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## FOCUS

### Citius, Altius, Fortius



Home Minsiter Ramesh Chennithala hands over games' Torch of the 64th Police Meet at Chandrasekharan Nair Stadium, Thiruvananthapuram



# EDITORIAL

## Participatory Governance hallmark of inclusive development

**K**erala has recorded many firsts in the country when it comes to high socio-economic and health indicators. But the success story of its decentralization initiatives by way of strengthening participatory democracy and governance at the grassroots level stands out as a unique model.

The post decentralization era has brought in a host of revolutionary changes, triggering huge development. From development of public transport to massive improvement in infrastructure facilities like roads, bridges and basic requirements like drinking water, decentralization has played a significant role.

The marginalized sections have benefited the most out of these initiatives. Their needs for shelter, toilets, electrification, social support mechanisms and empowerment have been addressed to a big extent.

Even in matters of gender justice, decentralization has achieved significant goals. The 50 per cent reservations for women in local bodies backed by forceful initiatives like Kudumbasree, have empowered women folk at the grassroots level.

Ayilkootams or neighbourhood groups comprising 15 to 40 families are working wonders with their effective micro credit operations, planning, local economic development and social security measures

On the education front, since achieving the historic distinction of first state with 100 per cent literacy in the eighties, Kerala has crossed many milestones. In general education sector, the state has continued to consolidate its past gains with the mission to improve quality. Athulyam programme implemented through local bodies has helped Kerala become the first state with total primary education coverage.

Entrepreneurship development clubs are being set up in colleges as part of student entrepreneurship scheme being implemented through Technopark, incubators in Kochi and Kozhikode. The programme is aimed at making students job givers rather than mere job seekers.

It is assured that with these ventures, the state will be in the forefront of nation in each and every sector.

Mini Antony IAS  
Editor in Chief

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# Smart City Kochi first phase in December

The first phase of Smart City Kochi (SCK) project is expected to be inaugurated in December, this year. Smart city Kochi, spread over 246 acres in the IT corridor of Kochi, is a hub for all information and communication technology (ICT), media, finance and education (research) companies attracting them from within India and overseas. The first phase of SCK project comprises 6.5 lakh sq. ft of built-up space. The work on the second phase would also be launched. The second phase involved larger capacities and creations of far higher numbers of jobs. It is scheduled to be completed in 30 months.



Chief Minister Oommen Chandy felicitating Ustad Amjad Ali Khan winner, Swathi Sangeetha Puraskaram in Thiruvananthapuram.

## Unesco Award for Vadakkumnathan Temple



Temples in Kerala are known for their fame and antiquity across the world. Be proud of keralites . One of the famous temples in Kerala has helped India bathe in glory once again. It is the Sree Vadakkumnathan temple in Kerala. India won the UNESCO prize "Award of excellence 2015" for the conservation efforts of the temple. The award is given for consercity sacred sites and its tangible attribution with conservation techniques emphasising architecture and construction.



## Free cancer Treatment

The 'Sukrutham' project that provides free cancer treatment to patients will be implemented in all district-general hospitals in the state said Chief Minister . He was speaking after dedicating the six storied building of Tirur district hospital ,Malappuram which is constructed at a cost of 3 crores of district panchayath. At present Sukrutham project is availed only in 5 medical colleges, two cancer centers and Ernakulam general hospital. Project that provides free cancer treatment to patients will be considered in all district-general hospitals that have got required facility including Tirur general hospital. Facility for the same will be provided in



those general hospitals that are lacking the same. CM added that the Government is committed to provide better treatment facilities for all and that it has taken up this as a challenge. Ministers VS Sivakumar, PK Abdurabb, MLAs and others were also present.

## Chengalikodan banana gets GI status

Another proud moment for keralites. The Chennai based central G.I registry accorded G.I (geographical indication) status to the much more famous banana variety, chengalikodan banana. This variety usually seen at chowannur, pazhayannur, wadakkanchery, puzhakkal and ollurkara block panchayaths in thirissur district. In shape, size colour and taste chengalikodan stands out among other varieties. The variety got its name from the place name chengalikode where it used to be cultivated long ago.



## 85 Crores for Coastal development

The first coastal speciality hospital which is under the 'Mathruka Matsya Gramam' project starts functioning at Valiyatura. The 85 Crores project focused entirely for the development in the coastal areas of Trivandrum such as Poonthura ,Valiyathura ,Cheriyathura, valiyathoppu and Kochuthoppu. There are seven doctors in the speciality hospital for consulting the patients 24X7. Surgery medicine, Gynecology, paediatric section will start work in soon. OP block, x-ray block, conference hall, etc are build under the latest terms of technique facilities.

The project is aimed mainly at the higher standard of living of coastal people through developments in education, health and road.



## FULL TEXT

MOOMMEN CHANDY  
Chief Minister

### Chief Minister's Independence Day Speech

**W**e are celebrating Independence Day as the country enters its 69th year and the State its 60th. During this period our country and the State have achieved remarkable progress. Today, India is a major economic force in the world and Kerala its leading State. We were able to protect our democratic system

and its foundations and made them stronger. We held steadfastly to the principles of secularism. Today, Indians can hold their heads high, be it anywhere in the world. Let us recall with gratitude those who had laid down their lives for attaining independence and also those who tirelessly worked towards the goal of independence.

The UDF Government came to power with the slogan 'development and care'. Since that time, we worked hard to turn this

# Setting seven new







slogan into reality. And I believe that we were able to do justice by producing good results with the cooperation of all sections of people. Currently, some of the mega projects in Kerala are well on course to become a reality, after the State witnessed the commissioning of Idukki dam and Nedumbassery airport. Projects worth Rs 16,000 crore like the Kochi Metro Rail, Kannur International Airport, Vizhinjam Seaport, By-passes and National Waterway are fast progressing towards completion. The government is also going ahead with the Light Metro projects in Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode. With this, Kerala would be able to make significant progress in infrastructure development, which will pave the way for generating more investments and job opportunities. I can say without any hesitation that today's Kerala is not what we are going to witness tomorrow.

We had several dreams in the welfare sector. We earnestly desired to make sure that not a single child should be left in the State with speech impairment and should not be deprived of medical treatment. We also had our concerns regarding elderly people left uncared, people with serious ailments struggling because of financial problems and poor patients not getting the required medicines. Currently, the 14 schemes of Social Security Mission are meant for providing relief in these areas. The department of Health has turned a new leaf by implementing 30 welfare projects. Lakhs of people received benefits through Karunya Benevolent Fund,

# goals





Jana Samparka Paripadi and the Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund. Over a period of four years, the UDF government provided Rs 12,350 crore as welfare pensions and financial assistance to the economically weaker sections in the society.

I am standing here with the fulfillment of having implemented most of the programmes that were announced during my Independence Day message in the past four years. In the months to follow, we have decided to complete projects that were announced earlier and start the ones that have been announced.

This year we intend to implement seven schemes as detailed below:

Under the 'Zero Landless Programme' 36,491 persons were given three cents of land each and efforts have been speeded up to provide land to the remaining people. The government will also undertake construction of houses to those who have their own land. Under this scheme, one lakh houses will be constructed during the current financial year. Dilapidated houses under M N Laksham Veedu project would be taken up for maintenance under this scheme. Rs 2.5 lakh would be spent on each house under the scheme, which will amount to Rs 2500 crore. For this, loans would be made available from nationalized banks and interest subsidy would be provided under the 'Houses for all Scheme' of the Union government. The State government would be able to repay the loan within 20 years by utilizing 50 per cent of the additional tax levied on petrol and diesel.

Kerala has made phenomenal progress in the Information Technology sector. 100 per cent mobile density, 75 per cent e-literacy, maximum digital banking, broad-band connection up to panchayat level, e-district project in all districts, linking of aadhar card and bank account have laid a strong foundation for digital Kerala.

Based on these indicators, I am proud to announce that Kerala is a complete digital State. To further augment this endeavor, local bodies will be equipped with Wi-Fi hot spots, total mobile governance and second-phase digital literacy will be implemented.

The anti-corruption campaign - Vigilant Kerala - will be strengthened with the involvement of the masses. Through this project, which is an innovative one in the country, the government aims to make its services free of corruption with the active participation of the people. The anti-corruption measures of the government would be made transparent and the Right-to-Service Act will be made mandatory in every department.

The government is committed to provide essential commodities through the public distribution system, SupplyCo, primary cooperative societies and Horticulture Corporation. Subsidy will be given to provide these essential commodities below the market price. This move will help to check rising prices. Organic farming will be encouraged and







stringent checking will be carried out to prevent pesticide infested food items.

As many as 21 large scale works of the Public Works department worth Rs 3771 crore will be taken up in 14 districts at the earliest. A detailed project report of 14 works would be completed by next month and would be implemented without toll.

These projects will be implemented by utilizing 50 per cent of the income generated through the additional tax on petrol and diesel.

Kerala is known for its natural beauty marked by mountains, rivers and valleys. The government is committed to ensure a sustainable development policy in order to prevent unscientific

and over exploitation of its natural resources. A Sustainable Development Council will be constituted to carry out these responsibilities and duties.

The former president of India, A P J Abdul Kalam who taught the youth of the country, which constitutes 65 per cent of our population to dream, is not with us anymore. However, his memory will continue to ignite our minds and encourage us. Kerala Science Technology & Environment Council will launch a new project - Dr A P J Abdul Kalam Youth Challenge - for converting the ideas of youth into business ventures. Any student studying in universities in Kerala or their groups can become part of this

project. Rs Five lakh each would be given to ten groups coming up with outstanding ideas. After one year the best among such ideas will be given Rs 50 lakh on a yearly basis, for converting it into a business venture. This project is aimed at churning out one business venture from universities in a year.

After having realized many of our dreams, Kerala has now set its eyes on new dreams and so is the youth of the State. I am sure, if everyone starts dreaming and thinking about the infinite possibilities of the State, then that will mark a new beginning for Kerala.

Greetings to all on Independence Day and Happy Onam.

Jai Hind ●

# DECENTRALISATION

■ Dr. P P BALAN

**Y**es. It is beyond comparison. It is because of the uniqueness of participatory planning of Kerala. The Local Self-Government Institutions (LSGIs) have been strengthened by means of devolving powers and functions based on the Kerala Panchayt Raj Act, 1994 on the one hand, and introducing the People's Campaign for the Ninth Plan, on the other. The recommendations of the Committee on Decentralisation was accepted by the Government and on the basis of its Report Kerala made strides in decentralization. Since there exists no model elsewhere in the world, the entire process is based on 'learning by doing' approach. The campaign which started in the early years of IX Plan wiped out the cynicism that existed in the state on development. The bold steps taken by the State allocating 35-40 percent of the Plan Grant-in-aid for the LSGIs needs special mention. Gradually, a participatory planning process was evolved where democratic space was created for the intervention of various stakeholders. Power and functions were also devolved at one go. Massive capacity building activities were also started under the leadership of KILA, the nodal institution. Indeed, a new methodology in decentralized planning has been coined. Other states in India, and even economies elsewhere in the world, regard Kerala's decentralization in high esteem.



# Kerala shows the way

In democratic de-centralization kerala has few parallels



## Involvement of various Stakeholders

Almost every section of society in Kerala is organized around an interest. Therefore to make up for the limitations of Grama Sabha/Ward Sabha due to lack of participation of the non-poor a system of compulsory consultation has been prescribed with different stakeholders like agriculturists, traders, industrialists, artisans, youth groups etc. to get their ideas on plan formulation. This process is gradually picking up. With proper guidance, it bids fair to be an important mode of citizen

engagement on the basis of serious discussions leading to informed negotiations

### Participatory Fora

The participatory planning methodology has succeeded in creating several participatory fora for the citizenry offering scope for formal intervention in the development process. At the local government level, Working Group consists of elected members and experts with the latter being defined as practitioners, officials, academics and activists. Before finalizing an Annual Plan a consultative discussion is held

with the different stakeholders from different walks of life in the Development Seminar. Similarly the Technical Committees for vetting of plans have several non-government professionals in them. In the case of water supply and irrigation User Groups plan, implement and manage utilities. Schools, Anganwadis and hospitals have all Consultative Committees. Civil society groups are enabling to participate in the different fora mentioned above. In addition, formal partnership with NGOs is achieved through a process of accreditation which enables an

## Salient Features

### Gama Sabhas/Ward Sabhas for Social Accountability

As Kerala has relatively large Village Panchayats having a population of around 30,000 on the average it is a Ward or the electoral constituency of a Member, which is declared as Grama Sabha. (In urban local government it is a Ward Sabha). Meeting four times in an year focusing respectively on plan formulation, of development programmes, Grama Sabhas/Ward Sabhas are the basic fora of social accountability.

NGO to carry out public works on behalf of local governments, outside the competitive tendering process. This ensures quality of public works in addition to accountability.

### Well accepted Process and Procedures

Due process is formally laid down for most of the dealing of local governments with the public. This is to avoid partisanship and arbitrariness. Without affecting the autonomy and freedom of local governments discretion has been defined. The best example is the process prescribed for selection of beneficiaries of the various individual and group-oriented programmes of local governments. The local government has to first decide the eligibility criteria as well as the prioritization criteria in respect of the beneficiaries. This is to be shown in the project as well as in the application form for benefits. There has to be a process of application and verification of the applications by a Committee set up by local government. The prioritization criteria should be assigned weightages in the form of marks out of 100 and the verification Committee has to award marks accordingly. The marks are read out in the Grama

Sabha/Ward Sabha where almost all the applicants invariably come and the approval of this general assembly sought. In the case of beneficiaries, Grama Sabha/Ward Sabha is the final deciding authority and the local government cannot overturn the priority fixed by it. Further, all documents including the mark sheet are public documents available to everyone for scrutiny and copying.

### Care for Women

The welcome change that

has developed here is the 50% reservation given to women in local governments. The 'Kudumbasree' further strengthened this system. Perhaps the most significant factor of the decentralization experiment in Kerala is the evolution of a network and organization of the entire population below poverty line with each family being represented by a woman. At the base of this well-knit pyramidal organization is the Neighborhood Group consisting of 15 to 40 families at the local level, federated into an Area Development Society (ADS) at the level of the local government Ward

women groups have not only voice but the power of choice as well in so far as anti-poverty programmes are concerned. Their organizational structure facilitates both extension and feedback. Covering more than one-third of the population this high democratic organization of the poor is a critical force in ensuring accountability especially in anti-poverty programmes. It is a noteworthy feature that 10% of the development fund is set aside for Women Component Programme (WCP)

### Watchdog System



## Policy Support

Over the last two decades, there has been an unusual degree of commitment to the core principles of decentralization especially the idea of power to the people. In fact decentralization in Kerala can be summed up as an attempt to transfer power to the people through the local governments. This principle is central to all government policies vis-à-vis local governments.

and further integrated into a Community Development Society (CDS) at the level of the Village Panchayat and Urban Local Government. This powerful organization of women has grown into an extremely effective system not only for micro credit operations but also for micro level planning, for local economic development for providing community based social security and creating demand for improvement in service delivery. Unlike the rest of India the SHG movement in Kerala has been structured as the next step in decentralization and not as a power centre parallel to local governments. These active

In order to ensure that the different forms of accountability are fully operational, independent watch dog systems have been designed outside the ambit of the executive. This is to avoid colorable exercise of power by the executive over the elected local governments which may belong to different political persuasions. The two important institutions performing the vigilance and corrective functions are:

### Ombudsman

It is headed by a High Court Judge (retired or serving) and has powers of looking into acts of malfeasance as well as non-performance of duty by local governments. It has the power to set right any wrong doing and punish those responsible.

### Appellate Tribunal

This is a semi-judicial body manned by a District Judge with



## Achievements

When we make an assessment of two decades decentralization in Kerala one can see the Union Government honoring the state giving awards for its best performance on different occasions. The state could garner extensive material gains from the process of decentralization of power. The four post-decentralization Five Year Plans in the state could make achievements than the eight pre-decentralization Five Year Plans could make. This post-decentralization period witnessed a revolution of changes in matters relating to the development of public transport systems like roads and bridges, availability of drinking water, promotion of agro-based infrastructural facilities, electrification of streets and roads, establishment and enhancement of basic

amenities in the public institutions like Krishi Bhavans (Agricultural offices), veterinary hospitals, schools, primary health centers, anganwadis etc. There was also a spurt in the promotion for availability of the basic amenities of the poor like shelter, toilets, drinking water and electrification. The lot of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes vis-à-vis their basic requirements also showed a marked improvement. In fact, majority of the people who benefited from the process of decentralization of power were from sections coming from the poor, the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and women. This is an indication that the process of decentralization of power played a crucial role in improving the state and status of the weaker and marginalized sections.

powers of hearing appeals from citizens aggrieved by decisions of local governments in the exercise of their regulatory power (as different from their developmental power where the recourse is to be Ombudsman) like licensing, environmental legislation.

### Performance Audit

In addition there is a kind of internal audit system to

### Leadership of MLAs

The democratic space provided was well used with the support given by the MLAs. This is peculiar in Kerala. Considering the idea that local Governments being powerful agents of local development, the development synergy between different tiers of local governments and other higher level elected leaders like MLAs and MPs can lead to comprehensive development,

the Assembly Constituency or Block Panchayat is considered as development units of such interface. Kerala Institute of Local Administration came forward with an initiative towards a comprehensive development plan for each Assembly Constituency. In this development interface, a platform is created wherein the local governments and the MLAs come face to face to formulate an integrated plan for the development of the locality. The aim is effective interface between MLAs and Local governments for local area development fixing standards in selected sectors for keeping in view of how a Legislative Assembly Constituency should be by 2030.

The state of Kerala, no doubt, is far ahead in democratic decentralization. To its credit, the Participatory Planning methodology which has been evolved as part of People's Campaign for IX Plan has been accepted by the Union Ministries for the implementation of various schemes. The new initiatives such as ward level Gramakendras and Ayalsabhas are peculiar to Kerala only. Any such initiatives when adopted or adapted by other states and countries of South East Asia and elsewhere elevates Kerala's decentralisation to the zenith of its glory and greatness. •

The writer is Director, KILA



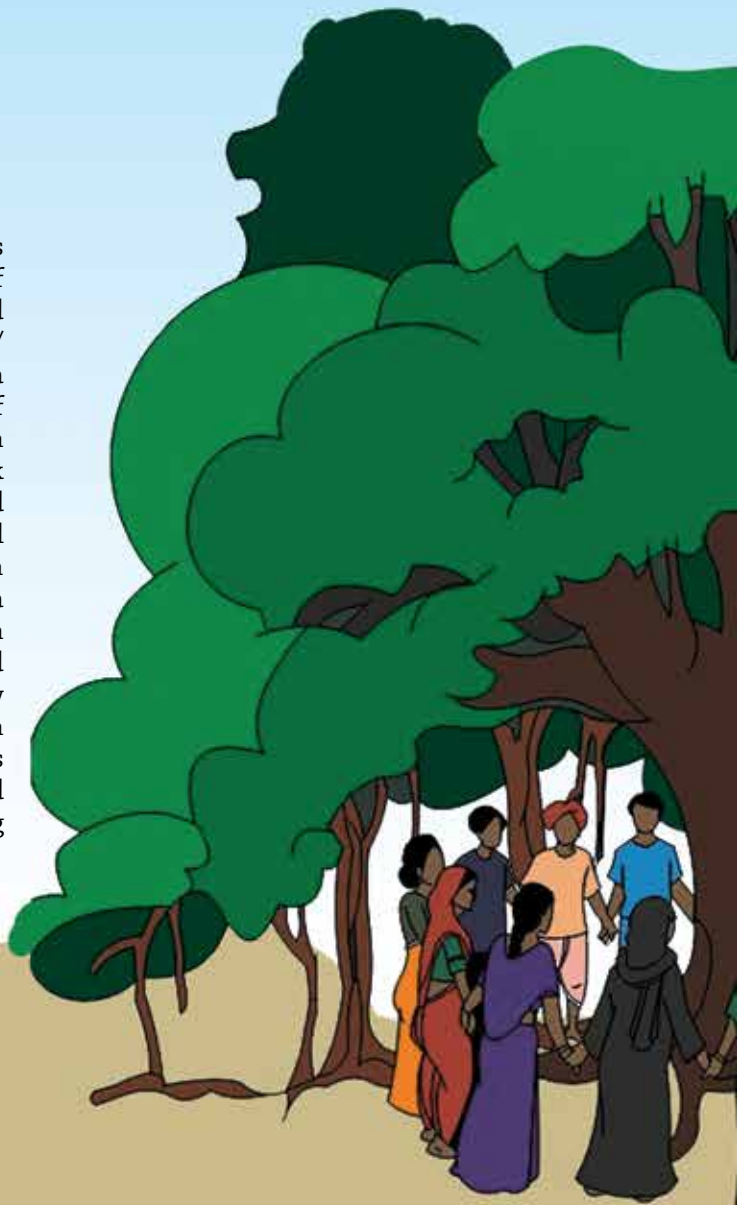
assist the local governments in maintaining their accounts and to oversee adherence to the due process. It is not autonomous but has freedom to carry out its activities. It ensures that accountability systems are properly kept and guidelines observed.

KILA undertook the programme of interface between MLAs and local governments.

Earlier there have been some development interface models in Kerala wherein the MLAs and MPs and other actors closely work on tandem with local governments for local development. Largely

# Incentives for Strengthening Decentralisation

**T**he 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendments are important milestones in the history of decentralisation in India as it has added one more tier of governance at panchayat/municipality level. The conformity Kerala Panchayat Raj and Municipalities Acts of 1994 and the amendments effected in 1999 provide the statutory framework for creating functional, financial and administrative autonomy at the level of the third stratum of government in Kerala. Kerala government followed a big big-bang approach in the devolution of 3 Fs – Functions, Functionaries and Funds to local governments and is now considered as the leader in the devolution Index in India. An attempt is made in this paper to review the various Central and State incentive schemes for strengthening decentralisation in Kerala.



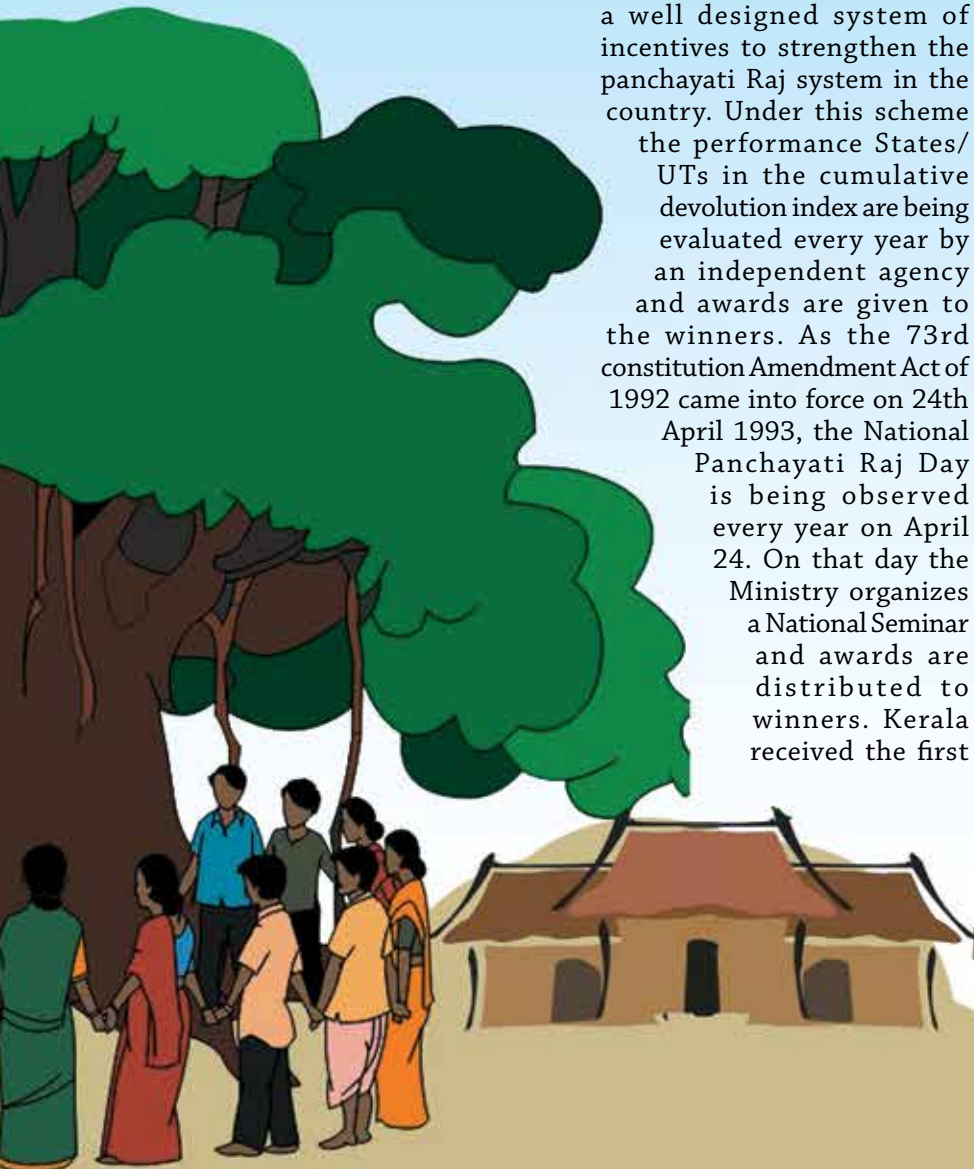


## Central Sector Incentive Schemes

Since the formation of a separate Ministry of Panchayati Raj in May 2004, the Ministry has taken many steps to strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). An important step in this direction is the provision of fiscal incentives to State/ Union Territory governments on the basis of their performance in strengthening local governments. During the year 2004-05, the Ministry introduced a central sector plan scheme Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Scheme (PEAIS) to provide a well designed system of incentives to strengthen the panchayati Raj system in the country. Under this scheme

the performance States/ UTs in the cumulative devolution index are being evaluated every year by an independent agency and awards are given to the winners. As the 73rd constitution Amendment Act of 1992 came into force on 24th April 1993, the National Panchayati Raj Day is being observed every year on April 24. On that day the Ministry organizes a National Seminar and awards are distributed to winners. Kerala received the first

prize with a cash award of Rs. 3 crore for many years since the inception of the scheme. Though Kerala was ranked first in 2009-10 and 2010-11, it had to be satisfied with the second position for the evaluation year 2011-12 and third position for the year 2012-13. This was mainly due to the inclusion of incremental devolution index since 2010-11. For the assessment year 2013-14, Kerala regained its first position and received the coveted National Panchayati Raj Award on 24th April 2015 from the Prime Minister. From 2011-12, panchayats have also been incentivized for their performance on various counts such as capacity building, excellence in the performance of gram sabhas etc. As many as seven panchayats from Kerala received the award for their performance during the year 2013-14. It is important to note that the Eraviperoor Grama Panchayat of Pathanamthitta district received the first National Award for Public Administration. Large number Grama panchayats from Kerala received the Nirmal Grama Puraskaram instituted by the Central Government. The Gram Panchayats that maintain a specific standard in sanitation and solid waste management are selected for this award amounting Rs. 5 lakhs each and for the Block Panchayat the award amount is Rs. 20lakhs.



## Incentives of Kerala Government

To encourage Local self-government Institutions to take up more and more people friendly development activities and to create a healthy competitive spirit among them, the Kerala government introduced a scheme of awarding Swaraj Trophy and cash prizes every year at state and district levels for innovative and exemplary work in the conduct of administration and development. The winners are being selected on the basis of strict qualifying criteria. Besides the Swaraj Trophy, the best Grama Panchayat in the state is eligible to get a cash prize of Rs. 5 lakhs and a special Plan Assistance of Rs. 25 lakhs. Awards are also given to Block and District Panchayats and Municipalities. Besides the trophy they are eligible to get special plan assistance of Rs. 25 lakh each and second prize winners are eligible to get special plan assistance of Rs. 10 lakh. At the district level, the best grama panchayat in the district is eligible to receive an award of Rs. One lakh and a special plan assistance of Rs. 10 lakh and a trophy. The second prize winning panchayat in each district is eligible to get a special plan assistance of Rs. 5 lakh.

## Green Kerala Express

In 2010, Government of Kerala sponsored a Social Reality Show (SRS) named Green Kerala Express to select the well performing LSGIs in Kerala and to exhibit their best practices or

innovative projects in sectors which have a linkage to environmental upgradation and sustainable development. Out of the 140 Grama Panchayats participated in the show, 15 panchayats were selected for the final show. From this Elappully Grama Panchayat and Akathathara Grama Panchayat, both from Palghat district and Adat Grama Panchayat of Thrissur district were selected for the first, second and third prizes respectively. From the urban local bodies, Ottappalam municipality of Palghat district and Malappuram municipality were selected for the first and second prizes respectively. While first prize winning Grama panchayat received an amount of Rs. 1 crore, the second and third prize winning Grama Panchayats received Rs. 50 and Rs. 25 lakhs respectively. In the case of Municipalities, the value of first prize was Rs. 50 lakhs and second prize was Rs. 25 lakhs. The remaining 12 Grama Panchayats who entered the final round of the show were given a prize amount of Rs. 10 lakh each. The 152 local governments participated in the show presented a large number of innovative projects carried out by them in various sectors. It is important to note that the prize winning local governments of the Reality



Show received the Swaraj Trophy for many years. The Social Reality Show, which had no parallel in Indian Television history, was an attempt to present the best practices and development initiatives of local governments in Kerala. This programme had won the praise and appreciation of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting and was selected by the Union Ministry of Urban Development for the National Urban Water Award 2010.

Despite being the leader in the devolution index in India, there is a general feeling among the public in Kerala that decentralisation has not yielded the desired results. From a close observation of the Green





Kerala Express Social Reality Show and the list of Swaraj Trophy winning local governments of last two decades, it can be seen that hardly 10 per cent of the total 1209 rural and urban local self-government institutions in the state have made the concept of decentralised governance meaningful with many innovative projects. And this has happened only because of the initiatives of a few elected representatives who are fired by the idea of decentralised governance and development. As a person closely watching the decentralisation process in Kerala during the last two decades, my impression is that the people in general and the elected representatives and the officials in particular have not yet internalized the concept

of decentralisation and the possibilities opened by it.

### Capacity Building

Recently the Minister for Panchayats and Social Justice Dr. M. K. Muneer, expressing delight over the state bagging the National Panchayati Raj Award, stated that the transformation of more grama panchayats into model panchayats with ISO certification would be the next priority of the government. If that task has to be achieved, capacity building of elected representatives and officials has to be given top most priority. Elected members of local governments are empowered to look into the functioning of all local offices of line departments, unless there is a legal provision

preventing them. But in reality elected members have no effective control over the functions and departments transferred to local governments. Here it is important to remember that the officials of line departments represent a vast pool of administrative and technical knowledge and as such can play an active role in advising the elected representatives. From a close observation of the functioning of the local self-government institutions, it can be seen that there is very little interaction between the elected members and officials of line departments. As such even after two decades of devolution of functions and functionaries, the officials of even the

transferred departments have not fully integrated themselves into the local government set up functionally and emotionally leading to considerable wastage of human resource. As majority of the 21,648 elected members of local governments are new comers, they lack the knowledge, skill and correct attitude to perform their mandated tasks. Therefore capacity building of elected representatives of local governments is very important to ensure the effective functioning of local self-government institutions. It can be in the form of structured training, field exposure, information, dissemination etc. •

The writer is Former Director, Economics and Statistics Department

# Transcending Border Lines

Kudumbashree sets exemplary model for other countries.



**T**he international conference on Poverty Alleviation, Women Empowerment and Local Self Government conducted by Kudumbashree, the first of its kind by Kudumbashree, held on 20th and 21st of August 2015 showcased the exemplary model set by Kudumbashree model to the world. Madame Zenube Tadasse Woldtsadik, the Minister of the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia inaugurated the conference. Kudumbashree is entering into an MOU for technical support in implementing poverty alleviation programs in Ethiopia. Inaugurating the conference, the Ethiopian minister hoped that the ties between India and Ethiopia would be extended to women's issues as well.

Dr. M.K. Muneer Hon: Minister for Panchayati Raj and Social Justice who presided over the inaugural session spoke of the early days of Kudumbashree, of how Kudumbashree provided a platform for poor women to fight for their rights and dignity and how





Kudumbashree provided a model of collectivisation with which to accomplish economic and political growth.

The plenary address was made by Prof. Mary Hawkesworth, Distinguished Professor of Political Science and Women's and Gender Studies of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. Rejecting the current model of poverty alleviation called "womenomics", that celebrates poor women as the agents who take the responsibility for themselves, their families and communities, and women micro-entrepreneurs as the solution to global poverty, she pointed out that the discourse of development attributes underdevelopment to internal structural weaknesses rather than to the extractive economic logic of colonialism, imperialism, and neoliberalism and patriarchal domination that have transferred the wealth of the global South to the advanced economies of the global North, creating inequalities within and across nations. Yet development experts have offered more and more development (read as economic



Women have the expertise to relate non-violently to nature, they fight against the linear extractive economy that has caused much havoc to the circular economy of nature.







growth) as the solution to poverty. Since poverty has to be necessarily conceptualized also in terms of peril (manifested in indeterminacy, hunger, anxiety, apathy, abandon, and fear), peril alleviation entails a mindful provision of social protection to the most vulnerable sections of society. The world has several such examples and one of them is the safety nets provided by Kudumbashree for the most vulnerable.

Dr. Bina Agarwal focusing on the importance of institutional structures of production highlighted 2 innovations that could help overcome the barriers to productivity namely public land bank and group approach to farming. Daniel Sugurensky's emphasis was on social pedagogy (the deploying of education to address social issues with its emphasis on the marginalized groups), Social Economy (with its emphasis on entities like micro credit groups, charities, co-operatives all of which have a social purpose rather than a focus on profit) and participatory democracy (with its primacy on people's involvement in decision making).

Dr. Vandana Shiva critiqued the extractive logic of all instruments

used to measure economy that believes in a one-way traffic of only taking away resources and not replenishing the same. Since women have the expertise to relate non-violently to nature, they fight against the linear extractive economy that has caused much havoc to the circular economy of nature. She made an ardent plea for a true cost accounting that takes into consideration the cost of environmental degradation and also for the enforcement of "the polluter pays" principle. Dr. Robert Chambers in his inaugural address of the technical session on resource management and poverty called our attention to how lack of sanitation led to stunting and multiple deprivations in poor communities. Drawing on examples from across the globe he showed how sanitation is intimately linked to women's well-



Before joining Kudumbashree women could access services only through male members of the family after becoming JLG members they can directly access agricultural services.





with NGOs and governments at all levels.

C. P. John, member of the Kerala State Planning Board, made a special address. He spoke of the environmental impact of different kinds of pollution. He urged enforcing the “polluter pays” principle, citing the successful implementation of Green Tax in Germany and Brazil. Quarrying cannot be wished away but has to be done with minimum damage to environment, he added.

Dr. Geethakkutty of the Kerala Agriculture University stated that 84% of unpaid farm work in small households is done by women. She spoke of the farming practices of joint liability groups of Kudumbashree that are at the mercy of nature. But whereas before joining Kudumbashree women could access services only through male members of the family after becoming JLG members they can directly access agricultural services. Today there are several support schemes of government for women farmers.

Neha Kagal spoke of the waste pickers’ union of Pune. Her presentation showed how collective mobilization of the waste pickers around social, political and economic issues had brought about transformation in the material conditions of the women, public perception, women’s own consciousness and in intra-household gender relations. Her narrative of the experiences with the collectivization of waste pickers and the resultant transformation were reminiscent of the collectivization of women under Kudumbashree.

The conference provided sufficient opportunity for networking among academics, NGOs, teachers and students and policy makers. The prolonged discussions over dinner facilitated cross learning, and exchange of views on a wide range of topics both local and global. •

The writer is Executive Director, Kudumbashree

being and empowerment.

The special address by S.M.Vijayanand, Secretary to Government , Panchayati Raj gave a very comprehensive view of Kudumbashree that encompassed its roots, structure, identification of poor, synergy with local self governments, linkages and convergences, role in MGNREGS, provision of livelihood opportunities both in the farm and nonfarm sectors, its schemes of care and compassion, its engagement with children and the aged, gender empowerment, cultural programs including literary creations, and the challenges faced by Kudumbashree. The presentation was a detailed class on the lessons that Kudumbashree has to offer to the rest of the country in poverty alleviation.

The special address by Jaco Cilliers, the country Director of UNDP, India spoke about the new framework of Sustainable Development Goals and the need for bringing gender inequality at the centre stage of any development discourse. He highlighted the 4 Ps that need to be borne in mind while formulating the next generation of development namely people, (inclusive) prosperity, protection of our planet and partnership



# COVER STORY

■ P K ABDU RABB  
Minister for Education



# Specialised

**W**ith the objectives of converting continuing education centres to specialised skill development centres, raising the standard of living of students of literacy equivalency programmes and setting up enterprises, 70 skill development centers have been started (5 centres in each district).

## Higher Secondary Equivalency Programme

Subjects such as Humanities and Commerce to be included in courses equivalent to higher secondary. Bridge

course materials developed and distributed for help teachers and students.

## Athulyam

Athulyam-total primary education programme implemented in all local self-government institutions of the state. The successful completion of the project placed Kerala as the first state with total primary education.

## Ashwas Project

A five-crore project to provide sports and health education; art education and vocational education in nine Government Schools.

## Asap

Additional Skill Acquisition Programme that envisages equipping students with job-related skills along with regular education extended to 953 educational institutions. As many as 13,114 students trained in ASAP courses last year. This year, 25,500 higher secondary/degree students have benefited through this programme. Skill development centres raised to 105. This year, 91 skilled courses have been designed for students.

## Autonomous Collges

Nine autonomous colleges started in Kerala. The Government has recommended autonomy to nine more colleges. Mar Ivanios (Thiruvananthapuram); Fathima Matha (Kollam); SB (Changanachery); Sacred Heart, Maharajas, St. Theresa's, Rajagiri, St. Thomas and Devagiri Colleges have received autonomy. These colleges can start new courses and can become autonomous universities in the long run. Syllabus development, conducting exams and declaring







# Skill Development

results can also be done independently.

## Community Colleges

Government colleges at Attingal, Kottayam, Thrissur, Perinthalmanna and Pattambi were selected for community college project. Courses in these colleges would be conducted in association with Government Polytechnics. These community colleges would get grants from UGC and AICTE.

## Students Entrepreneurship Scheme

Students Entrepreneurship Scheme (SES) implemented through Technopark, Thiruvananthapuram, Technology Business Incubators in Kochi and Kozhikode. In order to start Entrepreneurship Development Clubs in Colleges, camps and workshops to be held in universities.

## Technical University and IIT

Technical University - an umbrella organisation of all engineering colleges - formed in the state. Unified syllabus and examination is possible under this. Office of the University functions at Thiruvanthapuram Engineering College. IIT started in Palakkad will open up new frontiers for quality higher education in Kerala.

## Smart Children Project

Various projects for raising the education bar of students including Mazhavillu for standards one and two; Metric Mela for standards three and four; Science Congress and 'Ganitholsavam' for UP level were implemented. Focus 2015 was implemented in 1560 schools of the total 3568 schools with less than 60 students. Hopes that student strength in these schools can be enhanced to over 60 in the next academic year. 'Karuthu' project for developing the

physical, social and mental health of girl students was implemented in selected higher secondary schools. 2,000 students from 40 schools are being trained.

## Digital Collaborating Text book

In a major initiative that may revolutionize the general education sector, Department of Education has launched Digital Collaborative Text book (DCT), the first of its kind in the country. DCT help to make curriculum more interesting and effective. Through this system a subject expert or some one who has the practical knowledge in a particular field can contribute educational content for the benefit of school students.

DTC are e-books in which ordinary text books are scanned and updated. But a plethora of information contributed by different people including experts in different subjects make them unique. •











## PhotoFeature

Award winning  
photographs from the  
Photography competition  
conducted by I&PRD.





## COVER STORY

■ Dr. M ABDUL RAHMAN

KTU is bringing all technical education under a single umbrella



# Restructuring Acad

**T**hink about a University where all the technical education system Kerala comes under one umbrella. It has enough room to accommodate all the technical education in the state. From that dream, the concept of KTU is evolved. To be more precise, it has now been called APJ Abdul Kalam Technological University.

Among other universities in the state, KTU stands out brilliantly. It has a structure-novel and encouraging. We often hear about universities with Senate & Syndicate. But, here a Board of Governors and Executive Committee replace Senate & Syndicate. Transparency is the hall mark in administration, affiliation and academics where E-Governance plays a key role.

### A pioneer in initiating major changes

KTU has initiated major changes in the academic regulations and curriculum for the Engineering education. Theory courses are supplemented by practice and lab sessions leading to outcome based education. B.Tech Programme is a fully credit based programme having a normal duration of four academic years, spanning eight semesters. The maximum duration for a student to complete the programme is six academic years spanning twelve semesters. On meeting specific conditions, a student can get a B.Tech (Honours) Degree, an innovative concept with respect to technical education in the state. In addition to academics,

students have to actively engage in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Points are allotted for such activities. There is a defined academic calendar for curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and vacation for doing internship. Credit transfer facility from other University/Academic Institution is also supported by KTU which is new in Kerala. The Academic Community and other Universities in the country is keenly watching the effect of technical shift in the engineering curriculum brought into effect by KTU. 154 Engg Colleges in the State are currently affiliated with KTU with an Under Graduate intake of 40284 students. Management, Architecture and





# emic Standards

MCA programs will be affiliated next year onwards.

KTU held discussions with the Industrialists in the country and took their views to make the academic curriculum suitable for the industry. The Round Table meeting of senior industrialists in the country produced a useful recommendation set that can be applied while developing the curriculum of engineering programme. The Roundtable had given a clear mandate of deriving valuable inputs on Industry expectations from the Technical Education. These inputs are appropriately included into the Curriculum and the pedagogy of KTU. The outcome based education imparted by KTU is student centred having freedom to opt the courses he like. The aim of KTU is to bring

about a stupendous transformation instead of incremental changes to leverage the possibilities of technology and the skills of the current generation of youth to take our nation forward.

## **Cluster Autonomy to Post Graduate programs**

KTU has introduced cluster autonomy for the conduct of the M.Tech programme, which is a novel scheme and will be a first step towards granting autonomy to individual institutions. Each cluster will have approximately 10 to 15 colleges and these colleges will be identified based on their geographical location. The Cluster of colleges formulated procedures for the conduct of all academic activities associated with M.Tech programme in line with the regulations of the University.

These clusters can have academic autonomy regulated by the Cluster Level Graduate Program Committee (CGPC) consisting of all Principals of the colleges in the cluster. CGPC shall have a Chairman nominated by the University and a Convener selected by the CGPC. CGPC will be responsible for all academic matters on Curriculum, Syllabus, Course Plan, Internal Evaluation, Semester Examination, Grading, as well as result declaration for the streams of M.Tech program offered by the colleges in the cluster. The Chairman will be an eminent academician from the institutes of national importance. There are 104 institutes in the state which imparts PG courses in engg (MTech).KTU have formulated 10 clusters consisting max of 15 institutes.

## E platform environment

KTU is on an e-platform with maximum possible use of e-governance and all activities are in digital since inception. Affiliation is administered through online. The institutions provided information and data through the web portal of KTU and the data provided by the institutes is verified to find out whether the institutions meet norms and standards prescribed by the AICTE. Institutes will have a login id through which they can track their status. All communications are through email. Approval letters are issued online to colleges. Digital File System has already been in place at KTU. All the files are dealt digitally. Communication to and from the institutes is through email.

## Results within a week

Examination system will also be on digital platform. As and when the examination is over, the answer scripts will be scanned and uploaded on the KTU server from the college itself. As soon as it reaches to the server an examiner is allotted to that paper and he has to value it within 3 days. This paper will also be sent to the teacher who has taught this subject and average marks will be taken for publication of results. The result of the examination will be announced within 5 days after the last examination. The mark sheets will be awarded to students online. There will be no revaluation.

## Engineering Courses will go for an Academic Audit

KTU has introduced academic auditing of Engineering Courses to ensure the quality and mould the institute to equip them to outcome based education. The objective also include to ensure academic accountability, to define quality of each component of the functionalities and to ensure quality of technical education throughout the system; safeguard functionalities to technical education and define effectiveness of teaching – learning process and to devise methodology to confirm

maximum output from faculty members as well as students.

A detailed academic auditing procedure is in place comprising an internal academic auditing cell within the colleges and an external academic auditing for each college. The internal academic auditing cell in each college shall oversee and monitor all the academic activities including all internal evaluations and examinations. This cell is to prepare academic audit statements for each semester at regular intervals. These reports are to be presented to the external academic auditor approved by the University, who will use it as a reference for his independent auditing and for the final report to the University.

Academic auditing shall cover: Course delivery covering syllabus, adherence to course plan, quality of question papers for internal examinations, internal evaluation, laboratory experiments, practical assignments, mini projects and conduct of practical classes and their evaluation.

Co-Curricular and Extra-curricular activities available for students, their organisation and the mechanism of monitoring of activities points by earned by the students.

Academic functioning of the college encompassing students, faculty and college administration covering punctuality, attendance, discipline, academic environment, academic accountability, academic achievements and benchmarking.

Eminent academicians are deputed to each college as Academic auditors. The Academic Auditor may have to visit the college three to five times in a semester. The KTU has empanelled the team of auditors to the institute and the academic auditors will start visiting the institute from September 2nd week onwards.

## Take a Course break to become an entrepreneur

In order emerge Kerala as the No.1 Destination in India for Startups and amongst the top 5 startup ecosystems in the world, Kerala Technological University has come up with a start up policy for its stake holders. Start up policy published by the KTU in tune with the State Govt policy on start ups.

KTU's startup policy aims at generating 10000 student startup ideas every year. KTU's Policy aims to achieve the following by year 2020; Encourage/Facilitate/Incubate at least 1000 technology product startups. Out of these, the policy aims to help convert 1000 start-ups into proof of concept and eventually, lead 100 of these student startups into successful and scalable enterprises. The policy aims at encouraging enterprises, which serve social and economic needs. The incubation policy will cover incubation amenities for all students, Staff and alumni, irrespective of their streams. KTU



w i l l

create indicators to measure and rank all the departments and colleges. The Annual Student Start-up Index will put equal stress on process and output driven indicators along with structures and outlay driven indicators

Final year students of KTU will be required to take a matter-of-fact problem applicable in real life, and resolve it as a part of academic curricula through their final year project.

KTU permits the concept of Residential Student Entrepreneur. Students will be permitted to apply for grant of official leave of one year at a time for entrepreneurial





## KTU-State's first cashless Office

Good bye to cheques and Cash. If you have any amount to be received from Kerala Technological University (KTU), you don't have to go there and wait for cheque or Cash. Just Email your account number and IFSC code. The amount will be credited to your account within no time and intimation will be served to u. Unlike other Government offices, KTU is exploring the technological advantages and setting a model to the state.

KTU has come up with novel concept in financial management with respect to cash disbursement and receipts. The University has adopted corporate banking system which uncommon in Govt offices. There is no Account book, No cashier or Accountant. Everything is dealt by an Assistant with the use of online banking system.

Along with the bill you are submitting to University, you need to provide the account number and IFSC code of bank branch. The amount goes straight to your account which is safe, convenient and reliable, especially for large payments and the customer will be informed by Email. KTU is the first Govt office to use the online banking system for their entire transaction.

The concept of petty cash and impress amount is also digitized. Advancing and keeping amount for day to day activities are also made online. We cannot spot single paise in the University Office. Whether it is fuelling the Office Vehicle or purchase of Stationery, all are done through cash cards. The driver of the Vehicle is provided with a Cash card which is a pre paid type. The money goes on the

card; they can go to any debit machine and shop with it like any debit card. After the amount is over it is recharged from the University. Similarly Peon of the office is provided with a Cash card and he can swipe or withdraw money for the purchase of stationary. The system has been launched in partnership with the State bank of Travancore.

We need to prove that this is technological university and fruits of technology should reach the people. We need to change with the present world. We want to convince people that technology can be their friend. Automation of these payment methods makes administration much easier. It seems to have the advantage of simplicity as it allows you to send money by the click of a button, to virtually any bank or client.

initiatives during their study. Outstanding students who wish to pursue entrepreneurship can take a break of one year, after the second year, to pursue entrepreneurship full time

Every KTU program will set aside a few hours of its academic time where students and teachers will pursue certain activities for inculcating and amplifying the spirit of entrepreneurship. Every week two hours are set apart for student activities including entrepreneurship

KTU aims to provide an ecosystem where the best educated youth of the state can reach his/her maximum potential. Any society peaks when a great number of its people have access to experiences that are in line with their life goals and this requires development of increasingly complex skills. The necessity to develop increasingly refined skills is what lies behind the evolution of culture. By smoothly integrating the technological and creative skills of students to

solve the contemporary problems, the KTU aspires to kick-start an entrepreneurial culture, which contributes to increased knowledge, wealth and employment.

### **A new beginning for the Skilled Kerala**

Among the States in India, Kerala can boast of high levels of literacy, near universal involvement in elementary education, high levels of social and human development. The performance of Kerala in education sector has been good, impressive and could receive the distinctive acclamation as the "Kerala Model". Technical Education is one among the premier measures of any developing country as it has to play a vital role in producing good technically skilled people for the development of the nation in all aspects. The prospects and development in the higher education sector in India needs a critical examination in a rapidly globalizing world. We need higher and technically educated people who are skilled and who can drive

our economy forward. If our State could provide technically skilled people to the outside world, then we could achieve the economic development of the State in a short span. It is high time that quality assurance of students, faculty infrastructure and support services are addressed. A policy shift from mere 'teaching' colleges to 'research' colleges is proposed. It is the responsibility of society, as a whole to take a look into the rigorousness of the education system in terms of teaching-learning process and other socio-political issues. KTU believe that the new education system put forth, could surely raise the quality of output, which in turn shall result in a better industry academia linkage and then Industries, pan India, shall concentrate on Kerala as a potential market for Technically Qualified. KTU is on a mission to create a student community that excel in technical skill and knowledge and committed to the development of the nation. ●

The writer is Pro Vice Chancellor, Kerala Technological University

# Adding additional skill

## Additional Skill Acquisition Programme

**A**dditional Skill Acquisition Programme (ASAP) is a joint initiative of Higher Education and General Education Departments, Government of Kerala that aims at continuous skill development and grooming to craft the students as 'labour-market ready' personnel.

### Empowering the students

Additional Skill Acquisition Programme started its journey in November 2012 with an objective to empower the students with adequate skills for their successful careers. The first year students of Government/Aided Higher Secondary Schools and the first year students of Under Graduate courses in Government/Aided Arts & Science Colleges are the beneficiaries of the programme. The Programme consists of two components- Foundation module and the Skill Module. The training of foundation sessions of ASAP are held at institutions before and after school/college timings and those for the skill sessions are held at the Skill Development Centres (SDC) across Kerala during holidays/vacations without hindering the regular courses of the students. The students are given skill training based on their aptitude in crucial skill sectors in the emerging job market.



### Foundation course

ASAP Programme is of 300-330 hours duration, out of which 180 hours are devoted to Foundation Course that contains modules on communication skills in English and information technology. The focus of the foundation course is to develop soft skills that are essential to work efficiently in a corporate environment. About 120-150 hours (even more in some cases) are devoted to the skill sector chosen by the student for specialization.



## Selection Procedure

Students are selected for the Programme, based on approved criteria, after an interview process by an Institution level Committee which comprises Principal, Institution level Coordinator of ASAP and concerned Programme Manager. The process ensures that the most needy students come to ASAP.

For the proper implementation of ASAP, a district level coordination committee functions, with District Collector as Chairman and MLAs, President of Local Bodies, Principals, Programme Managers and Faculty Coordinators as members.

Incentive linked fee is being offered to the students from BPL, SC, ST, OBC, SEBC and Physically Challenged students.

From 102 institutions, 19 Skill Development Centres, 12 courses and around 3024 students in 2012-13, ASAP was able to inspire around 25,000 students, augment their domain knowledge, soft skills, leadership skills and industry relevant competency through 84 skill courses, 950 institutions and 105 Skill Development Centres in 2014-15.

## Training Partner Scheme (TPS)

ASAP also has been organizing intensive training programs under the 'Training Partner Scheme (TPS)', that aims at training students of final year Undergraduate and Post Graduate Programmes selected through campus recruitment from the 193 Government & Aided Arts and Science Colleges across Kerala through a Programme named as 'Thousand Splendid Stars' and develop professionals from them. Training Partner Institution will provide 21 days residential training to the student trainees on behalf of ASAP Mission for empanelling as Skill Development Executives (SDE) of ASAP. It aims at encouraging Departments of English functioning in various colleges to develop qualified professionals for prospective SDE selection.

ASAP also gives high priority for the Quality of the transactions. Quality is assured based on National Occupational Standards (NOS) and ASAP Quality Framework, fixed for both inputs as well as output. The input quality will be assessed by the Quality Division and Quality Assurers (QA) of ASAP and the output quality by both QA and the Assessment Agency.

## Summer Skill Training

ASAP has also taken efforts to popularize the concept of Vocational training during summer, in a small way in the past and this experience has prompted ASAP to design a comprehensive Summer Skill Training programme named 'Summer Skill SKool'. The target group includes the final year Degree and Second Year Plus two students who are looking for livelihood options immediately after their courses as many of them take up odd jobs as a livelihood option.

In 2014-15, Summer Skill training has been implemented in two different modes, namely; Design Operate Assess and Place (DOAP) and Demand Operate and Train (DOT). Training is being provided to 9357 students. Another Programme to be implemented is the Design Align and Train (DAT) Programme. One of the aims of this scheme is to encourage Engineering and Polytechnic colleges to take up skill development programme and thereby increase their brand visibility. The Scheme also intends to transform Technical teachers as Master Trainers and thereby create an industry trained resource pool in the state of Kerala. Through this Scheme, ASAP intends to encourage Engineering and Polytechnic Colleges to design industry relevant skill development programme and transform them as a quality Skill Training Providers approved by Sector Skill Council concerned.

## Life long Learning

One of the stated aims of ASAP is to promote Life Long Learning. Towards this end, a Moodle-based, state-of-the-art Learning Management System has been initiated to organize virtual classes with facilities for course creation, student enrolment, content/course delivery, online student/teacher evaluation, grading and professional development.

ASAP has also launched a 'Job Willingness Survey' for its regular students and Summer Skill Skool students.

Additional Skill Acquisition Programme (ASAP), in its own right, is a vital contributor to meet the Kerala's education and skills needs. Its association with Sector Skill Councils and industries helped to build up the momentum of skill development initiatives in the state.

It has been a year packed with new undertakings as our work was propelled into new arenas of skill training. The ability of ASAP to be nimble and receptive in a changing skill landscape has driven the organization to success.

The writer is Programme Coordinator, colleges



## Kerala State Literacy Mission Authority



Kerala become the first state to get total primary education in India. Athulyam programme was successfully implemented by all the local bodies in the state.

# Scripting history through Athulyam project

**N**eighbours of 108-year-old Kalyani Sankaran from Thelanadu village in the interiors of Kerala's kottayam district were surprised to see her distributing ladoos . Kalyani Sankaran has passed her 4th standard or 4th grade equivalency exam

conducted by The Kerala State Literacy Mission Authority (KSLMA).

Having secured 60% in the exam, a confident Kalyani Sankaran has now decided to write her 7th grade equivalency exam. The exam that Kalyani Sankaran





The first phase of "Athulyam" was successfully implemented in association with local bodies which are playing a key role in the second phase also.

wrote is one conducted under the 'Athulyam' project which was introduced by the state government to achieve 100% literacy through primary and secondary education. Now Kerala become the first state to get total primary education in India. Athulyam programme was successfully implemented by all the local bodies in the state. The declaration of total fourth -class equivalency done at the level of local bodies on June 19 and state level announcement will be made later. inmates of jails also took part the public exam. Total 141 jail inmates appeared for the examination.

Meenakshi Amma is 92. And, she proved that failing health has not come in the way of her quest for knowledge. Having dropped out in class second from her school at Kundamkuzhi in Kasargod district following a chronic illness, 87 years back, she nurtured the hope of pursuing education someday. Though not at ease while reading newspapers and periodicals, Ms. Meenakshi can fluently render Ramayana and Mahabharata. Meenakshi Amma is another successful winner of Athulyam examination.

The project implemented by KSLMA under the supervision of the Department of Education, aims to provide primary

education to any person above the age of 15. The first phase of "Athulyam" was successfully implemented in association with local bodies which are playing a key role in the second phase also. Presently KSLMA conducts equivalency exams for 4<sup>th</sup> standard, 7<sup>th</sup> standard and 10<sup>th</sup> standard and Higher Secondary for school drop-outs. Try to get as many drop outs as possible to write the exams. Through census data know who the school drop outs are, and district officers approach them. A total of 2,02,862 people - meaning 98.52% - passed the exams this year. What makes the exam special is that most candidates are elderly citizens, who dropped out of schools at a young age. Those who pass the exam are eligible to apply for the 7th grade equivalency.

In Kollam district, the oldest candidate was 101 year old Ayisha Beevi. She passed the exam with 70% marks. Thiruvananthapuram and Kottayam have secured 100% victory in the exams.

Seventy percent of the candidates are above 50 years old in all equivalency exams. In 4th standard exams, 80% of the candidates are above 50 years.

For 70-year-old Sarojini from Ernakulam district, passing the exam with 80% marks, was all

about a lost dream. "I was very good at my studies, but my father made me discontinue. Now at this age I am happily enjoying my studies," she says, her happiness evident.

The maximum number of students who cleared the examination are from Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Palakkad. As many as 1755 Tamil students from Kollam, Idukki and Palakkad districts and 1,542 Kannada students from Kasargod have passed. The students appeared for four subjects: Malayalam, Maths, Environment studies and English. Students who scored minimum of 30 out of 75 in all subjects except English (in which the minimum was 20 marks) were given pass marks. The government had earlier identified 2.40 lakh people across the state through a survey conducted by social welfare department and imparted classes to them from 2014 September. If 90 % of the population of any local self-government (LSG) body achieves primary education, the local body would be declared as a fully literate one.

KSLMA had launched equivalency exams in 2000 with the slogan "Education for all and Education forever." •

The writer is PRO, KSLMA

# New Gen Teachers and their role in the changing world

The changes that have taken place in schools have changed the roles of teachers.



**O**f all the professions in the world, Teaching is the noblest one. It is the world's oldest profession as well. Teachers should realise that the work they are doing is the noblest. 'Teacher' is a brand name that has remained a synonym for many words like belief, trust, efficiency, dedication, hard work, reliability and so on. As torch bearers of the society, their words once remained final among the student community.

The challenges of the new millennium such as the rapid globalization, the tremendous impacts of information technology, the international transformation towards knowledge-driven economy, the strong demands for societal developments, and the international and regional competitions have driven numerous educational changes in the different parts of the world (Cheng & Townsend, 2000). The rapid changes and increased complexity of today's world has brought in new challenges and demands on the teaching community.

The world is moving very fast to become a global village, in which different parts of the world are rapidly networked and globalized through internet and different types of IT, communications, and transportation (Albrow, 1990; Naisbitt, & Aburdence, 1991). A Teacher needs to equip himself to be a part of this network and to make his teaching effective.

In the social context of the new millennium, human nature is assumed to be multiple - as a technological person, economic person, social person, political person, cultural person, and learning person in a global village of information, high technology, and multi-cultures. Both individuals and the society need multiple developments in the technological, economic, social, political, cultural, and learning aspects. Life-long learning individuals and a learning society are necessary to sustain the continuous multiple developments of individuals and the society in a fast changing era (Drucker, 1993, 1995).



Teachers can be categorized as effective or ineffective. The traditional image of an effective teacher is attributed mainly to qualities manifested as kind, caring, authoritarian, resourceful etc. Some define a teacher as effective when he can establish a rapport with the students. Others opine that an effective teacher is a person who has a superior command over a particular subject; who has an ability to transact his or her subject effectively to the students. There is also another view that an effective teacher is one who can activate students' energy and make them work in a better way.

### Changing role of teachers in the present era

The changes that have taken place in schools have changed the roles of teachers. In the past teachers used to be the major source of knowledge, the leader and educator of their students' school life. Teachers would organize after-school activities. They used to be the authority in the class and often took over the role of parents. Nowadays, teachers provide information and show their students how to tackle them. Although they are still considered to be a kind of leader in the class, they are now thought of more as facilitators in the learning process. They are supporters rather than educators and also advisors to parents.

### The impact of ICT in the present teaching-learning process

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Program of Studies has several features of particular importance to teacher preparation programs. While the ICT Program of Studies does not identify itself as an agent of educational reform, it clearly has the capacity to be so in terms of the implications of wide-spread and effective technology use in schools.

As technology is best learned within the context of applications, activities, projects, and problems that replicate real-life situations, the ICT program of studies is

structured as a "curriculum within a curriculum", using the core subjects of English Language Arts, Maths, Science and Social Studies as a base. No living discipline outside schools remains untouched by the impact of ICT. What we know and how we know it have been forever transformed by technology.

1) Schools are not deeply connected to the changing knowledge bases and practices in the world outside their walls, nor yet to the power of technology (whether for good or for ill) to do things teachers cannot even imagine.

2) For many teachers, curriculum remains an unproblematic static body of knowledge that must be 'covered', 'transmitted' and 'tested'. The genuinely creative and effective use of technology for learning, challenges this basic mind-set.

3) Ethical considerations form



**Teachers should be the best minds in the country.**

Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan



a foundational part of the ICT Program of Studies. It acknowledges the cultural and practical impacts of ICTs both locally and globally, and makes explicit links between technology, the environment, economics, and politics.

4) It raises specific questions about privacy, intellectual property, and personal ethical behaviour in digital environments.

5) ICT helps to bridge the gap between those who have and those who do not; and to commercialize or to free human interaction.

### Learning with technology and learning about technology

Learning with technology, as distinct from learning about technology has the capacity to transform learning environments in ways that are difficult for most educators to imagine. Coupled with the struggle some adults have in using basic computer functions such as email, search engines, and presentation software, is the much larger issue that the children in today's schools have never known anything other than a digital world. For the first time in human history, the young are more confident and more fluent with the dominant technologies of the times than the adults charged to teach them. Prensky (2003) notes that there are important, never-before seen differences between the generation that grew up with digital technologies (Digital Natives) and the generation that grew up before these technologies....The new abilities, skills, and preferences of the digital natives are to a large extent misunderstood and ignored by the previous generation of educators.

### Challenges faced by present day teachers

If we focus on the teaching process, we realize that there are a great number of changes in this field and all of them have an influence on the role of teachers.

### Teachers in modern classrooms are no longer lecturers

Teachers are facilitators.

Their main task is to set goals and organize the learning process accordingly. In the past, teachers used to follow a set syllabus which was mandatory for them. Nowadays, teachers have a National Curriculum, a Core Curriculum and a local (school) curriculum that they have to consider, but on the other hand, they have the freedom to choose the teaching-learning materials and activities for their pupils so that they can perform well both at examinations and in life. Curriculum design is a task teachers have to be prepared for.

### The use of technology

The present day teachers need to have a technical background so as to use and handle effectively (computer, photocopier, power

point, projectors, etc). Instead of resorting to just the chalk and talk method they need to be an information technology expert, a technician or/and a photocopy master.

### Changed role in school management

The school needs them as responsible individuals who can make decisions and cope with the stresses of the changing world of schools. At the same time teachers need to be able to work in teams, co-operate with colleagues and parents; they have to write project proposals to gain money for the school programmes.

## New Learning Models in the changed Teacher preparation scenario

The changed Teacher preparation scenario envisages teaching using instructional models. Teachers can incorporate digital platforms and resources into diverse learning models and teaching strategies that engage students in active learning, provide deeper learning experiences, and meet diverse student needs:

- Personalized learning occurs when the teacher crafts a learning program for each student's learning preferences, interests, and needs. Real-time input from embedded formative assessments are a key enabler of personalized elements, enabling teachers to base instruction on an in-depth understanding of the individual student's preparedness and ability.

- Adaptive learning is a subset of personalized learning that brings together the latest advances in cognitive psychology, learning theory, neuroscience, data analytics, and other fields. Adaptive educational software, running on the student's mobile device, analyzes student performance as the student interacts with the software. The software then modifies the learning pathway and adjusts the presentation of material dynamically. Adaptive learning is a rapidly evolving area.

- Blended learning combines traditional, face-to-face teaching and online learning, giving students the flexibility to study when and where they choose, on their own or with others, at the pace that meets their needs. Students typically use adaptive software that customizes the learning for the student's personalized learning profile.

- Flipped or inverted classrooms are a form of blended learning that reverses the typical sequence of instruction. Typically, teachers introduce a topic in class via a lecture, then have students practice and apply the lesson at home. With flipped instruction, students are introduced to new

Knowledge is power, the more knowledge one has, and the more empowered one is.





content via videos, simulations, educational games, or other digital media that they watch at home on their personal computing device. The next day, students use class time to explore the content and concepts further through individualized and small group activities, collaborative projects, and other hands-on activities. At home, students can review the content as much as they need to. In class, teachers can provide more differentiated guidance and students can get help from peers and teachers as they solve problems and deepen their understanding of new concepts.

- Integrated studies combine two or more subjects—such as science and literacy—to deepen students' knowledge of both subjects and strengthen their understanding of connections across subjects. Integrated studies can also increase students' motivation, creativity, and problem-solving skills. For example, in a science and literacy class, students not only conduct hands-on experiments, but also discuss and write about them.

- Real-world, project-based learning builds on students' natural curiosity. It focuses learning

around real-world problems and authentic, inquiry-driven learning experiences. Effective project-based learning can increase retention of content, improve students' attitudes towards learning, and provide other benefits. Technology can help teachers bring outside experts into the classroom via video conferences and other collaboration tools. It can also help teachers create "schools without walls," establishing and managing internships in which students work meaningfully in organizations such as businesses, research centers, medical institutions, nonprofits, and cultural centers.

### **New-Generation Assessment**

- 1) Establish a multi-level framework of assessments that aligns with curriculum standards and pedagogy. Use a variety of assessment methods to evaluate student learning and provide continuous feedback that improves student outcomes. Focus more on learning outcomes and less on traditional metrics such as seat-time or the completion of specific content.

- 2) Use technology to give students authentic ways to demonstrate learning, and support

teachers in developing new ways to assess the results of collaborative and project-based learning.

- 3) In planning changes to assessments, start with the learning outcomes you are trying to achieve. Work backward to develop metrics that indicate progress and allow you to measure success in meaningful ways. Use the results to increase system accountability and improve individual student learning.

- 4) Avoid over-reliance on multiple-choice assessments, which don't capture students' progress in higher-level thinking.

- 5) Engage students, teachers, parents, and the community to build consensus on the goals and benefits of new curricular and assessment approaches. Listen to and address any concerns.

Knowledge is power, the more knowledge one has, and the more empowered one is. The teacher acts a facilitator in this empowerment. In the new millennium, ICT with its rapid spread with boundless interactions among countries has turned the world into a global village and hence as global citizens the challenges one has to face will be very high. Hence the need to hone the skills of teachers according to the changed scenario is inevitable. The ongoing education reforms in different parts of the world have already provided evidence that many countries are making effort in this direction through various types of initiatives in globalization, localization and individualization. Reform of curriculum and instruction will be inevitable from the 'teacher-centred approach/examination-centred approach' and the 'separated subject knowledge based curriculum' towards 'the student-centred approach' and 'the multiple intelligence-based curriculum'. The present generation of teachers need to march with a progressive attitude to conquer new horizons and thereby a million young hearts, who are to be the designers of the future World. ●

The writer is Head, Department of Education, University of Kerala



# The Rainbow is over there Let me behold it

It must have been a shocking sight to those who knew him. But, more shocked were those who did not know him. And, the most shocked was the world itself. The sight of the three year old Alyan Kurdi, who was washed over the Turkish Beach after his boat capsized while his family illegally trying to migrate to Europe, made the whole world, shed its last drop of tear.

Before this, another photograph from the war torn Europe stunned the conscience of the world three decades back. On June

8, 1972, a plane bombed the village of Trang Bang in South Vietnam, after the pilot mistook a group of civilians for enemy troops. The bombs contained Napalm, a highly flammable substance which killed and badly burned the people on the ground. The famous black and white photo of children fleeing the burning village won the Pulitzer Prize and was chosen as the "World Press Photo of the Year" in 1972. It became the symbol of the horrors of the Vietnam War, and of every war's cruelty to children and civilians.

So, whether it is war or

survival, most of the victims are children, toddlers and infants. Accidental or not, it is a harsh reality. And, in modern times, the most exploited are children themselves. In this context, we have to re-examine and analyze our stand about protecting the rights of children at any cost.

## **Are children's rights protected effectively?**

Do children have rights separate from what their parents decide for them? Are they not too young to enjoy, exercise and enforce their rights? Are children entitled to enjoy rights till



they become adults? These are all common questions that come to the fore in any discussion on Child Rights. This is because we often associate rights with the exercising of our political right, which begins at 18, when a citizen is officially recognized as an adult. Therefore, before we proceed any further, it is necessary to understand the concept of rights, and how they apply in the case of children.

A right is an agreement or contract established between the persons who hold that right, and the people or institutions that have obligations in relation to the realization of that right. All human beings have rights; therefore, a child, which is the legal definition for any person between the ages 0-18, has rights even from the womb of his/her mother.

Children share the general human rights as adults; but they also have certain specific rights that recognize their special needs. A child's understanding of rights will vary, depending upon his or her age and level of understanding; however, that does not in any way reduce the child's basic and inalienable rights. What is important is to understand that those responsible for the child will have the responsibility to act in a manner that ensures that the child's rights are not compromised in any way, and that the child is

given every possible opportunity to enjoy a safe and secure childhood, with opportunities to develop his or her capabilities to the fullest extent possible, so as to become a confident. Therefore, a child's enjoyment of rights depends upon his/her parents or guardians, the teachers and others in the child's immediate sphere of socializing, and the quality of the environment in which he or she lives.

Universally, child rights have been defined by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) of 1989. The UNCRC defines child rights as the minimum entitlements and freedoms that should be afforded to all persons below the age of 18, regardless of colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, birth status, origins or ability, and so applicable to all persons everywhere. The Convention states that in all actions relating to children, the "best interests of the children shall be the primary consideration". It also states very firmly that these rights are interdependent; therefore, it brings together rights articulated in other international treaties. The Convention further emphasizes not only the obligations of governments, but also that of parents and children for respecting the rights of others as well as of each other. India became a signatory to this Convention in 1992. The

implementation of this Convention is being monitored regularly by an independent group of experts which furnishes a report to the General Assembly every five years.

### **The Four Categories of Child Rights**

There are four major categories of Child Rights which are given special emphasis in the Convention. They are known as the 'general principles'. The first principle is that the rights guaranteed under the UNCRC must be available to all children without any discrimination. This means that no child should either benefit or be deprived because of his or her race, color, gender, caste, origins, disability, and language, and religion, political or other opinion.

The second principle is that the best interest of the child must be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children. This means that the best interests of the child should be reflected in the laws and policies concerning them, and should therefore benefit them in the best possible way.

The third principle is that every child has the Right to Life, Survival and Development. This means that a child's Right to Survival begins before its birth. The Right to Survival includes the right to be born, right to minimum standards of food, shelter and clothing; this also includes needs that are most



basic to human existence like nutrition and access to medical services. This right implies the right to an adequate living standard, i.e. the right to live with dignity while the Right to Development refers to the right to education, play, leisure, cultural activities, and access to information, freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Allied to this right is the Right to Protection which seeks to ensure that children are safeguarded against all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation, including protection of children who are in need of care and protection because they are not in a position to receive it from their parents or guardians, protection from any kind of abuse or exploitation and the allied opportunity for rehabilitation, protection from employment while they are still children, providing safeguards in the criminal justice system for children in conflict with law and special care for refugee children.

The fourth principle is the Right to Participation. This means that the

child's view must be taken into consideration in all matters affecting him/ her directly, or indirectly. The degree of such participation would vary according to the age and maturity of the child. Therefore, a child is entitled to express his or her opinion and have these opinions taken into account in matters affecting his or her social, political, cultural, religious and economic life. Participation rights also give children the right to join associations and assemble peacefully. In fact, as capacities develop, children need to be given the opportunity to participate in the activities of society in preparation for adulthood.

Articles 14 and 15 of the Indian Constitution proclaim quite unequivocally that equal rights are guaranteed to each citizen and that there will be equality for all before law. This benefit is extended to children too, as they are citizens of this country. Articles 15(3) and 39 empower the nation to make special laws to secure the interests of women and children. That

is why as early as in 1974, the Government of India brought out a National Child Policy to protect the interests of children from neglect, abuse and cruelty. After being signatory to the UNCRC, the Oslo Convention on child labour, the Stockholm and Yokohama Conventions on child abuse, to name a few, every statute that the Government has enacted has reflected the provisions of these Conventions.

It is in this context that the Juvenile Justice Act of 1986, which laid down the provisions governing the trial proceedings of children in conflict with law and neglected or abused children in need of care and protection were totally reviewed and brought in line with the requirements of the UNCRC. The Juvenile Justice (JJ) (Care and Protection) Act of 2000 which came into effect on April 1, 2001 is the result of this exercise. Under this law, juveniles in conflict with law are to be tried separately by a Juvenile Justice Board comprising a Principal Judicial Magistrate and two

social workers, however heinous be the nature of the crime. This is based on the argument that till children reaches 18, they lack the maturity to make proper choices, and an effort must be made to counsel and rehabilitate them so that they can have a fresh start in life without any stigma.

In 2006, a further amendment was made in the JJ Act whereby its provisions were required to be made mandatorily applicable, even if children are tried under the provisions of any other statute. This statute prevents a child from being handcuffed, placed in a lock up, from being taken to the police station or from being given capital punishment. Child Welfare Committees were also created in every district, comprising persons with long standing interest in the welfare of children, to look after the interests of children in need of care and protection. Rehabilitation has been given maximum priority with the help of Individual Care plans to be prepared to meet each child's needs and institutional care has





been stipulated only as the last resort.

In 2005, the Protection of Child Rights Act was passed through in which a provision was made to set up Commissions at the National and State levels to, inter alia, address the best interests of the child, to redress any violation of the child's rights, identify factors in statutes, policies, programmes etc that inhibit the enjoyment of rights and to suggest remedial action, provide support to children with special needs or in vulnerable situations, create awareness of child rights and even generate data that will help foster policies in the best interest of the child.

In 2012, the Government enacted the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act which is a path breaking statute which not only defines the nature of sexual offences in varying degree with corresponding penalties, it also makes the withholding of information by any person who may be aware of such an offence, a penalty that can be punishable

up to one year. This law spells out in detail what the approach of all stakeholders, starting from the police, should be in handling such cases. The police for example should not wear uniform when meeting the child, a woman police officer, at least of the rank of ASI should be present at the time of questioning, the child should never be taken to the police station or brought face to face with the accused, and should be interviewed only in a place where she or he is comfortable, and that too in the presence of someone the child trusts. The child has to be given the support of an interpreter or a special needs counselor if the need arises and the statement has to be in his or her own words. Above all, the privacy of the child has to be protected and at no time should any detail be given that will help identify the child so that there is no stigma attached to him or her, and it is possible to rehabilitate the child fully into society. These are only some of the very important provisions that have been enacted

to safeguard the child's interests through the POCSO Act.

Another landmark legislation that has been enacted to protect the right of the child to development is the Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009, which stipulates that it is the right of every child to have free and compulsory education up to 8th standard or the age of 14. It enjoins the Government to provide the necessary infrastructure to ensure this for all children including children with special needs, migrant children, children who are bedridden and unable to access school and those from vulnerable communities or places.

In a departure from the normal practice and in keeping with the importance given to child rights, the Statutes provide for the National and State Commissions for the protection of child rights to monitor the proper implementation of the POCSO and RTE Acts. Today, there are over 18 important statutes that are specific to the rights of children.

It is very clear that the Government or its agencies and the institutions that it sets up cannot meet the challenges in protecting child rights. That is why in recent years the voluntary or even the corporate sector is being given an increasingly important role to play in providing support in the areas of care and protection. But we need to go beyond even that and harness the support of the community at large to sensitize and participate in the efforts to protect child rights.

In every person's heart, there is a child. Childhood is the essence of life and its impact will be us till our last breath. Let me recite the famous lines written by the English poet William Wordsworth who celebrated the pleasures of childhood throughout his poems.

"My heart leaps up when I behold

A rainbow in the sky:

So was it when my life began;

So is it now I am a man;"

The writer is the Chairperson, Kerala State Commission for Protection of Child Rights.





## HEALTH

■ Dr G VIJAYARAGHAVAN

# How do

**C**urrently Vice Chairman but even the most careful and Dean of Post-graduate individual could also develop Medical Studies, Kerala one in times of extreme Institute of Medical physical or mental stress. Sciences, Trivandrum.

During the latter half of Heart disease is the 1930's and 1940's, heart commonest cause of attacks were rare world death among the world over. Milk, milk products, population. Among the meat, eggs and all other heart diseases, heart nutritious food items were attack is the most diverted to the military and dreaded killer of all. they were fighting in the This disease is like a field with extreme exercise traffic accident. It comes and vigour. The common at the most unexpected man was getting only frugal time. Most careful amounts of food and had drivers have the least to live in near poverty. In chance to get involved my childhood I remember in an accident. But when we used to have severe even the most careful rationing of food in the driver could also be 1940's. The picture did not an accident victim change much in India even in an unforeseen in the post World War years circumstance. Like or the post-independence the careful driver, era. After the World War II, if you follow Europe and America went the preventive through an industrial and strategies you agrarian revolution. Plenty could prevent of milk, milk products, a heart attack; meat and eggs appeared in



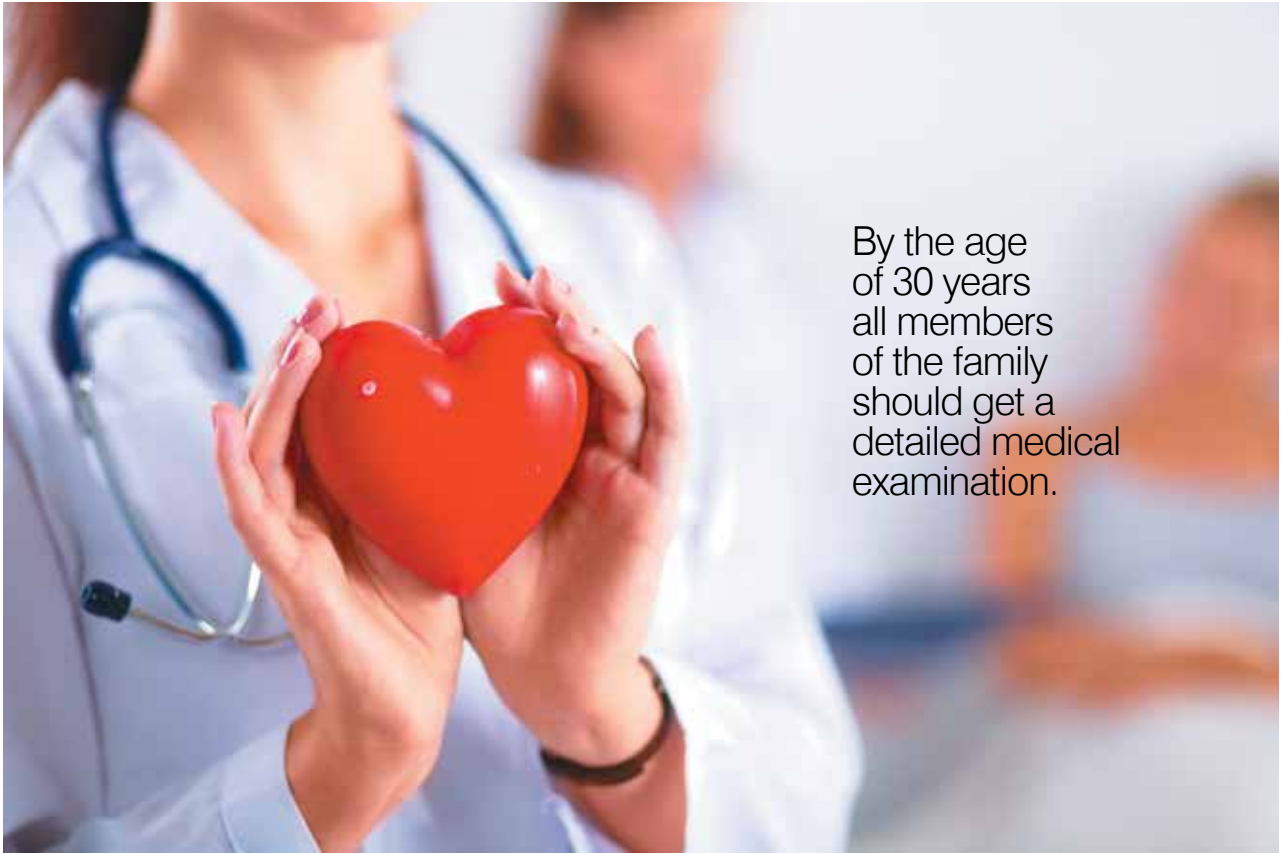
# you prevent Heart Attack?

the market at competitive prices with people doing less of physical activity. People started consuming large amounts of food with lots of fat and calories and obesity became common. Incidence of high blood pressure and heart disease increased substantially and scientists started looking into the causes of this mushrooming killer diseases. The American Heart Association took it as its duty to find measures to control heart disease and strokes and came out with preventive strategies, which turned out to be a great success in disease prevention. In 35 years time, preventive strategies adopted by the US population reduced the death due to heart attack by 50%.

Kerala has one of the most modern healthcare systems in India and it is demonstrated by the low incidence of maternal and infant mortality as well as numerous other indices of health. Yet, we have not conquered infectious diseases nor have we developed strategies to control lifestyle diseases. Diabetes mellitus, High blood pressure, heart

attacks and strokes are rampant in our community and very little has been done to control these diseases. Why do we get these diseases in such large numbers? This is a question to be answered by careful field surveys and study of dietary and physical activity pattern of our population. We have only a sketchy idea on this subject with information gathered from few studies conducted during the last 20 years. Living standards have gone up in our state during the last 40 years. Large percentage of people living in the “below poverty line” have moved up to the middle class. The improvement in education have increased the job opportunities for our people in India as well as in the rest of the World especially the Middle East. Per capita income has increased. The availability of rich fatty food items have increased along with increase of the buying power of our people. Keralites were used to large amount starch intake in the form of rice and tapioca with frugal quantities of protein and fat. Over many centuries or even millennia our genetic makeup has

changed for existing with the type of food we eat which we call as the “thrifty gene”. It is this population which has suddenly changed to eating high quantities of fried meat, biryanis, fish, milk and eggs. At the same time there came the transport revolution. Roads were constructed crisscrossing the entire state. Public transport became available even in the remote villages. Two wheelers and cars became common place and the population became lazy with the availability of all these facilities. Unfortunately, developments were lopsided that places of recreation and leisure time activities did not increase but became the casualty. Choking of all the roads with vehicles became a handicap that people had no place to walk. There was hardly any place for games and sports; neither at schools, colleges; or public offices. The construction boom literally consumed all the space available without thinking about the health of the people who lived in those houses. Children go to school in motorised vehicles; Workers travel by public transport or in their own



By the age of 30 years all members of the family should get a detailed medical examination.

vehicles. Even bicycles became a rarity. Our population forgot about the amount of walking and physical activity that our forefathers were used to.

It is in this scenario that we found it difficult to control the use of tobacco and alcohol. Strict laws that were enacted did control tobacco use to some extent, but alcohol use multiplied beyond our expectations. Along with the consumption of alcohol goes all the fried fatty food available in our stores. This is the cause of this lifestyle disease epidemic of our Kerala population.

We have to learn many lessons to overcome these hazards of life style. The American Heart Association has succeeded in controlling

heart attacks in the community. We have to follow these guidelines to prevent heart attacks in our country by suitably modifying them to our people. Incorporating the recommendations of the American Heart Association, I have formulated a 10-point agenda for preventing heart attacks in our people.

We should restrict our food intake. We should stop eating to completely satisfy our hunger and avoid eating to maximally fill the stomach. Many Japanese communities stop eating food when they feel that 80% of their appetite is satisfied. We have to select our food with plenty of fresh vegetables and fruits. Recent studies have shown that Indians use the least

quantity of vegetables and fruits among developing countries. Even vegetarians prefer pulses and fried food or sweets. Use only 20 to 30 ml of oil per person per day for cooking all the dishes. Even this oil should be preferably be vegetable oils with poly-unsaturated fat like sunflower oil, rice bran oil, karadi oil or corn oil. The Parents should select the right kind of food for the children and make them stop eating fast food, which is full of harmful oil and salt. The older people should eat enough proteins in addition to starch and little fat. Avoid sweets and sugars as much as possible. Commercially available sweetened drinks are harmful and should be avoided. It is the common cause of childhood obesity.

Overweight children need special care as they are prone to developing high blood pressure, diabetes and heart attack at a young age and these are preventable diseases.

Restrict your salt intake. This will prevent high blood pressure. Avoid pickles, pappads, chips, dry fish, chips, bakery mixture and salted nuts. Avoid adding salt at the table. Reducing the intake of salt of a community have proved to reduce the blood pressure of the population.

Avoid all kinds of tobacco; smoking, chewing and snuffing. Do not be a victim of passive smoking. Tobacco raises the blood pressure and heart rate. In addition the poisonous substances in tobacco can affect every organ in the body with respiratory and



gastro-intestinal diseases in addition to cancer of various organs.

Avoid alcohol. This increases heart rate and blood pressure in addition to increasing the fat content in the blood. Its untoward effects on the gastro-intestinal system especially the liver, is well known.

You need exercise to maintain good health and to spend the calories you have consumed. Undue rest weakens all the muscles especially the antigravity muscles. Undue rest invariably makes people to feel more tired. Walking for an hour a day at least 5 days of the week, is the best form of exercise. Badminton, tennis, swimming or other sports, are equally good.

By the age of 30 years all members of the family should get a detailed medical examination. This should be repeated every 5 years till you are 40 years and every 3 years thereafter. Early detection of high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes are important as they could be treated effectively to prevent future complications.

If more than 2 of your family members have diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease or stroke the above guidelines have to be adopted from the age of 20 years.

Utilise the weekends to spend with the family. Leisure time activities should be able to recoup your mind after 5 days of hard work. Annual leave should be used to go for locations where you can relax and engage

in refreshing your mind and body. These holidays should not be cashed for money but used for leisure time activities of your liking. Extreme stress and strain are well known factors precipitating heart attacks. Loss of dear ones, unfinished house construction, wedding at home, last dates for repaying loans are events which can stress the mind acutely and precipitate a heart attack. These events increase blood pressure and heart rate as well as fat content in the blood. Building up physical stamina by exercise, mental stamina by leisure time activities will prepare the mind and body to withstand such stressful situations.

Pregnancy is an important event in the family. Adequate nutrition of the pregnant mother is of utmost significance. Under-nutrition in the formative months of the foetus results in imperfect formation of liver and pancreas which will present as diabetes, heart attack or strokes in the next generation by the time they grow up to 40 or 50 years.

All patients diagnosed to have diabetes, high blood pressure or stroke should realise that they may develop an early heart attack unless they take specific treatment for their diseases. Diabetes should be well controlled under the supervision of a physician or specialist. They should check their blood sugar regularly, HbA1C once in three months and adjust their exercise programme, dietary restrictions,

and the dose of blood sugar lowering medicines accordingly. They should have periodic dietary advice from a trained person.

All subjects should maintain their cholesterol at the ideal level. Their diet and exercise pattern should be tailored to suit individual taste. It is advised to keep the blood cholesterol levels below 200 mg/dl and bad cholesterol levels below 100 mg/dl. Good cholesterol can be maintained at high levels only by exercise. High blood pressure is a major risk factor and requires early diagnosis and expert treatment. Maintaining Blood pressure below 140/90 mm of Hg is extremely important and this should be checked periodically and medicines readjusted by a physician. Six to eight hours of sleep, salt restricted diet, adequate exercise and mental peace are essential to maintain blood pressure at desired levels.

I have delineated the measures that will help us to ward off a heart attack for many decades. However changes in blood tubes/ arteries is an aging phenomenon. Unfortunately Indians are found to have this aging phenomenon occurring 10 years earlier than the westerners and hence we should adopt an ideal lifestyle if we have to change this phenomenon of early aging. Indians get heart attacks 10 years earlier than westerners. This is partly due to our genetic disparity make up and mostly due to our bad lifestyle. Longevity

of Kerala population is increasing and is on a par with that of many European countries. Thirty percent of our population is above 60 years and as the population is aging we are going to face increasing incidence of heart attacks. This should make us vigilant in adopting a healthy lifestyle. Diabetics have more heart related complications and long standing uncontrolled high blood pressure, can kill an individual when complicated by a heart attack.

There should be a mass movement to reduce the increasing incidence of diabetes, high blood pressure, strokes and heart attacks in our country. In this, all the Government and private health establishments should take an active part. Once a week, be it on a Sunday, they should make facilities available for people to come in and check their blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol levels at subsidised rates, or even free of charge. For them to make use of these facilities public awareness about the need to check these parameters periodically is essential, for them to make use of these facilities. The message of prevention of lifestyle diseases should become the goals of all health care establishments. Only by a well organised movement by lay press articles, television shows and public education meetings could we conquer these killer diseases that is affecting our population adversely. ●

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# The Song is still Evergreen

Renaissance flowered in Indian cinema with the advent of Pather Panchali. This year celebrates the 60<sup>th</sup> year of its making.

**T**he raw material for cinema is life itself. It is incredible that a country which has inspired so much painting and music and poetry should fail to move the moviemaker. He has only to keep his eyes open, and his ears.

Let him do so." Satyajith Ray.

Very few moviemakers in the history of the celluloid have acclaimed the position of portraying life with its harsh realities and above all

the spiritual element. From India, it was Satyajith Ray. In Italy, it was Vitoria De Sica with his neo realistic classic Bicycle Thieves. And, indisputably, Andre Tarkovsky, the legendary Russian film maker led







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the movement in the erstwhile Soviet Union.

One may wonder what makes these geniuses tower above other legendary film directors across the world. Why do they still remain inaccessible to the present day directors or the new generation film makers? They never attempted a film that would rock the theatres or rock the hearts of the moviegoers with enthralling music. But, the rocking was there. It was silent. As silent as a cool breeze. Music was there. And, it was not at all mundane. It was divine, ethereal!

Ray made his much acclaimed Pather Panchali in 1955,



the first of his Apu trilogies. The trilogy was completed with Aparajito in 1956 and Apur Sansar in 1959. This year, 2015 is the 50th anniversary of the film Pather Panchali that placed Indian film on the heights of world films and as a masterpiece it remains still unbeaten.

Ray had been a graphic designer by profession and with his debut film he showed how cinema could be irresistibly poetic without depending on gimmicks. His meeting with the French director Jean Renoir planted the seed for his wish in directing a film. Renoir was in India

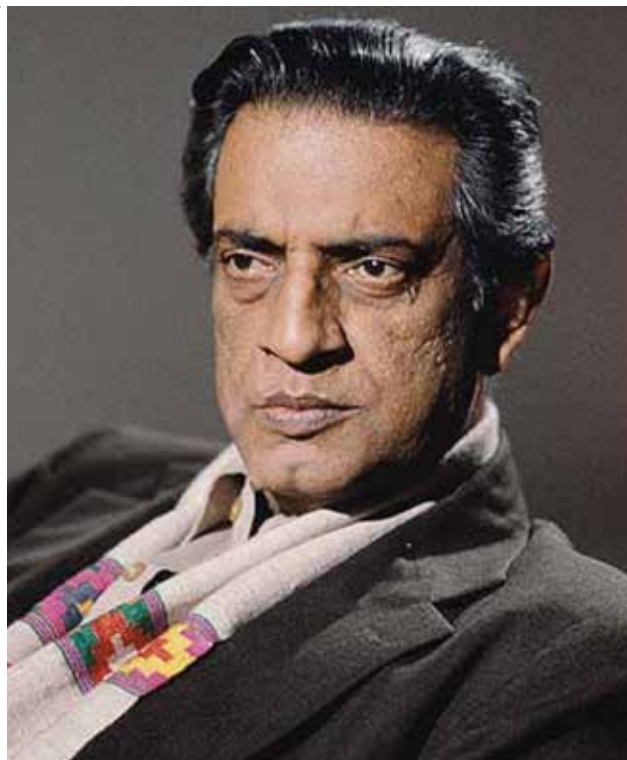
as part of making a film, *The River*. Satyajith Ray, who had been nurturing his dream of becoming a director, became an unaccredited assistant of Renoir. And, this friendship paved the way for Ray to materialize his first film, *Pather Panchali*.

#### The Song of the Little Road

This is the English Translation of the Bengali name *Pather Panchjali*. It is a novel written by and Ray made it move with an indescribable language that had been heard in Indian cinema before. The year was 1955 and the film was shot in B&W. Ray had been greatly influenced by *Bicycle Thieves* that portrayed naturalness at its core. Ray faced music even from acclaimed artistes like Nargis Dutt who alleged that Ray was deliberately selling Indian poverty in foreign markets.

*Pather Panchali* is devoid of any script. Ray made his film from the drawings and notes he completed during a sea voyage in 1950. He was also credited with making a storyboard even before the birth of principal photography. But *Pather Panchali* silenced all criticism with its enchanting poetic depiction. The poetic juxtaposition of man to nature has hardly ever been done better. The real heroes are the visuals and sound in this great work of art. The plot is too little to be spoken of.

And, the visuals!



Who can forget those stunning ones! The first scene shot by Ray itself is a masterpiece in the entire history of cinema. Apu and his elder sister is hurrying to see the train that comes to their village for the first time. In rays own words about his first shot” I still remember the first shot. I was tense and nervous. But, I got relaxed when the shoot was in progress. When it ended, I was blissfully elated”. It is a classic example of the contrast between the innocence of childhood and rural life and the temptations of urbanization.

So are the rest of the shots. Each shot is unique in its own way. Once seen, who can ever forget those insects skitting along the surface of a pond, while the thrillingly precise accompaniment provided by the legendary Ravi

Shankar finds just the right pulse of nature! Or Apu and Durga's walk through a field of tall, white, willowy reeds as they discover a train outside their village. Or Durga's ritual dance during the first monsoon rain. Or the terrifying night as the storm rips apart Durga's room as she lies dying. Or the long-absent father's approach to the crumbling house, the fallen Mango tree branch and the lone chewing cow. Each one of these images has infinitely more weight than the multitudinous factory of images supplied by Bollywood and most other cinemas of the world.

William Wyler, one of the greatest directors of all time, once remarked about his epic film *Ben Hur*. He was asked why he chose his assistant director to shoot the

much more famous chariot riding scene in the film in Italy. Wyler's opinion will suit to Ray aptly. “t is easier to shoot a scene which includes a lot of activities. But the real skill of a director lies in depicting the inner feelings. The best director's job is to portray the outer manifestations of inner feelings.”

Each scene of the *Song of the Little Path* is remembered by other factors such as music and cinematography. For the first time, the Indians were blessed with the nature of cinematography by Subrato Mitra. The ethereal music rendered by Pundit Ravishankar made a thousand flowers bloom in the minds of the film lovers.

His work has influenced an abundance of diverse filmmakers, including Otar Iosseliani (*There Lived a Singing Blackbird*), Andrei Tarkovsky (*Ivan's Childhood*), Sergei Paradjanov (*Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*), and so on. Of these, Andrei Turk sky can rightly be called the Satyajith Ray of the erstwhile Soviet Union. So, when we come back to the question of the dominance of these above others, one thing is commonly applicable to the trio. It is, first and foremost, their uncompromising stand for human spirit. And, their silent assertion through films that Man is a Spiritual Being. •

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