

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نېاشد تن من مېباد بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مېباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

Posted by [MLToday](#) | Apr 28, 2025 | [Other Featured Posts](#) | [0](#)

BY [ABDUL RAHMAN](#)

06.05.2025

COMMUNIST-LED KERALA SOON TO BECOME INDIA'S FIRST STATE FREE OF EXTREME POVERTY



A targeted program has been undertaken to develop sustainable livelihoods for thousands of families suffering under extreme poverty.

India's southern state of Kerala has announced that by November this year, it will have eradicated extreme poverty in the state by lifting thousands of families out of destitution. It will be the first Indian state to achieve this [milestone](#), which the state's communist government has hailed as a key step in Kerala's path toward inclusive development.

The Extreme Poverty Eradication Program (EPEP) was first launched in 2021 by Kerala's newly elected Left Front government. The initial goal was to eradicate all forms of destitution by 2026. However, the deadline was later moved up, due to the strong performance of local self governments (LSGs) and other government departments.

The eradication of extreme poverty in the state is the result of a “strong sense of compassion and commitment to human dignity” which communists have towards their fellow human beings, claimed Pinarayi Vijayan, chief minister of the state, in a [public function last week](#).

“The primary responsibility of the government is to improve the quality of life of the people,” he added. The function was organized to declare Dharmadam, Pinarayi’s own electoral constituency in Kannur district, the first constituency in the country to be free of extreme poverty.

The administration in Ernakulam, one of the state’s 14 districts, announced a day later that it will achieve the zero extreme poverty target by [August 15](#).

Kerala’s roadmap to poverty eradication

India remains a country with [very high levels of poverty](#), despite the high economic growth recorded in the last three decades. According to the government’s own think tank, NITI Aayog, the average rate of multidimensional poverty (MDP) in the country amounted to [14.96% in 2021](#). This means millions of people, the largest number in any one country, live in extreme poverty.

Contrary to the national trends, Kerala has been able to tackle poverty quite effectively. According to NITI Aayog’s data, it was the only state in the country with an MDP below one percent (0.71%).

The low levels of destitution in the state is a result of decades of progressive policy interventions such as:

- Land reforms
- High social spending
- Institutionalizing healthcare as a public service
- Various other programs under successive communist governments

Building on this legacy, the Pinarayi-led government decided to go further and launch a program to eradicate the remaining traces of extreme poverty in the state.

Micro-level planning

Under the program, the state identified [64,002 families – a little over 100,000 people – as extremely poor](#), out of its total population of over 35 million. The identification of families was based on their inability to meet their basic needs such as food, healthcare, secure housing, and a stable income. Based on the assessment, the government prepared a micro-level plan in August 2021 to pull all of these families out of extreme poverty.

The government began [several special programs](#) to carry out the plan:

- Providing job training and other necessary support for families that did not have a stable source of income
- Launching a minimum 100-day job guarantee
- Developing individual livelihood plans based on the specific needs of a particular family

Existing initiatives, such as Kudumbashree, were integrated into the program, along with new schemes like Destitute Free Kerala (DFK). The government also launched the Rights without Delay program to provide necessary documentation to over 21,000 such families. These documents were necessary for eligibility to access government benefits.

According to the 2024 economic survey by the government of Kerala, nearly 50% of the targeted families were taken out of extreme poverty within two years of the launch of the program. As [per the latest estimates](#), the concerted and coordinated efforts of the various departments of the state government has lifted over 70% of all extremely poor families out of their destitution.

The critical role of local self government

Pinarayi acknowledged the crucial role played by the local self government bodies such as “gram panchayats” (village council) and municipal corporations in the success of the EPEP in the state.

Communist Party of India (Marxist), the key constituent of the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government in the state, [has maintained](#) that the LSGs are the most vibrant part of the governance mechanism. The communist movement in the country and particularly in Kerala has always focused on strengthening decentralization and the LSG bodies for a more people-centric approach to development.

The belief in the LSGs people-centric approach was a crucial factor in them becoming a key mechanism for the extreme poverty eradication program in Kerala under the LDF. LSGs were involved in doing the grassroots surveys to identify the destitute families. They were also responsible for identifying the specific needs of families, as well as both the preparation and execution of the micro-level plans, known as the extreme poverty sub-plans.

The success in Kerala is just the beginning, as the left forces hope to bring the lessons from the state to other states in India, and eradicate extreme poverty once and for all. Though, one of the key lessons from Kerala is the importance of a government which prioritizes poverty eradication and strengthens local bodies to carry out the work, meaning that the political struggle remains at the center.

April 16, 2025 [Peoples Dispatch](#)

PHOTO CAPTION: *Dharmadam becomes the first Assembly Constituency in Kerala to be declared free of extreme poverty.* Photo: Pinarayi Vijayan/X