Preface

Preoccupations with GDP per capita as the sole measure of development are steadily on the decline, thanks to the emergence of the human development approach as an alternative. Though it is widely accepted that the ‘commodity welfare’, which GDP per capita represents, is an essential element of human development, Kerala is regarded as a rare exception to that. Kerala’s experience of high human development, unsupported by corresponding economic development, which is often referred as ‘Kerala model of development’, has been a favourite topic of discussion to development experts. However, the intra-state variations in human development of Kerala have not received much attention. It is in this backdrop that I have embarked on this ambitious project.

The search for an appropriate theoretical model for analyzing the human development situation in Kerala have inevitably led to the anatomy of the human development paradigm, and a comparison of it vis-à-vis other approaches to the measurement of the state of human well-being viz., income approach, social indicators approach and basic needs approach. It has also revealed many of the inadequacies of the human development approach, and invited relevant rectifications. The earlier part of this work is largely occupied by these considerations. A comparison of different aspects of human development of Kerala with other major Indian states also has been made. Regional variations in human development in Kerala have been assessed in this study based on both conventional and non-conventional parameters. The failures of certain regions regarding human development are analysed using conventional and non-conventional parameters in comparison which makes this work significant.

A project of this magnitude is not so handy for a doctoral research and I have no tall claims about my achievements, either. However, I feel that the study has been useful, at least in encouraging people to undertake more disaggregated studies of human development and to look for novel (non-conventional) indicators for such local level studies.

In my pursuit, I was greatly assisted by numerous individuals and institutions. Though it is practically impossible to mention all names here, some of them need special mention and it will be a great mistake to leave them with out proper
acknowledgements. The first and the foremost among them is my supervising teacher, Dr. Abraham George. Though heavily burdened with the responsibilities in Mar Thoma College, Thiruvalla as its Principal, he never turned me back when approached for guidance. His ever-pleasant approach has been a constant source of encouragement, particularly when I faced with problems.

Many experts in this field, for instance Dr. M A. Oommen, Dr. K. C. Zachariah, Dr. Irudaya Rajan, Dr. Abusaleh Sheriff, Dr. Varadarajan, Dr. M. K. P. Nair and K. Srinivasan working in association with various research institutes and UNDP provided valuable information for improving the quality of this work. I gratefully remember the helpful service of staff of various Panchayaths; Anganvadies, Primary Health Centres, Police Stations and District Medical Office in Kollam District; and District Crime Records Bureau, Kollam; State Crime Records Bureau, Thiruvananthapuram; Demographic Department of Health Directorate, Thiruvananthapuram, Directorate of Census Operations, Thiruvananthapuram; Regional office of National Sample Survey Organisation, Thiruvananthapuram and Directorate of Public Instructions, Thiruvananthapuram who provided me data on various aspects of this study. The concern and cooperation of the Staff of District Panchayat Office, Idukki and Kottangal Grama Panchayat, Pathanamthitta are worth mentioning in this regard.

In both stages of review of literature and data collection Libraries of Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram; Kerala University, Thiruvananthapuram; Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam and Mar Thoma College, Thiruvalla have served as the resource base. On technical side, especially on data analysis, I specially thank the staff of US Census Bureau who provided CSPro through online.

Dr. Shaji Varkey, Senior Lecturer, Department of Political Science, University of Kerala and all my friends and colleagues who were a constant source of inspiration and support during this endeavour. My friend and colleague Late Mr. John Mathew, to whose lovable memory this thesis is submitted, remains to be a stable influence on this work, both personal and academic. Last but not least I lovingly remember the kind consideration and affection of my parents, Sheeja and Chandu.

Leni. V