

Perspective Plan for State Higher Education with Special Reference to Arts & Science Colleges in Kerala.

Introduction

Kerala has been pursuing an inclusive perspective of educational development, which combines growth with equity and access. Naturally, the state's approach in the Higher Education sector has been horizontal, with a strong sense of distributive justice which could be distinguished from the exclusive approach of competitive selection and vertical privileging of institutions. Since the state has been taking sustained efforts towards quality enhancement by implementing the quality assurance package of the UGC, the state's academic and infrastructural preparedness is commendable. Kerala is the first state to have satisfied the nationally stipulated academic reforms such as semester system choice based credit system, curriculum development, admission procedures and examination reforms. Now the implementation of the UGC's current scheme of outcome based education (OBE) is under way as part of the state higher education council's initiatives. The Perspective Plan for State Higher Education is formulated in the above context and is limited to non-professional education and with special reference to Arts and Science Colleges in the self-financing stream.

Present Scenario - Higher Education in Kerala

Kerala has now 13 universities and 3 deemed universities as shown in the Table-1 below and all the Arts & Science colleges are affiliated to Kerala, Mahatma Gandhi, Calicut and Kannur Universities.

Table 1 Universities in Kerala (2017)

Affiliating Universities	Others	Deemed Universities
University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram	Cochin university of Science and Technology, Kochi	National Institute of Technology (former REC), Kozhikode
Kannur University, Kannur	SreeSankaracharya university of Sanskrit, Kalady, Thrissur	SreeChithira Medical Centre, Thiruvananthapuram
University of Calicut, Kozhikode	Kerala Agricultural university, Thrissur	Kerala Kalamandalam, Cheruthuruthy, Thrissur
Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam	APJAbdulKalamTechnological University, Thiruvananthapuram	
	Kerala University Of Health Sciences, Thrissur	
	Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies, Kochi	
	Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Wayanad	
	The National University of Advanced Legal Studies (NUALS), Kochi	
	ThunchathEzhathachan Malayalam University, Tirur	

In Kerala, the Higher Education needs of the students in the Arts and Science Sector are met and satisfied by Government colleges, Government aided colleges, Government controlled/financed/approved/supported colleges including colleges run by co-operative societies, Private self financing colleges, Distance mode education and private self study mode education.

All the above five groups provide facility to students for pursuing higher education in this sector.

Table 2: Enrolment of Students in Arts and Science Colleges (2016-17)

Course	Total	Girls	Boys	% of Girls
B. A.	1,17,874	77,334	40,540	65.61
B.Sc.	99,017	73,809	25,208	74.54
B.Com.	42,519	26,819	15,700	63.08
Total	2,59,410	1,77,962	81,448	68.6
M.A.	13,733	9,307	4,426	67.77
MSc.	16,772	11,705	5,067	69.79
M.Com	5,632	4,009	1,623	71.18
Total	36,137	25,021	11,116	69.24
Grand Total	2,95,547	2,02,983	92,564	68.68

Source: All India Higher Education Survey (2017)

Total number of students enrolled in various Arts and Science Colleges (excluding unaided colleges) under the four affiliating universities in Kerala during 2016-17 was 2.96 lakh of this, 2.03 lakhs (68.68 %) were girls. Out of the 36,137 students enrolled for post graduate courses, girl students constituted 69.24 percent. That is, there is a new trend of girl students enrolling largely to higher education, unlike the previous years.

Table 3: Details of Distance Education/Private Registration in Kerala.

Student Enrolment under Distance/Private Registration stream under various universities (Kerala/MG/Calicut/Kannur)								
DISTANCE EDUCATION								
Academic Year	BA	B.Sc.	B. Com	ANY OTHER COURSE	MA	MS c	M.Co m	ANY OTHER COURSE
2013-14	22801	1603	29204	1947	2183	213	2184	96
2014-15	23402	1787	30552	1840	1840	325	3144	106
2015-16	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2016-17	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2017-18	18477	971	18922	1259	3296	333	2788	NA
PRIVATE REGISTRATION								
Academic Year	BA	B.Sc.	B Com.	ANY OTHER COURSE	MA	MS c	M.Co m	ANY OTHER COURSE
2013-14	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
2014-15	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
2015-16	21181	1365	25717	1626	2676	282	3491	59
2016-17	17745	858	21041	1152	2628	302	3261	NIL

Source: Data from various Universities.

Apart from their regular stream, the four Universities in Kerala (Kerala, Calicut, Mahathma Gandhi and Kannur) have been offering distance education courses also for the last few years for students in the country and abroad. For BA & BSc the number of students enrolled in the distance education stream was 18477 and 18922 respectively. In the private registration stream also 21041 students registered for B.Com and 17745 students registered for BA in these Universities in 2016-17.

Growth of Arts and Science Colleges affiliated to various Universities in Kerala

Of the 13 State Universities in Kerala only 4 are affiliating Universities namely Kerala Calicut, Mahatma Gandhi and Kannur University. As on March 2018 there are 677 Arts& Science colleges consisting of govt., aided & self-financing colleges in Kerala affiliated to Kerala /Calicut /Mahatma Gandhi/ Kannur Universities.

Table 4. No. of Arts and Science Colleges in Kerala University (2013-14 to 2017-18)

Year	Govt. Colleges	Aided Colleges	Self - Financing Colleges	Total
2013-14	10	37	50	97
2014-15	12	37	73	122
2015-16	12	37	75	124
2016-17	13	38	76	127
2017-18	13	39	89	141

Source: Data from Kerala University

The number of Government and aided colleges under Kerala University remained more or less the same between 2013-14 and 2017-18. But the number of self- financing colleges increased from 50 in 2013-14 to 89 in 2017-18. The increase in the total number of colleges in Kerala University during this period from 97 to 141 is mainly due to the increase in the number of self- financing colleges affiliated to the University. (Table 2&Fig.1)

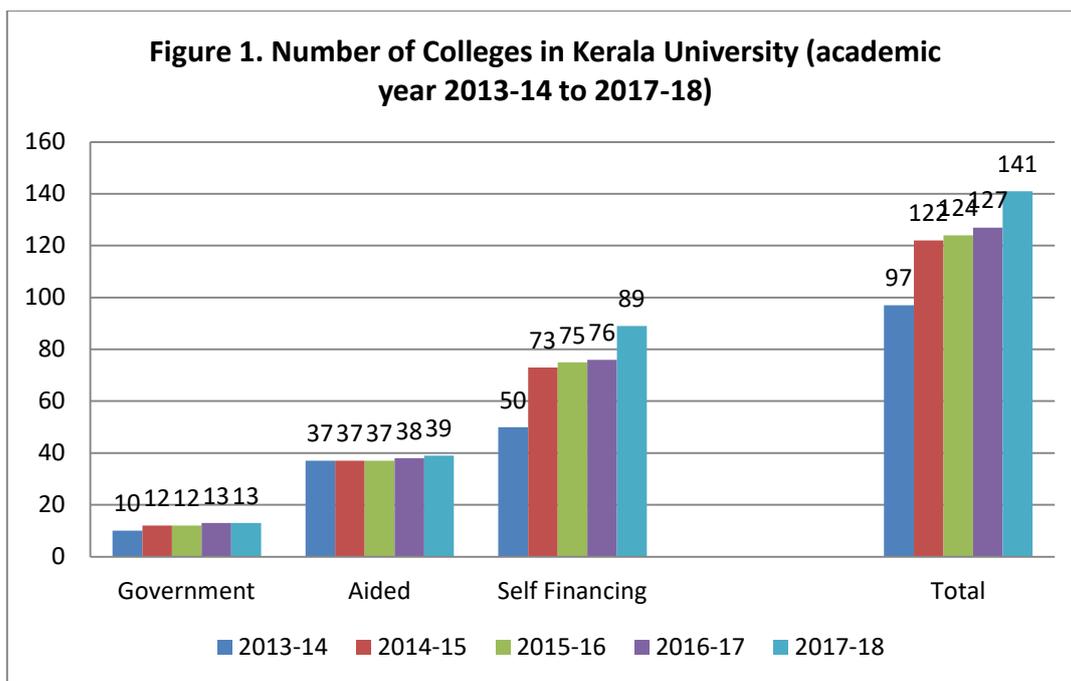


Table 5.No. of Arts and Science Colleges in Calicut University (2013-14 to 2017-18)

Year	Govt. Colleges	Aided Colleges	Self Financing Colleges	Total
2013-14	27	46	139	212
2014-15	32	47	153	232
2015-16	33	49	174	256
2016-17	33	49	174	256
2017-18	33	49	180	262

Source: Data from Calicut University

Similarly the number of Government and aided colleges affiliated to the University of Calicut increased only marginally during the period 2013-14 to 2017-18 as shown in Table.3 and Fig.2. But the number of self- financing colleges increased from 139 in 2013-14 to 180 in 2017-18. This has resulted in an increase in the total number of Arts and Science colleges from 212 to 262 during the same period in Calicut University.

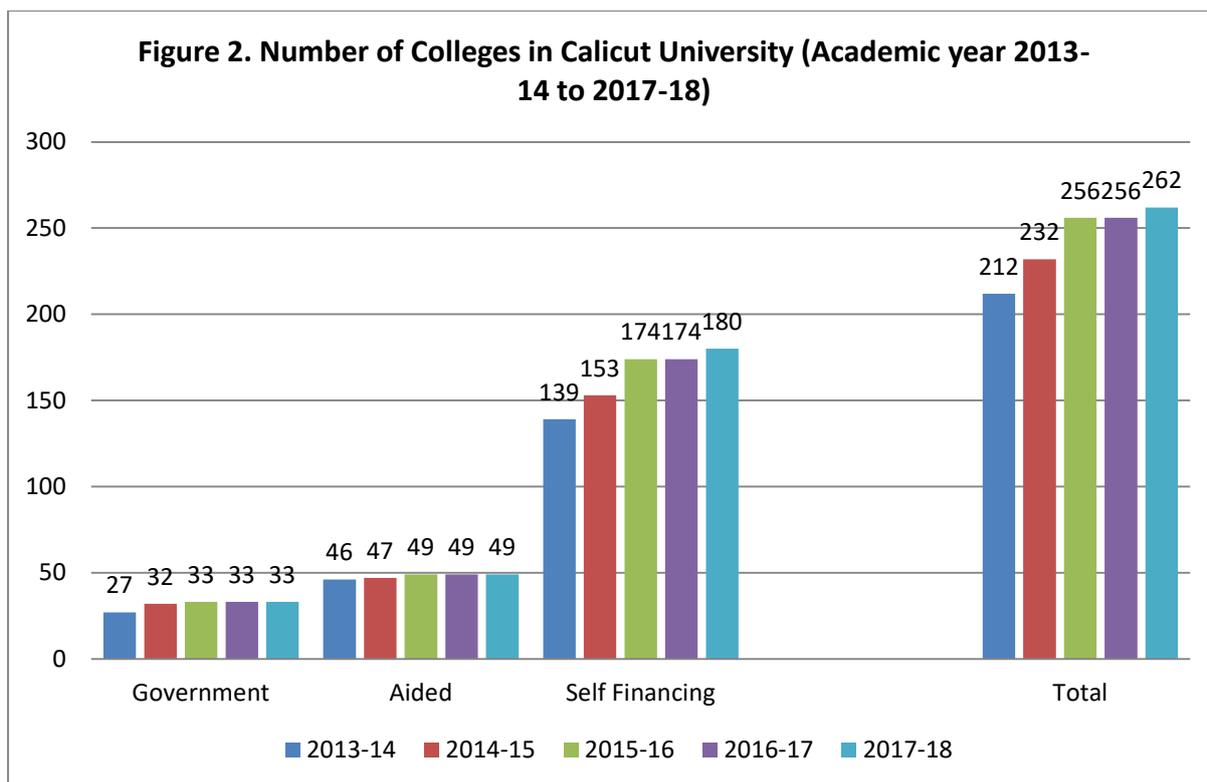


Table 6.No.ofArts and Science Colleges in MG University (2013-14 to 2017-18)

Year	Govt. Colleges	Aided Colleges	Self- Financing Colleges	Total
2013-14	9	56	125	190
2014-15	9	56	130	195
2015-16	9	56	136	201
2016-17	9	56	136	204
2017-18	9	56	136	204

Source: Data from MG University

A similar trend of increase in the number of self financing colleges is also evident in the case of Mahatma Gandhi University. While the number of Government and aided colleges under the University remained more or less stable, the number of self- financing colleges increased from 125 in 2013-4 to 136 in 2017-18, which has resulted in an overall increase in the number of affiliated Arts and Science Colleges under the University from 190 to 204 during the same period. (Table.4 Fig.3)

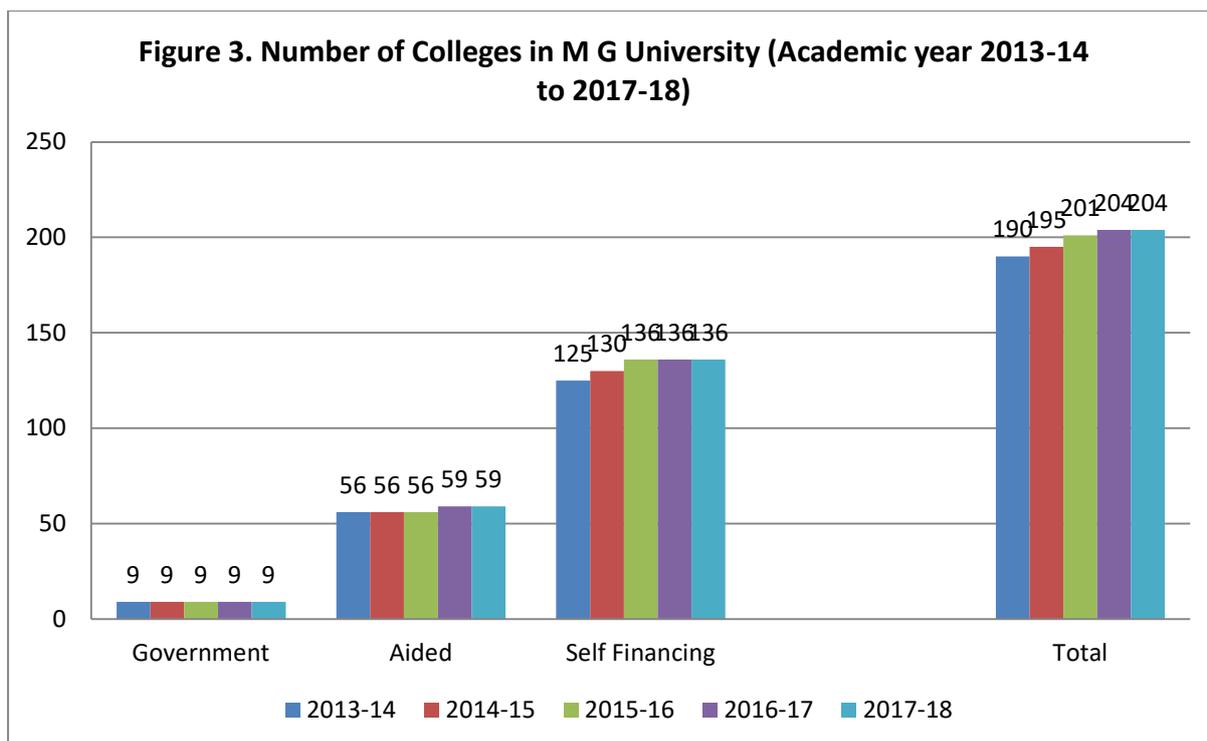


Table 7.No. of Colleges in Kannur University (2013-14 to 2017-18)

Year	Govt. Colleges	Aided Colleges	Self -Financing Colleges	Total
2013-14	3	12	40	55
2014-15	3	12	45	60
2015-16	3	12	50	65
2016-17	3	12	53	68
2017-18	3	12	53	68

Source: Data from Kannur University

In the case of Kannur University the number of Government and aided colleges remained unchanged between 2013-14 and 2017-18, but the number of self-financing colleges far exceeded the number of Government and aided colleges. It increased from an already high of 40 colleges in 2013-14 to 53 in 2017-18. The total number of affiliated Arts and Science colleges in Kannur University is 68 and three - fourth of it is constituted by self -financing colleges (Table.5

Fig.4)

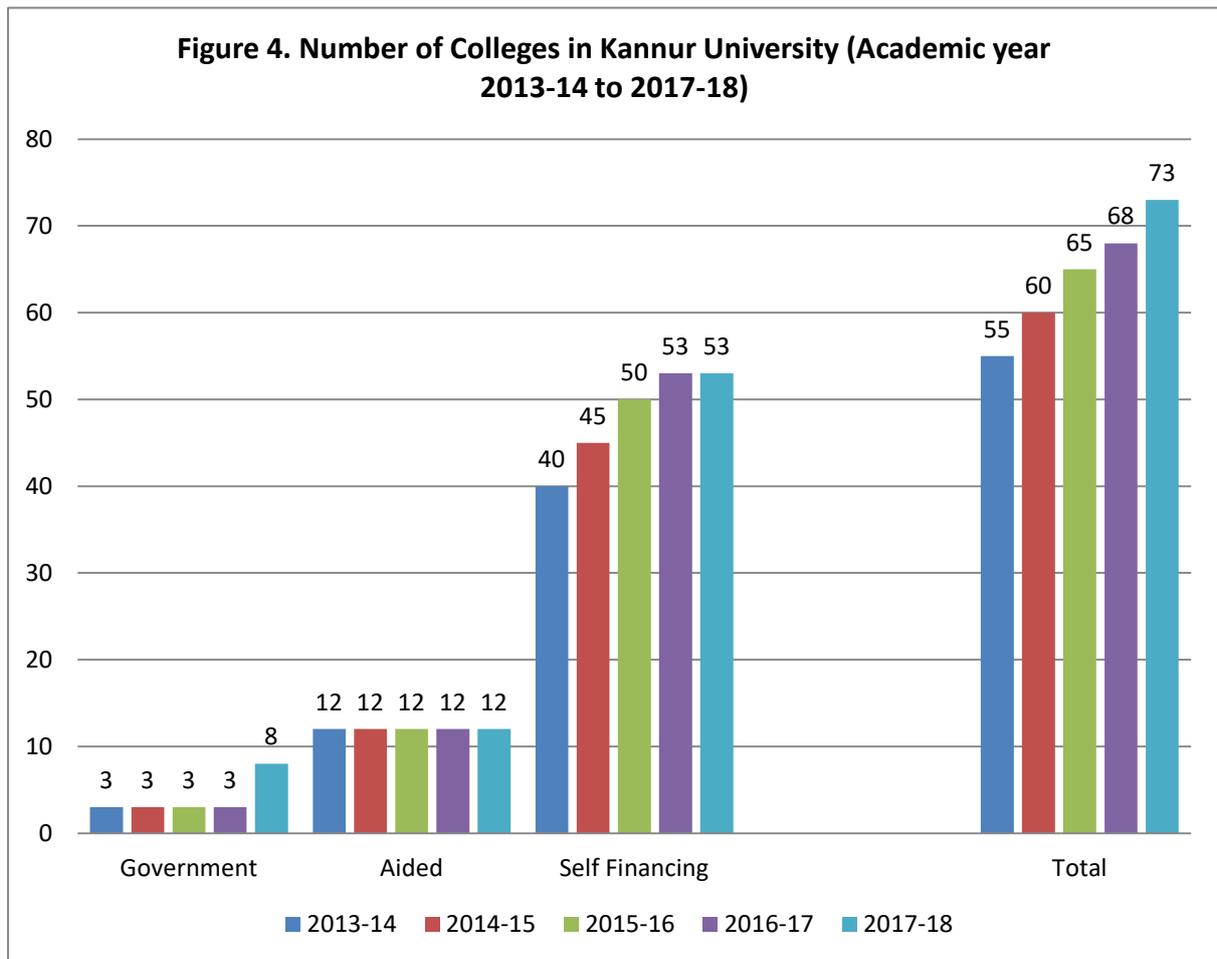
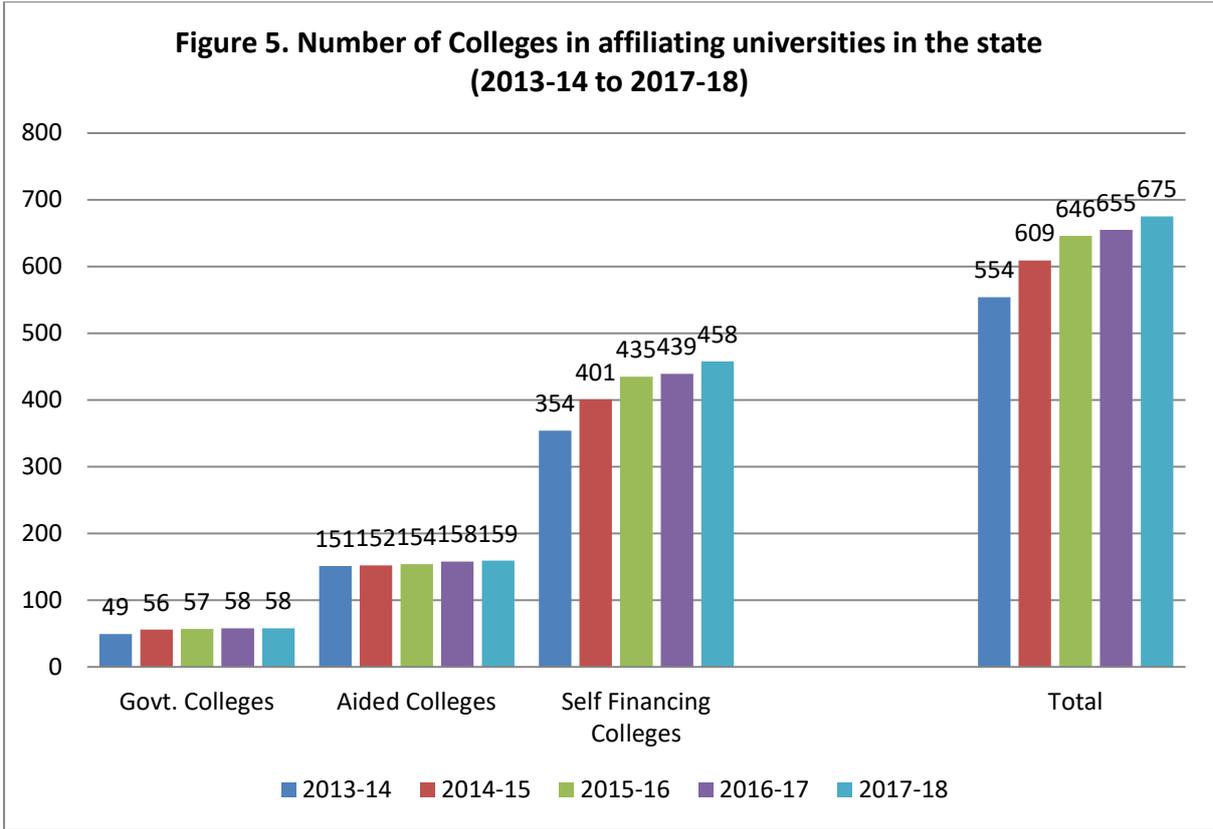


Table 8.Total Number of Colleges in four affiliating Universities in the State (2013-14 to 2017-18)

Year	Govt. Colleges	Aided Colleges	Self Financing Colleges	Total
2013-14	49	151	354	554
2014-15	56	152	401	609
2015-16	57	154	435	646
2016-17	58	156	439	653
2017-18	58	156	458	677

Source: Data from various universities



The growth of Arts and Science colleges (Government, Aided & Self Financing) in the state in the four affiliating Universities from 2013-14 to 2017-18 has been impressive. The number of Government colleges under these Universities which has been remaining stagnant for a long period increased steadily to 58 in 2017-18. Similarly the number of aided colleges which has been showing a similar trend like the Government colleges increased from 151 in 2013-14 to 159 in 2017-18. But the fastest growing stream in Arts and Science College category has been the self- financing colleges. It increased from 354 in 2013-14 to 458 in 2017-18. This has resulted in an overall increase in the number of Arts and Science colleges in affiliating universities from 554 in 2013-14 to 675 in 2017-18. (Table.6 Fig.5)

Increase in Enrolment of Students in the four affiliating Universities

The major share of student enrolment in higher education in Kerala is in the Arts and Science colleges in the State, coming under the four affiliating Universities namely Kerala, Mahatma Gandhi, University of Calicut and Kannur University.

	Courses		Total Seats including marginal		Actual Intake		Vacancy/ Unfilled seats	
	UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG
	Govt. Seats	Govt. Seats	Govt. Seats	Govt. Seats	Govt. Seats	Govt. Seats	Govt. Seats	Govt. Seats
2013-14	2572	759	2850	846	2837	845	13	1
2014-15	2788	759	3118	821	3098	811	20	10
2015-16	2788	759	3203	880	3182	867	21	13
2016-17	2950	759	3513	838	3494	834	19	4
2017-18	2950	779	3413	979	3538	867	0	112

Source: Data from Kerala University

In the University of Kerala, in govt. colleges both at the UG &PG levels, the actual intake of students increased considerably. At the UG level, it increased from 2837 in 2013-14 to 3538 in 2017-18 and at the PG level, it increased from 845 to 867 in the same period. But the vacant/unfilled seats in Government colleges at the UG & PG level were minimal.

	Courses		Total Seats including marginal		Actual Intake		Vacancy/ Unfilled seats	
	UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG
	Govt. Seats	Govt. Seats	Govt. Seats	Govt. Seats	Govt. Seats	Govt. Seats	Govt. Seats	Govt. Seats
1	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16
2013-14	5513	971	6891	1214	5573	987	1318	227
2014-15	6116	1039	7645	1299	6276	987	1369	312
2015-16	6418	1047	8023	1309	6943	1028	1080	281
2016-17	6418	1047	8023	1309	7788	1228	235	81
2017-18	6478	1077	8098	1346	7901	1244	197	102

Source: Data from Calicut University

In the University of Calicut, the situation was more or less similar as far as Govt. colleges are concerned. The actual intake at the UG & PG levels increased from 5573 to 7901 and 987 to 1244 respectively during the period between 2013-14 to 2017-18. The number of unfilled seats came down drastically in the Government colleges during this period.

Academic Year	Courses		Total Seats including marginal		Actual Intake		Vacancy/ Unfilled seats	
	UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG
	Govt Seats	Govt Seats	Govt Seats	Govt Seats	Govt Seats	Govt Seats	Govt Seats	Govt Seats
2013-14	1026	207	1222	252	1240	280	Nil	Nil
2014-15	1233	207	1386	279	1406	277	Nil	Nil
2015-16	1233	207	1434	262	1455	279	Nil	Nil
2016-17	1233	219	1654	314	1704	316	Nil	Nil
2017-18	1582	219	1505	305	1509	303	Nil	2

Source: Data from Kannur University

In the case of Kannur University also, almost all the seats both at the UG and the PG levels in the government colleges were filled and there was no unfilled seats in this category.

Academic Year	Courses		Total Seats including marginal seats		Actual Intake		Vacancy/ Unfilled seats	
	UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG
	Aided	Aided	Aided	Aided	Aided	Aided	Aided	Aided
2013-14	13941	1808	14820	2410	14470	2319	350	91
2014-15	13941	1808	15613	2303	15255	2246	358	57
2015-16	14529	1808	16200	2320	15748	2271	452	49
2016-17	14559	1808	16500	2340	16150	2150	350	190
2017-18	14659	1798	16670	2492	16421	2251	249	241

Source: Data from Kerala University

In the University of Kerala, actual intake of UG students in the aided stream increased from 14470 to 16,421 during the period 2013-14 to 2017-18. The unfilled seats at the UG level during this period declined from the high of 350 to 249. In the case of enrolment of PG of students, the number declined from 2319 to 2251 during the same period and the unfilled seats also increased from 91 in 2013-14 to 241 in 2017-18.

Table 13. Enrolment of students in Arts and Science Colleges (Aided) during 2013-14 to 2017-18 under Calicut University								
	Courses		Total Seats including marginal seats		Actual Intake		Vacancy/ Unfilled seats	
	UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG
Academic Year	Aided	Aided	Aided	Aided	Aided	Aided	Aided	Aided
2013-14	16826	3403	21033	4254	18186	2365	2847	1889
2014-15	18513	4105	23141	5131	18060	2619	5081	2512
2015-16	20144	4136	25180	5170	15948	2818	9232	2352
2016-17	20088	4532	25110	5665	15690	3146	9420	2519
2017-18	20145	4555	25181	5674	16390	3071	8791	2603

Source: Data from Calicut University

In the case of University of Calicut, enrolment of students in the aided colleges comprising of both aided and self financing courses in these colleges, at the UG level decreased from 18,186 in 2013-14 to 16,390 in 2017-18 and the number of unfilled seats also increased from 2847 to 8791 during the same period. At the PG level, the number of seats including aided and self financing stream in aided colleges, increased from 2365 to 3071 and the unfilled seats also increased from 1889 to 2603 during the same period.

Table 14. Enrolment of students in Arts and Science Colleges (Aided)during 2013-14 to 2017-18 under Kannur university								
	Courses		Total Seats including marginal seats		Actual Intake			
	UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG
Academic Year	Aided	Aided	Aided	Aided	Aided	Aided	Aided	Aided
2013-14	2421	153	2547	163	2416	163	128	-
2014-15	2555	197	2621	207	2496	206	125	1
2015-16	2562	208	2628	218	2520	216	108	2
2016-17	2630	211	2727	221	2642	217	85	4
2017-18	2606	216	2714	226	2659	224	55	2

Source: Data from Kannur University

In the case of Kannur University in the aided stream at the UG level the actual intake of students increased from 2416 in 2013-14 to 2659 in 2017-18 and vacancy/unfiled seats in this category came down from 128 to 55 during the same period. In the PG level actual intake in the aided stream increased from 163 to 224 and almost all the seats were filled in this category.

Table.15. Enrolment of students in Arts and Science Colleges (Self Financing)during 2013-14 to 2017-18 under Kerala university								
	Courses		Total Seats including marginal seats		Actual Intake		Vacancy (Unfilled Seats)	
	UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG
Academic Year	UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG
2013-14	4636	408	6600	619	4555	370	2045	249
2014-15	5250	430	7172	638	6065	509	1107	129
2015-16	5181	470	9350	611	8347	599	1003	12
2016-17	9568	477	11400	627	8749	581	2641	46
2017-18	11400	971	13662	1142	9178	677	4484	465

Source: Data from Kerala University

In the case of self -financing courses, in Kerala University the actual intake of students was lower than the total seats sanctioned and it show large number of unfilled seats in this category. The total number of seats sanctioned was 6600 in 2013-14 which increased to 13,662 in 2017-18. Bu the actual intake of the was only 4,555 in 2013-14 and the unfilled seats increased to 2045 in the same year. The number of unfilled seats increased considerably to 4484 in 2017-18. Similarly, at the PG level also the number of unfilled seats in the self- financing category increased as against the sanctioned seats. It increased from 249 in 2013-14 to 465 in 2017-18.

Table.16 Enrolment of students in Arts and Science Colleges (Self Financing) during 2013-14 to 2017-18 under Calicut university								
Academic Year	Courses		Total Seats including marginal seats		Actual Intake		Vacancy (Unfilled Seats)	
	UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG
2013-14	21061	1373	26326	1716	13844	1239	12482	477
2014-15	25759	2038	32199	2548	19219	1553	12980	995
2015-16	33004	2748	41255	3435	24553	1846	16702	1589
2016-17	33141	2893	41426	3616	27589	1854	13837	1762
2017-18	33210	2969	41513	3710	31993	1846	9520	1864

Source: Data from University of Calicut

A similar trend is visible in the case of Calicut University also in the Self financing stream. The total seats at the UG level was 26326 and it increased to 41513 during the period 2013-14 to 2017-18. The actual intake in this category during the same period was less than the total sanctioned seats. The unfilled seats at the UG level in the Self financing stream varied from 12482 in 2013-14 to 9520 in 2017-18. A similar picture is visible at the PG level also. The total seats at the PG level in the Self financing stream increased from 1716 in 2013-14 to 3710 in 2017-18. The number of unfilled seats also increased steadily from 477 in 2013-14 to 1864 in 2017-18.

Table.17 Enrolment of students in Arts and Science Colleges (Self Financing) during 2013-14 to 2017-18 under Kannur university						
Academic Year	Total Seats including marginal seats		Actual Intake		Vacancy (Unfilled Seats)	
	UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG
2013-14	5752	675	4632	540	966	170
2014-15	6181	789	5224	599	1208	256
2015-16	6684	821	5503	684	1363	188
2016-17	7025	957	5546	747	1725	351
2017-18	6975	957	5811	702	1247	380

Source: Data from Kannur University

In Kannur University also, in the Self Financing Stream both at the UG and the PG levels, the number of seats sanctioned and the number of seats remained unfilled increased during the period 2013-14 to 2017-18. At the UG level the number of seats increased from 5752 to 6975 between 2013-14 and 2017-18 and the unfilled seats increased from 966 to 1247 during the same period. At the PG level the number of seats was only 957 in 2017-18 and the unfilled seats reached the maximum of 380 during this period.

Table.18 Enrolment of students in Arts and Science Colleges (Govt.) during 2013-14 to 2017-18 (All Universities)						
Academic Year	Total Seats including marginal seats		Actual Intake		Vacancy (Unfilled Seats)	
	Govt Seats	Govt Seats	Govt Seats	Govt Seats	Govt Seats	Govt Seats
	UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG
2013-14	10963	2312	9650	2112	1331	228
2014-15	12149	2399	10788	2075	1389	322
2015-16	12660	2451	11580	2174	1101	294
2016-17	13190	2461	12986	2378	254	85
2017-18	13016	2630	12948	2414	197	216

Source: All Universities (excluding MG University)

Table.19 Enrolment of students in Arts and Science Colleges (Aided) during 2013-14 to 2017-18 (All Universities)

Academic Year	Total Seats including marginal seats		Actual Intake		Vacancy (Unfilled Seats)	
	Aided Seats	Aided Seats	Aided Seats	Aided Seats	Aided Seats	Aided Seats
	UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG
2013-14	38400	6827	35042	4847	3325	1980
2014-15	41375	7641	35811	5071	5564	2570
2015-16	44008	7708	34216	5305	9792	2603
2016-17	44337	8226	34482	5513	9855	2713
2017-18	44565	8392	35470	5546	9095	2846

Source: All Universities (excluding MG University)

Table.20 Enrolment of students in Arts and Science Colleges (Self-financing) during 2013-14 to 2017-18 (All Universities)

Academic Year	Total Seats including marginal seats		Actual Intake		Vacancy (Unfilled Seats)	
	SF Seats	SF Seats	SF Seats	SF Seats	SF Seats	SF Seats
	UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG
2013-14	38678	3010	23031	2149	15493	896
2014-15	45552	3975	30508	2661	15295	1380
2015-16	57289	4867	38403	3129	31308	1789
2016-17	59851	5200	41884	3182	18203	2159
2017-18	62150	5809	46982	3325	15251	2709

Source: All Universities (excluding MG University)

Growth of Colleges and Enrolment of Students in Arts & Science Colleges: Major Findings

1. The number of both Government and Aided colleges increased considerably during the period between 2013-14 and 2017-18. The number of Govt. colleges increased from 49 in 2013-14 to 58 in 2017-18 and that of the aided colleges increased from 151 to 156 during the same period.
2. The SF colleges recorded the fastest growth during the period of study. It number of SF Colleges increased from 354 in 2013-14 to 458 in 2017-18.
3. The increase in the total number of Arts & Science colleges in the State is mainly accounted by the steady and fast growth of SF Colleges in the State.

4. The student enrolment in Arts and Science colleges also increased considerably in Govt., Aided and SF colleges during this period. In the aided colleges, student enrolment comprises of both aided and self financing streams.
5. The number of students both at the UG & PG levels in the Aided Stream increased. At the UG level the enrolment was significant and it increased from 10963 to 13016 between 2013-14 and 2017-18. At the PG Aided level the number of students increased from 2312 to 2630 during the same period. In the Aided Stream also the Total student enrolment both at the UG & PG level increased considerably. At the UG level it increased from 38400 to 44565 and at the PG level it increased from 6827 to 8392 during the same period.
6. It was the SF stream that accounted for major share of increase in the enrolment both at the UG and PG levels in all the Universities. At the UG level the number of seats in the SF stream increased from 38678 to 62150 and at the PG level it increased from 3010 to 5809 during 2013 – 14 to 2017-18.
7. With increase in the sanctioned strength of students in UG & PG levels, the number of unfilled seats in the colleges also increased both at the UG and PG levels. But the number of unfilled seats at the UG level in all the Universities in the SF stream increased considerably. It increased from 15493 to 31308 in 2015-16 and now it has stabilised at the level of 15251 in 2017-18.
8. Both in the distance education and private registration stream the number of students registered increase considerably. In the distance education stream alone nearly 37370 students were enrolled at the UG level (BA, BSc). In the private registration stream accommodated about 39644 students at the UG level in 2016-17.

Recommendations

- The state has been providing necessary funding for government institutions in the higher education sector from the public resources for improving and developing the infrastructural facilities. These colleges provide quality education and *inter se* merit is the sole criterion for selection and admission. The quality of education there in are critically analysed and scrutinised by the statutory authorities. The maintenance of quality resulted in an increase in the flow of aspiring students to these colleges. It is therefore an undisputed fact that, unfilled seats in these groups, are very minimal.

- Education has never been the sole responsibility of the State in Kerala. There is a tradition of private initiative in education which has accelerated in recent years. But there is a world of difference between private involvement in the earlier decades and the new wave of private investment. While the earlier intervention was philanthropic in nature, the new mode is market oriented. This has led to the mushrooming of higher education institutions in recent times.

- The number of unfilled seats in the private self financing colleges and self financing courses in aided colleges is substantial. The rising trend of unfilled seats in these colleges/ courses is reflective of the falling standards and quality of teaching-learning in these institutions. Strict supervision, mechanisms for correction, proper remedial action etc have to be made to enhance the quality of education in the colleges under this group. The data obtained from the affiliating universities show that there is large scale increase in seats in arts and science colleges resulting in a steep rise in the number of unfilled seats, especially in the self-financing stream in all the affiliating Universities.

- The number of students aspiring for higher education have parallel opportunities to satisfy their needs of higher education through the distance mode of education offered by institutions of repute within India and abroad. Facilities are offered by the Universities in the State for enabling education through private registration. As can be seen from the statistics given above, in

spite of the availability of large number of vacant seats in the private self financing colleges/courses, the number of students who have opted for private study has increased very substantially.

- From the above discussions it is abundantly clear that there is no requirement for the establishment of new Arts and Science colleges/courses in the Self Financing stream in the private sector or Self Financing courses in aided colleges.

- It is also the need of the hour to strengthen and upgrade the physical infrastructure and academic facilities in the existing colleges. There is the need to create stringent checks and balances on each of the several factors relating to higher education offered in all colleges including private self financing colleges. The mechanisms and systems in University/Government to conduct checks and balances and ensure effective controls over the first three groups is adequate and efficient but not so with the Private Self Financing Colleges/Courses.

- Study of basic Arts and Science is the foundation for excellence in Higher Education. Quality of education rendered and standards of facilities offered are the essential foundational elements of success in this area. Compromising with these elements would be disastrous not only to the students and their parents but also to the society and the State. This has to be averted in public interest. The trust reposed on the Government has to be faithfully served and discharged to protect public interests.

- To this end, the Government may formulate the following plan of action for the future in respect of establishment of new colleges, starting of new courses in existing colleges and increasing intake of students to existing courses in the State of Kerala or affiliated to the Universities in the State of Kerala.

- All colleges offering arts and sciences courses shall ensure all standards in the human and physical infrastructure as fixed by Universities to which they are affiliated and as fixed by the regulatory bodies.

- The accreditation/ranking status of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) given by national agencies like NAAC and NIRF should be made mandatory for all colleges seeking affiliation of new courses.

- The conditions of service of teaching and non-teaching staffs in all colleges should be at par with their counterparts in Government and Government aided colleges in particular, the institution of permanent positions, pay and allowances, security of service, retirement benefits, etc.,

- Teaching and Non teaching staff shall have the right to form associations and ensure their functioning.

- Administration and management should be made transparent and accountable to a Governing Council with adequate representation for teachers, non-teaching staffs and students.

- Given that private players in education will inevitably offer only those courses which have potential for immediate employment opportunities, which would not benefit the larger interests of the State and the students. They shall be required to set a part a definite proportion of their investments in teaching and research in fundamental and basic disciplines in the natural and social sciences as well as areas which are deemed to be indispensable for the over-all development of the country and society in general and the State in particular.

- All courses offered by private self financing colleges should be vetted by committees appointed by University and apex regulatory bodies to ensure that the course structure reflects current, well established research in the discipline concerned such as artificial intelligence/data analytics/machine learning etc.

- All groups of colleges referred above shall maintain their separate identity. The tendency to start unaided courses in Government and Government aided colleges will lead to private appropriation of public assets and therefore should be strictly forbidden.

- Participation in the cluster college scheme should be made a precondition for affiliation of new colleges/courses. The State shall set up as many viable clusters as possible within the next few years. The possibility of such clusters eventually developing into district universities could be an added reason for promoting the scheme of cluster colleges.
- Teachers engaged in private self- financing colleges should have mandatory approval from the affiliating University to ensure quality of teaching /learning and also made eligible to participate University/college level examinations.
- Permission for starting new colleges shall be based on the recommendation of the Kerala State Higher Education Council.
- The University/Government in public interests, for correcting regional imbalance in institutional density and for increasing Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in a specified area, may exempt colleges established by Government or Co-operative societies from the requirements of furnishing financial guarantee.

The plan of action envisages strict physical and academic control over the educational institutions offering arts and sciences courses in the State. It is an undisputed finding that the existing private self financing colleges offering arts and science colleges are far below Government colleges, Government aided colleges, Government funded or supported colleges and colleges run with public funds, namely co-operative colleges in all aspects. The unfilled seats in private self financing colleges are substantially rising, obviously due to falling of academic standards or maintaining of quality both in the physical and academics fronts. The extent of control which the State can exercise over the private self financing colleges is very limited. A slow and steady implementation of the above plan of action would result in positive results in the long run.

Hence it would not be in the interests of the State, society, students and the public to allow any more private self financing colleges/self financing courses to be established. Government would strenuously and earnestly implement the plan of action in respect of all the Government, Government aided, Government supported and co-operative colleges. Since it is the requirement to permit new arts and science colleges which satisfy the conditions contained in this plan of action in the public sector, Government would encourage such arts and science college to be established by Government, Government aided, Government supported and co-operative colleges.

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