



'Entrepreneur-friendly Cochin': ISED Joins Cochin City Corporation's ambitious Plan

The joint strategy of the ISED and the City Corporation of Cochin, to make the City entrepreneur-friendly, has come out in the form of an innovative Project: The Enterprise Atlas of Cochin. The proposal was unveiled by the Cochin City Budget for the year 2017-18. The Atlas is expected to be helpful for attracting investors, as also for promoting city-to-city collaboration across the globe.

Even with a long history of political decentralisation, enterprise development strategies of Kerala today operate in a top-down fashion. It is important that enterprise development and livelihood promotion become a community concern, rather than the State government's concern. Self articulation and community participation can happen only in a context where the issues of enterprise development are discussed at the grass root level. From this angle also, having an appropriate knowledge base is critical, says ISED Director, Dr.P.M.Mathew.

Municipalities in Kerala have not seriously thought of developing entrepreneurial opportunities in their area of operation. The activities today are mostly confined to Centrally -sponsored schemes. This need to change, simply for the reason that, under the Panchayati Raj/Nagarpalika Act, 'development of village and small scale industries' is a subject under the powers of the LSGIs.

According to the latest international experience, countries like the Netherlands and Sweden are promoting competition among municipalities on enterprise development initiatives. Can we think of a competitive approach among regions in shaping enterprise development agenda and taking them forward? Already the State governments are doing this in the area of attracting investments from outside. The City of Cochin can meaningfully play a lead role in this area by showcasing the strengths of the City, and by preparing an Action Plan. The new initiative is important in the context of the 'Smart Cities Project', being implemented by Cochin.

The City Corporation made its early initiatives on local economic development, through the DFID - aided Cochin Urban Poverty Reduction Project(CUPRP). ISED played a major role in developing the 'Economic Development' component of this project.. The time has come to grow out of such experimental projects and to institutionalise 'Local Economic Development', says ISED Director, Dr.P.M.Mathew.