

From Gram Swaraj



Mahatma Gandhi leaves his Simla residence for Wardah, helped by Susila Ben and Sheila Nayyar

A Journey Towards Decentralisation

Ajith Venniyoor

Remembering Mahatma Gandhi on his birthday this year makes one to reflect on his thoughts and writings as to how he wanted India to be, after we attained independence. It is all the more important to remember him at this juncture particularly as this nation is standing on the threshold of a new journey, a journey for restructuring its economy, development strategies and governance system in the wake of the new winds blowing across the international boundaries shaping a novel model for societies, nation and communities for future.

At a critical stage in the freedom struggle, a journalist asked Gandhi, "When will India attain complete freedom?"

Without taking even a moment, Gandhi replied: "when the people begin to feel that they can change their destiny and situation by their own effort".

Gandhi added foundational dimensions to the freedom struggle. His aim was not to wrest freedom from the British, but the creation of a new social order. Gaining political power was only a means to it. Even while fighting the British Empire for political power, Gandhi dreamt of a new Indian society. He wanted to build up a democratic structure from below- the self government- the real Swaraj- by instilling into the masses a sense of their power and dignity. He reminded the people that they constitute the real power of the nation; they are the real masters of their destiny. He worked towards it relentlessly

and gave shape to a set of actions. Thus was born the famous 'Constructive Programmes'.

Democracy From The Grassroots

Khadi became the focal point of constructive programmes and charka the standard of freedom struggle. In course of time, these became the foundation stones of economic planning, aimed at rural reconstruction. Charka associations and khadi centres were formed to pay attention to manufacturing and marketing of khadi products. When these began to develop into institutions, Gandhi warned: "Constructive programme is not mere employment generation. Its end and means are neither compassion nor charity, but to activate the people by cultivating in them

to Panchayati Raj

the spirit of self-reliance and willpower. Their skills and abilities should develop. The people should become strong to control the centre of power and resist abuse”.

Gandhi stressed that “*real Swaraj will come, not by acquisition of authority by a few, but by the acquisition of capacity by all to resist authority when abused*”. He added: “*True democracy can not be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre. It has to be worked from below by the people of every village.*” His “Gram Swaraj” was not the recreation of the old village system, but the formation of fresh independent units of villages enjoying a self-sufficient economy.

True Swaraj, for Gandhi, means the happiness of millions. Mere change from British to Indian rule does not mean Swaraj. As long as one class dominates the other, the poor remaining poor or becoming poorer, there will be no Swaraj. In real Swaraj the millions will lead happy lives.

Gandhi conceived the village as the centre of a series of ever-widening circles. Not one on top of the other, but all on the same plane, so that there is none who is higher or lower than the other. He has, elsewhere, poetically pictured his village-based polity and he cautioned that the successive upper units should not weigh down on and crush the people constituting the base, “In this structure, composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever widening, never ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex, sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle, whose centre will be the individual, always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life, composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance, but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle, of which they are integral units.. Therefore, the outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle, but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it”

Democracy and exploitation cannot co-exist. If we want to create a society free from

exploitation, democracy has to be strengthened. The centralisation of democracy will lead to exploitation. The democratic process must begin in the small groups – from the fellowships of families.

On sensing that ‘An Economic Plan for India’, a book written by M. Visweswarayya, was becoming the guidelines for the Planning Council, Gandhi presented his dissenting views at the public fora. Gandhi did not agree with the view that what was needed for the success of economic planning was rapid industrialisation. He had reservations, especially in the plan for setting up heavy industries.

He was for re-structuring the plans in consonance with the village situations. What was required was the organised development of the rural economy. The innovation of heavy industries would lead to an exploitative social order. Gandhi’s position was that attempts at bringing about social revolution in this way

would unleash the forces that would endanger our cherished social values, such as freedom and brotherhood.

Guidelines Of Development

The socio-economic model Gandhi proposed for the independent India was a decentralised and people-based one. It is



Mahatma Gandhi and Sarojini Naidu during Salt Protest



Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru during a Satyagraha

not an ideology that imposes pre-fabricated solutions to problems. It provides the vision for transparent and self-directive guidelines.

The problems faced by each village and each community are varied. The contexts too are varied. The solution of the same problem in two different villages may demand different approaches, because the situations may be varied. This being the truth, the centralized planning and implementation is a futile exercise. This is what subsequently happened in India. Gandhi had foreseen this tragedy, which lies at the root of the sufferings of the rural communities in India.

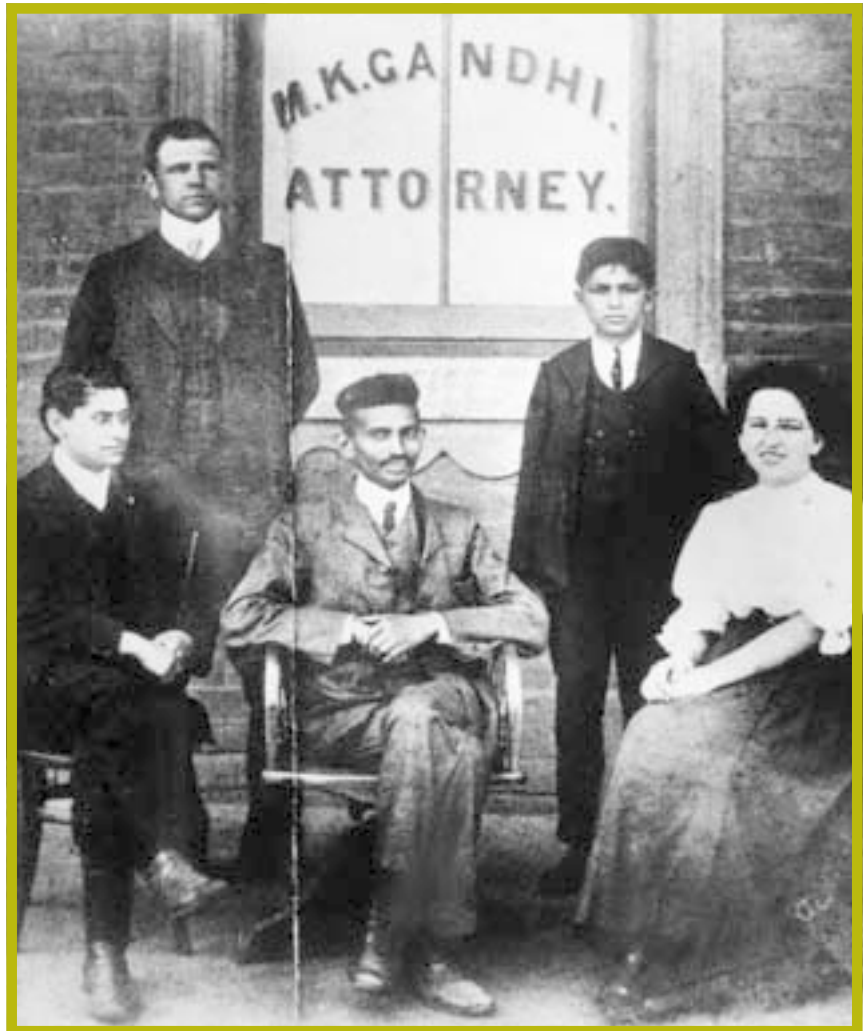
Gandhiji's Concept Of a Village

Gandhi suggested that in order to build up self-reliant rural communities, the self-governance institutions at the village level should be strengthened.

Ever since Gandhi returned to India in 1915, he had been laying the greatest emphasis on the need to revitalise the Village Panchayats and establish Gram Swaraj. He believed that the real India lives in its seven lakh odd villages and that India has no future worth the name unless these villages play their proper part in the development of the country. His scheme of such a Grama Swaraj comprehended every department of rural activity, which went to make each village self-governing and self-contained, as regards the essential needs of its inhabitants, so that on the solid foundation of a vast network of such little 'republics', peacefully cooperating with one another for mutual benefit, the life of the nation as a whole could be broad-based, enabling it to progress smoothly towards its destined goal.

The India that Gandhi dreamt was a federation of villages of enlightened and non-violent people. Self-reliance and self-rule will be possible there. But these village units have no independent existence.

In the proposed structure of self-government at the grass-roots, basic handy units will be self-reliant, self-sufficient and self-sustained. These autonomous units will primarily attend to the basic needs of living and the barest necessities of human life, leaving wider concerns for larger units. The polity would rise, storey by storey, from the foundation. Primary units will



Gandhi and his associates pose in front of his law office in South Africa.

progressively federate, tier by tier, into larger wholes, again for common benefits, without prejudice to the basic tenet of democracy to maintain equality among the people. Every basic unit will satisfy the basic needs of living, namely full employment, healthy environment and educational development.

Gandhi further elaborates the functions and the working of the basic unit—the Village Self-Government:

“My idea of Village Swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants, and yet interdependent for many others, in which dependence is a necessity. Thus the village's first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloth. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and play ground for adults and children... The

village will maintain a village theatre, school and public hall. It will have its own water works, ensuring clean water supply. This can be done through controlled wells and tanks. Education will be compulsory up to the final basic course. As far as possible, every activity will be conducted on co-operative basis. There will be no castes, such as we have today with their graded untouchability. Non-violence, with its technique of Satyagraha and non-cooperation, will be the compulsory service of village guards, who will be selected by rotation from the register maintained by the village”.

“The government of the village will be conducted by the Panchayat of five persons, elected annually by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. They

will have all the authority and jurisdiction required. Since there will be no system of punishment in the accepted sense, this Panchayat will be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its year of office. Any village can become such a republic without much interference, even from the present Government, whose sole effective connection with the villagers is the extraction of village revenue. I have not examined here the question of relations with the neighbouring villages of the centre, if any. Here there is perfect democracy, based upon individual freedom. The individual is the architect of his own government. The law of non-violence rules him and the government. He and his village are able to defy the might of a world. For the law governing every villager is that he will suffer death in the defence of his and his village's honour”

Gandhi worked out meticulously the details of a wide variety of practical things, which are vital to build a graceful village life. His conception of a village was not anchored in the modern notion of development, but on the post-modern perspective on quality of life. Gandhi added: “There will neither be plague nor cholera nor small pox. No one will wallow in luxury; everyone will have to contribute his quota of manual labour.”

Gandhi qualified the centralised government levying tax and using it for projects planned by the rulers at the centre as violence done to the villages.

Revolutionary Thinking

Gandhi put forward the suggestion that the Gram panchayat should have authority to identify the needs of the villages, look for practical solutions and mobilise the resources for implementing plans.

He also suggested rural sanitation, rural economy, village peace, agriculture, medical aid, nature cure, the resurgence of rural industries, cooperative cattle rearing etc. as means of rebuilding the vitality and self-reliance of the rural communities.

Dr. J. C. Kumarappa, Gandhian economist, who elaborated on the village concepts of Gandhi in his famous work ‘The economy of subsistence’, has painted a clear picture of the structure and the functioning of the Gram Panchayat. His ideas can be summarised like this:

*The village self-governance movement must have three types of institutions:

1. The Gram Panchayats for managing the self-rule of the village,
2. Multi-purpose cooperative societies for organising economic activities,
3. Voluntary village service societies for mobilising the support of the people and the initiatives for the rural development programmes.

*The Gram Panchayat must be elected by the adult village population. All the basic needs of the village, such as water supply, primary education, care of the sick, public roads, sanitation, public lighting, legal protection (within certain limits) should be the responsibility of the panchayat. The panchayat should have the authority to collect taxes for ensuring these services. The state should give supplementary grants.

- There should be a union of panchayats to co-ordinate and improve the activities of the panchayats and to audit their accounts. This union can take over the functions of basic education, higher education, woman and child care centres, large hospitals and so on. The union can make arrangements for working out estimates and carrying out public works.
- The panchayat should never be a mere administrative council. It should organise learning/ training programmes around the theme of citizens duties and responsibilities and try to eradicate superstitions, wrong practices and crimes. The panchayat should also ensure prosperity of those suffering from social injustices and focus on the development of women.
- The responsibility of the multi-purpose cooperatives is to regularise the

Gandhi considered the resurgence of the lowest in the society as the criterion for development. The development of all is possible only through the development of the lowest and the least-justice with development-development that ensures justice.

economic activities and undertake successful production programmes.

- The village service societies (Gram Seva Sangam) should implement programmes for ensuring the active participation of the people in the activities undertaken by the panchayats and the cooperative societies.

The criterion of growth

The Gandhian perspective reminds us that the growth of a society is not determined solely by the gross national product. The citizen must participate in each movement of change. Only then will it contribute to the development of human being.

Gandhi considered the resurgence of the lowest in the society as the criterion for development. The development of all is possible only through the development of the lowest and the least-justice with development-development that ensures justice. This vision of Gandhi was reflected in the proclaimed objectives of our national planning in the initial years.

The relevance of local leadership

While initiating development programmes with the aim of making the villages self-reliant, Gandhi considered the institutions as centres of inspiration and the Gandhi workers its motivators.

Gandhi gave emphasis to three things:

1. Identifying local leadership in the work area and transferring the responsibilities to them at the earliest, paying special attention to bring to the leadership those who belong to the weaker sections.
2. Organise people's groups and enable them from local action.
3. Attempt to create production and marketing methods based on local resources. The beneficiaries must become the creators.

Development depending on the doles of the state or rich nations is not social progress. It should be the results of the will and work of the people. The beneficiaries should also be its creators. We are suffering the consequences of forgetting this principle.

The decentralisation process will not be completed with the decentralisation of

development projects alone. It should start from the decentralisation of political power. Structures need to be created for the distribution of resources, for taking decisions on their proper use and for implementing these decisions without external interference. This calls for enlightened political will. Herein lies the relevance of Gandhian socio-political thinking.

The basic components

There are five basic components to the Gandhian economic planning.

- Should ensure the maximum utilisation, promotion and development of human resource.
- Should emphasise on production which does not endanger natural resources.
- Should ensure the equitable distribution of wealth.
- Before arranging for luxuries, the basic needs of ordinary people must be completely satisfied.
- Every activity should help in maintaining peace and co-existence in society.

The advantages of decentralisation

In a country like India, with scarce capital and abundant human and natural resources, only through decentralised modes of production and marketing can the above mentioned objectives be achieved. Decentralisation has a few more elements.

- It helps to promote the cultural pluralism of our country, its handicraft skills and the creativity of the workers.

- It abolishes the centralisation of power, which is the bi-product of centralised production and marketing.

To realise the dreams of the Father of the Nation, independent India launched its first programme of rural reconstruction, the Community Development Programme, with much fanfare in 1952. It had the potential of developing into a people's movement within the Gandhian framework of rural development. But it remained as a programme run by the bureaucracy without popular participation at the local level. The programme could

not generate the required enthusiasm and it was felt that the remedy lay in decentralisation of responsibility and power to levels below the state.

Following the failure of the Community Development Programme, the Belwant Rai Committee was appointed in 1957 to study and report on the Community Development Programme keeping in view "economy and efficiency" and to assess the extent to which the programme had succeeded in utilising local initiative and in creating institutions to



ensure the involvement of the community in the process of improving socio-economic conditions. The committee felt that development can not progress without responsibility and power being given to the community. It was for this objective that the team recommended an early establishment of statutory elective local bodies and devolution of necessary resources, power and authority to them. Thus by early 1960s PRI Institutions came into being in most of the states. PRIs became basic institutional apparatus, through which socio-economic transformation of rural India was to be achieved.

But unfortunately, in due course the strains in PRIs were visible and the desired

results were not forthcoming. The system, as it unfolded itself, had the least hue of Gandhian paradigm. Many Panchayats were superseded and even elections were not held. In 1977 the Ashok Mehta Committee was appointed to make suitable recommendations.

The committee drew up three phases of PR in India after Independence. from 1956-64 it was ascendancy, 1965-69 was phase of stagnation and 1969-77 of decline. The Ashok Mehta Committee report favoured two-tier model of PR. The

emphasis shifted from the block level to District Parishad level, with block functioning merely as an executive committee of the Jilla Parishad. It did not consider the village as basic unit of development, which remains a fundamental unit in the Gandhian theory, instead suggested a bigger area than the present panchayat as the second tier of PR for a population of 10-15 thousand and called it Mandal Panchayat.

In fact to a large extent both these committees only tried to incorporate Gandhian values into their models, which were distant from the Gandhian model of Gram Swaraj. The search for an appropriate model for rural upliftment continued even though we had a Gandhian Blue-print. In 1980s efforts were initiated to confer constitutional status to Panchayats which resulted in the 73rd and 74th Constitutional

Amendments enacted in 1992. It took about fifty years to transfer power to the people.

Though imperfect and suffering from several drawbacks, the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, ushering in a new era of local self-governance can be considered an important milestone in the efforts of the nation to realize the sublime vision of Mahatma Gandhi. Kerala certainly can take legitimate pride about providing workable models for the rest of India towards bridging the gap between vision and actualisation in the area of people-centered governance and development.

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Missions of Vision

Text of the address made by Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the President of India at the presentation ceremony of Sree Chitra Tirunal Trust Award at Thiruvananthapuram.



Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the President of India, presents first Sree Chitra Tirunal award to Dr. G. Madhavan Nair, Chairman, ISRO

I am happy to participate in the Sree Chitra Thirunal Trust Award presentation function. When I think of Sree Chitra Thirunal Bala Rama Verma Maharaja of Travancore, I recall my stay at Thiruvananthapuram for 20 years since 1961, when I realized how the people of Kerala shower great admiration, love and respect for the Sree Chitra Thirunal Maharaja. I used to ask my friends about him quite often. During the years 1932 and 1933 the Maharaja constituted India's first state Legislature based on universal franchise. He was a visionary and a person with nobility, who recognized the importance of democracy. His Highness made great contributions in the

establishment of Travancore University. I admire His Highness for the great thinking, which led to the abolition of capital punishment. He lived his divine life as a Padmanabhadasa. He contributed to every walk of life in Kerala like education, healthcare, music, spiritualism and also to democracy. I am glad that Sree Chitra Thirunal trust has decided to institute an award in memory of this great human being. I congratulate my friend Dr. G. Madhavan Nair, for receiving the first Sree Chitra Tirunal Award for his services to the nation in space science and technology. When I think of space science, I am reminded of the vision of my guru, Dr. Vikram Sarabhai.

Indian Space Visionary

Prof. Sarabhai worked with Sir C.V. Raman in the area of experimental cosmic ray research at the Indian Institute of Science. Prof. Sarabhai later established the Physical Research Laboratory in Ahmedabad with space research as the focus. In 1962, he became the Director of the Space Science and Technology Centre (SSTC), Trivandrum, which started launching of sounding rockets for space atmospheric research. Prof. Vikram Sarabhai unfurled the space vision for India in the 1960s. One of the major missions of this vision was that we should build indigenous satellite launch vehicle capability to put our communication



satellites into geo-synchronous orbit and remote sensing satellites into polar orbit. He envisaged that launch vehicles built in India should be launched from Indian soil. This vision led to intensive research in multiple fields of science and space technology. Many of us had the fortune to be part of Prof. Sarabhai's vision. My team and I were assigned the task of design, development and launch of India's first satellite launch vehicle, the SLV-3 and to put the Rohini satellite into orbit. My association with Dr. G. Madhavan Nair began when I was working as a rocket engineer at the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (TERLS). He came from the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre. Dr. G. Madhavan Nair and I worked together for nearly 20 years. He was with me as one of the leading members of the youthful SLV-3 team. This SLV-3 team has become very famous.

All its members are contributing today to various national missions.

It is notable that as an important member of the SLV-3 team, Dr. G. Madhavan Nair did pioneering work in putting the country on the satellite launch vehicle map of the world. After the SLV-3

programme, Dr G. Madhavan Nair became the Project Director for PSLV, Director - VSSC and subsequently the Chairman of ISRO. With the guidance of space technology leaders starting from Prof. Vikram Sarabhai, and then Prof. Satish Dhawan, Prof. U.R. Rao, Dr. Kasturirangan and now Dr. G. Madhavan Nair, indeed it can be said that the space vision dreamt by Prof. Sarabhai has been fully realized when geo-synchronous launch vehicles became operational. Of course space programme is highly complex and risky and some times certain problems do occur in the form of failures, but our space technologists have got a built-in strength and capability to defeat the problem and succeed.

Today, India with her 14,000 scientific, technological and support staff in multiple space research centers, supported by about 500 industry and academic



institutions, has the capability to build any type of satellite launch vehicle to place remote sensing, communication and meteorology satellites in different orbits and space application has become part of our daily life.

India has a unique operational educational satellite named EDUSAT, which is able to reach education to remote areas of the country. I am particularly happy that Dr. Madhavan Nair has put into action many initiatives to move forward on the second vision of ISRO that is to lead the country to a pre eminent position in all areas of space science and technology. Being in Kerala, let me also add that space technology can play a major role in the missions of Kerala for becoming the most developed state in the country. The specific areas of possible collaboration were suggested by me during my address to the Kerala Assembly on 28 July 2005.

In conclusion, we have seen how ISRO during the period from 1970 to 2005 has realized its first Vision ensuring the country's capability in all aspects of space in application, spacecrafts, launch vehicles and launch complex. I have been discussing with the ISRO Scientists and Dr. Madhavan Nair the need to realize the second vision for space before 2030. While connecting the nation through space communication, enriching the nation by remote sensing, and marketing space launchers and spacecrafts, I foresee that another important mission as part of the second Space Vision for the nation would be Manned Space Missions to the Moon and Mars and the establishment of a space industry.

I am very happy that the Sree Chitra Tirunal Trust has selected Dr. G. Madhavan Nair for his distinguished service to the nation in space science and technology, which has contributed in multiple areas to national development, particularly rural development.

I once again congratulate Dr. G. Madhavan Nair and my best wishes to all the participants in this programme for success in promoting excellence in the missions of the state and nation.

May God bless you. ■

T.U. Kuruvilla Sworn in



T.U. Kuruvilla

Shri T.U. Kuruvilla has sworn in as Minister before Shri R.L. Bhatia, the Governor, in a function organised at the Raj Bhavan in Thiruvananthapuram. He has been assigned with the portfolio of Public Works.

Shri Kuruvilla hails from Kothamangalam in Ernakulam District. He was the Chairman of the Kerala State Housing Board when the Board received the award for best Housing board in India for four consecutive years from 1996. Shri Kuruvilla was the President of Keerampara Panchayat for 16 years. Presently, he holds a number of responsibilities in various Organisations.

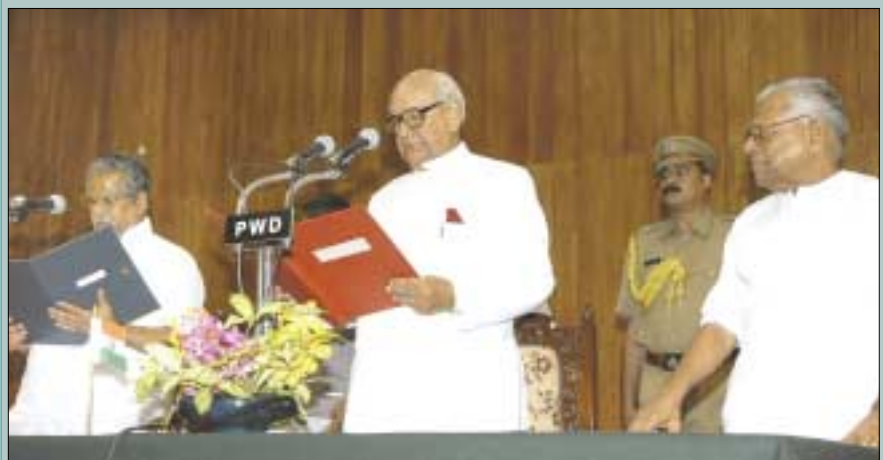
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Shri T.U. Kuruvilla swears in as Minister before Governor Shri. R.L. Bhatia. Chief Minister Shri. V.S. Achutanandan is also seen.

Beating the Disease

Government is committed

P.K. Sreemathi Teacher

Minister for Health

The spreading of the suspected cases of Chikungunya in the State, especially in Alappuzha, is now under control and the number of fever infected persons are being declined slowly. Thanks to the timely intervention of the Doctors and officials of the Health and other Departments. The Government could rise up to the occasion and employed sufficient number of Medical Officers and para medical staff in the fever affected area. The Government has made available enough funds to meet any hazardous situation. The Government has taken all possible steps to curb the spread of the disease. Reports are being received from the fever affected areas that the spread is in the declining stage.

It can be seen that various Departments of the Government and voluntary organisations have joined their hands together to alleviate the alarming situation by taking ample measures to check the spread of the disease. They were united to assure better health care to the fever affected people in the State. The Government is committed to go to any extent to eradicate the disease from the state and to provide solace to the affected people.

Suspected cases of Chikungunya were reported from Parassala, neighbouring Tamil Nadu in Thiruvananthapuram district in July 2006. The epidemic was brought under control by the concerted effort put forth with the help of various Government Departments and also with the help of NGOs. Only two cases have been reported serologically positive from this area. Another break out of the disease was reported from Vizhinjam, a coastal area in Thiruvananthapuram. 13,000 fever cases have been reported from this area. Out of these, only five cases were reported serologically positive.

The Principal Secretary (Health) and two Additional Directors of Health Service Department are camping in the disease-affected area in Alappuzha to supervise and coordinate the preventive measures. They have been assisted by the District Medical Officer and a team of well-experienced and committed Medical Officers and para medical staff.

In order to analyse the situation prevailing in the Health sector and to supervise epidemic control measures, the Government has formulated Monitoring Committees, both in the State level and in the district level. These committees convene meeting at regular intervals to look into the matter and to organize awareness programmes and to take preventive measures.

Director of Health Services has allotted rupees five lakh to each district for epidemic control activities. As a special assistance for relief and preventive measures relating to Chikungunya, rupees five lakh was sanctioned to District Medical Officer, Alappuzha and rupees two lakh each to DMO, Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Kozhikkode. And rupees five lakh each to Indian Systems of Medicine and Homoeopathy Departments. Further to this financial assistance, Government has taken steps to sanction Rs 97 lakhs as united fund to meet the emergency expenditure related to the disease control. Rupees five lakh have also been sanctioned to the Director of Health Services for the state level coordination and control activities. To enabling the purchase of fogging machines and hand compressor sprayers, a sum of Rs 20 lakhs have been sanctioned.

The Government will continue its effort to fight against the disease till the last person affected by the disease is cured. It is to be underscored that people and their organisations are working shoulder to shoulder with the Government agencies to educate the people about the new disease. ■



It was nothing but the concerted efforts made by various departments under the Government that has contributed momentum in preventing the spread of the disease to other parts of the State.



A comprehensive proposal for control of Chikungunya Epidemic and upgradation of Virology lab at Alapuzha for Rs.8.67 crores has been submitted to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

Chikungunya

Measures Taken by Government

- Daily monitoring and supervision is being done from Health Directorate.
- Entomological Team from Headquarters and Medical College expert team were deputed to investigate epidemic outbreak.
- Review meetings of field level activities were conducted by Director of Health Services, Addl. Director of Health Services (PH) on regular basis in all the places.
- An expert medical team with personnel from medical colleges and health services was deputed.
- Minister for Health frequently visits the affected areas and the health institutions in Thiruvananthapuram and Alappuzha and supervises the containment activities and give necessary instructions to intensify the control measures.
- The Chief Minister and the Ministers for Finance and Cooperation also visited the affected areas in Alappuzha.
- A comprehensive proposal for control of Chikungunya Epidemic and upgradation of Virology lab at Alapuzha for Rs.8.67 crores has been submitted to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.
- As per the request from Health Minister, Dr. P.L. Joshy, Director, NVBCP, Delhi and his team visited Vizhinjam and other areas of Chikungunya epidemic and had conducted a review meeting in the Directorate. He had discussion with the Mayor, Thiruvananthapuram about source reduction and containment activities in the corporation areas.
- A team from NIV, Bangalore visited Cherthala, Thuravoor, Thanneermukkom areas in Alappuzha and Vizhinjam in Thiruvananthapuram district. They have collected serum samples and larvae and mosquito for serological and entomological studies of epidemic.
- Government of Kerala have released Rs.5,00,000 (Rs.five lakhs) as untied funds for the immediate containment activities against Chikungunya/Dengu fever for each district.
- Addl. Director of Health Services (PH), Consultant (Training) and other programme officers attended an inter-sectoral meeting convened by Vizhinjam Grama Panchayat, various local self Government institutions in Alapuzha and Thiruvananthapuram districts.
- It was decided to depute health staff to take awareness classes in all grama sabhas, kudumbashree and to community volunteers and MSS volunteers.
- Rs.2.75 lakhs under non plan scheme and rupees four lakhs under plan scheme were allotted to all district medical officers for

containment of communicable diseases.

14. IC trainers (Nos. 30) were deputed for field level activities at Vizhinjam.
15. Instructions were given to intensify control activities like spraying, fogging, source reduction, chlorination, insecticides applications etc. in a co-ordinated war footing manner.
16. Instructed to maintain adequate 24 hrs. Medical service in the health institutions in the affected areas.
17. All health institutions and health staff are alerted and instructions are given to initiate immediate and prompt action for the containment of these communicable diseases.
18. District Medical officers are instructed to ensure essential medicines, diagnostic kits, lab equipments, insecticides, bleaching powder in all the health institutions.
19. District Medical Officers are intimated to undertake comprehensive coordinated containment activities in association with LSGIs, the other departments, NGOs, Professional bodies like IMA, Nehru Yuva Kendra etc.
20. IEC activities like press release, CD preparation and presentation through electronic media, printing of pamphlets, health talk on TV, health education classes, awareness workshop for doctors, media persons etc. are going on.
21. Inter-sectoral co-ordination meeting was conducted in all the epidemic areas and in the panchayats areas. Presidents of district panchayath, district collectors, panthayat president of grama panchayat, block panchayat and other representative , NGOs.
22. Sensitised all supervisors and junior health inspectors regarding chikungunya and the importance of mass source reduction activities with the help of LSGs, Kudumbasree members and other NGOs.
23. Mass source reduction activities have already conducted at Thalayazham, TV Puram, Edayazham panchayat, Vaikom, Kumarakom and going on in all panchayats at Alapuzha.
24. Fogging and spraying activities conducted at Vaikom Municipal area.
25. Message given through school assembly to school children to participate effectively in source reduction activities.
26. Every Sunday is observed as dry day throughout the district and monitored weekly.
27. Five medical camps conducted in the area. Seven more camps are planned to conduct under Vadakkekkara and Chittattukara panchayats.
28. Health squads are formed under peripheral level and intensified source reduction activities are being done in the area.
29. CD on Chikungunya prepared and given wide publicity through health staff. It is being regularly transmitted through electronic media.

Control of Mosquito breeding

- 1) All water tanks, barrels, containers etc.. need to be covered tightly with a lid.
- 2) Remove or empty water in old tyres, tin cans, buckets, drums, bottles or from other places where mosquitoes breed.



- 3) The premises of houses should be free of neglected bottles, buckets, pots etc.. which may collect water and provide good breeding places for the aedes mosquitoes.
- 4) Water collections in the terrace and parapet should be removed.
- 5) Weeds and tall grass should be cut shot, adult mosquitoes look for these shady places to rest during the hot day.
- 6) Pour diesel or kerosene over water collections in the premises so that the mosquito larvae will die.
- 7) To control adult mosquitoes spray DDT, Pyrethrum etc.. frequently.



Chikungunya Fever

Dr. B. Padma Kumar

Chikungunya is a virus disease caused by Alpha virus, which belongs to the family of Togaviridae. The disease was first reported from Tanzania in 1953. Between 1960s and 1980s the virus was isolated from numerous countries in Africa and many areas of Asia. In India, the disease was first reported from Calcutta in 1963. Following that the disease occurred in Madras (1964), Maharashtra (1973) and Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka (2005)

Transmission

Chikungunya virus is most commonly transmitted to human beings through the bite of an Aedes mosquito, primarily Aedes aegypti. Mosquito usually transmits the disease by biting an infected person and then biting someone else. An infected person cannot spread the infection directly to other persons. Aedes mosquitoes bite during the day.

Symptoms of Chikungunya

Chikungunya usually starts suddenly with fever, chills, headache, nausea, vomiting, joint pain and rash. In Swahili language (an African Language), 'Chikungunya' means "that which bends up". This refers to the stooped posture of patients who are afflicted with severe joint pain. While recovery from Chikungunya is the expected outcome, rarely joint pain may be prolonged up to a year or more. Infection appears to confer life long immunity. The time between the bite of a mosquito and the start of symptoms ranges from 1-12 days. Very rarely the disease becomes fatal by producing complications like meningitis, encephalitis etc.

Diagnosis of Chikungunya

Chikungunya is diagnosed by blood examination. But when an epidemic occurs with symptoms of fever, rash and joint pains, Chikungunya can be suspected. Blood examination includes:

- 1) Virus specific IgM antibodies detection by ELISA
- 2) Haemagglutination Inhibition (HI) antibody detection.
- 3) Isolation of the virus and RT-PCR

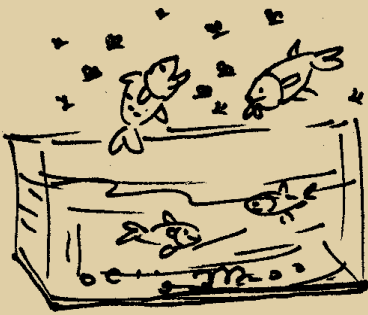
Treatment of Chikungunya

There is no specific treatment for Chikungunya. The illness is usually self-limiting and will resolve with time. Supportive Therapy that reduces the symptoms such as administration of analgesics like Paracetamol and getting plenty of rest may be beneficial. Movement and mild exercise tend to improve stiffness and morning arthralgia. Aspirin should not be given. In arthritis not responding to analgesics, chloroquine is recommended. Infected persons should be isolated from mosquitoes in as much as possible in order to avoid transmission of infection to other people.

Prevention of Chikungunya

The only known Chikungunya virus vaccine is no longer being produced and has very limited availability. Prevention, therefore, centers on avoiding mosquito bites when travelling to areas where Chikungunya occurs. Eliminating mosquito-breeding sites is another key prevention measure.

■ The author is Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine, Medical College, Alappuzha



To prevent mosquito bites do the following



- Use mosquito nets
- During daytime, wear long sleeved shirts and long pants.
- The windows and ventilations should be covered with nets.

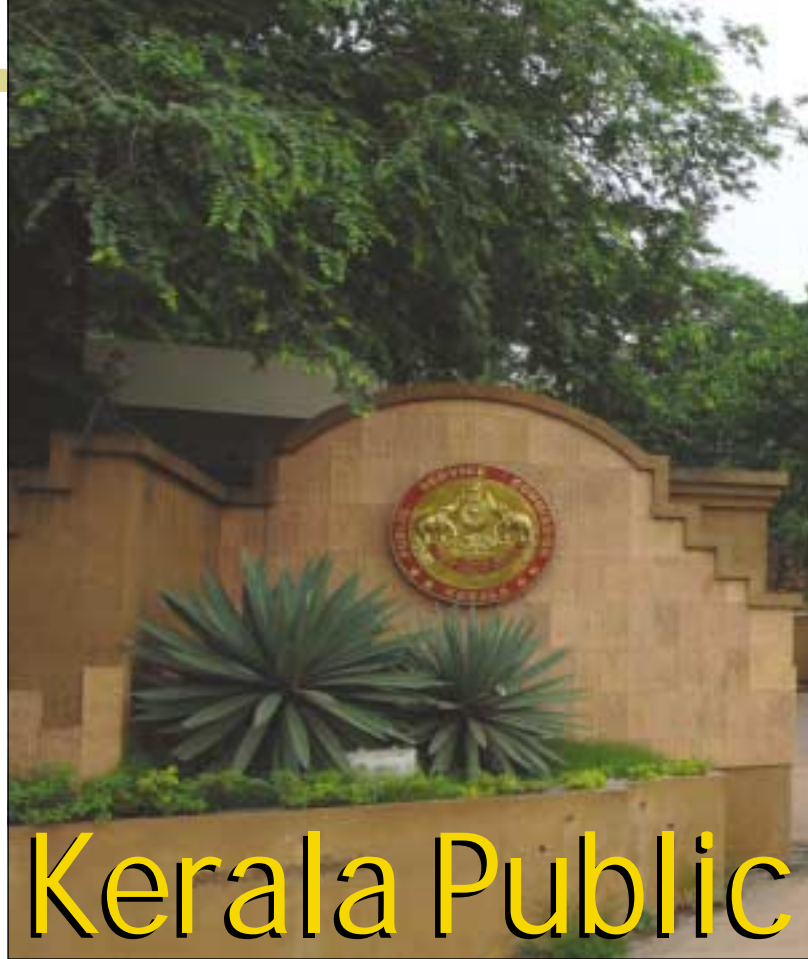


Fever? Call 0484 4099888

The Health Department has started a Call Center to register complaints about any type of fever. Just call over 0484 4099888. Your complaint will be registered and handed over to the Health Department instantly for further follow up. It enables the department to arrest the sporadic spread of fever by adopting various preventive measures. The Call Center functions from 8.00 am to 8.00 pm.



In a democratic system each quarter in the society should get its due share and opportunity in governance. So equity and social justice should be maintained at any cost. However, the quality of governance is directly linked to efficiency, trustworthiness and integrity of the civil servants. Needless to say, as a constitutional body, the Public Service Commission is entrusted with the responsibility of selecting apt candidates having the said qualities, strictly observing social justice. The KPSC reaffirms the commitments on the eve of the golden jubilee celebrations. Here *Kerala Calling* picturises KPSC highlighting its different aspects.



Kerala Public

Recruitment is the most important function entrusted with Public Service Commission. The various stages of selection process were kept strictly confidential because of the peculiarity of the system.

Easwaran Potty K. G.

Open, clear and easy access to all information relating to the functions of an organisation is vital in making it transparent. Paucity of transparency will lead to suspicion, misunderstanding and apprehension. Transparency measures deserve special importance in confidence-building process.

Recruitment is the most important function entrusted with Public Service Commission. The various stages of selection process were kept strictly confidential because of the peculiarity of the system. The maintenance of confidentiality naturally paved way for lack of transparency to a great extent. This situation was exploited by certain unscrupulous elements to mislead the naive candidates and create misunderstanding among public regarding the selection procedure being followed in the office of the Commission.

In this context the Commission took a bold decision to make the functioning transparent to the maximum extent possible. The past few years have witnessed this path breaking change in the functioning of the office of the Commission.

The cut-off mark relating to selection, which was kept secret earlier is



Service Commission

Transparency for Greater Trustworthiness

now made available along with the result of the examination.

The marks secured by the candidates who appeared for objective (OMR) type tests can be had from the website of the Commission when the Rank List for the post is published.

Earlier, question paper packets were issued to the examination centres two or three days prior to the date of examination. Now an official from the office of the Commission carries the question paper packets to the centre on the date of examination and the examination is conducted under strict supervision of that official. This procedure has been initiated to prevent any chance of leakage of question paper and to avoid any other malpractice.

Question paper packets are opened at the examination halls only after two candidates certify that the packets are not tampered with.

The practice of collecting back the question paper from the candidates has been stopped and the answer keys are now being published in the PSC Bulletin after the examination. The candidates get sufficient time to submit suggestions or complaints, if any, regarding the answer key. The answer sheets are valued only after the scrutiny of any such complaints by subject experts.

The details regarding advice for appointment, were also kept confidential. Now the detailed Appointment Chart showing the name of candidate, rank,

seniority position after working out the rotation, the turn (whether open or reservation) are also being made available to the public.

The booklet, “PSC: Functions and Procedures”, brought out by the Commission as part of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations has immensely helped in enlightening the candidates and the general public on the nature and work of the various wings of the Commission.

All these measures aimed at greater transparency have enhanced the trustworthiness of the Commission and strengthened the confidence of the society in general and the candidates in particular.

■ The writer is the Public Relations Officer, Kerala Public Service Commission



No Ban on Appointments



Shri. V.S. Achuthanandan, the Chief Minister inaugurates the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Kerala Public Service Commission.

V.S. Achuthanandan

Chief Minister

The Kerala Public Service Commission, which renders employment to tens of thousands of youths every year and conducts hundreds of examinations entertaining millions of candidates, is a credible institution among people from all walks of life. I know that more than 1100 rank lists exist in the Commission now. It shows that the same number of examinations were conducted during the last three years. There might be much more examinations.

The KPSC has been dealing with complex and busy works; notification of vacancies, reception of application forms,

conduction of examinations, valuation and publication of rank lists etc. Even then, the complaints raised against the functions are much less compared to the seriousness and complexities of the work being done by the Commission. The delay in the selection process is the only complaint for it takes

There were some major reformations in the Commission during the last a few years which yield results and this achievement was the outcome of the effective and efficient efforts of the Chairman, members and the employees.

one or two years to conduct examination after the notification, two or three years for the valuation and the publication of the short list, and then years for the rank list after the interview. There were cases even the candidates forgot about the submission of application.

But, there were some major reformations in the Commission during the last few years which yield results and this achievement was the outcome of the effective and efficient efforts of the Chairman, members and the employees.

The chairman of the Commission declared some major reformations at the venue of the inauguration ceremony of the golden jubilee celebrations. The publication of rank list within six months from the date

of notification was a notable one in his remark. This dream can be realised through combined effort and I wish all of them in the PSC would be determined in this regard.

Everyone should remember that the KPSC is dealing with the present and the future of the country, its progress and development. The Commission selects teachers, doctors, engineers, clerks, scientists for appointments who are to lead our State. And they are the catalysts for progress and development. Thus the selection is an important and imaginative affair so that the dynamic and creative candidates can be appointed. The selection procedure must be foolproof in every stage. So there must be a determination for this cause on the eve of the golden jubilee celebrations of the Commission.

A ban on appointments had been imposed by the previous government. Thousands of vacancies were barred from filling it on the account of modernisation and conditions imposed by the Asian Development Bank. The ban on the appointments was in addition to this. It was an overt and covert ban undertaken by the previous government. Moreover, the heads of departments put their own ban in the appointments by rebuffing to report the vacancies in time. It was a big blow to the tens of thousands of aspirants who were eagerly waiting for a job. On the other hand the heads of departments engaged casual employees on their behest and took bribe for that.

But, the LDF government was keen in the very beginning of its function in order to fill the vacancies properly by giving order to the concerned to report all vacancies within two weeks. Then thousands of vacancies were reported in that period. But it was not completed even though my government is committed to take appropriate steps for recruitments when vacancies arise. And I assure that the LDF government will not impose any ban on appointments.

I hope the functions and procedures of the KPSC may improve far better and it becomes foolproof and corruptionless. The KPSC is an autonomous body established under the sub section 315, Part 14 of the Constitution of India. This article empowers the Commission to undertake recruitments to government services and other establishments free and fair.

The state government will never interfere into the autonomy of the Commission. On the other hand it will extend all help in completing selection process in time. And the government will not be officious to its statutes for the extension of the period of rank lists. The government assures all help for speedy and effective functions of the Commission and to clear staff shortage. ■

The leader of path breaking innovations



M.Gangadhara Kurup

The KPSC cannot turn the pages of its history chart without witnessing the revolutionary and path breaking changes adopted timely for alleviating the procedural complexities and enhancing the trustworthiness of the institution during the tenure of Shri. M.Gangadhara Kurup as its chairman.

The wind of transparency and efficiency now blows at the Commission entered into it when Shri. Kurup opened the window of computer network. He lit the lamp of transparency in order to strengthen the confidence of the candidates and the whole public.

The last few years have unequivocally witnessed major reformations in the Commission. These changes can be seen in the field of examinations and in the recruitment procedures. Speed and efficiency became the symbol of the KPSC. He could lead the Commission in the clearance of arrear application and the number reduced to 39 lakhs from 92 lakhs. It was a Herculean task done through the combined effort of the entire staff.

Now Shri. K.V. Salahudeen, the new Chairman, whole heartedly glorifies the leadership of his predecessor and he terms the tenure as the golden era of the Commission.

Some reformations in the credit of Shri. Kurup are:

- More Objective type examinations
- Valuation of Objective type examinations with the help of computer
- Publication of cut off marks in the short list
- Marks on the website after publishing rank list
- Question papers made available after examination and the publication of answer keys before valuation in order to check the mistakes. Any one can point out mistakes, if any, and it would be taken into consideration
- Complaint redressal cell at the headquarters for timely action and special sittings at district head quarters to hear the candidates.
- Publication of rank list within one year from the date of notification



Interview

K.V. Salahudeen, Chairman, Kerala Public Service Commission

Fast track reformation

There is no need for concern from the part of candidates on the preparation of question papers and rank lists, because of the strict confidentiality observed in all stages and the special care taken in the cases of rotation.

Sunil Hassan

The Kerala Public Service Commission, the biggest of its kind, is ofcourse surging ahead on a fast track of reformation.

With the introduction of a time saving system and simplifying the time consuming procedures, the Commission has been moving towards much transparency and efficiency, says K.V. Salahudeen, the newly officiated chairman. Publication of rank lists within six months, submission of application through online and giving of valued Optical Mark Reader (OMR) answer sheets on website are his dream projects during the golden jubilee year of this constitutional body.

For the last few years, the PSC has witnessed some major reformations in the

selection process, by way of computerisation. The new chairman who is elevated from the post of a member of the Commission, is fully aware of the system of functioning of the PSC and he follows the suit of his predecessor, M. Gangadhara Kurup. Salahudeen speaks to **Kerala Calling** elaborately on PSC and all about his dream. Here are the excerpts from the interview:

It was really a Herculean task of sorting of application forms and its scrutiny, sending of admit cards, conducting examinations and valuation by maintaining strict confidentiality at each stage, to complete the selection process. The manual works done from the stage of notification to publication of rank lists were laborious and time consuming and the candidates had to wait for five or six years for selection. Now the situation has been

changed and the Commission is now capable of publishing rank lists within a year from the date of notification of the post. All the pending works are also completed. The KPSC conducts about 400 examinations in a year entertaining millions of candidates. Since the examination centres are schools and colleges and they are available only on holidays, the Commission faces many hazards in conducting examinations. In this context we are thinking about the scope of conducting online examinations - said Salahudeen.

The Commission has taken several measures to enhance its transparency. The question papers are made available and the answer keys are being published in the PSC bulletin after the examination. It enables the candidates to assess their performance. Anyone is free to point out mistakes in the question paper and in the answer key, if

any, and that would be considered after perusal and scrutiny by an expert panel. This process safeguards the interest of the candidates and helps to conduct a foolproof examination system. The cut off marks of each rank list are also being published. The proposed online facility for submitting application through online will open chance to all Malayali expatriates to apply without delay as and when the notification published on the website. They can appear for the examination when tentative dates for the examination is declared in advance. Conventional method of submitting application will also continue.

There is no need for concern from the part of candidates on the preparation of question papers and rank lists, because of the strict confidentiality observed in all stages and the special care taken in the cases of rotation. The whole selection process has

been done by separate sections in the Commission. If any one raises a baseless allegation of corruption in the selection process such person is wilfully trying to create panic among the candidates and seeking chances for cheating them. Every one should remember that even a single complaint was not lodged pointing any malpractice on the side of the Commission. The trustworthiness of the PSC is beyond suspicion and that is the reason why each and every quarter wants the PSC recruitment in all public undertakings.

In the case of complaints on copying questions from guides the Commission is not actually responsible and even then such complaints are taken into account seriously and proper actions are taken timely.

There is no regulation in the number of candidates to be included in the rank list. So the rank list includes candidates of

many fold and there is no guarantee of getting job. Hence the Commission envisages such a reform to cut short the number of candidates in the rank list to the actual vacancy as it is being done by the UPSC. Laxity on the part of the departments in reporting vacancies in time is the main hindrance in attaining the goal. It is the government that should take necessary steps to take action against the erring officials. If the arising vacancies are foreseen in each year and reported to the PSC, we can reduce the distress of the unemployed youths.

There are some procedural difficulties in adopting common selection for common posts for various institutions in order to reduce the work load of the Commission. Now a special cell has been formed in the Government Secretariat to look into this matter.

The PSC has already implemented the new package adopted by the previous government on the basis of Narendran Commission Report for the selection from minority communities. The new package was adopted on 2nd February 2006 and the relevant rules were amended on 8th March 2006. ■



Technology does matter: A view of the PSC office



The Evolution of Kerala Public Service Commission

With the formation of the State of Kerala, the Travancore-Cochin Public Service Commission was transformed into the Kerala Public Service Commission.

V G Suresh

The Government of India Acts of 1919 and 1935 were the administrative reforms which paved way for the establishment of Public Service Commissions in India. The first provincial Public Service Commission was formed in Madras Presidency in 1935. Thus the appointment of officials in Malabar region, which is now the part of Kerala, was brought under the purview of Madras Public Service Commission and that can be considered as the commencement of the functioning of Public Service Commission in the State.

In the erstwhile Travancore state there was a growing demand for equality of opportunity for all sections in the society in appointments to Government services and this issue was raised as a cut motion during budget discussion in the Praja Sabha in August 1929. A committee of Government officials and non officials was constituted to study about the community wise representation in Government service.

The Committee after a detailed study submitted its report on 16th September 1933. The report was published and in May 1934, the Praja Sabha and State Council made detailed discussion on the report and based on that Dr. G.D. Knox, who was a Judge of the High Court, was appointed on 30th October 1934 as Special Officer to frame rules for ensuring representation of all sections of the society in appointments to Government service based on their population and also for the formation of a Public Service Commission.

Dr. Knox submitted a detailed report and based on the recommendations contained in the report the office of Public Service Commissioner was constituted for making appointments to Government service and Dr. G.D. Knox was appointed as the Public Service Commissioner.

In Cochin there was a two member



KERALA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION											
EVALUATION OF WORK FROM 1996 TO 2005 (calendar year)											
Sl. No.	Description	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
1	No. of posts notified	475	*	451	432	389	154	395	501	363	306
2	No. of apps. received	1775565	2240506	1803622	1906304	1643368	1030657	493076	2941806	1852710	759169
3	No. of posts for which W/T held	218	355	284	493	209	266	320	302	297	183
4	No. of candidates included in W/T	830754	882812	1492723	2237820	2386017	1682734	2166755	1907683	1655646	2920602
5	No. of S/L finalised	309	217	316	301	233	338	304	238	324	388
6	No. of candidates included in the S/L	55662	37254	40967	50773	33327	64627	76113	49368	41435	33242
7	No. of candidates called for interview	Details not available	43114	26546	32417	20608	31540	33138	14267	22963	17478
8	No. of R/L finalised	537	355	398	415	349	406	539	413	456	555
9	No. of candidates included in R/L	39159	45528	39542	59958	52017	78586	73029	78300	38415	45388
10	No. of apps. disposed of	1377793	1282079	774700	832094	985721	2115622	3558378	4084246	1878205	2791745
11	No. of candidates advised	21227	23911	19477	18084	24760	21843	18394	30808	38457	28329
12	No. of applications pending (as on 31st Dec. on each year)	5098192	5994619	7023441	6097651	6756298	7670233	5080631	3038191	3636314	3403693

Staff Selection Board constituted for initial recruitment to lower posts. In 1947 a three member Cochin Public Service Commission was constituted replacing the Staff Selection Board under an Act of the State Legislature.

The office of the Public Service Commissioner, Travancore continued to function till the integration of Travancore and Cochin States. The Travancore-Cochin State was formed on 1st July 1949 by the integration of the two Princely States and a Public Service Commission for the new State was constituted by an Ordinance. There were three members in the Commission including the Chairman. The functions of the Travancore-Cochin Public Service Commission were generally the same as those laid down in the Government of India Act, 1935. Later, when the Constitution of India came into force on the 26th January, 1950 the Travancore-Cochin Public Service Commission continued to function under the Constitutional Provisions.

The State of Kerala was formed on 1st November 1956 consequent to the reorganisation of States. It comprised of the former Travancore-Cochin State (except the present Kanyakumari district and Shenkottah taluk) and the Malabar district and the Kasargod taluk of South Kanara

District of the then composite Madras State. With the formation of the State of Kerala, the Travancore-Cochin Public Service Commission was transformed into the Kerala Public Service Commission.

In exercise of the powers conferred by Articles 318 and 320(3) of the Constitution of India, the Governor of Kerala made the Kerala Public Service Commission (Composition and Conditions of Service of Members and Staff) Regulations and the Kerala Public Service Commission (Consultation) Regulations respectively in 1957.

In the erstwhile Travancore state there was a growing demand for equality of opportunity for all sections in the society in appointments to Government services and this issue was raised as a cut motion during budget discussion in the Praja Sabha in August 1929.

District Recruitment Boards were constituted as per G.O. (MS) No.631/ Public (Rules) Department dated 26.6.1959. The Board consisted of a Member of the Commission as Chairman, the District Collector concerned and a non-official nominated by the Commission as members of the Board. The District Recruitment Boards were abolished on 26.9.1972 and they were simultaneously redesignated as District Offices of the KPSC of the respective district and the work done by the District Recruitment Boards were transferred to the District Offices.

The number of the Members of the Commission was increased to five in 1959, to seven in 1971, to eight in 1981, to nine in 1982, to 13 in 1983, to 14 in 1984, to 15 in 1984 and to the present strength of 18 in 2004.

The Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the KPSC was inaugurated by Chief Minister Shri. V.S. Achuthanandan on 26th July 2006 in a function chaired by Shri. Oommen Chandy, the Leader of the Opposition and attended by Shri. M. Vijayakumar, Minister for Law and Youth Affairs and Shri. V. Jayan Babu, Mayor of Thiruvananthapuram.

■ The writer is Section Officer, Kerala Public Service Commission

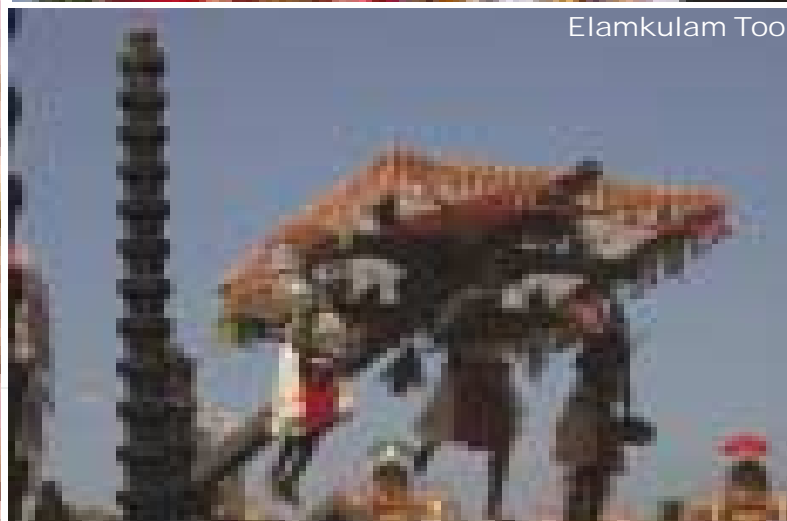


Kodungallore Bharany

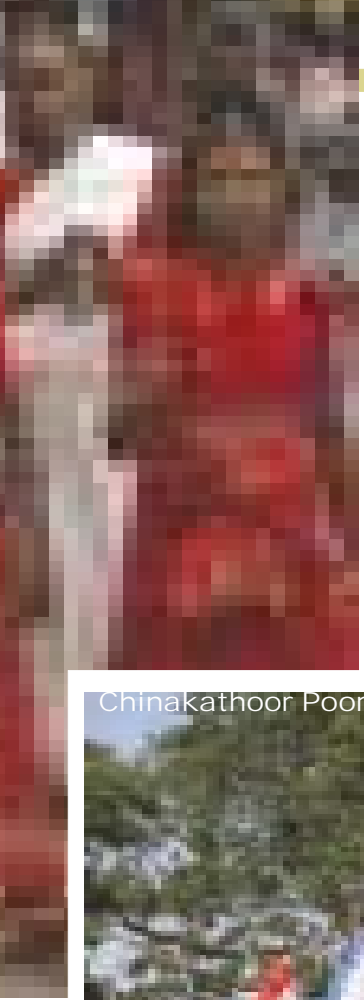
kodungallore



Padanilam Kettukazcha



Elamkulam Too



Machadu

Chinakathoor Pooram



Photos: Asokan Pallikathodu

A Travel Through Festivals

Chettikulangara Kettukazcha



kam

Web Portal for Speedy and Accurate Interface

Rajesh Krishnan R.

The web portal of the Kerala Public Service Commission (www.keralapsc.org) was the outcome of the decision of the Commission to make available to everybody all the necessary information in a complete, clear and comprehensive manner round the clock.

The portal is packed with information regarding the organisation, history, function and responsibilities, the procedure

Details relating to the general conditions, information regarding important orders, rules of recruitment and reservation etc. and answers for frequently asked questions relating to the procedure being followed by the Commission are available on the website.



of selection being followed, notification inviting applications to various selections, method of applying, examination timetable, instructions to candidates, interview schedule, probability lists, short lists and rank lists. Details of advice made from each list are also being displayed on the website.

Details relating to the general conditions, information regarding important orders, rules of recruitment and reservation etc. and answers for frequently asked questions relating to the procedure being followed by the Commission, both in question and answer format and

dictionary format are made available in the website.

Since the completion of networking of all the offices of the Commission, short lists and rank lists are being prepared with the help of computers. All the details are now being displayed in the website without delay. To facilitate easy navigation short lists, rank lists and details of Advice for Appointment relating to the head office, different regional and district offices are displayed separately.

In the page for Departmental Tests, in

to the sections concerned for necessary action and in all possible cases reply is sent via e-mail.

Format of applications for various purposes is available in the website, which could be downloaded and used.

The marks secured by all candidates who appeared for objective (OMR) type tests are made available in the website when the rank list for the respective selection is published.

Another notable feature is that along with the details of advice for appointment, detailed Appointment Chart showing the name of candidate, rank, seniority position after working out the rotation and the turn (whether open or reservation) in which they are advised are also being made available.

Announcements and news relating to the Commission and photo gallery can be seen in the website. And links to websites of UPSC and other state PSCs are also available. The official publication of the Commission, the *PSC BULLETIN* is also being published in the site. Back issues are also available.

With the launching of the web portal, all necessary information relating to the Commission could now be accessed from any corner of the world. Non-resident candidates are being able to know employment opportunities, examination time table, interview schedule and examination result without relying upon others back home. It is amazing that the website has a daily hit rate of over one lakh.

Thus the official web portal of the Kerala Public Service Commission functions as an effective, affordable, speedy and accurate interface between the Commission and millions of candidates.

■ The Writer is Senior Grade Assistant, Kerala Public Service Commission

Changing to Speed and Efficiency

Manoj R.

The Kerala Public Service Commission is undoubtedly the biggest recruiting agency in the country. Perhaps the total workload of the KPSC is more than the total work of all the PSCs in the country.

The number of posts, to which the selection comes under the purview of the Commission in a year, is about 2000 and the average number of applications being received for selection is not less than 25 lakhs. Manual processing of these applications naturally slows down the selection, which eventually affects the efficiency of the entire civil service. Complaints regarding the delay in finalisation of selection became widespread and there arose demand from many

quarters to modernise the entire selection process.

It was in this context that the Commission decided to employ state-of-the-art technologies in the selection process to make it more efficient, speedy, accurate and accountable. With these objectives in mind computerisation and automation were initiated in the year 2001. The first two phases of computerisation have been completed and the last phase is nearing completion.

As the first step, the processing of application forms by optical mark reader was introduced. The duly filled up application in OMR recognisable format is scanned and the data is captured. Alphabetical and talukwise/districtwise sorting of applications which took several weeks to complete earlier, could be done

within no time with the introduction of the new system. As every application form is assigned with a unique barcode number, tracing of any application has become very simple. Hence queries of candidates as to the status of their application are being answered without delay.

Preparation of admission tickets of candidates admitted for examinations, which was highly time consuming and laborious is now being done with the help of high speed printers which could print up to 1000 admission tickets per hour. Address lists of candidates admitted for examinations are also generated with the help of these high-speed printers. All the offices of the Commission are now equipped with such high speed printers.

Majority of the examinations now



OMR valuation system

KERALA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION WHEN COMPARED WITH UPSC AND OTHER PSCs (DETAILS FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2004)

State	No. of posts Notified *	No. of appins received	No. of exams conducted	No. of candi dates appeared	No. of candidates called for interview	No. of candidates advised
Kerala	393	1852710	297	1855648	22983	38457
UPSC	2646	510156	10	628503	2440	266
Andhra Pradesh	2411	151251	8	267773	3567	1710
Assam		1604		42	65	32
Bihar	235	612	12	42398	460	145
Chathisgarh	44	12280	117	67929	105	36
Goa	117	767		24	236	63
Gujarat	429	24938	36	966	3352	1010
Haryana	589	32348	11	24414	13541	745
Himachal Pradesh	28	22110	5	13322	188	67
Jammu	73	6410	10	2250	4781	678
Jharkhand	102	753	5	50921	199	11
Karnataka	625	111	10	17974		6
Madhya Pradesh	75	10533	4	62303	1739	596
Maharashtra	1078	30706	46	211526	1641	408
Manipur				136		
Meghalaya	47	5753	13	9624	10672	213
Mizoram	20	1042	5	266	99	37
Nagaland	222	5453	28	480	709	185
Orissa	365	8760	2	4697	713	466
Punjab				1577	109	60
Rajasthan	27777	127359	50	171573	2842	1426
Sikkim		40		38	36	17
Tamil Nadu	84		3	2548		
Tripura	338	21228	30	4231	1118	185
Uttar Pradesh	733	11537	4	60374	2079	411
Uttaranchal	1058	11500	7	5362	5932	801
West Bengal	1127	13788	10	58599	3151	655

* In UPSC and most other PSCs one vacancy is notified as one post.

being conducted by the Commission are of objective type. The advantage of OMR (optical mark reader) type test is that valuation can be done with the help of computers. Four high speed scanners which could process answer sheets at the rate of 20,000 per hour have been installed at the Head Office of the Commission. With the introduction of the valuation of answer sheets using OMR scanners, the delay experienced in getting the answer scripts valued has been avoided and accuracy in valuation is ensured as no subjective element is involved in the process.

Earlier the entire post examination procedure, right from the processing of answer scripts to preparation of short lists, including checking, shuffling and false numbering of answer scripts, packing, dispatching, getting the scripts valued, decoding false numbers, entering marks and ranking it after awarding grace-marks to eligible candidates, was done manually and it is no wonder that the whole procedure took several months to complete.

The completion of connecting together of the Head Office, Regional Offices and District Offices of the Commission by WAN (wide area network) facilitates quick exchange of information and speedy decision making. Moreover, the application processing work attached to one office can be done fully or partially at any other office.

Thus optimum utilization of both human resource and machine power is ensured in achieving maximum result. Imparting of training in the implementation of new system has empowered the staff to work with enhanced skill, competency, efficiency and accuracy with substantial saving in time and effort.

As a result of computerisation, pendency was reduced substantially. In the year 2000-01, as many as 92 lakh applications were pending and this was reduced to 39 lakhs in 2005-06.

The target to publish rank lists within one year from the date of publishing of notification inviting applications has been

achieved in the case of selection to the post of Lower Division Clerk in various departments in all districts and it is highly commendable considering the fact that it took 4 to 5 years earlier. For many posts selection is now being finalised within six months from the date of publication of notification.

Office automation is also being utilised for making the entire selection process more accurate and transparent.

In appreciation of the effective, efficient and planned manner in which information communication technology is being applied in the modernisation of the functioning of the organisation, the KPSC was honoured with the National E-Governance Award for Exemplary Leadership and ICT Achievement jointly, instituted by the Ministry of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances and the Ministry of Information Technology, Government of India and the National Productivity Council.

■ The writer is System Analyst, Kerala Public Service Commission



KPSC Under the Indian Constitution



The Constitution ensures the independence and fairness of the Public Service Commissions by incorporating provisions enabling them to discharge their duties in an impartial manner free from influence from any quarter.

John Kurian

An efficient civil service is very vital and essential in the administration of a nation committed to the values of welfare state. The framers of the Constitution of India were very particular that important function like recruiting of personnel to the civil service should be done in a just and fair manner by an institution which is impartial and free from the interference of the political executive. Thus Public Service Commission was created as a Constitutional body like the Election Commission which is responsible for conducting of elections to the Parliament and State Legislatures and Comptroller and Auditor General which is responsible for scrutinising the accounts of

the Central and State Governments. These three bodies are referred to as constitutional bodies as they have been created as per provisions of the Constitution and not by any statute of the legislature.

The provisions concerning the Union Public Service Commission at the Centre and other State Public Service Commissions have been laid down in Article 315 to 323 under Chapter II of Part XIV of the Constitution of India. Article 315(1) stipulates that there shall be a Public Service Commission for the Union and a Public Service Commission for each State. According to Article 315(2) if two or more States agree that there shall be one Public Service Commission for that group of

States, Parliament may provide for the appointment of a Joint State Public Service Commission to serve the needs of those States. All the States in India are having their own Public Service Commissions.

The Constitution ensures the independence and fairness of the Public Service Commissions by incorporating provisions enabling them to discharge their duties in an impartial manner free from influence from any quarter.

Appointment of Chairman and Members

As per Article 316(1) of the Constitution, the Chairman and other members of a Public Service Commission shall be appointed, in the case of the Union Commission or a Joint Commission, by the President, and in the case of State Commission by the Governor of the State, provided that as nearly as may be, one-half of the members of every Public Service Commission shall be persons who on the dates of their respective appointments have held office for at least ten years either under the Government of India or under the Government of the State.

Term of office

The tenure and service of the members of the Public Service Commission have been made secure by the Constitution. According to Article 316(2) a member of a Public Service Commission shall hold office for a term of six years from the date on which he/she enters upon his/her office or until he/ she attains, in the case of the Union Commission, the age of 65 years, and in the case of State Commission or a Joint Commission the age of 62 years, whichever is earlier.

Prohibition from holding office

To ensure that the Chairman and other members of the PSC do not show undue favours to persons in authority, the Constitution debars Chairman or any other member from re-appointment under the Central or the State Government. But the Chairman of a State PSC shall be eligible for appointment as the Chairman or member of the UPSC or as Chairman of any other State PSC. A member other than the Chairman of the UPSC shall be eligible for appointment as the Chairman of the UPSC or as the Chairman of a State PSC.



To ensure that the Chairman and other members of the PSC do not show undue favours to persons in authority, the Constitution debars Chairman or any other other member from re-appointment under the Central or the State Government.

The member other than the Chairman of a State PSC shall be eligible for appointment as the Chairman or member of the UPSC or as the Chairman of any other State PSC.

Removal from office

The Chairman or any other member of a PSC shall only be removed from his office by order of the President on the ground of misbehaviour after he has referred the case to the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court has on investigation reported that the charges are correct. The President may order the removal of office of the Chairman or any other member of a PSC if the Chairman or such other member is adjudged an insolvent or engages during his term of office in any paid employment outside the duties of his office or is, in the opinion of the President, unfit to continue in office by reason of infirmity of mind or body.

Conditions of Service

Article 318 of the Constitution stipulates that in the case of UPSC, the President and in the case of a State PSC the Governor of the State may by regulation determine the number of members of the Commission and their conditions of service and make provision with respect to the number of members of the staff of the Commission and their conditions of service. In exercise of the powers conferred by this Article, the Governor of Kerala made the Kerala Public Service Commission (Composition and Conditions of Service of Members and Staff) Regulations in 1957.

Proviso to this Article prohibits varying of salary, allowances and other conditions of service of the members of the Commission to their disadvantage after their appointment. However, there is no legal bar to change their service conditions to their advantage during their term of office.

Functions of the PSC

The duties and functions of the Commission have been laid down in Article 320 of the Constitution.

Administrative Functions: It shall be the duty of the Union and the State PSCs to conduct examinations and recommend



candidates for appointments to the Services of the Union and the services of the State respectively.

Advisory Functions: The UPSC or the State PSC as the case may be, shall be consulted

- on all matters relating to methods of recruitment to civil services and for civil posts
- on the principles to be followed in making appointments to civil services and posts and in making promotions and transfers from one service to another and on the stability of candidates for such appointments, promotions, transfers
- on all disciplinary matters affecting a person serving under the Government in civil capacity including memorials or petitions relating to such matter;
- on any claim by or in respect of a person who is serving or has served under the Government of India or the Government of a State in a civil capacity, that, any costs incurred by him in respect of acts done or purporting to be done in the execution of his duty should be paid out of the Consolidated Fund of India, or, as the case may be, out of the Consolidated Fund of the

State;

- on any claim for the award of pension in respect of injuries sustained by a person while serving under the Government of India or the Government of State, in a civil capacity, and any question as to the amount of any such, and it shall be the duty of a PSC to advise on any matter so referred to them, and any matter which the President, or, as the case may be, the Governor of the State may refer to them:

Provided that the President as respects the All India Services and other services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union and the Governor, as respects other services and posts, in connection with the affairs of the State, may make regulations specifying the matters in which either generally, or in any particular class of case or in any particular circumstances, it shall not be necessary for a PSC to be consulted. Under this proviso the Governor of Kerala has made the KPSC (Consultation) Regulations, 1957 specifying the matters in which it shall not be necessary for the Commission to be consulted.

Power to extend functions of the PSC

As per Article 321, an Act made by the Parliament or, as the case may be, the Legislature of a State may provide for the 'exercise of additional functions by the UPSC IT or the State PSC as respect the

member from re-appointment under the Central or the State Government. But the Chairman of a State PSC shall be eligible for appointment as the Chairman or any other.

Services of the Union or the State and also as respects all the services of any local authority or other corporate constituted by law or of any Public institution.

Acts empowering the Kerala PSC to exercise additional functions with regard to services under the KSEB, KSRTC, Various Companies, Corporations and Boards, Local Authorities, Apex Co-operative Societies and District Co-operative Banks have been passed by the Kerala Legislature.

Expenses of the PSC

As per Article 323 of the Constitution the expenses of the Union or a State PSC, including any salaries, allowances and pensions payable to or in respect of the members or staff of the Commission, shall be charged on the Consolidated Fund of India or, as the case may be, the Consolidated Fund of the State. They are not subject to annual vote of the Parliament or State Legislature. However they may be discussed.

Annual Report

It shall be duty of the UPSC to present annually to the President a report as to the work done by the Commission and on receipt of the report the President shall cause the same together with a memorandum explaining, as respects the cases, if any, where the advice of the Commission was not accepted, the reasons for such non acceptance to be laid before each House of Parliament. Likewise it shall be the duty of a State Commission to present annually to the Governor of the State a report as to the work done by the Commission and on receipt of the report the Governor shall cause the copy of the report with a memorandum explaining, as respects the cases, if any, where the advice of the Commission was not accepted, the reasons for such non acceptance to be laid before the Legislature of the State.

Thus the Government are made accountable to the public for any deviation from the advice of the Commission.

Constitutional Protection

The position of Public Service Commissions in our country is absolutely safe as they have been created by the Constitution and as such any change in the basic structure and nature of the PSC can be effected only by an amendment to the Constitution which is rather difficult. The framers of the Constitution have ensured the independence, impartiality and fairness of the Public Service Commission by incorporating the above provisions which enable the Commission to discharge their duties maintaining highest standard of integrity and upholding the cherished principle of social justice.

■ The writer is Selection Grade Assistant, Kerala Public Service Commission

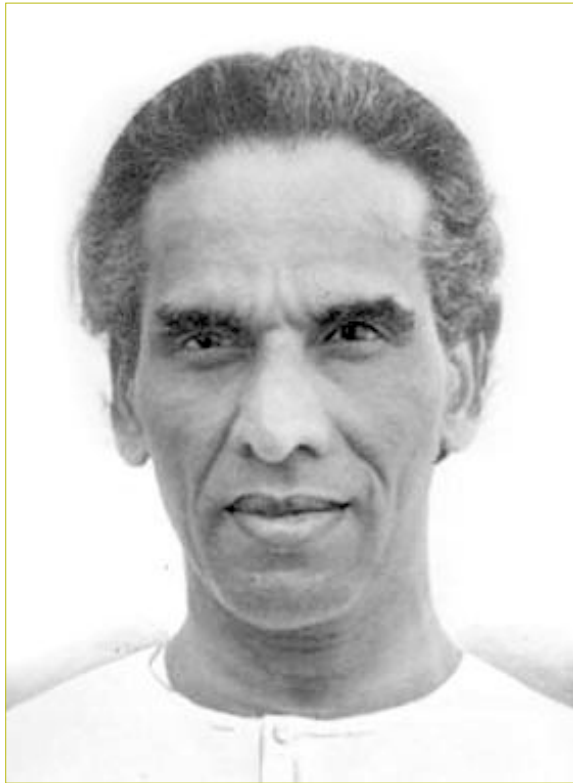
V.K. Krishna Menon

The Immortal Son of

Sam Chekkad

V.K. Krishna Menon was one of the most distinguished Indian statesmen who made a deep mark in the world affairs of the last century. He was a diplomat of exceptional qualities and there are only a few parallels to him in international politics. As an outstanding Keralite of international repute Menon occupies a place which perhaps none may challenge in the near future.

Krishna Menon was born at Kozhikode on 3rd May 1896. He spent his school days at Thalassery and Kozhikode and passed his Intermediate examination from Samoothiri's College, Kozhikode. He took his degree from Presidency College, Madras. Even from his early childhood he cultivated a good reading habit. History of men and nations evoked much interest in him. Also he exhibited an excellent debating talent. As a youth he showed extra ordinary qualities such as keen intelligence, discipline and strict morality. It was during his college days in Madras that he was attracted to the freedom movement and actively participated in many a struggles. Closely connected to the Theosophical movement headed by Dr. Annie Beasant, he became a full time socio political worker. He also worked as an organizer of the Scout movement. His goodness, self dedication, sincerity, strong moral courage, patriotism and leadership qualities impressed Dr. Beasant. He was ready even to sacrifice his life for the well being of the humanity. In appreciation of



V.K. Krishna Menon

these great qualities, the Theosophical Society decided to send him to England for further studies and leadership training.

In 1924, at the age of 28, Menon reached England. His entry as a student at the illustrious London School of Economics which was headed by renowned scholar and economist Prof. Harold J. Laski was a turning point in Menon's life. Deeply influenced by the ideals of Prof. Laski, Menon also became an ardent rationalist and an uncompromising Socialist. (Harold Laski was the patron, guide and inspiration for him in public life.). After graduation in Law and post graduation in political science, he devoted his full time in political

and social work. In 1931 he joined Indian National Congress as an active member. On the same year he was elected as the Hon. Secretary of the India League, an organization formed in England to fight against the British colonial rule in India. When Bertrand Russell, the celebrated philosopher, took charge as the President of the organization in 1932, the prestige and authority of India League was well established. Besides Harold Laski, and other stalwarts like Sydney Webb, Sir Stafford Cripps and Pal me Dutt were also in the Leadership line of the League.

While Krishna Menon began his public life in England, majority of the British people were ignorant about the Indian problems and considered Indian Independence only as a far distant dream. However Menon realised that, for a peaceful transfer of power, the support and sympathy of the British people was quite necessary. Keeping this fact in mind he planned various activities

to mobilize public opinion in this direction. To propagate the message of Indian freedom struggle, he started an English Newspaper named "Indian News". Besides he wrote several articles about India in British - American dailies and periodicals regularly. Hundreds of pamphlets were also written and published by him. He also organized many public meetings and seminars in every nook and corner of U.K. to enlist support for our freedom struggle. Through the pamphlets, articles and speeches he exposed the British Government's cruelty and injustice against the Indian people.

In 1930s itself Menon became the most important spokesman of India in England.

Kerala

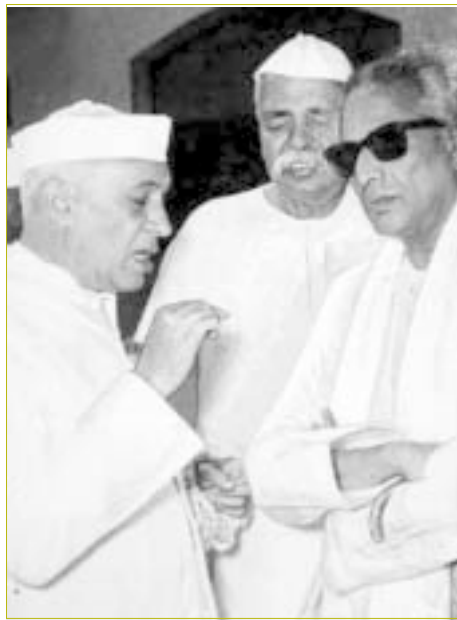
When Gandhiji visited Britain in 1931 in connection with the 2nd round table conference, it was Menon who had organized several public meetings for him and arranged an open discussion with the British Parliament members. For about 23 years he worked hard without proper food or rest to convince the British people about the need of India's freedom. During all these years his life was full of agony and miseries. He lived in a very small room braving against ill health and inconveniences.

Challenging the heaviest odds, Menon struggled hard. By his ceaseless efforts, he made the situation dramatically transformed and people in large number began to co-operate with India League. Organizing student, labour and women wings of the India League, its mass base was broadened. Meanwhile all these activities helped Menon in earning the sympathy and support of all progressive sections of the British intelligentsia, media and general public. He also organized more than hundred Parliament members of British Labour party as a separate forum of the League. They regularly attended India League meetings and strongly argued for India's independence in British Parliament.

The strong position taken by the MPs was the main reason behind the Labour party's open support to India's freedom while the ruling Conservative party under the leadership of Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill vehemently opposed it. It was in 1944 December that Krishna Menon became victorious in adopting a resolution by the British Labour party in favour of Indian Independence. (It was significant that Prof. Harold Laski was the President of the Labour Party at that time) Menon's close relationship with the Labour party and the Pro-Indian attitude of Prof.

Laski helped India's cause to a great extent. (Menon was also an active member of the British Labour Party). Fortunately within some months Labour party came into power and India's freedom became a reality earlier than expected. During the discussion for transfer of power held both in England and India, Menon was the chief negotiator of Indian National Congress. Later British Viceroy to India Lord Mount Batten said 'Krishna Menon was a great help for me during those difficult months'. Under the direction of Jawaharlal Nehru, Menon was the person who drafted the Independence resolution for the Congress party.

After independence, Menon was



Krishna Menon with Nehru

appointed as the first Indian High Commissioner to Britain. During his diplomatic career from 1947-52 he held an austere life. He could have availed all the facilities and benefits of a Cabinet Minister but he lived in a small room of the Embassy buildings and received only one rupee per month as salary. From the dawn to the midnight he worked hard. During those days his daily menu was only some cups of tea and biscuits.

The most colourful period of Menon's life was from 1953-57 as the leader of the Indian delegation to the United Nations. No doubt, he was one of the most

outstanding diplomats U.N. has ever seen. As becoming the part and parcel of the U.N., he tried hard to make the world body an effective instrument for world peace. He was the chief architect of the Korean cease fire agreement, and got international acclaim for the same. He also deserves full credit for averting the disaster developed out of the Suez Canal crisis. His glamour as a seasoned statesman rose to its pinnacle, when the Geneva settlement of 1954, ending the eight year long war in Indo-China was signed under his mediation. As a shrewd diplomat with a quick and alert mind, he had solutions for all complicated international conflicts. In those busy days he was flying from one capital to another, discussing various issues with world leaders.

From 1952-57 Menon was an active participant of almost all discussions and activities of the U.N. He was a highly talented and shrewd debater. Visitors gallery of the UN were fully packed and delegates were also present in full quorum whenever Krishna Menon was a speaker. His penetrating eloquence created so many fans and foes for him in India and abroad. But within a short time, he became the friend, philosopher and spokesman of all newly independent Afro-Asian-Latin American countries, anti-apartheid movements and all national liberation struggles. His revolutionary role as an intense crusader for human freedom, democracy, equality and justice earned him great respect in international politics.

The historical debate in the UN Security Council about Kashmir took place in 1957. Analyzing all aspects of the highly complicated Kashmir issue, Menon bombarded all the arguments of Pakistan and earned high appreciation from all over the world. His seven and half hour long speech in UN on that day still remains as a world record.

Krishna Menon was closely associated with Jawaharlal Nehru in evolving the idea of non alignment and making it popular. Their great vision made non alignment as the foundation stone of India's foreign policy. Menon was honoured around the world as the champion of India's non-aligned foreign policy and as the stringent

Continued on Page-45

Government Appointments

Appointments



□ **Shi John Mathai IAS** has taken over the charge as the new Chief

Secretary to the Government of Kerala. He is a 1971 batch IAS Officer. He started his career as Asst Collector at Thalassery. Before assuming the Office of the Chief Secretary, he held important positions like Additional Chief Secretary (Revenue), Commissioner of Commercial taxes and Excise, Principal Secretary (Industries Department), Member, Board of Revenue, Director of Public Instructions, District Collector, Kollam etc.

Shri John Mathai is a B.Sc (Engg) graduate from the Regional Engineering College, Kozhikode. He has also obtained a Diploma in Development Economics. He has also undergone various training programmes.



□ **Shri Mohammad Riazuddin IAS** is posted as Director, Institute of Management in Government, Thiruvananthapuram.



□ **Shri P.C. Sanal Kumar IAS** is the new Director, Scheduled Caste Development Department.



□ **Shri Sri. M. Sivasankar IAS** is the new Director of Public Instructions.



□ **Shri K.R. Viswambharan IAS** is the new Collector for Alappuzha.



□ **Shri K.R. Jyothilal IAS** is the new Director, Kerala State IT Mission.



□ **Shri K.R. Muraleedharan IAS** is the new Managing Director, Kerala State Agricultural Development Bank.

S. Suresh Kumar

Chlorella, the fresh water-grown plant, with amazing health benefits has gained much popularity recently as a nutritive food supplement. Chlorella, along with wheat grass, barley grass and spirulina, are referred to as green foods. Chlorella is a totally natural, organically pure, nutrient rich, whole food with all the minerals to support life.

Chlorella is a genus of single-celled green algae, belonging to phylum chlorophyta. It is spherical in shape, about 2 to 10 mm in diameter. It contains the green photosynthetic pigments chlorophyll 'a' and 'b' in its chloroplast. It depends on photosynthesis for growth and multiplies rapidly, requiring only carbon dioxide, water, sunlight and a small amount of minerals. Chlorella's name comes from "Chlor" which means green in Greek, and "ella" which means a small thing in Latin. A recent study shows that chlorella has been on earth for at least 540 million years, and is the first known form of eukaryotic organism (true nucleus plant). The German biochemist Otto Heinrich Warburg received the Nobel Prize in Physiology in 1931 for his study on photosynthesis in chlorella.

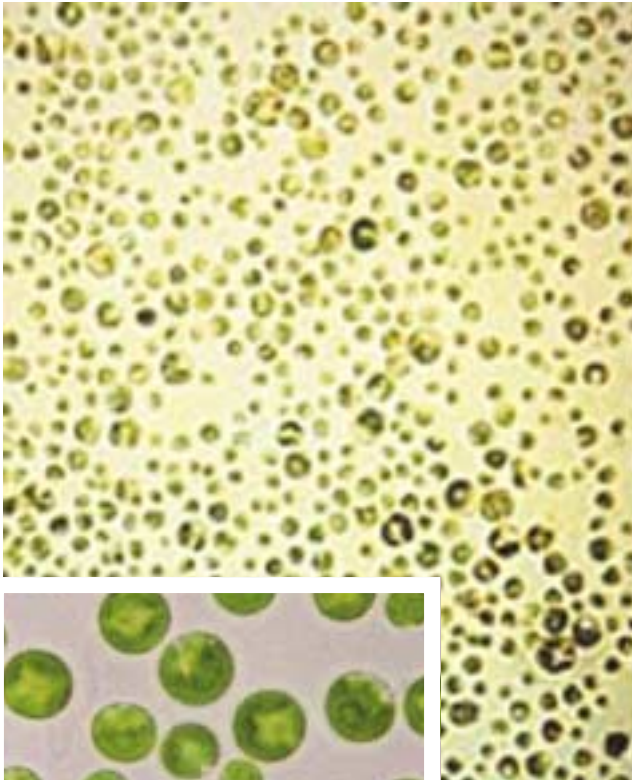
Nutritional Analysis

It is a well known fact that nature's greatest cleanser is 'chlorophyll.' It is one of the greatest food substance for cleaning the bowel and other elimination systems, the liver and the blood. This is commonly found in all green vegetables, especially the green leafy vegetables. The problem here is that food greens contains less than one per cent chlorophyll. Alfalfa, from which chlorophylls commercially extracted, has only 8 or 9 pounds per ton, about 0.2% when extracted, and alfalfa is one of the plants highest in chlorophyll. Green algae are the highest sources of chlorophyll in the plant world; and, of all the green algae studied so far, chlorella is the highest, often ranging from 3 to 5% chlorophyll. In short, chlorella is the highest known source of chlorophyll, with nearly 10 times the amount of chlorophyll found in alfalfa.

The macronutrients in chlorella include protein (58.4%), fat (9.3%), carbohydrate (23.2%), fibre (0.3%), ash (4.2%) and calories (411 cal/100 gm.). It contains

Chlorella

The Amazing 'green food'



foods are often grown in depleted soils, using toxic pesticides and herbicides. Consequently, our food does not have the nutrient content that our bodies require to maintain a balanced healthy state. But chlorella, on the other hand, is a naturally total pure food from a dark-green coloured, simple single cell algae plant coming from fresh water.

Production of chlorella

Chlorella is widely grown on a commercial scale in Japan and Taiwan. It is grown in a liquid nutrient medium made from purified water and toxin-free nutrient chemicals, including trace elements. The culture pools in Okinawa, Japan are one of the main centres of chlorella culture. They are large pools of over 175 feet in diameter. When the chlorella culture in them multiplies to a particular density, they are harvested for processing. It is then spray dried at low temperature. There are various forms of chlorella available in the market, including capsules, tablets, softgels and granules. Chlorella is marketed as a stand-alone supplement or combined with other green foods such as wheat grass, barley grass and spirulina.

Medicinal properties of chlorella

Chlorella has the amazing property as to protect the liver. It lowers blood cholesterol and triglycerides, the levels of which are associated with liver metabolism as well as fat intake.

Chlorella stimulates and normalises an under-active bowel. It also promotes the growth of lactobacillus, one of the bacteria that provides colon health. The chlorophyll in chlorella helps keep the bowel clean. It also assists in detoxifying the bowel and stimulates repair of damaged tissue.

Chlorella's cleansing action helps keep the blood clean. Experiments have shown that chlorella tends to normalise blood sugar in case of hypoglycemia. It also supports and balances pancreatic functions.

Japanese doctors found that ulcers healed rapidly when treated with chlorella. Chlorella has been known to normalise blood pressure. Giving chlorella to cancer patients going through radiation therapy or chemotherapy helped prevent 'leucopenia', the sudden drop in white blood cell count.

Thus with its wonderful health enhancing properties, chlorella, the tiny algae has now become the 'super supplement' with so many other substance, that nutritional science hasn't even discovered yet. ■

various amino acids like alanine, arginine, aspartic acid, glycine, glutamic acid, histidine, leucine, methionine, proline, serine, threonine, tryptophan, valine etc. Apart from Vitamin C and B Complex it also contains minerals like calcium, iodine, iron, magnesium, phosphorus and zinc.

To get an idea about the protein rich nature of chlorella let us compare it with some other food materials as given in the table.

Because of this high and natural nutritional value chlorella has emerged as the new 'super food', which is more nutritionally dense than the foods we normally eat. Another reason for the popularity of chlorella is that, as we all know in today's world, most of our

Food material	Protein (per 100 gms)
Chlorella	58
Beef	24-27
Chicken	24
Fish	18-29
Wheat	13
Rice	3
Egg	13
Potatoes	3

Zachariah's Magic Touch

The genius that creates hyper reality by mixing fact and fantasy

N.A. Karim

In Malayalam, perhaps as in all languages of the world, the path of fiction today is not a single track. Several broad and narrow ways bewilderingly crisscross its landscape now. Some of these are well-trodden, others not so frequently travelled. There are some adventurous writers who chart their own paths often through hilly terrain not always with profit or immediate acclaim. Still they are not willing to travel along the well-populated easy to travel high ways of creative writing. They prefer lonely paths as they are disgusted with the conventional themes, techniques and language. The urge to seek something new and tell it in a new way, to provide fresh insights into reality and convey refreshing ideas comes from a deep dissatisfaction with the superficial and therefore meaningless aspects of life.

Paul Zachariah, the Malayalam writer popularly known as Zachariah who won the prestigious Kendra Sahitya Academy award is a story teller who brought with his arrival on the scene a whiff of fresh air in the then largely musty world of Malayalam fiction. He brought to bear on his creations the deep mark of an original, richly imaginative mind with a remarkable gift for the right word or expression in his narration. But more than anything else, the success of his art lies in the fact that he has a fictional vision of his own.

The fictional tradition of Malayalam took shape in the three decades between the last decade of the



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of Art of Story Telling

nineteenth century and the second decade of the twentieth century if we mark the publication of O. Chandu Menon's *Indulekha* (1889) and C.V. Raman Pillai's *Ramaraja Bahadur* (1918) as the two points between which falls the formative period of the two mainstreams of Malayalam novel. The two core streams are represented by the visionary genius of CV and the realistic vision of Chandu Menon. Broadly speaking, the art of Zachariah draws its strength from both these streams almost in an equal measure. Perhaps in the last analysis this is true of all Malayalam writers of the four generations that followed the two giants including Zachariah whose literary space is somewhere in the not clearly demarcated nebulous area between the Modern and the Post Modern. Post Modernism is fundamentally the eclectic mixture of any tradition with that of the immediate past; it is both the continuation of Modernism and its transcendence.

Great creative writings take their origin in an environment where there are great intellectual upheavals and deep literary stirrings both of which are generally absent in our time. In order to capture the meanings of not so epoch-making developments in the realm of thought and ideas and the subtle manifestations of new trends in the area of art a writer needs an alert intellect and a sensitive mind. The advantage of Zachariah is that he has both. His quick and original response to contemporary problems of society, polity and culture is illustrative of these gifts. But when it comes to creative writings Zachariah becomes a visionary with a satirical twist that is the hallmark of his literary genius. His non-fictional writings are the raw materials from which he distils his fictional vision. Zachariah relates the rough reality around him to his imaginative mind in a special way in order to give the visible reality multiple layers of meanings that are generally missed by people without an integrated vision capable of delving deep

The story, *Annamma Teacher: Oru Ormakurippu*, was an example of Zacharia's simple, straight forward narration that unravels greater truth than convoluted techniques of narration of some of our Modernist writers. The story as such is a well-worn one

into them.

From the award winning collection of stories *Zachariayude Kathakal*, a representative selection of his stories, the reader gets a fairly wide range of his art in all its thematic varieties and narrative techniques. Stories like *Oridathu* had established Zachariah as a writer of remarkable originality whose creations decisively changed the literary sensibilities of Malayalam story readers. It is not as much as the newness of the themes of his stories but his utterly fresh treatment of ordinary well-worn incidents or familiar situations that create the Zachariah magic. This touch is there in almost all the stories of this collection beginning with the story, *pathram* and ending with *thattiyeduppu*.

Most of the stories are woven around the life of middle class people, their daily routines, concerns, anxieties, quarrels and fulfilment. The locale of the stories also is generally confined to a particular area of Central Travancore. The first story in this collection, *pathram*, is truly representative of the stock class and place of Zachariah the life of whose people he is most familiar with and the topography of which area he is most at home. So also the last story *thattiyeduppu*, the place of action of which is Kuravilangadu, is a place not far away from Cherpunkel of the opening story, *pathram*. What we have to take note of here is the fact that with the collapse of the universal meta-narratives, the local narrative

have come into prominence in literature everywhere.

The focus in the stories of Zachariah is on the language with which the small communities construct their own realities. Therefore he goes in for the local and the specific instead of the universal and the abstract. The intellectual pretences of some Modernists are absent in Zachariah, and he is therefore always enjoyable reading. A willingness to accept things as they are on the surface rather than an eagerness to delve deeper for Freudian or Marxian or Darwinian meanings is the secret of the extremely enjoyable reading of Zachariah stories. The story, *Annamma Teacher: Oru Ormakurippu*, was an example of Zacharia's simple, straight forward narration that unravels greater truth than convoluted techniques of narration of some of our Modernist writers. The story as such is a well-worn one: the story of a woman who was used as milch cattle by the family and her death. Several writers in Malayalam have treated this theme in different serious and sentimental manner. But Zacharia empties the story of all its sentimentalities and fills it with ironies and paradoxes to give the story an amazing new look and reveal multiple layers of hitherto unseen realities and their meanings. Here reality is not what it used to be.

If this is Modernism and Post Modernism, even its inveterate enemies wouldn't have any quarrel with it. In society the development of technology, in particular the electronic media has opened up increased possibilities to the exposure to a multiplicity of perspectives, undermining any belief in one objective reality. So also, in our world of media the dividing line between fact and fantasy fades away. This mixture of reality and fantasy gives credence to what is called hyper reality. Zacharia with an easy artless art creates such hyper realities out of simple ordinary incidents and situations. This is indeed the magic of his art. ■

P.K. Devan

The mist clad hills and valleys of Wayanad, situated 3000 feet above sea level, are the abode of tribes, who are the traditional healers to various ailments with wild herbs.

Though the adivasis have been using wild plants for curing various diseases over the centuries, their healing practices were seldom known to the world. Recently scientists from the Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanical Garden Research Institute (TBGRI) at Palode in Thiruvananthapuram discovered two rare medicinal plants – Arogyapacha (*Trichopus Zeylanicus*) and Amrithapala (*Janakia Arayalpatra*) – hitherto known only to the Kani Tribals. These tribals believe that the regular eating of the fresh kernels of the tender fruits of ‘arogyapacha’ and the preparation of a potion from its leaves and stem, rejuvenates the body and provides immunity against diseases. The Kani Tribals use Amritapala too as effective remedy for



Athickal Rajan Vaidyar, a Kurichia tribal healer examines a patient.

mark on his (her) forehead with this herbal paste soon after calling the name he (she) likes. Nettara Chundeli an old Adiya tribal at Thirunelli, revealed that the women of

is boiled, inhale its vapour through nose and mouth.

Wounds and burns – A tender coconut is to be ground well with four or

World of Tribal Medicine

peptic ulcer and cancer like afflictions. The pharmacological tests conducted by the scientists of the TBGRI have shown that there is some relevance to the claims made by Kani Tribals.

The tribals like Muduga, Irula and Kurumba in Attappadi, Mannan, Ulladan, Mala arayan, Muthuvan, Uraly of Idukki are also found traditionally healing various ailments with herbal plants growing in jungles. Dr. Chummar Choondal, an anthropological scholar has also gone to remark wonderfully that the Muduga, Irula and Kurumpa tribals of Attappadi use a herbal paste for attracting the opposite sex. This paste is prepared from the juice of a combination of some wild plants, known only to those tribals. They believe, if a man (woman) likes a particular person of the opposite sex, he (she) has to put a ‘tilak’

his tribe use the leaves of a wild plant as a contraceptive.

Persons suffering from various diseases are reportedly getting permanent relief after taking medicines prescribed by tribal healers. The healers claim to have efficacious cures for common ailments like cough, toothache, stomach ache, rheumatism, jaundice, urinal stone, itching, diarrhoea, ulcer etc. Though the method of diagnosis and therapeutic practices of the tribal healers are still unknown to the world, their methods of curing have been found rational and effective too.

Some of the ailments and the herbal application, practised by the tribals are listed below:

Toothache – Some roots of pepper plants are to be heated first in water along with some guava leaves. When the mixture

is boiled, inhale its vapour through nose and mouth.

Corn – Heat a white stone with firewood and then touch the corn affected skin area with this hot stone.

Stomach-ache – Drink a glass of water after adding to it the mixture of amalpori and cuminseed in their powder form.

Itching – The fat of a wild boar is to be applied on the affected parts.

Cough – A potion is to be prepared with pepper, garlic, cumin seed and lemongrass roots. Consume half a glass of this mixture thrice daily.

Ulcer – A potion is to be prepared with ‘Iruverithandu’ and ‘Aryaveppila’. Consume half a glass of this mixture twice daily for eight days.

Headache – The laurels of the arutha plant should be tied around the head so as the forehead is completely covered.

Mouth Ulcer – The patient should chew a mixture of black tulsi leaves and tender betel leaves and keep it in mouth for some minutes and spit it out.

Rheumatism - Inflorescence of the plantain and turmeric should be ground well and this mixture is to be boiled in water, adding some drops of castor oil to it. When this boiled mixture transforms into a paste form, the patient is advised to apply the paste all over his body.

Mygraine – Some pieces of Madar (Erukku) stems are to be crushed and tied around completely covering forehead.

Abortion – Pappaya roots with jaggery are to be boiled in water and this boiled water is to be given to the pregnant with a dosage of half a glass twice daily for seven days.

Jaundice – Some flower buds of a cestor plant (Avanakku) is to be ground well along with garlic and cumin seed and milk is to be added to this mixture. Consume one glass each thrice daily until cured.

Urinary stone – Seeds of aloes plant

(Kattarvazha) is to be powdered well and added it into a glass of milk. Consume one glass of this mixture every morning.

Centres for tribal medicine

'KIRTADS', the tribal research institute at Kozhikode functioning under the State Government had made a proposal to preserve the knowledge and practice of tribal medicine and propagate it to the new generation by the traditional tribal healers themselves. As a result the state Government started first centre for tribal medicine on September 15, 1993. This centre is located at the tiny village of Valat, about 15 kilometres from Mananthavady town in north Wayanad. The government appointed Kolichal Achappan, an elderly Kurichia tribal man, as the chief tribal healer here. Achappan is providing treatment to hundreds of patients everyday who come from far and wide of Kerala. This centre also conducts a one year certificate course in tribal medicine. For each batch, ten tribal youths, educated upto SSLC and aged between 18 and 30 years are selected. The teachers at this centre are the tribal healers belong to Paniya, Adiya, Kurichia, Kattunaikka and Kuruma tribal communities. Two other tribal medicine centres located at Vadom (12 kilometres from Kalpetta) by Athikkal Rajan Vaidyar and Rajan Vaidyar with the support of 'KIRTADS'.

It is high time dig into our medical traditions and to unearth the rich treasures of tribal healing practices. Earlier, the Department of Botany of Rajasthan University had gone through a study about the therapeutic use of some wild plants like 'Reju' or 'Ronj', morpankhi, karmada for curing diarrhoea. Studies have also conducted by some other universities about the healing practices of Santhal, Pawaras, Banjaras, Oraons, and Mundas tribes in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Maharashtra. The Bangalore-based Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions has recently discovered over 7000 species of plants, found in different ecosystems as the basis of traditional medicine in India. This foundation sadly points out that there is still no comprehensive inventory of medicinal plants used by ethnic and tribal communities in India.

■ The writer is lecturer in Sociology, NSS College, Pandalam



Wild Medicinal Plants.

'KIRTADS', the tribal research institute at Kozhikode functioning under the State Government had made a proposal to preserve the knowledge and practice of tribal medicine and propagate it to the new generation by the traditional tribal healers themselves.



Herbs are being sliced to prepare herbal medicines.



A view of the Steam Bathroom.

B. Harikumar

*The south wind searches for the flowers whose fragrance late he bore
And sighs to find them in the wood and by the streams no more.*

- William C. Bryant (*The Death of the Flowers*)

Kurinji – the wonder flower with which the Nilgiris has over the ages become synonymous in several ways, once again blossoming with a message of hope: Not much harm has yet happened to the delicate eco-system in the mountain, with the sprouting grasslands, the water spots dwelling on them... And later gathering themselves into brooklets, streams, rivers and water bodies. Because, only such a sophisticated eco-system can offer us this magnificent flowering bonanza.

Botanically termed as *Strobilanthes Kunthianum*, Kurinji is inextricably intertwined with the Nilgiri mountains. Many species

of which grow wild in various parts of the Nilgiris between 6,000 and 7,000 feet. Neelakurinji is the best known of the genus that has flowering cycle once in twelve years. Last blooming occurred in 1994.

Kurinji belongs to the family of Acanthaceae. The genus has around 300 species of which at least 46 occur in India.

Besides the Western Ghats, Neelakurinji is seen in the Selvarayan (anglicized as Shevaroy's) range of hills in the Eastern Ghats. It flowers at an altitude of 1,500 to 2,400 metres.

Kurinji flowers in some places near Kodaikanal in Tamil Nadu. But the bigger flowering is at the Eravikulam National Park where there are several areas Kurinji blooms. This include the public access area at Rajamalai. Kurinji also blooms gregariously on the hills between Klavarai in Tamil Nadu and Kovaloor in Kerala. In the Mattupetty and Top Station region, another species called Kalkurinji (*Strobilanthes Kemericas*) flowered in 2002.

The plant is usually 30 to 60 cms high on the hills. They can, however, grow well beyond 180 cms under longierial conditions. It is a bush with several branches. The flower looks light blue in the earlier stage of blooming. It has purplish blue colour later.

Neelakurinji has been referred in the past by names such as *Strobilanthes Kuntianum*, *Nilgirianthus kunthianum*, *Strobilanthus nilgirianthus* (nilgiriantes) and *Phlebophyllum kunthianum*. The species *Strobilanthes sessilis* flowers every year.

What makes Kurinji the star is its massive blossoming and the yawning gap well

maintained by it between two flowering seasons. Why does the Kurinji plant flower only once in 12 years? Latest studies reveal that Kurinji and a number of other plant species have this wonderful mechanism of flowering massively once in 12 years to save a substantial portion of their seeds. In this mechanism termed 'predator satiation', synchronisation of reproduction by large population leads to an abundance of 'prey' (i.e. seed) such that the seed/flower predators are simply outnumbered. Thus the percentage of population destroyed by jungle fowl and small mammals is significantly reduced.

Well, then, how can Kurinji seeds understand that twelve years have past since they last bloomed? The answer is that they have an internal calendar, which recognises the difference in day length. The calendar is usually well buffered for changes in environmental conditions and damages due to human activities such as burning. Each species waits for different periods of length before they flower so that they can accumulate enough nutrient reserves to produce a large number of seeds.

Neelakurinji stands as an excellent example for the ethno-botany studies. Its links with the hoary culture of the natives of Neelgiri area are time honoured. The mountain region itself has been given the name Kurinji in Tamil in geographical terms. In some temples in Tamil Nadu, Kurinji flowers are offered to Lord Muruka. According to the legend, Muruka married Valli, daughter of a Muthuva king, and the garland used was that of Kurinji. Kurinji has great influence in the lives of Muthuvan and Thoda tribes.

In the Sangha literature of BC 300 that include Akanannooru, Puranannooru, Nattinai, Maduhari Kanchi, Kuruntokai etc., there are references abundant on Neelakurinji. Might be because of these strong ethnic connections, the Kurinji has a strong fan to cry out for its conservation.

The modern world came to know about this wonder flower when the British scientists Robert White and Captain Bedome conducted jounries on the Palani Hills in 1837 and 1857 respectively. The clear cut documents on Kurinji flowers are available since 1856. A migrator named

Cock Burn who lived in Kottagiri near Nilgiri had collected details about this. His grand parents also collected as much informatin from Thoda and Koda tribes. Thus there are documents available on Neelakurinji for about three generations.

In 1971, the Kanan Devan Hills (Resumption of Lands) Act ruled that all land not actually under cultivation be vested with the government as part of a land reform programme. This caused some concern that the unspoiled land of the Eravikulam Plateau would be converted to agricultural uses. However, thanks to the representations on behalf of preserving the area by J.C. Gouldsbury, then chairman of the High Range Wildlife Preservation Association, and to the foresight of the Kerala state government, the area was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1975, and then, in 1978, upgraded to a national park.

Nevertheless, the Kurinji habitats in Munnar, Kodaikanal and the Nilgiri are under threat. From the British planters of the nineteenth century to the present day encroachers, many have converted the habitat of Kurinji into plantations. The Kerala Forest Department raised wattle in large areas to feed the tanning industry. Tamil Nadu raised pine forests on the Eastern slopes of Palani Hills. Fire caused further damage.

Having painted a bleak picture, we should not overlook the rays of hope that there are several NGOs, individuals and even the Government that are working very hard to save the Kurinjis and the mountain ecosystems in particular. Attitudes have also changed very much; the hunter of yesterday is the conservationist today, the poacher of yesterday is the tracker today. And the future of some of the animals in this silent area too is a little brighter.

The shola grassland is indeed a very unusual and special ecosystem in that it is found only in a few areas in the Western Ghats. Most of it has already been lost, but the few remaining areas can be protected, if measures are taken immediately. The loss of this habitat would be a great loss to science and to mankind for it has much to offer, both in terms of diversity and aesthetic value.

Anyhow, to commemorate this period's massive flowering of Kurinji, the Postal Department of India issued eight lakh Kurinji depicted stamps in the denomination of Rs.15 on 29th May 2006. The present decision to make a Kurinji sanctuary, the first of its kind in India and that the environmentalists and nature lovers believe, will help protect the Kurinji. Because, what we need is not a protected specimen but a protected sanctuary for Kurinji.

Now let's expect the lover's song even after 12 years when the Kurinji flowers once again blanket the slopes in radiant whiteness under the sun:

Beautiful-winged bee
whose life is passed in search of honey
don't speak to me of desire
but tell me what you really saw:

Could even the flowers that you know
be as full of fragrance
as the hair of the woman
with the even set of teeth and the peacock nature,
to whom long affection binds me?

- *Kurinji (Kuruntokai - 2)*

■ The writer is Secretary, GREENS, Thiruvananthapuram.

V.C. Jose

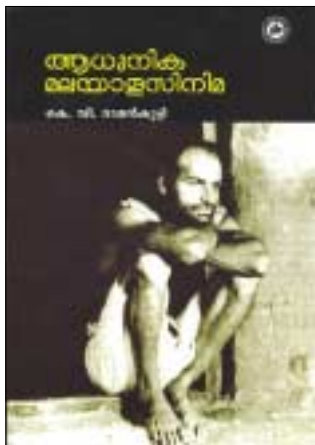
One of the acclaimed film critics of the world cinema Andrew Bazin remarked cinema is essentially the art of reality. May be true, but cinema of the Lumiere Brothers has undergone total change over the years. Though the language of film has changed a lot, it still remains to be a visual medium, the one that attracts the largest number of people. The question whether film require a literary approach in its analysis and exposition seems to be a greater question than ever before. However, it must safely be elucidated that no visual medium is complete without an aesthetic outlook which, in turn, ostensibly needs a literary manifestation. V.K. Ramankutty, in his book 'Adhunika Malayalam Cinema', perhaps endeavours to accomplish an ought to be reality which no one has envisioned in the past.

The impact of world classic on Malayalam film right from the sixties is very obvious in many of the films. Its direct expression was 'Olavum Theeravum', directed by P.N. Menon, which was very much under the influence of Italian Neo-realism. The French New Wave movement has its own impact in this language film, as elsewhere in the world.

It must be said that there are only a few writers who write solely on cinema in Malayalam. One such writer is V.K. Ramankutty. His first book 'Sathyajit Rayyute Pather Panchali' was widely accepted by readers of literature and cinema alike. This book 'Adhunika Malayalam Cinema' which at present is its second edition, elicits the fact that there are readers for the literary approach of cinema and that the old mindset is changing averse to the past.

The Malayalam language films, over the years, have undergone dramatic changes in its form, content and attire. Naturally, writing on these films cannot be complete without an ardent endeavour to dissect the historical epochs, which these films have

Catching the art of film



Adhunika Malayala Cinema
K.V. Ramankutty

Published by Kerala Bhasha Institute

witnessed in the past. Analysing the history of any language film from a writer's point of view is not that an easy affair. The basic question that often entangled with such a writer is whether cinema is an art, industry or entertainment? How do you fix the criteria for such an analysis? In such a circumstance, you would arrive at a conclusion that there are only a few films that have stood the test of time. On reading Adhunika Malayalam Cinema, one would inspire with the feeling that history of films is not the chronology of films but that which have taken the Malayalam film to the world for a ride.

It is indeed interesting to explore how the Malayalam film redeemed itself from the melodramatic overtones of Tamil and Hindi film culture. When the Hindi and other south Indian language films were engulfed in the puranic adaptations on the tinsel world, Malayalam films dealt with stark and real life of people, like the Bangali films.

It is another reality that Malayalam films achieved greater heights due to the rare affinity that existed between cinema

and literature during the sixties. No doubt, the love affair between literature and films has cooked up some of the ever-memorable films of this language and brought out national and international laurels to this land. Symmetric association of literary men with cinema has drawn up new echelons for the later generations to rest full faith in them. Though the two make a *company-combination* is still there in Malayalam film, the Thoppil Bhasi – Ramu Kariyat due for 'Mudiyanayaputhran', Basheer – A. Vincent affinity for Bhargavinilayam, M.T. and A. Vincent combine for 'Murappennu' can't be sidelined ever in this language film. In fact, these stalwarts laid down the basic of our language film.

The impact of world classic on Malayalam film right from the sixties is very obvious in many of the films. Its direct expression was 'Olavum Theeravum', directed by P.N. Menon, which was very much under the influence of Italian Neo-realism. The French New Wave movement has its own impact in this language film, as elsewhere in the world. Then our films had witnessed an onslaught of film society movement and consequently, the upshot of talented directors like Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Aravindan, John Abraham and so on. These directors with their very debut films placed Malayalam films to the pinnacle of national and international attention.

It is highly informative that the writer, in one of the chapters of the book, peeps very closely the inner world of directors like Adoor Gopalakrishnan, G. Aravindan and M.T. Vasudevan Nair. In Adoor's world the writer splits wide open the cinematic jargons like episodic, static energy, images, cinematic, techniques, hermetic, craft, minimalist, conditional tense, schematic etc which were laying dormant in Adoor's films, which perhaps no other writer on this

director's film dared to unveil.

Writing the history of Malayalam films straight away from J.C. Daniel's 'Vigatha Kumaran' to till date in 62 pages seems quite an insurmountable task. But here, V.K. Ramankutty approached the subject from a different perspective. Instead of chronologically proliferating, he has cut to size the intricacies in the evolution of

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Malayalam films in limited words analytically, thereby making the readers the feeling that they have got something extraordinary from the usual treaties on Malayalam cinema. Along with this, it is amazing that the writer has found sufficient space in recording the directors who have made a mark of their own in the last one and a half decades.

The writer's conviction to appendix the detailed study of 12 Malayalam films, which in one way or the other lifted the Malayalam films to the global audience, is certainly a breakaway from other writers on the subject. In fact, the 'Adhunika Malayalam Cinema', published by the State Institute of Languages takes the readers to some of the unseen scenery of this miniscule language, which is still making intellectual reverberation to the whole of Indian cinema. ■

Remembering Padmini



C. S. Venkiteswaran

“Garbo still belongs to that moment in cinema when capturing the human face still plunged audiences into the deepest ecstasy, when one literally lost oneself in a human image as one would in a philtre, when the face represented a kind of absolute state of the flesh, which could be neither reached nor renounced.”, said Roland Barthes of the mercurial presence of Greta Garbo in cinema. The presence of Padmini also exudes similar feelings. She belongs to a period in South Indian cinema when female actresses were as important a ‘star’ as their male counterparts. The Tamil films like *Veera Pandya Kattabomman*, *Thillana Mohanambal*, *Mana Magal*, *Mr Sampath* and *Vietanam Veedu*, Malayalam films like *Snehaseema*, *Adhyapika*, *Pareeksha*, *Umminithanka*, Hindi films like *Mera Nam Joker*, *Gis Desh mem Ganga Behti Hai* etc are testimonies to her art and her passion for it. One could glimpse it even decades later when dancing heroines were a thing of the past, in films like *Nokketha Doorathu*, *Kannum Nattu* and *Vastuhara*, where she plays aging but powerful roles.

A member of the Travancore sisters (the trio of Lalitha, Padmini and Ragini), all classical dancers par excellence, it was Padmini who went on to capture the imagination of the filmgoers of that generation. She was an acknowledged dancer even before she entered the world of celluloid, something that eased her way into it. But like many other actresses of her generation never was she reduced to a mere showpiece. She brought an intense charm and chemistry to the roles she played. For instance in *Thillana Mohanambal*, where she plays the role of a dancer, she vies with Sivaji Ganesan, the Nagaswaram exponent and her lover, bringing to life a virtual

jugalbandi of emotions, romance and arts. Only she could have matched the histrionic talents of an actor like Sivaji Ganesan.

It was not a coincidence that she was spotted by none other than Uday Shankar, who cast her in a small role in his dance spectacle *Kalpana* in 1948. In the following decades, she acted in all the South Indian languages and Hindi, dancing and acting her way to glory. She made her presence felt with *Eazhai Paadum Pattu* (1950), followed by *Panam* in 1952, in which she was paired against Sivaji Ganesan. The romantic duo went on to play several roles

as lovers and parents in the following decades, carving a niche for themselves in the minds of the filmgoers embodying all the romantic and familial conflicts of post-independence nation-building. As if marking the end of an era and the beginning of another in cinema as well as the nation, one finds in the family drama of *Vietnam Veedu* (1970) the aging couple of Padmini and Sivaji being made passive witness to the disintegration of the family. The generational shift, that forms the core of the narrative, carries a metaphorical charge here that is inescapable. Apart from



Sivaji Ganesan, she acted with almost all the titans of the period like MG Ramachandran, NT Rama Rao, Sathyan, Prem Nazir, Raj Kapoor, Gemini Ganesan and SS Rajendran. A true polyglot, she spoke all the south Indian languages and Hindi, and dubbed herself for her films!

In Malayalam, her image follows a different trajectory. It was a period of social drama, and hers was the image of a bold feminine presence, something that continued to her last films in Malayalam. In Snehaseema, she plays the role of the estranged lover, who is forced to marry against her wishes. In Adhyapika (1967), she is the sacrificing sister, who brings up a whole family, sacrificing her life and love in the process. The same image continues in the films she did much later. For instance, in Nokketha Doorathu Kannum Nattu (1984), she is again a self-centred matriarch living alone in a mansion, and whose heart is won by the young girl who forces her way into the fortress of her life. In Aravindan's Vastuhara (1990), she has a very poignant presence. Here again, she plays the aging and lonely woman, an erstwhile aristocrat, who still steadfastly holds on to her memories with great dignity. Though her memories (and memories about her) are tinged with guilt and nostalgia, she is never lost or dissolved by it. Padmini brings in a sort of disarming charm to the role.

Like many south Indian dancers turned actresses of that time, she also pursued her dancing career with passion till the end. In her case, the acting and dancing careers seemed to catalyse each other. She performed all over the world, and founded and ran an academy in the US to teach the art. She along with her sisters and dancers like Sukumari and Ambika have orchestrated and performed dance dramas like Ramayana and Valli enthralling audiences far and wide.

Padmini embodies a period in south Indian cinema, when actresses were whole, they were both body and mind, and were never reduced to one or the other like in the following decades. Hence the words of her famous song in Thillana Mohanambal still resonate in all its poignancy to the current generation: Nalam thana, nalam thana, udalum ullavum nalam thana..? ("Are you fine, in body and mind?") ■

V.K. Krishna Menon... *Continued from page-33*

crusader of the third world countries. According to him the prime motto of our foreign policy should be world peace, protection of national freedom and peaceful co-existence among nations. Based on this fundamental ideology, he played the most important role in the formation of the non-aligned movement.

Menon approached every problem with the sanity of a dispassionate yogi. He was a man of strong conviction and extra ordinary will power who always stood for truth and justice. No force could deviate him from his principled stand. Menon was basically different from many other political leaders. He was totally against populist slogans and gimmicks in public life. Of course he was a very distinct personality. Fearlessness, decisiveness, constraint and firmness were the basic features of his character. Even though he was rough in his behaviour and short tempered, he was kind and lovely in his mind.

Krishna Menon's broadmindedness, hard work, self sacrifice, dynamism, rationalism and humanism attracted Jawaharlal Nehru from the very beginning of their comradeship which began as early as 1927 in England. The attraction was mutual. In Nehru, Menon speculated a progressive, socialist and idealist leader for India in future. In 1935 Nehru wrote "I have great appreciation for Krishna Menon and consider him as one of our best personalities". To the very last he was deeply loyal and devoted to Nehru. Always they were identical in their social, political and economic philosophy. On several national and international matters both of them had same vision and ideology. They were internationalists in approach. As true socialist and secularists they dreamed an egalitarian society free from poverty, exploitation, oppression, superstitions and war. Nehru fully trusted Menon and sought his advice on all important subjects. No doubt, Krishna Menon played a historical role in the formation of India's post independent internal and external policies.



Menon always stood for a peaceful and fundamental change in the socio-economic and political system of our country. He fought for democratic values in society and also for inner party democracy in politics. He was against personality cult and dynastic rule in politics and government. During his tenure as Defence Minister of India from 1957-62 he took so many important decisions to make India self reliant and modern in defence productions. Although he had resigned from the ministry on 7th November 1962 as a result of our war with China, we are really indebted to Menon for the 1965 and 1971 war victories over Pakistan. Another epoch making event of his regime was the liberation of Goa from the Portuguese colonial rule. After its liberation Menon said "It was the finishing of an unfinished job".

Twice Menon was elected to the Lok Sabha from Bombay (1957 and 1962) as a congress candidate. (Earlier he was elected from Madras Legislative Assembly to the Rajya Sabha) In 1968 he was an independent member from Midnapur (W. Bengal) supported by the left parties. When he breathed his last at New Delhi on 6th October 1974, he was representing Thiruvananthapuram Lok Sabha constituency as an independent member.

It is undoubtful that his contributions and visions in solving the international problems and his battle against nuclear proliferation, racism and colonialism will be remembered in history for a long time. The seasoned' diplomat K.P.S. Menon who was with him in U.N. once said "I have not heard such a strong voice than Menon's in U.N. It was the voice of India. It was the voice of resurrecting Asian and African countries. It was the voice against slavery and injustice". ■

Vasantha Sena Honoured

JUBILANT are the members of the forest brigade 'Vasantha Sena', the all women brigade who shoulder themselves the responsibility to protect the Periyar Tiger Reserve. They would have never thought that their relentless effort bring such an honour to them. The voluntary organisation has now been selected for the Amrita Devi Bishnoi Award instituted by the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India for their achievement.

In 2002, when the organisation was formed, their intention was to guard the Periyar Tiger Reserve area from the muscle power of poachers. The members collect themselves around 10 am everyday and to patrol the entire region. Of late, they realised that their mission should not be limited to the protection of forest wealth. Therefore, they turned their eyes towards



the protection of environment by discouraging the use of plastics. If one visits the Periyar Tiger Reserve with a plastic carry bag, he will be stopped by the members of the sena and will replace his bag with a paper made one. By these measures, they ensure that the entire region is now a plastic free zone.

The Vasantha Sena was fortunate enough to bag the P.V. Thampi endowment award for forest protection as early as in

2004. Acknowledging the spirit shown by the members in protecting the flora and fauna, the Forest Department has provided basic requirements to the force like caps, rain coats etc.

The award, financially, is a blessing to the members of the force because it carries a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh plus medal and citation. The members are joyful because they get such a huge amount for their selfless service to the society.

In a Different Role



DON'T BE surprised if one find our Home Minister on the silver screen. Shri Kodyeri Balakrishnan has completed his role successfully for a documentary film named 'Traffic Police' produced by the Kerala Police. This is one of the films being produced by the Kerala Police in an effort to bring awareness among both the police personnel and the public. 'Beat Duty', 'Police Station' and 'Murder Case Investigation' were the other films produced in this connection.

Shri Balakrishnan has acted the role of a Good Samaritan who helped the traffic police to rush a road accident victim to the hospital. Two of his personal staff members also joined him in front

of the spotlight. The scene was recorded on a busy road near the Police Training College, Thiruvananthapuram. A few other documentaries are also in the pipeline by the Kerala Police.

Apart from the Home Minister, Shri Raman Srivastava, Director General of Police, Shri Jacob Punnoose, Additional Director General of Police, Shri Anil Kumar, Inspector General of Police, Shri Nitin Aggarwal, Deputy Inspector General of Police, Shri Manoj Abraham, Commissioner of Police, Thiruvananthapuram are the main actors in the documentary. The documentary is directed by Shri Nandan Pillai.

A blooming bud

FOUSIA YOONUS is aware of the transient nature of beauty in the world. Her heart is in the right place and what her imagination perceives as beautiful is truth” Dr. K. Ayyappa Paniker, the great poet wrote these lines, in his foreword to the book, ‘Buds into Blossoms’, a collection of poems, written by Fousia Yoonus, a student of St. Thomas Residential School, Thiruvananthapuram. Fousia is an upcoming writer, both in Malayalam and English. She became the younger English poetess from Kerala by publishing her maiden book, ‘Through the Open Window.’ She bagged several awards in her favour. *Puzhayude Sangeetham* is her collection of poems in Malayalam. She is the daughter of Er. A.

Yoonus and Dr. A. Faseela Yoonus.

“The rainbow slowly vanishes –
Back into the unknown
Never does it deprive
Any human heart
Of the joy it incites,
Nor the beauty while it lasts
The rainbow always strikes roots
Deep down in my mind!”
These are the closing lines of her poem.
‘The Rainbow.’

Her experiences with nature make her philosophical. She can handle divergent emotions with equal skill. The collections of poems came out in black and white when Fousia was a high school student. Now she is at Plus Two.



M. Deepak

‘Dra Cola’

A SINGLE SPARK of wit from an artistic piece may trigger a tough thought of struggle. That is the idea behind ‘Dra Cola’, a sculpture in sand made by M. Deepak at Shangumugham Beach. It was a part of anti cola movement, says Deepak who hails from Pappanur of Kannur District. The sculpture, which shows cola bottle in a coffin, was made with the help of his friends Janson and Joshi. Deepak reaches at Shangumugham beach every Sunday with a variety.



Movie on Mobile

ELDOSE BOSE, a student from Kochi, is getting into the limelight as he develops a technology to see cinema on mobile phones at full length. It is the first time in the world of technology that hours long cinema zipped on mobile phone. And the student says he got patent for this.



Eldose Bose

The software, which he developed for this purpose can be downloaded from the website www.moviplus.net free of cost soon. This software can be installed in mobile phones, which have P.R.S or EDGE and movies can be downloaded to it.

Movies can be seen enlarged in computers or TV set from mobile phones, which have video out. The technology now exists, facilitates only to download cinema scenes which lengths up to two or three minutes.

Eldose Bose has planned to start a mobile channel in the name *Moviplus*. He says this channel will be useful to cinema producers also. A nominal fee can be imposed for seeing cinema and a small percent from the profit will go to producers. The student dreams to work hand in hand to launch a website with the organisation of cinema producers.

Eldose Bose is the son of Mr. Bose, who is a movie producer. He is a first year BCA student of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

Medical Tourism

The new potential

India offers World Class Medical Facilities, comparable with any of the western countries. So also Kerala. The God's own country has state of the art hospitals and well qualified doctors. With the best infrastructure, the best possible Medical facilities, accompanied with the most competitive service charges, tourists all over the world have chosen Kerala for their treatment also. This has paved way for Medical Tourism.

It is estimated that the cost of dental treatment in the western countries is approximately 7-10 times more than that in our state. Because of this difference people have started to club their tours with dental treatments into one, ending up by having a grand holiday in the backwaters and hill resorts in Kerala.

Cardiac care has also become a speciality in Kerala. Many of the modern hospitals in Kerala have the distinction of providing comprehensive cardiac care spanning from basic facilities in preventive cardiology to



the most sophisticated curative technology. The technology is contemporary and world class and the volumes handled match global benchmarks. The charge in these hospitals for all these treatments is much less when compared to the multi speciality hospitals in UK, France or Germany. Even things like ordinary medical check-ups cost less in Kerala than they do in Europe.

The Kerala Tourism is all set to exploit the scenario by arranging a marketing campaign to promote the State as a medical tourism destination. On the anvil are promotional events in Sri Lanka, Maldives, Europe and in countries in West Asia. It is estimated that on an average 15000 medical tourists visit our State in a year. Majority are from the Gulf countries, Maldives and, of course, from Europe.

Medical Tourism has rejuvenated the Ayurveda field also. This branch of treatment requires a patient to remain in the hospital after the first phase of the treatment to start the next phase. The period in between these phases may vary from four days to four weeks. A tourist can easily spend these in-between period in any tourist places in Kerala.

By 2010, India will be in a position to earn Rs 10,000 crore from Medical Tourism alone. Kerala is looking forward to grab a significant chunk - at least 20 per cent of this projected estimate.

- Pramod

Life & Line

P.V. Krishnan

