

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

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Academic Year 2011-2012

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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



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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.