



CHRONICLE 14

Quarterly

Newsletter

2008

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EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue of CDSC arrives late – but with a good reason.

Readers will surely notice the change in the contents. All of us at CDS felt that the CDSC was beginning to look tired, a bit like a piece of old furniture that everyone uses but no one notices. In the past two months, we had discussions with faculty members, students, and the staff at CDS about infusing CDSC with new life.

We do hope that our efforts have paid off. We have tried to highlight the most exciting part of the institution – the ongoing research. In this issue, we

focus on the work of the Research Unit for Local Self-Government at CDS. Also, we have tried to get the students and the staff back in. So we have for in issue a special column, 'Studentspeak', through which students express their concerns and share their research interests. And the Library staff are back with 'Bibli-oh!'. Hopefully these will grow into CDSC's most attractive features.

We do hope to hear from you about the new CDSC. All the great ideas we received in the discussions have not been used for this issue. They will surely be given concrete shape in the future.

J. Devika

A Tribute to Professor P.R. Gopinathan Nair

Professor P.R. Gopinathan Nair – or PRG, as we all called him – passed away on 6 August 2008, at the age of 78. All of CDS – and especially those of us who have been involved with the *CDS Chronicle* – are still coming to terms with this loss. He was at work in his office till the very last moments – and his moment of passage seemed to reflect the gentle graciousness that marked him as a person. The *CDS Chronicle* has lost much more than a member of its editorial committee; indeed, PRG was one of its staunchest supporters and the work he put into the making of each issue was usually the most significant.

Born on 31 May 1931, PRG began his academic career at the Department of Economics, University of Kerala, and Thiruvananthapuram in the mid-1960s. He retired from the Department as Professor and Head in the 1990s. He has been closely associated with CDS from its very inception in all aspects – research, teaching, editing, and other activities. Indeed, after his retirement from the University of Kerala, PRG spent most of his time at CDS as Honorary Fellow. His students are numerous, both at CDS and the University of Kerala.

PRG's research has, since the 1970s, opened up

important questions on the links between population and human development, and around education and international migration in Kerala. In that sense he is one of the key progenitors of the wide-ranging debate on



development, public action, and social change that is often referred to as 'the Kerala Model Debate'. His paper on the decline of birth rates in Kerala, which advanced a new hypothesis on the interrelationship between demographic variables, health services, and education, published in the *Economic and Political Weekly* in 1974, is now necessary reading for any student who enters that area. PRG also devoted time and energy to translating development research writing in English to Malayalam.

PRG's active involvement has enriched two major research programmes at CDS — the UNDP-sponsored research project on 'Social Sector Strategies for Financing Human Development' in association with the (late) Prof T.N. Krishnan, and later, the 'Kerala Research Programme on Local Level Development' with Prof K. N. Nair. He has

also co-edited books on education with Prof A. Vaidyanathan (2001); his other edited work was of micro-studies on education in Kerala with Prof K.N. Nair (2007). Besides, he was actively associated with the Research Unit on International Migration at CDS, and co-authored a book on return migrants with K. C. Zachariah and S. Irudaya Rajan (2006). PRG was a widely-travelled scholar, associated with a number of international organisations, such as International Labour Organisation, United Nations University, International Organisation for Migration and United Nations Development Programme.

As Prof K.P. Kannan remarked about PRG in his recent write-up, his concern for students was evident in the length he would go to help out students with their “‘nut and bolt’ problems in conducting research”. Rare, indeed, is such a combination – a fine human being and a scholar.

(Please refer to page 15 for some of the works of Prof. P.R. Gopinathan Nair).

*Inputs
from S. Irudaya Rajan and J. Devika*

SEMINARS

Udaya S. Mishra & William Joe
(Centre for Development Studies)

**Healthcare Payments in India:
It's Catastrophic and Inequity
Implications**

25 April

(email: mishra@cds.ac.in & william@cds.ac.in)

K.K. Subrahmanian and Syam Prasad
(Centre for Development Studies)

**Inequality and Inclusive Growth:
The Kerala Experience**

30 May

(email: kks@cds.ac.in, & syam@cds.ac.in)

Pinaki Chakraborty

(Centre for Development Studies)

**Budget Rules, Fiscal Consolidation and
Government Spending: Implications for
Federal Transfers**

6 June

(email: pinaki@cds.ac.in/ pinaki@nipfp.org.in)

Professor Parameswar Nandakumar

(Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode)

**Skilled Labour-Specificity and the Pure Theory
of International Trade: An Application to the
Indian Information Technology Sector**

20 June

(email: nanda7285@yahoo.com)

EVENTS

**International Conference on Employment
Opportunities and Public Employment Policy in
Globalising India**

(Sponsored by IDRC Canada)

3-5 April

This conference brought together network of academics, policy advisors, institutions, and members of government and young researchers, to exchange views and disseminate research

findings on the implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (EGA) in India and similar initiatives in other developing Countries, particularly in Brazil and in South Africa. Apart from the leading experts from within India, select members of the “Network of Economists for Full Employment” an initiative supported by ILO which is based in Levy Economics Institute, New York has also participated in the seminar.

Various papers presented on the Indian experience

brought out the fact that states' performance varies widely in measure of implementation of the Act. It was noticed that fund utilisation ratio is alarming low in poorer states. Now that the coverage of the Act has been extended to all the districts of the country, the insights from discussions in this seminar may help us to understand the effectiveness of the 'employer of last resorts' policy as an employment policy tool in India.

Pinaki Chakraborty

Discussion on International Migration Policy for India

2 June

A meeting of the Migration Policy Group (MPG), constituted by the Research Unit on International Migrations and as mandated by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA), was held on Monday 2 June 2008, at CDS to discuss in detail the policy note prepared by S. Krishna Kumar, the Chairman of MPG. The meeting was chaired by K. N. Nair, the Director of CDS, and was attended by K. Mohandas, IAS, the Secretary, MOIA and Ranbir Singh, IAS, Director Emigration Policy, MOIA.

V. J. Varghese

One-day Consultation Workshop on Kottathara Panchayat Human Development Report

(Sponsored by Kerala State Planning Board)

Coordinator: K. Navaneetham

16 June



At the invitation of the Kerala State Planning Board, CDS has initiated the process of preparing District Human Development Reports (HDR) for Kottayam and Wayanad, and Panchayat HDR for one Panchayat selected from each of these two districts. The Centre prepared a preliminary draft panchayat HDR for Kottathara Grama Panchayat for wider consultation and organised a one day consultation workshop at the Conference Hall, Wayanad Collectorate, Kalpetta to get the feedback and suggestion of stakeholders. The workshop was attended by State and District Level Officers of the State Planning Board, Elected representatives of the Panchayati raj institutions, representatives of District Planning Committee, invited external experts, representatives of NGOs, civil society organisations and public institutions.

Krishnakumar. C.S

IN FOCUS

The Research Unit on Local Self Governments (RULSG) funded by the Government of Kerala was set up in CDS in 2005 to generate knowledge on the functioning of local self governments to help them in the efficient planning and implementation of projects for local development. We felt that this objective is best achieved through continual interaction with local self governments to understand the constraints they face in developmental and welfare

activities. The major task was to evolve a policy-oriented methodology for local planning that would allow for balance between general goals and local priorities. With these goals in mind we initiated an action research programme with the active collaboration of the local self governments in Kasaragod district in June 2006. In this issue we would like to share our experiences in several minor projects conducted over the past two years.

Housing for Grama Panchayats

When five Grama Panchayats in Kasaragod district — Karadka , Udma , Kodome-Belur, Kayyur-Cheemeni and East-Eleri — identified housing as their priority area, they were expressing a general trend: historically, the demand for independent housing for small families has been prominent in Kerala. The RULSG's intervention in local planning here was geared towards providing sustainable housing to the poor in these areas.

Field visits revealed the alarmingly dilapidated condition of housing for the poor — the Scheduled Tribes. Focus group discussions and a beneficiary survey designed by the RULSG brought out the inadequacies of the existing housing projects – especially the unrealistic beneficiary selection method, the fact that beneficiaries receive equal amounts of assistance irrespective of their financial status, the centrality of subsidy in housing assistance. The RULSG along with technical experts facilitated the preparation of housing projects for the five village panchayats, based on these observations from field research. A management committee and a technical committee at the Grama Panchayat level, and lower committees, including cluster committees, which were to organise and monitor construction activities, were proposed.

Good housing, however, rarely comes cheap. The plans, finalised by March 2007, had estimates on the higher side. For instance, in the housing plan proposed for east Eleri, where 693 houses were needed, the total cost worked out to be close to 14 million rupees. Local governments were not able to allocate even a fraction of such costs, for many reasons. No funds were forthcoming from the Block or District Panchayats.

The experience of the RULSG in this intervention confirms misgivings raised by researchers about the government's efforts to provide housing for the poor in the State – in a larger sense, this signals at our concerns regarding what the optimum size of a minimum entitlement in housing would be.

Promoting Agriculture in Madikkai



The RULSG initiated agriculture promotion at the instance of Madikkai Grama Panchayat (GP), here, in the context of poor performance of the sector for the last ten years, even after interventions through decentralised planning. A review, by RULSG team, of the Agricultural projects implemented previously revealed that programmes were poorly conceived and implemented. Meetings with rice and coconut farmers were held and data were collected on problems related to farming. Scientists from Central Plantation Crops Research Institute, Kerala Agriculture University and Agriculture Department visited farmers and the Governing Board members of the GP. Based on the discussions with the farmers and scientists the working group prepared a draft project. The draft was presented before the Agriculture Grama Sabha and was finalised after incorporating their suggestions. The annual plans of the GP for the project were drawn from the comprehensive plans. The GP has submitted the plan for consideration under National Agriculture Development Programme.

In 2007-08, the GP decided to experiment Group Farming in Keekamkottu vayal, one of the 8 *Padashekharams*. Farmers' meetings were convened to discuss the modalities of group farming. A calendar of activities was prepared to discourage competition among farmers for labour and other inputs. Seeds were procured from National Seeds Corporation of India and farmers were trained on raising the seedlings. The service of agricultural experts and scientists were made available to the farmers. The GP purchased a tiller from plan fund for the farm. Fertilizer and pesticides were provided at subsidised rates.

The collective effort of the farmers, the farm labourers, the grama panchayat, and the agricultural scientists paid rich dividends. Rice production multiplied and productivity surged ahead. And the harvest turned out to be celebration time for all. The farmers of Keekamkottuvayal were so encouraged by the fruits of their labour that this year they are not only going to continue group farming but also going to assist farmers of other *Padasekharams* in taking up group farming.

Ups and Downs of a Watershed Project



Bedadka, a beautiful, tranquil village in Kasaragod, with sprawling rocky areas, valleys and hills, offered the RULSG a wonderful opportunity for learning and intervention in 2007. Bedadka's people are mostly farmers – and so the Village Panchayat of Bedadka was especially interested in watershed management. The RULSG, along with other organizations and government departments committed to water and soil conservation, identified Cherpady, a small watershed, for intervention. In the subsequent weeks, the Village Watershed Committee and eight Nano Watershed Committees were formed. A number of activities were undertaken– transect walks, soil survey, socio-economic survey, training exercises, and awareness meetings. The enthusiasm of local people for the project was palpable and their participation was encouraging indeed.

However, the roadblocks were soon to come – it took many months to finalise NABARD as the funding agency for the project; the benchmark survey to measure water levels in the wells and the

length of streams in the watershed, and document the vegetation on both banks, was delayed; necessary equipment for measuring rainfall and humidity were never purchased. In general, enthusiasm seemed to have waned at the local official level, though Bedadka Village Panchayat allotted one lakh rupees for project in its annual plan for 2007-08. The enthusiasm of the Village Watershed Committee too declined with delays in disbursement of financial resources to beneficiaries. However, NABARD team visited the area and on May 16, a plan prepared by the watershed development team was approved by the Watershed Grama Sabha.

We have learnt valuable lessons– that unless the productive sector is planned in a comprehensive way, and unless the Local Self-Government Department accords primacy to agricultural projects based on watershed management, the way ahead will stretch endlessly. Nevertheless, hope is sturdier than all these hurdles!

Training for Project Appraisal

Many of the public projects, even when they are conceived well, fail to meet their objectives, due to the lack of ongoing monitoring and not learning from the past mistakes of earlier projects. However, it is only occasionally that ongoing projects are monitored or completed projects evaluated by a third party to assess the costs and benefits of the projects. While large projects at the international and national level do get appraised by professional bodies, numerous small projects implemented at the local panchayat level through the local self government institutions go unattended, mainly due to the lack of trained personnel in the area. It is in this context that RULSG initiated a training programme on “Appraisal, Monitoring and Evaluation of Projects of LSGs” to make available well trained persons at local level for planning and appraisal of public projects. The training programme aimed to equip the attendees with knowledge on ways of assessing financial, economic and social viability, the selection of appropriate institutional mechanisms for the implementation of projects,

mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation and the sustainable operation and management of assets created. The participants of the training programme were selected through screening and consisted of a heterogeneous group including college teachers, officials of urban and rural governments, members of working groups, Technical Advisory Groups and District Planning Committees, elected representatives and representatives of Non Governmental Organisations among others.

The programme was inaugurated on 12 November 2007 by Teeka Ram Meena, Secretary to State Planning Board at a function chaired by K.N. Nair, Director, CDS. The first training was for a period of 2 weeks for 25 persons. The duration was scaled down to eight days in the subsequent two batches considering the feed back from the participants of the first training. In total, 72 persons have been trained so far. The response from various groups to the training programme has been very encouraging. But how the expertise acquired by the trained persons will be utilised by the local governments in improving their efficiency remains to be seen.

Good Governance initiatives through IT

Service delivery systems of the local bodies have not been up to expectations even after decentralization; the prospect of greater accountability in democratic decentralization, which was expected to enhance efficiency of these systems, proved to be negative. In this context, RULSG have been assisting the Kasaragod District Panchayat (DP) and two Grama Panchayats (GP) viz. Madikkai and Chemnad, in their quest for improving quality of their services through e-governance initiatives. In DP, three transferred Departments, Agriculture, Health and Education were taken up on a pilot basis. With technical support from Information Kerala Mission (IKM), we initiated the use of Information technology (IT) in agriculture and health. In agriculture, three GPs- Pullur-Peria, Nileshwaram and Cheruvathur were identified for IT intervention. We identified various spheres of IT initiatives that could improve efficiency. For instance, computerisation would reduce the work load of Agriculture Officers and make them available for on

farm services. The state government's flagship IT programme, 'Akshaya Kendra', -local IT kiosks were to be interlinked with Agricultural offices to provide farming related information to the farmers. Networking with GP and with offices at the Block level and the District level is on the anvil.

A meeting with the doctors of the District Hospital brought out the possibility of computerised token system that could enhance administrative efficiency. In Madikkai GP the data pertaining to birth and death, social security pensions, office accounting, salary bill preparation, file tracking and plan monitoring have been computerised. The RULSG funds have been utilised to appoint personnel for training the staff on accessing the data .

In Chemnad, the progress has been tardy on account of a number of intrinsic factors. Birth and death data and most of the social security pension details have been computerised.

Moving Away from the Beaten Path in Peria

Farmers are the repositories of practical knowledge of agriculture not simply because they engage in farming day-to-day. They are often inheritors of knowledge from earlier generations, a fact less noticed in conventional development interventions. More often, development planning addresses agriculture through packages or projects that draw upon the expertise of government departments. The RULSG's intervention in Pullur-Periya Grama Panchayat moves away from such beaten paths. Here we seek to build knowledge capital through bringing together two groups of 'expertise' – the farmers' traditional knowledge and the scientific know-how from research on agriculture.

In other words, the effort is to conceive of the farmer-expert relation not as a recipient-donor relation, but as a thoroughly reciprocal one. It is hoped that the knowledge thus generated through two-way flow will be of use throughout the State. Fifteen farmers from Peria are actively engaged in the learning process. Farm profiles were prepared, soil testing conducted, and farming practices documented. These were subjected to expert

analysis, with the help of the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute. Retired experts have also been invited to participate in the process.

The RULSG group also realised that it would also be necessary to foster sources of additional income to the farmers. Floriculture, betel-vine cultivation, bio-fertiliser production, and dairying, all based on innovative methods, are being attempted and closely documented. Most importantly, the learning

is being actively shared between the farmers.

Recently, the RULSG has interacted with the rice farmers of Kayakkulam who have shown keen interest in rice farming and the cultivation of pulses as a second crop. On the whole, this is an encouraging experiment. We hope to share the lessons from Pullur-Peria with the larger community of farmers there, the leaders of the local body, and the Agricultural Department.

Outreach

- Sunil Mani has been invited to be one of the principal contributing authors of two of the chapters (one on 'Industrial R&D in India' and the second one on 'Growth of Technology-Oriented Industries in India' of the India S&T Report 2008 being brought by National Institute of Science, Technology and Development Studies (NISTADS), New Delhi. He taught at the 5th International Ph.D. School on National Systems of Innovation and Economic Development, Globelics Academy, University of Tampere, Finland, June 9-13. He also commented on six Ph.d dissertations during this time and presented a paper titled, 'Financing of industrial innovations in India, How effective are tax incentives for R&D?' at the Second Conference on Micro Evidence on Innovation in Developing Economies, Center for Applied Statistics, Renmin University, Beijing, and UNU-MERIT, United Nations University and University of Maastricht at Renmin University of China, Beijing, April 21-23 2008

- J. Devika presented a paper on 'Politics, Patriarchy, and Democratic Decentralisation in Kerala' at the Annual Summer Conference of the International Association for Feminist Economics held at the University of Turin, Italy, 19-21 June.
- Pinaki Chakraborty presented a paper (co-authored with Lekha Chakraborty and Krishanu Karmakar) titled 'Estimating Indirect Tax Incidence,' at the Symposium on 'Globalisation and Taxation: Improving Revenue Generation and Social Protection in Developing Countries,' at Argentina, during May 13-15, 2008.
- S. Irudaya Rajan participated in the Commission of Experts Meeting organised by the Ministry of Labour, United Arab Emirates at Abu Dhabi on 20th April 2008. He also participated in the meeting of the Project Management Team of the Pilot projects to demonstrate best practices in the Administration of the Temporary Contractual Employment Cycle at Abu Dhabi, organised by the Ministry of Labour, United Arab Emirates on 21st April 2008.

FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR'S DESK

Research Affiliation to CIHR-Canada HOPE Scholar
 Dr Sabu Aliyar, currently the recipient of the Canada-HOPE scholarship for his ongoing work on population ageing, health, and nutrition, has joined CDS as a Research Affiliate for two years.

Dr Aliyar is one of the three scholars to receive this prestigious fellowship, which allows promising researchers to work in research institutions in Canada. Dr Aliyar was a Research Fellow at the School of Nutrition, Acadia University, Nova Scotia, Canada. He will be associating with S. Irudaya Rajan, Fellow, CDS.

FROM THE LIBRARY

We are pitching in more, come back to the library! The old-world charm of reading from bound books and magazines, and browsing through stacked shelves in the library are fast receding, and the CDS library is no exception. CDS is also facing a growing army of digital corps who just read pdf files on laptops.

We are trying to woo our readers back to the library. Now our readers do not have to pack their bags at lunch on Saturdays. We are keeping the library open till evening 5 pm, on Saturdays, instead of the earlier practice of shutting at lunch hour. Enjoy your holiday at our library and grow wiser!

More of us, staff members, are going to be around during the lean hours, 5 pm to 6 pm, as well. Earlier we had thinned down our strength during the lean hours due to poor attendance in the library. But, no, if we wanted our friends to get back to the library we had to chip in more. So from now on our service to the readers would be available through out the day 9 am to 6 pm on all working days, lean hours or not.

Now don't wait in long queues to issue or return books. Barcode based Circulation system has

been successfully implemented for circulation activities. We have also completed the retrospective conversion of bibliographic records of all Working Papers and Back volumes of journals. Also you don't have to sift through complex catalogues to find what you want. Now they can be accessed through the Libsys OPAC.

The articles database is updated on a daily basis. In order to disseminate CDS Working Papers to researchers we have recently digitised Working Papers no. 1 to 278. Full text of our Working papers is now freely accessible from our website.

To top it all, the new library building is nearing completion and we hope that library space shortage which has been a pressing problem for several years will be solved. We are planning to have an air-conditioned Reading room and a Digital library in the new bloc. So now reading would be no sweat!

T.K.Subramoni

Dr T. K. Subramoni, former Library Manager, British Council joined CDS as Chief Librarian in June.

Senior Assistant Librarian V.K.Anil Kumar has been re-designated as Information and Documentation Officer.

Bibli-oh !

Excavation in Progress: The floor, where the old collections are stored for repair and maintenance was dug by the excavating team, groundbreaking began but it was slow, so the team was strengthened with addition of able-bodied men from different parts of the country, few of them were from the land of monuments (North-East). While digging they discovered some pieces of low-cost bricks and stones, later realized it were the ones used as foundations stones, three decades back. The collection stored there were already removed by Mr. Arjunan and his team and added to the heap of dead collection though a few of them were alive. The digging continued uninterrupted with the team moving from one site to another, then they started to excavate the ground floor below the present staircase - leading to the library entrance, but they could not trace anything! So, they guessed it must

be outside the library and moved the team to dig next to the foundation of new library tower, luckily this time, they succeeded in their attempt by unearthing a decayed fossil of an old tree. Later the inquiry team realized that it was the root of a eucalyptus they had cut while laying the foundation for the new library tower - just two years back! Finally they started digging in front of entrance, once again luck prevailed they got some old iron pipes - historical remnants from the metal age!!

Life Saved: With the timely notice from the Librarian and help of Biju, luckily the slab hanging over the library counter was removed, it was just above the counter, and could have crash-landed on any soul any time.

Entrance Test: Different methods are being tested to access the library; manholes including manholes!

Amir Ali

STUDENTSPEAK

Life in an Article Factory

While shuttling between stations and ports at odd hours, catching junk-food in-between from Mac's and KFC's and dumping the rest of my salary as rent, I decided to have a break (yeah, it cost me a job...No, they didn't throw me out).

Back home, got admitted for Ph.D at the university and convinced my parents that they need to sponsor my *khana-kappada-makan* for some more time since "PhD is like an investment - abstention from present consumption for the future..." (God, mercy on my sins). It is then that I first saw this ad: "Applications are invited from the unemployed (and runaway journalists and civil servants) to the Center's entertainment programmes. The selected unemployed and runaways will be given stipends by the Centre for Article Development Studies. Selected unemployed Yemphils to get 6k per month and unemployed Yem'As to get 3k per month.

Oh boy! Though the place is an artifact (acronym for article factory), my **real** standard of living jumped up from my salaried days. I got a whole 200 square feet furnished studio apartment all for myself for pittance. There is 'cooked' food, which we eventually learn to survive. Started collecting artifacts from the factory, learn to live without water and share space with other creatures. Since it is difficult to wake up in the morning, we keep an alarm...to wake up by noon, at least, for lunch. As time flies, the world around gets very colourful, painted with a heavy dash of grey, black & occasional white.

There are two major classes here: the stipender class and the articlist class. The classes are under constant conflict, as the articlist class controls the means for disbursing stipend. The stipenders dream of being an articlist one day – the class, according to them, enjoying the highest quality of life.

The life in the article factory is an eternal cycle...repetitive and unending. You have to be here to enjoy it...like the *Hotel California* – "you

can always check out, but you can never leave".

Anand. S

Contract Farming – Lessons from the Field

Contract farming has emerged in many parts of India as a solution to the woes of farmers plagued by difficulties in securing inputs and marketing products. In Andhra, farmers are contracted for raising Gherkins and hybrid rice. The contractual agreement differs from crop to crop. In the case of Gherkin farming, the company provides all the inputs and technology, buys back the entire crop, but provides no credit for labour. However, for hybrid rice farming, the company provides limited quantities of pesticides and extension services, and procures the whole output. Farmers reported an increase in their incomes through contract farming, and employment in the rural economy seems to have increased, since both these crops are labour intensive.

Gherkin farmers claimed that an income of six to eight thousand per acre could be earned in two months, while farmers of hybrid rice reported that each acre fetched close to twenty thousand rupees in about four months. They also mentioned difficulties, especially Gherkin farmers, who were being harassed by moneylenders when payments to them got delayed. They also complained that sometimes the company does not procure the entire gherkin crop, and then they were forced to sell the crop at lower rates. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, apparently, is adding to their woes since labour becomes unavailable in crucial times. Also, there is no compensation for crop failure. Most of the Gherkin farmers demanded that unless credit for hiring labour is offered, and the unit price of the commodity is increased, the system will not be sustainable. In contrast, hybrid rice farmers were a happier lot – the company, in their case, pays fifty percent of the total price within ten days after the

delivery of seeds and the rest after the completion of certification. They also receive a compensation of Rs 18,000 per acre in case of total crop failure due to natural calamities.

Braja Bandhu Swain

Buying Nature for Economic Growth

“Tell us how much money do you want for tigers or any other animals? We are ready to fund the cloning of any animal or bird that you want to conserve. But give us clearance for extracting the minerals without delay,” the owner of a private mining company argued in a seminar on environmental conservation in mining areas of Orissa. A senior official of a State-owned mining company quoted these statements to me during a discussion. This, I thought, is the solution for the dwindling tiger population in India.

But what about the lessons that we got from school textbooks? We were taught that tigers stand at the top of ecological order. A healthy tiger population in the forest speaks not only of their own well-being but also that of others – a thriving water body, lush vegetation, rich biodiversity, a rich assortment of animals and birds. The officer replies: “if not today, tomorrow we have to cut the forest and dig out the

minerals to meet the rising demand for metals and other mineral products. We can create a new zoo to preserve all the animals and birds that were living in the mining area. But in the name of environmental conservation we cannot be so romantic as to constrain our economic growth”.

This has been the typical attitude towards conservation of environment and biodiversity. For clearing a project, environmental impact assessment is being carried out in a piecemeal manner and ignoring the indivisibility of ecological services. A lush green forest, a perennial and pristine water body might look awfully romantic for the city grown *babus* issuing environmental clearances but these are the inexorable sources of livelihood for the local people. While initiating a new project, local people are assured of tap water in place of stream water, regular job in the project for their livelihood in place of their dependence on forest or other common pool natural resources. But all these remain never-fulfilled-promises.

The questions still remain: Development for whom? How rapidly should we grow? What should be the strategy of our growth?

Amarendra Das

P U B L I C A T I O N S

Books

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Navaneetham, K A. Dharmalingam and G. Caselli (eds.) 2008. *Poverty, Nutrition and Mortality: A Comparative Perspective*, Paris: CICRED.

Articles/Chapter(s) in books

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BOOK TALK

Poverty, Nutrition and Mortality: A Comparative Perspective, edited by K. Navaneetham (CDS), A. Dharmalingam (Monash University, Australia) and G. Caselli (University of Rome, Italy) explores the theoretical understandings of the inter-linkages between poverty, nutrition and morbidity/mortality by using empirical evidence at both macro and micro levels from three regions: Asia, the Pacific and Africa. The arguments and findings presented in this volume confirm that poverty, nutrition and mortality are not just inter-related and complex but that they are inseparable. The failure to survive, or

not surviving well, is strongly influenced by exposure to poverty and the resultant lack of access to social, economic and cultural resources. The contributions in this volume suggested a number of pathways that could be followed and frameworks for understanding the interconnections between mortality and poverty. The chapters in this volume also highlight the importance of culture, economic relationships, market-oriented production, history and geography for arriving at a better understanding of poverty, nutrition and mortality. The book has been published by Committee for International

Cooperation in National Research in Demography (CICRED), Paris, France.

Individuals, Householders, Citizens: Malayalis and Family Planning, 1930-1970, by J. Devika reconstructs the history of the creation of public assent for family planning in the span of four decades between the 1930s and 70s. It examines the different

ways in which people were interpellated into the discourse of family planning, and the importance of emergent notions of gender in these processes. It employs some of the insights of economists and demographers as entry points for critical historical enquiry into questions of gender, contraception and development in Kerala. The book has been published by Zubaan, New Delhi.

POLICY POINTERS

In his paper '**Role of Private Hospitals in Kerala: An Exploration**' (Working Paper No. 400, June, 2008) T.R.

Dilip attempts to understand the characteristics of private hospitals and the equity in accessing their services. His analysis shows that public policy favouring increased private sector participation in medical education coupled with opening of super specialty hospitals has resulted in phasing out of the much-needed small hospitals/nursing homes. A consistent increase in demand for hospitalisation facilities was noted between 1986-87 and 2004. Though the quantum of utilisation of private hospitals among poor is similar as rich, it taxes them severely. The over-whelming dominance of the private sector across time has resulted in marginalised groups getting more and more restricted access.

In their paper '**Rising Inequality with High Growth :Is this Trend Worrisome? Analysis of Kerala Experience**' (Working Paper No.401) K.K. Subramanian and Syam Prasad have analysed NSSO's Household Consumption Expenditure Survey Data of major Indian states with the focus placed on growth and inequality nexus in Kerala. It is clearly shown that rising inequality has tended to drive away the benefits of faster growth and hamper the rate of poverty reduction in Kerala context. These and other findings of the study may not help in suggesting specific redistribution policies but points out a clear policy direction. High growth rate alone would not be sufficient for reducing poverty; policies that reduce inequality are also critical for tackling the problem of poverty. Clearly, policy formulation cannot ignore or be indifferent to the current trend of rising inequality that accompanies high growth trajectories under neo-liberal policy regime. The celebration of high growth rate with a blind eye on inequality is a worrisome trend. Simultaneous policies aimed at achieving high growth rate and reducing levels of inequality are necessary for meeting the newly coined development goal of "inclusive growth" in the context of the Indian states.

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