



KDS - Delhi
(Kerala Development Society - Delhi)

National Seminar on
Development Experience of Kerala in a Comparative Perspective
Report

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of KDS- Delhi, a national seminar on ‘Development Experience of Kerala in a Comparative Perspective’ was organized on 16 March 2013 at India International Centre, New Delhi. Kerala Development Society–Delhi (KDS–Delhi), a socio-economic research organization and a resource centre for the development of States, organized the national seminar to review the development experience of various states including Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh with a special reference to Kerala, to highlight success stories, strategies, strengths and weaknesses, and to draw lessons for the future.



Inaugural Session: From L to R: Dr Jacob John, Shri E.T. Mohammed Basheer, Dr. N.J. Kurian, Shri T.K.A Nair, Dr. Vasanta Patri and Prof. K.R.G. Nair

Besides the inaugural and valedictory sessions, two technical sessions, one on health and the other on education were held. In addition, a panel discussion on 'Achieving inclusive development: An Action Plan' was also held. Participants, a total of 75, of the national seminar represented a microcosm of the scholars working in the areas of health, education, labour, democratic decentralization and development economics.



Inaugural Session: Dr. N.J. Kurian addresses. Shri E.T. Mohammed Basheer (L) and Shri T.K.A. Nair (R)

Inaugural Session

Dr. Jacob John, Director KDS in his welcome address outlined the achievements of KDS on its completion of ten years existence and presented its future strategies. Dr. N.J. Kurian, President KDS and an eminent economist, chaired the inaugural session. In his speech Dr. Kurian, addressed some of the major issues faced by Kerala in Health Sector. Shri T.K.A Nair, Advisor to Prime Minister of India, inaugurated the seminar. He has expressed concern about the increasing unemployment, unproductive investment and continuing social unrest in the state of Kerala. He spoke about the issue of environmental degradation and cautioned that it needs a special attention. He emphasized the need for quality improvement in education and suggested the introduction of skill development courses in educational institutions to address increasing unemployment amongst the unskilled youth in Kerala.



Shri T.K.A Nair felicitates Prof.K.R.G. Nair for his outstanding contributions to KDS

Shri E.T. Mohammed Basheer, Member of Parliament and former education minister of Kerala, in his felicitation address highlighted the potential of Kerala as an international destination for higher education. Low cost of education, English medium teaching, favourable culture and climate are positive factors that can help Kerala to become an international destination for higher education in India. The ABC of Kerala -Ayurveda, Backwater and Culture- which is the asset of Kerala, is under threat now and needs to be protected, preserved and strengthened. Kerala should avoid unwanted controversies that block development in different areas, especially in education and health. Kerala which is the beneficiary of inflow of foreign remittance from out-migration should not block in-migration. The seminar expressed concern at the growing incidences of intolerance of a section of Keralites towards the migrant laborers from eastern parts of India. Government of Kerala should take adequate policy measures to extend available welfare schemes to migrant labourers.



Prof. K.R.G. Nair addresses the gathering

Dr. Vasanta Patri, renowned psychologist and former faculty member of Lady Shri Ram College of Delhi University, in her address highlighted the significance of improving the quality of education in Kerala. Prof. K.R.G. Nair, an economist and retired Professor, University of Delhi, emphasized the need for enhancing the role of KDS as a national organization in promoting international human development standards.



Technical Session on Health: Mr. N.D. George addresses. L to R: Dr. Jos Chatukulam, Dr. Joy Elamon, Dr. Shibu Vijayan and Mr. Sunil Pillai

Technical session on Health

Mr. N.D George, Economic Advisor, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India chaired the first half of this session. Dr. Mathew Joseph, Professor at FORE School of Management, New Delhi chaired the second half of the technical session on health. Mr. N.D. George emphasized the need for a better solid waste management system in Kerala. Dr. Mathew Joseph appreciated the initiatives of Kerala in the area of public health delivery system. A total of 7 papers were presented by scholars in the session. Theme paper titled “Equitable and Inclusive Health Care” was presented by Dr. N.J. Kurian.



A view of participants

After giving the present strengths and weaknesses of public health care system of India, the paper discussed the lessons other states can learn from Kerala. These include reduction of regional disparities, urban – rural differences, social class differences and gender differences. The study has highlighted lessons that Kerala can learn from other States. The paper suggested that Kerala can follow Tamil Nadu pattern of Centralised procurement and distribution of generic drugs. He has emphasized that Kerala should give more importance to public health as a discipline and should ensure better utilization of publically funded health facilities.



Technical Session on Health: From L to R: Dr. Jos Chatukulam Mr. N.D. George and Dr. Joy Elamon

Dr. Jos Chatukulam, Director, Centre for Rural Management, Kottayam, Kerala in his paper ‘Health and Decentralization in Kerala: The contour of the Future?’ has dealt with various aspects of decentralization in the field of public health care system in Kerala. He has pointed out that in health sector, Kerala has devolved primary and secondary level health institutions and their staff to the local government institutions and only the tertiary and specialized health institutions are left with the State government. The paper listed out the positive features of this system which included additional resource mobilization for health sector, improved the access and outreach of health care, etc. The paper has raised issues of solid and liquid waste management, contaminated drinking water, high prevalence of life style diseases, and growing out of pocket expenses of individual households.



Technical Session on Health: Dr. Mathew Joseph addresses. Also seen Dr. Jos Chatukulam

Mr. Sunil Pillai of Asia Foundation Delhi, made a presentation on 'Public Perceptions on Health and Education in Afghanistan and Sri Lanka'. He shared his experiences of field survey carried out in the two countries. The objective of the survey was to gauge the national mood and gather public opinion on issues of security, economy, politics, governance, etc. Survey findings are intended to serve as a useful tool for policy makers, government leaders and civil society. He concluded that public opinion is shaped by level of expectations of people in a country and it would vary in conflict and post-conflict scenarios.



Ms. Seema Chelat is making a presentation: Also seen Dr. N.J. Kurian

Ms. Seema Chelat of KDS Delhi made an elaborate presentation on the recent KDS study on Effectiveness of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Health care system in the state of Kerala sponsored by Planning Commission of India. The study was conducted by KDS research team led by Dr. Jacob John. The study examined the structure of Public Health Institutions and devolution of functions, funds and functionaries to PRIs in health care system in Kerala. The study recommended that devolution of powers to PRIs and increased community participation in the delivery of public health system are necessary steps for various Indian states to address the health needs of people.



Dr. Indranil Mukhopadhyay and Dr. Sarit Rout are making presentation

Dr. Joy Elamon, Inter Cooperation, Hyderabad, in his paper on “Health in the Context of Climate Change” suggested a state action plan on climate change, early warning systems, forecast systems, data availability etc. to tide over the situation. Dr. Shibu Vijayan of Global Health Advocates, New Delhi presented a paper ‘Can we reach the unreachable?’ The paper draws our attention towards the presence of government insurance which has positioned public sector hospitals and private hospitals as competitors for insurance funds and can be seen as an opportunity for government hospitals to improve quality to attract more patients. As per the paper the major challenges before the government insurance schemes is the increase in the coverage cost as the population grows older and there is a pressing need for a national strategy to enable the efficient use of country’s scarce health resources.



Dr. Jos Chatukulam is making a presentation. Also seen Dr. N.J. Kurian and Dr. Jacob John

Dr. Indranil Mukhopadhyay & Dr. Sarit Rout of Public Health Foundation of India, New Delhi in their joint paper titled " Health Care Financing during the Decades of Reforms: Comparing Kerala Experience with Tamil Nadu and West Bengal" explained how low public spending has led to higher out- of- pocket expenditure and the uneven distribution of public spending had pushed many into poverty.



A view of Technical Session on Education: From L to R: Ms. Tina Mathur, Mr. Paul Joseph, Dr. Abraham George, Dr. K.P. Sunny and Mr. Joe Mathew

Technical Session on Education

Mr. Paul Joseph, former Principal Advisor, Planning Commission, Government of India chaired this session. He emphasized the need for improving the quality of education in Kerala. The theme paper on education was presented by Dr. Jacob John, KDS. The first part of the paper dealt with the assessment of implementation of RTE Act 2009 in the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Kerala while the second part covered the role of education loan in the financing of higher education in India with a special reference to states of Orissa, Kerala, UP and Maharashtra. The paper pointed out that there is a need for increased community participation in management of schools in the states of Bihar and UP as School Management Committees are not functioning properly in Bihar and UP.



Mr. Paul Joseph addresses. From L to R: Dr. K.P. Sunny and Mr. Joe Mathew

Dr. K.P. Sunny, Group Head, Economic Services & Administration, National Productivity Council of India, Ministry of Industry & Commerce, Government of India, New Delhi, presented a paper on “Employability of Fresh Engineers – Recent Evidences: India in a comparative perspective” He stated that absence of industry-academia interactions resulted in irrelevant and inadequate research and lack of innovations in Indian technical institutions as compared to developed countries. The paper emphasized the need for creating the right atmosphere for the engineering pass outs and diploma holders in technical areas to become partners in the manufacturing activities of India.



Another view of participants

Mr. Ajay Sinha, Executive Director, FLAIR, Delhi in his paper on 'Role of ICT towards Education Development and Ending Disparity', has made certain suggestions to improve IT education in India. Some of the suggestions includes technology driven curriculum, and appropriate ICTs and ground support, etc. Dr. Abraham George, former Principal, Mar Thoma College & Assessor, NAAC presented a paper on 'Some Issues and Challenges of Kerala's Higher Education Sector'. Major constraints of Kerala's higher education system include affiliation, traditional courses, low employability, academic and infrastructural deficiencies and outdated curricula. The paper emphasized the need for quality improvement in higher education which includes restructuring of courses/ curricula, strengthening the skills and abilities of students, faculty improvement, promotion of research and academic autonomy.



Technical Session on Education: Dr. Jacob John is presenting the theme paper

Ms. Tina Mathur of Centre for Organization Development, Hyderabad made a presentation on various aspects on 'Right to Public Services in Different States. In the context of Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Delhi the paper highlighted that State specific initiatives will improve the delivery of services (including electronic service delivery). Mr. Joe Mathew, Joint Director, Simultaneous Interpretation Service Rajya Sabha, Government of India, in his paper on "Perspectival Change in Kerala's Higher Education and its Social Impact' analyzed certain social aspect of higher education system in Kerala.



Technical Session on Education: From L to R: Ms. Tina Mathur, Mr. Ajay Sinha, Mr. Paul Joseph, Dr. Abraham George, Dr. K.P. Sunny and Mr. Joe Mathew

Panel Discussion on Achieving Inclusive Development: An Action Plan

Mr. P.R.R. Nair, Head, Centre for Responsible Corporate Governance, Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs, Delhi chaired the panel discussion. Dr. K.J. Joseph, Professor, Centre for Development Studies Thiruvananthapuram, Dr. Alex George, Leader—Knowledge Activist Hub Child Rights-Action Aid India, Delhi, Dr. S.K. Sasikumar, Senior Fellow, V.V. Giri National Labour Institute were the panelists.



Panel Discussion: From L to R: Dr. N.J. Kurian, Prof. K.J. Joseph, Mr. P.R.R Nair, Dr. Alex George and Dr. S.K. Sasikumar

All the panelists gave a clarion call to the policy makers to formulate and implement effective action plan for empowering the poor and marginalized communities in achieving inclusive development of India. Along with inequity in consumption, inequality in the access to health care services also accentuated especially in Kerala.



Mr. P.R.R. Nair addresses the Panel Discussion Session.
Also seen from L to R: Prof. K.J. Joseph, Dr. Alex George and Dr. S.K. Sasikumar

Given the financial constraints, it is seen that Kerala has been increasingly withdrawing from the public provisioning of health care services which has led to increasing role assigned to the private sector. On the other hand, many developments such as growing literacy, increasing household income and ageing population (leading to increased numbers of people with chronic afflictions), probably fuelled the growth in health care demand. Various issues including labour migration in the context of inclusive development of Kerala were also discussed by the panelists.



Prof. K.J. Joseph addresses the session. Also seen from L to R Dr. N.J. Kurian, Mr. P.R.R. Nair, Dr. Alex George and Dr. S.K. Sasikumar

Dr. N.J.Kurian in his concluding remarks expressed gratitude to paper presenters, panelists and participants for making significant contributions. Several eminent scholars, government officials, activists and representatives of various organizations took part and contributed significantly to the event. The seminar was enriched by the participation and leadership of Mr. Augustine Peter, Director General Petroleum & Analysis Cell, Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Government of India, Mr. V. Asokan former Advisor, Planning Commission, Government of India, Dr. Sibichan Mathew, Professor, National Institute of Fashion Technology, Government of India, Dr. N.K.Nair, Shri Ram Centre, New Delhi, Mr. Ranji Thomas, Advocate Supreme Court, Mr. Joemon Job of NDTV and Mr. P.V. Rajeev, former Economic Advisor, Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals, Government of India.

