Chapter V

The Changing Social Conception of Old Age

This chapter deals with the major findings of case studies. Open-ended interview schedule was used to collect the data to find out factors which are changing the concept of old age. The questionnaire had four major parts: first part was to collect the preliminary data, while the second was general questions to elicit the idea about the changes in the concept of old age. The third part dealt with more historical-comparative mode of thought covering selected political, economic, sociological, cultural, and religious reasons for this change. The fourth part was about the modern arrangements to cope with old age. Here the explanatory nature of the questions gave opportunities to the respondent to reflect on his/her ideas. Apart from the organized interviews, informal discussions were extremely beneficial. They helped the researcher go deep into the reality. Visits to the old age homes and interaction with its inmates and the staff helped to collect valuable information and data. Since the researcher is a resident of the district, 'participant observation' was part of the research methodology. Interactions with people of different walks of life and different age groups have produced valuable data.

Part I – Basic Data

The first part of the questionnaire was aimed at collecting the basic data of the respondents' overall socio-economic background. The sample selected was from the age group of sixty plus. Male/female differentiation had not made much of an effect on changes of old age conception. Still, some of them had the view that the shift in conception of old age may affect the males more. All other data like marital status, religion/caste/ community, profession, status in the community, locality of stay etc. were helpful to know the cases individually. It helped to find out how the changed conceptions of old age affected each respondent and what were the factors that influenced their ideas of old age. It is the 'subjectivity' that constituted through the discourses of gender, marital status, religious involvement, profession and so on.

Part-II

The second part of the questionnaire was rather a direct approach to the idea of change in conception of old age. For this reason some have responded directly with no further explanations. But some others gave detailed explanations with confusing ideas. Still, many have responded clearly. Some misunderstood the statement and responded that they do care for the elderly well and provide better facilities than ever before. The reason stated was that they are financially well today. They added that in the past, many of the elders were really struggling even for food. One of

them responded, "*ari veykkunna bhavanangaḷ kuṟavāyirunnu*" (The households which cook rice were less in number). That is to say the lower income people could not afford rice as their daily food in those days. Here, the researcher directed the interviewee to a more historical-comparative mode of thought covering selected political, economic, social, cultural and religious reasons for this change.

Part III

This part was intended to check how the political, economic, social, cultural and religious discourses are bringing changes in the concept of old age.

Political

To bring forth the concepts caused by the political changes, the interview schedule had questions about the break up of *janmi*-system. In stratified societies, the land owners (*janmis)* were the authorities, especially in the political affairs.

Janmi-System

To the question, how the break up of *janmi* system has affected the authority of elderly, most of the Christians-- the Marthomites, the Orthodox Christians and the Catholics had more or less similar response. They all agreed to the fact that *janmi*-system favoured the *janmis*, especially the elder ones, in exercising power over others. Some remembered their position like a

'King' to the family and to the community. Some remembered their 'right' to take decision in other people's matters too. Most of them were suggesting that today the factors that determine power are not the land ownerships, but the dynamic personality and efficiency in public activities. But some respondents from the Nair community disagree and say that land ownership still brings certain powers, at least within the four walls of the household.

The respondents from the Ezhava and, SC communities were of the view that their forefathers never had the experience of political power due to the land ownership. But today, some of them hold 'power' politically, though they do not own large acres of property. The Muslim respondents remembered the authority practised by their fore-fathers who had many business investments. The respondents from ST also were not familiar with the traditional *janmi*-system, but were happy to be under the leadership of *gōtṟa*-system.

Economic

Three questions were asked to find out the impact of economic discourses. They were: about the inheritance of property, about the caste based/traditional occupational system and about the tendency for urbanization/migration.

Inheritance of Property

The question asked in this section was, 'has decline of income from the property lessened the value of its holders, especially of the elderly'. To this question, most of the Marthomite respondents had the opinion that holding or inheriting property is not a big matter in today's perception. The respondents from the rural areas were considering it as a real burden. The Orthodox Christians and Catholics had more or less similar opinion and emphasized that their migrated children do not show much interest in the large acres of property in the rural settings. Instead, they consider it as a liability and donate it to the sibling who takes care of the aged parents, one commented. The Nairs did not say that they do not have interest in inheriting property. Some of them had responded that they might not use it for the purpose of cultivation, but needed it as a matter of security measure. Most of the Ezhava respondents had the same opinion, but two of them said that inheriting property is a matter of great prestige. Muslims also showed interest in inheritance, especially of their business. Most of the SCs and STs were in real need of inheritance, as holding of land enables them for the house construction by the Government. Some others said that they never had the experience of inheriting property from the fore-fathers.

Caste /Tradition Based Occupation

In order to verify the elder's role as 'occupational advisers', the question given was, 'what is your attitude towards the following of caste

based/traditional occupation of the father'. To this question, some Christian respondents said that it is God's will. Some others have expressed their willingness to continue the same profession such as doctor, engineer, teacher, lawyer etc. or the family business. Some of them were of the opinion that going abroad to make more money was much better. Some Nairs showed interest to stick with the Government job as usual. But some were very keen to follow the recent trend of joining to the courses like nursing, computer etc. than ever before. Most of the Ezhava respondents had the opinion that their children do not show any interest to follow their traditional occupation. The boys do prefer to become drivers or take up other technical jobs, while the girls are mostly interested in nursing or teaching. Most of the Muslims did not give up their father's trade and business completely; instead they modernized their businesses. Some are using the opportunity that they attained through education and many are attracted by the employment in Gulf countries. The SCs and STs did not like to follow their traditional occupation. They liked to be employed by the government through reserved quotas.

Urbanization/Migration

Urbanization/migration of the younger generation in search of better opportunity has become a widely accepted trend today. For this reason, a question on 'the attitude towards urbanization/migration of the young' is included. This question had very good response from all the communities. Most of the Christians were of the view that migration of the young brings

economic prosperity to the family, but two of them were regretting the fact all their children are abroad. Nair respondents were not that enthusiastic to follow this trend. But some of them were pointing out the recent changes in this attitude, as many are getting interested in migration. Most of the Ezhava respondents were of the opinion that 'going abroad to make money' is good at least for some time in life, but not for the permanent settling. Muslims also had the same opinion as the Ezhava respondents. They said that the gulf countries are good to make money than India. Migration in search of job has not yet become so common among the SC and ST communities. The word migration reminded some STs to their re-settlement in another land by the Government effort. Migration in order to search of better opportunities is not very common among them.

Social

Today education is considered as one of the major determinants of socialisation of human beings. Through this the human mind gets enlightened and reformed. In Kerala's context, besides education, religion made major impact on the reformed mentality which in turn affected the social life of people.

Modern/English Education

The aim of this question was to find out if the Indian cultural values were diminished by the introduction of the modern/job-oriented education.

A question enquiring the attitude of the respondents towards the modern way of education was asked. Most of the Christians were highlighting the wide opportunities that provided by the modern education. They considered it as a special privilege to attain modern education. But some of them argued that modern education does not enhance the Indian culture and its values. The Nair respondents commented about their recent trend of seeking high and technical education. Nowadays, they send their children for courses like nursing, teaching, computer studies etc. Ezhava respondents were mostly interested with technical studies. The nursing course is becoming popular than ever before. In contrast to the general trend, the Muslims of Pathanamthitta are highly educated among the Muslims of all over Kerala. The statement has been proved by the achievement of the eminent figures of the locality like Justice Fathima Beevi, Dr. Sayed Muhammed and so on. The respondents from SC and ST communities showed interest to equip their children with contemporary education. The reservation policy by the Government in favour of them is also one of the reasons.

Girl's Education/Women in Job

To the question about girl's education, the general opinion was that the girls as the bearers of culture must be well educated. The difference of opinion was only for sending women into salaried job. Many of the Christians had the attitude that if they are wealthy, then the women need

not work. The women respondents (the aged ones) answered that they worked due to economic considerations. But today's work participation is not with the same reason. Some of them were arguing that it is a matter of recognition as it brings status and prestige to the women. Nair respondents had more or less similar opinion. The Ezhava respondents said that their women are mostly engaged with household matters. But today's girls, the women of next generation, will not be the same. They are qualified and may seek proper placements. Most of the Muslims had the opinion that their religious faiths do not recommend to send their women to the public place in search of job. But some have disagreed with this opinion. The respondents from SC and ST communities said it is good to get some placements in the job market.

Religious Reforms

To the question regarding the influences of religious reformations, the Marthomites said that they are highly influenced by the reformed practices. They don't give much importance to the rituals and practices like many other Christian denominations. The Orthodox Christians and Catholics had more or less a similar opinion, namely, that rituals are important in today's society too. Some Nair respondents were of the opinion that the reforms are good, but the rituals conducted by the *mēlśānti* (the upper caste priest) will provide some soothing effect to people. The Ezhava respondents had to say that the reforms are good, so that the

organizations today are working for the progress of the community. The Muslims were not happy with the religious reforms. Most of them liked the rigid practices of Islam. The respondents of SC and ST communities said that the religious reforms are not influential in producing any enthusiasm among them.

Family

Family is the most cherished social institution in Kerala and the most vital non-formal social security for the old. This section is to investigate the familial impacts that cause changes in the conception of old age. So the question was related to family; the basic unit of society.

Joint Family System

The respondents were asked the following question: 'What is your opinion about the joint stay of living arrangement for today's society'. All the respondents, the Christians, Hindus and the Muslims agreed that the traditional type of joint family is not possible in today's situation. Many of the Christians had the opinion that today's concept of family is meant to constitute father, mother and their unmarried children. Some others said that 'three generation in a single household' is reasonable. But if exceeded, it will bring conflicts. Still there were exceptions where four, in rare cases five generations lived together in the same household. The Nairs responded that their aged parents do live with one of the children, mostly with the daughter. The Ezhava respondents also had the same opinion that they do

not let their parents live alone. Except one, all other Muslims were responding that avoiding parents at their old age is an offence in Islam. The exceptional case was saying, "If the health and conscience permit the parents must live separately". The SC as well as the ST respondents did not point out any difference in their living arrangement than the earlier days. Today too, their aged parents do live with one of the children, they said. But for rare cases, the Government policies like the house allotment scheme or the old age homes for the aged are persuading them for the separation of the aged, one added.

Part IV

Part four of the questionnaire enables to investigate the effectiveness of pension schemes, institutional arrangements and home nurses. These and the un-availability of *adiyāṛs* are affecting the concept of old age.

Pension Scheme

Regarding pension scheme the following question was asked: do the pension schemes or any other social security scheme help the elderly to have some economic independence? All the respondents, irrespective of community, unanimously agreed that the pension schemes are really a blessing to the aged. One Marthomite responded, "My salary was Rs.850/- at the retirement in 1985, and now receiving the pension of Rs.4000/- per month". The Christians responded that the pensions provide economic

independence in old age. The Nair respondents were also of the same opinion. Most of the Ezhava respondents were not the pensioners with regular jobs, but some of them were Gulf-returned. One Muslim respondent who retired from Electricity department was saying that pension is good that he can have an economically independent life today. The pensioner from the SC also responded that they enjoy old age independently, of which their fore-fathers could not think of.

Adiyāṟ System

The availability of *adiyāṟs* (attached labourers) was one of the important features of agrarian system. Some Christians and Nairs were remembering that the *adiyāṟs* used to work with no time limit. Most of the Ezhavas were not familiar with the practice of keeping *adiyāṟs.* Some SCs were of the opinion that it favoured them with security at old age and sickness. It offered them the right to depend on *janmis* in times of need and in old age.

Home Nurses

In this section we discuss how the availability of the home nurses has affected the well-being of the aged. Many of the Christians were thanking the system because they do survive on this facility. Some others were saying that the home nurses are not sincere. They work for fixed time and salary. Most of the Nair respondents did not like the practice of

keeping home nurses, except in certain unavoidable circumstances. The Ezhava respondents did not keep any home nurses. The Muslims, except two did not like the idea. Instead, they take help of their relatives in need. The SC and ST respondents said that they have not yet used such facilities.

Community Involvement

The Marthomites were aware that their churches consider old age as a social issue and of the arrangements made for the old. Senior Citizen Fellowships and other organizations made sure of participation by the elderly. Institutions like old age homes are the necessary arrangements that they made to solve the issues related to old age. Among the Orthodox Christians and Catholics too, their bishops and the church authorities do consider old age with great concern. The Nairs said that they are in the process of organizing people through NSS. Its Assistant General Secretary said, they do consider old age as an agenda for immediate action. The Ezhavas are also organizing and strengthening their community through the activities of SNDP. The Union Secretary of Tiruvalla Union said that they give medical aid to the old and sick and the housing scheme give preference to the poor and the aged applicants. The Muslims were of the general view that the aged must be cared within the family; they are not the responsibility of the community or the society. The SCs said the organization like AKCMS (Akhila Kerala Cheramar Maha Sabha) is

aiming at strengthening the community spirit, not implementing welfare activities as such, since the government takes care of their welfare.

Old Age Homes

The old age homes are very popular in today's society. The idea, 'the old can spend their last days in old age home' received widespread acceptability today than the earlier days. So the relevance of old age homes is important. To the question: 'how do you think that you can face and manage old age satisfactorily', many have mentioned old age homes as the right choice. Many of the Marthomites answered that this type of arrangements are necessary for the changed society. One respondent from the old age home of paid category said, "I feel comfortable here that I am not burden to anybody". One Catholic said, "Whether it is good or bad, today's circumstances are pushing the elderly to this type of arrangements". Even the Orthodox Christians also were of the opinion that old age homes are good for the isolated elderly. At the same time, some of them were of the view that old age must be spent in one's own house, while some others were thanking the facilities like old age homes in today's situation.

Most of the Nair respondents do not like the idea of moving to the old age homes. They said that the old people must be cared for by the family members. Except one, all other Ezhava respondents were against the

idea of old age homes. Muslims too had similar opinion like the Nairs. They do not have any love towards the concept of old age homes. But one retired engineer expressed his consideration towards such arrangements. Generally, they consider it against Islam. The SC and ST respondents were attracted by the assistance and provisions of old age homes. Still many of them expressed their preference to stay with their children in their own houses.

Analysis

Analysis on the primary data collection has been included in this section to show that how the societal changes are causing a change in the perception of old age. It will bring out how the 'concept of old age' is evolved out of those changes. It helps to enlighten us about 'sociology of knowledge[1]' and or about the construction of concepts. Hence, the analysis is done on the basis of political, economic, social, cultural, religious and institutional variables and from the standpoint of communities such as Marthomites, Orthodox, Catholics (Christians), Nairs, Ezhavas and SCs/STs (Hindus) and the Muslims.

Political

Janmi System and the Conception of Old Age

Most of the Christians were of the view that a *janmi* cannot command respect or political power in today's society. Today, the power can be assessed from two dimensions: the individual level and societal

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[1]   For details see, Peter L. Burger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge,* Anchor Edition, New York, Double Day, 1967, pp 1-5.

level. In caste and tribal society, the political power was mostly symbolic in nature. It was the same for both the individual and society. There the accumulation of wealth (*janmi*) was added up to power due to its metaphysical nature. The political power was 'given' (by God) only to the higher castes. Patriarchy or matriarchy and *gōtṛa* system offered political power as a symbolic matter to their elderly. Majority of the Indian traditional families were patrilineal, but in some communities, matriliny were in practice. However, the elder member, either the father or the mother had authority in all the household matters. This symbolic power changed in Kerala by the introduction of new administrative system, the British rule and the social reforms. The first movement in this regard was the Malabar Marriage Association founded in 1879 and was seeking legal sanction for Nair marriages and for providing a unified code of law governing succession to property and other matters[2]. Polygamy and *sambanda* were other two social practices of the agrarian society which were changed by the reform movements. Travancore Nair Regulation I and II of 1921 and 1925 respectively were worked out in such a way as to legalize Nair Marriage practices by registering *sambandams* with the government for resolving the moral issue of the supposedly unregulated Nair sexual union; to make bigamy a punishable offence and to provide legal provision for dissolution of marriages, divorce and restitution of

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[2]   P.J.Cherian, ed. State Editor, *Perspectives on…, Op.cit.,* p. 466.

conjugal rights.[3] All these measures improved authority of the individuals at the expenses of the 'elder'.

The reforms and the new administration laid the foundation for a modern State which emphasized humanitarianism, equalitarianism and secularism. The new political outlook aroused spiritual independence and critical attitude. This situation offered democracy as the characteristic of political life and geared dynamic and efficient youth irrespective of caste to the political momentum. Today, the political power is not something that is given simply for being old. It is to be attained by the operation of power relations. Efficiency, health and public opinion are some of the power relations that make human beings into its subjects today. These factors determine the political power in modern discourse. The elderly are subjected to acceptance or rejection by the modern discourse. This nature of modern political discourse creates different concept of old age, the individual conception of old age.

On the societal level, organised form of resistance and revolts gained momentum in the political field. National independence and equality were its major goals. The weaker section of the society became a major concern of social action. Hence, the elderly too come in the category of those for whom the agitations and revolts take place. The large size of the elderly population is also another matter seeking attention. So, the

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[3]   *Ibid,* p. 467.

political power favours the elderly. The welfare programmes, policies and pension schemes are some examples. While we refer Foucault, this can be the effects of power relations where power is 'capillary'. Fraser says, what Foucault meant here is that power did not emanate from a single source 'but circulates throughout the entire social body down to even the tiniest and apparently most trivial extremities'.[4] Its properties are invested in those over whom it is exercised, so it not only exerts pressures upon people, but is also transmitted by them: 'power comes from below; that is, there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled'[5] Hence, the capillary action of power allows the old (as the weaker section of the society), to have certain dimensions of power in modern discourse too.

Most of the Ezhava respondents were not familiar with the practices of *Janmi* system. But today, they depend on land for the economic security and thus the holders-- the elderly-- are important among them. The Muslims do respect their elderly as before. The reason is that though their elders were not owners of land, they were the owners of shops or business, which have great demand in today's life. The SCs said, though they are not large land owners, they do respect their old who own whatever little property they have. Some STs said that the decline of *gōtṛa* system affected their concept about the elderly; the elderly as the chieftains could

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[4]   Ann Brooks, *Post Feminisms- Feminism…, Op.cit.,* p.58.
[5]   Tim May, *Situating Social…, Op.cit.,* p.186.

enjoy all the powers in the community in the past. In short, we can conclude that the political conception of old age evolved out of the land ownership is changed in today's society. Like the caste society, today the political power cannot be determined by the mere holding of property. In the modern world, wisdom and accumulated experience of old may be seen as signs of obsolescence and so disqualify rather than qualify them to lead.[6] Transition associated with globalization also negatively view the old as rigid, bigoted, backward looking, and unwilling to give up power despite obvious signs of incompetence.[7] But, most of the Nairs, some Ezhavas, some SC/STs, some Christians and some Muslims have differences of opinion regarding the above statement. For them, the symbolic power of older people appears to be powerful even in the modern society. The subjectivity is formed more on the basis of traditional traits like patriarchy/matriarchy. For them, the accumulation of land is still a power determining factor. Also, the capillary action of power offers power to the old as the weaker section of the society.

Economic

This section seeks how the economic changes cause a shift in the conception of old age. Economy is production in terms of wealth and resources that enable man for his means of survival. To understand

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[6] Gail Wilson, *Understanding Old Age…, Op.cit.*, p.46.

[7] *idem.*

economic changes, we look at it through the three ways of production: production/economy through the land, occupation, and mobility. The inheritance of property, occupation and mobility are some of the issues discussed in the following sections.

Inheritance of Property and the Conception of Old Age

Property inheritance was the major means of survival in the agrarian set up of Kerala. In Robin Jeffrey's words, "In a State like Travancore in 1847, where agriculture was the main activity, where most labour was rewarded in kind, and where the population lived largely on what it grew, land was the primary resource".[8] Land was the major means of economic power and so the elderly as the holders of land were considered with great respect. Food grains, especially paddy were the major means of subsistence and upkeep of the temples and likewise the determinant of economy in caste system. Later, the garden land cultivation offered 'jobs' irrespective of caste barriers. It is colonialism that introduced the individual effort of economic distribution to the Indian economy. It attracted many to the 'salaried job system' and occupational mobility. Since education became the primary requirement for such jobs, the 'given' economic power of elderly started to decline. The new power relations like education, modern occupations than the traditional occupation, migration in search of upward mobility etc. have created human into subjects of modernity. The

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[8]   Robin Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nair Dominance…, Op.cit.,* p.25.

prestigious job opportunity that provide more finance, less physical exertion, better living arrangements, security to human rights, security schemes, status in the society etc. attract many to this kind of employments(form of subjectivization). The new subjectivity provokes the individual to attain maximum education/ social mobility for a better living. Here the aged who owns large property with no income is mostly in the position of rejection by the young. The younger generation do not show much interest to inherit the un-productive land in rural settings. This is the reason that many of the respondents, especially, Christians responded that inheriting an un-productive property is of no use today. Rather it is liability that makes one to pay the land revenue. Today's living is mainly on the basis of things available in the market, not from products cultivated in the backyard of the houses. Perhaps, the most important aspect of globalization, the rising impact of market forces in all areas of life affects the older people because they lack market power.[9] Various reasons like adverse climatic conditions, increased labour costs etc. generate the tendency to leave the land unattended and unproductive. Instead, these respondents depend on various other means, like bank investment, or children who are abroad for their survival. So the 'changed concept' about property inheritance is common today.

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[9]   Gail Wilson, *Understanding Old Age…, Op.cit*., pp. 69-70.

Today, land is considered more as a matter of asset or security than for agricultural purpose. Hence, the traditional concept of land as the necessary component for the survival also is changed. This affects the necessity of property inheritance for the purpose of daily living. This is the reason that many of the Christians considered inheriting property as really a burden. Property holding does not make much impact on the economic positions today. One of the reasons is the fall in the prices of principal agricultural commodities such as coconut, rubber, pepper, cardamom, tea, coffee, and so on. This, besides having a shattering impact on the farming sector, also affected the revenue collection of the State, contributing to a severe strain on the finances of the State Government, according to the State Planning Board[10]. Another reason for leaving the land unattended is the increasing of labourer charges.

Because of the Agricultural Loans Act, many agro-processed industries have developed. The banks advance credit on the basis of land offered as security and this was used to purchase more land, develop remunerative crops, and extend trading and processing of agricultural products. Agro-processing characterized the first phase of industrial development in Kerala. But some, who sold the inherited property for a good price, are getting less attached to their fathers. Once the land is sold out, the emotional link between fathers and sons becomes diluted. This

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[10] *Government of Kerala Economic Review 2000*, Thiruvananthapuram, State Planning Board, p.1.

leads to a situation that the father as the original holder of property is no more to be remembered and it leads to conception of old age different from the past.

The proportion of elderly possessing land is the highest among Syrian Christians and Nairs, 64.4 per cent[11] in Pathanamthitta. It means that both the groups are familiar with the landed properties of *janmi* system. So they must be aware about the changes occurred in the system too. Then, why the Christians responded differently because, the land may not be giving economic security to them. Its reduced productivity may be the reason. In Marxian view, this statement is true as he says the means of domination is linked with modes of production[12]. Being the holders of non-agricultural land, the elders become less privileged. Hence, they rely on other sources like bank balance, children or pension than agriculture for the economic security. This must be the reason that many Christians commented that the bank balance or children's money may bring status and power to the elderly today, not the ownership of land. Most of the Nairs were not agreeable to this argument. The reason may be they are continuing their dependence over the land for the economic security and agriculture.

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[11] K.C.Zachariah, E.T.Mathew, S.Irudaya Rajan, *Dynamics of Migration In Kerala: Dimensions…, Op.cit.,* p.357.

[12] Mark Poster, *Foucault, Marxism & History- Mode of production versus Mode of Information*, United Kingdom, Polity Press, 1984, p.78. This statement is given in the light of agrarian features of the society which could uphold all such characteristics and so make the higher caste elderly to enjoy their dominant position. For Foucault, this e form of domination is the characteristic of agrarian capitalism which was more based on exploitation, alienation, psychic repression, anomie, or dysfunctional behaviour may favour their elderly to hold a dominant position.

Inheriting property is one of the major characteristics of Indian culture. It is the birthright of the children to inherit father's or mother's property. Whether it is matrilineal or patrilineal, this act of succession provides not only the economic security, but a connecting link between the generations. It maintains certain sentiments between the generations. This is the reason many of the Nairs and some Christians responded that they do need the property inheritance. Most of the Ezhavas, some Nairs, the SCs and the STs were of the view that property inheritance is still important for them. The reason is they do need the landed property either for the purpose of cultivation or to make houses there or keep it as an asset. The inherited property is still in use as a means of survival for many. So their concept about the old as bequeather is not changed from the past. The Muslims too had the same feeling that they do need the inherited property (shop or business mainly) for their future survival. They do consider the elderly with the same or sometimes with more affection because the inherited business provides better chances in today's market oriented economy. The traditional use of land still persists among them.

According to Foucault, it is discourse that brings changes to the concepts. For him, the power is not given; possessed or seized rather it is exercised and exists only in action. It is a moveable substratum upon which the economy, mode of production, modes of governing and decision

making forms of knowledge etc. are conditioned[13]. For this study, the younger workers with their technologically oriented education are attracted by the fields of new opportunities than following the traditional occupation. Here, the new opportunities subjectivize them through the discourses where the effects of power, either through domination or through subordination (forms of subjection) produce subjects and thus the concepts. For Foucault, it develops gradually in local piecemeal fashion largely in what he called 'disciplinary institutions', like schools, work place etc. Thus education, salaried jobs, stays in other places (than the birth place) etc, makes human beings into new subjects and finds that property holding in rural area is burden today.

Occupation and the Conception of Old Age

The traditional agrarian set up of Kerala did not allow all its inhabitants to enjoy landed properties. It allowed Brahmins to install caste-oriented division of labour. Thus, the other three castes (*kṣatṛiyās, vaiṣyās* and *ṣudrās*) had to depend on various other occupations for their survival. Here, the son pursued the same occupation, and enjoyed the same social status in relation to members of other caste groups, as his father. The father had a defined role for this caste-prescribed occupational system. Later with the introduction of colonial administration, education became an important

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[13] Ann Brooks, "Contextualising Foucault: Power, Truth and Discourse" in *Post Feminisms…, Op.cit.,* p. 56.

determinant in the selection of one's means of survival. According to James A.Thorson, in changed society; one's occupation helps to know of his social status, his income, education and to a certain extent how valuable or important he is thought to be in the society.[14] This is the reason that many of the Ezhavas and SCs/STs responded that their youngsters do not follow the caste-oriented occupation. They don't depend fully on elders for their career guidance. Most of their youngsters are interested in technical fields. This situation that the "caste cannot decide what job you are in today"[15] is diminishing the role of the elderly as instructors. In today's situation, for instance, a priest's son may become a teacher, and his son may become a doctor. Thus the caste of the latest generation is 'Doctors' and that of the first generation is 'Priests'. While moving from the first generation to the last, the caste name itself got varied and the elder's title got faded. Again this occupational change loosens the cohesion between the generations, as the grand father's technical advices may not be helpful to the grand child due to the difference in occupational designation. Thus creates changes in the conception of old age. The technical/educational inequalities may lessen the cohesion between the elder and the younger and thus to the conception of old age.

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[14]   James A. Thorson, *Aging in a Changing Society…, Op.cit.,* p. 308.

[15]   B.N Hareesh, "Road Map to build a Peaceful Society" in *The Hindu,* Kochi, 5 October, 2004.

Most of the Christians had the view that if the father had a prestigious job, the son may follow it. 'Making more money than the fathers' is the general trend seen today. For this reason, most of the parents advise their children to acquire better position than they had attained in their life. Here too, the parents became inadequate to give occupational guidance. Some Nair respondents said that they were fine with the government positions. But their children may not come to the same field due to the above mentioned reasons. In all, the occupational inequality among the old and the young creates a different concept about the old than in the past.

Regarding the membership of a particular caste, it may possess some adherence to the rules, but the rituals about marriage, occupational traits etc. were changed in the colonial modern condition. There, the class dominates caste as anyone could rise to the level of higher class by his own ability, while nobody can go into a higher caste by ability. The modern situation is abundant with the technically qualified and scientifically able persons, whom can be labelled as higher class people. Here, the class dominates the caste. With this reason too, the caste-based occupation do not possess prior importance in today's situation, and likewise the following of father's occupation.

Another advantage for the job system is most of them are pensionable ones. The pensions and other beneficial schemes attract

today's young to such fields rather relying on traditional jobs which do not provide any pension facility. That also diminishes the role of the elderly who followed the traditional job.

In addition, the retirement-scheme associated with the job-system do affect the conception of old age today. The earlier system of agriculture or occupation did not put any age limit for the work. They could work as far as their health permits. But the modern job-system offers an age bar of fifty five, fifty eight of sixty five in accordance with the rules and regulations of the respective institution for retirement. It does not consider whether the retiree is healthy or unhealthy to work. So the act of retirement brings the elderly to be less-productive/non-productive state and this situation too creates a changed perception about old age. For all retirees, retirement represents an important transition in life; it means a loss of the status and they complain that they no longer performing a useful role in life.[16] Thus, the changed conception of old age associated with the retirement scheme affected the workers of all the communities. Again, it has been the policy of the public sector works, to employees retire from the job at a particular age. In most countries 58 or 60 is recognized as the age of retirement or a milestone of attaining the status of aged person[17]. So the life after retirement makes drastic changes in the life style of the people.

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[16] James A. Thorson, *Aging in …, Op.cit*., p. 324.

[17] Sushila Jain, "Role Strains and Patterns of Adjustment of Retired Personnels- A Conceptual Framework" in *Kerala Sociologist- Journal of the Kerala Sociological Society,* vol.XXX no.1, June 2002, p.12.

Retirement from the regular job creates the old as a new subject. It creates several social, psychological and economic consequences for the retiree. That means loss of not only the regular income but the work to keep one occupied and thus the social relationships too. This affects the male elderly more who find difficulty in having to spend time doing nothing. In the case of middle and lower strata of salaried workers who have no substantial saving or investment may have to depend financially on children for fully or partially. This causes a depletion of authority among the retired persons and they feel that instead of being the decision makers, decisions are now being made for him[18]. The power is transferred from the old to the young.

Migration and the Conception of Old Age

Migration and the economic returns that it brings appear as one of the development processes that have taken place in Kerala since Independence. Urbanization too is considered to bring about better life chances. But in both the processes, only the healthy, productive and efficient persons are required to work hard and make money. Similarly, acquiring wealth through migration is possible only by the healthy citizens. It is the reason that many of the aged are left behind in the rural set up. For the economic betterment, migration/urbanization, bring forth the younger ones to the main stream of economy. In agrarian society, the wealth was controlled by the elder members of the family. But today, the elders depend on the young,

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[18]   *idem.*

who earn enough through their stay in foreign countries. Thus the concept of the elder as the 'sole authority of the economy (wealth)' of the family was changed. This is the reason that many of Christians answered that migration causes changes to the conception of old age. Zachariah *et.al.*[19] says that, about sixty-three per cent of the Syrian Christians depend on their children for the economic assistance. It showed migration from the household as a positive factor in the provision of support to the elderly.

Migration is beneficial in terms of economy, but is crucial when it isolates the 'old' in the rural locality. This creates a burdensome feeling to the old themselves. This is the reason that some Christians were regretting that all the children are abroad. This effect of migration is common to the rural settings, where the elders do not like to leave the community and the native place that they have known since childhood where they have been active for many years. The reason has been pointed out by referring Matthews is that the quality of love, care, respect and other aspects of relationships are likely to last better if they were built on foundations of long familiarity.[20]

Other communities like the Nairs, Ezhavas and Muslims did not support that migration causes changes to the conception of old age. For

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[19]   K.C.Zachariah, E.T.Mathew, S.Irudaya Rajan, *Dynamics of Migration In Kerala: Dimensions…, Op.cit.,* p. 361.

[20]   S.Mathews(1979), The Social World of Old Women: Management of Self-Identity, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, as referred in Gail Wilson, *Understanding Old Age-critical and global…, Op.cit ,* p.77.

them, migration is beneficial, even though it causes many inconveniences. Another important reason is migration of their young do not leave the 'old' lonely in the village set-up. The migration of the entire household of the younger generation is not a common practice among them. Only the bread winner will go abroad in search of lucrative jobs, the rest of the family members give company to the old in the village locality.

For the respondents from SCs and STs, migration of the young in search of job is not very common as among the affluent societies and no change occurs in their conception of old age. The reason is that though socially and culturally they are in the path of progress, its impact may affect their life style in the near future only. The younger generation shows interest to come up in life by acquiring technical skills and education. So it will take a decade or two to know of the impact of migration in such communities. But some have responded that they do get the benefits of migration in today's context too. When the younger generation of the higher income families are settled in other countries and the aged parents need physical support, the help given by the local people is a great advantage. So they get rewarded by the higher income groups in many ways. Thus, the migration promotes the economy of the lower income group too. But it does not affect the life of the elderly negatively.

Again, migration of the younger generation (their long stay and social exposure) constitutes them as a subject different from that of the 'old parent' who resides in the rural setting of Kerala. The gap between the two types of 'subjectivity' creates conflicts in relationships which in turn causes isolation of the elderly in some cases. The attitude and behaviour of the one who had a social exposure in their life is different from that of the one who spend their solitary life in rural areas. The new way of living, greater opportunities, and better health to those who choose to move are preventing them from the return of migration. According to Gail Wilson, all migration has an effect on those who are left behind.

Social

The renaissance of Kerala became the foundation of a new style of social life for the modern democratic Kerala through its quantitative and qualitative growth occurred in the field of education and religion. To this study area, impact of education is considered high on the practices and life styles of its people. In traditional society, oral literature carried by the older members was the source of knowledge and culture. But in modern times, it does not come directly from parents and most elders, but from published books, periodicals, news papers, radio, television and the cinema. The extensive contacts of modern communications keep them

aware of the contemporary events[21]. Thus, the modern man has to undergo certain inevitable discourses like, schooling at early stages of life, knowing of English language in addition to the mother tongue, awareness about science and technology etc. to become the bearers of culture. So the questions like impact of modern education, girl's education, science and technology etc are relevant here to determine the educational impacts on the social conception of old age. But in the modern world, wisdom of the accumulated experience may be seen as a sign of obsolescence where the elderly (of mentally and physically disabled one) are mostly disqualified rather than qualified to lead.

Modern Education and the Conception of Old Age

Education is primarily to imbibe values and cultures, but nowadays it rather trains a person for economic benefits. The modern way of education makes it as the best field to invest in people with a motive for economic returns. Here too the values are imbibed, but it[22] asks to improve

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[21]   Ananda E.Wood, *Knowledge…,Op.cit.,* p. 1.

[22]   The advertisement given by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) with the aim to revitalizing rural India through urban support by using three illustrations that the grandmothers of old days used to speak out to the grand children during their leisure times. Those were the fables of 'the fox and grapevine', 'the thirsty crow', and 'the hare and tortoise'. But the intentions of telling these stories were not only as to pass on time, but to imbibe values which are essential to face life with courage and honesty. The moral values that these three stories holding were, 'don't give up like the fox and say the returns may not be sweeter', 'be like the crow and think wisely to have the smarter returns', 'be like the tortoise, who say slow and steady wins the race' respectively. The people of those days considered that until and unless someone learns these moral values, he won't be able to survive in the society. There, the concept about the word 'value' were in such a way that it should be filled with moral aspects of life. But today, the advertisement given by the bank, who used the above mentioned stories with a new dimension which has reminded us to think that how much the word 'value' has changed. It does not hold the same meaning as before.

one's efficiency to compete with the current fast moving world. So that he can face the challenges with self- confidence, not by merely looking into the experiences of old generations. The elders with their long years of experience and knowledge are not adequate enough to deal with the contemporary realities. General awareness or an overall idea about everything under the sky is not enough; instead the specialised knowledge is today's requirement. This is the result modern education aims at. Again, the elders are helpless (though they were teachers for long years) as the new curriculum of education as the mode of learning and teaching is different. Negligence of mother tongue lessens the interaction with the grand parents who know only Malayalam. As a matter of better future through migration to other countries, today's generation is keen to learn English language. Today's world thinks that reading books (of grand father's collection[23]) or hearing stories (from grand mother[24]) are time-

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The new versions say, instead of blaming the circumstances like the fox, use one high-chair so that you may reach up and have the sweeter returns easily, instead of doing time consuming works like the crow, use a single straw as the smartest way to drink till you fill, thirdly, be steady but don't be so slow like the tortoise, instead use one simple skate board so that you can have the faster returns. Here the values to be taught are entirely different from that of traditional values, to think wisely and at the same time use the modern techniques, so that one can have the returns at more sweeter, smarter and faster rate. The same word 'value' has been used with different concepts, with respect to the context of the time. The modern 'value' may advise one to attain more within no time. That means the concept about 'value of life' has changed.

[23] One respondent was saying his grandson said, it is waste to read such a huge book (worth Rs.2000) for many days in order to get one information which is needed. Instead he can get it within ten minutes from internet browsing.

[24] The Sunday Supplement, *Malayala Manorama*, Kottayam Edition, 19 September, 2004, p. 10.The world famous Pop Singer, Lonely Witnie Houston, is now scheduled with attracting small children to hear the fairy tales which she has been collected from grand mothers of through out the world[24]. She does, not only of its fun, but as her means of subsistence also. Here Witnie, make use of the modern mentality of the children. But do not transmit the culture and heritage that the stories hold as it was recited through the mouth of old grand mothers.

consuming. Instead, they can have it from television or internet facilities with less time. Today's large attraction to the subjects like computer science and information technology, rather than art, literature, humanities etc. creates a generation of less humanitarian concerns but of more temporal concerns such as accumulation of wealth. Besides, the concern to the poor and weak are more commercialized by the modern society. In all, the modern way of education provides less space to the old and so creates changes to the conception of old age. Foucault goes on to argue that 'in modern society the human sciences, through their claims to acknowledge and expertise, have transformed these unstable relations into general patterns of domination'[25]. In modern society, education is considered as the better means of domination or power.

Being the beneficiaries of education, Syrian Christians gave high value to the modern way of education. This can be proved by the census report of 1911, which states, the number of literates of Brahmins was 3007, the Nairs 5446, the Christians 10129, the Muslims 299 and the Ezhavas was 1441[26]. As we referred earlier, Pathanamthitta is the district with more number of highly educated people and among them the Syrian Christians hold a high percentage (38.2)[27] than the other communities. For this

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[25] Mark Philip, "Michel Foucault" in Quentin Skinner, ed. *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 75.

[26] Report of U.G.C Major and Research Project: 1993-96, *The Making of…, Op.cit.,* p. 37.

[27] K.C.Zachariah, E.T.Mathew, S.Irudaya Rajan, *Dynamics of Migration in Kerala: Dimensions…, Op.cit.,* p.87.

reason, the educational impact is higher among them, for instance the economic security[28]. At the same time, it lessens the importance of elderly in many ways. It can be said that the educational impact on the changed conceptions of old age is higher among Christians. The Nairs too have a high record of educational attainment (37.8%)[29]. But the subjectivity towards the western thoughts or modern way of education arrived late among the Nairs; as compared to the Christians. The essay "Development Experience of Colonial Keralam", written by Rajan Gurukkal agrees with the argument that "the Nairs are not the first who induced into the 'shift concept of world-view', but the Christians".[30] Adherence to the Indian culture too pulls them back from the subjectivity to the modern dealings. This is the reason that the impact of modern education is not severe among the Nairs like the Christians. But, the field data show that the 'concept' is slowly changing among them as more children are seeking admission to the courses like nursing, computer courses etc. Otherwise, in the past they were attracted by the government jobs[31] than by anything else.

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[28] *Ibid,* pp. 352-354. For this study, the Syrian Christians and Nairs possess economic security more than others in terms of land, bank balance or household.

[29] *Ibid,* p. 87.

[30] Rajan Gurukkal, "Development Experience of Colonial Keralam" in M.A. Oommen…, Op.cit., p.79. According to this concept, Portuguese missionary activities were the first to induce the beginnings of a shift in the world-view of the Christians. The imposition of Christianization marked the beginnings of new identity consciousness and subjectivity towards Western thoughts.

[31] K.C.Zachariah, E.T.Mathew, S.Irudaya Rajan, *Dynamics of Migration In Kerala: Dimensions…, Op.cit.,* p. 88.

The Ezhavas are mostly interested in the technical fields. Self-employment, domestic work and the non-agricultural labourer are some of their major field of activities. They are not that much interested with the high technical courses and so the impact of modern educational system is less among them. The SCs/STs are almost like the Ezhavas, but a good number is engaged as agricultural labourer[32]. But recently many of them are attracted to the Government jobs reserved. Still the impact of education and the social conception of old age do have many similarities with the Ezhavas. Among the Muslims too, the modern way of education does not affect the old severely. The state-wise record says that the Muslims have very low level of education (12.8)[33]. But the respondents from the field claim that, the Muslims of Pathanamthitta are highly educated among Muslims from all over Kerala. Then it is 'Islam' that keeps them back from subjectivity towards the western thoughts.

Women in Job and Conception of Old Age

As the bearers of culture, Indian situation considers the woman's role as primary to the family. The young girl is taught to perform her domestic duties like revering elders, respecting husband as her God and pleasing him and ministering to the wants and requirements of all in the household. All the training in the childhood may direct her towards realising

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[32]   *idem.*

[33]   *Ibid,* p. 64.

the ideal of female modesty and domestic duties with the virtues of dutiful, obedient and helpful wife to her husband[34]. So the earlier concept of girl's education was to direct towards developing in her those qualities which will enable her to reach this ideal more and more. Later, the schooling system started by the missionary endeavours has given more importance to home-economics for the girls. It influenced the woman a lot to the formation of a new identity with capabilities and self-esteem which helped her to be freed from the four walls of household. Slowly the emergence of an 'extra' role came to her as the bread winner to the family. As the roles increased, her duties to the family too increased, but it affected the elderly as she could not provide much time for their care. The feminine jobs like teaching, nursing etc. attracted many to such fields and promised good opportunities to go abroad. This situation led to the break up of joint stay of families and to the isolated life of elder parents in rural household even when independent living is no longer feasible.

To all the communities, economic independence is the main attraction for the search of job by the women. The economic sufficiency to the young woman may better the care to the family (financially) while that of the old woman (as pension) may help herself with better facilities. This is the reason that many of the Christians liked to enter the job market. But many of the Christians and Nairs were of the opinion that economically well-off class may

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[34]   Ananda E.Wood, *Knowledge…, Op.cit.,* p. 121.

not send their women to the job-market. There is another important factor which attracts such women to job-placement is the 'status' then achieve in the society as a recognition of their intelligence and efficiency[35]. Mary Poonen Lukose, Akkamma Cheriyan Varkey, K.R.Gouri[36] are three such eminent women who have been recognized by the society in making crucial impact on the politics of Kerala and to bring higher status to women. Today's women have been recognized as they can do a lot for the society than for the family. But the earlier society gave 'status' to the woman when she sacrificed herself for the sake of her family members. Today such a woman may be considered as less-efficient or less-intelligent. 'Sacrifice the job' for the betterment of children is common, but not for the weak and aged. In this way the women's work participation affects the formation of a different concept about elderly.

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[35] *The Hindu*, News Paper, Kochi, 1 March, 2005. The latest budget of India for 2005-06 presented by Chidambaram is called as 'gender budget' by economists as it gave importance to the gender by promising tax exemption up to Rs.1.25 lakhs for women while that for men is Rs.1 lakh.

[36] Robin Jeffrey, *Politics, Women and Well-being-How Kerala Became 'A Model'*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 92-216. Jeffrey took these women as examples to show the impact of women in Kerala to make it 'A Model'.

Mary Poonen Lukose (1886-1976) In 1915 she became the first Kerala woman to graduate in medicine and took charge of a newly opened Women's and Children's Hospital for 425 rupees a month, a huge salary in 1917 when a school teacher earned less than 10 rupees. Best example to prove that how the educated working women in Kerala could bring income, status and even official influence.

Akkamma Cheriyan Varkey (1909-82)Born into a wealthy Catholic Syrian family, she took BA degree, became a high school principal, spent two and a half years in jail and, at 44, fought a parliamentary byelection when she was eight months pregnant with her only child.

K.R.Gouri (1919-)Her career as a communist and her reputation as an administrator have few equals in Kerala. An Ezhava by caste and came from a wealthy family, she went to prison in 1948 and became Revenue Minister in 1957 and the first Ezhava woman to graduate in Law and joined in the communist party.

As the women started to get into the job-market, Kerala's migration rate too increased due to their placements in the field like nursing[37]. Impacts of migration of the young on the old people have been explained in the section of economic discourses. Among the female migrants, Christians hold the highest proportion, while the Muslims are the lowest[38]. It means that the impact of female migration is more among the Christians than others. The major impact is the isolation of elderly among the Christians unlike among the elderly of Muslims, Ezhavas, Nair and SCs/STs. Some Muslims had the opinion that their religious faiths do not recommend sending their women to the public place in search of job. But the situation may change soon as the girls of other communities also are entering into the job-market gradually.

Religious Reforms and the Conception of Old Age

The religion of tradition, namely 'totemism[39]' for clan groups, and 'polytheism' for some more elite culture, gave emphasis to the practices

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[37] Aravamudan, 'Nurses and nuns'p.255 as sited in Robin Jeffrey, *Politics, Women…,Op.cit.,* p. 194. Once nursing opened up as a sure avenue of employment in the 1950s, families-often, but not exclusively, Christian-readily directed their high-school educated daughters towards it. By 1975, an impressionistic survey of young nurses concluded that 'hardly any …came because they wished to care for the sick. They came mostly because it was a job'. An educated daughter was a potential salary, and a nursing qualification 'almost guaranteed employment'[37]. In spite of widespread migration, nurses in Kerala numbered close to 5000 in the 1980s, and gave Kerala the best nurses-to-people ratio in India- about 1: 5200.

[38] K.C.Zachariah, E.T.Mathew, S.Irudaya Rajan, *Dynamics of Migration In Kerala: Dimensions…, Op.cit.,* p. 93.

[39] Anthony Giddens, *Durkheim…, Op.cit.,* p. 87.The members of clan regard themselves as each other's relatives, not with a definite blood relationship, but because they share the same name. The totem are most often the humble objects of immediate environment, which has very special significance to all members of the clan group. . As the totem is the emblem of

like rituals[40], superstitions, idolatry, magic, witchcraft etc. As the head of

clan or as the priest of the religion, mostly the elders possessed the right of

consecration and interpretation of rituals there. But the peculiarities of the

religion steeped in superstitions and social obscurantism favoured the

upper castes, especially the Brahmins. Their right to preach religious

doctrines, to officiate as priests and to function as teachers could exercise

an overwhelming influence over others. Again, the environment that

prohibited the backward communities from worship in temples has

prompted the reformers[41] to contend for spiritual revitalization as the basis

for social reformation. Thus, the aim of religious reformation was for the

formation of 'reformed society' which promises equality to all mankind.

That means the social reformation as the revised form of religion is

endowed with religious rights to all including upper and lower castes and

to the old or young with equal chance. The religious reformations may

lessen the role of elderly for ritual authorities, but the social concern of

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the clan and the most distinctive symbol of the group, its divine attributes can cause to acquire sacred character to its members by mere association.

[40] B.N.Hareesh, "Road Map to Build a Peaceful Society" in *The Hindu*, Kochi., 5 October, 2004. Here Hareesh says, in olden days, science was communicated to the people in the name of God. He takes the example of turmeric and its use among the Hindus as a ritual by attributing a religious symbol of divinity. Hareesh comments that it has been just a symbolic expression to communicate science, the anti-bacterial properties of turmeric that can be used for killing harmful microbes. Since the people of olden days were not educated enough to believe that micro organisms also exist in the universe, such symbolic expressions could create certain impacts in their daily life. Communication through goddess seemed to have more effect as the religion and people's way of life got that much intertwined in olden days.

[41] P.Chandra Mohan, Growth of Social Reform Movements in Kerala as sited in P.J.Cherian, State Editor, *Perspectives…, Op.cit.,* p.460. Chattambi Swamikal and the Sree Narayana Guru have questioned the scriptural hegemony of Brahmins and tried to bring religious universalism with the belief of all the religions in one supreme being. The Christian Missionaries took the initiative of social reforms in Kerala with the spread of enlightenment.

religion considers the old as the weaker section of the society. The organizations formed under each religion like Christian organizations, Muslim associations, S.N.D.P and N.S.S give much importance for the care of the elderly with human concerns. So in today's reformed context too, the religion is a refuge for the old because the religions advise its members to imbibe values of respect and filial piety towards the aged.

Today, all the communities have arrangements to give religious training to those who enter priesthood. In tradition, religion empowered the elderly with religious authority to conduct worship. The Christians depend on seminaries, Nairs on the *Tantṛa Vidya Pīṭham,* the Ezhavas on Sivagiri for religious training; Muslims have to undergo twelve years of study to become *moulavi*, and the SCs depend on religious organizations (by neglecting the traditional *vēlatānmaṛ).* This way of religious training decreases the importance of the elderly, for instance, today most Hindus bring their child to the temple for naming ceremony, but in the earlier days it was the right of the old to 'name the child' by his own name. In religion too, the efficiency as a criterion for selection of priests may diminish the importance of the old in the religious matters.

Since the Marthomites were the more reformed ones (regarding its origin) than the other Christian denominations, the impacts of religious reformations were more substantial among them. The data from the field

reported that they were not so particular about the rituals and practices, unlike the Orthodox Christians and Catholics who were more traditional in their opinions. The Christian priests too have to retire when they reach a certain age, but retirement does not restrain them from conducting sacraments; instead, many Christians like the worships led by the old priests than the younger ones. This is because the religion offers certain role to the old even in the modern discourse. Here the subjectivity formed in such a way that the religious doctrines advise its people to obey their elderly to attain salvation. Among the Nairs too, the religion works out in the same manner. *'kaṛma* for *mōkṣa'*, the Indian concept of salvation is practised among its people. The '*satkaṛma'* includes mercy to the weak and old and so people are keen to practise it in today's situation too to attain '*mōkṣa'*. With this motive the religious institutions are established. A good number of like-hearted people may unite under the religious label for the betterment of the society. The destitute homes and old age homes for the care of elderly are emerged today with the same intention. In Pathanamthitta District, the Christians are in the forefront in such type of activities.

Today the religious involvements are considered as kind of 'status symbol' for many of the people. Due to this reason, a boom can be seen in the religious gatherings and the offerings in the religious places. Such involvement brings certain 'power relations' which in turn creates 'social

capital', in simple sense, the status in society. Today the NSS and SNDP too organized themselves better to improve the community spirit and to participate in humanitarian activities. According to the Secretary of Red Cross Society, Thiruvalla, the 'temples' were not providing space to organize people for social needs, in earlier days. Instead, they meant only for religious worships. But the reforms among such communities promote human concerns today. This in turn brings forth the feeling that the care of the old is the responsibility of the community.

For most of the Muslims, learning and living according to 'Islam' is more important than the reforms. The movement '*tabalīṟ*' is to promote Islamic faith. To become a '*moulavi*' they need to study Islam for twelve years. But it may not bring 'reformed mentality' with flexibility towards Islamic principles. It shows that the Muslims have not reformed much and they have not changed religiously to have changed conceptions of old age. The SCs are not properly organised under the religious label. Some belong to the Hinduism while some others belong to Christianity. So the religious reformations of such communities could not make reformations in its real sense yet. The data from the field report that casteism and prejudism are still in practice in Kerala. The reformations could not bring much change in the attitude of the society in giving religious opportunities even to their elderly. But '*daḷit* Christian organizations' (for the Christians of SC category) works well for the betterment of their people. But, the SCs who

belonged to the Hinduism are protected and helped by the Government. The Scheduled Tribe members are also changed that today they go to temples, instead of going to *maladaivangaḷ* (God of hills or forest) as in the past. Among them, the elders were the authority in *pūjas* (worships) and sacraments once. Today the worship in temple may not allow their elderly in conducting sacraments which in turn causes some changes in the conception of old age.

Familial

In the traditional agrarian set-up of Kerala, Brahmanic hegemony had a major role to the social stratification of the society. The Brahmin household consisted of members of three or four generations. The individual members possessed their own right to meet the expenses from a common account. Later, due to many reasons, the basic structure of family disintegrated and became nuclear in its structure. The major reasons for this as pointed out by Shah are: demographic factors, sanskritization, westernization, industrialization, urbanization and migration. Then he added that these factors must have induced them into the nuclear living arrangement and individualism, which are thought to have diffused from the west[42]. But it is proved that the entire urban society is not discarding joint household[43]. In the study area of Pathanamthitta, a good number of

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[42] A.M.Shah, *The Family in India-Critical Essays,* New Delhi, Orient Longman Limited, 1998, pp.4-61.
[43] *Ibid,* pp. 5-10.

elderly do live alone in single member household or with another elderly person in the same household, says Zachariah *et.al.*[44] In figures, it is 42 out of the 692 elderly (5.9 percent) in the sample live without anybody else living with them. This shows that how much the study area, Pathanamthitta is affected with the tendency towards nuclear family structure and individualism.

Nuclear Family and the Social Conception of Old Age

Family is the indivisible component of society. As the society changes, the structure and the function of the family also change. In the rural set-up, joint families as an institution provided security to the aged, sick, widows and orphans. It is for them the most preferred living arrangement and also the most emotionally satisfying. The family had the responsibility to take care of its members, whether they are old or young. Margaret Thatcher says about family that *"...it all really starts in the family, because not only is the family the most important means through which we show our care for others. It is the place where each generation learns its responsibilities towards the rest of the society…I think the statutory services can only play their part successfully if we don't expect them to do for us things that we could be doing for ourselves"*[45] .

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[44] K.C.Zachariah, E.T.Mathew, S.Irudaya Rajan, *Dynamics of Migration In Kerala: Dimensions…, Op.cit.,* p. 370.

[45] Margaret Thatcher, Speech to WRVS National Conference 'Facing the New Challenge' 19 January 1981 in P.Krishnan and K. Mahadevan, *The Elderly population in Developed and Developing World- Policies, Problems and Perspectives*, Delhi, B.R Publishing Corporation, 1992, p. 4.

The existence of family is more on the basis of relationship of its members. Traditional joint family considered woman's role as primary to the existence of family. The society is more sensitized to accept the role of married daughters in sharing the responsibility of supporting older parents. The patriarchal value structure of the family regards the claims of the husband, children and relatives as being the women's priority.[46] There, the aged and disabled were cared for easily. As the girl's education became widespread, it affected the family structure too. In the changing context where parents have only one or two children, in some situations only daughter, meeting of filial obligations become difficult. The feminine jobs like teaching, nursing and so on attracted many to such fields and promised good opportunities abroad. This situation led to the break up of joint families and to the isolated life of elder parents in rural household. Also, it improved the self-identity and individualism among women.

But this family dominance over the individual has been modified by the process of individualization associated with modernization[47]. Slowly, but steadily Kerala also is undergoing the process of modernization and so to the disintegration of joint living arrangement. Thus, the nuclear living arrangement is the norm today, and it provides new conceptions about human rights, new social laws to support it and new social structure for its

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[46] A.M.Shah, B.S.Baviskar, E.A.Ramaswamy ed*., Social Structure and Change, Volume.II*, Women in Indian Society, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1996, p. 101.

[47] The insight is borrowed from Gail Wilson, *Understanding…, Op.cit.,* p. 162.

implementation. It has acceptance today as the suitable living arrangement in the modern situation. But one consequence is that the weak and the old become 'orphan' with no place to live in. They look to the society for their care and survival. It is at the mercy of the society that they live and in acute situation, they become a burden to the society. The modern concept of family includes a single generation of parents and children. All the members beyond this, like grand children or grand parents, have no space to live in. An effort for their inclusion may cause conflict in modern sense. This is the way the nuclear living arrangement causes changes in the social conception of old age.

In the study area, Pathanamthitta, the emergence of nuclear set-up due to the individuality is not very common, as most of the older parents do live with the younger generation if they are in the same locality. The urbanization/migration of the younger generation is the major cause to the nuclear type of living arrangement or the isolated living arrangement of the elderly in Pathanamthitta. Among migrants, Muslims rank first 54.9, followed by Syrian Christians, 46.7. But some Muslims responded that they consider it as a great sin if they avoid their parents in their old age. They cannot attain 'heaven', some believes. They do arrange the stay of the elders with the richest son for better facilities. For this reason, migration of the young Muslims does not bring their elderly to a living arrangement where they are left alone.

The Syrian Christians have a dominant position for out-migration and they are the major emigrant group in Pathanamthitta[48]. The migrants of the Syrian Christians more often do not return to the native country. They settle in the migrated region with their own household. This situation leaves the elderly to live alone in the rural set-up of the study area. Some Christians responded that today 'individualism' is practised by the Christians than by others. Thus, the data from the field report that the Syrian Christians of the area live in the nuclear families, and so the changes in the conception of old age happen more among them.

The migration rate shows that among the Nairs and Ezhavas of Pathanamthitta also it is quite high. But the return of emigrants and return of out-migrants are comparatively larger among them than among the Syrian Christians. The data from the field also report that migration of the entire household of the younger generation is not commonly found among them. Only the bread winner of the family goes out and sends money to his family members who are staying with the elder parents in the rural set-up. This situation does not lead to the isolation of elder ones. So the problems related to the nuclear living arrangement of elder ones are not becoming a cause for the changed conception of old age today among such

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[48] In terms of Zachariah et.al., out-migration is migration towards the neighbouring states of Kerala and emigration is external migration to other countries. K.C.Zachariah, E.T.Mathew, S.Irudaya Rajan, *Dynamics of Migration In Kerala: Dimensions…, Op.cit.,* p. 394.

communities. But Sukumaran Nair[49], the Assistant General Secretary of NSS said that slowly, but steadily, these communities also are undergoing the process of modernization and so to the disintegration of joint living arrangement.

Some SCs and STs responded that they do stay with the elders in today's situation too. But to attain the facilities offered by the Government through the Kerala Model Development Scheme and Planning schemes for the construction of houses, they do apply for separate houses for the elder parents too. This is the way the nuclear living arrangement became the practice for many households. Its effect to cause changes in the conception of old age is negligible.

Part IV

Part four is to analyse the impact of various institutions to the changed conception of old age. Here the term 'institution' is included with facilities like pension scheme, availability of home nurses, community organisations and the old age homes. These facilities provide certain soothing effect to the old age issues variously. But its availability causes certain changes to the old concepts. For this reason, this enquiry regarding the availability of institutions is included.

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[49] Interview with Sukumaran Nair revealed the plan of NSS as they asked the personnel to prepare the project proposal to find out the intensity of the need. But the Union have purchased ten acres of land in Pandalam for the project which may be attached with one Ayurveda College and Hospital.

Pension Scheme and the Conception of Old Age

Pension provides economic security during the retirement period. It gives some economic independence to the old so that they do not have to depend wholly on others (children) for their survival. This situation of independence creates a different concept about old age. The emergence of job-system and the subsequent pension-scheme promotes individualism among its beneficiaries. But the earlier concept of old age assumed it as the responsibility of the children to care about their aged parents. They used to consider it as their own duty to look after the well-being of their parents. But the pension scheme and such other old age security schemes lessen the responsibility of the children and at the same time it improves economic independence to the aged. As most of the Christian respondents were retirees or employed ones, they were aware about the benefits of pension. So the changed concept of old age was clearly seen among them. One Catholic responded that "since I have pension, my children think that they don't have any responsibility towards me". Hence, the economic independence offered by the pension scheme creates changes in the concept of old age, irrespective of community.

Home Nurses and the Conception of Old Age

The unavailability of *adiyāṛs* and the availability of home nurses can be linked together to get an idea of changed concept of old age. Today the later one is treated as the substitute to the former one to a certain extent.

The earlier society facilitated by the system of *adiyāṛs* has worked out a way to make use of their service to care about the weak and sick of the family. Their timeless work, serving mentality, devotion and obligation to the land lords and their families for the long years could create strong bond between the two. This type of *adiyāṛ* system was not only beneficial to the land lords, but to the *adiyāṛs* too. It was the responsibility of the landlord to care about the *adiyāṛ* in his needs. But some of the respondents have pointed that the earlier type of *adiyāṛ* system is not possible in today's situation as today's Keralites are aware of human rights and its protective measures. Thus, the recently emerged system of home nurses is very effective to this changed society. The availability of home nurses is useful to the families where the aged are isolated, when other family members are in work or abroad. But their style of functioning is different. They are salaried; their time of work is fixed. They work on the basis of money they earn, not on the basis of obligation. Since they work on contract, the long years of 'knowing each other' is lacking in this relationship. In some cases, the aged are not the one who pays salary to the nurses, instead their children. So they have a notion that they are not answerable to the aged and so it affects the relationship.

In this situation, the availability of home nurses creates a different concept that old people can be cared for by using individuals other than the family members. It reduces the necessity of joint living of generations.

Christians are using this facility more than other communities. The reason is many of their elders have to lead an isolated life. They live without the company of immediate family members. Another reason is that they themselves or their children are well enough to pay for the services of home nurses. But the Nairs do not like the practice much. The reason is that isolation of the elderly is not so widespread among them. The same reason is applicable to other communities too. Among them, the migration of the entire household is not a widely acceptable practice yet.

Old Age Homes and the Conception of Old Age

Caste society has accepted old age as a particular stage of decline and decay. At the same time it could realize the unique meaning and purpose of old age. So it developed ideal stages of life to its people, especially for Brahmins. Their elders prepared themselves to face old age graciously. Other high caste communities too considered elderly with respect and reverence. The authority of elders was recognized by the young. However, the modern interventions brought the concept of institutionalisation of the aged as a commonly accepted theme. Or the idea of institution itself came into practice with the intervention of modernity. Just like all other institutions, here also the institutional devices transform the individual to become 'subjects' of modernity. So the changed conception of old age became the result of modernity.

The concept of old age homes is evolved out as the communal response to societal needs. Here, the group of people organised under various communal heads function for the human rights and the societal needs. For instance, "By the beginning of the twentieth century, caste associations became superseded and both the upper castes and lower castes of Hindus and non-Hindus like Christians and Muslims organised themselves to form certain reform movements like S.N.D.P yogam, N.S.S, Yogakshema Sabha Sadhuparipalana Sabha, Nasrani Jathiya Sangham, Cochin Christian Association, Travancore Muslim Association, Malabar Muslim Association etc"[50]. All these are the communal efforts to the reformed society where the social issues are of crucial importance. The changed concept of old age is the social issue and hence, the various communal efforts like the establishment of old age homes are being considered as one of the reasons to this change.

Family as an institution played a better role in tradition to care about their old and sick. The social and economic situations of Kerala have changed today, with the virtual disappearance of the joint family system, with both the husband and wife working and with the migration of younger generation. Thus, the inevitability of putting the elder parents in old age homes is becoming increasingly acceptable in the society. Now the role is

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[50]   P.Chandra Mohan, "Growth of Social Reform Movements in Kerala" in P.J.Cherian, State Editor, *Perspectives on Kerala History…, Op.cit.,* p. 462.

taken up by the society. The society helps the family to lessen its role as care taker to the aged. Today, the old age home in its more advanced stage as paid homes provides prestige to the aged as they live at their own expense, not at other's mercy. This is the reason paid type of old age homes are becoming popular.

Christians generally showed interest in this movement because they really need such type of arrangements. Among them, the migration of the younger generation is causing isolation to their elderly. Among other communities, migration of the entire household of the younger generation is not as common as among the Christians. They prefer to come back to the native place, after accumulating enough wealth from countries like Middle East. The youngsters who prefer other countries like U.S.A, Australia, Malaysia, and South Africa for their permanent settling are forced to leave their elderly isolated in the rural Kerala. For such elders, old age home is the ideal place to live.

Synthesis

The effect of modernity on the changed concepts of old age is revealed here through case studies. Most of the respondents were agreed that the political, economic and social factors of the current discourses are responsible for this conceptional change. Hence the qualitative analysis of the discourse is important here to bring forth a sociological knowledge of

old age, which is a social issue today. It is the social reality that is profoundly buried and a socially constructed one. It is inseparable from its contexts like family, friends, social, cultural, political, economic and historic circumstances that circumscribe one's life. The analysis by the use of theories makes it a reflexive one, which produces knowledge. Hence, the study relies on the analysis of the 'discourse' that helps to provide the 'truth' related to that particular discourse.

But the meaning, scope and application of discourse is relative to the different theoretical system in which it is embedded. In Snow and Benford's words, discourses are primarily instrumental devices that can foster common perceptions and understandings for specific purposes, and the task of discourse is to measure how effective they are in bringing about certain ends.[51] Much more comprehensive concepts of discourse on social meaning by regarding social structures are put forward. For instance, Foucauldian discourse analysis which is intent on showing the connection between 'discursive practices' and wider sets of 'non-discursive' activities and institutions.[52] Since the study seeks the impact of social practices on the changed conceptions of old age, it relies on Foucault's concept of discourse for the analysis more. For Foucault, it is possible to investigate dimensions of knowledge (episteme), which regulates the functioning of

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[51]   David Howarth, *Discourse…*, *Op.cit.*, p. 3.
[52]   *Ibid,* p. 4.

the thought of the people. Since the episteme (of Foucault) are not available for direct observation, they have to be reconstructed from accessible discourses.[53]

According to Foucault, there cannot be any statements which are true in all discourses, nor there any statements which are true for all discourses. Similarly, concept for certain period may not be the same with certain other periods. It shows the relative nature of concepts and discourse. For him, discourse is best understood as a system of possibility for knowledge. Discourse is a set of practices rather than structures where these practices systematically form the objects of which they speak. The discourse is the autonomous system of rules that constitute objects, concepts, subjects and strategies, thereby governing the production of scientific statements.[54] Also Foucault argues that discourses are 'tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations'. Here, discourses are the means for different forces or power to advance their interests and projects, while also providing points of resistance for counter-strategies to develop.[55] So by the analysis of those discourse Foucault could find out the rules that permits certain statements to be made, the rules that order these statements, and the rules that permits to identify some

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[53] Ann Brooks, "Contextualising Foucault: Power, Truth and Discourse" in *Post Feminisms- …, Op.cit.,* p. 49. Discourse is a set of practices rather than structures where these practices systematically form the objects of which they speak.

[54] David Howarth*, Discourse…, Op.cit.,* pp. 48-49.

[55] *idem.*

statements as true and some as false…..This act of discourse as the means of production of subject by the operation of power or the modern intervention is the major application of Foucault's theory to this study. It describes how the social, economic, and cultural discourse can subjectivize (make human beings into its subjects) the human being to get into the process of self-development (formation) in the modern discourse; which in turn produces a changed conception of old age today.

Unlike tradition, the elderly are not valued simply for being old in modern society. In the modern society, the determinants of value (power) are many, such as money/assets, health, education/achievements etc. By being the holder of any one or all of these, one can become the holder of power in modern society. It is the modern institutions/discourses that constitute one to be the holder of power or to become the subject of modernity. Here the modern medicine, modern economy, modern education etc. constitute human beings into subjects of modernity. The study revealed that a *janmi (*holder of an inherited property) cannot claim for power (just as a birth right) in modern discourse. Property became the thing that can be achieved by the intervention of modern discourses today. There are laws that advocate property rights to the individuals, irrespective of caste or gender. But in tradition it was the right of the upper caste to hold property and could only be inherited through generations. Modern ideology says it is the right of the individual where the term 'individual' is

not confined to any caste, class, age or sex. The young as well as the old may come into the category of 'individual' here. Anyone can be the individual and the power is with that individual. Power is not necessarily abide with the elderly in modern discourse. In modernity, there is no autonomous power that stands at the centre of the universe. It circulates throughout the social body. For Foucault, this is the bio-power notion where the constitutive or nonconstitutive act of power may work to the formation of subjects. Both the 'owner' and the tenant are important in the notion of modernity. At the same time both are the subjects who are in the process of subjectivization, and to have changed concepts which in turn causes changes to the conception of old age too.

Holding of property and its inheritance played a major role to determine one's economic status in agrarian society. The power was entrusted with the elders of the upper castes. Today, when money became the economic determinant, the salaried jobs, various occupational strategies and access to the migration became the means of accumulation of money. The new form of economy changed the traditional concept of power. There is no caste or age bar to hold power in modern economy. The ill health may devalue the aged from continuing in the power positions. But the bank balance or other security measures, like pension schemes may overcome the situation. For many of the Christian respondents, money sent by the children who are abroad brings economic power. But they consider land as

a liability, rather an asset. For many Nairs, the income from the landed property is providing economic security. For the Muslims, trade is the major means of economy in many cases. So the power is with anybody, irrespective of caste or age in the modern economy.

Joint family and kinship system was the major characteristics of traditional Indian society. The aged were cared for and protected within the familial atmosphere. The authority and sharing of relations were predominant practices of such coparcener living arrangement. The authority and the power were vested with the eldest member of the family. Case study proved this argument clearly. When industrialization, urbanization and social reform brought new opportunities and promoted individuation, extra-familial occupation for women became the trend. Changing roles and expectations of women, their concepts of privacy and freedom, wish not to be encumbered by caring responsibilities of old people for long periods, career ambitions, and employment outside the home implies considerably the break-up of joint family system largely in Pathanamthitta where the female migrant rate is high. Seniority was the power determinant in traditional joint families, for example, the mother-in-law. But in modern nuclear families, educated mother is also considered as an asset to the family. The individuation and autonomy developed in nuclear families help each member to hold certain degrees of power. The case study reported that many of the aged parents revealed their liking

towards nuclear living arrangement. Many of them, mainly Christians do not let their children to come back from their own living arrangement in foreign countries for to look after them in the remote villages. The reason they showed is that today's generation is not able to withstand the rural accommodation. All of these emphasize that today's trend of 'keeping intimacy at distance' is practiced by many families. The trend of nuclear living arrangement can be drawn as the effect of a two-stage development, which is stated by Foucault's technique of power relations[56]. Today in Pathanamthitta, the nuclear living arrangements are mainly because of the migration of the young in search of better productivity or upward mobility. Migration of the young is instituted initially as a means to control the situations caused by the industrialization or urbanization. Later, it evolved into techniques of enhancing the productivity of those subjected to them. So the subjectivity forces them to stay in migrated countries, even though they do not like to leave their parents in an isolated condition.

In traditional society, the word education denoted the way of handing down of *vēda*s and other sacred literatures orally from previous generations by the parents or older members of the community. The goal of education was value orientation or occupational guidance. The aged had major role as source of knowledge and pioneers of experience. But the aim

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[56] For details see Garry Gutting, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 97.

of modern education is to enhance human ability and to make one knowledgeable individual. Here education is to enrich one's life towards upward mobility. To attain that goal, certain techniques of power need to be exercised. For Foucault, "this the power of normalization imposes homogeneity, but it individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialities and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another"[57]. This process of 'normalization' is done by the schools, the media and anything and everything that the students get engaged in. Earlier, this role was authorized by the elders of the community. Here the 'practices' of schooling or the 'science' they learn through schooling may divide the young from the old as well as within themselves. The process of normalization through the act of power too creates different individual or subject than that of a traditionally oriented child.

'Women in job' is also a matter of power-bringing factor in the modern discourse. Here the power is accounted in terms of finance, status, recognition or a chance for migration. Besides Christians, the Nairs, the Ezhavas and others send women to the job market than the earlier days. Availability of pension at old age is another reason that attracts many to the job-market. All these subjectivize the younger women to get into the job

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[57] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Pantheon, New York, 1977, p.184.

market first, instead of staying back with the household affairs and being the care taker to all family members. Making use of home-nurse facility and paid-type old age homes are mostly by the Christian community. For them, it is the best way to spend old age and to avoid the disturbing of younger generation(own children) from the care giving of the old. Here the old too are discursively constituted to become the subjects of modernity where the modern discourse of migration of the younger generation causes their isolation.

All these show that the determinants of power in the modern discourse may devalue the status of the old to a certain extent. When we refer Foucault, the subjectivization by the mode of scientific objectification or the 'dividing practices' give the concept that old are devalued in modern society. But his concept of power relations say that power is not inevitably vested in the state, nor localized in, say, relations between the citizen and state.[58] Power is part of the social body as a whole. There is no binary. It comes from below as well as from up. It circulates throughout the social body. If so, the aged as the weaker section of the society too holds certain degrees of power in modern discourse. This is the reason the case study reveals that there are exceptional cases which say that the old are being respected in modern society too.

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[58]   Tim May, *Situating Social Theory…, Op.cit*., p. 186.

Besides the case studies, the area of the study, Pathanamthitta district itself is revealed here as a site of subjectivization to the modern discourses. The past developments and the current institutional changes bring forth the effect of modernity to this area. Though it is a post-traditional order, here modernity is not the one in which the traditional values are replaced by reasoning and rationality. Instead, the principle of radical doubt always opens to revision, or reflexivity. This creates the formation of multiple sources of authority, instead of single authority of traditional order. Thus in the setting of 'high modernity' the traditional values are not replacing, but are reflexively made to the formation of 'subjects'. The modern interventions like high literacy rate (for male and especially female), higher migration rate, higher number of female migrants, popularity of paid-type old age homes, senior citizen's forum, and day care centre's for the old and so on give the effect of modernity in Pathanamthitta. But the impact of modernity is not replacing the aged absolutely, as stated by Cowgill and Holmes in Modernization Theory. The socio-economic profile, participation profile of various community organizations, and the case studies that conducted among the selected sample are evidence to the statement mentioned above. The current discourses of Pathanamthitta reveals that modernity is not replacing the old, instead it reflexively made them to the subjects of modernity. Either the discourses shape material bodies by the exercise of power or the human

beings turn themselves into subjects through processes of recognition, self mastery and transgression. Hence the active or passive participation to the process of subjectivization is the reason behind the changed concept of old age today. Politically, economically and socially the concept of old age is being changed from its traditional conception.

It is revealed in interviews that there are senior citizens who keep in touch with their globe-trotting children and grandchildren and many of them prefer e-mail while chats and Internet telephony are also in use. And the case study brings the view that many of the Christians responded that the concept of old age has changed today. The reason is the way they are subjected to the modern discourses or the process of subjectivization than other communities. In certain cases, the human beings are passive to the process of subjectivization, while in many other cases they are active.

But this type of subjectivization allows to the existence of sureties of tradition and rationale of modern side by side. With this reason, the inclusion of the old on one hand and their exclusion on the other became the peculiarity of the current discourse. For example, 'ageism' the modern notion, discriminates the old today, while the same modern world considers the activities for the 'care of the old' as the responsibility of the welfare State.

Hence, the study reveals that today's changed concept of old age is due to the process of subjectivization of human beings. In order to know the concept of old age today, the study checked how the subject 'old age' is objectified. First it checked the contribution of science (gerontology as the study of ageing) to this mode of objectification. Secondly, the study of 'practices' helped to know how far they divide the old from others. Thirdly, it revealed in what way people turned themselves into subjects of modernity, so that the old prepare themselves to face old age graciously.