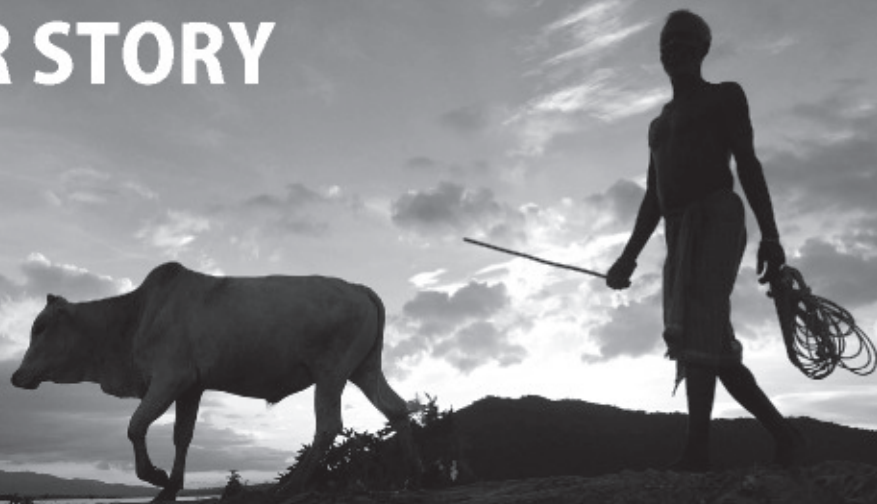


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## Enquiries

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• District Information Office, I Floor, Civil Station, Kollam, Ph: 2794911

• District Information Office, Ground Floor, Civil Station, Pathanamthitta, Ph: 2222657

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF** Mini Antony IAS  
**CO-ORDINATING EDITOR** C Ramesh Kumar  
**DEPUTY EDITOR - IN-CHIEF** A S Santhosh Kumar

**EDITOR** K P Saritha

**ASSISTANT EDITOR** C Rajesh

**SUB EDITOR** Merlin J N

**CIRCULATION OFFICER** R Anilkumar

**DESIGNER** V S Prakash

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### Representatives:

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## FOCUS



From the inaugural function of 'Operation Ruchi'

# EDITORIAL



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## Harvesting Prosperity

At the very outset let me wish all our readers a happy and prosperous Onam. The biggest festival of Malayalis is all about rich harvest, prosperity and happiness.

This year we all have a special reason for celebrating Onam in a grand manner thanks to the revolutionary strides witnessed in the agrarian sector during the last four years. Increase in production and improvement in the living standard of farmers have been the hallmark of the agriculture initiatives.

On the coconut front, the procurement scheme and production of Neera are some of the major initiatives. After decades of untiring efforts, Neera the dream project of coconut farmers became a reality. With just a single tree enough for producing about 2 litres of Neera daily, coconut farmers have rich source of income at hand. Experts say even if one per cent of 18 lakh coconut trees are tapped, the state's annual income could be a whopping Rs 3240 crores.

The other big success story has been vegetable production. Till about two years ago state produced only 40 per cent of its annual requirement, but an integrated approach focussing on enhancing, augmenting production and productivity in an exhaustive manner has shot up production hugely. In this process, involvement of school students and kudumbasree units in a big way has helped in inculcating an aptitude towards agriculture among the youth in particular and the public in general.

With toxic fruits and vegetables posing serious threat to people's health, the government has formulated an Organic policy to encourage organic agriculture. Besides, harmful pesticides have also been banned.

There have been persistent efforts since 2014 to turn the state into a hub of agri business ventures and hi-tech agriculture. About 1000 green houses are being built across the state, production centres for quality seeds, planting materials and tissue culture are coming up in a big way to give a boost to hi tech farming. To keep the farmers posted with latest technological interventions and agriculture research, training centres are being opened at various places.

On the farmer welfare front, Kerala is the first state to grant monthly pension to small and marginal who have attained the age of 60 years.

Undoubtedly, the last four years will go down in the history of Kerala's agri sector as a period of ground-breaking initiatives and achievements.

Mini Antony IAS  
Editor in Chief





Chief Minister announced that Government would spend Rs 1000 crores in the next five years for the development of Technoparks in Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam. He was inaugurating the function to

felicitate those who guided the park to such a level as part of the 25th anniversary of technopark. Rs 997.65 crores are being sanctioned for the first, second and third phase of Thiruvananthapuram technopark

and kollam technopark. A massive plan for land acquisition, development of basic facilities, sale has been given shape and administrative sanction for the same will soon be accorded.

## Planetarium reopened

Priyadarshini Planetarium, Thiruvananthapuram a venture of the Kerala, State Science and Technology Museum was opened to the Public after renovation. CM said that Government would provide all help to avail international standard in science education and practice in Kerala for students. He was speaking after inaugurating the renovated Hi-tech planetarium here that meets international standards. The achievements that India made in the field of science and technology is a matter of pride for all. Through contributions of our scientists we became a major force in this field. All help will be provided to mould such a generation in the state. CM added that the planetarium will help the people to understand the scientific subjects in a simple way.



Transport Minister Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan flag off the Scania bus service at Thiruvananthapuram.



Information and Public Relations Minister K.C Joseph releasing the book 'Ormmakalil GK' in memory of former speaker late G Karthikeyan by handing over a copy to speaker N Sakthan.



# OBITUARY

## M S Viswanathan



Well Known Southern Music composer M.S Viswanathan died in Chennai on 14th July 2015 . he was 87. He was popular for composing music in Tamil ,Telegu and Malayalam Films. M. S Viswanathan had over 750 films to his credit. He started his career as a composer in 1952 for the Tamil Film "Panam" starring Sivaji Ganeshan .

M.S Viswanathan was popularly known as " Mellisai Mannar" (The King of Light Music ). He was the composer of countless unforgettable film songs and one of the incomparable music geniuses in India .His music with its emotional undertone, at times, lends new meaning to words.



## Conserving Forest, wildlife

Chief Minister Oommen Chandy inaugurated the southern forest minister conference held on 6th August at Thiruvananthapuram . Referring to some recent incidents of elephant poaching in Kerala and red sandal smuggling in Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister said there is a point of worry in the re emergence of organized criminal gangs. This demands a closer and cohesive approach as they have trans-border repercussions. Illegal cutting of trees like teak, sandal and red sandal the cultivation of ganja in the interior forests and the poaching of

animals like elephants and tigers may destroy our ecological foundations. Encroachments and degradation of the elephant and tiger corridors and the emergence of extremist activities in forests pose serious challenges. In the event of inadequate inter-State coordination, they may become vulnerable to poaching and illegal activities. Minister of Forest Thruvanchoor Radhakrishnan presided the function. Forest Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Telengana and representatives from other southern states attended the conference.



## Celebrating brilliance

Those who passed the civil service exam should work with social commitment when they come to work in their respective fields said Chief Minister Oommen Chandy . He was inaugurating the function arranged by Kerala State Civil Service Academy to felicitate those who attained success in the exam

The success of the students from the

state shows the hard work they took said the CM. The success depended on the personal hard work that they put in. The academy has also shown excellence in providing the right study material and guidance.

CM said that he is having pride in the growth of the academy. New centers of the academy will be started. Government will provide necessary

facilities to the students so that more number of students achieves their aim. Financial assistance is provided to students from SC/ ST category and 27 students have availed the benefit.

. CM laid the foundation stone of the building of the academy with modern facilities.

# *Rededicate to Honour the Visionary*

**H**e gave wings of fire for the country to soar high. The passing away of one of India's most adored and respected son, Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam, plunged the country into deep sorrow and a great sense of loss. The absence of APJ, as he was fondly called, will be a challenge that we need to take on with conviction. And this conviction will come to us through the visions, guidelines and words of wisdom that he has already shared with us. He received admiration and respect from within and outside the country. In 1997, the nation honoured him with the Bharat Ratna, which was truly befitting to an outstanding scientist and a humanist.

Though born in Tamil Nadu, Kerala was like home to APJ. For about twenty years, starting from 1969, he worked at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) in Thiruvananthapuram. Simplicity was APJ's hallmark. People in the city of Thiruvananthapuram who were

familiar to APJ during that period, recall his humble and down-to-earth demeanor. And to his colleagues, APJ was a person dedicated to his work and one who was very caring and supportive.

It was not just rocket science and space missions that APJ was concerned about. I recall here the incident that took place in 2006 when APJ visited Kochi during his presidency days. His helicopter was to land at Marine Drive and as part of the preparations three gulmohar trees had to be cut down. This led to an uproar from a section of people and they informed the president about the incident. Without wasting time, APJ directed the district Collector of Ernakulam to plant 30 saplings at Marine Drive, in place of the three that were cut down. And not just that. When he finally landed at Marine Drive, he went around and checked all the 30 newly planted saplings and watered some of them. We owe the



APJ examined all existing powers of the president's office as prescribed in the Constitution and never transgressed them.



greenery that we now have at Marine Drive to APJ.

APJ's greatest impact on Kerala happened in one of his presidential visits to the State. He addressed the Kerala Legislative Assembly on 28 July 2005 and did a 52-minute long presentation on Vision 2010. This took place during my tenure as Chief

minister from 2004 to 2006. The Vision 2010 document turned out as a guideline for Kerala's development. On that day, APJ was the teacher and we sat in rapt attention like obedient students. He urged the Assembly to work on the State's core capacities and get into the mission mode to tap its potential to

the full. As soon as the presentation was over the treasury bench gave a rapturous applause. When APJ pointed out the need for the other side to join, they readily obliged. Following the presentation, on the very same day, I signed the file on the implementation of Vision 2010, while standing inside

the lift, on the way to attend a function in Kottayam. And in that function, I announced the government's decision to implement Vision 2010. The State can now proudly say that we have worked on the key areas identified by APJ for its socio-economic growth and had made appreciable advancement in some sectors.



# Legendary institution builder

Largely from him, I learnt a valuable lesson to inform my own dealings with team members: Don't miss the forest while counting the trees.

O

ur beloved Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam may not be with us physically. But his immortal spirit will be guiding us as we strive to fulfill his ideals and vision for India and the world. It has been our great fortune to have him amongst us.

My first recollection of Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam



was in my first year at Thumba in 1971. Kalam, then 40, struck me as a cheerful but serious person, with long, curly hair and a leather bag. He was a co-passenger in the ISRO bus from Statue Junction, Thiruvananthapuram. As head of the Rocket Engineering Division, he led a team of stalwarts including V Sudhakar, CR Sathya, Abdul Majeed and G Madhavan Nair. This was the team that had already developed a Menaka sounding rocket and several novel elements that were a precursor to our satellite vehicle programme.

He became a star in 1972,



Project Neera (tender non-alcoholic coconut drink) was one among them that we have successfully realized. In that Assembly address, APJ said: "Kerala has unity of minds and we should collectively see how its secular ethos, bounty of natural resources and excellent human resource can be used for making the State into a model in the country.

The value of involving the youth in the country's development and the need for intellectual development

were paramount to APJ. His politics was development and he had a great vision for India and shared with us the ways and means to achieve it. He has laid before us the path to lead India to become a powerhouse of knowledge. A great statesman, acclaimed scientist and a gifted writer, yet the humility of APJ is what makes him stand apart. The world got a taste of it after the frisking incident at New York airport in 2011 against all protocol. APJ maintained his composure



and even played down the incident by saying: "Forget it. It is not worth talking about." Because he always liked to talk and do things that mattered to the world. And

this trait of his was a reflection of the teacher in him and he always loved to be known as a teacher rather than a rocket scientist, former president of India or a writer.





first as chief of the Satellite Launch Vehicle Project (SLV-3) and later on as its project director. He gained quite a fan following largely due to his relations with the enthusiastic rocket community of nearly 5000 at Thumba. They worked with him closely in what was ISRO's first major project and adored him. I was a designer on the same mission and often saw him, notebook in hand, with the air of a good student.

When I returned from a degree programme from IIM Bangalore in 1976, I was assigned to the Avionics Group and discovered that Kalam knew almost every single person at Thumba contributing to the project. He had a habit of shooting pointed questions to anyone who crossed his path, because of which I too had to take care to be up-to-date on every aspect of my work. You didn't want to be caught unawares

when he ran into you at the staircase!

Kalam was member of the Avionics Area Board that religiously met every month, and as the board's secretary for two years, I frequently noted his penchant to focus on the larger canvass rather than getting stuck on minor details. Largely from him, I learnt a valuable lesson to inform my own dealings with team members: Don't miss the forest while counting the trees.

After the success of SLV-3 in 1980, he set up ISRO's

Launch Vehicle Programme office at its headquarters in Bangalore. I too moved to headquarters, a year later, to look after Budget and Economic Analysis for ISRO and during this period of working together closely on several fronts I got glimpses of the legendary institution builder that he was.

Finally, during my chairmanship of ISRO, he continued to be the chancellor of ISRO's Indian Institute of Space Science & Technology at Thiruvananthapuram.

Though as chancellor, he held a titular role, he was keenly interested in the development of the institute and interacted with the students and faculty like an eminent teacher. His ability to inspire was at its best when we were grappling with failures of the GSLV (the Geosynchronous Launch Vehicle necessary to launch very heavy satellites). During the days of the launch of the Mars mission, he arrived a day before the crucial Mars Orbit Insertion and took care to be with the Mission Team at Bangalore.

Aside of our jobs, we had a common interest in Carnatic music and I have had long discussions on the subject. In January he accepted my request to visit Bangalore and inaugurate a music festival conducted as a tribute to my music Guru Dr. R K Srikantan. ■

Ref : Huffington post  
The writer is former Chairman, ISRO



As president of India, APJ did not like to be tied down by the protocols and conventions of the Rashtrapathi Bhavan. Instead, he used it as an elevated platform to reach out to the whole of India. He was a people's president. As soon as he assumed the office of the president, he handed over all his properties and savings to a trust called PURA – Providing Urban Amenities to Rural Area. His reasoning was that after becoming the president of India there was

no relevance in holding on to all those wealth, since the Union government will be taking care of his well-being for the rest of his life. And as president, APJ examined all existing powers of the president's office as prescribed in the Constitution and never transgressed them.

He had this huge hunger for knowledge. An episode from his student days tells us that he used to sell newspapers for meeting the expenses of his education. But

before selling them, he used to read them fully. As a career scientist, he never budged from responsibilities. And every time he left a unit and took charge of a new one, APJ made sure that his colleagues have achieved the required skill and expertise to move forward with confidence. And whenever failures happened he stood by them.

APJ held Kerala close to his hearts. Before proceeding to his final resting place at Rameswaram, the Government of Kerala did its

best to bring APJ's mortal remains to Kerala for paying our last respects.

It is a fact that APJ has departed. He is a passionate teacher with a great zeal to remain attached to work, which he did till his last moments. A teacher to 1.28 billion people of India, I would like to say that APJ just left us for a new work station. And we will continue to connect with him by treading those paths laid before us by him to transform India into a powerhouse of knowledge. ■

■ Dr. M K MUNEEER  
Minister for Panchayats and Social Justice

## Kerala Social Security Mission

# Ensuring justice for the marginalised

**K**erala Social Security Mission, the autonomous institution under the Social Justice Dept. is the symbol of great charity and hope for lakhs and lakhs of marginalised and underprivileged population right from the new born opening ears to the lullaby to the person patiently awaiting the last call from the heaven. The activities of the Mission is boundless and has made strong footprints in its history of a short span of time thanks to the guidance and

farsight of those who are at the helm. The charity activities of the Mission is guided by the eternal words of the Great Martin Luther King - Justice denied any where diminishes justice every where.

A look at the activities of the Kerala Social Security Mission will unfold before us the wide and varied vista of its activities and benefits being extended. The Kerala Social Security Mission is always there with a helping hand to the needy.



**Vayomithram** (friend of the aged) is a scheme extending care and concern to people aged above 65 years; at present which is confined to 5 City Corporations and 27 Municipal Towns of Kerala with a total number of 1,27,876 beneficiaries. Palliative home care, free medicine, mobile clinic and helpdesk are components of Vayomithram. During 2014-15, expenditure incurred is ₹ 669.75 lakhs.

**Visappurahitha nagaram** (Hunger free city) is another auspicious project. An estimated number of 5,500 persons who are in patients and their bystanders in Govt. Hospitals of Kozhikode, Malappuram, Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam are fed free noon meals every day. Total beneficiaries would be more than 20 lakhs per year. This year an amount of ₹ 273.41 lakhs is proposed to be spent in this regard.



Under the Scheme - **Prathyasa** for extending marriage assistance to poor women above 22 years of age, 2000 girls have been given ₹ 50,000 each totalling ₹ 10 cr.

**Snehapoorvam** (With Love) is a Scheme that the Kerala Civil Society has welcomed with open heart and with a sense of relief. Children who lost both or one of their parents now find their parents in Government, they are given monthly scholarships for studies up to Degree level to an amount of ₹ 1000 starting from ₹ 300/-. Number of beneficiary children now is 51,773 and applications of another 30,000 children are under processing. Anticipated expenditure for the project this year is ₹ 35 cr.



**Snehasparsam** (Touch of love) caters to 1826 unwed mothers with a monthly assistance of ₹ 1000 each; most of them hailing from scheduled tribe community.



**Our Responsibility to Children** (ORC) is a novel scheme for reforming children of deviant behaviour due to abuse of liquor, drugs and uncared home atmosphere. The scheme is implemented with the co-operation of the Departments of Home, Education and Civil society. At present ten schools each in Thiruvananthapuram, Thrissur, Ernakulam and Kozhikode district are covered that will be extended to five schools each in other districts also during this year. This is a novel scheme for moulding up of generation of youngsters free from drugs and liquor so that they utilise their intelligence and energy for creation of a brave new world.

**Sruthitharangam** (Free Cochlear Implantation Surgery) is one of the biggest successful programme that has attracted national as well as international attention. Nearly 500 children up to the age of 5 years have been brought to the world of speech and hearing on performing surgery worth of ₹ 5 lakhs free to each child. Audio verbal therapy of children underwent surgery is closely monitored. K.J.Jesudas has extended his profound blessings to Sruthitharangam. The surgery is done at designated hospitals in the length and breadth of our State. The assembly of children underwent cochlear surgery along with their parents at Secretariat Durbar Hall was heartening and a new prayer was heard from one of them in the sanctum sanctorum of democracy.



State Initiative on Disabilities is a 40 cr project for prevention and detection of disability and early intervention and for corrective measures. The ultimate aim is a disabled free Kerala and to make disability, ability of a difference. Over 5,42,227 girls studying in 9th to 12th standard have been administered free Rubella vaccination as a part of this and early intervention / detection centres have been established in all District Hospitals and some Taluk Hospitals.

**Aswasakiranam** (Ray of Hope) is a project for giving assistance to caregivers of permanently bedridden persons due to old age, diseases, cerebral palsy, mental challenges, autism etc. The caregivers may not be able to engage any other activities. At present a monthly assistance of ₹ 525 each for 63,544 caregivers are being given for which an amount of ₹ 50 cr would be required.

### Samaswasam

provides monthly assistance of ` 1100 to poor patients (BPL) undergoing dialysis, kidney-liver transplanted persons ₹1000 per month, Haemophilia patients ₹1000 per month, sicklecell anaemia patients ₹1000 per month etc. are some other charity activities. The annual assistance being distributed by Kerala Social Security Mission for its charity/welfare activities is ₹ 106.3476 cr. Convergence of activities of Social Justice Dept, Education Dept, Health Dept, Home Dept. and Local Self Government Dept is visible in the functioning of Kerala Social Security Mission. In fact our Local Self Govt. Institutions have tremendously contributed for funding KSSM.



**Snehasanthwanam** is a relief measure to endosulphan victims. More than ₹ 80 cr has been spent from 2011-12 to 2014-15 under this scheme. The Scheme includes pension, treatment expenses, education assistance and compensation.

Free Cancer treatment is given to children below the age of 18 years. So far 13,184 children were treated with an assistance of ₹ 21.39 cr.

**Thalolam** is a scheme for providing assistance to children suffering from cardiac and other genetic disorders. So far 27,920 children were treated at an expense of ₹ 25.2857 cr. Treatment facility is provided at 15 selected Hospitals in the State.

## WE CARE



When the enormity of the activities underhand and to be undertaken is considered governmental source of funding would not be adequate and for which it is proposed to invite contribution from Corporates, Foundations, Philanthropists all over the world and from other charity organisations. A two lakh strong 'We Care' volunteer corps is being formed to be operationalised by 26th January, 2016. Any person in need of social security will be extended care and concern by these selfless brigade of integrity under

the Mission. 'We Care' in future will stand for Care and Concern of the Govt. of Kerala and the people of Kerala.

I request the whole hearted support of all Keralites from every nook and corner of the World and all philanthropists for carrying forward this biggest ever charity movement as a pathfinder for the rest of the Country and World how human love, empathy and compassion can make wonders in transforming society and to create a world filled with peace devoid of division of caste, creed or race.

# Benefits at Doorstep



Around 30 lakh social security pensioners in Kerala are going to receive their pension via Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system. Monthly, the beneficiaries would be receiving around ₹ 255 crores, distributed just like monthly salary to employees. This is one of the biggest online initiatives by a State government in the country. The system was inaugurated by the Chief Minister Oommen Chandy on the 6th of July in Thiruvananthapuram in the presence of the Minister for Social Justice and Panchayats Dr M K Muneer. This marked the beginning of the distribution of social security pensions in the State through DBT, starting



DBT is one of the biggest online initiatives by a State government in the country.



from April 2015. Five pensions that comprises three social security pensions under the National Social Assistance Programme viz. Indira Gandhi National Old-Age Pension, Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension, Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension and two State government social security pensions viz. Unmarried Women Pension (above the age of 50) and Agriculture Labour Pension.

The social security pensions are distributed by the local bodies and the nodal officer of the DBT Cell in the State will be the Director of Panchayats. The Cell will ensure the smooth distribution of all social security pensions from the 1043 local self-government bodies (panchayats, corporations and

municipalities) in Kerala. The total number of social security pension beneficiaries coming under the five pension schemes mentioned above in Kerala stand at 29,49,406. Of the total, 1,20,366 beneficiaries above the age of 80 are given ₹1,200 per month through the Indira Gandhi National Old-Age Pension scheme. There are also 9,06,263 beneficiaries below the age of 80, getting ₹ 600 per month as part of the same scheme. There are 33,862 beneficiaries above the age of 80 getting ₹ 1100 per month and 2,77,705 beneficiaries below the age of 80 getting ₹ 800 per month as pension through the Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension scheme and there are 10,46,545 beneficiaries under the Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension scheme, who

are given ₹ 800 per month. And the State has 67,479 Unmarried Women Pension beneficiaries above the age of 50, getting ₹ 800 per month and 4,97,186 farmers receiving ₹ 600 as Agriculture Labour pension.

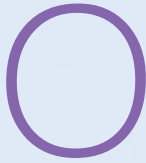
For the DBT of social security pensions, the Director of Panchayats will have to request the government with regard to the amount required for distribution every month. This will be based on the number of beneficiaries, which gets updated with the help of the software 'Sevana' before the 5th of every month. After this date the request under various heads of pension is placed before the government and amount sanctioned by the government reaches the account of the Director of

Panchayats on the 15th of every month. From this account the pension amounts are transferred to the bank / post office accounts of the beneficiary. It will also be send as Electronic Money Order (EMO), if the beneficiary faces mobility related issues. Any time, beneficiaries will have the choice to select their convenient mode of distribution by providing bank or post office accounts to the local self-government bodies. The EMO facility will continue as an option and will be restricted to bedridden persons.

The government has also taken steps for making all procedures online, starting with the submission of application for social security pensions to the stage of pension distribution. ■

# TAXATION

■ AJITH VENNIYOOR



ne of the biggest taxation reforms in India - the Goods and Service Tax (GST) - is all set to integrate State economies and boost overall growth. The Empowered Committee of State Finance Ministers has been deeply involved for last more than a decade in tax reform at the State level. Now, along with Central Government, it is in the process of introduction of Goods and Service Tax, which would be a significant breakthrough

towards a comprehensive indirect tax reform in country.

Encouraged by the success of the State VAT, the Centre and the States are now embarked on the design and implementation of a better system of taxation viz., Goods and Services Tax (GST). As announced by the Empowered Committee of

State Finance Ministers, the solution is to take the form of a 'Dual' Goods and Services Tax (GST), to be levied concurrently by both levels of government.

The introduction of GST marks the most significant reform in Indian tax system and easily one of the most important economic reforms in India.

K M Mani, chairman of





the empowered committee of state finance ministers and Kerala Finance Minister, is sure that the spirit of co-operative federalism and collective efforts of the Centre and the States are going to be instrumental in the introduction of Goods and Service Tax in India with effect from 1st April, 2016.

"It is a stupendous achievement that all the states with so much diversity...diverse political governance have come under the umbrella of the Empowered Committee of Finance Ministers and inching forward towards creating a single common market in the country. The Committee is in the process of discussing

and arriving at consensus on large number of issues of GST," he said.

The interview with K M Mani, the Finance Minister, explores the possible challenges and impacts of the implementation

#### **How will it become a reality?**

Under the present tax system, both Union and State governments impose tax through their respective administrative machineries. This

design of GST was achieving a balance between the fiscal autonomy of the states and the need for harmonization of taxes across the common market of India.

Kerala has taken effective steps in educating the business community on GST reforms and equipping them to meet the challenges.

# A Path Breaking Reform on the Anvil

system will continue to prevail in the dual GST system also. The larger objective of moving towards GST regime is to minimize procedural complexity and to facilitate easy compliance.

GST perhaps is the most discussed bill in independent India. The talk which started many years ago is still continuing. The reason is, Implementation of GST is the biggest tax reform hitherto ushered in the country. The original date for its introduction is April 1, 2010, missed due to various reasons, business community is eagerly looking forward to its promised new date of April 1, 2016 and is therefore monitoring all major developments that are taking place in this regard GST will be a Destination based Consumption Tax & will cover both Intra State and Inter State trade & Commerce.

Inter State Sales will be subjected to IGST which is combination of CGST & SGST. One of the biggest issues in the

#### **How feasible is the present deadline for GST?**

At this point of time all I can say is that the discussions on GST has been going on for long time and almost all states are in favour of GST. As such a political consensus on this matter may not be difficult. The GST discussions are going forward based on consensus between the States and Centre.

Almost all major issues on GST design, compensation, IT infrastructure etc. are being discussed with the State and Centre and the Committees and sub committees of the EC are working on detailed modalities thereon. With reference to the deadline, it is felt that considerable progress has been achieved in the direction of introduction of GST. Hence I am optimistic that April 2016 deadline is feasible.

A new Article 246A is proposed which will confer simultaneous power to Union and State legislatures to legislate on GST.

A new Article 279A is proposed for the creation of a Goods & Services Tax Council which will be a joint forum of the Centre and the States. This Council would function under the Chairmanship of the Union Finance Minister and will have Ministers in charge of Finance/Taxation or Minister nominated by each of the States & UTs with Legislatures, as members. The Council will make recommendations to the Union and the States on important issues like tax rates, exemptions, threshold limits, dispute resolution modalities etc.

It is proposed to do away with the concept of 'declared goods of special importance' under the Constitution.

Centre will compensate States for loss of revenue arising on account of implementation of the GST for a period up to five years. A provision in this regard has been made in the Amendment Bill (The compensation will be on a tapering basis, i.e., 100% for first three years, 75% in the fourth year and 50% in the fifth year).

The proposed GST has been designed keeping in mind the federal structure enshrined in the Constitution and will have the following important features:

Central taxes like Central Excise Duty, Additional Excise Duties, Service Tax, Additional Customs Duty (CVD) and Special Additional Duty of Customs (SAD), etc. will be subsumed in GST.

At the State level, taxes like VAT/Sales Tax, Central Sales Tax, Entertainment Tax, Octroi and Entry Tax, Purchase Tax and Luxury Tax, etc. would be subsumed in GST.

## SALIENT FEATURES of the Constitution 122<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Bill



All goods and services, except alcoholic liquor for human consumption, will be brought under the purview of GST. Petroleum and petroleum products have also been Constitutionally brought under GST. However, it has also been provided that petroleum and petroleum products shall not be subject to the levy of GST till notified at a future date on the recommendation of the GST Council.

The present taxes levied by the States and the Centre on petroleum and petroleum products, i.e., Sales Tax/VAT, CST and Excise duty only, will continue to be levied in the interim period.

Both Centre and States will simultaneously levy GST across the value chain. Centre would levy and collect Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST), and States would levy and collect the State Goods and Services Tax (SGST) on all transactions within a State

The Centre would levy and collect the Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) on all inter-State supply of goods and services. There will be seamless flow of input tax credit from one State to another. Proceeds of IGST will be apportioned among the States.

GST is a destination-based tax. All SGST on the final product will ordinarily accrue to the consuming State.

GST rates will be uniform across the country. However, to give some fiscal autonomy to the States and Centre, there will a provision of a narrow tax band over and above the floor rates of CGST and SGST.

It is proposed to levy a non-vatable additional tax of not more than 1% on supply of goods in the course of inter-State trade or commerce. This tax will be for a period not exceeding 2 years, or further such period as recommended by the GST Council. This additional tax on supply of goods shall be assigned to the States from where such supplies originate.

### How will GST benefit the economy?

In the Indian context, GST is expected to bring many benefits. Though, all these benefits are based on the assumption that overall taxation structure is less bureaucratic and cumbersome than present.

Centre and states have reached a consensus on GST, and reservations regarding producing and consuming states have been sorted. Interest of both producing

and consuming states will be protected. A decision on the revenue neutral rate for GST will emerge soon.

India's GDP is expected to leap from 0.9 to 1.7 percent with the roll out of the GST. As the number of taxes come down the associated administrative expense will also come down and tax revenue will go up with the strengthening of the tax base. The GST, a national sales tax, will transform the country into a "seamless" market,

boosting economic growth and cutting the cost of doing business.

Thus GST will help in the growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country and goods will become cheaper. Simplification of tax will always help in improving tax compliance and increasing tax revenues.

GST will create a single, unified Indian market to make the economy stronger. The implementation of GST will lead to the abolition of

other taxes such as Octroi, Central Sales Tax, State-level sales tax, entry tax, stamp duty, telecom license fees, turnover tax, tax on consumption or sale of electricity, taxes on transportation of goods and services, etc, thus avoiding multiple layers of taxation that currently exist in India. It is estimated that India will gain \$1500 crore a year by implementing the Goods and Services Tax as it would promote exports, raise





The Centre has promised to compensate the states for whatever losses they incur due to the new tax regime.

employment and boost growth. It will divide the tax burden equitably between manufacturing and services.

It will facilitate investment decisions being made on purely economic concerns independent of tax considerations. It will also promote exports.

Some of the states resist the implementation of GST because of the losses of revenue from a wide range of taxes. The Centre has promised to compensate the states for whatever losses they incur due to the new tax regime. **Have states come to any agreement on how they are going to address this issue?**

Since GST is a destination rather than origin-based tax, there is likely to be a sea change in the present pattern of revenue collection across producer states. It is true that the producing States have apprehensions in the matter. But GST has another aspect of widening the tax base by inclusion of service tax, Special Additional Duties etc

with respect to states and including tax on sales for the centre. Also partly to alleviate this apprehension, a one percent levy for origin states on interstate suppliers has been included in the revised constitution amendment bill. The discussions with States are at a very critical stage and I am optimistic that the Centre and the States would reach convergence in the coming weeks.

Though there are issues with regard to dispensation of CST compensation I must say that the gesture of the Centre in having allocated funds in the budget for CST compensation has improved the trust level among the states thereby creating an atmosphere conducive for the reform. Unlike other goods, States have been levying both excise duty and sales tax on alcohol. This evolved to be one of the major sources of revenue along with petroleum products for the states. Hence the states were cautious in including them in

GST. The Centre has accepted this proposition. This decision may not affect the general industrial scenario of the country since alcohol is not a major industrial input. Presently, the total tax load on products considering the various levies is more than the GST rates under consideration. However, there is a point that all these levies are not visible to the consumer. The revenue neutral rate under GST is still under discussion and a final decision is yet to emerge. Certain States have objected the subsumation of octroi and entry tax in GST.

#### **About the Compensation Package for States?**

Some states are pressing the Centre compensating fully for the loss of revenue in the first five years of GST replacing their taxes. In the context of GST the whole States/Union Territories can

be divided into two categories i.e., producing states and consumer States. Those states which are manufacturing and exporting larger goods and services to other States/ Union Territories are listed under producing states. Whereas those states which depend larger on other states for their goods and services are categorized as consumer states. Since GST is destination based taxation, the State Governments which listed as producing states will lose their present 2% tax revenue on interstate sales and they are to be properly compensated for the next 5 years. A thorough discussion based on facts and figures is suggested to be conducted between union and states on the compensation package. The IGST (Integrated Goods and Service Tax) Model may be framed by combining the compensation package within it. ■

The writer is PRO, Finance Minister

# CELEBRATION

■ SREEVARAHOM BALAKRISHNAN

It has often been asked as to what qualifies Onam to be hailed as a 'Festival of Festivals' and 'Carnival beyond Compare'. Is it mainly because of the majesty and magnitude of mass participation that eulogises 'Maveli', the mythical ruler of rare magnificence.

Or is it on account of the ethnic trait in Malayalees who seldom let go an occasion to rejoice and celebrate. Whatever the cause or the premise, Onam has enshrined itself in the Kerala psyche enriching and enhancing its exuberance year after year.

Enter "Chingam" (August-September) and the entire land is enveloped in an enchanting aura of Onam. The sky is all azure and the air soft and soothing, after the rattle-prattle of "Karkitakam". The harvest being over, farmers have hung their sickle and are heaving a sigh of relief. Onam is round the corner; it is their time to rejoice. To one and all in Kerala and Malayalees the world over, Onam is the springtime of fulfilment.

## Mother of all

Man & Nature



One of the major features that make Onam unique is that it signifies the communion between man and nature. Attiring herself in her finest, nature appears all alluring and strikes the celebrative chord in man. Neither too hot nor cold, the climate assumes a perfect balance between the two and provides a congenial background for the festive season to set in. After the monsoon showers, the lakes and lagoons, rivers and streams are full but friendly, furnishing an apt arena, beautiful

and beckoning, for boat races and other water sports.

And Keralites on their part avail themselves of the "hard-earned" holidays for relaxation, recreation and rejuvenation of every sort. Needless to say, they have been sweating it out almost round the year and now is the time to cool their heads and heels, soul and sinew from the heat and dust of the toilsome months that passed by. And they do so in a spirit of spontaneous gaiety.

Flowers all the Way

Onam scenario is incomplete without the vignettes of urchins who flit about in the wee hours of dawn looking for flowers to decorate "Athappookkalam" – earthen mounds decked with floral carpets on the front yard of every household. The custom-bound practice of making earthen icons and floral designs enable the children to imbibe a sense of the aesthetic, an unconscious urge to enjoy the beauty of the blossom, besides nurturing a

bond with mother earth right from a tender age.

Maybe, "pookkalam" have become glossy sponsored items, particularly in metropolitan cities and modern townships and flowers purchased rather than







# Festivals

Variety  
Vacation  
Land

## Food for All



Significantly, Onam flourishes on an ambience that presupposes the basic amenities of life – food, clothes and community feeling. It is synonymous with food, sumptuous food, to be exact. Known as “Onasadya”, Onam feast is a multi-course affair served on plantain leaves and savoured in the company of dear ones, who arrive from far and near to partake. It is a gourmet’s delight, to say the least.

gathered. But then, flowers are flowers either way, and what better way is there to greet Mahabali than with flowers!

The myth of Mahabali too has an element of uniqueness about it. As the legend goes, the benign king was banished at the pinnacle of glory to the nether world for being the epitome of the noblest traits in man and God. His was an ideal state, a virtual paradise on earth. And Onam symbolizes a solemn thanksgiving by a grateful people who pay homage to their legendary ruler year after year with joy and jubilation.

Not by feast alone do Malayalees celebrate Onam. The occasion provides an opportunity for them to display their prowess in the diverse fields of art and craft. Be it on the sprawling grounds in the open or ring-like interior platforms, they present quite an astounding variety of performing arts across Kerala. Ranging from “Thumbithullal”, “Thiruvathirakkali” and Ammaanaattam to “Onathallu”, “Karadikali” and “Kathakali”, they involve a host of artistes who vie among one another to enthral the audience and transform the whole heartland into a veritable playhouse for the vacation.

It is common knowledge that Malayalees spend extravagantly on Onam purchases, “Kaanam Vittum Onam Unnanam”, says an age-old adage. True, Onam involves a lot of buying of new clothes and presenting them to dear ones. In olden days such gift-clothes were called “Onakkodi”, preferably yellow ones, considered harbingers of good luck.

The elders often go ecstatic over the golden times when Onam was celebrated on tradition-ordained lines. In the past the festivities started at the fag-end of “Karkitakam”, the last month of Malayalam year, and lasted more than a month.

Times have changed and a large part of Onam has of late been commercialized with several sponsorships going into its programming. Such patronage, governmental or through other channels, has only enlarged its scope, range and overall appeal. Needless to add, Onam is out and out an exuberant outflow of excitement, a boisterous celebration of life by an entire people.

For Malayalees living in other parts of the world. Onam is an integral part of their lives. Wherever they are bound to, they carry along with them an unfading souvenir of Onam, a nostalgic piece so to speak. It is more or less a metaphor of a collective consciousness, a sort of plural pride and passion for one’s heritage. And that is exactly why Onam has emerged as a many-splendoured festival that has seldom been equaled, leave aside excelled.



# COVER STORY

■ K P MOHANAN  
Minister for Agriculture

Four years. For the agrarian sector of Kerala, it has been a period of tremendous success and achievements. A vibrant minister at the helm of the affairs with an enthusiastic team of officials from the Department of Agriculture penned a success story. And, this story of reviving hopes uplifted the farmers from their pathos and bathos. Four years seems short for success. But, it has been an incredible success!

The Economic Review Report shows that the integrated approach of the Department of Agriculture has led to an increase in production and improvement in standard of living of farmers. With a flurry of novel projects,

## Coconut Regaining lost glory

Procurement of coconut, production of Neera and planting of dwarf and hybrid palms (Kerasamridhy) are the critical interventions initiated to revitalize coconut cultivation. The stagnation in prices affected coconut farmers to a great extent. Procurement of raw coconut started on January 1st, 2013 at the rate of Rs.14/kg when the market price was hovering around Rs. 9 to 10/kg. As a result, the price of coconut swelled up to Rs. 32/kg.

It is also noteworthy that the open market price of coconut increased to 4 to 5 Rupees higher than that of the procurement price. This is perhaps an exemplary intervention of the Department of Agriculture executed in text book style and perfection, which yielded fruitful results

'Neera', the dream product of coconut farmers received 'moksha' after decades, on November 1, 2014. Considering that one to two litres of Neera can be produced from a palm per day, an average income of Rs. 1500/month can be ensured from each coconut tree. If Neera is tapped from one percent of coconut palms (18 lakhs) in the state the total income will be around 3240 crores per annum. Neera, the unfermented fresh sap

extracted from inflorescence of coconut, will definitely find its place as a family health drink.

In order to thwart the difficulty of harvesting coconut from tall trees due to labour shortage, schemes entitled Kerasamridhy and Kerasree are being implemented which envisage planting of ten lakh dwarf and hybrid coconut seedlings in the next couple of years and scientific management of plantations through cluster approach, respectively.

## Grow More Greens Vegetable Development Programme

Kerala was facing a huge dearth in vegetable production; it produced only around 40 percent of its annual requirement of vegetables in 2012-13. A new initiative Vegetable

# Revolutionizing Agri







# Sector

**Four  
Years/  
Green Road  
to  
Prosperity**







Development Programme, with the objective of enhancing area and augmenting production and productivity of vegetables, at an intensive scale, was started. The most impressive outcome of the project was a tangible increase in vegetable production, as envisaged in the project.

Schemes were formulated for cultivation of vegetables in every possible avenue like 2500 schools, public and private institutions, Clusters, Kudumbasrees, and terrace cultivation in grow bags. Cultivation of vegetables in homesteads by 50 lakh odd school students and 5 lakh women was definitely successful in inculcating an aptitude towards farming in the younger generation.

### Kerala Going Organic

An organic policy is formulated for the state. Kasargode was declared 'Organic District' and efforts are on to convert the entire state into Organic Agriculture by the year 2016. As a prelude, harmful chemical pesticides bearing red label were banned in the state. Panchayaths and constituencies which shift to organic farming are offered awards and incentives.

### Global Agro-meet Providing impetus

A Global Agro-meet was organized at Angamaly on November 6 - 8, 2014, in collaboration with KSIDC and

CII, with the objective of getting a close preview of global agriculture scenario and to project our strengths. It was aimed at transforming our state into a hub of agribusiness ventures and Hi-Tech agriculture. The world's biggest organic expo Biofach India was also conducted alongside.

### Farmer welfare measures

An array of farmer welfare measures were initiated by introducing pension at the rate of Rupees 600/month for all small and marginal farmers, enhancing Paddy production incentive to Rs. 1000/Hectare, enhancing pumping subsidy for Kuttanad, establishing Farmer Welfare Board to cater to welfare measures of farmers etc., call centre at the phone number 1800 425 1661, voice sms etc.

### Pension to farmers

Kerala is the first state in the country to announce and to grant pension to all small and marginal farmers who have attained the age of 60 years. An amount of Rs. 600 per month is being given as pension to farmers. More than 3.25 lakh farmers in the state are enjoying the benefit of pension. Moreover, pension is being deposited in the bank accounts of farmers every month

### Farmers Registration & E-payment

How many farmers are there in the state in area-wise

'Neera', the dream product of coconut farmers received 'moksha' after decades, on November 1, 2014.



slabs? The answer has always been speculative. This speculation was put to an end by introducing registration of farmers at Krishi Bhavans and preparing a database of farmers. Around 20 lakh farmers are presently registered. Along with preparation of the database action was also taken to transfer subsidies directly to the bank accounts of farmers. Agri-cards are being distributed to all registered farmers with the assistance of Canara Bank.

### Agro-service Centers for mechanization and labor

In Kerala Mechanization has long remained a verbal exercise and was at the back-burner, perhaps owing to the fragmented nature of land and the high cost involved. It is in this juncture that the Department ventured in to a novel initiative of starting Agro-service centers, which maintain an array of machines suited to the localities, along with staff trained in their operation and maintenance. The machines can be hired at fixed rates. Along with this, a green army 'Karshika Karmasena' is also operational who will do farming operations at pre-fixed rates. This is a path breaking step in mechanization at grass root level, especially, when people are distancing themselves from farming due to shortage of labor and the exorbitant



costs involved in farming. Owing to public demand and success, 50 more Agroservice centres are being established in all Blocks, each having Agricultural machineries worth 32 lakhs, which will become the backbone of Farm mechanization.

### Hi-Tech Agriculture

Kerala did not move in pace with latest development in Hi-Tech Farming. Hitech Agriculture and precision farming is a key focus area as it is well suited for fragmented land and small holdings of the state. It yields 8-10 times increase in yield. Around 1000 greenhouses are being built along the length and breadth of the state. 75 percent subsidy is granted to farmers who establish Hi-tech polyhouses. Open field precision farming is also gaining momentum as it is comparatively less expensive. The objective is to make Kerala a hub of Hi-Tech Agriculture.

### Agriculture Policy & Income Guarantee for Farmers

A Development policy was prepared for the State by a commission constituted under K. Krishnankutty, Ex-M.L.A. The policy covers almost all aspects in Agriculture, Animal husbandry and allied sectors and envisages sustainable growth and aspects like Income Guarantee for farmers, establishing Farmers Producer Organizations, procurement, value addition, conservation, research etc.

### Food security project

The food security programme implemented with the aim of increasing crop production yielded fruits as depicted by the increase in production of rice by 9 percent and productivity by 11.5 percent as claimed in Economic Review Report of State Planning Board. Assistance for group farming in rice was increased from Rs. 1500/Ha to Rs. 4000. After decades, the Paddy Production Incentive was increased from Rs.350/Ha to Rs. 1000/Ha.

### Farms in modernization drive

Farms owned by the Department were modernized and converted into production centers of quality seeds,



planting materials and tissue culture seedlings. Moreover, dairy units and biogas plants were established in farms to promote mixed farming and to cater to input needs.

### Biogas Plants in schools

In order to popularize organic cultivation and to processing waste at origin, biogas plants were installed free of cost in schools in the state. The gas will be used for Mid-day meal programme and the slurry for cultivating organic vegetables, the products which in turn will be used for meals.

### Training Institutes

To keep the farmers and officials up-to-date with recent technological interventions an Agricultural Research Training Institute and Bio-resource cum Agro-service Centre are established at Kannur apart from other institutes.

Apart from these, Schemes of State Horticultural Mission, Vegetable and Fruit

Promotion Council, Bioparks for producing value-added products from Rice and Coconut, Packages for Wayanad and Kuttanad, etc. also are noteworthy achievements

The agricultural sector is all set to modernize imbibing the virtues of tradition in the coming years. During the last four years apart from aiming self sufficiency in food production the State Government could provide a new facelift to farming and agriculture in a much more professional way bringing out a new generation of professional farm entrepreneurs. ■



In the history of Indian agriculture 2015 will be recorded in golden letters as the year when government of kerala finalized and issued orders for the implementation of a dynamic state policy for around agriculture development. The policies cleared include the significant recommendations like introduction of Actio apportum (farmers right on the high profits earned by value added products and its marketing) formation of price fixation, authority for agro products, income guaranty scheme, and presentation of agriculture budget .

In 1977 India , When gave a silent but strong goodbye to import of foodgrains, wr were welcoming the dawn of food security to our noble subcontinent. World hailed it as avictory of the green revolution by a developing country with a huge population of over one billion. It generated shocks and surprises to several nations, who were viewing India as a nation with a begging bowl for collecting grains as aloan and aid. Today the proudest achievement of 68 year old nation is the mighty food security provided to its 1.20 billion population. Apart from the same India has emerged

as one of the major International trader's in the Global food grain market.

Keeping the nation hunger free, still is a very challenging task. According to studies even now 27% of the worlds population facing under nutrition is living in India. The nation has to keep a constant vigil to keep the country hunger free and also continue the grain exports for helping other nations.

World over the stress is to enhance the production and the productivity of crops and domesticated animals and birds. We have also made tremendous progress in these efforts. But some how we have failed to create a prosperous life to the farmer and his family. The studies done by the official agencies reveal that 40 % of the farmer population in India are ready to leave the profession. Farming in general is getting less charming and romantic.

Younger generation is shy and unwilling to enter the farm front while the elders are trying their level best to discouage them from joining the agriculture and allied professions .

Globally at the same time importance of farm products as the raw materials for producing value added products is going up in a big way. The process is handled by forces of trade, commerce and industry are creating mountains of profit. The investment in to this sector though continue to be unlimited, the farmers are reduced to a mere raw material producers and get no share from the huge profit generated by the production and trade of value added products, suited to the needs of the consumers. It's high time to make a shift in the policy level for making the farm development activities more farmer friendly.

## Policy of Hope



Without farmers, farming is impossible in a country like India where 70 crores of the production depends on agriculture for their livelihood security. Indian farmers truly have brought us economic prosperity during last six decades providing global reputation to nation as a 'green power'.

Kerala has the unique distinction to give shape to an agricultural policy as far back in 1992. Considering the significant change that has happened world wide and nationally, the state government decided to give shape to a new agricultural development policy. Chief Minister Oommen Chandy, Agricultural Minister K P Mohanan and all members of the cabinet gave whole hearted support to the committee constituted for doing the draft of the policy headed by veteran farmer leader K Krishnan Kutty Ex

MLA. The draft report with over 315 pages was prepared after hearing the views of all the presidents of Grama Panchayat, Block Panchayats, District Panchayats, leaders of farmers organizations, scientists, farm labour leaders, service associations, corporations boards of farming sector and learned farmers. Important Award winners also gave their views. The draft report after screening by a cabinet subcommittee was presented for a debate in the assembly where all parties expressed their views. The final draft was discussed and approved by the cabinet and historic orders approving the recommendations released on March 23, 2015.

The approved policy report contains 46 chapters and hailed as a matchless development document, aimed to reconstruct the farming sector in a farmer

friendly way. The recommendations are aimed to develop the farm prosperity and farmer welfare so that the younger generation will come forward to take up farming as a challenging task providing them prosperity and charming life showering social status and wealth.

All the 323 recommendations are very important and significant and it must be considered as a document which provide assistance and guidance to farm future programmes. The main concept is to submit without reservation that farm prosperity and farmers welfare should go together. Really they are two sides of the same coin. So among the programs to be given shape immediately, formation of farmer welfare board deserve very special consideration. During the last 12 five year plans every state in india has

made very good progress winning global laurels in the farm production front. But we have failed in providing a prosperous life to the farmer population. The farmer suicides reported from different parts of the country should be taken as a big indication to the above failure. To implement the formation of farmer welfare board recommendation, legislative clearance and fund generation exercise have to be undertaken. The boards objective are very wide and provide very special care to the farmer and his family for making their life safe and sound. Once the bill on the formation of farmer welfare board gets legislative clearance it will be a model not only for kerala and India but for all the developing nations.

The recommendation for

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# Sustainability th

**V**egetable and Fruit Promotion Council Kerala (VFPCCK) is formed to sustain the activities of Kerala Horticulture Development Programme, aimed at overall development of commercial fruit and vegetable farmers of Kerala. Though various types of plantains, vegetables and other horticultural products are cultivated, the production and productivity were less and a large portion of the fruits and vegetables consumed is coming from neighbouring states. The major problems faced by the farmers are inadequate technical support, relatively high unit costs of production, cultivation on leased land, lack of marketing support and control etc. VFPCCK has succeeded in tackling these problems through appropriate cultivation packages, easy and timely access to agricultural credit and improvement of the marketing system.

VFPCCK is implementing various schemes of Central and State Government in vegetable and fruit sector for the betterment of farming community

## Objectives

To support, maintain, increase and promote the commercial production of vegetable and fruits and their consumption

To sustain the successful activities initiated by Kerala Horticulture Development Programme.

The Council works through the principle of "Self help, Participation and Prosperity". The vision foreseen is "Empowered farmer groups leading the nation in reaping the fruits of self help."







MISSION



“To develop and sustain cohesive self help groups of farmers who use participatory approaches and innovative, environment friendly practices to produce and market vegetables and fruits, leading to prosperity and gaining social empowerment”.

# rough self help

## Services Provided



formed based on neighbourhood principle. The Council has organized 9240 Self Help groups comprising around 1,80,153 farmers

### Moulding leaders among farming community

Every SHG selects three master farmers to lead the group in areas of production, credit and marketing. They form a rich human resource group who can effectively be utilised for grass root level application of learning, direct experience sharing with farmers and even as trainers and facilitators for farmer trainings.

### Paradigm shift in farm experimentation

equipped farmers to find solutions for agricultural problems through mutual discussion and enquiry and trying out the technology in their fields rather than thrusting institutional



research findings on them. Awareness campaigns are conducted so as to enable the adoption of appropriate technology at the right time

### Technology at farmers doorstep

-created greater acceptance of ideas and instilled a feeling of trust and confidence in the official.

### Moving together, towards prosperity

The small voluntary self help groups(SHG) of 15-20 farmers are





### Quality seeds and planting materials

-produced by seed farmers caters to the vegetable seed requirement of the whole state of Kerala.

**Seed processing plant (SPP):** -is able to cater to the major portion of the seed requirement of the state. 104 farmers are technically trained as seed growers, and produces seeds of the major 17 varieties

**Tissue Culture laboratory:** -which produce around 5 lakh plants per year. Varieties like Nendran, Robusta, Red banana are propagated.

**Vegetable seedling unit at Seed Processing Plant:** unit for supply of ready to plant seedlings. The nursery has a total area of 5000 sq ft and around 35 lakh seedlings can be raised per year.

**Fruit seedling unit:** supplies quality seedlings of fruit plants in the state. Around 3 lakh seedlings of major fruit plant seedlings are distributed annually.

### Imparting knowledge and refining skills

trainings are given for the stakeholders in production technology and entrepreneurship development, supported by participatory tools and exposure visits..

### Capital for cultivation in quick and easy steps and Caring for the crop and lives too"

The policy intervention was the innovative credit package of the Council. Loans to farmers cultivating even on leased lands without any registered tenancy agreement was the first of its kind in the country. The self help groups determine the credit requirement and credit worthiness of the member farmers.

Farming is a risky business since it is highly prone to natural calamities. Protecting the farmer who dares to take the risk is the responsibility of the Council which is undertaken through liaison with insurance companies. The farmer is assured a tension free farming activity.. Medical and life insurance packages for the farmers are also provided.



### For the farmers, by the farmers, of the farmers

The farmer markets is a unique marketing system developed and established to ensure the farmers an enhanced and sustained income. The Swasraya Karshaka Samithis are farmer markets for the farmers, by the farmers and of the farmers.. The Council has established 273 farmer markets across the state through which over 2,00,000 MT of produce is traded annually.

### Price fixation based on analysis of market trends and demand

The information on prices and quantity arrivals in open markets provides a base for the price fixation in farmer markets.

The writer is Chief Executive Officer, VFPCCK

## New Strides in Po

### Krishi Business Kendra

Started an Agri Business Centre viz. Krishi Business Kendra at Head Quarters, Kakkannad to provide varieties of fruit and vegetable seedlings. Planning Krishi Business Kendras in Trivandrum and Kasaragod.

### Promotion of Vegetable Cultivation

Cultivation in homesteads assures availability of safe and good quality organic vegetables.

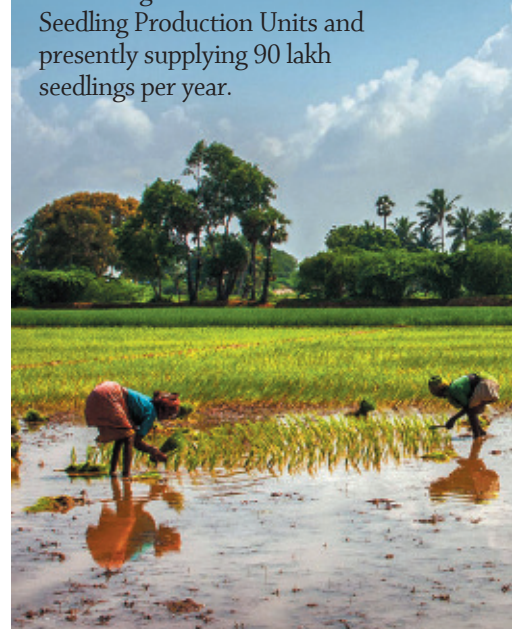
Govt. have many initiatives to promote homestead vegetable cultivation. Council had supported it by distributing 70 Lakh vegetable seed kits under various schemes

### PGS- Participatory Guarantee System

Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) is a quality assurance initiative that is locally relevant which emphasize the participation of stakeholders, including producers and consumers and operate outside the framework of third party certification

### Hitech Seedling Production Unit

VFPCCK provides high quality seeds through its seed multiplication chain and Hi-tech Processing centre. Initiated Seedling Production Units and presently supplying 90 lakh seedlings per year.





## tential Areas

### Value addition

“Adding value through little effort and little time”

Cut Vegetable units were initiated in Trivandrum, Ernakulam and Calicut .

### Retailing

“Caring producers and consumers”

Initiated 140 retail outlets all over Kerala.

Precision Farming or Precision Agriculture - using the new technologies and collected field information, doing the right thing, in the right place, at the right time. Initiated model precision farming plots in 38 acres.

### Harithanagari

“Making city life greener, healthier and habitable”

A scheme for the promotion of vegetable cultivation on terraces and house premises in urban areas.

### Mushroom spawn production unit

Produces spawn of oyster mushroom. Technical trainings is also conducted.



## BOOK REVIEW

■ ADARSH CHANDRAN

# 25 Janapriya Krishikal

A Guide to become a successful Farm Entrepreneur 25 Popular Farming Methods is a book written by Dr D Shinekumar which explains about some of the money making farming practices quite popular in the state. Our community has a long history of farming. We hailed as a farm population. We thrived on farming. Our ancestors sow seeds, ploughed their lands hardly, toiled their bodies in the shimmering sun, spend days restless and night sleepless and filled their granaries aplenty with threshed grains for a better future. But that was all the story we heard from a bygone era. For the last few decades, the state has been witnessing a stumble in farm population. With more and more workforce of the state migrating to other parts of the globe for better prospects and also the alarming rate in which the agricultural lands are converted to housing plots have thrown big challenges to the farming in the state.

Moreover, the profession has become less prospective as it takes too much capital to start and pays too low. The working condition is too dusty, smelly and noisy. We believed that these are the factors that makes this vocation look little glamorous among the new folks. The book 25 Popular Farming (25 Janapreeya Krishikal) written by Dr D Shinekumar, however, topples this belief and infuse a further promising concept that farming is a successful, promising vocation. Many would be wondered and inspired after reading this book that “Is it really possible for me”.

The book chronicles the success of various entrepreneurial farmers in the state. The book is of a great help to all farmers, it targets the wannabes, the folks who actually entertain notions of living, loving and learning on a piece of land.

Dr Shinekumar, a graduate in veterinary science, is a known speaker of organic farming and has been writing about farming for the last two decades.

Unlike the other books in the genre available, 25 Popular Farming is simple and easy read. The writer has taken initiatives in detailing the most difficult of scientific explanation in a simple, beautiful language devoid any jargons that often distracted readers. He invariably mixes the scientific practice of farming with the success story of the farming entrepreneurs of the state.

The book opens with the chapter on Spinach farming titled ‘Money flowing

Spinach’. It tells the methods and practice that are to be adopted to grow the succulent spinach, the most popular of vegetable plant among us. It is through an anecdote taken from the epic Mahabharata that Shine explains how important and valued the spinach is to our tradition. Though the plant is quite common to every Malayalis, many are unaware of the fact that this can be nurtured easily in their farmlands. In fact, little care and proper manuring provided.

The writer does not limit himself by explaining the methods of spinach farming. He narrates the success story of a school which has reaped high profit through Spinach farming in the next chapter.

These kinds of real-life success stories from people more common to us give the aspirants the courage and enthusiasm to take up farming more seriously.

A chapter that follows next is about the Pearl Spot (Karimeen) Fish Farming. Karimeen is one kind of a fish that we Malayalis savour the most. This popularity increases the demand of this fish and

bringing great profits to the farmers. But least we are aware that the Pearl Spot Fish farming is an easy thing and the most profitable one to do. Mr Shine narrates the story of a farmer Mr Vikaraman Nair in the next chapter about the success he had achieved through by growing of pearl spot fish.

Stories of farmers who have reaped success by practicing other popular farming like Goat, Chicken, Ducks, Goat, Ornamental Fish, Dogs, and other various vegetables are told in detail in the remaining chapters. Apart from this, writer asserts through many chapters about the importance of organic farming. Since with the debate over poisonous vegetables coming from other states are rife in the state, the discussion and debate are increasingly surrounded in adopting the organic farming in the state. The chapters on this give more insight into the topic in the detail.

There is also a chapter about how farming can be used to attract travellers and earn some foreign money. Farm Tourism is slowly getting its popularity in the state and is bringing in some good foreign exchange to the farmers of the state. The book tells in detail about the methods to be followed to create a successful example in Farm Tourism.

**Publication : Manorama Books**

**Price : 190/-**



## COVER STORY

■ Dr. N ANIL KUMAR, Dr. K P SMITHA



# Preserving Ethnic Farming

**K**eeping the productivity in continuity is the challenging goal for Indian agriculture. Kerala can address this challenge confidently as it has proven records of homestead level sustainable food production. The glory of Kerala's homestead farms was widely known to the world till a few decades ago! Unfortunately, this tradition along with the on-farm diversity, people's knowledge and innovations being fast disappearing due to the obvious reasons of the changing cultural and developmental needs of the state.

Article, discusses the Wayanad Ethnic





## High end rice varieties in Wayanad and adjoining regions

**Veliyan (Mannu Veliyan):** Drought and flood tolerant, source of high calorie energy, used in brewing home liquor and the burned husk is most preferred for homemade tooth powder

**Chettuveliyan:** Flood resistant, comparatively high yield, bold and red colored grain, nutritious and tasty rice, it gives a feeling of fullness when consumed, resistant to various biotic and abiotic stresses, high fodder yield as well as grain yield;

**Palveliyan:** Highly preferred for rice gruel ('Kanji'), white kernel;

**Thondi:** Tasty rice, red kernel;

**Palthondi:** Highly preferred for rice gruel, white kernel;

**Marathondi:** Red and stiff rice;

**Chennellu:** Holy and Medicinal rice, used as a cure for stomach ulcers, vomiting etc; considered as the king among traditional rices;

**Kaima:** Scented rice, preferred for preparing breakfast dishes and ghee rice;

**Urunikaima:** Scented, preferred for preparing breakfast dishes;

**Mullankaima:** Scented, used in the special occasions in the family;

**Poothadikaima:** Scented with strong aroma, preferred for preparing beaten rice; Gandhakasala: Scented, preferred for Biryani and Payasam in special occasions in the family;

**Jeerakasala:** Scented, preferred for Biryani and Payasam in special occasions in the family;

**Mullanpuncha:** Drought resistant;

**Thonnuran Thondi:** Short duration, traditionally treated as famine crop, harvested on emergency during the scarce periods;

**Kalladiyaryan:** Highly drought resistant. Suitable for valleys and terrains;

**Onavattan:** Tasty rice, introduced variety;

**Chempathi:** Scented rice;

**Chomala:** Highly tasty rice, white kernel, preferred to prepare break-fast dishes during special occasions;

**Chenthadi:** flood tolerant, tasty grains.

## Food and Nutrition Security of the Vulnerable Communities of Kerala



Agriculture System of -the major grain rice - some suggestions to revitalize this Heritage Agricultural System, and hopeful that sharing of this learning would help to design a suitable agricultural system that ensure sustainable food and nutrition to the vulnerable communities of a global biodiversity hotspot like the Western Ghats.

**Wayanad Ethnic Agriculture System**

Wayanad is one of the very few locations of the Western Ghats region with rich agro-biodiversity conserved at on-farm by the ethnic communities like the scheduled tribes. MSSRF has documented over 400 such diversity comprising mostly landraces, cultivars, and in some cases distinct species in



diverse genera (MSSRF Report 2011). The farming takes place at both the steep mountain planes and on the valleys.

### Tribal Communities

The tribal communities constitute 17.43% of the total population of the district, which is the highest share of Adivasi population (about 36%) in Kerala. The major communities that inhabit the district are Paniya (44.77%), Mullu Kuruma (17.51%), Kurichya (17.38%), Kattunaicka (9.93%), Adiya (7.10%) and Urali Kuruma (2.69%). These groups can broadly be categorized respectively into agricultural laborers, marginal farmers and forest dwellers.

Kurichya are one of the largest joint families of India, often holding large land areas and with more than 100 family members living together in one single house complex. The agrarian system of Kurichya have similarities

with that of the traditional agrarian society of Kerala existed before the Sangam period. (Suma 2014, Varma 2004).

### Diversity of Rice

There are two crop seasons for rice cultivation in Wayanad, Nanja (monsoon crop) and Punja (summer crop). Earlier tribal farmers cultivated long duration traditional varieties like Veliyan and Chenthadi during Nanja and short duration traditional varieties like Kalladiaryan and Thonnooram thondi during Punja season. But now most of these farmers cultivate traditional varieties with long duration during the first crop season, Nanja and High Yielding Varieties like Athira, Uma, Kanchana, IR20 during Punja. In certain pockets short duration varieties like Kalladiaryan are still cultivated during Punja.

### Valicha Krishi

A unique form of rice



The varieties used are also tolerant to pests and diseases. The benefit of Valicha krishi is that even if the stem breaks; it develops new tillers and can survive in adverse conditions.



cultivation of the tribal system is Valicha Krishi, which was widespread in earlier times owing to large landholding and reduced workload. Presently, it is done only in remote pockets in waterlogged/marshy fields that are unsuitable for other cultivation. By this method, long duration crops which can withstand water logged conditions (preferably with a span of 7-11 months) are selected, as minimum work is done after seed broadcasting. The varieties used are also tolerant to pests and diseases. The benefit of Valicha krishi is that even if the stem breaks; it develops new tillers and can survive in adverse conditions.

The land selected for Valicha krishi is usually marshy or water logged areas.

The rice diversity and their uses in Wayanad is astonishing. It is based on the terrain, soil type, and climate, the community here selected the varieties for cultivation. The other factors that influenced in selection of varieties were type of wetland, water availability, taste etc. The selection of variety for the crop season was based on the crop duration.

A study by MSSRF in 2011 showed that there were more than 75 traditional rice varieties cultivated throughout the district. Some





of the varieties are believed to have evolved in this place and some were imported during the course of immigration of people from the plains. But this has reduced to 35 out of which only less than ten are now extensively cultivated here. If the situation goes on like this it will take only a few more years for the erosion of this vast genetic wealth. The cultivation of such specialty varieties is decreasing day by day, the major reason being low productivity of these varieties compared to the High Yielding Varieties (HYV).

When compared to other districts of Kerala, Wayanad is the only district having at

least 35-40 varieties of rice conserved through cultivation. This richness of genetic wealth of the district can be attributed to the ethnic culture of value "rice as food and wealth", and they believe that it is their responsibility to handover this divine wealth, "seeds" to the coming generations for its perpetuation.

The experiences of the people who cultivate and consume these varieties show that the traditional varieties provide more energy in comparison to improved varieties on a per unit basis and the consumption of traditional crops helps to meet the high-energy

requirements for carrying out heavy tasks in high elevation areas. Cooking quality, palatability, grain colour, aroma, calorie content, satiety, medicinal qualities, high fodder and grain yield and cultural attributes influence the choice of a variety among the tribal communities. Resistance to biotic and abiotic stresses of varieties too influences the choice. Traditional varieties are composed of unique traits and are better adapted to different conditions. As an adaptation option for farmers for the imminent climate change impacts, these varieties become extremely important.

Now conversion of paddy lands to banana cultivation is a common and threatening scene in the district, which questions the very existence of the people whose food, nutrition and livelihood security depends upon this crop. Unprecedented droughts and floods becoming common in the district that have reasons like this changed land use pattern. Fighting all the odds the tribal communities of Wayanad still produce traditional varieties as remnants of their rich tradition without any kind of support. ■

The writers are Director, Community Agro Diversity Centre and Senior Scientist, MS Swaminathan Research Foundation



# Conquering fields

**T**hough India occupies a prominent position in the world in agriculture, India is still the home for more than 27% of the world's undernourished population. Among them 79.2% are children under the age of three, 56.2% are women and 24.3% are men who are malnourished and anemic. Despite poverty removal being an important state policy for a long time, the progress so far made towards lowering the number of hungry by 2015 under the UN Millennium Development Programme is off the track. With all its labour problems, Kerala still continues to be the number one among the Indian states generating maximum monetary returns from a hectare of farm land. Kerala is producing a yield worth of over Rs.53,000 per hectare of farm land now. It is also noteworthy that Kerala is still continuing to produce quality agro produce which fetches very high prices at the terminal and export market.

Official records show that 40% of the farming populations in the country are eagerly waiting for other opportunities to leave the profession and not to lead or encourage their younger generation to take up farming as an enterprise for livelihood. The present unhealthy trend among the new generation is to go and buy everything from the market,

totally ignoring the health hazards. Another crisis faced by the State which depends more on rice and vegetables is the use of productive land for commercial purpose. This has led to a severe food crisis. Unless the state steps up the production of food crops, food security in the state cannot be ensured.

It is in this situation that Kudumbasree, the State poverty eradication Mission decided to intervene by taking measures to ensure food security and improve the livelihood of landless women

through collective farming. Joint liability groups (JLGs) of women farmers are formed under the collective farming initiative to help women cultivators to access agricultural credit through the banking system. Progress in the work participation of women has come through a very silent revolution, triggered by a series of poverty alleviation measures and built in synergies.

With the experience gained from working in MNREGS, women took to agriculture as first time







farmers wherever land was remaining unproductive. Tie ups were made with Kerala Agricultural University to ensure a better yield through training programmes, with the Vegetable and Fruit Promotion Council Keralam (VFPCCK) and Supply Co, to facilitate the sale of the women farmer's produce.

### Achievements

Today women are into cultivation of paddy, tuber crops, food crops, and vegetables, spreading a silent revolution in the state by

earning extra to help themselves and their families. The landless laborers who were earlier been wage laborers became farm producers and managers of production. The cultivation of land not only allowed women to meet their consumption needs, but also provided them with surplus that they could sell. They showed their ability to produce enough food to feed their family members. Being a member of farming group, the women attained a sense of confidence and made them

feel empowered both economically and socially, as well as their ability to turn a fallow land to a productive land. Their membership in JLGs gave them the necessary bargaining power in the market.

They became the pillars of their families, showed their ability to produce enough food to feed their family members. As the intervention was scaled up to a state-wide one and bore fruit in all 14 districts, one could even term the women the pillars of food security in Kerala. Belonging to farming groups instilled a sense of self-confidence in the women and made them feel empowered, both economically and socially. Another commendable achievement of the intervention was the development of fallow land, and the revival of various environment-friendly techniques of farming. The inter-

vention launched by Kudumbashree in 2004 is currently functioning under the banner of the MKSP (Mahila Kissan Sashakthikaran Pariyojana) which has set an example for all women labourers in the country to aspire to become farm producers. The women being identified as master farmers under this scheme have proven to be instrumental in their transfer of knowledge about good agricultural practices and also in helping fellow women farmers build sustainable livelihood. A commendable achievement made by women farmers are, during the financial year 2013-14, 40218 hectare was cultivated by 47611 JLGs groups. Around 10543 JLGs have availed loans so far amounting more than 123 Crores of rupees. ■

Associate Professor,  
Department of Sociology,  
University of Kerala







## COVER STORY

■ SURESH MUTHUKULAM

# Toxic free

**K**erala, the land of diverse agricultural systems is now on its way back to the traditional, sustainable ways of cultivation without harming the ecosystem. Now it is the turn of organic farming, a system of broad principle of “live and let live” which is going to be a reality by 2016. It is a fact that the Green revolution technology or intensive agriculture particularly in Kerala along with other states in India, led to many fold increase in food grain production by introducing High Yielding Crop Varieties (HYCVs), regular application of agro-chemicals like chemical fertilisers, chemical pesticides, chemical weedicides etc.

The miracle seeds and dwarf and early maturing crop varieties have brought about a sudden transformation in Indian agriculture. As a result there has been a sharp increase in agricultural production and the food grain output increased substantially. The productivity of agriculture, as measured in terms of yield per hectare has also increased. Thus the Green Revolution spreading over the period from 1967-68 to 1977-78, changed India’s status from a food deficit country to one of the world’s leading agricultural nations. Thanks to the new seeds and extra tonnes of grains being

## PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIC

### Health

Organic farming should sustain and enhance the health of soil, plant, animal, human and planet as one and indivisible. According to this principle the health of individuals and communities is connected with the health of ecosystem; healthy soils produce healthy crops that foster the health of people and animals. The role of organic agriculture is to sustain and enhance the healthy ecosystems and organisms from the smallest in soil to human beings. In short organic farming is indented to produce high quality nutritious food that contributes to preventive health care and well-being. Avoid the use of fertilizers, pesticides, food additives etc that may have adverse health effects.

### Ecology

Organic agriculture should be based on living ecological systems. Production is to be based on ecological processes and recycling. Nourishment and well-being are achieved through the ecology of the specific production environment. Organic agriculture should attain ecological balance through the design of farming systems, establishment of habitats and maintenance of agricultural and genetic diversity.

### Fairness

Organic agriculture should build on relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities. Fairness is characterised by



# yield

harvested; but this has created some problems mainly like adverse impacts in the environment.

Excessive and unbalanced use of fertilisers has given rise to serious problems which led to the degradation of texture and structure of soil. The chemical pesticides and herbicides polluted the soil and water systems around the fields. Thus the soil system along with drinking water sources became heavily polluted which led to various fatal pesticide-induced

diseases like asthma, autism and learning disabilities, birth defects and reproductive dysfunction, diabetes, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease and several types of cancer. More over pesticides disrupt the natural balance in ecosystem, damage or harm the untargeted organisms, decreases biodiversity, causes decline or extinction of species and creates confusions in food chains or food webs. Continuing farming using intensive plant management and plant protection

measures is detrimental not only to the present generation but also for the generations to come. This is the reason why organic farming is gaining popularity worldwide

## Organic farming- a holistic approach

Organic farming is a holistic system designed to optimize the productivity and fitness of diverse communities within the agro-ecosystem, including soil organisms, plants, livestock and people. The principal goal of organic production is to develop enterprises that are sustainable and harmonious with the environment.

## Key characteristics of Organic farming

- Protecting the long term fertility of

## FARMING

equity, respect, justice and stewardship of the shared world, both among people and in their relations to other living beings. The principle emphasises that organic agriculture should provide everyone with a good quality of life by ensuring a sufficient supply of good quality food and other products.

## Care

Organic agriculture should be managed in a precautionary and responsible manner to protect the health and well being of current and future generations and the environment. Being a living and dynamic system the practitioners of organic agriculture shall enhance efficiency and increase productivity, but this should not be at the risk of

jeopardising health and well being. Here precaution and responsibility are the key concerns. Practical experience along with accumulated wisdom and traditional and indigenous knowledge offer valid solutions. Organic agriculture should prevent significant risks by adopting appropriate technologies and rejecting unpredictable ones, such as genetic engineering etc. Decisions should reflect the values and needs of all who might be affected through transparent and participatory process.

These principles put forward by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) are the roots from which organic agriculture should grow and develop.



The chemical pesticides and herbicides polluted the soil and water systems around the fields. The soil system along with drinking water sources became heavily polluted

soils by maintaining organic matter level encouraging soil biological activity.

- Providing crop nutrients indirectly using relatively insoluble nutrient sources' which are made available to the plant by the action of soil microorganisms.
- Nitrogen self-sufficiency through the use of legumes and biological nitrogen fixation, as well as effective recycling of organic materials including crop residues and livestock manures.
- Weed, disease and pest control relying primarily on crop rotations, natural predators, organic manuring, resistant varieties etc
- Attention to the impact of farming system on the wider environment and conservation of natural habitats.

### Organic initiatives in Kerala

The Department of Agriculture, under the magnanimous leadership of

Minister for Agriculture and Animal Husbandry KP Mohanan, has already initiated noted efforts to encourage farmers to switch over to organic methods of farming and convert Kerala into a fully organic state by 2016.

Kasaragod the northern district, which was affected by the use of endosulfan in cashew plantations had already switched over to organic farming and emerged as the first district in Kerala as a complete organic entity. To achieve this the Government materialised a number of credible measures like the total banning of pesticides in the district, providing enhanced compensation to the victims along with their timely rehabilitation.

A detail soil test was also conducted in this district to ascertain whether there is any residue of the pesticide in soil. Assistance was provided to the farmers to produce different types of compost like rural compost, vermi compost and also for green

manure and legume cultivation. Due to the stringent measures adopted here the result of the soil test was negative.

The whole cropped area was grouped into different categories like purely organic area where safe to eat food can be cultivated eco friendly area where organic farming can be implemented directly and areas where organic farming can be undertaken in a later stage. Along with this assistance was given to the farmers to encourage the use of organic inputs and bio control agents. For the proper marketing of organic produce eco shops were started here.

During the current financial year a scheme on Organic farming is being implemented by the Department of Agriculture for a budget provision of Rs 1000 lakhs. This is being implemented by providing assistance for organic certification, empowerment of clusters, providing promotional assistance for clusters, establishment of model units for organic

manure production and emphasis for "Safe to eat" food production. The main components of the Jaivakeralam programme include the following vital components:

- Formation of Organic agricultural panchayaths
- Formation of bio-input centres so as to convert Assembly Constituencies to Organic Agricultural Constituencies
- Formation of Organic produces sales- cum - processing centres in every constituency
- Awards for the best Organic agricultural constituency comprising of Rs 10 lakh, 5 lakh and 3 lakh for the first, second and third constituencies consecutively.
- Awards for the best three organic agricultural panchayaths in each assembly constituency comprising of Rs 3 lakh, 2 lakh and 1 lakh consecutively.■

The writer is Deputy Director and Editor, Farm Information Bureau



giving shape to an actio opportunist is to give a right to farmer on the huge income produced by the trade, industrial and commerce sectors by the post harvest handling and the sales of value added consumers goods from the raw agriculture produce. It is a sad saga to find that the farmer being used as a mere raw material producer denying a share of the huge profit generated by handling the produce with fine tuned usage of technology and massive funding . This is the root cause for the poverty seen and experienced by the farming population in all developing countries . Mechanisms should be made to collect and make available a portion of the profits generated to collect and make available a portion of the profits generated to the farmer as per the quantum of raw materials produced and supplied . This should be worked out for each agro products . This arrangement is a must for the youth in the world will be attracted with joy and hope. Globally 1985 billions U.S dollers worth produce are generated by the agriculture sector every year.

Once these are transformed as consumer goods its value may go up by ten to fifty . It may be noted with interest the organized labour and white collar workers round the world get the due share from the profit generated in the form of bonus ,incentives ,holiday trips various special allowance , awards ,subsidies on loans and even as shares but for farmers who is in the profession for more than Ten Thousand years ,such privilege still continue to be



dreams . Early drafting of the programme and supporting bills and its implementation will make kerala a innovator of great farmer friendly policy which could be copied in the world . Any quantum of efforts invested to make the above system healthy should be considered as noble contribution to the welfare of global farming community . A Recent report came in ' The Hindu' says that according to controller and auditor general of India ,rice millers in seven states of India every year amass over Rs 73000crs by selling broken rice, etc without giving any tax to any Government or any agency . But a sad miss is the fact that the entire amount really belong to the producer who is not only denied even a paisa of the generation of such huge amount of money from the grains he sold for a paltry sum. This is only tip of the "ice berg", when we try to investigate the very serious disservice done to the innocent producer by the mighty trade empire. It will be an explosive revelation.

Another recommendation of great importance is for introducing an act for creating

an income guaranty act. This will pave way for the flow of large scale technology and funding into the farming sector. This programme also needs legal backing and will make farming a safe investment paradise.

One recommendation is to give shape to a price fixing authority. The influence of agro business has now become a guideline for the creation of production strategy. Since the cost of production and allied factors are becoming more and more crucial, price fixing in time is of premium importance. The exercise done today is done by several agencies and they are more trade friendly often. The process call for a scientific methodology so that the different interests are taken care but not at the cost of farmers share.

The agro development policy consists of two hundred and thirty pages. It will be of great use to everybody connected with agriculture. It also includes recommendations on international trade, modernisation of various services extended to farmers for helping them to make farming more productive and profitable. The farmers, farm

labour, farmer leaders, elected representatives, social scientists, economists, scientists, media and all those who are involved in the development of agriculture may discuss and become partners in the implementation process. Copies of the policy are available in the internet and could be purchased from the Farm Information Bureau, Thiruvananthapuram. Before I conclude I may submit that one of the novel suggestions approved is the introduction of an exclusive budget for farm sector in the Assembly. Some states have already tried with success. But, once we do, we may be able to do it better because of the very special nature of our farming sector.

Implementation of the recommendation must get high priority in our development process. The unique document with approval orders of the Government is now before the Mass. Let us all unite to give shape to a gigantic effort to make it a reality and create Kerala farming sector a paradise of prosperity.■

The writer is former Director of Agriculture Kerala, is a member of the Policy Drafting Committee

# Igniting minds

E

very wise and sensible young person has the ambition to be a bureaucrat of tomorrow. But to dream of without firm determination, dedication and guidance means making castle in the air. Determination and dedication are the inner traits that one can have or cultivate, but for right guidance one surely looks beyond oneself. Kerala State Civil Service Academy is the guidance; it is your road to success.

Kerala State Civil Service Academy, Thiruvananthapuram was established in the year 2005 under CCEK (Centre for Continuing Education Kerala) with the noble cause of training the civil service aspirants in a focused manner and preparing them for facing the toughest competitive exam in our country, i.e. Indian Administrative Service Exam which has now come to be known as Civil Services Exam. Since its inception, Academy has helped over 350 students to enter civil services including IAS, IFS, IPS and other central services. Today, it is known as the most specialized institution of its type in the country, performing consistently at high levels and has acquired the rare distinction of achieving the highest success-rate in the Civil Services Examination. The academy has now been grown as a huge tree spreading its boughs all over Kerala accommodating all ambitious Civil Service aspirants under its shade. It has established



its sub-centres in Palakkad, Kozhikode, Ponnani, Chengannur, Konni and Muvattupuzha.

The administrative matters of Kerala State Civil Service Academy are controlled and monitored by a governing body with P.K Abdu Rabb, Minister for Education, as the Chairman and B. Srinivas IAS, Secretary, Higher Education Department, as the Vice Chairman. Dr. D Babu Paul, former Additional Chief Secretary, is Chief Mentor Emeritus of the academy.

### Mission and Vision

If our mission is to make our young prodigies discern and realize their genuinely unique talents and to bring out the best in themselves,

our vision is to provide their unequalled potentials to the service of our people so as to elevate our nation to the peak of multifaceted progress as they themselves have come up to the top.

### Facilities at the Academy

In terms of infrastructure, academy has grown by leaps and bounds. The classrooms are brightly lit, equipped with a projector; fully air conditioned with ample seating space, can accommodate 150 students per class. The highlighted facilities includes

### Library

Since the exam syllabus is very dynamic and the exam pattern requires diverse reading material, no candidate





can aspire for success in the civil services examination if he or she does not make good use of the library. The Academy has a full-fledged library; having two thousand and five hundred books, ten news papers with multiple copies and forty magazines. Educational CD are also available in the Library. Academy provides the facility of well furnished AC reading room accommodating 120 students at a time. The library will stay opened from 8.00 AM to 10.00 PM in all days.

### Internet and Videoconferencing

In addition to the library facilities, the Academy provides high speed Internet connection so as to enable the students to browse it for the materials they need. To add to the technical caliber, the Academy has now been made a Wi-Fi enabled Campus. Virtual class facility is another attraction of this Academy. Using this facility the students can interact with the subject experts from various corners. The academy provides virtual classroom and studio facility by which classes by experts can be

made available to the students of the sub-centres at Ponnani, Palakkad and Kozhikode.

### Adoption Scheme

The students who pass the Civil Service Preliminary Examination will be adopted by the Academy and will meet all the expenses in connection with his/her studies for the Main Examination and Personality Test by the UPSC at Delhi. They will be provided with free coaching and model interviews for Personality Test. They will be given air fare for their journey to and from New Delhi and free accommodation and food at Kerala House, New Delhi for attending the Personality Test conducted by the UPSC.

### Faculty Members

Kerala State Civil Service Academy has an impressive array of members who are highly qualified in the subject and have developed well-defined strategies to approach each of the subjects from the examination point of view. They comprise of college professors (retired as well as those still in service) and experts from various branches of learning. High

quality class notes, periodical (weekly) examinations and in-depth review of the answers help the aspirants to develop their knowledge, writing skills, presentation skills and refine the approach for answering the questions.

Besides these veteran educators, eminent personalities and IAS/IFS/IPS officers (both former and present) are occasionally invited to interact with the civil service aspirants so as to give them proper orientation. The Government has issued a directive to the junior IAS/IPS officers of the State to associate with Kerala State Civil Service Academy in its civil services examination training programme. All the proud winners of this Academy are also taking the trouble to visit the Academy to interact with the students and also to advise them on how to achieve success in the examination.

### Achievements

Kerala State Civil Service Academy has so far produced around 350 successful candidates who now hold top cadre jobs in our country, like the IAS, IFS, IPS, Indian

Revenue Service, Indian Postal Service, Indian Railway Service, Indian Information Service, etc. Every year some of our students have secured positions amongst the first ten successful candidates including Mithra T (Rank 10, 2008), Anupama P.V (Rank 4, 2009), Abhiram G Sankar (Rank 4, 2010), Haritha V Kumar (Rank 1, 2012), Sriram Venkittaraman (Rank 2, 2012), Alby John Varghese (Rank 4, 2012).

Kerala State Civil Service Academy bagged 36 ranks in Civil Services Examinations in 2014 with Dr.Renu Raj at the second position in the list.

Academy is now mirthfully celebrating its 10th anniversary of its unusual and consecutive miraculous victories with great pride and contentment. It has marked its own stamp in the field and is at its zenith of glory now. Ambitious youngsters from the nook and corners of India are attracted towards this centre of knowledge and wisdom as butterflies are attracted to a garden with full of fragrant blossoms. ■

The writer is Director, Civil Service Academy



I t's Onam - a festival of memories to bask in our yesteryears' glory and a celebration of colours when nature puts on its most adorable robes. Everything around us will be brimming with beauty and joy, and to par with them we mix the elegance of tradition along with the lustre of artistry in our festival days. In search of a fine blend of both we unanimously reach at the handloom saris or the Kasavu saris of Kerala.

Handloom was till then just another piece of cloth until visiting Balamapuram handloom mills. Not even while bargaining

inside the handloom shops, tossing away carelessly those golden threaded saris, a moment's effort was taken to split that compound term and to think about the role of 'hand' on a loom.

It was after meandering through several crossroads and streets from the city of Balamapuram we reached at our destination – the weavers' land. The mills were

tin roofed small blocks adjacent to the house of its owner. A mill consisted of 4-5 looms packed within the four concrete walls that covered hardly some 25 square meters. The loom is a complicated machine and on a first glance you will understand only the complexities created by the entangled state of hundreds of white and golden threads.

## Stories from Weavers' Land







known as 'kuzhithari' or 'pit loom'. The weavers work by standing inside the pit. The act of weaving is a mesmerizing sight where the weavers with utmost ease throws, catches and shuttles simultaneously and their leg peddling produces a rhythmic tak- tak music along. The growing enthusiasm literally pulled me into the pit and soon the musical loom turned out to be a burning furnace for me. The weaver who helped me to get into the loom said, "We can't even take the risk of spilling a drop of sweat over the threads as it will remain as a blotch over the woven cloth".

The weavers' land of Balamapuram is known as Shaliar Street, because they belong to the Shaliar group of weavers brought to Travancore from Tamil Nadu by Ummini Thampi, the Divan in the court of His Highness Balarama Varma. Initially used to weave the robes of temple deities and the members of royal family. But today none of the younger generation brags about their ancestral glory nor are willing to take up this traditional profession. The older generation in the Shaliar Street fear that this custom will end with them.

Another catchy craft outside the loom house is the device on which the threads are displayed a collection of golden, white and very many hues all set to get woven into fine garbs. The jaris are always lulled with great care and affection. "We work with our mind stirring around a huge curse, the one that of the silkworm! Jari (kasavu) is the product of many silk worms' sacrifice and hence we worship them.", adds another weaver. For this what they get is a hundred or two and during the monsoon even that is blocked as the moisture and rains will glue up the threads together making it impossible for the throw shuttle pit looms to work.

But every year when it is Onam, Malayalees never forget to return to one's ethnic traditional wears and hence this weavers land also welcomes the festival of colours with lot more experiments and innovations. After silver borders and variant prints this year the handloom shops are coming to us with tissue styled handlooms and those with coloured thread prints both over the borders and on the body.

With the advent of technology in this field as in any other sector, weaving has also become easier. But here the weavers who are the devotees of Lord Agasthya, swear upon their god that no machine can stand anywhere near their art composed from the light of their heart and the strength of their hands. The fineness of threads and jari, complications in the designs, regal lustre, and durability of the product are scores of times superior to the machine products. ■

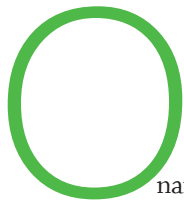
In an initial excitement if you try to strike or nuzzle this system, the weavers are sure to charge at you, as a small tumult in this arrangement can ruin their laborious days or month long sweat and toil. A slight mishandling can wreak the fine threads which are resting in a peaceful tension and temper after undergoing stream sizing, a process of strengthening the threads using a natural gum.

The time period required for weaving a whole five and a half metre long sari can vary from a couple of days to months, depending on the complication of the designs involved. On normal days a weaver weaves a dhoti and a half and during these festive days usually his work gets doubled. The task of beautification or designing is also a fairly strenuous process. The golden dust used for colouring which is an exclusive product of Balamapuram is mixed with wax to a fine amalgam and is applied over the designs are etched. This is then pressed over the threads arrayed on the loom and using pure jari (golden kasavu threads) these designs are manually woven over the prints made with the frame. This is one important process which explains the handloom's exclusivity over the powerlooms.

At Balamapuram, the looms are set before a three feet deep pit and are hence



# Green Hopes



Onam days are here. Floral carpets and floral spreads popularly known as 'Pookkalam' are the specialities of this harvest festival. Decades back Keralites used to collect flower from the fences and countryside for preparing the 'Pookkalam'. It was a tradition to weave baskets using the lamina peeled out of the fronds of coconut palm. Usually vase shaped baskets of desired size were woven. Children used these baskets called 'Pookkotta' to collect flowers to make 'Pookkalam'. But nowadays it could be difficult to locate children carrying 'Pookkotta' full of blossom meant for next day's Pookkalam.

'Pookkalam' has become a nostalgia. So is the case of our 'Pookkotta' – the palm lamina baskets which we used to collect flowers. Since flowers meant for Pookkalam became available in markets, the pookkotta have given

way to new commercial containers which could be of plastic or paper origin.

Silent Valley National Park observed this year's World Environment Day (WED) with a difference giving a nostalgic feeling of this pookkotta.

WED is an occasion to rededicate ourselves to the commitment of environmental protection.. Among a diverse number of themes for observance each year, the predominant activity on WED centres around planting seedlings of trees at available locations. This could be institutional campus, avenues, courtyards etc. and school children are instrumental in the tree-planting exercise. This year the seedlings supplied to the school children for mass tree-planting event were not grown in poly-bags but in biodegradable baskets made out of palm fronds. The Wildlife

Warden of Silent Valley National Park Smt. Silpa V. Kumar IFS initiated the programme presenting a token seedling to Vijayan, the Headmaster of the Silent Valley Model Residential School, Mukkali on 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2015.

In nurseries plant seedlings are usually raised in polythene bags. Poly-bags are useful only once and afterwards they are abandoned as waste. Being of plastic origin these poly-bags are not biodegradable and remain in the soil as a persistent pollutant for a considerable period of time. Also the leftovers of these poly-bags could form cavities and depressions that may hold water to harbour pests like mosquitoes and other noxious flies. Though plastic has revolutionised human life; becoming a waste it is very difficult to manage. Plastic (poly) bags used in plant nurseries are not an exception in this regard. It is not



easy to recycle them once they are contaminated with soil. It requires considerable input of monetary and other resources to accomplish recycling.

Traditionally the fronds of palm including coconut palm are used in packing, thatching, basketry etc. in regions wherever palms are plenty. A common practice is to use these fronds in bulk packaging of commodities like jaggery. Since these fronds are biodegradable they don't cause pollution when dumped in soil after use.

Usually 8-12 lamina of palm fronds are required to produce one basket. After pro-

cessing the laminae out of fronds, it needs hardly half an hour to weave one basket. 'Plaiting Basketry' method is followed in the making of lamina baskets. Plaiting involves passing strips of fiber over and under each other at a fixed angle. It produces a checked pattern. Of course it may not be easy for one or two person to produce a large number of baskets at a time. But when school children or traditional weavers are engaged they could collectively produce required number of baskets for use in plant nurseries instead of poly-bags. ■

The writer is Sr. Wildlife Asst., Forest Department



## Advantages

The material used to weave bags -palm frond lamina- are cheap and available in plenty, ie; 'low cost' or 'cost effective'.

There is no need for separate perforations on the baskets as the criss-cross pattern of weaving ensures holes and channels for proper drainage of irrigated water.

Since the basket material is biodegradable there is no fear of pollution.

While planting the seedlings in the field there's no need to tear away the baskets as usually done with the poly-bags. So the root system of the seedling and the

associated soil remain intact and undisturbed favouring the seedlings to establish quickly in the new soil.

Baskets of required size and shape could be woven

The mid-rib produced during preparation of palm frond lamina could be used to make broomsticks. There is zero waste resulting from the processing of lamina.

Polythene sheets when exposed to sunlight tend to slowly accumulate and retain heat for a considerable time. This heat may harm the seedlings inside the poly-bags. This condition is totally absent in the case of lamina baskets.

## Disadvantages

In nurseries termites may become a threat to these lamina baskets.

Basket weaving is a time consuming effort. Hence only a limited number of baskets could be produced.

Lamina baskets containing seedlings could not be retained without planting in the soil for a long period like a couple of months as the palm frond lamina is susceptible to degradation.





## H1N1

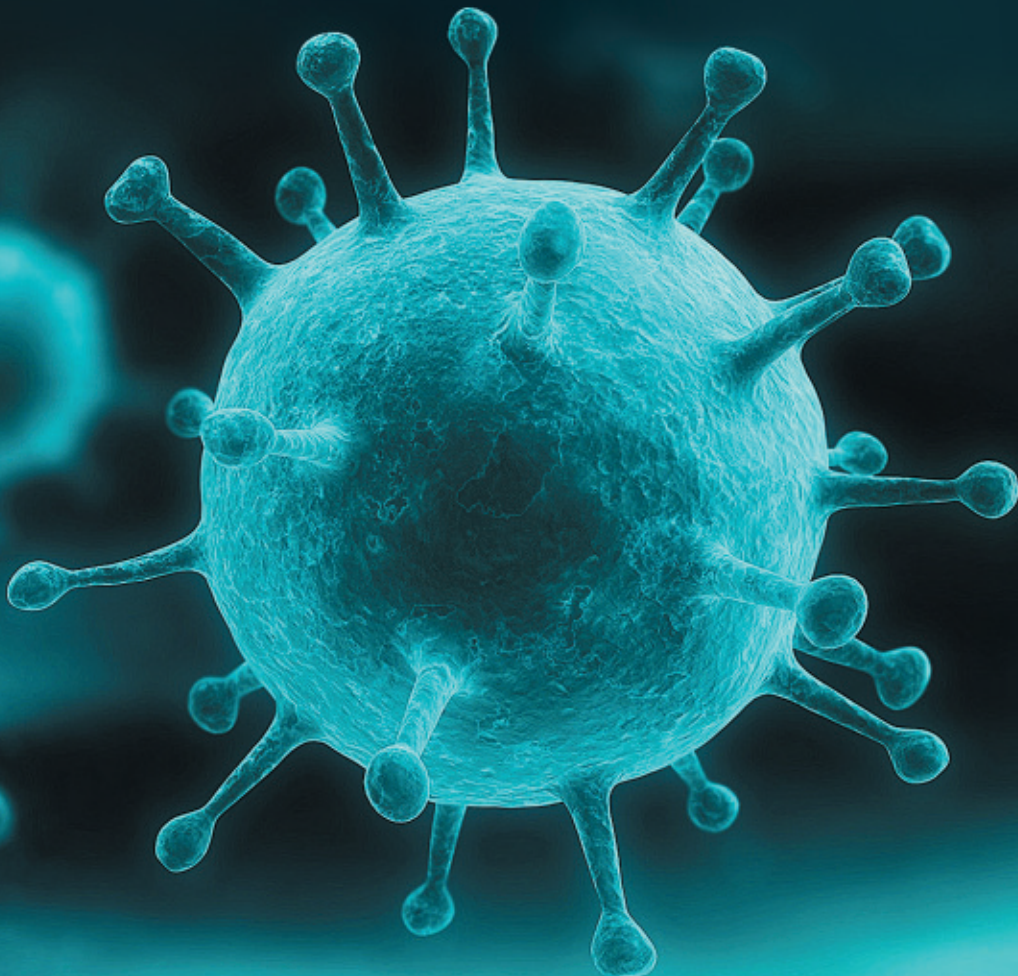
H1N1 influenza is one of the endemic 'viral fevers' now prevalent in our state as well as all over the country. The illness was unheard of when it started in 2009, and then rapidly spread all over the world. Since that period, it has now become one of the named viral fevers among all regularly existing viral fevers. What is special about H1N1 is that it can, usually in persons with some kind of health risks, suddenly become severe and cause pneumonia. Pneumonia is a kind of severe infection of the lungs, which can lead to death if not

treated in time, due to failure of the respiratory system, leading to other vital organs and systems of the body shutting down.

As of now, most patients who get the illness get mild forms (known medically as Category A illness), which recovers spontaneously, just like any other viral fever. All the patient has to do is to take rest for 4-5 days, have plenty of hot oral fluids like thick kanji water, regular nutritious food, enough fresh locally available fruits like papaya, gooseberry, etc, and stay at home. Supportive

medicines like paracetamol and 'cold medicines' are not cures, but help to relieve general symptoms like fever, headache, running nose, etc

People who are at a higher risk of getting the illness, or of the illness getting worse unusually fast are pregnant women, people who have diabetes, diseases of liver/ kidney/ heart/lungs, obese people, patients who are on steroid drugs, radiation, anti cancer drugs, those with HIV-AIDS and those who are in a poor general condition. Such persons need to be cautious and maintain their general





## Some danger signs in a patient with fever

Rash

Fits

Bleeding from any site

Jaundice

Reduced quantity of urine

Breathing difficulty

Altered behaviour etc.

# H1N1

## Influenza and Viral Fever

health stringently, and also ask for the doctors opinion if they get any so called 'common cold/viral fever'

The disease spreads by coughing and sneezing openly without covering ones nose/mouth. The fine spray of droplets thus released can infect anyone standing within a radius of 1 metre, as for any common cold/respiratory infection. It can also spread by touching ones own nose/mouth by hands which are contaminated in areas of public contact. Therefore the most effective method to prevent transmission of the illness to others around you is to cover ones nose and mouth while coughing and sneezing. Washing hands frequently with soap and water, especially after going out /travelling is useful to prevent transmission of most common cold like infections. These health promoting habits also need to be taught to children as early an age as possible, as children are more capable of transmitting such viral fevers at school/anganwadi/school buses and vans

### Diagnosis and treatment of H1N1

When H1N1 was an imported disease, and in the early period especially, it was necessary to test all suspect cases and confirm before treatment. Now, as it is an endemic viral fever, testing of individual patients is not at all necessary for treatment (Testing is continued for surveillance purpose only by occasional

random testing by the district Health Department. Such testing is only accepted from Government designated Labs, and not any other labs) Very clear and elaborate guidelines have ben published and made available by the Department of Health Services, for use of doctors, so that they can asses the possibility of H1N1 in any patient and initiate treatment based on the patients history, symptoms, and signs.

When should one suspect H1N1, and when should one see a doctor? People who have a 'cold'/viral fever like illness (with fever, body ache, cough, sneezing, running nose, sore throat, etc.) which doesn't get better in the expected time, those in whom such an illness gets worse in spite of appropriate treatment should discuss the possiblity with their doctor. Persons who belong to the high risk group mentioned earlier should be specially careful and see a doctor at the start of any such illness.

Illness more severe than usual is called Category B, while those with illness severe enough to be admitted are called Category C These two groups may often need to be started on Oseltamivir by the doctor. Some danger signs which indicate an emergency visit to the doctor are unusual difficulty in breathing, chest pain, bluish tinge of lips/finger nails, traces of blood in the sputum



The medicine for H1N1 is called Oseltamivir, which needs to be taken twice a day for 5 days without any interruption. It is available Statewide in all Government hospitals, Karunya Medical Stores, and several private medical shops which have special licenses to stock the drug. It is sold/issued only based on the prescription of a doctor, and should not be misused. It is safe and effective, when used as instructed. Side effects if at all, are generally similar to those of any common antibiotic.

Medical professionals can refer to the ABC guidelines for treatment of H1N1, at the link available on the website of the Directorate of Health Services opening page ([www.dhs.kerala.gov.in](http://www.dhs.kerala.gov.in)) or by entering the following link directly in your internet search box (<http://www.dhs.kerala.gov.in/index.php/publichealth>)

Any one may also call the Health Department help line DISHA 1056 free from any BSNL phone, or 0471-2552056 from any other

networks and ask to speak to the District Surveillance Officer of your district health department for advice.

H1N1, among other viral fevers is always more likely to increase in spread during monsoon months when the wet weather is generally favourable for germs to multiply and spread, while unfavourable for humans. Since fever is the most common of the symptoms, and many people rush to hospitals and small neighborhood clinics due to anxiety, the following 10 facts will be of use for all

Fever is a symptom, and not a disease- fear not the fever, but be careful about the cause

The commonest fevers are 'viral fevers' which do not require multiple medications or various tests.,

Most viral fevers take 3-5 days to recover.

Even paracetamol, the simplest remedy for fevers should preferably be taken according to the doctor's advice.

Supportive care, whether in hospital, or at home, will help you to improve much faster, and feel much less fatigue after the fever comes down. Supportive care includes

- steady intake of warm oral fluids eg thick kanji water with salt, lime juice, tender coconut water, which are better than black tea, black coffee, jeera water, etc
- continuous intake of small frequent portions of warm, well cooked soft, nutritious food, and locally available fruits.
- Rest till totally symptom free, as it will help you to recover faster, and also prevent spread of the fever to others.

Do not compel the doctors to give you injections/ iv drips for fever treatment, as these are most often not essential. They can also cause unwanted side effects like shivering, pain, dizziness, or dangerous reactions

Injections do not work

faster or better than oral paracetamol

When to report to hospital after starting treatment

- not improving in the expected time
- getting worse in spite of good treatment and supportive care
- Onset of unusual symptoms like rash, fits, bleeding from any site, jaundice, reduced quantity of urine, breathing difficulty, and altered behaviour etc.
- Not able to take food.

Self medication is a dangerous habit. Over the counter medication by discussing illness with medical store staff is to be avoided.

Covering the nose and mouth while coughing or sneezing, and washing your hands often with soap and water, will reduce the spread of many viral fevers, and respiratory infections to others at home. ■

The writer is State Nodal Officer -H1N1/Ebola/MERS/Avian Influenza, Directorate of Health Services, Thiruvananthapuram