

**THE KERALA MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT
AND ITS SHORTCOMINGS:
UNDERSTANDING WOMEN AND WORK IN
KERALA**

Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

APARNA



CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

NEW DELHI 110067

2018



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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled 'The Kerala Model of Development and its Shortcomings: Understanding Women and Work in Kerala' submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My work in the following pages would not have been possible without the help and support of a large group of people. Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Susan Visvanathan, my supervisor. Her inputs and guidance throughout the process of writing this dissertation have been invaluable. I would also like to thank my chairperson Prof. Nilika Mehrotra whose support during troubling times helped me complete this task. All my professors from the Centre for the Study of Social Systems have played a very important role in shaping my on-going journey towards becoming a sociologist and hence, to them all, I would like to say a heartfelt thank you.

Various teachers throughout my life have inspired me, to various degrees, to pursue a career in academia. My life as a student would have been incomplete without them. But, at the onset, I would like to particularly thank Mrs. Seema Gujjar. She was my first teacher of sociology and the reason why I took interest in the subject and decided to pursue it despite spending five years in economics. Thank you Miss Seema!

I would also like to thank the staff of the Institute of Social Sciences, especially the librarian Mr. Lalit Prasad for having let me use the premises. Additionally, I am also thankful to Dr. George Mathew, the Chairman of the Institute of Social Sciences for his support.

The process of writing my MPhil dissertation unfortunately coincided with my battle against clinical depression. I would not have made it through without the support of my psychologist and psychiatrist. Thank you.

I have been lucky to be around some of the best people who have helped me through this process. Their presence truly makes living more fun. To Lakshmi and Sabiha, your presence, literally, has always given me the assurance that you are truly just a knock away. To Natha, I love you. To Hari, you have been my oldest friend, and someone who I shall always be indebted to. To Arpi, we may not be able to talk to each other so often, but I know I could always fall back on you. Thank you.

I am deeply indebted to the 'sangathan' for you have truly made me want to come back to JNU. To Ameena, Amrit, Anjali, Anurag, Arpita, DJ, Garima,

Jayanti, John, Mayur, Mrityunjay, Prince, Sarath, Sarthak, Sumit, 'Choti' Swati and Swati- your enthusiasm and activism assures me that DSF is in safe hands. To Aishwarya, Anand, Arvind, Fayaz, Gargi, Ishan, Lenin, Pratim, Pushpika, Riya, Saket and Shubhanshu - you have truly been my comrades, in every sense of the term. You have been my pillars and your constant companionship has strengthened my resolve to stay put. I knew you'd always have my back. Thanks guys!

To Sarika- that one week when you insisted that I stay with you and join you in the library every day was the turning point of my MPhil. Your reassurance that I would be able to do this had worked magic on me. I don't think I would have reached this point without you. To Sonam- thanks for having been there for me every step of the way. I could not have traversed this path without your constant support. I love you.

Perasiamma and Sureshettan have been my guardians away from home. They have had to put up with my idiosyncrasies throughout the two years that I lived with them. Thank you for all that you have done for me. To Dilip and Ammu- you guys have been the best cousins that I could have ever asked for. Your friendship means the world to me. To Vallyedathy and Sreekanthettan- our culinary adventures around the city have always been the greatest break from the insipid mess food that I have had to endure. Spending time with you is something I shall always look forward to. And, of course, to Pachu- you are Ichamma's favourite.

And lastly, but most importantly, this dissertation would not have been possible without the three most important people in my life. Abhi, you have been a gem of a little brother and words could not express how proud you make me. We may be nine years apart, but you never fail to leave me awestruck by your intelligence and sensitivity. Through all our silly fights and our serious discussions I have grown to love you and respect you more than I thought could be possible. You shall always be my best buddy. Achhan and Amma have been my inspiration throughout my life. My decision to pursue academia has been due to your dedication and love for teaching. A mere thank you could not even begin to express my gratitude. Despite my many unconventional decisions in life, you have always stood by me and assured me that it will all turn out to be great. I love you to the moon and back!

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CPI	Communist Party of India
CPI-M	Communist Party of India-Marxist
CSP	Congress Socialist Party
GAD	Gender and Development
GDI	Gender Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GNP	Gross National Product
GoI	Government of India
GoK	Government of Kerala
HDI	Human Development Index
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INC	Indian National Congress
IRC	Industrial Relations Committee
KNOMAD	The Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development
KSKTU	Kerala State Karshaka Thozhilali Union
KSSP	Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad
LFPR	Labour Force Participation Rate
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
NIC	National Industrial Classification
NSS	National Sample Survey
PS	Principal Activity Status
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals

SS	Subsidiary Activity Status
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
VTC	Voluntary Technical Corps
WAD	Women And Development
WED	Women, Environment and Development
WFPR	Work Force Participation Rate
WID	Women In Development
WPR	Worker Population Ratio

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INTRODUCTION

India's development in the early post-colonial period was a part of a model of development with emphasis on large scale industrialization coupled with industries controlled by the state. Following the balance of payment crisis in 1991, where the foreign exchange reserves had depleted, India had to borrow money from the IMF. This led to an agreement where India's socialist style market, which by that point had become notoriously known as the License Raj, had to officially make way for a more open market where more foreign goods could infiltrate the Indian market. This is what is known as the liberalization of the Indian market.

Kerala, being a part of India, has also followed a similar path of development. But Kerala has always been seen as a model state in terms of its high human development, high literacy rates and favourable sex ratios. These high rates of HDI, equalling that of many western economies, have been achieved despite a much lower per capita GDP thus dubbing it as the Kerala Model of Development.

Kerala, located in the south west coast of India, consisted of the two princely states of Kochi in the centre and Travancore in the south. The northern part of contemporary Kerala was the Malabar district which was a part of the Madras presidency in the colonial period.

The demography of Kerala consists of Hindus (54.9 percent), Christians (18.4 percent) and Muslims (26.6 percent) (Zachariah, 2016). The caste structure predominant among the Hindus consist of the Pulaya and Paraya communities (the Dalits), the Ezhavas (now officially recognized as Other Backward Classes), the Nairs, Kshatriyas, Ambalavasis and the Namboodiris (the Brahmins); this is, of course in addition to various sub-castes and communities. The Christians in Kerala belong to various denominations including Syro-Malabar, Syro- Malankara, Jacobite, Marthoma, Orthodox, to

name a few. A majority of the Muslims in Kerala belong to the Sunni sect while there exists a small Shia population as well (around 6 percent of the total Muslim population) (Zachariah, 2016). Both the Muslim and Christian populations of Kerala could trace a history that far predates the British colonial rule.

The late colonial period had begun various social reform movements in Kerala that produced a rich literature on the various issues that persisted in the state including caste-based atrocities, lack of education etc. Though the women in many of the matrilineal communities as well as the Christian community had access to education, there were many others left out. The language of reform in this period had hence already laid grounds for a well literate society in Kerala.

The Kerala Development Model is defined by, in addition to high HDI despite low GDP per capita, measures of land reforms as a means to income redistribution. Another defining character of the model is an active public who, through their associations, has given birth to a space of intense democratization through public participation. The labour unions of Kerala have been characteristic of the Model, where collective bargaining has ensured income levels that are higher than other parts of the country. The stress laid upon literacy has led to intensive drives to ensure most of the population has access to education.

In the following pages, I would be looking at the various aspects of the Kerala Development Model. My intent, through this study, is to look women and work in Kerala. This shall be done by studying their participation in the workforce and the labour force. By undertaking the same, I shall also be trying to understand whether these participation rates reflect the levels of education in Kerala. If they do not, then I would like to investigate the reasons for the same.

My motivation to do the said topic comes from my interactions with Malayali people. Staying in Kerala, with my relatives, was the staple for all my summer vacations. My time spent there was always characterized by an inherent sense of patriarchal domination. This came from the difficulties faced while using public transport or generally while being out and about. It was also felt when I had to follow my parents' strict codes on dressing while living in Kerala (many of them absent while I was home in Goa). This drove home a sense of orthodoxy that was omnipresent in the Malayali community and public.

I had observed that a larger proportion of households amongst my relatives in Kerala had only one member who worked outside; that member would be, in most cases, the patriarch of the house. On the other hand, households amongst my relatives living in other parts of the country tended to have two people working outside of the house; this would mean both the male and female partners worked outside and were financially independent¹.

It is with these observations that I began the research. I have read much about the gender equality in Kerala in terms of high literacy rates for women and high GDI. My attempt is to encapsulate one dimension of the inequality that exists in Kerala; it is an aspect whose existence I have felt in my quotidian conversations, but the attempt is to understand it by looking at data on the labour force participation and workforce participation in Kerala.

In an international level, various authors have looked into the conditions of women in workforces across various economies. Most of these works have been influenced by Boserup's (1970) work on women and economic development- a pioneering study of this relationship. Earlier, Collver and Langlois (1962) had published a work on women in the workforce in metropolitan areas of 38 countries. Since the declaration of 1975-1984 as the Decade of Women by the United Nations, various studies have arose to understand female participation in

¹ Of course, this is just a mundane observation and should not be taken as any kind of a steadfast rule

labour force in developing and under-developed economies. Various empirical studies had also come from various parts of the world. For example, Chinchilla (1977) had looked at the relationship between women's work capitalism and industrialization in the Latin American country of Guatemala. Similarly, Hill (1981) looked at female labour participation in Japan.

Various works on women and the labour force have already been done in India in the past. Parthsarathy and Rao (1980) had provided a detailed analysis of women in the workforce in India. Mies (1986) looks at the condition of women in the workforce in agricultural sector in India. India's ministry of labour (1988) had published a detailed list on self-employed women and women in the informal sector. The World Bank (1989) has also produced a document detailing the situation on women in the Indian economy. Visaria (1996) has also looked into women and the Indian workforce.

Through the following work, I would like to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What have been the various aspects of Kerala Development Model?
- 2) What are the possible shortcomings of the Kerala Development model in terms of women in Kerala?
- 3) Do high levels of education in Kerala mean women participate equally in the labour-force and the work-force?
- 4) If there is a gap between women's literacy levels and their workforce participation, what are their possible reasons?

For the purpose of this study, I have referred to data on employment and unemployment based on the NSS 68th Round (July 2011 – June 2012). I have listed the available statistic on LFPRs and WPRs in Kerala. As means of analysis, I have looked into secondary data. Govindan Parayil's anthology of essays on the Kerala Development model (2000) has been an important source for my theoretical basis.

My dissertation would be divided into three main chapters:

- 1) Theoretical Perspectives on Development and Women
- 2) Understanding the Kerala Model
- 3) Women and Work in Kerala

Chapter 1: Theoretical Perspectives on Development and Women

This chapter looks at the various ways in which women in development have been understood. I will trace the history of how this relationship has been understood in terms of Women In Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD), Gender and Development (GAD) and Women, Environment and Development (WED). I would like to see each of these approaches as corresponding to the popular a paradigm of thought that was present during the time in women and gender studies.

I will further look into the capabilities theory to understand women and development. I will begin with Amartya Sen's understanding of the capabilities approach. Through his understanding of the approach, I will also look at Martha Nussbaum's understanding of the capabilities approach. I will highlight the basic aspects of her theory and what she understands by the capabilities approach. I will look at her basic understanding of central human functional capabilities as well as her trifurcation of capabilities into basic, internal and combined.

In the first chapter, I will also look at what have been the historical narratives of understanding women and work in Kerala. I would be looking at J. Devika and her work on engendering individuals and the kind of ideological position that was taken by the reformists in late 19th and early 20th century Kerala; the motive behind this would be to see whether these broad divisions of 'manly' and 'womanly' persist or not.

Chapter 2: Understanding the Kerala Model

This chapter is dedicated to understanding what the Kerala model is and what it entails. I will look at Kerala model through its aspects of popular participation and land reform; these two aspects have been highlighted by multiple theorists as definitive of the Kerala Model.

I will look at how the model has been pitted against growth models that have been propounded by neo-classical economists.

Under popular participation, I will be looking at various government initiatives that were started during the last 50 years. I will look at campaigns like mass literacy drive, group farming and resource mapping that were undertaken. I will look at how these campaigns became medium through which people could participate in democratic processes.

I will also examine, in detail the various aspects of land reform. Here, I would look at what were the land-reforms that had already been undertaken in the princely states of Cochin and Travancore and the British province of Malabar. I will also look at the various steps that were taken by the various Kerala governments to further these land-reforms.

I will also look at the aspects of sustainability and the Kerala model within the changing paradigms of understanding development. I will look at whether development in Kerala has been over-exploitative or whether it is be a model that can be sustained.

Finally, I will briefly touch upon which are the groups that have been excluded from the Kerala Development Model. Through this I would briefly look at the criticisms of the development model and would further develop this in my final chapter.

Chapter 3: Women and Work in Kerala

The final chapter will be dedicated to looking at women and work in Kerala. This would be done through understanding what the various indicators to

measure participation in the work-force are. I will also enlist the data on these indicators in Kerala, India and whenever possible, for each district in India.

My attempt would be to see whether high literacy rates in Kerala translate into high participation rates in the economy or not.

I will also look at foreign remittances to Kerala and whether they are correlative to labour-force and work-force participation.

Finally, I will conclude my dissertation by trying to answer the questions that I have already enlisted in my introduction and see what kind of work needs to be further done on this topic.

CHAPTER 1

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON DEVELOPMENT AND WOMEN

Through the next few pages, I would like to look at the various theoretical perspectives in understanding development and the impact that it has had on the lives of women across the world. I would be looking into the history of concept of women and development and look into how the concept has evolved over time. I would also be looking into what are the specifics in the case of Kerala and look at how the relationship between women in Kerala and the coveted Kerala model.

1.1: Understanding Development and its Impact on Women

The earliest engagement with the idea of development and its impacts on women can be understood with the UN Decade for Women (1976-85) and Esther Boserup's classic work, 'Women's Role in Economic Development' which was first published in 1970. The kinds of approaches that one observed towards understanding women and development could be largely divided into 4 different categories:

- A. Women in Development (WID)
- B. Women and Development (WAD)
- C. Gender and Development (GAD)
- D. Women, Environment and Development (WED)

A. Women in Development (WID)

This is the oldest approach to understanding the impact that development has had on women. This approach was a direct consequence of Boserup's work in 1970. The theory can be described as being a 'modernist' approach and had largely been favoured by liberal feminists of the time. Much like the spirit of

Boserup's work, this approach largely deemed modernization as the answer to the problems of male domination that was largely seen as a problem plaguing pre-modern and pre-industrialized societies (Visvanathan, 1997). The focus was on the economics of development and it was generally taken as a given that employment for women in modern spaces of work would naturally benefit them from escaping traditional male domination and authority.

There was also a criticism that much of the cost of modernization was being carried by women. And the attempts of this approach was largely to see to it that the cost of modernization be shared both by men and women. The ideological grounding of the approach made it push for a stronger integration of women into the process for modernization, a process that the advocates of the approach saw as the answer to male authority and domination.

The approach coincided with the declaration of 1976-1985 as the UN Decade for Women. One of the key areas of importance was looking at the impact that development has had on women. But even before the 1976, there were many steps being taken towards the direction of understanding the role women had on development and the effects that development had on women. 'In 1970 the General Assembly included in the International Development Strategy for the Second Development Decade a phrase- later widely copied- which stated the importance of encouraging 'full integration of women in the total development effort' (Tinker, 1997, p. 34). It was through these initiatives that Boserup's work became a starting point of understanding the related problems.

There were many concepts that were bound with the idea of Women in Development. They were (Tinker, 1997):

- i. Equality before the law
- ii. Education
- iii. Employment
- iv. Empowerment and

v. Economic development

There were three key conferences that were held during this period by the UN where the concepts and findings of related work on Women in Development could be further looked into and shared among various practitioners and academicians. The first of the three conferences was the World Conference for the International Women's Year held in Mexico City, Mexico in 1975. After the start of the UN Decade for Women in 1976, there was a Mid-Decade Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1980. At the end of the decade there was the conference Nairobi Conference that was held in 1985 in Nairobi, Kenya (Tinker, 1997).

The conferences required that each of the participating countries' governments submit a 'sex disaggregated data on a multitude of basic indicators' (Tinker, 1997, p. 35). This led a clearer understanding of how various development policies affected the women of different countries. But most impressive was the large-scale participation of women in both the main conferences as well as the parallel meetings among non-governmental organizations that led to more women sharing their first hand experiences on how they were being affected, positively or negatively, by the various policies regarding development that each of their governments were implementing.

The major critique of the Women in Development framework has been the assumption that women have traditionally been excluded from the process of development. It also uncritically adopted the theory of modernization. The proponents did not question the existing 'modern' social structures and did not see them as sites of oppression of and domination over women. The questions of intersectionalities were largely ignored and differentiations and hierarchies amongst women were not part of the analysis. Also, its emphasis on economic production as the site of giving women access to the fruits of development and further integrating women into the process of development meant that

questions of reproduction and gender roles within private, familial spaces were largely ignored (Visvanathan, 1997).

B. Women and Development (WAD)

Women and development can be largely categorized as the second set of approaches. These, unlike Women in Development approaches, were not blind proponents of modernization as the singular answer to male domination and authority.

Deriving from the work of Friedrich Engels, 'Origin of Family, Private Property and the State', Marxist feminists saw the Agricultural Revolution, where people learnt to cultivate crops and therefore shifted from a purely hand to mouth existence to one that produced surplus food, as the turning point from mother right to father right. They saw the rise of private property and questions of inheritance as the reason why men asserted the need to ascertain their fatherhood. Hence there rose a system that ensured control of the sexuality of women. Also, from these changes arose a system where men not only owned women and children, but they also claimed rightful ownership over other men who then were deemed his slaves. Hence into a hitherto classless society was introduced a system of class and caste that ensured the permanent domination of a group of people over a group that was, by fate of their birth, oppressed and dominated over.

Marxist feminists further propounded that this differentiation between men and women, through men staking domination over both production and reproduction, was intensified with the growth of capitalism that thrived upon private property. But, it has to be noted that Marxist feminists have not been able to give the spheres of family relations and reproduction its due focus. Rather it sees capital accumulation and capitalism in its entirety as the primary culprits. It saw the correction of the larger system, through radical changes in

the social structure, as bringing about immediate changes in familial relations as well as control of female sexuality and the process of reproduction.

The kind of approaches that informed the framework included many feminists who agreed to a large part of what the Marxist feminists in terms of their class analysis but diverge in terms of their gender analysis (Visvanathan, 1997). They can be grouped as dependency feminists and radical feminists. Dependency feminists largely agreed to the Marxist feminists and saw that gender inequalities as a consequence of the economic system of capitalism. Radical feminists, on the other hand, whose theories have been dominated by the writings of Maria Mies has further looked at the 'female body as the site of patriarchal violence' (Visvanathan, 1997, p. 22).

The major problems with the WAD approach have been the over-emphasis of the economic system of production as the site of gender inequality. It fails to critically analyse the relations between modes of production and women's subordination (Visvanathan, 1997). Also, its critique of capitalism has meant that it saw it as being disadvantageous for both men and women and at some level, this has limited its focus on how capitalism has specifically been disadvantageous to women. At some fundamental level, Women and Development has failed to address the issues of gender-based roles and has not been able to question the social beliefs of the 'naturalness' of these roles.

C. Gender and Development (GAD)

This framework arises when the deeper structural questions related to family and gender relations started gaining importance. Both WID and its non-critical approach towards modernization and WAD and its over-emphasis on class analysis were sufficient for a more in-depth analysis of gender and development. Another crucial development with this framework was the shift in focus from 'women' as a category of analysis to gender relations. Hence, the framework does not include the word woman in its title (Young, 1997).

According to Kate Young (1997), there are six characteristic features of the framework that I shall enlist below:

- i. As has already been mentioned, the critical focus of the framework is on gender relations and not women *per se*. The framework questions the basis of these very relations and questions the common sensical understanding that these relations and roles are a natural consequence of female and male biologies.
- ii. Whereas WID, which saw women as outside the sphere of development altogether, Gender and Development viewed women as ‘active agents and not passive recipients of development’ (p. 51). It further goes on to acknowledge that women, through the lived experience of being a woman, would have an innate understanding of their subordination. But this does not necessarily mean that they have been able to understand the reasons of this subordination and gender roles are never questioned and neither are they understood as the basis of such inequalities. The approach also acknowledges the existence of male privilege and hence unlikely allies in the cause of female empowerment.
- iii. The framework looks at various aspects of gender and how they interact with one another. It does not restrict itself to merely the economic aspects or the aspects of reproduction. ‘Rather, it focuses on the ‘fit’ between family, household or the domestic life and the organization of both political and economic spheres. (p. 52)’
- iv. The Gender and Development framework also questions the basis of understanding development itself. Development here is not equated to its economic aspects alone. Rather a more holistic conceptualization of development that includes economic, cultural, political and social betterment of people is undertaken.
- v. Welfare, anti-poverty and equity approaches are not seen as alternative approaches. Rather, welfare and anti-poverty approaches are seen as necessary for acquiring equity in society.

- vi. WID essentially sees the market as the medium through which equal distribution of cash between men and women would ensure equity between the sexes. But Gender and Development does not view market so optimistically. Giving women access to cash, though important, shall not be the sole reason to help them escape oppression and patriarchy. Hence, GAD asks further questions about political representation of women as well as improving their collective bargaining power in economic and political institutions. The discourse extends into stronger legal rights for women including right to inheritance. Therefore it pushes for an overhaul of existing power relations between men and women which would then need to undergo a revolutionary change.

D. Women, Environment and Development (WED)

The other approaches of seeing development and how it impacted women largely arose from theoreticians and practitioners who resided in the Global North. But the WED approach largely arose from conversations with women in the Global South who were seen to have a closer relationship with the environment. The approach is closely linked to eco-feminism that sees a link between male control over both nature and women. It is these similarities between exploitation of nature and exploitation of women that make women in a position closer to nature and make them better equipped to manage environmental and ecological crises (Visvanathan, 1997).

There is an 'economistic' conceptualization of WED that looks at it from the perspective of employment. Women's work, which has historically evolved along with patriarchy, has assigned such work to women that are essentially closer to nature. Men have been given the role of economic production whereas women have been assigned the role of economic reproduction (Braidotti, Charkiewicz, Hausler, & Wieringa, 1997). Such roles assigned to women are essentially lower valued than that of men and are, most of the time, unpaid.

On the other hand, the 'cultural' conceptualization sees that women are essentially closer to nature. Their role in the sexual division of labour places them in a closer relationship with nature. Here they see women as having a symbiotic and harmonious relationship with nature.

In India, Vandana Shiva has been one of the major proponents of the WED framework. She looks at the feminine principle that is called *prakriti* in Hindu philosophy. It is the feminine power that is source of all life (Shiva, 1997). Here she looks at the relation that the women in rural India share with nature. She looks at both colonialism and later post-colonial conceptualizations of development as being both capitalistic and patriarchal. They are based on exploitation of nature to serve the coffers of global capital. This undermines the relation that women in India have historically shared with the environment around them (Shiva, 1997). 'In contemporary times, Third World women, whose minds have not yet been dispossessed or colonized, are in a privileged position to make visible the invisible oppositional categories that they are the custodians of. It is not only as victims, but also as leaders in creating new intellectual ecological paradigms, that women are central to arresting and overcoming ecological crises' (Shiva, 1997, p. 66)

Wood was a common source of fuel for a lot of households in the Global South. And, since women were the ones primarily using stoves in the kitchen, and even going out, foraging for firewood, they were the target group for programmes that encouraged the use of wood saving stoves and pushed for large scale afforestation due to dwindling wood resources (Braidotti, Charkiewicz, Hausler, & Wieringa, 1997).

The rise of this approach also coincided with the Chipko movement initiated in India by Sunderlal Bahuguna. During the NGO conference that was held parallel to the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, the movement and its principles and practices were discussed (Braidotti, Charkiewicz, Hausler, & Wieringa, 1997). Similarly in 1985, the Nairobi

Forum was held parallel to the UN Women and Development Conference. This Forum included women from the Global South and it acknowledged their roles in environmental management and the close bond that these women shared with the environment that they lived in. As the discourse of sustainable development was gaining popularity worldwide, these forums acknowledged the special role that women played in the achievement of sustainable development.

1.2: Capabilities Approach to Understanding Women and Development: Nussbaum and Sen

One of the biggest contributors in alternative conceptualizations of freedoms is Amartya Sen. He shifted the focus of development from such concepts as GDP and per capita income to more inclusive concepts like the real freedoms that people enjoy. Here, concepts like GNP and other measurements of economic growth are only means to attain these freedoms (Sen, 2004). Sen (2004) also argues that there could be a situation where there is high GNP. But mere measures of economic growth cannot capture the existence (or the non-existence) of political and social freedoms. For example, the Gross National Product and the per-capita income in a country could be very high. But it could also be true of the same country, that there exist no free and fair elections. In such a case, can one claim that the country is highly developed by merely citing its high GNP growth rate or its high per capita income? Hence, Sen pushed for an approach that viewed development as freedom; this would include political, social and economic freedom (Sen, 2004).

An example that Sen gives to make clear the need to go beyond economic parameters is a comparison between male residents of the state of Kerala in India and that of male African-Americans in the USA. Even after correcting for price variations, it is quite obvious that African-American men earn more

than an average Malayali man. But then, if one compares the average lifespan of a Malayali man and an African- American man, one sees that their chances of reaching the age of 75 is less than that of Malayali men and even men in China (Sen, 2004). Here the ability to experience old-age is seen as a freedom and premature death as an unfreedom. And economic welfare alone, as has been shown in the case above does not entail complete freedom in leading a full and healthy life.

Sen's take on the market is not one of complete dismissal. He believes that it would be delusional to believe that there would ever be a possibility of economic transactions occurring without the medium of a market. But, unlike neo-Classical or neo-Liberal economists, he does not just emphasise on the role of the market as leading to economic growth. Although he acknowledges, to him the market is more importantly a space where individuals have the freedom to interchange. Hence he sees the existence of slavery and bonded labour as a rejection of freedom to participate in the labour market (Sen, 2004). But on the other hand, he believes that the state has an equally important role to play through social support and statecraft (Sen, 2004). This conceptualization of development, which acknowledges the role of the market but does not restrict development to just, the market, would require the coming together of various institutions: political, social, economic, cultural, educational etc. This conceptualization is also sensitive towards the mores of the existing society, which the people would hold dearly and the loss of which could be, in certain cases seen as an unfreedom (Sen, 2004).

Hence Sen sees a set of five instrumental freedoms. They are called 'instrumental' because each of them would contribute to the development of individual capabilities and they are the following (Sen, 2004):

- i. Political freedoms
- ii. Economic facilities
- iii. Social opportunities

- iv. Transparency guarantees
- v. Protective security

To understand what unfreedom entails, Sen refers to the Lee thesis that was developed by Lee Kuan Yew who was the former prime minister of Singapore. The thesis claims that if certain restrictions are placed on the political freedoms of people, it would help in the growth of the economy. Such ideas are often reflected in public discourse regarding the ‘growth’ and ‘prosperity’ of China. But Sen argues against such discourses where all other freedoms are regarded as merely contributing the economic growth, which is seen as the paramount indicator of development. He argues that political freedoms would ensure better economic structures since governments are answerable to the people and hence are more wary of insecurities like famines and other such man-made catastrophes (2004).

But over and above all such instrumental justifications, Sen sees political freedoms as ends in themselves, the non-existence of which would impede upon the full development of human capabilities. Quite simply, not having the freedom to choose who one is going to be ruled by is repressive and antithetical to the very concept of development.

Just like how political freedoms are seen as ends in themselves, so are economic ones. That is to say, the right to interact and exchange within the market is seen as a right in itself. This is quite contrary to the argument for markets that are being emphasised by modern day economists. Modern-day economics sees markets through its potential in expanding incomes and economic prosperity of the people engaged in it. Although, such benefits of the market economy cannot be questioned, the freedom and capabilities approach essentially speaks in favour of the market in terms of the freedom of exchange. He says that the possibility of expanding incomes and economic prosperity would also be, hypothetically, possible under the rule of a dictator who distributes all the money equally among its citizens and each of them earn

an amount that is more than the average income of a democratic economy. But, in the former case, all decisions regarding production and work are taken by dictator. Hence, the development as freedom approach would look at ‘comprehensive outcomes’ (that which would take note of the process through which the end result is achieved) over ‘culmination outcomes’ (that which would take note of only the end results) (Sen, 2004). With reference to a free labour market, Sen refers to Karl Marx who lauded the American Civil War as a great event in recent history. This is because; the American Civil War was fighting against slave labour, which is seen as the lack of freedom in the labour market. Hence, notwithstanding his critique of the labour market in a capitalist system, Marx sees pre-capitalist labour as completely lacking any freedom (Sen, 2004).

Here, while talking about freedom, Sen refers to two aspects of freedom (Sen, 2004):

- i. The *processes* aspect
- ii. The *opportunities* aspect

Unfreedom could arise from the restriction of either of these aspects. Inadequate processes would entail, for example, the absence of free and fair election. On the other hand, inadequate opportunities would, for example, entail the absence of medical services that would help people live a full and healthy life.

In his analysis, Sen sees two important roles for freedom in conceptualizing their roles in development (2004):

- i. Substantive freedoms have to be the benchmark through which the success of a society is measured. Having these freedoms would contribute to both human capabilities to live lives according to their own values and would also provide people opportunities to have better and more valuable outcomes.

- ii. The second aspect is termed the *agency* aspect. Here, freedom would mean higher autonomy the individual to make decisions. Hence they have agency to take initiatives and contribute more freely towards the society in which they live. Here, the word agent is not used in the traditional economic sense where it would mean a person who is acting upon the influence of someone else (the principal). Here, it is used to denote a person who is acting on her own will.

Within the paradigm of freedom and capability, Sen sees poverty not just in terms of lack of income. He extends it to the lack of capabilities that could arise from lack of food, healthcare, access to a free labour market etc. Hence, increasing unemployment would be seen as a deprivation that is detrimental to the full maturity of a person's capabilities.

Many arguments against economic development would claim it to be against the interest of the nation since it might result in the loss of traditions and cultures of the people. Against such arguments, the development as freedom approach would claim that the extent of development would be tested on the basis of how much freedom the people in the said country have to choose between a traditional way of life and one that reaps the benefits of economic development. In most cases, lifestyle choices would include aspects of both and no one group of people can dictate what tradition and what are the norms the rest of the society must abide by.

And it is the availability of this choice between tradition and modernity that becomes a recurring theme in Nussbaum's conceptualization of the capabilities approach.

Unlike Sen, who talks of capabilities in an abstract sense, Nussbaum (2000) gives concrete capabilities and terms them as the basic capabilities that each individual in any society must possess.

The central human functional capabilities that she enlists are (pp. 78-80):

- i. **Life:** This entails the right to live a full and healthy life, free of premature death, or loss of quality of life to such an extent that it is not worth living anymore
- ii. **Bodily Healthy:** Having good nourishment, good shelter and being able to be in good health, including reproductive health
- iii. **Bodily Integrity:** Having autonomy over one's own body. This would mean freedom from child sexual assault, sexual abuse, domestic violence, rape etc. which are all examples of people asserting their rights over another person's body, usually a woman or a child.
- iv. **Senses, Imagination and Thought:** This, quite simply means, the freedom of thought and expression. This implies having access to basic literacy and education, including basic mathematical and scientific skills. It would mean being able to produce one's own religious, literary, academic works. This would also imply the lack of an external pressure to think in a particular way or to be only able to express oneself in a certain way.
- v. **Emotions:** To be able to love the people we chose to love, to grieve their absence and to be able to feel anger or hurt at people who have been unjust or harmful. This would also imply freedom from abuse that may instil fear and anxiety in a person and impede their capability to love.
- vi. **Practical Reason:** 'Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life' (p. 79)
- vii. **Affiliation: A:** This entails the ability to live amongst others and to have affiliations with other members of the group. This would also mean being able to sympathise with others and their problems through the process of association. **B:** The processes of affiliation and association is a two way process and would entail the right to being treated as an individual and respected for the same. This would mean freedom from discrimination on the basis of caste, religion, gender, sexual orientation, region, language etc.
- viii. **Other Species:** 'Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants and the world of nature' (p. 80)

- ix. **Play:** 'Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities' (p. 80)
- x. **Control over One's Environment:** **A. Political:** This would entail the right to maintain one's own political affiliations and make political choices freely. This would also entail the right to free speech.

B. Material: This would entail the right to property. But this right to property must not be restricted to just a formal right but should be in terms of real opportunity. This also entails equal rights in seeking employment and freedom from 'unwarranted search and seizure' (p. 80)

This list, Nussbaum emphasises, consists of separate components. This essentially means that they fall under basic capabilities and no one of them can be satisfied by overcompensation of any other. For example, the capability live beyond hundred years won't compensate for having to live in constant fear of violence and bodily harm.

Capabilities, Nussbaum states, can be further divided into three different types (pp. 84-85):

- i. **Basic Capabilities:** This would include basic human functions like seeing and hearing. They become the necessary conditions for the development of more advanced capabilities like reading, writing etc.
- ii. **Internal Capabilities:** These are 'developed states of the person herself that are, so far as the person herself is concerned, sufficient conditions for the exercise of the requisite functions. Unlike the basic capabilities, these states are mature conditions of readiness' (p. 84). For some of these capabilities, the mere growing and maturing of the persons is enough. For example, capability to enjoy sexual pleasure is attained by reaching certain stage of sexual growth. But for certain other internal capabilities, like being able to make free political choices, one must need external support.
- iii. **Combined Capabilities:** This would be in contexts where a person has the internal capability and there also exists an external condition where such

internal capabilities can be exercised and can flourish. For example, a widow in India, who is not allowed to marry after the death of her husband, would have to internal capability of enjoying sexual pleasure but not the combined capability to do so. Similarly, people in a repressive dictatorship have the internal capability of asserting their right to political choice but not the combined capability to do so.

Through the approach that Nussbaum creates, she is also posing a critique of cultural relativism. She acknowledges the need to acknowledge local knowledge and traditional practices while studying the problems of women in a particular society or community. But she also acknowledges that there are certain universal values such as the ‘dignity of the person, the integrity of the body, basic political rights and liberties, basic economic opportunities and so forth’ (p. 41). It is by accepting such universal values that she is able to draw upon her ten central human functional capabilities that are applicable to people living in societies the world over.

But at the same time, Nussbaum emphasises that the focus of the capabilities approach is not to prescribe a certain way of life as being superior to other ways of life. Rather, the focus would be to create social, political and economic structures which would fulfil the central human functional capacities. It would be completely up to the adult individual to choose to live a life where she denies herself the fruition of any of her internal capabilities. For example, a woman may choose to lead the life of a traditional wife who would like to stay at home despite being qualified to work for a high paying job in a multi-national corporation. But, this, Nussbaum maintains should be the choice of the individual woman. Not being given the proper education or being forced to stay at home despite wanting to work outside would imply the lack of the central human functional capability to control one’s own environment and to one’s own senses, imagination and thought.

1.3: Understanding Women and the Kerala Model of Development

The Kerala development model can be summarized as one that has high human development indicators in terms of education, longevity, sex ratio etc. But these high indicators, sometimes surpassing certain indicators of highly developed countries, is coupled with low incomes, much below those of these highly developed nations. The model becomes a classic example of how economic prosperity might not always be the sole indicator of development.

But despite its high Human Development Index and its Gender Development Index, women who live in Kerala have an innate understanding of the existence of patriarchal norms. As a woman who has travelled the length and breadth of Kerala and has frequented its public transport and its roads, I have always been aware of the constant male gaze upon my body and way that I present myself in public. The challenge then would be to understand the existence of such sharp contradictions. Does the assumption that higher female education would weaken patriarchy not hold true for Kerala? The research would be understand these contradictions and to address the inadequacies of human development indices in being able to capture the existence of a strong patriarchal system in Kerala.

To understand patriarchy in Kerala, one must analyse its evolution in Kerala and the drastic changes the structure of family has undergone, especially at the turn of the last century. Historically, families in Kerala could be categorised as being patrilineal or matrilineal. Matriliney was practised among several groups in Kerala including several Hindu castes, the most prominent of whom were the Nairs, sections of the Muslim community, Izhavas in some parts of Kerala and sixteen families of Namboodiris (Brahmins) all located in one region itself (Saradamoni, 2006). The matrilineal system ensured higher autonomy for women within the family than did the patrilineal system. Unlike the patrilineal system, where daughters were regarded as '*paraya dhan*'² whose futures will be decided through marriage and entry into another family, in the matrilineal

² Literally meaning someone else's wealth

status, marriage does not alter one's membership in a family. Also, wealth is inherited from mother to daughter and hence women have a say in economic decisions made in the family (Saradamoni, 2006). But with the start of colonization, Victorian modes of understanding the family become the norm. Hence, it is seen as a husband's duty to provide for his wife and children. The matrilineal family, where children belong to their mothers' families and the paternal role is played by their maternal uncles, fathers usually have no say in the lives of their sons. Moreover, it was socially accepted for women to have multiple spouses. Colonial narratives that came to be in the 19th century termed such marriages as concubinages (Saradamoni, 2006). Such denouncement of the matrilineal family becomes a major reason why young men in Kerala start viewing matriliney as pre-modern.

Devika observes that the discourses that arose in late 19th century and early 20th century largely saw the caste system as impeding the development of the state. The attempts were to replace the status of caste, seen as external and human made, with that of gender, seen as internal and natural (Devika, 2007). The modern family for a modern Kerala is seen as one that is patrilineal and patrilocal wherein the spouses share a monogamous relationship (Devika, 2007). This same period produced various discourses on how to be a proper woman and what kind of education was deemed fit for women. This understanding of womanly education and manly education has carried forth to contemporary time as well. Hence one sees that there still exists high education among women in Kerala but at the same time, their representation in certain jobs, that are considered manly, is very low. On the other hand, 'womanly' jobs like that of a primary teacher or of a nurse, is dominated by women (Saradamoni, 2006). On the other hand, there is also a sense among women in Kerala that their status is better than that of women in other parts of the country. Hence, publicly expressing their discontent with structures of gender-based oppression becomes a taboo. Historically, since a 'modern patriarchy', located within the patrilineal family has coincided with high rates

of female education, questions against this patriarchal structure has rarely been raised. It is also very common to see that women, who have been educated and have largely been economically independent for their adult lives, anxiously search for suitable grooms for their daughters in their early 20s. This is a direct consequence of the primacy given to patriliney and monogamy as being essential features of the modern Malayali family.

Conclusion

The case of Kerala further strengthens Sen's claim that economic development is only one of the various factors that contribute to development. It shows that, despite lower per capita incomes, there exists HDIs higher than that of certain developed economies.

At the same time, Nussbaum's categories of central human functional capabilities become central to understanding the status of women in Kerala. Here, these capabilities being separate components become a central feature. Hence, one observes, for example that women in Kerala are highly educated, but do their living standards entail one that ensures freedom from sexual abuse, freedom to choose their partners, freedom to choose one's own occupation, freedom from discrimination etc.?

CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING THE KERALA MODEL

Kerala has, within the larger patterns of growth and development in India, been a peculiar case in that it has very high indicators of human development, but is not the highest in terms of per capita income in the country. This has famously been quoted as the ‘Kerala Model of Development’ or plainly the Kerala Model. In fact, some of Kerala’s human development indices rank as high as those of developed countries where its per capita income has been significantly lower.

The Kerala Model has found advocates in among those analysts who have, historically prioritized human development over economic growth viz. the expansion of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the nation. It has been a favorite amongst such social scientists because Kerala has historically shown relative economic stagnation with respect to the rest of the country.

The following pages would look, historically at what have been the various facets of development in Kerala, in particular the various moments in its political history that have resulted in these high ranks in human development indicators. The steps taken by various governments that have come into power, (be it the center-right led by the Indian National Congress (INC), the center-left initially led by the Communist Party of India (CPI) and eventually led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M) after the split of the CPI in 1964, or be it other smaller political parties like the Praja Socialist Party, Indian Union Muslim League etc.) have been an extension of social reform movements that occurred in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries in Kerala under the patronage of the princely states of Travancore and Cochin. The ideological direction towards improved and mass education and abolition

of the caste system had already been laid in the pre-Independence period. Hence public action through both governmental and non-governmental media has been a hallmark of the development of Kerala (Parayil, 2000).

Kerala model has often been pitted against the neo-liberal model of development through growth. It has been what many economists, including Amartya Sen and Jean Dreze, have considered as an alternative model of growth that could be adopted by the rest of India and much of the developing world. Where neoliberal economics has always pushed for higher rates of growth of economy, which would ultimately lead to development in terms of human development, through the trickle-down effect³, Kerala has always displayed high human development despite low rates of economic growth. In that sense, Kerala has always been an enigma to modern conservative economics (Parayil, 2000). This enigma becomes all the more pronounced when Kerala's per capita income and economic growth rates are compared to other states in the country, since there are many other states that exhibit higher per capita incomes and much higher growth rates than Kerala, while also exhibiting much lower levels of human development. This further cements the fact that such indicators as per capita income, GDP and growth rates are inadequate since they tend to mask inequalities and low HDIs.

The following pages would be divided into three main aspects of the development model, viz.:

- a. Kerala Model and Public Action
- b. The Land Reforms of Kerala

³ Trickle-down is a term that has been used to critique the kind of economic models that propound the decreasing of taxes on the wealthy and on businesses. Such models see better investment as leading higher levels of growth in terms of the Gross Domestic Product. They believe that such levels of growth could further fuel human development in such economies. The main contention to such a model has been that it would further existing inequalities and 'trickle-down' essentially means that the wealthy would have increased access to resources while that which 'trickles down' to the lower echelons of the population would be too meager to radically change their economic statuses

2.1: Kerala Model and Public Action

One of the key factors in Kerala has been the rich history of social movements in the princely kingdoms of Travancore and Cochin. This has resulted in various legislations being passed against caste-based discrimination.

The ideological standpoint of many of these legislations, especially in the early to mid-20th century, passed by the Maharajas of the princely states, find their grounding in the independence movement of India as well as a growing popularity of the communist party in Kerala. They were geared towards the abolition of the caste system as a medieval practice and as opposed to the modern ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity. 'Internal' qualities of gender become the thrust for division over 'external' qualities of caste. Here gender based division is seen as being symptomatic of a modern society, whereas caste is symptomatic of a medieval one (Devika, 2007).

If one looks at the history of reform movements in Kerala, one would see three distinct phases (Kannan, 1988):

- i. The first phase is that of protest movements where political mobilization was mainly centered on one's caste or religious identity. Such a movement had already talked against certain practices but did not talk for radical social change
- ii. The second phase of movements was secular and saw caste as antithetical to modernity. Hence, political mobilization based on immediate ascribed identities, such as religion and caste, was overthrown
- iii. The third phase of reform in Kerala coincided with the nationalist movement for freedom in India. This further pushed for the formation of class consciousness among Malayalis

Before the Communists rose to fame, there were a set of workers in the Indian National Congress itself, who were dissatisfied with the workings of the party.

Hence they formed the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) in 1934 since they felt that the vision of socialism was integral to the process of nation building in India. The CSP helped mobilize the agricultural workers of Kerala. Since land was held mostly by tenants, and since landlords constituted a small minority in the state's population, the atmosphere was conducive to the coming of the leftist ideology. Under the CSP, many Karshaka Sanghams⁴ were formed in different areas of the Malabar and was a crucial media through which one could politically mobilize this group of workers. The CSP had gone another step ahead and had attempted to make a common platform to unite these people who are simultaneously fighting the British colonial power as well as pushed for organizing the farmers based on their shared class status. This group was called the Purogamana Sahitya Prasthanam (Kannan, 1988).⁵ Although the CSP is credited with beginning the process of organizing the working class in Kerala, coir workers in Travancore is said to have already formed a union for themselves in as early as the 1920s (Kannan, 1988).

The Communist Party of India (CPI) had managed to garner popular support and establish a strong base among the people of Kerala by the 1940s (i.e. around the time of India's Independence), although it was founded way back in 1925. This further emboldened the working class people of the state to push for their demands. Such mass based struggles had managed to shape popular discourse that the Congress had to adopt similar strategies with their own unions for different classes of workers (Heller, 2000). And hence, both the Congress and the communists have had to fight closely contested elections by vying for support from the working classes by ensuring that their demands are met but their respective ministries. Thus, these close contests, with no one

⁴ Karshaka Sangham would mean a farmer's union

⁵ Purogamana Sahitya Prasthanam would mean Progressive Literature Movements

party wielding power for more than 2 consecutive terms⁶, have helped maintain the redistributive and welfarist character of Kerala's economy.

Such a strong engagement of people in political activities has resulted in pro-labour governments that have helped the working class to have unions that have militantly stood with the rights of the workers to collectively bargain, ensuring that the minimum wages gained among the lower classes of workers in Kerala is relatively higher than what is earned by similar workers in other parts of the country. Such unions are not only found in the organized, secondary sector, but also in the unorganized primary sector. The Kerala State Karshaka Thozhilali Union (KSKTU)⁷, allied to the CPI-M, has been the biggest trade unions for agricultural workers in Kerala. Similar trade unions have also existed for people employed by small scale industries like beedi making, coir, cashew etc. (Heller, 2000)

The government in Kerala has always worked in tandem with the unions unlike other parts of the country. 'Its historical formation was largely the work of the Communist Party, which organized unions primarily as instruments of class struggle, giving *political* unionism the upper hand over trade unionism' (Heller, 2000, p. 74). A case in point for this close bond between the government and the unions was the formation of Kerala's unique Industrial Relations Committees (IRCs). These committees are formed by workers' and employers' representatives as well as administrators from the Labour Department (Heller, 2000). They work together to fix the wages, decide what the bonuses have to be etc. These IRCs have been formed in various industries including petrochemicals, cashew & coir industries etc. (Heller, 2000)

But the negative impact of such high levels of unionization has meant that Kerala has never been viewed as an investment friendly economy (Heller,

⁶ One term for the legislative assembly is 5 years; hence, two consecutive terms would be 10 years

⁷ Roughly translated into Kerala State Agricultural Workers Union

2000). Lower levels of investment translate into lower levels of job generation and hence it would eventually negatively affect the workers themselves. Especially in the context of liberalizing the Indian economy, post-1991, Kerala has not been viewed an investment haven like some other states have.

As a means to propel investment in the state, governments that have arisen after the liberalization (post-1990s), including the communist governments, have pushed for private capital investment in the state as well as requested labour unions to tone down their militancy. There has been a shift from class struggle to class compromise, which has been a strategic withdrawal from class militancy despite an ever growing number of unions in the state. Provision of bonuses to workers, which was once done through the class struggles and the sitting of IRCs, has now been taken up by the Labour Department as a matter of policy. Therefore, where once such perks and bonuses as well as high minimum wage were ensured through actual class struggle, today the threat of possible class militancy has ensured that these demands are met (Heller, 2000).

Change in Kerala has often been propelled by popular movements that have maintained pressures to implement people-friendly legislations. From anti-caste movements of the pre-Independence period to the class based unions of post-Independence period, the public in Kerala has always been critically engaged in decision making and hence the political dispensations that have come to rule Kerala have been forced to act accordingly.

Kerala has thus witnessed a high level of social capital due to the ‘... sheer density of civic organizations and the vigor of associational lives’ (Heller, 2000, p. 67). This includes a multitude of NGOs and an excellent network of private, semi-private and government schools. This directly influences the level of education in Kerala, which in turn sustains this high level of social capital and ‘vigor of associational life’. Land reforms, which will be dealt with

in detail in the next section, has also led to high human development in the state.

Unlike other states that have seen a proliferation of caste-based and communal organizations, which have been divided on narrow lines, political mobilization has been primarily through class lines and has hence prevented it from dividing on the narrow lines as seen in other states (Heller, 2000).

‘And in so far as interests and social resources have been mobilized primarily, although not exclusively, along class lines, a democratically accountable state and a mobilized society have become organizationally and functionally linked in a manner conducive to the transformative projects broadly associated with development, particularly those of a redistributive character (Heller, 2000, p. 69).’

Even before the institution of panchayati raj in India, which was done through the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, passed in 1992 (GoI, 1995), there were attempts to decentralize the process of democratization and make it more participatory. This was undertaken with the help of non-governmental organizations that had already been working in close proximity to the people of the state, most prominently the Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP)⁸, which associated itself with the people’s science movement. Although a large section of people within the CPI-M were sticklers to centralized planning and development, newer groups within the party had pushed for deeper democracy through decentralization. Finally, when the left came back into power in 1987, with E K Nayanar as the Chief Minister, it pushed for a bottom-up approach to policy formulation. This led to the Government taking up three major campaigns (Törnquist, 2000):

- i. The first campaign: mass literacy drive

⁸ Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad would literally translate into the Kerala Science Literature Movement

- ii. The second campaign: group farming
- iii. The third campaign: resource mapping

Mass Literacy Drive

Apart from seeing literacy as a basic human right in gaining access to better lifestyles, the mass literacy drive was also undertaken as a move towards enabling a widest possible participation in more lucrative economic activities; hence, it was a move towards both economic and social development. It was also seen as a move towards loosening of religious patronages to create more independent individuals (Törnquist, 2000). The campaign began with a pilot campaign in Ernakulam, which was mainly headed by the KSSP, but also included the participation of other non-governmental groups along with the government. The literacy commission, which was located in New Delhi, also played an important role in this campaign.

In the pilot campaign of Ernakulam, about ‘...50,000 volunteers carried out an investigation of all 6,00,000 households in the district, whereafter 18,000 largely volunteer instructors made contact with those persons who could not read or write’ (Törnquist, 2000, p. 122). As a result of this phased out mode of the campaign, in 1990 the Prime Minister of India, V.P. Singh, proclaimed Ernakulam as the first district in India with a 100% literacy rate.

As a result of the success of this first round of campaign, it was repeated in other districts of the state as well as other parts of the country (Törnquist, 2000). But some of the problems that the campaign faced, quite similar to the other campaigns, were the lack of enthusiasm from public administrators and members of the political parties. Also no proper follow up had been planned and hence, continuous engagement with poorer, illiterate sections of the population has not been possible.

Group Farming

The late 1960s and early 1970s in Kerala witnessed a large scale implementation of land reforms. But such land reforms had not led to significant growth in production, although land was more equitably distributed among the population, and large landowners were restricted to plantations and cash crops like rubber, tea and coffee.

The strategy of group farming was adopted also as a means of bettering prospects of voluntary engagement, especially among the agrarian, rural classes (Törnquist, 2000). It was a method through which the agriculture ministry gained the support of the co-operating farmers that further helped in mobilizing popular support for the programme. The programme also helped in improving the productivity of the rice production in various parts of the state.

But since the agriculture ministry was still closely involved with the programme, the top-down approach of delegating tasks and duties did nothing to improve the lack of co-operation between various central agencies at the local level. Also, the programme did not see many supporters in party workers and other political entities in the local level, a problem that was faced by the literacy programme as well.

Resource Mapping

‘Resource mapping identifies the resources that can realistically be mobilized for campaigning. Relevant resources include human resources (committed activists, skills, experience, and time available), financial resources, material and institutional assets, and networks (contacts, potential allies)’ (UN Women, 2012, p. 1).

Thus, the project of resource mapping was undertaken in the state of Kerala to enable a sense of achievement among the people and also make them aware of the abundant resources available within each community. The maps were

drawn through a combined effort of the locals in the community as well as some experts who would train these locals.

But, like the campaign of group farming, this campaign too saw little participation from the people belonging to political parties. Even government officials and administrators did not pay much attention to the campaign. The campaign was undertaken in the early 1990s, right before the institution of formal bodies for local self-governance. Existence of such bodies would have helped in better implementing such campaigns. The loss of the center-left government in 1991 too led to the collapse of these campaigns too.

The Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP), a part of the larger people's science movement in the country, has been one of the foremost NGOs that have been part of such campaigns. It has aimed at giving the common man access to science which has traditionally been the privilege of a few. Thus, its active participation amongst people and communities has helped the growth of scientific temperament and helping it shape public discourse.

2.2: Land Reforms of Kerala

Land reforms have been one of the hallmarks of Kerala, where they were implemented most strictly as compared with the rest of the country. To understand what the various steps that have been taken under land reforms in Kerala are, one needs to understand what were the types of land tenures and the systems of land ownership that existed in Kerala prior to the arrival of land reform.

Systems of Land Tenures and Land Ownership that existed in Kerala

Prior to the formation of the Kerala state in 1956, it was divided into three separate princely states provinces viz.

- a. Malabar Province with its capital at Kozhikode
- b. Princely state of Cochin with its capital at Kochi (Ernakulam)
- c. Princely state of Travancore with its capital at Thiruvananthapuram

In addition to this, parts of present day Kerala also fell under the Madras presidency.

A. Land tenures in the princely states and in Malabar (which was under the direct control of the British), were very different and different rules governed them too. In the princely states of Travancore and Cochin, there are mainly of three types of land tenures (Oommen, 1975):

a. *Jenmom Lands*

These are lands that were owned by the temples (*Devaswoms*⁹), and hence Brahmins (Namboodiris) and other Savarna castes had most control of these lands. These land owners were commonly referred to as jenmis. These lands had other subordinate tenures under them that include:

- i. Verumpattom or simple temporary lease
- ii. Attipper or sale of land to the tenant
- iii. Kanappattom which is a combination of a simple lease and a mortgage. ‘The lease entitles the jenmi (landlord) and the mortgage entitled the tenant (*Kudiyar*) mortgage to so much of the usufruct as is equal in value to the interest on an amount called *Kanom* which the tenant advances to the landlord. Every year the tenant has to pay a fixed rent, from which the interest on the sum advance to the jenmi (*Kanomsum*) has to be deducted in the form of usufruct’ (p. 9)
- iv. Koolikanom or a simple temporary lease which allows the tenant to improve the leased land and he will be paid compensations for the same when the lease expires

⁹ These are boards that, in the present day, have nominated members from both the government as well as the community, that are responsible for managing Hindu temples in Kerala

- v. Koolikarazhma where a land lying waste is leased out for planting by the landlord and the tenant is paid according the trees they plant on the land
- vi. Otti or usufructuary mortgage

b. *Pandaravaka or Sirkar Lands*

These were the lands that were owned by the rules or the governments where certain types of land tenures arose viz.:

- i. Pandarapattom or a 'lease without any proprietary or transferable rights' (p. 9)
- ii. Inams (literally meaning gifts in Urdu) referred to lands granted to people in lieu or services rendered to the princely state or as a royal favour
- iii. Viruthi which were a type of inam, the receiving of which meant that the tenant had certain obligations such as personal labour or the performance of *Koothu*, which is a religious dance that is performed in the temples, or the supply of vegetables in the princely state etc.

B. In Malabar that was directly under the control of the British Raj the norms were different from the princely states of Travancore and Cochin. Here, the norms were more feudal and the government never owned the lands other than by escheat, purchase or by land-acquisition. Hence, tenants mostly dealt with the large landlords of Malabar and not with the British government. On the jenmom lands, the most common forms of land tenures were Verumpattom, Kanom, Kuzhikanom, Otti, and Karzhma (which is similar to Inams found in the princely states of Cochin and Travancore). In addition to this, another common system of land tenure was jenmomkozhum. In this form of a system, the amount of rent is fixed and cannot be altered by the landlord. At the same time, the tenants' right over the land was heritable (in the presence of an heir) in South Kerala whereas in North Kerala they only had a life interest. The tenant was also protected from being evicted from such kinds of lands.

It has to be noted that the Maharaja of Travancore had already undertaken land reforms in Travancore by giving tenants on Sirkar lands, a security of their tenures in 1865. Later, in 1867, the same security was extended to tenants under Kanom tenures (Oommen, 1975).

Similar reforms reached other parts of the state only several decades later. The Malabar Tenancy Act was passed in 1930 and the Cochin Tenancy Act was passed in 1938 (Oommen, 1975).

Having broadly enlisted the various types of land tenures that existed in pre-Land Reform Kerala, one needs to look at what were the objectives of land reform. The patterns of land distribution in India show that the percentage of land under tenancy was the highest in Kerala as compared to other states in the country. Kerala, in 1961 i.e. right before the Kerala Land Reforms Act was brought out, had 34.7 percent of its total cultivated land under tenancy (Oommen, 1975). The nearest state with such high percentage of land under tenancy was West Bengal with just 10.2 percent. Hence, land reforms, where these tenants could be made the rightful owner of these lands under tenancy, were very relevant in the case of Kerala.

The Kerala tenancy Act was passed in 1960 and was in accordance to the principles to the land reforms laid down in the Five Year Plans. As the court had struck down many of the policies enlisted in the Act, the Kerala Land Reforms Act was passed in 1963. This was partly implemented by 1st, April, 1964. But this partial implementation did not include the abolition of intermediaries and the placing of ceiling on landholdings. This came into force only on 1st January 1970, after the Kerala Land Reforms Act was radically amended in 1969.

Land reforms in Kerala were brought about with three main objectives (Oommen, 1975):

- i. Abolition of Intermediaries

- ii. Reforms of the Tenancy
- iii. Ceiling on Land Ownership

Abolition of Intermediaries

The following are the kind of intermediary tenures that existed in Kerala and what were the changes that were brought to each of them through the Kerala Land Reforms Act:

- a. Edavakai estates

These were lands that belonged to 'Chiefs' under the Travancore and the Cochin rulers. Although, many of the tenants were given protections and securities prior to independence, it was the Travancore-Cochin Edavakai Acquisition Act of 1955 that gave tenants exclusive rights over the land (Oommen, 1975). Compensations were paid to the Chiefs, and these were collected from the people.

- b. Jenmikarom Lands

In pre-Independence Travancore, the Travancore Jenmikudiyan Regulation Act of 1896 was passed and later amended in 1933 (Oommen, 1975). This amendment meant that the tenants (Kudiyans) became the owners of these lands, as long as they pay rents to the Jenmi (the erstwhile landlord). The Jenmikarom Payment (Abolition) Act of 1960 that was invalidated by the High Court and later revalidated through its inclusion in the 9th Schedule of the Constitution by the XVIIth Amendment, made the tenants full time owners of the land, as long as they paid an amount 8.3 times of the annual Jenmikarom (in 16 installments) to the Government (Oommen, 1975). The Government also paid compensation to the jenmis for the lands they lost due to land reforms.

In Cochin, the Cochin Kanom Tenancy Act of 1955 gave full rights over the lands on the Kanom tenants who occupied these lands.

c. The Pattazhi Devaswom Lands

These lands, that belonged to the Pattazhi temple Devaswom, was given over completely to the tenants through the passage of the Pattazhi Devaswom lands (Vesting and Enfranchisement) Act of 1961 (Oommen, 1975). This Government paid compensation to the Devaswoms by collecting the same from the tenants.

d. Sreepadom Lands

The lands covered an area of 15000 acres owned by the royal family of Travancore. The Sreepadom Lands Enfranchisement Act, 1969 passed over the ownership of these lands to the tenants who resided in them. It was decided that the royal family would be paid annuities forever.

e. The Kandukrishi Lands

These were 19,030 acres of land that belonged to the royal family of Cochin. These lands were surrendered by the Cochin king post-Independence, in 1949 to the Government. In 1958, the Pattadars (the holders of these lands) gained full ownership of these lands provided that they pay 8.3 times of the lease money (Pattom) in rural areas and 25 times the Pattom in urban areas. This money could be paid in lumpsum or in 9 installments.

f. Sree Pandaravakai Lands

These were 12,630 acres of land that was owned by the Sree Padmanabhasawamy Temple in Thiruvananthapuram. The Sree Pandaravakai lands (Vesting and Enfranchisement) Act of 1971 made the holders of these lands their full proprietors (Oommen, 1975). The role of the landlord was taken on by the Government who paid annual compensation to the temple, in perpetuity.

g. Thiruppuvarom Lands

The Thiruppuvarom Payment (Abolition) Act of 1969 was enacted through which the Government paid compensation to the Thiruppu holders in lieu of giving away their rights to collect Thiruppuvarom from the people in these lands (Oommen, 1975). Thiruppu holders that also are religious institutions

would receive such compensation forever. On the other hand, the land holders would have to pay a fixed amount to the Government in lieu of gaining full ownership of these lands.

Tenancy Reform

Tenancy reform included (Oommen, 1975, p. 20):

1. Security of tenure
2. Fixation of fair rent
3. Rights of tenants to purchase the ownership of their holdings

Security of Tenure

A group of people who occupied lands of the landlords in Kerala were known as the Kudikidappukars. These were groups of people who have been given the right by the landlord to occupy a small portion of the land for domestic purposes. They are traditionally given a small portion of the coconut produced, and are also supported in kind with the help of giving them materials to thatch their homes. They cannot be called tenants in the conventional sense of the term. These groups have historically lived at the mercy of the landlord and have, hence, been susceptible to eviction from the land, rendering them homeless. Thus the Kerala Stay of Eviction Proceedings Act was passed in 1957. This was a temporary stay on any such evictions of Kudikidappukars, pending the enactment of a detailed legislation to protect their rights to the land. The detailed legislation was brought forth with the enactment of the Kerala Agrarian Relations Act in 1961. 'This Act sought to confer permanent fixity of tenure to all cultivating tenants other than those holding land under a member of the Army or Navy, etc.

The initial Land Reform Act that was passed in 1964 was in favour of the rights of the landlord and allowed for evictions of Kudikidappukars. Later, in 1967, the United Front Ministry came back into power, with E.M.S

Namboodiripad as the Chief Minister and brought back a stay on any such evictions through the Kerala Stay of Eviction Act, 1967.

Further, with amendments to the Land Reform Act brought about in 1969, has conferred the security of tenure to all the various types of tenants in various lands in Kerala. Therefore, by 1970, all rights of the landlord had been vested upon the Government. Thus, at least in paper, the existence of landlordism was abolished in Kerala.

But, even within the amended Act of 1969, there were some provisions to hold land beyond the stipulated amount. Landlordism resumed on lands that were interspersed with plantations. Hence, big tea and rubber plantations continue to be held by big landlords. Also, it has been observed that several rich tenants taken advantage of this loophole and have owned lands beyond the ceiling by converting them to plantations. Thus they have, on the one hand owned large tracts of land and on the other enjoyed all the privileges of being a tenant under the Kerala Land Reform Act.

Fixation of Fair Rent

The Agrarian Relations Act was passed in 1961. Before this, outside of the Malabar province, there were no fair rents fixed. As a part of land reform, Land Tribunals had been set in various parts of the state. One of their major duties was to set the fair rent that differed with crops and different types of land.

With the coming of the Land Reform Act in 1964, in many places the rents were increased, substantially defeating the gains of the Agrarian Relations Act. But with the amendments made to the Kerala Land Reform Act in 1969 (under the United Front Ministry led by the center-left parties), many of the provisions of the Agrarian Relations Act were reintroduced. According to this, fair rent was fixed at 50 percent of the contract rent or the fair rent provided in the Act, whichever is less.

Purchase of Ownership Rights

The Kerala Land Reforms Act, as amended in 1969, vested all the rights of ownership of all land on the Government. This land can then be purchased from the Government. As a prelude to the amendment to the Land Reform Act, the government had conducted a Land Reforms Survey in the academic year 1966-67. It showed that very few tenants had actually purchased the land from the landlords. But, with the amendment put in order by 1970, there was a surge of tenants who wanted to purchase the lands. But even in this case, only 40 percent of the total tenants had applied for such purchase of land (Oommen, 1975).

During this time, there was difficulty on the part of the government to make the tenants apply for ownership rights. The fact that they had to pay the government to buy these lands was a huge hindrance that stopped them from buying the land. They were satisfied with the Government owning the lands, and preferred the government owning them over the erstwhile landlords.

Also, new legal changes would not be enough to break power structures that have existed for ages, and have maintained themselves through the thriving system of caste. Hence, many of the tenants were hesitant in coming ahead and claiming what is rightfully theirs, fearing repercussions from the landlords.

The initial Kerala Land Reforms Act of 1974 had decided that no tenancies created after April 1, 1964 would be considered (Oommen, 1975). But, since the question of transfer of rights was not taken up in full force till 1970, many tenancies had already been created in the meantime. And hence, many of these tenants were not entitled to the same rights as other, older tenants.

Some of the problems that the reformation of tenancy was that many of these Land Tribunals were run by the Block District Officer. They were not legally trained and hence would unnecessarily postpone the hearing of cases.

Additionally, these block district officers had many other responsibilities and the lack of officers to exclusively deal with reforms had led to poor implementation.

In terms of vesting rights over land on erstwhile tenants, the main difficulty faced in implementing this was the lack of proper records on tenancies.

Ceiling on Holdings

Even before the formation of the state of Kerala, the Land Policy Committee of the Travancore-Cochin State (1949) had brought about certain limits beyond which one could not hold any land. But it was the Agrarian Relations Act that strictly put forth a ceiling for land ownership that covered the whole of the Kerala state.

Like all other objectives of land reforms, the objective of placing a ceiling was also defeated through the initial enactment of the Kerala Land Reforms Act in 1964. It is only through the radical amendments that were brought in 1969, that these ceiling were re-introduced into the Act. The ceiling placed in Kerala was substantially lower than the rest of the country. Exemptions for such ceilings were in rubber, tea and coffee plantations, that continue be grown in large estates under the ownership of rich landlords.

The ceiling placed meant that an adult unmarried person or a family with one surviving member could not own more than 5 acres of land. For a family consisting of two or more members, the ceiling is 10 acres. This ceiling increases by an acre for every member in the household beyond five. But, in no circumstances can any family own land in excess of 20 acres.

In terms of implementation of the ceiling provisions, the major problem that the officials had faced was the lack of ability to identify surplus lands. In addition to this, many landlords have skirted land reform by declaring their

lands as plantation land. Hence this policy was a major loophole that needed re-analysis.

One of the major questions that need to be asked in the context of land reforms is regarding its efficiency. Here, one needs to differentiate land as being used for residential purposes as opposed to land for economic purposes, to create a production surplus. While the former is a basic human right, for the latter, one needs to learn what the most efficient use of land is and then see if the land reform has brought about this. Oommen (1975) posits the question of efficient use of land as a question of social justice since efficient use of land means more productivity for future generations to reap the benefits of. Thus, he talks about family farms; this is the rationale behind the pushing for group farming in the late 1980s, since the most efficient use of technology as well as seeds is in larger tract of lands over the small lands that have been handed over to erstwhile tenants.

Seeing land reforms as an integral part of the development of the state, the mere redistribution of land is inadequate. The government has not done much in terms of disbursement of funds for these small owner-cultivators to buy seeds, cattle etc. This reflects the lack of vision in terms of implementation of land reforms as a part of a larger model of development that has been observed in Kerala. Hence, as a remedy, Oommen suggests ‘... the progressive siphoning off of the population into the non-agricultural sector’ (1975, p. 55). His analysis of the lack of efficiency of small plots of land is reflected in the fact that agricultural sector is no longer seen as the most profitable and the service sector is the largest employer of Malayalis.

2.3: Sustainability of the Kerala Model

Sustainable development has been defined as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (UN, 2013, p. 1). It has come to the attention of

international economists as well as international organizations such as the United Nations, that sustainable development, in the face of large scale environmental, is a necessary condition to ensure the survival of the environment in general, and people in particular. Hence, along with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the UN also adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are (UN, 2017):

- a. No poverty
- b. Zero hunger
- c. Good health and well being
- d. Quality education
- e. Gender equality
- f. Clean water and sanitation
- g. Affordable and clean energy
- h. Decent work and economic growth
- i. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- j. Reduced inequalities
- k. Sustainable cities and communities
- l. Responsible consumption and production
- m. Climate action
- n. Life below water
- o. Life on land
- p. Peace, justice and strong institutions
- q. Partnership for the goals

As one may observe, a large section of these goals are with regards to environmental sustenance. And, it is with these parameters that one needs to review the development of Kerala. One needs to analyze what would be the effects of continued development at the same rate on the environment in Kerala.

In comparison to other states of the country, Kerala has relatively seen lesser environmental destruction. This is because Kerala is naturally endowed with rainfall distributed throughout the year. This meant that Green Revolution technologies, popular in the northern states of Punjab and Haryana, was used minimally in Kerala (Véron, 2000). But that is not to underestimate the extent of environmental damage that has already been caused in the state.

The major areas of environmental concern have been chemicalization of agriculture, water and soil pollution, extensive urbanization and the connected pollution that it brings to air, water and soil. But no environmental change has been as significant as deforestation. The forest cover fell from 28 percent in 1965 to 17 percent in 1973 to 7-10 percent in 1983 (Véron, 2000). The trees have taken along with them habitats for a variety of animals which mean death a destruction for wildlife in many parts of Kerala.

There has been a conversion of wetlands from being used for paddy cultivation to other crops etc. This is because rice cultivation is labour intensive and formalized labour relations means that labour costs have increased and hence rice cultivation has become more expensive. Since paddy farming requires that the land be submerged in water when the seeds are being sown, it helps maintain a high level of ground water. But the conversion of these fields for other purposes negatively affects the ground water level (Véron, 2000).

To prevent such conversions, and to preserve the naturally found wetlands, the government of Kerala passed the Kerala Conservation of Paddy Land and Wet Land Act that was put into force in 2008. According to this act, ‘...the owner, occupier or the person in custody of any paddy land shall not undertake any activity for the conversion or reclamation of such paddy land...’ (GoK, 2008, p. 4). The rules of the act maintain that there shall be the formation of local level monitoring committees at the level of the panchayat or the municipality. These committees would be constituted of a Chairperson who would be the

president or chairperson/mayor of the grama panchayat or the municipality or the corporation, depending upon where the committee is being set. Along with the chairperson, other member of the committee would include agricultural officer(s), village officer(s) and three representatives of farmers who shall be nominated (GoK, 2008).

These committees shall look into the conversion of paddy lands (if, required) although it shall not exceed 10 cents¹⁰ of land in a village or 5 cents in an urban area. It should also look into complaints regarding violations of the norms that have been laid down under the act (GoK, 2008).

Taking into the consideration the kind and extent of ecological damage that has been observed in Kerala, there is a need to rework the mechanisms of the Kerala development model in a way that is more environment-friendly.

Any reworking of the Kerala development model can only be done through decentralization, ensuring larger participation of the people in policy formulation. This would mean harnessing community based knowledge on conservation as a means to achieve the sustainable development goals. This kind of a shift was what was envisioned through the campaigns undertaken by the government in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Like the traditional model of development in Kerala, the new model would also focus on public action as a medium of implementing policy as well as ensure redistribution of resources (Véron, 2000).

Movement towards this bottom-up orientation to development and planning found fruition with the announcement that 37 percent of the fund for the 9th five year plan (1997-2002) be given to the panchayats. ‘The panchayats are asked to allot at least 45 to 50 percent of their budget for productive projects in agriculture , animal husbandry, fisheries, small-scale industry; 30 to 40 percent for social services (education, health, sanitation, drinking water

¹⁰ 1 cent = 435.6 sq. ft.

supply, housing); and only 10 to 25 percent of for infrastructure' (Véron, 2000, p. 222). Thus, to plan for the Ninth Five Year plan, the process was done bottom up when the people's campaign was drawn in 1996. The objectives of the people's campaign was to involve the people in the process of planning, to prepare lists on what are the projects to be undertaken at the local level with the participation of the community, to realize the true meaning of local self-governance by empowering them etc. Thus, there was a broad schedule drawn as to what would be stages through which this village level planning for the 9th Five Year Plan would be done. The planning process started from September 1996, with hold conventions at the level of the gram sabha that was open to all the residents of the village. Similarly, conferences were also held in the municipality level. These would formulate the kinds of projects that were to be undertaken, and would finalize them (Parameswaran, 2000). Once these projects were finalized, similar conferences were called in the block levels, district levels and eventually the state levels. By October 1997, there was the formation of the Voluntary Technical Corps (VTC) 'to evaluate technically the projects prepared by the task forces, improve them and make them financially viable, and later to assist the District Planning Committee in granting its technical sanction and approving the plan' (Parameswaran, 2000, p. 244).

Building a consciousness among the people to build an environmentally just society and economy is also, and probably most, important. Unlike the kind of development that happened in the west, at a point in history when environmental destruction occurred at a much slower rate, today sustainability is necessary in maintaining human development. Hence, in a state, where public consciousness was built around social and economic justice, the new Kerala model would also have to ensure environmental justice (Véron, 2000).

Some thinkers have talked about a possibility of a fourth world order and the possibilities of recognizing the same in Kerala. The fourth world would be an

alternative to the third world order, not in terms of countries that are more deprived than the 3rd world, but in terms of an alternative world order (Parameswaran, 2000). This would mean the synthesis of new economic political, social and economic structures, borrowing from both the Marxist and the Gandhian schools of thought.

This alternative paradigm would embody the following characteristics (Parameswaran, 2000):

- a. On the political front it would have a decentralized and participatory government
- b. Widespread knowledge attainment, not just in terms of literacy, but also in terms of better knowledge of one's environments, as a means of better being able to conserving it
- c. In adhering to Gandhian principles, it would have sovereign bodies of local self-governance
- d. Its Marxist character becomes clear when it propounds for political mobilization based on class over caste, religion, region etc.
- e. On the economic front, it would have an economy that thrives on small scale and cottage industries. This is also in tune with the Gandhian bases of the theory
- f. There should be a larger shift towards production for subsistence over production for surplus and profit-making. This would ensure that such production systems are more in tune with needs of ecological conservation
- g. In terms of technologies, there should be a shift away from those that have been made to fit large-scale production since they have been exploitative and have had a harmful effect on the environment
- h. Science and technology should also be geared towards serving the interests of small communities in an environmentally friendly manner rather than serving the interests of large corporations

- i. Globalization and the formation of the global village have meant that most of the products one needs are usually made from raw materials found in other parts of the planet. This large scale transport of raw material and finished products have also had very negative effects on the environment. Hence in the fourth world order, there has to be a push towards products that are locally produced from raw materials available in that certain region itself. This would be of great advantage for the conservation of the environment
- j. It is common knowledge that the non-renewable energy resources we use today, primarily natural gas, is dwindling fast. Hence, scientific innovation needs to be made to be able to harness renewable resources, like solar energy, in a manner that is cost effective, clean and good for the environment
- k. Other resources like minerals and ores are also dwindling fast. In addition to that, mines have been proven very dangerous to both the environment as well as the miners who work in them. On top of that, processes such as fracking¹¹ have led to extreme degradation of the top soil as well as water pollution in ground water. Hence, in the fourth world order, research and development must look into ways and means to extract such metals and minerals from extremely diluted sources such as water etc., where they are present in trace amounts
- l. There should be move to combat the culture of consumerism. Consumerism, which has led many to consume more than they require and this has taken its toll on the environment. Hence, one needs to be able to counter this by promoting a culture of simplicity and cut individual and social consumption to a bare minimum

The process of decentralization of democracy has already occurred in Kerala as has been mentioned above. On the front of science and technology for

¹¹ Fracking is the process of drilling down into the earth before a high-pressure water mixture is directed at the rock to release the gas inside. Water, sand and chemicals are injected into the rock at high pressure which allows the gas to flow out to the head of the well (BBC, 2015)

advancing environmental consciousness and justice, the Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad played an important role. This was done by expanding the definition of science to include the social sciences as well as applied sciences. They also did not restrict themselves to literary texts, which was dominated by western academia. They acknowledge the treasure of community based knowledge, that people have acquired by working in tandem with nature, and have passed on from one generation to the next. This kind of knowledge can be very helpful for works of ecological conservation. In 1973, KSSP took on the slogan of 'Science for Social Revolution' (Parameswaran, 2000). It also instituted Rural Science Fora which mirrors its principles of making science accessible to the common people. These science fora conducted science seminars in villages, conducted surveys to collect information on human and natural resources of a region, etc. (Parameswaran, 2000) Over the years, such fora have helped in creating a more participative democracy and making people aware of the ecologies that they inhabit and become sensitive towards the problems occurring in them. They have also helped in making people more oriented towards a model of development that is divorced from high rates of growth. All these factors comprise of the major economic, social and political changes that need to be undertaken to promote the fourth world order, an order that is less dependent on first world countries as well as more sensitive towards the needs to the environment.

2.4: Critiques of the Kerala Model of the Development

Criticism of the Kerala model of development has mostly arisen from that group of people who have adhered to conservative models of growth as development. In the initial years, pre-liberalization, but post-land reforms, the Kerala economy was stagnant. The per-capita income of the average Malayali in the 1980s was 16 percent less than the average Indian. But, by the second half of the 2000s, this had become 34 percent more than that of the

average Indian (Thomas, 2016). Hence, there was some stagnancy in the initial years, but has picked up in pace in the recent years.

As is common knowledge to most Malayalis, there is a huge section of Malayalis who leave the country for better prospects. A large section of them to go to the West Asian countries of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Kuwait. The Malayali economy is heavily dependent on with the remittances accounting for 36.3 percent of the State Domestic Product (KNOMAD, 2017).

Kerala has seen a high rate of migration of unorganized workers in Kerala and the native populations, who are highly literate, have witnessed a high rate of unemployment (Thomas, 2016).

People Who Have Been Left Out of the Kerala Model

Despite such high rates of social growth in Kerala, there have been certain groups that have historically been excluded from the growth model. One of these communities has been those of the fishermen in Kerala. Kerala has had an intimate relation with the coast and fisheries. With a total coastline of 590 kilometers, the entire Western border of the state is covered by the coastline (GoK, 2017). Hence, the sea has not only been the decisive factor that has led to Kerala's equitable climate, but it has also been a rich source of food and other resources. The cuisine of Kerala is dominated by the use of coconut and the wide prevalence of fish. With only a very miniscule percentage of Brahmin populations being strictly vegetarian, a large ratio of Malayalis depend on non-vegetarian sources of food, the most predominant of which is fish. Despite such dependency on fish, and the presence of an old fisheries industry, the condition of the fisher folk in Kerala has been worse off than other groups. Kurien (2000) refers to them as the outliers in the Kerala model. His study of the fishermen and women in Kerala has pointed out the discrepancies in the model of redistributive development in a way that pushes

for better redistribution rather than dissing the entire model as being the reason for economic stagnation.

The poverty of the fishermen is mainly due to their conditions of living and work. Most of them occupy the areas immediately bordering the beaches. This narrow strip of land houses a large population of fisher folk; hence, one observes overcrowding and poor standards of living that are not observed in other parts of the state. These are mostly thatched homes that border the coastline that live under the mercy of the sea (Kurien, 2000).

With more than 67 percent of households in Kerala having water latrines and around 28 percent of households with other kinds of latrines, it is the state with the highest number of households with toilet facilities (GoI, 2012). One of the groups of people, who occupy the 4.8 percent of households without toilet facilities, are the fisher folk. Their disadvantage is a direct effect of their geographical location. Their close proximity towards beaches has meant that installation of septic tanks is difficult due to the loose soil of these areas. Nonetheless the condition of their housing has improved, especially since the late 1980s, due to the provision of cheap but concrete housing by the government (Kurien, 2000).

The paradox of low per capita income, and high human development, observed in other parts of the state, cannot be said to be true of the fishing communities. The infant mortality rate has been observed to be higher in these groups than the Indian average; therefore, its health conditions have been much worse than that observed in the rest of Kerala (Kurien, 2000).

Kerala, being the only state with more women than men in its population, has scored very high on indicators of gender equality. But, among the fishing communities, where the preference of the male child is high since they are the ones who have traditionally been the ones primarily going out into the sea to

catch fish, and hence the sex ratio among these communities have been as low as 975 females for every 1000 males (Kurien, 2000).

Fishing communities impart their skills to the future generations, by taking the young boys along with the older men to fish. Hence, being in the sea is a major part of the boy's childhood to learn the tricks of the trade. Thus, education in terms of going to school and gaining modern, westernized education has been of low priority among such communities. This has reflected in low literacy levels, as compared to other communities in the state (Kurien, 2000). Since Kerala was a highly literate state, the written word was a media through which political mobilization was done through mass distribution of propaganda materials like pamphlets. Thus, illiteracy amongst these communities added on to their social, economic and political isolation.

The vulnerability of such communities is rendered worse through their total dependence on the market for other goods for survival. Since fish is a highly perishable product, especially in the hot weathers of Kerala, the fisher folk need to immediately be able to exchange these fish for other food products like rice, vegetables etc.

Another reason why the fisher folk have been systematically excluded from the development model has been because they have not had any type of union and hence no type of collective bargaining power. This, coupled with the illiteracy, meant that these communities were locked away from reaping the benefits of social development in Kerala. Lack of such collective bargaining powers also meant that, with the mechanization of fisheries through the impetus given by the government in the 1960s, there was a huge influx of rich entrepreneurs and their trawlers had an advantage over the fisher folk who adhered to their traditional methods.

But, as has been mentioned earlier, the condition has been changing since the 1980s, with a push towards collective action. Most notable was the setting up

of trade unions for all the fisher folk, by all the major political parties of Kerala. This meant a more active involvement by the political parties, with the problems of the community. One of the major reasons for a surge in socio-economic interventions was because of social workers who were already working with the people of this community. The depression in the fishing industry bolstered them to push for government intervention to prevent further damage to the fishing communities (Kurien, 2000).

Hence, be it the case of the fisher folk, or the Adivasis¹², collective action and unionization has always been the way through which they have pushed for the social and economic amelioration.

Conclusion

In the previous pages we have we have looked at the various aspects of the development in Kerala. The two key defining features of the model have been those of public action and the land reforms; they have been discussed in detail. The question of sustainability, that caught the attention of international agencies in the 1980s after serious engagement with the problem of environmental damage and increasing income inequality, has also been discussed. It has been observed that the extent of economic damage in Kerala is below what has been observed in other parts of the country. But, in terms of deforestation and conversion of paddy land, Kerala has witnessed them in massive scale and how they have managed in soil erosion and ground water depletion respectively. Finally we have also looked at what have been the criticisms of this model of development and who have been the groups of people who have historically been excluded from the process of development in Kerala.

¹² The tribal communities of Kerala and other parts of India are known as the Adivasis. They too, like the fishing communities, have been historically isolated from the process of social and human development of the rest of the state

CHAPTER 3

WOMEN AND WORK IN KERALA

In the previous chapter, we have looked at the Kerala Development Model and its workings. We have looked at their various aspects and what has been the role of the government.

We briefly looked upon the outliers of the model, specifically the case of the fisher-folk of Kerala. In the following pages, we would be extending our critique by examining women and their role in the labour force. We will be looking at data from reports on employment and unemployment in India as well as in Kerala. We would be looking at various indicators like labour force participation rates, worker population ratios, education, distribution of workers among categories of employment and distribution of workers among various industry sections¹³.

3.1: Labour Force Participation Rates

In most government reports, the Labour Force is defined as all those people who are either employed or are seeking the same (NSS Division, Department of Economics and Statistics, 2016). Thus, the people who are outside the labour force are those who are neither employed and are not taking part in the labour force either. This would include students, pensioners, people looking after domestic duties, sex workers etc. (NSS Division, Department of Economics and Statistics, 2016)

While the survey for the report on employment and unemployment was being undertaken by the government, within the labour force the usual principal activity status and the usual subsidiary activity status were identified. The usual principal activity status (ps) was identified as the activity status on which the respondent spent their major time in (NSS Division, Department of

¹³ Industry sections as stipulated by the National Industrial Classification of 2008

Economics and Statistics, 2016). On the other hand, the usual subsidiary activity status (ss) was the activity status on which the respondent spent relatively shorter periods of their time, but not less than 30 days in the previous 365 days (NSS Division, Department of Economics and Statistics, 2016). From the usual principal and usual subsidiary statuses one can derive the usual status of a worker (ps + ss). If a person is not enlisted in the principal activity status, they can still be enlisted in a usual status if they have spent not less than 30 days in the preceding 365 days in a subsidiary activity status (NSS Division, Department of Economics and Statistics, 2016).

Similar to the usual status of a respondent are their current weekly and current daily statuses. Where the usual status look at their activity statuses for the past 375 days, the current weekly and current daily statuses look at their activity status in the preceding 7 days and 24 hours respectively (NSS Division, Department of Economics and Statistics, 2016). ‘The activity status of a person on a day was determined on the basis of the activities pursued by him/her using a priority-cum-major time criterion’ (NSS Division, Department of Economics and Statistics, 2016, p. 14)

On the basis of the above mentioned the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) has been derived. ‘The LFPR is defined as the number of persons/ person-days in the labour force (which included both the employed and the unemployed) per 1000 persons/ person-days¹⁴, (NSS Division, Department of Economics and Statistics, 2016).

The following tables display the LFPR for India and Kerala as well as within different districts of Kerala.

¹⁴ A Person-day is a unit of measurement based on the amount of work that is done by one worker in one day

Table 3.1: LFPR (number of persons/person-days in the labour force per 1000 persons/person-days) according to usual for Kerala and India (2011-2012)
(**rural + urban**)

	Male	Female	Persons
	ps+ss	ps+ss	ps+ss
Kerala	579	248	403
All-India	556	225	395

Source: (National Sample Survey Office, 2014, p. 90)

The above table shows the LFPRs for men and women in Kerala and the all-India average. As is obvious from the above table, we can see that the LFPR for women in Kerala is higher than that of the national average. This slight difference of Female LFPR corresponds with the higher persons LFPR; the difference of about 2 percent is also similar to the difference between LFPR of males in Kerala and the country as a whole. The real important relation that we have to look at is the comparison between the male LFPR and the female LFPR. This shows that women make up less than half the amount of men in the labour force. The relationship this holds to education levels shall be further looked at in one of the later sections looking at education levels.

Table 3.2: Labour Force Participation Rate for males and Females in Kerala
(2011-2012) (**rural & urban, district-wise**)

District	Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Kasargode	516	318	431	189
Kannur	577	220	521	145
Wayanad	614	223	561	279
Kozhikode	562	126	553	108
Malappuram	489	116	424	76

Palakkad	519	209	539	168
Thrissur	560	203	545	209
Ernakulam	589	259	569	222
Idukki	607	385	477	193
Kottayam	619	262	521	187
Allapuzha	589	248	564	222
Pathanamthitta	626	257	567	156
Kollam	533	216	542	180
Thiruvananthapuram	544	239	530	206
All	556	214	537	177

Source: (NSS Division, Department of Economics and Statistics, 2016, p. 26)

The above table lists the labour-force participation rates for males and females in rural and urban Kerala. In terms of women's participation in the labour force in rural areas, Malappuram has the lowest participation rate at 116, whereas Idukki has the highest at 385. On the other hand, in urban areas, Malappuram continues to have the lowest labour force participation rate for women at 76 while Wayanad has the highest at 279.

3.2: Worker Population Ratios

The Worker Population Ratio (WPR) is also known as the Work-force Participation Ratio (WFPR). This indicates the ratio of between the persons/person-days employed and 1000 persons/person-days (NSS Division, Department of Economics and Statistics, 2016). This is different from the LFPR because this strictly looks at only those people who are employed and not those who are looking for employment.

Table 3.3: WPR (per 1000) in usual status (ps+ss) for Kerala and India (2011-2012) (**rural + urban**)

	Male	Female	Person
Kerala	562	213	377
India	544	219	386

Source: (National Sample Survey Office, 2014, p. 124)

From the above table, one can deduce that the WPR for an average Malayali falls slight short of that for the average India. Although for men, the WPR is higher, women in Kerala have performed slightly worse-off than women in India. Once again, a comparison between female WPRs and male WPRs shows that in Kerala, while 56.2% of all males are employed (whether in principal status or in subsidiary status), only 21.3% of the women seem to have found employment.

Table 3.4: Worker Population Ratio for males and females in Kerala (2011-2012) (**rural & urban, district-wise**)

	Worker Population Ratio			
District	Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Kasargode	503	312	428	176
Kannur	544	187	514	120
Wayanad	588	205	558	228
Kozhikode	549	103	532	92
Malappuram	474	65	412	50
Palakkad	506	181	526	159
Thrissur	551	184	520	188
Ernakulam	568	225	561	184
Idukki	588	346	456	193

Kottayam	604	227	483	141
Allapuzha	570	191	522	160
Pathanamthitta	588	206	524	131
Kollam	513	190	529	143
Thiruvananthapuram	532	200	514	171
All	539	180	521	147

Source: (NSS Division, Department of Economics and Statistics, 2016, p. 30)

The above table shows the worker population ratio at usual status for males, females and persons in each of Kerala's 14 districts. One sees that the highest WPR in rural areas, for both males and females is in Idukki at 588 and 346 respectively. Similarly the lowest for both males and females in rural areas is at Malappuram at 474 and 65 respectively. In urban Kerala, the highest WPR (at usual status) for both men and women is in Wayanad at 558 and 228 respectively. On the other hand, the lowest WPR (for both men and women) in urban Kerala is in Malappuram at 412 for males and 50 for women.

3.3: Education Levels of Workers

We have already observed that there exists a skewed representation of women in the labour force with their participation rates being significantly lower than that of men. In the following tables, we shall see what the levels of education that women have are and what is the Worker Population Ratio in each of these levels of education.

Table 3.5: Literacy rate (per 1000 persons) for persons above 7 years for Kerala and India (2011-2012)

	Male	Female	Male +Female
Kerala	966	924	944
India	827	663	747

Source: (National Sample Survey Office, 2015, p. 63)

The above table shows the literacy rate for women and men in Kerala and India. This statistic needs to be juxtaposed with those of LFPRs and WPRs for women in Kerala to understand the real paradox of the Kerala model and women and work in Kerala. While there is a gap between male and female education in India and it is around 16 percent, the same gap is only around 4 percent in Kerala. Hence, due to various moves taken by various governments to secure high rates of literacy in Kerala (as has already been discussed in the previous chapter), the gender-based gaps in education levels has been minimized in the case of Kerala. But, the corresponding gaps in LFPR and WPR remain despite higher standards of literacy among women in Kerala. Hence, can't a conclusion be drawn that women are attaining literacy but it is not being translated into better female participation in the workforce.

Table 3.6: Education level specific WPR in usual status (ps + ss) for persons of age 15 years and above for Kerala and India (2011-2012) (**rural, male**)

	General education level									
	Not literate	Literate and up to primary	Middle	Secondary	Higher secondary	Diploma/ certificate course	Graduate	Post- graduate and above	Secondary and above	All
Kerala	531	754	857	682	521	818	752	836	682	749
India	880	892	770	668	618	748	769	828	676	800

Source: (National Sample Survey Office, 2014, p. 153)

Table 3.7: Education level specific WPR in usual status (ps + ss) for persons of age 15 years and above for Kerala and India (2011-2012) (**rural, female**)

	General education level									
	Not literate	Literate and up to primary	Middle	Secondary	Higher secondary	Diploma/ certificate course	Graduate	Post- graduate and above	Secondary and above	All
Kerala	245	319	293	260	186	432	327	436	273	286
India	418	361	276	222	176	408	267	416	223	286

Source: (National Sample Survey Office, 2014, p. 154)

Table 3.8: Education level specific WPR in usual status (ps + ss) for persons of age 15 years and above for Kerala and India (2011-2012) (**rural, person**)

	General education level									
	Not literate	Literate and up to primary	Middle	Secondary	Higher secondary	Diploma/ certificate course	Graduate	Post- graduate and above	Secondary and above	All
Kerala	324	521	575	468	318	648	511	575	463	500
India	580	648	568	501	453	659	609	697	512	578

Source: (National Sample Survey Office, 2014, p. 155)

The tables above show the number of people in the workforce for every 1000 people above the age of 15 within each level of education in rural Kerala and rural India. It shows that about 30% illiterate Malayalis are in the workforce as opposed to 58% for India. Higher levels of education in Kerala have meant that jobs are sparser for the illiterate Malayali than for the illiterate Indian. In the case of women, for both India and Kerala, fewer illiterate women have access to the labour market than men. In Kerala this share for women is around 24% whereas for India it is 41% (as opposed to around 53% and 88% for men in Kerala and India respectively). In rural Kerala, the highest rates of employment are for people who have a diploma/certificate course, whereas in the rest of the country, highest rates of employment are seen among populations who have a post-graduate degree or above. For women in Kerala, the largest share of employed personnel is seen in the groups that have a post-graduate degree or above. Despite having a slightly higher share of employed people in this level of education for women in rural Kerala, as opposed to India (with rural Kerala postgraduate women having a 43.6% employment as opposed to 41.2% for their Indian counterparts), it is still far lower than the 83.6% employment rate for Malayali men with similar qualifications. This comparison further draws home the point that in rural Kerala, like in the rest of the country, far fewer women are employed than men and this difference is maintained even within groups with higher educational qualifications

Table 3.9: Education level specific WPR in usual status (ps + ss) for persons of age 15 years and above for Kerala and India (2011-2012) (**urban, male**)

	General education level									
	Not literate	Literate and up to primary	Middle	Secondary	Higher secondary	Diploma/ certificate course	Graduate	Post- graduate and above	Secondary and above	All
Kerala	497	722	873	630	445	790	790	772	662	731
India	832	847	765	651	583	691	771	844	687	741

Source: (National Sample Survey Office, 2014, p. 156)

Table 3.10: Education level specific WPR in usual status (ps + ss) for persons of age 15 years and above for Kerala and India (2011-2012) (**urban, female**)

	General education level									
	Not literate	Literate and up to primary	Middle	Secondary	Higher secondary	Diploma/ certificate course	Graduate	Post- graduate and above	Secondary and above	All
Kerala	187	198	204	203	173	413	427	427	281	241
India	240	223	158	110	108	344	237	395	173	195

Source: (National Sample Survey Office, 2014, p. 157)

Table 3.11: Education level specific WPR in usual status (ps + ss) for persons of age 15 years and above for Kerala and India (2011-2012) (**urban, person**)

	General education level									
	Not literate	Literate and up to primary	Middle	Secondary	Higher secondary	Diploma/ certificate course	Graduate	Post- graduate and above	Secondary and above	All
Kerala	273	430	539	400	285	653	591	584	459	468
India	419	521	424	355	343	630	593	576	450	455

Source: (National Sample Survey Office, 2014, p. 158)

The tables above show what the WPRs are for adults in urban Kerala and India for groups within different levels of education. In urban Kerala, the numbers

of employed illiterates are even lesser than rural Kerala, with 27.3% of them being employed (as opposed to almost 42% for the country). For urban illiterate women, though the difference between Kerala and India are far lesser, the percentage of employed illiterates is too low at 18.7% in rural Kerala (as opposed to 49.7% for men in urban Kerala with the same level of education). In urban Kerala, highest rates of employment among women are seen among those who have at least a post-graduate degree. The WPR for an urban woman with a graduate or at least a post-graduate degree is the same at 427. This is much higher than the WPR for women in urban India with similar levels of education. Urban Indian women with a graduate degree have a WPR of 237 and the WPR for those with a qualification of post-graduate and above are 395. Although 42.7% of the women with at least a post-graduate degree are a part of the workforce, this percentage is far lower than the percentage of men in the workforce with the same level of educational qualification (which is 77.2%). In Kerala, the group of persons which has the highest ratio of people in the workforce are those with a diploma or a certificate course. 65.3% of them are in the workforce.

3.4: Amount of Remittances for Each District in Kerala

The table below lists the amount of household remittances received in each of Kerala's 14 districts from the year 1998 to 2014. These could be remittances from inter-state migration or international migration as well. The point of looking at these remittances was to understand whether any correlation exists between the amount of remittances and women's participation in the workforce.

3.12: Household Remittances for Kerala (in crores) (2014) (**district-wise**)

District	2014
Kasargode	1294
Kannur	1976

Wayanad	303
Kozhikode	1967
Malappuram	3510
Palakkad	1009
Thrissur	2527
Ernakulam	3210
Idukki	228
Kottayam	699
Allapuzha	2065
Pathanamthitta	1478
Kollam	2168
Thiruvananthapuram	1847
All	24374

Source: (Zachariah & Irudaya Rajan, 2015, p. 50)

From the above table, it is evident that the highest amount of remittance, for the year 2011 was received in the state of Malappuram (Rs. 2752 cr.). The least remittance was received in the district of Idukki (Rs. 55 cr.). The year 2011 has been chosen because the rest of the data is from the year 2011-2012; therefore this is data closest to the rest of the data that has been used in this chapter.

Comparison of this table with the previous table on WPR in each of Kerala's districts shows a correlation between low remittances and high WPR for women. For example, Idukki ranks the highest in LFPR for women in rural areas (346 for every 1000 female persons). This is the district that has received the lowest remittance in the year 2011. Similarly, Wayanad has the highest LFPR for women in urban areas (228 for every 1000 female persons).

On the other hand, Malappuram has the highest household remittances in the entire state. But if we look at the LFPR, we see that it is the state which ranks

the lowest in female LFPR (65 for every 1000 females in rural areas; 50 for every 1000 females in urban areas).

3.5: Distribution of Workers

All the workers have been divided into the categories of self-employed, regular wage/ salaried employees or casual labour. The following is the way that these three categories have been derived (NSS Division, Department of Economics and Statistics, 2016, p. 8):

1. Self- employed:
 - i. Worked in household enterprises as own-account worker
 - ii. Worked in household enterprises as an employer
 - iii. Worked in household enterprises as helper
2. Regular wage/ salaried employee:
 - i. Worked as regular wage/ salaried employee
3. Casual Labour:
 - i. Worked as casual labour in public works other than MGNREGA public works
 - ii. Worked as casual labour in MGNREGA public works
 - iii. Did not work owing to sickness although there was work in household enterprises
 - iv. Did not work owing to other reasons although there was work in household enterprises
 - v. Did not work owing to sickness but had regular wage/ salaried employment
 - vi. Did not work owing to other reasons but had regular wage/ salaried employment

Of all the categories that have been listed, the highest numbers of educated people are found among salaried employees. This is important since in the ensuing table, one sees that the distribution of women in Kerala has a much

larger section working in the regular salaried section in comparison to the rest of the country.

Below are listed the tables of distribution of employed people according to their category of employment for every 1000 employed people.

Table 3.13: Per 1000 distribution of usually employed by category of employment for Kerala and India (2011-2012) (**rural, male**)

	Usually Employed		
	ps+ss		
	Self-employed	Regular wage/salaried employees	Casual labour
Kerala	389	156	457
India	545	100	355

Source: (National Sample Survey Office, 2014, p. 159)

Table 3.14: Per 1000 distribution of usually employed by category of employment for Kerala and India (2011-2012) (**rural, female**)

	Usually Employed		
	ps+ss		
	Self-employed	Regular wage/salaried employees	Casual labour
Kerala	367	231	407
India	593	56	351

Source: (National Sample Survey Office, 2014, p. 160)

Table 3.15: Per 1000 distribution of usually employed by category of employment for Kerala and India (2011-2012) (**rural, person**)

	Usually Employed		
	ps+ss		
	Self-employed	Regular wage/ salaried employees	Casual labour
Kerala	382	178	440
India	559	88	353

Source: (National Sample Survey Office, 2014, p. 161)

In the tables above we can see the distribution of workers into the three categories of employment, viz. self-employed, regular wage/ salaried employees or casual labour. From the aggregate of male and female data in rural Kerala and rural India, one can see that the proportion of workers engaged in regular wage/ salaried employment is much higher than the proportion for India's as a whole (it is 17.8% in Kerala whereas only 8.8% for India). This is a direct reflection of higher rates of education in the state. On the other hand, since self-employment also refers to agricultural labour in rural areas, we see a lower proportion of self-employed people in rural Kerala than rural India (it is 38.2% in rural Kerala as opposed to 55.9% in rural India).

The higher proportion of regular wage and salaried employees becomes even more pronounced among female workers in the state. For every 1000 female workers in rural Kerala, 231 of them fall into this category as opposed to just 56 for the Indian aggregate. This is even higher than the proportion for men in regular wage and salaried employment; in rural Kerala only 156 of every 1000 male worker is engaged in this category of employment (in India as a whole the same number is 100 for every 1000 male workers).

Rural Kerala has a higher proportion of casual labourers than the rest of the country. For Kerala's males and females as an aggregate, this proportion is 440 as opposed to India's 353; for females alone this proportion is 407 as opposed to India's 351.

Table 3.16: Per 1000 distribution of usually employed by category of employment for Kerala and India (2011-2012) (**urban, male**)

	Usually Employed		
	ps+ss		
	Self-employed	Regular wage/salaried employees	Casual labour
Kerala	364	315	321
India	417	434	149

Source: (National Sample Survey Office, 2014, p. 162)

Table 3.17: Per 1000 distribution of usually employed by category of employment for Kerala and India (2011-2012) (**urban, female**)

	Usually Employed		
	ps+ss		
	Self-employed	Regular wage/salaried employees	Casual labour
Kerala	361	466	173
India	428	428	143

Source: (National Sample Survey Office, 2014, p. 163)

Table 3.18: Per 1000 distribution of usually employed by category of employment for Kerala and India (2011-2012) (**urban, person**)

	Usually Employed		
	ps+ss		
	Self-employed	Regular wage/salaried employees	Casual labour
Kerala	364	358	278
India	420	434	146

Source: (National Sample Survey Office, 2014, p. 164)

The comparisons between urban Kerala and urban India display a different trend than their rural counterparts. One can see that the proportion of regular waged and salaried employees is lower in urban Kerala than it is in urban India (358 for Kerala and 434 for India). But Kerala's urban women, like their rural counterparts, are largely occupied in regular waged or salaried employment. 466 of every 1000 female workers in Kerala fall under this category as opposed to 428 in the country as a whole. Casual labour in urban Kerala, like in rural Kerala, is much higher in than the Indian average (278 in Kerala as opposed to 146 in India).

Self-employment in urban areas of Kerala, like in the rural areas too, is much lesser in proportion than the national average. In Kerala this proportion is 364 for every 1000 workers as opposed to the Indian average of 420. For women specifically, in urban Kerala every 361 of every 1000 female workers is self-employed whereas in India this proportion is 428.

Hence once can derive from this that, in average a higher proportion of workers in Kerala are regular waged or salaried (in comparison to the national

average) while self-employed and casual labourers are fewer in number within the same comparison.

Table 3.19: Distribution of workers according to employment status in Kerala
(2011-2012) (**rural, male**)

District	Self-employed	Regular wage/ salaried employee	Casual labour
Kasargode	279	51	670
Kannur	310	74	616
Wayanad	412	128	460
Kozhikode	278	167	555
Malappuram	377	135	488
Palakkad	389	159	452
Thrissur	329	256	415
Ernakulam	357	189	454
Idukki	381	103	516
Kottayam	477	205	318
Allapuzha	374	122	504
Pathanamthitta	485	109	406
Kollam	333	128	539
Thiruvananthapuram	216	209	301
All	351	156	493

Source: (NSS Division, Department of Economics and Statistics, 2016, p. 133)

Table 3.20: Distribution of workers according to employment status in Kerala
(2011-2012) (**rural, female**)

District	Self-employed	Regular wage/ salaried employee	Casual labour
Kasargode	594	59	347
Kannur	178	209	613
Wayanad	219	165	616
Kozhikode	322	179	499
Malappuram	323	328	349
Palakkad	173	156	671
Thrissur	264	322	414
Ernakulam	271	378	351
Idukki	147	183	670
Kottayam	533	238	229
Allapuzha	315	165	520
Pathanamthitta	471	293	236
Kollam	220	301	479
Thiruvananthapuram	406	272	322
All	310	240	450

Source: (NSS Division, Department of Economics and Statistics, 2016, p. 133)

Table 3.21: Distribution of workers according to employment status in Kerala
(2011-2012) (**rural, person**)

District	Self-employed	Regular wage/ salaried employee	Casual labour
Kasargode	400	54	546
Kannur	274	111	615
Wayanad	360	138	502
Kozhikode	285	169	546
Malappuram	369	161	470
Palakkad	327	158	515
Thrissur	310	275	415
Ernakulam	332	244	424
Idukki	299	131	570
Kottayam	493	215	292
Allapuzha	358	134	508
Pathanamthitta	481	160	359
Kollam	300	178	522
Thiruvananthapuram	269	226	505
All	340	179	481

Source: (NSS Division, Department of Economics and Statistics, 2016, p. 133)

The above tables show the district-wise data for distribution of rural males, females and persons in Kerala according to their employment status in Kerala. For the self-employed, their largest proportion is seen in the district of Kottayam (with a ratio of 493 for every 100 workers) and their lowest proportion is seen in Thiruvananthapuram (with a ratio of 269 for every 1000 workers). For women, the largest proportion of the self-employed in the rural areas is in the district of Kasargode (where 594 for every 1000 female workers

are self-employed) and the least is in the district of Idukki (where 147 for every 1000 female workers are self-employed).

When one looks at the regular wage or salaried employees, the largest proportion is seen in the district of Thrissur (where 275 for every 1000 worker receives a regular wage or salary), and the smallest proportion is seen in the district of Kasargode (54 for every 1000 workers). For females, the women in Ernakulam have highest proportion regular waged or salaried employees (378 for every 1000 female workers). For women as well, Kasargode has the lowest proportion of regular waged or salaried employees (59 for every 1000 female workers).

Kannur has the highest proportion of worker in casual labour (615 for every 1000 workers) whereas Kottayam has the lowest proportion (292 for every 1000 workers). In the case of women in rural areas, Palakkad has the highest proportion employed in casual labour (671 for every 1000 female workers) whereas Pathanamthitta has the lowest (236 for every 1000 worker).

Table 3.22: Distribution of workers according to employment status in Kerala (2011-2012) (**urban, male**)

District	Self-employed	Regular wage/ salaried employee	Casual labour
Kasargode	279	183	538
Kannur	322	169	509
Wayanad	304	141	555
Kozhikode	272	277	451
Malappuram	437	224	339
Palakkad	398	339	263
Thrissur	376	313	311
Ernakulam	304	382	314

Idukki	523	290	187
Kottayam	486	218	296
Allapuzha	367	307	326
Pathanamthitta	358	158	484
Kollam	263	310	427
Thiruvananthapuram	254	363	383
All	321	299	380

Source: (NSS Division, Department of Economics and Statistics, 2016, p. 134)

Table 3.23: Distribution of workers according to employment status in Kerala
(2011-2012) (**urban, female**)

District	Self-employed	Regular wage/ salaried employee	Casual labour
Kasargode	492	299	209
Kannur	267	384	349
Wayanad	118	441	441
Kozhikode	274	634	92
Malappuram	165	728	107
Palakkad	292	280	428
Thrissur	314	537	149
Ernakulam	278	577	145
Idukki	269	442	289
Kottayam	456	340	204
Allapuzha	516	294	190
Pathanamthitta	423	493	84
Kollam	292	457	251
Thiruvananthapuram	291	575	134
All	313	498	189

Source: (NSS Division, Department of Economics and Statistics, 2016, p. 134)

Table 3.24: Distribution of workers according to employment status in Kerala
(2011-2012) (**urban, person**)

District	Self-employed	Regular wage/ salaried employee	Casual labour
Kasargode	344	219	437
Kannur	310	214	476
Wayanad	252	220	528
Kozhikode	272	334	394
Malappuram	405	282	313
Palakkad	373	325	302
Thrissur	357	380	263
Ernakulam	298	430	272
Idukki	459	329	212
Kottayam	479	248	273
Allapuzha	403	304	293
Pathanamthitta	370	228	402
Kollam	271	345	384
Thiruvananthapuram	264	418	318
All	320	346	334

Source: (NSS Division, Department of Economics and Statistics, 2016, p. 134)

The above tables show the proportion of workers in each of the employment category for urban areas in each of Kerala's 14 districts. For persons who are self-employed, the highest proportion of workers who are self-employed in urban areas is in the district of Kottayam (479 for every 1000 workers). The lowest proportion of self-employed persons is in Wayanad (252 for every 1000 worker). For women in urban Kerala, the highest proportion of self-employed women is in Kasargode (492 for every 1000 female workers) whilst the smallest proportion is in Wayanad (118 for every 1000 female workers).

When it comes to the regular waged or salaried employees in urban Kerala, the highest proportion is seen in Ernakulam (430 for every 1000 workers) whilst the lowest proportion is observed to be in Kannur (214 for every 1000 workers). For women in urban Kerala, the highest proportion in regular waged or salaried employment is in Malappuram (728 for every 1000 female workers) whilst the lowest proportion is in Palakkad (280 for every 1000 female workers).

Next, when we look casual labour, the highest proportion for this category of employment for persons in urban Kerala is in Wayanad (528 for every 1000 workers) whereas the lowest proportion is in Idukki (212 for every 1000 workers). For women in urban Kerala, the highest proportion employed in casual labour is seen in the district of Wayanad (441 for every 1000 female workers). On the other hand, the smallest proportion of female workers engaged in casual labour is in the district of Kozhikode (92 of every 1000 workers).

When we juxtapose the above data (on district-wise distribution of workers in Kerala according to type of employment) with the data of Labour-Force Participation Rates we gather that in rural Kerala, Malappuram has the highest section of women working as regular waged or salaried employees. On the other hand, this district also has the lowest LFPR for women (at just 116). Hence we see that in the area, many women do not work outside their homes; but the ones who eventually decide to go out for employment, tend to look for regular waged or salaried employment. Such employment is also the one that demands the highest levels of speciality.

This pattern is even more starkly visible in the case of urban Malappuram. While having a depressingly low rate of labour force participation for women (at just 76), 72.8 percent of employed women are regular waged or salaried.

This inverse of this relationship is also visible when comparing the places that have highest female LFPRs. In rural Kerala, the district of Idukki has the highest female LFPR (at 385). But when one looks at the distribution of these female workers according to type of employment, one sees that rural Idukki has the highest ratio of women employed as casual labour (67 percent), a type of labour that requires the least amount of formal training.

The same relation is also seen in urban Kerala. Here, Wayanad has the highest rate of female labour force participation (at 279). But we see that the number of women in urban Wayanad employed as casual labour equals the number that is employed in regular waged or salaried employment (at 441); this is the highest proportion for casual labour in urban areas amongst all the districts of Kerala.

The next set of tables show the distribution of workers according to the industry sections of National Industrial Classification (NIC) of 2008. Here, the classifications A to U stand for the following industry sections (Central Statistical Organisation, 2008, pp. 13-24):

- A. Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- B. Mining & Quarrying
- C. Manufacturing
- D. Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply
- E. Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities
- F. Construction
- G. Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles
- H. Transportation and storage
- I. Accommodation and food service activities
- J. Information and Communication
- K. Financial and insurance activities
- L. Real estate activities
- M. Professional scientific and technical activities

- N. Administrative and support service activities
- O. Public administration and defence; compulsory social security
- P. Education
- Q. Human health and social work activities
- R. Arts, entertainment and recreation
- S. Other service activities
- T. Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods and services
producing activities of households for own use
- U. Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies

Table 3.25: Distribution (per 10000) of workers in usual status (ps + ss) by
industry sections of NIC-2008 for Kerala and India (2011-2012) (**male**)

	Industry section of NIC 2008										
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Kerala	2280	82	1097	48	6	2009	1580	1112	351	125	172
India	4361	63	1230	34	28	1232	1138	553	191	90	105
	Industry section of NIC 2008 (Contd.)										
	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	all
Kerala	49	98	108	245	159	120	59	257	44	0	10000
India	26	69	81	203	233	73	27	226	38	0	10000

Source: (National Sample Survey Office, 2014, p. 171)

Table 3.26: Distribution (per 10000) of workers in usual status (ps + ss) by
industry sections of NIC-2008 for Kerala and India (2011-2012) (**female**)

	Industry section of NIC 2008
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	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Kerala	3187	12	1918	23	11	1077	685	79	166	94	251
India	6277	29	1339	8	17	609	390	22	93	43	52
	Industry section of NIC 2008 (Contd.)										
	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	All
Kerala	1	48	140	186	922	661	32	229	280	0	10000
India	2	23	25	73	467	142	8	180	200	0	10000

Source: (National Sample Survey Office, 2014, p. 172)

Table 3.27: Distribution (per 10000) of workers in usual status (ps + ss) by industry sections of NIC-2008 for Kerala and India (2011-2012) (**person**)

	Industry section of NIC 2008										
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Kerala	2553	61	1344	40	7	1729	1311	801	295	115	196
India	4890	54	1260	27	25	1060	932	406	164	77	91
	Industry section of NIC 2008 (Contd.)										
	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	All
Kerala	34	83	117	227	388	283	51	248	115	0	10000
India	20	55	66	167	298	92	22	213	83	0	10000

Source: (National Sample Survey Office, 2014, p. 173)

The tables above show the distribution of workers by industry sections as have been laid out by NIC-2008 in Kerala and India. Like India, Kerala too has the highest proportion of workers in section A that is the primary sector of agriculture, forestry and fishing (2553 for every 10000 workers). But this proportion is significantly lower than that of India (4890 for every 10000 workers). Sections B to F are the secondary Industries and one sees that Kerala has a slightly higher proportion of workers in manufacturing that is section C (1344 for every 10000 workers in Kerala and 1260 for every 10000 workers in India). Similarly, in secondary Industries, Kerala has a much higher proportion

in section F, construction, than the rest of the country (1729 for every 10000 workers in rural Kerala as opposed to 1060 for every 10000 workers in rural India. In the tertiary sector, or the service sector, Kerala generally employs a larger proportion of people than the rest of the country, which is a direct reflection of the higher levels of education in the state. Significantly, in wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles, section G, Kerala has a much higher proportion of workers than the rest of the country (1311 for every 10000 workers in Kerala as opposed to 932 for every 10000 workers in India). Also significant are the number of workers in professional, scientific and technical activities, section M. This is an area that usually requires expertise and the larger proportion in Kerala is a reflection of better standards of education in the state (83 for every 10000 workers in Kerala and 55 for every 10000 workers in India). This is still a small proportion of the workforce and this is due to the expertise that is required to enter these professions. In section P, education, the proportion of workers in Kerala is higher than the rest of the country (388 for every 10000 workers in Kerala and 298 for every 10000 workers in India). Section K, financial and insurance activities also employs a larger proportion in Kerala than the Indian average (196 for every 10000 workers in Kerala and 91 for every 10000 workers in India). Section Q, human health and social work activities also employs a much larger proportion in Kerala than in India as a whole (283 for every 10000 workers in Kerala and 92 for every 10000 workers in India). This would include such professions as doctors and nurses.

If one looks at the distribution of female workers according to industry sections in Kerala and in India, the increased proportion of employment in service sectors in Kerala is even more pronounced. Like the data for all persons, a large section of the female workforce is also engaged in agricultural activities, although the average in Kerala (3187 for every 10000 female workers) is much lower than the national average (6277 for every 10000 female workers). In section C, manufacturing, Kerala employs a larger number

of women than the nation as a whole (1918 for every 10000 female workers in Kerala; 1339 for every 10000 workers in India). Similarly, in construction too Kerala employs more women than the rest of the country (1729 for every 10000 female workers in Kerala; 1060 for every 10000 workers in India). In section K, financial and insurance activities, Kerala employs almost five times the number of women as the national average (251 for every 10000 female workers in Kerala; 52 for every 10000 female workers in India). In section M, professional, scientific and technical services, too, Kerala employs twice the number of women as the national average (48 for every 10000 female workers in Kerala; 23 for every 10000 female workers in India). In section P, education, Kerala employs about double the number of women than the national average (922 for every 10000 female workers in Kerala; 467 for every 10000 female workers in India). Very stark difference between the state's average and the national average is seen in section Q, human health and social work activities. Here Kerala employs 661 female workers for every 10000 female workers. On the other hand, the corresponding data for the nation is 142. Hence the state employs around 4.5 times the national average.

Once again, like the comparison between LFPRs and distribution of workers according to type of employment, the distribution according to NIC-2008 section of Industry depicts that, despite lower levels of female LFPR, the ones who are employed tend to prefer employments with higher levels of specialisation than the rest of the country. Women in Kerala, outside of agriculture, manufacturing and construction, tend to choose employment in areas such as education, health, insurance services: all requiring higher levels of specialization. The high rate of women in education reflects the historical preference for female teachers, especially in lower levels of schooling. This, coupled with an intensive network of primary and secondary schools in the state, has ensured a high rate of female participation in this area of employment. Similarly, Kerala has a much higher level of participation by women in human health and social work activities. Though this would include

the female doctors of Kerala, the real reason for such a stark difference is the number of women in Kerala employed as nurses. In fact, nurses from Kerala are common throughout the country (although LFPR in Kerala wouldn't include them).

3.6: Key Observations

- The first and most important observation is that women's participation in both the labour-force as well as the work-force is much lower than their male counterparts. The female LFPR in Kerala is closer to the Indian average especially when juxtaposed with its much higher rates of female literacy
- Even for higher levels of education, especially in women with a post-graduation and above, only 42%-43% are employed in Kerala. This is much lower than the male average of around 80% employment for those with similar levels of education.
- But, when one looks at the distribution of female workers according to employment categories, a larger proportion of women are regular waged or salaried than men. Hence a larger proportion of women seek employment within industries which demand higher levels of expertise. The same is reflected when we look at distribution of female workers according to industry. A larger proportion of women are employed in industry sections like health, education etc. than men. This does not mean that these industries employ more women than men. It just means that for every 10000 female workers a larger proportion of them are in these industries than the proportion of men for every 10000 male workers. Since the total number of men employed exceeds that of women, the total number of men in these industries may be more than their female counterparts. But what this data indicates is that although women work at a much lower rate than men, when they do work, they prefer highly specialised employment. This is directly reflective of the fact that men are expected to work despite not gaining any highly specialized employments.

- Similarly, there is a correlation between remittances received and female work. In the district with the highest remittances (Malappuram), female LFPR is extremely low. But, districts like Ernakulam have high female LFPR despite high remittance as well. On the other hand, the opposite correlation holds true in a more consistent manner. That is to say, districts with lower remittances seem to have a higher LFPR, especially in Idukki and Wayanad.
- On the other hand, in Malappuram, where female LFPR is very low, the women who do work tend to choose regular waged or salaried employment. This goes on to show that in areas where woman LFPR is low, the ones who do work are specialised in their own fields.
- The study shows that Kerala has a very low female participation in the workforce. Despite female education, the priority to seek employment outside the home lies with males. Gendered notions of the breadwinning male and the domestic female have not been broken despite such high levels of education. But significantly, when women do work, they tend to choose employments that are regular waged or salaried at a rate higher than men in the state.
- The high praise that Kerala has received in terms of gender equality is definitely not reflected in its workforce. Women, in most cases, stay back in the homes rather than seek employment elsewhere. This inequality needs to be unmasked to rewrite the Kerala Model of development where women are more economically independent, and have a better role in not just social and political institutions, but economic institutions as well

3.7: Understanding Women, Work and Education

In the tradition of neoclassical economics, many authors have looked into the question of labour force participation. In Lakshmy Devi K. R.'s analysis of employment and education in Kerala (2002), she looks at how traditional economics has understood labour-force participation. Here, like in the case of Becker (1965), the family is seen as a single unit that behaves to maximise its

own well-being. This is in very similar lines to the neo-classical treatment of the individual. A similar treatment is also seen in Bowen and Finegan (1969).

Traditional neo-classical economics has also looked at a women's choice to work as a choice between work and leisure; this is the same lens through which men's choice of work is seen. Here, this choice is determined by two effects that occur due to change in wage rate (Lakshmy Devi, 2002):

i. Substitution effect

This essentially means that any increase in wage rate would mean that people would substitute leisure for work as leisure becomes dearer with respect to work

ii. Income effect

This would mean that any increase in the wage rate would mean that people would choose more leisure since their purchasing power would increase.

In simple words, if one's wages were to increase, one would either chose to work more (since every unit of work now would yield more income than it did before) or one would choose to work less (since increased wages means that one needs to work lesser amount than before to earn what one did before). But this choice becomes complicated when it comes to women, a complication that was long ignored in parochial and orthodox economics circles where gender was seen as being outside the gambit of economic analysis. When it comes to married women, domestic duties are an added factor that influences this so-called choice between work and leisure. For married women (as opposed to single women), who would want to work longer hours earn more, this choice to give up working hours is not to have a longer period for leisure but rather to also be able to partake in domestic duties. In other words, such a choice is absent for women with domestic obligations.

Thus, to better understand women and work, one also had to understand relationships amongst family members; this would not have been possible in

an economic analysis that sees families as a single unit almost replicating similar patterns of choices as individual or an analysis that would see no difference between a man's and a woman's choice to enter employment. It was with sociologists like Blumstein & Schwartz (1983) and Dwyer and Bruce (1988) that such relationships were studied in detail. These studies observed that a general income parity between the male and female partners in households tend to reflect in more equal relationships between them.

Finally, the rise of feminist movements also found its supporters among intellectuals studying labour and female participation (Lakshmy Devi, 2002). These theorists argued that existing male biases in theorists is reflected in the tendency to marginalize the gender question from economic theories. This approach would see patriarchy and capitalism as soldering each other and in turn being the reason why women find it hard to participate in the labour market.

But the above theories only talk about choices of entry into the labour force and why women face difficulties. In the following section, I would like to historically locate women in Kerala through Devika's discursive analysis regarding en-gendering of individuals in the late colonial and early post-colonial period in Kerala.

3.8: 'Womanly' Capacities and 'Womanly' Occupations

The discursive analysis by J. Devika locates transitions in understanding the women's space in the Malayali public sphere. Late colonial period in Kerala was marked by social reforms initiated by the Princely states of Kochi and Travancore. Heavily influenced by modernist ideologues of the independence movement; these reforms sort to rid the Malayali society of its medieval practices of caste. Hence arose a notion of the modern Malayali family with marked spaces for men and women.

Such ‘abhorrent’ medieval practices also included *marumakkathayam* (matriliny). The move to replace such systems of family structures with patrilineal and patrilocal monogamous families is a direct resultant of such abhorrence. Discourses on the Nair woman and her multiple male partners on the one hand and the Namboodiri woman and her hapless fate inside the four walls of the *illam* on the other hand, were seen as the extremities of the medieval ‘barbarism’ that existed in Kerala.

Reforms within the Namboodiri community sort to free these women from forced marriages with older men. This would mean provision of knowledge to such women as a mode of training them in ‘modern domesticity’ (Devika, 2007). Hence the basis of such education was not creation of female workers but rather the creation of well-educated domestic partners to Namboodiri men. This was reflected in the preparation of Namboodiri women for modern housewifery. But V.T Bhattathirippad also insisted on the education of women to gain access to employment (1930).

Such oppositions between groups who thought that education must be used to perfect the woman’s role in the domestic sphere and groups who thought education for women should be to help them gain employment outside led to a constant negotiation and re-negotiation of women’s spaces. On the one hand, women like Anna Chandy (1929) are seen as being vocal supporters of women in the public domain, as equal participants in the labour force. On the other hand, various women’s weeklies (something that had attained popularity during this period) had also published articles regarding the need for women to know what are their boundaries and must not forget their womanly duties. For example Thankamma (1925) derides women for aspiring to become like men through gaining employment. Similarly, an article by B B Amma (1931) states that a woman being the one with the sole responsibility of the domestic should not neglect her domestic duties. But even through these negotiations and re-negotiations, the idea of an essential womanliness was never questioned. Even

the groups that advocated for women's work in the public sphere saw this as an essentially womanly thing to do. The essential qualities of being a woman offered her an upper hand in certain professions.

Here, employment suited to a woman's capacities became popular spaces where women's participation has always remained high. A perfect example of such spaces is the school. By the 1930s it was largely regarded that women would make for better teachers than men, since they are more naturally equipped with the care of children. The *Kochi Adhyapikasammelanam* (Kochi Women-Teachers Conference) of 1929 reiterated the womanliness of the teacher, hence making them suited for the job without disrupting their essential womanliness (Devika, 2007).

On the other hand, another set of institutions that seemed to be fit for female employment were those of health. Women's ability to 'love' and 'care' are seen as making them fit for these occupations. Although there were initial restricts put on married women, it was later removed (Devika, 2007).

These notions of occupations fit for women still persist in Kerala. The rate of employment in the health and education sectors (as has already been discussed) are a consequence of such discourses as were present in the late colonial periods when women had started entering modern employment.

3.9: Understanding the Lack of Women in the Workforce through Nussbaum's Capability Theory

Nussbaum (2000) gives a set of concrete capabilities and terms them as the basic capabilities that each individual in any society must possess.

The central human functional capabilities that she enlists are (pp. 78-80):

- x. **Life:** This entails the right to live a full and healthy life, free of premature death, or loss of quality of life to such an extent that it is not worth living anymore

- xii. **Bodily Health:** Having good nourishment, good shelter and being able to be in good health, including reproductive health
- xiii. **Bodily Integrity:** Having autonomy over one's own body. This would mean freedom from child sexual assault, sexual abuse, domestic violence, rape etc. which are all examples of people asserting their rights over another person's body, usually a woman or a child.
- xiv. **Senses, Imagination and Thought:** This, quite simply means, the freedom of thought and expression. This implies having access to basic literacy and education, including basic mathematical and scientific skills. It would mean being able to produce one's own religious, literary, academic works. This would also imply the lack of an external pressure to think in a particular way or to be only able to express oneself in a certain way.
- xv. **Emotions:** To be able to love the people we chose to love, to grieve their absence and to be able to feel anger or hurt at people who have been unjust or harmful. This would also imply freedom from abuse that may instil fear and anxiety in a person and impede their capability to love.
- xvi. **Practical Reason:** 'Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life' (p. 79)
- xvii. **Affiliation:**
 - A:** This entails the ability to live amongst others and to have affiliations with other members of the group. This would also mean being able to sympathise with others and their problems through the process of association.
 - B:** The processes of affiliation and association is a two way process and would entail the right to being treated as an individual and respected for the same. This would mean freedom from discrimination on the basis of caste, religion, gender, sexual orientation, region, language etc.
- xviii. **Other Species:** 'Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants and the world of nature' (p. 80)
- xix. **Play:** 'Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities' (p. 80)
- xx. **Control over One's Environment:**

A. Political: This would entail the right to maintain one's own political affiliations and make political choices freely. This would also entail the right to free speech.

B. Material: This would entail the right to property. But this right to property must not be restricted to just a formal right but should be in terms of real opportunity. This also entails equal rights in seeking employment and freedom from 'unwarranted search and seizure' (p. 80)

Here, one may look at the last in her list of capabilities i.e. control over one's material environment. Specifically, the right to seek employment free from unwanted search and seizure is emphasized in this section. Despite many women opting to stay at home rather than seek employment, as we have seen earlier this could be due to existence of domestic duties. Hence, what is probably a choice that the woman makes it is also due to other restraints placed on her through the workings of patriarchy. A household with shared domestic responsibilities would help women have a freer choice to stay at home or find work. Her inability to choose between work and leisure, due to the presence of the third variable of domestic duties, further strains the relationship women have with the labour market.

After having stated some concrete capabilities, Nussbaum goes on to state that these capabilities can be further divided into three different types (pp. 84-85):

- iv. **Basic Capabilities:** This would include basic human functions like seeing and hearing. They become the necessary conditions for the development of more advanced capabilities like reading, writing etc.
- v. **Internal Capabilities:** These are 'developed states of the person herself that are, so far as the person herself is concerned, sufficient conditions for the exercise of the requisite functions. Unlike the basic capabilities, these states are mature conditions of readiness' (p. 84). For some of these capabilities to be realized, mere growth and maturation of the persons is enough. An example of this would be the capability to enjoy sexual pleasure. On the other hand, for certain

other internal capabilities one may need external support, for example the ability to read/write.

- vi. **Combined Capabilities:** This would be in contexts where a person has the internal capability and there also exists an external condition where such internal capabilities can be exercised and can flourish. For example, a widow in India, who is not allowed to marry after the death of her husband, would have to internal capability of enjoying sexual pleasure but not the combined capability to do so. Similarly, people in a repressive dictatorship have the internal capability of asserting their right to political choice but not the combined capability to do so.

When using this triad of capabilities, one can see how parallels can be drawn to the lack of female participation in Kerala's workforce. Here, women have the capability (gained through various levels of education) to perform a certain task that would surmount to economic activity. But external conditions, where women's work is not seen as required since the family is earning enough or where married women's movement outside the homes is not seen as preferable, directly reflect the lack of women's combined capabilities to become equal partners in the economic sphere.

3.10: Gender Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)

The Gender Development Index and the Gender Empowerment Measure are two indices that are used by the Government of India to measure the gender gaps that exist within the economy, state and polity.

GDI is captured by calculating HDI for men and women separately to see what the difference between the two sets of data is. The main dimensions for both HDI and GDI are (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2009):

- i. 'A Long and Healthy Life'
The indicators to this dimension are:
 - a. Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)
 - b. Life Expectancy at age 1
- ii. 'Knowledge'
The indicators to this dimension are:
 - a. Literacy rate for population above the age of 7
 - b. Mean years of education those above the age of 15
- iii. 'A Decent Standard of Living'
The indicators to this dimension are:
 - a. Female/Male estimated earned income share per capita per annum

Although the third indicator refers to earned income, it concentrates more on the share of this income than the rate of participation in economic activities. Hence Kerala ranks high in the GDI as compared to the national average. Kerala had a GDI of 0.745 in 2006 as compared to the national average of 0.590 (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2009, p. 12).

On the other hand, the Gender Empowerment Measure better captures this difference in participation in economic activities.

The following are the dimensions and their indicators to calculate GEM (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2009, pp. 5-6):

- i. 'Political participation and decision making power'
The indicators for this dimension are:
 - a. Percentage share of parliamentary seats (elected)
 - b. Percentage share of seats in legislature (elected)
 - c. Percentage share of seats in *Zilla Parishads* (elected)
 - d. Percentage share of seats in *Gram Panchayats* (elected)
 - e. Percentage of candidates in electoral process in the parliamentary election; and

- f. Percentage electors exercising the right to vote in the parliamentary election
- ii. 'Economic participation and decision making powers'
The indicators for this dimension are:
 - a. Percentage share of officials in service in Indian Administrative Service, Indian Police Service and Indian Forest Service; and
 - b. Percentage share of enrolment in medical and engineering colleges
- iii. 'Power over economic resources'
The indicators for this dimension are:
 - a. Percentage of females and males with operational land holdings
 - b. Percentage of females and males with bank accounts in scheduled commercial banks (with credit limit above Rs. 2 lakh)
 - c. Share of male/female estimated earned income share per capita per annum

The GEM is more apt in understanding what the gaps in access to resources between men and women are. Here, when we look at Kerala's performance, it is much lower than its performance with respect to GDI.

Kerala's GEM is 0.525 as opposed to India's GEM of 0.497. In fact, Kerala's performance in the 2nd dimension i.e. economic participation and decision making powers is worse off than the national average. While with respect of this dimension alone, Kerala's GEM is 0.537 whereas that of the rest of the country is 0.546. This reiterates the lack of women in the Keralan workforce.

Conclusion

Through this chapter, we have furthered the critique of the Kerala model by looking at one specific indicator i.e. women in the workplace. Through looking at women in the workplace, we have tried to capture the patterns female labour force participation and the lack thereof.

We have found that correlations exist between the amounts of remittances received in each of Kerala's districts and what the rates of female participation in the workforce are. We have also looked at the distribution of female

between various categories of employment and various industries. We have looked at how high levels of education mean that more women participate in jobs requiring higher amounts of expertise. But, this does not account for the huge gap between highly educated and employed females and highly educated and employed males. This means that the kinds of barriers to entry into employment that women have in the rest of the country persist in Kerala as well. This has been one of the major drawbacks of the Development Model of Kerala. Although, there have been historic struggles to attain well distributed lands, educated people and pro-active citizens, the equal distribution of the economic burden, and consequently the domestic one too, has been historically side-lined.

The notion of women's work and the kind of works that women should do, like nursing, teaching etc. is reflected in the proportions of women participating in these industries (viz. health services and education respectively). But, the notion of women ideally being associated with the domestic space is one of the primary reasons why women have not been able to access work in the same way that men have.

CONCLUSION

The Kerala development model has rightfully been termed so since its experiences could be replicated in other poor parts of the country as well as the world. Its redistributive character stands testimony to a model of development that prioritizes people and their lives over money and capital accumulation. Despite this, it is important to understand that the model has its own shortcomings that need to be understood. I have attempted to look at labour force participation rates and workforce participation rates as a means to understand women, employment and work in Kerala.

In the first chapter I looked at the various paradigms of understanding the process and development and role that women played in it. The main approaches have been Women and Development (WAD), Women in Development (WID), Gender and Development (GAD) and Women, Environment and Development (WED).

I have spent a good portion of the chapter in understanding the capabilities approach as understood by both Amartya Sen as well as Martha Nussbaum. Nussbaum's approach is especially important since this has been used in understanding the concept of education and work in the third and final chapter.

In the second chapter I have looked at the various aspects of land rights in Kerala, the concept of public participation and decentralization of democracy. In addition, I have also looked into the concept of land reforms in detail. The motive behind the chapter is to position the Kerala model as an alternative model of development that prioritizes redistribution of growth. The redistributive aspect has been one of the primary reasons the Kerala model has been lauded among various theorists including the likes of Dreze and Sen. The point of this elucidation is to further drive the point that all the emphasis on wealth redistribution has talked about equal opportunities for people of various castes and classes. But it systematically excludes the inequalities that women

have historically faced due to their economic dependence. This point is further elucidated in the final chapter.

In the final chapter, I have looked at two main indicators viz. Labour-Force Participation Ratio (LFPR) i.e. the number of persons in the labour force per 1000 persons. The other indicator is the Work-Force Participation Ratio (WFPR) or the Worker Population Ratio (WPR). This is the ratio between the number of people actually in the workforce and the total population. Both these indicators have been drawn for men and women in rural and urban areas. The attempt then is to show the differences between male and female participation rates to draw home the point that despite high rates of education, female participation rates in Kerala are closer to the Indian average.

Some of the key observations have been:

- The first and most important observation is that women's participation in both the labour-force as well as the work-force is much lower than their male counterparts. The female LFPR in Kerala is closer to the Indian average especially when juxtaposed with its much higher rates of female literacy
- Even for higher levels of education, especially in women with a post-graduation and above, only 42%-43% are employed in Kerala. This is much lower than the male average of around 80% employment for those with similar levels of education.
- But, when one looks at the distribution of female workers according to employment categories, a larger proportion of women are regular waged or salaried than men. Hence a larger proportion of women seek employment within industries which demand higher levels of expertise. The same is reflected when we look at distribution of female workers according to industry. A larger proportion of women are employed in industry sections like health, education etc. than men. This does not mean that these industries employ more women than men. It just means that for every 10000 female workers a larger proportion of them are in these industries than the proportion

of men for every 10000 male workers. Since the total number of men employed exceeds that of women, the total number of men in these industries may be more than their female counterparts. But what this data indicates is that although women work at a much lower rate than men, when they do work, they prefer highly specialised employment. This is directly reflective of the fact that men are expected to work despite not gaining any highly specialized employments.

- Similarly, there is a correlation between remittances received and female work. In the district with the highest remittances (Malappuram), female LFPR is extremely low. But, districts like Ernakulam have high female LFPR despite high remittance as well. On the other hand, the opposite correlation holds true in a more consistent manner. That is to say, districts with lower remittances seem to have a higher LFPR, especially in Idukki and Wayanad.
- On the other hand, in Malappuram, where female LFPR is very low, the women who do work tend to choose regular waged or salaried employment. This goes on to show that in areas where woman LFPR is low, the ones who do work are specialised in their own fields.
- The study shows that Kerala has a very low female participation in the workforce. Despite female education, the priority to seek employment outside the home lies with males. Gendered notions of the breadwinning male and the domestic female have not been broken despite such high levels of education. But significantly, when women do work, they tend to choose employments that are regular waged or salaried at a rate higher than men in the state.
- The high praise that Kerala has received in terms of gender equality is definitely not reflected in its workforce. Women, in most cases, stay back in the homes rather than seek employment elsewhere. This inequality needs to be unmasked to rewrite the Kerala Model of development where women are more economically independent, and have a better role in not just social and political institutions, but economic institutions as well

Thus, the answers to the key research questions that have been raised in the introduction are:

- 1) The main aspects of the Kerala Development Model are its redistributive character coupled with attempts of decentralization. It is defined by its high HDI, levels that have only been attained elsewhere with much higher per capita incomes. The model has led to mass land redistributions coupled with a society that has always been politically engaged to the extent that successive governments have had to engage with unions and other forms of class based organizations.
- 2) When it comes to women in Kerala, with respect to this particular study, their participation in the workforce is not very different from other parts of the country despite having a much higher education rate. This is because notions of the man as the breadwinner of the family and the woman as being in-charge of domestic responsibilities has not changed despite the development model. The ideal patrifocal, patrilineal, monogamous, heterosexual family that was revered during the late colonial period as being the harbingers of modernity continue to be the ideal family structure in contemporary Kerala as well.
- 3) This ideological orientation has meant that women stay at home despite being educated. As has already been pointed out, only about 42-43 per cent of women with a post graduate degree or above are part of the workforce. This is similar to the national average and is much lower than the participation rates of their male counterparts.
- 4) As has already been raised, the possible reasons for this gap are the notions that ideally, women need to be educated. But the exaltation of their domestic duties means that their participation in the workforce has been dismal in comparison to their levels of literacy and education

Of course, this study examines only one aspect of understanding gender inequality in Kerala. Even within the data, the reasons for why specifically

some districts have higher female LFPRs than other needs to be examined by looking into the nature of employment within each district.

But the central motive was to look beyond data, to understand the reality of being a woman in Kerala. Hidden within the GDIs and high literacy rates is a different reality that is not always so optimistic or positive.

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