

Dr T.P. Sethumadhavan

Even though the basic objective of education is to attain knowledge, develop skills and attitudinal changes, the main goal is to acquire a better job. Overseas education has already been considered as the pre requisite for getting better career. Selecting the right place or right country for study abroad is really a difficult task. Some of the key questions like the place to go for higher studies, nature of courses to be selected and the procedure thereafter confront every aspirant.

Spectacular growth has been witnessing in the overseas education sector in the country. In the recently held UK Education Fair at Kochi, more than 3000 prospective students visited the exhibition for study in UK programmes. When compared to previous year the turnover was more than 150 per cent. This clearly indicates the interest of students from Kerala to study abroad. Overseas education market has changed beyond belief. Large number of

universities and schools from different countries are considering India as a potential recruitment centre. Apart from UK, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and Switzerland, countries including Singapore, Malaysia, Russia, China and Italy started recruiting students from India.

Overseas education has got many advantages. Academic excellence, Global edge in faculty and students, better facilities, resources and faculty, variety of options, flexible curricula, cutting edge technology, hands on training, better support services for international students, financial assistance like scholarship, assistantship, fellowship, part time jobs, etc, challenging research opportunities and adaptation to different

social environment are some of the major advantages.

Good academic merit, individual capabilities including analytical skills, suitability to course and college and proficiency in English language need more consideration before you proceed for overseas education.

In the global education sector, study in the United States is rather cheaper when compared with the United Kingdom. This is the major attraction for US education. United States Education Foundation in India is promoting US education for Indian students. Students from developing countries find it very difficult to meet the increasing educational expenses in UK. Many UK universities are offering

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# Prospects

one year condensed postgraduate programmes including one-year MBA programmes.

Realising the increasing cost of UK education, many UK universities are seriously thinking of implementing more financial aid projects for Indian students. Dr. Alison Richard, Vice Chancellor of Cambridge University, in her recent visit to India revealed that since major American Universities are providing financial assistance to Students, Cambridge is seriously thinking of more financial aid schemes. Cambridge University is planning to implement more fund raising programmes so that more students can be given financial assistance to pursue education in UK.

Australia is emerging as one of the popular destinations for overseas students to pursue higher studies. Annually more than two lakh international students choose to study in Australian institutions. Australia, one of the largest islands in the world, has six states and two territories; New South Wales, Victoria, Queen's Land, Western

Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, Australian capital Territory and the Northern Territory. Cost of living and tuition fee in Australia is comparatively cheaper than in UK or USA. Overseas students can do part time work in Australia. Australian universities select students based on their performance in the qualifying examination.

#### Engineering and Management courses abroad

In the rapidly changing world, engineering courses are emerging as major areas of technological advancement recently. This trend is more pronounced in the global education scenario. United States, UK and Canada are the major choices for Indian students to pursue Engineering courses abroad. Being the four-year graduate programme, engineering students can directly apply for postgraduate programmes abroad. Nowadays more engineering graduates are interested to join for the management programmes in the business schools abroad.

While searching for engineering

courses abroad, identify a research topic, which is most suited to the students. Job opportunities after completing the study programme, chances of getting financial aid/funding etc. have to be assessed. Never depend on the promises of overseas education facilitating agencies alone.

Master of Business Administration (MBA) has acquired the status of one of the world's most popular postgraduate management programmes. Among international students in order to augment their business and marketing skills, this programme is getting more popularity nowadays. UK is the undisputed leader in MBA programme in Europe and the World leader in terms of innovation in MBA provision.

Why more students are interested in taking MBA from UK? The reason is simple. Duration of the course is only one year. More number of accredited schools. In USA duration of the course is nearly 18 months. So educational cost for MBA programme in UK is much cheaper than USA. UK institutions excel in reputation, best faculty and

# Abroad

specialisation.

MBA can be classic General MBA or a specialist qualification in the respective field. It can be completed either via full time or distance learning programme. General MBA include specialisation in marketing management, financial management, computer management and Human resource management. Some of the specialization programmes include Engineering management, Agri business, Retail management, Supply chain management, Automotive management, Sports management, Production management, Insurance management, Transport management, and Telecommunication management.

#### Pre-requisites for foreign education

While selecting a course, priority should be given to a course best suited to student's needs. It should take into account potential for higher studies and research.

Criteria for selection in foreign universities include Undergraduate institute last studied, Score in the qualifying examinations like GRE, TOEFL/IELTS, GMAT, etc, Overall grade point average-OGPA, Percentage, class/ rank, Work experience, Research aptitude, Skills in programming and project work, Statement of purpose, Letters of recommendation, Extracurricular activities, Communication skills, motivation, sincerity and leadership qualities and integrity.

Statement of purpose is one of the

essential components of application procedures for getting admission. It consists of student's personal details, professional interests, goals, factors related to the career path and future plans. It must reflect the confidence, motivation and determination of the student. Give more emphasis to your area of interest, aspirations and career goals.

Letters of recommendation is another important application component. Based on this, overseas universities will assess the credentials of the student. Letters of recommendation must be obtained from a resource person/ faculty members who can positively judge the student and his career plans.

#### Education abroad need one year planning

Preparation for overseas education needs strategic planning and evaluation. Then only easy access to foreign universities will materialise. Minimum one-year preparatory time is needed for fulfilling the envisaged goals. In European, American and Canadian universities, academic year will start from October onwards. Even though some of the universities admit students for the winter semester, during February, Indian students prefer to join during the pleasant spring season.

#### Calendar of activities

During September, the student has to decide the area in which he is interested to pursue the higher studies and collect information about the universities. Shortlist his choices. Register and apply

of relevant dead lines.

During November, after carefully reading the instructions, fill up the application form and send it via e-mail to the Professor of the concerned department. Application form must be complete in all aspects. It must be sent along with structured curriculum vitae and statement of purpose. Contact the universities for ensuring the receipt of the filled in application form during December. Collect details about the financial aids like Scholarships/ Fellowships, etc during January and the dead lines are mostly 31<sup>st</sup> January. During February follow up the application and reply promptly. Never send a reply without considering the envisaged objectives. Some times you will get admission during February itself.

From March to June ensure whether the qualifying examination scores have reached the universities of your choice. Patiently wait for the admission decision from the respective universities. You can contact the Indian students of your university of choice and try to apply for residence near the campus. Admission offer will reach you during June- July months. During that period you can arrange the needed documents for visa interview and travel plans. Complete the visa formalities including interview during August itself. During September you can leave the country for foreign education.

#### Green signal for foreign universities

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for qualifying examination and admission requirements like TOEFL/IELTS, GRE, GMAT, CGFNS, etc. Check the websites of the selected universities and download the application form during October. Collect detailed information including list

American universities are more interested to recruit Indian students for higher education. Study conducted by National Knowledge Commission revealed that among Indians aged 18-24 only 7 per cent enter a university. If it can be doubled, the potential is enormous. Regarding the increased cost of education abroad, US universities are interested to start campuses in India so that Indian students will get foreign





degree at lesser cost. Currently more than 1.6 lakh Indian students are studying and spending about four Billion US dollars abroad. Among international students in the USA, India and china are in the forefront. Instead of starting satellite campuses in India, American universities are more interested to join with the Indian educational institutions. Recently, as part of global educational initiative, Government of India has decided to permit foreign accredited educational institutions to start campuses in India. This will be really a boom for poor Indian meritorious students and researchers who cannot study abroad due to unaffordable expenses.

#### Emerging trends in job market

Impact of Globalisation and quantum jump in information and communication technologies (ICT) has paved the way for emerging prospective courses with immense job potential. Recent findings reveal that this trend is gradually replacing the traditional sector. Study conducted by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) revealed that information technology (IT), IT enabled sectors (ITeS), Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPO), Legal Process Outsourcing (LPO), Aviation, Hospitality, Retail, Entertainment and Brokerages are some of the prospective areas. Study on 'job opportunities in the emerging sectors', named as ASSOCHAM Business Barometer (ABB)

revealed that IT and ITeS would be the most potential areas in the years to come. The study predicted that by 2010 IT & ITeS and BPO sectors require 50 lakh and 23 lakh professionals respectively. KPO and LPO are emerging as the most lucrative areas with a predicted career potential of 2.5 lakh and 79000 each by 2010. Indian Aviation industry has recorded an annual growth rate of around 25 per cent. By 2010 Aviation and Retail sectors can create around one lakh and 20 lakh job opportunities respectively. The study assessed the potential in animation and entertainment sectors.

The ASSOCHAM study is an eye opener for the students and parents. Considering the importance of prospective areas, institutions have to start courses, which cater the need for potential work force in India. Nowadays more professionals are interested to study management courses from reputed business schools abroad. Retail management, transport management, agri-business, Hospitality

management, computer management, supply chain management, aviation management, logistics and production management are some of the specialization areas in business schools. Many students are interested to take MBA from UK than USA. In UK they can complete MBA programme in one year. Moreover they can do part time work during their study period. Communication skill and English proficiency are the main criteria for getting better positions in BPO sectors. Technocrats and professionals can work in the KPO sector. LPO is one of the lucrative areas for law graduates.

Recent study conducted by Mafoi, one of the leading HRD advisors in the country, revealed that during 2008, ten lakh new jobs would be created in the country. It will be in the areas of Hotel and Hospitality management, Health sector educational training and career consultancy. Their estimates revealed that

4.26 lakh jobs would be created in the hotel and hospitality sector in the country. 2.95 lakh and 1.66 lakh jobs will be created in the health and educational training and career consultancy respectively in the country. By 2011 around 40 international hotels will come up in the country.

KPMG studies revealed that KPO i.e., Knowledge process outsourcing in financial services is expected to be worth five billion US dollars by 2010. It may be due to the success in off shoring business operations. India is expected to remain a preferred location for KPO activity in future. Lack of talent pool,

requirement of high-level control, confidentiality and high-level control and enhanced risk management are some of the limitations in this sector. Process complexities, higher billing rates and skilled resource requirements differentiate KPO from BPO. ■

The writer is Asst. Director, Animal Husbandry Department, Govt of Kerala.

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# Overseas Education

## Financial Assistances

Dr M.G. Sreekumar

**A** resume carrying colourful degrees, a lucrative job, a vibrant and a glittering career are nowadays the common dreams of any forward looking ambitious student. It is a demonstrated fact that study abroad broadens the intellectual horizons and exposes the individual to

further deepening of one's knowledge and understanding on international, political and economic issues. Study abroad is indeed an enriching and eye-opening adventure, where learning is not just an academic exercise, but as well extends to the world beyond classroom walls. At a time when workplaces are changing in the wake of globalisation and

liberalisation, our students also need to compete in the global job market where businesses keep moving across national and international borders. What more, employers even within the country now look for candidates having international study and experience, languages and an ability to adapt to changes in the new

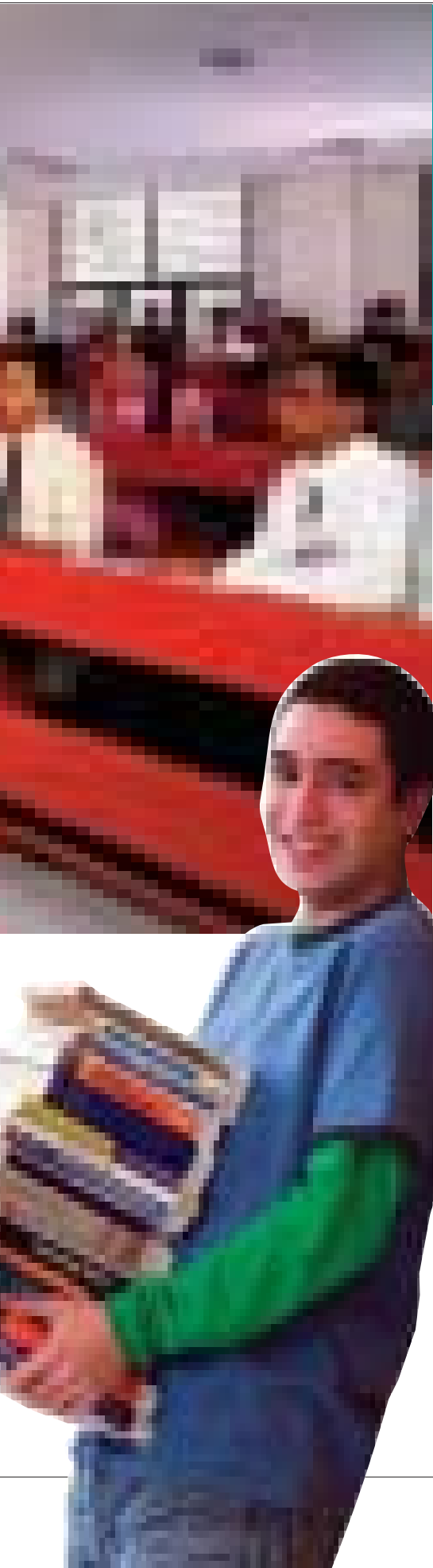


PHOTO COURTESY: SCMS, KOCHI

**Though there are numerous merits and benefits one can attribute to foreign education, it is a fact that only a few make it to success and even within this group, very few only really make the best use of the facilities and supports available.**

destinations and regret a lot about their lapses later. In this process, unfortunately many of our highly deserving candidates miss their ample opportunities.

We need to realise that studying abroad cannot be as easy as doing it in India where the government education is highly subsidised. Foreign education, in most cases, is prohibitively expensive and far beyond the reach of many of our students and parents. At the same time, for the most deserving candidate, this shall not pose much of a problem. What is of paramount importance is to identify the right destination, which includes the country as well as the university and then

## Useful websites

- <http://www.education.nic.in/scho.asp>
- <http://www.education.nic.in/studentloans.asp>
- <http://forum.education4india.com/archive/index.php/thread-8291.html>
- <http://forum.education4india.com/archive/index.php/thread-8299.html>
- GRE General Test - <http://www.gre.org/>
- GRE Subject Test - <http://www.gre.org/pbstest.html>
- GMAT - <http://www.gmac.com/>
- TOEFL - <http://www.toefl.org/>
- TSE - <http://www.toefl.org/tse/tseindx.html>
- LSAT (Law School Admission Test) - <http://www.lsatsat.org/>
- MCAT (Medical College Admission Test) - <http://www.aamc.org/>
- DAT (Dental Admission Test) - <http://www.ada.org/>
- PCAT (Pharmacy College Admission Test) - <http://www.aacp.org/>
- VCAT (Veterinary Aptitude Test) - <http://www.aavmc.org/>
- USMLE (United States Medical Licensing Examination) - <http://www.usmle.org/>
- CGFNS (Council for Graduate of Foreign Nursing Schools) - <http://www.cgfns.org/>
- CPA (Certified Public Account Accountant Examination) - <http://www.aicpa.org/>
- SAT Reasoning Test - <http://www.sat.org/>
- SAT Subject Tests - <http://www.sat.org/>
- <http://www.srikumar.com>
- <http://www.infozee.com>
- <http://www.uniguru.com>

cross-cultural working environments. Though there are numerous merits and benefits one can attribute to foreign education, it is a fact that only a few make it to success and even within this few, very few only really make the best use of the facilities and supports available. It is just ignorance or lack of awareness and proper guidance that lead to these situations. Most of them realise their mistakes only after reaching their

selecting the right course based on the candidate's strength, talent and interest. For this, one has to have a proper understanding of the domain of subjects and courses offered by the foreign universities in particular, and the country's education system in general. A meticulous landscaping of the plethora of educational opportunities abroad which can meet, suit and perfectly match the candidate's educational goals and

ambitions is really a mammoth task. Now the next thing is the proper knowledge on the funding opportunities and the right method of approaching it.

It is easily said than done when the selection of the university is from the staggering thousands of universities and institutions and picking up of the course is from a massive 600 listings with a wide range starting from music therapy to nanotechnologies. This is the case of USA alone and it could be even more challenging when one wants to select these from multiple countries simultaneously. Here again, a well-planned and executed strategy would yield excellent results.

### Being Qualified and Competent

The best strategy is to start the preparations quite early, if possible a couple of years ahead. One needs to set the goals first. Identify and approach the targets with pre-set deadlines. The process can then be started by step by step. Based on the country of choice, one should be aware of and meet the eligibility criteria for enrolment to undergraduate, graduate, post graduate, professional courses and to doctoral programmes. This is not a big deal these

days when the Internet and plenty of other resources available. Of course, awareness of Internet, basic computer skills and proficiency in English language are a must these days for any aspiring student.

### Financial Aid

Careful planning on the financial front is highly essential. It is even more crucial when the funding received is partial or even less. One should know in advance how much would be the financial commitments for tuition, hostel/housing and other living expenses, at least for the first couple of years. Tuition costs alone can range between US \$ 10,000 and 25,000, depending on the nature of university, whether private or state funded and the nature of the course selected. Cost of living could differ from place to place within the same country. Students are required to show proof of sufficient funds to cover at least the first year of their college education while applying for a student visa.

It is good and encouraged to get in touch with a professor / lecturer in the department one is planning to apply and establish a strong professional network in advance. Most of the faculty has excellent research grants and in most cases



## Scholarship Agencies in USA

Newcombe Foundation, 231-Nassu, Princeton, NJ-08540

Weiss Foundation, 745, Fifth Avenue, Room 116, New York-10151

World of Knowledge Foundation, 120, University Park # 150, Winter Park, Florida 32792, USA (For Indians & Americans).

Disney Foundation, 500-South Buena Street, Burbark, California-91521. (Arts & Science).

The Baruch Foundation, 274-Madison Avenue, New York-10019 (Forestry, Marine biology, Environment, Animal Husbandry).

American Nurses foundation, 10-Columbus circle, New York-NY19 (Nursing).

Hillman Foundation, 630-Fifth Avenue, New York-10111.

Kennedy Foundation, 75-Chestnut Ridge Road, Montavale, New Jersey-07645.

Avon Products Foundation, Nine West, 57th Street, New York-10019

Davies Charitable Trust, P.O. Box 45000, San Fransico-94145 (Performing art)

Anderson Foundation, P.O. Box. 6, Barrington, Illinisi-600 010 World of Knowledge Foundation, 120, University Park # 150, Winter Park, Florida 32792, USA ( For Indians & Americans)

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they could work wonders. The etiquette here is that one should check the messages/letters very carefully before shooting to them, that you are not upfront asking for financial aid before you make a strong case of study before the faculty. Also, these types of approaches are more successful for PG and Doctorate studies.

It is always good to get a full scholarship, which will cover most of the expenses, but in most cases it may not work out easily. It is easier to get university funding, at least partial, in the United States than in U.K., Canada, Australia or New Zealand. Most students in the US manage to get assistantship during the course of the first semester itself and with a tuition waiver in hand they can sail through smoothly. There are different types of aids available and they are:

**Tuition Waiver:** In this case, the student does not have

to pay the tuition fees at the university. However, general fees like the library, computers, health services etc. do apply. A tuition waiver is frequently awarded in conjunction with a scholarship or teaching/research assistantship.

**Scholarship / Fellowship:** This is a grant administered based on the student's scholastic performance. These are awarded to outstanding students only. A full scholarship would pay for a student's entire living expenses at that university, whereas a partial scholarship would require additional funds from the student.

**Assistantship :** Students with assistantship will receive a cash stipend sufficient for their living expenses, and/or tuition waiver. In lieu of this, they will work for a maximum of 20 hours per week. This work normally consists of teaching, research activities etc.

#### Bank Loans

Unlike the early days, banks are now very flexible in terms of loans and they offer numerous schemes at reasonable interest rates and with minimal collaterals.

State Bank of India, State Bank of Travancore, Bank of India, Andhra Bank, Syndicate Bank and Canara Bank and many other banks have educational loan schemes that extend from schooling to research. The amount differs according to the course. Banks give a loan for studying abroad which is as high as Rs 10 lakhs. The first condition is that admission should be confirmed. Secondly, loans are not given for correspondence courses. And thirdly, the past academic record of the loan seeker should also be satisfactory. Anyone who fulfils these conditions is eligible for an educational loan which covers course fees, hostel fees, cost of books, equipment

Before hand one should meet the basic requirements of the selection criteria exercised by universities and get qualified for financial aids. Chances of getting financial aid are quite bright if they have the following:

- Demonstrate evidence of high level of academic achievement/excellence;
- Score high in the standard subject aptitude tests as well as English proficiency tests/examinations such as (GRE – Graduate Record Examination, GMAT – Graduate Management Admission Test, TOEFL – Test of English as a Foreign Language, TSE – Test of Spoken English, IELTS – International



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and one way fare to the place of study. Repayment has to start six months after the completion of the course or if the borrower gets a job immediately after completing the course. The maximum time given for the repayment is 15 years counted from the date of the first disbursement.

English Language Testing System etc.);

- Show evidence of financial need and also provide private funding to cover some of the cost, if found essential;
- Sign up for Teaching Assistantship if offered;
- Sign up for Research Assistantship if offered;
- Obtain outstanding letter of recommendation and an impressive statement of purpose. (Statement of purpose is most important which will bring out the salient features and strengths of the student which are not normally reflected in the resume/ CV). ■

The writer is Visiting Professor, Faculty of Computer Science & Information Technology, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



All business schools assess the GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test) score of the candidate before giving admission to MBA programmes. It measures student's general, verbal, analytical, mathematical and problem solving skills.

# Prove your proficiency

Dr R. Radhika

Proficiency in English language is one of the major pre-requisites for overseas education. Different universities assess the English language proficiency of international applicants through various tests. These tests are considered mandatory by most of the foreign universities. Some of the major English language tests are as follows.

**TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)** This test is required for international students whose mother tongue is not English. So applicants are required to demonstrate their reading, writing and understanding of English by taking the TOEFL before they are considered for admission in most of the institutions worldwide. This multiple-choice format online test consists of four

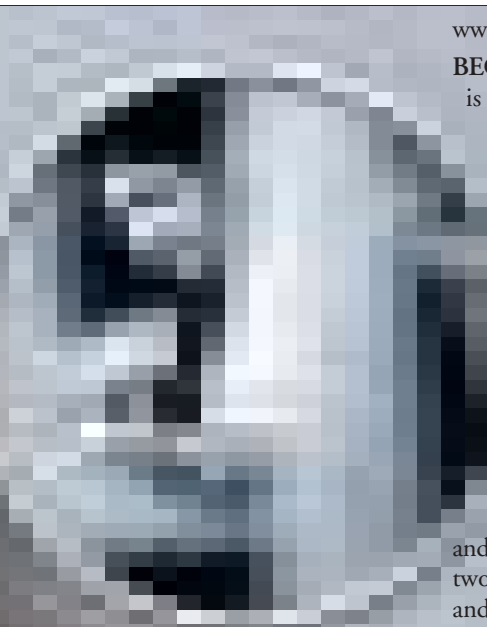
sections - listening, structure, reading and writing. TOEFL is considered mandatory by most of the U.S universities. Detailed information about the test can be had from the website [www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org) E-mail [toefl@ets.org](mailto:toefl@ets.org)

**IELTS (International English Language Testing System)** This test is widely recognised as an English language requirement test for higher education in United Kingdom, Australia, Austria, Canada, New Zealand and USA. IELTS tests ability to read, write, speak and listen

in academic or general training contexts. IELTS is managed and developed by University of Cambridge Local Examinations syndicate, British Council and IDP education Australia. The test includes listening, academic reading, general training reading, academic writing, general training writing and speaking. Minimum six band is required for admission. A total of 9,38,000 candidates appeared for IELTS examination during 2007. When compared to last three years, total number

of candidates appeared for IELTS has almost doubled during 2007. It can be due to new immigration policies, recognition of IELTS throughout the English speaking world and entrance requirements and criteria for admission. IELTS tests are conducted 48 times a year. Website: [www.ieltsindia.com](http://www.ieltsindia.com)

**TSE (Test of Spoken English)** The test of Spoken English is conducted to measure the ability of non-English speakers to communicate orally in English. Applicants at the graduate level who



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English. TWE can be written along with TOEFL as a half an hour essay test.

**ELICOS (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students)** Majority of international students entering Australia require additional instruction in English. Intensive courses are available in the campus.

**BULATS (Business Language Testing System)** It is a computer-based assessment offered by British Council that gives reliable information on employee's language ability. BULATS is an independent testing method linked only to internationally established levels of achievement and not to any language course or school. Candidates can be tested at any time, resulting in minimal disruption to work. Test is available in English, French, German and Spanish.

are seeking financial aid are required to complete TSE. It may be completed on the same day of writing TOEFL. It is conducted 12 times a year throughout the world. TSE has two divisions. TSE-A and TSE-B. TSE-A is required for teaching and research assistantship in US universities or departments. TSE-B is required for certification in professional or occupational field. Website: [www.toefl.org](http://www.toefl.org)

**TWE (Test of written English)** TWE assesses one's ability to write and express

[www.bulats.org](http://www.bulats.org)

**BEC (Business English Certificate)** This is designed to test English language ability in typical work situations that is offered by British Council. It has three exams; BEC Preliminary, BEC Vantage and BEC Higher. Website: [www.CambridgeESOL.org/BEC](http://www.CambridgeESOL.org/BEC)

### Tests for Graduate Studies

**GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)** GRE is required for students enrolling for a masters or doctoral programme in arts, science and engineering fields in the USA. It has two independent tests: GRE General and GRE Subject.

**GRE General:** US universities require this test as part of their entrance requirements. It is a computer-based test. It consists of verbal, quantitative and analytical writing tests.

**GRE Subject Test:** These tests are available in sixteen subjects viz. biochemistry, cell and molecular biology, biology, chemistry, computer science, economics, education, engineering, geology, history, english literature, mathematics, music, physics, political science, psychology and sociology. Website: [www.gre.org](http://www.gre.org)

**GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test)** It is a computer adaptive test mandatory for advanced study in business and management. All business schools assess the GMAT score of the candidate before giving admission to MBA programmes. It measures student's general, verbal, analytical, mathematical and problem solving skills. The quantitative sections of the test measure basic mathematical, analytical and problem solving skill of the student. GMAT consists of seven subdivisions, each containing multiple-choice questions. Total testing time is three hours and 30 minutes and held six days a week for three weeks every month. The score is valid for five years.

Website: [www.gmat.org](http://www.gmat.org). E-mail [apac@pearson.com](mailto:apac@pearson.com)

Students applying for graduate and postgraduate programmes in UK require IELTS and in USA require GRE and TOEFL with better score results. ■

Dr B. Vijayakumar

Information and communication technology has revolutionised the domain of education, knowledge and employment across the world. Today, knowledge is reckoned as a major factor input that can trigger the process of economic development by bringing home better prospects to stakeholders. While universities and institutions are designing innovative academic programmes that are more application oriented, companies are promoting research and development to sharpen their competitive edge. The results are translated to employees and freshers in the form of training. Imbibing the changes world over, there is a growing trend to travel outside in search of better, quality education as well as covetable jobs. This trend is more prominent in India, particularly in Kerala. A major component in this process is travel. Uninterrupted travel, whether within the country or abroad, is facilitated by authentic and adequate information.

While seeking opportunities for higher learning or employment, one should be equipped with a lot of information. Students are interested in the details regarding courses, credibility of the institute, fees, mode of payment, accommodation, training, facilities for earn while learning, placement opportunities within India as well as abroad. On the other hand, job seekers would like to know credibility of the company, pay and working conditions etc. Once we have decided for education / employment abroad, a basic understanding on travel formalities will save money, time and facilitate uninterrupted travel.

Passport, visa, airport tax, customs and currency are the major areas that need immediate attention of the traveller, besides one's own health. Possessing a valid passport is vital to international travel. It is an internationally accepted document that proves identity and citizenship of the holder. Besides ordinary passport, there are other types catering specific target groups. They include diplomatic or consular passport, official passport to government officials, alien passport issued to foreign residents of the issuing country, international Red Cross passport of UNESCO, children cards to minors, joint or family passport and temporary or emergency passport issued

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# Travelling Abroad

# Foreign Scholarships

- ▶ Egypt, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Netherland, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Spain, Turkey, Briton and U.S.A give scholarships to study in their countries. Contact: Deputy Education adviser, Ministry of Human resource development, Department of education, External scholarship division, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi-110001.
- ▶ British Chevening Scholarships: Oxford education/Cambridge education for Indian students. London School of economics and political science education post graduate studies. Stratchclied University scholarships for Science/Engg./Business. For more information, Contact: British Library, YMCA building, Trivandrum-695 001.
- ▶ Singapore Airlines scholarships: Those who passed 10th standard with more than 85% can learn +2 course in Singapore. Apply to SIA, Youth Scholarships, C/O Robinson road, P.O.Box-746, Singapore - 901 446.
- ▶ The Hindu-Hitachi Scholarships: B.Tech graduates can study six months in Japan. The Hindu-Hitachi training scheme, The Hindu, Chennai-600002
- ▶ J.N.Tata Scholarships: You can study in any Foreign country. Gift/Loan scholarships will be given.The Director, J.N.Tata Endowment, Bombay House, 24-Homi Mody Street, Mumbai-400 001.
- ▶ K.C Mahindra Scholarships: Up to Rs.85,000 will be given for P.G. Course in any Foreign University. Managing Trustee, K.C.Mahindra Education Trust, Cecil Court, 3rd Floor, Near Regal Cinema, Mahakavi Bhushan Marg, Mumbai-400 001.
- ▶ Eveready Scholarships: Scholarships for Engineering course in India. Eveready Welfare services, 2-Rainey Park, Calcutta-700019.
- ▶ Rhodes Scholarships: Oxford University is giving 7000 Pounds for P.G courses for 3 years. Age should be 19-25. Secretary, Rhodes Scholarships (Indian, C/O St. Stephen's College, Delhi-110007).
- ▶ Jawaharlal Nehru Scholarships: For Ph.D courses in India or in any Asian countries. Administrative officer, Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial fund, Teen Murti house, New Delhi-110011.
- ▶ Canadian Studies Fellowships: Usually this is given for the teachers of recognized colleges for higher studies of Canadian subjects. Apply to The Vice President (India Office), Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute, 5-B Vir Singh Marg, New Delhi-110 001.
- ▶ Dr.T.M.A Pai Fellowships: Research on different subjects can be done at Manipal academy of Higher Education. Monthly stipend and yearly grant will be available for 3 years. Dr.T.M.A Pai Fellowship Council, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Room .No.606,University Building, Manipal-576119.
- ▶ Fulbright fellowships: U.S Education foundation is giving this fellowship for Post doctoral research, professional fellowships, Travel only fellowships and many others on a wide range of disciplines. Details available at <http://www.fulbright-india.org>. Contact: USEFI Regional office, American Consulate Building, Anna Salai, Chennai-600006.
- ▶ ITC scholarship: Scholarships for foreign studies. Public Relations Dept, ITC Ltd., 37, Chowringee St., Calurtta-700 071.
- ▶ Rotary Foundation Scholarships: Scholarships to study in India or abroad. Scholarship Committee, Rotary Foundation, A-1/85, Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi-110017.

by the Government to its nationals. All passports normally will have a validity period. The validity period of Indian passport is ten years after which it has to be renewed. By submitting an application form to the authority concerned supported by proof of citizenship, identity photographs and fees, one can obtain a passport after verification.

Another inevitable document for international travel is VISA (Visitor Intention to Stay Abroad). This is an endorsement placed in a passport by a consular or other Government to indicate that the passport has been examined by such an official. The VISA shows the name and passport number, both of which must agree with the passport presented upon arrival. It will indicate dates of travel and cities of entry and exit made during the course of travel. Depending upon the purpose of travel, different types of visas are issued. They include transit visa, student visa, business visa, immigration visa, single entry visa, double entry visa and multiple entry visa.

Health certificate is another important document. There is a booklet published by World Health Organisation, where details of health certificates are given. Normally, vaccination is taken against contagious diseases.

However, depending on the purpose of travel and country visited, there may be slight changes in certain regulations. For example, in certain cases, duplicate copy of the visa is issued to the holder and original copy of the visa is kept at the destination airport and details will be mentioned in the travel ticket. While one travel with visiting visa, he needs to take return ticket also. Regarding the health status, the certificates can be obtained from the doctors listed by the immigration department.

If a traveller goes through a private airport, then he has to pay the user fee as stipulated. Every traveller is permitted to take a hand baggage with him and the quantity varies from class to class. The immigration section will check the documents of the traveller. As people travel for wide variety of purposes to different countries, minute details of each and every aspect of travel formalities are provided by travel agents. By providing latest information on travel, these agents contribute significantly to travel business. ■

The writer is Principal, Kerala Institute of Tourism and Travel Studies, Thycaud, Trivandrum - 14

# Touchi



'Finishing School'.

The problem of low level of soft skills – before the employment and after the employment – is not something special to IT industry alone. In other sectors too, similar experiences are there, but the employers in other sectors have not articulated their needs vehemently as the IT industry. We may expect Finishing schools for employment in other sectors in the days to come.

#### Anatomy of Soft Skills

Soft skill is a generic term that covers all other skills except academic and technical knowledge and skills imparted in our formal educational system. Skills associated with an individual's effective

# ng and polishing

Prof (Dr.) P.R. Poduval

**N**on availability of jobs for graduates in many professions has become a great concern in India, in spite of availability of trained manpower. The NASSCOM-McKinsey survey revealed that India will face a severe shortage of 5,00,000 knowledge workers by 2010 and there is an alarming indication of mismatch between academic performance and industry expectations. As per the observation of an expert in the employee selection process, only 30 per cent of the candidates for employment in this field are 'Employable'. Development of 'Employability skills', therefore, deserves high priority and special attention. Establishment of Finishing Schools is the answer to this immediate need. This observation on the low level of employability skills is primarily based on the interview and group discussion performance of the candidates. If the observation is on the low level of technical knowledge and skills of the candidates, the remedial strategy is not establishing finishing schools, but improvement of existing technical educational system and methodology of training and even starting of more technical institutions for avoiding possible shortage of manpower

in future. Advocacy for more and more finishing schools implies low level of soft skills rather than technical skills. Training in soft skills can be directly undertaken by the employing organisations for an exclusive training in soft skills without any reference to an employment, may not attract the employment seekers. In fact, many known IT companies are doing it by spending their time and efforts. But many others cannot afford extra resources for the purpose. A combination of technical training in some advanced areas along with training in soft skills before actual employment is perhaps the right strategy for the solution of the problem. This is the rationale for the establishment of independent Finishing Schools for the IT industries.

'Finishing' is not termination, but a terminal course for specific employment or profession. It also means a final polishing of the products out of an institution. Both technical skills and soft skills are implied in the concept

and efficient adjustment to the demands of his environment and skills associated with impression that he/she makes on other people are called soft skills. Based on the contexts, one may classify such skills as life skills, employability skills or corporate skills. Language fluency and communication, social manners and etiquette, assertiveness in interpersonal relations, leadership role skills in team management, decision making skills, compassion for fellow beings and a positive attitude towards significant objects, events and people, emotional poise, goal orientation and motivation for success in life etc. are the essential components of this generic term. All these skills may be categorised broadly into personal efficacy skills and impression management skills. Efficacy is the power or ability to produce the desired results with efficiency.

**Only 30 per cent of the candidates for employment are 'Employable'. Development of 'Employability skills', therefore, deserves high priority and special attention. Establishment of Finishing Schools is the answer to this immediate need.**

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Impression management is the art of influencing others for better self-acceptance, appreciation and even admiration from the onlookers. Communication including language fluency, social manners and etiquette, dress, body posture and gait and other related skills are external overt behaviour pattern whereas personal efficacy skills including intelligence, analytical skills, subject knowledge and technical skills are internal covert behaviour. The overt and covert behavioural skills are not mutually exclusive, for they act as complementary to provide a holistic picture of the person concerned. The first step in any training programme for soft skills development is confidence building and absence of it will affect in imparting language fluency and communication skills. A scheme of training with due care for all these skills in a logical sequence will produce the desired results. But the prevailing system of soft skills training without a sound base in psychology and educational processes is doing more harm than good. For some, it is more business than education.

### **Educational Entertainment**

Entertainment in education is a good thing, for it makes the learning process interesting. But, it may not make it useful, unless such entertainments are made with a purpose – directing the participants towards the goal of personal efficacy development and behavioural refinements. The purpose is not admiration and appreciation of the trainer for his competence, but a positive change or modification of the competence of the participants. It is not the enjoyment of the programme that matters, but the after-effect of such programmes. In other words, it is the effectiveness of such programmes, not the happy reaction of the participants that is to be underscored. Effectiveness can be assessed by a comparison of the state of affairs before and after the training.

### **Some issues for further discussion**

Project planning and implementation are to be based on sound premises, preferably based on empirical data based conclusions and

generalisations. Research is a pre-requisite for all plans and projects. Personal observations, wishful thinking and evaluations based on a few success stories and anecdotes are not sufficient to start new ventures. Establishing finishing schools is not an exception to this general warning signal. Questions on the prevalence of soft skills among various groups of people are relevant in this context. Is it true that regular full time college going students are better than the private registered degree students of the distance/correspondence/open-university mode? Is it true that the residential students are better in soft skills than the day scholars? Is it true that students who complete their education outside Kerala are better in soft skills than students who complete their higher education in Kerala? Is it true that there are significant differences among groups of students having different academic disciplines based on the course curriculum and opportunities for less or more social interactions? If the answers to all these questions are 'yes', then life experience is a major factor that contributes to the development of soft skills. People who are exposed to a variety of situations in life and who frequently interact with others and exchange ideas and thoughts and adjust well with diversities in culture are bound to enhance their soft skills than people who are always in a narrow field of experience.

What is the impact of narrow specialisations in academic pursuit and work specialisation on the holistic development of a person? The nature of work of knowledge workers by itself could be a limiting factor in the development of soft skills. Sociologists have coined occupational neurosis, professional deformity and similar words to describe the impact of work technology and organisational culture on the personality of the employees. If it is so, then more attention is to be paid to the personnel policies and programmes of an organisation for the holistic growth of its employees, rather than confining our efforts to individual training and development. These issues are very relevant to IT industries. ■

The writer is the Director, TKM Finishing School, Kochi



# Jobs become online

T.P.S

Advancement in information and communication technology and access to high speed Internet facilities have paved the way for emerging online jobs in Kerala also. There are different types of online jobs available through Internet. Outsourcing jobs are one of the major forms of online work. Certain companies recruit candidates for online jobs. Criteria for selection are based on proficiency in computer and English. Online jobs can be taken as a full time or part time work.

Housewives, retired persons and students can consider online jobs as one of the additional sources of income. Even it can be taken as a hobby for employees working in different areas. Major advantage of online jobs is that it can be done from home. So leisure time can effectively be utilised for online works. Online works help students to earn while they are studying.

Online jobs are related to publishing, blogging, consultancy, research, treatment, marketing, transcription works, business process outsourcing,

## Central Government Scholarships and Foreign scholarships

Advanced training in sports scholarships : Department of Youth affairs, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi-110001.

University teachers scholarship- study-cum-lecturers abroad: University Grants Commission, Bahadur Shah Sfar Marg, New Delhi- 110 002.

SAARC fellowship/Scholarship/ Masters degree in SAARC countries: University Grants Commission, Bahadur Shah Sfar Marg, New Delhi- 110 002.



# Earn while you learn

**Aga Khan Foundation:** This fellowship is available for development studies and courses not available in India. Forms are issued from January each year and completed forms must reach by 31st March of the year of award. For more details and application form, write to: Aga Khan Foundation, Sarojini House, 2nd floor, 6 Bhagwan Dass Road, New Delhi -110001.

**Inlaks Scholarships:** This fellowship is available for several disciplines. Applicants must be graduates, and 19-30 years old. Completed application forms must reach by 30th August for the following year.

For more details and application form, send a self addressed envelope to:

Inlaks Foundation, PO Box 2108, Delhi-110007.

**AT&T Leadership Awards (For U.S. only):** U.S. \$ 5,000 awards for the students from the Asia-Pacific region going to the U.S. for study in any discipline. Six of the 36 awards went to Indians in 1998. Applications must reach the programme's Malaysia office by 15th September. Decisions are announced by 31st December. For more details and application form, write to USEFI or email awards@attmail.com or fax at (886) 2-2715-7013 (attn: AT&T Leadership Award).

**Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarships:** The scholarship amount goes upto U.S. \$ 23,000 for studies in any subject and any country.

For any information, contact any Rotary Club office or write to:

The Scholarships Programme, Rotary Foundation, Rotary International, One Rotary Centre, 1560 Sherman Avenue, Evanston, Illinois, U.S.A.

legal process outsourcing, knowledge process outsourcing, ITES and other software applications. If you accept online job system, you have to complete the stipulated work in time.

## **Beware of Online jobs!**

While searching for online jobs, beware of many bogus companies

financial decisions, aspirants must be sure that they will not be cheated. At the same time, keep in mind that there are so many online companies doing pioneering works. Trustworthiness is more important.

## **Earn money through Blogs!**

Blogging is one of the online works.

**While searching for online jobs, beware of many bogus companies advertising through Internet just to collect the initial registration money. Before proceeding for online jobs, clearly assess the veracity of the organisation. There are so many online placement agencies cheating the unemployed youth.**

advertising through Internet just to collect the initial registration money. Before proceeding for online jobs, clearly assess the veracity of the organisation. There are so many online placement agencies cheating the unemployed youth. Never intimate your credit card number, bank account details etc. to them. Accountability of the organisation must be thoroughly verified before entering into online business. While taking any

According to blogger.com, 'Blog is easy-to-use mini website, where you can quickly post thoughts, interact with people and more all for free'. Through blogs, you can publish your thoughts and collect feedback from viewers. Thus you can become a writer, editor and publisher. You can make any number of blogs. Blogs can be made through three stages. First start an e-mail address with gmail account. Then name the title of

the blog. Finally select a suitable template and save the changes. Self-tutorials are available in the website [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com).

## **How to make money out of blogging?**

There are so many advertising companies in USA and UK interested to advertise their products through your blogs. You can associate with them by starting their account. [www.google.com/adsense](http://www.google.com/adsense), [www.adbrite.com](http://www.adbrite.com), [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) etc. are some of the advertising agencies. Open these sites and start account by signing in and submitting your details. They will approve your details within a couple of days. Then you can select the size of advertisement. As and when your account is verified you will get a java script. Copy and paste this just above body of your template and save changes. By this time, advertisement will appear on your blogs. If any body while reading your blog click and open the advertisement; you will get 0.01-0.2 US Dollars per hit. Based on the ad zone views, you will get regular income in the form of cheque. Amazon.com will give you income through marketing of their products. You can popularise your blogs through putting more advertisements at the post and also submitting your blogs to other blog submission centres. Navigating and marketing of blogs require time and patience. With one-month effort you can correct the tooting troubles and save money out of blogs. Moreover, you are required to regularly post articles in the blogs. ■

## **KERALA CALLING**

*Kerala Calling* proposes to include book reviews in its pages. Authors who wish to publish write ups on their books may kindly forward two copies of the book by courier to the

**Editor  
Kerala Calling  
Information and Public  
Relations Department  
First Floor, Secretariat Annex  
Thiruvananthapuram- 695 001**

Book review by eminent personalities will also be accepted.



for international students. The virtual advisor "Dany" from DAAD will also be of help for general questions.

Assist (Association of Universities in Germany) - <http://www.uni-assist.de/>

Higher education in Germany - <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/en/Aussenpolitik/Kulturpolitik/Wissenschaft/HochWissFor.html>

DAAD - <http://www.daad.de/deutschland/index.en.html>

Frequently Asked Questions - <http://www.mumbai.diplo.de/Vertretung/mumbai/>

## How to get Information on various courses?

Usually the embassies of the respective country offer on various courses. In some cases there are special cells to address such queries. Students are encouraged to visit the concerned embassy's official website in India for getting authentic information about study in the respective country. Below given is an indicative list of sources.

**USA:** The United States Educational Foundation in India (USEFI) is the most reliable source for educational counselling and advice in India. Headquartered in New Delhi, USEFI has several regional centres in the country. The southern centre is located at the US Consulate in Chennai. USEFI offers three primary services viz., i. Indo-U.S. fellowship support through the prestigious Fulbright Program and others, ii. the staging of academic dialogues in India and educational advising on U.S. higher education, and iii. on study of India for U.S. students, teachers and faculty. Visit <http://www.fulbright-india.org/Scripts/ForIndianNationalsOverview.aspx>.

**UK:** The British Council offers excellent educational advice and counselling to students and professionals who seek admission to British Universities. The closure of the British Library in Thiruvananthapuram is a set back in this area. Students can get services from their Chennai office and also online through their website. Details are available at <http://www.britishcouncil.org/india-scholarships-awarding-bodies-8.htm>.

**Canada:** Only limited financial assistance is available for international students. Some schools may offer scholarships based on academic merit. Details on scholarship and university funding are available at <http://www.infozee.com/canada/financial-aid.htm>.

**Germany:** Germany is gaining student attractions recently. Applying for admission at German universities has now become easy with the "assist", the association of over 85 universities and institutions in Germany, which offers assistance

[en/06/Studieren\\_\\_in\\_\\_Deutschland/seite\\_FAQ\\_higher\\_studies\\_ger.html](http://www.mumbai.diplo.de/Vertretung/mumbai/en/06/Studieren__in__Deutschland/seite_FAQ_higher_studies_ger.html)

**Australia:** Australia has a range of study and research awards available to candidates in the Asia Pacific region, including India, under the Australian Scholarships Programme. Details are available at [www.india.embassy.gov.au/ndli/study8.html](http://www.india.embassy.gov.au/ndli/study8.html) and [www.india.embassy.gov.au/ndli/scholarships.html](http://www.india.embassy.gov.au/ndli/scholarships.html)

**New Zealand:** Study in New Zealand has the double benefit of being in a developed country and pursue courses on cutting edge subjects with affordable tuition and housing. Universities have international offices to coordinate academic programmes and scholarships. For instance, in the University of Auckland, it is handled by the International Office, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland, New Zealand.

**France:** France is also becoming the student destination for PG as well as doctoral programmes. Details on the educational and scholarship opportunities are available at [http://www.france-in-india.org/en/article.php?id\\_article=1840](http://www.france-in-india.org/en/article.php?id_article=1840).

**Singapore:** Singapore is now quite familiar to Indian students for its excellent quality and standards of education. A number of universities there offer courses on almost all disciplines with a variety of scholarships and funding opportunities. Details are available at <http://www.uniguru.com/studyabroad/singapore.html>.



# Trust Loans

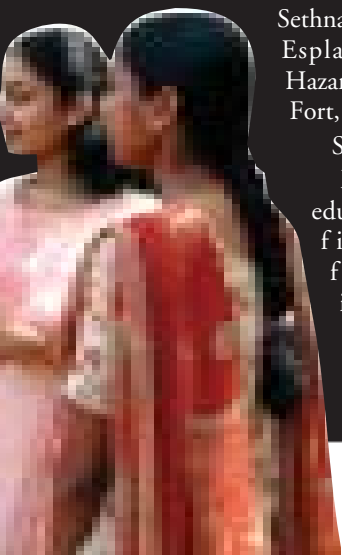
Loans from trusts have low rates of interest (two to four per cent) or are interest free. Some of the most well known trusts are listed below:

1. Birla. Education Trust, Pilani, Rajasthan.
2. Homi Bhabha foundation, C/o National Centre for Performing Arts, Nariman Point, Mumbai-400021.
3. J.N. Tata Endowment. Contact: The Director, J.N. Tata Endowment, Bombay House, 24 Homi Mody Street, Mumbai-400001.
4. Mafatlal Charity Trust, 27-Veer , Nariman Road, Mumbai-400001.
5. K.C. Mahindra Scholarship Trust, Cecil Court, III Floor, Next to Regal Cinema, Colaba, Mahakavi Bhushan Marg , Mumbai 400 001. TEL. # 91-22-2021031.
6. K.C. Mahindra Education Trust, Cecil Court, Mahakavi Bhushan Marg, Mumbai-400039.
7. Mariwala Charity Trust, C/o. The Managing Trustee, Mariwala Charity Trust, 409 Shah and Nahar Industrial Estate, Dr. E. Moses Road, Worli Naka, Mumbai-400018. Tel: (022) 4938307 Fax: (022) 4974704.
8. Prioj Shah Goderj Foundation, Godrej Bhavan, Waudly Road, Mumbai-400023.
9. The Secretary, Sahu Jain Trust, 4th Floor, Times House 7, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi.
10. Seth Purushothamdas Thakurdas Trust, Navsari Chambers, Thakudas marg, Mumbai-400001.
11. R.D. Sethna Scholarship Fund. C/o. The Chief Executive, R.D. Sethna Scholarship Fund, Esplanade House, 29 Hazarimal Somani Marg, Fort, Mumbai-400001.

See more Trusts at:

<http://educationmatch.com/financialaid/foundations/india.php3>

*Compiled by  
Dr M G Sreekumar*



## Rajendran Puthiyedath

**T**o plan one's education simply means to plan his life. From the experiences of well-reputed personalities we can see that there was a kind of planning and determination behind their success. Without knowing what is being studied and what to study in future, how can you plan your education? Hence understanding one's own capabilities and aptitudes is of paramount importance here.

Human beings are truly amazing creations. When a baby is born, it can do virtually nothing. Within the first one to two years of its life, it learns to talk, walk, listen, eat, learns what it likes, doesn't like, to form relationships, to love and much more. It does all this through its senses and its main teachers are parents. They love the child, they encourage it to try to do things by itself, they hold their hands behind it, waiting to catch it as it falls while trying to climb some stairs for the first time.

This baby has the intrinsic capacity to learn everything. What the parents should do is to understand their child's

tastes and preferences and do everything to nourish the good ones. The world around us is changing very fast. Suppose you are studying in 10th. You may be interested in electronics. You keep in your mind an electronics related career. After Plus Two you come to understand that there are a lot new subjects related to electronics, which were hitherto unknown to you. Then you will have to make a fine-tuning with the help of parents and teachers or others who are accustomed with this.

With help from all these corners you find that IT has demand and may select it. But be careful! IT is a field, which is subject to rapid changes. At present, while writing this, the IT scene is in a dim stage mainly due to the global economic recession.

To take an apt decision, the following points may be helpful.

Civil, Mechanical and Electronic Engineering are long standing. To substantiate, take the case of civil engineering. Can we imagine a period without construction works going on? Definitely not. Can we conceive of a stage without machines? Again not. Then what

about electronic engineering? It is the most essential one today, tomorrow and the day after. The blending of Mechanical and electronics engineering has paved the way for the birth of a new branch called Mechatronics.

Whether you study computer science or computer applications or IT, all these are part of electronics. So while deciding upon a subject, keep in mind that it is your performance not the name of the subject, which matters. The IT giants like Infosys, Wipro, Satyam etc. who regularly visit our campuses do not stick on IT people. They invite everybody including civil engineering students. But they are very particular that the person selected should have sound knowledge in English-both spoken and written.

So, whatever may be your field of study, try to have a good command over English language, right from school classes. The Government has started to reformulate the syllabi and tried to make the study of English simpler than past. Avoiding grammar from the classes and question papers is a part of this. Till three or four years back, we could not think of learning English without knowing active and passive voice, direct and indirect speech, tense forms, construction of the sentence etc. Now our school students are in a stage that they can at least communicate with others in English. They have no fear about committing mistakes. So far so good.

If you opt medical profession as your future, keep in mind that after plus two you will have to spend at least 10 years for becoming a practising doctor, having a super speciality tag of degree. Almost six years for MBBS, then three years for

**Students should develop an aptitude towards some subjects from 8<sup>th</sup> standard onwards. When they are in 10<sup>th</sup>, there should not be any doubt on the part of the student.**

**Plan  
your**



## To avoid the last minute confusions

Be determined. Whatever decisions you take, try to stick on it and be a master of it.

Maintain a positive outlook towards life and career.

Be honest to yourself and others.

PG and one year for super speciality course. In the earlier days, an MBBS would have been more than enough to be a "best" doctor. Today who will go to a doctor with only MBBS on his board? Moreover, even after taking a super speciality diploma, it will take time to be popular as a good doctor. While you spend minimum 10 years, your classmate may be earning lakhs after his four year B.Tech course.

Then what about legal studies? After plus two, you can join the five-year integrated LL.B, of course. Demand also is not bad. But as said about doctors,

lawyers too face the same situation. To be a leading lawyer, it will take minimum five to six years. If your family is financially sound, it's ok. Otherwise, it will be very difficult to earn something for your pocket after spending for food, daily expenses etc.

The universities in our state are far behind other states in introducing new subjects and revising the existing syllabus. Hence regular courses in these universities did not have any major change till now.

Another thing to be kept in mind is that never give over emphasis for approval or recognition of courses. You might be knowing that our nation is following a liberal economic policy, which was started some 12 years back. Now we cannot think of a going back. The entire world is a village now. State's role as an employer is becoming thin and thin. Private participation and private capital investment are dominating the scene.

For the private employer, this approval or recognition doesn't matter. They are more interested in the candidate's efficiency and subject knowledge, besides language command. You will be getting hi-fi salary, but you will have to work without rest. So understand the changing work

environment and culture. Whatever subject you study; try to be a master in it.

In our environment, from nursery to 10th standard, it is a regular flow. No question of optional selection and hence most parents are less worried during this period. Only selection of school makes the headache. But after 10th, they are confused over selection of groups for plus two i.e.; science group or humanities group or commerce group?

To avoid this headache, students should develop an aptitude towards some subjects from 8th standard onwards. When they are in 10th, there should not be any doubt on the part of the student. So also, the parents should monitor the talents of their wards during this crucial period and arrive at a conclusion at least by the time their child gets into 10th.

During my career as an educational journalist for more than two decades, I could meet a number of students and parents with utter confusion. It is a very pathetic situation. Even after passing the entrance examination with marks not bad, if a student has doubt about branch option, what can be done? ■

The writer is educational journalist and Asst Editor, Mathrubhumi, Kochi

# life



# Why not stay at home?

**Any student who is very keen on education abroad must eye one of the top 25 institutes. The next level of institutes may not have much acceptance either here or there.**

**Pramod P.Thevannoor**

**E**ducation abroad has been a dream of most of the students of our country from time immemorial. It is considered to be an avenue of migration to the advanced countries.


The advanced countries offer better pay packages, life style and other facilities. Over and above these, the acceptance back home as an NRI is another major factor. The outflow of the students is mainly to the US and the UK, followed by Australia.

The economy of our country has over the years improved quite a lot and we are on the road to becoming an economic

superpower. The opportunities in our country are tremendous and so are the salaries and benefits offered by the corporates.

The Indian economy is growing rapidly and India has become a power to reckon within the international arena. The quality of education imparted in the country has also improved tremendously.

Getting admitted to one of the IIMs or the IITs is considered more difficult than getting admitted to most institutions of higher learning in the developed countries. The opportunities in most of the advanced countries are dwindling, when the opportunities in our country are skyrocketing. In fact, the



salaries offered at the premier business schools in the country are considered better than the top business schools in the advanced world taking into fact the cost of living. Most of the other universities from these countries come to India to recruit students since international students pay a higher fee.

We have a large number of well qualified expatriate community from the Middle East returning India in search of greener pastures. The salary offered abroad when converted to Indian currency seems attractive but the cost of living is equally or more expensive. It is easy for the expatriates from the Middle East to come back, since no investment of a personal nature can be made there and all their investments are in India. It is not so in the case of most of the advanced countries.

Many students from India are coming back after their studies abroad. One of the main reasons is opportunities are better back home. In fact, in India some of the kids from the top schools earn as much or even more than their parents take home from abroad. The family and the near and dear ones is the next issue. The social networks that they use are almost non-existent in the US. It is the individual and the material that matters. Even when we travel abroad and mingle with the Indian community the areas of discussion generally revolve around visa status, mortgages and lack of

**Many students from India are coming back after their studies abroad. One of the main reasons is opportunities are better back home. In fact, in India some of the kids from the top schools earn as much or even more than their parents take home from abroad.**

facilities back in India etc. They are not even aware of what is happening back home.

The quality of life in our country is far superior to that of the western countries. In fact, an Australian woman who is the Chief Executive Officer of a BPO in Gurgaon opined that many of the expats enjoy the best in India, in terms of lifestyle, eating out, shopping etc. A chauffeur, domestic help, gardener etc. are ultra luxury in the advanced countries. Almost all the 500 villas at Palm Meadows in Bangalore are occupied by expats. When people from other countries are finding India a heaven, I wonder why people in India are vying with each other to go abroad. In fact DLF, a major construction company, is planning to bring in construction workers from China.

In the earlier days, when there was an uncle or aunty coming from abroad there used to be a long list for them. Almost all of it is available here now. Now they come with a long list of items they need from here. India has been identified as a major market by one and all marketers across the world. Take the case of cars. Almost all upmarket cars are already coming into our country. All new model launches are synchronised with the worldwide launches.

Any student who is very keen on education abroad must eye one of the top 25 institutes. The next level of institutes may not have much acceptance either here or there. In India, entry-level jobs are mostly filled up from campuses and hence an entry-level job for a student educated abroad may be a distant dream. If a student is planning to pursue an MS in a specialised area then he has to go abroad, since all specialisations are not available in the country. Students have to be very careful in choosing the colleges since bogus universities are many in the US. In fact, there is even a book titled 'Diploma Mills' which lists out the bogus colleges.

It is always advisable for a student to work a few years and come back to our country. The facilities are equally good in India. The society that made them what they are, the family and the friends they grew up with are here. ■

The writer is Director, SCMS Group of Educational Institutions, Cochin - 683 106

Dr M.Sarngadharan

The focus of Indian immigration has shifted in recent times from Indian technocrats and entrepreneurs to teachers who have joined the gallery of India's 'global citizens'. The dearth of educators in UK and US helps to create a growing global market for teachers. The demand is especially huge for specialty areas like Mathematics and Science, because it is

difficult to find teachers with strong subject knowledge and language skills. Experts predict that over the next ten years the International Education Industry will need 2.2 to 2.4 million teachers. That means there will be 15,00,000 to 25,00,000 openings for teachers in the elementary and secondary school level. The needs are also great in areas such as special education, mathematics, science, bilingual education and English as a second language.

Indian teaching professionals have a great opportunity in the US, in view of the projected shortage of 7,00,000 teaching instructors. And obviously, the advantage is that Indian teachers enjoy English speaking skills and a high standard of education. There is also a great demand for Indian teachers in the Gulf countries. The most attractive prospect job in the Gulf is that one can save a major part of his salary by enjoying tax-free income and free housing. In

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**Opportunities  
Numerous**



Britain, there are as many as 7,000 vacancies according to Government officials and the National Union of Teachers predicts the figure to go up to as many as 40,000. In addition, the salaries for teachers in UK are the biggest draw. Apart from teachers many other professions are closely connected with the Education Industry like counsellors, teacher assistants, librarians etc.

In the Middle-East nations and UK, schools prefer trained graduates. To apply for the posts of Physical Education teacher, Computer Science teacher and librarian, one should possess a professional degree in the concerned subject with some experience. However, for the posts of teachers in English, Mathematics, Science, Social studies and Hindi, a postgraduate degree will suffice. International Employers give preference to aspirants possessing strong language skills and preferably knowledge of another foreign language.

There are numerous career opportunities for qualified Indian Professionals interested in the field of law enforcement. There are over 20,000 law enforcement agencies in the United States alone, hiring about 1,00,000 new officers each year. Generally, starting pay ranges between \$ 2,000 and \$ 3,400 per month, depending upon the agency and location. Various career options available are Police Officers, Special Police Agencies, State police officers (highway patrol officers), Detectives, Drug Enforcement Administration Agents, Immigration Service Agents and Inspectors, Customs Inspectors, Secret Service Agents, Tax officers, Forensic Scientist and Criminologists, among other professions.

Before taking up a foreign job offer, you should collect reliable information about the firm that offers the job. Many a novice job seeker has made the mistake of being taken in by the tall claims made by the firms themselves and lived to regret. Visit the company web site by all means, but do not rely on it exclusively. Be wary of firms that require you to send money to them and who prefer advance



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payment. Never give your credit card number or bank account number until you are convinced about the authenticity of the company. Steer clear of a company that is unwilling to give you a written contract. No bonafide company can employ a foreign professional without the required permits and written contracts. Go over all the clauses in your contract with a fine toothcomb. Look for the small loopholes that may have escaped you initially.

To get an accurate estimate of the savings, you need to find out the comparative cost of living in your

country of work. Expatriate Indians already based in your intended city of work will be too happy to tell you whether it has a high or low cost of living. If there is not much difference between your living costs and your salary, then you cannot hope to save much money. However you may be willing to take that gamble, hoping for better stakes later. But go into it with your eyes wide open.

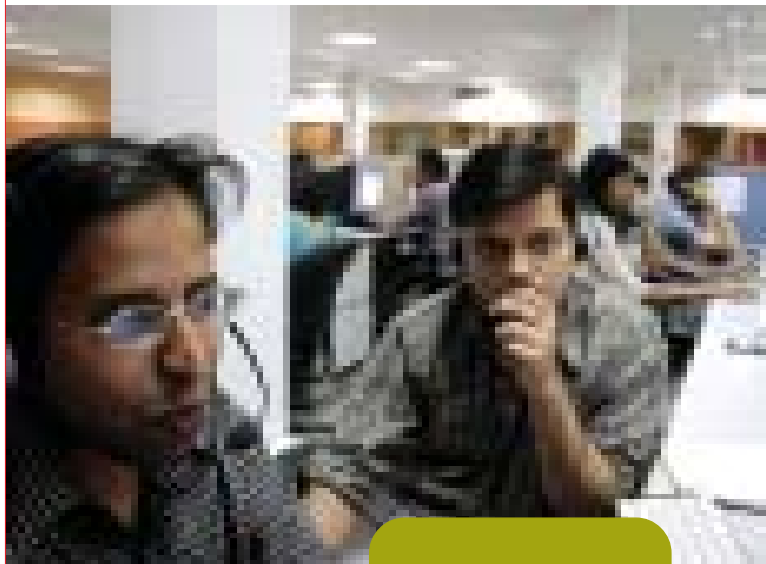
To work overseas, you require work permits. This is a legal document that recognises you as a foreigner who has

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## Opportunities numerous

permission to work in that particular country for a certain period of time. If you are caught without a work permit, you are liable to be put in jail as an illegal immigrant. Check in advance that the company is supplying you with a work permit. But double check from your travel agent or the Embassy of the country you plan to work in on the kinds of permits. Make sure that you have enough money to tide over the first month. Some organisations may also give you an initial sum to settle down but this may reach you only after the first couple of weeks. Check with a foreign exchange agency or the Embassy of the country you are travelling to about the most appropriate currency to take with you. The most common and widely accepted currency is the US dollar. This is the time to apply for those flashy international credit cards and ATM Cards that can be used overseas.



In spite of taking detailed precautions, you may still find yourself in a foreign country with no money, job or contacts. This is the time to seek the home away from home, i.e. the Indian Embassy or Consulate in that country. Diplomatic missions support their nationals who require urgent help. So remember to keep the address, e-mail ID, telephone and fax numbers of the Indian consulate. Indian Embassies abroad can issue emergency passports in case you lose your papers, provide assistance in case of accidents or illness, extend help if you get arrested, give warnings and vacate you in case of emergencies like a war and also provide the latest travel advice. ■

The writer is Professor and Head, Department of Commerce, University of Kerala

**Make sure that you have enough money to tide over the first month. Some organisations may also give you an initial sum to settle down but this may reach you only after the first couple of weeks.**



# Democracy becomes meaningful

## Fifteen Years of Panchayati Raj

M.A. Oommen

**A**pril this year marks the completion of 15 years of the new decentralised governance heralded by the 73rd/74th Constitutional Amendments. These amendments are significant because they bear tremendous potential to make democracy meaningful and truly

effective. The so-called liberal democracy be it the West Minister or American model lacks substance because it is party leader-based. Quite often it turns out to be a plutocracy with elections funded by big corporations or 'money bags'. The institutional reforms built into the 73rd/74th amendments to provide voice and choice to the traditionally weaker sections

of society and women are great attainments in the evolution of democracy in the contemporary world. The 73rd amendment needs special mention because it seeks to remedy or at least reduce the historical unfairness the rural people suffered by giving them various forums to voice their concerns, their dissent, their aspirations and so in

the various institutions created as part of Panchayati Raj. These institutions are not only accessible, but also accountable to the people. Relatively speaking, the record of achievements of Kerala is indeed respectable. This note tries to show some distinguishing features that make Kerala important compared to the rest of India.

The most significant aspect of Kerala's decentralisation process is that it abandoned gradualism and took to a 'big bang' approach. Devolution of functions, funds and functionaries in a single step is the best way to carry the process of decentralised democracy forward. The Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj has appreciated this initiative and has announced its readiness to support a big bang devolution in other states, by making available additional funds for building capacity and formal training.

The 'big bang' strategy was well exemplified in the People's Plan Campaign and the momentous decision of the Left Democratic Front Government in July 1996 to transfer 35-40 per cent of the State Plan outlay to the local governments as part of it. Although this percentage has not been followed in subsequent years, this has set in motion an irreversible process of devolution. In recent years, 15-20 per cent of the State's own tax revenue is transferred to the local governments. Although one can point out that Karnataka which has devolved more than 40 per cent of its tax revenue to the local governments stands above Kerala, it may be mentioned that this is not strictly correct for two important reasons. For one, Karnataka's transfer is a matter of adjustment of its innumerable state schemes at the district level. There is no autonomy in such budgetary adjustments as these schematic transfers are strictly tied by conditionalities. Secondly, only less than five per cent of the total transfers to the Panchayati Raj institutions go to the grama panchayats as against over 70 per cent in Kerala. Grama Panchayats at the cutting edge level are the basic building blocks of participatory democracy. In Kerala, grants are formula-based with focus on population, area and backwardness whereas in Karnataka every village panchayat is given an outright grant of

Rs five lakh. The much-touted Karnataka case does not tell a story of true democratic decentralisation.

Another great contribution and unique aspect of Kerala's decentralisation is in the realm of decentralised planning. As per Article 243 ZD, every state has to constitute a District Planning Committee (DPC) to consolidate the plans at the village, block and district levels with focus on spatial planning and environmental protection. Article 243 G mandates the panchayats to prepare and implement "Plans for economic development and social justice". Kerala, Karnataka and West Bengal are three states that have made DPC a functioning institution. But the only state in India that has initiated measures towards decentralised planning in any systematic manner is Kerala. Kerala has designed a multi-stage decentralised planning methodology and made it operational. This methodology which spans seven stages from the identification of felt needs at the grama sabha meeting to the technical scrutiny by a Technical Advisory Group of volunteer experts at the penultimate stage

Another outstanding contribution of Kerala is the initiative with regard to activity mapping and of late responsibility mapping. The 29 subjects enumerated in the Eleventh Schedule added to the Constitution following the 73rd Constitutional Amendment has no operative significance in a multi-tiered system, unless they are broken into activities and sub-activities and the task of each tier of the PRIs and that of the State clearly defined. It was Kerala's lead that encouraged the Union Panchayati Raj Ministry to launch a sort of 'campaign' for devolution and activity mapping through joint statements with 16 state governments and convening seven series of round tables of state level Panchayati Ministers during 2004-05.

Two other aspects may also be mentioned. One is the institutional devolution that has happened in the State. Critical institutions of public service like hospitals, schools, anganwadis, veterinary institutions, krishi bhavans etc. have been transferred to local governments. No other state in India has done this. Second, the state

**Kerala, Karnataka and West Bengal are three states that have made DPC a functioning institution. But the only state in India that has initiated measures towards decentralised planning in any systematic manner is Kerala. Kerala has designed a multi-stage decentralised planning methodology and made it operational.**

and final clearance by the DPC opens wide avenues of people's participation. The emphasis on women component plan (WCP) and of late, in watershed planning needs special mention. That the expert group on grassroot level planning (which was strongly recommended by the Planning Commission) has drawn heavily from Kerala's bottom up planning experiment and experience is indicative of State's important contribution towards decentralisation. In my view, Kerala's approach to participation and decentralisation is holistic and not fragmented at least in theory. This is something that the country as a whole can afford to lose sight of.

has ensured the autonomy of panchayats by reducing direct control over them (direct control exists in most states) and setting out independent institutions to oversee the functioning of panchayats. They include the institutions of Ombudsman, Appellate Tribunal and the State Development Council.

There are some unique aspects of Kerala's decentralised governance under the new dispensation. This does not mean that everything is neat and hunkey. Critical evaluation and readiness to correction is the key to the sustainability and strength of any democratic institution. This is more so in regard to local democracy. Kerala has this in abundant measure. ■

# Decentralisation Big Bang Approach

Prof. N. Ramakantan

**D**uring the last ten years Kerala has been successfully carrying out democratic decentralisation and has substantially transformed the functions of local governments in tune with the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts. The process of formulation and implementation of micro plans with community participation produced remarkable changes in the dynamics of local development and in the public management of local governments. The initiatives taken by the Government of Kerala for participatory planning at the local level enormously empowered the local community and the local political system. In democratic decentralisation,

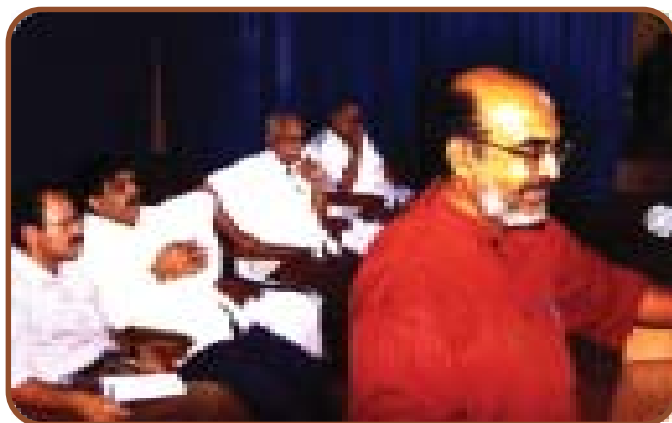
**The entire capacity building activities as part of democratic decentralisation during the Ninth Five Year Plan have been carried out by the State Planning Board and the Campaign Cell. Now KILA has been designated as the nodal institution for capacity building of local governments.**

capacity of different functionaries of local governments to exercise their rights and powers mandated by the Constitutional Acts and the State laws. In order to steer the democratic decentralisation process in the right direction, the Government of Kerala have decided to launch a mass movement called People's Planning Campaign and started massive capacity building efforts for empowering local governments.

The sustainability of democratic decentralisation and the process of institutionalising the spirit generated by it largely depend on building the capacity, continuous support and ownership of different functionaries of local governments. Therefore, the present capacity building strategy of decentralisation in Kerala has the following components; decentralised district level training for comprehensive coverage, continuous and concurrent training, help line support for doubt clearance and trouble shooting, publication of answers for Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), strengthening Associations of Local Governments for policy advocacy in favour of decentralisation and developing greater ownership.

### Approach of Capacity Building

The approaches followed in capacity building and empowerment for democratic decentralisation in Kerala are unique. The basic approach of capacity building for democratic decentralisation has not been restricted to developing mere competence among LSGI functionaries in local planning or local development. The capacity building exercise in Kerala as part of democratic decentralisation was, in fact, designed to



Kerala has adopted a 'Big Bang' approach and devolved massive financial resources to local governments to exercise the powers and responsibilities vested with them. Along with financial devolution, steps have been taken to build the

and Eleventh Five Year Plans, this responsibility has been transferred to Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA) and now KILA has been designated as the nodal institution for capacity building of local governments.

promote empowerment and social mobilisation of the people for social and economic transformation. It was realised that capacity building initiatives on a massive scale was essential for any people-centred development process. Therefore, the approach adopted in capacity building of democratic decentralisation is a long term investment in people and their organisations. It was also realised that building social capital and an enlightened citizenry would be useful for fostering the democratic decentralisation process at the local level and to build strong and effective institutions of local governments and promoting deliberative

in democratic decentralisation was therefore, focused to develop the required level of competency in formulating and implementing the local plans in a transparent and participatory manner. The task of formulating and implementing local plans was quite new to local governments. The entire efforts of capacity building as part of democratic decentralisation have been focused on developing competence for formulating and implementing local plans based on local choices and preferences and to support people-centred development process at the local level. Apart from the comprehensive nature of the local plans and the maximum autonomy given to LSGIs in their plan formulation, the micro-level planning methodology adopted in Kerala is distinguished from similar experiments in other states by the insistence of mass participation and transparency. The massive participation in the planning process is not limited to elected

for the training programmes organised as apart of the capacity building process of decentralisation in Kerala in terms of its scale i.e., the number of participants, extent of coverage and diversity of topics that were covered within a stipulated time frame. During the period of People's Planning Campaign, the training programmes coincided with different phases of the campaign and after formulation of local plans training programmes have been organised for developing competency in plan implementation.

Elected representatives and Ministerial staff of LSGIs, officers of transferred institutions, voluntary experts of different organisations, members of the expert committees, experts from different scientific and academic institutions are the target groups or participants of different training programmes during the Peoples' Planning Campaign.

#### **Institutionalising the Capacity Building Process**

After completing the task of formulating and implementing local plans and achieving the requisite competency in participatory planning, attempts have been made to institutionalise the capacity building process of decentralisation in Kerala. As part of the institutionalisation process, a project known as Capacity Development

of Decentralisation in Kerala ( CapDecK) was launched with the support of Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Most of the capacity building exercises carried out for decentralisation in the institutionalisation phase have been with the support of SDC.

#### **Training in Local Level Developmental Innovations**

The greatest achievement of democratic decentralisation in Kerala has been the emergence of a number of beacon local bodies that have made innovations in local development.

representatives, officials and voluntary organisations, but it includes the local community as such. The capacity building efforts covered all elected representatives, officials, experts and representatives of numerous mass organisations.

The training programmes designed and implemented by the Campaign Cell of the State Planning Board ensured massive coverage, wide variety of subject areas and issues and a modular structure with clearly defined objectives. The objectives of training varied with different phases of the campaign and the training design was developed so as to suit the requirement of different functionaries of local governments. There is no parallel

democracy. Deliberate attempts have been made to ensure the participation of mass organisations associated with local governments along with elected representatives and officials in the capacity building programmes organised as part of democratic decentralisation. They have also provided opportunities for transferring their learning into the local planning process and to create empowered, effective and accountable institutions of local democracy. Yet another approach of capacity building of decentralisation in Kerala is its focus on building the capacity of marginalised social groups like Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women and to reduce the gap with the rest of the society. Concerted efforts have been made to empower and bring to mainstream these groups through capacity building.

The distinctive feature of decentralisation experiment in Kerala is the central role allotted to develop capacity in participatory planning and empowerment of Local Governments. The capacity building strategy adopted

**The distinctive feature of decentralisation experiment in Kerala is the central role allotted to develop capacity in participatory planning and empowerment of Local Governments.**



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## Decentralisation: Big Bang Approach

These local bodies performed very well in peoples' participation, initiated innovative development projects, transparency of the system and procedures, local resource mobilisation and efficiency in implementation.

### Professionalisation of Local Governments

The establishment of a systematic approach in capacity development and training is the key factor to make decentralisation process sustainable and to transform local governments into more accountable, democratic, transparent and responsive. The Committee on Decentralisation of Powers, popularly known as the Sen Committee, in its report recommended that KILA would be designated as the lead institution for capacity building of local governments. In accordance with this recommendation the Government of Kerala designated KILA as the nodal institution for capacity building for local governments. In order to fulfil this task, KILA has been involved in designing and implementing a large number of training programmes with the objective of strengthening local governments and empowering community level organisations. To assist the local governments in strengthening the internal system in tune with the spirit of decentralisation is the focus of KILA in capacity development of local governments.

Professionalisation of capacity building and to develop a decentralised capacity building system to cater to the needs of local governments is the most important focus of the capacity building strategy of local governments in Kerala. The state training policy reiterates this capacity building strategy and KILA as the nodal institution is in the process of establishing a quality training system with a strong decentralised base and networking of district level partner institutions. This is not to say that the entire responsibility of capacity building is vested with district level institutions. KILA, as the nodal institution, has to play a lead role in the capacity building of local governments. The formulation of training policy and strategy for its execution would be the responsibility of

KILA.

### Capacity Building New Strategies

The capacity building of local governments needs a fresh approach, which would help them to move away from the traditional forms of training and development. A fresh look into the capacity building efforts of local government is needed in the light of the experience of the last ten years of democratic decentralisation process. This process should endow people with abilities to face the challenges of democratic decentralisation and to make local level democracy sustainable. The capacity building of local governments shall be designed and implemented on the basis of following principles:

- Training will have to be organised in sufficient quantity and quality within the stipulated time frame.
- Better coordination, integration and networking of training organisations within the State.
- Effective collaboration and policy dialogue between Associations of LSGI and training organisations.
- Greater ownership of the LSGIs and their Associations (Panchayat Associations and Municipal Chamber) in the capacity building process.
- Training supportive studies and research for policy advocacy and transforming local governments.

Useful and need based training design will have to be prepared in consultation with local government organisations and with all major stakeholders. Moreover, training will have to be organised in small groups with maximum learning effectiveness. The focus of training will have to be learner- centred and will have to adopt new methods of training delivery. Development of the capacity of training professionals, increased involvement of learners in their own learning process, development of a modular structure of training and a more focused approach to training evaluation should be the strategy of capacity building. ■

The writer is Director, Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA), Thrissur

Suresh Vellimangalam

Even before the decentralisation of planning and 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendments came into existence, endeavours had already been started in the direction of establishing the first village court in India - it was in Cheriyanad grama panchayat in Alappuzha.

It was none other than Mahatma Gandhi who exhorted in that the real power of India lies in her villages and the empowerment of India would be possible only by executing the policy of self-government (Grama Swaraj). A community fraternity gathered at Cheriyanad panchayat hall on January 30, 1988, the 40th death anniversary day of the Mahatma, elected a subcommittee to form the village court. The master brain behind this was V K Vasudevan the then panchayat president. (Still he is holding the post).

In the beginning, the panchayat president was the chairman of the village court. The vice-president and ward members are the members. Later it was developed and strengthened by including a retired superintendent of

police, who is also a legal expert, retired BDO, a college lecturer, a social worker and two standing committee members of the panchayat. The fact that more than 160 disputes were settled within two years was a striking proof of the ability of the leadership as well as the transparency in the functioning of the system. Thus, Cheriyanad became a glorious symbol of the concept of "court in to people" rather

than "people in to court". Disputes, which were supposed to be settled only through legal courts and those to be filed in courts, were successfully settled in village courts.

Cases which were pending in various courts for more than 25 years were settled through the mutual interaction of the parties in a healthy atmosphere. The practice of the village court was to reach



# Justice on the spot



**Cheriyanad is a litigation-free panchayat in Kerala. The committed employees and the sincere panchayat members who act beyond politics and the people in the area are the motivating factors behind the success.**



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from co-operation to oneness of opinion with the whole-hearted agreement of the clients, resulting in an amicable settlement. On receipt of a petition, the parties concerned would be formally summoned before the village court. The clients can make argument before the court. Those who had remained as rivals for long could sit together and express their problems, discuss the remedies and accept the verdict of the village court. No one is defeated here. No one is humiliated here. And here is no appeal.

The procedure of the village court is found very simple. Absence of formalities that have to be observed in a law court is the salient feature. Friendly approach of the panchayat president and members of the village court as well as the co-operation rendered by the people form its backbone. There is no threatening or punishment. The clients are made to confess wrong doings and accept the common verdict of the court whole-heartedly. This is implemented through mutual

**Cases which were pending in various courts for more than 25 years were settled through the mutual interaction of the parties in a healthy atmosphere. The practice of the village court was to reach from co-operation to oneness of opinion with the whole-hearted agreement of the clients, resulting in an amicable settlement.**

discussions. For this, the court patiently listens hours together to the petitioner and at the same time, spends time to hear the other side. The court members make the clients understand the virtues and vices as well as the just and unjust on their part and arrive at an amicable settlement through consensus.

The panchayath president says that of the total 602 petitions received so far, 570 have been solved. Common cases like border issues, financial matters, issues connected with pathways, family problems, disputes regarding distribution of ancestral land etc. are settled here. The court members are ready to make on the spot assessment, if the situation demands. A case remained unsettled in the court for 27 years was recently settled here in two hours. The court meets twice in a month on Saturdays from 9am to 3 pm.

Petitions received at the panchayat office will be recorded in the register by the clerk. The next step is to send notices to the clients concerned. If a client fails to attend the village court, he will be informed again. Only in one case, the client decided to keep himself away, despite repeated notices.

Cheriyanaad is a litigation-free panchayat in Kerala. The Panchayat President, V K Vasudevan strongly believes that the committed employees and the sincere panchayat members who act beyond politics and the people in the area are the motivating factors behind the success.

The president and his colleagues who effected a new revolution by uniting the people and lighting the lamp of virtue in their thoughts are, no doubt, the role model for the country.■

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Dr.M.V.Vishnu Namboodiri

Folk songs are imbued with the inner glow of folk life and folk culture. They are inextricably blended with all the facts of life.

They are generally handed down orally with no written form. They pass from mouth to mouth and from generation to generation. Consequently, they are subjected to vast changes as also to textual and attitudinal variability. Folk songs are the true mirror of social life.

Any language will have folk songs that breathe the local characteristics. Malayalam is rich with folk songs. Attempts have been made to collect and study these songs. Unfortunately, such wealth is fading away without being preserved. But in the past, scholars paid scant attention to folk-literature.

If we analyse the early development of Malayalam literature we can observe that it had three channels right from the beginning. They are *Pattu*, *Manipravalam*, the poetic composition and *Nadanpattu* (folksongs).

It is a difficult task to classify the folk songs of Malayalam into separate categories. Sometimes the same kind of songs belong to different categories. It is also natural for a song to have divergent functions. There are many reasons for the diversity of folk songs - religious backgrounds, ethnical tradition, the nature of presentation, narrative style, the revelatory mode, regional differences etc. Taking all those things under consideration, we can classify the folksongs of Malayalam into four categories as follows: i) Samudayikapattu

(Communal / racial song) ii) Anushtanapattu (Ritualistic song) iii) Vinodapattu ( Song for games and entertainments) and iv) Panipattu (Labour song).

#### Communal songs

Most of the folk songs of Malayalam have racial/ ethnical or communal tradition. Besides songs /music and art are the ancestral family vocation of many communities. The traditional songs of the Pana, Pulluva, Mannan, Pulaya, Vela, Kaniyan, Ganaka, Malaya, Vannan, Paniya, Paraya, Kammala, Kuruma, Kuraga, Cheruma, Atiyan, Theyyampati, Theeyadi, Karimpala, Brahmaniyamma, Akkamma, Mappila, Vettuva, Thiyya, Kuruppu, Koppala, Chakliya, Maniyani, Malaya, Christin, Kosava/ Kumbara, Mavila, Chetti (Wayanad), Kalanadi, Chaliya, Moovari, Mukkuva, Mukaya, Vala, Valluva etc. announce the communal traditions of folksongs of these people. This tradition is easily observed in the style of presentation of songs too. Similarly, the same song when sung by different folks / castes has different styles.

#### Ritualistic folk songs

Ritualistic folk songs in Malayalam are generally called *Anushtanapattu*. A major bulk of folk songs of Kerala are included in this category. Ritualistic rites, worship of various deities, the *pooja* of Gods, sorcery, exorcising the demon, offering for deities - in connection with pregnancy, religious performances - song sung for these purpose can be regarded as ritualistic in nature *Thottampattu*, *Bhagavathipattu*, *Bhadrakalipattu*, *Kannakipattu*, *Theyattupattu*, *Shasthampattu/Ayyappanpattu*, *Panapattu*, *Kalamezhuthupattu*, *Surpapattu*,

# Folk songs Songs of Myth and Reality



*Cheerumbapattu, Vettaykorumakanpattu, Daivatharpattu, Vyajathanpattu, Gandharvanpattu, Kendronpattu, Kalampattu, Kolambhullalpattu, Mundy-anpattu, Malavazhiyattapattu, Poorakkalipattu, Patayanippattu, Kannyarkalipattu, Mudiyettupattu, Kaliyoot-tupattu, Mudippurapattu, Marippattu, Kothamoorippattu, Kannerpattu* etc. are included in the genre of ritualistic folk songs.

#### Folk songs for games

Folk songs for games and entertainments in Malayalam are called 'Vinodapattu'. There are many folk songs in Malayalam, which are the exclusive property of games and entertainments. Games like *Kummattikali, Thalankali Parichakali, Chavittukali, Vattakali* etc. are not mere games. They have artistic excellence. There are songs for festivals, celebration and auspicious occasions.

#### Labour songs

*Panipattu* or *Thozhilpattu* are sung in full-throat to lessen the burden of the work and make it a sweet experience. Though some of them contain senseless sounds and words, they have an inescapable and haunting rhythm. *Thekkupattu, Chakrappattu, Kattappattu, Vallappattu, Vattippattu, Aravupattu, Vandippattu, Porippattu, Nattippattu, koythupattu, Njattupattu*

etc are different labour songs.

#### Songs in Different subjects

Whenever the ancient people thought of preserving any branch of knowledge for the futurity, they tried to transfer it in the form of songs. In that sense, they are repertoire of information about their culture, law, history, morality,

**All folk songs are not the products of the same age. Some are centuries old and a few others are quite new. Tamil shades are found in the folk songs of Palakkad and South Travancore. In Kasargode, the songs are influenced by Tulu. Thus, folk songs vary in accordance with region and race.**

philosophy etc. In Malayalam medicine, astrology, grammar and such other technical subjects were dealt with in folksongs.

Folksongs in general and folk-narrative songs in particular are highly

complex. That is the reason why they cannot be confined to the limits of a classification. Folksongs that are narrative in form and feature are folk narrative songs. According to literary historians of Kerala, there are two types of narrative songs namely, *Vadakkanpattu* and *Thekkanpattu*. At the same time there are certain other local heroic folksongs scattered in different parts of Kerala. Songs dealing with heroism of people like Athiyarupillai of Edappalli, an untouchable Edanadan, Veerappan of Arayan community and Chengannur Athi are prevalent. Among the Pulayas of North Malabar, heroic songs of 'Pulimarancha Thondachan, Vattiyanpolla and Thevar vellayan are seen. Among the Muslim community too, songs of love and daring activities of heroes are there. Some narrative songs in Malayalam deal with the stories in epics and legends of our country.

#### Literary and Cultural Values

Folk songs need not be deliberate compositions. Yet when we analyse Malayalam folk songs we cannot say that they don't have literary qualities. They are full of description, figures of speech, symbols and variegated sayings. The descriptions are natural, figures condensed with meaning, verbal pictures and the exposition of bhavas and rasas.

All folk songs are not the product of the same age. Some are centuries old and a few others are quite new. Tamil shades are found in the folk songs of Palakkad and South Travancore. In Kasargod, the songs are influenced by Tulu. Folksongs here differ according to regional and racial difference.

Folk songs always take up the social injustice and perversions of the then society. Examples are *Thottampattu, Thekkanpattu, Vadakkanpattu, Kothamoorippattu, Chimmanakkalippattu, Edanadanpattu, Aathippattu, Kanippattu, Maranpattu* and so on. In *Pottantheyyathottam* instances of ill - will against the caste system social discrimination. In Annapoornaswari Charitham we get a picture of the lords immersed in sexuality.

Folk songs have historical importance too. The incidents are completely historical and true. But it is a mixture of myth and reality. Even though the songs deal with real personalities, unreal and fantastic items will be blended in them. ■

# Tuber delicious

## Koorka



Dr T.E. George

**K**oorka (Botanical name: *Solenostemon rotundifolius*; English name: Coleus, Chinese potato) is fast attaining the status of a high value vegetable crop in Kerala. This vegetable is grown as a minor tuber crop in a few countries. The plant is a bushy annual herb with succulent stem and aromatic leaves which produces small dark brown tubers in clusters at the base and lower parts of the stem. These tubers have an aromatic flavour and delicious taste upon cooking and are used in a variety of traditional and novel culinary dishes. Low cost of cultivation, high production potential, consumer preference, good market demand and almost assured high returns make the crop highly popular among vegetable growers in Kerala as evidenced by the steady increase in its area over past few years. Regarding nutritive status of the



crop, the tuber contains 14.7 to 20.8 per cent starch, 0.04 to 0.31 per cent protein and 0.57 to 0.96 per cent sugar. Coleus is important from the medicinal perspective also, as the flavanoids present in the tuber are said to lower down the

blood cholesterol level.

Three high yielding varieties namely Nidhi, Suphala and Sree Dhara, all having a tuber yield of above 25t/ha, are available in coleus. While Nidhi and Suphala are released by Kerala Agricultural University, Sree Dhara is the contribution of Central Tuber Crops Research Institute, Thiruvananthapuram. Variety Suphala has the unique ability to produce tubers round the year.

Coleus comes up well in the warm humid climatic conditions and well-drained medium fertile soil. It is raised purely as a rain-fed crop in the State from June to December. The crop is photo-

**Koorka is a bushy annual herb with succulent stem and aromatic leaves and produces small dark brown tubers in clusters at the base and lower parts of the stem. These tubers have an aromatic flavour and delicious taste upon cooking and are used in a variety of traditional and novel culinary dishes.**

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sensitive and requires short day conditions for tuber development. The first step in coleus cultivation is preparation of nursery, which is usually done during May-June. A nursery area of 500m<sup>2</sup> is sufficient to produce cuttings for planting one hectare of main field. About 150 kg of farmyard manure has to be applied in the nursery area. Healthy seed tubers weighing around 15 gm have to be planted at a spacing of 15 cm on the raised nursery beds. About 170 to 200 kg of tubers will be required to raise the nursery. After 30 to 45 days, terminal vine cuttings of 10 – 15 cm length are taken for using as planting material. The main field is to be prepared well by ploughing, followed by formation of raised beds of 60 – 90 cm width. Vine cuttings are planted on the raised beds at a spacing of 30 cm x 15 cm. Planting of vine cuttings in a horizontal fashion at a depth of four to five cm, keeping the terminal portion above ground, ensures quick establishment and better tuber formation.

The fertilizer recommendation for this crop is 60 kg nitrogen, 60 kg phosphorus and 100 kg potash per hectare, apart from 10 tons of farm yard manure. Full quantity of farm yard manure, half doses of nitrogen and potash and full dose of phosphorus are to be applied as basal dose at the time of land preparation. Remaining nitrogen and potash have to be applied as top dressing 45 days after planting. Top dressing is to be followed by inter-culturing and earthing up of the soil at the base of the plant. One more earthing up 30 days after the first one will promote tuber proliferation. Harvesting is done when the vines dry up at four to six months after planting, by pulling out the plants and digging out the tubers.

The crop is relatively free from pests and diseases. However, at times, root knot nematode infection may cause damage to the plants and the tubers. This problem can be brought under check by deep ploughing the field immediately after harvest, destroying crop residues by burning, adopting crop rotation and using healthy nematode-free seed tubers for sowing in the nursery.■

The writer is Professor & Head, Department of Olericulture, College of Horticulture, Kerala Agricultural University

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# Gloxinias Gorgeous

Suresh Muthukulam

Gloxinia is a tropical, rhizomatous popular home plant which blooms freely, producing flowers in different hues – like blues and purples. It is known as the cousin of the noted garden plant ‘African violet’. Being tropical in nature, gloxinia prefers plenty of humidity and warmth. It likes evenly moist soil, but it can’t stand being water logged. The plant originated in Central America is also known as “Canterbury Bells”, the tubular or bell or funned shaped flowers bloom singly or in pairs on erect stems 2 to 4 ft. tall. The mint scented flowers are long lasting and showy.

Gloxinia needs bright, but no direct sunlight. Too little light creates laggy stems which have to be staked.

Gloxinia can be grown from seeds and leaf cuttings; but it would be more successful and convenient to plant tubers having a tiny group of buds or growing points. It can be grown both in the ground as well as containers. When in ground it prefers a light weight soil which is well drained. The simplest method of raising gloxinias is to obtain tubers and place them in a pot containing soil, sand and leaf manure in equal proportion. A mulch at the base of the plant will help to maintain soil moisture and studies have shown that mulched plants grow faster than non-mulched.

Gloxinia can be fed twice weekly with a general house plant fertilizer or bloom booster. The mixture can either be 18:18:18 or 19:19:19 which is made water soluble before applying the dosage being two gms per litre of water.

Pests and diseases are seldom a problem with gloxinias. Keep plants and growing area clean, pick off fading blossoms and dying leaves, wash leaves to free them of dust and pests. Do not crowd plants as this will give them less air and light. A common problem here is tuber rot. So do not let soil become water logged and avoid getting water on the foliage or atop the tubers.

The popular varieties are Emperor Frederick, Emperor William and Mont Blaue. Gloxinias with their showy bell shaped blooms are an added attraction to every home garden.



# Courtyard cuties

Dr. D. Shinekumar

In sharp contrast to the general notion that Geese are meant only for their meat, eggs and feathers these birds are excellent bio-weapon in keeping snakes at bay and fine scavengers in maintaining a clean courtyard.

In fact Geese are far less dependent on water rich area than other related birds.

The White fronted Goose which is more popular among Geese is migratory bird in the Arctic Area of Asia and Europe. Depending upon the nativity, size and pet appeal, Geese fall under nine groups viz. Lesser snow, White fronted, Bar Headed, Pink Footed, Red Breasted, Egyptian, Barnacle, Cape Barren and Ashy Headed.

The only one drawback of Geese is their loud cackling calls. They announce the arrival of strangers by this means. The white fronted Goose is also known as laughing Goose because of its jovial sounding calls.

Geese are agri-friendly pets generally do not prove difficult to keep or breed. It lays eight eggs in a clutch. Geese are proved as reliable parents but most likely to arise at the end of incubation period, once some chicks have hatched. The incubation period is about 28-34 days.

Duck diet, Grain, Greenstuff and waste from kitchen can be offered as foodstuffs. It is not difficult to rear young goose.

Geese invariably command high price. A pair of adult bird may cost upto Rs. 3000 - 6000 ranging their hue, plumage and bill pattern.





Madhu Eravankara

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*Thou art elevating a man to  
the peaks of glory in  
two-four days*

*Thou art bringing down one  
a street beggar.*

Thus sings the Krishna devotee Poonthanam in 'Jnanappana'. James Albert, the scriptwriter of 'Cycle' might have been truly influenced by these highly philosophical lines. This is what has exactly happened to Kausthubhan, the real protagonist of the story.

'Cycle' is centred on the story of youths. Roy and Sanju are intimate friends who hail from a poor background. A lover of Annie is live within Roy. And Meenakshi is trying to hook Sanju. Meenakshi is the daughter of the millionaire Kausthubhan, who had become rich overnight with the money he robbed during his days in Bombay as a taxi driver. Annie has a brother, Sunny, an engineering student trying hard to pull on with the only support of his sister. It so happens that in the New Year night, Sunny is locked up in the local police station and the Sub Inspector demands a huge sum for his unconditional release. Sanju and Roy are forced to rob Kaustubhan Financiers and escape with the money. Eventually the money reaches Annie's house, which is confiscated by the police when she acts as an informer.

The story of the film is told in between the opening and end sequences. The taxi driver Kaustubhan is very much present in both the sequences. The story is cyclic. It ends where it starts. This may be the reason to name the film 'Cycle'. Or is it because the heroes are always seen riding bicycle?

It is the trend in Malayalam cinema that stories are made for the stars. But 'Cycle' may be considered as an exception. We may notice that in this case story is made for the story. That is to say the preceding sequence is made deliberately for the succeeding one or vice versa. Look at these sequences. Mathews, Annie's father, discloses Kaustubhan about the sum he is carrying. This episode paves the way for the driver to rob him. Sunny encounters with a bike





# Story Cyclic

## The Cycle

accident that gives Annie an opportunity to take loan from Roy. The lock up incident leads to the great robbery by the 'kids'. In the end, the money reaches Annie's house so that police can confiscate it... In films, each incident should lead to the next one. But it should be evolved. Unfortunately, in 'Cycle' we feel that the juxtaposition is deliberate and each incident protrudes as if in joints. It is surprising to note that one can encounter all the situations in 'Cycle' in the Malayalam films of sixties and seventies.

In spite of the stale sequences, Cycle has a well-made script flowing incessantly, which helped the director Johny Antony to execute it meticulously. New faces are appearing on the screen. It is no surprise that Vinu Mohan who plays Sanju has kept the tradition of his great grandfather Kottarakkara Sreedharan Nair. Of course, as an actor, Vineeth has certain inhibitions, which he may have to overcome for his future assignments. Sandhya is superb while Bhama has nothing to do except asking for loans from Roy.

The film has a fabulous treatment with an undertone of humor and sentiments. It keeps track with the audience. Casting is excellent and the dialogues quite appropriate for the characters. The roles played by Saikumar, Sadique and Cochin Haneefa rightly

captures sarcastically the rotten political and law enforcement systems. Jagathy, as usual, is at the zenith of his performance. It seems that the twin hero-heroine concept is getting predominance in Malayalam films too, as is the case of Tamil and Hindi films. Exquisitely shot frames by Shaji gives a new visual dimension to 'Cycle'. The new comer Mejo Joseph has tuned the lyrics penned by Anil Panachooran. Can the Malayalam film industry afford to shoot every song sequence in foreign cities?

No doubt, 'Cycle' has many elements of popular appeal. Those who demand moral lessons have too many of them. But it spreads a message so damaging too. Whatever is the demand of the situation, robbery is not a means to earn money. See how skillfully they execute the same! It can definitely inspire the youth! Watch all robbery cases. There were films to inspire them all!



Dr. P. Sreekumar

Human beings are in continuous struggle against the ever-changing environmental conditions to maintain health and vigor round the clock throughout the year. We live in such a changing world with a continuous interaction between the internal system and external factors. When this interaction is in a proper way, the equilibrium is maintained and we call it as health. When this fails either due to deficiency or hostile environmental factors, the balance is disturbed and leads to ill health or diseases. To maintain the equilibrium in various climatic conditions, Rithucharyas or seasonal regimens are described in Ayurveda.

World Health Organisation defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing. Ayurveda gives a better definition to health. In a healthy person the Thridoshas (the functional unit of the body) should be in samavastha or equilibrium, Agni or digestive power, nourishment of all the seven Dhathus (structural unit of the body) and the excretion process should be normal. In addition to this, Athma (the soul), Indriyas (the senses) and Manas (the mind) should be pleasant.

#### Seasons in Ayurveda

In order to attain maximum benefits and reduce the ill effects of environmental changes, Ayurveda suggests seasonal regimens or Rithucharya. There are six seasons or Rithus mentioned in Ayurveda. They are Hemantha (early winter), Sisira (late winter), Vasantha (spring), Greeshma (summer), Varsha (rainy season) and Sarath (autumn). The entire year is divided in to Utharayana or northern solstice and Dakshinayana or southern solstice.

Utharayana also known as 'adana kala' in which the sun move towards north. It includes Sisira, Vasantha and Greeshma rithus. In this solstice, sun and air attain maximum strength. It takes all the moisture from the earth and makes it dry.

In Dakshinayana, sun move towards south. During this period, the sun is weak and moon is powerful. It brings about increased strength of human beings. Varsha, Sarath and Hemantha are the seasons included in southern solstice.

#### Greeshma rithu and health

The summer season extends from mid

Ayurvedic Way

# Foods to be taken during summer season

- Since the appetite is less, the intake of food should be minimum.
- The food we eat should be light and digestible.
- Avoid spicy, oily dishes and fried foods.
- Avoid salty, pungent and sour tastes or rasas.
- Prefer food having sweet taste, light, unctuous and cold properties.
- Take Laja powder mixed with sugar. Laja A type of flour mixture prepared from flour of fried raw rice.
- Always consume red rice along with curry prepared from Jangala mamsa (flesh of the animals which are habitant of tropical or desert region).
- Soup prepared with Jangala mamsa (fat content) should be reduced).
- Preferable drinks during summer:

**Rasala :** mixture of one part curd, half part milk, sugar and some amount of black pepper and cardamom.

**Raga khantava :** Syrup prepared out of fresh unripe mango.

**Panaka :** Seasonal fruits like jackfruit, mangoes etc. are cut in to pieces and mix with sugar, black pepper powder, dried ginger, cardamom and water. Ferment it for seven to 15 days.

April to mid June all over India.

But in Kerala, it starts from the beginning of April and continues till the first week of June. Strength of sun and air reduces the unctuous qualities of nature and human beings, which in turn increases the dryness. Vata dosha increases in the body and the equilibrium of doshas disturbed. Activities which increase the vatha dosha should be avoided, as also food that causes the same. E.g. food having excessive Katu (pungent), Thiktha (bitter) and Kashaya (astringent) rasa or taste etc. It is advisable to take Madhura (sweet) and Snigdha (unctuous) type food.

Cold water (not ice cold) scented with flower of patala (trumpet flower tree) and camphor is good during summer season. A special preparation of milk and sugar known as Sasankakirana is recommended for dinner. Milk, especially that of buffalo, with sugar should be taken at night as it has more fat content and is colder than cow's milk.

Diet should include plenty of fresh juicy seasonal fruits such as oranges, sweet lime, grapes, guavas, watermelon, papaya, jackfruit, mango etc. Mangoes and jackfruits available in plenty during the summer are rich sources of beta carotene, which is converted into vitamin A that can be stored in liver. This is sufficient to meet the body's vitamin A requirements

for at least six months.

However, they are heat inducing and high in calories. Consumption of large quantity of cold water, juices, buttermilk, lemon juice etc. is recommended.

It is better to avoid using alcohol in greeshma rithu. Those having a preference for alcohol should abstain from it during summer or have it in a more diluted form. Otherwise it will produce edema, weakness, excessive thirst, burning sensation or even fainting. Coriander drinks prepared by soaking one teaspoon full of coriander, cumin seeds and aniseeds powder in 200ml water for two hours is a fine preparation for summer. Squeeze it thoroughly and drink the sieved liquid. This drink is very helpful in reducing internal body heat and burning sensation. Tender coconut water is highly recommended during this season.

Having bath with cold water is one of the best ways to beat the heat.

Daytime should be spent in the

shades of tall trees or inside the houses cooled by fountains. Day time sleep is allowed in summer in bed prepared with petals of lotus.

It is better to wear thin and light clothes during this season of the year. At night, one should sleep on the terrace having good moon light. Apply paste of chandana or other cream having cooling effect on the body. Fanning with fans made of large wet lotus leaf is recommended. Spend time with friends or relatives singing chatting and playing.

Strenuous exercise and out door activities should be avoided when the heat is at its peak. It is better not to perform sex every day. Staying awake at night should be totally avoided.

Ayurveda gives a special food regimen and life style to maintain the equilibrium of doshas in summer season, which in turn helps to avoid dehydration and other ill effects.■

It is better to wear thin and light clothes during summer season. At night, one should sleep on the terrace having good moon light. Apply paste of chandana or other cream having cooling effect on the body.

The writer is Lecturer, Pankajakasthuri Ayurveda Medical College, Kattakada, Thiruvananthapuram

Roy P. Thomas

**E**ravikulam National Park is situated along the crest of the Western Ghats in High Ranges of Idukki District in Kerala. Spreads over an area of 97 square kilometers, it is an integral part of the forest stretching from the Anaimalais to the Palani Hills of Tamil Nadu. The National Park comprises of the shola-

approachable by vehicles up to 5th Mile. The stark beauty of the high mountains, the rolling grasslands and the possibility of watching the highly endangered Nilgiri tahr draws a large number of visitors to Rajamala.

A well scripted and a definite history marks how the Eravikulam National Park has come into existence. In 1877, the Poonjar chief sold a tract of land known as Kannan Devan Anchannattu Mala to

High Range Game Preservation Association was convened. In 1971, Eravikulam was handed over to the forest department of Government of Kerala under the KDH Resumption Act. In 1975, Eravikulam was declared as a sanctuary for the protection of Nilgiri Tahr. Subsequently, considering its ecological, faunal, floral, geomorphologic and zoological significance, Eravikulam was declared as a National Park in 1978.

The main body of the National Park is a high rolling plateau with a base elevation of about 2,000 metres. Most of the knolls and peaks rise 100-300 metres above it with some mountains reaching altitudes of over 2,500 metres. The highest peak is Anaimudi (2,695metres). The vast grasslands interspersed with sholas (patches of stunted evergreen forests) are the last remnants of the unique ecosystem that was once prevalent in the upper reaches of the Western Ghats. The Park is crisscrossed by perennial streams that originate in the sholas. Sholas (cholai) are deeply wooded valleys and grasslands are sweeping slopes. In the sholas, stunted forests huddle in gullies offering invitation to none. They stand behind thicket of bamboos, rhododendrons,

myrtles and laurels, maintaining their self-contained universe. Orchids and lichens live between smoldering leaves and dusky, humid, moss covered trunks. Only leaches sway their welcome from this wet darkness.

The pride of the grassland is the beautiful and mystical Neelakurinji (Strobilanthes). They are prevalent across the reaches of the Western Ghats. The

grassland ecosystem. Because of its close proximity to Munnar, a unique tourism destination in the region, Eravikulam National Park has got an important position on the tourism map of India. From a few hundreds during the end of 1980's, the number of visitors has gone up to over three lakhs in 2007. Rajamala, the tourism zone of the Park, is

J.D.Munroe, an officer of the Independent Kingdom of Travancore. This land later came to be known as Kannan Devan Concession Land in which the Kannan Devan Hills Produce Company Limited, a subsidiary of the British Finley was formed. In 1900, Nilgiri Wildlife Association was formed to monitor indiscriminate killing of the Tahr and other animals. In 1928, the



# The abode of Tahr

Nilgiris got her name from Neelakurinji. This shrub blooms at regular intervals of 12 years, painting the landscape with a soft lavender glow like it did to the literature of the Tamil Sangam, centuries ago. The last Neelakurinji 'outburst' was in 2006 and drew about 4.5 lakh visitors to the Park and next flowering is expected in 2018.

The park experiences a climate, which can be described as tropical montane. The park experiences very heavy rainfall also. It receives its major precipitation during the south-west monsoons (June-August). The average annual rainfall is about 3,000 mm. In winter, the temperature goes even below freezing point.

The introduction of the game fish, the rainbow trout, in these mountains dates back to 1906, when H.C.Wilson, a fisheries expert of the colonial days started trout culture on a scientific basis. After Independence, even as the European planters were apprehensive about the future, the work continued to thrive up to the present day, to the extent that these fish are now considered indigenous here. Trout spawn only once

a year during the cold months of November to January.

Eravikulam National Park harbours the largest surviving population of Nilgiri tahr (*Hemitragus hylocrius*). This endangered animal is endemic to the southern Western Ghats. Its nearest relative is the Himalayan tahrs. The fully-grown male, known as saddle back, is much bigger and darker than the female and has a silvery saddle like patch on its back. Mating takes place during monsoons and the birth season is January-February. The estimated population of tahr inside the park is about 700. Wild dog, leopard and tiger are the main predators. Apart from tahr, other little known animals such as Nilgiri Marten, Small Clawed Otter, Ruddy Mongoose and Dusky Stripped Squirrel are also found here. Elephants make seasonal visits. The people of these forests, the Muduvans, also speak of the Pohayan, an elusive cat, as big as the common leopard they say, with a smoky grey coat. He is pure mystery and does not match descriptions of any known animals.

About 120 species of birds have been

recorded which include endemics like Black and Orange Flycatcher, Nilgiri Pipit, Nilgiri Wood Pigeon, White Bellied Shortwing, Nilgiri Verditer Flycatcher and Kerala Laughing Thrush. Endemics confined to the shola-grassland ecosystem like the Red Disc Bushbrown and Palni Fourwing are among the 100 odd butterflies listed inside Park.

Day visits to Rajamala in the tourism zone are possible and normally the tahr can be viewed at close quarters. The "Story of the Park", an Interpretation Centre provides valuable insights about the ecosystem. An amenities centre run by the members of eco-development committee provides basic facilities. It is also possible to have a short walk from the Interpretation Centre along the road through the grasslands. An eco-shop sells different product, the benefit goes for the conservation of the National Park.

Entry of private vehicles inside the National Park is prohibited and the visitors have to avail the mini bus service provided here. The Park remains closed for about two months during the calving season that occurs between January and March.

The writer is Wild Life Warden, Munnar

Many Hindu Gods associated with music have simple folk instruments. Siva has the damaru or udukku; Vishnu, the conch and Krishna, the flute. Gods and Goddesses are seen playing veena and enjoying its music.

Parvathy Menon

A musical concert without Veena is something unnatural for us. The musical notes emanating from this stringed instrument is capable of entralling the audience. Veena, one of the oldest stringed musical instruments of India, reminds us of the primordial musical tradition from antiquity. Many stringed instruments have sprung from it. While they pushed veena to the margins in North Indian music, its pride position in Carnatic music in South India is still vibrant.

Sarangadeva, a great musical authority of ancient India, who lived at the court of the Yadava dynasty of Devagiri in the Deccan, says that veena can even liberate a person from worldly sins just by sight and touch. Similarly, Attur Krishna Pisharodi says that veena represents almost all the Gods and Goddesses. The main resonator kudam of veena is supposed to be the seat of the creator Lord Brahma. Dandi, the part that connects kudukkai and kudam is the seat of Siva. Nabhi, the navel of the veena is a hole in the centre of the

resonant chamber. Naabheerandhram is the seat of Saraswathi. Tanthri, the chord of a stringed instrument, is the seat of Uma. Kakubham is the main bridge on the kudam called kudirai (horse) is the seat of Vishnu. This vessel, made out of gourd, is covered with leather and kept under its neck to produce a deeper sound. Rekku, the metallic plate on the kudirai is the seat of Mahalakshmi. Meru, the carved metal plate over which the main strings of the veena move while coming of the peg box, is the seat of the moon. Mettu, the fret, is the seat of the sun. Dorakam, the seat of Adishesan, is a string for tightening the wires of a lute. The divine presence has thus made this musical instrument Sarvadeva Swarupini.

Many Hindu Gods associated with music have simple folk instruments. Siva has the damaru or udukku (a small hand drum); Vishnu, the conch and Krishna, the flute. In Hindu mythology, Gods and Goddesses are shown playing veena and enjoying its music.

Different types of string instruments can be identified in the Kailasanatha Temple at Kanchipuram, dedicated to Lord Siva. They depict him as master of both instrumental and vocal music and these instruments are believed to be the forerunners of the veena. When Siva plays the veena, he is called Veenadhara Dakshinamurti. Veenadhara means veena player, the Lord of music. As a teacher of

Contd. to page 49

# Strings Enthralling

Contd. from page 46

## Veena

music, Siva is shown as a four armed God, standing with the left leg placed on the head of apasmara and the right, resting on the ground. His two front hands are posed to hold a veena. His hands hold an axe and antelope. Veenadhara Dakshinamurti is usually shown holding a fretless veena with a single gourd, across his chest and shoulder.

The veena represents art and learning and is a symbol of Goddess Saraswathi. Saraswathi as the goddess of art, music and knowledge, is often depicted seated upon a swan or peacock, holding a veena across her lap. Tamburu, a stringed instrument with a single gourd, is usually held vertically nowadays as an accompaniment for musical concerts. Ancient literature and sculptures throw light on Saraswathi veena. It is made of bamboo sticks and two gourd resonators with bone frets fixed to note the swarasthanas.

Kachchapi means female tortoise. The tortoise shape of the resonant of Saraswathi veena earned it the name kachchapi veena. Narada, usually referred to as veenapanih, carries a veena in his hand.

The Saraswathi veena is the most important stringed instrument used in South Indian (Carnatic) music concerts in recent times. Rudra veena, the veena of the North Indian (Hindustani) music and the Vichitra veena are the other two types used in Indian classical music. The long-necked Vichitra veena is a fretless instrument. Being one of the most important instruments of Carnatic music today, it is rarely used in Hindustani music.

Ravana, Narada and God Hanuman are believed to be great veena players. Lankeswara Ravana, an accomplished veena player, is said to have made a veena using one of his heads and also his body nerves, in order to please Lord Siva. He played Samaganam for Lord Siva. His love for the instrument found it a place in his flag. This earned him the title Veenaikodiyon. Agastya Muni, a veena exponent competed with King Ravana, in playing the veena. ■

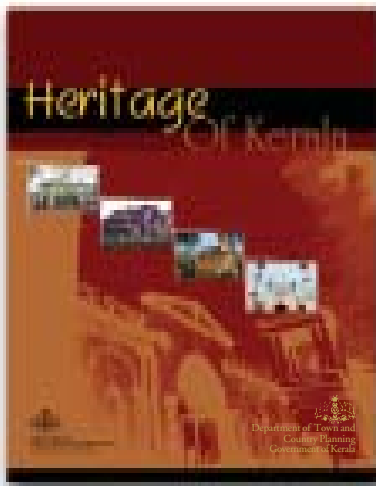
# Thiruvananthapuram *Calling*

G. Shankar

There is a strong cultural and historical rationale behind building conservation - architecture is a symbol of the past and a touchstone for future generations. Further, heritage has often been dubbed “the cultural capital” of a country. Nevertheless, a claim often made by some vested interests is that many heritage buildings in India are symbols of colonial power and do not deserve to be saved. History, however, has to be preserved in its entirety, not merely the more acceptable portions. The Auschwitz concentration camp, where an estimated 1.5 million people were gassed and tortured, is listed as a World Heritage site by UNESCO, for example.

Thiruvananthapuram may not have had the flamboyance of Edwin Lutyens' Delhi or imperial Bombay and Calcutta but its quiet charm was unmistakable. Apart from traditional architecture, Indo-Sarcenic, Colonial, Classical, Gothic, Romanesque and other styles can be seen in Thiruvananthapuram. Many early examples of the highly regarded Indo-Sarcenic style, which culminated in Lutyens' magnificent planned portion of Delhi, can be found in Thiruvananthapuram. A glorious example is the museum complex near Palayam.

Hidden by the ocean of hoardings and the chaos of the overflowing streets, the fascinating past of Thiruvananthapuram lives in its many buildings, public, institutional and private., The Town and Country Planning Department, Government of Kerala, tries to bring the forefront this living heritage of structures still in use. The enormous wealth of heritage buildings in Thiruvananthapuram is striking and 188 structures are documented in this book.



## *Heritage of Kerala*

pp: 204

Price: Rs 300

*Information and  
Public Relations  
Department,  
Government of Kerala*

The book has two main purposes - it is meant to serve as a guide for tourists interested in the city's architectural heritage and it also documents the city's living heritage buildings and the list could prove useful in conservation activities. The authors have meticulously documented and photographed buildings by locality. Both British constructions and indigenous structures, such as the city's temples and traditional residences, find a place.

The painstaking architectural and historical documentation of each building, although very brief, is impressive.

The book must be commended for its attempt to place heritage conservation in a wider perspective. Through beautiful photographs and short descriptions, a broad urban, historical and architectural context is introduced to the reader. The issues that are not addressed include the rationale behind heritage conservation, the history and loss of urban public spaces, the case for urban renewal in congested areas in Thiruvananthapuram.

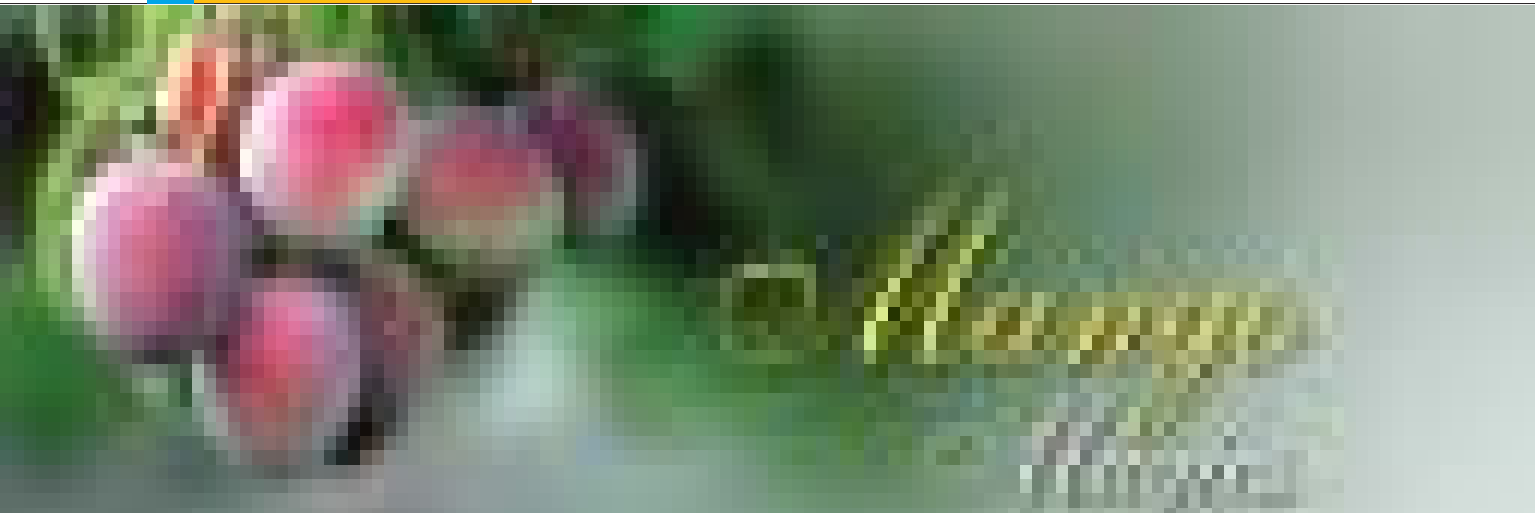
Since Independence, many of India's cities have been transformed significantly as a result of economic and population pressures. Over time cities have changed from concentrated and identifiable towns to sprawling urban areas. This growth has usually resulted in a poor quality of life for the average citizen. The pressure on land in urban areas has drastically increased its value and often a city's heritage buildings have been sacrificed for more financially lucrative enterprises which often have scant regard for local conditions and contexts, damaging the very quality of life they were intended to improve.

The modernisation and conservation are not competing aims and growth need not be sacrificed at the altar of conservation. Economic growth is vital to any country's future but growth without consideration for the quality of life of the average citizen is meaningless. The book points out that the lack of a well-rounded approach to town planning has compounded urban problems severely and it suggests that conservation can be a starting point for planning purposes.

There is an urgent need for a holistic approach to town planning where the old and new buildings can exist together. The noble effort of the Town and Country Planning Department needs to be lauded. ■

The writer is the Chairman, Habitat Technologies Group, Thiruvananthapuram





### Mango Chutney

Raw mango (small) - one  
 Small onion three nos.  
 Curry leaves two sprigs  
 Curry leaves two sprigs  
 Red chilli powder one table spoon  
 Crated coconut - 1 ½ cup  
 Salt to taste



#### Method

Cut mango into big pieces after removing its outer skin. Add the other ingredients to this and grind well. Make a ball out of this and serve as required.

### Kuttanadan Manga Curry

Raw mango two numbers  
 Salt to taste  
 Turmeric powder half table spoon  
 Curry leaves four sprigs  
 Coconut pieces one table spoon  
 oil one table spoon  
 To grind: crated coconut 1 ½ cup  
 Small onion 5 Nos  
 Coriander one table spoon  
 Red chilli powder one table spoon

#### Method

Select the mango which is not sour. Wash and cut the mango into two inch long pieces, having half-inch thickness, after removing its skin. Add coconut pieces, salt, turmeric powder and half cup water. Grind the ingredients written under to grind and add to the mango mixture. Cook this, spreading curry leaves on top. Mango pieces should not be over cooked. Pour oil and stir without mashing the mango pieces.

Indu Narayan

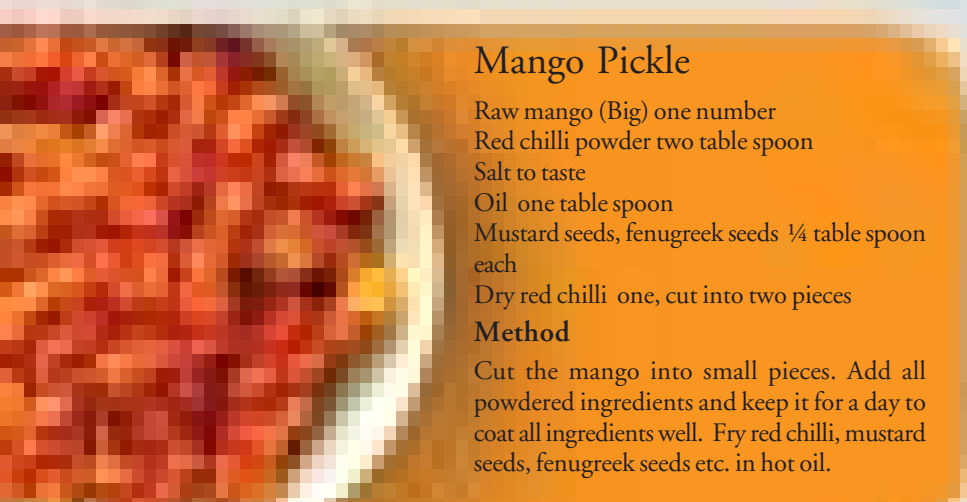
### Mambazha Pachadi

Ripen mango (Big) four numbers  
 Turmeric half table spoon  
 Salt to taste  
 Curd one cup  
 To grind:  
 Crated coconut one cup  
 Mustard seeds, fenugreek seeds- ¼ table spoon each  
 Oil one table spoon  
 Dry red chilli one number  
 Curry leaf one sprig



#### Method

Cut the ripen mango into eight pieces. Add turmeric, salt and enough water to cook. When it is cooked keep it aside. Add curd. Grind the ingredients coarsely, mentioned to grind. add to the mango-curd mixture. Fry the ingredients for frying in hot oil and when mustard seeds starts to splutter, pour the curry to this and when it starts to boil, off the gas. If the curry is sour, adjust it by adding one tablespoon of grated jaggery to the curry.



### Mango Pickle

Raw mango (Big) one number  
 Red chilli powder two table spoon  
 Salt to taste  
 Oil one table spoon  
 Mustard seeds, fenugreek seeds ¼ table spoon each  
 Dry red chilli one, cut into two pieces

#### Method

Cut the mango into small pieces. Add all powdered ingredients and keep it for a day to coat all ingredients well. Fry red chilli, mustard seeds, fenugreek seeds etc. in hot oil.



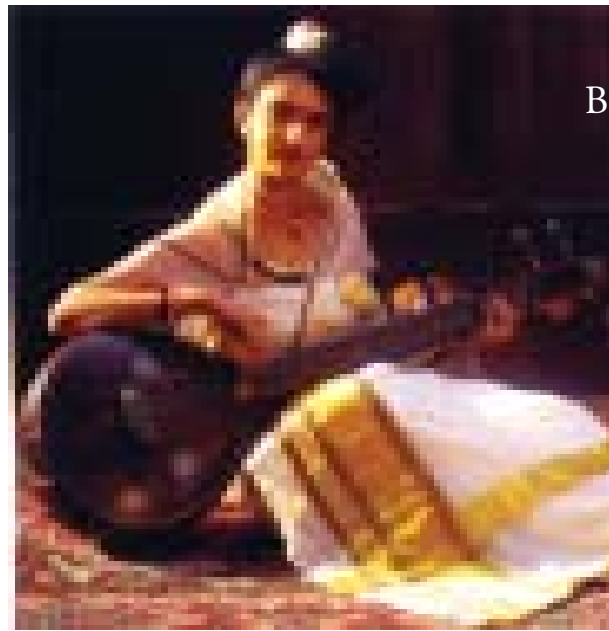
Best Second Film  
Ore Kadal



Nalu Pennungal



Paradesi



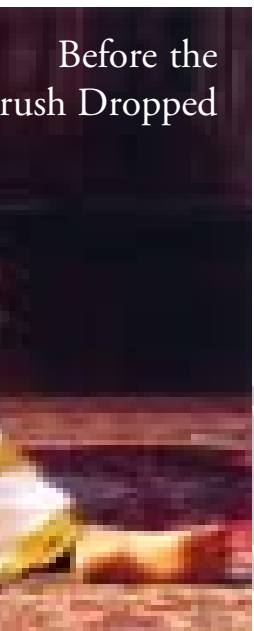
B



Best Feature Film  
Adayalangal



Thaniye



Before the  
rush Dropped

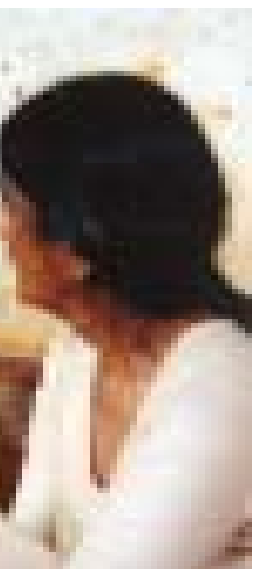
PHOTOFEATURE

Kerala State  
Film Awards  
2007

Scenes from the award  
winning films



Oridathoru Puzhayundu



Vinodayathra



## Financial assistance to farmers

V.S. Achuthanandan, Chief Minister, has distributed financial assistance to the farmers affected by unseasonal rain, at a function organised in Thrissur. A total amount of Rs 6.80 lakh was distributed to 103 farmers from various blocks in the district.

The Chief Minister said that the momentum of the State towards progress solely depended on agriculture. The Government are committed to help the farmers by providing them all assistance. The Government have decided to provide better amount than the procurement prize declared by the Centre. The Chief Minister handed over a cheque worth Rs 25 lakh to the collector for rebuilding the bunds which were demolished for rescuing the agricultural fields.

K.P. Rajendran, Minister for Revenue, R. Bindu, Mayor, Thrissur Corporation and MLAs attended the function.



G. Sudhakaran, Minister for Co-operation, inaugurating the total computerisation programme of Consumerfed at Thiruvananthapuram

## Kerala Police

**24x7**

The Kerala Police will be available 24 hours a day and seven days a week to the common man, thanks to the mobile connections supplied to the Police personnel across the State. All station house officers and other senior police officers will be provided with a mobile phone connection under this scheme. The people can contact them round the clock and seek assistance or provide clues that may be relevant to the Police.

The scheme named 'Kerala Police 24x7' has been inaugurated by Kodyeri Balakrishnan, Minister for Home, in Thiruvananthapuram. Apart from 433 station house officers, 190 circle inspectors, 50 sub divisional police officers, 17 Deputy Superintendents, Commissioners of Police, Superintendents of Police, four range Inspectors General, two zonal ADGPs and DGP will be getting mobile connections under this scheme. Deputy Superintendents working in Special Branch, Crime Detachment, District Crime Records Bureaus will also be getting this new facility. The mobile phone numbers will be made available to the public through media and websites. The connections have been provided by Vodafone Mobile Services. The scheme has been introduced with a view to improve the relationship of the police with the public, which ultimately helps to remove the apprehension of the common people about the police.

The function was attended by Raman Srivastava, DGP, Loknath Behra, Inspector General, K. Sanakara Narayanan, Chief Executive Officer, Vodafone Kerala, among others.



V.S. Achuthanandan, Chief Minister of Kerala inaugurating the integrated action plan for controlling epidemics at Thiruvananthapuram



K. Radhakrishnan, Speaker, Kerala Legislative Assembly, inaugurating the orientation camp for the media at Thiruvananthapuram. K.P Rajendran, Minister for Revenue and Jose baby, Deputy Speaker are also seen.

## Orientation Programme for Journalists

K. Radhakrishnan, Speaker, Kerala Legislative Assembly, has asked the media to abstain from sensational journalism which helps only in attracting public attention. Media should properly use the facilities available to them for informing the people about the business of the House. The speaker said that the media could play a vital role in bringing people's issues to the attention of the constitutional bodies. He was inaugurating a one-day orientation programme organised for the media in connection with the golden jubilee celebration of the State Legislature.

The Media should take pain to report news factually and honestly, said K.P Rajendran, Minister for Revenue, who attended the function. Jose Baby, Deputy Speaker, G. Karthikeyan, Deputy Leader of Opposition, P. Jayarajan MLA and N.K Jayakumar, Legislature Secretary have attended the function. Senior journalists like K.G Parameaswaran nair, C. Gouridasan Nair and John Mundakkayam participated.

## Rehabilitation Centre

Establishment of a rehabilitation centre is in the pipeline. The Government have taken initiatives to commence a rehabilitatin centre for the aged elephants at Kottoor, at the outskirts of Thiruvananthapuram.

The project with an estimated cost of Rs five crore on completion will accommodate 30 elephants in 50 Ha. This centre will get aid from both the State Government and Union Government and also from some non governmental organisations. The idea was mooted by a committee comprised of the Chief Wild Life Warden, Tourism Secretary and Director, Ecotourism.





## Transparency becomes the hallmark

**DC Suit** or Transparent Collectorate is no more a dream. Fulfilling the modernisation of administration programme, Malappuram District Collectorate has turned into a paperless office. As almost all documents in the district collectorate have been digitalised, a civilian may get any document within minutes. The documents include note file and current file of a particular file since its origin and upto the time the application is submitted. National

Informatics Centre has prepared this computer based file management system.

Making a distinct from the rest of the country, there are more than 300 akshaya kendras in all villages of Malappuram with the internet / intranet facilities. With this facility, people from every nook and corner of the district can verify and raise protest or submit petitions against the files endorsed or in progress at the collectorate through intranet. This is the first of its kind in India and is a

trendsetter too.

Intel Learn Programme, which gives training to children as well as elders based on 'Technology and Society' and 'Technology at Work', has reached its target in Malappuram. This programme has reached 26,000 learners already through akshaya centres.

You can avail the geographical details of Malappuram from Akshaya kendras using 'Bhoorekha' software which has 12 lakh land documents from 133 villages of Malappuram. It is estimated that 80 per cent of the details of the district land has thus been computerised. Public can see and take printouts of the land records using Akshaya Kendra facilities.

With the Smart Office Training Programme started in August 2007, the 38,000 government employees are being given computer training based on 40 hour long special educational programme. Training has also started for teachers, employees of local self government institutions, people's representatives, MDC bank employers etc.

Thus we have a district totally computerised to set before the world with pride.

**Hari**

