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1st August 2013

KERALA CALLING

The UN Award
Meaning and Significance



Mass Contact
Programme (2012)

- Alappuzha
- Ernakulam
- Idukki
- Kannur
- Kasaragod
- Kollam
- Kottayam
- Kozhikode
- Malappuram
- Palakkad
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MASS CONTACT PROGRAMME

Again

with new vigour



MASS CONTACT PROGRAMME

Goes hi-tech

for transparent and quick solution



EDITORIAL

New Lessons

Great leaders always keep their focus on the interest of the people. Things extraneous to that focus are avoided. The grievances of the people, particularly the poor, are not ignored when such mass leaders are in power. This is true in the case of Kerala, as we are led by a Mass Leader, Oommen Chandy. In a felicitation function for bagging prestigious UN award for the Mass Contact Programme, Chief Minister Oommen Chandy said, "In the course of my 55 years of public life, I owe a great deal of learning from ordinary people and from my daily interaction with thousands of ordinary citizens. So, people are my text books. They are the source of my inspiration, knowledge, energy and legitimacy. I owe everything to the people."

The Chief Minister is now ready for the second phase of the unique democratic experiment, the Mass Contact Programme. The first phase of Mass Contact Programme was recognized by the World Countries. Last month, our Chief Minister received the United Nation's Global Award for Public Service for this programme. The major learning point that the Chief Minister had from the mass-contact programme is in his

own words: "it is indeed possible to mobilise the positive energies within the bureaucracy and government when there is a collective sense of responsibility and incentive for learning."

All is set for the mass campaign. The Chief Minister's office has developed a new software by which the petitions would be sent online to senior officials of the departments concerned. Already the CM's office has received lakhs of petitions. This time people need not have to wait for 15 to 16 hours to get their complaints addressed. Those coming from distant places would be heard first and the petitions would be segregated department wise. The petitions would be dealt with at three levels; first by the officials, then by the minister in charge of each district and finally by the Chief Minister.

In the background of the great Success and Global recognition achieved for the first phase of this novel democratic experiment, the second phase of the mass contact programme is expected to reach more people and redress more grievances.

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In both Shelley's and Asan's poetry, we find the note of "sadness and melancholy." Their autobiographical lyrics are uniformly sad. In Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" the personal cry becomes very piercing and the agony of the poet's heart comes out poignantly.

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Seaplane service: Expert panel to conduct study

The government has decided to set up an expert committee to study the issues related to the seaplane service launched by the Tourism Department. The committee will study whether the seaplane project has adversely affected the fishing sector. The committee would comprise University of Fisheries Vice-Chancellor Madhusoodana Kurup, Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute representative Padmakumar, Tourism Secretary Suman Billa and Kerala Tourism Infrastructure Limited Managing Director S Anilkumar.



Committee to propose measures to check torture and abuse of children

The State Cabinet set up a committee to propose measures to check torture and abuse of children by parents, against the background of recent incidents in Kozhikode and Kumily. The committee, to be headed by the Additional Chief Secretary in charge of the Social Justice Department, will have the Principal Secretaries in charge of General Education, Health, Local Self-Government, and Home as members. The committee would take immediate steps to improve vigilance against torture of children.

Mr. Chandy said that pending adoption of long-term measures on the basis of the committee's report, the government would constitute vigilance committees at the local level involving anganwadies and school headmasters and principals. They would be required to look out for signs of distress among children and report the matter. The police would be directed to take strong action in case of atrocities against children.

The headmasters and principals would be asked to identify children requiring counselling. Funds for arranging counselling sessions would be made available from the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS). ICPS funds would be made available to provide food,

clothing, tuition fee, and money for excursions to poor children found to

Child rights to be protected: MK Muneer

"Not even a single child in the state should suffer from torture or cruelty. The newly formed Child Rights Commission (CRC) will ensure that and the CRC in turn will be monitored to check whether the child rights are protected by them," said Dr. MK Muneer, Minister for Panchayats and Social Welfare. He was inaugurating the meeting titled 'Debate 0-18'.

The state is to announce its nutrition policy. This policy will provide detailed information on the nutritional needs of the children according to the different growth stages, the minister added.



require them on assessment of their studies. Hospitals would be required to report suspected cases to child welfare committees when children with injuries are brought to hospital for treatment. The Chief Minister said that changes to the laws would be brought in if the committee recommended that for protection of the children. It would be possible to detect atrocities against children through effortless monitoring. Society needed to be watchful. The newly constituted Child Rights Commission is functioning in the Social Justice building complex in Poojappura. Former Chief Sec Neela Gangadharan is the chairperson of the Commission.



19 new cyber cells

In the wake of growing number of cyber crimes reported from various parts of the state, the State Government has decided to form 19 cyber cells and create seven posts in each cell, said Chief Minister Oommen Chandy. The government had decided to create 356 supernumerary posts for appointing eligible persons in government service on compassionate grounds whose applications were pending. "The postings on compassionate grounds were taking around seven to eight years. Earlier the government had given postings to 549 persons on compassionate grounds in May 2012 by creating supernumerary posts," he said.

The Cabinet gave its approval for

creating 758 posts for the 12 newly-constituted taluks. Out of this 656 will be new and 102 posts will be redeployment. Other Cabinet decisions include starting of 14 dental units in taluk hospitals and appointment of one dental surgeon in each unit. As many as 205 higher secondary teacher posts, 448 higher secondary junior teacher posts and 16 lab assistant posts will be created. A total of 330 higher secondary junior teacher posts will be elevated to higher secondary teacher posts. CM said that state government guarantee would be provided to Kerala State Women's Development Corporation to avail themselves of Rs 45 crore loan for 10 years.

State will get Rs 50 crore for NUHM projects

The state will get Rs 50 crore for implementing projects under the National Urban Health Mission (NUHM) for the comprehensive development of urban health infrastructure, Health Minister V S Sivakumar said. The Minister has held discussions in this regard with Union Health Secretary Kesavadesi Raju and other top Health officials in New Delhi. It was agreed at the meeting that Kerala would submit projects to the tune of Rs 50 crore under NUHM within a week.

The state would submit projects that lay stress on better health services and human resources development. In Phase I, the NUHM projects would be implemented in the five corporations and

six selected municipalities. The State Government has also submitted a memorandum seeking financial assistance to the tune of Rs 24.8 crore for developing health-infrastructure. The memorandum has been submitted to Union Health and Family Welfare Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad. In the memorandum, the state has sought the appointment of an additional 207 Ayush doctors through the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM). In all, 543 doctors have been appointed so far in the 750 posts that sanctioned. 270 doctors have been rank-listed and appointments will be made once the Centre gives the nod, said the Minister.

Call 1800 120 202 for 'Medicines at Any Time'

The Kerala Medical Services Corporation Ltd (KMSCL), which aims at 'medicines at any time,' has launched a toll free number for making medicines available in all government hospitals within 24 hours. With the slogan 'medicines available at any time,' the KMSCL launched the toll free number 1800 120 202, which helps all government hospitals from the Primary Health Centres to the Medical College Hospitals for availing of drugs at any time.

"If there is a shortage of medicines in the hospitals or if they are not able to get it from the warehouses, they have to just call the number. Once we get the call, all arrangements will be made to deliver the drugs," said KMSCL Managing Director R Kamalahar. If a particular drug was not available in the nearby warehouse, it would be arranged from the adjacent districts. Moreover, if the drugs are not at all available, arrangements will be made to get these drugs from the Karunya Pharmacy. If the medicines are even not available in Karunya, these drugs will be delivered within 15 days of the call," added the MD.

Bring youths in Attappady to mainstream: CM

Chief Minister Oommen Chandy has said that the problems of the tribal people of Attappady can be solved only if the new generation of the tribes is brought to the mainstream. Comprehensive changes in the lifestyle needed to be brought about to solve the problems faced by the tribal people. So, the government was taking steps to educate tribal children so that they could be brought to the mainstream. The government was ready to set up any number of residential facilities for this. Funds would be provided outside the budget for setting up hostels. The Centre had already initiated a number of steps to monitor the situation in the valley and take remedial measures, the CM said.

State government considers petrochemical as a core sector

The state government considers petrochemical as a core sector to increase participation of manufacturing sector in the overall development of Kerala, said Chief Minister Oommen Chandy. Though our State is well above the national average in the services sector, we have not been able to record a decent growth rate in the manufacturing sector. The government has already taken steps to change the scenario, said the Chief Minister while inaugurating a business meet on the petrochemical sector organised by Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC).

"The industrial sector in the state has not witnessed considerable growth in recent times. The state is well ahead in healthcare and education sectors but in infrastructure and manufacturing we are well behind other states. The Emerging Kerala meet boosted the anticipations of the state and the follow up processes of EK is progressing fast. The Emerging Kerala meet proclaimed that Kerala welcomes new investments and the state has more opportunities compared to others. The Rs 20,000 crore Integrated Refinery Expansion Project of BPCL-Kochi Refinery is very important as a continuation process of EK meet. The state government has agreed to all the incentives demanded by BPCL-Kochi Refinery without any delay, added the CM.



Chief Minister Oommen Chandy handing over the Swadeshabhimani-Kesari Award to veteran journalist V.P. Ramachandran.



Minister Anoop Jacob at Civil Supplies Corporation's Ramzan Onam Bazar



Scenes from Uttarakhand flood affected areas. Photographer Dinkar Narayan travelled along with Norka Team while on rescue operations.

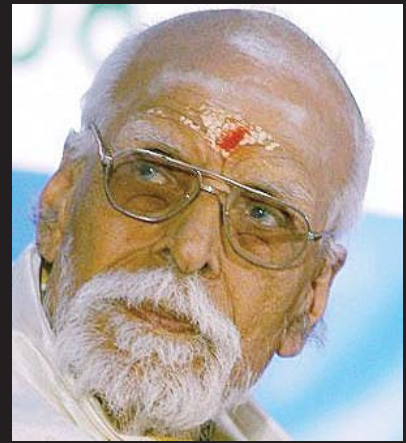
O B I T U A R Y



K.M. Mani, Minister for Finance receives the profit share of Kerala Financial Corporation from its Chairman P. Joy.



Chief Minister Oommen Chandy at Consumerfed Ramzan Onam bazar after the inauguration. Ministers C.N. Balakrishnan and V.S. Sivakumar are also seen



Dakshinamoorthy passes away

Veteran Carnatic musician V. Dakshinamoorthy (94) breathed his last at his residence in Mylapore. His demise brings to an end a stellar career that spanned over six decades when he set tune to movies in Malayalam, Tamil and Hindi. Dakshinamoorthy is survived by wife, two sons and a daughter. Born on December 22, 1919, at Alappuzha, Dakshinamoorthy exhibited a taste for Carnatic music from a very young age. His mother Parvathi Ammal, herself a well-accomplished singer, laid the foundation stone of a career that was to span over six decades and several languages by introducing a young Dakshinamoorthy to the world of Carnatic music.

Under the tutelage of Parvathi Ammal, Dakshinamoorthy learnt the intricacies of Carnatic music, including the ragas and keerthanas. He then went on to learn music from the late Venkatachala Potty, and debuted as a composer around the same time. Dakshinamoorthy came as music composer in the 1950 watershed Malayalam movie Nalla Thanka and went on to compose tunes for Malayalam, Tamil and Hindi movies. During the course of his career, the veteran musician composed music for over 125 movies and had to his credit a whopping 859 songs. Music composed by him had a distinct quality that reverberated of classical raga-based tunes, which indeed was his forte.

Dakshinamoorthy was well known for scoring music for the songs written by Sreekumaran Thampi. He is credited with introducing noted playback singer P. Susheela to Malayalam film industry in the (1960) film Seetha. He was the recipient of Kerala State Film Award for Best Music Director (1971) and Kerala State Film Award for Lifetime Achievement (1998).





The UN Meaning



The United Nations is a forum for international cooperation, but it is also an arena of intense competition among nations. The nature of competition has changed over the years. In the days of the cold war, the competition was largely ideological, with the two power blocs vying for global dominance and the nonaligned nations trying to carve out a niche for themselves by maintaining independence in judgment and freedom in action. Today, the divide between the developed North and the developing South is dominant in international relations. Colonialism manifests itself again in trade and environment and the developing nations struggle for equity and

justice in these areas. Protectionism in trade and hindrance to economic growth through environmental prescriptions still challenge the developing countries in their quest for economic development.

Good governance is a slogan that the developed nations have been raising ever since the days of decolonization to deny freedom and economic development to developing countries. They had argued even in the case of India that the time had not come for India to govern itself and that the country would break up if it did not have colonial protection in administration. Even today, good governance, as defined by the

developed world, is the yardstick used to measure the success of democracy in the developing world. The developing countries have been insisting that the United Nations should take note of exemplary democratic practices and reward them rather than highlight deficiencies to prove them unworthy. India was particularly at low ebb in the eyes of the world in the last two years because of the multiple scams that came to light, involving huge sums of money. India's credit rating went down and the value of the Indian rupee fell to unprecedented levels during this period. It is against this backdrop that we should judge the UN award for



the Mass Contact Programme (MCP) of the Chief Minister of Kerala.

Whether the award was for the Chief Minister or his office or whether any other programme in India had won this award in the same year do not detract from the importance of the award or the pride we should feel for this recognition. The MCP was a unique way in which a

AN Award and Significance

Gandhiji's dream was that he would be able to wipe at least one tear from one eye, but the CM of Kerala literally wiped many tears from many eyes. It was not a symbolic act for the cameras, but a genuine effort carried out with extreme discomfort and personal inconvenience for the CM.



democratically elected leader kept constantly in touch with his people and resolved to solve at least a fraction of the problems they brought up before him. This needed courage of conviction that he could deal with them personally and alleviate the suffering of the people. Gandhiji's dream was that he would be able to wipe at least one tear from one eye, but the CM of

The developing countries have been insisting that the United Nations should take note of exemplary democratic practices and reward them rather than highlight deficiencies to prove them unworthy.

MCP Goes Hi-Tech

Chief Minister's mass contact programme, which won accolades in the international level, is going high-tech this time. Unlike the earlier programme, this year's will be less crowded, more effective and simple. Taking lessons from the past, the mass contact programme has undergone a change in format, going online for receiving applications and by making the screening of the complaints more systematic. Long queues and big crowds would be a thing of the past. There will not be uncomfortable scenes where ailing patients had to wait long to meet the Chief Minister to air their grievances.

Those who are selected to meet the Chief Minister will be informed via SMS and e-post. Complaints will be received online and a special portal will soon be ready for that. Complainants can also know their turn to meet the Chief Minister through a curt SMS. They can also track the progress of their plaint using a docket number received at the time of registering it online. The minister in charge of the mass contact programme in the district will attend the screening of complaints and the Chief Minister will also participate via video conference. Collector will file a report on the complaints five days before that.

Complaints that demand policy decision will go for cabinet clearance. Chief Minister will meet the complainants directly only after the screening. Grievances that can be solved otherwise, would take the administrative route. But those who still wish to meet the Chief Minister, will have the opportunity to do so, after all other complaints are done with. Complaints can be posted online from Akshaya Centres. Online grievance registration facility will be available at the collectorate and taluk offices.



Kerala literally wiped many tears from many eyes. It was not a symbolic act for the cameras, but a genuine effort carried out with extreme discomfort and personal inconvenience for the CM. He did not leave the venue till the last petitioner had pleaded his case. No other political leader had attempted such a feat any time before. It was an international panel of administrators that chose the MCP as a best practice for other democratic leaders. More than an award for the CM, it was the identification of a model for democratic governance. The UN has also not missed the humanitarian aspect of the programme.

The UN panel that made the award must have also known that MCP was not a publicity gimmick foisted on the CM by his public relations adviser. He is known to be a person, who is comfortable with people and his whole life has been a MCP exercise. The programme came naturally to him and those who went to see him felt that he was sincere in his intentions even if he was unable to deliver solutions to every problem. It was his willingness to hear and apply the healing touch, which was more valuable than the remedies provided.

It was gratifying that a unique way of serving the cause of democracy in India was noticed and recognized by the United Nations. Some of us, who have worked hard for years to argue the case of democratic norms in India from time immemorial, have reasons to feel vindicated by this award. The story of Rama himself, who went disguised among the people to measure what his subjects thought of him, is a shining example of the need for rulers to feel the pulse of the people.

The UN Award may not have been a factor at all in the resumption of MCP for a second year. But the Award must have given the CM and his advisers added vigour to continue the programme. Some more tears will be wiped from some more eyes in the process. ■

The writer is Former Ambassador of India.

Making Democratic Kerala Exp

Speech by Oommen Chandy, Chief Minister of Kerala

Hon. Resident Coordinator of United Nations, Ms Lise Grande, the experts and staff of the various agencies of the United Nations, ladies and gentlemen, it is indeed a privilege to be with a team of policy experts, distinguished civil servants, and practitioners of human development and democratic governance.

At the outset itself, I would like to express my appreciation to the Resident Co-ordinator for organising this function and inviting me for presenting my experience and perspective in the area of democratic governance and human development. I would also like to congratulate various programmes that won the UN Public service award in 2013.

In my brief presentation I would like to highlight the context and learning from the experience of the 'janasamparka paripadi'(or mass contact programme). In the second part of the presentation I would like to stress the link between democratic governance and human development.

The United Nations Public Service award is on the one hand recognition for innovations in public service and on the other hand an incentive to strengthen the people's right to effective public service. The UN Public Service award to the mass contact programme is not merely a recognition to the government but recognition for the collective efforts of all stakeholders, including MLAs, Ministers, NGOs and government servants and millions of people of Kerala. Having served as a legislator for 43 years and having been committed to promoting human rights, human development and democratic governance in the last fifty five years as a political activist and as a policy maker, I have noted the increasing gap between the expectations of the citizens and the priorities and compulsions of the government. Hence, there was a need to consciously bridge this gap through conscious efforts. One of the major problems was the undue delay in addressing the various grievances of the people, particularly those who are economically or socially marginalised, including elderly people, women, and poor. It often took many months or years to address the simple problems faced by the people due to the proverbial red-tape or indifference at various levels of administration. It is in this context I have taken the initiative to adopt a fast-track approach to address the grievances of people. What we called 'Jana-samparka' programme, popularly known as 'mass-contact' programme was an effort with three purpose: a) fast track approach to ensure right to access the public service b) Fast-track approach to resolve

the grievances, problems and issues faced by those who are economically and socially marginalised and c) to develop a first-hand understanding of the real issues faced by the real people on the ground. On the one-hand it was an immense opportunity for collective learning and reflection and on the other hand, it was an effort to reach out to the last person, who are disabled, sick, abandoned or denied their right to service or livelihood. I consider mass contact programme as a great opportunity to listen, learn, review and reflect the role of governments from the perspective, experience and expectations of people. It was indeed a sincere and innovative experiment to reach out to people, listen to them and address the real issues of real

In my brief presentation I would like to highlight the context and learning from the experience of the 'janasamparka paripadi'. In the second part of the presentation I would like to stress the link between democratic governance and human development.

Governance work experience



Chief Minister Oommen Chandy receives the memento of UN Delhi Resident Coordinator Lise Grande, from Shashi Tharoor to felicitate him for receiving the UN Global Award for Public Service 2013

people, though we realise that it is not a long-term solution. However, when the collective efforts of the government, with the support of all ministers, all MLAs from all political parties and the collective efforts of thousands of government staff recognised by the United Nations by conferring the United Nations award in the Asia-pacific region, we realise the imperative to take institutional efforts for fast-track problem solving approach and effective ways to ensure the

rights to service. Though I have played a role in initiating the 'mass-contact' programme, the success of the programme was due to the collective efforts of all stake-holders; particularly hundreds of thousands of ordinary people's hope that government is willing to listen and address their issues. In the course of my fifty five years of public life, I owe a great deal of learning from ordinary people and my daily interaction with thousands of ordinary citizens. So

People are my books. People are the source of my inspiration, knowledge, and energy and source legitimacy. I owe everything to the people, those who returned me to the legislative assembly ever since 1970.

So the major learning that I had from the mass-contact programme is that it is indeed possible to mobilise the positive energies within the bureaucracy and governments when there is a collective sense of

responsibility and incentive for learning. However, this requires political will and a leadership genuinely committed to listen to the voice of people. Voice and accountability are important to ensure democratic governance. In the second phase of the mass-contact programme scheduled to be launched in September 2013, we would make efforts to learn from the earlier experience and to institutionalise the effort as a 'fasttrack' problem solving



approach to ensure right to public service to people.

Kerala model of development is rather well known. Kerala was shown as an example of achieving relatively higher human development indicators with relatively less public expenditure. The social and human development of Kerala is a result of cumulative

efforts of many actors over the last hundred years, particularly social-reforms movement, educational initiatives of missionaries, community efforts to strengthen right to education and right to health and social mobilisation for democracy and development. However, now Kerala is at a critical juncture. One of the significant

achievement of Kerala was the out-ward migration of skilled workers and professionals to different parts of the world. This was possible due to the investment in education and health. And as a result, Kerala annually receives more than 50 thousand cores of Rupees as remittance. This not only contributes to the foreign

exchange reserve of India, but also contributes to robust economic growth in the state. And the economic growth in Kerala is above the national average, with significant growth in the service sector. In spite of relatively high human development and relative better macro-economic growth, Kerala faces new forms of challenges





expectations of people and the capacity of the government to effectively perform. Though there is an increasing shift towards a political consensus on human development and inclusive economic growth, we are yet to out-grow the tendency to see everything through narrow lens of party-politics depending on who is in government or who is in opposition. It is indeed important to develop a political consensus and policy coherence when it comes to sustainable human development, inclusive economic growth and democratic governance. Hence, my government is making conscious efforts to ensure long-term human and economic development. We are in the process of developing a Vision 2030 perspective with inputs and advice from all stakeholders. The motto of our government is 'sustainable development and humane care'. We would like to combine a proactive approach combining environmentally sensitive human and economic development as well as social protection for the socially and economically marginalised. We would like to combine a politics of long term development along with a policy of compassion particularly to the deprived, marginalised, including elderly people, disabled and those suffering from historical deprivation. We have also developed a comprehensive approach to ensure land and habitat to everyone though it is a challenge to get adequate land in Kerala due to the high population density. We have taken the initiative to strengthen e-governance as means to make

government and outreach more effective. In the area of e governance, local governance and human development, Kerala is in many ways a leading state in India, in terms of innovation, participation and outcome. In the third year of my government, we will make conscious efforts to move forward in terms of strengthening direct interface with people, and making coordinated efforts to ensure policy coherence and collective action- in partnership with all actors, including civil society. We would indeed like to learn from the experience of UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women and other agencies. We also think we have something to contribute to the collective practice and learning of UN agencies in terms of democratic governance and human development. We would indeed be happy to work with the UNDP in India and elsewhere to promote 'south-south' learning and also possibly host such a global learning forum on democratic governance and human development. We would be happy to work with UNDP and other UN agencies, international organisation and civil society organisations to promote a regular space to share and exchange experience in democratic governance and human development .

in terms of sustainable human development and democratic governance. There is indeed a need to focus on the protection of environment to ensure 'sustainable human development' - and there is also need to ensure right to primary health care, access to quality education at all levels, particularly at the level higher

education, better and quality infrastructure development and need for a more equitable and inclusive economic growth and development. In Kerala, there is indeed a direct link between democratisation of governance and human development. However, we simply can't take this for granted. There is an increasing gap between the

Once again I would like to thank Hon. Resident Coordinator of UN and all other colleagues. May I also invite all of you to 'God's own' country to interact and share your experience with policy makers, civil society and civil servants? Thank you very much for your attention and consideration. Jai Hind. ■





If "Literature is the most concentrated essence of the intellectual life of a nation" both Shelley and Asan have a remarkable place among the immortal writers of world literature. In a sense they were the great teachers and through the medium of poetry they imparted moral lessons for the betterment of human life.

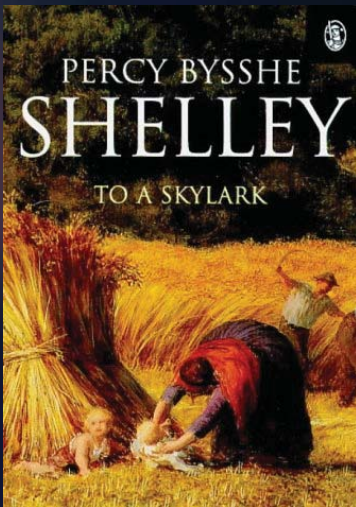
Really "poetry is the instrument for the propagation of moral thoughts". In the works of both Shelley and Asan we find the love for Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. So also we notice in their poems revolutionary ideas, love of nature and the aims for the regeneration of mankind. They also deal with their own personal lives, in the present and the

future, under the impress of love. Both Goethe and Mathew Arnold have emphasised the fact that greatness in poetry comes from the depth of thought. From this point of view, Shelley and Asan occupy a very high position among the great poets of the world.

Let us examine first the points of similarity and divergence which we notice in their works. It is believed that Shelley did not give any value to morality and the other human values. His private life has come in for strong criticism. In the book "A psychological study of the poet Shelley", Carpenter

P B Shelley and Kumaranasan





comments that sensuous thoughts and emotional feelings are merely sublimated by Shelley. It is true that an extent he sacrificed the sublimity and nobility of poetry for the sake of sensuous love. "A charge of immorality is found against him and his poetry. But the condition of Asan is entirely different. He took inspiration from his spiritual mentor 'Sree Narayana Guru'. Therefore his poetry is marked with spiritual and moral thoughts. The Guru cautioned him against writing the worthless and erotic poems which were the fashion of those days.

Shelley is considered as a visionary idealist and his poetry is charged with illusions and visions and other hazy qualities. Mathew Arnold writes "P.B.Shelley in actual life is a vision of beauty and radiance, indeed, but availing nothing, affecting nothing. And in poetry, no less in life, he is a beautiful and ineffectual angel beating in the void his luminous wings in vain". But Asan is free from these charges. He dealt only with the deep problems and agonies of his fellowmen. Their

success and failures; happiness and unhappiness and cheers and tears are described and depicted by Asan delightfully.

Both Shelley and Asan are famous for their lyrics. But Shelley's lyrics are marked with a note of spontaneity. The poems of beauty come direct from the poet's heart. There is absolute effortlessness in them. To quote Compton-Rickett, "Shelley exhaled verse as a flower exhales fragrance. The essential point is that there was no effort or laborious artistry about it at any time". Asan's light poems are delightful for an ordinary reader.



Ozymandias

Percy Bysshe Shelley

I met a traveler from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read,
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed,
And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:
Look upon my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.



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"Ozymandias," by Percy Bysshe Shelley (1817)

But to understand his mystic poems Malayali must be a good scholar. On the other hand Shelley's poems are simple and his poems can be read and appreciated by a man with a working knowledge of English. In the case of spontaneity the great poet Asan stands parallel to Shelley.

In many respects Shelley and Asan stand comparison. They are the bards of love and their lyrics are extremely musical. For example Shelley's 'Skylark is a triumph of musical harmony and the melody of the poem rings in our ears. It is because of the musical quality of the lyrics, Shelley has been called a "Perfect singing God" by Swinburne, who himself was a great master of song and melody in verse. So also Asan's works are musical and melodious. According to Edgar Allan Poe "poetry is the rhythmic creation of beauty" and this definition is applicable to the poems of Shelley and Asan.

A careful analysis of Asan's works viz. "Duravastha" and "Chandala Bhikshuki" clearly shows us the very presence of

these qualities. It is a shocking experience for the people of Kerala to think about the past of their state. Then the majority of people were facing unreachability. Really a kind of 'apartheid' was existing in Kerala. Asan, the mighty poet of that period, used the very power of his pen to heal the wounds from which the downtrodden people were suffering. "You change the rules; if not, you will be changed by them". It was the warning given by Asan to the upper class people of Kerala. Like Shelley, he is the poet of love. In his work "Nalini" he says "Love is the ultimate essence of this earth."

In both Shelley's and Asan's poetry, we find the note of "sadness and melancholy." Their autobiographical lyrics are uniformly sad. In Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" the personal cry becomes very piercing and the agony of the poet's heart comes out poignantly in the lines:-

"O! lift me as a wave, a leaf,
a cloud

I fall upon the thorns of life, I bleed"

So also we come across a similar statement in Asan's 'Veena Poovu' about human life. Asan says "It is a prolonged agony." Another quality of Shelley's poetry is its intensity. In the words of Stopford Brooke "There is no song like Shelley's Adonais in the whole range of English literature more passionate, more penetrative, more full of the force by which the idea and its form are united into one creation." His lyrics are popular because of its prophetic touch of humanism. A strong note of optimism is sounded in all his poems - We find the dawn of the cherished millennium. "O Wind! If winter comes, can spring be far behind".

Asan's poetry is also gifted with this peculiarity. To quote the great Malayalam poet Ulloor S Parameswara Iyer "Each word from him is living and forceful. Every line of Asan is perfect in thought and sense. His thought is highly intellectualised and emotionalised. In fine, by his birth, we are blessed."

Shelley and Asan were voracious readers who possessed encyclopaedic

knowledge. They were the most learned of our poets. Both of them were precocious geniuses and they surprised the literary world with their wonderful poems. Both Shelley and Asan were influenced and inspired by platonic thoughts. Like Plato they believed, that the spirit moves through the universe, giving them form and shape according to its power. In "Adonais" Shelley presents this idea.

"The one remains, the many
change and pass,

Heaven's light for ever
shines, earth shadows fly,

Life, Like a dome of many
coloured glass,

Stains the white radiance of
entemity,

Until death tramples it, to
fragments die."

In Asan's "Veena Poovu" he examines the platonic thought that "Good men may not live long." It is a moving dirge on the vanity of human wishes. It is an allegory of the fleeting, short-lived glory of earthly existence. These two poets were the master writers of fine elegies. Shelley



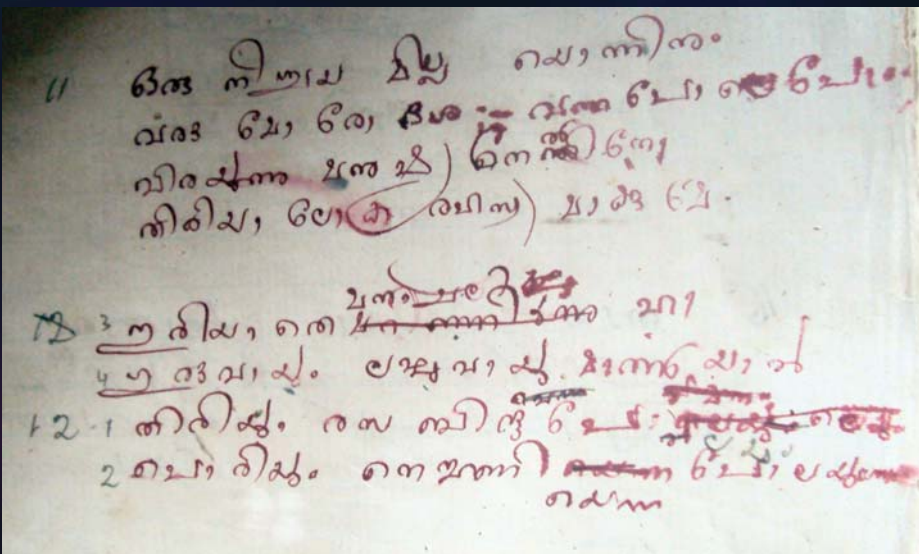
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wrote the elegy entitled "Adonais" in memory of his compeer John Keats. Asan wrote "Prarodanam" paying glorious tribute to the late great writer A.R.Rajaraja Varma. This royal poet was Asan's guide and guard.

Shelley and Asan are matchless in the use of similies and metaphors. A good number of American and English poets imitated Shelley. Among them we cannot forget the names of Tennyson, Morris, Swinburne and Robert Frost. In Malayalam poetry M.P.Appan, K K Raja, Nalappad Narayanan Menon, Lelithambika Antherjanam and others followed the footprints of Asan.

The tragic end of these two immortal poets has a great similarity, for both of them met with a watery grave. To conclude the study on Shelley and Asan we have to admit the fact that while Shelley enriched English literature, Asan glorified Malayalam poetry.

In his 'Defence of Poetry' Shelley says that "The poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." Both Asan and Shelley have made substantial contributions in rewriting the cultural, intellectual and moral laws of the people among whom they lived. ■





Managing Pain

Illness, injury and the other insidious condition make a strongly unpleasant bodily sensation or mental suffering which are usually termed as pain, as per the dictionary.

Drugs used to reduce pain are called pain-killers. Brain and spinal cord are included in the Central Nervous System (CNS). Peripheral nerves stem from and lead to CNS. The brain processes the pain message and coordinates an appropriate response. Endorphins are natural pain killers in the body. Chronic pain in the cancer patients or patients suffering from neuropathy or nerve damage requires palliative care and the drugs used only alleviate the

pain. Such drugs do not have curative properties. Patients suffering from incurable diseases lament due to excruciating pain.

Palliative care is essential for them as a philanthropic measure as it helps to lead a peaceful life till the end. Recent developments in this field are the result of benevolent attitude of the government as well as the non-government organizations. Such services are gratis and palliative care drugs are provided with the aid received from various sources. Unresolved pain is thus alleviated.

Other types of pains like injury, headache etc. are classified as acute pain or nociceptive pain transmitted by

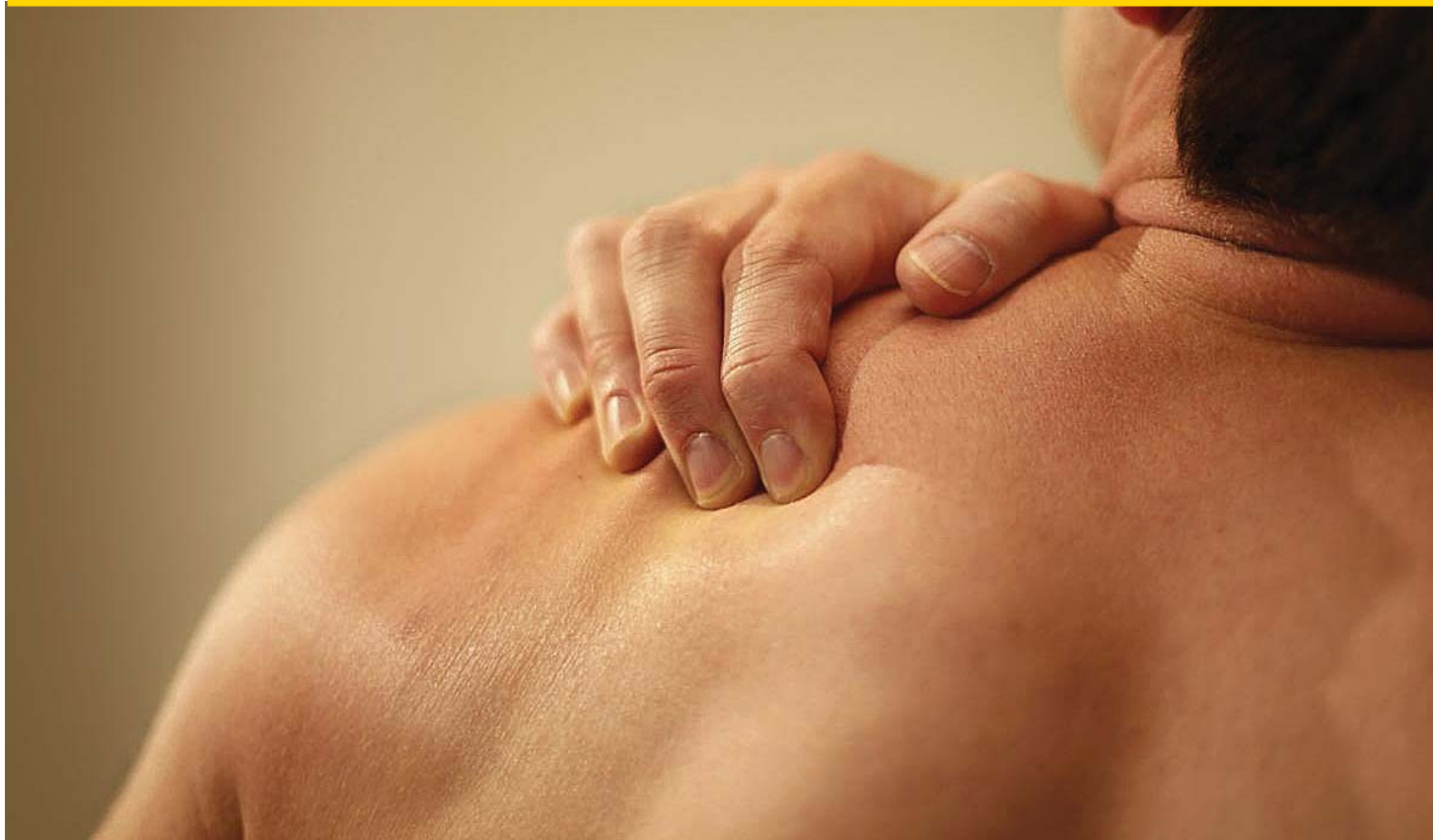
nociceptors. A pain message is transmitted by peripheral nerves to the central nervous system. Such PNS cells are called nociceptors which are distributed through out the body. Nociceptive means sensitive to pain or causing pain. Nociceptors respond to different stimuli.

Doctors say that headaches may indicate Stage 1 or Stage 2 hypertension. Blood pressure is measured in millimeters of mercury (mm Hg). The systolic number is 120 and the diastolic is 80 in ideal condition. Angina is caused by fat deposit. The build up of plaque narrows the coronary arteries. So we have high blood pressure due to coronary artery disease. Such

pains are alleviated by proper treatment.

Non-steroid anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) alleviate pains due to arthritis. Cortico steroids are also used. Diseases that modify anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs) also reduce pains and inflammation. Allergic reactions, muscle cramps, ulcers, abdominal cramps, liver disease, kidney disease, coagulation disorder, heart disease etc. occur when NSAIDs are used indiscreetly. Long use of acetaminophen causes kidney and liver damage.

Arthritic pain is due to joint damage. Strengthening the muscles on the front and back of the thigh helps knee and hip



joints. Gentle exercises help reduce arthritic pain. Narcotics may reduce the pain, but there is a possibility of addiction.

Cervical spondylosis too causes pain to the neck which may radiate to shoulders and shoulder joints. Headaches and spinning sensation make life more miserable. Light massage

and neck exercises are advisable as they do not have the side effects of drugs.

Hot and cold packs also help to a certain extent. Life style modification will help to reduce such pains. Thalamus is a specific region of the brain. The nociceptor first transmits its signal to nerve cells in the spinal

cord. From there the pain message is sent to the thalamus. An appropriate response is required for every kind of pain. Endorphine, the natural pain killer helps a great deal. But pain has to be enhanced as a response. Prostaglandins in the body enhance the pain and the response may be inflammation.

Usually the cause of pain is treated. Surgical procedures, pharmacological therapies etc. help to repair injuries. Analgesics reduce the pain. Aspirin, narcotics acetaminophen etc. handle intense pain. Antidepressants, anticonvulsants, corticosteroids etc. are also used by doctors for pain management.

Pain management without side effects is made possible with the help of yogas, acupuncture and acupressure. In some cases, surgical procedures also help. Correcting the injury, electrical stimulation and disconnecting the nerve are other techniques judiciously used.

Palliative care:- Chronic pain management is the aim of palliative care centres. The aim is to stop pain sensations of the patients suffering from incurable diseases. Narcotics are often used to handle intense pain effectively. Opiates or opioids relieve the cancer pain.

Doctors and volunteers do great service to terminally affected patients. ■

The writer is a Retd. Principal





Among all the species on the face of Planet Earth, it must be the Tiger which is getting all the global attention with regard to its protection and long conservation. Tiger is one of the most charismatic species of our times, and globally, nationally and locally, governments and other conservation organizations are turning their attention and allocating huge resources for Tiger conservation. Few years back, when WWF was heading the 'Save Our Tigers' campaign, during the interaction with the general public as part of the signature campaign, the most

common question put forward to us was 'why should we be so bothered if we loose the Tiger in the wild?'. This is actually a very relevant question and we encourage that each one of us ponder over this question and try to find the right answer.

Many a times, when we talk about Tiger conservation in India, people think, we are advocating for our national animal. Yes, it is very much right that the Tiger is the national animal of India. But that is not the reason why India Government along with the global community is giving much emphasis on protecting the Tiger.

If we go back a few years and recall our school and college days, in biology we have learned about food chain and food web. Different animals are connected in a uni dimensional food chain and different food chains interlink to form the more complex multi dimensional food web. When we look at this in the forest ecosystem, we see that the Tiger occupies the highest position in the food web and hence it is called as the 'apex predator' of the forest ecosystem. If we loose the Tiger, that will definitely lead to imbalance in the food chain and

food web, which will lead to the degradation and ultimate collapse of the forest ecosystem. This collapse will definitely affect the adjoining ecosystems also, be it cash crops, agriculture or rural settlements and there we have the issue of crop raid by animals, human animal conflicts, pest infestations etc. Hence protection and conservation of the Tiger is very much essential not just for the Tiger, but as we very rightly say in the campaign 'Save the Tiger, and you Save them All'. Once we protect the Tiger, the forest ecosystem is protected and its

Why

health will sustain all the other dependent life forms, be it the other bigger mammals like leopards, elephants etc or the smaller lesser known species like the civet cat or the flying squirrel.

From a time we had around 1,00,000 Tigers across the world, we have lost 97% of them and the global census figure of Tigers stand at 3200. The whole world looks to India to take a very proactive step in Tiger conservation, because more than 50% of the world's Tiger populations now remains in India. The figures put forward by the National Tiger Conservation Authority under the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India now puts the number of Tigers in India at 1706. This is then distrib-

uted in various states of the country across various landscapes having different forest ecosystems.

The alarming decrease in the number of Tigers can be solely attributed to anthropocentric activities. If we look back into history, globally, there was a time when game hunting of Tigers was considered as a great delicacy and privilege, especially by the royal community. In India, the British rulers and the rajas who ruled India have hunted down large number of tigers especially for the fun and thrill of game hunting. These animals who went down like this are still seen as stuffed animals in many palaces across the world, including India.

Later on, as the numbers fell alarmingly and conservation became a priority, we have enacted the Wildlife Protection Act under which the Tiger is a

other body organs. Poaching of Tigers for its body parts must be the biggest threat to the Tiger population. The recent arrest of the notorious wildlife criminal Sansar Chand and his alarming revelations about his extensive network of poachers spread across the country, trade routes etc reveal the bleak picture for our bigger animals like the Tiger, Leopard and the Elephant in our country. The other major threats to the Tiger include Human-Tiger conflicts, especially in Wayanad in Kerala, where there are stray incidents of the big cat straying into human habitations and causing loss to human life and livestock. This ultimately leads to the death of the animal by the attack of the violent mob or retaliatory killing through poisoning. Habitat degradation and fragmentation, loss of corridors etc are also serious threat to the survival of this big cat.

population of Tigers by 2020. That does not literally mean increasing the numbers to 6400, which is rather impossible. But on field, efforts are on to identify forest ecosystems, within a PA or TR and even outside, where if the most optimal conditions are ensured, i.e. healthy forest ecosystem, good prey base, necessary protection etc, the area can sustain more number of Tigers. In India WWF is working in close co-ordination with the MoEF and NTCA in this regard.

Across the country, WWF has also identified various important landscapes for conservation like the South Western Ghats Landscape, Terai Arc Landscape, Satpuda Maikal Landscape, Kanchenzonga Landscape, Karbi Anglong Landscape etc where we are trying to address conservation issues on a comprehensive level like improvement of the forest ecosystem, Tiger estimation and monitoring, biodiversity improvement of various other species like Elephants, Red Panda etc, improving livelihoods of tribals and other forest dependent communities etc. In some areas, WWF-India is carrying out a very relevant scheme of offering compensation the same day when there is cattle lifting by Tiger to avoid retaliatory killings. TRAFFIC, the global wildlife crime controlling agency, works with WWF in India to train manpower, provide equipment and infrastructure to improve wildlife law enforcement in the country and thereby control wildlife trade. WWF also works with other agencies like Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) to ensure biodiversity conservation, including the Tiger.

Each and every citizen of India has a responsibility to do whatever possible to protect and safeguard his or her environment, nature and biodiversity, including the Tiger, as envisaged in the Constitution of India under the Article 51A of Fundamental Duties. ■

This writer is State Director, WWF-India

Save the Tiger?

Schedule I species. Globally, IUCN has designated Tiger as an Endangered Animal. Project Tiger was also initiated later on to protect the prime habitats of Tigers as Tiger Reserves and to provide all necessary manpower, infrastructure and financial support to ensure the protection of the big cat. As of now, injuring or killing a Tiger is a very serious offence which is non-bailable and can attract long years of imprisonment and heavy fines. But still in various parts of our country, Tigers are hunted down for their very high demand especially in the global market for its skin, nails and claws and

Globally, the heads of the Tiger countries came together in 2010 in St. Petersburg, Russia and has signed a very important international treaty agreeing to take all possible efforts to increase the tiger populations in their country and thereby improving the state of affairs of Tigers globally. India is also a signatory to this international treaty. This international treaty was signed on July 29, 2010 and since then July 29 is declared as International Tiger Day. TX2 (referred as T by 2) is an outcome of the St Petersburg Summit where it has been decided globally to double the



Boosting Entrepreneurship in Kerala Government's Initiatives

According to Peter Drucker Entrepreneurship is defined as "a systematic innovation, which consists in the purposeful and organized search for changes, and it is the systematic analysis of the opportunities such changes might offer for economic and social innovation." It is now a widely accepted fact that active and enthusiastic entrepreneurs can only explore the potentials of the countries availability of resources such as labour, capital and technology.

Self employment offers an excellent opportunity to harness youth vigour. The recent phenomenon of increasing unemployment is largely due to their extensive dependence on wage/salary employment resulting in decline and wastage of youth vigour. In the long run self employment also helps in developing self confidence among the youth, which is usually lacking in developing countries. Through self employment we can clean out the unemployment rate. Self employment will wipe out concentration of economic power. Monopoly in trade, industry and business activities is the commonest evil in most of the developing countries. Planned efforts for encouraging and supporting self employment among the youth go a long way in weakening the tendency of monopoly holdings since many

self employed people start manufacturing goods and services which otherwise remain prerogatives of a selected few. Self employment helps in re-investing the profit for the welfare of the area of profit generation. Self employment provides balanced area development. By recognizing all these merits of entrepreneurship, governments all over the world have realized the significance of small entrepreneurial firms in the economic and social welfare of the nation.

It is a paradox that rural unemployment in Kerala is rising on the one hand, but on the other hand there is non-availability of labour at the going wage rate. This is particularly visible in agriculture, the primary sector for the livelihood of the State. Most of the people prefer white collar jobs than being an agriculturist. So we cannot say that Kerala is any more a primary sector oriented state. As a result, the State has to develop secondary sector for economic growth. Kerala as we all know is a progressive State and is considered as an investment destination. The State contributes four percent to India's GDP while it has only 2.7 percent of India's population. During the last decade, the State's GDP growth rate was higher than India's GDP growth during FYs 2002, 2004, 2005, 2008 and 2009. Globalization of

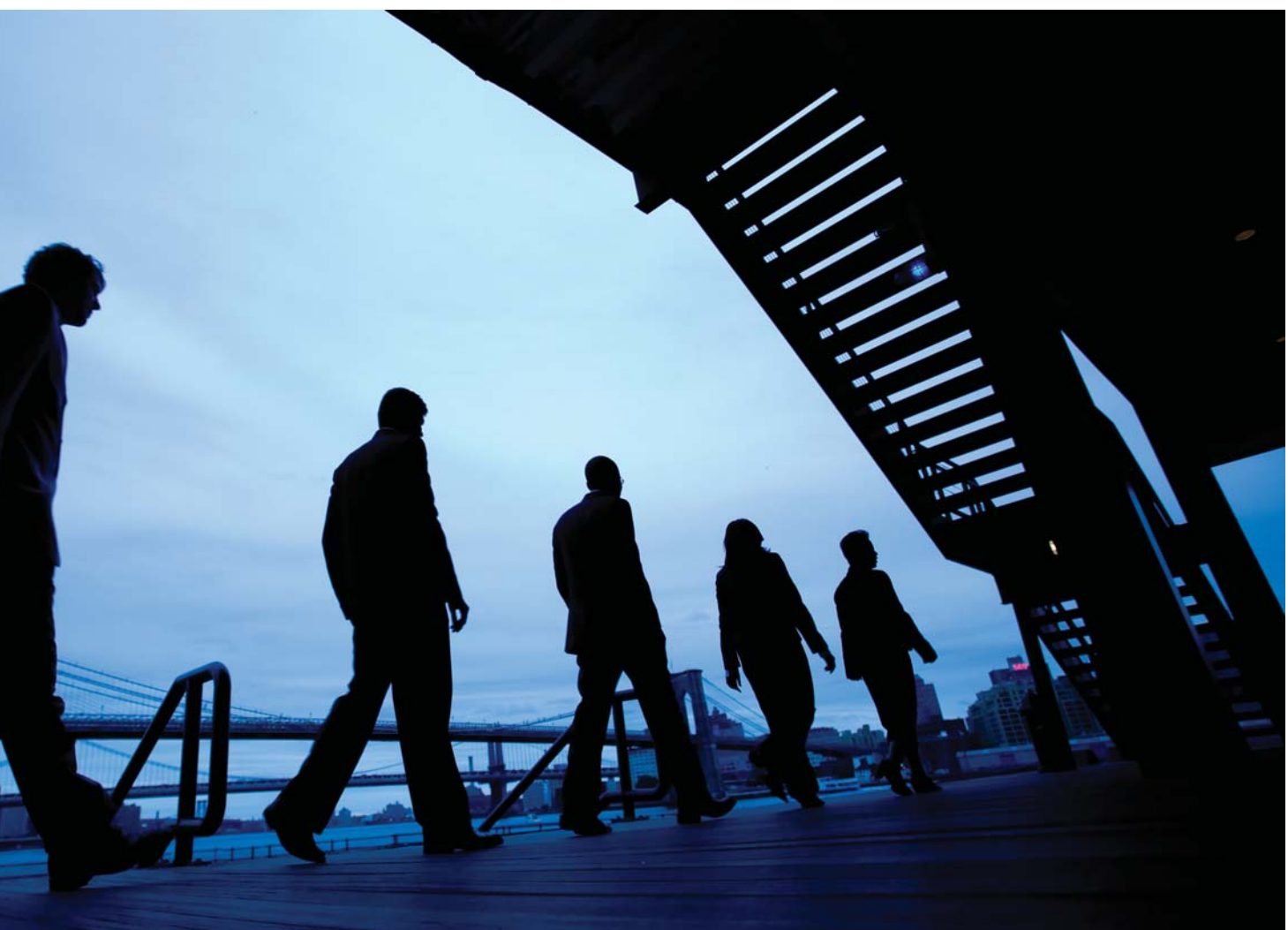
market and a buoyant economy has given tremendous impetus to the industrial growth in the State. Kerala has competitive advantage in terms of strategic location, basic infrastructure as well as large skilled, educated, young, workforce. Besides, the State has investor-friendly policy environment which facilitate tremendous scope for investment.

Kerala's industrial growth average grew by 4.7 percent between 2000-01 and 2009-10. The State government is taking various steps to attract active participation in this sector. We have to weave the seeds of self employment from the school/college level itself for entrepreneurial development. They have to inform about various self employment opportunities available and how to establish their own enterprise. The Government of Kerala recognizes that it is imperative for growth of Kerala to support home grown companies through a specific incentive for student startup companies.

Entrepreneurs are the driving force behind any economy and entrepreneurship is the future of modern society. It reflects a ray of hope for the unemployed to earn a living and maintain a dignified life and also for the economic development of the country. With the aim to reduce the level of

unemployment and to build entrepreneurship among the youth, the Finance Minister K M Mani has announced the setting up of the Kerala State Self Entrepreneur Development Mission (KSSEDM). It is an ambitious scheme of the Government of Kerala, aims at inculcating entrepreneurial confidence among youth of the State through the process of selecting persons with aptitude and earnestness, training them meticulously and enabling them avail finance on easy terms from Banks/Financial Institutions. The Mission involves identification and training of 50 probable entrepreneurs in each Panchayat/ Municipality / Corporation of the State, grouping them into 10 groups of 5 people each. Each such group will set up one micro enterprise. Thus 10 micro enterprises will





be set up in each Panchayat/Municipality/Corporation during the five year period 2011-16, at the rate of 2 enterprises every year.

Each of these enterprises will give employment to the five entrepreneurs promoting the venture and will additionally employ at least 5 more persons. Thus the scheme will result in employment generation of 100 persons in each Panchayat/Municipality/Corporation. Since there are 991 Panchayats, 60 Municipalities and 5 Corporations in the State, the Mission will result in generation of employment for over one lakh persons during the five year period in the State. It will definitely result in distributed development by harnessing the resources available at the rural level, in terms of raw materials, skilled human resources, etc.

The Kerala government has announced a Student Entrepreneurship Scheme which will give 20 per cent attendance and 4 per cent grace marks for university, college or polytechnic students who apply for business incubation in approved Technology Business Incubators (TBIs). There are at least seven TBIs in Kerala. Among the most popular ones are Techno park in Thiruvananthapuram and NITK in Kozhikode. So student entrepreneurs who miss classes and hence lose marks because of the involvement in their ventures can get a breather. This policy is aimed at students like Vivek Mohan, 20, a final year B Tech student at Kochi's Cochin University of Science & Technology, who is working on a mobile application that can translate regional languages to

English.

In addition to that state government is providing subsidies to farmers to set up green house, up to 3 in each Panchayat, in a bid to promote high-tech agriculture. The government will bear 75 per cent of its cost. A technology innovation zone is in about 10 acres in Kochi at an initial investment of 100 crores. The zone will also have house-incubators formed in the Public-Private Partnership model. The government is also providing a start up space of one lakh square feet for Startup Village, one of the first incubators in the country to come up in the Public-Private Partnership model. The state government has also proposed a National Centre of Excellence for Entrepreneurship, to be set up jointly by the government of Kerala and the

Confederation of Indian Industry.

Unlike other states where entrepreneurship has been industry or academy led, in Kerala the government is playing an active role in creating an ecosystem and removing many of the risks. The state has an entrepreneurial culture, but it is restricted to a handful of sectors like tourism. The aim now is to replicate this success in other sectors like technology, high-tech agriculture and high-tech manufacturing. With the sound infrastructure, progressive governance policies and responsive administration, the State is working very hard to increase the per capita investment. ■

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Tigers Meet, Mix in Forest Corridors

Endangered tigers' habitats have been carved up in central India, but the cats still prowl through strips of forest that connect these far-flung populations, a new study finds. These corridors enable the estimated 273 tigers in the area to intermingle and stay genetically strong. In recent centuries, as roads, factories, mining operations and railroads started to impinge on wild terrain, India's tiger population splintered into smaller, distinct groups. But several of these groups remain connected by tendrils of pristine forest, the researchers found, allowing the cats to maintain a healthy mix of genes.

Currently, these forest pathways have no legal protection in India. A split could be devastating for the tiger population.



Full Moon Creates Less Sleep

A full moon deprives people of sleep even when they are shielded from moonlight in a windowless lab, a new study suggests.

People snoozed less deeply within four nights of a full moon than during other parts of the lunar cycle, researchers report in *Current Biology*. The authors suggest that humans may have internal clocks that track the lunar cycle.

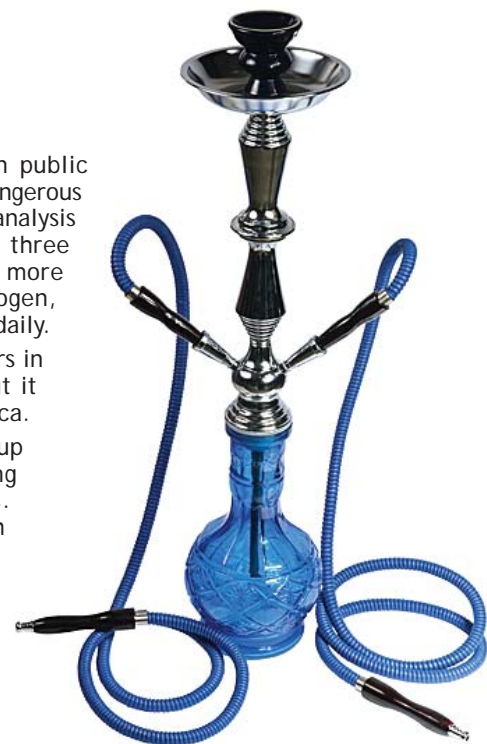
The shifting gravitational effects of the moon are too weak to influence human bodies. The hypothesis is that humans have an internal body clock synchronized to the phases of the moon.

Hookah Delivers Carcinogens

The tobacco and fruit mixture smoked in public hookah bars might be considerably more dangerous than its pleasant scent would suggest. An analysis of people who smoked from water pipes three times a day finds that the pipes deliver more carbon monoxide and benzene, a carcinogen, than does smoking half a pack of cigarettes daily.

Hookah smoking goes back hundreds of years in India, the Middle East and North Africa, but it is newer in parts of Europe and North America.

Urine tests revealed that a volunteer group had higher benzene levels when smoking hookahs than when smoking cigarettes. Benzene inhalation is associated with leukemia and lung cancer. The volunteers' blood samples while smoking the water pipe showed about half as much nicotine as when smoking cigarettes, but researchers estimated that the level was enough to be addictive.



Six-Legged Robot Goes Swimming

The Crabster CR200, a huge six-legged underwater robot, took the plunge earlier this month for the first time. Developed at the Korean Institute of Ocean Science and Technology, the Crabster is an alternative to propeller-driven remotely-operated vehicles and autonomous underwater vehicles, which are ill-equipped to deal with strong tidal currents in shallow seas.

The Crabster is designed to be lowered by crane to around 200 meters (650 feet) below the surface, where it will walk



along the sea floor on six legs powered by 30 joints. Moving on legs will hopefully prove more stable, and won't stir up as much debris as propellers. And like a crab or a lobster, the robot's two front legs are equipped with manipulators that can grasp objects that can be stored in a frontal compartment. The researchers also

designed the robot's shell to deflect strong currents by adjusting its overall posture.

The Crabster can remain on the sea floor for days at a time if necessary, as it is tethered to an external power source. It's equipped with a high resolution scanning sonar, acoustic camera, acoustic doppler current profiler (ADCP), and several optical cameras.

Climate Change troubles Oysters

The changing chemistry of ocean waters may cause baby oysters to have trouble mustering the energy to build their shells, new research suggests.

Oysters, clams, mussels and other bivalves build calcium carbonate shells using mostly raw materials from seawater. A two-day-old oyster larva is already 90 percent calcium carbonate by body weight.

During their shell-building blitz, larvae rely solely on energy derived from their eggs. By looking at the forms of carbon present in eggs versus algae provided as oyster food, the researchers found that larvae depend heavily on an egg's resources for more than a week. The youngsters



can't grab outside food until they construct enough shell to support muscle attachments for feeding appendages.

Oyster larvae's dependence on a fixed energy source could be a problem as atmospheric carbon dioxide rises. Oceans soak up more of the gas which alter the availability of the compounds needed to make shells.

How Old are the Eyes

Eyes of the human beings are at least 50 crores years old, and a good deal older than brain reveals The Vision Centre, Australian National University which has devoted more than 30 years to investigating their secrets.

The eyes are one of our most remarkable and precious organs, yet their origins have been caught in mystery.

The deep origins of 'sight' go back more than 700 million years when the earth was inhabited only by single-celled amoeba-like animals, algae, corals and bacteria. At this time the first light-sensitive chemicals, known as opsins, made their appearance and were used in rudimentary ways by some organisms to sense day from night.

Over the following 200 million years those simple light-sensitive cells and their opsins slowly and progressively became better at detecting light - they became more sensitive, faster, and more reliable - until around 500 million years ago they already closely resembled the cone cells of our present day eyes.

Our type of eye, a single globe packing in millions of photoreceptors, first starts to emerge between 500-600 million years ago, The Centre says.



The world population is currently seven billion and is anticipated to cross eight billion by 2025. India, now ranking second is projected to take China's title as the most populous country by 2050 with nearly 1.7 billion people. Feeding the burgeoning human population is undoubtedly the most challenging task facing the world today. That too, in the context of progressively diminishing agricultural lands, a condition which arose as an after effect of industrialization and urbanization. Transgenic technology has emerged as one of the innovative ways to address this problem. The technology aims at producing crop varieties that contain elite characteristics like heavy yield, resistance to stresses of diverse types, high nutrient and water use efficiency, high nutritional and storage qualities etc. The essence of the technology lies in inserting

desirable genes into target crops and their nurturing to enhance agricultural production. This novel technology, also known as genetic engineering or genetic modification thus involves the deliberate alteration of the genomes of plants by inserting desirable foreign gene/genes from other plants, animals or bacteria. After its first usage in 1951 by Jack Williamson, a US writer in his science fiction *Dragon's Island*, the term 'genetic engineering' has found wide usage in scientific literature to indicate human manipulation of genes. The organisms containing manipulated genomes are named transgenics, transgenic organisms or genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Transgenics have been created in animals, plants and microorganisms.

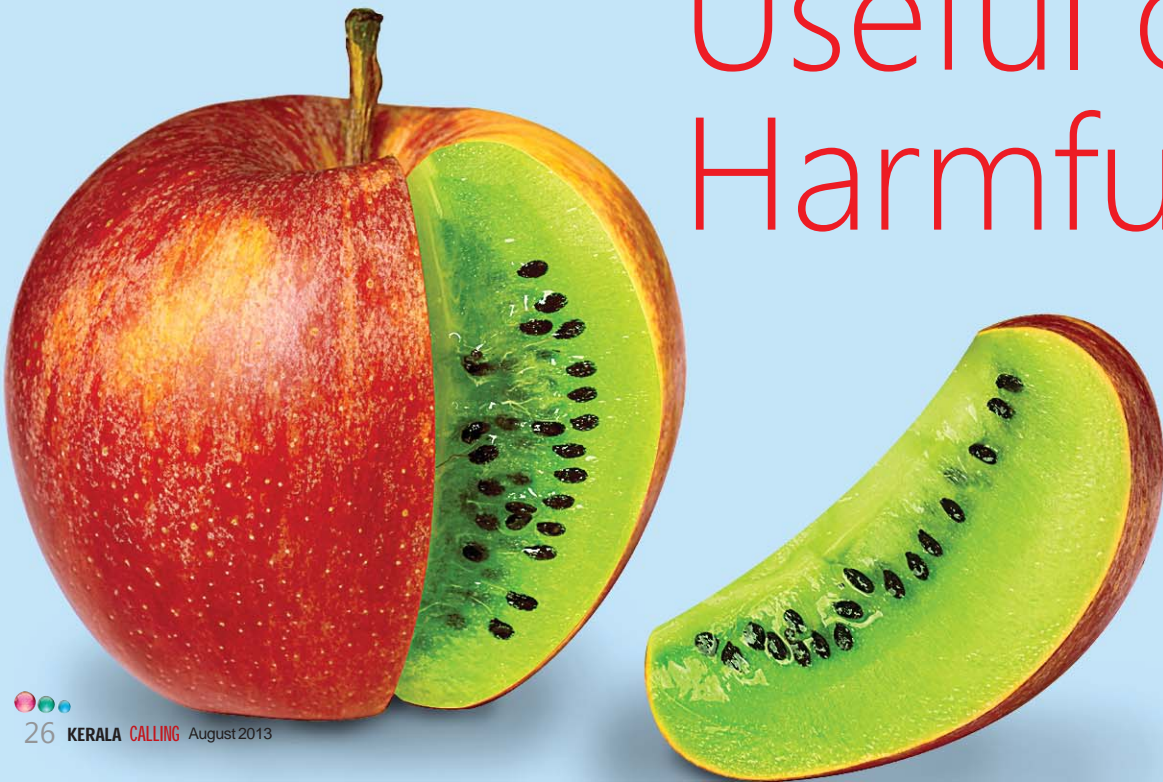
Transgenic crops or genetically modified crops (GM crops) exhibit desired traits like

increased resistance to herbicides, pests, diseases, drought, frost etc., improved nutritional content, enhanced shelf life etc. Plant breeders have long been attempting to introduce foreign genes in crops traditionally by crossing plants with desirable qualities artificially. But these methods were rather time consuming, unpredictable and often not very precise. Genetic engineering, on the other hand, can create plants with the exact desired trait very rapidly and with great accuracy.

Though transgenic tobacco plants were produced successfully as early as 1986, commercially such crops came into the scene only in 1994 when the tomato variety 'Flavr Savr' with improved sugar content and shelf life, produced by the Californian Company Calgene through antisense RNA technology was approved for

sale in the US. In the same year, the European Union approved genetically engineered tobacco with herbicide resistant genes for cultivation in Europe. Next year, the Environmental Protection Agency certified Bt Potato safe for cultivation and human utilization in the US, making it the first pesticide producing crop in the world ever. Following this, a transgenic soybean called 'Roundup Ready' with inbuilt resistance to the systemic, broad spectrum, glyphosate based herbicide 'roundup' was released by the US based Multinational Agricultural Biotechnology Company-Monsanto in 1996. Thereafter, this technology found successful application in an array of plants including food crops as well as commercial crops. Genetically engineered varieties are now available in maize, cotton, tomatoes, potatoes, canola, soybean, rice, sugar beet,

Transgenic Crops Useful or Harmful?



sugarcane, banana, apple, brinjal, papaya, lettuce, cauliflower etc.

Nowadays, the interest in cultivation of transgenic crops has increased all over the world. More than 10 percent of the world's crop lands are now under such crops. By far, the United States leads in GM crop cultivation and utilization, with more than 64 million hectares of agricultural land under transgenic soybeans, corn, cotton, soybeans, canola, squash and papaya. More than 75 percent of the food produced or used there is estimated to contain GM plant products. India is carrying out a lot of experimentation and research in the field of GM technology. The first GM crop, Bt cotton Bollgard I was commercialized in 2002. Following this, Bt brinjal, the first GM food crop in the country, developed by the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University was approved by the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee in 2007. Cultivation of transgenic crops in India is promoted through Mahyco-Monsanto Biotech, a joint venture of Monsanto and Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Company.

On the other side, at least a dozen countries in South America, Africa, Asia and Europe prohibit commercial planting of GM crops, although a few allow imports for such food and/or animal feed. The European countries are raising the strongest protest against GM crops. Recently, they also have begun to relax restrictions on GM imports.

The Technique Involved

Transgenic technology involves four major steps. (i) identification of a desirable gene (called the foreign gene) from another plant, animal or bacteria (ii) isolation of foreign gene using DNA cleaving enzymes called restriction endonucleases (iii) production of multiple copies of the desirable gene and their insertion into the DNA of an organism in which one intends to produce a desirable trait (called the host), with the help

of enzymes called restriction endonucleases and ligases. The host DNA incorporating the foreign gene is now called the recombinant DNA (or rDNA) (iv) Growing of the cell carrying rDNA by tissue culture techniques to regenerate a transgenic plant that expresses the characteristics of the introduced gene along with its own.

Need for Transgenesis

Transgenic technology is adopted in agricultural practices to achieve one or the other of

Transgenic crops or genetically modified crops (GM crops) exhibit desired traits like increased resistance to herbicides, pests, diseases, drought, frost etc., improved nutritional content, enhanced shelf life etc.

the following benefits.

- Boosting up of agricultural productivity to meet the escalating food demand.
 - Crop transformation to tolerate harmful agrochemicals like pesticides and herbicides.
 - Enhanced shelf life of plant products.
 - Increased resistance to diseases, salinity, drought, harmful insects and pests etc.
 - Fortification of taste and nutritional qualities.
 - Production of therapeutically significant products like vaccines, antigens (plantigens), antibodies (plantibodies), hormones, enzymes etc. in large quantities.
- Transgenics ultimately bring down the cost of food or drug production and help to reduce the requirement for biocides, and to enhance nutrient content and food quality.
- Major Achievements**
- Some notable achievements in the field are:
- Flavr Savr tomato - resistant to rotting (hence longer shelf life).
 - Roundup Ready soybean, corn etc. - resistant to herbicides.
 - Bt cotton, Bt corn, Bt brinjal etc. - resistant to insect attack.
 - Golden Rice- contains more beta carotene, the Vitamin A precursor.
 - Golden Rice 2- contains up to 23 times more beta-carotene than the original golden rice.
 - Amflora Potato – contain pure amylopectin, for industrial utilization.
 - Vistive Gold soybean-resistant to herbicides
 - Fish tomato – contain antifreeze gene from a fish
 - Therapeutic bananas, tomatoes, apples and potatoes- contain viral or bacterial antigens (generally called plantigens) (Some specific examples: transgenic soybeans containing human antibodies against Herpes simplex virus 2, transgenic tobacco plants





containing antibodies against tooth decay bacteria, transgenic tobacco manufacturing the enzyme gluco cerebrosidase required for patients of Gaucher's disease in its leaves etc.).

Many GM crops which serve as edible vaccines (eg. Transgenic banana, tomato, apple, potato etc.) or as sources of pharmaceutical products are in use or on pipeline.

Benefits of Transgenesis

Transgenic technology could create crops with many health and environmental benefits, but their actual usefulness is the subject of much scientific debate now.

Benefits to human health

- Foods could be engineered to combat human ailments and to reduce malnutrition. For example
- Golden rice can help prevent blindness and anemia in children resulting from Vitamin A and Iron deficiency.

- Edible vaccines can lead to easier, safer and more effective immunization against fatal diseases like Hepatitis B, Pneumonia etc. They would overcome the difficulties encountered in the extraction, purification, transportation, storage, distribution and delivery of traditional vaccines.
- Genetically modified food with their natural toxins or allergens deactivated is safer to consume eg. Tapioca tubers without cyanide; Groundnuts or wheat without toxic proteins.

Benefits to the Environment

External supply of synthetic agrochemicals which deteriorate

soil, environmental and human health, can be reduced considerably by engineering plants to produce their own herbicidal or insecticidal toxins and plants which are less dependent on fertilizers.

Economical Benefits

Production of self defense chemicals in transgenic crops,



farmers can save money to be spent on biocides. Herbicides can be sprayed safely in a field of herbicide tolerant transgenic crops without fearing crop destruction. In effect, the amount of chemicals required would be reduced, with a subsequent fall in the agricultural expenses. Drought and salt-tolerant crops would enable farmers to get increased yields in inhospitable areas at a lesser cost. Transgenic crops with increased tolerance to rotting give the farmer the opportunity to stock the produce for a longer period and transport it conveniently at a later time when the prices are high or demand is more, without the fear of getting them spoiled.



Concerns Over Transgenesis

Though transgenic biotechnology allows farmers to grow high quality food more efficiently, with more consistent yield and with reduced environmental impact, much controversy exists over its actual benefits and potential hazards. Genetically altered crops are usually tested for short-term effects and very little studies have been carried out on their long term effects. The major concerns over the impact of genetic modification come under three major areas like environmental problems, human health risks and economic issues.

Environmental Impacts

The cultivation of transgenic crops is stated to create harms to the environment which include:

Harm to Non Target Organisms

Self defense chemicals produced in these crops may harm other organisms directly or indirectly. For example, the Bt toxins in Bt crops can kill many species of insect larvae other than the bollworm. It is not possible to design a Bt toxin that would kill only those that damage the crop. High mortality rate was reported in monarch butterfly caterpillars in the U.S. when they fed on large amounts of pollen from GM corn. These

larvae normally feed on the weeds and not the corn. The crop pollen containing insecticidal toxins blown to the nearby weeds caused the larvae perish.

In UK, Skylarks were found indirectly affected by the cultivation of herbicide resistant transgenic sugar beets, which substantially reduced the weed population, on the the seeds of which the birds relied for food. This made the Skylark population to find other sources of food.

Creation of 'Super Pests' or 'Super Bugs'

Scientists and activists fear that pests or insects become resistant to Bt toxins, just as mosquitoes developed resistance to DDT. This would make their destruction practically impossible. In the same way if the antibiotic resistance genes used in genetic engineering technology are transferred to pathogenic bacteria, they may become resistant to antibiotics which makes disease treatment difficult or impossible.

Gene Transfer to Non Target Species

The possibility of cross breeding of weeds with crops engineered for herbicide tolerance, ends up with the transfer of the herbicide resistance genes from the crops into the weeds. The resultant 'superweeds' would then become herbicide tolerant and difficult to eradicate. Similarly other newly introduced genes may also cross over into non transgenic crops in the vicinity. Insecticidal genes if transferred from crops to weeds would make the latter produce toxins which prove harmful to the organisms feeding on them.

Human Health Risks

Critics of the technology argue that we have no right to tamper with the genes for our selfish needs. They foresee unintended effects from such human interferences.

- i. **Allergenicity:** The introduced gene may often cause unexpected allergic reactions in susceptible individuals.
- ii. **Unknown Effects on Human Health:** There is a growing concern that tailoring foreign genes into food plants may cause unexpected and negative impact on human health which are not hitherto identified. But according to the International Council of Science (ICSU), the currently available transgenic crops and foods derived from them are safe to eat.

Economic Concerns

Commercialization of transgenic crops is a lengthy and costly process. So the companies levy more from the consumers to ensure them a profitable return on their investment. Patenting of the newly created crop variety may raise the price of seeds so high that small farmers and third world countries cannot afford to purchase them. A situation may then arise where large multinational companies become the sole owners of the rights to all the good crops.

Genetic engineering definitely has the potential to solve the problem of food shortage and malnutrition, and to help protect and preserve the environment by reducing dependence on agrochemicals. Yet many controversies surround the technology's potential health and environmental risks. Present day laboratory and field studies are insufficient to identify any definite and substantial risks to human health and the environment in the long run. But the possibility of a risk cannot be ruled out. To avoid causing unintentional harm to nontarget areas and organisms as a result of our passion for this novel technology, we must proceed carefully. ■

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Kerala Budgets



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The budget is a continuous process of evaluation of Performance versus Standards (goals) set in the organization (Govt) and finding innovative ways to address the developmental challenges in it. The biggest challenge for Government lies in balancing its Revenue and Expenses without sacrificing the State's Social and Economic productivity and this aspect has universal appeal.

Running a Government organization (and others) is like a continuous sporting event. SPORTS across the world promote international integration beyond all human boundaries. Organizers make budget and arrangements for sports. Participants play the game; referees control it, judges evaluate it not from the point of view of Caste, Creed, Colour or Nation but only from the angle of solid performance parameters. Thinkers on the other hand, innovate and improve the basics of the game to add more value to it. All of these activities have time and cost factors and finally affect the Budget of the organisation and its performance.

In this context, let us consider the Budget of the Government of Kerala. The budget is a continuous process of evaluation of Performance versus Standards (goals) set in the organization (Govt) and finding innovative ways to address the developmental challenges in it. The biggest challenge for Government lies in balancing its Revenue and Expenses without sacrificing the State's Social and Economic productivity and this aspect has universal appeal. While doing so, the Government's business is to propel the growth trajectory by ensuring availability of

Table 1. Total Expenditure under Salary comparisons (Rs in Crores)

Srl	Items	2002-03 Actuals	2003-04 Actuals	2004-05 Accounts	2005-06 Accounts	2006-07 Account	2007-08 Accounts	2008-09 Accounts	2009-10 Accounts	2010-11 Accounts	2011-12 R.E	2012-13 B.E
1	Total expenditure under Salary (including teaching grant)	4201	4679	5345.58	5607.78	6585.45	7693.66	9063.81	9800.2	11068.38	15805.9	16765.7
2	Growth of Total expenditure under Salary (%)		11.38	14.25	4.9	17.43	16.83	17.81	8.12	12.94	42.8	6.07
3	Revenue surplus/deficit	-4119	-3680	-3669	-3129	-2638	-3785	-3712	-5023	-3674	-5471.66	-3463.8
4	Total expenditure under Salary as % of Revenue surplus/deficit (%)	101.99	127.15	145.7	179.22	249.64	203.27	244.18	195.11	301.26	288.87	484.03
5	GSDP(Crs)	94319	104887	119264	136842	153785	175141	202783	232381	276997	326693	391293
6	Total expenditure under Salary as % to GSDP (%)	4.4500	4.4600	4.4800	4.1000	4.2800	4.3900	4.4700	4.2200	4.0000	4.8400	4.2800

enough resources to the growing need of expenditure.

Over the years, the Governments are finding it difficult to contain revenue and fiscal deficits and augment new financial resources to fill the deficit gaps. Kerala State is also

financial norms and it has to appoint a Public Expenditure Review Committee to review its Budget expenditure accounts and follow its recommendations. Recently, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has indicated in a study that "...the increase in market

management will be under stress again in future.

The Kerala Public Expenditure Review Committee (KPERC) appointed from time to time by Kerala Government have analyzed and emphasized the need for reducing the State Revenue deficit. One of the Review Committee's report in 2012 says ".....thus

Common man's analysis

not an exception to this phenomenon. With adoption of The Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2003, the State is under obligation to follow some prudential

borrowings of State Governments since 2008-09 could lead to large repayment obligations from 2017-18 onwards". This shows that the State Government's fiscal

nearly 58 percent of the revenue expenditure is spent on salary to Government staff, teaching grants, pensions and interest"; meaning salary, pension and interest components form the major part of total

Table 2 : EL - Liability Analysis (Rs in Crores)

Srl	Items	2002-03 Actuals	2003-04 Actuals	2004-05 Accounts	2005-06 Accounts	2006-07 Accounts	2007-08 Accounts	2008-09 Accounts	2009-10 Accounts	2010-11 Accounts	2011-12 R.E	2012-13 B.E
1	Total expenditure under Salary including teaching grant	4201	4679	5345.6	5607.8	6585.45	7693.66	9063.81	9800.2	11068.4	15805.9	16766
2	EL Liability - Avg EL Annual salary/yr (Crs)	345.29	384.58	439.36	460.91	541.27	632.36	744.97	805.50	909.73	1299.12	1378.00
3	EL Liability as % to total expenditure under salary	8.22	8.22	8.22	8.22	8.22	8.22	8.22	8.22	8.22	8.22	8.22
4	Revenue surplus/deficit	-4119	-3680	-3669	-3129	-2638	-3785	-3712	-5023	-3674	-5471.7	-3463.8
5	EL liability as % to Revenue surplus/deficit	8.38	10.45	11.97	14.73	20.52	16.71	20.07	16.04	24.76	23.74	39.78
6	Interest liability 7.5% for 10 yrs on unaccounted EL liability Amount (Crs)	366.37	408.04	466.19	489.05	574.3	670.95	790.44	854.64	965.26	1378.4	1462.1
7	GSDP(Crs)	94319	104887	119264	136842	153785	175141	202783	232381	276997	326693	391293
8	EL liability as % to GSDP	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.34	0.35	0.36	0.37	0.35	0.33	0.4	0.35

Sources : KPERC- First Committee, Second report(November 2006); Third Committee, First report(December 2012) and Budget at Glance from Budget in Brief 2012-13





expenditure of the State.

In a democratic set up, the financial health of States are very important for enabling economic and social growth. The Government Salary system in the long run contains many uncertain variables and events and the challenges to manage it bring pressure on Fiscal discipline of the States. As noted above, Salary is the most important variable that affects the expenditure more (after new pension adoption) and is our focused item for further analysis. The Salary variable of the Government staff consists of different components (sub-variables), many of which undergo frequent changes due to Government's own policies, procedures and so predicting them is not that easy. From among the components of Salary, one important element that is missing or given less importance in the budgets is the encashable leave.

A sample analysis (Table. 1) made on Kerala State budgets from 2002-03 to 2012-13 throws light on some interesting facts;

The Salary expenditure of Rs. 4201 Crs in 2002-03 has grown to Rs.16765.70 Crs in 2012-13 and in all these years we have revenue deficits. Total expenditure under Salary as percentage to GSDP is hovering around 4.35 percent, which shows despite salary increases this ratio is almost steady.

Another analysis (Table.2) made on one of the component of the Salary viz. Encashable leave variable and its impact on Salary expenditure of the State attracts our special attention.

Preliminary analysis suggests that Encashable leave amount is about 8.22 percent of total salary (assuming 30 days EL/year) expenditure and 0.36% of Gross State Domestic Product and is hovering around the 0.35 percent levels. If EL eligibility is more, then naturally these figures will go up. Further, if we assume a simple interest of 7.5 percent p.a (without considering factors like inflation etc), we can see that, in around ten years time, the EL liability doubles and leads us to infer that, this poses inbuilt threats to State's financial health and needs to be managed in a more scientific way to avoid financial bubble in the long run. So, what is next?

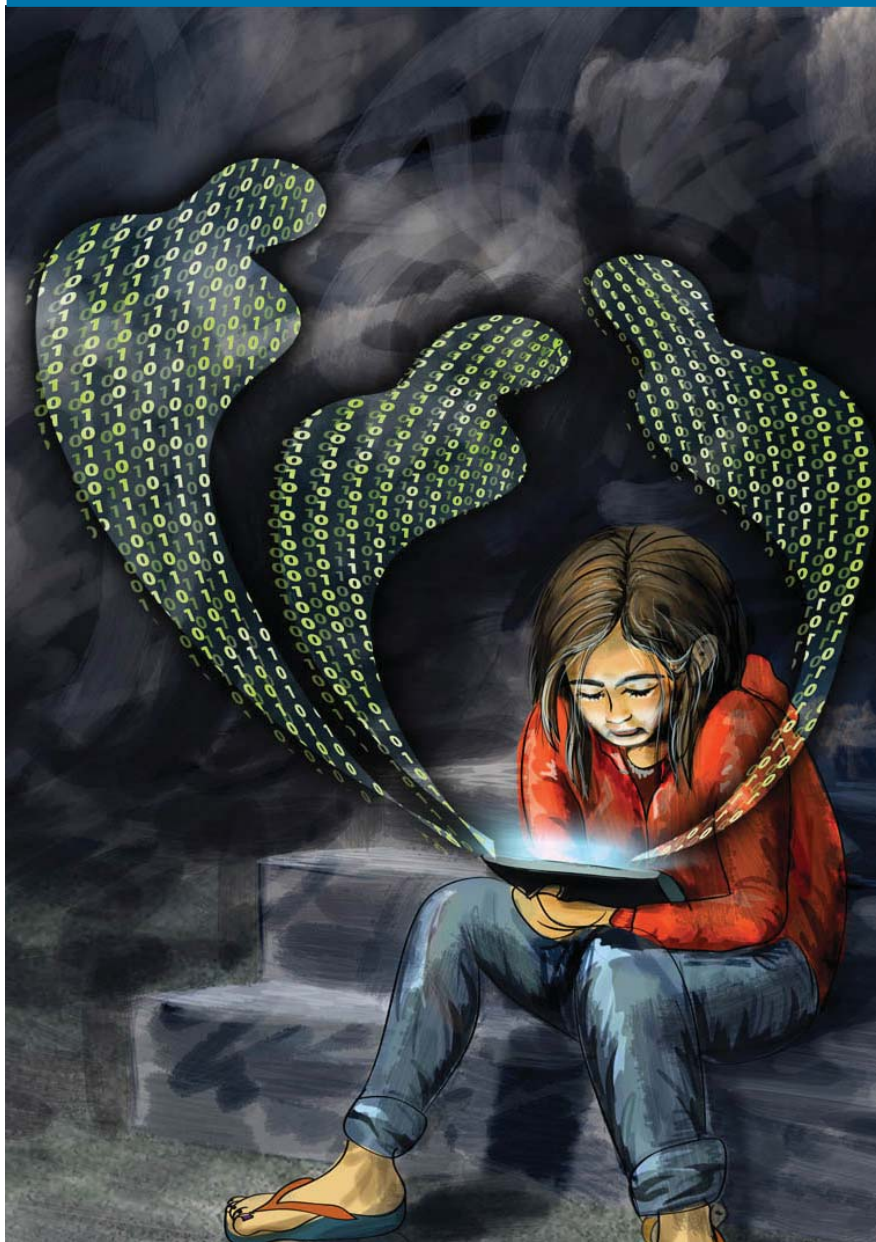
Innovation is the Key, Reform is the Mantra....! Which philosophy or economic formula can help us in this process?

Here is a quote from the father of the nation ".....But for me, truth is the sovereign principle, which includes numerous other principles. This truth is not only truthfulness in word, but truthfulness in thought also, and not only the relative truth of our conception, but the Absolute truth, the Eternal principle, that is God. There are innumerable definitions of God, because his manifestations are innumerable..." (An Autobiography or The Story of my experiments with truth by M.K.Gandhi).

Can the people of this country expect some such manifestations to happen in the near future? ■

The writer is former Executive Director of Cochin Stock Exchange Ltd.

Cyber syndrome amongst teenagers



It is high time implemented rapid and effective measures to curb cyber crimes. Everyone, especially women are under threat of it irrespective of their age, qualification, status, etc...Since Kerala is known for its 100 percent literacy, it has also become well known for cyber crimes. This is because of the people's awareness of the cyber world and their interest in its misuse. It is very easy to learn how to commit a cyber crime, for which only few resources are required and it can be committed without being physically present. Hacking, stalking, phishing, phreaking, bullying, e-mail spoofing, cyber piracy, cyber defamation, pornography are the common cyber crimes. 56 percent of the cyber crimes are not being reported due to embarrassment, loss of public confidence, false arrest concerns etc....

Like the small mountain stream, which becomes a big river later on, the sexual drive in a teenager is very forceful and powerful when it starts. The sexual instinct is suddenly awakened at puberty. There are many causes behind the unduly excessive interest in sex among the college students. The use of the internet has increased considerably among the teenagers and adults during the last few years, and there are some clinical observations that some people 'get hooked' and develop a cyber addiction. The Cyber world has many roles to play among the teenagers of today. It entertains, educates and informs. It has also some negative roles. This is not like alcohol or smoking where one can categorically say it is bad and quit it. It is like a Knife, use it to cut an apple or kill a person, it depends on the user. The challenge is how our teenagers use it for their development and growth.

Now children are being exposed to sex through cyber world. Their natural sexual instinct, coupled with their curiosity to know what it is, tempts them to indulge in cyber crimes and wrong relationships.



Pornography, new concept called as **SEXTING** is very common among teenagers. It is nothing but the commercial exploitation of sex which has ample power to distort the basic structure of a community. It is about pictures, writings, videos or other materials that are sexually explicit and patently offensive to community. It dehumanises and degrades sex. Pornography diverts the students and excessive interest in sex hampers the development of

personality and the general progress of a growing girl/ boy. It also affects their studies and emotional wellbeing adversely. The college students easily fall in affairs of the romantic kind if they lack the love and care at home or because of the parental strictness. These affairs drive them to seek solace in sexual pleasure.

There is a causal link between pornography and excessive sexuality. Pornography requires sex as an essential

ingredient. It has a negative effect on students; it shapes sexual knowledge in a vulnerable manner; it is a very poor sex educator because it shows perversions, sex in an unnatural way; degrades and fails to address intimacy, love, connection and romance. There are researches which reveal that online pornography plays an accessory role in negative social issues such as child abuse, violence against women, rape, inequality, relationship and



apathetic attitudes about sexuality and the opposite sex

- Spending excessive amounts of time on the computer
- Exhibiting anxiety if they are surprised by someone while using the computer
- Having problems in relationships, at work, or in school
- Lying about amount of time spent on the internet and websites visited

The internet – including social networking websites like MySpace and Face book – has become a normal part of an average teen’s life. Some researches indicate that excessive exposure to pornography can shape a young person’s attitudes toward both sexuality and sexual intercourse. Teens, especially males, may also

family breakdown, crimes among the youth, promiscuity and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). It shortens a student’s imagination and leads to a wrong direction; it narrows the intellectual and emotional horizons of teenagers by depraving and corrupting their mind. Also there is a causal link between pornography and sexual offences. There are reports which suggest that these kinds of pornography causes individual, social, moral and ethical harm and is causally related to sexual offences.

Many Indian Newspapers contain advertisements of phone numbers for making new friends. These friendship services offer sex chat in the guise of friendship and also arrange customers to meet girls, offending the moral fibre of the society. In India pornographic books are being sold and bought frequently. These books are available at book stalls, at railway stations, bus stands and markets. The problem of porn advertising is not only limited to internet. It has also spread its legs in the market of mobile phones. Pornographic content is being advertised by way of mobile spamming. Most

of the porn websites on internet have mechanism of registering mobile number of users. These websites can also access the mobile numbers of receivers of mobile spam through cyber stalking, hacking and illegal sale of information. They send advertisements of pornographic content which is available on their website. The uninterested receivers treat those advertisements as nuisance but interested receivers buy such content and even goes on to the extend of showing such pornographic content to children. Also morphed pictures and videos of famous celebrities are downloaded in mobiles and sent to others via Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS). These MMS contain pornographic clips of bathroom, bedroom scenes, honeymooning couples, couples in the park or morphed videos. It instigates the teenagers and prompts them to experience it leading them to excessive sexuality.

Symptoms of cyber syndrome

- Keeping the door to the room closed when they are using the computer
- Displaying negative or



develop negative attitudes about members of the opposite sex and begin to think of potential or current partners as objects. This may make it more difficult for the individual to start and maintain meaningful, lasting relationships in the future. Furthermore, exposure to pornography may also skew a young person's body image and expectations about sex, leaving them feeling inadequate, incompetent, and/or unsatisfied when they do become sexually active. Some people can view pornography without developing an addiction to it. But certain individuals may become addicted to the behaviour and the positive feelings they associate with it, which may, in turn, lead the person to experiment with other, more risky sexual behaviours that can lead to sex addiction. Even if the teen does not develop an addiction to sex, excessive exposure to pornography can shape their attitudes toward sex negatively and lay the foundation for relationship and other problems in the future.

Conclusion and suggestions

Affected children are exposed to

pornography at an early age through their peers and relatives. At home and in schools/colleges children are usually not supervised when on the Internet. Cybercafés are reluctant to filter pornographic sites because filters prevent adult users from accessing other web documents that share similar content characteristics with pornography.

Protecting children begins at home; parents are responsible for monitoring and educating their children about the value and danger of the Internet. Parents are not, however, alone in this endeavour. The widest possible protection should be accorded to the family to enable it to play its crucial role in society. Internet governance bodies and principles can facilitate this protection and assist families in fulfilling its role. Learning more about the dangers of Internet pornography and how to protect children from it has become critical. One good way to prepare children for accidental viewing of Internet porn is by letting the child know beforehand that they may occasionally come across unwanted information or pictures, and to let parents, teachers and guardians know if this happens. Another way to protect children is to buy Internet filtering software to block pornographic sites.

If only they had been guided properly by somebody, may be a parent, relative or teacher, their developing sexual instincts could be channelized in to more positive results. At home and in class room sex education should be given to young children, so that they know the facts of life. It should be undertaken in a careful, dignified manner. The government can place bans on websites that are famous for circulating pornographic content over the internet and should take serious steps to restrict the accessibility of pornography. ■

The writer is Associate Professor in Commerce, Sanatana Dharma College, Alappuzha.

Not every footstep

can lead you
through
the right path



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The term 'sigillography' has been derived from the word 'sigillum', which in Latin means seal. Therefore, by sigillography we mean a study of seals. Again, the term 'seal' refers to both the implement for making the impression and the impression itself, but it is the latter usage we are mainly concerned with.

Sigillography is a well developed science in the West and the people there have done much work for a critical study of the subject. It is, however, a matter of great regret that in most of the Afro-Asian countries this science is little known. In India

also this valuable and interesting subject is still to receive the attention, it really deserves. Anyhow, the National Archives of India has started the project of cataloguing the seals found on original documents lying in its custody.

Practice of Sealing

The holy Bible proclaims that the God almighty gave Kayene, the son of Adam, a symbol when he was distressed by fear after the execution of his brother, Habel, in order to protect him. It is said in the gospels of the Holy Bible, that the then Roma Government

Bygone



Stamped a seal (signet) over the grave in which the corpse of Jesus Christ was, not to be stolen his body. For a good authenticity in establishing a truth or record, a number of stamps and symbols had been in use or existence from the pre-historic or ancient times. In the earlier ages the seal was used as a taboo over something forbidden. Gradually it became a symbol of power and recognition.

In India the role of seals has been quite interesting throughout her recorded history. Right from

the time of Indus valley civilization down to the British period the seal has been used in one form or the other by kings, queens, princes and princesses, high officials, private individuals as also by governments and institutions to lend authority to documents. It is interesting to note that both in ancient and medieval India seal was considered more important than the signatures for the authentication of a document. Even in the modern period when the signature have become

almost universal, the seal, in a way, continues to hold its place and is required for legal execution of official deeds, contracts and communications.

Ancient Seals

The early Indian seals are found on clay. These clay-seals on tablet sometimes have the devices only, sometimes the legends only and at times both the devices and the legends. As to the seal –stamps found at Harappa, they have the legends as well as the devices, while the

legends of these seal-stamps have not yet been deciphered, their devices show life- like picture of animals like, lion, bear, deer, bull, etc. Besides clay, copper was also used for sealing purposes. In fact, the most usual method of authenticating a document was by attaching a copper or bronze reproduction of the royal seal. Such seals are found on copper-plate grants. These seals are of various sizes and have different shapes, such as circular, oval, leaf-shaped, etc. The devices of these copper and

Seals in India





bronze seals bear animal figures, but sometimes we find instead the pictures of lamp-stands, parasol, the sun and the crescent moon engraved on them. The legend of these seals generally bears the ruler's name along with the name of the ruler's father.

We have also come across a number of references to the signet-ring, which as an emblem of love, sovereignty and power, has always enjoyed a unique position. For instance, in his well-known play, the Shakuntalam, Kalidasa has made a dexterous use of the royal-signet of King Dushyanda, who had completely forgotten his wife, Shakunthala, but was able to recognize her ultimately on his memory being evoked by the sign of the ring which he had earlier given her as a token of love with his name engraved thereon. It is also interesting to know that in the line of signet-rings, we have an actual specimen which is

referable to the fourth century. A.D. and which was obtained at Lahore. This signet-ring of Maharaj Maheshvaranga, son of Nagabhata is made of copper or bronze and has an oval shape. It has both the legend and the device sunk in its surface. It is, in fact, very much of the type that high personages and men of note have all along been wearing on their thumbs till recent times.

Seals of the Sultanate Period

During the sultanate period the practice of sealing documents continued alright, but unfortunately we do not find much on record for a proper study of that seals of the period. Anyhow, we know it for certain that all grants of land. etc. were sealed with the royal tughra containing the name and style of the ruler in a highly ornamental form and that the routine orders of administrative

nature were sealed with the royal signet. In this context, it may be mentioned that when Ibn-i-Battuta, the famous Arab traveller, was honoured with the office of the Qazi of Delhi by Muhamad bin Tughluq, he is reported to have made the following remarks:- "My Lord, I am a follower of the Maliki school, whereas the people of this place are Hanafis, and I do not quite know their language even". In reply the Sultan addressed him thus, "I have appointed Baha al-din of Multan and Kamal al-din of Bijnor as your deputies and counsellors. They will give you their advice and you will have merely to stamp the documents with your seal." This shows that during the Sultanate period muhrdar (Keeper of seals) was an important official enjoying the utmost confidence of the ruler. We also learn that the various nobles and dignitaries had their own confidential seal-boarers who would generally carry the signet in a small bag and would produce it when needed.

Mughal Seals

As to the Mughal seals, they are available in a very large number and that too in a great variety. It may be remembered that the Mughal Government, which has been described as the Kaghazi raj (Paper Government), made the maximum use of paper to run the administration smoothly and efficiently. In fact, before their issue, the various papers and documents (farmans, parwanas, etc.) had to pass through a number of stages and that after a thorough check there of the officials concerned were required to put their seals and signatures on them. Thus, a huge bulk of records was created in the process. And, though with the march of time most of the Mughal archives have perished, we have still quite a number of

documents which afford us a very good information on the various seals of those days. Apart from the seals of the Mughal Emperors princes and princesses, nobles and high officials, we have thousands of seals of the various institutions and private individuals scattered almost throughout the country. Here it may be kept in mind that while the ancient Indian seals furnish the best examples of delineation of animal figures in their devices, the seals of the Mughals, especially those of the latter ones, are known for their carefully planned legends and excellent floral designs. Another characteristic of the Mughal seals is the mention of date which is missing rather conspicuously in the early Indian seals. It is also worthwhile to note that the seals of the Mughal Emperors are generally lineal in character and that right from Babur down to Bahadur Shah II the great seal of each ruler has his name in the central ring with the names of his ancestors up to Timur in the outer rings in a clock-wise manner.

Besides the great seal called muhr-i-muqaddas-i-kalan, the Ain-Akbari makes a mention of four other types of seals viz., (i) a small square seal with the legend Allah-u-Akbar Jalla Jalauhu, (II) a small round seal known by the Chaghtil name if Uzuk, (iii) a seal used for all matters relating to the seraglio and (iv) a mihrabi or lozenge-shaped seal which was used for all judicial transactions and which contained the following verse written around the Emperor's names:-

Rasti Mukht-i-riza -i-Khuda ast
Kas na di dam ke gum shud as
rah-i-rast

Uprightness is the means of
pleasing God



I saw none lost in the straight path.

Of the seals of the Mughal Queens, we have so far come across those of Hamida Banu Begam and Nur Jahan. The seal of Nurjahan which was struck in the year 1523 A.D. is extremely beautiful, presenting a remarkable specimen of art. It consists of four elliptical panels. The first panel contains the invocation Allah-U-Akbar, while the last one records the nineteenth regnal year of Jahangir – is engraved in the second panel. Further, the second and the third panels contain the legend in verse reading as follows:-

Ze nur-i-mihr-i-Jahangir badshah-i-Jahanban

Nagin-i-Nur Jahan badshah gasht furozan

By the light of love of Jahangir, the world-protecting monarch. The bezel of Empress Nur Jahan became resplendent.

We have also run into quite a number of seals of the local dynasties. These include the seals of Oudh, Murshidabad, Mysore, Hydrebad, Travancore, Arcot, Poona, Gwalior, Nagpur, Jaipur, Jodhpur and so on and so forth. While we do have in the National Archives of India, specimens of most of these seals, quite a good number of them are lying still in the private custody, hence need for salvaging them.

Seals of the company

We have also got quite a few seals of the East India Company,

which acted in the name of the Mughal Emperor for about two centuries. It is interesting to note that up to the year 1817 A.D. the Governor-General, like other Subadars, would describe himself as 'servant of the Mughal Emperor' in his seal which often contained a flamboyant legend in Persian running in five and at times seven long panels. In this context, the legend of the seal of Marquis of Hastings, which reads as follows, should give us a fairly good idea:-

Choice of high grandness, special adviser to His Gracious Majesty the king of England, having the rank of Saturn, noblest of nobles, Marquis of Hastings, Governor-General Bahadur, administrator of the



territories under the Government of the English Company Bahadur, and Commander-in-Chief of the royal armies and of the Company's Government in India, devoted servant of Emperor Muhammad Akbar, the holy warrior.

Some of the Governors-General, used to have two separate seals, one bearing reference to the Mughal Emperor while the other omitting it altogether. In any case, the practice of referring to the Mughal Emperor seems to have continued till about the year 1817 or so, for, thereafter we do not find either the Company or the Governors-General, mentioning themselves as the Fidwi (Servant) to the Mughal Emperor in their seals. Further, it may be noted that the Company and the Governors-General had their seals in English as well. These seals like those in Persian are generally oval in shape. They are, however, much simpler in their legends and quite often even without the date of engraving. For instance, the legend of Lord Bentinck's seal in English runs as follows:-

The Right Honourable Lord W.C. Bentinck, Governor-General of India.

Importance of Sigillography

A proper and scientific study of seals of all kinds helps much in knowing the various facts which have otherwise not come to the surface. Indeed, the date engraved on the seal, the style of legend, the name and titles of the owner are highly important for determining certain historical facts. There is no gainsaying the fact that the seals come to our rescue where the historical events are hidden in ambiguity. It is, therefore, highly essential that the various seals lying in the country should be properly classified, catalogued and preserved in the best possible manner. ■

The writer is a Rtd. Archivist





The year round blooming plant

The plant creating a tropical feel with its peculiar tubular flower clusters is the Jacobinias or Flamingo flower. Since the flowers resemble the feather of a flamingo, it is named flamingo flower. The plant with a tidy shrubby habit is well suited for containers outdoors or as a house plant in bright light lit areas indoors. Justicia is a genus in the Family Acanthaceae which consists of about 300 species of herbs, shrubs and tender native plants and is named after an 18th century

Scottish gardener James Justice. They have been popular container and green house plants from the early nineteenth century. The Brazilian plume flower or Justicia carnea is a shade-loving, soft-wooded shrub up to 1.5 mt height and large, coarse lush leaves which are prominently veined. Thick plumes of pale pink or deep ink

tubular flowers appear in regular flushes from early summer. There is also a white form of Jacobinia. The usual flowering time spreads across several months' right from January to May and November, December.

The Pink Jacobinia is also called Brazilian Plume, Kings Crown and Plume flower. During summer the plant covers itself large showy spikes of pink flowers or flowers with flesh colour as the name carnea indicates dense clusters of tubular pink flowers shaped like tiny tongues makes this plant unique. Buds grow at the tip of new growth, and once the pink starts to show, it is only a few days until full bloom. The flowers are tubes flared at the mouth and curving outward from the centre of the spike on which the flowers are arranged. The pink to rose purple corolla is about 6 cm long. Humming birds and butterflies are very much attracted to its nectar-rich blossoms.

Pink jacobinia; a native of South America is a perfect perennial for shaded and partially shaded areas. Even if it can grow in shaded areas the foliage gets firmer and deeply veined in full sun. The plant needs a loamy soil with a good amount of compost and peat added. Protect it from strong sun by placing it under large canopy





trees that protect it from anything but dappled sunlight. Used for additional colour in mixed beds or hedges Jacobinia also suits well as a floriferous annual when grown in large pots.

The yellow Jacobinia *Justicia aurea* which is a herbaceous shrub that hails from Mexico and Central America is a plant with huge dark green leaves and the flower is similar

to its cousin *Justicia carnea* except that it has 6-8 inches long and bright yellow flower. It has attractive large quilted foliage. It grows to about 1.5m tall and will grow in sun or semi-shade, tolerating dry conditions.

Justicia cuttings are very easy to root. Cut 8 to 12 inch pieces of stem probably soft wood cuttings, remove all but the top two leaves and dust the root

end of the stem with any rooting hormone powder. Push the stem 1 to 2 inches deep in potting soil and keep moist until new leaves appear. Provide organic matter such as compost or leaf manure,

into the soil prior to planting to improve soil quality and drainage. As in the case of other garden plants *Justicia* also requires a regular diet of all purpose plant food like a fertiliser mixture like 17 complex or 18 complex. Put the fertiliser into the soil 3 to 4 inches from the plants stem so that the fertiliser doesn't come in direct contact with *Justicia*, otherwise it may cause foliage burn. Prune the plants while they are young to encourage bushy, full growth. Remove the flowering stems at the base once blooming is complete. Flower removal helps encourage further blossoming. Pinch off the tip of each growing stem in spring when the plant belongs actively growing. Tip removal helps in branching and leads to a fuller plant. Also remove dead and damaged leaves. Cut the oldest and tallest stems back to the leaf node closest to soil level to encourage new growth.

Justicias are suitable for growing in pots and containers indoors or in shady entryways, porches and patios. They are also perfect shrubs for the background in a shady spot in the garden. A great specimen for the garden border or near the foundation of a building. ■



HOME STAY
TOURISM
Share
the Culture



Tourism has a vital role in terms of its scope for providing employment opportunities and foreign exchange. Tourism and holiday making on global as well as national scale is a manifestation of prosperity and peace. As a great number of people in many countries have higher living standards and they can save a proportion of their income for holidays and recreation. Today, tourism has become an export-oriented business for travel agents, transporters, hoteliers, retail dealers and for many others connected with tourism.

Tourism development in India has passed through many stages. India's glorious tradition and rich cultural heritage are linked with the development of tourism. The Government of India has declared tourism as an industry and has been extending the number of monetary and tax incentives to the promoters of those establishments like hotels, trade links, travel agencies etc, which helps in the building up of tourism industry. The Government has recognized tourism as a national priority and is now giving a thrust to tap its vast potential. The Government's attitude towards the development of tourism has reflected in its tourism policies and budget allocations. The Central Ministry of Tourism decided recently to launch a National Tourism Fund, which will be used for its infrastructure development. For a country like

India, endowed both with huge natural wealth and human resources, tourism has a special significance for it can help largely in the economic development, particularly of backward areas. The significance of tourism as a foreign exchange earner has become all the more important

tourism to gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to be at 6 percent (US \$67.3 billion in 2009 rising up to US \$187.3 billion by 2019). The report also states that real GDP growth for travel and tourism economy is expected to be 0.2 percent in 2009 and to an average 7.7 percent per annum over the

of globalization. India and South East Asia have been gearing up to achieve significant progress in this field owing to a number of encouraging factors.

Kerala Tourism

Kerala has been significantly successful in its tourism efforts, in creating a key tourism



in the context of the country's trade deficits.

The World Travel and Tourism Report for 2009 for 180 countries worldwide ranks the Indian Travel and Tourism economy 14th in absolute size worldwide, 144th in relative contribution to national economies and 5th in long term (10 year) growth. The contribution of travel and

coming 10 years.

Export earnings from international visitors and tourism goods are expected to generate 6.0 percent of total exports (almost US \$16.9 billion) in 2009, growing to US \$51.4 billion in 2019. Economic diversification and technological improvement have created a conducive environment for tourism development in the percentage

platform for the state and positioning itself competitively in the international tourist market. Acclaimed as India's only 'tourism super brand', Kerala has been able to develop strengths in certain core areas of product development and infrastructure creation. Although tourism statistics show that a large amount of revenue is brought into the state, factors like the rate





of leakage of tourism receipts and to what extent the local economy retains the revenues generated by tourism is still not clear.

Started as a state hospitality department in 1950's, the Department of Tourism came to being in 1960's. However the functions of the department were confined to running guest houses, upkeep of residential bungalows of Ministers and providing hospitalities and other arrangements for VVIP's. It was only during the 7th plan that the tourism promotion activities found a place in the functioning of the Department of Tourism. Kerala Tourism has recorded remarkable growth in the last few years. The number of foreign tourists and domestic tourists visiting the state has crossed two lakhs. The revenue generated in Kerala due to tourism is estimated to be nearly 4000 crores which is 6.29 percent of the state's GDP. Tourism has generated employment in Kerala to the tune of nearly 7 lakhs. Kerala has emerged as the most acclaimed tourist destination of the country in the recent past. World Travel and Tourism council has selected Kerala as a partner state.

National Geographic travel after two years of research has chosen Kerala, as one of the 50 must see destinations of one's lifetime and has been stated as one of the 10 paradises of the world.

Homestay Tourism

Kerala holds a unique position in its culture and nature, which widely opens its green windows to those who need a solace in the evening of the life bounded by the golden threads of simplicity speckled with the love and affection of the people. This green strip of land is a haven for many. These specialties make Kerala, one of the most sought after destinations. And people come and explore the virgin land with all its beauty and freshness wrapped with the rich culture. To experience this exotic fragrance of Kerala, one has to be here enjoying or absorbing the full flavour. This feeling cannot be fully absorbed by a stay in the four wall side boutique hotel, which serves only the basic needs. But a rapport with the local people who represent the pristine land and staying with them will give one an experience of being in the "God's own country". As to those



who come here to explore the mesmerizing land in all its vividness by staying with a family, offers them a chance to mingle with the family members, their culture, traditions, history and moreover the everyday life experience, a range of ethnic experiences. All these wonderful experiences are satisfied with the emergence of 'Homestay'.

As its name indicates, homestays, homestay, are a stay in a 'home' with a family where the tourists will get the opportunity to mingle with the people, their culture, life style, ideas etc. Homestays play an integral part of promoting our culture and nature to the external world. People are invited to experience the unique hospitality of Kerala homestay. Homestay is one such tourism product of Kerala that over the years has significantly added value to the hospitality sector of Kerala. It facilitates visitors to experience the local culture and lifestyle. These are traditional households of Kerala, where people have shaped their lives according to socio-religious and environmental factors. The joint family system, which once prevailed in Kerala, too had a

role to play in the functioning of such households. Kerala has in recent times become the most enchanting holding destination for families, tourists and individual travellers. Holiday makers arrive from all over the world to this destination every year.

The state offers luxury as well as budget accommodation all over, but a new dimension in Kerala package tourism has emerged in recent times. The concept of homestay accommodation allows the traveller to experience Kerala from a different perspective. Kerala homestay let you mingle with the host and the family leading a close cultural interaction and provides a learning process for better understanding of the society, local tradition, cuisine and community. Apart from being economical the homestay accommodation is an experience of the hospitality and warmth of people of Kerala. It is far removed from the monotonous dwelling and seclusion of the closed four walls of a hotel room. Thus Kerala homestays are not akin to bed and breakfast accommodation, but on the

Homestays play an integral part of promoting our culture and nature to the external world. People are invited to experience the unique hospitality of Kerala homestay.

contrary offer the comfort of malayali hospitality and warmth.

Kerala homestay accommodation is available at many different levels of service. It definitely does not offer upscale amenities of five star hotels but the rich experience the traveller gets is much more than the comfort of the lurching accommodation. Travellers spending their holidays at homestay in Kerala are assured of holiday experiences that are quite different from the usual ones. At homestay, the very informal atmosphere makes visitors feel at home and at the same time can partake in

activities carried out by the host family.

Benefits to the homestay operators

- Earning additional income other than his/her regular income and sustained employment.
- Use of Kerala Tourism Brand for marketing.
- Support from the Government in capacity building.
- Facilitation by Government in getting loans from the financial institutions for the improvement of the existing house for it's conversion into homestay.

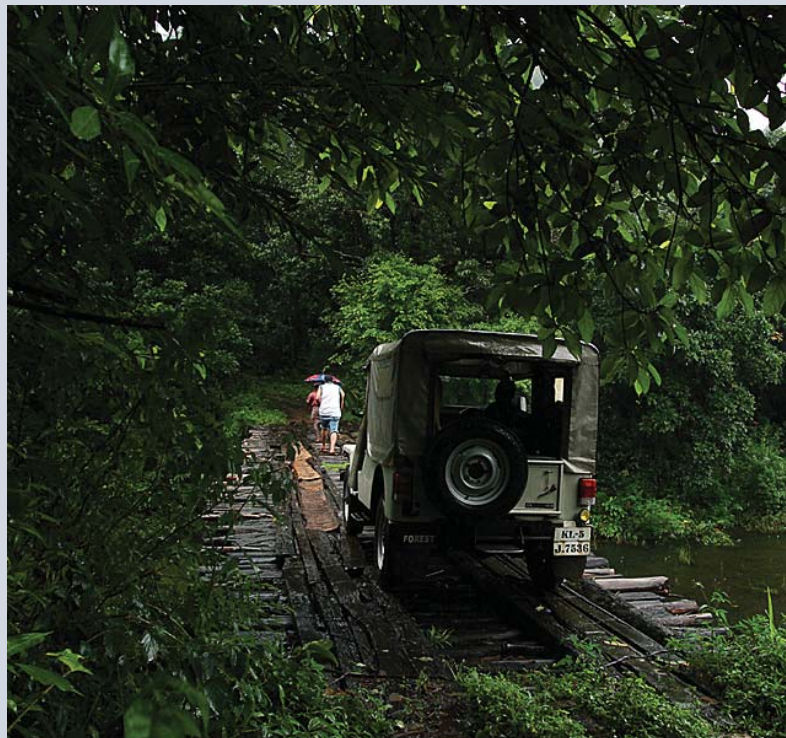
Homestay tourism is one of the important products in tourism which facilitate tourism development in Kerala. It ensures Social, Environmental and Economic responsibility which are the objective of homestay tourism. The main concern of homestay tourism is to encourage the foreign inhabitants and educating them to how to protect and respect the culture of Kerala. The local people also can play a good role in encouraging tourists to see their communities as more than a site for recreation. ■



Gavi

Nature at its
exquisite best

The name Gavi sounded quite out of ordinary and the experience was truly extraordinary. Once there, it was sheer ecstasy, which I doubt could be narrated by a few words. Gavi has captured the attention of tourists, mostly foreigners who prefer a holiday away from the hustle and bustle of modern day life. We started off from Trivandrum early morning by car. Deviating from Adoor which is on the M.C road, we took the route touching Pathanamthitta, Erumeli, Mundakkayam, Kuttikkanam, Peerumedu and reached Vandiperiyar by noon. The road branches off to the forest area from Vandiperiyar through the Konnimara estate from here.





We reached Vallakadavu, the Forest check post before entering the forest tract. The banner which screamed “Welcome to the land of death” send chills up our spines as the issue was taken up by all political groups. Thankfully the entry point was not blocked and we were issued passes to proceed to our destination. The issues and disturbing sights faded into insignificance as the breath taking beauty of the forest unfolded on either side of the road. We alighted at many places to enjoy the natural beauty at its best. Elephant dung could be seen at many places near streams which were aplenty. After traveling a

further 20 kms, we reached the Green mansion, a lodge run by Kerala Forest Development Corporation (KFDC). The lake on the foreground was pristine and inviting. We had booked a package comprising food, accommodation and sightseeing accompanied by a Guide.

Since my friend and family accompanied us during the trip, I had booked two tents. They were made of eco friendly material and were mounted on a semi permanent structure. Though tried after the long drive, we decided to go out into the open after a sumptuous lunch. The sprawling meadow on

We could hear a number of cries emanating from the adjoining forest area. Occasionally the trumpeting of elephants accompanied by the sounds of breaking bamboo could be heard.





the edge of the lake proved to be an ideal place to rest and enjoy the tranquility of the surroundings. Our guide as promised met us at 3 pm and took us to a waterfall on the other side of the lake in a row boat. Hidden between rocks and vegetation, it was indeed a refreshing experience. Luckily for us the visitors were few on this day. After bathing to our hearts content, we were taken back to the lodge. Next was a trekking tour to the hills on the opposite side of the lake. The view from the top was breathtaking as we sighted Mountain goats, Wild buffalo and hornbills. The flight of the hornbill is a sight to behold.

We were in for a surprise as when guide pointed out a column

of smoke rising at a distance with a township beneath it and told us it was the Sannidhanam, the abode of Swamy Ayyappa. Many pilgrims trek their way to sabarimala through these forests. The light was fading as the Sun began its fiery descent across the hills. This was glorious sight, a sight so familiar yet so different to behold in different parts of planet earth. I felt humbled and relieved of all pressures as we become one with nature.

Tiger sightings are not common even though tigers coexist with other species in natural haven. Our guide narrated us his experience of a tiger sighting some years back at this very spot. The big cat, unaware of it being watched, stretched out in the sunshine for

nearly an hour before walking away. As we walked back to the lodge, our guide motioned to keep mum. In a gorge on the side of the pathway lay a viper. We waited as it slithered away into the undergrowth. It was very dark when we reached our lodge, but the lights around helped us find our way. We were shown the way to the tent, and after refreshing, had supper from the restaurant. By this time the electric fence around the tent was switched on to prevent animals mainly elephants from entering the area. We could hear a number of cries emanating from the adjoining forest area. Occasionally the trumpeting of elephants accompanied by the sounds of breaking bamboo could be heard. Spending the

night in a forest was truly an exhilarating experience that too when the moon was at its glorious best.

The next day provided further excitement as we were taken for ride in a jeep towards Pathanamthitta by the forest road. This is another route, though risky but picturesque which will take you to Gavi from Pathanamthitta. A KSRTC bus plies between Pathanamthitta and Gavi covering a distance of around 100 km. This ride offers some amazing views and has attracted many tourists. Recently a Malayalam film with story woven around this journey ran in packed houses across Kerala. This has also contributed a lot to the popularity of Gavi. We are lucky enough to catch a glimpse of a tusker during the ride and a few antelopes in addition to a lion tailed macaque atop a tree.

Our package was for 24 hours and it was time to bid adieu to Gavi. At 12:30 pm we packed up and departed to Vandiperiyar on the way back to Trivandrum. The scenes near the check post in Vallakkadavu were in stark contrast to the Gavi experience. When the car moved forward, we couldn't help wondering – "Will there be mankind without nature, but nature will thrive sans mankind". ■

The writer is Assistant Professor, KITTS



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