

**THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY
WELLBEING AND ITS ACTUALIZATION IN THE FAMILY
APOSTOLATE OF CONGREGATION OF THE MOTHER OF
CARMEL**

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by

ANJU BABY

Under the Supervision of
Joseph. I. Injodey
Professor



**CENTRE FOR RESEARCH
CHRIST (Deemed to be University)
BENGALURU**

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Chapter 6

Summary

The goal behind the study was to explore the vision of Kuriakose Elias Chavara regarding family wellbeing, and to find out the relation between the original vision and the present concerns of the same, also to identify the actualization of that vision in the Family Apostolate of the Congregation of Mother of Carmel (CMC). The present chapter summarizes research findings, limitations and recommendation.

Purpose of the Study

Family is the largest surviving institution in Kerala irrespective of the ages, transformations, religious and political views. In this epoch, due to globalization, urbanization and secularism, the culture and traditions of the state are in transition and it has severe impacts on families. Hence proper formation of family through the personal vigilance is an urgent necessity of our times. The study is undertaken to explore the vision of Kuriakose Elias Chavara regarding family well being,to find out the difference between the original vision and the present concerns of the same and to further evaluate the actualization of that vision in the family apostolate of the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel, founded by Chavara.

Here comes the relevance of the writings of Chavara's letter -'The Testament of Loving Father', in which we can identify the practical and functional norms in order to attain stability and unity in family. It is the era of fractured family relations and fragile family structure. So the re-visiting of the vision of Kuriakose Elias Chavara about the family wellbeing and the application of the guidelines suggested by him for the proper functioning of a family is of utmost importance and relevance. Imbibing his spirit and vision, the CMC has renewed its family apostolate with greater thrust in recent years. So the present study will definitely invigorate the positive contribution of CMC for the welfare of the society at large.

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

Objectives of the Study

To explore the holistic vision of Kuriakose Elias Chavara regarding family wellbeing based on his life and writings.

To find out which aspects or areas of Chavara's vision have permanent nature and which aspects are contextual

To discover to what extent the contributions of Kuriakose Elias Chavara have influenced the family apostolate CMC.

To explore the ways and means by which Chavara's vision has been updated and implemented by the Family Apostolate of CMC in modern times

To find out various experiences of families with regard to family wellbeing

To investigate how far Chavara's vision of family wellbeing is relevant in the context of modern family of Kerala

Statement of the Problem

The present study 'Vision Of Kuriakose Elias Chavara on Family Wellbeing and Its Actualization in the Family Apostolate of CMC' proposes to recognise the vision of Kuriakose Elias Chavara with regard to family wellbeing from an intense study of life and writings of Chavara, to investigate its relevance in modern families of Kerala, and to identify the ways and means by which CMC is implementing this vision through its family apostolate.

Research Question

The study was guided by following research questions

1. What are the different aspects of family wellbeing according to Kuriakose Elias Chavara?
2. To what extent the contributions of Kuriakose Elias Chavara influenced the Family Apostolate of CMC?
3. How does CMC implement the vision of Chavara regarding family wellbeing through its Family Apostolate?
4. How far Chavara vision of family wellbeing is relevant in the modern family context of Kerala?

Research Design

The present study is situated in exploratory mode and it lies in qualitative approach. Patton (2002) states that qualitative methods are an important part of evaluative efforts because they tell the program's story by capturing and communicating the participant's stories.

To meet the first question the data were analyzed using hermeneutics. Hermeneutic approach gives clarity about social and historical context. As this study analyze the writings of Chavara which dates back to 19th century it is important to give solid interpretation about social and historical context. Hence hermeneutic approach of interpretation is applied in this study (Bryman, 2012). The primary sources analyzed in the study were written by Chavara from 1841 to 1868. The secondary source from 1873 to 2016 (11 books) which have authenticity is also included in the study.

Content analysis is used to explore the second question. The second and third questions were explored using the Constitution, Directives and the Synaxis reports of the Congregation, interview with General and Provincial faith formation councilors of 13 provinces and the sisters working in the family apostolate with an experience between 5 to 15 years.

The third and fourth questions were answered through thematic analysis. In the current study purposive sampling is applied. It is extensively used in qualitative research for the recognition and selection of information rich cases (Patton, 2002). Purposive sampling can be portrayed as a method of sampling where the investigator purposely selects who to include in the study based on their ability to offer necessary data (Parahoo, 1997). This involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are particularly knowledgeable or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Cresswell and Plano Clark 2011).

Sampling procedure

Sampling was done according to following procedure

1. The researcher contacted the General Councilor of Faith Formation who is in-charge of Family Apostolate of Congregation and explained the purpose of this study and acquired authorization to conduct the study in thirteen provinces.

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

2. The researcher met Archbishop of Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese His Excellency Mar Sebastian Adayanthurath and received his consent to conduct the study outside the above mentioned archdioceses.

3. Having discussions with Faith Formation Councillors of each province who is in charge of Family Apostolate in each province the parishes were selected for the study. Besides the researcher met the parish priest, the parish council members and the sister in charge of Family Apostolate in that parish and explained the purpose of this study and presented selection criteria for selecting the families.

4. With the help of them the researcher met the families.

5. The researcher explained the purpose of the study and received their consent and conducted the interview, with their full support and heartfelt co-operation.

5. For key informant interview the researcher contacted the Faith Formation Councilors of each province and obtained their consent and interviewed them in their convents and at the time they specified.

6. With the help of Faith Formation Councilors in each province contacted the sisters who are actively working under Family Apostolate in each province and having an experience more than three years dealing with families and their problems. The interview was conducted in their province and at the time informed by them and the key informants were CMC sisters and the interview was conducted in their convents. This was to ensure the presence of homely atmosphere so that the participant feels confidence and privacy and was encouraged to answer.

Techniques of Data Collection

Key informant

The present study employs key informant interview to obtain information related to activities of the Family Apostolate of CMC. The main benefit of this method is that the quality of data can be obtained in a fairly short period of time (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In this study, the key informants are one CMC sister each from all 13 provinces of Kerala, who has completed at least 5-15 years in the field of family apostolate and the faith formation councilors of each province.

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

Interview

Qualitative research interviews aim to elicit participants' views of their lives, as portrayed in their stories (Rice and Ezzy, 1999). Semi-structured and un-structured interview methods come under the umbrella of qualitative mode. Qualitative interviewing possess much interest in interviewee's point of view and interviewers can depart significantly from any schedule or guide that is being used.

Participants: Nuclear families, in which both the parents and children are residing in the same house.

Document analysis

Document refers to the materials that can be read, have not been produced specifically for the purpose of social research, are preserved so that they become available for analysis and are relevant to the concerns of the social researcher (Bryman, 2012). In this study personal and official documents are used. Personal documents include letters of Kuriakose Elias Chavara and literary works, biographies written by his contemporaries.

Official documents of CMC related to its apostolic activities are also included.

Tools for Data Collection

Interview guide

In order to accomplish the maximum use of interview time, interview guide facilitates the exploring of many respondents more systematically and comprehensively to keep the interview focused on the desired line of action (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). The researcher used two types of interview guide. One guide was for collecting the opinion of sisters about the concepts under study and the other guide for gathering the views of family regarding the same. The interview guide helped the researcher to move with the concepts without loss of time and gave confidence to carry on the interview.

Analysis of the Data

The data is analyzed through thematic, content and hermeneutic approaches.

Ethical issues

Here the moral standard taken is explained. The researcher should keep moral guidelines in all stages of the research process. The researcher acquired the approval from the Christ University Research Centre, Bangalore and consent from the Faith Formation Councillor of CMC and from auxiliary Archbishop of Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese and from the supervisor to undertake the study.

In this study the researcher followed the principle of ethics proposed by Diener and Crandall (1978). They are

1. Whether there is any harm to the participants
2. Whether there is lack of informed consent
3. Whether there is an invasion of privacy
4. Whether deception is involved

Harm to participants

Harm can entail a number of facets: physical harm, harm to participant's development, loss of self-esteem, stress and inducing subjects to perform reprehensible acts (Diener and Crandall 1978).

Another way to avoid harm to the participants is to maintain confidentiality of records. This means that identities and records of individuals should be maintained as confidential. This statement also means that care must be taken when findings are being published to ensure that individuals are not identified or identifiable (Bryman, 2012). In this study the researcher strictly maintained the confidentiality regarding their identity and used pseudo names. The researcher was sensitive to the emotions of the participants and even kept participant's responses confidential and did not even reveal it to the sister who is in charge of Family Apostolate or to the sister who accompanied the researcher.

Lack of informed consent

The principle of informed consent also entails the implication that even when people know they are being asked to participate in the research, they should be fully informed about the research process (Bryman, 2012). In this study the researcher visited the participant's homes and explained very personally and informally each and every process of the research. They were informed of the results and publication of their responses. Then they were asked to give their consent to participate in the study or not and

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

they are also allowed to withdraw from the study whenever they desired. With their full awareness and consent they were selected for the study.

Invasion of privacy

The right to privacy is a tenet that many hold dear and transgressions of that right in the name of the research are not regarded as acceptable. According to British Sociological Association (BSA), statement covert methods violate the principles of informed consent and may invade the privacy of those being studied. The issue of privacy is invariably linked to issues of anonymity and confidentiality in the research process, an area that has already been touched on in the context of the question of whether harm comes to the participants. Again, BSA states that anonymity and privacy of those who participate in the research process should be respected. Personal information concerning research participants should be confidential.

In some cases it may be necessary to decide whether it is proper or appropriate to record certain kind of sensitive information. The researcher tried to keep a distance from their internal matters which were sensitive to them and tried her best to value privacy of the participants. They were guaranteed of confidentiality verbally and in the written consent form. In this study the researcher tried to keep the names confidential and the interview transcripts were kept personally and securely.

Deception

Deception occurs when the researchers represent their work as something other than what it is. Social Research Association states that, ‘it remains the duty of social researchers and their collaborators, however not to pursue methods of inquiry that are likely to infringe human values and sensibilities. To do so, whatever the methodological advantages, would be to endanger the reputation of social research and the mutual trust between social researchers and society which is a prerequisite for much research’.

The researcher honestly speaks that as from the base of religious identity and as a research scholar she gave her first and foremost importance for conducting a research which will be of benefit to the society and to her congregation. So she tried her best to ensure truthfulness to the research.

Research Findings

The study ends here but begins a new horizon for the family to attain family wellbeing. The present study is a long journey which discloses the insights of Kuriakose Elias Chavara for the wellbeing of the families. His literary works are analysed along with the works of his contemporaries. The study also evaluated the actualization of his insights in the family apostolate of CMC and its functioning. The analysis reveals that the life experiences shared by the families strongly supports the view of Kuriakose Elias Chavara. It shows that in this post-modern era Chavara's insights remain valuable directives for the wellbeing of the families. The families are not very familiar with the Testament of Chavara written in the 19th century but some of them have heard a little about it. But their experiences point out the fact that still his views are relevant and occupy an important position in the present era. Also the findings divulge that some of his concepts which were once applicable in the past era are not applicable in this modern era. The living experiences shared by the families point out the relevance of his testament.

The study also evaluated the actualization of his dreams in the family apostolate of CMC. It gives the pictures of actualization and functioning of his vision in the apostolate. Document analysis and interview point out the past and present situations of it. Also it gives an understanding about challenges and crisis faced by the family apostolate today.

1. What are the different aspects of family wellbeing according to Kuriakose Elias Chavara?

The first question of the study explores the different aspects of wellbeing according to Chavara. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, the upholder of families had a significant and concrete view about the family. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, the upholder of family had a conviction that for a better society the family has to be refurbished. The present study was a long journey through the literary works especially his letter 'Testament of a loving father' of Kuriakose Elias Chavara to reveal his true spirit for the renewal of families. A deep and inspiring childhood memories in his heart about his family enlightened him to etch the elements for a good family. His counsels composed of

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

social values can lead the family to moral as well as social upliftment. Well being of the family was an important concept in his heart and believed that, by ensuring the mental, social and spiritual magnitude the stability of the family could be achieved.

Chavara considers good parenting as the first and foremost responsibility of parents and give a number of valuable instructions for them. He had clear vision about family relationship and encourages the maintaining of charitable relationships with respectful attitudes between husband and wife and parents and children. In the periods of suppressions and pandemonium, he valued and proclaimed the right of freedom, justice and respect in the family. He introduced these elements in family matters to promote the dignity and to teach the generation about its significance. According to him merging of mental, social and spiritual nourishment enriches the personality.

He believed that to sharpen all responsibilities in life one has to be educated. The development of society takes place only with the civilized individuals with a base of education. He shared the idea that education brings discipline and value in life and promotes the progress and enrichment of moral stream of values in individuals and society. To accomplish social and moral elements in life, he opened the pathway to education.

He put forward new dimension for religion and traditional practices. He visualized religion and traditional practices as a means of social union. His purpose was to modify its strict style to a pattern spiritual and affordable for all in the society, thus renewing its face to a face of humanness and respecting all with their characteristics. Even he shares his religious thoughts which protect the family from anarchy and chaos.

According to him family routine involving family prayer and family meals is an imperative mode for family union. He insists that every member must be there for family prayers and also he gives a clear timetable to keep the solidarity and order in a family. The suggestion about routine can foster physical health in daily lives. His wealth of knowledge filled his futuristic vision with creative and practical thoughts are very helpful to fortify the family. His thoughts analyze each element in family life.

He also speaks about the economic security of the family which has to be carefully maintained. Chavara also mentions about financial matters which is indispensable for a safe and sound family life. He advises careful and reliable

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

management of financial concerns and gives directions related to the moral side of it. In financial matters, he employed a culture of transparency throughout his life

This religious priest dedicated his life for his brethren and introduced his experienced life into action. Through day and night self giving activities he understood the rhythm of life and his wide contemplation proposed a dynamic sketch for family life. In the monastery he led a family life where he was the father for religious members, a friend for his disciples and a guide for novices, an excellent administrator for the congregation and a man of transparency for authorities, a model novice for all his fellow religious and was a person all in all for any ordinary man. In his life each day he lived with a family spirit and understood the depth of family life through his daily life experiences. He learnt from his own life experiences and his in-depth moral conscience taught him the lessons for a strong family.

The discipline and formation attained from his family and religious moulding, having connections with a wide variety of people including higher authorities and the marginalized, taught him the lessons of communal growth and enriched his depth of spiritual measures. His functions at administrative level rejuvenated his actions in leadership quality and enriched him with a vast practical knowledge. The insightful reading grinded his communication ability with influential authenticity and shaped his personality with immense wisdom about different concerns. Through contact with the poor and the marginalized, he realized the pain of lack of freedom and discrimination. He understood the indignity of untouchables by his close contact with society. He reformed religion to make it reachable and to bind all in unity. For Chavara it was also a source of social support and moral reminder. Thus considering his life and activities he touched each and every corner of the society and led a life devoted to the Almighty and his fellow beings.

2. To what extent the contributions of Kuriakose Elias Chavara influenced the Family Apostolate of CMC?

The second question was about the influence of Chavara's vision on family wellbeing in the family apostolate of Congregation of the Mother of Carmel and it was explored through content analysis. The researcher found that CMC Constitution and CMC directives are true evidence that clearly state that the vision of founder father

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

Kuriakose Elias Chavara about family is deeply and wholly followed by the Congregation in its activities related to family renewal programmes.

The findings reveal that in the early decade of the growing stage of CMC, priority was given for education, then for social work and for medical services. From 1977 onwards the congregation started concentrating more on Catechism. In the year 1991 the Faith Formation Secretariat was inaugurated. In the following years especially from 1997 the Congregation tried strongly to put her foot on family renewal programmes, evangelization, to give awareness for the people about moral path through Catechism.

From that years much importance was given for counselling, restoration of broken families, sacramental life, sex instruction and pro-life education, the importance of consecrated life in present times, family apostolate, mass media and evangelization. During these periods the Congregation encouraged working with different organizations in the parishes and members joined with ‘Mythri’, an organization which supports the people who were trying to commit suicide. Chavara’s views are accepted as principle directives which lead and guide the Congregation in family oriented activities.

In her mission, founder’s view was there but only in the year 1977 she became aware of founder’s thoughts and directives. During the period (1994-1997), the year of Chavara’s 125th death anniversary, the Congregation gave shape to the programs which have the founder’s vision. The priority was given for renewal of families and took initiation to continue the activities. Chavara Family renewal retreat a fruitful venture came out in the same year. Through different ventures like faith formation, Christian formation/ Catechesis, Christeen, Carmel buds, Youth ministry, forum for women, CMC associates, counselling, proclamation of the word of God, family apostolate, home mission the congregation tries to bloom under the vision of Chavara regarding family wellbeing. Considering the directives of Chavara faith formation secretariat gives form and shape to the activities which strive to bring a transformation in the families.

In the 19th century Kuriakose Elias Chavara wished to save the women flock from their pitiable condition in the society. From the beginning stage of the Congregation priority was given to the upliftment of women. From 2003-2006 the Congregation introduced different endeavors for the empowerment of women. Along with Faith Formation Team and other organizations, some of the provinces conducted awareness

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

classes against abortion, infanticide and suicide through film show, street play etc. In some of the provinces they conducted retreat for pregnant ladies. Another venture is the one year course for the house wives include each and everything about family life, upbringing of children, family relationships, running a family within the income of family etc. The documents reveal that during the periods 2009-2012, the Congregation tried to establish the views of Chavara about family and the Congregation widened her services to fathers of the family.

In the years 2009-2012, the public especially government and private management and even hospitals invited the members to conduct counselling and to give guidance. CMC has made her own movements in the field of counselling and it spreads to pregnant ladies, youngsters, victims of rape, sexual harassment, people addicted to drinks and drugs, the couples planning to divorce, mothers who have undergone abortion, those who tried to suicide, homo-sexuals, problematic children, people facing family problems, mental depression etc. During the periods 2000 to 2003 the Congregation took great efforts to conduct effective house visits and to popularize the Chavara's directives about family. In the year 2010, the synaxis took decision to popularize Chavara's directives with the help of mass media. It encourages each province making use of tele films, role play, skit, debate etc through TV/radio for effective renewal of families and women empowerment and to protect life. But findings reveal that congregation has to travel some more distance to reach the families.

3. How does CMC implement the vision of Chavara regarding family wellbeing through its family apostolate?

The third question explores the ways and means by which Chavara's vision has been updated and implemented by the Family Apostolate of CMC in modern times. This was explored through thematic analysis.

CMC in her journey through apostolic field keeps her own traditions and identities. The first indigenous religious congregation for women in the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Church has completed her 153th years of fruitful service. Keeping her founder's insights and reading the signs of present era she is moving with new dimensions to reform families according to Chavara's visions. The Congregation that started with four members now renders her services and try to institute founder's dream

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

through more than 6500 members. Her apostolic activities flow from the land of diverse culture, India to the continents of Africa, America and Europe.

With the deep experience of 153 years she has widened her borders with prolific measures rooted in the founder's insights.

The researcher spent ¾ to 1 hour with each participant and found that they have rich and in-depth knowledge about the real conditions of contemporary families.

The findings reveal that the congregation gives much importance for the renewal of the families. Much concentration is given on matters like parenting, family relationship, religion and traditional practices, family prayer and financial issues.

The participants (sisters) opined that modern families face problems in family relationship like misunderstandings and lack of self respect, increased rate of divorces, loss of trust between the partners, loss of acceptance and forgiving nature between the partners, poor communication pattern, social evils like extra- marital relationship,

pre-marital sex etc. They point out that poor parenting is another crisis. This involves irresponsible parenthood of women and men, workaholic nature, overload of work, poor communication between parents and children, giving more priority for status, health, facilities than children. Modern families possess higher education and occupy good status in the society but have lesser social support and less communication with surrounding but have good communication with people outside India. Majority of them shares that new generation families show less interest in spiritual matters, less communication with religious people, poor spiritual concepts, less number of church goers etc. The family prayer has disappeared from many families and has less participation in religious gatherings.

Poor financial background, poverty, giving priority for material and financial needs, extravagance and loss of value system, lack of order and discipline in life, lack of maturity even at marital stage, absence of long term life goals, alcoholism, misuse of media etc. are the other issues related to broken families. Majority of participants shares that they give much more importance for healthy upbringing of children, family relationship especially divorce cases, problems related to women and children, upbringing children, youth, educational matters etc.

Key Informant Interview

Parenting

The participants shared that with much fear and anxiety they observe increased rate of divorces and family problems. One of the participants (sister) says, “In the families having good parenting we can make out the difference in character and studies of the children and they will be more comfortable”. From their past experiences they believe that the basic problem behind irresponsible parenthood is work-oriented life that is the priority given for job than children. Another reason is that when the family became small or ‘nuclear families’ much concentration is given to one or two children. But the children are never satisfied with what they are provided. They unanimously state that personal contact, deep sharing and listening is an important source which gives the families insights about their crisis. Sisters mainly guide them using Chavara’s directives and by spending hours for counseling and therapies using the directives of Chavara they try to give them deep conviction that children are the treasures of the family by pointing out Chavara’s vision.

The important means through which they implement Chavara’s vision are classes, counseling and house visits, seminars, engage the women from immoral background in handicrafts to make them self-sufficient, , through Chavara’s directives, word of God, personal meeting and deep prayer, Christeen retreats, skit, role play, puppet show etc based on directives in the testament and the story books about Chavara, , gatherings for mothers, value education, exposure programs, competitions and discussions, helping the people to design a routine and family budget.

Congregation is conducting various activities especially classes, counseling and house visits to convince the parents about the problems faced by children and also try to equip them to deal the problem of the children in an appropriate way. Also they make available the help and guidance of eminent personalities in the congregation who could help them in a right way. Also they used to discuss and try to implant Chavara’s directives which deal with duties and responsibilities of parents. But the participants share that they could not save children within 3 or 5 days because they need continuous companionship. In such situations good parenting can bring back the children to normal life. So they try to strengthen parents with clear convictions about parenting with the help

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

of the Testament of Chavara. They used to conduct seminars, counseling and retreats for them. In the schools sometimes during PTA meeting they spend one hour for these classes related to healthy upbringing of children.

The participants convey that counseling combined with prayer helps to flourish the renewal of the families. But the participants frankly state that conducting follow up is the really difficult matter and sometimes there will be no follow up and it affects the progress of family renewal. They have saved many women from the immoral life of their husbands through counseling and tried to engage them in handicrafts to make them self-sufficient. Majority of them opined that Chavara's directives about good family life remain as a candle light in darkness. They revealed many cases which will be unbelievable for public and in order to respect them the researcher has to keep it confidential. They reveal that through Chavara's directives, word of God, personal meeting and deep prayer they became successful in dealing these crisis and they have united many couples who were going to divorce. With the help of Chavara's 'Testament of a loving father' they used to do counseling and they found that it was very helpful for the purpose. They affirm that in this 21st century Chavara's concept remain as a means for healing the wounds of the families. The participants shares that parents used to share that his directives serve as an important guideline for good parenting and even in matters related to finance. Sometimes these people take initiative to popularise the directives. They add that Christeen retreats, skit, role play, puppet show etc based on directives in the testament and the story books about Chavara are very effective in transforming children.

Family relationship

They (sisters) observe that today's family encounters a very dangerous issue that is broken relationship and this crisis is increasing in recent years. They observe that in the families where there is mutual respect and understanding the children will have secure feelings and are more centered on pro-social behavior and very rarely fell into immoral relationship. Good relationships enable a person to share her innate goodness with others and reciprocate the same in sharing with each other.

Also they share that divorce rate is increasing in each year and they used to send them for retreat, healing prayers, counseling conducted in their institution. Sometimes

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

they refer them to the experts in the congregation for guidance. The sisters used to have personal and intimate contact with them and also follow them until they reach a solution.

But sisters sincerely reveal that lack of members, time, workload, poor health etc are some of the barriers to reach the people.

Education

“Education especially new technologies are helping our youth to become channels of charity” says one of the participants with an optimistic mind. But some of the shared their past experiences. Another participant observes, “From the past few years we are giving value education taught by Chavara. We could see a difference in them and they are responding positively”. According to some of the participants in this modern era family life is more centered on qualifications and status and not on deep intimacy and pure love. A tinge of selfishness and ardent thirst for reputation and position enable the family to move without concern for others even in the family. They pointed out the positives and drawbacks of education but unanimously they supported and appreciated the role of education in the wellbeing of families.

CMC Education ratio reminds that teachers have to create on-going relation with the parents and should be aware of the family background of each child in order to know the child. The participants shared that could say that the sisters who are teaching in the schools visits the houses of their children and try to make out the problems of the child related to studies. Sometimes they will inform sisters who is in charge of family apostolate and they will take remedial measures like giving counseling for both parents and children.

The Congregation ensures free tuition and free boarding to empower the children from the families who are educationally backward. Also they make use of education fund for the poor. They try to give awareness for the parents about the importance of education. Exposure programs will be helpful in this case. Educated parents only can help their children. During PTA meetings, gatherings for mothers and also during house visits sisters used to speak about the importance of parent’s involvement in their children’s educational life.

Provinces provide different kinds of facilities to empower educationally backward families especially we provide financial assistance, provide incentives and

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

encouragement for poor children to study better and motivate the parents to visit and contact their schools or colleges. They point out that from the past few years we are giving value education taught by Chavara. They recollect that they could see a difference in them and they are responding positively. “We hope that the children will return to source of goodness and charity offered by the previous generation” says one of the participants. Another opinion is that, “We used to conduct awareness programs for our teachers to empower them with values and virtues dreamt by Chavara. So that they can hand over or can help the children to grow up with strong foundation of values and virtues”

Religion and traditional practices

The faith formation team of the Congregation gives main concern for Christian formation. Hence religion and traditional practices are highly focused area by the Congregation. For the past few years the Congregation tried to equip her members to lead people to goodness of religion and to attach the people with religion to ensure a life embedded in faith, spirituality and moral values. The participants recollect that one-day seminars, gatherings, workshops etc lead the people to understand about faith, religion and family life and sisters testify that there were many incidents which transformed them to a new light. House visit is an important solution to solve the draw backs related to religion and traditional practices. The participants point out that the personal contacts with these cases enable them to lead to other-centered life. Another surprising experience is the increased number of youth attending religious activities, gatherings and meetings.

“We strictly distribute ‘Testament of loving father’ in all the families during our house visit. Also based on the Testament we used to conduct competitions and discussions to deepen his views about family wellbeing especially family relationship, upbringing of children, importance of prayer and traditional practices”. When we conduct family gatherings we share the views of Chavara regarding religious and traditional practices” says one of the participants. House visit is an important solution to solve the draw backs related to religion and traditional practices. They have conducted classes and seminars at parish level and used to give class on Chavara’s- ‘Kudumpa chattam’ (Testament of a loving father) especially about the importance of religion and the role of traditional practices, try to convince them about the importance of Sunday and its

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

traditional practices, encourage deep relationship with priests and the sisters cultivate great interest in church activities and the needs of poor and sick.

During house visits they make out lists about the struggling people and in their struggles the sisters take special concern to support and strengthen them. Through the province, sisters try to take suitable steps to help them. The participants share that they used to encourage people attending and taking leadership in the organizations in the Church so that they will actively participate in the church matters. Also it will deepen their relationship with Church and during their crisis the parishioners will help and support them. The sisters used to send them for retreats and seminars for renewal so that these people take initiation for the renewal of families and the parish. The sisters give leadership to form prayer groups in the initial stage and later the people will lead the group. The sisters will guide and support them.

Family prayer and routine

The participants share that many of the families exist because of family prayer. For many of them it forms the foundation of the family. For others it's the time for sharing family matters. The families share that during those moments the open sharing helps the members to have an idea about family's real situation or the crisis of the member. Some of the participants point out that middle and low income family gives much importance for family prayer and sharing. The high income families find much difficulty to find time for family prayer. The sisters recollect many incidents where the families have shared about importance and miraculous experience of family prayer.

The sisters from 13 provinces from different parts of Kerala reveal that considering the past years the family prayer is slowly vanishing from the families. In the family the center of attraction is occupied by reality shows, new generation movies, adventurous programs etc. The parents and children spend their time in front of their favorite items.

“The parents become the busiest persons and hardly get time to be with their children. They are not much bothered about the faith and spiritual life of their kids” shares one of the participants.

The participants share that during olden days mothers took special concern to deepen the faith of future generation. They were very strict in spiritual matters especially

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

church attendance and participation in pious organizations. Now mother's special concern is about entrance coaching, tuition etc and considers spiritual matters as useless issues. From the sharing of the participants the researcher found that families in the Northern and Southern parts move with their family prayer, gatherings and traditional practices. The families in the Central part give priority for enjoying the life. Most of them do not have any deposit and are not even bothered about next day. Their lives are centered on club, trends, food etc. Church attendance is also very poor. For them faith and family prayer are meaningless. They explicitly say that in this era it is very difficult to follow a routine and majority of the family especially children do not have a proper routine. They are not even bothered about the importance of it and they consider it as an outdated activity. Even parents also agree with the children. They recollect some of the families spend their family prayer time to solve their crisis with God. The participants share, "During Sunday classes, gatherings for mothers and fathers, family units etc we strictly speak about the importance of family prayer. While giving marriage guidance and family counseling we try to make them understand about the depth, effect and power of family prayer".

The sisters share that using the exhortations of Chavara they encourage the family members to have food together at least at once a day. They say that there are many families which have food together and these were the moments they share the happenings of the day. The sisters recollect that there are children who wait for their father till late night to have food with them. There may only a pickle or something but they will have it with joy and peace because they are guided by familial love relationship. Also they share that they have seen the families which have prayer and meal together, encounter problems together and stand with one heart. The participants recollect that there were incidents where they sat with family members in order to help them to design a routine and family budget. They reveal that house visits, personal contacts and their presence in the families to conduct family prayer help them to sketch the families which are devoid of sharing. Participants reveal that families are not much interested in keeping routines but they value family prayer.

But the participants happily remember that there were many cases in which the members transformed to a state of joy, sharing and supporting, encouraging and

strengthening. They testify that many families became the agents in distributing the testament and they reveal the people agree with that to a great extend. The participants share that in the families having prayer and having food together the children are much more mentally healthy and sociable. They are bothering about others and have respect for elders and others. They are much more practical in their life and will spend health, talents and time for others. They cultivate a mind of collectivism. While visiting the houses the sisters help the children to make a time table in which they keep a space for family prayer. They also help them to arrange the time so that there will be time to have food together. Some of them helped to prepare proper budget for their family.

Family income

“It is an important aspect of family wellbeing” share the participants. The participants painfully recollect the pathetic conditions of families due to shortage of money. But they add that there are many families that lead a happy and peaceful life in the middle of poor financial set up. They point out that in the times of poor financial set up the faith and religious support from parish or parishioners really strengthen these families from family suicides.

The participants openly point out that in spite of crises, the new generation families enjoy life with their minimum. The habit of saving money is slowly disappearing from the modern families and spent their earnings for buying electronic articles, new generation clothes, food stuffs etc. The new generation families are not bothered about borrowing huge amount for celebrations or such programs. In order to pay back the debt again they will borrow money and will live lavishly. “During house visits we try to understand them about saving and spending of money using Chavara’s exhortations. We used to sit with them and help them to make a budget for their families. Some of the families really welcomed it and followed the budget but some of them do not want such planning and savings” reveals one of the participants.

Another issue is spending money for drinking. Many of them spend half of their earning for drinks. In these families the wives suffer a lot and they work hard to meet the expenses of the family. In some families the husbands will not go for work and the wives work till night to compensate this work. Also these families will have taken loan for other purposes and later they struggle seriously to clear the loan or to pay back the

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

money. There are some families which face financial problems due to serious sickness of the head of the family or a member of the family.

The participants recollect that in some of the families which are going through poor financial background the relationship between the members also will get affected. Especially relationships between partners are seriously affected. But in some families which have strong faith and religious support they move forward with much more courage and face the situation. “During house visits we came to know about the sickness or other serious issues leading to financial crisis. First we inform the matter in our community and with permission we conduct frequent visits to understand their real situation and then think about solutions to solve their struggles. We discuss with our major superiors and parish authorities and provide timely help. Along with that we frequently visit them and support them spiritually to overcome the pain”.

Some of the participants share that in certain families with financial problem the children adjust to great extend. “Sometimes they refuse to buy new clothes or they force parents to avoid celebrations or participating in such occasions”. But in some families the children become rebels when their desires are not fulfilled and they will find their own way to fulfill their desires”. According to the participants family income is an essential part of family wellbeing and their long experience reveal that in some families its shortage really matters a lot. But the families having deep faith and healthy relationship with the church survives the struggles. The new generation couples and families have lost the habit of saving and are more interested in enjoying life.

Challenges

The Congregation tries her best to carve the families in deep faith to survive the struggles and crisis. She updates her activities and prepares novel endeavors for the renewal of families. But in her journey of self giving she finds certain obstacles. According to the General and Provincial Faith Formation Councilors, the main barrier is the lesser number of members in this field. When home missions are conducted, the team sometimes struggles to finish it due to inadequate number of members.

Next issue is that if there are enough members all may not be belonging to team. They might be called for two or three days to finish the mission. So if the members changes each time it will affect the team work or team spirit. According to the

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

participants another hurdle is the partial commitment of the members. Some of the participants reveal that sisters fail to keep the matters confidential. They share about the misunderstanding and break in relationship caused due to sister's failure in keeping secrecy.

Lack of time is another difficulty. The sisters are engaged in a number of works. As they have different responsibilities they find difficulty to spare time for house visiting, to deal with problematic people, conducting classes and seminars etc. Due to huge responsibilities sometimes the needy and poor are neglected from their attention or even sisters would be unable to concentrate on them.

The public evaluates that congregation have to update their knowledge move with ability to read the new generation. A huge gap exists between today's generation and consecrated people. So they are very far from the mind of children and youth. Hence they have to be sensitive towards the needs of the new generation.

4. How far Chavara vision of family wellbeing is relevant in the modern family context of Kerala?

Interview Method

Family the foremost institution empowers the nations with its fruits, the youthful generations. The strength, progress and prosperity of a nation is surely dependent on wellbeing of the families. Rettig and Leichtentritt (1999), states that the degree to which one person's needs were met in the family settings was assumed to be an indicator of family wellbeing. According to La Placa, Mc Naught and Knight (2013) a family unit is an aggregate of individuals. To accomplish family wellbeing, the wellbeing of individual has to be first accomplished.

Kuriakose Elias Chavara, the upholder of families had a significant and concrete view about the family. His was ignited with thoughts of progress and magnificence of the society and hence he dreamt about the pathways leading to wellbeing of the family. Chavara, the herald of the east burnt the candle in an era of chaos and enriched people with humanness and thoughts of prosperity. His in-depth knowledge fired him to lay foundation for future families. He taught the ordinary people about the worth of parenting, family relationship, education, religion and traditional practices, family income in an era where empirical studies does not exists to prove its importance. But later

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

when the studies came out with the elements which ensure wellbeing of the family really point out Chavara's aspects which was contributed in an era of under development in Kerala.

Parenting

The experiences shared by the families prove the authenticity of his teaching. In a century snowed under lack of knowledge his sensitivity towards parenting still remains as a precious gem. He exhorts "Parents, understand that your most important duty and responsibility is to bring up your children well. They are the treasures entrusted to you by God". (CWC IV, 1990, p. 144). Parenting is a lifelong and life giving process where not only expending one's energy, time, and capabilities but also surrendering or submitting one's whole life to bestow shape to something shapeless. Zaslow and Eldred (1998) opine that parenting is an important determinant which affects the whole child. Parents basically mold and shape their children into adults through their world of influence (Baumrind, 1971). He taught parents to respect the identity and freedom of their children

In the study the researcher found that all the parents have deep conviction that parenting forms the backbone of the family and important factor of family wellbeing. A mother from a middle income family belonging to Central part states, "I realize that good parenting involves pain and sacrifices. I believe that if I lead an exemplary life then only I can bring up my daughters in the right path. I have dreams about them but I give more importance to their interest because they are going to live or face the world. I live for them and always wish that they never go astray".

Parenting styles

Parenting styles always have an influence in disciplining and even in the character formation of children. A sub-theme or category arising from his directives for parenting is parenting style. Darling (2007) reported that parenting style predicts child well-being in the domains of social competence, academic performance, psychosocial development and problem behaviour. In an era in which there were no developments and progress he wrote about an important aspect parenting style. In spite of rash parenting style, he introduced a style which sharpens the reasoning ability of children to discern what is appropriate and what is in-appropriate and had a humanitarian aspect respecting the identity of children and also aims at the upbringing of enlightened personalities. In his

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

testament Chavara emphasizes the freedom of children. According to them they keep the policy of giving enough freedom to think about their future to take the right decision.

The parents confirm that they respect the freedom of children and possess the parenting style proposed by Chavara.

Chavara had a clear picture about the style in disciplining. Chavara exhorts, “One should be neither too stern nor too lenient with one’s children. Too much of indulgence will make them proud and too much of severity and punishment will make them desperate, shameful and weak of intellect. Before giving them physical punishment, rebuke them with prudent benevolence” (CWC IV, 1990, p. 146).

Socialization and practice of values

Chavara gives an in-depth advice about socialization of children. According to him socialization involves knowing oneself and fellow beings and respecting the uniqueness and freedom of individual. It results in the carving of the individual with value based life to establish a good self and a better society. Chavara held families in high regard and believed that a family attains heaven-like peace and happiness only when it follows the principle that children should be brought up on a sound foundation of values. Such morally sound families turn out to be the enlightening force in a society. Chavara advises the parents “Don’t teach the children to tell lies and to use cunning means. When such faults are noted, immediately correct them and induce them to love and respect truth and justice” (CWC IV, 1990, p. 146). The researcher found that parents are too vigilant to bring up their children in values. Their words really reflect the tension about value system of future generation.

While asking about values the researcher found that parents belonging to middle and low income keep an important place for it and are too cautious to bring up their children with a strong value system. A father from a low income family from southern part says, “In future they have to become a good wife and mother and hence we have to seriously look out of their character formation. We try to keep the values in our life so that they can learn the meaning of values from our life. I give special consideration for morality and charity. I try my best to keep truth and justice in my life and remind them to

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

keep these values in their life". A good upbringing of children means offering a marvelous contribution to society.

The researcher could find some dislike towards his teaching especially about attending the celebrations. He exhorts, "When they have completed 12 years of age, this being the critical period of their lives, the parents should not send them to celebrations like death anniversaries, festival gatherings, weddings or other festivities, but keep them at home and give them occupation suited to their age" (CWC IV, 1990, p. 146). Chavara gives clear guidance about formation of children at age of twelve. Here his intention is to make children independent leading to a goal oriented life. He instructs that it is better to be engaged with some work than wandering everywhere to make the personality durable to complexities of life. He insists about learning of things at an appropriate age in order remain them till the end of their lives.

Parents usually try to engage their children in house hold responsibilities. They view that these responsibilities make them self-sufficient and independent. Some of the mothers have given them areas to clean thus encouraging them to take initiation to do work. While in the low and middle income families the children are used to do house hold responsibilities thinking about their parent's hardships. But the families share that in this post modern era this was an out dated view and they wish to take their girl child along with them for celebrations and social gatherings. Both the parents and children share that they used to go for religious as well as social gatherings and actually these were the moments which increase love, togetherness and unity among them. Also they state that these moments really take away the mental strain and strengthen with a relaxed mind. They speak that joining these gatherings will impart positive energy to face the world with more confidence.

Family relationship

Family is that interior source which provides the spirit of intimacy to relationships. His altruistic personality presents the true spirit of familial relationships which can bind varied minds and hearts leading to societal harmony. Strong family relationships are considered crucial to desistance (Farrall, 2004). Chavara, the icon of social reformation bloomed in relationship-a relationship with God and family members. Chavara, in his Testament, reminds his parishioners of the need for parents to love and

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

respect each other, in the absence of which children also will fail to love and respect them: “The mother must set an example to them in loving and respecting the father and the father should teach them to love and respect the mother.

If parents do not love and respect each other, the children cannot be expected to love and respect” (CWC IV, 1990, p. 146). It was also confirmed through various studies that if family relationship has been good the adolescent will develop into a well adjusted individual (Woolf, 1963). The participants give the message that ‘patience’ has to do a lot of work in relationships. In times of struggles and pain the role played by silence and patience really makes the relationship stronger and wonderful.

The researcher found that both parents and children are highly concentrated on family relationships. Each one has to say a lot about deep and intimate relationships. A mother from a high income family says, “Before sleep we used to share and go to bed with a free mind. But in front of children we try not to give scandal for them. Through my relationship I used to give them a view that their mother is there with them in their struggles and pain. I am sure that the strong relationship at home empowers them to stay united with family”. The participants opined that now a days the new generation has forgotten to respect parents as well as elders. They point towards the broken relationship between parents and between parents and children. In the past, the parents were the text where the children get knowledge about good manners. Also they were the lessons where the kids learn about respect and values.

Now the situation has changed and money, media and luxury took control of the home. Each member started speaking about their own needs and wants to protect their identity. The family lost the wonderful gift of sacrifice. Considering Chavara’s view the parents opined that they try to be model for their children. “I think she encourages children to respect elders especially me, their father, and used to give directions about manners while elders are present at home” says a father from a high income family from Southern part. Many of the children admit that the relationship with their parents really saved them from immoral friendships and relationships. A girl of 18 years from a high income family from southern part shares:-“My father never used a negative word against my mother. Even my mother never speaks a single mistake of my father. They never use any negative words or they never speak to us about each other’s weakness or mistakes.

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

They are perfect couple”. They happily shares that through the relationship with parents they learnt to hear their friend’s worries.

The affection and understanding which the children experienced through the relationship with their parents taught them the depth of blood relationships. Also they shares that they never heard a single word from their mother speaking against father which they feel as model for them. This exemplary behavior of mother helps them to respect or to obey their father. This is an important aspect of Chavara.

Chavara remind that never interfere in the conflicts between the children. Studies affirm that good relationship with the siblings can implant good levels of personal adjustment and its influence will be greater than the relationship with parents (Yeh, 2001). Another study discloses that violent sibling relationships are related to antisocial behavior and personal adjustment problems during adolescence (Schaeffer & Borduin, 1999). A girl from middle income family opens her heart, “In the night we (my sister & myself used to share each and everything happened on that day. These matters we won’t reveal to parents. Sometimes I feel her as my intimate friend to whom I can share the worst things also”.

A boy from high income family shares, “When I was in high school I felt my elder sister as a mother who used to take care of me with tenderness. While returning back from the school I used to share each and everything with her. Sometimes she used to give me corrections. But now in this age I think a small gap exists between us. But the relationship with her really protected me from immoral action”. Many of them admit that the relationship with their parents really saved them from immoral friendships and relationships.

Education

Chavara believed that education is the shortest way to knowledge and knowledge opens the way to awareness about God and self. It imparts the knowledge about fellow being by knowing self (CWC IV, 1990). This educational visionary burnt with the zeal for knowledge and foresaw the meaning and magnitude of education and longed to widen its trail to everywhere and to everyone. Education was far away from ordinary people but he opened the gates of world of words for all in spite of their caste and instructed parents

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

to send their children to imbibe knowledge and the way to God, brethren and eventually progress and development of society.

Realizing the importance of education in his later life, he inscribed in the testament, “As soon as the children come to the age of reason they must be sent to school” (CWC IV, 1990, p. 145). He reminds the parents to send their children to school to acquire knowledge at the right age. Education imparts right knowledge and also transforms mind to absorb the meaning of norms and values to lead a meaningful life. The participants in this study are educated and some of them were post graduates and some have basic education SSLC. All of them view it as an important factor but women value peaceful atmosphere than money or high status. Men consider education as a means to bring status. “Education brings an identity in life and also empowers with strong motives. It raises the standard of life and the income” says a father belonging to a high income. The researcher has found that fathers share an optimistic outlook about education and its advantages but mothers keep a different position towards it.

According to women they desire deep relationship and secure life. They fear that when the qualification increases each one will concentrate more on their own world and may affect the depth of relationship. A mother from a middle income family share, “Sometimes the person having higher education may be work-oriented and never be bothered about family”. A mother from a high income family shares her doubt “It helps to acquire a high income job but are we sure that high income job will bring peace and unity?” Mothers from high income families share from their experience that higher education leads to higher positions and the time with the family will be less and the children will feel their father as “paying guest”. Let us share some space for children. They also have their own opinion.

A boy of 17 years from a high income family state, “I feel confidence that my parents are educated. Also my mother used to teach us and as she sits with us Then I feel energetic and learn more. It is an important factor. Education helps us to take an appropriate decision, thus leading the family to goodness. Higher education opens the path to good jobs thus improving our life standards. Life is becoming expensive in this modern world. Hence needs a good educational background to meet the competitions”. A different opinion arises from a girl of 19 years belonging to a low income family “It gives

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

confidence and courage to face the world and to communicate well. I want to study as much as possible so that I can help my parents to live peacefully in their old age”.

Also the children from middle and low income groups articulate that as the family goes through money shortage, they never think of roaming with friends or engage themselves in useless activities. “They are working hard to educate us and ensure a bright future for us. Thinking about my father I never felt to be lazy in my studies” with a determined mind says a girl from a middle income family. According to Chavara education clears the path of life through the sprouting out of reasoning ability. Also it sharpens discernment and brings authenticity in life. He believed that thus illuminated generations can be the pillars of the society and can lead others to a path of moral conviction and ingenious life.

Religion and traditional practices

Chavara believed that through religion the human beings can be united with moral, social and spiritual magnitude. He transformed religion from its insensitive mannerism to a world of true spirituality blended with humanness resulting in sensitivity towards the needs of the people. He reveals the depth and goodness of spirituality and tries to bind the families with support and goodness of spirituality. Studies reveal that religiosity has been repeatedly associated with better mental and emotional health (Pargament 1997). Some of the fathers shared that their wives’ attitude and belief changed them to move in the path which matches with religious beliefs.

Religion and family have had a close relationship throughout history in both Western and non-Western societies (Hargrove 1979). According to Chavara church attendance is an important means for unity and it illuminates the individual with mental, social and spiritual power. It results in social gathering where matters are shared and solutions or even support can be received. The traditional practices were his choice to activate the families in moral, social and spiritual foundation because the participation will promote intimacy and bind together in strong conviction about truth and oneness.

In this study the analysis shows that fathers are well esteemed by the children for their religious activities and spiritual life. Some of them from high and low income families share that first they felt some of the religious and traditional practices as

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

meaningless activities. But also they admit that the traditional practices bring unity and joy and also keep them moving together.

Another truth confirmed by children is the effective as well as beneficial intervention of church authorities especially priests and nuns.

For low income family religion remains as strong wall which supports them. “Religion brings a network of relationship and will support in our difficulties. In my life there are many incidents where the church authorities empowered me in many difficulties especially in my financial crisis. They help the individual irrespective of caste or color. Also we get a prayerful support”. Low and middle income group from three parts share that during the times of misery, pain and tensions religion stood as a barrier and these families received spiritual help and material support.

Family routine and family prayer

Maintenance of family routines (such as grooming, meals, chores, and errands) is positively linked to multiple child outcomes, including academic achievement, self-esteem, and both behavioral and psychosocial adjustment (Maccoby & Mnookin, 1992). Chavara the man who zealously practiced and followed routine urges the family members to keep a family routine to enhance fellowship and to maintain an order and discipline in the family. Family routine opens the way for communion and this in turn empowers relationship leading to peaceful cohesion. The participants opined that for prayer and food all the members will be there at home. It is the time where each member share and go through relaxation. A father from middle class opines, “I feel that our family prayer and family meals increased our unity and understanding. According to a mother belonging to low class states, “We share what we have on that day. May be we have only ‘chatni’ but we feel it much tasty due to love and intimacy. Nobody will have complaints for having only one curry. During that time sharing goes on. Our love also grows and flow during these moments”.

The families put objection for routine. The fact revealed by the parents is that practically they find difficulty in keeping routine. “Modern education holds a new pattern in its strategy and it is difficult to keep a routine” opines a father from middle income family.

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

A boy from a high income family share, “It is very difficult to keep a routine or time table. Each one has to go to their office or to school at different times and reach home at different times. But we join together for family prayer and food. Here unity blooms, relationship deepens and gets time to laugh and relax”. The modern families find intricacy in giving space for routine.

In the *Testament*, Chavara solemnly points out that family prayer is the soul of the family and he repeats that each member has to be at home in the evening for family prayers. He says, “At dusk, when the bell for Angelus is rung, make it a rule that the children should be at home. After night prayers, teach them to say ‘praise be to Jesus’ to the parents and to kiss their hands (CWC IV, 1990). This togetherness helps to share the burden and through the prayer family members will share the same sentiments and become sensitive to others. He tries to give a positive attitude about family prayer and wishes to instill the taste of family prayer in his people. Let us have a look on participant’s view. The respondents share that they have daily family prayer. It is the time where everyone will be present and share about the happenings of the day. “Without reciting prayer we never go to bed. If any guest comes they will wait to finish our prayer or sometimes they will join us. I used to recite novena and other prayers” says a father from a middle class family.

Family prayer is the floor where the real situation of the family is revealed. A working mother from high class opines, “Daily we have family prayer and everyone will participate in family prayer. It is the time we share our difficulties, tensions, plans etc. Family prayer in fact energizes with freshness and hope. It increases our unity and strength. It helps us to face the problematic situation with courage and constructive ideas. Children shared that sometimes they feel lazy to participate in family prayer. Especially children from high income families irrespective of the areas share that as they are not much familiar with the difficulties of life they don’t feel much seriousness in family prayer. The families also support Chavara’s insights with their life experiences. Some of the fathers recollect that during the times of struggles and tension they realized the powerful intervention of God. A father from a high income family confesses: - “I have experienced tensions and difficulties from my childhood. The faith I attained from my

parents remain as a strong fold and hence I have deep faith that God will never abandon me.

Family income

Chavara advises to have a mature mind on handling the income of family. Empirical studies observe that financial hardship and dissatisfaction can have lethal effects on a range of factors, such as quality of life, marital satisfaction, physical and mental health, and job productivity (Kim, Garman, & Sorhaindo, 2003). The participants poured out from their heart that sometimes money decides the functioning of the family. All of them opined that “Money makes the matter easier but never could you buy deep relationship, the parents who sacrifice their life and dreams for the goodness of children or to maintain a peaceful atmosphere at home”. A father of high income family shares, “Thinking about the past I could recall many incidents I went through severe money shortage and thought of ending life. But during those days prayer and faith saved my life”. Money matters a lot in both high and low income families.

The new generation responded that “if you have good income then you could buy the things which satisfy yourself. But it will create a distance in your relationship”. Mother’s living experiences tell about the mental struggle when the family meets shortage of money, and they reveal the mode of spending money. Above all they are of the same mind regarding the relationship and intimacy among the members. They evaluate that love and mutual understanding between the family members and the faith really lead them to go through the painful moments with courage and hope. Compared to fathers mothers remain with much more strength.

The research findings point out that some of them are familiar about the directives of Chavara. Some are totally unaware of the ‘Testament of a loving father’. But from their experiences it is clear that they lead a life which are similar to the directives prescribed by Chavara and those families possess a remarkable place in the society. When the experiences shared by the families are compared with his directives it shows that still his teachings remain as milestone in ensuring the wellbeing of the family. Even his insights which date back to 19th century proved to be valid with empirical evidences of the 20th and 21st centuries. But some of his views regarding routine, leaving children at home instead of taking them for celebrations etc could not find that much support.

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

While analyzing the data from the families, it point out that their opinions carry his vision but on the other hand they are not much familiar with his teachings. Document analysis also shows that the family apostolate has to move forward to the families to spread his concrete views to accomplish the wellbeing of the families. Considering the wretched conditions of today's families the analysis shows that the apostolate has to go a long way to reach the original situations in the families.

Establishing Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is made up of four criteria each of which has a corresponding measure in quantitative study. They are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln 1994).

Credibility

This is similar to internal validity in quantitative research. Credibility can be established through member validation or respondent validation or triangulation. Respondent validation is a process whereby a researcher provides the people on whom he or she has conducted research, with an account of his or her findings. The aim of this validation is to seek corroboration or otherwise of the account that the researcher has arrived at. The researcher provides each participant with an account of what he or she has said to the researcher in the interview (Bryman 2012).

In this study researcher conducted respondent validation where the researcher confirmed participant's views by providing them with the transcripts containing their perceptions, researcher's summary, paraphrasing or repeating the participant's words. The researcher asked them whether the interpretation was true or reasonable reflection of their standpoint.

Transferability

This is similar to external validity in quantitative research. Qualitative findings tend to be oriented to the contextual uniqueness and significance of the aspect of the social world being studied (Bryman 2012). Holloway and Wheeler (2002) state that transferability means the finding of the research project can be applied to similar situations or participants. Lincoln and Guba (1985) declare that whether findings 'hold in some other context or even in the same context at some other time is an empirical issue' (Bryman 2012). Instead they suggest "as the naturalist cannot specify the external

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

validity of an enquiry, she can only provide a thick description necessary to enable someone interested in making transfer to reach a conclusion about whether a transfer can be contemplated as a possibility" (Lincoln and Guba 1985). The purpose of a thick description is that it creates verisimilitude, statements that produce for the readers the feeling that they have experienced, or could experience, the events being described in a study. Here in the present study the researcher provided a thick description about the setting, the participants as well as the method of data collection.

Dependability

This is similar to reliability in quantitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose that to assure dependability an auditing approach can be established. This involves ensuring that complete records are kept of all phases of the research process- problem formulation, selection of research participants, interview transcripts, data analysis decisions etc in an accessible manner. Auditing can be done through peer as auditors possibly during the course of the research and certainly at the end to establish how far proper procedures are being and have been followed (Bryman 2012).

The present study utilized audit approach where the researcher submitted the data manuscript to three experts to criticize and they did auditing of problem formulation, selection of research participants, interview transcripts and data analysis decisions. Besides the review meeting once in every three months conducted by the University with experts did sound auditing.

Confirmability

It is concerned with the researcher can be shown to have acted in good faith or in other words it should be apparent that he or she has not overtly allowed personal values to sway the conduct of the research and findings deriving from it. Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend that establishing confirmability should be one of the objectives of auditors (Bryman, 2012). In this study the experts audited the research.

Limitations of the Study

Kuriakose Elias Chavara, the herald of the east made a remarkable contribution to the literary world. His writings really take us to a sphere of in-depth knowledge about God and enrich us with guidelines which serve as source of selfless service leading to societal harmony and progress. Also it is not that much easy to analyse his writings in

THE VISION OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ON FAMILY WELLBEING

one single study. Hence in this study his letter “Testament of a loving father is mainly analysed and much priority is given to it compared to his others works.

Congregation of the Mother of Carmel the first indigenous religious Congregation with 21 provinces, two vice provinces spread its branches in different countries with 6500 members. Hence a study involving all the provinces with their family apostolate is a herculean task and in the present study only 13 provinces within Kerala are selected.

Recommendations for Future Research

As the present study concentrates only on the three provinces (3 district), hence another study can be designed to evaluate the functioning of different provinces inside and outside Kerala. New models can be proposed to energize the functioning of family apostolate.

New models can be proposed for family wellbeing. A detailed study can be conducted to evaluate people's response about CMC's family apostolate.

Conclusion

The empirical studies of later century reveal that the findings support his views about family wellbeing evoked in 19th century. But his views which are related to family did not obtain that much acceptance compared to his vision about education. The public and the Congregation greatly focused on his innovative activities in the educational field due to the need of times. Later seeing the wretched condition of the modern family the Congregation entered into special mission that is the renewal of family. In 1994 CMC inaugurated the Family Apostolate and started concentrating more on his insights about family wellbeing. Now the apostolate work sincerely to actualize his dreams. Till now, no scientific studies have been conducted to reveal his insights about wellbeing of the families. The researcher hopes this study will be a guiding star for the Congregation for the renewal of families.