



# CHRONICLE 6

Quarterly

Newsletter

2006

FROM THE DIRECTOR	03
MILESTONES	03
EVENTS	04
WORKSHOPS	05
SEMINARS	06
FROM THE TOWER TO THE MEDIA	07
LIBRARY NEWS / CAMPUS NEWS	08
PUBLICATIONS	09
OUTREACH / FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR'S DESK	09
FIELD NOTES / MEMORY	10
INTERFACE	11

## CHRONICLE

Volume 2. Issue 2. April - June 2006

## EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

J. Devika (Editor), A.P. Philroy, Tilak Baker, P.R. Gopinathan Nair  
K.T. Rammohan, Praveena Kodoth, V. Ushadevi, M.S. Harilal, Prabhat Kumar

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

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Challenges Ahead

C.K.Sankaran's recollections of the formative years of CDS in the 'Milestones' column of this issue are illuminating indeed. When we began in the seventies, the environment was very informal and there were no hierarchies. We have maintained more or less the same atmosphere until now.

Most of the staff who joined in the seventies will be retiring from CDS with in the next 5 to 8 years. This is true of both faculty and supporting staff. It will be a real challenge to assemble a new generation of staff who will be committed to the ideas and principles that we have cherished over time, and who will be able to take the institution

forward. All of us have the responsibility to work towards this goal.

There is also the need to mobilise adequate financial resources for renovating and upgrading the physical infrastructure. We have to prepare a systematic plan for this and a programme for implementation. In this context, help from our alumni and other well wishers in mobilising financial or infrastructural support will be much appreciated.

I appeal to all the alumni within India and abroad to keep in touch with CDS and take an active interest in supporting us.

K.N.Nair  
Director, CDS

M I L E S T O N E S

I joined CDS as a library assistant in January 1974. The Library was housed in two rooms. There were about 13,000 books stacked in the present Database room and periodicals and back volumes displayed in the present Director's office. The team that was to build up the CDS Library had begun to take shape by then. G.Ravindran Nair headed it. There were two Assistant Librarians, V. Ramakrishnan and G. Sasikumar. Joseph Kurien and Chandrakumaran Nair also joined the library in the same period. By the end of that year, Chidambaram Pillai and some others joined us.

That was the Golden Era of the Library. There were no restrictions on the purchase of books, documents or journals. We worked hard every day, even during out-of-office hours, often late into the night. Procuring government publications was very difficult then. However, we managed to collect catalogues, brochures and holding lists of books and documents. Essential tasks like checking for duplication, placing orders, and so on, were done systematically. Some of us were sent to government offices in Thiruvananthapuram, Chennai and Kolkata to select publications. Those were times in which the Internet was unheard of, but G. Ravindran Nair's meticulous explorations yielded rich results. He had a remarkable ability to

organise work and co-ordinate our assignments perfectly well. We will always remember his deep involvement, sincerity and devotion to work.

Life on the campus was different those days. We lived in a building that became vacant consequent on the shifting of the Library to the present campus. Until the hostels came up, all of us — the staff from the administration and the library, and the faculty, including the present Director, K. N. Nair— stayed together there. There was no canteen; eating places in the vicinity were few. So food had to be brought here. Thus Kunjukrishna Nadar, our watchman, became, for a short while, our *annadaata*. Naturally, his presence was much sought-after and prayed-for. I cannot forget his figure, carrying us food parcels on his bicycle. The long evening-walks with P.R.G.Nair, too, are etched in my memory too, when everything under the sun was discussed threadbare. Then there were the shuttle-badminton matches in the newly constructed court: we had the privilege of watching eminent economists like N. Krishnaji, I.S. Gulati, and P.R.G wield not only their pens, but also their rackets!

The new campus delighted us all, but we in the Library enjoyed it the best. The Library appeared to be the focal point of the architecture here. The institution was situated on the top of a hillock, which came to be called the Prasanth Hill. Visitors

here could not miss the feeling that they were actually pilgrims climbing a sacred hillock. And for those of us in the Library, it was indeed the sanctum sanctorum to which they all came to worship!

However, with passing time, we realised that 'worship' on all seven floors wasn't easy! The

difficulty was not intellectual; it was physical! As we aged, it became more and more difficult to climb up and down seven floors through the winding staircase. But despite this and all the other functional limitations, the Library tower still remains the crowning glory of CDS!

C. K. Sankaran

## E V E N T S

### Annual IASP Conference

7-9 June

The twenty-eighth annual conference of Indian Association for the Study of Population (IASP) was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Finance Minister of Kerala, Dr T.M. Thomas Isaac, on 7 June 2006. The president of IASP Prof S.C. Gulati, K. Narayanan Nair, Director, CDS, and the local organising secretary of the conference, S. Irudaya Rajan, CDS spoke during the opening session. The occasion was also marked by the release of the book *Syrian Christians in Kerala*, written by K.C. Zachariah, Honorary Fellow, CDS. The first copy of the book was received by K. Narayanan Nair from Dr Isaac.

The three-day conference, attended by about 150 delegates from all over India, deliberated on a wide range of themes relating to health, nutrition, urbanisation, migration, environment, education and employment. Distinguished demographers, young researchers, as well as policy makers, presented papers.

Prof P. N. Mari Bhat, Director, International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai, delivered the George Simmons Memorial Lecture at the conference. A special plenary session on specific population issues relevant to Kerala, in which members of the academia, health activists and bureaucrats aired their views, was also organised. A parallel session showcasing the work of young scholars at CDS was another highlight of the conference. We are proud that CDS was awarded the privilege of hosting this conference. We feel that this is nothing less than scholarly recognition of the remarkable amount of work that researchers here have undertaken on population-related issues.

The valedictory ceremony was held on 9 June 2006 in the presence of the executive members of IASP,



and renowned demographers including Prof K.Srinivasan and K.C. Zachariah, Honorary Fellow, CDS.

U.S. Mishra

### Inauguration of Research Unit on International Migration

12 June

Anyone visiting Kerala cannot be but struck by the visible impact of Kerala's 'Gulf connection'. About eighteen lakh Malayalees work in the Gulf countries, and their remittances home form about 22 to 25 per cent of the net state domestic product of Kerala. The impact of the inflow of wealth from the Gulf has made its mark in virtually every sphere of Malayalee life, and has altered the socio-economic profile of the State beyond recognition, across all socio-economic groups. No wonder, then, that international migration now throws up a host of issues that call for intense social scientific research, and with a varied bag of methodological tools. Besides, migration within the country also is a significant process, and has passed through periods of growth, stagnation and decline with diverse socio-economic impacts in Kerala and several other states in India. Migration studies, therefore, constitute an important item on the agenda of research at CDS.

CDS has conducted several studies on the micro and macro aspects of international migration from

Kerala during the past three decades, which have already received attention in national and international academic circles. The Ministry of Indian Overseas Affairs, Government of India decided to set up a Research Unit on International Migration at CDS in recognition of these efforts. Vayalar Ravi, Hon'ble Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs, Government of India, formally inaugurated it at the CDS on 12 June 2006. M.V. Ramachandran chaired the session. K.N Nair, Director, CDS, welcomed the audience. S. Irudaya Rajan briefly introduced the audience to the work of CDS scholars on migration to the Gulf over the past few decades.

In his inaugural address, the Minister referred to the rampant malpractices in emigration, especially of unskilled workers, women and other vulnerable groups, perpetrated by the numerous unlicensed recruitment agencies in India, and the dire consequences the victims suffer in their destinations.

In the seminar that followed, S. Krishnakumar, former Secretary, Ministry of Indian Overseas Affairs,



Government of India, presided. He dwelt on the evolving profiles of the emigration streams from the different states of India and the prospects of the emerging foreign destinations, particularly in South Asian Countries. He also spoke of the changes that have come about in the skill composition and the educational qualifications of emigrants subsequent to the electronic and IT revolution that has been raging in the Western world. Jiji Thomson, Secretary, NORKA, and Ranbir Singh, Director, Emigration and Policy, Government of India, and Prof B. A. Prakash, University of Kerala, also spoke.

S. Irudaya Rajan

## W O R K S H O P S

### Individual Agency or Empowerment: A New Measure?

22-23 April

The workshop presented the findings of a study, a collaborative venture between Harvard University and CDS, which sought to explore issues in measuring individual agency and empowerment by integrating quantitative, qualitative and participative approaches to research. This research is part of the ongoing efforts to develop Amartya Sen's Capabilities approach to development. A select number of women from neighbourhood/self-help groups linked to *Kudumbashree*, Kerala's experiment in poverty eradication, were the sample respondents. Participants in the workshop included scholars from across different social science disciplines.

The workshop began with a presentation by Sabina Alkire, Harvard University, and Valery Chirkov, University of Saskatchewan, Canada, on the major issues in measuring agency and autonomy and the new measure being field tested in this study.

Sebastian Silva Leander, UNDP, Rwanda, presented a paper on integrating agency into poverty comparisons. Vijayamohan Pillai, CDS presented the demographic characteristics of the sample respondents. Sunitha Sukendran presented two life histories, while Jyothi Nair attempted to provide women's own perceptions on empowerment. Mridul Eapen, CDS, presented a qualitative evaluation of the quantitative results of the survey taking each of the six domains that the 'agency' aspect of the study sought to address.

The discussion centred around the choice of domains, and questions about whether it really enables us to capture the specific manifestations of women's disempowerment in Kerala, about how we may ensure that internalisation of social norms and practices does not influence women's choices - for instance in the domain of household duties.

The workshop ended with presentations by *Sanskriti* scholars, which dwelt on topics closely connected with the concerns of the collaborative research project. The highlight of the workshop was the



interesting attempt to integrate the quantitative and the qualitative dimensions of empowerment and autonomy, both of which are central to Sen's notion of human development. It is true that governments always want 'evidence-based research' for policy. But 'evidence', as the workshop showed, need not always be quantitative.

Anant Kamath

### Care of the Aged Coordinator: S. Irudaya Rajan 10 June

This one-day seminar discussed the results of the IDPAD-sponsored research project on 'Care of the Aged: Gender, Institutional Provisions and Social Security in India, Netherlands and Sri Lanka'. K.N. Nair, Director, CDS, welcomed the participants and S. Irudaya Rajan, CDS gave an overview of the activities undertaken as part this project. K C Zachariah, CDS, chaired the technical session, in which four study

partners presented their results. Irudaya Rajan presented results of the analysis of size, growth rate, composition, disease and disability pattern and health-seeking behaviour, of the ageing population in India. He also presented the results of population projections regarding ageing for India up to the year 2051.

Dr Myrtle Perera, Marga Institute, Colombo presented her study titled 'Aged in the Households and Institutions in Sri Lanka', which was based on primary data, and portrayed the gaps in well-being of the elderly in Sri Lanka. She discussed living arrangements, networks and relationships, work participation rates, roles in decision-making, ownership of house and health status, of the aged. Prof Shanthi Johnson, Acadia University, Canada and S. Irudaya Rajan spoke on the disease and disability profile of the elderly in Kerala using data from the Kerala Ageing Survey, carried out as a part of this project. Results reveal gender differentials and rural-urban differentials in health and health-seeking behavior of the aged in Kerala. Dr K. Saradamoni gave a brief overview of her work on the changing familial role of the elderly in Kerala. Lastly, Irudaya Rajan made a presentation on 'Poverty among the Elderly in India'. This was based on an analysis of economic dependency, ownership of assets and property, unmet needs for basic necessities and a critical review of the existing old age benefit schemes in India

T.R. Dilip

## SEMINARS

Vinoj Abraham

### The Growth of Service Sector Income and Employment in India: A Regional Analysis

7 April

The presentation investigated the increasing share of the services sector in income and employment in the Indian economy and its patterns across the states. Examining the trends in relative product per worker, the presenter argued that the productivity levels of service sector shows higher growth both in relative and absolute terms. Productivity growth in the primary sector seemed to have been achieved through reducing employment growth, but in the services sector, this seemed achieved through increase in incomes. Consideration of inter-state differences in growth of sectoral incomes revealed

that most states experienced accelerated growth of income in services during the 1990s. However, the growth of employment had decelerated. This has important implications for widening per capita income gap across the states. Further, the inter-linkages between the income and the employment growth in the secondary and the services sector were highlighted. The declining employment elasticity and jobless growth in the services sector were also mentioned as major issues of concern.

The subsequent discussions touched on both conceptual and other, broader issues raised. It was pointed out that declining employment elasticity might not be a major issue if output could grow fast enough to generate enough employment. The need for a better measure of productivity in the services sector and the heterogeneity of the services sector were

also mentioned. Overall, the growing importance of this sector in the Indian economy and its implications for future growth prospects came out clearly into view through the presentation.

Nadhanael G.V.

**Sunil Mani**

**The Sectoral System of Innovation of Indian Pharmaceutical Industry**

23 June

This thought-provoking presentation brought into view certain aspects of the impact of TRIPS on the innovation behaviour of the Indian pharmaceuticals industry using the Sectoral System of Innovations (SSI) framework. It began with an introduction to the major features of the Indian pharmaceuticals industry such as the domination of formulation drugs, the existence of an active generic market as well as self-sufficiency in most drugs. The need for sector-specific innovation systems was

emphasised. The key components of the SSI were also identified.

Some interesting observations on the R&D focus of the Indian pharmaceuticals industry emerged in the presentation. Domestic firms are not investing on drugs for illnesses prevalent in developing countries due to shortage of financial resources. They have adopted the strategy of developing new molecules, and licensing them to MNCs at early stages of clinical development. The need for an appropriate price index for drugs price monitoring was also highlighted. The presenter concluded by saying that there exists no evidence to show that the TRIPS-compliant regime has reduced the innovative effort in this industry, but it is less focused towards the needs of the developing countries. Comments raised during the discussion centered upon certain key issues like clinical trials, essential drugs price, the role of public sector enterprises, and so on.

Beena. S, Prabhu Dass. G

**FROM THE TOWER TO THE MEDIA**

A number of commentators have observed that ACDS alumni have made up a disproportionate number of economic journalists in the country. From the the MPhil/PhD graduates of the mid/late 1970s, we have, in alphabetical order—Sanjaya Baru, Bharat Bhushan, N. Chandra Mohan, Sukumar Muralidharan, C.J. Punnathara and I think I can add my name to the list. From the mid-1980s, we have Sananda Kumar, Pyarelal Raghavan and for a brief while, Haseeb Drabu as well. I presume there have also been many MPhils from thereafter who have taken up writing. This is, I am sure, a far greater number than from other economics research institutions.

Why so many journalists from CDS? I think one reason certainly was that the CDS exposure to current affairs in political economy, the importance given to empirical issues – to query, understand, interpret and analyse information – and the emphasis placed at that time (in the research and student community) on understanding the world around us qualified many of us to be economic journalists. The textbook and perhaps solely theoretical emphasis placed MPhil/PhD graduates from other institutions/universities at a disadvantage – if indeed they wanted to enter the media. We were therefore much more suited for

media jobs and given the aptitude, there were openings to be had. (The 1980s were also when the print media, which was till then staffed with “generalists”, started to look for specialists in individual fields – first and foremost in economic policy. So there was a “demand” as well for those who could in simple terms explain and analyse complex economic issues.)

A “negative” explanation which could be offered for CDS alumni entering the media is that we were not very suitable for high-quality academics – the emphasis (over-emphasis?) on empirical issues meant that our theoretical base was weak, which made us suitable for academic positions only in applied economics. So where could we go? The NGO sector was not yet developed and there was no IT sector worth the name. Media then was one option. There may be an element of truth in this understanding as well, but I would like to think it is not the entire explanation. Much as theory was not a major component of the MPhil course and there were few PhD theses which were theoretical works, curiosity, reading, discussion and exposure to issues in theory was quite strong. (the late 1970s and the early 1980s were when CDS used to see a regular

flow of academic visitors of international calibre) .

I think the opportunities now in the media for writers with a strong background in economics are much more than 20 years ago. Economics now occupies a much greater part of the media space; there is a thirst for an understanding of economic issues and, of course, the media is now a booming industry.

Perhaps the media world is now waiting for the next wave of CDS scholars to take up positions in the industry. We could certainly do with such an infusion, given the quality of analysis that now passes for economic journalism.

C. Rammanohar Reddy  
Editor, Economic and Political Weekly

## LIBRARY NEWS

**D**uring the past quarter, 347 books, 48 working papers and 8 CDs were added to our collection. Considering the budgetary constraints, the Library Committee (LC) has decided to review the present book acquisition policy. The LC has decided to constitute Subject Committees, comprising faculty members and Ph D students, which will do the final selection of books recommended by faculty and students. The existing practice of getting the LC's approval for high-priced books will continue. We are also reviewing the list of serial publications on standing order, and steps are being taken to get the missing issues.

Given the paucity of funds, we are finding it difficult to continue our subscriptions to all journals listed in the core list. We are considering the possibility of subscribing to e-journals, if that will be cheaper ... Most of the journals we now subscribe to are available in e-versions in the UGC-Infonet Consortium, which is now extending their facilities to affiliated colleges, in addition to universities in India. The possibility of our accessing this facility is being explored. Also, Sunil Mani and U.S. Mishra have been asked to review the present core list of journals with the assistance of C. K. Sankaran and V. K. Anil Kumar, from the CDS Library.

Sir Michael Arthur, the British High Commissioner to India, paid a visit to the CDS Library on 8 June 2006. An exhibition of the works of Joan Robinson available in our library was arranged in connection with his visit. He took particular interest in the Nicholas Kaldor and Sanjaya Lall collections housed here.

The Committee of Direction has approved the report of the Committee regarding membership fee and revised orders will be issued shortly. In the past quarter, we extended reference facilities to 102 new users. Thirteen internal and two external memberships were granted. A second round of

reminders was sent to 79 defaulters as part of the drive to recover overdue books from external members. Barcoding of books and bound volumes is in progress.

EBSCO Publishing gave a demonstration of their information products to CDS users on 14 June 2006. They have also offered us a free trial of their databases including Business Source Premier, EconLit, and Health source: Consumer Edition.

V. Usha Devi

## CAMPUS NEWS

**P**rof Mitu Gulati, Duke University Law School, delivered the fourth lecture of the Law and Economics Study Group on 7 June 2006. He spoke on the 'Law and Economics of Contract Interpretation'. A lively discussion followed the lecture.

A grand farewell party was organised for the outgoing M Phil batch on 30 May 2006. This time, the juniors decided to display their musical and dancing talents in honour of their seniors! The entertainment was followed by dinner.

The strong winds that have accompanied the rains this monsoon season have wreaked havoc on the trees of the campus. This probably reveals that we have been unwise in choosing trees to plant on campus, for many of the species promoted by the Department of Social Forestry are just not hardy enough to withstand strong winds. We need more of hardy native species of mango, jackfruit and other trees that will also withstand the parasitic plants currently abounding on the weaker trees.

Sir Michael Arthur, the British High Commissioner to India, visited CDS on 8 June 2006. He met with the faculty members, and Sunil Mani made a presentation about CDS, mainly on the teaching and research that is carried out here. Sir Arthur also visited the CDS Library.

PUBLICATIONS

**Books**

Devika, J (ed.). 2006. *Aanarashunaattile Kazhchchakal: Kerala Streepakshagaveshanathil* (Sights from Male-dom: Kerala in Feminist Research). Thiruvananthapuram: Women's Imprint.

**Journal Articles**

Devika, J. 2006. 'Housewife, Sex Worker and Reformer: Controversies over Women Writing their Lives in Kerala', *Review of Women's Studies, Economic and Political Weekly* 41 (17), 29 April, 1675-83.

Mishra, U.S. and S Subramanian. 2006. 'On Measuring Group-differentials Displayed by Socioeconomic Indicators', *Applied Economic Letters* 13(8), 519-521.

Pillai, PMohanana. 2006. 'Botswana, Growth Sans Development', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 41 (23), June 10.

Sharma, Rajeev, Sharma, R.K., and Gupta, S. 2005. 'Price Behaviour of Sesame - A Statewise Analysis', *Agricultural Situation in India*, March, 831-844

Venkatanarayana, M. 2005. 'Child Schooling in a Community in Transition: A Case of Scheduled Tribe in Andhra Pradesh', *The Journal of Educational Planning Administration and Planning*, January.

Venkatanarayana, M. 2005. 'On the Heterogeneities in the Incidence of Educational Deprivation of Children in Andhra Pradesh', in G. K. Karanth (ed.) *Dimensions of Social Development: Status, Challenges and Prospects, Social and Economic Change Monograph Series 8*, March, Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), Bangalore.

**Outreach**

Sunil Mani delivered the keynote address titled 'Valuing Innovation Systems: Some International Dimensions', at the National Advisory Council on Innovation (NACI) International Workshop on Measuring Systems of Innovation: Inputs, Flows and Outputs, Pretoria, South Africa during 23-24 April 2006. He also gave lectures at the Third Globelics Academy, Instituto Superior de Economia e Gestao, ISEG, Technical University of Lisbon, Lisbon, Portugal during 7-11 May 2006.

Vijayamohan Pillai attended (as Coordinator of the Ford Foundation Project at CDS on 'The Challenge of Social Security in Rural India and China') the Ford Foundation Workshop on Social Protection in Asia, organised by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) of the University of Sussex and the Thailand Development Research Institute, in Bangkok on May 14 - 17 2006 and presented the findings of the research.

P. Mohanan Pillai has been appointed member of the Expert Committee on TSDF (Technical Committee on Hazardous waste treatment, storage, disposal facility), KSIDC, Govt. of Kerala.

K.J. Joseph made a presentation titled 'Does Foreign Direct Investment Matter in Capacity Building?' in the Second Catch-up Project meeting organised

by the Columbia University and University of Manchester on 11-13 May 2006 at the University of Manchester.

K.J. Joseph has been nominated as an Expert Member of the Selection Committee for Professors under CAS-1998 in the Department of Economics, Delhi University.

**FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR'S DESK**

Mohammed Hussain, Driver, retired from service on 30 June 2006. Hussain has been at CDS for nineteen years. Using his retirement benefits, he plans to start a taxi service.

T.M. Thomas Isaac, Honorary Fellow, CDS, is now the Finance Minister of Kerala. He was elected to the State Legislative Assembly in 2006 elections.

S. Irudaya Rajan, Fellow, CDS, has been appointed Chair Professor in the Research Unit on International Migration newly formed at CDS.

CDS plans to strengthen its research on WTO-related issues. A proposal to set up a Research Unit on promoting WTO studies at CDS has been submitted to the Ministry of Commerce, Government of India.

## FIELD NOTES

**The Gazer Shall Be Gazed At**

*(Notes from fieldwork in Saharsa, Bihar, for my research on migrant labour, globalisation, and the transformation of urban space in Kerala) - 18 March 2006 at 1.30 PM*

Mushhari Tola, Village Banma

I have reached the house of Mukhilal, a worker I met in Trivandrum, after a ride in a horse cart. Mukhilal has gone to the market. After some time, 10-15 men come. Ghurni, Mukhi's wife, tells me "Yeh sab Yadav hain". Mukhilal belongs to the Mushhara caste, much below the Yadavs. Ghurni warns me of the consequences of talking too much. One man starts a conversation, which proves to be a grilling session. He asks for proof of identity. I show the CDS identity card. He wants to see more papers. I say I will not show any thing more. He said he has not studied much, but is intelligent enough to know that knowledge comes from reading books and not by roaming around the countryside, that too in Bihar.

Another man gets up and says, "Yeh toh randi hain."

A footloose woman has to be loose. How else to understand women with wanderlust?

"What is the degree you are studying for?"

"M Phil"

"What is the full form of M Phil?"

"Master of Philosophy."

"If you are learning Economics, how are you going

to get a degree in philosophy?"

I search for an answer frantically. I know I must answer this question. Words fly around in my head "history of knowledge, philosophy of science, epist\*\*\*emology???". As a last resort, I try to remember Devika ma'm's face and answer the question. I say vague things like in the beginning there was only philosophy etc. etc. But he seemed to understand.

Finally the verdict came.

"You are a woman with intelligence, welcome to our village."

He invites me to a boat ride with him on the Kosi. Ghurni warns me with a quick wink. I politely decline.

9PM

Ghurni is making the bed. I ask her to sleep with me. She promises to be with me always. Mukhilal comes in. He shows a revolver and two bullets. I stare at them. I say I am scared of such things and beg him to take them back. He insists on me keeping them.

I see the volatility and the violence which order everyday lives in the village. I decide I have to know more about all these. Not only about why they came all the way to Trivandrum to work or who the intermediary who recruited them was.

A long and tiring day erases all fears from my heart and I sleep peacefully.

Mythri Prasad

## MEMORY

I'm in my third year of Business Management and Engineering Studies in the Netherlands. I'm back home now after spending four months on the CDS campus as a visiting scholar, doing a study on innovation in small-scale industries.

My first day in Kerala was a bit of a surprise really. I remember getting off the plane early morning on a warm and very humid day with bright sunshine. (It had been raining and freezing back in Netherlands). I spent the first few hours on the couch of a train from Kochi up to Trivandrum looking outside the window and was impressed. Since the first impression, not much has changed, for more than four months I have been impressed by really nice people, beautiful weather and rich cultural history.

Of course there were some difficulties with getting used to the food, the busy and unorganised roads, going by bus, the language- but I enjoyed them all.

Four months of stay at the CDS brought me a lots of firsts: first time outside Europe, on an aeroplane, experiencing a complete different culture, food, and eating habits (like sitting on the ground for dinner). And many more. Now I'm back home and I look back at the past four months with sweet nostalgia. Undoubtedly, it was an experience that will be remembered a lifetime. Thanks a lot!

Thijs Jagersma, University of Twente, The Netherlands  
(Thijs Jagersma was a research affiliate at CDS during November 2005-March 2006)



I N T E R F A C E

**Valery I. Chirkov** is a social psychologist, and currently Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Saskatchewan, Canada. He was recently at CDS in connection with the workshop on measuring individual agency and empowerment. **Vineetha Menon**, CDS, spoke with him on the interface of Social Psychology and Development Studies.

*As a psychologist who has been working in Self-Determination Theory, how do you view the potential contributions of the discipline of psychology to development studies?*

I learned about the existence of a discipline such as ‘Development Studies’ only at CDS. As I understand it, this is an interdisciplinary stream of research in which insights of social science scholars from across the disciplines are mobilised to investigate and understand development. I also noticed that psychology in general and social psychology in particular was poorly represented in it. There is a reason for this. Psychology’s relatively prolonged interest in finding universal laws of human behaviour alienated it not only from neighbouring disciplines, but also from real life. That’s why I was so excited by the invitation from Sabina Alkire, an economist, to participate in this study and workshop. This invitation indicated an emphasis on the individual as the unit of analysis, which calls for the involvement of specialists in the study of individual motivation and behaviour. I strongly believe that the renewed importance granted to the individual in political and economic change is an important shift within Development Studies, and the capabilities approach is one of its manifestations.

*How does your measure of ‘autonomy’ advance, or depart from, our existing understanding of ‘empowerment’?*

Combining several definitions of ‘empowerment’, I created my own understanding of it as a social process, a state in which individuals, communities, and organisations gain mastery/ control over their

lives through participating in decision-making, discovering/ creating options, or acquiring knowledge. The notion of ‘empowerment’ may refer to groups or individuals. Psychology is mostly involved at the individual level, whereas sociology, political science and economics study mostly group/organisational levels of empowerment.

At the individual level, empowerment is a set of thoughts and feeling about the potency to be the master of one’s own life, in private life, or in public activities. Regardless of the domain, the central issue is the experience of an individual regarding the control of his/her life. Many definitions of empowerment directly include or indirectly imply this notion of people’s autonomy. Self-Determination Theory helps conceptualise and operationalise this notion in an elaborate and coherent fashion; thus this approach is central to the current study of empowerment.

*Does your notion of ‘empowerment’ relate to universal notions of human rights or does it part ways with those notions?*

In my own understanding, it relates closely to the notion of human rights, which is similar to the concept of ‘human functional capabilities’. I believe that each person possesses among others a fundamental need and capability to be the master of one’s own actions and life. Therefore, each individual has a right to exercise and practise this capacity, and a society has to provide the opportunity, support, and resources to attain this right. Empowerment is a process through which basic human rights could be embodied.



**CHRONICLE 6**  
April - June 2006

**CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

Prasanth Nagar Road, Ulloor, Thiruvananthapuram 695 011, Kerala, India  
Tel: +91-471-2448412, 2448881 Fax: +91-471-2447137 Website: [www.cds.edu](http://www.cds.edu)

*Please send your contributions and responses to the editor: [devika@cds.ac.in](mailto:devika@cds.ac.in)*