



**ADDRESS
TO
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
KERALA**

16TH JUNE, 2006

BY

**SHRI R. L. BHATIA
GOVERNOR OF KERALA**

Hon'ble Speaker, Hon'ble Members,

1. I have immense pleasure in warmly welcoming and greeting the members of the 12th Legislative Assembly to its first session. The new Government has just assumed office and I congratulate the members of the Government and place on record my best wishes to them. I am confident that you have the capacity and commitment for the development of this beautiful State, which is uniquely poised for growth in spite of the present problems and challenges.
2. The people of Kerala have given a very clear and unambiguous mandate to the Left Democratic Front (LDF) with much hope and expectation. It has been a verdict against the globalisation policies, rampant corruption, deterioration of law and order, atrocities against women, caste and communal based sectarian strife that made the life of the people miserable during the last five years. Under UDF rule, sectors such as agriculture, traditional industries and fisheries on which the majority of people depend for livelihood have been stagnating and even deteriorating as revealed tragically by the farmers' suicides. I pay homage to the memory of these victims of the mindless globalisation policies. People have elected their new

representatives to this August House with a desire and conviction that the above trends will be reversed and that there will be all round development.

3. My Government is committed to strengthen the foundations on which the unique and globally acclaimed achievements of the Kerala model of development are built. The Government is also determined to address and remove the weak links in the Kerala experience of development. As you are aware the neo-liberal turn in government policies, both at the centre, and at the level of the State Government, has done a lot of damage to the welfare state apparatus nurtured carefully over many decades by our predecessors. In fact, it is such deviations from the welfare-oriented path of development that prompted the people of the state to vote for a change in government. My Government, therefore, is determined to correct the deviations of the recent past and put back the state on its path of all round progress and prosperity that would augment the welfare of even the least privileged.
4. I do not have any doubt in my mind that you all are aware of this responsibility and will live up to the expectations of the people of the State. However, we are severely constrained by the acute fiscal crisis that the new government has inherited. The UDF government that

assumed office declaring a fiscal adjustment programme to resolve the fiscal crisis and reduce the debt burden has vacated office with the budget currently under the consideration of the legislature, showing a yawning resource gap and a near doubling of debt burden. The revised revenue and fiscal deficits of the state government as per the 2006-07 budget proposal of the UDF government, taking into account the uncovered committed revenue expenditure, would be the highest ever in the history of the State. The Rs. 6450 crore proposed as Annual Plan is facing an unparalleled resource crunch both from the receipt as well as non-plan expenditure sides. On the expenditure side, it is nearly Rs. 2000 crore of committed expenditure including payments due to salary revision, the much publicised three rupee rice scheme, arrears of welfare pension and dues to the contractors for works done. The last item alone is estimated to be around Rs. 1200 crore. On the receipt side, the main threat is from Union Finance Ministry that has communicated to the Kerala government its intention to reduce the State's borrow-ceiling by Rs. 2500 crore, because of the heavy debt burden of the State. Kerala has been declared as a Debt Stressed State. The total debt of the State has increased from Rs. 23,919 crore in 2000-01 to Rs. 45,637 crore in 2005-06. The ratio of debt to State Domestic Product, which is a true measure of debt burden, has risen from 34% in 2000-01 to 41% in 2005-

06. If additional resources are not found for the uncovered committed non-plan expenditure and the borrow limit restored, the State, faces a situation of virtual plan holiday with development expenditure coming to a stop.

5. There is however a more basic issue here which we have to recognise and that has to do with the recent evolution of Centre-State relations in our country. The trend can be illustrated with reference to the agrarian crisis of Kerala. The immediate factors underlying the crisis have been largely outside control of the Kerala state itself and are a fall-out of the neo-liberal measures which were thrust on the state without any consultations whatsoever. They include the removal of the protection of farmers from the vicissitudes of the world market, and the rise in a range of costs for the farmers, including the cost of credit, owing to the elimination of Central subsidies and the abandonment of development banking which was introduced through Bank nationalisation in 1969.
6. This is a new and disturbing trend in our economy and polity, whereby the federal system envisaged in our Constitution is being converted into a virtually unitary one. This tendency shows itself not just through the fact of states being at the receiving end of policies in whose making they have had no say, but even directly through an encroachment

on the financial powers of the State Governments. At the moment for instance, State Governments hardly have much leeway in raising tax revenue, since their main revenue source, the sales tax, has been replaced by VAT with rates fixed for them; additionally, states' borrowing limits too have been fixed by the Centre. The role of the National Development Council in our nation's economic life has been reduced and successive Finance Commissions have not been even-handed in their dealings with the Centre and the states.

7. Even more disturbing at present is the evolving policy regime on food management in the country. States like Kerala, which produced cash crops, could do so in the confident belief that there was a public distribution system that would take care of their food needs. This public distribution system in turn was fed through the procurement operations of the Food Corporation of India. This entire system is now being progressively wound up. The allocations for states like Kerala under the PDS are being cut. Food prices through the PDS are also reportedly being jacked up. States like Kerala would be hit extremely hard by any whittling down of the Public Distribution System. Food policy and the food management system of the country is too important an issue to be left to the discretion of the Central Government alone. It must be decided for

the nation as a whole by the only body where the states are represented together with the Centre, namely the National Development Council.

8. In the days and months to come our Government will make serious efforts to unite with other state governments to rectify some of the imbalances that have crept into Centre-State relations in recent years.

9. My Government is committed to the growth of this State with equity, where the needs of the disadvantaged sections of society including the physically and mentally challenged will be accorded the highest priority. My Government responding to the unequivocal verdict of the people with a sense of responsibility and humility, will strive to remove the stumbling blocks that have hampered Kerala's development and unleash a process which is positive, people oriented and geared to bring about perceptible improvement in the socio-economic conditions, enhancing the quality of life of the people and fulfilling the dreams of Keralites. I am sure under the able and collective leadership of this Government, the real but untapped potential of Kerala will be fully realized and this will go down in history as one of the brightest phases in the development of Kerala.

10. My Government attaches the highest importance to a corruption free government upholding transparency and integrity in public life. I am happy to assure you that the affairs of the Government will be conducted in a manner, which is transparent, and decisions taken in a manner that is free, fair and equitable. It will be my Government's resolve to weed out the menace of corruption from public life. Most stringent action will be taken to book corruption in all its forms and manifestations. My Government will extend full cooperation for the implementation of the Right to Information Act so as to ensure accountability and remove arbitrariness.
11. My Government is committed to accelerating the economic growth so that we can make a dent into the problem of educated unemployment in the state. In order to accelerate the economic growth, there must be a major step up in investment, improvement in efficiency of resource use, and greater focus on sectors that have the potential for faster growth. Knowledge industries such as IT and Biotechnology and service industries such as tourism have been identified as new growth sectors. This is a re-orientation that was initiated by the previous LDF government. We are committed to setting up the necessary infrastructure and developing the human resource and

creating an investor friendly climate in order to ensure that the state rapidly advances towards the new horizons of growth.

12. But, unlike the UDF, we will not neglect agriculture, traditional industries and fisheries upon which the majority of our people depend for their livelihood. Programmes will be drawn up to revive these sectors and strengthen them to withstand the onslaught of globalisation and to enhance the well being of the work force. We are also committed to strengthening the public infrastructure in education, health and welfare and to improve the quality of services. Special attention will be paid to those social groups that have been left out of the mainstream development process like adivasis and dalits fisher folk. It must also be ensured that development process strengthens gender equality.
13. Democratic Decentralisation will play a central role in increasing the productivity of agriculture and other small scale sectors, in improving the quality of public services, in eradicating poverty and in improving the quality of public administration through involvement of the people in decision making and implementation of development plans.
14. It was this understanding which informed the People's Plan Campaign during 1997-2001. The success of People's Plan

Campaign had taken Kerala to the forefront of the decentralisation process in the country. However, during the last five years many of the initiatives such as district plans, micro watershed programme, linking of Neighbourhood Groups to Grama Sabhas and so on were shelved, rights of the Local Self Governments encroached upon, popular participation not encouraged and the planning process became routine and even got trivialized.

15. Let me solemnly affirm the commitment of my Government in revitalizing decentralization. Already the first steps have been taken to translate this commitment into reality. The Rural Development and Local Self Government Departments have been integrated and as the next step the process will percolate downwards to various institutions and agencies up to the cutting edge level so that a seamlessly integrated professional support system emerges for the Panchayats of Kerala. In the last decade local governments have performed creditably in providing minimum needs infrastructure and in reaching out to the poor and reducing their poverty mainly through the Kudumbashtree programme. As the next step, my Government intends to concentrate on three important areas – namely local economic development, human resource development and responsive administration.

16. For local economic development it is necessary to rejuvenate traditional agriculture. For this, the focus would be on integrated watershed management. Government would implement the centrally supported National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme sanctioned in the backward districts of Palakkad and Wayanad to improve the agricultural situation in these two districts even while providing much needed employment to the poor agricultural labourers especially the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. It would be our earnest attempt to showcase the scheme as a national model. To complement development of agriculture, it is proposed to develop rural business hubs to reap the advantages of clustering and to improve marketing. In this respect the quality upgradation and improved marketing of Kudumbashree products would be a priority item.
17. As local governments are the owners and managers of all public institutions related to human development like anganwadis, schools and hospitals, a policy shift towards improving the quality of the service delivery through these institutions is envisaged. For making the local governance more responsive, a radical restructuring of procedures and management systems is intended. A critical component of this would be to re-launch computerization of local governments by giving freedom to them to purchase

computers on their own with government providing software, training and technical support.

18. Though Kerala's decentralized planning has become a national model my Government intends to take it further and go for the preparation of well-integrated District Plans. Simultaneously measures will be initiated to prepare micro watershed master plans, which together with the district plan would constitute the basis of the 11th Five Year Plan of the Local Self Governments. The methodology of watershed master plan preparation and the 11th Five Year Plan will be such as to ensure maximum popular participation, transparency and scientific objectivity in the planning process. Preparation of maintenance plans for all the public assets owned by each local government to be implemented using the Maintenance Grant would also be given priority.

19. Kerala has not yet tapped the potential of the national urban development initiative through the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission. My Government would immediately develop City Developments Plans and investment projects for Thiruvananthapuram and Kochi and also develop comprehensive plans for the smaller towns as well as for a crosscutting urban poverty reduction project

to avail maximum benefit from the new national programme. The services of the Town and Country Planning Department will be fully utilized for this purpose.

20. The Kerala Panchayat Raj Act and the Kerala Municipality Act were restructured and updated in 1999. Now, based on the practical experience and in the light of the recommendations of three State Finance Commissions, a series of amendments to these two Acts are planned. As part of implementing the recommendations of the State Finance Commission, plinth area based property taxation would be given immediate priority and implemented from the current year onwards. This simple and transparent system would enable the citizen to self-assess property tax and remove altogether possibilities of manipulation and corruption.
21. The Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA) has already attained national recognition. It will be further strengthened through integration with the network of extension training centres and the State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) – to realize the objective of enhancing its status into a Centre of Excellence on local governance in South Asia.
22. My Government intends to give highest priority in tackling the agrarian crisis in the state even though it has no control

over the import policies and other globalisation measures adopted by the Central Government. Within the limits set by the federal framework, our attempt shall be to improve the productivity through watershed based planning, better provision of credit, reform of land and water management institutions, adoption of better technologies for cultivation and post harvest operations and value addition through agro processing. Adoption of biotechnology, promotion of organic farming and other innovative farming methods will be popularised. The Agri-export Zones for Medicinal plants and Fruits and Vegetables will be made fully functional.

23. My Government have already decided to write off the loans taken by the farmers who have committed suicide. The Government has already initiated dialogue with financial institutions regarding measures that could be adopted for reducing the existing debt burden such as one time settlement, reduction of interest burden, re-scheduling of loan and so on. In addition, my Government is considering the setting up of a Debt Relief Commission with quasi-judicial powers, which will go into cases of debt owed by farmers to private moneylenders. It will arbitrate on the appropriate level at which the debt contracted at exorbitant interest rates in the past should now be fixed, get banks to take over the debt wherever possible, with the government

coming in as a possible guarantor, and decide on cases of debt write-off for destitute farmers where the government can settle the entire debt on the farmers behalf.

24. The co-operative sector, which accounts for nearly half the agriculture credit has been in the forefront of the ameliorative measures for the indebted farmers. Moratorium on repayment of agricultural loans taken from co-operative institutions has been declared. The government is also considering schemes to provide interest relief on agricultural loans. Recovery steps on agricultural loans availed from co-operative societies will be postponed for one year and liquidity support arranged from NABARD or other sources for credit co-operative societies to the extent of agricultural loan recovery foregone for one year. Arrears payable to agricultural loans under the Agricultural Production Cost Relief Scheme will be released at the earliest.
25. 50,000 new Kissan Credit Cards will be issued through Primary Agricultural Credit Co-operative Societies during the year. Effective steps will be taken to ensure that all eligible applicants for educational loans through co-operative credit institutions are sanctioned without undue delay. In Wayanad district, which has already successfully completed the first phase of the NCDC assisted ICDP project, the second phase will be implemented.

26. My Government also proposes to revamp the Krishi Bhavans and transform them as effective Service Centres, for meeting all the service needs of farmers at one point. In order to ensure that the assistance reaches the most deserving among the small and marginal farmers, Government would launch a drive to identify these farmers and provide them with proper identification documents to enable access to quick relief, particularly in times of calamities.
27. The decline in the area under paddy cultivation and conversion of paddy lands for non-agricultural and commercial purposes are serious problems, which need to be tackled immediately. Paddy fields have an important role in the preservation of environment through maintenance of water balance and therefore, rather than implementing the paddy programmes merely as programmes aimed at increased production of paddy, these programmes will be recast with the involvement and participation of communities, local governments and other institutions aimed at environmental protection and conservation with focus on increased rice production. To co-ordinate these activities a Paddy Board will be constituted.
28. In order to address the crisis faced by the coconut farm economy in a holistic manner, it is proposed to constitute

'Kera Groups' in every Panchayat. To deal with the problem of root wilt on a lasting basis, a Project for Management of Root Wilt Disease with an outlay of Rs.1924 crore, which was approved by the Planning Commission, will be implemented on a cluster basis with the direct participation of farmers.

29. Our effort in the animal husbandry and dairy sectors would be to evolve schemes to retain the existing livestock farmers in the animal husbandry sector and to promote livestock farming among the rural poor. This is of paramount importance as livestock plays an important role in providing economic and nutritional security. My Government, would, therefore strive to augment the livestock population of the State both in terms of number and quality. Increasing the production of milk, egg and meat can be achieved by integrating the production process at the homestead level. This would go a long way in generating more self-employment opportunities and help the weaker sections in enhancing their income levels.
30. To further this objective we would, therefore, like to complete the process of adopting Panchayats for Intensive Poultry Rearing and developing marketing network involving the Kudumbashree network. With the aim of promoting trade in livestock and dairy products, disease -

control programmes will be undertaken so as to promote Kerala as a Disease Free Zone. The quality of milk distributed, including that from outside the state will be monitored in order to ensure quality. The Government also proposes to strengthen the welfare fund scheme for dairy farmers.

31. Fisher folk are a vulnerable section of the society and have been increasingly marginalized from the development process. Their historical backwardness has been compounded by resource depletion on the one hand and rising cost of fishing on the other. An integrated programme for coastal development would be drawn up for implementation by the different line departments and the Local Governments. The most important component would be a programme for providing universal housing, sanitation, drinking water and electricity to every household. Livelihood restoration programme in Tsunami affected areas such as sea-food kitchen units, integrated fish processing units for value addition with the help of common facilities, clusters of ornamental fish breeding units, mussel culture, clusters of value added coir products, community resource centres in selected Panchayats, improved fresh fish vending units and similar other schemes which could be implemented through a community-based system will be encouraged. Participatory coastal afforestation, coastal

protection programme and conservation of mangroves will also be promoted to improve the livelihood of coastal communities. Aqua-parks will be set up for ornamental fishes and programmes will be launched on a mission mode to augment culture fishery, both inland and brackish water. My Government also proposes to promote deep sea fishing for exploiting the tuna resources, improve the hygienic conditions of the fishing harbours and repair and reconstruct fishing harbours and landing centres damaged due to tsunami. The integrated coastal programme will be funded from various sources, the most important being Rs. 1400 crore Tsunami Rehabilitation Project. No efforts will be spared to bring in necessary legislation to ensure remittance of cess from fish exporters to the Fishermen Welfare Fund. Pattayams or Possession Certificate will be ensured to all fishing households.

32. My Government will take uncompromising steps for the preservation and protection of forests and for the conservation of bio-diversity of the State. Some of the major steps to be taken on priority by my Government are formulation of a new Forest Policy for the State within six months, protection of sandal forests of Marayoor, establishment of a sandal oil factory in the Public Sector / Co-operative sector in the coming financial year and preservation of mangroves.

33. Besides my Government will ensure People's participation in forest protection measures through agencies such as Vanasamrakshana Samithies, Eco-Development Committees etc. Suitable amendments/modification will be made in the existing rules to ensure protection of trees in and around forest regions without depriving individual rights of tree cultivation. Improved monitoring system for early detection and warning of forest fires will be introduced with the technical support of National Remote Sensing Agency. The banks of rivers, which are prone to erosion, will be stabilized through belt plantations of bamboos with the involvement of Local Governments.
34. After agriculture, traditional industries are the biggest source of employment. Coir industry is distributed all along the costal belt and it alone employs more than 3.5 lakh workers. My Government proposes to re-organize the industry through reviving the co-operatives, removing the middlemen, modernizing and diversifying production, ensuring adequate supply of husks and fibre and strengthening marketing. The losses of the potentially viable co-operatives will be written off and the liabilities converted into shares to enable them to raise institutional finance. The middlemen system or the depots system in the coir-manufacturing sector will be abolished and coir purchase price enforcement scheme introduced. Research

and technology upgradation is vital to ensure competitiveness of the industry in the market.

35. My Government will provide all necessary assistance for the efficient functioning and upgradation of the Coirfed, Coir Corporation and Foam Mattings (India) Ltd. Government is committed to following the terms of settlement decided upon in the discussion held with the coir workers unions, small scale producers unions and the exporters. My Government will include one-lakh women coir workers under the Mahila Coir Yojana Scheme, within 5 years. Remunerative prices will be ensured for coir and coir products. A census of coir establishments, equipments and workers will be organized in order to create a firm database for policy making and project formulation.
36. In the cashew sector, the major intervention of my government will be to revamp the Kerala State Cashew Development Corporation and CAPEX so that they become economically viable and set standards for wage and labour conditions. All the relevant provisions of the existing labour laws, Factories Act etc will be strictly implemented. Earnest efforts would be taken to curb the unhealthy trends created by middlemen in the industry. Development of market for cashew kernels and allied products, introduction of value added products to make this agro industry more attractive

and expansion of cashew plantations are the other major steps that will be adopted in this sector.

37. Dinesh Beedi Co-operative Society is the biggest Society of its kind in India supporting approximately 40,000 workers. Changing lifestyles and adverse market conditions have resulted in the financial instability of the Society. My Government is committed to evolving a Special Package to restructure and revive the Dinesh Beedi Cooperative Society.
38. Similarly, the traditional and vibrant Handloom Sector of Kerala will be strengthened with special emphasis on professional marketing. Modernisation and diversification of production, welfare measures for the weavers and strengthening of co-operative will be the interventions in this sector. Toddy tapping industry will be revamped and more employment opportunities created.
39. The public sector constitutes the backbone of modern industry in Kerala. However, most of the public sector units are facing severe crisis. In contrast to the neo-liberal solution of privatisation, my Government is committed to reviving the public sector. Measures like extending one-time assistance, technology upgradation, injection of fresh capital and improving the standards of corporate

governance for reviving viable units will be adopted. To improve professional management, CEO's will be selected solely on merit basis and for this a selection committee will be constituted.

40. My Government recognizes the need for providing world class, state-of-the art infrastructure as an essential condition for the rapid industrialization of the state. To spearhead this activity, Government intends to immediately float a public limited company on the model of Cochin International Airport (CIAL). Government along with KSIDC and KINFRA shall have substantial percentage of share holding in the company. My Government further proposes to tap the vast potential of Non-Resident Keralites across the world to raise the balance share capital. The company will build quality infrastructure required to attract high-tech industries. My Government also proposes to set up a large food-processing park in Wayanad district.
41. My Government intends to create opportunities for value addition in the mineral sector. Instead of exporting of raw, unprocessed mineral sands that fetch very low value, we plan to consciously move up the value chain.
42. My Government recognizes the critical role of IT as an enabler of employment generation and economic

development of the State. The previous government failed in sustaining the tempo of investment for developing infrastructure in IT sector in the state. My Government will fill in this gap, by augmenting both public and private investment in this sector. The State's inherent strength of quality manpower and connectivity infrastructure will be fully leveraged to create two lakh direct jobs in the IT/ITES/BPO sectors in the next five years. This will further generate six lakh indirect jobs. Establishing capabilities in the production/hardware sector will be encouraged, rather than depending on ITES sector alone. In order to achieve the above goals, my Government will create an investor friendly environment and develop the infrastructure. My Government is aware of the strategic importance of promoting Free and Open Source Software (FOSS). We shall strive to make Kerala the FOSS industry destination of India.

43. The E-governance initiatives of the State Government will be given further impetus with the commissioning of State Wide Area Network by March 2007. This project will result in giving high-speed broadband connectivity to government offices up to the Block Panchayat level to be then linked to the Village Panchayats. The Akshaya E-literacy project will be revamped to make it more effective. About thirty thousand Akshaya centres will be ready by the end of March

2007 to provide delivery of various Government / Local government and other services to the citizens. To ensure quality manpower for the IT industry, Government intends to set up a certification mechanism for the various courses imparted through IT training centres in the State.

44. To achieve the above objectives, my Government will frame a new IT/ITES policy shortly.
45. Tourism has emerged as the largest industry in the world by virtue of being the highest contributor to the GDP, employment creation and capital investment and tax generation. Keralites can be proud of the fact that Kerala is the most sought-after tourist destination in the country. My Government is committed to taking all steps to attract investment for the development of tourism.
46. During the next financial year, the focus would be on integrated development of tourism circuits connecting various destinations of the State. The Government would also concertedly promote new and emerging avenues in tourism like Health Tourism, Adventure Tourism, Plantation Tourism, Rural Tourism and Eco tourism. New initiatives like Farm Tourism and "My Village - A Tourist Friendly Village" intending to spread the benefit of tourism to the local communities especially rural agrarian communities

will be launched. The tourism potential of Malabar will be fully utilized. Tourism centres such as Bekal, Nilambur, Beypore, Peruvannamoozhy, Wayanad, Valiyaparambu and the backwaters of Malabar will be developed into full fledged tourism centres. A Cultural Village will be developed to revive the traditional art and folk forms of the region.

47. My Government also intends to prepare a comprehensive perspective plan, recognizing the uniqueness of each tourist destination. Schemes for tourism development will be crafted to showcase the abundant natural wealth of Kerala. The Government will take all precautions to ensure that our cultural heritage and environmental concerns are not compromised upon in the guise of development of tourism. Special efforts will be taken to control pollution due to tourism related activities.
48. Centres of Excellence for creating the human resource to meet the growing demand for trained manpower in the tourism sector will be set up. The Government would promote accommodation facilities for budget tourists in all important tourist centres. Special facilities would be arranged for pilgrims at all the pilgrim centres as part of tourism development. Transportation facilities will also be

improved to enable the tourists to have hassle free journeys in the State.

49. The NRKs, who are toiling very hard in various parts of the world and have done Kerala proud by making a mark in their chosen fields, and contributed significantly to the states economy will be involved in the developmental schemes of Kerala. An atmosphere will be created in which they will be encouraged to invest their hard earned money for the development of their homeland. The scope of functioning of the NORKA department will be expanded to meet the expectations and aspirations of the NRKs. Information on Keralites working outside the state will be collected for creating a database.
50. The Electricity Act 2003 paved the way for privatisation of power sector and many states in our country have already moved in this direction. Let me assure you, my Government will not privatise the KSEB and it will be retained in the public sector.
51. The LDF Government in its earlier tenure, from 1996 to 2001 could create history by achieving a capacity addition of 1089 MW while the previous UDF Government could achieve a capacity addition of 70 MW only. This Government will complete all the ongoing projects in a time

bound manner. All hydel projects will be implemented without causing much damage to the environment. The potential of small hydro projects and non-conventional energy sources will also be harnessed to the maximum extent possible to make the power sector self-reliant. Hydel tourism will be promoted.

52. Good monsoons during 2004 and 2005, increase in tariff effected during 2001 and 2002, and the reduction in interest rate for the loans availed by Kerala State Electricity Board and reduction in capital expenditure etc. have helped Kerala State Electricity Board to reduce the revenue gap. However there is an outstanding loan of Rs. 4541.32 crore at present. My Government will issue policy directions to the Kerala State Electricity Regulatory Commission to rationalize tariff in such a way as to enable the industrial sector to compete in the international market and also ensure social justice. This Government is committed to provide free electricity connection to all families below poverty line. On the service delivery aspect, all the pending applications for electrical connection numbering about 2.5 lakh will be cleared in a time bound manner and thereafter electric connections would be provided on demand commencing this year itself. Moreover, effective steps will be taken to collect arrears and to prevent power theft. The functioning of adalats will be expanded and made more effective.

53. My Government will endeavour to materialise the project for Power Highway within the State. The functioning of ANERT and the Energy Management Centre would be made more effective and they would co-operate with Local Governments in achieving these objectives.
54. Further, maintenance operations of the transmission and distribution system will be undertaken on a war footing, to ensure uninterrupted quality power and to reduce transmission and distribution loss. The required number of employees will be appointed or deployed for this purpose.
55. In the case of roads my Government would integrate and update the existing studies conducted by various National and International agencies so as to prepare a long term vision for the road network required to be constructed, upgraded or maintained in tune with the ever increasing traffic requirements of Kerala. Considering the rapid development taking place in the Kochi region, especially in the wake of the new Container Terminal, Special Economic Zones etc., the Public Works Department intends to commission a multinodal strategic option study by a National level agency. This study, which would be completed in six months, would focus on the special road designs and appropriate connectivity with the National

Highways, State Highways, Airports and Seaports. This would also form the basis of developing and maintaining the road network in the Central region of Kerala and also for linking with the northern part of the State.

56. Working in close co-ordination with the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI), my Government would take all steps needed to build four-lane roads in all the stretches under NH 47 and complete the bye-passes. The Roads and Bridges Corporation Kerala will give priority to complete the railway over bridges on a corridor basis so as to ensure free flow of traffic on the major arterial roads of Kerala. The implementation of Capital City Road Development Project undertaken by the Kerala Road Fund Board (KRFB) and construction of roads under Kerala State Transport Project will be expedited and completed. The Highway Protection Act, 1999 will be fully implemented in letter and spirit. My Government proposes to provide adequate infrastructure for the Motor Vehicles Department to ensure road safety.
57. Development of ports and equipping them with the modern handling equipments is very important for the economic development of the State. With this end in view my Government proposes to give special priority in developing Vizhinjam Port as a Deepwater International Container

Transshipment Terminal. Beypore Port will be developed to cater to passenger and cargo traffic from mainland India to Lakshadweep Islands and Alappuzha will be developed as a Marina-cum-cargo port so as to develop the tourism potential of the area as well as the State. Azhikkal will be developed as a general cargo port. The development of minor ports such as Kollam is also taken up.

58. In order to ensure optimal balance in inter-modal mix in transport it is important to emphasise the development of Smart Waterways. The development of Kovalam-Kollam, Kottappuram - Hosdurg stretch of West Coast Canal and other feeder canals in the State is to be taken up utilising the 12th Finance Commission award. The work on revival of Veli - Kovalam stretch of the TS Canal (Parvathy Puthanar) would be taken up during the year.
59. KSRTC has been following a policy of replacing vehicles, which are old, and during the current year also new buses will be procured after assessing the requirement. The Corporation intends to put up a modern Bus Terminal Complex at Thampanoor, Thiruvananthapuram. In order to augment non-operating revenue, KSRTC would put up modern Bus Terminal-cum-Commercial Complexes at Kozhikode, Malappuram, Angamali and Karunagapally and also would construct commercial complexes at Kollam and

Attakulangara in Thiruvananthapuram. Bus Station-cum-Commercial complexes at Kasargode, Muvattupuzha, Kottarakkara, Peroorkada and Kattakada are to be taken up by the Corporation using in-house facilities, with the help of loans from institutional finance. These projects will substantially add to the revenue of the Corporation.

60. During the current financial year, the KTDFC proposes to expand its business. The Company also proposes to launch the Special Vehicle Scheme for MI.As at reduced interest rate, using the subvention/discount received from dealer/manufacturer and construction of multi-storied Commercial complexes after the successful completion of the present "Trans Towers" Project.
61. It will be the endeavour of the Water Resources Department to prioritise its activities and aim at faster execution of the projects ensuring total transparency with a view to providing the intended benefits to the people at the earliest. The preservation of Kerala's water resources, protection of its rivers and rainwater harvesting will be a priority for my Government. The new State Water Policy will be finalised soon. Creation of public awareness regarding water conservation and management through mass campaigns involving Panchayathi Raj institutions and educational institutions will be given priority.

62. Providing safe drinking water is uppermost in the agenda of the Government. With this end in view, the Kerala Water Authority proposes to further expand its Rainwater Harvesting Programme, Swajaldhara scheme and schemes under ARWSP, benefiting a population of about 7.68 lakhs. Under the Bharat Nirman Project, it is proposed to cover 2238 habitations benefiting a population of about 11 lakh during 2006-2007. Five Urban Water Supply Schemes covering population of one lakh would also be completed under AUWSP. During the current year, implementation of the JBIC assisted Water supply Project, will be expedited ensuring transparency at all stages.
63. In addition to drinking water supply in rural areas under the Jalanidhi Project, it is proposed to take up two major water supply schemes in the Tsunami affected coastal areas for an amount of approximately Rs. 60 crores. It is also proposed to take up about 17 number of river-based schemes sponsored by multiple beneficiary groups during this year with the involvement of Panchayat. Besides, Groundwater recharge activities are also to be taken up on a large scale.
64. To mitigate the hardships faced by people residing in coastal areas, my Government will effectively utilise Rs. 175 crore provided by the 12th Finance Commission to Kerala for the period 2005-2010 for taking up anti-sea erosion works.

65. The agreement for implementation of the National Hydrology Project Phase-II has been signed and the scheme will commence during this year. In addition to the four ongoing projects under Command Area Development Authority, Kallada irrigation project has also been proposed for inclusion in the CAD programme. It is proposed to implement Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM) in select command areas of the irrigation projects during 2006-07 on a pilot basis for efficient and judicious use of water.
66. In the Housing sector my Government will implement a programme wherein all the families of Kerala will have residential houses within five years and for realizing this my Government intends to launch a people's movement under the leadership of local governments with the involvement of NRIs, NGOs, political parties and organizations of the people. Special emphasis will be given to upgradation of houses constructed under "One lakh Housing Scheme" and the houses of the Scheduled Tribes.
67. The state has attained universal enrolment in primary education and near total retention of students up to high school level. In order to upgrade the quality of education, my Government proposes to introduce social audit in Government and aided schools from this academic year. English language labs set up in a few schools will be extended to more Higher Secondary Schools this year.

68. My Government would take steps to enhance the nutritional content of Noon Meals and ensure clean and hygienic preparation and serving of food in the schools. Drinking water supply and toilet facilities will be provided in all schools and thatched buildings will be completely converted into tiled or concrete ones with the help of local governments.
69. My Government proposes to give special attention to the education of the disabled and disadvantaged groups by integrating them into the mainstream. It is also proposed to give training to girl students in self-defence arts. IT education will be extended to UP level and EDUSAT facilities will be provided in all schools. A certificate course in Communicative English will be started for students and teachers to enhance their language skills. To prevent sub-standard teaching and decline in student strength in Government/Aided Schools it is intended to take steps for closure of unauthorized schools.
70. At the Higher Secondary level, my Government proposes to set up an HRD (Human Resource Development) centre for training of teachers. In the vocational education sector, Training-Cum-Production Centres are planned for each Vocational Higher Secondary School. Career and Guidance centres will be opened in districts other than

Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam and Kozhikode where such centres are now working. The Service Delivery Project implemented in Government VHSE schools will be extended to the remaining 219 Government Schools this year. An International Training Institute for training and research in vocational subjects is also under consideration.

71. Kerala is renowned for its achievements in elementary education but has a very low rank in higher education. The participation rate of higher education in the State has to be enhanced to keep up with other States. At the same time, it is to be ensured that the poorer sections benefit from the increased opportunities. My Government will take effective steps to ensure social justice to the marginalized sections of society by providing financial assistance to deserving students in higher education in general and professional education in particular.
72. My Government will strive for the improvement of quality in higher education. Emphasis will be given to the revision of curriculum and research in the Universities. A permanent mechanism will be set up for the continuous evaluation of the academic content, curriculum and mode of teaching in the Universities and provide feedback. The alumni associations will also be used to provide substantive inputs to improve the standard of higher education. The

administration of the Universities will be modernized with the help of Information Technology.

73. A comprehensive legislation will be enacted regarding the admission to the professional courses removing the inadequacies of the existing Act and bringing professional education within the reach of the common man. In no case, the present trend of crass commercialisation of education is permitted. The initiative to develop the Cochin University of Science and Technology to the level of an IIT will be expedited by my Government by instituting a fast track mechanism for the implementation of the project. The Kerala State Open University will be started during the current financial year and comprehensive measures will be initiated to revamp the system of entrance examinations for admission to the professional colleges giving the students better access to specialised coaching.

74. The Science and Technology Department intends to set up the Kerala School of Mathematics as a joint venture in collaboration with the National Board of Higher Mathematics (NBHM), under the Department of Atomic Energy, Government of India, to promote mathematical research. The Biotechnology Programme will give specific thrust to industrial application and applied research projects. An "Environment Monitoring Project" has been initiated

in the area of water quality. My Government will introduce National Green Corps (Ecoclubs) in 250 schools in each district with the assistance of the Ministry of Environments and Forests. School students will be encouraged to participate in the Scheme for Promotion of Young Talents in Science (SPYTiS) and science popularisation programmes will focus on energy and environment conservation, water conservation, forest conservation and other relevant field of science and technology. The Patent Information Centre (PIC) will be further strengthened to provide support to Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) related activities.

75. Conserving the cultural heritage of the State is vital to the growth of our society as a vibrant living entity and is something to which my Government assigns the utmost importance. Cultural institutions and academies functioning under the government would be strengthened as democratic institutions with strong citizen interface.
76. The State Archaeology department would implement a scheme for the identification and conservation of structures, murals, temples etc. of archaeological and/historical significance in collaboration with Local Governments and with the assistance of the Kerala Council for Historical Research. The scheme would include the study and

documentation of local histories. The fund allocation for artists in indigent circumstances and for providing financial assistance for medical treatment for destitute artists and cultural activists will be enhanced considerably.

77. The Government of India has provisionally recognized the Kerala Kalamandalam as "Deemed University". It is proposed to avail of this opportunity and raise the Kalamandalam to an institution of cultural excellence through careful positioning and nurturing of academic research and through enhancing its profile of cultural outreach both within India and abroad. The Kunjan Nambiar Smarakam will be upgraded as a centre for Thullial Studies under the Deemed University. The year 2006 is the death centenary of Raja Ravi Varma. My Government intends to give a facelift to Sri Chitra Art Gallery, which houses many of his invaluable works and to complete the restoration of the 49 Raja Ravi Varma paintings entrusted to the National Museum, New Delhi this year. Conservation of the Hill Palace, Thrippunithura and the Napier Museum, Thiruvananthapuram will be taken up under the 12th Finance Commission Award.
78. The Sreepadam palace in Thiruvananthapuram, which is currently under acquisition, will be conserved and converted into a Numismatic Museum to house the rare

collection of coins of historical and archaeological significance with the State Archaeology department. An International Historical Museum on public action with focus on people's struggles in Kerala that illustrate how people made history will be set up as Punnapra-Vayalar memorial. It will be initiated as a part of the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the first struggle for Indian independence of 1857.

79. Kerala has made remarkable achievements in the field of sports. My Government intends to bring legislation for revamping the Sports Council. It will also review the existing Acts and Rules concerning sports and bring in the required change to promote sports at local and state levels.
80. Let me reiterate the commitment of my government to ensure quality health care with focus on preventive care and medical services to the poor and the needy, at affordable cost, from Government hospitals at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. A 'Life Cycle Approach' will be adopted for health care delivery focusing on maternal and child health, adolescent health and geriatric health care.
81. My Government will take steps to activate the State Rural Health Mission and District Rural Health Missions, involving Panchayathi Raj Institutions in a big way. Health

care delivery will be strengthened by ensuring convergence of various schemes under the line departments such as Water Resource Department and Social Welfare Department and the Local Governments. With this view in mind, a People's Health Programme will be formulated and implemented by adopting a holistic, integrated and decentralized approach for health care, sanitation, drinking water, nutrition and waste management with an inbuilt component for social control and monitoring. A focused programme targeted at vulnerable groups - tribal population, fisherman community and physically and mentally challenged persons will also be implemented.

82. The disease burden pattern in Kerala suggests a drastic increase in non-communicable, life style diseases as well as incidence of a host of resurgent communicable diseases. AIDS is another growing menace. Therefore my Government will bring in cost effective clinical and public health approaches to address burden of these diseases.
83. A comprehensive 'Computerized Procurement and Inventory Management System' will be introduced, to bring in transparency and to improve efficiency in procurement of medicines and equipments in Health Department. Strengthening the institutions and ensuring their functional autonomy will improve the quality of medical and para-

medical education. The Thiruvananthapuram Medical College would be upgraded as a Centre of Excellence, with a status equivalent to AIIMS. My Government will take steps to establish a Medical University linking the educational institutions in the health sector. Further, the service conditions of doctors in the Government Sector will be suitably modified to attract and retain the best talent.

84. Homeopathy, Ayurveda and other Indian systems of medicine will be encouraged. There will be a special focus on research on specialized Ayurvedic treatment and Ayurvedic medicinal product development.
85. Kerala stands foremost among the States of the country as far as the social and development indicators pertaining to women and children are concerned. However, a more focused, holistic and integrated approach is required, in order to sustain our achievements and for the overall welfare and development of our women and children. I am happy to announce that my Government intends to carve out a separate department of Women and Child Development.
86. The outreach of the Integrated Child Development Services will be further extended. The 3258 additional Anganwadis sanctioned by Government of India, particularly in coastal, tribal, urban slums and unreachable areas of the State,

where nutrition levels of children are below the State average, will soon start functioning. Moreover, Take Home Rations will be provided to all children below three years to reduce nutritional deficiencies. Our Anganwadis will be further developed as Community Resource Centres and the government will explore the way to improving the condition of Anganwadi workers.

87. My Government is deeply concerned about the plight of young children in distress – be it due to any reason. Child line services to help such victims will be extended to all the districts with State support starting with Palakkad, Kannur, Kasargode and Malappuram. Further, Government will encourage placement for all orphaned children by way of adoption or foster care under the provisions of the Juvenile Justice Act.
88. This Government is committed to the welfare of our disabled brethren. The Anganwadi workers will be trained in early detection of childhood disabilities. This will go a long way in reducing the incidence of correctable learning and physical disabilities among children. Dwarf and small stature men and women will be included in handicapped category.
89. The Public Distribution System in the state, which is the best in the country, is being steadily undermined by the new

reforms. The shift from universal rationing to targeted system has resulted in a major proportion of even the BPL families themselves being excluded from Public Distribution System. Our State has 14.16 lakh families Below the Poverty Line. However, Government of India has made provision for allotment of food grains covering only 9.58 lakh BPL families. Steps are being taken to identify and exclude the ineligible persons from the BPL category and to include the eligible persons. Although no provision was made by the previous Government for distribution of rice at Rs. 3/- per Kg. to the poor, this scheme will be continued, for which an amount of Rs. 10 crore per month is required.

90. In the silver jubilee year of starting of the Maveli Stores, my Government will take steps to improve the service delivery standards in the Maveli Stores, Labham Market, Sabari Super Markets and ARD Sabari stores. More medical stores will be opened during the current year under the Supplyco. Further, to ensure a permanent marketing channel for the farmers in the State and to ensure a stable price for the farmers, my Government has authorized Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation to procure paddy directly from farmers for converting to rice for distribution through Public Distribution System. A special incentive for the consumers for Onam is also being considered in order to strengthen marketing intervention during the festival period.

91. Kerala has a long and illustrious track record in the provision of public services. In order to build capacity to monitor the quality of these services and upgrade it, Government proposes to set up a Centre of Good Governance (CGG) with the support of Government of India. This will be an autonomous body functioning within the campus of the Institute of Management in Government (IMG). Its focus will be on guiding and handholding public service delivery institutions to achieve high standards of performance.
92. The core priority of my Government is to introduce basic Administrative Reforms to make functioning of Government professional and people-friendly. To start with, the fifteen reports of the Third Administrative Reforms Committee would be implemented. My Government believes that transparency is the best form to administrative reforms. Therefore the opportunities provided by the Right to Information Act would be fully utilised to make government transparent and fully accessible to the ordinary man. My Government intends to be proactive in providing information to the public on key aspects of its functioning. For this purpose each department would prepare a list of items where disclosure of information is mandatory and the information provided is in a form and language understood by the layman. This will enable continuous public audit of the performance of government.

93. The Department of Parliamentary Affairs is now in its infant stage. A new vision and added nourishment will help the Department to grow in to a very dynamic Department. In addition to its primary role as a co-ordinator between the Government and the Legislature, the Department proposes to undertake a wide range of activities, which would strengthen our constitutional democracy. The Institute of Parliamentary Affairs under this department will be developed into an Institute for study, research and training in parliamentary democracy.
94. My Government proposes to set up a State Youth Commission as recommended by the National Youth Commission for the study and analysis of youth related problems and to suggest its remedies. My Government intends to conduct job fairs for helping the unemployed and the employers. It is also proposed to equip youth clubs, particularly in tribal and backward areas to function as centre for Information Technology and Satellite Education in association with Indian Space Research Organisation. The Government would also organise Keralotsavam with better participation of youth.
95. My Government will constitute an Industrial Relation Board to create a peaceful and new atmosphere in labour related matters. The Government is also committed to give

encouragement and protection to the industrialists and investors. The existing single window clearing system will be strengthened and made more effective to provide hassle-free clearances to fresh investors. The Minimum Wages prescribed will be revised in time and minimum wages will be prescribed in those sectors where they have not been fixed. The functioning of the Labour Enforcement Wing will be made effective. My Government is committed to expand the coverage of welfare schemes to the entire unorganised sector and therefore new welfare scheme for the different uncovered sectors will be taken up in a phased manner. Timely disbursement of the benefits under all welfare schemes, security of women at work place and effective implementation of Inter-State Migrants Act will be ensured by my Government.

96. Kerala has been in the vanguard in the protection of the rights of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and proactively reaching out to them to improve their status. Now in the emerging economy these disadvantaged groups are being pushed further backward in the ruthless and unfair competition for grabbing opportunities. Therefore my Government will endeavour to specially address issues related to the long-term development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and re-orient the Special Component Plan and Tribal Sub-Plan to achieve this objective.

Diversion or mis-utilisation of funds earmarked for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes would be treated, as offences and the Protection of Civil Rights Acts would be given new meaning and direction to support all round development of Dalits and Adivasis.

97. Provision of the basic needs such as housing, electricity, drinking water and land to landless, education and health will continue to be focal points of intervention. A detailed survey will be conducted on the implementation of reservation in order to identify the shortfalls, which will be filled up immediately. It will be ensured that the educational concessions are disbursed in time. Efforts will be made to identify students of high excellence from among SCs/STs for providing facilities for studies abroad. The Government intends to start a Nursing College for SC/ST. Selected Industrial Training Centres under SC Development Department will be upgraded and model residential ITCs will be set up, which will also function as production-cum-training centres, thereby enhancing the employment potential of Scheduled Communities. Entrepreneurship programmes for small scale and micro enterprises will be strengthened.
98. There are about 18,500 tribal families residing in the Forest areas spread over 671 settlements in the State. It is

proposed to launch a new scheme viz "Scheme for the Welfare of Tribal Residing within Forest Areas" with technical support of the Forest Department. Steps will be taken to liberate the tribals from the clutches of the forest mafia and sexual exploitation. My Government is also proposing to re-organise and strengthen ST-Co-operatives in various sectors like Agriculture, Industry, Coir and other traditional sectors for employment and income generation. The traditional skills of the various tribal groups will be upgraded. Steps will be taken to promote and protect ethnic skills of the tribals in traditional medicines.

99. To augment the resource side, stringent action will be taken in Commercial Taxes Department for substantial increase in tax collection. To achieve this end, it is intended to complete the transition to the Value Added Tax regime during this year. The reasons for the fall in expected revenue from Value Added Tax will be identified and rectified. The Audit Assessment Wing and Intelligence Wing will be strengthened for this purpose.
100. The computerization of the Sub-Registrar offices in the State has been included in the Plan Scheme and all efforts will be taken to computerise the remaining offices. Time bound action will be initiated to construct buildings for all

the Sub-Registrar offices. The computerization of the Treasuries has been completed. In addition to the dial-up system in operation by which the entire data of all Treasury transactions on a day are transmitted to the central server kept in the Directorate each day, Wide Area Network which facilitates inter connectivity between Treasuries would be introduced shortly.

101. The Excise department will initiate immediate action against the wide spread use of ganja and other narcotic substances which play havoc among the youth. A joint team of forest, police and excise officials will conduct raids in the forest area to weed out the cultivation of ganja. Twenty-four hour control rooms will be opened at District/ Taluk Centres to curb the production, selling and consumption of illicit liquor. The construction work for "Excise Complex" building is rapidly progressing and it will be ready for occupation by the end of this year.
102. It is my Government's paramount duty to maintain peaceful law and order situation and to ensure protection to the life, property and rights of the people. In order to appropriately deal with complaints of police excesses and to address the grievances of police personnel the Government intend to set up a Police Commission. Reports submitted by committees appointed by the previous Governments would

also be considered for modernising the police force. All efforts will be taken to ensure that the police force will not resort to third degree methods in the police stations. At the same time, steps will be taken to clamp down on mafia elements. Functioning of the Highway Police Patrol Teams will be streamlined and it will be ensured that the Highway Patrol Teams do not harass the general public by merely booking petty cases.

103. My Government also intends to give top most priority in implementing the schemes under Coastal Security Scheme. As part of the Coastal Security Scheme, Coastal Police Stations will be established with the assistance of Government of India in eight places along the coastline in Kerala.
104. A high technology crime enquiry cell will be established in the Police Headquarters to give technical assistance to the investigating officers of local police and crime branch CID. A full-fledged Cyber Police Station will be started in Thiruvananthapuram to enquire into and check the rising tendency in cyber crimes in the State. As part of the infrastructure development programme basic facilities in police stations will be improved and the Government will ensure that a better work atmosphere and adequate facilities are provided to the police personnel and to the general public visiting the police stations.

105. My Government is aware that the conditions in our Jails need to be improved. New construction works are being undertaken under the Modernisation of Prisons Scheme with the assistance of Government of India. Video conferencing network of jails will be given top priority and housing facilities for the Prison staff will also be improved.
106. My Government is determined to root out corruption in Kerala and to ensure corruption free rule in the State. My Government will bring about suitable amendments to anti-corruption laws and Lok Ayukta Laws to ensure corruption free Civil Service.
107. My Government takes the alarming rise in road accidents with all seriousness. With this in view, for improving the quality of driver testing, it is proposed to set up driver testing yards with modern gadgets like driving simulators and test tracks at 18 centres. The first vehicle Testing Centre is being set up at Chevayoor, Kozhikode. The department proposes to set up 5 more Vehicle Testing Centres at District Headquarters. My Government proposes to install radar surveillance systems to detect traffic violations and to engage expert agencies for conducting traffic study and identifying black spots and locations to be provided with traffic signboards, signal lights and blinkers.

108. My Government will take steps for modernization and strengthening of the vigilance apparatus in the Revenue Department in tune with the latest development for better service delivery without delay. My Government will take strong steps to take over all the surplus lands which are legally due to be taken over and distributed, expediting the pending court cases. In order to achieve this the Revenue and Forest Departments will take urgent steps in a co-ordinated manner to overcome any legal difficulties in the matter. The interest of all those who have started farming activities in the forestland before 1st January, 1977 will be protected and they will be issued pattayams. However, the continuing encroachment of forestland will be severely curbed. In order to unearth bogus pattayams, if any, special teams will be formed and strict action taken. A thorough investigation in the matter of delay in taking over surplus lands will be undertaken and action taken against the culprits. The government lands on lease to individuals and institutions will be modified to suit the times and arrears collected. Further, unauthorised activities in leased lands will be taken seriously and action taken to resume the lands.
109. Kerala has been included in the disaster prone map as a multi hazard prone State by Government of India. Natural calamities like drought, floods, sea erosion, lightning, landslides and earthquake are on increase. After the

frightening Tsunami disaster in the State, the Disaster Management Department has formulated and obtained permission for two major projects, which forms part of the Tsunami Rehabilitation programme sanctioned by Government of India for Rs.1441.75 crore. In order to effectively co-ordinate and implement the disaster mitigation programme my Government will introduce a Disaster Management Policy. With active assistance of Government of India, risk mitigation programmes for cyclone, land slide, etc. will be undertaken. Steps will be taken to establish a Disaster Management Training Institute.

110. My Government will extend all necessary assistance to the Travancore Devaswom Board in providing basic amenities to the pilgrims visiting the Sabarimala shrine, in accordance with the Master Plan as stipulated by Government of India and in line with the directions of the Supreme Court. Considering the large number of pilgrims visiting Sree Krishna Temple at Guruvayur, my Government is committed to developing the area by building adequate infrastructure facilities. My Government will conduct an overall review of the existing Devaswom laws and will take steps to update the laws. Malabar Devaswom Board will be constituted.

111. My Government proposes to undertake Law reform as a high priority item on its agenda. All the existing Laws have to be carefully scrutinized to find out whether they need any amendment, or in some cases whether they need to be retained at all. It is also necessary to propose new Legislation in emerging areas. For this purpose, a Law Reforms Commission is to be set up, utilizing the expertise and experience of judges, lawyers and jurists. My Government proposes to create Legal Data Bank incorporating State Acts, Rules and important Orders and Notifications using advanced technology and strengthen the monitoring mechanism in the Law Department.
112. The initial steps for preparation of the Eleventh Five Year Plan have started. My Government will try to address the specific problems of Kerala in the plan formulation. For this, my Government will request Government of India to include representatives from the State in the various Working Groups of the Planning Commission.
113. My Government will strive for appropriate changes in the criteria fixed by Government of India for setting up National Institutes and for creation of Special Economic Zones and suggest that requirements of land may be fixed on need-based criteria so that States like Kerala with very high density of population are not left out. Many of the

Centrally Sponsored Schemes are not suitable to Kerala. Therefore my Government will interact with Government of India for bringing about suitable changes in the existing structure of the Centrally Sponsored Schemes so as to be better benefited by these schemes.

114. Kerala's premier position in the country in terms of realising women's rights is now under challenge. Liberalisation has unleashed ugly forces of exploitation of women. My Government would leave no stone unturned in upholding the status and rights of women and would not hesitate to use all its might to ruthlessly punish the agents and abettors of exploitation of women. Moreover on the development front also gender justice would be ensured. For this purpose gender budgeting would be introduced in phases.
115. I have outlined a long list of action points, which my Government intends to take up. Through these pronouncements the promises made in the manifesto have been transformed into formal policy statements. I am happy to note the sweep and comprehensiveness of the proposals for change and development and this indicates the clear vision of my Government. I am confident that these solemn policy commitments would be translated into practice. The mission undertaken by my Government is huge and the

tasks are myriad, made daunting by the financial situation. But my Government is confident that with the help of the people of Kerala, it can fulfil its promises. I can assure you that my Government will look back only to learn and will look ahead solely to perform. My Government will not only wipe the tears from every eye but also bring smiles to every face.

JAI HIND