<u>**Dream of a Silicon Coast**</u>

Kerala Students Entrepreneur Scheme

Background

- The members of the NASSCOM Executive Council, which was held in Trivandrum, interacted with students from over 30 Engineering Colleges across Kerala. In the subsequent meeting with the Hon: Chief Minister, Industries Minister and other government officials, two key points were brought to notice

  - **80% of students in Kerala do not want to remain back in the state after graduation**
  - **3 out of 5 applications at Technopark Incubator are from college students**

- Following this, during the announcement of Startup Village, India's first PPP model Incubator promoted by National Science and Technology Entrepreneur Development Board, Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, Technopark and the Private Sector, the Hon CM announced in Delhi a policy for promoting student entrepreneurship in Kerala.

Vision of Government of Kerala

- The State IT Policy and State Industrial Policy of Kerala envisions Kerala to be an entrepreneurial society creating wealth and employment in our state. A revolution has to begin from within the system to attract further investment and improve the social and economic well being of our state.

- The best talent and the brightest of minds create knowledge, wealth and employment in the society. In the current scenario of our state, the top talent has been going out of Kerala in search of jobs in cities like Bangalore and Chennai.

- In line with the state industrial policy of converting Kerala into an entrepreneurial society, it is felt that entrepreneurship should be supported from the undergraduate level itself to encourage the best of talent from Kerala to promote the culture of entrepreneurship.

- To further this cause, the State Planning Board in the 12th Plan (2012-2017) is giving great impetus to student entrepreneurship with specific funds being year marked to setup Incubation facilities in various government and private engineering colleges in Kerala.

- The success of Technopark incubated student startups is now visible with two of Technopark student startups (MobME Wireless from CET/SCT) and Innoz Technologies (LBS Kasargode) being rated by Nasscom amongst the **Top 10 Emerging IT companies in India.**

- At the recently launched Startup Village, over 170 applications have been received from student groups within 90 days of operation, undesrscoring the strong wave of student entrepreneurship that is rising in Kerala.

- India's most successful IT entrepreneur Kris Gopalakrishnan has highly endorsed this scheme to promote entrepreneurship amongst students and Govt of Kerala is keen to announce a scheme in this regard.

- It is a matter of great pride for Kerala that multinational companies like RIM (makers of Blackberry handsets) have already set up innovation zones at Startup Village to bring high technology exposure to our students.

- Under the guidance of Kris, chief mentor of Startup Village, it is expected that 15 more multinational will be opening their innovation zones in Kerala.

- Kerala has always led in the field of sports and nation building through various programs like NCC and NSS, the support provided by Universities to pursue these interests along with academic curriculum has proved critical in this success.

- **It is now the need of the hour that Kerala once again take the lead nationally in that universities of the state provide a strong support system by extending the same benefits that are currently being provided for sports and NCC to Student Entrepreneurship.**

- It is also imperative for growth of Kerala IT to support homegrown companies through a specific support for student startups. With over 25,000 final year engineering students passing out every year, it is necessary to create a robust entrepreneurial eco-system which will allow students to start working on innovative ideas even while in college.

- Innovation is one of the key strength of young startups. Fortune 500 companies like Yahoo, Microsoft, Google, Apple and now Facebook were all started by college students while studying. It is possible that in the next 20 years, we can have a fortune 500 company from Kerala through one of these startups yet to be born.

- It is proposed to give greater support to students and encourage them to become entrepreneurs and job creators in Kerala thereby retaining the best of talent back in the state along with wealth and employment creation in the society.

Experience and Learning from Student Incubation Programme at Technopark

- Technopark which pioneered Kerala's IT Revolution in the 90's has already initiated the first steps towards exploring student Entrepreneurship by setting up the Technopark - Technology Business Incubator (T-TBI) in 2006 with support from Department of Science and Technology, Government of India.

- After five years, there are 136 startups today in Technopark, which have cumulatively generated over 3000 employment opportunties and 100Cr Revenue Turn Over resulting in approximately 30Cr Taxes for the exchequer. These student startups have also bagged various International and National awards throughout the years and have brought fresh hope in rejuvenating the entrepreneurship ecosystem in Kerala. Technopark TBI also won the President's award for the Best TBI in the country during this time period outperforming IIT's and IIM's.

Learning from NCC and Sports Sector in Kerala

- The rich heritage of Kerala in the field of sports is very well known. The various Universities in Kerala extend their support and promote sports by way of Duty-Leaves and Grace Marks, which enable the students to participate in various state and national events. This support mechanism has given birth to numerous sports personalities who have brought laurels to the state.

- NCC, which serves a greater purpose of national integration and security is also quite active in Kerala and a key reason for the same is the 10% grace marks given for SSLC exams to the students

Note on support extended to Sports, NCC by University of Kerala

a) **Grace Marks**

- The University of Kerala has extends support by awarding grace marks to students who excel in Sports/Arts/NSS/NCC.
- The grace marks are awarded to only regular and bonafide students. The maximum grace marks awarded to a student in all the activities put together for a degree course shall not exceed 25 per cent. Grace marks are awarded to professional courses (subject to norms of the respective central councils) and post graduate courses also.
- The grace marks shall be given for all papers/ parts/ subjects of both annual and semester courses in a year. For semester courses the percentage shall be based on the total maximum

marks of either of the two semesters. The total available grace marks can be distributed for both semesters in a year.

- The grace marks shall be awarded to candidates on the basis of his/her performance in the respective academic year. The students should claim the grace marks within one year after the end of the academic year. (For example the claim for 2010-11 should be made before 31st May 2012). The grace marks shall be awarded for one additional chance including improvement/ betterment and also to papers of the supplementary examinations in the next immediate chance.

- Grace marks shall be given to for written examinations but if the marks of a candidate are below the required minimum for a pass in internal/ viva/ practicals, then grace marks shall be redistributed to these to get only a pass.

- The quantum of grace marks awarded to the students of a professional and post graduate course shall be three per cent less than that fixed for other students and maximum grace marks shall not exceed five per cent and moderation shall be effected after awarding grace marks to the original marks of a student.

Sports Performance		
Category	Performance	Grade
Inter District / State Championship	First Position	A
	Second Position	B
	Third Position	C
	Representation / Participation State Team	A
University/Inter Collegiate Competitions	First Position	A
	Second Position	B
	Third Position	C
	Member University Team	A
	Participation in Inter University Competitions	A
All India Inter University / Approved National Competitions	First Position	A
	Second Position	B
	Third Position	C
International Competitions	Positions in International Competitions (1st, 2nd, 3rd)	A
	Member Indian Team/ Participation in International Competitions	B

NCC Cadets		
Category	Event	Grade
Republic Day Parade	Republic Day parade attended at New Delhi	A
	National / Commonwealth Shooting	A
	Mavlankar Shooting	B
Centrally organized camps	Basic Leadership Camp	B
	National Trekking	B
	Para Gliding	B

NCC Certificates	'C' Certificate	A
	'B' Certificate	A
	Cadets with NCC activities with 75% attendance	A

b) **Duty Leave**

Students are eligible for duty leave on recommendation from the concerned authority if they perform certain kinds of duty for the college like representing the college in sports and games and involving in the college union and association activities. Duty leave can be recommended only by the faculty members who are authorized to do so. Duty leave should be submitted to the Principal, or the designated authority, preferably before the duty is performed or soon after returning from duty, but not later than three working days. However, for exceptional cases, such as representing University / State Athletic events, prior permission of the Principal should be obtained to get duty leave in excess of 10%.

Application Process

Sports: Application with all relevant documents and attested copies of certificates for Grace Grade Points shall be submitted to the Director of Physical Education of the University through the Principal/Director of Physical Education / HoD of Physical Education of the College concerned for verification. The Director of Physical Education of the University may send the approved list to the Controller of Examinations of the University for awarding Grace Grades.

NCC: In the case of NCC Cadets application with all relevant documents and attested copies of certificates for Grace Grade shall be submitted through the Group Commander, NCC Group by the institution and forwarded to the Controller of Examinations after proper recommendations of eligible Grades.

Technology Business Incubators (TBI)

Incubators are a capital efficient method for stimulating technology innovation and job creation. Technology business incubators are an effective tool for technology transfer, innovation, generating skillful jobs and for local economic development. In many countries, incubation programs are funded by regional or national governments as part of an overall economic development strategy. Incubators are a critical component of the entrepreneurial support infrastructure that have proven themselves to be significant generators of new jobs

Business incubators are programs designed to accelerate the successful development of entrepreneurial companies through an array of business support resources and services, developed and orchestrated by incubator management and offered both in the incubator and through its network of contacts. By focusing on developing a new generation of entrepreneurs – most of whom have ties to the local area – incubators are helping to build companies that will

create jobs and spark economic growth in the region for years to come. Since these programs provide targeted business assistance to young firms at their earliest stages of development – when they're most vulnerable – business incubators help support new ventures and result in a greater than average chance of success for new entrepreneurial ventures.

TBIs aim explicitly at incubating enterprises with high or advanced technology content. A typical TBI provides its clients with a comprehensive range of services, not only the rental space at an affordable price but also a full range of business and specialized services aimed at intensifying technology utilization. TBIs generally have strict admission and exit criteria and the entrepreneurial firm is expected to graduate from the business incubator in a stipulated amount of time (3 years) or upon meeting specific growth criteria (revenues, employees), whichever is the earliest.

Proposed Measure for Promotion of Student Entrepreneurship in Kerala

- **Student Entrepreneurs who are incubated in Technology Business Incubators (TBI) recognized by Department of Science and Technology, Government of India are to be extended the same benefits currently being granted to sports persons by various Universities**

- **Grace Marks:** Entrepreneurship can be added as a category of activity eligible for grace marks. Grace marks may be provided by the University to eligible candidates as per existing norms and decided criteria.

- **Duty Leaves:** The universities may provide directive to the respective colleges to include entrepreneurship under the certain kind of duties eligible for duty leaves along with sports, college union activities etc. The student may apply upon nomination by the incubate company along with the duty certificate attested by the Incubation Manager to the concerned authority of his / her college. Each incubate company shall cumulatively be eligible for a maximum of 30 days of duty leaves in each semester. The duty leave availed by any individual should not exceed 10% of the total number of working days in a semester. However, for exceptional cases, such as representing University / State Athletic events, prior permission of the Principal should be obtained to get duty leave in excess of 10%.The final decision with respect to the duty leaves remains solely with the head of the institution.

Eligibility Criteria

- All incubate companies of TBI's recognized and approved by National Science and Technology Entrepreneur Development Board, Dept. of Science and Technology in Kerala are eligible for availing the support.

Selection process of students to Incubators

- The selection process to gain entry to an NSTEDB approved TBI is very stringent. Each potential applicant submits a formal application with all the requisite details of the proposed business, subsequent to which they will have to pass a three stage qualification process to be eligible for entry; preliminary screening / shortlisting, personal interviews and formal presentation. The selection committee is constituted by experts from the industry approved by the Board of Governors of the NSTEDB approved TBI.

Annual performance appraisal

- The entrepreneurial company, which gets selected into the TBI, is admitted for tenure of 1 year and a provisional maximum tenure of 3 years. At the end of each financial year, the TBI conducts a formal review process to track performance and measure progress in accordance with the guidelines of the NSTEDB, Government of India. The evaluation is conducted by a panel of experts constituted by the Board of Governors of the TBI. Upon positive evaluation, the tenure is extended by 1 year.

Expected Outcome

- This move will serve as a catalyst in creation of the next 1000 startup companies within five years, create additional 15,000 direct employments and will add over 1000Cr to the total IT revenue in Kerala boosting its internal GDP and overall economic growth. Being product companies, the revenues figure would grow as there would be few outperformers from the 1000 companies which will move to VC/PE/ IPO stages

- The State would also aim to increase the momentum created by Technopark and the 122 campus startups currently to become an Innovation and Entrepreneurship hub and dream of a day when the sun sets at dusk in the valley, it would rise to see the **Dawn of a Silicon Coast in Kerala.**

Action Items

- **A committee may be immediately constituted under the Hon: CM to evaluate and finalize the guidelines that may be issued to operationlize the scheme at the earliest so that students in this Academic Year may get the immediate benefits.**

- **The suggested member of committee are**
  - ➢ **Dr. H K Mittal, Head of National Science and Technology Entrepreneur Development Board, Government of India**
  - ➢ **CEO, Technopark**
  - ➢ **Head of Technopark,Technology Business Incubator**
  - ➢ **CEO, Startup Village**
  - ➢ **Successful student entrepreneur reccomended by Technopark**
  - ➢ **Representative of TIE Kerala**
  - ➢ **Head of Center of Engineering Research and Development, College of Engineering, Trivandrum**
  - ➢ **Vice Chancellor's of Universitities in Kerala**
  - ➢ **Secretary, Higher Education**

- **Committee to give reccomendations and detailed implemenation plan to CM by August 10th**

List of NSTEDB, DST approved incubation centers in Kerala

1. Technopark TBI
   Technopark Campus
   Trivandrum
   Technological Thrust Area: IT and Bioinformatics

   Mr. Girish Babu
   CEO; Email: ceo@technopark.org

   Mr. K C Chandrasekharan Nair
   Secretary and Registrar; Email: kccnair@technopark.org

2. India Telecom Innovation Hub – TBI
   KINFRA Hi Tech Park, Kalamasserry
   Ernakulam
   Technological Thrust Area: Telecom & Internet

   Mr. Sanjay Vijayakumar
   Chairman; Email: sanjay@startupvillage.in

   Mr. Sijo Kuruvilla George
   CEO; Email: skg@startupvillage.in

3. National Institute of Technology – TBI
   Calicut
   Technological Thrust Area: Telecom & Internet

   Ms. Preethi M.
   Manager TBI

4. Amrita – TBI
   Amrita Vishwa Vidhyapeetham
   Kollam
   Technological Thrust Area: e-learning, IT and innovative technology

Dr. Krishna Shree
CEO, Email: Krishna@amrita.edu

Mr. Kalaignar T
Operational Manager; Email: kailash@amritapuri.amrita.edu