



# CHRONICLE 1

Quarterly

Newsletter

2005

from the director	chairman's message	homepage	events	phd these	announcements	facultymembers	publications	library	campus notes	book talk	memory	field notes	interfacing
page	page	2	Page 3	page 7	page 7	page 8	page 9	page 10	page 10	page 11	page 12	page 12	cover page 3

## CHRONICLE

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### EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

J.Devika (Editor), Philroy A.P, Tilak Baker, P.R. Gopinathan Nair  
K.T. Ram Mohan, Praveena Kodoth, Ushadevi.V, M.S. Harilal, Manikandan A.D

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Prasanth Nagar Road, Ulloor  
Medical College P.O, Thiruvananthapuram 695 011  
Phone: 0471 2448881-84 Website: www.cds.edu

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR

Centre for Development Studies was set up in 1971. Since then, its activities in research, teaching and training programmes have changed considerably. The number of stakeholders and other well-wishers of the Centre have grown. We have a large alumni from our MPhil and PhD Programmes and the international training programmes on 'Population and Development' and 'Universalising Socio-Economic Security for the Poor', who now occupy important positions in various fields. Also, the interest in CDS activities in colleges and related institutions in the State has considerably increased due to our involvement in

local level development research. In this context, we feel that it is important to communicate with all these groups and institutions about our activities and achievements. The *CDS Chronicle* is an important step in this direction.

The *Chronicle* is a quarterly publication with print and e-mail editions. It is the product of the collective effort of the staff and students, present and former.

It may take a few issues to fully develop the *Chronicle* in scope, content and style. We look forward to your response.

K.N.Nair

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Thanks to the association and guidance of several internationally renowned social scientists over the past three decades and more, CDS today is a centre of attraction for scholars and researchers from all over the world. An institution of higher learning is known through its faculty and students, its publications and contributions to intellectual advancement. CDS, though small compared to University standards, is indeed big in terms of scholarship and academic support for a better understanding of the developmental processes. It is important that the capacity of this storehouse of knowledge is shared widely and led into policy formulation and programme implementation at every level of governance and social development. I am sure in this objective, the proposed newsletter will be a significant step networking the stakeholders and advancing the common cause of development and social justice.

Being a student of law, I find a distinct role for legal

inputs in the academic programmes and activities of CDS. Rule of law, human rights and democracy are basic to India's development. It has become more so with liberalisation and globalisation. It is therefore essential for the CDS curriculum to reflect the growing importance of legal processes in both economic and social development. There has not been adequate social audit of the legal and judicial system from development scholars. It is my hope that in the coming years, CDS will address this gap and pioneer socio-legal enquiries in this fertile area of development research.

The present publication will bring together scholars and well-wishers of the CDS enterprise in their pursuit of academic excellence and professional leadership. I wish the publication all success and congratulate the team effort put together by the Director, Dr K.N. Nair, in this regard.

N.R. Madhava Menon

## HOMAGE

### REMEMBERING THE FOUNDER CHAIRMAN:

#### A. AIYAPPAN

The year 2005 is the Birth Centenary year of Prof. A. Aiyappan, an outstanding anthropologist and a great human being. He was born at Pavaratty, Thrissur, in 1905. After securing an M.A in Economics in 1927, he joined the Madras Government Museum in 1929. He became the Museum's first Indian head in 1940, and won worldwide recognition as an anthropologist in that position.

Between 1933 and 1937, Aiyappan did doctoral research on 'Culture, Tradition and Change in South Western India' under Raymond Firth, a prominent student of Bronislaw Malinowski, at the London School of Economics. Later observers could detect an intellectual continuity between Aiyappan's work and that of Malinowski and Firth.

Until 1958, Aiyappan continued at the Madras Museum. In 1954-56, he went to Cornell University, USA, as Visiting Professor. He then moved to Utkal University, becoming Professor and Head of the Department of Anthropology and later to the Andhra University at Waltair in 1966-67.

Dr M. A. Kalam, currently Professor of Anthropology at the Madras University, told me that during this period, Aiyappan's applications for Readership in Anthropology in Madras and for a position in the Census Commissioner's Office were rejected, for no obvious academic reasons. Such were the feelings of caste and community in academia of the time!

In 1969, he was invited to become the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Kerala. His achievements in a short span of a year and a half were many. He managed to overcome opposition in the Syndicate, and revive the then-dormant Teachers' Association. The University Students'

Union was extended to represent the affiliated colleges too. Some of us who were University students then remember that it was during this period that for the first time in India, student representation was instituted in decision-making bodies. Aiyappan as Vice-Chancellor was one of the original signatories and Chairman of the group that registered the CDS under the Travancore Societies Act in 1970, an unforgettable fact for all of us, associated with the Centre for Development Studies. He later became the Special Officer to set up a Tribal Research Centre. Aiyappan passed away at his birthplace in 1988.

Aiyappan's doctoral thesis was published as the first volume of the Bulletin of the Madras Museum, under the title *Iravas and Cultural Change* in 1945. In this work he meticulously documents the emergence of a community which in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries decisively challenged many a bastion of caste. What is remarkable is the almost detached position he maintains, though he could have claimed to be an aggrieved party himself. The same narrative style was employed in his other important works, *Social Change in a Kerala Village* and *Nayadis of Kerala*.

I remember him as a person of great simplicity. Prof. Kalam remembers him as a warm and concerned senior colleague. His commitment to and love of Anthropology is evident in his disinterest in climbing the academic hierarchy. He was also a person of diverse interests — a lover of painting, sculpture and murals, and a poet. He used to retain an interest in everyone he met, and his observations had a directness, laced with an irreverent sense of humour.

P.K. Michael Tharakan

## EVENTS

### Three - month Diploma Programme Universalising Socio - Economic Security for the Poor January 12-March 23, 2005

Institute of Social Sciences, The Hague, Centre for Development Studies,  
and Self Employed Women's Association, Ahmedabad

Co-ordinator: Mridul Eapen

The programme commenced in January at the ISS and moved to India six weeks later to impart understanding of two distinct efforts at universalising social security—SEWA, a grass roots women's trade union movement and the Kerala development experience, with the state playing an anchor role. There were 21 participants this year, from countries in East Asia, South Asia, Africa and Latin America — a mix of activists, officials and students.

The twenty day programme at CDS introduced the participants to the history, ecology, economy and society of Kerala, which came together in shaping relatively favourable outcomes in promotional and protective social security. The role of public action was particularly emphasised. Other processes, which influenced development in the state — migration, in particular to the Gulf countries, the rapid shifts in land use pattern and absence of a vibrant industrial sector, were also discussed. We then took up issues of current importance, particularly decentralised governance and experience of micro finance with a focus on women's collective initiatives. The innovative use of social capital generated by them turned out to be an interesting point of discussion.

An explicit theme running through the programme was the gaps in universalising social security in Kerala. The problems of groups excluded from social development and the highly iniquitous gender relations were cause for concern as were issues emerging from the demographic transition and



*Students and the CDS team in the ISS-CDS-SEWA Three-month Diploma Programme.*

failures in ensuring livelihood security exposed by the recent Tsunami.

The class room lectures were combined with field visits to get a 'feel' of Kerala and its 'rurban' homestead settlement pattern, to an old age home, a tribal area, a Panchayat and an NGO.

Mridul Eapen

## OUTREACH

Dr K.P. Kannan, former Director and Fellow, currently on leave, has joined the National Commission on Enterprises in the Unorganised/ Informal Sector as a full-time member. The Commission was set up in December 2004 by the Government of India under the chairmanship of Dr Arjun Sengupta as an advisory body and a watchdog for the informal sector. It will recommend measures addressing the productivity of these enterprises, the generation of employment on a sustainable basis, especially in the rural areas and comprehensive social security.

## EVENTS

### Workshop

## Community - based Participative Monitoring and Information Systems

March 4-5, 2005

Centre for Development Studies and University of Montreal

Co-ordinator: D. Narayana

The backdrop of the workshop was an ongoing joint project to develop a community-based, participative monitoring and information system (CBMS). The project focused on access to basic minimum services, has been based in Kottathara Panchayat, Wayanad, since 2002. The workshop was to present the approach developed, explore the options for monitoring utilising this approach, and share the results with decision-makers and elicit ideas, needs and visions for monitoring public interventions from decision-makers at different levels. It brought together policy-makers, community monitoring experts, academics, civil society groups, and the project team.

Evaluating current monitoring practices, the project found that incentives and the political will for impact monitoring, and the necessary expertise for its implementation were lacking. Despite many surveys, no database is available to the Grama Panchayat. Data collection by the health department is voluminous yet not available to the local government. Besides, the absence of civil social initiatives hampered the setting up of community - based monitoring systems.

The project built a Panchayat level database for monitoring access to services. It has also brought out a general profile that presents socio- economic characteristics of population groups, and a poverty profile, which brings out various dimensions of poverty across different caste/ tribe and religious groups in the Panchayat. Other profiles are being prepared.

In the discussions, the need to make the critical



*S.M. Vijayanand IAS, M. Balagopalan, Panchayat President, Kottathara, Ms. Sharmila Mhatre, T.A. Varghese and Dr Slim Haddad at the CBMS Workshop.*

monitoring system developed in the project into an active transformative tool by extending it further into other units of local governance was stressed, especially with the large social sector allocations in the CMP of the present UPA government.

**D. Narayana**

The project reports can be accessed from the CDS website

## ACHIEVEMENTS

**Tannistha Samanta** currently in the CDS MPhil Programme has been awarded the UNICEF India's Summer Internship programme, 2005, a component of Knowledge Community on Children in India. The duration of the internship programme is 10 weeks (May 23 - July 29, 2005).

## EVENTS

### International Conference

The Impact of Mortality as Both A Determinant and A Consequence of Poverty and Hunger

February 23-25, 2005

Centre for Development Studies, Committee for International Cooperation in National Research in Demography, and United Nations Population Fund

Co-ordinator: K Navaneetham

The conference addressed issues related to development, the triptych of poverty, hunger and mortality and the elaboration of plans for implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It was inaugurated by Dr K. Mohandas, Director, Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute of Medical Sciences and Technology, Thiruvananthapuram, and Prof. Christophe Z. Guilmoto, Executive Director, CICRED, introduced the theme.

Fourteen papers, presented in six sessions, highlighted the inter-connectedness of the triptych, most evident in the fact that hunger and malnutrition lead to high levels of ill-health, as also the inseparability of nutrition and levels of living. It was evident that the effective implementation of the MDGs requires better understanding of the demographic dimensions of each. There was great diversity in profiles and morphologies of populations disproportionately exposed to the ravages of the triptych.

The conference also discussed the framework and methodologies for understanding the linkages of poverty, hunger and mortality and raised policy questions. It brought out the significance of the MDGs, and the need to mobilise the international community.

Although the seminar extended the knowledge base on the triptych, there are still gaps. This means that the evidence-base on the eradication of poverty and hunger, and the reduction of mortality is still incomplete. Besides CDS faculty, there were 15 participants from China, Congo, Egypt, Fiji, France, Indonesia, Mexico, New Zealand, Panama, Philippines, Suriname and India.

K. Navaneetham



*Dr Navaneetham, Prof. Guilmoto, Dr K.C. Zachariah, Dr K. Mohandas and Dr K.N. Nair at the opening session of the Conference.*

## OUTREACH

Dr Sunil Mani, Fellow, has been appointed member of the Experts Committee on Innovation Survey 2004-07 set up by the Department of Science and Technology of the Government of India. The committee at its second meeting on March 23 adopted a definition of innovation and has decided to launch the India Innovation Survey. Dr Mani is responsible for designing the survey questionnaire, preparing profiles of the pharmaceutical, biotechnology and autoparts sectors, and initiating a series of capacity-building workshops to sensitize the actors in the national innovation system to the nuances of an innovation survey.

## EVENTS

### Training Programme

## Using Internet for Social Science Research

March 2 - 4, 2005

Centre for Development Studies and Institute for  
Information Technology and Management - Kerala

Co-ordinator: Sunil Mani

This short-duration programme, which targeted research scholars in economics and other social sciences across colleges and universities, had 22 participants from Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Faculty from IIITM-K, Mr J. Muralidharan Nair and Prof. Chandan Mukherjee of CDS, were resource persons. We are now

working with the Department of Science and Technology of Government of India in the designing of a new programme on 'Using Internet for Innovation Policy Management' for officials of science departments both at the Central and the State government levels.

Sunil Mani

## EVENTS

### Women's Day

## Celebrating Women's Solidarity

March 8 - 16, 2005

CDS, for the first time in several years, held a week long celebration of the International Women's Day. The celebrations provided an opportunity both to celebrate women's solidarity and to reflect upon their condition in general. The event began on March 8 with an exhibition of poems by women the world over titled 'Phenomenal Woman'. In the evening a short play was presented by the feminist theatre group, Neeriksha, named 'Ingane', which dealt with the sex scandals plaguing Kerala and the survivors choices.

Members of the community read poems by women or on women from several Indian languages on March 11.

The discussion on 'Is Economics a Macho Profession?', held on March 14, saw active

participation by faculty members and students alike. This was followed by the screening of the documentary 'When Women Unite', which retold the inspiring struggle by the women of Nellore against the arrack trade. On March 15, another documentary, 'Unlimited Girls', by Paromita Vora, on feminism and being a feminist in India, was screened.

March 16, the last day of the celebrations, saw a discussion initiated by B.R.P. Bhaskar, journalist and public activist, on 'Women and Legal Justice: After the Suryanelli Verdict'. This was followed by a documentary titled 'The Shame Is Not Mine', narrating the struggle for justice by a young woman from Bhavnagar, Nitaben.

Diana Abraham



## PH D THESES

**Babu P. Remesh**

**Dynamics of Rural Labour in Kerala:**

**A Case Study of Rubber Tappers in Small - Holdings**

The study looks at aspects of the changing dynamics of the rural labour market in Kerala through an in-depth enquiry of the labour situation in the small-holding rubber sector. The core parameters of labour contracts in small-holding tapping such as tenure, wages, extra-wage and non-pecuniary benefits vary drastically *vis-à-*

*vis* those in other rural/agricultural sectors. The sector also has lower degree of trade unionism, and weaker presence of state-initiated welfare programmes. All these imply that some of the stylised facts about rural labour dynamics in Kerala need to be revisited and rethought in the light of sector specific and micro level investigations..

## PH D THESES

**Saikat Sinha Roy**

**Factors in the Determination of India's Exports**

The study analyses India's merchandise export behaviour between 1960-61 and 1999-2000 in a demand-supply framework. In this period India's development strategy shifted from import substitution to outward orientation, with export growth accelerating and new markets emerging. Nevertheless, the commodity composition did not change significantly; most export items were at relative disadvantage despite improved price competitiveness. The study explains this via an econometric estimation of a simultaneous equation error-correction model using a time comparable dataset. It was successful in that significant error correction was found to exist. While the supply side scale factor is insignificant despite significant relaxation of constraints, the significance of the price factor and the predominance of world demand explain India's merchandise export performance. Above all, persisting market access restrictions, which created an asymmetry between India's export structure and the pattern of world demand, have provided an upper limit to the long-run exports

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A three-week training programme on Advanced Demographic Techniques is scheduled to be held from June 6 - 24, 2005 for officers of the Directorate of Census Operations throughout India sponsored by the Office of the Registrar General, India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.
- A two-day workshop will be held on April 18-19, 2005 as part of the process of finalising the *State Development Report* (SDR) being undertaken for the Planning Commission.
- Applications are invited for admission to MPhil and PhD Programmes - 2005. Details can be had from the Academic Programme Office or email to [acad@cds.ac.in](mailto:acad@cds.ac.in) or the CDS Website.

## FACULTY SEMINARS

V. Santhakumar

### On the Rationale of the Social Support/ Opposition to Institutional Reforms

March 11, 2005

The presentation utilised a neo-classical framework of political economy to consider the influence of the distribution of gainers and losers of reform on its implementation drawing on the experience of power sector reforms in different states in India. The losses/gains considered were: (1) the amount of subsidy received for electricity consumption by different sections of society (2) the losses due to poor quality of electricity supply (3) other losses due to the economic impact of a non-viable power sector and

the opportunity cost of government expenditure in the sector. The paper attempted to show that the connectivity (percentage of households with electricity connections), the level of subsidy received by the majority of connected households, and the per-household consumption of electricity can explain the likelihood of reforms in different States.

V.Santhakumar

## FACULTY SEMINARS

R. Ramakumar

### Formal Credit and Rural Worker Households: A Case Study of a Malabar Village

March 18, 2005

The presentation examined the extent to which the formal sector met the credit requirements of manual labour households involved in agricultural wage work, and the costs of credit they had to bear with evidence from Morazha village in north Kerala. The issues raised were regarding the nature of the rural credit market in a period in which the formal sector is retreating from rural areas across India, and the historical transformation of

Malabar from being an area of intense usury-based exploitation to one in which the poor could access credit at reasonable terms. Agrarian change, with land reforms in 1957, and the new institutional structures for credit provision to the poor — the formation of co-operative credit societies — were the major facilitating conditions.

R.Ramakumar

## PUBLICATIONS

### Books

Menon, Vineeta, P.R. Gopinathan Nair and K.N.Nair (eds). 2005. *Alleviating Poverty: Case-Studies of Local-level Linkages and Processes in the Developing World*. New Delhi :Rainbow Publishers.

Devika, J (ed and trans). 2005. *Her-Self- Early Writings on Gender by Malayalee Women*. Kolkata :Stree/Samya.

Guilmoto, Christophe Z. and S. Irudaya Rajan (eds). 2005. *Fertility Transition in South India*. New Delhi/Thousand Oaks/London: Sage Publications.

### Journal Articles/ Chapters in books

Eapen, M. 2005. 'Rural Industrialisation in Kerala: Re-examining the Rural Growth Linkages Controversy', in Rohini Nayyar and Alakh N. Sharma (eds), *Rural Transformation in India: The Role of Non-farm Sector*. New Delhi: IHD.

Irudaya Rajan, S. 2005. (with Myrtle Perera and Sharifa Begum). 'The Economics of Pensions and Social Security in South Asia', in Mohsin S. Khan (ed), *Economic Development in South Asia*. New Delhi:Tata McGraw Hill.

Irudaya Rajan, S. 2005. District Level Fertility Estimates for Hindus and Muslims. *Economic and Political Weekly*, January 29.

Kurien, John. 2005. 'Securing the Future against Tsunamis', *Economic and Political Weekly*, January 8.

Narayana, D. 2005. 'Institutional Change and Its impact on the Poor and Excluded: The Indian Decentralisation Experience', OECD Development Centre, Working Paper No.242. DEV/DOC (2005) 02.

Navaneetham, K. 2005. ( with A. Dharmalingam and S. Philip Morgan). 'Muslim-Hindu Fertility Differences: Evidence from National Family Health Survey II', *Economic and Political Weekly*, January 29.

Pushpangadan,K and N. Shanta. 2005. 'Competition in Indian Manufacturing Industries: A Study using Static and Dynamic Measures of Concentration', *The ICFAI Journal of Industrial Economics*, February.

Ramakumar, R 2005. 'Formal Credit and Rural Worker Households in Kerala: A Case Study of a Malabar Village', in V. K. Ramachandran and Madhura Swaminathan (eds), *Financial Liberalisation and Rural Banking in India*. New Delhi : Tulika Books.

Ramakumar, R 2005. (with Pallavi Chavan) 'Interest Rates on Micro-credit in India', in V. K. Ramachandran and Madhura Swaminathan (eds), *Financial Liberalisation and Rural Banking in India*. New Delhi: Tulika Books.

K Ravi Raman, 2005. 'Muthanga: A Spark of Hope' in Joseph Bara (ed), *Ordeals and Voices of the Indigenous and Tribal World*, Guwahati: ICITP.

Santhakumar, V. 2005. (with A.K Enamul Haque and R. N. Bhattacharya). 'An Economic Analysis of Mangroves in South Asia' in Mohsin S. Khan (ed), *Economic Development in South Asia*. New Delhi : Tata McGraw Hill.

Komath, Rajesh. 2005. 'Teyyam Performance: Resistance of the oppressed', [http://www.leftangle.net/magazine/2005/book1/teyyam\\_book1.pdf](http://www.leftangle.net/magazine/2005/book1/teyyam_book1.pdf)

*CDS brought out four Working Papers between January and March 2005. They may be accessed from the CDS website (www.cds.edu)*

## LIBRARY

Joseph Kurien, Chief Librarian, retired after 31 years of service, on February 28, 2005. M. Chidambaram Pillai has taken charge.

The library has acquired 300 publications during January-March 2005: 264 books, 15 Government serials, 6 theses, 11 UN publications and 4 IMF publications in various social science disciplines, besides 200 Working Papers of institutes like WIDER, IMF, population Council, NIPFP, GIDR, MIDS, IEG, Centre for Economic and Social Studies, University of Delhi, and University of Antwerp. The library also acquired the Bombay Stock Exchange Directory in CD form.

An exhibition of selected readings on social security, including books, working papers, article clippings, reports etc., was arranged in the Library from February to March as part of the CDS/ISS Training Programme 2005. The bibliography on social security was also updated for this purpose.

Borrowing facilities were granted to 23 internal members and 17 external members and reference membership to 468 scholars. About 1100 external users have utilised the library services during the past quarter. Four batches of students from the Department of Library Science, Kerala University and the Kerala State Library Council were in the library for observation and training.

## CAMPUS NOTES

The Intranet has acquired a new zip on campus: it has become a site of lively discussion touching upon many aspects of life at CDS. There were friendly exchanges over space for political expression on campus; protests over water scarcity and expression of concern over the depletion of vegetation on campus. On the whole, the Intranet seems to have helped us find ourselves as 'Centizens'!! (Philroy's coinage). And 'Centizenship' seems to be growing: this time, the Women's Day celebrations were planned through discussions via the Intranet!

The Malayalam section of the CDS library has always been comparatively weak. However, as development research turns increasingly interdisciplinary, the demand for textual sources in Malayalam has been growing. We are making an effort to expand the collection of books in Malayalam. Recently, faculty members and Library staff made a trip to bookstores in the city to select Malayalam titles.

The Discussion Club, a student initiative, has been active. On January 19, a discussion on the Employment Guarantee Bill was organised. On March 18, there was a panel discussion on the Union Budget.

Rainwater harvesting efforts have been intensified on campus recently. This began as a project funded by the Kerala Research Programme for Local-level Development, and proved quite effective in raising the water levels in the wells that supply the CDS campus. In the past two months, maintenance of the pits and bunds has been undertaken. Fragrant *ramaccham* grass and *patimukham* saplings have been planted along the bunds. Other saplings too, have been planted, under the guidance of the Centre for Environment Development.

During the Women's Day celebrations, we realised that many of us write poetry and many more are lovers of poetry. We have formed a Poetry Club, which had its first meeting on March 29. Members have decided to meet on the third Tuesday of every month, present their own work, listen to guest poets, or read and discuss their favourite poets. Gopidas, who we know to be a lover of flowers and music, recited his poem 'Tirthayatra' at the meeting. Rajesh Komath recited from Vayalar Rama Varma's 'Ashwamedham'. The theme for the next meeting is 'revolution', to commemorate the approaching May Day.

J.Devika

## BOOKTALK

## New in the Library

Carr, Marilyn (ed). 2004. *Chains of Fortune: Linking Women Producers and Workers with Global Markets*. UK: Commonwealth Secretariat.

Global production and trade are having a dramatic impact on employment relations and work organisation around the world, with production in a number of commodities shifting to developing economies and drawing in large numbers of women workers. What have been the experiences of the latter in the context of liberalisation? This book examines the more positive experiences of women workers in a liberalised economy.

Mridul Eapen

Bills, David B. 2004.  
*The Sociology of Education and Work*. Oxford: Blackwell.

The book offers an interesting approach to the education-work nexus. It discusses how the structures and activities in the realm of education and work are determined by social structures and in turn help constitute that structure.

Mridul Eapen

Fogel, Robert William. 2004. *The Escape from Hunger and Premature Death, 1700–2100*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This is the most recent book by Robert William Fogel, the Nobel Laureate, whom McCloskey described as “the Napoleon of the cliometric revolution”. Well-known (notorious, as some cliometricians and many non-clometricians would say) for such works as *Railroads and American Economic Growth: Essays in Econometric History* (1964) and *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Slavery* (1974), in this study Fogel explores the relationship between health, nutrition, and technology over the past three centuries. He notes that while throughout most of human history, chronic malnutrition has been the norm, the last three centuries were different. During this period a synergy between improvements in productive technology and human physiology has enabled humans to more than double their average longevity and to increase their average body size by more than half. These in turn facilitated further economic growth and technological change.

K. T. Rammohan

The full list of recent acquisitions of the Library may be accessed from the CDS website.

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## MEMORY

As an activist working with dalit women in Chengalpattu, Tamil Nadu, I had felt the need to understand better the role of caste in the rural economy. I joined the CDS MPhil Programme in 1979 to further my understanding, and eventually went on to complete a doctoral dissertation on the subject.

Besides the warmth and friendship, and the generosity of my teachers, my most cherished memories relate to living on the campus for close to 18 months with my son, Sandeep. One year into my PhD, in 1981, Sandeep was born. Faculty members' families supplied special food in his early months and helped in taking care of him when he was unwell. Sandeep took his first steps in the CDS Guest House, while a circle of students sat around and clapped, encouraging him to move farther. We celebrated his first birthday in the CDS Guest House, too.

Sandeep's routine began with A. J. C. Bose, an MPhil student, coming at 6 a.m. to take him for a morning walk. There was a crèche on the campus

where he spent time with other children. Evenings were very eventful. Sandeep would ride on the shoulders of one or the other student, as a big group went 'downhill' for tea. We would have fun in the children's playground too. Many faculty members had children about the same age. Almost once every week we would have dinner in one of their homes where Sandeep would have a playmate. I remember a Diwali party in Sudipto Mundle's house where the 14 month-old Sandeep danced with many eminent economists — not only of the present but also of the future! When I think back to those days, they seem too good to be true.

## Sundari Ravindran

*Sundari is an independent researcher and activist working on gender, health and development issues. She is Honorary Professor at Achutha Menon Centre for Health Science Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, and Consultant with WHO Geneva's Reproductive Health and Research Department.*

## FIELD NOTES

Often commonsensical understanding is not borne out in social security schemes, as I found out recently. Very often, we tend to judge the impact of a particular scheme from our privileged class backgrounds. As part of our training in the MPhil programme we conducted a field survey on social security schemes in the second week of January. We did a survey in Karakulam panchayat, Thiruvananthapuram district. Our objective was to examine the impact of social security schemes such as disability pensions, old age pensions, agricultural labour pensions, and pensions for widows and unmarried women etc. on poverty.

In class, in casual discussions, most of us thought

that a pension of a mere Rs.110 a month would make no impact at all. But in the field, we encountered several people who declared that their lives would be impossible without it. There were very many people there who possessed no assets at all, which means that they had absolutely no access to any form of credit. Many of these were aged people and suffering from terminal illnesses. For them, obviously, the pension was nothing less than a lifeline, even though from our perspective it appeared to be no more than a pittance. For some, it was the means of procuring basic food items; for others, it was the only instrument which brought them some consideration and care from other members of their families.

S. Beena



*Jeemol Unni is attached to the Gujarat Institute of Development Research. A former student of CDS, she has done extensive work on rural and urban labour markets in India focussing on the informalisation of labour and production systems and its gender implications. Jeemol Unni was recently at CDS in connection with the ISS-CDS-SEWA diploma programme.*

**Praveena Kodoth** spoke to her on issues related to informal sector labour in India.

*There is a seeming irony to the growth in policy attention to the informal sector in the 1990s coeval with the push towards economic liberalisation. What political interests might have sustained a policy regime that protected the small section of formal sector workers?*

Many, indeed. First, early planning emphasised the public sector in core industries (coal, steel), transport, and services. This constituted a large, more urban formal work force. Secondly, large private industries, like the textile industry, dominated and were concentrated in specific areas. Thirdly, traditional trade unions found formal workers easy to organise and political parties used them as vote banks.

The decline of manufacturing sector, growth of e services sector and privatisation of public sector, as well as the decline of large industrial units in favour of sub-contracting led to trade union decline. World Bank - IMF influences also helped liberalisation and consequent informalisation of the work force. The informal workforce was already large, but consciousness of their existence is more prominent in the new regime.

*I am struck by the growth of a women's 'trade union' like SEWA in a global context of shrinking trade union space. How would you react to a statement that socialist institutions have been experienced as intensely masculine.*

"Masculinity" of socialist institutions implies its corollary "femininity" of capitalist institutions. I do not agree with either statement and do not think

that the growth of SEWA and other trade unions for informal workers has anything to do with this. SEWA has only rightly judged the impact of the phenomenon discussed earlier. It has been able to act as a vanguard of the informal worker's movement using international space such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Incidentally both at the ILO and at the Indian Labour Conference, SEWA has only recently acquired formal recognition, after a long struggle.

*What would you prioritise — the challenge of an Employment Guarantee Scheme or protective social security for workers? Comment on the challenge of designing social security schemes for informal sector workers?*

The informal work force in India being what it is, any number of programmes will still only address a small segment. The employment guarantee scheme is a self-targetting programme and reaches the bottom segment. Protective social security can reach a wider segment. Hence, I would think that both are necessary and would not like to prioritise between them.

In fact, in a country where resources are scarce, the government should prioritise between benefits for industry and formal sector workers. Besides the challenges raised by the largeness and the segmented nature of the informal workforce, even getting the government to prioritise resources for this is a hurdle. The major challenges are in the provision of a unique identity to all informal workers irrespective of the sector of work, and in the delivery of the programme.



# CHRONICLE 1

January - March 2005



Dr A. Aiyappan (1905-1988)  
Founder Chairman