

SEMINAR



E-Governance and the Kerala Model

Unpacking the Changing Dynamics of Dependency and Discretion



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Political Sociologist

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Hybrid | Speaker In-Person

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Time: 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm



A-220, R&D Building,
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DR ASHWIN VARGHESE

A political sociologist studying power and algorithmic governance. He is an Assistant Professor at O.P. Jindal Global University and a Research Network Affiliate at the Centre of Governance and Human Rights, University of Cambridge. From 2024–2026 he was a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the University of Cambridge and a College Research Associate at King's College, Cambridge, where he led an independent project on algorithmic governance and the changing dynamics of discretion. His research has been published in *Big Data and Society*, *Sociology Compass*, *Economic and Labour Relations Review*, and the *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, among others.

E-Governance and the Kerala Model: Unpacking the Changing Dynamics of Dependency and Discretion

Abstract–

The adoption of e-governance in states like Kerala, India is crucially coordinated by concerns over dependency. These relations of dependency have important ramifications on discretion. This paper analyses the ongoing development of algorithmic governance in Kerala to critically unpack the changing dynamics of dependency and discretion. The state of Kerala, known for the Kerala model of development—a humanist and democratic model of development, has laid out elaborate plans for algorithmic transformation through its e-governance initiatives crucially laying emphasis on developing technology in-house. Drawing from empirical research in India between 2024–2026 (discourse and content analysis of state policies, interviews with state personnel) this paper contributes to debates on algorithmic governance by locating the changing dynamics of dependency and discretion in the emergent politics in global south. In doing so, this paper argues the state of Kerala in its experiment with e-governance, offers a unique configuration which has the potential to generate an alternative, humane and sustainable model of algorithmic governance, but is ultimately dependent on the evolution of democratic politics in the state.



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