

## Kerala MPs talk more, work less

**T K Devasia /**  
Thiruvananthapuram

**M**Ps from Kerala have been very vocal in Parliament against the neglect of the state by the Union government in the last few years. But this enthusiasm is not evident in utilizing MPLADS funds.

A study found that out of Rs 406 crore released under the scheme from 2001-02 to 2006-07, only Rs 297 crore was utilized. This means Rs 109 crore, which is 36.7 per cent of the released fund, remained unspent in the five-year period.

The study was conducted by the Kollam Residents' Apex Council on the basis of statistics collected from the Lok Sabha. Council general secretary C Amaolbhavan said the utilization of the fund was also poor in the previous years.

Utilization was better in 2007-08, when 40.04 crore of Rs 43 crore was spent. A total of 1676 works were recommended by MPs during the fiscal and out of this 1,140 were sanctioned. A total of 1,305 works were completed during 2007-08, according to the annual report of MPLADS department. Maximum works (39.49 per cent) were for roads and bridges, 19.37 per cent for education and 15.49 per cent for drinking water.

However, observers of the scheme have noted serious lapses in the utilization of the funds. They say that majority of the MPs have been using the funds to favour sections supporting them or their party. For instance, former Kollam MP, P Rajendran, came under the local bodies controlled by the CPI (M).

An arts and sports club at Kadavoor in Kollam managed by party leaders was a beneficiary of a large chunk of the MP fund

Rajendran received between 2004 and 2008. The club had openly canvassed votes for Rajendran in the April 2009 Lok Sabha election.

At the same time, Rs 25 lakh Rajendran sanctioned for constructing a pavilion at the Lal Bahadur Sastri Stadium at Kollam five years ago still remains on paper. The amount, according to Amalolbhavan, was apparently diverted to some other projects.

In rare cases, MP funds have become a catalyst for major develop-



**E Ahamed: exemplary disbursement**

ment. For example, Rs 70 lakh which minister of state for railways E Ahamed sanctioned for the development of the Malappuram district hospital during his term as Manjeri MP from 1999 to 2004 led to a massive Rs 8 crore project. The project was conceived by the district panchayat with the help of taluk and gram panchayats and NGOs.

M Ummer, who spearheaded the project as the Malappuram district panchayat president, said that an eight-storey block with 1,000 beds and 17 operation theatres, an administrative-cum-commercial block and an effluent treatment plant have been constructed under the project. ■