We are going through one of the most difficult times in the recent history of Kerala. Unimaginably high rainfall we received in the last few days put the entire state in unprecedented havoc by way of deadly floods, landslides, destruction of hundreds of houses and more than 10000 km roads, and collapse of power and communication networks. We lost the lives of more than 370 dearest citizens. As of 20th August, 10,28,073 people have been rescued and evacuated to 3274 relief camps opened all over Kerala. The damage of agriculture and livestock is also very huge. The preliminary estimation of overall damage is more than 20000 crore rupees.

With the relentless support of all state services (that includes revenue, police, fire and rescue and all other departments), central services (that includes NDRF, army, navy, air force etc) and volunteers from all walks of life and various organizations and institutions, we are effectively managing rescue and relief activities. Amazingly brave and selfless rescue operations of fishermen throughout the calamity days deserve special mention here. The volunteers carried out uniquely higher level of participation in rescue operations, collection of relief materials including food and medicine, distribution of relief materials in camps and at places where people remain stranded in flooded areas. All these together helped government to bring the situation under control in a speedy manner. A big salute to all noble hearts involved in the rescue and relief works.

Now it is time for even more creative and hectic efforts for reconstructions and rehabilitations, which also require more than 20000 crore rupees as mentioned initially. We lost invaluable infrastructure that we built with decades of hard work and hard earned resources. Now we have to start the rebuilding from scratch. Apart from this we should also support thousands of people who lost their livelihoods completely.

So far the support we got from central government, other state governments, organizations and individuals are very encouraging and we are thankful for that. State government employees are contributing their two days salary and entire festival allowance for this noble cause. There are also many employees who have contributed substantially higher than that. But, as you know, the gap between the resources available and the resources required for rebuilding Kerala is huge. Therefore, I request all individuals, organizations and governments to contribute generously to the Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund (CMDRF). Donations can be made online by visiting the website https://donation.cmdrf.kerala.gov.in/ It will help us regain what we lost and attain new heights of development.

With warm regards
Dr. T.M Thomas Isaac

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  (Strategic Advisor to the Kerala Department Innovation Strategic Council)
- Recent Software updates and improvements.
- Work in Progress
- Latest Events & Upcoming event
- Vital Statistics of volume of transactions and the bills processed through SPARK
- Work Report from SPARK PMU
- Important Circulars & Govt Orders
- Get Familiarize with a SPARK Module: Article prepared by Baburaj P R

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Donate to Chief Minister’s Distress Relief Fund

All contributions towards CMDRF are exempt from Income Tax under section 80G
The Chief Ministers Distress Relief Fund (CMDRF) is a unique e-governance application developed by Centre for Development of Imaging Technology (C-DIT) as a part of the chief Ministers office (CMO) Suite eventually which is envisaged as an integrated monitoring and decision support tool for innovative policy interventions.

The enterprise architecture for the Chief Minister’s Office suite is provided below which is an analytics driven grievance handling and distress relief system. The data analytics component under development will play a key role in the effectiveness of the system in the future. The system shall provide a knowledge base on public grievances across departments as well as vulnerabilities of the most marginalised. It is proposed to develop a fully normative system of the processing with the identification and fast tracking of special category petitions driven by deep learning and data analysis. The department to department Tapal Engine called Kerala Communication Services (KCS) being developed for the General Administration Department is also part of the Enterprise Architecture of CMO suite.

Enterprise Architecture for CMO Office Suite
The CMDRF is a product which has evolved through extensive business process re-engineering (BPR) efforts driven by the departments of the Revenue, Finance and Information Technologies. An outline of the processes prior to re-engineering and are currently available is provided below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Pre Existed System</th>
<th>Current System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application Submission</td>
<td>Manual application submitted physically to the concerned office</td>
<td>Online application submission through multiple channels. Standardized distress category and subject classification done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disbursement of Relief</td>
<td>Fund transferred to the District Collectors from the Finance Department for all the approved cases, which in turn is transferred to the concerned Taluk Offices. Finally cheque is issued to the beneficiaries physically.</td>
<td>Direct treasury integration with the application, has made available enhanced DBT to the beneficiary accounts for all approved cases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration with other data sets and departments for more effective decision and delivery</td>
<td>Non-existent</td>
<td>Integrated through API with other departments Aadhar Authentication – UIDAI, Ration Card Database - Civil Supplies Department, Treasury payments - Treasury Department, Death Certificate - Civil Registration System, Medical Certificate - Health Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pendency Alerts escalation</td>
<td>Non-existent</td>
<td>Automated pendency alerts to the higher-level officials on pendency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real time reviews</td>
<td>Non-existent</td>
<td>Centralized monitoring of peers through Video Conferencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special cell at CMs office for monitoring</td>
<td>Non-existent</td>
<td>An apex cell closely monitoring and intervening for speedy and just disposal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The outcome of the BPR had been fabulous and the details are as indicated below. As could be seen the efficiency of processing has drastically improved with average processing time declining from 52 days to 27 days. This is however far below the targeted objective of processing the application in less than 100 hours.

**Outcome of BPR in CMDRF**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of days for processing</th>
<th>Before 2018</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;14</td>
<td>18.81</td>
<td>55.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 to 30</td>
<td>11.32</td>
<td>23.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt;30</td>
<td>69.87</td>
<td>21.34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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The quantum of priority cases and percentage of application from the backward districts also increases drastically from 1.57 to 31.09 and from 15.54 % to 17.23% as indicated below.

Outcome of BPR by type of application and backwardness of district

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Before 2018</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>31.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Priority</td>
<td>98.43</td>
<td>68.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backward district</td>
<td>15.54</td>
<td>17.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other district</td>
<td>84.46</td>
<td>82.77</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The coverage of applications increased from 68,346 to 1,47,351 during the period through multiple channels village office, Akshaya, web, mobile and at “Straight forward Counter” in the secretariat. The number of decisions made (approvals, rejections, GOs issued, DBT transfers) increased from 32,097 to 1,30,761 very clearly demonstrating the overall effectiveness. The thematic distribution of the applications for distress relief is provided below. The coverage of application along various channels is as follows. The distribution shows a predominance of Tapal. However online applications from the public, applications through Akshaya centres and online applications from MP/MLA offices have registered a steady increase. The profile of medical cases covering 90.25% accident death cases 2.72 and other cases only 7.03. The social category wise distribution is SC 10.23% ST 1.05% and others 88.72%. The lower percentage of SC and ST is indeed a matter of concern, but is partly caused by competing schemes of the SC & ST Department for medical support and accidents. The profile clearly indicate that CMDRF has the potential to evolve as a smart social security plan for marginalized link to welfare pensions.

Transactions in CMDRF – Channel wise

Theme wise distribution of CMDRF applications 2018

Category wise distribution of CMDRF applications 2018
The Major improvement made in the applications and changes planned during the Next year as provided below

Changes during the current year

- Application form Integrated with APIs of Ration Card Database and Aadhaar Database for easy application submission and verification
- Mobile App for Application Processing by the department officials, enabling 24X7 working in needed cases there by breaking the working hours barrier.
- Introduced Social Risk Factor of beneficiaries to assist in normative decision making.
- Integrated Finance Module for fund request processing, DBT Integration with treasury, reconciliation of payments, payment alerts to beneficiaries
- Generic Dashboards for all users with real time statistics for effective monitoring.
- Reminders on pending applications to the processing officials via SMS.
- Time tag on applications for priority processing and decision making.
- Customer Relations Management (CRM) - for rectification of shortcomings in the application and for getting customer satisfaction level.
- Medical App for Medical Practitioners, for issuing medical certificates electronically making their processing convenient. The International Classification of Diseases(ICD-10) and medical risk grading is incorporated in this mobile app
- API Integration with other applications.
  - For getting the Death certificate from the Birth & Death Registration System.
  - For getting FIR/post-mortem report from the police information system for accident death

Improvements during the next year

- Migration to completely Java based system using AGORA framework
- Integration with the Kerala Communication System(KCS) - the electronic communication channel connecting all department offices across the State, for all government communications.
- Building a robust analytic engine using Hadoop framework.
- Analysis for identifying the continuous treatment required cases to take the beneficiary to a regular support system like pension scheme.
- To achieve a modal time of 100 hours from receipt to disposal of applications
- To conduct customer satisfaction survey

The application recently caught some attention when it became part of the unparalleled public action against the worst flood in 100 years. The rescue relief and rebuilding operations which brought the best out the polity a proactive approach of the bureaucracy and technocracy. The Polices, Fire Force, Armed Forces and the exquisite resilience and unity of the public exemplified by the bravery and gallantry of the fisher folk. During 10 days the technical team at C-DIT built up a portal linking 12 payment gateways and 12 UPI/QR Code/VPA and could manage 30 lakh transactions with a very good response time of 5.2 sec. The application monitored by the cyber dome, hosted on the cloud has a potential for transforming into a product for crowd sourcing for Kerala’s rebuilding efforts.
Recent Software updates and improvements:

Cancel increment option
Increment cancellation option included in increment module (Service Matters→Increment sanction→Cancel Increment sanction) for cancelling the sanctioned increment, but this option will work only if salary not processed/encashed with erroneously sanctioned increment.

Updation for improving Bill generation speed
SPARK PMU has done software updation to increase the speed of Bill generation. Once the bill processing gets over, system put the bills to be generated in a queue and from the queue, bills will be taken one by one and the reports/schedules will be generated and stored in server in pdf form. Once the pdf is generated, the already generated/stored pdf will be shown to the user whenever the user tries to open the report again. But for yesteryears old reports, reports will be generated as in earlier way.

Module for C Off enabled for gazetted officers
Module for gazetted officers C.Off processing option enabled in Secretariat Departments like GAD, Finance, Law, Information and public relation. Through this option gazetted employee’s can do online submission of their compensatory off to their higher authority, Also then can view the status of submitted application through their login, the submitted C. off application will be available in higher authority’s login in for approval.

Redesigned SPARK info site:
SPARK PMU has re-designed the SPARK info website, earlier its beta version was made live for testing and now this beta version removed and launched the new site. SPARK info site is available at url info.spark.gov.in. New info site is designed, ensuring easy access and data retrieval from the site, so contents in the site are structured In a systematic and well organised manner to get a professional touch and feel. The new launched site is very user friendly, information can be accessed in very few clicks. SPARK PMU now announces recent software updates and news through this site; user can access this information from info site’s homepage itself. Also options are facilitated to view and download important SPARK related government orders, circulars, instructions, help materials, and FORMs through this site. Instead, Monthly e newsletter issues are announced through this site, download option and 3 D view of newsletters are activated in newsletter link. Chat facility option is enabled in the home page itself, on clicking the Chat link, user can do chat with SPARK helpdesk team.
HSE and VHSE: Digital signature
As per GO No.121/2018/Fin dated 08/08/2018, SPARK PMU will soon enable the Digital signature for HSE and VHSE, for authorizing Headmasters of aided Primary and High Schools to draw salary bills without counter signature. This will reduce unnecessary waiting and delays for obtaining countersignature from approving authorities.

Cooperative recovery module updation
As per circular number 60/2017/Fin dated 28/07/2017, SPARK PMU is updating the cooperative recovery module which will facilitate to generate a detailed schedule of co-operative recovery with society name, loan account, bank details of institution, installment amount etc. The same is to be accompanied with the salary bills having co-operative recoveries. A download facility will also be enabled in Co-operative societies/ institutions login, for viewing the schedule details of treasury encashed bills. Using this option, the details of recoveries can be downloaded by the institutions.

Employees’ Nominees and family members Aadhaar updation option
Options will be soon added in employee’s personal details module to update the Aadhaar details of employees’ nominee and family members.

Refund option for excess remittance of HBA/Personal Computer Advance/Motor Conveyance Advance
Option for refunding the excess remittance of HBA/Personal Computer Advance/Motor Conveyance Advance will be soon added in the interface of claim entry under the option Accounts→Claim entry.

Empanelment of Department Master Trainers of SPARK
As per G.O. (P) No. 3/2017/Fin dated 05/01/2017 SPARK PMU invites application for empanelment of Department Master Trainers from Government officials who have expertise in dealing with establishment matters as well as SPARK software operations. Application form is available on the website www.info.spark.gov.in. The filled applications have to be sent to the email id: info@spark.gov.in with DMT Application as subject.
SPARK Training held on 23/07/2018 & 24/07/2018

As per the decision taken on the meeting held on 09/07/2018, with the nodal officers of various departments, a training session for the Nodal officers has arranged on 23/07/2018 & 24/07/2018, at the Centre for Training in Financial Management, to make them equip with newly updated modules in SPARK. SPARK training session was handled by Sri. Sunil T.K. Master Trainer, SPARK PMU and followed by that training on BIMS&BAMS was handled by Sri. Shine, Trainer, Treasury Department. A total of 30 employees attended the training session.

SPARK training arranged for University employees:

An introductory training session was arranged for university staffs on 26th July 2018, to make them familiarise with the SPARK software. This half day training was held at the Centre for Training in Financial Management (CTFM) and 10 university staffs participated in the training session. Sri. Sunil T.K., Master Trainer, handled the training session and discussed SPARK software and its modules in detail.
2nd phase of SPARK training series for DDOs

As part of process reengineering and system revamping, SPARK PMU is in the process of arranging trainings to employees all over Kerala to make them equip with SPARK modules. In connection with that a meeting of the training Nodal Officers of various departments with SPARK PMU officials was conducted on 09/07/2018 at CTFM, DPC Building, University Campus, Palayam. All the attendees were of the opinion that training should first be given to all DDOs and their support staff member. As the first step, a SPARK training was given to the nodal officers on 23rd and 24th of July 2018 at CTFM.

As the second phase SPARK PMU will be arranging two day training sessions for all the DDOs in government offices working across the state. SPARK PMU has already sent formal letter for almost all DDO’s to inform the same and suggest dates from the SPARK trainings. The SPARK training series from DDO’s will start from the mid of August 2018.

Vital Statistics of volume of transactions and the bills processed through SPARK

As per SPARK database records, 98633 salary bills, 55337 arrear bills (including DA arrear, Salary arrears and Pay revision arrear), 1023 other allowances bill and 41823 claim bills were processed through SPARK during the last month.
SPARK PMU’s in-house helpdesk software, QUEST monitors the number of issues handled by SPARK PMU’s help
desk unit, this software records the number of queries answered by email, chat and phone by each person at the
helpdesk unit. The number of cases handled by SPARK PMU for the month of July 2018 is shown here.

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**Important Circulars & Govt Orders**

**G.O.(P) No.121/2018/Fin dated 08/08/2018**
Finance Department - Authorizing Principals of Schools under the Directorate of Higher Secondary Education and Directorate of Vocational Higher Secondary Education to draw salary bills without counter signature - Sanctioned - Orders issued.

Government has earlier issued guidelines for authorizing Headmasters of aided Primary and High Schools to draw salary bills without counter signature. As per this GO, the guidelines are extended to the aided schools under the Directorate of Higher Secondary Education (DHSE) and Directorate of Vocational higher Secondary Education (DVHSE) with permission to draw salary bills from SPARK without countersignature.

**Go (P) No 122/2018/Fin dated 08/08/2018**
Government issued order for disbursing the Festival advance amount of Rs. 15,000/- and this amount has to be recovered through five equal instalments starting from the month of 9/2018. This order also mentions the condition for issuing the festival advance of employees belonging to various service categories

IFMS - Online Submission of bills - Mandatory Digital Signature for all the bills by DDOs for e-submitting to Treasuries - Approved Orders issued

As per this order government has decided to implement DSC for all the DDOs in State Insurance, Lotteries, National Savings Department, Soil survey, Registration, Mining and Geology, Factories & Boilers, General Administration Department & Law Department for e-submission of bills. All the bills generated in SPARK and BiMS are to be e-submitted to the treasuries concerned with digital signature by the DDOs with effect from September 2018.

This Go also instructs the Heads of the aforementioned Departments should ensure that all DDOs in their Department are equipped with DSC as ordered and e-submitting the bills duly authenticated using Digital Signature. This GO also mentions the Director of treasuries should instruct all treasury officers not to accept the online bills from SPARK and BiMS without Digital Signature of the DDOs in respect of the above Departments from September 2018 onwards.

**GO(P) No 125/2018/Fin dated 09/08/2018:**
In connection with Onamfestival, Government has decided to make advance payment of August salary for all state government employees (including fulltime, part time contingent employees, establishment staffs, SLR, NMR employees, aided school and college employees, polytechnic employees and teachers. This order also mentions that pension for the month of August may be drawn and disbursed to service pensioners/family pensioners, KFF pensioners on 20.08.2018 and 21.08.2018.Butgovt has issued the G. O. (P) No 131/2018/Fin dated 14/08/2018 to correct the advance pension disbursement dates as 17/08/2018 and 18/08/2018.

**Letter No. 932211/SL3/2018/Fin dated 16/08/2018**
This letter mentions the instructions issued to Director Treasuries to accept Aided institutions Onam allowance, advance, bonus bills under General Education Department without counter signature by the Approving authority

**GO (P) No.134/2018/Fin dated 18/8/2018**
Govt has issued orders for recovering the festival allowance from the employees, who have been sanctioned the festival allowance of Rs 2750/- .The amount thus recovered will be transferred towards CMDRF as financial support to the flood affected victims. If festival allowances already drawn, in such cases the concerned DDO should deduct the festival allowance amount from employee’s September month salary.
Employees in working arrangement:

Service Matters → Employees in working arrangement

Working arrangement is a method of recruiting employees temporarily to other offices, if paucity of staffs is noted in such offices or based on employee request. For working arrangement cases, the parent office of the employee remains the same and the salary should be issued from the parent office itself. Most of the working arrangement cases, employees are eligible to receive HRA and CCA of working arrangement office. In such cases, parent office user has to update the working arrangement details through the ‘working arrangement’ option available in SPARK. Earlier, the DDO from parent office has the privileges to update, edit or remove data working arrangement data any time through the parent office login. SPARK PMU has now updated the module, editing privileges are removed and the module modified as follows;

If an employee is in working arrangement and eligible for HRA and CCA of working arrangement office, then the DDO has to relieve this employee through working arrangement module to the office where the employee got posted for working arrangement. Module for processing working arrangement procedure is as follows

- View Employees in Working Arrangement
- Relieve on Working Arrangement
- Join on Working Arrangement

View Employees in Working Arrangement:

Service Matters → Employees in Working arrangement → View Employees in Working Arrangement

This option enables the head of the institution/Drawing and Disbursing officer to view the employees who are in working arrangement from their office. Through this option user can check the details like the period of Working arrangement, working arrangement Department, office details, also see whether employee is eligible HRA and CC from this working arrangement office.

Relieve on Working Arrangement:

Service Matters → Employees in Working arrangement → Relieve on Working Arrangement

Employees can be relieved to working arrangement offices through the option; Select the employee, Enter Relieving details like Working arrangement Department, Office, Nature of work( On employee request/public interest), Date of relieving, also in user can opt ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ option for eligible for HRA and CCA fields, and confirm the details.

On confirming the page working arrangement details get updated in SPARK DB and user can access employee details from the same office.

Join on Working Arrangement:

Service Matters → Employees in Working arrangement → Join on Working Arrangement

On completing the working arrangement tenure user can terminate the working arrangement through the option; Select the employee, and then system will automatically display the updated relieving details of working arrangement in the respective fields.

The user has to enter joining date to terminate working arrangement so to join the employee back to this office. On confirming the joining details, the system will update the termination date of working arrangement also in SPARK database.
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