

Building a Fairer,
Healthier World

Kumaran Asan
The Master Wordsmith

M. Krishnan Nair
The Maverick & Iconoclast

KERALA CALLING

₹ 12

prd.kerala.gov.in/publication/keralacalling

2021 APRIL 01



RESIST IT
with
ALL MIGHT

Together we can survive the second surge

PROTECT OURSELVES BY GETTING VACCINATED



THE SECOND COMING



PREVENTION CORONAVIRUS COVID-19



Wash Hand



Use Soap



Avoid Crowd



Use Masker



Avoid Shakehand



Use Disinfection



When the noted Irish poet William Butler Yeats penned the poem *the Second Coming* in 1920, he might not have imagined that a pandemic such as Covid would have its claws on the world exactly after 100 years. He scripted the poem as an allegorical representation of the post World- War I ambience of Europe. But what Yeats had written a century ago, can be re-read in a different context now. Anarchy loosed upon the world then owing to the vengeance and hatred among nations. But now, forgetting animosity and differences, the world is united in will to fight a single enemy- the pandemic Covid 19.

We, the human race, have evolved facing numerous challenges. Animals, stronger than us, had become extinct by failing to face the hardships posed by nature. But humans survived, though being bipeds. And it is an obvious fact that we will survive the second coming of the virus as well.

Our health professionals armed with all available supplies are engaged in the battle of taming the microscopic enemy. Vaccination drives are conducted everywhere and they

are being done at a much faster pace. But to top it all, it is the obligation of every person to ensure the safety of their life by strictly adhering to the covid protocols issued by the authorities concerned.

This issue of Kerala Calling discusses in detail the second coming of the pandemic and the articles are contributed by experts par excellence in their respective fields. World Health Day falls in April and we are honoured to publish an article of Dr Roderico H Ofirin, World Health Organisation (WHO) representative to India.

April also witnesses many important days, of which the World Book Day stands out. The birthday of Shakespeare is observed as World Book Day. It is also the death day of renowned writers such as Cervantes and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega. And for the bibliophiles, we have some surprises in store. The aficionados of books will find some interesting and informative articles in the current issue to get engrossed with.

Some noted Malayalis bade adieu to us in April and they are remembered with due respect.

In these hard times, we must not lose courage and should stick to the guidelines dispensed by the authorities. Let us again remember the optimistic note expressed by the English poet P.B. Shelley in his famous poem *Ode to the West Wind*.

If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

S. Harikishore IAS
Editor-in-Chief



KERALA CALLING APRIL 2021

Editor-In-Chief	:	S. Harikishore IAS
Co Ordinating Editor	:	K. Santhosh Kumar
Deputy Editor In Chief	:	K. P. Saritha
Editor	:	C. Rajesh
Assistant Editor	:	A. Anchiitha
Assistant Information officer	:	S. Shyama
Circulation Officer	:	A. C. Abhilash
Cover Design & Layout	:	Anil D. Prakash
Printing	:	Orange Printers Thiruvananthapuram

ENQUIRIES

Editorial	:	0471 251 8648
Subscription	:	0471 251 7036

Views expressed in the articles published in Kerala Calling are not, necessarily, those of the government. Kerala Calling welcomes free expression of divergent views and exchange of ideas through its pages.

TO SUBSCRIBE

Send Rs. 120 as money order to The Director, Information & Public Relations Department, First Floor, Secretariat Annexe, Thiruvananthapuram - 695001

The subscription amount will also be received at the State Information Centre, Press Club Building, Thiruvananthapuram. Phone: 0471 251 8471 and at all District Information Offices

RESPONSES MAY BE SENT TO MAIL:

keralacalling@gmail.com /facebook.com/Kerala Calling

EDITORIAL MATERIALS

Articles/features appearing in this magazine are either commissioned or assigned. Nevertheless, other articles are also welcome. A maximum of 750 wordage is appreciated. Such items should be addressed to The Editor, Kerala Calling, First Floor, Secretariat Annexe, Thiruvananthapuram Pin 695001



Photo Credits :
I&PRD Photography Division,
V.V. Biju, PTI, Face book, Freepik

Number of Pages: 48+Cover

CONTENTS

- 6 Building a fairer, healthier world**
Dr. Roderico H Ofrin
World Health Organisation (WHO) representative to India
- 8 Crushing the curve**
Dr. Indu P.S.
Professor and Head, Community Medicine, Govt Medical College, Thrissur
Dr. Prajitha K.C.
Senior Resident, Govt Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram
- 10 Variant Behaviour or Variant Virus**
Dr. Aravind R.
HOD Infectious Diseases, Government Medical College Thiruvananthapuram
Dr. Mariyam Rajee Alex
Senior Resident, Community Medicine, GMC Thiruvananthapuram
- 12 Remaining Buoyant as COVID Surges Again**
Dr. Arun B. Nair
Associate Professor of Psychiatry Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram
- 14 Keep these things in mind**
Dr. Anju Angel Alex
Department of Health services
- 16 Is Global Microbial Diversity Waning**
Ignatius Pereira
Senior Journalist

18 Clearing up the Final Hurdle to success

Dr. B. Ashok

Serving IAS officer and former Vice Chancellor

20 Kumaran Asan The master wordsmith

P.N. Gopikrishnan

Literary Critic

24 Nritha, Nrithya and Natya

Nirmala Paniker

Mohiniyattam Exponent

26 Not of an Age, But for all Time

Dr. V. Rajakrishnan

Literary critic and Professor of English

28 “My Story” Also Hers

M.N. Karassery

Literary Critic

30 ‘The Little Mermaid’ Still Influences...

Dr. Vrinda Varma

Professor, Sri Kerala Varma College

32 The Maverick & Iconoclast in Criticism

P.K. Rajasekharan

Literary Critic

35 News scan

36 Climate Change Deepens Rich-Poor Divide

N. Bhadrn Nair

Executive Editor, Indian Science Journal

38 Valuing water

Dr. Rathy M.C.

Department of Environmental Science
University of Calicut

40 Kerala Glitters in the NFA

A. Chandrasekhar

Film critic

42 Storyteller of the Modern Theatre

Dr. Raja Varier

Director, Centre for Performing & Visual Arts,
University of Kerala

44 Gem of an Educator

Tansi Hashir

UAE

46 Enslavement During the Dutch-Ruled Cochin

Alexander Geelen

Social Historian, International Institute of Social
History in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

48 Working with Emotional Intelligence

Jayadeep M.V.

Freelance writer

50 News scan



BUILDING A FAIRER, HEALTHIER WORLD



Dr Roderico H Ofrin
World Health Organisation
(WHO) representative to India

This year's World Health Day falls in India against the looming threat of a second surge in the Covid 19 pandemic. The World Health Organisation that has been at the forefront of many battles against many a pandemic, is raging another relentless fight against the Covid 19 pandemic

The theme of World Health Day 2021 is "Building a fairer, healthier world" where everyone has equitable access to preventive, promotive and curative services and access to health determinants such as safe water, sanitation, food and clean air, irrespective of gender, income, education, geographic location, age or religion.

The simplest measure of health inequities is to compare the health status of those in the lowest socio-economic group with those in the highest to identify the gap. Our goal is to end this disparity by reaching the unreached and most vulnerable groups, whoever and wherever they are.

Kerala exemplifies how a committed health workforce and a strong primary

health system can keep communities healthy and safe. With an infant mortality rate of 4.6 per 1000 live births, maternal mortality ratio of 42 per 100 000 live births, improved drinking water access in 94.9% of households, and sanitation facilities in 98.7% of homes, the state has among the best health indicators in the country.

WHO is an active member of the Government of India's Joint Monitoring Group steering the country's COVID response. It has supported cascaded training of nearly 250,000 vaccinators and 440,000 lakh vaccination officers for the vaccine rollout. On the ground, it has repurposed its staff to help fight the pandemic in the frontlines by activating its emergency response framework for disease surveillance, contact tracing, hospital assessment, and capacity building for testing and infection prevention and control.

In Kerala, the WHO team of Surveillance Medical Officers were part of State and District Control Rooms and Rapid Response Teams and assisted the state in the preparedness assessment of designated COVID hospitals, and in partnering with the private hospitals and medical associations for seamless patient identification, referral and treatment. WHO also supported microplanning, capacity building, identification of private vaccination centres, preparedness review, monitoring and feedback of the Covid-19 vaccination drive in the state. It assisted in conducting the ICMR Covid-19 Sero-Survey in Ernakulam, Thrissur and Palakkad Districts in May, August and December 2020.

To ensure the pandemic did not disrupt health services, the WHO is continuing to support Integrated Vaccine-Preventable Diseases Surveillance to detect cases of acute flaccid paralysis, measles, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis and neonatal tetanus cases; and building capacity for the Universal Immunization Programme to raise full coverage from the current 78%, as per NFHS-5 data. The WHO also assisted in the pulse polio vaccination drive this year, when close to 2.4 million children under five were vaccinated in the first quarter of 2021 to keep Kerala polio-free. Initiatives such as the India Hypertension Control Initiative provided quality medicines free to hypertension patients during the pandemic.

Past support during disasters included a response to floods in 2018 and 2019, and the Nipah outbreak in 2018 when the WHO Team assisted the state in strengthening surveillance, engaging with the private sector and coordinating activities with partners through the deployment of officers from other states.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us that no one is safe until everyone is safe. It has taught us that a fragmented world cannot respond to health challenges without partnerships. It has also taught us that collaborations produce unprecedented results – from drugs and vaccine development, production, approval and delivery, to using data for programme monitoring and strengthening health systems.

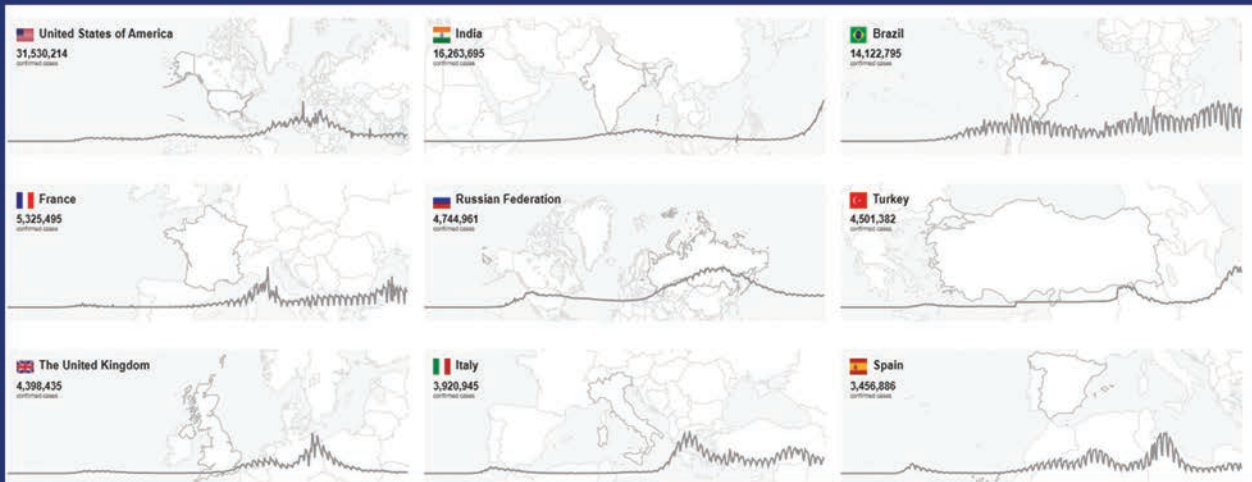
Lessons, such as research and innovation and the use of technology also behave us to rethink solutions, not just for health systems but for systems in general. Such concerted effort and solutions-oriented actions to tackle inequities can make health for all a reality. The post COVID world must be built on resilient foundations of credible data, quality services and partnerships to meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals to ensure health and prosperity for all by 2030.

“ **Lessons, such as research and innovation and the use of technology also behave us to rethink solutions, not just for health systems but for systems in general.** ”



“ **To ensure the pandemic did not disrupt health services, the WHO is continuing to support Integrated Vaccine-Preventable Diseases Surveillance to detect cases of acute flaccid paralysis, measles, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis and neonatal tetanus cases; and building capacity for the Universal Immunization Programme to raise full coverage from the current 78%, as per NFHS-5 data.** ”

CRUSHING THE CURVE



(fig.1, source-WHO)



Dr. Indu P.S.

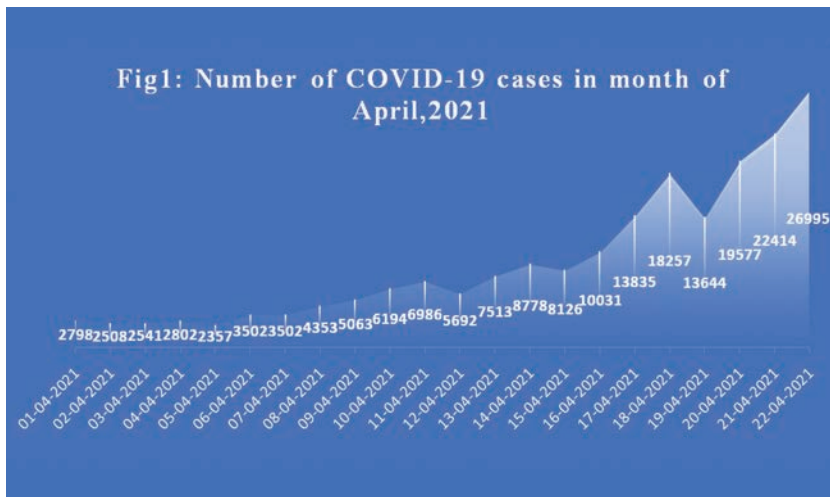
Professor and Head, Community Medicine, Govt Medical College, Thrissur

Dr. Prajitha K.C.

Senior Resident, Govt Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram

The second wave of COVID -19 pandemic is tearing the world with an immense toll in terms of human lives and derailing the containment efforts. Different countries are at different phases of the epidemic, but overall the speed of spread is a cause of worry for all. The peculiarity of the Indian epidemic is the steep slope of the curve (rapid rise in cases), compared to other countries which faced the epidemic (fig.1, source-WHO). This is a huge cause for concern.

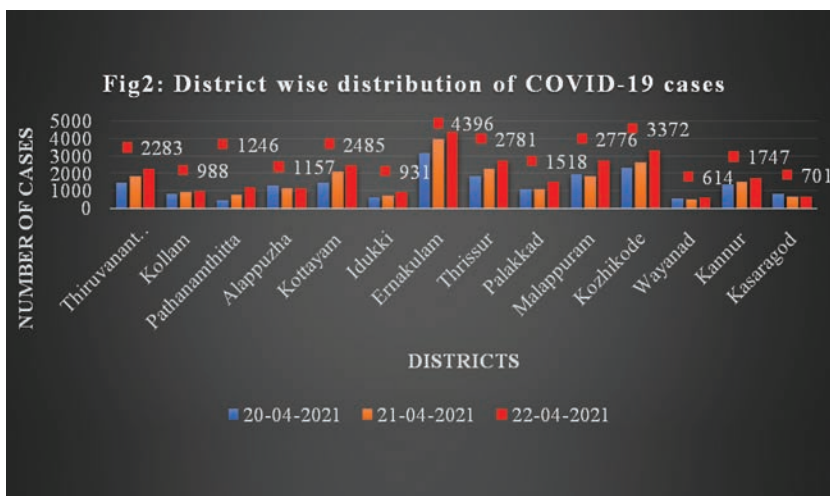
Kerala's detection rate is higher than the rest of India. Our latest sero-survey showed that one out of every four case is identified in Kerala. Kerala reported a total of 178983 cases and 5055 deaths to date, maintaining a case fatality rate of 0.3 %. Out of the total active cases, only around 0.7% is on critical care. However, since the last week, the total positivity rate has shown a steep increase with 28447 cases on the 23rd of April, the highest ever daily case load, posing a clear challenge to the health system of the state. (Fig2). This points to an urgent need of doubling our efforts towards multiple control strategies to bring the worrying situation under control. The government needs to act and prepare immediately with more emphasis on public health and social measures along with accelerated vaccine drive.



{Fig.2, source- WHO}

The public health and social measures which have been applied in the first wave will be the major part of our response. In view of more evidence coming up on the role of airborne transmission in the fast spread of SARS-CoV-2, masks become the most important intervention. The SMS campaign needs to be strengthened along with other measures like enhanced localized surveillance, shielding of vulnerable individuals, isolation of positive patients, and bans on mass gatherings. Concurrently, it is necessary to ensure that the healthcare system has adequate labor, resources, and facilities to minimize the mortality risk of COVID-19, especially in areas where the number of cases is increasing exponentially. Among the districts, Ernakulam has been reporting the maximum number of cases followed by Kozhikode, Thrissur, and Malappuram. (Fig.2).

Kerala's sero-prevalence rate was 10.7% (survey conducted by Govt of Kerala) , which is half of the national average. Presence of mutant strains can also be a cause of concern. Govt of Kerala has already initiated a study



{Fig.3, source- WHO}

on the genetic epidemiology of SARS-CoV-2 in Kerala, in collaboration with CSIR Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (CSIR-IGIB). The higher proportion of the elderly population and people with co-morbidities is also matter of concern. The gravity of the situation urges us to adopt stringent

measures and accelerate the vaccination drive.

The COVID-19 vaccines that are currently approved and available in the state are expected to provide protection against new virus variants as the vaccines elicit a broad immune response involving a range of antibodies and cells. In the event that, if one vaccine proves to be less effective against mutant variant, it still could prevent complication and death from COVID-19. Till 22nd of April, 65,03,833 doses of vaccine have been administered in Kerala and 74% of health care workers and 61% frontline workers have been vaccinated with 2 doses. However, only 17% of people belonging to age groups of 45-59 years and above 60 years have completed 2 doses of vaccination. The vaccination campaign needs to be strengthened with high priority to elderly and vulnerable groups.

Along with increasing coverage of vaccination, it is also necessary to understand that every possible measure should be adopted to stop the spread of the virus to prevent mutations that may reduce the efficacy of existing vaccines. This is because, as the virus circulates widely, the likelihood of mutation increases. The more opportunities a virus has to spread, the more it replicates – and the more opportunities to undergo genetic changes. At this point, the key is to stop the spread of the virus at its source. So, every individual should take health as their responsibility and should continue to work against new variants by reducing the amount of viral transmission by frequent hand washing, wearing a mask, physical distancing, good ventilation, and avoiding crowding and thereby reducing opportunities for the virus to mutate.

VARIANT BEHAVIOUR OR VARIANT VIRUS



Dr. Aravind R.

HOD Infectious Diseases,
Government Medical College
Thiruvananthapuram

Dr. Mariyam Rajee Alex

Senior Resident,
Community Medicine, GMC
Thiruvananthapuram

India is in the grip of a massive second wave of COVID 19, with daily cases crossing the 100,000 mark, something which hadn't occurred during the first wave of the pandemic. The steady rise in test positivity rate reflecting an exponential increase in the number of cases in affected states like Maharashtra, Chattisgarh etc is a harbinger of the times to come with repercussions expected in almost all states including Kerala.

Going by the steep rise in the active cases, the second wave of COVID 19 in India is likely to be more severe than the first wave both in the absolute number of cases and case fatality rate. Pandemics are characterized by ebb and wave patterns and COVID 19 is no exception. The 1918 Spanish influenza pandemic, arguably the most devastating in the history of mankind, killed an estimated 5 crore people in three waves between March 1918 and November 1919. Each wave had as high mortality as the previous one.

Multiple waves of COVID 19 have occurred across the globe which is believed to be related to the presence of vulnerable population [seronegative], waning immunity among seropositive individuals, and in part due to the emergence of immune escape variants of SARS-CoV-2 virus like the Brazilian and South African Variants of Concern. The pace of the COVID 19 pandemic can be slowed only when around 70% of the population acquire immunity to COVID 19 either through natural infection or by vaccination. This population immunity is otherwise referred to as herd immunity, which is the indirect protection from an infectious disease that occurs



when a sufficient percentage of the population becomes immune to an infection either through vaccination or by natural infection thereby reducing the likelihood of infection for those individuals who lack immunity. As far as COVID 19 is concerned, acquiring herd immunity by natural infection of 70% of the population is not an option considering the heavy price we will end up paying with respect to avoidable deaths. So the feasible option is to protect the entire population by strictly enforcing COVID appropriate behaviour like universal masking, hand sanitisation and physical distancing till around 70 to 80% of the population is fully vaccinated. The percentage to be vaccinated for herd immunity depends on the efficacy of the deployed vaccines. COVID 19 transmission dynamics is closely related to the 3 Cs

- 1. CLOSED SPACES with poor airflow.**
- 2. CROWDED PLACES.**
- 3. CLOSE CONTACT settings with face to face contact.**

Preventive measures should be put in place to ensure that the 3Cs which are closely related to COVID 19 transmission dynamics gets addressed.

The three waves of Spanish flu were driven by school opening, changes in ambient temperature and lowering of guard by the vulnerable. The hard lessons of history, such as the 1918 devastation of Philadelphia due to influenza following a large parade, have been forgotten. Not learning from past pandemics is one of the reasons why we are witnessing multiple waves of COVID 19 across the globe including India.

High seroprevalence in the community by itself will not ensure complete protection against further waves of COVID 19. This is partly because of antibody decay kinetics in the seropositive, which means that neutralizing antibody titres will wane with time leaving even the seropositive vulnerable to reinfection after 6 to 8 months of primary infection. Another mechanism is an infection due to immune-escape variants of SARS-CoV-2 like Brazilian and South African variant where the mutant virus is capable of evading the neutralizing antibodies leading to infection even in seropositive. The role of immune escape variants as drivers of further waves is evidenced by the carnage unleashed by the Brazilian variant which decimated the city of Manaus to a ghost town. Interestingly seroprevalence in Manaus prior to the second wave was

“ COVID 19 transmission dynamics is closely related to the 3 Cs

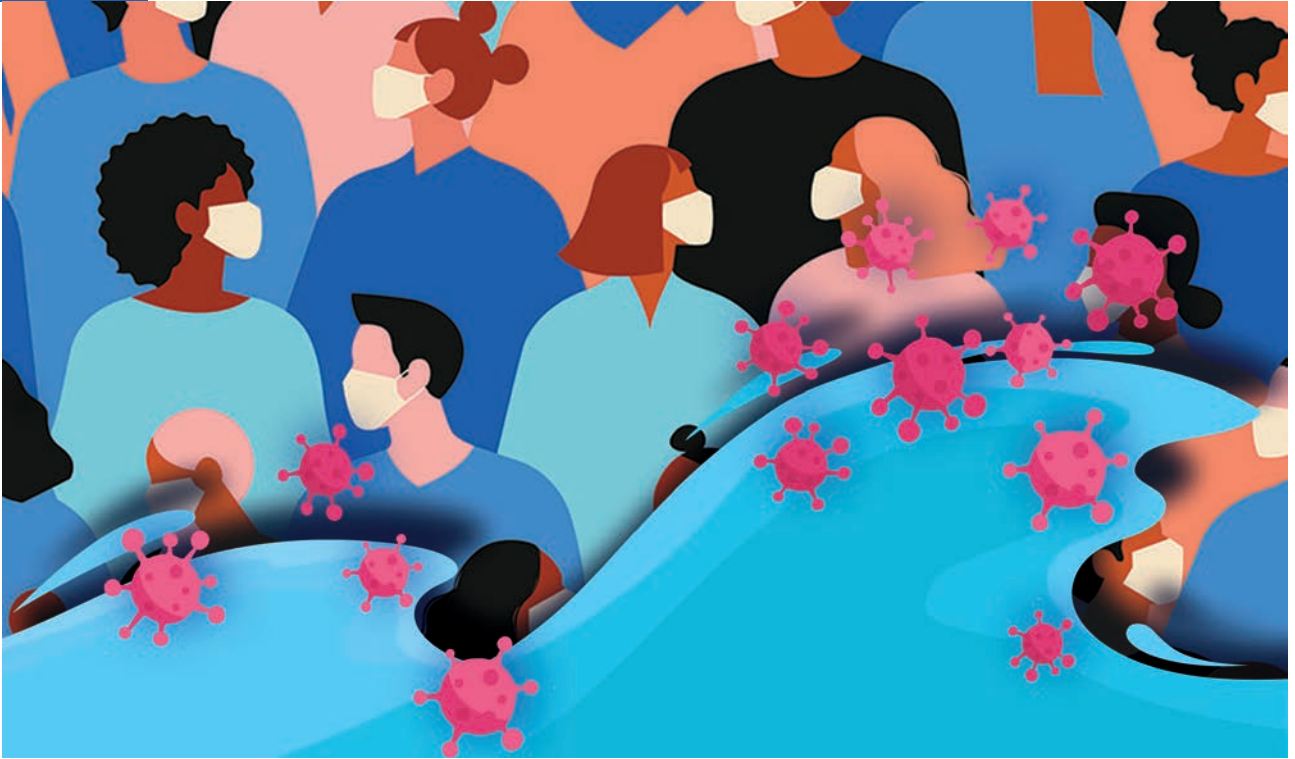
- 1. CLOSED SPACES with poor airflow.**
- 2. CROWDED PLACES.**
- 3. CLOSE CONTACT settings with face to face contact.**

76%, well above the herd immunity threshold. This clearly shows the importance of masking, hand sanitization and physical distancing even in seropositive individuals.

Emerging mutant variants of concern could be one of the reasons for the second wave in India. A sudden increase in the number of infections due to mutant virus could be due to an increase in infectivity, virulence or immune evasion. B117 variant driving the second wave in Punjab is associated with higher transmissibility and lethality. Variants with E484Q and L452R mutations prevalent in Maharashtra are associated with immune evasion and reinfection. So the second wave in India is driven by COVID inappropriate behaviour with probable contribution from mutant variants of concern.

“ Interestingly seroprevalence in Manaus prior to the second wave was 76%, well above the herd immunity threshold. This clearly shows the importance of masking, hand sanitization and physical distancing even in seropositive individuals.

REMAINING BUOYANT AS COVID SURGES AGAIN



Dr. Arun B. Nair

Associate Professor of Psychiatry
Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram

The COVID pandemic took the world by surprise by the end of 2019, and is still raging furiously. It has altered the physical as well as the emotional health of people across the globe. We in India thought that the pandemic was very much contained but current statistics shows that a second wave is on the upsurge. Newer variants of the COVID virus which threaten the immune system are emerging, posing a bigger challenge to the life and health of the citizens of our country. In this context, it is imperative to evaluate how the pandemic has affected the mental health of people the world over, especially in Kerala.

At the initial stage of the pandemic, there was confusion about how to handle the situation. Complete lockdown led to loss of jobs, financial insecurity as well as emotional problems among all sections of the society. It was for the first time that people, who were globetrotting and doing business in various continents, had to remain at one part of the world, probably within the confines of their houses. This paved the way for new emotional problems leading to domestic violence, alcohol- and other substance-induced disorders,

and conflicts, all of which added to the already-peaking financial and social stress. The sudden unavailability of alcohol also either precipitated or worsened many problems.

The longer periods of time spent together by spouses led to an increase in domestic violence and marital conflicts. Adolescent children studying in colleges returned home, and the prolonged stay with parents after a long interval of time, led to intergenerational conflicts. Many developed addiction to digital devices, which the parents could not tolerate, and this caused huge stress in the households of Kerala.

The educational style shifted to online mode, forcing many children to use their parents' mobile phones. This, in turn, led to a significant increase in the time of screen exposure per day. Things got worse when children began to misuse mobile phones for playing online games, viewing pornographic materials, chatting, etc. This adversely affected their physical and mental health. The digital addiction also led to behavioural problems like sudden anger, depression, disturbed sleep and anxiety. A few slipped into depression due to the stresses triggered by the pandemic.

HOW TO REMAIN POSITIVE DURING THE DAYS OF PANDEMIC

The pandemic is a reality and still looms large on our horizons. We have to learn to live with it. So maintaining positive health is an extremely important thing. Many factors should be kept in mind if we are to remain buoyant during this crisis.

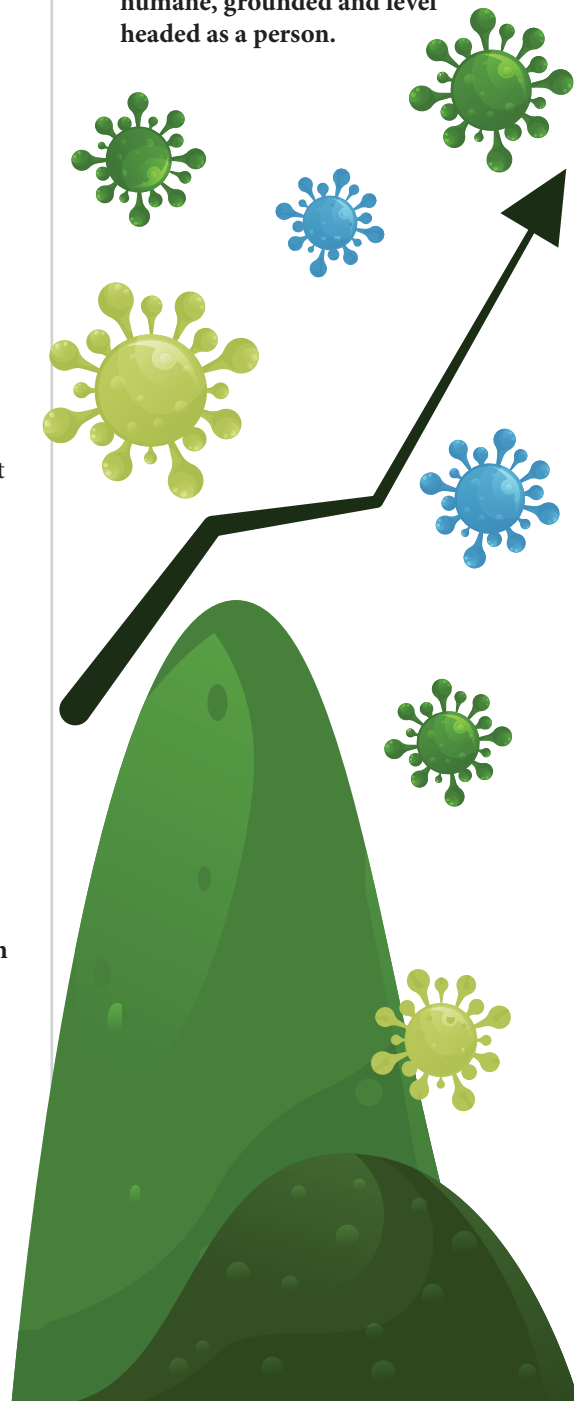
- ▶ **Ensure good and continuous sleep for at least 7 hours every night. For that, maintain a sleep hygiene protocol.**
 - Go to sleep at a fixed time (ideally between 11 pm or 12 midnight) and wake up at fixed time (6 am) – the period when melatonin the sleep-promoting chemical is produced by the pineal gland in the brain
 - Keep away from coffee, cola, etc. (that contain caffeine) after 2 pm
 - Stay away from mobile phones and other digital devices for at least one hour before sleep time
 - Ensure physical exposure to sunlight for at least forty-five minutes every evening, ideally, 5 to 6 hours before sleep
 - Take a bath in cold water immediately after the physical activity
 - Practise any relaxation exercise like deep breathing, yoga, meditation or progressive muscle relaxation just before going to sleep.
- ▶ **Avoid digital addictions**
 - Use mobile phones and other digital devices responsibly and ideally for less than one hour per day
 - Don't indulge in gaming or cultivate addiction to social media
- ▶ **Spend quality time with family members**
 - Speak to your children, listen to them and chat informally to create an atmosphere of relaxation
- ▶ **Set apart some time for hobbies for at least one hour**
 - Spend at least thirty minutes of 'me time' every day for yourself to contemplate what you want in life and what you want to do next day
- ▶ **Before going to the bed write down three positive blessings that happened during the day**
 - Think about the happy events of your childhood days and transpose

yourself to the emotional state you had at that point of time

- Make gratitude visits to those who helped you during difficult times

- Remember that you are a part of universe and are associated with many others.

This will make you more humane, grounded and level headed as a person.



KEEP THESE THINGS IN MIND



Dr Anju Angel Alex
Department of Health services

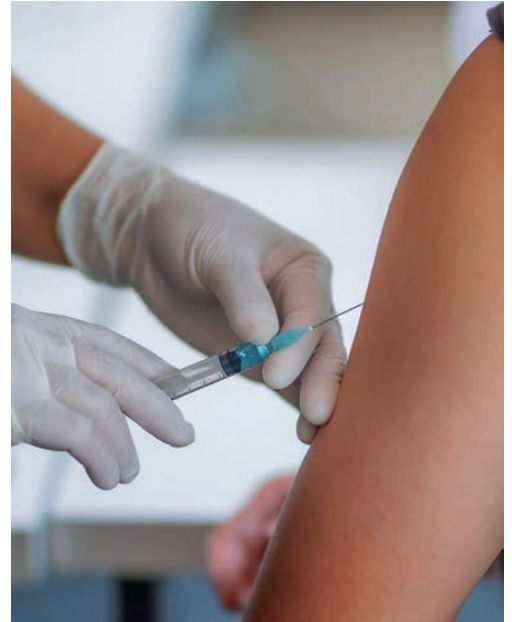
The dreaded Second wave of the Pandemic has struck with a vengeance. The number of new cases has gone up from 11,794 in the first week of February 2021 to 152,265 as of April 10, 2021, with regional variations. Here's a look at the FAQs—old and new, for knowledge is power!

HOW DO WE GET AN INFECTION?

The predominant and confirmed mode of spread is through direct droplet transmission. The safe distance to be kept in this regard is 2 metres. Though there have been sporadic studies that suggest airborne spread, in the lack of conclusive evidence it, we cannot authoritatively talk about aerosol transmission—meaning transmission by means of suspended particles in the air.

IS NOT FREQUENT USE OF SANITISER THE MOST IMPORTANT THING?"

No. Spread of the virus through fomites (things or surfaces that are likely to carry an infection) has lesser and inadequately documented evidence in



comparison to droplet infection. The duration of which the pathogen can survive on different surfaces is not known for sure. So the most important thing is to avoid crowds, wear a good mask that covers your nostrils and keep a safe distance from each other.

IS WEARING A MASK GOOD ENOUGH TO ENABLE A PERSON TO ATTEND SOCIAL GATHERINGS?

All social gatherings, be it a wedding or a funeral, will invariably have very many people from different walks of life with varying exposure risk-taking part in it. Following Covid protocols at such events without seeming silly or rude become impossible including when it comes to having food. These gatherings are definitely more risk than anything else.

WILL VACCINATION HELP ME PREVENT AN INFECTION?

Yes. To a great extent. No, the vaccine gives 100 per cent protection. The protection given by a vaccine can be anything from 70 % and above. But this protection becomes good enough when the herd immunity is good. It also protects us against the very severe form of the disease. Vaccination is the tool that has helped us keep many infectious diseases at bay.

COVISHIELD OR COVAXIN -WHICH ONE IS BETTER?

Both are different vaccines that have different technologies. An absolute answer with respect to which is better can be said only when data with regards to the immunogenicity (the ability to produce immunity) is obtained, by conducting retrospective studies. Nevertheless, both vaccines having cleared all phases of clinical trials means that they are good enough against Covid 19.

WHAT ARE THE EXPECTED SIDE EFFECTS FOLLOWING VACCINATION?

These injections can cause mild events ranging from fever, joint pain, muscle pain, chills, headache, nausea, tiredness which is relieved by paracetamol tablet. These are expected, just as with a DPT injection in children. After

vaccination the subject is kept in observation for half an hour during which any untoward event is watched for and taken care of.

DO SIDE EFFECTS MEAN THAT THE VACCINE IS WORKING?

No, the vaccine will do its work irrespective of your getting a fever or not. For the vaccine to work means producing covid specific antibodies. This is not a process that happens instantly or within a few hours. It takes a minimum of 28 days for the system's machinery to produce antibodies in adequate amount.

The little doubts are endless and should be cleared with a registered medical practitioner. But above all, we should have faith in the system that tries to safeguard our health. With the Second wave in full swing, let us use our knowledge and translate it into healthy practices. And obey the guidelines issued by our government from time to time. And get ourselves vaccinated without dilly-dallying when our turn comes.

IS GLOBAL MICROBIAL DIVERSITY WANING



Ignatius Pereira
Senior Journalist

With alarms sounding about the declining diversity of plants and animals, a related concern with equally profound implications is posed: is the variety of microbial life, including viruses, changing and waning too? If yes, it may have deep consequences for all life on earth, says a scientific study published on April 11, 2021.

'Microbes' mean 'the tiniest living things, including bacteria, archaeobacteria, single-celled eukaryotes, and viruses of all organisms. In 2011, scientists estimated that Earth's plant and animal species (macrobes) numbered almost 10 million. That therefore meant that for every macrobe species there are 1,000 kinds of microbes or microorganisms.

With alarms sounding about the declining diversity of plants and animals, a related concern with equally profound implications is posed: is the variety of microbial life, including viruses, changing and waning too? If yes, it may

have deep consequences for all life on earth, says a scientific study published on April 11, 2021. That is because many microbes support the existence of all higher life forms. The study was carried out by David S. Thaler of the University of Basel, Switzerland, and Guest Investigator at The Rockefeller University's Programme for the Human Environment (PHE).

He points out that assessing plant and animal biodiversity involves counting different species within a given timeframe, and then comparing a subsequent count. "By doing so, we learned that some species have recently become extinct and an estimated one million at risk of extinction within decades". He said that the same approach has been used to monitor, for example, changes in microbial diversity in an intestine due to dietary changes. "The extent of current microbial biodiversity is unknown, and a large fraction of the microbial world may exist in hard-to-access, rare, or extreme environments -- the deeper the depth, the less we know. Previous research has theorized that the deep hot biosphere may contain the majority of our planet's microbial biodiversity. Resolving this problem might require 20 years before there is a sufficient understanding of the deep biosphere and other hard-to-access environments."

Says Dr. Thaler: The world is finding hundreds of variants of the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19, one of a very roughly estimated 10 billion different kinds of microbes each evolving in its own ways.

"Microbial evolution is not always toward greater diversity, microbes can also become extinct, smallpox virus being an example," he adds. "Countless other viruses and bacteria probably have also come and gone without our ever having known of their existence. Some microbes are specific in their associations with certain animals and plants. As these plants and animals become extinct, it seems likely that specialized microbes associated with them have also vanished."

"There is no comparable understanding of the overall trajectory or detailed fine-structure trajectories of microbial evolution. Possible implications in the trajectory of microbial evolution are not limited to the evolution of pathogens that attack humans or the few species we depend on for our food." Humanity depends on the ecological services performed by microbes which recycle nutrients, nurture plant growth, purify water, make cheese and wine, and decompose wastes. And, by turning atmospheric carbon dioxide back into carbon to be stored in soils or the ocean depths (and doing likewise with nitrogen, sulphur, iron, manganese and more), microbes are key to Earth's atmosphere and climate.

Concludes Jesse Ausubel, Director of The Rockefeller University's PHE, a sponsor of the study: "Linnaeus started his Systema Naturae in 1735, almost 300 years ago, and we still do not have a complete list of the species of plants and animals that he started to catalogue. It will not be easy to do something similar with probably 1,000 times as many microbes, and measure the changes!"

Adds Mr. Ausubel: "There is no agency yet monitoring the state of the microbial world, and no World Wildlife Fund or Nature Conservancy for microbes. Perhaps one day soon we will realize and rectify our neglect and lift our respect for the diversity of microbial life."

“ The extent of current microbial biodiversity is unknown, and a large fraction of the microbial world may exist in hard-to-access, rare, or extreme environments - the deeper the depth, the less we know.



“ Humanity depends on the ecological services performed by microbes which recycle nutrients, nurture plant growth, purify water, make cheese and wine, and decompose wastes.

CLEARING UP THE FINAL HURDLE TO SUCCESS



Dr. B. Ashok
Serving IAS officer and
former Vice Chancellor

The result of the main examination of the much sought after KAS has been announced and the shortlisted candidates are preparing to clear the final hurdle, the interview. An interview is an exploration of the personal abilities of the candidates which need to be gauged from his reactions, reflexes, abilities to apply his knowledge, display officer like qualities and maintain a pleasant countenance. It also needs to be kept in mind that the impression of the candidates in an interview is always relative.

The personal interview has become an inevitable methodology to select candidates to positions that require the huge instant application of knowledge and “thinking on the feet” such as officers selected through the UPSC’s civil service examinations or the newly organized Kerala Administrative Service. From the Notification for the Kerala Administrative Service, the interview carries a weightage of 50 marks out of 350 used to arrive at the ranked list for the selection. Though it carries only 14% of the overall maximum score, the 50 marks set apart for the interview is likely to determine the success of most candidates as more than three times the actual number of vacancies are likely to be called for the interview. Therefore it is imperative that the candidate performs and gives his best in the half an hour also set apart for the personal interview.

First, the interview is an exploration of the personal abilities of the candidates which need to be gauged from their reactions, reflexes, abilities to apply his knowledge, display officer like qualities and maintain a pleasant countenance when met with somewhat aggressive or adversarial questioning. It also needs to be kept in mind that the impression of the candidates appearing in an interview is always relative. The main informants on a candidate's performance would be his wisdom displayed over and above his academic knowledge and work experience. As a person, the candidate's preference for objectivity and ability to master facts and figures would be looked into.

A civil servant in the all India cadre or state service needs to be a master over the facts and figures of the area he is expected to analyse. Summarising data of voluminous nature into a paragraph of praxis to guide the decision-maker make a reasoned choice is a fundamental art in civil service. Without the art of crisp precis writing and advocating positions based on the fundamental guidelines for governance such as the Constitution and the laws and the rules, no civil servant can succeed. If I am on the panel for an interview, I would be looking for the candidate's appetite for facts and figures and ability to draw quick conclusions and generate alternate options for the decision-makers.

A third defining feature of a servants' professional height is an ability to prepare concise drafts as against academic journal long articles and papers. A preference for the economy of words and concise and crisp expression is preferred. The background setting of an effective young civil servant needs to rest on the foundation of the idea of the Indian State for which a basic idea of the contours of the Constitution needs to be established. The developmental context of the state or service one has chosen has to be there. Therefore an idea of the history, geography, economy, polity and current development issues of the states/service the candidate has applied to serve has to be built. Curiosity on the current debates on the development at a national and regional context has to be maintained.

Relations have to be drawn between one's field of academic training and also work experience, if one has had, to the position one has applied for. As joining the new service implies taking on a new role he will have to explain how that new role will fit both the foundation of academic training as well as the buildup of experience so far. If a candidate is leaving an established career like that of a dentist or a musician he will have to give sound reasons why that lateral shift is in the public interest and to his satisfaction. Questions on personal motivation need to have convincing answers and not should be casually remarked upon.

SHOULD NOT HESITATE TO DIFFER FROM THE ASSUMPTIONS

Candidates should not hesitate to differ from the assumptions or conclusions of the person asking the question. A polite departure is always appreciated if made with sound reasoning and the assistance of facts and figures. There is no right answer to any question posed in an interview. A tricky question is another means to test the intellectual honesty and flexibility of the candidates as to whether he is given to guesswork or would candidly admit the inadequacy of facts and figures or law in making sense of the question. While attempting a difficult question partly in the dark is alright, an answer made upon absolute guesswork is not at all advisable. That would reflect a non-serious approach and lack of intellectual analysis which is best avoided.

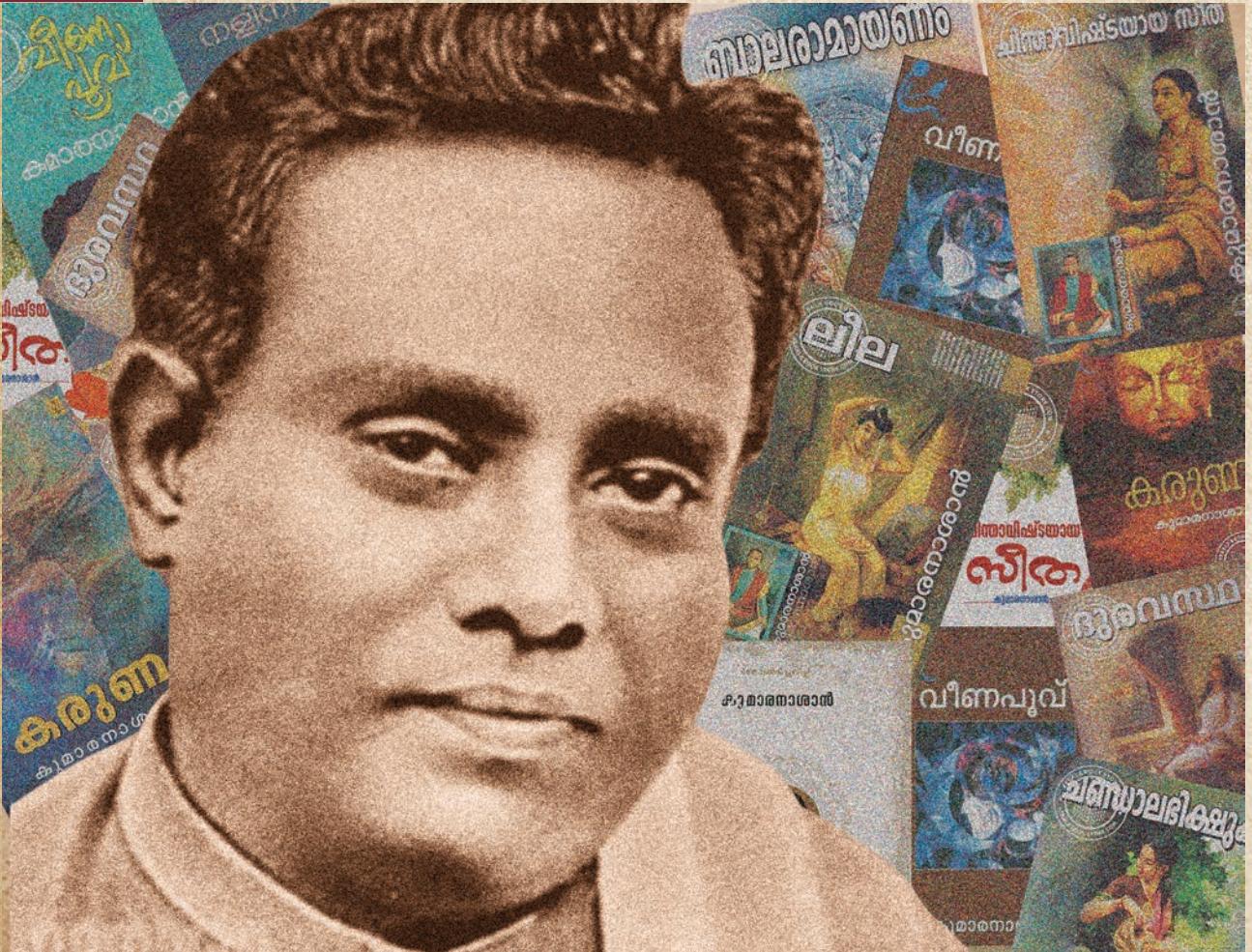
Apart from the verbal communication which is usually done for 75% of the time spent in the interview room, the body language and dress decorum of the candidate has a definite impression and role. I would recommend dressing to comfort but not going over the top. Harsh colours and jeans are not the etiquettes in a professional interview. Interview formals would include a full sleeve shirt of usually office styling,

“ First, the interview is an exploration of the personal abilities of the candidates which need to be gauged from their reactions, reflexes, abilities to apply his knowledge, display officer like qualities and maintain a pleasant countenance when met with somewhat aggressive or adversarial questioning. ”

cotton trousers and lace-up black or tan shoes for men and saree suits for women. One can imagine other formal dresses as well, but this has become more or less standard for civil service interviews.

The grooming has to be adequate but facial makeup not go overboard and one has to maintain composure and a relaxed framework of mind while answering the questions. If attended carefully and with adequate preparation of at least half a dozen preparatory mock interviews with a panel with sufficient understanding of the interview process, the body language, dress sense and the answering pattern can be improved to almost twice the performance level observed in the beginning. Therefore, candidates need to undergo mock interviews as frequently as possible and get used to the half an hour or 40 minutes spent acquiring the most precious 50 marks which will go to clinching success in their KAS examination. The interview has to be mastered with diligent preparation and is not to be not worried about.

KUMARAN ASAN THE MASTER WORDSMITH



P.N. Gopikrishnan
Literary Critic

Kumaran Asan's heroines were born much before the state of Kerala took shape. But Asan portrayed them against the backdrop of the nation-state of India - Nalini in the Himalayan province, Leela in Vindhya, Vasavadatta in Mathura, Chandalabhikshuki in Pataliputra, Savithri in Malappuram and so on. It was through his heroines that Asan drew the map of yet-to-be-born India. Renowned critic P.N.Gopikrishnan rereads Asan's poetry while we celebrate the 148th birth anniversary of the poet this month.

To write about Kumaran Asan the poet is to remind ourselves about the ephemerality of life. He lived for a brief span of 51 years, of which only 15 could be consecrated to the composition of poetry - from "Veena Poovu" [The Fallen Flower] in 1907 to "Karuna" [Compassion] in 1923. The only consolation we can draw is that if water, with its gentle but most powerful

arms, had not caught him in its loving embrace, he would have lived longer[1]. Asan sowed a few seeds of words in the bed of Malayalam soil. The sprouts grew and, in turn, nourished that very language many times over. They have assured us that it is now impossible to kill the Malayalam tongue without first destroying Asan's poems.

The question "What if Asan never lived?" – though speculative – is a highly relevant one. It is a very ponderous question too. In response, what we can say with absolute certainty is that if Asan had never lived, the mysteries of our inner lives would have remained inaccessible. The topography of the human mind – with its gargantuan mountains, surging seas, ossified darkness, slivers of lightning, and conflicts that defy continual attempts at resolution – would have been left uncharted.

Rainer Maria Rilke, the great German poet wrote this about his predecessor, another great poet, Holderlin:

To you, O majestic poet, to you the compelling image,
O caster of spells, was a life, entire; when you uttered it
a line snapped shut like fate; there was a death
even in the mildest, and you walked straight into it; but
the god who preceded you led you out and beyond it,
.....
..... Only you
move like the moon. And underneath, the nocturnal landscape
brightens and darkens—your holy, your terrified landscape,
which you feel in departures. No one
gave it away more sublimely, gave it back to the universe
more fully, without any need to hold on.

The same can be said of Asan. Like every other great poet in the world, he moved through life and death. He could spot a small plant, see a tiny flower beneath it, and notice its tinier, withered petals. Simultaneously, his eyes could leave the earth, and soar with the eternally majestic birds as they took to the lofty skies. Taking an X-ray picture of the society around him, he could say, "Why do you cry, Mother India? Bondage is your destiny, O Mother!" The very hand that penned the consoling words "I ask not your caste, sister!" could also paint the picture of the horribly mutilated Vasavadatta. Asan was a compassionate person but as a poet, he did not fight shy of depicting the worst form of violence.

Women abound in Asan's longer poems – Nalini in whose presence even mendicants pale into insignificance, Leela who after her husband's demise seeks out her paramour in the woods, Sita who questions Rama's sense of justice, Savithri who breaks the spiky iron fence of casteism and marries Chathan, Chandalabhikshuki who rises from the lowliest of social circumstances and becomes a messenger of Buddha's anti-casteism and universal love, Vasavadatta who – like a flower that waits for the breeze in order to bequeath its final breath of fragrance – clings on to the tender thread of life until she can meet her ascetic lover – Malayalam literature had not seen such brave women till then. Just cast a passing glance at the gallery – Nalini the epitome of piety, Leela who even in conjugality nurses dreams of her lover, Sita a mythical figure, Vasavadatta a courtesan, Savithri a Brahmin

“ In other words, women in his works had already made a quantum leap into the future.

woman, a Chandala girl, a lover (Nalini), a widow (Leela), an abandoned woman (Sita), a fallen woman (Vasavadatta), a devout wife (Sita), a woman abandoned by her lover (Vasavadatta), a woman who overcomes hurdles to marry her lover (Savithri) – the permutations and combinations are so rich that we look at them with wonderment.

To understand why his women characters provoke such wonderment, we have only to examine the condition of women during that historical period in Kerala. Let me recall what P. Udayakumar has very clearly stated in his study of Asan. Quoting from the autobiography of C. Kesavan, who was the Prime Minister of Thiru-Kochi and leader of SNDP and State Congress, Udayakumar argues that at a time when Asan created brave women characters powered by a kind of social dynamism, in actuality, women in Kerala had only begun to wear

“ If Thunchath Ezhuthachan is the father of the Malayalam language, Kumaran Asan [Asan in Malayalam means 'instructor'] is its wordsmith nonpareil.



blouses, and take the first steps towards modernity. In other words, women in his works had already made a quantum leap into the future.

Needless to say, Asan's heroines were born much before the state of Kerala took shape. But Asan portrayed them against the backdrop of the nation-state of India – Nalini in the Himalayan province, Leela in Vindhya, Vasavadatta in Mathura, Chandalabhikshuki in Pataliputra, Savithri in Malabar and so on. It was through his heroines that Asan drew the map of yet-to-be-born India. Besides, he bestowed these women with an inner dynamism even when the societies they lived and died in did not show any signs of vitality. Leela was catapulted from the city to the woods, Chandalabhikshuki from her lowly

hut to the Buddhist vihara, and Vasavadatta from her palatial residence to the graveyard. He made Sita a thinker and Savithri a revolutionary. They were not puppets in the hands of fate. Rather, they were the products of their own desires and longings.

Asan composed his works by drawing sustenance from the soil that had been tilled by the social renaissance. To be more specific, Asan was one of the tillers himself. Precisely for that reason, he accommodated in his works all the values that were getting drained from the field of social activities. His mentor (and Kerala's too) Sri Narayana Guru had envisioned a world of brotherhood and worked towards making Kerala a model of fraternal nobility. It was Asan who ushered in sisters into such a world. The use of the word "sister" in the line "I ask not your caste, sister!" is highly significant because it played such a role. In this manner, by suggesting that it is not the community of brothers alone that makes a society but that of sisters as well, he added the second hemisphere to complete the globe of renaissance. It was executed in a style that could be pulled off only by an experienced wordsmith, and this feat would repeat itself time and again in the future.

Asan has been generally described as a high priest of love. Even while it is true, we need to pose the question "Why did he valorize love?" In his works, love transcends the plane of a romantic sentiment and fulfils a cultural purpose, a value that was the most significant one in Asan's scheme of things. This was because Asan's poetic turf was not a level ground. It encompassed tall hills and deep valleys. But as his world was populated by different types



of characters who went through different dramatic life situations, they needed to have a plain field as a meeting place. The lack of such a location was the reason why a sex worker like Vasavadatta and an ascetic like Upagupta could never meet. The only space where their tryst was possible was the even terrain created by culture, a locale that Asan called “love”. And love was not painted by using one pigment alone. In “Leela” the time of the consummation of love is also the time of death because the lovers Leela and Madanan unite as corpses in the Reva river. In “Karuna” love becomes deliverance. In “Chintaavishtayaaya Sita” Asan shows what happens to love when patriarchal authority reigns supreme. Love, to Asan, meant the construction of a modern space that erased all differences of caste and social position. Love was the force that razed down the prison walls of castes and religions, liberated people, and led them to the world of humanism. Thus Asan made love an entity that was neither limited nor imaginary.

Asan was unparalleled in his evocation of milieu. He never wrote about any event without specifying where and when it took place, be it a wooded area, a snowy locale, cityscape or countryside. He conjured up Kerala and India. The smaller poems gave clearer pictures of the settings. The hand that portrayed the Garisopa waterfalls also sketched the Spanish cherry and Asoka trees blooming during spring time in a village. The hand that drew Sri Narayana Guru in “Gramavrikshathile Kuyil” [The Cuckoo on a Village Tree] also presented a kid who noticed flowers flying from the tree branches, and depicted its mother who taught her child that the flowers it saw were actually butterflies. Asan gave Malayalis philosophy to ponder over, evening

“ He made Sita a thinker and Savithri a revolutionary. They were not puppets in the hands of fate. Rather, they were the products of their own desires and longings.

prayers to chant, and revolutionary songs to sing. All of them fell within the ambit of poetry but in a manner that is difficult to define. Therefore, if Thunchath Ezhuthachan is the father of the Malayalam language, Kumaran Asan [Asan in Malayalam means ‘instructor’] is its wordsmith nonpareil.

[1] The reference is to Kumaran Asan’s death by drowning in Lake Pallana when the boat he was travelling in capsized on 16 Jan. 1924.

NRITHA, NRITHYA AND NATYA



Nirmala Paniker
Mohiniyattam Exponent

Movement is fundamental to the existence of the universe. At the smallest level matter exists in continuous state of motion. Movement is also characteristic to the existence of life on earth. Prehistoric human beings danced because of this innate affinity for moving. Dance was part of their expression in social gatherings. Since time immemorial, humans danced in groups around fire in the night. While the campfire protected them from wild animals and cold, it also expressed their emotions celebrating the sense of belonging or a big catch or as part of funerals and mourning.

As civilizations evolved dancing also evolved in form and purpose. As communities grew audiences emerged. The purpose of dance grew and addressing the aesthetic sensibilities of the audience became an important purpose of dance. Different styles of dancing evolved. The world dance day celebrates the legacy, purpose and beauty of dance that transcends times and space.

NRITHA - Pure Dance - Thiruvathirakali



NATYA

Nangiarkoothu-KapilaVenu



NRITHYA - Expository dance with emotional expressions and mood



Smitha_Rajan in Ananda_Sayana at Soorya 2008

“ Natya is the presentation of the essence and state of all the three worlds. There is no knowledge, no craft, no learning, no art, no yoga, no action which one cannot find in natya ”
“Natyashastra”

NOT OF AN AGE, BUT FOR ALL TIME



Dr. V. Rajakrishnan
Literary critic and Professor of English

April 23, the birthday as well as the death day of William Shakespeare, is observed as World Book Day. Renowned critic and professor of English Dr. V. Rajakrishnan throws light on the long-standing fame of the plays of the Bard.

In one sense Shakespeare was a truly Elizabethan writer. His world-view was steeped in Elizabethan values and beliefs, and he addressed concerns that were contemporary and topical. At the same time, he was able to transcend his epoch in a peculiar way. In one sense his timeliness formed an essential part of the timeless quality of his theatre. Now it is a truism that Shakespeare was a universal genius, and he belongs to all ages. In fact, after his death every successive age tended to look upon his plays through its own prism. For instance, the eighteenth century or rather 'the age of reason' had its own image of Shakespeare. One finds that towards the end of the eighteenth century, with the advent of the Romantic Age, Shakespeare took on entirely different aspects. Goethe for example understood and interpreted Shakespeare in a particular manner. Perhaps it was Goethe who underscored the intensely emotional side of Shakespeare's theatre, and again it was Goethe who rediscovered Hamlet after his own fashion, which led to a radical breakthrough in understanding and interpreting one of Shakespeare's most problematic, elusive plays.

Then came the Romantics. One is tempted to recall the famous remark made by Coleridge: "I think I have a smack of Hamlet in me". Coleridge, the philosopher lost in a mist of opium, found his own reflection in the character of the Prince of Denmark: a vacillating, hypersensitive, indecisive youth caught between dream and duty.

Shakespeare continued to exercise a tremendous fascination across successive generations in the Romantic and Victorian era. Starting with the renewed interest in Shakespeare shown in the Romantic era, an entire corpus of critical work began to emerge around his works in the manner of exegesis, rereading and reinterpretation. By the beginning of the twentieth century, you had critical readings of Shakespearean theatre filling whole libraries. This happened alongside the enduring fascination exercised by one single play of the Immortal Bard, Hamlet. Next to Jesus Christ Hamlet is the most written - about figure in Western culture, followed by Franz Kafka, and Samuel Beckett.

How could one define the twentieth - century perception of Shakespeare? Here I wish to recall a seminal critical work which appeared in 1960s carrying the suggestive title 'Shakespeare our contemporary'. Its author was Jan Kott, a Polish theatre critic who moved to the West. What was interesting about this book is the way Kott tried to relate Shakespeare's History plays and Tragedies to the turbulent times which countries in Eastern Europe, especially Poland, lived through under a totalitarian regime. The originality of Kott's reading of Shakespeare lies in the fact that he made Shakespeare look exactly a contemporary whose plays directly spoke to the spirit of a shifting and unstable age in which everyday reality quickly slid into the realm of nightmare. I wish to recall an interesting observation contained in this book. Had Hamlet and Ophelia lived in our times, they would have been wearing jeans, and instead of reading Montaigne they would have been reading the works of Sartre and Camus. Jan Kott made some incisive observations regarding Shakespeare's contemporary relevance, moving back and forth from Shakespeare Tragedies and the Absurd plays of Samuel Beckett.

Now one can think of the prolific and unending representations of Shakespeare in cinema and visual media. Perhaps one compelling feature of the rediscovery of Shakespeare in modern times has been the manner in which he has been lifted out of the Anglo-Saxon or even the Western framework and transposed to the unique sensibility of the Third World. For example, I might recall a remarkable film that grew out of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, which is now considered a classic: *The Throne of Blood* by the Japanese film director Akira Kurosawa. *Throne of Blood* is a nativised version of *Macbeth* in which the director has transposed the play to a Samurai context. Kurosawa has filtered out the meditative poetry and the philosophical reflections in the original text. He has even left out Lady Macbeth from the story. What has survived is the violence at the heart of the play, which speaks in intimate terms of the Japanese psyche seeking an escape from the traumas of the Second World War.

Most of the Shakespeare plays have been adapted to the screen in our times. Some are literal adaptations while others tend to recast the spirit of those plays in a modern idiom. One can think of the ways in which practitioners of art cinema in Europe sort to recapture the spirit of Shakespearean plays, breathing a modern sense of urgency in them.

Again one can think of the Hollywood adaptations of Shakespeare which appeal to a general audience, leaving out subtle nuances. I wish to end with a passing reflection on a totally different spin given to *The Tempest* by theatre persons in Third World nations including India. *The Tempest* is now seen an allegory of colonialism, and Caliban is perceived as the native underdog confronted by the hegemony of a colonizing master. In a similar vein, Othello has been reread in some African countries with a heightened emphasis on the

“ Next to Jesus Christ Hamlet is the most written -about figure in Western culture, followed by Franz Kafka and Samuel Beckett.

element of racial polarity in the play. It has been said of the character Hamlet that there as many Hamlets as there are readers. This is perhaps true of Shakespeare too. Every passing epoch attempts to reinvent Shakespeare after its own image.

“ It has been said of the character Hamlet that there as many Hamlets as there are readers. This is perhaps true of Shakespeare too. Every passing epoch attempts to reinvent Shakespeare after its own image.



“ Had Hamlet and Ophelia lived today, they would have been wearing jeans, and instead of reading Montaigne they would have been reading the works of Sartre and Camus.

“MY STORY” ALSO HERS



M.N. Karassery
Literary critic

Madhavikuuty aka Kamala Suraiyya's life was an eventful one. Till her advent to the literary circle, women were mostly viewed through the typical male gaze. She opened a wide window for readers and said, "see the real woman!"

There can hardly be another woman in the history of Kerala, who had created as many debates around her as Kamala Das aka Madhavi Kutty aka Kamala Suraiyya. Her writings, her conversations and statements, her politics and beliefs, had all ignited huge disputes. She had been a controversial figure for almost all of forty years. No other female presence had tempted or provoked the society of Kerala in such a manner. Never had we been compelled to direct our consistent focus on any other woman.

Her autobiography, "My Story" was most explosive happening in the field of Malayalam literature. Nothing more incendiary had happened either before or after it was published in 1973 and there has been no event in the history of writing or writers in Malayalam that has been comparable to the continuous newsworthiness.



It was her uniquely naive and extremely honest way of speaking, behaving and writing that gave rise to those constant and contentious debates. One could even say that her most important achievement has been that she could successfully demonstrate to our society, the highly explosive nature of naked truths.

If what she openly wrote about menstrual blood, experiences of homosexuality and extramarital relationships in “My story” had kicked up a storm, it was her subsequent revelation that most of what was contained in that book was purely figments of her imagination that created the subsequent tornado.

“My story”, raised a very basic question. What indeed is an autobiography? Was Kamala Das telling a fictitious story that she was sculpting into an autobiographical format? Were imagined experiences as real and vivid as actual ones? She had once mentioned this to me in this manner, “Madhavikutty in that story is just a character that I had created. As someone who breaks free from all fetters, I hold her very close to my heart. She was adventurous”

An element of reconstructing the very mould of the autobiographical format of

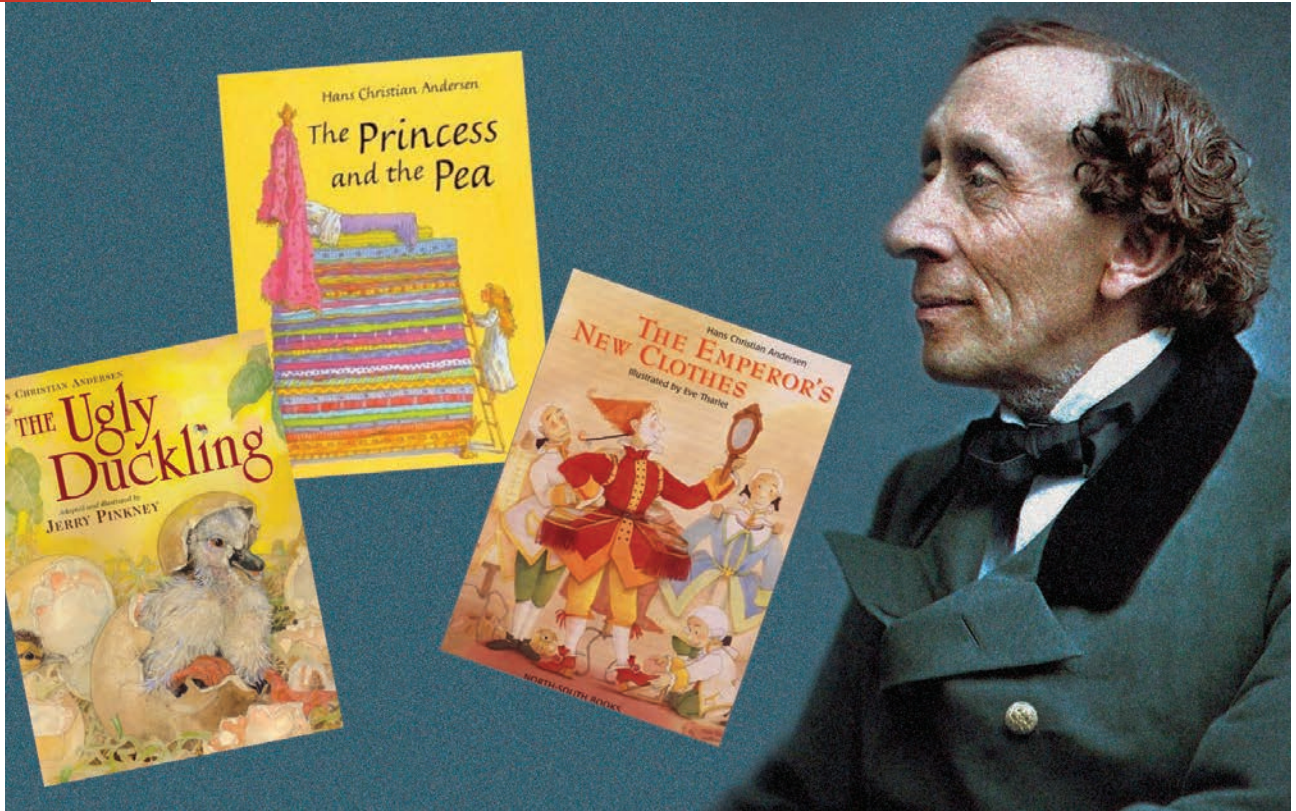
literature becomes evident here. I had not read that book as the true story of the private life of a particular woman. I had rather read into it as the honest depiction of the sorrowful reality of Indian womanhood as a whole. It was a book that was born out of internalising the tragic absence of freedom and the leitmotif of sadness and loss that underlined all-women lives and experiences. She had sacrificed her self-respect and honour to show the world what an enormous hell of gender discrimination burns behind the facade of the so-called glory of Indian womanhood. Had she used a mode other than an autobiography to narrate all this, it would not have had the same impact.

The silent sobs of a woman’s heart yearning for love can be heard from each of the pages in that book. It is her reckless search for that love in her real life, which brought her to the point where she was even willing to take decisions that created heated debates in the society

The real Madhavikutty was the one, whose enlightened literary works had uprooted all the notions that had worked against women. She had never been consciously aware that she was speaking of matters that no one had dared to raise before the society till then. She had always just spoken the truth with the naive innocence that comes naturally to a child.

This licence was the authority conferred on her by her immense capacity for love. The same description of “belligerent outpourings born out of love” that Vailopalli had ascribed to the cries of the crow, echoed like loud drumbeats throughout her life. Transformed through the literary tools of her writing, those persistent cries will continue to remind us of the shallow posturing of our morality and the utter senselessness of the intolerance of our religious beliefs.

'THE LITTLE MERMAID' STILL INFLUENCES...



Dr. Vrinda Varma
Professor, Sri Kerala Varma College

International Children's Book Day is celebrated on April 2nd, the birthday of Hans Christian Andersen, one of the world's greatest authors.

Hans Christian Andersen was born in Odense, Denmark, to a shoemaker father and an illiterate washerwoman mother, he grew up listening to washerwomen's tales and the ramblings of inmates at a nearby mental hospital, and from there, went on to write some of the best stories ever written for children.

Andersen's tales for children include "The Ugly Duckling," "The Princess and the Pea," "The Little Mermaid," "The Emperor's New Clothes," and hundreds more. He wove his stories with such care and affection that it is a shame that the majority of them are only available to us in abridged and poorly translated forms for children.

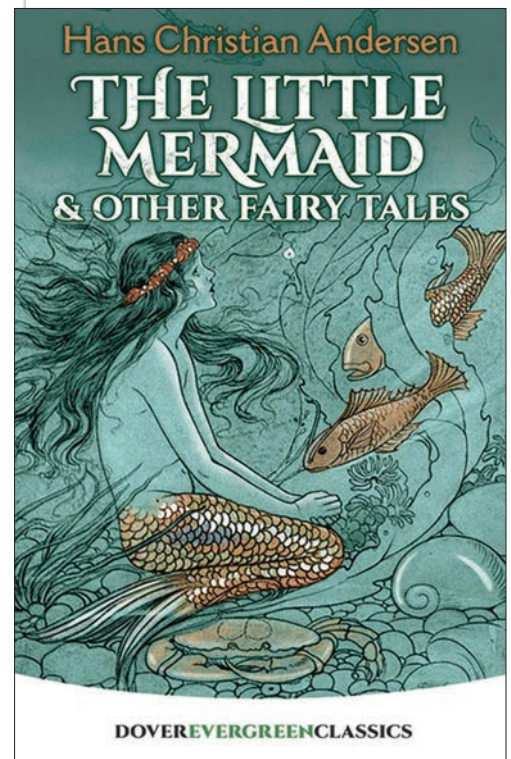
All of his stories have the classic fairy tale aspect of the rags to riches story. Additionally, however, his stories also reflect a troubled life, a deep yearning for happiness, and raw truth. Much criticism has been levelled at Andersen's works for their appropriateness for children, the dark themes, and the overarching sense of melancholy and pessimism. Some of his stories, such as *The Little Mermaid* and *The Little Match Girl* were heavily altered by publishers and editors in order to avoid traumatising the children who read them. Karen Nelson Hoyle (1995) mentions how the illustrator Gustaf Tengrenn changed the ending of 'The Little Match Girl' so that the little girl falls asleep on a luxurious bed at the end of the story, rather than freezing to death as was written in the original. Of course, Disney gave *The Little Mermaid* rather Disney-esque ending, turning it into a happily ever after tale rather than sticking to the original storyline in which the mermaid gives up her tongue to become a human and then throws herself into the sea, choosing to end her life. The elimination of such macabre themes from many of his works, ostensibly because most children lack the emotional bandwidth to assimilate and understand the themes, has however resulted in the trivialization of the original versions.

This is not to suggest that children's books must only be about the positive, imaginary, and wonderful. Now more than ever, when it is more difficult to feel hopeful than it has been in the past, one may be misled into believing that children's books should mainly appeal to the positives of life, or even only the happy-imaginary. However, another argument in the way of assessing what children's books should contain is the understanding that they should address the problematic issues of the society we all cohabit, in order for them to deal with it better when the time comes, in respectful and considered ways.

Julian is a Mermaid by Jessica Love is a book about gender identity targeted at children aged 4-6 years old. It also emphasises the importance of a loving adult in affirming a child's personal choices and interests. *Here We Are: Notes on Living on Planet Earth* by the prolific Oliver Jeffers is a missive on living gently on our planet. It embraces and acknowledges differences, and it shows the child the vastness of our world, of which we are but a small part, while also reminding us that we are never truly alone. *A Family is a Family*, written by Sara O'Leary and illustrated by Qin Leng, is a lovely book about unusual families. Sanjana Kapur's *Who Stole Bhaiyya's Smile* by Pratham Books explores childhood depression through the eyes of a young girl who wonders what happened to her older brother. She imagines that a monster ate Bhaiyya's smile and attempts to reclaim it for him. The *Portraits of Exile* series by Katha Books addresses serious issues such as exile, refugees, and migration. *Gone Grandmother*, written by Chatura Rao and published by Tulika, is about a girl who is trying to figure out where her grandmother has gone. As her mother tries to describe death and dying to her, the young girl discovers the answers for herself, with a little support from science.

Though not all such books would appeal to all readers, they nevertheless push the limits of what has traditionally been referred to as children's literature. They are bound to spark conversations and debates, and in a world where actual spoken dialogue is in short supply, who could say no to a dinner table discussion between kids and parents about books and the topics covered in them?

“ Julian is a Mermaid by Jessica Love is a book about gender identity targeted at children aged 4-6 years old.



“ Though not all such books would appeal to all readers, they nevertheless push the limits of what has traditionally been referred to as children's literature.

M.KRISHNAN NAIR (3 MARCH 1923 – 23 FEBRUARY 2006)

THE MAVERICK & ICONOCLAST IN CRITICISM



P.K. Rajasekharan
Literary critic

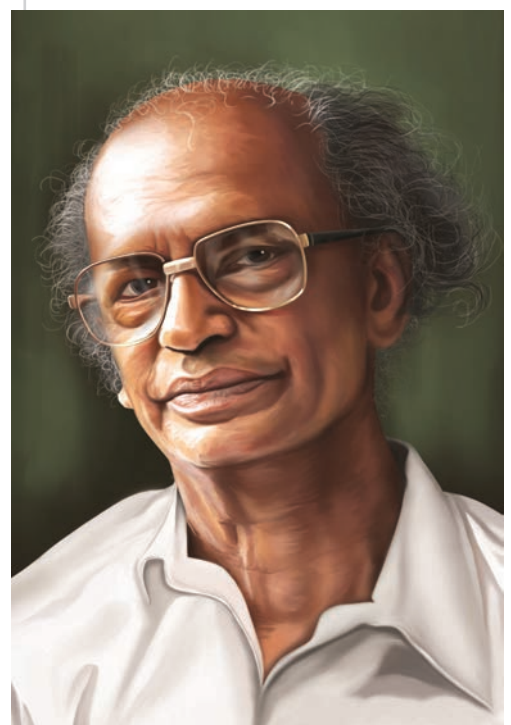
Prof. M. Krishnan Nair took a path less travelled by other prominent figures in criticism. He rescripted criticism and made it accessible to every reader. Thus towering figures in world literature became household names in every Malayali home.

There are some indelible names in the history of newspaper columns in Malayalam. The columns by Sanjayan, E V Krishnapillai, K.P. Keshava Menon, E.M.S Nambuthirippad, K.R. Chummar, O.V. Vijayan, M.P. Nararyanapillai have shaped the public opinion of Malayali in different eras. Most of those columns dealt with politics and social criticism. Yet, there is only one column that may be termed unique in the history of columns in Malayalam: Sahityavaraphalam by M Krishnan Nair. He wrote this literary column in the magazines like Malayalanadu, Kalakaumudi, and Samakalika Malayalam from 1969 to 2006. The 36 years long column had only a few breaks during its appearance.

M Krishnan Nair did a quality check of the literary works published each week in the periodicals in Malayalam.

Reminding the weekly horoscope columns, the title of the column (Sahithya varaphalam) reflected the nature of its critical investigation too. Krishnan Nair ruthlessly predicted longevity, character, and their fortune and misfortune. Varaphalam declared the quality of the literary works in Malayalam while introducing the contemporary works in world literature along with reminding the classics. He used the better works in Malayalam in the past too for comparison. The varaphlam became unique because it mixed various topics. Krishnan Nair wrote by mixing experiences, humour, sarcasm, literary thoughts in a readable style as enjoyed by every kind of reader. He had many readers from various social classes.

“ It was M Krishnan Nair who introduced many writers like Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Jorge Louis Borges, Jose Saramago, AllejoCarpentier, Roa Bastos, Miguel Asturias for the first time in Malayalam.

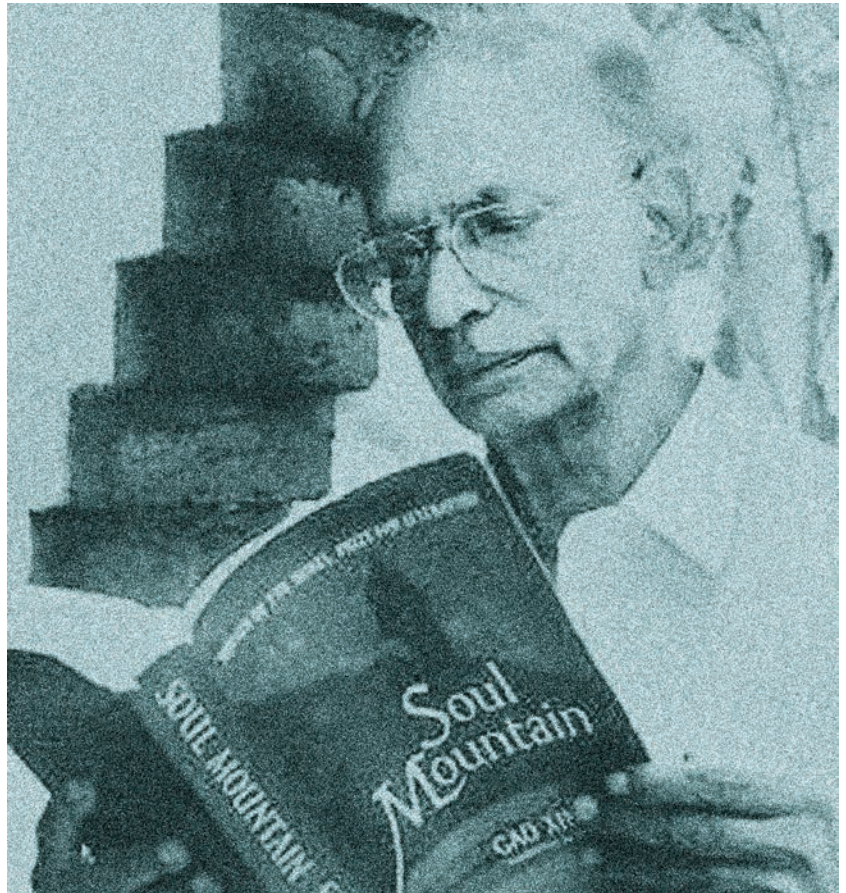


Sahithya varaphalam started appearing in the very first edition (May 18, 1969) of Malayala Nadu periodical from Kollam, under the editorship of S. K. Nair. Since the publication of Malayalanadu came to an abrupt end in 1984,varaphalam was shifted to Kalakaumudi. Once the editor of Kalakaumudi resigned and started The Malayalam magazine, varaphalam again got shifted to that. Years before postmodern literature and criticism appeared in Malayalam, M Krishnan Nair had introduced the Structuralist Ferdinand de Saussure, Roland Barthes, and Michel Foucault in the 1970s itself. It was M Krishnan Nair who introduced many writers like Gabriel Garcia Marquez , Jorge Louis Borges, Jose Saramago , AllejoCarpentier , Roa Bastos , Miguel Asturias for the first time in Malayalam. The scholarship in Malayalam, English, and Sanskrit along with the observation of the developments in contemporary literature made varaphalam an entertaining affair for the readers.

If the tastes remain the same and the eternal doctrines about the literary quality sustain, literature will become a closed domain. The differences in taste result in conflicts. These conflicts renew writing off and on and create new shores and winds where there are breaches. M Krishnan Nair’s criticism paved the way for such conflicts. He was ruthless towards the works which were not in tune with his aesthetic sense and taste. While he showered praises on the postmodern writers in western literature, he gave pass marks

“ M. Krishnan Nair stood as a towering figure in Malayalam literature like a whip, who criticized the substandard literary works and imitations unfazed. This is why the readers think that it would have been better had he been alive still.

only to a select few in Malayalam apart from Changambuzha. He was not kind enough to give appreciation to the writers in Malayalam though the same was given to the experimental western writers. Yet he opened the doors to new currents in literature while keeping rigorous and conservative stances. Amazingly, he spoke about some first-rate writers and literary works years ago itself. When our modern critics were



stuck with German - American literature and Existentialism, Krishnan Nair talked about the new waves in literature and experiments in writing at the heyday of Modernism itself. Before the reverberation of the Latin American Boom entered Kerala, Krishnan Nair talked about it. Apart from the very common names like Marquez and Borges, writers like Jorge Amado, Miguel Asturias, Roa Bastos became familiar with the common Malayali through Krishnan Nair. He wrote about the writers in other European languages too.

Before Camilo Jose Cela and Jose Saramago were Nobel laureates and Kazantzakis became the love of the '80s, Krishnan Nair opened the doors to them. He declared Akhmatova was a poet of higher quality. At the same time, he didn't buy that everything in Western literature was of standard. He was blatant to tell that Name of the Rose by Umberto Eco was excellent but Foucault's Pendulum was a longer essay. He was not hesitant to criticize the predecessors as well as the contemporary writers in Malayalam. He was brave enough to say that the interpretations of Kutti Krishna Marar were both complacent and illogical. He never detained himself in a rigid, unchanging opinion. It was contexts and literary works that shaped his opinions. Often these resulted in personal rifts and enmity.

M. Krishnan Nair stood as a towering figure in Malayalam literature like a whip, who criticized the substandard literary works and imitations unfazed. This is why the readers think that it would have been better had he been alive still.

A NEW DIMENSION TO CLASSICAL DANCE



The picture of Sudanese kid and Vulture, captured by the late Kevin Carter shocked the conscience of mankind and has enduring relevance. The film *THE VULTURE* revisits the theme through the eyes of the character of the vulture through Kuchipudi, a classical dance form of India known for its dance drama tradition. Artiste Reshma U Raj choreographed and performed the dance form.



Entrenched conflicts and violent extremism exacerbated poverty and instability across the globe. The vicious cycle of hunger and war leads to colossal human tragedy and wrack the peaceful and cohesive world order. In the chaotic world of wars, climate change, political and economic instability, the widespread use of hunger as a weapon and the global health pandemic that make all of that exponentially worse. *THE VULTURE* has been selected to be a part of the prestigious International Film Festivals - LIFT-OFF SESSIONS, FIRST-TIME FILMMAKER Sessions, Pinewood Studios, UK and GutterBliss Temporary Festival 2021.

“SUGATHAM” BUTTERFLY PARK



Sugatham Butterfly Garden was opened in the memoir of renowned writer and poet Sugathakumari, in the premises of the Public Service Commission head office at Pattom in Thiruvananthapuram. This is the first digital garden with the QR code on each plant and trees of its kind in the public service commissions in India. Along with this a renovated heritage building, and automated library are also functioning in the institution. A book titled “Trees garden plants of Kerala public service commission- India's first psc with digital garden was also released.

CLIMATE CHANGE DEEPENS RICH-POOR DIVIDE



Climate Change has its own share to widen the rift between the poor and the rich, say experts.



N. Bhadrans Nair
Executive Editor,
Indian Science Journal

Climate change is one of the main environmental challenges facing the world today. As a result of climate change, the global mean temperature is estimated to increase between 1.4 and 5.8o Centigrade by 2100. This unprecedented increase is expected to have a severe impact on the global hydrological system, ecosystem, sea level, crop production and related processes. The impact would be particularly severe in the tropical areas, which mainly consist of developing countries, including India, warned the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Like any other country, India too would be hit by temperature variations, like its adverse impact on agriculture and food production, water resources, forest and biodiversity, health and coastal management. This is in addition to the stress on the ecological and socio-economic systems that are already facing tremendous pressures due to rapid industrialisation, urbanisation and unscientific economic development.

Between 2000 and 2019, over 475,000 people lost their lives worldwide losses to the tune of US dollar 2.56 trillion as a direct result of extreme weather events.

India stood 7th in the ranking of countries most affected by climate change in 2019.

According to Global Climate Change Index 2021, 2,267 lives were lost in the country and the economic loss was estimated to be at the US \$ 68,812.35 million.

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture and Food Security is highly climate-sensitive. Indian agriculture, 65% of which is in rainfed areas, contributes nearly 25% of GDP employs 65% of the total workforce and accounts for 13.3% of total exports together with allied activities. Several studies predict that despite a substantial increase in national food grain production, the productivity of some important crops such as rice and wheat could decline considerably with climate change.

HEALTHCARE

While the entire population is affected by climate change, children, pregnant women and the elderly are more susceptible to climate-sensitive health impacts. The impact of climate change on clean air, safe drinking water, shortage of food and shelter could accentuate existing or unanticipated health problems. In the next two decades, it is estimated that 250,000 additional deaths could occur from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress, according to the National Health Portal of India.

Since climate change impacts the availability of potable water, water-borne diseases could show seasonal variations. While globally, water scarcity already affects four out of ten people, 30 cities in India, including the national capital Delhi are susceptible to acute water risks, according to a report by the World Wide Fund for Nature.

Climate Change including heat waves, cold spells and other extreme events would bring new and emerging health issues. Heat stress can make working conditions unfavourable and increase the risk of cardiovascular, respiratory and renal diseases and heat-related illness. "With 1.5°C warming, 350 million more people could be exposed to deadly heat stress by 2050," notes National Health Portal.

India in absolute terms is expected to lose the equivalent of 34 million full-time jobs by 2030 as a result of heat stress. Although most of the impact in India would be felt in the agricultural sector, more and more working hours are expected to be lost in the construction sector, because of heat stress, noted the Union Economic Survey 2021.

"These losses underscore the need for investment in building resilience and adoption of policies for mainstreaming risks through building appropriate social protection systems, including the provision of social insurance and social assistance which can help workers and their families to adapt to the consequences of heat stress," said the Economic Survey.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND RICH-POOR DIVIDE

Though global efforts are afoot to mitigate the impact of climate change and global warming, especially after the 2015 Paris Summit, the division still exists among the rich nations on its contribution to such efforts.

The ability of nations and their populations to tide over the crisis depends on their resourcefulness. While the wealthy could find funds for a retreat to safety, temporary accommodation and relocation, the poor might not be able to evacuate. Access to food, water and housing or energy might not be available or affordable to them.

Those responsible for climate change are relatively insulated from its impacts, while those affected face greater adversities with limited resources.

The global organisation Oxfam says, the world's richest 10% cause 50% of emissions and they claim over half of the world's wealth. Conversely, the poorest 50% of the population contribute roughly about 10% of global emissions and

“ While the wealthy could find funds for a retreat to safety, temporary accommodation and relocation, the poor might not be able to evacuate. Access to food, water and housing or energy might not be available or affordable to them.

receive only about 8% of global income.

On the micro-level the impact of global warming and climate change on agriculture and healthcare greatly affects the poor, who do not have the wherewithal to survive its impacts.

Poor nations would have to bear the most severe impacts of climate change, as their dependence on agriculture and therefore, vulnerability to extreme heat is higher than rich nations.

“ Poor nations would have to bear the most severe impacts of climate change, as their dependence on agriculture and therefore, vulnerability to extreme heat is higher than rich nations.

VALUING WATER



Dr. Rathy M.C.
Department of Environmental Science
University of Calicut

During the past few decades, Kerala has witnessed unusual scarcity of water during the summer seasons. Prudent water management and stringent conservation are the need of the hour

**Water, water, every where,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, every where,
Nor any drop to drink.**

(Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the Rime of the Ancient Mariner)

Although Kerala is adorned with 44 rivers and a flourishing monsoon, spreading over a period of six months, the State has been heading for a water crisis since 1980 owing to the undulating topography of the State; run-off is also quite high. Various institutions reporting that the State is going to face severe water scarcity by this year. Due to increased pressures on the land, people not only started reclaiming old ponds and paddy fields for the construction of buildings but also replacing open

dug wells with bore wells. These phenomena resulted in gradual overexploitation of groundwater on the one hand and a collapse of the traditions of conservation of water on the other, contributing to the current water crisis. The adoption of modern consumer culture and heavy urbanization resulted in environmental pollution, massive deforestation, sand mining, all of which adversely affected the deterioration of surface water quality. But its consequences are experiencing recently. More overdependence on underground water has grown over the past few decades, and its quality also shows a declining trend. At present, the only solution of the problem is prudent water management and stringent conservation measures.

SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT

It is high time that people all over the world are made aware of the grave situation of acute water scarcity through “save water” campaigns and effective measures are taken for sustainable management of the world’s water resources. For the sustainable utilization of water, effective measures for water conservation are essential. Some of the common measures for water conservation to tackle the problem of extreme water scarcity are the following:

1. A new approach towards augmenting the drinking water systems in the local areas is by way of renovating the existing water sources such as ponds, canals, streams will be desilted and ensuring the availability of clean and hygienic water.
2. Rivers, lakes and other water bodies will be protected and preserved
3. The people of Kerala are dominantly dependent on underground water so recharge the water table through rainwater harvesting.
4. The stagnant water bodies caused as the byproduct of human activities like mining, quarries and so on will be purified and preserved for utilization.
5. Considering the topography of earth and the peculiarity of the landscapes, appropriate technology for water conservation will have to be adopted.
6. In the hilly terrains where the flow of water is fast and the land is sloppy, small water harvesting boundaries will be constructed, enabling the clogged water to penetrate into the soil.
7. Water budgeting and water auditing will be undertaken.
8. Decreasing runoff losses: Huge water loss occurs due to run-off on most soils. This can be reduced by allowing the water to infiltrate into the soil, using improved water storage systems. Water storage structures like farm ponds, dug-outs, Suranga (Traditional water management system) etc. can be useful for conserving water through the reduction of runoff.

Rainwater harvesting is a simple and cost-effective water conservation method. Conservative strategies such as rainwater harvesting and well recharging are going on. One of the most significant factors of well recharging is that it will be beneficial not only for the individual household but also for surrounding topography as it will raise the level of the water table in the area. Besides, well recharging helps reduce E-coli bacteria in water bodies. The only way to cleanse wells with high E-coli bacteria is to recharge them with rainwater. Mazhapolima is a good recharge programme. A recharge of well-reduced rainwater run-off and increasing infiltration into the soil and aquifers, which is the only solution to water scarcity. It is time that we use the recharge well as an important tool in the sustainable management of water in our cities and in preventing or mitigating floods. Overexploitation and wastage of freshwater have to be avoided such that the utilization of water never exceeds its replenishment. A Judicious and sustainable utilization of freshwater will save the state from further scarcity in water

“ More over dependence on underground water has grown over the past few decades, and its quality also shows a declining trend.



“ One of the most significant factors of well recharging is that it will be beneficial not only for the individual household but also for surrounding topography as it will raise the level of the water table in the area.

KERALA GLITTERS IN THE NFA



A Chandrasekhar
Film critic

The performance of the Malayalam cinema in the 67th National Awards for the year 2019 is another endorsement to its rich legacy.

Ever since Neelakkuyil in the year 1954, Malayalam movies and filmmakers has always been listed top in the National Film Awards declaration. For many years Malayalam Cinema could sustain its supermacy and monopoly in bagging the maximum number of awards and that too in the major categories. It was only after the late nineties that other language movies surpassed our Cinema in the National Film Awards, but still it continue to enjoy its prominence by ensuring a comfortable placement in the same. It is just in continuation to this legacy that the performance of Malayalam Cinema in the 67th National Awards for the year 2019, that got declared off late due to the Covid Pandemic, should be evaluated.

It has been after 7 long years that a Malayalam cinema has been adjudged as the best film through Priyadarshan-Mohanlal production-Marakkar-

Arabikkadalinte Simham. Though Priyadarshan had won the award for the best director long back in the year 2008, this award is something special to him as well as actor Mohanlal as their movie has been selected as the best among so many qualified movies from other languages. Marakkar sets a landmark as a multi-lingual, multi-crore historical fiction produced in tune with the commercial values after Bahubali that won the same award in 2015. Through this, Priyadarshan gets himself paraded amongst great filmmakers like Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Shaji N Karun and G Aravindan, who won both the National Awards for the best movie and

Apart from all these, Marakkar-Arabikkadalinte Simham has become something very special to Priyadarshan as a person, as the film also fetched the National Award for the best visual effects for Sidharth, who is none other than his son. Marikkar also bagged the award for the best costume design for Sujith and Sai for their creative costumes they had designed for the movie that gave it a pan -Indian look and feel.

As against expectations, the National Award for the Best Malayalam film has come out to be a surprise to film lovers when Kallanottam, a small movie directed by the Sate award winner Rahul Riji Nair was selected for the same. Rahul's movie is all about how mobile phone camera corrupts the social viewpoints. Starting as a children's movie, Kallanottam emerges out to serious social document recording the misuse of digital camera. For Rahul, this award after the State awards he had won for his debut film Ottamuri Velicham is really commendable.

But the real big surprise that the 67th National Film Awards had in it for Malayalam Cinema, is the Award for the best debut film of a director. Mathukutty Xavier's feel good thriller movie Helen, sets an inspirational benchmark through this award to many aspiring filmmakers. Helen also bagged the award for the best make-up for Ranjith, which indeed is a deserving one for his commendable work in the movie where he has managed to present the heroine convincingly real in the frozen episodes.

What makes the award for the best lyricist in the 67th NFA is the fact that, Prabha Varma becomes the fourth Malayali to win this award after Vayalar Rama Varma who bagged the award for Achanum Bappayum in 1972, O N V Kurup for Vaishali in 1988 and Yusufali Kechery for Mazha in 2000. Prabha Varma bagged the award for the lines he wrote for Kolambi, directed by TK Rajeevkumar.

The real disappointment for Malayalam is regarding Lijo Jose Pellissery's much talked about Jellikettu, Though the critically acclaimed movie has been well accepted and rewarded in the IFFI and IFFK etc., it has to content with the award for the best cinematography in the 67th NFA. But it should be noted that this very award is so deserved as Girish Gangadharan's camera work in this movie has been that much appreciated for its out of the box uniqueness.

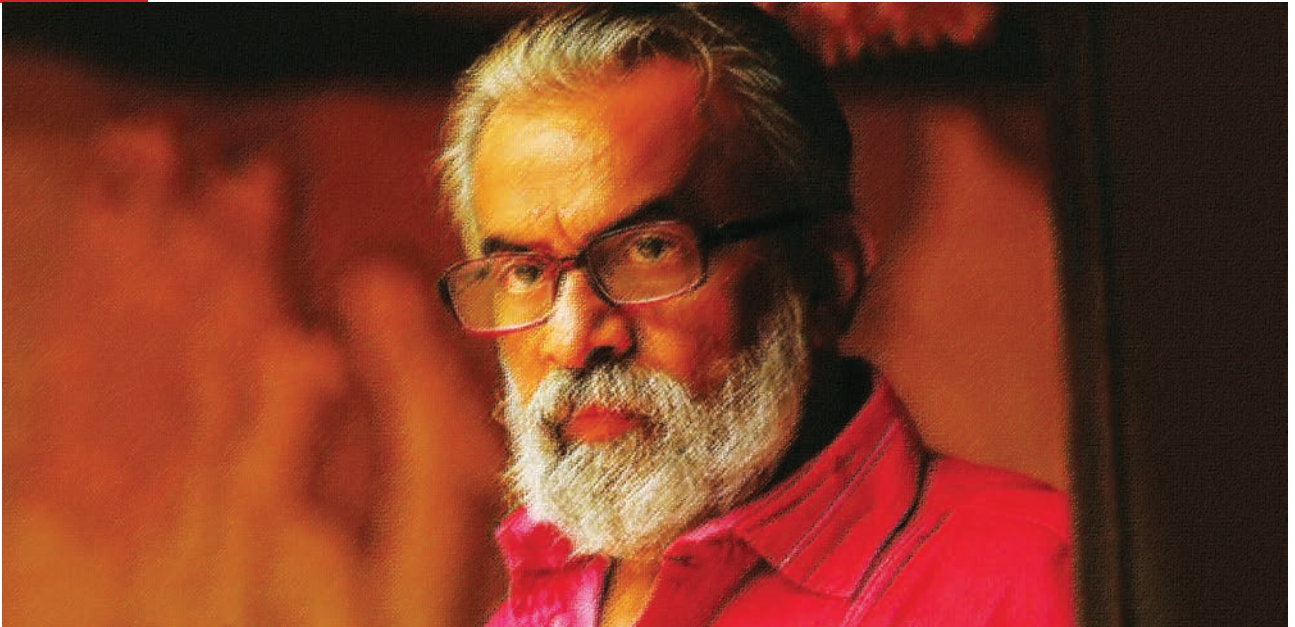
Sharan Venugopal's Oru Paathira Swapnam Pole, which has been adjudged as the Best Film on Family Values and Manoj Kana's Kenjira which won the award for the Best Film in Paniya language also ensured Malayali supremacy in the 67th NFA.

“ It has been after 7 long years that a Malayalam cinema has been adjudged as the best film through Priyadarshan-Mohanlal production-Marakkar-Arabikkadalinte Simham.



“ What makes the award for the best lyricist in the 67th NFA is the fact that, Prabha Varma becomes the fourth Malayali to win this award after Vayalar Rama Varma who bagged the award for Achanum Bappayum in 1972, O N V Kurup for Vaishali in 1988 and Yusufali Kechery for Mazha in 2000.

STORYTELLER OF THE MODERN THEATRE



P. *Balachandran was a versatile genius. His presence was felt not only on stage but on screen as well. He excelled in all fields he engaged.*



Dr. Raja Varier

Director, Centre for Performing & Visual Arts, University of Kerala

It was during the 1960s, Kerala like other native regions of India started experimental enquiries beyond the imageries built around Proscenium Theatre. By the second half of 1970s numerous sprouts of experimental theatre had started appearing related to experiments happening in the Malayalam drama world. It was during this intense experimenting period, the well-known dramatist P. Balachandran made his appearance. His journey through the land of drama too was that of enchanting enquiries made into the meaningful world of theatre. It was the time of small and big camps happening everywhere on theatre experiments. The full land was searching for a novel phase for sentimentality in the theatre scenario. It was the time when experimentations with practicality oriented novel visions were being practised full-scale all over the place. P. Balachandran, who was full of vigour, young and agile has dedicated his life to the welfare of the stage and theatre. Balachandran tried his level best to bring about long term diversions and change in the visual and oral traditions that were familiar for the viewers and theatre artistes of those times by evading repetitions of superficially affecting social issues and inappropriate humour expressions by keeping them aside

and instead brought in concepts that were intense and serious, to be written and enacted innovatively through drama literature. It was the time when reformations were happening worldwide in all fields including social, political, economic and cultural and in all countries novel literature and art forms were evolving and thus humanity was exposed to the productive capacity related to such literature.

This novel literature that evolved worldwide finally reached India and Kerala. A lot of artists and literary laureates who were directly and indirectly influenced such literature propped up here too. P. Balachandran was one of the playwrights and drama artist, who has immense theoretical and practical knowledge about the media, drama. The 'Thamasi' written by P. Balachandran won the first prize at a college-level competition, done by Mathrubhoomi weekly in 1972.

P. Balachandran, who was born in Sasthamkotta got integrated with the drama institutions while doing his studies in Sasthamkotta Devaswom Board College. He also was involved with the first drama camp held in 1967, with the eminent G. Sankara Pillai leading the camp. Following this, he joined the School of Drama, Thrissur, as a student accepting the invitation from Sankara Pillai. But by this time he became popular as a playwright artist and became one of Sankara Pillai's favourite pupils.

'Inspector General' written by Russian playwright Gogol was translated by Balachandran as 'Melvilasom' in Malayalam. Independent plays like 'Mydhili', 'Kalyanasaugandhikam', 'Mayaseethangam', 'Ma'ramarayattam Nerampokku', 'Chathavanum Konnavanum Bharyasametham' 'Oru Madhyavenal Pranayaraavu' etc were some of the plays that reinforce the innate creative skills of the playwright who understood the different phases of the theatre intuitively.

Backgrounds of most of the plays of Balachandran mostly deals with the conflicts that humans are forced to face when dealing with the secret cravings of one's sub-conscious mind and the practical life-related superficial happenings. 'Thamasi' that brings forth a universe of the deeper experiences of a vagabond culture, 'Paavam Usmaan' brought forth immensely beautiful word pictures through the creative development induced in 'Kuthuratheeb' a Muslim custom popularised by Mohaidhin Shaik, 'Samarayilekku' that was able to develop a simple myth into an enchanting and everlasting picturesque story, 'Che'ri' where realism and fantasy equally go hand-in-hand, 'Kalyanasaugandhikam' where tradition and instances from ancient epics were absorbed into the modern stage were some of the plays worth mentioning which supported the experiments happening in the theatre world that paved a strong base to the modern drama world. All these plays helped Balachandran in securing a firm base in Malayalam Theatre world too.

Balachandran not only was a favourite of the drama world, but he was also equally adored by the film world too. Though he became very popular as a screenplay writer, he became equally well-known as a Director and an actor. 'Uncle Ben', 'Thacholy Varghese Chekavar', 'Pavithram', 'Punaradhipasam', 'Ulladakkam', 'Agnidevan', 'Kammattipaadam', 'Ivan Megharoopan' that was made base on the life of P. Kunhiraman Nair etc are some of the memorable films, which he had done the screen-plays for. There are so many screenplays

that have not seen the limelight, that is worth mentioning.

Balachandran was one of the first batch students of 'School of Drama'. Later he worked a short while there as a teacher there

“ His journey through the land of drama too was that of enchanting enquiries made into the meaningful world of theatre. ”

itself. Later he officially joined as a lecturer in School of Letters, under MG University. An immense loss happened in the field of drama and film worlds when on the morning of 2021 April 5th when he said adieu to the mortal world.

“ An immense loss happened in the field of drama and film worlds when on the morning of 2021 April 5th when he said adieu to the mortal world. ”

GEM OF AN EDUCATOR



Mariamma Varkey – the pride of Kerala. A Malayali woman who helped the UAE take baby steps into the world of English education, and stayed on to lend strength to its scholastic aspirations. A towering personality who went to the Arab land in the nascent years of migration, and remained there until her death, contributing substantially towards improving its educational infrastructure.



Thansi Hashir
UAE

It was way back in 1959 that Mariamma Varkey, a native of Ranni in Pathanamthitta district, accompanied her husband K. S. Varkey to Dubai. During those days, when only Arabic-medium schools were in existence, her own initial steps into the field of education began with teaching English to native students. In course of time, the children of the royal family and those of prominent local leaders became her students. Eventually, she and her husband founded Our Own English School in 1968. The first batch of students had only 27 students.

In the years that followed, even as the number of schools and students increased, Madam Varkey ensured that neither disciplinary nor educational standards dipped. In the 1980s, her son Sunny Varkey took over the reins of

administration and expanded it until, in 2000, the GEMS [Global Education Management Systems] Group was born. Today, the GEMS Group has become a global presence with a chain of 250 institutions spread over 19 countries.

“Ammachi” [Mother] to those who were close to her, “Madam Varkey” or “Amina” to others, she epitomized self-confidence and determination. Even when she had a commanding presence, her attitude was characterized by loving care. She was an educator to the children of the first expatriates, who lay special emphasis on girls’ education and growth, and made humanitarian interventions for the benefit of all.



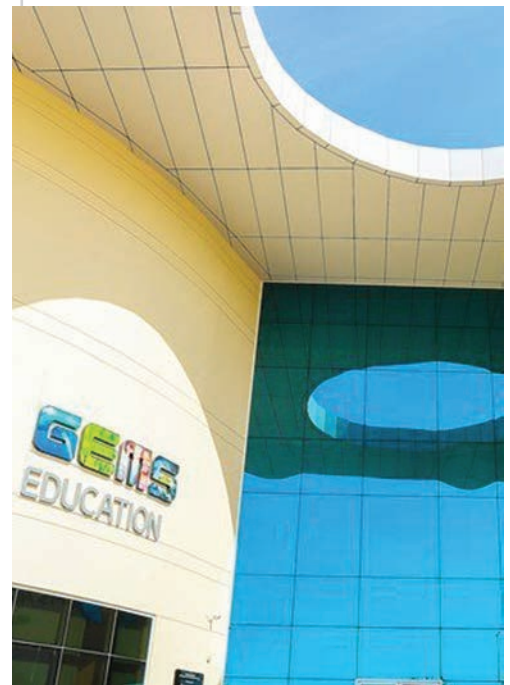
Mariamma Varkey ‘Most Inspirational Teacher’ award, 2019

Nothing can be more eloquent than the tweet posted by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, while paying homage to her on her death. It acknowledged how dear Mariamma Varkey was to the UAE community: “Mariamma Varkey moved to Dubai with her husband in 1959. Driven by an enduring passion for education, she started tens of schools with thousands of students inside and outside UAE. Mariamma recently passed away, leaving behind a legacy of education in UAE and beyond.”

In the autumn of life, people usually desire to go back to their native lands. But Madam Varkey held the UAE, her workplace, so close to her heart that even at 90, she chose to remain there. Today, she lies in eternal sleep in her adopted land.

Sixty-two years back, long before the UAE came into being, Mariamma Varkey, realizing the immense potential that the land held, strove really hard to lead it into the expansive world of education. Today, every Malayali can feel justly proud of her immense achievements and the historic contributions she made to the pedagogic history of the UAE.

“ She was an educator to the children of the first expatriates, who lay special emphasis on girls’ education and growth, and made humanitarian interventions for the benefit of all.



“ Sixty-two years back, long before the UAE came into being, Mariamma Varkey, realizing the immense potential that the land held, strove really hard to lead it into the expansive world of education. Today, every Malayali can feel justly proud of her immense achievements and the historic contributions she made to the pedagogic history of the UAE.

ENSLAVEMENT DURING THE DUTCH-RULED COCHIN



Alexander Geelen

Social Historian, International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Alexander Geelen gives immense insight into the enslavement in the Dutch-ruled Cochin in his new book *Testimonies of Enslavement*.

In February of the year 1725, close to the city of Cochin, the two people MiramPoelle and Miram went to a washer village on an errand to retrieve clean laundry for the Jewish merchant Eziekel Rabbi. When they were there, they saw a woman Malickoema. According to the prosecutors account in the court case that followed 'they had not refrained from robbing the woman Malickoema of her precious liberty'. Miram and Miram had kidnapped Malickoema, and then proceeded to sell her into slavery. According to MiramPoelle, Malickoema was the slave of the son of his grandmother's sister, named PattakawittilPolle and he therefore felt that it was his right to 'steal' Malickoeme. Miram and Miram offered the other washers in the village a deal: If they could pay them 25 fanums they would let Malickoeme go. Since the washers were unable to provide them with that amount of money, they took Malickoeme with them and hid her in the house of Ezekiel for one day.



The next day they already managed to sell her to the wife of a Dutch East India Company (VOC) commander. When MiramPoelle and Miram had left, Malickoema explained to her new owner that she was in fact a free woman and her sellers had kidnapped her. The commander's wife brought the case to court, where the two Moors were interrogated. After finding that no *ola* was ever provided to prove that Malickoema was a slave and that Malickoema had in fact stayed with MiramPoelle's family but only because they nursed her while she was sick, the prosecutor deemed that she had indeed been kidnapped and robbed 'of that most precious jewel'; her freedom. For their crimes MiramPoelle and Miram, were punished as 'human thieves' and were given the death penalty.

This court case is just one of many examples found in the understudied Court of Justice archive of the VOC in Cochin that have been translated from Dutch to English in our new book *Testimonies of Enslavement, Sources on Slavery from the Indian Ocean World* (Bloomsbury 2020). The book features court records from the up to now understudied Court of Justice archive of the VOC in Cochin. In what constitutes present day Kerala and other regions of South Asia the VOC combined its role as sovereign of coastal and partly inland regions with more dependent roles as merchant with a local factory in other trading places. In these roles, the VOC oversaw a slave trade and slavery of a highly varied and complex nature and vast scale.

This particular case about the kidnapping of Malickoema above reveals the fragility of freedom on the eighteenth century Malabar Coast and the fluid border between freedom and enslavement. A family member of people that had provided her a roof over her head decided to kidnap Malickoema on a whim and nearly brought her into a lifetime of enslavement. The case also reveals the formal and legal context of slavery: Documents had to be provided to prove that Malickoema could officially be enslaved. The VOC provided the formal space in which slavery could exist, by providing legislation for legal slavery but also prosecuting those that did not adhere to these rules. The court

“ These cases are some of the most telling examples of local histories of enslavement and enslavability, with global implications for the study of slavery.

cases reveal that the VOC was strongly invested in the regulation of the institution of slavery, both when it concerned Europeans and locals. Importantly, like all court cases featured in our book, the case reveals the agency and voice of the enslaved, which is so rarely heard. In this particular case, Malickoema's voice tells us how she resisted slavery by speaking up. These cases are some of the most telling examples of local histories of enslavement and enslavability, with global implications for the study of slavery. By translating Dutch sources to English we aim to make them accessible for a wider audience and researchers. We hope that *Testimonies of Enslavement* will show scholars and the public alike the incredible potential of these sources.

“ Importantly, like all court cases featured in our book, the case reveals the agency and voice of the enslaved, which is so rarely heard. In this particular case, Malickoema's voice tells us how she resisted slavery by speaking up.

WORKING WITH EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE



Jayadeep M.V.
Freelance writer

To be an effective leader one must have a clear understanding of how one's emotions and actions affect the people around them.

We are all familiar with the term Intelligence Quotient (IQ), but that is not the case with the term Emotional Intelligence (EQ). A very critical judgemental yardstick these days in the corporate world, EQ at work is all about how well we handle ourselves and one another better at the workplace. This has nothing to do with the academic standards, nor can that be taught exactly in any university - rather it is perceived, conceived and practised with empathy, adaptability and persuasiveness. People are as important as products these days. Managing your workforce is as challenging as selling your products.

Emotional intelligence refers to a set of personal management and personal skill sets that allows one to succeed in the workplace and life in general. Social skills at the workplace have gained much relevance these days. It is not all about speaking and communicating alone that matters but speaking

in terms of understanding the demands of a customer or a work situation is what matters the most. EQ encompasses intuition, character, integrity and motivation. Now people may be wondering what roles these 'emotions' have in the workplace, where figures and facts rules. How good is it to show your emotions at a workplace? It is a fact that today one's poor emotional and social skills can derail his/ her career than lack of technical expertise or general intelligence. The gut feeling about a situation, a sense of deep understanding about the situation, a choice of right or wrong, a proactive action, taking a decision presuming it is right and finally believing one's intuition - all these fall under the head Emotional intelligence.

'Emotions' do not mean a flow of emotions or over reactions on matters; It is not even letting your emotions rule your intellects. Again it cannot be always a factual, rational thought process either. In a workplace, several situations arise where one has to deal beyond the facts and figures. Feelings, intuition and instincts are vital sources of information. Imagine a work situation; there may be reasons for you to trust facts and figures to conclude, but for dealing with the factors beyond these, and to reach out for more concrete results, information from the emotional centre of the brain is essential

There is a self and social dimension to Emotional Intelligence-knowing the self, and knowing others. Only a person who is well aware of self and who empathizes with others can actively inspire and motivate people. Only can they create teamwork, achieve outstanding results and get the desired output from their team members. knowledge of oneself is very important here. A person, who is well aware of his self, would understand what exactly is required at that moment. One's response to situations and people improve with more self-awareness that one tend to possess. In the same way, getting into people's shoes and understanding those verbal and nonverbal cues, would easily let one get a feel of the situations or problems whatsoever, to one's advantage. Enthusiasm, initiative and persistence coupled with positive attitudes are termed as what we call 'motivation' in its true sense. Leaders with high Emotional Intelligence are always committed to doing things better as they would be creative in their approach and looking for a 'value' added to their tasks.

In an organisational atmosphere, true leaders are expected to get the best out of their employees - for that the managers need to model themselves as Leaders who could facilitate creativity -One who leads the way, one who can bring the best out of his employees, and one who can be looked upon to. Setting the organisational expectations, being supportive to the peers and often giving them positive feedback at face, through the mail, or in a peer meeting would certainly help. There is a theory for it as well- assessing that "people are generally good"(Theory Y of McGregor).To more praise and good words, people tend to change, focus on corrections and are more inclined to receiving positive strokes more often.

The best results of Emotional Intelligence are often obtained when a leader assumes the post of a facilitator in a corporate environment with more participation in team activities and the empowerment of the team in general. With this one tends to use one's emotional brain in tandem with one's rational brain. The results are improved interpersonal relationship and increased productivity.

“ ‘Emotions’ do not mean a flow of emotions or over reactions on matters; It is not even letting your emotions rule your intellects.



“ There is a self and social dimension to Emotional Intelligence-knowing the self, and knowing others. Only a person who is well aware of self and who empathizes with others can actively inspire and motivate people. Only can they create teamwork.

LET'S NURSE NATURE BACK TO HEALTH: U.N. SECRETARY GENERAL



At no point in recorded history has humanity gained so much control over natural forces and yet faced so numerous and seemingly insurmountable problems as it does now. On the one hand we have put a rover on Mars – no mean feat – but on the other we are reeling under the impact of a pandemic that is spiralling out of control, and also suffering the consequences of climate change, unleashed by our own unbridled greed.

Nature has brought us down to our knees, and it is high time we quelled our hubris and worked jointly towards restoring our planet to health. This is the spirit of the message sent out by the United Nations on the occasion of International Earth Day 2021 (celebrated annually on 22 April).

Today, our exploitation of natural resources is so blind and aggressive that it has taken on the dimensions of a war. Perhaps that explains why Antonio Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, chose to say, “We must end our war on nature and nurse it back to health”. Global warming, triggered by our unscientific industrial expansion, has caused unprecedented wildfires, tsunamis, sea surges, unseasonal torrential rains, droughts, groundwater depletion, melting of ice caps, coral reef destruction, harmful algal blooms . . . the list is virtually endless.

The only way to repair the damage lies in our willingness to own up our wrongs, and take proactive steps. All the nations of the world should resolve to keep their commitments made under the Paris Agreement of 2015, and build sustainable economies so that we do not disturb or destroy our fragile ecosystems. Simultaneously, we should adopt more effective methods to reduce pollution and waste, and to protect and strengthen our biodiversity. The UN Secretary-General underscored the fact that if humanity is to progress any further, climate stability has to be restored at the earliest.

Our planet is awaiting the touch of a healing hand. Let us do our bit.



#LARGEST

കോവിഡ് പ്രതിരോധ കുത്തിവയ്പ്പിനായി രജിസ്ട്രർ ചെയ്യേണ്ട വിധം

ഉപയോഗിക്കേണ്ട ലിങ്ക് www.cowin.gov.in

കോവിൻ പോർട്ടലിൽ രജിസ്ട്രേഷൻ ആരംഭിക്കുന്നതിനു മുമ്പ് ഫോട്ടോ പതിച്ച തിരിച്ചറിയൽ കാർഡ് കരുതുക. (ആധാർ കാർഡ് / വോട്ടേഴ്സ് ഐഡി കാർഡ് / ഡ്രൈവിംഗ് ലൈസൻസ് / പാൻ കാർഡ് / പെൻഷൻ ഐഡി കാർഡ്...)

• Register / Sign in ക്ലിക്ക് ചെയ്യുക

• ഒ.ടി. പി. ലഭ്യമാകുവാൻ

നിങ്ങളുടെ ഓബൈൽ നമ്പർ രേഖപ്പെടുത്തുക

• ഒ. ടി. പി. നമ്പർ രേഖപ്പെടുത്തുക

• വെരിഫൈ എന്ന ഓപ്ഷനിൽ ക്ലിക്ക് ചെയ്യുക.

VERIFY

• തിരിച്ചറിയൽ കാർഡിന്റെ വിവരം രേഖപ്പെടുത്തുക

• ലിംഗം , ജനിച്ച വർഷം എന്നിവ നൽകി രജിസ്ട്രർ ചെയ്യുക.

• 'ആഡ് ഓർ ഓപ്ഷൻ' നൽകി ഒരു ഓബൈൽ നമ്പറിൽ നിന്നും നാലുപേർക്ക് രജിസ്ട്രർ ചെയ്യാം.

• വാക്സിനേഷൻ ഷെഡ്യൂൾ ചെയ്യാനായി പേരിന് നേരെയുള്ള ഷെഡ്യൂൾ ഓപ്ഷനിൽ ക്ലിക്ക് ചെയ്യുമ്പോൾ **Schedule now** എന്ന ഓപ്ഷൻ വരും.

SCHEDULE NOW

• ക്ലിക്ക് ചെയ്യുക അതിൽ താമസ സ്ഥലത്തെ പിൻകോഡ് നൽകുകയോ ജില്ല തെരഞ്ഞെടുക്കുകയോ ചെയ്യുമ്പോൾ വാക്സിനേഷൻ സെന്ററുകളുടെ വിവരം ലഭ്യമാകും.

*തീയതിയും സമയവും നൽകി വാക്സിനേഷൻ ഉറപ്പിക്കുക.

വാക്സിനേഷൻ സെന്ററിൽ Appointment Slip പ്രിന്റ് ഔട്ട് എടുത്തതോ മൊബൈലിൽ വന്ന മെസ്സേജോ ഹാജരാക്കുക.



ജില്ലാ മെഡിക്കൽ ഓഫീസ് (ആരോഗ്യം) ആരോഗ്യകേരളം, തിരുവനന്തപുരം മീഡിയാ വിഭാഗം

Subscribe & Pay via E pay



Annual payment for subscribing the State Government's official magazines **Kerala Calling and Samakalika Janapadham** can now be paid through e-payment facility as well.

The website link www.etreasury.kerala.gov.in

Payment via **Net banking/upi/Bank - cards** also available.

Money order and Demand Draft are the other options.

Contact:

Information Public Relations Department
First floor, Annex -I, Govt. Secretariat, Thiruvananthapuram.

Yearly subscription rate for both magazines - Rs. 240.

For details contact 0471-2517036 Email - iocirculation@gmail.com

