CHAPTER 2

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Review of literature is an integral part of the entire research process and it makes a valuable contribution to almost every operational step. In the initial stages of research it helps to establish the theoretical roots of the study and develop methodology, but later it serves to enhance and consolidate the base and help to interpret findings with the existing body of knowledge. Large number of studies has been undertaken in the field of decentralised planning and poverty alleviation. The present study has been classified in to the following two heads like reviews on decentralised planning and reviews on poverty.

2.1 Review of studies on Decentralised planning

A study related to the working of Panchayatiraj institutions by Khanna (1956) revealed that every rural panchayats in India are facing inadequate financial resources, limited autonomy, mass illiteracy etc. Any attempts handover to these institutions are faced by these inefficiencies. Thus, the poverty reduction programmes are facing great hurdles.

The Balwant Ray Mehta Committee (1957) reviewed about the failures of the community development programmes and the reason behind it is the lack of presence of democratic and representative local bodies to take any initiatives for the community development. The centralised structure of governing system cannot do anything in favour of the real beneficiary selection and the effectiveness of the development will never reached to the hands of marginalised sections of the society and thus it recommended for the three tier structure of the panchayatiraj institutions.

A study conducted by Kerala state planning board (1983) about the improper fund utilisation of the rural poverty reduction programmes like IRDP and its impact
on rural poverty alleviation efforts found that, only 14% of poor people moved out of poverty after the implementation of the IRDP programmes. In addition, it was due to the improper utilization of funds and unnecessary delay in granting loans. Above all, there was lack of planned participation of local governments in the proper implementation of the programme. That is why the programme could not achieve the desired goals of poverty reduction from the rural masses.

Kuttikrishnan (1984) in his study of rural poverty alleviation programmes in Kerala, like IRDP in a village in Kannur district in Kerala revealed that, the IRDP programme couldn’t achieve the desired goals of raising the income levels of the rural people. It is because of the improper beneficiary selection and the misutilisation of funds by the local governments.

Prof: V K R V Rao (1987) reviewed that economic development is essential for the development of human beings and not only agricultural development but also non-agricultural development like socio and cultural development like education, health, and cultural development can alleviate poverty by improving the quality of life of people.

EMS (1992) empahasized that the Panchayat Raj Institutions should be the important instruments for the extension of democracy at all levels of administration and for the solution of serious problems in socio – economic, development especially the upcoming of the poor sections of the society through employment generation in traditional and nontraditional sectors.

Drèze and Sen (1995) examined the role of public action in improving the social well being of the poor and backward sections of people. They reviewed that public action is a more important determinant of social well being than percapita
income, because public action is more inclusive than the latter.

Franke, Barbara and Chasin (1997) in their article on power to malayalee people, reviewed that even though a complete provision of higher level responsibilities is not intended, a relaxation of central controle can do a lot to the local development and community empowerment and with peoples participation in different stages can make it the largest programme in the world.

Raj (1997) in his article, ‘Planning: getting the economy on track’ reviewed that the encouragement of panchayatiraj institutions in local level planning with sufficient power, fund, autonomy, and democracy can open an easy accessibility of the benefits of the development to reach to the poorest and the most deprived. Five-year plans with long-term objectives can be effectively dealt by local level objectives.

Lekha (1997) local governments are not at all utilizing the allotted fund to various programmes requires the effective leadership with proper vision about local needs, and willful execution is the need of the hour to solve the local problems.

Isaac and Harilal (1997) in their article on’ planning for Empowerment-People’s Campaign for Decentralised Planning in Kerala’ describes that the planning process in India continues to be a centralized affair eventhough decentralized planning has got its merits and advantages. It is mainly because of the line departmental district; block level planning is going on in the old centralized nature.

Crook and Manor (1998) commented that democracy in the local level will be strengthened as the decentralization bringing the common people towards the administration in the local level and it makes them closer to development.

Shete (1999) reviewed that rural development was the main objective of every planning whether it was centralised or decentralised because as Gandhi said ‘India
lives in Villages’. However, it is a complex subject which needs a multi dimensional approach, which includes the components like agriculture, industry, education, social life, culture and social justice. Due to the lack of this multi-dimensional approach to deal with rural development, many rural development programmes like Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) etc. did not produce the expected positive changes in the life of rural people.

Fung, Ohlin, and Wright (2000) decentralisation is considered as a means to make state more effective, because even poor people is considering state as an agency to address their problems like poverty and unemployment.

Blair (2000) reviewed that decentralisation could lead to the political and democratic empowerment. The main attraction of decentralization was that decentralization deepen the democracy by ensuring the participation of the people especially participation of the marginalized sectors of people. This participation of the downtrodden and backward groups, leads to the good governance.

Rapheal Jos (2000) systematically discusses about the progress of decentralised rule in Kerala and Karnataka. As far as Kerala is concerned, gramapanchayats are fully equipped with financial assistance. Compared to the expenditure, the revenue is much less than what is required. Absence of monitoring and evaluation and poor follow-up actions taken by the concerned authority, little coordination between the officials and the Panchayats are major problems.

Gopinathan Nair (2000) made a case study 1997-98 to 1998-99 to study the impact of peoples Plan Programme covering issues like corruption, extent of public
participation etc in Nanniyodu in Vamanapuram block and Vithura in Vellanad block, Trivandrum District, Kerala. It concluded that, a large majority of the beneficiaries did not experience any difficulty in receiving bribe. Magnitude of corruption declined marginally. - Majority of the beneficiaries were women.- Ward members were best disseminators of information – (beneficiaries came to know about programmes through ward members), - participation in gramasabha largely motivated by self interest, Voluntary services was less than expected were 25% but 13% Vithura and 9% in Nanniyode. In addition, the study reviewed, Sudden flooding of the Panchayats with plan funds – leads to misuse and wastage of the plan fund (biting off more than they could chew). To fill quota of 40% of the plan grant in productive sector, they compelled to pick up whatever schemes available in these sub sectors.

Gopinathan Nair (2000) in a study on peoples campaign based on two panchayats in Vithura and Nandiyodu in Thiruvananthapuram district analysed that there is relatively small percentage of chances on bribes for getting benefits from LSGIs, when it is compared with the other states. Only 2.8% of households admitted to pay bribes for getting loans in Kerala. In addition, he reviewed that most of the other states are not at all reached in the democratic decentralisation. The study critically ascertained that the unscientific projects are the main reason for the unsuccessful completion of most of the productive sector projects in Kerala and that is why the generation of employment and income is not reached in many projects. Also the political interference of Gramasabha in several activities of Gramasabha including beneficiary selection.

Das (2000): criticised in an article as there is a tendency of politicalising every developmental activities like the selection of beneficiaries for the welfare schemes
like housing, sanitation, repairing, drinking wells etc and even in the encouragement given to panchayats for the effective implementation in the form of Swaraj Trophy to the best panchayat. During the first four-year period of the LDF rule, of the 135 panchayats, which were awarded Swaraj Trophies among them only two belonged to the opposition parties (UDF).

Gopinathan Nair (2000), in a study related to peoples planning in Kerala found that the decentralised planning efforts might lead to the wastage of recourses due to the sudden flooding of the funds. That is the funds, which must be spent within a short span of time, with rigid guidelines related to the thrust areas. The total panchayat plan, in most of the time, may not reflect the state and national priorities, because of the contradictions between the felt and real needs of the people.

D. Narayana and K. K. Hari Kurup (2000) in a study related to the health care decentralisation in Kerala, concluded that being the relatively large size of population under the lowest unit of the LSG institutions- the problems like spillover effect, relevance of Hospital development committees, and minimum health care facilities to be provided by the health care institutions are not addressed effectively in the decentralisation of health care sector. “The decentralisation of health sector depends to a large extent on the vision from the top and perception of the administrative and political process from the bottom. But Transfer of Plan funds to the Village Panchayat by population size, area, and SC/ST population, and payment of salary of health personnel by the government does not create problems of unequal distribution.”

Reghuram, Sobha (2000) reviews about KSSP review of five years of experience of the plan campaign was frank enough to admit, “there has been no
change in the productive sector including agriculture”. Neither the farmers nor the farm workers felt the benefits of people’s planning. It also failed to create opportunities for employment.

Gurukal, Rajan (2001) reviewed some confusions related to the ideological implication and future prospects of decentralised local governance exists among the political cadres which are giving leadership to the decentralised process and its devolution of functions among different tiers of local governments. This confusion may be the reason for the gap between the serious political and administrative interfieranace and its continuous evaluation.

Pagaria and Yadav Ram Jass, (2001) studied about the viability of the loss making in rural branches of commercial banks. The study analysed that even though many of the programmes introduced for the rural development by the government with the support of commercial banks, (like Swarnajayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), DWCRA, GKY, SITRA, MWS, JGSY, EAS, PMGSY, PMRY) for the development of rural people and employment generation, the share of Non Performing Assets (NPAs) in advances to the total NPAs of CBs under the government sponsored programmes is showing a rising trend in the country. So it was quite doubtful, whether these schemes improved the economic standards of farmers, especially small and marginal farmers, who constitute a majority of rural masses. In short, majority of the central schemes for the poverty reduction are not at all utilising the fund transferred through the commercial Banks.

Baby (2001) conducted a study on rural housing programme under peoples Plan Campaign in Parathode Grama Panchayat in Kerala. It analysed the rural housing programme during the peoples plan and found that many houseless rural poor
benefited during the programme but some problems like irrational delays related to the further instalments.

Baby Thomas (2001) found that implementation of plan projects could facilitate remarkable improvement in the quality of life and standard of living of rural poor in Kerala. However, even now a given percentage of people still lie outside the purview of the decentralised planning process in several parts of Kerala. The Government should take this seriously.

Chattopadhyay, S (2001) in a study, reviewed as the so called plans of Panchayat levels are not real plans but a bundle of schemes reflecting largely the wish list of the members which has not a link with other projects of the same plan year and schemes of the subsequent years. Similarly the plans of the three tiers were not integrated in a meaningful way. Moreover, the time lag in plan related matters leads to delay in getting plan grants and this leads to a rush of expenditure before March 31st of the present financial year to avoid the lapse of funds.

Isaac and Sreedharan (2002) in an article related to peoples plan campaign in Kerala, reviewed that when the peoples plan campaign introduced, the main observation of E M S Namboodiripadu was, the coordinated efforts from the part of all political parties, and peoples movements like trade unions, women forums, Student movements, Youth movements etc. Avoiding all such political and ideological differences, people participate in different participatory forums of planning process. However, the expected outcome in this regard would not yield due to the indifferent attitude of political parties. That is why, the real development agenda vanished in the air.
MohanKumar (2002) reviewed that the labour bank formation in Vallikunnu, Kallyasseri, Kunnathukal, Kumarakam, Mayyil, Onchium. The major model panchayats could not sustain the initial enthusiasm even with the interference of KSSP and thus the labour bank idea was not sustained to other panchayats even if most of them made people resource mapping.

John and Chathukulam (2002) in an article related to the five years of participatory planning in Kerala, tries to approach planning process in the perspective of decentralisation rather than in the perspective of planning. In this article they analysed the SHG formation was formerly faced many problems related to the division of APL/BPL and many of SHGs were refused to get the assistance. And as per the rule Go 17/2000/planning dtd April 3rd 2000, the assistance was restricted in the case of group of industrial projects-only to the below poverty groups and this continued till the 10th plan period (also for central Schemes like SGSY, SJSRY). Similarly, the subsidies given for the above poverty line groups were removed. In addition, some achievements related to the beneficiary selection of Gramasabha like the Grama sabha list made authentication by avoiding the possibility of the inclusion of ineligible person, most of the poor reliefs are provided through this list. Moreover, the Gram panchayat has become a site of welfare. It is increasingly becoming a site for expression of grievances, which was not felt there earlier. Significant achievements have been registered in areas like housing, sanitation, drinking water, public health and in rural infrastructure.

Chathukkulam and John (2002) reviewed the realities of the 9th plan as peoples plan campaign, and greatly admired the empowerment side of the campaign. The peoples plan campaign in Kerala witnessed for the development of social capital
in the form of creation of Neighborhood groups, Self Help Groups, and the involvement of various associations. Moreover, these associations greatly helped the poor especially the poor women to empower themselves.

Nair and Sureshkumar (2002) in the article ‘Daridrya Nirmarjanam Adhikara Vikeendreekaranathilude’ the rural poverty can easily wiped out even from the grass route level through the effective and speedy implementation of the people plan in Kerala where each problems were identified and solved through the Gramasabha interventions.

Even though number of self-employment projects were discussed, and development of rural entrepreneurs were projected during the peoples plan period, Nair (2002) in his article on Peoples Planning and Industrial Development in Kerala, analysed the small-scale industrial sector and its employment potential after the implementation of the peoples plan. The study concluded that due to the leadership empowerment in the rural entrepreneurs no significant impact is noticed in the industrial development of Kerala during the People’s Plan period.

Bandhyopadhyay, Yugandhar and Mukerje (2002) reviewed, creation of the Self help groups can do a lot with the panchayatiraj institutions to provide self employment opportunitites in the local community. In their article titled Convergence of programmes by empowering SHGs and PRIs, reviewed that the effective devolution of power, autonomy and funds and functions to the panchayatraj institutions and the integration of the self-help groups with panchayatraj institutions will develop more sustainable income generating groups.

Vincent (2003) in a study about the role of local self Government in the Economic Development of Kerala identified that; there is a positive relationship
between utilisation of assistance given by local self-government institution and socio-economic development of beneficiaries.

Vyasulu (2003) reviews that the democratic decentralisation increased the effectiveness of the rural development programs like poverty reduction through the deepening of democracy with people’s participation and positive relation with rural development and democratic participation.

Jain (2003) studied about the impact of decentralisation on Development and the study reveals that decentralisation is an effective tool for development in global and regional level. The political, administrative, democratic and finanncial decentralization will strengthen the development functions implemented by these institutions.

Craig Johnson (2003) argued that, not only India, but also many developing countries are on the process of political devolution and this transition is better able to the needs of the poor and political marginal groups in society. He holds the view that the centrally administered beaurocracies represent an inefficient and potentially destructive means of allocating resources with in society. Their implementation of policies lacks vision and do not create institutional amendments that are more amenable to local needs and preferences. However, “the devolution of power will not necessarily improve the performance of local government and there is a scope for, empowering local elites to capture a longer share of public resources”.

Craig Johnson (2003) in a discussion paper identified four broad conditions under which local political bodies can be made more accountable to poor and politically marginal groups in society. “active participation among broad elements voting, campaigning, attending meetings, running for office, fiscal and political
support, competent political parties, deeper economic transformation to challenge local structures”. There is no evidence to suggest that decentralisation could produce a systems of governance that are accountable to local needs and interests.

Tharakan (2004) found in a study, as the indifferent attitude of the social community of Kerala especially the political parties, against the decentralization became a historical hurdle on the process of decentralization. It leads to an ineffective involvement to the study of real problems of the locality and to suggest solutions and raising it as an important Political agenda. The political parties failed to realize the regional issues related to the social life of the different sections of the society and to discuss it in the participatory forums like Gramasabha.

Thomas (2004) in a case study to analyse the impact of decentralised planning in Thrissur District-Aloor, Nattika and Porathissery panchayat. The major conclusions and findings of the study were the participation of people in Gramasabha meetings below the statutory minimum of 10% of the Voters in each ward. It is because of the perception of the people as it is a programme only for the poor, lack of awareness, ignorance, lack of interest etc. Participation of people in task forces was very good. Implementation of projects.-Completion ratio is far below the spillover ratio. In the development projects (like roads, Calvert, ponds) and the beneficiary projects housing, sanitation, maintanance of house etc), the droppage ratio was very low.

Shaheena, P (2003) points out that; there is an inter-Panchayat variation in the mobilization of non-plan revenue. The researcher also identified that,’ there is variation in the expected and realized additional resource mobilization. Resource transfer creates an income effect. The impact of conditional grants on revenue
mobilization has great significance’.

Rashmi Sharma (2003) in her article on Keralas decentralisation, idea and practice, observed that people are concerned more about their basic needs in the panchayat level plans and activities, and panchayats are likely to accept and indulge in meeting that basic needs and social welfare. No panchayats are interested to take up long term and medium term projects.

Crook Richard (2003) analyses that decentralisation of power has transferred more responsibilities to the local governments. All the pro-poor policies announced by the central as well as the state governments are supposed to be implemented by these local authorities. Local self-governments (LSGs) also have some autonomous schemes in order to address the problem of poverty. However, when the progress of all these programmes evaluate, we may get unsatisfactory results. Main reasons for this deadlock are red-tapism, corruption, as well as lack of accountability of the officials. The author points out main problems in the way of effective decentralization in rural areas as ‘administration lock’, poor physical capacities to undertake development plan. Hence, the working of panchayati raj institutions should be object oriented, more realistic and in a way that the fruits of reach the poorest.

Harilal (2004) reviewed in a paper related to reforming local government structures in India, that Decentralisation with peoples plan was an experiment with enormous devolution of fund to the local governments and it was a big push to the local governments to perform various development and welfare functions which emerged from the Grama sabhas.

World Bank (2004) reviewed in a study related to the fiscal decentralisation to rural governments in India, the interest behind the decentralization was not only
emerged from the developing and transitional countries, but it was also an agenda of developed countries. Because, decentralisation acts as an engine of economic growth.

Harilal, Heller and Chawdhari (2004) made a study to analyse the impact of decentralised planning especially the peoples campaign in Kerala, involving 72 panchayat from Kerala, reviews that due to the introduction of the peoples plan campaign, Kerala experienced achievements in quality, efficiency and inclusiveness of development. In addition, it could change the development culture in Kerala by people’s participation in raising their own problems and suggesting solutions for them.

Hiroshi Sato (2004), in a study related to social security and wellbeing in a low income economy with special focus on Kerala experience, reviewed the role of private sector and organised sectors in the betterment of public welfare other than that of the public intervention. Concentrating on four areas like food provision, health services, elementary education, and pension schemes, it gave attention to the participation of the private sector as well as the activities of political parties and labor unions. The study found that in Kerala, the private sector and organized activities have played a vital role- in addition to ‘public intervention’, for the betterment of public welfare.

Basheer (2004) in a study about Decentralisation and Development in the North Malabar region during Eighth and Ninth plan, reviewed that , to the upliftment of the rural mass at the grass roots level, to encourage democracy, socio economic development ,and standard of living of people in the rural area, the decentralisation has to perform a greater role.
Alagh (2004) studied about the emerging institutions for rural development to assist the panchayatiraj institutions for the rural development and poverty reduction and found out that the cooperative institutions, community organisations can strengthen the rural development and assist the panchayats to discharge of development functions in a more responsible manner.

Shah, Mihir (2004) NREGA has been hailed as a historic opportunity to provide jobs to the poor via public investment, and galvanise the Panchayat raj institutions by the participation of the disadvantaged people.

Mukerjee and Bandyopadhyag (2004) reviewed that “Exactly a decade after the enactment of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, there are enough causes for cheers and also for numerous disappointments and frustrations. After two rounds of elections it seems that intended benefits of PRI have not flowed in to empower the truly deserved”. The poor, Dalits, Minorities, Women, disables, old aged and socially marginalised groups in a societies are still excluded from the mainstream. The pictures of Kerala and W. Bengal are some exceptions. Thus, there is a need for t a synergy between the PRIs and SHG’s at the implementation level of plan.

Kushik (2005): reviewed in an article related to rural development claimed that during 9th plan Strategic changes made to promote the process of nation building through decentralised planning. “After 73rd constitutional amendment, Decentralisation through the bottom –up approach completely changed the rural development programmes. In the absence of well-planned rural development programmes and efficient delivery systems most of these resources, do not benefit the target groups”. It has been reported that only 18% has reached the target family while
the rest is wasted due to inefficient delivery system – so poor continued to be poor.

Kushik (2005) also reviewed in the same article, as there are several attempts by Ministry of R.D. for sustainable development in Rural India. Integrated approach for improving quality of life of rural poor and insuring equity and effective people participate. “The thrust of rural development programmes has been to make frontal attack on poverty through special employment generation programmes, productive asset transfer through Institutional credit and subsidy programmes and rural housing, drinking water and sanitation”.

Robinson (2005) examined in an article related to a decade of panchayatiraj democratic decentralisation and found that decentralisation ensures the allocation function of the government, because the local governments are better institutional agency to deliver the public goods like roads, drainage system, irrigation canals, drinking wells, streetlights to the common people and it strengthened their living environment.

Rao(2005) analyses in a study that, poverty is multi dimensional; therefore, poverty reduction programmes should have diverse dimensions. Devolution of powers to the grass route level has resulted in elimination of poverty in many parts of the Country. He critically examined the various self employment programmes like IRDP, TRYSEM, DWCRA, JRY and EAS and concluded that many poor people could cross the poverty line through the better implementation of these programmes. However, regarding the empowerment of the rural women and creation of sustainable income generating assets among the land less and small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and rural artisans from the below poverty line were not at all appreciable.
Islam (2005) in a study in West Bengal reviewed that the lack of effective
devolution of fund will be a constraint to the local institutions to impart the poverty
reduction programmes. The study suggested the need for more adequate fund to make
the decentralized social institutions more effective in their social role of poverty
reduction.

Gangadharan T (2005) made a study among 10 best performing panchayats in
Kerala related to the coordination of local government mechanisms with beaurocracy
and observed that no regular attempts were made in any panchayat to provide best
administrative outcome in all spheres of decentralisation by integrating standing
committees and steering committees. In addition, many of the panchayats could not
perform as the local governments. They could not coordinate or evaluate the
transferred institutions and the major portion of beaurocratic functionaries could not
feel that they are the part of LSGs. The new elected panchyat governing bodies never
transferred the experiences of the former elected bodies to better administrative
outcome. Any way the capacity development of the LSGs and empowerment of
women were the main outcome after the decentralised people’s campaign.

Minimol (2005) in a study about rural self government and e- governance in
Kerala, identified that the panchayats has the vital role to effectively intervene among
the rural masses to meet the various needs of them and it has no regional variation
across the world. The e- governance can sharpen the activities of the local
Governments in imparting various programmes like poverty reduction programmes.

Chakrabortothy, Achin (2005) in a study reviewed as Kerala panchayatiraj
Act1994 and its amendment in1999, transferred well defined social and
developmental responsibilities to local governments. The extend of decentralisation to
the following fields were noted. They are in the infrastructure development, power like the extending lines of electricity, sanitation, solid and liquid waste management, rural water supply, promotion of tiny and cottage industries, agriculture extension, watershed management, dairy development, animal husbandry, inland fisheries, ICDS, care of disabled, etc. The implementation in this area became the responsibility of local governments.

Prakash B A (2005) made a study on the impact of decentralised planning in Kerala, and analysed the situation before and after the implementation of the decentralised planning process and concluding with positive and negative remarks. The major positive results were Local bodies got more powers, People get an opportunity about plan programmes, Gramasabha’s provided actual poor for beneficiaries selection. There was speedy implementation of the projects; Local bodies have taken better initiatives. The major negative results were short period huge fund flow leads to misuse and wastage, participation in Gramasabha was low, ‘Voluntary service – Objective’ not materialised, more than a quarter of funds distributed under individual beneficiary scheme in production sector leads to be unproductive, local bodies failed to introduce new schemes, the quality of more than half of the assets were poor in quality. The spillover ratio of the development projects was much high due to corrupt practices of beneficiary committees, lack of funds, seasonal charge delays in starting projects, inadequate marketing etc. He concluded, “Even though, many states dismal performance, Kerala made a notable performance in the implementation. Decentralisation is not a panacea for all ills; it is a way to mobilise both people and resorses to reduce poverty”.
John (2006) differentiate centralised and decentralised planning, as in the case of centralised planning the main decisions were made in the planning office. Whereas decentralised planning tries to take decisions from the bottom level, where the felt needs are more meaningful and a bottom-up approach is experimented instead of top down approach of centralised approach.

Sudhakaran (2006) in a PhD Study related to the decentralised peoples plan campaign in Kerala, points towards the need for substantial improvements in the design of decentralisation in the state, so that participation as well as integration of plans could be improved. The study emphasised the need to have a rethink on the inter-tier distribution of powers, functions, responsibilities, and resources for ensuring role clarity. “It is also essential to ensure that- powers, functions, responsibilities and resources are assigned according to a well-defined objective criteria and consideration of spillover effects. Improvement in design is required to improve participation in grama sabhas as well as at higher levels and higher tiers”. Also the study emphasised the horizontal and vertical integration of plans and projects across various tiers of government. In the absence of such integration, local plans would result in duplication of activities, wastages of resources and various other sub-optimalities.

Kannan (2006) reveals that the state intervention through numerous social welfare programmes, contribution of unorganized sectors to the State GDP etc, have resulted in a rapid reduction in poverty of Kerala. Self Help Groups (SHGs) consisting of women force of Kerala have made a silent revolution on the social and economic setup of the State. But social welfare programmes for women, children, the aged, the handicapped and the destitute and other vulnerable groups were not enough for even maintaining a minimum standard of living. The main problem identified by
his study was the time lag in the distribution of the ‘poor-relief payments’. “Payment of pensions, although quite nominal, does not serve its purpose when they are not distributed regularly”. He recommends the efficient distribution of social welfare funds to improve the lives of poor people in the State.

Oommen (2006) discussed about the fiscal decentralisation and role of fiscal decentralisation are still disturbing after more than a decade of decentralisation. Fiscal autonomy is necessary to the success of every initiative taken by the Panchayatiraj institutions.

Oommen (2006) finds that while kudumbashree participation improved organisational and leadership abilities and knowledge about gender issues, women’s rights and empowerment, economic empowerment through the Kudumbashree did not seem to improve asset position or income, despite increased savings.

Sundar ram (2007) in a study related to the role of Panchayati raj institutions in India claimed as “Gandhiji believed that human happiness with mental and moral development should be the supreme goal of society and that this goal can be achieved through decentralisation of political and economic powers. It is wildly acknowledged that decentralised governance and local polity holds great potential for development and poverty alleviation.”

Mohanan. B. Pillai (2007), in an article related to the role of panchayatiraj institutions in 60 years of independent India and he analysed the peoples plan campaign became the alternative for the economics and politics of corporate dominated globalisation. The corporate dominated globalisation changed development culture and affected negatively the life of the backward sections of the society.“After 1996. Kerala become the focus of international attention. Kerala
became the most favored destination of academic tourism as everyone wanted to know what types of innovation is happening in Local democracy and participatory development. PPC for decentralized planning generated heated debates and discussion in Kerala.”

John and Chathukulam (2007) focused on the following problem areas of decentralised planning efforts in Kerala; as the dual role of many areas of decentralised set up like SC member represent interest of general population neglects SC/ST population, women reserved memberse neglect women population, the ward mentalities in development agenda, absence of employment planning in public works, administrative inefficiencies due to the dependence of the officials on orderse from above, the ineffective integration of rural development department and block panchayats, comparatively lesser role of the block panchayat members, the question of two office in block as BDO and secretary in block panchayat, lack of integration in MP, MLA funds, lack of smooth flow of information between the three tiers, and lack of inter-tire-complementarities, awareness of members about projects of other tires, political instability due to pre election understandings and coalition of parties, gap between income and expenditures that is expenditure is lower than total funds, etc.

Devika and Binitha (2007) reviewed as, in the case of poverty alleviation, local governments play a crucial role with kudumbasree mission. For the poverty reduction attemps the BPL and just above poverty line families are grouped in to NHGs (Neighbourhood groups) and among the female members of each NHGs ADS (Area development society) members are selected for each ward of the village panchayat. Among the ADS members, CDS (community development society) members for the village panchayat are selected. The CDS system works in a
partnership basis with the local governments to reduce poverty. All the centrally sponsored anti poverty programmes are planned and implemented by local governments.

Vijayanand (2007) critically evaluated the decentralised plan, schemes and beneficiary selection of the disadvantaged categories of Kerala in the following manner; 1) Even though the beneficiaries are selected from Grama Panchayats, the implementation and volume of support depends on among different department agencies. Thus sometimes the needy households often fails to get the benefit of the several schemes, LSGs also failed to chalk out appropriate strategies to improve the lively hood condition of the disadvantaged sections, the identification of true beneficiaries, social audit, design of appropriate programmes etc. were not effective. Lack of correct factual information about the most deserving, multiplicity agencies and duplication of schemes with different rate of subsidies created several problems. “As central schemes are implemented also through the line departments, lack of coordination and integration of GP schemes and projects, the overburdened work of VEO, who implement and monitor the beneficiary schemes for poor, etc makes the lively hood condition of the hard core poor still remain unchanged”. He also claimed that claimed that democratic decentralisation got international attention because of pro-poor development. The lively hood conditions of the disadvantaged sections improved very much. Nearly 8 lakh houses, 10 lakh sanitary latrines, 2 lakh wells and several other physical assets were provided to the deprived sections during the 9th and 10th five-year plan periods. However, neo – liberalism and market penetration, the decentralisation is facing several challenges.
Chathukulam and Gireeesan (2007) studied MGNREGA implementation in Kerala, and covered all GP’s in two blocks of two districts of Kerala found that Local Self Governments institutions have significant role in the implementation and found that community participation at all stages was satisfactory. However, the lack of convergence with other programmes and rural development departments as a problem. It also found that the program has been empowering for women as it enabled them to pay their debts, or buy some household or personal items.

Thomas (2007) analyses there are examples of synergisation on funds from different panchayats, MLA funds, and MP funds. Funds from several sources are converged. Services of various government departments are converged. Marketing services of civil supplies co-operation, irrigation facilities of irrigation department, Technical knowhow of Agricultural university, Interest free loans for farmers from co-operative banks. It was in Thrissur district, Vadakancherry block, where successfully implemented NREGs through another scheme of GALASA (Group Activity Locally Adaptable Sustainable Agriculture).

Vijayanand (2007) discussed in an article that the democratic decentralisation planning implemented in Kerala, has been appreciated as a model for applying it to the rest of the Country. At present the local self governments (LSG’s) have more than a decade experience in development planning through a democratic and participatory process. Most of the human development and Social securities and welfare functions are implemented through LSG’s, evaluated in this paper and found that in health sector, large number of poor sections of people are benefited through the primary health centers, Anganwadies, in the form vaccinations, free medicines, free medical checkup and vitamin tablets but the decentralised public health system must be
improved to meet the challenges especially against disadvantaged categories

Sharma, Resmi (2007) attempt to study and analyse the success and shortages of the decentralised administration in Kerala. Peoples planning and decentralisation has produced quiet impressive merits. However, many hurdles are noticed when the author conducted a survey in Palakkad district. Absence of actual follow-up activities, over political interference, starting issues, lack of technical expertise are the serious drawbacks of the project implementation. Unfair benficary selection basic needs issue, equity issues are other limitations. Gramapanchayats have given greater importance to basic needs issues. Projects like Indira Awaz Yojna have extended to many places all over the state.

The Economic review reports of Kerala (2007) reviews about some panchayats which chartered special programmes for poverty reduction are Venganur Grama panchayat from Trivandrum District, Mangattidam GP which utilised the micro level projects for poverty reduction, Nedumbassery panchayat for Asraya, Perambra panchayat which utilised MGNREGA programmes for Agricultural development are some examples of efficient implementation of decentralized governance.

Jagtap (2007) found in a study related to SGSY and its impact on poverty alleviation, in pune district reviewed that there is significant difference among the local governments in rural and urban areas in implementing schemes of service delivery to ensure social justice, economic justice where as no difference in environmental justice to their citizens’

Chathukulam and Gireesan (2007) made an evaluation study of ‘NREGS in Kerala’ conducted in two districts Palakad and Vayanad for centre for rural
management, found that the implementation of NREGS raised the annual family income of the beneficiary household among the rural poor and the scheme resulted in checking migration, reducing household indebtedness, improving soil/water conservation and enhancing agricultural productivity.

Vijayanand and Jithendran (2007) made a study related to NREGS and its implementation in Kerala, positively evaluated NREGS has suddenly increased purchasing power of the poor. In addition, it found some visible local economic development. The peasants from Wayanad, where the suicide rates of the farmers were higher, managed to get substantial relief from NREGS by getting over their inhibition in working as labourers in richer farmer’s lands by moving on to the new-respectable public works. The roles of local governments for the effective implementation of the scheme were one of the reasons for the improvement.

Varghese, Varatharajan and Thankappan (2007) conducted a study in 32 panchayats of Kerala to know the issues in the allocation of resources under decentralized planning. They studied the foreward and backward linkage of the socio-economic status of the panchayats, people’s participation in Gramasabha and resource allocation to health. “Size of allocation to health was determined negatively by the socio-economic status of the Panchayats and positively by people’s participation. In other words, people’s participation declined, if their economic status increased. It is striking that those Panchayats which had poor socio-economic status showed more interest in health and vice versa”. Observations of this study may be of helpful when the State authorities strategize the decentralized planning process to raise the participation of the people.
In Kerala padanam (2008) the study made by Kerala Sasthra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP), the decentralisation does not mean only to activate panchayats but more than that it is the development of power structures which ensures the social rights of the people on resources, instruments of production, infrastructural facilities, land, water, living environment and develop opportunities for their scientific and susainable utilisation. The study concludes that the panchayats are the only power structure which ensures these possibilities. In order to protect these democratic forms, practical discussions must be made from lower tiers on poverty reduction, public distribution, land use, productive enterprises, cultural forms, and the programs on gender and social justice. In addition, deliberate attempts must be made to encourage Gramasabhas, SHG formation, Neighbour hood groups, Cooperatives etc. The study made following major recommendations related to the decentralisation and poverty reduction are: Decentralisation must be a political agenda to the improvement of the poor sections of the society and,

1) The study recommends some own tax possibilities (like development tax) for rising own revenue for the panchayats.

2) Transferring required staff to make the LSGs fully autonomous institutions, Gramasabhas are to be given more powers, the right to recall the elected representatives must be established legally.

3) Increase in the number of mandatory functions must be examined, as it cut down the rights of self-governments.

4) Awareness must be given about Social auditing, the citizen charters etc.

5) More powers must be given to District planning councils
6) A clear critical evaluation based on the merits and demerits of the local development programmes must be conducted.

Kerla padanam (2008) made some recommendations on poverty in Kerala like the following; through productive local development programmes, the poverty problem must be tackled and effective alternatives must be formed to sustain the benefits in poverty reduction and social security. Kudumbasree units must be the activity groups by conducting model programmes, training, development of markets etc. A home-based –development plan must be prepared for each family and consolidate and submit to the panchayat. SHG’s must be restructured with discipline, and new projects other than micro credit with higher interest rates. In addition, all SHG’s, and Kudumbasree must be under the full controle of panchayats. Women empowerment ensured in social, economic and political spheres. Effective labour bank systeme must be developed. Above all, poverty eradication programmes must have an integrated programme focused on land, drinking water, medical treatment, education, and environment.

Mahipal (2008) in an evaluation related to the ‘A decade of reforms in Decentralised planning Under Panchayati Raj in Kerala’, have led to mixed results. In terms of assured flow of funds as well as its adequacy in relative terms, Kerala has made impressive gains. However, the middle and the educated class did not consider panchayat relevant to their life. The challenge of building effective monitoring and accountability systems from above as well as from below without undermining the legitimacy of the elected representatives is crucial for the success of decentralisation in Kerala. He also argues that, although the importance of decentralised plans was emphasised in every plans, most of the states introduced it in seventh plan. Planning
machinery in district and sub district level in most of the states was weak. Instead of block level plans, most of the departments like agriculture, veterinary, cooperation health, and education etc. were implement the schemes of the state and centrally sponsored schemes. Sound database was not available in village, block, and district level, except in few cases. District budgeting arrangements, enlistment of the NGOs for effective decentralised planning, effective monitoring arrangements, and formulation of a perspective planning arrangements also were not exist in many states except in some cases.

Nair, Sreedharan, and Kumar (2009) using a mix of quantitative and qualitative methodology to study the impact of MGNREGS in three Grama Panchayats in Kerala, concluded that households have benefited financially, also women have started shouldering house hold expenses and responsibilities after participating MGNREGA.

E M Thomas (2009) in a study in two panchayats of Thrissur District Aloor and Nattika, about the impact of decentralised planning and poverty reduction reveals that the roots of rural poverty are deep and invisible. The extend and dimension of rural poverty cannot be evaluated properly and eliminated with existing methods and strategies. Even though many houses, water connections, electricity connections, sanitation etc are given, it was not sufficient to meet the hidden poverty due to the unemployment, chronic illness, physical and mental disabilities, malnutrition, indebtedness. Therefore, a solution is possible through development plan projects rather than individual beneficiary projects, strengthening neighbourhood groups, and monitoring committees, raising pensons, effective beneficiary selection etc.
Leal and Alegandro (2010) reviewed that the participatory approach with the involvement of people can be a good tool against poverty. “The radical roots of participation concept arise from the emancipatory pedagogy of Paulo Fiere, and the principal objective of the participatory Paradigms was not development or poverty alleviation: but the transformation of the Cultural, political, and economic structures which reproduce poverty and marginalisation.”

Narayan, Deepa and Petesch (2010) reviewed various approaches related to the moving out of poverty indicates that the opportunities offered by the local economic conditions and local political institutions can do many things to reduce poverty in the lowest level. It indicates the need of effective local governance and effective local interventions to reduce the poverty and make an easy moving out of poverty.

Another evaluation study by Kerala State planning board (2011) suggests that the greater participation of women is related to the larger gender wage gaps in other works, as against the equal wages to men and women in the MGNREGA. They argue that women empowerment has increased because of the boost in the earnings of women, through increased social contacts, and opening bank accounts and post office accounts.

S M Vijayanand (2012) made a discussion related to the convergence of NREGS and other programmes like SGSY, IAY, ICDS, NRHM, for more benefit to fisher folk especially in lowland areas. In order to strengthen local planning capabilities, facilitate proper articulation of demand and improve community based-delivery of programmes and services. It is necessary to organise self-help groups covering fishing villages through the women folk. Thus to benefit fisher folk and
coastal areas through NREGS, there is a need for high quality participatory micro planning and well thought out plan for convergence.

S.M. Vijayanand (2013) in a discussion paper related to the strengthening of panchayatiraj institutions through NREGA, the empowering PRIs and broadening capabilities of disadvantaged group by bringing about social justice and economic development. “The NREGS Act has created the legal framework to enable the political executive to structure effective decentralization. The Guidelines re-affirm this, declaring the PRIs as the ‘key Stakeholders.’ Further for realising entitlements and broadening capabilities of the disadvantaged, democratisation and participation are essential and sufficient pre-conditions and only PRI can bring them about”. He also pointed out that the NREGS is acting as an instrument to strengthen the PRIs and an effective instrument for poverty alleviation. By empowering the Panchayat Raj Institutions, it could be possible to strengthen the poverty alleviation programmes through the converging of other schemes like SSA, NRHM, ICDS, Mid Day Meals, PDS, SGSY, Health Insurance, and RSBY and to achieve inclusive growth through participatory development led by democratic institutions.

Kuttappan M (2014) emphasized the next step issues of decentralization in kerala. “Even though the importance of local government level, data for decentralised planning is emphasised by many studies, serious attempts were not made by Kerala Government” 12th five year plan recommended the need of developing standardised system for the collection, compilation and maintenance of LSG data and its integration at block,district and grama panchayat level. The serious attention on the implementation will enable the Panchayats to meet the next step issues in decentralisation.
Rajan and Biju (2014) critically reviewed about the quality of the public delivery system like Jana Sevana Kendram as like “most of this front office management system became only collection centers and the initial enthusiasm has not maintained in several panchayats. The queuing system often interrupted by the panchayat members, the inability to make clarification by the staff in the front office, blaming each other’s for delays by officials and elected representatives etc. leads to the time delay for several services”. The continuous monitoring, training, is needed to ensure the quality in LSG institutions and improve the public delivery systems.

2.2 Reviews of Studies on Poverty

Kuttikrishnan (1984) in his study of IRDP in a village in Kannur district in Kerala revealed that the IRDP programme could not achieve the desired goals of raising the income levels of the rural people because of the improper beneficiary selection and the misutilisation of funds.

Ellis (1984), suggested that there are four dimensions of poverty like economic dimension, social dimension, political dimension, and legal dimension and along with these important dimensions of psychological, ideological and conceptual dimensions are to be added to get the multidimensional aspects of poverty. Poverty must be treated based on these multi-dimensional aspects.

The study conducted by Nair and Nair (1984) revealed that the fixation of target for the selection was fixed throughout the country and variation in the dimensions and depth of poverty in different states are not taken in to consideration. That is why the beneficiary selection became faulty and the desired goals are not achieved.
Government of India, Department of Rural Development (1986) conducted a study on IRDP covering 36 districts all over India and found that only 5 percent of the beneficiaries had crossed the poverty line. The study found that the inefficient implementation without proper training at the district and block level caused the failure.

Raju (1993) in his Ph.D. work “An evaluation of IRDP with special reference to Kerala” found that like commercial banks, co-operative banks were not much involved in financing IRDP. The study observed that 49 percent of the beneficiaries did not receive adequate assistance for the activity. The study also revealed that 58 percent of sample beneficiaries had a positive improvement in their standard of living after obtaining assistance under the programme. The study concluded that 20 percent of the beneficiaries crossed the poverty line (annual family income of Rs.6400/-) comfortably as a result of IRDP investment.

Meshram (1995), in his study in Maharashtra, entitled “Institutional Rural Credit in India” revealed that credit institution had succeeded in helping the people who were economically backward, by supplying them agriculture inputs and loans and advances on easy terms to start subsidiary occupations to tackle the problems of poverty and unemployment. The study showed that all the categories such as SCs and STs, literate and illiterate people in the rural areas had been availing and utilising credit facilities for both production and consumption purpose and thus the aim of rural credit institution had been fulfilled.

Rangarajan (1995) in his article has examined the relevance of the concept of priority sector and the system used for monitoring priority sector advance. He found
that all the priority sector segments are affected seriously because the over importance given to the poverty alleviation programmes in the case of financing.

Veerasekharappa (1995) did a study pertaining to the patterns and utilization of farm finance by institutional agencies. The study highlighted that the major governing factor, which determines the credit accessibility to the rural mass, is still the land holding and educational attainment. Moreover, this, to ensure about the land holding possession level, there is great delay on the delivery of credits. As the rate of recovery was less than 60 percent, over dues as a proportion of outstanding amounts were around 25 percent.

Rajendran (1997) in his study conducted in rural credit management in Kerala demonstrated that, the greater dependence of rural people on non-formal sources of credit has declined very much in Kerala. That is why to avail rural credit facilities are much better in Kerala is better than any other states and it was appreciable in the matter of credit support to the priority sector.

Social security defined, as Getubig does van Ginneken (1998), as “any kind of collective measures or activities designed to ensure the members of society to meet their basic needs, as well as being protected from contingencies (such as illness, disability, unemployment, and old age) to enable them to maintain a standard of living consistent with social norms.”

Majumdar (1999) “banking reforms not only mean ATMs, computerisation of treasury operations, credit cards, NRI branches, and perhaps dealing in securities”. They must involve in lending to the productive sectors, priority sectors, and small borrowers. Developing viable credit institutions and providing credit to the rural poor
within the broad objectives of poverty alleviation is a well-established development policy.

Dodkey (1999) emphasized the role of Self-Help Groups (SHG) in improving access of the rural poor to the formal credit systems. He argued, “SHGs constitute a vital link in the credit delivery system. The number of SHGs linked to bank loans had increased from 255 in 1992-93 to 14317 in 1997-98. The programme had benefited nearly 1, 50,000 rural poor families”

Benson (2000) studied the impact of credit on income of the rural borrowers in Kerala. He compared the post loan and pre loan situation of the rural borrowers and examined whether it raised the income and standard of living of the people in the rural area and found that the easy term lending to various economic activities will move them out of poverty.

Hulme, Moore and Shepherd (2003) identified chronic poverty in terms of “combinations of adverse incorporation, stage in life cycle, health status, position in household, position in community or nation and lastly by the geographical location”. Factors causing chronic poverty are the structural factors such as market related, political or social relationships, vulnerabilities arising from various causes, low asset status, shocks agro-ecological, political and economic and spatial poverty traps.

Swaminathan (2004) defined “The poor are poor only because they have no assets - no land, no livestock, no houses and often no education. Their only assets are time and labour. The challenge therefore lies in enhancing the economic value of the time and labour of the poor”

Mehta, Aasha Kapur and Amita Shah, (2004) claimed that the marginalised group of people like SC,ST and the elderly, women and the disabled are experiencing
multiple deprivations of nutritious food, assets like land, shelter and other basic requirements and it is harder to move them out of poverty.

Hiroshi Sato(2004) in a study reviewed that “the state of Kerala attained a level of social wellbeing compared with that of advanced Countries despite its low income standard is widely known as an example of “welfare by Public intervention” in developing economies. The Public intervention especially in the form of decentralised and participatory models in local areas”.

Kumar, Anand (2004) in a study related to politics of poverty and poverty of politics in India found that the chance of conflicts between poverty affected social groups and others in relation to the economic and political reforms.

Pat (2005) reviewed that “The poor are considered as ‘unbankable’ for fear of default of repayment and inability to force repayment. They continue to depend on the informal sector for finance on extortionist terms.” Even though the direct approach to attack on poverty helped the poor to move out of the poverty but much more has to be done, as the problem of poverty is multi dimensional. Efforts that are more serious are made by the Kerala Government through the SHG formation through the Kudumbashree mission. He argues that decentralised governments are more responsible to the needs of the poor than Central Governments and thus are more likely to implement pro-poor Polices. The decentralisation is unlikely to lead more pro-poor outcomes, without a serious effort to strengthen and broaden accountability mechanisms at both local and national levels.

Erraiah. G. (2005) reveals that poverty is a multi dimensional problem and incidence of poverty is more in rural India compared to urban India. Characteristics of Rural Poor in Kerala are according to him are dependence on agriculture for a
livelihood. Since Agriculture is a seasonal job, rural people forced to do other works. Most of the earning members in poor families are daily wage earners. Poor families will give prime preference to food consumption, the availability of consumer durables is very limited in these households. The poor people depend highly on credits. The purposes of credit are marriage, house construction, house repair, expenses to meet emergencies etc.

Chathukulam (2005) in a study about SGSY implementation in Kerala found the major defects’ related to the beneficiary committees. The programme for rural development degenerated to the position of an ordinary public work programme lead by the contractors instead of beneficiary committees. The lack of experienced beneficiary committees in the implementation of a centrally sponsored programme designed for the employment and income generation of the rural poor, defeated the major goals of decentralisation.

Kaushik (2005) commented that decentralizations in India is confronted with variety of limitations. In other words, that ambiguity surrounding the concept of self government and the substantial power that still rests with the State governments have prevented most States from devolving only substantive power to the Panchayats. According to world banks studies in terms of political decentralization India ranks first among the best performers internationally. Nevertheless, in terms of administrative decentralisation, India places close to the last.

Weiss John and Khan Haider (2006) examines that “poor implementation and poor out comes have been defining characteristics of targeted poverty programmes in India”. This is because of poor administration, and corruption. The problem of benefit leakage and beneficiary exclusion is dependent on how poor are being
Their study clearly reveals the potential clash between official and community perceptions of poverty.

Thomas (2006) in a study reveals’ that the participatory planning process in Kerala has to keep a keen attention and revamping on the institutions like beneficiary committees in the implementation of various projects. If sufficient attention is not given, the idea of people participation will be vanished and the former contractor raj can be re emerged in the rural economy.

Arjun Sen Gupta (2007) in an article related to capability approach viewed that extreme poverty is the mixture of extreme form of income poverty, human development poverty, and social exclusion. Poverty in any country is considered as the worst form of degradation of human dignity in that sense it is the violation of human rights conditions like right of food, health, education standard of living, right of life, freedom of assembly and expression along with other civil and political rights. The absence of these rights is considered as the denial of basic capabilities.

Thomas E M (2007) studied about the performance of lower primary schools in aided and Government sector, in the period of competition and the threat of closure due to declining g rate of enrolment, found that the decentralisation and large amount of plan fund allocation on educational sector improved the standard and an increasing impact in enrolment. As this schools are only depending educational institutions for the poor communities, their improvement with the physical and competitive environment will help the poor rural community largely. He also reviewed that the plan projects are not having the continuity as many of projects are stopped after two or three years implementation and it may seriously affects the poor reliefs in educational sector and the expectation of many poor students.
Oommen (2008) criticised the poverty indices developed by the Kudumbashree mission and questioned the relevance of most of them to estimate the real poverty. The presence of an illiterate adult in the family, the criteria related to employment, the presence of children less than five years, a family with alchoholic/drug adicts, SC/ST families may not the real attribute of poverty. Moreover, suggested some improvements in it.

Oommen (2008) in a working paper related to the Kudumbashree and micro finance programme in Kerala for poverty alleviation tried to measure four types of empowerment. Organisational empowerment, economic empowerment, knowledge empowerment, leadership empowerment, and social capital. Organisational empowerment is studied based on the organisational ability to collectively bargain for a common cause, Social position among family members and relatives, Social position among neighbours and other people in the community, skill / ability to plan projects, ability to organise group activity. Economic empowerment is studied based on income, asset holdings, savings, chance of getting bank loan; Leadership Empowerment based on capacity to address a group, feeling of self confidence, overall capabilities; Knowledge empowerment is based on awareness of women’s empowerment, awareness of women’s rights, awareness on gender discrimination etc.

"Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes."

Tony Addison (2008) claimed that the poverty research needs to have a thorough understanding of poverty dynamics and different poverty reduction
programmes and it requires the cross-disciplinary approach by analysing strength and weakness of different poverty reduction strategies

Amit Thorat (2009) in a PhD study on determinants of poverty in India, analysed and identifies the poor in the country quite clearly. “Poor are identified not only by their economic characteristics but also by their socio-religious identities. It also highlights the fact that in a country like India, social belongings could be at times much more important in determining income outcomes of households, than their economic characteristics”.

Thomas (2009) in a study among two village panchayat in Kerala, Padiyoor and valappad in Thrissur district reveals that the decentralised planning efforts in Kerala could succeed in women empowerment. As the increasing participation of women in panchayat administration, in Gramasabha and decision making process, economic, social, political empowerment and self confidence has enhanced through various policy measures like encouraging women in training, new ventures, women cooperatives etc.

Thomas B.K. (2009) developed a participatory local method with indicators applicable to Kuttanad regions, to identify the poor household in the area. Two stage method – First identify poor households and then to identify and rank the vulnerable among the poor. Primary means of lively hood of the head of the family – agri labourers, fish workers and other labouring people, were categorised as poor and others are non – poor toddy tapper, farmers, migrants to Persian Gulf and government employees. Using 8 indicators of vulnerability scoring and ranking as poor Household. The vulnerability indicators are, one income earner, male head unable to work, female
headed, living in dilapidated house, of a girl of marriageable age, children pursuing higher studies, not taken farm land on lease in the recent past, living in paddy field.

Gopikuttan (2009) in a study reviewed that the participatory model of decentralised planning implemented in Kerala was appreciated around the country and many states accepted the model of Kerala in the devolution of functions, powers, fund transferred to LSG’s. “With the experience of more than one decade, Kerala GP’s are in the capacity to identify Local provisions and prepare plans for the local development in a participatory way. The participatory approach as the part of direct democracy- experienced, sustained, and carried forward to the 10th and 11th five-year plan periods”. Most Of the human development programmes, social welfare functions, social security’s, employment generation programmes are implemented through the LSG’s.

Bisha C M (2009) in a study related to Gandhis concept of village swaraj, Village panchayats are the Key Unit of decentralisation of legislative, executive and judicial powers. According to Gandhi, only the political decentralisation cannot empower the rural communities, the economic decentralisation is also a necessity to become a self-sufficient village republic by meeting the basic needs of the people like food, clothing, and shelter.

Gadadhara Mahapatra (2010) in a study related to impact of SHG on poverty in Kalahandi district found that around 70 per cent households have an increase in the level of income among the programme participants after joining respective SHGs in the sample villages. However, the increase in income has not shown satisfactory result in asset accumulation. Only 25.4 per cent households reported that they have purchased utensils, ornaments, food grains and livestock’s out of the income from the
SHG activities. Asset accumulation is a reliable indicator of poverty levels; the study finds “positive impact of borrowers in comparison to a control group of non-borrowers”. However, the study does not confirm to the fact that increase in income has led to increase in asset among the programme participants”.

Krishna (2010) analysed that poverty reduction means, not people moving out of poverty, even if many moved out of poverty, several others might have fallen in to the poverty. “It is important to restrict the chances of non-poor falling in to the poverty through different social development and welfare programmes, which provide a sustainable and continuous level of income”.

Thomas and Muradian (2010) reviewed that “Governments are often constrained by fiscal considerations and the pressure to show falling levels of poverty. Arbitrarily setting a cut off as the poverty line, and social security benefits are targeted to those who are falling below the poverty lines, most often a universal approach is not used”, and for different approaches, different set of people are identified as poor.

As per development report of World Bank (2013), “The pace of decline in poverty has accelerated. Between 2005 and 2012, India lifted 137 million people out of poverty. Poverty declined by 2.2 percentage points per year, as the poverty rate (based on the national poverty line of US$1.17 (PPP) per person per day) fell sharply from 37 percent to 22 percent during this period”. The report claims a widespread decline in both rural and urban poverty rates to 26 percent and 14 percent in 2012.

As per 2013 development report of World Bank, “Many of India’s newly non-poor remain vulnerable and minor shocks could easily push them below the poverty line. Three out of every five Indians are not poor but live dangerously close to poverty
(between one and two poverty lines)”. The individuals living below a threshold of poverty lines remain vulnerable to shocks, which could push them into poverty.

Kurian and John (2014) critically reviewed the multiplicity of agencies in poverty estimation in India like NSSO, Planning commission, BPL census, and different methodologies. Besides these World Bank, UNDP and other International agencies made estimates about poverty. Most of these estimates reveal that the Kerala has made a remarkable achievement in the poverty reduction when compared with other states in India. From 1993-94 to 2011-12 ((50th round to 68th round of NSSO) based on Tendulkar methodology state specific monthly per capita poverty line of Rs.1018 for rural Kerala GOI (2013). “As per the BPL census (Monetary poverty in Kerala) the rural poverty declined to 20.2% in 2004-05 and again declined 12% in 2009-10 (All India 33.8%)’. As per MPI methodology of UNDP, Kerala’s poverty declined from 32.6% in 1999 to 12.7% in 2013. (56.8 to 53.7 in All India)”.

He also mentioned about the states own risk index method of estimating poverty. Kudumbashree set 9 core risk indicators and eight additional risk indicators for identifying BPL beneficiaries. Those who are having four or more than four are identified as poor (risk families) and those having eight or more than eight are treated as very poor (destitute).

**Conclusion**

To sum up, in all the earlier studies, the decentralised planning is assessed by studying the achievements of the peoples planning campaign, impact of democratic decentralisation, role of panchayatiraj institutions in rural development, allocation of resources under decentralised planning, fiscal decentralisation in Kerala, rural housing programmes, success, and shortage of decentralised administration etc. Separate
studies were made on poverty and its estimation in Kerala, improper fund utilisation of poverty reduction programmes, implementation of the performance of the various poverty reduction programmes like IRDP, NREGS, women empowerment and Kudumbashree etc. were made. However, no serious single study has been made to explore the impact of decentralised planning on poverty alleviation in rural Kerala. So with a view to bridge this research gap, an intensive study is attempted here to investigate the impact of decentralised planning on poverty alleviation in rural Kerala-based on selected districts of Kerala. It tries to identify the various dimensions of rural poverty in Kerala, the operational viability of different poverty reduction programmes implemented through the decentralised institutions. It also attempts to detail some of the impacts of decentralised planning on poverty alleviation in rural Kerala.
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CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL BASE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
Chapter 3

THEORETICAL BASE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter deals with the theoretical and conceptual framework of decentralised planning and the study of poverty. Brief discussion related to the meaning, definition, different degrees, theories and dimensions of decentralised planning and poverty are included. Similarly, it deals with the various approaches and the evolution of decentralised planning in Kerala and various poverty identification strategies introduced in Kerala. The discussion related to different poverty reduction programmes directly implemented through the decentralised institutions also incorporated in the last part of the chapter.

3.1. Theoretical base and conceptual Framework of the Decentralised Planning

The decentralised Planning and its application for the democratic deepening in the planning process are widely discussed among the planners and research scholars. For the sake of simplicity and convenience, the most relevant for the present study is incorporated in this chapter.

3.1.1. Meaning

The decentralised planning is a more complex concept in the philosophy of economic planning. Decentralised planned economy is the one in which most important economic decisions regarding what to, How to, and for whom to are decided by the decentralised planning mechanism. It is sometimes known as horizontal planning or root level planning. In this type of planning decisions are divided among different agents within the production units. Alternatively, it tries to localise the decision-making mechanisms through a root level participatory technology. Participation of agents in different tiers is related to the decision-making mechanism.
In the development context, it is the transfer of authority and responsibility in the formulation and implementation of plans, from higher level (central or state level) institutions to the lower level (District level, Block level or GramaPanchayat level) institutions.

3.1.2. Definition of the Concept

World Bank Definition

'Decentralization entails the transfer of political, fiscal, and administrative powers to subnational units of government. On the other hand, it may consist of expanding the resources and responsibilities of existing subnational governments'

Thus Decentralised planning is a type of planning in which the authority and responsibility of formulation, implementation, supervision and evaluation of planning is made by the bottom level or local level institutions and organisations.

UNDP definition

“... Decentralization can be a means for creating more open, responsive, and effective local government and for enhancing representational systems of community-level decision making. By allowing local communities and regional entities to manage their own affairs, and through facilitating closer contact between central and local authorities, effective systems of local governance enable responses to people's needs and priorities to be heard, thereby ensuring that government interventions meet a variety of social needs. It require local, participatory processes to identify and address priority objectives for poverty reduction, employment creation, gender equity, and environmental regeneration”

Robertson Work (2002) in a worldwide overview of decentralisation in 2002, published by UNDP, “decentralised planning is the transfer of responsibility for planning, management and
resource raising and allocation from the central government and its agencies to the lower level of governments”.

3.1.3. Dimensions of Decentralised Planning

There are four dimensions of decentralised planning.

1) Functional Decentralisation 2) Political decentralisation

3) Administrative decentralisation 4) Fiscal decentralisation.

- Functional decentralisation refers to the transfer of different functions from central or state level to sub national level. It requires clarity and care to divide functions among different tiers of government. Functional decentralisation must be matched by power decentralisation like (i) policy-making power like law making and executive powers, (ii) Financial power related to revenue and expenditure, and (iii) power over personnel matters like conditions of service, establishments, appointments, promotions, transfers, discipline etc. Even though some powers are transferred to the bottom, the command will be at the top.

- Political decentralisation or democratic decentralisation refers to the transfer of political power and authority to the lower level governing bodies like village, block, and district panchayats. It requires constitutional, legal framework to ensure accountability and transparency. Here real democracy is ensured by full participation of the people in decision-making mechanism. Three major components of the political decentralisation are local autonomy, devolution, and public participation.

- Local autonomy refers to the local community to take decisions and execute actions with the minimum dependence on the higher authority.
• Devolution refers to the transfer of functions, powers to local authorities to take decisions and to accept responsibility on that decision. It is not merely delegating where the responsibility rests on the higher authority.

• Public participation refers to the full participation of peoples in decision-making process. Public participation in planning process will be maintained by the institutionalisation of Local Self Governments. In India, it is established through the panchayati raj by 73rd and 74th amendment.

• Administrative decentralisation refers to the transfer of decision-making authority, resources and responsibilities related to the transfer of some public services from central government agencies to the other levels of Governments in the bottom.

• Fiscal decentralisation refers to the transfer of fiscal resources from central government to the sub national levels and it is related to the budgetary practices and must be based on the capacity building of the local governance in fiscal management. Planning would be meaningless without the sufficient allocation of financial resources. The mobilised resources of central government are transferred through finance commissions based on some criteria like population, area, backwardness, tax effort etc. It is better to find their own source of revenue mobilisation instead of complete dependence on central funds, for the success of decentralised planning.

3.1.4. Different Degrees of Decentralisation

According to UNDP overview of decentralisation(1998) and World Bank(1984), there are four degrees of decentralisation.
• Devolution - It is a form of political decentralisation. That is full transfer of responsibility, decision making, resources and revenue generation to an independent and autonomous local authority.

• Delegation - In this form of administrative decentralisation the central government delegating local governments or its agencies to perform some functions on behalf of the delegating authority, by keeping some accountability and the ultimate responsibility on the delegating authority.

• Deconcentration - It is a form of administrative decentralisation in which transfer of responsibilities from central to local governments is only by maintaining the hierarchical accountability from one unit to its top.

• Divestment (Privatisation) - It is related to the contracting out or transfer the partial services like planning, administrative functions of a government agency to any other non government agencies or voluntary organisations.

• Dispersal: Amitava Mukherjee (1990) introduced another concept of decentralisation as Dispersal, where the posting of personnel outside the national capital without any significant transfer of powers or functions to them.

3.1.5. Approaches to the concept of decentralisation

J.W. Felser (1965) reviewed about four types of approaches for decentralised planning.

a) Doctrinal b) Political c) Administrative d) The dual role

a) **Doctrinal Approach** - The decentralisation here treated as an 'end' itself based on some ideologies or doctrines rather than treating it as a means to achieve some end values.

b) **Political approach** - This approach underlines the political commitment to the devolution of powers and functions to the lower tiers of administration.
c) **Administrative approach** - The field level decision making is essential for the prompt problem solving in the decentralised planning mechanism. To make it more effective, conscious efforts must be there to set up more field administrative units.

d) **The dual role approach**: This approach tries to involve the traditional or established field system with that of the changing field system and tries to avoid the conflict between two different orientations.

**3.1.6. Theories of Decentralised Planning:**

Mukkerjee, Amitava et al (1990), Thomas E M (2002), reviewed the main theories of decentralisation can be grouped in to five categories.

1) **Location Theories**: This theory of decentralisation favours the dispersion process to counteract the concentration process and emergence of large number of small and medium sized centers provide more facilities to the inhabitants in these localities.

2) **Central Place Theories**: August Losch(1954), favoured the Central place theory. In addition, as per this theory a central place as the center of the surrounding dispersed region and the population of these central settlements live on economic activities conditioned by land surrounding them.

3) **Theory of development Poles**: Perroux (1950) Theory was based on the development experiences of the development poles and its application towards the other regions surrounded them.

4) **Theory of geographical incidence and transmission of economic development**

Hirschman (1969) pointed out that unequal development of various sectors often generates conditions for rapid development. The sequence that moves away from the equilibrium is an ideal pattern of development.
5) **The Theory of Growth foci**: This theory derived as the integration of many theories like growth pole, and central place theories. The growth foci vary in size and function to suit the specific regional needs. Many levels of foci based on the Micro needs and Macro needs.

### 3.1.7. Evolution of Decentralised planning in India

After independence, in India a centralised planning structure adopted for the quick prosperity and development of major sectors. The centralised system, with planning commission was an important agency to prepare plans from the top and implement it in the bottom level like states, districts, blocks, and panchayats. Most often, the local needs and priorities are ignored. When it is implemented uniformly for a vast area like India, without considering the regional differences in different areas, may create an unbalanced structure of development in the country as a whole.

In order to avoid these deficiencies people from the bottom level has given participation in the formulation and implementation of plans for their localities including their local needs and priorities.

From the first plan (1951), itself some attempts were made in the way of decentralisation to strengthen the local planning. Only after the 73rd and 74th amendment, it became strengthened in its real meaning.

**First Phase**-(Community development phase):

During the first and second plan period (1951-1961) based on Gandhian ideology of self-reliant village economies, community development programme started. It was implemented through the National Extension Services. The community development programmes ensured the peoples participation in identification of needs, prioritization, and even in the responsibility of implementation. The Government officials have only the role of guiding and assisting the
villagers and supplying the sufficient resources. However, it was really a Top Down approach and the decision were often suggested by the higher authority and local needs were not reflected in it.

**Second Phase** (1960-1970): This phase was characterised by the Balwant Rai Mehta recommendations related to the implementation of a three tier structure for the local development. At the Village and Block panchayat level a Democratic body by elected representatives, made the planning and development activities. In District level, it was an advisory committee under the chairmanship of the District collector.

Many Panchayat raj institutions in different states were set up as per these recommendations. However, due to the lack of proper local development profile, Training, and over political interference the system could not continue for a long time.

During 1977, Asok Mehta committee appointed to review the community development programme and they recommended a two-tier system.

**Third Phase** (1970-80): During fourth and fifth plan period an area approach was developed and plan allocation of the centre to the states were made in terms of Gadgil formula instead of assistance for specific projects. Block allocation were made 30% as grants and 70% as loans. Rural development, development of target groups and target areas were given emphasis. The development block was considered as suitable area and development projects implemented for this area. Working group under the chairmanship of M L Dantwala prepared guidelines for the block level planning.

**Fourth Phase** (1980-1990): District level planning was given priority in this phase and a working group was appointed in 1982, under the chairmanship of C H HanumanthaRao.
Another working group under the chairmanship of G V K Rao also given priority to the district level planning with separate identity from state level planning.

**Fifth Phase** (1990-2000): During this period deliberate attempts were made to strengthen panchayatiraj institutions by the 73rd amendment of the constitution. Three tier structures were established in all the states, as it became the constitutional responsibility.

**Sixth Phase** (2000 -2010): This phase More Indian States made attempts to devolve funds, Functions, and Functionaries to the decentralised institutions. In addition, many Anti poverty programmes are designed to be implemented through the Local Government Institutions. Many Central schemes and State Schemes made use of the direct Intervention of the decentralised planning Institutions.

**Seventh Phase** (2010-2015) This phase witnessed the deliberate attempts for the inclusive development. In order to incorporate the excluded categories of development, with the development process, decentralised institutions are devolved more functions and functionaries. More concentration on the empowerment of the disadvantaged sections is attempted in different states like the Kudumbashree in Kerala.

**3.1.8. Constitutional amendments and decentralised planning in India**

The 73rd and 74th amendments are related to the the panchayatiraj and Nagarapalika respectively and came in to force from 24 April 1993. The various articles provide State Governments the constitutional obligation to perform various functions. The article 243ZD of the constitution constituting the DPCs consolidates the plans of panchayat and municipal levels. Article 243 G related to the endowment of powers and authority necessary to function as a local self-governments and preparation of plans for economic development and social justice including the poverty reduction. Article 243w related to the urban areas powers and functions.
Related to the metropolitan planning committee. Several states like Kerala, Madhyapradesh included MPs and MLAs as the permanent invitees of the DPC and many states made the chairperson of the Zilla panchayats as the chairperson of the DPC like Kerala, Assam, Bihar Haryana, Karnataka, Manipur, Rajasthan, and West Bengal. In addition, the executive officer of the Zilla panchayats is considered as the secretary of DPC.

Mahipal (2008) Although the importance of decentralized plans was emphasized in every plans, most of the states introduced it in seventh plan. Planning machinery in district and sub district level in most of the states are weak. Instead of block level plans most of the departments like agriculture, vetinery, cooperation health etc. implement the schemes of the state plans and centrally sponsored schemes. A sound database was not available in village, block, and district level except in few cases. District budgeting arrangements, enlistment of the NGOs for effective decentralized planning, effective monitoring arrangements and formulation of a perspective planning arrangements also was not exist in many states except in some cases

### 3.1.9 Principles on Devolution of Functions

The Sen Committee laid down some principles of devolution of functions.

1) Autonomy-it means the LSGIs are allowed to function freely and independently without the controle from upper tiers.

2) Subsidiary-To do the best at a particular level should be done at that level and not at higher level. Thus, the transfer of functions starts from the level of Grama sabha then go up to the Union Government.

3) Role-clarity

4) Complementarity (no overlapping and repetitive functions in different tiers)
5) Uniformity-criteria for selection of beneficiaries, prioritisation etc would be the same for all LSGIs.

6) Peoples participation-Ensure peoples participation on all levels of decision making

7) Accountability-Means answerability to the public and to the nation for all the activities performed

8) Transparency-Every decision taken has to be based on norms and criteria, and the public have the right to know about the fund, how much spent, how much lapsed etc. (Vijayanand 2009, Economic review 1998, GOK (1997), Kerala State Planning Board (1999)

3.1.10. Evolution of Decentralisation in Kerala

At present, the State of Kerala has a strong decentralised structure with 999 village panchayats, 152block panchayats and 14 district panchayats in the rural areas 53 Municipalities in urban areas. This strong background of decentralisation has been evolved even before the formation of Kerala State. Some attempts were made towards the decentralisation of planning efforts and prioritisation of local needs. The two major provinces as Travancore-Cochin and Malabar area were implemented some arrangements as per the respective acts controlled them. In Travancore and Cochin, a single tier arrangement of local governing system as per Travancore Cochin Panchayat Act was existed and a Two-tier structure of local governance was existed in Malabar as per Madras Village panchayat act. However, after the formation of Kerala state, deliberate attempts were made to strengthen the process of decentralisation process by the formation of an Administrative Reform Committee under the leadership of EMS Namboodirippad, it recommended a strong local governing mechanism for the local development and especially for the development of the disadvantaged, marginalised, and exploited sections of the society. The Administrative Reform committee (ARC) in 1958 recommended for two-tire
system including a directly elected village Panchayat and District councils. Village Offices, schools health, agriculture, animal husbandry, and Cottage Industries were to work with Panchayat.

In 1960-61 Kerala Panchayat Raj Act and municipal act, passed by including the administrative recommendations of the two tier structure. A new panchayatiraj bill was initiated in 1967 with Two tier – panchayat at bottom level and District panchayat at district level introduced. 1971 –This bill Re introduced but later lapse. 1978 - Kerala District Administration Bill again introduced. 1979 - After removing some functions like Police functions, this bill passed. 1991 - First election conducted to District councils’. (B A Prakash 2005) but their powers were taken away within six months after its formation.

As elsewhere in India, The original concepts of decentralisation most often ignored and the increased departmentalism overruled many of the development schemes put forward by the government. Many agencies for the scheme implementation like Board, corporations, societies etc. complicated the issue of development and the upliftment of the downtrodden.

3.1.11. The Kerla Panchayat Raj Act amendment in 1999 and various

Functions of three tier Local Governments.

The Kerala Panchayat Raj Act, 1994 was amended in 1999, as per the recommendations of the Sen Committee. It provided more clarity regarding the powers and functions of different tiers of panchayats. It brought more functions to the local governments like Regulatory functions, Mandatory functions, General functions, Promotional functions, Agency functions, Managerial and Autonomous functions and it enhanced the role local bodies to broader horizons. The functions assigned to the grama panchayat, the block panchayat and the district panchayat are listed in schedule three, four, and five of the Act respectively.
3.1.12. Grama panchayats and their functions

**Mandatory functions:** Mandatory functions are only for Grama panchayats and it includes 27 functions like regulation of building construction, protection of land from encroachment, management of markets, immunisation, streetlights, birth and death registration, solid waste management, drinking water provision.

**General functions:** There are fourteen general functions like statistical data, promoting thrift, communal harmony, promoting cooperatives, people’s participation in all stages of development etc.

**Sectoral functions:** Sector wise distribution of responsibilities in 19 sectors like agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, social forestry, housing, water supply, electricity and energy, education, public works, public health and sanitation, social welfare, poverty alleviation, SC/ST development, sports and cultural affairs, public distribution system, natural calamities and cooperatives.

3.1.13. Block Panchayat and their functions

**General functions:** Grama Panchayats, block panchayats are given 3 general functions. They are pooling technical expertise, technical services to the village panchayats, and prepare plans considering village plans

**Sectoral Functions:** There are 14-sector wise distribution of responsibilities like agriculture, animal-husbandry, minor-irrigation, fisheries, small scale sector, housing, electricity, education, public works, public health and sanitation, and social welfare, poverty alleviation, SC/ST development, cooperatives
3.1.14. District Panchayat and their Functions

**General functions:** The district panchayats are also given some general functions like mobilise the technical expertise, provide technical services to the block panchayats and village panchayats, prepare plans after considering village and block panchayats.

**Sectoral functions:** The sector wise distribution of 16 responsibilities like agriculture, animal husbandry, minor irrigation, fisheries, small scale sector, housing, electricity, water supply, education, public works, public health, sanitation, social welfare, poverty alleviation, SC/ST development, sports and cultural affairs, and cooperatives. In the case of functional distributions, the general functions and mandatory functions are free from overlaps and confusions related to the role of each tiers of the decentralised governance. However, in the case of sectoral functions lack of clarity in the distribution of functions leads to overlaps, duplication, and confusions.


The amendments provided greater role to the local bodies in relation to the poverty alleviation. All the three tiers have the responsibility to implement anti poverty programmes. Various centrally sponsored and State sponsored poverty reduction programmes were implemented by the local governments.

**The responsibility of the Grama Panchayats on Poverty Alleviation:** The responsibility of grama panchayats on poverty alleviation are the following.

a) Identification of poor
b) Self employment and Group employment schemes

c) Providing community assets for the benefits of the poor.
The responsibility of the Block panchayats on poverty alleviation: The Poverty alleviation programmes under the Block panchayat are planning and implementation of employment assurance schemes, in coordination with the village panchayats and skill upgradation of the poor for self employment and wage employment for people below poverty line.

The responsibility of the District panchayats on poverty alleviation: The District panchayats are providing infrastructure for self-employment programmes. More than that, in other sector-wise distribution of responsibilities in social welfare like pension distribution to the destitute widows, handicapped and agricultural labourers, distribution of unemployment allowance, assistance given to the marriage of daughters of widows, management of group insurance scheme of the poor are also provide benefits to the poor. In addition, the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes development activities like beneficiary oriented schemes under SCP and TSP, Health sector activities like sanitation, immunisation and health centers etc promote the poverty alleviation programmes.

3.1.16. Developmental Decentralisation in Kerala

Kerala Panchayatiraj Act1994 and its amendment in1999 transferred well-defined social and developmental responsibilities to local governments. Many development and social security responsibilities are transferred to the local bodies like infrastructural development and poverty eradication, women empowerment, Scheduled cast and Scheduled tribes development, rural water supply etc.

3.1.17. Developmental Responsibilities of Local Governments in Infrastructure

The extend of decentralisation have the following facts to be noted in the infrastructure development; power like the extending lines of electricity, sanitation, solid and liquid waste management, rural water supply, promotion of tiny and cottage industries, agriculture extension,
watershed management, diary development, animal husbandry, inland fisheries, ICDS, care of disabled, etc were became the responsibility of local governments. Chakraborthy, Achin (2005)

3.1.18. Developmental Responsibilities of Local Governments in poverty alleviation,

SC/ST Development and Women empowerment.

Eventhough from 1975 onwards, special component plan (SCP) for Scheduled cast and Tribal sub plan (TSP) for Scheduled tribes were introduced, it is only after 73rd and 74th amendments local self governments are given poweres for the plan formulation and implementation for these disadvantaged sections. From 9th Plan onwards Kerala devolved two third of the total allocation of SCP and TSP for LSGs. Moreover, women component plan for the women empowerment were introduced during 1998 and nearly 10% of the total allocation must be spent women oriented projects. Special anti poverty sub plans are introduced for the poverty reduction programmes. In the case of poverty alleviation, local governments play a crucial role with kudumbasree mission.95percentage of the poverty reduction programmes are handled by the Kudumbashree mission. For the poverty, reduction attempts the BPL and just above poverty line families are grouped in to NHGs (Neighborhood groups) and among the female members of each NHG, ADS (Area development society) members are selected for each ward of the village panchayat. Among the ADS members, CDS (Community Development Society) members for the village panchayat are selected. The CDS system works in a partnership basis with the local governments to reduce poverty. All the centrally sponsored anti poverty programmes are planned and implemented by local governments. Devika and Binitha (2007)
3.1.19. Developmental Responsibilities on Education

GPs have control in education sector only up to the higher secondary level. Higher secondary schools are controlled and managed by district panchayats.

3.1.20. Developmental responsibilities on Health

All primary health centers in Homeo, Allopathic, and Ayurveda given for the Grama panchayats, Taluk hospitals, and other medical institutions given for the District Panchayats.

3.1.21. Developmental Responsibilities on Social security and welfare

The beneficiary selection and disbursement of all welfare pensions are under the control of GramaPpanchayats. Universal health insurance scheme for the poor, social security schemes also under the control of village panchayats. The responsibilities related to the human development and social developments are under the purview of local governments. All the public institutions and offices related to these responsibilities are transferred to local governments.

3.1.22. District Planning Committee (DPC)

The History of district planning in Kerala is as reviewed in Prakash B A(2005) Late 1960’s and early 1970’s of bringing out a document giving district wise breakup of the annual plan. Each department prepared district wise break up schemes divisible among district such schemes consolidated by State planning Board (SPB).-Later a separate decentralized planning division created 1076.- District planning Offices functioned in 1979 in all districts.- Their first task was to create data base for each district.- Local planning machinery created (DPC) headed by District collector, as MLAs MPs, Official and Non-Officials as members (District planning council)- BPC (Block planning committee) also formed at every block.- From the above discussion it is clear that there was no decentralized planning in Kerala till1995 (which focused
The local govt. got powers and financial resources to implement development functions only after 1994. (Kerla Panchayatiraj Act).

Kerala state formed fully functional DPCs. DPCs are an important constitutional body in Kerala for integrating plan drafts of local bodies. The DPCs are coordinating and monitoring the plans of local governments and provide suggestions by constituting Technical advisory committee. The structure of district planning committee includes 15 members among 12 are from district panchayat and urban bodies3 others are district panchayat presidents chair person of DPC and District collector as secretary and an expert. All MPs and MLAs of the districts are permanent invitees of the DPC. Vijayanand (2009)

3.1.23. Administrative Decentralisation in Kerala

Administrative decentralisation means flow of power from political executives to local bodies. Traditional wisdom recommends the capacity building of the local government first, and as improvements in capacity building, power can be transferred to the local bodies. However, Kerala adapted a 'reversal sequence' where first giving responsibility and then building capacity. As once the functions, finance are transferred, it will be the duty of government to ensure that the system works, and necessary orders, deployment of staff will be made. Isaac and Franke (2000).

To operationalise decentralisation, Kerala selected the participatory local level planning, and the campaign approach adopted in the planning as 'people’s campaign' made it a model for the country as a whole.

The most important feature of Kerala system of planning is the devolution of many functions from the state Government departments to village panchayats. Even though two different ruling parties LDF and UDF had ruled the state during the decade from 1996 onwards, without any political rivalry, they vigorously continued the practice of decentralised planning in
the state. Hence, the greatest merit of continuity, present in the system of planning in Kerala. Thomas E M (2007)

3.1.24. Decentralisation of Planning Process

Kerala’s decentralised planning became a homegrown process and a model for all other states as it experimented the planning process with people’s participation. With the participation of people in all the stages of planning, a democratizing methodology adopted from the grass route level. In the bottom up participatory approach, people determines the choice and local priorities in the matter of drinking water, poverty, roads and other infrastructure facilities, agriculture and other development needs. George Mathew (2007) to ensure the mass participation of people in the planning process, the state launched a campaign model as ‘people’s campaign’ and people discussed various local problems and the local possibilities as solutions.

The methodology of people’s plan campaign consisting of different planning stages.

1) Grama sabha

2) Development seminar

3) Task forces

4) Preparation of local plan

5) Preparation of higher-level plan

6) Plan appraisal and sanction.

7) Implementation

8) Monitoring

9) Evaluation

Grama Sabha consisting all the members of the ward and the selection of beneficiaries and decisions regarding various local development issues were seriously discussed in this sabha.
According to the KPA 1994, Special Gramasabhas are called for the need identification of the plan. The various subject wise gathering of people under the leadership of a gramasabha facilitator, discuss the priorities of these needs of the locality and after discussions in the gramasabha, an end report is prepared related to the priorities and problems of different local needs and it is discussed in development seminar. As like the subject wise gathering, development reports under 15 different subjects are prepared.

The planning board provided some guidelines for the project preparation focusing the local needs arise from the Gramasabhas and as per this guidelines the Task force (Voluntary Technical Experts from various field) prepares plan projects. The voluntary service of the task force is an important thing to integrate local needs and based on that the planning board makes the sectoral allocation.

The various tiers of decentralised planning (Block and District) also preparing their Plans considering the basic issues discussed in the Gramasabha and the methodology for the formulation of plan were same for them except the Gramasabha discussions. The higher level plans are the integration of the lower level plans and elected members in those tiers are raising the local issues for the plan preparation.

The plan appraisal and sanction was done by the DPC (District Planning Committee) after considering the viability of the projects. In order to evaluate and sanction bulk of projects from lower tiers a separate VTC (voluntary Technical corps) later it was known as Expert committee, was formed consisting of retired officers in different sectors and experts nominated by the District collector.
3.1.25. Kerala Development Plan (10th Five year Plan-2002-07)

The Change in the ruling Front from LDF to UDF in 2001, the planning methodology has not changed, even though the name of the campaign changed to Kerala Development Plan from Peoples Plan Campaign 'Sudhakaran (2006). The focus of the planning has changed to the long term Plans instead of annual plans. The task force (The Voluntary technical experts from various fields) was renamed as working group. The 10th Plan period covering from 2002 to 2007, were experimented with these changing format of the planning. The different stages of the Preparation of Plan were

1) Working group formation for minimum eight sectors like poverty reduction, SC/ST development, development of women and children Education, social security, energy and local economic development etc and these working groups prepare plan drafts.
2) Gramasabha, where the plan drafts are discussed
3) Target setting and draft of projects are prepared for presenting in development seminar.
4) Preparation of Plan projects by the Working group
5) Preparation of plan by the local body
6) Plan appraisal
7) The appraisal of projects is done by technical advisory committee (former expert committee) constituted in block and district level they sanction only the projects of public works.

3.1.26. Anti poverty Sub Plan

When decentralised planning strategies were implemented in 1996. One of the important targets of the programme was the development of the poor and marginalised sections of the society. During the period of 9th plan some attempts were made to find out the real poor through beneficiary committees and Grama sabha discussion. Individual benefits in the form of
provision of housing, electrification, sanitation, wells for drinking water, house repair, were given among the beneficiaries selected from the beneficiary list prepared from GramaSabha, for the reduction of poverty. During the 10th plan period separate anti poverty sub plans are introduced to meet the problems of poor. 11th Plan also continued the anti poverty sub plans with some emphasis on group level self-employment projects through Kudumbashree SHGs. The 95% of the poverty reduction programmes are implemented through Kudumbashree mission under the direct control of Grama Panchayat. Many SHGs are formed consisting members from poor families. Number of micro credit, Joint liability group farming units was formed. Special Component programmes for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, women component plans were given more emphasis and considerations to the respective groups. It is important to analyse the relative position of these poor sections of people after implementation of nearly two decades of decentralised planning. Many efforts have been made to economical, social and political empowerment of poor people through the balasabhas, jagratha samithies, sthree padhavi padanam (study of women’s position), crime mapping, kudumbashree markets, technical training to women for a livelihood etc..

Anti poverty, sub plans are specially aimed at the removal of poverty with in a time period. As against other poverty, alleviation programmes it tries to develop a participatory model where poor themselves identify the needs and they suggest problems of poor households and solutions. Neighborhood groups are framing micro level plans enlisting the needs and their estimates and by integrating micro level plans the ADS (area Development Societies) preparing Ward level plans or Mini Plans. All the mini plans from each ward are coordinated by the CDS (community Development Societies) and this becomes the panchayat level Anti poverty sub Plan.
For this purpose a problem based BPL survey is prepared in 2002 (not based on household income level as like 1998) based on the different problems faced by each household related to house, land, cloth, food security, sanitary toilet, possession of equipments, educational standard, employment level, livelihood, indebtedness, etc. The ward level details are consolidated as panchayat BPL list. It is made available as a printed format. Ward level list is given to the corresponding ADS executives and they have to arrange ADS meeting for dissuading and evaluating this list. The meeting must be in the presence of the ward member. In this meeting proper evaluations of the list is made and problem areas are noted and make proper arrangements for the detailed evaluation in the neighborhood group level.

The evaluation means the eligibility of a household to be included in the list, and it must be done only in the presence of that particular household in the neighborhood group. In order to include any additional household, their presence also must be there. If any household who are not the member of the particular NHG, and not included in the list, they must be given chance to be included in the list of another NHG.

3.1.26.1 Special meeting of NHG and preparation of Micro plans.

This ward level list is presented before the special meeting of all Neighborhood groups in the ward and the corrections and additions are made as per discussions. Here the poor themselves evaluate the officially collected informations regarding the poor households.

In the meeting, the details of each household must read loudly and every one can verify the problem of each household. Micro plans are prepared by the identified problems and development needs of the ward. Thus, a participatory BPL list and Micro plans are prepared.
3.1.26.2 Mini Plan Formation at ADS level

The micro plans at the NHG level must be consolidated at ADS level with proper directions and suggestions related to the development needs connected with poverty reduction in the ward level. It should be ensured that the micro plan contains needs of each poor family. The presence of ward member will be an essential criterion in the plan preparation for the ward. The Mini plan in the ADS level must contain the following parts. Education and health sector, Infrastructure, income yielding sectors, child development, the needs of old aged, destitute, physically or mentally challenged, traditional sector, agricultural sector, etc. The mini plans at the ADS level must be presented and are sanctioned at the Grama sabha.

3.1.26.3 CDS level coordination and CDS plan

Panchayat level CDS level plans are prepared by coordinating all the ward level mini plans. The CDS plans contain the following

1) Physical needs of the poor households like land for dwelling, house, drinking water facilities, sanitary toilet, electrification and others. It contains the total material target in each type like total land, total houses etc.

2) Health and Education-health problems of all poor households, the availability of health officials and institutions, need of medical camps, training of health volunteers, education level of NHGs, remedial education, the participation of teachers to improve physical standards of the schools.

3) Child development-nutritious food, preprimary education, medical camps, balasabhas, etc

4) Needs of the physically and mentally challenged-to help them in their education, job training etc.

5) Old age care-special medical camp and survey to identify their needs
6) Economic development-new employment projects, skill training, introduction of new brand, marketing, infrastructural development, Labour bank etc.

7) Agricultural sector - instructions related to group farming, Joint liability group farming, vegetable cultivation, food processing etc and their marketing

8) Development of roads, electrification, anganwadi, schools, hospitals etc to the resident areas of poor.

3.1.26.4 Panchayat level Anti poverty Sub Plan

The CDS level-coordinated plans are sending for the sanction of the panchayat committee and panchayat committee send it for the suggestions of the Working group on anti poverty programmes and social justice. Moreover, the expert opinion of the working group is made after the evaluation and again send it to the Panchayat committee for the final sanction. After their sanction, the panchayat level anti poverty sub plans is formed. The detailed evaluation of the plans by the working group can be done even at the stage of CDS level integration to make it a better technically viable plan.

3.1.27 Beneficiary Selection for Poverty Reduction Programmes

The beneficiaries for different poverty reduction programmes of different centrally sponsored and state sponsored programmes like IAY,EMS, Asraya for destitute, Self Employment Projects like SGSY, IWMP, NRM, electrification, sanitary toilets, repairing of houses, drinking water wells, etc. are selected from the list prepared through the Anti poverty sub plans with the NHG level participation of the poor households.

3.1.28. SCP /TSP Special Component Plan for the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes

The major defects of the Centralised planning attempts were a large proportion of the disadvantaged population ignored from the main stream of the development, leakage of
recourses, avoidance of local needs, lack of people participation, lack of efficiency and over departmentalism.

These drawbacks revealed the fact that the centralised structure of development and planning must be restructured for the benefit of the vulnerable and disadvantaged sections of the society. Therefore, the attempt for SCP and TSP started even from the fifth plan itself. But the more strengthening efforts to the effective implementation of the SCP and TSP initialised from the 9th plan onwards. It strengthened the participation of people in the identification of their problems, empowerment of the SC/ST women, Social Mapping, Definite fund allocation, Plan fund allocation for SC/ST development and effective monitoring.

3.1.29. The implementation of the projects under SCP/TSP

Government provides certain guidelines for the implementation of the SCP/TSP projects. It is important to ensure the following criteria for the implementation of the SCP/TSP projects. The projects must be prepared for the overall development of the SC/ST sections of people, avoid the chance of fund lapse, allotment of SCP/TSP funds for roads and other infrastructure facilities like wetland development, irrigation facilities, must be benefited to at least 50% of this group, VEO/LVEO executed for the implementation of the schemes for SC/ST, more than 30% of the fund must not utilize for the development of the roads and infrastructure development, the preparation and keeping the beneficiary list must be as per the procedures for the individual benefits, regular monitoring of the implementation must be there to ensure the effective fund allocation etc.

3.1.30. Women Component Plan

In order to ensure the strategic gender concerns in plan formulation, implementation and monitoring; a women centered approach and special fund allocation is needed for the
development of women in the society. Women are the most disadvantaged group in the development scenario and inorder to bring them in the mainstream a special approach is needed.

In WCP, special programmes were introduced for the development of women like the need identification of the women through the participatory approach, programmes like employment training, women centered self-help groups, rehabilitation programmes, counseling, debates and discussions, redressal of complaints and other women empowerment programmes for their economic, social and political empowerment.

Similar pattern of plan formulation is put forward for the WCP, SCP/TSP, as like the Anti Poverty Sub Plan. Plan must be aimed for the economic development, social development and infra structure development of these particular sections.

3.1.31. Household Centered Approach

A household centered approach in which a household is taken as one unit and need-based projects are prepared which may benefit individuals and households of the marginalised sections. In addition, public infrastructure facilities like electricity, road, and drinking water for these sections are prepared based on surveys of these sections. Special plans for children, old aged and differentially able are prepared and special projects and fund utilisation are made.

3.1.32. 11th Five year plan structure(People's plan campaign II)

The new LDF Government changed the Kerala development plan to peoples plan campaign during the 11th plan period (2007-2012) Even though the methodology has not changed very much, the working groups were given well defined functions and role to prepare annual plans in the respective field.
3.1.32.1 Different stages of planning during 11th Plan period.

As published by the 11th plan Guidelines to local governments, Vijayanand (2009), and Economic review (2008), the major stages of the planning are follows

- **Situation Analysis by Local Governments.** Working group on different 12 groups like poverty reduction development of women and children etc are formed (and a separate working group for Tribal Sub Plan) Depending on availability of experts, many working groups can be formed. Members of the working group are experts capable of contributing to it. The anti poverty sub group must be headed by the chair person herself. At least one member of the Kudumbasree cds should be included in all the working group and in the case of working group of poverty reduction, SC/ST development and women and children two CDS members must be included. Working group has to prepare the list of schemes taken up in the sector in 9th and 10th five year plans by local governments, list of beneficiaries, list of assets created, list of major schemes implemented in the sector during 9th and 10th plan period are made available to them and preparation of problem matrix and potential projects are prepared for the sector after conducting field visit and discussion with sample of beneficiaries of the schemes.

2) **Pre Grama Sabha\consultations-** Holding pre grama sabha consultations with the key stake holders like farmers and agricultural workers, industrial workers, ADS members, PTA, Headmaster, Anganwadi workers, clubs, political parties etc.

3) **Holding of Grama sabha** - Gramasabhas are created after sufficient creation of environment and the priorities are ranked as per the questionnaire method and suggestions are recorded separately.

4) **Watershed planning** - Separate working group-watershed Gramasabhas etc.
5) **Preparation of development report and vision document** - The methodology developed by Kila and Local governments can nominate a team. District panchayat do not have the vision document and District planning committee prepare the vision document for the districts.

6) **Draft plan preparation at the local government level** - The key strategies and priorities are discussed.

7) **Development seminar** - The draft plan and maintenance plan are discussed and priorities are fixed.

8) **Reorientation by local governments** - The elected members are considering the suggestions of seminar and make suitable modifications.

9) **Projectisation** - The working group prepare a detailed project report within their allocations.

10) **Plan Finalisation by local governments**

11) **Plan vetting by Technical Advisory Group (TAG)** (Block level TAGs for village panchayats and DPC level for blocks and districts) ensuring the plans are with the technical guidelines and giving suggestions.

12) **Approval by DPC**

13) **Post approval steps**

   (Economic review report of 2007-Kerala, 11th plan guidelines for local Governments by Local self government Department, Kerala, S M Vijayanand (2009))

3.1.33. **12th Plan - Decentralised plan procedures and Approach**

   The 12th plan approach was mainly considering the entire panchayat as one unit by avoiding Ward mentality as it affects the effectiveness of the resource allocation. Thus integrated projects are needed by coordinating the priorities of the people in all sectors in the
entire panchayat and joining all efforts of different agencies, departments, missions and central and state generated programmes.

As per the guidelines a perspective plan for the next 5 years period, a shelf of projects for 5 year period as per priorities, sector wise, and year wise must be prepared. Annual plans are prepared based on the perspective plan and a rapid assessment must be made on each year, and spill over projects must get special sanction. Long-term vision and priorities, source of recourses, and shelf of projects must be the three main parts of the plan drafts. (12th plan guidelines, GOK, 2012)

3.1.33.1 The stages of Plan formulation are as follows during the 12th plan period

As per the 12th Plan guidelines to the Local governments by the Government of Kerala, the different stages of plan formulation are the following.

1) **Selection of the Plan coordinator** - to coordinate the plan activities.

2) **Working group formation** for different subject group consisting members from SC promoters, ASA workers, CDS persons. The working group must be supervised by different standing committees and the strength of the working group ranged from 7 to 17 and the chair person of a working group must be an elected person other than the standing committee chairperson.

3) **Preparation of status report** - It is prepared by each working group and send to higher tiers.

4) **Discussion with the banks** about the loan availability

5) **Meeting with the stakeholders** (agriculture laborers, farmers, ADS, CDS, PTA, clubs, political party representatives etc.)

6) **Planning Grama Sabhas** (block and district level by participating elected representatives from village, block, and district level.)
7) **Status report and project suggestions finalisation.** (After discussions in grama sabha each working group prepare a status report and suggestions for the next 5 years.

8) **Preparation of Development and plan guidelines** (It must be printed and a copy must be send to the higher tiers)

9) **Preparation of Integrated programmes**

10) **Development seminar**

11) **Approval of development guidelines**

12) **Decisions on Plan allocation**

13) **Project preperation**

14) **Plan finalisation**

15) **Approval by the local Governments**

To conclude, the various plan periods in Kerala from 9th plan onwards gave much seriousness towards the introduction and implementation of decentralised planning strategies discussed in the frame work discussed above. The concept and philosophy of decentralised planning was utilised in the the participatory planning strategies adopted in the field of poverty reduction in Kerala. Selection of beneficiaries for various poverty reduction programmes are made by the participatory methodology and the needs of the poor households are identified by the poor households themselves through the discussions and evaluations in the Neighborhood groups of the poor. The bottom up approach in the planning process is directed by the State planning Board in consultation with the council of Ministers and and implemented in all the three tiers like Grama Panchayat, Block Panchayat and District Panchayat. In the Present study, the researcher tries to find out the Impact of these decentralised planning efforts to alleviate rural poverty.
3.2 Theoretical Framework for the study of Poverty

This part of the chapter provides the theoretical base and conceptual framework related to the study of poverty. It tries to discuss the different definitions, dimensions, and different methodologies in poverty estimation. Moreover, it tries to discuss the special features of rural poverty in Kerala and various governmental strategies and schemes to alleviate poverty.

3.2.1. Meaning and definitions of Poverty

Poverty is the inability to secure the basic needs like food, clothing, and shelter. In this condition, a person or community lacks sufficient financial recourses to meet the minimum standard of life acceptable in the society. Poverty can be identified from those who are unable to achieve basic facilities like food, safe drinking water, shelter and access to information, education, healthcare, social status, political power or even opportunity to develop meaningful connections in the society. This condition is absolute poverty (Economic review (2007)). Relative poverty is the fewer recourses or less income related to others with in a society or country compared to worldwide averages.

UN definition of Poverty

United Nations indicators of poverty and hunger (2011) defines, "Poverty is the inability of getting choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one’s food or a job to earn one’s living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness, and exclusion of individuals, households, and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living in marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation"
World Bank Definition of Poverty

World Bank (2011) defines poverty in its poverty and inequality analysis, "Poverty is pronounced deprivation in well-being, and comprises many dimensions. It includes low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. Poverty also encompasses low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, inadequate physical security, lack of voice, and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one’s life".

Definition by Kudumbashree Mission (Poverty Eradication Mission in Kerala)

Poverty has economical, political, and social dimensions. Thus, Poverty is considered as a multidimensional aspect. According to the definition of Kudumbashree mission "Poverty is the negation of different basic needs, basic services and basic rights." In short poverty

- Lack of basic needs in the form of nutritious food, clothing, secure home, and drinking water.
- Inability to secure Basic services in the form of safe drinking water, sanitary toilets, health care facilities, effective education facilities, employment opportunities, better environment for good living etc.
- Negation of basic rights in the form of power to say loudly his needs, participating in the decisions related to him, and to live independently in the society.

3.2.2. Rural Poverty and its Meaning

Rural poverty is different from the urban poverty as rural livelihood and employment opportunities, life style, different from urban areas. Erraiah. G. (2005) reveals the Characteristics of Rural Poor are”” More dependence on Agriculture for livelihood as it provides most of the employment and incomes in rural areas. However, as a seasonal job, rural people
forced to do other works. “A shortage of remunerative work opportunities off the farm during 
the slack season may greatly increase the poverty. Natural calamities like flood, drought ruining 
the harvest of these rural areas. Small and divided holdings. And most of the tenants and share 
cropers in rural areas share their output with land owners; their incomes will be very lower”. 
Besides these, other characteristics of the rural poor are the occupational pattern concentrated 
mainly on the daily wage earners, almost all adults engaged in some works, majority of women 
engaged in household work, more proportion of spending on food items, limited consumer 
durables, more dependence on credit etc. In Kerala, the tenancy reform acts have introduced 
and, therefore, the problem of tenants are eliminated.

3.2.3. Various dimensions of poverty

Poverty is considered as multi dimensional. Multi dimensional aspects have to be 
considered to measure poverty.

3.2.3.1. Economic Dimensions of poverty

Economic Dimensions of poverty focus on material needs like the necessities like food, 
clothing, shelter, or safe drinking water. Thus as per this aspect poverty is a condition in which a 
person or community lacking the basic needs for minimum standard of well being and life 
particularly as a result of income. (Journal of poverty 2010)

3.2.3.2. Social Dimensions of poverty

Social Dimensions of poverty is related to the capabilities of people to live the kinds of 
lives they value. it is related to the distribution of recourses and power in a society. The social 
aspects of poverty may include lack of access to information, education, health care or political 
power. (WHO, 2002)
3.2.3.3. Asset Dimension of poverty

It is the economic and social condition that is more persistent and prevalent than income poverty. The inability to access assets and other wealth resources will lead to the deprivation of basic needs. The assets consist of the ownership of land, house ownership, consumer durables, Savings and deposits, Insurance policy cash value etc. Lack of these basic assets often leads to the poverty.

3.2.3.4. Health dimensions of poverty

This dimension is related to the malnutrition among the poor due to the lack of nutritious food. And various aspects like the prevalence of various diseases and child mortality are the indicators of this dimension. In the multi dimensional poverty measurement World Bank considered this dimension as an important aspect to be measured.

3.2.3.5. Educational Dimensions of poverty

Poor accessibility to schooling is an important indicator of poverty. World bank consider in its MPI measurement by estimating the presence of persons who have not completed five years of schooling, and through the child school attendance by estimating the attendance and finding out whether the school aged child is deprived up to class eight.

3.2.3.6. Standard of living Dimension :It can be measured through the presence of certain basic facilities in the family. Poor families most often deprived of improved sanitation facilities, drinking water, type of houses, cooking fuel and electricity, ownership of assets like TV, Telephone, Bike, or Car etc.

3.2.3.7. Gender dimensions : Poverty always excludes the women’s from the different social and economic opportunities. Poor women often lacks Economic self reliance, the right to utilise the recourses, ownership of the assets and the right to participate in decision-making process In
order to empower them, it is essential to relate the knowledge obtained from their life, occupation and social environment with the current social environment and make them aware about the rights and power they have for self development.

3.2.3.8. Dimension related to social status

Poverty may also be understood as an aspect of unequal social status and inequitable social relationships, experienced as social exclusion, dependency, and diminished capacity to participate, or to develop meaningful connections with other people in society. (Sukhatme P V, 1978) Such social exclusion can be minimized through strengthened connections with the mainstream, such as through the provision of the relational care to those who are experiencing poverty. (Ojha P D, 1971)

3.2.3.9. Dimension related to Powerlessness

The focus of much NGO intervention is powerlessness among the poor. Poor are powerless in social and political relations. Most often they are socially excluded due to this powerlessness. Future is always hopeless for many of them. The economic inequality between and within households leads to concentration of power between the better off people and the worst off people are normally excluded. (Helene Levens, 1997) reviews that the organizational affiliation plays on important role in reducing feelings to powerlessness among the poor. The poor one alternatively described as politically in active and unorganises, fatalistic in their outlook on life.

3.2.3.9. Dimension related to Vulnerability

Susan and Ben Rogaly (1997) Poverty can also be understood as vulnerability to downward fluctuations in income such as seasonal decline in employment for agricultural workers or unexpected shocks such as crop failure, illness, funeral expenses or loss of an asset such as
livestock through theft or death or natural disaster. Interventions, which reduce such vulnerability and protect livelihoods, also reduce poverty.

Most often, many families are experiencing this type of shocks due to the death of an earning member, crop failure, or due to the prevalence of serious diseases and even though they are in the APL category as per the economic dimensions, the chance of being fallen in to the poverty is greater to the poor people.

There are three theoretical explanations of perceptions of the causes of poverty, namely individualistic explanations, where blame is placed on the poor themselves, structural explanations; where blame is on external social and economic forces; and fatalistic explanations where blame is on bad luck or illness (David, Derek, Gonws, Amanda 2013).

3.2.3.10. Other Dimensions of poverty

The World Bank's "Voices of the Poor," identifies a range of factors which poor people identify as part of poverty. These include: "Abuse by those in power, is-empowering institutions, Excluded locations, Gender relationships, Lack of security, Limited capabilities, Physical limitations, Precarious livelihoods, Problems in social relationships, Weak community organizations". Silver (1994) and Simmel (1965).

The present study intends to evaluate the performance of poverty alleviation programmes implemented through decentralized planning, on the various dimensions of poverty as discussed above. In other words, how far the various dimensions of poverty could be reduced or eliminated through various schemes meant for each such problem is discussed in the study.

3.2.4. Poverty measurements in Kerala

In poverty estimation different agencies exists in India like NSSO, Planning Commission, BPL surveys by Ministry of Rural Development (MORD), Multi dimensional Poverty
Index(MPI) by UNDP, World bank PPP Estimates etc. All these estimates clearly indicate that among other Indian States Kerala made a remarkable achievement in Poverty Reduction.

Besides these methods, as based on the argument that, the central methodologies are not suited to the special features of Kerala, The State developed a new Risk Index methodology through Kudumbasree Mission.

3.2.4.1. Purchasing Power Parity (PPP terms)

The World Bank defined poverty line based on Purchasing Power Parity basis by considering differences in cost of living in different countries, as prices of goods and services are varies in different countries. It considers the local cost of a basket of essential goods and services that people can purchase.

The World Bank defined the new international poverty line as $1.25 a day for 2005 (equivalent to $1.00 a day in 1996 US prices) but have been updated to be $1.25 and $2.50 per day. It is determined by the purchasing power parity rate, which would look at how much local currency is needed to buy the same things that a dollar could buy in the United States. (Ravallion, Martin; Chen, Shaohua; Sangraula, Prem (2008).

3.2.4.2. NSSO and Tendulkar Methodology in Kerala

From 1993-94 to 2011-12 ((50th round to 68th round of NSSO) Tendulkar methodology adopted for estimating income poverty in India. Based on state specific monthly per capita poverty line of Rs.1018 for rural Kerala and 987 for urban Kerala. As per planning commissions estimate using Tendulkar methodology 23.95 lakh (7.05%) in Kerala are poor ( 9.14% of in rural areas 4.97% in urban area) GOI (2013)
3.2.4.3. NSSO and estimation by Rangarajan methodology in Kerala

The latest official estimates of Rangarajan were mainly based on certain normative standards of food and non-food consumption as well as the behavioral aspects of classes concerned for consumption. Accordingly, the energy requirement as calculated by Rangarajan is 2,155 kcal per person per day in rural areas and 2,090 kcal per person per day in urban areas.

The persons spending below Rs 47 a day (1407 a month) in urban areas and persons spending below Rs.32 (972 a month) in rural areas are considered as poor. it is against the Tendulkar estimates as Rs 33 a day (1000/month in urban) and Rs 27/day (Rs 816 /month) in rural areas (Economic review, GOK 2013)

3.2.4.4. BPL survey and estimation of Poverty by MORD

Every five years MORD (Ministry of Rural Development) conducting BPL census to identify poor households to be targeted for assistance. The first census in 1992 and income was the basis. In the Second Census (in 1997) expenditure used as the basis for estimating poverty.

BPL method 2002

Due to the wide spread dissatisfaction in the income and expenditure method of the former surveys, a new Index method was used in the third Census in 2002 using a set of 13 indicators to identify poor household.) It involves size of land holding, type of houses, availability of clothing, food security, sanitation, Ownership of consumer durables, literacy status, status of labour, means of livelihood, Status of Children, type of indebtedness, reasons for Migration, and assistance preferred by the Government. Each of these scored from Zero to Four. Therefore, score of a house hold range from zero to maximum 52. The higher the score, better off the household. (Economic review 2004)
BPL method 2009

And due to the controversies related to the 2002 BPL census government appointed Saxena committee to devise better methodology for the next BPL census. The new methodology submitted in 2009 which was piloted in selected panchayats in the country. SECC the Socio Economic Cast Census was based on this experience. The criteria considered included in the BPL list of 2009 was

1) No of deaths of Infants in the household during the last five years
2) Presence of persons with receiving Welfare pensions
3) Presence of old age persons above 65
4) Presence of persons below 18
5) Presence of persons who have not completed school education
6) Presence of persons who are handicapped
7) Presence of persons with critical deceases
8) Presence of Widow/unmarried woman/unmarried mother
9) Ownership of house and land - type, ownership, roof, wall, floor, square feet, drinking water, sanitary toilet, Electricity average charge, whether asraya beneficiary.

However, due to many controversies it has not yet released. As per this BPL census (Monetary poverty in Kerala) the rural poverty declined from 33.9% in 93-94 to 20.2% in 2004-05 and again declined 12% in 2009-10. (All India 33.8%).

3.2.4.5. Multi Dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) and Poverty of Kerala

Most countries define Poverty based on the lack of money. However, in reality the poor persons suffer multiple disadvantages than income like poor health or malnutrition, poor quality

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of work, little education, lack of clean water or electricity etc. So attempts were made to include multi dimensional aspects in poverty measurement.

It was developed in 2010 by UNDP. It assesses poverty at the individual level, based on the deprivations on Education, Health and Living standard. It helps for international comparison, as it is an international measure of acute poverty (Alkire Roche Santos Seth, 2011)

Multi dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is the official method of UNDP to measure capabilities poverty uses 10 indicators within the three dimensions like Education, Health and Standard of living.

Education: Year of schooling, School attendance
Health: Child Mortality and Nutrition
Standard of living: Electricity, sanitation, Drinking water, Floor, Cooking Fuel, Assets (OPHI (2011). In addition, as per this methodology Kerala’s poverty as per this methodology declined from 32.6% in 1999 to 12.7% in 2013. (56.8 to53.7 in All India). (Economic review 2013). MPI provides more comprehensive picture of poverty by considering different aspects.

3.2.4.6. KudumbaShree Mission and Risk Indicators for Poverty Estimation

As per the Kudumbashree Risk Indicators methodology, nine risk Indicators developed for the estimation of Poverty in Kerala. They set 9 core risk indicators and eight additional risk indicators for identifying BPL beneficiaries. Those who are having four or more than four are identified as poor (risk families) and those having eight or more than eight are treated as very poor(destitute)

1) Kutcha house (thatched or substandard hut)
2) No access to drinking water
3) No access to sanitary latrine
4) Illiterate adult in the family
5) Family with more than one earning member
6) Family getting barely two meals a day or less
7) Presence of children in the age group of 0-5 in the family.
8) Alcoholic or drug addict in the family.
9) Scheduled tribes or Scheduled tribe family.

Later the risk Index is modified as per the study made by Oommen (2008) and some modifications made. (See in Ashraya)

3.2.5. Special Features of Rural Poverty in Kerala

3.2.5.1. Life in Scattered Habitat: In Kerala people prefer to live in scattered habitat whether in rural area or in urban area. The Joint family system gave a way to the micro family system as one household prefer to be in micro structure with a husband, wife and one or two children and this pattern often costs much for new housing, electricity, sanitation, water supply etc. This habitat also influences the life style of the families and individuals. (Economic review 2007)

3.2.5.2. Educated poor : The compulsory education became a culture of the state as the state positioned in the highest literacy rate the number of students enrolled in the first standard and number of students passed 10th standard, Plus two, Graduation, technical education is quite large in the state when compared to other states. Thus, the unemployment among the educated youth is a common phenomenon in the state.

3.2.5.3. Assetless poor: The most important similarity among the rural poor are most of them are not possess any income generating assets like agricultural land. Most of them having less than 10cents of land in possession. This assetlessness among the poor became a reason for the vicious circle of poverty among rural poor.
3.2.5.4. Malnutrition: The supplementary nutritious programme in the state is effectively done through the ICDS programme and nearly 50% of the students in the pre-school age group 3-5, covered through the programme. In addition, the programmes like care of pregnant women and infants through the various interventions of ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers and other health programmes leads to the reduction in the infant mortality rate and positive life expectancy among the households.

3.2.5.5. High Medical expenses: The high literacy rate and other educational indicators made the poor more conscious about the diseases and the dependence on modern medical treatments leads to heavy expenses on the medical care. Sometimes this over dependence leads to the indebtedness among the poor.

3.2.5.6. High indebtedness: Many studies reveal that the rural poor mostly depend on the private agencies or moneylenders for getting easy loans even though with the presence of co-operative societies, and nationalised banks. The easy terms and conditions and simple procedures made them to borrow from these private sources and lead them to a debt trap. The credits are often taken for the unproductive purposes like construction of houses, marriage, death related rituals etc.

3.2.5.7. Heavy Influence of Custom and tradition: the rural poor are mostly influenced by the religious traditions and social customs and therefore the expenses related to the marriage, death, delivery, and festivals will be high and it may be a reason for the indebtedness and poverty.

3.2.5.8. Inflation: High cost of living in the state leads to inflationary raise in the prices of essential goods, building materials, medicine, clothing, and other household related commodities leads to poverty among the rural population.
3.2.5.9. Occupation : The Occupation of the poor families are most often related to the daily wage earning jobs like agriculture labourers, construction workers, toddy tappers, and most of the women are indulged in household activities not in any productive job.

3.2.5.10. The presence of dependants in the family : As the joint family system gave way for the Micro family system, The increasing dependency ratio that is the presence of old aged infants, or less than 18 years of age among the total members of the households is causable factor for the poverty among rural population.

3.2.5.11. Major portion of spending on food: The major portions of the expenses of poor families are on food consumption relatively less importance are given to the other expenses like clothing, and saving.

3.2.6. Rural Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Kerala through Decentralised Institutions

The poverty reduction programmes implemented in Kerala is a more complex process as it involves multiple schemes and innumerable agencies like various Central and State Government Departments and Local Governments. In Kerala, nearly 800 schemes were introduced and implemented through different state Government departments for the benefit of the disadvantaged groups (KILA 2014). Similarly, various centrally sponsored schemes and Local Government schemes make the situation more complex. The present study tries to focus only the schemes, which directly or indirectly implemented through the panchayati raj Institutions for the reduction of rural poverty.

The Entire Poverty reduction programmes implemented in the State can be divided in to Three sub divisions.1)Centrally sponsored schemes through Departments 2)State sponsored schemes through Departments 3) Directly Through Panchayatiraj Institutions (District Pnachayat, Block Panchayat and Grama Panchayat)
3.2.6.1. Centrally Sponsored Programmes Through Departments

Centrally sponsored schemes are those schemes, which are implemented through various Central Government Departments using the Plan and Non Plan funds to obtain the specific objectives. The Centrally sponsored Schemes have two sub divisions like the schemes implemented directly through various departments and the schemes implemented through the Local Governments or Panchayati Raj Institutions. Similarly, the State Sponsored schemes also have two sub divisions like through departments and through the LSGs. More than that some Own programmes of the Local Governments using the Panchayat Plan Fund. Some of the major Central Department schemes to help the reduction of poverty in the state are outlined here for the purpose clarity related to the multiple schemes.

Agriculture Department: RKVY (Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana), National Bio Gas Development Programme

Livestock Department: Niravu programmes like cow, goat rearing, poultry farming, piggeries, goat club etc.

Diary development: Niravu (RKVY), Diary Entrepreneurship Development Programme

Fisheries Department: Housing schemes, Group insurance schemes for fishermen

Department of Industry: PMEGP (Prime Ministers Employment Generation Programme), Credit guarantee for Micro Small Enterprises

NABARD: Schemes for diary development, goat, cow, pig rearing

Health Department: NRHM(National Rural Health Mission), Accredited social health Activist(ASHA), Palliativecare, Ward level health-nutrition Programme, District cancer care unit, Rogi Kalyan Samithy (RKS), Janani Suraksha Yojana, Janani Sisu Suraksha Yojana, Rashtriya Swasthy Bhima Yojana, (RSBY) Insurance
Education Department - SSA Programmes to universalize Education, Means cum Merit Scholarship, RMSA Programmes, Premetric-Scholarship, IED- scheme for the disabled.

Social Welfare and Security - ICDS scheme through the Anganwadis (providing Supplementary nutrition, Immunisation, Health Check up, Pre-School education, nutrition and health Education), Sabala for adolescent girls, Deena Dhayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme, Ujjuala for sexually harassed victims, Prevention of Alcoholism and Substance abuse for treatment of addicted persons, Indira Gandhi Old Age Pension, Indira Gandhi Widow pension, Indira Gandhi National Handicapped pension, National Family Benefit Scheme, AABY Am admi Bhima Yojana for Landless insurance programme, SWADAR for the rehabilitation of the Widows, Divorced, Destitute etc, Conditional Maternity Benefit Schemes (IGMSY), Karyakartru Bhima Yojana for Anganwadi worker-helper, integrated programme for the old aged

SC/ST departments - Schemes for development of Scheduled caste and Tribes like educational scholarships, Stipends, Training for Higher education, Assistance for purchasing land, training programmes, Credit programmes etc

Food Security - Annapurna yojana (10kg food grains for destitute old aged, AAY (Antyodaya Anna Yojana) food grains at RS.1 for the very poor, Food grains for the BPL families at RS.1, Food grains for the APL (RS.8.90/-), Kerosene for Non electrified households at RS.16/ltr maximum 4 ltr.

3.2.6.2. State Sponsored Programmes through Departments

Lottery Department - Karunya programme for poor, provides RS.2 lakh as the medical expense of various chronic diseases.

Housing development Board - M N Laksham Veedu reconstruction scheme for the poor in Laksham veedu (Dual homes for two households with single wall partition)
Civil Supplies - Food grains for APL Card holders at two Rupees per Card, 25kg rice, 8kg wheat, at Rs.1 and 2 respectively for those who are in Grama Panchayat poverty list but not in the Central BPL list, 0.400 gm Sugar/person in the BPL/AAY category at Rs.13.50 for one month.

Employment Department : Different welfare fund schemes for the labourers in the unorganised sectors like pension, Scholarship, medical expenses etc. For Agricultural labourers, Toddy tappers, Automobile workers, Auto rikshaw labourers, Head load workers, Tailors,

National Employment Service - KESRU for self employment among youth, Unemployment allowance through Grama Panchayat (120/month)

Education Department - Scholarship, merit cum means, Stipend for different disadvantaged groups.

Kudumba Shree - Financial Assistance to Joint Liability Group (JLG) of SHGs of Neighborhood groups, Ashraya scheme for the destitute, Yuvasree, Innovation Fund, Technology Fund, Revolving Fund Scheme etc for the Self employed entrepreneurial groups.

Social Welfare Department - Education schemes for the students from women headed families, medical Expenses from disaster fund of the handicapped, supplementary Nutrition for HIV diseased women and children, Employment training for the physically Handicapped, Aswasa Kiranam programme through ICDS (financial assistance for the helpers of the bed ridden patients and mentally and physically challenged), Cancer Suraksha programme (provide free medical treatment for the cancer patients below 18), Thalolam programme (Financial Assistance through hospitals for surgery and other treatment for the chronic diseases) Snehaporvam for the childrens from the families of unexpected death of the parent, SnehaSparsam for unwed mother Rs.1000/person, Annadayini for tribal colonies malnutritioned persons, Samaswasam programme for the kidney/liver patients (monthly Rs.900/person), Agathy pension for the
destitute widows, Divorced completed 18 years of age, Pension for physically Handicapped (Rs.700/Month), pensions for Agricultural labourers through LSGsRs.500/month, Pensions for the Unmarried above 50 years old,(Rs.700/month) etc, Financial Assistance for the Inter caste marriage(30,000/ within three years after marriage)

**SC development Department** - lumpsum grant, Stipend, Self employment programmes for Sc entrepreneurs between 18-50 provides up to 5lakh for individual and upto 25 lakh for groups, Tool Kit, programme for rehabilitation of the Land less by providing 1,50,000/household in SC - BPL list and having up to 3 cents of Land, Housing Grant upto 2 lakh, 25000/toilet construction, marriage grant up to 50,000/newly married SC woman, Supplementary nutrition programme for the Pregnant women 6 months before and after the delivery,

**ST Development Department** - Gothra Sarathy for travelling facility Jannani Suraksha programme provides nutritious food for pregnt women from ST from 3 months of the pregnancy and up to the one year of the child, Land to landless (maximum 1 lakh), Housing programme for repairing of houses(up to 1 lakh), medical facilities and expenses, health insurance, housing grant up to 2,50,000/household, self Employment training, marriage grant up to 50,000/,etc.

**Continuing Education Programmes** -Basic Literacy Programme, 4th standard ,7th Standard,10th Standard, and higher secondary level equivalence programme.

**Health Department** - Life style diseases prevention programmes, cancer care programmes, Arogya Kiranam programme to provide free medical treatment to the physical, mental and intellectual problems of the childrens up to the age group of the 18 etc.

**Industrial Department** - Self-employment schemes for the registerd unemployed and training programmes for the Entrepreneurs, Empowerment programmes for the women etc.
Animal Husbandry Department - Providing hen, goat, and cow for the entrepreneurial development.

Fisheries Department - Theera mythry programme for the poor sections in the coastal area through Kudumbashree and CDS.

Most of the above said departmental schemes are directly implemented through the concerned departments but some of them transferred to the Local self Governments like various pensions from social welfare department, and unemployment allowance from Employment Department, Supplementary Nutrition through ICDS etc. Some schemes are directed to the Kudumbashree and CDS to implement with the help of the departments. Most of the beneficiaries for the schemes of the BPL households are identified through the Central BPL list, Panchayat level BPL list, and the list of the very poor or destitute selected for Ashraya.

3.2.6.3. Rural Poverty alleviation programmes Directly through Panchayati Raj Institutions

The major poverty alleviation programmes of the Central and State governments are directly implemented by the Decentralised institutions like District, Block, and Grama Panchayat. The Central government and State Government Plan and Non-plan Funds are gone through the District Panchayat and its poverty alleviation units. The funds transferred from District panchayats to the Block and Grama Panchayat bodies and they implemented the major schemes by finding the real beneficiaries.

The major poverty alleviation Programmes implemented in a Local body can be broadly divided in two different categories as per the focus of the programme.
1) The provision of basic Assets
   a) Housing Schemes
      i) IAY General
      ii) IAY for SC
      iii) IAY for ST
      iv) EMS for General
      v) EMS for SC
      vi) EMS for ST
      vii) M N Laksham veedu punar Nirmanam
      viii) Panchayat Plan Fund
      ix) Vanitha Sub Plan
      x) Ashraya Fund
   b) Provision of Land
      i) EMS scheme land to land less
         ii) Ashraya Scheme
         iii) Panchayat Plan Fund
         iv) Vanitha Sub Plan
   c) Provision of well for drinking water
      i) Panchayat Plan Fund
      ii) Vanitha Sub Plan Fund
      iii) Ashraya Fund for Destitutes
   d) Sanitary toilets
      i) Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan
ii) Panchayat Plan Fund

iii) Vanitha Sub Plan Fund

iv) Other

e) Electrification of the houses

i) Panchayat Plan Fund

ii) Vanitha Sub Plan Fund

iii) Ashraya Fund for Destitutes

2) Wage Employment programmes

a) MGNREGS (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme)

b) SGRY (Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana for wage employment and food security)

c) IWMP (Integrated Watershed Management Programme providing employment opportunities to the people in the watershed areas)

3) Self Employment Programmes

a) NRLM (National Rural Livelihood Mission)

b) SGSY (Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana)

c) MKSP (Mahila Kisan Saktheekaran Pariyojana through Block panchayat-)

   Women Empowerment programme through SHG formation)

d) Kudumbashree SHG formation

4) Food Security programme

a) Annapurna Yojana (10kg food grains for destitute old aged)

b) AAY (Antyodhaya Anna Yojana) food grains at RS.1 for the very poor
c) Food grains for the BPL families at RS.1, Food grains for the APL (RS.8.90/-), Kerosene for Non- electrified households at RS.16/ltr maximum 4 ltr.

d) State Government Schemes for food security (Food grains for APL Card holders at two Rupees per Card)

e) 25kg rice, 8kg wheat, at Rs.1 and 2 respectively for those who are in Grama Panchayat poverty list but not in the Central BPL list, 0.400 gm Sugar/person in the BPL/AAY category at Rs.13.50 for one month.

f) Mid Day Meal Scheme (As Educational institutions are coming under the Local Bodies, the programme is supervised by LSGs)

g) Supplementary Nutrition programme Through ICDS: The supplementary Nutrition programme through the Anganwadies is transferred to the concerned local bodies and the cost is met by the GPs and BPs in sharing basis of the ratio 2:1. The food stuffs suited to the local condition and with nutritional value is provided by the LSGs through anganwadis.

5) **Social Security and Social Welfare Schemes**

   a) Pension Schemes

      (i) Pension for Agricultural labourers

      (ii) Pension for Widows

      (iii) Pension for Old aged

      (iv) Pension for physically Challenged

      (v) Agathy pension for the destitute widows, Divorced and completed 18 years of age
(vi) Pensions for the Unmarried above 50 years old

b) Insurance Schemes
   i) RSBY (Health insurance Scheme up to 30,000/year as medical expenses)
   (ii) Accident insurance programmes
   (iii) AABY (Am admi Bhima Yojana insurance programme for Land less)

c) Unemployment allowance: The Unemployment allowances through the employment Departments are transferred to the concerned Local Governments.

d) Educational Scholarships: As the educational institutions are under the control of local bodies, various educational scholarships given by the educational departments and SC/ST department is supervised by the Local bodies.

e) Medical Expenses for Chronically diseased persons

6) Basic Literacy programmes

Continuing Education Programmes through the block level programme officer (Prerak) coordinates the Basic Literacy Programme, 4th standard, 7th Standard, 10th Standard, and higher secondary level equivalence programme

7) Kudumbashree programmes

A Programme of State Government Poverty Eradication Mission to empower rural women from poor households through various self-employment programmes through SHG formations.

   a) Financial Assistance to Joint Liability Group (JLG) of SHGs of Neighborhood Groups,
b) Ashraya scheme for the destitute,
c) Yuvasree
d) Innovation Fund
e) Technology Fund
f) Revolving Fund Scheme for the Self employed entrepreneurial groups.

8) Welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward classes

a) Development Programmes of Scheduled caste and Scheduled tribes
b) Special Component Plan and Tribal Sub Plan through local governments
c) Education Schemes
d) Housing scheme
e) Health schemes
f) Self -Employment Schemes

3.2.6.4. Major Poverty Alleviation Schemes and their implementation

3.2.6.4.1. I A Y (Indira Awaas Yojana)

Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) was launched during 1985-86 as a sub-scheme of Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) and continued as a sub-scheme of Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) since its launching from April, 1989. It has been delinked from the JRY and has been made an independent scheme with effect from January 1, 1996.

The IAY is implemented by MORD with the help of state government and panchayat. AT 60 % of the grants are reserved for SC/ST families. The assistance was regularly improved based on the cost of manufacturing and inflationary trend.
The objective of IAY is primarily to provide grant for construction of houses to members of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes, freed bonded labourers and also to non-SC/ST rural poor below the poverty line.

The target group for houses under IAY will be people below poverty line living in rural areas belonging to Scheduled Castes / Scheduled Tribes, freed bonded labourers and non - SC/ST subject to the condition that the benefits to non - SC/ST should not exceed 40% of total IAY allocation during a financial year. From 1995 - 96, the IAY benefits have been extended to ex - servicemen, widows, Disabled persons in rural areas

Identification of beneficiaries: District Rural Development Agencies DRDAs) / Zilla Parishads on the basis of allocations made and targets fixed shall decide Panchayat-wise number of houses to be constructed under IAY, during a particular financial year and intimate the same to the Gram Panchayat. Thereafter, the GramaSabha will select the beneficiaries restricting its number to the target allotted, from the list of eligible households, according to IAY guidelines and as per priorities fixed. No approval of the Panchayat Samiti will be required. The Panchayat Samiti should however, be sent a list of selected beneficiaries for their information. This amendment in the IAY guidelines shall come into force with effect from 1-4-1998.

Priority in Selection of Beneficiaries: The order of priority for selection of beneficiaries amongst target group below poverty line is as follows:(i) Freed bonded labourers, (ii) SC/ST households who are victims of atrocities,(iii) SC/ST households, headed by widows and unmarried women,(iv) SC/ST households affected by flood, fire earthquake, cyclone and similar natural calamities.,(v) Other SC/ST households.,(vi) Non- SC/ST households.,(vii) Physically handicapped.,(viii) Families/widows of personnel of defense services / Para-military forces, killed in action.,(ix) Displaced persons on account of developmental projects, nomadic semi-
nomadic, and de-notified tribals, families with disabled members and internal refugees, subject to the households being below poverty line.

**Pattern of Funding:** IAY is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme funded on cost-sharing basis between the Government of India and the States in the ratio of 80:20. In the case of Union Territories, the Government of India provides the entire resources under this scheme.

The panchayat raj institutions have a greater role to play especially for the Grama Panchayat for identifying the beneficiaries and identify land for construction etc.

### 3.2.6.4.2. EMS -Total Housing Scheme

The EMS Housing Scheme envisioned with the objective that there should be no homeless family in the state. It was estimated that there are 2 lakh landless families and a total of 5 lakh houseless families in the state as on June 2008. EMS total Housing scheme launched by Government of Kerala aims at providing house sites to all landless families and houses to all houseless families coming under the BPL category. The scheme will be implemented by the local bodies with the support of government.

The ultimate goal of this Scheme is providing land and house to all those who are landless and houseless in the state. The Scheme also aims at repairing of Kutcha Houses including those built under 1 Lakh housing scheme. This is a purely state funded Scheme. The fund required is to be raised from the Plan Fund; by the way of raising loans from Banks especially Co-operative Banks by ULBs and other sources like contributions from NRIIs, Government Servants, and NGOs etc. It is a total subsidized scheme to the beneficiaries. It is proposed to complete construction of houses during 2009-2011 (Local self Government Department, Government of Kerala 2011)
The scheme provides fund for SC, ST and General sections to an amount 200000 for SC families and 250000 for ST families. The General Households are getting 150000. The selection is based on the BPL list and GramaSabha approval.

3.2.6.4.3. M.N. Laksham Veedu Punarnirmana Padhathi

Under the scheme, which is named "M.N.Laksham Veedu Punarnirmana Padhathi" financial assistance for the reconstruction of dilapidated twin houses into single units and reconstruction of single houses, is being implemented through the Board. The Government subsidy will be 75,000/- for General Category, 1,00,000 for SC Category and Rs.1,25,000/- for ST category. 50% of the subsidy amount will be given by Kerala State Housing Board and the balance amount shall be met by the Local Self Government Departments (Government of Kerala 2010)

3.2.6.4.4. Ashraya - A Destitute Eradication Programme

Ashraya - It is the most integrated destitute eradication Programme specially designed by the State Government of Kerala. Ashraya programme mainly aimed to the rehabilitation of the poorest of the poor or destitute. It was estimated that nearly 2 percent of the population are coming in to this category of very poor. These destitute are often not covered by any poverty alleviation programme. Each and every Grama Panchayats and Municipalities are in the responsibility of involving Ashraya projects in the anti poverty sub plan while preparing the plan for the three tier local bodies and ensure its implementation. Block panchayats and District panchayats also have the responsibility of supporting the Ashraya components within the Grama Panchayat level.
The Kudumbasree Mission, through community-based organisations of the poor, had been entrusted with the task of destitute identification, rehabilitation, and monitoring under its poverty eradication mission. Destitute families will be identified according to the nine-point criteria evolved earlier by the Kudumbasree Mission, which along with community-based organisations under it, will continue to be the pivots in identifying the beneficiaries.

**Package:** A package is prepared for the care of destitute families under the Ashraya scheme. This will cover food, health, education, clothing, water, houses, medicine, nutritious food, medical care, palliative care, counseling, education etc. Thus, it tries to meet subsistence needs like food, clothing, health, education and Basic needs like housing, Development needs like Job training and personality development, and other needs related to the better involvement in the society like counseling, palliative care etc provided as a package. The package also involves special programmes for the physically handicapped and mentally challenged persons. The package is prepared for normally three years.

**Selection as Beneficiary in Asraya:** It is Based on a participatory selection criteria. the Neighborhood groups in each locality finds the destitute households. It is based on the Kudumbashree Nine point criteria’s for the selection of poor households. As per the guidelines the households who meet 7 risk factors among the nine point criteria’s and one risk factor from the eight high-risk factors are included in the destitute household list.

**The Risk Factors are:**

1) No land/less than 10 cents of land
2) No house/Dilapidated house
3) No access to drinking water within 300 meters
4) No access to sanitary latrine

5) Women headed household/Presence of a Widow, divorcee/abandoned lady/unwed mother

6) No regularly employed person in the family

7) Socially disadvantaged Groups (SC/ST)

8) Presence of physically or mentally challenged person/chronically ill member in the family

9) Families with an Illiterate adult member

Special problems or High risk factors:

1) Those landless households living in canal Bunds, or puramboke land, forest land, paddy fields etc.

2) Those who spent night time in public places, streets or in the varandha of shops

3) Family led by unwed mothers, separated women in distress

4) Family led by young widows who are economically poor and women who have passed the age of marriage

5) Mentally and physically challenged households who are challenged to meet the medical expenses due to chronic, incurable diseases.

6) No healthy earning member to win bread for the family

7) Women subjected to atrocities

8) Beggers who resort to beggary as a vocation

Fund availability: Grama Panchayat, Block Panchayat, and District Panchayat, Centrally Sponsored Schemes, Sponsorship. Also maximum 10 lack as 25 percentage of the total allotment is given by Kudumbashree as challenge fund. It is based on the approval of the DPC.

Implementation and Monitoring: It is implemented by the CDS of the Kudumbashree and the Local governments do Monitoring.
Evaluation: All ashraya beneficiaries are contacted personally by the Kudumbashree mission volunteers and evaluate the merits and limitations. If the situations of the destitute families are improved, they are removed from Ashraya list and if the household needs continuous medical facilities, food, or care it is provided through special Fund allotments by the Kudumbashree.

3.2.6.4.5. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Generation Programme is the largest ever anti poverty programme introduced in India for ensuring 100 days guaranteed wage employment for employment seekers. The scheme is based on legally mandated entitlements, by the MGNREG act, not constrained by recourse availability, and it provide central place to panchayats in planning and implementation responsibilities. As per this scheme, it is the responsibility of the authority to provide at least 100 days of wage employment to a rural household unless there is a provision for unemployment allowance.

Any members in rural area who are ready for unskilled works can apply for this programme. Adequate women representation is given as one third of total employment. Those who registered in panchayat for wage employment are getting job cards and when they need job they have to inform it in the grama panchayat or Block panchayat office and they are getting job within 15 days. Total 100 days employment for a household in rural area is a right of the poor unemployed people. The wage rate is determined by State level, in Kerala it is Rs.175 per day. The Other important features of the programme are a right based approach, recourse availability, priority to provide employment, labour budget, women biasness, community contracting, wages through bank account, joint responsibility, responsibility, effective monitoring, social audit, grievances reddressal etc.
The scheme came into force on 5 September 2005. In some selected areas and implemented in Kerala from 2006 February onwards. As income and purchasing power of the rural mass is improving, this programme is a remedy for rural unemployment.

Panchayat raj institutions are having a major role in the planning and implementation of the programme. The Kudumbashree is implementing the programme in Kerala through the formation of NHG or neighborhood groups of the poor households and NHG s are forming ADS area development societies in ward level. From the ADS, a panchayat level group as Community Development Societies are formed. The ADS are entrusting the task of organising public works, keeping muster roles, providing welfare amenities to the workers etc. The transparent system, constant vigilance, local action, women participation, women empowerment, corruption free implementation etc are the major merits of the programme.

3.2.6.4.6. Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)

This is a centrally sponsored programme on the cost-sharing basis in the ratio 75:25. The central government also provide food grain cost equivalent to cash component, free of cost as additionally.

Transportation cost bears the state government. It is a scheme for additional wage employment in the rural areas as also food security. Creation of social, economical community assets. The benefit of the SGRY is made available for all the rural poor who are in need of wage employment. 10 kg food grains made available per man days. Economic review (2005). it is merged with NREGA from 1-4-2008

3.2.6.4.7. IWMP (Integrated Watershed management programme)

It involves all the permanent residents of the Selective micro watershed area as beneficiaries of this programme. It provides employment opportunities related to water and soil
protection activities in the area. This programme is implemented by Central Government through the poverty alleviation unit of the District Panchayat and Block panchayat. The Block panchayat provides Fund to the Grama Panchayat water shed committee.

3.2.6.4.8. SGSY (Swarna Jayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana)

SGSY started from April 1999. It was covering all aspects of self-employment such as organisation of the poor in to self-help groups, training, credit, technology, infrastructure and marketing. SGSY funded on the ratio of 75:25 by the centre and states. With the launching of this programme earlier programmes like IRDP, DWCRA, SITRA, GKY, and MDMS pooled under the head SGSY. The objective of the SGSY is to bring the assisted poor families (Swarozgaris) above poverty line by ensuring appreciable increase in income over a period. It is through the social mobilization of the poor in to Self Help Groups, Their training and capacity building, and provision of income generating assets through the mix of Bank credit and government subsidy.

The assisted families may be individuals or groups. Preference will be given to the groups. It aims to creating large number of micro enterprises in the rural areas upon the potential of the rural poor. The objective of the programme is to bring the assisted family above poverty line. The Gramasabha will authenticate the list of families below the poverty line identified in the BPL census. Identification of individual families suitable for will be made through a participatory process. It is a credit cum subsidy programme. It envisages a major involvement of the Banks. The programme seeks to promote multiple credits. Promotion of marketing, consultancy services etc. SGSY focus on vulnerable groups among the poor accordingly SC/ST women, disabled etc. Subsidy will be uniform at 30% of the project, subject to a maximum and for SC STs it will be 50%. For group swarozgais subsidy would be 50%.
3.2.6.9. NRLM (National Rural Livelihood Mission)

The National Rural Livelihood Mission is a programme for poverty alleviation and it marks a significant stage in the evolution of approach to reduction of income poverty in households. The programme launched in 2011. The key distinguishing features are Participatory identification of the poor, organising poor through women into SHG at the local level. Focusing on multiple livelihoods, build strong linkage with the banks to mobilize one lakh of credit per family with seven years.

Role of PRIs: Panchayati raj institutions are involved in various activities of NRLM like identifying and mobilizing BPL households into SHGs with initial priority for poorest and most vulnerable amongst them, Facilitating proper financial support, basic facilities, coordinating with the different departments etc. NRLM provides a platform between panchayat raj institutions and SHGs in planning, recourse pooling, and sharing experience.

3.2.6.10. MKSP- Mahila Kisan Saktheekaran Pariyojana

This programme implemented by Central Government through the Block Panchayat by providing fund to organise women self help groups in agriculture activities. Different training programmes conducted to the SHGs related to the new technology used in Agriculture activities. This is women empowerment programme.

3.2.6.11. Kudumbashree

Kudumbashree is the programme initiated by the poverty eradication mission of the state Government of Kerala. Under this programme the women from the poor households are organised to form community based structures of women focusing on self help groups, demand led activities under the leadership of the local Government.
Community based organisation of the poor- Through the NHG formation organising the women from rural households and ADS or area development society is formed in ward level. Where representatives from the NHGs were included. The ADS from all wards again select another group CDS (community Development Society) and they are the panchayat level upper body to organising the community based development projects.

Financial assistance to Joint Liability Groups (JLG) : In order to ensure livelihood to women through Group farming related activities and food security. the JLG groups are given training for different farming techniques, bank Loan, Area Bonus, Production Bonus etc. the Neighborhood groups 4 to 10 members are registered under CDS as JLG and start Farming activities. Financial assistance given through CDS to the bank account of JLGs.

Rural Micro Enterprise Scheme: To help entrepreneurial development among individual and group entrepreneurs and provide assistance through bank Loan and Subsidy.

Innovation Fund :To support the innovative micro enterprises the Mission provides up to 50% of the total project cost as innovative fund and subsidy. Project reports are prepared by the Micro enterprise consultants in each panchayat and the applications from NHGs reaches in the Mission through ADS and CDS to be selected.

Technology Fund Scheme : To encourage new technology in micro enterprises. Project reports are prepared by the Micro enterprise consultants in each panchayat and those women entrepreneurs who want to use effective technology can apply in NHGs and it reaches in the Kudumbashree mission through ADS and CDS and a selection committee made selection of the deserved.
**Revolving Fund Scheme:** The Fund is intended to meet the urgent need for working capital for the women enterprises completed the grading. It provides maximum 35000 not exceeding the 15% of the project cost.

**Linkage Banking** - After proper grading of all the NHGs, selected NHGS are linked with banks as per the guidelines of NABARD.

**Lease Land Banking:** Under this scheme, several hectares of barren land brought under cultivation by the Kudumbashree NHG groups. In 2002-2003, the programme launched and it provided a boost to the productive sector.

**Balasabha** - This programme intended to prevent the intergenerational transmission of poverty. To build confidence level and future prospects, intra and inter relationship with in the society etc, the children from poor families are organised.

**Yuvashree** : It is a programme intended to empower the youth between 18 and 25 years to find the sustainable employment opportunities. The scheme provides opportunities to individual and Group of minimum five to start new enterprise.

**IT enabled service to the poor**

For enabling IT enabled services to the poor, computerization of the CDS office were done with the assistance of Central government

**Vidhyashree** - A programme initiated to provide computer training to the high school students under the assistance of state poverty eradication Mission.

**Bhavanashree:** This programme intended to provide houses for the poor and vulnerable sections of the society.

**Kerashree** - New brand coconut oil brought out in the brand name of Kerashree by the mission.
**MadhyamaShree** - A programme developed to empower women in Kudumbashreee for media reporting.

### 3.2.6.4.12. Social security and Social Welfare programmes

Due to the globalised modern scenario, the deprivation among the poor sections of people aggravated and large poverty alleviation programmes do not guarantee the adequate protection of the poor.

International labour organisation (ILO) suggests the provision of support to the poor sections from falling in to contingent poverty. These contingencies are sickness, medical care for the worker, maternity, unemployment, work injury, death of worker, invalidity and widowhood.

Through the five year plans Kerala Government made a pioneering attempt in the provision of social security and welfare activities through the institutional care and different pension schemes, social insurance schemes, unemployment allowances etc. Many welfare fund boards and Decentralized institutional mechanisms helped to enhance the social security net towards the protection of the poor and vulnerable workers in the unorganized sectors.

The major social security measures provided through the panchayatiraj institutions are the different welfare pensions like old age pensions, widow pensions, pensions to the workers in the unorganized sectors like agricultural labourers, fishermen, Un employment allowances, pensions to the un marriage ladies, unwed mothers etc. Apart from this many department agencies, welfare boards are providing to the concerned workers like SC/ST development departments, Kudumbashree, etc. Several pension schemes are implemented by the state Government as a safety net for the vulnerable sections. There are more than 40 pension schemes of which 20 are financed by the state governments. Health insurance schemes provided to all the
poor families (RSBY) like free medical treatment in major government and Private hospitals for a definite amount.

3.2.6.4.13. Food security Programmes

As the part of food, security programmes various Central Government programmes and state government programmes implemented with the help and support of decentralized panchayatiraj institutions.

Supplementary Nutrition Programme : The ICDS programmes like supplementary nutrition programme implemented through the anganwadies transferred to the concerned local Governments. The LSGs identify the food stuffs suited to the local conditions having the nutritional value as per ICDS norms. The cost of Supplementary Nutrition programme met by Grama panchayats and Block panchayats in a ratio of 2:1.

Mid- day meal programme -As the educational institutions are under the jurisdiction of the Gramapanchayats the Mid day meal programme in the schools are supervised by the concerned local governments.

Kerala is considered as a trendsetter and model for all other states in the country, related to decentralization and poverty alleviation. Before 73rd and 74th amendments, most of the poverty alleviation schemes were introduced as state sponsored programmes and all the schemes were planned, implemented and monitored in a centralised character with the State government departments. The selection of beneficiaries, and programme implementation were done by the departments. The lack peoples participatory forums to intervene, monitor and to provide suggestions often leads to the corruption and inefficiency in the centralised poverty alleviation processes. This non-participatory centralised approach often leads to the failure in the attainment of the objectives like poverty reduction.
After the enactment of panchayatiraj act, three five year plans (9\textsuperscript{th}, 10\textsuperscript{th} and 11\textsuperscript{th} Plan) have already completed in the State. As per the direction of the Finance commission, nearly 33\% of non-plan share of the state, 5.5\% of budget share as maintenance grant, 3.5\% as General purpose fund transferred to the three tier panchayat. Thus a Grama Panchayat in Kerala is getting an average one crore rupees and 1.5crore for Block panchayat and 20 crores for District panchayat. With these sufficient amount of funds the panchayatiraj institutions implemented their devolved functions like poverty reduction and SC/ST development. Number of Central and State sponsored programmes implemented through three-tier panchayat with the peoples participation in need identification and beneficiary selection by NHGs and Gramasabhas. The present study tries to evaluate the impact of these decentralized planning efforts on the poverty alleviation in Rural Kerala.

\textbf{Conclusion}

To sum up all the earlier studies related to different degrees and approaches of decentralised planning, constitutional amendmends and evolution of decentralisation in Kerala, Peoples Plan campaigns and Kerala Development Plan, anti poverty sub plan formulation, role of different tiers of panchayatiraj institutions in povety alleviation etc. provides a valuable insight to approach the present study with strong theoratical foundation. Similarly the theories related to the various definitions of poverty, theories and approaches in poverty estimation, different dimensions of poverty and various poverty alleviation programmes in Kerala paved the right path to the present study towards the direction of rural poverty. In short the present study make use of the various theories and practices applied in decentralisation and poverty, in various economies and tries to provide the theoretical foundation to the further discussions related to the impact of poverty alleviation in rural Kerala.
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