

Separation between Man and Nature enabled opening up of new trajectories of imagining the 'realisable potentialities' of oneself and the nation. A few phrases that are central terms of the discourse can be spelt out: mastery over Nature, mastery over oneself, splitting of the past from the present and future, optimism about changing hierarchy, separation of labour from land, prioritisation of modern over tradition. Man began to set his ends and sought to find out the 'rational' means to achieve them assuming that there are rationally derivable means and end which can only be good to men and therefore most desirable: causality was born then. This optimism pushed many to prioritise the wealth of nations of the Political Economy kind over human happiness and other sublime aspects of life.

How do we represent the following situations: a situation in which Man separates himself from Nature; a situation in which Man thinks that his hands are capable of moulding the Nature according to his will; a situation in which Man considers himself capable of altering his own Nature and customary practices and deciding his fate and that of future generations. How do we categorise a thinking that conceives of development and freedom as brought about by accumulation of wealth? What kind of thought classifies countries in terms of the telos of 'development' and situates one's country as 'undeveloped'?

A possibility: with the help of a concept which can be broadly phrased as 'Developmental Modernity'.

Developmental Modernity

Developmentalism is the non-self-reflexive belief/confidence in the claims and promises of the project and discourse of 'development'. Developmentalism is a major repertoire of belief systems for speaking about the present and future of any country, class, caste, region and any conceivable social unit. Within the discourse of development, individuals are objectified as labouring subjects; they are at the same time subjects who will, in turn,

objectify others and make them participate in the unfolding of the project of development. The project of development combines different intentions, strategies, agents, dreams etc.; it promises 'equality' and 'freedom' *in the future*—yet in this world. Its units are nation/society and individual. This calculated rational belief in the capability of the project of development to bring cure, wealth, happiness, freedom, salvation, redemption, prosperity etc. is innocent of self-reflexivity; therefore the uncritical acceptance of the promises.

In developmentalism and discourse of development, Man looks at himself as a master of nature and the value of one's being in this world is judged by how much wealth he possesses. He can be instrumental in the production of raw materials. If developmentalism is a solar system having the bright planets of seduction, incentive, compulsion, violence, enticements, restraints, unfathomable conviction, persuasiveness etc. then developmental modernity is a galaxy. This is where social reformulations was carried out to fashion micro-entities such as individuals to be in the system effectively.

Within Developmental Modernity, Nature is separated from Man; modernity-tradition divide is construed; Nature is split into useful and waste or useless; universe is divided into human and non-human; societies are separated into developed and undeveloped, cultured and natural, civilised and tribal etc.; besides, a society or a nation is judged by its wealth and control of other territories. Man ventures to decide the fate of himself and of others through self-transformation and produce wealth from the nature, Man represents Nature and himself objectively to develop his nation and free himself from the yoke of 'tradition' and 'passivity'.

Developmental Modernity goes on reinscribing and adjusting itself to undermine scepticism about the project of development in order to guarantee circulation and material repeatability of developmentalism. Developmental modernity embraces science but strategically alters its reasons continuously by convincing ever more novices of developmentalism that the reasons are

objectively derived and unaffected by social stratification, politics and power. That is why, as we have pointed out, development was unquestionably accepted as the objective condition of freedom, equality and redemption. In other words, this condition was uni-versalised, although it had the genealogy of multiversality, as development was reductively constituted; and it was made into a truth before it was circulated as ideology. Material causality was separated from human imagination and ideation and it was prioritised over any other forms of thought. Words such as 'power', 'culture', 'tradition' and 'history' are used in all innocence.

Developmentalism works in specific locales where developmental modernity has no strong opposition and does not receive sceptical gaze etc.; even contests are negotiated in favour of the continuation of developmentalism. Developmental modernity neither excised tradition out of modernity nor modernised any aspects of everyday affairs completely; it created a kind of, in the absence of better word, hybridity. There were also several locales in which hybrids were never thought to be hybrids for the boundary between 'inside' and 'outside' were outside the purview of the prevalent thought.

Unlike notions such as 'modernity' and 'progress', 'development' assumes a present filled with misery, poverty, state of degeneration, passivity etc. whereas in the case of modernity and progress, as they were conceived in the west, they were movements towards consummation from an already 'advantageous/developed' state of affairs. The psychology of self-denigration, self-contempt, self-accusations etc. did not give scars to the subjects of progress. Such psychology was one of the initial conditions of developmental modernity; and the immediate concern was for 'cure' than advancement and achievement. Modernity and modernisation are different from developmental modernity and development.

There are many who find identity between development and modernisation in the contexts of 'peripheral societies'. They would argue, for

example: "a version of development has come finally to be synonymous with modernity and been disseminated and incorporated in the practices of social forces." (Heinz. R Sontag, 2001:219-30) Several others would agree with such a view. But our discussion clearly shows that 'development' and modernity/modernisation cannot in no way be used as synonyms. Not only that the initial conditions of development and European modernity are different but also that any process that takes place under colonial condition is different from those taking place under other conditions. We should also remember that modernity could never be formed into something having universal application but development has been formed so; in the sense that development was normalised, while the idea of 'modern' was, in several contexts, contested. This is one of the ways in which the present paper can be situated within the wider context of academic discussions on development.

Of course developmentalism and discourse of modernity are not monoliths, but we can always trace the continuities and lingering bruises that were common to all versions of them. They, as they have unfolded in developmental modernity, did not exclude any one from becoming the object or subject of it; they, in fact, invited and pushed everyone to participate in the project of production centred development. They were, in principle, secular. For the gaze of the discourse had no bounds, it cuts across caste, creed, class, religion etc. Earlier wealth creation was a concern of a few, but since developmentalism got normalised among the people, every citizen/individual in the population had one or other role to act out.¹² The entire population is expected to be both objects and subjects of developmentalism.

¹² It is worth while to quote from a self-reflexive text which deconstructs and reconstructs development theory. "... the missionary zeal frequently associated with modernization and development, comparable to earlier missionary passions of conversion, improvement and reform. Developmentalism and its master plan is not merely a matter of reason and logic, it is also, at heart, the performance of a religious duty, the quest of a utopian rendezvous, the pursuit of a messianic course." (Pieterse, J. N 2001:26)

Development discourse began in Kerala by the turn of the nineteenth century. For instance it was possible to formulate statements such as the following.

The solution of a few of those problems (belonging to 'bread-and-butter nature') makes him feel that knowledge is power to control nature to human needs, and he naturally revels in the exercise of such power to the utmost limit of his capacity. ... The machinery employed in the conquest of nature... (Parameshwara Iyer, U, 1926,1978:125-26)

Since then, developmentalists and modernisers had been the main missionaries and pastures of the people longing for social change and development. Being already objectified and subjects of project of development at the same time, they in turn, objectified ever more numbers of people. The locales of their affective and effective action were families, and public sites such as schools, churches, plantations, markets etc. In these sites development project employed the most seductive terms of power of developmental discourse. The new shepherds of developmentalism and developmental modernity were singing the songs of freedom, equality and redemption that development was to bring to the flock.

Discourse of development centralised wealth and state in the anticipated life worlds of people. Within developmentalism also the individual subjectivities were formed in the world of wealth—and this assumes drastic reshuffling of the social relations and practices. Interestingly enough, when we look into the history of development process, only its absence/lack could be traced. The material-production-centric discourse of development generated not so much 'development of material processes', *homo economicus* or labouring subjects, but something else. One illustrative statement can be invoked.

Great irrigation schemes have been established to secure him from famine; co-operative societies of all kinds have been formed to save

him from the grinding persecution of the money lender; demonstration and experimental farms have been set up in all parts of the country to show him in a practical fashion how to improve his cultivation and his breeding of stock. But, to my mind, the mind obstacle to his advance and progress lies in the psychology of the rural worker himself, owing to the custom and habit of caste and tradition that has governed his life and actions for generations. (Spencer Hatch, 1932: IX)

The state did all that it could do but development has been deferred. In spite of the continuous deferment the confidence in the promises of development and un-self reflexive participation in the project of development continued. Lack of development looms large even today in the fast-multiplying discourse of development, particularly the one that refers to the famous 'Kerala model of development'. We will return to this point later; now let us move on to the beginnings of developmentalism that has formed in the discourse of development.

Developmentalism got formalised, roughly speaking, by the beginning of the twentieth century, although some of the contemporary terms of development, such as empowerment, governance, information etc, were yet to become keywords. By the mid-twentieth century developmentalism was firmly rooted in Kerala (about this we will have more shortly). It entered into family, educational institutions, political parties, tea and barber shops, public places, markets, churches, media etc. Nevertheless, there are those who believe that developmentalism is primarily a post-world war phenomena; for instance, those who discuss post-developmentalism like in the literature of Ferguson, J (1990), Escobar, A (1995), Sachs, W (1999) etc. anchor developmentalism to the reshuffling due to post-world war trauma. Post-developmentalism reaffirms the need for self-reflexivity especially in the context of rethinking about the ways in which the projects of development have effectively unfolded. Nevertheless, the history of development that they construct goes against the genealogical beginnings.

In post-developmentalism the development project bifurcates since the declaration of Truman. What is underlined here is not so much the problem of chronology but of chronogramming which has effects of power. But making a cut of point it slips into essentialism and the habit of treating the 'developing nations' as a given universe. Representation of contemporary development project as post-war phenomena is equal to creating a 'Truman effect' and fabricating a superhero-author/authority capable of changes in the 'developing' world. This is tantamount to agency-centricism in identifying a project which has always been unfolding or in its becoming. The 'inventions' of development began to appear in Kerala much before the world war and Truman. And today it has reached every strata of society—the *Malampandaaram*, bands of forest dwellers, may be an exception, but they have already come to its fringes. This reference to post-developmentalism is only a way of situating this paper in its wider academic discussions on development and modernisation.

We can safely say that both developmental modernity and developmentalism have driven their roots into the soil of State and also into the texture of the every day life of the 'educated'. The process of development was a double-edged dagger in the sense that it had sites in which people could corporate with the state and it also provides 'legitimate' scope for opposition towards shortcomings of the state. The state, the educated and the market leaders, at the same time, accepted development as a universal concept. They took upon themselves the responsibility to universalise it with their spirit of *ecumena* by the turn of nineteenth century. And by the second quarter of twentieth century, major social collectives received the insignias of developmentalism. Poverty, population, necessity, education, etc. became quite popular. By then, there were many social collectives which were already objects of developmentalism-but since then, every body has been targeted. And by the fourth quarter of the twentieth century, they became the naturalised subjects and objects of developmentalism.

Rendezvous with contemporary versions of developmental discourse

Monoliths are rare in developmentalism. Developmental discourse projected monolithic behaviour and values, but in developmentalism no one particular type of hybridity can be identified. There are significant variations in the proportions of the mixture. It is possible to classify different versions within what we generally call as developmental discourse in which people/individuals are objectified and made into subjects diversely. We have already discussed extensively several facets of developmental discourse formed within/under the colonial conditions. In it the state was supposed to give lead, the basic unit was the nation and development was projected as a homogenising-secular project, the goal of which was to 'catch up with' industrialised economies; the key terms were equality, freedom, production, productivity, poverty, population, resource etc. In a long run perspective, one can say that, all these remained so before and after independence and the subsequent formation of Kerala as a State. Development discourse was central to colonial conditions and it remained so even after the British Raj. The nationality of the individuals who took the agent positions did change, but it is difficult to believe that development took over those that colonialism left.¹³ Development as it took place operated through the structures of colonialism conditions. It is true that the white masters have 'left' but the conditions, structures and institutions that were created here could not be taken away by them. 'Colonialism' cannot be represented merely through the acts of its bearers; it is something that got shaped right 'here'. Agent-centricism is a difficult language practice to give up. So much is by way of linking the present paper with its textual surrounding.

Another version of developmental discourse became popular by the time celebration of 'independence' started; it was a more radical version of developmental discourse and was influenced by the notions such as equality, freedom and socialism. It objectified not so much 'national development' but

¹³ Example for such arguments can be seen in Kothari, R. 1988.

that of 'labour', 'poor' or the 'common folk'. Here the unit is not nation/society but a sub-section of it. The cause of the 'working class' was celebrated. Through this the project of development could advance a long way into the environs of the labourers, who were since then represented as the marginalised. They were represented as subjects seeking ever-more economic gain. Within the discourse they were objects who could not yet stand up for their rights like development, equality and freedom. The concept of change in the former version was gradual and selective but in this version it is radical and inverting; tendency to universalise development is common to both, so also the agent of development. It may be possible to elucidate this 'radicalness' by making sense of the way the separation between Man and Nature is articulated in this version. The relation between them was radicalised to the extent that there was strong revealed preference, at least among the 'progressive' ideologues of the time, for the artificial, and a revulsion towards the Natural. It was thought that Natural growth darkens and shrinks Man's world (inner as well as outer) and therefore it should be slashed and cleared (*vettithelikkuka*) so that Man gets light; such was the radical humanism at work. One of the examples:

That serpent grove, I behold,

Cancer of the good soil

The inner eye shimmered

A flashing axe

Ye deities, thriving

In abodes of darkness,

Human life has suffocated,

Within your spreading wilderness

We are now setting fire!

As I slashed and burned away that forest

It was only a yellow snake! that slithered away,

vanishing

Saplings did I nurture there, palms, plantain, plantations...

(Vailoppilli, 1984:157-161) (translation)

This is one of the poetic pilgrimages seeking to liberate the Malayali from the claws of bad (to be cleared) and sick (to be cured) Nature. This was nothing new when it was written at the middle of the twentieth century. The knowledge of the inner eye tells Man to take over as his 'right' (a privilege otherwise solely exercised by deities) the conquest of Nature and its alteration. We were, it was thought, fated to inherit the 'demonic' beliefs and this was to be 'developed' by setting the sacred grove on fire. Firmly grounded in the certainty of Natural/Universal law that Man has produced, as against the Divine law, Modern Man can disclose and criticise, accuse and express resentment at continued beliefs and accuse Nature for sickening culture. The call was to slash and burn the 'natural' and not merely to *milk* Nature.

Nature is inserted into the economic-order as resource, as arable land, and Man, holding the flashing axe, encounters ever more remote parts of Nature disclosed by the inner eye that shimmers glowingly at the sight of the natural. A worldly Parashurama¹⁴ is concocted; one who does not throw his axe into the air to part the sea and create land as a sacrifice, but slashes the forest, what is out there as an agriculturist. Parashurama becomes the labouring Subject, axing the root of everything natural. Patriotic citizens were expected to carry on this idealised activity, and the ideal figure was that of the

¹⁴ Parashurama is a legendary character who is portrayed as the creator in the origin-myths of Kerala and several castes.