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INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON KERALA STUDIES

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INTERNATIONAL
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ON
KERALA STUDIES

ABSTRACTS

VOL.1

A.K.G. CENTRE FOR
RESEARCH AND STUDIES
Thiruvananthapuram

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON KERALA STUDIES

27-29 AUGUST 1994

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Volume 1

ADDRESSES & ABSTRACTS

**AKG Centre for Research and Studies
Thiruvananthapuram - 695 034, Kerala, India**

English

International Congress on Kerala Studies, Volume 1, Addresses & Abstracts

*Texts of the addresses and abstracts of the papers presented at the
International Congress on Kerala Studies
on 27-29 August 1994 at Thiruvananthapuram,
organised by AKG Centre for Research and Studies,
Thiruvananthapuram - 695 034, Kerala, India*

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PREFACE

The International Congress on Kerala Studies, the first of its kind, is a multi disciplinary conference that brings together scholars and socio-political activists from India and abroad. Around 600 papers have been received, and they will be presented in 66 sessions and 6 symposia over three days. The response to our invitation has been extraordinary: about 1500 persons - scholars, socio-political activists and persons from many different walks of life - are registered as delegates to the Congress.

The papers to be presented at this Congress have been compiled in five Volumes. Volume 1 contains the texts of addresses of speakers at the inaugural session, on August 27, statements and presentations of the chairpersons of the symposia that will be held later the same day, and the texts of some other presentations at the symposia and abstracts of 3 technical sessions. Volumes 2 to 5 contain abstracts of the papers to be presented in other sessions. The abstracts which could not be included in the five volumes are brought out as a separate Supplement. All the papers could not be printed according to the order of the sessions as many of the papers reached us very late. Please use the Index supplied, to trace the location of a paper in the five volumes and the supplement.

A note on the abstracts. Many participants sent us papers without abstracts, many others sent us abstracts that were too long to print without being shortened. Abstracts were written or edited by volunteer-scholars who did their best to represent the authors' views accurately.

The AKG Centre for Research and Studies will continue its efforts to organise dialogues between scholars and activists on the issues that will be discussed at this Congress. We plan to publish edited volumes in Malayalam and English of selected papers from the Conference at a later date. We have already begun to plan a series of post-conference seminars and workshops on selected aspects of the Congress proceedings. These seminars and workshops will be organised by the Centre in collaboration with other institutions, scholars, teachers, students and mass organisations.

Although we had asked participants to send us their abstracts by April 15, abstracts continued to arrive until middle of August. The pressure of work on our volunteers in the few weeks before the volumes went to press was enormous, and I want to thank Jayaraj G., John Mathai, Kochunarayanan T.K, Michael Tharakan, Mridul Eapen, Narayana Menon K.M, Narayanan C.P, Nataraj Duvvury, Pyarelal Raghavan, Saji, Sree Kumar V., Thomas Isaac T.M and Vijayan.N for their time, effort and commitment. I also thank M/s RE-INFOM, Thiruvananthapuram and M/s RE-INGRAPH, Impress and Printaids, Thiruvananthapuram for text processing and M/s S.T.Reddiar & Sons, Ernakulam for printing.

E M S Namboothiripad
President,
International Congress on Kerala Studies

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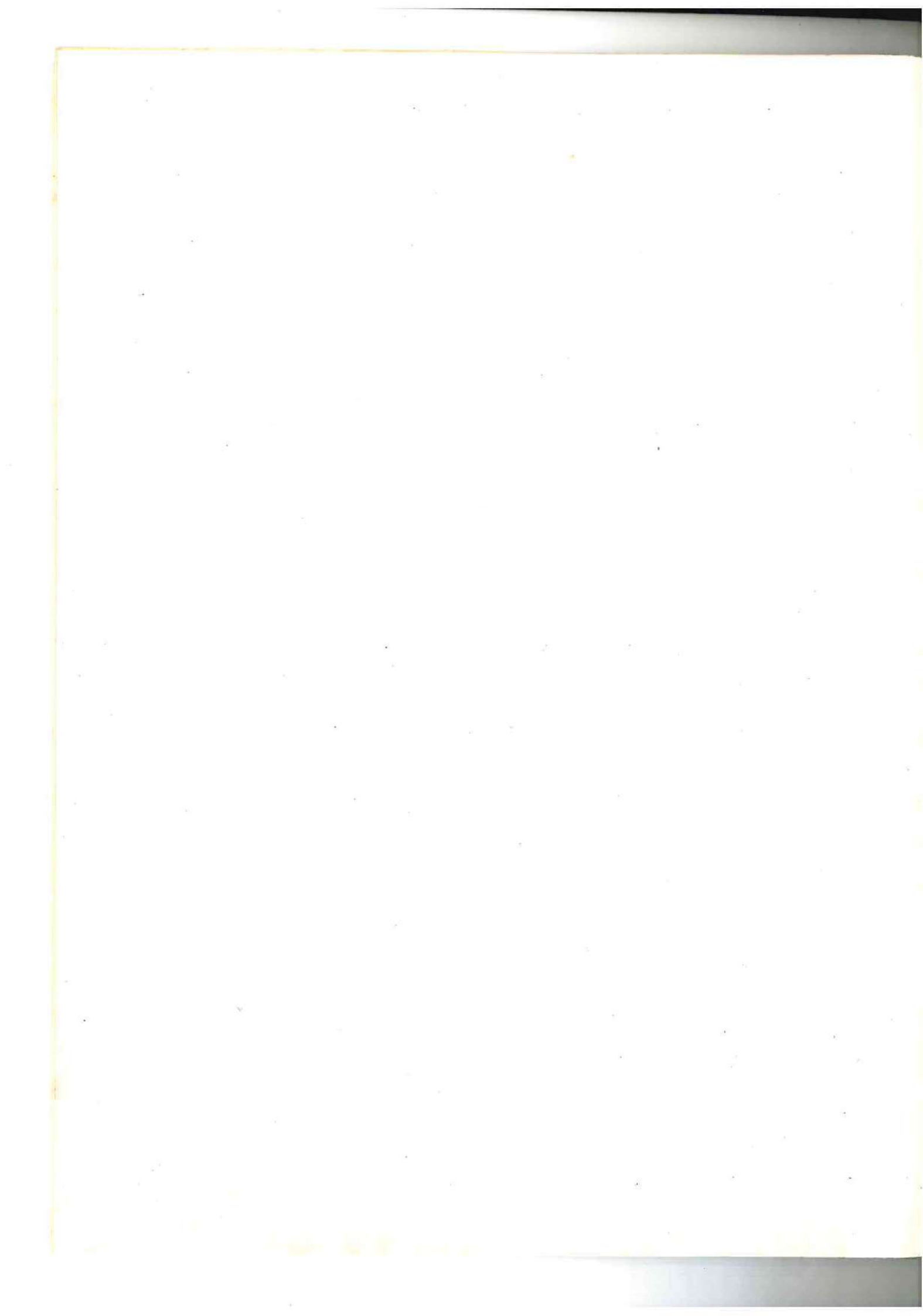
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INAUGURAL SESSION

Presidential Address by E.M.S.Namboodiripad

Respected Vice President, distinguished guests from abroad, scholars and socio-political activists from all over Kerala and India:

I thank you all for having accepted our invitation to participate in this Congress of scholars in various disciplines and of socio-political activists.

This is a unique event. Gathered here are over a thousand distinguished persons who, in 73 sessions and over three days, will discuss various aspects of the sociology, economy, politics, culture and natural resources of Kerala. Laypersons will profit from the presentations of scholars, while scholars will benefit from the practical experience of socio-political activists. Such an exchange will be of great help to us in Kerala, since it will provide a new perspective on our socio-cultural, economic and political life.

This is not a seminar that is expected to come to precise conclusions on how the various problems of Kerala are to be solved. That is a task that political parties and social organisations in Kerala shall have to undertake on the basis of their experience, including the experience they gain at this Congress. As for the A.K.G. Centre for Research and Studies, I want to assure you that we will do our best to continue the dialogue between scholars and activists that will take place at this Congress.

The A.K.G. Centre for Research and Studies was founded in honour of the great revolutionary A.K. Gopalan. For many years, A.K. Gopalan was the President of the All-India Kisan Sabha, travelling all over the country, organising rural and urban toilers to fight oppression and exploitation. From the first general election in 1952, and for more than two decades, A.K. Gopalan was the leader of the Communist group in the Lok Sabha (for almost the entire period, the Communists formed the largest opposition group in the Lok Sabha).

Though no academic scholar himself, at the end of his life he expressed a wish to start a school for activists from all walks of life. When he died, we thought it appropriate that an "unofficial University" be established to perpetuate his memory, an institution at which academic scholars and socio-political activists could exchange information and experience. I had the privilege of working with A.K. Gopalan for almost the entire period of his political activity, and was chosen to head this organisation, and it is as the Director of the Centre that I shall raise a few practical problems faced by us in Kerala.

Although called an "unofficial University", the founders of this Centre, including myself, have no claim to academic scholarship. It is, however, our good fortune that, in the course of our work, many distinguished scholars in various disciplines have associated themselves with the work of this Centre. We are socio-political activists and our friends from academics have found it profitable to interact with us.

This Congress is, of course, a far bigger event than ever before. Let me thank you once again for having come and having agreed to give us the benefit of your experience, knowledge and wisdom.

The Centre is named after the most eminent Communist of Kerala, and bears the impress of the Communist movement in the state. The birth and growth of the Communist movement in India and in Kerala and the problems of the movement are the concerns of the Centre. I consider it appropriate to use this occasion to mention some of the contributions that we as a Party have made to academic thinking and scholarship. "Philosophers have in various ways interpreted the world, the point is to change it" - so reads Karl Marx's thesis on Feurbach. We Communists of Kerala and of India have not confined ourselves to political activism, and are proud of having made contributions to academic thinking as well.

The Socialist-Communist movement

began in Kerala in the mid-1930s, more than a decade after it began in India. In those early years of the movement some major socio-economic, political and cultural problems confronted us, and our work in respect of these problems was the basis of our initial contribution to the development of scholarly and academic thought.

The first of these problems was the existence of feudalism that had a peculiarly Kerala character. I have called Kerala feudalism the combined domination of the feudal landlords (in the economic sphere), the Brahman-dominated upper castes (in social life) and the rule of the princes and chieftains of the different component parts of Kerala. The combination of these three forms of domination and the strength of the people against them were the essential elements of socio-economic life in Kerala.

Our struggle against the British rulers for national freedom was, consequently, integrated with the movement against landlordism, upper-caste domination and princely rule. In 1934, when we formed the Congress Socialist Party in Kerala, we considered this task of integrating the movement for national freedom with the struggle against landlordism, upper-caste domination and princely rule to be the basic task of our movement. We achieved this integration through many-sided political activity.

First, we believed that, after freedom from British rule was attained, the territory of the princely states of Travancore and Cochin, and the Malabar district of Madras Presidency in British India had to be brought together into a united Kerala. While a united Kerala was our ultimate objective, we thought it immediately necessary to work for democracy in the princely states. The struggle for responsible government in Travancore established unity among radical democrats and Communists all over the state, and this unity helped our struggle succeed.

Secondly, we concerned ourselves with the problem of the economic domination of the feudal landlords (*janmi*). The *janmi* system dominated agrarian relations in Malabar, and existed in many parts of Cochin and in some parts of Travancore as well. Militant trade union movements in Travancore, Cochin and Malabar, and the militant peasant movement in Malabar were very important features of the radical democratic and freedom movements in Kerala in the 1930s. As a result of the activities of these mass organisations,

and of the local units of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee in Malabar, the Cochin Congress and Prajamandalam in Cochin, and the State Congress of Travancore, socialism and communism became forces to reckon within Kerala.

We built the Kisan Sabha and raised the issue of ending feudal landlordism free of cost to the rural toilers. This demand was articulated in the dissenting note of three left-wing Congress Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) who were members of the Malabar Tenancy Inquiry Committee which submitted its report early in 1940. To strike a personal note, I was one of the three MLAs, and my note of dissent presented the theoretical argument for ending feudal landlordism and distributing land to the rural toilers free of cost. Although it was written as a matter of practical revolutionary work, that dissenting note of mine had some academic value.

The demand and the document became the basis on which the Kisan Sabha developed in the 1940s. Our agrarian demands culminated in the enactment of an agrarian legislation by the first Communist government of united Kerala (1957-59). The legislation came into force in 1969. The struggle waged from the 1930s onwards and the legislative activities of the first Communist and the United Front governments together thus brought about a revolutionary change in agrarian relations, perhaps the best possible within the framework of the bourgeois Constitution of India.

Next, the movement was confronted by the problems of the oppressed castes in Hindu society, and of the underprivileged religious minorities, Muslims and Christians. We based our activity on the theory of class struggle, rather than the ideologies of castes and religious communities. We try to bring together toiling people of all castes and religious communities in the class organisations of industrial and agricultural workers, toiling peasants and all other sections of the working people. In this process, we were up against the Indian National Congress and other bourgeois parties of liberal democracy, and against caste and communal organisations that had no use for class struggle. While the leaders of caste and religious communities spent their energies in building caste and communal organisations, we built class organisations of the working people in which toilers of all castes and religious communities came together. The Alleppey general strike in Travancore and the

north Malabar struggles of peasants in the 1930s were our answer to the leaders of caste and communal organisations.

Another question that we dealt with when we formed the Socialist-Communist movement in the 1930s was that of the role of art and literature in revolutionary social change. We were deeply influenced by the call of Maxim Gorky and other giants of international proletarian literature and of Indian writers such as Munshi Premchand to base literature on the lives and struggles of working people. We founded the first organisation of progressive writers in Malayalam in 1937. When it began, the organisation was mostly confined to revolutionary political activists who dabbled in literary activities as well; it was broadened in the 1940s to include established writers and critics who were committed to revolutionary practice. There were subsequent conflicts between the two groups of progressive writers and bitter polemics between the Communists and the rest in the progressive writers' movement. This clash of ideas led to a clarification of issues on the form and content of writing.

This discussion on literature and progressive literature also helped the growth of new trends in other areas of artistic and cultural activity, for instance, drama, cinema and the visual and performing arts. That was how the present organisation of progressive writers and artists came into being. It is an organisation that draws on the best in the arts and cultural activities for the people's struggle for democracy and secularism. Some of Kerala's most celebrated writers, poets, musicians, cinema artists and specialists in the visual and performing arts are active today in the movement and are participants in this Congress. I am sure that their presence here will help the Congress to come to a more clear understanding of the problems of art and literature in Kerala, and that they will benefit from the exchanges here.

One of the important contributions of the Communists during this period was the elaboration of the doctrine of the multi-national character of united India. We advanced the theory that every people who have their own language and distinct culture (such as the Malayalam-speaking people of Kerala) are distinct nationalities. These nationalities were united in the struggle against British imperialism, a unity that was to be carried forward in the post-Independence period in a united federal India. The objectives set by the Party were those of

unity in diversity, and a united India with as much autonomy as possible for the new linguistic states. Though the detailed formulation of the concept was not faultless, the main idea was fully correct. This was a distinct contribution made by the central leadership of the Communist Party of India to Indian politics.

This doctrine of the multi-national character of united India was taken over and elaborated by the Kerala Communists. In a pamphlet I wrote in 1945, I put forward the idea that Malayalees in Malabar, Cochin and Travancore be united in a single, unified state of Kerala. The southern Tamil-majority parts of Travancore and the Kannada-majority parts of north Malabar would, of course, go to the linguistic states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. This was the central idea of the pamphlet titled "A Crore and a Quarter Malayalees". That attempt to apply the idea put forward by the Central Committee of the Party to the conditions of Kerala was accompanied by two similar attempts by P. Sundarayya in Andhra and Bhowani Sen in Bengal.

Such was the conceptual framework of nationalities and a united India that led the revolutionary movement to the Punnappra-Vayalar upsurge in Travancore, the Telangana struggle in Andhra and the Tebhaga movement in Bengal. These revolutionary movements and the idea that Kerala, Andhra and Bengal were the homes of distinct nationalities, marked the Communist Party off from the Congress and other bourgeois parties. This perspective of a free India with national unity at the centre and with the widest possible autonomy for linguistic states was a new and revolutionary perspective. Our concept of different nationalities in a united India was opposed to the Congress idea of a centralised and unified India with no state autonomy and to the Muslim League's doctrine that Hindus and Muslims were different nationalities.

The emergence of this concept of nationalities influenced the Party's effort to study society and history in Kerala. I personally made a humble contribution to this effort by writing the first history of Kerala that was based on the Marxist theory of class struggle. The attempt did, of course, have its weaknesses, since the history of society in ancient Kerala was steeped in mystery. I however succeeded in bringing out the fact that, since at least the mediaeval period, what I called "caste-janmi-prince-chieftaindomination" (the peculiarly Kerala form of Indian feudalism) was well established in

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Kerala. Although I had subsequently to revise and correct the concept with respect to the history of ancient Kerala, what I wrote regarding the mediaeval and modern periods has stood the test of time.

Many persons are present at this Congress who have done original research on Kerala and have uncovered many facts about the history of ancient Kerala. I am sure that the studies and research of my friends will deepen our understanding of Kerala history and correct the deficiencies of my assessment of Kerala history.

Our studies of Kerala history and the revolutionary struggle in which we were involved in the 1940s and early 1950s made us foremost among political organisations in our understanding of the socio-economic, political and cultural problems of Kerala, and ahead of others in our attempt to solve these problems. Our study and our practice enabled us to emerge as the major political party in the state in the post-Independence period (the Party also emerged as the major political party in West Bengal and Tripura). In 1957 the Party emerged victorious in the first parliamentary and legislative assembly elections held in the new state. Ever since, the left has remained the leading force in the politics of Kerala.

Looking back, I feel one of our key failures has been in understanding issues connected with religious minorities in Kerala. Unlike West Bengal and Tripura, the population of Kerala has large Christian and Muslim minorities, which form over 40 per cent of the state's population. Muslims and Christians are under the predominant influence of religion-based leaders, that is, of the Muslim League and the Church. The Muslim League and the Church, for various reasons, took strong anti-communist positions, which hindered the development of Kerala in no small measure.

Now the situation is changed. Sections of the clergy and laity are joining hands with Communists in the struggle for national unity, democracy and improvement in the living and working conditions of the common people. Changes are also taking place in the Muslim community, changes that have opened doors of cooperation between devout Muslims and Communists. In the Hindu community, too, the message of revolutionary humanism preached by Swami Vivekananda in India and by Sree Narayana Guru in Kerala are bound to make more and more sadhus and sants cooperate with Communists. Lenin visualised "cooperation

between the believers and Communists in building a heaven on earth rather than speculating on having heaven in the other world"; such cooperation has become possible.

Our theory and our practice have left deep imprints on Kerala society. Land reforms, the growth of various mass organisations of people, the spread of education, improvements in the health status of the people, and so on, have transformed Kerala significantly, and have attracted much scholarly attention. I refer to the much-discussed "Kerala Model of Development". That model has its positive features: the emphasis laid on education, public health, communications, etc., has certainly helped the formation of an independent working class in the state; it has also helped the emergence of the organised movement of various sections of the working people. These are certainly assets of which I am proud. It should, however, be mentioned that the negative features of contemporary economy and society in Kerala are too serious for us to neglect.

The fact of the matter is that, although important advances have been made in respect of what are now called "human development indicators", Kerala faces today an intense economic crisis in the spheres of employment and of material production, agricultural and industrial. In fact, I am inclined to believe that while we have spent much time and attention on "social-sector" issues of welfare and the improvement of the living standards of the people, we have not paid enough attention or shown adequate concern for pressing problems of economic growth and material production. I make a request: let not the praise that scholars shower on Kerala for its achievements divert attention from the intense economic crisis that we face. We are behind other states of India in respect of economic growth, and a solution to this crisis brooks no delay. We can ignore our backwardness in respect of employment and production only at our own peril.

There are numerous papers that will be presented at this Congress that analyse the various manifestations of the economic backwardness of Kerala, its retarded industrialisation, infrastructural bottlenecks, agricultural stagnation, and mounting unemployment. I am also certain that you will discuss the economic, technological and sociological factors that have contributed to the economic crisis. The restructuring of global and national economic and political institutions and the new policy

regime are undoubtedly going to intensify our problems. The situation calls for political solutions. As a political activist, to resist and defeat these anti-people changes and policies is my first priority. It is going to be a long drawn-out struggle.

I do not subscribe to the view that nothing can be done in our state until these national policies are reversed. I am proud to refer, in this context, to the efforts and achievements of the people and government of West Bengal, which I shall illustrate with the example of agricultural growth in that state. From 1965 to 1980, West Bengal was far behind the rest of India in respect of agricultural growth. Thanks to the Left Front's achievements in land reform and in democratic decentralisation, and despite the constraints that are imposed on state governments in our system, rural West Bengal is transformed. Rates of agricultural growth in West Bengal after 1983 were the highest among the 17 most populous states of India, and these rates have increased in all districts and for almost all major crops.

Within the limitations imposed by global and national structures, we too will have to find practical solutions to the various problems that our state faces. We cannot let the present situation drift. We have got to reach a consensus as to what measures are to be adopted to accelerate economic growth without sacrificing the welfare gains and the democratic achievements of the past. I feel that we need to take fresh stock of our present situation and draw up a new agenda. This is not the task of any one political party or of political parties alone. It is a national task, in which the academic community and scientific professionals have an important role to play.

When we set out to draw up an agenda for a democratic Kerala half a century ago there was hardly any academic community and few modern professional experts. We activists took up the challenge, and I have spoken of some of the contributions we made in the process. The problems of today are different and, perhaps, more complex. We need urgently a dialogue between academics and professionals in various disciplines and political activists, and between various political parties - both of the left and the right - on how the development process in our state can be sustained through strengthening the material

production base. Political differences will remain, but a consensus on a broad platform of measures to overcome the crisis can be achieved.

Our great assets are our mass organisations and the democratic consciousness of our people. The combined strength of all mass organisations in the state is about ten million. Besides, there is a vast network of cooperative organisations and movements, such as the organisations of the library and literacy movements. I am aware that there are some people who consider all these to be the bane of Kerala society. I have devoted my life to mobilising the people for the radical transformation of our society, and I cannot but disagree with such perceptions. I feel that one big question that we face is whether the organised strength and political consciousness of our people can be used to increase production and productivity. I want to answer in the affirmative. But there is a precondition: the government and the ruling classes must change their attitude to the organisations of the people and their demands. Instead of suppressing people's struggles and adopting negative attitudes, amicable solutions should be found through collective bargaining and discussions. Further, institutions and social mechanisms have to be developed to ensure that the toilers get their due share from increased production.

I must emphasise the importance of democratic decentralisation in this context. In this respect, I must confess that our progress has been very slow. The 72nd and 73rd constitutional amendments have been utilised for bureaucratic centralisation rather than for democratic decentralisation. We must also establish new social and economic institutions for land and water management, to improve the quality of our social infrastructure and for cultural development. Modern science and technology have to be integrated in the development process in a sustainable way.

All these and other tasks require deep and frank dialogue between everyone who is interested in the progress of the state. This is the context of the first International Congress on Kerala Studies. We of the A.K.G. Centre for Research and Studies are proud to host the Congress and look forward eagerly to hearing your opinions. I hope that the discussions here will help us all in the task of planning for a new Kerala in a new India.

Speech by I.S . Gulati

Respected Shri K.R. Narayanan, our Vice President, Shri E.M.S Namboodiripad, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

It is my great privilege to join Shri E.M.S Namboodiripad in welcoming our Vice President and thanking him for taking the time to come and inaugurate this Congress.

The idea of organising this congress was Shri Namboodiripad's. He wanted to bring together social and political activists with academicians from various disciplines; to make the activists aware of studies on Kerala in various fields of knowledge and to give an opportunity to the academics to become aware of the current concerns of activists. Our hope is that, on the basis of the interactions during the course of the Congress, a foundation shall be laid for a long-term dialogue between academics and social activists and that Congresses, similar to the present one will be convened periodically to take stock, renew contacts and plan for the future.

In his presidential address Shri Namboodiripad has explained at great length what the mutual gains can be from interactions of the type this Congress seeks to encourage. As an academic with a long innings, I thought I could take this opportunity to say a few words on how useful a multi-disciplinary gathering such as this Congress can be to the advancement of knowledge and research.

It is only through interaction between academics and social activists that we can have an idea of the social questions that require to be studied. The only way we academics can escape the charge of irrelevance and sterile thinking is for us to keep abreast of the social concerns as they evolve in our midst.

It is appropriate that we draw here a distinction between academic freedom and academic relevance. The latter imposes no constraints on the former; it only seeks to make the fruits of the exercise of academic freedom useful to society. This is, I submit, broadly true

of all branches of knowledge.

We in this Congress can take pride in its multi-disciplinary character; the interactions between scholars from various disciplines will itself be very useful. Inter-disciplinary interaction will help us take stock of the work being done on Kerala in each discipline and across disciplines. Such interaction will also, doubtless, raise new questions and open opportunities for multi-disciplinary work. We hope thus to raise the quality and the relevance of our own research and the research of the students we teach and train.

As we all know, Kerala has attracted substantial attention from scholars all over the world. While social advances made in Kerala have been held up as a model for other low-income states and countries, the problems that Kerala currently faces on account of the virtual stagnation in economic growth and very high levels of unemployment and underemployment are reminders that not all is well in our midst and that we cannot rest on our oars. Some persons trace our current problems to the very model of development that we adopted in Kerala. Others are fearful that, whatever the side-effects of the model, the pursuit of the social goals of this model may become more and more difficult to sustain because of the constraints imposed by a stagnant economy. It is crucial for our state's future that we are clear on how to chart the course of future policy, and our studies must concentrate on the issues thus raised.

I am extremely hopeful that through the deliberations in this Congress of ours our studies on Kerala shall benefit immensely, especially in terms of their social relevance. With your good wishes, Mr. Vice President, we are confident of making the most of this unique opportunity. Also, enriched by the experiences in this Congress, it should be possible for us to do better when we meet next.

Thank you.

Speech by P.R.Pisharoty

Respected and Distinguished President, learned Delegates, Honourable Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, my salutations to you all. *Namovah.*

Continuous improvement in the well-being of one and all is, or should be, the objective of governmental and non-governmental organisations in any civilised society. Such a welfare consists of two parts, physical and psychological. Physical and Biological sciences contribute to the physical well being, while art, literature and philosophy contribute to the psychological welfare.

The resources that Nature has provided for human welfare can be broadly classified into: Atmospheric, Oceanic, Biospheric and Lithospheric. Of these, the Atmospheric, Oceanic and Biospheric resources are mostly renewable. However, our use of these resources in a "sustainable" manner, requires much skill, ingenuity and expenditure even more than in the developed countries. Let us first consider the Atmospheric Resources of Kerala. They play significant roles in the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat and the clothes we wear. The various atmospheric processes are briefly denoted by the words weather and climate.

The temperatures in Kerala are not extreme - they range between a mean minima of 22°C in January to a mean maxima of 35°C in March. During the monsoon months the air temperature over the whole state has a fairly uniform value of about 26°C.

Mean wind speeds are nearly 10 kilometres per hour, although the speeds can be 15 to 20 kilometres per hour. These low wind speeds require special wind mills - not of the type available in the western countries or duplicated in India. Then only can we operate wind mills extensively in Kerala. This is an area where Kerala Scientists have to do much Research work.

The total number of hours of Sunshine, averaged over the state of Kerala is nearly 2500 hours mostly received during the non-rainy months. The maximum possible even in a cloud less desert area, is only about 4000 hours. This means that outside the monsoon months the state can derive a large

amount of renewable energy from Solar Radiation. Intense research is called for in this area also - on lines different from what Japan and USA have adopted. Recently I came across a write-up in which ground nut oil flowing within a copper tube system exposed to Sunshine could provide an effective heat source, inexpensive compared to the Solar Panels commonly employed.

The principal rainy season for Kerala is the South West monsoon period June to September, when 60% to 70% of the total annual rainfall occurs. The main atmospheric feature of the monsoon is the replacement of the relatively dry, warm air prevailing over the State during March, April and most of May, by a fast moving stream of cool, moist oceanic air extending to four or five kilometres above sea level. Often this replacement takes place in a few hours. It is called the onset of the monsoon. Often it is a violent atmospheric phenomenon. It is accompanied with strong winds 60 to 100 kilometres per hour, very heavy rains, 10cm to 15cm, severe lightning and loud peals of thunder. Some of the lightning strikes the ground. These features of the onset of the monsoon extend to a few kilometres out into the sea also.

The date of onset of the monsoon over Kerala is first June averaged over the past eighty years. In any particular year it varies from this date. In the past it has varied between May 11 and June 19, with a standard Deviation of a week - seven days, on either side of First June.

Kerala, its plains and the Ghat section lie north-south across the strong westerly stream of deep moist air. Such a physio-graphic orientation of the land of Kerala, is responsible for the abundant monsoon rainfall it receives. The mean total monsoon rainfall, June to September, over Kerala as a whole is nearly 200cm and the corresponding mean annual rainfall is nearly 300cm. The standard deviations of the seasonal rainfall and the annual rainfall are both nearly 20% of the respective means.

The rainfall distribution is skewed towards the larger values. Consequently the median is less than the mean, and

there are a larger number of years in which the annual and seasonal rainfalls are less than their respective means, than equal to them or above them.

The variability of Kerala's rainfall is such that, out of every hundred years, it would be within $\pm 10\%$ of the normal in 40 years; deficient by 50% very rarely, perhaps once. Similarly the rainfall will in excess by 20% or more in 15 years out of a hundred.

In a tropical country like India, a rainy day is one in which the rainfall recorded is 2.5mm or more. On this reckoning the number of rainy days in Kerala varies from about 100 in Trivandrum to about 145 in Kottayam District. On a rainy day it does not rain all the 24hrs. On the average it rains for only 2 hours out of the 24. The average intensity of rainfall is 1 cm per hour, seven to ten times more the average intensity in middle latitude countries where it is only 1 to 2 millimetres per hour. Half of Kerala's total rainfall

during the monsoon season occurs in 30 to 40 hours dispersed throughout the season. The average intensity on these occasions is about 5cm per hour. Within these spells there are brief spells, each lasting 10 or 15 minutes when the intensity can be as high as 10cm per hour or 1 centimetre every six minutes. The following table is very informative.

It will be seen that on several occasions the median size raindrop in Kerala will hit the ground with kinetic energies 600 to 1700 times the kinetic energies of the raindrops in the middle latitude countries. Much surface runoff and severe soil erosion will result. Our main roads are mostly Macadem roads originally designed for England by Mr. Macadem. Therefore it is understandable why our roads are in very bad shapes after a few days of heavy monsoon rains. We should build over roads using a different methodology.

Water is a valuable renewable resource. Excess of it in week-long spells of rain creates floods, causing

Table I

Terminal velocities and kinetic energies of raindrops of different diameters D_m associated with different intensities of rainfall p in India.

Category	Rain fall intensity mm/hour	Median size of rain drops mm	Terminal fall velocity of drops cms/sec	Relative Kinetic Energy	Remarks
1	1-2	0.6	246	1	No runoff; No erosion
2	8.5-11.5	1.2	464	30	Some runoff; A little erosion
3	22.5-27.5	2.0	649	292	Good runoff; Significant erosion
4	45-55	2.5	742	673	Much runoff; Great erosion
5	90-110	3.0 or bigger	806	1730	Sheet flow; Severe erosion

Rainfall of the middle-latitudes belong to category 1.

Half of Indian rainfall belongs to category 1 or 2.

The remaining half of the Indian rainfall during summer belongs to categories 3 and 4.

The heavy rainfalls associated with tropical cyclones, depression belong to category 5.

much human misery and loss of property. A lack of it, on the other hand, causes prolonged misery, loss of employment, decreased production of food grains and other agricultural wealth, decrease in power generation, power cuts, decreased industrial activity, etc. Lack of drinking water particularly in villages is an extremely serious problem consequent to deficits in rainfall.

The CWRDM at Kozhikode has done much laudable work on our Water Resources - Development and Management. Since 1900, the population of Kerala has increased five fold. The rainfall of course has remained the same. Due to the heaviness of rainfall, the general steepness of the terrain, the near absence of flat lands, more than 50% of the rain water runs off the land and rapidly reaches the sea and is lost for human use. The quickness of the run off does not provide enough time for the rainwater to penetrate into the soil and recharge ground water aquifers. We should also remember that Kerala has nearly four warm non-rainy months.

All these factors demand clever management of our Water Resources. Rain harvesting through contour bunding, narrow shallow dug channels on open grounds, collection in water ponds of various sizes, underground and over ground check dams are all required. Water recycling, sprinkler irrigation are water conservation methods to be adopted by industry and agriculture. Big dams for Hydro-electric power generation have done what could be done. For future we have to use/develop micro-hydel power stations.

As mentioned earlier, the CWRDM at Kozhikode has the know-how for the proper management of our water Resources - our renewable rainfall. People's participation and Sram-dan at the grass-root level are required to make full use of the available know-how.

Medicinal plants and herbs and the traditional knowledge about their uses, available among the rural and tribal people of Kerala is a great resource. While the mortality in present Kerala is low, the morbidity particularly among the poor is high. This is mainly due to poverty and ignorance regarding medicinal plants.

The Tropical Botanical Garden and Research Institute has done and is doing very good work on these aspects, which can effectively reduce rural morbidity. They can also improve the health of our people without the use of expensive drugs. There are some medicinal plants which can improve mental qualities like

memory and quick grasp - Dharana and Dharana and Dhi. Let me repeat an old sloka in this context.

*Amantramaksharam nasthi
nasthi moolamanaushadham
Ayoghya purusho nasthi
yojaka: Thathra dhurlabhah*

It is suggested that Kerala establish a centre exclusively for the propagation of medicinal plants and an awareness of their value among the public. We should establish a good herbarium in every village and spread awareness among the people through our non-governmental organisations like Sastra Sahitya Prishad. It is not classical Ayurveda, It is ultra modern Phyto-medicine. The processing of the phytomedicines can be done at home. It can keep out the great drug manufactures of the world from the villages.

I am familiar with most of the R and D Centres established in Kerala. If I remember correct the Science, Technology and Environment department was first established by late Shri Atchuta Menon. Successive Chief Ministers have encouraged and liberally supported these R&D centres. These centres have developed much know-how in various fields of Science and Technology. These can contribute substantially to the physical well-being of our people. We have to put all this available know how to practical use at the grass-root level. This has to be done through peoples movements, and would involve some sram-dan - voluntary work as by the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad - may be by a branch called Kerala Sastra Pravartaka Parishad.

Even from ancient day the mental well-being of the people of Kerala have been looked after very well. This has been done through dance, music, sculpture, poetry, prose and philosophical literature, as well as numerous colourful and vibrant festivals. These have enabled even the poor people to have some enjoyment and mental poise. Kerala is the home of original dances like Kathakali and Mohini Attom. Almost all Sanskrit works of beauty have been Transcreated in Malayalam. Apart from Adi Sankara's work on Vedanta Kerala has simple verses conveying much philosophy and wisdom. Here is an example.

*Ennaleyolamenthannarinjila
Ini naleyumenthennarinjila
Madhyeyinghane kanunna nerathu
Kalahikkunnathenthinu nam vridha*

Let me conclude with another half-verse.

*Kshamam koodathe vendum vidhamiha
mazhayum peyyanam, lokharellam*

*mamodham poondasooya kalaharuchikal
vittothu vanida venam.*

Thank you for your patience.

Speech by O.N.V. Kurup

Distinguished delegates and friends,

I welcome you all to this International Congress on Kerala Studies, an important event of our time. Kerala is a small state, with about 4 percent of India's population - apparently a very small minority! What then is the relevance of an International Congress that discusses the affairs of such a small state? When the decision to convene such a Congress was announced there was tremendous response from eminent scholars all over the country and even from abroad. Why was there such a response? It is not the size of the state nor even the population that matters. I think this Congress itself will answer both the questions. Representatives of various disciplines in human studies are here. A Congress of thoughts and ideas on this scale is indeed an academic adventure, and one that can lead to a great leap to the future.

Anything pertaining to Kerala is relevant to this Congress. Kerala, a narrow strip of land in the south west corner of India, authentically mirrors the plurality of Indian culture. Though apparently fragmented by the Western ghats on one side and the Arabian Sea on the other, Kerala, historically and culturally, both remains an integral part of the old *Dakshinanta* or south of India, and maintains its own identity. For example, Malayalam belongs to the Dravidian family of languages. But having imbibed a lot of words from Sanskrit, some scholars of the past mistook it as an offshoot of Sanskrit. The *Kavya* and *Shastra* literature in Sanskrit held sway over educated persons from Kerala even in the early centuries after Christ. Unlike Tamil, which was rather reluctant to adopt words and expressions from Sanskrit, Malayalam borrowed lavishly and incorporated Sanskrit words either in their true equivalent (*tatsama*) or derived (*tatbhava*) forms. It is an old adage in Malayalam that to acquire knowledge is no shame (*vidyacku nanam illa*). Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam are the four major branches of the parent stem of

the Proto-Dravidian language. Malayalam is closer to Tamil than to the other languages in many respects, although in respect of Sanskritisation it is closer to Telugu and Kannada than to Tamil. Any language is a social product; Malayalam, which is a product of the social environment of Kerala, is no exception. Malayalam reflects the basic temperament of Kerala society - a liberal and tolerant attitude towards other cultures. Throughout history there had been an imperceptible process to integrate various cultures. The history of Malayalam language and literature offers a great deal of evidence of social processes in Kerala that worked to integrate different cultures. When Christianity and Islam came to Kerala, there were no summers of burning hatred. In the 9th Cent. A.D., when a Christian missionary, Mar Zaphir Easo, requested the Raja of Venad to grant him space to build a Church, it was granted benevolently (the royal decree is in the Tarisappally copper plate). Jews came to Kerala and built a settlement in Cochin. The synagogue in Mattancherry and the Jew Street nearby speak to us of how peacefully Jews lived in Kerala while Jews elsewhere were persecuted. In course of time, Kerala became a place in which Hindus, Christians, Muslims, Jews and others lived together cordially. Buddhism and Jainism also lived long in Kerala, although their influence eventually was submerged in the tide of Hindu revivalism in the medieval period. Both religions have left deep imprints in this soil. *Silappathikaram*, the first and foremost of the celebrated five *mahakavyas* of the Sangam period, was written by a prince of Kodungalloor who, according to legend, abandoned his royal privileges to become a Jain monk. Ilango Adigal was a prince and a saint.

An example of attempts to transfer knowledge to society's lower strata is the *Bhashakautaliyam*, a commentary on the *Arthashastra* of Kautilya in old Malayalam. This work was written in the late 11th or early 12th century. It is an exhilarating fact that Kerala produced one of the first (or perhaps the very first) non-

upper-caste poets to translate the Bhagavad Geeta into a regional language. The poet was Madhava Panicker, a member of the renowned family of *Niranom* poets and the title of the work, written early in the 14th century, was the *Bhasha Bhagavad Geeta*. This translation did away with the notion that the Bhagavad Geeta, the "Song Celestial", was inaccessible to non-caste Hindus. The *Niranom* poets also brought out delightful versions of the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Bhagavata in Malayalam. These poets blended folk and classical traditions to create a popular poetic form. Ezhuthacchan, considered the patriarch of modern Malayalam, completed the process of establishing a poetic diction and pattern accessible to the population at large. He brought together Malayalam and Sanskrit elements in such a way as to create a new language that did not, nevertheless, put the identity of the native tongue at stake.

Kerala's contribution to Sanskrit language and literature also is remarkable. The contribution of dramatists like Kulasekhara and Shakti Bhadra, scholar-poets like Sree Sankara and Melputhoor are part of history. For centuries, Bhasha's dramatic works were undiscovered; they were eventually discovered from the private library of a Namboodiri Brahmin near Trivandrum. It was a person from Kerala, Kunjukuttan Thampuran, who first translated the Mahabharata into a regional language preserving the original metre. Only an enlightened social environment, in my opinion, achieves such literary feats.

Sree Narayana Guru's maxim, "One Caste, One Religion, One God for Man", awakened the untouchables and the downtrodden. The Brahmin monopoly of Vedic learning was questioned by Chattampi Swamikal and a band of other revolutionary saints like Vagbhadananda and Ananda Teertha. From among Brahmins emerged a movement led by V.T. Bhattathiripad to discard cruel anti-social customs and rituals and to make Brahmins aware of human rights.

Although other parts of India saw the occurrence of a renaissance in the nineteenth century, the renaissance in Kerala had special features. Three great poets, Asan, Ulloor and Vallathol were leading figures of a renaissance in literature that influenced society at large. Inspired by his mentor Sree

Narayana Guru and influenced by the Buddhist ideals of compassion and love, Kumaran Asan not only lived a poet's life but also traversed the hazardous path of a social worker and organiser of the outcastes. But for the relentless efforts of Vallathol, art forms such as Kathakali and Mohiniattam would be extinct. New literary forms were introduced, for example, the sociological novels of O. Chandu Menon and historical C.V. Raman Pillai. Awareness of social change inspired these writers and they in their turn inspired society to move to a new era.

Kerala today enjoys the prestige of having a very high rate of literacy, a very powerful library movement, high levels of infant and child survival, and of health and family-planning awareness. The S.P.C.S., a unique cooperative of writers to publish and distribute their own works, has inspired writers all over India. It was in Kerala that the first Communist ministry in India was voted to office.

There are many examples as well of communal harmony, and of contributions by persons of different religions to socio-cultural development in the state. Isahac Gurukkal, the noted Muslim pundit, translated the Bhagavad Geeta into Malayalam; the Christian poet Professor P.C. Devassiah wrote an original Sanskrit *mahakavya* on the life of Jesus Christ in the celebrated *Vaidarbhi* poetic style and won a central Sahitya Academi award. The contribution of Christian missionaries towards the development of Malayalam language is beyond any dispute. Among them were lexicographers, grammarians, linguists and prose-writers. Kerala owes much to them for the first printed texts in Malayalam.

Kerala has survived several attempts to disrupt communal harmony. In the very heart of this city you can find a temple, a church and a mosque co-existing close to each other in all peace. No discordant note has disturbed the silent symphony of this co-existence. Thanks to the humanitarian efforts of our great forefathers and to the progressive political and social movements of yesteryear, an awareness of the oneness of human beings unfolds an unseen umbrella of protection over all of us. The times demand that we should protect it. I hope this Congress will inspire every participant to achieve this goal.

HAS THERE BEEN A "KERALA MODEL"?

K.N. Raj

Nearly a quarter of a century ago, Professor Jan Tinbergen, in his capacity as Chairman of the United Nations Committee on Development Planning, had suggested to the other members of the Committee - of whom I was one - that it might be useful to undertake studies on elimination of mass poverty and unemployment and on policies for promoting distributive justice in their respective countries. In response to this suggestion, I undertook to prepare, in collaboration with my colleagues in the Centre for Development Studies at Trivandrum, a case study of *Poverty, Unemployment and Development Policy* with reference to Kerala. The study was completed towards the end of 1974 and published early in 1975 by the United Nations.

A little earlier, in 1971, Professor V.M. Dandekar and Dr. Nilakanta Rath (of the Indian School of Political Economy in Pune) had published a book on *Poverty in India* attempting measures of poverty in India as well as in the constituent States. According to their estimates of poverty, based on per capita calorie intake, about 40 per cent of the urban population and 50 per cent of the rural population were living at below the "absolute minimum" consumption levels required and thus constituted the hard core of poverty in the country. In Kerala, the percentage of living below the stipulated minimum consumption levels was estimated at just over 90 per cent of the rural population and nearly 89 per cent of even its urban population.

However, the later study undertaken in the Centre for Development Studies (hereafter referred to as the CDS Study) revealed clearly various adjustments that had to be made in the estimates for Kerala. After allowing for these adjustments it was evident that the per capita availability of calories from the food intake in Kerala was "not less than either the national average or the estimated requirements for the state's population". On that criterion, together with the more equitable distribution of available foodgrains (thanks to the public distribution system within the State) and the substantial supplies of tapioca from domestic production

available to the lower income groups, the scale of poverty in Kerala was significantly lower than perhaps in the rest of the country.

The CDS study brought out also the high levels of literacy and educational attainments in Kerala, compared to other States in India, as well as the vastly greater spread of health facilities in the rural areas, resulting in sharper decline in the rates of infant mortality and of mortality in general. The study noted also the "significant downward trend in birth rates evident in Kerala during the last decade" [i.e. between 1965 and 1974] and advanced the hypothesis that it was "the indirect outcome of societal changes in attitude to family size arising from longer life expectation, reduction in infant and child mortality, and female education." It added that, if this hypothesis proved correct, "the importance attached to the development of health and educational services will not only have justified itself but will provide fresh insights into the process of what has been described as 'the demographic transition'".

From all this the CDS Study drew a more general and significant theoretical and policy inference for countries in the early stages of industrialization: "The observed decline in birth-rates in the now advanced industrial countries has been generally attributed to rise in per capita incomes, urbanization and industrialization. It could be the case that the more proximate factors responsible for the decline were the development of health and educational services, and that in these countries such development happened to take place simultaneously with rise in per capita income, urbanization and industrialization, but that much the same results could be achieved in less industrialized and urbanized societies by giving higher priority and precedence to the development of these services".

These observations of the CDS Study offered a decade ago have been amply supported by studies undertaken since then. It is particularly important to cite in this context a study by Dr. K.C. Zacharia, Honorary Fellow of the Centre,

on *Demographic Transition in Kerala in the 1980s*. Mimeographed copies of this study are available but the printed version as a book will be available by the end of this week from the Demography Unit in the Centre for Development Studies.

At no stage, however, has the Centre described its findings on the set of issues as constituting in effect a "Kerala Model". Perhaps, in the light of the experience in Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and China, it could be suggested that social and economic development along the lines followed in Kerala might be less burdensome and more appropriate

to the less developed countries of the world in transition from tribal or feudal societies. But such development should also lead fairly rapidly to all-round advances in agriculture and manufacturing industry, and here Kerala has been lagging behind despite a number of favourable circumstances such as rapid growth in incomes following large-scale migration of workers and middle-income groups to the adjoining Gulf States. The reasons for this lag need to be carefully investigated and studied (as is now in fact being attempted in the Centre for Development Studies).

SPEECHES OF THE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE SUBJECT PANELS

BIODIVERSITY: RIGHTS, REWARDS AND RECOGNITION

M.S. Swaminathan

Over the next century, we will have to produce more food, fibre, fuel-wood and other agricultural commodities from less land and with less water. If we are to achieve the goal of food for all, we will have to conserve and sustain biodiversity, and use it equitably.

The Global Biodiversity Convention is humankind's response to the urgent need for halting genetic erosion arising from the loss of habitats rich in genetic wealth due to a variety of commercial and anthropogenic pressure, as well as the vanishing practice of *in situ* conservation of land races and wild species by rural and tribal women and men. We do not even know what we are losing. The existence of only about 1.5 million species of plants and animals have been documented so far. Biosystematists, however, estimate that over 50 million species may exist, particularly if we take genetic diversity in microorganisms and invertebrates into account. The loss of every gene and species limits our options for the future not only from the point of view of food security but also in our ability to meet new situations arising from climate change, enhanced ultraviolet-B radiation and altered sea levels. The loss of gene pools is also occurring at a time when biotechnology has enhanced the economic and ecological value of biodiversity, by opening up opportunities for moving genes across sexual barriers.

The Global Biodiversity Convention has recognised the sovereign rights of nations over the genetic wealth occurring within their political frontiers. It was hoped that in the post-cold war, post-apartheid era, there will be greater goodwill and greater cooperation among

nations in the conservation of gene pools. Commercial interests, demographic pressures as well as ethnic and economic conflicts make the realisation of this hope difficult. It is clear that there can be no better common future for humankind without a better common present.

At its Fifth Session held in Rome in April, 1993, the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources of FAO emphasised the need to realise Farmers' Rights in order to accord recognition to the contributions of farm women and men in the *in situ* conservation of genetic variability both at the intra- and inter-specific levels. The incorporation of an implementable system of Farmers' Rights in any *sui generis* system according rights to breeders has become urgent in view of the following two developments:

a. The Convention on Biological Diversity recognises that the authority to determine access to genetic resources rests with the national governments. Access to genetic resources shall be subject to the prior informed consent of the Contracting Party providing such resources, and shall be on mutually agreed terms.

b. The World Trade Agreement, which came into force on 15 April, 1994, makes it obligatory that every nation has either a patenting or *sui generis* (i.e., Plant Breeders' Rights) system for protecting the work of breeders and breeding companies.

India has nearly 25 percent of the world's farming families, with over 75% belonging to the small and marginal farmer categories. For them, seeds incorporating genes for tolerance or resistance to a wide spectrum of biotic

and abiotic stresses provide the best safety net against crop failure. They hence need the fruits of the best in modern genetic and breeding research. While both the livelihood security of small farmers and the national food security system depend upon the efficient and equitable use of genetic diversity, divergent gene pools are also the feed stock for modern genetic engineering industry. The challenge lies in developing a system which recognises and rewards those who have helped to preserve for posterity genetic diversity in plants and animals, and which stimulates and rewards scientific research designed to convert genetic resources into products which can enhance food security and economic prosperity using both conventional and molecular techniques. It is not difficult to develop such a system provided there is commitment to both genetic conservation and sustainable and equitable utilisation.

Biological diversity is usually treated at 3 levels - genetic diversity within a species, species diversity and ecosystem diversity. At all these three levels, local communities, particularly women, play a key role in both conservation and selection. In the past, local communities were practising both *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation of local cultivars and folk varieties. This is why we have today over 100 thousand varieties of rice. Tree species were usually conserved through institutional devices such as sacred groves. Unfortunately, such contributions to the conservation of genotypic diversity are slowly getting extinct. One reason is the spread of high yielding varieties developed through modern plant breeding and biotechnology. The second and even more important reason is the lack of recognition and reward for such informal innovation.

At the level of species, the most urgent task is to save the endangered plant and animal species listed in Red Data books. There is no systematic effort in this area. World wide habitat destruction has become the greatest threat to the conservation of biodiversity. Here again a whole set of factors, both anthropogenic and commercial, are responsible. Poaching and illegal activities also denude biodiversity. Today, while there is an economic stake in the utilisation of biodiversity, there is no corresponding economic stake in conservation. One of the urgent tasks therefore is getting economic benefits to tribal and rural families for their work in genetic conservation.

When we disaggregate the nature of the problem on the above lines, it is obvious that we need an alliance among local communities, professional institutions and Government organisations, if we are to conserve for posterity a representative sample of existing genetic diversity in India. It is only by meeting the genuine needs of the people for fodder, fuelwood, food, water and other livelihood needs that we can expect a positive response from them. The following areas need urgent support:

1. Saving endangered plant species and threatened national parks, protected areas and habitats rich in biodiversity, often referred to as "hot spots".
2. Linking social and agro-forestry programmes with biodiversity conservation, so that the livelihood needs of local people and conservation programmes develop symbolic links.
3. Supporting programmes which strengthen the *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation practices of rural and tribal families.
4. Development of simple bio-monitoring methods, such as the use of bioindicators, with which local communities can monitor the health of their ecosystems.
5. Assisting in the development of databases on the intellectual property rights of tribal and rural women with particular reference to conservation, selection and evaluation of plant and animal genetic resources.
6. Assisting the protection of coastal biodiversity such as mangrove forests, sea grasses and coral reefs so that the ecological security of coastal areas is strengthened. This will be particularly important in case sea level rise takes place in the future.
7. Promoting capacity-building activities through training, technology transfer and techno-infrastructure development.
8. Development of training modules for training school students to prepare a "Biodiversity Charter" for their area (more than 50% of the population in India is below the age of 21). Such as charters would help to sensitise and mobilise youth for diversity conservation.

At our Centre in Madras, a multimedia database on the work of tribal women and men in the area of genetic conservation and enhancement is being developed. Our studies show that tribal families still cultivate a wide range of plants to ensure food security even under adverse weather conditions. Anthropological and ethnobiological studies in Kerala show that in the past the food and

livelihood security of local populations depended upon several hundred plant species. With advances in high-yielding agriculture, there has been a drastic reduction in both the number of plant species and varieties within species chosen for cultivation. We now know that genetic homogeneity enhances genetic vulnerability to pests and diseases. An urgent task is the restoration of the *in situ* conservation habits of rural and tribal women of genetic variability among and within species. Farmers' rights can be an effective means to improve *in situ* conservation of crop genetic resources.

Some of the genetic resources conserved by tribal families are of great value in improving the quality of human life. For example, an extract from the Brahmi plant (*Bacopa minor*) helps to improve memory in old people. With the average life span continuously increasing, this can be of great value. Growing charges of gene piracy are being made against commercial companies which

try to get patents for the plant-derived products which had been conserved and cultivated by indigenous people over centuries, because of their medicinal, pesticidal, food or other properties.

At an interdisciplinary dialogue held at our Centre in Madras in January, 1994, and easily implementable method of recognising and rewarding informal innovation in the conservation and election of plant genetic resources was developed. The sooner the concept of farmers' rights moves from theory into practice, the more effective will be our measures to halt genetic erosion and revive and strengthen indigenous systems of conservation of biodiversity.

Kerala is rich in biodiversity, particularly in medicinal plants. A biodiversity inventory and conservation strategy are urgent needs both for conserving Kerala's rich genetic estate and for converting genetic wealth into economic wealth.

IN DEFENCE OF 'OLD' HISTORY

K.N. Panikkar

It is a privilege to be asked to address you as the Chairperson of the section on history of the International Congress of Kerala Studies. On occasions like this, the temptation would be to take stock of the existing scholarship and to indicate the possible directions for future. Being conscious of the violence such a step might do to the sensibilities of this unprecedented assemblage of historians on Kerala, I would refrain from this customary and relatively harmless practice. Any alternative, I am conscious, is not bereft of peril, but then the practice of history is not without peril either, at least in contemporary India.

We are meeting at a time when history has become quite contentious in India. What constitutes India's past and the historical process which brought to being the contemporary society are issues of serious debate, both at popular and academic levels. If employed for the politics of power and used as an ideology of politics history is likely to lose much of its discipline specific qualities. Indian history is in such an impasse. As a result, the line of demarcation between myth and history has

tended to vanish, at least in popular mind. The selective appropriation and expropriation of the past inherent in this trend would have ominous consequences for the well-being of Indian society. The historian can remain indifferent to it only at great risk to his profession which, if to be obviated, would need an affirmation of the method of history.

In the on-going debate about India's past, the study of Kerala society as it evolved historically would be of particular interest, as it encapsulates some of the traits Indian society has inherited. Kerala has a long tradition of interaction with outside world which is reflected not only in its demographic composition but also in the cultural modes of life. Almost every religious denomination had their abode here from early times, enriching religious thought and cultural practices. People belonging to different religious persuasions commonly participated in secular vocations like trade and business, agricultural production and administration. In this sense Kerala is a microcosm of the historical process which constituted the Indian Society. For us

today, it has become necessary to reiterate this seemingly simple proposition and underline its social, political and cultural implications. In other words, to enquire into the manner in which the identity of Kerala was formed and to locate the elements which went into the make up of that identity. Among others, this aspect of history, I hope would figure in our deliberations.

I

The modes of constructing the past undergoes change almost continuously; the axiom that in every age history is written anew. Apart from the quest for furthering knowledge, generated within the disciplinary boundaries, ideological influences play a crucial role in this process. How history is conceived and narrated is enmeshed in the intellectual and philosophical currents of the time. The discipline of history is today almost unrecognisably different from the scientific history Ranke had advocated or the narrative or interpretive modes adopted by many a historian after him. The contours of this change would reflect the changing conception of history, its progress and goal, as influenced by a variety of ideologies and socio-political theories. They ranged from religious views to the post-isms of contemporary world. In the process Rankean confidence about the certainty of historical knowledge has almost irretrievably disappeared. Arguably for the better, as Voltaire once said, if you begin with certainties you are likely to end in confusion. But the opposite may be equally unproductive, if we refuse to go beyond uncertainties. The imagined, constructed and conjectured histories which now crowd the discipline leave the black cat in the dark. One of the post-isms which informs these histories Umberto Eco described in *Postscript to the Name of the Rose* as the dilemma of "a man who loves a very cultured woman and knows that he cannot say to her, 'I love you madly' because he knows that she knows (and that she knows that he knows) that these words have already been written by Barbara Cartland. Still there is a solution. He can say, as Barbara Cartland would put it, I love you madly... But does he really love the woman, or is he just saying that he loves her. That we neither do nor can know; he says he loves her is the most we can say, and hence the most we can know".¹ Those enclosed within this fog of uncertainty and struggling for long for a ray of light, are now trying to emerge out of

it.² Yet, in India the fog is setting fast, threatening to blur the vision. It is not accidental but logic of the times, as Fredric Jameson noted in a recent interview the cultural - imperialist propensity of post-modernism:

The setting in place of American power is one thing, the development of a culture which both reflects and perpetuates that power is a somewhat different matter. The old cultural slate had to be wiped clean, and this could happen in the United States instead of Europe because of *I' ancien regime* in European culture. Once modernism broke down, the absence of traditional forms of culture in the United States opened up a field for a whole new cultural production across the board. Individual things could be pioneered in Europe, but a system of culture could only emerge from this American possibility. The moment American power begins to be questioned, a new cultural apparatus becomes necessary to reinforce it. The system of post-modernism comes in as the vehicle for a new kind of ideological hegemony that might not have been required before.³

To use in India and perhaps to the people of all former colonies Jameson holds out a reminder of the past and a warning for the future. In the past, one of the major areas of colonial and neo-colonial assault has been the intellectual and cultural resources of the colony. History, being a part of the collective memory of a society and hence imbued with the potential for resistance, became a particularly important target. Colonialism sought to construct new histories of the subjected, giving them a notion of the past unfamiliar to them.⁴ This intellectual - political project was not confined to the scholarly histories compiled by administrators and ideologues but embraced the administrative tomes like ethnographic surveys, enquiry reports and census operations. The categories they invented and assumptions they advanced are now being reworked and given a new vocabulary, both in objective scholarship and in intellectual radicalism, allied to neo-colonial ideologies and study centres. Colonialism appears to be reemerging as a new avatar in historiography. It is accorded legitimacy in the name of latest in theory.

A tendency of this neo-colonial assault is what Andrew Ross has evocatively called the "Universal Abandon", leading to a fracturing of over arching categories. Micro histories have come quite handy to achieve such a fracture. The province instead of

nation, locality instead of province and family instead of locality. But micro-history need not necessarily be divorced from the universal. "There is nothing new", pointed out Eric Hobsbawm in reply to Lawrence Stone's defence of narrative history, "in choosing to see the world via a microscope rather than a telescope, so long as we accept that we are studying the same cosmos. The choice between microcosm and macrocosm is a matter of selecting the appropriate technique".⁵ Implying an integral connection between the micro and the macro, Hobsbawm suggested that the former is not an end in itself but a means for illuminating wider questions, which goes far beyond a particular event, story or character. It is the pursuit of this connection which in a way enabled historians to pose and answer the "big why questions". In contrast, the tendency of neo-colonial history is to isolate the micro from the macro and to imbue the former with independence, both from its origin and context.

The attention of post-modern history is rivetted, to invoke an analogy from the vegetable world employed by one of its advocates, on the leaves rather than on the trunk and branches of the tree. "What remains now... is to gather the leaves that have blown away and to study them independently of the origins. This means that our historical consciousness has, so to speak, been turned inside out. When we collect the leaves of the past ... what is important is no longer the place they had on the tree, but the pattern we can form from them now. The historians' object of enquiry as a consequence would be "scraps rather than large entities". Linked with this view of history is a changed conception of historian's task. "History here is no longer the reconstruction of what has happened to us in various phases of our lives, but a continuous playing with the memory of this ... The wild, greedy and uncontrolled digging into the past, inspired by the desire to discover a past reality and reconstruct it scientifically is no longer the historian's unquestioned task. We would do better to examine the result of a hundred and fifty years digging more attentively and ask ourselves more than what all this adds up to. The time has come that we should think about the past rather than investigate it".⁷ The consequences of this shift in historian's role is not easy to fathom. It would at any rate make historian's craft redundant and historical writings nothing more than a trivialisation of the past. He would

mercifully be relieved of grand designs like seeking explanation and casual connections to arrive at historical truth!⁸

II

One of the many questions arise out of this view of history is about the conceptual categories employed to interrogate the nature of society. Colonialism viewed Indian society in ethnic terms and based its strategy of control on an elaboration of administrative practices and political management on such divisions. Caste and communities not only became categories to comprehend reality but also weapons in colonial armoury to ensure the perpetuation of political power. India, in this view, was constituted by a conglomeration of warring groups, held apart by the intervention of colonial rule. It is not accidental that neo-colonial history invokes these categories as the only valid means to interrogate reality.

A major difficulty in this mode of conceptualisation is that it overlooks the multiple associations and consciousnesses individuals and groups are endowed with in society. No caste or community is homogeneous in its material pursuits and hence, despite a possible ritual identity multiple consciousnesses are embedded in each group. The varied and even contradictory material interests within each group make caste and community inadequate categories of analysis, despite their provenance in social consciousness. In Kerala, for instance, Nair, Ezhava and Mappila would reflect only one dimension of belonging. However powerful that sense of identify is, it does not fully account for social or political action.

The tracks of Indian historiography and the advance it made since independence reflect, at one level, a contestation with the basic premises of colonial construction of the past. It was not confined to, as is often argued, an attempt to discover European virtues and institutions in India's past or to trace a golden age which would disprove the need for subjection. Even if they were integral to the nationalist project, a transition from it was not long in coming. This transition was mainly a result of the influence of Marxism on Indian historical writings. The important consequences of this influence is not limited to a shift in analytical categories from caste and community to class - but also to a conception of

historical process which underlined the centrality of material forces. Although ideological and cultural dimensions remained relatively neglected in Marxist historiography, the emergence of neo-colonial history was not a consequence of this weakness. The colonial history is an alternate paradigm, which treats history as a mere representation and what Michel De Certeau called quasi fiction.

It is not my intention nor is it necessary to this audience to go into the details of this track, either of Indian or Kerala historical writings. Yet, it is necessary to remind ourselves that Indians were sensitive to the need of a historical project distinct from the colonial. Whether Indians in ancient times produced historical texts which would reflect a sense of history comparable to other civilizations may be debatable. But such a sense was well articulated during the colonial period when history became a powerful element in the evolving anti-colonial consciousness. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the celebrated author of *Anandamath* was perhaps the first to articulate this need:

In our opinion there is not a single work in English that is a true history of Bengal. What has been written is not the history of Bengal, not even the nearest fragment of it. It has nothing at all to do with the history of Bengali nation. A Bengali who accepts this kind of writing as the history of Bengal is not a true Bengali.⁸

The introspection into the history and culture witnessed in almost all regions in the second half of the nineteenth century was not altogether divorced from this awareness about the limitations of colonial historical writings and the urgency to contest it. An outcome of this awareness was the large number of regional histories written in vernacular. That is in Kerala too this tendency did manifest should be evident from the efforts to conceive the geographical, political and cultural unity of Kerala in the light of historical experience. In many of these attempts to construct the past, the influence of colonial historiography and Orientalism was quite conspicuous. Some of them failed to transcend this influence and did nothing better than reproduce or summarise the received knowledge. Still the glimpses of an enquiry into areas other than those defined by colonial discourse and based on distinctly different cultural assumptions are quite evident. They are yet to be identified from innumerable tracts and literary texts and discussion

proceedings of cultural organisations. The history of Kerala composed in verse by Kunhikuttan Tampuran was located in this intellectual - cultural context.

The form in which K.P. Padmanabha Menon wrote his monumental multi-volume history of Kerala perhaps has much greater significance than what is generally recognised. He used one of the early European constructions of Kerala Society, Jacobus Canter Vischer's *Letters from Malabar*, written during the beginning of the eighteenth century, "as the thread on which to string the ancient history of Kerala". The reason for doing so was attributed by T.K. Krishna Menon who edited and published Padmanabha Menon's notes to the inadequacy of the then existing knowledge of Kerala History. According to him Padmanabha Menon "Knew that, if he were to write a connected and complete account of ancient Malabar there would be breaks which he could not very well fill up with authentic materials". It may be true, but it does not entirely explain why Menon took Vischer for his aid and "prepared cameos on many of the important events and institutions, customs and manners and the salient features of the country, and of its social, political and economic conditions based, as far as possible, on contemporary records".¹⁰ By the time Menon embarked on research and writing on Kerala history European - colonial knowledge had already become a hegemonic force in Indian self - perception. Vischer's letters which drew upon experience or accounts of "trust worthy persons" was an important link in this process. Since Menon did not write a preface, we are deprived of his version as to why he leaned on Vischer. That he was responding to Vischer's observation is nevertheless significant, even if he did not contest but only complimented Vischer. By doing so, what he did was to underline the incompleteness and inadequacy of European observation which is a way is the necessary precursor to the latter contestation.

III

The history of Kerala has been a researcher's delight due to its institutional distinctiveness and political radicalism which called for explanation and analysis. The usual debate about chronology and dynastic history notwithstanding, institutions like *Marumakkathayam* (matrilini) and *Jenmi Sampradayam* (landlordism) and political currents like peasant militancy and radical political movements have

taken up bulk of historians, time and energy. Kerala path of political transformation and more recently, Kerala model of development have added grist to the mill. Underlying all these issues, however, is a common thread - the formation of an identity which characterizes the personality of the region. This identity is not solely cultural, but also derives from political institutions, social relations and economic production. This historical process is enmeshed with the development of nationality which was not contradictory but complimentary to the growth of Indian nationalism. The cultural production, social protest and political agitation during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries drew upon the 'regional' and the 'national'. This was not an altogether new phenomenon, but an extension of the earlier historical process which had subjected Indian polity to periodic centripetal and centrifugal forces and thereby to cultural interactions between the core and the periphery. As a consequence the boundary between regional and national history tended to blur. As such nationalism and Sub-nationalism did not develop as parallel but mutually fulfilling phenomena. Viewed in the light of this experience Kerala is not a fragment of the nation, but nation itself.

But then who constitutes the nation? Whose history is the history of the nation? Is it the history of the bourgeoisie and its ideologues who disseminated the nationalist ideology? Or is it the history of the people? Or of both? Referring to the role of the Italian intelligentsia, Antonio Gramsci has pointed out the disjunction between the national and the popular.¹¹ In India did such a disjunction exist, marginalising the people from the nation? Exploring the national - popular, however, is not to romanticise the people as an undifferentiated mass, but to locate their class specificity and place in the productive process. That would, among others, underline their denied share in the nation as well as recover their muted voices and their "hidden transcripts".¹²

The neo-colonial radical history seeks legitimacy by celebrating the "people". In contrast, the Marxist method rooted in historical materialism and class perspective, post-Marxism notwithstanding, concentrates on their participation in the process of material production and its consequences.¹³ Is it that such a method is capable theoretically of engaging itself only

with dry as bone impersonal forces and not with other spheres of human endeavour, except in a deterministic manner. Has that led to a crisis in Marxist historiography, paving the way for 'new history', obsessed with the leaves of the tree. Far from it, as evident from the Marxist historiography, though haltingly, moving from the cellar to the attic. The theoretical dimensions of such a movement, inherent in the writings of Marx himself, was unambiguously articulated by Engels in his oft - quoted statement on economic determinism.¹⁴ The Marxist scholars all over the world, E.P. Thompson, Raymond Williams, Christopher Hill and a host of others, have demonstrated the innovative potential of Marxist historiography.

IV

The historical project of colonialism, Amilcar Cabral has argued, is marked not by distortion but by denial of history to the subjected.¹⁵ By conceiving history as representations, without the possibility of ever knowing the truth, the neo-colonial ideologies are precisely doing the same. For, history is a weapon of the weak which the people of neo-colonies could call into attention in their efforts at resistance. That seems to be the unstated concern at the heart of new history which celebrates fragmentation rather than synthesis. An alternative lies in scientific history which has a fairly strong tradition in Indian historiography. That tradition should enable us to agree with Huizinga that "mythical and fictitious representations of the past may have a literary value as forms of play, but for us they are not history".¹⁶

Notes and References

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KERALA'S DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE : RANDOM COMMENTS ABOUT THE PAST AND SOME CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

C.T. Kurien

I

I am greatly honoured by the invitation of the organisers of this International Congress of Kerala Studies to preside over the subject section on Economics and to give its Presidential Address. I am certainly not the most qualified person to speak about the Kerala economy. Those who have done pioneering and significant work on Kerala's economy, whose writings I have followed with great admiration are in Kerala, especially here in this city of Thiruvananthapuram. These writings, some of the earlier ones in particular,

inspired me to devote the greater part of the 1970s to a study of the neighbouring state where I have been living and working for over four decades. I found that effort to be an exceptionally healthy exercise. I have always held that the central task of economists is to examine and interpret the conditions of living of the people and that the closer one gets to that reality, the firmer will be one's grip over economics. But even my work on the economy of a neighbouring state is not sufficient justification for

this honour that has been conferred upon me. It is possible that the organizers wanted to have a Kerala economist working outside Kerala to preside over this section because the choice of a person from within the state would not have been easy as there are many eminent ones to choose from. But economists hailing from Kerala working elsewhere are also not rare. After a great deal of introspective analysis of this problem, I have come to the conclusion that the choice fell on me because the organisers were looking for a Kerala economist outside the state but physically close enough to it. I am perhaps the most noise-making Kerala economist operating from Tamil Nadu, or even Karnataka.

Having settled that matter I had to decide on a topic for this address. Not having done any work on Kerala, it was obvious that I would have to depend entirely on the work of others. I shall underline some of the issues already established, offer comments on some problems and raise a few questions about some others. This is certainly a lazyman's only option, but I shall try to carry it out as effectively as I can!

II

Two decades ago, perhaps even in the early 1980s, the pattern of development that Kerala was following was spoken of with great admiration (was there also a tinge of adulation in it?) not only by ardently patriotic Keralites, but also by international development agencies which are usually very reluctant to compliment anything other than what they consider to be success stories in their standard pattern of "development", identified with high levels of growth and per capita income. Kerala's experience was very different. It had a low level of per capita income even by the very low Indian standard but in terms of specific indices of social or human development, such as life expectancy, birth and death rates, infant mortality rates, literacy levels, especially of the female population, its performance had to be rated very high both by standards of the developing countries and by global standards or even by standards of the developed countries. What came to be frequently referred to as the "Kerala Model" in those days was, therefore, an enigma.²

Kerala became noted at that time for one more aspect of economic significance - its radical land reforms hailed by several scholars, Indian and foreign, as a major success story.³ The

optimism and euphoria of those days, it would appear, have given place to nagging doubts and serious concern in more recent years. A set of studies conducted in the late 1980s and published in 1990 had "Kerala Economy at the Crossroads" as their common title,⁴ reflecting an element of crisis. This crisis is noticed in two spheres, first, in the fact that the rate of growth of State Domestic Product (SDP) has been stagnating, and that the growth rate of the commodity-producing sectors in particular has been very low. The second, and perhaps more alarming, reflection of the crisis is seen in the fiscal sphere, the growing inability of the state to continue to finance precisely those social aspects that had become the glory of Kerala. The facts themselves and the studies analyzing different aspects of the problems are by now quite familiar and hence I do not propose to go into details.⁵ Briefly the situation is as follows:

Analyzing the performance of SDP over the period from 1962-63 to 1985-86 and dividing the period into two, 1962-63 to 1974-75 and 1975-76 to 1985-86, K.P. Kannan shows that overall SDP showed a growth rate of 3.2 percent in the first period, but declined to 1.76 percent in the second; that the primary sector's growth rate which was 2.23 percent turned out to be minus 0.70 percent during the second period; that similarly the secondary sector's growth rate came down from 4.71 percent to 2.15 percent; whereas the tertiary sector's growth rate, which, was 4.24 percent went up to 5.32 percent in the second period. On the fiscal crisis K.K. George's studies which concur M.A. Oommen's⁶, shows a rather dismal picture. During the Seventh Plan period, despite strict treasury controls and piling up of unpaid dues to the public, Kerala had fiscal deficits in four years. In 1986-87, the state had the biggest ever budgetary deficit of Rs.193 crore which represented 2.5 percent of the State Domestic Product.⁷ If that was not bad enough, the pattern of the deficit was also disturbing; while most other states in the country were using their revenue surpluses to cover partially at least their capital deficits, Kerala has been using its surplus on capital account to finance, to some extent at least, its revenue deficits.

To add to it all, Kerala's long-standing problem of unemployment has not been subsiding, and the unemployment among the educated has been increasing.⁸ There is enough to be concerned about.

However, the element of paradox still continues. Although Kerala's per capita SDP is lower than that of many other states, in terms of per capita expenditure it has a much higher ranking. And while the performance of the real sector was sluggish, the Cochin Stock Exchange, which was started in 1978, showed remarkable growth in the 1980s, especially in the second half of the decade with the daily trading volume moving up from around Rs.3 lakh in 1984 to over Rs.800 lakh in 1989.⁹

The issues involved are very complex and I am sure that more work will be done in these areas in the years to come. I would like to make three preliminary observations. The first is that we must be careful in drawing too close a causal relationship between Kerala's low per capita SDP and high social welfare. Surely, there are costs involved in improving the educational achievements and health conditions of the people of a state and hence the level of SDP and the pattern of public expenditure have a bearing on them. But in terms of social welfare, Kerala has a very long tradition and history. The accent on social welfare started in Kerala long before the United Nations launched its development decades, and long before India decided on planned economic development. P.G.K. Panikar and C.R.Soman in their study of Health Status of Kerala draw attention to this fact: "The critical breakthrough in the control of infectious diseases and mortality rates in the major parts of the state was achieved in an earlier era before the concepts of development, not to speak of policies towards the same, became articulated. As early as the forties, the death rate in Travancore-Cochin had come down to about 15, a level attained by France and Sweden a decade earlier... That is to say, the initial improvement of health status was in response to health care programmes and not the result of economic development policies *per se*".¹⁰ In terms of educational achievements too it is well known that Travancore and Cochin were way ahead of the rest of India not only at the time of independence, but even at the beginning of the century. If these historical achievements have any significance, then perhaps it was wrong to attribute the high social welfare position of Kerala in the 1960s and 70s and even now to any particular model of development that Kerala may have adopted during these decades. To put it differently, when development planning started, Kerala did not decide to give high priority to the social sector. The

high priority that the social sector received in terms of financial allocation was simply a continuation of a rich heritage of Travancore and Cochin and the achievements of the sector would have been impossible without it.

My second observation is that we must look at Kerala's experience in a broader and all-India perspective because, as an integral part of the country, what happens in Kerala may be related to what goes on in the country as a whole.

In a study of regional imbalances in the Indian economy over the plan period, P.C. Sarkar uses several indices for inter-State comparisons.¹¹ One of them is a composite index of 14 diverse "development indicators", per capita consumption of electricity, percentage of villages electrified, net area irrigated as percentage of net area sown, per capita SDP from agricultural sector, per capita food grain production, per capita income from the manufacturing sector, number of average daily employment per lakh of population, number of registered small scale units per lakh of population, road length per lakh of population, number of registered motor vehicles per lakh of population, per capita expenditure on health, effective literacy rate, percentage of urban population, percentage of population below poverty line. In terms of this composite index Kerala's rank among the major States was 10 in 1960-61, 8 in 1970-71 and 1980-81, again 10 in 1984-85 and 7 in 1986-87. This would suggest that towards the end of the 1980s Kerala had definitely improved its position compared with the early 1960s. I am sure that many of you will have reservations about an index composed of such varied and some what miscellaneous items. The only comment I would make is that from this point of view SDP is no better, and perhaps even a worse index although we frequently forget that it is also a composite index and not a pure number.

Let me turn to my third observation which is also an inter-state comparison, but of a different kind. It is an evaluation of the distribution of land in Kerala in relation to what has been happening to land holdings in other parts of the country. Oommen has made an assessment of Kerala's land reforms recently, asking two specific questions. Have the land reforms enabled Kerala to implement the pre-independence slogan of "land to the tiller"? Why has Kerala succeeded, however limited this success might be, while other states have not done so well?¹² Oommen is critical about

some other aspects of the land reform and its impact and his observations deserve careful consideration. For my limited purposes I am depending on another and more recent piece by H.R.Sharma on the distribution of land holdings in rural India 1953-54 to 1981-82 based on the several rounds of the National Sample Survey (8th Round 1953-54; 17th Round 1961-62; 26th Round 1971-72; and 37th Round 1982).¹³

First, the Kerala land reform of 1969-70 did benefit the landless, the percentage of households not owning land coming down drastically from 30.9 in 1961-62 to 15.7 in 1971-72 and then to 12.8 in 1982. No other state achieved such a sharp fall in the landless during that decade, although many states (Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana) show much sharper reductions between the 8th and 17th Rounds. But it is well known that this is largely the result of change in the definition of ownership between these two rounds of the National Sample Survey and I have commented about it elsewhere.¹⁴ What needs to be noted is that there are many other states which in 1982 (and even in the earlier Rounds) show a lower percentage of landless than Kerala and these states include Andhra Pradesh (11.9) Bihar (4.1) Orissa (7.6) Punjab and Haryana (6.3) Rajasthan (8.1) and Uttar Pradesh (4.8). Most of them have a long history of low landlessness (U.P.'s figure for 1953-54 being as low as 9.4). What is even more significant is the view at the top. The share of ownership of land of the top 1 per cent of households in Kerala in 1982 was 14.01, fairly close to the all-India figure of 14.35. Only Andhra Pradesh (16.78) and Tamil Nadu (14.70) have higher figures than Kerala, and let us recall that the other states that show figures lower than in Kerala include Bihar, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh on the one hand, and Gujarat, Maharashtra and Punjab and Haryana on the other. Even in terms of the share of the top 5 percent of households, and of 10 per cent of the households, Kerala's figures of 37.45 per cent and 55.39 per cent are quite prominent, although in the former category Kerala's rank is 5th (A.P., T.N., Maharashtra and Punjab and Haryana taking the first four positions), while in terms of the latter Kerala again has the third place with A.P. and T.N. ahead of it. There may be a variety of reasons for this concentration at the top, but I think it is important to examine what league Kerala is in with respect to the profile of land ownership and why.

III

These preliminary comparative assessments have already raised some issues that need to be given careful attention for a more adequate understanding of Kerala's development experience. Let me now move on to a more direct examination of Kerala's contemporary economic problems and to some speculations about the possibilities and prospects for the future.

First, a brief resume of the current problems as I have been able to gather from specialists on Kerala studies.¹⁵ In agriculture, according to Kannan and Pushpangadan, there has been an all-pervasive stagnation, especially from the mid-seventies (to the mid-eighties) when there was a decline in output in the case of paddy, tapioca, banana, coconut, cashew and arecanut; no significant change in pepper and cardamom with only rubber showing an increase. In the case of paddy, tapioca and arecanut, the fall in output was the result of a fall in area while decline in yield was mainly responsible for the performance of banana and cashew. Paddy was the only crop which showed an increase in yield which, however, would appear to be the result of marginal land going out of cultivation rather than due to any technical change. The authors consider technological retardation the main problem in agriculture. In contrast John Kurien and Thankappan Achari, on the basis of field studies over a long period, show that in fisheries one of the main problems has been indiscriminate introduction of technology which, by most standards, would be considered modern and advanced.

K.K.Subrahmanian's study of the performance of the industrial sector shows a big come-down since independence. In 1950, the per capita manufacturing product of Travancore of Rs.48 was significantly higher than the all-India figure of Rs.37. In the 1980s on the other hand, Kerala, with 3.7 percent of the country's total population, accounted for 3.7 percent of the number of factories, 3.12 percent of industrial employment, 2.61 percent of fixed capital, 2.56 percent of gross output and 2.90 per cent of value added in the factory sector of the country. Within the state itself, "industrial performance measured by any parameter - annual growth of its manufacturing sector, share of manufacture in the state domestic product, value added by the factory sector or any like measure - has been on the low side." Industrial stagnation too,

was particularly pronounced in the 1980s (1980-81 to 1987-88) when, as against the annual compound growth rate of 10.56 per cent for all-India, Kerala recorded only a marginal rate of 1.73 per cent in value added by manufacture. Alice Albin points out that Kerala's share of household units in the manufacturing sector is much lower than the all-India figure which may suggest that Kerala's industrial structure is more advanced than that of the country, but M.M. Thampy shows that one of Kerala's problems is that the non-factory non-household or the "small units" sector which provides the bulk of the industrial employment in the state consists of traditional industries with hardly any technological dynamism of their own. Nirmala Padmanabhan, analyzing the financial performance of a representative sample of private sector companies in manufacturing industry in the state from the early seventies to mid-eighties claims that even the private sector's performance has been poor in comparison with the rest of India. Gopikuttan draws attention to Kerala's construction boom since the mid-seventies, but argues that it failed to provide any growth stimulus to the state's economy. M.P. Parameswaran's paper shows that the state which for long considered itself to have abundant hydro-electric power for its own use and even for export became a deficit state from the mid eighties. In this connection, it may be pointed out that Kerala's consumption of commercial energy (consisting of petroleum products, coal and electricity) is exceptionally low, just 228 Kg (in 1990-91) compared to the all-India figure of 314 kg and that the Kerala figure is even lower than the average of the relatively poor states which is 233 kg. In terms of per capita consumption of electricity too, Kerala's 255 kwh in 1992-93 has been way below the all-India average of 330 kwh.¹⁶

These facts certainly justify the now frequently made statement that Kerala's economy is "at the crossroad". If so, the question to consider is "*quo vadis?*". But I suggest that before we turn to that question, we try to understand what has been going on.

It seems to me that to put the diverse pieces together we must try to see the features of the transformation that Kerala's economy has been undergoing during the past few decades and perhaps even the past few centuries. If one were to select one word to depict that transformation, it would be "commercialisation". There is a tendency to use that word as a magic key which will throw

open many mysteries. But we must heed the words of K.N.Raj, who says that in studying the process of commercialisation the specificities of the economy concerned as well as the specificities of the opening up processes must be taken into account.¹⁷ As far as Kerala is concerned, that is a tall order because the process of commercialisation started here many centuries ago and a wide range of factors were associated with it. I have neither the time nor the competence to review that long process. All that I propose to do is to draw a distinction, initially, between two stages of Kerala's commercialisation, identified simply as the "old" and the "recent". The old is upto independence; the recent is roughly the four decades from 1950 to 1990. I shall concentrate on the latter, using the former only for purposes of comparison. At the end of the discussion, I shall refer to another phase of commercialisation, that has been initiated in 1991 which I shall refer to as "the latest". From the way in which I have classified commercialisation you will see that my analysis is rather *ad hoc*.

Thanks mainly to spices, Kerala has had a long history of commercial activity, essentially of relationships with other parts of the world - or an "outward orientation", if one may use the current jargon. Like most long distance trade of antiquity, however, these dealings did not have much of an impact on the day-to-day economic activities of most of the people of the region who were engaged in the task of the production of the staple food, paddy, either directly as producers or as rent receivers. There were different forms of ownership and control over the land that was used for this purpose and of the actual patterns of use as well as of the production relationships that resulted from them, most of them not particularly fair or just, to put it mildly. Some changes began to emerge with the advent of western colonial traders at the end of the 15th century, which became more pronounced with the establishment of the British rule in India and the starting of the plantation economy. More goods were traded and the volume of transactions increased. In certain regions of the State, commercialisation came to have disruptive impacts on traditional economic activities too.¹⁸ However, the ground level pattern of economic life remained substantially isolated from and unaffected by commercial activities in many parts of the State almost till the end of the British raj.

If you will permit me to strike a personal note, I would like to place before you a micro version of what might have been happening. During my early childhood in the years immediately preceding the Second World War, I had the opportunity to spend long stretches of time with my grand parents and uncles in a tiny village called Nallanikkunnu in central Travancore, between Pathanamthitta and Elavumthitta. Each household in the village was practically self-sufficient in terms of paddy, coconuts, tapioca, a wide variety of yams, vegetables and fruits. Some had weaving units of their own and perhaps a multi-purpose bullock cart too. Male members of the household cultivated the land and the paddy fields along with the "men who came to us as part of the land", as my grandfather used to explain the arrangement. These men and their families too lived in a corner of "our" land. A few things like salt, dry chillies, kerosene and dhal were occasionally bought, but by taking a bunch of bananas, a fowl or some eggs to the village market that used to meet on Saturdays. In a household which seemed to have everything else in plenty, cash was frequently in short supply.

One of my uncles, apart from attending to cultivation on his land, used to buy the surplus coconuts from the village, convert them into copra to be sold in Alappuzha. In the village he was one of the few "making money", but the money was simply ploughed back into more copra trade again and again. Periodically it was also used to get his six daughters married.

While I do not want to suggest that the pattern that obtained in my village during those years was a good replica of the macro situation during the old commercialisation stage, it seems reasonable to assume that a lot of day to day economic activity was protected from the active commercialisation that was going on. If I may paraphrase Marc Bloch's oft quoted words about feudal Europe,¹⁹ there certainly was some buying and selling in Kerala during the period we are referring to, but with rare exceptions people were not dependent on buying and selling for their daily lives.

It is precisely this aspect that began to change in what I have called the recent phase of commercialisation, starting with independence and the merger of the erstwhile native states of Travancore and Cochin into the Indian Union. The process of the political integration that took place immediately after independence bringing the many smaller units into a larger configuration

has received a good deal of attention, but the corresponding integration of the Indian economy, I believe, has not received the attention it deserves although there are close parallels between the political and economic processes of integration. Travancore and Cochin, let us recall, were not only separate political units as native states, they were quasi-independent "national" economies too, with their own currencies, tax administration, customs duties and so on.

The removal of these features was part of the process of economic integration. Another part of the integration was brought about through the planning process, especially the central allocation of investments and funds to different parts of the country. But I believe that a commercial or market integration of the Indian economy was very much a part of the planning strategy. Though at one time it was fashionable for economists to indulge in polemics about the state versus the market in the development process, it is now widely recognised that in most cases where the magic of the market is claimed to have happened, the magician was very much the state!²⁰ In India the state managed to bring about a great deal of marketisation under the cloak of centralised planning. I personally do not think that this process in itself was wrong, although I will soon be touching on some of its consequences too. The point to be noted now is that the broad process of commercialisation that took place since independence was substantially state-sponsored and to some extent state-regulated. Political integration itself paved the way for economic integration. The linking up (and thus opening up) of the country by roads, railways, air travel and the communication networks strengthened it. The growth in food grain production, its purchase and sale through the agencies of the state became the basis of the new phase of commercialisation. The introduction of high-yielding varieties and the consequent need to purchase a variety of inputs linked up different sectors of the economy commercially. The spread of banking and the deliberate promotion of rural banking since nationalisation knit the economy closer together. The production of a wide range of manufactured goods for consumption increased market activities throughout the country. And, of course, the introduction and rapid spread of television and visual advertising has also considerably reinforced the

commercial thrust.

All these diverse factors have led to a substantial erosion of the regional and sectoral isolation of the Indian economy. The process is still going on. Its impact has not been uniform, but Kerala's economy has been one of the most seriously affected ones, both within Kerala and in terms of its links with the rest of the Indian economy. The consequences of this on the lives of people have been phenomenal. As we have been living through this great transformation we may have failed to appreciate its full significance. But I believe that by objective standards what has been happening to the economy of Kerala over the past four decades can only be described as phenomenal.

The constraints of time do not permit me to enter into this aspect fully or even adequately. I shall place before you just a sample. As my main concern is with the conditions of life of the people, and not just the economy in the abstract, I have chosen to deal with agriculture in general and food in particular. Of course, it will necessitate references to other aspects too, but I shall keep them to the minimum.

In sum, what I have to say is that although Kerala has had a very long history of commercialisation, the character and magnitude of the recent commercialisation of the past four decades since independence, perhaps even the two decades of the seventies and eighties, have substantially undermined the agrarian basis of Kerala's economy which had remained more or less intact for many many centuries. If Kerala was used to commercial activities in spices and some plantation crops and had managed to accommodate them into an essentially non-market economic base, this time the commercialisation has been in food grains, especially paddy. The commercialisation of staple food from a situation where it was produced for direct consumption is commercialisation of a very different kind with tremendous spill-over effects and I suggest that we look at it carefully.

Consider, first, the extent to which Kerala as an economic unit has become dependent on others in the matter of food grains. The per capita food grain production in Kerala (average of the triennium of 1989-92) was just 38 Kg compared with the all-India average of 203 Kg.²¹ During this period Kerala, which has 3.4 per cent of the country's population according to the 1991 census, produced only 0.6 per cent of the

country's food grains. It must be noted that Kerala is unique in this respect. It is the only state in the country where during the past two decades, 1970-73 to 1989-92 food grains production declined, and that too at an annual rate of 1.09 per cent. What is even more significant is that much of this happened in the decade of the 1980s when the annual rate of decline was 2.06 per cent compared to the previous decade, when it was only 0.2 per cent. This has been a rather sudden development. Kerala had become a food grains deficit state long ago, and it may be recalled that a discussion of low food grain production in the state and the low food intake constituted a major theme in the UN-CDS publication, Poverty, Unemployment and Development Policy.²² The average per capita food grain production in the state in the triennium 1969-70 to 1972-73 was only 62 kg compared with the all-India figure of 186 kg. However, in the two decades preceding it, 1951-71, food grain production in the state had grown at 3.0 per cent per annum above the rate of growth of population at that time of 2.3 per cent per annum and these figures were very similar to the all India figures of 3.0 per cent and 2.1 per cent respectively. All that has changed now. In view of the more easy inter-state movement of food grains now than in the sixties, it is doubtful whether there is still as close a relationship between food grains consumption and food grains production in each state as was the case noted in the UN-CDS study. It is known too that the food and calorie intake in Kerala is not derived from food grains alone, but also from supplements like tapioca. But tapioca production too has been declining in recent decades, from around 4,600,000 tonnes in 1970-71 to less than 2,800,000 tonnes in 1990-91.²³ In any case, my main concern for the moment is not food consumption, but the production of food grains as an economic activity. The decline noticed in the production of food grains in the state is matched by two other sets of related figures. The first is that the area under food grains has come down from 960,000 hectares in 1970-71 to 593,000 hectares in 1990-91, of paddy alone from 875,000 hectares to 560,000 hectares. The second is that the share of cultivators in the total workforce has also come down, from 17.8 per cent in 1971 (compared with the all-India figure of 43.3) to 13.06 per cent in 1981 (all India 41.46), and to 12.24 in 1991 (all-India 38.41).²⁴

I have been arguing that the major transformation that Kerala's economy has been experiencing during the past few

decades is due to the change over of a predominantly agrarian society where production of food grains was mainly for consumption into one where most people now purchase food grains and many other items of food. It is really a socio economic transformation of enormous significance. Such a tremendous transformation in so short a period became possible because Kerala's economy got integrated with a much larger and more diverse Indian economy. Changes have been taking place in other parts of the country, though not as prominently as in Kerala. Of some direct interest to Kerala is the change that has been taking place in Punjab where there has been a pronounced shift into the production of food grains for sale. The per capita food grains production in Punjab in the triennium 1989-92 was 951 kg per annum compared with Kerala's 38 Kg mentioned earlier. In this sense Punjab and Kerala are the two extreme cases, indeed, complementary opposites. What is of greater significance is the production of paddy in Punjab. Though always one of the big producers of wheat in the country, Punjab was producing hardly any rice at all till the late sixties, and only less than 700,000 tonnes even in the early seventies. But in 1991-92 rice production was 6,755,000 tonnes from over 2,000,000 hectares becoming the fourth biggest producer of the crop in the country, and contributing the highest share, almost 50 percent, of its public procurement.

Now commercialisation of this kind resulting from integration or integration achieved through commercialisation certainly has been to a large extent a market phenomenon, one of buying and selling. But I have already indicated that it was much more than that, that a variety of physical adjustments were involved in it and that it was the result of an all-India pattern of development quite deliberately adopted. Again, I have no time to develop the theme fully. I shall simply pick up a few prominent aspects. At the level of the central government, it was associated with the decision fairly soon after independence, to accept responsibility for a fair regional distribution of food grains and to regulate the operation of 'free market' in many ways to achieve that objective, the decision to import food grains from other parts of the world at one stage and make the country self sufficient in food grains later on. Decisions taken on the pattern of industrialisation, especially in regard to the location of industries had a

bearing on what has been happening. The pattern of financial allocation between the centre and the states decided from time to time also influenced the kind of changes taking place in different parts of the country.

Apart from integration with the larger Indian economy, two other factors have contributed to the recent commercialisation of the Kerala Economy. The first is the acceleration of the old commercialisation. The basis of the old commercialisation, it will be recalled, was the cultivation of and trade in the "commercial crops". The significance that the commercial or cash crops have come to have in Kerala's economy can be seen from the fact that in terms of per hectare value of output, Kerala's annual average of Rs.8,953 in the 1986-89 triennium was the highest in the country, almost double that of the country as a whole (Rs.4,537). It is easy to see why this is so. It simply reflects the use to which land is being put for the cultivation of high value crops. The share of non-food crops in area cultivated in Kerala increased from a little less than 60 per cent in 1970-71 to 71 per cent in 1989-90. This is not only way above the all-India figure of 25 per cent, but also the highest figure among all the states, the second rank going to Gujarat where it is only 46 per cent.²⁵ It is not easy to say what the size distribution of land under different commercial crops is. There can be no doubt that there are some very large holdings, including estates, which concentrate entirely on commercial crops. But a distinctive feature of commercial cultivation in Kerala is that smaller holdings also cultivate cash crops. According to N.Krishnaji, "Both poor and middle peasants are involved to a great extent in the cultivation of coconut, pepper and other commercial crops. 55 per cent of the area under coconut and 40 per cent of the area under pepper are in holdings held by households cultivating in all no more than 2.5 acres each."²⁶ As is well known, of late different size groups of land holders have moved into the cultivation of rubber.

The cultivation of high value commercial crops must have certainly led to some large land owners becoming exceptionally rich. But equally significant is that many cultivators, including some resorting to backyard cultivation of selected spice varieties on their tiny plots, have come to have cash on hand, a fact that has stimulated and strengthened the process of commercialisation.

The second factor that has reinforced the recent commercialisation, of course, are remittances from the Gulf region which, by all accounts, have been a major contributor to the transformation of Kerala's economy during the 1970s and 1980s. The magnitude of the Gulf remittances of this period has been estimated to be from Rs.500 to 1,000 crores per annum, representing around 30 per cent of the SDP in some years.²⁷ It has been pointed out too that the total remittances during this period could have been about Rs.10,000 to 15,000 crores compared to the total Plan outlay of Rs.5,360 crores of the past 40 years.²⁸ The total quantum of remittances, thus, has been phenomenal. These remittances, again, have been widely dispersed, though very unevenly, especially on a regional basis. The point to note is that both in terms of the total quantum and the pattern of distribution and use, they substantially augmented the cash flow in the economy, thus enormously reinforcing the ongoing process of commercialisation.

The combined effect of all these processes has been to fashion Kerala's economy as a multilayered one with a crisis crossing of cash transactions. For most people, the cash they come to have is barely adequate for their basic necessities. But there are also many at different levels with small and large quantities of surplus cash at their disposal. Though they are a minority, they themselves, their cash and the way they handle it become very visible and give the economy an appearance of prosperity.

Beneath the surface, however, major adjustments have been going on. First, there has been a movement of people away from agriculture.²⁹ The share of the workforce engaged in agriculture (cultivators and agricultural labourers) in Kerala, 37.8 per cent in 1991, is the lowest among the major states and much lower than the all-India figure of 66.5 per cent. There has also been an internal problem in agriculture, with cultivators constituting just a third and agricultural labourers two-thirds of those engaged in that sector. Agricultural labourers are supposed to find work from cultivators, but it is well known that the vast majority of cultivators have only small bits of land and may not provide much employment to agricultural labourers. That certainly accounts for the first rank that Kerala has come to have in terms of unemployment accounting for 16 per cent of 'usual status' unemployment in the entire country, almost five times its share in

the total population. The fact that Kerala has the highest proportion of non-agricultural workers in rural areas is also explained to a large extent by the inability of agriculture to provide employment to a growing workforce.

But those who have been thrown out of agriculture have been absorbed primarily into the service sector. As the essential aspect of the recent phase of commercialisation has been the need to depend on the market for food and daily necessities of life, trade-related activities have greatly increased. Since the integration of Kerala into the Indian economy and its openness to the international economy had enabled a steady flow of goods into the State, the manufacturing sector did not have to and did not respond to the demand for goods that was generated by the cash flow. Thus the only alternatives to the growing labour force has been to gravitate into different forms of services or to move out of the State. The growth of the service sector has been necessary and useful up to a point, but it has also been a desperate attempt of covering up unemployment as for instance, some avenues of "higher education".

The growth of the service sector, it may be noted, represents the increase in the selling and buying of labour power. The recent phase of commercialisation has given the impetus for a quickening of transactions in land also. The enormous increase in the volume of transactions in goods, especially food grains, in land and in labour power during the past four, perhaps even just the past two decades, has been a matter of tremendous economic, social and political implications.

What has been the policy response to this transformation? I have already indicated that to a large extent these changes were brought about directly by, and as indirect by-products of, policy measures. In a federal set up like ours, policies adopted and carried out by the Central government have a major impact on growth and change in the states. A quick glance at studies that deal with these aspects shows that the rate of growth of per capita plan outlays has been coming down since the decade of the sixties,³⁰ that the percentage of central investment in Kerala has been declining³¹ and that even the successive Finance Commissions have not properly appreciated Kerala's special commitments and the special efforts the state has been making to meet these commitments.³² I would only add that a strong case can be made that apart from the standard indicators used such as size

of population, the level of SDP, percentage of population below the poverty level, tax efforts etc., in deciding on Centre-State economic and financial relationship, the nature of the transformation that each of the state economies has been experiencing should be taken into account. Obviously, it is not an easy task.

Let me turn to the manner in which the state government itself has been responding to the transformation of the state's economy. State governments in general are much closer to the day-to-day lives of people and hence cannot afford to shape their economic policies based solely or even mainly on macro aggregates (even relating to their own economies) or highly sophisticated development models. They have to respond to concrete problems and situations as well as they can.

My assessment is that, overall, the policies of the State government in Kerala have been responsive to the kind of changes that I have described. Consider, for a moment, what the main thrust of policy should have been, granted that these changes were in fact taking place. I have no hesitation in saying that it should have been to protect sections of society that were becoming most vulnerable as a result of these changes. Obviously, the first thing to do was to ensure that at least a certain minimum quantity of food grains was available at reasonable prices so that the lives of people were not surrendered completely to the caprices of the so-called 'market forces' - (so called' because these forces are never the forces of the market, but the forces behind the market). I believe that that has been the rationale of the elaborate public distribution system that the state has built up. Public policy was aimed not only to protect the weaker sections, but also to provide them something of a resource base to survive and to be able, to some extent at least, to enter into market operations. That was the rationale of the 1969-70 land reforms, the minimum wage legislations, the pension schemes for agricultural labourers and so on. Public policy also attempted to keep up the State's historical tradition of taking care of the health conditions and educational requirements of the people at large, but again with particular reference to women and others who did not get enough attention in the past.

More can be said along these lines, but perhaps this will do except for a few comments. Policy measures of the kind mentioned above finally found expression in the form of legislations and

administrative steps for their implementation. However, they were not merely bureaucratic or even political actions in the narrow sense of the term "political". They resulted from the desires and urges of a people who have been becoming increasingly conscious of their rights and powers and of their ability to use the apparatus of the state to give concrete expression to them. It did not happen smoothly or in the normal course of events either. As several studies have shown³³ the success of reforms in Kerala has been the culmination of many years of struggles and agitations, sweat and blood. Kerala has had governments backed by different kinds of political forces from time to time. None of them could afford not to be responsive to the organised urges of vast sections of the population. Some political forces, of course, dithered and tried to find excuses to put off the reforms; others were insightful to recognise the needs of the people and to take decisive steps to respond to them. Though I am not a political scientist, I believe there is a big difference between the two!

If Kerala's development policies were, thus, responses to the needs and rights of the people, the majority of them, they cannot be faulted as being "distributive" or "redistributive" in an economic sense. Such expressions usually convey the veiled and, sometimes the very explicit criticism that the development policies concerned have not given undivided attention to "growth" as such. I would not worry about growth *per se* mainly because in an economy characterised by wide disparities in resource power and "growth" is the increase in the goods and services produced, valued on the basis of market prices, unspecified growth is usually to the advantage of those who have large resource power.³⁴ In any case, if a choice has to be made between sacrificing growth and sacrificing the interests of people, I certainly would not agree to the human sacrifice! So, if in Kerala, people have been becoming better off and SDP has been stagnating, so be it!

However, the matter is not so simple. In its proper sense, the trade off between distribution and growth is between well being today and well-being tomorrow. In other words, what should be a matter of concern is whether policies pursued for the well being of people can be sustained over time. That is where the growth of SDP and its proper utilisation become matters of concern.

In at least two spheres, public

policy in Kerala - and I include not only the policies of government here, but also the public policies of private concerns - has been deficient from this perspective. The first is in relation to the use of surplus funds that accumulate in many hands in a rapidly commercialising economy. Such funds can be channelised into productive investment to raise productivity, incomes and use of resources in the future. Or they can be used for quick and speculative profits in the short run. Kerala has had a long history of mobilising surplus funds in different ways including via modern banking operations in which Travancore and Cochin had played pioneering roles³⁵ but the finance thus mobilised had been used mainly to generate more finance, but not much to facilitate more real growth. Even the enormous remittances that have come to the State from the Gulf regions in the seventies and eighties entered only the commercial, financial and speculative streams, and hardly any into real investment activity to raise productivity in the future. This has been a matter of colossal failure of policy, both of state policy and more so the policies and perspectives of the private sector.

Secondly, in an economy where the process of commercialisation has been throwing people out of agriculture, they can be productively absorbed only if manufacturing of a simple nature, but with potential for appropriate technological upgradation is consciously taken up. This too has not happened in Kerala, at least not anywhere near what it should have.

The two problem areas I have identified are closely related. The State has enormous trained human resources; it has the tremendous capacity to generate surplus funds both from within and from without. The two will have to be brought together for which appropriate infrastructural developments, technological innovations and organisational patterns will have to be attempted. Put differently, unless Kerala's ongoing commercial revolution is directed into an appropriate form of industrial revolution, it will dissipate itself. That is the challenge for the future.

IV

I might have closed on that note. But I cannot because Kerala has been drawn into a new phase of commercialisation by the economic policies initiated in the country since

1991. I have made rather detailed assessment of them elsewhere³⁶ which I shall not even try to summarise here. I shall touch briefly upon a couple of matters that are of special importance to Kerala. But a general observation about the new economic policies is necessary. I welcome the stated objectives of removing the excessive bureaucratic controls that the Indian economy in general and Indian industries in particular had come to have over the past few decades. I also believe that in terms of international trade in goods India can and should become more open. But the recent Indian economic reforms viewed in the global context and as the reform measures have been unfolding themselves, are not particularly geared to either of these. They are more an attempt to link up the Indian economy to the globe trotting finance capital increasingly under private control. There is a lot of invocation of free trade and market principle under this regime, but the freedom that is being canvassed is essentially for the movement of capital and the market principle that is being pushed is that exchange value must become the sole criterion in all major economic decisions. What is being propagated is, therefore, a new form of commercialisation which I would describe as indiscriminate commercialisation.

One of its implications will be to bring much closer parity between Indian domestic prices and global prices. If this were to happen Kerala would be affected primarily in terms of the price changes of rice and rubber. A recent study examining the prospects for Indian agriculture in the context of the emerging multilateral international trade pattern has shown that the world price of rice now is higher and of rubber lower than the prevailing Indian prices.³⁷ If by throwing open border trade, there is to be an increase in the internal price of rice and a fall in the internal price of rubber, consumers of rice and producers of rubber will be adversely affected. I leave it to you to infer what this is likely to mean to the day to day lives of vast sections of people in Kerala.

However, as I see it, changes in prices are not the main problem that the new policy can present to Kerala. No matter how the basic objectives of the reform measures are spelt out, their underlying principle is that all economic activities, trade and production in particular, must be subjected to the criterion of profitability of capital, whether Indian or foreign. Actually under the new dispensation, the distinction

between Indian and foreign capital largely disappears and hence it will be argued that the profitability of capital anywhere in the world is now emerging as the sole consideration for the determination of the patterns of production everywhere in the world. In layman's language, the argument has been presented as: "Potato chips, computer chips, what is the difference? They are all chips. A hundred dollars of one or a hundred dollars of the other is still a hundred dollars".³⁸ I am sure that in the years ahead arguments will be heard that Kerala's comparative advantage in the new international division of labour is for the production of banana chips and that the state must become the global production centre for banana chips - to the exclusion of any other and all other chips - to be exported to the Gulf areas, to the tigers of the East, to the flourishing Pacific Rim, to the vast expanses of the new Commonwealth of Independent States to our north, to the unified European Economy and, of course, to the United States of America which has shown a great deal of interest in banana kingdoms in all parts of the world. I am serious about this and I know that this "sound" economic argument will be put forward by many voices from within Kerala itself. Wherever there is wide disparities in economic power with a few people having liquid capital at their command - and Kerala still is a land of that kind - there will be a tendency to push for economic activities, especially trade related activities, that can result in quick and possibly high returns to that capital. That is also the essence of the new phase of commercialisation into which, along with the rest of the country Kerala is being invited and dragged to enter. The danger is more real for Kerala because it has had a long history of commercialisation and many contemporary conditions that favour the new global formula. One has only to recall the enthusiastic response that Kerala made to harvest quick profits by jumping into the shrimp export trade not long ago. My fear is that on a much larger scale, affecting the lives of many many more people, some new "opportunity" of that kind may present itself.

But from what I know of the later history of Kerala's shrimp escapade, I am sure also that the ordinary people of the State are enlightened enough and alert enough to figure out fairly soon what is good for them and what is not and have the tenacity and courage to defend their rights. I pin my hope on their vigilance. There is also a task for those of us who

are somewhat removed from the day to day struggles for survival. In the new context it is going to be more difficult to articulate the rights of the common people in sound economic categories and to translate them into appropriate political programmes. But I trust that this International Congress on Kerala Studies will remind us more than ever before that a major task of knowledge is to discern the complexities of real life and to provide a sense of direction for social change towards the achievements of a more fulfilling life to all members of society.

NOTES

1. I would like to express my gratitude to the pioneers of the Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram - K.N. Raj, P.G.K. Panikar, T.N. Krishnan and I.S. Gulati, in particular - for the encouragement given for regional development studies. My two studies on Tamil Nadu were Economic Change in Tamil Nadu (with Josef James, New Delhi, Allied Publishers, 1979) and Dynamics of Rural Transformation (Madras, Orient Longman, 1981).
2. The United Nations, especially its Economic and Social Council recognised the special features of Kerala's development experience in the early 1970s. See the Foreword in United Nations, Poverty, Unemployment and Development Policy: A Case Study of Selected Issues with reference to Kerala (New York, 1975), prepared by scholars at the Centre for Development Studies. In reviewing the study soon after its publication, I had raised some critical questions about the Kerala experience. See my review in Economic and Political Weekly, August 21, 1976 (Vol XI, No. 34).
3. See M.A. Oommen, "Land Reforms and Agrarian Change in Kerala since Independence in M.A. Oommen ed., Kerala Economy Since Independence (New Delhi, Oxford and IBH, 1979), Ronald Herring, Land to the Tiller: The Political Economy of Agrarian Reform in South Asia (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1983) P. Radhakrishnan, Peasant Struggles, Land Reforms and Social Change, Malabar 1836-1982 (New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1989).
4. See Economic and Political Weekly Sept 1 & 8 and 15, 1990 (Vol XXV

- Nos.35 & 36 and 37).
5. Apart from the papers in the EPW numbers mentioned above see also K.K.George, Limits to Kerala Model of Development (Centre for Development Studies Monograph Series, 1993).
 6. K.K.George, *op.cit* and M.A. Oommen, "Development Experience, Development Priorities and Fiscal Resources of Kerala" Chapter 9 in M.A. Oommen, Essays on Kerala Economy (New Delhi, Oxford & IBH, 1993).
 7. K.K.George, "Kerala's Fiscal Crisis: A diagnosis", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Sept.15, 1990 p. 2097.
 8. For an analysis see Chapter 7 in M.A. Oommen, Essays on Kerala Economy as cited in Note 6.
 9. K.T. Ram Mohan and K.Ravi Ram, "Of Cochin Stock Exchange and What it Means", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Jan 6, 1990 (Vol XXV No.1).
 10. P.G.K. Panikar and C.R.Soman, Health Status of Kerala: The paradox of Economic backwardness and Health Development (Trivandrum, Centre for Development Studies, 1984) p.46. It is recalled (p.50) that in 1928, the Government of Travancore requested the Rockefeller Foundation to depute an expert to tender advice to the government in the field of public health. The Foundation sent an expert and a programme of work, public health education and propaganda was prepared. See also P.N. Mari Bhat and S.Irudaya Rajan, "Demographic Transition in Kerala Revisited" in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Sept 1 & 8, 1990 (Vol XXV, Nos 35 & 36).
 11. P.C. Sarkar, "Regional Imbalances in Indian Economy over Plan Periods" *Economic and Political Weekly*, March 12, 1994 (Vol XXIX, No.11) 12. Chapter 1 in M.A. Oommen, Essays on Kerala Economy as cited in Note 6.
 13. H.R.Sharma, "Distribution of Landholding in rural India, 1953-54 to 1981-82: Implications for Land Reforms" *Economic and Political Weekly* March 26, 1994 (Vol XXIX, No.13) Review of Agriculture.
 14. C.T.Kurien, Growth and Justice: Aspects of India's Development Experience, (Madras, Oxford University Press, 1992) Chapter 3. The explanation is that in the 8th Round a plot of land was considered owned by a household only if the latter had a right of permanent heritable possession. But in the 17th Round the category of ownership was widened to include land held under grant or lease, or assigned by the government on a long-term basis. The latter definition has continued since then.
 15. Except when other sources are cited, I rely on the papers on Kerala published in *Economic and Political Weekly* in September 1990 as cited in Note 4.
 16. The figures are taken from Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, Basic Statistics Relating to the Indian Economy: 1993, Vol 2, States, September 1993.
 17. K.N.Raj in Introduction, K.N.Raj et al eds, Essays on the Commercialization of Indian Agriculture (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1985).
 18. See M.S.S. Pandian, Political Economy of Agrarian Change in Nanchilnadu: the Late Nineteenth Century to 1939 (New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1990).
 19. "The society of this age was certainly not unacquainted with either buying or selling. But it did not, like our own, live by buying and selling." Marc Bloch, Feudal Society (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965) Vol I p.67
 20. See World Bank, East Asian Miracle - Economic Growth and Public Policy, (New York, Oxford University Press for World Bank, 1993); Mukul G. Asher, "Some Aspects of Role of State in Singapore" *Economic and Political Weekly*, April 2, 1994 (Vol XXXIX No.14)
 21. Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, Performance of Agriculture by Major States, 1967-68 to 1991-92, August 1993. Chapter I
 22. CMIE, *op.cit* (as in note 21)
 23. Census of Population 1991, Series-1, paper 2 of 1992
 24. Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, Basic Statistics Relating to the Indian Economy: 1993, Vol.2, States, September 1993.
 25. N. Krishnaji, Pauperising Agriculture (Bombay, Oxford University Press, 1992) p.117

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27. I.S. Gulati and Ashoka Modi in their "Remittances of Indian Migrants to the Middle East" (Working Paper No.182, Centre for Development Studies, November 1983) estimated that in 1980-81 remittances formed between 22 and 28 per cent of Kerala's SDP. They must have moved to a higher proportion by the middle of the decade.
28. Oommen, *op.cit.*, p.156
29. For some helpful statistics see T.N.Krishnan, "Wages, Employment and Output in Inter-Related Labour Markets in an Agrarian Economy - A Study of Kerala" *Economic and Political Weekly* June 29, 1991 (Vol.XXVI No 26).
30. P.C. Sarkar, *loc.cit* (As in Note 11)
31. K.K.Subrahmanian, "Development Paradox in Kerala: Analysis of Industrial Stagnation" *Economic and Political Weekly*, Sept.15, 1990.
32. K.K. George, *op.cit* (as in Note 5)
33. T.K.Oommen, From Mobilisation to Institutionalisation: The Dynamics of Agrarian Movements in 20th Century Kerala, (Bombay, Popular Prakashan, 1985); P.Radhakrishnan, *op.cit* (as in Note 3); Richard W. Franke and Barbara H.Chasin, Kerala-Development through Radical Reform (New Delhi, Promilla & Co., 1992)
34. This follows from the logic of the market. See C.T.Kurien, The Economy-An Interpretative Introduction, (New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1992) Chapter 10.
35. See Chapter 5, M.A. Oommen, Essays on Kerala Economy (as cited in Note 6)
36. C.T. Kurien, Global Capitalism and the Indian Economy (New Delhi, Orient Longman, 1994).
37. Deepak Nayar and Abhijit Sen, "International Trade and Agricultural Sector in India", *Economic and Political Weekly*, May 14, 1994 (Vol.XXIX No.20)
38. Quoted by Clyde V.Prestowitz, Jr., "Beyond Laissez Faire" *Foreign Policy*, Summer - 1992.

KERALA: SOCIETY AND POLITICS**K. Saradamoni**

When I sat down to write this address I tried to picture before me the society of Kerala about which I am expected to talk. I had a sense of pride and the attempt appeared fascinating. Yet, I was filled with doubts and questions, discontent and disturbances, none of which I must tell you has made me frustrated.

How can we perceive or understand a society? Is the attempt even possible when in every society we can find diversities, variations and disparities? True, sociologists, philosophers and others concerned with studying society have tried to understand the social organism, its constituent parts and the relationships within and between all of them. We shall not enter here into the arguments and theories put forward by them. Our attempt is to capture, as far as possible, these diversities, and even contradictions, and place them against the background of the dreams of the people and the commitments made to them: the creation of a society where they could enjoy freedom, equality and dignity. For various reasons, this is only a preliminary attempt and cannot be treated as comprehensive. I take this conference as an attempt, again preliminary, to take stock of Kerala studies, find out the lacunae or distortions if any, or the absence of studies in relevant areas and see whether we can evolve a broad agenda for future academic studies and socio-political action. It is in this light that I try to share with you some of my observations and concerns.

The deliberations in this conference are taking place under four other major themes. A rather complete picture of Kerala Society would emerge only when we put together the observations emerging in all the sessions. I shall hence focus directly on a few important areas falling within our broad topic. As there are sessions dealing with Kerala history let us concentrate on contemporary Kerala with occasional flash-backs to the past. According to the Census of Kerala 1991, this part of the country which occupies 1.27% of the total land area has a population of 2.90 crores, which forms 3.44% of the total Indian population of 84.6 crores. These numbers alone do not

say even a partial story, yet they do play an important role in the social, economic and political spheres. However, we do not depend too much on them to understand the complex, and sometimes contradictory, realities of present day Kerala. Again, Kerala is not an isolated unit. Its interaction with the world outside is greater than ever before.

Kerala is 'accepted' as a state where many of the social indicators are positive and different from the rest of India. They include favourable sex ratios for women (Kerala 1036, India 927 per 1000 males), greater life expectancy and literacy rate, falling infant mortality rate and acceptance of the small family norm by a larger proportion of families. Kerala is also known for its radical politics, being the first state where a communist party was elected to power. Other special features of the state are widespread education, and 'progressive' measures like agrarian reforms, the fixing of relatively higher minimum wages, pension schemes for widows, older persons among agricultural labourers and others from unorganised sectors and a higher level of awareness among the people about their rights and dignity. To some extent atleast, a section of the educated people have imbued the idea that they are different, if not one-up when compared to the rest of the country. Other achievements like primary health centres, library movement, writers' co-operatives, and a high circulation of newspapers are slightly less known. For a balanced understanding of the situation we have also to take into account many other facts which are of great concern. They include soaring unemployment, changes in cropping pattern, a fall in the area under paddy cultivation, the exodus of the young and able-bodied to other parts of India and abroad in search of work. Demographic changes, emerging contradictions in women's situation, the near break-up of joint families, emergence of nuclear families and disappearance of old family kinship ties have not received the attention they warrant. Virtually almost all items of consumption have to be imported but no serious attempt has been made to tackle this question. Environmental degradation and the non-

availability of clean drinking water for a section of the people have come to be acknowledged, but they deserve more urgent attention. A somewhat exaggerated projection of the state's achievements has without doubt resulted in dimming those issues which should have been at the centre of our thinking and development process.

We welcomed the birth of Kerala State on November 1, 1956 with great enthusiasm and considered it a dream come true. It meant the administrative unity of a people who were already unified by a common heritage, common language, culture and concerns. The society of Kerala on that day was not what it was in 1901. The people had come a long way from a society bound by rigid caste rules and social distances and hierarchical land relations. The intervening period witnessed the massive involvement of the people in the struggle for independence from colonial rule, social reform movements, the formation of political parties, and the building of closer links with the rest of India. These had instilled in the people a zest as well as expectations and hope when they entered the new Kerala. The election of the communist party to power and the formation of a Left Government in 1957 was the result of the enthusiasm on the part of the people to create a new social order. The formation of Kerala State also coincided with the Second Five Year Plan. The Central Government and the Congress party which were aware of the imbalance in our socio-economic system decided on "upliftment" of the weaker and less privileged and "poverty alleviation" schemes, special programmes and social legislations, leaving plenty of opportunities for the haves, or well-to-do, or clever players in the game to "make it" in the system. But, in a democracy where political parties depended on the votes of the masses, concern for the people "below the poverty line" could not be avoided. Kerala cannot be said to have remained outside this thrust.

It is with this background that I look at Kerala Society and Politics since 1956. The enthusiasm of the people and the coming to power of a communist led government is already mentioned. This undoubtedly paved the way for the formation in later years of non-Congress governments in many other states and also at the Centre. One of the primary tasks of the new government was the drafting of an agrarian relations bill which, in the words of E.M.S., was to "carry out policies announced by the Congress

Central Government, but unimplemented by Congress State Governments" (Herring, 1983). This piece of legislation passed through several vicissitudes before becoming the Kerala Land Reforms Amendment Act (1969), which has received much acclaim. By having achieved this Kerala is spoken of as having gone "way ahead of the rest of the country" (Oommen, 1993). However even those who have hailed the land reforms in Kerala as a success story have not left unnoticed the fact that the slogan "land to the tiller" was not implemented. One can find in the literature a great deal of discussion on and explanations of the term "tiller". Reservations are expressed even by those people who do not wish to dismiss the impact of land reforms Kerala land reform and give credit to the state for having abolished "feudal landlordism" (Oommen, 1993). One, land has not passed on to a "class of sturdy self-cultivating peasantry" (Oommen, 1993). Two, a large number of "absentee" farmers are also teachers, shop keepers, lawyer, government servant and politicians. It is by now admitted that a large number of agricultural households receive most or a substantial share of their income from non-agricultural sources. The primary beneficiaries have been found to be "rich peasants" viz., those who do some agricultural work, but depend significantly on wage labourers. It is also found that the old landlords have been replaced by a "new tier of proprietors who are neither tillers nor primarily engaged in agriculture" (Herring, 1983). A still more disquieting finding is the alienation of tribal lands (Oommen, 1983). After extensive field work in Palghat to study the effect of the changes in the agrarian structure on women I came to the conclusion that "progressive" legislations had been a slide-back for women (Saradamoni, 1991). I found a good number of women who had lost their not too large holdings, their only source of income, and were living in desperation and near destitution.

What benefits did the land reforms bring to the large body of agricultural labourers? These women and men who were the main body of tillers or actual cultivators and the majority of whom belonged to the erstwhile class of agrestic slaves were also landless and could not stake claims as tenants. So the rights they got over their hutments or kudikidappu is regarded as a major achievement. It has been observed, 'although quantitatively the gains to the

agricultural labourers in terms of redistribution of land might not have been very impressive, qualitatively the left has emerged as a stronger force in the country side, especially in the struggle for better working conditions for the labourers' (Krishnaji, 1992). During my field work mentioned above I asked the women labourers what they considered to be the major change in their life. Most of them answered "fixed hours of work", and added that the landlords could not call for them to work before the break of dawn as before. In answer to another question on how much land they would like to own to make a living from cultivation, the answers ranged between 50 cents to 1.50 acres. All of them said that the fields should be irrigated. Some mentioned double cropping too. Are they still waiting for land?

To answer this we have to see some other developments on the agricultural front. Though we still have some farmers who are committed to cultivation with passion and determination (programmes on television by Hailey and friends), the agricultural sector in Kerala has been declining or slowing down. The reclamation of paddy lands for cash crops and residential purposes has been a very disturbing trend. This has thrown large numbers of female and male labourers out of work and our dependence on other states for food crops has increased. A recent study indicates that paddy is cultivated only in slightly more than three-fourth of the area traditionally utilised for paddy cultivation (Somasekharan Nair,). Paddy cultivation has traditionally given women labourers the maximum number of days of work and we have no data on what has happened to the displaced women. We find many of them in quarry and construction work. Where have the others gone? Social scientists, mainly economists working in this areas have offered technological stagnation (Kannan and Pushpangadan, 1990), "absentee landlordism" and speculative trading in land (Oommen, 1993), and rising real wages as the reasons for agricultural stagnation. The state's performance in terms of production and productivity is also found to be the worst since the 'seventies (Bhalla and Tyagi quoted by Oommen, 1993). In such a situation any improvement in the work conditions or life of the workers cannot be expected. They continue to be plagued by severe problems of under employment and malnutrition (Panikar quoted by Herring, 1983). It is no wonder that the Kerala Agricultural Workers Act of 1974

described as the Magna Carta of labourers by the minister who piloted the bill, and which received wide publicity thereafter, is a forgotten chapter even in Kerala.

The significance of land ownership has changed remarkably in the last few decades. It is no more the symbol of social prestige and power. Lands have been divided, subdivided and sold several times. We do not have any worthwhile information on the socio-political impact of land reforms. It can be said that land reforms did not restructure the agrarian structure and bring greater fairness and justice to the smaller cultivator and traditional labourers. A fall in production and productivity added to their difficulties. And many were pushed out of their traditional occupation and livelihood, and bereft of their skill and knowledge. Many small farmers who do not have a non-agricultural income feel that agriculture alone does not fetch them 'sufficient' income and respectability. Even if land reforms had fared better at the implementation stage, it would not have brought about fairness, not to speak of equality, in ownership of land or income. The situation appears worse now, when the slogan of cultivate and export is raised. There are already persons engaged in floriculture and horticulture mainly for export. Should we wait and see the implications of this on a chronically food deficit region which imports even vegetables and flowers for domestic use.

When I was writing this a young man came to me in connection with a market survey. A well brought out hand-out said 'Maxworth Green Harvest Limited Brings to Kerala Fresh Fruits and Vegetables at Your Door Step'. When I said that I was against their coming as I did not think that there was any need for a multinational company to take the place of the women who bring fruits and vegetables at my door step, he said that he too thought the same. He added that he was aware of the implications of the GATT agreement, but, he had to do this for earning his 'livelihood'. I remained silent, but exclaimed to myself, 'future Kerala!'. He walked away sad and disturbed.

Industries have never been a strong point of Kerala. We can say with confidence that the industrial sector cannot cover up the dismal performance of the agricultural sector. There are many sessions in this conference dealing with different aspects of industrialisation. We are trying briefly to raise a few questions regarding industries and people's expectations of a new social

order in 1956. The State did not have too many industries and also raw materials like coal and iron. But we had the experience before us of states like Punjab and Tamilnadu which had industries without such raw materials. In the sixties itself, a Techno Economic Survey of the State was prepared by the National Centre for Applied Economic Research. People at the helm of affairs knew and believed that industrialization would bring about higher growth modernisation and create a skilled work force, who would be a force in socio-political action and change. Why this has not happened is a serious question that all concerned should ask. It is necessary for more than one reasons. One, all the traditional industries like coir, cashew, beedi making, handloom are facing problems of one kind or other. These industries have been giving work - however low skilled and low-earning they may be - to lakhs of workers, particularly women. The survival of lakhs of families depends upon the future of these industries. The introduction of upgraded skill and technology, diversification, and retention of these workers should be one of our primary concerns, because no amount of industrialization could absorb so many people. Fisheries, according to official sources have become an important foreign exchange earner, but there too the traditional fisher people are engaged in constant struggles for their own survival and against the depletion of the fish resources of the sea. Second, unemployment in the state which is estimated to be about 43 lakhs needs renewed attention. There is an argument that this number includes some who are already employed and also students. The exclusion of the latter need not make a marked change in the total.

Even when ministers or others in authority speak of the interest foreign and NRI investors show in setting up industries in Kerala they do not indicate how much employment would be generated. On the other hand, both government and non-government spokes-persons point out that the future is for the self-employed. While much needs to be changed and corrected as far as employment in the organised sector is concerned, the average Keralite thinks that entry into government service alone would fetch them regular work and income, privileges and security. At the same time the people, particularly lower class women respond positively to government schemes. This is clear from the way in which they react when schemes are announced, training

courses are arranged and also when they come with their products at sales melas and exhibitions. If there is repetition - too many units making garments, pickles and other edible items - or if there is no standardisation they are not to be blamed. We can easily produce atleast 30 per cent of the goods currently imported from nearby states. But the Government should have confidence and responsibility in organization at the initial stages. This would include providing raw materials, credit, publicity and marketing. This warrants a change in the authorities' perception of the unemployed, as an untapped potential and not as so many lakhs of idle women and men. Though problems of unemployment crop up now and again in seminars, articles and the like, one cannot believe that there is a genuine concern and an urge to solve the problem either at the government or non-government level. The experience of the state during the Kuwait war showed that employment in the Gulf countries can not be taken for granted. Yet migration is welcomed by both the authorities as well as families. Among the migrants to the Gulf countries, nearly 91 per cent are males, with 88 per cent in the age group 20-40, 81 per cent are married and the 'model' frequency of visit of the migrants to Kerala is around once in three years (Somasekharan Nair). There are some studies related to these questions but a full length study of the economic, social psychological, cultural and familial impact of this migration is yet to be undertaken.

We always hear the term educated unemployed. We have not seriously thought whether 'educated' is used as an adjective to mark them off as a distinct category or as a disqualification to the unemployed. For a change let us think of the educated employed and highly placed among them. Some or many of them today may be the products of the elite schools that are increasing in number, but elite schools need not produce better scholars or equip the student with social perception and long term abilities. Not much research is needed to find out who they are and what made them "succeed". However we have to note that Kerala which had a tradition both of literacy and numbers of schools made quantum leaps in both in recent decades. Most of the children are within walking distance of a neighbourhood school. Most parents from the unorganised sector, especially mothers, send their children to school hoping that some schooling can help them move out of their uncertain work and insecure life. Not many of these parents

have seen their wish fulfilled. It is certainly not because the children lack intelligence. But most of them are the first generation of school goers. They are of course not able to spend money on "additional" coaching or tuitions which have become an integral part of the education system. Even the student who comes out with the highest rank (and her or his parents) do not feel confident if their ward doesn't get 'special' instruction. Many of us who belong to an earlier generation can say with authority that one can complete a good education without attending any of these tutorial institutions. For that education at school should be different from what it is today. A collective effort is immediately needed to save education from the depth to which it has sunk, and also to regain its social purpose which it has lost.

One question that has suddenly started bothering the demographer, other social scientists and some medical personnel is the "alarming rate of growth" of the elderly (60+) in the State. The time when demographers felt happy about the "demographic transition" in Kerala, the model state which made it like the developed countries of the west is still in our memory. Now it is said that general well-being and medical care facilities in addition to fall in fertility and mortality have combined to make their impact felt on the society. The rate of growth of the elderly which was 35 per cent during 1961-71 rose to 59 per cent during 1971-81. When Kerala had a rate of growth from 5.3 per cent to 7.6 per cent during 1961-81, for all India it was 5.6 per cent to 6.4 per cent for the corresponding period (Santhosh). Seminars and television programmes inform us about the gravity of this situation which is riddled with many problems. At one level the seriousness of the problem gets accentuated when we realise that the retirement (for those who have such employment) age in Kerala is 55. An average person remains healthy and fit to work at that age. But if the retirement age is raised it would be at the cost of the millions waiting to be employed. This anyhow is not the only problem and the millions outside Government service are not affected by it. But the fact that single person households have been on the rise for several years should get our attention. In this matter too, the experience of the well-to-do and others is not the same. More and more of the affluent sections are setting up comfortable 'old age homes' where all needs are taken care. They can do this

out of their own savings or with the support of well-placed children abroad. I have no intention of saying that all the rich people are in this enviable situation but they are free from other problems of old age. But for the majority, it is a harsh problem. Finance is important, but that is not the only issue. It is time that this becomes a problem of concern outside seminar halls and a community awareness is generated, because it touches a vital aspect, though not recognised, of the functioning of the society, viz. inter-personal relationships.

Experts are trying to point out the role of the family in taking care of the aged (P.K.B. Nayar,) whom they classify into young old, old old and oldest old. Even amongst us we can find persons who lead a normal, healthy life even beyond 90. But they do not form the majority, who are prone to various kinds of disabilities, physical, and psychological. However imperfect and unsatisfactory they may be, the care of the sick and elderly is undertaken now by the family. But with the changing pattern of the family and increasing number of the elderly, it may put greater stress on the family, particularly on women members.

It is necessary at this juncture to look into the family in present day Kerala. I am both surprised and disturbed that the question of changing family and kinship has not found a place in this conference. What constitutes today's Kerala family? Plenty of research in recent times has exposed many myths about the family and households. The much publicised happy and contented family of husband, wife and two children is not the reality. Many in Kerala would say that we have made the "progressive" transition from matrilineal joint family to nuclear family much ahead of other states. So also the acceptance of the small family norm. What we do not emphasise is that along with demographic changes, lack of employment opportunities, migration and our individualism single person households are on the increase. In the case of female headed households also Kerala ranks very high. These women have the primary responsibility in earning and sustaining their households even at a low level of living. They include widows, but not all of them. They are deserted, separated or divorced. In many households the husband or able bodied male members may be present but either due to unemployment, old age and sickness or laziness they do not bring in any income, and the burden is pushed to women. Their

struggle to eke out a living in a situation where opportunities for work in any sector is on the decline is beyond description.

In this connection I have to report one of my experiences in Vypeen island. I walked into a relatively poor house and the sight of a very large number of plastic cans caught my attention. Two young women there collect water from the wayside taps and sell them to boatmen for bathing. Similarly they wash, starch and iron their clothes, all for payment. These ingenious survival tactics do not get noted and counted by data collecting agencies and even researchers.

In this connection we have to think a little about female migration from Kerala. I am not referring to the migration of nurses, typists and stenographers to recognised and known places in India and abroad. They do have their problems, which have to be sorted out. I do not know how many of you present here are aware of young and ill-equipped girls being lured to places, far away from home. Some years back hair raising stories of a girl's experience in the prawn peeling centres in Gujarat or Bombay coast appeared as front page news in newspapers. Now lots of young girls go in search of work, money and perhaps some amount of freedom to Delhi, Bombay or some middle East Countries. Though they have not caught the attention of reporters many of us know that they have neither decent work nor place to stay. They are put to hardships and exposed to anti social elements.

This should be a matter of great concern for all of us. It is also common knowledge that prostitution is on the increase in Kerala. But we have preferred to close our eyes to many a reality. We have also remained silent about the severe stress to which many families belonging to all classes are put. The reasons can be unemployment and insufficient income or inability to satisfy increasing needs. Equally important are the spreading menace of alcoholism and drug abuse, increasing male oppression which can take the form of physical violence, mental torture, indifference and distancing. Women who are engaged in woman focussed studies and women activists all over the world have been talking about inequality, discrimination and violence within the home and also the interlinkages between public and private domain or family. Unfortunately the echoes of these have not penetrated the walls of our beautiful state.

It is of immediate importance that

we have an idea of the present day Kerala family, its age-sex composition, sources of its economic, social and emotional support, access and control of resources and decision making, interaction of members within the family, and interaction of each member with neighbourhood and society beyond. Such a study undertaken without pre-conceived notions and with sensitivity would throw up many not noticed and "ignored" aspects of Kerala society. One of the most important findings would be the not so enviable status of women in Kerala. There was a time when Kerala was referred to as the land where women ruled. Our men, especially the English educated middle class, found this very embarrassing and the story since then is the establishment and perfecting of male domination. In overt and subtle ways it continues even today. I started by referring to the favourable sex ratio prevailing in the State. We read with pleasure foreigners' observations about the rows of small girls walking to the school early in the morning. We remember with pride, women cashew, coir and agricultural workers' militant struggles against exploitation and oppression and for minimum fairness and justice. We see with happiness the photographs of girls who have stood first in various examinations on the front pages of newspapers. However, we refuse to think that women in public life are noticeable by their absence. This conference itself is a good example. It is a very serious question that we have to pose regarding the invisibility of women in the world of politics (except as voters), literature, arts and culture and in debates on issues of wider concern and interests. There is no evidence to think that they are incapable. The media particularly the cinema, the TV serials and advertisement not only strengthen the stereotype image of women, but also devalue women and send wrong messages. News about dowry and related issues including death, marital discord leading to quarrels, violence, murder or suicide are on the increase. Yet no political party or N.G.O. has thought it necessary to discuss these questions in the open. The Kerala Desiya Vedi which is doing admirable work in highlighting the wastage that is taking place in the name of marriage expenses has not raised questions about the institution of marriage and the unequal relationship on which it is based. If divorces are on the rise among the middle and upper classes, desertion is a common practice among the lower strata (Desabhimani). There was a time when we

thought that 'economic independence, by which we meant an independent income, would liberate women. From their own experience, women all over the world began to say that much more than economic independence alone is needed and pointed out intra-household differences in access to resources, the unequal division of labour, domestic and external violence etc. The radical male world appears to have not heard these. A.K. Sen, while elaborating his 1985 paper Women, Technology and Social Divisions talks about the earnings different members make from outside the family. In his opinion this income is very noticeable and has a role to play in the division of benefits within the family. "Those who work outside the home - and that tends more often to be the men rather than the women - often happen to get a disproportionate share of the joint benefits" (Swedberg, 1991). I am disturbed on various counts. The United Nations itself has admitted that more than 30 per cent of the households are female headed. The survival of much more than 30 per cent of the households depends on women who, though not employed for salary, seek work outside the home. Even in Bengal, much more than generally accepted number of women earn by working outside the home and contribute significantly to household sustenance (Saradamoni). Besides all this a sizeable section of women in Kerala have the right to own property, have been educated and employed and have independent income. But many of them - certainly not all - in private would admit that they have no control over their earnings.

Kerala women's subordination has been observed by women and men who are generally pro-left and sympathetic to the communist parties (Richard Franke and Barbara Chasin, 1992; Kannan, 1988; and Jeffrey, 1993). To explore the reasons behind this phenomenon is a challenge to all political parties. Answers to this will throw up not only issues related to women's invisibility and subordination but also orthodoxy, bindings and constraints within the society. Even the 'progressive' men (lots of women too) think that women are to be 'protected'. This less than equal if not subordinate relationship reflects society's overall norms regarding human relationships which is well captured in the story of the film *Vidheyam*.

I have tried to touch upon a few key elements which have surfaced in the evolution of present day Kerala society. These and many other features like change and continuity, stratification, caste and

class, conflicts, adaptation and compromise would be discussed in detail in the various sessions. The period since 1956 has witnessed development efforts as conceived in the Five Year Plans of the Central and State governments, expansion of a strong bureaucracy, and intense political action. Developmental efforts were mainly oriented towards economic growth which was to be brought about by greater investment, modernisation and technological advancement. Social development which is equated with social services including education and health is also recognised, concern for the "weaker" or "less privileged" sections is expressed through "special" programmes and schemes, which are renewed and enlarged from time to time. Independent India created a hierarchy of positions in the government sector. The result has been a bureaucracy with different levels of power, authority status and influence who hold the key to policy making and implementation.

The "political" front became more vibrant in the same period. Though many people identify politics with political parties, politics has entered the day-to-day life of people including those who think that they have no politics. Writing in the context of the overthrow of the first Communist government, E.M.S. Namboodiripad wrote more than twenty five years ago, that the people had seen with their own eyes how the Congress had for long misruled the state, how it was unable to maintain its own internal unity. "The record of ministerial crisis and changes, manipulations and intrigues by its leaders, individually and in groups, had thoroughly discredited it as the ruling party". In contrast he called his ministers "a group of dedicated servants of the people, rather than self-seekers who use politics for their own personal and factional ends". It is hard to believe that this is how people differentiate political parties and leaders today.

A few months back I had been to a village in Eastern U.P. One morning while talking to a group of young men they said in great anguish, that *bhrashtachar* was their biggest problem. I use the same word because I feel that it conveys more than the English word corruption. They called corruption in their state a cancerous attack on the body politic and the social system. They did not approve of it, but felt caught in it, therefore helpless. Though corruption in our state captures headlines in our news papers, we are capable of consoling ourselves that

the situation is not as bad as in UP or Bihar. Corruption is corruption and it kills innocent people's morale and confidence in the system. We cannot say that this is not happening in our State. Politics which is not forward looking and which is bereft of idealism encourages favouritism, factions, manoeuvrings, distrust among people and subservience to leaders. An average Keralite believes that nothing moves - whether it be an admission to school, hospital or transfer - without "connection" and "contact". Even those who do not know English use these words freely. They think that this is politics: a perception shared across caste and class, and differences of poor or rich.

The role of caste/community/religious groups in Kerala's politics has become more visible and decisive. One would have expected them to continue with the unfinished tasks started during the social reforms period. In the choice of candidates the voting strength of different caste/religious groups was always considered by all political parties. Now they have become independent forces, able to play the number game, and with the ability to instil in an increasing number of people the desire to have a caste/religious identity.

Lobbying has also become part of Kerala politics. The slogan and strategies which evoked fear and which were risky once have become common place and are being used by all. In the political struggles which have become a day-to-day affair one does not hear a clamour for change or see an alternate formula or a vision of a new society which is more just and fair emerging. Very often a demonstration, or bandh is to say 'no' to certain decisions or developments or it is to demand a greater share of the gains or benefits the present patterns of development offers.

Can we dismiss these phenomena as the inevitable consequences of the brand of capitalism developing in a small state in a big, third world democracy? Or is it because elections and seeking votes and coming to power through them necessitates endless compromises and limitations? Or is it to be in line with the people's desires and aspirations which are influenced by several factors and forces outside political parties? Do we see greater alignment or polarisation on the basis of caste or class?

"Erosion of values", particularly in public life is something which we always hear. I do not know whether everyone endows a single meaning to this

expression. It is necessary both for academics and politicians to know how values, beliefs, behavioural norms and ideas about personal and societal aspirations have been generated and inculcated in different generations. Without this we shall not understand the undercurrent of cynicism and unease that has become part of the individual Keralite and of society as a whole. Fortunately, cynicism is not the only story. Individuals and small groups engaged in enquiries about or struggles of women, environment, dalits and tribals, fisherpeople etc. are raising new questions. They are finding space in the political horizon and in the consciousness of more and more people which will add new dimensions to political thinking and social process. This can also encourage still more people to be drawn into issues concerning the people, society and the future. Here I would like to raise a question relating to a very sensitive issue. Why has not the number of people who are to be helped or brought into the mainstream through 'reservation' successively reduced in Kerala? Kerala has fared relatively better in the implementation of reservation policy. Still it is a big political issue; what are our experiences? To what extent and how does reservation help? To what extent does "absorption" through reservation minimise or hide other forms of backwardness and deprivations? How can we incorporate these questions as in-built components of development strategy? The same questions apply to women as well. Why are not 30, 40 or even 50 per cent of women candidates elected from Kerala to the Lok Sabha, Assembly Elections and local bodies? Why are we not in a position to say, "We do not want this gift of 33 per cent? We have more women than that already in an elected bodies". Those to me would have been a sure indicator of Kerala's uniqueness, and a lesson for other states.

The touchstone of our achievement depends on the answer we get to questions such as: is this the society that Ayyankali envisaged when he asked women agricultural workers to stop work till their children were admitted to school, is this the society that Sri Narayana Guru wished for when he consecrated the Shiva idol in the temple at Aruvippuram and is this the society that Kelappan, AKG and hundreds of women and men dreamed of? I cannot think that they have become irrelevant. These and endless other questions would crop up when we individually and collectively develop or

desire to understand the people and society. Nagam Aiya, then Devan Peishkar and Census Commissioner observed in 1906 that the Travancorean was a stay-at-home person. 63 per cent of those who went out of the state were in Cochin. Of 83 persons who had been enumerated outside Madras, 74 were in Mysore, 8 in Coorg and 1 in Baroda (State Manual of Travancore). Within a period of one hundred years the people seem to have realised that their motherland cannot offer them decent work and living. Prof. Ayyappan, a decade back thought that Keralites had a strong Kerala identity and he compared them to the Jews. Today I am compelled to think that they are trying to get rid of it. Of course, people would have their reason and compulsions. What are they?

Way back in 1971, Dr. K.N. Raj, while addressing the Foundation Day Inauguration of the A.N. Sinha Institute of Social Studies, Patna "provocatively" stated that the social scientists' contribution to the understanding of the forces at work in India on the whole had been limited. I do not know what Dr. Raj thinks today about the Indian social scientists. Here is a challenge to all of us, social Scientists and social activists.

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PAPERS OF THE SYMPOSIA

2

A NOTE ON KERALA'S DEVELOPMENT ACHIEVEMENTS

V. K. Ramachandran

(This note is the concluding section of a draft paper titled "Kerala's Development Achievements: A Review")

This paper attempted to review and analyse the most important social and economic development achievements of the people of Kerala.

There has been a progressive transformation in Kerala of the health and demographic conditions characteristic of less-developed societies, and the state is far ahead of the rest of India in respect of these conditions. The expectation of life at birth of males was 67 years and a half, against an Indian average of 56 years, and the expectation of life at birth of females was 73 years, against an Indian average of 56 years and a half (life expectancy at birth of males in Kerala has since crossed 70 years). The birth rate in Kerala was 18.5 per thousand in 1990-92, against an Indian average of 29.5 per thousand. The death rate was 6.1 per thousand against an Indian rate of 9.8 per thousand. The infant mortality rate was 17 per thousand against an Indian average of 79 per thousand. There were 1040 females per thousand males in Kerala's population, against an Indian average of 928.

The ratio of medical establishments to population is substantially higher in Kerala than the rest of India. In an area of mass literacy, and where social and political consciousness are high, people demand more health facilities, use the health system more, and use it better. Recent data indicate that the rate of immunisation of boys and girls is higher than elsewhere and that immunization is not determined by the level of income.

While the evidence is of progressive change in the pattern of morbidity and of improved facilities to deal with illness, medical evidence also indicates that much remains to be done to control the incidence of water-borne and air-borne infections in Kerala.

Nutrition levels have improved in Kerala after the 1970s, and, according to official data, household consumption levels were higher than the Indian average by the late 1980s. The public food-distribution system, the best among India's states, gives basic nutritional support to the people of Kerala. There is a two-tier system of public distribution of essential commodities. The system was extended and consolidated from the second half of the 1970s. Of the population of the state, 90 per cent held ration cards (which entitle households to buy subsidised rice, wheat, sugar, cooking oil and kerosene), and the average amount of foodgrain bought from ration shops by an individual in Kerala was 69.6 kg in 1991. The corresponding figures for Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in 1989 were 6 kg and 8 kg.

Kerala is the only state in India where there is mass literacy (and near-total literacy among adolescents and youth), and the proportion of child workers in the population is the lowest in India. Kerala was the only state of India where the socio-economic arrangements were in place to absorb international advances in the last three decades in epidemiology and public health.

The people of Kerala have altered radically a system of agrarian relations that was among the most complex,

burdensome and exploitative in India, and have won important victories against some of the most monstrous forms of caste oppression in India. Public action in recent decades has attempted to bridge the gap in health and educational facilities and achievements between the districts of the north and the districts of the south, a gap that widened during the period of colonial rule. The modern state of Kerala has also introduced a series of interesting protective social security measures that attempt to provide pensions and other payments to working people in the so-called "informal" sector, and to destitute and physically handicapped persons.

The achievements of the people of Kerala are the result of major social, economic and political transformations. They were possible because there was mass literacy; because agrarian relations were transformed; because there were important changes in the conditions of unfreedom of the people of the oppressed castes; because of enlightened social attitudes towards girls' and women's survival and education, and because of the public policy interventions of governments in Kerala. All of these conditions are replicable.

The case of Kerala is an outstanding example of the importance of literacy for social and economic progress. Widespread literacy was a condition precedent of every major health and demographic achievement of the people of Kerala. The achievement of mass literacy in Kerala required -- just as the achievement of mass literacy in India will require -- mass schooling. Mass literacy was not achieved in Kerala until basic caste, gender, and class obstacles to literacy were overcome; that is, until literacy was gained by people of the oppressed castes, by women, by the working people, and by the rural and urban poor.

It is worth emphasising, at the risk of some repetition, two issues regarding the place and role of women in Kerala's development achievements. First, Kerala's women have made outstanding gains in the fields of education and health and are more equal participants with men in education and health achievements than in any other part of India. Kerala is the only state where mass literacy has been achieved; it follows that mass female literacy has been achieved. Literacy among adolescent girls was almost universal in 1986-87. Women's literacy is supported by society and the state, and there has never been any organised opposition to female

literacy and education in Kerala. At 73 years, female life expectancy at birth in Kerala is higher than in China. Girls and women have access to the health care system in Kerala, and primary-data-based surveys show that, in general, the rates of immunisation of girls are as high as of boys. As a result of progressive social attitudes in Kerala towards the survival of girls and towards female survival in general, the proportion of females in the population was 1040 per thousand males; the all-India average was 928.

Secondly, Kerala's experience is a dramatic example of the role of women's agency in advancing the social and economic development of a society. Female literacy and education are crucial determinants of child survival, general health and hygiene. These, in turn, determine progress in other demographic and health indicators: the expectancy of life at birth, the birth and death rates, the infant mortality rate and general morbidity. Kerala's achievements in the sphere of health would have been impossible without female literacy, and without an enlightened social attitude towards the survival of girl children and women. Female literacy ensures next-generation literacy; literate mothers generally have literate children. Women in Kerala have been, historically, important rank-and-file participants in the trade union movement (and particularly in the coir and cashew industries and in the plantations), in the peasant and agricultural labour movements and the movement for land reform, and in the movement for food.

All this is not, of course, to make exaggerated claims of total liberation. Work participation rates among women in Kerala, for instance, are very low, and the representation of women is very low in elected bodies -- Parliament, the Legislative Assembly and local bodies -- and in trade union executives, even in trade unions in occupations where most workers are women. The women's movement in Kerala has drawn attention to dowry-related deaths in Kerala and to other crimes against women. Nevertheless, the extraordinary historic gains of women cannot be underestimated; it is simply wrong to dismiss the achievements of women as superficial.

In the specific case of Kerala, the mass political movements led by the Communist Party and the communist governments that came to power in 1957, 1967, 1980 and 1987 were crucial agents of socio-political change. In nineteenth-century Kerala, missionary

activity and government policy in the princely states (particularly Travancore) played a foundational role in establishing a climate of official support for education and public health. The pervasive influence of the matrilineal system was important in determining social attitudes towards women's survival, women's education and women's health. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, social reform organisations of people of the oppressed castes emerged as pioneers of anti-caste social reform and as the first organisers of democratic socio-political movements among rural working people.

The crises in the spheres of employment and material production are perhaps the most pressing economic problems in Kerala at present. The present situation of a low- to no-growth economy is neither desirable nor politically viable (and it is no surprise that transforming the conditions of production in the economy is the task that many on the left in Kerala see as their most important task today). It is necessary also that we remember that there are many people in Kerala's population among whom conditions of education and health are unacceptably poor, and to whom the so-called "Kerala model" does not extend: among them are sections of the people of the scheduled tribes (particularly in north Malabar), of the fishing communities and of the scheduled castes. Among them are also the members of the new underclass of migrant workers (mainly from Tamil Nadu) who work at a wide range of manual tasks in contemporary Kerala.

Although it is not the objective of this paper to attempt a detailed analysis of the causes of industrial and agricultural stagnation in Kerala, or to attempt some kind of blueprint for

production and employment in the state, some general points can be made. First, market forces will not ensure that productive investment appears spontaneously; transformation in the spheres of production and employment requires public intervention. It requires the conscious policy attention of governments and intervention by political parties and mass organisations. Secondly, it is clear, and there is general scholarly consensus, that state-supported infrastructural investment is crucial for industrial and agricultural growth in Kerala. Thirdly, the potential for the expansion of skilled employment in Kerala is extraordinary. Unlike the rest of India, where schemes for mass employment are basically earth-work projects that involve unskilled work or work that requires low skills, Kerala is a region where even schemes for mass employment can draw on a labour force, rural and urban, whose members are literate, with high levels of political and social consciousness. Fourthly, any plan for rural economic growth in Kerala must consider the very promising opportunities for growth based on the mixed cultivation of diverse crops that require skilled crop management, with support, particularly in respect of marketing, from public institutions and that involve new forms of production organisation.

To reiterate the major conclusion of this paper, Kerala's achievements were possible because of mass literacy and because traditional patterns of gender, caste and class dominance were transformed radically. In the conditions of contemporary India, it is worth remembering that public action, and not policies of globalisation and liberalisation, was the locomotive of Kerala's progress.

LIVING AQUATIC RESOURCES OF KERALA: NEED FOR CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

2

N. Balakrishnan Nair

The importance of living aquatic resources in the economy of the state has been stressed. The main developmental schemes coming under the purview of the fresh water sector are enumerated.

The extent of the fishable waters, the nature of production and the share of the State in the all-India production are indicated.

A detailed account is presented of

the inland fishery resources, involving both the capture and culture fisheries and of the constraints confronted by this sector in Kerala. The steps to be taken for the development of fresh water fisheries have been suggested.

An account is furnished of the important brackish water resources comprising an area of nearly 55,000 hectares; the nature of anthropogenic stress on this system in recent times such as deforestation, reclamation of backwaters for non-fishing purposes, destruction of mangroves, infestation by noxious aquatic weeds, dredging of the lake bottom and the problem of pollution. The nature of fishing pressure on this system is highlighted and the imperative need for conservation and management has been stressed.

The prospects for marine fisheries are explained, the need for diversification expressed and the importance of mariculture for substantial increase in the production of sea foods emphasised. Over exploitation of resources in the coastal zones has been clearly explained with supporting data and the nature of conflict between the artisanal and the mechanised sectors is elucidated.

The signs of economic and size overfishing are indicated, the significance and the adverse consequences of these are enumerated. The need for a ban on monsoon trawling for the conservation of resources has been suggested and a permanent set up to maintain a watch-dog mechanism to plan, monitor and manage the activities of the fisheries sector recommended.

A series of constructive steps have been suggested for the conservation and management of our precious aquatic living resources.

Steps to be taken for the development of freshwater fisheries

Since freshwater fisheries represent one of the most important sources of animal protein, especially for the poorer section of the people, there is the imperative need to develop this sector as a priority industry. All efforts must be taken to develop fisheries at the village level so that fish could be raised and distributed as low cost protein food. There is also need for improvement in capture fisheries using refinements in fishing techniques developed through craft and gear research. There is the urgent need to manage and control fishing operations in rivers through appropriate regulations to

conserve the stocks. There is the need for greater reliance on indigenous species in the rivers.

For the proper conservation of downstream ichthyofauna preimpoundment surveys of rivers would be beneficial. It is desirable that proposals should be jointly developed by fisheries and irrigation departments on river valley projects prior to impoundment.

It is also desirable that reservoirs and tanks built for domestic water supplies should also be utilised for fish rearing but with adequate health safeguards. It is highly essential that an adequate level of water is maintained in the dead storages of medium and major reservoirs to keep the continuity of stocks of major carps which take long periods for natural breeding.

Rationalisation of fishing in reservoirs is necessary through systematic removal of trash fish and observing closed seasons with a view to stopping indiscriminate destruction of brood fish particularly major carps.

Cultivation of suitable types of legumes should be encouraged in the foreshore areas exposed during summer months.

While formulating policy for land and water utilisation, the State Govt. should consider freshwater swamps as naturally advantageous areas for the development of fisheries. Other uses, if any, should be treated as subsidiary.

The production base by aquaculture from freshwater should be enlarged with the application of new technology.

There is the urgent need for increasing the seed fish supplies of major carps several fold by all possible methods of production for undertaking increased stocking densities to obtain optimum yields from all culturable waters. With a view to increasing seed production, the facilities for dry bound breeding of major carps should be examined after surveying suitable areas where they could be constructed at minimum cost.

It is essential that the State should intensify the programmes for seedfish farms located near reservoirs and other areas where perennial water facilities exist. The available area for nursery tanks should be increased and improved management practices in fish nurseries need to be adopted. Extension literature should be freely available and training-cum-demonstration in these practices be organised for the benefit of people interested in fish culture as well, as fish farmers.

Whenever stocking of fingerlings is

considered necessary the State should give preferential consideration to grant fallow lands near culturable areas for creating rearing ponds.

For experimental work on indigenous and exotic carps in areas potentially important for fish culture, the establishment of large fish farms for adaptive research is recommended.

The use of fertilisers in increasing productivity of ponds and other water bodies is known. It would be desirable to make it rational and economic. Similarly supplementary and artificial food should be identified from locally available sources as well as waste materials to make it economical in cultural practices.

It would be advantageous to try large scale monoculture of common carp in special floating net enclosures in reservoirs, canals etc, to substantially increase inland fish production. This system is likely to solve, to some extent, the problem of rehabilitation of people displaced as a result of impounding reservoir basins.

Swampy areas unsuitable for reclamation into farming units for carp culture should be used for the culture of air-breathing fishes.

Fishery rights of inland water resources, now vested in other departments of the State Governments, should be transferred to Fisheries Departments.

For fishing in rivers, canals etc. a licensing system should be adopted after notifying waters under the necessary legal provisions.

For fishing in reservoirs, any system-licensing, royalty, bifurcated leasing or outright leasing may be adopted keeping in view the conditions laid down for each system.

Rights in culturable fisheries should be granted as outright leases on adequate tenures to enable utilisation of long-term credit. There should be provisions for extension of lease periods upon satisfactory fulfilment of lease conditions and on fair amount of annual rentals based on estimated yields and price of produce.

In leasing out fishing rights for waters vested in local bodies such as municipalities, gram-panchayats, etc., a similar procedure as for governmental waters should be adopted. However, local bodies interested in undertaking developmental activities themselves should either engage trained persons or get their personnel trained and the State

Government should then accept such schemes duly approved by the Fisheries Department.

In leasing out portions of reservoirs, canals, lakes and coastal regions for intensive aquaculture in new systems such as floating net enclosures, cages, rafts etc., same procedures should be adopted as for culture fisheries. But in case of reservoirs, first preference should be given to persons affected by impoundments and in the case of coastal regions, consideration should also be given to any private enterprise including the corporate sector.

Backwater Fisheries Management

There is a concerted effort on the part of businessmen, communal and political organisations and other wealthy representatives to hold the backwater fisheries under their fold for their ulterior motives. As a result, a majority of the *bona fide* fishermen are forced out of the sector and are suffering for their subsistence and livelihood. No doubt, this state of affairs has resulted from the lapse on the part of authorities to manage the system properly.

At present, there are two worthwhile management practices in the backwater fisheries sector of Kerala. Whatever system and practice presently existing, all are totally ineffective or defunct. Over and above, the system is too loose to be managed because of the absence of the needed statutes and other necessary infrastructure required for enforcement of management practices. The backwaters warrant an ecological approach fortified with a strong will and wisdom to manage the system effectively and to preserve its rapidly deteriorating health in the best interest of the conservation of the living resources and their proper development. A comprehensive statute common to all parts of Kerala with a perspective of proper resource management and development and strong enforcement machinery, well equipped for implementation, are the basic primary prerequisites needed urgently for the conservation and management of backwater fisheries in Kerala. For conserving the fishery resources and thereby increasing fish production and for protecting the genuine interest of the fishermen, urgent steps have become imperative. Any further delay is likely to cause irreparable damage to this fascinating ecosystem passed down to us as a natural heritage through the centuries.

Conservation and management of marine resources

It is therefore, essential that the fishing zones are delineated for different types of crafts as explained in G.O. (P/29/86 F & PD dated 14-3-1986) and this should be strictly enforced and implemented. Necessary administrative and technical support should be ensured by the Government for quick and speedy implementation of the provisions in the above mentioned Government Order.

Night fishing in the sea by any type of gear except gill nets should be prohibited throughout.

Registered and licensed vessels/crafts alone should ply and fish in the territorial water of Kerala. To ensure this, it is essential that:-

(a) Arrangements be made by the Directorate of Fisheries for the prompt annual licensing of all the registered vessels.

(b) All registered vessels, now in existence, are to be re-registered, licensed with the appropriate Registration Number allotted. Display of Registration Number on the vessels must be made compulsory.

(c) While giving registration to the mechanised fishing boats, the stipulation laid down by the Government in G.O.RT.No.219/86/F & PD dated 21.4.1986 read with Government Letter No.7571/B3/86/F&PD dated 25-6-1986 that no new shrimp trawling vessels will be given registration after 31-7-1986 should be strictly adhered to.

A programme to phase out existing mechanised trawling boats should be initiated beginning with those which have been in operation for twenty years or more. The above mentioned criterion may be used for an annual phasing out programme in order to reduce pressure on the fishing grounds as well as to ensure adequate return of investment. This programme could be subjected to a quinquennial review.

In the interest of conservation of resources, it is suggested that a total ban be enforced on trawling by all types of vessels in the territorial waters of Kerala during the months of June, July and August. The impact of this measure on the conservation and optimum utilisation of the resources should be examined in detail and be subjected to close scrutiny and review in the next three years. For this purpose, during this period, a team of experts will study the impact of the ban on (i) resources, (ii) socio economic aspects of fishermen and (iii) the industry, involving top fishery experts

and technocrats, scientists with expertise in resource assessment, craft/gear development, economic evaluation and evaluation of social benefits reaching common fisherfolk. Immediate steps must be taken for the project formulation indicating the scope of the project, terms of reference and the facilities required to meet the demands of the project. Sufficient technical support should be earmarked on the Directorate of Fisheries for this purpose.

Adequate justification is not forthcoming to exempt any area from the proposed ban on fishing by trawlers during the monsoon months. It is felt that the traditional sector has the necessary capability in harvest *P. styliifera* to optimum levels if it is given an opportunity to do so. This is recommended purely on an experimental basis for a continuous period of three years. It is also recommended that Neendakara-Sakthikulangara area should be subjected to detailed observation and monitoring for an assessment of the situation particularly from the angle of optimum utilisation of resources and acquired capability of the traditional sector.

The G.O.(MS)No.144/80/F & PD dated 29-11-1980 and G.O.(P)138/84/PWF & PD dated 30-11-1984 prohibiting "the use of the purse seine, ring seine (Ring seine means any gear or contrivance used for fishing, using the technique of purse seine or closing any of its part for preventing the escape of the trapped fish), pelagic trawl and mid water trawl" for fishing in the territorial waters of the State has not been effectively implemented. The statistics available show that there has been a prodigious increase in the number of and change in the specifications of the ring seines proving them to be almost as destructive as the purse-seines. Therefore, the above mentioned G.O. should be strictly implemented in the interest of conservation of resources. The Governmental agencies, financial institutions and others that are directly or indirectly promoting these type of programmes should be advised against encouraging the use of such gear. The Department of Fisheries should also, in consultation with the CIFT, evolve appropriate norms and policies for possible introduction of suitable fishing gear such as the trammel nets, with an eye on management of resources. A programme of phasing out the ring seines is also recommended.

Taking cognizance of the

deleterious effect of the ring seine on the marine fishery resources and in view of the Government Order on its prohibition already existing, the ring seine should disappear from the scene. Since there are more than 2000 units now fishing in Kerala, this gear may be phased out gradually in due course of time so that the traditional fishermen involved in ring seining are not affected immediately. For this the following steps are suggested.

(a) Traditional craft/vessels at present operating ring seine will be allowed to operate only in the areas beyond those specified in G.O.(P)29/86/F & PD dated 14-3-1986.

(b) No ring seine with more than the size-length 250 m. and a depth 35m, will be allowed to operate. Minimum mesh size of all the ring seines shall be 35 mm.

(c) All the existing ring seines should be registered/re-registered immediately within a period to be stipulated by the Department and no further introduction of ring seines be allowed. (Details and modalities regarding the registration have to be promptly worked out by the Department of Fisheries).

(d) All promotional agencies including financial institutions should be advised not to extend any support for the ring seine.

(e) Appropriate measures should be taken to completely phase out fishing by ring seines within a period of three years and to encourage operations of such non-destructive type of gear as the trammel net etc.

A similar adverse trend has also been noticed in the programme of introduction of Out Board Motors. It is high time that a detailed review is undertaken, regarding the optimum number of crafts fitted without board motors, the maximum Horse Power to be employed and the specifications of the crafts and gear to be operated with these boats. Use of crafts fitted with OBMs of more than 15 HP should be prohibited forthwith. The existing crafts fitted with higher HP and any craft engaged in mini trawling should not ply within the area upto 30 m. line in the sea along the coast line of the State from Kollengode to Paravoor Pozhikara having a length of 78 km. and the area upto 20m. line in the area along the coast line from Paravoor Pozhikara in Manjeswaram having a length of 512 km. It has been noted that the existing regulation of mesh size in shrimp trawl and fixed engines (Chinese Nets and Stake Nets) have not been strictly enforced. It is suggested, therefore, that a minimum mesh size of 35 mm. for the cod-ends of

trawl nets and 25 mm, for stake nets and Chinese nets, should be strictly enforced, in the interest of conservation of juvenile prawns and fish.

It is suggested that fishing effort at the entrance of river mouths should be considerably reduced to allow free passage of such varieties of prawns and fishes, that use the backwaters as nursery ground. It is felt that a 'Protective Zone' of adequate dimensions should be declared at the river mouths, estuaries and the modalities of enforcement with special reference to area, time etc., should be worked out by the Department of Fisheries taking into consideration the local situations existing in the various regions.

Considering the magnitude of increasing fishing pressure and prevailing undesirable fishing practices, immediate attention of the Government is invited for taking urgent necessary steps warranted for the effective management of Backwater Fisheries. For conserving the fishery resources for increasing fish production and for protecting the genuine interest of the *bona fide* fishermen the following immediate measure are suggested:

(a) All bar mouths shall be declared as protected zones devoid of any fishing activities.

(b) With a view to minimising the very heavy fishing pressure on resources from the stake and Chinese nets, which have phenomenally increased during the past few years, it is essential that no fresh licence be given for new ones and all the existing unlicensed ones be promptly dismantled and removed. The very large number of licensed nets already existing demands the need for the phasing out of at least fifty per cent of them. All the authorised (licensed) Fixed Engines (Chinese nets and Stake nets) existing at present are to be registered before 31-8-1989 and appropriate registration number allotted. Display of Registration Number must be made compulsory on the Fixed Engines.

(c) Fixed Engines owned by persons other than fishermen and those existing with benami ownership are also to be removed. No organisation, agency, board or body except fishermen's co-operatives duly recognized by the Department of Fisheries, shall be given licence to own and operate Fixed Engines.

(d) Undesirable and destructive fishing practices such as the use of dynamite (Thotta), poisoning, madavala electric fishing, padal and torch fishing etc. (to be identified by the Department of Fisheries) are to be banned.

(e) Existing prohibition on fishing during high tide using fixed engines should be strictly enforced. Mesh size of the coded of stake/Chinese nets should not be less than 25 mm.

(f) A large scale programme should be envisaged to convert all traditional prawn filtration fields to scientifically managed prawn/fish culture farms in due course.

(g) Harvest by poisoning in the prawn filtration is to be banned.

(h) A large scale welfare scheme shall be launched with a view to removing or replacing all the hanging latrines built over or emptying into the backwaters.

(i) Fisheries Department and Pollution Control Board together should take up appropriate measures for preventing water pollution, which is deleterious to fish and other living resources.

(j) Action shall be taken to declare backwaters and other identified areas adjacent to backwaters and sea as aquaculture areas. Reclamation and use of these areas for non-fishery purposes shall be prohibited. Necessary laws to protect and use these areas have to be framed at the earliest.

(k) An enforcement wing with necessary facilities and infrastructure should be set up separately for enforcing the regulations, law and order concerning the backwaters.

Adequate encouragement should be given to the mechanised fishing boats, to diversify their operations from bottom trawling for shrimps, to other types of fishing for varieties that are under exploited.

It is distressing to note that there are no systematic evaluation and regular monitoring of development programmes and the absence of a nodal agency to keep watch on the over-capitalisation tendencies in the creation of infrastructure including boats, Outboard Motors, gear and other implements. A co-ordinating mechanism is the need of the day which will oversee all investment programmes and subject them to periodic review with special reference to living resources available and social justice. The Department of Fisheries should assert its role as the nodal agency for all development, management and conservation programmes relating to fisheries.

The establishment of a Fishery Resource Management Cell be able to provide a watchdog mechanism to monitor optimum fishery resource utilisation and necessary management measures and to function as a clearing house for future development programmes with special reference to conservation and national utilisation of the precious living aquatic resources of the state.

TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF KERALA : PROSPECTS AND PROBLEMS

M. Vijayan

The issues concerned with the technological development of Kerala need to be approached from different angles. First, we have to examine technologies appropriate for the natural resources of Kerala. Secondly, we should identify technologies which suit the genius of the people of Kerala. Thirdly, we have to deal with the needs and availability of the infrastructure for the development and sustenance of the technologies. Fourthly, we have to critically examine the facilities for higher learning and scientific research which not only are important for technological progress but also form integral components of a healthy modern society. Finally, we need

to consider the support necessary for the development of science and technology.

Technologies appropriate for Kerala

The natural resources of Kerala are well known and much discussions and indeed substantial actions, have already taken place on their utilization on scientific lines. It is also known that Kerala is devoid of several resources such as iron, coal and petroleum which are critically important for substantial segments of conventional industrial development. However, fortunately, there are emerging technologies which do not greatly depend upon these inputs. It also

turns out that these technologies are ideally suited for the genius of the people of Kerala.

Kerala is undoubtedly endowed with an enlightened population. The high level of literacy in the state, the quality of medical care and the low rate of population growth have all made them a role model in many respects. Keralites are generally considered to be intelligent, innovative, adaptable, receptive to novel ideas and capable of acquiring and absorbing new skills and knowledge. It is precisely these qualities that are required for excelling in two of the most important emerging technologies, namely, information technology and modern biotechnology. Both of them are substantially knowledge-based.

Computers are at the core of information technology. Our present technological capabilities especially in relation to materials, do not perhaps permit us to manufacture major computer components. However, the development of novel architectures and configurations using these components is well within our grasp. Yet another area which is ideally suited for our capabilities is software development. The other areas of information technology that could be addressed include computer-aided design, robotics, computerisation of industrial processes and communications.

It is the breath-taking progress in the last few decades in modern biology that gave rise to modern biotechnology. It is the unification of biology brought about by the molecular approach that made this progress possible. The recent advance in molecular biology, especially genetic engineering, have indeed been spectacular. Equally spectacular has been the progress in structural biology which deals essentially with the structure and interactions of biomolecules. Yet another area in which impressive advances have been made is immunology which is concerned with body's defence systems. The areas of modern biotechnology include development of diagnostics, large scale production of medicinally important substance using genetic engineering technique, rational drug design, gene therapy and the development of transgenic plant and animals.

Infrastructure

Adequate infrastructure is a prime requirement for the development of information technology and biotechnology, as indeed for that of any technology. The situation with regard to power, in terms

of quantity and quality, exemplifies the rather bleak infrastructural scenario. Paucity of resources does not appear to be the only reason for this situation. Attitudinal and managerial problem are also perhaps responsible for it.

Higher education and research

Technology, particularly substantially knowledge-based technologies such as information technology and biotechnology, will thrive only in the ambience of excellence in higher learning and scientific research. Kerala does not appear to be in an inevitable state in this regard.

A discussion on scientific research often leads to the futile debate on the relative importance of basic and applied research. They are, in fact, the two sides of the same coin and are mutually dependent. Indeed, in studies related to information technology and biotechnology, the two cannot often be distinguished. What is required is a right mix of basic research, applied research (when the two can be separated) and technological innovation.

Support for science and technology

Science and technology have been the most potent instrument of development during the last couple of centuries. Indeed, the difference between the developed and the developing countries is, to a substantial extent, the difference in the level of science and technology in them. Thanks mainly to the enlightened vision of Nehru and his successors, in India the expenditure on S&T rose steadily to 1.1% of the GNP in the later part of the eighties. This was certainly much less than that in the developed countries, yet the direction was positive. Indeed the increased investment resulted in substantially improved performance. But during the last few years the support for S & T as a proportion of GNP has declined and the national commitment to S & T appeared to have taken a back seat. This is an unhealthy development and need to be arrested. Private investment in S & T need to be increased, but it should be in addition to, and not instead of, governmental support. Also, science and technology in India cannot be developed to any significant extent with foreign help; we have to do it ourselves.

Resources are by no means the only thing required for scientific development. The scientific community has several internal weaknesses which need to

be rectified. Then there is bureaucratic control and the nexus with various interest groups. There are a host of other problems that need to be attended to. However, adequate political and social support, in terms of resources and commitment, to science and technology is absolutely essential.

The developed world is now in the throes of a new scientific and technological revolution. The rapid development of emerging technologies such as information technology and biotechnology, and the inadequacy of many of the existing technology to meet the growing environmental and energy-related concerns, are among the causes for this revolution. If Kerala, as indeed India, does not move in step with this revolution, we are likely to be dominated even more than what we are now. A concerted effort is needed to prevent this from happening. An element of patriotism could be useful in this

effort. In the present state of development of science and technology in the country, patriotism could be a positive force.

Role of mass movements

Normal conventional channels are probably not enough to release the creative genius of the youth of Kerala and to channelise it into scientific and technological endeavour of the highest order. The somewhat unsatisfactory state of the present set up is such that perhaps this can be done only with the involvement of a mass movement. It is through the involvement of mass movements that Kerala registered a very high level of literacy and achieved substantial success in the popularisation of science. It is perhaps time that a movement concerned with higher education and research developed in Kerala.

3

MAKING OF MODERN KERALA: HISTORICAL SURVEY OF STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

P.K. Michael Tharakan

Economic analysis of modern Kerala, and Social and Cultural studies of medieval Kerala, use laudatory terms like the 'Kerala Model of Development' and symbiosis between different cultural streams. There have been various attempts at explaining contemporary developments, such as non-occurrence of any serious communal conflict on the strength of cultural symbiosis. One may disagree about who or what caused the symbiotic relationship; distribution of economic functions among different cultural streams; benevolence of the rulers; or tolerance of the Hindu majority. But the fact remains that Kerala, so far, has escaped major communal confrontations. Kerala model can be a double-edged sword; to highlight achievements as well as limitations. Nevertheless, the achievements cannot be overlooked. Meanwhile political analysis of Kerala till the 1960s at least, had regular references to 'problem state'. Even when the claim that 'what Kerala does today rest of India does tomorrow' was put forward; it had an undercurrent of impending problems. One off-shoot of

the general political problematique; 'militancy' of workers - viewed both as a politically laudatory observation of militancy created on the basis of high level of political consciousness or a negative term, denoting unruly behaviour - is used commonly as a cause for non-development of manufacturing. Are these contradictory observations inherent to the historical experience of Kerala or are they imagined by analysts?

Writings available on the Kerala Model or the Cultural Symbiosis are either already packed with different nuances and understandings or are open to such contradictory interpretations. Attempting to sort them out, by going into the details, will not serve the immediate purpose of the present historiographical survey. Yet both of these processes had to have evolved, through at least, the most contemporary system of popular decision making; that of democratic polity and adult franchise. One of the least controversial aspects of discussions on the Kerala Model is that the indicators, which constitute the model and their dissemination, are the

result of the public action and state policy and the interaction between them. Could not a similar analysis bordering upon the political process, be relevant to explain the existence of symbiotic or more appropriately, non-confrontationalist communal relations? In other words, the rise of modern political movements, particularly of the Leftist variety with well-articulated anti-communal stances, could have been a major moderating factor on communalization. The politics of public action and the politics of moderation are both likely to have emerged on the basis of well-developed social and political consciousness.

The origins of the well-developed social and political consciousness can be traced back to the spread of education, and in its economic rationale for maintenance, to a series of agrarian reforms. They both go back beyond the rise of modern political movements. These observations raise a point whether the education - agrarian - reform combination has already saturated its potential? One can also raise the question that the political movements and even the Socio-religious Reform Movements before them, which harnessed public demands have exhausted the possibilities for regularly mobilising the people, which is a necessary condition for the maintenance of politics based on high

consciousness. Are these reflected in heightened problems of sustaining the Kerala Model or non-confrontationist communal relations?

These are certainly important questions to be answered. Nevertheless there is yet another aspect which has to be seriously looked at. The methodological parameters set for regional history writing, more or less reflected the overriding concerns of national history-writing. In that process several local and remembered histories imbedded in folk memory got neglected. Their isolated re-creation in a politically conscious milieu can naturally be highly rhetoric and 'disruptive.' Available historical studies do indicate that subalterns - either castes or classes - have not benefitted from education - agrarian - reform - combine, as much as the others; neither were the juxtapositions of forces and persuasions the same all over Kerala, or at the same time and in the same way among all sections of the people. This clearly proves the inadequacy of a uniform history centred around 'average' experiences. Then, what should take its place? A historical investigation bordering on the interface of disciplinary boundaries or/and a more disaggregated historical analysis through which the multi-faceted aspects of the collective experience of the people can be unravelled?

CONCEIVING ANCIENT SOCIETIES: A CRITIQUE OF KERALA'S HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Rajan Gurukkal

Doing history as a chronological sequential narrative of events is derived from western historiography that branded our traditional modes of historical representation mythical and legendary. Attempts at reconstructing Kerala's past with this new historical sense began here mainly under the British rule whose ways and means of conceiving history set the model for us. Naturally the western assumptions about the persistence of a homogeneous society became fundamental to our historians' perception. A perception either ignoring change as a mere linear

and natural process or precluding the possibility of change necessitated hardly any framework of apriori reasoning to explain the phenomenon. Strafed by the assumptions of continuity, their perspective of conceiving hostirical societies tended to be unifying rather than differentiating. An overall uniform and synchronic appreciation seems to have controlled their faculty of imagining past societies, even of disparate periods. This monolithic and one dimensional perspective has always been a serious block for them in conceiving

societies in terms of structural differences. The presentation here seeks to make a critique of Kerala's historiographical perspectives for understanding ancient societies.

The factors that restricted the construction of Kerala's ancient societies by confining them to mutually unrelated descriptions of archaeological remains as well as their typology and comparative chronology is central to this presentation. Historiographically, ancient Kerala has so far been a mechanical caricature with archaeological culture-types such as Chopper chopping,

Microlithic, Neolithic, Megalithic and so on besides with literary culture-categories like sangam. There is a complete absence or a general recession of the concept of social totality in the characterisation. Why was our historiography by and large reluctant to conceive the natural plurality of ancient societies? Why is that still so, despite the methodological advancement enabling better explanation of the plurality in terms of differences in ecology, technology, forms of subsistence and social relations? The presentation attempts to probe into these matters.

FOOD SECURITY

1

Krishnaji

The on-going reforms have serious implications for the future of the economies of the states in the Indian Union. The Centre has always played the dominant and decisive role in economic policy-making. The states had never the autonomy needed to shape their own economic destinies, with full control over local resources. This is paradoxical: the Centre exists only because the states do and the Centre's resources - financial or otherwise - are in fact those of the states. The economics and politics of federalism need not and should not have led to an absolute concentration of economic-policy-making power in the hands of the Central government, but they have done so. And, quite predictably, with the design of the new economic policy almost wholly being the prerogative of the Centre, the States' capabilities for adjusting to the new policy regime are likely to become even weaker.

I want to refer in this context to the problems of food security in Kerala. No matter what the Centre decides, whether to wholly dismantle the public distribution system (PDS) or to severely curtail its scope and coverage, it will pose serious problems of financial and economic management for Kerala. Since food provisioning, especially for the poor, does not depend on the PDS alone, let me try and place the problem in a broader socio-economic perspective.

Kerala's social advancement in recent decades is remarkable because it has been taking place during a period when the economy was in near stagnation.

Agriculture and traditional industries have been steadily declining and the growth of modern industry has been unimpressive by any yardstick. It is only the service sector that has been expanding and preventing the erosion of income for at least some sections of the people.

Despite the poor performance of the economy, living standards, judged by food consumption and other criteria, have been steadily improving, especially among the poor families. Consequently, the incidence of poverty has declined quite dramatically from its very high level during the 1960s.

There is no doubt that in all this the remittances from the Gulf have played a big role. These inflows contribute a significant part to the state's income. While the remittances have supported directly the incomes of families receiving money from the Gulf, they have indirectly contributed also to some increases in the employment in the service sector. However, not much of these amounts have gone by way of investment into the productive sectors of the Kerala economy. This is understandable to some extent because there is a strong preference among the people for holding money in the form of various assets that give a measure of security, especially to properly-less families, given the grim unemployment situation in the state.

Although the planners in Kerala knew very well that the use of remittances for productive investment would have provided employment and income

on a sustained basis and given security to the poor, they have failed to design imaginative schemes for attracting such investments. One reason for this failure is that such schemes would have had to be linked with the revival and restructuring of the decaying sectors, namely agriculture and traditional industries. This was not an easy task given the structure of economic and political relations in the state. There is an urgent need for devising projects that can provide employment to unskilled labour and for devising ways to finance these projects at least in part from the funds flowing from the Gulf.

In supporting the sagging economy, the remittances have played a positive role and reinforced the structures that contribute to a secure living for the poor in Kerala. Two important elements of these structures are the wage rates and the assurance of highly subsidized food supplies through the PDS. Land reforms, the effective implementation of which was possible wholly because of the organised strength of the leftist forces (and not because of clever legislation), gave a measure of security to agricultural workers. Besides, workers in all sectors of the economy have now the assurance that real wage rates will be maintained. Organised or not, unionised or not, the workers in Kerala are not threatened by inflation: sooner or later the wages will increase.

However a high wage rate is of little comfort if no work is available. Therefore, sooner or later, there will be all round distress unless a steady expansion in the material sectors begins.

At the moment, the Kerala economy is precariously balanced and, with the integration of the Indian economy into world markets, it can become even more unstable. Kerala is more dependent than any other state on exports, the price fluctuations of which can and will introduce much uncertainty in the incomes earned. Likewise, the remittances also constitute an unpredictable source of income. As recent events have shown, economic activities in the Middle East can collapse in a few weeks.

What is perhaps more certain is that the Central Government will gradually reduce the food subsidy. Since the PDS cannot be dismantled - for, no party in Kerala can survive without offering food security to the people - this only means that the subsidy will now have to be met from the state's own resources, leaving progressively less and less for developmental activities.

If the Centre closes down the

operations of the Food Corporation of India, Kerala will have to depend upon the neighbouring states of Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh for its rice supplies. With the trade across state borders being made wholly free, rice prices are likely to shoot up beyond the reach of the Kerala poor. Therefore, the food subsidy will almost certainly be much more than it is now, and it will have to borne wholly by the state.

It is clear that to prevent a chronic food scarcity combined with high rice prices, it is necessary to boost the domestic production. Given that hardly 30 per cent of the total requirements are now being met from domestic sources, the task may look hopeless, but beginning has to be made.

What is required is land reform of a different kind, not necessarily for redistribution of ownership, but for the use of land for improving the productivity and production of rice. Paddy cultivation is now uneconomical and unattractive for a variety of reasons. However, the state cannot afford to wait for prices to rise and hope for the cultivation of paddy to become remunerative, because the wages are bound to increase as well. There is no obvious market solution to the problem, whether or not we decide to embrace fully the free market economy. The solution has to lie in institutional arrangements that will ensure the revival of paddy cultivation irrespective of what the costs may look like on paper. This is not simply a matter of imaginative planning; it is a political issue of the highest importance. As in the case of all other successful measures of land reform, this too requires the mobilisation and support of the people.

Finally, some suggestions are recently being made that an employment guarantee scheme can be a substitute for the PDS as a means of providing food security. In my opinion, such a scheme will be a very poor substitute. No matter at what levels the incomes of poor can be supported, it is ultimately how much rice and at what price it is available in the market that will determine the consumption levels among the poor. If, however, the employment guarantee schemes are tied to investments in agriculture that can promote domestic food production, they will constitute a double safety net. In the absence of the possibility of increases in rice production, all these safety measures will simply be a further drain on the uncertain resources of the state.

EPIGRAPHY IN THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF KERALA: SHIFTING PARADIGMS.

Kesavan Veluthat

This paper seeks to survey the shifts in the frameworks of using epigraphy in the historical writing of Kerala in the premodern period. After making a brief statement about the nature of historical writing in premodern Kerala, the paper traces the growth of epigraphy in Kerala particularly as a source of historical study. It argues that quantitative additions notwithstanding, real changes affecting the framework of historical inquiry have been brought about only when there have been major shifts in the paradigm of enquiry. Accordingly, the following major paradigms are identified in the historiography of Kerala where material from epigraphy has been heavily used.

a. The first stage represents the beginning of the use of epigraphy for historical reconstruction. This stage begins with the decipherment and publication of inscriptions in Kerala, particularly the Jewish and Syrian Christian Copper Plates and their use in the reconstruction of history. The best representative of this tradition is William Logan who, in the section on his *Malabar Manual*, created the groundwork for much of the writing of the history in Kerala. Accordingly, Logan put A.D.825 as the beginning of political uncertainty and anarchy in Kerala, a picture which went a long way in legitimising the empire. Those who followed him worked within the same frame and strengthened the picture, in spite of the broadening of the data base in the meantime.

b. The significant shift comes with the use of newly discovered material for the rewriting of history. The idea of Logan that the beginning of the ninth century represented the beginning of anarchy here, was challenged and rejected; on the other hand, precisely that period was presented as the beginning of the rule of what has been described as the "Second Chera Empire" or the "Kulashekshara Empire". Apart from locating the history of Kerala within the

context of contemporary south India, this construction challenged and rejected the framework of Logan who identified the entire period after the beginning of the Kollam era as an age of anarchy and confusion. In its place, a picture of a centralised empire and all the attending details with which golden ages in history are made was presented, at least for about three centuries from this period. In the matter of social, economic and political history too, this frame had definite points of its own. Ideas about the evolution of the *janmi* system of matriliney or the *devadasi* system were also put forward, in consistency with this frame.

c. A major revision of this framework, presented by Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai and popularised by A.Sreedhara Menon through text books and Gazetteers, was taken up in the seventies of the present century. M.G.S.Narayanan's work challenged much of the idealisation and glorification in the writings of Elamkulam and reconsidered the nature of polity, society, economy and other details in a basic manner. That Kerala formed part of the larger unit of Indian civilization and that the social formation of this part of the country largely represented a regional version of what came into being in the sub-continent in the Gupta and post-Gupta periods are among the major additions to knowledge at this level.

d. This good work has been carried forward by several researchers in recent years. Details have been filled in and the data base has been broadened. Some excursions to the periods and areas which fall outside the ones covered by Narayanan have also been made. A major departure can also be seen in the recently published work by Raghava Varier and Rajan Gurukkal where epigraphic evidence is sought to be analysed with the help of recent advances in theory. There are, however, major gaps to be filled in, particularly in relation to periods after the twelfth century.

THE LEFT MOVEMENT IN KERALA : LESSONS OF THE PAST AND CHALLENGES OF THE PRESENT

T.M.Thomas Isaac

Kerala was one region in India where works on communism appeared in print in the first decade of the twentieth century. The Communist party of India, however, came into existence only at the end of the 1930s. The lineage of the CPI in Kerala can be traced to the left tendencies within the Congress as well as non-Congress movements (especially in Travancore and Cochin) and the crystallisation of the former in the Congress Socialist Party. The Communists in Kerala came to communism through Congress socialism. They were fortunate in escaping the phase of sectarianism that characterised the tactics of the CPI during the 1920s due to its grave underestimation of the anti-imperialist potential of the Indian bourgeoisie. Thus the Communists in Kerala were successful in linking their class and mass organisations with the national movement and emerged as the unquestionable leaders of the national movement during the post-war revolutionary upsurge. The prestige so gained laid a firm basis for the phenomenal expansion of the Communist Party's influence in the first decade after Independence.

The poor peasantry and the rural poor in general were the mass base of the Party. A correct understanding of the agrarian question in Kerala was the key to the Communist success in mobilising peasants. They transformed the tenancy movement, dominated by the superior tenants, into a mass movement of the whole peasantry in Malabar. Taking into consideration the actual conditions of agrarian Travancore they did not hesitate to form a deperate agricultural labourers' union in Kuttanad. The theoretical understanding of the nature of feudalism in Kerala, best described by the term coined by EMS, the "savarana-janmi-chieftain domination", played an important role in the agrarian practice of Communists. The concept helped clarify the connections between the peasant question, the caste question and the question of princely rule in Kerala.

Perhaps the most original contribution of the Communists in Kerala was in the dialectical approach that they

formulated with regard to the caste question. While supporting and actively participating in the social reform movements in various communities, particularly the anti-savarna movements of the oppressed castes, the Communists sought to build class and mass organisations of various sections of people irrespective of caste and raised caste-reform slogans as part of their anti-feudal democratic struggle. The Communists carried forward the radical legacy of the social reform movements and won over a large part of the masses in these movements, while the elites within castes began to confine themselves to sectarian demands and withdraw into casteist organisational shells.

The demands of the class organisations were not confined to issues of land and wages alone; they were also concerned with social provisioning of many basic needs as well as with a variety of social and cultural issues. In the post-social-reform-movement era, the new mass organisations, which were, in general, led by the left, became the main pressure groups for pro-people redistributive policies. Left-led governments in Kerala set new paradigms of radical redistributive state policies. Class organisations succeeded in implementing land reforms, improving the level of wages and conditions of work and strengthening a radical sense of self-respect and awareness among the people. The success of mass action in Kerala, along with state provisioning of basic necessities, contributed to substantial improvement in the quality of life within the state. Kerala's development experience shows that through political intervention it is possible to ensure the basic needs of the people even in conditions of low income. The struggle for better conditions of education, health, housing, public distribution and so on can indeed be important components of a successful strategy for mobilisation.

The contemporary crisis in Kerala illustrates the limitations of sustaining improvements in living conditions in the absence of economic growth and the

limitations posed by the basic socio-economic structure of the country. There have been two kinds of responses to the present situation. The right tends to blame redistributive policies and structures for economic stagnation. There are also some on the left in whose opinion no major socio-economic transformation in Kerala is possible without radical all-India change. In their opinion Kerala has nearly exhausted the potential for reforms within the present socio-economic structure. Though covered in radical phraseology, this position is more often is camouflage to opportunism and an alibi for a policy drift.

Now, it is certainly correct that an island of socialism cannot be created within semi-feudal, capitalist India. The new economic policies of the Government of India further curtail the limited opportunities for autonomous development that exist today. Nevertheless, the position that "nothing can be done in Kerala until the Indian revolution" is a defeatist position.

The left in Kerala needs to draw up a new agenda. While struggling for Indian revolution, a programme to utilise the organised strength and political consciousness of the people to accelerate the process of economic growth has to be formulated. Such a programme requires revising the development policies pursued within the state, creating new democratic institutions within the sphere of production, integrating modern science and technology in a manner to promote sustainable development and reorienting the mass organisations themselves. Without improving productivity, redistributive measures cannot be sustained. Given the uneven growth of the left movement and the general national

and international political situation, such a new programme is important if the mobilisation of the people on the basis of partial demands has to be sustained. Further, I also argue that improving productivity has become a key question in ensuring the unity of the toiling masses, particularly in the agrarian sector in the post-land-reforms era.

Accomplishment of the above task would require a reassessment of the objective conditions in Kerala economy and society, particularly the following points may be mentioned: the nature of agrarian question in the post land reform phase, the massive inflow of remittances and its socio-economic consequences, expansion of education and impact on labour supply conditions and the regional implications of the structural adjustment.

Besides, the above a reorientation of the Left's policies in the socio-political spheres has also got to find place in the new agenda. I consider the following areas to be the most relevant: 1) dialogue with believers, especially the religious minorities without compromising with casteist and communal forces who are today a serious threat to the secular and radical legacy of Kerala, 2) women question, 3) style of functioning of the mass organisations, especially to rectify their degeneration into "front organisations" of political parties and 4) regaining cultural and intellectual hegemony of the fifties.

In short, the left needs to draw up a new agenda which is responsive to the changed reality of Kerala. It alone will enable the left to break out of the relative stagnation in growth over the past two decades and bring about decisive leftward shift in the correlation political forces in the state.

LESSONS OF HISTORY OF LEFT MOVEMENT IN KERALA

4

M.P.Veerendrakumar

The history of the Left Movement in Kerala is a subject that should be of utmost importance and great interest to those who are committed to the cause of social progress. In fact, several strides and steps in Kerala's march towards social progress are inextricably linked with the evolution of the Left Movement during the last few decades. No impartial

observer or student of the history of Kerala can ignore the immense contribution of the Left Movement in making Kerala one of the most progressive and Left-oriented states in India. In this context, the International Congress on Kerala studies acquires great relevance and the observations that will emerge from the deliberations in the

Congress will certainly help the future generations to grasp the different aspects of Kerala Studies in the correct perspective.

A discussion on the lessons of the history of the Left Movement in Kerala obviously start with a proper definition of "the Left". If it is meant by "the Left" only those movements that are committed to the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism, then such a definition is undoubtedly incomplete, narrow and sectarian. Just as Marxism drew and drank from the inexhaustible reservoir of knowledge and experience of the past and antiquity, the "Left Movement" in Kerala too developed by absorbing all the various positive trends in the history of Kerala. Every movement that helps transform a conservative society to a progressive one should come within the compass of the "Left". Rummaging through the pages of Kerala's history, particularly of the latter half of the last century and of the early decades of the present century, one will come across several of such movements.

It was during this period that cracks began to appear in the feudal structure of Kerala society. For a long period, especially since the advent of Brahmins in the 8th century, Kerala's was a feudal society headed by the priestly caste of Brahmins and ably aided by the princely caste, which was the creation of the priestly caste as there was no ruling caste, Kshatriya in Kerala. These upper castes had complete supremacy in society and they had held the vast majority of the lower castes in suppression, abject dependency, poverty and illiteracy. The Bhakthi Movement that had swept India in the 16th century, therefore, had its impact on Kerala and its literature. It was this movement, whose representative in Kerala, was the great Tunchath Ezhuthachan, that had effected a radical change in Kerala's literature. Till then the literary creations in Kerala were either in Sanskrit or Manipravala (a kind of Sanskrit-Vernacular mixture) and literature was the exclusive preserve and privileges of the upper castes. Although in the 14th century Cherusseri had written his *Krishnagatha* and a little later Kannassa Panicker of central Travancore had written his *Ramayanam* in Malayalam, it was Ezhuthachan and his *Adhyatma Ramayanam* that became more popular. All these stalwarts had brought down the Malayalam literature from the ivory towers of Sanskrit and Manipravala. *Adhyatma Ramayanam* became a precious possession in every household and the common man could, by then, hear the

recitation of the *Ramayanam* in Malayalam or read it in his own language. This was certainly a revolutionary turning point in the history of Kerala and to my mind, the early stirring of a 'left orientation' can be traced here.

This trend was reinforced with the coming of the Christian missionaries who established a number of English Schools in different parts of Kerala. Education was imparted in these schools without any caste discriminations which enabled both the upper and lower castes to have a glimpse of the world. This opening up of the outside world, or rather a new world, had, in turn, enriched Malayalam literature in a big way. Novels, short stories, essays, etc., in the pattern of Western literature and translations of world classics began to appear in the vernacular. Malayalees of different social strata began to acquaint themselves with movements like the Renaissance, Reformation, French Revolution, Industrial Revolution, etc., and ideas like Fraternity, Equality and Liberty, Democracy, etc., which helped especially the lower castes to be more conscious of their social status and as a result of which there sprang up several radical movements to fight against the social evils and injustices.

Next is the era of the legendary Sree Narayana Guru who inflicted the most crushing blow to the pernicious caste system through his epoch making social revolution. In those days lower castes and untouchables were denied entry into Hindu temples, then absolutely under the control of the upper castes. Sree Narayana Guru commenced his crusade against this evil practice by installing a Siva idol, which he proclaimed as Ezhava Siva, at Aruvipuram in the precincts of Thiruvananthapuram. The message was unambiguously clear and emphatically strong and it spread throughout Kerala like a hurricane uprooting many a myth and malpractice perpetrated by the upper castes in the name of Hindu religion. It had awakened the lower castes from slumber. It was this social revolution spearheaded by Sree Narayana Guru that had virtually turned the Kerala soil upturned making it fertile for the seeds of agnosticism, rationalism, atheism, socialism and communalism to be sown.

The pertinent point to be noted here is that it was only when Sree Narayana Guru had broken the shackles of caste had the 'Left' been able to get a foot hold in Kerala. Here it may be noted that Sree Narayana Guru was immensely influenced besides the Advaita philosophy

by the Budha and Jaina systems which were prevalent in Kerala before the advent of Brahminism. In this context, the contribution of Sree Narayana Guru's illustrious contemporary, the ebullient Ayyankali also merits mention. It was his heroic struggles for the dignity of the untouchable that aroused those downstream masses into action. Very much before the Marxian theory of class struggle became known in Kerala, Ayyankali had organised an agricultural workers' strike which extended for a full year. The cause for this first ever agricultural workers' strike in Kerala was the denial of admission to a Harijan girl in an educational institution.

While these developments were taking shape in Kerala, Gandhiji had become the supreme leader of the National Movement. With him at the Command the Indian National Congress became a fighting organisation of the masses for India's freedom. By espousing causes like eradication of untouchability and uplift of Harijans Gandhiji had drawn millions of the downtrodden masses into the National Movement. These sprouted a number of small and big movements in Kerala in line with this Gandhian action plan which were all radical and progressive in character in the then existing social and political conditions. Besides the Indian National Congress the socialist movement in the mould of Gandhian philosophy also took deep roots

in Kerala. The teachings of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia and Jayaprakash Narayan along with Gandhiji's had much mass appeal. The Socialist Party in India was born out of the Congress Socialist Party and its Kerala Unit had converted itself into the Communist Party way back in 1939.

All these trends and developments have contributed positively to the growth of the 'Left Movement' in Kerala. But the question is whether the present day 'Left Movement' is prepared to absorb and assimilate the positive trends narrated above, whose embers are still growing. The socio-political scenario in Kerala and India has drastically changed with the issue of social justice getting ascendancy in the political agenda and with the introduction of the new economic policy by Narasimha Rao Government. The issue now is certainly not class war but a movement for social justice in which the lower castes and the SC/STs getting an upper hand in political power. The new economic policy also will pauperize the vast majority of Indians who are mostly the lower castes and the downtrodden. Therefore, the fight for social justice and against the new economic policy are intertwined and interlinked. The 'Left' in Kerala, therefore, has to bring under its penumbra all those forces that are fighting for social justice. Kerala had already shown the way and this experience should enable the 'Left' to chalk out the correct action plan for the future.

CRISIS IN KERALA'S HIGHER EDUCATION

5

T.N. Jayachandran

There is something very seriously wrong with higher education in Kerala. The entire system is chaotic.

The blame for the crisis must be put squarely on the political parties of Kerala, particularly the Communist Party (Marxist) and Indian National Congress (Indira). They have practically abdicated their responsibility in education by handing over education to minority parties or small parties when they were in power after 1964. This may be because we have more politicians than statesmen

among our leaders.

One of the reasons for the crisis is the proliferation in the number of colleges; from 28 in 1956-57 to 173 in 1993-94. There has been a phenomenal increase in the number of students as well-from a mere 22,000 in 1956-57 to 3,60,000 in 1993-94. Out of these, 2,00,000 are Pre-degree students who ought to be with the School system.

The 'Direct Payment Scheme' introduced in 1972 which ensured regular payment of salary to all College teachers

indirectly resulted in deterioration in the quality of teachers as the right of appointment rested with Private Managements and Government had only the right to pay! The introduction of UGC scales of pay has resulted in better incomes of teachers without any commensurate benefit for the students.

A high degree of politicisation of college teachers has had undesirable consequences. Academic corruption has become normal.

Sanction of new colleges and courses have been indiscriminate and illogical. In Kerala, a new college is good business, even if it is bad education.

The Vice-Chancellor is the kingpin of higher education. Unfortunately, the prime consideration for the choice of Vice-Chancellors is very often caste and

political affiliation rather than academic excellence or administrative ability.

There could be positive improvement in higher education if conscious attempts are made on the following lines:-

1. The major political parties must handle education portfolio when they come to power.
2. Politics must be kept out of education.
3. Pre-degree courses must be delinked from the University system.
4. An Open University may be set up.
5. Qualifications and quality of teachers must be ensured.
6. New colleges and courses must be started only on academic considerations.
7. Courses and Curriculum must be revamped to suit the changing times.

CRISIS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN KERALA

C.P. Narayanan

Abstract

Higher education in Kerala has been in crisis from the days of its origin. Higher education in India was modelled on British higher education, although higher education in Britain has been reformed thoroughly, Indian higher education follows more or less the old pattern. While some states have made some welcome changes in their systems of higher education, Kerala has not. Universities in Kerala have been turned into major nurseries of the unemployed.

Education, and this includes general education and higher education, has to be addressed to the current needs of society. So the attempt to adopt western systems of higher education wholesale is not appropriate to our society, which faces different economic, social, political and cultural problems. It is good to provide our students with facilities for self-development that meet international standards, but it is incorrect to imitate what is being done elsewhere and for education to suit others' needs. An imitative strategy will be useful only to a few young men

and women who wish to migrate to the West, and in the process we shall be guilty of making tens of thousands of our youth misfits in our society. The success of 'internationalising' our higher education has to be judged on the basis of the achievements of the majority of students who go through the system, not on the basis of what a small elite group has achieved.

What we have to imbibe from western education are its high standards of teaching and learning and the attitude and involvement of different interested sections. We have never cared to note what faculties of students are to be developed by higher education. Whatever the standards that existed in respect of teaching and learning at the time of India's independence, have deteriorated miserably. No serious attempt has been made to upgrade them. In the West, governments and private agencies set requirements before universities and centres of learning and they make resources available to universities. The rest is left to the academic community. In our context, the one who provides finance has the last word on education.

As a result, there have been serious distortions of higher education. Last but not least, parents in the West do not interfere with a student's right to choose what they want to study. In our context, students are often not given any freedom at all by their parents. The seriousness of this tragedy is often recognised in our society.

Private interests in education contributed a lot to education in an earlier period. Today, however, they are driven by the profit motive. They have nothing in common with their western counterparts. They are interested only in multiplying institutions, in quantity,

not quality. Private interests have devalued education by admitting students who have scored very low marks and by appointing third-rate teachers.

Private interests and the government are undermining universities, making them undemocratic and bureaucratizing them, and making education too costly for ordinary people. Unfortunately, many academicians in the university either support these vested interests or keep silent. What is needed now is a stout defence of what is living in our education system and a rejection of what is dead in it.

5

NEED FOR STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN THE AFFILIATION SYSTEM

A.N.P. Ummerkutty

Madras, Calcutta and Bombay are the first universities in India, all started in 1857 and organised as Affiliating Universities on the model of the University of London. Gradually the affiliating system got stabilised in the country with a sort of division of labour between the parent body and the attached institutions. The university gave necessary academic guidance, regulated the various courses of studies and conducted the final year examinations, while most of the educational process including teaching, library work, practical demonstration, tutorials in the evening hours, internal tests, assessment of the performance of the students, etc., were carried out in the affiliated colleges. During the entire nineteenth century this was the pattern of higher education in the country.

In 1920 the first teaching department was organised in the Calcutta University on the recommendation of Asuthosh Mukerji Commission appointed by the then Government of Bengal to study the problems of higher education and to suggest reform measures. Later still, research was also started in the University teaching departments. This innovation was followed by other universities also so that gradually the university consisted of a campus with its own teaching-cum-research departments and a number of colleges affiliated to it,

but located in far off places. The hierarchical relationship between the parent body and the affiliated institutions was thus completed with the former having a distinct leadership role. This state of affairs continued until 1947.

After independence some major changes took place that radically altered the course of evolution of the affiliation system. They are: (1) Enormous expansion of the higher education system in the country, universities having increased 8 fold, colleges 15 fold, students 25 fold and teachers about 15 fold; (2) Large scale expansion resulted in the deterioration of standards. Ill-equipped laboratories, poorly-stocked libraries, inadequate space, neglected campuses, under-qualified and often disinterested teachers, inexperienced administrators and management, entirely new social composition of students, etc., contributed to this deterioration and flattening of educational standards; (3) Qualifications for the appointment of teachers, admission rules for students and courses of studies being offered in the university departments being more or less identical with those prevailing in colleges, the university departments lost their leadership role; (4) Prestige of university departments was further eroded by shortage of funds for research

activities. In free India quite a large number of autonomous research institutions outside the university system sprang up. They work under the umbrella organisations like the CSIR, ICAR, ISRO, ICMR, DRDO, AEC, etc., and drain away most of the funds available for research, thus depriving the university departments of any worthwhile opportunity for serious research.

These are the major changes that have necessitated rethinking on the need for structural changes in the affiliation system which seems to have evolved into a sterile, fruitless, dead end. Being a century old product of the colonial rulers, the affiliation system has developed its own self-perpetuating

techniques and therefore radical structural alterations in the system are not immediately feasible. But at the same time, no functional improvement is possible without corresponding structural adjustments.

In the paper a few such remedial measures are suggested. These measures will have the double advantage of both inserting a new self-propelling dynamism into the system and of gradually eroding the present day stagnance, and rigidity of the affiliation frame work. Though the problems identified are essentially of all-India nature, the solutions suggested can be implemented at the state level, for all the universities in Kerala are state Universities.

5

ECONOMICS OF HIGHER EDUCATION: IMPLICATIONS OF THE PUNNAYYA COMMITTEE REPORT FOR STATE UNIVERSITIES

J.V.Vilaniyam

In November 1992, the UGC set up a high-powered Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Justice K. Punnayya to examine the financial situation in Central Universities and Colleges affiliated to the Delhi University, BHU, etc. Although the Punnayya Committee Report deals with centrally funded institutions, its implications for the State Universities cannot be overlooked because all Universities in the country - Central and State - are facing severe financial crises. Neither the central government nor the state governments are in a position to augment the annual grants to universities.

The Committee's recommendation is that all universities have to alter their financial management systems so that expenditures are curtailed and grant requirements and costs are assessed on the basis of a unit system of calculation. "The unit system should replace the present negotiated (incremental system). All grants from the next five year-plan period onwards should be closely related to the unit cost of activities..." the report says. Another important recommendation of special significance to the University of Kerala (in fact to all State Universities in different degrees) is that

"the UGC/Government must ensure that maintenance grant covers the wage bill of the university, and also the service charges to be laid down in consultation with the universities and experts. This may include water supply, consumables and libraries. It is very clear that the impact of the periodical increase in DA and other allowances of the salary structure is considerable and financial systems of the universities cannot bear this except at the cost of essential academic inputs."

As far as Kerala is concerned, there were recent increases in the emoluments of the staff (about 2500 persons) in the University of Kerala: one, the implementation of central parity in the scale of pay and the other, an increase in the DA. Both are corollaries of the Kerala government's decisions. The State Government has generously increased the pay and allowances of the staff without increasing the annual grant to the University. DA increase alone costs the University nearly Rs.50 lakhs a year. The total requirement for meeting the salaries of the staff comes to Rs.1800 lakhs.

To conduct the 4300 odd

examinations and to bring out the results on time through centralized evaluation and spot payment, the University needs Rs.500 lakhs a year whereas the examination fee collected from the students comes to only half that amount.

How long can this situation continue? Is there really any re-thinking on the part of educationists on these matters? Who should finance higher education in India? Are we really imparting quality education to the hundreds of thousands of students who rush to the colleges for higher education? How many of these thousands are there with real interest in acquiring higher learning?

Out of the approximately 1200 lakhs young people in India between the ages of 15 and 25, about 260 lakhs (22%) go for higher education. Such mass higher education has never been a priority in any high-population country at any time in history. "Education for all" does not mean "higher education for all". But mass education is a must - at the lower levels.

We in India have embarked upon the great historical experiment of building a democratic society based on adult franchise and the rule of law in a largely illiterate country. But for building a democratic society, costly higher education for all is neither practical nor necessary. Values of democracy, rule of law, civic sense and social orientation can be imparted from a tender age. Similarly, the basics of living in a scientifically and technologically shaped society can also be given within 12 years of schooling. For some ill-considered logic many intellectuals think that free or almost free higher education is a matter of right for every citizen.

No doubt, every citizen must have the right of access to higher education, irrespective of caste, creed, religion and economic backwardness. But this right should be based on merit. Only the deserving should go for higher education and nobody with merit should be denied access to it. These who do not have the means should be helped through grants, scholarships, freeships, easily payable educational loans, etc. But the state should not attempt to provide costly higher education free of cost to all who ask for it.

No country in the world has ever provided or attempted to provide free or almost free higher education to all its young citizens. An excerpt from a letter written by Shri E.M.S., the venerable Communist leader of India is quite eye-

opening.

"Colleges and Universities should be made to confine themselves to research and theoretical studies. They should not be converted into institutions where degree holders are manufactured

One proposal therefore would be that the general education should be completed in the high school. Colleges and universities should be confined to intensive study and research on subjects chosen by the students themselves. This would require what may be called the delinking of colleges and post-graduate degrees from jobs in Government service ..."

Table I gives a picture of the enrolment in colleges and universities of India in 1990-'91, and Table II gives the corresponding picture for Kerala. One can find from these Tables that the majority of those who go for University education are actually "pre-University" students. The enrolment of students at the degree and post-graduate levels is not high. This is as it should be, but the bulk of the State grants goes for such "pre-University" level education. Many of those who go for such pre-University education go for it just because their school education has not equipped them for any occupation.

A high school education should equip the large majority of the young between the ages of 6 and 18 with skills for clerical, technical and semi-technical jobs. Enormous amounts are spent as subsidy for providing cheap higher education in Kerala and India. The large majority of those who pass (and pass percentage varies between 20 and 25 without moderation but even with moderation it does not go beyond 40%!) go on for higher degrees. They keep earning higher degrees until they get a clerical job!! The fact that out of those who applied for a Grade II Assistant's job (entry level) in one University, nearly 60% had either an M.A., M.Sc., or a B.Ed. degree should open our eyes to the poverty of higher education in Kerala. There were five Ph.Ds and scores of applicants with two post-graduate degrees. What a tremendous waste of human resources and what deep frustration and enormous national wastage of time, money and energy! What a strong case for delinking degrees from jobs!! Grants for higher education should be for real higher education - high levels of

theoretical research and applications, the results of which will be useful for the socio-cultural and economic development of regions, states and the nation itself.

However, because of the high unemployment in the country, creation of job opportunities through appropriate planning at State and Central levels is the responsibility of governments. But there are still jobs for which properly skilled persons are not available. There should not only be delinking of jobs from degrees, but also linking of education and training with available and newly created/newly planned jobs. Planning of jobs and planning of education and training have to go on simultaneously.

Most of what the government today spends on higher education should be diverted to creation of facilities for job-oriented skills training and education at the school level. By the time a student reaches the 9th class, he/she should start receiving instruction in technically oriented subjects also. When he/she reaches that class, they will be in a position to determine if they need further liberal education or they need further training in vocational courses. All our schools must have the infrastructure for imparting technical/vocational education and training. The rush to colleges will automatically ease. Higher education will benefit. Unless school education is revamped, higher education will not improve. Given that high school education is reoriented towards skills essential for living in the modern era, higher education in colleges and universities should be streamlined in such a way that there is no financial waste and that institutions of higher learning become economically viable. The institutions must become free enough from vested interests and pursue excellence in the interests of national development based on social justice with due attention on what is happening on the international scene. In order to do this, institutions of higher learning have to change their financial systems. It is here that some of the major and minor recommendations of the Punnayya Committee become extremely relevant.

Based on the Punnayya Committee's Report, the following recommendations are given fully endorsing the two most important ones given earlier:

1. Universities must generate their own resources without overly depending on the UGC or the State Government. Any additional

resources generated by a university may be kept in a separate fund for furthering the objectives of the institution and the UGC may provide a matching grant.

2. There should be 100% income tax concession on all endowment and contributions made to universities.
3. State governments must take care of essential maintenance and developmental requirements of the universities.
4. Fee structure must be revised in order to meet academic and research expenses. Those who can pay higher fees must pay. Those who cannot but have the merit, must be helped by the university and the state.
5. Cut down wasteful expenditure. The universities must calculate the cost of education per student. Expenditure due to increase in the number of staff has to be reviewed and curbed firmly wherever necessary.
6. Departments must have academic and financial autonomy, so that they can organize new courses based on the changing needs of society, and existing programmes can be developed further.
7. Development grants should be linked to an academic audit system, and to performance indicators.
8. Twenty per cent of the annual maintenance grant may be released to the universities in April-May, 60% in September-October and 20% in December every year.
9. The universities must have an efficient system for dissemination of information regarding the deployment of resources and the implementation of academic and non-academic programmes. The system must be capable of storage, retrieval and analysis of the information which will be useful also to the UGC, the funding agencies and the public.
10. Academic costs, that is, the expenditure directly related to teaching and research, should be 60-65%; academic administration should be 10-20%; and other departments, auxiliary services,

etc., within 20-25% of the total maintenance grant.

11. The student-teacher ratio should be 12:1. The teaching non-teaching staff ratio should be 1:3. Employees like gardeners, cleaners and watch and ward should be engaged on contract basis to the extent possible. The minimum workload for Professors, Readers and Lecturers should be 40 hours per week and these should be apportioned for actual teaching, examination, own research, reading, administrative work and research guidance.
12. All fees should be revised to take care of at least half of the unit cost per student (which is estimated to be about Rs.22,250/-

for students of arts, humanities and social science and Rs.32,210/- for those of science in Central Universities). The state universities will have to calculate these costs before the Ninth Plan starts).

Conclusion

Every activity of the university has to be examined from the cost point of view. Innovative financial systems based on cost-benefit calculations are essential for bringing much-needed fiscal discipline and funding realities to the academic and non-academic communities in all universities. This is especially needed for state universities which cannot hope for any large scale aid from funding agencies of the State or Central Government.

TABLE I

NATIONAL STATISTICS ON HIGHER EDUCATION, 1990-91

Item	Boys	%	Girls	%	Total	%
1. Pre-degree and Higher Secondary Level	14524228	84.18	7132969	83.98	21657197	84.11
2. B.Ed./B.T.	51453	0.29	40764	0.47	92217	0.35
3. M.B.B.S.	55482	0.32	28911	0.34	84393	0.32
4. B.Com./B.Com. (Hons)	751596	4.35	242936	2.86	994532	3.86
5. B.E./B.Sc. (Engg.)	215081	1.24	26287	0.30	241368	0.93
6. B.A./B.A. (Hons)	918955	5.32	615393	7.24	1534348	5.95
7. B.Sc./B.Sc. (Hons)	475861	2.75	281035	3.30	756896	2.93
8. M.A.	125935	0.72	76896	0.90	202831	0.78
9. M.Sc.	47542	0.27	24349	0.28	71891	0.27
10. M.Com.	64451	0.37	15043	0.17	79494	0.30
11. Ph.D./D.Sc./D.Phil.	23969	0.13	8488	0.09	32468	0.12
Total	1,72,54,553		84,93,082		2,57,47,635	

Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 1990-91, New Delhi: Ministry of HRD, Govt. of India, 1992, pp.16-29.

TABLE II
KERALA STATISTICS ON HIGHER EDUCATION
1990-91

Item	Boys	%	Girls	%	Total	%
1. Pre-degree and Higher Secondary Level	156450	66.71	159095	64.04	315545	65.34
2. B.Ed.	1178	27.45	3113	72.55	4291	0.88
3. M.B.B.S.	2486	61.87	1532	38.12	4018	0.83
4. B.Com	12135	63.76	6898	36.24	19033	3.94
5. B.Tech./B.Arch.	11955	57.32	8898	42.67	20853	4.31
6. B.A.	22929	43.92	29282	56.08	52211	10.81
7. B.Sc.	22021	40.57	32261	59.43	54282	11.24
8. M.A.	2205	42.23	3017	57.77	5222	1.08
9. M.Sc.	1551	33.01	3162	67.09	4713	0.97
10. M.Com.	825	57.57	608	42.43	1433	0.29
11. Ph.D./D.Sc./D.Litt.	773	58.61	546	41.39	1319	0.27
Total	234508		248412		482920	

Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 1990-91, Ministry of HRD, Govt. of India, 1992, pp. 16-29.

ART AND LITERATURE IN THE SECOND STAGE OF KERALA RENAISSANCE

P. Govinda Pillai

Abstract

Periodisation in history is a hazardous endeavour, especially when the historian is dealing not with personalities, dynasties and wars, but the movements of people and ideas. Dates and years are bound to be slippery. Given all these problems, one may fix the beginning of Kerala's renaissance somewhere around the year 1888. This period, which was marked by the development of the print media, political activities, social reform actions, the development of prose as the main form of literary and public discourse, nationalist stirrings, and the formation of rudimentary legislative bodies, came to a close by the late 1920s. The year 1928, in which the father of the Kerala renaissance, Sree Narayana Guru, passed away is a convenient cut-off point for the first stage. This periodisation also indicates that Kerala's renaissance was a later

phenomenon than the Bengal renaissance (the father of the Bengal renaissance, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, died in 1833, while Sree Narayana Guru was born in 1854).

The second stage of Kerala's renaissance, which began in the 1930s, came to a close in 1956, when Kerala state was formed and the first Kerala ministry was formed in 1957 by the Communist Party. In the years that followed, Kerala's history witnessed a sea-change in life, politics, literature and people's aspirations.

The features of the 1930s that made the decade a watershed in Kerala's history had their roots in the past. These features included social reform, nationalism, nascent ideas of socialism, and literary and artistic upsurge. In the 1930s, popular awakening and action gave new life and strength to these movements.

The decade of the 1930s opened with a social reform movement in the

cloistered Namboodiri families that insisted on equal rights for women. This was immediately followed by the Salt Satyagraha in the north and the so called abstention (*Nivartana*) movement in the south. Abstention from elected bodies was initiated by the depressed and backward communities and minorities like Muslims and Christians. They demanded better representation in government jobs and the legislature. The fight against untouchability, started by Narayana Guru, and which found expression in the Vaikom Temple Satyagraha, continued in Guruvayoor. The temple entry proclamation in Travancore in 1936 and the formation and struggles of the Travancore State Congress changed the political landscape. The formation of the Congress Ministry in the Madras Presidency gave Malabar a foretaste of limited democracy. A series of events - World War II, the anti-imperialist actions in Malabar in 1940, the 1942 struggle and the post-war upsurge, which included the Punnappa Vayalar and North Malabar struggles and the Prajamandal in Cochin led forward to freedom in 1947.

The formation of the Congress Socialist Party in 1936, and the Communist Party in 1937 and the predominance of the left in the Congress gave a radical turn to the freedom struggle, and also a tremendous impact on art, literature and culture. The formation of the Jeevat Sahitya Sanghom in 1937, under the inspiration of the All India Progressive Writer's Association, whose President was Premchand, was a seminal event. Although two among the famous trio of poets of twentieth century Malayalam (Ulloor and Vallathol) were alive, they were thrust to the background and a new generation of poets (Changampuzha, Vylloppilly and Sankara Kurup) captured the limelight. Poetry no longer dominated the literary scene; prose literature, mainly short stories (Basheer, Varkey, Thakazhi, Pottakkatt, Kesavadev) flourished in this period. Plays with social and class struggles as themes were written and enacted for the first time (V.T. Bhattathiripad, K. Damodaran, Premji and, later, Varkey, Basheer, Antony, Cherukad and others). The main figures in the new criticism were Balakrishna Pillai, M.P. Paul, Mundasserry, EMS, Devadas and Damodaran, some of whom were liberal democratic and others Marxists. Almost all of this generation were associated openly with the Progressive Writers Association (PWA), which was the name the Jeevat Sahitya Sanghom took in 1944.

The 1940s witnessed the continua-

tion and strengthening of the literary trends born in thirties. The victory of the antifascist war, with the Red Army in the victorious camp, and the surge of anti-imperialist movements at home and abroad gave a powerful impetus to progressive writers and artists. But the dawn of freedom led to new alignments among the progressives and the organisation of progressive writers split into communist and non-communist groups, and the organisation itself faded out by the fifties.

So we see that the 1940s witnessed both the acme of the PWA and its downfall. The blame for its decline has to be shared by the left and the right in the organisation. It is an apparent paradox that, although the 1950s began with the decline of the PWA, the movement itself grew stronger. A younger generation of poets, like Vayalar, ONV, Thirunelloor came to the forefront, with their progressive ideals intact. Most of the pioneers of short story began to write novels. The KPAC in the south of Kerala, Pratibha in the central region and Kendrakalasamithy in north Kerala and several troupes and companies began a whole new phase of development of the performing arts. A revolution occurred in the media. The print media advanced in leaps and bounds, the publication of books almost doubled, and cinema truly arrived. These events changed the terms and scale of cultural discourse. New heights were attained when the long-cherished dream of Malayalees came to fruition, the formation of a united Kerala with Communists in government. Political and cultural historians justifiably hail the fifties as the "Red Decade".

The red decade also gave birth to new patterns of literary creation, initiated by T. Padmanabhan, M.T. Vasudevan Nair and Madhavikutty. Their stories, though realist and humanist like their predecessors, differed radically from the loud realism of the founders. They explored the inner life of their characters more than the exterior social milieu. In the 1960s this trend was followed by ultra modernists to the point of absurdity, with anti-humanist and amoral results. In poetry too this trend slowly began in the work of M. Govindan, Ayyappa Panicker and others.

Surveying the impact of the second stage of the renaissance in literature and art, the birth marks of Kerala's renaissance (for example, in Kerala, unlike Bengal, the oppressed classes played an important role in the renaissance) are significant and evident.

In Bengal, the renaissance started with the upper caste elite and seeped down to the lower strata. In Kerala the reverse

occurred. Though the original tempo of the renaissance is apparently slowing down, the impact has not disappeared altogether.

6

RENAISSANCE, DECADENCE, MODERNISM AND POST MODERNISM

K. Satchidanandan

The Renaissance in Kerala was the sum total of the various movements that strove to create a modern, secular and democratic society in the region. The pioneers of Kerala's Renaissance knew that they had to fight indigenous hegemonic forces as well as the colonial masters in order to shape a new society. The first wave of this Renaissance came in the form of social reform movements operating within the structures of caste. It was aimed at the annihilation of sub-caste, removal of crippling customs and superstitions and the initiation of the communities into useful crafts and contemporary knowledge. These movements embraced all castes; however, its essential content was subaltern and egalitarian as represented by the Sree Narayana and the Dalit movements. The second wave of Renaissance came with the Nationalist Movement that worked towards a greater unification transcending castes and religions and created the first row of secular intellectuals and activists committed to anti-colonial as well as anti-feudal ideology. The third wave of Renaissance was the emergence of the Congress-Socialism and Communist movements from within the rank of the Congress. The rights of peasants and workers came to be recognised through a series of heroic struggles; Kerala's history, culture and politics began to be studied anew from the perspective of the oppressed classes.

The formation of Kerala's public sphere is part of this general democratic movement. The translations of Sanskrit and European classics provided new aesthetic norms and models. The codification of the rules of grammar helped the rise of a prose style; the pursuit of Sanskrit and Western poetics led to the development of literary criticism. Fiction modelled, after English, prose narratives began to be written along with plays and verse narratives, epics, lyrics and other forms of poetry. Printing presses, newspapers,

journals, publishing houses, libraries and literary societies promoted the growth of secular and trans-class community of readers freely debating literary works. The progressive literary Movement in its first phase encouraged a broad unity of writers based on their commitment to democracy, socialism and secularism and their readiness to look afresh at institution and values.

By the 1960s however, the Renaissance had lost its dynamic vitality. In the new post-independent scenario, the communal leadership that had once led the reform movements got congealed into conservative establishment that vied with each other for superiority and bargained with the government for privileges. The Congress was no more the radical force that it had been during the struggle for Independence, but an unquestionable centre of political power. They had abandoned Gandhi even while he was alive, in his last sad days of solitary strife; now Congress became a party of opportunists who found it profitable to support the rising class of capitalists. The Communist Party had entered a new phase in its existence with the anti-feudal struggles losing their urgency and it was called upon to confine its battles to the platforms of parliamentary democracy. The new enemy was not as visible as the old one, the party was uncertain about its new strategies. The secretive bureaucratic party-struggle developed during the earlier militant phase was in conflict with the new demands. Bourgeois tendencies like corruption and factionalism were creeping in, sectarianism marked its attitude to culture, intellectuals were suspect. The pure commitment to ideal was giving way to the pressure of real-politick.

The modernist literature that had its beginnings in the late 50s and emerged full-fledged in the 60s was an expression of this decadence of Renaissance forces and an oblique reaction to from the point of view of

middle class intellectuals. The optimism of the Renaissance writers lay shattered. It was difficult to believe in a simple theory of 'progress' and development. Most of the first-generation modernist who lived in metropolises outside the state were victims of a culture-shock as they with their rustic roots found themselves lost in the squalor of the over-crowded urban interos. Angst alienation, solitude, loss of identity, deterioration of faith and moral decadence became increasingly the themes of new writing. Their gods had died young, they were left adrift in a time-world without hope of redemption, the exposures of Stalin's perversion and atrocities made them disbelieve the communist ideal which many of them had embraced earlier. Nihilism and anarchy appealed to some, some posed existential questions, some turned cynics, and all, inevitably, were suspicious of Power. The modernist ideology also spread to other arts soon, to films, for example, the European modernist gave them a model to look at the post-Renaissance reality of Kerala in particular the post-Independence reality of India in general.

The 'dominant' of Modernism underwent a shift in the 70s. Some of the modernists identified themselves with the radicals inspired by the Naxalbari revolt. They felt a new destructive-creative force was at work, the lost purity and moral dedication appeared to have been retrieved. The radical modernists of the 70s were attempting a

metacritique of the modernist cultural critique of the 60s. The movement was stylistically an extension of the modernist upsurge and thematically a negation of it, a synthesis of the new sensibility and idiom with a desire for fundamental social change. However, their perception of reality also suffered from a lack of complexity as if they had identified India with its different ethos and cultural and philosophical past with countries like Chile or Bolivia.

The exhaustion of this political extremism lies behind the recent attempts at an indigenous variety of post-modernism aimed at a decolonisation of sensibility. Ethnic myths, racial history, regional traditions and submerged rhythms are being restored in poetry. The old callisthenics of class-combat has been replaced by a new eco-aesthetics of racial retrospection. 'Post-Marxist' issues like those of ecology, gender difference and ethnicity are being vigorously expressed. A new literature of engagement seems to be on the anvil, concerned this time more with micro-politics of every day than with the macro-politics of the State. In political terms, the axis appears to be shifting from the commitment to a one dimensional Revolution to a Foucauldian faith in transversal struggles waged simultaneously on a hundred fronts. The polyphonic textuality of post-modernism seems to be a product of this multi-dimensional engagement with a hydra-headed reality.

19 : DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION

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01

DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION IN KERALA - A RESPONSE TO OFFICIAL POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

K.C. Zachariah

During the course of past 30 years, the fertility rate in Kerala was declined from an average level of about six children/couple to less than two children, a level that could cause Kerala's population to decline if allowed to persist for a sufficiently long time. At the same time the infant mortality rate has declined to less than 17, a level that is comparable to some of the best in the world. This paper argues that much of Kerala's success in moderating fertility and mortality in such a short span of a generation was due to the policies which successive Governments in Kerala followed since independence. What are these policies and what are the programmes under them? How did the policies and programmes succeed in Kerala much more than in the other

states of India? Much of this paper is devoted to answering these questions.

Based on the results of two successive sample surveys conducted by the author at an interval of 10 years in 1980 and 1991, the paper also gives a brief description of the demographic transition in the State during the past 20 years and concludes with a question: with fertility rate remaining below replacement level for sometime now and still falling, should not the Department of Health and Family Welfare think about restructuring its programmes giving greater importance to MCH programmes and entrusting implementation of part of the family planning programme (eg. the reversible methods) to the NGOs? In any case, the Government's track record with reversible methods is not that good.

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02

MORTALITY AND FERTILITY TRANSITION IN KERALA: A HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION BASED ON PARISH RECORDS

S. Irudaya Rajan*, P.N. Mari Bhat**, Tim Dyson***

Historical demography is essentially a specialized branch of population studies which emerged only in the 1950's. Most often, parish records which are maintained for religious reasons rather than demographic purposes become the data

sources of historical demography. Vigorous interest in historical demography has emerged only in the last fifteen years, in France, England, USA and also in some other European countries. However, it is fact that

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historical investigation through parish records has been a rare venture in India and particularly in Kerala. The senior author of this paper has completed a comprehensive study on demographic transition in Bombay through parish records.

This paper reports the investigation done by the authors to understand the mortality and fertility transition of Kerala through parish records of seven Roman Catholic parishes of the archdiocese of Trivandrum. The larger study is financed by the Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi. Historical annual series of data on births, deaths and marriages are gathered from these seven parishes.

The parishes selected for the present study are St Thomas, Valia Veli; St Anthony Forane, Valiathurai; Madre de Deus, Vettukad; St Anthony, Kamukinkide; St Ignatius, Puthenthope; St James, Thazhampally; Assumption, Vlathankara.

In the beginning, an attempt is made to understand the quality of data and some basic trends and patterns of births, deaths and marriages separately. Later a linkage analysis is carried out to examine the quality of data as well as to draw some inferences on the trends in fertility and mortality on the basis of linkage between births, deaths and marriages. A comparison of these results with the results of the same type of study carried out in the Bombay parishes by the senior author also has been attempted. The analysis is mainly confined to the present century due to the absence of data for the 19th century.

The overall sex ratio at birth of four parishes combined for all the periods is 125 males per 100 females while it was 102 for Bombay parishes indicating poor quality of data of Trivandrum than that of Bombay. The data on the age at baptism shows that the children who are baptised within a month has declined tremendously from the second half of the twentieth century to the present day in all the parishes.

Number of births for different decades shows that up to 1950 there was an increase in the number of births but after 1960, there is a secular decline in

the number of births till the present day. A seasonality in birth is also observed from the data. Monsoon season contributed to 35.1 per cent of births followed by summer with 34.8 per cent and the lowest was in winter. By individual month the highest number of conception was found in May, followed by October.

The sex ratio at burials was favourable to females indicating excess male deaths in Kerala's population. The proportion of infant deaths in the total deaths showed a drastic decline after 1950's. The share of adult deaths to total deaths was 40 per cent in the first half of the present century and declined there after. On the other hand, the share of old age death has gone up over time. The rainy season accounted for more number of deaths compared to other seasons.

Marriage age has shown consistent increase especially after 1950's. The age at marriage for both males and females has shown an increase over the time period. The highest number of marriages occurred in Trivandrum in May followed by November. The mean age at marriages for males has shown a consistent increase from 25.0 in 1925-29 to 28.4 in 1985-90 where as the same age for females was 18.7 to 23 respectively.

The trends in fertility and mortality is assessed through ratio of births to burials. This ratio indicates an interesting feature of the Kerala's demographic transition. But there is a difference in this ratio between Bombay and Kerala with Kerala showing a lesser ratio in recent past inferring the faster decline in fertility. The marital fertility rate is depicted in terms of ratio of baptisms to nuptials which shows a declining trend over the time period. Further more the ratio was lower in the case of Kerala compared to Bombay parishes in all time period indicating that even historically Kerala Christians have a lower fertility and there after the reduction is faster. The ratio of birth to nuptials (ie total marital fertility rate) has shown a decline from 6.82 in 1910-14 to 2.33 in 1985-90.

LOW BIRTH WEIGHT AND NEED FOR NUTRITIONAL CARE OF PREGNANT WOMEN IN KERALA

R.S.Kurup

This paper intends to present the findings of a study of birth weight in two government hospitals in the Trivandrum City in two years 1987-88 and 1992-93 based on a 20 per cent sample from the hospital registers. At the outset it may be stated that the hospital statistics may not be representative of the general state of affairs as a large number of the cases may be having some complication or other. But in Kerala institutional deliveries being most common, even the poorest of the poor give priority on getting admission into the major hospitals with all types of facilities. At the same time the emergence of large private hospitals in the capital city and some other important places has lessened the demand for the services in the public sector hospitals and health centres. However, there has not been any perceptible decline in the number of delivery cases in these hospitals as could be seen from available statistics.

Previous studies conducted from hospital data by the Health Services Department and the Medical College Nutrition Division, and those by other agencies have brought out the important variables which are responsible for the low birth weight. Social class which actually includes the living status, occupation or income has been pointed out as an important variable. But from hospital records this cannot be ascertained as the income reporting may not be correct and there is no verification done in this regard.

The WHO definition of low birth weight is that below 2.5 kg. and that below 2kg is referred to very low birth weight. In the 20 per cent sample of cases studied from the two hospitals the low birth weight cases including the very low ones has been found to be 10 per cent in one hospital (the first hospital) and 20 per cent in the second in 1987-88; the second hospital has nearly 3000 delivery cases in an year while the first one has only less than half that number. After five years the percentage in the second hospital declined to 17. The mean birth weight decreased from 2.85 kg. to 2.73

kg. in the first hospital during this period while in the second it decreased from 2.87 kg. to 2.65 kg. In another study of 250 cases the mean was found to be 2.91 in the second hospital. It was also pointed out that from the fifties to the eighties there was an increase in the birth weight of infants. Here the fact that there has been shift in middle and high class clients to private hospitals has to be borne in mind. In any cases these differences cannot be statistically significant though the averages are above the limit set for defining low birth weight. Another conclusion was that women of ages below 20 years and above 40 years give birth to low birth weight babies. The present study, however, does not confirm this - the number of such cases are quite small to warrant any such conclusions.

It was found that most of the low-birth babies are of parity one but are not necessarily born to mother with age less than 20 years as even the average age at marriage of females is 22 years. One peculiar feature is that the fathers of the low birth weight babies were either coolies or having blue collar occupations. This naturally throws doubt whether the pregnant mothers could get enough food or at least average nutritive value during pregnancy. The usual habit of women in middle and low class families to eat at last after every one has eaten and that too whatever is left over makes the situation worse. Some pregnant women does not take enough food during the initial months of pregnancy due to vomiting and nausea even if all types of necessary food will be available.

A group of researchers in the S.V. University, Tirupati had pointed out that maternal morbidity and low birth weight were caused by malnutrition in about one-seventh of pregnant mothers. Iron deficiency had also been pointed out in many studies. In the small sample of cases already followed up in the present study, it has been revealed that the poor women had very little of prenatal care and the health personnel did not visit them nor did they go to their office. Even if iron and folic acid could be

distributed, the women were not aware of its efficacy and were not sure of continuous supply. The follow-up is inadequate.

Those women who cannot afford to have any supplementary nutritional diet suffer very badly in this aspect and are prone to maternal morbidity which limits the availability of breast milk for the low birth weight babies. In Kerala, the low infant mortality of 17 per 1000 live births and nearly double the child mortality in 1-4 years can be lowered by caring about the nutrition of the pregnant mothers and the feeding women, as also attending to children's supplementary feeding. It would be ideal if the peripheral level health staff take more care in ensuring that the pregnant women get all that are needed for their health and nutrition and also for the growing foetus.

The data further reveal that parities above 2 are rare in 1992-93 and that most of the women are in their twenties. Even in the year 1987-88 the pattern was more or less similar.

The results of the Trivandrum hospital based study cannot be generalised, especially because a large part of the low birth weight babies were not followed up. There were only 2 infant deaths out of the cases visited which numbered about 50 low birth weight babies; these were complicated cases and were neonatal deaths. The study is being done in the Malabar area also.

The need for nutritional care of pregnant mothers has also been suggested for reduction in proportion of low birth weight babies and thereby reduction of infant death rate, to be achieved by the year 2000.

19

04

POPULATION REDISTRIBUTION: A NEW POLICY

K. Krishnakumari

Kerala attracts population scientists from all over the world mainly due to the peculiarities in her demographic scenario. Since 1971 the growth rate of population has shown steady decline and had reached an annual growth rate of 1.3 percent by 1991. Declining birth rate, low death rate, low infant mortality rate, high literacy rate, (especially of women), etc., have placed Kerala in the forefront of the demographically advanced areas. But, this small state of India suffers from a high density of population and hence possesses an imbalance between population and resources. Due to highly favourable climatic conditions, fertility of the soil and geographic beauty of the State, population in multitudes have been found to settle here even from very early times. The density has increased from 165 in 1901 to 749 in 1991 which means that the number of people occupying a square kilometre of land has increased by 584 during this 90 year period. High birth rate of yester years, rapid improvement in technology, better transportation and communication facilities as well as improvement, in other amenities and

migration might have boosted the density of the state.

Now the questions to be taken up are: (1) Does the State have sufficient carrying capacity? and (2) How to solve the problems of high density and the imbalance between population and resources in Kerala. Kerala should not be studied in isolation. Viewing the State as part of a whole unit, the percentage share of population and area and the density of the whole nation have to be taken into account. The land and population in India, as in any other regions of the world is unevenly distributed. If we analyse the density of the States and the districts of each state, we get an entirely different picture.

Viewed in this perspective, patterns of distribution currently found in India, as in any other developing countries, can be described as a mismatch between the distribution of land and population. The existing distribution of population has to be recognised as a factor of great importance in determining the future population of a place,

especially in the near future. A distribution once established has a powerful influence upon relative attraction of various area of human habitation. Over population in certain pockets of the nation and the existence of 'empty spaces' are crucial problems that deserve attention at this juncture.

The maldistribution which is associated with various socio-economic and geographic factors can be considered as a great demographic obstacle in the path of development. Therefore, a redistribution of population is very essential for solving the problem. Redistribution of population in the demographic sense points to certain

observed changes in the number of people in an area during a specific time interval. The natural increase of population and internal migration, as mentioned earlier, are the principal factors which exert profound influence upon the changes in the density of population. But an unscientific and unchecked migration of the present type can only harm and worsen the conditions of the densely settled areas of the country. Therefore, a new policy has to be formulated for the redistribution of population taking into account the density and land availability of each state.

BIRTH INTERVAL DYNAMICS IN KERALA: A CAUSE OF CONCERN

19

05

U.S.Mishra, S.Irudaya Rajan

Fertility Transition is often initiated with the widening of birth intervals which ultimately results in a lower average expected number of children born to a woman at the end of her reproductive span. In addition, elongation of birth intervals are desired to ensure better maternal and child health. But, when the reproduction process reaches an exact replacement level or below replacement level as in case of Kerala, it is essential to follow a proper birth interval dynamics without devoiding the aspect of maternal and child health. With a common agreement on a small family norm (i.e having at most two children per couple), it is probable that women tend to compress their effective reproductive years of life through having the desired number of children limited to two in the initial few years of married life.

With a positive contraceptive environment in the state, the popular acceptance of permanent means of contraception induces closer birth intervals with having the first child

immediately after marriage followed by the second child at the least interval. For instance, the effective reproductive span (defined in terms of the difference between age at first child and the age at last child) for Kerala in 1990 is 5.12 years as against 12.60 years for India and 16.64 years for Uttar Pradesh. This does not have the due adverse impact on infant and maternal mortality as expected because of widespread immunisation as well as antenatal and post natal care in the state. No doubt, an immediate first birth after marriage is inevitable for Kerala women keeping in view their late age at marriage. But, the quick occurrence of second order birth seems to be intentional and it reflects a decisive approach towards acceptance of a permanent means of contraception. Based on this observations, it is felt that sterilisation the most popular means of permanent contraception is to be made qualitative at the cost of advocating spacing methods.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES IN KERALA - COMMUNITY WISE ANALYSIS

G. Somasekharan Nair*

Kerala is always mentioned to be having uniqueness and specialities in various fields when compared to the rest of the country. This is true in the case of the pattern of development also. The development activities in the fields of education and health contributed for the achievements of the national demographic goals set for 2000 AD as well as the constitutional requirement of universalisation of elementary education. The causal factors for such a pattern of development may, perhaps be a matter of debate. But it is a fact that significant improvements have been made not only in the above two fields but also in fields like communications, construction and transport. Analysis of the various development indicators reveals that large scale variation still exists in the development of different geographic and administrative regions in the State. Unfortunately, data at levels lower than the district are not available at present to undertake analytical studies at levels like the panchayats/municipalities or for different sections of the population within such smaller units.

The Kerala Statistical Institute, Thiruvananthapuram has undertaken a Development Monitoring System (DMS) in selected localities with the main objective of making available a set of indicators which will throw light on whether the quality of life of the people is becoming better and to find out linkages, if any, among these indicators of wellbeing. A comprehensive report depicting the progress over the decade 1981-90 on the quality of life of the people at local level was published in October 1992. The highlights of the studies are:

- i. the development efforts in the past have made impacts with varying degrees among the localities;
- ii. improvements in living conditions and education were noticed in a greater proportion of the households belonging to SC/ST group though a considerable section among

them are yet to get the benefits to be on par with other communities. and

- iii. the percentage of matriculates and above to the total population aged 15 and above has not achieved any significant improvement, though education is free up to that level.

An attempt is made in this paper to analyse the trend in the development pattern of the different community groups (Hindu Forward, Hindu Backward, SC/ST, Christians and Muslims) in the selected localities over time. Since the same localities and the same set of households, to the extent possible, were covered during the different periods, comparison over time would be more meaningful to assess the present status of the different community groups with respect to the characteristics studied. The characteristics considered for this study are, housing condition, electrification, sanitation, household size, age-structure, education, per capita income, number of earners, number of dependents per earner and household monthly income.

This study based on available data shows that the disparities among the different community groups are getting narrowed over time. In the case of variables like number of earners per household, housing conditions, electrification and sanitation, Hindu Backward, SC/ST and Muslim groups have made better improvements than Hindu Forward and Christian groups. The average household size and number of dependents per earner of Hindu Backward and SC/ST groups are smaller than that of the general population in most of the localities while for Muslims the household size as well as the number of dependents per earner is still higher. The number of localities selected for DMS may not be sufficient enough to develop indicators at the State level. Yet the results are indicative of the trend in the development impact of the different community groups.

19

07

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF AGEING IN KERALA

P.K.B.Nayar

In this paper, some of the social and economic problems of the aged population in Kerala are examined. The proportion of the old (60+) in Kerala, as per 1991 census, constitutes 9% of the total population and is the highest in India. In another 30 years, i.e., by 2012, it will be around 16%. By then, one in every six persons in Kerala will be old. Due to longer life expectancy of women their proportion in the old population is larger. Widows constitute 62% among the old and 92% among the old-old (70+) women.

The old are beset with a number of social problems: loneliness - physical and mental. During day time, their children go for work and grand children go to school. Even when they are present in the family, due to the so-called generation gap, interaction between them and the old is minimum. Psychological problems due to this and due to loss of authority and power and consequent loss of respect from family members make them miserable.

Break-up of the joint family deprived the old of the traditional form of care-giving. They feel insecure and unattended. Economic problems of the old

arise mainly out of the increasing poverty of the people and their consequent inability to look after/provide for their old kins. 32.1% of the population is below poverty line. Increasing cost of maintaining the old (especially medical cost) and greater demand on the limited family resources for education and health care of children result in marginalisation of the old. The two pension schemes for the old, Old Age Pension and Agricultural Workers' Pension-cover only a part of the needy and the amount (Rs.75) is inadequate.

Institutional care of the old covers only less than one percent of the old and is not satisfactory. Social services geared to the old are wanting. Gerontological and geriatric care are absent. In fact, the problems of the old as special social problems are not recognised by the state.

The paper gives some suggestions for "adding life to Years" along with the addition of years to life. The roles of the family, the State and of NGOs in helping the process of "successful ageing" and proper management of the problem of ageing are highlighted and appropriate measures are suggested.

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19

08

POPULATION CHANGE IN KERALA AND ITS SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

V.Gopalakrishnan Asari

The population decline in Kerala in the recent times has attracted world-wide attention. Its socio-economic implications have generated curiosity among population scientists in many countries. In developed countries, the decline in population has occurred only after economic development has taken place. But Kerala's experience shows that the decline in population growth can be possible through social development.

The prime mover in the social development was the change in educational levels, especially of women and a consequent rise in the age at marriage, occupational opportunities, medical help etc. There has been great changes in these factors in the State in the last few decades as compared to other States in the country.

The population growth in India is 23.4 percent in the decade, 1981-91 whereas, that of Kerala is 14.06 percent.

There was faster decline in the birth and death rates especially, during the decades, 1971-81 and 1981-91.

Many socio-economic factors are associated with these changes. There has been a moderate rise in the per capita income among the people. This has helped them to avail the health facilities. The per capita income in the State has increased from Rs.1513 in 1980-81 to Rs.3843 in 1990-91. As compared to other states, the per capita income of Kerala is low. Therefore, other factors are important for the decline of population growth in the state. The sex ratio of the population is 1040 females per 1000 males 1991, and for India the ratio is 929. The reason for a high sex-ratio is a fast decline in the female infant mortality and a high expectation of life expectancy among females, compared to that of male.

The most important factor in the social change is education. The literacy rate in the state has increased from 11.4 percent in the beginning of this century to 90.59 percent in 1991. The literacy rate among women in the country, generally is very low, whereas that in the state is very high. Similarly, at the age at marriage of women in Kerala is 22 years. The reason for the high age at marriage can be attributed to the widespread rise in the educational levels. There has been a fast change in the housing sector, transport and communication, roads and bridges making, extension of drinking water facilities and above all the expansion in the health infrastructure. Similarly, the target achievement of various methods of family planning programme has been high in the

two decades in 1970-71 to 1991-92. The target achievement in sterilization has increased from 52.8 percent to 108.80 percent. About 90 per cent of deliveries are carried out in hospitals in the state.

The infrastructure build up for health in terms of the number of sub-centres and PHCs is high compared to rest of India. There is one sub-centre for every 4565 persons and one PHC for a population of 25,520 on an average in Kerala. On an average, there are 4 sub-centres for every three village in Kerala. The maximum distance covered by a sub-centre and a PHC in Kerala is 1.52 and 3.58 Kms, respectively. The respective figures for all India are 2.76 and 6.94 Kms. These infrastructural build up had tremendous impact on the implementation of health and family planning programme in the state.

Although it was possible to control population to a manageable extent now, the question arises whether the living population is adequately fed, protected from diseases and all other physical, mental and social ills. Unfortunately, the situation is not altogether happy in the State.

Kerala has the highest suicidal rate in the country. The reasons for these are reported as incurable diseases, family breaking, mental illness, etc.

The problems of dependant persons also require adequate attention. There is about 8 to 9 percent of the population are aged 60 years and above. Therefore, the social security of the senior citizens in the state need particular attention by the planners.

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09

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY PLANNING AND FERTILITY BEHAVIOUR IN KERALA

N.J.Saleena

The phenomenon of rapid population growth is one of the serious problem confronting India today. The government sponsored Family Planning programme with emphasis on fertility control has been implemented to meet this challenge by providing a package of services to eligible couples through a countrywide network of primary health Centres and Sub Centres.

One important features of of the fertility trends in the country is that the decline in fertility brought about by the Family Planning programme has not been uniform throughout the country. While the fertility decline in India as a whole had been very low the decline in Kerala had been remarkably steep. Moreover, the decline in Kerala is

contrary to most of the universally accepted conditions for fertility decline and against what could be expected from circumstances elsewhere in the world.

A good number of studies conducted in the field of fertility and family planning to identify the important factors responsible for the fertility decline in Kerala have implicitly or explicitly assumed that apart from several socio economic factors, education is the most crucial determinant of fertility levels. Education affects family planning both directly and indirectly. A modest attempt is made in the present study to understand the direct and indirect influence that education exerts on fertility in two different districts of Kerala, viz, Kottayam and Wyanad, which presents markedly different socio economic scenarios.

Family Planning behaviour depends upon several socio economic and cultural factors. Economic and social status variables also influence family planning adoption. More importantly, education of the wife and husband influence several socio economic variables on the one hand and the family planning adoption on the other. An attempt has been made in the study to assess empirically the impact of education and other socio economic and cultural factors on the adoption of family planning on the one hand and the number of children (fertility) on the other. The influence of education and

other socio economic variables over family planning and fertility behaviour is first examined with the help of simple correlation analysis. Later, the relationship between education and other socio economic variables and family planning is examined with the help of partial correlations followed by and correlation. On the basis of the correlation analysis and on the basis of earlier studies, A few regression models have been formulated and estimated.

The simple correlation analysis revealed that family planning status is highly correlated with the education and occupation of the husband as well as the education and employment of the wife and fertility is negatively correlated with the education of the wife and husband in both the districts. Partial correlation analysis also substantiate the above results. Education and temporary family planning methods are positively correlated and it implies that as education moves up, people prefer temporary methods of contraception to permanent methods. The rank correlation between education and family planning (and the related variables) reinforce the results of simple and partial correlations. Six regression models were also formulated and tested on the basis of LOS. The study thus shows the different levels of influence of various determinants on family planning and fertility behaviour in two districts separately.

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10

CAN POVERTY DETERMINE FERTILITY? AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS AND THEIR FERTILITY DECISIONS IN KERALA

K.S. James

Kerala fertility decline attracted a lot of attention because of its diffusion even into the lower strata of the society like agricultural labourers. This is since agricultural labourers are generally found to have a large family size. On account of this, there is no unanimity in the conclusion drawn from different studies as to the determinants of the state's fertility decline.

It had been observed by some writers that poverty is the cause for fertility decline among the agricultural

labourers. A study among the agricultural labourers of the two districts of Kerala, namely, Alappuzha and Palakkad, found that fertility decline in Kerala, is, in fact, a poverty induced one.

This paper, therefore, attempts to find out the rationale for a poverty induced fertility transition among agricultural labourers of Alappuzha and Palakkad districts of Kerala state. It is hypothesised that if poverty is associated with a lower family size,

comparatively better off districts or better off classes in socio-economic ranking will have a higher fertility.

The data for this study is obtained from the field survey conducted by the World Bank in 1980 and a follow up survey conducted in 1990 in the Alappuzha and the Palakkad districts of the state.

An analysis of the agricultural labourers of Palakkad and Alappuzha districts showed no sign of a poverty induced fertility transition in this group. An assessment of poverty in the two districts showed Palakkad to be poorer compared to Alappuzha, yet fertility was higher among this group in Palakkad. Hence poverty and fertility has shown a direct relationship, that is, the poorest having highest fertility and systematic reduction of it with improvement in poverty situation. A regression analysis carried out to find

out important factors that determine fertility decision showed per capita household expenditure as the single most important socio-economic variable that impacts on fertility decision.

It is also observed that not only with regard to poverty but also in several other respects like social movements, organization of workers, etc. Alappuzha has taken the lead over Palakkad. Since Alappuzha was part of the erstwhile Travancore state, several drastic changes have occurred in the district due to progressive policies of the government. Therefore, the low level of fertility among the agricultural labourers of Alappuzha district as compared to that of Palakkad has to be seen in the light of their history of organization and struggle rather than in poverty.

LIFE TABLE ANALYSIS OF THE LABOUR FORCE IN KERALA

19

11

S.Sulaja and N.B.Sureshkumar

Introduction

The overall development of any nation depends on the availability of both human resources and natural resources. Labour Force Statistics provide details of a nation's supply of labour. The number of persons in the labour force is only a first approximation in the measure of the supply of labour. A better way of presenting the economically active population is by means of a 'Working Life Table'. As it incorporates work participation rates with mortality, it is possible to understand the net effect of mortality on the length of work force. It also describes the variations by age in the entry into and exit from labour force, the replacement ratio, the expectancy of active life at different ages and the percentage of inactive years of a person in his life.

Though Kerala has made creditable achievements in the demographic front, its performance in the economic front is dismal. Unemployment and underemployment, especially among the educated, are serious problems in Kerala. The work participation rate of Kerala is

one of the lowest in India. Though it is the lowest, the question before the policy makers now is whether even this lowest proportion is fully utilised for the progress of the state. The objective of this paper is to analyse the labour force participation in Kerala by constructing working life tables for males and females separately.

Data and method

The Census of India Publications, 1981 (Part III - A&B (1) General Economic Tables) and the Reports of the Sample Registration System (1981) constitute the data for the study.

A working life table is a modified form of an ordinary life table. First, an ordinary life table is constructed from which the working life table is framed. An abridged life table is constructed on the assumption that (a) the work participation rates within each age interval is uniformly distributed, and (ii) that the entire working population in the age group 0-10 years is considered to be the same for the age group 10-14 years. In computing the various

functions of the working life tables, the United Nations (1968) methodology has been followed.

Results

The agewise and sexwise work participation rates of the population of Kerala according to the place of residence show differences not only by sex but also by their place of residence. The participation rates are higher in rural areas for both male and female. Female work participation rates are low in the urban areas.

Expectancy of active years means the number of years that any person, irrespective of his work status, can remain in active life. But expectancy of active years of an active worker explains the same for a working person.

The expected number of years a rural male and urban male at the age of 10 years remain active are found to be 40 years and 36.11 years, respectively. At the age of 60, they are 8.61 years and 5.86 years, respectively. But for the females these values are 14.96 years and 10.12 years at the age of 10 years for rural and urban respectively, and at 60 years 3.54 years and 1.37 years, respectively. Rural people have higher expectancy of active years than the urban people at all the ages.

The expectancy of the active years of an active rural male and active urban male at the age of 10 are 52.82 years and 50.47 years, respectively. But for the rural females it is 49.20 years and 48.98 years for their urban counterpart. For both male and female, irrespective of their residential background, the expectancy of active years of an active worker is almost the same for every age group.

The percent of life time spent inactive means the percentage of the expectancy of life a person would remain inactive.

The percent of lifetime inactive at the age of 10 years is 32.52 and 20.71 percent at the age of 25 years, and then it goes on increasing and reaches at 48.57 percent at the age of 60 years for rural males. For urban males the percent of lifetime spent in non-economic activities are 38.38 percent, 26.16 percent and 62.75 percent for the corresponding ages.

The rural females remaining inactive by 76.86 percent of their life at the exact age of 10 years, while an urban female spent 85.03 percent of her lifetime inactive. After the age of 30 years, this in both cases increases with

increasing age.

Mortality is considered as one of the major factors which shortenes the potential working life of the population. The loss of active years due to mortality is not very high in Kerala. The extent of loss of active years due to mortality is more among males than females in both rural and urban areas. This may be due to the higher work participation of males.

The net retirement rate of males reaches a maximum of 1847 for the rural and 1777 for the urban at the age of 25 years. For females, the rural worker enters into work earlier (ie., the net retirement rate at the age of 15 years is a maximum of 273, while the urban women whose net retirement rate becomes a maximum of 136 at the age of 25 years. This may due to the agricultural nature of the rural areas.

There is no net retirement upto the age of 40 years for the population. Irrespective of the residential background, both males and females have higher retirement rates at advanced age.

Replacement ratio is the proportion of the person entering in the economic activities to the total loss of persons from the economic activities by retirement and death in a given period.

In Kerala, both for male and female, the rural areas show the highest replacement ratio while it is different in urban area.

Conclusions

The work participation rate is high in rural areas, for both male and female probably due to the high pressure of population on land. The early entirement and late retirement from agricultural occupations raise the work participation rate of rural areas. But female activity rates are low. This may be due to the cultural factors that deter female work participation considerably. As the unemployment problem becomes acute and the expectancy of life at birth is high, the percentage of years spent inactive by the people of Kerala is high.

Annual net entirement rate is high in rural areas but the net retirement rate is low. The loss of active years due to mortality is low, which explains the low crude death rate of Kerala. It appears that further reduction in mortality would not be possible. So measures should be taken to fully utilise the active years of the persons by providing ample opportunities especially to the urban working age populations.

25 : STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF EDUCATION

25

01

HIGHER EDUCATION IN KERALA

K.Babu Joseph

As in several other states, higher education in Kerala is in doldrums. It is high time that one took stock of the performance of the universities and colleges in the state. Traditional courses are taught in these institutions without caring for their relevance. So long as a degree is regarded as a status symbol by the society, there are takers for any type of course. The colleges churn out manpower possessing only absolute minimum of knowledge for a career as a teacher in a school or college or at the worse, as an office assistant. There is no accent on character formation or personality development at any stage. The training that the student receives hardly prepares him or her for any assignments in productive areas. There is a near-total lack of emphasis on practical experience. The science-based curricula offered in colleges fail to cultivate a scientific spirit. The stridency of superstitions as well as fundamentalist attitudes among large sections of the people testifies to the failure of our education programmes.

To understand the higher education scenario in Kerala, it would be useful to consider some statistics culled from the 1991 Census Report:

Year	Strength of Students	Govt	Private	Total
1985-86	Pre-degree	31336	165923	197259
	Degree	15310	91207	106517
	PG	2167	6849	9016
	Distribution of teachers	2372	11002	13374
1986-87	No. of arts and science colleges	40	131	172

According to the data available for

1987-88, Ernakulam district has the largest (24) and Wayanad and Kasaragod have the smallest (4) number of arts and science colleges. In 1985-86 Ernakulam registered the largest enrolment of students (45503) while Wayanad did the smallest (2764). As of 1986-87, there are 7 engineering, 5 medical, 1 ayurveda, 1 veterinary, 4 law and 19 teachers training colleges in the state.

Eventhough separate statistics for science and humanities are not available, many general deductions can be made on the basis of the foregoing data. It brings out the fact that about 77 percent of the non-professional colleges are in the private sector employing 82 percent of the total teacher-force in the state. The data reflect regional imbalances between Travancore-Cochin and Malabar areas, with the latter remaining backward in the field of higher education. The state has been progressively cutting the expenditure in higher education, from 27.4 percent during the V Plan to 22 percent during the VII plan. In 1988-89, the share of higher education was only 12.5 percent of the education budget. What is disturbing is that in 1986-87, 90 percent of the expenditure on education was on the salary account, a sharp pointer to the steep fall in the quality of education. While the expenditure on salaries has increased several fold over the years, the investment in laboratories and libraries has decreased. Many institutions do not even claim and spend the UGC grants for infrastructure development. Corruption in the purchase of books and equipments is quite common. With shrinking resources, the regular colleges are not better poised than the so-called parallel colleges, some of

which even boast of 'excellent' laboratory and library facilities.

Add to the woeful lack of infrastructural facilities the comparatively low level of motivation on the part of several thousands of teachers. Many choose the teaching profession not because of any aptitude for it but as a secure and rewarding job. Corruption is rampant in the selection of teachers in private colleges. The recruitment procedure currently followed is heavily in favour of the management. The selection committee consists of a university nominee who is the subject expert, a government nominee and the manager or his representative. However, it is the all-powerful manager who handpicks the expert and government nominee from long lists submitted by the university and government. The selection list has a period of validity of one year. If, by chance, someone who does not fulfil the manager's 'expectations' other than consideration of pure merit, happens to be ranked, say at the instance of the subject expert, the particular post would remain vacant for the next one year, rather than be filled by the unwanted person. Many private managements literally 'sell' the posts for a consideration ranging from Rs.2 to 5 lakhs. In some institutions run by the minority communities, all jobs are effectively reserved for members of the respective communities so that there is no distinction between the open merit and community quotas. If the management is a religious organisation, the community quota is filled by members of the particular community.

Though the importance of job-oriented courses has been recognised for a long time, very little effort has been made to popularize them. Instead, year after year, the government and the universities continue to sanction traditional type of courses. As a first step towards vocationalisation of higher education, degree courses may be started in areas such as computer science,

electronics, biomedical engineering, biotechnology, hospital administration, hotel and tourism management, food technology, communication engineering, dairy and poultry farming, fishing and fisheries and natural products. The UGC's recently declared policy of supporting vocational education programmes may be taken note of, in this context. Teachers of traditional disciplines can be encouraged to teach some of the novel courses as a multidisciplinary enterprise. Biology and chemistry departments, for instance, can collaborate in teaching courses in biotechnology and natural products.

A recent phenomenon in the field of technical education is the starting of self-financing colleges. Whatever be the arguments advanced in favour of these programmes, the sad fact remains that, in the name of high cost of technical education, the government is denying the economically weaker sections the opportunity to study. Fifty per cent of these seats are sold in the global market at fabulous rates. Even though merit is said to be the sole criterion for the payment seats, it will not be absolute merit but a kind of relative merit defined only for those who are willing to pay! The remaining fifty per cent merit seats, though non-paying, are divided among the poorer sections of all communities including scheduled castes and tribes. The net result will be a fifty per cent reduction in the number seats which would have been otherwise available for this category. Since ours is not yet a hundred per cent capitalist economy, there is no substance in the argument that higher education must be self-supporting. Instead of opening new institutions with scarce funds, the government may mobilise resources to support the existing institutions and improve the quality of the training they offer. From this perspective the case for a new University in Kerala appears to be bleak but, if it can concentrate only on non-traditional programmes, there is some justification for it.

PROGRESS AND DETERIORATION IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL SCIENCE CURRICULA OF KERALA AND TAMIL NADU OF 1993-94 FROM THAT OF 1980-1981.

K.Krishnan

Need for the study

The two Southern most Indian States, viz. Kerala and Tamil Nadu are advanced in education in general and science education in particular, since they have been effecting curricular reforms and changes periodically. Kerala modernised its school science curriculum in 1973 followed by Tamil Nadu in 1975. These curricula were in force during 1980-81 and were assessed and compared in terms of a set of criteria under five dimensions, viz. Functional-Utilitarian, Behavioural-Developmental, Conceptual-Disciplinary, Pedagogical-Curricular and Methodological-Instructional by the present investigator in 1981. Though Kerala has revised its school science curriculum twice and Tamil Nadu once after 1981, no systematic assessment and comparison of the same has been done till date.

Terms and definitions

Progress - refers to the advancement in the degree of fulfilment of aspects of an ideal curriculum.

Deterioration - refers to the down fall in degree of fulfilment of aspects of an ideal curriculum.

Secondary School Science curricula of Kerala and Tamil Nadu - refers to the content and learning activities prescribed directly or indirectly in the written documents meant for Physics, Chemistry and Biology of standards VIII through X.

Methodology-in-brief

The syllabi of the Secondary School Science curricula of Kerala and Tamil Nadu were collected from the authorities concerned. They were subjected to analysis in terms of the set of criteria (used in 1981 study) meant for any ideal and meaningful science curriculum using a five point rating scale, viz., Highly satisfactory (5), Satisfactory (4), Moderately Satisfactory (3), Not satisfactory (2) and Highly

unsatisfactory (1) by a panel of ten specialists (who were exposed to the criteria and operational definitios and illustrations used by the investigator). The average rating of the ten specialists for each curriculum in terms of each criterion was computed and rounded off. 51 criteria such as, provision for understanding of scientific applications in the working of domestic contrivances, understanding of scientific principle related to personal health and hygiene, understanding of scientific procedures to be followed in community life were studied.

The ratings of the 1980-81 curricula of Kerala and Tamil Nadu for each criterion was adduced from the report of the study in 1981.

Analysis was done based on the ratings of the study in 1980-81 and the ratings by the current panel of specialists in order to fulfil the objectives of the study.

Results

The major findings that emerge out of the present study are as follows:

It became evident from the study that the present Secondary School Science curriculum of Kerala has made progress in the fulfilmeent of 22 criteria while it has got deteriorated in 9 criteria as compared to the curriclum of 1981. It is also evident that the present Secondary School Science curriculum of Tamil Nadu has made progress in the fulfilment of 28 critria whil it has got dteeriorated in 7 criteeria as compared to the curriculum of 1981.

It is evident that the 1981 Secondary School Science curriculum of Kerala was found superriorr to the 1981 Secondary School Science curriculam ofTamil Nadu in 13 critia, while the curriculum of Kerala was founnd iferiorr to that of Tamil Naduin 4 criteia, which shows that the progress made by Tamil Nadu is superior to that of Kerala.

It is also evidnt that the prsnt Scinc curriculum of Krala is founnd superior to that of Tamil Nadu in nine criteria, while it is found infeerior to that of Tamil Nadu in four critria.

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03

STORY OF A RURAL INSTITUTE

R.Gopalan Chettiyar

The Travancore Rural Institute was established in 1963. Kelappaji, nationalist leader, ardent Gandhian and social worker was its founder. Its two main objectives were rural development and community development.

The institute was set up in a period characterised by a firm commitment of the government to community development. As Dr. Shrimali said, "the main philosophy underlying Rural institutes is their devotion to human welfare. The philosophy should be exemplified in the life of the staff and students, in instruction, research and extension work. Rural Institutes emphasise professional education because the individual can make his best contribution to social progress through his profession. Liberal education is not ruled out and remote from the life of the people. But it is something which affects people's life and work". The institute therefore emphasised not only professional education but also extension work. A basic principle of the institute is the emphasis on manual labour, "earning while learning", self-sufficiency and service of the community.

The Tavanur Rural Institute was controlled by the National Council for Rural Higher Education and was governed by an autonomous body consisting of high officials and distinguished non-officials nominated by the state Government.

This institution did not get timely help either from the state government nor from the Central Government. To tide over this difficulty it was made a part of the Kerala Agriculture University. A drawback of this organisational set up is that it

has no governing body and participation of eminent local people.

Initially the emphasis of education in the institute was an job oriented courses. The Diploma in Rural Service (Arts) prepared students to become teachers after B.Ed, Panchayat Executive Officers, Block Development officers; The Diploma in Rural service (science) prepared them to become science teachers after B Ed and chemists in laboratories. The Civil and Rural Engineering students were expected to get jobs as Junior Engineers, formen, technical Assistants etc. As these job oriented courses could not guarantee employment most of the graduates remained jobless. Gradually students lost hope in these courses and the number of students seeking admission to these courses dropped.

As a consequence the standard degrees and diplomas offered by other Agricultural universities were introduced. Thus this Institution drifted away from its earlier objectives. Little importance is being given today to research and extension. Community development activities such as, school enrolment drive, conducting of night classes for the illiterate people have also stopped. Similarly, the principles of manual labour and self-reliance have been given up. The visions of the founders have faded even though the institute today is called Kelappaji College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology. The transformation that this institute has undergone is but a reflection of the changed value system of our national life.

ILLITERACY AMONG SCHOOL GOING CHILDREN

N. Jagjeevan

The country now stands on the threshold of the twenty first century. India is saddled with inherent challenges whose urgency cannot be overlooked. Education is the most effective instrument to meet these challenges.

Given the above understanding it is essential to analyse the status of formal education in our country. It is an accepted fact that in a country with limited resources and vast illiteracy, elementary education should get maximum priority. However experience shows that elementary education has not received the attention it requires to reach a vast section of population. Instead a bias towards an elitist education for a small section of population is increasingly seen. This has resulted in the degeneration of the education system as a whole over the years. Without the basic education being strong and sound we cannot dream of providing proper secondary and higher education.

In order to assess the extent of degeneration in the basic elementary education KSSP conducted a survey in elementary and secondary school (LPS,

UPS, High School) along with a test to assess the extent of illiteracy in schools. The test comprised of a language portion and a numerary portion. The weightage for Malayalam literacy was 80 percent (20/25) and numeracy 20 percent (5/25). The test was administered in 529 Schools in Trivandrum District alone. The test was administered to 134784 students distributed over 3rd standard to 7th standard.

The result of the study are presented in table I.

The result shows that nearly 35.27 percent of those to whom the test was administered had scored less than 12 marks. KSSP had taken a special effort to organize special type of teaching-learning process under the schedule of *Vijnana Vedi* in these schools. The programme covered 43152 students viz. 32.01 percent of the total student strength of 134784 distributed in these 529 schools. One of the contributing factors that brought in illiteracy in schools is the system of general pass that was adopted upto 7th standard in schools.

Table

Table Showing Extent of Illiteracy in Schools from 3-7th standard at Trivandrum district based on survey that conducted by KSSP

	No. Taken Test	No. Selected for Vijn- ana vedi	No. Scored <12
Thiruvananthapuram (A)	35475	9570	10740
(123)*	(100%)	(26.98%)	(30.28%)
Kaniyapuram	14976	5511	6011
(59)*	(36.80%)	(40.14%)	
Thiruvananthapuram	12371	2418	2701
North (46)*	(19.55%)	(21.83%)	
Thiruvananthapuram	8128	1641	2028
South (18)*	(20.19%)	(24.95%)	
Attingal (B)	57141	19804	22378
(246)*	(34.66%)	(39.16%)	
Attingal	10355	3526	3936
(35)*	(34.05%)	(38.01%)	
Kilimanoor	9149	2829	3333
(46)*	(30.92%)	(36.43%)	
Nedumangadu	11337	3876	4390

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	(43)*	(34.19%)	(38.72%)	
Palode	(65)*	14285	5772	6348
		(40.41)	(44.44%)	
Varkala	(57)*	12015	3801	4371
		(31.64%)	(36.38%)	
Neyyatinkara (C)		42168	13778	14426
	(160)*	(32.67%)	(34.21)	
Balaramapuram		14276	4353	4887
	(53)*	(30.49%)	(34.23%)	
Neyyattinkara(10)*		2997	520	730
		(17.35%)	(24.35%)	
Parassala	(11)*	3543	1489	1285
		(42.03%)	(36.27%)	
TOTAL (A+B+C)		134784	43152	47544
	(529)*	(100%)	(32.01%)	(35.27%)

* - No.of schools covered as per details available.

The *Vijnana Vedi* programme involved the development of new text book to be followed by the programme which essentially covered the syllabus but the nature of presentation varied. The presentation proceeded from simple to complex alphabet and words. Innovative methods of teaching such as teaching through play were used to ensure motivation of students. The teachers were given training on how to use new teaching methods and other games as an educative tool. Even they were oriented on using test and evaluation as a constructive tool rather than a sieve for failing. One of the important positive aspect that was noticed was that teachers came forward to put in extra efforts for the programme especially by attending training programme at their own cost as well as spending time outside school hours. As regards governmental

involvement, participation came in where certain likeminded educational officers had taken a proactive approach. The participation of society was ensured through formation of people's committees and Mother/Parent/ Teachers Association. The involvement of local leadership was consumed through reception committees. The programme was a moderate success.

The ultimate determinants for success or failure in education are the commitment of society to it and the sense of purpose and integrity of the participants in the process of the presentation. Given these two ingredients, people, who are deeply involved with achievement of certain goals, can rise above the limitations of their environment and accomplish their objectives. When there is no sense of dedication, policies, good or bad, become words without meaning.

PANCHAYAT SCHOOL COMPLEX - AN EXPERIMENT IN COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

C. Ramakrishnan

After independence there has been a phenomenal increase in the number of schools in India, particularly in Kerala. But this quantitative increase did not reflect much on the quality of education. But of late, there has been a serious rethinking in this direction. The activities of Kerala Sastra Sahithya Parishad (KSSP) in the field of education have put forth new models in educational planning and innovation. One of them was to try out the school complex programme suggested by Kothari commission through people's participation, dubbed by educational authorities as a failed experiment due to the lack of imaginative leadership and academic resources. It was taken up for the first time during the academic year 1992-93 in the school complex with Sivapuram high school as nucleus at Sivapuram in Kannur district. The school complex had 28 primary schools as the feeding area spread over three panchayats. There was a thorough intervention in the curricular transactions of all these 28 schools from I to IV standards. This has enabled KSSP to develop new models of the teaching-learning processes.

Objectives

1. To improve the teaching-learning processes and to make the learning processes inside and outside the class room more effective.
2. To develop educational strategies which make learning pupil-centered, life-related, interesting and activity-oriented.
3. To make teaching a joyful exercise to teachers and to establish a forum for teachers of various schools to interact with each other.
4. To develop a healthy relationship between the schools and the people of the local locality thus enabling the community to take up the responsibility of various activities in the schools.
5. To develop an organic interest for parents, especially, mothers, in the school activities of their children.

To achieve the above objectives the programmes were undertaken under the leadership of the District Council.

Some of the limitations of Sivapuram Complex were the following.

1. Since the schools are spread over various panchayats, it is difficult to crystallise a popular leadership.
2. The nucleus High School cannot provide the whole academic leadership to all primary schools.

The concept of panchayat complex was to overcome the aforesaid limitations. The KSSP provided academic leadership to begin panchayat complexes at Madikkai in Kasargode district and Kalliasseri in Kannur district.

Comprehensive intervention in the curriculum transactions from I-IV standards was planned in all schools of the panchayats. Programmes were planned time bound. Through this project an earnest attempt was made to make the present curriculum transaction activity-oriented, learner-centred, life-related. A unique nature of the programme was that it envisaged people's participation in academic and para-academic activities. Through this it was hoped that the under-achievers could be helped to attain higher levels, thus improving the standard of learners.

Madikkai experience

There were two types of committees which undertook the programme: organizational and academic. At the district level organizational committee the President of the District Council was the chairman. At the panchayat level the panchayat president was the Chairman. At the school level the president of the mother PTA was the chairperson. The academic stream was at two levels- district and panchayat.

Under this programme there were 1858 pupils and 65 teachers spread over 10 schools in classes I to IV. As a preparatory work data regarding all schools and personal data about the teachers were collected.

The Aksharapulari programme conducted during 92-93 provided a strong basis for the activities of the panchayat complex. Detailed modules were prepared in a workshop conducted during the early stage of Pathanotsavam which was used as

the "Teacher's hand book". The various modules prepared by KSSP for classes I-IV in connection with the operation class room programme were used for the preparation of teaching modules at panchayat level. The concept of minimum levels of learning was also incorporated in the material preparation done at the panchayat level.

The present day evaluation system blocks any well meaning reforms and experimentation in the classrooms. We cannot think of any reform unless we change the prevailing evaluation system. *Pathanotsavam* helped us to try out new techniques of evaluation. The cognitive, effective, and psychomotor domains were measured. The talent search examinations (*Vijnanotsavam*) being conducted by KSSP provided the expertise for this activity wherein practical work was given more importance.

Monitoring

Effective monitoring is the key to the success of any programme. The high school teachers of the area were entrusted with the responsibility of monitoring. They visited the primary schools and discussed with teachers their problems, suggestions for improvement, etc., which helped the primary teachers to build up their confidence and also to clear their doubts. The monitors reported then to the panchayat level academic body so that the feedback from the field could effectively be used to plan the future activities.

Apart from the high school teachers, other officials of the educational department and people's representatives visited schools to solve some of the unforeseen academic and organizational problems.

Possibilities

1. It could overcome the limitations of the existing Parent Teacher Association and ensure the involvement of the whole society in the educational planning and execution.
2. The expertise of the local level artisans were widely used in preparing learning aids to be used in class rooms.
3. The people's participation could be increased by making them conscious of the problems and limitations of each school. The qualitative improvement of schools by peoples intervention strengthen the parent's self-confidence, encouraging

them to send their wards to neighbourhood schools.

4. A new united front could be forged consisting of pupils, teachers and guardians. This helped teachers to make parents aware of the new teaching-learning process being developed across the country.

5. The retraining of teachers could be undertaken depending on the local needs and on the fast expanding horizons of knowledge in various subjects. The teachers get a chance to exchange their expertise amongst themselves.

6. The mothers' forum of the school helps mothers to identify educational, psychological, nutritional and health problems of pupils.

Constraints

1. People were sharing new responsibilities in the field of education which was not familiar to them in the past, hence there was a lack of continuity in people's participation.

2. High school teachers found it difficult to give proper creative resource support to primary teachers because of the lack of confidence and competency. The teachers who had the training in the traditional method internalise new trends in pedagogy only very slowly.

3. The present day examination system evaluates only the memory power of the pupil. Some of the guardians resisted any change in the evaluation system. It is very difficult to quantify the behavioural changes in pupils.

However, with all these limitations and constraints we could effectively obtain people's participation for bringing out desirable changes in the activities of the class room.

The quality of education in government aided schools is to be invariably improved. This improvement become imminent to resist the new educational policies, which destroy the very basic concepts that caused commendable educational achievements in Kerala. These policies try to inculcate the English medium culture even in remotest village in the state and try to hand over the educational sector to private traders under the pretext of improving quality. This can be achieved only by developing the confidence of parents and by introducing new pedagogical models.

A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE SOCIO-POLITICAL FACTORS AS REVEALED THROUGH THE KERALA SCHOOL MATHEMATICS TEXT BOOKS

K.R.Gopalakrishnan

All human creations are reflections of his socio-cultural environment. Mathematics is no exception. Here an attempt is made to assess how far mathematics reflects the socio-cultural aspects of Kerala society.

Procedure

The present and immediate past mathematics text books of all standards of Kerala were analysed in detail in respect of review questions, development of teaching points, worked out examples, practice problems and suggested activities. On the basis of the analysis, the facts were classified into categories such as gender biases, adulteration of commodities, profiteering, exploitation, exhibitions of affluent society, influence of casteism/communalism.

Findings

1. Gender bias is often clearly evident in problems of partition of property among children, percentage of pass in examination etc.
2. Mathematical problems related to adulteration of consumer goods still persist. But there has been some changes. In the past text books, examples of mixing milk and water or mixing of different varieties of tea, etc., were given. In the present text books there are even problems involving mixing of water and spirit!
3. Urge for profiteering often finds reflection in problems. There are problems involving 45% interest rate. Twenty five percent profit is now considered a rather low rate. Taking of loan for lending the money for a higher rate of interest is given in many

problems. Examples of profiteering is seen in many topics such as dividends, interest, ratio, sales and resales, loans, etc.

4. Not only taking profit, but also exploiting the consumers is a recurrent theme. Discount, commission, etc., are examples.

5. Contents of several problems are demonstrations of an affluent society. Examples: cost of car and its depreciation, area of marble flooring space, etc. Daily life of the majority of the pupils does not get reflected in the problems.

6. Influence of caste/religion can be seen in several problems. Business is conducted by members of the same religion. The names of persons in each problem usually are all Hindus, Muslims or Christians. Problems containing names of different religious groups are rare.

Suggestions

Problems creating unhealthy attitude in the minds of pupils should be avoided. Instead, problems contributing to an atmosphere for socialistic attitude may be purposefully included. It is not advisable to conceal all unhealthy tendencies existing in the society from the pupils. But what is needed is to the problems so as to expose/criticise indirectly the anti-social side of the tendencies. Problems exposing liquor tragedy, need of environment protection, miseries of war, consequences of population explosion, magnitude of national progress, small family norm, etc., may be given in future text books. Equality of sexes should be brought about by giving equal representation to females in problems and removing gender biases in the statement of the problems.

PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY EDUCATION IN KERALA

Mary Roy*

Almost without exception, education for children between three and eight years of age is in a tragic mess.

The official Education Department syllabus is good. It keeps the academic content low and emphasises the development of other skills.

But this is a syllabus which is honoured by default and only in Kerala government schools. Almost all parents who can afford the fee send their children to private schools where the syllabus is horrifying by standards anywhere in the world. The child is compelled to "speak in English" even in the U.K.G. and L.K.G. and primary classes. After three years of "English medium" he/she cannot speak a single sentence in English. He/she can converse only in Malayalam. In school she is a dumb listener. The result is a psychological numbness and a loss of self-esteem. In the class, children are intimidated and just do not speak at all. In effect, what this whole English

adventure does is to prey on a young child's vulnerability, rather than build on its strength. Any kind of discussion and independent learning is replaced by rote learning of things that are completely beyond the child's comprehension and this sets the tone for higher education, even upto graduate and post-graduate levels.

The children of the poor in the Malayalam medium schools, instead of gaining from a reasonable syllabus and the use of the mother tongue, are mired in a feeling of inadequacy emphasised by teachers with poor teaching skills and no motivation.

Changes in the syllabus of Std. X and Pre-degree will not alter the scenario except in a totally inadequate, superficial way, which, any honest method of examination would reveal at once!

What we need are changes at the primary stage, without which we are going to destroy the lives of thousands of children.

LANGUAGE OF CHEMISTRY IN EDUCO LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

P. Radhamony

This study originates from the educo linguistic analysis of Vedamoni Manuel exploring the Whorf-Sapir hypothesis (language is not only a medium of communication but forms the thinking process itself) in scientific communication to a number of contrasting languages particularly in the teaching of Science and Mathematics. It has also drawn some ideas from the works of Dr. Thirumalai and late Dr. Sudarsanam. The specific purpose of the study is to analyse the language of Malayalam textbooks (1974-83) in Chemistry from classes 6 to 10 on the lexical, morphemic, syntactic, and incidentally, graphemic aspects. Analysis was the primary methodology supplemented by questionnaires to teachers, students and a test to students.

The syntactic analysis shows that some of the potential strengths of the Malayalam language like the flexibility of phrasal arrangements possible through the Dravidian agglutinative postpositional structures, the close matching of the Malayalam syntax with the experimental procedure, the impersonal use of the verb free from declensions (form person, number and gender), use of inferential terminations like -anam, -am, etc., have often been taken advantage of in scientific expression. But sometimes this potentiality has been missed.

Some of the defects include the inability to handle the Dravidian finite verb structure to express certain ideas ordinarily introduced in English with the main clause followed by a 'that' clause, putting in too many qualifiers and complex structures in a sentence, confused discourse, misuse of elegant variety to hide the visibility of inductive possibility, misplaced anglicisms, use of unnecessary and misleading opening clauses, premature precession, bringing in the subconcept before explaining the basic concept itself, abrupt introduction of terms especially when synonymy (multiple terms for the same concept) and homonymy (same term with different meaning) are involved.

Some of the intrinsic difficulties in natural Malayalam structures in scientific communication due to placing the copula at the end and repetition of post fixed conjunctive and disjunctive particles are also analysed.

The survey part brings out the convenience and acceptability ratings of several discourse styles and various methods of coining technical terms.

So far as the names of chemical substances are concerned transliteration is used. Many students are totally lacking in a sense of chemical morpheme (the precise chemical significance of small meaningful particles like -ide, -ite, -ate etc). This is lacking even when chemistry is taught through English. The problem is made more difficult by the inability in Malayalam to separate out these morphemes by a vertical line. A loop technique was adopted (where a vertical line would suffice in English) and found effective.

For translation of processes and generic terms translation (usually through Sanskrit) is adopted. Here also morphemic sense is lacking and children have not learned that the suffix -kam indicates an agent where -nam indicates a process. Other suffixes like -ta (equivalent to English -ty, -sion and -cy) are analysed. The use of -kar with -i- as prior link morpheme is perhaps the most powerful device for coining process terms both from Sanskrit and from International roots bhav- with -i- link morpheme is another process verb formative. The Dravidian particles pet-, -ak - and -akk - are powerful morphemes to convert nouns into verbs with powerful transformational possibilities characterised by economy and elegance. Perhaps these are not sufficiently capitalised.

A series of prefixes like eka-, dvi-, dvitiya-, catus-, nis-, nis-, nir-, ku-, su-, ati-, atho-, anu-, apa-, ut-, pascat-, puro-, pari-, prati-, bahir-, saha-, sam-, vi- etc have been analysed from the point of view of their constructional values. Some foreign prefixes like anti-, amphi have also been

induced in the textbook language.

The morphophonemics involved in dirghasandhi and guna sandhi and internal changes in the Sanskrit root sometimes trend to confuse meaning.

The lexical analysis analyses the terms in various categories such as chemical process terms (58% based on Sanskrit words not of everyday use), processes based on traditional crafts and daily life activities (36 mostly Dravidian), processes representing observed phenomena and properties (22 everyday words mostly Dravidian), processes met with in the laboratory (18 everyday words with powerful bridge potentiality), words representing observable or demonstrable processes, (mostly of Sanskrit origin but teachable through demonstration), process terms derived from substantives or qualities (46 high sounding and difficult Sanskrit words) verbs loaded with chemical concepts (40 Sanskrit derived), international process terms (transliterated). 443 terms representing

chemical concepts categories, structures, etc., are grouped and presented. Some are international, some are coined.

A quick analysis of the textbooks prepared in 1984 was also used for comparison. In some aspects it looked as if a highly qualified chemistry professor has directly presented the ideas first in Malayalam and then translated them into English. This is a more natural and desirable method to follow. But even here there are some difficulties because the concepts presented in standards 9 and 10 are far too advanced.

It is proposed to conduct in collaboration with the supervising teacher a study of the avoidable difficulties to school children in terms of conceptual overload and overload due to careless translation of a text first thought and presented in English. Another line of investigation proposed is to extend this investigation to the four South Indian Languages and Hindi and in course of time to all the Indian Languages under the auspices of ISDL.

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09

NEED FOR A REDEFINITION OF EDUCATION

T.A. Varkey

When we formulate a Theory or System of Education, comprising art or science, a historical analysis of educational system becomes imperative. Till the end of the Agricultural Age a hierarchical structure of society prevailed with definite functional norms. The paradigm was mainly orientated for the obedience to the upper echelons of the society and adherence to the customs and duties enforced by them. Individual creativity and initiative were unknown to Classic System of Education. It was stagnant, repetitive and unproductive.

The Industrial Age with the advent of scientific innovations and free thinking, brought about a cataclysmic upheaval in the concept and practice of education. Science, the beacon light of the modern era which showed the path, the purpose and programme, enabled the humans to rebel against the concept of an omnipotent God and to enjoy the fruits of knowledge.

Scientific education has a well

defined goal and organised methodology. It aims at the cultural progression of the individual. It knows that culture is the advanced development of human powers - body, mind and spirit - by training and experience. Food, sex and work are the cultures by which humans express themselves. Scientific education imparts the knowledge for the healthy and productive use of these three human faculties.

Industrial age brought about a unique world vision based on democracy and individual enterprise. All individual endeavour contributed to the welfare of the humanity as a whole. Race, creed or colour is not the concern of science. Economic activities, inventions and discoveries and large scale industries paved the way for interaction among peoples and nations. Thus a universal view and holistic concept emerged. Though ideological conflicts such as capitalism versus communism took the reins of the nations for a considerable period, the

scientific outlook prevailed and it led to crumbling of ideologies and systems of states. No philosophy or principle of statehood can sustain the overflow of the technological advancements. The materialistic outlook of Marxian philosophy collapsed among with competitive capitalism.

Now humanity has entered into the threshold of the most modern era called the Micro-Electronics Age. The past two decades have transformed totally the vision and approach of the scientific scenario of the world. The new educational programme has to be oriented to a more civilised and tolerant democratic idealism. A holistic approach would eliminate all class distinctions and barriers. Homo Sapiens would share the fruits of intellectual achievements

of individuals equally as members of a family. Wars of annihilation would be buried deep in history. But the war against the odds of nature would be vigorously taken up. Excellence in performance would be the watch word of the new education.

The new definitions of education would be holistic and would reshape the class consciousness in order to make a universal man. For which the micro electronics would take the reins. The new theories of human evolution and genetic engineering, physics and chemistry, and the new philosophy and sociology would provide humanity a new sportsman spirit and aesthetic sensibility in art, music and literature with a universal language of experience and enjoyment, culminating in a deeper and sustainable spirituality.

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10

MUSHROOMING OF UNRECOGNISED SCHOOLS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE GENERAL EDUCATION SYSTEM - A MICRO-LEVEL STUDY

Thomas Uzhevath and T.P.Kaladharan

The provision of free and universal primary education implemented through the network of government and aided schools has been one of the most important achievements of Kerala. However the recent developments tend to threaten the above widely acclaimed achievement. A large number of government and aided schools are facing the threat of closure because they are "uneconomic", with very low (less than 25 per division) student enrolment in the primary classes. In 1992 more than 1100 schools were closed. Now the government has issued closure notice to another 1072 schools. The immediate outcome has been the emergence of a large number of teachers who do not have work to do but whose pay is protected by the government. More important and far-reaching consequences of the policy are the dismantling of the government and aided-school network, and the threat that such dismantling poses to the system of free and compulsory education in the state.

The official explanation for the phenomenon of schools becoming "uneconomic" was mainly in terms of demographic changes, that is, a declining birth rate. It is suspected that this may not be the real reason. Recently there

has been a mushrooming of unrecognized schools that have attracted children from a number of middle-class and upper-class families. The enrolment in these schools does not appear in any official statistics. The objective of this study is to estimate this enrolment and examine the reasons of the attractiveness of these unrecognized schools through a case study of two panchayats in Pathanamthitta district. The two panchayats selected were Pazhawangadi in Ranni Taluk and Kadappara in Tiruvalla Taluk. In Pazhawangadi two new unaided but recognised schools have been sanctioned by the government recently; one similar school was sanctioned in Kadappara. The government schools, aided schools, unaided recognised schools and unrecognized schools in the panchayats were visited and data were collected. Secondary data from the educational department were also utilised for the study.

There are 14 (government, aided and unaided recognised schools in the Pazhawangadi Panchayat. Of these, five schools (government and aided) have been declared uneconomic. The strength in each of these schools is less than a hundred.

There are four unrecognized primary schools now functioning in Pazhawangadi

Panchayat. The total enrolment is 1300. In Kadappara Panchayat the total enrolment in unrecognised schools is 800. The enrolment in class I in the unrecognised schools in Pazhawamgadi is 260. The average strength per class is more than fifty.

These two panchayats may not be atypical of Kerala. If not, the total unreported enrolment in class one may be anywhere between 1.00 and 1.50 lakhs, or more than 20 percent of the reported enrolment. This demands a more widespread study.

Qualitative enquiries made with parents of children enrolled in these unrecognised schools reveal three reasons

for their decision to choose those schools over government and aided schools:

- (i) English medium syllabi.
- (ii) Examinations conducted by the Central Board of Education and other central organisations.
- (iii) Regular school hours and days without break.

The present study, though limited to two panchayats, shows an emerging trend that may prove to be extremely detrimental to the poor and downtrodden and may become very difficult to reverse. A more thorough study of the extent and nature of this trend is needed urgently so that corrective measures can be planned effectively.

31 : CASTE, COMMUNITY AND POLITICAL PROCESS

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01

**EMERGENCE OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE IN KERALA :
AN HISTORICAL ENQUIRY**

M. Gangadharan

The paper outlines the vicissitudes of the Mappilas of Malabar from about the 16th century to the Rebellion of 1921-22. The developments of the post-rebellion period are examined in more detail. The nature of the social reform movement among the Muslims of Kerala is discussed, and the shift of a large number of Muslims in Kerala from the nationalist Congress to the Muslim League in the 30s is traced. The reasons for this shift are tentatively seen as:

1. The reaction of the Mappilas to the unsympathetic attitude of the Congress towards the Rebellion of 1921-22 and the rebel's.
2. The influence of the social reform movement among the Muslims of Kerala
3. The formation of a Mappila identity in the 30s and early 40s which was an amalgam of Indian, Islamic and Keralite identities, and which could not be penetrated by other parties.

Kailasam, Parappanangadi, Malappurama.

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02

DIALECTIC OF THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS REFORM MOVEMENTS IN TRAVANCORE

P.J. Cherian

The Travancore society was experiencing a rapid process of structural transformation, especially since the entry of the European merchants and the British dominance in the region. The historical process of the dissolution of the feudal mode and the penetration of the capitalist mode was a complex one especially in the social background of a caste-ridden traditional society, like that of Travancore. The rapid process of change, dictated the stratification of the society on new lines. The spurt of a large number of community based organisations in the last quarter of the 19th century, should be viewed in the background of the rapid changes in the

material milieu. These organisations were attempting to seek their share in the evolving economic and political power structure of the society. This phase constituted the period of Memorials, when various communities came together to present their specific grievances in the new situation. The emerging middle stratum from the intermediary caste-religious groups like Nairs, Ezhavas and Christians found it imperative to place before the public the urgency of the redressal of their grievances.

The socio-religious reform movements irrespective of savarna and avarna distinction, but with definite caste identity, originated as a consequence. It should be noted here that

communities that came outside the caste-hierarchy, like the Christians & Muslims were also part of the socio-religious reform activities.

Though the urge for reforms and radical changes was commonly shared, only the movements active among the intermediary groups could gather momentum. In the slave caste groups, inspite of their best efforts, at imitating the socio-religious reform initiatives of the dominant groups, no major movement could be triggered off. Their efforts degenerated into more and more sub-caste divisions with the leaders nibbling at the baits of the establishment.

A number of studies have appeared on many of these movements and most of them tend to highlight the egalitarian, reformist and progressive ideals of these movements. But caste exclusiveness and caste chauvinism were also the lasting contributions of these movements. Sree Narayana, the founder of S.N.D.P., wanted the "...Yogam not to be exclusively of one caste, but a people's organization without caste". At one stage he is said to have stated: "We have no caste, and we are not Ezhava". This was an ironical situation. Even when drastic changes were taking place within the caste based social structure of the time, caste was still playing a very important role in reinforcing orthodoxy. The caste based socio-religious movements allowed its perpetuation. This became very clear when all the socio-religious movements came under the grip of sectarian upper class interests of the concerned caste groups.

Perpetuation of caste identity in a transitional phase was not that easy. The inner class-contradiction in each caste group was widening. But the reform movements overlooked these contradictions and could successfully reinforce caste identity and orthodoxy in each group. Each caste group irrespective of its handicaps and backwardness was taught to be proud of its heritage and caste exclusiveness. Naturally caste feelings trickled down to every sector of life. This climate of caste feelings and caste antagonisms was a major hurdle in the growth of nationalist aspiration in Travancore. The development of legislature, newspapers and educational system truly reflects the caste and communal orientation of the society. These channels of social progress provided the background and legitimation for the perpetuation of the communal and caste divide.

It is true that Sree Narayana was a great traditional genius and

revolutionary. But it should not be forgotten that the torch bearers of his ideas were the newly emerging dominant sections of his community. It was the growing economic power of the new social classes of commercial farmers, traders, petty capitalists and industrialists which offered a base for reform efforts. The traditional caste and social structures became barriers to this group's new socio-economic advancement, and had to be removed anyway. The solid support of this section was of vital importance for the origin and success of the reform efforts in Kerala. SNDP for example was founded in Dec 1902, by ten share holders who paid Rs.100/- each as fee for life membership. Similarly, in the Christian Church also, it was the wealthiest of the wealthy who acted as the leaders of the socio-political reform efforts in that community.

At some point the social reform movements touched the religious chords and set secular and practical notes vibrating. Though this is a positive aspect, they mostly catered to the interests of the dominant groups of each caste or community. One of the main objectives of the SNDP was the promotion of industrious habits among the Ezhavas. This necessarily promoted the Ezhava dominant group involvement in Coir industry, Abkari trade, agriculture and the weaving industry.

All the social reform movements had very effective structural and organisational frameworks that suited the requirements of a society witnessing the dawn of capitalist growth. SNDP from its very inception was a registered limited company which observed all the necessary rules and regulations. The NSS was modelled on the ideals of the Servant of Indian Society. In this regard all those organisations copied the higher model of christian social institutions. "The church provided the christians the unity, advice, aid and leadership". The christian social organisation was centred on parishes. All parishes had besides the collective Sunday worship, regular meetings either in families or in churches a record of its members' marriages, birth and death registers, subscription lists and regular observance of other rites and practices. The remarkable role of these social organisations on the development of a coherent social system advantageous to the Christian Community was conspicuous and was neatly copied by the social-reform agencies of the time. Internal hierarchy of the christian church, however was more feudal than capitalist.

Thus the social reform movements took with them all the disadvantages of a rigid and structured framework within which they functioned.

The reformative faith, thus could not shift the focus of authority from communal/casteist traditions to enlightened individual conscience in all matters. Many SNDP and NSS leaders have openly admitted their indebtedness to the church institution. T.K. Madhavan, for example, has attributed the success of the Christian community in education and economic activity to the organisational religious network of christians and he exhorted the Ezhavas to emulate the Christian model.

The socio-religious reform movements were not exclusive to the dominant or intermediary caste groups. There was some activity in this regard among the lower caste group of Travancore. The lowest caste groups were principally the Parayas, Pulayas and Kuravas. They constituted about 15% of the population in the beginning of the present century. At one point, like their dominant masters they also came forward to form associations and raise slogans of reform. But it should be underlined that they were the most ill-equipped and least resourceful sections of the society. Their subalternity was near total. They were bound to the land on which they could never dream of any property rights.

Their subalternity was institutionalized by laws and traditions. Even during the early decades of the present century their illiteracy was cent percent. Even though they ended up as poor imitators of the major socio-religious movements they deserve more attention and analysis.

Whatever be the achievements and advances of different communities and their social reform efforts in Travancore during the early decades of the present century, casteism/communalism was deeply entrenched in social relations. The varied organisations which were the offshoots of the general renaissance, or socio-religious reform movements, strengthened the caste feelings. This helped each caste group to gain an illusion of cohesion in spite of internal contradictions. The rigidity of the caste divisions of the earlier times continued in sharper terms in the changed situation also. This division invariably helped the ruling class while the agony of the deprived sections continued unabated. The casteist compartmentalization narrowed down the socio-political perspectives, and the nationalist ideals hardly influenced the Travancore people to begin with. On the other hand, none ranging from C.V. Raman Pillai and Kumaran Asan to Ayyankali found it improper to enjoy the patronage and sing praises of those in power, whether it was the local Dewan or the paramount power, the British

CHRISTIANS AS A MINORITY IN KERALA

31

03

Ninan Koshy

Christians in Kerala, though demographically a minority, constitute one third of the Christian community in India. Politically, socially and economically they have been quite influential in the state.

In spite of such influence they claim whatever special privileges may be available for minorities. Such claims and mobilization and politics based on them have weakened secular and progressive movements in the state.

In addition to the social and political questions raised, there are theological issues also involved especially because there have been many

occasions when the church has directly intervened in politics.

The issue of Christians in Kerala as a minority may be examined against the background of international law on minorities and the provisions of the Indian constitution regarding minorities. At the time when the constitution was made Indian Christians had given up special privileges regarding electoral representation.

An examination of the role of Christians in Kerala during independent struggle and important period after independence will be made with a view to exploring specially the minority

approach. Closely linked to this is the attitude of Christians to progressive legislation in the state, especially related to education.

In general the majority of Christians in Kerala have supported the Congress (or its various formations). The reasons for this have to be examined. This will also help to find why the leftist movements in the state have not gained the support of the Christian minority.

There are several theological issues involved. The liberating spirit of the Christian Gospel should prompt

Christians to support progressive movements in favour of the underprivileged and marginalised. What are the implications of the intervention of the church in Kerala politics?

As the nation passes through a critical phase, Christians in Kerala should be able to explore new forms of participation in the socio-political life of the state that will strengthen secularism and pluralism. They should be able to find new allies, for justice and liberation, in keeping with the demands of the Gospel.

31

04

MALAYALI MEMORIAL: CLASS INTEREST THROUGH CASTE AND COMMUNITY INTERACTION

J. Prabhash

Malayali Memorial agitation of 1891 constituted the first spark of political consciousness among the people of the State' and an attempt by the educated middle class at exposing public policies prejudicial to its interest. However, what was most striking about the agitation was the manner in which its protagonists tried to promote their class interest through caste and community interaction

The Memorial

The Memorial, a petition by the 'natives' of Travancore against the mounting influence of 'non-Malayali' Hindus - most specifically 'foreign' Brahmins - in the State Civil Service, should be viewed as an effort by the educated middle class to adjust itself to the declining ethos of feudalism concomitant on the advent of the British. The spread of western education, abolition of slavery, development of trade and commerce, introduction of land settlements, etc., triggered off far reaching changes which shook the very foundation of traditional Travancore society. As a result feudalism caved in and with its status and privileges based on ascription. Consequently, men regardless of caste and religion tried to obtain for themselves the benefits of education and with this the demand for government jobs increased. But to their consternation they found that almost all

important positions were occupied by 'non-Malayali' Hindus. The natives naturally resented this which crystallized itself in the form of a Memorial. The petition was signed by 10038 people belonging to different castes and religions particularly Nairs, Ezhavas and Syrian Christians with K.P. Sankara Menon, Dr. Palpu, P. Velayudhan, John Nidhiry, C.V Raman Pillai et al., as the signatories and was submitted to the then Maharajah, Sree Mulam Tirunal, on 11 January, 1891.

The memorial after paying obeisance to the King gave a detailed account of the leverage enjoyed by the 'foreigners' in the matter of appointments in government jobs, particularly at the higher echelons. The tirade was carried out in the most consummate manner and the arguments were buttressed with extensive statistics. According to it the few appointments the natives got were mainly in the lower rungs of the administration and that too not in pro rata to their numerical strength. And as the salary increased their number plummeted. Memorialists therefore entreated the King to take steps to obviate this danger and put forward one concrete suggestion for the purpose - to define the term 'native of Travancore' in the same manner as the term 'native of India' was defined by the Government of India by the Statute of 1870 and confine future appointments to such natives alone.

Class Interest Through Caste and Community Interaction

A thorough analysis of the Memorial makes one skeptical about the true intensions of its paladins, and in fact their claim that it projected the interests of the entire Travancore population becomes preposterous. On the other hand it becomes evident that the Memorial had a sneaking class appeal and a thorough orthodox tone.

It may be remembered that the Muslims were excluded from the purview of the Memorial as education among them was at a 'low ebb'. The Memorial also gave a very narrow definition to the term 'native Hindus' - 'those who followed Marumakkathayam or a mixed system of Makkathayam and Marumakkathayam and whose Kudumi or tuft hair is in the front'. It was further added that the chief among them were the Nairs and the Ezhavas. Others, Brahmins, Channars and untouchables did not figure at all anywhere in the Memorial.

The class nature of the document is also revealed by the background of its signatories. Of the 10038 people who had signed it, name, occupation and other relevant details of only 250 were given. Of these 88% belonged to the middle class or upper middle class - 132 landlords, 63 employed by government or retired civil servants and 27 vakils and pleaders.. It may also be noted that the major issue raised in the Memorial was not simply absence of representation in the civil service as such, but inadequate representation in its higher echelons. This meant that what the Memorialists desired was higher appointment in the government and through it greater economic mobility (a class factor). This also reflected the interest of the middle class and upper middle class rather than that of the lower classes. And as the number of educated people was highest among the Nairs and since they took the initiative in submitting the petition it came to have a Nair orientation. But this should not be taken to mean that the Memorial represented the communal interests of the Nairs and therefore that it was a 'Nair Memorial'. The reality was that the demand raised in it affected the fortunes of only the educated minority within that community. For the majority, who lacked the glamour of education,

appointment in the government was not the real issue which pestered them. Viewed thus Malayali Memorial becomes an attempt by the then emerging middle class under the leadership of the Nair elite to move from the periphery to the centre of the system redefining its positions, status and power, vis-a-vis the 'non-Malayali' Brahmins.

An analysis of the Memorial should also take cognizance of the manner in which its protagonists tried to further their objective through caste and community interaction. This was the first instance when people of different castes, communities and religions combined for the realisation of a common cause. Such a unity stemmed partly from the fact that in the changed socio-economic context and taking into account the demographic pattern of the State where the population was divided into more or less evenly matched communities, no section could strike a lone furrow for fulfilling its aspirations. Partly this was also because all the aggrieved groups perceived 'foreign' Hindus as their common foes and the issue highlighted in the Memorial as one which affected them all in varying degrees.

The Memorial also marked the faint beginning of exploring primordial ties for achieving power since intra-community support was mobilized through rousing communal sentiments of the people. Notice here that the Memorial primarily harped on the neglect shown to the Nairs, Ezhavas and Christians rather than that of the natives of Travancore; protest meetings organised following the submission of the Memorial were chaired and addressed by people belonging to the dominant community of each area; and 'the signatories of the document signed it first as Nairs, Ezhavas and Christians rather than as Travancoreans'. All these force one to conclude that support for the agitation from within the communities was harnessed by playing on the communal sentiments of the people rather than the native sentiment.

Thus Malayali Memorial was an attempt by the rising middle class in the Nair, Ezhava and Syrian Christian communities to promote its interests through the interaction of caste and communities and by exploiting the communal sentiments of the people.

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05

ANTI-BRAHMIN AND NON-BRAHMIN MOVEMENT IN TRAVANCORE (1850-1891)

T.P. Sankarankutty Nair

Atleast from the second decade of the 19th Century Brahmin domination was preeminent in the princely states of Travancore and Cochin. Increased social awareness and consequent acquisitions of bargaining power depending on numerical superiority compelled communal groups to organise their social and political arms. This was possible because of the pioneering work done by Barrister G. Parameswaran Pillai in politics and Dr. P. Palpu in society. Barrister G.P., because of his English education became aware of the political rights and privileges monopolised by the Brahmins. The Rao ridden society of Travancore from 1817 onwards ignored and avoided the genuine and reasonable demands of the local people. It was against this Rao

ridden politics that Barrister G.P., through his speeches and writings, organised an anti-Brahmin and Non-Brahmin movement in Travancore. Similarly Dr. P. Palpu who through his contacts with Swami Vivekananda heralded a movement for the uplift of the Avarnas. This resulted in the submission of the Ezhava Memorial (1896) and consequent establishment of the SNDP Yogam. G.P's Travancore Memorial (1891) and Palpu's Ezhava Memorial were steps towards the redressal of age old grievances of the Avarnas of Travancore. The present paper is an attempt to evaluate the movement and its aftermath in Travancore and later on in Kerala. The author has tapped all available evidences for this study based on unpublished and hitherto unknown sources.

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06

COMMUNITIES AND COMMUNITY POLITICS IN KERALA

George Mathew

Community in sociological terms means a group with distinctive racial or cultural characteristics and thereby implies a religious bond in terms of belief systems, values and ritual practices. On the Indian cognitive map communal is often not a value-neutral term. It is important to note here that community has a relation to primordiality which is a state of intense and comprehensive solidarity through a common territory of origin and residence, common place of work, or ties of blood and sexual connection etc., This is characterized by intense attachments to symbols where religious symbols play an important part.

Communalisation

If communalism is bereft of its

negative religious overtones we may term it as 'communalisation'. A community with religious identities devoid of transcendent, ritual or spiritual significance and hostility or contempt towards other religious or caste groupings organising itself to bargain for larger or proportionate share in wealth and power commensurate to its numerical strength is 'communalisation'. Increasing commercialisation, quest for enhanced status, consciousness of deprivation, realisation of the importance of political power, recognition of a rival reference group are causes and consequences of 'communalisation'. 'Communalisation' gains a respectable position through its close affinity and attachments to non-religious (secular) instrumentalities. Here hostility gives

way to healthy competition.

The hundred years history of Kerala - here I am confirming primarily to Travancore - is a fascinating example of this 'communalisation'. The cut off point is 1891 - the year of the Malayalee Memorial. The closing decades of 19th century in Travancore were ripe for an awakening of the people to demand their rights from the State. People began to realise that their rights could be protected and their legitimate rights achieved through collective action. For this people were mobilized on the basis of their primordial loyalties.

The communal organisations assumed importance in Kerala because of the realisation that in order to protect and achieve their rights they must be organised on the basis of their primordial loyalties in a situation where they were discriminated against on the basis of their birth, etc.

Political Consciousness

In the pre-capitalist society which existed in Travancore at the dawn of 20th century, the high status index was government jobs. But when feudalism began to crumble, status was attributed to economic achievements. Mere ownership of land was not sufficient in the new economy. Newer economic enterprises had become the status indices. They began to emerge as prerequisites for social upward mobility.

But since equality was basic for participation in the new economic forces, civil rights movement got the support of all communities which were at the receiving end.

The period 1932-47 saw in its first half heightening of the activities of community organisations and in the latter part declining their influence, more or less giving way to political parties. In the early 30's the level of popular consciousness was rising to newer heights through the work of community organisations. But soon a shift in the role of community organisations was evident because attainment of political power was crucial to enhance and consolidate their status. The abstention movement of 1932 was the best example of traditional primordial instrumentality (communal demands) giving rise to modern secular values (political consciousness). But soon people realised the inadequacy of communal traditional instrumentalities in achieving secular goals. This led to the formation of political parties. In 1938, the Joint Political Congress which spearheaded the abstention movement was dissolved making way for the Travancore

State Congress. This political consciousness was the result of the latent secularizing process which paradoxically gathered momentum through the 'communal' struggles of different communities for their social rights. The paradox was that the communal organizations themselves became a threat to the theocratic administration.

The period between independence (1947) and the formation of Kerala State (1956), Travancore-Cochin saw communities influencing State politics through political parties. Travancore's freedom struggle had been led by the leaders of three main communities Nair, Ezhava and Christian. To achieve their goal of 'responsible government' they were together, but once they reached the goal, differences of opinion surfaced and each began to drift apart. The result was the three communities vying with one another for a larger share of the cake - social, economic, political - to be distributed by the State.

Congress began to appease some of the 'communal' organisations which had opposed the movement for 'responsible government' and had wanted even to destroy the State Congress. They had allied with the Dewan of Travancore in the crucial days of the struggle. However, when power was in sight, they shifted their positions with ease.

Class consciousness

But there was a countervailing power emerging in the Kerala society. That was the growing class consciousness. It was a counter move to the communal consciousness. Emergence of a militant working class as well as an organised agrarian movement (it was stronger in Malabar than in Travancore) contributed in no small measures to the growth of class consciousness. The class consciousness took a new form and received an added impetus through party politics which had become an accepted norm.

During the period since Kerala State came into existence in 1956 till 1990, the broad political process was woven around two distinct streams. One, the class politics as the axis of a group of political parties and two, communal politics intertwining with another set of political parties. The present political fronts, LDF and UDF must be seen in this light. The net result was the emergence of almost a two party system. Differentiation within communities, the hall mark of a secular society, was clearly evident. But loyalties to one's

own community had not ceased to exist. Thus presence of secularization process on the one hand and communal loyalties on the other has been a fascinating factor in the social development of Kerala.

The secularization role was not something the communal leaders consciously played. It happened at the subterranean level.

In the light of the recent developments in the State, questions are asked whether the Kerala model of 'communalisation' process has begun to halt somewhere. Many may suggest that communalism has begun to raise its head. What are the reasons for such arguments? Where does Kerala society stand now?

POLITICS OF IDENTITY - THE SYRIAN CHRISTIAN UNDER COLONIALISM

31

07

Joshua George

The St. Thomas Christians or popularly called Syrian Christians constitute a traditional religious community of Kerala. The Church did not develop its own bishopric and church hierarchy till 16th century. The church maintained close co-operation with the West Asian churches professed to St. Thomas traditions in its religious life-faith worship, rite and language of liturgy. There were three such churches in West Asia - Church of Edessa, church of Persia and Church of Seluciactesiphon. The traditional Syrian Church of Kerala accepted the ecclesiastical supervision of any one of these churches at a time. It developed an indigenous way of governing itself. The Arch-deacon who was a native priest, was the chief administrator and head of the community.

The Syrian Christians community was fully integrated into the socio-cultural environment of Kerala society. It was assigned a specific status position in the social hierarchy of Kerala. The Syrian Christians were treated as a non-polluting caste by rulers of Kerala and other caste Hindu groups. The Christian by profession were traders, agriculturalists and warriors. They contributed to the Political economy of regions wherever they settled. Because of their services to the local kingdoms they were conferred with titles and other social privileges by the Rajas of Kerala. The Syrian Christian community which was a closed community in the anthropological sense, developed its own ecclesiastical and ethnic identity in Kerala over the years of diverse historical processes.

The first major attempt to integrate the Syrian Christian community

with Western Christianity was made by the Portuguese in the 16th century. The economic interests of Portuguese demanded alliance with the Syrian Christians who were a powerful trading group. The Portuguese thought of perpetuating their commercial interests by uniting the Syrian Christians to the Papacy. They started systematic efforts to latinize the local Christians. The Synod of Diamper called by the Portuguese Arch bishop Menezes legitimised this process. The Synod under the force of superior political power of the Portuguese replaced the indigenous religious customs, beliefs and mode of worship with Latin ways. The Syrian Church was brought under the Portuguese Padroado administration. These forceful changes agitated the minds of Syrian Christians. They resorted to various modes of protest against the Portuguese. It reached its culmination in 1653, when a West Asian Bishop, who arrived at Cochin, was deposed by the Portuguese garrison. The Syrian Christians united en-masse, marched to Mattancherry parish church near Cochin and pledged themselves to dissociate with the Roman Catholic Church and Portuguese domination for ever. This incident came to be known as the Coonan Cross Oath (1653). The community nominated their Arch deacon to the office of Bishop. The consecration was conducted by a group of native priests without the attendance of any bishop of West Asian church. A good section of the community believed the consecration was illegal. Mean while the various missionary groups of the Roman Catholic Church were active with their latinisation mission. They got the whole hearted support of the Padroado

admn and the local kings who were afraid of the Portuguese. The consequent dissensions, rifts and change of loyalties led to the division of the community into two sects the Pazhayakoor (Romo-Syrians) and the Puthenloor (Jacobites or Orthodox). The Romo-Syrians were a latinized sect where as the Jacobites or Orthodox aligned to West Asian church, the Jacobites of Antioch.

The Portuguese power declined in India. By the opening of 19th century almost all regions of India came under the British East India Company. Travancore and Cochin became tributary states to Britain. The first two British Residents - Macaulay and Munro took keen interest to integrate the Syrians with the church of England. The proselytising organ - the church Missionary Society started a Rescue Mission in the Puthenloor Syrians (Jacobites or Orthodox). They thought that the church was blemished with unscriptural practices out of its contact with the Latin church and "superstitious" practices of the 'heathens' (Hindus) around. The Missionaries introduced a series of reforms disseminating protestant ethics, morals and religious practices. The print media, English education, colonial administration and socio-economic reforms served subjectification of the natives. Anglicization of the community invited resentments and indignation towards the missionaries by a section. The Jacobite Church officially severed its co-operation with the CMS in 1836, by an instrument - the Mavelikkara Padiyola. Anyhow, the anglicized sections of the church posed challenges to the church leadership. Eventually new Anglicized groups and sects came into existence.

Intention of this paper is to study the constitution and subsequent changes of identity of a localised religious group by its interaction with dominant models of Western religious organizations. The history and anthropology of the Syrian Christians will be a useful plank for explaining the social dynamic of identity which I termed Politics of Identity.

For the first sixteen centuries of its existence, the Syrian Christians had developed a peculiar sense of affinity with the churches of West Asia professed to St. Thomas traditions and Syriac Rite and Liturgy which I hypothetically call - ecclesiastical identity of the Syrian Christians. At the same time at home, the Syrian Christians had developed a separate consciousness of ethnicity in

their social behaviour and intercourse with their fellow-communities which I call the ethnic identity of the Syrian Christians. Anyhow this ecclesiastical and ethnic identity of the Syrian Christians were manifested and crytalized into a distinctive identity with its contacts and conflicts with the Western form of christianity. The contacts and conflicts with the 'other' forms of christianity constituted the 'self' identity of the Syrian Christians. The 'other' helped to constitute the self. The 'other' and 'self' are imaginized. Identity is not static or permanent. It is subjected to transmutations and change. Identity is not infallible; at best it is optional. The Syrian Christian identity underwent changes according to the dominant forms of discourse of Reforms. The Natives themselves got lost into the orientalist discourses. They began to see themselves through the lens of the Orientalists. The colonial education, socio-economic reforms orientalist representation of native ethnic groups and the print media acted as various modes of discursive strategies that accelerated the subjectification process of the natives. The social dynamic of this change of identity that the native - christians passed through the colonial period is what I called the politics of identity.

The discourse of reforms and attempts to integrate the Syrian Christians into the Western christianity can be comprehended under two headings - the politics of ideological dissemination and domination and the politics of mobilization. The colonial countries were overzealous to propagate their version of christianity in Kerala.. It was out of their conviction of the imperfectness of the 'Oriental christianity' and the perfectness of the 'Western' forms of christianity. The Portuguese and English way of 'representing' the native christians as 'pagan', 'heathen', 'superstitious', 'oppressed' and deserving help were a part of establishing Western christianity's superiority over the native christianity by disseminating a superior hegemonic knowledge under orientalism. Along with these attempts of domination one can also see traces of civil resistance developed by the native christians against the Western Christianity through various modes of protest - assemblies of the laity, and ostracizing missionaries, which I call the politics of mobilization.

THE POLITICS OF COMMUNALISM IN KERALA

Oommen John

The political system in Kerala has been prone to continuous political instability wherein control over the government is exercised by one or more parties for short periods. The State has had ten elections, fifteen ministries and seven spells of President's Rule after its formation in 1956. One of the factors that contributed to this instability is communalism.

History of the origin of communalism

Communalism as prevalent in Kerala may be defined as the feeling of group identities among the different communities. The origin of communalism in Kerala can be traced to the pre-Independence days. The regions which encompass Kerala today - Malabar, Travancore and Cochin - had different historical experiences till its integration in 1956. Malabar area was part of the Madras Presidency and its people were involved in a direct relationship with the British and their institutions. The Muslims who constituted a numerically strong minority there were mostly small peasants and agricultural labourers who suffered under the exploitative system of land tenure introduced by the British. The Moplah uprising against the exploitation at the hands of the *Jenmis* changed the political complexion of the region. The alienation of Muslims from the British as well as the Congress helped the Muslim League to make inroads into the Muslim community.

Travancore and Cochin, unlike Malabar, were princely states under the British. There communalism can be traced to the awakening of nationalism among the people. But unlike the rest of British India, this nationalism was not channelised by the Indian National Congress. Leaders of various communities submitted petitions to the government for redressal of the grievances of their respective communities. A consciousness oriented towards the community rather than the welfare of Malayalis as a whole was a significant development in the growth of communalism in Kerala. One manifestation of this was the formation

of communal organisations like the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP) and the Nair Service Society (NSS).

Communalism and political instability

After the formation of the state in 1956, communalism was intensified and different communities began to assert themselves with redoubled vigour in the policies of the state. The demographic composition of the various religious or caste communities helped them to dictate terms to political parties. Another significant factor about these communities is their geographical concentration. Although they are scattered throughout the state, they have certain areas of concentration called pocket boroughs. This geographical concentration helps the communal parties to win more seats from areas which they dominate.

The high level of caste consciousness is also one of the contributing factors in the shaping of political behaviour. The Hindus are divided on caste basis and hence could not take a united stand in the electoral game. This is in contrast to the Muslims and Christians who are more organised and show far more solidarity in electoral exercises. The reason for this could be their minority character and the absence of the caste factor. This solidarity allowed them a greater bargaining capacity in securing concessions from the government. The claims and counter claims about the bargaining capacity reinforces the polarisation of the communities giving rise to uncertainty and contributed to the instability of the political system.

Apart from these features, communalism was intensified due to the absence of ideology and display of opportunism by the major political parties - Congress (I) and CPI (M). The result of this opportunism displayed by the political parties was that the communal parties began to dictate terms to them. Any reluctance on the part of the government to accede to their demands resulted in the parties shifting their

loyalty to the opposite front. The net result was political instability at the macro level.

By aligning with the small splinter communal parties, the major political parties which could have played an important role in secularising the

political process became participants in the communal processes. Consequently, the communal divide in the society was reinforced and the possibilities of a consolidated secular base for the political system narrowed down.

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09

SOCIO - RELIGIOUS REFORM MOVEMENTS AMONG THE MUSLIMS OF KERALA: C.1900 - 1930

M.Kabir

Numerous studies have appeared on the social reform movements in Kerala in the first half of the twentieth century. But, one gap in these studies is the reform movement(s) among the Muslims. The present paper is an attempt to fill this gap and examines such movement(s) in the Travancore and Malabar regions.

Muslims of Kerala - Population and Occupation

Muslims of Kerala (known as Moplahs in Malabar) are the descendants of the Arab traders or of the converts from the Hindu castes. In 1901 the proportion of Muslims to total population was 30% in Malabar while it was less than 7 % in Travancore.

Whereas in Travancore they did not maintain much interest in land, the Moplahs of Malabar were primarily tenants. On the other hand, the Moplahs in the urban centres maintained interest in trade. A significant proportion of them were also wage earners of various sorts. There was also strong Muslim presence among the marine fishermen.

The Changing Economic Environment

The economic environment in which the Kerala economy functioned underwent a process of transformation from the latter half of the 19th century. In Travancore this was reflected in a series of changes which affected the land relations and also opened up the economy for foreign investment and trade. While the former set of changes did not influence the Muslims very much (because they did not hold land on a substantial scale under sircar pattom or other tenures), the latter set of changes did have a profound influence on them. The value of exports

from Travancore increased by nearly 10 times between 1855 and 1905. The internal trade also expanded and the new found prosperity was seen in an increase in local trade. These changes improved the prospects of those Muslims who were active in trade and the new found prosperity was seen in the emergence of a middle class among the Muslims, predominantly drawn from among the traders.

In Malabar the rise in commodity prices led to enhancement of rent or Pattom by the Janmees, to increased rate of eviction and to the impoverishment of the peasantry. Of all the regions, South Malabar came to be the most rack rented and this was reflected in a series of peasant revolts.

On the other hand, the urban traders were able to take advantage of the trade boom and improve their economic position. Some of them used this new prosperity to make their inroads into the rural areas by taking up lands under Kanom and other superior tenures.

Education and Literacy

According to the Census of 1901, the rate of literacy among the Muslims was 8.66 % in Travancore (against a state average of over 12%) and 4.81 % in Malabar (against the district average of 10.05 %).

This poor performance was partly due to the influence of the Thangals or Kazis, and partly due to the antagonism to British rule and British education. More over, it resulted from the desire to keep a separate identity as was reflected in the development of a separate language, called Arabi Malayalam. In Malabar, these general factors in educational backwardness were underscored

by the poverty of the Moplahs. Nevertheless, those who had the means to send their children, mostly the merchants, wealthy traders, business men and Kanomdaars, sent their children to schools and colleges and entered government service.

Muslim Reform Movements

Unlike the reform movements among the other communities or castes, the M.S.R.R.M lacked cohesion and there was no central organisation or leadership.

However, we can identify at least two streams in the M.S.R.R.Ms. One led by a section of the new breed of 'progressive' Ulamas drawn from the educated elites (but coming from the middle class); the other, by the new middle class - the traders, business men, rich Kanomdaars, professionals and government officials. At times, the two streams overlapped as in the case of Vakkom Abdul Khader Moulavi who inspired the movement in Travancore.

The Non Traditional Ulamas

A new breed of Ulamas who had their training in secular as well as religious education began to emerge by the turn of the century. It was progressive Ulamas who took the initiative in introducing reforms. Two illustrations are Vakkom Moulavi (in Travancore) and Sanaullah Makthi Thangal (in Malabar). Both emphasising the need for secular education, especially that of females. They opposed distortions from Islam and condemned such practices as Channanakudam and Kodi Kuthu. To spread the reform zeal they published their own journals both in Malayalam and Arabi Malayalam. But, given the low levels of literacy among the Muslims the message of reform could not reach the masses. It could reach only the educated Muslims, who were drawn mostly from the middle classes. On the other hand, their opposition of practices such as Kodikuthu and their emphasis on female. The reformers were also strongly opposed by the traditional Ulamas who exercised considerable influence. More over, at least in the case of Sanaullah, the condemning of the Moplah 'riots', reduced the possibility for solidarity and reform.

Middle Class Organisations

Overall the aspirations of the Muslim middle class in Travancore may be seen in the light of the agitational strategy that was followed by the other

communities in securing employment in government service and going up in education. Muslims did not appear as a party to these agitations at least till 1918 when they joined hands with the Izhavas and Christians under the Joint Political League. To the Muslim middle class also education and government service becoming a desideratum for going up in the social ladder.

From 1914 they formed organisations and started establishing schools of their own. In 1915, the Lajmathul Muhammadiyya, organised by the well to do traders of Alleppey, submitted a memorial to the Dewan requesting the establishment of schools in the places of Muslim concentration and appointing Quran teachers in schools with more than 25 students. The numerous organisations came up operating within a limited area, often limited to the area of a Jamaat. In 1923, there was the attempt to bring together these organisations, under the Keraliya Muslim Aikya Sangham..

In Malabar, sabhas, operating in limited geographical limits, were organised by the rich traders, kanomdaars and government servants, often in alliance with the Thangals and Kazis. These were mostly 'ultra loyalist bodies' and opposed the distortions to the 'faith caused by the non traditional Ulamas'. The interest of these Sabhas was in protecting their interest and securing more positions under the government. At times these sabhas declared solidarity with the ordinary Moplahs, mainly they criticised 'riots' by the tenants stressing the importance of education and represented before the government the necessity of promoting education among the Moplahs.

Conclusions

The M.S.R.R.M was not as powerful as the S.R.R.Ms among other communities. In the latter, the reform movement, even though initiated by an educated middle class gradually took the form of a mass movement. This transformation however did not take place among the M.S.R.R.M. One important reason for this seems to be the opposition of the traditional Ulamas who could exert considerable influence through the religious meetings and Qutubas on Fridays. On the other side, the methods adopted by the non traditional Ulamas were not favourable in taking the message of the reform to the masses. More over, the middle class leadership could not declare their solidarity with those below them and this was especially true in the case of

Malabar. But in Malabar, the issue before the majority of the Muslims was one of

poverty and to them the most important concern was those connected with land.

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10

CONSEQUENCES OF SOCIAL CHANGE IN TRAVANCORE

S. Ramachandran Nair

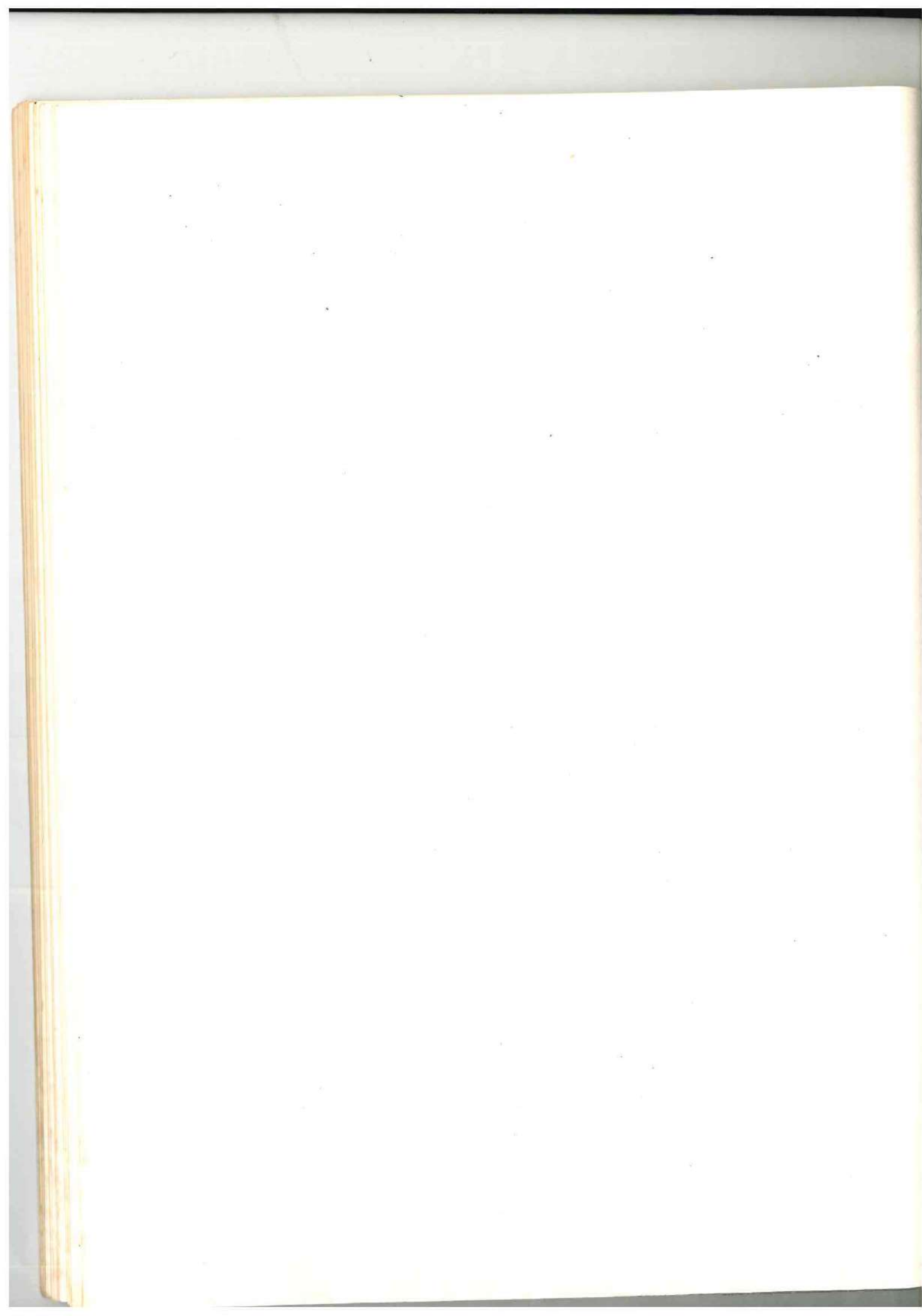
One of the unfortunate results of modernization of administration was the growth of communalism in the state. The rapid growth of population without a corresponding development of the economy was responsible for such a phenomenon. Since Western education was essential for entry into government service or other professions, and, all communities competed with each other for opportunities. In the absence of adequate vacancies to absorb all the qualified persons, it became easy for caste leaders to incite communal feeling among their adherents. The individual struggle for the loaves of office ultimately gave way to competition among communities. Each community had the support of its organisation and its press. Again, in the absence of political parties, elections to Legislative Council and the Assembly, organized on the basis of a restricted franchise were fought on communal line and gave rise to communal bickerings.

As a matter of fact the upper strata of the various castes exploited the lower strata. The work of communal organizations prevented the masses from uniting on the basis of class.

The biography of Marx appeared for the first time in an Indian language, Malayalam in 1912 with the subtitle - "a great man who devoted his life to the uplift of wage labourers". The November Revolution of 1917 also drew response in Kerala. The second decade of the twentieth century saw the beginning of labour movement in Travancore. Unions

were organized and demand for higher wages and for better working conditions emerged. Most of the workers were literate and were aware of international events. But the caste consciousness among them was an important factor which arrested the development of class-formation. The majority of the workers belonged to the low castes and came from the lower economic order. The caste organizations were dominated by the educated middle class in each community. The retardation of the growth of class feeling among workers was perhaps due to this vertical union of different strata in the same caste or community.

The attitude of the working class to imperialism and local aristocracy also deserves close attention. The low caste Hindus, Christians and Muslims received great encouragement from the British to emancipate themselves from the shackles of tradition. The landed aristocracy became their arch enemy which insisted on the perpetuation of the old social order. The foreign capitalists provided them with occupations in developing sectors like trade, transport, industry and plantations. Between the local aristocracy which denied them social status and the foreigners who exploited them economically, they identified the former as their number one enemy. This hostility, originating in social disability further delayed the organization and development of any labour movement or struggle on the basis of class.





കേരളത്തിലെ ഇടതുപക്ഷപ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ അനുഭവപാഠങ്ങൾ

വി.എസ്.അച്യുതാനന്ദൻ

പാർലമെണ്ടറി പദപ്രയോഗത്തിൽ ഇടതുപക്ഷം എന്നതു കൊണ്ടുദ്ദേശിക്കുന്നത് ലിബറൽ ഉല്പത്തിയ്ക്കു പ്രസ്ഥാനങ്ങളെയും പാർടികളെയുമാണ്. ഇവിടെ ഇടതുപക്ഷം എന്നതു കൊണ്ട് ഇന്നു വിവക്ഷിക്കപ്പെടുന്നത് മാർക്സിസ്റ്റായ വിവിധ സോഷ്യലിസ്റ്റ്-കമ്യൂണിസ്റ്റ് പാർടികളെയാണ്. ഇവയടങ്ങുന്ന കേരളത്തിലെ ഇടതുപക്ഷ പ്രസ്ഥാനം അതിന്റെ വളർച്ചയ്ക്കുള്ള ആശയപരവും രാഷ്ട്രീയവുമായ ഊർജ്ജം ഉൾക്കൊണ്ടത് മുഖ്യമായി സാർവദേശീയ തൊഴിലാളിവർഗ പ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ നിന്നും ദേശീയ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യപ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിൽനിന്നുമാണ്.

ഫ്രഞ്ചുവിപ്ലവകാലത്തുതന്നെ യൂറോപ്പിൽ തൊഴിലാളിവർഗം വളരാൻ തുടങ്ങിയിരുന്നു. അതിന്റെ ആശയപരവും രാഷ്ട്രീയവുമായ വളർച്ച പക്ഷമായത് മാർക്സും എംഗൽസും അതിന്റെ നേതൃത്വത്തിലെത്തിയതോടെയാണ്. 'കമ്യൂണിസ്റ്റ് മാനിഫെസ്റ്റോ' തൊഴിലാളിവർഗത്തിനു പുതിയൊരു ലോകവിക്ഷണം നൽകി; ഒന്നാം ഇൻറർനാഷണൽ പുതിയൊരു സംഘടനാരൂപവും. അവ രണ്ടിന്റെയും അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ പാർലിസിലെ തൊഴിലാളികൾ ലോകത്തിലാദ്യമായി അധികാരം പിടിച്ചെടുത്തു. അവർക്കത് ഏറെക്കാലം നിലനിർത്താനായില്ല. പിടിച്ചെടുത്ത അധികാരം നിലനിറുത്തുവാനുള്ള മാർഗം പിന്നീട് ലെനിൻ റഷ്യയിൽ വികസിപ്പിച്ചെടുത്തു. അങ്ങനെ സോവിയറ്റ് യൂണിയൻ പിറവിയെടുത്തു. തുടർന്ന് കമ്യൂണിസ്റ്റ് ഇൻറർനാഷണൽ നിലവിൽവന്നു. ലോകമെങ്ങുമുള്ള കോളനിരാജ്യങ്ങളിൽ തൊഴിലാളികളുടെയും മറ്റ് അധ്വാനിക്കുന്ന ജനവിഭാഗങ്ങളുടെയും പ്രസ്ഥാനങ്ങൾക്ക് അതു ബീജാവാപം ചെയ്തു.

1920-ൽ ഇന്ത്യക്കാരുടെ ആദ്യത്തെ കമ്യൂണിസ്റ്റ് ഗ്രൂപ്പ് രൂപംകൊണ്ടതും അത് ഇന്ത്യൻ കമ്യൂണിസ്റ്റ് പാർടിയായി വളർന്നതും ഈ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിലാണ്. സോവിയറ്റ് വിപ്ലവവും സോവിയറ്റ് യൂണിയന്റെ പുരോഗതിയും കോൺഗ്രസ് പാർടിയുടെ ഇടതുപക്ഷത്തിന്റെ ആവിർഭാവത്തിനിടയാക്കി.

ബ്രിട്ടീഷ് കോളനിയായിപത്യത്തിൻകീഴിൽ ഞെങ്ങിഞ്ഞെടുത്തുവോഴാണ് ഇന്ത്യക്കാരിൽ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യവാഞ്ചര ഉടലെടുത്തത്. അത് സമൂഹജീവിതത്തിന്റെ നാനാമണ്ഡലങ്ങളിൽ നവോത്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ കൊടിക്കുറകളുയർത്തി. അന്ധവിശ്വാസങ്ങൾക്കും അനാചാരങ്ങൾക്കും എതിരായി ഉയർന്ന നവബോധം സാമൂഹ്യ പരിഷ്കാരങ്ങൾക്കും അവസാനം രാഷ്ട്രീയ പരിഷ്കാരത്തിനും തിരികൊളുത്തി. സ്വതന്ത്ര ഇന്ത്യ എന്ന നവസങ്കല്പം അങ്ങനെയാണ് ഉദിച്ചുയർന്നത്. ആ സങ്കല്പത്തെ സ്വപ്നം കാണുന്നവരുടെയും അതിനെ ഇന്ത്യൻ മണ്ണിൽ യാഥാർ

ത്ഥ്യമാക്കാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്നവരുടെയും മുൻപന്തിയിലേക്ക് ഇടതുപക്ഷം വളർന്നുവന്നു. സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യസമരത്തിനു പിന്നിൽ ബഹുജനങ്ങളെ അണിനിരത്താൻ മുൻകൈയെടുത്തത് മഹാത്മാ ഗാന്ധിയായിരുന്നു. എന്നാൽ ഗാന്ധി അവർക്ക് സ്വതന്ത്രവും നിർണായകവുമായ പങ്കുനൽകാൻ വിസമ്മതിച്ചു. അതുകൊണ്ട് ഇടതുപക്ഷമാണ്. സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യസമരത്തെയും മർദ്ദിതരുടെയും ചൂഷിതരുടെയും മോചനത്തിനുള്ള സമരത്തെയും പരസ്പരാനുപൂരകങ്ങളായി കണ്ടുകൊണ്ട് അവയെ വികസിപ്പിച്ചെടുക്കുകയാണ് ഇടതുപക്ഷം ചെയ്തത്. കോൺഗ്രസും ഇടതുപക്ഷവും തമ്മിൽ കാഴ്ചപ്പാടിലുള്ള ഈ വ്യത്യാസം സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യലബ്ധിക്കുശേഷം പ്രകടമായി. കോൺഗ്രസിന്റെ ഏകപരിപാടി ഭരിക്കലായി. ഇടതുപക്ഷം ജനസാമാന്യത്തിന്റെ വിവിധ പ്രശ്നങ്ങളുയർത്തി ബഹുജനപ്രസ്ഥാനമായി നിലനിന്നു.

സാർവദേശീയ തൊഴിലാളിവർഗ പ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെയും ദേശീയസ്വാതന്ത്ര്യപ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെയും നായകൾ പിരിച്ചുണ്ടാക്കപ്പെട്ടതാണ് കേരളത്തിലെ ഇടതുപക്ഷപ്രസ്ഥാനം. കേരളത്തിൽ 19-ാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിന്റെ ഉത്തരാർദ്ധം മുതൽ വളർന്നുവന്ന നവോത്ഥാനപ്രസ്ഥാനങ്ങൾ അതിനു വളക്കൂറുള്ള മണ്ണാരുക്കി. ഇവ ശക്തിപ്പെട്ട പ്രദേശങ്ങളിലും ജീവിതമേഖലകളിലുമാണ് ഇടതുപക്ഷ പ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിനു വേരോട്ടമുണ്ടായത്. സ്വദേശാഭിമാനി രാമകൃഷ്ണപിള്ളയും മറ്റും സോഷ്യലിസ്റ്റാശയങ്ങൾ പ്രചരിപ്പിക്കാൻ ഒറ്റപ്പെട്ട ശ്രമം തുടങ്ങിയെങ്കിലും 1930കളിൽ കോൺഗ്രസ് നേതൃത്വത്തിലൊരു വിഭാഗം തൊഴിലാളികളെയും കൃഷിക്കാരെയും മറ്റു സാധാരണക്കാരെയും സംഘടിപ്പിച്ചുണിനിരത്താൻ തുടങ്ങിയതോടെയാണ് ഇവിടെ ഇടതുപക്ഷം സംഘടിതശക്തിയാകാൻ തുടങ്ങിയത്. അതോടെ കോൺഗ്രസ് സോഷ്യലിസ്റ്റ് പാർടി രൂപംകൊണ്ടു. താമസിയാതെ, 1940-ൽ അത് കമ്യൂണിസ്റ്റ് പാർടിയായി മാറി. തുടർന്ന് ഇന്ത്യൻ സോഷ്യലിസ്റ്റ് പാർടി, കെ.എസ്.പി., ആർ.എസ്.പി എന്നീ കക്ഷികൾ രൂപംകൊണ്ടു.

മലബാറിലെ കർഷകസമരങ്ങളും പുനപ്രവയലാറും ഇടതുപക്ഷത്തിന്റെ ശക്തി വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിനിടയാക്കി. സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യാനന്തരം കോൺഗ്രസ് അധികാരമേന്മയിൽ ചടഞ്ഞുകൂടിയപ്പോൾ അവരുടെ ഭരണംമൂലം കഷ്ടത്തിലായവരും മോഹഭംഗം വന്നവരുമായ ജനങ്ങളെ അണിനിരത്തുന്നതിൽ ഇടതുപക്ഷം ശ്രദ്ധ കേന്ദ്രീകരിച്ചു. അത് 1957-ൽ ഇന്ത്യയിലാദ്യമായി കേരളത്തിൽ ഒരു ഇടതുപക്ഷ ഗവൺമെന്റ് നിലവിൽവരുന്നതിനിടയാക്കി. ഭരണഘടനയുടെ ചട്ടക്കൂടിനുള്ളിൽനിന്നുകൊണ്ട്

മുഖ്യമായി കോൺഗ്രസിന്റെ നയപരിപാടി നടപ്പാക്കാൻ ശ്രമിച്ചിട്ടുപോലും ആ ഗവൺമെന്റ് പിരിച്ചുവിടപ്പെട്ടു. അതിന്റെ മറവിൽ കോൺഗ്രസും കുട്ടാളികളും ഇടതുപക്ഷത്തെ അടിച്ചമർത്തുവാൻ നോക്കി. അതിനെ അതിജീവിക്കുന്നതിന് ഇടതുപക്ഷത്തിനു കഴിഞ്ഞു. അങ്ങനെയാണ് 1966-ൽ ഇടതുപക്ഷക്കാരുടെ ചില പാർടികളെ കൂട്ടിച്ചേർത്ത് സപ്തകക്ഷി മുന്നണി രൂപം കൊണ്ടതും 67-ൽ അത് അധികാരത്തിലെത്തിയതും.

കോൺഗ്രസും മറ്റു പിന്നിരപ്പൻ ശക്തികളും ഉയർത്തിയ ഭീഷണിയെ അതിജീവിക്കാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞെങ്കിലും ആ പ്രക്രിയ ഇടതുപക്ഷത്തിൽ പ്രത്യാഘാതം ഉളവാക്കാതിരുന്നില്ല. ഈ ഭീഷണിയെ നേരിടുന്നതു സംബന്ധിച്ച് കമ്മ്യൂണിസ്റ്റ് പാർടിക്കകത്തും കമ്മ്യൂണിസ്റ്റ് പാർടിയടക്കമുള്ള ഇടതുപക്ഷ പാർടികൾ തമ്മിലും രൂക്ഷമായ ആശയസമരം പലപ്പോഴും നടന്നു. തൽഫലമായി കമ്മ്യൂണിസ്റ്റ് പാർടി പിളർന്നു. വലതുപക്ഷത്തോടു കൂട്ടുകൂടുന്നതടക്കം ഇടതുപക്ഷത്തിൽ പല ചേരിതിരിവുകളുണ്ടായി. എങ്കിലും അവയെ അതിജീവിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് ഇടതുപക്ഷ ഐക്യം വളർന്നു ശക്തിപ്പെട്ടു. 1967-ലെ സപ്തകക്ഷി മുന്നണിയും 1980-ൽ നിലവിൽവന്ന ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യ മുന്നണിയും ഇതിനു സാക്ഷ്യം വഹിക്കുന്നു.

കേരളത്തിലെ ജനങ്ങളെ ഗതകാല സങ്കല്പങ്ങളുടെ കുറ്റികളിൽ തളച്ചിടുകയാണ് കോൺഗ്രസും മറ്റു പിന്നിരപ്പൻ ശക്തികളും എന്നും ചെയ്തിട്ടുള്ളത്. അവരിൽ ജാതിമതതാല്പര്യങ്ങളിൽ അധിഷ്ഠിതമായ പ്രാകൃതവികാരങ്ങൾ ഉയർത്തിയാണ് ആ ശക്തികൾ അവരെ തങ്ങളുടെ കീഴിൽ നിർത്തിയത്. അവരെ ചരിത്രത്തിന്റെ പാതയിലൂടെ പിന്നോട്ടുവലിക്കാനാണ് അവർ എന്നും ശ്രമിച്ചതും. എന്നാൽ അവരെ മുന്നോട്ടുനയിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് ഇടതുപക്ഷം ജാതിഭേദം ജനങ്ങളിലുണ്ടാക്കിയ ഉച്ചനീചത്വം അവസാനിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിനു മുൻകൈയെടുത്തു. ജനങ്ങളുടെ മതവിശ്വാസത്തെ മാനിച്ചുകൊണ്ടുതന്നെ മതം രാഷ്ട്രീയത്തിൽ ഇടപെടുന്നതിനെ അതു വിട്ടുവീഴ്ചയില്ലാതെ എതിർത്തുവ

രുന്നു. കൃഷിക്കാർ, തൊഴിലാളികൾ, ജീവനക്കാർ, വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾ, സ്ത്രീകൾ, യുവാക്കൾ എന്നൊക്കെയുള്ള നിലകളിൽ ജനങ്ങൾ നേരിടുന്ന കഷ്ടപ്പാടുകൾക്ക് അനുതിവരുത്തുന്നതിന് ഇടതുപക്ഷ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ നടത്തിവന്ന ശ്രമങ്ങളാണ് കേരളത്തിലെ ജനജീവിതത്തിന് ഇന്ത്യയിൽ മറ്റു മിക്ക സംസ്ഥാനങ്ങളിലുമില്ലാത്ത പല തനിമകളും നേടിക്കൊടുത്തത്.

കോൺഗ്രസ് ഐക്യമേയും കുട്ടാളികളുടെയും നേതൃത്വങ്ങൾ അധികാരപ്രമത്തതയിലും അഴിമതിയുലം സ്വജനപക്ഷപാതത്തിലും ആണ്ടുകിടക്കുന്നതുമൂലം അവയിൽ കേരളത്തിന്റെ ഭാവിയെക്കുറിച്ച് ഉത്കണ്ഠപ്പെടുന്നവരായില്ല. ആ ഉത്കണ്ഠ ഇടതുപക്ഷത്തിനേ ഉള്ളൂ. അതുകൊണ്ടുതന്നെ ജനങ്ങളുടെ നാഡിമിടിപ്പ് മനസ്സിലാക്കി പ്രവർത്തിക്കാൻ ഇടതുപക്ഷത്തിനു കഴിയുന്നു. കോൺഗ്രസും ബി.ജെ.പിയും അധികാര കേന്ദ്രീകരണത്തിനും ആസൂത്രണനിഷേധത്തിനും സമ്പന്നസേവയ്ക്കുംവേണ്ടി നിലകൊള്ളുന്നു. ഇടതുപക്ഷമാകട്ടെ, അധികാര വികേന്ദ്രീകരണത്തിനും ഏറ്റവും അടിത്തട്ടുവരെ എത്തുന്ന ആസൂത്രണസംവിധാനത്തിനും ജനസാമാന്യത്തിന്റെ സർവതോമുഖമായ പുരോഗതിക്കുംവേണ്ടി നിലകൊള്ളുന്നു. ഇക്കാര്യത്തിൽ വിട്ടുവീഴ്ചകളൊന്നും സംഭവിക്കുന്നില്ല. എന്നല്ല, വീഴ്ചകൾ പറ്റിയാൽ അതു മനസ്സിലാക്കി തിരുത്താനുള്ള ശ്രമം ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യ മുന്നണിയിലുണ്ട്. കോൺഗ്രസ് ഐക്യം ബി.ജെ.പിയും പുത്തൻ സാമ്പത്തികനയത്തെയും സാമ്രാജ്യത്വ ഇടപെടലിനെയും അനുകൂലിക്കുമ്പോൾ ഇടതുപക്ഷമാണ് അതിനെതിരായ കലാപമുയർത്തുന്നത്. ഇതിലും മറ്റു പ്രശ്നങ്ങളിലും ജനങ്ങളോടുള്ള പ്രതിബദ്ധതയാണ് ഇടതുപക്ഷത്തിന്റെ മാറ്റുരച്ചു കാണിക്കുന്നത്. ജനസാമാന്യം ഇടതുപക്ഷത്തിനുപിന്നിൽ അതുകൊണ്ടാണ്, സോവിയറ്റ് തകർച്ചയ്ക്കുശേഷവും, കേരളത്തിൽ കൂടുതൽ കൂടുതൽ അണിനിരന്നുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നത്.

ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണി: കാഴ്ചപ്പാടും കർമ്മപരിപാടിയും

എം.എം.ലോറൻസ്

പാർലമെന്റിലെ തങ്ങളുടെ മൂലധനഭൂരിപക്ഷം ഉപയോഗിച്ച് മുതലാളിത്തത്തെ വളർത്തുക, ഭൂപ്രഭുത്വത്തെ സംരക്ഷിക്കുക എന്ന നയമാണ് സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യാനന്തരം അധികാരത്തിൽവന്ന കോൺഗ്രസ് സ്വീകരിച്ചത്. സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യത്തിനുമുമ്പ് ഉയർത്തിപ്പിടിച്ച ജനാധിപത്യപരവും ജനതാപര്യത്തിന് അനുരൂപവുമായ എല്ലാ സിദ്ധാന്തങ്ങളും അത് കാറ്റിൽപറത്തി. ന്യായമായ അവകാശങ്ങൾക്കുവേണ്ടി തൊഴിലാളികളും കർഷകരും ഇതരജനവിഭാഗങ്ങളും നടത്തുന്ന പ്രക്ഷോഭങ്ങളെ കഠിനീയമങ്ങൾ ഉപയോഗിച്ചും ക്രൂരമായ മർദ്ദനസപടികളിലൂടെയും അടിച്ചമർത്തിപ്പോന്നു. ഈ നയങ്ങളെ എതിർക്കുന്ന പാർടികൾക്കും സംഘടനകൾക്കും ന്യായമായി പ്രവർത്തിക്കാനാവത്ത അവസ്ഥയുണ്ടായി.

പാർലമെന്റൽ മൂലധനമായ ഭൂരിപക്ഷം ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നവെങ്കിലും ഭൂരിപക്ഷം ജനങ്ങളുടെ പിന്തുണ ഗവർണ്മെന്റുണ്ടായിരുന്നില്ല. വിവിധ കക്ഷികളുടെ പിന്നിൽ അണിനിരന്ന വോട്ടർമാരുടെ ഭിന്നതയാണ് കോൺഗ്രസിനെ ജയിപ്പിച്ചത്. ഈ ഭിന്നത അവസാനിപ്പിച്ചാൽ കോൺഗ്രസിനെ പരാജയപ്പെടുത്താമായിരുന്നു.

പക്ഷേ, കോൺഗ്രസിനെ പരാജയപ്പെടുത്തിയാൽ പോര. പകരം വരുന്ന ഗവർണ്മെന്റ് എങ്ങനെയുള്ളതായിരിക്കും? എന്തായിരിക്കും അതിന്റെ പരിപാടി എന്നത് പ്രധാനമായിരുന്നു. ഈ ചിന്തയിൽനിന്നാണ് അമ്പതുകളുടെ ആദ്യം തിരു-കൊച്ചിയിലും മദ്രാസ് സംസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ ഭാഗമായ മലബാറിലും ഐക്യമുന്നണി പ്രസ്ഥാനം രൂപംകൊണ്ടത്. പൊലീസ് മർദ്ദനം അവസാനിപ്പിക്കുക, ഒഴിപ്പിക്കലുകൾ തടയുക, പാട്ടം, വാരം കൃഷിക്കാർക്ക് ഭൂമിയിൽ സ്ഥിരാവകാശം നൽകുക തുടങ്ങി ജനങ്ങൾക്ക് അടിയന്തര പ്രാധാന്യമുള്ള ഏതാനും ചുരുങ്ങിയ പരിപാടികളായിരുന്നു ഐക്യത്തിന് അടിസ്ഥാനം. കമ്മ്യൂണിസ്റ്റ് പാർടിയായിരുന്നു ഐക്യമുന്നണി പ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ മുൻനിരയിൽ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നത്. ഉദ്ദേശിച്ച ഫലം ഈ ഐക്യം തെരഞ്ഞെടുപ്പുകളിൽ ഉണ്ടാക്കി. പക്ഷേ ഈ വിധത്തിലുള്ള ഐക്യം അധികകാലം തുടർന്നില്ല. ചില കക്ഷിനേതാക്കളിൽ കട്ട പിടിച്ചുനിന്ന കമ്മ്യൂണിസ്റ്റ് വിരോധവും, ഐക്യമുന്നണിയിലെ ചില കക്ഷികളെ സ്വാധീനിച്ച് മുന്നണിയെ തകർക്കുന്നതിന് കോൺഗ്രസിനുണ്ടായിരുന്ന കഴിവുമാണ് അവയെ തകർച്ചയിലേക്കു നയിച്ചത്. അതിന്റെ ഏറ്റവും വലിയ തെളിവാണ് തിരു-കൊച്ചിയിൽ 1954-ലെ മുന്നണിക്കു സംഭവിച്ച തകർച്ച. കമ്മ്യൂണിസ്റ്റ് പാർടി, ആർ.എസ്.പി., കെ.എസ്.പി., പട്ടം താണു പിള്ളയുടെ നേതൃത്വത്തിലുണ്ടായിരുന്ന പി.എസ്.പി എന്നിവ

ചേർന്നുണ്ടാക്കിയ ഐക്യമുന്നണി തിരു-കൊച്ചി അസംബ്ലിയിലേക്കു നടന്ന തെരഞ്ഞെടുപ്പിൽ കോൺഗ്രസിനെ പരാജയപ്പെടുത്തി. പക്ഷേ അതിന് അധികാരമേൽക്കാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞില്ല. പട്ടം താണുപിള്ളയിലെ കമ്മ്യൂണിസ്റ്റ് വിരോധവും സ്ഥാനമോഹവും ഉപയോഗിച്ച് കോൺഗ്രസ് ആ മുന്നണിയെ തകർത്തു. കോൺഗ്രസ് പിന്തുണച്ച് പട്ടത്തെ മുഖ്യമന്ത്രിയാക്കി. അത് കോൺഗ്രസിന് അധികാരം തിരിച്ചുപിടിക്കുവാനുള്ള കുറുക്കുവഴിയായിരുന്നുവെന്ന് അധികം താമസിയാതെ തെളിയുകയും ചെയ്തു. കോൺഗ്രസ് നൽകിയ പിന്തുണ പിൻവലിച്ച് പട്ടം ഗവർണ്മെന്റിനെ പുറത്താക്കി.

ഈ സംഭവങ്ങളൊന്നും ഐക്യമുന്നണിയെന്ന ആശയത്തിന്റെ നിരാകരണത്തിലേക്കു നയിച്ചില്ല. ദൗർബല്യം എന്തെന്നു കണ്ടെത്തി കൂടുതൽ ഉറപ്പുള്ള കൂട്ടുകെട്ടിന് അത് വഴിതെളിയിക്കുകയാണുണ്ടായത്. അതിനു സഹായകമായതാവട്ടെ, വിവിധ വിഭാഗം ജനങ്ങളുടെ വളർന്നുവന്ന സമരങ്ങളായിരുന്നു. ജനകീയ പ്രശ്നങ്ങളോട് വിവിധ കക്ഷികൾ സ്വീകരിക്കുന്ന സമീപനത്തിന്റെ ശരിയും തെറ്റും ശക്തിയും ദൗർബല്യവും ഈ സമരങ്ങൾ പ്രകടമാക്കി. എന്നുമാത്രമല്ല പൊതുവായ പ്രശ്നങ്ങളെ അടിസ്ഥാനമാക്കി യോജിച്ചു പ്രവർത്തിക്കേണ്ടതിന്റെ അനിവാര്യതയും ഇത് ഉയർത്തിക്കൊണ്ടുവന്നു.

തുടർന്നും മുന്നണികളുടെ രൂപീകരണത്തിന് ഇത് വഴിതെളിച്ചു. യോജിച്ചുള്ള പ്രവർത്തനവും ചിലപ്പോൾ ഭരണത്തിലേറലും തകർച്ചയും ആവർത്തിക്കപ്പെടുകയും ചെയ്തു. 1965, 67-69, 80-82 ഈ വർഷങ്ങളിലെ മുന്നണി രൂപീകരണവും തകർച്ചയും അതാണ് തെളിയിക്കുന്നത്. ഇതിനിടയ്ക്ക് പലപ്പോഴും ചില കക്ഷികൾ കോൺഗ്രസ് പക്ഷത്തേക്കു മാറുകയുണ്ടായിട്ടുണ്ട്. അങ്ങനെ മാറിയ ചില കക്ഷികൾ തിരികെ വന്നിട്ടുമുണ്ട്. എന്നാൽ കഴിഞ്ഞ 14 വർഷത്തോളമായി ഈ സ്ഥിതിക്കു മാറ്റമുണ്ടായിരിക്കുന്നു. ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണി സംവിധാനം മുൻകാലങ്ങളെ അപേക്ഷിച്ച് സുസ്ഥിരതയോടെ ശക്തമായി തുടരുകയാണ് ഇന്ന്.

കഴിഞ്ഞകാല അനുഭവങ്ങളും അധികാരം മാത്രം കണ്ടുകൊണ്ട് കൈക്കൊള്ളുന്ന അവസരവാദപരമായ നിലപാട് ജനങ്ങളിൽ സൃഷ്ടിക്കുന്ന പ്രതികരണവും ഇന്ന് കൂടുതൽ ദൃഢമായ മുന്നണിബന്ധത്തിന് വഴിതെളിയിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. വർദ്ധിച്ച ഇന്നത്തെ ഇന്ത്യൻ രാഷ്ട്രീയത്തിൽ സൃഷ്ടിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള ഗൗരവതരമായ സ്ഥിതിഗതികളെ ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണി കണ

ക്കിലെടുക്കുന്നു. അതുകൊണ്ട് വർഗീയ രാഷ്ട്രീയപാർടി കളുമായി യാതൊരു കൂട്ടുകെട്ടുമില്ല എന്ന ഉറച്ച നിലപാടാണ് ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണി സ്വീകരിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്.

ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണിയെ അനിവാര്യമായ ഒരു സംവിധാനമായി ഇന്ന് ജനങ്ങൾ അംഗീകരിച്ചു കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടുണ്ട്. അധികാരം പിടിച്ചുപറ്റുവാനുള്ള രാഷ്ട്രീയ പാർടികളുടെ ഒരു കൂട്ടുകെട്ട് മാത്രമാണീ മുന്നണിയെന്നാണ് ചിലർക്കുള്ള ധാരണ. എന്നാൽ ഇത് ഒരു അർദ്ധസത്യം മാത്രമാണ്. കോൺഗ്രസിന്റെ അധികാര കൂത്തക തകർക്കുന്നതോടൊപ്പം വർഗീയതക്കെതിരായി വിട്ടുവീഴ്ചയില്ലാത്ത പോരാട്ടം നടത്തുകയും ചെയ്യുക എന്നതിൽ അടിയുറച്ചുകൊണ്ടുള്ള ഒന്നാണ് ഇടതുപക്ഷജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണി.

കോൺഗ്രസ് തുടരുന്ന സാമ്പത്തിക-രാഷ്ട്രീയനന്ദം ജനവിരുദ്ധമാണ്. വൻകിട മുതലാളിമാരുടെയും ഭൂപ്രഭുക്കളുടെയും താല്പര്യം സംരക്ഷിക്കുകയാണ് അത് ചെയ്യുന്നത്. അതിന്റെ ഫലമായി രാജ്യത്ത് തൊഴിലില്ലായ്മ വർദ്ധിക്കുന്നു. വില കുതിച്ചുയരുന്നു. കർഷകർ കടുത്ത ചൂഷണത്തിനു വിധേയമാവുകയും പാപ്പരീകരിക്കപ്പെടുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. കർഷകത്തൊഴിലാളികൾക്ക് ന്യായമായ കൂലി ലഭിക്കുന്നില്ല. സാമ്രാജ്യത്വ മുലധനത്തിന്റെ കടന്നുകയറ്റത്തിന് സാമ്പത്തികരംഗത്തെ തുറന്നിട്ടുകൊടുക്കുന്നു. സ്വാശ്രയത്വത്തെ നശിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. ജനാധിപത്യസ്ഥാപനങ്ങളെ ദുർബലമാക്കുന്നു. ജനകീയസമരങ്ങളെ അടിച്ചമർത്താൻ ട്രാഡ്, എസ്എം തുടങ്ങിയ മർദ്ദനനിയമങ്ങൾ ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നു. ചുരുക്കത്തിൽ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യസമരത്തിന്റെ ലക്ഷ്യങ്ങളൊക്കെ നിരാകരിക്കുകയാണ് കോൺഗ്രസ് ഭരണം ചെയ്യുന്നത്. അതുകൊണ്ട് ഈ അപകടകരമായ പോക്കിൽ നിന്ന് ജനങ്ങളെ രക്ഷിക്കുക എന്നതാണ് ഇന്നത്തെ മുഖ്യമായ ചുമതല. ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണിയുടെ പ്രവർത്തനം ഈ ധാരണയുടെ ഭാഗമാണ്.

തെരഞ്ഞെടുപ്പ് വരുമ്പോൾ കോൺഗ്രസിനെതിരെ വോട്ടു ചെയ്യാൻ ജനങ്ങളുടെ ഇടയിൽ പ്രചരണം നടത്തുന്നതുകൊണ്ടോ, അതിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ ചിലപ്പോൾ വിജയിച്ച് അധികാരത്തിൽ വന്നതുകൊണ്ടോമാത്രം കോൺഗ്രസിനെ പരാജയപ്പെടുത്താൻ കഴിയുകയില്ല. കോൺഗ്രസ് ഗവർണ്മെന്റ് അനുവർത്തിക്കുന്ന ജനവിരുദ്ധനയങ്ങൾക്കെതിരെ തുടർച്ചയായ പ്രചരണം, പ്രക്ഷോഭസമരങ്ങൾ എന്നിവ അതിന് കൂടിയേകഴിയും. അങ്ങനെമാത്രമേ കോൺഗ്രസിൽ വ്യോമോഹംപുണ്ടു നിൽക്കുന്ന വിഭാഗങ്ങളെ വ്യോമോഹവിമുക്തരാക്കുവാൻ കഴിയുകയുള്ളൂ; ജനാധിപത്യപരവും പുരോഗമനപരവുമായ ഉറച്ച രാഷ്ട്രീയനിലപാട് വളർത്തിയെടുക്കാൻ കഴിയും. അതാണ് ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണിയുടെ ഉറപ്പിനടിസ്ഥാനം.

ജനങ്ങളെ അണിനിരത്തിക്കൊണ്ടുള്ള പോരാട്ടങ്ങളുടെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിലെ ജനങ്ങളുടെ നേരെയുള്ള ആക്രമണങ്ങളെ തടയാനാവാം. അതോടൊപ്പം ജനതാല്പര്യത്തിൽ അടിയുറച്ച മൂല്യാവകാശങ്ങളുടെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ വിപുലമായ ഐക്യം ഉറപ്പി വളർത്താനാവുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു.

ഈ ലക്ഷ്യം മുൻനിറുത്തിക്കൊണ്ടാണ് ഇടതുപക്ഷജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണി രൂപീകൃതമായത്. അതായത്, തെരഞ്ഞെടുപ്പു മാത്രം കണ്ടുകൊണ്ട് രൂപംകൊണ്ട ഒന്നല്ല എൽ.ഡി.എഫ്. ജനങ്ങളെ നേരിടുന്ന പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾക്ക് പരിഹാരം കാണാൻ സംഘടിതമായി നടത്തിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന പോരാട്ടത്തിനിടയ്ക്ക് ഇടലെടുക്കുന്ന തെരഞ്ഞെടുപ്പിനെയും ആ പോരാട്ടത്തിന്റെ തുടർച്ചയായി ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണി കാണുന്നു.

തെരഞ്ഞെടുപ്പിൽ ഭൂരിപക്ഷം ലഭിച്ചാൽ യോജിച്ചു ഭരിക്കുക, ജനങ്ങൾക്ക് നൽകിയ വാഗ്ദാനങ്ങൾ പടിപടിയായി നിറവേറ്റുക എന്നത് എൽ.ഡി.എഫ്. ഗവർണ്മെന്റിന്റെ മുഖ്യചുമതല

ലയായി കണക്കാക്കുന്നു. എന്നാൽ, ജനങ്ങളുടെ മൗലികമായ പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾക്കെല്ലാം പരിഹാരം കാണുവാൻ ഇങ്ങനെയുള്ള ഗവർണ്മെന്റുകൾക്കു കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടില്ല; കഴിയുകയുമില്ല. ഇക്കാര്യം വ്യക്തമാക്കിക്കൊണ്ടാണ് തെരഞ്ഞെടുപ്പുകളിൽ എൽ.ഡി.എഫ്. മത്സരിക്കുന്നത്.

എന്തുകൊണ്ടാണ് മൗലികമായ പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾ പരിഹാരം കാണാൻ കഴിയാതെ പോകുന്നത്? ഇന്ത്യൻ ഭരണഘടനയുടെ ചട്ടക്കൂടിനകത്തുനിന്നുകൊണ്ടാണ് ഇങ്ങനെയുള്ള ഗവർണ്മെന്റുകൾ പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നത്. ഭരണഘടന മൗലികമാറ്റങ്ങൾക്കു തടസ്സമാണ്. രണ്ടാമത്, നിലവിലുള്ള ഭരണഘടനയനുസരിച്ച് പ്രധാന അധികാരങ്ങളെല്ലാം കേന്ദ്രത്തിൽ നിക്ഷിപ്തമാണ്. അതുപോലെ വരുമാനമാർഗ്ഗവും.

തൊഴിലാളികൾ, കൃഷിക്കാർ തുടങ്ങി വിവിധ വർഗങ്ങളുടെയും വിഭാഗങ്ങളുടെയും സംഘടിതമായ പ്രക്ഷോഭസമരങ്ങളുടെ അനിവാര്യത ഈ പരിതസ്ഥിതി വ്യക്തമാക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. ന്യായമായ സമരങ്ങൾക്ക് ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണി ഗവർണ്മെന്റ് തടസ്സമാവുന്നില്ലെന്നു മാത്രമല്ല സഹായകമായി വർത്തിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. ഈ വിധത്തിലുള്ള സമരങ്ങളാവട്ടെ ഇടതുമുന്നണിയെ കൂടുതൽ ശക്തമാക്കിത്തീർക്കുകയാണ് ഫലത്തിൽ ചെയ്യുന്നത്.

കേന്ദ്രഭരണത്തിന്റെ പൊതുനയത്തിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിലും ചട്ടക്കൂടിനകത്തുനിന്നുകൊണ്ടും മാത്രമേ എത് സംസ്ഥാന ഗവർണ്മെന്റിനും പ്രവർത്തിക്കാനാവൂ. അതനുസരിച്ച് പ്രവർത്തിച്ചാൽപ്പോലും തങ്ങളുടെ പാർടിയുടേതല്ലാത്ത ഗവർണ്മെന്റിന്റെ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്ക് തടസ്സം നിൽക്കുന്ന നിലപാടാണ് കോൺഗ്രസ് നേതൃത്വത്തിലുള്ള കേന്ദ്ര ഗവർണ്മെന്റ് തുടർച്ചയായി സ്വീകരിച്ചുപോന്നിട്ടുള്ളത്. 1957 മുതൽ കേരളത്തിൽ എന്നും ഉണ്ടായിട്ടുള്ള അനുഭവം അതാണ്.

തങ്ങളുടേതല്ലാത്ത സംസ്ഥാന ഗവർണ്മെന്റുകളുമായി സഹകരിക്കുകയെന്നത് കേന്ദ്ര ഗവർണ്മെന്റിന്റെ ചുമതലയാണ്. മറിച്ചുള്ള നിലപാട് ഫെഡറലിസത്തിന്റെയും ജനാധിപത്യത്തിന്റെയും കടയ്ക്കൽ കത്തിവയ്ക്കലാണ്. ഈ കത്തിവയ്പാണ് കോൺഗ്രസ് നേതൃത്വത്തിലുള്ള കേന്ദ്ര ഗവർണ്മെന്റ് എന്നും പ്രതിപക്ഷ നേതൃത്വത്തിലുള്ള സംസ്ഥാന ഗവർണ്മെന്റുകളോട് പുലർത്തിപോന്നിട്ടുള്ളത്. അതുകൊണ്ടുതന്നെ പ്രതിപക്ഷത്തിന്, പ്രത്യേകിച്ച് ഇടതുപക്ഷ നേതൃത്വത്തിലുള്ള സംസ്ഥാന ഗവർണ്മെന്റുകൾക്ക്, ജനാധിപത്യപരമായി തെരഞ്ഞെടുക്കപ്പെട്ട ഗവർണ്മെന്റിന്റെ നിലനില്പിനുവേണ്ടി കേന്ദ്രവുമായി ഏറ്റുമുട്ടേണ്ടിവരുന്നു.

ഏറ്റുമുട്ടലിന്റേതായ ഈ പരിതസ്ഥിതി ഇല്ലാതാക്കുകയെന്നത് ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണിയുടെ ഏറ്റവും പ്രധാനപ്പെട്ട ലക്ഷ്യമാണ്. പക്ഷേ ഇതെങ്ങനെ സാധിക്കും? കേന്ദ്ര ഗവർണ്മെന്റിന്റെ ജനവിരുദ്ധമായ നയങ്ങളെയും സംസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ താല്പര്യങ്ങൾക്കെതിരായ നിലപാടുകളെയും ചോദ്യംചെയ്യാതെ അംഗീകരിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് മുന്നോട്ടുപോകരുത് ഒരു മാർഗമാണ്. അതാണ് ഇന്ന് ഐക്യജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണി, 'പിന്നുവർത്തിക്കുന്ന രീതി, അതിൽനിന്നു വ്യത്യസ്തമായി ഒരു ബദൽനയത്തിന്റെയും പരിപാടിയുടെയും അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിലാണ് ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണി ജനവിശ്വാസം നേടുന്നത്. ആനയവും പരിപാടിയും ഉപേക്ഷിക്കുകയെന്നാൽ ജനങ്ങളെ വഞ്ചിക്കുകയെന്നർത്ഥമാണ്. പിന്നെന്താണ് ഇതിനു പരിഹാരം?

കേന്ദ്ര ഗവർണ്മെന്റും സംസ്ഥാന ഗവർണ്മെന്റും ഒരു ലക്ഷ്യത്തോടെ അന്യോന്യപുരകമായി പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്ന അവസ്ഥയുണ്ടാക്കലാണ് ഇതിനുള്ള പരിഹാരം. ജനങ്ങളുടെ മൗലികമായ പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾക്ക് പരിഹാരം കാണുക, ജനാധിപത്യവും ഫെഡറൽ വ്യവസ്ഥയും സംരക്ഷിക്കുകയും ശക്തിപ്പെടുത്തുകയും

ചെയ്യുക എന്നിവയിൽ ഊന്നിയുള്ള ഭരണനയമാണ് ഇതിനുള്ള അടിസ്ഥാനം. അതാണിന്ന് മിക്കവാറും നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്നത്. വി.പി.സിംഗിന്റെ നേതൃത്വത്തിലെ ജനതാദൾ ഗവർണ്മെന്റ് മാത്രമാണ് ഇതിൽനിന്നു വ്യത്യസ്തമായ ഒരു നിലപാട് സംസ്ഥാനത്തോട് സ്വീകരിച്ചത്. വി.പി.സിംഗിന്റെ നേതൃത്വത്തിലുള്ള ജനതാദൾ ഗവർണ്മെന്റിന്റെ കാലത്ത് കേരളത്തിലെ ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണി ഗവർണ്മെന്റും കേന്ദ്ര ഗവർണ്മെന്റും തീക്കുത്ത ഐക്യം പുലർത്തുവാൻ ഇതു സഹായിച്ചു. സംസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ ന്യായമായ ആവശ്യങ്ങൾ പലതും അംഗീകരിക്കപ്പെട്ടു. സംസ്ഥാന ഗവർണ്മെന്റോടുകൂടി, കേന്ദ്രത്തിലെ വി.പി.സിംഗ് ഗവർണ്മെന്റിനെ സർവ്വതോമുഖമായി പിന്തുണയ്ക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. സംഘടനാഭിരുചിയും കീഴടങ്ങലിന്റേതും എന്നതിനുപകരം സമന്വയത്തിന്റേതും സഹകരണത്തിന്റേതുമായിരുന്നു അന്നത്തെ ബന്ധം.

ആ വിധത്തിലുള്ള രാഷ്ട്രീയ കാലാവസ്ഥ വീണ്ടും സ്ഥാപിക്കുകയെന്നത് കേരളത്തിന്റെ താല്പര്യം സംരക്ഷിക്കുന്നതിന് ഒഴിച്ചുകൂടാനാവാത്തതാണ്. പക്ഷേ ഇത് കേരളത്തിനുമത്രമായി കഴിയുന്നതല്ല. അതിനു കേരളത്തിലെയും ഇതര സംസ്ഥാനങ്ങളിലെയും ജനാധിപത്യപ്രസ്ഥാനം ഇനിയും വളരെ ശക്തിപ്പെടണം. മറ്റൊരുവിധത്തിൽ പറഞ്ഞാൽ ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യപ്രസ്ഥാനം ദേശവ്യാപകമായി വളരേണ്ടിയിരിക്കുന്നു.

ദേശീയാടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യക്ഷികളുടെയും വിഭാഗങ്ങളുടെയും ഐക്യത്തിന്റെ പ്രസക്തി ഇവിടെയാണ് കൂടികൊള്ളുന്നത്. ഇത് ക്ഷിപ്രസാധ്യമായ കാര്യമല്ലെന്നു പറയേണ്ടതില്ലല്ലോ. ഇതിനകം ഈ വഴിക്ക് കുറെ മുന്നേറ്റവാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടുണ്ട്. അതിന്റെ ഫലമായിരുന്നു ഇടതുപക്ഷ-ദേശീയമുന്നണി ഐക്യം. ചിലപ്പോൾ ഇതിനു പിന്നോക്കമടിയും സംഭവിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെന്ന കാര്യം വിസ്മരിക്കാവതല്ല. പക്ഷേ, ഈ പിന്നോക്കമടി സ്ഥിരമായിട്ടുള്ളതല്ല. വളർന്നു മുന്നേറ്റുവാൻ പോകുന്നത് ഐക്യം തന്നെയാണ്. എന്തുകൊണ്ടെന്നാൽ ജനങ്ങൾ ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നത് അതാണ്. അതിന്റെ തെളിവാണ് ഇന്ത്യാ ഗവർണ്മെന്റിന്റെ പുത്തൻ സാമ്പത്തികനയം, ഗാട്ടുകരാരിൽ ഒപ്പുവയ്ക്കൽ, സ്വകാര്യവൽക്കരണം, തൊഴിലില്ലായ്മ, അഴിമതി, ജനാധിപത്യധ്വംസനം എന്നിവയ്ക്കെല്ലാം എതിരായും സർവ്വോപരി ബഹുരാഷ്ട്രകൂത്തുകകളുടെ ആധിപത്യത്തിനെതിരായും സ്വാശ്രയത്തിനുവേണ്ടിയും അഖിലേന്ത്യാടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ വളർന്നുവരുന്ന വമ്പിച്ച ബഹുജന ഐക്യപ്രസ്ഥാനം. തൊഴിലാളികളുടെയും കർഷകരുടെയും ഇതര ജനവിഭാഗങ്ങളുടെയും ഈ യോജിച്ച മുന്നേറ്റമാണ് അഖിലേന്ത്യാടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യ ഐക്യത്തിന്റെ ചാലകശക്തിയായിത്തീരുന്നത്. ഇതിന്റെ അഭേദ്യഭാഗം തന്നെയാണ് കേരളത്തിലെ ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണി. അധികാരത്തിനുവേണ്ടി കക്ഷികൾ തമ്മിലുണ്ടാക്കിയിട്ടുള്ള വെറും കുട്ടുകെട്ടല്ല. മറിച്ച് അവകാശങ്ങൾക്കുവേണ്ടി ജനങ്ങളെയാകെ ഐക്യപ്പെടുത്തി സമരത്തിലേക്കും തെരഞ്ഞെടുപ്പ് വിജയത്തിലേക്കും നയിക്കുന്ന ഇടതുപക്ഷകക്ഷികളുടെയും മതനിരപേക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യകക്ഷികളുടെയും മുന്നണിയാണ്. അതിന്റെ പ്രവർത്തനത്തിൽ കേരളത്തിൽ കൈവരിക്കാനാവുന്ന മുന്നേറ്റവും വിജയവും അഖിലേന്ത്യാടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ സ്വാധീനം ചെലുത്തുന്നതുപോലെ, അഖിലേന്ത്യാടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ ഉണ്ടാവുന്ന വളർച്ചയും മുന്നേറ്റവും കേരളത്തിലും സ്വാധീനം ചെലുത്തുമെന്ന് തീർച്ചയാണ്. അതായത്, ഇവിടത്തെ ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണി ആ അർത്ഥത്തിൽ അഖിലേന്ത്യാ പ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ തുടർച്ചയാണ്.

കോൺഗ്രസ് നേതൃത്വത്തിലുള്ള ഐക്യജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണി ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണിയെപ്പോലെ ഒരു മുന്നണി

തന്നെയാണെന്നു പറയാം. പക്ഷേ സമാനത 'മുന്നണി' എന്ന വാക്കിൽമാത്രം തുങ്ങുന്നു. ഐക്യജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണി എന്നത് എല്ലാ അർത്ഥത്തിലും ഭരണാധികാരമെന്ന പരിമിതമായ ലക്ഷ്യത്തിനുവേണ്ടിയുള്ള കക്ഷികളുടെ കൂട്ടുകെട്ടു മാത്രമാണ്. ജാതി-വർഗീയശക്തികളോട് മാനിമാറി കൂട്ടുകെട്ടുണ്ടാക്കുകയും അവയെ പ്രീണിപ്പിക്കുകയും ശക്തിപ്പെടുത്തുകയും ചെയ്യുകയാണ് ഐക്യജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണി ചെയ്യുന്നത്. അധികാരത്തിൽ കയറാൻ വർഗീയശക്തികളുമായി അവർ സന്ധിച്ചെയ്യുന്നു. ഒറ്റയ്ക്കു മത്സരിക്കുവാൻ കോൺഗ്രസിനുള്ള കഴിവില്ലായ്മ മാത്രമാണ് കോൺഗ്രസ് (എ) നേതൃത്വത്തിലുള്ള ഐക്യജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണിക്കടിസ്ഥാനം.

കേന്ദ്ര ഗവർണ്മെന്റിനെ നയിക്കുന്ന കോൺഗ്രസ് (എ) യാണ് യു.ഡി.എഫിന്റെ നേതൃത്വം. കേന്ദ്ര ഗവർണ്മെന്റിന്റെ ജനവിരുദ്ധസ്വഭാവംതന്നെയാണ് ഈ മുന്നണിക്കുള്ളത്. ഭരണത്തിൽ പങ്കാളിത്തം ലഭിക്കുന്നുവെന്നതുമാത്രമാണ് അന്യോന്യബന്ധത്തിനടിസ്ഥാനം. ജനങ്ങളെ ബാധിക്കുന്ന തൊഴിലില്ലായ്മ, വിലക്കയറ്റം, കാർഷികവിളകളുടെ വിലക്കുറവ് തുടങ്ങിയവയ്ക്ക് തെല്ലെങ്കിലും പരിഹാരം കാണാനുള്ള സത്യസന്ധമായ താല്പര്യം അവർക്കില്ല. കേന്ദ്രം കേരളത്തോട് തുടർന്നുവരുന്ന അവഗണനയുടെ കാര്യത്തിലാകട്ടെ കീഴടങ്ങലാണ് അവരുടെ നയം. അഴിമതി നടത്തുകയും അഴിമതിക്കാരെ സംരക്ഷിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുക എന്നതത്രെ അവരെ സംബന്ധിച്ചിടത്തോളം ഗവർണ്മെന്റിന്റെ പ്രധാന ചുമതല.

ജനാധിപത്യത്തെ അത് ധ്വംസിക്കുന്നു. അധികാരവികേന്ദ്രീകരണത്തെ തകർക്കുകയും കേന്ദ്രീകരണത്തെ ശക്തിപ്പെടുത്തുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. തൊഴിലാളി സമരങ്ങൾക്കും ഇതര ജനാധിപത്യപ്രക്ഷോഭങ്ങൾക്കുമെതിരെ മർദ്ദനനിയമങ്ങളും നടപടികളും സ്വീകരിക്കുന്നു.

ഐക്യജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണിയിലെ ഘടകകക്ഷികൾ തമ്മിലോ ഓരോ കക്ഷികൾക്കുമകത്തുതന്നെയോ ഐക്യം പാലിക്കുന്നില്ല. ഭരണനേതൃത്വം ഘടകകക്ഷികളെയും സ്വന്തം കക്ഷികളിൽപ്പെട്ടവരെയും അവഗണിക്കുകയും, സ്വയം സ്വേച്ഛാധിപതികളായി മാറുകയുംചെയ്യുന്നു.

ജനതാപുരുഷനെ അടിസ്ഥാനമാക്കി ലക്ഷ്യബോധത്തോടെ പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്ന ഒരു മുന്നണിക്കേ യോജിപ്പോടെ നിലകൊള്ളുവാനും സ്വതന്ത്രരും പ്രഭാവം ചെയ്യുവാനും കഴിയുകയുള്ളൂ. ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണിയുടെയും മുന്നണി ഗവർണ്മെന്റിന്റെയും ഇതുവരെയുള്ള പ്രവർത്തനം ഇത് സംശയരഹിതമായി തെളിയിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. മുന്നണി ഘടകകക്ഷികളുടെ രാഷ്ട്രീയനിലപാടുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ടതാണ് ഇക്കാര്യം. മുന്നണിക്ക് നേതൃത്വം നൽകുന്ന കക്ഷിക്ക് മുന്നണിബന്ധത്തിന്റെയും ജനകീയപ്രശ്നങ്ങളോടുള്ള മുന്നണിയുടെ പൊതുസമീപനത്തിന്റെയും കാര്യത്തിൽ നിർണ്ണായകമായ പങ്കാണുള്ളത്.

സ്വന്തമായ രാഷ്ട്രീയനിലപാടും വ്യക്തിത്വവുമുള്ള കക്ഷികളാണ് ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണിയിലുള്ളത്. സ്വാഭാവികമായും ചെറുതും വലുതുമായി ചില കാര്യങ്ങളിൽ ഈ കക്ഷികൾക്ക് വ്യത്യസ്തമായ നിലപാടുണ്ടാവും. എന്നാൽ ഈ വ്യത്യാസത്തേക്കാൾ ഉയർന്നുനിൽക്കുന്നത് ജനങ്ങളുടെ വിശാലമായ താല്പര്യങ്ങളെ അടിസ്ഥാനമാക്കിയുള്ള യോജിപ്പാണ്.

മുന്നണിയെന്ന നിലയ്ക്ക് യോജിച്ചു തീരുമാനമെടുത്ത് പോകേണ്ട കാര്യങ്ങളിൽ ഉണ്ടാകുന്ന വ്യത്യസ്ത നിലപാട് കൂട്ടായ ചർച്ചകളിലൂടെ പരിഹാരം കാണുന്നു. അന്യോന്യം തർക്കിച്ചു തോല്പിക്കുക എന്നതിനുപകരം, അവരവരുടെ വീക്ഷണം മറ്റുള്ളവരെ ബോധ്യപ്പെടുത്താനും മറ്റുള്ളവരുടെ അഭിപ്രായം സ്വയം ഉൾക്കൊള്ളാനും ഉള്ള മനോഭാവം ഇവിടെ പ്രധാനമാണ്. ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണി വളരെക്കാല

മായി യോജിച്ചു നിലകൊള്ളുന്നതിനും അതിന്റെ ജനസാധിനം വർദ്ധിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നതിനും കാരണമിതാണ്.

ഇതെല്ലാമാണെങ്കിലും ചില സന്ദർഭങ്ങളിൽ യോജിപ്പിലെ താനാവാത്ത അടിയന്തിരപ്രാധാന്യമുള്ള ചില പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾ ഉയർന്നുവന്നേക്കാം. ആ വക കാര്യങ്ങളിൽ ശത്രുതാപരമായ നിലപാട് സ്വീകരിക്കാതെ അവരവരുടെ നിലപാടിൽ ഉറച്ചു നിൽക്കുവാനും ആയത് പ്രചരിപ്പിക്കുവാനും ഓരോ കക്ഷിക്കും അവകാശമുണ്ട്.

ഏതെങ്കിലും ഒരു കക്ഷിയുടെ അഭിപ്രായം മറ്റുള്ളവരുടെ മേൽ അടിച്ചേല്പിക്കുന്നതിന് പ്രസക്തിയോ അവകാശമോ ഇല്ല. അഭിപ്രായ സമന്വയമാണ് ആവശ്യം. അതിനുള്ള സാധ്യതയെ കണ്ടു വന്നിട്ടുമാണ്. തർക്കത്തിന് ഇടയാവുന്ന പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾ കൈകാര്യം ചെയ്യുമ്പോൾ പരമാവധി ജനങ്ങളെ ഐക്യപ്പെടു

ത്തുകയും ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണിയുടെ ബഹുജനാധിപത്യ വിപുലമാക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുക എന്നതാണ് ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണിയുടെ കാഴ്ചപ്പാട്.

ജനങ്ങളെയും രാജ്യത്തെയും ബാധിക്കുന്ന പ്രശ്നങ്ങളിൽ ശരിയും കാലോചിതവുമായ നിലപാടാണ് ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണി തുടർച്ചയായി സ്വീകരിച്ചുപോന്നിട്ടുള്ളത്. വർദ്ധിച്ച തോതിൽ ജനങ്ങൾ എൽ.ഡി.എഫിന്റെ പിന്നിൽ അണിനിരന്നുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നത് ഇതിന്റെ തെളിവാണ്. ഇന്ത്യൻ ജനതയെയും കേരളത്തിലെ ജനങ്ങളെ വിശേഷിപ്പിച്ചും ഇന്നു നേരിട്ടുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന ഗുരുതരമായ പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾക്ക് പരിഹാരം കാണുവാൻ ഇടതുപക്ഷ ജനാധിപത്യമുന്നണിയുടെ ബഹുജനാധിപത്യം കൂടുതൽ വിപുലമാക്കിത്തീർക്കുകയാണ് ഈ കാലഘട്ടത്തിലെ പ്രധാന കടമ.

മലയാള സാഹിത്യവിമർശനം — നവോത്ഥാനഘട്ടം

വി.അരവിന്ദാക്ഷൻ

ആംഗലഭാഷാ-സാഹിത്യസമ്പർക്കം കൊണ്ടാണ് പത്തൊമ്പതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിലെ ഭാരതീയ വാങ്മയ നവോത്ഥാനമുണ്ടായത് എന്നതു പാടിപ്പാടി പതിഞ്ഞുപോയ ഒരു പാട്ടാണ്. വ്യവസായവിപ്ലവം, ആധുനികശാസ്ത്രം, ലിബറലിസം എന്നിവയുടെ വാഹകരായി ഇവിടെ വന്നു ഭരണാധികാരം വ്യാപിപ്പിക്കുകയും ആ ഭരണാധികാരമുപയോഗിച്ചു മുഖ്യമായും സ്വന്തം സാമ്പത്തിക താല്പര്യങ്ങൾക്കനുരോധമായി പരിഷ്കാരങ്ങൾ ഏർപ്പെടുത്തുകയും ചെയ്ത ഇംഗ്ലീഷുകാരുടെ സ്വാധീനം സാഹിത്യത്തിലൂടെ മാത്രമല്ല സംക്രമിച്ചത്. ഭാരതീയ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ നാനാ മേഖലകളെ ആഗോളവ്യവസ്ഥയുമായി ഉദ്ഗ്രഥിച്ചു ഈ ആംഗലാക്രമണം, തത്ഫലമായുണ്ടായ സാംസ്കാരിക വിപ്ലവമാണ് സാഹിത്യത്തിലെ നവോത്ഥാനത്തിനു പ്രേരണയായത്. ഇത് ഇന്ത്യയിലെല്ലായിടത്തും ഒരേകാലത്തും ഒരേ മാത്രയിലുമല്ല ഉണ്ടായത്. ഓരോ പ്രദേശത്തും ഓരോ സവിശേഷതയുണ്ടായിരുന്നുതാനും അതിന്.

കേരളത്തിൽ

പത്തൊമ്പതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിന്റെ ഉത്തരാർധത്തിലാണ് കേരളത്തിൽ പാശ്ചാത്യപ്രേരിതമായ നവോത്ഥാനം പ്രബലമായത്. ഈ കാലഘട്ടത്തിൽ ഇവിടെ സാമ്പത്തികം, സാമൂഹികം, രാഷ്ട്രീയം, സാംസ്കാരികം എന്നിങ്ങനെ എല്ലാ മേഖലകളിലും അഭ്യുത്ഥാപനമായ പരിവർത്തനമാണുണ്ടായത്. വാണിജ്യ-വ്യവസായങ്ങൾ അഭിവൃദ്ധി പ്രാപിക്കുകയും റബ്ബർ-തേയില-കാപ്പിത്തോട്ടങ്ങൾ മുഖേന കൃഷിയിൽ തന്നെ വ്യവസായവൽക്കരണം സുപ്രതിഷ്ഠമാവുകയും സാമ്പത്തികവ്യവഹാരങ്ങളാകെ പണാധിപത്യത്തിനു വശംവദമാവുകയും ചെയ്തതോടെ ഇവിടെ മുതലാളിത്തവ്യവസ്ഥയുടെ മേഖല, നാടുവാഴിത്തത്തെ വെല്ലുവിളിക്കാൻപോന്ന വിധത്തിൽ, ശക്തിപ്പെട്ടു. ഇതോടൊപ്പം കൂലിവേലക്കാരായ തൊഴിലാളികളുടെ ഒരു വിഭാഗവും ആവിർഭവിച്ചു.

ഈ കാലഘട്ടത്തിൽ തന്നെയാണ് പൊതുവിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിനു പ്രചാരം സിദ്ധിച്ചത്. അതിനുമുൻകൈയെടുക്കുന്ന ക്രിസ്ത്യൻ മിഷണറിമാർ പുരാതനമായ ജാതിവ്യവസ്ഥയുടെ കോട്ടകൊത്തളങ്ങളെ ആക്രമിക്കുകയും നൂതനമായ ആശയങ്ങളും ചിന്താരീതികളും ഭാഷാശൈലിയും പ്രചരിപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. അച്ചടിയുടെയും പത്രങ്ങളുടെയും ആവിർഭാവമാണു സുപ്രധാനമായ മറ്റൊരു സംഭവവികാസം. മൂലധനനികേഷപം അനിവാര്യമായ ഈവകസംരംഭങ്ങൾ മുതലാളിത്തമേഖലയുടെ ഒരു ഘടകമാ

ണെന്നു വിശേഷിച്ചു പറയേണ്ടതില്ലല്ലോ.

ഇതേ കാലഘട്ടത്തിൽ സവർണജാതികളിലുണ്ടായ പരിഷ്കരണയത്നങ്ങളും അവർണജാതികളുടെ ധീരോദാത്തമായ പ്രക്ഷോഭങ്ങളും പാരമ്പര്യത്തിനേല്പിച്ച ക്ഷതം നിസ്സാരമായിരുന്നില്ല. ഇതെല്ലാം ചേർന്നു സൃഷ്ടിച്ച അന്തരീക്ഷം പ്രക്ഷുബ്ധവും ഉൽപതിഷ്ണുക്കരം ഉത്തേജകവും ആയിരുന്നു.

ഇത്തരം സാഹചര്യങ്ങളുണ്ടായപ്പോൾ മുൻകാലങ്ങളിൽ അന്യരാജ്യങ്ങൾ സാക്ഷ്യം വഹിച്ച സമൂലപരിവർത്തനങ്ങളുണ്ടല്ലോ, അതൊക്കെ തന്നെയാണു കേരളവും കണ്ടത്.

സാഹിത്യരംഗം

സാംസ്കാരിക ചക്രവാളത്തിനും സമൂഹമനസ്സിനും പെട്ടെന്നുണ്ടായ വികാസത്തിന്റെ ഫലമായി മലയാള സാഹിത്യത്തിൽ — രചനയുടെയും വിമർശനത്തിന്റെയും മേഖലകളിൽ — ഒരു വിപ്ലവം തന്നെയാണു നടന്നത്. പാണ്ഡിത്യമെന്നാൽ സംസ്കൃതമാണ് ഡിത്യമെന്നും ഉത്തമസാഹിത്യമെന്നാൽ സംസ്കൃതസാഹിത്യമെന്നും ഉള്ള രൂഢമൂലമായ വിശ്വാസം തകർന്നു. മലയാളത്തിൽ പ്രസിദ്ധീകരിച്ച ആദ്യത്തെ രണ്ടു പത്രങ്ങളിൽ ഒന്നായ 'പശ്ചിമോദയ'ത്തിന്റെ ഒന്നാം ലക്കത്തിൽ (ഒക്ടോ:1847) തന്നെ ഇങ്ങനെയൊരു പ്രസ്താവന കാണുന്നു:

"വെളിച്ചം പൂർവദിക്കിൽ നിന്നു മാത്രമല്ല പശ്ചിമദിക്കിൽ നിന്നും വരുന്നത് ആശ്ചര്യം തന്നെ. ഈ കേരളം ദൈവവശാൽ ഇംഗ്ലീഷ്കാർക്ക് അധീനമായി വന്നതിനാലോ ഈ നാട്ടിൽ അറിഞ്ഞുകൂടാത്ത ചില സംഗതികളെ പടിഞ്ഞാറിൽ നിന്ന് ഇങ്ങോട്ട് കടന്നുവരുവാൻ ഒരു പാലം ഉണ്ടായിരിക്കുന്നു. ഇവിടെ നടപ്പായ വിദ്യകളും ശാസ്ത്രങ്ങളും ഒഴികെ വിഭാഗത്തിൽ നടക്കുന്ന പലതും ഉണ്ട്. രണ്ടു വക്കെക്കും തമ്മിൽ വളരെ ഭേദം ഉണ്ടുതാനും. പരമാത്മാ ജീവാത്മാ തുടങ്ങിയുള്ള മർമ്മോപദേശങ്ങളെ ധ്യാനിച്ചു ഓരോ അകറ്റുണ്ടാക്കി ദിവ്യശ്ലോകങ്ങളെ ചമച്ചു വിഭാഗമാരെ രസിപ്പിക്കുന്നത് ഹിന്തു ജ്ഞാനത്തിൽ മര്യാദ തന്നെ. കാലദേശാവസ്ഥകളുടെ സൂക്ഷ്മം നിദാനിച്ചറിഞ്ഞ് കുട്ടികളുടെ ഉപകാരത്തിനായി ഗദ്യമാക്കി പറയുന്നത് വിഭാഗത്തിജ്ഞാനത്തിന്റെ ലക്ഷണമത്രെ" (ഡോ.അഴീക്കോട് മലയാളസാഹിത്യവിമർശന (1981)ത്തിൽ ഉദ്ധരിച്ചത്. പৃ.47-8)

വിജ്ഞാനസീമയുടെ വികാസവും വിജ്ഞാനപ്രസരണത്തിനു ഗദ്യം രൂപപ്പെടുത്തേണ്ടതിന്റെ പ്രാധാന്യവും ഇവിടെ സൂചിതമായിരിക്കുന്നു. അക്കാലത്തെ സാഹിത്യ

പരിശ്രമങ്ങളെ ഈ രണ്ടു പരിഗണനകളും ഗണ്യമായി സ്വാധീനിച്ചു. “സാഹിത്യസീമകൾ സംസ്കൃതഭാഷയെ അതിഗതിക്കുന്നില്ലെന്നു വല്ലവർക്കും വാദമുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ അവർ കൃപമണ്ഡുക പ്രായൻമാരാണ്” (സാഹിത്യപഞ്ചാനനൻ) എന്നതു സർവസമ്മതിനേടി. കാളിദാസകൃതികൾ വായിച്ചു രസിക്കുന്ന അതേ ഉത്സാഹത്തോടെ ഷെയ്ക്സ്പിയർ കൃതികളും രസിക്കാമെന്നായി; സംസ്കൃതത്തിലെ അലങ്കാരഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങൾ പഠിക്കുന്ന അതേ നിഷ്കർഷയോടെ ഇഷ്ടീഷിലെ താദ്യശ്ലഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങളും പഠിക്കാമെന്നായി; പാണ്ഡിനിയോടു കാണിക്കുന്ന അതേ ആദരം നവീനമായ ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രം വളർത്തിയ പാശ്ചാത്യ പണ്ഡിതന്മാരോടും കാണിക്കാമെന്നായി. പാരമ്പര്യത്തിൽ കൂടുങ്ങിക്കിടന്നിരുന്ന ബുദ്ധിയും ജിജ്ഞാസയും വിചാരരീതിയും സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യമായി.

മനോവികാസത്തിന്റെയും ധൈര്യത്തിന്റെയും ഉടനടിയുടെ ഫലമാണ് ഗദ്യനിർമ്മിതി. സ്വമതപ്രചാരണത്തിനുവേണ്ടി പ്രഗല്ഭരായ പാതിരികൾ ആവിഷ്കരിച്ച ഗദ്യത്തിനു പോരായ്മകളെത്രയെങ്കിലും മുണ്ടായിരുന്നെങ്കിലും അതിനു വ്യവഹാരഭാഷയോടുണ്ടായിരുന്ന അടുപ്പം സൗഷ്ഠവമാർന്ന ഒരു ഗദ്യശൈലി വാർത്തെടുക്കാൻ മനഃപൂർവ്വം ശ്രമിച്ചവർക്കു ബോധിച്ച ഒരാൾ ശ്രദ്ധായിരുന്നു. ചന്തുമേനോന്റെയും സി.പി.അച്യുതമേനോന്റെയും മുർക്കോത്തുകുമാരന്റെയും മറ്റും ഗദ്യശൈലികൾ ആ ആദർശസാക്ഷാത്കാരത്തിന്റെ ഉത്തമനിദർശനങ്ങളാണ്. സംസ്കൃതസ്വാധീനത്തിൽ നിന്നു തികച്ചും മുക്തനായിരുന്നില്ല അദ്ദേഹം എങ്കിലും, കേരള വർമകോയിതവ്യരാനും അതേ ആദർശത്തിൽ നിന്നു കണ്ണെടുക്കാതെയാണ് പരിശ്രമിച്ചത്. അദ്ദേഹം സ്വയം രചിച്ചതും മറ്റു പണ്ഡിതന്മാരെക്കൊണ്ട് എഴുതിച്ചതുമായ പാഠാവലികളിലും അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ പ്രൗഢപ്രബന്ധങ്ങളിൽ പലതിലും ഈ പരമാർത്ഥം പ്രസ്ഫുഷ്ടമായി കാണുന്നു. ഗദ്യപോഷണത്തിന് അക്കാലത്തു നൽകിയ പ്രാധാന്യം അന്നത്തെ പണ്ഡിതപ്രമുഖരുടെ അനവധി ഉദ്ബോധനങ്ങളിൽ മുഴങ്ങുന്നുണ്ട്.

ഗദ്യസാഹചര്യത്തിന്റെ പരകോടിയത്രെ ഇടപ്രഥമമായി മലയാളത്തിൽ പ്രത്യക്ഷമായ നോവലുകൾ. കാവ്യം പദ്യത്തിൽ തന്നെയാവണമെന്നില്ല, ഗദ്യത്തിലുമാവാം എന്നല്ല, ചിലപ്പോൾ ഗദ്യത്തിലുള്ള കാവ്യം പദ്യത്തിലുള്ളതിനേക്കാൾ മികച്ചെന്നും വരാം എന്നതെല്ലാം പരക്കെ അംഗീകൃതമായി. ഫീൽഡിങ് കോമിക് പ്രോസ് എപ്പിക് എന്നും റാറംഫ് ഫോക്സ് “ബുർഷാ എപ്പിക്” എന്നും വിശേഷിപ്പിച്ച നോവൽ എന്ന സാഹിത്യരൂപം പ്രതിഷ്ഠനേടിയതിനോടു തൊട്ടടുത്താണ് ഇവിടെ ഒരു മഹാകാവ്യവിവാദം നടന്നത് എന്ന സംഗതി കേവലം യാദൃച്ഛികമാണോ? കവിതയെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള ഒരു നൂതനസങ്കല്പവും അതനുസരിച്ചുള്ള കവിതയും ഇതേ കാലത്താണ് ഉണ്ടായത്. “ഇന്ദുലേഖ”യുടെ പ്രകാശനം കഴിഞ്ഞ് കാൽനൂറ്റാണ്ടേ ആയിരുന്നുള്ളൂ. ‘വീണപൂവ്’ അതിനു സമാനമായ അനേകം ലിറിക്കുകളും അവതരിപ്പിച്ചപ്പോൾ ഒരു ഭാഗത്തു റിയലിസ്റ്റ് നോവൽ, മറുഭാഗത്തു റൊമാൻറിക് കവിത — രണ്ടും ഒരേ ദശകങ്ങളിൽ വൈചിത്ര്യമാർന്നു പുഷ്പി പ്രാപിക്കുകയായിരുന്നു.

പഴയ കഥാട്ടത്തിൽ വാർന്നുവീണ നാടകങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നു വ്യത്യസ്തമായ റിയലിസം സ്ഫുരിക്കുന്ന നാടകങ്ങൾ ഭാഷയിലുണ്ടായി എന്നതും ശ്രദ്ധേയം. ഒരുദാഹരണം, കൊച്ചുണ്ണിത്തമ്പുരാന്റെ ‘കല്യാണി’, ഈ സാഹചര്യത്തിൽ കഥകളിയെയും ആട്ടക്കഥാസാഹിത്യത്തെയും കുറിച്ച് ചർച്ച എന്തൊരാവശ്യത്തിനും — കഥാകഥനം മുതൽ ശാസ്ത്രീയചർച്ചവരെയുള്ള ഏതൊരു കാര്യത്തിനും — ഉപയോഗിക്കാവുന്ന ഗദ്യം, ആധുനിക യുഗത്തിലെ മഹാകാവ്യമായ നോവൽ, നാടകസ്വഭാവത്തോടു കൂടിയ ഖണ്ഡകാവ്യങ്ങൾ, ആത്മാവിഷ്കാര പ്രധാനമായ ലിറിക്കുകൾ ദേശീയ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യവാന്മാർ മാറ്റൊലിക്കൊണ്ടുകവിതകൾ, റിയലിസ്റ്റ് നാടകങ്ങൾ — അദ്ഭുതാവഹമായ വൈചിത്ര്യമാണു നവോത്ഥാനദശയിലെ സാഹിത്യപരിശ്രമം കാഴ്ചവെച്ചത്. എന്തിന്, മലയാള കവിത “വിലക്ഷണ്”മായ ദുരവസ്ഥ വരെ വളർന്നു. സംസ്കൃതവൃത്തങ്ങളോടുള്ള ദാസ്യം ഉപേക്ഷിക്കുകയും കിളിപ്പാട്ടും വഞ്ചിപ്പാട്ടും മറ്റും പുനരുജ്ജീവിപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു കവികൾ എന്നതും ഈ സംക്രമണഘട്ടത്തിലെ ഒരു മുഖ്യസംഭവമായി എടുക്കാവുന്നതാണ്.

പുതിയ സംരംഭങ്ങളെ എല്ലാവരും ഒരേപോലെ അനുകൂലിക്കുകയുണ്ടായില്ല എന്നതു സ്വാഭാവികം മാത്രം. അന്ന്, അതുകൊണ്ട്, തീക്ഷ്ണമായ വിവാദങ്ങൾ പലതും നടന്നു, യാഥാസ്ഥിതിക്കരും പരിവർത്തനോത്സാഹികളും തമ്മിൽ, സമാനചിന്താഗതിക്കാർക്കിടയിൽ തന്നെയും തർക്കവിതർക്കങ്ങളുണ്ടായി. അവയിലെല്ലാം സാഹിത്യബാഹ്യമായ ചില താത്പര്യങ്ങളും പരിഗണനകളും കയറിക്കളിച്ചു ചിലപ്പോഴെങ്കിലും എന്ന വസ്തുത മറച്ചുവയ്ക്കേണ്ടതില്ല. എന്നാൽ അവയ്ക്കു വലിയ പ്രാധാന്യം കല്പിക്കേണ്ടതുമില്ല. പരമപ്രധാനമായ സംഗതി അന്നത്തെ സംഘർഷങ്ങളിലൂടെ സാഹിത്യവിമർശം വളർന്നു എന്നതാണ്. പുതിയ തത്വങ്ങൾ, പഴയ സങ്കല്പങ്ങൾ, പുതിയ വ്യാഖ്യാനങ്ങൾ, പുതിയ മാനദണ്ഡങ്ങൾ എന്നിവ കാലക്രമേണ ഉരുത്തിരിഞ്ഞുവന്നു. ആ ദശയുടെ അന്ത്യത്തോടടുപ്പിച്ചു വിഭാൻ സി.എസ്. നായർ എഴുതിയതിപ്രകാരമാണ്. കവിതയെ മാത്രം പുരസ്കരിച്ചാണ് അദ്ദേഹം എഴുതിയതെങ്കിലും ഇതു സാഹിത്യത്തിനു സാക്ഷ്യേണ കൊള്ളിക്കാമെന്നു തോന്നുന്നു. അതുകൊണ്ടാണ് ഉദ്ധരിക്കുന്നത്.

“രാജ്യകാര്യങ്ങളെയും സാമുദായിക വിഷയങ്ങളെയും അധികരിച്ചുകൊണ്ടുള്ള കവനങ്ങൾ ആവിർഭവിച്ചു തുടങ്ങിയതോടുകൂടി നമ്മുടെ സാഹിത്യം, ജനസമുദായത്തിന്റെ സചേതനമായ ഒരു പ്രതിച്ഛായയായിത്തീർന്നു തുടങ്ങിയിരിക്കുന്നു. മനുഷ്യജീവിതത്തിന്റെ നാനാമുഖങ്ങളെയും പ്രതിഫലിപ്പിക്കുന്നതും സാമാന്യജനതയുടെ ജീവിതവ്യസ്തികളെ വിഷയീകരിക്കുന്നതുമായ സാഹിത്യമാണു സചേതനമായിട്ടുള്ളത്. മലയാളസാഹിത്യം ഇപ്പോൾ അങ്ങനെയുള്ള ഒരു പദവിയിലേക്കാണ് പ്രയാണം ചെയ്തുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നതെന്നു കാണുന്നതിൽ പ്രത്യേകമൊരു കൗതുകം തോന്നുന്നുണ്ട്.” (ഭാഷാവിഭാസം, 7-ാം പുസ്തകം, 1100/1925, വിഭാൻ സി.എസ്. നായരുടെ സാഹിത്യവിമർശം, എഡി: കെ. പ്രസന്നൻ, കേരള സാഹിത്യ അക്കാദമി, 1990, പৃ. 121).

ഇതേ കാലത്തു സംസ്കൃതം, ഇംഗ്ലീഷ്, ബംഗാളി എന്നീ ഭാഷകളിൽ നിന്നുണ്ടായ വിവർത്തനങ്ങളും ഭാഷയെ സമ്പന്നമാക്കി. കൂഞ്ഞുക്കുട്ടൻതമ്പുരാന്റെ മഹാഭാരത തർജ്ജമ, വള്ളത്തോളിന്റെ രാമായണ തർജ്ജമ മുതലായവ.

ഗവേഷണം

പഴയ പല പ്രമുഖ കൃതികൾ കണ്ടെടുക്കുകയും അവയെ കുറിച്ചുള്ള നിഷ്കൃഷ്ട പഠനത്തിനു തുടക്കം കുറിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തതും ഇക്കാലം മുതൽക്കുതന്നെയാണ്. പ്രചാരത്തിലിരുന്ന പല കൃതികളെയും സംശോധിച്ച് പുതിയ പതിപ്പുകൾ ഇറക്കുക, താളിയോലഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങളിലും മറ്റുമായി ഒളിഞ്ഞുകിടന്നവയെ കണ്ടുപിടിച്ച് ആദ്യമായി അച്ചടിക്കുക തുടങ്ങിയ ശ്രമസാധ്യമായ ഒട്ടേറെ കാര്യങ്ങൾ ചെയ്തു തീർക്കാൻ അന്നത്തെ പണ്ഡിതന്മാർ അരയും തലയും മുറുക്കി പുറപ്പെട്ടു. ഭാഷയെയും പൂർവകാല സാഹിത്യത്തെയും സംബന്ധിച്ച ഗവേഷണത്തിന് ഇതെല്ലാം ആക്കം കൂട്ടി. അക്കാലത്തെ ഭാഷാ-സാഹിത്യപഠനങ്ങളിൽ സർവാഭ്യർത്ഥിയായി കാണുന്ന ഒരു ചൈതന്യവിശേഷം സുദ്യുക്തമായ ചരിത്രാവബോധമാണ്. ഭാഷയായാലും കവിതയായാലും പരിണാമവിധേയമാണെന്ന സങ്കല്പം അടിസ്ഥാനമായി സ്വീകരിക്കാൻ നവോത്ഥാനഘട്ടത്തിലെ പണ്ഡിതന്മാർ ശക്തിചിഹ്നം. ഭാഷയുടെയും സാഹിത്യത്തിന്റെയും ചരിത്രം പ്രതിപാദിക്കുന്ന ആദ്യഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങൾ അന്നാണ് പുറത്തുവന്നത് എന്നതു ശ്രദ്ധേയമാണ്.

ഭാഷാപഠനത്തിൽ രണ്ടു രീതികൾ സ്വീകരിക്കാമെന്നും താൻ അവയിൽ ഏതാണു സ്വീകരിക്കുന്നതെന്നും വിശദമാക്കിക്കൊണ്ടു ഏ.ആർ.രാജരാജവർമ്മ എഴുതിയതു നമ്മുടെ വിജ്ഞാനചരിത്രത്തിലെ ഒരു നാഴികക്കല്ലാണ്. 'കേരളപാണിനീയ'ത്തിനെഴുതിയ മുഖവുരയുടെ ആദ്യവാചകങ്ങൾ നോക്കുക: "ഒരു ഭാഷയ്ക്കു വ്യാകരണം ചെയ്യുന്നതു രണ്ടുവിധമാകാം. ആഭ്യന്തികപ്രസ്ഥാനം... ആഗമികപ്രസ്ഥാനം... ഉപയോഗമധികം ആഗമിക വ്യാകരണംകൊണ്ടാണ്. വ്യാകരണത്തെ ശാസ്ത്രങ്ങളുടെ കൂട്ടത്തിൽ ഗണിക്കണമെങ്കിൽ തന്നെ അത് ആഗമിക മാർഗത്തിലുള്ളതായിരിക്കണം."

സംസ്കൃതത്തിന്റെ വ്യാകരണം (ലഘുപാണിനീയം) ചെയ്തപ്പോഴും കേരളപാണിനി ആഗമികമാർഗമാണു സ്വീകരിച്ചത്. ആഭ്യന്തികവും ആഗമികവും തമ്മിലുള്ള വ്യത്യാസം വിശദമാക്കിക്കൊണ്ട് അദ്ദേഹം എഴുതിയിട്ടുള്ള ഒരു വാചകം പിന്തോട്ടിപ്പകമാണ്. "ഭരണത്തിലും തന്ത്രഭേദമുള്ളതുപോലെ ആഭ്യന്തികവ്യാകരണം രാജാധിപത്യത്തിന്റെയും ആഗമികവ്യാകരണം പൗരാധിപത്യത്തിന്റെയും സ്ഥാനം വഹിക്കും." ഇതോടൊപ്പം ഈ വാചകങ്ങൾക്കുടി വായിക്കൂ: "വാസ്തവത്തിൽ വൈയാകരണ സാർവഭൗമനായ പാണിനിമഹർഷിയുടെ പ്രസ്ഥാനം ചരിത്രവ്യായന ആഗമികം തന്നെ എന്നു ലഘുപാണിനീയത്തിന്റെ രണ്ടാം ഭാഗത്തിൽ സമർത്ഥിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. മഹാഭാഷ്യകാരന്റെ പിൻക്കാലം ഉണ്ടായ വ്യാഖ്യാതാക്കന്മാരാണ് ആചാര്യനെ ദുഷ്ട

തന്ത്രാധിപതിയാക്കിത്തീർത്തത്." വ്യാകരണവിചിന്തനങ്ങളിൽപ്പോലും അപൂർവമായ വിചാരരീതി പ്രയോഗിക്കാൻ ഏ.ആർ. ഒരു സങ്കോചവും കാണിച്ചില്ല.

സമകാലീന കവിതയോടു പൊരുത്തപ്പെടാൻ ക്ലേശിച്ച-വിസമ്മതിച്ച എന്നുതന്നെ പറയാം — സാഹിത്യപഞ്ചാനനനും ചരിത്രപഠനത്തിന്റെ പ്രാധാന്യം അംഗീകരിച്ചു. എഴുത്തച്ഛനെ കുറിച്ചെഴുതിയ പ്രബന്ധത്തിന്റെ മുഖവുരയിലാണ് "Every age requires the past to be interpreted to it in terms of its own ideas". തുഞ്ചന്റെ കൃതികളെക്കുറിച്ച് വർധക ഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങളായിട്ടു മാത്രമല്ലാതെ, സാഹിത്യശില്പങ്ങളായിത്തന്നെ യുക്തിപൂർവ്വം അപഗ്രഥിക്കാൻ അദ്ദേഹം മടിച്ചില്ല. ഇതൊക്കെ വിമർശനരംഗത്തുണ്ടായ സെക്യൂലറൈസേഷന്റെ നിദർശനങ്ങളായി കരുതാം.

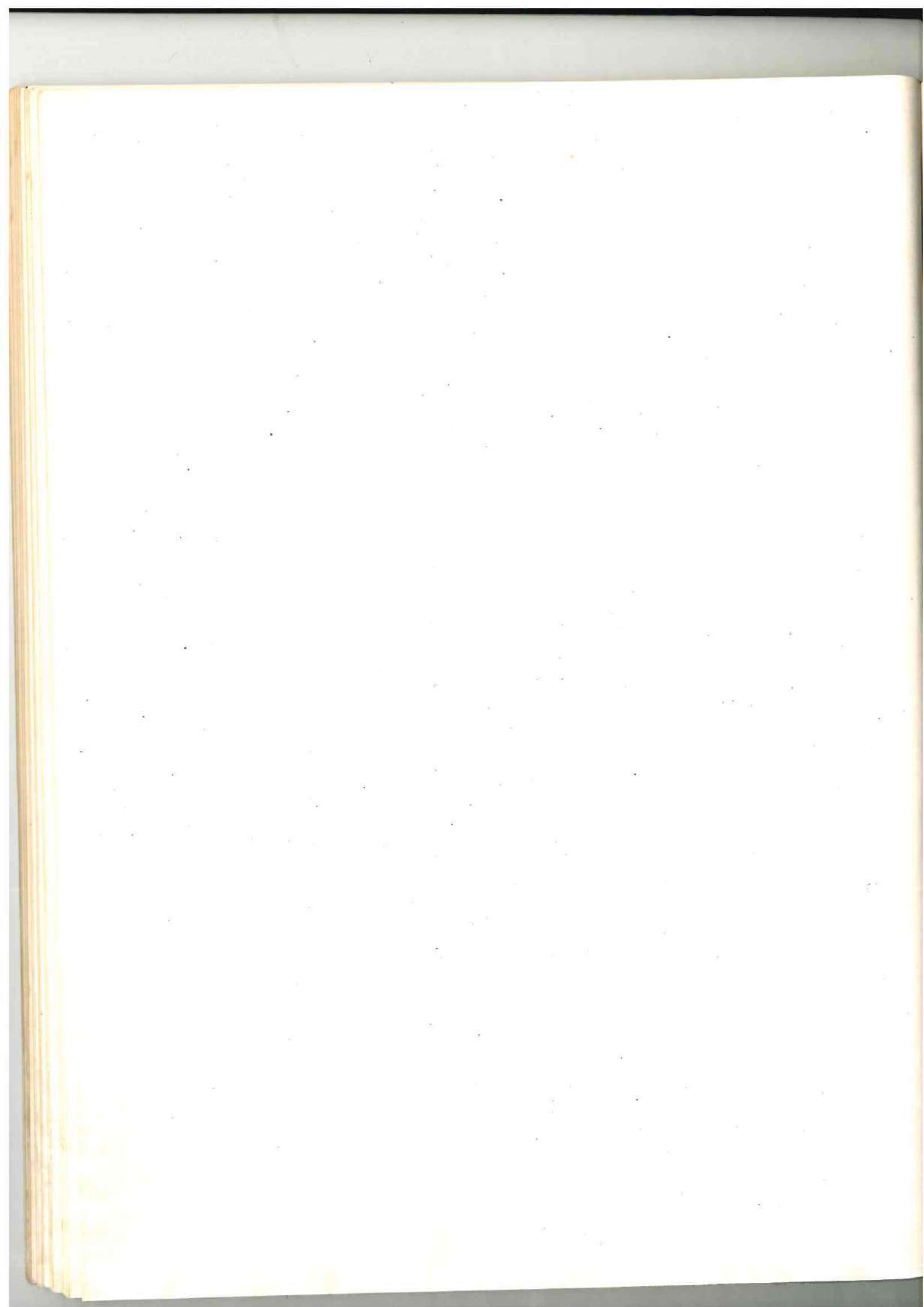
നവോത്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ നേതാക്കളിൽ ഏറ്റവും യാഥാസ്ഥിതികൻ എന്ന പ്രശസ്തി നേടിയിട്ടുള്ള കേരളവർമ്മ നൂതനേതിവൃത്തങ്ങൾ സ്വീകരിക്കേണ്ടതിന്റെ ആവശ്യം ഉന്നിക്കൊണ്ടു ചെയ്ത ഉദ്ബോധനം ഈ പ്രസംഗത്തിൽ എടുത്തു പറയേണ്ടതാണ്.

"ഗദ്യഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങളിലും പദ്യകൃതികളിലും പുരാണകഥകളെത്തന്നെ പർവിതചർവണം ചെയ്യാതെയിരിക്കുന്നതിനും ഭാഷാഭിമാനികൾ നോക്കേണ്ടതാണ്... വിവിധ മതസ്ഥരായ കേരളീയരെ രസിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിന് പൊതുവിഷയങ്ങളെ അധികരിച്ച് എഴുതുന്ന കൃതികൾക്കേ സാധിക്കുന്നുള്ളൂ" (ഡോ.അഴീക്കോട് ഉദ്ധരിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളത്. മലയാള സാഹിത്യവിമർശം, പृ.61).

"പുരാണമിത്യേവ ന സാധു സർവം" എന്ന ബോധത്തോടെ പഴയതും പുതിയതുമായ കൃതികളെ വിമർശിക്കാൻ തുടങ്ങിയപ്പോൾ, പൗരസ്ത്യമായ കാവ്യമീമാംസയും പാശ്ചാത്യമായ കാവ്യമീമാംസയുടെ സുപ്രധാന സിദ്ധികളും സമന്വയിക്കാനുള്ള ശ്രമം അക്കാലത്തെ പണ്ഡിതന്മാർ നടത്തുകയുണ്ടായി. ഡോക്ടർ ജോൺസ്, വേഡ്സ് വർത്ത്, കോററിഡ്ജ്, ആർണെഡ് എന്നീ ആംഗല വിമർശകരുടെ എന്നല്ല ക്രോംവേ വരെയുള്ള പാശ്ചാത്യപതികളുടെ കൂടി പ്രബന്ധങ്ങൾ പഠിക്കാൻ അവർ മനസ്സിലുറുത്തി.

ഗതാനുഗതികമ്പത്തിൽ നിന്നും ശബ്ദാലങ്കാരരത്നത്തിൽ നിന്നും സാഹിത്യത്തെ വിമോചിപ്പിക്കുക എന്ന മഹത്തായ ലക്ഷ്യം സാധിക്കുന്നതിനുവേണ്ടി പാശ്ചാത്യ-പൗരസ്ത്യഭേദമന്യേ ശാസ്ത്രങ്ങൾ തേടിപ്പിടിച്ചു അവർ.

സംഭവബഹുലവും സൽഫലസമൃദ്ധവുമായ ഒരു കാലഘട്ടത്തിലെ ചില പ്രമുഖ പ്രവണതകൾ ചൂണ്ടിക്കാണിക്കാനേ ഇവിടെ ഉദ്ദേശിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളൂ. ഒരു ദീർഘമാത്രാവലോകനമാത്രം. മൗലിക പ്രശ്നങ്ങളെ ചൊല്ലിയുള്ള ബഹുവിധ പർച്ചകൾ നടന്ന ഒരു കാലം, നൂതന വിചാരപദ്ധതികൾ പ്രയോഗത്തിൽ വന്ന ഒരു കാലം, ആലോചനാമൃതങ്ങളായ അനേകം കൃതികൾ ജന്മംകൊണ്ട കാലം — അങ്ങനെയൊരു കാലത്തിലൂടെ ഒരു ഓട്ടപ്രദക്ഷിണം നടത്തിയപ്പോൾ കണ്ടെത്തിയതു ചിലതു, പർച്ചയിലൂടെ പുഷ്പിപ്പെടും എന്ന വിശ്വാസത്തോടെ സമർപ്പിക്കുകയാണ്.



കേരളത്തിന്റെ ജലവൈദ്യുതശേഷിയും വികസനവും

കെ.ആർ.ഉണ്ണിത്താൻ

വൈദ്യുതിയുടെ ആളോഹരി ഉപഭോഗത്തെ കണക്കാക്കുമ്പോൾ ഇന്ത്യയിലെ ജനങ്ങൾ പൊതുവിലും കേരളീയർ പ്രത്യേകിച്ചും വളരെ പിന്നോക്കാവസ്ഥയിലാണെന്നു കാണാൻ കഴിയും. ഇന്ത്യയിലെ വിവിധ സംസ്ഥാനങ്ങൾ തമ്മിൽ താരതമ്യപ്പെടുത്തിയാലും കേരളീയർ വളരെ പിറകിലാണ്.

കേരളത്തിന്റെ ആളോഹരി ഉപഭോഗത്തിന്റെ ഈ താഴ്ന്ന നിലവാരംപോലും വേണ്ടത്ര കാര്യക്ഷമമായ ഉൽപാദനോന്മുഖ ഉപഭോഗത്തിലൂടെ ഉണ്ടായിട്ടുള്ളതല്ല. കേരളത്തിലെ ഉപഭോഗത്തിന്റെ 58 ശതമാനവും ഗാർഹിക ആവശ്യത്തിനും വൈദ്യുതി അസംസ്കൃതപദാർത്ഥമായിട്ടുള്ള വ്യവസായങ്ങൾക്കുമാണ് വിനിയോഗിക്കപ്പെടുന്നത്.

കേരളത്തിന്റെ വൈദ്യുതോൽപാദനം എത്രയായിരിക്കണം എന്നത് സംബന്ധിച്ച് വ്യത്യസ്ത കണക്കുകളാണുള്ളത്. ഇവയൊക്കെ വ്യത്യസ്ത മാനദണ്ഡങ്ങളുടെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിലുമാണ്. കേരളത്തിന്റെ ആളോഹരി ഉപഭോഗം അഖിലേന്ത്യാ ശരാശരിയ്ക്കൊപ്പമെത്തിക്കണമെങ്കിൽ, 2500 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റ് ഇന്ന് അധികമായി ഉല്പാദിപ്പിക്കേണ്ടതുണ്ട്. 1275 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റ് കാര്യക്ഷീകാവശ്യത്തിന് തന്നെ അധികമായുണ്ടാക്കണം. അഭ്യസ്തവിദ്യരായ തൊഴിൽരഹിതരിൽ പകുതിപേർക്കെങ്കിലും വ്യവസായമേഖലയിൽ തൊഴിൽ നൽകണമെങ്കിൽ 9600 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റ് വൈദ്യുതി അധികമായി വേണം.

കാർഷിക വ്യവസായികേതര ആവശ്യങ്ങൾക്കായി ഗാർഹികം - വ്യാപാരം തുടങ്ങിയ - വൈദ്യുതി ലഭിക്കാൻ കാത്തിരിക്കുന്നവരുടെ എണ്ണം ഏതാണ്ട് 8 ലക്ഷത്തോളം വരും. അവർക്ക് ഒരു മാസം 30 യൂണിറ്റ് എന്ന ശരാശരി നിരക്കിനെങ്കിലും വൈദ്യുതി നൽകുന്നതിന് ഒരു വർഷം 108 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റ് വൈദ്യുതി അധികമായി വേണം. ഉപഭോഗം നിയന്ത്രിച്ചിട്ടുകൂടി ഇന്നത്തെ ഇവരുടെ ശരാശരി ഉപഭോഗം പ്രതിമാസം 55 യൂണിറ്റാണ്. ഈ കണക്കുവച്ച് കാർഷിക-വ്യാവസായിക ഗാർഹിക-വ്യാപാരാദി ആവശ്യങ്ങൾക്കായി ഇന്ന് നമുക്ക് ഏതാണ്ട് 1100 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റ് വൈദ്യുതി കൂടി അധികമായി വേണം. ഇന്നു നമുക്കു നൽകാൻ കഴിയുന്ന 5700 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റിനുവുറേയോണിത്. പ്രേക്ഷണവിതരണ നഷ്ടം കഴിച്ച് ആകെ ഇത്രയും വൈദ്യുതി ലഭ്യമാക്കണമെങ്കിൽ 21,000 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റ് വൈദ്യുതി ഉല്പാദിപ്പിക്കണം. കേരളത്തിലെ ഉല്പാദനവും കേന്ദ്രപുളിയിൽനിന്നുള്ള ഇറക്കുമതിയും അടക്കം ഇന്നുള്ളത് 7200 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റ് മാത്രമാണ്.

വിവേചനോത്തസ്സുകൾ

വൈദ്യുതാവശ്യകതയെ നേരിടുന്നതിന് കേരളത്തിൽ ഇന്നുള്ള വിവേചനം എന്തെല്ലാമാണെന്ന് ഒന്നു പരിശോധിക്കാം.

ജലം, കൽക്കരി, എണ്ണ, പ്രകൃതിവാതകം, അണുശക്തി എന്നിവ ഉപയോഗിച്ചാണ് ഇന്ന് ഇന്ത്യയിൽ വ്യാവസായികാടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ വൈദ്യുതി ഉല്പാദിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്. ഇവയിൽ കേരളത്തിൽ ലഭ്യമായിട്ടുള്ളത് ജലം മാത്രമാണ്. ഉല്പാദനശേഷിയുടെ 37 ശതമാനം മാത്രമെ നാമിതുവരെ ഉപയോഗപ്പെടുത്തിയിട്ടുള്ളൂ.

കേരളത്തിൽ ഉല്പാദിപ്പിക്കുന്നത് കൂടാതെ കേന്ദ്ര ഉടമസ്ഥതയിലുള്ള വൈദ്യുതി നിലയങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നും കിട്ടുന്ന വൈദ്യുതി കൂടിയുണ്ട്. 480 മെഗാവാട്ടാണ് നമുക്കനുവദിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളത്. പക്ഷേ 250 മെഗാവാട്ടിൽ കൂടുതൽ കേരളത്തിനു ലഭിക്കാറില്ല. യൂണിറ്റിലുള്ള കണക്കു പറഞ്ഞാൽ അത് 1250 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റിലേക്കു താഴുന്നു. ചിട്ടപ്പെടുത്തിയിട്ടുള്ള അറ്റകുറ്റപണികൾക്കായി മാറ്റിവെയ്ക്കുന്ന ജനറേറ്ററുകളുടെ ശേഷി കഴിച്ച് കേരളത്തിലെ ഇപ്പോഴത്തെ വൈദ്യുതിയുടെ ലഭ്യത 1400 മെഗാവാട്ടും 700 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റുമാണ്. (മഴ കൂടുതലുള്ളപ്പോൾ, സെക്കൻറി പവർ എന്ന നിലയിൽ 300-400 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റ് വൈദ്യുതി കൂടി ലഭിച്ചേക്കാം). ഏറ്റവും പരിമിതമായ ആവശ്യം പ്രവചിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള 14-ാം പവർ സർവ്വേ പ്രകാരം 94-95ൽ വേണ്ടത് 2002 മെഗാവാട്ടും 10170 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റുമാണ്. കമ്മി 602 മെഗാവാട്ടും 3170 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റും.

ഇപ്പോൾ പണിനടന്നുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന പദ്ധതികൾ 96-നകം പൂർത്തിയാകുന്നുവെന്നു വയ്ക്കുക. അപ്പോൾ ആകെ ഉല്പാദനം 1738.5 മെഗാവാട്ടും 6639 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റുമായിത്തീരുന്നു. അയൽ സംസ്ഥാനങ്ങളിലെ വൈദ്യുതി കമ്മിയുടെ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ കേന്ദ്രപുളിയിൽ നിന്ന് കൂടുതലേന്തെങ്കിലും ലഭ്യമാകും എന്നു പ്രതീക്ഷിക്കേണ്ടതില്ല. 96-ൽ കേന്ദ്രവിഹിതമടക്കമുള്ള നമ്മുടെ വൈദ്യുതിയുടെ ലഭ്യത (പ്ലാൻഡ് ലോഡ് ഫാക്ടർ കൂടി കണക്കിലെടുക്കുമ്പോൾ) 1575 മെഗാവാട്ടും 7900 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റും ആയിരിക്കും. 14-ാം പവർ സർവ്വേ അനുസരിച്ച് അപ്പോഴത്തെ ആവശ്യകത 2160 മെഗാവാട്ടും 10998 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റുമാണ്. കമ്മി 565 മെഗാവാട്ടും 3109 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റും.

ഈ സ്ഥിതിവിശേഷം കണക്കിലെടുത്താണ് ബ്രഹ്മപുരത്ത് 100 മെഗാവാട്ടിന്റേയും കോഴിക്കോട് 120 മെഗാ

വാട്ടിന്റേയും കാസർഗോട് 60 മെഗാവാട്ടിന്റേയും ഡീസൽ വൈദ്യുതിനിലയങ്ങൾ സ്ഥാപിക്കാൻ കേരള വൈദ്യുത ബോർഡ് തീരുമാനിച്ചത്. ഇവയുടെ നിർമ്മാണം രണ്ടുവർഷംകൊണ്ട് തീരുന്നവയാണ്. ഈ മൂന്നു പദ്ധതികളിൽ നിന്നുമായി 72% പി.എൽ.എഫിൽ 200 മെഗാവാട്ടും 1700 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റും ലഭിക്കും. ഇത് 96-ലെ കമ്മി 385 മെഗാവാട്ടും 1409 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റുമായി കുറയ്ക്കുമെന്നു പ്രതീക്ഷിക്കാം.

തുടർന്ന് എ.ഡി.2000-നകം പ്രതീക്ഷിക്കാൻ കഴിയുന്ന വർധന പ്രാഥമിക ജോലികൾ തുടങ്ങിവെച്ച ചില ചെറിയ ജലവൈദ്യുത പദ്ധതികളിൽ നിന്നും ചില സംവർധക പദ്ധതികളിൽ നിന്നും ഉള്ള ഉല്പാദനമാണ്. ഇതാകട്ടെ 345 മെഗാവാട്ടും 232 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റുമാണ്. ഇതുകൂടി ചേർത്താൽ 2000-ൽ ലഭിക്കുന്ന വൈദ്യുതി 1800 മെഗാവാട്ടും 9830 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റുമാണ്. 14-ാം പവർ സർവ്വേ അനുസരിച്ച് ആവശ്യകതയാകട്ടെ 2927 മെഗാവാട്ടും 15040 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റുമാണ്. കമ്മി 1127 മെഗാവാട്ടും 5210 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റും.

ഇന്ന് പവർകൂട്ടായും പ്രഖ്യാപിതവും അപ്രഖ്യാപിതവുമായ ലോഡ് ഷെഡിംഗായും അനുഭവപ്പെടുന്ന വൈദ്യുത കമ്മി ഏതാണ്ട് ഇരട്ടി വ്യാപ്തിയിൽ നമുക്കനുഭവപ്പെടുന്നുമെന്നർത്ഥം.

കേരളത്തെ ഈ സ്ഥിതിവിശേഷത്തിലെത്തിച്ചതിന്റെ മുഖ്യകാരണങ്ങൾ എന്തൊക്കെയാണ്?

പണവിഭവത്തിന്റെ കാര്യത്തിൽ സംസ്ഥാനം പിൻതള്ളപ്പെട്ടു എന്നതുതന്നെ. മൂന്നാം പദ്ധതിയിൽ വൈദ്യുതിമേഖലയിലെ നിക്ഷേപത്തിന് സംസ്ഥാനങ്ങൾക്കനുവദിച്ച ആകെ വിഹിതത്തിന്റെ 4.6% കേരളത്തിന് ലഭിച്ചിരുന്നുവെങ്കിൽ 6-ാം പദ്ധതിയിലും 7-ാം പദ്ധതിയിലും ഇത് യഥാക്രമം 1.62%ഉം 1.15%ഉം ആയി കുറഞ്ഞു. 1972ൽ പണി ആരംഭിച്ച (5-ാം പദ്ധതിയിലും) പദ്ധതികളിൽ ഇടുക്കിഷി ചുളളവയെല്ലാം സാമ്പത്തികക്കുഴപ്പം മൂലം നിർത്തിവെയ്ക്കുകയാണ് ചെയ്തത്. ഇടമലയാർ, സൈലന്റുവാലി, ശബരിഗിരി ആഗ്നൈറ്റേഷൻ ഇവയെല്ലാം ഇതിൽപ്പെടും.

ഇതേ കാലഘട്ടത്തിൽ കേരളത്തിൽ വർദ്ധിച്ചുവരുന്ന ഉപഭോക്താക്കൾ സ്ഥാപിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള വൈദ്യുതയന്ത്രോപകരണങ്ങളുടെ 'കണക്ടഡ് ലോഡ്' 1600 മെഗാവാട്ടിൽ നിന്ന് 4800 മെഗാവാട്ടായി വർദ്ധിച്ചു. വർധന 300%. ഡിമാന്റ് വർധനയ്ക്കൊത്ത് വൈദ്യുതി നൽകാൻ കഴിയാത്തതിന്റെയും പ്രധാന കാരണം, ന്യായമായ പദ്ധതിവിഹിതം യഥാക്രമം നൽകിയോ, നേരിട്ടു പദ്ധതികൾ ഏറ്റെടുത്തോ വൈദ്യുതി മേഖലയിൽ ആവശ്യമായ നിക്ഷേപം നടത്താത്തതാണെന്നു കാണാൻ കഴിയും. ഇത് കേന്ദ്രഗവൺമെന്റിന്റെ രാഷ്ട്രീയ സാമ്പത്തിക നയങ്ങളുമായി നേരിട്ടു ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട പ്രശ്നമാണ്.

കേരളത്തിൽ തന്നെ 1989-ൽ പ്രവർത്തനമാരംഭിച്ച കായംകുളം താപനിലയത്തിന്റെ പണി ഏതാണ്ട് 10 കോടിയിലധികം ഉറപ്പിക ചിലവഴിച്ചശേഷം മുടങ്ങിയപ്പോയത്, ആവശ്യമായ ഫണ്ട് ഉറപ്പാക്കത്തക്കതുകൊണ്ടാണ്. ലോകബാങ്ക് സഹായത്തോടുകൂടി നിർമിക്കുന്ന പദ്ധതിയായിട്ടുകൂടി ലോവർ പെരിയാർ പദ്ധതിക്ക് യഥാവസരം ഫണ്ട് ലഭിക്കുന്നില്ല എന്നതാണു വസ്തുത. ഫണ്ട് സമയബന്ധി

തമായി ലഭിച്ചിരുന്നതും 3-ാം പദ്ധതിയിൽ തുടങ്ങിയതുമായ ശബരിഗിരി പദ്ധതി 5 വർഷംകൊണ്ട് പൂർത്തിയായി എന്നത് ഇത്തരൂണത്തിൽ സ്മരണീയമാണ്.

കേരളത്തിലെ ജലവിഭവശേഷി നമ്മുടെ വികസനത്തിനാവശ്യകതയ്ക്കൊത്തവണ്ണം ഉപയോഗപ്പെടുത്താൻ കഴിയാത്തതിന്റെ മറ്റൊരു പ്രമുഖ കാരണം, പദ്ധതിയ്ക്കാവശ്യമായ കേന്ദ്രാനുമതി യഥാവസരം ലഭിയ്ക്കാത്തതാണ്. 2275 മെഗാവാട്ട് സ്ഥാപിതശേഷി വരാവുന്ന 16 പദ്ധതികൾ ഇതുമൂലം ഏറ്റെടുക്കാനായിട്ടില്ല. സൈലന്റുവാലി പദ്ധതിയ്ക്ക് പണമില്ലായ്മമൂലം ആദ്യം മുടങ്ങുകയും തുടർന്ന് പാരിസ്ഥിതിക പ്രത്യാഘാതത്തിന്റെ പേരിൽ അനുമതി നിഷേധിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. പകരം കേന്ദ്രഗവൺമെന്റ് വാഗ്ദാനം ചെയ്ത പുയംകുട്ടി പദ്ധതിക്ക് പ്രാഥമിക പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്കായി 5 കോടി രൂപ ചിലവഴിച്ചു. തുടർന്നു കേന്ദ്ര വനംവകുപ്പിന്റെ അംഗീകാരം ലഭിയ്ക്കായ്ക മൂലം പദ്ധതി തുടങ്ങി. വന-പരിസ്ഥിതി വകുപ്പുകളാണ് മിക്ക പദ്ധതികളുടെയും അനുമതിക്കു തടസമായി നിൽക്കുന്നത്.

പരിസ്ഥിതി പ്രത്യാഘാതം, വനനശീകരണം എന്നീ പ്രശ്നങ്ങളുടെ പേരിൽ ജലവൈദ്യുതി പദ്ധതികൾക്കെതിരെ നമ്മുടെ സംസ്ഥാനത്തു പ്രത്യേകിച്ചും രാജ്യത്ത് പൊതുവെയും ഉയർത്തിക്കൊണ്ടുവന്ന അശാസ്ത്രീയവും പൊതുവെയും ഉയർത്തിക്കൊണ്ടുവന്ന അശാസ്ത്രീയവും വികസനവിരുദ്ധവുമായ പ്രചാരവേലയും പ്രക്ഷോഭങ്ങളും, കേരളത്തിലെ ജലവൈദ്യുതപദ്ധതികൾക്ക് കേന്ദ്രാനുമതി നിഷേധിക്കുന്നതിൽ വലിയ പങ്കാണ് വഹിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളത്. ഇതിന്റെ വിശദാംശങ്ങൾ ഇവിടെ പരാമർശിക്കുന്നില്ല. പരിസ്ഥിതിയും വനവുമെല്ലാം കേന്ദ്രഭരണാധികാരികളുടെ കൈയിലെ രാഷ്ട്രീയായുധമായി മാറിയിരിക്കുകയാണ്.

വിതണശൃംഖലകളുടെ അപര്യാപ്തതമൂലം ഇടുക്കി പദ്ധതി പ്രവർത്തനം ആരംഭിച്ചതിനെതുടർന്ന്, വൈദ്യുതി മിച്ചമാണെന്ന തോന്നലുണ്ടായി. വൈദ്യുതി അനുസംസ്ഥാനങ്ങളിൽ വിറ്റു പണമുണ്ടാക്കുന്ന ഒരു സംസ്ഥാനമായിത്തീർന്നു അന്നു കേരളം. ഇന്നീ ഉല്പാദനത്തിൽ ഊന്നൽ നൽകേണ്ടെന്നും, വിതരണശൃംഖല ശക്തിപ്പെടുത്തിയാൽ മതിയെന്നും ശക്തമായ വാദഗതികൾ ഇതിനെതുടർന്നു വന്നു. ഈ സമീപനവും നമുക്കു പദ്ധതികൾ അനുവദിച്ചിട്ടുകിട്ടുന്നതിന് തടസമുണ്ടാക്കിയിട്ടുണ്ട്.

ഉടനടിയുള്ള വൈദ്യുതിക്ഷാമത്തിനു പരിഹാരം കാണാൻ ജലവൈദ്യുത പദ്ധതികൾ ഉതകില്ല. ദീർഘകാലം ടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ നോക്കുമ്പോൾ ജലവിഭവശേഷി മതിയാവുകയില്ല. അതിനാൽ ജലവൈദ്യുതപദ്ധതികളല്ല വേണ്ടത്. ഈ ചിന്താഗതിയും വാദഗതികളുമെല്ലാം നമുക്കു ജലവൈദ്യുതപദ്ധതികൾ ഇല്ലാത്തതാണെന്ന സഹായിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളു.

എന്തുകൊണ്ടാണ് ജലവൈദ്യുതപദ്ധതികൾ ആരംഭിക്കുന്നതിനെപ്പറ്റി മാത്രം ഇവിടെ പരാമർശിക്കുന്നത്. വൈദ്യുതി ഉല്പാദിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിന് മറ്റു മാർഗങ്ങളില്ല എന്നു ചിന്തിക്കാവുന്നതാണ്. ജലവൈദ്യുത പദ്ധതികൾക്ക് പ്രാഥമിക പരിഗണന നൽകുന്നതിനു മുഖ്യകാരണം അതിനാവശ്യമായ അസംസ്കൃതവസ്തുവും സാങ്കേതിക വിദ്യയും കേരളത്തിൽ ലഭ്യമാണെന്നുള്ളതുകൊണ്ടാണ്.

ഒരു ഉല്പാദന പ്രക്രിയയിൽ പരമാവധി ചിലവ് കുറച്ച് ഗുണമേന്മയുള്ള ഉല്പന്നം ഉണ്ടാക്കാനാണ് പ്രതിജ്ഞ. അതിനു ചിലവു കുറഞ്ഞ അസംസ്കൃതവസ്തു ലഭ്യമായ സാങ്കേതിവിദ്യ എന്നീ രണ്ടു ഘടകങ്ങളും പരമപ്രധാനമാണ്.

കേരളത്തെ സംബന്ധിച്ചിടത്തോളം വൈദ്യുതി കുറഞ്ഞ വിലയ്ക്ക് വിൽക്കുന്നതിന് പൊതുപ്രാധാന്യം കൂടാതെ മറ്റൊരു പ്രത്യേക പ്രാധാന്യവുമുണ്ട്. നിയമാനുസൃതവും കാലാനുസൃതവുമായ കൂലി പോലിച്ചുവാങ്ങാൻ കഴിയുന്ന ശക്തമായ തൊഴിലാളി പ്രസ്ഥാനം നിലവിലുള്ള സംസ്ഥാനമാണ് കേരളം. ഇത് വ്യവസായികളെ ആകർഷിക്കുന്ന ഘടകമല്ല, വ്യവസായികളെ ആകർഷിക്കുന്ന പ്രധാന ഘടകം ഇവിടുത്തെ കുറഞ്ഞ വിലയ്ക്കുള്ള വൈദ്യുതിയാണ്. അതില്ലാത്തതായാൽ കേരളത്തിന്റെ വ്യവസായവൽക്കരണം എന്നത് ഒരു മരീചികയായി തീരും. കേവലം 12 പൈസയ്ക്ക് കാർഷികാവശ്യത്തിനു വൈദ്യുതി നൽകുന്ന സംസ്ഥാനമാണ് കേരളം. ക്ഷഷിയോഗ്യമായ ഭൂമി മുഴുവൻ ജലസേചനം നടത്തി കാർഷികോല്പാദനം വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കണമെങ്കിൽ കുറഞ്ഞ വിലയ്ക്കുതന്നെ വൈദ്യുതി ക്ഷഷിക്കാൻ നൽകേണ്ടതുണ്ട്. നമ്മുടെ സംസ്ഥാനത്തെ അതിരൂക്ഷമായ തൊഴിലില്ലായ്മയ്ക്ക് പരിഹാരം കാണാൻ ഈ രണ്ടു മേഖലയിലെയും വികസനത്തിലൂടെയാണ് കഴിയുക. സേവനമേഖലയുടെ വികസനവും ഇതുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ടതാണ്. വിവിധ മാർഗത്തിലുള്ള വൈദ്യുതോല്പാദനം, അതിന്റെ വിലയെ എങ്ങനെ ബാധിക്കുന്നു എന്നത് പരിശോധിക്കുമ്പോൾ ജലവൈദ്യുതിയാണ് ഏറ്റവും ലാഭകരം എന്നു കാണാൻ കഴിയും.

ജലവിഭവത്തെ ആശ്രയിച്ച് വൈദ്യുതി ഉല്പാദിപ്പിക്കുന്ന സംസ്ഥാനമായതിനാലാണ് ഇന്ത്യയിൽ ഏറ്റവും വില കുറച്ച് വൈദ്യുതി വിൽക്കുന്ന സംസ്ഥാനമായി കേരളം നിൽക്കുന്നത്. കേരള വൈദ്യുതിബോർഡ് എന്നിട്ട് ലാഭത്തിലാണ് പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നത്. ജലവൈദ്യുതി പദ്ധതികൾമൂലം ഈ പണലാഭം മാത്രമല്ല ഉള്ളത്. ജലം പരമാവധി ഉപയോഗിക്കുകയെ കൽക്കരിയും എണ്ണയും ഭാവി തലമുറയ്ക്ക് വേണ്ടി സൂക്ഷിച്ചുപയോഗിക്കാൻ കഴിയും. അതിവ്യക്തിയുള്ള കാലത്ത് വെള്ളപ്പൊക്കക്കെടുതികൾ നിയന്ത്രിക്കുന്നത് ജലസേചനം ഒരു നിയന്ത്രണം, ഗതാഗത വ്യവസായികാവശ്യങ്ങൾ, മത്സ്യവളർത്തൽ എന്നിവയ്ക്ക് വെള്ളം നൽകുന്നതിനും ജലവൈദ്യുതപദ്ധതികൾ സഹായിക്കും. ജലവൈദ്യുതപദ്ധതികൾ യാതൊരു തരത്തിലുമുള്ള അന്തരീക്ഷ മലിനീകരണം ഉണ്ടാക്കുന്നില്ല.

ഇക്കാരണത്താൽ ആകാം ജലവിഭവശേഷിയുള്ള പല വികസിത രാജ്യങ്ങളും അവ ഫലപ്രദമായി ചൂഷണം ചെയ്യുകയും തങ്ങളുടെ ആകെ വൈദ്യുതി ഉല്പാദനത്തിന്റെ ഒരു മുഖ്യ പങ്കിന് ജലവൈദ്യുത നിലയങ്ങളെ ആശ്രയിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തിരിക്കുന്നത്.

ഇക്കാര്യത്തിൽ ഇന്ത്യ പിന്നോക്കം നിൽക്കുന്നു. യൂറോപ്പിന്റെ ജലവൈദ്യുതിശേഷിയുടെ 60% അവർ ഉപയോഗപ്പെടുത്തി കഴിഞ്ഞു. ഏഷ്യയുടെ ജലവിഭവശേഷിയുടെ 1/4 മാത്രമാണ് യൂറോപ്പിലുള്ളത്. അവരുടെ പകുതി മാത്രമാണ് ഏഷ്യൻ രാജ്യങ്ങൾ ഉല്പാദിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്.

ഇന്ത്യയ്ക്കുള്ള ജലവിഭവശേഷിയുടെ 19% മാത്രമാണ് ഇതുവരെ വൈദ്യുതി ഉല്പാദനത്തിന് ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നത്. കേരളത്തിന്റെതാകട്ടെ 37 ശതമാനവും.

ജലവൈദ്യുതപദ്ധതികൾക്കെതിരെ വരുന്ന ഏറ്റവും ശ്രദ്ധേയമായ വിമർശനം, പദ്ധതികൾ പണിയുന്നത്, വനനശീകരണത്തിന് കാരണമാകുമെന്നതാണ്. ഇത് ഗൗരവപൂർവ്വം കണക്കിലെടുക്കേണ്ടതുണ്ട്. എന്നാൽ കേരളത്തിൽ സാധ്യമായ മുഴുവൻ പദ്ധതികളും പൂർത്തിയാക്കിയാലും കേരളത്തിന്റെ വനസമ്പത്തിന്റെ 2.58% മാത്രമാണ് പദ്ധതിക്കുവേണ്ടി നഷ്ടപ്പെടുക. അതേസമയം വനനശീകരണം വൻതോതിൽ നടക്കുന്നുണ്ട് എന്നതു വസ്തുതയാണ്. വനം കൊള്ളയും, വനഭൂമി കയ്യേറ്റവുമാണ് പ്രധാന കാരണങ്ങൾ. ഇതു കർശനമായി തടയേണ്ടതും വനസമ്പത്ത് സംരക്ഷിക്കേണ്ടതും രാജ്യത്തെ ജനങ്ങളുടെ ആവശ്യമാണ്. അതിനാവശ്യമായ ഭരണനടപടികൾ ഗവൺമെന്റ് എടുക്കേണ്ടതുണ്ട്. അതിനോടൊപ്പം വളരെ പ്രധാനമായി ഉന്നയിക്കാനുള്ള ഒരു നിർദ്ദേശം ജലവൈദ്യുതശേഷി പരമാവധി ചൂഷണം ചെയ്യുകയും ജലസംഭരണപ്രദേശത്തിന്റെ പരിപാലനം (ക്വാച്ച് മെന്റ് ഏരിയ ട്രീറ്റുമെന്റ്) കേന്ദ്രഗവൺമെന്റിന്റെ പുനരധിഷ്ഠിപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യണം. അതിനുവേണ്ടി നിയമനിർമ്മാണവും ഭരണനടപടികളും ഉണ്ടാക്കേണ്ടതുണ്ട്.

അടുത്തകാലത്ത് 3364 ദശലക്ഷം യൂണിറ്റും 982 മെഗാവാട്ടും ഉല്പാദിപ്പിക്കാൻ കഴിയുന്ന 186 മിനി-മൈക്രോ ജലവൈദ്യുതപദ്ധതികളുടെ വിശദാംശങ്ങൾ വൈദ്യുതി ബോർഡ് തയ്യാറാക്കിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. നേരത്തെ സൂചിപ്പിച്ച ജലവൈദ്യുതശേഷിക്കു പുറമേയായിട്ട്. മഴ പെയ്യുമ്പോൾ മാത്രം ഒഴുകുണ്ടാക്കുന്നതും ഒഴുകുണ്ടാകുമ്പോൾ മാത്രം വൈദ്യുതി ഉല്പാദിപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്ന പദ്ധതികളാണിവ. ഉല്പാദിപ്പിക്കുന്ന ഓരോ യൂണിറ്റ് വൈദ്യുതിയും 4 രൂപയിലേറെ വില വരുന്നുണ്ട്. ഉല്പാദിപ്പിക്കുന്ന വൈദ്യുതി പ്രേഷണം ചെയ്ത് മറ്റു സ്ഥലത്തേക്കു കൊണ്ടുപോയാൽ വേണ്ടത്ര പലപ്പോഴും ഉണ്ടാകാറില്ല. ചില പ്രത്യേക സാഹചര്യത്തിലും, ഭൂപ്രദേശത്തും, ഈ മാർഗവും ഉപയോഗപ്പെടുത്താവുന്നതാണ്.

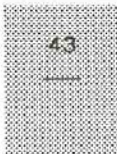
കാറ്റ്, തിരമാല, സൗരോർജം എന്നീ വിഭവങ്ങൾ നമുക്കുണ്ടെങ്കിലും അവ ഉപയോഗപ്പെടുത്തിക്കൊണ്ടുള്ള വൈദ്യുതി ഉല്പാദനം, വ്യവസായികാടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ ഇനിയും വികസിച്ചുവന്നിട്ടില്ല. പരീക്ഷണാടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ അങ്ങനെ ഉല്പാദിപ്പിക്കുന്ന വൈദ്യുതിക്ക് താങ്ങാ നാകാത്ത വിലയുമാണ്.

പ്രേഷണവിതരണ നഷ്ടത്തിലൂടെ പാഴായിപോകുന്ന വൈദ്യുതിയുടെ അളവുകൂറയ്ക്കുന്നതിനും, കേരളത്തിൽ ചില പരിമിതികളുണ്ട്. കേരളത്തിന്റെ ഭൂപ്രകൃതി, ജനങ്ങളുടെ അധിവാസപ്രത്യേകതകൾ എന്നിവമൂലം വിതരണ ലൈനുകൾ ഏറെ വലിക്കേണ്ടിവരുകയും സസ്യപ്രതാദികളിൽകൂടിയുള്ള പോർച്ച് ഏറെയുണ്ടാകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. അതുപോലെതന്നെ ഉല്പാദനത്തിലെ പോരായ്മ, കുറഞ്ഞ വോൾട്ടതയിലേക്കും, ഏറിയ പ്രേഷണവിതരണ നഷ്ടത്തിലേക്കും നയിക്കുന്നു. ഈ പരിമിതികളെ അതിജീവിച്ച് ഇന്നത്തെ പ്രേഷണ വിതരണ നഷ്ടം 20%-ൽ നിന്നും 15% വരെയായി കുറയ്ക്കാവുന്നതാണ്. ഇത് ഏതാണ്ട്

15 ദിവസത്തെ ഉപഭോഗത്തിനു തികയും. എന്നാൽ വിതരണ നഷ്ടം കുറച്ചാൽ മതി, പദ്ധതി ആവശ്യമില്ലാ എന്ന് പറയുന്നത് പുതിയ പദ്ധതികൾ ഉണ്ടാകുന്നതിനു തടസ്സപ്പെടിക്കാണെ ഉതകും.

പുരക്കത്തിൽ വർദ്ധിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന വൈദ്യുതി ക്ഷാമത്തിന് പരിഹാരം കണ്ട് കേരളത്തെ അഭിവൃദ്ധിയിലേക്കു നയിക്കുന്നതിന് ഉപയോഗിക്കപ്പെടാതെ കിട

ക്കുന്ന 63% ജലവൈദ്യുതിശേഷി ഫലപ്രദവും അടിയന്തിരവുമായി ഉപയോഗപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതിന് ആദ്യത്തെ പരിഗണന നൽകണം. പൂയംകുട്ടി തൊട്ടുള്ള ജലവൈദ്യുത പദ്ധതികൾക്കു പണവും അനുവാദവും ഒന്നാന്നായി നേടിയെടുക്കണം. അതിനു ബുദ്ധിജീവികളും, രാഷ്ട്രീയനേതാക്കളും, ജനങ്ങളുടെ സംഘടിപ്രവർത്തനത്തിലൂടെ നേടിയെടുക്കേണ്ടതിതാണ്.



കേരളഭാഷയ്ക്കും സംസ്കാരത്തിനും ക്രൈസ്തവമിഷനറിമാർ നൽകിയ സംഭാവനകൾ

ബാബു സെബാസ്റ്റ്യൻ*

കേരളഭാഷയ്ക്കും സംസ്കാരത്തിനും ശ്രദ്ധേയമായ സംഭാവനകൾ നൽകിയവരാണ് ക്രൈസ്തവമിഷനറിമാർ. കേരളഭാഷയെയും സംസ്കാരത്തെയും കുറിച്ചുള്ള പഠനം പൂർണ്ണമാകണമെങ്കിൽ ഇവരുടെ സേവനങ്ങളെ കൂടി വിലയിരുത്തേണ്ടതാവശ്യമാണ്. ഈ പ്രബന്ധം അതാണു ലക്ഷ്യമാക്കുക.

മൂന്നു ഭാഗങ്ങളായിട്ടാണ് ഈ പ്രബന്ധം സംവിധാനം ചെയ്യാനുദ്ദേശിക്കുന്നത്. ഒന്നാംഭാഗം എന്താണു സംസ്കാരമെന്നുള്ള വിശകലനമാണ്. സംസ്കാരമെന്നത് തലമുറയിൽ നിന്നും തലമുറയിലേക്കു പകർന്നു കിട്ടുന്ന പൈതൃകമാണെന്നും അതൊരു മനോഭാവമാണെന്നും അതു മതപരമോ മതനിരപേക്ഷമോ ആകാമെന്നും ഈ ഭാഗത്ത് സ്ഥാപിക്കുവാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്നു.

കേരള സംസ്കാരത്തിന് ക്രൈസ്തവമിഷനറിമാർ നൽകിയ സംഭാവനകളെ വിലയിരുത്തുന്നതായിരിക്കും പ്രബന്ധത്തിന്റെ രണ്ടാംഭാഗം. വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം, സ്ത്രീകളുടെ

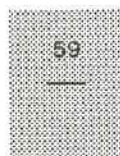
ഉന്നമനം, അടിമസ്വഭാവം അവസാനിപ്പിക്കൽ, ജാതിവ്യവസ്ഥയുടെ ഉച്ഛാടനം, അന്ധവിശ്വാസ ദുരീകരണം, ദായ ക്രമമാറ്റം, ആളോഹരിഭാഗം എന്നീ രംഗങ്ങളിൽ മിഷനറിമാർ നൽകിയ സംഭാവനകൾ ഇവിടെ വിശദീകരിക്കാൻ ഉദ്ദേശിക്കുന്നു.

മൂന്നാംഭാഗം കേരളഭാഷയുടെ വളർച്ചയ്ക്ക് ഇവർ നൽകിയ സേവനങ്ങളെ വിലയിരുത്തുന്നതായിരിക്കും. വ്യാകരണം, നിഘണ്ടുക്കൾ, അച്ചടി, പത്രപ്രവർത്തനം, നവീനഗദ്യശൈലി എന്നിങ്ങനെ ഈ രംഗത്തുള്ള അവരുടെ സംഭാവനകൾ വിലപ്പെട്ടവയാണ്.

ക്രൈസ്തവ മിഷനറിമാർ കേരളസംസ്കാരത്തിനും ഭാഷയ്ക്കും നൽകിയ സംഭാവനകളെ വിശദമാക്കാൻ ഈ പ്രബന്ധം കൊണ്ട് സാധ്യമാകുമെന്ന് പ്രതീക്ഷിക്കുന്നു.

ഈ പഠനമാകെ അവലോകനം, താരതമ്യം മൂല്യനിർണ്ണയം എന്നിങ്ങനെ ഭിന്നതലങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നുകൊണ്ടാണ് നിർവ്വഹിക്കാൻ ഉദ്ദേശിക്കുന്നത്.

* സെന്റ് തോമസ് കോളേജ്, പാല



സാമൂഹിക വിപ്ലവം - ജി. ശങ്കരക്കുറുപ്പിന്റെ കവിതയിൽ

തോന്നയ്ക്കൽ നാരായണൻ

ജി. ശങ്കരക്കുറുപ്പിന്റെ കവിതയ്ക്ക് സാമൂഹിക വിപ്ലവവുമായി എന്തുബന്ധം? മുമ്പാരു ജി.യുടെ കവിതയെ ഇത്തരം ഒരു കോണിലൂടെ വിലയിരുത്തിയിട്ടില്ല എന്നതാണ് ഈ ചോദ്യം ചോദിക്കുന്നവരെ പ്രേരിപ്പിക്കുന്ന മുഖ്യഘടകം. സാമൂഹിക ബോധമില്ലാത്ത സൂര്യനെയും നക്ഷത്രത്തെയും പൂക്കളെയും മറ്റും പറ്റി കുറേ എഴുതിക്കൂട്ടിയ ഒരാളാണെന്നതായിരുന്നുവല്ലോ ജി.യെപ്പറ്റി പ്രൊ. മുണ്ടശ്ശേരിക്കും മറ്റും ഉണ്ടായിരുന്ന പ്രധാന പരാതി. എന്നാൽ

'സാഹചര്യം' ചങ്ങമ്പുഴ നഗർ, കൊച്ചി-83

തുലനാത്മക വിശകലനത്തിനൊരുമ്പെട്ടാൽ സാമൂഹിക ബോധമുള്ള മറ്റേതൊരു കവിതയുടെയും പിന്നിലല്ല ജി.യുടെ സ്ഥാനമെന്ന് വ്യക്തമാകും.

ഒരു പക്ഷേ, ദേശീയവും അന്തർദേശീയവുമായ കാലപ്രവാഹങ്ങളെ ഇത്രത്തോളം ഉൾക്കൊണ്ട മറ്റൊരു കവിയും നമുക്കില്ല എന്നു കാണാം. ഇരുപതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടു സാക്ഷ്യം വഹിച്ച നിരവധി ചരിത്രസംഭവങ്ങൾ, രേണകൂടങ്ങളുടെ മാറ്റങ്ങൾ, ശാസ്ത്രത്തിന്റെ വിസ്ഫോടനങ്ങൾ എന്നിങ്ങനെ ജി.യുടെ ഭാവനയുടെ വർണ്ണ രേണുക്കൾ പറ്റാത്ത

വിഷയങ്ങൾ നന്നേ കുറവാണ്. കമ്മ്യൂണിസത്തിന്റെ പ്രചാരണം, ഒക്ടോബർ വിപ്ലവം, ലെനിന്റെ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ വന്ന ഭരണകൂടം, ആഫ്രിക്കയിലും ലാറ്റിനമേരിക്കയിലും അലയടിച്ചുയർന്ന കറുത്ത വർഗ്ഗങ്ങളുടെ മുന്നേറ്റം ഇവയെല്ലാം ജി. യുടെ കാവ്യവിഷയങ്ങളിൽപ്പെടുന്നു. 1937 ൽ ജീവൽസാഹിത്യമെന്ന പേരിലും 1940-നു ശേഷം പുരോഗമന സാഹിത്യമെന്ന പേരിലും അറിയപ്പെട്ട സാഹിത്യ പ്രസ്ഥാനം മാർക്സിസത്തിന്റെ സ്വാധീനത്തിൽ നിന്നും ഉരുത്തിരിഞ്ഞിട്ടുള്ളതാണ്. സാമൂഹിക വിപ്ലവത്തിന് ശക്തി പകർന്ന നിരവധി കൃതികൾ പുരോഗമന സാഹിത്യ പ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ പ്രവർത്തനഫലമായി ഉണ്ടായിട്ടുണ്ട്. എന്നാൽ ആ പ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിനു മുമ്പുതന്നെ മഹാകവി കുമാരനാശാൻ, ശ്രീനാരായണഗുരു, കെ.പി. കുറുപ്പൻ, മൂലൂർ പത്മനാഭപണിക്കർ തുടങ്ങിയവർ കവിതയെ സാമൂഹിക വിപ്ലവത്തിന്റെ പടവാളാക്കി മാറ്റിയിരുന്നു.

എന്നാൽ പുരോഗമന സാഹിത്യത്തിന്റെ സ്വാധീനം കൊണ്ടുണ്ടായ വിപ്ലവസ്വഭാവം കവിതയ്ക്ക് മറ്റൊരു മാനമാണ് നൽകിയത്. പ്രധാനമായി സാമ്പത്തികാസമത്വവും ഫ്യൂഡലിസവുമാണ് പിഴുതെറിയേണ്ടതെന്ന് പുരോഗമന സാഹിത്യകാരന്മാർ വിശ്വസിച്ചിരുന്നു. കാലത്തോടൊപ്പം വളരുകയും കാലത്തിന്റെ തുടിപ്പുകൾ സ്വായത്തമാക്കുകയും ചെയ്ത ജി. ശങ്കരക്കുറുപ്പിന്റെ വിപ്ലവകവിതകളും സാമൂഹികാസമത്വത്തിനെതിരെയുള്ള നിശിതശസ്ത്രങ്ങളാക്കി ഉപയോഗിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. ജാതി വ്യത്യാസപോലെ തന്നെ സാമൂഹിക വിപ്ലവമാണ് സാമ്പത്തികമായ ഉച്ചനീചത്വങ്ങളും ഫ്യൂഡലിസവുമെന്ന് ജി വ്യക്തമായി മനസ്സിലാക്കി. മാർക്സിസമാണ് അതിനു വേണ്ടി കവി അടിസ്ഥാന പ്രമാണമായി സ്വീകരിച്ചത്.

കമ്മ്യൂണിസ്റ്റ് മാനിഫെസ്റ്റോയുടെ സ്വാധീനശക്തിയാൽ മലയാളത്തിൽ രചിക്കപ്പെട്ട ആദ്യത്തെ കവിത ജി. യുടെ 'നാളെ'യാണ്. സാമ്പത്തികമായ ഉച്ചനീചത്വത്തിനെതിരെയുള്ള മനുഷ്യന്റെ പ്രതികരണം, വർഗ്ഗസമരാടിസ്ഥാനത്തിലുള്ള ഉണർവും പ്രവർത്തനവും, സോവിയറ്റ് നാട്ടിലെ ഒക്ടോബർ വിപ്ലവം തുടങ്ങിയവയെല്ലാം ആ കവിതയിലെ ആശയങ്ങളാണ്.

“ജന്മസിലാമം പദം
പുണ്യലബ്ധമെന്നോർത്തു
വന്മദം ഭാവിക്കുന്നൊ-
രുന്നത നക്ഷത്രമേ”

എന്നു തുടങ്ങുന്ന കാവ്യത്തിലെ നക്ഷത്രം വിയർക്കാതെ ലഭിച്ച ഔന്നത്യവും സമ്പത്തുകൊണ്ട് അഹങ്കരിക്കുന്ന ജന്മി വർഗ്ഗത്തിന്റെ പ്രതീകമാണ്. മങ്ങി ഇരുണ്ടുപോയ ഭൂമിക്ക് 'നാളെ'യുടെ വരവ് പുതുയുഗത്തിന്റെ നാദി കുറിക്കുന്നു. അതിന്റെ ആഗമനത്തോടെ “ഇല്ലിനിയസമത തളിർക്കാം കുറുകുത്തി മുല്ലക്കും വാനം പുൽകും മുകിലിൻ പടർപ്പിന്നും..” കാറ്റും വെളിച്ചവും ജീവജാലങ്ങളുടെ പൊതുസ്വത്തായിരിക്കുന്നതുപോലെ ജീവസന്ധാരണത്തിനാവശ്യമായതെല്ലാം പൊതുസ്വത്തുതന്നെയാണ്. അത്തരമൊരു ആദർശത്തിന്റെ മോഹന മുഹൂർത്തമാണ് നാളെയിലൂടെ വിടർന്നു വരുന്നത്.

ഈ കവിത വമ്പിച്ച സാമൂഹിക മാറ്റത്തിന് ശക്തി പക

ർന്നു. സർക്കാരുദ്യോഗസ്ഥനായിരുന്നു കൊണ്ട് ഇത്തരം ഒരു കവിത എഴുതിയതിന് ജോലി നഷ്ടപ്പെടുമെന്ന നിലവരെ എത്തിച്ചേർന്നു. ഇത്ര ശക്തവും വിപ്ലവാഹ്വാന മുഴക്കുന്നതും അധികാരതലങ്ങളെ പ്രകമ്പനം കൊള്ളിക്കുന്ന തുമായ ഒരു കവിത അതിനുമുമ്പ് ഒരു മലയാള കവിയും രചിച്ചിട്ടില്ല.

സോഷ്യലിസ്റ്റ് ആശയത്തിന്റെ പ്രചാരണം മുഖ്യലക്ഷ്യമാക്കി ജി. ഒട്ടേറെ കാവ്യങ്ങൾ രചിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. ചെങ്കുതിരു കടം, വനഗായകൻ, നിമിഷം, മുത്തുകടം, ഇതളുകടം, പഥി കന്റെ പാട്ട്, അന്തർദ്വാരം, വെള്ളിൽപറവകടം തുടങ്ങിയ സമാഹാരങ്ങളിലെ ഭൂരിപക്ഷം കവിതകളും ഇക്കൂട്ടത്തിൽ പെടുന്നു.

പ്രാകൃത മനുഷ്യന്റെ പരിഷ്കാരത്തിന്റെ പ്രാരംഭം കുറിച്ച പ്രധാന ഉപകരണം കലപ്പയാണ്. അസ്ഥിരവാസിയായി അലഞ്ഞു തിരിഞ്ഞ മനുഷ്യന് ക്ഷഷിവിദ്യ വശമായതോടെ സാമൂഹിക ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ പ്രസക്തി എന്തെന്ന് മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞു. വൈലോപ്പിള്ളി യുടെ ബലരാമന്റെ കലപ്പയും ഇതേ ആശയം കൈകാര്യം ചെയ്യുന്നുണ്ട്.

“സൗമ്യമാം കലപ്പതൻ സന്ദേശം: ഞാനെന്നും സാമ്യവാദിയാണെന്നെൻ മൂർച്ചയേറിയ നാവായ് പാരിണയിളക്കും ഞാൻ, നിരപ്പാക്കും ഞാൻ ചേതോഹാരിയാക്കും ഞാൻ ഹർഷ ഹരിത രോമാഞ്ചത്താൽ.” താനൊരു സാമ്യവാദി (സോഷ്യലിസ്റ്റ്) ആണെന്നും തന്റെ തൂലിക കൊണ്ട് ജനങ്ങളെ വിളിച്ചുണർത്തി, സമത്വസുന്ദരമായ പുതിയ കാലത്തെ കെട്ടിപ്പടുക്കും എന്നും അസന്നിഗ്ധമായിത്തന്നെ കവി പ്രഖ്യാപനം നടത്തുകയാണ്.

ഇടിഞ്ഞു നിരങ്ങിയ കോവിലിൻതറകൾ, വീണടിഞ്ഞ കോട്ടകൾ, കിടങ്ങുകൾ, തരിശുഭൂമികൾ എന്നിവയെല്ലാം നിരപ്പാക്കാൻ തന്റെ കലപ്പയ്ക്കൊക്കുമെന്നു ‘കുണ്ണുകൾ’ എന്ന കവിതയിലൂടെ കവി വ്യക്തമാക്കുകയാണ്. ഫ്യൂഡലിസത്തെ സമ്പൂർണ്ണമായി തകർത്ത് സോഷ്യലിസം വിളയിക്കുക എന്നതാണ് ഇവിടെ കവി ലക്ഷ്യമാക്കുന്നത്. എങ്കിലും ‘കുണ്ണുകൾ’ എന്ന പ്രതീകത്തിലൂടെ ഫ്യൂഡലിസ്റ്റ് സംസ്കാരം തകർച്ച സമ്മതിച്ചുകൊടുക്കാതെ ഇപ്പോഴും കിളിർത്തു വരുന്നുണ്ടെന്ന് കവി ഓർമ്മിപ്പിക്കുന്നു.

‘ശവപ്പെട്ടി’ എന്ന മറ്റൊരു കവിതയിലും ചിരവീരോധിയായ ഇരുട്ടിന്റെ നെഞ്ചിലൂടെ ചുവപ്പിൻ കുതിരയെ പായിച്ചുകൊണ്ടു വരുന്ന ഒരു ‘നാളെ’യുണ്ട്. അജയ്യമായ സോഷ്യലിസ്റ്റ് വിപ്ലവശക്തിയെയാണ് ആ പ്രതീകത്തിൽ വരച്ചുകാണിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്. ജനമർദ്ദനത്തിന്റെ കരയും ജീർണ്ണസംസ്കാരങ്ങളുടെയും ജീർണ്ണ മതത്തിന്റെയും നാറിയ കുപ്പായങ്ങളും മനുഷ്യന്റെ ഒടുങ്ങാത്ത തിന്മകളുടെ അഴുക്കുകളും അടിച്ചു പൂത്തിയാക്കുന്ന ‘തൃപ്പുകാരി’ എന്ന കവിതയും പുരോഗമന ചിന്തയിലൂടെ പുതിയ സമൂഹ സൃഷ്ടിക്കു ശ്രമിക്കുന്ന ഒരു കവി ഹൃദയത്തിൽ നിന്നേ വിടർന്നു വരൂ.

മാർക്സ് പുണ്ടിക്കാണിച്ച ഉള്ളവൻ, ഇല്ലാത്തവൻ എന്നീ രണ്ടു വർഗ്ഗങ്ങളെ പ്രതിനിധാനം ചെയ്യുന്ന സിഗററ്റിനെയും ബീഡിയെയും പറ്റിയാണ് ‘ഒരേ തീയ’ എന്ന

കവിത. സമ്പത്തുകൊണ്ട് അഹങ്കരിക്കുന്നവനും സമ്പത്തില്ലാത്തതിനാൽ ക്ലേശമനുഭവിക്കുന്നവനും വലിക്കുന്നത് ഒരേ തീയുടെ പുകയാണ്. സ്ഥാനവലിപ്പവും പ്രഭുതയും ജാതിയും വംശവുമെല്ലാം ഈ ഒരേ തീയിൽ അവസാനിക്കുന്നു എന്ന് ആശാൻ നൽകിയ തത്വശാസ്ത്രമുണ്ടിവിടെ. പക്ഷേ, ഇവിടെ തത്വചിന്തയെല്ലെ പ്രാധാന്യം. വർഗ്ഗപരമായ വ്യത്യസ്തതയൊക്കെയാണ്.

“കൂലിയായ് പതിരിനിവേണ്ട .

നീയനീതിതൻ

കാലിനെക്കൂടിക്കൊയ്യാൻ

മടിക്കാതിരുന്നെങ്കിൽ

‘പോദിക്കട്ടെ’ എന്ന കവിതയിലെ വരികളാണിത്. അധികാരതലത്തിന്റെ വഞ്ചനാത്മകമായ നിലപാടിനോട് പ്രതികരിക്കാൻ ഇതിലധികം ശബ്ദം മറ്റാർക്കുണ്ട്?

‘റഷ്യൻ സൈനികന്’ ജൈത്രപടഹ് മടിക്കാൻ പറയുന്ന ‘ജൈത്രപടഹ്’, വലകെട്ടി ഇരപിടിക്കാനിരിക്കുന്ന ചില നിയെ സാമ്രാജ്യത്വ കോയ്മകളുടെ പ്രതീകമായി വരച്ചുകാണിക്കുന്നു. ആരാമത്തിൽ, ഭാരതസന്ദേശം, കൊച്ചമ്മ, ആ പോദ്യ ചിഹ്നം, ആദായം, ക്ഷമാപണം, താരകം തമ്മിൽ, കലക്കിയുടെ കാവ്യം, പൂമ്പാറ്റ, നായ്ക്കൻ തുടങ്ങിയ കവിതകളും സാമ്പത്തികമായ ഉച്ചനീചത്വങ്ങളോടുള്ള പ്രതികരണമെന്ന നിലയിൽ ജനിച്ചവയാണ്. അവയിലെല്ലാം സമൂഹത്തിലെ വിവിധ പ്രശ്നങ്ങളും വേദനകളും നെടുവീർപ്പുകളും ഉണ്ട്.

എന്നാൽ മറ്റു പല വിപ്ലവ കവിതകളേയും പോലെ ജീവിതത്തെ പച്ചയായി പകർത്തിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന നാച്ചുറലിസ്റ്റ് കവിയല്ല ജി. കവിതയും യാഥാർത്ഥ്യവും തമ്മിൽ ഒട്ടേറെ അകലമുണ്ട്. കവിതയ്ക്കെന്നല്ല എല്ലാ കലകൾക്കും യാഥാർത്ഥ്യത്തിൽ നിന്ന് കുറേയെങ്കിലും അകന്നുനില്ക്കേ തിരിക്കാനാവില്ല. കവിത ഒരു പത്രവാർത്തയോ യഥാർത്ഥമായ വർണ്ണനയോ അല്ല എന്നതാണ് അതിനു കാരണം. കലാപരമായ വർണ്ണ ഭംഗികളുടെ അകമ്പടിയുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ മാത്രമേ കവിതയ്ക്ക് ഉത്തമകവിതയായി നിലനില്ക്കാനാവുകയുള്ളൂ. ജി.യുടെ സാമൂഹിക വിപ്ലവകാവ്യങ്ങളെപ്പറ്റി ചിന്തിക്കുമ്പോഴും ഈ യാഥാർത്ഥ്യ ആസ്വാദകൻ കാണേണ്ടതാണ്. പക്ഷേ, അന്തിയാത്തവരാണ് ജി.യെ സാമൂഹിക വിപ്ലവകാരിയായി കാണാൻ മടിക്കുന്നത്. കവിതത്തിന്റെ ഭാവവും ഭാവനയുമില്ലാതെ ജി. എഴുതാറില്ല. അതു മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ ആസ്വാദകൻ അവന്റെ ഭാവവിശിഷ്ടതയോട് ജി.യുടെ കവിതയുടെ മുമ്പിൽ തുറന്നുവെച്ചേ മതിയാകൂ.

സാമൂഹിക വിപ്ലവത്തെ ഉന്നംവെച്ചുകൊണ്ട് ജി. എഴുതിയ ഒരു ഖണ്ഡകാവ്യമാണ് ‘പന്ദനക്കട്ടിൽ’. വെമ്പലനാട്ടിലെ തമ്പുരാന്റെ തമ്പുരാട്ടിക്ക് കിഴക്കൻ കാട്ടിലെ തടിമുത്ത പന്ദനം കൊണ്ടൊരു കട്ടിൽ വേണമെന്ന ആഗ്രഹം അന്നത്തെ അധികാരതലത്തിലെ ഒരു സാധാരണ സംഭവമാണ്. ഇന്നത്തെ ജനകീയ മന്ത്രിമാരിൽ പോലും പലരും ഇങ്ങനെയൊക്കെത്തന്നെയാണല്ലോ.

തമ്പുരാട്ടിക്കുള്ള മോഹമല്ലേ

തമ്പുരാൻ കല്പിച്ചിരിക്കയല്ലേ

എന്ന ചിന്തയാണ് ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാരിൽ.

“തലയും ചൊരിഞ്ഞു തിരിച്ചു പോന്നാൽ തലയോടുകൂടി വിടില്ലൊരാളെ”

എന്ന വാക്കുകൾ അവരുടെ തലയ്ക്കു മുകളിൽ ഗില്ലോത്തിനായി കുറങ്ങിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. അതിനാൽ അവർ എല്ലാം നിശ്ശബ്ദമായി അനുസരിക്കുന്നു.

മുഖ്യകഥയിലെ സാമൂഹിക വിപ്ലവാംശമല്ല ഈ കഥയിൽ ഏറെ പ്രസക്തമായി നമുക്ക് അനുഭവപ്പെടുന്നത്. ‘കബന്ധം’ എന്ന വാക്കിന്റെ അർത്ഥമറിയാത്ത മരുമകന് ഒരു കിഴവൻ പരിചാരകനെ വിളിച്ച് തലകൊയ്തു സംശയ നിവൃത്തിവരുത്തുന്ന കാരണവരുടെ കഥ അതിലൊന്നാണ്. മറ്റൊന്ന് തിരുനാളുകൊണ്ടോടൻ ‘മുടിയേറ്റ’ യഥാർത്ഥമായി അവതരിപ്പിച്ച് സന്തോഷിക്കുന്ന നാടുവാഴിയുടെ കഥ. കാളിയായാടുന്ന വലുത്താവൻ ഭാര്യകനായാടുന്ന മരുമകന്റെ തലകൊയ്ക്കെടുത്ത് നാടുവാഴിയുടെ ആഗ്രഹനിവൃത്തി വരുത്തുകയാണ്.

“നെല്ലും പണവും കവിഞ്ഞവർക്ക്

കൊല്ലും കൊലയും കുലാധികാരം”

എന്നതാണ് ആശ്വസിക്കാൻ വേണ്ടി അന്നത്തെ നിസ്സഹായരായ ജനങ്ങൾ കാണുന്ന തത്വശാസ്ത്രം. പന്ദനക്കട്ടിലിലെ ഉപകഥകളിൽ പ്രത്യേകിച്ചും നിറഞ്ഞു നില്ക്കുന്നത് നാടുവാഴികളുടെയും ജന്മിത്തത്തിന്റെയും ഉരുക്കു മുപ്പികളോടുള്ള ശക്തമായ പ്രതിഷേധമാണ്. എത്ര വ്യാഖ്യാനിച്ചാലും ധന്യന്മാർക്കായ അർത്ഥവിസ്തൃതി കണ്ടെത്താവുന്ന അതിമനോഹരമായ ഈ കാവ്യത്തെ പോലും അവഗണിക്കുവാൻ നമ്മുടെ പ്രൗഢരായ പല നിരൂപകരും മടിക്കാണിച്ഛില്ല.

പന്ദനക്കട്ടിലിനെ പറ്റി പറഞ്ഞതുപോലെ തന്നെ അധികാരവും പഠനവിയേയമാക്കാതെ വിട്ടുകളഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്ന അതിശക്തമായ മറ്റൊരു ഖണ്ഡകാവ്യമാണ് “മൂന്നരു വിയും ഒരു പുഴയും”. മലയാളത്തിലെ ഖണ്ഡകാവ്യങ്ങളെപ്പറ്റിയുള്ള സുവിശദപഠന ഗ്രന്ഥത്തിൽ പോലും ഈ കൃതി കണ്ടെടുക്കുന്നതിനായിക്കുന്നു എന്നത് അതിവിചിത്രമല്ലേ?

ഒരു ഗ്രാമീണ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ വൈകാരികസത്തയെ പയ്ക്കൻ, കറുവൻ, കാളി, മേലാൻ എന്നീ കഥാപാത്രങ്ങളിലൂടെ ഭാവഗീതലാവണ്യം ഒട്ടും പോർന്നുപോകാതെ വേണ്ടത്ര പിരിമുറുക്കത്തോടു കൂടി രചിക്കപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്ന ഖണ്ഡകാവ്യമാണിത്. സാമൂഹിക വിപ്ലവ ലക്ഷ്യത്തോടെ എഴുതപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുള്ള ഒരു കൃതിയുടെയും പിന്നിലല്ല ഇതിനു സ്ഥാനം. പയ്ക്കനും കറുവനും കാളിയെ പ്രേമിച്ചു എന്നും അവരും രണ്ടുപേരെയും ഒരു പോലെ ഇഷ്ടമായി എന്നും അവരിൽ ഒരാളിന്റെ ഭാര്യയാകേണ്ടിവന്നതോടെ അവളുടെ ജീവിതം ദുരിതമയമായി എന്നുള്ളതാണ് കഥയുടെ അസ്ഥികൂടം. പന്ദനക്കട്ടിലിനെ പറ്റി പറഞ്ഞതുപോലെ ഇതിനകത്ത് പരാമർശിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന അനുബന്ധ സംഭവങ്ങളും അവ വരച്ചുകാട്ടാൻ ഉപയോഗിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള ബിംബങ്ങളും സിംബലുകളുമാണ് ഈ കഥയിലെ ജീവതത്തുക്കൾ. രാവിലെക്കാറ്റിൽ ബലാൽക്കാരത്താൽ തലതാഴ്ത്തി പാവലം മാടത്തിന്മേൽ നിന്നുൾന്നു കിടക്കുന്നു എന്ന വരികൾ ശ്രദ്ധിക്കുക.

അതുപോലെ പുത്തനം മടവാള്, തിന്നപോറിനു നന്ദി, പത്തടിയട്ടേ ശ്ശംഗാനിക്കുന്നോ കരിമല്ലൻ, ഉടക്കുളിയാണോരോ വാക്കു മുരിയാൽ പ്രാണൻ പോകും എന്ന വാക്കുകളിൽ ജന്മിത്തത്തിന്റെ ക്രൂരതയെ അതിഭംഗിയായി ചിത്രീകരിക്കുകയാണ്. ജന്മി കാളിയോടു പറയുന്ന

വാക്കുകൾ, യഥാർത്ഥത്തിൽ എത്രയോ ഹരിജൻ പെൺകിടാങ്ങളോട് ജന്മിമാർ പറഞ്ഞിട്ടുള്ളതാണ്!

ജി. ഒരു രാഷ്ട്രീയ പ്രവർത്തകനോ ഏതെങ്കിലും ഒരു പാർട്ടിയുടെ സഹയാത്രികനോ ആയിരുന്നില്ല. എങ്കിലും സമകാല രാഷ്ട്രീയ തത്വസംഹിതകൾ അദ്ദേഹത്തെ വളരെ ആകർഷിച്ചു. കമ്മ്യൂണിസം ഭാരതത്തിലങ്ങിങ്ങും കേരളത്തിലെമ്പാടും വ്യാപിക്കാൻ തുടങ്ങിയ കാലത്ത് ആ തത്വസംഹിതയോടൊപ്പം സാഹിത്യ രംഗത്ത് ഉരുത്തിരിഞ്ഞ ജീവൻ സാഹിത്യ-പുരോഗമന സാഹിത്യ സംഘടനയോടൊപ്പം നിലക്കാൻ ജി. മടികാണിച്ചില്ല. സാമൂഹിക ബോധമുള്ള ഒരു എഴുത്തുകാരനെ നിലയിൽ സമൂഹത്തെ സാമ്പത്തിക പ്രശ്നങ്ങളുടെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ വിശകലനം ചെയ്യുന്നതിനും അതിനനുസരിച്ച് സ്വാഭാവികമായുണ്ടാകുന്ന പ്രതികരണങ്ങളെ കരുത്തുറ്റ പ്രതീകങ്ങളിലൂടെ കവിതയായി ആവിഷ്കരിക്കാനും അദ്ദേഹത്തിനു കഴിഞ്ഞു. അതുപോലെതന്നെ ഇന്ത്യൻ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യസമരം സാർവത്രികമായി അലയടിച്ചിരുന്ന കാലമാകയാൽ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യസമരത്തോട് കൂറുള്ള ഒരു എഴുത്തുകാരനായിത്തന്നെ അദ്ദേഹം പ്രവർത്തിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഗാന്ധിയെയും ഗാന്ധിയൻ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളെയും പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുന്ന പലകവിതകളും അദ്ദേഹം എഴുതിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഇക്കാര്യത്തിൽ വളരത്തോളിനെ പിൻപറ്റുന്ന ഒരു സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യ സമരഗാതാ

വായിരുന്നു അദ്ദേഹവും. വെൽകവെൽക, സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യഗീതം, വന്ദനം പറയുക, പ്രഭാതപാതം, ഓർമ്മിക്കുന്നുവോ, വന്ദനം, കവിയുടെ കത്ത് തുടങ്ങിയവയെല്ലാം അത്തരം ദേശീയബോധത്തിൽ നിന്നും ഉരുത്തിരിഞ്ഞിട്ടുള്ളവയാണ്.

ജാതിയെയും മതത്തെയും ചില അനാചാരങ്ങളെയും എതിർക്കുന്നതുമത്രമാണ് സാമൂഹിക വിപ്ലവമെന്ന ദുർവിചാരമാണ് സാമൂഹിക പ്രവർത്തകർക്കും ചരിത്രകാരന്മാർക്കും നിരൂപകർക്കും ഉള്ളത്. സമൂഹത്തിൽ ജാതി-മതങ്ങളുണ്ടാക്കിയ വേലിക്കെട്ടുകളെക്കൊണ്ട് യോനകമായ മതിൽക്കെട്ടുകൾയർത്തിയത് സാമ്പത്തികമായ ഉച്ചനീചത്വങ്ങളും അതുകാരണമുണ്ടായ പൂഷണങ്ങളും ഫ്യൂഡൽ സാമൂഹിക വ്യവസ്ഥകളുമാണെന്ന യാഥാർത്ഥ്യത്തിലേക്ക് ചരിത്രകാരന്മാർ ഇനിയും വേണ്ടത്ര ശ്രദ്ധ തിരിച്ചു കാണുന്നില്ല. ജി. ശങ്കരക്കുറുപ്പിന്റെ കവിതകളിലൂടെ നാം കേൾക്കുന്ന സാമൂഹിക വിപ്ലവ നാദം അത്തരത്തിലുള്ളതാണ്. എഴുത്തച്ഛൻ ഭക്തിമാർഗ്ഗത്തിലൂടെ നടത്തിയ സാമൂഹിക വിപ്ലവം സാംസ്കാരിക ജീർണ്ണയത്ത് എതിരെയായിരുന്നെങ്കിൽ അതിനു സമാന്തരമായി ഫ്യൂഡലിസത്തിനും സാമ്പത്തികമായ അസന്തുലിതാവസ്ഥയ്ക്കും എതിരെ പോരാടുന്ന സോഷ്യലിസ്റ്റ് സമൂഹത്തിനു ശക്തി പകർത്താൻ പോരുന്ന നിരവധി കവിതകൾ കാഴ്ചവച്ച കവിയാണ് ജി. ശങ്കരക്കുറുപ്പ്.

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കർഷകപ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യാനന്തര നേട്ടങ്ങളും പുതിയ കടമകളും

എസ്. രാമചന്ദ്രൻപിള്ള*

1. കൃഷിക്കാരുടെയും കർഷകതൊഴിലാളികളുടെയും പ്രസ്ഥാനം ആണ് കർഷകപ്രസ്ഥാനം. കേരളത്തിന്റെ സാമ്പത്തിക രാഷ്ട്രീയ സാമൂഹ്യ ജീവിതത്തിൽ കർഷകപ്രസ്ഥാനം അതിപ്രധാനമായ മാറ്റങ്ങൾ വരുത്തി. കേരളത്തിന്റെ വളർച്ചയിലും വികാസത്തിലും വളരെ പ്രധാനപ്പെട്ട പങ്ക് വഹിച്ചു.
2. നെൽകൃഷിയുടെയും നാളികേരത്തിന്റെയും ഉല്പാദനത്തിന്റെ അളവ് മാത്രം കണക്കിലെടുത്ത് വളർച്ചയും വികാസവും അളക്കുവാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്നവർ ഒന്നുകിൽ ഈട്ടിൽ തപ്പുകയാണ്; അല്ലെങ്കിൽ ജനങ്ങളെ ബോധപൂർവ്വം തെറ്റിദ്ധരിപ്പിക്കുവാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുകയാണ്. ഈ സമീപനം അശാസ്ത്രീയവും പിശകുമാണെന്ന് മാത്രമല്ല, തികച്ചും പക്ഷപാതപരവുമാണ്.
3. ബംഗാൾ ഒഴിച്ചുള്ള ഇന്ത്യയിലെ സംസ്ഥാനങ്ങൾക്കു നേടാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടില്ലാത്ത വമ്പിച്ച നേട്ടങ്ങൾ കേരളം കൈവരിച്ചു. ലക്ഷക്കണക്കിന് വരുന്ന കുടികിടപ്പുകാർ കുടികിടപ്പിന്റെയും അത് സ്ഥിതി ചെയ്യുന്ന ഭൂമിയുടെയും ഉടമസ്ഥരായി. തങ്ങൾ കൃഷിചെയ്യുന്ന ഭൂമിയുടെ ഉടമസ്ഥത കൂടിയാൻമാർക്ക് ലഭിച്ചു. ഭൂപരിധിയിലേറെ വരുന്ന ഭൂമി, ഭൂരഹിതർക്ക് വിതരണം ചെയ്തു

കൊടുത്തു. മെച്ചപ്പെട്ട കൂലിയും ജോലി സമയം സംബന്ധിച്ച മെച്ചപ്പെട്ട വ്യവസ്ഥകളും മാത്രമല്ല പെൻഷനും ക്ഷേമനിധിയും കർഷകതൊഴിലാളികൾക്ക് നേടാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞു.

4. കർഷകതൊഴിലാളികളുടെയും കൃഷിക്കാരുടെയും ജീവിതത്തിലും കാർഷികമേഖലയിലും വന്ന മാറ്റങ്ങൾ അവിടെ മാത്രമായി ഒതുങ്ങി നിന്നില്ല. പാവപ്പെട്ട ജനവിഭാഗങ്ങളുടെ താല്പര്യങ്ങൾക്കു സമ്പത്തിന്റെ വിതരണത്തിൽ പരിഗണന ലഭിച്ചു. ബഹുഭൂരിപക്ഷം വരുന്ന പാവപ്പെട്ടവരുടെ കായികവും മാനസികവുമായ കഴിവുകൾ വികസിച്ചു. ആരോഗ്യരംഗത്തും വിദ്യാഭ്യാസമേഖലയിലും കേരളം കൈവരിച്ച നേട്ടങ്ങൾ മൂന്നാം ലോകരാജ്യങ്ങളുടെ മുൻപന്തിയിലേക്ക് കേരളത്തെ എത്തിച്ചു. ജനാധിപത്യബോധമുള്ള പൗരനെ വളർത്തികൊണ്ടുവന്നതിലും കാർഷികരംഗത്ത് ഉണ്ടായ മാറ്റങ്ങൾ വളരെ പ്രധാനമാണ്. ഇവയാകെ കേരളത്തിന്റെ എല്ലാ മേഖലകളിലുമുള്ള വളർച്ചയെയും വികാസത്തെയും സഹായിച്ചു.

5. കേരളകർഷകസംഘവും കർഷകതൊഴിലാളി യൂണിയനും നടത്തിയ നിരന്തരമായ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളുടെ ഫലമായാണ് ഇവയൊക്കെ നേടാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞത്. കർഷകപ്രസ്ഥാനം സമരങ്ങൾക്കും ഭരണത്തിനും നേതൃത്വം നൽകി.

* അഖിലേന്ത്യാ കിസാൻ സഭ, ന്യൂഡൽഹി.

കേരളത്തിൽ കർഷകപ്രസ്ഥാനം വരുത്തിയ മാറ്റങ്ങളും നേടിയ നേട്ടങ്ങളും മൂന്നാം ലോകത്തിലെ ശ്രദ്ധേയമായ വികാസമാത്മകളിൽ ഒന്നായി കണക്കാക്കപ്പെടുന്നു.

6. കർഷകതൊഴിലാളികളുടെയും ബഹുഭൂരിപക്ഷം വരുന്ന പാവപ്പെട്ട കൃഷിക്കാരുടെയും താല്പര്യങ്ങളെ കേന്ദ്രീകരിച്ചുകൊണ്ടാണ് സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യത്തിന് മുമ്പും സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യത്തിനു ശേഷവും കേരളത്തിലെ കർഷകപ്രസ്ഥാനം പ്രവർത്തിച്ചത്. നാടുവാഴി ഭൂപ്രഭുക്കളും കർഷക മുതലാളിമാരും ബദൽ പ്രസ്ഥാനം വളർത്തിക്കൊണ്ടുവരുവാൻ പലപ്പോഴും ശ്രമിച്ചിരുന്നു. എന്നാൽ കർഷകതൊഴിലാളികളെയും പാവപ്പെട്ട കൃഷിക്കാരെയും കേന്ദ്രമാക്കി ബഹുഭൂരിപക്ഷം വരുന്ന കർഷകജനവിഭാഗങ്ങളെ അണി നിരത്തിയ കർഷകമുന്നേറ്റത്തെ പൊളിക്കുവാൻ അവർക്കു കഴിഞ്ഞില്ല. പുരോഗമന ഇടതുപക്ഷ ആശയങ്ങളുടെയും വിശേഷിച്ച് കമ്മ്യൂണിസ്റ്റ് പാർടിയുടെയും വളർച്ചയും സ്വാധീനശക്തിയും കർഷകപ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ വളർച്ചയ്ക്ക് സഹായകമായ അന്തരീക്ഷം സൃഷ്ടിച്ചു.

ഇന്ന് കാർഷികമേഖല പുതിയ പ്രശ്നങ്ങളെ അഭിമുഖീകരിക്കുന്നു. വികസിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന മുതലാളിത്ത ഉല്പാദന ബന്ധങ്ങൾ കേരളത്തിന്റെ കാർഷികഘടനയിലും വലിയ മാറ്റങ്ങൾ വരുത്തിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുകയാണ്. വിളകളുടെ ഘടനയും നിക്ഷേപത്തിന്റെ എറ്റിറക്കങ്ങളും ഇന്ന് നിർണയിക്കുന്നത് മുതലാളിത്ത കമ്പോളമാണ്. ഈ കാര്യത്തിൽ ആസൂത്രണത്തിന്റെ പങ്ക് അപ്രധാനമായി. ക്ഷേധാനുവിളകളിൽ നിന്നും ഭക്ഷ്യതര വിളകളിലേക്കും നാണ്യവിളകളിലേക്കും ഉള്ള മാറ്റങ്ങൾ അതിവേഗം നടന്നുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുകയാണ്. കടുംകൃഷിയിലുള്ള താൽപര്യം കുറയുന്നു. ഇടവിള ചെയ്യുവാൻ ഔത്സുക്യം കുറഞ്ഞുവരികയാണ്. ഉല്പാദനക്ഷമതയുടെയും ഉല്പാദനത്തിന്റെയും വർദ്ധനവ് ഒന്നോ രണ്ടോ വിളകളിൽ മാത്രം ഒതുങ്ങിനിൽക്കുന്ന സ്ഥിതിയാണ് ഉള്ളത്. കാർഷികമേഖല വിറങ്ങലിപ്പിനെ നേരിടുന്നു. ചെറുകിട ഇടത്തരം കൃഷിക്കാർ കൃഷിഭൂമി പാട്ടത്തിന് എല്പിച്ചുതുടങ്ങി. കൃഷി അഭിവൃദ്ധിപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതിനേക്കാൾ ഭൂമിയുടെ ഭാവിമോഹവിലയിൽ കണ്ണുനട്ടിരിക്കുന്നിടത്തേക്ക് ഗണ്യമായ ഒരു വിഭാഗം കൃഷിഭൂമിയുടെ ഉടമസ്ഥന്മാർ മാറിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു.

8. ഇവയാകെ കാർഷികമേഖലയിലെ തൊഴിൽ സാധ്യതയെ ഗണ്യമായ അളവിൽ കുറച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. തൊഴിലില്ലായ്മ ഭീതിപ്പെടുത്തുന്ന വിധത്തിൽ വളർന്നുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. കർഷകതൊഴിലാളികളുടെ പ്രതിവർഷ വരുമാനം കുത്തനെ കുറഞ്ഞുവരുന്നു. കൃഷിക്കാരുടെ പാപ്പരീകരണം വേഗത്തിൽ നടക്കുന്നു. കൃഷിഭൂമി ചെറിയ ചെറിയ തുണ്ടുകളായി മാറിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുകയാണ്. ഉല്പാദനക്ഷമതയെയും ഉല്പാദനവർദ്ധനവിനെയും ഇവ വീണ്ടും പ്രതികൂലമായി ബാധിക്കുന്നു.

9. കർഷകമുതലാളിമാരുടെ ആവശ്യം നാണ്യവിളകൾക്ക് കൂടുതൽ വില ലഭിക്കണമെന്നാണ്. സബ്സിഡി വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കുകയും കടം ലഭിക്കാനുള്ള സൗകര്യങ്ങൾ വിപുലപ്പെടുത്തുകയും ചെയ്യണമെന്നും അവർ താല്പര്യം കാട്ടുന്നു. കാർഷികമേഖലയിലെ പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾക്കു ഇവ കൊണ്ട് മാത്രം പരിഹാരം കാണാനാവില്ല. ഈ താൽപര്യങ്ങൾ

ളിൽ മാത്രമായി കർഷകപ്രസ്ഥാനം കേന്ദ്രീകരിച്ചു നീങ്ങിയാൽ ബഹുഭൂരിപക്ഷം വരുന്ന കർഷകജനങ്ങളുടെയോ കാർഷികമേഖലയുടെ തന്നെയോ പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾക്കു പരിഹാരം കാണാനാവില്ല. കാർഷികമുതലാളിമാർ അവരുടെ താല്പര്യങ്ങൾക്ക് മാത്രമാണ് പരിഗണന നൽകുന്നത്. ഈ താല്പര്യങ്ങൾ അന്തിമവിശകലനത്തിൽ ബഹുഭൂരിപക്ഷം വരുന്ന കർഷകജനവിഭാഗങ്ങളുടെ താല്പര്യങ്ങൾക്ക് എതിരാണ്. അവർ ബഹുഭൂരിപക്ഷം വരുന്ന കർഷകജനതയുടെ ശത്രുക്കളാണ്.

10. കാർഷിക മേഖലയിൽ തൊഴിൽ സാധ്യതകൾ വൻ തോതിൽ വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കേണ്ടതുണ്ട്. കർഷകതൊഴിലാളികളുടെ തൊഴിലില്ലായ്മക്ക് പരിഹാരം കാണുന്നതിന് ഇതാവശ്യമാണ്. കർഷകതൊഴിലാളികളുടെ വേതന സേവന വ്യവസ്ഥകളും മെച്ചപ്പെട്ടതാവണം. പാവപ്പെട്ടവരും ഇടത്തരക്കാരായ കൃഷിക്കാർക്ക് കൃഷി ആദായകരമായ തൊഴിലാവണം. മുതലാളിത്ത കമ്പോളത്തിന്റെ ആക്രമണത്തിൽ നിന്നും അവർക്ക് സംരക്ഷണം ലഭിക്കണം. കാർഷികമേഖലയിലെ വളർച്ചയുടെ നേട്ടങ്ങൾ കർഷകമുതലാളിമാർ തട്ടിയെടുക്കുന്ന ഇന്നത്തെ സ്ഥിതിക്ക് മാറ്റം വരണം. ബഹുഭൂരിപക്ഷം വരുന്ന കർഷക ജനവിഭാഗങ്ങളുടെ ആവശ്യങ്ങളാണിവയെല്ലാം.

11. ലോകബാങ്കിന്റെയും ഐ.എം.എഫിന്റെയും ഉപദേശനിർദ്ദേശങ്ങളനുസരിച്ച് കേന്ദ്രഗവൺമെന്റ് സീകരിച്ചുപോരുന്ന സാമ്പത്തിക നയങ്ങളും കാർഷികനയവും കടിഞ്ഞാണില്ലാത്ത മുതലാളിത്ത വളർച്ചയെ ആണ് ലക്ഷ്യം വെച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്. ഇന്ത്യൻ കാർഷിക മേഖലയെ തങ്ങളുടെ താൽപര്യങ്ങൾക്കുതകുംവിധം വിധേയമാക്കാൻ സാമാജ്യത്വരാജ്യങ്ങളും പരിശ്രമിക്കുന്നു. ഗാട്ട് കരാർ ഇതിന്റെ പ്രത്യക്ഷ ഉദാഹരണമാണ്. നാണക്കേട് നിലയിൽ ഇതിന് വഴങ്ങുകയാണ് ഇന്ത്യാഗവൺമെന്റ് ചെയ്യുന്നത്.

12. ഇവയെല്ലാം കർഷകതൊഴിലാളികളുടെയും ബഹുഭൂരിപക്ഷം വരുന്ന കർഷകജനവിഭാഗങ്ങളുടെയും ജീവിതം കൂടുതൽ ദുരിതപൂർണ്ണമാക്കുന്നു. തൊഴിലില്ലായ്മ വീണ്ടും വർദ്ധിക്കുന്നു. ചെറുകിട ഇടത്തരം കർഷകജനവിഭാഗങ്ങളുടെ പാപ്പരീകരണത്തിന്റെ വേഗത വീണ്ടും കൂടുന്നു. പുത്തൻ സാമ്പത്തിക നയത്തെയും കാർഷികനയത്തെയും എതിർക്കുന്നതോടൊപ്പം ബഹുഭൂരിപക്ഷം വരുന്ന കർഷകജനവിഭാഗങ്ങളുടെ താൽപര്യങ്ങളെ കേന്ദ്രീകരിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് ബദൽ നയങ്ങൾ കർഷകപ്രസ്ഥാനം മുന്നോട്ടുകൊണ്ടു വരണം.

13. ബഹുഭൂരിപക്ഷം വരുന്ന കർഷകജനവിഭാഗങ്ങളുടെ താൽപര്യങ്ങൾ സംരക്ഷിക്കുന്നതിന് കാർഷികമേഖലയിലെ ഉൽപാദനക്ഷമതയും ഉൽപാദനവും അതിവേഗം വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കേണ്ടതുണ്ട്. ജലസേചനസൗകര്യങ്ങൾ വിപുലപ്പെടുത്തുകയും വിദ്യുത് ശക്തിയുടെ ലഭ്യത ഉറപ്പുവരുത്തുകയും ചെയ്യുക എന്നത് പ്രധാനപ്പെട്ട ഒരു ഘടകമാണ്. ചെറുകിട കൃഷിയിടങ്ങൾക്കുതക്കുന്ന സാങ്കേതിക വിദ്യ പ്രയോഗത്തിൽ കൊണ്ടുവരണം. വളത്തിന്റെയും കീടനാശിനിയുടെയും ഉപയോഗം വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കേണ്ടിവരുന്നു. ശേഖരണാലയങ്ങളുടെ വിപുലമായ ശൃംഖല കർഷകജനവിഭാഗങ്ങളിലെ ബഹുഭൂരിപക്ഷക്കാരായ പാവപ്പെട്ട

വരുടെ താൽപര്യങ്ങൾ പരിരക്ഷിക്കുന്നതിന് അത്യാവശ്യം ആണ്. വിള സംവിധാനവും പരിക്രമണവും ശാസ്ത്രീയമായി സംഘടിപ്പിക്കണം. കാർഷിക ഉൽപ്പന്നങ്ങളുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട ചെറുകിട വ്യവസായങ്ങൾ ബോധപൂർവ്വം വികസിപ്പിക്കണം. ഇവയെല്ലാം നേടുന്നതിന് കാർഷികമേഖലയിൽ നിക്ഷേപം വൻതോതിൽ വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കേണ്ടിവരും. പൊതുമുനിഷേപം വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കാതെ സ്വകാര്യനിക്ഷേപത്തെയും ആകർഷിക്കാനാവില്ല. ബഹുഭൂരിപക്ഷം വരുന്ന കർഷകവിഭാഗങ്ങളുടെ താൽപര്യങ്ങൾക്ക് മുൻഗണന നൽകി അവർക്ക് നിക്ഷേപം ചെയ്യുന്നതിനുള്ള തുക ലഭിക്കാനുള്ള സൗകര്യങ്ങൾ വിപുലപ്പെടുത്തണം. കാർഷികോൽപ്പന്നങ്ങൾക്ക് ആദായവിധി ലഭിക്കത്തക്കവണ്ണം കമ്പോള സംരക്ഷണ നടപടികളും ഏർപ്പെടുത്തേണ്ടതുണ്ട്. കർഷകപ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ മുകളിൽ വിവരിച്ച ആവശ്യങ്ങളെ കേന്ദ്രീകരിച്ച് പുനർനിർമ്മിക്കണം. കാർഷികമുതലാളിമാരും മുതലാളിത്തകമ്പോളവും ബഹുഭൂരിപക്ഷംവരുന്ന കർഷകജനതയുടെ താല്പര്യങ്ങൾക്ക് എതിരായാണ് നിലപാട് എടുക്കുന്നതെന്ന് ഒരിക്കലും വിസ്മരിക്കരുത്. ഭൂപ്രഭുക്കളെ — അതു നാടുവാഴിയോ മുതലാളിയോ ആകട്ടെ — ഒറ്റപ്പെടുത്തുക കർഷകപ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ ലക്ഷ്യമാണെന്നത് ഒരിക്കലും മറക്കരുത്.

14. കർഷകപ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിന് ഇന്ന് പുതിയ കടമകളാണ് നിർവഹിക്കാനുള്ളത്. ഗവൺമെന്റിന്റെ തെറ്റായ

നയങ്ങൾക്കെതിരായി ബദൽ നയങ്ങൾ ഉയർത്തിക്കൊണ്ടുള്ള പോരാട്ടം നിരന്തരം നടത്തേണ്ടതുണ്ട്. സഹകരണസ്ഥാപനങ്ങൾ, തദ്ദേശസ്വയംഭരണ സ്ഥാപനങ്ങൾ എന്നിവയുടെ ജനാധിപത്യസ്വഭാവം വിപുലപ്പെടുത്താനുള്ള സമരങ്ങളോടൊപ്പം ഇവയൊക്കെ പ്രയോജനപ്പെടുത്തി ഉല്പാദനക്ഷമതയും ഉല്പാദന വർദ്ധനവും കൈവരിക്കാനുള്ള പരിശ്രമങ്ങൾക്കും കർഷകപ്രസ്ഥാനം നേതൃത്വം നൽകണം. ഗവൺമെന്റ് ശക്തിപൂർവ്വം നടപ്പാക്കിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന “ഇറ്റുവീഴ്” നയത്തിനെതിരെ “അടിയിൽ നിന്നുള്ള വളർന്ന് പൊന്തൽ” ബദൽനയം ഉയർത്തുകയും പ്രയോജനപ്പെടുത്താവുന്ന ജനാധിപത്യസംവിധാനങ്ങളെ ആകെ ഉപയോഗിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് ബദൽനയം പ്രായോഗികമാക്കാനുള്ള സമരങ്ങൾക്കും പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്കും കർഷകപ്രസ്ഥാനം നേതൃത്വം നൽകണം. സങ്കീർണ്ണമായ കടമകളാണ് കർഷകപ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ മുന്നിലുള്ളത്. കർഷകപ്രസ്ഥാനം ഉയർത്തിക്കൊണ്ടുവരേണ്ട പുതിയ ആവശ്യങ്ങൾ, അവ പ്രായോഗികമാക്കുന്നതിന് നടത്തേണ്ട സമരങ്ങളും പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളും, ഇവയൊക്കെ സമർത്ഥമായി കൈകാര്യം ചെയ്യുവാനുള്ള സംഘടനാ സംവിധാനം ഒരുക്കുക എന്നിവയിലെല്ലാം കാലാനുസാരിയായ മാറ്റങ്ങൾ വേണ്ടിവരും. ഇവിടെ നടക്കുന്ന ചർച്ചകളും എത്തിച്ചേരുന്ന നിഗമനങ്ങളും കർഷകപ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ കടമകൾ പുനർ നിർമ്മിക്കുവാൻ സഹായിക്കും എന്ന് ആശിക്കുന്നു.

മലയാളനോവലിൽ പ്രതിഫലിക്കുന്ന തറവാടിന്റെ തകർച്ച — തെരഞ്ഞെടുത്ത നോവലുകളെ ആസ്പദമാക്കി ഒരു പഠനം

കെ. ശിശുപാലൻ

ഈ ഗവേഷണ പ്രബന്ധത്തിൽ നോവലുകളെ ആസ്പദമാക്കി ഒരു പഠനം എന്ന ഈ ഗവേഷണ പ്രബന്ധത്തിൽ നോവലുകളെ സാമൂഹികമായ കാഴ്ചപ്പാടിലൂടെ പഠിക്കാൻ ശ്രമിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. നോവലും സമൂഹവും തമ്മിലുള്ള സൂക്ഷ്മമായ ബന്ധവും സമൂഹത്തിൽ ഉണ്ടാകുന്ന മാറ്റങ്ങൾ നോവൽ പ്രതിഫലിപ്പിക്കുന്നു എന്ന സങ്കല്പവുമാണ് ഇത്തരമൊരു പഠനത്തിന്റെ പ്രചോദനം. പ്രബന്ധത്തെ താഴെ പറയും പ്രകാരം സംഗ്രഹിക്കാം.

1. തറവാടുകൾ തികച്ചും കേരളീയമായ ഒരു കുടുംബ വ്യവസ്ഥയാണ്. കൂട്ടുകുടുംബ വ്യവസ്ഥയും മരുമക്കത്തായ വ്യവസ്ഥയും കൂടിച്ചേർന്നാണ് അത്. തറവാടിന് അതിന്റേതായ വ്യവസ്ഥകളും രക്തബന്ധ നിർണ്ണയ രീതികളും ആചാര മര്യാദകളും ഉണ്ട്. തറവാട്ടു വ്യവസ്ഥയോ അതിന്റെ ദായക്രമമോ ഏതെങ്കിലും സമുദായം നായൻമാരിൽ അടിച്ചേൽപ്പിച്ചതല്ല. വന്യഗോത്ര ജീവിതത്തിൽ നിന്നും കാർഷിക ഗ്രാമസമൂഹത്തിലേക്കു പരിണമിക്കുന്നതിനിടയിൽ വളരെ സ്വാഭാവികമായി രൂപം കൊണ്ടതാണ്. അങ്ങനെ രൂപം കൊണ്ട ആ കുടുംബ വ്യവസ്ഥ അടിസ്ഥാനപരമായ മാറ്റം കൂടാതെ ഈ നൂറ്റാണ്ടിന്റെ എതാണ്ട് മദ്ധ്യകാലം വരെ നിലനിന്നിരുന്നു എന്നു പറയാം.

2. ബ്രിട്ടീഷ് ആധിപത്യം കേരള സമൂഹത്തെ ഘടനാപരമായി പരിവർത്തിപ്പിച്ചു. സാമ്പത്തിക രാഷ്ട്രീയ സാമൂഹിക മണ്ഡലങ്ങളിൽ ആധുനീകരണം നടന്നു. ഫ്യൂഡൽ ഉല്പാദന വ്യവസ്ഥയിൽ അധിഷ്ഠിതമായ സ്വയം പൂർണ്ണഗ്രാമങ്ങൾ തകർന്നു. ഉല്പാദന ബന്ധങ്ങൾ മാറി. കീഴാചാരങ്ങൾ മാറ്റി മറിയ്ക്കപ്പെട്ടു. സാമൂഹിക പരിഷ്കരണ ശ്രമങ്ങൾ വ്യാപകമായി. ഇവയുടെ സ്വാധീനഫലമായി തറവാടുകളിൽ ആഭ്യന്തര പ്രതിസന്ധികൾ ഉടലെടുത്തു. തറവാടിന്റെ കൂട്ടുകുടുംബ വ്യവസ്ഥ തകർന്നു. ദായക്രമം മാറി. രക്തബന്ധ നിർണ്ണയരീതി മാറി. കാരണവ-അനന്തര ബന്ധം തകർന്നു. മരുമക്കത്തായ കൂട്ടുകുടുംബ വ്യവസ്ഥ മക്കത്തായ പിതൃമേധാവിത്വ ലഘു കുടുംബം അഥവാ ആധുനിക അണുകൂടുംബമായി പരിണമിച്ചു. പത്തൊൻപതാം ശതകത്തിന്റെ ഉത്തരാർദ്ധത്തോടുകൂടി ആരംഭിച്ച തറവാടുകളുടെ തകർച്ച ഈ നൂറ്റാണ്ടിന്റെ മദ്ധ്യത്തോടുകൂടിയാണു പൂർത്തിയായത്. തറവാടുകളുടെ തകർച്ച സാമൂഹിക വികാസത്തിന്റെ അനിവാര്യഫലമായിരുന്നു.

3. തറവാടുകളുടെ തകർച്ചയെ കേന്ദ്രീകരിച്ച് രചിയ്ക്കപ്പെട്ട കൃതികളാണ് ഇന്ദുലേഖ, ശാരദ, കയർ, അയലക്കാർ, നാലുകെട്ട് എന്നിവ. ചന്തുമേനോനും തക്ഷിയും

കേശവദേവം എം.ടി. വാസുദേവൻ നായരും ഈ തകർച്ചയെ ഒരേ രീതിയിലല്ല തങ്ങളുടെ നോവലുകളിൽ ചിത്രീകരിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്. കാലഘട്ടത്തിന്റെയും പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിന്റെയും എഴുത്തുകാരന്റെ വ്യക്തിത്വത്തിന്റെയും വിഭിന്നതമൂലം നോവലുകൾ മൗലികമായിത്തന്നെ വ്യത്യസ്തപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. സൗന്ദര്യ ശാസ്ത്രാധിഷ്ഠിതമായ വിശദ പഠനം അർഹിക്കുന്നതാണ് ഈ വസ്തുത.

4. ചന്തുമേനോന്റെ കാലഘട്ടത്തിൽ തറവാടു വ്യവസ്ഥയിൽ തകർച്ച ആരംഭിച്ചിരുന്നു. ഇന്ദുലേഖയിലും ശാരദയിലും അത് പ്രതിഫലിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. നായിക നായക സ്പഷ്ടി യഥാർത്ഥമായിട്ടില്ല. ഭാവിയിലെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള എഴുത്തുകാരന്റെ സ്വപ്നത്തിന്റെ ആഖ്യാനമായി അതിനെ പരിഗണിക്കാം.

5. തറവാടിന്റെ തകർച്ചയുടെ ബാഹ്യവും ആഭ്യന്തരവുമായ ഘടകങ്ങളെ സമഗ്രമായി 'കയറി'ൽ ചിത്രീകരിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. സമൂഹ വികാസം കുടുംബ വ്യവസ്ഥയിലും വ്യക്തിബന്ധങ്ങളിലും ഉളവാക്കുന്ന പരിണാമത്തെ തിരിച്ചറിയാനും അവയെ കൂട്ടിയിണക്കി ലാവണ്യോത്സുകമായി ചിത്രീകരിക്കാനും തക്ഷിക്ക് കഴിഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്നു. 'റിഫ്ളക്ടീവ് റിയലിസം' അതിന്റെ സാധ്യതയെ ഫലപ്രദമായി ഉപയോഗപ്പെടുത്തിക്കൊണ്ടാണു തക്ഷി കയർ രചിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്. ഇക്കാര്യത്തിൽ അദ്ദേഹം മറ്റുള്ളവരെ അതിശയിപ്പിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്.

6. തറവാടിന്റെ തകർച്ചയ്ക്കു ആസ്പദമായ ബാഹ്യവും ആഭ്യന്തരവുമായ ഘടകങ്ങളെ തൃപ്തികരമായി സങ്കലനം ചെയ്ത് യഥാത്ഥമായി ചിത്രീകരിക്കുന്നതിൽ കേശവദേവ് വിജയിച്ചിട്ടില്ല. പത്മനാഭപിള്ളയെ ആദർശ വല്ക്കരിക്കാനുള്ള ശ്രമത്തിൽ റിയലിസത്തിൽ നിന്നും ദേവ് അകന്നുപോയി. തറവാടിന്റെ തകർച്ചയുടെ അടിസ്ഥാന കാരണത്തെക്കുറിച്ച് ശരിയായ അവബോധവും ദേവിനുണ്ടായിരുന്നില്ല. അയലക്കാരുടെ രചന പാളിപ്പോകുന്നതിന് ഇവ കാരണമായി തീർന്നു.

7. സമൂഹപരിണാമം വ്യക്തിയിൽ ഉളവാക്കിയ പ്രതികരണത്തിലൂടെ ആവിഷ്കരിക്കുക എന്ന നവീനമായ രചനാതന്ത്രമാണ് എം.ടി. പൊതുവേ സ്വീകരിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്. അതിനാൽ നാലുകെട്ടും അസുരവിത്തും കാലവും തറവാടിന്റെ തകർച്ചയുടെ റിഫ്ളക്ടീവ് റിയലിസ്റ്റിക് രീതിയിലുള്ള ആഖ്യാനമാകുന്നില്ല. അതേ സമയം തറവാടിന്റെ തകർച്ചയുടെ വ്യത്യസ്ത ഘട്ടങ്ങളെ വിശ്വസനീയമായി പ്രതിഫലിപ്പിക്കാൻ എം.ടി.ക്കു കഴിഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്നു. തറവാടിന്റെ തകർച്ചയുടെ കഥ പറയാതെ അതിനെ തീക്ഷ്ണമായ ഒരു അനുഭവമായി മാറ്റാൻ എം.ടി.ക്കു കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടുണ്ട്.

* മണ്ണമ്പളത്തിൽ, ഗോവിന്ദപുരം, കായംകുളം, 690 527