

1. INTRODUCTION

All measurements of human development have put Kerala on top of all the major States of India. The Planning Commission of India has worked out the Human Development Index (HDI) at 0.638 for Kerala against 0.472 for All India, for the year 2001¹. Kerala has the highest life expectancy, literacy and lowest infant mortality, though per capita monthly expenditure is not the highest.

In terms of Net Domestic Product, Kerala's rank amongst States falls in the middle, though it holds the highest HDI rank. Per capita income of Kerala at constant prices in 2001-02 was Rs. 11,046 crore. It was marginally higher than the per capita income for India (Rs.10,754 crore). But the rate of growth in Kerala during this year was lesser than for India.

Kerala has a rich heritage of socio-economic development due to several factors. With a coastline of 590 kms., the State has had a rewarding maritime tradition. It has been trading with the Gulf countries for many Centuries, especially in spices. It has received the missionaries of Christianity since the first Century AD. Along with these missionaries came education and health care. The monarchs who ruled Kerala encouraged art and literature and made the same accessible to men and women alike.

The southern part of Kerala under the Travancore and Cochin Maharajas could also boast of a good infrastructure of roads and irrigation systems, which ensured relatively higher prosperity for the people.

South India in general and Kerala in particular was not subjected to the ravages of invaders and insecurity of life and property, as was the case in North India. The State of Kerala took off from a comparatively higher level of social development, when it was formed in 1956 under States Reorganization in India.

¹ The HDI is a composite of variables capturing attainments in three dimensions of human development viz., economic, educational and health. These have been captured by per capita monthly expenditure adjusted for inequality; a combination of literacy rate and intensity of formal education; and a combination of life expectancy at age 1 and infant mortality rate.

ITEM	KERALA		INDIA	
	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02
Net Domestic Product (NDP)				
At current prices	63,094 (10.8)	69,602 (10.3)	17,19,868 (8.9)	18,76,955 (9.1)
At 1993-94 prices	34,450 (5.3)	36,079 (4.7)	10,62,616 (4.2)	11,23,543 (5.7)
Per Capita Income				
At current prices	19,463 (9.9)	21310 (9.5)	16,707 (6.9)	17,978 (7.6)
At 1993-94 prices	10,627 (4.4)	11046 (3.9)	10,306 (2.4)	10,754 (4.3)
<i>Source: Government of Kerala, State Planning Board, Economic Review, 2002 Figures in brackets indicate change over the previous year.</i>				

Kerala squeezed between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea has a small share of the land area of the sub-continent. But blessed with rich land and abundant water and other resources, habitation has been intense, contributing to high density of population.

The highlands of the State slope down from the Western Ghats which rise to an average height of 900 mts. with a number of peaks well over 1,800 mts. in altitude. The agro-climate of this region has been highly suitable for plantation crops – tea, coffee and cardamom. The midlands situating between the highlands and the lowlands of the coast with rich but porous soil have sustained a wide variety of tree crops and spices – coconut, arecanut, cashew, pepper, ginger, turmeric etc. The versatile rice crops are to be seen in all regions at various altitudes including the lowlands. The coastal region has a rich eco-system of deltaic and estuarian areas. These areas, together with the Arabian Sea front are rich in marine resources. Washed by 44 rivers and exposed to two monsoons, the State is doubly blessed and has a strong agrarian base for its economy.

Industrial development has lagged behind with few large industrial units. The high potential for hydropower generation from its rivers has not translated into large investments of capital in manufacturing.

The introduction of land reforms and abolition of tenancy brought in some kind of re-distributive justice and lower levels of poverty in the State. Of course, the land under plantation crops like tea, coffee, rubber and cardamom were exempted from the land ceiling provisions which excluded a substantial proportion of land from the impact of land reforms. It also caused deprivations to small landlords who were not actual cultivators. They had no other assets when they gave up ownership of land to the tenants, nor was employment easily available to them in the secondary and tertiary sectors in the State. The Namboodaries were specially one group that belonged to this class and suffered deprivations due to the change in their economic status. They were brought down to the lower middle class category from being *jenmis* (land lords) holding large extents of land.

Land holdings in Kerala are very small. The average size of land holding now is 0.27 hectares. It is held by 62.97 lakh land holders. Land under food crop cultivation has also been declining rapidly with increasing population. The land under paddy cultivation has reduced from 8 lakh hectares to 3.22 lakh hectares. This has significantly reduced production of paddy as well as employment in agriculture. The most significant problem of Kerala is matching its human resource with the available employment opportunities in the State at the level of investment that is taking place. A significant proportion of the population migrates to other parts of the world and other parts of India for employment, which adds to the State's Domestic Product, and is an important source of foreign exchange earning for the country.

The levels of wages in Kerala are higher than most parts of the country. Workers from neighbouring States find it attractive to migrate into Kerala and take up many of the unskilled jobs and depress wage levels, making them less attractive for the educated manpower of Kerala. The problem of unemployment, particularly for the educated is most severe in the State. Women are more among the unemployed than men.

The administrative budget of Kerala under successive Governments of the earlier decades and Five Year Plans concentrated on education and health. Even now these sectors account for significant proportions of State Budget Expenditure.

The people of Kerala follow different faiths – Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Judaism. Numerically, the faith-mix of the population of Kerala is strikingly different from that of India as a whole. Though the Hindus are the majority community, their proportion in the population in the State is much lesser. Muslims and Christians have a substantial presence. In the Muslim community there are both descendants of Arab merchants who married local women as well as native converts. There is considerable diversity among Christians - Catholics and Protestants and among the Catholics, the Roman, Latin and the Syrian.

Like in other parts of India, the Hindu community is characterized by caste and community based stratification. The principal communities among the Hindus are *Namboodiri Brahmins, Nairs, Ezhavas/Thiyas* and *Harijans* consisting of several sub-castes/communities, *pulayas* and *parayas*. Depending upon community practices, the status of women also varied in different communities.

The State is home only for a relatively small proportion of the adivasi population of the country. In the current mix of population in Kerala, Scheduled Tribes constitute only 1.1%. Similarly, the population of Scheduled Castes is around 9.9% which is comparatively a smaller proportion of the population compared to several other States.

Historically, women in Kerala enjoyed a significantly higher status compared to most other parts of India. Some of the important factors which contributed to this were:

- Enlightened policies of the Governments of the erstwhile princely States;
- Access to education;
- Communitarianism of a high order; the community organizations of the Christians (the Church institutions), Hindus (the Nair Service Society and SNDP Yogam of Ezhavas) etc. organized their constituents, exposed them significantly to education, facilitated access to health and employment and created the necessary infrastructure for the purpose;
- The matrilineal system of inheritance of property which was also in the nature of affirmative system conducive to special protection for women; and
- Matrilocal residence of women after marriage with their spouses.

Religion	India	Kerala
Hindus	82.00	57.28
Muslims	12.12	23.33
Christians	2.34	19.32
Sikhs	1.94	0.01
Buddhists	0.96	-
Jains	0.40	0.01
Others	0.39	0.01
Religion not stated	0.05	0.04

Source: Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India, Census of India – 1991, State Profile 1991.

The beneficial impacts of the joint family system and matriliney on the status of women have been described in terms of – strength and social security flowing from property entitlement, freedom of socialization without constraints on female visibility and mobility, trauma-free widowhood, absence of child marriage, absence of controversies regarding legitimacy children because of identification of the children with the mother etc.²

After achievement of Independence, especially after formation of Kerala, the people have been exposed to the social trends and practices elsewhere in the country. Nuclear families have emerged with the termination of the joint family system. Even as matriliney is not the order of the day, the evils of dowry system are becoming rampant. In-country and out-country migration of women as well as men, while enhancing incomes, has brought in its wake disruptions in family life generating traumatic experiences.

There is a school of thought that the so-called “High Status” of women of Kerala is illusory and that the developments since achievement of Independence and formation of the State of Kerala, have not necessarily contributed to enhancement in the status of women. The interactions of the National Commission for Women with the Civil Society in Kerala have reflected several factors that detract from women’s well being. These factors would seem to call for an objective demystification of the so-called “High Status” of women in Kerala.

Demystified “High Status” of Women In Kerala

- In recent years, there are indications that the earlier advantages reflected in Kerala’s favourable female sex ratio cannot be taken for granted for any more.
- Mushroom growth of ultra sonography clinics and evidence relating to abortions lend credibility to the possible practice of sex selective abortions.
- There is serious concern in regard to masculinization of juvenile sex ratio, though it is much lesser than for All India; fertility decline experienced in Kerala may result in a masculinization of juvenile sex ratios through the “intensification” effect. The space left for daughters narrows down.
- Women now have individual rights over their share of *Taravad* property but this right has been achieved within a legal framework of dependence on men as husbands. Men as husbands and fathers have gained access to control over women in ways that they did not have earlier.
- There has been a tendency for men to move away from farming to other occupations in the context of changing value of land and the decline of farming as a favoured occupation. This has wider consequences for gender relations of women who remain in the house and have to take over an increasing share of responsibility for farming, importance of which as a source of family income is declining.
- Despite education, gender segregated roles of women in the households continue.
- Marriage has come to be central to a woman’s social identity which necessitates the control of her sexuality, behaviour and independence.
- External migration and its associated processes such as remittances from abroad have been linked to the growth of consumer practices such as in lavish marriages and provision of dowries with dangerous implications for women.
- Women who marry migrants tend to withdraw from work indicating a particular status attached to “domestication” in terms of the self-identity of the migrant husband.
- Studies on migration bring out the psychological trauma faced by “Gulf Wives” who are on average better educated than their husbands who emigrate for work.
- Gender differences in education prevail in technical fields.
- Failure in examinations, mismatch between expectations of educated job seekers and levels of education, marital disharmony including because of alcoholism amongst husbands, mental torture etc. are factors which traumatize women and drive them to suicides.
- Feminization of jobs in terms of access to segregated jobs prevails and this allows little bargaining power in the nucleated families.
- There is evidence of asymmetrical position for women in occupational distribution. There is sex discrimination in levels of wages in various sectors – informal, manufacturing and even professional.

Source: Mridul Eapen and Praveena Kodoth, *Demystifying the “High Status” of Women in Kerala*, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, 2001.

² Gender Profile- Kerala, Leela Gulati and Ramalingam, Royal Netherlands Embassy, New Delhi, India.

2. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Kerala constitutes 1.27% (geographical area of 38,863 sq.kms) of the total area of India and holds 3.10% of India's population. The State, in 2001 Census, recorded a population of 31.84 million (males 15.47 million and females 16.37 million). The population is distributed over 14 Districts of Kerala (Appendix 1 Table 2.1)

The demographic picture of Kerala presents striking contrasts with that of India as a whole –

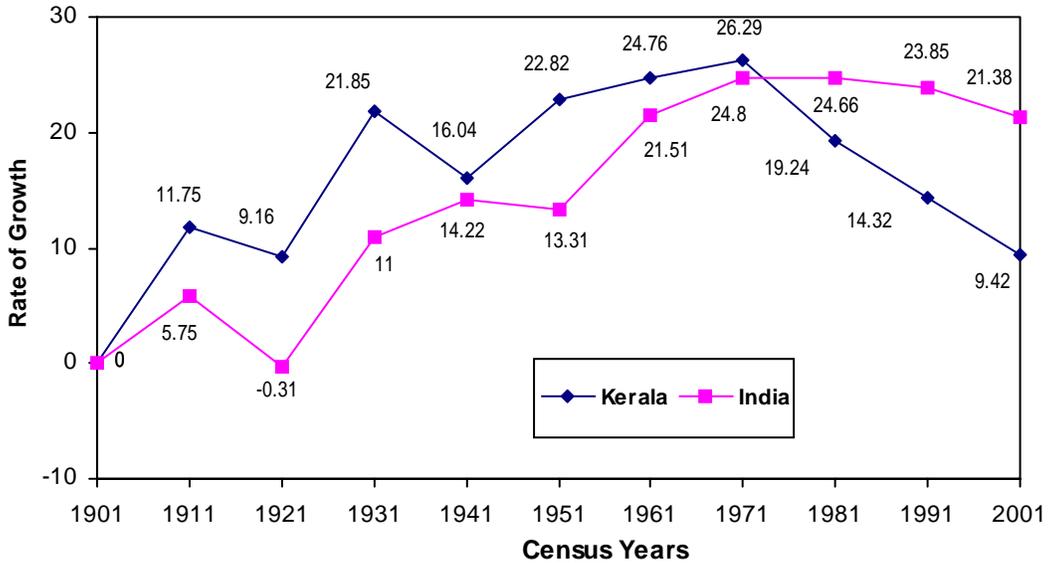
- Very high density of population: two and a half times the national average. It holds the 3rd rank amongst the States of India. The higher density is true of all the Districts excepting for Idukki where the density is 252 per sq.km. Alappuzha District has the highest density of 1489 per sq.km¹ (Appendix 1 Table 2.2)
- Lower decadal growth rate (Appendix 1 Table 2.1): for seven decades since 1901, the growth rate exceeded the national average. It peaked in 1971 and has been declining rapidly and maintaining itself below national levels (Figure 1). The higher growth rate of the earlier decades was due to falling death rates simultaneous with falling birth rates resulting in net growth higher than the national average.
- Lower level of urbanization: Level of urbanization was all along lower than the national average except for decades ending with 1961 and 1991. The higher urbanization interlude reflected in 1991 was due to recategorization of certain rural areas as urban. Six Districts are more urbanized than the State as a whole. Three Districts have less than 10 per

Indicators	Kerala	India
Population (Million)	31.84	
Males	15.47	
Females	16.37	
Decadal Growth Rate of Population	9.42	21.38
Density of Population (Per Sq.Km.)	819	324
Level of Urbanization (%)	25.97	27.78
Urban Female Population (Million)	4.25	
Birth Rate	18.0	26.1
Death Rate	6.4	8.7
Sex Ratio	1058	933
Urban Sex Ratio		900
Rural Sex Ratio	1059	945
Sex Ratio (SC)	1029	922
Sex Ratio (ST)	996	972
Juvenile Sex Ratio	962	
Life Expectancy (Years)	73.3	61.1
Males	70.4	60.4
Females	75.9	61.8
Proportion of Women in Reproductive Age Group	56%	51.1%
Median Age of Marriage		
Males	25.5	
Females	27.5	
Effective Age of Marriage of Girls (Years)	22	19.5
Proportion of Girls Marrying after 21 Years (%)	63	25.9
Proportion of Girls Marrying between 18 and 20 Years (%)	32.3	53.4
Marital Status (Widowed/Divorced/separated (%))		
Males	1.5	2.5
Females	10.5	8.0

¹ State Planning Board, Thiruvananthapuram, Government of Kerala, Economic Review 2002

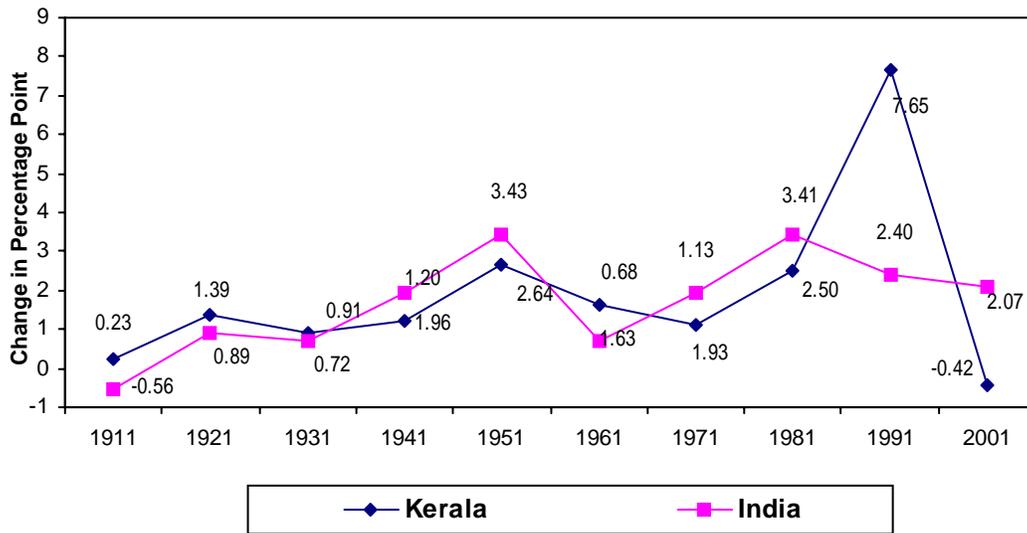
cent of the population living in urban areas (Appendix 1 Table 2.2). There are 17 urban agglomerations² (Class 1 cities) with a population of 100,000 or more encompassing 78 towns.

Figure 1
Growth Rate of Population 1901-2001 Kerala and India



Source: Census of India 2001; Kerala; Series-33; Provisional Population Totals; Paper-1 of 2001

Figure 2
Pace of Urbanization



Based on Data Presented in Appendix Table 1.2

² "An Urban Agglomeration is a continuous urban spread constituting a town and its adjoining urban outgrowths, or two or more physically contiguous towns together and any adjoining urban outgrowths of such towns" – Directorate of Census Operations, Census of India, 2001, Series-33, Kerala, Provisional Population Totals, Paper-2 of 2001, Rural-Urban Distribution.

- Substantially lower birth rate: There has been rapid and significant decline in the birth rates in the rural and urban areas of the State. Between 1951 and 1993, there has been sustained decline from 43.9 to 17.3 and has since risen to 18.0 in 1999 (Table 2.1) The rise since 1993 is attributed to the increase in the proportion of females in the reproductive age group. The birth rates in the districts of Kerala vary from 13.26 in Idukki to 21.92 in Malappuram.
- Significantly lower death rate: Death rate in the State had touched a low of 6.0 in 1991 but has slightly risen since with high proportion of population in the 65 plus age group (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1
Birth and Death Rates, India and Kerala

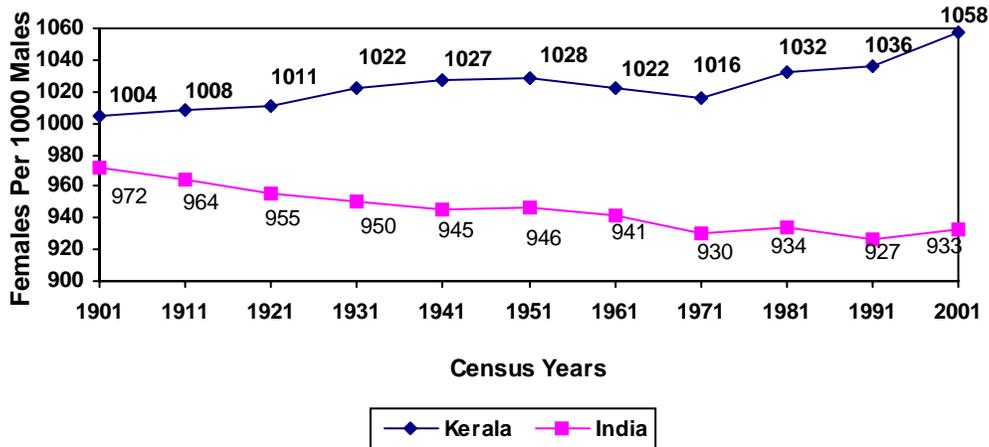
Years	Birth Rate						Death Rate					
	India			Kerala			India			Kerala		
	T	R	U	T	R	U	T	R	U	T	R	U
1971	36.9	38.9	30.1	31.1	31.3	29.6	14.9	16.4	9.7	9.0	9.1	8.4
1981	33.9	35.6	27.0	25.6	26.0	23.5	12.5	13.7	7.8	6.6	6.7	5.8
1991	29.5	30.9	24.3	18.3	18.4	18.1	9.8	10.6	7.1	6.0	6.2	5.3
1999*	26.1	27.6	20.8	18.0	18.1	17.7	8.7	9.4	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.3

Source: Registrar General, *Compendium of India's Fertility and Mortality Indicators, 1991-1997, Based on Sample Registration System (SRS), 1999.*

* Registrar General, India, *Sample Registration Bulletin, October, 2000.*

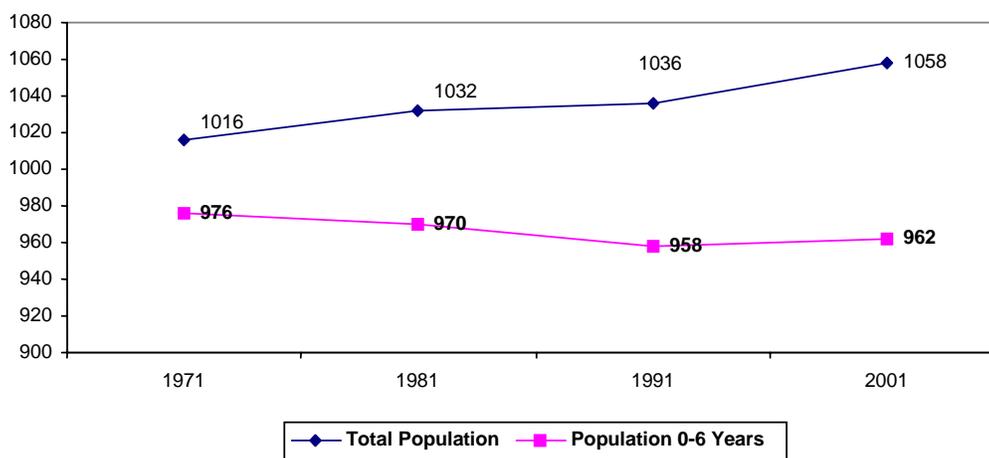
- Favourable sex ratio throughout the 20th century and above All India: in fact the only State now in the country, apart from Pondicherry, maintaining a sex ratio above unity (Figure 3): Rural sex ratio, however, is higher as elsewhere. This is due to migration of men to urban areas, which depresses the ratio in the urban areas. The districts of Ernakulam, Idukki, Kannur, Kasaragod and Kottayam, have relatively lower sex ratio. This is attributable to a high degree of plantation orientation of agriculture with men remaining on the plantations, besides a low level of industrialization of urban areas. Ernakulam is the commercial capital of Kerala with a buoyant service sector in which women participate in large numbers and hence the higher urban sex ratio in the district (Appendix 1 Table 2.1). Idukki is the only district with sex ratio below unity, though it is well above the national average. Scheduled Castes have favourable sex ratio but lesser than the State average. Scheduled Tribes have adverse sex ratio. However, the concern now is the declining juvenile sex ratio. There has been a slight increase in the juvenile sex ratio in 2001 compared to 1991. However, relative to 1971 it is significantly lower (Figure 4).

Figure 3
Trends in Sex Ratio 1901 - 2001 Kerala and India



Source: Census of India 2001; Kerala; Series-33; Provisional

Figure 4
Overall and juvenile sex ratios in Kerala through



- Longer life expectancy: Life expectancy at birth is the highest for males (70.4 years) and females (75.9 years) in Kerala compared to all the other States of the country. Between 1970-75 and 1993-97, there was a life expectancy gain of more than 11 years for all persons in the State. Females gained 12.8 years. (Appendix 1 Table 2.3). The higher expectancy of life for females raises the overall sex ratio as well as sex ratio in the highest age group.
- Higher effective age of marriage for girls: The effective age of marriage for girls in Kerala was 22 years against 19.5 years (1997) for All India. Majority of females in Kerala married after 21 years and those marrying before the legal age for marriage of 18 years was only less than 5%. In the contrasts between rural and urban areas, the age of marriage varies in a narrow range—of less than a year in Kerala and slightly more than a year for All India. In urban Kerala females marry a little earlier than in rural areas, while in urban India, females marry a little later than

in rural areas (1993). Though Kerala is quite progressive compared to rest of India in regard to the age of marriage of girls, there are in fact intra State variations.³ While in four districts (Ernakulam, Kottayam, Alapuzha and Pathanamthitta) the percentage of girls marrying before 18 years is zero, it is as high as 35.7% in Malapuram district. Wayanad, Pallakad, Kozhikode, Kasaragod and Kannur are districts where the percentage of girls marrying before 18 years ranges from 8.4% to 19%.

“Unlike most states of India, very early marriage is not common in Kerala. The median age at first marriage for women age 25-49 is 20 years, much higher than the median, at 16 years, for the country as a whole. Only 14 per cent of women age 15-19 are already married, and this proportion is only 16 per cent even in rural areas where age at marriage tends to be lower than in urban areas. Older women are more likely than younger women to have married at an early age; 6 per cent of women currently age 35-49 married before they were 15, compared with 1 per cent of women currently age 15-19. Although this finding indicates that the proportion of women who marry young continues to decline in Kerala, one in six of even the younger women (age 20-24) married before reaching the legal minimum age of 18 years. On average, women are about six years younger than the men they marry.”⁴

- Larger proportion of widowed / divorced / separated females: This marital status of the people in Kerala is impacted by factors such as the age structure of the population, higher life expectancy of females, etc. (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2
Percentage Distribution of Population by Sex and Marital Status, India and Kerala, 1998

	Never Married			Married			W/D/S		
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
India	50.4	54.9	45.6	44.4	42.6	46.3	5.2	2.5	8.0
Kerala	48.5	55.2	42.2	45.4	43.4	47.3	6.2	1.5	10.5

Source: Registrar General, India, Sample Registration System, Statistical Report, 1998.

* W/D/S – Widowed/Divorced/Separated

The proportions of population in different age groups between 1991 and 1998 have experienced shifts at both Kerala and All India levels. The proportion of population in the lower age groups have been declining in Kerala as in India. The proportion of females in the

Aging of Female Population and Geriatric Care

The increased life expectancy has resulted in Kerala's population aging at a faster rate than other States. Widows constitute the largest segment of the aged population of Kerala. Coupled with this is that they live five years more than men and thereby increase the agonies of old age and widowhood. The possibility of bringing about geriatric care under WCP (reference here is to Women Component Plan) needs to be explored. Some sort of allocation may be earmarked for their welfare by way of treatment or setting up of old age homes and providing pension to them. (UNICEF, Report of the Study of Women Component Plan in Kerala.)

³ Rapid Household Survey, 1998-99 sponsored by UNICEF

⁴ International Institute of Population Sciences, The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-2), Kerala, 1998-99.

reproductive age group of 15-49 has increased and come to be more for Kerala than for India - 56% and 51.1% respectively. The lowering of birth rate and fertility rate has helped Kerala contain the population growth rate despite the increase in the proportion of females in the reproductive age group. The proportion of females in the 50 plus age group has been much higher for Kerala in 1991 and is becoming even more in 1998 contributing to larger number of elderly women (Appendix 1 Table 2.4). The median age for the population of Kerala is significantly higher at 25.5 years for males and 27.3 years for females compared to All India and other States. The female to male sex ratio in different age groups is above unity in all age groups except in the 5-14 age group. The highest sex ratio is in the 65 plus age group due to the higher life expectancy for females.

3. HEALTH CARE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Health, like education, was given special attention in Kerala since long time in pre-Independence periods. This was due to the enlightened monarchs of parts of what is Kerala today. Important health-related subjects including nursing were built into the school curriculum for girls. With the introduction of formal professional courses for nursing and establishment of public and private educational institutions for the purpose even since the early years of the last century, Kerala has come to be reputed for its specialization in nursing discipline. It is no exaggeration to say that today Kerala nurses are serving humanity worldwide. If the people of Kerala in general have far superior health status than of the country as a whole, one of the important contributory factors is the tradition of special attention being given in governance to health, health infrastructure including medical manpower and paramedical personnel.

The accessibility to health infrastructure and services is superior in Kerala as compared to other States and All India. For over a decade now, medical staff strength including that of paramedical staff in the Government health care delivery system has steadily increased. More pronounced expansion has been that of the nursing staff strength.

A specialty of the health scenario in Kerala is that adoption of the western system of medicine has been without detriment to the indigenous systems. Indeed, affirmative policies have been implemented both at the Central and State Government levels for the preservation and development of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homeopathy. This development has come about both in the public and private sectors (Appendix 1 Table 3.1). As part of decentralization of power, 2621 medical institutions have been transferred to local bodies. The appointment of all categories of personnel and the supply

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sub-centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spatial distribution of sub-centres - Population served per sub-centre 	1 for every 6.16 Sq. Kms. 5000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Primary Health Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spatial distribution of Primary Health Centres - Population served per Primary Health Centre 	1 for every 33.3 Sq. Kms. 25000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Population served by Community Health Centres ● Expansion of medical staff strength <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Over all expansion - Nurses - Pharmacists - Field Staff 	1 per 25000 0.9% per annum 3.1% per annum 0.3% per annum 0.4% per annum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Health Expenditure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expansion of per capita expenditure on health including family welfare (1990-91 to 2000-01) - Expansion of expenditure on health and family welfare (1995-96 to 2001-02) - Public per capita expenditure on health (2000-01) - Private per capita expenditure on health (1997) 	300% 5.3% to 5.5% Rs.221/- Rs.793/-
Source: Compiled for this report from the State Planning Board, Economic Review 2002, Government of Kerala	

of medicines continue to be with the health department of the State Government while construction of buildings, conduct of medical camps and health awareness programmes are carried on at the local level.

Despite the conjoint development of the various systems of medicine, peoples' preferences are dominated by primacy of option to the Allopathic system. According to a study,¹ in both rural and urban Kerala, more than 80% of the expenditure was on allopathic treatment; 53% of the urban households incurred expenditure on allopathic treatment, 14.5% on ayurvedic treatment and 6% on homeopathic treatment. The figures for rural households were 53.6%, 10.8% and 2.3% respectively.

Unlike in India as a whole, more women than men avail of institutional facilities for treatment of disorders. The reason for this is high proportion of institutional delivery of children, higher proportion of aged women than of men and higher incidence of female morbidity – 155.8/1000 cases of chronic illness against 137.5/1000 for males.

"More than half of the households in Kerala (58 per cent) use private hospitals, clinics, or doctors for treatment when a family member is ill. More than one-third (38 per cent) normally use the public medical sector. Even among households with a low standard of living, more than two-fifths normally use the private medical sector when members become ill. Most respondents are generally satisfied with the health care they receive. Ratings on the quality of services are consistently better for private-sector facilities than for public-sector facilities."²

Institutional delivery of children is generally the order of the day. Ninety seven percent of all child deliveries take place in institutions. About 3 lakh deliveries are reported annually in Kerala. Greater access to medical services, women's education, high level of health awareness and commitment to single/two child norm are factors contributing to high institutional deliveries. The superior maternal and child health care in Kerala is also attributable to institutional access.

However, there is a criticism about women opting for avoidable caesarian operations and over medicalization.³

Mortality

Mortality rates in Kerala start rising past 40 years of age. They are the highest in the 70 plus age groups. This reflects high life expectancy. Infant and child mortality rates as also mortality rates among the adolescents and the youth are quite low. Overall mortality rates are generally higher in rural areas compared to urban areas. Female mortality rates are generally lesser than those of males in rural as well as urban areas excepting in the age group of 0-4 years. This pattern is discernible in the data on age specific mortality rates (Appendix 1 Table 3.2).

¹ Report of the Study on Impact of Development Programmes on Quality of Life Kerala Statistical Institute, Thiruvananthapuram, December, 1999

² International Institute of Population Sciences, The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-2), Kerala, 1998-99.

³ SAKHI, Resource Centre for Women, Kerala, Status of Women in Kerala.

- In the three decades since 1971 crude death rates as well as infant, neonatal, postnatal and peri natal mortality rates (Appendix 1 Table 3.3) registered steep decline. This is due to substantial improvement in health care.
- Generally, mortality rates are higher in the rural areas compared to the urban areas.
- Female rural infant mortality in Kerala is higher than rural male infant mortality but lower than both urban male and female infant mortalities (1997).⁴
- The lower child mortality rate in the rural areas is significant.
- “The child mortality rate at 3 deaths at age 1-4 years per 1000 children reaching age 1 has almost halved from its level in NFHS-1 of 8 deaths per 1000. Each of the infant and child mortality rates in Kerala is not only the lowest by far among all of the Indian States, but each of them is also a fraction of the corresponding rates for the country as a whole.”⁵

Morbidity

Morbidity in Kerala significantly manifests itself in respiratory diseases, diarrhoea, tuberculosis, filarial and malaria.

Child immunization since first National Family Health Survey (NFHS-I) has registered a substantial improvement. However, 20% of children are not fully vaccinated. “Girls in Kerala are more likely (83 percent) than boys (77 percent) to be fully vaccinated, a change since NFHS-1 when boys were slightly more likely than girls to be fully vaccinated.”⁶

Reportedly Kerala has the largest number of cases of tetanus neonatal.

Mental Health

Among the psychiatric disorders suffered by women in Kerala, the most prominent is mental depression – anxiety neurosis. Marital discord due to various reasons including alcoholism on the part of the spouses is one of the foremost reasons for the psychiatric problems of women in the State. Since the middle of 1970s, there has been disturbing growth of this disorder. “Women experienced growing mental distress due to the dual role, as home makers and as workers outside the home; a feeling of being restricted in their mobility and the ignominy of suffering domestic violence, physical and verbal”.⁷ Women under stress are also increasingly taking recourse to divorce proceedings before family courts.

Diseases	Prevalence Rate Per 1000 Population
Leprosy	0.71
Tuberculosis	1.20
Filaria	1.02
Acute Diarrhoeal Diseases	17.63
Enteric Fever	0.23
Viral Hepatitis	0.14
Measles	0.10
Acute Respiratory Infection	216.62
Pneumonia	0.77
Malaria	0.07

Source: Kerala Economic Survey, 2002.

⁴ Registrar General, India, Compendium of India’s Fertility and Mortality Indicators, 1971-1997, Based on the Sample Registration System (SRS).

⁵ International Institute of Population Sciences, The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-2), Kerala, 1998-99.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Thrani 2000, Counseling Centre in Trivandrum, as quoted by Mridul Eapen and Praveena Kodoth, Demystifying the “High Status” of Women in Kerala, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, May 2001.

Saturday Syndrome

For a large number of Gulf wives, mainly young ones, Saturday is the day when the Gulf wives complain of mental distress and come for psychologist's help. This is because their husbands mostly make the occasional phone calls home on Friday evening (as the long-distance calls cost less on Friday in many Gulf countries). After their husbands' speaking with them or the in-laws, the women become highly troubled and depressed and show symptoms of mental illness.

However, there seems to be a tendency among mental specialists and medical men to equate the mental problems of the teenage wives with those of the Gulf wives.

The Gulf wives face the pains of two conditions: teenage marriage and the long separation from husbands. Since the Gulf wives' problems ('Gulf syndrome') get more attention, the problems of teenage marriage are hardly noticed. The fact is that it is the teenage marriage that turns the Gulf syndrome into a complex one.

Also, while Gulf wives can afford, and have more access to, psychiatric help, the silent majority of mentally ill teenagers in the poor village homes go unnoticed. A section of these suffering girls go to the faith healers who sometimes seem to offer temporary relief.

Sadly, no community leader or Government agency has realized the extent of mental illness – like they have not realized the extent and impact of teenage marriage in the district.

(Prof. Mohammed, Malappuram, Kerala)

Reproductive Health

Fertility

There has been spectacular decline in fertility rate in Kerala from the level of 4.2 over the last three decades. As of 1998, it is 1.8 which amounts to crossing the replacement level of population (Appendix 1 Table 3.4). However, in the age group of 15-19, the cumulative fertility rate in the State is 7.4.⁸ In some places in Kerala, women reach grandmotherhood at a rather young age. "Higher than replacement level fertility is found in Kerala only among the Muslim population which has a fertility rate of 2.46 children per woman. Despite low levels of overall fertility, urban rural differences still persist in Kerala with rural women having 0.56 children more than urban women. Fertility is much lower among scheduled caste women than among other women."⁹

Levels of education of women influence fertility rates. According to NFHS-2 fertility rates with reference to the illiterate significantly declined among the literate (less than middle school complete), middle school complete and high school complete and above in that order.

30-year-old grandmothers of Malabar

Among the Muslims, because of the practice of teenage marriage, young grandmothers continue to 'take birth'. About two-thirds of the Muslim girls in Malappuram district are married off before the legal age of 18 and a large number of them conceive in the first year of marriage. In spite of all the changes taking place around them in the social, economic, educational and technological fields, teenage marriage and adolescent childbirth survive in the Muslim community.

Though young grandmothers existed in the past too, the new generation, unlike their earlier ones, undergo a lot of psychological stress and social strain. This is because of the drastic changes in the social environment, their (high school) education and the impact of the media. Added to these is the fact that many of these women are Gulf wives, thus suffering from additional emotional problems. There is a wide gap between the young grandmothers' chronological age and 'social age'. Though they are and do feel young, these women are socially programmed to act old. Like other 30-plus women, they have a lot of life in them, but are forced to mask it. This creates immense psychological tension.

"They suffer from middle-age blues at the peak of their youth," a psychologist in Malappuram district said, while admitting that psychologists were yet to probe the specific mothers. "They are trapped between youth and middle age," he goes on. "In a sense, they are forced to feel 'menopausal' in 10 or 15 years in advance."

(By K.P.M. Basheer, The Hindu, Friday, March 9, 2001)

⁸ Registrar General, India, Sample Registration System, Statistical Report, 1998.

⁹ International Institute of Population Sciences, The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-2), Kerala, 1998-99.

Child birth patterns in Kerala reflect superior reproductive health of women compared to the All India position. The effective child bearing period in Kerala is 6.8 years against 9.9 years for All India (Appendix 1 Table 3.5).

Contraceptive prevalence rate registered in Kerala is 77% (Appendix 1 Table 3.6). According to NFHS-2, female sterilization has shown increasing trend compared to the situation at the time of NFHS-1; and male sterilization has declined.

“Of particular note is increased use of female sterilization from 42% in NFHS-1 to 49% in NFHS-2. Female sterilization that accounted for 66% of contraceptive use in NFHS-1 now accounts for 76%. The share of male sterilization in contraceptive use by contrast has declined from 10% in NFHS-1 to 4% in NFHS-2. The current use of each of three officially sponsored spacing methods has remained virtually unchanged between the two surveys. These results suggest that despite the increased emphasis on contraceptive choice and on modern spacing methods in the Reproductive and Child Health Programme, and despite women’s wide spread knowledge of modern spacing methods, female sterilization has increased its dominance in the method mix in Kerala and modern spacing method still accounts for only a small percentage of total contraceptive use in both urban and rural areas.”¹⁰

Couple protected by various methods of family planning programmes in Kerala is 65.98% in 2001 as against the all India average of 46.2 (Appendix 1 Table 3.7). Family welfare programme in Kerala is implemented through the wide network of the public health care system.

Nutrition

In terms of nutrition status of women and children also, Kerala presents a better picture than India as a whole . Women of Kerala consume a variety of rich foods – chicken, meat, fish, vegetables, pulses, milk, curd etc. The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) implemented in the State benefits about 10 lakh children apart from more than a lakh of nursing and lactating mothers.

Completion of child bearing by 29 years of age	83%
Children born after 36 months of birth interval	42.4%
Children born even interval of 24-36 months	26.5%
Median age of women at the time of birth of the first child and the last birth	40-49
At least one antenatal checkup undergone by pregnant women	98.8%
Two or more tetanus toxoid injections taken by pregnant women	86.4%
Mothers receiving iron or folic acid syrup or tablet	95.2%
Institutional deliveries of children*	93%
Deliveries attended by health professionals	94%
Maternal mortality	Less than 1 per 3000

Source: Registrar General, India, Sample Registration System, Statistical Report, 1998.
International Institute of Population Sciences, The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-2), India, 1998-99.
* In Malapuram and Wayanad districts, there is high incidence of home delivery of children – 23% and 17% respectively.

Mean Height of Women	153cms.*
Women under 145cms. Of height	9%**
Body Mass Index (BMI)	22
Women with BMI below 80.5	20%
Women with some degree of aneamia	28%
Children having some degree of aneamia	44%
Under-weight children below three years of age	27%***
Stunted children	22%***

Source: National Family Health Survey-2
* The figure for India as a whole is 151cms.
** The figure for India as a whole is 13%
*** Half the level estimated for children in India as a whole

¹⁰ International Institute of Population Sciences, The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-2), Kerala, 1998-99.

Child Health

Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) in Kerala at 14/1000 is strikingly lower than the All India rate. The target of the State was to bring down IMR to 12/1000 by year 2000. It is yet to be achieved. It is hoped that it would be feasible within a couple of years.

Female infant mortality in the State is lower than male infant mortality in rural as well as urban areas. IMR in the districts of Wayanad and Idukki is double the rate in the southern districts of the States. In the districts of Kasaragod, Malapuram, Pathanamthitta and Thiruvananthapuram, female IMR is higher than male IMR. Relatively lower IMR in Kerala is attributable to better prenatal and postnatal childcare.

Under-Five mortality has significantly declined since 1991 and it is the lowest in the country. However, according to 2001 Census, relative to that of 1991, juvenile sex ratio increased to 958/1000 in Kerala from 954 while it registered a decline to 927 from 933 in India as a whole.

While there has been continued drive for immunization coverage of children against vaccine preventable diseases, universal coverage has not yet been achieved as per the target of the Government. In the districts of Malapuram and Palakad, the coverage is much lower than in the State as a whole.

Progress in the drive for administering oral dose of Vitamin A to children so as to prevent blindness has been quite substantial.

The incidence of low birth weight amongst babies in Kerala is also quite low. Survival and development of infants is helped significantly by the practices of breast milk feeding and start on solid foods to them rather early. The Supplemental Nutrition Programme (SNP) under implementation under the Basic Minimum Need Services (BMNS) seeks to enhance the nutritional status of children and pregnant and nursing mothers.

Measles, respiratory infection, diarrhoea and tuberculosis are the serious child morbidity problems.

Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)	14/1000 live births (the All India figure is 70/1000)
Rural IMR	14/1000 live births
Urban IMR	16/1000 live births
Female IMR (Rural and Urban)	13/1000 live births
Male IMR (Rural and Urban)	17 and 22 per 1000 live births
Under-Five Mortality Rate	18.8 (All India figure is 94.9)
Proportion of children having immunization of coverage	76.7%*
Proportion of less than one year old children receiving at least one oral dose of Vitamin A	93%
Incidence of low birth weight babies	16/1000

Source:
* The State target was 100% coverage by year 2000; coverage in the districts of Malapuram and Palakad was 59.8% and 75.1% respectively.

4. EDUCATION

Kerala has built a tradition for female education since the beginning of the 19th Century.¹ School education in Travancore was compulsory for children in the age group of 5-10 without any gender discrimination. Imparting elementary education especially to poor children was totally nondiscriminatory and neutral to caste or creed or gender. On account of the educational tradition of Kerala, 80% of girls from the erstwhile Travancore and Cochin areas were already in schools when the country achieved Independence.

Literacy

Kerala has the highest literacy rates in the country for males and females, 94.20% and 87.86% respectively, very much higher than the All India averages. Male-female literacy gap in the State declined nearly three times the level in 1951. The gap increased during this period in India as a whole nearly one and one fifth times. (Table 4.1). There is, however, a rural-urban gap of 4 percentage points in the State female literacy rates – 86.79% against 90.87%.

Table 4.1
Male Female Literacy Gap : India and Kerala

Years	India			Kerala		
	Male	Female	Gap	Male	Female	Gap
1951	27.16	8.86	18.30	49.79	31.41	18.38
2001	75.85	54.16	21.69	94.20	87.86	6.34

Source: Census documents

Intra-State variations in female literacy (Appendix 1 Table 4.1) are significant. The lowest rate (79.31%) is in Palakkad District that borders on the State of Tamil Nadu. Ernakulam District, geographically in the heart of the State, with high educational tradition and concentration of educational institutions, has the highest rate (90.96%). Including Ernakulam, four districts of Kerala have female literacy rates higher than 90%. The male female literacy gap is the highest (6.34%) in Kasaragod District which borders on the Karnataka State and lowest (2.91%) in Pathanamthitta District.

Females in Kerala account for nearly 70% of the total stock (2.56 million) of the illiterates in the State. The interesting feature is the positive contribution of females in Kerala between 1991 and 2001 to reduction of illiterates and the negative contribution of males, whose number increased marginally during this period (Table 4.2).

¹ Western education was introduced as early as the beginning of the 19th century, especially under the patronage of the rulers of Travancore and the initiative of Christian Missionaries.

Table 4.2
Reduction of illiteracy

(in million)

Details	India				Kerala			
	1991	2001	Decrease in Illiterates	% of decrease	1991	2001	Decrease in illiterates	% of decrease
Total	328.17	296.21	31.96	100	2.58	2.56	0.020	0.05
Males	128.10	106.65	21.45	100	0.787	0.789	-0.002	-0.01
Females	200.07	189.55	10.51	100	1.79	1.77	0.018	0.17

Source: Census of India, 2001; Provisional Population Totals; Paper-1 of 2001

Among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes women in Kerala, literacy is significantly lower than general female literacy - 65.03% and 43.53% respectively. Intra-State, female literacy among Scheduled Castes is the lowest (47.8%) in Kasaragod District and the highest (75.89%) in Alapuzha District. Among the Scheduled Tribes women, Palakkad District registers the lowest (25.10%) literacy rate and Ernakulam District the highest (62.42%). Palakkad, Wayanad and Idukki are Districts of Tribal concentration in the State. Finding that tribal communities have the lowest levels of literacy, the State Government are implementing special programmes in these Districts.

Education Infrastructure

Education infrastructure is significant in facilitating access, enrolment and retention of children in schools. Compared to other parts of the country, Kerala has considerably superior educational infrastructure (Appendix 1 Table 4.2). Over 80% of the schools have proper buildings, drinking water and toilet facilities. An important reason for the superior educational infrastructure in the State is the continuing tradition of mobilization of the people who contribute resources including land, buildings, furniture etc. School infrastructure in the State still needs to be improved. Eighteen percent of habitations do not have primary schools within walking distance of 1 km and 11% by upper primary schools within 3 kms (according to norms) (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3
Coverage of Habitations by Schools, India and Kerala, 1999-2000

	Coverage of Habitations by Primary Schools		Coverage of Habitations by Upper Primary Schools	
	No. of Habitations Covered	% of Habitations Covered by Schools within 1 km.	No. of Habitations Covered	% of Habitations Covered by Schools within 3 kms.
India	884,089	83.36	807,656	76.15
Kerala	7,191	82.23	7,783	89.00

Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 1999-2000, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, Department of Secondary Education and Higher Education.

Enrolment, Drop out and Attendance Ratios

School enrolment in Kerala has been declining significantly since late 1970s owing to the sharp decline in the rate of growth of population. In 2001-02, enrolment was down to 5.10 million from 5.91 million in 1992. During this period, enrolment at Lower Primary and Upper Primary Levels decreased but High School enrolment (Secondary Level) increased marginally.²

There is no gender gap in school enrolment in Kerala as in other States.

- Girls constituted 49.10% of all students (2.58 million against a total of 5.25 million). At the Lower Primary, Upper Primary and High School Levels, girls constituted 49.07%, 48.15% and 50.19% respectively of all students (Appendix 1 Table 4.3).³
- Primary and elementary level enrolments are substantially higher compared to All India ratios. This reflects community practices, in Kerala, of sending children for initial enrolment (in classes I to V) consistent with their school age. In other parts of the country, children outside the relevant school age are also enrolled in addition to the school age children. This enhances the Gross Enrolment Ratios.
- Higher enrolment ratios at the elementary level compared to All India signifies better school attendance and retention in Kerala. This is also manifested in the overall negative drop-out rates (1999-2000) for both boys and girls at the Primary and Elementary levels in Kerala. This contrasts with the high drop-out phenomenon at the All India level (Appendix 1 Table 4.4).
- Net school attendance rates for both girls and boys in urban and rural areas in Kerala at primary and upper primary levels are very high compared to All India (Appendix 1 Table 4.4).
- At the Higher Secondary level, there were 1254 schools in year 2002 with a student intake of 0.24 million. The proportion of girl students among the total students who passed in higher secondary in 2002 constituted 58%.
- The vocational stream of Higher Secondary education was started in 1983-84. The infrastructure for the stream in the State consists of 375 Vocational Higher Secondary schools offering a diversity of subjects in multiple disciplines – 45 subjects in the 8 disciplines of engineering technology, agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, paramedical, physical education, home science and business and commerce. A significant feature in the performance of the school vocational stream is that intake of girls exceeded that of boys.⁴
- Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes enrolled in schools (year 2000) was 0.62 million, constituting 11.77% of total enrolment (Appendix 1 Table 4.5).
- Gross Enrolment Ratios for Scheduled Castes are marginally higher than for All Students at the primary as well as elementary levels. The ratio for girls is marginally lesser at the primary level.
- Primary level enrolment of Scheduled Tribe boys and girls is considerably better than in the case of All Students as well as Schedule Castes. At the elementary level, however, these ratios for Scheduled Tribes are much lesser (Table 4.4).

² Economic Review, 2000, State Planning Board, Government of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram

³ Ibid.

⁴ Economic Review – 2000, Government of Kerala, State Planning Board, Thiruvananthapuram.

Table 4.4
Gross Enrolment Ratio of SC/ST Students at School Level, 2000

	Primary		Elementary	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
All Students	85.80	84.74	97.78	93.36
Scheduled Castes	87.76	84.18	100.29	94.92
Scheduled Tribes	101.49	99.25	83.11	77.18

Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 1999-2000, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, Department of Secondary Education and Higher Education.

Teacher-Pupil Ratio

Teacher-pupil ratio is a very crucial factor which impacts on the quality of teaching. Teacher-Pupil ratio in Kerala fell from 1:29 in 1997-98 to 1:28 in 2001-02. It is amongst the highest teacher-pupil ratios in India. The total number of teachers was 182,186 (Table 4.5). The distribution of these teachers among various kinds of schools was: 35% Government school teachers, 61% aided school teachers and 4% unaided school teachers. A special feature about the school teaching community of Kerala is the category of "protected teachers". Certain schools are declared uneconomic. The norm for such declaration is strength of students falling below 25 in a class. There has been an alarming increase in number of such schools having protected teachers. "The number of 'uneconomic' schools increased from 1407 in 1996 to 2244 in 2000-01 and further to 2720 in 2002. The number of 'protected' teachers has also increased from 2239 in 1996 to 2408 in 2000-01 and further to 3926 in 2002. These two drain the public exchequer a lot and divert resources that should be used for improving quality and for modernization".⁵

Number of teachers in higher secondary schools stood at 16292 in 2002 of whom 10982 were full time teachers and remaining were on contract basis.

Table 4.5
Teaching Manpower in Schools

Education Level	No. of Teachers			% of Trained Teachers	Teacher Pupil Ratio
	Men	Women	Total		
Primary	12930	32669	45599	98	45
Middle	16072	32428	48500	95	36
High	30576	61430	92006	100	18

Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 1999-2000, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, Department of Secondary Education and Higher Education.

⁵ State Planning Board, Economic Survey of Kerala, 2002.

Educational Attainment

In terms of educational attainment, the status of Kerala is much above the All India average, both for males and females. With 8.1 median number of years of schooling of the *de facto* household population for boys aged 6 and above, Kerala holds the second rank amongst 25 States. In the case of girls, the median number of years is 7.6. On this basis, Kerala holds the first rank. But the attainment of females is lesser than that of males at all levels of education in Kerala, though the difference is only marginal (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6
Education level of the household population*

	Illiterate	Literate, < primary School Complete	Primary School Complete	Middle school Complete	High School Complete	Higher secondary complete and above	Missing	Total Percent	Median no. of Years of schooling
India (Male)	25.5	21.1	18.4	13.0	10.7	11.2	0.0	100.0	5.5
Kerala (Male)	7.2	18.4	23.4	17.4	21.2	12.4	0.0	100.0	8.1
India (Female)	48.6	17.1	14.5	8.1	6.0	5.6	0.0	100.0	1.6
Kerala (Female)	14.9	16.9	21.4	16.0	18.5	12.3	0.0	100.0	7.6

Source: Internal Institute for Population Sciences, National Family Health Survey, (NFHS-2), 1998-99, India and Kerala.

*Percent distribution of the *de facto* household population aged 6 and above

Vocational Training Outside the General Educational School System

Vocational training is imparted outside the general education institutions, like in the rest of India, through a network of Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and Industrial Training Centres (ITCs). There are also exclusive Women's Industrial Training Institutes and Women's Wings in general ITIs for giving special attention to the vocational training requirements of women. The proportion of seats utilized by women out of the total of all seats utilized by apprentices of various categories is around one third or less. Under the Women's Vocational Training Programme of the Government of India, a Regional Vocational Training Institute has been functioning with base at Thiruvananthapuram for more than two decades now. Women undergo various basic, advanced and post advanced courses in this institution. (Table 4.7)

ITIs/ITCs 529 in number	Capacity 57,153 seats
Regional Vocational Training Institute for women (RVTI)	232 training seats
Women ITIs/Wings – 11 in number	2,182 seats
Seats utilization by trade apprentices	438 out of 5640 (7.76%)
Seats utilization by graduate apprentices	280 out of 740 (37.83%)
Seats utilization by technician apprentices	839 out of 2,541 (33%)

Source: Government of India, Ministry of Labour, 2001-02.

Kerala pursued a liberal higher education policy from 1956 and achieved quantitative expansion and greater access to higher education. There was a shift in policy from quantitative expansion to quality education, gender equity, social justice and equalization of opportunities. In the last decade, there has been greater emphasis on self-financing education at higher levels with the starting of more professional colleges and courses in emerging areas. Out of 1,60,754 students enrolled at degree and post graduate levels in 2002, 99,136 (62%) were girls (Appendix 1 Table 4.7)

The enrolment of girl students out numbered boys in almost all the B.A. degree courses. In the case of B.Sc. degree enrolment in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Zoology and Botany showed higher enrolment of girls.

Proportion of girl students in polytechnics (diploma level institutions) works out to 35%. Share of SC/ST is 10%.

Girl students in Technical High Schools constitute only 10%.

Post Secondary and Higher Education

At the Higher education level the proportion of girls' enrolment, excepting in the case of engineering and doctoral courses ranges from about 55% to 82%. In engineering, the girls' proportion is a third and in medicine more than half (Table 4.6 in Appendix-1). There were 413 women teachers in Engineering Colleges, 49% of all teachers (848). Women teachers in polytechnics (395) accounted for 24% of all teachers in these institutions (1239).

Expenditure on Education

The share of social services in the revenue expenditure of the State in 1999-2000 was 38.28%; that of education was 22.76%. The total Government expenditure on education in Kerala increased nearly six times from Rs.4,150/- million in 1985-86 to Rs.24,809/- million in 1999-2000. Primary education accounted for 50% of total Government expenditure on education, the shares of Secondary and Higher education being 31% and 14% respectively. The ratio of State Expenditure on education to State Domestic Product (SDP) rose from 3.60% to 3.97% between 1985-86 and 1998-99. In 1999-2000, cost of primary education per pupil was Rs.3439.59 and of secondary education Rs.4818.73. Education is free in Kerala for both boys and girls upto Secondary Level (Classes I-X).⁶ The expenditure on education in 2001-02 is Rs.26568.2 million. According to the State Planning Board, most of the expenditure is on salaries. Enough resources have not been available for improvement of infrastructure—science laboratories, libraries, IT connections etc. – or for starting new courses in colleges and research. "The education system of the state is at the cross-roads and is in need of major reforms if the state is to recapture and retain its once pre-eminent position in this field in the country".⁷

Education has generally been an area of priority in the matter of provision of budget. Proportion of budgeted expenditure to total budget in Kerala is more than twice the All India proportion. Per

⁶ Economic Review – 2000, Government of Kerala, State Planning Board, Thiruvananthapuram.

⁷ Economic Survey of Kerala, 2002, Government of Kerala, State Planning Board, Thiruvananthapuram.

capita budgeted expenditure on education in the State is also substantially higher than for All India. Budgeted expenditure on revenue account in respect of education and training is less than 30% (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8
Education Expenditure – India and Kerala

(Rs. in Million)

	Total Revenue Budget (Centre and State)	Budgeted Expenditure (Revenue Account) – Education and Training	Per Capita Budgeted Expenditure	% of Budgeted Expenditure on Education to Total Budget
India	4416.22	608.57	620.15	13.78
Kerala	96.24	27.72	866.84	28.21

Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 1999-2000, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, Department of Secondary Education and Higher Education.

5. EMPLOYMENT

Historical Perspective and Employment Profile of Women

The economy and economic structure of Kerala is distinct from the rest of the country. It is characterized by predominance of perennial cash crops, – many of them tree crops like coconuts and cashew – agro-processing, a lower level of food crops cultivation, declining agricultural activity, marine fisheries because of long coast line, low level of industrial activity and high level of service oriented activities. While the people of Kerala have a high degree of literacy and general awareness because of education, unemployment of the educated is especially quite high. This is because of the general problem of lack of employment orientation of education. Those who acquire certain general levels of education do not also get attracted to labour intensive traditional economic activities. Consequently, inward migrants from neighbouring States take up lower end jobs. Relatively skilled persons as well as those with professional qualifications also opt for out migration within the country as well as overseas. Unskilled persons also join the bands of out country migrants in the hope of accessing wage employment even if access is only to lower end jobs because of relatively better income prospects.

Historically, the women of Kerala had access to education and availed of

Employment Profile of Women in Kerala

- Among women only one in six participates in work while among men every second person participates (work participation rate is only 15.3% for women against 50.4% for males).
- Female work participation in Kerala, compared to that at the All India level, is significantly lesser – only three fifths of the latter (15.3% against 25.7%).
- Between 1991 and 2001, women's work participation rate declined but that of men increased.
- Women constitute a substantially lower proportion of the workforce than men, both in the main as well as marginal categories.
- Majority of women workers of Kerala, like in the rest of India are rural workers – as, indeed, male workers also are.
- Women are predominant in the categories of agricultural labourers and household workers.
- Representation of women in the primary sector is much lower (48.6%) compared to that at the All India level (81.1%). Within the State, the proportion of women workers in this sector is almost about the same as that of male workers (47.8%).
- Significantly higher proportion (21.7%) of women workers is in the secondary sector than at the All India level (7.4%). Within the State also the proportion of women in the secondary sector is more than that of men (17.1%).
- The distribution of women workers in the tertiary sector is close to 30% against only 11.5% at the All India level. However, within the State, their proportion in this sector is less than that of men (35%).
- Women workers are relatively better organized. Compared to the All India situation, a significantly high proportion of women workers is in the Organized Sector (21.6% against 4.2%). Within the State, the proportion of women workers in the Organized Sector (21.6%) is double that of male workers in this Sector (11.4%). The situation is just the reverse at the All India level at which the proportion of male workers is more than double that of women workers (10.2% against only 4.2%) in the Organized Sector.
- The concentration of women in the Unorganized Sector (78.4%) is far lesser than that at the All India Level (95.8%).
- Women workers are significantly more under employed than men.
- Unemployment is higher for urban females compared to urban males.
- Unemployment of the educated males and females is highest in Kerala among all States.

this access as much as men did. Education facilitated women's access to employment as well even from the early 20th century. Salaried employment of women had become quite common by the beginning of the second quarter of the 20th century. Mary Poonen (1886-1976) was an early role model of women's development; she distinguished herself as an academic and doctor. One frequently came across surviving women of the earlier generations who retired as heads of educational institutions, functionaries in the medical profession and other public offices. Teaching and nursing have been among the preferred vocations for Kerala women whether within the country or outside. Employment of women in agriculture has not been as large a proportion as in the rest of India, due to the nature of cropping in Kerala. The organization of labour intensive agro based traditional industries like coir, cashew processing, plantations and spices (rubber, tea, coffee, cardamom etc.) attract significant female labour. Indeed, women are considered as specially skilled in these industries.

Kerala is reputed to be a State of vibrant Trade Unionism. However, like elsewhere in the country, women have not been significant in the Trade Unions.

Market conditions too have always tended to have impacts on conditions and quality of employment, especially of women. Many of the commercial crops of Kerala are export oriented and adverse fluctuations in the international prices of commodities often drive the employers to seek out economies in business, and one area sought to be adjusted against price fluctuations is labour. In the process, implementation of labour laws like the Minimum Wages Act, Payment of Wages Act, Equal Remuneration Act etc. gets undermined.

The decline of female workers in the primary sector has been attributed to change in the cropping pattern in Kerala – shift of substantial areas to perennial crops, coconut and rubber and reduction in area under women intensive paddy cultivation. Employment of women in the secondary sector is still significantly oriented towards traditional industries. Some of these industries like cashew are also "seasonal" on account of problems of securing adequate raw materials for processing throughout the year. Some of the industrial activities like shrimp processing etc. are also contracted out to be undertaken on *cottage* basis – on the basis of what is referred to as "*kudil vyavasayam*". While the increase of women workers in the tertiary sector is seemingly impressive, the quality of employment in this sector is not necessarily so, many jobs being peripheral and precarious. The comparative Employment Profile of women in Kerala and India is represented in Appendix 1 Table 5.1.

Work Participation and Occupational Shifts

The analysis of women's work participation and occupational shifts show the following trends:

- Decline in women's work participation; (between 1981 and 2001, women's work participation rate declined but that of men increased.) (Appendix 1 Table 5.2).
- Decline in the proportion of women in the primary as well as secondary sectors in rural areas;
- Increase in urban areas in both primary and secondary sectors;

- Substantial decline of women workers in the category of agricultural labourers and increase in the category of cultivators.
- Increase in the proportion of women workers in the tertiary sector in rural areas and decrease in urban areas.

District level work participation rates show wide variations (Appendix 1 Table 5.3.)

The 55th round of National Sample Survey has also largely reflected the trends in occupational shifts presented above. Many of the domestic activities carried out by women are indeed economic activities. Examples are: processing of grains, poultry, kitchen gardening, household dairy related activities etc. These activities do also have opportunity costs but are not reflected in the national accounts.

Informal Sector

Informal sector, whether it be rural or urban areas, is characterized by unincorporated proprietary enterprises or partnerships within or outside households with low employment intensity. In off farm employment in this sector, men are predominant and women workers constitute only a small proportion of male workers (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1
Per 1000 distribution of Non-agricultural workers in the informal sector,
(Principal and Subsidiary status), India and Kerala

	Proprietary		Partnership	
	Male	Female	Within same households	From different household
India				
Rural	602	78	15	12
Urban	578	56	24	18
Kerala				
Rural	686	68	12	13
Urban	520	85	15	24

Source: Non-agricultural workers in informal sector, 1999-2000, NSS 55th Round

Where informal off farm employment takes the nature of self employment, activities are either carried out on own account or by giving wage employment to others. These activities largely take the shape of household enterprises in which there are no assured regular salaries or wages. Workplaces are located frequently in own dwellings. Female workers are in significant numbers in this form of employment. They have to access credit by their own arrangements, assetless persons as they mostly are. Where they don't work on own account, they secure credit, especially for raw materials, through the employers for whom they work.

Marginalization Trend – Census 1991-2001

According to Census data, between 1991 and 2001, there has been a very high level of marginalization of workers both in India as a whole and in Kerala, particularly of men. Marginalization of men and women workers in Kerala has been of a much lesser order than in India as a whole. Inter Census trends in category shifts of workers are presented below (Appendix 1 Table 5.4). Relegation of workers to the marginal category is an indicator of their being driven to under employment, precarious employment and economic insecurity.

Inter-Census Trends in India/Kerala

In India – Increase in the total of main workers Increase of women as well as men main workers Gentle increase in rural main workers for both men and women and more for women Significant increase for urban main workers both men and women	In Kerala – Decrease in the total of main workers. Decrease of women main workers and increase of men main workers Decrease of rural main workers for both men and women and more for women Insignificant increase for urban main workers both men and women
Increase in the total of marginal workers Increase of women as well as men marginal workers Very significant increase for rural marginal workers Very significant increase for urban marginal workers both men and women	Increase of women as well as men marginal workers Increase in the total marginal workers Significant increase for rural marginal workers both men and women Increase of urban marginal workers more significant for men than women

Work participation rates between 1991 and 2001 have increased in all the Districts of Kerala except Thiruvananthapuram and Malappuram where it has marginally decreased and Kollam and Pathanamthitta where it has remained static. The highest work participation rate has been recorded by Idukki District and the lowest by Malappuram. In nine out of the fourteen districts, female work participation rates have declined in 2001. In Idukki which is a plantation district, female work participation rate has significantly increased – by over 4 percentage points. Wayanad, Palakkad, Kasaragod, and Malappuram are relatively backward districts of the State and decline of female work participation in these districts signifies increasing distress among women (Appendix 1 Table 5.3)

SC/ST Labour Participation

Among the social groups in Kerala, the scheduled tribes, males and females are the most employed. Male workers among the Scheduled Tribes, however, are the least employed in the urban areas. The Scheduled Castes come second in rank in terms of employment in rural as well as urban areas. Irrespective of the social groups, male and female workers in the State are more employed than their cohorts in India as a whole (Table 5.2).

Table 5. 2

Number of workers per 1000 persons according to the usual principal status and subsidiary status taken together by social groups, sex and residence, 1999-2000 (India and Kerala)

	ST		SC		OBC		Others	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
India								
Rural	558	438	531	325	532	302	520	223
Urban	480	204	503	185	530	159	518	108
Kerala								
Rural	721	408	580	327	528	226	572	221
Urban	548	471	566	301	549	198	561	198

Source: Employment and Unemployment situation among Social Groups in India, 1999-2000, NSS 55th Round, National Sample Survey Organization.

Unemployment

Kerala presents some contrasts to the All India situation in respect of unemployment. Female unemployment in the State is substantially higher than in India as a whole in rural as well as urban areas. Unlike in India as a whole, in urban Kerala, more females are unemployed than males. However, female rural unemployment level in Kerala is lesser than that of males. In this respect, Kerala and all India situations are alike (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3

Number of unemployed per 1000 persons according to usual principal status by sex and residence, 1999-2000, India and Kerala

Number of unemployed persons						
	Rural			Urban		
	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons
India	11	4	7	26	9	18
Kerala	43	39	41	40	56	48

Source: Employment and Unemployment in India, 1999-2000, NSS 55th Round

Female workers received considerably lesser wages than male workers. The average daily wage rates for women in the agricultural sector was Rs.78.80 as against Rs.118.90 for men (1999-2000).¹ The wages in Kerala are much higher than in many other parts of the country.

¹ Department of Economics and Statistics, Government of Kerala.

6. POVERTY

Poverty Head Count

Poverty ratio in Kerala, according to Government of India estimates based on NSSO survey, is less than half of India as a whole (Table 6.1). The poverty ratio is higher for rural India than urban India. In the case of Kerala, urban poverty is more than rural poverty – almost double. The Government of India ratios are disputed by the Government of Kerala. According to the State Survey, there are 1.72 million families which live below poverty line and about one-fifth of these families belong to SCs and STs. SC, ST and OBC families together constitute 76% of these families. In absolute numbers, Palakkad, Thiruvananthapuram and Malappuram districts occupy the three top positions in terms of the numbers of families living below poverty line (Appendix 1 Table 6.1).

Table 6.1
Number and Percentage of Population Below Poverty Line in Kerala
Relative to India, 1999-2000

	Rural		Urban		Combined	
	No. of Persons (Million)	% of Persons	No. of Persons (Million)	% of Persons	No. of Persons (Million)	% of Persons
India	193.24	27.09	67.07	23.62	260.31	26.10
Kerala	2.09	9.38	2.00	20.27	4.10	12.72

Source: Poverty estimates for 1999-2000, Government of India, Press Information Bureau, February 2001

Based on urban poverty data collected in respect of the Kollam Corporation, the State Government holds that majority of families in poverty do not have lands, habitable houses, access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

Anti-Poverty Programmes

The State Government are implementing a large number of urban and rural anti-poverty programmes based on the Government of India programmes some of which are specially targeted at SC/ST and OBC

Anti-Poverty Programmes Implemented in Kerala State

- Swarna Jayanthi Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY)
- Urban Self Employment Programme (USEP)
- Development of Women and Children in Urban Areas (DWCUA)
- National Slum Development Programme (NSDP)
- Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojana (VAMBAY)
- Cochin Urban Poverty Reduction Project (CUPRP)
- Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)
- Indira Awas Yojana (IAY)
- Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)

Source: Government of Kerala, State Planning Board, Economic Review, 2002.

families as well as women. (This apart, the State Government is also implementing the special component plan for SCs, Tribal Sub-Plan for tribals and State schemes for SCs/STs. SGSY and DWCUA are two anti-poverty programmes respectively in the rural and urban areas with special emphasis on women's development.

Under the SGSY which is a credit cum subsidy scheme, group approach is followed, special emphasis being on running of micro enterprises. It is ensured that 40% of the beneficiaries are women. More than 4500 groups are being assisted under this programme.

Under DWCUA, urban poor women are helped in setting up gainful employment through group activity. This scheme is distinguished by the special incentive extended to the poor women of urban areas who decide to setup self-employment enterprise as a group as opposed to individual efforts. Groups of urban poor women identify an economic activity suited to their skill, training, aptitude and local condition. Besides generating income, the synergy of the group helps the women to empower themselves for combating poverty. Minimum number for a group is fixed as 10. Ordinarily the project cost is Rs.2.5 lakhs or below, but varies from project to project. The DWCUA group is given a subsidy of 1.25 lakhs or 50% of the cost of the project which ever is less. To ensure the contribution of members, 5% of the project cost is brought in as their share, either in cash or in kind or as both. The banks normally sanction 95% of the project cost as loan amount. When the thrift of the poor population reaches a sizeable limit, the Thrift and Credit Societies also sanction loan. As of end March, 2003, over 1000 DWCUA Groups were in operation in the State.

Successive Governments in Kerala have introduced as many as 35 social security schemes and over 3% of the state budget is spent on social security measures. Reduction of income insecurity has been the primary objective of social security measures as over 87 per cent of the people are in the informal sector of the economy and substantial number of them are women.

There are 48 welfare institutions in the state under the Social Welfare Department with a sanctioned strength of over 5000. At present care and protection is provided only to about 2500 inmates. Through a network of 420 orphanages in the State, over 40,000 inmates are given care. Care and protection under these institutions also is largely for the benefit of women.

Rehabilitation of the Disabled

Considerable work is being done in the State for the rehabilitation of the disabled. It is estimated that there are 3,79,000 disabled in the State. The proportion of women among them is 43% (Table 6.2) The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) at its 48th Session in 1992 declared the period 1993-2002 as the Decade of Disabled Persons in order to achieve the decade goal of "Full participation and equality of people with disabilities. Consistent with the goals of ESCAP Declaration, several intervention measures for the benefit of the disabled in the State are under implementation.

Table 6.2
Projected Total Disabled in Kerala – Disability-wise

Disability	Males	Females	Total
Visually impaired	28960	33997	62957
Hearing and speech impaired	25183	23923	49106
Physically Handicapped	103249	75548	178797
Mental Retardation	28985	22640	51625
Mental illness	28960	7555	36515
Total	215337	163663	379000

Source: State Planning Board Committee Report on Disabled, 2000

Major intervention Measures for the Disabled in Kerala

Programme	Implementing Department
Educational and Support Facilities	
Special Schools	Directorate of Public Instruction
Educational assistance for mentally retarded	Non Governmental Organizations
Scholarships to students from Standard 1 to Plus Two	Social Welfare Department
Integrated Education of Handicapped	Education Department
Higher education for hearing impaired	NNISH
Health Promotion Facilities	
Distribution of aids and appliances	KSPHPEW/Health Department/Local Government
Physical medicine and rehabilitation centres	Health Department
Welfare activities to the locomotor disable	Welfare society for locomotor disabled
Early detection and intervention in hearing and speech impaired children	NISH
Early intervention and therapy services for prevention of neurological disability in children	CDC
Rehabilitation and training to children and adults with cognitive and communicative disorder	ICCN
Special Training for the Mentally retarded children	SIMH
Special Security Measures	
Institutional Care	Social Welfare Department
Pension and Allowances	Local Government

Programme	Implementing Department
Employment Assistance and Cells	
Special Employment Exchanges for Disabled	Directorate of Employment
Vocational Training Centres	Government and Private
Self Employment Assistance	KSPHPWC
Implementation of Persons With Disability Act, 1996	Commissionerate for Disability
Reservation and Concerns to the Disabled	Various Department

Source: Government of Kerala, State Planning Board, Economic Review 2002

Kudumbashree

An innovative poverty reduction programme implemented exclusively for women in Kerala State is "Kudumbashree" (State Poverty Eradication Mission). This is based on the model under the Urban Basic Services Programme (UBSP) with support from UNICEF started in 1992 in Alapuzha Municipality. It was universalized in year 2002-03 in the entire State. "Kudumbashree has been identified as one of the twenty best practices in governance identified by the Planning Commission and UNDP."¹ A special feature of Kudumbashree is the modality of identifying destitute families within a community for the purpose of delivering services with reference to crucial non-economic criteria.

Non-economic criteria followed by Kudumbashree for identification for destitute families

1. Kutch house
2. No access to safe drinking water
3. No access to sanitary latrine
4. Illiterate adult in the family
5. Family having not more than one earning member
6. Family getting barely two meals a day or less
7. Presence of children below five years in the family
8. Alcoholic and drug addict in the family
9. SC/ST family

Source: Government of Kerala, State Planning Board, Economic Review, 2002.

Kudumbashree

- The Mission was inaugurated on 1st May 1998; formal activities were started on 1st April 1999.
- The Mission was based on the previous experience of the 1994 Alapuzha Community Development Society (Urban Model) and the UNICEF assisted Malappuram Community Based Nutrition Programme (CBNP) [Rural Model]. The salient features of these models were community participation through grassroots Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs), identification of poor among the beneficiaries based on non-economic criteria, thrift based channeling of financial assistance from banking institutions for establishment of micro enterprises.
- The operational structure is a three-tier system of Community Based Organizations (CBOs). The lower most tier consists of NHGs, each with 20-40 women members selected from poor families. In weekly meeting of the Groups, local problems are discussed, micro plans prepared, savings of members collected and recycled as loans and functional volunteers are selected to

¹ Government of Kerala, State Planning Board, Economic Review, 2002.

work in areas of community health, income generation and infrastructure. The next higher tier consists of Area Development Societies (ADSs) at the Ward level for 8-10 NHGs. Activities are determined by the representatives elected from the federating NHGs. Ward level Monitoring and Advisory Committees are formed with the concerned Ward members as Chairpersons. Priorities for action are decided in tune with the policy framework of the Local self-government bodies. Mini Plans are prepared based on Group level Micro Plans. The third tier consists of the Community Development Societies (CDSs) at the Panchayat/Municipal level. These Societies are registered under the Societies Registration Act. At this tier also, Monitoring and Advisory Committees are formed under the chairmanship of the concerned Panchayat Presidents/Municipal Chairpersons. Based on the Micro Plans and Mini Plans prepared at the lower tiers, the CDS Plans which are also the anti-poverty sub-plans of the local self-government are prepared. Kudumbashree is recognized and accepted by the local self-governments as a further step in the process of decentralization.

- The areas of concentration of the Kudumbashree are housing, safe drinking water, sanitation and entrepreneurship development.
- In the management of thrift and credit, sustainability of loaning programmes is ensured through linkage of loans with savings and promptitude in repayment of loans in weekly meetings of NHGs. Operations are transparent and transaction costs are low. Without collateral securities, loan repayments are ensured through peer pressure. So far nearly 14000 Micro Enterprises have been established. As at the end of July 2001, credit of Rs.220 million had been advanced against thrift of Rs.310 million. The turnover target set for Micro Enterprises for year 2001-02 was Rs.735 million.
- A special feature of Kudumbashree has been that it has reached out to primitive tribal Groups—the Koragas of Kasargod, Paniyas and Kattunayakans of Wayanad of Malappuram, Kadars of Thrichur and Kurumbaras of Attappadi in Palakkad districts of the State.

(Kudumbashree, Concept Organization and Activities, State Poverty Eradication Mission, Thiruvananthapuram)

Housing, Sanitation and Environment

Housing, access to safe drinking water, sanitation, and energy at the household level are basic minimum needs for healthy living conditions and environment. Inadequacies in the satisfaction of these needs are harsher on women than men because they are more tied down to domestic chores and household responsibilities.

Housing sector has witnessed significant growth over the last three decades. This growth in Kerala State is attributable to replacement of the joint family system by that of nuclear families, land reforms under which *kudikidappu* rights (residential rights) were granted to resident labourers of pre-reform times, inward remittances by in country and out country economic migrants, apart from provision of house sites and targeted weaker section housing programmes. Despite the housing sector

growth, there are still considerable shortages in the supply of housing units. Millions still do live in semi permanent or kutcha (crude) and improvised structures. Quality of construction of many of the dwelling units leaves much to be desired, not to speak of the lack of privacy for women members of households.

Safe drinking water from protected water supply sources are not also accessible for millions in the State. Nor do they have house tap connections,

Though Kerala is in high rainfall zone, water scarcity is frequent because of failure of monsoons, often successive and consequent fall in the water table. In addition, residents in coastal areas have the problem of salinity intrusion in the well water. The soil of Kerala is largely porous laterite and water contamination due to sub soil seepage also adversely affects potability. There is high incidence of water borne diseases; the State Directorate of Health Services has reported (2000) 0.6 million cases of acute diarrhoea. Supply of adequate protected water continues to be a major concern both in rural and urban areas, and an issue of development.²

A fairly significant proportion of households are not equipped with any toilet facility. Majority of the households having toilet facilities are fitted with pit toilets and flush toilets are rather low in proportion.

Housing, Sanitation and Environment	
Housing	
Growth in housing stock in 30 years	2.8 million 5.5 million
Shortage of dwelling units	50,000
Dwelling units requiring repair/reconstruction	800,000
Proportion of households living in pucca houses	80%
Urban Areas	89%
Rural Areas	77%
Proportion of households living in semi-pucca houses	13%
Urban Areas	7%
Rural Areas	16%
Proportion of households living in kutcha construction	7%
Urban Areas	4%
Rural Areas	8%
Protected Water Supply	
Proportion of population having access to protected water supply	
Urban Population	69%
Rural Population	51%
Households connected with house taps	6.1 lakhs (10.47% of all households)
Energy	
Proportion of households with access to various energy sources	
Urban Areas	
Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG)	30%
Kerosene	5%
Wood fuel	64%
Rural Areas	
Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG)	11%
Kerosene	2%
Wood fuel	86%
Electric Supply	
Proportion of households having electric supply	
Urban Areas	88%
Rural Areas	67%
Toilet	
Proportion of households with toilets	
Urban Areas	
Flush toilets	26%
Pit toilets	67%
No facilities	7%
Rural Areas	
Flush toilets	15%
Pit toilets	67%
No facilities	17%

Source: International Institute for Population Sciences, NFHS-2, 1998-99, Kerala.

² Economic Review 2000, Government of Kerala, State Planning Board, Thiruvananthapuram.

Considerable strides have been made in rural electrification but there are substantial shortfalls in electricity supply at the household level though coverage in this respect is much greater in the State compared to many others.

Domestic fuel consumption in the State is dominated by use of wood fuel though supply of kerosene and liquid petroleum gas has generally increased. Wood fuel used in Kerala includes coconut residues. Smoky domestic working environment common during wood fuel usage poses serious health hazards for women. According to the Directorate of Health Services, in 1999-2000, the incidence of Acute Respiratory Infection was in 5.6 million cases that included cases in which there were 1000 mortalities. Under the Integrated Rural Energy Programme (IREP) which is under implementation in 28 Rural Development Blocks, improved *chulahs* (fixed family *chulahs*, family portable *chulahs* and community *chulahs*) are being installed.

In terms of all the parameters – housing, water supply, sanitation, energy use and supply of electricity, living conditions, especially for women are still quite harsh. This is more so in the case of rural areas.

Female Headed Households

The proportion of female headed households in Kerala has been increasing since 1961 and as of 1999, the proportion was 22.1%, more than double the proportion in India as a whole which is 10.3%³. Desertion, death, divorce, migration etc. are the basic reasons for households becoming female-headed. Districts having relatively higher incidence of female-headed households are Kannur, Palakkad, Kollam, Malapuram and Kozhikode.

Women's Component Plan

A special feature in respect of investing on women's development is the implementation of the Women's Component Plan since 1998. Kerala is, indeed, the only State in the country which implements this Plan.

"In Kerala in addition to general development, gender specific schemes have been formulated and implemented. In the 2001-02 budget there were as many as 30 schemes specifically drawn up and implemented for women. Nearly 5 per cent of the plan outlay is spent on women specific schemes including grant in aid allocation to Local Self Government Institutions (LSGIs)."⁴

³ Census of Kerala, 1961 and International Institute for Population Sciences, NFHS -2, Kerala.

⁴ Government of Kerala, State Planning Board, Economic Review, 2002.

7. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION BY WOMEN

While Kerala presents many contrasts with the rest of India, in political participation of women, the State is not significantly different from the latter. Voter turnout of women in the Legislative Assembly Elections of 2001 was 70.67 percent as against 74.39 percent in the case of men. In the membership strength of 141 including a nominated member, women members are 9 in number (6.38 %). This proportion compared to that under the earlier Assembly elections of 1996, is a decline from 9.2 %. (Thirteen women members had been returned to the previous Assembly). Political parties are also reluctant to sponsor women candidates in reasonable proportion, leave alone parity on the matter. In 2001 elections, there were only 19 women contestants against 1000 male contestants.

Kerala is a State where democratic decentralization process has been under effective implementation following the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution. In terms of statutorily mandatory reservation of seats for women in the Panchayati Raj bodies- Gram Panchayats, Block Panchayats, District Panchayats, Municipalities and Corporations – there were 6,184 women members against a total of 17,095 (36%).

LSGIs	Total No.	No. of Wards	No. of Seats Reserved for Women			
			SC	ST	General	Total
Grama Panchayats	991	13255	422	48	4330	4800
Block Panchayats	152	1638	39	5	585	629
District Panchayats	14	307	13	1	91	105
Municipalities	53	1597	45	1	504	550
Corporations	5	298	11	0	89	100
Total	1215	17095	530	55	5599	6184

Source: Government of Kerala, State Planning Board, Economic Review, 2002.
*LSGIs – Local Self Government Institutions

Out of the financial resources devolved on Panchayati Raj bodies, 10% is exclusively allocated for women's development programmes and projects. Earmarking of resources for women is of the order of Rs.1300 million per annum. In the programmes of training of members of local bodies, special importance is assigned to gender issues. Deviating from implementation of traditionally stereotyped schemes for women's development, industrial projects are now being given priority. A UNICEF supported study of implementation of the Women's Component Plan has brought out that centrality of gender dimensions has become part of the planning process and that project formulation is increasingly addressing the emerging needs of women, though there is considerable scope for further improvements especially in regard to addressing children's issues.

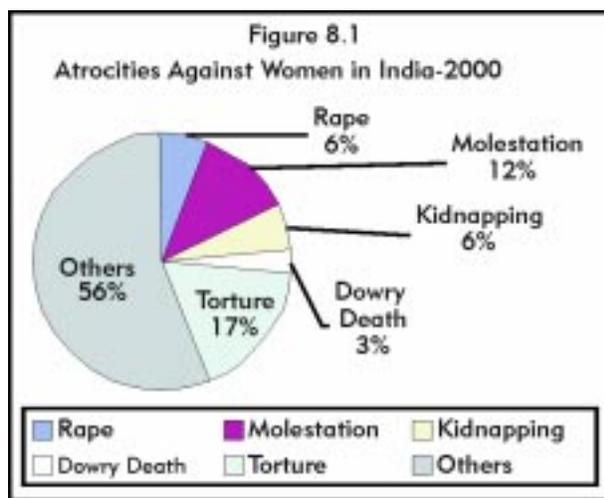
8. VIOLENCE

Despite the high level of literacy and general awareness among the people of Kerala, violence against women is widely prevalent and is a matter of serious social concern. Ghastly crimes against women like dowry deaths, of course, do not generally take place in the State. The State's contribution to crimes against women is less than 4% of the All India average, though, the crime rate of total cognizable crimes in the State is more than the All India average – about 15% as against 14% for All India (1999). Rape, kidnapping and abduction, cruelty by husbands and relatives, molestation and offences under the Immoral Traffic

Table 8.1
Details of Atrocities Committed Against Women in Kerala

Offences	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Rape	588	589	423	552	550
Molestation	1561	1773	1643	1695	2033
Kidnapping	160	130	123	89	125
Eve-teasing	70	96	50	69	86
Dowry Death	25	21	31	25	24
Torture	1675	2125	2488	2418	2579
Others	3227	2739	2985	2773	2171
Total	7306	7473	7743	7621	7568

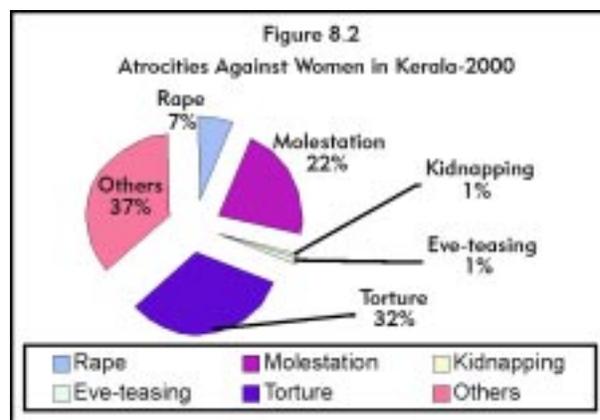
Source: State Crime Bureau as quoted in Government of Kerala, State Planning Board, Economic Review, 2002.



Commission (Over 30,000 petitions filed during 1996-2000). Malappuram, Thrissur and Kollam are the districts in the State areas of the State which have relatively higher incidence of crimes against women (Table 8.1 in Appendix-1).

Though, sexual harassment against women does not significantly feature in the official crime

(Prevention) Act are the more frequently occurring crimes against women in the State. In terms of absolute numbers, the largest numbers of crimes against women are accounted for by cruelty by husbands and relatives, and molestation. These two categories of offences constitute 94% of all crimes against women. This scenario also is reflected in the large number of petitions in respect of atrocities against women submitted to the State Women's



records, it does remain a problem in Kerala. This is reflected in the level of awareness about this problem among women. According to SAKSHI, a Delhi based NGO, more than 90% of working women in Kerala are aware of sexual harassment in the work place (the highest level of awareness among all States). Complaints committees to address the problem of sexual harassment are in place in most of the Government Departments as well as Public Sector Enterprises. A status note on the constitution/functioning of these committees has been documented by the National Commission for Women based on its dialogue with various agencies they had at Thiruvananthapuram in May 2003 (Appendix 4 – Paper 4).

Kerala has one of the highest suicide rates in the country, 27 per lakh population (16 per lakh for women and 39 per lakh for men) which is three times the national average. The incidence of completed suicides is higher for men while attempted suicides are higher for females.¹ During 2001, there were 9572 suicide cases registered of which 2785 were those of women which constituted 29 percent.²

Domestic violence in Kerala is as rampant as in other parts of the country. "Three out of five women accept at least one of six reasons as justification for a husband beating his wife. 10% of ever-married women have experienced beating or physical mistreatment since age 15 and 4 percent experienced such violence in the 12 months preceding the survey. Most of these women have been beaten or physically mistreated by their husbands".³

¹ Mridul Eapen and Praveena Kodoth, Demystifying the high status of women in Kerala, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, May 2001.

² Government of Kerala, State Planning Board, Economic Review, 2002

³ NHFS-2, Kerala, 1998-99

9. WOMEN AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

The Hindu Succession Act of 1956 established the currently prevalent Hindu Personal Law. It contained special provisions in respect of matrilineal communities among Hindus. So far as Kerala is considered, *marumakkathayam* and *aliyasanthana*, were the customary matrilineal¹ systems. Under the special provisions of the Act, all prevailing differences in the rules of devolution customarily applicable to matrilineal Kerala Hindus were eliminated. The children of pre-deceased sons and daughters were brought on par in the matter of succession to property. (Earlier, lineal descendants of pre-deceased daughters had been favoured). The special provisions of the Act also eliminated all prevailing differences in different types of landed property – self-acquired, separated, and joint family property (*taravad* or *tavazhi*). A person's share in the joint family property was deemed to be that which it would have been had the joint property been partitioned on a per capita basis among all members holding interest in the *taravad*.

In 1976, the Kerala Joint Hindu Family System (Abolition) Act was enacted by the State Government. It explicitly removed the vestiges of matrilineal joint estates. Under this law, all family members with an interest in the Hindu undivided family estate were deemed as holding their shares separately as full owners. In the devolution of property, preferences in favour of children of pre-deceased daughters were eliminated. All surviving matrilineal joint family estates were deemed as partitioned on a per capita basis. Further testamentary rights for all property were conferred on both men and women. Advantages that sons had enjoyed over daughters in joint family property among patrilineal Hindus in Kerala were also eliminated.

While the laws relating to inheritance among Hindus have been enacted with the intent to terminate gender discrimination, there are views that the change at scenario has not necessarily been an unqualified blessing for women –

“The effects on women of the changes in inheritance practices are mixed. On the one hand, it can be argued that women have gained in that they now have individual rights in landed property over which legally they have absolute control, while earlier control over management was essentially in male hands through the *Karanavan*. However, class differentiation and poverty among the Nairs² have

¹ Inheritance of property was by matrilineal joint families which were known as *taravads*. They consisted of the matrilineal descendants of a common ancestress – a set of sisters and brothers, their mother, sisters' children and sisters' daughters' children. The *taravads* had a common residence and enjoyed property collectively. The communities, which followed the matrilineal systems, were the *Nair* and *Tiyyas* and *Mappila* Muslims of some parts of Kerala. Namboodiri Brahmins also had joint family system. They lived in groups in common residence, the *Illoms*. Descent of property among them was patrilineal.

² One of the communities of Kerala which followed the *Marumakkathayam* system.

increased with the break-up of the *taravads*, and many Nair women whose economic needs would previously have been taken care of by the joint family estate are today landless and poor.”³

“For the women of Kerala, the disappearance of matriliney and its replacement by patrilineal monogamous households should have represented a retrogressive step..... Women did not realize then what they were being asked to give up.”⁴

“Women now have individual rights over their share of *Taravad* property but this right has been achieved within a legal framework of dependence on men as husbands. Men as husbands and fathers have gained access to control over women in ways that they did not have earlier.”⁵

So far as the Christians of Kerala are concerned, they were covered by the Cochin Christian Succession Act, 1921 and the Travancore Christian Succession Act, 1916 – in Cochin and Travancore areas respectively. These Acts reflected a lot of gender inequalities. A widow or mother, for instance, under the Travancore Act could only inherit life interest in land and other immovable property. Even this was to be forfeited on remarriage. With the formation of the Travancore-Cochin State, the Indian Succession Act of 1925 should have superseded the Travancore and Cochin laws. However, a 1956 court judgement had the effect of saving the Travancore and Cochin laws. In 1983, Mary Roy, a Travancore Christian challenged the Constitutional validity of application of the old laws on grounds of equality of sexes guaranteed under the Constitution. In 1986, the Supreme Court held that the 1925 law, the Indian Succession Act, was the law that could hold the ground. As a result of this judgement of the Supreme Court, daughters can claim equality of right over fathers’ property.

Though rights may be vested in women by law, social practices on ground may vary and may not necessarily be in terms of exercise of legal rights. Even after lapse of 15 years after the enactment of the Hindu Succession Act, it was found in studies that still “family land” and “individual land” devolved differently following the old concepts of “joint family estate” and their indivisibility, “self-acquired property” etc. “Recent research in Central Trivancore, by two doctoral students indicates that although women’s property rights are still recognized, women usually inherit a house but are less likely to get agricultural land.”⁶

The Supreme Court judgement in Mary Roy case was also not without protests from the Kerala Christian community on several grounds. “.....the protests against the Supreme Court ruling has been supported by the Synod of Christian Churches which conducted a ‘pulpit campaign’ and arranged legal counsel to help draft wills to disinherit female heirs.”⁷

³ Bina Agarwal, *A Field of One’s Own, Gender and Land Rights in South Asia*, 1994.

⁴ *Gender Profile-Kerala*, Leela Gulati and Ramalingam, Royal Netherlands Embassy, New Delhi, India.

⁵ Mridul Eapen and Praveena Kodoth, *Demystifying the “High Status” of Women in Kerala*, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, 2001.

⁶ Bina Agarwal, *A Field of One’s Own, Gender and Land Rights in South Asia*, 1994.

⁷ *Ibid.*

It is the general experience that in most of the States in which land reforms have been introduced by law, there is gender discrimination in respect of fixation of land ceilings (land ceilings are fixed in relation to family units, usually of five members) – more specifically, in the definition of the term “family”, in provision of additional allotments and in the wife being allowed to be counted as an independent unit. Unlike in most of the States, gender discrimination has been avoided in application of land ceiling provisions in Kerala. Wife is included in the definition of the term “family”. Unmarried adult daughters are also counted as separate units like unmarried adult sons are.

The present day property inheritance practices at the societal level juxtaposed with legal entitlements deserve to be studied specially in the perspective of the experience of actual exercise of rights.

10. WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT: SPECIALIZED AGENCIES IN KERALA

Kerala Government has ambitious socio-economic development targets for achievement during the Tenth Five Year Plan. All these targets have vital implications for women's development. Specifically, these targets are –

- To ensure economic growth of 6.5% per annum in the Tenth Plan (2002-07) with 3.05% in Agriculture and Allied Sectors.
- To reduce poverty from 12.7% in 1999-2000 to 6% by 2007 and near elimination by 2012
- To ensure 100% enrolment of all children by the end of 2003 and their retention till they complete 14 years of age. Access to schools within a range of 1 km. These goals are aimed to be achieved by 2007.
- To increase literacy rate from 90.92% in 2001 to 98% in 2007 and elimination of rural-urban female-male disparity.
- To reduce IMR from 14 per 1000 live births in 1999 to 8 per 1000 live births by 2007.
- To increase the forest tree cover from the present 26.6% to 33% by 2012 and also to ensure density of tree cover by eco-stabilization, eco-restoration and eco-protection.
- To provide drinking water to all partially covered habitations (71% to 100), thus making them fully covered habitations.
- To reduce gender gaps in health, education and wage rates by 50% by 2007.
- To provide all weather road connectivity to all habitations (the connectivity is now 83%) with population of 500 and above by 2007.
- To bring down the decadal population growth rate from 9.4% to 5% by 2011 and to achieve population stabilization.
- To bring down the unemployment rate from the level of 20.4% (current daily status) in 1999-2000 to 10% by 2007 and near zero by 2012.

Expenditure on Social Services			
(Rs.Crore)			
Year	Total Expenditure (Revenue and Capital)	Expenditure on Social Services (Revenue and Capital)	Percentage of Social Services Expenditure to Total Expenditure
1991-92	3502.00	1382.00	39
1992-93	3934.00	1480.00	37
1993-94	4656.00	1325.00	39
1994-95	6103.00	2196.00	36
1995-96	6390	2380.00	37
1996-97	7410.64	2774.06	37
1997-98	8979.99	3162.05	35
1998-99	9897.71	3429.25	35
1999-00	12214.14	4272.31	35
2000-01 (RE)	13395.02	4671.65	35
2001-02 (R.BE)	13671.27	4861.36	36

Source: Government of Kerala, State Planning Board, Economic Review, 2002.

The growth rates targeted for Kerala during the Tenth Plan are:

Agriculture Sector	3.05%
Industries Sector	5.89%
Service Sector	8.17%
Total	6.5%

Social services of which women's development is part has always been assigned a significant proportion of total budgeted expenditure. The proportion in 2001-02 was 36%.

The approach of the State to women's development is holistic. Women's concerns in gender issues are viewed as pervasive matters to be addressed in all the general development schemes to the maximum extent feasible as well as through gender specific schemes. Reference has been made to this earlier in the context of the Women's Component Plan under the section on Poverty. Women's development activities are taken up in more than 14 departments of the State. Several agencies/government institutions and non-government institutions are involved. Details of the schemes/activities have been dealt with sectorally in the relevant parts of this document. The major governmental institutions exclusively concerned with women's development are Kerala State Women Development Corporation, Kudumbashree and Women's Commission. The activities and achievements of these institutions are detailed below.

Name of Institution	Activities	Achievements
Kerala State Women Development Corporation	Started in 1988 with the objective of social and economic empowerment of poor women providing self-employment, training in modern trades. It is the nodal agency for implementing STEP and NORAD schemes through mobilizing fund from NBCFDC and NMDFC and GOI	During 2001-02 it mobilized Rs.60 lakhs from NBCFDC and Rs.50 lakhs from NMDFC, provided self-employment assistance and training to 1722 women. It is also running 5 women hostel benefiting 250 inmates.
Kudumbashree	Comprehensive network approach of State Poverty Eradication Mission started in 1999 as a partnership of GOK, GOI, LSGI's and NABARD. The objective is eradication of poverty from the state with in a decade. The core activities include women empowerment initiatives, micro finance operation, micro enterprise promotion and convergent community action carried out through BPL women. It has three-tier structure – Neighbour Hood Group at the grassroot level, Area Development Societies at the local ward level and CDS at the local government level.	At present 73333 NHG's 5306 ADS's and 758 CDS's are functioning in the urban areas covering 14.28 lakh families. In the Rural Areas 108450 NHG's, 12957 ADS's and 1049 CDS's are functioning covering 2224847 BPL families. About 4500 NGHS's were linked with the NABARD during 2002.
Kerala Women's Commission	Established in 1996 with the objective of improving the status of women in Kerala and to enquire into unfair practices against women.	During 2002 the commission received 3935 complaints which include 559 related to violence, 710 on harassment by husband and 165 dowry cases.

Source: Government of Kerala, State Planning Board, Economic Review, 2002.

An organogram presenting the interface between the various departments/ agencies is presented in Appendix 2.

11. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND DIALOGUES OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN WITH EXPERTS, NGOS AND GOVERNMENT OF KERALA

Meeting of the Expert Committee on Economic Empowerment of Women

The National Commission held a meeting of an Expert Committee on Economic Empowerment of Women in April 2003 to identify the major issues that needed to be tackled. The issues that emerged as affecting women were –

- Predominant relegation of women to agricultural labour and consequent vulnerability;
- Women's predominance in informal/unorganized sector employment and precariousness and insecurity arising out of it;
- Occupational segregation;
- Gender based disparities in earnings;
- Non-payment of minimum wages in accordance with the law;
- Denial of social security
- Low skill development;
- Opposition to acquiring non-traditional skills – example, masonry
- Negative impacts of liberalization of trade and globalization;
- Displacement owing to introduction of new technologies;
- Negative impacts of changing market conditions;
- Violence at workplace; and
- Lack of access to assets in the absence of property rights.

The major recommendations were to intensify the formation of Self Help Groups and their linkage to markets, skills, credit and resources through a process of gender budgeting. Gist of the discussions is presented in Appendix 3.

Public Hearings

Most of the above points discussed by the Expert Committee on Economic Empowerment of Women came up during the public hearings in the various sectors in which women were working in Kerala. (The NCW conducted public hearings in Kerala in September, 2001 and September, 2003. The public hearing held in September, 2001 had workers from the plantation sector, special economic zone and fish processing industry. The public hearing conducted in September, 2003 had domestic workers, bamboo workers, agricultural workers and workers in the fish processing industry).

The major issues that emerged in the public hearings were the decline of employment opportunities due to globalization and other market changes, closing down of plantation estates, lack of housing, health, education and transport facilities to workers, lowering of wages, declining employment opportunities, harassment at the workplace, inadequate social security measures in the special economic zone and absence of it for domestic workers, poor working conditions, exploitation of domestic workers with low wages and long hours of work, Influx of cheap labour for domestic work from neighbouring State, increasing poverty etc. Apart from this, many of the participants referred to domestic violence due to alcoholism. The reports of the public hearings are placed in Appendix 3.

Dialogue with NGOs

The NCW held a workshop at Thiruvananthapuram on 19th May, 2003 on Strategies for Economic Empowerment. The Hon'ble Chief Minister who inaugurated the workshop said economic empowerment could not be seen in isolation from political and social empowerment. Women suffered most when the income of a family was hit. The government had attempted to enhance the process of women's empowerment through implementation of the various provisions for decentralization such as reservation of positions for women. Kudumbashree programme had become a model for economic empowerment of women. However, there continued to be other challenges such as dowry, sexual exploitation of women etc. Attitudes and mindsets had to change for genuine empowerment to be achieved. The Kudumbashree model and the interventions made by NABARD were presented at this meeting. The Director, Centre for Development Studies referred to unemployment of the educated in Kerala as the greatest concern. He also established a link between education and violence and stated that less educated women were subjected to greater violence than the more educated women. The Member Secretary of the Kerala State Planning Board explained the process of decentralization and women's empowerment in Kerala. (The summary report is placed in Appendix 4.).

This was followed by a workshop on the Status of Women in Kerala on 20th May, 2003. The Minister for Industries and Social Welfare, Shri P.K. Kunhalikutty inaugurating the workshop said that the real challenge for Kerala was to sustain the achievement already made for women's empowerment in the State. Other eminent speakers included Justice Sukumaran and Savithri Lakshmanan. This was followed with a detailed discussion with the representatives of the NGOs. The summary report is placed in Appendix 4.

Interaction with State Government Departments and Public Sector Enterprises

The Chairman, NCW held a meeting with all the departments and public sector enterprises of the State and Central Government in Kerala to review the functioning of Complaints Committee in Workplace on 20th May, 2003. The report of the review meeting is placed in Appendix 4.

The NCW visiting team held a detailed discussion with the Secretaries to the Government of Kerala on 21st May, 2003. Minutes are placed at Appendix 4. The issues brought to their notice related to –

- Gender Sensitization of Police;
- Inadequacies in the functioning of the Family Courts;
- Poor Implementation of Dowry Prohibition Act;
- The incidence of female foeticide;
- Impact of sex tourism on women and girls;
- Consultation of the Government with the State Women's Commission;
- Condition of prisons;
- Inadequacy of rescue and short stay homes;
- Sexual harassment at workplace;
- Violation of the Minimum Wages Act;
- Decline of employment of women in agriculture;
- Child marriages;
- Unsatisfactory implementation of Women's Component Plan at the Panchayats; and
- Welfare of the women belonging to SC/ST etc.

The Secretary, Social Welfare promised to coordinate action on all the points raised by the NCW.

12. CONCLUSION

The scenario in Kerala presents a paradox. Women have very high level of achievements on all social development indicators namely, education and health. The laws relating to property rights are also more progressive with a long tradition of matriliney. Yet the economic, social and political empowerment of women is not complete. Women lag behind in their political empowerment as indicated by the low representation in elections to the legislature; lowest work participation with a high level of unemployment experienced by women, particularly educated women; the mental stress of employed and educated women in not being able to maintain domestic harmony for a variety of reasons. The increasing violence and suicides also stand in contradiction to the high levels of attainment in social development. The data presented and the analysis brought out in all the sections relating to demography, health, education, employment, political participation and violence bear out this situation.

What emerges clearly is the social mindset which does not recognize gender equality and maintains discrimination. The State Government have unique programmes like the Kudumbashree, and have unique strategies like the Women's Component Plan at the Panchayat level. The Kudumbashree has made a mark in helping large numbers of women access skill development and incomes. The Women's Component Plan seems to have missed out the "spirit" of making this special component of 10% an additionality to the general development activities of the Panchayat to benefit women.

The declining agriculture, the inadequate growth of industries and the lack of capacity of the tertiary sector to absorb the large numbers of persons with various levels of education is a major concern. The large inflow of remittances from the migrants has not translated into investments that could generate massive employment within the State. The pressures of liberalization of trade and globalization of markets have caused great threats to employment in the plantations as also the manufacturing sectors in the State. Development of alternate skills and identification of new products for markets seem to be slow, resulting in the employment crisis that has hit the job seekers.

Wage discrimination and poor implementation of minimum wages in some sectors and low wages in others are problems faced by many, which threaten their economic security. Influx of labour from neighbouring low wage States confounds the problem further.

Intensive drive for expanding tourism brings with it problems like sexual exploitation of women and children.

Gender justice should now come about by increasing efforts of gender sensitization across the board and addressing the males in the society. The school curricula, the media and all training

initiatives have to be oriented to changing the social mindset which does not provide space for the female in the decision making process.

Women of Kerala are developed in terms of social indicators. But these indicators do not seem to add up to empowerment. Women are educated, frequently more than men, but are unemployed also more than men. They live longer than men. Poor quality of life makes it burdensome and prolongs the burden. Women are more aware. Nonetheless, they continue to be abused. This scenario should give food for thought. Are we chasing a shadow in pursuit of indicators? Can archaic mindsets be beaten into the framework of indicators and changes measured?

Appendix 1
STATISTICAL TABLES

Table 2.1

Percentage of decadal growth, percentage of child population in the age-group 0-6 by residence and percentage of urban population to total population – Kerala State and Districts, 2001

State/District	Total/Rural/Urban	Population			Percentage of decadal growth 1991-2001	Percentage of child population in the age-group 0-6			Percentage of urban population	Sex ratio of total population	Sex ratio of child population in the age-group 0-6
		Person	Male	Female		Person	Male	Female			
KERALA	T	31,838,619	15,468,664	16,369,955	9.42	11.48	12.04	10.95	25.97	1058	963
	R	23,571,484	11,450,785	12,120,699	10.05	11.68	12.24	11.15	-	1059	964
	U	8,267,135	4,017,879	4,249,256	7.64	10.90	11.45	10.38	-	1058	958
Kasaragod District	T	1,203,342	587,763	615,579	12.30	12.54	12.94	12.16	19.42	1047	984
	R	969,597	474,899	494,698	8.30	12.69	13.09	12.30	-	1042	979
	U	233,745	112,864	120,881	32.64	11.94	12.34	11.56	-	1071	1004
Kannur District	T	2,412,365	1,154,144	1,258,221	7.13	11.20	11.97	10.49	50.46	1090	956
	R	1,195,202	578,017	617,185	8.04	11.55	12.20	10.94	-	1068	957
	U	1,217,163	576,127	641,036	6.26	10.86	11.74	10.07	-	1113	954
Wayanad District	T	786,627	393,397	393,230	17.04	12.74	13.04	12.44	3.76	1000	954
	R	757,025	378,547	378,478	16.61	12.76	13.08	12.45	-	1000	952
	U	29,602	14,850	14,752	29.00	12.18	12.20	12.16	-	993	990
Kozhikode District	T	2,878,498	1,398,674	1,479,824	9.87	11.64	12.18	11.12	38.25	1058	966
	R	1,777,552	863,226	914,326	10.03	11.54	12.11	11.00	-	1059	962
	U	1,100,946	535,448	565,498	9.60	11.79	12.28	11.32	-	1056	973
Malappuram District	T	3,629,640	1,759,479	1,870,161	17.22	14.64	15.26	14.05	9.81	1063	979
	R	3,273,657	1,586,791	1,686,866	16.33	14.67	15.27	14.12	-	1063	983
	U	355,983	172,688	183,295	26.03	14.30	15.19	13.45	-	1061	940
Palakkad District	T	2,617,072	1,265,794	1,351,278	9.86	11.56	12.17	10.99	13.62	1068	963
	R	2,260,611	1,092,486	1,168,125	12.60	11.73	12.36	11.15	-	1069	965
	U	356,461	173,308	183,153	-4.84	10.46	11.01	9.95	-	1057	955
Thrissur District	T	2,975,440	1,422,047	1,553,393	8.70	10.82	11.59	10.11	28.21	1092	953
	R	2,185,933	1,018,381	1,117,552	5.89	10.98	11.82	10.22	-	1097	949
	U	839,507	403,666	435,841	16.56	10.40	11.01	9.84	-	1080	965
Ernakulam District	T	3,098,378	1,535,881	1,562,497	9.09	10.56	10.93	10.19	47.65	1017	948
	R	1,621,890	805,950	815,940	10.56	10.60	10.97	10.23	-	1012	944
	U	1,476,488	729,931	746,557	7.52	10.51	10.88	10.14	-	1023	953
Idukki District	T	1,128,605	566,405	562,200	6.96	11.46	11.59	11.33	5.07	993	970
	R	1,071,365	537,987	533,378	6.68	11.45	11.57	11.32	-	991	970
	U	57,240	28,418	28,822	12.50	11.78	12.00	11.57	-	1014	978
Kottayam District	T	1,952,901	964,433	988,468	6.76	10.59	10.96	10.23	15.35	1025	957
	R	1,653,122	817,364	835,758	9.60	10.58	10.95	10.22	-	1023	954
	U	299,779	147,069	152,710	-6.59	10.61	10.99	10.24	-	1038	968
Alapuzha District	T	2,105,349	1,012,572	1,092,777	5.21	10.33	10.94	9.76	29.36	1079	962
	R	1,487,236	712,503	774,733	6.88	10.24	10.90	9.64	-	1087	962
	U	618,113	300,069	318,044	1.39	10.53	11.06	10.03	-	1060	961

State/District	Total/Rural/Urban	Population			Percentage of decadal growth 1991-2001	Percentage of child population in the age-group 0-6			Percentage of urban population	Sex ratio of total population	Sex ratio of child population in the age-group 0-6
		Person	Male	Female		Person	Male	Female			
Pathanamthitta District	T	1,231,577	588,035	643,542	3.72	9.93	10.56	9.34	10.03	1094	968
	R	1,108,004	528,469	579,535	7.32	9.92	10.57	9.33	-	1097	968
	U	123,573	59,566	64,007	-20.29	9.96	10.51	9.46	-	1075	967
Kollam District	T	2,584,118	1,248,616	1,335,502	7.33	10.95	11.56	10.38	18.03	1070	961
	R	2,118,268	1,020,513	1,097,755	7.99	10.96	11.58	10.38	-	1042	964
	U	465,850	228,103	237,747	4.44	10.91	11.46	10.38	-	961	944
Thiruvananthapuram District	T	3,234,707	1,571,424	1,663,283	9.78	11.00	11.58	10.45	33.78	1058	955
	R	2,142,022	1,035,652	1,106,370	9.94	11.47	12.10	10.97	-	1068	960
	U	1,092,685	535,772	556,913	9.46	10.08	10.57	9.61	-	1039	945

Source: Directorate of Census Operations, Kerala, Census of India 2001, Series-33, Kerala, Provisional Population Totals, Paper-2 of 2001.

Table 2.2

Proportion of Urban Population to Total Population in the Districts of Kerala,
1951-2001 & density of population (2001)

Districts	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	Density 2001
Kasaragod	10.22	17.36	16.68	4.94	16.45	19.42	604
Kannur	9.12	17.93	13.59	31.73	50.87	50.46	813
Wayanad	-	-	-	-	3.41	3.76	369
Kozhikode	20.44	27.04	30.83	27.18	38.34	38.25	1228
Malapuram	5.54	5.48	6.73	7.40	9.12	9.81	1022
Palakkad	12.09	10.87	12.70	10.11	15.72	13.62	584
Thrissur	11.70	11.00	11.74	21.10	26.31	28.21	981
Ernakulam	18.79	23.27	29.40	39.56	48.74	47.65	1050
Idukki	3.22	-	3.30	4.60	4.72	5.07	252
Kottayam	13.54	12.59	13.56	9.37	17.55	15.35	884
Alappuzha	16.61	19.67	19.21	5.53	13.05	10.03	1489
Pathanamthitta	7.42	3.85	3.75	5.53	13.05	10.03	467
Kollam	10.66	9.87	10.32	15.50	18.53	18.03	1038
Thiruvananthapuram	23.13	25.71	26.00	25.26	33.88	33.78	1476
Kerala	13.48	15.11	16.24	18.74	26.39	25.97	819

Source: Census of India, 1991, Kerala State District Profile, 1991, Registrar General, India; and Census of India, 2001, Provisional Population Totals, Paper 2 of 2001, Rural-Urban Distribution, Directorate of Census Operations, Kerala

Table 2.3
Life Expectancy at Birth

State	All Persons	Male	Female	Difference in life expectancy for females
All India	61.1	60.4	61.8	1.4
Rural	59.9	59.3	60.2	0.9
Urban	66.6	65.1	68.0	2.9
Kerala	73.3	70.4	75.9	5.5
Rural	73.2	70.6	75.2	4.6
Urban	73.8	69.7	76.0	6.3
Gain in Life Expectation Between 1970-75 and 1993-97				
	11.1	9.4	12.8	3.4
Rural	11.5	9.9	12.3	2.4
Urban	10.3	8.7	9.7	1.0

Source: Registrar General, India, Sample Registration System based on Life Tables, 1993-97 and Registrar General, India, Compendium of India's Fertility and Mortality Indicators, 1971-1997, Based on the Sample Registration System (SRS)

Table 2.4
Proportion of Population by Age Groups

Age Group	All India				Kerala						
	Males (%)		Females (%)		Males (%)		Females (%)		Male	Female	Sex Ratio
	1991	1998	1991	1998	1991	1998	1991	1998	NFHS-2 (1998-99)		
0-4	12.03	11.7	12.40	11.3	9.6	9.7	8.8	8.6	8.7	8.4	1,021
5-14	25.13	24.4	24.95	23.7	21.2	19.3	20.0	17.1	19.9	17.2	923
15-29	26.26	27.7	26.88	27.4	29.4	28.2	31.0	29.8	28.6	29.3	1,093
30-49	22.81	23.6	22.37	23.7	24.3	26.4	21.7	26.8	25.2	26.9	1,139
50-64	9.13	8.9	8.82	9.3	9.9	10.7	10.1	10.8	10.8	10.9	1,076
65 plus	4.63	3.8	4.58	4.3	5.5	5.7	6.2	6.7	6.8	7.3	1,153
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	934

Source: Registrar General of India, 1991 Census and Registrar General, India, Sample Registration System, Statistical Report, 1998

Table 3.1
Health Infrastructure in Kerala

Details	Allopathy	Ayurveda	Homoeopathy	Others	Total
Hospitals	4431* 1317@ (143 Govt.)	4922* 113@	31*@	290*	9674*
Dispensaries	53* @	631@	474* 524@		527*
Beds					
Govt.	45,684@	2,604@	970@		49,258
Private	67,517@				67,517
Cooperative	2,740@				2,740
					119,515
Community Health Centres	105				105
Population per Centre	0.23 million				
Primary Health Centres	944 -				944
Population per Centre	25591				
Sub Centres	5094				5094
Population per Centre	4742				
TB Centres/Clinics	21				21
Beds	268				268
Leprosy Control Units	15				15
Registered Doctors	29,656* 30,318@	7356* 14016@	6704* 8420@	3916* 1456@	47,632* 54,210@
Nurses					60,760* 29362@
Auxiliary Nurse Midwives					12,907* 12,940@
Nurses Midwives (integrated)					30,087@
Midwives					29,260@

Source: *Census of India 2001, Kerala.

@ Government of Kerala, Economic Review, 2000.

Table 3.2

Age Specific Mortality Rates by Sex and Residence, Kerala, 1997

Age Groups	Total			Males			Females		
	T	R	U	T	R	U	T	R	U
0-4	3.2	3.0	3.9	3.0	2.8	3.4	3.5	3.2	4.3
5-9	0.6	0.7	0.2	0.6	0.8	0.0	0.6	0.6	0.4
10-14	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.3
15-19	0.6	0.7	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.7	1.0	0.0
20-24	1.1	1.3	0.6	1.1	1.3	0.3	1.2	1.3	0.9
25-29	1.6	1.6	1.5	2.2	2.3	1.8	1.1	1.1	1.3
30-34	1.7	1.5	2.5	2.2	1.8	3.2	1.3	1.1	1.8
35-39	1.3	1.5	0.7	1.4	1.5	0.9	1.2	1.5	0.4
40-44	3.3	3.4	3.1	4.9	5.1	4.5	1.7	1.7	1.8
45-49	5.0	4.9	5.1	7.2	6.6	8.7	2.7	3.2	1.2
50-54	7.0	7.3	6.4	10.9	10.6	11.5	3.4	3.2	1.5
55-59	10.3	8.7	15.2	15.9	13.2	24.0	5.2	4.5	7.0
60-64	17.4	18.7	13.5	26.1	28.3	19.8	9.4	10.0	7.7
65-69	30.6	28.9	35.8	43.1	38.7	56.3	20.0	20.5	18.8
70 Plus	80.4	82.8	73.2	97.7	99.7	91.0	67.2	69.3	60.8
All Ages	6.2	6.3	6.1	7.6	7.6	7.8	4.9	5.0	4.5

Source: Registrar General, India, 1999, *Compendium of India's Fertility and Mortality Indicators, 1971-1997*, Based on the Sample Registration System (SRS).

Table 3.3
Mortality Indicators, Kerala

Indicators	Total	Rural	Urban
Crude Death Rates			
1971	9.0	9.1	8.4
1981	6.6	6.7	5.8
1991	6.0	6.2	5.3
1998	6.4	6.5	6.2
1999	6.4	6.5	6.3
Infant Mortality Rates			
1971	58	60	48
1981	37	40	24
1991	16	17	16
1998	16	18	13
1999	14	14	16
Neo Natal Mortality			
1971	37.5	39.1	28.0
1981	25.7	—	—
1991	11.3	11.6	10.3
1998	11.0	11.0	12.0
1999	—	—	—
Post Natal Mortality			
1971	20.5	20.9	20.0
1981	11.7	12.5	7.0
1991	5.1	5.1	5.4
1998	—	—	—
1999	—	—	—
Peri Natal Mortality			
1971	41.5	42.5	35.6
1981	28.6	30.1	19.1
1991	18.0	19.1	12.8
1998	15.0	14.0	17.0
1999	—	—	—
Still Birth			
1971	17.5	17.2	19.0
1981	11.3	12.4	4.8
1991	9.2	10.2	4.6
1998	6.0	6.0	7.0
1999	—	—	—

Source: SRS Statistical Report, 1998; SRS Bulletin, April 2001; Compendium

Table 3.4
Age Specific Fertility Rate – 1971-1998

Indicators	Age Group	1971	1981	1991	1998
Age Specific Fertility Rates	15-19	51.8	42.9	25.5	27.3
	20-24	213.1	183.4	142.1	151.5
	25-29	224.5	168.4	122.0	126.0
	30-34	171.8	99.5	46.9	52.1
	35-39	113.6	48.7	15.0	10.7
	40-44	40.6	18.7	4.4	1.7
	45-49	6.7	4.0	0.7	0.1
General Fertility Rate		125.4	94.7	64.4	62.2
Total Fertility Rate		4.1	2.8	1.8	1.8
Gross Reproduction Rate		2.0	1.4	0.9	1.9
Total Fertility Rate and Level of Education*					
Illiterate					2.22
Literate (< middle school complete)					2.02
Middle school complete					2.14
High school complete and above					2.02

Source: SRS Compendium and SRS Statistical Report, 1998

*NFHS-2, Kerala

Table 3.5
Percentage Distribution of Current Live Births by Birth Interval, 1998

Birth Interval in Months	Total	Rural	Urban
10-12	2.5	3.0	0.9
12-18	7.5	7.8	6.4
18-24	21.1	21.5	19.7
24-30	11.3	10.0	15.4
30-36	15.2	16.4	11.5
36 plus	42.4	41.3	46.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Sample Registration System, Statistical Report 1998

Table 3.6

Knowledge and Current Use of Contraception

Methods	Knowledge of Contraceptive Methods			Ever Use of Contraception		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
Any method	99.5	99.7	99.7	79.4	76.3	77.0
Any Modern Method	99.5	99.7	99.7	68.2	64.9	65.7
Pill	94.1	89.3	90.4	6.7	6.8	6.8
IUD	91.0	88.7	89.2	12.8	10.2	10.8
Condom	95.7	90.2	91.5	21.9	13.1	15.1
Female Sterilization	98.6	99.1	99.0	48.5	48.6	48.5
Male Sterilization	94.0	94.0	94.0	3.5	3.0	3.1
Any traditional method	83.4	76.5	78.1	33.2	30.2	30.9
Rhythm/safe period	77.4	69.5	71.4	22.4	20.4	20.9
Withdrawal	66.7	59.8	61.4	18.7	18.1	18.2
Other method*	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.2	0.2

Source: International Institute of Population Sciences, The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-2), Kerala, 1998-99.

* includes both modern and traditional methods that are not listed separately

Table 3.7

Couple Protection Rate and Female Reproductive Age Group – District Wise

Sl. No.	District	Couple Protection Rate as on 30.06.2001	Female Reproductive Age Group (18-40)
1.	Thiruvananthapuram	86.4	371290
2.	Kollam	74.7	337804
3.	Alappuzha	61.73	262470
4.	Pathanamthitta	80.63	185611
5.	Kottayam	71.32	252324
6.	Idukki	66.36	160000
7.	Ernakulam	61.072	355015
8.	Thrissur	69.63	419915
9.	Palakkad	62.88	348050
10.	Malappuram	48.37	539380
11.	Kozhikode	59.69	421860
12.	Wayanad	68.80	121825
13.	Kannur	57.10	368090
14.	Kasaragod	54.39	159550
	Kerala	65.98	4303184

Table 4.1

Literacy Rates by Sex for Kerala State and Districts

Sl. No.	State/District	Literacy Rate*						Male-female gap
		Persons		Males		Females		
		1991	2001	1991	2001	1991	2001	2001
	All India	52.21	65.38	64.13	75.85	39.29	54.16	21.69
	Kerala	89.81	90.92	93.62	94.20	86.17	87.86	06.34
1.	Kasaragod	82.51	85.17	88.97	90.84	76.29	79.80	11.04
2.	Kannur	91.48	92.80	95.54	96.38	87.65	89.57	06.81
3.	Wayanad	82.73	85.52	87.59	90.28	77.69	80.80	09.48
4.	Kozhikode	91.10	92.45	95.58	96.30	86.79	88.86	07.44
5.	Malappuram	87.94	88.61	92.08	91.46	84.09	85.96	05.50
6.	Palakkad	81.27	84.31	87.24	89.73	75.72	79.31	10.42
7.	Thrissur	90.18	92.56	93.77	95.47	86.94	89.94	05.53
8.	Ernakulam	92.30	93.42	95.40	95.95	89.22	90.96	04.99
9.	Idukki	86.97	88.58	90.89	92.11	82.97	85.04	07.07
10.	Kottayam	95.72	95.90	97.46	97.41	94.00	94.45	02.96
11.	Alappuzha	93.87	93.66	96.79	96.42	91.12	91.14	05.28
12.	Pathanamthitta	94.86	95.09	96.56	96.62	93.29	93.71	02.91
13.	Kollam	90.47	91.49	94.09	94.63	87.00	88.60	06.03
14.	Thiruvananthapuram	89.22	89.36	92.84	92.68	85.76	86.26	06.42

Source: Census of India 2001; Provisional Population Totals; Paper-1 of 2001

Census of India 2001-Kerala; Provisional Population Totals; Paper-2 of 2001

Note: *Literacy rate is the percentage of literates to population aged 7 years and above.

Table 4.2
Infrastructure for Education

Category	University	Arts and Science	Medical/ Engineering	Technical Institutes	Schools
Universities	9*				
College/ Institute		224*	Medical - 7 Dental - 3 Nursing - 3 Pharmacy - 20 Homoeo - 4 T.B Institute - 1 RIO (Ophal) - 1 Engineering - 69*	Polytechnics - 56 Food Craft Institutes - 7 Teacher Training - 102	
Schools				322	
Vocational Higher Secondary					1254
Higher Secondary					2618
High Schools*					2959
UP Schools*					6754
LP Schools*					3570
District Primary Education Project (DPEP) in 6 Districts in LP Schools					

Source: Census of India 2001, Kerala

*Data relates to 2003 as presented in the Economic Survey, State Planning Board

Table 4.3
Enrolment in Schools – Stage wise 2001 & 2002 (Lakhs)

Stage	2001			2002		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Lower Primary	9.83	9.50	19.33	9.53	9.27 49.30%	18.80 100%
Upper Primary	8.72	8.07	16.79	8.37	7.77 48.10%	16.14 100%
Secondary	8.06	8.01	16.07	8.12	7.96 49.50%	16.08 100%
Total	26.61	25.58	52.19	26.02	25.00	51.02

Source: *Economic Review, 2002. State Planning Board, Government of Kerala.*

Table 4.4
Drop-out and Net Attendance Rates for Kerala and All India

Details	Kerala			India		
	All	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls
Enrolment						
Classes I-V	85.28%	85.80%	84.74%	94.90%	104.08%	85.18%
Classes VI-VIII	95.61%	97.78%	93.36%	58.79%	67.15%	49.66%
Drop-out rate						
Primary	(-)7.05%		(-)5.00%	40.25%		42.28%
Elementary	(-)5.73%		(-)4.06%	54.53%		58.00%
Net Attendance Ratio						
Class I-V						
Rural	91.00%	89.00%	93.00%	63.00%	68.00%	56.00%
Urban	92.00%	92.00%	91.00%	78.00%	80.00%	57.00%
Class VI-VIII						
Rural	91.00%	78.00%	74.00%	39.00%	44.00%	32.00%
Urban	74.00%	74.00%	80.00%	58.00%	60.00%	57.00%

Source: *Selected Educational Statistics-1999-2000, Government of India, Higher Secondary Education*

Table 4.5

Enrolment of SC/ST Students at School Level (numbers), 2000

Level	General (million)	Scheduled Castes (million)	Percentage to Total	Scheduled Tribes (million)	Percentage to Total
Lower Primary	1.93	0.21	10.75	0.03	1.47
Upper Primary	1.71	0.18	10.72	0.02	1.03
Secondary	1.61	0.17	10.38	0.01	0.86
Total	5.25	0.56	10.63	0.06	1.14

Source: Government of Kerala, Economic Review, 2000.

Table 4.6

Enrolment in Higher Education – Kerala, 1999-2000

	Boys	Girls	Total	% of Girls
Ph.D./D.Sc./D.Phil.	806	757	1563	48.4
M.A.	2999	7554	10553	71.6
M.Sc.	1390	6464	7854	82.0
M.Com	1133	1540	2673	57.6
B.A./B.A. (Hons.)	28599	58496	87095	67.2
B.Sc./B.Sc. (Hons.)	30325	57219	87544	65.4
B.Com./B.Com. (Hons.)	13815	16282	30097	54.1
B.E./B.Arch. etc.	15404	6409	21813	29.4
B.Ed./B.T.	2091	5700	7791	73.1
M.B.B.S.	2967	3618	6585	54.9

Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 1999-2000, Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Secondary Education and Higher Education.

Table 4.7

Enrolment of Students in Arts and Science Colleges in Kerala 2002

University	Degree			Post Graduate			Total
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	
Kerala	18431	30815	49246	1473	3761	5234	54480
Calicut	15136	23838	38974	1438	3388	4826	43800
Mahatma Gandhi	17334	26733	44067	1274	2325	3599	47666
Kannur	6037	7655	13692	495	621	1116	14808
Total	56938	89041	145979	4680	10095	14775	160754

Source: Directorate of Collegiate Education, Thiruvananthapuram

EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION STRUCTURE

Table 5.1

Comparative employment Profile - Kerala and All India (2001)

Details	Kerala			India		
	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female
Total Workers (Million) Total**	10.29	7.79	2.50	402.51	275.46	127.05
Percentage to Total Population**	32.3%	50.4%	15.3%	39.3%	59.9%	25.7%
Main Workers (Million) Total**	8.23	6.48	1.76	313.17	240.52	72.65
Percentage to Total Population**	25.9%	41.9%	10.8%	30.6%	45.3%	14.7%
Marginal Workers (Million) Total**	2.05	1.31	0.74	89.33	34.94	54.40
Percentage to Total Population**	6.4%	8.5%	4.5%	8.7%	6.6%	11.0%
Non Workers (Million) Total**	21.54	7.68	1.39	622.74	254.96	367.78
Percentage to Total Population**	67.7%	49.6%	84.7%	60.7%	48.1%	74.3%
Category of Workers (Main and Marginal)**						
Percentage to Total Worker Population**						
Cultivators	7.2%	8.0%	4.7%	31.7%	31.4%	32.5%
Agricultural Labourers	16.1%	14.2%	22.0%	26.7%	20.8%	39.4%
Workers in Household Industry	3.5%	2.3%	7.3%	4.1%	3.0%	6.4%
Other Workers	73.2%	75.5%	66.0%	37.5%	44.8%	21.7%
Employment by Industrial Category (%)*						
Primary	48.02	47.84	48.61	67.37	66.28	81.09
Secondary	14.17	17.14	21.65	10.18	12.09	7.41
Tertiary	37.81	35.01	29.74	22.45	21.63	11.50
Employment by Sectors (%)@						
Organized	13.73	11.41	21.58	8.51	10.23	4.21
Unorganized	86.27	88.59	78.42	91.49	88.77	95.79
Proportion of employment in the Organized Sector @ and \$						
1991	100	64.22	35.78	100	85.86	14.14
1999	100	63.20	36.80	100	73.19	26.81
Unemployment 1999-2000 Per 1000 persons #						
Rural	41	43	39	7	11	4
Urban	48	40	56	18	26	9

* WCD, Government of India. Women in India, A Statistical Profile-1997.

** Census of India, 2001

@ Compiled from data presented in Manpower Profile India, Year Book 2000

\$.Dr. Sarala Gopalan, Women and Employment in India, 1995.

#Employment and Unemployment in India 1999-2000, NSS 55th Round.

Table 5.2

Percentage distribution of female main workers by industrial category, States/Union Territories
(Rural, Urban) – 1981, 1991 and 1999-2000

Kerala	1981			1991			1999-2000*	
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00		
Cultivators	4.95	5.53	1.41	5.56	6.53	2.36		
Agricultural Labourers	43.55	48.38	14.21	36.09	42.25	15.77		
Livestock forestry, fishing, hunting, plantations, orchards and allied	6.46	7.27	1.52	6.24	7.56	1.91		
Mining and Quarrying	0.27	0.28	0.22	0.72	0.78	0.50		
Total Primary	55.23	61.46	17.36	48.61	57.12	20.54	60.60	14.80
Manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairs In household industry								
Other than household industry activities	7.64 12.47	8.02 11.82	5.36 16.43	5.93 14.78	5.56 13.75	7.17 18.18		
Total Secondary	20.11	19.84	21.79	20.71	19.31	25.35	19.30	27.20
Construction	0.85	0.69	1.80	0.94	0.66	1.84		
Trade and Commerce	3.23	2.42	8.14	4.59	3.21	9.14		
Transport, storage and communications	1.60	1.30	3.44	1.50	1.09	2.85		
Other and services	18.98	14.29	47.47	23.65	18.61	40.28		
Total Tertiary	24.66	18.7	60.85	30.68	23.57	54.11	20.20	58.00

Source: *Women in India: A Statistical Profile-1997*, Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development.

* *Employment and Unemployment in India, 1999-2000, NSS 55th Round, 1999-2000.*

Table 5.3

Work Participation rates by residence in the districts for 1991 and 2001

District*	Year	Total			Rural			Urban		
		P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
Idukki	1991	39.7	55.2	23.8	40.1	55.3	24.4	32.4	51.8	12.7
	2001	43.3	58.4	28.1	43.8	58.6	28.8	33.7	53.0	14.7
Wayanad	1991	38.8	53.2	23.8	38.8	53.2	23.8	39.0	54.1	23.0
	2001	39.3	55.7	22.8	39.2	55.6	22.8	40.8	57.3	24.1
Palakkad	1991	35.3	48.6	23.1	36.2	48.7	24.4	31.8	48.2	16.2
	2001	36.2	52.2	21.1	36.5	52.2	21.8	34.0	52.4	16.5
Kasargod	1991	33.4	46.1	21.0	33.8	46.5	21.3	31.3	43.8	19.3
	2001	34.7	49.3	20.8	35.3	49.6	21.5	32.5	47.8	18.1
Alappuzha	1991	34.1	46.8	22.0	34.2	47.0	22.1	33.9	46.5	21.7
	2001	34.4	49.7	20.2	33.8	48.7	20.1	35.8	52.0	20.5
Ernakulam	1991	33.5	51.5	15.5	35.3	52.5	18.0	31.6	50.5	12.7
	2001	36.1	55.4	17.1	37.7	56.3	19.3	34.3	54.4	14.7
Kollam	1991	32.1	47.7	17.0	32.7	48.1	17.8	29.7	45.9	13.8
	2001	32.5	48.5	16.7	32.2	48.3	17.3	31.2	49.5	13.6
Kannur	1991	28.9	44.7	13.8	30.8	45.9	16.1	27.0	43.5	11.7
	2001	31.8	50.0	15.2	34.0	51.4	17.8	29.7	48.6	12.7
Thrissur	1991	32.0	47.2	17.9	32.4	47.1	18.9	30.7	47.4	15.1
	2001	32.2	50.8	15.1	32.3	50.8	15.4	31.9	51.0	14.2
Thiruvananthapuram	1991	32.6	50.2	15.6	33.6	51.5	16.4	30.6	47.7	14.0
	2001	32.4	51.5	14.4	32.3	51.8	14.0	32.6	50.9	15.1
Kottayam	1991	31.2	50.4	12.1	31.5	50.8	12.3	29.9	48.5	11.3
	2001	32.9	52.4	13.9	33.3	52.8	14.1	30.8	49.9	12.4
Pathanamthitta	1991	29.7	48.0	12.5	29.9	48.4	12.6	28.3	45.7	11.8
	2001	29.7	47.6	13.2	29.9	48.0	13.4	27.7	44.5	12.0
Kozhikode	1991	26.6	44.6	9.0	27.0	44.1	10.3	26.0	45.4	7.0
	2001	27.9	48.8	8.1	27.4	47.5	8.4	28.7	50.9	7.7
Malappuram	1991	24.3	40.7	8.7	24.4	40.8	9.0	22.9	40.2	6.3
	2001	24.1	42.8	6.6	24.1	42.7	6.6	24.4	43.6	6.3
Kerala	1991	31.4	47.6	15.9	32.1	47.9	16.9	29.6	46.8	13.0
	2001	32.3	50.4	15.3	32.6	50.2	15.9	31.6	50.8	13.5

Source: Census of India, 2001, Series-33, Kerala, Provisional Population Totals, Paper-3 of 2001, Distribution of Workers and Non-Workers. Data compiled from statement- 3.

* Districts are listed according to the ranking of female work participation rate in 2001.

Table 5. 4

Inter Census trends in category shifts of workers.

Employment Category	India			Kerala		
	1991	2001	Increase/ Decrease in 2001	1991	2001	Increase/ Decrease in 2001
Main Workers – Total						
Total	285.93	313.17	+27.24	8.30	8.24	-0.06
Male	221.66	240.52	+18.86 (8.5%)	6.40	6.48	+0.08 (1.25%)
Female	64.27	72.65	+8.38 (13.03%)	1.90	1.76	-0.14 (-0.07%)
Main Workers – Rural						
Total	222.29	229.67	7.38	6.18	5.99	-0.19
Male	169.29	169.33	0.04	4.72	4.69	-0.03
Female	56.00	60.34	4.34	1.46	1.30	-0.16
Main Workers – Urban						
Total	63.64	83.50	19.86	2.12	2.24	0.12
Male	55.36	71.19	15.83	1.68	1.79	0.11
Female	8.28	12.31	4.03	0.44	0.45	0.01
Marginal Workers – Total						
Total	28.19	89.34	+61.15	0.84	2.05	+1.21
Male	2.70	34.94	+32.24 (1194%)	0.39	1.31	+0.92 (235.8%)
Female	25.49	54.40	+28.91 (113.4%)	0.45	0.74	+0.29 (64.4%)
Marginal Workers – Rural						
Total	26.74	80.98	54.24	0.69	1.68	0.99
Male	2.31	29.87	27.56	0.31	1.06	0.75
Female	24.43	51.11	26.68	0.38	0.62	0.24
Marginal Workers – Urban						
Total	1.46	8.36	6.90	0.15	0.37	0.22
Male	0.40	5.08	4.68	0.08	0.25	0.17
Female	1.06	3.28	2.22	0.07	0.12	0.05

Source: Census of India 2001, Kerala, Provisional Population Totals, Paper 3 of 2001, Distribution of Workers and Non-Workers.

POVERTY

Table 6.1

Number of Families Below Poverty Line – 1998-99 (Provisional)

District	Total BPL Families	SC	ST	Families with OBC	Others	Invalid
Thiruvananthapuram	188310	38816	2629	102658	44169	38
Kollam	175617	41166	1532	77588	55293	38
Alappuzha	156151	23415	1235	91854	39630	17
Pathanamthitta	74856	21364	1401	22767	29300	24
Kottayam	59182	8139	1149	24619	25256	19
Idukki	34435	5810	3856	9643	15106	20
Ernakulam	99521	20306	805	46271	32094	45
Thrissur	158961	42957	1516	71350	43115	23
Palakkad	204605	51595	2812	117491	32668	39
Malappuram	180375	32738	2128	123765	21679	65
Kozhikode	131781	22882	1215	83305	24259	120
Wayanad	64794	4068	19502	23268	17950	6
Kannur	122067	10201	3174	74468	34166	58
Kasaragod	72901	11823	3893	39577	17578	30
Total	1723556	335280	46847	908624	432263	543

Source: Commissionerate of Rural Development

Table 8.1

District-wise Crime Against Women Reported in Kerala-2001

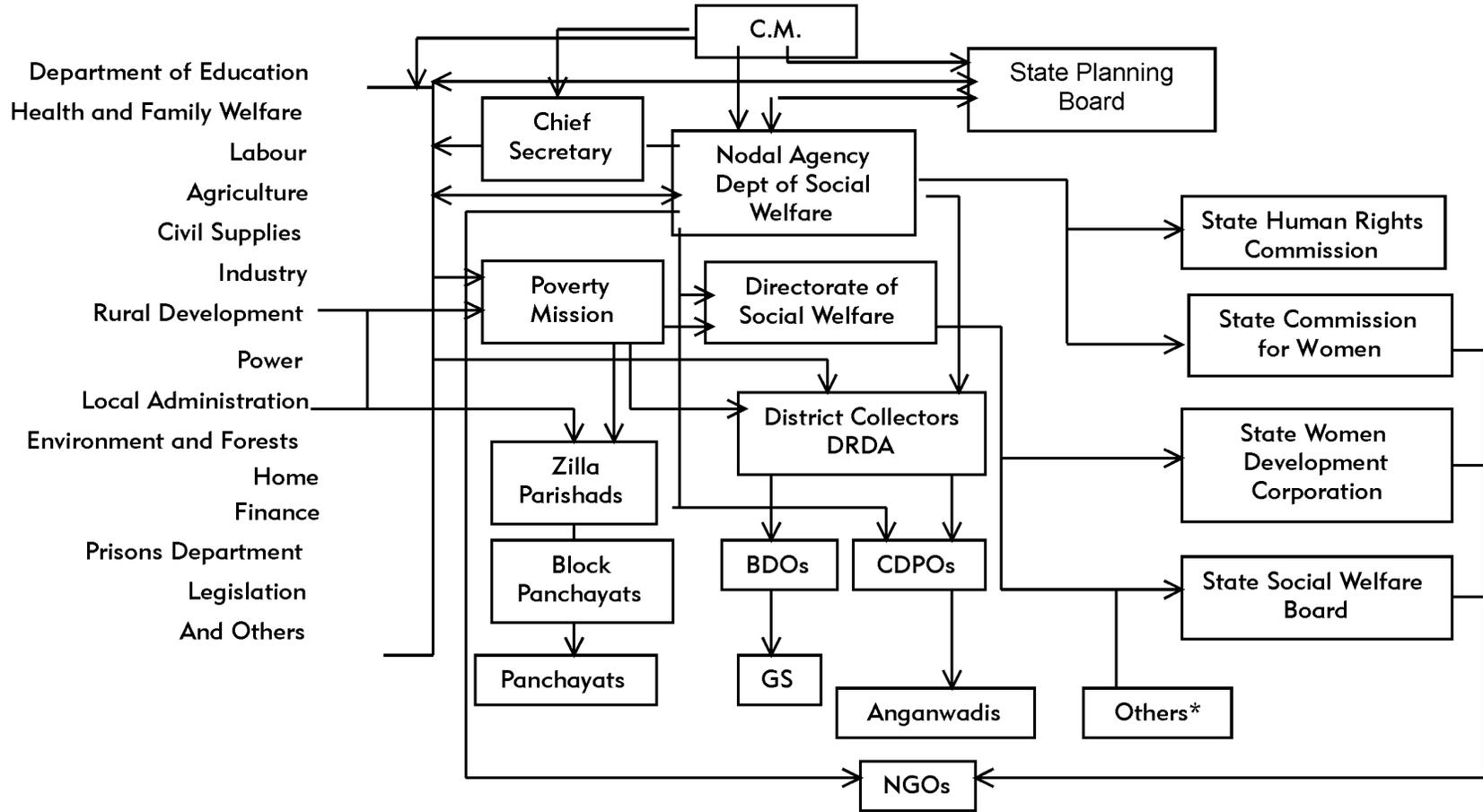
District	Rape	Moles tation	Kid-napping	Eve-Teasing	304(B)	Torture	Others	Total
Thiruvananthapuram Corporation	11	135	24	0	1	128	20	319
Thiruvananthapuram Railway	45	220	12	1	4	143	71	496
Pathanamthitta	12	90	6	3	0	95	18	224
Kollam	53	233	10	1	3	311	27	638
Alappuzha	21	162	6	2	1	105	9	306
Idukki	34	145	8	16	0	127	9	339
Kottayam	22	125	12	8	0	82	0	249
Ernakulam Corporation	10	44	1	3	0	62	87	207
Ernakulam Railway	10	44	1	3	0	99	202	456
Thrissur	40	215	9	15	2	189	313	783
Palakkad	63	106	11	10	5	213	151	559
Malappuram	64	111	2	9	3	440	376	1005
Kozhikode Corporation	13	46	1	3	1	106	91	261
Kozhikode Railways	28	82	5	5	1	198	185	504
Wayanad	35	67	3	3	0	60	124	292
Kannur	42	77	8	7	0	158	286	578
Kasaragod Railways*	28	55	1	0	0	63	202	349
TOTAL	550	2033	125	86	24	2579	2171	7568

Source: State Crime Bureau as quoted in Government of Kerala, State Planning Bureau. Economic Review, 2002.

*Many of the totals do not tally apparently because exhaustive figure for crimes under 'railways' have not been taken into account.

Appendix 2
ORGANOGRAM

State Machinery for Advancement of Women - Kerala



*Primary Health Centres, Sub Centres and ANMs

Appendix 3
PUBLIC HEARINGS

Report of the Public Hearing
The Impact of Globalisation on Women Workers

Organized by
The National Commission for Women

On
The 26-27 September, 2001

At the
DBCLC Hall, Thrissur

Local Organizers
SEWA-Kerala, Kerala Stree Vedi

Members of the Jury

Ms. Vibha Parthasarathy, Chairperson, NCW
Justice K. Aravindaksha Menon, Retired District Sessions Judge
Ms. Monamma Kokkad, Member, Kerala Women's Commission
Dr. A.M. Varkey, School of Legal Studies, Cochin University
Adv. K.B. Mohandas, Trichur
Adv. K. Nandini, Kerala High Court, Ernakulam
Mr. C.R. Neelakantan Namboothiri, Ernakulam
Ms. Mercy Alexander, Kerala Stree Vedi
Ms. Lailabai Amma, Deputy Labour Commissioner, Trivandrum

27.09.2001

Hearing, Second Day

10:30 a.m. : Hearing on problems of women workers from the fish processing plants

Deponents

Cherthala Taluk,

Alappuzha District

- 1 Mahilamani Rajappan (Peeling shed)
- 2 Mary Baby (Migrant worker and Peeling worker)
- 3 Sumathi (Migrant worker)
- 4 Mary Tomy (Peeling)
- 5 Baby George (Freezing plant worker)
- 6 Metty N.K. (Freezing plant worker)
- 7 Merykkutty Antony (Peeling shed)
- 8 Kunjumol Susheelan (Peeling shed)
- 9 Stela Jacob (Freezing Plant)

Cochin

12:30 Hearing on the problems of the women workers in the Special Economic Zone

- 1 Alice M.J. (Tata Ceramics)
- 2 Sreedevi M.S. (Tata Ceramics)
- 3 Jayalekshmi (AVT)
- 4 Kumari P.A. (Steriltex)

01:30 p.m. : Lunch Break

03:00 p.m. : Response and Verdict of the Jury

Inauguration

In her inaugural address Ms. Vibha Parthasarathy stated that this Public Hearing was being organized by the National Commission for Women in order to see whether women workers are covered by the rights afforded to them by the Constitution and if not to find ways and means by which this can be done. Over the last decade, Globalization and Privatization are impacting on the people in different ways. Through the visual and print media, this is creating a new life style for the people. Through the first hand information gathered at these Public Hearings and separate studies undertaken by the Commission, it is intended to come up with a series of recommendations in December when the Commission will organize a National Workshop in the Capital.

Prof. Sara Joseph highlighted the fact that globalization has seriously affected those at the bottom of the economic ladder. With godowns overflowing with food grains, there have been several cases of hunger deaths in the country. There have been reports of the people attacking food outlets in utter desperation. Farmers are caught in the debt trap and agricultural workers are jobless. The traditional employment sectors are collapsing and the environment being threatened by ongoing developments. The media is creating an artificial culture and the economic reforms are throwing people into the debt trap. Women have begun to resist this. It is they who decide what they have to bring into their kitchens and homes. The self help groups that women are creating is an alternate banking system which develops the awareness of the women. It is through these people's movements and struggles for alternatives that we will fight globalization.

The first session of the Hearing focused on the women workers in the Plantation sector.

Deponents:

Kalamam : I am 46 years old and my husband is Balakrishnan and we have two children, a boy and a girl. Both of them are married and my husband works in a tea shop and earns enough money for his own needs. My hometown is in Nenmara in Palaghat district. When I was in the 5th standard I came to my aunt's house in Wayanad as she had work in the Nedumpala estate. I studied here up to class 7 and while I was studying I started working in the estate and was soon made permanent. Two years later, I was married to my aunt's son when I was 16 years old. I had my first child when I was 17. My husband drank and even treated me roughly. He used to collect my wages and if I asked

questions I was beaten so I kept quiet. It is only since 10 years now that I know what exactly I earn. He still drinks but there are no other problems.

I wake up at 3a.m., cook all the food and leave for work at 7.45a.m. Work on the plantation starts at 8a.m. till 12 noon and again from 1-5p.m. My husband earlier was a temporary worker on this estate too but just for two years.

I married my daughter with a loan from my PF. Now there are several problems at work especially after the fall in tea prices. The management wants to reduce our wages as we now get Rs.78.20 a day. We have opposed this. According to the Plantation Act, we have to get our minimum wage for plucking 14kg. of tea. But now this is not possible as we are forced to pluck 30 kg. if we do not reach these targets, we are scolded and abused and this is very painful. They tell us we need not come back for work. For those of us who fall sick there is no go. Earlier we all helped each other to reach the target of 24kg but now this is not possible as 30 kg is too much to cut. We now use a sheers and this is again a cause of ill health. But this is no problem to the company.

The quarters we live in are in a really bad state and they do not maintain them. The houses were wired 14 years ago but we got electricity only a few weeks ago. The company hospital too is in a poor state. I was admitted there for 38 days as I had a bad stomach ache. They took 5 x-rays and said I had an ulcer. When my son asked that I be transferred to another hospital they refused. I then went to private hospital and I had a fibroid in the uterus. I underwent a surgery which cost Rs. 14,000 and the company did not pay a pie. They only gave me half pay leave for 28 days. Even the union was not able to do anything to help me get my due.

There are two sections of the estate and where I work there are 120 workers. After the fall in tea prices, there are all kinds of problems for the workers. There is discrimination against the workers too. For those of us who are slow, we are sent to the poorer areas where it is impossible to pluck 30 kg a day. By making the permanent workers work more, the temporary workers are reduced.

There is no school here and the children have to walk 5 km each way to school. There have been several discussions with the management as the government was willing to run a school here if the company gave them the space. But this has not yet happened. There is a high school 14 km away and if a child is studying there s/he needs Rs.5/- daily for the bus fare. There are no other transport facilities. As there is no work for the youngsters, they are getting into bad ways. This has to change somehow.

Subara Bee is a temporary worker on the same estate and adds:

I am 30 years old and came here from Malapuram with my family of 7 children. I studied only up to the 7 standard but can read well. As I was the oldest child and as my mother went to work, I had to give up my studies to care for the family. I was married at 13 years of age had my first child at 14. My husband was a worker in the near Rippon Estate He was a very cruel man and tortured me a lot. When I had my first child I heard that he married again. He disappeared for some time and when

he came back I was pregnant again. Three months later he left the place again and I did not see him for two and a half years. He returned and stayed with me for 9 months and I had another child. When he realized that I would get no special allowance at this pregnancy, he left and I have not seen him since. By this time he had pawned and sold all my gold.

I have started working from the age of 11 because there was very little food in the home. I used to do coolie work of weeding and plucking coffee. I used to get Rs.2.50 a day and my husband took all the money from me. There have been several days when my children and I went to be hungry. Now my children are studying in the 10th, 9th and 6th standards. Now I am the second wife of another man who married me because he did not have children by the first wife. I had to pay a dowry of Rs.100,000/-.

I have been a temporary worker on the Nedumpala estate for the past 16 years. I haven't been made permanent yet as the management has made no body permanent for the past 5 year. Since the past two years as temporary workers we are forced to pluck 30 kgs. of tea now and we are told not to come to work if we cannot do this. It is very difficult for women to be made permanent of the pretext that we take maternity leave. We are also forced to do the general work of spraying etc and for this there are no protective measures. So many of us are ill with breathlessness and headaches and many of our children suffer from TB.

Now there are 3 young women and 42 males who have no work and I fear these will soon turn to anti social activities. When the owners were making profits, they did not tell us about it, but now in the time of crisis they come to take for us and tell us to cooperate.

Nelliampathy Chandramala Estate

Kunjamma Joseph: I have passed the 10th std. And have typewriting lower and have done the higher course as well. My husband is a construction workers and our 3 children are studying. Our parents are from Punaloor and came here to work in the estate. It was the writer in the estate who helped me study. My sisters only studied up to the 4th std. The high school has come here only since six years. We had to walk a long way to school, as there are only state buses on which there are no concessions even now. We need Rs.25/- a day for transport and this is the reason why no one sends the children to school. I have married my sister's brother in law. They came here from Madurai. I married in 1985 and he left in 1988 and returned five years ago. Now we are together.

My mother worked for 33 years on this tea estate. In 1986 I started working on this estate and became permanent in 1994. My mother retired in 1999. There are three tea estates in Neelliampathy. It is mainly women who pluck the tea and the work like weeding, digging, spraying etc is done by men. In the tree sections there are altogether 3000 workers. In Chandramala itself there are 485 permanent and 115 temporary workers. The work timings are from 7.30 am to 4.30 pm. Normally pesticide is applied once in 15 days and manuring is thrice a year. But now since the price of tea has fallen, this maintenance work is also reduced. Last year we got 20% bonus, but his year we received only 8.33% bonus. We all went on strike to oppose this on May 15 but the company locked out and reopened only

on June 1st. On June 7th we got back to work with nothing achieved. On the contrary the management got even more strict and insists on us coming on time and taking no breaks and for those who are ill there is no excuse. When we take advance, Rs.4/- is reduced from our daily wages.

The big problem is that our men drink a lot and then violently harass us women. Many of us women have lost our health because of this. Unemployment and drunkenness, the transport costs and ill health are all the various problems we face. In these circumstances, if the managements take a firm stand; we will all loose our work.

In the last elections, I stood for the panchayat elections and was elected. There are 4 of us women in the panchayat. Seven of us are estate workers. My parents were members of the AITUC union. I am also the secretary of the women's mandalam.

Waryad Chembra Peak Estate

Elsy: I am 51 years old and since 35 years have been working on this estate. I have been a permanent worker since 1977. We have come here from Cochin and we have 5 children. Since the past 25 years I am an active worker in the Plantation workers union and am the president of our unit.

I have mainly been plucking coffee and weeding. There are 391 acres of land in this estate and despite the fact that we grow different things, the main crop is coffee. The head office of our estate is in Bangalore. There are 92 permanent workers here and 40 temporary workers. Of these 72 are women and 70 men. This was an estate with a very high production. When prices were high, the management even gave us clothes. In the plucking season, they employ casual workers from Karnataka. On the 7th of every month we got our pay. Since this July, we are paid on the 10th of the month.

After the harvest in April, all of us got annual leave. This was leave with pay and minimum bonus together with travel costs. This year we did not get this bonus as they told us that the prices of coffee had fallen and they incurred a loss. After the union leaders made a noise, we got this bonus. Every year we got Rs.250/- for the books of the school going children. They reduced this at the time of giving us the Onam bonus. But this year they said they could not give this to us. At the end of June there were discussions with the management and the management put forward thirty demands. Among them they wanted to reduce the permanent workers, dismiss the medical attender, have only one instead of two ayas in the crèche and one driver instead of two, no mechanic, no cleaners in the office and to extend the working hours, no health treatment from private hospitals and for those on medication, no work. This is an estate on which much pesticide is used including the banned endosulfan. Even the water we bath in has the pesticide and many of us suffer from breathlessness and giddiness. This year the estate has not been maintained. As we did not agree with the demands of the management, the decision was postponed and they have not called for talks since then. Then we got to know from the notice in the muster room that there is no bonus for us this year. No other advances too are permitted. After some time we did not see our Commercial Manager who had promised to negotiate for us. This August 11th, we read that 21 workers have been dismissed. They got their dismissal notice together

with a Cheque with all their benefits. When they refused these cheques, the next day the estate was locked out. They did this with police protection. The dismissed workers had from over 10-23 years service.

All of us are in dire straits. We organized a march to the Collectorate asking at least for free rations. We have been informed that the district labour officer will negotiate. The management thinks that the workers will go to other places in desperation although they are not going to close down the estate. All the unions are on strike as this has affected all the workers and we are left hungry.

Cheruvally Rubber Estate: Harrison Malayalam Ltd. Erumely

Anthoniaamma: I am 53 years old. I was married when I was 18 years old. It is 12 years since I lost my husband and I have a son 16 years old. My mother lives with me. We came here from Tenkashi in Tamil Nadu. Our father died young and because of the difficulties at home I started working from the age of 13. At that time I got Rs.1.25 as daily wage. Since 1969 I am a permanent worker here.

My main work was rubber tapping. The work time is from 7.00 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. We have to tap the rubber, collect it and take it to the milk station. We are supposed to tap three blocks of 400 trees each once in three days. We used to get a half hour break in between but that is reduced to 15 minutes now. Now I am doing slaughter tapping and this work is very hard. I have to carry a ladder of 7-7 and a half feet, which weighs around 20 kg. although according to the law the ladder has to be 3 feet only. Because of this many of us women are ill and have undergone a hysterectomy surgery. Back aches and pain in the arms is usual. Several women have even fallen from the ladders. The male supervisors also threaten and laugh at us and never help us when we fall. I also have to carry the knife and the bucket in which I collect the latex and the hardened rubber. Most of the women get help from their children or we will not be able to meet the target. Because of this the education of the children is affected. If we arrive even a few minutes late for work, they do not engage us that day. We are scolded and threatened all the time and even punished if we do not meet the targets. In order to increase production they inject chemical hormones in the trees. This has increased the production, which means that our work load has also increased. During season times we get work by 5am. We have to collect 8 kg. dry rubber for the minimum wage. For this we need at least 25 kg. milk, even in the measuring they cheat us and we cannot question them. In the rainy season, they reduce the quantity saying it is watery.

Although we soil our clothes at work, they do not give us uniform according to the Plantation Act. They even refuse to pay our medical bills and have reduced our bonus to the minimum. The company has not paid their share of the PF and they insist that we work on Sundays. We are now paid on the 14 instead of on the 7th of the month. When the management enforced the D-4 system we went on strike in March 9th this year and since then as the management has not called for talks, we have been out of work. None of us have any savings. We are all in debt. I do not have a cent of land to call my own. We have decided to struggle on to get our rights.

Mahavir Plantations, Bonacaud

Baby: I am 52 years old. We had 3 children of which one died. My husband has been disabled since one year with a stroke. In 1968, I came here from Tengapatinam in Tamil Nadu. I have studied up to the 8th standard and married when I was 17 years old.

I have mainly been a tea plucker and in the beginning got Rs.1.50 as daily wage. This was an estate where there were over 1000 workers and those who retired were replaced. But now as the prices have fallen, there is no replacement and our workload has increased. Since 5 years the payments started getting irregular despite the fact that the production remained the same. We began to get our salaries once in three months and later once in six months. Then we started to strike and in 1999 December we reached an agreement with the management who promised to pay our dues in three instalments. But since then he is absconding. He has not paid the company's share of PF since 1997. Now we are still due 26 months salary. Although there are all the facilities on the estate, nothing has been functioning since the past five years. We have to come to Vithura to get to a hospital and school now, which is Rs.14/- up and down. Children are not having concession. Our children live in orphanages in order to study. This Onam we received Rs.1000/- and 5kg rice from the government. We are all in debt and try to eat what we collect in the forest and around. We are all still working and plucking the tea but we are being cheated by the local managers who do not give us our due. When my son died in an accident in Madras, I could not go because I had no money.

Farm Sector

Deponents

Ancy Sebastian: I am 48 years old. I have been married since 26 years. We have three children. My daughter has just completed her nursing and the two boys are studying. One completed his B.Com. and doing a computer course and the second completed his 12th and doing a computer course.

In 1962, we moved from Moovatupuzha and as squatters we occupied some land in Poovaram thottil, Wayanad. I came with my parents and 8 of us children and we started farming. We grew lemon grass and made oil and as we had some wet land we also grew paddy for some time and later shifted to tapioca, pepper and cashew. In the early 70s we planted 300 rubber trees but as they did not proper, we grew aracnut instead. Then we also uprooted the cashew and planted coconuts. We also had some cows and buffaloes. And we managed to live like this. As it was difficult to get firewood, in 1980 we stopped making lemon grass oil and stopped growing the grass too.

I was married in 1975 into another farming family and we had 5 acres of land. We grew mainly arecanut, coconut and rubber and my husband and I did all the work. But with the hard work both of us got ill and so we had to hire labour to help us. Annually we get 12 quintals arecanut and 6-7000 coconuts and 16 rubber sheets per day. But the production has been falling because of disease and natural calamities.

We also have high expenses. For arecanut we require 110 quintals of manure, waste, dung and chemical fertilizer. We have to use pesticide two to three times a year. It is Rs.125/- per kg. of pesticide

and coolie for the two workers is Rs.150/- each and food. We need about 5-6 kg. of pesticide a day. For plucking the aracanuts it is Rs.2.50 per tree. To open them it is Rs.4.00 per kg. To pluck the coconuts it is Rs.3.50 and dig the pit around it is Rs.7/- per tree. We require 4 quintals of manure a year for the coconuts. Only if we do all this will the coconuts yield well.

For the rubber, we have to pay Rs.60/- per plot (300 trees). Even if the trees are less, the minimum is Rs.60/- but for more trees we have to pay more. We have lost more of the pepper we had and we get about 20 kg. at the most. We had also grown ginger but even that was diseased and we stopped. Growing all this for the costs today is not viable.

We have taken loans both for constructing our house and for the farm but our house is not yet complete and we are deep in debt both from the bank and from friends. We have also pledged all our gold in the bank and have a debt of Rs.400,000 today. When the prices of the products rose in the 80s, many things changed for the better in our lives. We got a fridge, phone and TV and the wages for the labour increased. With this the amount paid in dowry also increased. But with the fall in prices, we have all been ruined. There is no price for the products we sell, but there is no reduction in the prices for the things that we buy. When rubber was Rs.68/70/- a kg., the prices of rubber slippers was Rs.50-60 but now when the prices of rubber has fallen to Rs.28/-, the price of the slippers remains the same. Even the electricity charges and the but charges have increased.

As both of us are sickly, we are not able to do much work ourselves and the costs of medicine have also increased. Doctors fees are also much and this is a big expense for us each month. Educating the children is also expensive. Now that our daughter is to be married, the rates quoted for the dowry are impossible. And we are not able to sleep thinking about all this. In order to meet all our expenses, even if we want to sell our land and make some money, there are no takers for the land. In this situation, we do only the work that we can do ourselves. And so we cannot maintain the farm by manuring it etc., because of this even the labourers do not have work. We do not know how far we can go like this. We only hope things will change for the better and we live in this hope.

Elizabeth Ommen: I am 36 years old. I come from a family where all were in agriculture. I studied up to the Pre-degree. But because of financial difficulties, I stopped my studies. My father died in January 1990 and this was a big shock for us. My father had taken Rs.1900/- as loan from the Manathavady Syndicate bank to grow coffee. He paid back over Rs.8000/- as interest and we had a balance of Rs.3000/- to pay. My father went around ploughing people's land and he wanted to sell the bulls in order to repay the loan. But at that time there was an announcement of the Prime Minister V.P. Singh to write off debts up to Rs.10,000/- and so we did not pay the balance Rs.3000/-. But in 1990 January without any warning, the bank officials came to auction our land. Our father was not at home and moreover he had got a stay order to postpone the auction till the end of January. The auctioneers ordered us to vacate the house and all the neighbours gathered and we promised to pay back the money by 5 p.m. but they did not listen. As my marriage was fixed, we gave them the two sovereigns of gold necklace we had bought. That night my father committed suicide. Haring this, the

thahasildar returned the necklace and we paid back all the money that week. In July 1991, we received a letter saying that our debts had been written off and we were returned Rs.3330/-.

Father's death was a big obstacle in our lives. My brother stopped his studies. My marriage was postponed. Our main crops were coffee and pepper and we made lemon grass oil and we stopped this when firewood became scarce. Because of the wild pigs we could not plant tapioca. We grew vegetables for our own consumption and gradually disease killed all our pepper too. In 1989-90, we used to get 2 quintals pepper but this has drastically reduced now to 45-50kg. We also have arecanut but these trees are still young. But even this prices has fallen. Our main production is now coffee.

In 1997, I was married but my family is in more than Rs.80,000/- debt for my marriage and other things. In this situation, the prices of our produce have also fallen. In 2000, my brother got 5 quintals coffee and selling this he did not even get sufficient to pay the interest on our loans. We mortgaged 1 acre of land belonging to my mother and got Rs.20,000/- more loan. We also took another Rs.2,000/- as loan to pay the interest.

In order to increase our earnings, my brother took some land on lease and planted 4,000 bananas but we lost some of this because of the storm and with the low prices he ended in a loss. The next year, he planted 1,500 bananas and even that ended in a loss. But this year, he planted only in our own land and we have managed to come out without profit or loss. During this time, we received auction notices for the half-acre land in my name. I pledged my gold and paid back this loan.

Even though that is a very small family they cannot make ends meet and my fate now is no different. We have 2 acres land with our two children and my mother-in-law. Rubber and coconut are the main crops and we have 2 cows. We get tapioca for our own use but no other food crops and we have debts too. We work ourselves and now with the fall in prices even with our own work we make no profits. We wonder what will be our future. All that we sell has no price about there is no price reduction in all we buy. We feel that it is only if the government intervenes that things can improve.

Mary Eapen: I am 56 years old. I have one daughter who is married and lives separately and only my husband live on our land. I was born in Palai and because it was difficult to survive there we moved to Rajakad in Idukki district where we had 90 cents of land. I was married there but then we moved to Pulpally in Wayanad in 1977. We lived there for 7 years on 1 acre 90 cents of land and after that moved to Kakkadam Poyil. Here we have 2 acres land since the past 16 years. My husband is a TB and asthma patient and constantly needs medicine and now because it is so difficult I have not bought medicine for the last one month.

My daughter is married and she and her husband are also farm workers. In 1985, we pawned 1 acre of land and got a loan of Rs.12,800/- from the Eranad Farmers Cooperative Bank, Mangery for coconut farming. We planted 60 coconuts but these were all destroyed by the wild pigs. But the climate here is not suited to coconuts. Since the loans was for coconut, the bank did not allow us to plant arecanut but we did plant 500 arecanut trees. Even that the pigs destroyed, 160 in one day besides that there is the disease and so it is impossible to make ends meet. I informed the bank about

our difficulties but they insisted that we repay the loans. One day in desperation I was running away madly and the storekeeper seeing my grief, offered the money to install a solar fence to keep off the wild animals and I did this.

Now we have 20 coconut palms and some arecanut. In 2000, we got 10 quintals of arecanut and 15kg of pepper. In February 2001, we got a bank notice saying we had to pay back Rs. 36,688/- or they would confiscate the land. Then our local leaders met the Chief Minister and others and we were told that the confiscation measures would be withheld and this was published in the Deepika News. But that day itself, the bank auctioned our land to the bank. The next day I went and paid Rs.8,000/- to the bank from the sale of our ginger. First the Manager refused to take back the money but later insisted that I give him all the earnings from the land and he insisted that I sign a papers saying that the entire amount would be repaid by August 2001. Although we only mortgaged on acre of land, the bank has take possession of the two acres accounted for in our title deeds. Of this I have given 1 acre 30 cents to my daughter as the only dowry. Now the bank can throw us out of our house at any time. If prices were good, we would certainly have been able to pay back our loan little by little but now neither the products nor the land have any value. It is also time to renew the solar fence, but I just cannot think of it.

Rosa John: I am 63 years old and have two children. My husband died of cancer. I was married at the age of 14 and we came to Wayanad from Thodupuzha as servants of the landlord we were working with. We worked as slaves for nine years. I dig the fields and do all the agricultural work and initially we women got 50ps and the men got Rs.1.25. We carried our babies with us to work. When it was impossible to live on what we earned, we took some land on lease. We gave the owner half the crop of paddy as rent and we worked on our land only when we were off work with the landlord and live that we were able to buy 28 cents of land with Rs.650/- that we saved. We then worked as coolies and made our living. My husband tapped rubber too and I did all other kinds of heavy work and I could earn up to Rs.70/- a day. We also took land on lease to grow ginger. Earlier we got Rs.3-400/- for a quintal of ginger and there was regular work in those days. But since the last year, nobody calls us for work as they tell us that agriculture is not viable. At this time my husband got cancer and I need a lot of money for his treatment. I sold a part of our land and now have 13 cents only. There is even no work in the time of the coffee harvest. Earlier I would earn around Rs.100/- a day in the harvest time but now nobody calls us to harvest even if we demand less. We are now really in bad shape and the daily wages have fallen to Rs.60/-. One day I asked for Rs.5/- more and with that the landlord stopped calling me for work.

My daughter is married. I live with my son who is a painter but now there is no work and for him too the wages have fallen to Rs.125/-. We need at least two and a half kilogram of rice a day and we die to eat fish once in a way. We have sold several of our vessels. The panchayat gave us a loan of Rs.20,000/- to build our house but even that is not completed and I do not know how we will go ahead. With the fall in prices, people like me are the worst hit and we really hope the Government will understand our plight and do something to help us.

Sreemathi: I am 65 years old. I have 2 boys and two girls and all of them are married. My husband died two years ago. I have studied till 2nd standard. My family has migrated from the eastern side of Thrissur to the western side. There we both worked as coolie workers. In between we acquired 90 cents of land of forestland. We started cultivating this land and at the same time continued to work outside. In olden days, in my village the main crops were paddy, plantain, vegetables and various types of roots. Pepper and coconut were the only cash crops. For paddy harvesting we used to get one share after 8 'paras' go to the worker. Later it became 5:1. But now most of the paddy lands have been converted to other cultivation. In olden days, even though the wages were less we were getting enough food to feed the family. The amount of rice we get during one harvesting were enough for one family. We used to make different items from the root items.

Slowly all these lands have been converted to rubber plantations. Initially the rubber board encouraged the farmers to cultivate rubber with subsidies. They demanded to cut the trees in the land (mango trees, jack fruit trees, fuel wood and other wood trees) for getting subsidies. Most of the lands were full of these varieties of trees and that time we got the work of shifting these woods from the land. As most of the farmers were having land varying from 2-3 acres, they themselves started to tap it. Otherwise they used to take men for tapping. But now with the fall in prices most of them are doing it by themselves or not tapping at all. Rubber was pushing out women from work. Then I turned to brick making in Puthoor Padam which was known for its paddy cultivation. There also we faced crisis and then I turned in to construction work. I worked there as a coolie worker. Now there is also no work. My neighborhood women were supposed to come for this hearing but she could not turn up because of the fear of losing the construction work. Once they won't go the employer will take other person replacing them. The construction field is also too dim as there is no money with the people to invest.

Now my health status is very bad and I am not able to do any hard jobs. Moreover there are no work even for the men. My sister in law was running a small hotel and now she closed it as nobody is paying ready cash. Everything will be on credit.

Comparing to the olden days the wage has increased. But the prices of all other things that we need have increased. Even to get ration we have to pay much. Now I am making garlands for the local temple and also doing cleaning and cooking for the temple priest. I am earning an amount of Rs. 300/- per month.

Now my son has kicked me out from my own house and he is torturing me a lot. Now I am staying with my daughter and I have to pay Rs. 6/- everyday for bus to go for work.

Special Economic Zone (SEZ)

Luxy Babu: I am 35 years old, married with two children. My husband is a painter on wage work. I have joined Trend Setters in 1991 June. I am one of those who joined in the industry right from its inception. Initially I received a monthly salary of Rs.300/- per month for the first three months which was increased to Rs.500/- and then an increment of Rs.100/- each following year. At the closure time,

I was receiving a salary of Rs.1,647/- a month and initially I got Rs.7/- an hour as overtime and towards the end Rs.15/- per hour. On Sundays the overtime was doubled.

The working hours were from 8am to 5pm. There were supervisors to supervise our work so that we were allowed no relaxing. Cutting was by machine according to a fixed pattern. Each worker worked only on one particular piece and I only did pockets all my tenure. There was no skill up gradation, and great monotony in work. In this factory, they got their lunch and two teas. There was a nurse to attend to illness. Initially, there were 1,000 women employed and these were gradually reduced in order to take casual workers and at the time of lock out there were about 600 permanent workers altogether. This was a big loss for me. I only expected a total of Rs.2,000/- but instead we lost our jobs. They even suggested that our food be stopped in order to give us the rise. The management did not get into any negotiations. They just closed and disappeared. We did not get our dues and we wonder why the company closed down. This is the case with many companies. As even my husband does not get work regularly, this work was important for me to have money to feed our children. Now I go for piece rate work and earn Rs.1000-15000/- a month.

Jayalekshmi: I am 27 years old and have two brothers and two sisters. My parents are unemployed and two of my brothers work in private companies. While I was in my Pre-Degree, I joined Midland Latex Pvt. Ltd., an AVT group company. For the first four months, I was employed as a temporary worker and paid a salary of Rs.400/- a month.

Then I was taken on as a trainee and given an increment of Rs.30/-. This increment was given as an incentive to encourage me. After that there was a probationary period of six months. I received a salary of Rs.1,500/- a month. In 1992, I was confirmed with a pay scale of basic Rs.450/-, plus house rent allowance and DA making a total of Rs.1,800/-. In 1998, the union leaders asked us to join them for a strike to ask for a wage hike of Rs.1,000/- per head. The management requested us to keep away from the strike and promised us an increment of Rs.500/-. But the union leaders did not agree and we went ahead with the strike. After a month the management called for discussions. At that time there was only the CPM led CEPZ Workers Association and one Janatha Dal Union called the CEPZ Workers Federation. Finally the management agreed to pay Rs.250/- per head and stated that this agreement would be valid for three years. But in between in 1999, the management started to lay off workers. During this period, the women workers were obliged to work two weeks with a compulsory one hour over time for which we got no extra wage. But the men were made to work only one week without overtime.

During this layoff the management employed casual workers and so we understood that this was a strategy to move towards contract work. The management also applied for retrenchment of 53 permanent women workers while men who were far junior were kept on. I was one of the committee members of the CPM led union and I approached the leaders. They advised us to accept the retrenchment notice and leave the company as the management promised men one more increment with the work continued. Unable to accept this, we women created our own union and gave a representation to the

Labour and Rehabilitation Secretary. He called a meeting with the management and the unions, but our union was excluded as we had registered only after the notice was served. So there was nobody to speak for us. Only 11 senior workers were retained and the rest not reinstated so we were forced to go to the High Court. The Single Bench verdict was in our favour and advised the management to continue with production and if the number of workers was in excess, retrenchment should take place on basis of seniority. So the next day although we entered the company, the management did not allow us to work and on the next day, the management got a stay order from the Division Bench of the High Court and so we were ousted. We approached the court to withdraw the stay order but we lost. Those 11 workers that were earlier retained were also retrenched the next day.

There were altogether 93 female and 100 male workers in the company. All were permanent but 15 had earlier resigned as the management transferred them to Pondicherry. In April 2000, the company was finally closed given a handsome amount to all the male and 25 female workers who were still working in the company. All others were given a small compensation.

While we worked, the management harassed us no even giving us the recognized holidays like Vishu, Easter etc. Absenting ourselves on such days was calculated as loss of pay leave. We had a total of six casual leaves but this was not sanctioned on the days that we wanted. The company was reluctant to take on married women because of the leave benefits due to them. In our company almost all male workers were from outside the district as also around 25 female workers. They all lived in very congested rented rooms.

I sincerely hope that the National Commission for Women will take measures to see that the existing labour laws are applied in the SEZ. Shelters and health facilities especially for the female workers should be provided. This will help my sisters who get work in the zone in the future. And also we should be appointed in the company if it is reopening again.

P.A. Kumari: I am 32 years old and have 2 brothers and 4 sisters of which 2 sisters are married. I am single. My father is a coolie worker therefore it was important for me to find some work. I have studied upto my degree but have not passed. I finally got work at Steriltex India Pvt. Ltd. in February 1997 after two years in AVT Rubbers where I got Rs.750/- a month at the time of retrenchment.

Steriltex started working in 1995 April producing gloves by a USA based NRI. It was a small multinational company as it has sister concerns in Malaysia, China, Taiwan, USA, South Korea and Canada. I started as a temporary worker and the company appointed me as a general worker in 1998 and I was confirmed as a general worker trainee. Initially, I received a salary of Rs.650/- which continued for one year. Then it was increased to Rs.1,000/- and later to Rs.1,250/-. After confirmation, I was on a scale of basic of Rs.745/- with DA making a total of Rs.1,700/- a month. In addition Rs. 125/- was given as house rent allowance. I have paid PF every month till the company refused to take it in August 1999. Nobody in the company receives any documentation of their wages or deductions. While the employee's share was being deducted for PF etc. the employers only paid their share for the first 9 months. There are altogether 126 permanent workers and about 100 contract workers. After

1998, nobody has been appointed as a trainee. The company paid 8.33 bonus for the year 1997-98, 1998-99. We workers were paid Rs,.2/- per head to the union and a percentage of the bonus with which the union constructed a union office.

The company has a production capacity of 4 lakhs pieces of gloves a day. Slowly this was reduced to around 50,000 pieces at the time of closure in April 2000. A punching system was introduced but this was stopped a few months before the closure of the company. The company claims that closure was due to the shortage of material. Although the workers worked on till April, wages were not paid from January onwards.

We had a CPM led union in the company. I was one of the committee members. We were assured by the union that this was only a temporary closure and that work would resume. So we too kept silent and then we came to know that the leaders would not really help us so we started a strike in November and gave our petitions to all the concerned bodies. We staged a dharna before the SEPZ Development Commissioner's office, and then we met the Collector. We also led a march towards the house of one of the Board members but the police stopped us. The collector discussed the issue with the additional District magistrate and on his instructions the management paid the wage of January 2000.

I request the National Commission for Women to make an enquiry into the conditions of work in SEPZ and see that the labour laws are applied and that we get our due compensation.

Sreedevi MS: I am 33 years old, 10th failed. I was married at the age of 19 years. I got 8 sovereigns of gold and Rs.10,000/- as dowry but the marriage lasted for 10 months only. My husband was a drunkard and was on drugs and he used to beat me. I demanded a divorce and then I had to go back to my parent's house and was dependent on my father. I have one child for whom I needed money to educate and so I had to look out for work. I first went to a printing press for work but since we were expected to oblige the owner for various things, I gave up the work there after six months. I actually had no gains from there. Later, with the help of a Municipal Councillor, I found a job in Tata Ceramics in the CEPZ complex in July 1996.

At the start, I got Rs.850/- in the first months which increased to Rs. 950 and then to Rs. 1,070/- and later to Rs.1,200/- and this remained for the next years. Gradually the workers began to organize under the established trade unions but it was clear that the demands of the workers were different from the priorities of the union leaders who were under the hold of the party leaders. Neither of the two major parties were interested in the issues of CEPZ, so we organized an independent trade union. We first sent a letter to the District Labour officer regarding the low wages and asking for a rise but there was no positive response. Then we went to the Assistant Labor Commissioner and then to the Regional Joint Labour Commissioner and he called a meeting of the CEPZ Development Commissioner and the union leaders for a discussion. But these talks also achieved nothing and so the workers decided to go on a joint strike and we went on a three-day warning strike. The management then called us for discussions and offered to raise the wages by Rs.350/- and we did not accept that and then without any warning, the company declared a lockout. For three months the factory was closed

and during this time we kept watch on the factory in groups day and night, the men taking the night watch. We used all kinds of pressure tactics and so the management called for talks again and agreed to give each worker a rise of Rs.600/- and so we decided to go back to work. But for this the quantum of work was also stipulated. This settlement was in February 1998 and was valid for 2 years. In 2000 May, the agreement was renewed and DA was introduced. There was an additional allowance (of Rs.500/0) if we packed 2.80 lakhs pieces in a month.

This company started in 1994 and in 1995 it started the production of ceramics. There are about 235 permanent workers and 400 trainees and 200 contract labourers. Of these, besides the permanent workers, 70% of the rest are women. The trainees get work for 5-5½ months and then a laid off for 10-15 days and then they are called back for work. This is a continuous process. The agent who supplies the contract labour is one Soman. He even brought three child labour at one point but the other workers did not permit this. The contract workers get Rs.50/- per day out of which they have to give Rs.5/- to the contractor.

There are 4 shifts of work: 8am to 4pm, 4pm to 12 night and 12 night 8am, 10am to 6pm. Those who work in the evening shift get Rs.4/- extra per day and the two night shifts get an extra Rs. 5/- per shift. Women work on the 8am to 4pm shift.

The permanent workers have the ESI, PF etc. we get a casual leave of 7 days and one earned leave for every 20 days work, there are 11 holidays, ESI privilege leave to the maximum of 18 days. To qualify for this the ESI doctor has to certify and this is difficult to get and the doctors hold us to ransom often, as we have to bribe them. When I was admitted for an appendix surgery the ESI doctor did not give me a certificate and so I did not get the privilege leave. On one occasion we organized a big strike before the ESI hospital as our contribution to the ESI is deducted from our salary every month and we get no benefit from it. Ours is probably the only company in CEPZ in which we get an appointment letter and a pay slip. We have to pay Rs.20/- as professional tax every month.

In the midst of these difficulties, the management tells us that the goods from China that are being imported into India are cheaper than ours and so we are loosing our orders. Recently, we had an order from England and we received the initial order but at very short notice, the order was withdrawn. Now the management is making big pressure on the permanent workers imposing more production demands on us so that the production costs are reduced. The increases in electricity costs are also another problem that has added to production costs. They have told us that they will give us an incentive if we increase production and reduce the casual workers. Now there are discussions between the management and us as to the manner in which we can keep production going so that we do not have to close the factory. We cannot think of a time when we will not have work and so we are making all efforts to cooperate with the management.

Fish Processing Sector

Stella: My name is Stella and I am 47 years old and live in a very densely populated island called Vypin. I have studied up to the 7th standard and have 2 children. My husband is unemployed. I started

working from very young. When I was in the 3rd standard. I was also going to work. I worked initially in a peeling shed for over 15 years and from there I went to a little company where the owner offered more wages. So several of us went there. There we got 30ps for peeling a basin of shrimps (supposed to be 3.5kg but it is often a kilo more). The rate gradually increased.

In 1995-96, I joined a women's group called the Maltsya Thozilzli Vanitha Veedi and this made the management insecure and they wanted to trap us in some way. One day in the pretext that they saw on shrimp in the waste and so refused to give me work. The next day they put me in the weighing machine where I had to do my peeling alone and would be asked to do other work as well. I was very angered and so stopped going there to work. I had worked there for 22 years by this time and I left without a single benefit.

As we are not accepted as workers having no appointment order etc. we get absolutely no benefits. In 1997-98, we heard that the State Government created a Welfare Fund for Fisheries Allied workers and we tried to join this fund. The owner refused to sign our application forms and so none of us could join this fund. There were about 45 of us working for this man at that time. Then we heard that there was an enquiry and after that the manager made a guise of closing the factory. Work was not regular and work was more dispersed. Recently they have opened the factory. After I lost this work I began to work in the port sorting the coffee beans for a company but since the last two years I go to a processing company to peel cuttle fish and squid. We are not recognized as workers with benefits but at certain off-season times we get some extra allowance or free rations. We work from 7am to 6pm and get Rs.2/- to peel 2kg of material. There are several unemployed workers and so if we are late even one day, we loose our work. So there is no job security but there are no other problems.

We have several health problems because we work constantly in wet atmosphere with no gloves etc. and for this we get no benefits from the management.

Mary Chanthanthara: I am 44 years old and come from Kumbalinji in Ernakulam district. We were 8 children and our parents were sickly, so all of us were obliged to work to earn some money for the family. I started working from the age of 12 doing coir work. From 18 years onwards I started going to the prawn peeling sheds and other processing units. I used to do peeling, washing, grading etc. In 1976, I went to Calcutta, Vishakapatnam and then to Mangalore. We used to get work only for one year in each place. Grading was my main job and the wage was Rs.150/- after all the expenses were deducted. 150-175 of us women used to stay in one big hall and there were three monthly offs and we had to stay on even if there was no work.

I got married in Mangalore in 1979. My husband was also working there. When I was carrying my first son I had to do overtime and night work. I had problems there and my husband took me back to Kerala. When my son was a year old, I started to go to the peeling shed again. At that time I got Rs.1.50 for one basin of prawns. Now it has increased to Rs.3/-. Some owners give an extra token, which is like a bonus for us I would normally peel 10-15 basins a day when the landing are good. Although the basin is supposed to weigh one and a half kg, they normally fill it with 2kg. During the

season, we are not allowed to leave the shed until all the catch is completed. If we resist we are not taken on the following day.

Most of us do not even leave the shed for food and we are in the ice-cold water the whole day. Sometimes we peel for 3-4 days continuous days and then our fingers bleed and sometimes get infected too as we use no gloves etc. No medicine is provided and none of the owners consider this an occupational health hazard. My medicine is to boil tea, mix salt with it and soak my hand in this for relief. If we do not work even for a day it is we who suffer as the owners get as many workers as they want. So we are the losers.

As we are not considered workers in the industry, we do not get any benefits and are not included in any welfare schemes. I used to get 5kg of rice from my owner at Onam but since the last 2 years he has been giving us Rs.50/-. I have been a member of the Maltsya Mazdoor Sabha Union since the past 5 years through which we have tried to struggle for better conditions but to no avail. Our main plea is to get free rations during the monsoon ban for trawling.

Now I have three children and my husband has become a drunkard. Although he is a fisherman, he rarely goes to work. I have suffered a lot living with him as he is violent with me. My workday is very long and often I have slept outside the house with my children because of my drunken husband. My house is in a very bad shape and we don't have work now because the catches have been poor. Once in two to three years, the owners shut down the sheds and move to other places and so we are left high and dry.

Mahilamani: I am 38 years old and I come from Chandiroor in Ernakulam district. My husband is Rajan and he is a coolie worker. I have two children.

I started working at the age of 16 years. My father passed away at my early age and I was obliged to go for work to look after my family. I worked in a freezing plant and I used to get Rs. 6/- for a day's work. After my marriage I am going to peeling sheds for work. Morning 8 we will start peeling, which goes on till 5 or 6 in the evening. We won't even get up for tea. I used to peel 15-20 basins of prawns during season. Normally a basin of prawns should weigh 1kg, but we always will get 2kg. If we resist there won't be any job for us any more.

The working situation is very bad. The sheds will be congested with 50-60 workers sitting in a very small place. The floor will always be slippery and most of us will be falling there and getting cracks. If we peel continuously for 3-4 days or fingers will bleed and become infectious. If we won't go for work our family will only suffer. We are not given identity cards and our names are not registered. If the labour officer comes for inspection the owners will ask us to put signatures against some fake names. If we are not willing then we will be thrown out from work. My husband is a drunkard and I have to look after my family. He destroyed everything at my house. My two sons were studying and both of them stopped their studies because of our troubles. There are no benefits for our children. We are not even considered as workers.

Recently in our shed they started giving us one token a day as a welfare fund. If we peel for 30 tokens one more will be given to us and we will get that during month end. I am working for the last 38 years. After so many agitations we got 5 kg. rice during this onam.

We don't have work for the last one-month because the catches have been very bad. Since we are not having any benefits our houses are struggling. We can't do any other work also. I am a committee member of the Matsya Mazdoor Sabha and we did many strikes for the last 6 years. Nothing happened after such long years of struggle. We do not have any benefits either from the owners or from the government. Our main demand is to get free ration when we are not having work especially during the monsoon ban for trawling and to recognize us as workers. If this condition continues you expect hunger deaths also from our areas.

Betty: I am 30 years old. I have two children. I got married 6 years back. I started working in a processing plant at the age of 16. Our main task is to process the peeled prawns and fish and then pack it with quality. Our work place is fully air-conditioned. We have to stand in this room without any precautions. Both day and night shifts are there. The working hours are from 9a.m. to 6p.m. 6p.m. to 3a.m. After 3a.m. there is an overtime allowance of Rs.3/- per hour. We are taken as contract workers without any benefits. There are no registration books. If there are 100 workers without any with 10 names. We are forced to put signatures with fake names. Otherwise we will be thrown out and the owners have to give more money to the officer coming for inspection. Now I am getting Rs. 65/- a day without any benefits. The working conditions are terrible with most of us having body pains. So many women stopped working because of ill health. Once the labour officer came and we were forced to say that we are getting Rs.2500 instead of Rs. 1800.

Unmarried young girls are preferred to work in the freezing plants. Once they find us not fit or if we are over age we will be thrown out. The young girls are even used by the owners and others. Because of the fear of losing jobs most of the girls won't say anything. Otherwise their family will be suffering. Now I am a member of the Matsya Mazdoor Sabha and we had several agitations to get acknowledgement as workers and in to include us in other welfare schemes. But nothing has happened till now and I came here with very little hope. Since the Women's Commission Chairperson is a woman I expect her to realize our plights.

Verdict of the Jury

Under the auspices of the National Women's Commission, the Public Hearing on the Impact of Globalization on Women workers in Kerala held in Thrissur on the 26-27th Sept. we have listened to over 40 deponents from the Plantation Sector, the Farm sector, the Fish processing industry and the Special Export Processing Zone-Cochin. We have tried to understand the problems that these workers face in their work but in this short time we do not pretend to have a complete understanding of the same. We herewith submit our verdict to the National Commission for Women.

We understand that globalization has not been a demand by the people but has been forced on them. We are therefore convinced that the impact of these changes have to be borne by the creators

of these problems. It is of concern that the greatest impact of these changes are experienced by the women at the lowest rungs of the social ladder. Work pressure has substantially increased and the service facilities like public health etc. have been greatly reduced. Women are increasingly made to do the work earlier done by men and yet there is no equal wage for equal work. The intervention of the government on these issues is urgently required.

The Plantation Sector

The deponents came from the various estates: Nedumpala Harrison Malayalam Estate and Wariad Estates-Wayanad, Chandramala Tea Estate, AVT Lilly Estate, Anamada Estate, Cherunelly-Nelliampathy, MNJ Plantations-Chittar, Pathanamthitta, Harrison Malayalam-Cheruvally Rubber Estate, Erumaly, Vegetable and Orange Government Farm-Nelliampathy.

Globalization has not had a positive impact on the plantation sector. The price of almost all plantation crops has fallen. Tea prices are not as low as that of coffee. Unable to break even, the small plantations have either closed down or sold out their land in small pieces. The workers are left by the wayside. In order to reduce production costs, the workload of the women workers has been greatly increased. In most cases the women are engaged as temporary workers. Because of the family responsibilities, women are not able to meet this excess work pressure and this is used as an excuse for not making them permanent. Women are expected to be at work by 8 a.m. and even if they are a few minutes late, they are not admitted for work.

Despite several years of work, these women are not entitled to gratuity. Several of the provisions in the Plantation and Factories acts, regarding the workplace, are not complied with, e.g. A safe atmosphere for work as the women workers are often abused by the supervisors. Lockouts are announced without following approved procedures. The workers are not able to organize for their rights as the management avoids discussion with them and even refuses to appear before the government bodies. In the recent past none of the reconciliation talks have been in favour of the workers.

Women are exposed to health problems that are work related as dangerous pesticides are used without necessary protective measures.

In the coffee plantations there are over 1 lakh workers including agricultural workers mainly in small holdings. During the last five year the price has come down form Rs.65-75/- to Rs.28/- in 2001. This has had a devastating effect on the farmers. There is therefore a treat to sell out in small pieces and to move from a wage system to a share system. If the workers are not willing for this, the harvesting is withheld.

Recommendations

- Implement rights and safety measures assured in the Indian Constitution namely article 21, 14, 16, 48, and 51 as early as possible. Provisions of the existing Labour Laws like the Plantation Labour Act, the Minimum Wage Act, the Industrial Dispute Act, Payment of Gratuity Act, Payment of Bonus Act, the Kerala Agricultural Labour Act should be implemented. The anti worker polices should be withdrawn.

- Ensure job security. Take measures to reopen the Wayanad Wariad Chembra Peak Estate, Mahavir Plantations, Bonacaud, Peermedu Estate. The Government should also intervene in the reopening of the smaller estates.
- Measures must be taken to see that housing, health, education and transport facilities are assured to the workers.
- In this time of crisis, when owners are unable to run the estates because they no longer viable, the government should stay fragmentation and the sale of the land. Government should build support measures for the creation of workers cooperatives and assist in the marketing of the products.
- The Government farms that are now running at a loss should be reexamined and should continue as food farms in the future too.
- Plantations that were started for the welfare of the adivasis by the government, should handed over to the adivasis like Aralam and the Sugandhagiri farms.
- In areas where famine deaths have occurred because of long closure of the estates, the government should extend health and education facilities together with free ration to the workers.
- In the high range areas, education facilities for the children and transport concessions should be specially extended.

The Farm Sector

Listening to the testimonies of the small-scale farmers and the agricultural labourers, it has become more clear that for the last 20 years they are the victims of the government policies and of the globalization process. Despite the fact that the growers price is falling substantially the market price both for the raw and value added products at the consumer level have been increasing (e.g. Rubber).

They are forced to adopt the 'modern' agricultural methods and at the same time have been fallen in to the trap of huge debts and auction because of the small amount they have taken for their land. These had led to the suicide of many of the farmers.

Recommendations

- Government has the full responsibility for solving the indebtedness of the small-scale farmers. The government should take immediate measures to write off the huge amount of interest the farmers are forced to pay and give time for them to pay back the actual amount. The Government should block the revenue recovery measures that are taking place.
- Government should take the responsibility of supporting the farmers who are cultivating food crops through subsidies, interest free loans, minimum support prices according to the production crops etc.

- The government should promote farmers involved with organic farming and develop markets for their products.
- Free zones should developed where the farmers can sell their own products.
- The farmers should own their products including value addition.
- The government should take immediate measures to implement all the rights of the women agricultural labourers according to law such as equal wage for equal work, health facilities, maternity benefits etc.,
- The Government should redefine the BPL/APL criteria.

Fish processing Industry

The immense competition developed in the fishing sector is a visible impact of the globalization. This has led to the huge destruction of marine resources. The non-availability of prawns and other fishes used in huge quantities for exports are good examples of this. This is reducing considerably the jobs of the enormous number of women workers in the processing zones. They are having job stability and the noxious working conditions are affecting their health. The wages are very less and the peeling is on piece-rate contract. The grading and freezing jobs are on daily basis. In order to compete in the global market, the exporters are reducing the production costs which directly cut down the benefits of the workers.

Recommendations

- The factories act, minimum wages act, contract labour (regulation and abolition) act and migration labour act should be implemented timely and strictly. There should be proper job stability.
- In the light or the severe health hazards of the workers in the processing plants proper safety and healthy measures should be taken care. Measures should be taken to eliminate occupational injuries like slipping on the floor.
- The Marine Regulation Act should be implemented and thereby make sure the availability of fishes and prawns.
- During the monsoon when there is ban in trolling there should be free-ration and health facilities for the workers.
- The workers should be given full rights to unionise.
- Projects should be implemented to ensure social security and welfare for the workers. E.g. The registering of the sheds and the issuing of identity cards to the workers.
- Permission should be granted to selected NGOs and women's organizations to inspect the premises of the factories and check on the working conditions of the workers.
- Educational grants should be provided for the children of the fish processing workers.

The Special Economic Zone

Created with the specific objective of providing work opportunities, this Special Economic Zone does not in practice implement existing labour regulations. The existence of the companies themselves is very unpredictable. In times of profit making, the workers are not given decent wages, in times of market slump, these industries are closed indiscriminately leaving the workers high and dry. All the insecurities of the market are finally borne by the workers.

Recommendations

- Implement the existing Industrial Dispute Act and other labour laws applicable to this sector.
- Revise the Minimum Wage Act according to present price index and bring all the industries in this sector under the act.
- Uphold the Labour security Measures as they exist and implement them.
- Supply the workers with identity cards.
- Provide accommodation facilities and health facilities for the workers

Of the Jury of eight, there was one dissenting note by Justice Aravindaksha Menon.

Dissenting Note:

Globalization is a stated policy of the Indian Government. The deponents at this Hearing have stated that it is Globalization that is the cause for the fall in prices of agricultural products. This affects not only their employment opportunities but has also increased the work burden of those who continue to work. But their claim that globalization has been thrust on the population is incorrect. It is a policy of a government that has been democratically elected by the majority in this country. Neither does this have an impact on the workers only of Kerala. But the difficulties created by this Policy should be brought to the notice of the Government. I am of the opinion that the Government should consider these problems seriously.

It is not the absence of legislation that creates hardships for the workers on the plantations but the fact that existing legislation is not properly implemented. It appears that the Plantation Act is not being followed voluntarily and hence should be officially implemented. For this the government should take proactive steps.

There is insufficient consideration paid to the health of the workers. The use of pesticides and chemical manure, impacts on their health and proper preventive measures are not adopted. Special legislation should be enacted for this.

The disintegration of the plantations and their sale as small holdings should be studied by the government and remedial measures should be enacted for each particular case.

If and where adivasis are engaged as temporary labour, they should receive the stipulated minimum wage and if not this should be brought to the notice of the government.

The fact that farmers were forced by the government to go in for rubber as a crop is not true. It can be said that farmers desired it.

In order to write off the farmers debts, a just policy should be worked out by the government. Until then any measures to confiscate the land because of bad debts, should be withheld.

Gist of Public Hearing Organized by NCW on Impact of Globalization on Women Domestic Workers,
Organized by the Center for Women's Studies and Development, Research Institute,
Rajagiri College of Social Sciences, Kalamassery, Kochi, Kerala, September, 2003

NCW Public Hearings

The National Commission for Women held Public Hearings to get first hand information on the conditions of employment of women in Kerala. Irrespective of the sector of employment, the general complaint was that prescribed minimum wages were not paid to women workers. For example, it was observed in the hearings that in the Plantations in Wayanad and Nelliampathy, women did not receive minimum wages in many of the estates. Work opportunities were on the decline owing to cost cutting measures enforced by employers who were affected by low prices for many of the agricultural products. The cash crops of Kerala were severely affected by market competition by the removal of quantitative restrictions in trade and liberalized import of many of these commodities from cheaper markets.

The conditions of work in the fish processing units were deteriorating. Owing to liberalization of trade, lot of work had moved from large units to smaller cottage units to be competitive in the market. Working conditions deteriorated with lesser facilities and greater occupational hazards. Workers' health was in jeopardy owing to the humid and cold environment in the work sheds. Numbness and injuries to the fingers were common complaints. There were no social security measures to provide health care facilities to the women workers.

Domestic workers were not unionized. They had long hours of work, low wages and insecurity of employment. The possibility of substitution by cheaper labour from Tamilnadu was a serious threat that made them remain silent and not complain. They suffered various kinds of harassment at the work place.

Bamboo Workers

The Bamboo mat weaving industry was not any longer attracting workers from the younger generation. The older workers were largely fighting their ageing and trying to remain in the industry, which was shrinking. The competition from substitutes (plastics), the declining supplies of raw material and low prices for bamboo mats increased their helplessness. They were too old to learn new skills and move to other sectors of work. They had no social security.

Women Domestic Workers

At a public hearing held in September, 2003 in Kerala by the NCW. It was highlighted that the employment opportunities of domestic workers declined. Domestic workers lived in object poverty without any social security. Agricultural productivity had declined and employment was shifting out of the sector. The modernization of traditional sectors also led to declining employment opportunities. The influx of women workers from the neighbouring States, especially from Tamil Nadu, who are available

at lower wages took away job opportunities from the local people. Women domestic workers were not organized and therefore their voices were not heard. They were exploited and entreated physically, mentally and sexually by the employers. But these did not come to limelight as the victims maintained silence for fear of losing their jobs, as they had no alternatives.

Grievances/Complaints

Following were the important grievances put forth by the participants during the public hearing:

- For the permanent workers, there is no stipulated time and they are forced to work from dawn to dusk;
- Most of them are not allowed to take leave even if there is a genuine reason;
- The part time workers are burdened with strenuous working conditions as they move from one house to another for the domestic work.
- Domination of Tamil workers increases the unemployment level of these women in this sector.
- There are no welfare schemes/unions/service organisations to hear/solve the varied problems of these women;
- Remuneration paid for the exhaustive work is very low;
- Physical and sexual harassment is quite common;
- Inhuman treatments are meted out to many of the domestic workers at the hands of the employers;
- Due to the constant use of detergents health problems especially skin diseases confront these women workers;
- The elderly workers are experiencing a lot of physical ailments viz. back pain, eyesight, asthma etc.
- Those who are registered with the private recruiting agencies have to give commission for placement, as they do not have the bargaining ability;
- There is no social security measures for the domestic workers.

Important Recommendations¹

- Minimum remuneration should be fixed for the domestic workers;
- Skill training should be given to workers so as to increase their efficiency, resulting in better remuneration;
- Convert domestic work a respectable profession by appropriate skill upgradation;
- Treat domestic workers as a special category and evolve specific policies and programmes for their well-being;
- Establish linkages with other women organisations to support their causes and grievances;

¹ Report of the Public Hearing on Impact of Globalization on Women Domestic Workers, Sponsored by the National Commission for Women, New Delhi, September, 2003.

- A separate wing catering to the needs of the domestic workers should be set up with the State Social Welfare Development;
- They should be made to register themselves in the above wing of the social welfare department;
- Welfare measures viz. pension, medical aid, marriage allowance, bonus etc. should be provided;
- Research studies should be undertaken to unearth the real situation of the domestic workers with more emphasis on case studies;
- Legal awareness programmes should be organized frequently to conscientise them about their rights and responsibilities;
- A separate policy for the domestic workers should be introduced.

Agricultural Workers

Agriculture in Kerala has been adversely affected with the steep fall in prices of most of the farm commodities. 80% of Kerala's agriculture involves cash crops. Kerala accounts for 45% of the area under plantation crops (rubber, tea, coffee and cardamom) in India, contributing to 92% of the national production of rubber, 71% for cardamom, 21% for coffee and 9% for tea. The Export-Import Policy, 1997-2002 and the modifications and amendments introduced in April, 1999 and 2000 have removed quantitative restrictions on the import of 1,948 commodities. The liberalization of imports has seriously affected the economy of Kerala. In the plantation crops, women account for more than 60%. Many of the estates have ceased to function and the workers have been forced look for work elsewhere due to crash in the prices of the products.

The fall in prices have also affected small farms with mixed crops. The fall in prices have compelled the farmers to reduce the number of workers and also wages in several areas.²

Fish Processing

The fish processing industry is a women intensive industry. Earlier the fish processing industry were in large units. There is now a mushrooming of large number of small units in the Unorganized Sector with very little protection for the women workers. The petition from 56,250 women workers in Cherthala taluk referred to the low wages of Rs.30/- per day for 10-12 hours of work. The environment of work is appalling in wet and humid conditions. Many time women fall and dislocate their job. They get cuts and pricks on the wet rule and fingers and thy arc their prone to bacterial and viral infections. Apart from these infections their sitting postures also give rise to many health problems. Sitting on wet floors hours together leads to circulatory problem resulting in numbness. Their feet get fungus due to the ice and cold water. Most of the women suffer from bronchial diseases. Approximately 82.9% of the women complain of backache with 30% having it very regularly. Headache holds the second rank with 80.9% suffering from it.

² Report of the Public Hearing, The Impact of Globalization on Women Workers in Kerala, Organized by the National Commission for Women, 26-27 September, 2001, Thrissur.

Appendix 4

DIALOGUE WITH THE NGOS AND STATE GOVERNMENT

Meeting of the Expert Committee on Economic Empowerment of Women
held by NCW on 08.04.2003, at New Delhi

The Expert Committee of NCW on Economic Empowerment recognized that in the country as a whole, women workers were denied their rightful wages as there was discrimination in the payment of wages. Dr. Mukul Mukherjee pointed out that economic reforms initiated during the last two decades have paved the way towards an open economy that is the hallmark of globalization, but these often have adverse implication for women. "This is evident in signs of decline in women's employment, specially in rural areas....new technologies and new products enter the market, tastes and preferences change, induced by a barrage of market promotion tactics. As a result, many products lose their markets and this has a cascading effect. There is a displacement effect for a large segment of women workers deriving subsistence from these occupations. This is a specially worrisome trend, because it is very difficult for women to find adequate alternative employment in the newly emerging sectors because of their general lack of requisite resources and capabilities. There was overcrowding of women in the informal or so-called unorganized sectors. Informal or unorganized sector refers to the multitude of small labour productive units or micro-enterprises, characterized by low skill, low productivity, poor income, little scope for upward mobility and little relief by way of social security or collective bargaining. While the share of women workers in the total labour force is about one-third, in the informal sector occupations such as bidi-making, match-making or domestic service, their share is as high as 70-90 per cent. Women's work patterns hamper their empowerment. This work pattern is characterized by occupational segregation and gender based disparities in earnings. Women's over representation in the informal/unorganized sector is known for its handicaps and uncertainties. Their preponderance as agricultural labour is one of the most vulnerable occupations."¹ When economic crises deepen and women are compelled to take up additional work, there is a rising pressure on the girl child affecting her future prospects. Due to this, instead of narrowing disparities we have a situation of persistent gender gaps impede progress towards women's empowerment.²

Ms. Padma Ramachandran, in enumerating the problems faced by women in Kerala that needed to be addressed, mentioned³

- (i) Non-payment of minimum wages in accordance with the Act.
- (ii) Opposition of males to masons work being done by women.
- (iii) Toilet facilities for girls in schools.
- (iv) Scholarships for girls for taking up maths and science, and
- (v) Establishing women crafts villages in all tourist complexes.

¹ Excerpts from the note of discussions of the meeting of the Expert Committee on Economic Empowerment of Women held by NCW on 8-4-2003, at New Delhi.

² *Ibid*

³ *Ibid*

Dialogue with the NGOs and State Government

Summary Report of Workshop on "Strategies for Economic Empowerment", 19th May 2003, Organized by the National Commission for Women and State Commission for Women

The workshop commenced with the welcome speech by M. Kamalam, the Chairperson of the Kerala State Commission for Women.

The workshop was presided over by Dr. Poornima Advani, Chairperson of the National Commission for Women and the inaugural address was by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala.

The objective of the workshop was to be able to get the grassroots voice. It is important to keep in mind that women too have the right to live and this also means the right to live with dignity.

Some of the concerns are violence, globalization and specific problems of Kerala State issues of violence and empowerment closely linked. It is hoped that the workshops could come out with policy recommendations, both short and long term and a list of do-ables. Inner strength of women biggest resource. It was hoped that the Government of Kerala would consider seriously the recommendations and issues emerging from the workshop and address them.

The Chief Minister promised to consider the recommendations emerging from the workshop. Economic empowerment cannot be seen as isolated from political and social empowerment, women suffer most when the income of a family is hit. The government has attempted to enhance the process of women empowerment through the various provisions under decentralization such as reservation for women. Kudumbashree programme has become a model for economic empowerment of women. However, there continue to be other challenges such as dowry, the sexual exploitation of women. It is imperative that empowerment precludes security. Attitudes and mindsets have to change for genuine empowerment to be achieved.

Dr. Sarala Gopalan, Advisor, National Commission for Women, emphasized the need to emerge from women being "victims" to being "problem solvers and change agents. In the Kerala context there are definite contradictions – despite the high literacy rate, work participation and political participation is low. Programmes like Kudumbashree are success stories and give us hope.

Lissy Jose, Member, Kerala State Commission for Women, gave the vote of thanks. She observed that the Constitution guaranteed equal rights but the attainment of these for women still remained a distant dream. She hoped that the discussions of the next few days would be fruitful.

K.P. Kannan, Director, Centre for Development Studies, presented the keynote address on Economic Empowerment.

He provided statistics to bear out the fact that the performance of girls in education in terms of participation in primary school, dropout rate, vocational education, degree and other development indicators such as low fertility, low IMR, low birth rate etc. are favourable to women. However, work

participation rate is lower than the all India average. This is not a cause of undue worry since the reason is Kerala women have more of a choice, and demand for labour in agriculture is comparatively low.

The concern in Kerala was more in terms of educated unemployment. The strategy to address this would be to provide women with skills to develop their status in the labour market, after a careful study of emerging areas of demand and according to a prioritization of activities for which there would be demand.

An economic base is a foundation for empowerment. Studies show that there is a definite link between education and violence. It was seen that lesser educated women. The keynote address was followed by a question-answer session.

This was followed by the presentation of papers. Mr. John Kurien, General Manager of NABARD made a presentation on Economic Empowerment and Micro Credit. It provided an overview of NABARD's work with SHGs and constitutes one of the largest micro credit programmes in the world. Despite the high success rate and the various challenges that have been overcome as a result of the NABARD intervention, there remain issues of concern such as sustainability, graduation from SHGs to small micro enterprises.

Change in mindset and attitudes. Government to provide backward and forward linkages to ensure sustainability.

Various question and issues were raised; one of the chief concerns raised by Panchayats was that banks consistently refused them loans despite their considerable savings. The GM of NABARD assured them that this situation could be rectified.

Mr. T.K. Jose, Executive Director, Kudumbashree presented a paper on the Kudumbashree Experience in Economic Empowerment. Kudumbashree has defined empowerment, according to them there are four facets of empowerment, which are:

- Physical;
- Social and Cultural;
- Economic; and
- Political

The presentation of Shri. T.K. Jose on the strategies for economic empowerment on 19th May 2003, at Trivandrum at the NCW workshop highlighted the following issues:-

- (i) Low level of work participation of women in Kerala;
- (ii) Unemployment and under-employment among educated women in Kerala;
- (iii) Positive relationship with reduction in violence against women and high education;
- (iv) Scope for micro credit as a tool for economic empowerment;

- (v) The role of SHGs in promoting micro credit;
- (vi) The correlation between micro credit and poverty reduction;
- (vii) Four facets of empowerment - physical, socio-cultural, economic and political;
- (viii) The role of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in women employment;
- (ix) Poverty reduction through micro finance, micro capital, micro-enterprises process;
- (x) Correlation between decentralization and poverty reduction;
- (xi) Importance of community participation;
- (xii) Role of SHGs in enhancing community participation in grass-roots democracy;
- (xiii) Gender sensitization through bureaucratic action;
- (xiv) Economic empowerment only a necessary condition but not a sufficient condition for social change;
- (xv) Increasing burden on women due to micro finance and micro enterprise.

In the presentation, the following were indicated as shared experience –

- Even the poor can be made entrepreneurs;
- Project identification is vital, but identification of entrepreneur is critical;
- Skill development is important for ensuring success;
- Entrepreneur can be created through careful nurturing and hand-holding;
- Developing entrepreneurs and not enterprises;
- Financial intermediation is required for development of the poor. Appropriate dialogue with banks is necessary;
- Community based network has provided marketing. Initial marketing is the neighbourhood itself,
- Poverty reduction through stereotype programmes is not enough. Complementarity between Government and other agencies is necessary.

Summing up the presentation and responding to queries from members, Shri Jose mentioned that -

- (i) Turbulence is now seen in traditional sector in Kerala because of inflow of labour from Tamil Nadu. Bargaining power of labour in Kerala has been affected;
- (ii) Duty free import of tea from Sri Lanka has affected plantation workers;
- (iii) State level budgeting – it should go down to the level of Panchayats;
- (iv) There are sporadic and localized efforts against globalization. Panchayat movement in Kerala has stopped the onslaught of Pepsi and Coca Cola and also illegal mining of rare earth minerals. These are tangible action against globalization and can be case analysis for other States.

- (v) Networking with other women organization is necessary. Awareness and knowledge and confidence building are needed;
- (vi) Capacity building and human resource development at Panchayat level. In the absence of proper training, it is not making headway.

Taking into consideration the gravity of the problem, it was agreed by the members of the Committee attending the meeting, to form a Core Group to finalize the recommendations to Central Government.

The recommendations that have emerged during discussions of the Expert Committee of the National Commission for Women include –

- Maintenance of a violence-free environment is an essential pre-condition for women's participation in various activities including income generating activities.
- Another basic premise for economic empowerment is proper recognition and reporting of women's work, both market-linked and otherwise.
- Equally important are property rights and ownership of assets for women, specially land rights. As land is perhaps the most precious asset in rural India, the agenda for women's economic empowerment has to include land reforms measures that secure women's entitlement to land.
- More effective implementation and monitoring of labour laws such as Minimum Wages Act or Equal Remuneration Act or Bidi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act.
- The SHGs should not only focus on provision of micro credit but have a holistic approach and provide support services including awareness of marketing and enhance capability of the women members. The SEWA model was advocated. The SHG for poverty groups require special attention.
- Skill building for women is of crucial importance especially skills which can help them get stable income and withstand the impact of globalization.
- Women Development Corporations should be made the nodal points for chocking out action plans for the economic empowerment of women.
- Gender analysis should be done in planning, monitoring and evaluating the impacts of revenue raising and expenditure allocation at national, sub-national and/or local level.
- Implement strategies for women's participation in economic decision making through their engagement in budgetary processes.

The processes moving from a community-based organization to a micro enterprise were explained. Case studies were used to illustrate these. Strategies used in empowering the poor were shared. Essentially the aim is to work for a participatory poverty alleviation programme with the support of Panchayati Raj Institutions, Government of Kerala and NABARD.

There was a question and answer session following the presentation.

The moderator observed that economic empowerment therefore links to social empowerment. Economic empowerment is not automatic there are various processes to go through.

Mr. S.M. Vijayanand, Member Secretary, State Planning Board presented a paper on Decentralization, Panchayati Raj and Women Empowerment. The one-third reservation of seats for women in the Panchayati Raj has contributed to empowerment - a study by KILA has shown that the confidence of women has increased tremendously in a period of four years.

Ten percent of funds have been set apart as women component plan. Government of Kerala is hoping to improve social audit to monitor the way funds are being used.

Government is also hoping to introduce gender budgeting and is looking for some technical support to actually operationalise this.

Sarada Muraleedharan, IAS

Women merely contributing to the family income by itself cannot constitute empowerment. Their role in decision-making is the key.

Societal attitudes towards women in power still need to be changed – a conducive environment needs to be created. Empowerment for one section implies that another section stands a little dis-empowered. It is also seen in the Women Component Plan that it is not monitored adequately – the more difficult the scheme, the easier it is to give it the go-by.

Gender sensitization training to be given not only to women but also men. It is important to think through the gender implications of development programmes e.g. mechanization in agriculture.

This was followed by a session on sharing of experiences by five women entrepreneurs under the Kudumbashree Programme. Women micro entrepreneurs groups (10 each) presented their stories – they were involved in a range of products and services from payasam mid, dairy products, door to door supermarket, Information Technology unit in school, data entry unit. Sarala Gopalan observed that these women had self-confidence and pride in what they were doing and all reported changing attitudes in their own family.

Summary Report of Workshop of "Status of Women in Kerala, 20th May, 2003
Organized by the National Commission for Women and State Commission for Women

The inaugural speech was by the Minister for Industries and Social Welfare, P.K. Kunhalikutty.

The Minister said that the real challenge was to sustain and develop the achievements already made in the area of women empowerment. From the part of the Government, necessary steps would be taken to ensure that the deliberations and emerging issues and recommendations were translated into action.

Dr. Poornima Advani said that the greatest challenge was to ensure gender sensitive governance and the greatest strength was women's collectivity. It is the concern of NCW to hear the voice of the voiceless. All policy formulations should be in consultation with women who are in the field.

It is also time to stop seeing women as objects of welfare and constitute a Department for Women and Child along the lines of a Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Justice Sukumaran referred to various cases in maintenance, harassment of women in power etc. which brought out the fact that there still remained various problems to be addressed. Article 15 ensures special protection and care of women. The complexity of women's problems is such that it can be effectively addressed only on a decentralized basis. The importance of legal education and the need for relief measures such as short stay homes was emphasized by him.

Savithri Lakshmanan said that it is important the initiatives to address women issues should not be politicized. The system still discriminates against women. But it is important not to get caught in the jargon but instead emphasize on action.

Ms. P. Kulsu, Member, Kerala Women's Commission gave the vote of thanks.

The inaugural session was followed by NGO interaction where activists on NGO's brought out issues concerning the status of women and provided suggestions on action points:

The issues that raised were:

- Non action on a sexual harassment case against a Senior IAS official where the offender was a Minister.
- Cases of sexual harassment on the increase and the situation of no action against offenders leads to a sense of helplessness.
- The attitude of running down those who speak out against sexual harassment is worrying.
- The necessity of short stay home.
- Procedures that are unfavourable to women e.g. the case of Constable Vinaya where she tried to change the section in forms which asks for the name of the father/husband.

- Despite the sex racket case that was unearthed, in Kozhikode, no action has been taken. The manner in which the complaint of sexual harassment registered to the Complaints Committee of Calicut University by P.E. Usha has been trivialized and sensationalized leads to a sense of frustration. Women are very vulnerable e.g. case of burn victim who was molested in a hospital, women suffering as a result of communal killings in Kozhikode are all matters of grave concern.
- Women are not safe within their homes – cases of domestic violence on the increase. The statistics for sexual harassment are alarming. Cases also of sexual harassment of children.
- Sexual harassment of plantation workers who are women.
- Women do not even have access to toilets in public places, school children do not have proper water and toilet facilities.
- Ration Card discriminatory – asks for the name of the man of the house and his relationship to other members of the family.
- Attitude of police to women in distress/social workers – police need to be sensitized.
- Most women are now in the unorganized sector and no labour standards are applicable there.
- Female foeticide case increasing as evident from declining female-male ratio in the 0-6 age group.
- The PNDR Act needs to be implemented more strictly.
- Women's bodies used as commodities –increasing caesarians from 35-60 percent as against the WHO standard of 15%.
- The problems of widows need special attention.
- Women in the fishing sector subject to discrimination.
- Women become victims of political conflicts and killings and lost their near and dear ones.
- Various gender stereotypes perpetuated in the education system.
- Early marriage is a big problem in Malappuram District among the Muslim community.
- In Wayanad District, the phenomenon of 'Mysore' marriages where women are married to men from Karnataka without dowry but are then abandoned.
- Human rights violation in the Muthanga case, where a tribal woman was sexually exploited and killed.
- The problem of drug addiction is acute in Idukki District.
- Need to improve condition of women in traditional industries.
- Dowry harassment and dowry deaths are on the increase.

- Dowry in Christian community – efforts by social workers to get these recorded so that they can be reclaimed when the woman wants – ten percent of the dowry amount goes to the Church.
- RDO not acting as dowry Prohibition Officer.
- Hospital timings in Alappuzha, not conducive to women – women are free only in the afternoons, but hospitals are closed then.
- Sex tourism on the rise.
- The case of Vinaya a woman constable who fought to improve the conditions of women police was suspended. Despite a Court Order that she be reinstated, she has been again given suspension.
- Alcoholism of husbands is the biggest problem for women.
- Demographic profile shows that the number of aging women are on the increase and their specific problems need to be attended to.
- One-stop crisis centre in hospitals essential.
- HIV/AIDS counseling before marriage.
- Given the backdrop of divorce cases, joint title deed to be necessary.
- Mental health – increasing tendency to suicide.
- Problem of sex workers – they are subject to police harassment and this is justified under PITA.
- Education – school dropouts especially among tribals.
- Women unsafe in bus stands – presence of women police will be reassuring.
- Ladies compartments in train – why located at the back – presence of women police will provide as sense of security.
- Problem of destitute old women – steps to provide shelter to them.
- Women to be trained in physical self-defense.
- Legal education and training on legal rights.
- Kovalam – enquiry on marriages with foreigners.
- Kovalam – Sexually Transmitted Diseases increasing.
- Conditions of sales girls, nurses, paramedical staff.
- More Family Courts needed.
- Capacity of women to be built up to take up new roles and responsibilities.

Meeting on Sexual Harassment – Functioning of Complaints Committee in Workplaces,
20 May, 2003 – Organized by National Commission for Women

It is mandatory to have a Complaints Committee in every work place as per the Supreme Court directive. The Complaints Committee should be headed by a woman, 50% of the members should be women. There should also be a third party, preferably an NGO as member. The committee should meet preferably every three months. Periodic reports are to be submitted.

The meeting was to take a quick assessment of the status and functioning of the Complaints Committee in various workplaces.

Collegiate Education Department – Committee in place as per directives for the last two years. No complaints received so far. Publicity given and there is awareness about its existence.

Hindustan Latex Ltd. Set up 2 years back. Training provided to women on its role and objective. No complaints received so far. Guidelines circulated in Malayalam and survey conducted among women employees.

Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre Third Party is a Government Department. Publicity given. 2-3 complaints received but these are not of sexual harassment. Needs to be reconstituted.

NABARD Committee in place but no third party representative. There was a complaint but complainant was not willing to give it in writing and hence not taken up.

Needs to be reconstituted and inform NCW about action taken.

Department of Civil Supplies Committee in place as per directive. No complaints received so far. But no proper follow up.

Directorate of Medical Education Committee in place as per directive. No complaints received so far.

Directorate of Economics and Statistics Committee in place as per directive. Publicity given. Meet only once a year. This is to be rectified. Also third party nominee should be an NGO/independent representative.

This is to be reconstituted and meetings convened more frequently. NCW to be informed.

Directorate of Ayurvedic Medical Education Committee not constituted.

Committee to be constituted and action taken to be intimated to the NCW.

Department of Irrigation One complaint so far. No third party representative. No information on last meeting. Chairperson retired.

Valid Committee to be constituted and NCW informed on action taken.

Department of Indian Systems of Medicine Step to be taken to add third party and this to be intimated to the NCW. No complaints received so far.

Department of Prison Constituted only six months back. Not proper representative at the meeting.

Kerala State Handloom Development Corporation One complaint received. No third party representative. Action to be taken and NCW to be informed.

Local Fund Audit Committee No committee. Vigilance Committee is not a substitute. Action to be taken and NCW informed.

Kerala Tourism Development Corporation Committee in place as per directive. No complaints received so far. Amended service rules.

Directorate of Fisheries 25 members. 3 NGO nominees. Periodic meetings. No complaints so far.

Reserve Bank of India, Thiruvananthapuram Branch Committee constituted in accordance with directives. Two complaints received and action taken.

Canara Bank a male member heading the Committee. No third party. But this will be reconstituted and NCW informed.

Forest Department set up 2 years back in accordance with directives. One case received but this has gone to Court since a Minister is involved.

Directorate of Higher Secondary Education has 13 members representing all non teaching and teaching members of schools. Meet once a year. No complaints so far. Process of nomination of members to be based on consensus.

Kerala State Road Transport Corporation Committee set up as per directives. Complaints received were 'minor' and could be sorted out through counseling.

Department of Education, Directorate of Public Instruction Committee in place but no third party representatives. Action taken on harassment of girl students. No complaints received so far.

Labour Department Committee in place as per directives. Publicity given. Officers sent for training.

Life Insurance Corporation of India Committee in place as per directives. No complaints received so far.

Kerala State Electricity Board Committee set up as per directives.

In 2001, 17 sittings held, 33 persons heard, 10 complaints received. Action taken and final reports on 7, 3 pending action.

In 2002, 13 sittings held, 25 persons heard, 4 complaints final report.

In 2003, 2 sittings, 1 person heard, 3 complaints received.

Of these 2 were sexual harassment complaints and in one case, accused person was suspended, and in another, transfer recommended.

Action is pending on initiative to amend service rules.

Method for processing was explained.

Tourism Department Committee constituted as per directive. Third Party representative not in place.

Needs to be reconstituted and NCW informed.

Technical Education Department Committee in place as per directive but no complaint so far. Meet once a year.

Treasury Department Committee constituted as per directives. Additional training also provided.

All India Radio, Thiruvananthapuram No third party representative. This needs to be reconstituted. Two complaints received and warning given. Meet only once in 6 months. Frequency of meetings to be increased. Complaints received by Director can also be taken up by Committee.

Public Relations Department Though Committee constituted, one member working in Secretariat and one retired.

To be reconstituted and NCW informed.

Civil Supplies Corporation Meet twice a year. Six complaints received and 5 redressed, one still under enquiry.

Panchayat Department Committee as per directive in place. No complaints received so far.

Commissionerate of Rural Development Committee constituted as per directive. One complaint came up but was not under the purview of the Commissionerate. Awareness programmes and discussions conducted.

Income Tax Department No Committee in Thiruvananthapuram. Complaints are forwarded to Kochi.

To be set up in Thiruvananthapuram and NCW informed.

Kerala State Insurance Department Committee in place as per directives. No complaints received so far.

Department of Survey and Land Records Committee constituted as per directive. No complaints received so far.

Health Services Department Committee in place. One complaint received so far and the doctor concerned was transferred.

The Chairperson of the National Commission for Women emphasized the following points:

- It is important that women get to know about the Committee and have faith in it. Necessary steps to be taken in this regard.

- Every work place needs to have a Committee – Complaints Committee should not be only in the Central Office so that suffering women have recourse to justice at a convenient place.
- The presence of third party is important so that women feel free to approach someone not connected to the workplace.
- Systems of nomination to the Committee should be based on consensus and be transparent.
- Meetings to be convened frequently. Meeting once a year is not effective.
- Periodic reports to be submitted.
- Suo moto notice can be taken of a complaint. In this case, it is the spirit of the law which is to be internalized.
- The lack of complaints implies (A) there are no complaints (B) women do have the confidence to give a complaint. The (B) possibility is to be minimized.
- Committee should be by rotation.

A question was raised about monitoring of reports submitted and whether any action is taken on them.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives from various Departments and organizations for providing their statements on the functioning of the Complaints Committee.

Minutes of the meeting held on 21st May, 2003 between the visiting team of National Commission for Women (NCW) led by Dr. Poornima Advani, Chairperson, NCW and the Secretaries and Head of the Department of Government of Kerala in the Conference Hall of the Secretariat of the Kerala Government at Thiruvananthapuram

The Chairperson, NCW thanked the officers for extending their cooperation to NCW for the conduct of the Workshops in the State. She was awaiting the responses of the State Government to the questionnaire already sent by the Commission. She requested to those departments, who had defaulted, to expedite their response for the completion of the preparation of the gender profile of the State.

Briefly, outlining the purpose of the meeting, the Chairperson emphasized that the Commission would like to discuss the issues raised by the NGOs during the meeting held with them on 20.05.2003 so that the State Government may consider these for action plan/remedial steps. The following issues raised by the NGOs were discussed.

Violence Against Women

It was noted that violence against women was on the rise. A lot of young girls were being abducted for sexual pleasure. The fear of affliction of HIV/AIDS had lured them to young girls. All public places including bus stand etc. had become very insecure for girls and young women. The Home Secretary said that they were seized of the problem. Additional police patrolling in sensitive areas in plain clothes had been organized. He further mentioned that most police stations have a separate women police cell and there are 4 Police Mahila Stations. After detailed discussions, the following decisions were arrived at:

- Gender sensitization of the police would be made an integral part of police training programme.
- The curriculum of training of the police force for gender sensitization would be reviewed and improved.
- Gender sensitization programme for faculty/trainers in the training programme will be strengthened.
- For changing the mindset of the people, the State Government would launch general awareness programmes.
- Recruitment of women to the police force should be increased.
- The girls/young women may be taught Self Defence Courses.
- The positioning of women's compartment in the train which now situates at the end of the train would be reviewed in consultation with the Railway Authorities to ensure their safety and security.

Family Courts

The Home Secretary clarified that the number of Family Courts was increased from 7 to 9 and the State Government would like to set up one Family Court in each District. CP, NCW pointed to the

presence of more men than women judges in the Family Courts. She also stated that the State Government should adopt the pattern of the State Government of Maharashtra for improving the working of Family Court i.e. two consellers should be appointed per judge and the counsellors should be social workers/women activists who could devote time and work for the cause of women. It should not be difficult for the State Government to identify such workers as the education and literacy levels of women in Kerala was quite high and qualified persons would be available.

The Chairperson also suggested that the State Government may ask the Family Courts to hold camp hearings so that the cases could be disposed of quickly and would avoid travelling long distances.

It was also suggested by the team of NCW that the State Government may consider delegating the powers of the Family Court to the SDM to the extent that the papers etc. could be filed there.

The Home Secretary assured that the State Government would look into all these suggestions.

Dowry

The Chairperson, NCW stated that the subject matter was discussed at length in the NGO meeting held on 20.05.2003. The women activists were of firm opinion that the problem of dowry was on the increase in Kerala and was ruining many families. The Dowry Prohibition Act was rarely invoked and the institution of Dowry Prohibition officer is defunct and non-functional to such an extent, that most people were not aware of the designated Dowry Prohibition Officer.

During discussion, it emerged that the Revenue Officer is the designated Dowry Prohibition Officer (DPO) who is burdened with a lot of work and is, therefore, able to give dowry matters only a low priority. The role of the DOP was also questioned as the matter had to be reported to the police, who could themselves take action. May be the Act should be amended.

The Chairperson, NCW, suggested that the meeting of the existing Dowry Prohibition Officers may be convened to discuss their problem and come out with a remedial action plan. She also suggested that a suitable officer, who could devote adequate time for the purpose should also be identified and notified. The Home Secretary agreed to all the suggestions.

The practice of the church taking 10% of the dowry as donation in certain Christian communities was highlighted in the NGO meeting. Dowry was undervalued by the parties and a lower valued registered to reduce the donation. This had an adverse impact on the girl in the event of divorce though the practice of registration was good. Even in other cases, dowry is undervalued. The Home Secretary promised to look into this.

Female Foeticide

The Health Secretary, outlining the steps taken by the State Government for implementation of PNMT Act, stated that all Ultra sound machines, including the mobile ones, except where the Clinics have moved Courts for non-registration, have been registered. All the CMOs who have been designated, as appropriate authority are performing their duties well and take regular meetings. He further stated

that he personally monitors the works and files affidavit every 3rd month. However, he had no rationale for adverse juvenile sex ratio in Malappuram and Kozhikode. A single-child norm he thought could be one of the reason for such a tilt. This argument was not accepted as such adverse sex ratio could only become feasible with sex selected conception, which was as yet not common. The Health Secretary informed that a study has been launched and its results would be available in 2-3 months time. The outcome of the study would be informed to NCW.

It was further decided that steps would be taken for giving more publicity to the provisions of the PNDDT Act and to establish a connection Women Commission would bring this provision of the Act to the notice of all concerned.

It was also decided that a meeting with the NGOs would be convened so that they could have first hand information about the implementation of the policies of the Government and the health vision/document 2005 of the State Government.

Sex Tourism

Secretary (Tourism) stated that to check sex tourism, the State Government has created Tourism Police, who keeps vigilance to ensure that the marriages for sex pleasures such as an old men marrying a young girl for sexual gratification does not take place. In massage centres, massage is done by women to women and men to men. This is only voluntary and not administered through Act. The State Government promotes high quality tourism.

After detailed discussion on the subject and taking into consideration the gravity of the problem and the networking of the customer, commercial sex worker, trapped young girls, as well as the role of the police, the hotel between women patients who have attended the Clinic and who have subsequently carried out abortions.

Health Facilities

During the NGO meeting it was reported that, there was acute shortage of hospital beds in the state. It was very common for patients to sleep in the corridors and sometimes even on the roads leading to the hospitals. The Health Secretary was shocked to hear this.

He mentioned that population policy would be formulated which would take care of the rising incidence of HIV/AIDS and in which provision of health insurance is also being thought of.

The CP, NCW desired to know whether the Chairperson of State Women Commission has been consulted on that policy. Reply to this query was in the negative. Considering the statutory requirement of consultation on all the policy matters relating to the women, it was decided that the Secretary, Department of Social Justice as well as Chairperson of State and Autoriksha/Taxi drivers, it was decided that a help line would be created and would be given wide publicity which would encourage the public to report the sex tourism to the police whenever they come across such cases.

Condition of Prisons

The CP, NCW stated that she visited Wayanad jail after dusk sometime ago. She observed the condition of the women inmates was appalling. It was over crowded. There was no light. There was one bucket of water for 5 persons for all their needs. The Home Secretary informed that a new Mahila Jail is being constructed to solve the problem of over crowding. DIG (Prison) visits Jails to ensure that the basic facilities to the prisoners are provided.

It was decided that the instructions will be issued to all the Jail Authorities envisaging the check points which they should keep in mind for improving the conditions of jails.

Misuse of Section 8 of PITA

The CP, NCW mentioned that she visited Calicut Jail one year ago. She was informed by the women around Bangladesh colony that police was misusing Section 8 of PITA under allegation of soliciting. The police authorities should not invoke such provisions to harass women.

Rescue and Short Stay Home

The NGO voiced inadequacy of short stay homes in the State. The Secretary, (Social Welfare) admitted that these homes were not sufficient and these homes were running in different districts/ places with names. He said that they were trying to review the working of these homes and integrate them in a scheme. The CP, NCW asked him to ensure that these homes were managed by women and in no circumstances it should be headed by men. The Secretary assured the Commission that they would pay heed to her direction.

He further clarified that they would review the State Policy 1996 for women and a new policy would be formulated soon.

Sexual Harassment at Work Place

It was noted that inspite of the issue of guidelines by the Chief Secretary in April, 2001 for constituting Complaint Committees in accordance with the directives of the Supreme Court in the 'Vishaka Judgment to check sexual harassment at work place many departments have not constituted the Complaints Committees. It was also noted that in some cases the constituted Committee was without third parties. The Secretary, Social Justice, assured the Commission that the matter would be reviewed shortly and the compliance of the Supreme Court directives and rectification of the faulty composition of the Complaint Committee would be intimated.

Fisherwomen

The Secretary (Fisheries) informed that there was no complaint of wage discrimination and lack of catch by the fisherwomen. There was a system of pucca auction for the catch. He regretted his inability to throw light on wage discrimination between men and women in processing units in response to a query from the NCW team.

Education

The Secretary (Education) informed that taking into consideration the National Policy of Education which prescribes people teacher ratio as 40:1. Seven schools have been closed. No teacher has been retrenched. They have shifted teachers. He assured that toilet with water facilities would be constructed within six month in all schools of the State. He further assured that the State Government would continue to review the textbooks to make them gender sensitive.

State Legislations for Women

As the Secretary (Law) could not be present because of preoccupation, Secretary (Social Welfare) assured the team that he would send a separate note to the Law Secretary and would apprise the Commission of the latest position.

Child Marriages

NGOs had informed NCW that child marriages were not uncommon and were taking place in some districts. Perhaps the provisions of the Act are not know to the public. For bringing change in the mindset of the society and stop child marriages, NCW recommended that following steps be taken:

- Holding Seminars/Awareness Camps.
- Creating awareness among youth.
- Highlighting disadvantages of the child marriages in the books.
- Social mobilization through NGOs.

Economic Empowerment

- The violation of Minimum Wage Act would be checked.
- A study would be launched on the decline of employment of women in agriculture.
- Survey of BPL would be expedited.
- Social Welfare Department would write to all Departments to take a holistic view of women's needs and integrate all development activities and schemes towards that end.
- The clash between self help groups organized by the Panchayats under Kudumbashree and others by the BDOs was becoming an irritant. This will be sorted out to smoothen the functioning of poverty alleviation programmes. The rivalry between departmental officers would have to be addressed and their work coordinated to benefit poor women.
- The banks would be urged to advance loans to SHGs.

Political Empowerment

The expenditure on women seems to get limited to the 10% women component funds in the Panchayat without giving them the benefit of expenditure of the 90% of the funds. Such reduction of allocations for meeting women's needs is unfair and needs to be rectified.

Welfare of the Women Belonging to SC/ST

- The disbursement of relief money in Wayanad should be closely monitored by the SC/ST department to ensure prompt payment.
- Confidence building measures in the disturbed areas of Wayanad should be undertaken immediately.
- The ATR on the recommendations of the report of NCW of Muthanga Tribals of Wayanad district would be intimated very shortly.
- Efforts would be made to bring SCs/STs in the mainstream.

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A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF WOMEN IN KERALA

BY
SARALA GOPALAN

JANUARY, 2004



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
NEW DELHI



FOREWORD

The existential pathos of a woman's life has been inimitably captured by the great Hindi poet, Shri Maithilisharan Gupta, in a memorable couplet which says, "Alas, woman! Thy destiny is eternal sacrifice, eternal suffering!"

Despite the exalted position given to women in some of India's religious texts and the exceptional attainments of individual women in fields as diverse as philosophy, statecraft and even warfare, the profile of the average woman through the ages has been that of a perpetually poor, perpetually pregnant and perpetually powerless being.

Independent India has tried to redeem the situation by proclaiming equality of the sexes as a Fundamental Right under the Constitution and directing state policy towards removing the various disabilities that thwart women in realising their potential. Five decades of Independence have also seen a plethora of laws passed by the State and Federal Governments to protect women from violence and discrimination and to strengthen their entitlements in the social and economic fields. Numerous committees and commissions have x-rayed the position of women, the advances made by them and the obstacles faced by them, and they have made umpteen recommendations to improve the situation. Scores of schemes have been floated by various Ministries of the Government to address women's problems, particularly those relating to education, health, nutrition, livelihood and personal laws. In the institutional area, independent administrative departments to give undivided attention to women's problems have sprung up at the Centre as well as in the States. Development corporations were an innovation of the Eighties to energise economic benefit schemes. The Nineties saw the setting up of the National Commission for Women (NCW) and State Commissions in various States to inquire into the working of various legal and constitutional provisions concerning women, to investigate cases of violation of women's rights and generally to advise on the socio-economic policy framework in order to mainstream women's concerns. In recent years, the Governments, Central and State, have also articulated comprehensive policies for the empowerment of women through a variety of instruments and approaches focusing on an explicit vision of equal partnership of women in all walks of life.

Credit must also be given to a robust women's movement which has often given forceful expression to women's aspirations and joined issue with all the organs of state — legislative, executive and judicial — for reviewing the age-old prescriptions of a patriarchal society. Often they have networked effectively with the international community and fora in the quest for worldwide solidarity on issues affecting women. These interactions have often times changed the idiom of discourse on women's right to justice and development.

The half-century of struggle and reform has undoubtedly had considerable impact on women's world. Some of the key indicators of development have perked up significantly; women's life expectancy has risen; education levels have improved; economic participation has grown. But there are areas of darkness too; crimes against women, both at home and outside, continue unabated; traditional economic occupations have withered in the face of global competition; there is increasing commodification of women's persona and vulgarisation of their image in the media's marketplace. The new economic regime, where Sensex swamps sensibility, has meant the precipitate withdrawal of the state from many fields leaving the weak, including women, in the cold. Similarly laws change; minds don't. Therefore between progressive legislation and sensitive enforcement falls a long shadow. Critics also point out that whatever advances have been made remain confined to urban India and the vast hinterland resists change obstinately.

The overall picture is thus a mixed one leaving the profile of the average Indian woman not substantially altered. But in this vast country there is no average Indian woman. As in all other matters, diversity marks the Indian woman's picture too. How society and economy are coping with the forces of modernisation differs substantially from region to region. The geography of a state provides its own constraints and opportunities; history gives its own moorings to values and momentum to change. Thus the regional profile is superimposed on the national profile. The NCW has therefore commissioned these studies to gauge how women's life has been changing or not changing in different States of the country, and to situate these studies in the historical and geographical context of each region or State so that progress can be measured across time and across space. Such spatial comparisons can highlight what lessons there are to be learnt from the 'leading' areas and equally they help in focusing the attention on the 'lagging' areas. Regionally disaggregated data helps in benchmarking progress of different regions, areas or districts, and can be used for improving performance by attempting to raise the performance levels of the laggards to the average of the State and then matching the State's average to the national average. Interesting insights can also be gleaned from the experience of implementing agencies, both governmental and non-governmental, in dealing with different

problems. Some of these may be rooted in the soil of the region and may not lend themselves to replication but many others can be useful examples to emulate. That is how Best Practices become common practices.

These studies have been carried out by different research groups having special knowledge and interest in the area — its people, its history, its administration, its cultural ambience etc. They have interacted with official agencies as well as with leading NGOs working with women in the respective areas. The NCW has given a helping hand by providing information from its own database where available and also by interacting with the government of the State to set the stage for these exercises. The result is in your hands.

It is our hope that this effort will eventually result in the compilation of a comprehensive index of gender development focusing on the key issues in women's lives thus enabling comparisons of achievements and gaps regionally and nationally. This will help scholars and administrators alike.

Poornima Advani

PREFACE

Non-discrimination is part and parcel of the basic structure of the Constitution of India. Officially, the Government of India is committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. Even so, in practice, women in the country are subject to cascading discrimination. The women's movement is struggling against it. At the national and sub-national levels, efforts are being made to bring about equality of sexes in the true sense of the expression. For the purpose, investments are being made on women's development, institutional structures have been created not only to perform watchdog functions but also to implement, coordinate and direct gender specific initiatives. The National Commission for Women (NCW), the apex women's development institution in the country, in this context, has commissioned situational analysis of women in the various States, one of which is Kerala.

Eminent social scientists and analysts quote Kerala as a model among developing societies for forging human development including in terms of eliminating gender discrimination.

I am privileged to have been called upon by the NCW to make the situational analysis of women in this model State. I have made a humble effort. This document is the output of this effort. I have great pleasure in submitting it to the Commission.

New Delhi, 21st January, 2004

Dr. SARALA GOPALAN

GENDER PROFILE OF KERALA AND INDIA ON SELECT INDICATORS

Indicator	Year	Gender	India (Million)			Kerala (Million)			Comments
			Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	
Population Totals	1981	P	683.33	-	-	25.45	20.68	4.77	Kerala holds 3.1% of India's Population
		M	353.37	-	-	-	-	-	
		F	329.95	-	-	-	-	-	
	1981	P	846.30	628.69	217.61	30.10	21.42	7.68	
		M	439.23	324.32	114.90	14.29	10.51	3.68	
		F	407.07	304.37	102.70	14.81	10.91	3.90	
	2001	P	1025.25	740.26	284.99	31.84	23.57	8.27	
		M	530.42	380.44	149.98	15.47	11.45	4.02	
		F	494.83	359.82	135.01	16.37	12.12	4.25	

Source: Census of India, 1991, Kerala State District Profile, 1991, Registrar General, India; and Census of India, 2001, Provisional Population Totals, Paper 2 of 2001, Rural-Urban Distribution

Indicator	Year	Area	India	Kerala
Distribution of Population (%)	1991	R	74.29	73.61
		U	25.71	26.39
	2001	R	72.22	74.03
		U	27.78	25.97

Source: Census of India, 1991, Kerala State District Profile, 1991, Registrar General, India; and Census of India, 2001, Provisional Population Totals, Paper 2 of 2001, Rural-Urban Distribution

Indicator	Year	India	Kerala	Comments
Decennial Growth rate	1971	24.80	26.49	Population growth was higher in Kerala than for All India till 1971, thereafter the growth rate has declined below the rates for All India.
	1981	24.66	19.24	
	1991	23.85	14.32	
	2001	21.34	9.42	

Source: Registrar General, India; and Census of India, 2001

Indicator	Year	India	Kerala	Comments
Density of Population (per sq.km.)	1991	267	749	Kerala holds 8 th rank for density of population among States and UTs of India
	2001	324	819	

Source: Registrar General, India; and Census of India, 2001

Indicator	Year	Area	India	Kerala
Population of SC/ST (Millions)	1991	Total	838.58	29.09
		SC	138.22	2.88
		ST	67.75	0.32

Source: Registrar General, India; and Census of India, 1991

Indicator	Year	Gender	India	Kerala	Comments
Life Expectancy at Birth	1970-75	Male	50.5	60.8	Kerala has more than a 10 year higher life expectancy for both males and females.
		Female	49.0	63.0	
	1981-85	Male	55.4	65.4	
		Female	55.7	71.5	
	1992-96	Male	60.1	70.2	
		Female	61.4	75.8	

Source: Census of India, 2001 – Population Projections for India and States: 1996-2016, Registrar General of India (RGI), New Delhi, 1996.SRS, RGI, New Delhi, 1999.

Indicator	Year	Area	India	Kerala	Comments	
Sex ratio	1971	All	930	1016	Sex ratio is higher for Kerala, and higher than unity.	
	1981		934	1032		
	1991		Rural	939		1037
			Urban	894		1034
	2001		933	1058		

Source: Census of India, 2001 – Provisional Population Totals

Indicator	Year	India	Kerala
Sex Ratio (0-6 years)	1971	964	
	1981	962	
	1991	945	958
	2001	927	963

Source: Registrar General, India; and Census of India, 2001

Indicator	Year	Area	India	Kerala
Birth Rate	1971	Total	36.9	31.7
		Rural	38.9	31.3
		Urban	30.1	29.6
	1981	Total	33.9	25.6
		Rural	35.6	26.0
		Urban	27.0	23.5
	1991	Total	29.5	18.3
		Rural	30.9	18.4
		Urban	23.1	18.1
	1997	Total	27.2	17.9
		Rural	28.9	17.9
		Urban	21.5	17.9

Source: *Compendium of India's Fertility and Mortality Indicators, 1971-1997 based on the Sample Registration System (SRS), RGI, 1999.*

Indicator	Year	Area	India	Kerala
Death Rate	1971	Total	14.9	9.0
		Rural	16.4	9.1
		Urban	9.7	8.4
	1981	Total	12.5	6.6
		Rural	13.7	6.7
		Urban	7.8	5.8
	1991	Total	9.8	6.0
		Rural	10.6	6.2
		Urban	7.1	5.3
	1997	Total	8.9	6.2
		Rural	9.6	6.3
		Urban	6.5	6.1

Source: *Compendium of India's Fertility and Mortality Indicators, 1971-1997 based on the Sample Registration System (SRS), RGI, 1999.*

Indicator	Year	Area	India	Kerala
Infant Mortality Rate	1971	Total	129	58
		Rural	138	60
		Urban	82	48
	1981	Total	110	37
		Rural	119	40
		Urban	62	24
	1991	Total	80	16
		Rural	87	17
		Urban	53	16
	1997	Total	71	12
		Rural	77	11
		Urban	45	15

Source: *Compendium of India's Fertility and Mortality Indicators, 1971-1997 based on the Sample Registration System (SRS), RGI, 1999.*

Indicator	Year	Area	India	Kerala
Neonatal Mortality	1992-93	Total	48.6	15.5
	1998-99	Total	43.4	13.8
Post-neonatal Mortality	1992-93	Total	29.5	8.2
	1998-99	Total	24.2	2.5
Infant Mortality	1992-93	Total	78.5	23.8
	1998-99	Total	67.6	16.3
Child Mortality	1992-93	Total	33.4	8.4
	1998-99	Total	29.3	2.6
Under Five Mortality	1998-99	Total	109.3	32.0
	1998-99	Total	94.9	18.8

Source: *National Family Health Survey (NFHS-1), 1992-93; National Family Health Survey (NFHS-2), 1998-99.*

Indicator	Year	Gender	India	Kerala
Mean Age at Marriage	1971	Male	21.3	
		Female	17.2	
	1981	Male	23.3	
		Female	18.3	
	1991	Male	23.9	
		Female	19.5	22.0
	1997	Male	N.A.	
		Female	19.5	22.0

Source: SRS – Fertility and Mortality Indicators for respective years, RGI, New Delhi

Indicator	Year	Area	India	Kerala
Total Fertility Rate	1971	Total	5.2	4.1
		Rural	5.4	4.2
		Urban	4.1	3.8
	1981	Total	4.5	2.8
		Rural	4.8	2.9
		Urban	3.3	2.4
	1991	Total	3.6	1.8
		Rural	3.9	1.8
		Urban	2.7	1.7
	1997	Total	3.3	1.8
		Rural	3.6	1.8
		Urban	2.4	1.8

Source: Compendium of India's Fertility and Mortality Indicators, 1971-1997 based on the Sample Registration System (SRS), RGI, 1999.

Indicator	Year	Area	India	Kerala
Place of Delivery	1998-99	Ins.	33.6	92.9
		Home	65.4	5.9
		Other	1	1

Source: National Family Health Survey (NFHS) –2, 1998-99.

Indicator	Year	Area	India	Kerala
Assistance During Delivery	1998-99	Professional	42.3	94.1
		TBA	35	3.1
		Other	22.4	2.0

Source: National Family Health Survey (NFHS) –2, 1998-99.

Indicator	Year	Area	India	Kerala
Literacy Rate	1971	Persons	34.45	69.75
		Male	45.96	77.13
		Female	21.97	62.53
	1981	Persons	43.57	78.85
		Male	56.38	84.56
		Female	29.76	73.36
	1981	Persons	52.21	89.81
		Male	64.13	93.62
		Female	39.29	86.17
	2001	Persons	65.38	90.92
		Male	75.85	94.20
		Female	54.16	87.86

Source: Registrar General, India; and Census of India, 2001

Indicator	Year	Area	India	Kerala
Enrolment (% of Girls - General)	2001-02	Primary	43.75	48.67
		Middle	41.32	47.84
		Higher Secondary	38.99	52.14
		Higher Education	40.57	60.48
Enrolment (% of Girls - SC)	2001-02	Primary	43.12	48.39
		Middle	39.49	47.47
		Higher Secondary	36.58	52.84
		Higher Education	38.98	61.41
Enrolment (% of Girls - ST)	2001-02	Primary	42.24	
		Middle	37.25	
Gross Enrolment Ratio - General (Classes I-V – 6-11 Yrs.)	2001-02	Total		87.87
		Boys		88.41
		Girls		87.31
Gross Enrolment Ratio – General (Classes VI-VIII – 11-14 Yrs.)	2001-02	Total		99.05
		Boys		101.43
		Girls		96.58
Gross Enrolment Ratio – SC (Classes I-V – 6-11 Yrs.)	2001-02	Total		85.63
		Boys		87.05
		Girls		84.17
Gross Enrolment Ratio – SC (Classes VI-VIII – 11-14 Yrs.)	2001-02	Total		94.59
		Boys		97.32
		Girls		91.74
Gross Enrolment Ratio – ST (Classes I-V – 6-11 Yrs.)	2001-02	Total		98.34
		Boys		98.80
		Girls		97.85
Gross Enrolment Ratio – ST (Classes VI-VIII – 11-14 Yrs.)	2001-02	Total		81.06
		Boys		83.70
		Girls		78.22
Dropout Rates (I-V)	2001-02	Total	40.67	0.00
		Boys	39.71	0.00
		Girls	41.90	0.00
Dropout Rates (I-VIII)	2001-02	Total	53.67	0.00
		Boys	50.33	0.00
		Girls	57.95	0.00

Indicator	Year	Area	India	Kerala
Dropout Rates (I-X)	2001-02	Total	68.58	19.15
		Boys	66.41	23.82
		Girls	71.51	14.29
Female Teachers (% to Total)	2000-01	Primary	35.61	71.46
		Middle	38.17	66.89
		High	35.02	66.65
		Higher Secondary	29.71	65.18

Indicator	Year	Area	Gender	India	Kerala
Work Participation Rate	1981	Total	P	36.7	30.5
			M	52.6	44.9
			F	19.7	16.6
		Rural	P	38.8	31.3
			M	53.8	45.2
			F	23.1	17.7
		Urban	P	30.0	27.4
			M	49.1	43.4
			F	8.3	11.8
	1991	Total	P	37.5	31.4
			M	51.6	47.6
			F	22.3	15.9
		Rural	P	40.0	32.1
			M	52.5	47.9
			F	26.7	16.9
Urban		P	42.0	32.6	
		M	52.4	50.2	
		F	31.0	15.9	

Indicator	Year	Area	Gender	India	Kerala
	2001	Total	P	39.3	32.3
			M	51.9	50.4
			F	25.7	15.3
		Rural	P	42.0	32.6
			M	52.4	50.2
			F	31.0	15.9
		Urban	P	32.2	31.6
			M	50.9	50.8
			F	11.6	13.5

Source: Census of India, 2001, Series-33, Kerala, Provisional Population Totals, Paper-3 of 2001, Distribution of Workers and Non-Workers. Data compiled from statement 2.1.

Indicator	Year	Gender	India			Kerala		
			Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
Percentage of Workers	1991	M	51.61	52.58	48.92	47.58	47.88	46.76
		F	22.27	26.79	9.19	15.85	16.86	13.02
	2001	P	39.26	41.97	32.23	32.32	32.56	31.65
		M	51.93	52.36	50.85	50.36	50.22	50.78
		F	25.68	30.98	11.55	15.28	15.88	13.55
Main Workers	1991	M	51.00	51.88	48.57	44.82	44.91	44.57
		F	16.03	18.75	8.15	12.81	13.34	11.30
	2001	P	85.76	84.53	92.30	80.04	78.13	85.64
		M	90.93	89.95	94.82	83.17	81.56	87.70
		F	77.71	77.12	83.60	70.27	67.86	78.35
Marginal Workers	1991	M	0.61	0.70	0.35	2.76	2.97	2.19
		F	6.24	8.04	1.04	3.04	3.52	1.72
	2001	P	14.24	15.47	7.70	19.96	21.87	14.36
		M	9.07	10.05	5.18	16.83	18.44	12.30
		F	22.29	22.88	16.40	29.73	32.14	21.65
Non Workers	2001	P	56.03	53.53	65.84	67.68	67.44	68.35
		M	49.31	48.87	51.01	49.64	49.78	49.22
		F	63.55	58.67	83.81	84.72	84.12	86.45

Source: Registrar General of India, Census 2001.

Indicator	Year	Crimes	India	Kerala
Crimes Against Women	1999	Incidence	1,32,997	4,838
		Rate*	13.7	15.1
		Rank	-	11

Source: Ministry of Home Affairs, National Crime Records Bureau, Crime in India, 1999.

* Proportion to total cognizable offences

Indicator	Year	India	Kerala
Poverty Ratio (% of Population Below Poverty Line)	1973-74	54.88	59.79
	1993-94	39.97	25.43
	1999-2000	26.00	12.72

Source: Government of India, Planning Commission

Indicator	Year		India	Kerala
National/State Income at Constant Prices (Rs.Crores)	2001-02	Net Domestic Product	11,23,543	36,079.75
		Per Capita Income	10,754	11,046

Source: Government of Kerala, State Planning Board, Economic Review, 2002.

Indicator	Year	India	Kerala
Human Development Index	2001	0.472	0.638

Source: Government of India, Planning Commission.

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