

The revival of a school



Govt. Upper Primary school of Chendamangalam

Unnimaya V C

There was a slight chill in the air and the sun was yet to shine as I started my journey to Chendamangalam. Blue was just seeping through black. Stars were dying. A low breeze carried my thoughts to some unknown little faces playing with immense happiness in front of their school. I was eager to explore the recently rebuilt Govt. Upper Primary school of Chendamangalam, a small town in Paravur taluk, Ernakulam district. It was a few months back that this non-descript town lay affected along with others, thanks to the now infamous floods.

As my watch showed 10, the train eased into Ernakulam Central. I finally reached my destination at about 12 in the noon. Chattering of students from one corner, busy little faces focused on a ball in the playground, attractive paintings on the wall, warm and soothing smile on the face of Principal and staff welcomed me to one of the best rebuilt Govt UP schools of Kerala.

The Principal V K Santhosh invited me inside and shared his experiences of the flood. The town-folk were very much dependent and attached to this school. Geographically, the school is situated at a higher level as compared to other places in this area. He reminisced 15th of August 2018, as people all over India were celebrating Independence Day, he had bought some ladoos to distribute to his students and was on his way to the school. What awaited him was really mind-blowing. There was flood water everywhere. Within no time the surrounding areas submerged under water and the school was opened as a relief camp. Situation the next day worsened beyond anticipation of the locals. Water level began to rise rapidly and soon half the school was under water for the next few days.

It was a huge loss. Records, documents, computers, lab, library, furniture and everything lay destroyed. The school authorities were in a dilemma, but to their surprise many helping hands held them tight to bring back the school to a better condition. All helped in the cleaning and rebuilding process.

After talking for a while, the Principal introduced me to Murali K Mukundan, an alumni, a retired KSRTC officer and a cartoonist. His wife Jayasree P R, is a teacher in the same school. Their house was completely devastated by the floods. One of his friends, Mr Sudheernath, a famous cartoonist at Delhi, came after the waters receded. He realised the helpless condition of the school and promised to do something to help. After reaching Delhi, he explained the situation of the school to A J Philip, Secretary of a social organization named Deepalaya. It was with the help of this organization the school got a new make over.

With unforgettable memories I moved away from the school, satiated with the lunch offered by the school and contented with the stories of humanness I had experienced. As the reddish rays of sun was once again swallowed by the white glare of the moon, I was on my way back home, with a smile on my lips and hopes for a great future.

Rebuilding Green Kerala

Salin Raj P R

T'Puram: 'A calamity anywhere in a country is a calamity for the whole country and that's the principle of federalism otherwise we are not together' said Prof. K P Kannan, Honorary Fellow, Centre for Developmental Studies and a member of the Advisory Committee for Rebuild Kerala initiative of Government of Kerala. In his keynote address, he talked about 'The great Kerala floods 2018 and beyond: lessons and challenges' at the International conference on "Restructuring Kerala Economy: Alternative Perspectives" conducted by the Inter-university Center for Alternative Economics, University of Kerala. The function was inaugurated by the Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.



Prof. K P Kannan

Lessons

The consciousness of the people, their maturity and their readiness to voluntarily come and intervene in any situation was a great lesson. A large majority of the people who volunteered were youngsters. Schools became a natural shelter for people in distress calling out the multifunctional dimension of schools. The role of panchayat raj institutions and the

Panchayat member as the first point of contact for people who were affected in the flood was another lesson. The panchayat became active, immediately though officially the revenue department was controlling the relief activities.

Challenges

The recommendations of Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) report detailed four pillars. The first was that Kerala needs to examine its outlook on Integrated water resource management. A simple solution that the engineers know but not carried out is desilting of dams. We need to adapt to a concept of "living with water". The second pillar is intelligent approaches to land use and settlements. Kerala is no longer a clean

state that we boasted once. Overcrowding of houses have left no place for waste management. The third one is inclusive and people-centered approach for development. When it comes to employment, income generation, social security and a whole range of other issues which are yet to see results. The Fourth pillar is knowledge, innovation, and technology.

Resources

Correct tax collection and utilization is a must. Green armies are now being formed in panchayats for waste management, deforestation, rejuvenating rivers, canals etc. We have to adopt a more holistic, eco-friendly and prudent approach towards our environment.

WE SHALL OVERCOME...

A Rajiv

T'Puram: Dr Sekhar Lukose Kuriakose exuded hope while speaking on the rebuild drive undertaken by the State Government post the recent floods which affected Kerala in August 2018. He was sharing his thoughts with the students of First year Mass Communication and Journalism, University of Kerala on an informal platform.

Speaking eloquently on the flood related relief operations, he stated that rebuild was not an overnight process and that clear cut plans for rebuild figuring in the DM plan have been put in motion, however, its efficacy could only be gauged 3-5 years from now. He lauded the dedicated efforts of the government moving ahead with a clear



Dr. Sekhar L Kuriakose

Member Secretary, Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (Ex-officio) & Head Scientist, Kerala State Emergency Operations Centre Department of Disaster Management, Govt. of Kerala

thought process and strong will to rebuild Kerala in the shortest possible time.

The project has been titled "Rebuild Kerala Initiative". A very senior IAS officer has been placed in charge

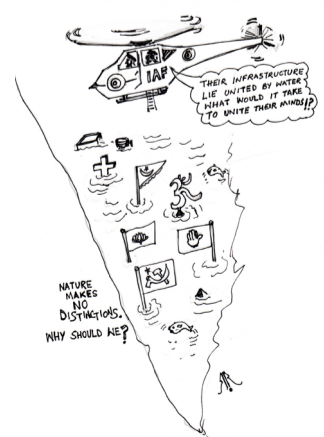
of the rebuild process. He quoted developed countries like the US, where, as in the case of the catastrophic Katrina in West Orleans, the rebuild is still in nascent stages. In his opinion, speaking about adequacy to rebuild, he felt that there was a lot of perception management in play.

Those affected in the floods and landslides will be the beneficiaries of this initiative. The floods had submerged the dreams of many. Educational institutions, healthcare centers, individual houses, domestic animals, crops, roads and bridges and other infrastructure bore the brunt of the disaster.

3 'The trust factor had grown so much that things could be...'
Of Defuge, Disaster and Deliverance



SNIPER



Towards a greener state

The new year demands us to embark on a massive reconstruction exercise - economic, social and political - to restore the status of God's own country after the unprecedented flood that ravaged the state. The impact of the natural disaster has been devastating and the recovery would need significant amount of money and time. As the political frenzy over Sabarimala seems to subside, its time to bring back the focus to the mission in hand - Rebuild Kerala. During August last year, a heavy torrential rainfall caused catastrophic floods and a series of landslides in whole of the state. Dams overflowed as monsoon grew in intensity and rivers were in spate. A calamity of 'severe nature', Kerala had not seen in nearly a century, affected the highlands, the heavily populated midlands and the coastal plains alike.

Rebuilding has to be environment friendly and should protect the ecology of the region. Kerala has a very wide network of rivers, estuaries and backwaters. The rapid urbanisation process led to the encroachment of river banks and it highly affected the mangrove cultivation and conservation. Mangroves have been vitally important for Kerala's ecology because it prevents the intense erosion due to tidal action. Disastrous land use practices along with increased deforestation deteriorated the water retaining capacity of soil. Eventually the ecosystem became fragile. Most of the dams in Kerala are concentrated in the ecologically fragile Western Ghats. The Ghats have an exceptionally high level of biological diversity and endemism and is recognized as one of the world's thirty six biodiversity hotspots. Western Ghats also influence the Indian monsoon weather pattern and has a crucial role in determining the climate and ecology of the region. Also this ecosystem provides resources for the sustainable development and contributes to the growth of economy.

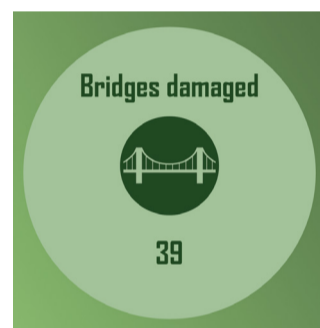
The warnings were coming loud and clear since the publication of Gadgil Report that Kerala is surrounded by severe impending disasters at least in 124 villages on the Western Ghat ranges and flood on the lower coastal inhabitations. One of the strongest recommendations of the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel was to encourage and strengthen biodiversity management committees in the rural and urban panchayats to demarcate and conserve ecologically fragile areas.

Local communities can act as reliable early warning systems. They live close to the environment. So, their experience and knowledge will be useful while facing such natural disasters. The Government needs to adopt a functional institutional framework which will necessarily involve decentralised planning and direct involvement of the people. Having a literacy rate of above 95% in almost all taluks and towns, such community centered and inclusive approaches are possible in Kerala. Long term development plans has to be designed incorporating the measures to preserve the environment. The rebuilding should protect the ecology of the region. Considering the complex socio-ecological situations of the state such steps would help to move towards a more resilient future.

What Caused Kerala Floods?

Nandu Sekhar

From the 9th of august 2018 severe floods affected kerala never like before. The unexpected and unusually high rainfall caused chaos in the state. Nearly 500 were dead and over 15 are missing. About a million people were evacuated, mainly from Chengannur, Pandanad, Edanad, Aranmula, Kozhencherry, Ayiroor, Ranni, Pandalam, Kuttanad, Malappuram, Aluva, Chalakudy, Thiruvalla, Eraviperor, Vallamkulam, North Paravur, Vypin Island and Palakkad. All 14 districts were on red alert. Estimated Property damages was over 40000 crore in rupees. There were several debates



over what really caused the kerala floods.

So many theories and arguments were evolved. Kerala received heavy monsoon rainfall, which was about 75% more than usual rainfall. On the eve of August 8, almost all dams in kerala was filled to its maximum capacity. In the next 24 hours kerala received 310mm of rain. Suddenly all dams

were opened since the water level has increased dangerously. Leading to the opening of 35 of 50 dams located in kerala.

Kerala recorded more than 37% excess rainfall in just two-and-a-half months, while in the past that has happened throughout the monsoon



season which usually lasts about four months. Such heavy rainfall in a short span of time also triggered landslides that killed many people. Environmentalists say deforestation is responsible for this.

The Government of Kerala argued in the Supreme Court that the very sudden release of water from the Mullaperiyar Dam by the Tamil Nadu Government was one of the reasons for the devastating flood in Kerala. The Tamil Nadu government rejected the argument, saying that Kerala suffered the deluge due to the discharge of excess water from 80 reservoirs across Kerala, spurred by heavy rains from within the state; It also argued that the flood surplus from the Idukki Dam is mainly due to the flows

generated from its own independent catchment due to unprecedented heavy rainfall, while the discharge from Mullaperiyar dam was significantly less. Though it is difficult to attribute any single event to Climate Change, its possible role in causing the heavy rainfall event over Kerala cannot be ruled out.

Nasa Goddard Space Flight Center experts wrote on their blog, "Rainfall accumulation in the week from August 13 to 20 showed two cloud bands of heavy rains across India. While the first band, which appeared much broader and extends across the northern part of the peninsula, received 120mm of rainfall on



NorthWest and 350mm on east towards the Bay of Bengal. The second cloud band is heavily concentrated and intense near the southwest coast of India and the Western Ghats where onshore flow was enhanced by an area of low pressure embedded within the general monsoon."

"Though much smaller than the Himalayas, Western Ghats parallel to the

West Coast of India with many peaks over 6,500 feet. The Western Ghats enhance rainfall along the West Coast of India as they intercept the moisture-laden air being drawn in off the warm waters of the northern Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea as part of the



monsoon circulation," Nasa experts said based on IMERG. Nasa used passive microwave sensors and geostationary infrared data.

A few days after receiving one of the highest rainfalls in a century, Kerala came under the threat of severe drought. Water level in wells, ponds and rivers have recorded lowest levels and some wells even collapsed. The water level in wells, especially in high ranges of Idukki district has come down by 20 feet in just a matter of 15 days. Chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan has directed the State council for Science, Technology & Environment to carry out studies on the phenomenon after floods across the state and suggest possible solutions to the problem.

'99 FLOOD: A REMINDER

Arya M Nair

It is worthwhile to look back into the history of Kerala and flag the devastation of flood that occurred in 1924 which transformed Kerala into a calamity zone. 94 years later, another flood is required to remind us how we utilize our resources. The British ruled Kerala has witnessed the emergence of a new transformation of constructions and technologies.

Time has changed, years flew by and lots of development took place but Kerala is still a calamity prone state.

The great flood of 99 had a chaos over the life of Keralites which swept away the crops and small scale livelihood. Even Munnar which is 1500m above sea level was destructed severely in flood.

Then why the loss of properties and life is increased in 2018 flood?

It's clear because Kerala has reduced its capacity to deal with such extreme floods by allowing illegal stone quarrying, changing drainage patterns and sand mining on river beds.

Through salary chal-

lenges and many other contributions to Chief Minister Relief Fund, an estimated amount of 450 cr is accumulated for state welfare. But no accountability is provided about the relief distribution.

Out of 54 dams, 35 dams were open for first time in history. All 14 districts of the state were placed on red alert. Over 483 people died and 14 are missing. About a million people were evacuated. The rescue operation was managed by 40 helicopters, 31 aircrafts, 18 medical teams and a total of 4537 fishermen

across Kerala were engaged in this mission.

AFTER MATH

Kerala witnessed an immediate draught after flood. Water level in wells, ponds and rivers have recorded lowest levels and some wells even collapsed. Heavy run off of the top in the upland areas and the siltation in the rivers were the reason for the falling water level.

Five months later the havoc, rebuilding Kerala is on progress along with political allegations and studies on disaster management.

Of Deluge, Disaster and Deliverance

– a story of an unparalleled relief operation during Kerala Floods 2018

In conversation with Dr Sekhar Lukose Kuriakose, the Head (Scientist) of SEOC (State Emergency Operations Centre, Formerly HVRA Cell) of Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA). A thorough environmentalist, he was instrumental in starting the construction of KSDMA's headquarter building with special provisions for housing the State EOC. His contribution towards preparation of Kerala's first ever Disaster Management Plan is praiseworthy. From 2016, he holds the coveted position of Member Secretary of the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority and was the RO during the recent Kerala floods. Widely read and travelled, he is highly qualified and has published quite a few papers and books. It is a matter of great pride that he is an Alumnus of Kerala University. In conversation with him is Col A Rajiv, first year student of MCJ, University of Kerala.

At the outset thank you for your valuable time. We are given to understand that you had a major role to play in developing the first ever disaster management plan for Kerala in 2016. The plan was put to test almost pan Kerala in the recent floods, as one of its creators, do you feel that the plan stood the test of nature?

You see, this plan has basically 4 components. Preparedness, Response, Mitigation, and Reconstruct. There are different aspects to it if you look at the preparedness aspects laid out in the plan, I think we will have to go a long way. If you look at the responses in terms of the IRS, that is the Incident Response System, I think we were able to activate the institutional mechanisms across the country. If you take the history of disasters, this was one instance where the Civil Administration was on top of the situation managing and effectively controlling it. We were able to position the Armed Forces, the civil well wishes and the like at their own places, make them comfortable and get the best out of them. So as far as IRS is concerned, I think it was a success.

Now coming to mitigation, we have certain mitigation measures. In 2016 we had started the first mitigatory project, the National Cyclone Risk Mitigation project which was an indication that SDMA has stepped into mitigation processes also.

Could you briefly tell us about the growth of SDMA?

SDMA had hardly 2/3 people, technical hands in 2012 and have grown from there to its present complement of dedicated individuals. In normal circumstances you deal only with routine occurrences like a cyclone coming up or a limited flood during a monsoon or a drought so the initial day's of SDMA was spent in formulating a handbook on emergency operations, ensuring that we have the correct civil military liaison, so much so we created a WA group where we even have the top armed forces officials. The trust factor had grown so much that things could be initiated based on requests on WA messages because the armed forces knew that a proper request as per protocol would surely follow. We developed a huge lot of institutional systems. So by 2016, we have evolved to understand the various chains of command above the SDMA and develop internal chains of command connecting the State and other machineries. Thereafter we also started looking into carrying out certain emergency mitigatory work, a classic ex being operation Anantha which was done in tvn which has ensured that the city was not inundated during the recent floods or heavy monsoons. We are in the path of creating a rebuild mechanism which is a recovery and reconstruction process

Can you throw some light on the methodologies adopted to ensure the enviable levels of coordination that was achieved?

You saw the largest armed forces assignment on humanitarian assistance deployment during the recent floods. One night, I had 5 teams of armed forces coming in 2 IL 76's with tremendous quantities of men, material and equipment. When they landed, I was there to receive them, food for



all of them were ready, packets of water were given, and trucks were earmarked along with a police jeep escort to ferry them to their designated place of action. This was personally supervised by the State Relief Commissioner with exact points of contact given. On 8th August, from this very office at 2:30 AM, a formal request to this effect was made and within 24 hours we had the teams moving for their

“ The trust factor had grown so much that things could be initiated based on requests on WA ed forces knew that a proper request as per protocol would surely follow.

places of action. This is the kind of rapport and liaison that has been developed. Another thing that went in our favour was that we could ask for very specific requirements to different agencies which removed any sort of ambiguity in the dealings. The point of contact for armed forces commanders were the District Collectors themselves. This ensured that there were no hierarchy problems as the teams were headed by officers of the rank of major and below. I think it is prudent to mention that the Air Marshal commanding Southern Air command, Aakulam came on record to state that this was the smoothest humanitarian assistance operation that was undertaken by him in his entire service.

The credit basically goes to the IRS laid down in the DM plan. Every year before the monsoons we carry out a meeting and in 2018 also on May 16th we had a meeting where the armed forces were well represented. Brigadier Arun himself was present. With no inclination of the impending heavy monsoons, we did discuss action plans in case of exigencies which came handy when the floods actually occurred. Thankfully the handing taking over briefings between Commanders have been fool proof wherein we never had to reinvent the wheel with each new Commander. There's a tacit agreement that whenever there is a requirement of large scale assistance the same shall be processed only by the SDMA. This again helped in clarity of communication. Whenever an odd request for assistance came directly to the armed forces they were politely told to contact the SOEC.

That's why I say it worked well in the response phase of the plan. We were able to mobilize, pool it up, manage, direct, and ensure what we needed is done. At the same time I am fully aware that we have to go along way as far as preparedness, mitigation and rebuild goes.

The contribution of the fishermen community and the vibrant youth were immense. Were they envisaged in the DM plan or was it a chance occurrence?

The plan only speaks of instrumentalities. It empowers the state government to utilise any instrumentality that they may feel fit. For example, very recently in July, the houseboats of Alapetty were pooled in as a resource, interestingly not for ferrying people but to utilise the bathrooms available inside them. So, it's the society at large which is the instrument. A few fishermen came up to the Kollam Collector who routed their willingness to us. We consented, opened up funds for them and upon seeing their effectiveness, more and more teams from the fishermen community volunteered to contribute and we pressed them into service. They were provided with fuel, transportation, food etc. The role played by them was definitely commendable and so was that of the vibrant youth who surprised not just Keralites, but the world itself by their selfless dedication.

The state DM plan also draws from the Emergency Support Function Plan of the state wherein, it's spelt out that each individual and organization should come up suo moto in aid of the Government in times of crisis.

Please elucidate on the role of governance?

As far as local self governance is concerned, the entire country looks upto Kerala because of its efficacy. Speaking of leadership, I think the Chief Minister himself acted like a trained General in a war-front, being along with his team throughout, assimilating the requirements, assessing the resources available and then giving crystal clear orders which was another reason why the flood relief was a success.

Did media play up to boost your efforts? Did a bit of sensationalisation here and there disturb the process of rescue operations?

I will not speak about media ethics which I'm sure you are more aware than me. A bit of sensationalisation was expected and was rightly discounted by all concerned. The media might have had agendas to fulfill which may have affected their reports. None of it had affected our morale in any way. When things were going a bit out of hand, we had invited all major media for a meeting, which, sadly was attended only by trainees, thus not changing much at the larger scenario. However, I'm sure that those trainees would have gained a clearer insight which would help them in future. Whenever natural calamities occur, people shed their rational thought and are emotionally charged. Every institution must handle such situations with care.

As a parting question, what would you advice the people of Kerala?

Well, as far as advices are concerned, I'm no one to advice as we are all doing our duty to our motherland. However, I'd say this much for sure, please do not tamper with mother Nature. In our blind run up to procure more and more, we seldom think about Nature and then are unable to take the retaliation. If we can take the recent floods as a lesson, it would do a lot to mitigate such occurrences in future.

'YES! WE ARE EQUIPPED'



Flagging off emergency flood relief operations of UoK at Karyavattom campus

Salin Raj P R

Karyavattom: The Facebook post "Yes! We are equipped. Kerala University campus is ready" posted by Athul S, Chairman, Departments Union, University of Kerala awoke the students, teachers, nonteaching staffs, old students, local parties, rikshawala, local residents and nearby techies from Techno Park to take part in flood relief activities.

While everyone looked outside, Union didn't forget to think of what was happening nearby.

They tried to map places which major

media avoided and lent arms to provide help. They reached nearby coastal backwater areas like Menamkulam, Cheramanthuruthu, and Channankara LPS. University buses were used to transport the collected relief materials to various camps, located in Alappuzha, Chengannoor, Ranni and the last ever closed camp at Aala.

Money saved for the Onam celebrations was donated to CM's Distress Relief Fund. Bundles of study materials were provided to school kids. Extra classes were arranged for the students in the university departments who were affected by the flood.

New ARISE @ Kudumbasree

Tess J S

T' P u r a m : Kudumbashree, the Kerala state women empowerment and poverty eradication mission launches broadening skill training to 50000 flood affected families in Kerala. This is a three-month training programme in 10 categories that include housekeep-



ing, outside housework, sales, laundry, ironing, day-care, agriculture-re-

lated jobs, electrical works, electronic repairing, plumbing, and data entry. The skill training is provided by the Kudumbashree through government accredited training agencies.

Anyone who is in Kudumbashree can participate in this skill training programme. ARISE skill training for self-employment gives a great opportunity to regular college students from flood-affected families also. Data entry sector mainly aims the students. After the training programme, they can work part-time.

ARISE campaign activities are started in all districts, those who register will be given skill training. Through this, Kudumbashree aims to uplift the people in the flooded areas in Kerala.

Right prevention @ 'flood time'

An interview with Dr. Unnikrishnan.S, Health Inspector Public Health Center, Vadavannoor

Aruna

What is the current scenario of the disaster relief camps and what are the measures taken by your department ?

We faced a situation that was never seen before in Kerala. We stayed at the camps and provided medical treatments for them, and we got the right counselling and got direct help from the part of the government through the revenue department. That is why we were on the right track. The camp is organized as per the instructions from the higher authorities and shifted the hospital infrastructure to the camp. Kerala government has shown good governance in the backdrop of such a great disaster to gets rid of the flood through immense hard work. Also, as a person who has been a part of all these, I feel better.

What are the diseases that have been outbreaken since the floods ?

Water born diseases usually spread during the rainy seasons like Dengue fever, leptospirosis, diarrhea, and dehydration are the main diseases that are caused during the flood.

What prevention methods did you take to control such diseases?

Generally, people do not have medicines for such diseases. If they are provided with the right medicines at the right time then we can have control over such diseases. So it was our first prevention method. The doxycycline and antibiotic medicines that had already been stocked before were given to the people of flood affected areas with a dosage of 200 mg weekly even before the symptoms of these diseases. By doing so several lives were saved. If we are not taking the right prevention methods at the right time then diseases such as leptospirosis may affect the internal organs of the patient and even lead to their

death. Then the cleaning the surroundings can prevent such diseases from spreading up to a great extent.

Did you get help from the government to clean the affected areas?

Yes, the government acted so quickly and provided with a lot of help by allotting gloves, boots, bleaching powder and super chlorination materials which helped in cleaning up the entire water affected area. All Government and non-government employees including grama panchayat authorities and several organizations have been a part of the cleaning process. This has prevented the spread of diseases.

What are the helpful contributions received from the government to the medical field?

There was relief fund related to the flood. By utilizing the fund, a team of the staff nurse and one Junior Health Inspector was appointed to distribute medicine. They also decided to pay a month's salary to the chief minister's disaster management fund. A schedule was created for the purpose of traveling to the district hospital for patients in need of treatment.

What steps did medical authorities took in making aware of the situation for those people who have returned from camp?

Special counseling sessions were set up under the leadership of each JHI were provided for the people who were staying at the distress relief camps. We tried to make them mentally prepared for the challenges that they are about to face in the recovery phase.

What can you understand from the field visit after the flood?

After the field visits, it has been found that the people have been recovered from the flood. The precise follow-ups and prevention measures that have taken by the government and authorities have been a great factor in making the situation better.

Cartoonscape



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Colouring the rebuilding efforts: Kochi Biennale

Amal Dev V S

In the aftermath of the Kerala floods I had conducted various workshops in schools in and around Chalakudi. It is after this that I took charge as the programme manager of ABC at the Biennale. The reason for conducting workshops after the floods, because it tells us certain things. Especially the necessity of us as humans to strike a bond with nature. Our education systems, culture etc. are causing us to alienate ourselves from nature. The floods made us more sensitive in our thinking and in a way led to a reawakening of humanity. In fact, humanity is present in the relation (in the special bond) between man and nature. It is with this fact in mind that we organised the workshops. These workshops help the children to come out of classrooms to the world of colours waiting



Blaise Joseph
Programme Manager, ABC

An artist and art educator who has more than 10 years of experience in leading community-based art projects. Having worked extensively with children and learning communities in different parts of India, he tries to establish art and creative expressions as the basis of learning, nurturing interactive spaces which are non-competitive and non-judgmental.

outside and extend their creativity.

It is through such a process that children could be taught to draw. The conception of the art room as a part of chil-

dren's Biennale is an extension of this idea. The art room is conceived in such a manner as to be a testimony to the unique bond between man and nature. The relation between man and nature mandates the presence of art. Artistic skill increases with the sublime merging of our hearts with nature. This is because the reference and inspiration for art is nature. This is the juncture where we understand the relationship between nature and us. This has been an effort to bring that point into focus. Many people are participating in our workshops. Childishness is present to an extent in adults as in children. Childishness is basically a mix of art and games. Here the children interact freely with nature. When left to their freedom, there is no end to their explorations and discoveries.

If they are left free, there is no end

to the things that they could discover and explore. The idea of a new Kerala, as well as the rebuilding of Kerala, isn't something that should be thought exclusively by the elders. It's something that children should definitely be a part of. After all, they constitute the next generation. They should decide how to get along with nature. The setting up of unnecessary walls, tiles replacing our grounds and apathy towards nature has been a development that had evolved over the last 10-15 years. This is not something that should be appreciated or glorified. It is, in fact, a downfall. There is a need for children to question it and to get it back. And for this, it becomes mandatory for the elders and the children to work together. This forms the concept of the art room.

We have intro-

duced art rooms to the schools in the places affected by flood in Ernakulam and Chalakudi (NSHS Valoor (Chalakudi), Pre-Metric Hostel for Tribal boys Vettilapara (Chalakudi), GHS Mattanchery, EMHS Veli, GHS Panayappalli, St. Sebastian's H Gothuruth, and Standard Pottery High

back art to children.

The minds of children are vast. It shouldn't be narrowed down to the pages of a notebook. It would limit an entire generation. It is essential to bring back art. Art is the base of education and life. Even money comes after art. Art isn't just about drawing pictures. Everything done with the heart is in some way art. Maintain a creative spirit and a creative expression. It requires space to grow.

This space should be provided in schools. The absence of a learning process of art takes culture to another realm. There occur the drawbacks of aesthetic sense. Aesthetic sense is something that arises out of engagement. Aesthetic sense is a way readymade. It's been designed by others and we follow it.



Kochi-Muziris Biennale 2018

School Thaikaturu). That would mean a total of 7 schools that are centered on areas affected by the flood. There are issues with funds. We are planning to introduce the art room to 2-3 schools in Alappuzha. Thus, we are planning to extend the concept of art room focussing on 10 schools and bringing

After Effects

Anandhu G S



View of Cheruthoni Dam after floods



Aftermath



View of Cheruthoni bridge

Chekutty, a gesture of hope

'Chekutty has scars.. Chekutty has stains.. Chekutty is each one of us who survived the floods..'

Akhila G Mohan

All the while the Chekutty dolls were spreading smiles across the world, Keralites were trying to overcome the trauma of an unforeseen disaster.

The doll with the warm smiling face radiated positive energy and with which Kerala entered the rebuilding mode after the great floods. Thus Chekutty became the symbol of survival.

Chekutties are small pleasing dolls made by different communities by upcycling flood-ravaged fabrics of Chendamangalam. It is a small handloom village situated in Ernakulam district that witnessed and severely affected the attack of flood tides. Actually, the manufacturing units were onset for the big Onam sale but the huge deluge completely submerged the whole handloom products stored in the godown and depot of Karimpadam H. 191 handloom society.

About 26 lakhs of handloom products such as clothes, threads



Chekutty Doll

got fully damaged. All these products seemed unusable after the torrent as it was fully mired in mud breaching foul odour.

The idea of Chekutty was first framed by

Gopinath Parayil, who runs a travel tourism company in Mattancherry and Lakshmi Menon, a renowned fashion designer. The handloom society secretary Ajith

Kumar saw this initiative as a new way to survive. They took further steps for collecting and cleansing the dirty damped clothes with chlorine and began to make Chekutty dolls.

Chekutties are made of pieces of clothes and then sketched with pens. As the idea of Chekutty was fresh and innovative, it fastly grabbed the attention of the world. Around 9 countries involved in the making of Chekuttys. In addition, almost all the local, national and international media covered the news of these dolls.

The handloom society sold the dolls at 25 rupees each. The online sale was also available. Till this time, the handloom society gained around 16 lakhs of rupees and they also expecting about 10 lakhs from Federal Bank. The time and hard work of thousands of knowing and unknowing people were behind the success of Chekutty dolls. Chekutty, the mascot of rebuilding a better Kerala, represents our unity, solidarity, and resilience.

SINKING IN DEBT, TO RE-BUILD?

S P Adithi Nair

Thiruvalla: It's been five months since we witnessed the flood almost devouring Central Kerala. Now its time for 'Re-building' what we have lost. The state government has announced various funds as compensation for the people who were adversely affected by the flood. One of the major provision is the compensation of Rs 4lakh given to the people who lost their houses to the flood. However, this turns out to be a curse more than a help to the people.

Ashok Kumar's small house was situated in the Niranam Panchayath in Pathanamthitta district. Niranam is one of the



Ashok Kumar in front of his half-constructed house

places that had to face the worst atrocities from the flood unexpectedly. The auto driver's house was completely shattered in the flood. His six-member family including his elderly parents was forced to shift to a self-built shed. The government authorities approved him eligible for the rebuilding com-

pensation of 4lakhs from which he only received Rs. 95400/- as the first installment. He was instructed to finish the work of the basement of the new house to be eligible for the second installment. Unable to complete the basement with this amount he had to borrow money from other sources to meet

the expenses which have brought him debt added to his homelessness. He had to build the basement along with his family to lower the expense of giving wage to workers.

"This is not just the case of Ashok Kumar, there are almost 6 houses that were wiped out by the flood in the panchayath. We understand their situation that it is impossible to build a house with such low funds and have informed the authorities about the need for more fund. Still, there has not been any movement from the government to raise the funds," said Mathew M Varghese the Panchayath Member of Niranam panchayath.

Flood relief to AKPA Members

Sreelakshmi K

Thrissur: The All Kerala Photographer's Association gave financial aid to its flood affected members. The programme held at Lalithakala Academy hall in Trichur on 9 november 2018. The heavy torrential rainfall and the flood which followed, caused much havoc in most of the districts in Kerala and led to the loss of livelihood of many people. AKPA extended their help to its members who lost their camera and other equipments by providing financial support and also donated five lakhs rupees to Kerala Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund.

The 458 applications they received from 10 districts, were categorised according to the degree of loss and the

association provided about 42 lakhs of rupees for district wise distribution.

The state level distribution programme was officially inaugurated by M G Raju, state president of AKPA on 30 october, 2018 at Malappuram by giving cheques to 10 members. The fund distribution in Ernakulam, one of the worst affected districts, was held at AKPA bhavan. District wise distribution programmes were also organised in Alappuzha, Pathanamthitta, Kottayam, Idukki, Palakkad, Wayanad and Kozhikode districts.

All India Photographic Trade and Industry Association along with Harison Photo Products and The Photography Club of Coimbatore also collaborated with AKPA in this venture.

Veeyapuram: Through Rebuild

Saira Hussain

Alappuzha: Veeyapuram, a village under Kuttanad sector near Haripad in Alappuzha district is surrounded with Pamba and Achan-kovil river, having a lot of paddy fields and streams from both of these rivers. Most of the water bodies got contaminated. Different groups and organizations along with the government had started rebuilding houses, roads, and other damaged infrastructures.

The youth handled the removal of waste materials deposited in houses, roadsides and paddy fields. Representing the panchayat, ward member Mrs. Aabidha said, each family got 10,000 rupees as an emergency relief fund from the government. The government assured to rebuild around 100 houses with severe damage. Among that 15 houses were built by this January. Other damaged houses are build with help from different community groups and insurance companies. They are waiting for the state assured financial assistance and plans. Wells and water bodies are being cleaned by different volunteers. Most of the students got their lost study material from their school itself. Thus the village is slowly struggling to achieve goal

Coastal Warriors

Ann A L

Thumba: Jackson Thumba k k a r a n ,fisherman from Thumba in Trivandrum , was an active presence in Chengannur during the floods that ravaged Kerala in August 2018. He made a daring rescue operations with his boat in challenging areas like Puliyoor and pandanadu and rescued hundreds of lives.

Kerala witnessed the worst calamity in its history and thousands fled to relief camps, leaving behind their possessions. Rescue mission with fishermen, men in uniform and local people joined their hands to save the affected. In the deluge

swamped kuttanad and Chengannur in Alappuzha district, a large number of people who escaped the flood waters are now in dire straits and finding it difficult to rebuild their lives as the state governments post flood rehabilitation programme is making a slow progress. There are 63,046 families are eligible for the financial assistance from the government. So far only 17,832 families have received the first instalment of compensation . A total of 1,62,008 families have received immediate assistance of Rs 10,000. Many are still running from pillar to post to get immediate aid of Rs 10,000.

Chendamangalam library, the real symbol of survival

Jaseela S

Chendamangalam: Kerala drowned by the unexpected flood which kills thousands of people's dreams and life. We can see a ray of hope in their faces, striving to rebuild the shattered lost.

The Chendamangalam Nair Samajam Public Library is now on the path of fast revival. The havoc a completely destroyed the library which was the light spread up by a world of letters for more than 85 years. The library which has won several awards has a robust membership base of over 2000.

The Chendamangalam library and reading room established in 1934 at Paliamnada, near Chendamangalam tells the tale of dozens of local libraries that were inundated in the recent flood. Around 16000 books worth 27 lakhs from a collection of over 28000 have been lost and cannot be used again. The hundred-year-old building is also destroyed in the deluge.

"There was no time to save the books. I was all alone and my home near the library was also flooded," says P. T Joy who has been the librarian for 22 years.

There were so many efforts to survive the deluge. Regarding with the rebuilding process,



Chendamangalam library

The State Archives Department has launched a mobile conservation clinic to the restoration of over a century old rare books of the Nair Samajam Library there which were damaged by the surging water. M.L.A V.D Satheesan hand over the books for restoration. This process is helped to restore over a thousand books. But can't restore the old books that were destroyed.

The cooperation and support of the villagers are really well coming. While the rebuilding process, Sethu, well-known writer and former chairman of South Indian Bank take effort for collecting books to the library. Through this, they can collect around 7000 books. The library management takes a book challenge to set itself the target of getting back all the lost titles before the first anniversary of the flood in August 2019. The campaign has giv-

en hope to the library has been struggling to restock its shelves.

To reconstructing the collapsed building the local people and some are in abroad helped very well. The library got around 8 lakhs for the reconstruction of the damaged building. The Fire and Rescue Team from Andhra Pradesh helped to remove the slush and debris from the library. To inaugurate the renovated building, the library has organized a function on December 21st 2018. It was inaugurated by Sethu, writer and former chairman of the South Indian Bank.

The continuous efforts and support made by the public and the library management helped to the quick revival. We will overcome, we rebuild Kerala. The Chendamangalam library is the real symbol of rebuilding Kerala.

Kerala Floods 2018

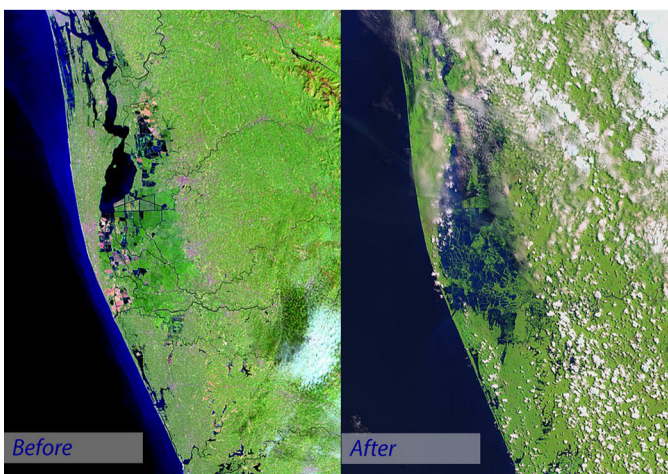


Image Credit: NASA

Candles of solidarity

Survival is Art

Sreethu T A



Inaugural Session of the International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK) 2018

Sruthi P P

T'Puram: The week-long international film festival was inaugurated by chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan on 7th December 2018. The theme of fest was rebuilding. The festival which almost got cancelled following the floods in August was eventually given clearance and decided to

continue. International film director Majid Majidi was felicitated by Pinarayi Vijayan with the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award during the ceremony.

Asghar Farhadi's *Everybody Knows* was the first movie screened in the event. In respect to the lives lost due to the floods, candles of solidarity were lighted at the

festival venue during the inauguration.

In the inaugural address, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said that the festival will send the message across the world that Kerala stood tall and overcame the deluge together. Renowned director Buddhadeb Dasgupta was the chief guest and actress-director Nandi-

ta Das was the guest of honor.

Though the price of the delegate pass was Rs.2000, a large group of film lovers were gathered in the festival points which shows the dedication of the public towards world cinemas. Many of the delegates expressed their anger towards the hike in the price of the delegate pass, and few have expressed their solidarity to this action and they believe that this action was to save the festival.

After seven days of film screening, the fest ended on 13th December. Even though the flood and price hike affected the film fest a good group of participants and cinemas made the 23rd film festival a memorable one. This season of IFFK marked in history as the returning of Kerala from a great disaster.

Alappuzha: The State Education Department conducted the 59th Kerala State-level school arts festival without many celebrations in the wake of the unprecedented floods the state had suffered 3 months before. The cost for conducting the Kalolsavam has been reduced to Rs 16 lakh from the previous Rs 32 lakh. 12000 contestants competed in 29

MP K C Venugopal participated. The official inauguration function and procession was avoided for reducing the cost.

Many students chose theme for their performances on the basis of the flood. Many of the students and their families were affected by the floods. So they tried to portray their real-life experience in their performances



The green protocol was strictly followed at the venues and it was ensured that food and paper waste were not thrown around. The National Service Scheme, Haritha Sena, and DTPC cleaning workers helped with the cleaning. The fund saved from cutting down the celebrations were donated to Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund.

Survivors of Karyavattom campus

Shilpa Annie Joseph

Karyavattom: "It happened all of a sudden," said Divya, 1st year PG student of chemistry, University of Kerala. Almost one-fourth of the students on the campus were affected by the severe flood. Divya is a student from Wayanad, the place where flood badly affected. Divya added more, the areas were fully covered with water. Even though the water didn't reach her house, their fears were all about the frequent dangerous landslides.

The heavy rains in Wayanad have caused a severe landslide and have left the hilly areas isolated. Sangeetha, PG student of Statistics from Ernakulam, recall the flood days as she was living with their grandparents at that time.

During the flood, almost the water reached the first floor. They were left in the flood relief centers there about two weeks. When they reached back, the house was filled with filth. Weeks had tak-

en to clean the whole house. Her family had got some stipend from the government.

In the case of Simona, Statistics student, from Chalakkudy, said that she had experienced a terrific makeover in her area. Her home was near the Chalakuddy River. The bund of the river is just on the side of their houses. Rests of the parts were taken up by the river. Also, slight mudslide also occurred. Her house was a 2-floor building and in the flood, the whole first floor sank.

Details of the flood victims were taken by the Government officials. Some amount was given by the church near to them as a charity from their side. There were many students on our campus whose life went miserable due to the flood. Some even lost their houses.

The University of Kerala is proud that their students actively participated in helping the people without bothering about themselves.

From Lesotho, with Love

Puzzled in nervousness, I could vividly recall to one blue Wednesday morning of the 5th September 2018. It goes without saying that, anxiety gets to be one of the most common beliefs held by majority of people whenever they look upon doing something for the first time. In a more or less the same way, this is a perfect account on an incredibly amazing experience on the first day I set my foot in India.

It was at dawn and I kept peeping through the aeroplane window. If I could turn back the hands of time, I could spool back frequently and gasp to enjoy an aerial view of God's own country through a dazzling bright morning from a distance. Never had I known even a little of Kerala's tropical climate until I gazed upon a few trees and natural vegetation that calmly stood surrounding Trivandrum airport. Moments later, the plane landed.

While I joined the queue, I heard a clacking sound of shoes on the floor as everyone from aboard made their way towards the customs checkout. There at the arrivals' desk, sat a young beautiful woman. She seemed to be in her 20 to 30 years of age. I stretched out my arm and handed over my passport to her. After checking on it, she turned up, looked at me, and gave a huge smile and then softly expressed a three worded phrase that will never ever skip my mind, "welcome to India" she said. Some echoes of warm welcome began ensuing from my head down to my feet.

Outside the Airport's main exit, I came across multitudes of Keralites. I had my head held up so high in confidence, as I directly made my way to join a bunch of young gentlemen just beyond the main exit. Soon after getting to know each other a little, all of them simultaneously imposed multiple personal questions. I felt so much pressure as I had to give my responses to each one of them. Most of them would want to know about my family, how many members, if I am married or not, and the most commonly interesting, was about whether I have had anything to eat or not. I was taken-aback. These people had only met me for the first time, and I began to wonder. So many thoughts began to pop up in my mind. Perhaps that would be too early for me to perceive them as genuinely friendly and empathetic.

As time went by, in a very short period of time, I had made friends from all over Trivandrum city. In this instance, it all came through my observation that, I have just ventured in a peaceful and happy society. Despite the devastating recent floods, Kerala people continued to value happy friendships, especially with foreigners. Gradually, I felt in love with this country.

Some people may think that making new good friends in a coherently diversified-cultural and multi lingual society may be a bit of a problem for outsiders as they make their way to fit in well within those realms of social settings. I conversely found that all to be a myth. In Kerala, individuals do value social interaction as it substantially translates into intimacy and mutual respect. The richness of the cultural norms and practices also play such a vital role in maintaining solidarity. Kerala is the place for entertainment as Keralites do organize several cultural festivals such as music performances, as they make way to happy gatherings, such as classical music concerts, and Onam, to mention a few.

It is not only about the glamorous look pertaining to the beauty of God's own country but the warmth and an enduring empathetic experience that to this very day, I am reaping off such magnificent and amazing love and peace.

Thabo Gladstone Noosi, MCJ Student, UoK

Restoring a Resilient Kerala

Sruthy Suresh

T'Puram: The international workshop on rebuilding a resilient Kerala after the floods was held on the 6th and 7th of January 2019 at the Mascot hotel in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. It was jointly organised by University of Leeds, UK and TKM College of engineering Kollam in association with Kerala State Planning board. The workshop included 10 sessions in two days comprised of presentations and discussions about research updates, flood studies and plans for rebuilding Kerala.

The first day of the workshop shared studies already conducted by experts in UK and India in the fields of flood man-

agement, climate effect on floods, reducing impact of floods and engineering resilience in reconstruction after floods and the second day focused on 4 critical areas where progress should be made to ensure that rebuilding Kerala could proceed by combining resources in both the India and the UK. It commenced at 12 Noon on the 6th with an inauguration of the sessions of the day. The first session of the workshop consisted of a presentation by doctor K P Sudheer who is a Professor at IIT Chennai. Dr Sudheer presented on the topic. It was followed by an interaction session. The next session, Session 2 included presentations. Dr Andy Sleigh and Dr Danny Barrington from the

University of Leeds, UK along with Dr Chris Whitflow from Edenvale young Associates, Bristol, UK delivered presentations on flood impacts. Session 3 had presentations by Dr Vasilis Sarhosis and Dr Mark Trig from the University of Leeds. The presentation was on "Engineering resilience in the reconstruction. The presentation in session 4 was by Dr Ayoob and Dr AS Dili of TKM college. They spoke about TKM's role in alleviating flood disaster. The workshop on the first day was over by 6 pm. The second day of the workshop started at 9 am on the 7th of January. It addressed outcomes and objectives of the workshop. Discussions were held with experts like Mr. PH Kurien IAS (Prin-

cipal secretary of revenue and disaster management) Dr T Jayaraman (Kerala state planning board, Mr. UV Jose IAS (Joint commissioner, land revenue department Kerala, Dr B Iqbal (former Vice Chancellor University Of Kerala and planning board member) acted as chairs. The 10th and final session of the workshop discussed the outcomes. Dr KM Abraham IAS (former Chief Secretary and CEO, KIIIFB) delivered the keynote address. An action plan was presented.

The themes of the workshop included the reconstruction of critical and civil infrastructure in a resilient manner, capability building to cope with future floods caused by climate change, land

use planning and educating the next generation of engineers to deal with the above three aspects. The objectives were bringing together academia, industry and government agencies working on this issue and willing to join forces, identifying short-term, medium-term and long-term goals to deal with the themes and discussing how resources can be used for dealing with the themes and making an action plan. The basic challenges identified in the workshop, include the reconstruction of critical and civil infrastructure in a resilient manner, capability building to cope with future floods caused by climate change, land use planning and educating the next generation of engineers.

**FACTS
VERSE**

'99 Flood

☞ The great flood of '99 occurred when the Periyar River in Kerala state of India flooded in the month of July 1924.

☞ This is the year 1099 ME in the Malayalam Calendar.

☞ As the Malayalam Calendar was popular in Kerala, the flood is generally referred to as 'Thonnootti Onbathile Vellapokkam' (flood of 99).

☞ Many districts of present day Kerala were deeply submerged by the flood.

☞ From Thrissur, to Ernakulam to Idukki, Kottayam even up to Alappuzha and Kuttanad.

☞ Even a huge mountain called Karinthiri Mala was washed away by this flood and the road to Munnar also went along with it.

Discovering Floods



Kavia M R

Discovery premiered "Kerala Flood-The human story". The Discovery Channel documentary on the Kerala floods paints an interesting picture of the Kerala floods and people response to it. Kerala Floods, which has showcased on Discovery Channel on Monday 12th November 2018 at 9:00 pm has taken viewers through inspiring stories of people of Kerala who refuse to lose hope and working tirelessly to piece back everything that was lost.

The one-hour documentary is a celebration of the spirit of survival in the face of disaster. The channel stated in a press release. "viewers will get to witness incredible stories of coming together to help those in need from fishermen-turned-rescue operators to the defense forces who provided aid, from actors who worked alongside NGO workers to get supplies to those in need to young entrepre-

neurs who devised ways to connect people at a time when the apocalyptic rain fury just refused to die." That's what exactly the documentary is. The documentary narrating the whole story of before and after the flood. The intensity of pain and fear of the people were reflecting in the first few minutes. All the bites of the officials and victims give the real life to the documentary. It is all about a disaster but it emphasizes the humanity, care, love, compassion which poured by the people from around the world. The 'Human Story' highlighting the economic crisis which Kerala has faced after the flood.

The documentary features brave rescue operations like the one involving the fully pregnant Fajitha Jabil who was airlifted by the Indian Navy hours before she delivered a boy named Subhan. It is now available on YouTube and its going viral. The 'Human Story' is a desirable gift to all human around the world.

Flood of flooded cars

Vinayak S

T'Puram: Kerala floods of 2018 destroyed the whole state and claimed a lot of lives and many people lost their belongings. According to the unofficial statistics almost 350 vehicle dealerships were affected by the flood and about 17,500 cars are damaged. These are included with brand new cars and people's cars in the affected areas.

The damage scale

is quite high because the water level raised about eight to ten feet across the certain part of the state. Insurance companies have received a lot of damage claim requests from private vehicle owners.

The extent of damage is about 1000 crores. This is only a small portion of the total amount of damage the flood has caused. The 26 percentage of the total automotive market in the South India

is owned by Kerala. The dealers of Kerala sells about 2,45,000 units in a quarter.

Insurance claims require time to get processed, some have already come up with plans to scrap the damaged cars. If the flood-affected cars go up for auction, they can be bought for cheap. However, a good amount of time, effort and money are required to bring them back to its original working condition.

Smart ideas for state planning

Henna Mansoor

Pattom: In an initiative for rebuilding, the Kerala government is inviting 'practical ideas and suggestions for all walkers of life'. The government of Kerala has launched a new initiative that invited and enabled public participation in the state planning process on Sept 15, the CMO tweeted about a new online platform called 'Idea Hunt', a portal through which citizen can send in their "Small Ideas" and suggestions to the government for consideration.

Idea Hunt is an initiative by the Kerala State Planning Board, as part of an existing program, PLANSPACE (maintained by IITMK for the planning board, where the public can

monitor the progress and expenditure of the government on various project) and is meant "for effective collaboration and invited practical ideas and suggestions from all walks of life". It is the first such initiative by the government of Kerala and could be of particular use in the post-flood rebuilding efforts.

Joy NR chief of Industry and Infrastructure at the Kerala State Planning Board says, 'It was announced in the Governors Address in the previous budget session that from next year onwards, we will have

people involved in the planning process. We have developed this initiative in line with those ideas".

In just a few days since the launched of the portal, they've received over 500 ideas from respondents all over the world. It's up to the government of Kerala and concerned departments to sift through the ideas to pick out actionable suggestions. He says 'we need to look into it in detail. Each area has concerned offices who will look into it and come up with the implantable or positive ideas which can be taken

up by the department or agencies. The Ideas may be good but from a government perspective, we need to see to what level we can do it, and come up with appropriate schemes after sufficient research and discussion.

Introducing a "Website for emergency purposes", it's one of the ideas based on the IT section. We can use it for our emergency situations, that type of site interconnect all people to communicate. In each department got 1500 of ideas. Agriculture and irrigation departments got many efficient ideas. Several expert plans and proposals were received for rebuilding the state. Hence a coordinated effort is required for the execution of the proposals' said CM.

