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**DOMESTICATING MALAYALEES:  
FAMILY PLANNING, THE NATION  
AND HOME-CENTERED  
ANXIETIES IN MID- 20<sup>TH</sup>  
CENTURY KERALAM**

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**DOMESTICATING MALAYALEES: FAMILY PLANNING,  
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## ABSTRACT

The paper tries to unsettle the naturalized association often assumed in the existent literature between the modern family and the small family in 20<sup>th</sup> century Malayalee society. Instead, it attempts to trace out the shaping of certain life-options in discourse from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards that would increasingly mobilize the desire of modern Malayalees and play an important role in directing them towards the small family norm. The entire notion of parental responsibility was redefined in a crucial way in and through these processes; secondly, the ability of the state to intervene in the family was also strengthened and legitimized. These were, of course central to the willing acceptance of the Family Planning Programme in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Malayalee society. It is also important to inquire about the specific paths through which these life-options began to appear both reasonable and desirable to different social groups in this society, but since this points at far more intensive and prolonged research, the paper attempts only to open up some ground tentatively. Further, it considers the question why Malayalee sub-nationalist sentiment, which peaked in the 1950s, actually sanctioned a reduction in the numbers of Malayalees, and why calls for assertion of the Malayalee identity were fully compatible with the desperate call to reduce their numbers. In conclusion, the paper gestures at what is called the process of 'Domestication': a process by which the major share of the energies, interests, desires etc. of individuals have been directed into their families, in which the Family Planning Programme is taken to be a major event. The political implications of this process are briefly discussed.

**Keywords :** Small family, modern family, responsible parenting, state, salaried employment, householder, Developmentalism, Malayalee sub-nationalism.

## I

### **‘A Home and a Name’**

Today in Keralam one may claim without much risk that the popular ideal of the modern family is deeply informed by the small family norm. In the social scientific literature on the health and demographic transition in Keralam, the connection is taken to be implicitly given and naturally following. The acceptance of the small family norm is explained by highlighting two sets of factors. First, the far-reaching political and socio-economic transformation in 20<sup>th</sup> century Malayalee society is prominently presented as releasing a whole range of progressive forces that ‘liberate’ the individual from a social order in which the large family was, for various reasons, more or less an inevitability. Secondly, the economic conditions under which the costs of bringing up children increased manifold are gestured at<sup>1</sup>. In much of the representation of ‘progressive Kerala’ in this literature, the small family norm appears as desirable in itself, something that a progressive society would automatically gravitate towards<sup>2</sup>. The spread of the small family norm, therefore, appears to be in one sense, carrying forward the progressive thrust of the struggles to end the joint family system, and replace it with the modern family. While the difficult economic conditions are at times admitted to have induced the poorer sections to resort to limitation of family size, it seems as though it is the dexterity with which the poor have ‘adjusted’ themselves to meet the situation that has evoked the admiration of many academic observers. Even ardently leftist accounts of the Malayalee demographic transition retain, in greater or smaller measure, an admiring attitude towards the Malayalee success in getting rid of the anxieties about burgeoning population

without rocking the boat in any major way. The ‘social justice’ theory of Kerala’s demographic transition focuses on the redistribution of resources within Kerala, between different social groups. This demographic transition- without- Development would appear particularly convenient in that it does not require any major transfer of resources into the poorer country/State from the wealthier ones, simultaneously retaining the aura of a kind of ‘liberation’. At the same time, that the adoption of the small family norm has not significantly widened the range of individual life-options available or made child rearing less laborious or anxiety-ridden is easily overlooked.

The point of this paper is not to argue the reverse, i.e., that the acceptance of the small family norm represented some sort of regressive change, or that this does not represent a continuation of the ‘progressive’ attitude. This, however, does not mean that one may take for granted the meaning of ‘progressiveness’ within Malayalee modernity as if it indicated somewhat unconditional openness to change and heterogeneity, highly defined as it was by the desire for Development. Within Developmentalist Malayalee modernity in which the notion of ‘progress’ was tied to Development, ‘progressiveness’ implied the emergence of a set of life- options purported to be conducive to Development that clearly required the exclusion and marginalisation of others. In this paper we intend to trace out the crystallisation of certain modern life-options first proposed in the mid- late 19<sup>th</sup> century, which would intensely and increasingly draw the desires of Malayalees in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and would play a decisive role in directing them towards the small family norm. They were also of crucial importance in facilitating the ability of the state to intervene in the domestic domain, enabling it to play an active role in the Family Planning campaign without arousing much resistance. But, as we shall see later, some effects of the multi-pointed political contestations released in the encounter of the established social order(s) with the newly- emerging modern, which were very often condemned as hostile to Development, were also important in this process in determining the specific means and ways through which these life-options were to be actualised. This may help

us to garner some insights about why the acceptance of the small family in Malayalee society has largely remained more or less a strategy of 'adjustment', not living up to the promises of the Family Planning publicists regarding its efficacy as an economic instrument accelerating Development, or as a political instrument widening the life-options of individuals. It may also help us to make a beginning in understanding how a whole variety of anxieties have accumulated around the small family in contemporary Keralam as expressed in the media, in literature and cinema and in many other sites like religious discourses, medical discourse etc.

This clearly requires that the now-naturalised association between the idea of the modern family and the small family norm in Keralam needs to be reexamined not as a naturally-given but as a construct that emerged in and through a specific and complex configuration of ideas, institutions and practices, at a particular historical juncture. First, even a cursory survey of the Family Planning propaganda literature circulated in mid- 20<sup>th</sup> century Keralam leaves one impressed with the massive number of words spent upon cementing this association in a 'positive' way. That is, in arguing that the possibilities offered by the nuclear family are best realised when the number of children is kept low. Secondly, examining early reformist demands for change in the family form and the reformist critical appraisals of the joint family, there is little that links the desired ideal of the modern family (constituted by two major axes, that of the husband- wife relation and the parents-children relation, supported economically by the self- earned income of mainly the father, and managed by the mother) to the small family norm. In fact, some of the early defenses of patriliney in which the nuclear family figures as the 'natural' and sole possible outcome of the adoption of patrilinearity, the possibility of raising large families is counted as one of the key advantages<sup>3</sup>. Thirdly, it may be possible to argue that modern domesticity as it was projected as a desirable ideal in early and mid- 20<sup>th</sup> century Malayalee society did imply a system of alliances quite conducive to bringing forth more children than less. The conception of marriage as an unambiguous life-long association; the

exact identification of a ‘natural’ provider of economic sustenance with total and personal responsibility of this; the inciting and directing of fresh energies in women towards the constant monitoring of the bodies and souls of children, and the management of the home—all this support the above claim. But the fact that powerful countervailing pressures like the active presence of furiously competitive community politics<sup>4</sup> were obviously not enough to prevent the gradual sedimentation of a close association between the ideal of modern family in Keralam, and the small family norm, is certainly significant.

One way to begin this inquiry is to look for elements within the ideal of modern family propagated by Malayalee reformisms which might have been useful in the inculcation of the small family norm in the Family Planning propaganda. Here the significance of the attribution of personal responsibility to the parents (in uniquely gendered fashion, of course) emerges. In the projection of modern domesticity in the twentieth century Malayalee public sphere, the agencies of the father/householder and the mother/home manager were constructed in such a way that the state could make a direct appeal to them on behalf of the Nation, over and above the spectrum of interests situated in between, such as those of the locality, the extended family or community<sup>5</sup>. Lowering the number of children, it was pointed out, would make it possible to fulfill the modern responsibility of transforming children into full-fledged Individuals attributed to the parents (tied to them as ‘natural’ and ‘personal’) in a more efficient way, and at the same time help the state to accelerate the pace of the Nation’s progress towards self-actualisation through Development. By the 1960s, the nuclear family ideal had gained widespread legitimacy within Malayalee society, bolstered by near-total admittance of its ‘naturalness’ and ‘immediacy’. So effective was this projection of ‘natural’ duty towards one’s children that even in the community reform movements (which swore by the strength of numbers), the fulfillment of the ‘natural’ responsibility of fashioning full-fledged- rational, industrious, self-disciplined- Individuals from one’s children was proclaimed to be indistinguishable from establishing the modern community identity. The state’s duty, then,



seemed to be fully in tune with these 'natural' responsibilities. Indeed, in the emergent World-order of the post-independence decades, particularly in the turbulent 1960s, it was not too difficult to project the state's interest as closely resembling that of the parents in a nuclear family, struggling to establish it on a secure basis on its own, in magnified form<sup>6</sup>. So if the citizen was asked to accept birth control in the interest of fulfilling her/his 'natural' duty as parent, the state could also be projected as fulfilling something that resembled 'natural' parental obligation towards 'bringing up' the infant Nation into self-fulfillment in and through its promotion of Family Planning.

Nevertheless, the opening up of agencies within the domestic domain that the state could easily access, alone, cannot explain why the small family norm became to be such an integral part of the ideal of modern family in Malayalee society. There was a certain conjunction of discursive and non-discursive factors, quite apart from the state's promotional efforts, that made small family size appear an inevitable element of the ideal modern family. Prominently, the process by which a certain notion of family subsistence as basically involving scarce means and unending wants steadily gained ground among different social groups in a major way would require serious attention here. A full-scale attempt to map out the different routes and temporalities by which differently located and endowed groups may have arrived at such a notion is well beyond this paper. Here we try to make some preliminary forays only. We consider, in a tentative way, some of the ways in which such a notion could have gained velocity of circulation in early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century Malayalee society. For example, the possibility that the amazingly persistent desire for salaried employment exhibited by the educated classes in this period in Malayalee society might have implicitly effected a merging of the ideas of the small family and the modern family is considered. Set in a milieu in which other ways of acquiring self-earned income were becoming both scarce and unattractive, and levels of consumption defining the genteel life were fast increasing, this desire could well have aided an unproblematic reduction of the modern family to the small family. However, we caution

that this is probably just one of the many routes by which the habitus in which agents are preempted to make such an association was constructed here. There is a whole research agenda emerging here; we do not intend to reduce it to one major ‘path’.

By the mid- 20<sup>th</sup> century, it seems, an environment favourable for the small family through Family Planning seemed emergent here<sup>7</sup>. The force that strongly criticised the recommendation of the small family for reasons of health and economy, the Catholic Church, now seemed less united in its anti-Family Planning stances, loosening up in many quarters. The Communists, equally in need of subjects directly accessible to the state unimpeded by interests and affiliations crowding in between, had already approved of Family Planning as an individual choice. Neither did the formation of the State of Kerala in the late 50s, and the renewed consciousness of being ‘Malayalee’, and the deep sense of grievance expressed frequently throughout the 1950s and 60s against the continued marginalisation of Kerala within the Indian Union translate into a suspicion of the Centrally- supported drives to reduce numbers here. But this is hardly unexpected, given that the dominant version of the ideal Kerala of the future was strongly Development – defined. The necessity of reducing births to speed up Development was accepted (though not necessarily the advancement of population as a fundamental cause of poverty), and so also the key role to be played by the Central government in speedily ushering it in. This was crucial: Malayalee national interest seemed to be poised upon the reduction of the number of Malayalees.

The large literature that has addressed the widespread and voluntary acceptance of Family Planning in Malayalee society has pertinently pointed to several cultural factors that enabled and activated this. Yet it has rarely pursued the full implications of the larger process gestured at by all the factors thus identified—the process of Individualisation. The result is that Malayalees have received enough pats on the back for having embraced modern values, desires and standards, but when the stresses and strains arising from transforming

the home into a highly Individualising space begin to show up, they are regarded with a certain mild astonishment, as if their very appearance was anomalous. The rising rates of divorce, recurrence of domestic difficulties among the reasons given by families and individuals taking their own lives, concern over increasing child abuse, especially psychological abuse, in contemporary Keralam voiced by child psychologists etc. seem to indicate that the Individualising family has had its side-effects unintended or simply ignored by the Family Planners. This is hardly surprising: ever since the domestic domain has become a space for the shaping of Individuals, child-rearing has increasingly resembled a craft-like activity in which children are treated as a sort of ‘raw material’ upon which parents work in their parenting. This offers the parents a tantalising mix of emotional intensities, pleasure and pain—persistent, even agonising, labour, combined with the pleasure of near-total absorption and insulation from any larger worries stemming beyond the home, and the pleasurable, if precarious, expectation of a perfect end-product. The strains and tensions of domestic responsibilities and its pleasures and consolations all stem from a common source: the direction of a major share of the energies of men and women into their supposedly natural calling, parenting. It may be possible to claim that a process of ‘domestication’ has been one of the major process of social change emergent in Malayalee modernity, both in the sense that people have been steadily directed towards investing most of their time, energies and desires in the modern home, and in the sense implying a certain ‘taming’, a making useful, a political docility.

In general, the large literature on Keralam’s achievements in improving human life have largely tended to treat the processes through which the ‘right to life’ was asserted in Keralam as power-free or as part of a liberation from power. While there is no doubt that the number of deaths have decreased and health has improved, it would be naïve to suppose that this signifies the absence of power-regimes. Modern power, as Michel Foucault has so powerfully shown, does not banish pleasure, nor is it mainly hinged upon the taking of life. Rather, it fosters life. The push towards Individualisation gestured at the gradual rooting of an

“anatomy-politics of the body”, one of the major poles of the new form of modern power, and the establishment of regulatory controls over the species- body—what Foucault calls “the bio-politics of population” and points out to be the other pole of modern power—accompanied<sup>8</sup>. In modern Malayalee society, the family has been a major site for the deployment of both these forms of regulation, and the success of the latter seems to have been crucially dependent on the effective rooting of the former. Pursuing the history of Keralam’s social development in this fashion, the possibility of viewing the success of Family Planning in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Keralam as a *political* event—involving the entrenchment of new networks of power—is unfurled.

This paper largely draws upon materials from the Malayalee public sphere in the early to mid- 20<sup>th</sup> century. Modern domesticity was intensely debated in the public sphere directly, and featured indirectly as a key issue in many other debates like those on law, education and employment. The public sphere (this concept is used here not so much in the truly Habermasian sense, but in the qualified sense in which the critics of the concept have tried to retain it, as an arena of contested meanings, with different and opposing publics manoeuvring for space within it) is thus the most convenient site to pursue the vicissitudes of several ideas that came to figure centrally in the ideal projection of the modern family and of family welfare deployed in and through the Family Planning propaganda in Malayalee society of the 1960s. The principal method may be characterised as interpretative, but in a sense that privileges neither the intentional consciousness nor the referent, but replaces them with the text itself, looking for the conditions by which it became possible to attribute a certain meaning to a certain statement or practice. While the importance of structural and institutional change is highlighted, words— on which this paper relies heavily upon—are considered no less material, not taken to be simply representing truthfully some reality unfolding outside, in greater or lesser measure. Words, as texts, are to be taken to be rule-bound in their active constitution of subjects and objects, describing ‘reality’ and prescribing specific means to live within that ‘reality’. The distinction, however, must not be

exaggerated. Working upon materials from the public sphere, one immediately tumbles into a labyrinthine maze in which the text and the world are inextricably entwined and the discursive necessarily abuts the non-discursive; in which the boundaries are not clear and the discursive and the non-discursive exist in a mutually energising relation. This kind of interpretative history-writing, however, demands an intense and unavoidable sensitivity to empirical detail, a careful mapping of mutations and transformations in a complex interpenetrated ensemble of texts, practices and institutions. This serves not only the purpose of producing a richer text but also enables a necessary self-reflexivity.

## II

### **The Impossibility of Carefree Breeding**

From the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, we increasingly come across, in writings, the determined articulation of a notion of ‘responsible parenting’, which gained nearly unchallenged acceptance among the educated social groups in mid 20<sup>th</sup> century Malayalee society. This hinged upon the attribution of complete, personal, and ‘natural’ responsibility for the wellbeing of children upon the parents. It also implied the loosening of the ties of men, women and children with larger kin groups, the locality, the community etc., and fashioning them as husbands, wives and their children within a single unified institution, recognised as the modern family. Further, it foregrounded prominently a gendered division of domestic responsibility ostensibly grounded in the difference in the ‘natural’ sexual endowments of bodies. In the modern family, the father was to be the chief provider of economic support, while the mother was to manage the materials and souls within the domain of the domestic. The activity of parenting was to be a sort of child-crafting, in which the parents sought to mould their offspring into full-fledged Individuals.

It is not difficult to see that this must have been quite a novel suggestion. Accounts of the upbringing of the young in the established ways of domesticity in late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century society gleaned

from autobiographies (and also from the accounts of anthropologists working here much later) seem to hint that the division of labour involved in the socialisation of the young was far more spread-out over a number of different agents including elders and senior kin in the extended family and retainers and servants in the case of well-off joint families<sup>9</sup>. From within this complicated network with its multiple levels and hierarchies, complex and mobile relations of domination and resistance, the husband and wife along with their children were to be culled out and reestablished as a self-sufficient unit unto itself. The new unit was to turn around two major axes. One was the husband- wife axis, seen to be constituted by mutual bonding in moral obligations – the husband’s obligation to provide for his legitimate offspring and their mother, his wife, and the wife’s to remain faithful and diligent in the performance of her role as home manager towards her husband and the father of her legitimate offspring. A second form of bonding in the husband- wife axis was that which was expected to ensue from the mutual moral shaping of the couple, each partner having to act as the other partner’s resourceful guide of character and conduct. The third form was identified to be romantic love between wife and husband, which was expected to ensure an atmosphere cordial to altruistic exchange between the partners. A fourth sort of bonding, less commonly advanced in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, was to be through the generation of aesthetic pleasure within the home, with the wife acting as the provider of aesthetic pleasure, and the husband, the consumer. The second axis of the modern family was to be the parent-child relation. This was seen to be constituted by the bonding effected through the supposedly ‘natural’ affinity and affection of the parents towards their children, first, and secondly by a social obligation to mould them into fully Individualised adults. With these two axes in place, the modern family was expected to function as an efficient institution for the production of industrious, rational and self-disciplined subjects, with the husband and wife playing their respective gender-ordained roles, complementing each other’s contribution.

These were also times in which passionate pleas were beginning to be made on behalf of wealth-generation, on behalf of the larger

collectivity to which they were now seen to belong; the Nation (Tiruvitamkoor, Kochi or the projected Indian Nation of the future most often occupied this space). These urged people to improve their agriculture by adopting new techniques and working harder to produce for the market, embrace profit-oriented industrial production for a wider market and directed them to various wealth-generating activities<sup>10</sup>. It also seemed that the other requirement to enter the Promised Land of material prosperity and temporal power, so enticingly mirrored in the Nations of Europe and North America, was to persuade parents to take up their 'natural responsibilities' towards their children, so that subjects capable of bearing the rigours of wealth-production would be produced. Another backdrop against which such role-assumption appeared vital was the articulation of a vision of a society of equals capable of completely erasing the hierarchies prevalent within the established social order(s), which privileged *Janma bhedom* or difference by birth. In these projections of such an ideal social order, human beings were valued not by the 'purity of their blood' or by caste, but by the weight of their individual qualities alone. Thus in such a society, gender alone, appearing to be 'naturally given', was taken to be the only enduring social division. Accompanying such projections were pleas for correct training to sharpen internalities through proper upbringing and education of the young to hasten the downfall of the *Janma-bhedam* determined social order(s) and actualise the vision of the society of equals. Among the institutions identified as sites for such training, the modern family occupied a prime position<sup>11</sup>. Thus it is no coincidence that throughout the period from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century up to the present, expressions of concern over the state of social and individual discipline in Malayalee society have inevitably gravitated towards questions regarding the welfare of the modern family. In this, the 19<sup>th</sup> century Protestant missionaries, modernising state officials, 20<sup>th</sup> century *Streetsamajams*, community-movements, social reformers, nationalists, communists, late-modern religious cult-followers, the Catholic Church, demographers, educationists and economists, psychologists and family counselors, not to speak to the institutions of law and order, have found common ground.

The task of shaping the modern patrilineal family turning upon the husband-wife axis and parents-children axis was found to be especially pressing in Malayalee society in which a significant section of the people lived within matrilineal domestic arrangements, too often berated as hideous and ‘unnatural’ in Victorian reckoning<sup>12</sup>. Nor did a local model seem readily available for imitation. The practice of patrilinearity among the Syrian Christians or among the Malayala Brahmins seemed quite distant from the ideal model imported from the West, and increasingly, Malayalees were instructed to seek a model elsewhere, and the mid-Victorian monogamous patrilineal family came to be widely prescribed. Even those who did not savour imported models sought other similar models, closer home, like the family life of the Tamil Brahmins<sup>13</sup>—there was already the foregrounding of an “all-Indian” Brahmanical model from which the Malayala Brahmins were seen to be straying<sup>14</sup>. And even for those who were reluctant to swallow the missionary representation of the existent marital arrangements, like O.Chandu Menon, the standard of reference was still the monogamous family with the life-long union of husband and wife<sup>15</sup>.

Making men accept the role of the chief provider of their wives and children was, not surprisingly, often identified as the first step towards the setting up of the modern family. The criticism mounted against *marumakkathayam* by the CMS native missionary Rev. George Mathen<sup>16</sup> well-illustrates the shape of the arguments that not only survived many generations but were also accentuated and intensely moulded in and through each of them. Entrusting the father and mother with the responsibility for the wellbeing of their children seemed the surest way of ensuring the longevity of the monogamous marital bond, the absence of which seemed to underlie a ‘decline’ of Nairs. In return, the enduring husband- wife relation was seen to produce superior progeny:

As, in current practice, the authority over guardianship lie in the uncles, the fathers have no interest and responsibilities in their affairs. In contrast, if patriline were



the rule, fathers would have had concern for the care and wellbeing of their offspring, and would not abandon the mothers of their children. Because of this difference, the mothers too would not reject the husbands of their youth, and seek after other men.... Children born to couples living in mutual fidelity are found to be strong and healthy, but the offspring of those who lead a loose and stray life are mostly weak and sickly.<sup>17</sup>

Mathen's arguments dispute the claims advanced later by O.Chandu Menon defending the marital arrangements among the Nairs, known generally as *sambandham*, that it was as civilised and as useful a form of marriage as the English one<sup>18</sup>. Mathen claims that *marumakkathayam*, originating under primitive conditions lacking in religion, ruled out the possibility of "natural parental love" in fathers, as they could not recognise their progeny<sup>19</sup>. Moving towards the 'natural', to him, seemed to call for the constitution of the patrilineal monogamous family in which a strict division of labour between father/ householder and mother/ homemaker was already in place. Human infants, it was pointed out, unlike animals, needed

...not only food but also clothes to wear and training in some trade. Since they have neither the capacity nor the time to labour during the training, they have to be fully provided for in this period with not only food and clothes but also the entire expenses of education. Since the mother lacks the capacity to create the wealth necessary for this, the father's help is absolutely essential. But if the fathers have no authority over children and can expect no favour from them later, they will show little interest...<sup>20</sup>

So, though the parental love of the father springs 'naturally', some cultural manipulation seems necessary for it to concretise—the occupation of the seat of paternal authority over the children by the father seems to be a precondition for such love to blossom forth. Innumerable reformist texts seeking to establish an economic base upon

which to build the modern family would reiterate precisely this combination of nature and culture. Bonds of affection between uncles and nephews and nieces were judged not entirely natural hence not ‘basic’ enough. The lack of ‘love’ in matrilineal joint families, was often lamented by Nair reformers, and ascribed to the ‘unnatural’ familial arrangements prevailing there<sup>21</sup>. It may be mentioned here that despite these claims, we do have other autobiographical accounts in which the uncle- nephew bond appears no less intense and affectionate as that between father and son<sup>22</sup>. Educated Nairs, at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, seem to have become avid supporters of the theory that the father making provision for his children was doing nothing wrong, simply following the “dictate of natural law”<sup>23</sup>. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century anyhow, the idea that a man’s labour and wealth were to be utilised for the wellbeing of his immediate family of wife and children gained rapid strides. The report of the Ezhava Law Committee of Travancore actually claimed in 1919 that the practice of marriage of the Ezhavas of Travancore was actually very close to the modern patrilineal monogamous model, and that the community was in favour of a law enjoining strict monogamy, and that this type of marriage was both “natural” and “conforming to the line and tendency of civilisation”. Any other suggestion would, increasingly, seem unfair or impractical. During the tour of the Ezhava Law Committee, a member of the committee is said to have asked Shree Narayana Guru, a venerated spiritualist and the foremost of modern reformist figures in Keralam, who the rightful heir of a man’s self-earned wealth was. The Guru is said to have identified the dead man’s neighbours to be his true heirs. The compiler of this anecdote records that the suggestion was immediately dismissed as “impractical”<sup>24</sup>. Whether true or not, by the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the right of the immediate family upon the wealth of a man was being increasingly accepted such that the above anecdote may have occurred perfectly well.

The actualisation of the role of the father/ householder was deemed important enough for some seekers of reform of modern education as it developed in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Malayalee society. One such instance was the proposal put forth by L.A Ravi Varma Tampuran in 1924-25,

which devised a special subject called *Grihastadharmam* (Householder's Duties) for boys, which was to comprise of "Methods of producing and utilising wealth, obligations and duties towards parents, spouse and children, and the World in general, principles of the correct instruction of the young. Through this subject the pupil may be made fairly well aware of his duty.." <sup>25</sup> Such concerns about transforming men into responsible householders attained considerable visibility in the agendas of almost all community movements in 20<sup>th</sup> century Keralam. The image of the modern (read wealthy, prosperous, politically powerful) community, when projected in the speech and writing produced from within community-movements, seemed to consist of several such disciplined and productive families coming together. Innumerable instances can be cited here. This was a perennial theme surfacing in the speeches of the leading Nair reformer Mannath Padmanabhan. To mention just one of these, in the Nair Conference of 1956, he exhorted young Nair men to reap the profits hard labour, and claimed that only when a man became capable of earning his own income did he qualify to become a householder. He went to the extent of saying, "...at least in our case, a law that prevents the unemployed – he who lacks the capacity to support his children— from marrying is necessary." <sup>26</sup> In the well-known Presidential Address made by E.M.S.Nambutiripad at the Yogakshema Sabha Annual Conference at Ongallur in 1944, young Malayala Brahmin men were exhorted to rise up and assume the role of producer and provider of the their families <sup>27</sup>. Speaking to the Yogakshema Sabha meeting two years later, E.M.S. Nambutiripad urged the Malayala Brahmins to take the "risk" of abandoning the old parasitical lifestyle; the security that was to cushion this risk was the confidence about being able to support the family by self- earned income through hard labour <sup>28</sup>. This paralleled repeated calls for legal reform that would force men to take responsibility for the economic security and welfare of their wives and children. Early Nair reformers were persistent in this, complaining that Brahmin *Sambandhakkars* (partners in *sambandham* relation) of Nair women did little to fulfil their duties as fathers and husbands. 'Sahityapanchananan' P.K.Narayana Pillai's speech at the Nair Conference at Kollam in 1922 brings together all the

arguments linking the physical and mental condition of women and children, the responsibilities of husbands and the prosperity of the community<sup>29</sup>. Expressing deep concern that the health and reproductive capacities of Nair women seemed to be declining, he claimed that this was not the state of affairs in former days: “It is seen that in former times, the fame of the beauty of Malayalee women was heard even in distant regions....Along with such beauty, the strength of moral purity and unusual good health were implied...”<sup>30</sup> Lamenting this loss, he suggested that “...it would be a great favour if those who endeavour to increase the number of faces on the face of the earth will also act with an eye on providing the means of subsistence.”<sup>31</sup> Directly following on the heels of this suggestion, he condemns the practice of excluding the Nair wife and children from inheriting the property of the non- Nair *sambadhakkaran* (man entering into *sambandham*) as “incompatible with justice or reason”, asserting that “...the person responsible for fathering children and causing the youthfulness of the woman to fade must bear appropriate burdens while alive and they (*the wife and children*) must be made the owners of the properties of those who are relieved from such responsibility by death.”<sup>32</sup> Thus the idea linking the attainment of adult Manhood with the capability to bear full responsibility for the upkeep of one’s wife and children was normed in by innumerable reformist interventions as well as by legal measures and structural changes that facilitated conformation.

After the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the idea of ‘responsible parenting’ seems to have emerged as a powerful social norm. Researchers studying the demographic transition in Keralam found some evidence that could be read as indicating a connection between higher education, lengthening of the search for paid employment and age of marriage of men. Writing in the 1970s, T.N.Krishnan remarked that the rise in the age of marriage of women, which seemed to be a major causative factor, might be “.... consequent upon a rise in the average age at marriage of males. The average age at effective marriage for males has also been rising partly because of improvements in their levels of education. At the same time, improvements in the education of males have increased

the number of job seekers outside of the traditional occupations and the system of self-employment. There are some indications that the waiting period for employment has been lengthening through time.”<sup>33</sup> He placed this in the context of the erosion of traditional support- structures in the wake of extensive socio-economic reforms that altered land ownership and family ties, leading to the “emergence of unitary families in Kerala in place of traditional joint families”<sup>34</sup>. However, we have argued that the assumption of the role of chief provider for one’s wife and children by young men here was not just the mechanical effect of certain economic compulsions or the transformation of certain social arrangements. While these are certainly important, it can hardly be forgotten that the ability to maintain a family on one’s self-earned income had also become a crucial norm defining adulthood and masculinity itself, such that even those unconstrained by material want increasingly sought to conform.

The call to generate and redirect the energies of men into the new family ascribing to them complete, personal and ‘natural’ responsibility for the upkeep of the family was decisive in that it enabled the opening up of an agency within the domestic domain to which appeals could be made on behalf of the Nation. The modern Citizen-Man, implicated in the Nation, was also to be the channel through which the Nation would enter the home, and facilitating such entry would count among the foremost duties of the Citizen-Man. Later, the educated Woman was identified to be the transforming agent in the family, and by the 1920s, the early advocates of a ‘Woman’s’ perspective in Malayalee society, were vociferously pointing out that it was unfair to exclude women from full citizenship, from the affairs of the Nation, as they were potentially the appropriate agents for transforming the family into an institution conducive to the project of National Development/progress. An interesting text from the 19<sup>th</sup> century embodying the exhortation to produce better children may be discussed here to elucidate this point. This is an early manual of the correct upbringing of children, addressed to fathers, written by the modernising Dewan of 19<sup>th</sup> century Tiruvitamkoor, T.Madava Row.<sup>35</sup> It illustrates well how the solidification of the position of the modern father within the domestic domain was

viewed as a crucial step towards transforming the home into an Individualising institution, and facilitating the access of the Nation to it. Madava Row sets about to give ‘hints on the training of native children’ to fathers, assuming such ready access of fathers to children that they may easily shape their children’s bodies and minds. The appeal to produce healthy and disciplined children is made in the interest of both the family and the Nation: “To raise children in such a way that they become our healthy, fortunate, intelligent and useful heirs is one good way of creating love of one’s Nation”<sup>36</sup>. Following this is a detailed account of how to care for the body and the mind of the child. Very soon, with the spread of modern education and Western values among women in Keralam, such advice would be entirely redirected towards women, and with renewed force. This advice included instructions on how to properly feed and clothe the child, to keep it clean and healthy, how to establish an economy of rewards and punishments to control its actions and how to shape its mind through words, narratives and display of emotions. Here the shape to be taken by modern political power is simultaneously etched out with clarity: it is to be the power of fostering life, of which the institution of the modern family is identified as a vital radiating point. In Madava Row’s text, the state that appears is projected as dependent on such non-coercive power, and the thrust is towards transforming the domestic domain so as to adjust it to the new regimen of power, to functionalise it in a different direction. He writes about the limits that may be set to children’s play: “All things that give the child pleasure will do it good. Therefore such pleasurable activities should be curbed only when they cause harm to others. Children must be made to understand that this is the best principle to rule a country, and so our practice must conform to this.”<sup>37</sup> Interestingly, though this text constantly addresses fathers, it scarcely reminds them of the necessity of providing the material support for the family. As the reformers were never tired of reiterating, such access to and authority upon children would be possible only when the father assumed full economic responsibility for their welfare. The altercation between the *karanavar* (the head of the joint family) Panchu Menon and the indigent father of the young boy Shinnan, over his education in O.Chandu Menon’s *Indulekha* (1889) is a brilliant

literary illustration of this<sup>38</sup>. Madava Row's text simply *assumes* that the father's position is already in place, and then proceeds to fine-tune it, and so a reminder of the financial responsibilities of being father/householder does not seem essential. Instead, fathers are instructed in the minute details of childcare (later, identified as a topic of exclusively feminine interest). The benevolent father and the benevolent state are projected as exercising the same sorts of power; just as the disciplinary efforts of the benevolent father may be justified as being in the interest of the family, the interventions of the state in society may be justified as precisely in the interest of the Nation. The state thus seemed fully justified in its efforts at social intervention. "The child must be informed time to time that a just government takes care of all the people in the same way as a father cares for his children. The child must know that all people ought to respect the government in the same way children respect their father."<sup>39</sup> Ultimately, the family is to be made into a training ground in which the new sort of political power may be encountered in microcosmic form. In Madava Row's text, children were to be made to get used to the new form of political power within the home itself, under the benevolent father, with whom, it was hoped, they would identify the state.

These associations gained steady expansion and embellishment in the 20<sup>th</sup> century Malayalee public sphere. Much public discussion focussing on such themes as the relation between the government and subjects, citizenship, social progress, equality and justice etc. would continue to affirm Madava Row's vision of the state (as resembling the benevolent father) engaged in actively moulding its subjects into healthy and useful citizens through the deployment of a power that did not make the body suffer pain. Some of this discussion extended his arguments further. A. Gopala Menon's *Samudayolkkarsham* (1924), for instance, dwelt on the duties of the subject of such a state—it recommended that individual should actively contribute to and cooperate with the efforts of the state to facilitate the self-development of every individual by actualising their inherent and 'natural' capacities. Individuals were advised to desist from activities that could impede the self-development of others<sup>40</sup>. Activities that obstructed the fulfillment

of the state's obligation to guide each one into self-development were judged to deserve punishment. Neglect of the duty of the role of domestic provider figured among these 'socially harmful' faults of the Individual. "Inability to repay debts or provide for the family due to excessive spending or licentious living"<sup>41</sup>—in short, inefficiency in playing the role of householder—is classified among behaviour that affects society as a whole, and not just the individual member or family. So also, the shaping of Individuals within the family is counted as part of one's 'duty to others':

Those who have attained maturity and capacity for self-support can gauge their situation, know their desires and fashion their future better than anyone else. Till then, however, many (*others*) will be responsible for (*one's*) self-development. This is how *Grihabharanam* (rule of the home)—that is, the protection and culturing of those who are dependent upon oneself—becomes so very important in Man's liberated existence.<sup>42</sup>

The shaping of Individuals within the family thus comes to figure as an activity in which the state, given its concern to establish conditions enabling the full expansion of every individual-member of society, could rightfully intervene if necessary. Thus in this reckoning, if those entrusted with *grihabharanam* proved to be lax or negligent, the state was completely justified in initiating steps to ensure conformity. In Madava Row's terms, such efforts by the state would be fired by the same spirit that fills a father performing his 'Nature-ordained' duty of correcting his children for their own good. The forces now generated in men and women and harnessed in the service of producing modern Individuals are deemed already-present, 'natural'; any sign of dissipation or redirection of energies is easily branded 'unnatural' and even punishable. 'Responsible parenthood', in sum, meant not just the assumption of responsibility for the welfare of one's children; it also meant being responsible to the state.



The duty of ‘responsible parenting’ was to be equally borne by the Mother/homemaker as well, but in a uniquely gendered fashion. This was to be mainly by taking over, in an active sense, the supervision of the bodies, souls, sentiments and material things within the domestic space. Thus the science of child-crafting prescribed by Madava Row (mentioned earlier) soon became projected as an exclusively female concern. New kinds of anxieties came to accumulate around mothering as a sort of supervision<sup>43</sup>. Here again, the chief means of actualising the Mother/ homemaker within the home was prescribed to be education, which was expected to both generate fresh energy within women and to channelise it back into the home. This was, however, almost inevitably couched in the terms of realising one’s ‘natural capacities’. From being a mere *pettamma* (mother-as-bearer), the mother is now raised to being the major agent of Reproduction, accorded a central place in the transformation of the domestic domain into the Individualising modern family. First the Protestant missionaries and then enthusiastic local reformers took up this cause with considerable zest and vigour. In this light, earlier expressions of motherly love and devotion appeared passive and pointless. An author remarked thus on the difference:

Due to their ignorance, our mothers have no idea about their place and responsibility. Though many Hindus, through false fasts, and Christians and Muslims, through vows and donations, seek to attain motherhood, they have no idea of the sacrifice and austerity necessary for the attainment of true motherhood....If one desires to be a mother, severe austerities are to be practiced. Only then will the sleeping Indian Nation arise into wakefulness...<sup>44</sup>

A large gulf seems to separate the two sorts of mothering, and the earlier forms are reduced to superficial show, devoid of ‘real substance’, which was identified to lie in the modern mother’s desire to shape her children into disciplined and rational Individuals. Indeed, ‘liberating’ children from the “earlier animal-like maternal love”<sup>45</sup>, to some, seemed no less than a pre-condition for fashioning them as Individuals, and birth control appeared as the apt tool:

Careful observers are quite sure to opine that the love for children has only increased after the acceptance of birth control. It may be possible to admit that the earlier animal-like motherly affection expressed in kisses and cuddles, with little concern for cleanliness, nutrition etc., has decreased with birth control. Today's mother who has limited the number of her children is striving very hard to provide them with favourable circumstances as far as possible.<sup>46</sup>

Indeed, from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards, we encounter an ever-increasing number of speeches and articles that seek to cleanse local women of their 'passive' motherliness, point out the defects in their mental equipment and suggest better ways of inculcating discipline among the young.<sup>47</sup> This, of course, was said to be in the interest of both the family and larger collectivities, in this case, the Nation. In the above account, a new standard of judging the strength of character came along – willingness to sacrifice oneself for the Nation. Rejecting the argument that only-children tended to be weak and selfish, the above-quoted author wrote: “The accusation that such infants may become weak is refuted by the fact that many thousands of only children joined the army during the last war for the defense of the land.”<sup>48</sup> The Nation thus enters into the mother-child intimacy. The mother's loving attentions must not simply generate pleasure-for-itself; it must be strictly yoked to and limited by the need to produce useful subjects for the Nation.

The two imagined collectivities that could readily be projected as having common interest with the individual Malayalee family in these times were the 'Indian Nation' that was foregrounded in the post-independence period, and the 'Malayalee People' which came to be increasingly evoked by the 1950s. Immediately after World War II, the global order was reconfigured, and the newly independent nations which came into the United Nations were put into the pre-fabricated slot of 'underdeveloped nations' using a small, standardised list of selected indices like the GNP, savings, investment, population density, balance

of payments etc. Now the Nation-State came to enjoy a particular prominence, accepted as the basis of action and analysis, and the major agent in transforming the entire local world to resemble the West, promulgated as the ultimate telos of human history. In the global discourse of Development post World War II, the life stages of the growth of the individual rooted in a family has served to articulate the growth of the Nation. The newer nation was said to be ‘newly-born’, ‘growing’, ‘attaining maturity’ etc. within a global ‘family of nations’. In this family, the less wealthy nations figure as children who are to be incited to imitate, improve upon, follow, repeat or replicate the wealthy Western nations who are seen to have attained adulthood by virtue of having reached a developed status<sup>49</sup>. Within India, easily figuring as ‘underdeveloped’ in this global reckoning, the Nation was frequently projected as a family, struggling to reach self-sufficiency and Developed status, so as to gain a respectable position in the global ‘community’ of nations. The discourse of Development did operate within India to define and differentiate areas and classify them as closer to or farther from Development, and the Malayalees were identified early enough as ‘underdeveloped’. The urgency of family limitation would be equally self-evident to the head of the family struggling to achieve not only stability but also improvement in the family finances amidst difficult economic circumstances, and to the Nation or sub-nationality, struggling to achieve self-sufficiency and forward movement along the path to Development. For the community movements, such close identification of interests was not entirely and *immediately* possible (though the many leading community movements, and figures did support Family Planning in mid 20<sup>th</sup> century) because their commitment to Development was equally matched by their rootedness in the field of competitive *redistributionist* politics. In contrast, the ‘Indian Nation’ and the ‘Malayalee People’, both entrenched within the depoliticising discourse of Development, seemed far away from competition, furiously bent on self-improvement through hard labour and prudent spending without demanding any serious redistribution of resources or deterring others. Quite like the disciplined family trying to improve its circumstances through abstemious living and persistent labour.

So the propaganda of the Family Planning Programme had very well prepared soil to root itself in, as by the 1960s, the ideal of ‘responsible parenting’ had gained widespread circulation in Malayalee society, especially among the modern educated classes. It was presented as an effective means of shaping Individuals by making possible the concentration of the material and mental resources of the parents upon fewer children. But since this shaping, now taken to be the ‘natural’ and essential duty of parents towards children, was far more economically and emotionally demanding than the earlier ways of caring for children, the recommendation of fewer numbers also seemed to imply a lightening of the burdens of parents. Family Planning, by the late 1950s, had gained a place within the social ‘uplift’ efforts of the government that sought to equip women to be better homemakers. The women’s camps conducted as part of the Community Development Programme at the Block level in the late 1950s, it is pointed out, intended to introduce women to such subjects as “..care of the family, health, nutrition, cooking, childcare, family planning, poultry farming, kitchen gardening...”<sup>50</sup> This remained a persistent feature of the activities of many *Mahilasamajams*, and female Development workers such as the *gramasevikas* and others were actively integrated into the Family Planning propaganda machine<sup>51</sup>. At the same time, propagating Family Planning was projected as an ideal way to serve the Nation. In 1966, a *Mahilasamajam* of the Kuttali Panchayat is reported to have set aside one day in a month for the ‘service of the Nation’ in the same spirit in which devotional fasts—*vratams*—are offered. This day was to be devoted to “...offering voluntary labour in construction activities, taking part in family planning work, planting kitchen gardens and so on...”<sup>52</sup> But Family Planning was certainly not portrayed as an exclusively Womanly pre-occupation; indeed, it was depicted, in innumerable instances, as the major tool for the fulfillment of the duty of the Father/householder to support his wife and children upon his self-earned income.

While the commonality of interest between the family and the Nation was continually stressed, it was sometimes recommended, as a strategic necessity, that the Nation's interest should be mentioned only after the gains to the family to be reaped through Family Planning were strongly advanced. That is, some of the Family Planning publicists found it unwise to project the acceptance of Family Planning as a service to the Nation, so that the aspect of individual- familial gain was obscured. Because, "...even those who have no great interest in the welfare of the Nation will have concern about their own children."<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, the interest of the family was always prominently highlighted in the Family Planning propaganda, and asserted to be indistinguishable from the interests of the Nation. The bureaucratic- technocratic accusation that 'improvident maternity' represented anti-social and anti National behaviour, disseminated through countless speeches, articles, pamphlets and so on in the Family Planning propaganda aroused feeble protest in Malayalee society of the 1960s<sup>54</sup>. Objections raised to the claim that Family Planning would be beneficial to both the family and the Nation rarely questioned the alleged commonality of interests between these institutions<sup>55</sup>. To reject it could even be interpreted as outright selfishness. Thus an appeal issued in 1966 from the 'outside' to the 'inside', by "prominent citizens" to "all married couples in Kerala" pointed out that the importance of Family Planning lay precisely in that it was not merely a measure to assure financial stability but a "national need"<sup>56</sup>. For the state, however, projecting Family Planning as primarily benefiting the individual family held some very solid advantage. To project it as a sacrifice on the part of the individual in the interest of the Nation would leave some space for the individual to make a claim for special consideration from the state. This was clearly evident in the aftermath of the highly successful Mass Vasectomy Camp held at Ernakulam in 1971, which was widely portrayed as a *Yagna* – " .. a sacred, concerted and concentrated effort involving the sacrifice of the participants and the public at the altar of the future welfare of the nation."<sup>57</sup> Given this orientation, some of the developments that followed the Mass Vasectomy Camp at Ernakulam in 1971 seem particularly interesting. Accompanying news reports that around 1500 persons who

had undergone vasectomy at the Camp were hospitalised with infections and bleeding, there was a report that efforts were on to organise a ‘union’ of the *Vandheekrtar*—the sterilised<sup>58</sup>. A meeting held by the *Vandheekrtar* of Kanjoor and adjoining areas presided by one T.K.Prabhakaran apparently decided to form an organisation called the *Kerala Vandheekrta Union*<sup>59</sup>. The statement issued by M.R.Nanappan, Convenor of the Working Committee elected in the meeting said that “The sterilised people are those who have voluntarily committed themselves to the cause of preventing the excessive increase in population facing India, and if they are not to be ignored then such an organisation is necessary...many who underwent sterilisation surgery are mentally and physically upset today. Many of them, who were capable of hard labour, now struggle to work...We must find solutions to all this.”<sup>60</sup>

Such claims upon the state, made on the basis of sacrifices rendered, could be easily rendered invalid once it was affirmed that Family Planning was fundamentally the need of the individual family, pegged to individual happiness, specified as the ability to fulfill one’s ‘natural’ obligations as father/householder or mother/homemaker. Besides happiness, the need for Family Planning was also pegged to one’s sense of honour and decency. One leading Family Planning propagandist, A.P.Udayabhanu, persistently argued that the success of Family Planning propaganda in asking people accept family limitation lay in linking ‘shame’ and ‘lack of responsibility’ to large families and elevating the acceptance of birth limitation into a cultural norm. He wrote, “ To parade around pregnancy beyond the third child, one suspects, is already being looked down in society. The time in which such persons will be derided as shameless and irresponsible is not distant.”<sup>61</sup>

The alliance between the individual family and the Nation projected in the Family Planning propaganda dissolved the interests of communities into the background. Indeed, the community movements, which were a formidable presence in Malayalee society and completely

committed to the politics of numbers, did not really obstruct the acceptance of family limitation. Not that suspicion and concern about the effects of the widespread acceptance of Family Planning on community politics were never voiced. But it was the community movements which had forcefully propagated the ideal of 'responsible parenting' in Malayalee society since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; their own visions of the ideal modern community of the future was inevitably one in which the individual family supported by the labour of the parents figured as the keystone. In the 1960s, prominent community movements were lending support to Family Planning activities. The prominent Nair leader Mannath Padmanabhan was making speeches that actively called for 'responsible parenting' through birth limitation<sup>62</sup>. The *Mahilasamajams* and other fora of the NSS and the SNDP Yogam were also aiding Family Planning work<sup>63</sup>. The Catholic Church, despite its uncompromising rejection of 'artificial' birth control, did approve of family limitation through other means and that too, in the interest of both the family and the Nation<sup>64</sup>. The signatories of the Appeal for Family Planning by "prominent citizens" in 1966 were all from diverse communities and faiths, seemingly uniting in the interest of the home and the Nation<sup>65</sup>.

Thus, by highlighting the shaping of children into full-fledged Individuals as the right way of raising children, 'responsible parenting' significantly increased the amount of energy required to raise a child, and demanded it as a 'natural' obligation from the parents. This, in itself, was a condition directing parents towards family limitation. At the same time, in and through 'responsible parenting', the modern family was imagined as fully amenable to control and direction by the modern state. Early enough, the widespread acceptance of 'responsible parenting' was recognised as something crucial to the actualisation of the Developed Nation of the future, and citizens were directed towards assuming it as their duty towards the Nation. Through 'responsible parenting', it became possible to project the emergent political rationality of the new state as something quite distanced from politics itself, as a magnified altruism. On the other hand, the family was to remain open to

correction by the state whenever it seemed to fail in the adequate performance of the task of child crafting assigned to it, precisely because the state was projected as occupying the position of the benevolent father vis-à-vis society. By mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, such ideas had gained quite remarkable circulation, especially among the newly educated, in Malayalee society. The publicists of the Family Planning Programme in the 1960s would abundantly draw upon them. In turn, they would increase the velocity of the circulation of these ideas as well as take them to groups placed further away from the modern educated classes.

### III

#### **Building the Individual's Castle**

Despite the higher costs of child raising implied in 'responsible parenting', it is still quite difficult to pinpoint in its popularity the crucial condition that made Family Planning acceptable to very diversely placed social groups in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Malayalee society. As seen earlier, for instance in Rev. George Mathen's words, cited above, 'responsible parenting' was clearly associated with the large family and not the small one. Indeed, there is the need to trace out the historical process which shaped the habitus which predisposed agents to linking 'responsible parenting' with the small family. There is good reason to suppose that there were many distinct and not necessarily connected routes by which such associations were cemented among very different groups of people, and much more intensive research will be necessary to study them. This section will merely attempt to tentatively open up this enquiry by following up some of the routes which seem to lead on to a notion of family subsistence as involving a balancing between scarce means and unending wants. The crystallisation of such a notion as somewhat of a common sense among groups of people could have been significant in their gradual internalisation of the modern family as the small family. This, of course, does not suggest that the understanding of 'means', 'ends' etc. were unitary across various social groups. Indeed,



the intention of this exercise is not to identify a universal route, but to highlight the very complexity of the process, that can be addressed only through painstaking research. Thus if certain groups entered such a habitus through the direction of their desire towards salaried employment, others might have followed different paths: for instance, the insecurities about the future that began to appear on the horizon of existence of the subaltern classes in the 1970s could well have served as another such path.

In Malayalee society, reflections on how the individual ought to be ideally implicated within larger social collectivities (Community, Church, Nation etc) appeared almost alongside the earliest articulations of 'responsible parenting', in the late 19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Needless to say, these largely stayed within the horizons of a vision in which the Individual was granted timelessness. The larger collectivity was represented as largely dependent on the efficient extraction and extension of the capacities of the Individual. An unquestioning obedience could no longer be recognised as the quality of the ideal member of the modern collectivity. The modern collectivity seemed to call for *subjects*, who participate in the reshaping of the collectivity and not merely those born into it by chance. Since the abundance of material wealth was seen to be an important criterion marking the ideal worldly modern collectivity, this active role was often understood as involving the energetic pursuit of material wealth, or at least, achieving self-sufficiency, and members were constantly urged to contribute 'positively' by becoming industrious and efficient producers. Early enough in colonial rule, this worked as a standard of assessing the worth of social groups. Social groups in need of such a radical transformation that would enable them to become a 'useful' resource for the larger collectivity, the society, as a whole, were noticed and commented upon. Their transformation meant, of course, the transformation of their members into fully productive, disciplined and hard-working subjects. Francis Buchanan, commenting on the Nayadis of Malabar, used precisely this standard, and voiced exactly this concern, viz., the concern about making them useful subjects:

A wretched tribe of this kind buffeted and abused by everyone, subsisting on the labour of the industrious is a disgrace to any country; and both compassion and justice demand that they should be compelled to gain a livelihood by honest industry and be elevated somewhat more nearly to the rank of men.<sup>66</sup>

The Nayadis, to be made into honorable constituents, must be transformed into industrious and civilised subjects who do not eat into the resources produced by the hardworking, but rather, support themselves. But even this was not enough: the ‘positive’ contribution meant the production of a surplus, which the collectivity could claim. Those who managed to find their own subsistence through labour could still be chided for shirking this ‘duty’. Thus we find criticisms of peasants, definitely rated higher than the Nayadis, for failing to elevate themselves to the role of the citizen- subject since they did not seem to be labouring enough to produce a surplus for the collectivity, specifically the Nation. The First Prince of Tiruvitamkoo, in a speech delivered in 1874, quoted at length from an Administrative Report of the Tiruvitamkoo State that presented a glowing picture of self-sufficiency and contentment reigning in the “rural Arcadia of Travancore”, only to argue that “.. the very contentment and conservation have proved the greatest obstacle to industrial progress...It has seldom or never entered the thoughts of the peasant or those better than him, to endeavour to make two blades of grass grow where only one does now.”<sup>67</sup> In order to forge an ideal relation with the collectivity, the Nation, the peasant must produce a surplus that it may appropriate, over and above the needs of the local community or the immediate family. Clearly, this was hardly a recommendation for further frugality on the part of the peasant or the aspiring citizen-subject. In fact, it was being argued that a change to a more consumption- oriented lifestyle would actually boost production of surplus through the creation of new needs. Tiruvitamkoo’s well-known bureaucrat and Manual-writer, V.Nagam Aiya, struck this vein when he complained about agriculture in Tiruvitamkoo in these terms:

What we know and have known for a long time is a condition of perennial want in greater or lesser degree...the lazy and miserable Travancore ryot ekes out a miserable existence, and his inexpensive clothing, food and drink contribute their quota to his general inefficiency...<sup>68</sup>

Here, the ‘miserable existence’ of the Travancore ryot is constructed not only through the presence of ‘perennial want’ but also through the ‘inexpensive lifestyle’ that does not spur him to produce large surplus. The removal of this ‘perennial want’ and the rejection of the ‘inexpensive lifestyle’ seem to be somehow tied together. This, along with Nagam Aiya’s exasperated admission that he would have tolerated an expensive, even ostentatious style of life, if it would drive the ryot out of his relaxed attitude<sup>69</sup>, usher in production for the market as the principal solution to both the ‘perennial want’ bemoaned, and the needs of the Nation. The same solution came to figure in the proposals of Development-initiators: here too, the removal of poverty was inextricably linked to joining into such an economy of production for the market. Spencer Hatch, the director of Rural Demonstration and Training in Tiruvitamkoor in the 1930s, which aimed at rationalising village life, prescribed this in 1932, teaching the methods of rationalising village life to the rural poor. His method was to encourage the modernisation of agriculture and allied activities, and the co-operative system in production and marketing. The money economy and the social circumstance in which one would need “...more income with which to purchase the necessities of life”<sup>70</sup> was assumed to be well in place. In Hatch’s account, the integration of the rural poor into the market-based economy is the solution to their poverty, and the formation of a larger collectivity, what he calls the community, is the principal means to this end.<sup>71</sup> At the same time, the schemes for economic improvement and the formation of the collectivity oriented to this end must all be responsive to the need of the larger collectivity, “... a real factor in the welfare of the society of which the group is a part—community, state or nation.”<sup>72</sup> Further, as Hatch observes in his thoughts on forging the vanguard of

the Developmental activity, this seemed closely entwined with the fashioning of Individuals—disciplined, hard working, committed Individuals to lead the less Individuated rural people into the Promised Land of Development, in turn shaping ever – more Individuals from amongst them.<sup>73</sup>

Thus the ideal Citizen- Man well implicated in the modern Nation was to be the industrious and efficient producer of material wealth, capable of producing a surplus above his immediate needs and thus establishing a ‘positive’ relation with the Nation. However, this did not necessarily exhaust the ideal models of modern masculinity that were being fabricated in these times. Almost paralleling this, we find another ideal model of masculinity being projected, especially in the early literary imaginings of the modern Individual in Malayalam, best exemplified by the ideal Manly figures of the early Malayalam novels<sup>74</sup>. In these texts, the ideal Man is hardly the hard working producer of material wealth; though possessing of that necessary qualification to be Man, i.e., a self-earned income, he is almost inevitably in salaried employment associated with colonial/ state authority and Western knowledge. It is perhaps pertinent to remember here that the construction of the modern Man in the early Malayalam novels is enframed by their textual staging of the antagonistic confrontation between the entrenched order(s) based on *janma-bhedam* (difference by birth) and the emergent modern one, which held forth the promise of equality and freedom. In this context, the ideal Man, in confrontation with the established order is armed with the material authority of the colonial/ state power, and the intellectual authority of Western knowledge. Even when power-effects were negligible, the income derived from these sources seemed to ensure a space into which the entrenched forces could encroach only in a limited sense. And that space is the space of the modern household. Thus the successful culmination of the struggles of the modern Man against the established forces, in most of these novels, is the formation of a thoroughly modern household, supported by the father/householder’s income, derived from mostly non-traditional sources and often from service in the colonial/state machinery, or in institutions disseminating modern

knowledge. There is one early Malayalam novel in which these two modern ideals of masculinity come into direct conflict, and the issue of choosing the better one is dealt with. This is *Parangodiparinayam*, which openly lampoons the hankering after modern professions by modern-educated Malayalee men, and re-presents ideal Manhood in the central male protagonist who is a skilled producer of material wealth who is at the same time able to make thoroughly rational judgements on the utility of everything issuing forth from the West<sup>75</sup>. This, however did not mean that the father/ householder was banished to oblivion; rather the contrary. Indeed, the ideal male figure, Pangasha Menon, is *both* an efficient producer and a capable householder. The point is that the ideal of father/householder never gets eclipsed in the contest between the efficient wealth-producer and the educated professional close to centers of power, in defining ideal modern Manhood. The ability to build a space relatively insulated from the entrenched powers seemed fundamental; the major differences centered on the most effective means to realise this. For these times and in these texts, employment in the administrative machinery of modern governments, or in the work of spreading modern knowledge, were identified in some sense to be both liberating, and enabling the realisation of a certain ‘Manliness’.

The desire for modern education treated as a passport to salaried employment was to become an abiding feature of Malayalee modernity especially among social groups and families with some access to material resources; in the materials that have survived from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century public sphere right up to the present, this is a theme that remained most extensively discussed and debated. A host of factors combined in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to aid the identification of the modern family almost exclusively with the consumption- oriented unit supported by a wage/ salary, mainly of the father/householder. Besides modern literacy and heavy exposure to modern ideas, extensive changes in property ownership favouring the setting up of individual households, already accelerating by the 1930s with far-reaching family legislation in Tiruvitamkoor, Kochi and Malabar, as well as the severe economic insecurities in the second World War period probably helped to

accentuate this. Besides the fact that ‘responsible parenting’ was implicit in such desire for upward mobility, for Family Planning propaganda this was of crucial importance precisely because when the desire for economic (and social) independence got almost inextricably bound to the desire for regular salaried income and the consumption-oriented lifestyle implicit in it, it was all the more possible to talk of family subsistence as revolving around relatively limited means and steadily multiplying wants; of children as economic liabilities. With salary income identified as the mainstay of the family’s finances, it more or less begins to look less like a production unit and more like a consumption-oriented one. It may not be entirely unjustified to say that the rooting of such desire helped to prepare the ground for the advocacy of the small family, so central to the Family Planning propaganda, to help it appear sensible and find the kind of resonance it did in Malayalee society. ‘Responsible parenting’, the manufacture of full-fledged Individuals in the home, as was elaborated in the earlier section, already implied higher levels of energy- and income-expenditure in child rearing; it also seemed to carry the promise of upward mobility or escape from the entrenched forces in local society. When it was to be carried out within the consumption-oriented household supported by a limited, if regular, salary, the wisdom of family limitation could hardly be missed. Many acceptors during the Mass Sterilisation campaign of the early 70s raised this as their reason for acceptance. The *Matrubhumi* quoted an industrial worker welcoming Family Planning in 1970:

My parents had nine children including myself. My father was a teacher. Due to the economic difficulties in my family, I had to give up studies at the age of seventeen and join the army. It was not ill health or incompetence at studies that hindered my education. It was sheer economic want that placed hurdles before me... At least my children must be spared of this misfortune.<sup>76</sup>

This does not mean that different social groups and communities were equally permeated with the desire for mobility through modern

education and employment, or at the same time. What it probably hints at is the shaping of a certain *habitus* in which people, as agents, were predisposed to making the choice of Family Planning as a sensible one, and towards a taken-for-granted association between the modern family and the small family.

However, it must not be supposed that the hankering after salaried employment remained uncriticised. On the contrary, in the writings of most social commentators, it remained an enduring source of anxiety. For instance, by mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the optimism exuded by the early Malayalam novels regarding the political value of employment was vacated in modern Malayalam literature. Salaried employment does not appear so liberating now: increasingly bleak portrayals of the individual caught between a poverty-stricken and oppressive traditional society, and an equally or more alienating cog-like existence of the employee in modern bureaucracy, army or business appear<sup>77</sup>. Employment begins to look like an inevitability that the Malayalee is pushed into, but without which survival would be impossible. Nevertheless, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the new knowledge seemed to hold the promise of proximity to power, and appeared as a fundamental condition for the acquisition of wealth<sup>78</sup>. This very worldly understanding of the benefits from knowledge was sometimes brought up in late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century texts as a sort of common sense that needed to be combated and replaced with the idea that knowledge was in itself valuable as an instrument of modern self-building<sup>79</sup>. This continues to appear well into the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century as a critique of the existent system of education, faulted for placing too little emphasis on character building<sup>80</sup>. The seeking after modern education with the intent of securing salaried employment by the better-endowed social groups, often perceived to be at the cost of opportunities for productive self-employment, was also widely criticised as a movement away from labour—a reluctance on the part of the modern educated to engage in physical labour. This critical theme has proved to be remarkably persistent from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century well into the present. In 1928, the Unemployment Enquiry Committee in Tiruvitamkoor reported the strong prevalence of such reluctance,

which was identified as underlying the phenomena of unemployment<sup>81</sup>. The noted humourist E.V.Krishna Pillai's essay written in 1934, *Shirtukal* (Shirts) took off on this: "The shirt has certain disadvantages. He cannot bear the sight of the pickaxe or shovel. Fields, crops, garden land—these are his inveterate enemies. He can't bear the sight of paddy. Tapioca, yams, millets—all these are alien to him."<sup>82</sup>

Perhaps because the acquiring of modern knowledge was deeply implicated in the local struggles against the established forces, such chastisements may not have had much desired impact. In mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, discussions on Development in Keralam clearly identified the broader economic reasons for the clustering of the educated around employment, and sought to suggest ways of relieving this pressure. By the 1920s and 30s, clear warnings regarding the consequences of such direction of energies generated through modern education were being sounded. Yet, despite this flood of dire predictions, modern education continued to appear as the panacea for poverty and inequality, and the ultimate source of social and economic security, to an ever-greater number of social groups, especially those in the lowest rungs of the entrenched social hierarchy, and even among the newly- found organisations of the labouring classes. A pamphlet published by the Chirakkal Taluk peasant union in 1938 raised the issue of the indebtedness and pauperisation of the agricultural labourers. However, "...their ultimate sorrow lay in the fact that, 'Though we struggle/ Are we able to dress our children even in rags/ And put a slate and pencil in their hands'"<sup>83</sup>. Going by the numerous accounts from the autobiographies of individuals who lived through these times, salaried employment, especially in the government, seemed to be the sure guarantee of upward social mobility. B.Kalyani Amma, Tiruvitamkoor's first Woman-graduate, writing on differences in wealth and status among students in college while she was a student, remarks thus on the promise of education and employment to those hailing from lower down in the social hierarchy, already headed by those in successful modern professions. Symbolic capital seemed to more than compensate for the lack of economic capital:



“Most of the Nair girls there were the daughters or nieces of prominent lawyers or officials. They did not hesitate to throw contemptuous glances at our manners and ways and make fun of us amongst themselves.... Later on, while attending social functions as teachers or Inspectresses after passing examinations, the ‘ladies’, who had before laughed at us, were prepared to welcome us respectfully and behave in an extremely friendly manner.”<sup>84</sup>

Women too, seemed to be no different, seeking salaried employment, and identifying it as the chief aim and goal of modern education. This was despite the fact that the intrinsic value of education in modern self-building had been most vigorously emphasised with reference to female education. The Statham Committee on educational reforms in Tiruvitamkoor (1933) noted with regret that women students appeared to be excessively ‘materialistic’, and that domestic training courses had few takers. The root cause of this tendency was identified in the propensity to see education as not something with cultural value in itself but as “a direct means of securing employment and competing with men in the open market.”<sup>85</sup> For women too, modern education and salaried employment were sometimes identified as the most reliable means of at least partial deliverance from oppressive patriarchal social arrangements, as, for instance, in the writings of Kuttippuzha Krishna Pillai, in mid 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>86</sup>. Nevertheless, this was not to proliferate; instead, women’s paid work outside the home was gradually reconciled with women’s domestic responsibilities. If salaried employment frequently appeared as the most feasible way of realising modern Manhood, efforts were on, early enough in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, to argue that it was not necessarily inimical to modern Womanhood, and to the role of the modern mother/homemaker (though not made central to it, as in the case of modern Manhood)<sup>87</sup>. By the 60s, the necessity of an active economic contribution to the household income by the mother came to be increasingly endorsed as a necessity for the maintenance of the self-supporting nuclear family<sup>88</sup>. This formed yet another argument in favour of family limitation.

Past the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the attraction for salaried employment continued to be strongly felt and frequently commented upon in public fora. The reluctance to take up independent initiative in productive activities and the attraction for employment was recognised as an unfortunate characteristic of the New, and different causes were found to be underlying it—for example, traditional conservatism, laziness, bureaucratic indifference, labour militancy etc. Newspapers wavered between demanding that the government satisfy the desire of the educated for employment, and exhorting the educated to give up their sterile desire for employment, and take to the virile desire for productive efficiency. The *Matrubhumi* in 1970 lamented thus on the inability of Malayalee engineers to undertake fresh industrial ventures on their own:

“Another solution is that engineers should initiate some industries. The government is willing to support all these efforts....But it is said that not enough engineers have come forward to take advantage of the opportunities and concessions. One can only say that this is the curse of this land. Everyone wants jobs in the government or in some company. No one is ready to start something anew or engage in productive enterprise. The guts and confidence for such initiative is lacking.”<sup>89</sup>

On the other hand, newspapers of these decades report several instances of the expression of deep anxiety and insecurity among the young and the educated about the difficulty of finding employment. These generally point at a socio-economic milieu in which traditional social-support mechanisms were steadily dwindling, initiative to generate employment seemed lacking, and the necessity of finding one’s own income was being projected as crucial for both family survival (for women) and the attainment of (male) adulthood.<sup>90</sup>

Besides, the Family Planning propaganda actively addressed the domestic worries of those who did not yet aspire towards ‘responsible parenting’ and salaried employment. That is, Family Planning was actively projected as the solution to the problem of the everyday upkeep

of the poor family, which seems to have become a serious ‘problem’ by the 1960s. Traditional obligations binding different groups had either collapsed, or were in the process of collapsing, with the result that food and shelter seems to have become ever- more insecure. Much earlier, birth limitation had been suggested as a solution to the sudden rise in the number of beggars in the early 40s, when the terrible pressures of the economic crisis of the war induced near-famine conditions<sup>91</sup>. The traces of the insecurities engendered by the passing away of the traditional social and economic arrangements are not difficult to find: in 1968, the *Kerala Kaumudi* reported R.S.Unny speaking in the Legislative Assembly about the difficulties in securing housing faced by Harijans and agricultural labourers in the aftermath of the ban on eviction since 1957. Demanding a housing scheme for them, he pointed out that

Though eviction has been banned and *Kutikidappukar* have been protected since 1957, the situation today is that more people cannot become *Kutikidappukar*. The result is that more than one family resides in the same *kuti*. If there is a god, then that god alone knows how difficult it is to fulfill primary human needs for such people, thus squeezed into a single *kuti*.<sup>92</sup>

Other accounts, such as those of the well-known journalist and author of the 60s, Pavanan, illuminate the desperate struggle for sheer survival among groups increasingly cut off from land and traditional survival strategies. His pen-portraits of ‘ordinary Malayalees’ of the 1960s, evoke images of extreme poverty and suffering among the poor, trying to fend for themselves in a situation in which work was neither easy to find, nor sufficiently remunerative to support even minimum needs<sup>93</sup>. The intense conflicts over redistribution in the agrarian sector which continued well past the land reforms, and these were clearly tied to the grim question of survival in an agrarian society in which a sizeable class of agricultural labourers, more than one-third of the entire rural workforce in Kerala in 1971 depended on a land holding class eighty-five percent of which owned less than one acre<sup>94</sup>.

At the same time, the ideas of the importance of the family and the primary responsibility of the husband towards providing economic support to his family were beginning to achieve greater circulation among the poorest and most deprived. To mention just one such site, we find these firmly institutionalised, for instance, in the *Report of the Minimum Wages Committee For Cashew Industry of 1953*, commissioned by the government of Travancore- Kochi. It justified the nuclear family as supportive of disciplined and thrift-oriented life, which made the husband a responsible provider. Proclaiming such a family in which the husband provided for the wife and children to be desirable, it legitimised the discrepancy between the wages of male and female workers, holding that women were not expected to maintain their husbands<sup>95</sup>. On the other hand, in more and more sites, women who worked for wages were increasingly represented as primarily mothers engaged in paid work to enhance the family's income<sup>96</sup>. In other words, it became gradually possible to articulate the ideology of 'responsible parenting' in the context of the poor working class family, even though it was accepted that 'responsible parenting' here could not involve very high levels of energy and income expenditure. Thus the Family Planning Programme's arrival could not have been better timed: on the one hand, questions of everyday survival seemed to be looming large for the poorest and most populous sections; on the other hand, 'responsible parenting' seemed to be rising in the horizon of working class life, issuing forth from a whole variety of sites ranging from governmental institutions to trade union struggles to popular theatre and cinema. Parvati Ayappan, who was actively involved in promoting Family Planning in the late 60s and 70s, puts forward this point candidly:

These are times in which ordinary people are being tormented by heavy burdens of responsibility and the severity of economic difficulties. Everyone desires to be liberated from this situation. Everyone is now convinced that adopting the policy of family limitation is the easy way towards this....Plentiful gifts...Each person gets around a hundred rupees as money, things and ration rice.

This is indeed a great boon in these months of *Mithunam-Karkadakam* (June-July) which are the months of difficulty....<sup>97</sup>

In several of its editorials, the *Kerala Kaumudi* reminded its readers that family limitation was no longer a strategy of the richer sections to preserve their wealth and resources, but the single most important solution to the problem of sheer survival of poor families. Pointing to the extreme insecurity that seemed to have pervaded Malayalee society, it claimed thus:

If Kerala, which has been generously endowed by Nature is to overcome today's calamities and once again become the ancient *Mavelinadu* (*the realm of the legendary Malayalee king Maveli, in which people are said to have enjoyed total security of life*), population increase must be consciously curbed. There is not enough rice gruel to give surviving children, no cloth to wear, no roof to sleep under, no means to educate—if parents create more children fully aware of this state of affairs, then they are committing a heinous crime.<sup>98</sup>

There is some reason to think that the waning of communal forms of life-sustenance (however meagre), and dependence on wage-income, combined with the attainment of a certain minimum command over resources, may have been the important conditions for securing gradual acceptance of Family Planning among the agricultural proletariat. It may be true that significant acceptance of birth limitation by the agricultural labourers came only in the late 1970s when there was a situation of relative plenty, as far as the agricultural labourers were concerned, but this does not mean that insecurity about the future among the poor was reduced: there is the possibility that we may speak not so much of poverty-induced acceptance, as of insecurity-induced ones.<sup>99</sup> The transformation of landless labourers into minor property owners without major gains in productive agricultural assets, communal forms of life- sustenance as well as mutual ties of obligations that bound the

different tiers of the *Jati* hierarchy, would have faced gradual erosion, in the subsequent decades. It has been pointed out that the expected gain in agricultural growth did not fructify soon enough, and that the erstwhile tenants found other profitable use for the land they gained, and that status- mobility was not entirely free of new worries. Especially about the future of children: “Agricultural labourers were forced to think of other means of survival for their children. They sent their children to school and tried thus to acquire jobs in the organised sector. Their ability to do so was limited in spite of government-guaranteed reservations.”<sup>100</sup> The pervasive and continuously snowballing presence of these new anxieties of survival, focussed around the home, against deep insecurity has been well documented elsewhere too<sup>101</sup>.

Besides, the consumption oriented lifestyle that was steadily gathering adherents in Malayalee society was by no means defined once and for all. On the contrary, it seemed ever- expanding, perpetually adding to the list of ‘basic needs’. By the 60s it was gradually becoming the standard by which village life was assessed, and condemned.<sup>102</sup> We have little information as to how exactly these new desires spread into an increasing number of groups, but certain traces remain in writings. One such is to be found in Pavanan’s pen-portraits of ‘ordinary Malayalees’ of the 1960s, which focused on agricultural labourers, plantation workers, cashew workers etc. In this he records the changes in lifestyle in a small farmer’s household, in rural Keralam and remarks thus:

For sure, in the interior of Tamil Nadu, Gujarat or Uttar Pradesh, an agricultural family of the economic standards of Kunhiraman Nair’s household will not have needs of this sort. However, for the great majority of agricultural families in Kerala all this cannot be dismissed as unnecessary expenditure. Using scented soap, collyrium, silk clothes, going to the movies, using talcum powder, all have become common even among farming families.<sup>103</sup>

Irrespective of whether this observation was accurate or not, we do find, since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, repeated assertions that modern life was multiplying needs. Alongside these, a very specific, home-centered sort of anxiety about finding means to meet them begins to show. In time, this became one of the key arguments used to justify women's participation in income generating occupations. Writing in 1928, an author justified women's efforts at income generation by pointing to this scenario:

Today, the amount of money necessary for comfortably supporting a family is four or six times higher than what was required half-a-century before. The times when men were contented with a dhoti and towel, and at the most a shirt, are long gone. Today one cannot be dignified without a dhoti, a towel, a shirt, coat, collar, tie and footwear. In place of the cadjan umbrella to be got by exchanging three *Idangazhis* (a Malayalee measure) of paddy, today we buy the Java alpaca umbrella of three rupees....But there has been no rise of income paralleling our expenses....The only solution to this problem is that women must pay greater attention to the matter of generating wealth.<sup>104</sup>

The reference to cash in the above quote is striking. We have several autobiographies and memoirs of people who lived through these times which amply record the persistence of socio-economic arrangements in which money played a relatively minor role in the fulfillment of most needs, the gradual settling in of the money-economy, and the erosion of ties of mutual obligation within the locality<sup>105</sup>. The arrival of new 'basic needs', such as, for instance, 'decent attire', usually as part of entering the modern school, and modern education, is vividly etched in many such accounts<sup>106</sup>. The Family Planning Programme amply cashed on this, taking this vision of the genteel life into the poorer classes: the gifts given away at the Family Planning camps in the late 60s and early 70s were almost symbolic of the higher- consumption

life that a smaller family seemed to promise—watches, radios, timepieces, bicycles, electric fans, lamps etc<sup>107</sup>. Family Planning publicists stressed the necessity of family limitation in spurring the consumption-oriented lifestyle attained by the better-off even further: “ Today, the living standards of our middle class has gone up considerably in comparison with earlier times. Most of them want to see it go further up. There is no other reason why they display greater interest in Family Planning than any other group.”<sup>108</sup> Indeed, representations of the ideal (middle class) family in the 60s centered upon high consumption. One particular instance is interesting: an essay that won the first prize in an essay contest for women conducted by the *Malayala Manorama* on the topic ‘The Family I Dream of’.<sup>109</sup> In the detailed description of the ideal family, it is the concrete space inhabited by the family—the rooms of the house—and then the objects found essential that are foregrounded. Among these are counted the radio, the fan, electric iron, the meat safe, the pressure cooker and the dressing table, which are mentioned to be “no longer articles of ostentation” but necessities. Following this is an assessment of the family size within which it would be possible to maintain such a lifestyle. As may be expected, Family Planning is warmly endorsed. This order of priority in describing the ideal family was certainly not limited to this single text. Needless to say, the condemnation of those who favoured artificial contraception as consumerists steeped in worldly pleasures, heard since the 1930s onwards<sup>110</sup>, seems to have been simply burnt itself out. Once what had earlier seemed to be mindless luxury came to be acknowledged as a necessity for decent existence, birth limitation looked less like a path to overindulgence and more like the royal road to the genteel life.

‘Responsible parenting’, which demanded much greater amounts of energy, time and wealth for child rearing; the solidifying of the recognition of family subsistence as involving limited means and steadily expanding wants; and a fast-changing perception of the genteel life incorporating further and further consumption— all hint at the gradual shaping of a habitus within which the Family Planning propagandists’ call for smaller families became intelligible and appealing. The Family



Planning Programme readily appealed to economic insecurities among the better off, and the poor, quite different in their specific content, all, however, hovering around the home, and the primary responsibility of men and women towards its maintenance.

#### IV

#### **‘A People United in Development’**

Almost around the same period in which the consumption oriented family supported by an ‘independent’ salary-income was rooting itself in the dreams of the educated Malayalee’s vision of the genteel life, a certain sense of unity was coalescing around the ideal of ‘Keralam’, as the embodiment of the unity of a people sharing a common language and culture. This reached a crescendo in the 1950s with demands for a united State of Keralam, combining the erstwhile Princely States of Kochi and Tiruvitamkoor and Malabar, which had formed part of the Madras Presidency. This generally involved a heightened sense of being a homogeneous people, with socio-cultural particularities and politico-economic interests vis- a- vis the other cultural unities inhabiting the geographical space of India, and the Indian state itself. The formation of united Keralam was frequently justified as central to preserving the identity of the Malayalee people in the Indian nation<sup>111</sup>. However, this high tide of the perception of Malayalee self-interest within the larger totality did not translate itself into pro-natalism, that might have rendered the task of the Family Planning publicists more difficult. Indeed, exacerbated sub- nationalism seemed to have demanded a reduction in the number of Malayalees, not an increase.

However, the same cannot be said about the highly pervasive community-politics characteristic of Malayalee society in the 1950s. At the eve of Indian independence, community movements were a visible and powerful presence here. With the coming of the Nation, most of them announced withdrawal from the ‘political’ and claimed the ‘socio-economic’ as their legitimate space, as if the latter was somehow distanced and preserved in isolation from the former.<sup>112</sup> This was

precisely the space of Development: community movements proclaimed their commitment to Nation- building by promising to actively aid the Indian state in its efforts to transform local society in the image of the modern West, into the Developed Nation<sup>113</sup>. However, this scarcely meant that the politics of numbers had ceased to be relevant. Most community movements held fast to their role in the 'socio-economic' as representatives of particular interests. Pointing to the continuing inequities between various communities and *jati* groups, they resisted the interpretation of nationalist sentiment as something fundamentally inimical to community-feeling. They vowed to continue to be active to secure for their respective communities the conditions that would ensure them of full citizenship in the projected Developed Nation of the future<sup>114</sup>. Politically, their task was achieving the delicate balance between these two commitments—securing the particular interests of their communities, and at the same time cementing their allegiance to the emergent Nation.

In this context, it is hardly surprising that Family Planning appeared at least ambiguous as far as the interests of particular communities were concerned. In a political milieu in which the clout of numbers remained a considerable asset, the sponsoring of effective means of birth control by the Nation state could be easily read as an open invitation to work against the interests of the community, in getting integrated with the Nation. From the 1930s onwards, opinion within prominent community movements had been divided about the utility of artificial birth control as an instrument of Development. There were many who were convinced that numbers did not matter if the wealth-producing capacities of the community was sufficiently enhanced.<sup>115</sup> But even for those who were convinced of the economic wisdom of reducing numbers, the political reality in which greater numbers did make a difference loomed large. In 1963, the *Malayalarajyam* reiterated an argument against artificial birth control from this vantage-point, already familiar since the 1930s:

It does not seem that the Catholics in this society will support it...As for the Ezhavas, they are in general a large community. Ezhava leaders believe that the greatness and advantage of that community lies in their large population....The Ezhavas and Catholics together form a sizeable portion of the population of Keralam. If these groups do not wholeheartedly participate in population control, what is the utility in the propagation of population control by the Nairs and the Nambutiris? Others will make up for what they reduce. This is because all claims made in Keralam are based on numbers. Such programmes as these will not work until citizens are made into scientifically-oriented, modern-minded individuals.<sup>116</sup>

Here, of course, the Nation enters. The *Malayalarajyam* endorsed the statement of the Minister for Public Health that, "...its success (i.e., of the Family Planning Programme) lies in viewing it in terms of the national interest."<sup>117</sup> Successful implementation of Family Planning seemed to require the building of a bridge directly linking the Nation and the Individual without the intervening particular interests, such as that of the community or the locality interfering. In earlier editorials, the *Malayalarajyam* had explicitly pointed out that the adoption of Family Planning by the Nairs and Nambutiris would be detrimental to their interests, under the present circumstances.<sup>118</sup> Representatives of marginalised social groups, pointing out that numerical strength was the only strength they possessed under current circumstances, had expressed such doubts<sup>119</sup>. The other prominent 'solidarity group' in Malayalee society of those times, the Communists, had their own reasons to be suspicious of state sponsored Family Planning. The anti-imperialist critique of artificial birth control had already been raised herein the 1930s, and continued to appear well into the 1950s, often raised by Communists critical of neo-Malthusianism<sup>120</sup>.

In the 1950s, such a danger of subversion to the project of Family Planning appeared rather relevant: we find repeated instances of claims

made on the strength of numbers, and the reluctance to accept Family Planning attributed to certain social groups is often readily linked to fear of political decline<sup>121</sup>. The attempt made by the Nair leader Mannath Padmanabhan, the Ezhava leader R.Sankar and others in the early 1950s to float a 'Hindu organisation' devoid of caste, and pitted against Christians and Muslims seems to indicate that the politics of numbers was alive and well, and that it could be easily extended<sup>122</sup>. Those who claimed to have abandoned a political programme were only too eager to prescribe ways of ensuring adequate political representation to their respective communities. No wonder, then, statements in favour of Family Planning by prominent political figures and state functionaries were not frequent and highly qualified. In this sense, the scepticism about state sponsored Family Planning, voiced earlier in the legislative assemblies of Kochi and Tiruvitamkoor was to some extent carried over into the 1950s<sup>123</sup>. In the late 50s and even in the 60s, the opposition put up by various interest groups and Communists was being mentioned as a major hurdle to the success of Family Planning in Kerala<sup>124</sup>.

Yet there is reason to think that the fears aired by the *Malayalarajyam* were already or at least rapidly becoming redundant. First, there were clear indications that the rifts and fault-lines within communities were deepening, such that 'community-interest' was becoming much more complicated than before<sup>125</sup>. Secondly, the entrenchment of 'responsible parenting' and the resultant heightening of domestic burdens seem to have been generally accepted as an emergent reality to be adjusted to. Father Vadakkan, the leading Catholic publicist, remarked about Family Planning in an interview that it was a sin, but a thoroughly forgivable one, a necessary evil of sorts:

Suppose that a father and mother have ten children. Or suppose that there is the fear that the wife might die in childbirth. Or a situation in which one is unable to provide adequate education and food to one's children. I have seen the tears of many such suffering families. If such people accept Family Planning, God will forgive

them....the God who forgave the prostitute Mary Magdalene, the God who forgave thieves and sinners, such a God would certainly forgive the person who submits to the sterilisation operation out of sheer misery.<sup>126</sup>

In the 1930s, community movements often acutely alive to the political benefits to be reaped from greater numbers and suggestions to increase numbers without breeding were sometimes contemplated. But by the 1960s, it was being admitted that with the massive changes in the fundamentals of community- and home life, more children no longer signified the future strength of the community<sup>127</sup>. Redistributionist politics, it seemed, could no longer stall the emergence of conditions under which more and more were led to view child raising as a struggle between meagre resources and multiplying needs. Indeed, it was even being argued that it was not wise politically for the minorities, to indulge in uncontrolled breeding<sup>128</sup>. As for the communists, they had never objected to artificial birth control as a measure of personal choice. In particular contexts, in the 1930s, they emerged as champions of birth control, such as in the Malabar District Board in 1939, in which they passed a resolution demanding that the Madras government open birth control clinics<sup>129</sup>. In 1957, EMS.Nambutiripad clarified the issue in the Kerala State Legislative Assembly that the Communist Party welcomed artificial birth control "...for health reasons", but did not consider it to a solution "to the problems facing us today".<sup>130</sup> In the Communist vision of ideal society, Family Planning figures not so much as an economic instrument as a political one: like the Nation, they too needed to clear the political ground so that appeals beyond community loyalties and interests would resonate. Not that they abhorred all contact with any form of community feeling. In the 1950s, communist authors advocated a strategic approach towards community movements, arguing that instead of rejecting them outright, the effort should be to transform them into vehicles of Development, tied to the ultimate politico-economic project of transforming local society into the Development-defined ideal vision of a unified Malayalee people<sup>131</sup>. This implicitly implied in large measure the pledging of the particular interests of the community to the

promised glorious future in order to be enfranchised in the Developed society of the future. Thus though the *Nazrani Deepika* was expressing immense frustration in the Communist Ministry's considerable interest in Family Planning (pointing out that on this issue, the Catholics and the Communists had generally agreed)<sup>132</sup>, the interest is not inexplicable. Also, the Communist charge that the Catholic Church was interfering in the implementation of the Government of India's Family Planning Programme in the State<sup>133</sup> is also perfectly intelligible in this light.

Given the pervasiveness of the desire for Development, it is also possible to understand why the rise of sub-nationalist sentiment in the 1950s, in the *Aikya Keralam* (United Keralam) Movement and outside did not generate any sort of pro-natalism. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Indian nation was widely welcomed in Tiruvitamkooor- Kochi, but Centralised authority and first-claim were not meekly accepted. As if responding to Sardar Patel's comment on a proposed ten-year control upon native states by the central government, that the Native States had no reason to worry about Central control, ("Why should children fear paternal control?"<sup>134</sup>) P.T.Chacko, representing Tiru-Kochi in the Constituent Assembly, reframed the issue in equally familial, but strikingly different terms: "The Central Government's policy towards the Native States is similar to that of a mother-in-law to a young bride...(like) A widowed, young and jealous mother-in-law."<sup>135</sup> That the widespread propagation of Family Planning seemed to go against the crucial need to actively preserve one's particular interests vis- a -vis the Central power figured in the discussion on Family Planning in the Tiru-Kochi legislative assembly in 1951. Taryattu Kunhittomman, speaking against Family Planning, argued thus: "...Besides, in the coming days, all our affairs are to be decided through voting. Our representation at the Center is dependent on our population. If so, our population must certainly remain high."<sup>136</sup> However, such arguments received little elaboration in the course of the 1950s, even with the waxing of the movement for United Keralam.

Thus in the early 1950s, a large population seemed useful in political terms, but looked entirely disadvantageous in economic terms. It seemed possible to resolve this quandary through Development. In public discussion, it was admitted too often that the burgeoning population of Keralam was proving to be an economic liability; however, the sense of being marginal in the Indian Nation in terms of both strength and size was being expressed ever-more frequently. This was stated as early as the 1930s, in the writings of Kesari A. Balakrishna Pillai. Kesari A. Balakrishna Pillai was one of the earliest champions of artificial birth control in Tiruvitamkoor, which he supported on a number of grounds including the economic<sup>137</sup>. However, writing on the future of the Malayalee in the 1930s, he outlined a situation in which the lesser numbers threatened to push Malayalees to a peripheral position. The way out, it was clarified, was the vigorous pursuit of Development, in which, it was pointed out, Malayalees were lagging behind:

People fewer in numbers may gain an important place in ruling their motherland and in other affairs by developing their abilities in other matters. But Malayalees seem to possess no such advantage in comparison with other peoples. Economically and industrially, the Malayalee's position, when compared to that of others, is very backward....There is the possibility that in the independent India of the future, Malayalees may become an insignificant minority and gradually decline, becoming slaves to other peoples. This terrible future is not because Nature has been unfavourable...<sup>138</sup>

To get over the disadvantage of being small in relative terms, Kesari advises, Malayalees must modernise all modes of life-sustenance rapidly, and multiply the means of wealth creation. Wealth-creation, in turn, seemed to require less population pressure on land. By the end of the 1940s, these ideas had gained considerable circulation among the modern-educated in Keralam, through a variety of sites ranging from textbooks to the conferences of the community movements. By the

1950s, the necessity of large-scale industry which required large amounts of capital accumulation was being urgently pressed in public discussion, and the implications of this for Kerala's relation to the Centre were clearly drawn out. EMS.Nambutiripad, writing on Kerala's economic problems in 1956, pointed out that the goal of Development of Kerala could not be achieved without the active support of the Central Government, and active co-operation with it in large-scale Developmental activities. He wrote:

This task, however, cannot be carried out by the State of Kerala—its people and its government—by themselves. (*This is so*)..precisely because Kerala is not an independent country but an integral part of India; our economy is not an isolated one but part of the general economy spread throughout India....So we Malayalees can find solutions to our problems only as part of the organised efforts carried out by the people and the government all over India to reform and develop India's economy.<sup>139</sup>

EMS stated unambiguously that the way out of Kerala's economic ills lay in "An all-India economic plan that will help in the speedy growth of large-scale industry, the reform of agriculture based on this and improve trade, industry and transport. Only when problems are solved in an all-India basis will Kerala's problems be solved."<sup>140</sup> The desire for Development thus binds the newly-emergent State of Kerala in a relationship of dependence upon the Centre, and centrally sponsored Development schemes to achieve the urgently-required goal of Development, which, it was supposed, would end the marginality of the Malayalees. The Family Planning Programme seemed efficacious in that it could help to create the crucial condition for wealth-creation mentioned above, i.e., lower population pressure on land, and on the resources of the government, which would have to otherwise devote quite a large share to social development<sup>141</sup>. No wonder that many who enthusiastically embraced it endorsed the unity and self-assertion of



Malayalees as a people within the Indian sub-continent. Indeed, it was not coincidental that the celebration of linguistic unity and unique cultural identity of Keralam in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century did not seem to have spurred in any major way, the questioning of the long-term sagacity of reducing numbers (as was, for instance, expressed by Catholic authors regarding the long-term effects of artificial birth-control on the longevity and health of the community<sup>142</sup>). This is especially true for the leftist vision of the ‘Malayalee Society’ of the future, which was a powerful presence in the movement for a united Keralam. In the writings of EMS Nambutiripad, and many other non-leftist authors also, linguistic and cultural unity figures as nothing more than a favourable initial condition towards the erection of modern Developed Keralam. EMS and other leftist intellectuals like Kuttippuzha Krishna Pillai emphatically rejected the Hinduised elitist cultural arguments in favour of united Keralam; instead, thoroughly secular grounds, rooted in material self interests differing from group to group, but converging upon United Keralam as solution were found<sup>143</sup>. In one of his evocative accounts of the vision of the Developed Keralam of the future, EMS conjures up an image of a people united finally in Development, which has once and for all transcended the mundane struggles over redistribution expressed in the politics of numbers, and in which the scientific temper would work to generate “the culture of modern Keralam”, and in which all forms of life-sustenance would be thoroughly modernised. EMS characterises this as the *Mavelinadu* of the future, a mythical kingdom in which no one knew any want, treachery or misery.<sup>144</sup> This new Keralam was to be thickly populated with large-scale industries, scientifically-managed farms, hydel plants, and this was pointed to as the ideal environment in which ‘freedom’, defined as “..being able to live without servility to another and with universal access to food and other basic needs of life...”, was promised to thrive<sup>145</sup>. The defining feature of the ideal Keralam of the future was not so much its cultural uniqueness as the state of being Developed. Once the desire for this vision of future Keralam, which obviously called for massive mobilisation of resources, was set in place, it is quite easy to see that why calls for Malayalee self-assertion and identity remained perfectly compatible with the call to reduce their

numbers as urgently as possible. It is also quite evident that ‘responsible parenting’ fitted well within this vision, directing people more into the business of shaping productive human forces in the home.

The post-independence decades have no doubt witnessed the most powerful movements for redistribution within Keralam<sup>146</sup>. Irrespective of whether this hampered productivity or not, it may be safely claimed that the shift towards the consumption oriented small family was hardly impeded. As staunch redistributionists themselves accepted, it had ceased to be effective as a strategy that could keep one for long from partaking as solid common sense, the perception of family subsistence as a difficult adjustment.

## V

### **Reconsidering Voluntary Acceptance**

This paper has gestured, albeit briefly, to the long-term process of what may be called the ‘domestication’ of Malayalees, and the successful Family Planning drive of mid 20<sup>th</sup> century Keralam is taken to be a major event in this process. It also gestures at the rooting of modern political rationality in which the object and target of governmental action is in some sense the necessary partner or accomplice of government. By the process of ‘domestication’ is meant a complex conjunction of discursive and non-discursive changes, which effected the direction of the major portion of the energies, interests, desires and commitments of individuals into their immediate families. That this implies a solidification of modern gender relations and the intensification of their power-effects can hardly be overestimated. For to be ‘domesticated’ was to be integrated into the modern domestic domain as responsible father/ householder or mother/homemaker, engaged primarily in the Individualising of their children. It has been argued that ‘responsible parenting’ was an ideology that took root in Malayalee society through several decades. It may be actually quite plausible to think that the modern-educated Malayalee male suffered less from castration anxieties at sterilisation, at least in the 1960s<sup>147</sup>, for Manliness,

in this particular milieu, was inextricably bound to the ability to support one's dependents within the nuclear family by one's self-earned income. By the late 1960s and 70s, new domestic worries were beginning to gain ground even among those who did not possess the resources to be aspiring towards 'responsible parenting'. This foregrounding of domestic concerns and obligations was carried forth actively in the 1970s, figuring prominently in state sponsored Programmes like the Mass Sterilisation Camps, the Housing Schemes for the poor, and the extension of the public distribution system through the *Maveli* stores, all which aimed at the consumption oriented modernised (but poor) *family*.<sup>148</sup> Besides the hardening of the power-effects of modern gender relations, 'domestication' probably affected mobilisation on behalf of larger collectivities such as the local community. Though this point really calls for much more research, it may be possible to suggest that the process of 'domestication', in the long term, worked to the disadvantage of the development of new forms of collective action and interests, opening up a bridge between the individual family and the Nation-state, subsuming all forms of collective participation under it. It is really no contradiction to say that the process of 'domestication' gained vim and vigour in and through the modernising community movements of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, though it might have ultimately worked against such mobilisations.

It may also be important to mention that what is being argued here certainly seeks a more complex explanation than is offered by those who claim that there is a case for viewing the acceptance of Family Planning in Kerala by the poorest as poverty-driven<sup>149</sup>. This may be a salutary corrective to excessive self-congratulation, but it maintains a distinction between the 'positive' and the 'negative' conditions for voluntary acceptance of birth control, as if the 'positive' conditions were rather free of power-effects. It is not only that the coming of new personal aspirations seems to have involved new responsibilities and anxieties, harder to recognise and resist, precisely because pleasure is harnessed to their fulfillment. It is also that the newly opened space of the personal is conceived as one readily accessible to the state, insofar

as the responsibility towards one's offspring was also tightly linked to responsibility towards the state. We have argued that throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, in and through the process we have called 'domestication', the modern family has been configured as a matrix for organising and coordinating domestic and conjugal arrangements not only in the name of the personal wellbeing of the individual members but also in the name of public citizenship.<sup>150</sup> In Malayalee society in the course of the past century, we have seen sustained efforts to fuse the sense of the 'personal' to that of the 'familial' in an extraordinarily durable way. It is thus, no surprise that we have come to perceive contraception as Family Planning, and to allow a convenience for family maintenance to stand in the place of an instrument of personal mobility.

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## NOTES

- 1 See, for instance, P. G. K. Panikar et.al., 1978; K.C. Zachariah, 1984; D.Stein, 1995; S.S.P.Padmadas, 2000; K.Mahadevan, M.Sumangala, 1987.
- 2 See, V.K.Ramachandran, 1997, pp. 205- 356. This recurs in the research on population in Keralam as well as in popular pronouncements. See, Mathew M. Varghese, 1983, K.P. Ramachandran Nair, Inaugural Address, *Proceedings of the Seminar on Fertility and Family Planning in Kerala and Karnataka*, 26-28 Nov. 1984, Thiruvananthapuram, 1986, pp.92-93.
- 3 See, 'Marumakkathayattalulla Doshangal' (The Disadvantages of Matriliney), *Vidyasangraham* Vol 1 (5), Jul. 1865, pp.345-52. The author of this text is said to be Rev. George Mathen. See, Dr.S. Chandanappally, 1992, p.574.
- 4 See, Louise Ouwerkerk, 1994; Dilip M. Menon, 1994. Indeed, in the 1930s, community movements were actively contemplating on various other ways of increasing their numerical strength, such as through amalgamating sub-*Jati* s etc. See, Ambady Narayani Pothuvalsyar, 'Ambalavasi Samudayam', *Yuvachaitanyam* 1(1) Oct.-Nov. 1933, pp.46-47 which points to the political necessity of increasing the numbers of the Ambalavasi community; K.V.Sankara Warriar, 'Samudaya Parishkaranam- II- Ekeekaranam', *Swajanaranjini* 1 (4), Jan.-Feb. 1934, pp.132-36; The Nambutiri family Regulation Committee Report, Thrissur, 1925, pp.42-43; see also, a critique in the *Mahila* 12 (4,5), 1932, pp.160-61, of a resolution passed at the Nair conference at Mavelikkara to increase their numbers by amalgamating sub-*Jati* s. The Ezhavas, apparently, had already begun this process, see, N.K.Damodaran, 'Parishuddha Ezhavan, Chettatta Ezhavan', *Kerala Kaumudi* 4 Aug. 1968, p.4.
- 5 Clearly, a whole range of political projects, not just Family Planning, could appeal to this centrality of home-life and domestic obligations for self-justification. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the anti-slavery efforts by missionaries in Tiruvitamkoor (the

Malayalam name for Travancore) raised the violation of the 'natural' family by the slave owners as one of the essential arguments against agrestic slavery. See, the memorandum submitted by the missionaries to the Maharajah of Tiruvitamkoor in 1847, appended to K.K.Kusuman, 1973, pp.78-80. In leftist popular theatre of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the need for socialism was often affirmed by showing it to be necessary for the maintenance of 'natural' ties and obligations in the family. In P.J.Antony's hugely popular play *Inquilabinte Makkal* (The Children of Revolution), Francis, the pro- Communist character raises this point to convince his frustrated unemployed friend of the need for socialism: " Parents raise and educate their children in the hope that they will protect the parents in their old age. There is no system in our land by which one may not have to depend on others in their old age. So when the expectations of parents regarding their children are shattered, the very desires of their life are shattered...it is this system that must be opposed. Family relations are being shattered. That even our dearest ties have to be dependent on money! What a pitiable situation!...Only if Man is financially free will love exist in its truest form ." First published, 1954, p. 26.

6 See, Akhil Gupta, 1999.

7 The sociologist George Kurien, conducting fieldwork in the late 1950s, noted that the large majority of the people he interviewed in the late 1950s, even Roman Catholics, were for artificial birth control. George Kurien, 1961, pp.86-7.

8 Michel Foucault, 1978, pp.138- 39.

9 See, Kanippayyur Sankaran Nambutirippad, 1963; Ch. Kunhappa, 1981; K.P.S.Menon, 1971; C. Kesavan, 1965. Also see, M.S.A.Rao, 1957.

10 See for instance, Prince Rama Varma, Lecture delivered to the Trevandrum Debating Society, 'Our Industrial Status', Kottayam: CMS Press, 1874.

- 11 For a more detailed account, see, J.Devika, 1999, Chapter 1.
- 12 See, for instance, the account provided by Augusta Blandford, who was a prominent missionary of the Zenana Mission in Tiruvitamkoor, teaching at Thiruvananthapuram. A.Blandford, c. 1903; also see, R.Jeffrey, 1976.
- 13 See, Kanippayyur Sankaran Nambutirippad, 'Dambathyabandham' (Conjugal Relations), *Unny Nambutiri* Vol.7(7),1925, pp.423-32.
- 14 One of the earliest appearance of this pan-Indian Brahmanical ideal was during the discussions generated by the sensational ritual trial (*Smartavicharam*) of an Antarjanam (Malayala Brahmin woman), Kuriyedathu Tatri at Kochi in 1905, as part of the debate whether the Tamil Brahmins named in the case needed to submit themselves to the decisions of the Malayala Brahmins. See, 'Paradaragamana Prayashchittam' (Penance for Adultery), *Malayala Manorama* Jan. 10, 1906.
- 15 See, Praveena Kodoth, 2001, pp. 349-84.
- 16 Op.cit., note 3.
- 17 Ibid., p. 351.
- 18 See, for instance, the 'Notes' written by him to the English translation of *Indulekha*. O. Chandu Menon (translated by W.Dumerge), 1965, pp.371-72.
- 19 Op.cit., p.348.
- 20 Ibid., pp. 351-52.
- 21 See for instance, the autobiography of Mannath Padmanabhan, in Kidangoor A.Gopalakrishna Pillai, 1978. However, there is reason to think that this was not so much a result of 'unnatural' marriage practices, as an effect of the crisis of material survival, well-detailed in several autobiographies of Nair reformers and public figures of the period, such as in Cherukad's *Jeevitappata* (1984), K.Kannan Nair's *Atmakatha* (1989), V.R.Parameshwaran Pillai's *Aa Ezhupatu Varshangal* (1974).

- 22 See, for instance, Putezhattu Raman Menon, 1959.
- 23 The Interrogatories in the *Report of the Malabar Marumakkathayam Commission* gives a particularly interesting view into this. See, for instance Dewan Peishkar A.Govinda Pillai, *Report* Vol II, p.171. Also see, C.Sankaran Nair, Speech at the Keraleeya Nair Samajam, published in the *Malayala Manorama*, 11 Jun. 1910.
- 24 Quoted from Mooloor S. Padmanabha Panikkar's memoirs in Dr. T.Bhaskaran, 2000, p.238. This does not mean that the Guru did not approve of modern marriage. In a message to the SNDP Yogam in 1909, he clearly approved of legal provision for giving a portion of the individual earnings of the husband to the wedded wife and their children. Quoted in Meera Velayudhan, 1999, p. 64.
- 25 L.A. Ravi Varma Tampuran, 'Lokopakaramaya Oru Vidyabhyasakramam' (A System of Education Useful to Society), *Swadeshahimani* Vol.3(5-6), 1924-25, pp.217-22.
- 26 Mannam in Kidangoor A. Gopalakrishna Pillai (ed.), 1978, p.89.
- 27 E. M. S. Nambudirippad, 1945.
- 28 E. M. S., 1946; reprinted in P.Govinda Pillai (ed.), 1999, pp.228-34.
- 29 P. K. Narayana Pillai, 'Samudayika Chintakal' (Thoughts on The Community) in M.Gopalakrishnan Nair (Compiler), 1995, pp.178-80.
- 30 Ibid., p.178.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Ibid., p.179.
- 33 T.N.Krishnan, 1976, p.1223.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 T. Madava Row, *Hints on the Training of Native Children*, Kottayam: CMS Press, 1889.
- 36 Ibid., Preface.
- 37 Ibid., p.4.



- 38 O.Chandu Menon, 1965, pp.62-4.
- 39 Madava Row, op cit., p.60.
- 40 A.Gopala Menon, *Samudayolkkarsham* (Progress of Society), Thiruvananthapuram: S.R.Book Depot, 1924, p. 15.
- 41 Ibid., p. 17.
- 42 Ibid., p.16.
- 43 These anxieties are complexly expressed in the poetry of Balamani Amma, one of the earliest of modern Malayalee women to carve a niche for herself in modern Malayalam poetry. See, for instance her poems like 'Ammayum Makanum' (Mother and Son), 'Matruchumbanam' (Mother's Kiss), 'Mazhavellattil' (In the RainWater) etc. in Balamani Amma, 1985. The critic Tayattu Sankaran has noted that her conception of the child differs significantly from earlier notions of the child that celebrate it as a source of joy in that it sees the child as the nucleus of the mature human being, the responsibility of which lies in the Mother, who must nurture it. Tayattu, 1969, pp.65-66.
- 44 Kaveri Amma, 'Nammude Pradhanappetta Chumatalakal' (Our Chief Responsibilities), *Malayala Manorama* 10 Oct. 1925.
- 45 'Santananiyantranam'(Birth Control), *The Mahila* Vol. 12 (11-12), 1932, p.373.
- 46 Ibid.
- 47 For an excellent piece of such advice, see K.Chinnamma, 'Vidyabhyasattil Streekalkulla Sthanam' (The Place of Women in Education), *Lakshmi bhayi* 8 (6), 1913.
- 48 Op.cit., note 45.
- 49 See, A.Gupta, 1999, p.41; D.Ludden,1992, pp.247-87.
- 50 Omallur K.V.Nanu, 1960, pp.188-89.
- 51 See, interview with State-award winning *gramasevika* C.Ponnamma, *Matrubhumi* 7 Sept. 1969, p.4.

- 52 'Mahilakalude Vratam', *Malayala Manorama* 6 Apr. 1969, p.3.
- 53 P.R.R. Babu, 'Pottitterikkunna Janasankhyayude Velluvili' (The Challenge of Exploding Population), *Malayala Manorama* 30 Apr.1961, p. I; Speech by V.Viswanathan inaugurating the condom factory at Thiruvananthapuram, *Malayala Manorama* 6 Apr. 1969, p.3.
- 54 "The task before the nation is first of all to bring about such a change in the climate of opinion that every married couple will accept it as their duty (to themselves, to their family, and to that larger family- the nation) that they should avoid improvident maternity. The occurrence of improvident maternity should evoke social disapproval, as any form of anti-social behaviour. R.A Gopalaswami, quoted in W.Petersen, 1966. See also, report in *Matrubhumi* 22 May 1968, p.4, of speech by Dr.S.Chandrasekhar at the Family Planning Conference at Kottayam in which he suggested that a milieu in which anyone with more than three children would be denounced as an enemy of the nation must be created. Such statements were widely circulated, with more or less bluntness in the local Family Planning Conferences, newspaper supplements etc.
- 55 'This is best illustrated in the enthusiastic way in which 'responsible parenthood' and birth limitation, though without 'artificial' birth control, was taken up by the Catholic Church in the 1960s and 70s. See papers in Fr.D. Manickatan (Compiler), 1972.
- 56 'Santananiyantranam Oru Desheeya Aavashyamanu: Paurapramukharude Prasthavana' (Birth Control is a National Need: Statement by Prominent Citizens), *Matrubhumi* 5 Sept. 1966, p.6.
- 57 S.Krishnakumar, 1971, p.29.
- 58 'Vandheekrtar Sanghatikkunnu' ( Sterilised Persons Organise), *Matrubhumi* 12 Aug. 1971, p.5.
- 59 Ibid.

- 60 Ibid.
- 61 A.P.Udayabhanu, 'Entoru Jeevitamanu Ningal Enikku Tannatu' (What a Life have You Given Me), *Matrubhumi* 19 Sept. 1967, p.4.
- 62 See his speech at a Nair meeting at Mavelikkara in which he argued that men and women who had more than two children were deserving of punishment. Reported in the *Malayala Manorama* 19 Aug. 1963, p.4; speech at Ambalappuzha reported in the *Malayala Rajyam* 3 Oct. 1964, p.1; speech at Pattanapuram, *Malayala Manorama* 30 Nov. 1961, p.4.
- 63 See the list of institutions that were providing sterilisation services other than the government hospitals in 1969 in K.Peetambaran, 1969, pp. 209-10.
- 64 C.H.Jose, 'Matrutvavum Pitrutvavum Adhunika Yugattil', (Motherhood and Fatherhood in the Modern Age) in Fr.D. Manickatan (Compiler), 1972; *Souvenir of the Kerala Regional Seminar* of the Catholic Church, Aluva, Dec. 1969.
- 65 Op.cit., n. 56. The signatories included luminaries like K.P.S.Menon, prominent Muslim leaders T.A.Abdulla and P.K.Kunhu, the Nair reformer Mannath Padmanabhan, the Congressman C.M.Stephen, the Communist T.V.Thomas, the veteran Congresswoman A.V.Kuttimalu Amma and others.
- 66 F.Buchanan, 1988, first published, 1807, p.144.
- 67 Prince Rama Varma, 1874, pp.3-4.
- 68 V.Nagam Aiya, 1909, pp.3-4.
- 69 Ibid. For the same sort of despair about the peasant, see, T.K.Krishna Menon, 'Gramodharanam' (Village Uplift), in T.K.Krishna Menon, 1948. Indeed, the voluminous writings on rural Development produced in this period frequently echo this despair on the inertia of the peasant's desires.
- 70 Spencer Hatch, 1932, p. 99.
- 71 Ibid., p.11.

- 72 Ibid., p. 125.
- 73 Ibid., pp. 177-78.
- 74 O.Chandu Menon, op.cit., n.18; Cheruvalathu Chathu Nair, 1988, first published, 1890; see also, Potheri Kunhambu (1897); Komattil Padoo Menon (1892) and Joseph Mooliyil (18) in P.V.George Irumbayam, 1985.
- 75 K. Ramankutty Menon, in G.Irumbayam, 1985.
- 76 ‘Vyavasayatohilalikal Kutumbasootranattinte Munnaniyil’ (Industrial Workers in the Forefront of Family Planning), *Matrubhumi* 27 Jun, 1970, p.2. The ethnographers F.Osella and C. Osella, in a recent study on the Izhavas in Malayalee society (F.Osella and C.Osella, 2000), touch upon precisely this process, all the more highlighted in the case of this community because of the strong early avocation of thrift and industriousness as defining the Izhava identity in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Izhava reformism. They trace the shifts by which the Izhava identity starts to strain against “...the ethics of thrift, hard work and modest life which are at odds with mobility ambitions demanding high spending on children, disdain for labour and the pursuit of pleasure” (p.248). They point out that these latter goals are already entrenched in local society, and that “this comes about because Izhavas do not live in a social vacuum; they watch and are watched by the Nayars and Christians” (ibid.). The assumption of the role of the modern householder remains central to such upwardly mobile ambition. “...over the twentieth century, the cultural figure of the Hindu householder has become merged with the bourgeois paterfamilias and revitalised as the consuming man of substance. Such changes, wrought in both the human life-cycle and in historical linear time, have been subsumed within this century’s totalising time-narrative of ‘progress’. Members of the lower castes opted into this narrative at the turn of the century and had faith in its future, which would bring continued improvement and continuous change for the better.” (p.245)The observation they make about Izhava youth, that “in

Valiyagramam as increasingly in Kerala as a whole, the referent for the young men is the world of paid employment”, judging from the public-sphere discussions on unemployment, would have been pertinent for the Nair, Christian and the Izhava elite as well, much before. Family Planning may have appeared to be a relevant strategy to further accumulate, or simply transfer the symbolic capital already at hand to the next generation, especially under conditions in which the accumulation of economic capital was not intensifying at a remarkable pace. In fact, the quoted statement of the industrial worker points exactly at this. Hence its appeal to the steadily-bourgeoified lower middle-class is intelligible.

- 77 See, E.V.Ramakrishnan, ‘Pattalakathakalile Rashttrasankalpam’ (The Concept of the Nation in Army Stories) in E.V.Ramakrishnan, 1997, pp.41-49 in which the disillusionment in the stories of the leading authors of ‘army stories’ like Nandanar, Kovilan and Parappuram is discussed. On the Progressive Writers, see, P.K.Gopalakrishnan, 1987.
- 78 The coupling of *Vidya* and *Dhana sambadanam* (the creation of wealth) in reformist projects of social transformation is really too frequent to be cited. In 1844, the Tiruvitamkoor government issued a proclamation giving preference to the English-educated in government service (K.K.N.Kurup, cited in Dr. N.Sam, 1988). In the 20th century the coupling remained intact in the pronouncements and writings issuing from the movements for community reform. To quote just one instance, a speech made by Shree Narayana Guru to a meeting of the Pulayas, who were the lowest down in the *Jati* hierarchy, at Muttathara, near Thiruvananthapuram: “All men belong to the same caste. There is no Jati difference between them, only difference of status. It is not possible (otherwise). Some may be better off in wealth, education and hygiene...The Pulayas are at present highly deficient in wealth and education. You must strive to amass these two. Education must be urgently acquired. If that is attained then wealth and hygiene will follow...” Quoted in T.Bhaskaran, 2000,

pp.222-23. K.Saradmoni points out that the “..first strike by agricultural workers in Kerala was organised by Ayyankali not for economic gains, but for the right for entry to schools.” K.Saradmoni, 1980, p.149.

- 79 In 1864, a teacher in the CMS School at Kottayam reported thus about the responses to an essay-question on the benefits of modern education he had set his boys: “I was much amused to find that with scarcely an exception of these little lads, for most of them are about ten to twelve years of age, described the chief advantage of education as arising from the fact that it was the key to honour, wealth and power. They saw that they are thus enabled to converse with Europeans without shame and embarrassment, they can obtain good situations, which are often the roads to wealth, always to honour amongst their countrymen”. He then regretted that the moral value of education as a force in shaping virtuous character was rarely being perceived. See, ‘Report of Annual Distribution of Prizes’, *Madras Church Mission Records* Vol.XXXI No.10, p.345. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such linking of education to wealth and power were to become too frequent to be cited.
- 80 In the late 19<sup>th</sup>, and more frequently into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, one comes across many works on character-building among children, that purport to supplement and fortify school-education, saying that even the materialistic aims of the latter will remain unfulfilled without the former. See, for example, Rev.George Mathen, 1867; Dewan Bahadur A.Govinda Pillai, 1915; C.P.Parameshwaran Pillai, 1915; Mathew M.Kuzhiveli, 1943.
- 81 *Report of the Unemployment Enquiry Committee*, Govt. of Travancore, 1928, p.28.
- 82 E.V.Krishna Pillai, 1978, p.187.
- 83 Quoted in Dilip Menon, 1994, p. 144.
- 84 B.Kalyani Amma in K.Gomati Amma (ed.), 1968, p.66.
- 85 *Report of the Travancore Educational Reforms Committee*, Govt. of Travancore, 1933, pp.256-66.

- 86 Kuttippuzha Krishna Pillai, 'Streekalude Paratantryam' (The Unfreedom of Women), 1941; 'Russiayile Streekal' (Women of Russia), 1944, in Kuttippuzha Krishna Pillai, 1990, pp.11-14; pp.54-56.
- 87 See, J.Devika, 1999, Chapter 3.
- 88 See, for instances, the appearance of the desirability of the working mother as a common topic of discussion in Malayalam newspapers and periodicals of these years. To cite a few articles: Mrinalini, 'Kalyanam Kaliyalla' (Marriage is no Play), *Matrubhumi Weekly* 41 (10), 26 May 1963; Sati Ramachandran, 'Udyogastakalaya Matakalam Kunhungalum' (Working Mothers and Children), *Kerala Kaumudi* 3 Mar. 1968, p.4; V.Subhadra Devi, 'Bharyayaya Udyogastaye Patti' (About the Woman Officer who is also a Wife), *Kerala Kaumudi* 10 Mar. 1968, p.6; Soma Krishna Pillai, 'Veetammamar Vazhittiruvil' (Housewives at Cross-Roads), *Malayala Manorama* 10 Oct. 1969, p.6; Subaida Beevi, 'Udyogastayaya Matavu Kutumbattinu Shapamo?' (The Employed Mother: A Curse to the Family?), *Malayala Manorama* 23 Oct.1969, p.7; Annamma Jacob, 'Udyogastayaya Kutumbini' (The Employed Housewife), *Malayala Manorama* 22 Oct. 1971, p.6; Usha Sukumaran, 'Udyogastayaya Bharya: Oru Vishadeekaranam' (The Employed Wife: An Explanation), *Malayala Manorama* 19 Nov. 1971, p.3.
- 89 Editorial, 'Tozhilillatta Engineermar' (Unemployed Engineers), *Matrubhumi* 5 Mar. 1970, p.4. See also,editorial, 'Tozhilillaima Prasnam' (The Problem of Unemployment), *Kerala Kaumudi* 20 Jul. 1971, p.2; editorial, 'Padhichavarude Tozhilillaima' (Unemployment of the Educated), *Kerala Kaumudi* 4 Oct. 1969, p.2.
- 90 See the opinions expressed in the discussion meant for young people on the worries plaguing the youth, *Matrubhumi* 31 Mar. 1968, p.4; also the report on an interview conducted at Kollam for the recruitment of five policewomen, for which 2000 applications had been received. The *Matrubhumi*'s reporter who

spoke to some of the 385 candidates for the interview wrote that they said that it was sheer material need and lack of other income-generating options that had prompted them to choose work in the police force. *Matrubhumi* 21 Feb. 1968, p.4.

- 91 *Arunodayam* Vol 5(7-8), Nov-Dec. 1941, p.168. Cited in R.Jeffrey, 1992, p.197.
- 92 ‘Talamurakalayi Avakasahngal Nishedhikkappettavar’ (Those Denied Rights Since Generations), *Kerala Kaumudi* 9 Nov.1968, p.5.
- 93 Pavanan (pseudonym), 1967.
- 94 Several accounts of these struggles are now available: see, P.Heller, 1999; J.Tharamangalam, 1981; K.P. Kannan, 1988; T.M.Thomas Issac, 1982.
- 95 Well discussed in A. Lindberg, 2001.
- 96 Ibid. Also see the report on the desires, aspirations and ideals of lower-class families supported by unskilled labour, and in which the father/householder- mother/homemaker axis seems to have crystallised, at least in the realm of ideals, *Family Growth: Desires, Ideals and Achievement*, Department of Statistics, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1965, pp.43-44. The extent to which the nuclear family consisting of the breadwinning husband and his housewifely spouse, and their children was gaining ground as 'natural' is evident in the popular columns on the business of living everyday life in newspapers and magazines, like for example, K.P. Kesava Menon's column in the *Matrubhumi*. See, K.P. Kesava Menon, 1966. Also, the need for expert intervention into and management of child-rearing, seemingly justified by the relative isolation of modern families from wider familial or community networks, and their economic difficulties, began to be more vehemently stressed. See, Dr. Krishnan Thampi, 1967; K.V.Sankarankutty Warrior, 1966. By the late 1980s, however, the problems of the 'child- centred family' began to appear in 'home-life' literature in Malayalam. See, Dr. Kurias Kumbalakkuzhi, 1987.



- 97 Parvati Ayappan, 'Jeevitaniavaravum Swabhavaroopekaranavum' (Standard of Life and the Formation of Character), *Kerala Kaumudi* 22 Jul. 1971, p.5.
- 98 Editorial, 'Janasankhya Nyantranam' (Control of Numbers), *Kerala Kaumudi* 5 Aug. 1967, p.2.
- 99 Leela Gulati's work on the survival strategies of poor women does indicate that poor families might have taken to it as a survival strategy, either short-term or long-term, or both. L.Gulati, 1981, p.49; 74-75. Also see, Peter van der Werff on survival under circumstances of 'modern poverty' among agrarian unskilled poor in a foothill area of Kerala. P. van der Werff, 1992, p.125.
- 100 P.K..Michael Tharakan, 2002, p.359. Several studies seem to indicate that while extra-economic forms of control over the labouring classes did not entirely cease with the land reforms, the traditional obligations supporting life-sustenance of the labouring classes were progressively ignored by the better off. See, Loes Schenk- Sandbergen, 1988; H. Schenk, 1986; O. Nieuwenhuys, 1991. Nor did these latter die out everywhere at the same pace; they either persisted in vestigial fashion, or some times took modified form. P.Heller has argued that the passage of the Kerala Agricultural Workers Act was really a granting of "legal sanction to customary right", since it gave legal status of 'permanent worker', with a guaranteed right to employment, to any labourer who had worked in a particular landowner's property, by custom, contract, or otherwise (pp. 138-39). He also mentions that for the successful cultivators, this was little more than the extension of the older patron-client relation (p.143). It is the gradual attrition of permanency, seemingly "traded for wage increases", that he actually records. P.Heller, 1999, p.145.
- 101 Marion den Uyl, 1995; B.M.Morrison, 1997, pp.61-87; S. Ramanathaiyer, S. Macpherson, 2000.
102. See, for instance, Kozhikkodan, 1966, pp. 40-51.
- 103 Pavanan, 1967, pp. 59-60.
- 104 Pennammabhai, Chambakkulam, 'Nammude Sambattika

- Nilayuum Streekalum', *Vanitakusumam* 1 (9), 1928, p.318.
- 105 See, for instance, M.P.Sivadasa Menon's autobiographical essay, 'Prachinakeralattile Parasparasahaya Vyavasta' (1947), in M.P.Sivadasa Menon, 1961, pp.116-17; Takazhi Sivasankara Pillai, 1976; K.C.George, 1985. Also see, K.Saradmoni, 1980, pp.29-32.
- 106 See, for instance, Takazhi, 1976; B.Kalyani Amma, 1968; Mathew Ulakanthara, 1995, pp. 14-15; C.Kesavan, 1953. See also, K.Saradmoni, 1980, pp.186-91.
- 107 "The gifts ranged from dhoties to wrist watches, transistor radios and bicycles and consisted of utility articles such as stoves, cooking utensils, stainless steel vessels, suitcases, electric torches, petromax lamps etc. specially selected to be of use to the financially weak rural family". S.Krishnakumar, 1971,p. 40.
- 108 Parvati Ayappan, op.cit., n. 97.
- 109 Gracy Cherian, 'Akattum Purattum Modiyulla Kutumbam' (A Family Splendid Inside and Outside), *Malayala Manorama* 27 Nov. 1970, p.6.; K.E.Varghese, 1981; K.Mahadevan and M.Sumangala, 1987.
- 110 See, for instance, M.O.Joseph, 'Janananiyantrana Prasthanam' (The Birth Control Movement), *Nazrani Deepika* 22 Dec. 1933,p.8; Jose Vakayil Parambil, 'Janananiyantranam' (Birth Control), *Deepika Weekly* 5(46), 1952, pp. 17-19; 'Lokalokam' (editor's Column on World Affair), *Swajanaranjini* 1 (2), 1934, pp.33-41; , 'Sanatananiyantranam' (Birth Control), *Aryakeralam* 1 (1), 1936, pp.3-6.
- 111 See, for instance, G. Sankara Kurup, 'Samyukta Keralam' (c. 1949), 'Keralasamsthanam', in G. Sankara Kurup, 1977, pp.350-51; 370-78; Ullattil Govindankutty Nair, 'Keraleeyasamskaram', in Ullattil Govindankutty Nair, 1962, pp.85-100; A.K. Gopalan, 'Aikyakeralam'; Dr. P.J.Thomas, 'Keralasamsthanam Enthinu?' in *Sardar K.M.Panikkar Shashtipoorthy Smarakam*, 1954,pp.236-38; pp.240-44; P.Sankaran Nambiar,

‘Keralabhyudayam’ in P.Sankaran Nambiar, 1943, pp.158-65; Malloor Govinda Pillai, ‘Aikyakeralavum Keralasarvakalashalayum’ in K.Sivarama Panikkar, 1950, pp.99-106. N.Shreekantan Nair, 1947.

- 112 See, speech by Joseph Naduvattumuri at Latin Christian Mahajanasabha Annual Conference at Thiruvananthapuram, reported in the *Nazrani Deepika*, 13 May 1949, p.1; Joseph Maliakkal, ‘Catholica Conference: Oru Tiruttal’ (Catholic Conference: A Clarification), *Nazrani Deepika*, 15 Jun 1949, p.3; sections of the Travancore Muslim League also announced the renunciation of their political programme in 1949, though it was strongly opposed by others—see, for an account the biography of P.K.Kunhu, by Jamal, 1975, p.175. By 1961, this was accepted as normal. In an editorial, the *Kerala Kaumudi* discussed the implications of such renunciation, arguing that community politics was a necessary evil, which however, was tolerable only because almost all community movements had agreed to remain non-political. See, ‘Vargeeyatayam Mukhyamantrimarute Sammelanavum’ (Communal politics and the Chief Ministers’ Conference), *Kerala Kaumudi* 15 Aug. 1961, p.2.
- 113 Indeed, it was even argued that the politics of redistribution was taking too much space and in the conferences and meetings of community movements, they were urged to pay attention to the task of Nation –building and Developmental activities. Endorsing the exhortation of the Tiru-Kochi Joint Nair Conference in 1947 that community movements should focus on Developmental activities, the *Nazrani Deepika* wrote: “Community organisations have long concentrated on political affairs. Although political programmes have been abandoned now, many community movements continue to focus on political affairs. They are not seen to be displaying this interest and energy shown in political matters, in economic programmes.” Editorial, ‘Samudayasanghatanakal’ (Community Movements), *Nazrani Deepika* 14 Sept., 1949, p.2. Also see, speech by Paliath

- P.K.P.Achan at the Tiru- Kochi Nair Conference, reported in the *Nazrani Deepika* 13 Sept. 1949, p.3. Almost all speeches by Mannath Padmanabhan in the 1950s and 60s uphold this point without however, sacrificing the communal viewpoint. See his speeches in Kidangoor A. Gopalakrishna Pillai (ed.), 1977. The suggestion that community organisations must relinquish struggles over redistribution and turn to wealth-creating Developmental work appeared much earlier: see, for instance, editorials, ‘Samvidhanalakshyam’ (The Aims of Planning), *Nazrani Deepika* 16 Jun 1941, p.2; ‘Samudayasanghatanakal’, *Nazrani Deepika* 17 Jun 1941, p.2.
- 114 See, speech by Manamdhan Nair at the Tiru- Kochi Joint Nair Conference, reported in the *Nazrani Deepika* 13 Sept. 1949, p.3; speech by Seeti Sahib, ‘Vargeeyatayum Desheeyatvavum’ (1958) in Abu Siddique, 1966, pp.208-15; resolution by Joseph Chazhikkad at the All- Kerala Catholic Conference, reported in the *Nazrani Deepika*, 5 May 1949; speech by Joseph Naduvattumuri, op.cit., n.112; ‘Vargeeyatayum Mukhyamantrimarute Sammelanavum’, op.cit., n.112; speech by Dr. P.K. Sukumaran at the SNDP Sabha Conference, reported in *Kerala Kaumudi* 15 Nov. 1967, p.2; editorial., ‘SNDP Yogam’, *Kerala Kaumudi* 16 Dec. 1970, p.2.
- 115 See, for one instance among many, the article by the prominent Nair reformer and educationist, R.Easwara Pillai, ‘Chila Samudaya Chintakal—Nammude Samudayashakti’ (Some Thoughts on Community—The Strength of Our Community), *Service* 5 (1), 1926. Also see, P.K.Narayana Pillai, op.cit., n.29; K.K.Panikar, ‘Sanghatana Venamo?’ (Do We Need Organisation?), *Vivekodayam* 20 (5) 1930, pp. 177-79.
- 116 Editorial, ‘Keralathile Kutumbasootranam’ (Family Planning in Keralam), *Malayalarajyam* 21 Dec. 1963, p.2.
- 117 Ibid.
- 118 Editorial, ‘Kutumbasamvidhanam’ (Family Planning), *Malayalarajyam* 13 Dec. 1958, p.2; Editorial, ‘Lokarogyavum Janasankhyaprasnavum’ (People’s Health and the Population Problem), *Malayalarajyam* 9 Apr. 1963, p.2.

- 119 See, speech by T.A.Kunhumaideen Kunhu, in the general debate in the Tiru- Kochi Legislative Assembly, on a resolution tabled by A.P.Udayabhanu favouring the establishment of Family Planning Work by the government, 3 Apr. 1951, *Proceedings of the Travancore-Cochin Legislative Assembly*, Third Session Vol III Nos. I&II, pp.1605-6. In 1951, P.C.Adichan, representing the depressed classes in the Tiru- Kochi Legislative Assembly, pointed out that encouraging people of the Scheduled castes and tribes to take to birth control would negatively affect their political interests, as reservations were promised only for a decade. Reported in the *Nazrani Deepika*, Sept. 29, 1951, p.3.
- 120 See, for instance, L.C. Isaac, 'Sanatananiyantranam' (Family Planning), *Nazrani Deepika* 15 Jan. 1932, p.6; 'Lokalokam' (Editor's Column), *Swajanananjini* 1 (6-7), 1934; report of protest meeting organised at Madras by Catholics, *Nazrani Deepika* 21 Jan. 1936; L.J. Chittoor, 'Congress Padhatiyile Kutumbasamvidhanam' (Family Planning in the Congress Plan), *Nazrani Deepika* 13 Nov. 1951, p.5; E.M.S. Nambutiripad, 'Planningum Vyavasayavatkaranam' (Planning and Industrialisation), *Janayugam Weekly*, Annual Number, 1963; Dr. P.K.Sukumaran, 'Santananiyantranamo Sambattikasootranamo?' (Birth Control or Economic Planning?), *Janayugam Weekly*, Onam Special Issue, 1963; E. Gopalakrishna Menon, Speech in Tiru-Kochi Legislative Assembly during discussion on resolution seeking government support for family Planning tabled by A.P.Udayabhanu, Third Session, 3 Apr. 1951, op.cit., n. 119; Puthezahttu Raman Menon, 'Janapperuppavum Bhakshanakshamavum' (Population Increase and the Food Crisis) in Menon, 1970, pp.72-92; editorial, 'Janapperuppathinte Karyam' (About Population Increase), *Desabhimani* 18 Jun. 1953, p.2. All these arguments were brought together in V.Jagannatha Panicker's much-read *Crucifixion of the Unborn* (1974). In the 1930s, several Indian scholars were highly critical of neo-Malthusianism in a strident and vocal way, for example, B.K.Sarkar, 1936, Radhakamal Mukherjee, 1946 etc.
- 121 Innumerable instances may be cited here. To mention just a few: editorial, 'Neeti Palikkanam' (Justice Must Be Meted Out),

*Nazrani Deepika* 27 Sept. 1949, p.2; Editorial, 'Latin Kristyanikalum Mantrisabhayaum' (Latin Christians and the Ministry) *Nazrani Deepika* 29 Jun. 1949; Speech by Mannath Padmanabhan and R.Sankar at the Pattanamtitta Hindu Conference, reported in *Nazrani Deepika* 15 Feb. 1950, p.6; report of resolution of the SNDP director board, *Malayala Manorama* 29 Sept. 1961, p.4; speech by Mannath Padmanabhan at Chertala, reported in the *Matrubhumi* 19 Feb. 1964, p.3. Interestingly, in this speech he argued that the fight for a fair share of resources and openings for Nairs should not interfere with their commitment to Family Planning.

- 122 Speech by Mannath Padmanabhan at meeting organised by Hindu organisations, reported in the *Nazrani Deepika* 27 Sept. 1949, p.1; speech by Mannath at Kumarakom, *Nazrani Deepika* 7 Nov. 1949, p.2.
- 123 In 1950, Kunhuraman, minister in the Tiru-Kochi Cabinet denied in the Legislative Assembly that the government had plans to support FP saying that the government did not believe population to be excessive (*Nazrani Deepika* 12 Nov. 1950, p. 3); in 1951 too, no effort from the government's side was admitted to in response to similar questions ( Answer to Question No. 632, 17 Mar. 1951, Third Session, op.cit. , n.119, pp. 584-85; report in *Nazrani Deepika* (7 Nov, 1952, p,2) on question raised in Tiru-Kochi Legislative Assembly whether an FP clinic had been opened in Tiruvitamkoor to which the health minister V. Madhavan replied that the government had no plans of supporting Family Planning; In 1953, in reply to the suggestion that FP work should be added on to the Kuttanad Social Development Project, the Tiru- Kochi Chief Minister A.J.John clarified that it would not be so (*Nazrani Deepika* 7 Sept. 1953, p.1); even when governmental initiative was conceded, it was done with considerable qualification. See for instance, report of question by V.Shreedharan in the Tiru- Kochi legislative assembly, *Nazrani Deepika* 19 Oct. 1955, p.3; report of question to minister P.K.Kunhu to which he replied that the Family Planning

- Programme was the Centre's interest, and not that of his party (*Nazrani Deepika* 21 Jul. 1954, p.5). Even in 1970, the questions whether Family Planning would not upset the balance between communities was being raised in the Kerala state legislature. See, report, *Kerala Kaumudi* 30 Jan. 1970, p.5.
- 124 See answer to starred question No. 846 by R. Prakasham to health minister A.R..Menon, 30 Mar. 1959, *Proceedings of the Kerala Legislative Assembly* Vol. VII, Nos. 25-36, pp.2396-97; statement by A.R.Menon at Press Conference at Thiruvananthapuram, report, *Nazrani Deepika* 5 Jul. 1957, p.3; editorial, 'Aarkku Votu Cheyyanam? (Vote For Whom?)', *Matrubhumi* 14 Feb. 1967, p.3; Dr. C.O. Karunakaran, 'Kutumbasamvidhanam Avidayum Ividayum' (Family Planning, There and Here), *Kerala Kaumudi* 18 May 1968, p.2.
- 125 P.M.Mammen, 1981.
- 126 Interview with Fr. Vadakkan, *Kerala Kaumudi* 11 Aug. 1968, pp.1-8.
- 127 See, for instance, K.Sukumaran, speech, reported in the *Kerala Kaumudi* 17 May 1969, p.4. Also see, articles in the *Souvenir of the Kerala Regional Seminar* of the Catholic Church, Dec. 1969. For discussion of the merits of increasing numbers for particular communities in the 1930s, see op. cit., n.4.
- 128 See, letter by Dr. P.Muhammed Ali, 'Muslin Leaginte Utkandha' (The Anxiety of the Muslim League), *Matrubhumi* 13 Oct. 1967, p.4.
- 129 Mentioned by R.Jeffrey, 1993, pp.195-97.
- 130 Reported in the *Nazrani Deepika* 20 Jun. 1957, p.1.
- 131 See, EMS Nambutiripad, 'Keralattile Samudayasanghatanakal: Avayodu Perumarendatengane?' (Community Movements in Kerala: How to Approach Them?), *Matrubhumi* 25 Jul. 1936 (reprinted in P. Govinda Pillai (ed.), 1999, pp.86-94; 'Nambutiriye Manushyanakkan' (To make the Nambutiri into Man), 1945; Kambissery Karunakaran, 'Communisavum Communalisavum'

- (Communism and Communalism), *Prabhatam* 1 (8), Jan. 1945, p.1; p.12.
- 132 Editorial, 'Kutumbasamvidhanam', *Nazrani Deepika* 15 Apr. 1958, p.2.
- 133 See, exchange in the Kerala Legislative Assembly during question hour, starred question by P.C.Raghavan Nair to Home Minister P.T.Chacko about political interference by Catholic religious heads, 22 Jul. 1960, Second Session, *Proceedings of the Kerala Legislative Assembly* Vol. IX, pp.2447-49.
- 134 Reported in the *Nazrani Deepika* 13 Oct. 1949, p.3.
- 135 Reported in the *Nazrani Deepika* 24 Nov. 1949, p.1.
- 136 Taryattu Kunhittomman, Speech in discussion on resolution demanding government support for Family Planning in Tiru-Kochi Legislature, 3 Apr. 1951, op.cit n. 119,p.1598.
- 137 See his editorials on birth control and the population problem in Kesari A. Balakrishna Pillai, 1989, all written in the 1930s.
- 138 Kesari A.Balakrishna Pillai, 'Malayaliyude Bhavi'(The Future of the Malayalee) in P.Krishnan Nair (ed.), 1934, pp. 24-25.
- 139 EMS., 'Keralattile Sambattika Prasnanal' (The Economic Problems of Keralam), 1956, p.7.
- 140 *Ibid.*, p.53.
- 141 In fact, EMS' radio broadcast supportive of Family Planning in 1967, touched precisely this vein. Reported in *Matrubhumi* 21 Sept. 1967, p.3.
- 142 See, for instance, the excellent article by M.O.Joseph who counters the charge that the Catholics resisted birth control because it would lower their numbers, and hence their public clout. He points out that people who are ambitious are willing to sacrifice short-term advantages for long- term gains. The advocacy of birth control undercuts the possibility of people making such sacrifices for the sake of the family, and instead, directs people



outside the family. Then he identifies the individual family to be the very root of the community, and argues that if people are directed away from the family, the community will automatically suffer. He claims that this is what underlies the Catholic distrust of birth control, and not dogma or fear of numerical decline. 'Janananiyantrana Prasthanam', *Nazrani Deepika* 22 Dec. 1933, p.8.

- 143 See, E.M.S, 1981 (1948), 'Aikyakeralattinu Vendiyulla Samaram Putiya Ghattattil' (The Struggle for United Keralam in a New Phase), 2000 (1952), pp.248-55; Kuttippuzha Krishna Pillai, 'Parasuramachitram' (The Picture of Parasurama) in Kuttippuzha Krishna Pillai, 1990 (1947), pp.85-88.
- 144 E.M.S, 'Onnekalkoti Malayalikal' (A Crore and a Quarter Malayalees), reprinted in P.Govinda Pillai (ed.), 1999 (1946), pp.288-347.
- 145 Ibid., p.344.
146. Patrick Heller, 1999.
- 147 Vasectomies peaked in Keralam in 1976-77 with 120800 operations being performed, but fell drastically in the post-emergency period. In 1984-85, they were a mere 12000. See, R.Jeffrey, 1993, p.198.
- 148 I am thankful to Dr. P.K. Michael Tharakan for pointing out to me that the 'mass' programmes initiated by successive governments from the 1970s onwards in Keralam were hardly 'mass' in the sense of voicing the interests of the dispossessed majority, but rather served to cover up that lack.
- 149 Alaka M.Basu, 1986.
- 150 Nikolas Rose, 1996.

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