

**Is the Kerala Model Sustainable?  
Lessons from the Past: Prospects for the Future<sup>1</sup>**

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Is the Kerala Model sustainable? To answer this question adequately, we must ask:

- What do we mean by sustainability?
- What is the Model to be sustained?
- What forces brought the Model into being?
- Why is the question of sustainability being asked now?
- What are the principal forces threatening the Model's sustainability?
- What resources are available to sustain the Model? Can the forces that created the Model in the first place be used to sustain it, or will new forces be necessary?

To respond to these questions we will propose a formal definition of sustainability and of the Kerala Model. We shall then elaborate the definition of the Kerala Model to identify those elements that are most critical to the question of sustainability. Then we consider the Model's shortcomings that threaten its sustainability—what many scholars now call *The Crisis of the Kerala Model*.

## **1. Sustainability**

Sustainability is one of the most widely discussed concepts in development at present.<sup>2</sup> Most proponents see it primarily in ecological terms. We suggest a broader conceptualization. We consider a development model sustainable to the extent that it:

- Improves or at least maintains the material quality of life of the population.
- Expands or at least maintains access to any entitlements necessary for economic security and personal dignity, particularly of vulnerable groups.
- Expands or at least maintains the number of people obtaining access to production resources adequate for a decent life or employment at reasonable wages.
- Reduces the level of social and economic inequalities, or at least does not exacerbate them.
- Expands or at least maintains basic political and individual rights.
- Improves or at least maintains productive resources including land, water, flora and fauna.<sup>3</sup>

For many years the Kerala Model has met most of these criteria. Few models elsewhere have come so close to fulfilling all the demands of sustainability. This results from the features of the Kerala Model.

## **2. The Kerala Model**

We define the Kerala Model as:

- A set of high material quality of life indicators coinciding with low per capita incomes, both distributed across nearly the entire population of Kerala.
- A set of wealth and resource redistribution programs that have largely brought about the high material quality of life indicators.
- High levels of political participation and activism among ordinary people along with substantial numbers of dedicated leaders at all levels. Kerala's mass activism and committed cadre were able to function within a largely democratic structure which their activism has served to reinforce.

## **3. Quality of Life Indicators**

The Kerala Model can be viewed as a set of quality of life indicators that put Kerala closer to high-income developed countries than to the rest of India or to its counterparts in the low-income world. Table 1 presents the most recent figures we could locate, which are from 1991 to 1997.

Kerala continues to lead low-income areas and the rest of India. Recent criticisms of the Kerala Model suggest that Kerala is losing its lead within India. K. K. George (1993:119) cites figures indicating that Punjab spends more per capita on education and

that both Rajasthan and Punjab spend more per capita on health than Kerala. He also compares Kerala unfavorably with Maharashtra, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh in pension payments to destitutes.<sup>4</sup> These weaknesses should not be overlooked, but they remain minor compared with Kerala's continuing overall ability to deliver a high material quality of life to its people as the indicators show. Oommen and Anandaraj's district-level profile (1996) found 9 of Kerala's 14 districts among the top 12 in all of India on a composite of literacy, life expectancy, and several economic variables. Kerala's lowest district of Malappuram was 31<sup>st</sup> on a list with 372 entries.

Table 1: Comparison of Quality of Life Indicators, 1990s

Indicator	Kerala	India	Low-Income Countries <sup>a</sup>	United States
Per capita GNP in US dollars (1997)	\$324 <sup>b</sup>	\$390	\$350	\$28,740
At Purchasing power parity (PPP) (1997) <sup>d</sup>	\$1,374	\$1,650	\$1,400	\$28,740
Adult literacy rate as percent of total adults				
Males	94 <sup>c</sup>	65 <sup>f</sup>	65	96
Females	87 <sup>c</sup>	38 <sup>f</sup>	41	96
Scheduled caste females (1991)	74	24	--	--
Scheduled tribe females (1991)	51	18	--	--
Life expectancy in years				
Males	67 <sup>e</sup>	62 <sup>f</sup>	58 <sup>f</sup>	74
Females	72 <sup>e</sup>	63 <sup>f</sup>	60 <sup>f</sup>	80
Infant mortality per 1,000 (1996)	13	65	80	7
Rural (1991)	15	82		
Urban (1991)	7	45		
Birth rate per 1,000	18 <sup>e</sup>	29 <sup>e</sup>	40 <sup>g</sup>	16 <sup>g</sup>

Sources: GOK 1995b:3; GOK 1998:11, 101; Bose 1991; World Bank 1999:187, 190, 192, 202; World Bank 1995:162-63, 212-15.

Notes: We used the most recent figures we could locate in all cases.

Figures with no superscript are for 1997 unless indicated by a year marking in the left column.

<sup>a</sup> Low income refers in 1997 to 54 economies with per capita GNP of \$785 or less. With India excluded, it refers to 53 countries, including the 37 countries used in Franke and Chasin 1989:11 for 1986 data and the 38 countries used in Franke and Chasin 1994:ii for 1991 data. The additional countries in the 1997 list are former Soviet republics and former regions of Yugoslavia. The addition of these countries tends to improve the quality of life figures for the low-income category, diminishing Kerala's lead.

<sup>b</sup> We estimated the US dollar figure for Kerala by dividing the State Government's 1996 per capita State Domestic Product figure of Rs 9,066 (GOK 1997:3) by 35, the approximate number of rupees per dollar during that year. To this figure of \$259, we added 25%, the maximum estimate of the value of overseas remittances added to the Kerala economy. The figure of \$324 thus represents the highest likely per capita income and therefore does not exaggerate the difference between Kerala's income and its quality of life achievements.

<sup>c</sup> Kerala's adult literacy rate for 1991 is taken from the 1991 Indian Census (Bose 1991:69), prior to the literacy campaign. By the end of 1991, Kerala's rate was near 100%, but weaknesses in the follow-up may have reduced the rate again.

<sup>d</sup> The Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) reflects local prices and makes the income figures more directly comparable: one PPP dollar has the same purchasing power over domestic GNP as a dollar in the US has over US GDP. See World Bank 1998/99:234.

<sup>e</sup> Figures are for 1996

<sup>f</sup> Figures are for 1995

<sup>g</sup> Figures are for 1993

Kerala's performance on the basic indicators has continued to improve since the early 1980s. Generally, the rest of India and the low-income countries have made only sluggish progress. Kerala's infant mortality rate dropped from 27 in 1986 (Franke and Chasin 1994:11) to 13 in 1993 where it stabilized up to 1996 (see table 1). This is a 52% drop. By contrast, the all-India rate went from 86 in 1986 to 65 in 1996, a decline of 19%.<sup>5</sup> The closest Indian state to Kerala was Punjab, with an IMR in 1992 of 56 (GOK 1995:S14), more than 4 times the 1993 Kerala rate. Furthermore, Kerala continues to maintain a nearly even distribution of its indicators when compared with the rest of India. Table 1 shows that female scheduled caste literacy in Kerala in 1991 was 79% that of males overall (74 vs. 94) whereas in all-India it was 37% (24 vs 65). For scheduled tribe females the figures for Kerala are 54% vs all-India 28%. In 1996, Kerala's 990 villages and 63 municipalities had 956 Primary Health Centres, serving an average of 30,346 persons each compared with an all-India average of 38,618.<sup>6</sup> Health subcentres numbered 5,094, with an availability for each 5,695 persons compared with an all-India rate of 6,358. Kerala offered 147 hospital beds per 100,000 people compared with the all-India average of 96 (GOK 1998:102). In Kerala, leprosy, filaria, and tuberculosis have been reduced to levels below one per 2,000 (computed from GOK 1998:103). The all-India malaria rate in 1992 was 240 per 100,000 (UNDP 1996:161) compared to a Kerala rate of 36 for 1997 (computed from GOK 1998:103 and S240). Nonetheless, Kerala faces many medical problems including a serious shortage of blood in hospital blood banks, a possible resurgence of malaria, a threat from AIDS, and a high reported disease (morbidity) rate.<sup>7</sup>

Kerala's continuing ability to improve health services, literacy, birth rates, infant mortality, and life expectancy means that the Kerala Model is still valid and relevant as an alternative to growth-only development strategies. This important fact should not be overlooked when assessing the sustainability of the Kerala Model.

#### **4. Redistribution Programs: Case Study of Nadur Village**

Behind Kerala's statistical indicators lies a century of struggles for redistributing wealth and the expanding public services to benefit most people rather than a small elite. In 1986-87, we conducted research in the central Kerala village of Nadur ("Centreville") to ascertain the effects of these struggles at the local level.

Nadur village has many typical features of Kerala, historically, geographically, and sociologically. Nadur lies in the former princely state of Cochin. In terms of land reforms, Cochin lies between the former princely state of Travancore, now southern Kerala where many changes took place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and Malabar, now northern Kerala, where the most protracted and bitter land struggles occurred. Nadur was the scene neither of intense battles between tenants and landlords in past decades nor of land occupations by radical peasant groups in the late 1960s as took place in some other villages. At the same time, Nadur has had its share of land reform militants and Communist organizers so that it represents a kind of mid-way point in terms of land reform struggles in Kerala.

Geographically Nadur is in the lower foothills of the Western Ghat Mountains and contains intensive wet-rice paddy fields typical of the lowland areas of Kerala, as well as cashew and coconut gardens and hillside fields more common in the central midlands. It also contains some upland rubber and forest lands more like the parts of Kerala in the higher elevations to the east. In both history and geography Nadur is thus in the middle of the range of types found in Kerala.

Nadur's 5,000 plus residents include representative numbers of all the major castes of Kerala except the Christians. Like many Cochin villages, Nadur has a higher than average percentage of Nambudiri Brahmins, one of the most important former landlord groups in Kerala. It also has Nair caste members in several occupations, craft castes, Ezhavas, and Pulayas. The Nadur sample in 1987 contained only 2 households with workers sending large remittances from the Persian Gulf states. Nadur's near absence of such households makes it a controlled case in which the redistribution of the land reform should show up more clearly than in areas where remittances have flooded the village economy.

#### **4.1 The Field Research**

Nadur had been studied by Professor Joan Mencher who kindly made available to us copies of her 1971 household survey. Although the Kerala land reform was enacted in 1969 and went into effect in 1971, land titles in 1971 were still held by landlords and several households were paying rent. The 1971 survey, with a few assumptions, can be taken as pre-land reform, while our 1986-87 survey describes the situation 15-16 years later, after all land reform transfers had been completed. By comparing the two surveys we could ascertain how the land reform affected land ownership, income distribution by caste and class, and upward and downward income mobility of selected households.

#### **4.2 The Findings**

In the Nadur sample, abolition of rice land tenancy resulted in the transfer of 52.25 acres of land from 10 large landlords (6% of the sample) to 47 tenants (29% of the sample) who became fully entitled small holders. The former tenants received on average 74 cents each. One hundred and three landless households (64%) were not affected by the rice land reform.<sup>8</sup>

The abolition of house compound tenancy benefited 92% of households. Rights to 47.87 acres were transferred from 7 households (4%) to 156 households (92%). The average tenancy in 1971 was 51 cents while the average owned in 1987 was 54 cents. The poorest laboring families gained title only to small and often inferior plots. Rents and interest dropped from 7% of total sample income in 1971 to 1% in 1987 (Franke 1996:110).

**Declining land and income inequality.** We used the Gini Index to measure inequality. A decline in the Index means a decline in inequality. In Nadur, the Gini Index for rice land ownership inequality dropped 13 points. For house compound land, the Gini dropped 39 points between the two surveys. During the same 16 year period, the Gini

Index for income inequality declined by 5.3 points. Although forces outside the land reform pulled both towards greater and less inequality, land reform must have caused much of this decline in income inequality. The 1974 Kerala Agricultural Workers' Protection Act may also have played a role in these figures.

**Declining caste inequality.** In Nadur, a reduction in caste inequality is one of the clearest consequences of the land reform. The Nambudiri Brahmin hold on land and high incomes was broken. In 1971, 12 Nambudiri caste households had incomes that correlated 0.86 with rice land and 0.89 with house compound land owned. In 1987 the figures changed to -0.09 and -0.19. Nambudiri incomes rose far less rapidly than those of other castes. Nair and Mannan caste households gained the most while the lowest caste Pulayas raised their relative position slightly. Mannans and Pulayas probably gained more from programs other than the land reform such as the reservation policies. The political conditions for these programs, however, included the power of tenants and their allies in the land reform movement. Land reform struggles reinforced the leverage for these lowest caste groups to move upwards economically.

**Class inequality.** Nadur's class structure was altered dramatically by the elimination of landlord and tenant classes. Former landlords dropped from garnering 6.5 times the sample average income in 1971 to 1.5 times the average in 1987. Former tenants did not gain much on average, but several occupational groups slightly improved their economic positions. Households depending primarily on farming raised their relative share of income from 60% of average to 90%. Land reform played an important but not determining role in these class changes.

**Social and economic mobility.** In Nadur upward mobility occurred in 16 households that gained land but only one that lost land. Downwardly mobile households included 2 that lost land and 5 that gained. Overall, changes in income levels correlated 0.19 with changes in rice land ownership, and 0.21 with changes in house compound land. Both associations are statistically significant. Many other factors interacted with the reform. These include access to highly paid wage labor, age and health of household head, number of wage earners in the household, and access to reservation and targeted development programs. Land reform in Nadur helped foster upward mobility in conjunction with other social and economic processes.

**Exploitation.** One of the most effective components of Kerala's land reform was to end the threat of eviction of tenants by their landlords from either rice land or house compounds. The success of the land reform, however, has produced new tensions. In place of the struggle between tenants and landlords, former tenants are now at odds with their hired agricultural laborers. Where once the poor were pitted against the rich, now the poor are pitted against the slightly less poor. This development may present an obstacle to progressive forces in Kerala in rallying small landowners to their programs.<sup>9</sup>

**Landlord response to the land reform.** Nadur's Nambudiri caste landlord households adopted various strategies to prevent the land reform from depriving them of high incomes and good futures for their children. One strategy was to send their children for higher education to make professional employment the chief landlord response to the

reform. This response has benefited Nadur because formerly parasitic landlords have become teachers, administrators, and small business people who contribute to the economy in ways their ancestors did not. Kerala's high unemployment of the educated, however, threatens the former landlords' escape route and could result in impoverishment for some.

### **4.3 Other Redistribution Programs in Nadur**

Our Nadur study found that other Kerala programs also had measurable effects. School and nursery lunches added 3% to the incomes of the poorest households with children in school and raised their calorie intake by 5%. The lunches improved the distribution of calories and income by caste, class, income, and land ownership groups (Franke 1993:360).

Nadur's ration shop effectively reduced income inequality by 5% in 1987, providing 10% more income for the bottom two quintiles which include mostly labor and agricultural labor and low caste households. The lunches and the ration shop became particularly important in July, near the end of the long lean season before the August harvest. By making available subsidized food, they probably reduced the need for borrowing by many poor households. Even so, 11% of Nadur sample households reported food shortages so severe that, at least once during the reference year, they had to reduce food intake. Altogether 46% reported eating less, borrowing money, or borrowing food at least once in the year (Franke 1996:176).

Agricultural labor pensions played a small but significant role in reducing inequality and bringing up the income levels of the poorest groups. Our research showed that 91% of Pulaya caste households received at least one pension, and that the pensions raised the average incomes of all households receiving them by 17%. The ration shop, school lunches, and agricultural labor pensions benefited female-supported households more than male-supported households. They thus contributed to reductions in one aspect of gender inequality (Franke and Chasin 1996:628).

Literacy in Nadur rose from 60% in 1971 to 74% in 1987. Among members of the age cohort 15-29 years, the average years of schooling was 8.1 for males and 7.6 for females. The age cohort 61+, by contrast, had below 2.5 years of school (Franke 1996:228). Every caste and class group experienced increases in the percent literate and the average years of education between 1971 and 1987. Muslims and Pulayas experienced the greatest increase in years of education, thus tending to improve their position vis à vis the other castes. The rate of passing the SSLC also improved, but remained low, with only 14% of the cohort 15-29 having passed. Those included 75% of Nambudiris but only 5% of Pulayas, 14% of Nairs, and no Muslims in that cohort. The challenge for Nadur's educational system clearly comes in creating conditions favorable to real school success for those groups most disadvantaged in the past. The Nadur sample displays the same characteristics as have been noted in other parts of Kerala with regard to education, late marriage, and declining birth rates. After age has been controlled for, age of marriage and years of education play statistically significant roles in accounting for the number of births to females (Franke 1996:239).



Overall, our research in Nadur strongly suggests that redistribution has been beneficial to the lowest castes, lowest income groups, agricultural laborers, and female-supported households. During the 16 year period between the 2 surveys, several poor households experienced upward social mobility (Franke 1996:241-64). The percent of tiled roofs went from 59% to 91%, and the average number of rooms per house increased by one (Franke 1996:267). Electricity went from 8% to 23% of houses (Franke 1996:270). Still, Nadur residents have few household furnishings or consumer goods (Franke 1996:270-71). Only 22% had enough cots for all household members; the average household income was Rs 6,871 (\$529), in 1987 (Franke 1996:112), an increase of about 10% over 1971 when adjusted for inflation. Most people remain very poor by international standards.

## 5. Political Participation and Activism

We believe the Nadur study supports the contention that Kerala's quality of life achievements result from redistribution. But why has redistribution occurred in Kerala? Enlightened 19th century Maharajas provide part of the answer; Christian missions provides another part. We would argue, however, that the main factor is Kerala's popular movements that have sustained themselves for nearly a century.<sup>10</sup> These movements have gone through many stages, from caste improvement associations to trade unions and peasant associations to Communist parties to the Kerala People's Science Movement. Whatever the stage, popular movements in Kerala have displayed a combination of characteristics that—taken together—make them especially powerful and enduring.

**5.1 Kerala's movements have often contained very large numbers of members overall.** Kerala's activists have shown an ability to mobilize very large numbers of people for a variety of causes. In 1957 the membership of the *Kerala Karshaka Sangham* (Kerala Peasant's Organization) reached 190,000 (Sathyamurthy 1985:189). With just 3.5% of India's people, Kerala had 20% of all the unions in the country (7,836) in 1984. Kerala's union membership accounted for 7.5% of total Indian union membership (Thampy 1994:291). In 1983, 44% of workers in Kerala's factory sector were trade union members (Thampy 1994:291). In 1988, CPM-organized events in Alleppey involved 750,000 participants (Franke and Chasin 1994:27). The 1989-91 Total Literacy Campaign recruited 350,000 volunteer teachers.

**5.2 Kerala's movements have often achieved nearly total representation in strategic geographical or economic areas so that their influence outweighed their numbers.** During the period 1935-1940, the *All-Malabar Karshaka Sangham* (Peasants' Organization) had a paid up membership of 5,000 in Kasargod, and 10,000 in Chirakkal (Sathyamurthy 1985:156). The Shertellai Coir Factory Workers Union in 1946 had 98% of the workers as members. Six other unions in the area had above 80% membership (Kannan 1988:118). Similar concentrations existed in recent years for toddy tappers in Thrissur (Kannan 1988:145-92) and agricultural laborers in Kuttanad and Palakkad (Kannan 1988:249).

**5.3 Kerala's movements have often been very militant and creative in finding ways to challenge authority.** The birth and success of the Kerala Dinesh Beedi Workers' Cooperative in Kannur depended on the concentrated union membership, militancy, and history of mobilization of the beedi workers in the area, and the class solidarity of other workers across Kerala who became the cooperative's initial market (Thomas Isaac, Franke, and Raghavan 1998). The workers' creativity in sending out marketing teams to other unions and to community organizations was matched by their capacity to set aside party disputes and focus on the cooperative's survival. The KSSP in Kerala is known for its innovative communication style that includes street theater, puppet plays, songs, and an emphasis on making political struggle interesting to make it more effective.

**5.4 Kerala's movements have thrown up an unusually large number of dedicated and self-sacrificing middle and top leaders, thereby creating a cadre structure of unusual strength, endurance, and ability to generate new ideas and actions to adjust to changing local, national, and international circumstances.** It seems unlikely that movements with the features described above could sustain themselves for so long without a strong and viable cadre structure of leaders who for the most part do not succumb to corruption and privilege. Why did popular movements develop this set of characteristics in Kerala?

Kerala's location might play a role. As a transfer point on many ancient trading routes, Kerala has experienced influences from many other cultures, for the most part peacefully. This has led to a cosmopolitan outlook on the part of many of Kerala's people (Franke and Chasin 1994:23-25). Today, Kerala maintains national and international ties of extraordinary strength: 50% of the gross output of the primary and secondary sectors of the economy is exported to other parts of India and overseas, while around 65% of consumption expenditure goes for imports (Thomas Isaac 1994:368). In the 1980s, over 682,000 of Kerala's people worked overseas altogether (Franke and Chasin 1994:69), with as many as 187,000 in the Gulf States in 1980 alone (Nair 1994:104), possibly contributing as much as 19% to the state SDP in 1981 and remaining above 12% through 1989 (Thomas Isaac 1992:24).<sup>11</sup>

Kerala's ecology might play a role (Cohn 1971; Fuller 1976; Mencher 1966; cf. Sreekumar 1993). The undifferentiated access to water led to an evenly dispersed settlement pattern that makes it easier to protect against water-borne bacteria and parasites. This means Kerala starts with an advantage in combating infectious and parasitic diseases—the main diseases of underdeveloped areas. Another advantage is political: rural and urban workers can more easily interact and support each others' struggles. Furthermore, Kerala's elected progressive governments could more easily supply public services to a population fairly evenly distributed: there were few special costs associated with isolated, distant, politically weak groups (Franke and Chasin 1994:22-23).

Another probable factor is the set of historical conjunctures that produced a modern rural proletariat in Kerala. Cool, well watered, and close to ocean transport lanes, the

Western Ghats were ideal for tea and rubber plantations that British colonialists set up in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Coir mat-weaving factories, cashew nut processing, tile factories, and sawmills were added. In a parallel process, the supply of cheap labor in northern Malabar seems to have stimulated the rise of beedi production under the direction of Indian capitalists (Thomas Isaac, Franke, and Raghavan 1998:23-25).<sup>12</sup> More sharply than any other part of India, Kerala experienced a rupture of traditional ties of kinship, caste, and locality creating the potential for intensified class consciousness.<sup>13</sup> The dissolution of traditional ties in Kerala coincided with one of the most radicalizing periods of world history: the Russian and Chinese revolutions, the class struggles in Europe, and the independence movement in India and other colonies. The combination of these several factors and their timing may be part of the answer to Kerala's apparently unique constellation of radical movements with such power and endurance.

## 6. Crisis of the Kerala Model

Since the late 1970s, scholars and activists within Kerala, have been sounding an alarm: the Kerala Model faces a crisis (Thomas Isaac and Tharakan 1995:1995). In 1990, the *Economic and Political Weekly* devoted two issues to the theme *Kerala Economy at the Crossroads* (*EPW* 25:35-36 and 37, 1 and 8 and 15 September 1990). The Crisis of the Kerala Model was the major theme of the August 1994 *First International Congress on Kerala Studies*, held in Thiruvananthapuram. In our view, the Crisis of the Kerala Model has 8 major components.

- Kerala's economy has grown at a much slower rate than the Indian national average for most years since the late 1970s (Thomas Isaac and Tharakan 1995:1995). Between 1988 and 1994, Kerala rebounded with an annual growth rate of 6.4% compared to 5% for all-India (Heller 1998:35) before slipping again in 1996 to 1997 with a rate of 7.5% versus 14.2% for the Indian national economy (GOK 1998:11).
- Stagnation in agricultural production until the late 1980s coincided with a decline in the area planted in rice. This led to increasing vulnerability to outside sources for the major food crop—rice—which was already substantially dependent on the outside.
- Price increases for raw materials and competition from cheaper labor sources in other areas have sent traditional industries such as coir, cashew, and hand loom into a tailspin (Thomas Isaac and Tharakan 1995:1995).
- Industrial growth since the mid-1970s has been sluggish in general and even negative in some years (Mohan 1994; Subrahmanian 1994; Thomas Isaac and Tharakan 1995:1995). By 1996-97, however, it had managed a comeback to 7.4% (GOK 1998:11).
- Unemployment—already high enough to be the major blight on the Kerala Model—has remained at about 3 times the all-India average (Prakash 1994:22; Thomas Isaac and Tharakan 1995:1996).

- The state government has experienced a series of fiscal crises that threaten to undermine many Kerala Model redistribution programs (George 1993). Threatened programs include the agricultural labor pensions, educational and health spending, and the public distribution system for food. The prices of ration shop rice and wheat have been rising relative to the open market price. From 1991 to 1994, subsidized supplies declined by 31%, but in 1997 increased to 94% of 1991 levels (GOK 1998:21). Prospects for maintaining Kerala's extensive public distribution of basic foods depend on both statewide political trends and on which parties hold power at the national level. Increasing local productivity and local output is essential to Kerala's being able to exercise choice over its public distribution policies.
- Up to 15% of Kerala's people may have been left out of the Model. These include fishing people (Karuna 1994; Kurien 1994), female stone cutters (Ukkuru *et al* 1994), female domestic servants (Subramony 1994), some female agricultural laborers (Mencher 1994), at least some tribal peoples (Devi 1994; Corrie 1994), migrant workers from Tamil Nadu, and many head load and other casual laborers (Pillai 1992; 1996).<sup>14</sup>
- Finally, Kerala—like most places on earth—faces an environmental crisis of large proportions. Kerala's environmental damage directly threatens the quality of life and reduces the resource base that must be tapped to sustain the main elements of the Model. The best documented component of Kerala's environmental destruction is the loss of forest cover, down from 44% in 1905 to 27% in 1965, 17% in 1973, and 10% in 1983 (Kannan and Pushpangadan 1988:A125-126; Chattopadhyay 1985). Loss of forest cover has resulted in soil erosion in the highlands and water logging of lowland areas. Additional environmental problems include water and air pollution, and possible overfishing of some offshore regions (Kurien 1991). Repairing environmental damage is among the costliest of human endeavors, adding difficulty to a stagnant economy with little surplus to invest in renewal. Kerala's ecological problems are exacerbated by the state's high population density and its intense land use that make it difficult to set aside protected areas. Poverty drives settlers onto hillsides too steep for sustainable cultivation and forces people to cut the dangerously depleted forests for firewood to sell.

## 7. Sustainability in the Present World Situation

At the beginning of this paper, we asked what forces threaten the sustainability of the Kerala Model. Clearly, the several components of the Crisis of the Kerala Model described in section 6 above threaten the model. So do outside forces. Sustaining the Kerala Model requires surmounting several important national and international obstacles.

**7.1 The New World Order and Structural Adjustment.** One of the strengths of the Kerala Model has been the (limited) power of the state government to meet some of the demands of the poorest groups. The collapse of the Soviet Union led to the

emergence of a one-power world in the early 1990s. The New World Order means: (1) the protectionist policies that helped today's capitalist economies once develop will be denied to today's underdeveloped nations, (2) public expenditures are considered inefficient and inflationary—pressure is being exerted to reduce them, and (3) inequality is accepted as a natural result of market forces and seen as beneficial to development. Advocates of the one-power New World Order seem to have accepted Simon Kuznets' 1955 paper on the need for an entrepreneurial phase of development in which inequality increases in order to raise production, followed by a period of increased output, leading to eventual better lives for all with reduced inequality. Kuznets' scenario takes about 100 years to unfold.<sup>15</sup>

Structural adjustment is new to India, but its effects have been experienced in other parts of the world. Much of Africa and Latin America have been in structural adjustment programs since the 1980s. Between 1984 and 1990, average per capita incomes in Latin America dropped by 9.1%; in Africa they decreased by 12.5% (Pinstруп-Anderson 1993:87). Official poverty levels in Latin America rose from 25% in 1980 to 31% by the end of the decade (Pinstруп-Anderson 1993:88). In Costa Rica between 1971 and 1983, the poorest 10% of the population lost 20% while the richest 10% gained 15% relative to prices (Pinstруп-Anderson 1993:88-89). In Chile, in the decade between 1980 and 1990 the poorest half of the population saw its share of the national income drop from 20.4% to 16.8%. At the same time the richest 10% experienced an increase in their share from 36.5% to 46.8% (Bello 1994:45). In Ghana, a long-term trend of falling infant mortality rates was reversed by a 20% increase from the mid-1970s to mid-1980s (Pinstруп-Anderson 1993:105); in Abidjan, Ivory Coast neonatal mortality rates went from 37 per 1,000 in 1977-1981 to 81 per 1,000 in 1982-86 (Pinstруп-Anderson 1993:106). In Brazil, 60,000 "extra" child deaths are attributed to the 1980s recessions. Brazil had previously been labeled an economic miracle. The 3rd world generally absorbed more than 500,000 excess deaths in 1988 alone than might have been expected. War-related deaths are not included in these estimates (*The New York Times* 20 December 1988:1; Grant 1989:1). Despite a long-term trend of declining child deaths, 13 million children died in 1993, 98% of them in the 3rd world. At least 8 million of them could have been saved by oral rehydration therapy, vaccinations, and public health actions to prevent diseases such as malaria, meningitis, respiratory ailments, and certain kinds of diarrhea (Kane 1993:96). To the best of our knowledge, no study has yet shown that structural adjustment or any other program of the New World Order has benefited the poorest groups. Nor has any study shown that the policies of the New World Order fit logically, theoretically, or empirically with the concept of sustainability.<sup>16</sup>

In the context of such statistics and trends the Kerala Model is still valid and relevant as an alternative to growth-only development strategies. As the brutality of the New World Order imposes itself on societies unprepared or unable to defend their most vulnerable groups, Kerala, for all its shortcomings, might become even more of a model.

The survival of the Kerala Model is in question, too, however. Structural adjustment threatens to undermine past achievements, replacing them with policies favoring affluent consumers and freewheeling investors. Fewer restrictions on investment may lead to more investment going out of the state—the precise opposite of what people from all

political persuasions seem to think is necessary. Abolition of subsidy protections to domestic agriculture could undermine Kerala's spice, cashew, and other cash crop exchange earnings, thereby worsening the subsistence base that depends on such earnings. Small firms might lose government protections—a potentially catastrophic blow to an economy with high unemployment in which hundreds of thousands who are employed work in cottage industries. A market takeover of health, education, and social welfare could price out the poor. M. A. Oommen (1994:15) has characterized these trends as "euthanasia" for the Kerala Model.<sup>17</sup>

### **7.2 The international environmental crisis and the problem of sustainability.**

Structural adjustment and New World Order domination are not the only perils to the sustainability of the Kerala Model. International environmental developments also pose serious hazards. The 20<sup>th</sup> century has generated so much output that “evidence of mounting stresses can be seen on every hand as more and more sustainable yield thresholds are crossed and as waste absorptive capacities are overwhelmed” (Brown 1998:4). At current levels of abuse, any area can be affected by another area's practices. Fresh water tables are dropping all over the world. The demand for grains in many areas is outstripping supplies. In 1996, international grain stocks declined to their lowest recorded levels. Even with exceptionally good harvests in 1996, there were only 55 days of reserves, 15 days fewer than are required as protection against a bad harvest (Brown 1998:15-16.) Nearly every one of the world's fisheries is in decline (Brown 1998:5-9) and one-third of all fish species are at risk of extinction (Brown 1998:11). Atmospheric warming from massive developed country carbon emissions—with the U.S. by far the worst offender—has probably brought on local weather changes all over the world.<sup>18</sup> High winds, floods, and droughts threaten food production in many areas.

Kerala could be influenced by international grain decline, fish catch losses, and climate irregularities. With no direct bargaining power in international forums, and dependent on India's limited influence, Kerala has limited options for sustaining its Model.

## **8. So Is the Kerala Model Sustainable?**

Kerala's internal problems combine with several international threats that we have described. What are Kerala's strengths in the current situation?

**8.1 The old Kerala Model still matters.** The old Kerala Model fostered a literate, healthy, motivated population with a sense of purpose, involvement, commitment to ideals, and a generally optimistic future orientation. These achievements—along with the expectation of high material quality of life indicators and willingness to organize and carry out mass actions—give Kerala significant resources with which to build a new model appropriate to today's circumstances. How can such resources be effectively mobilized?

Let us return briefly to Nadur Village. In 1971 Joan Mencher found that only 25% of sample respondents believed that the village "had made progress." Following the radical reforms, we found in 1987, that 59% believed their lives were better than those of

their parents, and 71% thought life for their children would be even better (Franke 1996:273). Several respondents volunteered observations about the importance of community actions in making life better. Eight years later, Thomas Isaac and Tharakan (1995:1997) observed in their report on the First International Congress on Kerala Studies that "It is the consciousness and struggles of the masses and not the manipulations of the politicians that will ultimately determine" whether the Kerala Model survives and is renewed.

Redistribution still matters too. A study by Cereseto and Waitzkin (1988) found that for any given level of average per capita income, countries with more equality provided better education, longer life, and lower infant mortality. In other words, the Kerala Model holds cross-culturally. But does redistribution work at cross-purposes to production? Economists Bowles, Gordon, and Weisskopf (1990:223) found that among advanced industrial countries, both productivity growth and investment performance are strongly and *positively* correlated with equality. *The New York Times* (8 January 1994:A39) reported that "many economists..[have] begun to see greater income equality as compatible with faster growth—and perhaps even contributing to it." The US magazine, *Business Week*, led its issue of 15 August 1994 with a story entitled "Inequality: how the growing gap between rich and poor in America is hurting the economy." Among the studies cited in the article was one showing that in 26 US cities, those with the least inequality between suburban and inner city incomes had job creation significantly greater than those with greater inequality. Another study cited was a summary of 54 other studies from which the author, Harvard economist Richard B. Freeman, argued that market strategies and privatization tend to raise inequality while government programs are essential to reducing it.

The exact mechanisms leading to the correlations between equality, productivity, investment performance, and job creation, are not spelled out in these reports, but surely they deserve closer attention. Taken together, they imply that Kerala's strategy of redistribution is not the likely cause of the state's high unemployment and sluggish economic growth. The gains made in Nadur—that we cited earlier—are not an outmoded left wing chimera but rather a reasonable basis from which to launch new initiatives for sustainable development.

What initiatives would these be? In their review of the First International Congress on Kerala Studies, Thomas Isaac and Tharakan (1995:1997) pointed out that "...the Left needs to draw up a new agenda that is more responsive to the changed reality of contemporary Kerala." At the same Congress, veteran CPM leader, the late E. M. S. Namboodiripad, pointed out the need to "accelerate economic growth without sacrificing the welfare gains and the democratic achievements of the past" (Thomas Isaac and Tharakan 1995:1997).

## **8.2 A New Kerala Model?**

The Left's "new agenda" is the *People's Campaign for the Ninth Plan*. This campaign was drawn up on the basis of the discussions at the First International Congress on Kerala Studies and on discussions at several follow-up conferences in 1995

and 1996.<sup>19</sup> It is also based in part on the *New Democratic Initiatives* of the 1987-91 LDF Ministry. These included elected district councils—which were brought back to life for the new campaign—the Total Literacy Programme, some unrestricted funds to local panchayats, and the People's Resource Mapping Programme.<sup>20</sup> Each of these programs had met with modest success in 1987-91. The Congress-led UDF victory in the 1991 elections brought the programs to a near halt (except for the panchayat unrestricted funds), but forces had been set in motion that could be reactivated after the LDF election success of April 1996. The New Democratic Initiatives had mobilized many activists and had given them experience, and LDF leaders and middle level cadre may have learned lessons about the potential for grassroots development action aimed more at community integration and increasing production than at class struggle to spread existing wealth.

### **8.3 The People's Campaign: An Overview of the First Two Years**

Immediately after assuming power in May, 1996, the new LDF ministry made a decision to allocate 35-40% of the state plan for projects to be designed and implemented by elected local governments—village panchayats, municipalities, and the block and district panchayats.<sup>21</sup> The emphasis was on the village panchayats and urban neighborhoods. India's nationwide 9<sup>th</sup> five-year plan was about to be formulated; in 1992 the national constitution's 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendments had been adopted, requiring states to delegate 29 general administrative functions to lower level bodies. For the newly-elected LDF ministry, it was an ideal conjunction for an experiment in democratic planning. But how does a government delegate administrative functions to lower levels? LDF activists decided that a mass mobilization would be needed. The constitutional administrative reforms became a people's campaign, drawing on the strength of Kerala's history of mobilization, its literate, activist population, and the political will of the LDF leadership to make things happen.

The campaign was based on five main ideas:

- Local people often understand better than outside bureaucrats or experts what their communities need. With assistance from bureaucrats and experts working directly with them rather than in power over them, ordinary people can make more efficient use of resources and can choose more appropriate priorities.
- The use of a mass campaign mode would draw in people who might not come forward in a bureaucratically-structured reform. The experiences of the Total Literacy Campaign, the People's Resource Mapping Programme, and many KSSP projects were applied to the new campaign.
- A mass campaign mode would make it easier to insure transparency and accountability, reducing corruption and hopefully reducing the cynicism of people towards government.
- A mass campaign mode held out the best hope for bringing about changes in attitudes, creating a greater sense of community, a greater sense of optimism, and a lessening of party identification in development activities—necessary elements of what activists called the “new development culture.”<sup>22</sup>



- Local planning and local participation offer the greatest hope for attention to the environmental aspects of development—sustainability of the resource base.

LDF activists moved quickly. They set up a High Level Guidance Council under the chairpersonship of E. M. S. Namboodiripad, Kerala's veteran communist leader who enjoyed wide respect from all sections of the public. The Council was intended to create the highest possible degree of consensus for the campaign: the Council included all living former Chief Ministers from all parties, vice chancellors of the universities, cultural leaders, and leaders of mass organizations.

The People's Campaign was set in motion on 17 August, 1996, New Year's Day that year in the Malayalam calendar. The High Level Guidance Council presided over a two-hour ceremony in the Senate Hall of Kerala University in Thiruvananthapuram, that was broadcast live on state television. Simultaneously, inaugural ceremonies took place in every panchayat and urban municipality. Hundreds of thousands of people participated or watched. Immediately after the ceremony, the High Level Guidance Council remained in the Senate Hall to hold its first formal meeting: the People's Campaign was underway.

**Phase 1: The Grama Sabhas or ward assemblies.** On 15 September, 1996 the first grama sabha was held at Nandiyode Panchayat, a politically active panchayat governed by the Opposition in Thiruvananthapuram District. During the next three months, 14,147 wards in Kerala's 990 rural panchayats and 63 municipalities held these assemblies. An average of 161 people attended each assembly, about 10% of the adult population. Twenty-seven percent of those attending were women.<sup>23</sup> Written invitations were delivered to each household asking their participation. Street theater and coconut oil lamp processions created a festive atmosphere: democracy was to be enjoyable as well as necessary. Across Kerala, a thousand artists performed several thousand *janathikhara kalajathas*, "power-to-the-people processions."

The grama sabhas typically began at noon. After short introductory speeches, people broke into 12 topic groups where trained facilitators encouraged them to speak up about the problems in their ward: what organizers call getting at the "felt needs of the people." The topics were: (1) agriculture and irrigation, (2) fisheries and animal husbandry, (3) education, (4) transport, energy, and markets, (5), industry, (6) housing and social welfare, (7) public health and drinking water, (8) culture, (9) women's welfare, (10) cooperatives, (11) welfare of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, and (12) resource mobilization.

**Phase 2: Development reports and development seminars.** Topic group participants elected representatives to gather local data and prepare a local development report. In December 1996-February 1997 the topic groups discussed the development reports at village-wide development seminars and made lists of projects needed to respond to the needs expressed in the grama sabhas. The development reports are among the greatest achievements of the 9th plan campaign. Each of Kerala's 990 rural panchayats and 63 municipalities produced a report, running from 75 to 100 pages. Much of the information for the reports was gathered by activists from local government offices. Never before had such a systematic compilation of data from different sources been undertaken. The

reports offer overviews of their respective panchayats/urban areas, give brief histories gathered from elderly residents, and provide detailed information on each of the 12 topic areas discussed at the grama sabhas. Many include the results of a “transect walk,” in which a local committee chose a pathway through the community with the greatest geographical diversity, cross-cutting it and making a simple map to indicate the major ecological zones. It is hoped these maps will become a basis for careful attention to environmental issues in future years of the planning process; full-scale resource mapping is also planned..

**Phase 3: The task forces.** The development seminars elected task forces to draft project proposals. These proposals were to include appropriate technical, cost-benefit, and time-frame considerations along with an assessment of the resources of the community to carry out each project. An estimated 120,000 persons drafted 100,000 project proposals by March 1997.

**Phase 4: Finalization of the annual plan.** In March of 1997, the state budget was approved with 36%, or Rs 10,250,000,000 (Rs 1,025 crores: one crore=10 million) earmarked for local projects. At this point, power shifted from the assemblies and the task forces to the elected panchayat officials, who became responsible for approving overall local plans and for prioritizing projects. Each panchayat submitted a formal written plan up to the next level, the block (a group of 2 to 13 villages), and from there to the district. Each plan included a brief description of the local development challenges, a statement of the local development strategy, estimates of the additional local resources that could be mobilized—volunteer labor and material contributions—a list of projects drafted by the task forces, a discussion of the possibilities of integration among the projects, a statement about the special programs for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, a statement about the gender impact of projects with a list of special projects for women that were supposed to employ at least 10% of the total funds, and a plan for monitoring the implementation to avoid corruption and insure effective use of funds towards the intended ends.

**Phase 5: Annual plans for the block and district levels.** From April to September 1997, block and district level panchayats prepared plans based on the village plans submitted to them. A novel innovation was the idea of evaluating the development problems in each locality according to a 4-point severity scale—using information from the lower level plans—and making a similar matrix of ratings for the relative importance of the different types of projects for each lower-level panchayat. The block and district panchayat plans were supposed to identify weaknesses in the lower level plans and fill in the gaps that seemed to require higher-level action. Because of delays in the first round of local panchayat plan preparation, this phase did not work very well, but the concept holds promise for future years.

**Phase 6: Plan appraisal: the Voluntary Technical Corps.** In their first year local communities had many problems drawing up project descriptions and keeping track of technical issues. Planning Board activists attempted to overcome these problems by issuing a call for a “Voluntary Technical Corps,” of retired technical experts living in Kerala’s villages. The campaign took up the slogan “Life Begins at 55,” referring to

Kerala's retirement age and the excitement and rewards of making life better in one's own community. More than 4,000 experts answered the call, committing themselves to at least one day a week giving advice to the task forces and helping to evaluate local projects and plans. Expert committees were formed at the block and district levels, drawing on VTC members and government officers. These committees were expressly forbidden to alter the priorities set by the local bodies, but they were allowed to make suggestions on how to make individual projects more feasible.

**Training for empowerment.** In its first year the people's campaign trained hundreds of thousands of persons in seven rounds of training. In the initial three stages, training was provided to 660 at the state level, 11,808 at the district level, and 100,000 in the villages and municipalities. Training included sessions on what the campaign was about, how to lead an effective discussion, how existing government regulations and would affect local planning, how to draft project proposals, and many other topics. Each training session included a handbook, and an appeal for continuing self-study after the session. Lectures were supplemented by group discussions and, in some stages, "project clinics."

We witnessed the 3-day training of local volunteers for the 4th stage of the campaign that took place in Calicut on 10-12 January 1997. The 4,500 volunteers came from all over northern Kerala. They received meals, lodging, and transportation, but no other payment. They attended lectures, workshops, and project clinics from 10 am to midnight in several buildings of the Zamorin High School, borrowed for the weekend.

At the project clinics, panchayats with interesting or advanced projects presented seminars giving detailed descriptions of their work. The emphasis was on how to do it. Topics included: "The Chapparapadava Peoples Bridge," "The Thanalur People's Health Programme," "Kunnothuparambu's Water Conservation Societies," "Peelicode's Total Sanitation Programme," and Kalliasseri's experience in overall planning.

**What has been accomplished?** The people's campaign has experienced numerous difficulties, delays, and disappointments. Despite large-scale participation, most of Kerala's people did not attend any of the meetings or discussions. Despite tremendous energy and sacrifice by dedicated persons at all levels, the entire process was significantly delayed: a campaign originally conceptualized for one year has run into its third year. Corruption, incompetence, and political haggling marred the campaign in some places. Women, scheduled castes, and scheduled tribes participated at much lower levels than had been hoped. Opposition representatives and even some supporters of the LDF worked openly or surreptitiously against the campaign for their own political purposes.

But achievements of the campaign were also substantial. The initial 14,147 grama sabhas took place without any violent incidents. Plans *did* emerge from the local level and the planning process showed signs of taking off: plans that took more than a year in the first phase were completed in four months in the second year. People were learning by doing. Local communities supplemented government allocations with voluntary labor and donations that raised the value of the projects by 10%. Mechanisms were put in place to reduce corruption and increase the level of public monitoring and government

accountability at several levels. More funds than ever were made more directly available than ever to scheduled caste and scheduled tribal communities—for more transparent projects than previously.

Most importantly, people are experiencing a new sense of optimism about their communities. And government bureaucrats are seeing the value of coming out from their offices to work more directly with the people.

## **9. So, is the Kerala Model sustainable?**

It is too soon to say whether the people's campaign can sustain the Kerala Model. But we think it offers the best hope for the future. By arranging government from the bottom up and by inspiring ordinary people to contribute more fully to developing their communities, The People's Campaign for the 9th Plan constitutes a giant experimental alternative to the multinational corporate domination of the New World Order. It offers democracy in place of domination, empowerment in place of submission, environment and community in place of profit, and action in place of passivity. Having learned their lessons from the past, Kerala's people are creating prospects for a sustainable future.

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<sup>2</sup> A subject search of the Harvard University library Union catalog brought up 180 books with (nonmilitary) "sustainability" as one of the key words. Most were published since 1993.

<sup>3</sup> These are adapted from Franke and Chasin 1983:11. Daly (1996:195) gives a more detailed and technical definition: "An economy in sustainable development adapts and improves in knowledge, organization, technical efficiency, and wisdom; it does this without assimilating or accreting an ever greater percentage of the matter-energy of the ecosystem into itself but rather stops at a scale at which the remaining ecosystem can continue to function and renew itself year after year. The nongrowing economy is not static—it is being continually maintained and renewed as a steady-state subsystem of the environment." Daly goes on to specify

how particular elements of the economy should operate, but does not directly take up the questions of distribution of wealth, political rights, and material levels of living.

<sup>4</sup> Based partly on George's criticisms, Tharamangalam (1998) has launched a full-scale attack on the Kerala Model. Our reply to his attack appears in Franke and Chasin (1998) along with other responses, both critical and supportive. A further set of responses will appear in *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 30(4), 1998.

<sup>5</sup> The figure of 65 comes from the 1998/99 World Bank report. Other sources give higher IMR rates for India as a whole. It should also be kept in mind that a small portion of the all-India figure is influenced by the Kerala figure that makes up a part of it.

<sup>6</sup> For simplicity, we are grouping together 59 municipalities, 3 municipal corporations (Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam, and Kozhikode), and one township (Guruvayur).

<sup>7</sup> See Franke and Chasin 1994:vi-vii for a discussion of the problems of interpreting the apparently high morbidity rate in Kerala. Kerala's suicide rate in 1994 was the highest in India at 28 per 100,000. The all-India rate was 10 and Karnataka was second to Kerala with 19 (Halliburton 1998:2341). Police surveys indicate that reasons for suicide in Kerala are the same as for the rest of India (Halliburton 1998). We do not wish to downplay this important failure of Kerala society, but one should keep in mind that the suicide rates are per *hundred* thousand, while the infant mortality and birth rates are per *one* thousand.

<sup>8</sup> See Franke 1996:121-92 and Franke 1992 for details of the land reform analysis that follows. See Chasin 1990 for an interpretation of the land reform's effects on gender inequality.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Isaac and Tharakan (1995:1996) see this conflict as a possible reason for the heavy election losses of the LDF in 1978 in Palakkad and Alappuzha, two of its traditional strongholds. Herring (1989; 1991) surveys many aspects of the conflict with reference to Palakkad.

<sup>10</sup> Jeffrey (1993) appears to agree with this point, though his explanation for how the movements grew differs somewhat from ours. Casinader (1995) offers a view similar to ours in the context of a comparison between Kerala and Sri Lanka. Herring (1983) argues that mass movements and their level of militancy were the keys to the enactment of the Kerala land reform.

<sup>11</sup> Our note to table 1 explains that we took the exceptionally high figure of 40% to make sure we did not exaggerate the difference between Kerala's quality of life achievements and its per capita income. Some observers in Kerala have suggested the 40% figure on the assumption that government data would surely underestimate the effects of the remittances, some of which might not be traceable.

<sup>12</sup> The location of beedi production in northern Malabar is otherwise difficult to account for since none of the raw materials are available there.

<sup>13</sup> Jeffrey (1993) has suggested that the decline of the *marumakkathayam* system and the breakup of the Nair *taravad* may also have played a role. His point is well argued, but we think larger forces also had to be at work. Nairs make up only about 14% of Kerala's population, and while many Ezhava households also practice *marumakkathayam*, this hardly seems enough to produce such widespread mobilization as occurred in 20th century Kerala.

<sup>14</sup> Pillai (1996:2099) reports that about 4,600 headload workers are covered by a Kerala-Model scheme to regularize their work relations and create a modern benefits structure. These workers represent about 2% of the total estimated headload and casual laborers in the state.

<sup>15</sup> Franke (1996:9-10) summarizes the Kuznets approach in terms of the international development literature.

<sup>16</sup> Mander and Goldsmith, eds., provide a full-scale critique of the New World Order.

<sup>17</sup> The other elements mentioned in this paragraph are also taken from Oommen's paper.

<sup>18</sup> US emissions in 1997 were 23% of the world total, ahead of second-place China that had 14%. The average US citizen accounts for 21 times as much carbon as the typical Indian (Dunn 1998:66).

<sup>19</sup> Our paper on female-supported households, included in this volume, was prepared for the follow-up conference on women's roles and empowerment.

<sup>20</sup> Brief overviews of the Peoples Resource Mapping Programme are available in Franke and Chasin 1994:xvii-xviii and Thomas Isaac, Franke, and Parameswaran 1997:42-44.

<sup>21</sup> Village panchayats in Kerala average about 25,000 in population. Two to thirteen villages are grouped into development "blocks" which also have elected councils or panchayats. The blocks are combined into the districts which now have district councils.

<sup>22</sup> For more details of the concept of a new development culture, see Thomas Isaac, Franke, and Raghavan 1998:71 and 213

<sup>23</sup> The female percent is based on figures from 703 rural panchayats that reported the male-female breakdown.