



CHRONICLE 18

Quarterly

Newsletter

2009

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Volume 5. Issue 2. April - June, 2009

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Published by the Director, Centre for Development Studies
Prasanth Nagar Road, Ulloor
Medical College P.O, Thiruvananthapuram - 695 011
Phone: 0471 2448881-84 Website: www.cds.edu

Printed at St. Joseph's Press, Thiruvananthapuram - 695 014

For Private Circulation only

SEMINARS

R. Mohan

(Indian Revenue Service)

and

D. Shyjan

(Department of Economics, University of Calicut and Doctoral Scholar at CDS)

**Impact of Central Devolution on the States –
A Study in the Indian Context**

24 April

(email: prakri@gmail.com & shyjandavis@gmail.com)

N.C. Narayanan

(Associate Professor, Centre for Technology

Alternatives for Rural Areas, IIT, Bombay)

**Governance of Drinking Water
in Kerala: Analysis of Recent
Institutional Changes**

5 June

(email: ncn@iitb.ac.in)

Sunil Mani

(Centre for Development Studies)

**Is India Becoming more Innovative
since 1991? Analysis of its Evidence
and some Disquieting Features**

19 June

(email: mani@cds.ac.in)

CONFERENCES / WORKSHOPS

**Workshop on Transnationalisation,
Migration and Transformation:
Migrations from Punjab to UK**

Coordinators:

S. Irudaya Rajan and V. J. Varghese

6 April

The Research Unit on International Migration, CDS, in collaboration with the Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (CRRID), organised a one-day workshop at the Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (CRRID), Chandigarh, to announce the launch of its “Trans-nationalisation, Migration and Transformation: Multi-Level Analysis of Migrant Trans-nationalism” (TRANS-NET) research project in Punjab.

The workshop was aimed at initiating discussions on the research project to strengthen its methodological and field orientations. Dr. S.K. Mangal, Member of the CRRID Governing Body, inaugurated the workshop. Professor Aswini Kumar Nanda, Director, Population Research

Centre, CRRID, made the opening presentation on the history and dynamics of migration from Punjab.

S. Irudaya Rajan, CDS, introduced the research project. He said its thrust was on investigating how migrants’ activities across national borders emerge, function and change, and how they are related to the processes of governance in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. He also explained the research strategy, which will take into account views from both the home and host countries, with research teams working simultaneously in India and the UK.

V.J. Varghese, CDS, spoke on the research agenda of the TRANS-NET project, especially how it intends to closely investigate structural factors related to transnational migrations and their implications on the everyday life of people in Punjab. He also detailed the political, socio-cultural, economic and educational domains of transnationalism that will be covered by the study at the micro, meso and macro levels.

Mr. Swarn S. Kahlon, Mr. Ashwini Luthra, Professor Swaranjit Mehta, Professor B.L. Abbi and Ambassador P.S. Sahai also spoke in the workshop,

which was attended by more than 50 participants from the academic community, government, non-governmental organisations and the press.

V.J. Varghese

TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Using Internet for Applied Development Research, Version 5.0

2-5 April

This year the programme went national since its inception five years ago. It was held in collaboration with the Western Regional Centre of the ICSSR at its premises in Mumbai University Campus during April 3-5 2009. For the first time we advertised in the EPW and in response to it received about 100 applicants from a wide variety of universities and research institutes across the country. From this list we selected about 60 participants and ultimately about 50 students attended the programme. Like earlier years the programme took the participants through the various stages in conducting research on applied development problems and acquainted with various open source Internet tools. Classes were handled by Mr. J.Muralidharan Nair, Dr U.S. Mishra and Professor Sunil Mani. The programme was co-ordinated by Professor Sunil Mani and Professor Venketesh Kumar. We hope to repeat this programme again in 2010.

Sunil Mani

2nd CDS-UNCTAD Refresher Course cum Research Training Programme in Economics

Co-ordinator – K.J. Joseph

21 May-10 June

As part of its activities as a partner of the UNCTAD-GOI-DFID Project on Strategies and Preparedness for Trade and Globalisation in India (SPTGI), the

CDS held a refresher course for university/college teachers and researchers, entitled 'Contemporary Issues in International Trade: Theory and Empirics'. In addition to scholars from the CDS, 19 university/college teachers and researchers from 11 states participated in the second version of the training programme.

The inaugural lecture was by Professor Prabhat Patnaik, Vice Chairman, State Planning Board, Government of Kerala. Apart from the CDS faculty, resources persons included well-known scholars in the area of international trade, policy-makers and practitioners.

While the course aimed to familiarise its participants with recent theoretical developments and empirical issues in the sphere of international trade, the special features of this year's programme were a focus on Computable General Equilibrium modelling and an exposure to all important trade data bases.

Other issues dealt with included trade policy reforms in developing countries, issues related to India's international competitiveness and balance of payments, new trade theories, issues related to FTAs and RTAs, and various agreements under the WTO and their implications.

Professor A. Jayakrishnan, Vice Chancellor, University of Kerala, delivered the valedictory address and distributed the certificates. As in the previous year, feedback from the participants was very encouraging.

K.J. Joseph
Hrushikesh Mallick

MEMORIAL LECTURE

**The Second P.K. Gopalakrishnan
Memorial Lecture**

“Middle Class in India”

18 June

Professor Andre Beteille
(National Professor and Professor Emeritus
of Sociology, Delhi School
of Economics and former Chairman,
Indian Council of Social Science
Research, New Delhi)



The core issue Professor Andre Beteille addressed in his lecture was that of distinguishing the Indian middle class as a distinct segment of the population. In his opinion, discussions on the Indian middle class tended to be largely moralistic, focusing on its self-seeking and self-serving attitudes. A better way of addressing the issues and challenges posed by the emergence of the middle class, he suggested, would be to understand its role in conjunction with other classes since it is fundamentally a unit in a larger class system.

The middle class in this country has had a prominent position since the 19th century with it being the driving force behind the modernisation of Indian society. The older middle class consisted mainly of self-employed persons and own-account workers who were neither employers nor employees. They did not also belong to the land-owning, working or peasant communities. But by the end of the 19th century, there emerged a distinct modern middle class associated with the office system.

Speaking about the position of the Indian middle class vis-à-vis other classes, Professor Beteille provided an illuminating example by contrasting it with the working class. While the middle classes seem to prefer non-manual occupations, the working classes are mainly engaged in manual work. However, over time, this division is narrowing with greater accessibility to education—the children of working class parents now aspire to study and are catching up with their middle-class counterparts.

Professor Beteille concluded his talk by elaborating on the pivotal role that the state has played in the development of a salaried middle class in India. However, he was of the opinion that an expansion of the middle class in India was not possible through numerical quotas, arguing that this would only give more opportunities to the sons and daughters of already upward mobile middle-class families to become more upward mobile. In his view, a better way of ensuring social mobility was through policies that aim to improve social inclusion, besides providing better access to elementary and secondary education to the deprived sections of society.

Anoopa S. Nair

EVENTS

RUIM Study on Goa Migration

2 June

Report Released in Goa

A function to release the Goa Migration Study, 2008 as well as a discussion with the press were held at

the Goa Government Secretariat Press Hall on 2nd June 2009. The study was prepared by the Research Unit on International Migration (RUIM) of the CDS, in collaboration with the department of the Commissioner for NRI Affairs, Goa.

The programme was presided over by Mr. Eduardo Faleiro, NRI Commissioner, Government of Goa. He officially released the report by handing over a copy to Professor K. Narayanan Nair, Director, Centre for Development Studies.

Mr. Faleiro, a former Union external affairs minister, was very appreciative of the work done by the CDS study team. He observed that Goa was the second state (the first being Kerala) to have conducted such a comprehensive migration study. The study, based on 6,000 representative samples and household surveys conducted in all the 11 talukas



of the state, will be analysed and discussed at a conference of experts on the subject, both at the national and state levels.

Sabu Aliyar

THE CDS MPHIL: A TOUR

My Tryst with the FQ

Aano bhadra: kratavo yantu viswata ("Let noble thoughts come to us from every side") said the Rig Veda because *ne jnaanaat na mukti* ("There is no salvation without wisdom").

These verses signify the noble desire of moulding every student into a "know-all". This was possible in the ancient times of *rishis*, when the boundaries of knowledge were narrowly confined. But in the present age, given an ever-widening horizon of information and our limited capacity to cope with it in the time we have, specialisation has become desirable. This has sadly shorn our education of its cultural/ethical benefits, because a mechanical division among the branches of knowledge has displaced their dialectics; each has become a cell of its own. One of these unfortunate estrangements has been between mathematics and the social sciences.

It was the classical Greek philosophers who first realised the power of mathematics to clear the confusions and uncertainties of a social science. They believed that mathematics helped philosophy gain the same clarity and certainty as geometry, physics or astronomy. Mathematician and philosopher Pythagoras was the source of Plato's view of mathematics as the supreme example of true knowledge. The Pythagorean motto "all

things are numbers" means that the essence and structure of all things can be determined by finding the numerical relations within them. Plato insisted that the reality and intelligibility of the physical world could be comprehended only through the mathematics of the ideal world. There was no question that this world was mathematically structured. Plutarch reports Plato's famous statement, "God eternally geometrises".

As is now clear, mathematics provides a logical, systematic framework within which quantitative relationships may be explored, and an objective picture of the reality generated. There is nothing wrong in claiming that among the social sciences, economics with its deductive reasoning about socio-economic phenomena has been more responsive to mathematics.

Two of its central concepts, commodities and prices, are quantified in a unique manner, and the rich mathematical structure of those two spaces has provided an ideal basis for the development of a large part of economic theory. Though this is acknowledged, and a synthesis is honoured in most foreign universities, the estrangement continues in our country. It has deteriorated to the extent of firming up a conviction that the "arts" are a haven for those weak in mathematics.

The MPhil course in Applied Economics at the CDS expects students to have minimum background knowledge in quantitative analysis. The main objective of the Foundation Course in Mathematics at the start of the programme is to familiarise them with the fundamentals of mathematical methods as applied in economics. Nurtured in the Indian milieu of maths-phobia, most of the students appear in my FQ class in a state of apprehension. It is interesting to watch

their mutation to ease and confidence as my classes progress. The result of course comes from 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration (I do remind them of that legendary Napoleonic dictum).

However, this happy end often masks the reality that follows with many relapsing into old ways. A few still move ahead with promise; and those promises sum up the geometrising God.

Vijayamohan Pillai N.

Outreach

- T.R. Dilip participated in the second WHO Regional Consultation meeting on the Revision of the System of Health Accounts (SHA) manual, held at the OECD Policy Centre, Seoul, Republic of Korea, on 6-8 May 2009.
- K.J. Joseph participated in the launch meeting of the project 'Innovation System for Inclusive Development: Experience of India and China,' and made a presentation at the Institute for Innovation Management (NIIM), Zhejiang University during 11-13 May 2009.
- Sunil Mani presented a paper on 'Is India Becoming more Innovative since 1991?' at the CSTM, University of Twente, Netherlands, on 8 May 2009. He also presented a paper on 'The Empirical Implementation of the National System of Innovation Framework' at a session of the Science of Science and Innovation Policy, First World Social Science Forum, University of Bergen, Norway, on 11 May 2009.
- V.J. Varghese participated in the 3rd *Gendering Asia Network Conference on Gender, Mobility and Citizenship*, organised by the University of Helsinki and Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, during 28-30 May 2009, at the University of Helsinki and presented a paper entitled 'Governmentality, Social Stigma and Quasi-Citizenship: Gender Negotiations of Indian Housemaids to the Middle East' (drawn from a collaborative work with Professor S. Irudaya Rajan). He also attended a project consultation at the University of Tampere, Finland, on 1 June 2009. He discussed the progress of the research project 'Transnationalisation, Migration and Transformation: Multi-Level Analysis of Migrant Transnationalism' and the possibilities of furthering collaboration with Finnish researchers.
- Vinoj Abraham presented the project proposal entitled 'Global Economic Crisis in the GCC and its Impact on South Asian Migrants,' (jointly prepared with Professor S. Irudaya Rajan) at the *Third meeting of RETA-6417*, funded by the Asian Development Bank, at Hotel Intercontinental, Bangkok, Thailand, on 25-26 June 2009.

In touch

- J. Devika and V.J. Varghese presented a paper titled 'To Survive or to Flourish? Minority Rights and Syrian Catholic Community Assertions in Kerala' at a *seminar on Really Existing Secularisms in India*, held during 10-12 April 2009 at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), New Delhi.
- J. Devika made a presentation on the keynote theme on 23 May 2009 at the workshop *Rethinking Culture and Development: Feminist Crossings*, organised by the Centre for Women's Studies, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, at Latugiri, West Bengal, during 22-30 May 2009. She was also the discussant for papers presented in subsequent sessions.
- K.J. Joseph delivered the plenary lecture on 'Innovation System in a Southern Perspective,' in the *International Conference on Technology Policy and Innovation*, 13-15 March 2009, New Delhi. He also delivered a lecture on 'Impact of Global Financial Crisis on Agricultural Sector with Special Emphasis on Plantation Crops,' in the meeting of *Regional Consultative Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, NABRAD*, on March 27 at Trivandrum. In addition to this, he also delivered a lecture on 'Preparing Research Proposal for Funding Agencies,' in the workshop for college lecturers on *Capacity Building and Enhancement Initiatives on Research Projects*, at the Mahatma Gandhi University, on 2 April, 2009 and also made a presentation on 'Perspective for Plantation Development in the Context of Agrarian Crisis,' in the *workshop on Regional Perspective Plan for Kerala*, organised by the Kerala Service Forum on April 27 at Kanjirappally.
- Sunil Mani presented the Annual Distinguished Lecture on 'The Innovative Performance of India since Economic Liberalisation' at the National Geophysical Research Institute, Hyderabad, on 30 April 2009. He also presented a lecture on 'Why has Kerala not Attracted much Industrial Investments since Economic Liberalisation?,' to a visiting group of faculty and students of the Duquesne University Graduate School of Business, Pittsburgh, USA, at Saintgits Institute of Management, Kottayam, on 15 May 2009. In addition, he presented two lectures on 'India's Innovation Policy' at the course on Policy Analysis and Public Management organised by IIM Bangalore and Maxwell School of Syracuse University at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, on 9 June, 2009.

LIBRARY NEWS

Devaki Jain Collection

Professor Devaki Jain, the well-known feminist economist who was with Delhi University and is now based in Bangalore, has donated her personal collection of more than 900 books to the CDS library. The collection includes books on gender studies, economics, governance, human rights, and education. They are being processed to be added to the library. Since many of these titles are not yet been available in our collection, students working in the above-mentioned areas will definitely benefit from this donation. We are deeply thankful to Dr Jain for her thoughtful gesture of affection towards the CDS, and sure that this treasure will be put to the best use here.

New Building

The library team is gearing up to occupy a new building which is nearing completion. Lighting and air-conditioning, besides a generator, UPS and lift, are in place. The committee for relocation of the library has met several times and finalised its plan for the move. The present decision is to start functioning from the new building by September.

T.K. Subramoni

CAMPUS NEWS

Towards a 'Green and Clean Campus'

The CDS has one of the most beautiful campuses in India; a small but unforgettable green jewel. However, many factors, including the fact that there are many more of us on campus now than there were in the 1970s, have led to mounting problems with waste

management. Kerala's metamorphosis into a consumer's paradise has not left the campus untouched. While we have been planting trees to maintain the tree cover, parasites have taken over a good number of them. In addition, cleaning practices have not often been environment-friendly.

Some of us on campus had been trying to raise these issues, and in April, the Director and the administration gave the green signal to the "Green and Clean Campus Initiative". We sought the help of activists from Thanal, an eco-friendly waste management NGO in Thiruvananthapuram, to conduct a waste audit on campus and discuss how to manage it. Students actively participated in the audit and a one-day waste collection drive. The cleaning staff was provided with proper equipment and large quantities of waste were removed after segregating environmentally hazardous material. Hostel meetings were held to discuss viable ways of segregating waste and a list of possible measures was drawn up and submitted to the administration.

Much more work needs to be done to implement the suggestions effectively. We hope to progress in a slow but steady manner.

J. Devika

Achievements

Sunil Mani has been made an Honorary Fellow of the National Institute of Science, Technology and Development Studies (NISTADS), New Delhi, with effect from April 2009.

STUDENTS SPEAK

**The Demand for a Separate Telangana:
Promoting Divisiveness?**

Today, we are again witnessing a series of meetings in Andhra Pradesh demanding a separate Telangana state. Years of backwardness and neglect by political parties at the centre and in the state have left a void in Telangana.

The visible prosperity of people living downstream of the Krishna and Godavari rivers is due to adequate utilisation of the waters for their benefit. This is hardly the case in Telangana, through which these rivers pass. The people of Telangana, particularly of this generation, feel they have been cheated of educational and employment opportunities. Add to this the absence of any developmental programmes.

The demand for a separate Telangana pre-dates Independence and continued to be voiced through the 1970s and 1980s. It re-emerged in 2000-2001. Those who feel that this longstanding demand is rather unjustified and divisive may do well to ponder that 47 years is just a speck in the history of a state or a country. Reorganisation of regional and state boundaries, by itself, does not necessarily create divisiveness. Besides, there are enough instances in world history to show that that timely division may stall the divisiveness that arises from a denial of the fruits of economic growth and development. In the past 50 years, many new countries have emerged on the world map; within countries, too, regional boundaries have often been redrawn. For example, in 243 years of existence, the United States has expanded to 51 states from the initial 17.

Therefore, the demand for a separate Telangana state cannot be rejected on the grounds that it

promotes divisiveness within India. It may actually be the remedy to unfair distribution and the anger it foments among people of the region. If not remedied, the latter may indeed lead to divisiveness.

Krishnareddy Chittedi

Wayanad ... Here We Come

Though I am writing this almost two months after our trip, my memories are fresh and green as Wayanad itself. For the second year in succession, the CDS packed itself away from deadlines, presentations, submissions, grades, water scarcity and sundry woes, thanks to the enthusiasm of people like Atish (cultural secretary), Hari and others. Travelling almost 15 hours, we reached the place we would be staying in, Pratheeksha Bhavan, an NGO guesthouse, in Sultan Batheri.

In no time at all, we hit the road again, towards Edakkal caves—economists raring to “analyse” the neolithic carvings and “conceptualise” their importance. Burning midnight fat (acquired at work in the CDS) we huffed and puffed to reach the destination. Deep and rough stone carvings resembling an elephant; a man with a crown, and the sun could be identified; all faintly suggestive of a distinct lifestyle. Inscriptions in the Brahmi script could be seen among the



carvings. While a few enthusiastic chaps crawled up to the top of the hill, the rest of us enjoyed the view from the caves. I think that is what people mean when they talk of being “on the top of the world”. The view was amazing.

After a good lunch, we travelled to the Soochippara waterfall. Yes, you guessed it, the name is because the origin of the fall is as thin as a needle. It had thinned further in the blazing summer ... so what? The guys were already in there beating the heat while we women huddled up for a few photos and dangled our feet in the cool water. Time to go back ... this is what I did not like. Dragging ourselves out of the water, we headed back to the guesthouse. Tired after a long day, we were ready to hit the bed.

Wake up ... Kuruva Island is the next stop. Oh! Man this place was awesome! While a few got to the island on a small boat, the rest preferred to swim. There was a perfect *jugalbandhi* of crickets and creaking bamboos. In the dim sunlight filtering down to the ground, it was not difficult to imagine one was a character in a suspense thriller. We walked around the island, singing, dancing and clicking cameras.

We had to cross a stream and that was real fun. With footwear off, we clung to, warned and guarded each other as we crossed. While a few managed to stay dry, others had a great fall. Uh! Oh! Here comes down another one! We decided to settle down and spend some time at this stream. All in the water. Many of us had our first swimming lessons. After an hour in the water in the cool water and the pleasant breeze, it was time to pack ... trust me, it was not an easy thing to do.

After lunch, we are all set to return. The long journey and the summer heat took their toll on a few of us. On our way back, we stopped at Pookkottu lake. By 6:30 the next morning by we were back at our CDS.

I am sure this refreshing and adventurous journey to Wayanad will always remain a pleasant memory in the minds of many of us. You would not be reading this if a few students had not taken the trouble of organising everything so meticulously. I would love to fill this column next year too.

Shravanthi Choragudi

... And so passed yet another jamun season

Big, round, purple coloured jamuns carpet the road, welcoming everyone visiting the CDS library in the months of May, June and July. Sometimes the numbers on the ground far exceed those on the tree and every step you take could be on a jamun.

At the peak of the fruit-bearing season, which is sometime around the beginning of June, bunches of shining purple jamuns against the background of the tree's dense green foliage remind one of the extraordinary beauty of nature. It is during this time that “jamun fever” hits the campus, with young and old savouring these round fruits. Groups of friends may be seen standing near the tree trying to outdo one another at coloring their tongues purple by eating as many jamuns as possible.

With a mixed, sweet, mildly sour and astringent flavour, the fruit is considered to be rich in vitamins A and C. However, the jamun can be a spoilsport if you happen to be wearing white and get some of its juice on you. It takes just a mild breeze to send a ripe jamun down on a hapless person and colour him or her in shades of violet which are a challenge to get rid of. By mid-July, the fruit season comes to an end and the last of the jamuns leave their trace on the road, promising to come back next year.

Trivia about jamuns

- An evergreen tropical tree in the flowering plant family *Myrtaceae*, it is native to Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Indonesia.

- The fruit is known as Jamun, Nerale Hannu, Njaval, Jamblang, Jambolan, Black Plum, Damson Plum, Duhat Plum, Jambolan Plum, Java Plum or Portuguese Plum.
- The wood is strong and water resistant. So it is used for railway sleepers and to install motors in wells.
- The jamun seed is used in various alternative healing systems such as Ayurveda (to control diabetes), and Unani and Chinese medicine for digestive ailments. The leaves and bark are used for controlling blood pressure and gingivitis.

Source: Wikipedia

Anoopa S. Nair

National Conference on “Challenges in Human Development in India”: From Students’ Perspective

The National Conference on “Challenges in Human Development in India” hosted by the CDS on 24-25 January 2009 was a valuable learning experience for the students. It was an excellent opportunity to come into contact with great minds from academia and policy-making.

In the environment of inter-disciplinary research the CDS provides, the conference proved to be a

marvellous occasion to meet like-minded, enthusiastic people in which we were valued for our creativity and encouraged in our vision. The conference had all the right elements to make for an ideal learning environment—the opportunity to interact with experts, and highly motivated participants. The participants had challenging questions and took the speakers to task on many inadequately defended assertions.

The broad theme of human development being one of the research interests at the CDS, students benefited hugely from the exposure to cutting-edge research on various dimensions of the subject. CDS students who presented their work at the conference, especially, found the experience of being exposed to a wider interactive environment that stressed rigour to be of immense value.

Besides presenting papers and interacting with the participants, students were also involved in reporting and managing various sessions. Such responsibilities made them aware of the other professional skills necessary for conducting seminars and academic events. Their active involvement in transporting and accommodating the delegates also helped make the conference a success.

Atish Kumar Dash

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

Articles/Chapter(s) in books

Dilip, T.R. 2009. ‘Consolidation of Private Hospitals in Kerala: Some Policy Implications,’ in Gangadharan (eds) *Paradigm Shift in Health and Education in India*, New Delhi: Serial Publications, pp.10-118.

Krishnareddy, Chittedi. 2009. ‘Sensex-The

Dancing Beauty of Indian Stock Market, *Indian Journal of Finance*, Volume 3 Number 7 July.

Navaneetham, K. (with M. Kabir and C.S. Krishnakumar). 2009. ‘Emerging Morbidity Patterns in Kerala,’ in A. Ashokan (ed) *Perspectives in Health Economics*, Serial Publications, New Delhi.

POLICY POINTERS

In their paper '**Morbidity Patterns in Kerala: Levels and Determinants,**' (Working Paper No. 411, April 2009), K. Navaneetham, M. Kabir and C.S. Krishnakumar investigate the high morbidity situation in Kerala and say that it is a real phenomenon, which cannot be dismissed by attributing to a bias in perception.

The morbidity profile is dominated by non-communicable diseases, with a noted decline in the risk of communicable diseases. A female disadvantage in health outcomes becomes significant from the age of 34. Though educational levels and socio-economic status show a negative relationship to morbidity, the patterns are different for the rich and the poor. The rich are at a higher risk of diabetes and hypertension, while the poor show greater susceptibility to viral fever/influenza and diseases of the bones and joints. Further determinants of ill health vary among districts and across various stages of life.

Since the morbidity profile is dominated by diseases requiring sustained medical attention, the private health care system cannot be the answer because of its high average cost of treatment. The study ends by recommending greater and sustained efforts by the state to widen the scope of public action.

From the Administrator's Desk

K. Muraleedharan, Senior Assistant Administrative Officer, retired on 30 April 2009. He worked in different administrative positions and had the distinction of being the first staff member to have worked with the Centre continuously for more than 37 years. He retired as in-charge of the faculty support services section.

Soman Nair

I N T E R F A C E

Professor Louk de la Rive Box is Rector at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, Netherlands. He was recently at the CDS to attend the National Conference on Challenges in Human Development in India, and The International Conference on The Role of New Technologies in Sustainable Development: The Case of Kerala, held on 24-25 January and 27-28 January 2009 respectively. This interview by **Arindam Banerjee**, Lecturer, CDS, was recorded at that time.



AB: *In your view, what are now the important paradigms of development in the developing world? How do you view the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?*

LB: From the perspective of developing countries, I think the current central paradigm of development can be located in the post-colonial traditions of thinking, the nature of work done, for example, by Santos. However, in most cases, we have developing country policies anchored around questions and issues that are imposed by the western world. The western-imposed line of thinking with regard to development is not well adapted to the realities of developing countries. This kind of thinking and issues generate from the “linear notion of time” in models of growth that developed in the tradition of Rostow. Contrary to this, a context-sensitive mode of thinking is prevalent in developing countries. There has been a continuous attempt by international institutions like the UNDP to refresh the ideas of development from developing countries’ perspective. However, an institution like the World Bank has been prone to the neo-liberal line of thinking and its policy recommendations have enhanced inequalities in many parts of the developing world. A lot of criticism of such policies has taken place as part of the post-Washington Consensus. Intellectuals in the developing world are not primarily involved in defining the issues that the World Bank has been propagating as important developmental questions.

I would like to view the MDGs in this context. Issues like sustainable development, human development and social security have culminated in the formulation of the MDGs. While the MDGs have been formulated through an international consensus in which developing countries also participated, there is some concern regarding inadequate inputs by the latter in the whole process. As Professor Ashwani Saith has argued, the MDGs are to some extent imposed on developing countries and constitute a top-down and technocratic approach. For example, the predominant focus on primary education, sometimes even at the cost of secondary and technical or vocational education, is an absolute non-starter in places like Kerala.

AB: *Has there been any significant reduction in the technological divide between the North and the South under the process of globalisation?*

LB: The technological divide has been changing in selected parts of the developing world. Certain countries like the BRIC countries or Singapore, which had a secondary or tertiary role earlier in the global economy, have exhibited fascinating developments in recent times.

However, inequalities in the system of science and technology have remained steady or grown larger in the case of most countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa, there has been a significant phasing down of agricultural technology and it is not of the same quality that prevailed earlier. For example, Zimbabwe was one of the few African countries with an

independent and well-developed agricultural science and technology capacity. However, this aspect has been neglected over time and presently there is a near total collapse of the technological system in that country.

On the whole, agricultural technology development is not doing well. As we see in the case of Kerala, there has been a cut-down in the budget for agricultural research. Privatisation of extension services is also thwarting further development of technology in the field of agriculture.

In sum, the technological divide has shown some transformation in centres like the BRIC countries while inequalities have widened in most countries. The quality of agricultural technology is also declining and as Paul Krugman has recently argued, there is a need for more investment in food production. There is a case for correction of policies to address the issue as to why most of our farmers who grow food for us also go hungry to bed.

AB: *How do you think the global financial crisis will affect development across the world?*

LB: It may be too early to exactly predict the effects but one can outline three specific developments. First, the financial crisis has seen a fast decline in trust in our financial institutions and the overall banking system. Extraordinary amounts have been spent on preventing banks from collapsing in the rich countries. This has left them with inadequate funds to finance and rejuvenate the productive economy all over the globe, as in foreign direct investment.

Second, there will be a significant decline in remittances that come into poor developing countries from non-resident workers. This will emerge as a serious problem for a place like Kerala, where about one-fourth of its income is from remittances. Further as prices of oil drop, there will be less construction activities and a shrinking of employment opportunities in the Gulf. The problem will be compounded

by the preference for local workers in the host countries. A significant section of the population in Kerala, dependent on remittances, is likely to become more vulnerable due to these developments.

Finally, the third development will be the emergence of a debate as to which will be the dominant model of development in the post-crisis period. While the neo-liberal model has clearly failed, there has also been a failure to provide alternative models of development by the left and by social scientists. Hence, the neo-conservatives are getting off the hook quite easily.

In the developing world, there is going to be harsh criticism of neo-liberal policies like privatisation of education. I expect a far more radical reaction from social scientists globally. The coming times will be an intellectually exciting period and younger generations like your own will have to pick up the pieces and formulate alternatives unlike our generation which largely succumbed to neo-liberalism.

AB: *You are speaking about an alternative model of development? What are the tenets that will form the basis for this new model?*

LB: One can foresee at least three basic changes in the paradigms of the development model. First, the state, which was rapidly withdrawing from the development discourse under the neo-liberal doctrine, will assume a far more important role in the future. Second, the private sector will be pushed to adopt different roles in future like greater corporate social responsibility, something that has largely remained on paper till now. The third development will be the more important role of civil society and NGOs in exerting public pressure for the protection of commons like environmental commons or social security. These will be the new principles that will come into existence as part of the alternative model.



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April - June 2009

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