

JANUARY 31, 1974

ബഹുമാനപ്പെട്ട മിസ്റ്റർ സ്പീക്കർ, നിയമസഭാസമാജികരേ,

ഗവർണ്ണർ പദവി ഏറ്റെടുത്തശേഷം ഞാൻ ആദ്യമായി നിങ്ങളോട് സംസാരിക്കുകയാണ്. ഈ അവസരത്തിൽ നിങ്ങൾക്കും നിങ്ങളിൽക്കൂടി സംസ്ഥാനത്തെ ജനങ്ങൾക്കും ഞാൻ അനുഭവങ്ങളും ആശംസകളും നേരുന്നു. ഞാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞ ഏപ്രിൽ മാസത്തിലാണ് കേരളത്തിൽ വന്നത്. എങ്കിലും കേരളം എനിക്ക് അപരിചിതമായിരുന്നില്ല. എന്തെന്നാൽ ഇതിനുമുമ്പുതന്നെ ഞാൻ കേരളത്തിൽ ചെറിയ സന്ദർശനങ്ങൾ നടത്തുകയും കേരളത്തിന്റെ പ്രസിദ്ധമായ പ്രകൃതി സൗന്ദര്യം ധാരാളം ആസ്വദിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തിട്ടുണ്ട്. മുൻ കാലങ്ങളിൽ ഈ സംസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ പല പ്രശ്നങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ചും, പ്രത്യേകിച്ച് വ്യാവസായികപ്രശ്നങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ചും എനിക്ക് അറിവുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. ഭരണപരമായ എന്റെ പരിചയം ഈ നാട്ടിലെ ജനങ്ങൾക്ക് പ്രയോജനപ്പെടുന്നതിനുവേണ്ടി അവരേയും അവരുടെ പ്രശ്നങ്ങളേയും കൂടുതൽ അടുത്തു മനസ്സിലാക്കുക എന്നതായിരുന്നു ഇവിടെ വന്നതിനുശേഷം എന്റെ പ്രധാന ഉദ്ദേശം. ഇതിനായി ഞാൻ പ്രധാനമായി രണ്ടു കാര്യങ്ങളാണ് ചെയ്തത്. ഒന്നാമതായി ഞാൻ എല്ലാ ജില്ലകളിലും വളരെയേറെ സഞ്ചരിച്ചു. അങ്ങനെ അനേകം ആളുകളെ നേരിട്ടു കാണുവാനും വ്യവസായത്തിലും കൃഷിയിലും ഇന്നുള്ള നില നേരിട്ടു മനസ്സിലാക്കുവാനും എനിക്കു സാധിച്ചു. രണ്ടാമതായി ഇവിടെത്തെ കാര്യങ്ങൾ നന്നായി മനസ്സിലാക്കുന്നതിനുവേണ്ടി ഞാൻ മലയാളം വളരെ താൽപര്യത്തോടുകൂടി പഠിക്കുവാൻ തുടങ്ങി. എന്നാൽ മുഴുവൻ പ്രസംഗവും മലയാളത്തിൽ ചെയ്യുന്നതിന് തക്ക അറിവ് എനിക്ക് ആ ഭാഷയിൽ ഉണ്ടായിട്ടില്ല. അതിൽ ഞാൻ വ്യസനിക്കുന്നു. എന്റെ ഉച്ചാരണം മേഘമാണെന്നും മലയാളഭാഷ സംസാരിക്കുവാൻ വേണ്ടത്ര കഴിവ് എനിക്കു കിട്ടിയിട്ടില്ലെന്നും ഞാൻ ശങ്കിക്കുന്നു. അതുകൊണ്ട് എന്റെ പ്രസംഗം മുഴുവൻ മലയാളത്തിലാണെങ്കിൽ അതു നിങ്ങളുടെ ക്ഷമയെ പരീക്ഷിക്കുകയായിരിക്കും. അതിനാൽ ഇനി ഞാൻ ഇംഗ്ലീഷിൽ പ്രസംഗിക്കുവാൻ പോവുകയാണ്. അതിനോട് നിങ്ങൾ സഹകരിക്കണം. ഇതുവരെ ഉച്ചാരണത്തിൽ തെറ്റുകൾ വന്നിട്ടുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ നിങ്ങൾ ക്ഷമിക്കുമെന്നു വിശ്വസിക്കുന്നു. ഇത്രയും മലയാളത്തിൽ പറഞ്ഞുകൊണ്ട് ഞാൻ ഇംഗ്ലീഷിൽ സംസാരിക്കാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നു.

Unemployment is the largest single problem eluding solution so far. My Government have tried to make a manysided approach for the purpose of creating employment opportunities in the industrial, agricultural and other fields.

One of them is the half-a-million jobs programmes sponsored by the Government of India for the educated unemployed. It is expected that a total of about 25,176 would have got employment in the State through the various schemes under this programme. Other special employment programme such as Central programme for educated unemployed, Food for Work Programme, Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Project, Crash Scheme for Rural Employment, etc., were also continued and contributed to easing the employment position. The latest report of the Directorate of Employment shows an increase of employment in the organised industrial sector to the extent of 2.7% in 1972-73.

There is a general tendency among us to lean too heavily on Government for getting a job. It need hardly be emphasised that the ability of Government to create jobs has its limitations. To achieve fuller employment serious efforts by every one of us for self-employment has to proceed side by side with the Government's effort to step up industrial and agricultural development which alone can solve the problem in the long run.

Some attempts have been made by my Government through implementation of such programmes a "Earn while you learn"; "Work Experience Programme" and "Youth against famine" among students to inculcate the habit of work, to develop attitudes and interests conducive to self-employment which, while making them better citizens, would lead to more discipline, increased production and better living. The Work Experience Programme is now being implemented in 130 High Schools and 170 U. P. Schools and more schools would be brought under the scheme shortly. For the purpose of helping unemployed educated persons to set up their own industrial ventures my Government has already taken steps to register a new Corporation named "KEPCO" the Kerala Employment Promotion Corporation. The function of this Corporation is to advise technically qualified young men in search of employment as to what line of production they can adopt, and to provide them with the seed money or equity margin to attract working capital from Banks for their projects, as well as technical advice and project reports.

The financial position of the State continues to be under severe strain. However, as a result of the Sixth Finance Commission's award which has been accepted by the Government of India, there will be sizeable increase in the share of Central resources transferred to our State from the next year. It is hoped that with the consequent strengthening of the State's finances, we will be in a position to start the Fifth Plan on a firmer footing. However, I will be failing in my duty if I do not give a warning that unless strict financial discipline is enforced, and all unnecessary or avoidable expenditure mercilessly cut down, not only in the non-Plan sector but even in the Plan sector, we may find it extremely difficult to implement our development programmes.

In the rural sector, Land Reforms continues to be one of the most important programmes designed to give a major shake-up in favour of the poorest. By the disposal of applications for purchase of kudikidappu rights more than three lakhs people have been made full owners of their house-sites. 3.89 lakhs of cultivating tenants have become owner cultivators by assignment of the rights of landlords and intermediaries. 41,168 acres of surplus land taken possession of so far is going to be distributed to landless poor. Taluk Land Boards with popular participation and having powers of Civil and Criminal Courts already set up have not been successful in speedy implementation of ceiling provisions of the Act as was expected. One reason for this is the legal requirement that all the seven members of the Board should be present for taking any decision by the Board acting as a Court. To get over this difficulty my Government would be bringing an amendment in the present session of the Assembly for changing this and empowering the Presiding Officer to constitute Boards consisting of two or more members of the Board. A special scheme for organising the landless agricultural labourers in the Kuttanad Kayal Belt into a farming Co-operative Society, providing them with land from the surplus lands taken over by Government and also giving them adequate financial assistance is proposed to be implemented soon which, if found successful, can be extended to other areas also. The second Collective Farm has been started in Koothali in Kozhikode District, besides the first in Illithode, started earlier in the year.

Improving the conditions of tenants has always been of paramount consideration to my Government. In this direction, my Government is presently seized with the question of abolishing the Jenmikaram in Kanam lands and pending comprehensive legislation on the subject, it is proposed to stay collection of Jenmikarams "Peasant proprietorship" being the slogan of my Government, it is only in the fitness of things that my Government, is trying to settle the remaining available lands such as 30220 (as on 1-1-1974) hectares of poramboke land, 4317 (as on 1-1-1974) hectares of arable forest land, 10500 hectares of kumki land in favour of landless labourers and small cultivators.

Shelter, next to food is one of the prime necessities of man. My Government is paying special attention to this problem also. Our "One Lakh Houses Scheme" is showing good progress. About 30 thousand houses have been completed and another 30 thousand are at different stages of construction. Besides, Housing Board and Housing Co-operatives are playing significant roles in easing housing problems in urban areas.

To increase food production the existing programmes are being implemented with redoubled vigour. Ela programme is being extended to new areas, additional areas are being brought under pulses; spraying programmes are being expanded. The unprecedented pest attack on the Mundakan paddy crop has acted as a damper on the enthusiasm of cultivators who are eager to produce more. But steps are being taken to counter the pest attacks more effectively with the active co-operation of the people. Likewise, in the context of dwindling availability of chemical fertilisers plans are being set afoot to produce organic manure on a big scale. The Kuttanad Project is progressing satisfactorily and it is expected that construction of permanent bunds at an estimated cost of Rs. 40 lakhs will be over in less than six months. The Trichur Kole Project which is expected to benefit 11 thousand hectares of land will be ready for approval in a few months.

My Government also proposes to set up a milk product factory, a feed mixing plant, a buffalo breeding farm, a pig development project and a buffalo meat processing plant in the Fifth Five Year Plan period.

In this day of dwindling supplies and soaring prices it has required a great effort on the part of my Government to keep the public distribution system running. The inadequate allotment of rice from the Centre has been a source of anxiety throughout last year. The enhanced Virappu procurement of about 53

thousand tonnes of paddy is a creditable achievement although it cannot be said to have solved our food problem. The only solution is for surplus States to step up their procurement through direct levy and make available to deficit States like Kerala, the minimum requirements of food. The Central Government must enforce this policy on the surplus States with a firm hand; otherwise all talk of national integration will lose its meaning. In order to wipe out hoarding and blackmarketing within the State my Government have taken several steps. Three surprise squads have been formed to detect violation of control orders. 391 persons have been arrested for various offences under the Essential Commodities Act, D.I.R. and Maintenance of Internal Security Act and 26 officers have been placed under suspension. A scheme to distribute other essential commodities at fair prices is under consideration of my Government.

In improving the conditions of work and living, the labour policy of my Government seeks to promote the workers' productive efficiency so that the economy produces more and more, which in turn can lead to more investment and more employment. This approach which holds the key to the objective of growth combined with social justice has to be extended to every sphere, including agriculture. With this end in view, the Kerala Agricultural Workers' Bill has been placed before the honourable members and it is hoped that there is no doubt that the Bill, as it has emerged from the Select Committee, will bring in a new era of satisfaction and happiness for both the workers and landowners.

For better management of private forests vested with Government, for proper exploitation of forest wealth and for scientific land utilisation my Government, after the Supreme Court judgment, has taken prompt action to implement the provisions of the Kerala Private Forests (Vesting and Assignment) Act, 1971. A senior officer of the Government has been appointed full time as custodian of vested forests. A Committee consisting of senior officers of the Forest, Agriculture, Irrigation and Revenue Departments of Government has been constituted to advise Government on the areas to be retained permanently as forests in the interests of agriculture and the areas that are to be assigned. A land use plan is also being prepared under the guidance of an emeritus scientist of the ICAR who has rich experience in this field. A feature of the enactment is that Government can lay down the crop patterns and prescriptions regarding land utilisation as conditions of the assignment or lease. This opens up unique opportunities for a comprehensive development of the area and the provision of a sound agro base as a foundation for further economic and industrial development of the area. The Committee has been charged with the task of making proper recommendations to achieve this objective. Two funds, one to be called "The Vested Forest Fund" and the second to be called "The Agriculturists Welfare Fund" are to be constituted. The proceeds of these funds will be available for financing the economic development of the area as well as to make available financial aid to the agricultural labourers, scheduled castes and tribes, poor agriculturists and unemployed youth to whom land is to be assigned for cultivation. Survey work which is the necessary preliminary for further action has already been started. The Committee has been directed to submit its report within six months and the assignment of lands will be completed as soon as practicable after that.

Kerala being a coastal State, we can hardly afford to ignore the development of Ports and Fisheries. A major development programme for improvement of Beypore Port at an estimated cost of Rs. 112 lakhs is under implementation. The first stage of Vizhinjam Fishing Harbour has been completed. A new Dredger "Meena" has been purchased this month at a cost of Rs. 2.1 crores. Together with another Dredger loaned by the Government of India, which is already working in our ports, the work of minor port development will be speeded up.

The welfare of large number of fishermen inhabiting the coastal areas of the State is uppermost in our mind. This year my Government has constructed 166 houses for them and 280 houses are under construction. A scheme to construct 320 houses for sea-erosion victims has been approved. It is proposed to initiate a new scheme of giving grants for 1000 houses to be built by the fishermen themselves. 17 new dispensaries have been opened and steps have been taken to provide feeder roads to coastal areas.

I am however sorry to say that the Central Government has not yet given clearance to our Deep Sea Fishing Project submitted nearly a year ago.

Protected water supply received considerable attention of my Government during the Fourth Five Year Plan. While there were only 9 Urban Water Supply Schemes prior to 1970-71, covering 40% of the Urban population there will be 23 schemes completed and 11 schemes in progress by the end of March this year covering 80% of the Urban population. In rural sector, after completion of the 290 schemes under implementation, the coverage of population would go up from 6.5% prior to 1970-71 to 17%.

Health care of our people is of primary concern to my Government. We lead the other States in having achieved the landmark of one bed for every one thousand of population. By the end of this year we would have also achieved the distinction of providing one medical institution in each Panchayat. Besides action is in progress to construct pay wards in district hospitals, to establish research centre for homoeopathy at Kurichi and to start a pharmacy for manufacture of homoeo medicines. An advanced Centre for research and teaching in Ayurveda will be started this year in Kottackal. The Sri Chithra Thirunal Medical Centre in Trivandrum will be developed as a centre of higher study and research.

Industrialisation holds the key to prosperity. Unless the productive base of the economy is expanded and deepened it cannot sustain an expanding population. My Government has been busy setting up new industries and expanding the existing ones. An attempt is being made to bring about a structural change in the State's economy by making adequate investment in large and medium scale industries. A serious bottleneck in the development of large and medium scale industries is the lack of sufficient number of economically viable projects. An important development, however, in the recent years has been the development of consultancy service. A large number of projects are now on the drawing board of K.I.T.C.O. and K.S.I.D.C. for which concrete proposals are already in sight. A Railway wagon factory and a switching equipment factory are under consideration. First phase of Steel Complex at Feroke has been completed. The Scooter Factory at Alleppey, Excel Glass at Kalavoor, expansion of T.C.C. and TELK, etc. are in different stages of implementation. Eddy-current controls at Chalakudy has gone into production, Traco Cable expansion has completed its first phase. The first 1000 metre communication cable unit has been commissioned. We are trying for sanction for two more similar units. It has been decided to start four new sugar mills in the districts of Trivandrum, Idikki, Calicut and Cannanore, preliminary work for which has already started. During the year 1973, 8 Industrial licences and 21 letters of intent have been issued by Government of India for starting new industrial units for manufacture of automobile tyres, paper, razor blades, polythene sacks, refractories, silicon metal typewriters, scooters, etc.

Detailed investigations for economic mineral deposits in different parts of the State are in progress. The final report on the survey of iron ore in our State by Geological Survey of India will be ready within a very short period from now. Investigations for minerals in forest areas; pilot mining and bulk sampling for iron ore, graphite, limestone, bauxite, china clay and sand deposits and drilling for limestone are expected to be completed by the end of this year. On completion of the investigations it would be possible to draw up plans for commercial exploitation of these minerals. A mining Engineer has been appointed as technical member in the Planning Board to prepare project report for starting a Cement Factory and also a project report for exploitation of iron ore deposits.

The scheme for first phase of the reorganisation of the Coir industry has been approved by the Government of India and they have assured necessary finance for the implementation of the scheme, but the full amount for the first year of the scheme has not yet been placed at the disposal of the State Government. The scheme for the second phase is currently under discussion with the Planning Commission.

We have organised an Electronic Corporation for the State with a view to guide the development of Electronic Industry in the State. This industry has a great future and it is very important to the State in the matter of employment to our people particularly educated women. Our Electronic Corporation has already entered the field in an effective way. It has entered into collaboration with world famous companies for manufacturing components and the collaboration agreement will be approved by Project Advisory Board without any difficulty. Agreement with ECIL has been signed for production of 5,000 television sets per year which will be manufactured at our Karakulam Industrial Estate.

Water and Power are two important inputs for any economy and Kerala is fortunate in having abundance of both. In the wake of creeping energy shortage, Kerala can soon become the entrepreneurs' paradise

with its large hydel potential. Every effort is being made by my Government to harness this power potential to the maximum. Besides implementation of Idukki and Kuttiyadi Hydro-electric projects the approval of Planning Commission has been obtained for Silent Valley, Edamalayar and Idikki Stage II Projects; in fact preliminary work on the Silent Valley and Edamalayar Project has already started.

The work on seven major Irrigation projects, viz., Kuttiyadi, Kanhirapuzha, Kallada, Chitturpuzha, Pamba, Periyar Valley and Pazhassi are in progress. It is the intention of my Government to complete all these Projects and make their benefits available by the end of 5th Five Year Plan, except Kallada which is expected to spill-over to the 6th, although partly commissioned in the 5th Plan. It is also proposed to bring 14,500 hectares under Irrigation during 1974-75. Under anti-sea-erosion and flood control programme it is proposed to protect 15 to 20 kilometres of vulnerable reaches of the sea-coast during next year.

Economically and socially backward sections of society continue to receive sympathetic consideration of my Government. The maiden venture of the Kerala Development Corporation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in finding new avenues of employment for Harijans was inaugurated on the Republic Day this year by distribution of auto-rikshaws to Harijans trained as Auto-rikshaw drivers. Special recruitment of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes has made considerable headway. Out of 116 gazetted posts and 3620 non-gazetted posts reserved and notified for special recruitment, 29 gazetted and 774 non-gazetted posts have already been filled up. At the same time another special recruitment has been ordered taking the staff position as on 1st of January this year.

Government have made great strides in the modernisation of the Police Force and in Police Housing. The vehicle fleet has been increased and it is now possible to provide a vehicle to every Police Station. The District Armed Reserves are being reorganised to improve their efficiency. Within the severe constraints of finance, Government are trying their utmost to improve the working conditions of the Policemen.

My Government are aware that sections of Government employees are becoming restive on account of the delay in the implementation of the pay revision for them. I want to assure them on behalf of the Government that there is no cause for any anxiety on that score. My Government have constituted a Cabinet Sub Committee for implementing the promised pay revision. The Cabinet Sub Committee will be shortly holding discussions with the representatives of the employees Associations on their demands. Within the constraints of State Government finances my Government will do its utmost to give a fair deal to its employees.

One of the factors which is likely to dominate the economy in the coming months is the credit squeeze—severest in the monetary history of India—initiated by the Reserve Bank of India during the recent months. Even with the best of intentions, we can ill-afford to ignore the set back to production which the squeeze might entail in the short run. My Government took it up with the Central Government. It is some consolation for us that the Reserve Bank is having a second look at the situation and is likely to exempt some of the priority sectors from the squeeze.

The following are some of the important Bills that will come up for consideration during the course of the year:

1. The Kerala Agricultural Workers Bill, 1972
2. The Kerala Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance) Bill, 1971
3. The Calicut University Bill, 1972
4. The Kerala University Bill, 1972
5. The Kerala Chitties Bill, 1972
6. The Kanam Tenancy Abolition Bill
7. The Stay of Recovery of Arrears of Jenmikaram Bill

Honourable members, this is the first time that I have had the opportunity of addressing your August Assembly and I hope your endeavour to usher in a new era of happiness for our people will bring us together many a time in the years to come.

May I wish you success in your endeavour.

JAI HIND