocation is not only about the management of revenues and finances. Many reports and available data shows a rise in the privatisation of education with a large number of children being eliminated from the system at early stages, cost of education going up due to systemic inefficiencies.

## Conclusion

In contrast to the rest of India and most other low-income countries, people in Kerala enjoy education and health at levels close to those in the West. Women in Kerala are generally far better off than women in the rest of India, and people at all levels of society have greater access to education – as well as a greater say in their governance – than can be found in any other Indian state. Public provisioning of education facilities has long been the basis of Kerala's acclaimed development achievements. As it is well documented, historically, all the social reform and political movements in Kerala have encouraged school education as an effective tool against caste, gender and class discrimination. Kerala accepted early enough that “mass literacy required mass schooling” and today holds the stature of universal literacy rate. Kerala, therefore, surged ahead of many other States in human development indicators such as literacy levels, including female literacy levels, enrolment in schools, percentage of girl students and Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes students in schools, low drop-out rates and the number of schools (and colleges) even in rural areas. Public spending on education in Kerala was the highest in the country and more than 80 per cent of it was on school education (Frontline, 2011) All these factors clearly show that the development of Kerala's education system has been a success story due to the availability of sound infrastructure, social value of the society and effective role of state.

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