

**A Critical Analysis of the Efficacy of MDG 2:
Case Study of the Dalits of Kerala, India**

Michael Manjalloor

A thesis submitted to
Auckland University of Technology
in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

2015

Institute of Public Policy
Auckland University of Technology
Auckland, New Zealand

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my late mother Mary Lonappan and my father Lonappan Mathai who ignited the desire to learn more.

Table of Contents

<i>Dedication</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>Table of Contents</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>List of Figures and Tables</i>	<i>viii</i>
<i>Abbreviations</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Attestation of Authorship</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>xii</i>
<i>Abstract</i>	<i>xiv</i>
PART I	1
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Rationale and Significance of the Study	3
1.3 Research Questions	8
1.4 Objectives of this Study	9
1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study	10
1.6 Structure of the Thesis	11
CHAPTER TWO	14
UNDERSTANDING THE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK NESTED IN CRITICAL THEORY	14
2.1 Introduction	14
2.2 Method	14
2.2.1 Purpose of using critical ethnography.....	17
2.3 Critical Theory	19
2.3.1 Critical theory in the Freirean and Marxian context.....	21
2.3.2 Why not other theories?.....	23
2.3.3 Relevance of critical theory in the Kerala context.....	23
2.4 Empirical Framework of this Study	24
2.4.1 The participants.....	27
2.4.2 Rationale for the selection of the colony.....	28
2.5 Data Collection	29
2.5.1 My ontological position as a researcher.....	29
2.5.2 Introducing the research programme.....	30

2.5.3 Face to face interviews.....	31
2.5.4 Observation	33
2.6 Relevance of this Data in this Research	34
2.6.1 Data analysis.....	34
2.7 Ethical Considerations	35
2.8 Conclusion	35
CHAPTER THREE.....	36
UNDERSTANDING THE THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL CONTEXT OF THE MDG	36
3.1 Introduction.....	36
3.2 An Overview of the MDG Programme.....	36
3.3 Debate on the MDG Programme.....	38
3.3.1 Economic objectives of the MDG programme.....	38
3.3.2 MDGs: A capitalist ploy for trade?.....	41
3.3.3 Measurability of goals.....	45
3.3.4 MDG achievements: A review.	47
3.4 Poverty in the Context of the MDGs	49
3.4.1 Definition of poverty.....	50
3.5 Measuring Poverty	54
3.6 Poverty in India.....	57
3.6.1 Who are the poor in India?.....	61
3.6.2. The Dalits of India.	62
3.7 Strategies to Alleviate and Eradicate Poverty	67
3.7.1 International context.....	67
3.7.2 Poverty alleviation in India.	68
3.8 Conclusion	70
CHAPTER FOUR.....	72
A BRIEF SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SKETCH OF KERALA	72
4.1 Introduction	72
4.2 Kerala: General Background	72
4.2.1 Demographic background.	75
4.2.2 Caste and community division of people.....	76
4.3 Socio-Political Context.....	81
4.3.1 Social movements.....	83
4.3.2 Poverty and its social context.	89
4.4 Economic Context	97
4.4.1 Pre-independence economy.....	98
4.4.2 Post-independence economic stagnation.	99
4.4.3 Remittance economy.....	101
4.5 Kerala in the National Indian Context.....	105
4.5.1 MDG achievements in Karala.....	107

4.6	Conclusion	109
CHAPTER FIVE.....		111
KERALA: MDG 2 AND ITS EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES.....		111
5.1	Introduction.....	111
5.2	Objectives of MDG2 and UPE.....	111
5.2.1	MDG 2: Human Capital Theory.....	115
5.2.2	Objectives of MDG 2 (SSA) in Kerala.....	116
5.2.3	Evaluation of MDG 2 (SSA) in Kerala 2005-2015.	117
5.3	History of Schooling in Kerala	118
5.4	Impact of MDG 2 in Kerala.....	123
5.4.1	Impact on school education.	123
5.4.2	Impact on higher education.....	127
5.5	The Education System: A Freirean Critique.....	130
5.5.1	The banking system.	130
5.5.2	Oppression.....	132
5.5.3	Conscientisation.	135
5.6	Conclusion	136
PART TWO.....		139
DATA ANALYSIS		139
Overview.....		139
CHAPTER SIX.....		142
SOCIAL EXCLUSION		142
6.1	Introduction.....	142
6.2	Caste Bigotry.....	143
6.3	Untouchability, Unapproachability and Unseeability.....	146
6.4	Purity, Pollution and <i>Kulathozhil</i>	149
6.5	Culture.....	152
6.6	Identity.....	156
6.7	Critical Consciousness	160
6.8	Education.....	164
6.9	Discarded Lives	175
6.10	Social Mobility	179
6.11	Conclusion	181
CHAPTER SEVEN.....		183
ANALYSING OPPRESSION AS A CAUSE OF POVERTY		183
7.1	Introduction.....	183

7.2	Slavery.....	184
7.3	Bonded Labour.....	187
7.4	Work and Debt: Institutionalised Exploitation.....	190
7.5	Tattered Employment Safety Nets	192
7.6	Dalit Women: The Double Oppressed	194
7.6.1	Alcoholism and domestic violence.	198
7.7	Dalit Movements and Political Forces	202
7.8	The Dalits’ Life under Imperialism.....	205
7.9	Conclusion	208
CHAPTER EIGHT		210
POVERTY DUE TO DENIAL OF OPPORTUNITIES, FREEDOM AND RIGHTS		210
8.1	Introduction.....	210
8.2	Right of Landed Property.....	211
8.2.1	Land reform.....	212
8.2.2	No ‘land to the tillers of soil’.	216
8.2.3	“We are uprooted; not transplanted”.....	220
8.3	The Inter-Generational Ordeal for a Shelter to Live In	221
8.4	Declining Opportunities.....	223
8.5	Denial of Civil Rights.....	225
8.6	The Public Policy Conundrum.....	229
8.7	‘One Trillion Lapses; the Sick are Left to Nature’	236
8.8	Starving: then Oppression, now Exploitation.....	239
8.9	Missionaries: A Ray of Hope	246
8.9.1	Conversion for emancipation.	248
8.10	Conclusion	251
CHAPTER NINE.....		253
CONCLUSION		253
9.1	Major Findings	255
9.2	Contribution to Knowledge	257
9.3	Limitations of the Research	258
9.4	Recommendations and Areas for Future Research	258
References.....		261
Glossary		289
Appendices		290
Appendix A: Ethics Application approval letter from the AUTEK		290

Appendix B: Goals and Targets of the MDG Programme	292
Appendix C: MPI Poverty Estimation of the States of India.....	294
Appendix D 1: Map of Erstwhile Malabar region of Kerala	294
Appendix D 2: Map of Erstwhile Kochi state.....	295
Appendix D 3: Map of Erstwhile Travancore state	296
Appendix E: High Volume of Male Keralans Going Overseas to Work	297
Appendix F: A Comparison of PQLI of Kerala with Other Less Developed States of India	298
Appendix G: Comparison of Dropout Rates between Kerala and Other States of India	299

List of Figures and Tables

<i>Figure 2.1. Philosophical perspectives of qualitative research.</i>	15
<i>Figure 2.2. Map of Kerala, (red mark shows the location of the study).</i>	26
<i>Figure 3.1. MPI indicators of poverty.</i>	56
<i>Table 3.1</i>	59
<i>Incidence of Poverty using Different Criteria</i>	59
<i>Figure 3.2. Cartoon showing the ambiguity of poverty line.</i>	60
<i>Figure 3.3. Chart showing the variance in different agencies' estimation of poverty.</i>	61
<i>Figure 4.1. Map of Kerala indicating erstwhile Malabar Kochi and Travancore.</i>	74
<i>Table 4.1</i>	76
<i>Kerala General Information</i>	76
<i>Table 4.2</i>	80
<i>List of the Main Dalit Jatis/Castes and their Population in Kerala.</i>	80
<i>Table 4.3</i>	96
<i>Caste and Community Profile of People below the Poverty Line in India.</i>	96
<i>Table 4.4</i>	109
<i>Distinctive Position of Kerala in MDG Indicators</i>	109
<i>Table 5.1</i>	124
<i>School Dropout Rates in 1997-98 (%)</i>	124
<i>Table 5.2</i>	125
<i>Level of Academic Achievements in Kerala</i>	125
<i>Figure 5.1. Corporal punishment in Kerala.</i>	134
<i>Figure 6.1. Rajappan's kitchen.</i>	155
<i>Figure 6.2. Socio-religious differentials in higher secondary education, Kerala 1996-2006.</i>	168
<i>Figure 6.3. Changing phases of Dalits' social exclusion.</i>	177

Abbreviations

APL	Above Poverty Line
ASER	Annual Status of Education Report
BPL	Below Poverty Line
CDS	Centre for Development Studies
CMS	Church Missionary Society
DC	Developed Country
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
GNI	Global Hunger Index
HDI	Human Development Index
HPI	Human Poverty Index
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IHDS	Indian Human Development Survey
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
KMS	Kerala Migrant Survey
LDC	Least Developed Country
LMS	London Missionary Society
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
NCAER	National Council of Applied Economic Research
NRR	Net Reproduction Rate

NSDP	Net State Domestic Product
NSS	Nair Service Society
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPHI	Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PQLI	Physical Quality of Life Index
Rs	Rupees (Indian currency)
SC	Scheduled Caste
SJPS	Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sanghom
SNDP	Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Sanghom
SSA	Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (Universal education mission)
ST	Scheduled Tribe
UMIC	Upper Middle-income Country
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Economic Social and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
US	United States
WHO	World Health Organisation

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Michael Manjalloor

November 2015

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors, Associate Professor Dr Nesta Devine and Associate Professor Dr Love Chile. Repeatedly revisiting my work, I can imagine how much tolerance you must have needed! Thank you so much for your patience and guidance. Between 2010 and 2012, Dr Love was my primary supervisor and since then Dr Nesta has been my primary supervisor and has looked after me and helped me to overcome the hurdles of D9 and Ethics Committee approval. Thanks a lot for your encouragement, commitment to understanding my work, and suggestions. You have helped me a lot to streamline my thoughts and ideas, without which this would not be a PhD thesis. I wish to express my heart-filled gratitude to both of my supervisors for their support.

I would like to thank the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEK). The ethical application for this project was approved on 16th May 2013 (AUTEK reference number 13/68). I would like to express my gratitude to the Postgraduate Centre of the University for facilitating my access to necessary seminars and workshops. I would like to thank Dr David Parker for his guidance to improve my writing skills. I also would like to thank Dr Andrew Gibbons and Dr Antje Deckert for their valuable suggestions.

I would like to thank IHC New Zealand, my employer and my manager Naga Vindamuri for his constant support to complete my work. I would like to thank Dr Mridula Venugopal, HOD, Sociology Department, M.A College Kothamalam for being the local guardian for the empirical work. I would like to thank Jo Adams for proof reading and editing this thesis.

I would like to thank all the participants in the Valayam colony for their co-operation, time, and sincerity when discussing sensitive areas of their life. I would like to thank the Centre for Development Studies (CDS), Trivandrum, for permitting access to their resource and library material, and thanks to their researchers who provided me with

valuable information. I would like to thank the staff of the Centre for Socio-economic and Environmental Studies (CSES) Kochi for their valuable input. I wish to thank Blesson T Sam, Akhil M Joy and Mohana Chandran Nair for assisting me in coordinating the empirical work.

Finally, I would like to thank my daughters Misha and Amy and my wife Jisha for their sacrifices during the course of my research. I am grateful to my wonderful family especially my cousin Fr. Simon for his constant encouragement.

Abstract

This study sought to understand whether the United Nation's (UN) Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2, with its main target of 100 per cent school enrolment and primary school level completion, could act as a major instrument of poverty eradication, using the case study of the Kerala state of India. The MDG programme focuses on the measurable objective realities of poverty; ignoring the cause and context of poverty. Correspondingly, MDG 2 is aimed at human capital formation. This thesis challenges the underlying assumptions of MDG 2. I argue that MDG 2, as currently conceptualised in terms of conventional primary schooling and universal access, without pedagogical reform, is unlikely to achieve its current promised goals.

This study used extensive interactive material based on critical ethnographic methods to explore the lived experience of the Dalits of Kerala, which constitutes the case study for this thesis. Kerala has already achieved the targets of MDG 2; it has enjoyed universal primary education for over a hundred years, and yet remains a poor state. As the poorest community in Kerala, the Dalits highlight the contradiction inherent in MDG 2 and poverty eradication. Therefore, this research interrogates the efficacy of MDG 2 by examining the conditions of the Dalits of Kerala, an educated population in terms of MDG 2, who, notwithstanding, remain enmeshed in poverty.

Inherent in MDG 2 is a theory that changing indicators, in this case universal primary education, will eradicate poverty. However, eradicating poverty is much more complex than changing indicators. Poverty is associated with a complex web of factors such as the level of oppression, social exclusion and lack of opportunities experienced by the subaltern population. Critical theory, which provides the framework for this thesis, argues that the role of education is emancipatory, which implies transforming social institutions and emancipation of the oppressed. These goals cannot be achieved by the MDG 2 objective of human capital formation through education.

Although this research focused on one case study in one country, nonetheless, it provides a critical perspective, which may help better understanding of the limitations of MDG 2 as an instrument of poverty eradication.

Key words: MDG 2, Dalits, Kerala, UN poverty eradication programme, education and poverty eradication, critical theory

PART I

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This thesis is a critical inquiry into the efficacy of United Nation's (UN) Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2. Inherent in MDG 2 is a theory that changing indicators, in this case universal primary education, will eradicate poverty. However, a detailed analysis of the nature and causes of poverty of Kerala reveals that, poverty is not a stand-alone phenomenon (as UN documents suggest) and eradicating poverty is much more complex than changing indicators, because poverty is associated with a complex web of factors such as the level of oppression, social exclusion and lack of opportunities experienced by the subaltern population.

To demonstrate the point, I undertook a case study among the *Dalits* of Kerala who are enmeshed in poverty. Kerala is a small state in India representing just over one per cent of India's land, yet it has a larger population than many of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries such as Canada, Australia, Denmark, New Zealand and Sweden. Kerala is not just one state in India; it has its own language, culture and other unique diverse features distinct from India. Kerala is a state that has showed the world how to achieve human development despite a very low per capita income and low Gross Domestic Product (GDP). That is, with a GDP similar to Papua New Guinea, the state has met the needs of the equivalent of Canada's population. Although the state is ahead of all other states of India in primary education and other social indicators, it

illustrates the fallacy of MGD 2 that universal primary education will eradicate poverty (Alkire & Seth, 2013; UN Millennium Project, 2005).

That the Dalits of Kerala have achieved universal primary education but yet are the largest extremely poor community is evidence that poverty in Kerala is parallel to the representation of caste hierarchy (Planning Commission of India, 2005). Slavery may be a thing of the past, but those former slaves (Dalits), still stagger under the dead weight of economic and social oppression, denial of opportunities and exclusion (Hjejle, 1967; Mohan, 2006; A. K. K. R. Nair, 1986; Saradamoni, 1973). Yet,

the state is much ahead of the rest of the states in India by at least about 25 years. The state had also achieved all Millennium Development Goals (referred to here as MDGs, or the MDG programme) at least a decade earlier than it was declared. (S. I. Rajan & James, 2007, p. 1)

Hence, on the one hand, this case study of the state questioned the relevance of the MDG target of \$1.25 a day as a means of rising above poverty; and on the other, it examined the efficacy of MDG 2 to address the caste-based discrimination, exclusion and oppression causing poverty.

In this context, I want to investigate whether the MDG 2, with its main target of 100 per cent school enrolment and primary completion, would eventually eradicate poverty. Critical theory, which provides the framework for this thesis, argues that the role of education is emancipatory which implies transforming social institutions and emancipation of the oppressed. Moreover, as a philosophical basis of this thesis, I assume that poverty can be eradicated by human emancipation from oppression. Therefore, this thesis argues that, as proposed by the MDG 2, for education to become an effective instrument of poverty eradication, emancipation of the oppressed is a necessary condition.

This chapter describes the objectives, significance and rationale of this study. It provides a context to the research question addressed in the thesis, along with the structure, scope and limitations of the thesis.

1.2 Rationale and Significance of the Study

The UN, by launching the MDGs, which are part of a time-bound programme to end poverty, brings the experiences of poverty worldwide to the attention of a wider range of organisations, countries and institutions on the one hand; and presents a set of goals towards addressing those issues on the other. While appreciating the initiatives carried by the UN, as a researcher it is necessary to point out the incongruity of the programme, for intellectual discussion. I desire to do this, and also to present a framework of analysis using the case study of Kerala by focusing on MDG 2, the education component; the second of the eight goals of the MDGs.

In the year 2000, the UN launched the MDGs and stated that if the goals were achieved, more than 500 million people would be lifted out of extreme poverty and that therefore more than 300 million would no longer suffer from hunger (UN, 2014; UNDP, 2011). But in reality, after a decade there were more people living in hunger than in the year 2000 (Global hunger worsening: warns UN, 2009; IFPRI, n.d). About 1.65 billion people live in multidimensional poverty, with acute deprivation in levels of health, education and standards of living (Alkire, Roche, & Sumner, 2013, p. 47).

Critics (Easterly, 2006; S. Fukuda-Parr, 2006; Hubbard & Duggan, 2009; Michael, Charles, & Todd, 2004; Saith, 2006; Sarver, 2010; Vandemoortele, 2009) have argued that, more than helping the poor, the MDGs may help the rich countries in streamlining the market and trade policies of poor countries. They maintain that, while essentially poverty eradication in poor countries should be planned and executed by the poor countries' organisations, it is the outcome of an OECD countries and Bretton Woods organisations' initiative, so its intentions

are suspect (Devarajan, Miller, & Swanson, 2002; Spoor, 2004; Sumner, 2004; Vandemoortele, 2009, 2011).

The MDGs measure poverty based on \$1.25 per day; that is, those whose income is \$1.25 per day are living above the poverty line; thus while poverty is regarded as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, its quantification remains essentially one-dimensional in the MDGs (UN, 2014; UN Millennium Project, 2005; UNDG, 2010; UNDP, 2011). Critics (Akindola, 2009; Rice, 2006; Sen, 1999; Sumner, 2004) opine that targeting income as the key indicator of rising out of poverty is only a means of finding easy figures for comparison. Moreover, the monetary approach to poverty measurement was introduced in the works of Booth and Rowntree, who studied poverty in London and York in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries among factory workers; groups which have characteristics contradictory to the characteristics of poverty in the third world countries (as cited in Stewart, Laderchi, & Saith, 2007).

Furthermore, if raising income of the poor was the objective of the MDGs, that has not been achieved; economic inequality has widened between the years 2000 to 2013. The economic growth of a country is unlikely to reach the bottom layer of the people unless there is a concerted effort (Alkire et al., 2013; Kristoff, 2014). Oxfam estimates that the richest 80 people in the world have the same wealth as the bottom half of the world's population (Kristoff, 2014). The Oxfam report (2015) pointed out that, in 2014, the richest one per cent of people in the world owned 48 per cent of global wealth, leaving just 52 per cent to be shared between the other 99 per cent of the population on the planet. More appallingly, 80 per cent of the people share just 5.5 per cent of the global wealth and the report suggests that the top one per cent will have 99 per cent of the global wealth within two years (Oxfam, 2015).

As the concept of poverty itself is highly debated, its measurability is also a subject of academic deliberations. Some of the major studies on

these issues complementary to the MDGs' initiatives include: *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities of our Time* (Sachs, 2005); *Defining Poverty in the Developing World* (Stewart et al., 2007); and *How Are We Doing on Poverty and Hunger Reduction? A New Measure of Country Performance* (Gentilini & Webb, 2008).

There are a number of studies countering both the conceptualisation of poverty in the MDG programme and its attempts to eradicate poverty. They include: *The Aid Trap: Hard Truths about Ending Poverty* (Hubbard & Duggan, 2009); *Chronic Poverty in India: Incidence, Causes and Policies* (K. A. Mehta & Shah, 2003); The UN aims to cut poverty in half, even as the experts wonder how to measure it (Kruger, 2005); *International Norm Dynamics and the "End of Poverty": Understanding the Millennium Development Goals* (S. Fukuda-Parr & Hulme, 2011); *Acute Multidimensional Poverty: A New Index for Developing Countries* (Alkire & Santos, 2010); *Economic and Non-economic Wellbeing: A Review of Progress on the Meaning and Measurement of Poverty* (Sumner, 2004); *Poverty Reduction through Decentralisation: Paper presented at the Asia and Pacific Forum on Poverty* (Vijayanand, 2001); *How to Monitor Poverty for the Millennium Development Goals* (Deaton, 2003); and *Towards a Definition of Poverty: Poor People's Perspectives and Implications for Poverty Reduction* (Akindola, 2009).

Mendelsohn and Vicziany (1998), who conducted a pan-Indian study to understand the nature and causes of poverty in modern India, established that the discrimination between people on the basis of purity and pollution, which imposes exclusion and oppression (which are defined by caste), is the basis of poverty in India. There are many other studies that concur with this argument (eg. Deininger, Jin, & Nagarajan, 2007; Deshpande, 2000; Ganesh, 1991; Kochu, 2013; K. A. Mehta & Shah, 2003; Mohan, 2006; Parasuraman, Gomathy, Raj, & Fernandez, 2003; Patnakar & Omvedt, 1979; Sivanandan, 1976, 1979; Srivastava, 2003; Tharamangalam, 1981; Thurston & Rangachari, 2001; Varman, 2006).

Historically, Kerala has displayed the highest levels of features of caste discrimination such as slavery, ritualistic pollution, Untouchability, Unapproachability, and even Unseeability, compared to the rest of India. With modernisation these practices have transformed into more obscure forms of discrimination, exclusion, oppression and Untouchability. Along with those factors, the heavy impact of their slave past, excluded settlement in the colonies and denial of the right to own agricultural land have made the Dalits of Kerala into an exceptionally poor community in the state (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998; A. K. K. R. Nair, 1986; Sivanandan, 1976, 1979; Sreerekha, 2010, 2012; Srivastava, 2003; Tharamangalam, 1998; Thurston & Rangachari, 2001; Werff, 1982). Hence, this thesis is an investigation of the role of MDG 2 to address these characteristics of poverty.

There is no literary evidence countering the fact that the Dalit community is one of the extreme poor in Kerala and poverty in Kerala is parallel to the presence of the caste hierarchy. Hence, to address their poverty, it is essential to analyse the history and causes of it. Although the Slavery Abolition Act of 1843 decreed that slaves (Dalits) should be permitted to acquire and inherit property (Hjejle, 1967), even after the Independence of India hardly any former slaves owned their landed property (Sivanandan, 1979). As a result of that, according to the latest reports available, 25,000 Dalit families do not own either land or a home in Kerala (Kochu, 2013). Ninety nine per cent of the Dalits of Kerala are either landless or possess less than a hectare of land (Planning Commission of India, 2011). Hence, it is a kaleidoscope of multiple compound experiences that have led to the Dalits' poverty.

However, there is no goal directly targeted at such social issues pertaining to human rights, social exclusion, oppression and equal opportunities in the MDGs, which are excluded from other measurable indicators (Sumner, 2004; Vandemoortele, 2009, 2011). Building on Sen's (1999) theory of 'development is freedom', the UN (2005) posits that poverty is the denial of human rights and freedom to live a good life. Therefore, education, as an instrument for increasing opportunities

and reducing social exclusion, has the potential to reduce poverty. MDG 2 is the education component of the MDGs and its main target is 100 per cent school enrolment and primary school level completion.

Studies conducted on the issues of poverty and education have focussed narrowly on the relationship between education and non-income poverty (see e.g. Chandrasekhar, Ramachandran, & Ramkumar, 2001; Colclough & De, 2010; Dholakia & Iyengar, 2008; Dilip, 2010; K. K. George & Sunaina, 2005; Kumar & George, 1999, 2009; Misiriya, 2009; P.R. Gopinathan Nair, 1976; Narayana, 2009; Salim & Nair, 2002; A. Shah, 2010; Tilak, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2006). Primary education was a passion and present in the spirit of every community of Kerala a century ago. Therefore, they united; building schools and educating their women and children, including the girls, which was beyond the government's efforts. The poverty of the Dalits deprived them from going beyond primary education; literacy and primary education has not helped them to achieve better social mobility from the excluded Dalit milieu (Chandrasekhar et al., 2001; Dholakia & Iyengar, 2008; Dilip, 2010; Govinda & Bandyopadhyay, 2010; Jacob, 2011; Kumar & George, 2009; K. Kumar, 2001; P.R. Gopinathan Nair, 1976; Padmanabhan, 2010).

The issue as to how MDG 2 influences multidimensional poverty in Kerala has not been addressed in any of the previous research, especially with regard to the social causes of poverty such as oppression and exclusion. Hence, there is a scope for rigorous critical studies into the usefulness of MDG 2 as an instrument of poverty eradication, using Kerala as a case study.

There was more than one reason for selecting Kerala as a case study other than the history of slavery and extreme forms of caste stratification. These included:

- (a) Kerala is a role model for poor countries and regions because of its development model, despite the severity of the caste system. Before the MDGs were declared, the state had achieved almost all

the goals of the MDGs (Alkire et al., 2013; Franke & Chasin, 1995; S. I. Rajan & James, 2007).

- (b) Kerala has stood ahead of all other states of India in total literacy, long life expectancy, low infant mortality and birth rates and high access to medical care (Franke & Chasin, 1995; Harilal & Reynolds, 2006; Leni, 2006; Lieten, 2002; Parayil, 1996, 2000).
- (c) One of the starkest issues of poverty in the world is that almost 10 million children die every year before the age of five due to preventable causes. A quarter of the 10 million of those children who die are in India, with a very high child mortality rate of 58 for every 1,000 children (Black, Morris, & Bryce, 2003); whereas Kerala has a very low child mortality rate of 14 per 1,000 children; parallel to developed countries.
- (d) This region has the highest density of population in India and Kerala's achievements came when it was one of its poorest economies; it is a state with a population similar Canada's and a GDP comparable to Papua New Guinea.

Amidst all these paradoxes, Kerala has stood as a unique model in India for social development; yet the indicators show that the Dalits, whose poverty is deplorable, are still far behind the rest of the society, suggesting that the achievement of the MDGs may not reach the Dalits anywhere in India. This may be an outcome of the particular exclusionary policy. Therefore, this research has investigated to what extent is MDG 2 is an instrument of poverty eradication in Kerala?

1.3 Research Questions

“To what extent is universal primary education (MDG 2) an instrument of poverty eradication in Kerala?” is the overarching question of this research. As a schoolteacher and as a native of Kerala, when a new primary education mission was launched in the state I was sceptical about its relevance, especially without initiating structural changes in the education system. Kerala had already overtaken that phase of social development brought about by improvements in elementary education

almost a century ago. The Dalits are the extreme poor in Kerala and their poverty is intertwined with centuries of exclusion, oppression and exploitation. Among all the MDGs, MDG 2 is the goal that is suitable to address these causes of poverty, yet they are not considered as a target of poverty eradication. Hence, in addition to the overarching question, the following were the key areas of enquiry in the literature review and in the case study:

(a) Will MDG 2 end poverty?

(b) Will achieving MDG 2 have the potential to end the factors of denial of freedom, opportunities and imposed social exclusion, which are causing poverty?

(c) How far does the education goal of the MDG go in trying to ensure the socio-economic, cultural and political rights of the people, to reduce poverty?

(d) Does the experience of Kerala illustrate the efficacy of the MDG 2 targets?

(e) To what extent do the MDGs consider the local context (for example, schooling history and social development of Kerala) for poverty eradication?

(f) What is the experience of poverty among the most marginalised Dalits of Kerala?

1.4 Objectives of this Study

The main objective of this study was to analyse the impact of MDG 2 for poverty eradication in Kerala. The focus of this research was to explore the suitability of this UN programme in Kerala with regard to the lived experience of poverty; the Dalit poverty in particular. As mentioned above, this work aimed to explore whether the MDGs merely attack the symptoms of the global malaise rather than the causes of poverty.

This study aimed to delve beneath the surface comprehension of poverty, in order to understand the causes and experience of poverty. It

also intended to raise the emancipatory voice of the extreme poor, in order to redirect the policy makers' attention towards addressing the causes of poverty. In addition, the goal was to assess whether the oppressed Dalits live in a closed world of poverty from which there is no exit. Secondary data are highly parochial, and can be subject to bias that only helps to justify the publisher's intention. Government statistics of poverty and the exclusion of the poor from social benefits are examples of that bias. This research verifies the government's claims of providing safety nets for the Dalits, such as the provision of extra places for education and employment, grants for housing, settlement from Poramboke¹ (berm) and other welfare pensions and schemes of the government.

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

One of the major limitations of this study is that although it examines the efficacy of MDG 2, it has focused on one case study of the marginalised Dalit community in one state, in one country. Both statistical as well as literary evidence is presented to justify the selection of Dalits as an exclusively projected group of extreme poor of Kerala. Moreover, this study focused only on the primary education component, because that is the focus of MDG 2, albeit with a different approach to education as I argue in this thesis.

The MDGs are part of a programme intended to eradicate poverty, and the MDGs estimates of poverty are based on income; that is, \$1.25 per day per person is considered as above the poverty line. The choice of Kerala state for this study is to critique that assumption and to highlight how the state achieved most of the MDG targets before they were declared, and yet substantial portions of the population continue to live in poverty. Furthermore, Kerala has certain unique features, which deserved to be considered for programme implementation and

¹Public land by the roads, canals, rivers and railway tracks where Dalits settled when they were evicted from the landlords' farms.

policymaking. This thesis examines the nature and causes of poverty of Kerala and the suitability of the MDGs to eradicate poverty in the state.

Dalit-specific issues are discussed together with the empirical studies and analysed in chapters Six, Seven and Eight. The literature review chapters discuss issues that are general to the research topic. For example, the impact of MDG 2 on education in Kerala is discussed in chapter four, while statistics relating to the Dalit students are analysed in Chapter Six. Pre-2000 statistics are used wherever it is appropriate to assess the relevance of the MDG programme overall, or MDG 2 specifically, especially in the case of Kerala. For example, the school dropout rate of 1997-98 is analysed but the academic achievement rate of 2010 is analysed in Chapter Four.

The history of Kerala often ignores the history of Malabar and the history of Travancore is often considered as the history of Kerala. Hence, in this research, although an attempt is made to collect data regarding all regions of Kerala, most of the references to Kerala in the 18th and 19th centuries mean only the region of Travancore, the present southern half of Kerala. The social condition in Malabar was not better than in Travancore (Miller, 1954). In addition, since all three regions have remained as a single geographical area with the same language and culture isolated by the Western Ghats mountain range, social practises such as the caste system and slavery of all these regions are considered as being similar.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into nine chapters in three parts. Chapter One, “Introduction”, introduces the study and presents the rationale, significance, the objectives, research questions, structure and scope and limitations of the study.

Chapter Two, “Understanding the Research Framework Nested in Critical Theory”, describes the methodology used in this study, and the methods and techniques for data collection and analysis. It illustrates

the relevance of Marxian and Freirean critical theory approach in this thesis and the added advantages of using critical ethnography methods in emancipatory research. This chapter has a detailed description of the empirical framework and the data collection process, as this field data is central to the theory of knowledge in this thesis.

Chapter Three, “Understanding the Theoretical and Practical Context of the MDG programme”, provides a critical analysis of the MDG programme, its theoretical underpinnings, methodological paradigms, practical conundrums and hidden agendas. It provides an overview of the concept and measurement of poverty. The chapter analyses the continuing debate on the definition of poverty and presents an overview of poverty in India, with a special focus on the characteristics of poverty in Kerala, followed by poverty eradication strategies in general.

Chapter Four, “A Brief Socio-Economic and Political Sketch of Kerala” discusses the general characteristics of Kerala with regard to the demographic and caste and community configurations. This chapter also presents a literature review of the three phases of economic transition of the state. The review in this chapter focuses mainly on the social movements that put Kerala ahead of other states of India and brought about a number of other social changes.

In Chapter Five, “Kerala: MDG 2 and its Educational Objectives”, I discuss the objectives of MDG 2. Some of the central themes examined in this chapter include the vision and mission of MDG 2, system of education, history of schooling in Kerala and the purpose of primary education in Kerala. The literature review focuses mainly on a critique of publications about stimulating the system of education as a way of promoting the emancipation of the Dalits. It proposes Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1996) as an alternative to the conventional system of education for emancipation from oppression, exclusion and denial of opportunities. This chapter concludes by critiquing the MDG 2 notion based on the human capital theory of education and its unsuitability to eradicate poverty.

Chapter Six, “Social Exclusion”, is the first chapter in part two that presents the empirical results of the study. This chapter illustrates the diverse experiences of social exclusion meted out to the Dalits of Kerala. The focus of this chapter is the nature of caste bigotry and its different elements of exclusion. This chapter is one of the three broader themes that emerged out of the data analysis. It is analysed under 10 topics, with substantial literary data specific to the Dalits’ experiences of poverty.

Chapter Seven, “Analysing Oppression as a Cause of Poverty”, explores the empirical results of the study related to oppression. The seven major themes that emerged as indicators of oppression in the Dalits’ life are analysed, with relevant literary evidence and observation notes. Although this chapter does not pay attention to the chronology of experiences, for the reader’s enhanced understanding, the different facets of oppression are analysed in a sequence. For example, the chapter starts with an overview of slavery in the region, followed by bonded labour and the present day experiences of oppression.

Chapter Eight, “Poverty due to Denial of Opportunities, Freedom and Rights”, is the third and final chapter of empirical works. This chapter starts with an argument that is the key point of this study; that is, the fact that the denial of the right to landed property to the subaltern groups in the past is legalised by the modern democratic communist government is the foundation of poverty of the Dalits of Kerala. In this chapter, there are 12 other themes about the denial of opportunities, freedom and rights explored with rich narratives, stories and observations.

Chapter Nine, “Conclusion”, summarises the study’s major findings; contribution to knowledge; implications and suggestions; strengths and limitations; and recommendations for future work.

CHAPTER TWO

UNDERSTANDING THE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK NESTED IN CRITICAL THEORY

2.1 Introduction

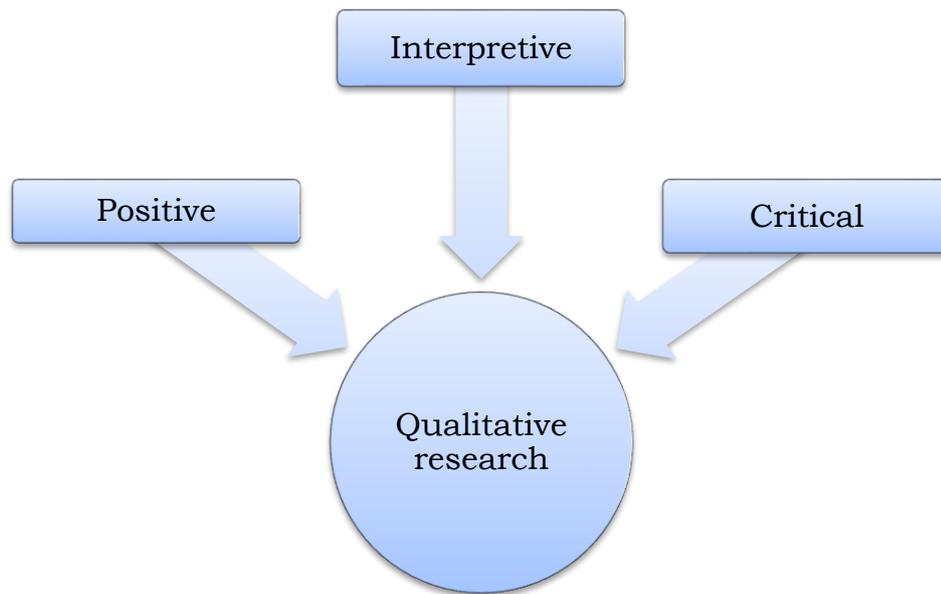
Following the tradition of emancipatory research, this research used critical ethnography methods, critical theory and the Freirean theory of emancipation of the oppressed as a methodology. This thesis is grounded in the theoretical assumption of Marxian social justice. I have discussed in section 2.2 the purpose of using these methods and about the significance of the methodology in section 2.3. As the empirical data is very important in this PhD thesis, I have discussed in detail the empirical framework, data collection process, relevance of this data, and the ethical considerations in the following sections.

2.2 Method

As this thesis focuses on the lived experiences of people, the qualitative method was chosen from the three main research methods or paradigms; that is, qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods (Silverman, 2010). In this thesis, poverty, a key concept of the research, is considered to be a subjective reality that has many dimensions, especially the characteristics of oppression and exclusion, and ritualistic denial of rights, that are better investigated through qualitative enquiry than other methods.

This thesis has acknowledged the gap between the statistical inaccuracies characterising the portrayal of poverty on the one hand,

and the lived experiences of the poor on the other. Therefore, it is imperative to listen to the poor as an empirical method; hence, I used a qualitative ethnographic research method. Qualitative research methods are designed to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural contexts within which they live (O'Reilly, 2009). Positivist, interpretive and critical philosophical perspectives influence qualitative research. Table 5.1 illustrates this.



Source: Author's drawing based on *Critical Ethnography* (O'Reilly, 2009).

Figure 2.1. Philosophical perspectives of qualitative research.

The objective of using the approach is to illustrate how the poorest community of Kerala, the Dalits, highlight the contradiction inherent in the MDG 2 and poverty eradication. Critical ethnography is considered as one of the best methods for such social research, about which Kirk and Miller (1986) write:

Qualitative research is a particular tradition in social science that fundamentally depends on watching people in their own territory and interacting with them in their own language, on their own terms. As identified with sociology, cultural anthropology and

political science among other disciplines, qualitative research has been seen to be “naturalistic,” “ethnographic” and “participatory”.
(p.8)

Furthermore, different ethnographic studies of the Dalits of India (i.e. G. R. George, 2003; Govinda & Bandyopadhyay, 2010; C. Jeffrey, Jeffery, & Jeffery, 2004; Reddy, 2005; Still, 2008) have also used intensive observations and semi-structured interviews to study the lives of the Dalits. This research is also similar to those ethnographic studies, where observation and informal conversation are the main sources of data collection.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) argue that the goal of understanding a phenomenon from the point of view of the participants and its particular social and institutional context is largely lost when textual data are quantified. Hence, this research ascribes little importance to the secondary statistical data on poverty and considers qualitative data for analysis.

The philosophical assumption of this research is that poverty eradication is achieved through human emancipation from oppression. Thus, critical ethnography, which is the critical style of analysis and discourses embedded within the conventional ethnography, along with the critical theoretical paradigm, can provide a meaningful framework for this thesis (Jim Thomas, 1993).

My ontological position as a researcher is another significant factor determining the choice of method in this research, which is described in detail in this chapter’s section 2.5. I grew up in a society where oppression and social injustice prevailed as the order of the society. So my thoughts and writings were rooted in the Marxian assumption of social justice. Thus, I was equipped to be catalyst of social change, through this research, where oppression is the chief cause of poverty.

2.2.1 Purpose of using critical ethnography.

Silverman (2010) has highlighted the suitability of ethnographic research when studying the socio-cultural aspects of marginalised communities. In the case of Kerala, over many generations the oppressed have been consistently deprived of the freedom and opportunities, and that deprivation has become a way of life, which they inherited through generations. Education is the institution to snap that inter-generational bondage. To understand how education can unlock poverty dynamics, the study utilised critical ethnographic research methods applied through the lens of critical theory. The critical ethnographer calls for social change by speaking on behalf of the researched as a means of empowering them (Jim Thomas, 1993).

The goal of critical ethnography is to help create the possibility of transforming social institutions, such as schools, to achieve emancipation of the oppressed (Brodkey, 1987). This research looked at education as a means of emancipation from oppression. Essentially, human rights, social exclusion and opportunities are neglected in the MDG programme in favour of other measurable indicators of poverty (Vandemoortele, 2011). Therefore, using a critical ethnographic approach, this research explored to what extent MDG 2 helps the emancipation of the oppressed.

The purpose of using critical ethnography with critical theory methodology is summarised as “critical ethnography is critical theory in action” (Madison, 2005, p. 28). One of the most significant justifications regarding the use of critical ethnography along with critical theory in this study can be found in the book *Doing Critical Ethnography* by Jim Thomas (1993), which states:

The roots of critical thought spread from a long tradition of intellectual rebellion in which rigorous examination of ideas and discourse constituted political challenge. Social critique, by definition, is radical. It implies an evaluative judgment of meaning and method in research, policy, and human activity. Critical

thinking implies freedom by recognizing that social existence, including our knowledge of it, is not simply composed of givens imposed on us by powerful and mysterious forces. This recognition leads to the possibility of transcending existing forces. The act of critique implies that by thinking about and acting upon the world, we are able to change both our subjective interpretations and objective conditions. (p. 18)

According to Atkinson and Hammersley (2000), critical ethnography usually refers to the following features in social research which were found suitable for use in this case in Kerala:

- A strong emphasis on exploring the nature of particular social phenomena (poverty caused by social practices), rather than setting out to test hypotheses about them;
- A tendency to work primarily with unstructured data, that is data that have not been coded at the point of data collection in terms of a closed set of analytic categories;
- Investigation of a small number of cases, perhaps just one case in detail;
- Analysis of data that involves explicit interpretation of the meaning and functions of human actions, the product of which mainly takes the form of verbal descriptions and explanations, with quantification and statistical analysis playing a subordinate role at most (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2000).

Critical ethnography was the chief approach used for data collection in this research. I spent nearly two months in a Dalits' settlement listening to their stories, biographical explanations, narratives and life histories. Narratives include both discourses and stories, whereby, as Brodkey (1987) explains, the story is the 'what' and discourse is the 'how' of narratives of the lived experiences of poverty. Those stories and narratives have strong links to their present day experiences of poverty.

As Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte (1999) suggest: “Narratives and storytelling permit interviewees to speak from experience about situations that illustrate points important for the researcher's study. Researchers use narratives to obtain information from the informant's perspective about episodes from beginning to end” (p.138).

In this thesis, these stories are interrupted by literary evidence providing additional information about the course of history. Here, the researcher aimed to “resist domestication” and penetrate to the heart of the experiences of subjects whose stories would be otherwise restrained out of reach and substantiate them with literary evidence (Madison, 2005; Silverman, 2010). Madison (2005) expounds on the meaning of “resisting domestication” as follows:

It means that she will use the resources, skills, and privileges available to her to make accessible to penetrate the borders and break through the confines in defence of the voices and experiences of subjects whose stories are otherwise restrained and out of reach. (p.5)

Therefore, using literary evidence and historical data to supplement the collected data is a part of this research approach.

2.3 Critical Theory

This research used critical theory to analyse the phenomenon of poverty and the suitability of MDG 2 for poverty eradication in Kerala, through the Freirean and Marxian paradigm. Critical theory provides the descriptive and normative bases for social inquiry aimed at decreasing domination and increasing freedom in all their forms, which is indeed a major phase of poverty eradication (Silverman, 2010). According to Horkheimer (2004), to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them is the practical purpose of critical theory; and the Stanford School (2011) postulates that critical theory aims to transform all the circumstances that enslave human beings. Moreover, this

seemed to be an appropriate methodology to use with critical ethnography in this research.

Through Freirean critical theory, this research examined to what extent the existing system of education can empower the participants to overcome their experience of poverty. While there is debate about whether poverty is an objective reality 'out there' or is subjective to the lived experiences of the poor (S. I. Rajan & James, 2007), the Freirean logic of the concrete reality is the connection between subjectivity and objectivity and was the principle behind this research (Freire, 1996). Critical researchers assume that social reality is historically constituted and that it is produced and reproduced by people. Although people can consciously act to change their social and economic circumstances, critical researchers recognize that their ability to do so is constrained by various forms of social, cultural and political domination (Denizin, 2001).

This thesis is set in the context of literary evidence that the causes of poverty in Kerala lie in historically constituted oppression, exclusion and denial of freedom. The main task of critical research is seen as being one of social critique, whereby the restrictive and alienating conditions of the status quo are brought to light (Madison, 2005). As a critical researcher my focus was on the oppositions, conflicts and contradictions in contemporary society, and seeking emancipatory knowledge that can help to eliminate the causes of oppression and domination (O'Reilly, 2009). Thus, the objective of this critical theory study was to extrapolate from what is to what could be (Madison, 2005).

Both Critical theory and Freirean pedagogy speak about the emancipation of the oppressed as a means of poverty eradication. Hence, while discussing the role of primary education for emancipation, the research has relied on the Freirean pedagogy of education, which accentuates the role of education to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality. Therefore, this thesis illustrates the unsuitability of

conventional education system, which Freire calls “Banking education” to achieve the goals of MDG 2.

The social structure and poverty parallel to it suggests that, Kerala society functioned in terms of the Marxist idea of the structure of exploitation: that some people have their power and wealth because they profit from the labour of others (Young, 1990). Therefore, with the Marx’s understanding of structure the thesis illustrates how they are structurally oppressed. Hence, this thesis discusses in detail the historical structure and nature of oppression in Kerala.

Critical theory refuses to identify freedom or liberation, which play the key roles in social empowerment, with any institutional arrangement or fixed system of thought. It questions the hidden assumptions and purposes of competing theories and existing forms of practice. It is always concerned not merely with how things were but how they might be and should be. It was thus quite relevant in this research to analyse and question the practices of oppression, social exclusion and denial of opportunities to the marginalised communities. Critical theory always has had an anticipatory character, and its advocates have projected the transformation of everyday life and individual experience, which was the paradigm of this thesis enquiry (Bronner, 2002; O'Reilly, 2009).

In conclusion, critical theory was fundamental in this PhD research study in the analysis of literature as well as in the analysis of the empirical data in three main areas, viz: a) the general problem of poverty, that is conceptualisation and approaches (including the MDGs); b) the nature and role of MDG 2; and c) the contradicting realities of education and poverty in Kerala in the light of education for conscientisation.

2.3.1 Critical theory in the Freirean and Marxian context.

To justify the structure and analysis of issues related to poverty and education I have used Freire’s theory of educational and socio-political conscientisation. Freire posits that an oppressive social system is operating through conventional education, which instills oppression

leading to poverty. In this system teacher is the dominator and student is the dominated and this process of 'all known' to 'all ignorant' siphoning system of education is known as "banking system" (Freire, 1996). This projection of an absolute ignorance on others by the knowledgeable is a characteristic of the ideology of oppressed. The students accept their ignorance like a slave. But, knowing is a social process, which involves the whole conscious self, feelings, emotions, memory, affects, and an epistemologically curious mind focused on the object, which is not possible in an oppressive social structure (Freire, 1998).

Freire cautions the need for critical literacy for the emancipation of those who live in poverty due to their oppressed social position because Freire (2001) considers oppressive education as dehumanisation, which prevents people from exercising their right to become more fully humans. In the 'Pedagogy of the oppressed', he proposes education as an instrument of social emancipation, because the oppressed under the oppressive education system are unaware of the extent of oppression as they aim to become oppressors in turn (Freire, 1996). Therefore, without conscientisation education for mere literacy is considered similar to the Roman practise of teaching their slaves to read and write to increase their value at auction (Hill, 1999).

The thesis argues that poverty is a consequence of oppressive social structure, which is founded on Marx's critical analysis of social structure and social injustice. Marx's concept of social structure suggest that society or social formation is a complex totality consisting of the economic base or the mode of production, a related superstructure of political and legal institutions and corresponding forms of consciousness (R. Mishra, 1979).

Marx identifies social class as the chief actors in society, which this thesis argues as the chief cause of poverty. As Marx suggests in *Communist Manifesto*, the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles between the oppressor and the oppressed (Marx, Engels, & Hobsbawn, 1998). In Kerala, Marx's notion of

Bourgeoisie and Proletariat operates in its terms with different names. The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. This theoretic perspective will guide the enquiry in this research to illustrate the nature of poverty with the analysis of the poverty of the Dalits of Kerala.

2.3.2 Why not other theories?

This PhD research looked at the role of primary education in the emancipation of the oppressed Dalits as a means to alleviate their inter-generational poverty, which has been inflicted rather than experienced. Therefore, through this research I aimed to search beneath surface appearances of a phenomenon to move from 'what is' to 'what could be'. In this context, the most useful methodology was regarded as being critical theory rather than phenomenology or grounded theory.

Similarly, in research in the context of domination and oppression, where upper caste people have excluded the Dalits from social participation, a conversation or discourse analysis may not be as useful as social activism-oriented critical theory (Horkheimer, 2004). Moreover, critical theory is widely used in emancipatory research when the researchers speak on behalf of the researched as a means of empowering them (Jim Thomas, 1993).

2.3.3 Relevance of critical theory in the Kerala context.

The core area of enquiry of this research was to find to what extent the UN-sponsored primary education programme can be instrumental in poverty eradication in Kerala. The review of related literature on poverty and education (i.e. Freire, 1996, 1998; Govinda & Bandyopadhyay, 2010; Hill, 1999) revealed that if education does not encourage critical consciousness, it may become a means to instil oppressive values, or a suppressive political system and if it does not liberate the excluded from social exclusions, the educated may still be deprived of opportunities. I

have noted and analysed in Chapter Five, sections four and five, that, in the Kerala's socio-education context, this phenomenon of instilling oppression through education is very much a reality. Since critical theory aims to transform all the circumstances that enslave human beings, in the context of Kerala this was an appropriate methodology to use in this research (Stanford School, 2011).

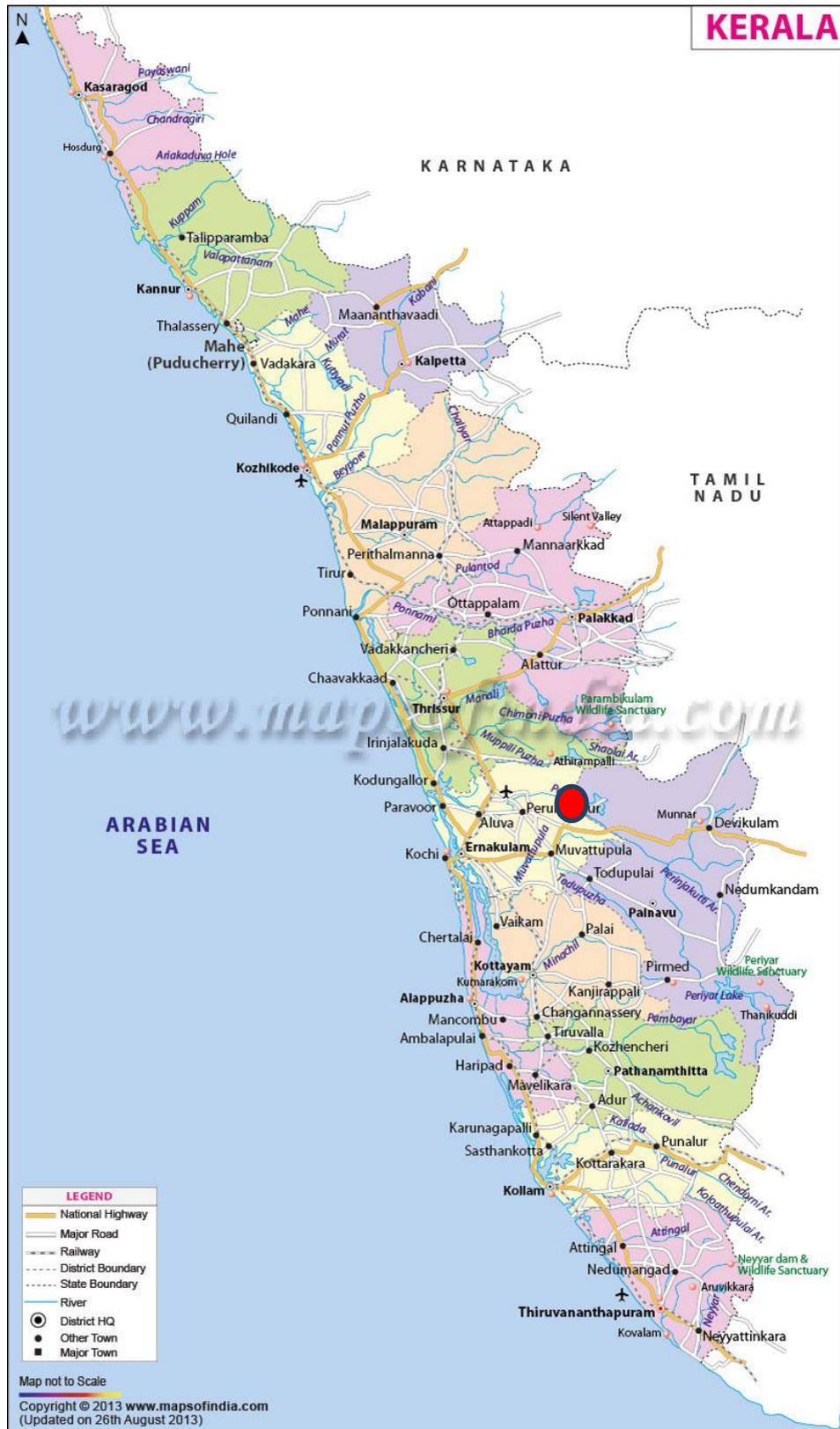
This research speaks on behalf of the Dalits, identifying them as the most deprived, with relevant reasons such as slavery, ritualistic exclusion, and denial of the human right to live a normal life. My empirical work suggested that many of them are so crushed and psychologically depressed that they are not able to imagine a better world or resist against exploitation; nor are they able to imagine that they can demand their human rights. The work of Jim Thomas (1993) suggests that critical theory was an appropriate theory in this context of Kerala, to hear the Dalits speak and to also speak on their behalf.

2.4 Empirical Framework of this Study

The conventional notion is that a researcher should be neutral (Sarantakos, 2005); however, I did not assume that I could be neutral as a critical ethnographer. That is because I had clear emancipatory objectives in this research and a critical ethnographer stands for social change rather than just finding the facts. I had a sceptical inquiring stance with a 'what could be' approach, with the Marxian assumptions of social justice and the Freirean theory of emancipation of the oppressed. Therefore, I had more of a social activism stance than a neutral reporter stance in conducting this empirical work.

When I started to prepare for my empirical work, I recollected that the Dalits used to live all along the roadside leading up to my school. They used to live in shanties made of coconut leaves and bamboo, stretching from the estate-boundary walls, wherever the road berms were wide enough. However, now the roads are widened, there is no more Poramboke (berm) by the road for the Dalits to live on. To enable the road widening, they were settled in colonies.

When I visited the colonies, I could easily establish that they are an extremely deprived group, and it was almost all the Dalit community who were so deprived. Therefore, after visiting a number of Dalit colonies, I chose the Valayam colony, one of those Dalit settlements of Kothamangalam Taluk, in the Ernakulam District of Kerala, as it is a bigger colony than some others and has different Dalit Jatis living there. (See Figure 5.1 of the location of the colony in the map of Kerala).



Source: <http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/kerala/> [Retrieved 8 July 2014]

Figure 2.2. Map of Kerala, (red mark shows the location of the study).

2.4.1 The participants.

Most Dalits of Kerala live in government settlements called colonies. The participants in this research project were Dalits living in a colony, who shared common characteristics with the other oppressed people of Kerala. Although other studies (Kochu, 2013; Kumari, 2011) have described that most of the houses in these colonies are not habitable and many of them are unhygienic without toilets or a healthy environment, the government still considers that the colony settlers are better off compared to another 25,408 Dalit families who do not have either land or houses (as per the 2010 statistics) (Kochu, 2013). It would be appropriate to conduct a study among the landless and the homeless Dalits in order to understand the severity of poverty in Kerala. However, they live in slums, bus stands and railway stations, and on railway tracks, riverbanks and other unhygienic areas with less hospitable living conditions. After considering many practical difficulties to conduct an ethnographic research in such areas, I chose a Dalit colony for my empirical work.

Most of the participants settled into this colony from roadsides and riversides. They all lived as *kudiyans* previously, and their preceding generations were slaves to the landlords. This was the common characteristics of the participants regardless of their identity as BPL or APL. This area around the colony is known for its affluent landlords, who own large paddy fields and rubber estates. They had hutment dwellers (*kudiyans*) on their land before the land reforms, and almost all of them successfully evacuated the Kudiyans from their land yet still utilised their labour while they lived by the roads and rivers. Most of these participants had changed the nature of their work since the land reforms, as they were no longer bonded to one family. Most of the men worked in the construction sector, as most of the paddy fields are no longer operational or are converted to long-term commercial crops such as rubber and coconut, while many of the women are still housemaids for the landlords' families.

2.4.2 Rationale for the selection of the colony.

Firstly, this is a large Dalit colony, in which different Dalit Jatis/castes live together, yet maintain Untouchability between the upper and lower Jatis. The landlords and upper caste rich people live outside the colony. The Dalits are not settled here from any faraway place, they have all been born and brought up in the same area, which I am familiar with and where I was also born and brought up. Hence, it was a suitable place to observe and study the social relationships of the Dalits.

Secondly, building on the literature, it is evident that the Dalits are forced to live landless either on the Poramboke or in settlement colonies. It is the consequence of both biased public policy as well as the discriminatory social practice of declining Dalits the right to own land. This colony is situated in the corner of large estates, in which they work and could be theirs if it were an egalitarian society. The government ignores the fact that almost 2.5 million hectares of land leased by the erstwhile governments to the imperialists still rests with the corporates in Kerala (Manosmita, Aruna, & Libina, 2012; Scaria, 2010). Had there not been a restriction on Dalit ownership of land, they who toiled to clear the wasteland and barren land to form into estates could be the natural owners of those rubber, coffee and tea estates now.

Thirdly, even subaltern Untouchable groups such as the Ezhavas were emancipated and integrated with the rest of the society when they were liberated from the restriction from owning land and *Kulathozhil*. However, a colony of Dalits is an epitome of institutionalised exclusion and oppression meted out to a community. Keeping them in a state of dependence on the government is an oppressive strategy. Therefore, by selecting this Dalit colony, I could learn to what extent they perceive the reality that they are settled by the government as part of an exclusionary social policy.

2.5 Data Collection

I visited a few Dalit colonies in 2011, while I was in the early phase of my research, to get a feel of the area. I also had discussions with researchers at the Centre for Development Studies (CDS) in Trivandrum, Kerala and Centre for Socio-Economic and Environmental Studies (CSEES) in Cochin, Kerala prior to my decision making. I realised that although people throughout Kerala experience a range of socio-economic status, people living in the colonies and on the streets live an extremely deplorable life. Thus, after having decided to conduct the empirical work in a Dalit colony, I contacted Dalit activists, leaders and social workers. I also sought input from the Block Dalit welfare office, the Scheduled Caste (SC) promoter, the local Panchayat and the local Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), although some government officials such as the Project Director of the 'Ernakulam District Poverty Eradication Unit' were reluctant to cooperate.

2.5.1 My ontological position as a researcher.

My ontological position in this research is based on my concern for the well-being of the poor people, with whom I have spent the greater part of my professional life as a teacher and a Principal in various schools in India and in the Maldives. Emancipatory thoughts and feelings have always remained prominent in my writings and active political involvement from my school days.

As a volunteer of the National Service Scheme (NSS) (social work unit of University colleges), I was actively involved with oppressed people and their deprived lives. In particular, I volunteered for the sanitation works in a similar colony and a literacy mission in another colony in the Idukki district during my pre-degree study time. I chose to study a sociology degree with an ambition of working with oppressed people. During the second year of my degree, as the leader of a student union, (I was also NSS secretary then), I raised a flood relief fund for the people who lived by the river and lost their belongings in the monsoon flood. At that time, we distributed some utensils to some families. Twenty years

later, when I met with the people of the study colony on the first day of my fieldwork for this thesis, coincidentally one elderly lady told me that she was one of those who received our utensils. Then I recollected a scrawny woman who lived alone in a hut as small as a kennel. She still lives in a small hut in this colony.

An incident that took place when I was a teacher inspired me to learn more about the plight of the Dalits. While I was teaching in Year Seven, in a private school, its manager came to the class and pulled out one student from the class in an aggressive manner and threw all his books away. His parents were manual scavengers and they belong to the lowest strata of the Dalit community: this was the reason behind fiercely removing the student out of the school. Later, when I saw this boy working with his parents he told me that the upper caste students did not like him sitting with them. During my professional life I came across many such miserable life experiences of the Dalits.

After all, both poverty and education are the warp and weft of my life, as illustrated in this thesis. I grew up along with the poor Dalits, knowing their lives, as a sympathiser of the oppressed community. Thus, this research built on my own lived experiences and my experience with the community.

2.5.2 Introducing the research programme.

The study colony is one of the earliest Dalit colonies and was established in 1994, for 78 families. To protect the identity of the participants who did not consent to disclose their identity, I name this colony the Valayam colony. Both in terms of my understanding about them and in terms of their understanding about me, I did not have any trouble recruiting participants. Furthermore, I introduced the objective of my research with the help of a few videos of similar research studies held in some other Dalit colonies, in a gathering, convened at the community hall in the colony.

At present, there are 68 families in the colony; they all live in an area of 3 cents (about 120 square metres of land) each or less, in one room houses or shanties; with very limited sanitation. I invited all of them with a notice to take part in this study. Participation in the research was voluntary with their signed consent. Thirty-eight females and 18 males volunteered to participate in the interview. Conversations were recorded using a mobile device and field notes were taken. Although I made myself available in the weekends and also late in the evenings, I could not meet with some people, especially working men, who their family told me would come home late at night, inebriated. Many of the men were found in the colony constantly inebriated and were unwilling to participate in the studies; hence, fewer men participated.

2.5.3 Face to face interviews.

Data were collected through audio-recorded face-to-face interviews conducted in Malayalam and through observations. The fieldwork began with a gathering; it was a tea party, so that we could discuss and describe the purpose of my fieldwork in a relaxed environment. This not only helped the colony's residents to be prepared to narrate their life stories, biographies and experiences but also provided ample time to meet me at their convenience. One of the participants, who holds the community hall's key, offered me key so I could use the space on all the days I was there. Some of them told me that they have nothing to sit on in their houses if I visit. I sat on the floor in those houses, and some houses were too small to go in and we met outside those houses. But I visited all their homes because people are most likely to feel comfortable and in control in their own home environment (Silverman, 2010).

Although I was not considered as a stranger, they could not consider me as an "insider" as a Dalit identity is very much different from that of outsider's. I gave the participants a Participant Information Sheet and explained it to them along with a Consent Form (both in English and in Malayalam) for them to sign before starting the interview. I asked certain indicative questions in between the conversations to guide the

discussion towards their experiences of oppression, social exclusion and denial of opportunities.

Regarding the relevance of narratives in ethnographic research, Brodkey (1987) suggests that “once the academic narrative has been formulated and published, that narrative is likely to function as the authoritative text to which all subsequent retellings and problems in interpretation will be referred” (p.68). As these narratives were often about the disillusionment in their life, it was embarrassing and some of the conversations we had to stop half way as they sobbed because of their painful thoughts. However, they felt relief while they narrated their difficulties. According to Silverman (2010), listening to the experiences of an oppressed person can be a relief to them and they may be talkative about their experiences if they know that it is a means of emancipation.

Yes, they were mostly talkative about their miseries. Starting with general conversation, I gently took them into discussing the research area by asking indicative questions such as “Tell me how did you come to this colony?” as I recorded the interview and my research assistant took notes of the observations, I could fully engage with the participants. My interviewing strategy was open ended, interrupted only for clarifications. Very often, I sat inquisitive and humbled while raising questions about the new areas of my inquiry, which provided them with gratifying comfort to unburden themselves.

Many of their concerns were similar but experiences were quite different. It suggested to me that they had common experiences as slaves and as bonded labourers. After the land reforms, they were disillusioned, and felt deprived and scattered. Here, in the colony, they have come together as a group for the first time from different places and from different living conditions. Most of them had lived by the river or roadside and worked on a farm, but there are also families who came from the urban areas who had lived on the footpaths, market corners and by the railway tracks.

Although I collected enough satisfactory data to achieve the goals of my research, I was prepared to listen to any other members of the colony. While inviting everyone again for the valedictory meeting I sent a notice to every home inviting any further participant to be interviewed. Morse (1995) has stated: “Researchers cease data collection when they have enough data to build a comprehensive and convincing theory” (p.148). Although more participants’ inputs would have given me new stories, the data I have collected is substantial enough to present a convincing theory of my argument.

2.5.4 Observation

The objective of observation in this research was to understand the ‘lived experience’ of poverty in relation to primary education. According to Atkinson and Hammersley (2000), social research is a form of participant observation because we cannot study the social world without being a part of it. Ethnographic research is a mode of being in the participants’ world. Although people can consciously act to change their social and economic circumstances, critical theory researchers recognize that their ability to do so is constrained by various forms of social, cultural and political influences. Therefore, different issues which may have an impact on education and/or poverty outcomes need to be observed (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2000).

Discrimination is not a phenomenon meted out only to the Dalits of Kerala, but the entire society has been stratified on the basis of castes and Jatis. The presence of these social dynamics was a subject of observation for this study. The researcher observed and participated in the natural stream of everyday life without intervening. Critical research focuses on the oppositions, conflicts and contradictions in contemporary society, and seeks to be emancipatory; that is, it should help to eliminate the causes of alienation and domination (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Therefore, I observed areas that the participants overlooked or were resistant to seeing because of being domesticated and not having the words to explain their experiences.

2.6 Relevance of this Data in this Research

The data collected from the literary sources is not substantial enough to provide the lived experience of poverty, which is one of the core areas of enquiry in this study. This data was used to verify the government's claims of safety nets for the Dalits, such as the creation of reserved places for education and employment, grants for housing, settlement from Poramboke and other welfare pensions and schemes of the government. Secondary data are highly parochial, which only helps to justify the publisher's intention. For example, Dalits are allocated employment reservations and given different types of encouragement such as prizes for high achieving students, but all those benefits are confined to the high achievers among the Dalits or the permanently employed Dalits. Secondary evidence could not substantially help in the understanding of the subaltern people's feelings and the impact of all types of assistance on their social world.

Furthermore, there is a gap in the literature in terms of the analysis of the efficacy of primary education to eradicate poverty from the perspective of oppression, exclusion and denial of opportunities. Against the popularly perceived notion of income poverty, with the empirical data, this study looked at the experience of their poverty through the paradigm of historical causes of oppression, exclusion and denial of opportunities on a ritual basis and it was analysed against the suitability of MDG 2 to address it.

2.6.1 Data analysis.

Miles and Huberman (1994) contended that there are two common problems in data analysis. One is the inability to conceptualise or theorise empirical data. The other is the theorisation stripping away the necessary contextual factors. The pitfall of thematic analysis is that, although it reduces data and thus allows more abstract theories, it also isolates data from its context. I have used the computer-based data analysis programme Nvivo10 for coding and data analysis. Based on the literature analysis, data has been classified into three broad themes:

oppression, exclusion and denial of opportunities. Those data are used as a supplement to the related literature to avoid the possibility of stripping away the context. Thus, I have both conceptualised, as well as theorised about, the data in the following three chapters.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

I believed that the ethical considerations were quite important in this study, because it was set in the privacy of the homes of the various subaltern groups of people settled in a colony, within a different socio-cultural context. Considering their slave past and the social exclusion resulting from ritualistic pollution, there is still a certain degree of stigma in terms of outsiders' reactions when interacting with them. Their problems and experiences such as prostitution, illicit liquor brewing and theft have given this colony a bad reputation as a whole. As this is a colony of so many ill-reputed people, considering the public scepticism I engaged one research assistant with me during the study.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter explained the theoretical perspectives, and ontological and epistemological stance, which provide an understanding about the empirical methods. It has described the relevance of critical theory along with critical ethnography methods used in this research. It has explained the data collection and analysis methods and the rationale behind those approaches. It has discussed the context of oppression among the research respondents and hence the relevance of emancipatory research in this thesis.

This part, Part I, is concerned with the theoretical aspects and literature review. Part II is organised into three chapters following Part I, that present the field data along with the auxiliary literary material, focusing on three major areas causing poverty: oppression, exclusion and denial of opportunities.

CHAPTER THREE

UNDERSTANDING THE THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL CONTEXT OF THE MDG

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I explore the concept and suitability of the MDGs, with reference to the contextual situation of Kerala's poverty. This chapter analyses the objectives of the MDGs, conceptualisation of poverty and the nature of poverty in India, with a special focus on the most marginalised Dalits of Kerala. This chapter, and the following two chapters, (i.e., chapters Three and Four) provide the overarching literature review framework for this thesis.

As a programme planned for poverty eradication, the MDGs' objectives and challenges are discussed in section 3.3, before analysing the conceptualisation of poverty and its measurability in section 3.4 and section 3.5. Section 3.6 attempts to bring both the MDG programme and poverty into the context of India, with a special emphasis on the application to Kerala. This chapter concludes with a review of poverty eradication programmes before the MDGs.

3.2 An Overview of the MDG Programme

Poverty eradication has been an agenda of all the UN summits since its formation (UN, 2010a). At the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000, world leaders agreed that poverty is the most important global issue (United Nations, 2000). At this summit, eight millennium development goals were proposed to end poverty from the face of humanity. The eight goals of the MDG programme can be summarised as follows:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger: By the end of 2015, halve the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day.
2. **Achieve universal Primary School education: Ensure children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course (eight years) of primary schooling².**
3. Promote gender equality and empower women: Ensure gender parity in education.
4. Reduce child mortality by two thirds, by 2015.
5. Improve maternal health: reduce maternal mortality rate by three quarters. .
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability: reverse the loss of environmental resources, provide access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation and improve the lives of 100 million slum dwellers.
8. Develop a global partnership for development through supporting the developmental activities of poor, isolated and developing countries.
(UN Millennium Project, 2005, pp. xviii,xix)

According to Jeffry Sachs, the director of the MDG project:

MDGs are the world's time-bound and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions – income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion – while promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability. They are also basic human rights- the right of each person on the planet to health, education, shelter, and security as pledged in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Millennium Declaration. (UN Millennium Project, 2005, p. 1)

The UN road map on the MDGs, *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals* (UN Millennium Project, 2005), highlights the vision for the MDGs as follows:

² Emphasis is given to show the second goal of the MDG programme, which is the key area of this research.

If the Goals are achieved more than 500 million people will be lifted out of extreme poverty. More than 300 million will no longer suffer from hunger. There will also be dramatic progress in child health. Rather than die before reaching their fifth birthdays, 30 million children will be saved. So will the lives of more than 2 million mothers. (p.258)

In short, the MDGs are time-bound goals set by the UN for poverty eradication and economic development in developing countries. In addition to the eight goals set by the UN, it has recommended that developing countries prepare poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) to adapt the programme for their countries (India does not have a PRSP). The MDG programme works under a Millennium Project team who coordinate both developing and developed countries, with a set of 10 recommendations to achieve the 18 targets of the eight goals (see appendix B for details of targets and recommendations) (UN Millennium Project, 2005).

3.3 Debate on the MDG Programme

3.3.1 Economic objectives of the MDG programme.

The MDG programme has the target of halving poverty by 2015 by halving the number of people whose income is less than \$1.25 a day. This is the largest ever attempt to act against human poverty and extreme hunger (UN, 2010a). As the MDG programme nears its expiry date of 2015, the MDG programme report published in 2014 claims that global poverty has already fallen to less than half the 1990 rate. With the MDG initiative, 700 million people have escaped from poverty with an average daily income of \$1.25, but yet another 1.2 billion people still live in extreme poverty (UN, 2014).

Although other indicators of development included in the MDG programme help to reduce poverty, estimates of poverty and claims that poverty has declined based on \$1.25 a day are unrealistic because of the following points:

Income alone is not the cause of poverty. It can rather be a consequence of poverty, and yet targeting income as an indicator rising out of poverty is only a means of finding convenient figures (Akindola, 2009; Rice, 2006; Sen, 1999; Sumner, 2004). Equal income does not necessarily provide equal economic freedom to different people (Sen, 1999). For example, a handicapped or sick person may have to spend much of his/her income for his/her health, so his/her ability to spend on other essentials can be little and that should be the indicator of his/her purchasing power (Sen, 1999). Similarly, equal incomes will have different purchasing power for different people in different countries and different geographical locations within a country.

Secondly, there are more people living in hunger now than there were in the year 2000 (Global hunger worsening: warns UN, 2009; IFPRI, n.d). According to the Global Hunger Index (GHI) published in October 2013, although the UN target is to cut hunger by half, (i.e. 420 million by 2015), 1.02 billion people were living in extreme hunger. Although South Asia has very fertile soil and a productive agricultural sector, this region remains in the 'alarming' category of the GHI, with an GHI score of 22.6 (out of 100 points). According to a Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) report, South Asia and Africa have made very little improvement in hunger since the year 2000, with 907 million hungry people in 2013 (Fox, 2013). Many countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Zimbabwe, Liberia, and Burundi have had the steepest increase in hunger since 1990. An interactive map of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) (IFPRI, n.d) suggests that none of the countries in the 'alarming' category of the GHI in 2000 have come out of it by 2013. Therefore, it can be assumed that world hunger remains the same despite the MDG programme initiatives. It follows that poverty eradication becomes irrelevant if hunger is not reduced (Gentilini & Webb, 2008; Global hunger worsening: warns UN, 2009; IFPRI, n.d).

The economic imbalance of food value across the world may cause more hunger than low incomes (Sumner, 2004). Moreover, hunger is largely

due to the disparity in the supply of foodstuffs rather than the shortage of production, a fact that is not being considered in the MDGs (Akindola, 2009; Sumner, 2004). Studies have found that the United States of America (US), due to their economic upper hand, easily amass huge quantities of food; half of which is wasted (Fox, 2013; Kristoff, 2014). A study by the University of Arizona has indicated that 15 per cent of the total edible food wasted in the US is untouched or unopened; the report concludes that, as a result of cheap affordability of food in the market, half of the food in the US goes to waste every year (William Reed Business Media, 2004). A FAO study in 2011 has estimated that the total global food loss and waste is around 30-50 per cent of the edible parts of food produced for human consumption, amounting to about 2 billion tons per year (which has substantially increased from 2000 to 2011) (Fox, 2013).

Thirdly, as the MDG programme is nearing its expiry, studies show that since the year 2000 economic inequality has worsened worldwide. Oxfam estimates that the richest 85 people in the world own half of all its wealth and the richest one per cent of people in the US now owns more wealth than all that of the bottom 90 per cent of the population. (Kristoff, 2014). The poorest 40 per cent of the world's population account for only 5 per cent of global income and the richest 20 percent account for three-quarters of world income (UNDP, 2007): "Inequality causes problems by creating fissures in societies, leaving those at the bottom feeling marginalised or disenfranchised" (Kristoff, 2014, p. 10). Therefore, rather than lack of income, growing economic inequality is the cause of poverty (Akindola, 2009; Sumner, 2004).

Fourthly, the economic growth of a country is not directly proportional to the economic growth of the people as a whole and it does not prove there is poverty eradication in the country. For example, three-quarters of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) poor and two-thirds of the severe MPI poor live in middle-income countries (MICs)³. Research has

³ The Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) classifies countries based on per capita gross national income. Following are the threshold of

also found that rates of poverty in upper-middle income countries (UMICs) can approach 40 per cent and that poverty rates in low-income countries (LICs) can be as low as five per cent (Alkire et al., 2013). Therefore, the national income of a country is not necessarily indicative of the level of poverty of its people. Also, surprisingly, there are almost a billion MPI poor in stable MICs (Alkire et al., 2013). Moreover, real wages are highly disproportionate in different regions and the percentage of the population vulnerable to poverty (through variance of income or assets) is not calculated in the MDGs (Sumner, 2004). The Gini co-efficient, which is a good measure of economic equality, is not considered in the MDGs for monitoring prosperity and deprivation (Sumner, 2004).

Finally, although there are eight different goals set to reduce poverty, the quantification of poverty is essentially money-metric (Vandemoortele, 2011), which means people earning above \$1.25 a day are counted as being above the poverty line. However, empirical analysis of the trends in the MDGs' outcomes has found that there is little or no correlation between economic growth and non-income MDGs (Alkire et al., 2013). For example, in a cross-country analysis it was found that 53 per cent of income-poor children in India and 66 per cent of income-poor children in Peru were not malnourished; whereas, of children who were not income poor, 53 per cent in India and 21 per cent in Peru were malnourished. Hence, income is not a sufficiently accurate proxy indicator for the multiple dimensions of poverty (Alkire et al., 2013).

3.3.2 MDGs: A capitalist ploy for trade?

Although 171 developing or underdeveloped countries are the intended beneficiaries of the MDG programme, this is not a programme planned by them. But as a result of the OECD countries' initiative, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and OECD together proposed the idea of the MDGs, which was unveiled in the Development Assistant

classification in US Dollar: LICs: <=\$1,005; LMICs: \$1,006-3,975; UMICs: \$3,976-12,275; HIC: >\$12,475 (Alkire et al., 2013)

Committee (DAC) report (an OECD report), *2000 – A Better World for All* (Devarajan et al., 2002). The DAC report states: “Increased prosperity in the developing countries demonstrably expands markets for the goods and services of the industrialised countries” (Development Assistant Committee, 1996, p. 5). Hence, capitalist countries’ market expansion can be the major objective of the MDG programme.

Critics such as Hulme (2009), Fukuda-Parr (2011), Saith (2006) and Vandemoortele (2011) argue that the MDG programme is the result of an agreement between the UN staff and those of the World Bank, IMF and OECD for exploiting the resources of poorer countries. The DAC report explicitly describes this motive as follows:

Those of us in the industrialised countries have a strong moral imperative to respond to the extreme poverty and human suffering that still afflict more than one billion people. We also have a strong self-interest in fostering increased prosperity in the developing countries. (Development Assistant Committee, 1996, p. 1)

The DAC report reveals that the OECD is not an altruistic body: its aim is to exploit the markets and resources in poorer countries. Therefore, the vision of the MDGs may be to tap the resources in less developed countries (LDCs) and streamline the globalisation process.

Essentially, the MDGs are a synthesis of the international development goals agreed upon at the UN social development conferences and global summit meetings of the 1990s, under different agencies (Sarver, 2010). The MDGs are a set of goals that emerged neither from an analysis of development constraints in each of the poor countries, nor from regional planning (S. Fukuda-Parr & Hulme, 2011). The programme was neither an outcome of a poor countries’ poverty summit, nor a programme planned by the poor countries themselves. Therefore, it may not have the potential to remove the root causes of poverty that are experienced by the recipient countries. These goals may provide a new instrument for mobilizing action, but do not seem to provide a new strategy for development (Fukuda-Parr, 2004).

According to Samir (2006), the MDGs can be a way of lifting the trade barriers in poorer countries. In other words, the MDG could be a programme organised by Bretton Woods' organizations (the IMF, World Bank and World Trade Organization) for controlling the development activities in poorer countries. If so, the MDG programme could probably be the next instrument of dependency-making for developed countries (DCs) (Nafziger, 2005). Dependency making can be seen in the large scale institutional and welfare expansion in the LDCs, using MDG programme funding. Once that funding is over, LDCs will have to depend on the DCs for the continuation of the schemes (Duggan & Hubbard, 2009). Therefore, poorer countries are at the mercy of the sponsoring countries and will have to be dependents of them. An example of this move is that the US government threatened to withhold its contributions to UN agencies unless reforms to its liking were instituted (Saith, 2006).

Kruger (2005) argued that the World Bank is keeping track of the MDGs where the level of poverty is measured on political grounds. Since the World Bank itself is a political institution, it cannot be impartial. The World Bank is to be considered the catalyst that facilitates the process of economic imperialism by capitalist countries. According to Freire (1996), for the capitalist oppressors, what is worthwhile is to have and to be in the class of the 'haves'. Hence, every programme they plan and introduce in poorer countries should have an agenda of possession. In this unrestrained eagerness to 'possess', the oppressor countries develop the conviction that it is possible for them to transform everything into objects of their purchasing power. Such ideology reflects their materialistic concept of existence. Money becomes the measure of all things and profits the most desired outcome. Freire's writings suggest that the MDG programme is the name of such an initiative.

By maintaining the currency value in their favour, capitalist countries are able to tilt global resources, both natural and human, in their favour. This process intensifies in the free market competition between capitalist countries. The MDG programme itself can be considered as an

organised attempt in this direction. Losing the resources will indeed accelerate poverty in poorer countries in spite of all these aids. The agreements that are inked in the backdrop of the MDGs suggest that the vision of the MDG programme is to tap the resources in less developed countries (Duggan & Hubbard, 2009).

The MDG programme provides funding for the opening of a large number of schools and hospitals in the poorer countries, for the provision of free education and health (Duggan & Hubbard, 2009), without generating sources of income for the people and government. Richer countries have distributed over one trillion dollars in foreign aid over the last sixty years without accomplishing much progress (Duggan & Hubbard, 2009; Gulrajani, 2010). Ayittey (2005) argues that in the last 10 to 20 years, over \$450 billion had been given to Africa by different international aid agencies such as the World Bank, IMF and others. However, only 22 per cent of it has been reinvested in Africa. In short, after 2015, once the MDGs funding is over, poor country governments will fail to maintain these institutions, and for that they will sign a new agreement which would ultimately surrender their economic freedom (Duggan & Hubbard, 2009). Thus, aid will flourish as a big business.

Exploring how each MDG will benefit the developed countries may be beyond the scope of this research. Yet, inquiring about the motive behind MDG 2 shows that, in the event of an ageing population in the richer countries, they are struggling to compete with the newly emerging industrialised nations. Therefore, after natural resources, they are looking for international students and the human resource from the developing nations. Therefore, promotion of modern education in these developing countries is the best source of a cheap skilled labour force for the richer countries (Blinder, 2006).

A number of scholarly journals speak of the negative consequences of 'brain-drain' to poorer countries, whereby skilled workers emigrate to developed countries (eg. Cuhls, 2007; Docquier, Lohest, & Marfouk,

2007; Meso, 2007). It is estimated that 56 per cent of the skilled workforce of the Seychelles migrated to OECD countries, and 85 per cent migrated from Jamaica (Docquier et al., 2007). Meso (2007) argued that developed countries on the whole have large numbers of scientists and healthcare and other professionals in their population, whereas developing countries may have just a handful. A major obligation of any government to its population is to pursue and implement policies that increase numbers of these key professionals to a desirably stable level. However, it is apparent that poor people in the poorer countries are dying due to the lack of medical facilities and health workers while the best-qualified, highly skilled medical professionals from these countries are working in the OECD countries. In terms of Kerala, more than 25 to 30 per cent of workers in highly skilled occupations are now living outside the state. The potential negative impact of this 'brain drain' on Kerala's development could be significant (Meso, 2007; Zachariah & Rajan, 2012).

3.3.3 Measurability of goals.

Vandemoortele (2011), former chief of the MDG programme planning at the UN argues that the quality of education, the affordability of water, good governance, social justice and human rights (i.e. civil and political rights) and several other areas covered in the Millennium Declaration were not included in the MDGs, by reason of their non-measurability of their success. Non-economic indicators such as permanent housing and household infrastructure, and civil rights such as the right to participate in elections, and participation in local projects are not included in the MDGs (Sumner, 2004). Therefore, more than poverty eradication, the UN wants to project some figures of change whether it is happening naturally or through MDG initiatives.

All eight MDGs are targeted at reducing poverty, but MDG indicator calculations do not comply with the realities of poverty, because for the calculation of poverty, the World Bank relies on the country's data, which are the least accurate (Kruger, 2005). Examination of the World

Bank database has also revealed that most of the poorer countries did not have any data regarding indicators of poverty before the beginning of the MDG programme (World Bank, 2011). As a result, many assumptions about poverty are poorly founded.

Of the 171 developing countries, at least a third of the countries' governments could not maintain the data and necessary records pertaining to the indicators of the MDGs, and obvious bureaucratic failures add to it (Kruger, 2005). Generalising the available country records for all these countries is simply inappropriate. It is argued that a third of all developing countries have no data collected between 1990 and 2000 for net primary school enrolment, adult literacy, infant mortality, under five year old mortality and maternal mortality, and access to improved water sources and adequate sanitation (Kruger, 2005; Sumner, 2004). Therefore, the MDG projections are based on inaccurate data.

Poverty is measured in many countries based on the calories of food consumed, including India. But these calculations are based only on goods delivered to the market, which ignores the tremendous amount of home grown food (Amin, 2006). Food habits and food varieties also need to be considered in this assessment, but it is difficult and hardly possible. For example, the people of Kerala have very high standards of living and health compared to the rest of India with the lowest per capita food intake (Sen, 1999).

On the contrary, if poverty is estimated based on the country data, the estimation will vary from country to country based on the methodology adopted in each country to measure it. Section 3.5 of this chapter describes more about the inaccuracies in the measurement of poverty. However, the concept of measurability has implications for most of the UN poverty eradication planning, including the MDGs. In the words of Vandemoortele (2011):

In an age where numbers prevail, it was decided that only those targets with agreed indicators and with robust data were to be

included in MDG. This is why the quality of education, the affordability of water, good governance, social justice and human rights (i.e. civil and political rights) and several other areas covered in the Millennium Declaration were not included in the MDGs. (p. 4)

Vandemoortele's (2011) argument also proves that the MDG programme has ignored many of the social interventions necessary for poverty eradication such as human rights, addressing social exclusion and opportunities, citing non-measurability. Essentially, human rights, social exclusion and opportunities are neglected in the MDGs, in preference for other measurable indicators of poverty.

The day-to-day reporting of the rise and fall of poverty is fictitious in the form it appears in the MDGs' monitoring reports, because poverty is not easy to measure, define or evaluate in the short term (Kruger, 2005). In terms of literacy, being 'literate' is a relative concept; there is no defined cut-off point for being 'illiterate' (Sumner, 2004), and different countries have different parameters to measure literacy. For many countries it is just the minimum ability of being able to read and write their name, which often does not serve the purpose. Therefore, it is difficult to assess from what standpoint MDG defined 759 million adults as 'illiterates' in the world in the year 2000.

3.3.4 MDG achievements: A review.

The 2013 MDG programme report claims that poverty rates have been halved, and about 700 million fewer people lived in conditions of extreme poverty in 2010 than in 1990 (UN, 2013). For argument's sake, even if the income poverty measure can be considered valid, the report hides the fact that in China, extreme poverty dropped from 60 per cent in 1990 to 12 per cent by 2010, which alone can be 600 million people. Nevertheless, there is no basis for the claim that poverty declined in China due to the MDG programme (United Nations, 2010). Moreover, the MDG director Jeffrey Sachs (2005), in his book *The End of Poverty*, points out that the 550 years of economic decline and poverty of China

was alleviated when Western-educated Chinese economists envisioned a new China of prosperity and progress and thus cut 60 per cent of its poverty by 2000.

Also in contradiction to the 2013 MDG programme report, the number of people living on less than \$1.25 per day has risen from 290 million to 440 million in Sub-Saharan Africa since 2000. Hence, the claim that the MDG programme has already achieved its target by halving the number of people below the poverty line is arguably based on the outcomes of economic growth made by some of the most populated countries in the last two decades, not those as a direct result of this programme (UN, 2013; UNDP, 2014).

On a more reliable basis, the Human Development Report (HDR) published in July 2014 points that when the MDGs expire in 2015, more than 2.2 billion people are vulnerable to multidimensional poverty (UNDP, 2014). At the time of writing, 1.2 billion people still live on less than \$1.25 a day. The UNDP HDR posits that, while progress has been made, the MDG programme is on shaky ground because of economic crises, social unrest, conflict and climate change. The proportion of people living with an income of below \$1.25 per day has not halved, or even decreased in the last 14 years (UNDP, 2014). A more realistic assessment is that,

[a]bout 1.65 billion people in the 104 countries covered by the global MPI 2013 live in multidimensional poverty with acute deprivation in health, education and standards of living; this exceeds the number of people in those countries who live on USD 1.25 per day or less. (Alkire et al., 2013, p. 47)

Further, a brief review of the MDGs in the UN millennium development goal report of 2010 shows that the results are far behind the objectives of the MDG programme (United Nations, 2010). According to that report, only about half of the developing world's population are using improved sanitation. Of the 47 African countries, 42 are considered "off track" for at least half of the targets and 12 countries are "off track" for

all targets (United Nations, 2010). The same report indicates that the numbers of undernourished people have risen from 817 million in 1990 to 830 million in 2007. The monitoring report of MDG 2 finds that, out of the 45 African countries, 27 of these countries are not even expected to break the 50 per cent primary school completion threshold by 2015 (UN Millennium Project, 2005).

A status report of the progress of literacy in India since the beginning of the MDG programme shows that literacy rates increased only 9.2 per cent between 2001 and 2011, compared with the literacy growth rate of 12.6 per cent between 1991 and 2001 (Census of India, 2011). Therefore, under the MDG programme, India's literacy rate stagnated compared to the normal growth rate and the total number of children enrolled in school has increased only six per cent internationally (UN Millennium Project, 2005).

Other international indicators are also unfavourable in terms of the MDG programme outcomes. Only 82 girls per 100 boys are still enrolled to school worldwide (United Nations, 2010). Over the period 1999-2009, 14 African countries enrolled less than 60 per cent of the children of the relevant age in primary school (Aiglepierre & Wagner, 2013).

The number of people living with HIV has increased from 27 million in the year 2000 to 33 million in 2009. Eighty per cent of people in rural areas in the world are still living without access to an improved drinking water source (United Nations, 2010). Despite all the efforts under the MDG programme, the growing number of refugees is an indicator of the persistence of the problems that it is addressing. These results vindicate my argument that the programme does not have the content necessary to eradicate poverty and signifies the need for further studies that can be more inclusive to understand and address the causes of poverty.

3.4 Poverty in the Context of the MDGs

The MDG programme definition of a poverty line (people who live on less than \$1.25 a day, based on the assumption that families typically

spend one-third of their income on food) below which is considered impoverished, is unscientific because there is no particular threshold of income or expenditure above which people automatically become nourished (Kruger, 2005). To convert the \$1.25 poverty line into foreign currencies, the World Bank uses indices of purchasing power parity (PPP) that reflect the cost of buying a standard bundle of goods in each country; however most of the items that the poor consume are not traded on the world market (Kruger, 2005).

Another important disadvantage of using the MDG programme poverty line is that it treats all those that fall below the poverty line alike (Calkins, 1992). In the current context, the poverty line is not very applicable since it is a yardstick formed based on industrialised countries' social benefit schemes (Marshall, 1998), whereas most of the chronic poverty countries do not have social benefit schemes. It is not appropriate to use a money-based metric to measure the poverty of rural people who grow their own produce.

The book *The Untouchables: Subordination, Poverty and the State in Modern India*, written by Mendelsohn and Vicziany (1998), is a detailed and comparative analysis of the nature and causes of poverty in India. It iterates that the discrimination between people on the basis of purity and pollution, which are defined by caste, imposes exclusion and oppression and is the basis of poverty in India (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998). That is, almost half of the extreme poor in the world experience poverty mainly due to social causes, which are ignored in the MDG programme. The MDG programme is implemented in India with the same goals and targets as elsewhere, without paying attention to the perils of the caste system.

3.4.1 Definition of poverty.

If there was a universally accepted meaning, measurement and explanation for poverty, that would pave the way for more effective poverty eradication policies. However, the concept of poverty is debated in all poverty eradication programmes. Since the conceptualisation and

definition of poverty keeps changing, the approaches to address poverty also change. Although the definitions of poverty are variable, they can be grouped into three categories: commodities/material concepts, human capability-based theory and the multidimensional approach.

2.4.1.1 Material concepts of poverty.

The first category regards poverty as a material concept. The World Bank (1990) definition of poverty, ‘the inability to attain a minimal standard of living’, has been most widely accepted among planners and policy makers, mainly due to the growing influence of the World Bank in fiscal policies internationally. Hence, poverty statistics in most parts of the world are based on a money-metric notion of poverty. Traditionally people were considered poor when they lacked the resources to get the things they need. Townsend (1997) defined poverty as an income- or resource-driven concept. Ashton (1984) defined poverty as the lack of money necessary to meet basic human needs. Similarly, Wilson (1985) argued that poverty means not having enough money to buy oneself out of deprivation.

Thus in the first group of definitions, poverty was looked at from an economic point of view rather than a sociological perspective. George (1988) argued that poverty consists of the lack of a core of basic necessities as well as a list of other necessities that change over time and place. Baratz and Grigsby (1971) defined poverty as a severe lack of physical and mental well-being closely associated with inadequate economic resources and consumption. Ringen (1988) likewise argued that poverty is a standard of consumption, which is below what is generally considered to be a decent minimum.

2.4.1.2 Capability theory of poverty.

Nobel laureate Amartya Sen introduced the human capability theory of poverty. According to Sen (1999), poverty is the denial of choices and opportunities for a tolerable life, therefore indicators of poverty are lack of education or denial of human rights to be treated equally. Sen sees capability as part of living a good life; capability being the substantive freedoms people enjoy to lead the kind of life they have reason to value,

such as social functioning, better basic education, healthcare, and longevity (Sen, 1999). If human development is about enlarging choices, poverty means that opportunities and choices most basic to human development are denied (Sen, 1999). According to Sen (2000), there is not much of a relationship between people's wealth and their ability to live as they would like; therefore, economic growth and income are poor predictors of capability.

For Sen (1999), freedom (not development) is the ultimate goal of economic life as well as the most efficient means of realizing general welfare. According to Sen (1999), development should be seen as the expansion of human capabilities, not the maximization of utility, or its proxy, financial income. The capability approach rejects monetary income as its measure of well-being and instead focuses on indicators of the freedom to live a valued life. In this framework, poverty is defined as deprivation in the area of capabilities, or failure to achieve certain minimal or basic capabilities, where 'basic capabilities' are the ability to satisfy certain crucially important functions up to certain minimally adequate levels (Sen, 1997). In the capability approach, well-being is seen as the freedom of individuals to live lives that are valued; that is, the realization of their human potential (Stewart et al., 2007).

Sen argues that development should be characterised as an expansion of human capabilities; namely, a measure of the freedom that people enjoy in choosing the kind of lives they want to lead. Therefore, economic development is best seen as a process of expanding the capabilities of people, which means that Sen opposes the conventional commodity-centric development model (Omkarnath, 1997).

Building on Sen's definition of poverty, Mahbub-ul Haq introduced the Human Poverty Index (HPI) and Human Development Report (HDR). Capability theory, and the HPI and HDR, inspired a paradigm shift in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) approach to poverty. The concept of poverty began to concentrate on three aspects of human deprivation: longevity, literacy, and living standard (UNDP,

2010). Longevity is measured by the percentage of people who die before the age of 40 years; literacy by the percentage of adults who are literate; and living standard by a combination of the percentage of the population with access to health services, the percentage of the population with access to safe water, and the percentage of malnourished children under five years of age (UNDP, 2010). The UNDP methodology of formulating the HPI also uses multiple deprivation as indicators of poverty such as survival deprivation, deprivation of education and deprivation in economic provisioning with respect to safe water, health services and under-nourished children (Vijayanand, 2001).

More recently, expansions on capability definitions of poverty have focussed more on the right of people to live a decent life as reflected in the latest definitions:

- a) Poverty is a situation that deprives individuals of the capability to enjoy human rights (UN Millennium Project, 2005);
- b) Poverty is the inability to attain a minimum standard of living (FAO, 2001); and
- c) Poverty is a set of social relationships in which people are excluded from participation in the normal pattern of social life (Narayan, 2010).

Therefore, if human development is about enlarging choices, poverty means that opportunities and choices most basic to human development are denied.

In order for the MDG programme framework to be consonant with the capability theory, the UN has broadened the concept of poverty in the World Development Report 2000/2001. It defined poverty as: “a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information” (World Bank, 1999, p. 13). Thus, the UN concept of poverty depends on income and access to services.

2.4.1.3 Multidimensional poverty index (MPI).

A more recent and widely accepted approach to poverty is the multidimensional poverty index (MPI) developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) (Alkire & Santos, 2010). The MPI assesses poverty at the individual level, with poor persons being those who are multiply deprived, and the extent of their poverty being measured by the range of their deprivations (Alkire & Santos, 2010). Taking inspiration from the capability theory of Amartya Sen, this theory has been developed by refining and including more areas such as work, health, nutrition, education, services, housing and assets, among others. An assessment of deprivation in all these areas will provide a new category of people falling under the category of poverty; they are the multidimensionally poor (Sabina, 2013). Concurring with the above definition, it is broadly agreed that poverty is multidimensional and that successful poverty reduction rests on understanding these dimensions through the active participation of poor people in all stages of developing that understanding (Akindola, 2009).

However, based on my studies on the nature and characteristics of poverty in Kerala, it is my contention that all the above definitions are referring to the objective realities of poverty, ignoring the causes and context of poverty. Literature regarding poverty in India reveals that poverty is not just a phenomenon but it is a consequence. As a part of investigating the factors leading to poverty, the working definition of poverty for this PhD thesis is “a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs and capabilities due to oppression, denial of freedom and opportunities, and imposed social exclusion”.

3.5 Measuring Poverty

Human lives are battered and diminished in all kinds of different ways, which form the basis of poverty. Therefore, if there were an accepted meaning, measurement and explanation for poverty, that would pave the way for more effective poverty eradication policies. However, as with the definition of poverty, the measurement of poverty is also debated in

all poverty eradication programmes. Since the conceptualisation and definition of poverty keeps changing, the approaches to address poverty also change.

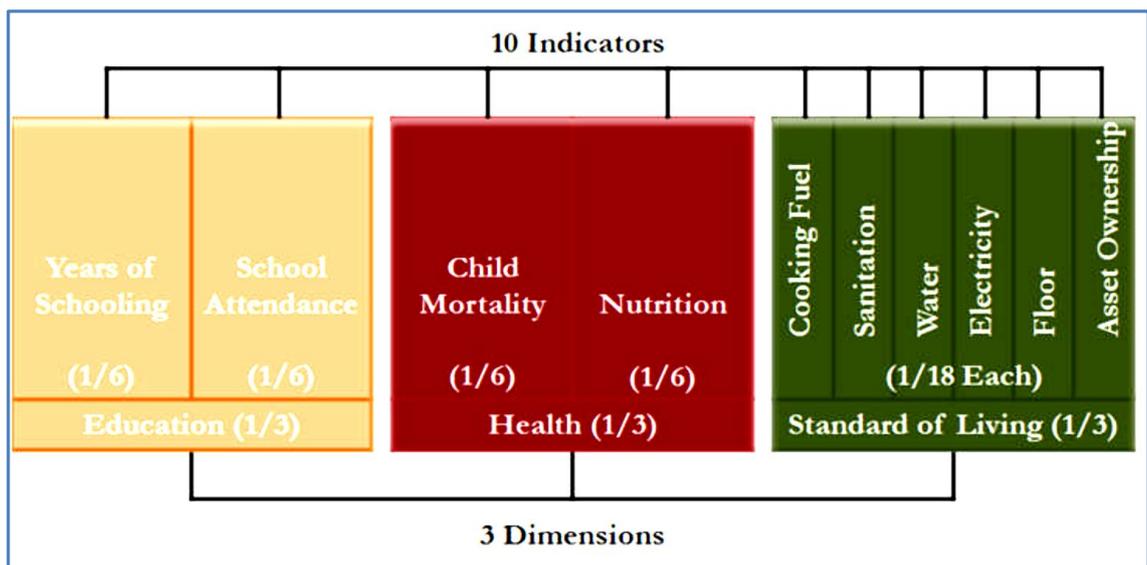
The monetary approach to the identification and measurement of poverty is the most commonly used because of its convenience to proxy other aspects of welfare and poverty and the feasibility of providing statistical evidence. Poverty lines are used as a measure of poverty to target services effectively using monetary measures or income based consumption measures, as it is used in India. Poverty lines are used as the cut off points separating the poor from the non-poor. The poverty line is the level of income below which a person cannot afford to purchase all the resources one requires to live (K. Rajan, 2009).

However, the poverty line is not a universally accepted measure of poverty. Problems in identifying a poverty line stem from the fact that there is no theory of poverty that would clearly differentiate the poor from the non-poor. Ravallion (2011) suggests two methods: one is the Food Energy Intake Method, which essentially amounts to a nutritionally based poverty line; the other is a 'cost of basic needs' line; both methods starting with food and adding a non-food component. Rowntree defined the poverty line by estimating the monetary requirements for a nutritionally adequate diet together with estimated needs for clothing and rent (as cited in K. Rajan, 2009).

As discussed in section 3.1.2, income-based measurement is based on outmoded and inappropriate concepts. Therefore, income-based measurement of poverty is just an easy method, not a suitable method. While poverty is regarded as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, its quantification remains essentially one-dimensional, which reinforces the money-metric perspective of the MDG programme. This mismatch between the phenomena of poverty and its measurement can be viewed as a paradox and is also potentially a barrier to the effective implementation of the MDGs (Vandemoortele, 2011).

Another issue concerning measuring poverty is the unit over which poverty is measured, whether it is defined at the level of the individual or the family. Similarly, people move in and out of poverty over seasons and years, and therefore the longer the time perspective the less poverty will appear (Stewart et al., 2007). Furthermore, to assess the progress of the MDG programme, the UNDP is helping countries to develop progress reports based on national data. However, a country is a complex unit in terms of its comparability to others. Comparing countries with populations of less than one million with countries whose populations total over one billion is not logical and the deprivation levels of huge populations goes unnoticed in this type of percentage report. Therefore, there is uniformity but no validity in the quantification of poverty.

The MPI involves distinct and broader aspects of poverty in their measurement. The MPI calculates poverty using a set of indicators, cut-offs and weights for each person with three dimensions such as health, education and living standards; and ten indicators such as nutrition, child mortality, years of schooling, school attendance, cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, flooring and assets (see Figure 2.1) (Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative [OPHI], 2014).



Source: Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative [OPHI] (2014, p. 1)

Figure 3.1. MPI indicators of poverty.

The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) measure of poverty gives an entirely different statistical profile of poverty. For example, according to this method, in Ethiopia 90 per cent of people are 'MPI poor' compared to the UNDP statistic of 39 per cent who are classified as living in extreme poverty (living on below \$1.25 per day). Conversely, 89 per cent of Tanzanians are classified as poor according to the UNDP statistics, compared to 65 per cent who are MPI poor (Alkire et al., 2013). According to their estimates, over 80 per cent of the MPI poor and MPI severe poor live in ten countries, mostly in South Asia and 40 per cent of the MPI poor and 40 per cent of the MPI severe poor of the world live in India alone. Poverty varies hugely within the country according to these studies; for example, while 12 per cent of people are MPI poor in Kerala, 80 per cent are MPI poor in Bihar. Furthermore, 2.1 per cent are severely poor in Kerala; in contrast, 53.5 per cent are severely poor in Bihar. The MPI indicators also suggest that, among all the provinces of India (Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal), Kerala has the lowest level of poverty (see Appendix C for details) (Alkire et al., 2013; Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative [OPHI], 2014).

3.6 Poverty in India

To target services effectively, India has developed its own poverty line by which families are categorized as living below the poverty line and thus eligible for various government benefits. In India, poverty is officially linked to a nutritional baseline, which is measured in calories. In 1992, the identification of poor households was directly based on self-reported income. The 1992 Below Poverty Line (BPL) survey conducted by the Ministry of Rural Development found that up to 60-70 per cent of people live below the poverty line in some states of India, with an average of 52.9 per cent in rural poverty, which was far different from the NSSO estimation of 26.10 per cent for the Planning Commission (Hirway, 2003; K. Rajan, 2009).

While the Planning Commission refers to nutrition-based income poverty, the BPL census of 2002 defines poverty using 13 indicators that include a wide range of areas, such as landholding, housing, food security, water supply and sanitation, literacy and migration. However, that study was also least practical, as it did not consider many of the material aspects. Firstly, for example, families owning less than two hectares can be included in the BPL list, despite the land being worth millions of rupees and owned by wealthy people in Kerala, unlike land of a similar area in other sparsely populated states which is worth much less. Secondly, not having a television or refrigerator is a criterion to be included in BPL list; more well-off people in the rural areas do not bother to own a fridge, especially in areas where there is no electricity; at the same time even the poorest people in the slums may also have a television (Hirway, 2003). Once again, this third approach of measuring poverty representing a completely different picture further suggests that accurate identification of poverty in India continues to be a puzzle (see Table 2.1).

Table 3.1***Incidence of Poverty using Different Criteria***

No	Village	NSSO Survey* (%)	BPL Survey** (%)	Multiple*** Criteria (%)
1	Kansagar	13.17	90.38	35.08
2	Limaj	13.17	78.07	33.33
3	Nasipur	13.17	78.15	34.43
4	Bavka	13.17	92.14	27.52
5	Ranol	13.17	27.50	17.14
6	Jadia	13.17	36.86	12.24

Source: Hirway (2003, p. 4806)

Note: *Village-wise poverty data are not available so the state average is used. It is calculated based on nutrition-based income poverty; it is the Planning Commission's data for the calculation of benefits.

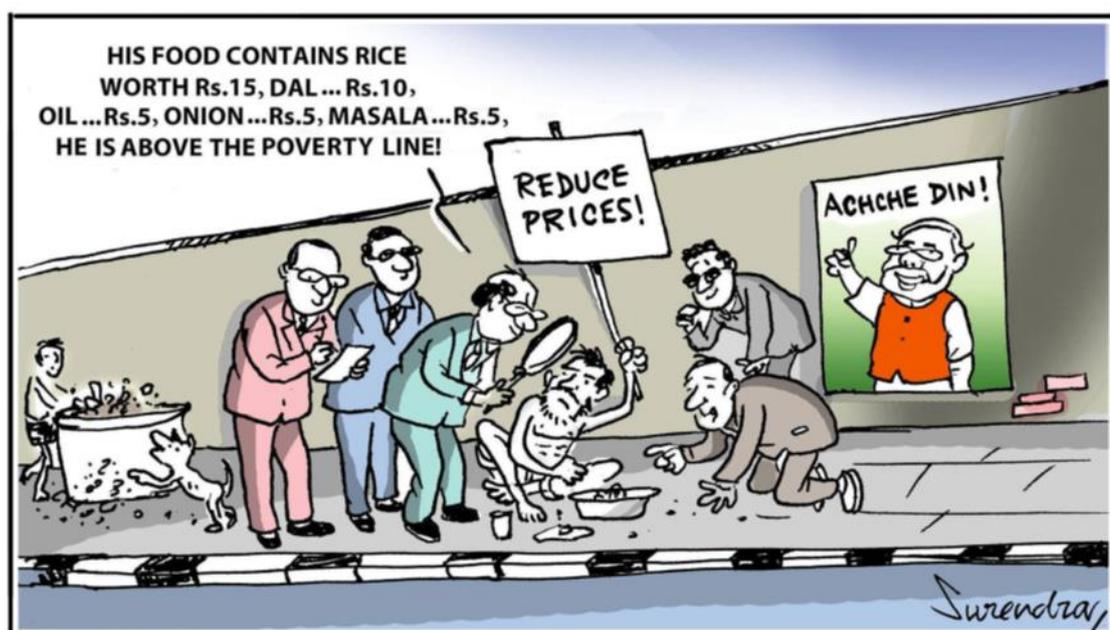
**'Report of 'The Expert Group on Identification of Households Below Poverty Line' (BPL Census 2002)', submitted to Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

*** Multiple criteria used by an agency to measure and validate the other two findings of poverty (Hirway, 2003).

The Planning Commission of India estimated the proportion and the number of the poor separately for rural and urban India at the national and state levels based on the recommendations of the 'Task Force on Projections of Minimum Needs and Effective Consumption Demands' of 1979 (Hirway, 2003). The Task Force had defined the poverty line (BPL) as the cost of an all-India average consumption basket at which calorie norms were met. The norms were 2,400 calories per capita per day for rural areas and 2,100 calories for urban areas. As per these calculations, until the beginning of the MDGs, the Planning Commission's poverty line was based on per capita monthly expenditure of Rs. 49 for rural areas and Rs. 57 for urban areas (Mander, 2012).

However, complying with the internationally accepted poverty line of one dollar per person per day, in 2004 the Suresh Tendulkar committee

computed a poverty line in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms equal to one dollar; that was Rs.33.33 in cities and Rs.27.20 in villages (M. Shah, 2013). Ironically, the updated new poverty estimates of Rs. 29 per person per day released by the Planning Commission in 2013 are equivalent, in PPP terms, to the new internationally updated poverty line of \$1.25 (while writing, the actual exchange value of a US dollar is \$1=Rs.62). With this juggling of numbers, the Planning Commission has released data indicating that poverty has declined dramatically, from 400 million people living below the poverty line in the year 2005, to 270 million in 2012; that is from 37.2 per cent to 21.9 per cent respectively, which is reported as an MDG programme impact. It has ultimately helped the government to exclude almost 130 million extreme poor from all government benefits (most of the participants in my empirical work are so excluded from the BPL list) (M. Shah, 2013). The cartoon (figure. 2.2) shows the conundrum of such exclusion.

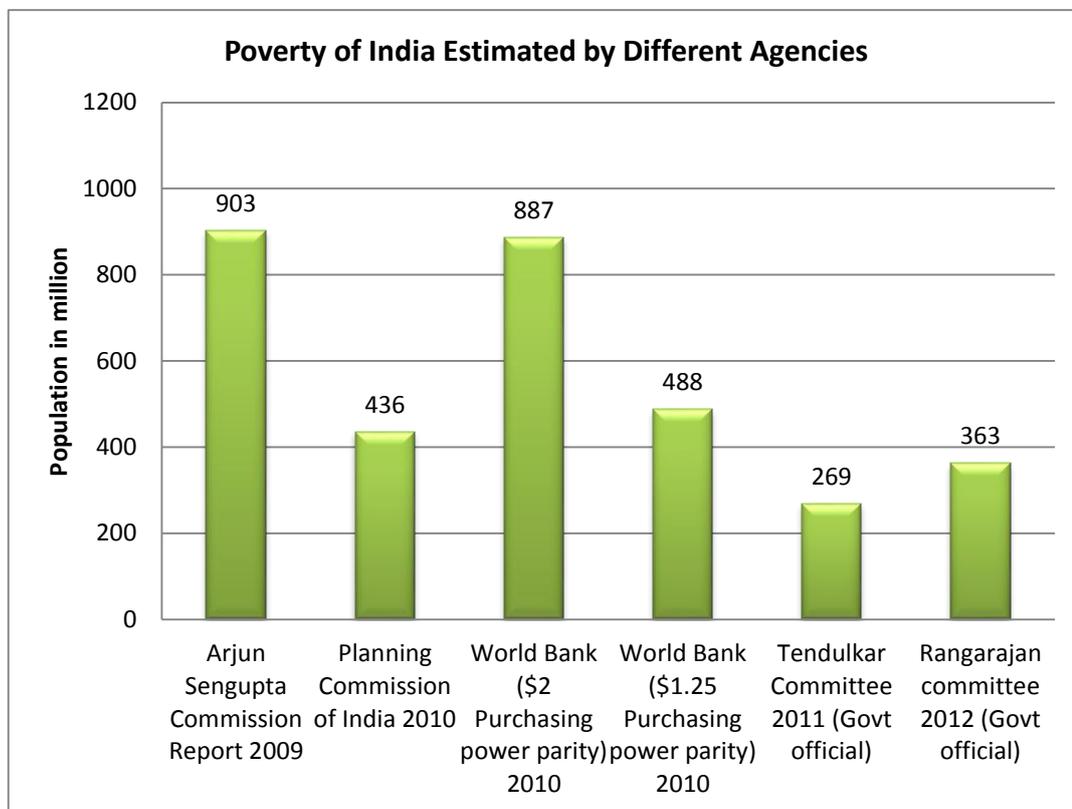


Source: The Hindu 8th July 2014, p.8 Retrieved from <https://epaper.thehindu.com/index.php?rt=index/index>

Figure 3.2. Cartoon showing the ambiguity of poverty line.

Note: This thought provoking cartoon mocks the consumption-based income poverty estimation, following the Planning Commission's poverty line benchmark of Rs.29 amidst a price hike, which left millions of poor out of the poverty line and social benefit schemes.

Consonant with all those illegitimate calculations of poverty the national poverty estimations by different agencies (see Figure 2.3) reveal the inaccuracy in the estimation of poverty.



Source: Author's drawing based on different sources.

Figure 3.3. Chart showing the variance in different agencies' estimation of poverty.

From the above discussions and the chart showing extremely dissimilar estimation of poverty it is apt to conclude that estimates of poverty are quite unrealistic. Rather than reflecting the actual situation in regards to poverty, they are an exercise for the convenience of policy makers. Therefore, in this research I have ignored these numbers and the BPL list, and selected those who experience absolute poverty, by identifying their projected characteristics.

3.6.1 Who are the poor in India?

It is crucial to differentiate the poor from the non-poor, but the estimation, as described above, is so variable as to be of little practical use, and hence benefits seldom reach the needy; thus the use of the

poverty line as a method of allocating resources has no justification (K. Rajan, 2009). At a theoretical level, the possibility of identifying poverty relies on the crucial assumption that there is some form of discontinuity between the poor and the non-poor, which can be reflected in the poverty line. As it stands, the poverty line between the poor and non-poor is defined with reference to the \$1.25 (PPP) allocation; and it is argued here this is undermining the reality of poverty in India as it impacts on people's lives.

However, anyone who understands the history and causes of poverty in India would assume that these money-metric measures, designed by economists for use in industrialised countries, are not appropriate for the Indian context. Most studies on poverty in India have underscored that forms of social oppression such as discrimination, social exclusion and exploitation are the chief causes of poverty (M. Desai, 2003; K. A. Mehta & Shah, 2003; Sengupta, 2007; Thurston & Rangachari, 2001). Apparently, as a result of those oppressive practises, now 80 per cent of Dalits, as a marginalised and excluded people, experience poverty even by the lowest monetary measure (Planning Commission of India, 2009). Mendelsohn and Vicziany (1998) posit that the edifice of that medieval discrimination, such as the social exclusion and untouchability imposed on the Dalits, persists in India even now, which is a cause of intergenerational poverty. Hence, a sociological perspective of poverty is more appropriate for the Indian context than a money-metric measure of poverty.

3.6.2. The Dalits of India.

Concurring with many of the studies conducted about the causes of poverty in India, Mehta and Shah (2003), in a research article titled '*Chronic Poverty in India: Incidence, Causes and Policies*', found that in rural India, Dalits who work for the high caste do not dare to ask for payment from their masters, since their ancestors were content with food alone. In another study, Sengupta (2007) found that even after half a century of independence, the deprived Dalits are under constant

exploitation which deepens their vulnerability and poverty. Numerous poverty studies (M. Desai, 2003; K. A. Mehta & Shah, 2003; Sengupta, 2007; Thurston & Rangachari, 2001) have upheld this point that, more than any other cause of poverty, it is the history of caste-based oppression, denial of opportunities to the Dalits, and the lack of freedom for all to realise their capabilities that are the main causes of poverty in India. Thus, poverty of the most oppressed Dalits needs to be studied here.

Dalits are not considered as a particular caste, but all those thousands of oppressed endogamous *Jatis* seen in different parts of India with different names and traditions together are called Dalits (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998). *Jatis* are small endogamous groups tied to a specific occupation, based in a village or group of villages. Their social ranks are defined by birth and maintained by their traditional “polluting” occupations called *Kulathozhil* (P. D. Mehta, 1944; Olcott, 1944).

The caste system of India is based on *varna* (colour/caste) and *dharma* (work/duty); it traditionally has divided the society into four *varnas* and associated *dharmas* (Charsley, 1996). According to ancient popular Hindu law book *Manusmriti*, the first three *varnas* (Brahmins, Kshatriya and Vaisya) are *dvijas* (twice-born people), whereas the fourth *varna* *Shudra* are non-*dvija* (once-born) (Charsley, 1996; Schwartz, 1989). Hence, the upper-castes should be venerated and lower castes should be excluded from learning, practicing or even hearing *Vedas*⁴; and their *dharma* is only serving the *dvijas*. This centuries’ old theory became the key to all forms of exclusion such as from education, wealth and social participation.

The most popular theory of the caste system, according to Bose (1990) is:

⁴ *Vedas* are a large body of texts originating in ancient India (before 1500 BC). Composed in *Vedic* Sanskrit, the texts constitute the oldest layer of Sanskrit literature and the oldest scriptures of Hinduism.

Brahmins, who are a priestly caste, are created from the mouth of Brahma (Supreme Being). Kshatriyas, who are warriors and rulers, were created from the arms of Brahma; Vaishyas, who are merchants, were derived from the thighs of Brahma; and Sudras, who are servants and artisans, were derived from the feet of Brahma. Those who fall outside the four categories are the Dalits or the Untouchables, the most oppressed and exploited social group. (p.50)

Essentially, the caste system has been accompanied by its destructive mechanisms, such as Untouchability and stratification. According to Charsley (1996), the Untouchables are not the fourth *varna* but they are the out-castes; meaning they were never ideologically included in the *varna* system of Hindu society. Ilaiah (2002) in his popular book, '*Why I Am Not a Hindu: A Sudra Critique of Hindutva, Philosophy*', argued that there are few socio-economic and cultural similarities between the Hindus and the Dalits. Ultimately, Ilaiah (2002) concludes that for a Dalit what matters is that his/her life is crushed and denigrated beyond comparison to the Hindus. However, in modern India, irrespective of arguments about whether they are attached or detached to the Hindu caste, their social position is not going to change.

According to the Aryanisation theory of the origin of the caste system, the invasion of the Aryans and the destruction of the Indus Valley culture has made the Dalits powerless and the Aryans powerful since around 600 BC (Bose, 1990). Before their arrival, the caste system was unknown in Dravidian society. The Aryans introduced heinous caste practises that deprived Dalits of every human right to live a decent life. They treated the Dalits as an exterior caste, outside of the four-fold Hindu caste system. Janagan and Patil (2010) posit that:

The oppression of Dalits has been a social curse for the past 3,000 years as they have been segregated in all spheres of social life; in places of worship, education, housing, and land

ownership; use of common property resources such as wells, village water taps, roads, buses and other public places. (p. 395)

Analysing the historical social position of Dalits, Schwartz (1989) has suggested that the Dalits are a permanently impure and degraded group on a par with unclean animals, required for removing polluting products such as human faeces and dead bodies. Quoting different historians and one of the oldest sources of census information of India, Mendelsohn and Vicziany (1998) argue that the Untouchables had never been considered as a part of the Hindu religion. It was Mahatma Gandhi who propagated the idea of integration of the Dalits into the Hindu religion. The upper caste census collectors were even reluctant to count the Dalits as humans in the 1881 census (Charsley, 1996).

The Dalits were also called Untouchables, outcastes, exterior castes or *Harijans*; and later, following the Government of India Act of 1935, the word Untouchables was replaced with a technical term, 'Scheduled Caste' (SC), in government documents (Charsley, 1996; Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998). All these words and phrases were how others named them; but when they united, they used the word Dalit to denote both their state of deprivation and oppression as a people. Hence, in this thesis I have used the word Dalit and also it has become the most common word used to denote all those oppressed Jatis. The word Dalit means crushed, downtrodden or destroyed (Eleanor, 2010; Janagan & Patil, 2010).

2.6.2.1 Dalits of Kerala.

From the medieval period, the social panorama of Kerala was comprised of upper caste Hindus (*Brahmins* and *Nairs*), Christians and Muslims, lower caste Hindus (*Ezhavas*) and *Dalits* in a respective hierarchical order (Nisar & Kandasamy, 2007; Oommen, 1996; Werff, 1982). In Kerala, the lowliest of the low in the Dalit hierarchy were *Pulayas*,

Pariahs/Parayas and *Kuravas* who were agrestic⁵ slaves and were usufruct for all above them (E. T. Mathew, 1999; Saradamoni, 1973).

Brahmins occupied the most superior position among the different castes in Kerala. Their high social status was interwoven with their ritual purity, wealth and political influence. They led a very luxurious, affluent life in palace-like houses. The Dalits were expected to keep at least 96 feet away from the Brahmins. Dalits were restricted from entering public roads, and using public places and public facilities such as wells. A Dalit's foot print would pollute a Brahmins path, so the caste code that was prevalent in Kerala prescribed them to tie a broom at their back to wipe out their polluting foot prints and a pot on their neck to collect their polluting spittle (Nisar & Kandasamy, 2007; Oommen, 1996; Werff, 1982).

The Dalits of Kerala were considered untouchable, unapproachable and even unseeable on the presumptive basis of their ritualistic impurity, rather than due to their *Kulathozhil*, which formed the most significant aspect of Dalits of Kerala than elsewhere (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998; Mohan, 2006; Werff, 1982). Unlike the Dalits who were used for menial work in North India, the Dalits of Kerala were slaves mostly used for cultivation; they were treated like animals; they were sold, mortgaged, rented and even killed for *Narabali* (human sacrifice) for pleasing the deities and had no voice of their own (Mohan, 2006; Werff, 1982).

Every wealthy man possessed his own slaves; the slaves were traded in the market for about one thousand years until it was abolished in the year 1861. There were slave laws, but they did not address the rights and duties of the slaves; rather they concerned inheritance rights, ownership and transactions. The slave owners had to pay a 'slave levy' to the government in accordance with the number of slaves they owned. Slaves were never allowed to enjoy a decent life, but were just allowed to procreate to provide more workers for labour (A. K. K. R. Nair, 1986; Saradamoni, 1973). There are no known parallels to this kind of caste

⁵ Rural, unpolished and related to the field.

discrimination anywhere else in India (Hjejle, 1967; Saradamoni, 1973; Werff, 1982).

However, the Dalits used to carry out the entire agricultural activities, from sowing the seeds to reaping the harvest. Often, for providing food at the farm and for supplying materials to the workers, the hierarchical chains of other lower caste people were used. In this process, Ezhava caste people would be working in between the Nair assistant of a Brahmin and the Dalit workers (Saradamoni, 1973).

3.7 Strategies to Alleviate and Eradicate Poverty

3.7.1 International context.

A review of literature (i.e. Ayitteyi, 2005; Easterly, 2006; S. Fukuda-Parr & Hulme, 2011; Parasuraman et al., 2003; Sarver, 2010) to analyse attempts to eradicate poverty shows how different countries have tried entirely different approaches to eradicate poverty before the introduction of the MDGs. Foreign aid and loans from international agencies such as the IMF and World Bank have been the chief instruments employed to eradicate poverty. But to what extent foreign aid reduces poverty is still a matter of serious debate.

In a series of papers, Boone (1994, 1996) argued that foreign aid has had little effect on poverty, development and growth, after reviewing a large sample of developing countries' poverty reduction attempts. Poverty in Africa is an example to show the ineffectiveness of foreign aid in eradicating poverty. Ayitteyi (2005) argued that, out of the \$450 billion donated by international agencies to African countries, in the last two decades of the 20th century only 22 per cent had been reinvested in Africa, and the rest was misused by corrupt and spendthrift rulers. Thus, instead of focusing on their own socio-economic development, some African nations are surviving only because of international aid. Ultimately, by the turn of the 21st century, 18 African countries had lower per capita income than in 1975 (Ayitteyi, 2005).

Moreover, it would be difficult for the income-based development approach to reach the poorest of the poor, mainly because the better among the poor will have an obvious chance to tip all the benefits allotted for the poor (Calkins, 1992), or that corrupt and spendthrift governments could misappropriate the aid for their own purposes (S. Fukuda-Parr & Hulme, 2011). It is also argued that aid only provides short-term relief rather than long-term transformation, which makes governments and people complacent so they do not try to work towards permanent ways of emerging out of poverty (Parasuraman et al., 2003). Overall, poverty eradication through foreign aid has made little headway so far (Ayittey, 2005; Sarver, 2010).

3.7.2 Poverty alleviation in India.

Poverty eradication targeting backward communities started in India only after the 1970s. Prior to that, the government followed a policy of large-scale investment in multinational industries, companies and projects with the notion that the benefits will trickle down to the poor at the bottom (K. Rajan, 2009). It took several years to realise that the benefits of economic growth remained in the developed areas and among the rich and bypassed the poorer areas and the poor sections of society. As a result, a vast majority of poor Indians were excluded from participating in the development of the country, which became a major cause of poverty and lack of development in India (Hirway, 2003).

The poverty line estimated at Rs. 29 per person per day is not substantial enough even to buy one kilogram of rice, so people of India have considered it a dangerous means of exclusion from the benefits of government programmes. Thus in many of the programmes hence, the government has moved away from using the poverty line as a cut-off point for entitlements. The Food Security Ordinance passed by the union government thus included 67 per cent of the people of India, which cost a trillion rupees in subsidies every year (Rukmini & Venu, 2013). Parallel to this, the Socio-Economic and Caste Census [SECC] (2011) suggests that the lowest earning 65 per cent of the population

should be considered as being below the poverty line (BPL). However, considering the Planning Commission estimate of 21 per cent BPL poor, Mehra (2013) argues that the cost of pushing all households above the poverty line would have less than half of the cost of food subsidies if cash transfers were used instead of such anti-poverty schemes.

When the Planning Commission's estimation of poverty was found inappropriate, some state governments, such as Kerala, conducted their own *Panchayat* (civic body)-based poverty surveys to identify the poor. The Kerala survey identified 42 per cent of the families of Kerala as poor, but the Planning Commission imposed a restriction that the BPL list should not exceed more than 10 per cent of their own estimate of 21 per cent (Hirway, 2003). That is one reason why many of the participants in my empirical studies belong to the BPL list but are not eligible for welfare benefits such as food rations.

Ravallion (2011) points out that in the 1980s, more than 80 per cent of the population of China was poor and this figure has dropped to below 5 per cent by 2010; whereas it has dropped only one per cent per year during the same time period in India, according to the World Bank estimates of 2011. China's market reform and micro planning, with the creation of extensive employment opportunities, is considered as the secret of this success; whereas India's poverty eradication programmes could not reduce poverty substantially.

The three major poverty eradication initiatives in India are the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), started in 1978; the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) started in 1999; and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), started in 2007. The IRDP was a major self-employment programme for poverty alleviation. The objective of the IRDP was to provide suitable income-generating assets through a mixture of subsidy and credit to below-poverty-line families, with a view of bringing them above the poverty line. However, the government was forced to withdraw this programme, understanding that majority of the extreme poor could

not pay back the loan. Studies found that most of the rural people who bought cattle or opened shops under this scheme sold them to meet emergencies and became further indebted (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998).

The SGSY was planned to replace the IRDP by generating employment opportunities. When the MDG programme started, the SGSY programme was further developed as the MGNREGS, which is the largest rural employment programme implemented in India. Provided for under statutory law since 2007, this programme guaranteed 100 days of work to the rural poor (Vij, 2011). The programme is highly criticised for its poor planning and execution. It is argued that the local elites capture and control the programme for their benefit (Vij, 2011). Due to the programme being one policy designed for the whole country, works undertaken in different parts of the country are unsuitable to local needs; hence, their participation is driven solely by money. It is not a programme exclusively meant for the poor; people both BPL and APL (above poverty line) are eligible to get work under this scheme (Vij, 2011). Its implementation is further discussed in Chapter 8, section 6. Hence, although India has experienced substantial economic growth, it has not yet translated into poverty eradication in an extensive way.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has critiqued the objectives and practical anomalies of the MDGs and argued that although poverty eradication is one of the pressing needs of the 21st century, when it is planned according to the interests of the OECD countries, it loses its focus on poverty eradication and becomes redirected to their market expansion. In a quest to understand poverty in monetary terms, a year before the MDG programme ends, the Millennium Project (2014) has claimed that poverty has halved internationally. On the other hand, other reports identify some of the appalling statistics on numbers of people dying due to hunger; increasing economic inequalities; increasing numbers of refugees; and derailed programmes.

With 1.65 billion people living in poverty with acute deprivation in health, education and standards of living in 2014, it is worth enquiring whether these figures would be different without the MDGs (UNDP, 2014). An analysis of the conceptualisation of the reasons behind the implementation of the MDG programme so far suggests that it was a means of lifting trade barriers. While this programme focuses on poor countries, those countries do not have reliable data pertaining to the specific goals of the MDGs. A detailed analysis of the causes of poverty will reveal that poverty is not just an objective reality to be measured 'out there', but is the consequence of social practises such as oppression, exclusion and denial of opportunities. Hence, it is my contention that by excluding non-measurable indicators of poverty, the MDG programme has been confined to a statistical, data gathering exercise rather than an emancipatory process from poverty.

CHAPTER FOUR

A BRIEF SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SKETCH OF KERALA

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on Kerala or Keralam (as it is used in Malayalam), popularly known as 'Gods own country'. The name is derived from the word *Kera*, which means coconut palm. Kerala is a state that lies on the South-Western coast of India, with lush green coconut groves as a major crop in the coastal belt. This chapter analyses the basic socio-economic, political and demographic characteristics of the State. The chapter is divided into four sections: the general demographic and community background of Kerala; socio-political context; economic context; and Kerala in the national context.

4.2 Kerala: General Background

The people who live on the western side of the Western Ghats who speak Malayalam are known as Malayalees, Keralans, or Keralites. As this area is geographically separated from the rest of India by the Western Ghats mountain range, it developed more trade relationships with the Persian countries lying to the west of India than the rest of India.

One of the disciples of Jesus Christ, St. Thomas, had been to Kerala and started churches in different parts of South India (Zachariah, 2001). Due to the presence of Christianity in Kerala, there was frequent interaction between Kerala and Syria, and Syrian migrant Christians settled in Kerala in the following years (Zachariah, 2001). Later, the first European explorer, Vasco Da Gama, reached Kerala in 1498. This

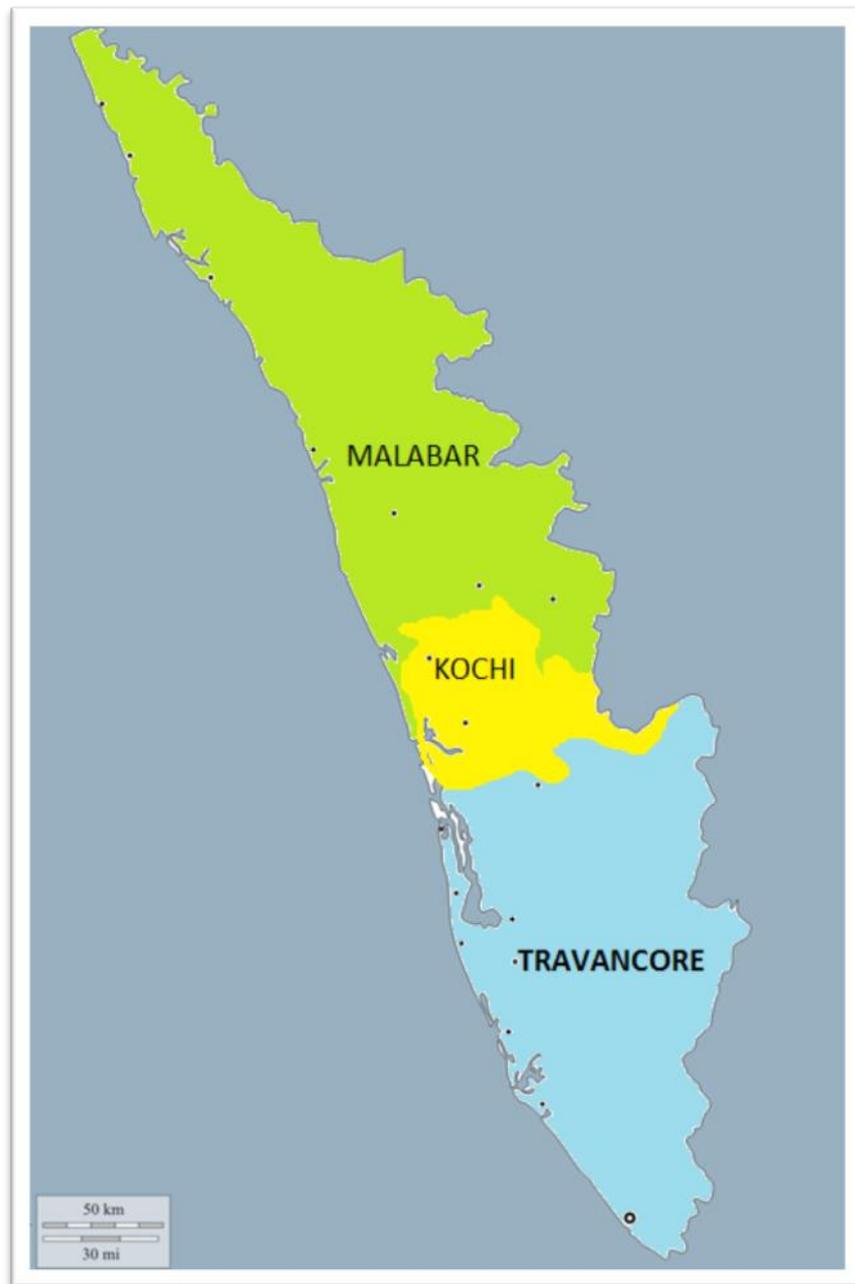
ushered in the era of trade between Kerala, which is the home of spices, with the European countries. Later, after the arrival of the Europeans, missionaries from different European countries settled in Kerala; mostly Catholic missionaries associated with the Syrian Catholic churches. Due to the close contact with the Arabian countries, Islam also spread into Kerala (A. Singh, 2010; Zachariah, 2001).

Prior to the establishment of the Chera Kingdom in the 7th century AD, there are no records of major socio-political developments recorded worth mentioning here. During the eleventh century, the Chera Kingdom conflicted with the Cholas, which led to the breakup of the Chera Empire. With the second invasion of Rajendra, the Chola king, in 1028 AD, the Chera Empire began to disintegrate and the power of the Brahmins was heightened (Kerala Secondary Education Board, 2010; Menon, 2007). Kerala lost its political unity and was divided into a number of independent principalities under the control of local Brahmin landlords. From time to time, this region fell under different smaller and larger kingdoms, but remained cohesive and in unity, as it was a single geographical unit using the same language. It continued until the end of the 18th century, until the establishment of the imperial government in India (Menon, 2007; Nisar & Kandasamy, 2007).

After 1800, Kerala remained under three political units: Malabar, Kochi and Travancore. The Treaty of Srirangapattanam⁶ brought Malabar under the direct control of the British queen and the Subsidiary Alliance⁷ brought Cochin and Travancore under British control; thus by the end of 18th century the entire state of Kerala came under British control (see Figure 3.1) (Kerala Secondary Education Board, 2010; E. T. Mathew, 1999).

⁶The British ruled Malabar directly according to the terms of the Treaty of Srirangapattanam (Kerala Secondary Education Board, 2010).

⁷Lord Wellesley, the Governor General of India, introduced the Subsidiary Alliance to bring the native states under British control. Accordingly, the responsibility of protecting the native states was with the British army. The expenditure of maintaining that army would be met by the states. These states lost their rights to keep their own army. The sole right of deciding foreign policy of these states was vested with the British. A British resident was sent to each state to ensure that the provisions of the agreement were observed. The mutually quarrelling native states considered this arrangement as an attractive one (Kerala Secondary Education Board, 2010).



Source: Prepared by the author with the help of information from different sources. Separate maps of Malabar Kochi and Travancore are given in the Appendix D.

Figure 0. Map of Kerala indicating erstwhile Malabar Kochi and Travancore.

When Britain decided to quit from India as a result of nationalist movements, considering the distinct features of Kerala, the Maharaja of Travancore did not agree to integrate with India and declared independence on 18th June 1947. However, this was unacceptable to the transitional Government of India. They forced Travancore to integrate and following an assassination attempt of C.P Ramaswamy

Aiyar, the Diwan⁸ of Travancore, the province acceded to the union with India on 25th July 1947. When India became independent in 1947, the national government enacted a policy abolishing princely states, the states that were not under the direct rule of the British crown but had accepted its supremacy. Thus, the princely states of Travancore and Cochin⁹ were integrated into a single state as Tiru-Kochi. Later, in 1956, as a part of reorganisation of states on a linguistic basis, Malabar was added to Tiru-Kochi to form the present Kerala state (Menon, 2007; Padmanabhan, 2010).

4.2.1 Demographic background.

With a population density of 859 persons per square kilometre, Kerala is one of the most densely populated regions in the world and the most densely populated state of India after the national capital (Parayil, 1996). According to the 2011 census, the population of the state was 33.38 million (GoK, n.d). With 64 per cent of its population in the working-age bracket of 15-65 years, Kerala has the largest percentage of working age population in the country (S. I. Rajan & James, 2007). The population growth rate in Kerala during the 1950s was the highest in India; it increased by more than five times from six million in 1901 to 32 million in 2001 and 33.38 million in 2011 (GoK, 2014; S. I. Rajan & James, 2007).

After the 1970s, the state's rate of population growth became the lowest in the country. By 1985, the population growth rate of Kerala stabilised to a demographic replacement level net reproduction rate (NRR) of one (GoK, 2014; Parayil, 1996). The population projections of Kerala indicate that there will be no major changes in the population in the next 40 years. Analysing this demographic transition of Kerala, Amartya Sen argues that China could have achieved its population targets without resorting to draconian coercive measures, had its leadership followed non-coercive persuasion through the instruments of democracy by guaranteeing the political rights and freedom to choose of its people,

⁸ The post of Prime Minister in the Travancore government.

⁹ The British renamed Kochi as Cochin, now named as Kochi.

as the case was in Kerala (K. K. George, 2011; Parayil, 1996). Table 3.1 shows some of the general features of Kerala.

Table 4.1

Kerala General Information

KERALA	FACTS
Population	33.4 million (almost 3 percent of India's population)
World Rank in population if considered as a country	30
Density	859 persons/ Sq Km
People below poverty line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 42 % households as per the Kerala state planning board • 13 % according to Planning Commission of India • 12 % MPI poor and • 6.7 % according to Tendulkar Committee Report 2012
Population between 15-65 years	64 %
Unemployment	30 %
In-migrants	8 per cent of the population
Emigrants	12 per cent of the population
Sex ratio	1058 females: 1000 Males
Geographic size	1.18 % of India (38,863 sq km)
Geographic length	580 kms coast line
Geographic width	35 to 120 kms

Source: Census of India (2011); (GoK, 2014), (GoI, 2013) other sources and author's calculations based on latest figures.

4.2.2 Caste and community division of people.

A review of the caste and community configuration of the population of Kerala suggests that the total population of Kerala was composed of about two hundred separate castes or communities belonging to the Hindu, Christian and Muslim religions. Menon (2007) posits that the people of Kerala lived as a cooperative farming community prior to the invasion of Tamil migrants and the process of the division of society into castes, which was facilitated by the establishment of the Chera Empire. Historians Rajan Gurukkal and M.G.S Narayanan suggest that the

caste system evolved into an oppressive social practice in Kerala by the 7th century AD due to the migration of Parasurama Brahmins and the ensuing foundation of the *Chera* empire (as cited in Nisar & Kandasamy, 2007). As a result, Brahmins became feudal landlords in Kerala and they introduced *jati maryada* (a caste code); this is widely believed to be the beginning of caste-based exploitation and oppression in Kerala (Sivanandan, 1976).

However, Sivanandan (1976) has argued that it was wealth that determined the social position of the communities. Those who were in a position to accumulate the greatest wealth became the highest castes and ultimately, the class that was in a position to accumulate no wealth at all became the lowest caste. To prove this argument, he cites the example of the Syrian Christians of Kerala, who are financially superior as well as socially parallel to the upper castes. Although this is not a popular argument, it is evident that the upper castes are economically and socially privileged and the lower castes, especially Dalits, are socially and economically deprived due to the caste system and its oppressions.

When the Brahmins were the feudal lords they converted the society into a ritualistic one and usurped the divine role with concepts of holiness and purity; the Nairs enjoyed the benefits of the feudal system, being the protectors and supervisors of the Brahmin's property. They practised heinous discrimination against and atrocities on the Dalits and Ezhavas (Kerala Secondary Education Board, 2010; Sivanandan, 1976). The medieval period saw the worst face of caste Kerala: "with over 500 divisions and sub-divisions and conceptions of pollution which extended beyond untouchability to Unapproachability, Kerala was described as a mad house of caste" (Nisar & Kandasamy, 2007, p. 15).

The Hindu caste system divides people into *Savarnas* (coloured) and *Avarnas* (colour-less). This is the most distinctive feature of Indian society with which it operates its social rules and practises. Of all parts of India, Kerala had the most rigid and ritualistic caste system

compared to the occupation-based caste system in North India (Alexander, 1971; Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998). Similar to the North Indian four-fold caste system (Brahmin, Kshatriys, Vaisya and Sudra), in Kerala, Hindu's are divided into *Nambudiris*, *Nairs*, *Ezhavas* and *Nadars*. The caste system in general considers Dalits as outcastes and in Kerala, Dalits were slaves far below the caste hierarchy. Schwartz (1989), in a detailed analysis of the origin of caste, summarises that the present caste system is a product of long historical evolution with roots traceable to the Vedic¹⁰ period. Since this social stratification is based on faith and beliefs, its origin is also based on scriptures and mythology (Ganesh, 1991; Menon, 2007; A. K. K. R. Nair, 1986). The caste hierarchy in Kerala, as it was historically practised, is summarised in the following sections.

Nambudiris, who were known as Brahmins all over India, constituted 1.5 per cent of the population and historically enjoyed a superior position in all areas of life. Since their migration to Kerala in the 7th century AD, they were the rulers and titular owners of the state's entire land. However, believing in their purity and holiness, they never operated agricultural land (it was sinful for a Brahmin to cut soil according to the Vedas), rather they subdivided it among the Nairs who were the custodians and proprietors of their property. The Brahmins considered themselves as ritually holy and the religious heads of Hindus (Ganesh, 1991).

The Nairs are considered as the *Kshatriyas*¹¹ in the caste system, who are the military class and constituted 14.4 per cent of the population. Being the practical owners of the land they were considered as the oppressors and the caste conflicts often occurred between the Dalits and the Nairs. In the caste hierarchy, only the Brahmins and Nairs enjoyed the privileges of wealth and status (Sivanandan, 1979).

¹⁰ The Vedas, the oldest Hindu scriptures were written around 12th century BC. This period is called the Vedic period.

¹¹Kshatriyas are the warrior caste according to the four-fold caste system, with the Dharma of protecting the country.

The fourth Hindu caste group in Kerala are the Ezhavas, who constituted 24 per cent of the population, and are popularly known as the *Chon*; and the Nadars, who constituted 10 per cent of the population, also occupied the same social position as the Ezhavas (Sivanandan, 1979). They both were Untouchables and a polluting class, but they were above the slaves and acted as the intermediary between the slaves and the upper caste. They were not allowed to walk on public roads, and they could not use public wells or public places. They could not get admission in educational institutions. They had to maintain a distance of 36 feet from a Brahmin. Both the Ezhavas and the Nadars had to pay extra taxes due to their social disability until the 20th century. But they were able to acquire education and landed property by the end of the 18th century (Nisar & Kandasamy, 2007).

Chapter Three, section 3.6.2.1, made a comparative analysis of the Dalits of Kerala, which is relevant to this discussion. In addition to that, the Dalits' social relationship with the other caste groups is worth mentioning here. Touching or even falling in the shadow of a polluted Dalit could defile an upper caste person of Kerala (Olcott, 1944). A Dalit who comes closer than 95 paces to a Brahmin would pollute him and so the protectors and caretakers of the Brahmin families, the Nairs, would kill the defaulting Dalit in cruel ways. One common form of such punishment was '*Chitravadham*', a form of killing by fastening a person onto a tree and then amputating the body parts and piercing the eyes (R. Jeffrey, 1981).

The *Pulayas (Cherumas)* and *Parayas* are currently the major Dalit groups in Kerala. They historically had extremely low status; ritually they were not only Untouchables but also Unapproachable and Unseeable and economically they were slaves (Nisar & Kandasamy, 2007; Saradamoni, 1973). Table 3.2 shows the demographics of the six most common Dalit castes.

Table 4.2
List of the Main Dalit Jatis/Castes and their Population in Kerala

Sl.No	Dalit caste/Jati names	Population			Percentage of total Dalit population		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1	Pulayan ¹² / Cheramar ¹³	1041540	508199	533341	33.34	33.32	33.36
2	Parayan	316518	154540	161978	10.13	10.13	10.13
3	Kuravan/ Sidhanar	273617	131511	142106	8.76	8.62	8.89
4	Kanakkan/ Padanna	227857	111634	116223	7.29	7.32	7.27
5	Vettuvan	143294	70336	72958	4.59	4.61	4.56
6	Velan	74789	36494	38295	2.39	2.39	2.4

Source: Census of India 2001 (Census of India, 2001)¹⁴.

In 1968, people who did not belong to the Hindu caste system were nearly half of the population of Kerala, which should have played a significant role in the social transformation of the state. Christians¹⁵ were 20 per cent of the population of Kerala, belonging to different denominations; they had a social position on a par with the Nairs in terms of the social hierarchy. Muslims, who constituted 19 per cent of the population, were concentrated in the Malabar area of Kerala and also enjoyed similar social privileges above the untouchables. The

¹² The term 'Pulayan' is derived from 'pula', which means pollution in the sense of caste impurity. A 'Pulayan' is considered as a polluting man. Another argument is that the term is derived from 'Pulam' which means field. Pulayas are slaves working in the fields of their masters (Saradmoni, 1973).

¹³ A section of the Pulaya community prefer to be called *Cheramar*, used in the vernacular as *cheruman* or *cherumakkal*. There are many Christian converts among them. The caste name cheruman or cherumakkal is derived from the Malayalam word 'cher' which means soil, and 'makkal' meaning children. Thus this term is interpreted as the sons of the soil. There is also an argument that cheramar or cherumakkal was a corrupted form of cheramakkal, as the original inhabitants of the ancient Cheranad. As such they are the original inhabitants of the land pushed out by invaders (Saradmoni, 1973).

¹⁴ Jati based statistics of 2011 census was not yet available while writing.

¹⁵ It includes different denominations of Christianity. The percentage is based on a 1968 socio-economic survey. The percentage of those identifying as Christian has reduced to 19, whereas Muslim's percentage has increased to 22, according to the 2011 census.

remaining one percent of the population was made up of other religions including Jews, Jains, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Sivanandan, 1976).

4.3 Socio-Political Context

According to the Kerala Secondary Education Board (2010), until 1956, Kerala was mainly ruled by monarchs controlling different principalities. With the arrival of Portuguese, Dutch, French and British colonizers, Kerala became a tangle of intrigues and shifting alliances between the European powers and the local kingdoms. The European invaders fought each other and also incited the local kings to fight each other, with the ultimate objective of gaining control over the kingdoms so as to exploit the resources. They not only supplied modern weapons but also made trade deals with the kings; the beginning of a crude form of the MDGs in the 18th century. Finally, by making treaties with the local princes of Travancore and Cochin, the British managed to gain control of them by 1792. For the next century and a half the British governed Kerala in three separate units, retaining the local monarchs in Travancore and Cochin, but imposing direct rule on Malabar in the north (Kerala Secondary Education Board, 2010).

As a part of the Subsidiary Alliance, a British Resident controlled the affairs of the princely states; in particular, Colonel John Munro served as a *Diwan* (1810-1819) of Travancore, keeping the young princess as the titular head of the state. He introduced many administrative reforms in line with modern systems of governance, which changed the centralised rule of the monarchy (Nisar & Kandasamy, 2007). During this period, many of the conventional rules and regulations, which were based on the 'caste code', began to change (Tharakan, 1984). John Monro introduced British-style secretarial administrative system and laid the foundation of modern education in Kerala. Colonel Munro also introduced several measures for the advancement of the oppressed slaves and Untouchables (Parayil, 2000; Salim & Nair, 2002; Tharakan, 1984).

Munro's initiatives, coupled with the work of missionaries, laid the foundation of social change in Kerala (E. T. Mathew, 1999). The missionaries, who came for evangelisation, moved more into social action for the welfare of the people and the advancement of the society, which led to mass public participation. Missionaries introduced girl's education, education of the Untouchables and Dalits, health care and Western thought. Almost all the present differences between Kerala and the rest of the country in terms of social development can be traced back to this period (E. T. Mathew, 1999; Tharakan, 1984).

Publication of four well-circulated newspapers in Malayalam by the end of the 19th century played a significant role in shaping political consciousness among the people of Kerala. In the early 20th century, the national struggle intensified for the political independence of the country, coupled with more enlightened political ideologies. Employees in the factories who hitherto were quiet and subservient started to make demands for their rights; farm workers began to demand a fair wage and one day off a week and so on. Increased political consciousness influenced all aspects of life. The oppressive landlords and factory owners met with the revolting employees (Kannan, 1981; T T Sreekumar, 1995).

Western liberal thinking and the socialist revolution in the erstwhile Soviet Union influenced a group of National Congress followers and they became communists (T T Sreekumar, 1995). The emergence of the communist party can also be considered as a natural political outcome of the oppressed society in Kerala. However, based on their activities in Kerala, it is observed that "communism crept into Kerala insidiously. As a reformist movement that never overtly questioned the traditional values of a caste ridden, extremely traditional community... they offered a cocktail revolution working within the communal divide" (Sekher, 2003, p. 3446).

The Communist Party emerged and strengthened amidst exploitation, poverty and unemployment, especially when the coir factories closed

down during the Second World War. The irony is that, according to Ambedkar, the Communist party in Kerala was ostensibly “a party of a bunch of Brahmin boys” (as cited in Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998, p. 211), but for the Dalits it remained as “a green snake in green grass” (Sekher, 2003, p. 3447). The Communist Party followed the traditional caste structure in its organisational structure by marginalising its lower caste members, making them the workers of the upper caste leaders (Lukose, 2006; Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998). However, the growth of Communist Party, and the resultant formation of the Communist-led Government in the first democratic election conducted in Kerala, can be considered as complimentary to the reformation and social movements active in Kerala in the early 20th century (T T Sreekumar, 1995).

4.3.1 Social movements.

By the end of the 19th century, Kerala became a ‘hotbed’ of numerous social reform movements. The Dalits and the Ezhavas began to fight for their rights in the last decades of the 19th century as a gradual consequence of different socio-political movements. Being more caste-ridden and more educated than any other part of India, Kerala was the centre of trade unions, associations and political parties (Namboodiripad, 1976). The Ezhava community, organised under the leadership of Sree Narayana, formed one of the most prominent social reform movements called Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Sanghom (SNDP) (Tharakan, 1984). Under the leadership of Mannathu Padmanabhan, the Nair community formed the Nair Service Society (NSS) in 1914 and the Pulayars, the largest Dalit community in Kerala, formed Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sanghom (SJPS) under the leadership of Ayyankali. Each of these movements worked for the social and educational progress of their communities (Tharakan, 1984).

4.3.1.1 Upper caste movement.

By the last quarter of the 19th century, the Nair community realised that their authority was declining both in government and socially. For

the welfare of the Nair community, they formed the *Malayali¹⁶ Sabha¹⁷* in 1884, and opened about 25 schools. In 1914 the *Malayali Sabha* was expanded to the Nair Service Society (NSS), as an altogether different kind of movement (Tharakan, 1984). As literacy of the Nairs was among the highest in the state, the NSS focused on the eradication of superstitious beliefs and social evils, in addition to working for the economic and educational advancement of the community (E. T. Mathew, 1999; Tharakan, 1984).

As the Nairs are considered the oppressors, their movements deserve little importance in this thesis. However, under the organisation of the NSS, it is worth noting that they implemented several initiatives for the integration of the lower castes and the elimination of cruel social practises. Mannath Padmanabhan, the founder of the society who envisioned an egalitarian society and urged for the rights of the Dalits and the Ezhavas, made one of the most remarkable contributions in the field of social reforms in Kerala (Oommen, 1996).

In the Vaikom Satyagraha¹⁸, as well as in the Temple Entry Movement¹⁹, Mannath Padmanabhan demanded for the equal rights of the Ezhavas and the Dalits. Vaikom Satyagraha was a movement centered at the Shiva temple at Vaikom near Kottayam. The Satyagraha aimed at securing freedom of movement for all sections of society through the public roads leading to the temple (R. Jeffrey, 1981; Lukose, 2006). The polluted castes of the Hindu community were not allowed to use the roads passing by the temple at Vaikom. While Christians and Muslims enjoyed free access to the roads around the temple, Ezhavas and Dalits had to walk along the marshy field to protect the sanctity of the road. The Satyagraha was organized against this discrimination suffered by the Untouchable castes. The agitators formed in groups of three; a Dalit, a Nair and an Ezhava; held hands

¹⁶ People who speak the Malayalam language.

¹⁷ A congress of likeminded people.

¹⁸ A peaceful protest.

¹⁹ Ezhavas and Dalits were not allowed to enter temples as they were considered as polluted. A movement for the rights of the Untouchables to enter the temple also found partial success in 1936 (Lukose, 2006).

together, trespassed the road and were arrested, and were then followed by crowds of thousands who attempted to use the roads. This movement started on 30 March 1924 and lasted for about 20 months, which triggered a paradigm shift in the caste prejudices in the state. Although it was Gandhi's strategy of the Congress Party to integrate the excluded Dalits into the Hindu fold, Mannam's initiatives also drastically changed the discriminative society into one with the modern values of universal brotherhood and justice (R. Jeffrey, 1981; Lukose, 2006; Tharakan, 1984).

4.3.1.2 Emancipation of the Untouchable Ezhavas.

Although the Ezhavas, who constituted 22 per cent of the population of Kerala, were considered as Untouchables, they were not as oppressed as the Dalits such as the Pulaya and Paraya. Ezhavas were also socially excluded and oppressed by the upper caste, but they enjoyed a greater level of liberty following the 1818 proclamation that the Ezhavas could also lease out wasteland as the Muslims and Christians were allowed. This enabled the Ezhavas to migrate to less populated areas where there was wasteland available and thus to lead a much more independent life (Tharakan, 1984). They made rapid progress in the early 20th century through socio-religious movements under the leadership of Sree Narayana Guru and under the banner of the SNDP.

After the formation of the SNDP on 15th May 1903, it adopted the doctrine 'gain education and wealth' as a means of emancipation. Its founding leader, Dr. Palpu, who was denied a job in the Travancore medical service, citing the reason as being his ineligibility as an Ezhava, declared that: "Without education no community has attained permanent civilized prosperity. In our community there must be no man or woman without primary education" (Parayil, 2000, p. 103).

This initiative had a cascading impact on all the communities. As the Untouchable Ezhavas decided to come up to the level of other communities in terms of education, Kerala witnessed a community-based education competition in the early years of 20th century. R. Jeffrey (1981) reported that, out of the 25,000 employees of the

government in 1930, a large number of them were Ezhavas, which was almost nil in the 19th century.

The Sree Narayana Movement, which originated in Travancore, had been the most powerful social reform movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries throughout Kerala (Sekhar, 2014). Although this organisation was established with the objective of mobilizing the Ezhava community, subsequently it transformed itself into a forerunner and role model of various protest movements of the oppressed castes in Kerala. In 1917, Sahodaran Ayyappan, an Ezhava activist, broke the caste code of not eating with and not eating food made by the Dalits, by taking part in the *Cherai Pandi Bhojanam* (a mixed dinner with the Dalits at Cherai). The Ezhava movement became an inspiration and motivation for the Dalit movements (Sekhar, 2014). As such, this movement heralded an era of great social renaissance and spiritual awakening among the people of Kerala, and Sree Narayana Guru has been hailed as the 'father of the modern Kerala renaissance' (R. Jeffrey, 1981; Tharakan, 1984).

Sree Narayana Guru led the renaissance of Kerala by fighting against the discrimination meted out to the Ezhava community and by urging the community to abandon many of the cruel and immoral practises and customs such as polygamy, polyandry, menstrual ceremonies and child marriage. His philosophy of 'one caste, one religion and one god for humans' resonated very well in a caste-ridden Kerala society (as cited in Sekhar, 2014). He encouraged the Ezhavas to acquire wealth and gain education as a means of emancipation from their oppression. As a result of that, Ezhavas made remarkable progress in the early 20th century, which was a powerful inspiration for the Dalit community as well (Tharakan, 1984).

Sree Narayan Guru challenged the Brahmin supremacy by consecrating temples for the use of the Ezhavas. Considering them as subaltern Hindu group, they were denied access to worship in the temple. Olcott (1944) observed that Narayana Guru had to stay 325 feet away from the famous Guruvayoor Hindu temple due to untouchability. The polluted

castes had been denied the right to worship in the temples from time immemorial. Sree Narayana Guru also managed to get the support of other communities and organisations in the 'Temple Entry' movements and the Guruvayoor Satyagraha. In the course of this protest, Narayan Guru's statement created a heated furore in Kerala. He said:

The volunteers standing outside the barriers in heavy rains will serve no useful purpose...They should scale over the barricades and not only walk along the prohibited roads but enter all temples... It should be made practically impossible for anyone to observe untouchability. (R. Jeffrey, 1981, p. 284)

The proclamation issued by Sri Chitira Tirunal Balarama Varma, the Maharaja (King) of Travancore, on 12th November 1936 finally allowed entry into the Hindu temples of Travancore for all Hindus irrespective of their caste distinctions. This was an important event in the caste prejudiced state of Kerala and a milestone for the social advancement of the Untouchables (R. Jeffrey, 1981).

Although they were Untouchables and many of the communities of their social status were included into the Scheduled Caste category in the rest of India, the Ezhavas were considered too advanced to be included in the Scheduled Caste category for reservation²⁰ (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998; Sivanandan, 1976). In terms of emancipatory observation, this movement enabled the biggest social mobility in Kerala. As a researcher in the 21st century, it is hard to believe that the Ezhavas were considered Untouchables and were excluded from society, but now they have managed to integrate with the Brahmins and Nairs as equal citizens, unlike the Dalits.

4.3.1.3 Slaves breaking the shackles of oppression.

According to the Hindu social order, Brahmins are permanently pure and the Dalits are permanently polluted. Because of this consciousness

²⁰ 'Reservation' in India is the process of setting aside a certain percentage of seats (vacancies) in government institutions for members of backward and under-represented communities (defined primarily by caste and tribe). Reservation is a form of quota-based affirmative action. Reservation is governed by constitutional laws, statutory laws, and local rules and regulations.

of impurity along with the practise of Untouchability, Unapproachability and Unseeability, coupled with the torture they experienced, every Dalit lived a psychologically inferior life, reluctant to fight for justice (Saradmoni, 1973). Inspired by the reformation movements of the Ezhava community, Ayyankali (1863-1941) was able to mobilise the oppressed Dalits in many parts of Travancore and founded the Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangham (SJPS) in 1907. He is considered as the 'torch-bearer' of the Dalit social movements in Kerala (Nisar & Kandasamy, 2007).

Ayyankali led violent mass protests against the dehumanizing Nair oppressors and infringed the caste codes that restrained the Dalits from participating in society. He took Dalit children to government schools and demanded them to be enrolled, which led to clashes between the Dalits and the upper caste and they even burned down a school polluted by the touch of Dalits (Nisar & Kandasamy, 2007; Tharakan, 1984; Werff, 1982).

Following this incident, in June 1913 Ayyankali led the most epoch-making protest against the oppressive practises against the Pulaya Dalits. The Dalits massively boycotted working on the farm. Famine spread on both sides and many of the Dalits resorted to fishing for survival (Nisar & Kandasamy, 2007). The SJPS activists organised militant attacks against the torturing Nair Janmis. They demanded the right to education of their children; the right to upper-cloth for the women; the right to use public roads; fair wages for work and a reduction the number of working days from seven to six days a week (Nisar & Kandasamy, 2007; Werff, 1982).

Finally, after a year-long protest, in 1914 following the mediation of district collector Kandala Nagapilla, the government agreed to enforce most of their demands. After that, the Dalits began to get wages in cash and have Sunday as a day of rest every week. With the energy of these achievements, the Dalits planned programmes for their community's progress. They gathered to discuss their grievances on Sundays and conducted processions, in which both men and women took part. Thus

entry of women into the public sphere for protest was also a revolutionary achievement of Ayyankali (Nisar & Kandasamy, 2007; Patnakar & Omvedt, 1979). Chapter Seven, section 6 further describes the Dalit movements.

Ayyankali demanded that all public schools should admit Dalit children. Finally, the Dewan agreed to give admission to Pulaya children in all schools where the Ezhava children were admitted. However, the Dalits were not allowed admission to schools that were at the temple premises, which also forbade the Ezhavas (R. Jeffrey, 1981).

Without the violent protest of SJPS against the oppressors, the history of the Dalits would be different. However, after the death of Ayyankali, the SJPC did not work effectively; the organisation disintegrated into a number of subgroup-organisations. Chapter Seven, section 6 discusses other social movements that influenced the Dalits. Although now there are over a hundred Dalit organisations in Kerala, none is making any commendable attempt for the emancipation of the Dalit community. It is important to note that, due to their economic deprivation, Dalits could only make demands for access to education, while the Ezhava, Nair, Christian and Muslim organisations actually became major private owners of education institutions (E. T. Mathew, 1999). Poverty of every variety had reduced the Dalits to a level below that of others.

4.3.2 Poverty and its social context.

There has always been controversy about the extent of poverty in Kerala, especially when micro-economic poverty estimates and the achievements in social indicators are not equally considered (T. T. Sreekumar & Parayil, 2003). Hence, this thesis does not give much importance to the different estimates of poverty. Based on the measurement of poverty, the statistics can be extremely different but the lived experience of the poor will be the same, which is a focus of this thesis.

According to the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), 16.3 per cent of people in Kerala were below the poverty line in the year 2000 (Planning Commission of India, 2005). During the same period, based on the Planning Commission's nutritional criteria of an intake of 2,400 calories per person per day, 82.5 per cent of rural people of Kerala lived below the poverty line (K. Rajan, 2009). According to a head count ratio, it is estimated that 19.7 per cent of people, that is nearly one fifth of the population of Kerala, were below the poverty line in 2004-05. According to the Government of India statistics, 25 per cent of the population of Kerala live below the poverty line (Census of India, 2011). However, the Kerala Government has identified that 42 per cent of households live below the poverty line (Kerala State Planning Board, 2013). In the latest estimation of the MPI, Kerala has only 12 per cent poor when the average for all of India is 40 per cent (Alkire et al., 2013). These figures suggest that, regardless of all the economic changes, there is a substantial section of the population living in poverty.

While consumption, cost-based poverty identification is widely criticised, Kerala's method has its strengths, as it is an approach that is capability-based rather than a money-metric one (N. J. Nair, 2014). The Kerala method uses nine core indicators and eight additional criteria to identify poor households. The core indicators are related to housing, water, sanitation, literacy, income sources, food, presence of infants, presence of alcoholics and caste/tribe. Eight additional criteria relating to contextual factors such as the presence of handicapped or permanently sick persons, women of marriageable age at home, and living in inaccessible areas are also taken into account wherever applicable. The presence of four or more of the core indicators used in this method qualifies the household to be categorised as BPL (S. I. Rajan & James, 2007).

However, although it is more than just a list, it is not used for any policy making, since the central government finance major poverty alleviation programmes based on their own estimates. Hence, the State Government is not able to provide even the minimum assistance of

public distribution to all the BPL families on the state list. Chapter Eight, section 8 discusses this dilemma further. The more pressing issues of poverty are its causes and its social context are examined in the next sections.

4.3.2.1 Poverty and property.

The wealth of landed property was the major factor that determined the poverty of the people of Kerala in the past (which was determined by the social practise of the caste system). After the establishment of the Chera Kingdom in Kerala, by the 7th century AD the Brahmin immigrants had brought the entire arable land under the institutional control of the temples, and through the temples under their control. However, they considered cultivation beneath their status and breaking soil was sinful for Brahmins (Charsley, 1996). Therefore, they allocated the land on ‘*pattom*’ (lease) to the Nairs (Heller, 1996). As time progressed, the land was sublet to Christians, Muslims and Ezhavas, but not to the Dalit Untouchables because they were the slaves of the landlords (*Janmi*); thus the Dalits became an inter-generationally poor community (M. G. Radhakrishnan, 2009). The word Janmi is derived from that those who own land by ‘Janmom’ (birth) (Ganesh, 1991). In the agrarian society, landed property was probably the main source of livelihood, therefore lack of land became the historic cause of poverty of the Dalits (Saradmoni, 1973).

According to Varghese (1970), historically, the Dalit slaves, who lived on the farmland along with the ploughing animals, looked after the animals and the farm. Janmis retained the right to allocate slaves to tenants enslaved under their control, and labour was tied to land and transactions of land effected along with the attached slaves. There were three modes of slave-attached property transactions: 1) *Janmom*: one inherits the rights to, and ownership of, land along with its slaves and cattle by birth; 2) *Kanom* or mortgage: a long term lease of land with its slaves for a loan; and 3) *Pattom* or rent: whereby the land along with the slaves were leased out for an annual sum (M. G. Radhakrishnan, 2009; P. Radhakrishnan, 1982; T. A. Thomas, 2010; Varghese, 1970).

In 1856, to raise more land revenue and to increase food production, the Travancore Legislative Assembly issued a proclamation assigning government land on lease for garden crops to the landless Ezhava and Nadar communities (P.R. Gopinathan Nair, 1976). They were Untouchables, hence they did not own land until then. Even after that proclamation, Dalits were never entitled to own agricultural land. Although they were traditionally agricultural labourers, they became the only community who were discriminated against in terms of owning landed property (P.R. Gopinathan Nair, 1976).

As part of the modernisation of the society and imperial rule, slavery gave way to a bonded labour (hutment dweller) system. According to this system, popularly known as the *Janmi-Kudiyan* system, every Dalit family lived on the *Janmi's* (landlord) land as their *Kudiyan* (hutment dweller) until the implementation of the land reform act in 1969. The Kerala Land Reforms Act (1969) put an end to the Brahmin ownership of the entire land and offered legal ownership to all the leaseholders and sub-lessees. However, it offered only homestead rights to the largely Dalit landless labourers who were excluded from owning land. The end result of the reform was the exodus of more than 340,000 families, with nowhere to live, who finally took shelter by the river banks, roadside and railway tracks (P. Radhakrishnan, 1982; Werff, 1982).

According to the Land Reform Act passed in 1963, and finally implemented in 1969 with amendments, the landlords were bound to provide 10 cents²¹ of land where the *Kudiyan's* huts were situated (Werff, 1982). According to the statistics provided by the Government of Kerala, about 100,000 Dalit families received this benefit but about 340,000 families, that is more than 1.5 million people, did not receive any compensation from their *Janmis*, for whom they toiled for centuries through the generations (Werff, 1982). Thus, the government “settled them legally’ along the roadside, riverbanks, railway lines and canals with an arrangement called Poramboke settlement. As their settlement began to expand, in the interests of the public, the government settled

²¹ ‘Cent’ is the common measure of land in Kerala. One cent is equal to 40.46sq meter.

them in concentrated residential areas by providing two (urban) to three (rural) cents of land (an average area of a small house) . This process is continuing while at least 25,000 Dalit families still live without land or housing in Kerala (Kochu, 2013).

After the massive eviction of the bonded Dalit labourers from their hutment, they had to live closer to their landlords to ensure the continuation of work. Landlords also required that labourers lived on their field, but they were not prepared to settle someone permanently in their land (K. Rajan, 2009). About this exclusionary attitude, Devika wrote:

From the Dalit perspective, these may appear to be two sides of a single exclusionary strategy, in which their exclusion from the radical redistribution agenda was “balanced” by the extension of the state’s infrastructural power oriented toward bettering social development. (Devika, 2010, p. 803)

Most of the participants in my empirical work lived outside the estates (where they were hutment dwellers hitherto) to ensure they could get sufficient work to live. Some large estates that require hundreds of employees as early as 4am in the morning (for rubber tapping) built dormitories inside the estates, which sheltered them.

In short, wealth in Kerala is generally inherited; people born in some castes inherit wealth from their ancestors, while the Dalits inherit debt. Chapter Eight discusses more about Dalits’ economic deprivation and the denial of right to own land. Due to the sociological legacy of the Dalits of Kerala, they continue to experience economic underdevelopment, occupational inferiority and social exclusion, and there is no sign of its end in the near future (Sivanandan, 1976).

While Kerala boasts that its land reform is a pioneering one in India, as it endorsed the land ownership of 2.8 million families, it is important to remember that the same land reform excluded the Dalits because they were hutment dwellers on the Janmi’s land. The National Federation for Dalit Land Rights Movements (NFDLRM) reports that, with 90 per cent

of Dalits landless or near landless (living in homesteads or in the colony), Kerala has the second highest proportion of landless Dalits in India (Mohan, 2011; Sreerekha, 2012). Chapter Eight, section 2, provides a detailed analysis of the land reforms and public policies that led to the severe deprivation and poverty of the Dalits.

4.3.2.2 Protests for land.

The Communist Government (the first elected government of united Kerala, which was sacked by the central government) made extensive promises to the landless Dalits in order to come back to power again in the 1960 election. As they promised, if the land reform was implemented there would be 0.11 million acres of land available for the landless (Sreerekha, 2010). However, until 1989, only 24,333 acres of land were distributed to the Dalits. Almost 340,000 Dalit families were evicted from land and the government promised the creation of ‘*one-lakh*’ (one hundred thousand) houses to settle the Dalits. The process of settling still continues. However, as far as the Dalits are concerned, denying them the right to own cultivable land in the Land Reform was an incorrigible blow meted out by the Communist Government (Sreerekha, 2010).

According to Devika (2010), to ameliorate the ire of the Dalit supporters, the Communist Party organised a ‘land grab’, but this ended up as a farce. Knowing that every party has deserted the Dalits’ right to own land, in 2007, without the support of any political parties, they occupied a part of the Harrison Malayalam rubber plantation. Rubber needs to be tapped every morning to take its sap, so estates have Dalit workers settled in shanties on their land. On the 4th of August 2007, a few workers who had lost their jobs and many more landless Dalits occupied the Kumbazha estate of Harrison Malayalam at Chengara, demanding five acres of land each. Although the government finally provided some land to approximately 1,000 Dalit families in 2010, the struggle of the landless and their demands for land still continues (Kuttoo, 2011; Sreerekha, 2012).

Harrison Malayalam is one of the British rubber estates in Kerala handed over to Indian corporates. They own 76,000 acres of estates in different parts of Kerala, which were leased by the erstwhile governments and illegally possessed (Mohan, 2011; Rammohan, 2008). A large number of Dalits have protested on the plantation, along with their children, for several years, which is a consequence of the partial land reform and the inability of successive governments to do justice to the landless millions (Rammohan, 2008).

In contrast to the Dalits' experience, following 48 days of agitation in front of the State Assembly that ended on 16th October 2001, the government agreed to provide a minimum of one acre of land to each *Adivasi* (Tribal) (Scheduled Tribe) (ST) family, and up to five acres wherever land was available (Krishnakumar, 2001). Hence, it can be concluded that the Dalits are still excluded from owning cultivable land.

4.3.2.3 Relevance of Dalits' poverty to be studied.

According to the statistics provided by a National Sample Survey Organisation of the Ministry of Planning and Statistics of the Government of India, the Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) people are the poorest among all the communities and at least five times poorer than the high caste Hindus (NSSO, 2011). In the Constitution of India, all the Dalits /Untouchables/oppressed sub-castes were listed together as the Scheduled Caste (SC), and since then 'SC' has become a common term given to all the Dalits or the Untouchables of India. 'ST' people are those aboriginals who have lived in the forest confinements. Along with the SC people, they are the poorest community in Kerala (M. Desai, 2003; K. A. Mehta & Shah, 2003; Sengupta, 2007).

Looking beyond the statistical evidence, literary evidence (eg. Saradamoni, 1973; Sivanandan, 1976, 1979; Werff, 1982) suggests that poverty representation in the population is parallel to the caste hierarchy structure in Kerala, and Dalits, who are at the bottom of the social hierarchy, are poorer than other communities. Since Dalits have

been historically excluded from private property, education and the choice of employment, they continue to experience the disadvantages of those exclusions (Sivanandan, 1976). Table 3.3 shows the percentage of people in each community living below the poverty line according to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (2013).

Table 4.3

Caste and Community Profile of People below the Poverty Line in India

No	Caste and Community Groups	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
1	Scheduled Tribes	45.8	35.6
2	Scheduled Castes (Dalits)	35.9	38.3
3	Other Backward Castes	27.0	29.5
4	Muslim Upper Class	26.8	34.2
5	Hindu Upper Castes	26.8	34.2
6	Christian Upper Class	09.6	05.4
7	Sikh Upper Class	00.00	04.9
8	Other Upper Religions	16.0	02.7
9	All groups	17.0	23.4

Source: Based on NSS 55th Round held in the year 2000 by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation [MoSPI] (2013).

Note: The year 2000 is considered as the base year in the discussion of poverty in this thesis, since the MDG programme began in 2000.

Table 3.3 shows that poverty lies parallel to the community positions, which concurs with many other previous studies (eg. Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998; Thurston & Rangachari, 2001). The incidence of poverty is most common among the tribal (ST) population, but they are not

considered for this study because in the context of Kerala, the Dalit population is five times larger than the tribal population and the tribal population is quite small. In addition, as per the new settlement scheme with the tribal community, the government provides them with a minimum of one acre of land. Dalits are more relevant for this study, because although they have lived within a civilized society, they still experience social isolation, exclusion and oppression (Venkatesh, 2010).

Consistent with many other studies, Sivanandan posited that “the higher a community is placed in the social ladder, the better is its position in terms of employment and income” (Sivanandan, 1976, p. 9). Without even considering the statistical evidence, the literary evidence of history of Dalit life is sufficiently substantial to establish that the Dalits are the major sector of the poor community in Kerala. As they lack property and any form of inheritance of wealth, they continue to be the workers of the erstwhile Janmis. Their survival largely depends on the availability of such menial work, which is often seasonal. Despite India’s major economic growth, particularly in Kerala, the position of the Dalits in the economy is not improving. Planning Commission statistics show that, as the gap between the haves and have-nots is increasing, the Dalits’ economic deprivation is increasing (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998; Planning Commission of India, 2011).

4.4 Economic Context

A view of the economy of Kerala through the paradigm of poverty reveals that its economic growth fluctuations have had little impact on poverty. For example, at a time when Kerala experienced the worst per capita income and economic growth, the state achieved United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) acclaim who labelled it the “Kerala model”, with high indicators according to the Human Development Index (HDI) and Human Poverty Index (HPI). With the per capita income of Papua New Guinea, Kerala outpaced China in the HPI. While the US’s HDI was 0.925, Kerala stood at 0.775, with a per capita income about one-hundredth of the former (Parayil, 1996). In addition, according to

the Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI), Kerala has stood far ahead of other Indian states, while Kerala's per capita income has been far below the national average (Franke & Chasin, 1995; Parayil, 1996). The PQLI is an attempt to measure the quality of life or well-being of a country (Narayana, 2009). It is calculated based on literacy, life expectancy and the infant mortality rate, which in fact are indicators included in the goals of the MDG programme.

The state of the economy of Kerala can be divided into three stages: the pre-independent economy (before 1947); post-independent economy (1947-1980), and the emigration boom economy (1980s onwards). These stages represent the transition of the state from an economically prosperous one, to the economically most backward state by 1971, with 1.8 per cent economic growth; and the subsequent turnaround to 8.1 per cent economic growth by 2005-2006, above the national average (K. K. George, 2011).

4.4.1 Pre-independence economy.

In the first phase, before independence in 1947, Kerala was known for its ports and petrochemical industries (K. K. George, 2011). The location of Kerala on the coast of Arabian Sea permitted trading and cultural relations with outside world. Due to the mountain ranges that separated Kerala from the rest of India, the state developed more trade with the Arab and European countries. The ports of Kerala developed into centres of trade between the Arab countries, North Africa and the Roman Empire.

According to K. K. George (2011), there is historical evidence of trade between India and the Arab countries in the 10th and 11th centuries, in which half of the trade with India was carried out at the port of Malabar. In both Travancore and Cochin, the area under cultivation, especially that of cash crops such as coconut, tea, coffee, spices and rubber, was constantly expanding. Kerala accounted for 92 per cent of the production of natural rubber in the country. The share of cardamom was 78 per cent. The state was a leading producer of pepper,

ginger and many other spices that attracted European traders. As a result, Kerala experienced a better economy compared to the rest of India (K. K. George, 2011; Parayil, 1996).

Before independence in 1947, the Keralan economy was based on ports and the petrochemical industries (K. K. George, 2011). Revenues to the state then included income tax, excise duties and customs duties. According to the National Council of Applied Economic Research, at the time of the formation of the state in 1956, Kerala was above India's national averages both in per capita terms and in the share of industry in the state income (as cited in K. K. George, 2011). However, the independent government's policy of the nationalisation of industries sidelined private industries. Kerala did not even get two per cent of the nationalised industries of the country (Kumar & George, 2009).

4.4.2 Post-independence economic stagnation.

In the post-independence era, Kerala was a lesser known area to the North Indians. In parliament and in Delhi, people used to address Malayali's as Madrasees, assuming that the Malayalees live in Madras (Tamil Nadu) state. Evidence that the 34 million people of Kerala are still marginalised is demonstrated by the fact that there is no member from Kerala in the union cabinet of India. The central government took the tax from the state, and when allocating funding for developmental activities, paid attention to the social indicators. Kerala was regarded as being far ahead in social development; therefore other states including the remote areas of sub-Saharan countries gained more from central funding. The vast majority of India that was under the direct control of the British Empire had suffered extensive financial deprivation as a result of British exploitation. Due to the influence of the North Indian states, the central transfer to the state is fixed at 29 per cent and other welfare transfers depend on each state's size and needs. Hence, during the Ninth Plan period (1997-2002), the per capita central government transfers to the state was only 4995 rupees, compared to 6159 rupees for all states (K. K. George, 2011)

Economic stagnation started in the state after independence, due to the central government's discrimination against Kerala's needs (Kumar & George, 2009). The Government of India gave prime importance to the public sector in the industrialization of the country. However, Kerala had received only a small share in the central government's investment in industrial units. The share of the central government investment in the fixed capital of the public sector's industrial units in the state was only 2.4 per cent of the total investments, as compared to 17.8 per cent in Maharashtra, 7.6 per cent in Tamil Nadu and 6.9 per cent in Andhra Pradesh.

In the first quarter century after the independence of India, governments and policy makers attached the greatest importance to rapid economic growth without considering the distributive side, assuming the benefits of economic growth would 'trickle down' to the bottom of society (Rajan, 2009). However, with economic growth, inequalities in income and wealth have increased without producing any trickle down of benefits to the more vulnerable sections of society, which affected Kerala as a whole and its marginalised people in particular (Rajan, 2009). In particular, the period between the years 1970 to 1980 was one of economic stagnation, highest unemployment and food shortage in Kerala (K. K. George, 2011). During this time the average growth of state income declined to 1.8 per cent (K. K. George, 2011). The annual rate of growth of the per capita State Domestic Product (SDP) of Kerala was at its lowest: it was 1.4 per cent per annum during the period 1960-61 to 1995-96. The unemployment rate of the state was the highest in the country, with over 30 per cent of educated people unemployed in 1980 (K. K. George & Krishnakumar, 2003)

Due to the paucity of funding, education, health and other areas of social development in Kerala, it experienced stagnation (T. T. Sreekumar & Parayil, 2003). The role of the centre-state relationship in the socio-economic development of Kerala, in terms of the continuation of its pre-independent policies, is worth examining. In this thesis, I would like to leave the broader spectrum of the topic for further

research and here focus on examining how the central government has influenced the education policies of Kerala.

Kerala had already overcome the first generation problems of education before independence, which India is still grappling with 65 years after independence. Therefore, the Financial Commission appointed by the central government in 1968 downplayed the needs of Kerala's education sector. For example, the Commission estimated that the state is already spending more on education than any other states on a per capita basis. Nevertheless, per-pupil expenditure on secondary education in Kerala was 4659 rupees, as compared to the national average of 5668 rupees, because Kerala had a high enrolment rate. As a result of that, the quality of Kerala's education and the expansion of tertiary education suffered adversely (K. K. George, 2011; K. K. George & Krishnakumar, 2003). Chapter Four, section 4, describes the degree to which the economic policy of the central government inhibited the development of higher education in Kerala.

4.4.3 Remittance economy.

Emigration and resultant remittance is one of the most significant factors that has lifted Kerala out of economic stagnation and reduced poverty since 1980. Opportunities in the Gulf countries in the construction sector following the oil boom of 1970s, coupled with unemployment, high population growth and poverty led to early migration from Kerala (Misiriya, 2009; Zachariah & Rajan, 2008). Kerala's poverty-level income rate was 10 per cent higher than the national average in 1973, before emigration boomed; but within the next two decades, Kerala reduced that by 58 per cent and now it is lower than the national average by 30 per cent. Emigration has also reduced the unemployment rate, which was as high as 30-50 per cent in the last quarter of the 20th century. Unemployment has also reduced substantially by the year 2011 (Zachariah & Rajan, 2012). Misiriya (2009) has also found that the proportion of people below the poverty line has declined by three percentage points annually as a result of

remittance received by Kerala households from their relatives abroad. Yet Kerala is not one of the economically rich states of the country (Misiriya, 2009).

Remittances formed 31.23 per cent of the state's net state domestic product (NSDP) (Zachariah & Rajan, 2012). The state's per capita income was Rs. 52,084, without taking into consideration remittances to the state; but it stood at Rs. 68,375 if remittances were also included. The total remittance Kerala receives annually has increased by 35 per cent since the year 2000. According to the Kerala Migrants Survey (KMS) in 2013, about five million people (from the total population of 33.4 million) emigrated from Kerala, and 90 per cent of the overseas migrants' destination is the Gulf countries (Harikrishnan, 2013).

According to a report tabled in the Parliament of India in July 2014, Kerala alone received a quarter of the entire remittance received by India in 2013. This is even more impressive considering that India leads the remittance receiving countries in terms of revenue, ahead of China and the Philippines, with a revenue of US\$69 billion every year according to the World Bank reports ("India tops global remittance, 2013"). However, the Kerala Migrant Survey (KMS) calculates only direct remittances received, which is less than half of the actual World Bank estimates. Despite that, the annual infusion of 50,000 crores²² rupees (500 billion rupees = US\$ 8.3 billion) into Kerala via remittances is significant considering its population of 33.3 million (Zachariah & Rajan, 2012). For instance, distributing 50,000 crores rupees among the 33.3 million persons of Kerala would give each person in Kerala about Rs. 15,015 per year, which alone is over one dollar per day without considering the domestic income. It does not include the remittances from the approximately 931,000 Kerala out-migrants living in other states of India (Zachariah & Rajan, 2012).

²² One crore is equal to 10 million.

Thus, emigration has played the most significant role in reducing income poverty. However, the OECD countries that are aiding poor countries to raise the income to one dollar per day per person discriminate against the poor countries' emigrants. In this context, a review of Kerala's development pattern would have helped the OECD to plan a better programme for poverty eradication than the MDGs (K. K. George & Krishnakumar, 2003; Misiriya, 2009; K. Rajan, 2009).

Migration has played a significant role in the paradigm shift from the traditional landed and property-based economic and social position. According to the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) "Migration has provided the single most dynamic factor in the otherwise dismal scenario of Kerala in the last quarter of the 20th century" (Khadria, 2008, p. 96). However, the remittance received is not very equitably distributed. Muslims benefit the most, followed by Christians; economically and socially hindered Dalits benefit the least from migration; due to their socio-cultural exclusion and economic deprivation they are least likely to emigrate (Wilson, 2005; Zachariah & Rajan, 2012).

Recent trends in Kerala such as the rapidly growing private education sector is highly corresponding to the migrants' (popularly known as the 'new rich class') ratio. For instance, Muslims constitute 24 per cent of the population, however 42 per cent of the migrants are Muslim, and Muslim households receive 46.5 per cent of the remittances. As a result of that, 42 per cent of the students in the elite private schools are Muslims (Zachariah & Rajan, 2012). Misiriya (2009) argued that the rapid growth of private English medium schools²³ in Kerala is one of the consequences of the large number of migrants who wanted their children to work overseas. Therefore, although migration has benefited the state as a whole, economic inequality increases along with deprivation levels among the already deprived.

²³ Schools that follow English as the medium of instruction against other schools that used the Malayalam-mother tongue as the medium of instruction.

The majority of migrants are men and they cannot take their family with them if they emigrate to Gulf countries. It is estimated that over one million migrants' wives (popularly known as "Gulf wives") live unemployed and isolated from their husbands, who generally come home every two years (Zachariah & Rajan, 2008). Appendix E illustrates the demographic conundrum of Kerala that is in addition to the existing high female: male birth ratio. Emigration of almost 10 per cent of the male population leaves Kerala as a 'female state'.

Since the 1990s, large-scale employers, such as contractors and estate owners, have brought labourers from North Indian states to work in Kerala. According to a report tabled at the Kerala Assembly in 2013, there were 2.5 million (7 per cent of the population) in-migrants working in Kerala and about 235,000 new migrant workers arrive every year (Harikrishnan, 2013). Because of that, the unemployment rate among educated women in the rural areas was 53.3 per cent compared with the national average of 23.1 per cent. With 55.5 per cent of educated women unemployed, the problem was slightly more in the urban areas of Kerala. Nevertheless, the unemployment rate in general has declined due to emigration.

However, the human resource cost of these monetary gains to the state is concerning. According to the KMS 2013:

...corresponding to 100 chemical engineers in the state, there are 75 such persons among the emigrants from the state and living outside India. Similarly, corresponding to 100 persons (in the specified occupations) in the state, there are 49 fabrication workers outside, 44 computer professionals, 43 building electricians, 41 mechanical engineers, 40 child care workers, 40 crane operators, 39 nurses and so on. (Zachariah & Rajan, 2012, p. 60)

Thus, the state's economy is surviving at the cost of almost half of its highly qualified and skilled population working overseas. While the

economy is surviving in this way, its human resource cost is yet to be calculated.

4.5 Kerala in the National Indian Context

Although Kerala is a small state in India occupying just over one per cent of India's land, it has a larger population than many of the OECD countries such as Canada, Australia, Denmark, New Zealand and Sweden. Kerala is not just one state in India; it has its own language, culture and other unique diverse features distinct from the rest of India. Kerala is a state that showed the world how to achieve positive levels of human development with very low per capita income and low GDP distinct from the rest of India. That is, with a GDP similar to Papua New Guinea, the state met the needs of the equivalent of Canada's population and emerged as a region (state/province) with the highest social indicators of development (Alkire, Roche, & Sumner, 2013). Hence, on the one hand, a case study of the state questions the relevance of the MDG programme target of one-dollar-a-day as a means of rising above poverty and on the other, it shows to what extent MDG 2 can eradicate poverty caused by caste-based discrimination, exclusion and oppression (Alkire & Seth, 2013; Parayil, 1996).

Franke and Chasin (1995) used the case of Kerala as a role model for low-income countries' development in 1995. They said:

Third World people can make their lives better in the absence of industrialization or large-scale economic growth. The key ingredients are active grassroots organizations, redistribution of wealth and democratic participation. Despite low per capita incomes, Kerala's 31 million people have achieved nearly total literacy, long life expectancy, low infant mortality and birth rates and high access to medical care. Kerala's development indicators compare favourably with the rest of India, low-income countries in general and even rich nations such as the United States. (p.25)

However, Franke and Chasin had not realised that redistribution of wealth did not reach the excluded Dalit community. Yet, despite their deprivation levels, the Dalits joined with the rest of Kerala's society to educate and to provide health care to their children. As early as 1960, the women of Kerala had outpaced the rest of India in terms of literacy and life expectancy (A. Shah, 2010). In fact, in 1992, when Kerala was declared a 100 per cent literate state, India's average literacy was only 52 per cent, with a 39 per cent in women's literacy. Although women in Kerala are not equivalent to men in many areas of social development, the gender gap is much less compared to the national average in all indicators of development and they are ahead of men in schooling and life expectancy (Biswas, 2010). According to Sen (2000), Kerala was ahead of every province in China and South Korea in female literacy in 1990.

In terms of the 76 countries for which the value of Human Poverty Index (HPI) was calculated in 1997, Kerala ranked 12th, above China and Indonesia. Kerala has the lowest population growth in India (1.4 percent per annum), which is parallel to Europe and the US (Biswas, 2010; Census of India, 2011). In terms of health care, primary education and public food distribution, Kerala leads other states of India (Biswas, 2010). In short, what Kerala had achieved in social development half a century ago had not been achieved by many of the North Indian states in the year 2000.

The MDG programme aims to achieve what Franke and Chasin (1995) stated in 1995 that Kerala had achieved. (Section 5.1 of this chapter provides details of Kerala's achievements in the MDG targets). However, it is relevant to observe that after nearly another two decades, the former slave Dalits of Kerala remain extremely poor. Furthermore, literary evidence (eg. Hjejle, 1967; Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998; M. G. Radhakrishnan, 2009; P. Radhakrishnan, 1982; Saradmoni, 1973; Werff, 1982) and my empirical work suggest that the former slaves who were, until recently, denied a vast range of human rights, are still subject to extreme poverty, in contrast to the rest of the community. As

40 per cent of all the extreme poor live in India, this investigation, focusing on Kerala, can shed light on the relevant areas of the MDG programme and poverty eradication (Alkire et al., 2013; UNDP, 2011).

4.5.1 MDG achievements in Kerala.

The targets of MDG have long been achieved by Kerala (S. I. Rajan & James, 2007), which is also evident from the literature discussed so far. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite index that measures income, education (average years of education completed by adults), expected years of education for children entering school and health (life expectancy); that is, MDGs 1, 2 and 4. Kerala is placed first among the Indian states in all these indices, and sits alongside other high HDI countries. It suggests that, out of 187 countries, India is in 135th position with a value of 0.50, whereas Kerala's HDI value is 0.63 (UNDP, 2014). Kerala has the lowest incidence of poverty in India according to the OPHI calculation, and also based on the MPI (Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative [OPHI], 2014).

Kerala had a 99.3 per cent primary school enrolment rate in 2005; a growth from 91 per cent in 1997, with a dropout rate of a negligible one per cent (UNESCO, 2000). Kerala implemented a free primary education system starting from the 19th century, and a free midday meal programme has been in place since the 1940s (Parayil, 2000; Tharakan, 1984). Kerala was declared a 100 per cent literate state in 1992, but this is unlikely to occur nationwide in the near future, according to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) findings (ASER, 2014).

In Kerala, school completion rates of girls are ahead of boys, and as girls' school enrolment was almost 100 per cent in the year 2000, Kerala can claim that it had achieved the MDG 3 gender equality target in education before 2000 (Dilip, 2010; Gupta & Yesudian, 2006). Moreover, the median number of years of schooling completed by females aged six years and above was 7.5 years in Kerala in 2005, which is parallel to Europe during the same period, while India's national average was only 1.9 years (International Institute for

Population Sciences and Macro International, 2007). Trends of Kerala education such as primary school completion, school attendance rates, and academic achievements show that the state is far ahead of the other states of India and girls perform better than boys in schooling (Kumar & George, 2009; Leni, 2006).

According to state government statistics for the year 2000, Kerala was ahead of many of the developed countries on a number of HDI indicators, including the US, in life expectancy, infant (0-5 years) mortality and in fertility rates (Harilal & Reynolds, 2006). Kerala was 13 years ahead of the Indian average for life expectancy in the year 2000 (Lieten, 2002). At the 1985 Rockefeller Foundation Public Health Conference, on “good health at low cost”, Kerala was featured as a world model of a state with below average income levels and high levels of universal health and well-being (A. Shah, 2010). In the year 2000, Kerala’s infant mortality rate (IMR) was 14 per 1000 live births, while India’s IMR was 58, which is higher than Kerala’s IMR in the 1970s; whereas the MDG programme target is achieve an IMR of 28 worldwide (Leni, 2006). The number of women dying due to maternal causes was another achieved goal for Kerala even before the MDG programme began. It aims to reduce the maternal mortality rate (MMR) to 109 per 100,000 live births, while it is 81 per 100,000 in Kerala; whereas India’s average remains twice that of the MDG target (National Human Development Report, 2011).

Based on the US Health and Human Services survey and the WHO report of 1994, the Keralans decisively outlive American Black males in terms of surviving to an older age, although the latter have a much higher level of income than the Keralans (as cited in Sen, 1997). With 74 years of average life expectancy, and the highest level of standards of living, Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI) indices and a ‘replacement level’ of population growth in India, Kerala had achieved all the targets of the MDGs before the programme began, suggesting that Kerala would require a different programme for its poverty eradication (Harilal & Reynolds, 2006; Sen, 1997).

If I consider Kerala as a country, it would be equal to Canada in terms of population; equal to Tunisia in terms of GDP; and equal to Papua New Guinea, one of the poorest nations in the world, in terms of GDP per person (An Indian summary, 2014). Further, the MDG programme is planned and measured based on national indicators of development. The UNDP website provides national statistics on development indicators of different countries; however, regional variations are ignored. As a result of that, when many of the smaller countries with a population of less than one million are considered in terms of MDGs' performance, Kerala's unique achievements are ignored because it is only a part of a country (UNDP, 2010). The wide variation of PQLI between different states in India (see Appendix F for details), and Kerala's exceptional education performance in the year 2000 (discussed in Chapter Five, section 4) and the Table 3.4 given below confirm this argument.

Table 4.4

Distinctive Position of Kerala in MDG Indicators

No	Criteria	Kerala	India average
1	HDI Value	0.62	0.46
2	IMR/1000	14	58
3	MMR/100000	81	240
4	Life expectancy	74 years	63 years
5	PQLI	90.52	55.45
6	Literacy rate	94%	64%
7	HPI rank	12	47

Source: Based on 2000 indicators or data available closer to 2000

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I conducted an analysis of the socio-cultural and economic circumstances of Kerala, in terms of past and present contextual influences. It suggests that Kerala State has a unique

culture, geo-political background, language and history. It is significant to note that the social movements that transformed Kerala society, especially the Dalits' movements, came to a standstill following independence. Many other states in India may also have such distinct features as Kerala, but considering the fact that India is the second largest populated country in the world, with the largest population below the poverty line, these unique features should have been considered regionally before implementing the MDGs.

Ironically, the processes behind the achievements that Kerala has made have been different from the way the MDGs are conceptualised. In Kerala, for example, people were enlightened about the need for education, which in turn caused a huge demand for education in the state, which is against the MDGs approach. In a very simple term, in Kerala, to cater people's demand for education, government as well as social organisations came out against the top-down approach of the MDGs (see details in the next chapter, Chapter Four).

This chapter has thus illustrated that in Kerala, those ritually polluted Untouchables have not yet become a part of the mainstream society. They are still working on the farms to feed others, and building houses for others to live in, without the ability to dream a dream for their bright future. It is evident from the state government's poverty estimation criteria that if the MDG programme had been planned at the state level, it should have focused on the Dalits' emancipation and would still suit the needs of the state.

CHAPTER FIVE

KERALA: MDG 2 AND ITS EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter, Chapter Three, reviewed the past and present socio-economic and political situation in Kerala, except the history of school education, one of the biggest movements ever conducted in the state and the central theme of this research. This chapter focuses on the schooling history of Kerala, paying special attention to the MDG 2 context and its impact. It discusses both the MDG 2 objectives and its scope for achieving poverty eradication, and the alternative education system, which may bring about real changes to the lived experiences of poverty of the Dalits through critical consciousness.

5.2 Objectives of MDG2 and UPE

The *Roadmap Towards the Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration* presented by the UN Secretary-General in the UN General Assembly on 6th September 2001 states:

The main objective of MDG2 is to ensure that, by the year 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education (UN, 2001, p. 20).

A review of UN publications and documents related to MDG 2 (eg. Ana, 2005; UN Millennium Project, 2005; UNDG, 2010; United Nations, 2000) suggests that addressing the problem of illiteracy, which still affects around 760 million people worldwide, is the main objective of

MDG 2. It focuses on encouraging children to go to school and avoiding dropouts through different interventions such as providing a midday meal and occasional food rations, enhancing accessibility, and involving the civil society organisations in the functioning of local schools (UN Millennium Project, 2005).

Regarding the objectives of MDG2, the UN Millennium Project states: “there are few jobs beyond subsistence for people who are illiterate and innumerate. A lack of education is thus a sentence to a lifetime of poverty...they cannot earn in a competitive world economy” (UN Millennium Project, 2005, p. 84). The role of education in reducing poverty is widely recognised; nevertheless, this approach towards education as a means of getting a job suggests that our planners are advocating an education process that is unresponsive to many other needs. In other words, as conceptualised in MDG 2, education initiatives are not focused on developing critical consciousness for the emancipation of the oppressed. Alternatively, the advocates of MDG 2 are unaware of the role of education beyond numeracy and literacy, as a means to address the causes of poverty.

The first target of MDG 2 is, all children girls and boys alike to complete a full course of primary schooling by 2015, that to achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE) for all school aged children. Roughly once in every two decades since the Second World War, an international gathering of policymakers has solemnly promised to achieve universal primary education in developing countries by about twenty years thereafter (Ibrahim, Levine, & Birdsall, 2005) their stated quantitative goals were never achieved. MDG 2 is next in a series of such a primary education initiatives. There have been five international commitments between 1960 and 1970 to attain 100 per cent universal primary education by 1980, such as the Karachi Plan of 1960, Addis Ababa plan of 1961, Santiago Plan of 1962 and so on (Clemens, 2004). The Human Rights Declaration of 1960, the World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien Declaration) of 1990 and the Dakar Framework for Action (Dakar Declaration) of 2000 were the other major universal primary

education interventions before the MDG 2 initiative (Aiglepierre & Wagner, 2013; EFA, 2010).

None of those initiatives made any significant long-term impact on poverty or on primary education globally. After all those attempts, in the year 2000 more than 113 million children worldwide had no access to primary education and 880 million adults were illiterate (Gómez, 2005). Of those, 125 million were young people between the ages of 15 to 25 years. The MDGs review reports suggest that in Uganda, due to higher numbers of enrolments, the pupil to teacher ratio increased from 38:1 to 60:1, and up to 100:1, which led to the decline in the standard of education. This further suggests the unpreparedness of the MDG programme in general (UN, 2010b).

The thematic paper on MDG 2 is not concerned about the education system or its ability or inability to eradicate poverty. MDG 2 basically reinforced the objectives of Dakar Forum which was targeted to achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE) (Aiglepierre & Wagner, 2013). Thus, school enrolment, primary completion, and literacy and numeracy skills are the areas of its concern (UNDG, 2010). The UN Development Group (UNDG) on primary education has predicted that at least 56 million school-aged children will be out of school when the programme finishes in 2015 (UNDG, 2010). Hence, the target of the programme is to enrol and retain the maximum possible number of school-aged children in school. This is most crucial in many of the Sub-Saharan African and South Asian countries where the enrolment level is still very low.

The complementary relationship between education and poverty is thoroughly discussed in the MDG literature. However, a cause-based analysis of what kind of education is needed to eradicate poverty is less well examined, compared with the discussion of the importance of education to eradicate income poverty (eg. Chandrasekhar et al., 2001; Colclough & De, 2010; Dholakia & Iyengar, 2008; Dilip, 2010; K. K. George & Sunaina, 2005; Kumar & George, 1999, 2009; Misiriya, 2009; Narayana, 2009; A. Shah, 2010; Tilak, 1999, 2001, 2002). Education

necessarily demands long-term horizons; poverty, on the contrary, compels people to remain embedded in immediate or short-term concerns (K. Kumar, 2013). For example, a mother who is unable to make ends meet without going to work will insist that the school-aged child stay home to look after the younger children (which is one of the most important causes of drop outs) (SSA Kerala, 2011). In this context, the elder child either drops out or never enrolls, which is necessary for their immediate survival. Therefore, poverty is the cause of non-enrolment and dropouts rather than vice versa. Although a large amount of literature describes the role of schooling in eradicating poverty, based on substantial information, this research would like to assert that lack of schooling is mostly due to poverty (K. Kumar, 2013).

The ASER Centre is a research organisation in India conducting household-based surveys among around 700,000 school-aged children in India every year; it aims to provide reliable annual estimates of children's enrolment and basic learning levels. While government statistics suggest that there was a huge increase in the number of children enrolled in school in India, on the day of the ASER surveys, nearly half of the students were not present in school in most of the much less developed states of India such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. This survey report suggests that primary school enrolment and completion is on paper only (ASER Centre, 2010). This needs to be understood in the context of the general character of India's fraudulent public service. For example, an investigation found 300,000 bogus students in Kerala, who were 'enrolled' only for the schools to access more funding; but they were actually studying in private schools (Sebastian, 2014). Therefore, it is my contention that the UN should formulate a plan to address the causes that impede primary education.

The objectives of MDG 2 is a schooling initiative rather than an education initiative because primary education proposed under MDG 2 does not suggest any pedagogical turnaround beyond making the existing conventional system accessible to all school aged children. For

example, if a school teaches that the Pulayas (Dalits) are equal to the Brahmins in all walks of life, it will be burnt down like the schools were burnt in 1914 when the Dalits were admitted. If a curriculum includes the power of the subaltern to rule the upper caste, it will cause another caste/class struggle. Hence, any attempt to ensure opportunities for children to be creative, original, or critical of the wider world and to use their own initiative is lacking in MDG 2 beyond the targets of literacy and numeracy in the conventional education system (Campbell, 2005).

5.2.1 MDG 2: Human Capital Theory.

As discussed in section 5.2, human capital theory is the paradigm of MDG 2. In other words, “investment in education leads to formation of human capital, as an important factor of economic growth,” is the fundamental theory behind MDG 2 (UN Millennium Project, 2005). This capitalist view of education is consonant with the traditional curriculum, which was developed in a particular time period, that of the industrial revolution, which meant that there was a desire for the availability of specific skills in the population for the means of production. As a result, the concept of education emerging from that time was to create a human resource suitable for production. The notion of human capital theory originated in this context (Bowles & Gintis, 1975).

Human capital theories explain how education raises the productivity and earning capacity of individuals. Schultz (1961) argued that education is investment in human capital, an investment that can yield returns like investment in property. He posits that investment in education will lead to the income growth of individuals as well as the state. In an article titled ‘Social capital in the creation of human capital’ Coleman (1988) suggests that human capital investment is social capital investment, because increases in human capital result in increases in a society’s productivity and income. Income gains of an educated person have numerous widespread influences and may result in benefits such as the income and education gains of subsequent generations, better statesmanship, lawful behaviour and emergence of

social cohesion (Coleman, 1988). Thus, social capital theory also considers education as a means to integrate people under one system.

However, human capital theory does not consider that the educated will become producers themselves, but regards the human resource as a source of skilled labour for a small minority who own and control production or business (Bowles & Gintis, 1975). According to that theory, labour is a commodity that can be utilised to generate profit. Similarly, a highly skilled work force is not necessarily a profitable workforce, therefore education does more than produce human capital. Further, the human capital theory of 'skills and productive knowledge imparted through education increases the productivity of the people, and thereby their earnings' is a money-metric and narrow vision of education (Tilak, 2002). For poverty eradication in Kerala, which is caused due to social factors such as oppression, exclusion and denial of opportunities, this theory of education is least likely to be suitable. Hence, advocating an education system focusing on the capitalist version of human capital theory is not compatible with the philosophical assumption of this thesis. That is, 'poverty eradication should be seen as human emancipation from social oppression'.

5.2.2 Objectives of MDG 2 (SSA) in Kerala.

The Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA), (the Hindi name for the universal primary education movement of India) is the name of the programme for the universalisation of primary education in India as part of the MDG 2 initiatives. It is the Government of India's flagship programme implemented in partnership with the state governments. Eighty five per cent of its funding comes from the central government, which is provided by international agencies such as the World Bank, UNICEF, and UNESCO (Ministry of Human Resource and Development [MHRD], n.d). The programme seeks to open new schools in those locations which do not have schooling facilities, and strengthen the existing school infrastructure through the provision of additional classrooms, toilets, drinking water, and maintenance and school improvement grants (SSA Kerala, 2011).

The mission of SSA Kerala is to follow the national objectives of the SSA. The specific goals of SSA Kerala mentioned in its official website are:

- Enrol all children in schools, Education Guarantee Centres, Alternative Schools, 'Back-to-School' camps by 2005.
- Bridge all gender and social category gaps in the primary school stage by 2007 and at the elementary education level by 2010.
- Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.
- Achieve universal retention by 2010. (SSA Kerala, n.d para.3)

These goals suggest that the SSA objectives were achieved in Kerala and they are far below the education needs of the state.

5.2.3 Evaluation of MDG 2 (SSA) in Kerala 2005-2015.

As a part of the MDG 2, the SSA did not target for any pedagogical turnaround in the primary education, hence it is relevant to examine only its impact in the conventional education system. A survey report published in January 2015 suggests that the quality of primary school education in Kerala is declining (Warrier, 2015). Infrastructure development was the priority of SSA that has ignored the quality of education over the last decade (Jomi Thomas, 2015). As a result of that, in a literate society like Kerala the younger generation complete their schooling without gaining a minimum of literacy and numeracy skills (Jomi Thomas, 2015). A comparison of the primary schooling outcome survey results of Kerala shows that while 23 per cent children of fifth grade could not read their mother tongue in 2005, in 2014, 34 per cent of the fifth grade are unable to read simple sentences of grade two level difficulty (ASER Centre, 2015; Jomi Thomas, 2015).

In short, when the MDG 2 targets are achieved, of the 100 students who complete primary schooling (grade eight), three of them do not read any language, 16 of them are not capable of subtraction and 40 of them incapable of division. Although the number of children not enrolled in school between the age of 6-14 years has decreased from 0.6 per cent in

2005 to 0.1 percent in 2014, it is not a significant achievement of SSA (ASER Centre, 2015). The single most significant change in the primary schooling is the increase in the number of children studying in private school from 22.4 per cent in 2005 to 62.2 percent in 2014 (ASER Centre, 2015) (This issue is discussed in detail in section 5.4.1 of this chapter).

By the end of the MDG 2 programme in 2015, in Kerala, 25 per cent of the schools do not serve a mid-day meal, 5.3 per cent of the schools do not have a library, 15 per cent schools do not have useful toilets, 17 per cent of schools do not have drinking water facilities and 25 per cent of schools do not have playgrounds (ASER Centre, 2015). Therefore, the MDG 2 per se has not significantly improved primary education in Kerala.

5.3 History of Schooling in Kerala

Before examining the relevance and importance of MDG 2 in the context of Kerala, it is important to discuss the education history of Kerala. A royal decree in 1817 issued by Rani Gouri Parvati Bayi, the Princess of Travancore, directing that the state of Travancore should defray the entire cost of the education of its people in order to spread education in the state, is considered the foundation of Kerala's modern education system (E. T. Mathew, 1999; Parayil, 2000). The credit for this proclamation should go to Colonel John Munro, the British Resident, who was also the Dewan of Travancore (E. T. Mathew, 1999). The initiatives of John Munro came at the request of the then Christian missionaries who had opened schools for modern education (Salim & Nair, 2002).

By 1850, Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionaries had established a number of primary schools and girls' schools; both schools admitted pupils from all communities. In 1878, there were 141 CMS schools in Travancore. The London Missionary Society (LMS) also spread education both in English as well as in Malayalam; they had 384 schools by 1904. Thus by the end of the 18th century, British

missionaries were able to open schools as part of establishing every church, including girls' schools, boys' residential schools, and teacher training institutes (E. T. Mathew, 1999; Tharakan, 1984).

From 1862, during the administration of Dewan T Madhava Rao (1862-1874), again there was a popular demand for the expansion of schooling. Since the government could not meet the resource requirements needed to open schools, it provided for private-public participation in education through creating the policy of grant-in-aid (Tharakan, 1984). In 1887, the Government of Travancore introduced grant-in-aid and special grants for the Dalit schools, to be implemented in 1895 (E. T. Mathew, 1999; P. R. G. Nair, 1983).

During the same period, indigenous schools were integrated into the formal schooling system and a Book Committee was established for the translation and compiling of books into Malayalam. The government also paid attention to the expansion of vernacular schools. R. Jeffrey (1981) has noted that the number of private schools increased from 20 in 1873 to 440 in 1883, and by 1890 around 50 books were published in Malayalam by the Book Committee. From 1891 the government introduced service examinations for the selection of staff for its services. This policy of acknowledging education beyond the merit of caste was a far-reaching decision that inspired greater community participation in education (P.R. Gopinathan Nair, 1976).

As a result of this government policy, by utilising the government's grant to meet the people's aspirations, many socio-religious organisations came forward to start schools, as it was one of the main objectives of those organisations. This was a revolutionary change in the expansion of formal education in Kerala (P R G Nair, 1976). Entry of the Catholic Church into the sphere of education is perhaps the most revolutionary chapter in the expansion of education in Kerala. Due to the cohesive organisation of the Church, they could open schools much more quickly than other communal organisations in Kerala. Although they had only 10 schools in 1882, by 1887 there were more than 1000

schools under Catholic management (P.R. Gopinathan Nair, 1976; Tharakan, 1984). By the turn of the 21st century, Catholic education institutions became the major providers of education in Kerala.

Thus, by the end of the 19th century, people became extremely organised under their caste or religion and formed multi-purpose organisations. Education and social reform of their community were the main common objectives of these organisations, as discussed in Chapter Three, section 3.1. The great education revolution ignited by the Christian missionaries was transmitted into other communities with the same missionary zeal.

Essentially, by the beginning of 20th century, Travancore and Kochi ranked first and second in literacy far ahead of other provinces in India (Tharakan, 1984). However, both Kochi and Malabar were not on a par with Travancore in the early stages due to the expansion of education among the Dalits in Travancore, but Kochi became more literate than Travancore by the middle of the century and Malabar still lagged behind (R. Jeffrey, 1987). In 1901, for fewer than six million people in Kerala there were 3,683 schools, of which the government owned only 429. Ninety five per cent of them were primary schools. That is the level of primary school education expansion the government of India is trying to achieve through MDG 2 (P.R. Gopinathan Nair, 1976; Tharakan, 1984).

According to R. Jeffrey (1987):

[B]y the 1920s virtually every section of Kerala society had come to regard education as "the door to a new earth and a new heaven"... the question was: who was leading whom? Was government policy tempting more and more Malayalis to send children to school? Or was government unable to keep up with a deep and constant demand to multiply the number of schools? (p.470)

The major initiative of the government in the early 20th century was to ensure that schooling was accessible to all. As part of the expansion of

education for the Dalits, Dalits' school fees were waived from 1923 and a 'Lump sum grant²⁴' scheme was introduced in 1936 (P R G Nair, 1976). A full fee concession was granted for girls from 1925 for the encouragement of girls' education. Later, from 1954 to 1956, primary and middle school fees were abolished in two stages and in response to the teachers' demands for a fair wage, management school teachers were also paid by the government at a rate level with government teachers (P R G Nair, 1976).

Since most of the public schools were 'aided' under the private management, the government did not carry much of the establishment costs, and the private management paid the teachers until the government nationalised privately managed schools. However, with the shrinking financial position of the state and explosion of population growth during the post independent years, the quality of education and spread of private education declined. The share of expenditure on education in terms of total government expenditure in Travancore increased from 5.1 per cent in 1900-01 to 6.2 per cent in 1941-42 (K. K. George, 2011). The pattern and pace of education development in Kochi was almost equivalent to Travancore, and their spending on education was higher than Travancore in general (P. R. G. Nair, 1983). As early as the 1960s, Kerala was spending 35 per cent of the state revenue on education, while another state, West Bengal, was spending only 19 per cent (K. K. George, 2011).

From the 1950s, the Kerala Government paid more attention to the expansion of secondary schools, for which the state introduced the Private Secondary School Scheme (Tharakan, 1984). Consequently, secondary school fees were abolished between the years 1960 and 1970. In 1972, the Kerala Government permitted travel concessions to students in all means of transport, both in private and public, at a rate of 25 per cent of the actual fare. Although there were no school fees collected from students, the privately managed schools continued to

²⁴ A scheme of special cash transfer for the Dalit students, for the encouragement of their education.

appoint staff and collected vast sums of money as donations to fund their operations. Thus opening a school became a profitable business for any organisation. By this time, private, aided schools outnumbered government schools and they became powerful enough to question the existence of government (Tharakan, 1984). The Education Bill, passed in 1957, which intended to constrain aided schools so they were under the direct control of the state government, resulted in a massive protest popularly known as the “liberation struggle”. Consequently, alleging failure of the law and order situation in Kerala, the central government dismissed the state government in 1959. In general, school education was the most contentious issue in the socio-political scenario of Kerala in the 20th century (P. R. G. Nair, 1983; Tharakan, 1984).

In 1959, the Kerala Education Act required that the government should provide free and compulsory education for all children of the state within a period of 10 years from the commencement of the Act (Planning Commission of India, 2005). The Act also stipulated that the government supply a midday meal, clothing and books and other writing materials to poor pupils free of cost (Parayil, 2000). In short, at least 50 years ago the Kerala Education Act had already ensured everything that MDG 2 has sought to address in terms of primary education.

As mentioned earlier, by the 20th century, education was a passion and quest of all the people of Kerala. A collective action by the community called “operation floodlight” a total literacy mission, romped to success on 18th April 1991, culminating in the declaration that Kerala was a totally literate state (Oommen, 1996; Padmanabhan, 2010). As the general plight of the Dalits of Kerala indicates, none of these initiatives worked well for the socio political conscientisation of the Dalits (Padmanabhan, 2010).

5.4 Impact of MDG 2 in Kerala

5.4.1 Impact on school education.

As described, before the introduction of MDG 2, the Kerala Government had already established a cohesive network of primary school facilities in the state, and both literacy and primary school enrolment rates were nearly at 100 per cent. Largely, as a part of MDG2, when the state introduced Sarva Siksha Abyan (SSA), the state education machinery was forced to comply with the national policies. The people of Kerala are highly involved and concerned about their children's education, but the response to the SSA initiatives suggest that they were not prepared to accept yet another primary education initiative; while they wanted a tertiary education revolution in the state (Leni, 2006; Retnakumar & Arokiasamy, 2006; A. Shah, 2010).

Chapter Five, section 3 described the state government's keen interest in the expansion of primary education. It was made possible with the public-private participation, but more recently, the communist governments of Kerala have considered education as social capital and moored private schools in the domain of government, and nationalised all the privately managed, aided schools which has badly affected the quality of education and the government's ability to spend on higher education (Tilak, 2001). Kerala had a near total retention in primary schools but dropout was considerably higher at the more senior levels. It was a unique phenomenon in India, because national statistics suggested a 54 per cent dropout, whereas Kerala had zero per cent dropout in the years 1997-98. Table 4.1 shows comparative figures for rates of dropouts for Kerala and nationally. Appendix G provides detailed numbers of dropouts for all states.

Table 5.1***School Dropout Rates in 1997-98 (%)***

	Grade I-V	Grade I-VIII	Grade I-X
Kerala	-9.00	-0.40	25.81
India	39.58	54.14	69.33

Source: Annual Report, Ministry of Human Resource and Development, Government of India (Chandrasekhar et al., 2001).

Note: Enrolment in grade I is considered to be 100%. Hence, following new enrolment (mostly in-migrants' children) dropout becomes negative in Kerala. By adjusting for new enrolments, the dropout rate in Kerala stood at 3.6% in grade VIII (Chandrasekhar et al., 2001).

As shown, Kerala already had a well-established primary schooling system in the 20th century and arguably could not improve the quality of that schooling any further. Thus, when SSA started in 2002 as part of the national mission for primary education reforms, it was met with negative public reaction in Kerala. Along with it, due to other socio-demographic changes and the poor quality of education, students deserted thousands of public schools and joined the private schools (3,557 public schools in Kerala have fewer than 60 students each). Those who advocated SSA in Kerala suggested that it would bring extra resources and funding so that the infrastructure facilities could be improved in schools (Jacob, 2011). However, as the programme was about to expire in 2015, on 3rd September 2014, the Chief Minister of Kerala acknowledged in a press meeting that more than 1,300 public schools in Kerala did not have toilets (*"Schoolukalil suchimurikal, 2014"*).

According to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2010, about 30 per cent of the children who complete primary school in Kerala did not reach the minimum achievement levels in literacy and numeracy. The report suggested that a quarter of the students complete primary school without gaining the ability to read or write; with little arithmetic skills (ASER Centre, 2010) (see Table 4.2).

Table 5.2

Level of Academic Achievements in Kerala

Standard/ Grade/ Year	MOTHER TONGUE Children who can read Malayalam (%)	TUITION children who attend private tuition (%)	ARITHMETIC (A) Number recognition (only A)	ARITHMETIC (B) Subtraction (A&B)	ARITHMETIC(C) Division (A,B&C)	ENGLISH (A) of those who can read words, children who can tell the meaning of the words (%)	ENGLISH (B) who can read words, children who can tell the meaning of the sentence (%)
1	9.6	25.0	53.6	10.2	4.6	70.6	75.2
2	25.7	32.5	51.2	31.8	4.9	72.1	85.2
3	42.9	34.4	32.1	55.3	7.4	75.1	81.7
4	59.2	38.9	18.9	52.6	24.5	83.6	88.4
5	71.3	42.4	12.2	39.6	45.4	77.7	92.9
6	77.0	38.2	9.7	30.2	58.1	78.9	92.5
7	81.1	38.2	7.3	24.0	66.3	78.9	92.5
8	86.1	44.7	5.3	18.0	75.6	81.7	93.7
TOTAL	58.5	36.8	22.4	33.3	37.3	76.5	90.9

Source: Compiled from the ASER Report 2010 (ASER Centre, 2010).

Note: The survey used the basic minimum language and arithmetic tools of the relevant standard or grade.

One notable finding of this survey is that 47 per cent of children who were in school and studying in Grade 5 could not read the story text at a grade two level of difficulty. Kerala made impressive achievements in schooling on the one hand, but the state ranked below 17 other states in respect to the level of learning achieved by school students on the other (NCERT, 2008). In this context, parents began to prefer private English-medium schools, which showed high pass percentages in high school and higher secondary. Furthermore, the immigration boom that started from the year 1980 generated a wealthy middle class. Because of globalisation and privatisation, by the end of the 20th century the government was no longer a major source of employment and parents became more focused on lucrative international jobs. Thus, there was a natural shift in preference from conventional free public education to expensive private education (Department of Economics and Statistics [DES], 2009).

Unfortunately, SSA initiatives accelerated this shift; by 2009, as many as 2,646 private schools were opened in the state in which 2,189 were English-medium schools (Department of Economics and Statistics [DES], 2009). On the other hand, according to the data published by the Department of General Education, Government of Kerala (2014), as many as 3,557 schools in Kerala have fewer than 60 students each; 717 schools have fewer than 30 and 593 schools have fewer than 20 students each, which are classified as uneconomical schools. Many of them have dozens of vacant classrooms (Paul, 2014). There are many schools without students, but are still not closed. However, the government is not in a position to give redundancy to the surplus teachers. Hence the government was bearing the burden of about 1,200 excess school teachers in the 2013-14 academic year in the state (General Education Department, 2014; Sebastian, 2014).

These numbers of surplus teachers and schools will be higher if the government is able to challenge the fraud data to get more accurate figures, because whenever there is an inspection, students are nominally transferred from one school to another (Paul, 2014; Sebastian, 2014). A study conducted in 2014 found that there are 300,000 'bogus students' in Kerala, who study in one school (private) and are also enrolled in another school (public) to avoid "division fall" (Sebastian, 2014). This is a coordinated attempt of the aided school management and the teachers to ensure jobs in the aided schools. Conversely, the aided schools inflate their recorded numbers of students so that they can recruit new teachers. The school management get donations from teachers and the teachers are well-paid, but it is a huge waste of money for the state (Sebastian, 2014).

The next phase of Dalit exclusion from education surfaces here. The total number of Dalit students who are studying at private schools is estimated to be only 3.31 per cent. Whereas the number of uneconomic schools, and the percentage of Dalit students in each school, as published by the Department of Public Instruction, suggest that over 50 per cent of the students in the uneconomic schools are Dalit (General

Education Department, 2014). Thus, it can be assumed that the government schools are becoming 'Dalit-schools'. Furthermore, Padmanabhan (2010) conducted an empirical study among the Dalit students to explore why thousands of Dalit students drop out every year in Kerala before completing their schooling. She found that the Dalit students experience 'silent exclusion' from the schools, in which both peers and teachers ignore them as 'good-for-nothing'. Dalit students are irregular in their attendance and learn little in school. (Chapter Six, section 8 explores Dalits' schooling experience in more detail).

5.4.2 Impact on higher education.

As discussed above, the MDG 2/SSA demanded more funding from the state government but did not make a significant impact on primary education except for a marginal increase in enrolment. On the other hand, the government's excessive focus on primary education hindered the higher education possibilities. Therefore, although the issue of higher education is of less relevance in this thesis, it is important to note that, due to heavy burden of school education on the government exchequer, the government was unable to finance tertiary education or pay attention to it being part of the natural process of the next stage of educational development (Kumar & George, 1999; A. Shah, 2010; Tilak, 2001).

When SSA started in Kerala, although there was a near total primary school enrolment of the eligible population and a negligible dropout rate, there was a 26 per cent dropout rate in secondary school, with 43 per cent of Dalit boys dropping out before completing the 10th Grade (Chandrasekhar et al., 2001; Dilip, 2010). In Kerala, only 3.7 percent of young people between the ages of 18-24 years were enrolled in tertiary education in the year 2000 (Tilak, 2001). Only 6.54 per cent of Keralans were able to achieve tertiary education during this same period, which indicates the states' negligence and inability to afford tertiary education (Leni, 2006; Retnakumar & Arokiasamy, 2006; A. Shah, 2010). While nationally, an average of 76.2 per cent of those who complete higher

secondary schooling enrol in higher education, only 67.4 per cent do so in Kerala (Parayil, 1996; Tilak, 2001).

The Kerala Government could not afford to open more tertiary colleges due to its financial commitment to school-level education (Chandrasekhar et al., 2001; Tilak, 2001). For example, while the state opened 98 colleges between the years 1948-1968, it could open only 54 colleges between the years 1969-1992. The Kerala Government's expenditure on technical education did not increase from 1960 to the year 2000, which is a clear indicator of the negligence of higher education (Chandrasekhar et al., 2001; Tilak, 2001). Kerala's share of higher education in the country's higher education institutions had declined from 4.4 per cent in 1981 to 2.6 per cent in 1999 (Tilak, 2001). After making in-depth analysis of Kerala's unique achievement in human development, Sen (2000) posited that Kerala could not build on its success in human development to raise its income levels beyond the focus on literacy and schooling.

Due to the lack of higher education facilities in Kerala, an average 300,000 students went outside Kerala for higher education each year between the years 2000 and 2010, which is a major proportion of those who complete higher secondary education (Zachariah & Rajan, 2012). Finally, the government sacrificed its egalitarian approach to tertiary education, realising that students of Kerala were going out of Kerala in search of job oriented courses (Kumar & George, 2009). The total number of higher education institutions in Kerala in 1990 was only 170 (Tilak, 2001). However, reports published in 2011 suggest that almost 250 professional colleges were established between 2006 and 2011 in the private sector, when the government opened up tertiary education to the private sector (Mani & Arun, 2012). By 2008, the number of private engineering colleges vaulted from zero to 90 per cent of the total number of engineering colleges; almost the same is the case for medical, dental and nursing colleges (Kumar & George, 2009). Enrolments in engineering increased from about 2,800 in 1991 to about 28,000 in 2008 (Mani & Arun, 2012). Despite that, almost 311,000 students of

Kerala sought higher education in private institutions outside Kerala in 2011. This demonstrates the inadequacy of the facilities provided by the government to meet the higher education needs of its people (Zachariah & Rajan, 2012).

These figures are relevant in this thesis because before permitting the self-financing colleges, higher education was government funded or owned; thus the Dalits and the socially marginalised got equal access to free education. However, in the new system, the economically weaker Dalits are deprived of higher education opportunities. Because of that, only 2.1 per cent of Dalits are able to gain tertiary-level education; among them a good number are studying in private colleges and paying fees which are unaffordable to most of them (Kumar & George, 2009; Mani & Arun, 2012). Chapter Six, section 8 explores this issue further.

Furthermore, international evidence demonstrates that no country can become economically advanced if the enrolment ratio in higher education is less than 20 per cent of the total enrolment (Tilak, 2001). In this regard, in a statistical analysis of the relationship between education and economic growth Veena (1987) has found that education in medical science, technology, agriculture and applied engineering science is significantly related to gross national product. The rapid growth of East Asian countries is mostly due to their high quality tertiary education (Tilak, 2001). Experience of countries such as Vietnam, Rwanda and Sri Lanka shows that societies that have focused their attention rather exclusively on literacy and basic education and ignored higher education have not succeeded economically (Tilak, 2001). It has also been found that optimum utilisation of physical capital and maximum exploitation of natural resources cannot be achieved in less developed countries due to the lack of educated human capital (Veena, 1987).

In information technology (IT) and software development institutions, Kerala is far behind other states, without having even a one per cent share nationally (A. Shah, 2010). Until recently, Kerala provided too

limited opportunities for professional education, so the educated were mostly migrating out of the state (A. Shah, 2010). This has made Kerala the least industrial friendly state in India (A. Shah, 2010). Therefore, Kerala does not have even half a per cent of foreign direct investment in its industries. Kerala has miniscule share in software exports (A. Shah, 2010). These are some of the education-related factors contributing to poverty in Kerala. Therefore, it is my contention that the education component of poverty eradication in Kerala needs to focus on tertiary education or the next stage of education development rather than primary education.

5.5 The Education System: A Freirean Critique

5.5.1 The banking system.

Before the beginning of formal education in India, Vedic education was practised. Upanishads say that the teacher is the abode of knowledge (Cenkner, 1995). Hence, the Indian system of education was a process of siphoning knowledge from the teacher to student. The Brahminic education introduced in Kerala also followed the same Vedic culture and tradition, which the state proudly upholds, without eroding amidst continual socio-political changes. As a part of that, the '*Gurukula*²⁵' system of education existed in Kerala in ancient times. In those days there were no print media available, so the words of the guru were the ultimate knowledge (Prasad, 2008). "[The] Guru was an embodiment of wisdom and ideal way of life. So saving the student from ignorance was the primary task of a teacher" (Cenkner, 1995, p. 36). Thus came the dictum of *guru-devo-bhava* (guru is equal to god) to encapsulate the teacher-student relationship. Teacher education still upholds the position of the traditional Indian teacher which is described in the Upanishads as: "the guru is the embodiment of highest truth...those alone who follow both scriptures and gurus transcend ignorance"

²⁵ Ancient Indian education system, where pupils gain education living with the Guru practiced in India during about 500AD-1500 AD.

(Cenkner, 1995, p. 34). The presence of this tradition is evident in the conventional education of Kerala.

This all-known to all-ignorant siphoning system of education is known as the 'banking system' (Freire, 1996). Freire describes how, according to the banking concept of education, knowledge becomes a gift bestowed by those who regard themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Education thus becomes an act of 'depositing', in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues notes and lectures and makes deposits, which the students patiently receive, memorize and repeat. In the banking concept of education, the scope of education allows the students to extend only as far as receiving and storing the deposits. Freire describes that:

Narration (with the teacher as narrator) leads the students to memorize mechanically the narrated content. Worse yet, it turns them into "containers," into "receptacles" to be "filled" by the teacher. The more completely she fills the receptacles, the better a teacher she is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are. (Freire, 1996, p. 72)

Based on how well a student can play the banking game, students are stratified within the school and then beyond. The traditional system of schooling treats students as passive recipients of the narratives decided upon by authorities (A. Kumar, 2006). Banking education does not encourage students' critical consciousness. Rather, it is a system highly efficient in producing obedient, submissive, and uncritical citizens. In a school system dedicated to the banking pedagogy, students internalise values and habits, which actually sabotage their critical thought (Freire, 1998; Krishna, 1998; A. Kumar, 2006).

An active, dialogical, critical and criticism-stimulating method of teaching is not possible as long as teachers assume that they are the treasure houses of knowledge (Freire, 1996). Freire maintains that this

creates an ego relationship between teacher and student, dissuading students from questioning because the teacher is the subject of the learning process and the student is a mere object (Freire, 1996). But dialogical relations lead to a situation where the teacher is no longer merely the one who teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn, while being taught, also teaches (Freire, 1996).

Hill (1999), an educationist who supports the ideology of Freire, suggests that only a small number of individuals can ever imagine a different way of doing things in a compulsory mass schooling system. Here, teachers expect a pre-defined output, so 'mug-up the knowledge imparted as-it-is', is the criteria of their success. Freire explains that this system of education is the sign of an oppressive society where: "the interests of the oppressors lie in changing the consciousness of the oppressed, not the situation which oppresses them, for the more the oppressed can be led to adapt to that situation, the more easily they can be dominated" (Freire, 1996, p. 74).

5.5.2 Oppression.

According to Freire (1996), the oppressive education system is an oppressor's instrument of dehumanising. Education, in the Freirean sense, is concerned with communication and dialogue through praxis, between people, and across cultures, which was impossible in the caste-based society of Kerala because the caste code divided the people into groups of 'humans' and 'sub-humans'. Hence, the education system of Kerala was an instrument of the oppressors to establish that they are the 'all known' and the oppressed are 'all ignorant'.

This dominator-dominated relationship exists in Kerala's schools even today. It is a part of Kerala's culture for the powerful to become an oppressor. The teachers often oppress students and assault those who underperform, which often forces them to drop out, abscond and some even commit suicide as a result of the pressure between the teachers on the one side and parents on the other (P. Singh & Mitra, 2007).

Students who are weak at memorising are living under extreme stress from both the parents and the teachers who practice corporal punishment (see Figure 4.2), which gradually builds in the students' minds the consciousness that they are worthless. Surveys have found that students who are academically weak and not excellent in memorising things are harassed by teachers and that is a major cause of dropouts (Ghose, 1989).

This phenomenon is extremely visible among the Dalit students who are the most oppressed by the teachers and society. Padmanabhan (2010) maintains that the Dalit students of Kerala remain in school with the sub-human psychology of being 'good-for-nothing'. The entire socio-economic and living conditions cause Dalit students to be academically weak and less than excellent at memorising. Thus, schooling becomes an institutional process of their oppression. The general comprehension that they are inferior adds their vulnerability to physical and psychological assault (see Figure 4.1).



Source: Parents of a school student show numerous cane bruises on their son's back, as appeared in the *Malayala Manorama Daily* on July 2, 2011 ("Kalaring thettiyathinu," 2011).

Figure 5.1. Corporal punishment in Kerala.

Despite numerous pieces of legislation, news of unusual punishments appears in the media almost every day. On the 29th September, 2014, *The Hindu Newspaper* reported that in Kerala a schoolchild was locked up in a kennel in the school from 10.30am to 3pm as a punishment for talking in the class (D. M. Mathew, 2014). Parallel to the caste code-dictated social order, in Kerala an ideal student is supposed to remain quiet, obedient and recall everything printed in the text, and the teacher's duty is to make all students reach this target.

In this process of learning for the sake of learning, students lag in the process of knowing. Freire (2005) posits that knowing is more than mere surface comprehension; it is a process of striving to delve beneath surface appearances; of endeavouring to understand an object of study

rigorously. Knowing is not just a cognitive process, separated from the rest of the world. Rather, knowing is an intensely practical process, intertwined with the messy realities of everyday life (Roberts, 2007). Knowing, as Freire conceives of it, is something one engages in with one's whole being with feeling, will and action as well as with reason. Nevertheless, the teachers of Kerala persist in wanting students to learn exactly what they teach. This is a type of percolation of social oppression through education. In that way, with the weapons of corporal punishment and examinations, a teacher can force the student to comply with their instructions (Freire, 1972, 2005).

Freire (1996) proposes that education is an instrument of social emancipation, because the oppressed under the oppressive education system are unaware of the extent of oppression as they aim to become oppressors in turn. Hence, oppression is the connecting theme between Freire and education for poverty eradication, especially in the context of Kerala. The humanistic agenda of education has no meaning or validity if the educators, and the curriculum they uphold, ignore the decline of humanity into an oppressor-oppressed duality (Krishna, 1998). As discussed earlier, the prevailing educational practices, for the most part, exacerbate the dehumanised state of the human world (Krishna, 1998).

5.5.3 Conscientisation.

Conscientisation is a process of critical consciousness in learning (Freire, 2005). The meaning Freire (1996) has given to conscientisation – “learn to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (p.35) - indicates that it is the education requirement for the oppressed poor of Kerala. It is not a matter of first developing a critical consciousness; it should be an outcome of education. What conscientisation demands of us is that we strive to deepen and extend our current understanding (Wink, 2000). This requires the application of intellectual virtues, such as willingness to question; a probing and inquiring stance when faced with a problem. Its characteristics are open-mindedness, curiosity, and

certain humility; recognising, among other things, that we cannot know it all and there is always more to learn (Wink, 2000). Conscientisation does not take place through fixed, inevitable, irreversible stages; rather, it occurs as a process at any given moment (Roberts, 2007). It requires problem-posing education, and according to Freire (1996): “[B]anking education anesthetizes and inhibits creative power; problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality. The former attempts to maintain the submersion of consciousness; the latter strives for the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality” (p.68).

Thus, critical consciousness will empower everyone to liberate him- or herself from oppression and from the clutches of others’ ideas. Thus, education should evolve ideas not deposit ideas. As Freire says: “word is not the privilege of a few persons, but the right of everyone” (1996, p. 69). This is where the importance of the dialogic development of consciousness becomes important and where rights become paramount; the right of every person to have a voice, ideas and to name the world; and to participate in the process of social transformation and social change. Dialogue is based on the principles of equality, humility, hope, and mutual respect; it possesses the dialectical potential of creating and re-creating the new realities. Dialogue is a process through which human beings re-create and reproduce their cultures, values and socio-political norms. In the dialogical system, the students are no longer docile listeners; they are co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher (Freire, 1996).

5.6 Conclusion

From the above analysis in this chapter, it is evident that the education requirements of Kerala and those of the UN programme of education (MDG 2) for poverty eradication are not complementary. As described, although Kerala had achieved the MDG 2 targets long ago, the Dalits of Kerala, although they are an educated population in terms of MDG 2, nevertheless remain enmeshed in poverty, which suggests that this programme is not sufficient to eradicate poverty.

Yet Kerala has implemented the UN programme as a part of SSA, which aims to bring to the school the largest number of out-of-school children in the world and to have full levels of participation in primary education. While the situation in North Indian states is similar to sub-Saharan African countries regarding poor levels of primary school education, Kerala could not implement a programme that could end poverty as it was not locally planned and executed. Hence Kerala would not need the UN programme, as a part of poverty eradication.

Kerala is so distinct due to its long history of schooling and the people's desire for education. The British Christian missionaries, the British Resident to Travancore, and the successive governments of both Travancore and Kochi successfully reinforced a craving for education among Keralans, which began centuries ago. Moreover, the social reformation movements that transformed Kerala used education as the key to social change. Furthermore, successive governments have emphasised the expansion of the education networks so it was accessible to all.

In this context, school education became a burden on the Keralan economy, so the government could not focus on improving the quality of education or providing higher education, because all the resources went into running the schools they opened. In due course, parents began to consider the state school education as sub-standard and resorted to private English-medium schools. Yet the policies of SSA did not permit the state government to shut down the uneconomic schools, even the student-less schools. Consequently, when the government could not provide opportunities for higher education, it led to privatisation. Socially and economically marginalised Dalit communities suffer in both these changes, which have intensified poverty and social exclusion among the Dalits.

I have observed that an education initiative from the primary level could be appreciated if it envisages a paradigm shift in the education system, which ends banking, oppression and factory schooling and encourages

conscientisation. That could create a critical impact on poverty in Kerala in the long term and could be a catalyst for the eradication of poverty in India as a whole. As the programme comes to an end without contributing to poverty eradication, it can be recommended to the UN policy makers that it is better not to underestimate the local context and regional policymaking before similar programmes are implemented in the future.

PART TWO

DATA ANALYSIS

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE OF THE NATURE AND CAUSES OF POVERTY OF DALITS OF KERALA

Overview

An analysis of poverty in Kerala has exposed its extreme social causes leading to poverty. Economic deprivation, along with many other experiences of dispossession, is a consequence of the caste system. The Dalits, who are at the bottom of the caste hierarchy, are the most deprived and denigrated community in Kerala. Hence, they remain the extreme poor of Kerala. In addition to the literary evidence (eg. M. Desai, 2003; K. A. Mehta & Shah, 2003; Saradamoni, 1973; Sengupta, 2007; Sivanandan, 1976, 1979; Werff, 1982) of the presence of poverty that runs parallel to the caste hierarchy, an overview of people living in Kerala shows that the Dalits are much poorer than the rest of the community. In this context, for an in-depth analysis of the poverty of the specific community, I chose to study the nature and causes of poverty of the Dalits.

Dalit poverty is a kaleidoscope of multiple deprivations, denial of opportunities, systematic exclusion, consistent oppression and heinous dehumanisation, which are manifested in the form of slavery, Untouchability, Unseeability, Unapproachability and different forms of caste bigotry. Hence, characteristics of Dalit poverty are dominated by

their experiences of caste system. Although all these practises are not overtly practised today, their effects are very much active today and the strictures of the caste code are highly embedded in the Kerala people's lives. Therefore, a detailed analysis of those practises is vital to unpack the causes of poverty in Kerala.

Since all the practises of the caste system are inflicted based on a caste code, and imposed in a Feudal scheme, unless the oppressed realise the perils of the system that they are ensnared in, they will not be able to emancipate from the system. This thesis assumes that poverty eradication can be achieved only by the emancipation of the oppressed from the vicious circle of poverty. Part I discussed the relevance of the criticism-stimulating education system for their emancipation. It suggested that an education system which develops critical thinking and instils conscientisation (critical consciousness) is relevant for the emancipation of the Dalits.

Part II reflects on the lived experiences of poverty of the Dalits with the MDG 2, and illustrates whether it is sufficient to address the obstacles to emancipation. In addition, it explores to what extent the impact of the oppressed people's past experiences operate in the present and drag them into their present plight of poverty. With relevant literary evidence, critiques the approach to poverty based on deprivation and suggests that factors causing deprivation need to be addressed. Thus, Part II, the data analysis, is also an enquiry into the nature and causes of poverty of the Dalits.

The empirical study conducted at the Valayam²⁶ Dalit colony in the Ernakulam district of Kerala for this research shows that, since the end of slavery until the present, the government's efforts have not enabled the Dalits to obtain equality, social justice and freedom. They are excluded, exploited, oppressed, marginalised and deprived. Amidst inappropriate social welfare schemes, political manipulation, improper aid fund utilisation, poor health, an inadequate health care system and

²⁶ Not the real name, a pseudonym is used to protect their privacy.

rampant corruption, the Dalits experience extreme levels of poverty and deprivation.

Although the lived experiences of poverty of the Dalits are intertwined, based on the themes and patterns that emerged from the data analysis, they have been grouped into three chapters: social exclusion, oppression and denial of opportunities. As these characteristics are inter-related, all three chapters discuss similar topics. Notwithstanding that, an attempt is made to analyse the data keeping the continuity within the topic.

CHAPTER SIX

SOCIAL EXCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The social fabric of Kerala has traditionally stratified people into different castes and sub-castes ascribing ritual purity and pollution. Although Kerala is the second least caste practising state in India, poverty is identified as parallel to this caste stratification. This chapter examines the nature, intensity and extent of exclusion that led the Dalits, who are at the bottom of the caste hierarchy, to extreme inter-generational and multi-dimensional poverty. Both literary and empirical evidence suggests that the powerful upper caste usurped authority and treated Dalits as Untouchable, Unapproachable and Unseeable; and therefore excluded them from civil society, leaving them impoverished.

The European Union Poverty initiative has expounded that social exclusion is a process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live (Office for National Statistics, 2013). Parasuraman et al. (2003) observed that: “[i]ndividuals and institutions interact through relationships. If majority of these relationships are exploitative or contractual rather than affirmative, it eventually leads to distress, disempowerment and impoverishment” (p. 202). Therefore, social exclusion is seen as a major cause of Dalit poverty.

Social exclusion is the “inability to participate effectively in economic, social, political and cultural life; alienation and distance from the mainstream society” (Duffy, 1995 as cited in Taket, 2009, p. 7). Citing any of the famous definitions of social exclusion, the way the Dalits have been dealt with, and are still inflicted upon by being compelled to live in a colony settlement, is nothing short of social exclusion. Stewart et al. (2007) argue that although the concept of social exclusion was

first developed in industrialised countries to describe the process of marginalisation and deprivation, the characteristic of social exclusion on the basis of birth in a particular caste is a leading cause of poverty in Kerala.

This chapter analyses to what degree these exclusions still prevail and to what extent they are causes of present poverty. A spectrum of field observation notes, participants' responses and the related literature illustrate how far Dalits have recuperated from the systematic exclusion from education, ownership of land, employment, and dignity of life. Although caste code is not operational in the society as it was in the past, this chapter explores different facets of social exclusion both experienced in the past (and bearing its consequences now) and those exclusions the Dalits are still experiencing.

6.2 Caste Bigotry

As discussed in Chapter Three, section 6.2, the caste system that has prevailed in India has excluded and denigrated the Dalits. According to the caste system, the Dalits are an impure and degraded group of people who are excluded from society. The extent to which a Dalit could cause pollution is beyond comprehension to present-day researchers. According to that system, the shadow of an Untouchable falling on the walls of a temple or an upper caste home could pollute them (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998). Therefore, the Untouchables had to avoid paths near temples and upper caste homes (it is practised still in many places). Seeing a Dalit would pollute the upper caste so the Dalits had to ring a bell to announce their "polluting arrival" and wear a spittoon to catch any polluting spittle that might drop from their lips. In some parts, some of these Dalit Jatis were Unseeable – that is, they would work in the night and hide in the day (Annamalai, 2014; Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998).

According to Werff (1982): "the caste system of Kerala, incorporating the ritual pollutions by touch, approach and seeing, came into being during

the wars between the kingdom of Chera (in Kerala) and Chola (in Tamil Nadu) in the 10th and 11th centuries” (p. 1).

Varthema, a traveller who journeyed through Malabar in 1505, has recorded that the slave castes could not use the main roads in the village, but had to:

Slink along through marshy fields and bush, shouting to warn caste-people of their presence... Should they not be crying out and any Nair be going that way and see their fruits [children] or meet any of them, these Nairs may kill them without punishment. (as cited in Alex, 2008, p. 2)

The earliest common term used to describe the Dalits was “*Asprishya Shudra*”, meaning ‘not-to-be-touched Shudras’. An explanation for their impurity is that their touch could even pollute the water of the river Ganges (Charsley, 1996). The practise of Untouchability required that the Dalits should ensure that they never came in to physical contact with higher caste people and may even extend to not touching anything that higher caste people are going to use; so they could not go near eating places or water sources. Their shadow, their footprints and their spit could pollute a place (Alex, 2008). According to Saradamoni (1973), the Dalits could not be seen on the roads or in public places until late in the 19th century.

According to the principles of *Dharma* and *Karma*, by birth Dalits are born to do polluting jobs; therefore they are permanently polluted and excluded. In North India, Untouchability was associated more with their impure works; however, in the South, it was part of the ritual. Kerala had more restrictions on Dalits than North India (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998; Saradamoni, 1973).

As a result of their social exclusion from the rest of the castes, the Dalits were considered as a fifth class, and inferior to animals (Charsley, 1996). They were looked down upon as permanently impure

and therefore they were subject to torture and bigotry, if not death, in the event of them breaking any of the caste codes (Schwartz, 1989).

Since the caste-based social practise of India was incomprehensible for the British administrators, they often abstained from its complexities. Sir Herbert Risley spent years of careful study of the caste system and untouchability in Bengal. He became the Census Commissioner of India for the 1901 census and made an official categorisation of castes. Thus all the not-to-be-touched Jatis came under Dalits (Charsley, 1996).

Based on a large-scale sample survey conducted in various parts of India, Mendelsohn and Vicziany (1998) posited that even today there is open Untouchability and discrimination practised in many parts of Kerala; although there are no separate plates and cups for different castes in restaurants, as seen in many other parts of India. Those who believe in the caste system believe in Untouchability as well. Katha, a study participant, explained her strict discriminatory practices:

...my daughter married to a converted Christian but I want to die as a Pulaya. If my son or grandsons become Christian, they will not be able to see or touch my dead body. Still there is untouchability to a dead Pulaya. We still follow the untouchability with the Paraya. None of us go and eat from Paraya people, though they are our neighbours. We Pulaya people used to live together, but not along with the Parayas. Then do you think the Nairs and Nambooris will come and eat from us? Never.

Katha's statement substantially reflects the depth of the caste system and Untouchability that extends beyond the boundaries of relationships and friendship. The caste codes dictate them still. Until recent times they were referred to with the Jati name. Sekharan said that in his childhood, people used to identify and address each other by caste and their landlord's family name, not by their own names. Kanakam said:

We used to call Christian landlords Kolan (Sir), (most of the participants used the same word when mentioned about their

neighbouring Christian landlords) *Muslims Anikkile (Boss), Brahmins Thampuram (Lord). We were called as "Parakkili" and "Parayan". Our children were called as Molayan and "Molachi". Even the upper caste kids used to call us as "Parakkili" and "Parayan". Now a days they don't call so, but they look us down because we look like this (laughs).*

Generations of dehumanisation of the oppressed have made them non-responsive even to the most denigrating mockery of their identity. I have already established that the caste system is the main cause of poverty in Kerala, and in the discussion of this topic, I have illustrated the extent of caste bigotry that may cause poverty. It is my contention that, more than any other goals of the MDGs, MDG 2 has the potential to eradicate these social evils. However, as discussed in Chapter Five, section 5, the planners have not considered the relevance of education for ending these social evils.

6.3 Untouchability, Unapproachability and Unseeability

The most visible sign of caste bigotry is that of distance pollution that is expressed in attitudes of Untouchability, Unapproachability and Unseeability. Dalits are Untouchables and are described as the epitome of evil, immorality, uncleanliness and corruption; whereas the Brahmins consider themselves the icons of purity and holiness (Majid, 2012). Lower castes were impure; therefore, their touch could defile the upper castes, who were considered pure. Impurity varies according to the level of the caste. As mentioned in Chapter Three, section 6.2, the caste code prescribed that from a Brahmin, a Nair had to maintain a distance of four feet, an Ezhava had to keep a distance of 36 feet and a Dalit had to keep a 96-foot distance. Similarly, an Ezhava had to keep a distance of 12 feet from a Nair and a Dalit had to keep a 96 foot distance. In addition, a Dalit had to keep a distance of 36 feet from an Ezhava (Alex, 2008; Chandran, 1989; Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998; Saradmoni, 1973). This is an indicative rule of practise, to show how unworthy each caste is regarded by others. In general, the *Nairs* acted

as managers and domestic assistance of Brahmin homes; they assigned work to, and dealt with, the *Ezhavas*; and *Ezhavas* in turn worked with the Dalit *Pulayas* (Saradamoni, 1973).

Discrimination between the Dalit castes and was even a strong presence in relation to the castes just above, even after marriage. Kanakam, a study participant, had this experience:

One of my brothers has got a government job so he got married to a Viswakarma²⁷ girl; they wouldn't allow us to get into their home. Once I went to see my brother, at their home; they asked me to stay outside its entrance and gave me some food into my folded skirt and sent me back home. My own brother never allowed either me or my family to enter their house all those years he lived with his wife.

Although people are not ready to break the barriers of caste discrimination, a government job is a means of upward social mobility; notwithstanding that it isolates him/her from his/her family and community. The caste system and its characteristics has greatly reduced in urban areas of India and Kerala, but in many villages where people follow age-old conventions and traditions, the Dalits have to make sure they never come into physical contact with higher caste people (Chandran, 1989).

Historian Buchanan says that “even among these wretched creatures [Dalits], the pride of caste has its full influence; and if a Cheruma or Pulayan is touched by Parian, he is defiled” (as cited in Saradamoni, 1973, p. 383). The *'Untouchability in Rural India Survey'* found that Dalits were denied entry into upper-caste homes in more than 50 per cent of villages studied (Centre for Human Rights and Global Justice, 2007). Although there is no policy of segregation in India, Dalits are subject to *de facto* segregation in all spheres, including housing, public services and education. This widespread segregation has led to a

²⁷ A Jati belongs to the bottom rung of the Hindu caste system just above the Untouchables; they are engaged in carpentry works.

description of the practice of untouchability as India's "hidden apartheid" (India Criticized, 2007).

Mendelsohn and Vicziany (1998) argued that "Untouchables still tend to suffer multiple and severe discrimination based on caste... Historically, poverty and ritual debasement went hand-in-hand in the case of the Untouchables" (p. 36). Hence it can be assumed that poverty will remain parallel to the pursuing of untouchability and social exclusion, despite the abolition of Untouchability by the Parliament of India.

The Constitution of India purported to abolish Untouchability and make its practice an offence according to Article 17 of the *Constitution* and further prohibited some specific discriminations and exclusions. These prohibitions were amplified by the *Untouchability Offences Act* of 1955, which established a regime of offences and punishment for direct discrimination (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998). Nevertheless, Mendelsohn and Vicziany (1998) summarised the present state of untouchability of Kerala as:

Untouchability may well have developed, at least in part, as rationalisation of material exploitation. It seems to follow that if the ideology were now destroyed, the poverty of the former Untouchable castes could be addressed without regard to discriminations of a ritual character. But this is only hypothesis, since the ideology of untouchability has clearly not been destroyed... There has been progress in this direction, perhaps more progress than the struggle against poverty. But, like caste itself, untouchability has changed character as well as lost some of its intensity. (p. 36)

A recently published survey investigating the extent of Untouchability practices in 565 villages in 11 Indian states found that the constitutionally abolished crime of Untouchability continues to profoundly affect the lives and psyches of millions of Dalits. Untouchability practices were documented in almost 80 per cent of the villages surveyed (Centre for Human Rights and Global Justice, 2007). I

have also found that many of the Indians we see around us in New Zealand do not touch each other, citing Untouchability! There are also reports of potential homebuyers asking real estate agents whether an Indian person had lived in the property as a way of checking the price stipulated by the previous property occupants before making an offer.

These kinds of social exclusions have a compound impact on every realm of the Dalits' lives. Slavery, oppression, economic subordination and economic exploitation have paved the way for their inter-generational and multi-dimensional poverty. As a result, Untouchables are among India's least educated, poorest, and most economically dependent citizens, even in urban areas (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998). Hence, poverty eradication may not be possible if this context of poverty is ignored.

6.4 Purity, Pollution and *Kulathozhil*

This topic is quite significant for the education component of poverty eradication because as long as birth in a caste defines the job of people in a community, the parents will not be motivated to educate their children. Because of that, the education goal of most parents and their children is only gaining literacy and numeracy skills. This colony provides workers for the tasks of emptying toilet tanks, working in cemeteries and slaughtering animals, which other caste people are unwilling to do. As Sheeja said:

People want our children to do our job, so no one wanted to help me to educate my sons.

This describes how purity and pollution decides those caste's employment.

Purity and impurity are the two endemic features of the caste system. Physical purity decides one's standing in society or position in the caste hierarchy, which leads to social exclusion. Bodily secretion and touching makes every Hindu polluted, however it can be purified with

water; whereas those who are engaged in impure activities as part of their “*Kulathozhil*” (caste based traditional job) are permanently polluted (Majid, 2012; Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998). The polluting *Kulathozhil* includes skinning animal carcasses, tanning leather, butchery, fishing, removal of human waste, cremation, washing clothes, mud works, and coconut toddy tapping, amongst others (Ganguly, 2009).

Those who are engaged in such “dirty” jobs, such as scavenging human excreta, working in the mud and working with animal skins as their *Kulathozhil* are permanently polluted; hence their shadow, their footprints and their spit could pollute a place (Alex, 2008). They are excluded from society according to the Hindu caste system and they are commonly called Dalits in modern India. Prior to that, Dalits were mostly known by the work they were doing or by their Jati name. Samuel Mateer, a missionary who lived in Travancore for many years observes that the dominant Dalit group of Kerala, the *Pulaya*, got their Jati name from *Pula*, which means funeral pollution (Saradmoni, 1973).

Kulathozhil has not come to an end, as the caste system itself has not come to an end. For example, the organisation of manual scavengers has been demanding an end to their many generation-old practice of removal of human excreta and carrying it on their head (Mander, 2013). They had been forced to wade in human excreta discharged onto railway tracks and from sewer lines as the only source of income by which to live. The Indian Parliament has passed a law abolishing manual scavenging but for the people of India they are “*Thottis*” (shit bearers) and they are in demand to do those jobs.

As long as one belongs to a particular Jati, which is synonymous to a particular *Kulathozhil*, he or she will continue to have the same identity and will not be welcomed to any other field of employment. He/she is socially excluded. This is an issue that the government has not solved by abolishing manual scavenging (Mander, 2013). That means neither law nor social change has ended the age-old pollution-based exclusion.

Similar is the case of many other *Kulathozhil*, where each generation is confined to carrying the stigma of their dehumanising traditional jobs for their wherewithal (Ganguly, 2009; Majid, 2012).

Sarojani said:

...My family was assigned as the family “velan” (washermen) of the Brahmins in our area. So I know which are the “Matt” (Brahmin houses) I need to serve. We had to go there every time their women had a period. Only we would wash out their period clothes. We are impure so we can care the impure woman...

While we work in the upper caste farms, they would give us food in leaves, we would sit in the muddy front yard, dig a small hole to put a leaf and eat. Even today, I don’t go inside to eat from any upper caste houses. I don’t sit with the upper caste people.

Although purity and pollution are determined by birth, women of all castes are excluded from rituals at all times and even from cooking during their menstrual cycles and child birth (Ganguly, 2009; Majid, 2012).

Nisar and Kandasamy (2007) posited that the Brahmins believe that they have divinity and are sacred. They demanded to be venerated and addressed as *Thampuran* (Lord), which in turn became an accepted norm, particularly in Kerala. Sarojani shared her experience:

Even today, we call them (Brahmins) as “Thirumeni” (Lord). We are the only Dalit caste who can enter to these Brahmin families. These Parayas and Pulayas (pointing to the houses in front of her house) cannot enter their houses even today... they will only stand outside their houses compound... They may get food from their houses...they will also have separate plates or glasses at their backyard.

In a world where purity and impurity are inherited by birth, complying with existing social norms has been considered the most accepted social

practice. Thus, Dalits were regarded as so unclean, that they would transmit pollution to their fellow creatures, not only by contact, but even by approaching them (K C Alexander, 1968; Chandran, 1989; Oommen, 1996). Sarojani said that this particular social protocol has created a particular slave mentality in them from birth; that they are impure and the upper castes are pure, so that they are bound to the oppression and their duties without any rights. She said:

We comply with the social protocol to look after the upper caste. For example, if a Brahmin lady delivers, we can enter their house for 10 days. We wash their cloths, for these days they can touch us and we can touch their child until the 11th day of "Punyaham" [purification]. These days they believe that they are impure, so that only the impure can touch them [the delivered woman and the child].

During the 10 days from the time of the birth of a child, no one other than a "Velan" would bathe or care the mother and the child. The 11th day purification is a ritualistic ceremony where all the clothes we washed will be sunk in a pool and go out of the house. Then they sprinkle and purify the house, so that their servant – a Nair lady – [Nair is at the second strata of the social ladder] can take over the duties.

Only a Nair will work as a servant of Brahmin; we are not allowed to go in and touch them or their clothes unless they are polluted through delivery or menstruation. My son is still doing laundry that is the Kulathozhil of our Jati.

As the caste system and Untouchability has not ceased to exist, Kulathozhil and its polluted identity remain with the Dalits.

6.5 Culture

Culture may be described as the organic whole of ideas, beliefs, values and goals which condition the thinking and acting of a community or

people. It can be defined as the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society (Oxford Dictionaries Online, 2014). Literary evidence (eg. K C Alexander, 1968; Oommen, 1996; Saradamoni, 1973) suggests that the subaltern cultural characteristics of the Dalits of Kerala were not decided by them; they were the oppressive, degrading and derogatory cultural patterns demanded by the upper caste. For instance, their words and world symbolise oppression and degradation. The Dalits' popular dance is called '*pottenthullal*' (unsynchronised steps of a fool); they refer to themselves as '*adiyans*' (serfs); their paddy, as '*nelpathir*' (chaff); their rice, as '*kallari*' (stone rice); gruel, '*karikadi*' (bad gruel); their money, '*chempukashu*' (copper coin, which is considered to be poor people's money compared to the gold coin), and their children as '*kidangal*' (calves) (K C Alexander, 1968).

Alexander (1968) wrote that:

Their²⁸ dress and personal appearance were considered abominable. The bark (spathe) of the areca palm furnishes, in some places, the whole of their clothing which, at best, never exceeds a bit of cloth merely sufficient for purpose of decency. Their hair is allowed to grow wild and forms an immense matted filthy mass. Their house called madam (hut) was, devoid of any furniture and was extremely dirty and filthy. (p. 1071)

Saroja, a participant stated:

A Christian family, where I go to do domestic works invited me for their son's Holy Communion party last week; but I didn't go because that is not a part of our culture. Now the new generation is inviting us; but their parents wouldn't invite us. In those days all their workers would go after the party and they would give us some leftover food into our towel and we would take it home. Now I feel shame to do that...

²⁸ This is a special study about the Pulayas of Kerala, who comprise the majority of the Dalits. Their culture is generalised for all the Dalits of Kerala.

Sheeja stated:

I have the abilities to live like every other woman outside the colony but culturally we are forced to serve someone. I am trying to help my children to overcome this slave life. We have more obstacles than the outsiders [people outside the colony], in our attempt to come out of the traditional life, because a Dalit coolie's [labourer] son is looked down as a coolie; and to remain docile forever. When our attempts become hopeless, the men go and drink to ventilate their disappointment. But as a widow I just go to bed without eating... that's it. The next morning I wake up and go to work with more determination. But men give it up. I suffer every difficulty and still keep trying. Only we women have made such improvements in this colony.

While both these women are attempting to emerge out of their oppressed culture, Rajappan, an ailing old man living with his grandsons, commented:

This house was granted on the name of my son, he passed away and his wife married to another man and left. Now I have the burden of their two sons; both of them are over 20s but they don't bring a single penny home. When they lost their parents they stopped going to school. I have to cook for them and also to do their washing. If I don't do that they just live like beggars. If the children do not get daily job they will sell everything from the house, to drink [alcohol]. They even sold this house's door when I was in the hospital. This house doesn't look like humans house, because they come and sleep here every day but they don't do anything.



Figure 6.1. Rajappan's kitchen.

It was unbelievable that a family with two young men can live with such limited utensils in such rundown conditions. These young men are symbols of most of the young men in this colony. K. C. Alexander (1968) stated that “Parent-children relationship among them (the Dalits) was regarded as weak by the higher castes and their children grew up with little respect and obedience to parents” (p. 1071).

During transactions in the slave trade, children were often separated from their parents; there are instances where husband and wife were separated as well (Saradmoni, 1973). That lack of bond between children and parents were visible in most of the Dalit families except the widows' families and the Dalit Christian families.

In the above responses, Sroja's words give clear indication of the vanishing customs and alleviating of hunger level among the Dalits, but not their integration or emancipation. However, Sheeja is determined to see her children escape the shackles of poverty and Dalit oppression. Rajappan feels helpless, as his grandsons are the products of the influence of the colony and the Dalit culture.

Rather than escaping from the symbols of oppression, the oppressed should be able to achieve humanisation. The changes happening in their life are influenced by the freedom they experienced from a more liberalised society. However, the consciousness-raising through education needed to transform their outlook and to retain their rights is not taking place. From the mere subjective perception of the situation, an alerted critical consciousness can only prepare them to struggle against their obstacles to humanisation (Freire, 1996). Any poverty eradication attempt should realise this fact; and thus if education does not change that perception, poverty eradication will be an illusion for them.

6.6 Identity

The physical appearance, social position, dignity of their job, dress, culture, language and lifestyle indicate the identity of the Dalits (Oommen, 1996). In fact, the identity of the Dalits is defined by their masters, in a world in which they have no voice of their own. Dalits use a set of derogatory words for self-reference and a set of honorific words while referring to their employers and landlords (K C Alexander, 1968; Tharamangalam, 1998). Corresponding to the Pulayas' low caste status was the imposition of a highly restricted manner of speech. They have been compelled to use self-degrading language (Oommen, 1996).

Since exploitation and exclusion meted out to the Dalits has been more in a ritualistic manner, challenging that would be as offensive as challenging a god. An incidental violation of that god's creed would invite death of the subaltern, and the killers would be hailed for establishing the god's kingdom. Dalits have been treated differently in different parts of India; for instance, they have been treated as slaves and considered a polluting people only in parts of present day Kerala, although most of them are engaged in agriculture. On the other hand, the Dalits in other parts of the country are engaged in more polluting Kulathozhil such as manual scavenging and carcass removal (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998).

Now, calling Dalits by their caste name is a punishable offence; considered parallel to swearing. However, they know that is how people talk about them behind their backs. Tharamangalam (1981) has observed that a Dalit family would be attached to a landlord, generally known by the latter's name as Murikkan's Pulayan, Mankompan's Pulayan and so on. The Dalits also used to identify and introduce themselves in the same way, although most of them had names.

When I mentioned my research, one of my young friends in New Zealand told me that he knew "Pulayan Vasu". I asked why he called him "Pulayan?" He replied; that is how he has been known from his childhood; that will exist until his death. *"If I find out his family name, which will be his Janmi's family name; no one is going to understand who that is,"* he continued. Karuppankutti, a study participant, explained that they did not have an identity beyond their Janmi's Pulayan:

We seven children have different surnames because, the official record comes when we are enrolled in the school, that time they don't ask us what is your surname but they would ask in whose land do you live. When I was enrolled to school, we were Kudiyan (Kudi means farm land, Kudiyan means free dweller of their land) of Parayil family so I got the surname "Parayilkudiyil" (belong to Parayil farmland). And my children got another surname...

Based on my observation and interaction with the participants, they have a distinct identity, placing them in inferior social roles compared to the other people of Kerala. Sekharan stated that until the recent past, people used to identify and address each other by their caste and family name and not by names; and still, upper caste people refer the lower castes with their caste name, but just as 'Peppa pig and Shoozee sheep'.

Alexander (1971) suggested that the caste codes prevented the Dalits from wearing neat and tidy clothes so they were easily identified by their dirty clothes and dishevelled hair. Tharamangalam (1998) explained

that it is the social protocol for the Dalits to show humility and submissiveness in their movements, in posture, in demeanour, in choice of words, in dress and deeds. Therefore, historically their identity was visibly submissive, inferior and degrading. The society expected them to look and dress in an ugly fashion to identify them as Dalit by sight.

Karuppankuty recalled how important it was to keep Dalit identity:

I was beaten a number of times for not following the caste codes. For example, once I grew my moustache, and when I was working in their paddy field, our Janmi came there, slapped on my cheek, and asked me to shave off the moustache and not to grow as they do. We were not allowed to dress nicely either. My father had no voice in such matters; as long as we were in their land we had to listen to them and if anyone questions them they would be beaten or they would pull down our hut and would ask us to get out. In that case some other Janmis may give us place to live... for me it was slavery.

Alexander (1968), in a study conducted among 450 Dalit families in Kerala, found that the practise of calling upper caste people using respectable words, coexisted with self-degrading words to describe themselves. Thus a Dalit had to use two sets of words for the same thing; one for the Dalits and the other for the Non-Dalits (K C Alexander, 1968).

Rajan said:

A few years ago, people would call me with my caste name but nowadays it is not used directly, only when someone talks to some non-Dalit they use these derogatory words. We have deep rooted caste system and the resulting discrimination; it hasn't gone away, people are able to hide it, that's all. A Dalit can go to a church; still they will have that Dalit identity. And they will be called either as "poocha" (cat) or "patti" (dog) (nicknames for the Dalits).

What Rajan concluded is that he is conscious that he is a Dalit and he realises that others look at him as a Dalit though they do not say it openly. Anju was married to a Christian man outside the colony not long ago. She now feels totally elevated, and explains how her identity has changed:

When I live outside the colony [along with a Christian family] and dress well, I will be looked as a 'good lady' [not as a Dalit] but if I live in this colony and dress up well people will look at me in a strange way and murmur that I am a prostitute. That means a lady in a colony is not expected to dress well unless she is doing some bad things.

When I chose this colony for the current study, the locals told me the colony is notorious for prostitution, illicit liquor brewing, drugs and gangs; so if I go to the colony I may be considered a 'customer'. Hence, I had to circulate a notice before I started my project and convened a meeting of the members of the colony to explain about my project.

Sarita had an inter-caste marriage with a Viswakarma (carpenter) man and she chose to keep the Dalit identity for her children. She said:

My husband is not a Dalit, although lower caste. We loved and married but his family has out-casted [a ritual to exclude someone from a caste] him. It is six years now, they have never let us get into their home because I am a Dalit.

This indicates the strong presence of Untouchability and caste-based exclusion that is more significant than a blood relationship. If Anju was promoted to a Christian status, Sarita's husband was dropped to a Dalit status.

Saroja is a Pulaya woman married to a Pulaya-converted Christian man. Since he is the head of the family, they have not been given a free plot for a house. She stated:

It is a shame for my husband to live in his wife's house for 10 years. It is not easy to go and find some Poramboke²⁹ land to put up a house nowadays. He is a converted Christian that is why his applications for a free plot and house are always declined.

All these participants and their families are primary educated, but that is not enough to challenge their traditional caste beliefs. Without that ability to challenge the social evils, education will not help them for their emancipation.

6.7 Critical Consciousness

This study has also analysed how the participants reflect on the Dalit culture and identity and its role in causing poverty. Dalits have been looked down upon as inferior creatures and made to live without self-esteem. For this, according to Hjejle (1967), the upper caste has imposed unwritten rules such as: women were not allowed to cover the upper part of the body; they were not allowed to wear clean and tidy clothes; they were prohibited from wearing gold or silver ornaments or carry an umbrella, or any such practices which typically give dignity to the upper caste; the offenders were punished cruelly (K C Alexander, 1968; Srivastava, 2003). As Rajan stated:

Now it is illegal to insult on cast base but we know who we are and they know who we are. Everyone behaves with this understanding only.

In addition to the upper caste-imposed social exclusion and government-imposed physical exclusion, the Dalits' self-imposed exclusion seems to be a main cause of their poverty. That is why this thesis is focusing on the importance of conscientisation through education. Every participant in the study had a caste consciousness that they are inferior humans; although not all of them reported being looked down upon by the public. Varman (2006) has observed that

²⁹ Public land by the roads, canals, rivers and railway tracks where Dalits settled when they were evicted from Kudikidappu (bonded labour).

lower caste people grow up with the inhibition that their backwardness is their drawback and that gives them a slave mentality. Both Sheeja and Kuttan, while explaining that the officials would look down on them when they go into an office, said: “*seeing us they can understand no sir*”. This suggests that they are all living with the consciousness of inferiority.

However, Sheeja’s younger son Sourabh stated that:

“There are no well-educated and government employed persons living in this colony. In these 68 families there is only one more person other than me completed a degree, but she doesn’t live here, she works in Andhra Pradesh. So I know that our people have a very low-class behaviour. I studied in a hostel so I know how cultureless these people are. Soon we will go out of this colony.”

Sourabh’s critical consciousness is unique, but no one else in this colony had it. While others of his age dropped their studies for an easy way to make money, amidst their real financial crisis, Sourabh is doing a Master’s Degree. He studied at Navodaya³⁰, as he gained admission through the Dalit reservation, which according to him has changed his outlook. Freire (1996) describes this kind of self-reflection, as a result of education, as the process of reflecting upon the world they live in and taking action to create it and re-create it. It is through this means that humans become the makers of their own reality. Sourabh’s words reveal that he is above, or has overcome the submissiveness of the other people and he compares the culture of the oppressed and seeks to find his better world. As Roberts (2007) has stated, critical consciousness involves seeking to know oneself, others and the world; however there is a question whether MDG 2 or an accelerated primary education programme can amplify this critical consciousness.

On the other hand, Karuppankutty narrated an incident showing why he acknowledges his inferiority:

³⁰ A series of fully residential advanced schools run by the central government; one in each district, for talented children (there are 14 such schools in Kerala).

...[A]ll Dalits know that they are outcaste. For example, while we were the kudiyanas of the Kakkuzhi family, I used to play with the Janmi's children. One day along with them I went and sat in a wedding reception. When I started eating one of their family members asked me to get out, and took me behind the house and served me along with the outcaste people... I have told my sons to keep this in their mind if they are in the company of non-Dalit people. Since then until today, I don't eat from any upper-class family, even if I work in their houses; because they don't like us to eat in the dishes they use. I work for them, talk to them; at the most I will go inside their house. I know still there are people who hate to come near us.

At the same time, critics argue that this “once bitten twice shy” attitude of the Dalits is a major hurdle for their emancipation. Anant (1967) argued that even when the Dalits are given equal opportunities by some social reformers, they prefer to stay at a distance. Through centuries of oppression, Dalits have developed such strong feelings of inferiority that they themselves remind the higher caste about the norm regarding their untouchability, pollution and exclusion (Anant). Conscientisation through education is very significant in changing this attitude of the Dalits.

However, Ajesh stated that:

Traditionally we have a bad reputation as a Pulaya; Pulays were thought to be like dirty people but as we are allowed to dress and live like others, slowly it is coming down. Unfortunately, living in a colony is a public identification that we are Pulaya. I think the government does not want to change our identity as Dalits, that is why they have settled us together in a colony.

Anant (1967) has also made an observation that the Dalits in general are more eager to enjoy the special privileges provided through the reservations rather than a permanent emancipation (Anant, 1967). Sarita acknowledged this particular mind set of the Dalits:

My husband is a Viswakarma man. Yet, instead of choosing the Viswakarma status we are maintaining a SC (Dalit) status for our children, because they can get some reservations' benefits from the government.

This kind of clambering for the hand-outs and benefits is an obstacle to humanisation; therefore is a hindrance to the emancipation of the oppressed (Freire, 1996). Deliberately or not, these 'perks' and benefits are the oppressors' strategy to keep them oppressed. In many families I noticed that, rather than thinking of an attempt at emancipation, they try to retain the impoverished conditions to gain welfare assistance. On the other hand, Sivan, a trade union worker, showed a good political understanding when he stated that:

We know we have been exploited, but we are not uniting to protest against all kinds of oppression, because they give us work to live, if the landlords turn against us, we may not even live... so better suffer it.

Freire (1996) observed that this situation represents the "perception of the reality of oppression as a closed world from which there is no exit" (p. 31). I have observed that most of the men are desperate and acknowledge that they are exploited; but seem to have given up the fight for emancipation.

As Ajesh stated:

We live with the consciousness that we are Dalits, but if we lived along with other people, able people would have settled well and ignore the Dalit identity. We have got a bad image as "colony people" that is worse than being known as a Dalit. There are good and bad people here, but people think that colony is a bad people's place. You know, I had 10 marriage proposals; all of them disagreed only because I live in a colony. Any Dalit who is not in a colony will never send their daughter to a colony.

While the older generations still retain the fear of mingling with the upper caste, the younger generation do not feel the same. Baiju stated:

I don't invite my friends to the colony; also my friends don't know I am living in a colony. I don't want anyone know that, if they understand that I live in this colony they will understand that I am a Pulayan, otherwise most of my friends don't know that. We are trying to wipe out that shame by dressing and living like others; but living in a colony is a statement that I am a low class person.

Instead of protesting against their fate, the Dalits began to receive security and preferential treatment due to the statutory reservations, which in fact benefits a very small fraction of them. On the other hand, it helped the government to appease those who may protest against the system (Anant, 1967).

6.8 Education

Education was one of the major areas of exclusion every Dalit experienced due to their birth into one of the Dalit castes. After the enactment of the Slavery Abolition Act in 1843, although schools were opened for the slaves, the upper caste prevented the slave children from going to school (Hjejle, 1965). Even after the 1907 government order for the admission of Dalit children to schools (subject to conditions such as not being near the temple), it took at least 30 years for them to be admitted to schools because of the high caste Hindus' protests and agitations (Padmanabhan, 2010).

In contrast, the CMS missionaries working under the leadership of Rev. Henry Baker and his family impacted hugely on education in Kerala and education of the Dalits and girls, especially in the Kottayam district. The missionaries' impact on education in Kerala is described in Chapter Eight, section 9. A number of CMS educational institutions can be seen in the Kottayam district today, where the first Dalit president of India and the first Dalit Chief Justice of India came from (Abraham, 2003). The Kottayam district was the centre of slavery in Kerala and became a

centre of missionary education activities, and became the first fully literate district in India and a place where the largest number of Dalits rose to prominence, which suggests the significance to them of education.

The introduction of Mitchell's Education Code in 1910 abolished caste-based discrimination in the matter of admission to schools. However, then only 35 government schools in Kerala were prepared to admit Dalit children (E. T. Mathew, 1999). This is another example of how the Anglo-Indian government routinely failed to enforce its edicts to counter the caste practices (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998). In spite of the missionaries' endeavours and state intervention, Dalits had a much lower literacy rate and level of education until 1931 (Sivanandan, 1976).

Despite the government pronouncement, there was no substantial abatement of discrimination for admitting Dalit students to government schools. Mendelsohn and Vicziany (1998) narrated an instance of this:

...[I]n 1925 a Dalit was admitted to a government school but was permitted to sit on the veranda outside the classroom. He sat there for three years, until an inspector pronounced that this was an infringement of government rules. Thereafter the boy was allowed inside, but sitting on a chair behind the teacher. (p.125)

Yet, as the pupil was not permitted to sit alongside the other pupils, the caste code prevailed over the government rule:

Since public schools were not open to the Dalits, conversion to Christianity was the only option to those Dalits who wanted their children to be educated; thus by 1870 when CMS had 8500 converts, they also opened 51 Dalit schools. (Padmanabhan, 2010, p. 104)

However, the caste rebel SJP Sanghom of Ayyankali made significant progress in admitting Dalit children to schools in the first half of the 20th century (E. T. Mathew, 1999; Nisar & Kandasamy, 2007). In 1914, Ayyankali attempted to gain admission for a Dalit girl to a government

school in Oorottambalam, Thiruvananthapuram Kerala. The people of the upper castes of the area began a campaign of violence against the Pulayas for this act and, after violent clashes, burned the school down. Ayyankali made a public announcement to the effect that unless Pulaya children were admitted to government schools, Pulaya labourers would not work in the paddy fields. Thus the first agricultural labour strike in Kerala was declared by the Dalits for the right to education (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998; Padmanabhan, 2010).

In 1866, the *Diwan* of Travancore made a proclamation that “all important government jobs would be filled by educated men, and by educated men alone as soon as they become available”, which encouraged all communities to vie for education (Padmanabhan, 2010, p. 105).

To meet the needs of educated people in the administration, the British rulers promoted education regardless of caste. However, protesting against the admission of Dalit children to schools, the upper caste formulated a new strategy of leaving the classroom en-masse as soon as a Dalit student entered the class. Finally, the Director of Public Instruction, a British officer, issued an order to compulsorily transfer those boycotting students (E. T. Mathew, 1999).

However, Jaya’s experience suggests that when education of the Dalits is confined to primary schooling, it cannot eradicate poverty:

When I went to primary school, I was very good at studies even better than our landlord’s children. But when I grew up our landlord ordered me to work in their farm. I wanted to study but my parents had no chance to educate me. Now all his children got good job but I am still their maidservant.

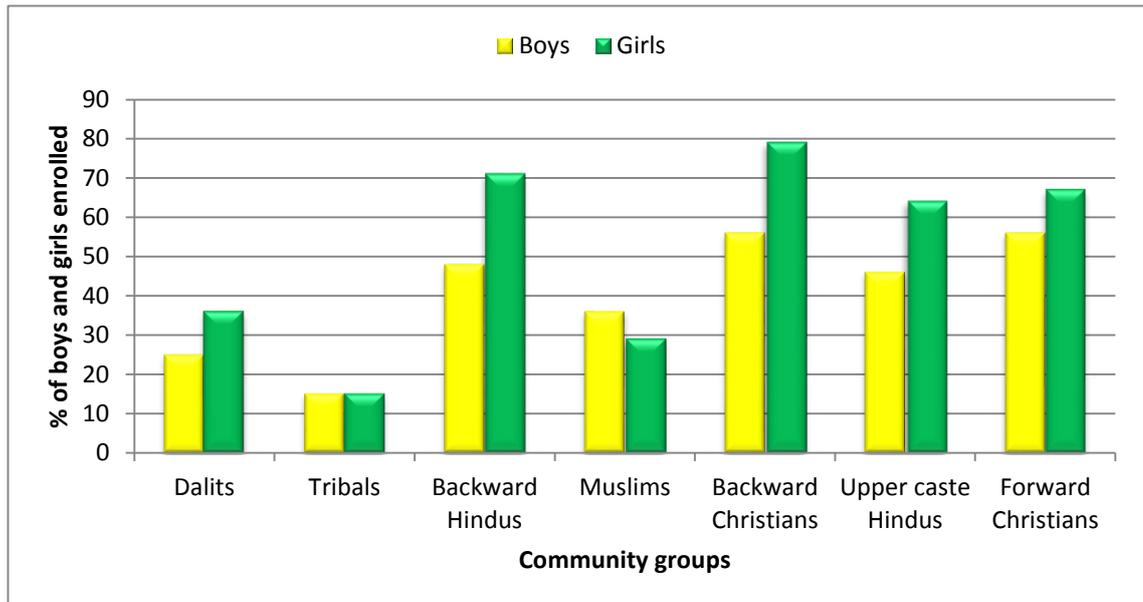
Moreover, Padmanabhan (2010) maintains that: “There is a lack of culture-of-education and educating the children among the Dalits; children in many families are the first or second school going

generation. Therefore, Dalits lag far behind in academic achievement all over Kerala” (Padmanabhan, 2010, p. 116).

Kerala was declared a totally literate state on the 18th of April, 1991 (Oommen, 1996), a position which scarcely any other state of India has yet achieved. This was achieved as a result of a ‘Total Literacy Mission’ conducted all over the state and due to the high demand for education from the Dalits, who were denied education (Padmanabhan, 2010). But the education exclusion meted to the Dalits has not yet been addressed, because of the higher dropout rate of the Dalit students at the high school level when compared with other students (Sivanandan, 1976). When Dalit children are old enough to undertake work, they leave their studies before the secondary school level and start work to support their family.

Furthermore, children belonging to poor families find it difficult to cope with the regularity that schools demand. This is because hunger, illness and insecurity constantly interrupt their life at home. Their parents use up most of their energy dealing with everyday emergencies, and are not primarily concerned with their children’s studies (K. Kumar, 2013).

According to a survey conducted in 1968, only 20 per cent of Dalits had completed their secondary school course (Sivanandan, 1976). Appallingly, this phenomenon remained the same in a survey conducted in 2001; whereby there was a near total enrolment at the primary level; yet it fell drastically to 25-30 per cent at the higher secondary level (Dilip, 2010; Kumar & George, 2009). According to the education statistics provided by the Department of Public Instruction, Dalits’ retention rate is near total until the end of primary school; that is until Grade Eight; however in 2000, 43 per cent Dalit boys and 30 per cent Dalit girls dropped out before completing Grade Ten. This gender gap widened in the higher education, where 70 per cent of Dalit students are girls in higher education (Chandrasekhar et al., 2001) (as illustrated in Figure 6.1).



Source: Composed using the data from Dilip (2010).

Figure 6.2. Socio-religious differentials in higher secondary education, Kerala 1996-2006.

Although the Dalits of Kerala have high levels of literacy compared to the rest of India, their higher education attainment cannot be applauded, because only 18.5 per cent of the literate Dalits complete the higher secondary school level; university graduates and above comprise just 2.1 per cent (Census of India, 2011). The 2011 data suggests that even after the beginning of the MDG programme, the Dalits are not the beneficiaries of education. Hence, often Dalits are only eligible for the quota of the lowest grade of employment in the public services and they are excluded from highly competitive jobs (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998; Sivanandan, 1976).

As per the information provided by the Directorate of Public Instruction in 2011 in Kerala, out of the 0.48 million Dalit students, 2,828 students dropped out of school before they completed secondary school (Planning Commission of India, 2011). Even in the secondary school passing percentage, Dalit students underperformed compared to the other students. Economic problems within the family are the chief cause of dropouts among the Dalits (SSA Kerala, 2011). Furthermore, frequent illness, especially on account of stomach-related problems, is common

among Dalit children who live in conditions characterised by poor sanitation coupled with poverty, which has a corrosive effect on children's health and mental capacities, thus reducing their academic achievements (K. Kumar, 2013).

Teachers and management rarely consider the difficulties of following the regularities and strictures of modern education, where a student is supposed to comply with many instructions and be equipped with a lot of materials. Sheeja shared the poignant memories of her attempt to educate her children. This was a long narration. I try to quote the most significant parts of it together, as it is similar to many other parents' experiences and it illustrates the obstacles to Dalits' education:

No one helped me for my children's education, but when I was disillusioned to live and let my children live; it was god's hands that pulled us to life.... Since then I am challenging to live and let my sons live a better life.... While I worked in the metal quarry, I used to hang them in a manger under the tree.... Due to their poor health I spent all I earned to keep them alive. With a lot of hard work my young son got admission in Navodaya School, I am very proud of that. I need not pay anything for his studies. Education is the only way I found for them not to get my destiny.

When my elder son finished schooling I challenged to educate him further. I managed to send him to hotel management institute; but for its final year, I had no means to pay his fees. I knocked on all the banks for a loan for Rs 60,000 (US\$ 1000). Finally, I went to a bank with two of my friends; one was seeking loan for self-employment, so I thought I could do the same (a kind of bluffing). But when I reached the bank I became nervous not knowing what to say. I sat there for a couple of hours.

Seeing me sitting upset, one officer came and asked me to explain the purpose of visit. Then the manager called me in. I thought this is my last resort; and if he doesn't approve, my son won't be allowed to write the exam and lose his dreams. Exactly my dreams

because, I have already spent a huge amount whatever I saved throughout my life for his studies. Dozens of children have committed suicide in Kerala in the last couple of years, when banks denied loan to continue their study (mostly poor Dalits). One second-year engineering student jumped off from the College terrace and died in the same situation one month before. Many of the colony people didn't study after school because they don't have money and also banks won't give poor people any loan... So I became speechless when I went to the bank manager.

I began to mutter with tears. I couldn't say anything about self-employment loan; although I had its application. Somehow, I explained how I brought up my son to this level, and my ambition to see him complete his course. I understood that he realised a single mother's aching heart and hope. I don't remember what happened next, I couldn't control my emotion... I cried... (crying...). [she was extremely emotional that she was not able to speak, so I took a break for lunch and when I came back she continued]

...the bank processed the loan and gave me 40,000 (US\$ 670) rupees loan on the same day. My son is studious and obedient so I was ambitious to take him to a destination...Now he is a staff in a star hotel. (a sigh of relief and a smile of accomplishment).

Banks offer loans to students on the basis of a bank guarantee equal to the value of the loan; mostly through house or landed property deeds. The banks then require the loan to be paid back as soon as the course is completed. Banks also deny the continuation of the loan if a student does not perform well in exams. Hence land- and property-poor Dalits rarely benefit from bank loans (“Vidyarthikalute, 2013”).

One of the study participants, Ajesh, found a welding job when he was in the Ninth Grade and dropped schooling; he now regrets not studying further. He noted that people of this colony are not interested in education. As a universal practice of Kerala, almost everyone goes to

school, especially the current generation, but many of them realise too late that they stopped their studies too soon. Ajesh said:

I know that education is the most important thing our children need, but it is too hard to educate our children beyond school. Unfortunately, there are no interested children [to study] in this colony and parents cannot control them outside home. I had bad friendship from this colony. So before I finish my schooling I joined their company [friendship] for drinking and party. I got a workshop job and I left school.

Ajesh realises that he has slipped into poverty due to lack of education, which is caused by the Dalit culture and colony life. Therefore, it is my contention that the MDG 2 objective of achieving high levels of primary school level education per se may not have any impact on this kind of situation, where education does not help them to break the Dalit bondages. There is no young person in this colony who has not been to school. There are, however, nine young men who are very rarely seen in this colony; Bosco; Karuppankutti's two sons; Sekharan's two grandsons; Rajan's sons; Mathew's one son; Chellamma's sons and Ajesh. All of them have primary education but no one has studied up to secondary school. All of them are daily waged workers and they are all alcoholics. They appear to come to the colony only to sleep and do not take care of the family, nor do they save anything for the future.

One typical feature of this colony is that the women look after the family far more adequately than the men do, and it is evident in all the widows' families. I interviewed five widows who all came to this colony when they had small children. The most educated children are the widows' children; two of the degree holders are widows' children; one is a school teacher and the other is a hotel receptionist. None of the widows' children is in the 'alcohol group' and they look after their families in a better way, although they had little public contact, more social exclusion and less awareness about how to educate their children for a better life. Annamma, another widow shared her experience:

When my daughter finished schooling, she had good marks, so we were excited to send her to college (University). I worked for the college management and many of the staff, so I asked them if my daughter could get admission. As they said, many times I went to the college they made us wait outside their offices... finally they didn't give her admission I know my daughter could get reservation as a Dalit girl, but finally I gave up... (sobs).

I had no one to advise me; what else I could do to get my daughter's education get going... Both of us were desperate when we realised that she had to stop her studies... because I educated them without eating... (She cried profusely as if she has shattered a life). I would eat from the house where I work and if they give me more food I also would bring home for my children, (she continued sobbing) because my wage was hardly enough to buy them clothes and to educate five children... So as a single parent I had dreams... but my bosses didn't like a Dalit servant's daughter doing degree... Elder son also stopped his studies after school and he is helping me now; the young ones are studying well...

Anitha also had to stop her studies due to the pressure from home:

My father was blind, so even when I was studying I used to go to work with my mother. When I came to secondary school, I began to get full pay to work in the farm so my parents told me to stop my studies to support the family. I was good at studies... even after marriage I tried to go and study tailoring but if I go to study I cannot work... my husband won't take care of the family. Children will starve so I dropped that...

I am educating all my children. The problem is that they get everything for free in the primary school, but when they have to go to the secondary school we have to pay huge amount for that. Then we think of sending them to do any labour. They will also find some labour, for their pocket money; that's how most of these children stopped studies in the school. My husband is not taking

any initiative to send our elder son to school, he will be in 10th grade next year, but we don't have money to buy all his uniforms and books...he will go and help his father from this year.

This is a very clear picture of Dalit education and the poverty common in Kerala, which is in no way improved by MDG 2. While primary education is over-pampered with free books food and education, secondary education is unaffordable to many and those children who are forced to go to school without food divert their thoughts to working for a living.

Many other participants expressed the same concern that there is a lot of encouragement to attend primary school; however when it suddenly stops, parents are unable to afford to educate their children further. Participants also expressed a general feeling that lack of better education is the cause of intergenerational poverty. However, it is observed that education, in general, is not regarded as anything beyond a means of getting a job. Therefore, when it becomes extremely difficult to afford education, finding any job would be a satisfactory point to quit studies. When it is difficult to push school education, those who are able to find work for a living are leaving school and confined to the lowest rung on the ladder of society. In this context, poverty is both the cause and effect of insufficient quality education (Venkatasubramanian, 2001)

Sugathan stated another facet of education:

My mother enrolled me to school. By the end of primary school, I was scared to go to school, because they would beat me, so I would go from home and would spend time with wanton boys. Gradually mother understood that I was not going to school...that was the end of my schooling.

Despite the ban on corporal punishment in schools, it is very common and often leads to cruelty. This is the problem that Dalit boys experience in school. While acknowledging that the lack of facilities and

environment are the major causes of their educational disadvantages, the success stories of the three widows' (Sheeja, Katha and Annamma) children, suggest that Dalit children can obtain a good education.

Thankamani is a young mother; I spoke to her when she came just after enrolling her four-year-old son in school. She said she was determined to give her son a good education. She has poignant memories of her own shattered education:

We were two daughters ... after coming from the school, we had to do household works before father and mother comes... when father comes from work he would be coming drunken with swearing and abusing us and the neighbours. He wants to hit someone when he comes home... sometimes we run and hide in the neighbour's house. This was an everyday practise.... He would either quarrel with us or with the neighbours... there was no day that he did not hit us. I lost my hearing of the left ear after he slapped me on the ear... So we would crouch in a corner putting off the lamp. And we would go to school without doing any work. How do you think we can study in such a house?

Drinking-related violence is seen as one of the most common factors preventing better education. Pushpa said:

If anyone asks me why I didn't continue study, the answer is that it was not possible at my home, amidst a fierce father... he would hit everyone until my brother began to stop him. Mother used to run away and I would cry...

Dalits are much less likely to get a good education compared to other Keralans. These stories of the family environment are referred to here to make a point that just advocating education without understanding the other factors affecting a Dalit child's life may not help them. The planners of MDG 2 have not considered that Dalit children who sit subdued in the class may not have had food; could have lost their house in the rain; authorities might have evacuated them from the

street; the water authority might have used the pipe they have been living in; their alcoholic father might have hit them and their mother; they might have worked in the night to feed the family; they perhaps have not slept on a rainy night; and they may have ill-health or stomach-related ailments due to their unhygienic living conditions. Therefore, their thoughts will not be on what is taught in the class, but what is experienced in their life and how to fight it. As the former President of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere said: “Education is not a way to escape poverty — it is a way of fighting it” (as cited in Venkatasubramanian, 2001, p. 8). MDG 2 needs to address this basic compatibility between lack of education and poverty.

6.9 Discarded Lives

According to the Land Reform Act (Amendment) implemented in 1969, landlords were bound to provide 10 cents of land where the *Kudiyans*' huts were situated (Werff, 1982). However, Janmis succeeded in evicting the Kudiyans forcefully or through manipulation. In this process of resettlement, Dalits were concentrated in settlements as discarded people; hundreds of families, for the first time (both in the history of Kerala as well as in the Dalits' life) were without housing or sanitation. They had to cope with many displacement struggles, especially in terms of their subsistence levels of living and employment. In reality, almost all the Dalits were deprived of the ownership of land for farming or even to live on.

Because of the poor decision making, the government has given little consideration to the Dalits, who have been geographically isolated and confined to cultural captivity, thus they are experiencing another phase of social exclusion. The European Union has substituted social exclusion to replace poverty in its policy documents; acknowledging that anyone excluded from full participation in society, access to resources for making a living and taking part in the development of society are therefore residing in poverty (Taket, 2009).

According to Rajan, a participant, any improvement in their lives is only due to their own hard work. At every phase of transition, they faced severe adversities in coping with the changes and challenges. He believes no legislation was for their benefit. He said that:

When we were living by the streets, our children would poo on the streets and the rich people were irritated of it sticking on their car wheel, that is why they decided to settle us in this unwanted land. These two acres given for 78 families was not even one percent of its landlord. But for us, the days when we came, it was like a lunatic asylum... every evening drunken people one after another would swear scream and yell. Some 60 plus families started living here without a house... most of us made thatched huts... no water... no toilets... no drainage and no power for several years....

During the same period of time, a quarter of the Brahmins owned an average 25 acres of land each (Sivanandan, 1976); thus, the government's settlement plan of 10 cents (about 400 metre square) of land can only be seen as a 'hand out' to justify social exclusion. Finally, when the government offered land for resettlement in the colonies it was only 3 cents (about 120 metre square) of land. The Dalits' right to housing is continuously undermined by violations of their right to own property (Centre for Human Rights and Global Justice, 2007). (This process of social exclusion is described in Figure 6.3).



Source: Author's drawing based on the data analysis. It shows the transition of Dalit life into different phases of oppression and exclusion.

Figure 6.3. Changing phases of Dalits' social exclusion.

Gigi, a young mother, who has spent most of her life living in this colony, narrated how they happened to experience poverty.

Actually, my grandfather got 10 cents of land from their Janmi, when grandfather passed away, my father had to look after his family and to marry off his five sisters. Obviously, his income was not enough to save some money to marry off his sisters. So he sold the land, gave everyone a share, and he took us to the street... our life is like walking on a string, we are just surviving meeting our everyday needs... any eventualities can fell us to gutter.

Jaya came to this colony with her young children from the river bank expecting to get relief from the miseries she had been experiencing. However, even today, she is working as a housemaid for one of the Janmis, earning a meagre wage. She stated:

My husband's father was Perumbillichira's Kudiyan, they were given 7 cents of land as Kudikidappu right. They were seven children, when they grew up the youngest one got the house as the law of the land³¹. So, all others came out to the street. Then we didn't have work every day... the wage was just enough to meet every day needs; not to buy some land...

³¹ It is a social practise in most of the communities in Kerala that the youngest son deserves the parents' house.

Sundari says that the Dalits' life is becoming more challenging, generation after generation, in spite of government interventions:

My grandparents were Panthappilly's Kudiyan, they had a lot of cattle and vast field. We had fun looking after that. My parents' generation had to live by the road and from my generation we live in a colony. I realise that generation after generation we are not improving but declining. We are really marginalised; government knows that we will remain so if they put us in a colony.

These mothers acknowledged that they could not build a bright future for their children while they were struggling to make ends meet. Life in poverty is unpredictable and prone to sudden losses and traumas. For Dalits, anything can happen anytime, and all they can do is cope as they suffer (K. Kumar, 2013). The life of a student is one of the most miserable here. Hence, these parents acknowledged that they could not educate their children, as a natural consequence of the plight of their life. Most people who live by the rivers are affected by flooding. Many of the houses in this colony will have water dripping inside from the roof during rain, which is almost every day for at least six months.

However, Pennamma says that bonded labour was a bondage, but life was better than it is currently with fewer worries:

I was happier there [as a kudiyan]... they took care of our personal needs, we had enough food... actually we had fewer worries than today. We were allowed to grow our own veggies and tapioca around our hut. It was peaceful unlike this colony...

This research has detailed the miseries of bonded labour in Chapter 7, section 3. Pennamma's evaluations of their life under a Janmi as being "better than now" is a relative assessment of her plight over a period. While acknowledging that there was no individual freedom or private ownership, they recognised the peace of life on a vast farmland, looking after the Janmi's property. Whether it justifies the social arrangement of

the past or highlights the marginalisation of the present, one thing is evident: that life of the Dalits is miserable today.

The systematic elimination of Dalits from the ownership of land constitutes a crucial element in the subordination of Dalits. As the Dalits are slowly realising that it is their right to own land, their efforts are met with state violence or retaliation by private actors (Centre for Human Rights and Global Justice, 2007 as cited in Ramakumar, 2005). At least now, if these Dalits can realise that they have been systematically excluded by the state from equal participation in society and other opportunities to utilise the resources, they would attempt to emancipate themselves. Unfortunately, the responses of the participants reveal the lack of critical consciousness to realise that their plight is the consequence of an oppressive social system. Therefore, without instilling critical consciousness among them, their emancipation and thus poverty eradication is impossible (Freire, 1996; Sen, 1999).

6.10 Social Mobility

The rigid caste system practised in India was the main hindrance to social mobility, especially for the Dalits. The concept of ritualistic pollution/untouchability and *Kulathozhil* debarred people of the Dalit community from mingling with the rest of society (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998). They were also discriminated from actively participating in society and excluded from using public utilities such as roads, wells, schools, temples and public places. This stigma and a consciousness of shame guided the everyday activities of the Dalits, which deterred them from pursuing social mobility (Charsley, 1996).

Ayyankali was the first leader to emerge from the Dalits and question the oppressive practises of the upper caste, especially the Nairs (Nisar & Kandasamy, 2007). He took several bold initiatives for the social mobility of the Dalits denouncing the dictates of the caste code:

In 1983 by travelling through a public road in a Villuvandi (bullock cart) that was used only by the upper caste, Ayyankali disobeyed the caste practise. He had also violated the dress code of the Dalits and dressed well like an upper caste. (Nisar & Kandasamy, 2007, p. 66)

He organised a youth army called '*Ayyankali pada*', which fought against the oppressors. Later, by the end of the 19th century and in the early decades of the 20th century, he assembled his men to take possession of a number of roads that were sign boarded 'only for the upper-castes', which resulted in riots (Nisar & Kandasamy, 2007). These incidents are the most significant in the social mobility of the Dalits of Kerala.

As a part of examining the obstacles of Dalit emancipation, this thesis considers the obstacles of social mobility as a major impediment for poverty eradication. Neither the abolition of slavery nor the end of bonded labour enabled the Dalits' social mobility because it was highly associated with their social position according to the caste code (Saradmoni, 1973; Werff, 1982). Any Dalit who violated the caste code would be punished severely. For fear of such inhuman punishments, they never tried to break the caste code to seek social mobility or emancipation from the plight of their life (Hjejle, 1967). Both the upper caste community and the government that legalised the caste codes restrained social mobility of the Dalits.

The independence of India and Land Reform were expected to improve chances of Dalit emancipation and social mobility. According to the Centre for Human Rights and Global Justice (2007), the systematic elimination of Dalits from the ownership of land constitutes a crucial element in their subordination and exclusion. The Dalits who were excluded from the dwellings on the *Janmi's* land were more marginalised than those who lived on the *Janmi's* land, therefore had less chance of social mobility. Werff (1982) maintains that Land Reform

accelerated social exclusion and reversed the possibility of social mobility. He said:

For the first time the Harijans (Dalits) came to live together in concentration of hundreds of families. For the first time also they had to set out for work, predominantly on daily basis, with new employers in a strange environment. (Werff, 1982, p. 11)

Thus, Dalits who lived among the upper caste were marginalised into settlements and Porambores. Land Reform intensified their economic dependency, and impeded their possibilities for better education and better standard of living. As I have observed in my fieldwork, they even lost the chance to live among the upper caste people and thus lost their chance to imitate them for a better social mobility. Rather, the younger generation is easily attracted to alcoholism and the ill-effects of colony life. Education is considered as a strong instrument for increasing social mobility, but this study shows that achieving primary education is not sufficient for their social mobility and emancipation.

6.11 Conclusion

The analysis in this chapter reveals that poverty of the Dalits of Kerala is deeply intertwined with the history of the caste system. The severity of Untouchability and distance pollution illustrate the level of discrimination. The caste code not only socially excluded the Dalits, but also made them to believe that they are 'good for nothing'. The principles of Karma and Kulathozhil are instilled in their consciousness.

With the combination of caste bigotry, the sub-human nature of their life, their denigrated identity, subaltern culture and economic oppression, the Dalits psychologically accepted their social exclusion that has been passed from generation to generation, which became a major obstacle to their emancipation. Finally, their inferior consciousness has increased when they are excluded from wider society to live in isolated settlements, which is unambiguously an institutionalised social exclusion.

In addition to the ascribed impurity, the upper caste had insisted that a set of subaltern cultural characteristics, ideas, customs, behaviour patterns and even words should be used by the Dalits. A comparative analysis of the past conditions and present position of social exclusion suggests that escape from this requires more affirmative social policies rather than financially based poverty-eradication policies. Unless the Dalits are able to emancipate with a higher level of criticism generated by education, poverty eradication of the Dalits will be a mirage.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ANALYSING OPPRESSION AS A CAUSE OF POVERTY

7.1 Introduction

Although the previous chapter discussed the different forms of social exclusion that cause poverty, it also revealed that the caste-based social stratification goes beyond exclusion to oppression, which was, and still is, a major cause of poverty. While the Brahmins usurped the ownership of almost the entire land of Kerala, the Dalits had to work as slaves on the land just for minimum subsistence.

This chapter examines the history and experience of the oppressed life of the Dalits, and their attempts to achieve emancipation. Previous studies (ie. Hjejle, 1967; Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998; Mohan, 2006; A. K. K. R. Nair, 1986; Saradmoni, 1973) have found that the Dalits are still carrying the burden of oppression over the centuries through different generations. Participants' responses also suggest that while they escape from one form of oppression, they come under another form of oppression that pushes them into poverty.

As discussed in Chapter Six, section 8, neither the Dalit nor the Dalit student lives in isolation from his/her past experiences. Every Dalit lives with the burden and impact of his/her ancestors' slave past, oppression, exclusion and inferior consciousness. As Young (1990) maintains, "all oppressed people suffer from inhibition of their ability to develop and exercise their capacities and express their needs, thoughts and feelings" (p.40). Understanding these experiences of oppression is vital for oppressed people's education and poverty eradication.

This chapter is divided into eight sub-sections based on the theme of oppression. The first part discusses the history of oppression such as slavery, bonded labour and other forms of social exploitation of the

past. However, in the later part I analyse the experience of oppression against public policies to provide equality of justice to the Dalits.

7.2 Slavery

Slavery existed in Kerala as a corollary of the rigid caste system for several hundred years. Saradamoni (1973) maintains that the Dalits are still living with the burden of the economic and social oppression of slavery. According to Hjejle (1967), slavery has existed in Kerala from time immemorial, but Nisar and Kandasamy (2007) have argued that slavery started with the *Chera* conquest of Kerala in the ninth century, followed by the migration of Brahmins and their establishment of ownership of landed property and caste practises in Kerala.

Historical accounts and literary evidence from 18th and 19th centuries suggest that the agrestic slaves were severely treated. They were of diminutive status and had a dark appearance which made them visibly distinct from other people (Hjejle, 1967). Historian Buchanan considered the condition of the slaves of Kerala was greatly inferior to that of the slaves in the West Indies (Hjejle, 1967). Abbe Dubois, who spent 32 years in India as a missionary, has also stated that the conditions of the slaves of India were deplorable in comparison to the slaves of any other British colony (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998).

According to Dubois:

the agrestic slaves of Kerala are looked upon as below the level of the beasts. They were not even allowed to walk peaceably along the high roads. A hundred paces is the very nearest they may approach anyone of a different caste. If a Nair, who always carries arms, meets one of these unhappy people on the roads, he is entitled to stab him on the spot. (Dubois 1906: 60-1 as cited in Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998, p. 261)

Sanal Mohan's (2006) collection of memories of slave experiences also illustrates how the fierce torture, physical harassment and oppressive

attitudes towards them have led to their present day undernourished physical structure and the subordinate psychological consciousness of slavery of the Dalits. It says:

There are occasions when erring lower caste slaves were taken out to the wilderness and were implanted neck deep in pits covered with soil, only the head propping up. The slave cries aloud to his master to show him mercy... After implanting him, coconut oil was poured over his head, inviting a colony of black ants that will eventually eat up the slave...(the slave's family witness the ordeal for hours). Other forms of punishment meted out involved being taken in country boats to the deeper recess of rivers or backwaters and being drowned by hanging stones around their necks, so that they never came up. Here again the wife and children follow to witness the murderous orgy in vain; unable to take revenge upon the landlords and their men. (Mohan, 2006, p. 22)

Slave testimonies published in 1905 narrate that they were yoked along with a bullock or buffalo to draw the plough and afterwards chained so that they might not escape. They were not allowed to wear clothes but only leaves and the bark of trees (Varghese, 1970). Testimonies state that:

[T]hey were sold, the father to one man, the mother to another and the children to several separate persons and would not be allowed to see one another afterwards and under such cruel treatments, some have entered the forests preferring to be eaten up by wild beasts than to lead such miserable lives. (Varghese, 1970, p. 24)

Extreme torture meted out to women and children has its impact beyond generations. One of the fierce memories of Dalit women is quoted like this:

Slave women are forced to work for many hours without any respite even immediately after childbirth. Within a day or two of giving birth to a child, the landlord comes to the hut of the Untouchable labourer and asks the woman to go to the field for transplanting of paddy or weeding; a work that involves severe physical strain. The woman labourer will have to keep herself bent for long hours in knee-deep mud and water without proper rest. She bleeds, as she is not allowed to take rest after delivering the child... A day's hard labour exhausts her and she hears at a distance the loud cry of her new-born child that gradually becomes a faint sobbing... in the evening when she returns to the child kept in a cradle hanging from the branch of a nearby tree, what was left of her beloved child were ant-eaten mortal remains. When she returns home, the elder children are anxiously waiting to see their younger sibling and ask for the child to be carried and fondled. The mother breaks down and gives the dead body of the infant to the siblings. (Mohan, 2006, p. 21).

Until the turn of the 20th century, a slave was yet another plough animal for the Janmi. The wealth of a farmer was considered based on the number of cattle and the number of slave families he possessed (Hjejle, 1967). Werff (1982) wrote that: "The market of Chenganacherry [Nair- dominated Central Kerala city] was a well-known centre for slave trade, where even desperate slave parents come to offer their children for sale" (p. 2).

Ward and Conner, who surveyed Travancore and Cochin between July 1861 and end of 1862, recorded the price of a male Pulaya as varying from Rs. 6 to Rs. 10. The price of a female sometimes reached Rs. 12. The church Mission records of 1850 indicate that the price of slaves varied from place to place. On average it varied from Rs. 6 to 9; but in one place it went up to Rs. 18 (Saradmoni, 1973).

The significance of these narratives to this thesis is that these Dalits' parents and grandparents were those who were tortured. These kinds of

stories are the frequent subject of talk in Kerala as the appalling treatment was rampant across all regions of the state. The Dalit children who go to school may want to share the experiences of their siblings eaten by ants, their grandfather burnt or their parents' tree house, in order to construct their future and their emancipation. However, it requires a Dalit-inclusive education system which does not cease with obtaining literacy and numeracy. As soon as they grow up enough to think critically, the great majority of the Dalits drop out of school, which suggests that they do not feel that the system is inclusive of them nor capable for advancing their emancipation.

7.3 Bonded Labour

Since the end of slavery, the Dalit slaves became attached or bonded labourers in the *Janmi's* farms. They were called *Kudikidappukar*, those who lived in a part of the farmland from where they could see to all parts of the farm; duties that were for 24 hours, seven days a week (Tharamangalam, 1981). They were all expected to be at the disposal of the *Janmi*, primarily to protect the farm from wild animals and flood (Tharamangalam, 1981). This system appears to have functioned in terms of the Marxist idea of the structure of exploitation: that some people have their power and wealth because they profit from the labour of others (Young, 1990).

In a practical sense, bonded labour was not much different from slavery. Parallel to the change in social awareness, the Dalits were neither traded nor chained; however, the life of a bonded labourer's family was confined to the whimsies and fancies of the host Janmi (T. A. Thomas, 2010). Once a family was allowed to live on one Janmi's land, as described in 6.6, the entire family's identity was subsumed by the landlord's as 'Murickan's Pulayan' or 'Chalayil's Pulayan' and so on. The adult male members had to perform hard manual work such as bunding (building walls), ploughing and dewatering operations. Even the smaller children had their duties, such as running errands or

frightening away crows and other birds with firecrackers (Oommen, 1996).

Unsatisfactory performance of such a Kudiyan would be dealt with by severe punishments. All members of the family would be punished and few Janmis would allow the Kudiyan's children to go to school. After the Dalit protests Janmis began to let Kudiyan children to go to school but only until they had sufficient labourers to work in the field. The study participant Karuppankuty said that:

My father had no voice in our life; as long as we were in their (Janmi) land we had to listen to them and if anyone questions them they would be beaten or they would pull down our hut and would ask us to get out.

In some cases the Kudiyan family would run away overnight, or the Janmi would pull down their hut and evict them from his land (Tharamangalam, 1998).

In spite of the abuses, the Janmi wanted the Kudiyan to stay to ensure the supply of labourers. For this, they used deceptive and exploitative indebtedness. T.A Thomas (2010) explained this system like this:

During the lean period paddy was given by way of a loan measured with *Koolippara*³² (a measure less than a standard *para*) and was accounted at a higher price. After harvest, repayment was paid in standard *para* and price accounted at a lower level. The net effect of the dual system was double exploitation in quantitative as well as in value terms. In the process of repayment, paddy obtained from harvests got exhausted and entered again during the lean season into a new loan. This cycle went on and the attached labourers got indebted continually for generations with little chance of escape. (p.58)

³²*Para* is a measure used to measure paddy. During the time of independence one *para* of rice was the wage for 10 female day workers or seven male day workers (T. A. Thomas, 2010). Its standard size is about 10 litres. To pay the wages, Janmis used a smaller size *para* called *Koolippara*. The term *Koolippara* is used as a symbol of institutionalised exploitation.

As a result, the bonded labourers would be known for the indebtedness to the Janmi. At the time of the formation of the state, nearly 95 per cent of the attached agricultural workers of Kerala, who were almost wholly Dalits, were in debt (Alex, 2008). Some Janmis even created huge indebtedness in their bonded labourers, so that they would not be able to pay it back without years of work. Thus, when they got lower wages they ate less and even starved, causing physical disabilities, sickness and malnourishment (T. A. Thomas, 2010).

Oommen (2008), while analysing the life of the Dalits in the beginning of the 20th century, found that bonded labourers were being persecuted and intimidated by the landlords for seeking to work for whom they chose. Oommen (1996), who has researched Dalit social protests in Travancore, found that, inspired by the anti-slavery moment of the 19th century, many Dalits resented their Janmis and fled hundreds of kilometres away into hilly areas and lived there.

The participant Annamma explained her experiences like this:

My parents were just working for big Janmis. When we were Kudiyaans there was no certainty.... we just had to suffer their abuses if anything goes wrong... but we could grow our food and they would give us some clothes as well.

Jaya observed the plight like this:

In the olden days while these landlords grabbed land, even we Paraya could grab land³³, but it was not allowed for the Paraya to do so. We, as the slaves of the upper caste only helped them to grab land. So they became landlords and we became landless.

During bonded labour, they did not experience many forms of human rights but they had a much better life than in slavery. The participants' responses suggest that it was better than their present life. Bonded labour was a social system but it was not social exclusion. The Dalits

³³ Until 20th century, people used to encroach on revenue land in the hilly areas as much as they needed.

gained substantial rights during this time, such as the use of public roads and public places, wages in cash and admission to school amongst others. The Kudiyan's children went to school along with the Janmi's children. While acknowledging that they were still oppressed, it is important to note that they lived on vast farmland, were engaged in day-to-day farming activities and grew their food without worrying about their future. This signifies how the public policy of ending bonded labour by land reform deepened their poverty, denied their opportunities and led to their social exclusion.

7.4 Work and Debt: Institutionalised Exploitation

This section is intended to explore the extent of exploitation experienced by the Dalit, despite the hard labour they invested in to feed themselves and the rest of their family. As discussed in section 7.3 of this chapter, to retain the labour force in their farms, the Kudiyan would borrow food supplies from the Janmis when there was no work. They would keep working to repay the debt in the following years. When the payment was paid in cash, they were paid barely enough for a minimum subsistence living and during the non-working days they had to forage in the forest for food (Hjejle, 1967).

Radhakrishnan (2009) has argued that the slaves were never paid wages; rather they were given subsistence food such as was given to the ploughing cattle. Until the 20th century, there was no concept of a cash wage in Kerala. It was rather a duty by birth in which agrestic slaves were expected to keep working on the farm, and they would get food and clothing from the Janmi (Chandran, 1989). Other Dalits who supplied pots and baskets, and scavengers, also did their job dutifully and received food and clothes (mostly leftover food and used clothes) (Chandran, 1989).

Karuppankutty, a study participant, stated that:

My wife and I were regular workers at the Peechikkara's land when we were living by the road. They were reluctant to give us

wage in cash although there was government rule to pay cash for all labour except for paddy cultivation. So they used to make us work in their dry land for coconut and rubber in the forenoon and in the paddy field in the afternoon so that they could give us rice for the whole day's work. We protested this but they forced us to do so. One day our comrades came and posted a flag in the field and filed a case against them. That was in the 1970s, since then until now they have never cultivated that farmland that is lying barren.

Further, Paru also said that:

During the harvesting time we had to work from sunrise to sunset; after cutting and binding the paddy into small sheaves, we had to carry them to a 'Kalam' (a specially cleared work-area to do the threshing and winnowing). When we finish doing all these they will give us 'Kallari' (rice mixed with sand) or 'vannala' (low quality rice that does not come in the first threshing). By night we come home and we had to sort to cook for our kids to eat.

The average wage of a working male was one *idangazhi* (a measure to the size of one litre) of husked rice for a day; however, the Janmis would pay the wage with a smaller measuring tool. As mentioned in Chapter Seven, section 2, even in quantity the Dalit labourers were often exploited by deceptive measurement. Anyone voicing against *Koolippara* would be brutally punished. According to a report by the Human Rights Watch published in 1999, "Dalits, usually work to pay off debts that were incurred generations ago" (Majid, 2012, p. 269). Ninian (2008) argued that at least 40 million Dalits of India were still working like slaves to pay off the debts incurred by their ancestors, generations ago.

This feudal attitude was very open until the second half of the 20th century. Patnagar and Omvedt (1979) pointed out that a Kerala landlord argued in 1940 against his labourer who demanded wages like this: "His body and his father's body are my property and he dares to ask for wages. Is it right?" (p.423).

Trade unions and the social change that transformed Kerala in the early 20th century helped considerably with the emancipation of the Dalits. Education is important to bring them to the mainstream culture through creating critical consciousness, in order to emancipate them from poverty. That criticism should instil beliefs and visions in the younger generation that value education, for their emancipation from poverty.

7.5 Tattered Employment Safety Nets

As discussed in Chapter Six, section 4, traditionally the occupation of a Dalit is determined by his/her Jati. Some theories propose that each Jati is formed based on people who engage in particular occupations (Saradmoni, 1973). Thus, all Jatis engaged in menial and polluting jobs are categorised as Dalits. The nationalist movements lobbied for the emancipation of the Dalits and gained the reservation of positions for Dalits in the public service. However, my empirical studies have found that there are no beneficiaries in terms of employment from this colony and most of the youth stopped their schooling to follow their *Kulathozhil*. Hence, an examination of public policy to end *Kulathozhil* and to ensure the Dalits participation in the public services will help us to understand the significance of education in this regard.

Reservation of positions of employment in the public sector could ensure many job opportunities for the Dalits. Yet, according to a study conducted by Mendelsohn and Vicziany (1998), only 2 per cent of the Dalits, that is the most advanced among the Dalits, could get the benefits of a government job. Moreover, although the statutory policy of the government is to offer 15 per cent of jobs to Dalits in all sectors, less than 12 per cent of these vacancies are filled by the Dalits (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998). Furthermore, in the rapidly liberalised Indian economy, it is relevant to ensure their representation in the private sector as well.

Dalits continue to be significantly underrepresented in most professional strata due to their lack of higher education, therefore they are often confined to the lowest grade of government posts (Centre for Human Rights and Global Justice, 2007). For example, in a survey it was found that 93 per cent of the sweepers in the government sector are Dalits (Joshi, 1980). Dalits occupy 90 per cent of the lowest grade jobs, and since job reservation is not applied to promotion, very few Dalits are able to achieve promotion to higher positions (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998). At the same time, although Brahmins constitute a small fraction of the population in Kerala, 46 per cent of their earners were employed in technical, professional and administrative positions (Sivanandan, 1976).

Ammini stated:

My daughter studied B.Ed (Bachelor of Education) and went to work in a nearby church school for a leave vacancy. When she asked for a permanent job, they demanded 2.5 million rupees as donation. That means, that job is not for people like us. Now she is working in a private school in Andhra Pradesh.

The practise of Kulathozhil is as oppressive as slavery and needs to be abolished to ensure Dalits' rights to choose their occupation. Due to the presence of Kulathozhil, every Dalit thinks of starting their career in the same field and society expects them to serve society in that field even before they attempt to be employed in some other field of occupation. For example, manual scavengers are at the very bottom of the caste hierarchy; they are certainly doing their Kulathozhil, not because they want it, but society wants them to do that and they have no other source of income (Centre for Human Rights and Global Justice, 2007):

In 2002-03, the union ministry for social justice and empowerment admitted the existence of 6.76 lakh³⁴ people who clean human excreta from lavatories for a living and the presence of 9.2 million dry latrines, spread across 21 states and union territories. (Majid, 2012, p. 269)

³⁴ One lakh is equivalent to one hundred thousand.

The example of scavengers is symbolic of all oppressed people who follow their Kulathozhil. Unless the government formulates concrete programmes to make them believe that they are worthy of performing different occupations, job reservation cannot reach the wretched bottom of the Dalits' society (Mander, 2013). The education goal of the MDG programme should have played a significant role to end Kulathozhil and snap their inter-generational bond with it for poverty eradication.

7.6 Dalit Women: The Double Oppressed

Chapter Six discussed the oppressive nature of Indian society in general. The excessive level of the oppression women are experiencing is a major cause of poverty in Kerala. As the UN Millennium Project (2005) highlights, lack of education and poverty of women increase the chances of child mortality, malnutrition, maternal mortality and lack of education of the children. In short, oppression and social exclusion result in women's poverty and that causes poverty in society.

According to the Indian Human Development Survey (IHDS) conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) and the University of Maryland, Indian women are governed by strict caste norms. It follows that 50 per cent of women do not travel alone outside their home; 18 per cent do not even go to a provision shop alone and 75 per cent of women do not meet their husband before marriage. These statistics speak volumes about the level of freedom and rights experienced by the women of India in general (S. Desai, 2014).

Kerala women are essentially the same as women elsewhere in India in term of the caste code and practices. Kerala women are generally disadvantaged due to their unequal social status and opportunities. Women's rights activist Kodoth (2008) has argued that, despite the many women's welfare schemes, women in Kerala live with 'suppressed minds'. Although Kerala women have a higher life expectancy of 72 years compared to men, women are more prone to sickness, have poor mental health and more suicide attempts; moreover they suffer more poverty and exclusion (Chacko, 2003). Socially, women are deprived of

much of the freedoms that men enjoy, which is a cause of poverty and the poor participation of women in society (Mitra & Singh, 2007).

Sociological studies (P. Singh & Mitra, 2007) reveal that Kerala society is still rooted in the tradition of male superiority; women are discriminated against by male employers, and husbands are the primary decision makers at home. Women's social status is mainly determined by the patrifocal (male-focused) family system practised in most parts of Kerala. This family system does not encourage women to participate in society, mainly due to the lack of freedom and security to mingle with men (Eapan & Kodoth, 2002).

Although the girls of Kerala have an edge over boys in education, both in terms of success as well as total number of years of education, that is not translated into women's social status, freedom and position in society (Dilip, 2010; Kodoth, 2008). Both school and family orientate girls in terms of how unsafe they will be in the public; therefore by the completion of schooling, a girl abstains from participating in society (Dilip, 2010). For example, in the 140-member Kerala state assembly, there is only one female member elected from the governing party. Therefore, although MDG 2 could ensure 100 per cent primary school enrolment, without changing Indian society's attitudes towards women, women's empowerment and poverty eradication is not possible.

Although women in Kerala are highly educated, they face higher unemployment rates than males in Kerala and women in general in India. This is especially true among the educated females both in urban and rural Kerala (Eapan & Kodoth, 2002). Since Dalit women have been traditionally undertaking menial jobs and because of the pressing need to support the family, although they are educated, rather than waiting for a salaried job, they end up in manual labour (P. Singh & Mitra, 2007).

For example, study participant Rekha said:

I have passed Commercial Diploma³⁵; I know computer and shorthand. Even I was selected for a job in the Cochin Shipyard. But at that time I was pregnant, so I couldn't join... now I work in the neighbouring farms. Today I was carrying cow dung to the field from the cow shed; it is really heavy. What to do? We need to live no...?

Extreme poverty forced Rekha to do some kind of work to pay for her daily living costs, rather than looking for a salaried job. Others with Rakha's education need not work on a farm as they have other avenues to look for job. Another participant, Soumini, described how her parents had to sell her to a Janmi for the family's survival:

Soumini said:

...I was sold to one 'Janmi' when I was 12, I lived at their house doing their domestic works until I got married. They didn't pay me or to my parents anything. We were seven children; my parents were unable to feed all of us. If my parents were going to wash anyone's clothes (they belong to washer-men caste) they would not be asking money, but the Janmis would give them some food or old clothes. It was not enough for all of us. Therefore, my parents sold my sister and me too. After 15 years, when I was 27 they married me off giving a gold chain [excitement].

It was not strange for the Dalits to sell their children to some families as that was a way of finding food and clothes for their children; in return, the children would be working as the Janmi's servants. It was a traditional custom of the upper caste men to maintain lower caste girls as slaves to have sexual relations with them (Werff, 1982). The upper caste had controlled promiscuity among both married and unmarried slaves. "In case of pregnancy with unmarried slaves, a male worker of the same landlord could be forced to take the blame... frequently with small dowry the landlord gave when he decided to marry off a slave girl"

³⁵ A two year diploma consisting of commerce, accounts, word processing/computer skills and short-hand.

(Werff, 1982, p. 4). There is evidence of slave women being sold by their master in ancient times (Hjejle, 1967). It is also recorded that some women slaves were the most valuable in the slave trade and women slaves were also exported (Saradamoni, 1973). Even now, in many upper caste houses, Dalit servants work in the same pattern.

Still (2008) maintained that Dalit women experience a double disadvantage of caste and gender discrimination. Women in general, Dalit women in particular, are excluded from higher positions and this pressure forces them to engage in the lowest paid and most menial work. For example, more than 200,000 employees work in the lowest paid cashew industry in Kerala, of whom 95 per cent are women, mostly belonging to the Dalits (P. Singh & Mitra, 2007).

No Indian state has male-female wage equality among the unregulated sectors, such as agriculture and construction; and a large number of women are engaged in domestic work on very low wages (Planning Commission of India, 2011). Those women in highly qualified professional categories are engaged at the lower levels of the hierarchy and women's earnings are lower than men's for the same level of professional education (Eapan & Kodoth, 2002).

Sheeja, a widow, said:

We women do more work at work place, but we are paid less than men, sometimes even half for the same kind of work. At times men will get some parties with alcohol, but they will not call us even for a cup of tea. Only because I am a woman I am getting lower wage and struggling to run a family by myself.

Wage discrimination is very high in the unorganised sectors, compared to salaried jobs. Dalit women, though educated, are forced to go to manual labour as a cause and result of poverty. This shows that Dalit women are more vulnerable to exploitation. The education system is not adequate to ensure women's empowerment in Kerala, or it is impeded by other social factors oppressing women's active inclusion in society

when it should be emancipatory for all. I argue that MDG 2, as it is coming up to expiry in 2015, has not played any substantial role in improving women's equality.

7.6.1 Alcoholism and domestic violence.

Although I have so far discussed upper caste oppression, this topic illustrates some of the Dalit's oppression of their own people. From the participants' perspective, alcoholism can be a part of their lifestyle, and could be used to soothe bodily pain after a long day's hard work or to reduce their frustration about the oppression they are experiencing in their everyday life.

I have listened to a number of poignant stories of alcohol-related domestic violence and alcoholism in this colony. This oppression by the oppressed can be considered as the inherent feeling of the oppressed to become an oppressor. As Freire (1996) maintains, every oppressed person can aim to become an oppressor of their own people. I have considered whether the 'oppressed oppressor' is a consequence of oppression and poverty, or whether their oppressive behaviour is causing the poverty. Analysing the oppressor is quite significant for understanding the poverty of the Dalits, because their behaviour can be the biggest impediment of development and that is a major cause of poverty among the Dalits. A few of the most significant experiences narrated by the participants will demonstrate that.

Due to Thankamani's alcoholic father's assault, she lost her hearing and stopped her studies. Her experiences are quoted in Chapter 6 section 8. In addition, participant Jaya stated:

Though I am working as a housemaid, I have regular work and consistent income. Unfortunately, my husband who works every day spends the whole lot of money only for drinking. While my children were little kids he was a burden to the family. After finishing his money he would hit me to get my wage... He would come in the evening drunk and eat the whole food and start hitting

me and swearing at the children. Many days we slept without food. That is how the children stopped their studies early. Next morning when I go to work people will look at the marks on my face and laugh at me, saying that I got nicely.

I was a victim of his cruelty until my son grew up. Now he is scared of my son, so although he would quarrel he won't hit me now. My daughter says she doesn't like to marry, seeing the atrocities of her father. Nowadays he is getting a good wage, so he will drink for the whole amount and also use drug. He used to hit me in a way that I would fall sub conscious. But now my son is bigger than my husband, so if my son sees him hitting me he would be pulled out of the house. [I met her husband and asked for an interview, but he declined; whenever I saw him he was inebriated regardless of the time].

Srinivas is another alcohol addict. Both the times I met him he was inebriated and he was not able to talk properly. According to Annamma, his neighbour, because of his drinking, he sold everything from his home. Unable to bear this behaviour, and his assault, his wife sought refuge with a local charity. They admitted her children to an orphanage and she is working in their hostel. When I managed to catch up with him, he agreed that he was unable to stop drinking. His shanty is probably one of the most dilapidated one in the colony. According to his neighbours, he has sold its doors and windows; he was arrested for theft from the neighbour's property. Another neighbour told me that she once snatched a cooking pot from him, when he took it to sell; as his wife shouted that was the only pot they had to cook rice.

Kanakam stated:

My young daughter's husband is alcoholic and he has been frequently assaulting her. Every day as he comes home he will start beating her. One day even he cut her on leg and hand with a sickle.

Thankamma said:

My husband was alcoholic so there was no saving, if I save something that also he would take to drink; now same is the case of my sons. My son once took homemade liquor to school and he was caught.

Rajeev, an alcoholic participant said drinking is a part of their lifestyle:

We drink every evening to feel an ease of our body pain after hard work with stone. ...[S]ometimes I make quarrel in my house. The houses are very close by; we behave with our immediate response... We don't have a polished behaviour, so we speak filthy things loudly... that can be meant to abuse my wife, unfortunately the houses are very near so it can be heard all over the colony... that is how we grew up. We are the most hard working people... we cannot get sleep without drinking... there will be body pain, back pain and even mind pain. At the workplace, we experience a lot of ill feeling... but for drinking we all sit together. Even our boss will sit with us to drink... (Laughing with as a gesture of contentment).

Kuttan said:

Suppose I want to bring my friends home, at that time the neighbours may start quarrel and swear, which become an insult my friends.

Bosco described a weird social reality of the colony:

Until late night most of the young men in this colony get together. Everyone go to some work, so we have money to buy liquor and enjoy...What else can we do when father comes home? We are not kids; it is a one bedroom house. My father wants to sleep with my mother and they expect me to go elsewhere. (His father was inebriated and was rude to me when I visited them).

But Mathew stated:

Violence has come down a lot now; a few years ago, there used to be more quarrel, because there was illicit brewing within the colony and police had to come every day. Now-a-days after work, they go to the bar and come late and also most houses have TV that has reduced domestic violence.

Each Panchayat has an SC coordinator to work for the coordination of welfare activities and to facilitate development. However, I could not find that anyone has benefited from their services. Therefore, towards the end of my fieldwork I met with all the SC coordinators of the Block (sub-district). In this meeting the Dalit development officer Sunil said that drinking and domestic violence are the major problem with the Dalits, hindering them to implement any development activities among them. An alcoholic man in a family is an aggravating cause of poverty. On the other hand, according to Ramanathan (2012), Dalits are the people who are engaged in all kinds of heavy manual labour, so drinking is a necessary evil of their life.

This research found that most of the men work for circa Rs. 500 (US\$8.50) per day. If it is a four-member family and if he works for five days a week, the family can be considered above the poverty line and out of poverty, according to the MDG programme, but almost all men spend at least Rs. 400 on alcohol. In such homes, if the women do not work they are starving. Hence, one dollar-a-day is not an indicator of people living above poverty line, rather their ability to spend appropriately decides their poverty.

Rather than considering alcoholism as their fault, if it can be understood as a consequence of the imposed Dalit culture and life style, poverty eradication initiatives may help them to integrate with the rest of the society. Public policies and the education system should focus on improving their lifestyle. It is important to understand and analyse the causes of alcoholism and its significance in intensifying poverty.

7.7 Dalit Movements and Political Forces

Radical social change in Kerala began to gather momentum from the 19th century through the spread of education and political change. However, the social change that took place in the first half of the 20th century was a renaissance, which drastically changed people's outlook and public perceptions towards the oppressed. Chapter Four, section 3 illustrates this, and this current section describes further some of the movements that significantly influenced the Dalits. It is my strong contention that more than the economic deprivation, oppression and exclusion deepened the poverty of the Dalits and this section looks at the gains and losses of the Dalits in their struggle against it.

By the second half of the 19th century, there was an awakening among the Dalits due to the intervention of missionaries, education, conversion to Christianity and many other social changes (Nisar & Kandasamy, 2007; Padmanabhan, 2010). Conversion to Christianity not only removed the restraints that the caste system had put on the Dalits, but also elevated them to the top of the social strata and gave them the opportunity to receive education and be exposed to discourse on messages of liberation (Mohan, 2006). The European missionaries not only motivated the Dalits but also put pressure on the British parliament to create legislation to end slavery and exploitation (E. T. Mathew, 1999). Thus, the missionaries intervened strongly to end oppression, and ignited the lethargic minds with a message of emancipation and a hope of a new life.

In the first quarter of the 20th century, when India's freedom movement gathered momentum, the anti-caste movement came to the fore; especially when Dr B R Ambedkar³⁶, the Dalit leader, and Mahatma Gandhi came into the political arena (Patnagar & Omvedt, 1979). Although both of these men were ardent advocates for the cause of the

³⁶ Ambedkar is known as 'Babasaheb'; he was a hero, guide and guru to the oppressed class people in India. Ambedkar's motto was to "educate, agitate, and organise." He gained a BA from the University of Bombay, PhD from Columbia University at New York, and a DDS from the London School of Economics.

Dalits, Gandhi tried to integrate the Dalits into the Hindu fold so as to end their social exclusion. For example, the Scheduled Caste Federation was formed to fight for the rights of the Dalits; but both the Congress party and Communist party took up the cause of the Dalits and promulgated their integration with the rest of society, but actually acted as a safety valve to prevent their emergence as a powerful force (Patnakar & Omvedt, 1979).

Unfortunately, the demands of the political parties were still constructed through the paradigm of oppression. For example, in the land reform movement, both Congress and Communists were unanimous that the Dalits need not be considered as having any rights to agricultural land; only their wage interests were to be protected (Patnakar & Omvedt, 1979). The plight of the Dalits in post-independent India and the latest Dalit movements suggest that Freire's notion of transformation of the structure of oppression is the most significant factor in their emancipation. Freire (1996) says: "...[T]he solution is not to integrate them into the structure of oppression, but to transform that structure so that they can become beings for themselves, such transformation, of course, would undermine the oppressors purpose" (p. 74).

In other words, under the banner of different political parties, the Dalits were usufruct for the party goals. Ambedker also demanded equitable distribution of land among all, but by this time, the Dalit movements had condensed into political organisations. Denying the possibility of land re-distribution among the landless Dalits, the undisputed leader and theoretician of the Communist Party of Kerala, E. M. Sankaran Namboodiripad argued that,

The Dalits take on not just agricultural labour but any other form of work that is available... and most important, there is a possibility of disputes arising, even, between farmers and agricultural labourers. So bringing them under the same

organization may create weakness within. (as cited in Namboodiripad 1937, p.221 Devika, 2010, p. 804)

While Namboodiripad, the first Chief Minister of Kerala, proposed the idea of not considering the landless Dalits in the land distribution, he considered the political consequence of the class struggle rather than the social consequences of Dalit poverty. Moreover, society had not yet started to consider the Dalits as equal citizens. Dalits themselves demanded a wage rise, not a share of the land they were ploughing.

The earliest trade union movement started in Kerala in the Alappuzha area. The emancipatory ideology preached by the Communist Party attracted the low wage Dalit industrial workers, and overtly exploited the farm labourers in the early 20th century. The huge resentment felt by workers ultimately led to the formation of a Communist Government in Kerala (Namboodiripad, 1976). It took a long time for the Dalits to realise that the Communist Party in control, and led by members of the upper cast, considered the Dalits only as their tool in orchestrating a mass movement.

It is interesting to note that in the first few decades of the 20th century, Dalits and the Indian National Congress waged an aggressive campaign to end the discrimination against the Dalits. Mahatma Gandhi took the cause of the oppression of the Dalits as the symbol of India's freedom struggle (Charsley, 1996). Gandhi wrote:

The Untouchable, to me, is, compared to us, really a Harijan – a man of God, and we are Durjan (men of evil). For whilst the Untouchable has toiled and moiled and dirtied his hands so that we may live in comfort and cleanliness, we have delighted in suppressing him. (Young India, August 6, 1931 as cited in Charsley, 1996, p. 8)

All the Dalits actively participated in the national movement with the hope that independence would bring them a better life. However, when the British left, the demand for their rights subsided (Mendelsohn &

Vicziany, 1998). The Brahmin-dominated Congress Government was no better than British rule for the Dalits. It vindicates the Freirean theory that:

Although the situation of oppression is a dehumanized and dehumanizing totality affecting both the oppressors and those whom they oppress, it is the latter who must, from their stifled humanity, wage for both the struggle for a fuller humanity; the oppressor, who is himself dehumanized because he dehumanizes others, is unable to lead this struggle. (Freire, 1996, p. 47)

As a result of Ambedkar's initiatives, the Dalits received a quota of places reserved in education, employment and parliamentary positions in British-governed India (Patnakar & Omvedt, 1979). Rather than removing all the obstacles for their equal participation in society, providing quotas might have benefited only a very few Dalits. For the Dalit community as a whole, with these place reservations they lost their able people and the verve for a struggle. However, it is a topic that requires further discussion. My argument is that the Dalits have lost their unity and critical consciousness to fight for their rights, which is a reason why they are experiencing extreme poverty. After the death of Ayyankali, the Dalit organisations mushroomed for each Dalit Jati, but no one has made any comparable achievement. Therefore, the Dalits need criticism-generating education to build a generation who would question the appeasement policies of those reservations and fight for their rights.

7.8 The Dalits' Life under Imperialism

Establishment of the British Empire in India had both a positive as well as negative impact on the life of the Dalits, especially the slaves. At the beginning, the British East India Company strengthened the feudal system then prevailing in India to maximise the revenue from agriculture. The pressure of maximum production, commercialisation of crops and the market economy intensified the burdens on the slave Dalits (Patnakar & Omvedt, 1979).

The Treaty of Srirangapattanam and the Subsidiary Alliance brought Cochin and Travancore under British control by the year 1800 (E. T. Mathew, 1999). Thus began an era of imperial economic exploitation in the state (Kerala Secondary Education Board, 2010; E. T. Mathew, 1999). Under the agreement of the Subsidiary Alliance, the Travancore princely state had to pay a grand sum of Rs. 800,000, to the British government annually (Nisar & Kandasamy, 2007). This period also kindled exploitation in Kerala; from a self-sustaining village community, the local rulers collected huge taxes, leaving the people to starve (Miller, 1954).

The British replaced cash for in-kind payment in all the day-to-day transactions. They encouraged the feudal landlord system denying the peasants to own land; landlords got more rights and powers and the land revenue, which was collected in cash, increased many times. By the beginning of the 20th Century the British had at least 250,000 hectares of land in Kerala used for rubber, coffee and tea plantations (Kerala Secondary Education Board, 2010). These lands are still vested with the corporates of India.

However, in the transformation of Indian society, with the advent of new professions and occupations, British missionaries began to speak up for the equal rights of the Dalit slaves. The Bhakti movement of the medieval period preached the same human rights and equality; but it could not make any improvement in the plight of the Dalits. During the British period, due to the interventions of the missionaries and the foreign educated Indians' movements, the Dalits began to campaign against the most irksome forms of discrimination against them (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998).

After India came under the British rule in 1858, the British administrative machinery, which so far had abstained from being involved in the ritualistic restrictions, began to punish all kinds of caste-based restrictions (Patnakar & Omvedt, 1979). However, the Dalits had no economic ability to take a case to court. About Dalits

ability to sue against an upper caste person, Patnakar and Omvedt (1979) said:

...[I]f they did so, the court was generally not likely to direct effective police action to help them even if it decided in their favour; and if they rebelled on their own and the upper castes exerted social and economic boycott against them, the courts took no action to protect them... [I]n some cases court even refused to take action against the upper castes. (p. 411)

This helplessness continued at least until independence.

In short, the British were limited in their ability to eradicate caste-based exclusion, and oppression continued to exist in India. This fact is reflected well in Ambedkar's speech at the first Round Table Conference³⁷ held in 1930. He said:

Our wrongs have remained as open sores and they have not been righted, although 150 years of British rule have rolled away. Of what good is such a government to anybody? It was a government which did realise that the capitalists were denying the workers a living wage and decent conditions of work and which did realise that the landlords were squeezing the masses dry, and yet it did not remove social evils that blighted the lives of the downtrodden classes for several years. (Patnakar & Omvedt, 1979, p. 413)

Although imperialists usurped political power, profit making was their prime motive. Thus they paid little attention to social evils and injustice. Patnakar and Omvedt (1979) argued that:

British rule did nothing to transform caste feudalism or to alleviate the worst aspects of untouchability. Whatever steps were taken came in the transition period between the wars when concessions were being given to Indian nationalists. And whatever

³⁷ Round table conferences were a series of three conferences organised by the British Government from 1930-1932 to discuss constitutional reforms in India. They were conducted as per the recommendation by the report submitted by the Simon Commission in May 1930.

steps the Indian nationalist leadership took came as a response to Dalit struggles. (p.420)

British officials in particular did not bother to interfere with the social practise of the caste system and related slave practices. Nevertheless, they did not make any distinction between slaves and non-slaves while dealing with public administration, especially when Travancore and Cochin were princely states. However, the interaction of the British people with the public, such as missionaries, academics and estate owners significantly impacted on the practise of slavery (Hjejle, 1967).

7.9 Conclusion

Oppression is a very real problem for any human being at any time. This chapter described the intensity of oppression and the oppressive symbols that continue over generations, a social practice that oppressed the Dalits to the level of acting as ploughing animals and debarring them from participating in society. Ascribing pollution to the Dalits, the oppressors inflicted the nadir of ill-treatment and deprived them from anything that could give them human dignity and a decent standard of living. Any attempt for decent living, dressing, housing and even obtaining adequate food was against the caste code and the violators were met with inhuman punishments or death. Unable to resist the oppressors, the oppressed developed an inferior psychology to live a sub-human life, which became their way of life. Amidst all social changes, the Dalits have not emancipated themselves from this oppressed consciousness.

The discussions in this chapter reveal that a majority of the Dalits are still living under the shadow of oppression and they have not been liberated from the psyche of their slave past. Slavery was abolished, but the system of oppression continued almost at the same level, with bonded labour and the oppressor not changing. They are not only oppressed, but are also exploited. Vulnerable among them are women who are doubly oppressed both as women and as Dalit; and are also subject to domestic violence.

National parties that fought for the human rights of the Dalits in British India are no longer stood up for the Dalits' rights when they came to power. The protests and reform movements that formed the roots of oppression in the early years of the 20th century have now disappeared. Amidst vicious poverty and oppression, the Dalits lack leadership. Education has significant role in their emancipation, but the experiences narrated in this chapter suggests that primary school level education is not sufficient for the Dalits emancipation and poverty eradication.

CHAPTER EIGHT

POVERTY DUE TO DENIAL OF OPPORTUNITIES, FREEDOM AND RIGHTS

8.1 Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter Six, Dalits who belong to the bottom of the caste hierarchy were excluded from Kerala society and therefore from the opportunities to share the natural resources, as evidenced by the right to own agricultural land. Drawing on the participants' experiences, this chapter examines in detail the context of Land Reform, which made the Dalits landless and homeless. This chapter also addresses to what extent the government policy of abolishing bonded labour, without offering an alternative settlement to the Dalits, increased their poverty. In the agrarian economy of Kerala, land is the main source of wealth, therefore a detailed analysis of the socio-political context that made the Dalits the only community disadvantaged in owning landed property is very significant in the understanding of poverty.

Researchers (eg. Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998; Mohan, 2011; P. Radhakrishnan, 1982; Scaria, 2010; Werff, 1982) have argued that land reform in Kerala has failed to provide land to the tillers of the soil (the Dalits) because of the caste system-based public policy. While the government, landlords, corporates, religious institutions and the tenants shared the agricultural land in Kerala, the Dalits, who constituted 10 per cent of the population of Kerala, were mostly left landless, and consequently homeless. To illustrate the importance of emancipation from the bondage of the caste system for poverty eradication, this chapter analyses the role of the Christian missionaries and public policies. Based on these analyses, this chapter examines

why public policies are not capable of helping the Dalits to emerge from poverty.

The MDG programme does not seem to have considered the intensity of poverty due to the denial of opportunities, freedom and rights; both those denied in the past as well as those denied in the present. Therefore, again, I use this chapter to repeat my argument that poverty is not just a measurable objective reality but is a consequence of the systematic exclusion of people from opportunities from freedom and from rights. Hence, conscientising the Dalits about their rights and lost opportunities must be an inevitable step to eradicate poverty, which is possible through education.

8.2 Right of Landed Property

In an agrarian society like Kerala, denial of the right to own landed property represents a denial of food, shelter and clothing, because as a slave or as a bonded labourer, the Dalits were at the mercy of their Janmis for all these. They had minimal clothes or none at all, nominal shelter and a minimum level of food in return for providing dawn to dusk labour. Hence, this denial of landed property remains as the tool of exploitation for an indefinite time. This section examines to what extent the denial of opportunities to own land and consequent public policies in this regard led to Dalit poverty and the importance of education for their emancipation from this plight.

As mentioned in Chapter Four, section 3, although feudal land was leased out to peasants in different tenure systems, ownership of land was vested in the hands of Brahmins who formed less than two per cent of the population (Heller, 1996; Scaria, 2010). Many of the land relationship Acts passed before the formation of the Kerala state in 1956 were focused on tenancy relationships between the upper castes and the lower castes (Varghese, 1970).

The Slavery Abolition Act of 1843 is the first Act that insisted that slaves should be permitted to acquire and inherit landed property

(Hjejle, 1967). However, because the Dalits were the labourers of the Janmi's land, neither the Janmis nor the local governments were prepared to provide land to the Dalits (Scaria, 2010; Sivanandan, 1979). Later, in the early 20th century, the Dalit leader Ayyankali fervently fought both inside the Legislative Assembly as well as outside for the Dalits' right to own land. However, even after the Independence of India, barely any Dalits in Kerala owned landed property (Sivanandan, 1979).

Thus, as a result of a century of rebellion, organising, petition signing, marching, meetings, strikes, battles with police and landlord cartels, election campaigns, and parliamentary debates, the first elected government (Communist) of Kerala mooted a Land Reform Bill in the Legislative Assembly in 1957 (Franke as cited in Alex, 2008). Amidst fierce protest from the landlords, the issue was one of heated debate for 13 years until it was passed in 1969, with substantial amendments designed to appease all the powerful landholders such as the plantation and estate owners, religious institutions and landlords (P.R. Gopinathan Nair, 1976).

8.2.1 Land reform.

The Kerala Land Reforms (Amendment) Act of 1969 envisaged the implementation of three schemes. Firstly, the conferment of ownership rights to the cultivating tenants of the lands leased by them (Werff, 1982). This part of the Act is significant as it conferred legal ownership to all who had leased land. In effect, it ended the Brahmin domination on land ownership, which had existed over several centuries; but the Act maintained the social practice of excluding the Dalits from the ownership of land. At the same time, those (non-Dalits) who had leased hundreds of acres of land became owners of all that land.

Second, land ceilings were fixed; that is, a family unit could hold up to 22.5 acres of single crop land, 30 acres for dry land, and 15 acres of garden land. Land held by plantations, estates and religious and charitable institutions was exempted from the ceiling (Werff, 1982). If

there was no exemption, 1.8 million hectares of excess land would have been available for redistribution among the landless Dalits (Sivanandan, 1976). However, this was the most significant change in the nature of the Land Reform Bill, which was introduced in 1957 and not passed until 1969. In other words, the Land Reform Bill started as a pro-poor one, but by the time it was implemented (and became an Act) it had become a pro-rich one. Corporate estate owners held 250,000 acres of estate land. Every other landowner who owned more than 30 acres of land was allowed time to convert their land into a plantation. Due to this drawback of the law, the government failed to find much excess land to be distributed among the landless Dalits (Werff, 1982).

Thirdly, the Act ensured fixity of tenure to the hutment dwellers and the right to purchase land from their landowners; three cents (120 metre square) of land was granted as homestead in a city, five cents in a town, or 10 cents in a rural area. One-half of the purchase price was to be paid by the government and the other half by the hutment dweller (Werff, 1982). Unfortunately, the hutment dwellers, who were struggling to find food and clothing, could not buy land and as a result they were evicted and became landless and homeless (P. Radhakrishnan, 1982; Werff, 1982).

According to (Werff, 1982):

After passing the Land Reform Act in 1969, not all kudikidappukars (bonded labourers) could acquire the plot of 10 cents... many landlords, before the Act was finally issued were aware of the approaching consequences and evicted their labourers from the land, or moved them to more infertile parts of the holding... Many landlords disputed the claims of their labourers (tenants) before the Taluk Land Tribunal and even filed court cases assisted by professional lawyers. As a result the plot was not allotted, or the plot given to the labourer did not exceed four or five cents. (pp. 6-7)

Study participant Karuppankuty remembered that:

We were at the forefront of the land reform protests, strikes and clashes under the banner of Communist party; but when the party came to power we got nothing. EMS [the Communist leader who introduced land reform] cheated us in the land reform. When they organised 'surplus land grab' movement I didn't go. Now I know every party wants to look after only the rich.

This is a disappointed response with no hope, but the Dalits need to be re-energised with a criticism-generating education system in order to unite again for their emancipation from poverty. P. Radhakrishnan (1982) argued that through land reform, the land system in Kerala is no longer under the hold of the caste system. However, with the exclusion of the Dalits from the benefits of land distribution and providing full ownership to a few, the state policy on the one hand tampered with the natural setting of society, and deserted the landless Dalits on the other.

Even after the implementation of the Act,

Brahmins who account for only 1.5 per cent of the population had 21 per cent of their households each owning more than 25 acres" (Sivanandan, 1976, p. 19). The Communist party at the forefront of Land Reform movement took a stand that "[c]aste oppression was to be ended, but that did not entail recognizing the landless tiller's claim to land, similar to the peasant's. This was in sharp contrast with Ayyankali's demanded for both agricultural land and modern education. (Devika, 2010, p. 803)

The Communists also thought that distributing land to the landless Dalits may cause a class struggle between the peasants and landlords (Devika, 2010). Thus, both major parties of Kerala deserted the Dalits' demand for agricultural land.

In 1959, the Kerala Government had estimated that a surplus of about 1.8 million acres would be available for redistribution, which would be sufficient for 2.5 hectares of land for all landless families in Kerala at that time (Sivanandan, 1976). However, after the Act came into force in

1969, only 66,984 acres were redistributed; most of it was uncultivable. Bureaucrats and revenue officials themselves were landowners so they did not show much interest in implementing the law. In research conducted to understand how the land system has changed after the enactment of the Act, Radhakrishnan (1989) has found that by bogus transfers and fake gifting involving more than 80 per cent of the surplus land, landowners have averted the Land Board from taking over their land.

Joseph, a study participant, said:

As the Janmi's workers we also helped them to manipulate the land so that they won't lose their land. Most of these Janmis had thousands of acres of land, they bought tons of kilos of cashew and strewn all over the cultivating and uncultivated garden land and that became a cashew estate in a few years... that is what most of the Janmis did. And they also influenced the revenue officials to avoid land acquisition.

A comparative analysis of land distribution in other states of India, and in other countries, shows that Kerala has redistributed much less land than other countries (Deininger et al., 2007). Statistical reports suggest that most other countries have implemented a better land redistribution than India as a whole, and Kerala in particular. For example, Japan redistributed 33.3 per cent, Korea 27.3 per cent, and Taiwan 26.9 per cent compared to the 8.5 per cent in Kerala (Deninger et al.). With plantations excluded and landlords circumventing reforms through family partition, and due to diversion of agricultural land into plantations, only a meagre proportion of land could be acquired for redistribution (Rammohan, 2008).

While leaving the Dalits landless, most of the large plantations and estates belonging to the British Sterling companies and other corporate groups occupied vast cultivable land in Kerala and nullified the effect of the land reform. The land ceiling was an ineffective measure, except for legalising the ownership of tenure lands. The long 13 years between the

introduction and completion of the Land Reform Act were sufficient for the landlords and the tenants to dodge the government (Rammohan, 2008). The Dalits, the real tillers of the soil, were left landless, ensuring that they would remain a large category of extreme poor in Kerala (Alex, 2008). Thus, it can be argued that the government upheld the caste system and its exclusionary policies rather than eliminating its influences for the future. Hence, it is my contention that Land Reform has not materially improved the condition of Dalit people. The Dalits lacked sufficient education to be able to understand the implications of the reform or to resist it effectively. They require critical education, a conscientisation of the Freirean kind, not simply docile elementary education as envisaged by MDG 2.

8.2.2 No 'land to the tillers of soil'.

After comparing land reforms in different parts of the world, and different states of India, Mendelsohn and Vicziany (1998) posited that Kerala has one of the poorest records of land reform among various places in the world. The land reform and its influence on the present day scenario of poverty in Kerala clearly illustrates that those attached labourers who obtained the right of homestead, but did not obtain the right over the agricultural land that they were labouring on for years, still remain the extreme poor. This is primarily due to their lack of access to agricultural land.

Because of the government's failure to effectively implement the provisions of the Act, the Communist Party started 'excess land agitation' in 1972. The Communist Party gained popularity through the promise of an egalitarian world and gained the massive support of the oppressed Dalits (Devika, 2010). Yet why did the Dalits, who once demanded landed property under the leadership of Ayyankali in the early years of 20th century, not resent the Act? They strongly believed in the ideology of the Communist Party, which had already come under the control of the bourgeoisie for its own and its government's survival (Devika, 2010). This obviously is a relevant situation where Freire

(1996) asserts the need for education for conscientisation: “The conviction of the oppressed that they must fight for their liberation is not a gift bestowed by the revolutionary leadership, but the result of their own conscientisation” (Freire, 1996, p. 67).

Dalits had rallied behind the political parties to achieve their goals. However, when the parties came to power, they betrayed the Dalits because even in politics the social perception of the Dalits was only as the slaves of the upper castes and not as equal human beings. Little attempts were made to challenge this attitude. For example, a 1947 Agriculture Labour Union resolution on the abolition of landlordism stated: “All agricultural labourers (Dalits) must have a minimum wage. All other tillers of the soil must get proprietary rights in it under their direct cultivation, and cultivable waste land must be distributed among poor peasants and agricultural labourers were never materialised” (Patnakar & Omvedt, 1979, p. 421).

Karuppankuty’s family was deceived by the landlord, as was the case of many other Kudiyanas. He explained how his family was discarded to the streets:

Before my father came to know about this Act, [Land Reform Act] our landlord asked my father to sign on a document. As an illiterate he signed wherever they asked. Actually that was a deceptive contract to agree that we were their rental tenants. We got a court notice to vacate their land as soon as possible. Including my children, we were 12 members living in that hut, so we could not go out and my father (who served his entire life for the family) hoped that they would not send us out.

One day police came... asked us to go out of their land... and threw out all our belongings and they pulled off our thatched hut... With my six sisters, two children, father, mother and my wife we came to the Poramboke. We spent the night on a shop veranda and the next day put up a hut by the street and lived there...

Karuppankuty's family was expelled, mainly due to the property squabble between the landlord's sons who were disputing ownership of a 'big tree' under which the hut was built. By this time, there was heightened public awareness of Dalit oppression due to some Malayalam movies, literary personalities, social activists, newspapers, and political parties who spoke out against oppression. One eminent lawyer in Karuppankuty's neighbourhood fought for their rights and got them back to the same land within a couple of days; although the case went on for years:

... [B]y the time the case was settled, my father had passed away; we got 10 cents of land excluding 'the big tree'; later we sold the land to marry off my sisters and lived by the main road for nearly 10 years, and 20 years ago we came to this colony.

I could see an unforgettable desperation on his face as he stopped for a while looking aimlessly at the neighbour's vast rubber plantation.

Subhadra said:

No government wants us to be really better. Everyone wants to exploit us; tax all our earnings. If they have any sincerity let them give us a piece of land to cultivate, I will show growing gold in that; I started working in the farm when I was five years. I never stopped working for the last 60 years. Look (pointing to the small pile of turmeric) I have to beg to get some land on lease to cultivate that. I know, in my lifetime I won't be able to buy some land and cultivate; but it is the desire of any Pulaya. We are the people of the soil; nobody knows the soil as much as we know. I can say what grows in what soil, how and when...

This is not a babbling of a tiny woman; it is a genuine demand on behalf of a community who have been systematically excluded from their legitimate rights and natural resources. Without paying attention to these demands, poverty eradication cannot be made possible.

As a result of a pro-rich public policy, “after the land reforms the overwhelming majority of Dalits in Kerala continue to be entirely landless” (Manosmita et al., 2012, p. 33). According to the latest reports available, 25,000 Dalit families do not have either land or home in Kerala (Kochu, 2013); 99 per cent of the Dalits of Kerala are either landless or possess less than a hectare of land (Planning Commission of India, 2011). It is appropriate to conclude that “land reforms in Kerala have failed to provide agricultural land to the actual tillers of the soil” (Scaria, 2010, p. 191) and those deprived people are the extreme poor in Kerala (Planning Commission of India, 2011).

Thus, it is my contention that it was the lack of critical consciousness of the Dalits and the exclusionary public policy of the government that deprived them from owning land. Instead of being tools of the Communist Party in the protest for land reform, if the Dalits had united to raise their own demands, they would not be deprived in its outcome. As Freire (1996) states:

The oppressed have been destroyed precisely because their situation has reduced them to things. In order to regain their humanity they must cease to be things and fight as men and women. This is a radical requirement. They cannot enter the struggle as objects in order later to become human beings. (Freire, 1996, p. 68)

Therefore, Dalits needs to examine the sheer denial of opportunities when they lacked unity and a movement of their own after the death of Ayyankali. As a result of the Land Reform exclusion, 10 years later in 1980, 100 thousands of families were left homeless; about 75,000 families were evicted repeatedly and were still facing the threat of eviction (Werff, 1982). As time progresses the situation has not improved and homelessness has increased. On the 56th anniversary of the state formation in 2013, the government announced that there were 243,928 families in Kerala who do not have either land or housing in which to live (“Zero landless project, 2013”). I consider this land reform

exclusion as a potential cause of poverty. Critical consciousness through education can empower the Dalits to fight for their lost rights, but education of the kind envisaged by MDG 2 is not sufficient for empowering the Dalits.

8.2.3 “We are uprooted; not transplanted”.

Any poverty eradication programme has to take into consideration that the denial of cultivable land to the Dalits in the Land Reform is one of the most significant public policy failures leading to their poverty in Kerala. As discussed earlier, the Dalits were deprived of the right to own private property because of their status as a slave or bonded labourer. After the Land Reform, out of the 440,000 Dalit families, (about 12 per cent of the population of the state) at least an estimated 340,000 families became homeless and started to live in the Purambok (P. Radhakrishnan, 1982; Werff, 1982). It was not only the age-old caste system but also the policy of a modern democratic government maintaining the caste philosophy of Janmi and Kudiyan pushed more than 1.5 million Dalits out of their homes. It is another reason for their current state of poverty (Werff, 1982). Therefore, it is my contention that Dalit’s poverty is not just a natural phenomenon, but is a consequence of social practices that denied their rights.

Saroja, a participant who lives with her mother, has been seeking a plot for her own house for 14 years. She asked:

There are many homeless families who are looking for a plot, just like us. Almost 10 plots are unoccupied here for 20 years. Why don’t they give it to the newly married people, instead of building a huge events centre in those plots? What way we are taken care of... we were just uprooted from wherever we settled. It took several years for us to get settled here. If we were at the street, after marriage we could build one more hut somewhere there.

Furthermore, Kanaka said:

Until we come here we never knew we would have to share with all these kinds of people. By shifting us to this colony they (the government) have pushed us to a lot of social problems....we are deprived of the minimum necessities to live. I am of the opinion that do not create a colony like this. I work earn and live but I cannot escape from this colony culture.

...we don't have to starve if governments at that time or now willing to give us at least one acre of land, so that we would continue our legitimate traditional life. We are the children of soil, farming is our life. I think it was better to live as a Kudiyan than coming here. Here we have no opportunities...

As these participants said, they feel extreme disillusionment now. They are now removed from a permanent source of work and reliance on a farm. Living in congested huts in a colony suffocates their life. Furthermore, there are no effective public policies in place to support their vulnerable lives. Dalits' lives are vulnerable to different kinds of unexpected events such as evacuation, flood, ill-health, diseases, family feuds, accidents and even death; but they are ill-prepared for any such eventualities (K. Kumar, 2013). This social exclusion, due to the state's unplanned social policy, is undoubtedly a violation of the Dalits' right to live a decent life. Therefore, it is my contention that, for a review of the land reform in Kerala, the Dalits have to acquire critical consciousness through education and the ability to demand access to rights which can reduce their poverty.

8.3 The Inter-Generational Ordeal for a Shelter to Live In

The most oppressive forms of the caste system that prevailed in Kerala not only deprived the Dalits from owning land but also restricted them from building houses in which to live. Historical accounts and literary evidence from the 18th and 19th centuries suggests that the agrestic slaves lived in small huts on top of a tree or in shanties (Hjejle, 1967).

French missionary Abbe Dubois made the following observation about their houses:

The Pulayas [Dalits] are looked upon as below the level of the beasts which share this wild country with them. They are not even allowed to build themselves huts to protect them from the inclemency of the weather. A sort of lean-to, supported by four bamboo poles and opens at the sides, serves as a shelter .Most of them, however, make for themselves what may be called nests in the branches of the thickest-foliaged trees, where they perch like birds of prey for the greater part of the twenty-four hours... (Dubois 1906: 60-1 as cited in Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998, p. 261)

Although experiences of the slaves have been already discussed, it is important to mention that from that condition they have not had an opportunity to emancipate to the level of others yet. When the government started to settle almost 340,000 displaced Dalit families after the land reforms, it did not include housing. For this colony, the government first purchased a semi-arid piece of land and subdivided it into nearly three cents of land for each family. It was bushy and not habitable. However, when people were asked to vacate the places where they were living, they themselves built huts in the colony using locally available leaves and bamboo.

Annamma stated:

I built my first hut with coconut leaves; my eldest son was only nine years then; he helped me to tie them together. I used to lie all my five children together on the floor on a mat, beside me. I had to struggle to stop water flowing into my house. Then I wanted something to stop the floor getting wet, something to stop water trickling from the roof, a separate room for kitchen a coat to sleep after a daylong hard work.... To get more money I used to do heavy headload works. The government agencies did nothing for us for

several years. The Christian missionaries gave us the closet to make toilets...

Only 10 years after coming to this colony, was anyone able to get a loan for a house? Most of them got Rs. 30,000 (US\$ 500) for building a house, which was substantially below the required expenditure. As a result of that, most of the houses are leaky and uninhabitable. Many houses have plastic sheets tied on top of the roof tiles. There are houses roofed just using hoarding sheets. Their toilets are outside the house, and mostly walled and roofed with plastic sheets, without a substantial roof. Figure 8.1 illustrates the limited resources they are living with.



Figure 8.1. Left: example of a toilet; right: example of a house

8.4 Declining Opportunities

As already discussed, the Dalits' circumstances are severely reduced due to social exclusion and inappropriate public policies. The Dalits' opportunities have traditionally been restricted by their caste position and the limited freedom they have enjoyed. Since they were excluded from mainstream life and denied the rights the upper castes had, they have did not have an opportunity to be an active part of society (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998). To increase the opportunities of the Dalits in education and employment, the government reserved a 12.5 per cent quota for the Scheduled Castes (Dalits) in June 1946, and raised it to 15 per cent in 1970. The constitution has also required that Dalits be given the number of parliamentary seats proportional to their population (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998).

However, at the time of the legislation of the quota, the public sector contributed more than 65 per cent of the employment in the organisational sector, which became 40 per cent by 1980 (Joshi, 1980) and it is fast declining in India as a whole. Hence, without including reserved positions in the private sector, the Dalits cannot enjoy the benefits of the reserved positions of employment proportionate to their population beyond the legislative claims of the 15 per cent quota. In all the 68 families in my fieldwork colony, no one has benefited from the job place reservations.

Furthermore, different communities among the Dalits are not equal. While the opportunities are equally available, the better off communities, such as the Paravan, are found to take all benefits and communities such as Nayadi, Vedan, Chakilian and Parayan are always deprived of any benefits of the education and employment quotas (Varman, 2006). On the other hand, the Bangis of North India and Mahars of Maharashtra are castes parallel to the Ezhavas of Kerala (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998). The Ezhavas of Kerala are not included in the Dalit category in the constitution, as they had achieved considerable socio-economic development by the time the quota system was introduced; however the Mahars and Bangis were included. Similarly, those Dalits who have achieved education and employment are in a comfortable position to ensure their family and children are successful in absorbing all the benefits open to the Dalits (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998).

In this context, it is worth mentioning the argument of the first Chief Minister of Kerala that:

[S]ince the process of social, cultural, economic and political development is bound to continue and therefore the respective position of particular castes and communities are bound to change from time to time, it is necessary to have periodical reviews of the position occupied by each caste and community. The aim of this review being to see whether a particular caste or

community has overcome their backwardness and, if they have done so, remove the reservation for that caste or community. (Namboodiripad, 1976, p. 67)

However, this is not being carried out, or perhaps is not possible in the Indian context, as public policies often give preference to the most influential over the weakest, as the political parties that form the governments are controlled by the influential.

Furthermore, when pushing all the Dalits into a settlement of tens of hundreds of families, their opportunities have declined in many ways. Even when they were expelled, they used to live in the Poramboke closer to places where they worked. Since the land reforms, they have been settled in colonies that are set up in remote areas where the land is cheap and distant from public transport and other facilities (Kochu, 2013). Their access is reduced and the opportunity to participate effectively in society is also curtailed. Therefore, reduction in opportunities is a major obstacle to Dalits' emancipation, and consequently also to poverty eradication. When the Dalits realise these bottlenecks in their emancipation through critical education, there will be some prospect of poverty eradication. However, as the objectives of MDG 2 are achieved in Kerala and almost all my participants have achieved primary education, this study suggests that MDG 2 is not sufficient for the eradication of poverty in Kerala.

8.5 Denial of Civil Rights

Another area denying Dalits the opportunity to participate equally in society is the denial of civil rights such as statutory provisions and schemes, and official funds not granted to the Dalits. The ancestors of the Dalits had very limited civil rights as slaves (Saradmoni, 1973). Even the bonded labourers had the same consciousness as their masters, as the duties and their social status were the same as the masters, because they were ritually excluded as Untouchable, unapproachable and even unseeable. Such perceptions barred them

from every public place, including roads, wells and temples and offices (Schwartz, 1989).

This denial of civil rights, which has continued over generations, has not simply vanished, since the perception of Untouchability still exists (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998). Hence, an investigation of the Dalits' civil rights is important, in order to understand their poverty. Irma Eugenie Loemban (2008) has argued that:

- Poverty can be both a cause and a consequence of human rights violations.
- The realization of all human rights and efforts to eliminate extreme poverty are mutually reinforcing.
- Human rights' norms and principles provide the framework for poverty reduction and/or eradication (p. 5).

Sivan's experience is an example of this:

If I go to any government offices, they look down on me, they don't care about me... I am treated like a useless pest... (He was raging with anger for many things he has been denied by the authorities). Whereas, I can see them offering a chair and chat with the rich people because they will pay them good "inducements" [bribe]. If we go and complain to our ward member, he will laugh at us. We are just a laughing stock for them...

Kuttan also believed that the government authorities discriminate against him because he is a Dalit:

I have been to many offices to get this house registered in my name. It is difficult to know what is right and what is wrong. For getting a loan for a house here, they said we should not have even this hut. But if I pull it down to apply; it will take some time to grant a subsidy for another house. Where will I live then?... If the officer is too lazy to do some work for me he will ask some questions or ask for some more documents. They know that I don't understand all they say...

Kuttan said that he studied five classes, but as a young man, he faced stigma when explaining that he could not understand what they said. At times, he had to pretend that he understood to conceal his lack of competency. According to the ‘*Untouchability in Rural India*’ survey, Dalits are even denied entry to Panchayat offices in some 14.4 per cent of the 499 villages surveyed, which has the effect of denying them access and a right to be heard at the most immediate level of government (Centre for Human Rights and Global Justice, 2007).

All participants who go to the Panchayat office to get their requests processed expressed a similar experience; that they are ignored. This conduct is triggered by the colour of their skin, the understanding that they are Dalits, and their unpolished language.

Janaki said:

To get something done, if we go to any office they will consider only the rich people. Suppose, I wait outside for a long time they will just ignore me. If I dare to go inside and ask for a help they will say, “come tomorrow”. I am a lady: I am scared of the officers, I cannot question why. They don’t consider that I am going to the Panchayat office walking more than one hour giving up one day’s work. Looking at people like ‘us’ they are thinking what excuse to say...

Many of the participants had similar experiences. Kalyani and Sarojani said that they were turned away by the Panchayat Member when they asked for his attestation; and they say it is a revenge for not voting for the Member in the Panchayat election. These are examples of sheer civil rights violations which accelerate the Dalits’ poverty.

Jaya had a similar experience from the electricity office. She said:

To get electricity connection for this house I went to the electricity supply office three times, they repeatedly told me excuses, the next time I went there, I angrily shouted at the supply officer: “are you expecting bribe from me? If so please tell me, or please tell me why

you are not giving me the connection?” and desperately I came back. On my way while I was waiting in the bus stop, one of their attendants came, took me back to the office, and asked me to sign on an application. I got electricity within days.

Sheeja narrated another experience:

Just before the last Panchayat council complete their term, they organised a big function where ministers attended for the distribution of the Revolving Fund³⁸. They gave one person an envelope on the stage as its inauguration. That was bogus; no one was paid any money. We enquired our money next day; they said they were processing, that would take some time. We were all expecting money until we realised that the amount sanctioned by the government was already lapsed. We realised it only after the election. Every department deal with us is corrupt, because they know it is easy to deceive us.

Sheeja’s another experience is important:

Once district mission [poverty eradication mission] granted us fund for ‘Onachanda’ (a festival market). They built the stalls and granted us 5000 rupees each. I bought stuff from the wholesale market and sold; and I got 11,000 rupees. We all returned the entire amount to the CDS³⁹ chairperson; she is supposed to give us the profit deducting the rent. But she didn’t pay us anything. We complained against her... now she has been suspended, but we haven’t got any money yet. Our ward member was supporting her. There are many such examples; we have burnt our hands. Many programmes will come for the poor but the officers will use us for making money.

Paru gave another example:

³⁸ A subsidy from the government.

³⁹ The Community Development Society, a federal body supervising all the neighbourhood groups of a Panchayat.

Seven solar lights were granted from the SC fund for this colony. But they put only two in this colony. What is the use of two small lights for this big colony? We don't know whom to ask?

Although national, state and local governments allocate funds for the Dalits' development, they often go underutilised or misused. There are many such works taking place in this colony, especially in the last few years; not all of them are well planned. For example, first they developed a well for the colony; and the next year a rainwater-harvesting tank and later, tap water connections all through the colony's streets. The well and the rainwater-harvesting tank are incomplete and unused now.

It is very important to ensure that the Dalits' welfare fund is effectively utilised; that they are able to access the public services and their civil rights are protected. Denial of civil rights denies their opportunity to lead a decent life and discourages their participation in society. Every attempt government is making to channel development focused to the Dalits is mismanaged. Potentially that leads to poverty. Education which leads to an understanding of political context and possibilities is an important component for the Dalits to understand government mismanagement and fight for their rights.

8.6 The Public Policy Conundrum

As the Dalits are underrepresented in public offices and the making of public policies in India is an upper caste-dominated one, discriminative public policies are an important cause of Dalit poverty. Caste codes were the public policies of India in the past and they became the laws of the nation, in which both the monarchical as well as the democratic governments were pressured to represent the upper caste desires to retain the caste code and upper caste upper hand in the government policies. An understanding of these public policies that led to the present state of poverty of the Dalits is significant for poverty eradication.

Prior to the abolition of slavery in Kerala, based on the missionaries' complaints, the British parliament ordered an official enquiry into the life of the Dalits, but was met with a response from the princely states of Travancore and Cochin that the slaves had no complaints although they were treated in the most brutal way. All the officials that responded to the enquiry were slave owners and seeking the welfare of a slave was beyond the comprehension of an Indian officer (Hjejle, 1967). In 1923, the crown sent Thomas Baber to study the plight of the slaves of Kerala, an action which led to the abolition of slavery in India (Hjejle, 1967). Even after the abolition of slavery, the Act was not effectively implemented by the government and the judiciary were unwilling to make a judgement in favour of the Dalits (Saradamoni, 1973).

Although I have earlier mentioned about the exclusionary public policies against the Dalits, here I would like to repeat some of them to establish that the poverty of the Dalits is also a consequence of the 'casteist', oppressive and exclusionary public policies. By 1815, missionaries had a number of schools that admitted Dalits; but after a century of the imperial government ordering the admission of Dalit children to school, the government schools refused. But the Travancore Government Order of 1907 stipulated that Ezhava and Dalit children could be denied admission to government schools if the school was close to a temple (E. T. Mathew, 1999). After the Mitchell's Education Code of 1910, which ensured education for all, when Ayyankali took a Dalit child to a public school in 1914, the upper caste burnt the school down. The government did not agree to the Dalits' demands until they abstained for one year from working in the farms as a protest (E. T. Mathew, 1999).

Even in the 20th century, the government of Travancore had put up signs on main roads banning the entry of Dalits and lower caste people. When the Congress Party organised a movement violating this government rule at Vaikom, the Diwan of Travancore strongly opposed their demand to use the road and encouraged the upper caste to fight against the violators because the 'government' believed that if the Dalits

walked on the roads, that would pollute the roads and the nearby buildings wherever their shadow fell (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 1998).

In the upper cloth revolt, when Dalit women demanded the right to cover their breast, the government took a stand in favour of the upper castes and denied their demand for more than a century (Kerala Secondary Education Board, 2010). As a result of missionary education, Dr Palpu, an Ezhava, completed his medical education in Madras and when he applied for recognition with the Travancore Medical Council in 1896 the Diwan of Travancore commented that “admitting Ezhavas [then Untouchable] to school and appointing them to government service would be contrary to tradition” (E. T. Mathew, 1999, p. 803 the bracket note is added for clarity).

This discrimination did not just end with the monarchical governments but stayed intact in the post-independence governments as well, because it was also an upper caste system. For example, in 1993, a law was first passed making the employment of people to clean dry latrines with their hands an offence punishable under law; with a fine and imprisonment. But for 20 years the law was never implemented, resulting in another bill being passed in parliament in 2013 to abolish manual scavenging (Mander, 2013).

Almost every family in this colony coming under the ambiguous⁴⁰ BPL category has a Health Insurance Card, but I could not find anyone who has benefitted from that documentation. I heard the ordeal involved in having a photo taken for the card, as people from different colonies were asked to arrive in the morning and they had to wait until evening. I checked and found that the photo does not identify them, nor has it got a legal name and address. Here are some examples (depicted in Figure 9.1):

⁴⁰ The reason for ambiguity in dividing people as BPL is discussed in Chapter Three, section 5.

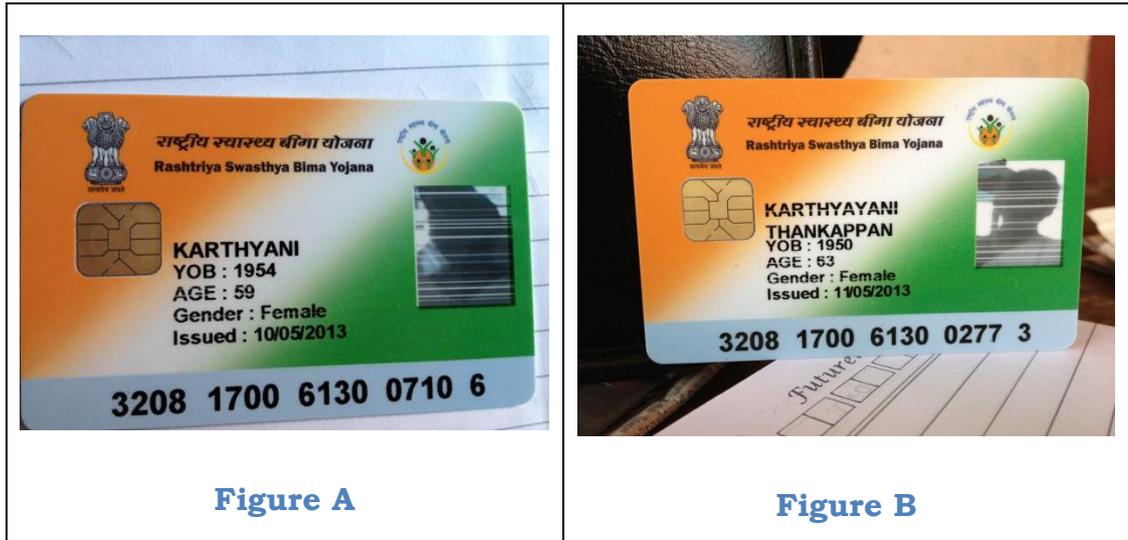


Figure 8.2. Health insurance cards with faceless identities.

Note: Samples of Health Insurance Cards show unclear or fake photos without the person's full name and address printed in English and Hindi so its owners, who are Malayalees do not know what is printed on it. If this has happened in various parts, it could be the result of a nexus between private hospitals and the insurance agencies for money laundering.

These pictures, with insufficient details and unclear photos, reveal the shoddy public services in Kerala. The National Health Insurance Scheme is a programme the central government rolled out in 2008, targeting about 300 million BPL families. It is intended to provide hospital-related expenses up to Rs. 30,000 (about US\$500) per family per year in private hospitals, with an expected annual cost of 3,000 crores (US \$500 million) (Ministry of Labour and Employment, n.d). I met three people in this colony whose legs have been broken, are unable to walk and were in need of medical care. However, among my participants, no one has benefited from this insurance scheme.

Joseph, a participant said:

I have taken health insurance, but when I went to the hospital they said I am not eligible because I have more income. When the officers asked me what is my job I said 'coolii' [manual labourer] and they might have calculated my income based on that. But for

the last 20 years I didn't go to any work. I had a heart attack and I am suffering from 'asthma'. I cannot even walk for 100 metres. My son has arthritis so he cannot do heavy job either. My wife has tumour on her leg but she is working as a maid-servant to meet our ends. I was in the hospital for the last one week, when I had no more money I came home, and I don't even get a food subsidy because I got an APL ration card. Nobody knows my poverty.

A village Panchayat is the lowest unit of administration in Kerala. An elected member from each village of about 500 families represents the village in the Panchayat administrative body. Almost all the participants had complaints about the Panchayat Member, and they believe that this person is misappropriating their funds. When I asked for an appointment, he panicked. Later, in response to my enquiries, he explained the reason for his panic is that there is an investigation going on against him and the Panchayat for money laundering for the supply of water to 18 colonies, including the one in the study. This colony had no water shortage in the last summer since it had a piped water connection. However, the Panchayat created forged documents and got the funding for tanker water supply; and the money was divided among the Panchayat Members.

A two-storey event centre is being built in the colony. On one side the six member family of Kochupennu lives in a hut made of old hoardings and plastic sheeting, and on the other side Kanakam and Sekharan live like destitutes. They already have a community centre; in a meeting I held there, they made these observations:

In the Gram Sabha (ward meetings), we unanimously assert that we don't want an event centre here, because, first, the only event we have is wedding; although we are Dalits, when we have a wedding we invite others as well, some of them will be upset if we invite them to a colony for a party... Second we have no difficulty to get a function hall either at the church or at the school; we only need to pay just Rs. 200.... Third, we do not want to show the

outsiders and the wedding party that we live in a colony... Fourth, if it was outside the colony, in the town everyone in this area would use it, no upper caste people will come to this Dalit colony to conduct a wedding function here. It is only our ward member's initiative. He will get good amount from this.

The convention centres and the houses beside them (Figure 8.3) illustrate the public policy conundrum.



Photos 1&2



Photos 3&4

Figure 8.3. Photos showing the outside and inside of the colony.

Note: Photos 1 and 2 (at the top) on the left show the new convention centre being built; in the middle the community centre and at right the early childhood centre. Photos 3 and 4 show two houses on either side of the convention centre which demonstrates the contrast in the public funds' utilisation.

Even the government authorities I talked with agreed that the Panchayat Members are eager to construct buildings, rather than to help the people. These pictures and the whole chapter illustrate the poor living conditions, including the inadequate housing and sanitation of the colony people, but the authorities' initiatives to spend money on extravagances suggest the need for addressing the problems with public policies before addressing poverty.

Kanakam's words reflect that:

The government is doing what they want to do, not what we want. For example, when we came from the hospital (after spending a month) the house was totally damaged by mite. The roof tiles were slipped off; the house was leaking everywhere. I requested the Panchayat member for a help, he didn't even mind me. Finally, a church helped me to repair it. A temple also gave us some money but no government department.

Pennamma made a fair point:

Instead of building a two storey event centre in this colony, if they had built it for any ready-made factory or any business unit we could get a job, that would have been very useful for this colony.

Most of the participants raised the concerns of the discrimination by public servants against them; the denial of allocating the Dalit funding to alleviate the major and persistent causes of their poverty; or the failure of the government to remove obstacles to emancipation from poverty. Alex (2008) maintains that the major problem of the Dalit welfare policies are that the policy makers and planners come from the better-off classes and the better educated who have great difficulty in understanding the lived experiences of the Dalits' lives.

This topic has clearly illustrated the gap between the public policies and the lived experience of the Dalits. It suggests that public policies have not yet been weaned away from the caste system and the high-handedness of the public servants in providing service to the Dalits. I

have quoted a number of such grievances in all the three data analysis chapters because my data collection was inundated with such complaints, which they consider (and I am convinced that they are right) are the major obstacle for their poverty eradication. Hence, it is my contention that to resolve the corrupt and arrogant system it needs the uprising of an educated Dalit community. Although they have achieved primary education, the present state of affairs suggests that the MDG 2 initiatives will not be sufficient for empowering the Dalits to fight against the oppressive and discriminatory public policies. Education strategies for Dalits should include their stories and their obstacles to emancipation. There should be a Dalit-inclusive education approach, in which Dalits have an active role in an education planning and curriculum committee.

8.7 ‘One Trillion Lapses; the Sick are Left to Nature’

A study conducted by Valsala Kumari (2011) has found that most of the Dalits live with extremely poor sanitation and in unhygienic surroundings, with few families have usable toilets. At the same time, a Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report tabled in the Parliament shows that a Rs. 9,000 crore (US\$1.5 billion) external fund allocated for sanitation remains unutilised in India; and as at March 31, 2010, the unutilised committed external assistance was of the order of Rs. 1,05,339 crore (Rs.1.05 trillion) in the same year (“India sitting over one lakh crore, 2011”).

The inter-generationally malnourished Dalit community, who are forced to do heavy work in every type of inclement weather, and to live in the most unhygienic environment, are undoubtedly vulnerable to diseases. There was an alarming number of sick people in that colony. At one stage of my field work I had the thought that “half of the people in this colony are sick”. From seasonal illness to tuberculosis (TB), acute mental illness, stroke, elephantiasis, accident handicaps, asthma, to ulcerated cancers, every type of sick person is represented in this

colony. In addition to the social and economic disabilities, health disability is an added factor leading to Dalits' poverty.

In addition to poor health, they are exposed to different health vulnerabilities. For example, Katha said:

... [M]y elder daughter gave birth to twins in a premature delivery; I had to spend Rs. 80,000 in the hospital (in the year 2000)! I sold all... I sold all the savings kept aside for marrying off my younger daughter. After that I kept begging from the town to all around Kothamangalam until she was discharged, no government helped us...

Kanakam and Sekharan, and Saramma and Chako are two couples struggling to survive. Kanakam had a liver stone and had surgery; now her stomach is bulging so that she is not able to work. Her husband Sekharan had a stroke, and became paralysed and mentally disabled. Saramma has elephantiasis, it has grown so bad that she finds it too difficult to move around; her husband Chako is a TB patient; he is also not able to walk alone, nor even able to talk well. Both the wives are supporting their husbands in a most wretched way.

It was a painful experience listening to the miseries of Kanakam and Sekharan that led them to a level that they are not able to extend their lives further. The full story is too long to narrate here. Kanakam concluded saying that:

...[R]eally we want to end this life... (Sobbing). I used to beg in the neighbouring areas for food and for his medication. But now I work three half days in a house as their servant... just to survive. I don't know how long...(crying..)

When I reached the second couple's house, Saramma was reading the Bible as she thought it was their last hope to survive the miseries of life:

*"The Lord is my shepherd.
I have everything I need.*

He gives me rest in green pastures.

He gives me new strength.”

I sat quietly and encouraged her to continue, she repeated the same verses. I knew these two ailing couple were struggling to survive. By the time I finished listening to their miseries, I was shocked, upset and my eyes were welling with tears. Saramma said:

My husband is unable to walk due to TB; to take him to the doctor I have to call a taxi. It's impossible because we live with the little money we get from welfare pension. With that money, I have to buy him medicine and the doctors have advised me to give him good food like milk and fruits, so that he can recover his health. He is just a skin on skeleton. I am struggling to afford the daily food, then how can I buy nutritious food...

Although all the adults are literate and almost all have primary school level education, they are not leading a healthy and hygienic life. In addition to the history of their unhygienic life style, forcing them to live together in a congested colony without sanitation causes a multitude of health hazards. Kalyani said:

People are dumping all their rubbish to the neighbours' property which is causing smell and disease to us. We live close to this rubbish, the smell is unbearable, when we oppose to anyone from dumping, it causes serious quarrel. In the Gramasabha, we raised this issue many times; but they take it light...

From each of these 68 houses, all their rubbish is dumped on the three fringes of the colony, which are fenced by the neighbouring estates. I could not walk along the sides of the colony without holding my nose. I knew that was a contributing cause of their ill health but they had no other choice but to suffer its consequences. Towards the end of my fieldwork, the monsoon started and there was a massive spread of contagious diseases in almost all the houses; mostly spread by mosquitoes. Undoubtedly, by living in this colony they will be physically

oppressed (due to ill-health) in addition to their existing social, economic and psychological oppression. Understanding the factors leading to this situation is quite relevant to emancipate them from poverty. They are following an unhealthy lifestyle, although they are educated; that paradox suggests the necessity of a suitable education system for better life.

8.8 Starving: then Oppression, now Exploitation

Kerala is one of the most food insecure states of India because of the low per capita production of rice (a staple food) (Suryanarayana, 2001). Kerala produces only 15 per cent of the food grains required by the state; the rest is imported from other states (Planning Commission of India, 2011). The vulnerable sections of the community (especially the landless Dalits who do not produce any food items), bear the most of its ill effects. Studies have found that per capita food consumption also corresponds to the caste position in India and Dalits spend the least amount of money on food (Deshpande, 2000). The per capita food intake among the Dalits is only three fourths of the non-scheduled castes (Deshpande). When people of these sections are excluded from the subsidised food supply, it intensifies their poverty. The majority of the families in this colony do not benefit from the BPL ration supply; they are desperately helpless and curse the politicians for this denial. It is quite normal that a mother who is unable to feed a child may not send her child to school. Thus, poverty and lack of education go hand in hand.

Dalit children experience more stunting and malnutrition than non-Dalit children do. In particular, the general health and growth of Dalit children whose mothers are engaged in waged labour are highly vulnerable due to the lack of proper care and food (R. N. Mishra, 2006). According to the National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau's survey 2010 in Kerala, intake of cereals and millets was less than the recommended level by about 20 per cent; that of pulses less by 55 per cent; that of green leafy vegetables less by 77.5 per cent and milk less by about 42

per cent. With the Dalits, these nutritional intakes are far below the state averages (Suryanarayana, 2001). All the research participants looked malnourished and weak (Figure 8.4), which vindicates this argument.

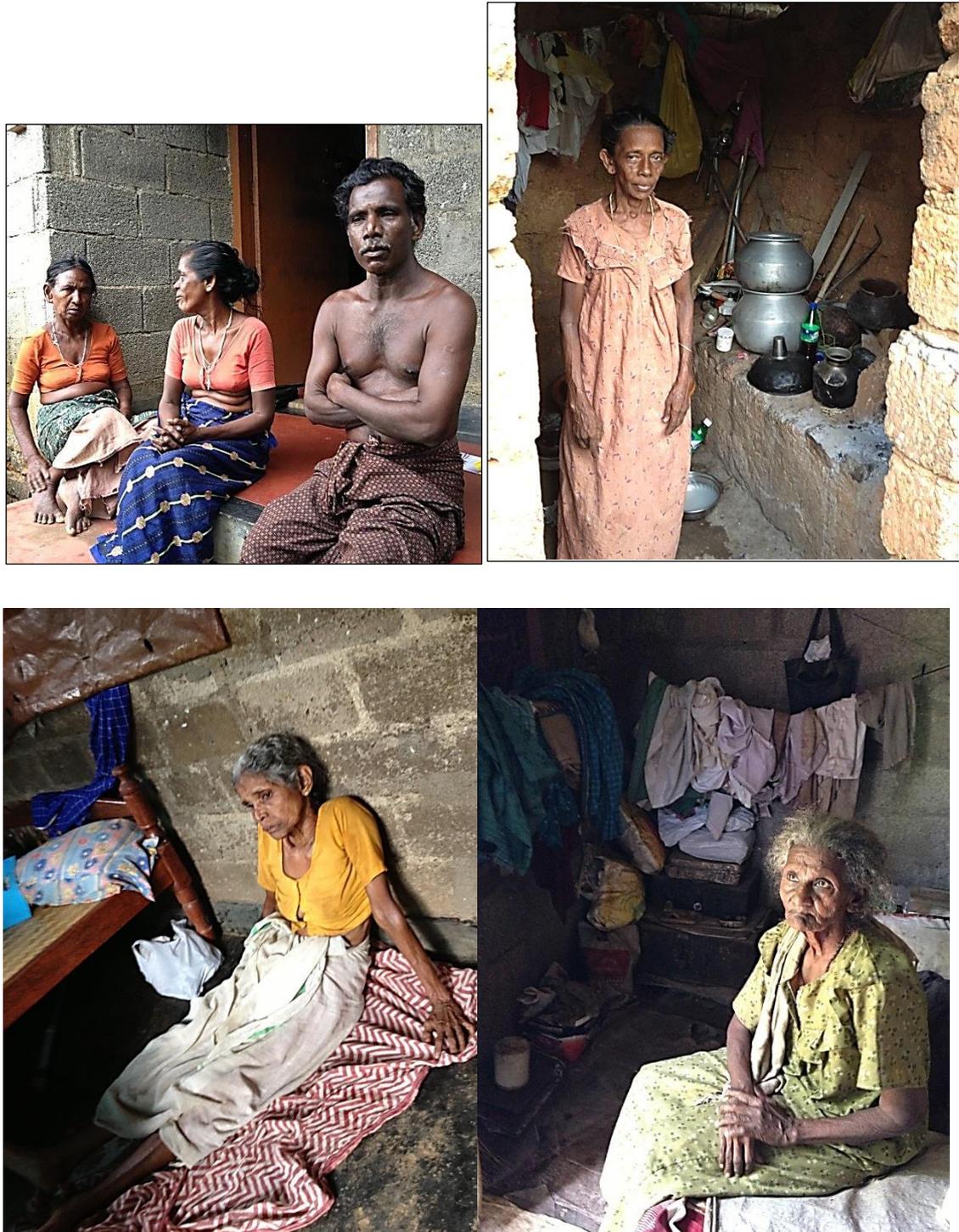


Figure 8.4. Some of the people of the colony while participating in the study.

Kuyili (right bottom corner in the photos) continuously lives with the minimal amount of subsistence food. She said:

I last cooked two weeks ago; since then I have been eating from the neighbours. I can live without eating for a day, I only need one time food. I have been waiting for Sheeja to bring me next month's Aashraya-kit⁴¹ (while I was talking to Kuyili, at 2pm she had not had any food yet). I am sick; I got some medication from Anganawadi (the Kindergarten at the corner of the colony; yes the Kindergarten supplies medicines!) but I need to go to hospital when I get some money.

She is too frail to fetch water and firewood but she lives alone. It seems that her hut has not been cleaned for years. Her kitchen had some unwashed cooking pots covered with mould. The house is covered with cobwebs.

There are other people as well in this colony who are unable to go to work. They mostly live on the meagre government welfare pension. Kuyili, Eli and Kali are destitute women living alone with just 400 rupees (NZ\$ 8) per month from the old age pension (paid once every three months). The three of them do not seem to be cooking regularly. Kali is more able but cannot walk well due to a broken leg in an accident. She has been begging outside the colony for both food and money. Eli is too old to go out, so is confined to the colony and has a similar life. However, the most appalling thing was that they do not have a BPL ration card.

Kuyili, who is almost begging to live, narrated several attempts to get a 'below the poverty line' (BPL) ration card so that she could get cheap rations but it was in vain:

⁴¹ A bag of food grains and pulses. It is distributed to the destitute widows from the State public distribution system to the Panchayat office. Sheeja normally brings the bags for three of the destitute widows as an act of kindness whenever she goes to the Panchayat office. But she is reluctant because she needs to pay for the taxi when she brings the bags to them. So for the last three months they have not got the Aashraya kit.

These ladies told me that if I go to the supply office, they can correct my ration card and I could get subsidised one rupees rice. So I went to Kothamangalam supply office, it is on the 7th floor of the revenue tower. While climbing up I fainted on the stairs, some sirs lifted me up and took me to the office; they gave me tea and when I became ok, the officer wrote something on my card and sent me back. But I did not get any BPL ration food.

To understand the causes of their poverty, it is important to examine the puzzle of excluding these unfortunate people from the BPL ration benefits. The Public Distribution System came into existence in the state from 1966, with the implementation of the Kerala Rationing Order of 1966 as a major poverty alleviation intervention. The central government supplies essential items like rice, wheat, sugar, edible oils and kerosene to the federal states at subsidised prices (Suryanarayana, 2001). The ration is available to all people under two different pricing schemes, one which is highly subsidised for BPL families and below market price for APL families (Planning Commission of India, 2005).

On the 1st of September, 2011, the government of Kerala launched one of the major poverty alleviation initiatives of the state, the scheme of issuing rice for Rs. 1 per kilogram. According to this scheme, all BPL-card holders get 25 kilograms rice per month at this rate; but only a few families in this colony have a BPL card. Out of the total 7.62 million card holders, 1.46 million are BPL card holders and 5.57 million are APL card holders in Kerala (Planning Commission of India, 2011). Nevertheless, there are only 1.02 million BPL families in Kerala, according to the central government estimates, and there are almost 5 million BPL families according to the state government estimates (N. J. Nair, 2014).

Subsidised provision of rice alone constitutes about 50 per cent of the total income transfer under the various poverty alleviation programmes of the central government (Suryanarayana, 2001). However, if all the Dalits are not eligible for subsidised food in Kerala, who are the 1.5

million eligible cardholders and what is the criterion for inclusion and exclusion from the BPL list? It is an intriguing question to be further investigated. In addition, it is another example why the central state relationship does not work effectively to address the problems of poverty.

Moreover, the Public Distribution System (PDS) is one of the most corrupt departments in Kerala (its corrupt practices in themselves are enough material for another thesis). Everyone in this colony complained to me about the malpractices in the ration supply.

Kanakam stated:

Ration shop always deceives us. They won't do any fair deal. They resell the best quality rice to private companies and give us poor quality rice.

Joseph narrated an incident:

One day the ration retailer sent back people saying that the rice hadn't come yet. But some of our friends had unloaded rice on the previous night. So we understood they were planning to sell the good quality rice to the private retailers in return to low quality rice. Then we ransacked their godown and found out the best quality rice was hoarded by the ration shop.

Furthermore, Giji said:

We are a BPL family in the Panchayat records but we have an APL ration card. Further if we go to the ration shop, we don't get the parboiled cooking rice; they will say it is finished, because it is expensive, they can sell it to private retail shops.

On the other hand, Karuppankutti says that he got an APL card because he belongs to the opposition political party. Many who obtained an APL ration card went to the Panchayat and got the stamp stating that they really belong to the BPL category; yet some are eligible for the

food subsidy, some are not. Figure 8.5 below illustrates the contradiction.

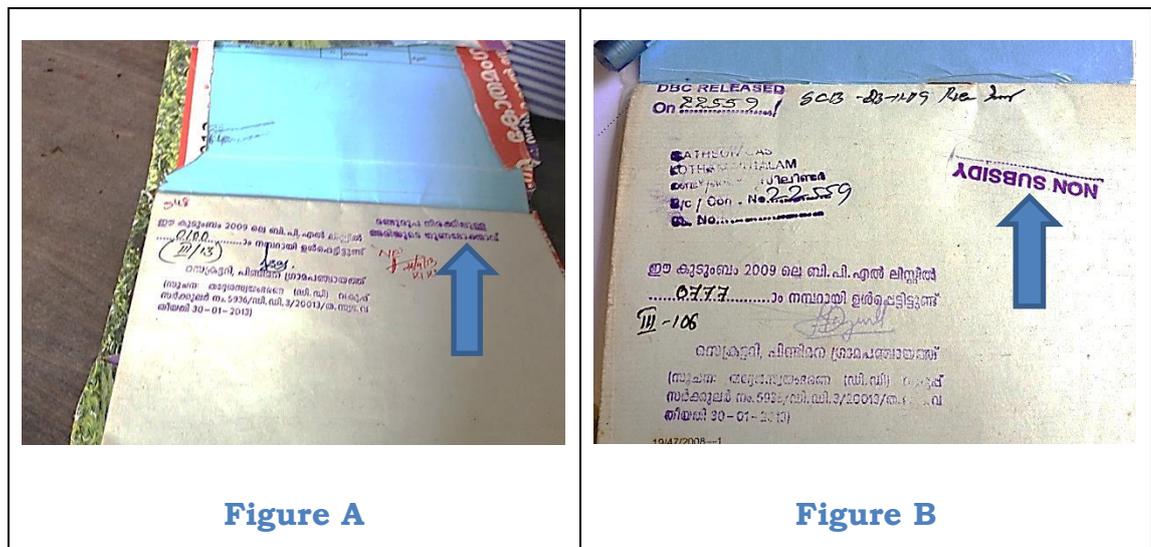


Figure 8.5. Two APL Ration cards with BPL stamps on.

Figure 8.5 shows that welfare policies are beyond comprehension. Both are blue APL cards (BPL cards are pink). Yet, Figure A says that this family belongs to the BPL category in the Panchayat list 0100 (III/13), signed by the Panchayat secretary. Above the arrow it says “eligible for subsidised rice for two rupees”.

Figure B also says that this family belongs to the BPL category in the Panchayat list 0777 (III/106) signed by the Panchayat secretary. On its right side above the arrow says “non-subsidy”, which means they are not eligible for the subsidised BPL ration unlike the other blue card.

These ration cards are further examples of how poverty is intensified due to denial of people’s rights and their inability to demand them, hence, reinforcing the strong need for educated conscientisation of this community to escape from the perils of poverty. It has already been explained how the Dalits as a community have been denied decent food to live a healthy life, although they produced food for all.

Subhadra explained this:

We never had good food when we were Janmi’s “Kudiyans”. ‘Kanji’ [rice gruel] and ‘mulak chammanthi’ [mashed chilli] were

our food. Since we grew up so, we fed our children so, that is our food culture, even if we have money we are content with kanji and kappa [tapioca].

Anju, who has a one month old baby, said:

I eat the normal food as I used to eat before delivery... I am not drinking milk... I think no one in this colony buys milk, because from childhood we never bought milk... and in this three cents no one can keep a cow. It is the upper class people who sell milk nearby, but they don't like us to go to their houses in the morning. After all, we always worried about how to buy our essentials not milk and meat.

In addition, Paru stated:

One day while, my daughter and I were coming after washing clothes, (they wash their clothes at a canal almost a kilometre away) the smell of meat cooking in our neighbourhood was piercing to our nose. My daughter asked me when we would be able to eat some meat. I had no money to buy meat; we had never cooked meat for a long time. I actually went to the butcher and begged for some meat... I cannot explain my child's happiness I have seen on that day....

One major observation is that they do not have a nutritious food culture. As manual labourers, they were always craving food, whether or not it is nutritious. Their poor health is an indicator of the poor quality of food.

Karuppankutty is visibly hard working; a tiny man who may weigh around 50 kilos. He told me that:

Since I was nine years my Janmi asked me to plough in the field, we had to start at six in the morning. We would be burning with hunger after ploughing, but they used to give us 'Chama kanji' [a

kind of cattle feed]. In those days we were not supposed to eat the food they eat...

In the past, caste-based oppression meant Dalits had to live on cattle food or little food. Today, it is the continuation of the previous oppression, exploitation and denial of opportunities leading to their poverty. However, evidence does not suggest that MDG 2 is sufficient for their emancipation from the impacts of those oppressions, exclusions and denial of opportunities.

8.9 Missionaries: A Ray of Hope

The missionaries' effort to end the social exclusion of the Dalits has been the most important turning point in the emancipation of the Dalits of Kerala. In addition, it was perhaps the most significant event in the reduction of the Dalits' poverty. I have discussed in Chapter Three about the social reform movements that changed the life of the Dalits in the early 20th century. It was the missionaries' initiatives, and the consequent education revolution that took place in Kerala, that transformed the state and caused the social reform movements and Dalits' emancipatory attempts.

Although the British administrative system generally abstained from intervening in the caste system of Kerala, activities of the missionaries, especially the LMS and CMS missionaries, struck at the roots of the upper caste control over the lower castes (Padmanabhan, 2010). The missionaries' efforts were not only to spread education, but also to educate girls and those oppressed castes who were excluded from society. For example, when they opened the first slave school, the building was set on fire more than once; yet in 1878 the CMS had 15 schools in Kerala exclusively for the benefit of the Dalits. From a different perspective, the missionaries tried to gain human rights for the Dalits (E. T. Mathew, 1999).

In 1813, the British Parliament added clauses for the formation of regular church establishments in India to the charter of the English

East India company (E. T. Mathew, 1999). In 1806, Rev Dr Claudius Buchanan of the LMS proposed the establishment of schools in all the parishes of Malabar. Since 1800, both Travancore and Cochin had accepted the supremacy of Britain, with a British Resident in both the states. The British Residents influenced the native princes in the state policies; education policies were the most important among them (E. T. Mathew, 1999; Salim & Nair, 2002).

In 1850 the missionaries made an announcement that “school teachers who bring in slave children to school would get wage incentives; within a year more than 1000 slave children were enrolled in the schools in one region alone” (E. T. Mathew, 1999, p. 2815). While the missionaries were fighting to educate the Dalits along with the upper caste, the government schools had not allowed the Dalits admission to schools. It was only with the introduction of Mitchell’s Education Code in 1910 that caste-based discrimination in the matter of admission to schools was abolished (E. T. Mathew, 1999).

The Charter Act mooted that slavery in India should be extinguished as soon as practicable, and it was left to the Governor General in the Council and the Court of Directors to consider when such a condition had been reached. The authorities in India were anything but happy about the provision and tried to shelve it; but continued agitation among the Evangelists in England finally forced some measure of legislation onto the Indian Government.

The missionaries successfully briefed the British Parliament describing “the Dalits sufferings, highlighting the lack of adequate food, dress, shelter and their emaciated body vulnerable to diseases, making their everyday living and survival a great problem” (Mohan, 2006, p. 33). Thus, the British Parliament carried out several interventions to end slavery and to ensure the civil rights of the Dalits.

When the Nadar women were converted to Christianity, they had to go to church and sit with others bare breasted. The LMS missionaries inspired them to fight for the right to wear upper clothing. The ‘Upper-

Cloth Revolt' lasted from 1827 to 1859 which became the beginning of a number of social reform movements inspired by the missionaries and their education initiatives (Chandran, 1989). The enlightenment of the importance of the education provided by the missionaries gave way to a number of social reform movements in Kerala. Thus, education was significant for the emancipation of the Dalits a century ago, but now, although most of the Dalits are educated, they do not seem to unite for their rights.

8.9.1 Conversion for emancipation.

It was the missionaries who started an egalitarian humanistic approach to all in India beyond the dictates of caste. In the case of Christianity in Kerala, conversion was not a very significant event, but for poverty eradication and the emancipation of the Dalits of Kerala, conversion has played a significant role. While the Dalit castes were considered unapproachable by any decent person, the missionaries reached out to them; breaking the norms of Untouchability and distance-to-be-kept with the message of hope (Oommen, 1996). They played a pivotal role in the social transformation of a society that was rooted in slavery, oppression and exclusion.

Christians constituted a good proportion of the population of Kerala long before the advent of Europeans, especially the British missionaries. This is evident from the copper plate inscriptions of the fourth century and ninth century AD (E. T. Mathew, 1999). The Syrian Christians had social status on a par with the highest caste in Keralan society (Fuller, 1976; Namboodiripad, 1976), but they were not actively engaged in proselytization (Alexander, 1971).

Like the other areas of missionary activities, conversion was also relevant for the emancipation of the Dalits and placed Kerala far ahead of the rest of India in respect of social indicators of development. It was the Christian missionaries who demanded human rights for the Dalits; even before any known Dalit protest began against oppression (Oommen, 1996). As a result, by the end of the 19th century, the CMS

had more than 35,000 Dalit Christians, more than half of their membership.

Pennamma narrated the big change in their identity and social status after conversion:

We are now Christians, we pray to God, and He is there answering all our needs. Once we were oppressed, it is too hard for us to get equality. I remember days when there were separate plates for the Dalit people and there were different kinds of dressing. But today we dress like others, so we are no more identified as a Pulaya. We are working hard to meet our ends and to live just like others.

There are remarkable changes in the lives of converted Christians compared to the other Dalits in this colony, which aligns with some of the current research (Mohan, 2006; Oommen, 1996). From the context of slavery, the advent of sweeping social change was evident in a memorandum submitted to Morris Watts, the Diwan of Travancore in 1926, which stated:

We the people numbering 10,000 belonging to Parayar, Pulayar and Kizhakke Pulayar who have been slaves for a long time... We the original inhabitants of this land were for a long time steeped in slavery, and had to depend on others as we did not have our own land to stay and we lived like animals without education, social reform and such civilizational qualities...Now in different parts of the state we have 63 parishes and there we have churches and schools for the worship of God and education of our children. (Varghese, 1970, p. 8)

Ultimately, a large number of those who converted have managed to escape from many areas of Dalit poverty. One such family, who settled in this colony with all the deprivation of the Dalits and is now preparing to vanish from the Dalit identity, is the family of Mathew and Achama. They live in a better house with quality furniture, and a TV, fridge, cooking gas and other amenities. They said:

Now we are converted to Christianity from Pulaya. We are attempting to escape from our backwardness. We worked hard to establish a better standard of living. Now we have a far better life style than all others in this colony... it [the Christian belief] elevated us from our psychological feelings to remain backward. That feeling of we are no more Pulaya and the blessing of the God help us every year to improve our life.

Mathew said:

After conversion, I have stopped drinking, and spend more time with the family and we have peace and happiness. Now I am a security at a Jewellery shop, since I am a Christian I can interact with everyone.

Conversation experiences of these participants are quite important as they feel emancipated from the social bondages and they are able to lead a better life, getting rid of the Dalit culture and identity. Conversion in Kerala was the beginning of a long conversion process, and it still continues mostly among the oppressed Dalits; out of the 20 million Christians of India, 14 million are estimated to be Dalit converts (Fuller, 1976). Conversion to Christianity that took place in Kerala was about humanising the dehumanised slaves. Literary evidence (Dilip, 2010; E. T. Mathew, 1999) and empirical evidence suggests that conversion has helped the Dalits to gain some vertical social mobility, especially at a time when the Dalits had slaves' lives.

However, in some states of India, conversion is legally banned, with the assumption that the Dalits are Hindus (Majid, 2012). To discourage conversion to Christianity, the Government of India has excluded Dalit Christians from the benefits of the Dalits' reservations. Seven states (Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu) have introduced legislation designed to make conversion difficult or virtually impossible. Four of the anti-conversion laws explicitly stipulate harsher punishments where the convert is a Dalit. Indeed, the Hindu extremists of India are using

threats and coercion to re-convert the Dalits to Hinduism (Centre for Human Rights and Global Justice, 2007).

Considering the loss of special statutory privileges after conversion, such as stipends and other benefits, they are reluctant to convert. Baiju, a senior secondary student said:

We got converted to Christianity, so it is mentioned "converted" in our documents, therefore we are denied of the benefits the Dalits are getting. Especially, the Panchayat does not give any benefits to the converted.

According to Alexander (1971), conversion in the 19th century was a major phase of emancipation of the Dalits due to their extremely deplorable position, “they were no longer governed by the caste rules and untouchability... and also the missionaries empowered them through education and employment” (p. 553).

While those who benefit from the quota reservations receive emancipation from economic oppression, conversion is an attempt to escape from ritualistic oppression such as untouchability and Kulathozhil that are still prevalent throughout India. However, the loss of constitutional privileges upon conversion (to Christianity and Islam) represents serious discrimination and oppression, not only of their human rights but their right to escape oppression (Centre for Human Rights and Global Justice, 2007). There can be no justification for the public policies that discourage conversion and denial of Dalits’ benefits after conversion.

8.10 Conclusion

With this chapter, I have collected sufficient information to prove that the Dalits are experiencing deprivation due to the history of Dalit life but MDG 2 per se is not going to help them to come out of their poverty. It suggests that if the policy makers do not understand the nature of poverty in Kerala, poverty eradication can also be difficult. As I have

repeatedly mentioned, the caste-based denial of the Dalits still continues in Kerala, and their welfare is at the mercy of the public servants who maintain caste discrimination or are unaware of the lived experiences of Dalit poverty.

Social exclusion was followed by exclusion from enjoying natural resources, and now they are geographically expelled from mainstream life into Dalit settlements. While welfare policies and reservations are an acknowledgment that the Dalits' lives are deplorable, that their benefits are not reaching the needy represents a sheer injustice.

Dalits' development activities have become a source of corruption in Kerala. Their lack of education and economic status enables public servants to misappropriate their funds. The Dalits are caught in an inescapable network of oppression and exclusion that denies their opportunities to emancipate from the vicious circle of poverty. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. It needs to be objected to.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

This thesis critically examined the human capital approach which underpins the assumptions of MDG2, and concluded that not only is poverty eradication highly unlikely through the implementation of MDG 2 in Kerala, but any attempt to eradicate poverty must address the root causes. The causes of poverty are much deeper than economic deprivation. In the case of the Dalits of Kerala, social stratification based on a caste system which excludes whole communities from mainstream society is a primary cause of poverty. The findings of this thesis support previous studies, which revealed that, although most of the adult population in Kerala achieved primary school-level education and almost all are literate, the degree of poverty is appalling. This leads to the inevitable conclusion that MDG 2 alone is not sufficient for poverty eradication in the state.

As Gegeo (2001) explains in his article “Re-visioning knowledge transformation in the Pacific”, on the dangers of imported epistemology, the case study of MDG 2 in Kerala illustrated how unsuitable an imported programme is when it is planned by external agencies without taking into consideration the local knowledge. The case study of Kerala has clearly highlighted both statistical as well as empirical evidence of inter-generational poverty, which cannot be eradicated with MDG 2. Primarily, MDG 2 is neither addressing the root causes of poverty in regards to oppression, exclusion and denial of opportunities, nor is it remedying the obstacles to gaining education.

This research has identified that poverty experienced by the subaltern group of the population is deplorable and that education has a key role in transforming it. However, the conventional system of education that does not encourage critical consciousness, but instils oppressive values,

is not a panacea. A paradigm shift in the education system, which ends the banking approach, oppression and factory schooling, and encourages conscientisation, is proposed in this thesis. That can help the oppressed to take more control of their own history, in order to engage more effectively with the wider society and to free themselves from oppression.

Although India has the largest number of extreme poor in the world, there has never been a unanimous approach to address its poverty. With the case study of Kerala, this thesis has shown the need to address the causes of poverty rather than its symptoms. Several studies in this area have highlighted that the caste system has stratified people and excluded the subaltern groups from social participation and getting a fair share of the resources. Because the MDGs programme seeks to achieve certain measurable targets universally, it did not consider the social causes of poverty, which are primarily oppression, exclusion and denial of opportunities to the subaltern groups. The study pointed out that social change that is relevant for poverty eradication in Kerala may not confer any statistical data showing a decline in poverty in a short time. Century-old social stratification cannot vanish in a moment, but it is my contention that ending caste-based oppression is instrumental for poverty eradication in Kerala as for anywhere else in India.

This thesis has demonstrated that oppression is a very real cause of poverty for any human being at any time. It described in detail the intensity of oppression and the oppressive symbols that have continued over generations. By ascribing pollution to the Dalits, the oppressors inflicted the nadir of ill-treatment on them and deprived them of anything that could give them human dignity and an adequate standard of living. Any attempt by the Dalits to ensure decent living standards, adequate dressing and housing and even a sufficient amount of food was against the caste code and the violators were met with inhuman punishments or death. Unable to resist the oppressors, the oppressed developed a psyche of feeling inferior and living a sub-human life, which became a way of their life. Amidst all social changes, the Dalits have not

emancipated from this oppressed consciousness. Therefore this thesis proposed cultivating a critical consciousness among the oppressed through education.

Citing the example of Kerala, this study has demonstrated that many of the targets of MDG 2, which were the education targets of Kerala a century ago, have been achieved. While these can help to universalise primary school-level education, they are not sufficient for poverty eradication. By utilising critical theory and critical ethnographic methods in this study, I was able to bring out the voices of the less heard poor people to critique the unsuitability of the MDGs. However, with limited data from only one colony, this study may not provide the full picture of all the poor people of Kerala. Notwithstanding, both statistical and empirical observations reveal that the Dalits are an extremely poor group of people in Kerala, living below the poverty line, ignored by public policy and denied the human right to effectively share in the resources of their society through the implementation of oppressive laws and cultural practices.

9.1 Major Findings

This research has found that the MDG 2's focus of encouraging children to go to school, avoiding children dropping out of school through different interventions such as providing a midday meal and occasional food rations, and involving the civil society organisations in the functioning of local schools, can universalise education but cannot be sufficient for poverty eradication. An analysis of poverty in Kerala has shown that its occurrence is parallel to the caste hierarchy. In this context, literary evidence, academic studies and government documents suggest that the Dalits, who are at the bottom of the caste hierarchy, are much poorer than the rest of the community, although they have achieved the MDG 2 goals.

An in-depth analysis of the experiences of poverty of the Dalits in this research showed that multiple deprivations, denial of opportunities,

systematic exclusion, consistent oppression and heinous dehumanisation that are manifested in the form of slavery, Untouchability, unseeability, unapproachability and different forms of caste bigotry have laid the foundations of Dalit poverty. Dalits' emancipation from this system and from the consequences of the past practises can eradicate poverty. However, MDG 2 does not offer anything towards addressing these oppressive structures and practices.

The education component of poverty eradication focuses only on achieving primary education. Kerala had achieved primary education and a total primary retention rate long before MDG 2 had begun, because of the coordinated efforts of the people and the government. On the other hand, the majority of the Dalit children drop out before they complete secondary school and thus only very few of them are able to achieve higher education. Furthermore, this study has noted that it is a distorted policy of the MDG programme that the education goal of poverty eradication should be confined to primary school-level education in developing countries, rather than removing every obstacle of education for all, when OECD countries are focusing on tertiary education.

In the case of Kerala, it had already given imbalanced importance to primary-level education and it became a drag on its economy. While the state was gearing up for a higher education drive, since it had to focus its education resources on primary education, the state surrendered its egalitarian education policy to the private providers, which badly affected the economically weak and subaltern groups of the state.

So, rather than insisting on investing in primary education in Kerala, if the international initiative supported the state's education requirements, it could retain its egalitarian approach to higher education. Thus, without letting higher education go to the private sector, the government could have ensured free education to the Dalits and that would have been more helpful for their poverty eradication. On the contrary, when tertiary education became a private service,

pupils left the government schools as well. As a result, thousands of government schools have fewer than fifty students, and uneconomical schools may prompt a possible shift of the entire education sector to the private sector.

The MDG 2 approach towards education as a means of getting a job suggests that our planners are advocating an education process that is unresponsive to the real causes of poverty. With the empirical data and literary evidence, I have established that the heavy impact of slavery experienced by the Dalits of Kerala still lingers with them and they are not yet integrated into society. The Dalits continue to experience the stigma of Untouchability and social exclusion. Ritualistic pollution forbade them from participating in the society and enjoying the natural resources. Therefore, they are hindered in all areas of human development such as education and health care and other similar services. Hence, it can be summarised that the advocates of MDG 2 must focus on the role of education beyond numeracy and literacy as a means to address these causes of poverty.

9.2 Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributed to knowledge in a number of ways. Firstly, by extending the critical analysis of the role of education in eradicating poverty, the current study clearly demonstrates the unsuitability and inefficiency of MDG 2 to act as a major instrument of poverty eradication. By limiting the outcome of education to human capital formation, without creating the opportunities to learn to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality, MDG 2 undermines the potential for conscientisations, which is critical for personal and community emancipation. This research deviated from general poverty studies that rely on statistics about economic priorities, and argued that poverty is largely related to oppression, exclusion and denial of opportunities. Thus, this study has extended the research literature regarding the role of education for poverty eradication through emancipation.

Secondly, it contributes to the critical understanding of the suitability of MDG 2 in Kerala. The empirical study in Kerala extended the understanding of the impact of powerful social and historical influences of oppression that are present as an obstacle to Dalit emancipation. This case study has demonstrated that achieving MDG 2 per se could not affect such influences and extended the relevance of Freirean (1996) theories of education for emancipation in this context.

Thirdly, I chose critical ethnography as the most suitable methodology along with critical theory for studying the relevance of MDG 2, because it enabled me to engage with the lived experiences of those in extreme poverty and to understand the flaws in the initiatives to eradicate their poverty. Thus by bringing out the voices of the less heard, the research has expanded the research literature and challenged the current approaches of poverty eradication. Using critical theory, this research has also contributed to the emancipatory theories of poverty which explains the association between education and social development.

9.3 Limitations of the Research

Although this study has critiqued the anomalies of the MDGs in general, it has not analysed the objectives of the MDGs in detail because an in-depth analysis of the nature and causes of poverty in Kerala which identified the relevance of education for poverty eradication would in turn achieve all other goals. It has presented a strong account of Dalits' experiences of poverty and how it cannot be eradicated by lifting their income above \$1.25 per day per person, nor by achieving MDG 2. However, this study has focused only on one case study of a marginalised Dalit community in the Kerala State of India. A systematic roadmap on how poverty eradication is possible is beyond the scope of this study.

9.4 Recommendations and Areas for Future Research

This study argued that the MDG programme is the outcome of the OECD countries' initiative to coordinate financing of their aid activities

in developing countries. Aid provided by the rich countries has some strings of agreements attached to it. In the case of the MDG 2 programme, some aspects of the strings relate to the expansion of the OECD countries' markets in developing countries. Consequently, the goals are set by the aid donors rather than by the developing countries.

To be more effective, poverty eradication and development activities in the developing countries should be planned and executed in partnership with those who are the target of the interventions. This will help to ensure that such interventions address the root causes, rather than merely attack the symptoms, and focus on long-term transformation of the structures of oppression that cause poverty, rather than short-term relief programmes. In the case of MDG 2, Kerala had achieved all the targets of the MDG 2 before the programme was launched in 2000. A partnership approach would have identified Kerala's needs and developed effective interventions by adapting MDG 2 to meet the educational needs of the state and its people.

From a public policy perspective, a bottom-up rather than top-down approach to decision-making would enhance the effectiveness of policy interventions. Socio-economic dynamics differ between countries and between the states/regions of countries. In the case of Dalits of Kerala, their history of discrimination and exclusion demands that poverty eradication programmes should take into consideration the history of slavery, Untouchability, Unapproachability, marginalisation and exclusion, which are the fundamental causes of their poverty. In implementing any universal programme, it is essential to recognise the Dalits' unique circumstances, and realise that 'one size does not fit all'. Such experience may be useful for the Dalits of Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka who share similar characteristics and experience with the Dalits of India.

The study has revealed that, in a parallel movement to wider social change, Dalits who were slaves became bonded labourers, and those bonded labourers became colony settlers. The fundamental character of

social exclusion, oppression and denial of opportunities continues even today in Dalit colonies. There has been a number of pieces of legislation passed by the Indian parliament to address some of the issues affecting Dalits, such as denial of land ownership, access to education, freedom of worship and access to employment among others. However, many of these have not been implemented due to pressure from the upper classes. As access to ownership of land and property is one of the key issues impacting on poverty, a key policy initiative will be for the governments of Kerala and India to implement the recommendations of the various commissions, and the legislation at national and state levels regarding the human rights of Dalits. This will address the fundamentals of socio-economic discrimination, which underpins the poverty of Dalits.

This research has largely established that the MDG programme is a capitalist approach to resource mobilisation and capital formation. As this programme is drawing close to its expiry, it is relevant to review whether MDG 2 has helped the developed nations to generate more international students as a business, as well as being a 'brain-gain' exercise for them, rather than having the result of assisting poorer countries. The case study of Kerala illustrates the unsuitability of MDG 2 in the State of Kerala in connection with the nature of poverty. A comparative analysis of similar studies from other parts of the world will establish the efficacy of MDG 2 for poverty eradication that can be helpful for further UN policy making.

References

- "Kalaring". (2011, July 2). Kalaring thettiyathinu vidyarthikku Mardanam [Child beaten for wrong colouring] [News]. *Malayala Manorama*, p. 3. Retrieved from http://www.malayalamlive.com/patram_malayala_manorama.html
- "Suchimurikal". (2014, September 3). Schoolukalil suchimurikal nirbandhamakkum [Toilets should be mandatory in schools] [News]. *Mathrubhumi*.
- Abraham, S. (2003). *An ethnographic study of violence experienced by Dalit Christian women in Kerala State, India and the implications of this for feminist practical theology*. (Doctoral Thesis). University of Galgow, Glasgow. Retrieved from <http://theses.gla.ac.uk/id/eprint/2456> (glathesis: 2003-2456)
- Aiglepierre, R., & Wagner, L. (2013). Aid and Universal Primary Education. *Economics of education review*, 37, 95-112. doi:10.1016/j.econedurev.2013.09.001
- Akindola, R. B. (2009). Towards a definition of poverty. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 25(2), 121-150. doi:10.1177/0169796X0902500201
- Alex, N. (2008). India's Untouchables: The Dalits. *Contemporary Review*, 290(1689), 186-192. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/204970567?accountid=8440>
- Alexander, K. C. (1968). Changing status of Pulaya Harijans of Kerala. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 3(26/28), 1071-1074. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/stable/10.2307/4358815?origin=api&>
- Alexander, K. C. (1968). Changing Status of Pulaya Harijans of Kerala. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 3(26/28), 1071-1074.
- Alexander, K. C. (1971). Caste and Christianity in Kerala. *Social Compass*, 551(18). doi:10.1177/003776867101800402

- Alkire, S., Roche, J. M., & Sumner, A. (2013). *Where do the world's multidimensionally poor people live?* London: Oxford poverty and human development initiative (OPHI). Retrieved from <http://www.ophi.org.uk/where-do-the-worlds-multidimensionally-poor-people-live/>
- Alkire, S., & Santos, M. E. (2010). *Acute multidimensional poverty: A new index for developing countries*: University of Oxford. Retrieved from <http://www.ophi.org.uk/acute-multidimensional-poverty-a-new-index-for-developing-countries/>
- Alkire, S., & Seth, S. (2013). Selecting a targeting method to identify BPL households in India. *Social Indicators Research*, 112(2), 417-446. doi:10.1007/s11205-013-0254-6
- Amin, S. (2006). The millennium development goals: A critique from the South. *Monthly Review*, 57(10), 1-15. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/docview/213160518/fulltextPDF?accountid=8440>
- An Indian summary. (2014). Which countries match the GDP and population of India's states and territories. *The Economist*. Retrieved from <http://www.economist.com/content/indian-summary>
- Ana, A. (2005). Education and the millennium development goals. *Convergence*, 38(3), 3. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/204599163?accountid=8440>
- Anant, S. S. (1967). Child training and caste personality: The need for further research. *Race & Class*, 385(8), 385-394. doi:10.1177/030639686700800404
- Annamalai, V. (2014). *Dr.Velu Annamalail: Aricans (the "Untouchables" "Dalits") in India*. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_6-xip9QCYM
- ASER Centre. (2010). *ASER Survey*. Retrieved from http://img.asercentre.org/docs/Publications/ASER%20Reports/ASER_2010/ASERReport2010.pdf

- ASER Centre. (2015). ASER Report 2014. Retrieved 16 January 2015, from Aser <http://www.asercentre.org/Keywords/p/234.html>
- Atkinson, P., & Hammersley, M. (2000). Ethnography and participant observation. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.
- Ayitteyi, G. B. (2005). *Africa unchained: The blueprint for Africa's future*. NY: Plagrave Mc millan.
- Biswas, S. (2010). Conundrum of Kerala's struggling economy. Retrieved from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8546952.stm
- Black, R. E., Morris, S. S., & Bryce, J. (2003). Where and why are 10 million children dying every year? *Lancet*, 361(9376), 2226-2234. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(03)13779-8
- Blinder, A. S. (2006). Offshoring: The next industrial revolution. *Foreign Affairs*, 85(2), 113-128. doi: 10.2307/20031915
- Bose, M. L. (1990). *Social and cultural history of ancient India*, . New Delhi, India: Concept publishing company.
- Bowles, S., & Gintis, H. (1975). The problem with human capital theory--A Marxian critique. *The American Economic Review*, 65(2), 74-82. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1818836>
- Brodkey, L. (1987). Writing critical ethnographic narratives. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 18(2), 67-76. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3216500>
- Bronner, S. E. (2002). *Of critical theory and its theorists*. New York: Routledge.
- Calkins, G. N. (1992). Causes of poverty. *Publications of the American Statistical Association*, 3(17), 79-81. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2276254>
- Campbell, R. (2005). Primary education or primary schooling? *Education 3-13: International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education*, 33(1), 3-6. doi:10.1080/03004270585200021
- Cenkner, W. (1995). *A tradition of teachrs: Sankara and Jagadguru today*: Motilal Banarsidass publishers private Ltd.

- Census of India. (2001). *Data highlights: The scheduled castes*. Retrieved 23 March, 2013, from <http://censusindia.gov.in/2011-common/censusdataonline.html>
- Census of India. (2011). *2011 Census data*. Delhi: Office of the registrar general and census commissioner, India. Retrieved from <http://censusindia.gov.in/>
- Centre for Human Rights and Global Justice. (2007). Hidden apartheid: Caste discrimination against India's untouchables. *19*(3). Retrieved from http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/india0207webwcover_0.pdf
- Chacko, E. (2003). Marriage, development, and the status of women in Kerala, India. *Gender & Development*, *11*(2), 52-59. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4030640>
- Chandran, K. (1989). *Working Class Movement in Travancore (1922-1949)* (Doctoral Thesis). Goa University, Goa. Retrieved from <http://library.unigoa.ac.in:8081/xmlui/handle/123456789/194>
- Chandrasekhar, C. P., Ramachandran, V. K., & Ramkumar, R. (2001). *Issues in school education in contemporary Kerala*. UNICEF New Delhi. Retrieved from http://www.macroscan.com/anl/jun03/pdf/Education_Kerala_Paper.pdf
- Charsley, S. (1996). 'Untouchable': What is in a name? *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, *2*(1), 1-23. doi:10.2307/3034630
- Clemens. (2004). The long walk to school: International education goals in historical perspective. *Centre for Global Development*, *37*, 1-78. Retrieved from <http://www.cgdev.org/publication/long-walk-school-international-education-goals-historical-perspective-working-paper-37>
- Colclough, C., & De, A. (2010). The impact of aid on education policy in India. *International Journal of Education Development*, *30*(5), 497-507. doi:10.1016/j.ijedudev.2010.03.008

- Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94(S1), S95-S120.
doi:10.1086/228943
- Cuhls, K. (2007). The brain drain problem. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 74(5), 708-714.
doi:10.1016/j.techfore.2007.04.001
- Deaton, A. (2003). How to monitor poverty for the millennium development goals. *Journal of Human Development*, 4(3), 353-378.
doi:10.1080/1464988032000125746
- Deininger, K., Jin, S., & Nagarajan, H. K. (2007). *Land reforms, poverty reduction, and economic growth: evidence from India*. Retrieved from <http://econ.worldbank.org>
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.
- Department of Economics and Statistics [DES]. (2009). *Report of survey on unrecognized schools* Retrieved from <http://www.ecostat.kerala.gov.in/index.php/reports/89.html>
- Desai, M. (2003, November). *India and China: An essay in comparative political economy*. presented at the meeting of the IMF Conference on India/China New Delhi, India. Retrieved from <https://www.imf.org/external/np/apd/seminars/2003/newdelhi/desai.pdf>
- Desai, S. (2014). Declining sex ratios seen in gender scorecards [Commens]. *The Hindu*. Retrieved from www.thehindu.com
- Deshpande, A. (2000). Does caste still define disparity? A look at inequality in Kerala, India. *The American Economic Review*, 90(2), 322-325. doi:10.1257/aer.90.2.322
- Devarajan, S., Miller, M. J., & Swanson, E. V. (2002). *Goals for development: History, prospects and costs, World Bank policy research working paper*
- Retrieved from <http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/I>

B/2002/04/26/000094946_02041804272578/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf

- Development Assistant Committee. (1996). *Shaping the 21 Century: The contribution of development cooperation*. Paris: OECD. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/dac/2508761.pdf>
- Devika, J. (2010). Egalitarian developmentalism, Communist mobilization, and the question of caste in Kerala state, India. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 69(3), 799-820. doi:10.1017/s0021911810001506
- Dholakia, R. H., & Iyengar, S. (2008). *Access of poor house hold to primary education in rural India*. Ahmedabad, India: IIM Ahmedabad. Retrieved from <http://www.iimahd.ernet.in/publications/data/2008-02-02RDholakia.pdf>
- Dilip, T. R. (2010). *School education attainment in Kerala: Trends and differentials*. Kochi, India: CDS India. Retrieved from http://cds.edu/download_files/wp429.pdf
- Docquier, F., Lohest, O., & Marfouk, A. (2007). Brain drain in developing countries. *The World Bank Economic Review*, 21(2), 193-218. doi:10.1093/wber/lhm008
- Duggan, W. R., & Hubbard, R. G. (2009). *The aid trap: hard truths about ending poverty*. New York: Columbia Business School Pub.
- Eapan, M., & Kodoth, P. (2002). *Family structure, women's education and work: Re-examining the high status of women in Kerala*. Trivandrum: Centre for Development Studies. Retrieved from <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/apcity/unpan010726.pdf>
- Easterly, W. (2006). Planners versus searchers in foreign aid. *Asian Development Review*, 23(2), 1-35. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/220282733?accountid=8440>
- EFA. (2010). *Education for all global monitoring report: Reaching the marginalised*. NY. Retrieved from

- <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/efareport/reports/2010-marginalization/>
- Eleanor, Z. (2010). India's Dalits: Racism and contemporary change. *Global Dialogue (Online)*, 12(2), 1-9. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/866742055?accountid=8440>
- Fox, T. (2013). *Global food: Waste not want not* (IMEch Global Report). London: Institute of mechanical engineers. Retrieved from http://www.imeche.org/docs/default-source/reports/Global_Food_Report.pdf?sfvrsn=0
- Franke, R. W., & Chasin, B. H. (1995). Development without growth: The Kerala experience. *Multinational Monitor*, 16(7-8), 1-69. Retrieved from <http://multinationalmonitor.org/hyper/mm0795.08.html>
- Freire, P. (1972). *Cultural action for freedom*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Freire, P. (1996). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. London, England: Penguin Books.
- Freire, P. (1998). *Teachers as cultural workers: Letter to those who dare to teach*. Westview Press.
- Freire, P. (2005). *Education for critical consciousness*. New York: Continuum.
- Fukuda-Parr. (2004). Millennium development goals: Why they matter. *GLOBAL GOVERNANCE*, 10(4), 395-402. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27800537>
- Fukuda-Parr, S. (2006). Millennium development goal 8: Indicators for international human rights obligations? *Human Rights Quarterly*, 28(4), 966-997. Retrieved from http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/journals/human_rights_quarterly/v028/28.4fukuda-parr.html
- Fukuda-Parr, S., & Hulme, D. (2011). International norm dynamics and the "end of poverty": Understanding the millennium development goals. *GLOBAL GOVERNANCE*, 17(1), 17-36. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/856112980?accountid=8440>

- Fuller, C. J. (1976). Kerala Christians and the caste system. *Man*, 11(1), 53-70. doi:10.2307/2800388
- Ganesh, K. N. (1991). Ownership and control of land in medieval Kerala: "Janmam - kanam" relations during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 28(3), 299. doi: 10.1177/001946469102800304
- Ganguly, D. (2009). Pain, personhood and the collective: Dalit life narratives. *Asian Studies Review*, 33(4), 429-442. doi:10.1080/10357820903367109
- Gegeo, D. W. (2001). Revisioning knowledge transformation in the pacific: A response to Subramani's "The oceanic imaginary". *Project Muse*, 1, 178-183. doi:10.1353/cp.2001.0005
- General Education Department, G. o. K. (2014). *General education department*. Retrieved 15th July 2014, from <http://education.kerala.gov.in/>
- Gentilini, U., & Webb, P. (2008). How are we doing on poverty and hunger reduction? A new measure of country performance. *Food Policy*. doi:doi:10.1016/j.foodpol.2008.04.005
- George, G. R. (2003). Pineapples and oranges, brahmins and shudras: periyar feminists and narratives of gender and regionality in south India: 1. *Anthropologica*, 45(2), 265-281. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/214176016?accountid=8440>
- George, K. K. (2011). *Kerala Economy: Growth, Structure, Strength and weaknesses* (25). Retrieved from <http://csesindia.org/admin/modules/cms/docs/publication/25.pdf>
- George, K. K., & Krishnakumar, K. K. (2003). *Centre-State relations, finance commissions and Kerala's fiscal crisis*: CSES. Retrieved from <http://csesindia.org/publications.php?page=1>
- George, K. K., & Sunaina, P. (2005). *Dynamics of Change in Kerala's education system: The socio-economic and political dimensions*. Retrieved from http://www.academia.edu/6369670/Dynamics_of_Change_in_Ke

ralas_Education_System_The_Socioeconomic_and_Political_Dimensions

- Ghose, S. C. (1989). *Teacher student relationship and its impact on student unrest*. New Delhi, India: Northern book centre, New Delhi.
- Global hunger worsening: warns UN. (2009). Global hunger worsening, warns UN (News). Retrieved August 28, from BBC <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8306556.stm>
- GoI. (2013). *Press Note on Poverty Estimates, 2011-12*. New Delhi: Press Information Bureau. Retrieved from http://planningcommission.nic.in/news/pre_pov2307.pdf
- GoK. (2014). *State profile*. Retrieved 18th July, 2014, from http://www.kerala.gov.in/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2642&Itemid=2754
- GoK. (n.d). *State profile*. Retrieved 18th July, 2014, from http://www.kerala.gov.in/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2642&Itemid=2754
- Gómez, S. V. (2005). Literacy and Millennium Development Goals: One step forward and two steps backwards. *Convergence*, 38(3), 33. Retrieved from <http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/27769777/literacy-millennium-development-goals-one-step-forward-two-steps-backwards>
- Govinda, R., & Bandyopadhyay, M. (2010). Social exclusion and school participation in India: Expanding access with equity. *PROSPECTS*, 40(3), 337-354. doi:10.1007/s11125-010-9160-8
- Gulrajani, N. (2010). *Development futures: What role for development management?* , London School of Economics.
- Gupta, K., & Yesudian, P. P. (2006). Evidence of women's empowerment in India: a study of socio-spatial disparities. *GeoJournal*, 65(4), 365-380. doi:10.1007/s10708-006-7556-z
- Harikrishnan, K. S. (2013). Reverse migration haunts kerala. *Inter Press Services*. Retrieved from

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/08/reverse-migration-haunts-kerala/>

- Harilal, K. N., & Reynolds, D. (2006). Kerala: A union alternative to corporate globalisation. *Working*, 9(1), 29-39. doi:10.1111/j.1743-4580.2006.00091.x
- Heller, P. (1996). Social capital as a product of class mobilization and state intervention: Industrial workers in Kerala, India. *World Development*, 24(6), 1055-1071. doi:10.1016/0305-750x(96)00015-0
- Hill, D. (1999). A question of relevance and domestication of education. *International journal of lifelong education*. doi:10.1080/026013799293720
- Hirway, I. (2003). Identification of BPL households for poverty alleviation programmes. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 38(45), 4803-4808. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4414254>
- Hjejle, B. (1967). Slavery and agricultural bondage in south India in the nineteenth century. *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 15(1), 71-126. doi:10.1080/03585522.1967.10414353
- Horkheimer, M. (2004). *Eclipse of reason*. New York: Continuum.
- Hubbard, R. G., & Duggan, W. R. (2009). *The aid trap :hard truths about ending poverty*. New York: Columbia Business School Pub.
- Ibrahim, A., Levine, R., & Birdsall, N. (2005). Towards Universal Primary Education: investments, incentives, and institutions. *European Journal of Education*, 40(3), 337-349.
- IFPRI. (n.d). *GHI 2013 interactive map*. Retrieved August 28, 2014, from <http://www.ifpri.org/tools/2013-ghi-map>
- Ilaiah, K. (2002). *Why I am not a Hindu: a Sudra critique of Hindutva, philosophy, culture, and political economy*. Calcutta, India: SAMYA.
- India Criticized. (2007). *India criticized for discrimination against Untouchables*. Lanham: Federal Information & News Dispatch, Inc. Retrieved from <http://aut.summon.serialssolutions.com>
- India sitting over 1 lakh crore (2011, March 18). "India sitting over 1 lakh crore rupees of unused external aid: CAG", [News]. *The*

- Hindu*. Retrieved from
<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-sitting-over-rs-1-lakh-cr-of-unused-external-aid-cag/article1550624.ece>
- India tops global remittances list. (2013, April 21). India tops global remittances list [Business news]. *The Hindu*. Retrieved from
<http://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/india-tops-global-remittances-list/article4637261.ece>
- Jacob, A. (2011). Decentralisation of elementary education and community participation in Kerala. *Rajagiri Journal of Social Development*, 2(2), 161. Retrieved from
<http://ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/900352014?accountid=8440>
- Janagan, J. E., & Patil, K. (2010). Research as social work participatory research on the status of Dalits in India. *The Indian Journal of Social work*, 71(3), 395-406. Retrieved from
file:///C:/Users/Research/AppData/Local/Temp/July-Emmanuel.pdf
- Jeffrey, C., Jeffery, P., & Jeffery, R. (2004). A useless thing!" or "nectar of the gods?" The cultural production of education and young men's struggles for respect in liberalizing north India. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 94(4), 961-981.
Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3694106>
- Jeffrey, R. (1981). Religious symbolisation of the transition from caste to class: The temple-entry movement in Travancore, 1860-1940. *Social Compass*, 28(2-3), 269-291.
doi:10.1177/003776868102800205
- Jeffrey, R. (1987). Governments and culture: How women made Kerala literate. *Pacific Affairs*, 60(3), 447-472. Retrieved from
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2758883> .
- Joshi, B. R. (1980). "Ex-Untouchable": Problems, progress, and policies in Indian social change. *Pacific Affairs*, 53(2), 193-222.
doi:10.2307/2757470
- Kannan, K. P. (1981). Evolution of Unionisation and changes in labour processes under lower forms of capitalist production: A study of

- the cashew industry of Kerala. *CDS Working paper No 128*. Retrieved from <http://www.cds.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/wp128.pdf>
- Kerala Secondary Education Board. (2010). *Medieval Kerala*. In *Social studies- Standard X*. Trivandrum, India: Government publishing depot.
- Kerala State Planning Board. (2013). *Kerala Development Report*. Retrieved from <http://books.google.co.nz/books?id=U1-OkF5gUJQC&pg=PA429&dq=Kerala+Development+Report+2013&hl=en&sa=X&ei=JF00VLPxHYa4igKZ6oD4Cg&ved=0CB0Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=Kerala%20Development%20Report%202013&f=false>
- Khadria, B. (2008). India: Skilled migration to developed countries. In S. Castles & R. D. Wise (Eds.), *Migration and development: Perspective from the south*. Geneva, Switzerland: International Organisation for Migration.
- Kirk, J., & Miller, M. L. (1986). *Reliability and validity in Qualitative research*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
- Kochu, K. K. (2013, September 30). Maariya kalathe Dalit Agenda [Dalit Agenda in the Changing World] [Article Column]. *Mathrubhumi*, p. 9.
- Kodoth, P. (2008). Gender, caste and matchmaking in Kerala: A rationale for dowry. *Development and Change*, 39(2), 263-283. doi:10.1111/j.1467-7660.2008.00479.x
- Krishna, K. (1998). Freire's legacy. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 33(46), 2912-2915. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4407379>
- Krishnakumar, R. (2001, Oct.27 - Nov.09). Promise of Land: Kerala's Adivasi Dalit Action Council ends its struggle over land and livelihood issues following an agreement with the State government. *Frontline*, 18(22). Retrieved from <http://www.frontline.in/static/html/fl1822/18220420.htm>
- Kristoff, N. D. (2014, July 14). An idiot's guide to inequality [opinion]. *The Hindu*, p. 11.

- Kruger, A. B. (2005, February 3). The UN aims to cut poverty in half, even as the experts wonder how to measure it. *The New York Times*.
- Kumar, & George, K. K. (1999). *What is wrong with Kerala's education system?* . Trivandrum: Centre for social and economic studies
Retrieved from
<http://csesindia.org/admin/modules/cms/docs/publication/3.pdf>
- Kumar, & George, K. K. (2009). Kerala's education system: From inclusion to exclusion. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 44(41/42), 55-61. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25663680>
- Kumar, A. (2006). Gramsci and Freire: Bridging the divide in Indian context: An exploratory essay. Retrieved from
<http://www.isec.ac.in/Anil0001.pdf>
- Kumar, K. (2001). Looking beyond the smokescreen: DPEP and primary education in India. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 36(7), 560-568. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4410292> .
- Kumar, K. (2013, October 12). Where knowledge is poor. *The Hindu*. Retrieved from
<https://epaper.thehindu.com/index.php?rt=index/index>
- Kumari, K. B. V. (2011). *Microcredit as a poverty alleviation strategy; Women's empowerment and gender relations* (Doctoral Thesis). Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, New Jersey.
Retrieved from
<http://hdl.rutgers.edu/1782.1/rucore10001600001.ETD.000061324>
- Kuttoor, R. (2011, May 25). Chengara agitators hopeful of a solution [News]. *The Hindu*. Retrieved from
<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/chengara-agitators-hopeful-of-a-solution/article2048316.ece>
- Leni, V. (2006). *Regional disparities in human development in Kerala* (Doctoral Thesis). Mahatma Gandhi, Kottayam Retrieved from
<http://hdl.handle.net/10603/6739>

- Lieten, G. K. (2002). The human development puzzle in Kerala. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 32(1), 47-68.
doi:10.1080/00472330280000041
- Loemban, I. E. (2008). Human rights and the Millennium Development Goals. *Global Watch*, 3(3), 3. Retrieved from
<http://ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/224676351?accountid=8440>
- Lukose, R. (2006). Recasting the secular: Religion and education in Kerala, India. *Social Analysis*, 50(3), 38-60.
doi:10.3167/015597706780459395
- Madison, D. S. (2005). *Critical ethnography: methods, ethics, and performance*. London, UK: SAGE.
- Majid, A. (2012). Future of untouchables in India: A case study of Dalit. *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies*, 27(1), 263-285.
Retrieved from
<http://ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1023239553?accountid=8440>
- Mander, H. (2012). *Report of the expert group to recommend the detailed methodology for identification of families living below poverty line in the urban areas*. New Delhi: Centre for equity studies. Retrieved from
www.planningcommission.gov.in/reports/genrep/rep_hasim1701.pdf,
- Mander, H. (2013, September 15). A law for human dignity [Article]. *The Hindu*, p. 5.
- Mani, S., & Arun, M. (2012). *Liberalisation of technical education in Kerala: Has a significant increase in enrolment translated into increase in supply of engineers?* Retrieved from
<http://www.cds.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/WP448.pdf>
- Manosmita, M., Aruna, C., & Libina, K. (2012). Beyond resource mobilization theory: Dynamic paradigm of chengara struggle. *Journal of Sociology*, 3(1), 29-35. Retrieved from
<http://www.krepublishers.com/02-Journals/JSSA/JSSA-03-0->

- 000-12-Web/JSSA-03-1-000-12-Abst-PDF/JSSA-03-1-029-12-021-Manosmita-M/JSSA-03-1-029-12-021-Manosmita-M-Tt.pdf
- Marshall, G. (1998). *A dictionary of sociology: Poverty line*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Marx, K., Engels, F., & Hobsbawn, E. J. (1998). *The Communist manifesto: a modern edition*. New York: Verso.
- Mathew, D. M. (2014, September 29). School locks up Kindergarten kid in kennel as 'punishment'. *The Hindu*. Retrieved from <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/thiruvananthapuram-school-locks-up-kindergarten-kid-in-kennel-as-punishment/article6458028.ece>
- Mathew, E. T. (1999). Growth of literacy in Kerala: State intervention, missionary initiatives and social movements. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 34(39), 2811-2820. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4408460>
- Mehra, P. (2013, November 29). Anti-poverty programmes are leaky [National news]. *The Hindu*.
- Mehta, K. A., & Shah, A. (2003). Chronic poverty in India: Incidence, causes and policies. *World Development*, 31(3), 491-511. doi:10.1016/S0305-750X(02)00212-7
- Mehta, P. D. (1944). Tribes, and the caste system of India. *Man*, 44, 100-101. doi:10.2307/2791743
- Mendelsohn, O., & Vicziany, M. (1998). *The Untouchables: Subordination, Poverty and State in Modern India*. London, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Menon, A. S. (2007). *A Survey Of Kerala History*. Kottayam, India: DC Books.
- Meso, A. I. (2007). Brain drain: poor countries lose most and benefit least. *Nature*, 447(7140), 28-28. doi:10.1038/447028c
- Michael, A. C., Charles, J. K., & Todd, J. M. (2004). The trouble with the MDGs: Confronting expectations of aid and development success. doi:10.1016/j.worlddev.2006.08.003
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: an expanded sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

- Miller, E. J. (1954). Caste and territory in Malabar. *American Anthropologist*, 56(3), 410-420.
doi:10.1525/aa.1954.56.3.02a00100
- Ministry of Human Resource and Development [MHRD]. (n.d). *Elementary Education*. Retrieved September 6, 2014, from <http://mhrd.gov.in/schemes>
- Ministry of Labour and Employment. (n.d). *Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana*. Retrieved from <http://www.rsby.gov.in/>
- Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation [MoSPI]. (2013). *Source of household income among social groups in India*. Retrieved from http://mospi.nic.in/stat_act_t14.htm
- Mishra, R. (1979). Technology and Social Structure in Marx's Theory: An Exploratory Analysis. *Science and Society*, 43(2), 132-157.
doi:<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40402168>
- Mishra, R. N. (2006). Dynamics of caste-based deprivation in child under-nutrition in India. *CDS working paper, 380*. Retrieved from <http://www.cds.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/wp380.pdf>
- Misiriya, P. V. N. (2009). Dimensions of emigration from Kerala to the Gulf countries. In K. Rajan (Ed.), *Kerala economy: Trends during the post reform period*. New Delhi, India: Serials publications.
- Mitra, A., & Singh, P. (2007). Human capital attainment and gender empowerment: The Kerala paradox. *Social Science Quarterly*, 88(5), 1227-1242. doi:10.1111/j.1540-6237.2007.00500.x
- Mohan, S. (2006). Narrativizing oppression and suffering: Theorizing slavery. *South Asia Research*, 26(1), 5-40.
doi:10.1177/0262728006058760
- Mohan, S. (2011, December 19). Land struggle in cotemporary Kerala. *Business Line*. Retrieved from <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/land-struggles-in-contemporary-kerala/article2729300.ece>
- Morse, J. M. (1995). The significance of saturation. *Qualitative Health Research*, 5(2), 147-149. doi:10.1177/104973239500500201
- Nafziger, W. (2005). *From Seers to Sen: The meaning of Economic Development*. presented at the meeting of the WIDER Jubilee

- Conference, Retrieved from
http://www.rrojasdatabank.info/unurp06/rp2006-20_1.pdf
- Nair, A. K. K. R. (1986). *Slavery in Kerala*. Delhi, India: Mittal Publications.
- Nair, N. J. (2014, May 12). Many BPL cards are still in wrong hands [News]. *The Hindu*. Retrieved from
<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/many-bpl-cards-are-still-in-wrong-hands/article6000635.ece>
- Nair, P. R. G. (1976). Education and Socio economic change in Kerala, 1793-1947. *Social Scientist*, 4(8), 33-39.
- Nair, P. R. G. (1976). Education and socio economic change in Kerala, 1793-1947. *Social Scientist*, 4(8), 28-43. doi:DOI: 10.2307/3516378
- Nair, P. R. G. (1983). Educational reforms in India: Universalisation of primary education in Kerala. *CDS Working Paper No. 181*. Retrieved from <http://www.cds.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/wp181.pdf>
- Namboodiripad, E. M. S. (1976). Economic backwardness of harijans in Kerala. *Social Scientist*, 4(12), 62-68. doi:10.2307/3516336
- Narayana, M. R. (2009). Education, human development and quality of life: Measurement issues and implications for India. *Social Indicators Research*, 90(2), 279-293. doi:10.1007/s11205-008-9258-z
- NCERT. (2008). *Sixth survey of educational research 1993-2000*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncert.nic.in/html/pdf/eric/survey.pdf>
- Ninian, A. (2008). India's Untouchables: The Dalits. *Contemporary Review*, 290(1689), 186. Retrieved from
<http://ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/204970567?accountid=8440>
- Nisar, M., & Kandasamy, M. (2007). *Ayyankali- Dalit leader of organic protest*. Calicut, Kerala, India: Other Books.
- O'Reilly, K. (2009). *Critical Ethnography*. doi:10.4135/9781446268308.n10

- Office for National Statistics. (2013). Poverty and social exclusion in the UK and EU, 2005-2011. Retrieved from <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/household-income/poverty-and-social-exclusion-in-the-uk-and-eu/2005-2011/rpt--poverty-and-social-exclusion.html>
- Olcott, M. (1944). The caste system of India. *American Sociological Review*, 9(6), 648-657. doi:10.2307/2085128
- Omkarnath, G. (1997). Capability and the process of development. *CDS Working paper No 275*. Retrieved from <http://www.cds.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/wp275.pdf>
- Oommen, G. (1996). Dalit Conversion and Social Protest in Travancore, 1854-1890. *Bangalore Theological Forum*, XXVII(3), 69-84. Retrieved from <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1119>
- Oxfam. (2015). Wealth: Having it all and wanting more. Retrieved from <http://www.oxfam.org/en/research/wealth-having-it-all-and-wanting-more>
- Oxford Dictionaries Online. (2014). Oxford Dictionaries In. Retrieved from www.oxforddictionaries.com
- Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative [OPHI]. (2014). OPHI Country Briefing: Multidimensional index data bank. Retrieved 24th July 2014, from OPHI, University of Oxford <http://www.ophi.org.uk/multidimensional-poverty-index/mpi-2014/mpi-country-briefings/>
- Padmanabhan, R. (2010). Learning to learn: Dalit education in Kerala. In K. R. Raman (Ed.), *Development, democracy and the state: Critiquing the Kerala model of development*. Retrieved from <http://aut.lconz.ac.nz/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=1555450>
- Parasuraman, S., Gomathy, Raj, K., & Fernandez, B. (2003). *Listening to people living in poverty*. Bangalore, India: Books for change.
- Parayil, G. (1996). The "Kerala model" of development: development and sustainability in the Third World. *Third World Quarterly*, 17(5), 941-957. doi:10.1080/01436599615191

- Parayil, G. (2000). *Kerala: the development experience*. London, U K: Zed books Ltd.
- Patnakar, B., & Omvedt, G. (1979). The Dalit Liberation Movement in Colonial Period. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 14(7/8), 409-424. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4367359> .
- Paul, B. (2014, October 24). Schools projecting the students' numbers [Vidyarthikalute ennam peruppichu kattunna schoolukal] [Essay]. *Mathrubhumi*.
- Planning Commission of India. (2005). *Kerala development report*. New Delhi Planning Commission. Retrieved from http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/stateplan/sdr_pdf/shdr_kerala05.pdf
- Planning Commission of India. (2009). *Report of the expert group to review the methodology for estimation of poverty*. New Delhi. Retrieved from http://planningcommission.nic.in/reports/genrep/rep_pov.pdf
- Planning Commission of India. (2011). *Human Development Report, Kerala*. New Delhi: Planning Commission. Retrieved from <http://www.spb.kerala.gov.in/~spbuser/images/pdf/er2011/pdf/Chapter14.pdf>
- Prasad, D. R. (2008). *The School, teacher student relationship and values*. New Delhi, India: APH Publishing house.
- Radhakrishnan, M. G. (2009, November 02). Kerala: The lost slogan: Armed Dalits are the new revolutionaries. *India Today*. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/198652733?accountid=8440>
- Radhakrishnan, P. (1982). Land Reforms and Changes in Land System: Study of a Kerala Village. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 17(39), A107-A119. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4371397>
- Rajan, K. (2009). *Kerala economy: Trends during the post reform period*. New Delhi, India: Serial Publications.
- Rajan, S. I., & James, K. S. (2007). *Demographic transition and economic development in Kerala: The role of emigration*: South Asia Network

- of Economic Research Institutes. Retrieved from
<http://saneinetwork.net/Main.php?PageType=1&Id=37>
- Ramakumar, R. (2005). *Public Action for Socioeconomic Security: A Note on the Case of Dalit Households in a Village in Kerala, India*. Retrieved from
<http://humansecurityconf.polsci.chula.ac.th/Documents/Presentations/Ramakumar.pdf>
- Ramanathan, H. (2012). Family – The prime influencer of alcoholism among people of Kerala *Excel International Journal of Multidisciplinary Management Studies*, 2(3), 9. Retrieved from
http://www.zenithresearch.org.in/images/stories/pdf/2012/March/EIJMMS/4_EIJ_MARCH12_VOL1_ISSUE3.pdf
- Rammohan, K. T. (2008). Caste and Landlessness in Kerala: Signals from Chengara. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 43(37), 14-16. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40277941>
- Reddy, D. S. (2005). The ethnicity of caste. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 78(3), 543-584. doi:10.1353/anq.2005.0038
- Retnakumar, J. N., & Arokiasamy, P. (2006). Explaining school enrolment trends in Kerala, India. *Journal of South Asian Development*, 1(2), 231-248. doi:10.1177/097317410600100204
- Rice, S. E. (2006). The threat of global poverty. *The National interest*, 76-82. Retrieved from
<http://ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/218405640?accountid=8440>
- Roberts, P. (2007). Conscientisation in Castalia: A Freirean reading of Hermann Hesse's the glass bead game. *Science and business media*. doi:10.1007/s11217-007-9062-2
- Rukmini, S., & Venu, M. K. (2013, July 24). Beyond debate, govt. accepts 65% Indians are poor [National news]. *The Hindu*. Retrieved from
<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/beyond-the-debate-govt-accepts-65-indians-are-poor/article4948698.ece?ref=relatedNews>

- Sabina, A. (2013). How to measure the many dimensions of poverty? *Development Co - Operation Report*, 43. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1470794540?accountid=8440>
- Sachs, J. (2005). *The end of poverty: economic possibilities for our time*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Saith, A. (2006). From universal values to millennium development goals: Lost in translation. *Development and Change*, 37(6), 1167-1199. doi:10.1111/j.1467-7660.2006.00518.x
- Salim, A. A., & Nair, P. R. G. (2002). *Educational development in India: The Kerala experience since 1800*. . New Delhi, India: Anmol publications.
- Saradmoni, K. (1973). Agrestic slavery in Kerala in the nineteenth century. *Indian Economic Social History Review*, 10(371). doi:10.1177/001946467301000403
- Sarantakos, S. (2005). *Social research*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sarver, R. (2010). Counterpoint: UN MDGs and US Aid to Africa: Ineffective and Unrealistic. *International Social Science review*, 83(1&2), 79-86. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41887307>
- Scaria, S. (2010). Changes in land relations: The political economy of land reforms in a Kerala village. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 45(26). Retrieved from <http://www.epw.in/review-issues/changes-land-relations-political-economy-land-reforms-kerala-village.html>
- Schensul, S. L., Schensul, J. J., & LeCompte, M. D. (1999). *Essential ethnographic methods: observations, interviews, and questionnaires* (Vol. 2). Walnut Creek, Calif: AltaMira Press.
- Schultz, T. W. (1961). Investment in human capital. *The American Economic Review*, 51(1), 1-17. doi:10.2307/1818907
- Schwartz, M. B. (1989). Indian untouchables resistance: Symbolic domination and historical knowledge. *The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice*
- Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23163056>

- Sebastian, J. (2014, July 14). Ee eratta thappinu vazhangano? [Need to agree this duality?] [Article]. *Mathrubhumi*. Retrieved from <http://digitalpaper.mathrubhumi.com/303902/kochi/14-JULY-2014#page/4/1>
- Sekhar, A. (2014, August 22). Jatiye dahippicha Sahodaran [Sahodaran who brunt caste] [Editorial article]. *Mathrubhumi*.
- Sekher, A. (2003). Older than the church: Christianity and caste in "The God of Small Things". *Economic and Political Weekly*, 38(33), 3445-3449. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4413900>
- Sen, A. (1997). From income inequality to economic inequality. *Southern Economic Journal*, 64(2), 384-401. doi:10.2307/1060857
- Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. NY: Oxford University Press.
- Sen, A. (2000). Democracy: The only way out of poverty. *New Perspectives Quarterly*, 17(1), 28-30. doi:10.1111/0893-7850.00234
- Sengupta, A. K. (2007). *Report on conditions of work and promotion of livelihood in the unorganised sector*. Retrieved from http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Unorganised%20Sector/bill150_20071123150_Condition_of_workers_sep_2007.pdf
- Shah, A. (2010). Putting the Kerala model to rest: Lessons for a new era of development in India. *The American enterprise institute*. Retrieved from <http://www.aei.org/files/2010/09/20/Putting-Kerala-Model-Rest-September-10.pdf>
- Shah, M. (2013, August 6). Understanding the poverty line. *The Hindu*. Retrieved from <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/understanding-the-poverty-line/article4989045.ece>
- Silverman, D. (2010). *Doing qualitative research: a practical handbook*. London: SAGE.
- Singh, A. (2010). *Fort Cochin in Kerala, 1750-1830: the social condition of a Dutch community in an Indian milieu* (Vol. 13). Boston: Brill.
- Singh, P., & Mitra, A. (2007). Human capital attainment and gender empowerment: The Kerala paradox. *Social Science Quarterly*, 88(5), 1227-1242. doi:10.1111/j.1540-6237.2007.00500.x

- Sivanandan, P. (1976). Economic backwardness of Harijans in Kerala. *Social Scientist*, 4(10), 3-28. doi:10.2307/3516418
- Sivanandan, P. (1979). Caste, Class and Economic Opportunity in Kerala: An Empirical Analysis. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 14(7/8), 475-480. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4367366>
- Spoor, M. (2004). *Globalisation, poverty and conflict :a critical "development" reader / edited by Max Spoor*. Dordrecht ;London: Kluwer Academic.
- Sreekumar, T. T. (1995). *Peasants and formal credit in Thiruvitamcore: The state, institutions and social structure 1914-1940*. Trivandrum: CDS Working paper 264. Retrieved from <http://www.cds.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/wp264.pdf>
- Sreekumar, T. T., & Parayil, G. (2003). Kerala's experience of development and change. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 33(4), 465-492. doi:10.1080/00472330380000291
- Sreerekha, M. S. (2010). Challenges before Kerala's landless: The story of Aralam farm. *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLV(21), 55-62. Retrieved from <http://environmentportal.in/files/Challenges%20before%20Keralas%20Landless.pdf>
- Sreerekha, M. S. (2012). Illegal land, Illegal people: The Chengara land struggle in Kerala. *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLVII/ 30(30), 21-24. Retrieved from <http://www.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/files/file/Chengara%20Land%20Struggle.pdf>
- Srivastava, S. P. (2003). Unravelling the dynamics of Dalit oppression. In A. K. Lal (Ed.), *Social Exclusion* (Vol. 1). New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.
- SSA Kerala. (2011). *Sarva siksha abhiyan*. Retrieved June 23, 2011, from <http://www.ikm.gov.in/ssaweb/reports/StateReport.php.html>
- SSA Kerala. (n.d). *Sarva Shikksha Abhiyan, Kerala*. Retrieved September 6, 2014, from <http://www.ssamis.com/web/#>

- Stewart, F., Laderchi, C. R., & Saith, R. (2007). Introduction: Four approaches to defining and measuring poverty. In F. Stewart, R. Saith, & B. Harriss-White (Eds.), *Defining Poverty in the Developing World*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Still, C. (2008). Dalit women in the social justice revolution in India. *Public Policy Research*, 15(2), 93-96. doi:10.1111/j.1744-540X.2008.00519.x
- Sumner, A. (2004). Economic and non-economic well being: A review of progress on the meaning and measurement of poverty. *Inequality poverty and human well being*(WIDER Research Paper No. 2004/30), 1-24. Retrieved from http://www.wider.unu.edu/publications/working-papers/research-papers/2004/en_GB/rp2004-030/_files/78091742604493957/default/rp2004-030.pdf
- Suryanarayana, M. H. (2001). Economic reform versus food security: Kerala's gordian knot. *Journal of international development*, 13(2), 239-253. doi:10.1002/jid.761
- Taket, A. R. (2009). *Theorising social exclusion*. New York: Routledge.
- Tharakan, P. K. M. (1984). Socio-Economic Factors in Educational Development: Case of Nineteenth Century Travancore. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 19(46), 1959-1967. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4373769>
- Tharamangalam, J. (1981). *Agrarian class conflict: The political mobilization of agricultural labourers in Kuttanad, Soth India*: The University of British Columbia.
- Tharamangalam, J. (1998). The perils of social development without economic growth: The development debacle of Kerala, India. *BULLETIN OF CONCERNED ASIAN SCHOLARS*, 30(1), 23-34. doi:10.1080/14672715.1998.10411031
- Thomas, J. (1993). *Doing critical ethnography* (Vol. 26.). Newbury Park, Calif: Sage Publications.
- Thomas, J. (2015, 16 January). Schooling standard drops [School nilavaram Thazhottu]. *Malayala Manorama*. Retrieved from

http://epaper.manoramaonline.com/edaily/flashclient/client_panel.aspx

Thomas, T. A. (2010). *Changing production conditions in agriculture a study of Kuttanad* (Doctoral Thesis). M G University, Kttayam
Retrieved from

<http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/532>

Thurston, E., & Rangachari, K. (2001). *Castes and tribes of Southern India*. New Delhi, India: Asian Education Services.

Tilak, J. B. G. (1999). Education and poverty in South Asia.

PROSPECTS, 29(4), 517-533. doi:10.1007/BF02736902

Tilak, J. B. G. (2001). Higher education and development in Kerala. *Working Paper 5. Centre for Socio-economic and Environmental Studies, Kochi, Kerala*. Retrieved from

<http://www.csesindia.org/admin/modules/cms/docs/publication/5.pdf>

Tilak, J. B. G. (2002). Education and Poverty. *Journal of Human*

Development, 3(2), 191-207. doi:10.1080/14649880220147301

Tilak, J. B. G. (2006). Post-elementary education, poverty and development in India. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF*

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, 27(4), 435-445.

doi:10.1016/j.ijedudev.2006.09.018

UN. (2001). *Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration*. NY: UN. Retrieved from

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/sgreport2001.pdf>

UN. (2010a). *The Millennium development goals report 2010* Retrieved from

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG%20Report%202010%20En%20r15%20-low%20res%2020100615%20-.pdf>

UN. (2010b). *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2010*. New York: U N. Retrieved from

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG%20Report%202010%20En%20r15%20-low%20res%2020100615%20-.pdf>

- UN. (2013). *Millennium development goal report 2013*. New York: UN.
Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/report-2013/mdg-report-2013-english.pdf>
- UN. (2014). *End Poverty: Millennium Development Goals and Beyond 2015*. Retrieved 8th August, 2014, from <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/poverty.shtml>
- UN Millennium Project. (2005). *Investing in development: A practical plan to achieve the millennium development goals*. Retrieved from <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/documents/MainReportComplete-lowres.pdf>
- UNDG. (2010). *Thematic paper on MDG 2*. New York: United Nations.
Retrieved from http://www.undg.org/docs/11421/MDG2_1954-UNDG-MDG2-LR.pdf
- UNDP. (2010). *Human Development Report 2010*. Retrieved from http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/270/hdr_2010_en_complete_reprint.pdf
- UNDP. (2011). *Millennium Development Goals*. Retrieved February 21, 2011, from <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview.html>
- UNDP. (2014). *Human development report 2014*. New York: UNDP.
Retrieved from <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr14-report-en-1.pdf>
- UNESCO. (2000). *Education for all 2000 assessment global synthesis*.
Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001200/120058e.pdf>
- United Nations. (2000). *United Nations Millennium Declaration*. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>
- United Nations. (2010). *The Millennium development goals report 2010*. New York. Retrieved from <http://www.un-ngls.org/spip.php?article2682>
- Vandemoortele, J. (2009). The MDG conundrum: Meeting the targets without missing the point. *Development Policy Review*, 27(4), 355. doi:10.1111/j.1467-7679.2009.00451.x

- Vandemoortele, J. (2011). The MDG story: Intention denied. *Development and Change*, 42(1), 1-21. doi:10.1111/j.1467-7660.2010.01678.x
- Varghese, T. C. (1970). *Agrarian Change and Economic Consequences: Land Tenures in Kerala, 1850-1960*. Bombay: Allied Publishers.
- Varman, R. (2006). Why are we opposed to reservation. Retrieved from <http://www.ambedkar.org/News/News051707.htm>
- Veena, D. R. (1987). *Education and economic growth*. New Delhi, India: S B Nangia.
- Venkatasubramanian, K. (2001, September 4). Education and Poverty. *The Hindu*, p. 8. Retrieved from <http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/op/2001/12/04/stories/2001120400060100.htm>
- Vidyarthikalute. (2013, October 12). 'Vidyarthikalute prasnam marakkarthu' [Mal] Don't Forget Students' Problem [Editorial]. *Mathrubhumi*.
- Vij, N. (2011). Collaborative governance: Analysing social audits in MGNREGA in India. *IDS Bulletin*, 42(6), 28-34. doi:10.1111/j.1759-5436.2011.00269.x
- Vijayanand, S. M. (2001, 5-9 February). *Poverty Reduction through Decentralisation* presented at the meeting of the Asia and Pacific Forum on Poverty: Reforming Policies and Institutions for Poverty Reduction, Manila.
- Warrier, B. S. (2015, 16 January). School education should not be child's play [School Vidyabhasam Kuttykali Akaruth] [Article]. *Malayala Manorama*. Retrieved from http://epaper.manoramaonline.com/edaily/flashclient/client_panel.aspx
- Werff, P. W. d. (1982). Harijan life in Kerala. In L. P. Vidyarthi (Ed.), *Rural Development in South Asia*. New Delhi: Naurang Rai.
- William Reed Business Media. (2004). US wastes half of its food. Retrieved 24 August 2014, from William Reed Business Media, <http://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/Suppliers2/US-wastes-half-its-food>

- Wilson, C. (2005). A Paradox within a Paradox: Scheduled Caste Fertility in Kerala. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40(28), 3085-3093. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4416878>
- World Bank. (1999). *World development report 2000/1 Attacking poverty*. Retrieved from <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPOVERTY/Resources/WDR/approutl.pdf>
- Young, I. M. (1990). Five faces of Oppression. In I. M. Young (Ed.), *Justice and the politics of difference*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Zachariah, K. C. (2001). The Syrian Christians of Kerala: Demographic and socio economic transition in the twentieth century [Working paper]. *CDS Working paper No 322*. Retrieved from <http://www.cds.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/wp322.pdf>
- Zachariah, K. C., & Rajan, I. (2008). Economic consequences of emigration from Kerala: emigration and unemployment. In B. A. Prakash & V. R. P. Nair (Eds.), *Kerala's development issues in the new millennium* New Delhi, India: Serials publications.
- Zachariah, K. C., & Rajan, S. I. (2012). *Inflexion in Kerala's Gulf connection: Report of Kerala migration survey 2011* (CDS Working paper No 450). Trivandrum, India: CDS. Retrieved from <http://www.cds.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/WP450.pdf>
- Zero Landless Project. (2013, November 2). Zero Landless Project [News]. *The Hindu*.

Glossary

<i>Dalit</i>	Common name for all the Untouchables of India
<i>Jatis</i>	Sub-division of a caste; smallest endogamous group
<i>Kanji</i>	Rice gruel
<i>Kudikidappu</i>	Dwelling of a bonded labourer
<i>Kudiyar</i>	Bonded labourer
<i>Kulathozhil</i>	Traditional job based on Jati
<i>Mulaku chammanthi</i>	Mashed chilli
<i>Paraya</i>	Second largest slave and Dalit community in Kerala
<i>Porambok</i>	Berm or other government land not in use
<i>Pulaya</i>	Largest Dalit community and the most common slave community in Kerala

Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Application approval letter from the AUTEC



16 May 2013

Nesta Devine
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Nesta

Re Ethics Application: **13/68 Attainment of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2 as an instrument of poverty eradication in Kerala State of India.**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the AUT University Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 16 May 2016.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 16 May 2016;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 16 May 2016 or on completion of the project.

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this. If your research is undertaken within a jurisdiction outside New Zealand, you will need to make the arrangements necessary to meet the legal and ethical requirements that apply there.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

All the very best with your research,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Banda', with a small flourish at the end.

Madeline Banda
Acting Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Michael Manjalloor myckle@aut.ac.nz; michaelmanjalloor@gmail.com

Appendix B: Goals and Targets of the MDG Programme

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- ❖ Target 1A: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day
- ❖ Target 1B: Achieve Decent Employment for Women, Men, and Young People
- ❖ Target 1C: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

- ❖ Target 2A: By 2015, all children can complete a full course of primary schooling, girls and boys

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

- ❖ Target 3A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality rate

- ❖ Target 4A: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

- ❖ Target 5A: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio
- ❖ Target 5B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

- ❖ Target 6A: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
- ❖ Target 6B: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it
- ❖ Target 6C: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

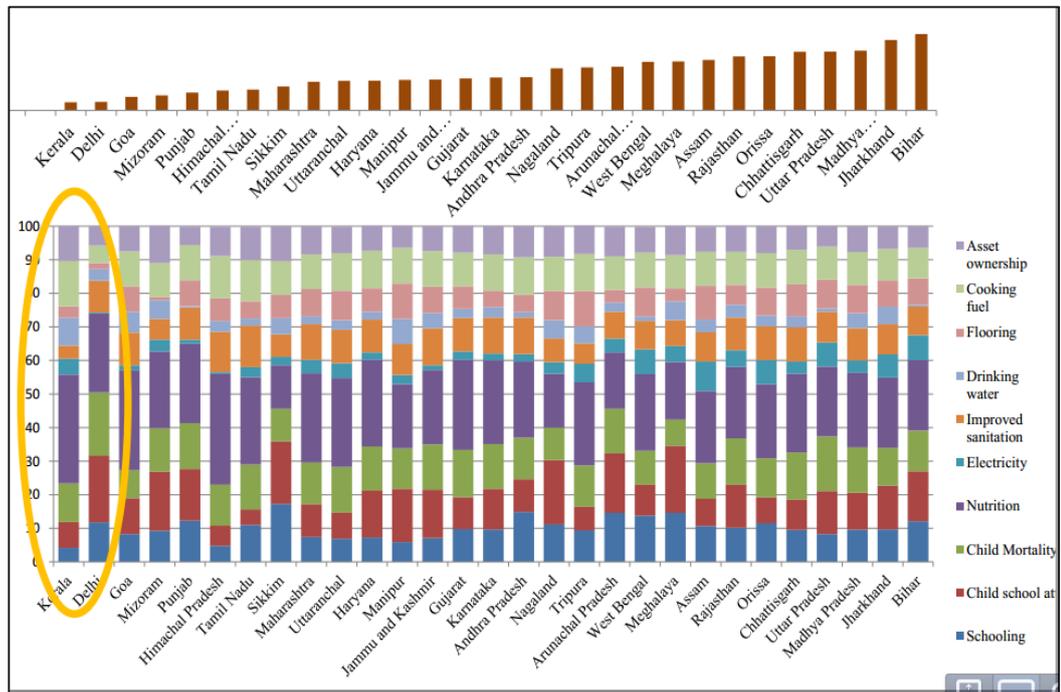
- ❖ Target 7A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs; reverse loss of environmental resources
- ❖ Target 7B: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss

- ❖ Target 7C: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation (for more information see the entry on water supply)
- ❖ Target 7D: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

- ❖ Target 8A: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system
- ❖ Target 8B: Address the Special Needs of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs)
- ❖ Target 8C: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States
- ❖ Target 8D: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term
- ❖ Target 8E: In co-operation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries
- ❖ Target 8F: In co-operation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications (UN Millennium Project, 2005, pp. xviii-xxiii)

Appendix C: MPI Poverty Estimation of the States of India

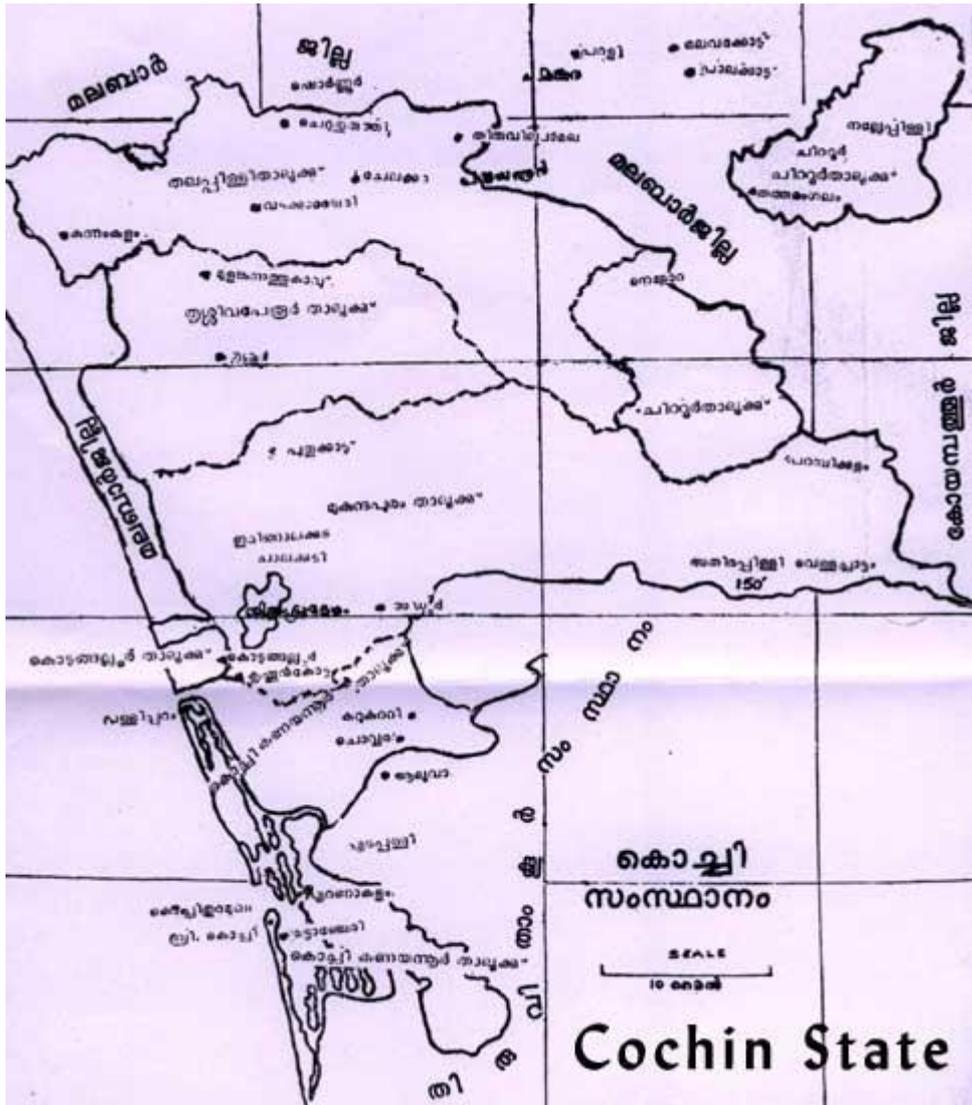


Source: (Alkire et al., 2013, p. 6).

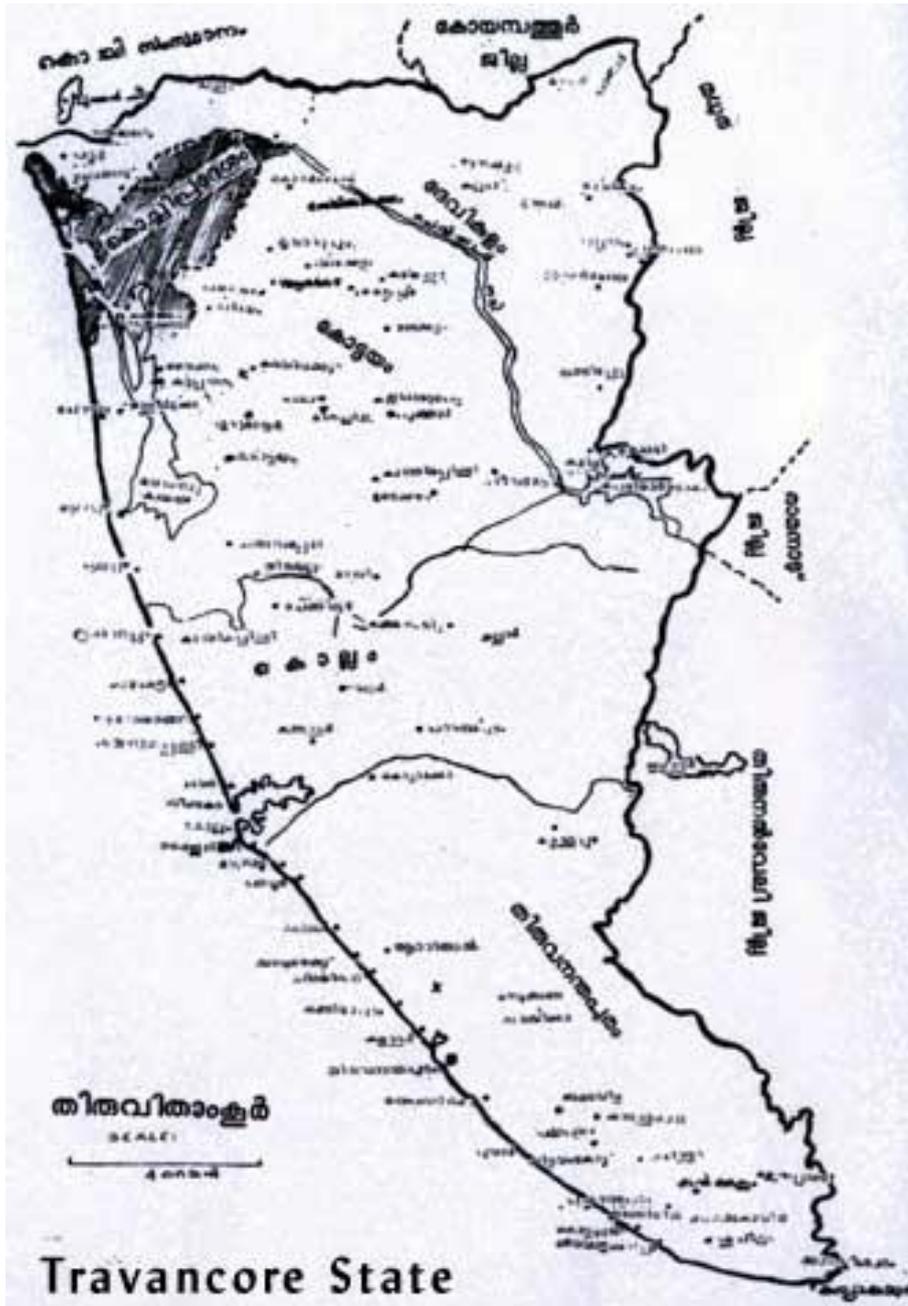
Appendix D 1: Map of Erstwhile Malabar region of Kerala



Appendix D 2: Map of Erstwhile Kochi state

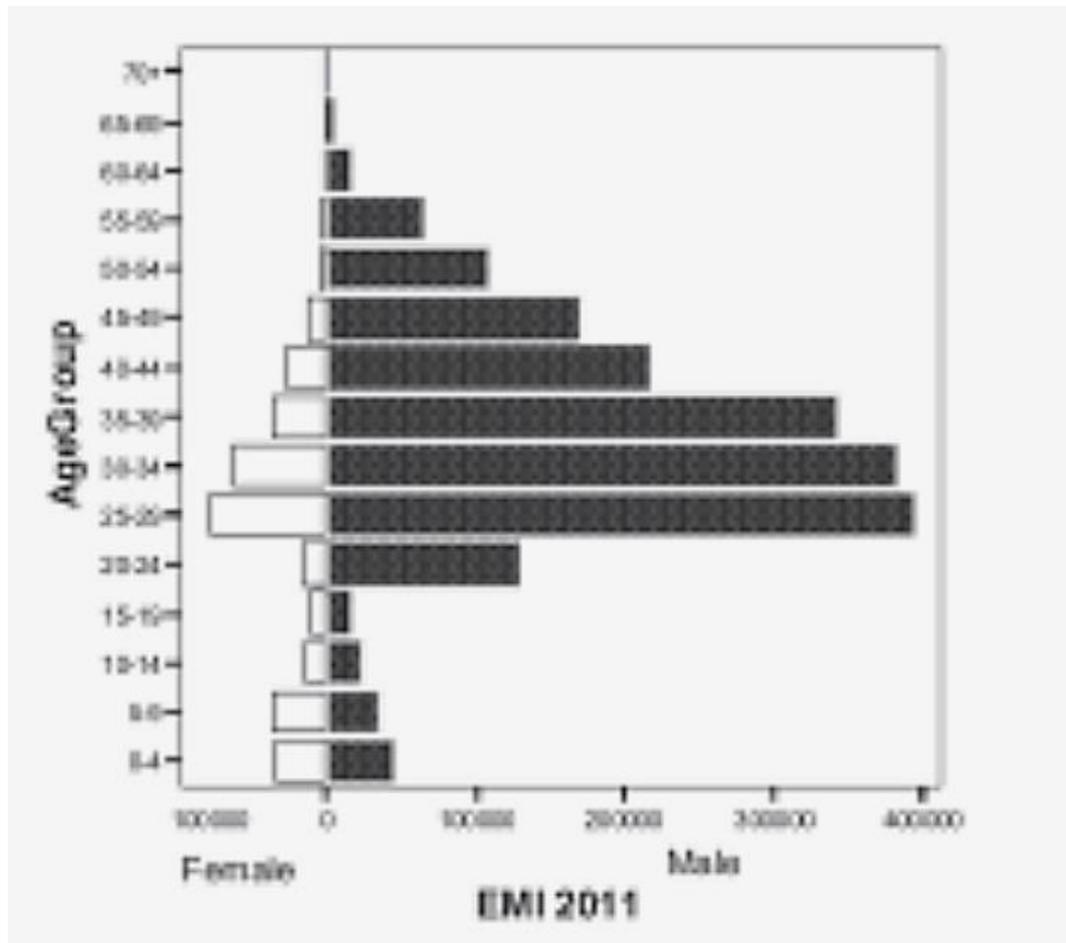


Appendix D 3: Map of Erstwhile Travancore state



Appendix E: High Volume of Male Keralans Going Overseas to Work

Chart showing the proportion of Keralans working overseas with age and sex differentials



Source: (Zachariah & Rajan, 2012, p. 49). Detailed figures are not available in the publication so the same picture is copied here.

Appendix F: A Comparison of PQLI of Kerala with Other Less Developed States of India

State	PQLI
Kerala	89.11
Bihar	18.17
Orissa	6.70
Madhya Pradesh	16.08
Uttar Pradesh	15.39
Rajasthan	28.41
All India	36.14

Source: The Kerala model of development: Development and sustainability in the third world (Parayil, 1996).

Appendix G: Comparison of Dropout Rates between Kerala and Other States of India

Table 15 Drop-out rates in India, 1997-98, State wise (per cent)

State	Class I to V			Class I to VIII			Class I to X		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Andhra Pradesh	44.61	47.03	45.74	72.27	74.92	73.43	76.50	79.09	74.07
Assam	40.87	42.43	41.56	64.53	68.70	66.39	76.84	75.66	76.31
Bihar	58.28	62.00	59.65	75.32	80.48	77.13	81.74	87.68	83.78
Gujarat*	22.52	33.96	27.75	56.77	64.70	60.32	68.12	72.24	69.96
Haryana*	14.30	15.59	14.90	27.09	35.56	30.91	40.74	53.02	46.26
Himachal Pradesh	31.20	31.03	31.12	19.95	26.42	23.04	47.73	53.90	50.65
Jammu & Kashmir*	34.40	33.63	34.08	29.39	43.38	35.18	60.83	69.28	64.29
Karnataka*	33.50	33.46	33.48	53.76	60.95	57.13	64.84	68.10	66.42
Kerala*	-11.06	-6.83	-9.00	-0.84	0.67	-0.40	31.58	19.78	25.81
Madhya Pradesh	19.79	27.89	23.27	43.13	59.76	50.36	60.78	76.88	67.68
Maharashtra	19.82	25.73	22.64	36.93	46.35	41.35	55.36	64.75	59.78
Manipur*	51.42	53.90	52.59	71.74	72.04	71.88	76.39	76.62	76.49
Meghalaya	61.07	63.77	62.44	48.25	46.81	47.57	63.19	64.39	63.75
Mizoram*	51.60	52.08	51.82	71.82	70.57	71.23	71.65	70.10	70.92
Nagaland	36.71	35.09	35.94	45.61	35.80	41.70	62.83	68.60	65.69
Orissa*	50.74	47.90	49.61	51.49	62.85	56.17	71.58	77.40	74.00
Punjab	25.21	21.82	23.62	26.56	30.50	28.39	46.89	50.10	48.37
Rajasthan	53.78	57.99	55.30	59.74	69.73	62.99	86.44	89.25	87.34
Tamil Nadu*	13.99	16.18	15.05	25.94	34.64	29.99	57.04	65.74	61.06
Tripura*	50.28	53.91	51.95	72.56	74.21	73.32	79.11	83.54	81.13
Uttar Pradesh*	45.98	55.98	49.85	49.87	57.28	52.45	52.85	71.69	59.50
West Bengal	46.17	54.15	49.92	67.47	71.11	69.08	79.39	88.70	83.52
India	38.23	41.34	39.58	50.72	58.61	54.14	67.65	72.67	69.33

Notes: For Orissa and J & K, the data is for 1996-97.

* Values taken from Sixth All-India Educational Survey, 1993-94.

Source: Annual Report, 1998-99, Ministry of Human Resources Development, Department of Education, Government of India, New Delhi, Statements 8, 9 and 10, pp. 142-44.

Source: (Chandrasekhar et al., 2001, p. 42)