

Human Development Without Growth: Long Run Aftermath and Vulnerability  
of the Kerala Paradigm Faced to the XXI Century

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Τὸν φρονεῖν βροτοὺς ὁδώ-  
σαντα, τὸν πάθει μάθος  
θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν.  
στάζει δ' ἔνθ' ὕπνω πρὸ καρδίας  
μνησιπήμων πόνος\*

–Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, 458 BCE, Lines 176-180,  
translation by Herbert Weir Smyth

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\* CHORUS: “Zeus, who sets mortals on the path to understanding, Zeus, who has established as a fixed



## Contents

List of Figures .....	vii
Abstract .....	x
INTRODUCTION.....	8
I THE KERALA MODEL .....	10
1. History of the model.....	10
2. Kerala Today .....	12
2.1 Human Development Attainments.....	14
3. Wealth and Growth .....	20
4. Kerailite Democracy .....	22
5. Definition of the Model.....	23
6. Analyses and Discussion.....	25
7. Present and Future Threats to the Kerala Model.....	32
7.1 Overseas Money and Unemployment.....	34
7.2 Drunk Kerailites.....	35
7.3 India's Suicide Capital.....	38
8. Considerations.....	38
II HISTORIC SOURCES OF A TRIUMPH IN HEALTH AND EDUCATION....	40
1. Education.....	41
2. Health .....	42
3. The private welfare in Kerala.....	43
3.1 Considerations .....	46

III ECONOMY AND POLITICS: ADJUSTMENTS IN KERALA .....	47
1. State and Employment .....	47
2. Kerala's Economic booster: services .....	50
3. Labour Force Diaspora.....	52
4. Why Kerala Lags.....	54
5. Economic Prospects of Kerala .....	56
IV FINAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	58
References .....	61
Annexes .....	71

## **List of Figures**

Figure 1: Kerala location within the Indian sub-continent .....	8
Figure 2: India literacy rate by province, 2011; Office of the Registrar General, India. .	9
Figure 3: Religion in the Kerala State; National Census, Office of The Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2011 .....	12
Figure 4: Indian population density; National Census, Office of The Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2011 .....	13
Figure 5: Demographic transition in India, 1951-2000; Human Development in India, 2010, & Bath, Rajan, 1990 .....	16
Figure 6: Total fertility rate decline in Kerala and India, 1970-2000; Human Development in India, 2010, & Bath, Rajan, 1990 .....	16
Figure 7: Infant mortality gap in Indian States compared to Kerala, 1970-75 and 1995- 2000; Human Development in India, 2010 .....	17
Figure 8: Infant mortality rate decline in Kerala and India, 1970-2000; Human Development in India, 2010 .....	18
Figure 9: Relative per capita income of Kerala and India, 1972-2000; Kannan, Hari, 2002 .....	20
Figure 10: Trends in State income (Net State Domestic Product); Kerala Economic Review, 2004 .....	21
Figure 11: Ranking of States within India from lowest to highest India State Hunger Index scores; NFHS III National Report, 2007, & NSSO 61 <sup>st</sup> round, 2004-5 .....	25

Figure 12: Total per capita health expenditure in 2001-2 rupees and life expectancy at birth of males in 2002-6 for Kerala and other Indian States; National Health Profile of India, 2008, & Central Bureau of Health Intelligence .....	27
Figure 13: Comparison of per capita income and remittances in India and Kerala, 1972-2000; Kannan, Hari, 2002.....	34
Figure 14: Alcoholic beverages consumed in Kerala in 2010; Kerala State Beverages Co .....	36
Figure 15: Alcohol-consumption-shaped map of the world, 2001; SASI, & Newman..	36
Figure 16: Alcohol consumption in the world; WHO, 2011 .....	37
Figure 17: Public Health Expenditures, per capita, as a percentage of total health expenditures, per capita, 2001-2002 and life expectancy at birth, males, 2002-2006, Kerala and 15 other Indian states; International Institute for Population Sciences, 2008 .....	44
Figure 18: Per Capita Net State Domestic Product, 1999-2007, Kerala and selected Indian states; Reserve Bank of India, 2009 .....	50
Figure 19: Net State Domestic Product by Sector, 1999-2007, Kerala; Reserve Bank of India, 2009 .....	51
Figure 20: Net State Domestic Product by Sector, 1999-2007, Gujarat; Reserve Bank of India, 2009 .....	51
Figure 21: Average years of schooling and GDP per capita PPP, 2000; Barro, Lee, 2000, & Handbook of Statistics on Indian Economy 2008-9, 2009 .....	55
Figure 22: Organisational membership by State; India Human Development Survey, 2004-2005 .....	71



## List of Tables

Table 1: Adult literacy rates and life expectancy in Kerala, India, and China, selected years; Drèze & Sen, 2002; Desai, 2005 .....	9
Table 2: Population growth rate, sex ratio and density of population in Kerala and India, 1961-2001; Human Development Report Kerala, 2005 .....	14
Table 3: Proportion of literate persons in population in Kerala and India; Human Development Report Kerala, 2005 .....	21
Table 4: Polling percentage in Kerala in Legislative Assembly elections, 1977-2011; Kerala Official Website Of Chief Electoral Officer, & Election Commission of India .....	22
Table 5: Unemployment rates for the educated (15 years and above), 1993-2000; Sarvekshana, 2001 .....	26
Table 6: Statewise infant and child mortality rate (per 1000 births) for births in preceding ten years; Human Development in India, 2010 .....	72
Table 7: Annual median household and per capita incomes by State (sample of all 41.554 households); India Human Development Survey, 2004-2005.....	73
Table 8: Foreign remittances and State income (NSDP) in Rupees crore, as ten million Rupees; Kannan, Hari, 2002.....	74
Table 9: Sectoral growth rate of Net State Domestic Product (constant prices), 1970-2003; CSO, National Accounts Statistics, 2004 .....	74
Table 10: Underlying components of India State Hunger Index and India State Hunger Index scores; NFHS III National Report, 2007, & NSSO 61 <sup>st</sup> round, 2004-5 .....	75

Table 11: Severity of Indian State Hunger Index by State; NFHS III National Report, 2007, & NSSO 61 <sup>st</sup> round, 2004-5 .....	76
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*For grandparents, Wilma and Ugo.*

*Eventually for her, любимая моя.*



## Abstract

The already renowned Indian region of Kerala is the focus of this work. It represents a unique case of development, within a country wherein about half a billion people live in poverty<sup>b c</sup>, because of its exceptional social development, since 1970s, in such areas as health, education, and even the demographic transition, despite low economic development. Thanks to these extraordinary attainments comparable to Western world's, Kerala has become a "model" of development which does not encompass, neither strive to boost, economic growth. Because of such results, that are translated in a pursue of human and social development within a tough welfare framework without a paved path for economic growth, the Kerala model has been greeted for decades by the academia and development non-governmental agencies and organisations. It stands out as a bright example of productive and effective investments in human capital even in challenging economic scenery.

Though, the model presents current jeopardy and weakness. On the one hand, through an historical and quantitative approach, the study would demonstrate that state-led welfare policies, as implemented so far in Kerala, can hinder social development and involve critical and negative effects on the economic development. The research focuses also on the institutional settings previous to the instauration of a strict welfare state and of statism, trying to evaluate the influence of ancient regimes on the actual social and economic outcomes. Basically, we want to demonstrate that what is impeding economic growth in Kerala, despite high education rates and healthy citizens, is the kind of governmental policies put in place by the communist public management.

On the other hand, through the analysis of these issues and modern vulnerabilities of the model, which some are proper to developed countries, such as alcoholism and high rates of suicide, the research investigates in general whether this developmental paradigm still works in the XXI century, in particular if it is sustainable, both socially and economically, in a long term perspective.

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<sup>b</sup> Poverty defined as income levels of less than \$1.25 per day in purchasing power parity.

<sup>c</sup> Institute of Applied Manpower Research, 2011.

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