

# RESEARCH SCHOLAR

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## Bridging the Digital Divide: An Appraisal of the Kerala Scenario

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**Abstract:** Governments make use of Modern Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to proffer government services to the citizens. ICT let governments to make available governmental services on the internet. Governmental services offered are obtainable electronically, irrespective of time or place and hence it is no longer obligatory to make one's way to an office physically. Intensive efforts are being undertaken by the government of Kerala to make available a stronger platform for the State's move towards a knowledge based society. The integral element of these efforts are the promotion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) as a strategic driver to support and contribute directly to the growth of the economy as well as enhance the quality of life of the citizens. ICT have been acknowledged by the government of Kerala as the prime enabler of the state's public service delivery. The vision of e government is to create a collaborative environment that promotes the reinvention of governance by ensuring high- quality services to the public. Expectations are high and Citizens now expect their public services to be equally accessible and convenient. The state government envisions a future where all components of society can communicate and transact their operations in an effective and efficient manner.

**Key words:** Digital divide, Digital Inclusion, e-Government, Good governance

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### Introduction

E-government is the centerpiece of information systems supported reforms to digitalize the delivery of services and processes of governance taking place across all levels of government. E government utilizes the Internet and the World Wide Web for both service delivery and information dissemination<sup>1</sup>. E governance is defined as the use of information and communication technologies in government to provide public services to improve managerial effectiveness and to promote democratic values and mechanisms, as well as a regulatory frame work that facilitates information intensive initiatives and foster the knowledge society<sup>2</sup>.

There crop up two imperative changes in the sphere of administration. First is the focus on good governance with mounting non government participation in deliverance of public services. The second is the increased volume of application of Information and Communication Technology that potentially could connect any and everyone in real time<sup>3</sup>. E-governance is the application of ICT to the processes of government functioning for good governance<sup>4</sup>. World Bank refers, e government as, the use by government agencies of



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## UNDERSTANDING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

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### ABSTRACT

The idea of governance is a popular theme in modern statecraft. It stands for larger collaboration between different actors in society for the smooth operation of state. The authority factor as a dominant tool of government gave way to larger cohabitation and cooperation between different actors. This notion was further expanded with the notion of good governance. The idea of good governance presupposes some criteria for governance which may be identified as benchmarking tools for governance. Good governance is an accepted operational pattern for modern states. In a democratic state like India, the implementation of Good Governance is essential for establishing the legitimacy of the state. But this task needs constant reformation of the institutions, procedures and processes of the state. The current study is an attempt to unravel the implementation of good governance in India.

### INTRODUCTION

In modern times the role of the State has been undergoing many changes in terms of the structure, functions, processes, goals and orientation. The entire complexion and nature of public administration is undergoing a change in the present times due to the impact of as 'globalisation'. The process of globalisation accompanied by removal of trade barriers, large-scale entry of multinational enterprises, and drastic developments in information technology, is affecting the different domains of our system.

The impact of globalisation is leading to new managerial orientation in administration. Along with the developed countries, the developing countries including India have introduced managerial reforms in the form of disinvestment, corporatisation, outsourcing of certain activities, reduction of subsidies, and shrinking of the government's sphere of activities, which is gradually concentrating on core activities. Traditionally, the practice of public administration has been dominated by the government playing a key role in provision of goods and services. The instrument of bureaucracy has always occupied a predominant place in administration. Slowly, the inadequacies in governmental operations have started focusing attention on looking for alternative modes of service delivery.

Due to impact of market, a single mode of operationalising good and services to the citizens, is giving way to a larger collaboration between government, market and civil society. The interaction between the various key actors has started influencing the decision-making process, making it more broad-based. There has been a gradual shift from 'government' to a broader notion of 'governance'. Governance that encompasses the collectiveness of the State, Government, market and community has become dominant. The concept of Good Governance has also gained prominence.



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## The Great farming Circus in India: Crisis of Survival

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**Abstract:** Agriculture has been enjoying a crucial role within the overall growth of the Indian economy. India achieved autonomy in food production at the macro level. The volume of food production is registering a spontaneous growth. But this growth is not reflected in the income and status level of farmers. The dependence of the agricultural work, force on agriculture for employment has not declined in proportion to the falling contribution of agriculture to GDP. This has widened financial gain inequality between the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. There is also issues of pricing, natural calamities and absence of government support for farming activities. The result is an evident decline of farmer status and steady decline of profit for individual farmers. In this context the current paper tries to study the agrarian crisis in India. It also tries to discuss the role of government in the farming sector and important initiatives of the government to uplift the farmers in India.

**Key words:** - Agriculture, Agrarian Crisis, Farmer Suicide, Globalization

### Introduction

In India, agriculture was the main source of national income and occupation for a long period of time. Agriculture and allied activities contributed nearly 50 percent to India's national income. Around 72 percent of total working population was engaged in agriculture. These confirm that Indian economy was an agriculture based economy at the time of Independence<sup>1</sup>. In the initial days of independence, the state was keen to promote agriculture as the basis of Indian society and economy. This evident from the investment on agriculture in the earlier five year plans and government policies. The constitution of India also acknowledged the significance of agriculture in Indian society. Article 48 of the constitution deals with Organisation of agriculture and animal husbandry. The state under this article has to organize agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines. This also includes prohibition of killing of cows, calves and other milch and draught cattle. This concern was later taken over to the realm of legislation. Land reform acts and tenancy rules were framed by various state governments. Land reforms, land tenures, land holdings, consolidation etc. are under the exclusive legislative and administrative jurisdiction of the states by Entry No.18 of List II(State List) in the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution. The Central Government has been also playing an advisory and co-ordinating role in the field of land reforms since the First Five-Year Plan. Agrarian reforms have been a core issue for rural reconstruction as a means of ensuring social justice to actual tillers and the landless rural poor, thereby creating a sustainable base for the overall growth of the industrial and tertiary sectors of our economy. The earlier investment tempo on agriculture sector produced positive results with more output and food security. But in the long run priorities were shifted and



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### INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO AGRICULTURAL POLICY: THE IMPACT OF FARMERS ORGANIZATIONS IN THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR IN KERALA

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#### Abstract

This study explores the role of farmers organizations in shaping agricultural policies of Kerala. Through a qualitative analysis of interviews with farmers and policymakers, it is found that farmers organizations have played a crucial role in advocating for the needs of small-scale farmers and promoting sustainable agriculture practices. These organizations have also been instrumental in facilitating farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing and providing access to markets and resources. So, here it is argued that the success of these organizations demonstrates the potential for innovative, bottom-up approaches to agricultural policy that prioritize the needs and voices of farmers themselves.

#### Key Words

Agricultural policy, Farmers organizations, Cooperative farming, Sustainability, Farmer empowerment, Crop diversification, Organic farming.

#### Introduction

Agriculture has always been the backbone of India's economy, with more than 50% of the population relying on it for their livelihood. In the state of Kerala, farmers organizations are playing a vital role in ensuring the sustainability and growth of agriculture by introducing innovative approaches to agricultural policy. The formation of farmers organizations in Kerala dates to the 1950s, with the establishment of the Kerala Karshaka Sangham, the first farmers' organization in the state. Since then, farmers organizations have played a significant role in the development of agriculture in Kerala, advocating for farmers' rights and introducing new techniques and technologies

#### Innovative approaches.

**Agro-ecology:** One of the innovative approaches introduced by farmers organizations in Kerala is the concept of "agro-ecology" which involves the promotion of farming practices that are in harmony with nature. This approach emphasizes the use of natural resources, such as water and soil, and encourages the use of organic farming methods. Farmers organizations in Kerala have been actively promoting agro-ecology and working towards the development of sustainable agriculture (FAO, 2017). It emphasizes the integration of ecological principles and social justice into agricultural systems, and has gained attention as a promising alternative to conventional, industrial agriculture. By promoting the adoption of agro-ecological practices, Kerala's agrarian policy is demonstrating a commitment to sustainability and a recognition of the need to prioritize the well-being of farmers and the environment.

**Use of information and communication technology (ICT):** Another innovative approach introduced by farmers organizations in Kerala is the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in agriculture. The government of Kerala has developed digital tools and applications to aid farmers in farm management, providing them with real-time information on weather, market prices, and pest and disease outbreaks. This includes the Kissan Kerala app, which provides farmers with crop-specific advice and the Farm Income Estimation and Analysis System, which helps farmers make

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## EMPOWERING PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY IN INDIA: UTILIZING RASPBERRY PI-BASED CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT MODULE TO ENHANCE CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

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### Abstract

The concept of participatory democracy and the role of citizen engagement modules in improving democratic processes are examined in this research paper. It emphasizes the importance of active citizen participation in decision-making and governance, as well as the importance of inclusive and transparent mechanisms to facilitate such participation. The paper provides a thorough examination of how a citizen engagement module based on the Raspberry Pi platform can improve participatory democracy by allowing citizens to access government information, vote on issues, and provide feedback. It investigates the potential benefits of a module like this in promoting inclusivity, transparency, and accountability within the democratic system. The findings of the study demonstrate the transformative power of technology-enabled citizen engagement, providing insights into how participatory democracy can be strengthened for more responsive and effective governance.

**Keywords:** Participatory Democracy- Raspberry Pi-Online Voting- Citizen Feedback Mechanism

### Introduction

Democracy, as a fundamental pillar of modern societies, provides citizens with the opportunity to actively participate in decision-making processes and shape the policies that govern their lives. However, traditional democratic systems often face challenges in ensuring broad-based participation, inclusivity, and transparency. In recent years, the concept of participatory democracy has gained prominence, emphasizing the need for enhanced citizen engagement in governance.

Participatory democracy goes beyond the mere act of voting and seeks to involve citizens in decision-making at various levels. It recognizes the importance of diverse perspectives, active dialogue, and collaborative problem-solving in policy formulation and implementation. In this context, the integration of technology can play a pivotal role in facilitating citizen engagement and strengthening participatory democracy.

This research paper focuses on the potential of a citizen engagement module based on the Raspberry Pi platform to improve participatory democracy. The Raspberry Pi, with its low-cost and versatile capabilities, provides an accessible and scalable solution for leveraging technology in democratic processes. The citizen engagement module built upon the Raspberry Pi offers a web-based interface that allows citizens to access government schemes, vote on specific issues, and provide feedback on policies.

The paper aims to explore the impact of such a citizen engagement module on participatory democracy by examining its potential benefits. It delves into the significance of inclusivity, transparency, and accountability in democratic systems and how the module can contribute to these aspects. By enabling citizens to actively participate, express their opinions, and influence decision-making, the module seeks to bridge the gap between citizens and policymakers.

Through an analysis of existing literature, case studies, and empirical evidence, this research paper provides insights into the transformative potential of technology-enabled citizen engagement. It investigates the implications of the citizen engagement module on democratic processes, governance outcomes, and citizen satisfaction. The research findings contribute to the discourse on participatory democracy and offer practical recommendations for policymakers and practitioners seeking to enhance citizen engagement in their respective contexts.

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### AGRARIAN CRISIS AND FOOD SECURITY: AN ANALYSIS IN KERALA CONTEXT FROM 1990 TO 2023

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#### Abstract

This article aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the agrarian crisis and its impact on food security in the state of Kerala, India, from 1990 to 2023. Kerala has long been hailed as a model for social development, but it has also faced significant challenges in its agricultural sector. The article examines the causes and consequences of the agrarian crisis, analyzes the policies implemented to address the crisis, and assesses their effectiveness. Furthermore, it explores the implications of the crisis on food security, emphasizing the need for sustainable and inclusive agricultural practices. The article draws on a wide range of academic research, reports, and government documents to support its analysis

**Keywords:** Agrarian crisis, food security, Kerala, agricultural policies, sustainable practices

#### Introduction

Agriculture has been the backbone of the Indian economy, and it has been a source of livelihood for a significant portion of the population. Kerala, a state in southern India, is known for its agricultural productivity, with agriculture and allied sectors contributing to a significant portion of the state's economy. The agrarian crisis is a multifaceted phenomenon characterized by various challenges that hinder agricultural productivity, farmer livelihoods, and food security. Kerala, known for its progressive social indicators, has grappled with its share of agricultural problems. This article aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the agrarian crisis in Kerala from 1990 to 2023, focusing on its causes, consequences, policy interventions, and the impact on food security.

#### Agriculture in Kerala:

An overview Kerala is a predominantly agrarian state with more than 50% of its population depending on agriculture for their livelihoods. The state has a total land area of 38,863 square kilometers, of which 32,803 square kilometers are cultivable. However, the actual cultivable land is only around 22,970 square kilometers due to the high population density and urbanization. The major crops grown in Kerala include paddy, coconut, rubber, tea, cardamom, pepper, and ginger. The state is also known for its traditional farming practices, such as organic farming and agroforestry.

#### Agrarian Crisis in Kerala.

The agrarian crisis in Kerala can be traced back to the 1990s when the state started facing a decline in agricultural productivity and profitability. There are several factors that have contributed to this crisis, including:

**Land Fragmentation:** The landholding pattern in Kerala is highly fragmented, with an average landholding size of less than one hectare. This has led to a decrease in economies of scale and increased production costs.

**Lack of Technology Adoption:** The majority of farmers in Kerala still rely on traditional farming methods and have not adopted modern technologies and practices, such as mechanization and precision farming.

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## TRAJECTORY OF KERALA MODEL OF PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM (1942-1997)

Sudheesh K.M.\*

### Abstract

*Kerala's rationing system emerged as the best public distribution system in India. Much like the land reforms, universal education and healthcare, the public distribution system was crucial to strengthen a welfare state in Kerala. The general improvement in the living condition of the people earned a title to Kerala - "Social Democracy in the Global Periphery". Public Distribution System assumes a special significance because the governments have to meet the food requirement of the people without sufficient food production in the domestic economy. Historically, public distribution emerged in Kerala in a challenging condition of severe food shortage, and over the years, universal availability of food for all evolved as a social right of the people. This paper is an attempt to examine the history of the evolution of the Kerala Model of Public Distribution System in Kerala.*

There is no much difference between Kerala and other places in India regarding the timings of the emergence of PDS and the sequence of changes in it. The Public Distribution System in Kerala did not emerge and expanded quickly. The political and economic circumstances in the state influenced its origin and expansion. The paper classifies the history of PDS in Kerala into four stages. They are the emergence of rationing (1942-1954), zone system

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This paper is a part of my PhD thesis titled *New Economic Policy and Welfare: A Study of Public Distribution Policies of United Democratic Front and Left Democratic Front Governments of Kerala (1991-2011)* which I submitted to University of Hyderabad. The paper is also presented at the Indian History Congress 2019 session.



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# NEOLIBERALISM AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM: CHALLENGES AND RESPONSE OF KERALA

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Sudheesh. K. M.\*

## Abstract

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The general improvement in the life conditions of the people through the state intervention has earned the state of Kerala the title “Social Democracy in the Global Periphery”. Public Distribution System (PDS) is one of such interventions that has pivotal significance for Kerala as the domestic production of food in state has been insufficient. Historically, the PDS emerged in Kerala amidst challenging condition of severe food shortage but with the passage of time, the universal availability of food turned as a social right of the people. The positive role of PDS in achieving greater social development in Kerala has attracted the attention of scholarship on the issue. The studies point out that the supply of rice at a subsidised price through PDS has enhanced the per capita consumption of rice in Kerala. Besides, it has also regulated the open market prices of cereals and thereby provided a certain measure of additional food security. But the neo-liberal economic reforms introduced by Government of India in 1990s have adverse impact on the PDS in the state. With this hypothesis in mind, the present paper intends to examine the impact of economic reforms on rationing system (PDS) in the state and the governmental response to it.

**Keywords:** PDS, Rationing, Food Security, Price-control, Neoliberal Reforms, Kerala

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Public Distribution System assumes a special significance because the governments have to meet the food requirement of the people without sufficient food production in the domestic economy. Historically, the public distribution emerged in Kerala

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