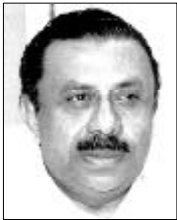


NRKs, families Grievances redressed

About a decade ago, NRKs, in general, were considered as an affluent group of people who live in luxurious socio-economic conditions. However, due to the wide ranging socio-economic changes in the regional, national and international scenario, this situation has been undergoing ups and downs from place to place during the course of time.



MM. Hassan
Minister of NORKA

NRK is a blanket term widely used to refer to those who have migrated to other parts of the world. They differ largely in their socio-economic, educational and professional backgrounds. Therefore, their needs, the problems they face etc., also vary considerably.

Until about a decade ago, NRKs, in general, were considered as an affluent group of people who live in luxurious socio-economic conditions. However, due to the wide ranging socio-economic changes in the regional, national and international scenario, this situation has been undergoing ups and downs from place to place during the course of time.

The Government are very much conscious about the magnitude of the problems that are faced by the NRKs living abroad, in other states and those returned to the State after 'pravasi life'. The above three categories have entirely different problems. Even within each of these categories the

problems faced are quite different and more often antagonistic. Therefore, while schemes and programmes are formulated for the development, welfare and generation of employment, these aspects are being considered.

A group of immensely rich people belonging to the above categories are worried about the investment of their earnings in the most productive and safe way. The headache of another category who are highly professional and well experienced in different sectors of Science, Technology/Management, but do not possess earnings, is to make use of their expertise in their own establishments. Yet another category, who have moderate savings and possess semi skilled/skilled category of technical know-how are prepared to invest in joint ventures to generate self employment. Finally, the working class, probably the largest category is poor in earnings and technical expertise. Among these, a substantial

number are terribly debt burdened, largely due to borrowing money at an exorbitantly high interest rate for obtaining employment -visa and air ticket for their job abroad but failed to make a foot hold abroad or elsewhere.

What the State could do for them? The State Government consider the NRK and their wealth coupled with the vast array of natural resources as the most valuable infrastructure for the large scale generation of employment through integrated development of Agriculture, Industry, Tourism, Health care etc. in the State.

In the meanwhile Government are taking steps to identify potential sources of funding and technical expertise locally, nationally and internationally. The Norka and Roots prioritised the rehabilitation of the NRK returnees for which multifaceted programmes are on the anvil. It includes gathering of fund from potential sources, either as grant in aid or soft loan for generation of employment for the below poverty category of semi skilled/unskilled persons and marginal income category of semi-skilled/skilled groups of people. Another group of professionally competent but economically weak category need financial support to create means of livelihood. To fulfill the needs of all the above categories of 'pravasi returnees,' intensive efforts are being made for the preparation of projects for obtaining funds from various sources. Efforts are also being made to avail of the defunct/idle units of Industry, Agriculture etc. to 'pravasi returnees' for generation of employment through their revitalisation.

In order to promote the performance of youths from Kerala who attend interviews and written tests for employment abroad, short-term training courses are being introduced in potential sectors like nursing, computer application etc.

Measures for the redressal of grievances

Majority of the representations

received from NRKs and their families are concerned with encroachment on NRKs' immovable properties, destruction of boundary walls, unauthorised construction of motorable roads through their lands, and fabrication of bogus documents on NRKs' properties without their consent.

concerned offices from my office and they are repeatedly contacted for speedy and effective solution. Representations of routine nature are sent to Dept. of NORKA/ROOTS.

**Services of NORKA through
Indian Embassies/
Consulates abroad**

(1) Visa cheating has become a

wide spread social menace during recent years. Unemployed youths of the weaker section including women had become prey to this in many ways.

Thousands of NRKs alleged to be victims of visa cheating are imprisoned or compelled to work as slaves in labour camps in many countries. Various measures have been taken to check exploitation of youths through visa cheating. This includes confirmation on the genuineness of employment visa issued by sponsors abroad. This is done through the



Cheating in money deal by way of bogus documents is the next widely prevalent types of representations received.

Discriminatory treatment of NRKs by Government Institutions, Local Self Govts., Electricity Board, Water Authority, Department of Telecommunication etc. has been widely criticised and a lot of representations and petitions are received on specific issues for early and effective redressal from the concerned institutions.

Vast majority of the representations received are related to getting assistance from local police and revenue authorities. Representations/petitions of importance and emergency nature are sent directly to the

consulates of India in the concerned countries.

(2) Another humanitarian service rendered by NORKA through the concerned Indian Embassies is the assistance given for the release of innocent NRKs from imprisonment/labour camps. A majority are reported to be innocent but imprisoned by fabricated cases charged by selfish sponsors to escape from the obligation of payment of arrear salaries and other service benefits.

(3) Assistance is also given to get service benefits of those who returned to the motherland and to the heirs of those who died in accidents abroad.

(4) Actively engaged in co-ordinating rescue/relief activities at times when NRKs meet with accidents/

natural calamities. NRKs have widely appreciated the services rendered by NORKA during World Trade Centre incident, Iraq War, earthquake in Gujarat and a number accidents occurred elsewhere in the Gulf sector.

(5) Whenever reports of missing of NRKs from abroad are obtained of the same are brought to the notice of the concerned Indian Embassies and through frequent follow up actions some of them were able to reach home back.

(6) On receiving representations on dispute between NRKs and their sponsors or anybody else, the same are brought to the notice of India Embassies for amicable settlements.

(7) Co-ordination activities done with NRKs meet with accident/death for getting better medical treatment abroad/in India, transport of body to the native place of the deceased, are carried out promptly and regularly.

**Services extended with co-
operation of Passport Offices**

On different occasions different issues arise relating to passport. Under crucial situations when persons may lose job abroad for want of valid passport and the same is brought to the notice of the respective passport offices. In most cases, a lenient and sympathetic approach is made to ensure that no body loses job abroad for want of a passport.

**Services related to KSEB and
Telecommunication**

On receiving representations from NRKs/NRKs families, on undue delay in getting new electric connections, exorbitant bills, drawing of electric lines over private land without consent of the owners, failure in replacing meters and realizing unjustifiably high charges, negligence in replacing damaged electric posts, installation of electric posts blocking mobility of vehicles to dwelling places etc., the same are brought to notice of the concerned offices. In such cases the grievances of the petitioners are redressed with the co-operation of KSEB.

Representations relating to telecommunication are more or less similar to those of Electricity and are redressed in the same way. An issue confined to some of the NRK families is blackmailing by rival families/anti-social elements. In these cases the telecom authorities are directed to take necessary action.

Issues related to air travel

Complaints relating to air travel are a common issue of the NRKs. For example, direct flights connecting different airports of Kerala and Gulf regions are a long cherished desire of the NRKs. Realising the gravity of this problem, especially of the Gulf sector, efforts have been made either to solve the problems or to minimise the burdens to the extent possible. By repeated representations and meetings with the Prime Minister and Civil Aviation Minister, a number of additional services could be introduced. Another burning problem is the realising of comparatively high flight charges for the regular flights and exorbitantly high charge during rush seasons. Through regular efforts coupled with reduction of state tax on aviation fuel, flight charges could be reduced substantially. Enhancement of flight charge during peak seasons that had been practised for several years also was brought down substantially. As a relief to the low-income group, efforts are being taken to introduce passenger shipping service in Kerala - Gulf region. Global tenders have been invited and offers received are being processed. Cancellation of flights at the eleventh hour of departure was frequent in the past. This has caused untold miseries to the NRKs. Government have taken up the issue and brought the matter to the notice of the concerned authorities. Now instances of last minute flight cancellation are rare.

Sincere efforts are being made to see that each and every one of the NRK community feels secure.

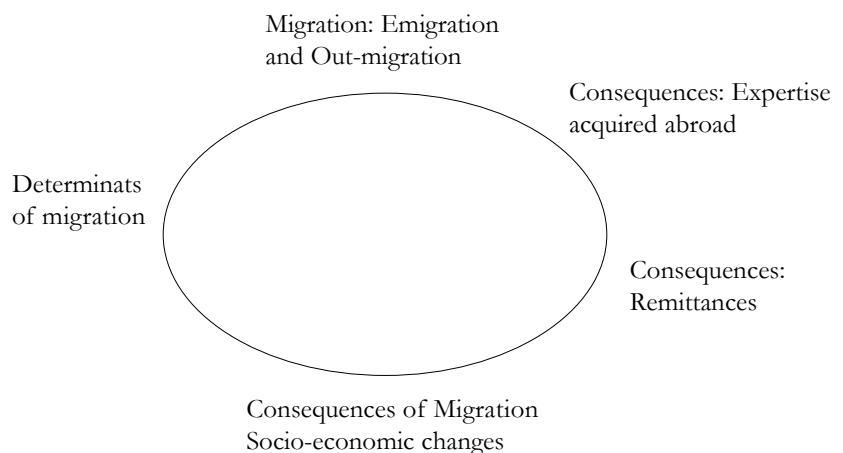
Economic consequences of migration

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Our 'roots' are sacred

Kerala stands always in the forefront with regard to the gifted personalities. Taking human resource as a product of the State, Kerala may be the largest exporter of resourceful minds and gifted professionals to other parts of the country. Being highly educated, industrious and dynamic, there is a demand for Malayalees in the employment arena.

As there is an acute dearth of employment avenues within the State, Malayalees are forced to go elsewhere in search of matching employment. It is a matter of pride that in every nook and corner of the world the presence of Malayalees can be felt. In the course of time these Malayalees have formed their own local associations for keeping the warmth of friendliness and unity on the basis of the linguistic solidarity.

Keralites working outside Kerala but within the country and those working abroad are Non-Resident Keralites. Doctors, nurses, engineers, scientists, technocrats, skilled and unskilled labourers constitute the majority of the NRKs. The contribution of the Non-Resident Keralites to our economy is very high. Be it in the form of foreign exchange, Indian currency, consumer goods, or fixed assets, it is much reflected in the economic activities of the State. In fact, they are the props and buttresses of the economy of the State.

NRKs are the flag-bearers of true spirit of cultural integration and communal harmony. They spread the fragrance of Kerala's rich tradition, heritage and culture wherever they live. Further, they are the informal ambassadors of our country and hence are responsible for maintaining good relations in the alien place.

NRKs, irrespective of their financial status, have their own woes and untold miseries. The feeling of alienation, education of the children, looking after the aged parents, protection of properties etc. are some of the difficulties experienced by the NRKs. Rehabilitation of the returnees is a challenge before the Government and society. Everywhere the *sons of soil movement* is growing badly and the impact of this on NRKs will be severe. The social and psychological aspects involved in the issue attract serious attention.

Conceiving the gravity of various issues relating to the NRKs, the Government of Kerala is now more committed for their welfare. Non Resident Keralites' Affairs Department (NORKA) which may be the first of its kind in our country has been established for looking after the welfare of Non Resident Keralites. ROOTS-NRK Initiative is another agency constituted for the welfare of NRKs. The recently held NRK get-together "Samanwayam 2003" has chalked out a 16-point programme for their welfare. The proposal for giving facilities to cast votes, dual citizenship etc are being considered by the Government.

NRKs have a higher responsibility of strengthening their motherland in all possible ways. Many of the world-renowned scientists, technocrats, doctors, educationalists and other professionals working outside Kerala have Malayalee roots. One's own 'roots' is a feeling so dear to be cherished in the heart of heart as the mother earth has a craving for the return of the native.

Editor in Chief

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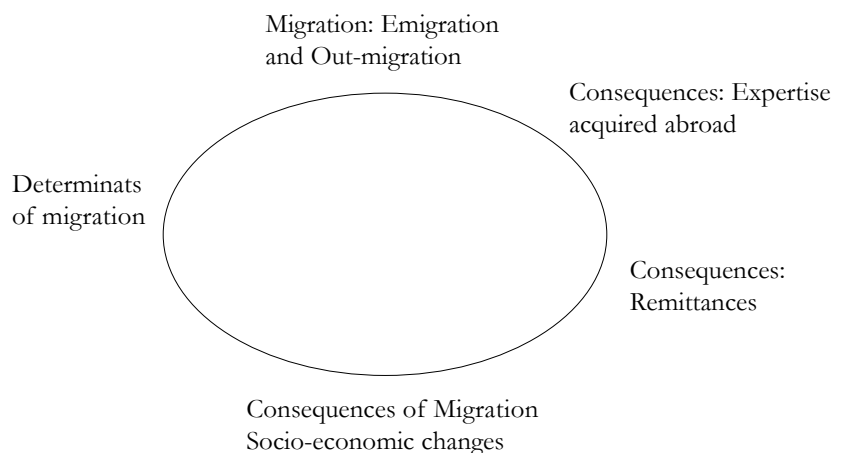
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classified by duration of migration. For instance, households with migrants who migrated in recent years are compared with those with migrants who have been away for more than ten years. The difference observed as between the two groups should constitute a measure of the effect of migration, or at least, the effect of duration of migration. The consequences analysed in this part are remittances, housing facilities, possession of consumer durables and quality of human resources (including education and occupation).

The chart gives a schematic diagram connecting migration, remittances, and socio-economic changes. Most, but not all, consequences work through remittances. Migration leads to remittances, and remittances lead to socio-economic consequences, on human resources development, on ownership of land, on housing, on life-style, etc. Remittance is from this point of view, an intermediate variable and is fundamental to an understanding of the consequences of migration. We, therefore, start with a discussion of remittances received by Kerala households.

All households participated in a sample survey were asked whether any member of the household had received cash or goods from abroad during the 12 months preceding the date of the survey. Those who answered "yes" to this question were asked to report the amounts and the details of articles they had received (and their total value). Remittances could be not only from members of the households concerned who are away, but also from other relatives or friends.

Not all families reported having received remittances from abroad. Altogether 17 percent of all the households, or 80 percent of the households with an emigrant, reported having received remittances. Nearly all Ezhawa emigrant households received remittances, but only three-fourths of the Syrian Christian emigrant households did. The proportion of households, which received remittances in kind, is much less, 53 percent. As per our estimates, per emigrant remits Rs

25,000, about Rs 5,500 per household and Rs 1,105 per capita in the state. Remittances received by a household vary by the educational attainment of the emigrants from the household. The average was about Rs.25 thousand; but in the case of degree holders the amount was as high as Rs.36.5 thousand. It is of considerable interest to discuss how the households dispose of the substantial amounts of remittances they receive. The households of emigrants were asked how they used the remittances. They could state one or more of 10 uses listed in our survey.

A lion's share of the remittances is used to meet living expenses: 75 to 90 percent of the households mentioned

Migration has a very significant effect on the quality of housing. This effect is independent of the effect of community or district. In fact, the interactions between migration and district and between migration and community are statistically insignificant. The effect of migration on quality of housing remains strong in all the districts and among all the communities.

living expenses as the main use of the remittances. The lowest percentage was among Nairs (75%) and the highest was among Muslims (92%). More than one-third of the households used remittances for educational purposes. While only 16 percent of the Scheduled caste households spent remittance incomes on education, the corresponding proportion among Muslim households was as high as 44 percent. More than one-fourth of the emigrant households used remittances to repay debts incurred primarily for

emigration. The proportion of households of Syrian Christians who incurred expenditure on this item comes to only less than one-half the state average. The highest proportions were among Latin Catholics (33%) and Muslims (31%). The other major items in the end use of remittances were construction and repairs of houses and bank deposits: 11 per cent of the households on the former and 8 per cent on the latter. Uses of remittances indicate the areas in which to look for consequences of emigration. We should expect significant consequences on consumption levels, educational status, quality of housing and volume of bank deposits.

It is a common observation that, one of the first things an emigrant or return emigrant does is to improve the quality of his housing. This is done in several ways: by making improvements or additions to existing houses, purchase of buildings or building new houses. Whatever be the means, emigration to a large extent, and out-migration to a lesser, tend to contribute to improve the housing conditions of the migrant family. In the discussion which follows we therefore include households of all types of migrants: emigrants and return emigrants, and out-migrants and return out-migrants. As stated earlier, construction and repairs in the houses was the item next in importance only to consumption, education and repayment of debt.

Houses were classified into the following four categories based on the cost incurred: (1) below Rs 20 thousand; (2) between Rs 20 thousand and Rs 100 thousand; (3) between Rs 100 thousand and Rs 500 thousand; and (d) above Rs 500 thousand. Weights were given to houses in each type, 1, 3, 10 and 30 respectively. An index of the cost is obtained by averaging the weights. Analysis indicates that non-migrant households have the lowest and emigrant households the highest housing index.

For assessing quality, houses were grouped into the following five categories: (1) Luxurious (3 or more bed rooms with attached bathrooms, concrete roof, mosaic floor); (2) Very

Samanwayam 2003

NRKs' get together



Chief Minister Mr.A.K. Antony inaugurating Samanwayam 2003. Minister for NORKA Mr.M.M. Hassan is also seen.

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The two day meet of non resident Keralites from within the country, organized by the Non Resident Keralite Affairs Department (NORKA) and Roots - NRK Development Initiative, was inaugurated by the Chief Minister Mr. A.K. Antony at the Vypopilli Samskrithi Bhavan on 12th July. The Meet marked the beginning of a series of programmes aimed at strengthening the bonds between Non Resident Keralites and the State Government.

Delegates from various Malayali organizations from different parts of the country, even from the remotest corners like Sikkim, Nagaland, Andaman & Nicobar islands etc. converged to the confluence. Prominent personalities from social, cultural, literary and political walks of life, took active part in *Samanwayam* which has been organized by the State Government for the first time.


The delegates exuded their trust and confidence on the NORKA Department and the Government. They expressed their happiness in having a minister who had a sense of direction and purpose at the helm, to guide the department.

“It is a matter of great joy for us to

have a Government department to rely on and to place our trust in. It gives a sense of belonging, an inner strength and a boost to our confidence and morale while we work in places outside our state” – said a delegate who was carried away by the camaraderie of the Meet.

Non Resident Keralites – their problems and solutions - role of the state government and Non Resident Keralites and Kerala's Economy were topics of symposiums which were deliberated upon, during the Meet.

The valedictory function on the 13th, chaired by Mr. M.M. Hassan, Minister for NORKA, was inaugurated by the Hon. Speaker of the Kerala Legislative Assembly, Mr. Vakkom Purushothaman. The NORKA Secretary Mr. Jiji Thomson presented the 16 point action plan which emerged from the Meet. The department envisages to implement it within the next one year.

Recognising the undeniable place of the Non Resident Malayali in the mainstream of Kerala life, formulating a clearer vision and a pronounced action plan, which evolved through the confluence of ideas, *Samanwayam* wound up on a warm and cordial note. 

Good (2 bed rooms with attached bath rooms, concrete roof, mosaic floor); (3) Good (1 bed room, brick and cement walls, concrete or tile roof) ; (4) Poor (Brick walls, cement floor, tin or asbestos roof); and (5) Kutcha (mud walls, mud floor and thatched roof). Nearly 70 percent of the houses are of high quality, of which only about 1.3 percent are characterised as luxurious.. The poor and very poor (Kutcha) houses came to 28 per cent. Housing quality of external migrants is found to be higher than that of internal migrants which, in turn, is higher than the housing quality of non-migrants. The comparison among emigrants and among return emigrants

themselves by periods of migration shows that the period and the duration of stay have strong influence on housing quality. Emigrants who came back after 1991 have better housing than those who came back later. The longer a return emigrant has been living in Kerala, the better is his housing. Similarly is the case with emigrants who are still abroad. The longer has an emigrant been abroad, the better is the quality of his housing.

Migration has a very significant effect on the quality of housing. This effect is independent of the effect of community or district. In fact, the interactions between migration and district and between migration and

community are statistically insignificant. The effect of migration on quality of housing remains strong in all the districts and among all the communities.

Migration had its effect not only on the overall quality of buildings but also on the fittings and furnishings in them. We have taken three common items for analysis of the impact of migration - electrification, toilet facilities and cooking fuel. It is well known that Kerala has made tremendous progress in electrification of houses, in equipping houses with modern toilet facilities and in the use of modern fuel (e.g.: gas and electricity) for cooking. Progress in these areas began to be made much

earlier than the recent large-scale migration to the Gulf countries. It is quite likely that the progress would have continued even without emigration. However emigration must have accelerated the process.

Fifty years ago, electrification of houses was a luxury confined to rich houses in the major towns of the State. At the time of the survey, nearly three-fourths of the houses were electrified, but the proportions varied by community and migration status of the household. Households of emigrants have the highest proportion of electrified houses, nearly 90 per cent. The households of return emigrants are not far behind with 87 per cent. The households of internal migrants (out-migrants and return out-migrants taken together) have slightly lower levels of electrification; they are however, much higher than the proportion among the non-migrant households (66 per cent). The difference as between migrant households and return migrant households is not very large, either in the case of external migration or internal migration.

Kerala has made tremendous progress with respect to the use of modern toilet facilities in the houses. Taking the proportion of households with flush toilets as a measure of the availability of modern toilet facility, we find that more than three-fourths of the households have the facility. The highest proportions are among the emigrant households and the lowest proportions are among the non-migrant households. This pattern is observed among all the communities, except the scheduled castes among whom the households of return emigrants had the highest proportion. The proportions are lower, but only marginally, in the internal migrant household. The difference in the facility as between emigrant households and non-migrant households is the highest among Muslims; the next in the order are Ezhawas and Latin Catholics. The proportions are lower, but only marginally, in the internal migrant households. ■



COVER STORY

NRKs cement the economy

Migration from Kerala to other States in India and to abroad is common and its impact is felt on all walks of life in the State. Till 1940's Kerala had a non-migrating population. A Centre for Development Studies (CDS), study on migration entitled as "Kerala's Gulf connections," finds that the best estimate of the number of emigrants from Kerala was 1.36 million. Between 1988/92 and 1993/97 the number increased by 120 per cent. Arab Countries of the Middle East were the destination of 95 per cent of the emigrants and Saudi Arabia alone accounting for nearly 40 per cent of the total. In terms of emigrants per 100 households, Malappuram was in the lead with a rate of 49; Pathanamthitta came second with a rate of 33. Thrissur, Kozhikode and Palakkad had higher than average migration.

According to "Survey on Activity Status and Rehabilitation of Migrants from Kerala" conducted in 1999 by the Department of Economics and Statistics, there are 11.41 lakh Keralites working in different parts of the world. This constitutes about 3.6 per cent of total population of Kerala and 95.6 per cent of the migrants are in the Gulf Countries. Among the districts the highest number of migrants is from

Malappuram followed by Thrissur, Thiruvananthapuram, Kannur, Kozhikode, Alappuzha and the lowest is from Idukki. About 16.9 per cent of migrants are working abroad in Medical/ Technical field and 46.7 per cent Education/Office work and remaining 35.4 per cent are in other categories that include labourers. About 21.1 per cent went abroad for better employment.

Out of 11.41 lakh migrants 2.21 lakh people (19.4 per cent) received less than Rs. 5,000 per month. The monthly income of more than 50 per cent of the migrants (5.75 lakhs) is Rs. 5,000 but less than Rs. 10,000. 20.7 per cent received more than Rs. 10,000 but less than Rs. 20,000 per month. Only about 0.2 per cent of migrants (2200 persons) received a monthly income of above Rs. one lakh. The major portion of income of 27.1 per cent of the migrants were utilized to purchase land and construction of buildings. Another 60 per cent spent their earnings for marriage, education, treatment and others. The study reveals that 5.43 lakh persons have returned to Kerala due to different reasons.

According to the CDS study the total cash remittances received by Kerala households in 1998 was Rs. 35,304 million and cash remittances constituted on 9.3 per cent of the SDP. If the

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The valedictory function on the 13th, chaired by Mr. M.M. Hassan, Minister for NORKA, was inaugurated by the Hon. Speaker of the Kerala Legislative Assembly, Mr. Vakkom Purushothaman. The NORKA Secretary Mr. Jiji Thomson presented the 16 point action plan which emerged from the Meet. The department envisages to implement it within the next one year.

Recognising the undeniable place of the Non Resident Malayali in the mainstream of Kerala life, formulating a clearer vision and a pronounced action plan, which evolved through the confluence of ideas, *Samanwayam* wound up on a warm and cordial note. 

Good (2 bed rooms with attached bath rooms, concrete roof, mosaic floor); (3) Good (1 bed room, brick and cement walls, concrete or tile roof) ; (4) Poor (Brick walls, cement floor, tin or asbestos roof); and (5) Kutcha (mud walls, mud floor and thatched roof). Nearly 70 percent of the houses are of high quality, of which only about 1.3 percent are characterised as luxurious.. The poor and very poor (Kutcha) houses came to 28 per cent. Housing quality of external migrants is found to be higher than that of internal migrants which, in turn, is higher than the housing quality of non-migrants. The comparison among emigrants and among return emigrants

themselves by periods of migration shows that the period and the duration of stay have strong influence on housing quality. Emigrants who came back after 1991 have better housing than those who came back later. The longer a return emigrant has been living in Kerala, the better is his housing. Similarly is the case with emigrants who are still abroad. The longer has an emigrant been abroad, the better is the quality of his housing.

Migration has a very significant effect on the quality of housing. This effect is independent of the effect of community or district. In fact, the interactions between migration and district and between migration and

community are statistically insignificant. The effect of migration on quality of housing remains strong in all the districts and among all the communities.

Migration had its effect not only on the overall quality of buildings but also on the fittings and furnishings in them. We have taken three common items for analysis of the impact of migration - electrification, toilet facilities and cooking fuel. It is well known that Kerala has made tremendous progress in electrification of houses, in equipping houses with modern toilet facilities and in the use of modern fuel (e.g.: gas and electricity) for cooking. Progress in these areas began to be made much

earlier than the recent large-scale migration to the Gulf countries. It is quite likely that the progress would have continued even without emigration. However emigration must have accelerated the process.

Fifty years ago, electrification of houses was a luxury confined to rich houses in the major towns of the State. At the time of the survey, nearly three-fourths of the houses were electrified, but the proportions varied by community and migration status of the household. Households of emigrants have the highest proportion of electrified houses, nearly 90 per cent. The households of return emigrants are not far behind with 87 per cent. The households of internal migrants (out-migrants and return out-migrants taken together) have slightly lower levels of electrification; they are however, much higher than the proportion among the non-migrant households (66 per cent). The difference as between migrant households and return migrant households is not very large, either in the case of external migration or internal migration.

Kerala has made tremendous progress with respect to the use of modern toilet facilities in the houses. Taking the proportion of households with flush toilets as a measure of the availability of modern toilet facility, we find that more than three-fourths of the households have the facility. The highest proportions are among the emigrant households and the lowest proportions are among the non-migrant households. This pattern is observed among all the communities, except the scheduled castes among whom the households of return emigrants had the highest proportion. The proportions are lower, but only marginally, in the internal migrant household. The difference in the facility as between emigrant households and non-migrant households is the highest among Muslims; the next in the order are Ezhawas and Latin Catholics. The proportions are lower, but only marginally, in the internal migrant households. ■



COVER STORY

NRKs cement the economy

Migration from Kerala to other States in India and to abroad is common and its impact is felt on all walks of life in the State. Till 1940's Kerala had a non-migrating population. A Centre for Development Studies (CDS), study on migration entitled as "Kerala's Gulf connections," finds that the best estimate of the number of emigrants from Kerala was 1.36 million. Between 1988/92 and 1993/97 the number increased by 120 per cent. Arab Countries of the Middle East were the destination of 95 per cent of the emigrants and Saudi Arabia alone accounting for nearly 40 per cent of the total. In terms of emigrants per 100 households, Malappuram was in the lead with a rate of 49; Pathanamthitta came second with a rate of 33. Thrissur, Kozhikode and Palakkad had higher than average migration.

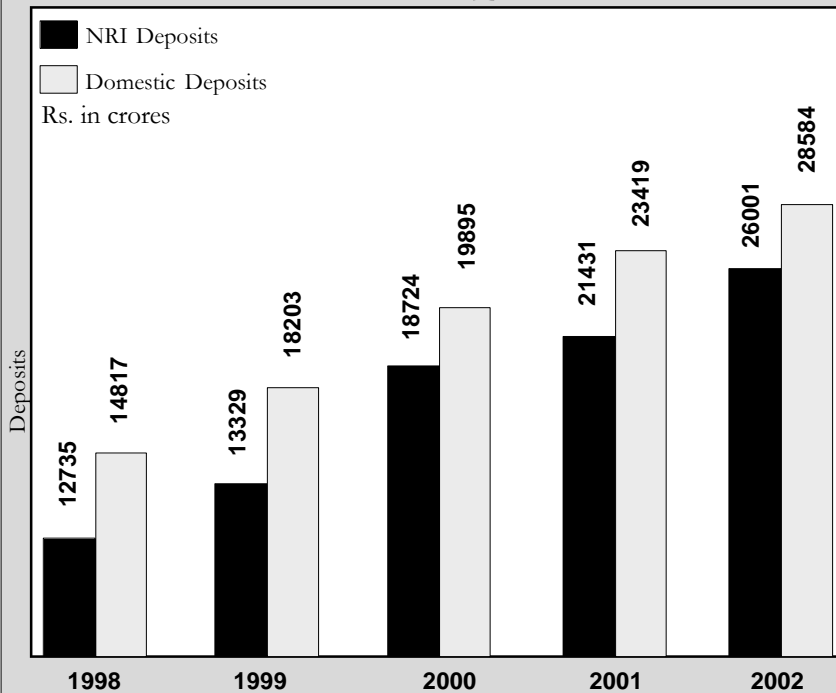
According to "Survey on Activity Status and Rehabilitation of Migrants from Kerala" conducted in 1999 by the Department of Economics and Statistics, there are 11.41 lakh Keralites working in different parts of the world. This constitutes about 3.6 per cent of total population of Kerala and 95.6 per cent of the migrants are in the Gulf Countries. Among the districts the highest number of migrants is from

Malappuram followed by Thrissur, Thiruvananthapuram, Kannur, Kozhikode, Alappuzha and the lowest is from Idukki. About 16.9 per cent of migrants are working abroad in Medical/Technical field and 46.7 per cent Education/Office work and remaining 35.4 per cent are in other categories that include labourers. About 21.1 per cent went abroad for better employment.

Out of 11.41 lakh migrants 2.21 lakh people (19.4 per cent) received less than Rs. 5,000 per month. The monthly income of more than 50 per cent of the migrants (5.75 lakhs) is Rs. 5,000 but less than Rs. 10,000. 20.7 per cent received more than Rs. 10,000 but less than Rs. 20,000 per month. Only about 0.2 per cent of migrants (2200 persons) received a monthly income of above Rs. one lakh. The major portion of income of 27.1 per cent of the migrants were utilized to purchase land and construction of buildings. Another 60 per cent spent their earnings for marriage, education, treatment and others. The study reveals that 5.43 lakh persons have returned to Kerala due to different reasons.

According to the CDS study the total cash remittances received by Kerala households in 1998 was Rs. 35,304 million and cash remittances constituted on 9.3 per cent of the SDP. If the

NRE Deposits



The rate of growth of NRE deposits that was 40.48 per cent in 2000 sharply declined to 14.5 per cent in 2001 and remained at the same level during 2002. In 2001, the NRE deposits was for Rs. 21431 crore. The deposit increased by Rs. 3103 crore and reached Rs. 24534 crore in March 2002, an increase of 14.5 per cent. At the same time, the total deposits and domestic deposits have shown a slight higher rate of growth as 16.1 per cent and 16.4 per cent respectively. The amount of total deposits which was Rs. 44850 crore in 2001, increased to Rs. 51656 crore in 2002 and domestic deposits from Rs. 23419 crore to Rs. 27112 crore during the same period. State Bank group stood first in the mobilisation of NRE deposits during 2002 with Rs. 8874 crore (36.14 per cent) followed by other nationalised banks with Rs. 8032 (32.74 per cent) and Private Banks with Rs. 7329 crore (29.87 per cent).

Growth in Bank Deposits						
Year (March)	Total Deposits		NRE Deposits		Domestic Deposits	
	Amount	Annual Growth (%)	Amount	Annual Growth (%)	Amount	Annual Growth (%)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1991	7935	19.1	2304	14.5	5554	20.5
1992	9787	23.3	3039	31.9	6632	19.4
1993	12261	25.3	4499	48.0	7613	14.8
1994	15138	23.5	6015	33.7	8926	17.2
1995	17694	16.9	6886	14.5	10572	18.4
1996	20419	15.4	8103	17.7	12068	14.2
1997	23354	14.4	10178	25.6	13176	9.2
1998	27552	18.0	12735	25.1	14817	12.5
1999	31532	14.4	13329	4.7	18203	22.9
2000	38619	22.5	18724	40.5	19895	9.3
2001	44850	16.1	21431	14.5	23419	17.7
2002	51656	15.2	24534	14.5	27122	15.8
2001Sept	47129	14.3	22186	10.7	24943	17.8
2002Sept	54585	15.8	26001	17.2	28584	14.6

remittances were added to GDP, the per capita GDP would have been Rs. 13,041 instead of the actual Rs. 11,936. The annual remittance received by the State households was 2.55 times higher than what Kerala received from the Central government as budget support. The study shows that by early 1990's remittances to Kerala economy had assumed a significant share of state income. This ranged from 17 per cent in 1991-92 and 24 per cent in 1997-98 with an average of 22 per cent for the second half of the 1990's. The large increase in terms of rupee is also due to the nearly twice fold depreciation in the value of the rupee vis-à-vis the US dollar from Rs. 17.50 at the beginning of the decade for over Rs.48 at the end. The state thus benefited significantly from the liberalization of the exchange rate. The study added the remittance income to the GDP and constructed a modified state income series. As a result Kerala's per capita income not only caught up with the average per capita income for India but started exceeding it reaching 49 per cent above the national average by the end of 1990's. This tallies with per capita consumer expenditure in Kerala, which was in excess of 41 per cent above the national average by the end of 1990's

By the nineties savings rates in the Kerala economy seem to have reached such high levels as those comparable to the East and South East Asian countries. By the end of the nineties remittances reached such levels that they were well above the total State Government expenditure. Workers' remittances to Kerala (about Rs.13-14 thousand crores by the turn of the century) constituted as much as 22 per cent of the Net State Domestic Product by 2000. Remittances in 2001 were larger than the annual budget of Kerala for the year 2001-02. In short, migration seems to be the single most dynamic factor in the otherwise slow growth and dreary employment scenario of Kerala during the last 25 years.

Courtesy: Economic review 2002, Planning Board, Kerala.

Welfare of NRKs

ROOTS is at service



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Non-resident Keralites today play a vital role in the economic development of Kerala. Nearly one-fourth of Kerala's population resides outside the State - within India or abroad. This migration of Keralites in search of opportunities, which has led to a large inflow of foreign remittance into the State, is in fact one of the positive features of the celebrated Kerala model of economy.

The enterprising Malayalis are migrated in large numbers to all the States within India and virtually to every part of the world. The money being sent by the NRKs to the State plays pivotal role in cementing its economy and increasing the living standard of the people. Kerala is a state that depends heavily on this inflow from abroad .

It was the Government's concern for the welfare of the NRKs and the need to have an intermediary between them and the Government that resulted in the formation of the Department of Non-Resident Keralite's Affairs (NORKA) - the first of its kind in India. The primary objective of the Department was to ensure the welfare of NRKs, redress their grievances, safeguard their rights as well as to rehabilitate the returnees.

Later, Non Resident Keralites' Welfare Agency (NORKWA) was formed as a field agency of NORKA to plan and execute the various schemes and projects initiated by the Government, using the resources and expertise of NRKs. It was a coordinating

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body between agencies that are relevant to NRI issues and an agency to harness the resources of the NRKs for the economic development of the State. ROOTS, the present form of NORKWA which enjoys more functional and financial autonomy, was formed to make the existing outfit more responsive and vibrant.

ROOTS - NRK Development Initiative, the establishment of the Government of Kerala that acts as a counsel for the Non-Resident Keralites and provides social security to them and their family, is formed under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956. The company is a metamorphosed form of NORKWA, the Non-Resident Keralites' Welfare Agency under the Department of Non-Resident Keralite's Affairs, established in 1996.

- To plan and implement

programmes and schemes for the welfare and benefit of the NRKs and to address and devise solutions to their problems.

- To provide all assistance to NRKs and to take up matters concerning them with the Governments of Kerala and India and other institutions and organisations in India or abroad.
- To evolve strategies for the resettlement and reintegration of NRKs returning to Kerala and other Indian States.
- To give a thrust to the industrial development of the State by channelising the NRKs' resources and expertise and help them set up projects, ventures and enterprises in Kerala.
- To facilitate the creation of a high calibre human resource pool to meet the changing global requirements and to assist and monitor human resources export through transparent and lawful methods.
- To undertake the establishment, management and monitoring of a worldwide network of organization and groups of NRKs.

Some of the recent initiatives of ROOTS for the welfare of the NRKs and returnees may merit a brief mention here as a reflection of the State Government's commitment and concern for the welfare and rehabilitation of the NRKs. A prominent one in the list is "Pravasi Swasraya" a comprehensive social security scheme for Non-Resident Keralites and returnees inaugurated by the Chief Minister Mr A.K. Antony at Thiruvananthapuram on January 14, 2003. This scheme being implemented in association with L.I.C. meets a long-standing demand of the NRKs working in unorganised sector and those who are self employed who do not enjoy any pensionary benefits.

Similarly, ROOTS is planning to put in place a Welfare Fund to meet the extreme needs of the returnee Malayalis below poverty line. Funds for the scheme would be mobilised from

benevolent individuals and charity organisations. The scheme intends to provide financial assistance for certain specified purposes such as medical assistance and assistance to family in distress due to death of its breadwinner.

Establishment of Heritage Homes, that can take care of the dependent parents of Non-Resident Keralites settled abroad or innovative schemes like “My village My Dream” for the overall development of villages with the participation and assistance of NRKs abroad and “My Malayalam My Pride” a language tutoring programme for the second generation migrants etc are some of the schemes under various levels of implementation. Preparation of a

guidance and motivation. This, we are confident, would lead to large-scale investment into the State, create employment opportunities and result in the overall development of the State.

Man’s journey in search of an oasis of material comforts and his return trip in search of roots, dogged by an acute sense of loneliness and lack of belongings in the new territory are two voyages as old as human history. Both these journeys are very relevant, presently - felt and far from remote in the case of Kerala where large number of people go out of the State at any given time in search of a livelihood and better prospects propelled by the twin pressure of educational advancements

world, the word “Roots” has more than one connotation. The large expatriate community has its roots firmly entrenched within the State, while the State has its prosperity and financial stability resolutely rooted in the money orders that its people send home without fail.

Finally, on a metaphysical plane also, “Roots” is a word with ‘deep and penetrating’ meaning. The Bhagavad Gita in the first shloka (Verse) of its 15th chapter, ‘Purushotama Yoga’, in a stunning imagery equates human life to a peepul tree with its roots spread upward and its branches stretching downward.

*Urdhwamoolamadhabhsakham
Asvattham Praaburavyayam*

*Chbandaamsi Yasya Parnani
Yastham Veda Sa Vedavit*

(They [the learned ones] speak of an imperishable Asvattha Tree with its roots above and the branches below. Its leaves are the Vedas; he who knows it is the knower of Vedas)

The tree is both the symbol and an entity revealing life. Like this tree, which supplies sap from the above and sends it to the branches spread across the surface of the earth, the human soul draws sustenance from the supreme life force above and finds its manifestations on the earthly, mundane plane. The State of Kerala, like the primordial Peepul tree, perches her people all over the world, drawing sustenance and nourishment from them who serve as her roots spread outward and upward.

Kerala is the first State in India, and probably the only one, which has an exclusive Department named Non-Resident Keralites’ Affairs (NORKA), headed by a Minister with Cabinet Rank to address the issues concerning the NRKs. The Department has three segments of people under its purview, the Non-Resident Malayalees abroad, Keralites residing and working in other states of India as also those who have returned to the State. NORKA Department and ROOTS would always be in the forefront to address the problems being faced by the NRKs and to redress them.

The idea of running some innovative schemes for the welfare and rehabilitation of returnees through income and employment generating projects has been in the agenda of the ROOTS. As far as the Government are concerned, it is part of laying down a comprehensive strategy for inviting foreign direct investment through entrepreneurship development on the one hand and rehabilitation of returnees on the other. The Government are planning to tap the large resources of NRKs through incentives and proper guidance and motivation.

comprehensive data bank of NRKs, migration monitoring studies and schemes for the skill upgradation of prospective emigrants are also being pursued by the government.

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and shortage of job opportunities within the State. A large portion of them yearns to return to their homeland. For most of them, especially the first generation migrant, retirement is where he had spent his childhood, in the security of familiar surroundings, amidst the images and landscape where he feels comfortable. In other words he always looks forward to returning to his village, to his home and back to his roots.

In the case of Kerala where practically one fourth of its people are working and settled outside its four boundaries, a State which takes immense pride in its fine human capital and in the spread and outreach of its people to almost every part of the

INDIA MARCHES AHEAD...

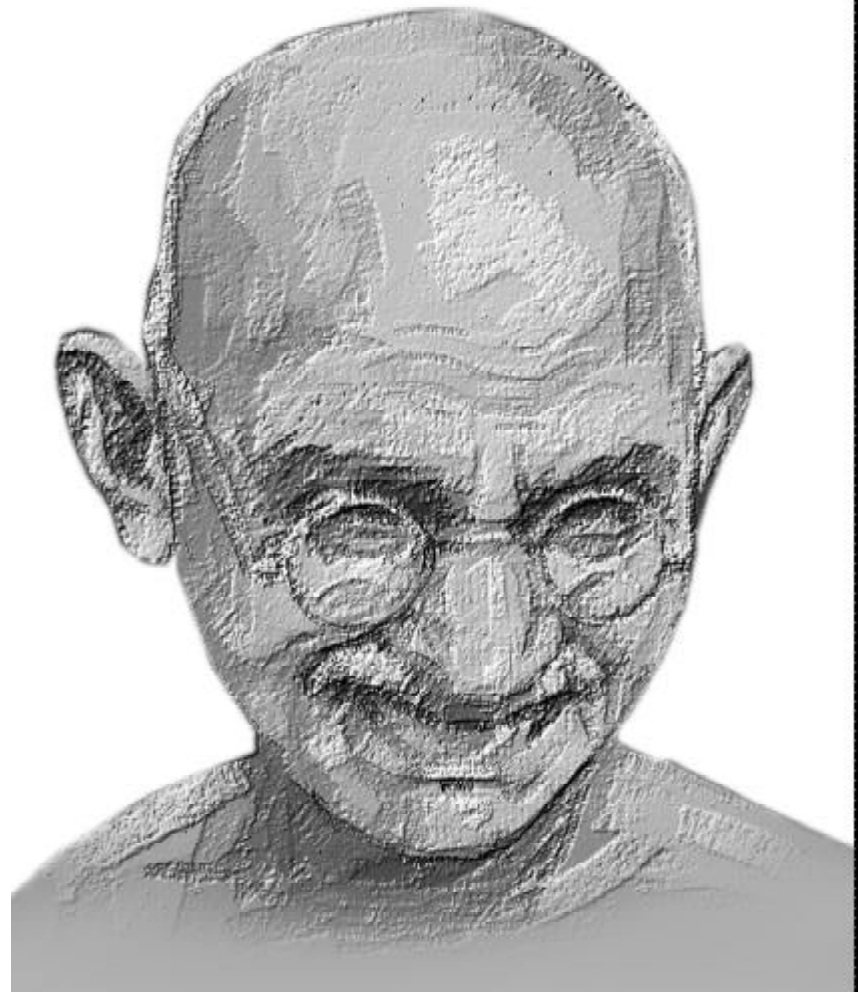
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Poet Subramania Bharati became ecstatic at the prospect of India becoming free and he burst out:

Freedom! Freedom! Freedom!
To the *Pariahs*, the *Tiyas*, to the *Pulayas*,
Freedom!
Come, let us labour all,
Sparing naught in the way of Truth
and Light.
There shall be no oppressed,
Born in India,
All are of noble birth.

And read along with this the advice of Gandhi to the new rulers of Independent India:

“Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to *Swaraj* for the hun-



Varghese Punnathur

gry and spiritually starving millions?”

It is quite natural that these thoughts keep on coming to the most of the Indians when any attempt is made to assess the state of the nation on the eve of the 56th Year of its freedom. A host of images, including the *Ramarajya* as dreamt by Gandhi and the *Welfare State* promised by Nehru, are being dangled before the masses who have luckily still not become desperate and lost all hope unlike the intellectuals, politicians and certain others who are almost convinced that India is doomed and beyond redemption.

It might be considered in this context, since they offer valuable insights, the four exercises that the Indian Council for Gandhian Studies recently under-

took in order to gauge public opinion on India since Independence. The first group consisted of over one hundred freedom fighters from different parts of India. They were nostalgic, emotional, passionate and appeared to be embers. Dispirited, unhappy and somewhat angry with the ruling class, they showed no ill-will and represented the spirit of an age which produced heroes and martyrs. To a specific question whether, in the light of the present disquieting picture, it was worth the sacrifices they made to free India from colonial power, their unanimous view was that anyone familiar with the humiliating situation that existed in the country before 1947, would not have put that question at all. They were proud of their role in that glorious struggle. It was a dream, a great dream to make India free. When a

dream comes true, it need not be and cannot be as sweet and cherishable as it had been in the dream. What one could not miss in their shrunken and wrinkled faces was their undying faith in the innate and essential power of this long-suppressed nation to introspect and correct the course.

The second category was a cross-section of politicians, writers, journalists, academicians and retired bureaucrats. They made brilliant analysis of the present malaise and laid the blame at the doorstep of others, each trying to prove the other wrong and conveniently absolving and exonerating himself. They shed crocodile tears for the *Davidranarayans* of this country. Two or three former ministers, who were among the speakers 'confided' how the bureaucracy scuttled their programmes which if implemented, would have brought revolutionary changes in the country. Some tried to pinpoint the wrong development model the nation adopted under Nehru while a few others were convinced that the dynastic rule that was imposed on the young democracy had done incalculable harm. One retired bureaucrat mustered courage to blame the corrupt politicians for converting the country into their personal chiefdom.

The third was a two-day workshop of social activists and Gandhian constructive workers. A few, representing some Gandhian outfits, were convinced that the present messy situation owes its source to fifty-five years of misrule and the ruthless manner in which the collective voice of the Gandhian organizations was stifled. When some younger members demanded to know what their own contribution was, some leaflets were passed around saying, "Let the records speak".

The fourth group comprised eighty young men and women representing a cross section of Indian youth and they debated for three days the problems of

contemporary India. While they were not happy with many things and did not know what the future has in store for them, they did not sound desperate or despondent. They were convinced that the country had not done badly since independence. To many of them much more than political corruption which, according to them, is only an extension of the otherwise morbid and unhealthy attitudes and which can certainly be con-



“Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions?”

tained by honest administrative and political measures, what is troubling them is the double standard and hypocrisy that have crept into our life-style. An education system which does not offer them anything substantial except degrees or diplomas, and an insensitive social order that is being assiduously promoted by power-brokers are all the reincarnation of colonialism in a new garb. The danger emanating from the pressures

and pulls of a unipolar world, the temptations of the free market economy, advantages of a new consumerism-abetted socio-economic situation, and the thought whether India can remain an island when all around her the powerful winds of globalism aided by massive communication explosion rage with ferocious intensity, received their attention. These young men and women, who are certainly troubled and worried

about their future, have however not lost faith on their nation.

Can India remain an island aloof and cut off from the rest of the world when the world is shrinking and when globalization has become the bye-word? Mutual interdependence of the countries of the world is on the increase. Liberalization policies have to be geared to address the liberation of the masses from the clutches of poverty and non-employment.

While we should be conscious of our failures, we should not shut our eyes to the remarkable progress the country has registered in several areas. It is being appreciated all over the world that the country has a lot of potential as it marches ahead. Strengthening of democracy and democratic institutions, the broad industrial infrastructure, strides in agriculture, tackling successfully some of the dreaded diseases, the impressive improvements in the status of women, progress in the spread of literacy are some of the key areas where visible and qualitative changes have occurred since independence.

and fauna. This sanctuary is the most important eco tourism resource of the Thenmala Eco-tourism Project.

The Thenmala Eco-tourism Project adopts a threefold strategy, which involves eco friendly general tourism, eco tourism and pilgrimage tourism.

Eco-friendly general tourism is planned in the periphery of the sanctuary so the pressure of tourism will not affect the sanctuary. The real eco tourism is to take place inside the sanctuary and only eco tourists are engaged for that. Others can experience the Eco-friendly product such as small nature trails, elevated walkway through canopies, mountain biking etc., which may give them a feeling of what awaits as eco tourism in the sanctuary area, for which they have to wait since it is supply driven. This is a consciously developed strategy after analysis what is happening in various sanctuaries by way of tourist pressure, and is aimed at to reduce the impact on forest ecosystem inside the sanctuary.

Eco tourism is planned in the surrounding forest area. An Environmental Education and Interpretation centre would be set up as an Eco tourism activity at Thenmala. The Shenduruney wild life sanctuary is having high potential to promote Eco tourism activities. Apart from that, a number of satellite spots are identified within a radius of 50 kilometres from Thenmala to develop eco tourism centres.

The third important element of TEP is Pilgrimage tourism. This strategy aimed at developing an Eco friendly circuit from Thenmala connecting the three Ayyappa shrines related to famous Sabarimala, i.e., Kulathupuzha, Aryankavu and Achankovil, which fall within the project area. Such a proactive step is extremely necessary to see that environmental issues at Sabarimala will not happen in these places. This is the reason why a special thrust to this 'pilgrimage circuit' is given, i.e., ecological problems of these places will be monitored so as to make it environmentally sustainable.

No permanent construction is

provided in these areas. To make this project a great success TEPS is entrusted with the study of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to Kerala Forest Research Institute (KFRI). Further on the recommendation of KERI and on the basis of EIA, TEPS amended the activities to minimize the negative impacts of the project.

Present stage of development

The TEP is divided in to four different zone viz. culture ,leisure ,adventure and eco tourism zones.

fountain, amphitheatre, restaurant, parking areas and the shop courts. The tourism facilitation centre accommodates large crowds, ticket centres, and information desk. The musical fountain, which is located on the top of the hill-a, synchronized rhythmic ballet of water, sound and light – and a natural ambience is rare and provides a unique and authentic experience. The amphitheatre can accommodate 1250 people at a time and is used to perform local art forms at various occasions.



Apart from this there is a Deer Rehabilitation centre, the famous Palaruvi waterfalls, facilities of boating inside the Shenduruney Wildlife Sanctuary,

The culture, adventure, and leisure zones fall within the project area, and are intended to provide a feeling to the visitors as what eco tourism is. In the culture zone, there is the tourism facilitation centre, musical dancing

The theme of the leisure zone is "Man and nature". The major attractions of this zone include the sculpture garden and the Board Walk. The sculpture garden endeavours to depict the relationship of man and his culture with nature, in the serene backdrop of a green forest – i.e., unpolluted nature – synchronizing with the Thenmala Forest Range. Interesting pathways around the sculptures and the integration of the



the help of National adventure Foundation (NAF).

The Boat – landing area is inside the Shenduruneey Wildlife Sanctuary around three Kilometres from the tourist Information centre. In order to avoid overcrowding of vehicles inside the sanctuary special transport arrangement is made. Two battery-supported vehicles are used to take the tourists from the tourism facilitation centre to the Boat landing. These vehicles are procured from BHEL. In Kerala, this is being done for the first time. This will signify the importance attached to the non-polluting sources of energy.

The Forest department, which provides a natural rehabilitation of spotted and sambar deers manage the Deer Rehabilitation centre. A children's eco park is opened nearby, close to the river so as to give the visitors a new experience . The tree top huts in this area give a unique experience.

Eco tourism is based on the four pillars – nature based,

Eco tourism is based on the four pillars – nature based, ecologically sustainable, possibility of conducting research, and involvement of local people.

fairs, cultural and religious festivals, national celebrations and food festivals. Among these eco tourism blends a different strategy of enjoying the nature's serenity in its own way.


Thenmala eco tourism project promoted by the Government of Kerala, is a success in its initial year of launching, though it is not fully functional. The tourist inflow – both domestic and foreign is increasing day by day. Recently TEP was honoured with the best Eco-friendly Tourism Project Award for the year 2002 by the Government of India. If this trend continues, definitely, the project can act as a model for other

natural features in the zone gives the sculpture garden its own exclusivity. The 250-metre Boardwalk along the banks of the river brings out the beauty of the Thenmala hills, the dam and the flowing water.

The adventure zone is located on the other side of the leisure zone. The activities in this zone favour adventure tourism. The attractions are the elevated walkway, mountain biking facility, rock climbing, river crossing, small nature trails, lotus pond, etc. the nature trail winding through various areas of the site, the elevated walkway through canopies and the river crossing attracts a large number of nature tourists. The activities in this zone are carried out with



ecologically sustainable, possibility of conducting research, and involvement of local people. Modern tourism may take different forms including mass, adventure, health, international trade

tourism projects in the state as well as of the nation that helps in achieving economic development without the disadvantages of other forms of tourism. 

iii) Ambient water quality monitoring scheme (AWAQUMS)

This scheme covers stations monitored by the Board and includes 73 river stations including a few brackish water ones. The number of stations are being further increased.

On the whole there are 128 river ground water and lake stations, maintained by the Board in the state under all the ambient water quality-monitoring schemes. This extensive monitoring network covers more than 90 percent of the inland water resources of the state.

Classification of water bodies

Classification of surface waters on the basis of best-designated use is carried out after assessing the water quality. This is an important tool for the effective management of the environment and for pollution control. The Central Pollution Control Board has laid down guidelines to be followed for this classification. This Board is implementing a continuous programme to classify the surface waters of Kerala after assessing the water quality. The twelve classified rivers are, Karamana, Kallada, Achenkovil, Pamba, Manimala, Meenachil, Moovattupuzha, Periyar, Chalakkudy, Bharathapuzha, Chaliyar and Valapattanam river.

Air pollution control

The Government of Kerala declared the whole State as air pollution control area in 1993. Till 1984 only seven pockets were declared as air pollution control areas. As per the **Air (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act** consent of the Board is mandatory for making emissions to the atmosphere. The consents are renewed for further periods only if there is satisfactory compliance to consent conditions. The air pollution load has been got reduced from the 1984 levels. As per the ambient air quality monitoring done by the Board generally the ambient air is good except in some pockets within Kochi city where Suspended Particulate Matter (SPM) is seen recorded occasional excess. Main sources of excess dust emissions in to the ambient air than the permissible limit are automobiles, construction and other

human activities within the city area. The Central Pollution Control Board, as part of annual publishing of the National Ambient Air Quality Status Report in national level, published the ambient air quality data monitored by the Board. The said report testifies that the ambient air quality in the State is not polluted or deteriorated.

Ambient air quality monitoring

National Air-quality Monitoring Programme (NAMP), financed by the Central Pollution Control Board, aims to assess the ambient air quality in the state. Under this programme eleven monitoring stations have been established at different locations in the state. Air quality within industrial, commercial, residential and silence zones are being monitored from these stations. The stations are Chacka, Chingavanam, Irunpunam, Eloor, Kanjikode, Nallalam, S M V School, Kottayam, Kaloore, Palayam and Sastamangalam.

Other areas of activities hazardous wastes

Authorisation under **Hazardous Wastes (Management & Handling) Rules** is required by generators/handlers/disposers of hazardous wastes for collection, reception, treatment, transport, storage and/or disposal of hazardous wastes. The generators of waste oil/used oil, lead acid batteries, nonferrous metals can dispose their waste only by sale/transfer to pre-processors who have authorisation from the Board and registration with Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India. So far more than 110 Authorisations were issued as per HW Rules to major hazardous waste generating industries and agencies.

Bio-medical wastes disposal

Kerala has the highest number (about 27%) of health care institutions in India. The total bed strength of hospitals in Kerala is 1,13,530 of which 43,273 are in the Government sector, 2,740 in the cooperative sector and 67,517 in the private sector. The Kerala State Pollution Control Board is the Prescribed Authority in the State to

implement the *Biomedical Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 1998*.

Hospitals having inpatients, clinics and laboratories serving more than 1000 persons per month and operators providing facilities for biomedical waste transport, treatment and disposal have to obtain Authorisation from the Board. The Board has so far identified nearly 4000 biomedical waste generators in the State. These institutions are required to obtain the Authorization of the Board and provide adequate facilities for collection, segregation, treatment and disposal of biomedical wastes.



As per the said Rules directions were given to hospitals to put up individual or common facilities for handling treatment and disposal of biomedical waste generated. It is widely accepted that rather than going for individual facilities it is better to establish Common Treatment Facilities collectively. The State Govt. in association with the State Board have taken action to establish three common facilities in three locations in the State for the treatment and disposal of waste generated in the Government hospitals. The locations are at Pariyaram in Kannur district for the northern sector hospitals and

Koratty in Thrissur district and Nooranadu in Alappuzha for central and southern sector hospitals. Land available in the Government hospitals in this area will be made use for this purpose. It is expected that the Common Treatment Facilities will be made operational with private sector participation within one year. Similarly Indian Medical Association (IMA) and other Medical Professional Associations have come forward and initiated action for installing Common Facilities for the handling, treatment and disposal of biomedical wastes in private sector hospitals. Some of the hospitals in the State have



established their own waste management facilities and it is functioning well. It is expected with in period of one or two years significant progress can be achieved in the field.

Municipal solid wastes disposal

On the urban local bodies and operators applying for Authorisation for handling/processing/disposing solid wastes, the Board is to issue/refuse Authorisation. The Board is to monitor compliance with the conditions of the Authorisation and to take appropriate follow up action.

Pamba action plan

The water quality monitoring done by the Board over the last several years in the Pamba River, the holy river of Kerala, it was revealed that the river is polluted beyond limits. It is due to the disposal of untreated liquid and solid wastes generated from Sabarimala pilgrimage and disposal of untreated sewage from all local bodies within the river basin. It has been felt necessity for cleaning up of the Pamba river. It was decided to take up the matter with the Central Govt. for finding cost for the cleaning up of Pamba river.


Accordingly the Board had conducted Pre-feasibility Study for implementation of Pamba Action Plan. The project is aiming to clean up Pamba river from upstream to downstream and submitted the report for cleaning up, having an estimated cost of about Rs.272 crores to the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India in March 2002. The Ministry had in principle approved the proposal and requested the State Government to furnish detailed project report for implementation of the project. A Committee was constituted by the State Govt in the Water Resource Department consisting of officers from the Board, Water Authority and Irrigation Department. The Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India has on 2003 communicated the first phase administrative and expenditure approval for implementation of the project with an amount of Rs. 18.45 crores. Thus the Board succeeded in the efforts to clean up the Pamba river which is really an achievement to the State and to the Board.

All the 58 urban local bodies in the State have been apprised of the Rules. They have been instructed to apply for Authorisation. All the Development Authorities in the State were addressed to identify and handover landfill sites to the urban local bodies. Where there is no Development Authority the urban local body has been asked to identify the landfill site.

The urban local bodies in the state have been asked to modify all existing open garbage dumps into sanitary landfills. The Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode Corporations have already installed solid waste processing plants. Some operational and other problems noticed in those two plants are under rectification. Similarly Chalakudy and North Paravur Municipalities have also installed solid waste processing plants. All other urban local bodies are in the process of providing sufficient facilities as per the Clean Kerala Project launched by the State Government. It is expected that with in two year period all urban local bodies can provide sufficient facilities for the management of municipal solid waste.

The Board has prepared detailed

project report (DPR) for conversion of facilities for solid waste management available in the Kozhikode City by up gradation and modernisation into a modern facility. The DPR prepared by the Board was submitted to the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India in March 2003 for approval and financial assistance. The Board has also taken action to install Model Plant in one of the Municipalities in the State. Accordingly DPR for the installation of Model solid waste management facilities in the Alappuzha Municipality was prepared and submitted in May, 2003 for approval and funding. Approval of both schemes is awaited from the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India. It is expected that both these projects can be implemented within one year after getting approval from the Central Government.

The Kerala State Pollution Control Board has made significant contributions towards improving environmental wholesomeness in the State during the past 28 years. The Board will strive to accelerate the pace of progress in the coming years. 



Vitalising economy

There is enormous potential in the state as regards to raw materials and that the state in itself is a big consumer market is the crux of the situation. The question then to be asked is- as to why we don't process the raw materials here itself.



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The state's economy is beset with two major problems, one resulting from the steep fall in agricultural prices and the other due to severe fiscal crisis of the state government.

It is but common knowledge that the Kerala economy has depended on its spices and manpower export. The latter (NRK's) have contributed heavily, to the sustaining of our economy, irrespective of poor performance in primary and secondary sector.

A glimpse through the vital economic indicators and statistics would help us in knowing as to where we stand now.

The plan size had to be pruned by 25 per cent in 2000-2001 and 2001-2002. The ninth five year plan of Kerala was approved by the planning commission for a five year outlay of Rs 16,100 crores at constant prices and Rs 21,700 crores at current prices out of which 25 per cent was reduced.

There have been some good initiatives and improvements, though marginal in the state of affairs. IT and Tourism have been recognized as thrust areas of development. Tourism industry has directly created 1.5 lakh job opportunities and 5.5 lakh jobs indirectly. Some major industrial units showing interest in the industrial parks, the policy changes by the government to encourage investments and new industries, development in the basic infrastructure amenities available, etc. are encouraging signs.

There still remain elements of concern like the low pace of agriculture, increased operational costs and losses in power sector, though issue of availability of power has been solved to some extent.

The credit deposit ratio in the economy continues to be low at 43 per cent, which is abysmally low by any standards. Through elaborate tripartite con-

sultations and discussions among bankers, development agencies and the beneficiaries, an environment for the continuous flow of credit has been created. As a rule of thumb, private investments of all kinds should be more than two to three times the plan investment.

Having looked into the economy as such, let us move into our topic of productive economy, and basically the secondary sector. Industrial development is a major factor in accelerating the growth of the economy. As of 2000, there were 18,710 registered working factories in the state comprising of 18,160 private factories and 550 public undertakings. The total employment in those factories was 4,40,083 during 1999-2000. A quick estimate for the year 2000-2001 reveals that the growth rate in the manufacturing sector is 2.27 per cent now vis a vis 3.25 per cent of the earlier year. One of the major reasons for the poor performance of the indus-

try is the dismal show by the public sector undertakings.

It's somehow assumed that manufacturing sector is not the best served in Kerala. Statistics though show that manufacture of products, manufacture of basic chemical and chemical products and manufacture of machines and other equipments recorded an increase in the past year and that manufacture of paper and other products registered a fall. The potential of the food processing industry is a highly positive one. The state with a high level of technically qualified manpower could also look into the light engineering and other technological and allied industries.

There is enormous potential in the state as regards to raw materials and that the state in itself is a big consumer market is the crux of the situation. The question then to be asked is- as to why we don't process the raw materials here itself. Diversifying agriculture into high value crops and value additions, tapping the immense potential of IT and Biotechnology, further strengthening the tourism development appropriate to the needs for the state and promoting the new general small- scale industries and positioning the traditional industries in the proper place could form the basic elements of this strategy.

The focus now should be on facilitating private investments especially



those, which have maximum employment potential. Procedural delays have to be avoided and attitudinal changes should be brought about in our labour force, accompanied by strict enforcement of provisions against unfair labour practice as well as management practices. Kerala enjoys comparative advantage in sectors related to IT, Biotechnology, Food Processing and Tourism.


The cluster based approach to industrial development needs to be ushered. The traditional industries like coir, handloom and other village industries need to be repositioned according to the national and international demand for

the products. Up gradation of technology and techniques are critical for the sector's all round growth.

It is worth while to ponder on the statement made by the Minister for Industries Mr. P.K. Kunhalikutty in one of his recent interviews, "Traditional industries have to be retained but the traditional practices need to change". The emphasis here is on modernizing the technology and practices in the traditional industry so as to make them technically and commercially viable.

When we talk of growth drivers, the two terms that come to my mind are IT and Biotechnology. Though these terms have been clichéd, the potential of these areas are still to be exploited, as they have much to offer. Information Technology has taken the mantle of an efficient enabler in all walks of life and hence the emphasis is on the IT enabled services, which has mind-boggling numbers pertaining to its market potential.

Biotechnology with associated areas like informatics has been identified as a future growth driver. We are still at infancy as far as this sector is concerned and any delay in our initiatives to establish our own R & D facilities and promotion of research in our soil would prove costly in the context of the inevitable enforcement of IPR.

This R & D with adequate extension work leave a long-standing impact on the primary sector in terms of good species, productivity and markets. 



modern biotechnology. These range from the oldest alcohol production units to the modern units for recombinant hepatitis-B vaccine, erythropoietin immunodiagnostics and transgenic plants (BT cotton). The present total investment in biotechnology industry is estimated at Rs. 7000 crores distributed over around 900 units, out of which more than fifty percent are conventional units. The present demand for biotech products is about Rs. 9000 crores, which is expected to more than double to Rs. 24000 crores by 2010.

Let us now look at some of the



specific areas, which could be taken up for development in Kerala. In the agriculture sector, one could think of biofertilizers, biopesticides, tissue and floriculture. The last two can be focused on high value added species from the well-endowed biodiversity of the State, such as spices and a variety of medicinal plants. Biotechnology interventions can result in developing varieties, which provide higher yield, increased content of the desired component in the plant, rapid multiplication of elite and disease resistance varieties. Further value addition can be made by down stream processing to obtain a variety of products through setting up extraction

units. With its resources of fresh water rivers, lakes and backwaters and the long coastline, aquaculture and marine biotechnology can be seriously looked out as areas of development. In medical biotechnology, diagnostics, particularly immunodiagnostics and

Kerala has a fairly advanced research and development activities in institutions such as Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology, Tropical Botanical Garden and Research Institute, Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology, Indian Institute of Spices Research, Central Tuber Crop Research Institute, Regional Research Laboratory and Kerala Forest Research Institute. Apart from these, the Kerala Agricultural University and the departments of Life Sciences in Kerala, Cochin and Calicut Universities have various biotechnology research programmes. Industrial presence in biotechnology at the moment is not very large except for a few units for tissue culture and floriculture.

biopharmaceuticals, diversifying into choral drugs and recombinant vaccines could be taken up. Other products would include industrial enzymes and organic acids.

The present R&D infrastructure may be utilized advantageously for biotechnology development. Kerala has a fairly advanced research and

development activities in institutions such as Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology, Tropical Botanical Garden and Research Institute, Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology, Indian Institute of Spices Research, Central Tuber Crop Research Institute, Regional Research Laboratory and Kerala Forest Research Institute. Apart from these, the Kerala Agricultural University and the departments of Life Sciences in Kerala, Cochin and Calicut Universities have various biotechnology research programmes. Industrial presence in biotechnology at the moment is not very large except for a few units for tissue culture and floriculture.

The growth of biotechnology industry can be greatly accelerated by setting up of one or more biotechnology parks in the State which will integrate the technical knowledge and facilities in the research laboratories and the universities and supplement them by common facilities for technology incubation such as pilot plants and specialized instrumentation. KINFRA has already taken up development of a biotechnology park in the State in consultation with the Department of Biotechnology and with technical assistance from BCIL. The development of biotechnology industry can be further accelerate if technocrats, scientists and new entrepreneurs can be supported by venture capital assistance, linkages and interactions with research institutions for technology support, investment incentives, facilitation of regulatory approvals and guidance in IPR. Finance Bill 2003 has extended fiscal concession to BT on par with IT.

The Kerala Venture Capital Fund located in Kochi is already looking at some interesting biotechnology projects. Once a cluster of biotechnology industries comes up, it would be easier to attract investment from outside as in States such as Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, which have made considerable progress in both conventional and modern biotechnology. Kerala has a basic framework of industrial and intellectual resources, these coupled with financial and policy support can further strengthen development of the biotechnology sector.



Influence of monsoon winds

The monsoon winds which blow South - West from April to October and North-East from October to April, have influence on social, cultural and political life.



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The Southwest monsoon which lasts for three months, during the months of June, July and August is a special feature of Kerala. It is the monsoon winds which blow from the coast of Africa through the Arabian sea, and brings rain to the western coast of India especially to Kerala. The western ghats of Kerala which block the monsoon winds, play a major role in bringing rain to Kerala. The monsoon winds which blow south west from April to October and North-East from October to April, have influence on social, cultural and political life. It is this rain which is mainly responsible for the lush green vegetation. The months of July and August during which heavy rain occurs, and not suited for productive activities is treated as the month of *Karikkidakam* or a month of difficulties.

The influence of the monsoon rain is evident in the architecture of Kerala. Sloping roof is a special feature of our architecture. This style of architecture is seen in houses and buildings. Well known historian Dr. M.G.S. Narayanan

states that a Dravidian style developed in the temple construction, with sloping roof and it was used to protect the buildings from heavy down pour. Historians of Travancore have written that it was the monsoon rain of 1789 which prevented the March of Tippusulthan's all conquering army to the southern Kerala.

Ancient Kerala had been famous for her spices and it was its fame as the land of spices that brought foreign people and cultures. Certain reference in the Old Testament of the Bible contains information about cinnamon and spices which were the special products of Kerala. But lack of reliable accounts limits our knowledge on this subject. According to evidences Kerala's foreign contacts increased after the discovery of monsoon winds.

Hippalus wind

It is the Greek traveller Hippalus who claimed to have discovered the course of the monsoon winds. It is presumed that the discovery was made



by Hippalus in 45 AD. With the discovery of Hippalus the voyage by foreign travellers and trade through the Arabian sea became easier and less dangerous. The knowledge about the course of the monsoon winds was very useful to the traders and sailors from



discovery of the monsoon winds was very useful to the traders from Egypt, Syria, Greece, Rome and Arabia and it greatly facilitated the trade between Kerala and the western world.

Though the monsoon rain start during the first week of June in Kerala, the winds start blowing before that. The foreign travellers travelled in accordance to the course of the winds. In short the monsoon winds brought not only rains but also foreign travellers safely to Kerala. In May 1498 Zamorin of Kozhikode gave instruction to Vasco-da-gama to anchor his ships at Pantalayani Kollam (Pantalayani Kollam was an ancient port of northern Kerala. It is situated nearly 30km away from Kozhikode) before the arrival of the rain and travel to Kozhikode from there. The foreign traders and sailors who reached Kerala along with the monsoon winds, returned after four months along with the return of monsoon winds. They must have used the rainy season to collect spices and indulge in other trading activities. For this they always need the support of the local rulers to store their trade commodities and vessels. It is evident that foreign traders also got the support of the local rulers. The Syrian copper plates of 849 AD and Jewish copper plates of 1000 AD are the best examples of the liberal policy adopted by rulers of Kerala towards traders.

Syrian copper plates

The Syrian copper plates records the gifts made by the then Venad Governor, Ayyan Aikal under the initiative of a Syrian Christian leader Mar Sapir Iso in the fifth regal year of Sthanu Ravi Kulasekhara. The document provides information about the city of Kollam, the society of Kerala, the administration of the Chera dynasty, the period of Stahnuravi, the trade guilds of Kerala during those days etc. The Syrian copper plates stand as the best example for the religious tolerance shown by Sthanuravi towards other religions. The signatures put in the document like Hebrew and Pahlavi show that many foreign nationals

had arrived in Kerala during those days.

Jewish copper plates

The historically important Jewish copper plates of Kochi of 1000 AD was recorded during the period of Bhaskara Ravi Manukuladityan. This copper plate is a royal proclamation giving the status of Anchuvannam with seventy two special privileges to the Jewish chief Joseph Rabban. The privileges and concessions given to the Jewish chief was to get the full support of the Jewish community in Kerala during the period of Chola invasion.

There are many evidences to prove that Kerala's foreign trade increased and strengthened after the discovery of monsoon winds. The trade between India and the western Roman Empire increased or multiplied during the early centuries after Christ. The trade was conducted in luxury items which was very popular among the elite section of the Roman society. Pepper which was extremely popular in the western world was referred in Sanskrit as Yavana puja or favourite of the Yavanas. We can find number of references about pepper in Tamil songs. The Akananuru, a first or second century Tamil work mentions that the Yavanas came in large vessels carrying gold and they returned with pepper. Akam songs of 2,112,182 and 273 also make references about pepper cultivation. The song 126 of Puranannuru provides information about the ships which brought gold from Rome. Cargoes such as textiles of various kinds, spices and semiprecious stones were shipped from India to Egypt and from there to Rome.

Roman coins

The Roman coins discovered from the various parts of the country, especially from Kerala and the references about the trade in classical accounts and in early Tamil works are the evidences to prove the trade links that existed between Kerala and Rome. Large hoards of ancient Roman coins have been discovered from Eyyal in Thrissur, Kottayam in Kannur and

the west. The knowledge that if the vessels are moved according to the trends of the winds a traveller from the Gulf of Aden can reach the Western coast of India or Kerala. With this discovery it was possible to reach Kerala from the Gulf of Aden in 40 days. The

Paravur in Ernakulam. Coins of Roman rulers like Augustus (BC 24 - AD 14), Tiberus (14-37 AD), Cladius (41-54 AD) and Nero (54-68 AD) have been discovered from various parts of Kerala. These coins roughly covers a period of 250 years of ancient Roman history. The abundancy of Roman coins in Kerala shows the nature of brisk trade existed between the Roman empire and Kerala in the ancient period. The benefits of these trade was enjoyed by ancient Tamizhakam including Kerala. It was no wonder that Pliny the Roman historian complained of the luxury trade with India which draining the Roman treasury.

Ports

Hippalus winds also contributed to the origin of the ports. From the ancient time onwards ports that centred around the sea coast developed in Kerala. These ports were the results of the contacts with foreign traders who come to Kerala along with the Hippalus winds. Besides the references in early Tamil work, we can also find references about the ports of Kerala in classical accounts like Pliny (natural history – Latin, 1st century AD) Periplus of Erythrean sea (Greek – 1st century AD) Ptolemy's geography etc (In Greek, second century AD). The most important port referred in the Yavana literature is Muziris (identified as modern Kodungalloor). 'Muchiri' an ancient port of Kerala about which we find references in early Tamil works like Purananuru and Akananuru is identified as Muziris. Some of the foreign accounts call Muziris as emporium denoting it as an important trade centre, where various kinds of goods and articles were exchanged Pliny points out that Muziris was not so big enough for the ships to enter the port. He refers Muziris as the capital of Chera province. It is presumed that Muziris was an international trading centre where Phoenicians, Romans, Egyptians and Greeks came for trading activities. Besides Muziris, the important ports mentioned in the early Tamil works and classical accounts are Tindis (Tondi), Bares and Nelkinda. These ports which

flourished during the period early Tamil works are not properly identified. The chieftains of Tamizhakam paid great attention to develop these ports to increase the trade by the sea.

The important ports of the Perumal Era (800 AD – 1122 AD) were Kurakkenni, Kollam, Muyrikode (Kodungallur) and Panthalayani, Kollam. By the middle of the 13th century the importance of Kodungallur decreased and new ports originated. They were Kozhikode and Kochi. Even during the post Perumal period (1122-1498 AD) ports of Kerala like Kurakkenni Kollam, Kozhikode and Panthalayani Kollam were dominated by Chinese and Arab traders.

Hippalus winds also transformed Kerala into a cosmopolitan society. It was not foreign travellers and traders alone, who entered Kerala along with the monsoon winds. The winds also

established their first settlement at Muziris or Cranganore.

Christianity

According to a legend, Christianity was introduced in Kerala by St. Thomas, one of the apostles of Jesus Christ. Cosmas Indicopleustus, the Byzantine monk who came to the Kerala coast early in the 6th century AD testifies to the existence of a Christian community in Kerala. However, Syrian copper plates are the first authentic record which speaks about the existence of Christians in Kerala.

Islam

Islam also found its way into Kerala at an early period of its history. The religion of the Prophet might have been introduced here by the Arab traders in the 7th or 8th Century AD itself. But the progress of this religion was relatively slow. At the time of Sulaiman's visit (851 AD) there were not many Muslims on


The knowledge that if the vessels are moved according to the trends of the winds a traveller from the Gulf of Aden can reach the Western coast of India or Kerala. With this discovery it was possible to reach Kerala from the Gulf of Aden in 40 days. The discovery of the monsoon winds was very useful to the traders from Egypt, Syria, Greece, Rome and Arabia and it greatly facilitated the trade between Kerala and the western world.

brought their religions to Kerala. The religions which reached Kerala through the Arabian Sea were Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Kerala was one of the earliest territories in the Indian sub continent where these religions were first propagated.

The Jews

The first reference about the Jews are found in Tarisappalli copper plates of 849 AD and detailed information are available in the Jewish copper plates of 1000 AD. According to tradition Jews came to the Kerala coast in 68 AD, in order to escape from religious persecution at home. However, there is no direct evidence in support of this tradition. They might have come and

the Kerala coast. In the course of centuries Islam made progress as a religion. The Muslims were given special and favoured treatment by the Zamorins for the reasons of enlightened self-interest.

The peaceful co-existence of these religions made Kerala a truly pluralistic society. In short it was the monsoon winds or Hippalus winds which transformed Kerala society into a society of many religions and cultures. A peculiar feature of Kerala is the existence of the temples, mosques and churches together at one place in different parts of the State. This shows the religious harmony of this southern most state of India. 

Rural water supply Kasaragod gains



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Kasaragod District, the northernmost in Kerala, is one of the 67 pilot districts where the Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission (RGNDWM) launched its new reform oriented drinking water supply project. Launched in 2000, the Project in the district had a sleepy start initially, for want of adequate enabling environment and requisite institutional arrangements. The Government of Kerala and the District Panchayat of Kasaragod have succeeded to a great extent in scaling up the reform project in the last 8 -12 months. The schemes in the pilot Grama Panchayats are going into the community managed O & M phase (*Atmarpan*) and the construction of water supply systems in the II Grama Panchayats is progressing at a brisk pace. The *Atmarpan* of 8 schemes is completed and the Project is well on its way to commission 200 small-scale drinking water supply schemes by December 2003. The project has offered considerable lessons in how the synergies developed when robust and sincere institutions and people pull in unison in the right directions.

The Sector Reforms Pilot Projects launched by the RGNDWM is covering two districts – Kasaragod and Kollam – in Kerala. These Projects were initiated in 2001 and is expected to cover the needy areas of the districts over a period of three years. The Projects are being implemented through the concerned District Panchayats and Grama Panchayats. The approved budget of the



Source construction in progress – open well being constructed by the Theru BG in Pilicode GP – the construction is done through community contracting method, avoiding contractors.

Sector reforms pilot project

Sector Reforms Pilot Projects in Rural Water Supply and Sanitation was launched by the RGNDWM (Government of India) in 1999 – 2000 and is presently being implemented in 67 districts of 26 states. Reforms were introduced in rural water supply sector to institutionalize community participation in rural water supply program and to ensure sustainability of systems and sources. The RGNDWM recognized the need for a transformation from a target based, supply-driven approach which pays little attention to the actual practices and/or preferences of end users, to a demand-based approach where users get the service they want and for which they are willing to pay. This has following broader elements:

- Adoption of a demand-driven approach based on empowerment of villagers to ensure their full participation in the project planning, decision making in the choice of scheme design and management arrangement.
- Shift of Government's role from provider to facilitator.
- Focus on village level capacity building.
- Ensuring an integrated service delivery mechanism by streamlining the functions of the agencies involved in project implementation.
- Partial capital cost sharing and full O & M cost sharing by users.
- Taking up of conservation measures for sustained supply of water through rainwater harvesting and ground water recharge.

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Use of PRA tools – members of the Beneficiary Group participating in the preparation of a resource map of their village in Nileshwar GP – facilitated by the Training Division in Project Support Unit.

some of the issues brought out by the stakeholders at different levels.

Uduma Grama Panchayat

Out of 42 BGs, 27 have raised the 10% cash contribution in five months. 16 schemes have been approved by the District Level Expert Committee (as common to any other project under People's Planning) and the construction of 15 source wells (1 bore and 14 dug) have been completed well ahead of the rains. The initial skepticism over the 10% mandatory contribution has given way to participation and joy. The wage component of the project has benefited the poorer among the users. Wages up to Rs. 2000/- have been paid back and they have discovered that the initial cash payment (average Rs. 2000) typically collected in installments is worth every rupee.

Projects is Rs. 40 crores each with 90% of the budget being funded by the RGNDWM and the rest 10% is community contribution.

The 90% Project funds from RGNDWM are received directly by the District Panchayat in to a Bank account. The Government of India contribution is released to the GPs in installments and the GPs release it to the bank account of the BGs depending on the progress of the work. The Steering Committee approves guidelines regarding fund release in installments. The 10% beneficiary contribution is mobilized by the BGs and deposited in their bank account and spent in accordance with the scheme estimates and guidelines. The entire construction work is undertaken through the community contracting method in which the Executive Committee of the BG procures the necessary goods and services directly from the market and ensure a transparent process of spending the money.

A review visit across the Grama Panchayat and a dozen individual schemes in different stages (in O & M, construction completed and in progress) by the authors of this, explored the strengths and weakness of the Project and offered management solutions to

Institutional arrangement

The institutional arrangement for the implementation of SRP consists of following:

- Beneficiary Groups acting through a Beneficiary Committee
- Grama Panchayats acting through a Volunteer Resource Team (GVRT)
- The District Panchayat acting through the Project Support Unit (PSU)
- The State Level Steering Committee

The Beneficiary Groups (BGs) are registered associations of the users of the water supply schemes and their size varies from 30 to 100 families. It is vested with the most important responsibilities of planning, designing, constructing, operating and managing rural water supply facilities under the project. They contribute their share of capital investment and levy and collect water charges to meet the operation and maintenance expenses.

The GPs assist and co-ordinate the activities of the BGs. They assist the BGs in planning and implementing the schemes through the five members GVRT appointed under the project. The GPs will also play a coordinating role with the line departments in enabling speedy power connections and other clearances and supports.

The District Panchayat, the highest tier PRI, has the lead role in facilitating the implementation of the project. The Project Support Unit consisting of a multidisciplinary team of professionals, set up within the District Panchayat, is responsible for providing management support.

The project is implemented under the overall guidance and supervision of the State level Steering Committee for SRP chaired by the Principal Secretary of Water Resources Department. The SC comprises of Senior Officers, the elected Presidents of the District Panchayats, and the Team Leaders of the Project Support Units. The SC is responsible for providing a policy environment and monitoring the progress of the work.

With the inhabitants of the area fully cooperating with the scheme as their own money was at stake, the land came in no time. 2 3/4 cents was purchased from a neighbor who was paid Rs.10,500/- for that. The construction of well is over at a cost of Rs.1, 60,000. The total project is at Rs.14.5 lakhs and the President of the BG expects a monthly per capita operation cost of Rs.30 on electricity charges and operator wages. We advised a slight extra for unforeseen and force majeure. The possibilities of insuring the motors and electricity panel need to be explored. The nearby gully can be plugged using a VCB and recharge arranged to the source.

Kayyur – Cheemeni Grama Panchayat

The GP has completed construction of 5 schemes and commissioned 3 of them and moved into O & M of which we chose for visit the Keeranthode BG. The BG's main discussion as we met them (assembled under the Presidentship of Ms Padmini and Secretaryship of Mr. Gopalan) is the user charge collection and management under O & M phase.

The PSU has brought out detailed formats for the book keeping during O & M phase. The BG has shown initiative to duplicate the O & M registers, which show billing and meter reading for households. The pump operator's log is ready for inspection and the first month's electricity bill is received. It shows a usage of 958 KWHs. And a bill of Rs.1870 is charged. The pump operator has been hired at Rs.300 per month and that means that each of the 65 families have to pay Rs.33.40 as O & M for the first month in operation.

The twice a day pumping needs 16 units of power. The pump operator is also recording the household meters and levying the tariff. Rs.35 is the minimum tariff being paid by a household here. Water quality is being ensured through a chlorinator. The scheme was completed at an expense of Rs.8,30,000.

It is clear that the community facilitators have debated the project thread bare to convince the people about the usefulness and sustainability of this

community managed water supply system. They are fast to deny that the Project has anything to do with World Bank Money. 'It is all from India Government', the Secretary underlines with punch. (The GP is known for domination from left parties who in this case are championing this people driven project). The champions of rural water supply through community participation may experiment with other sustainable models of service delivery in future.

Belloor Grama Panchayat

We had a detailed interaction with the GP level GVRT of five young persons in the GP office. They have joined the project in November 2002 following their selection by the PSU. Mr. Vinod, the Community Engineer, with his colleagues (Mr. Prahlad, Sub Engineer, Mr. Rajesh, Community Asst. En-

difficult task. The cash mobilization is slow. The sparse populations amidst areca plantations call for wider distribution network and higher per capita costs. Not being exposed to, a newer technology like rainwater harvesting is difficult for the local people to accept. The volunteers feel that the scope for "models", showing casing the technological options is required here. The existing working and dysfunctional options are mainly hand pumps (bores). We pointed out that providing repair training for hand pumps could have been an excellent beginning point. No, the BGs want piped domestic connections. Hand pump maintenance has been rather ignored. We discovered a roadside hand pump, which is pumping brownish water from the GI casing bore pipes.

The 15 active BGs have together



Sri. Moideenikka, Secretary of Beejadakatte BG in Belloor GP, explaining the functioning of the "metre" he has installed under Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation system for measuring the progress in payment of community contribution. (It is a bar chart developed under PME showing the payments made by each member of the BG towards the 10% capital cost contribution for the scheme).

gineer, Mr. Balakrishnan, Community Mobilizer and Sumati, Community Accountant) briefed on their progress so far. In the hectic months of work, they were able to identify 42 clusters from where BGs could be formed. Demand generated in about 15 BGs who are actively into implementation phase now. 27 BGs are in various stages of planning and given the terrain of the BG area (hills and plantations), it is a very

contributed Rs.3, 65,000 towards own share for the source development alone. It requires the BGs to fully assess the seeking out of a perennial source for them to further bet their own money in developing entire supply systems.

As the sources got confirmed through last summer, 13 BGs have been helped by the PSU Hydro geologist to finalize their sources. Out of 15, 5 opted for open draw wells and of them 2 failed

to give sufficient yields. 10 BGs who have zeroed in on the bore wells have clubbed and are developing sources.

We proceed to *Bijadakattee* Beneficiary Group, where we met with Moideenikka, the BG Secretary. Why he has set up even a small office near his erstwhile pan shop.

He narrates the travails he had in getting 49 families together in the scheme. "We got registered on 6th December 2002 and started collecting Rs.200/- per head per month". In between some households became impatient and were reluctant to proceed with

local languages (Malayalam and Kannada) is the first one. The household capital cost contribution raised, is plotted on a bar chart. A third shows a pre-debated and settled time line for all activities in the scheme cycle and a fourth the actual progress of construction with the delays and defects pointed out.

Sure, this *meter* is the most important meter – Mr.Moideen points to the household wise cash collection charts. Once they were installed and we plotted it from the BG registers, the households who were not contributing ad-



The 4.25 lakh litre capacity underground storage tank being constructed in the campus of the District Panchayat office in Kasaragod for the model roof top rain water harvesting scheme.

the collection since they genuinely doubted whether Mr. Moideen's grandiose plans would even fly. He promptly returned some members (who were most reluctant) their money and proceeded with the team to source selection.

Mr.Moideen is an embodiment of the empowerment the project has brought in. The people's water movement is bringing out the best in them in this remote corner of Kerala. He points to his walls where the *meters* of people's participation are hung. They are simple visual aids developed by the PSU as part of the Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation system being piloted in the Project with the facilitation of the Consultant from WSP-SA, an organization providing technical assistance to the project.

A summary of project estimates in

equately came forward. It was the better off households, which always dithered. Now they paid lump sums and boosted it up to 10 per cent, the requisite of his estimated 9 lakhs.

Mr.Moideen and his friends have become ardent champions of the people's water movement. When their scheme starts to chug water out, his skeptics are sure to approach him for tap connections. "I am going to tell them to wait for a month or two'- he jokes in lighter vein. "They will have to pay twice our capital costs. After all, we took the risks".

Some issues and observations

- With about 200 such small water supply schemes nearing completion in 2003-04 itself, Kasaragod's 17 (out of 39) GPs are going to be beneficiaries of the SRP.
- The southern GPs are mostly the

beneficiaries of the project. The northern ones are beneficiaries of the Kerala Water Authority's larger schemes. So the District Panchayat has decided to spread the schemes south subject to the granting of second and third installments (total expenditure as of now is only about Rs. 7 crores) by RGNDWM. All the GPs in this district will come under the new service delivery model, if funds are available.

- Technology options do not as of now show a healthy mix of innovative and proven technology options. The reluctance on the part of many beneficiary groups to adopt technology options other than the wells and piped household supply system points to the weakness in the IEC. The transformation of the community engineering professionals to economists and sociologists remains to be accomplished.
- The scaling up of the new technology option of rain water harvesting is attempted in the huge, 4.25 lakh litre rainwater harvesting tank being completed in the campus of the District Panchayat complex in Kasaragod at an estimated cost of Rs. 3.69 lakhs. The demonstration effect hopefully will spill over to the BGs and more and more of them will opt for this low cost and high quality drinking water source.
- The project is getting good support from the Panchayati Raj Institutions in the district, which is manifested, in the functional freedom being enjoyed by the PSU and GVRT personnel in project implementation. The District Panchayat and the GPs have joined hands in achieving speedy progress to make up for the lost time in the initial stages.
- Integration of SRP programme with the Total Sanitation Campaign remains a mirage. Despite the implementing agency level integration, the projects are not being reviewed together. There is considerable compartmentalization and even the TSC / SRP teams sit separately. Using the integration platform of

Under the Modernising Government Programme too, RBM is based on the following process:

- the definition of strategic goals which provide a focus for action;
- the specification of expected results which contribute to these goals and align programmes, processes and resources behind them;
- ongoing monitoring and assessment of performance, integrating lessons learned into future planning;
- improved accountability based on continuous feedback to improve performance.

In short, RBM will focus on tangible results to be delivered under each of the MGP initiatives. The methodology will clearly be based on making the programme focus constantly on the beneficiaries or recipients of the public service. This will clearly be at all times related to the purpose or objective of

Later this evolved into what is known as the Logical Framework (LFA) for the Governments and Public Sector agencies in the seventies. LFA is an analytical, presentational and management tool which can help planners and managers to analyse the existing situation during project preparation; establish a logical hierarchy of means by which objectives will be reached; identify the potential risk to achieving the objectives and to sustainable outcomes; establish how outputs and outcomes might best be monitored and evaluated; present a summary of the project in a standard format; and monitor and review projects during implementation. The product of this analytical approach is the matrix (the Logframe), which summarises what the project intends to do and how, what the key assumptions are, and how outputs and outcomes will be monitored and

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Origins of Results Based Management

The whole idea of focusing on objectives in the implementation of programmes began in the sixties. This is found in the work of the renowned management guru Peter Drucker. This culminated in the evolution of a technique called Management by Objective (MBO), that became popular in the sixties and still continues to be used in many public sector organisations.

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Results Based Management was in some sense the next step in the evolution to project management methods that focused on results more than on inputs, while keeping it simple for use. RBM began to be adopted rather vigorously by different countries in different forms in the 80's and 90's – e.g. UK, New Zealand, Australia, China, Singapore, Malaysia. Increasingly, it is now becoming an accepted approach for greater efficiencies and effectiveness in Governments and public sector.

In the next article, we will complete the discussion on Results Based Management Methodology as the underlying project management tool for MGP and review the preparations that are taking place in MGP for launching the RBM based planning tools for use in Government.

(To be continued)

Self help groups to family circles

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The Neighbourhood family circle is a novel concept conceived and developed by the Kerala State Literacy Mission. The philosophy behind this unique idea is that the development of an individual cannot be achieved in isolation. An individual is part of the family and as such his/her overall development depends on the well-being of the family as a whole.

Self Help Groups (SHGs) are, no doubt, an effective medium for involving individuals in the developmental activities to the point that they themselves take the initiative. They provide opportunities to work jointly in support of the common goal of improving the quality of life of the poor. SHGs are considered to be a powerful tool for alleviating poverty through empowerment of women.

But experiences have shown that empowerment of one member of a family alone will not lift the family from poverty and deprivation. For instance take the case of a family where the wife is member of a SHG. She has a regular thrift saving and also is engaged in some income generating activity. But her husband is a drunkard and snatches away whatever she earns. Her eldest son is a juvenile delinquent. Under such circumstances, the empowerment of one individual may not lead to the welfare

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Self help groups to family circles

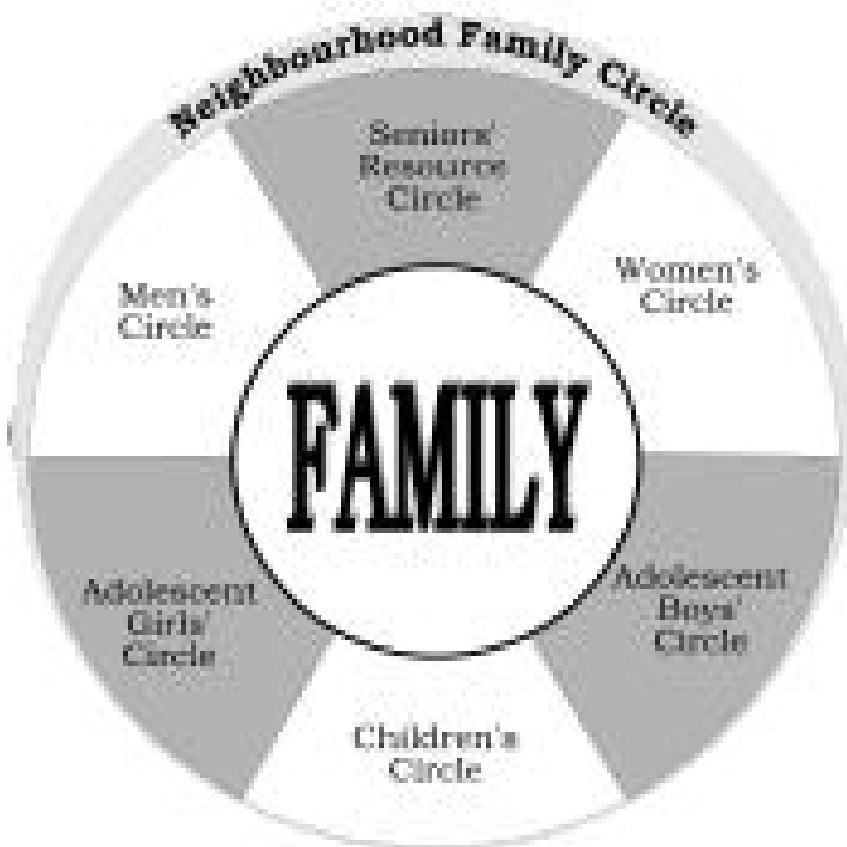
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of the entire family.

Under the NFC there will be separate community circles (groups) for each member of a family. Community and family circles aim at the overall development of a family and not the development of particular individual alone.

Children's circle

Children in the age group of 6-12 belonging to neighbourhood families can become members of the Children's circle. It will have a five member management committee consisting of President, Secretary and three members. One member will be in-charge of

education/studies, another one will be in charge of socio-cultural activities and the third one will look after sports. Out of the five members two are to be girls.

The objectives of children's circle are protection of child rights, development of inborn talents, cultural activities, sports activities, life skill education and form school society linkage.

Adolescent circles

Adolescent circles are meant for teenage boys and girls in the age group of thirteen to nineteen. Just like Children's circle, Adolescent circle will also have a five member management committee consisting of President, Secretary and three members. One

member will be in charge of health and adolescent issues, the second one will be in-charge of socio-cultural activities and third one will be in-charge of life skill education. Adolescent circle tries to solve adolescent issues and also develop life skill education, cultural action, sports activities, talent creation, career counselling and promoting participatory approaches.

Men's circle

All males in the age group of 20-60 can be members of Men's circle. The Men's circle will also have a management committee consisting of President, Secretary and three members. One of the committee members will be in charge of literacy and continuing education, the second one will be in-charge of income generating activities and the third one will look after health and socio-cultural activities.

Women's circle

Women's circle will have the same composition as that of the Men's circle. It deals with women's issues, empowerment, resource mobilisation, income generation, quality life, interest promotion, literacy, continuing education, cultural activities, health and hygiene, gender equity, promoting decision making, social justice, human rights, participatory approaches etc.

Resource circle

Resource circles are meant for senior citizens (grandpas and grandmas). The resource group will provide resource support to other circles. The knowledge and experiences acquired by the senior citizens can be profitably used by other circle members. The Resource circle will not only benefit other circles but also in turn provide a sense of worthiness to the senior citizens who are subjected to neglect and are often left uncared for. So the formation of a Resource circle will help combat the feeling of alienation and forlorn. This group works in this areas lies, Resource support, Caring for children, Community leadership, Programmes for aged, Conflict management, Entertainment

Neighbourhood family circle

The Neighbourhood family circle is the apex body of different community circles. The President/Secretary of each circle shall be the members of the NFC. It will provide a common venue for 15-

20 families in a neighbourhood to discuss their common issues and find out solutions. This will also help foster amity as well as unity among different families living in a particular locality. In Kerala's context these families may belong to different religion, caste or political affiliation. Any attempt to foster unity among different communities living in an area is to be welcomed especially when communal harmony is at stake in the country. Long term development plan, Resource mobilisation, Responsive governance, Healthy politics, Amity and communal harmony, Resource support, Community leadership, Family networking, Health and sanitation, Quality of life improvement, Promoting participatory approaches and Socio-cultural activities are the subjects to be dealt in this circle.

Why circle?

The members of each group are to sit in a circle whenever they meet. This is very important because a circle has a number of advantages, vis-a-vis the conventional seating arrangement where people often sit in a row.

- *A circle helps each member to see each other's face.*
- *It facilitates easy communication.*
- *It ensures the participation of each and every member. Unlike any other gathering, in a circle a participant cannot hide behind another member.*
- *It promotes leadership by providing opportunities to express one's views without any inhibition.*
- *It creates a feeling of oneness and amity among the participants.*
- *It helps promote group dynamism.*

Each circle is expected to meet once in a week. The day, time and venue will be decided by the respective circle. Every meeting will have an agenda prepared by the Secretary and approved by the Management committee.

The role of Prerak or facilitator is to facilitate interaction among members of the circle. He is not a 'all knowing person'. The role of a facilitator is to play the part of a co-learner to create an environment where everyone can learn and contribute as equally as

possible. His main task is to keep the interactive dialogue on track.

An ideal circle should be as assembly of members of diverse backgrounds not run by a particular facilitator, rather by the participating members themselves continuously rotating the facilitatory role. If any specific information is lacking a specialised person could be invited to join the circle to enrich the discussion on that particular topic.

What do Family Circles aim to achieve?

The NFC is basically a circle wherein the community people are both participants and facilitators. It need not be in any way structured - in the sense that it has to have certain number of people, time frame, infrastructure, or predefined programmes. Rather it would be a gathering of all walks of life, both men and women, children and adolescents interact through a participatory manner (PLA Process) aimed at finding out the root causes of different social, cultural, economic and political problems.

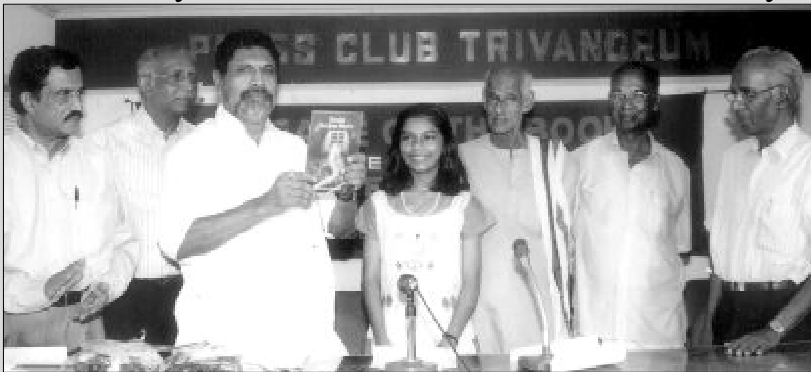
Doing a societal analysis to analysis the root causes of various problems is very important. It is crucial to look at how the particular problem is affecting different classes. What factors (e.g. economic, political, social, cultural) are responsible, which factor or cause is addressable etc.

By asking "but why" against each cause identified by the participants a more nuanced and deeper level of analysis will emerge, hopefully leading to a more in-depth understanding of the issue. It is true that by doing such an analysis a number of causes might come up which appear to be impossible to solve unless the whole structure of society is radically reshaped. Nevertheless this analysis would be useful at least to identify what the institutions are and who are the people who are supposed to be accountable to the people in the community.

Evidently, Community circles cannot tackle or solve all problems as they have limited capacity. Rather they can be considered as platforms for identifying the causes of problems, and it is the role of the civil society and pressure group organisations to address the causes, linking with rights and mobilising the community as whole.



Fousiya Yoonus makes history



Mr. G. Karthekeyan Minister for culture releases the book, 'Through the open window' at Press club Thiruvananthapuram. Also seen are Dr. M. R. Thampan, George Samual, poets Fousiya Yoonus, K. E. Mammen, Adoor Balan, Dr. N. A. Karim.

The thirteen year old Fousiya Yoonus, an eighth standard student of St. Thomas Residential School, Thiruvananthapuram creates history in the field of English literature by publishing her maiden book of poems, 'Through the Open Window'. A collection of twenty two poems, the book narrates the imagination of a child about the world around. The collection starts with the poem, 'A day of a child' which depicts the reflections of a child's mind undergoing several changes within a day. The subjects chosen by Fousiya are of varied nature. Mr.G. Karthikeyan, Minister for Culture released the book by handing over the same to Dr.N.A. Karim, Dr.M.R. Thampan, Dr.A.M. Unnikrishnan, K.E. Mammen, George Samuel and Adoor Balan spoke on the occasion. With the publication of this book Fousiya Yoonus became the youngest poetess in English language from Kerala.

INSTITUTION

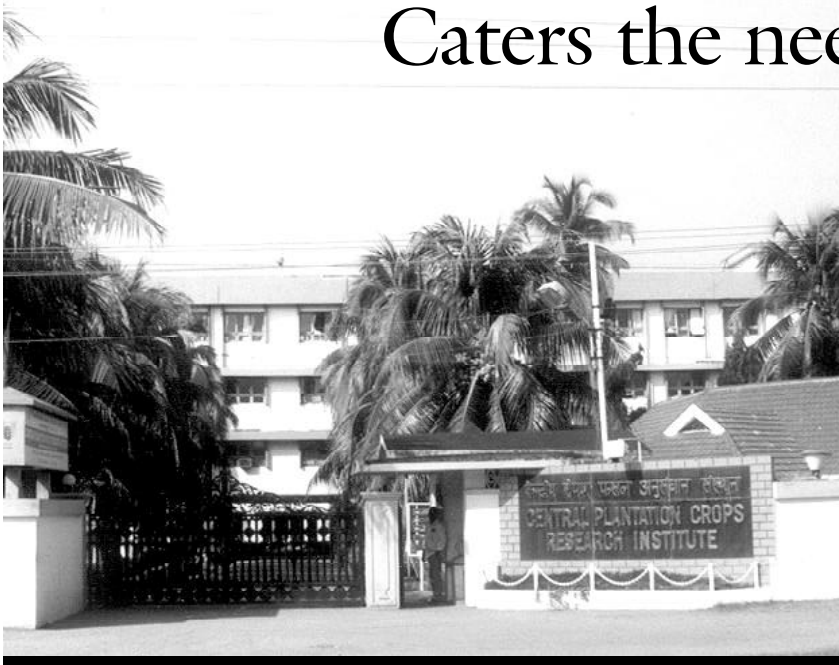
Recently the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI) has been awarded with the most prestigious 'Sardar Patel Outstanding ICAR Institutions Award' for the year 2002. The award includes a citation and Rs. one lakh.

germplasm of the mandate crops (313 in coconut, 140 in arecanut and 137 in cocoa): release of four high yielding cultivars and three hybrids of coconut with average yield of more than 100 nuts per palm per year among which Choughat Orange Dwarf is a tender nut cultivars most popular among growers, four high yielding varieties of arecanut with average yield of more than 10 kg ripe nuts per palm per year; development of four hybrids of cocoa which are in

pioneering investigations on mechanism of drought tolerance and identification of such cultivars and hybrids as well as development of cost effective drought amelioration methods; designing various farm machineries comprising of copra moisture meter, solar-cum electrical dryer, copra dryer for small holder, coconut and arecanut de-huskers and coconut climbing device; and standardisation of technologies for product diversification such as coconut

CPCRI

Caters the needs of farmers



chips and snow ball tender nut.

Great emphasis is being given for technology dissemination through Krishi Vigyan Kendras at Kasaragod and Kayamkulam, Institute Village Linkage Programme as well as Agricultural Technology Information Centre which caters to the needs of farmers through single window delivery system for planting materials and products, advisory services on production technologies, technology capsules in the form of publications etc. The interface programmes on problem identification and formulation of effective management strategies with the active involvement of State Department of Agriculture, Kerala Agricultural University and farming community have received wide appreciation among all the concerned. CPCRI is also giving thrust on women empowerment through technology literacy and entrepreneurship development among unemployed rural youth.

The institute has an effective linkage with both national and international agencies like NATP, DBT, CDB, COGENT, ADB etc for collaborative research. The CPCRI is well equipped with infrastructure facilities on par with international standards to conduct upstream and anticipatory research on priority areas of coconut, arecanut and cocoa with changing world scenario. ■

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CPCRI is a premier institute established under Indian Council of Agricultural Research at Kasaragod, Kerala in 1970 to conduct research on coconut, arecanut and cocoa. It has three regional stations and four research centres in different locations of the country. It formulates and implements multidisciplinary, inter-disciplinary and disciplinary research programmes.

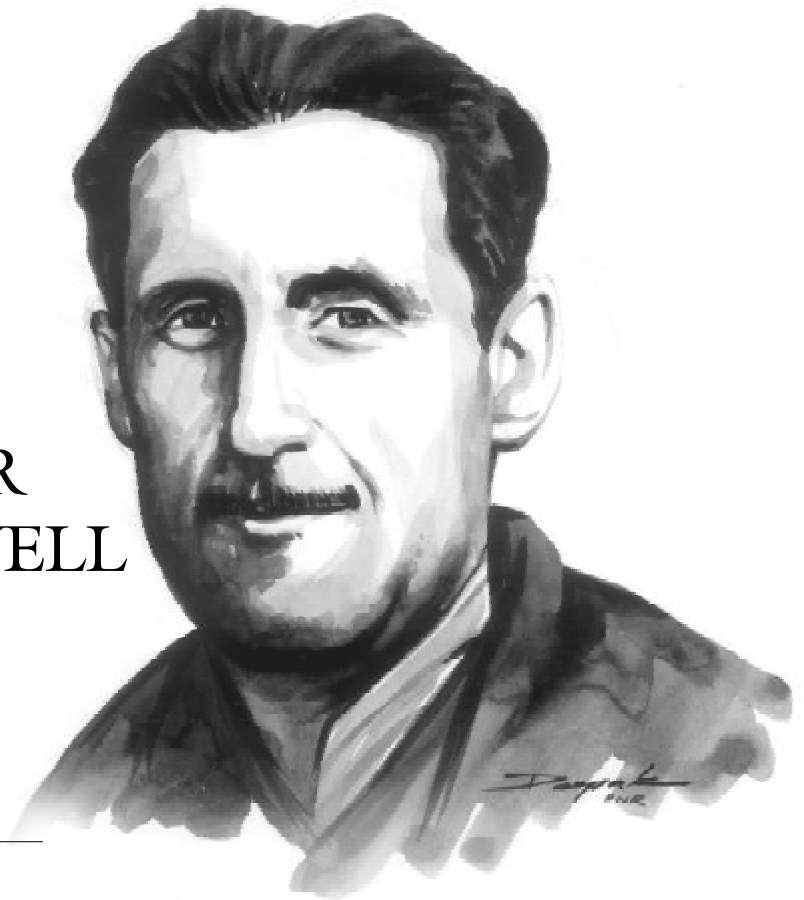
Significant achievements of the institute include – collection and conservation of world's largest

different stages of evaluation; evolving suitable cropping system models including mixed farming for more income generation; standardisation of agro-techniques on nursery management, irrigation and nutrient management; development of effective methods for recycling and utilisation of on-farm biomass through vermin-composting and mushroom production; studies on important pests and diseases including their casual organisms and developing most effective integrated chemical plant protectants; carrying out

FROM ERIC BLAIR TO GEORGE ORWELL



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This is the centenary year of India-born, controversial and complex British writer George Orwell a few of whose telling coinages have become part of the language of the political discourse of even of those who do not know Orwell and his writings. His father was in Bengal Civil Service. His real name was Eric Arthur Blair. After his schooling at Eaton, Eric Blair tried his hand at several odd jobs, like working in a bookshop, running a grocery store in England and policing as a member of Imperial Police Force in Burma before he left for Spain to fight Franco on the Republican side in the Civil War there. He signed the register in the Lenin barracks as Eric Blair, grocer, when he enlisted himself in the brigade at Barcelona.

Eric Blair returned from Spain seriously wounded in the war. For some time after his recovery Blair lived the life of a tramp under the name P.S. Burton to experience want and poverty first hand and develop his own philosophy of socialism. The result of this was his first book, **Down and Out in Paris and London**. This was quickly followed by his first novel **Burmese Days** (1934). During these days he wrote a number of highly original and provocative essays and review mainly in the then prestigious publication, **New Statesman**.

A fervent crusader for socialism he gave passionate expression to his ideas. **The Road to Wigan Pier** (1937) describes the deplorable plight of the poor and the unemployed. **Homage to Catalonia** (1938) records his

experiences in the Spanish Civil War in which he fought on the Republican side and got severely wounded. He continued to write novels, **Keep the Aspidochelone Flying** (1936) and **Coming up for Air** (1939). We see the beginning of the writer of his two later masterpieces, **Animal Farm** (1945) and **Nineteen Eighty Four** (1949) in the two earlier works particularly, in **Coming Up for Air** which is an impassioned defense of individual freedom against growing and enveloping impersonal forces in an industrialised society.

The two political novels for which George Orwell is now widely known make a creatively convincing case against totalitarianism of any kind, both of the left and the right. The former book is in the form of a satire on the Soviet society which in his eyes, had, by that time, become a vicious totalitarian regime. This book was widely used by the Anglo-American camp during the Cold War period in their no-holds-barred political propaganda against Soviet Communism. **Nineteen Eighty Four** on the other hand gives a frightening picture of a nightmare - Utopia of the future. Had Orwell lived long enough to witness the post-Cold War political developments in the world he would have been shocked and disillusioned by the far more cruel trampling upon the rights of poorer peoples and nations of the world.

George Orwell died of tuberculosis in 1950. Just three months before his death the fast sinking Orwell married his

much younger second wife Sonia Brownell on the hospital bed. Instead of his dressing gown Orwell wore a smoking jacket and sat propped up in the hospital bed for the marriage ceremony. After her husband's death Sonia played the role of the literary widow and the literary executrix of her husband in a rigid manner and took up editorial responsibilities of two literary journals. In his last will Orwell made shortly before his death he had specified that no biography of him should be written. With the growing posthumous interest in his writings it became almost impossible for Sonia to prevent biographical attempts on the part of many eager writers of lives to piece together all kinds of facts and anecdotes to create unreliable memoir and sketches. Though at first she strictly withheld copyright materials from those enterprising


Biographies and critical writings on his works followed there after almost in quick succession. Now with the centenary celebration mood there is an over enthusiastic effort on the part of literary editors and publishers to bring out new materials on this cultural icon of a period. Political journalists are in the forefront. A couple of new solid biographies have been published recently. Earlier a twenty volume **Complete Works of George Orwell** had been published by Peter Davison with a companion piece, **George Orwell: A Literary Life** by the same scholarly editor of the **Complete Works**. A lot of new materials has hitherto been dug out by a few adventurous biographers but the readers seem to be unsatisfied in the matter of his personal life of this unconventional man particularly his sex life which is still very tantalising from the



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biographical hunters, later she realised that it would be better to commission an authentic biography than to allow unsatisfactory accounts of her husband gaining currency in books like **The Unknown Orwell** by Peter Stansky and William Abrahams published in 1972. Therefore Sonia chose Bernard Crick, the then Professor of Politics at Birkbeck College, London to write a biography of Orwell and put all materials at his disposal. The result was Crick's **George Orwell: A Life**, an exceptionally fine biography which is unique in the treatment of his difficult subject. But Sonia died in 1980 shortly before the publication of the biography which she was looking forward to.

facts that have already come out. The question whether everything Orwell has written is of uniform high standard that justifies the publication of a twenty volume complete works remains unanswered.

The immortality of Orwell lies mainly in the fact that many of his phrases particularly in the last two of his works have become part of the language as in the case of Dickens and other classical writers. "Big Brother is watching you", "Some animals are more equal than others" etc. are used by several even in our country without knowing the fact that they are the inventions of a remarkably complex man with a highly sensitive political mind who almost got himself killed in his fight against the Fascism of Franco in Spain of 1930s. In a way he was the "Wintry conscience of a generation" as V.S. Pritchett put in his now oft-quoted obituary piece in **New Statesman**. It was Orwell's publisher Victor Gollancz, who insisted on the pseudonym, George Orwell when young writer, Blair was toying with the idea of adopting a new name as writer. Blair had a few other fancy names in his mind which were firmly ruled out by Victor Gollancz. Thus Eric Arthur Blair became the immortal George Orwell of the literary world. 

Thousands of devotees and tourists trod on the dusty ghat road through the dense forests of the Periyar Tiger Reservoir, 13 km off Kumily on Chitra Pournami Day every year for paying obeisance to Kannaki, the presiding deity of Mangaladevi hills temple.

Situated about 4500 feet above the mean sea level, this century old historic forest temple is thrown open to the public only once in an year, for Chitra Pournami festival, organized jointly by the Kerala, Tamil Nadu Governments.

Chitra Pournami at Mangaladevi

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Kannaki, the epic heroine, immortalised by Elankovadikal in his classic “Chilappathikaram”, is the embodiment of women’s chastity, determination and revenge. Entangled in history, legend, epic and folklores, Kannaki has later transformed as an incarnation of the Almighty.



A bone of contention between the two states, this historic monument has weathered the fury of many a dynasty and time. What remain now are some ramshackled structures that are tell-tales of negligence. Believed to have built by the Chera King, Chera Chenguttuvan, it dates back to medieval style of architecture. Apart from Kannaki, idols of Lord Siva, Ganapathy and Goddess Durga are believed to be there in the ‘mandapams’. Thailians’ version is that the idols are that of Kannaki, Kannaki Matha, Sundaresan and Ganapathy.

The temple, built by granite / stone slabs, have inscriptions (‘vattezhuthu’) and images of elephants, peacocks, dancers etc. An abandoned tunnel is seen inside the ‘Sreekovil’, which the old-timers believe, leads to Madurai temple.

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Born to a wealthy family in Poompuhar, the capital of the then Chola dynasty, the young, pretty girl, Kannaki tied the nuptial knot with Kovalan, son of an affluent trader. Enticed by a Devadasi girl, Madhavi, he soon deserted Kannaki. But that did not last long. A repentant Kovalan returned home. Kannaki, still waiting for him with prayers, accepted him, who had lost everything. The reunited couple set out to Madurai, the capital of Pandya dynasty. She had offered one of her anklet for sale, to start a new life there. He approached a goldsmith and he was offered higher price. It was then that one of the golden anklets of the queen was found missing, which was stolen by none other than the goldsmith. Kovalan was made a scapegoat. The King's henchmen, stamped as the robber, being tipped off by the goldsmith, beheaded him.

A shocked Kannaki stormed to the palace and broke her anklet. The diamonds scattered from it proved that it was not the stolen one. The King fallen dead, unbearable to the cruelty of killing an innocent 'praja'. Still enraged, Kannaki cut off her left breast, chanted mantras, and roamed the city thrice, before setting it on fire. Madhurai came up in flames. Chaste women, elders, young children, saints, cattle and Brahmins were, however, spared.

Burning in ire and revenge, a rancorous Kannaki walked 14 days and nights sans water or food and finally reached the peak of a hill at

Thiruchenkunnu (now, Mangaladevi) on the banks of Periyar in Cheranadu. The Almighty God, pleased by her chastity, devotion, vigor and strength, showered blessings on her. They descended there on a chariot with the enlivened Kovalan. She was then raised to the heavenly abode. Thus spoke the legend.

It is also popularly believed that Kannaki was Lord Siva's daughter. Attukalamma, and Kodungalluramma are said to be the incarnations of Kannaki. The 'thottampatts' associate Kannaki with these Goddesses.

Priests for the Chitra Pournami festival are selected every year, by Tahsildars of Peerumedu and Theni. Tamil priest offer poojas at Kannaki Kovil in Tamil and Malayali counterpart chant mantras at Durga Kovil.

The festival began with 'Vanapooja' in the morning vee hours, came to a close with 'Durga pooja' in the evening.

This year foreigners were denied permission to visit Mangaladevi for the first time. Officials fear an influx of tourists to these picturesque hills, where the panoramic beauty of Tamil villages and towns could be glimpsed.

Due to its environmental fragility, police and forest officials of both states took a constant vigil on devotees and tourists. Sound horns and trumpets were banned inside the forest and temple, as it would frighten the Nilgiri tahrs (varayad). Plastic bags were also not allowed.

When the sunsets and the last pilgrim emerge out of the Ambadi forest gate, Kannaki is left alone, marooned in the wilderness, uncared for. Nay, the elephants, tars, tigers, serpents, birds, the flora and fauna of the evergreen forest would give her a company till the next Chitra Pournami!



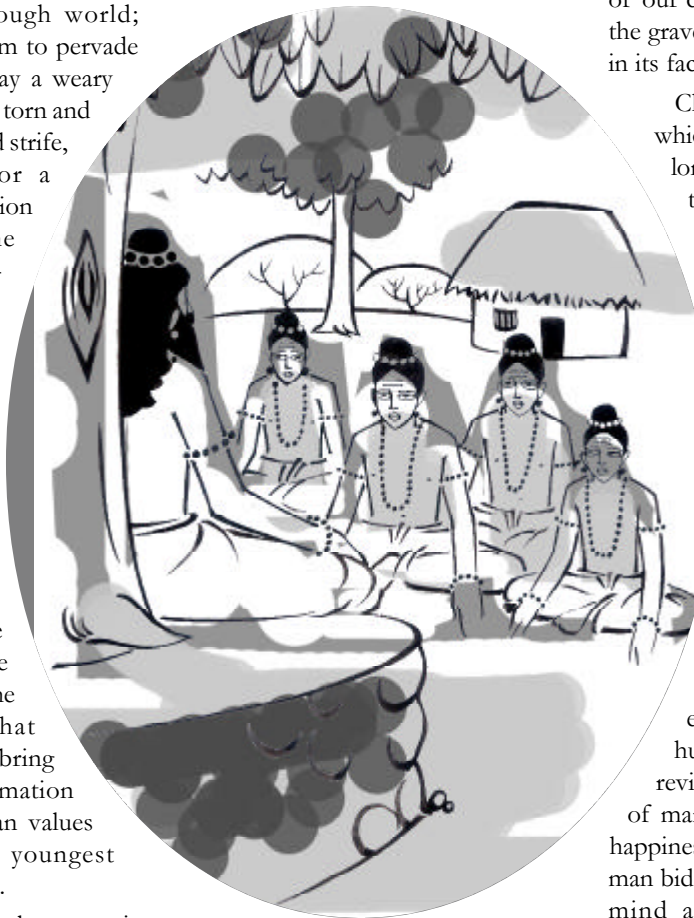
Transformation of society through spiritual education

Mankind is passing through an age of fleeting values with the accent on materialism. Life has become an artificial embellishment. But when this mask is discarded by a single jostle of this rough world; darkness and mystery seem to pervade everywhere. We find today a weary world, shattered, battered, torn and shrunken with conflict and strife, desperately looking for a succour. The cultural erosion that is a menace to the present society is the by-product of a spiritual aridity. This helpless condition must be changed. Societies must undergo transformation in a direction that the elements of societies understand and practise higher values of life.

History confirms that education plays a vital role in the transformation of the societies. The need of the hour is to explore that education which would bring about the right transformation that shall inculcate human values into the minds of the youngest architects of the mankind.

Education sans spiritual content is the cause for the evils of society. Ignorance of the self has to be dispelled from the minds of the children by providing them the right guidance to differentiate the real from the transient. If the conscience of man is muddled, the ropes of rules and ethics cannot tie him because the spirit of all legality remains firmly grounded in the conscience of man. So education must aim at yielding honest and truthful individuals.

Lack of spiritual knowledge makes the child grope in the dark and alienated from his self, his society and environment. His mind would suffer from indecision and his actions



become aimless. In the hands of a compassionate and creative teacher, school is safer for the child than the outside world where he can kindle his spiritual rays.

In the entire educational system, intellect and intuition, science and spirituality, living and learning have to be promoted in a balanced manner. Otherwise no miracle can save the world from the catastrophe that is looming

large on the horizon. The world is at a turning point and it is high time to re-evaluate our existing practices and explore innovative ways to solve our problems. It is only within the four walls of our classrooms that we can address the grave problems that stare humanity in its face.

Character is the foundation upon which rises the spiritual edifice. As long as one is a slave of the senses, talk of spirituality is a mockery.

There are millions of educated men and women in our free India today, but many of them are inwardly not free. They have not attained the excellent human development of which poet Tagore sang in his Gitanjali, "Into that haven of freedom, O Father, let my country awake!"

The external devices cannot bring about the psychological understanding and the spiritual unity that are essential for the happiness of humanity. If the idea of spiritual revival is to become the future goal of mankind's pursuit for peace and happiness, it will be possible only when man bid fare to build it on the plane of mind and spirit and with all the appliances of technology which are available to him to implement that psychological and spiritual revival. Spiritual revival is the only solution that can be offered to alleviate and even eliminate the leaping flames of world mysteries and tensions that are threatening to consume humanity. Only then humanity can breathe that celestial vital air of lasting peace and happiness for which man was ushered into existence. 