

Being seventy

Is ageing a sin?

One more social evil is taking roots in our society

-Ageism-hatred towards old age.

Our parents gave us everything they had.

Time tracks to launch into life to conquer the world.

But do we 'know' them?

Even inside our homes, they are outside the threshold
of our minds.

Shrivelled and desolate in the fog of
non-remembrance and the downpour
of rejection and the dog days of hatred.

Has any one loved you more than
your parents?

What did you give them in return?

Ageing is not a sin.

Recognise the sinful ways of ageism....



LALS OACHIRA

December 30, 1999.

**Before a famous temple of middle Travancore,
Time 10 a.m.**

A car stops at the vicinity of the temple. Four people come out. The old lady among them is above 80 and has difficulty to walk. The man and woman accompanied her help her move. Seemingly, they are the old lady's son and daughter-in-law or daughter and son-in-law. The other one is a kid. When too tired to walk the old woman was made to sit in the middle of the maiden. The man and woman leave the old woman saying that they will be back after worship. But they never returned.

The old woman eagerly expected their come back. But shockingly knew that she was abandoned. With closed eyes, in a gesture of prayers, she sat before the deity for four days together. Unable to move, without food or water. Somebody departed from the breadline

a sin?

offered a portion of the free-meal to her. But she was too stormy inside to know her weak body. Four days he sat there immobile. Sometimes folded hands and prayed God to call her back. On 5th January 2000, she died. At what time? Nobody knows. Before the sunrays beamed to the maiden somebody informed the administrative office (of the temple) that she is dead.

Someone told the old woman was 'troublesome' at home!

**On 3rd August 2004.
An old age home beside .
K.P. Road, in Alappuzha district.**

Enter the Gate. Walk down to the corridors of the newly constructed 'charitable' home. Ignore the emotion-frozen faces of some inmates.

Now stand before Joseph.

Age? Not known (to him). Joseph became an inmate two years ago. Don't conclude that he was sent to the care home two years ago. For seven years he had been to another care home nearby Thiruvalla. Look at his face. One can read lessons of experience from his eyes. A farmer's laborious life... Hard work from edge to edge.... Handful of money.... festivals.... feasts and other celebrations. Children's elevations to big pastures. News from abroad, of their ascends to successes. Now let Joseph talk:

"I used to cane my children at their early childhood...

"My second son used to steal money from my box....

"Once when I was away my first son took away my bicycle for trial ride. His age was not ripe for bicycling. I beat him badly on the day. I repented it later....

"I didn't see two of my grand children though they are 6 and 4 now....

"My daughter comes to see me once in two years. I don't know when my sons will come...

Ask him, "Do you feel happy here?"

After a pause, answer comes, "Yes." ■

What is Ageism?

The Oxford Learner's Dictionary defines 'ageism' as (practice of) treating people unfairly or unjustly because of their age.

The term 'ageism' was coined in 1969, defining it as a process of systematic stereotyping and discrimination against people because they are old. Today, it is more broadly defined as any prejudice or discrimination against or in favor of an age group. Ageism is manifested in many ways, some explicit, some implicit. Some graphic examples of ageism:

Older persons falter for a moment because they are unsure of themselves and are immediately charged with being 'infirm.'

Older persons are constantly 'protected' and their thoughts interpreted.

Older persons forget someone's name and are charged with senility and patronized.

Older persons are expected to 'accept' the 'facts of ageing.'

Older persons miss a word or fail to hear a sentence and they are charged with 'getting old,' not with a hearing difficulty.

Older persons are called 'cranky' when they are expressing a legitimate distaste with life as so many young do.

Older persons are charged with being 'like a child' even after society has ensured that they are as dependent, helpless, and powerless as children.

How is Ageism perpetuated?

Ageist attitudes are perpetuated in many ways. Examples are abundant in the popular culture such as the lack of positive images of the elderly in advertisements and on TV programs, and the widespread use of demeaning language about old age. In addition, institutions perpetuate ageism. Businesses frequently reinforce ageist stereotypes by not hiring or promoting older workers.

Human service professionals also

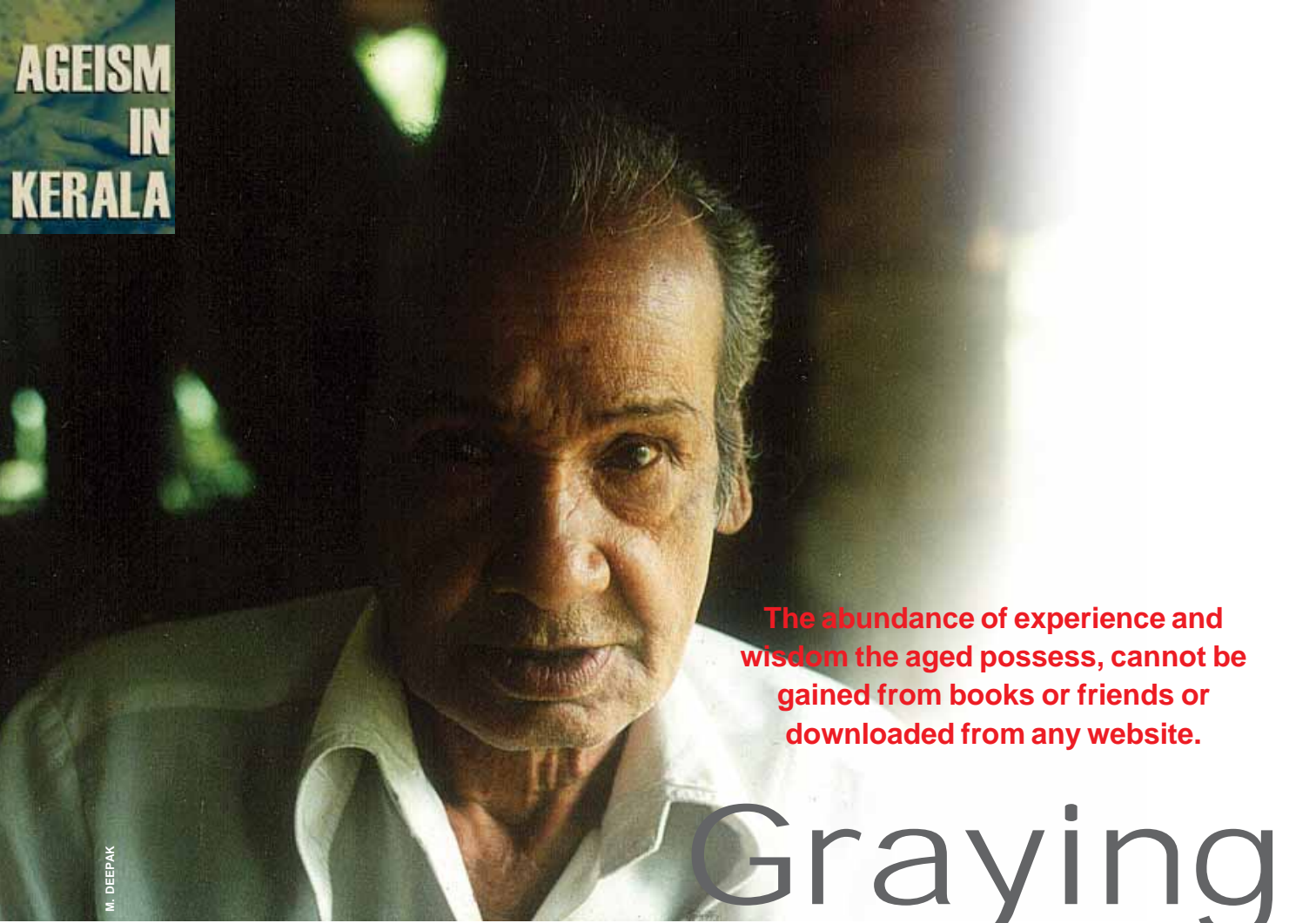
perpetuate ageism. This is done more covertly by denying or limiting services, by not including ageing issues in training material or educational offerings, and by not requiring geriatrics training for medical students even though older adults will comprise a significant proportion of their patients. The same criticism can be made about training of professional social workers who receive little information about the ageing process although many of their clients will be elderly.

The consequences of Ageism

The consequences of ageism is discrimination. This will have harmful effects on the individuals. For example, an elderly person who accepts the negative image may 'act old' even though this may be out of keeping with their personality or previous habits. This may mean that they stop or reduce social activities, do not seek appropriate medical treatment, or accept poverty. In essence, this internalization of a negative image can result in the elderly person becoming prejudiced against him/herself, resulting in loss of self-esteem, self-hatred, shame, depression, and/or suicide in extreme cases. Denial of one's status as an elderly person can also have negative consequences. One example, lying about one's age may not seem significant, but it can further erode morale. Another example is the attempt to 'pass' for a member of the dominant, younger group by undergoing cosmetic surgery, having hair transplants, or using widely advertised anti-ageing products

such as hair dyes, skin creams, cosmetics, etc.

Ultimately, elders are not seen as human beings but as objects who, therefore, can be more easily denied opportunities and rights. For example, elders are frequently misdiagnosed or denied medical treatment because they are seen as "old" and, therefore, incurable. Elders are also frequently denied employment or promotion opportunities because they are "old" and less productive. Such discrimination is also evident on the social policy level where the elderly are blamed for having medical problems and consuming public resources rather than seeing them as having human needs requiring appropriate social responses. A final consequence of ageism is that by devaluing this segment of the population, a vital human resource is lost. Cumulatively, the elderly represent a vast amount of experience, skill, and knowledge which this country needs to remain strong and true to its ideals.



M. DEEPAK

The abundance of experience and wisdom the aged possess, cannot be gained from books or friends or downloaded from any website.

Graying

Justine G. Padaradan

Every phase in the human life cycle has its own characteristic assets and traumatic experiences. Each stage also has its own developmental tasks and demands and if they are met adequately the fruits of that stage are realised. The demands of old age are adjusting to decreasing physical strength and health, adjusting to retirement, adjusting to the passing away of near and dear ones, adapting to the social and cultural changes and roles, finding sources of care and companionship and so on.

In the traditional Indian society the older people enjoyed a sense of honour and dignity, had the power and responsibility of decision making in the family and community, enjoyed a lot of care, respect and reverence. Now due to the fast and rapid social changes, transition of extended families to nuclear and sub-nuclear family ones, attitudinal changes in the people, changes in values and priorities, geocentricism, spiritualism giving way for

materialism, agrarian culture turning to business and commercial set up all have detrimental effects on the elderly. The family and near ones may not be even aware of the various psychological and mental problems that the elderly have. It is estimated that about 45 per cent of the elderly have some form of depression, which goes often unnoticed.

The elderly in fact, belong to a heterogeneous group, different in health, abilities, educational status, financial security, familial and cultural background, value system etc.

Some people move into old age without regret for the past and loss of the present. They take the best, out of the rest of their lives. Some struggle against it and finally succumb to disgust and despair. Some consider old age as a handicap and disability.

The psychosocial factors of ageing are determined by two factors mainly: the personality and life history of the aged and attitude of the society towards the old people. In fact these two are interrelated and

interacting.

Personality and life history

To a great extent the process of ageing follows laws peculiar to the individual. Every person reveals in advanced age traces of his own life history. He bears the brunt of his life not only on his face but in the whole of his person. One could even say that the satisfaction or dissatisfaction in old age is predetermined the way one has reached old age. Adaptive ability, the richness of experiences, life's satisfactions and misfortunes, preparation for old age, the characteristic way of dealing with everyday problems, ability to anticipate and plan for the future with farsightedness and above all the philosophy of life and the lifestyle one has developed all through his life would tell upon the process of ageing. Just to cite an example, some take retirement as a blessing whereas some others consider it as a curse. Those who consider it as a blessing look forward to getting a lot of time available for doing things that they always wanted to do, but could not, due to the demand of

the job or occupation and certain other restraints. They may include travelling, visiting places and people, enjoying hobbies, enjoying the company and companionship of a pet, visiting religious places, sparing time for social activities and activities like writing, painting or even learning a new skill! If one looks at retirement as the loss of job, loss of recognition, loss of financial stability, loneliness and uselessness and wondering how to kill, of course, the time etc may find retirement as disastrous and a phase of uselessness. To enjoy the retirement financial stability and relatively good health are necessary. This too, of course, depends on the planning in advance which is essential for the satisfaction of old age.

There are also a number of psychological hazards specific to old age. The first psychological hazard is acceptance of the traditional beliefs and cultural stereotypes of the aged. These stereotypes encourage the elderly to feel inadequate and inferior. Even worse, it dulls the motivation to do what they are

capable of. The second stems from feeling of inferiority and inadequacy that comes with physical changes. Third, loss of hearing and poor vision interferes with communication with other people. The fourth psychological hazard is the suspicion or realization that mental decline has started to set in. Many elderly people realize that they are becoming somewhat forgetful, that they have difficulty in learning new names or numbers. They may come to think that they are slipping mentally. The fifth psychological hazard is the result of reduced income. Compared to men, in our social set up, women find financial strains too much for them. The sixth and by far the most serious psychological hazard of old age is social disengagement. This may be voluntary, but most often involuntary- due to poor health, lack of financial resources, non-availability of people to interact with.

There are several cognitive changes that take place in normal ageing. A reduction in the ability to concentrate, creeping forgetfulness for recent events, dulling of

sensation, taking more time to think about, slow mentation, a decreasing ability to adapt to new things are usually seen in the elderly as the years pass by. In many situations the elderly may not get the company of their children, when it is probably most wanted. The young people, migrating to urban areas and foreign countries in search of employment necessitates the demand on the elderly to fend for themselves. In many cases the elderly couple become once again with themselves. This is called the 'Empty Nest Syndrome'. i.e. the young ones have flown off or migrated to fend for themselves. This may be inevitable, but it casts loneliness, tension, apprehension, insecurity and helplessness in the elderly. This is compounded when one of the spouses passes away, leaving the widow or the widower all alone.

Attitude of the society

Very often one finds that the attitude of the society towards the aged is coloured by the traditional beliefs and stereotypes that are passed down from generation to generation. There are a lot of negative stereotypes reinforced by the depiction the elderly in fairy tales, fiction, media and even in certain scientific studies with wrong sampling. These unfavourable stereotypes have a pronounced influence in forming the social attitude towards the old people. In turn the elderly develop personality pattern that conforms to these attitudes!

Adding years to life is meaningless if we cannot add life to years. The most important requirement for happiness in old age is planning in advance, especially regarding matters of health and finance. Then comes the lifestyle of the individual, ability to establish harmonious interpersonal relationship, realising that happiness is not getting what one likes but, liking what one gets.

The community should realise the qualities and usefulness of the elderly. The abundance of experience and wisdom they possess, cannot be gained from books or friends or downloaded from any website. It has been found that grandparents contribute a lot in moulding the character of the grandchildren, helping them to acquire values and develop into a wholesome personality. They may have the ability to resolve conflicts in the family or take decisions .

There is no intrinsic problem in ageing gracefully. Graceful ageing will happen when the aged are treated gracefully.

■ The author is a Clinical Psychologist.

Gracefully

Characteristics of healthy ageing

- Strong and varied interests
- Economic independence
- Many social contacts with people of all ages
- Enjoying work which is pleasant, useful and not taxing
- Participation in community activities
- Minimum worry about self and others
- A feeling of satisfaction with present status and past achievements
- Enjoying recreational activities planned for the elderly
- Happy memories of childhood and adulthood
- Reasonably good health without chronic problems
- Acceptance by and respect from social group
- Little bit of exercise, meditation or yoga
- The younger generation could do a lot for brightening the lives of the aged.
- As far as possible include them in decision making
- Value their presence and company
- Get their blessings for important occasions
- Instill a sense of wantedness in them
- Teach children to show respect and reverence to grandparents by modelling by the parents
- Make use of the wisdom the aged have refined over the years.
- Give them the status they deserve.
- Treasure them close to your heart.



Ageing in

Dr. K. G. Moli

Among the Indian states, Kerala has the largest proportion of elderly population and the growth rate among the aged is increasing higher and higher. Therefore one of the many challenges facing Kerala is its growing elderly population. It is growing much faster than the overall population itself. With the possibility of declining birth rate and fewer children in families, there will be lesser and lesser people taking care of the elderly as the decades roll by. Traditional life guards of family care are dwindling due to our migration, dual career and growing consumerism. All these make the well-being of the elderly, a growing challenge of the 21st century. A significant aspect of this challenge comprises the socio-economic and psychological status of the aged.

Current situation and prospects Age structure changes

In Kerala, ageing is primarily a result of the diminution in the proportions at the younger ages, a result of falling fertility. As both fertility and mortality levels continue to descend to much lower levels, the age distribution will very closely resemble those of the more developed regions in 1950. The period 1971-2001 is characterised by large decrease in the share of young population (0-15), in the total population of Kerala (from 40.26 to 23.38 per cent), and the share of both working age population (15-59) and elderly (60+) population showed an increase during this period. Thus the population of Kerala aged because of the decrease in the proportion of young population.

The ageing and feminisation of the Kerala population is clearly evident in Table 1, where the male population aged 60 years and above makes up about 10 per cent of total male

Year	*Male	*Female	*Average
1961	5.65	6.02	5.84
1971	5.97	6.47	6.22
1981	7.15	7.84	7.50
1991	8.33	9.29	8.82
2001	10.00	11.62	10.84

**in per centage*

population whereas the corresponding proportion of women comprises of 11.62 per cent. The proportion of elderly women will exceed that of their male counterparts. A significant fraction of this expansion will be due to greater female longevity at the very old ages.

The proportion of aged population increased from 5.8 per cent in 1961 to 10.84 per cent in 2001. The projected figures indicate that aged population of the state will be 16 per cent in 2021 and about 30 per cent in 2051. This accelerated growth of elderly demands the need for changes in health care system delivery and welfare activities. The age composition of the elderly population is being altered because of the tendency of the old age groups within the elderly population to expand more rapidly. The ageing process currently observed is characterised by a disproportionate growth of the very old. Among all the age groups of the population, the fastest growing group is the old old (66-79). The large increase in the oldest old (80 years and older) is evident

Year	60+	60-64	65-69	70-74	75+
1961	1089	1071	1060	1118	1138
1971	1101	1055	1110	1116	1165
1981	1130	1056	1150	1174	1207
1991	1156	1090	1153	1165	1263
2001	1229	1105	1169	1248	1445

both among women and men.

Other indicators Sex ratio for the elderly

Sex ratios of the elderly reflect the differential mortality and migration that have occurred over the lifetimes of cohorts. Although more boys than girls are born men tend to have higher mortality rates than women at all ages, which accounts for imbalances in sex ratios at older ages. Thus ageing Kerala is increasingly becoming disproportionately female. Table 2 shows the growing proportion of women in the elderly population. Already sex ratio in Kerala is the highest in India. This ratio will further increase in the elderly because of the high longevity of life for women. Sex ratio among the 60+ which was 1304 in 1901 has decreased to 1289 in 1951 and 1229 in 2001. But the sex ratio of population aged 60-74 is continuously decreasing from 1901 to 1991 and shows a slight increase in 2001. Highest sex ratio is occurred among the population aged 75 and above. As per

Kerala

projections there is 1445 females for 1000 males among 75+ population in 2001 period. Therefore there is a considerably larger proportion of women than men in Kerala's ageing population.

Life expectancy among the elderly

Men's life expectancy is uniformly lower than women's primarily due to the effect of the former's less healthy life styles during adulthood compared with the latter. Estimates show that the expectation of life at birth has been consistently higher among females in Kerala whereas it is not true for India as a whole. In the period 1951-61, the expectation of life at birth was 44.3 years for males and 45.3 years for females. It was 60.6 years for males and 62.6 years for females in 1971-81 period. During 1991-95, on an average a man of 60 years will survive for another 18.1 years and his woman counterpart to another 20.6 years. Even for those aged 65 years, the expected length of remaining life is estimated to be 15 and 17 years respectively for males and females. As a result of increase in life expectancy the prolonged state of morbidity and disability will be higher among the elderly.

Urban- rural difference

Most of elderly population in Kerala were to be found in rural areas. The proportion of rural elderly population increased to 8.91 per cent in 1991 from 7.5 per cent in 1981, which was 6.26 per cent in 1971. In rural areas the difference between the proportion of aged

males and females was only 0.74 per cent in 1991, whereas the difference in urban areas was 1.58 per cent. This shows that the proportion of elderly females is greater in the urban areas when compared to their rural counterpart.

Marital status of the elderly

The marital status of the older persons is an aspect of family structure that deeply affects their living arrangements, support systems, and individual well-being. It also determines the living arrangements of older persons. They constitute a multiple support system for spouses in terms of emotional, financial and social exchanges.

In Kerala majority of the elderly females are widows. Among the elders (60+) in 1981, 66 per cent of the women had lost their husbands whereas only 12 per cent of the men lost their wives. By age 70+, 81 per cent of the women became widows. Even at this age only 19 per cent of the men became widowers. This is because of that the female expectation of life at birth exceeded that of males. About 67 per cent of the elderly women are widows as of 1991 census. According to the report of National Family Health Survey in 1998-99, 46 per cent of women aged 50 and older are widowed, but only seven per cent of men in this age group are widowed. Therefore elder women of Kerala are doubly marginalised due to the combined effects of ageing and widowhood. As widowhood is the main factor that influence one's adjustment and mental health, elder widows must be considered as a special group to get priority in the National Policy for the elderly.

Support dependency ratios

As population ages, supply and demand issues also are created. The elderly place different demands on support system than the non-elderly. According to the estimates, 11 per cent of aged population are supported by 61 per cent of working age population in 2001, even though not all of them work.

Old and young dependency ratios 1961-2001		
Year	Young	Old
1961	83.0	11.3
1971	75.2	11.6
1981	61.5	13.2
1991	47.0	14.1
2001	42.2	16.1

The size and proportion of the population under 15 years of age are more directly affected by recent fertility changes than other age groups. However, it is the change in old age mortality that directly influences the population aged 60 years and other more than any other age group. The comparison of proportion of elderly to those of the child population indicates which age group is dominant and whether the trend is one of juvenation or ageing. Young age dependency ratio has been continuously declining and attained a level which is about half of that the rate in 1961. On the other hand, the old-age dependency ratio increased to 16.1 per cent in 2001. The decline of the young-age dependency ratio during 1961-2001 period is about 40.8 and the increase of old age dependency ratio about 4.8 points. Thus there is 18 old age persons for 10 working age persons in 2001.

Social implications

The family and household

The traditional family norms and values were a great source of security case for the aged persons. Joint family met the social economic and emotional needs of its members. Due to the break down of joint family system, selfishness, lack of adjustment, refusal to compromise and with more and more younger women entering into jobs, the care and attention given to the elderly persons are affected. At the same time the need for care giving due to the expansion of morbidity and prevalence of chronic diseases and the prolongation of the period of care due to the extension in the span of old age necessitated larger number of cares than ever before. The nuclear family has to face yet another problem: high cost of rearing and education of children. In these changing circumstances, the inevitability of putting the elderly in old age home is increasingly felt in the society. In Kerala, it is true that a large number put their parents in old age homes.

Conditions of women

More recent expansion in women's education made younger women workers relatively more useful to their employers than older women. As greater number of women join the labour force, their time must perforce be taken up not only by bearing and rearing children, but also by catering to the demands of the growing number of elderly in the households. Majority of the female elderly especially of the rural area are living in poor economic background with no money at their disposal to meet their daily life.

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Old age

Prejudice

Fact

▶ **That they are Ill:** Perhaps the most common prejudice against elders is that most are sick or disabled. People over 65 spend much time in bed because of illness; have many accidents in the home; have poor coordination; feel tired most of the time; develop infection easily.

▶ **That they are Impotent:** There is a belief that most elders no longer engage in any sexual activity or even have sexual desire. Even physicians, who should know better, often assume that sexuality is unimportant in late life.

▶ **That they are Ugly:** Another stereotype is that old people are ugly. Beauty is associated with youth, and many people, especially women, fear the loss of their beauty as they age.

▶ **That they are at Mental Decline:** Another common prejudice that mental abilities begin to decline from middle age onward, especially the abilities to learn and remember, and that cognitive impairment (e.g. memory loss, disorientation, or confusion) is an inevitable part of the ageing process.

▶ **That they have Mental Illness:** A similar stereotype is that mental illness is common, inevitable, and untreatable among most aged. Both elders themselves and many health professionals think that most mental illness in old age is untreatable, which partially explains why few mental health professionals choose to specialize in geriatric mental health.

▶ **That they are Useless:** Because of the beliefs that the majority of old people are disabled by physically or mentally, many people conclude that the elderly are unable to continue working and that those few who do continue to work are unproductive. This belief is the main basis for compulsory retirement policies and discrimination in hiring, retraining, and promotion.

▶ **That they feel Isolation:** People think that 'The majority of old people are socially isolated and lonely' and 'The majority of old people live alone.'

▶ **That they suffer from Depression:** Since many believe that the typical older person is sick, impotent, senile, useless, lonely, and in poverty, they naturally conclude that the typical older person must also be depressed.

▶ **That they hold Political Power:** Another thought is that the elderly are a 'potent, self-interested political force.'"The assumption is that the political power of the elderly hamstring our politicians from undertaking needed reforms.

▶ Most elders (about 78 per cent of those 65+) are healthy enough to engage in their normal activities. While more persons over 65 have chronic illnesses that limit their activity (43 per cent) than do younger persons (10 per cent), elders actually have fewer acute illnesses than do younger persons, have fewer injuries in the home, and fewer accidents on the highway than younger persons. Thus, the higher rate of chronic illness among elders is offset by the lower rates of acute illness, injury, and accidents.

▶ The majority of persons past 65 continue to have both interest in and capacity for sexual relations. Masters and Johnson (1966) found that the capacity for satisfying sexual relations usually continues into the seventies and eighties for healthy couples.

▶ While our culture tends to associate old age with ugliness, and youth with beauty, some other cultures tend to admire the characteristics of old age. For example in Japan, silver hair and wrinkles are often admired as signs of wisdom, maturity, and long years of service. Thus, there is nothing inherently ugly or repelling about the characteristics of old age. Ugliness is a subjective value judgment, or, in other words, "ugliness is in the eye of the beholder." These value judgments usually conform to cultural standards of beauty and ugliness.

▶ Most elders retain their normal mental abilities, including the ability to learn and remember. It is true that reaction time tends to slow down in old age and it may take somewhat longer to learn something.

▶ Mental illness is neither common, inevitable, nor untreatable in the elderly population. Only about two percent of persons 65 and over are institutionalised with a primary diagnosis of psychiatric illness. The incidence of mental illness among the elderly is less than that of younger persons.

▶ The majority of older workers can work as effectively as younger workers. Studies of employed older people under actual working conditions generally show that they perform as well as, if not better than, younger workers on most measures. Consistency of output tends to increase with age, and older workers have less job turnover, fewer accidents, and less absenteeism than younger workers.

▶ The majority of elders are not socially isolated. About two-thirds live with their spouse or family. Only a small percent of elders are extremely isolated. Most elders have close relatives within easy visiting distance, and contacts between them are relatively frequent.

▶ Major depression is less prevalent among the elderly than among younger persons. However, of the various mental illnesses, depression is one of the most common among the elderly. Experts are not in agreement about the extent of its occurrence,

▶ The aged do constitute a large portion of participating in political activities. While ageing-based interest groups can exert some influence, elders usually do not vote as a block and, consequently, have less political power than presumed.

Based on Erdman Palmore's Book Ageism: Negative and Positive, 1990

Protecting old age

Dr. B. Jayakumar

You do not heal old age. You protect it; you promote it; you extend it.

- Sir James Sterling.

The study of Physical and Psychological changes which are incident to old age is called Gerontology. The care of the aged is called clinical Gerontology or Geriatrics.

Biology of ageing

Ageing A process of gradual and spontaneous change, resulting in maturation through childhood, puberty, and young adulthood and then decline through middle and late age.

Senescence The process by which the capacity for cell division, growth, and function is lost over time, ultimately leading to an incompatibility with life; ie the process of Senescence terminates in death.

Although ageing has both the positive components of development and the negative component of decline, senescence refers only to the degenerative processes that ultimately make continued life impossible. Not all of the changes that occur with age – even those that occur in late life – are deleterious (eg. Gray hair), and some may even be desirable (eg. Increased wisdom and experience). The age – related increase in insulin levels and body fat that occurs in late life may be beneficial when available nutrition is limited. In contrast, the memory impairment that occurs with age is considered senescence. Senescence has no positive features.

Disease Vs Ageing

In both ageing and senescence, many Physiologic functions decline, but normal decline is not usually considered the same as disease. The distinction between normal decline and disease is often but not always clear and may be due only to statistical distribution. Glucose intolerance is considered normal ageing, but diabetes is considered a disease, although a very common one. The incidence and prevalence of type II diabetes increase with age, so that

among persons more than 75 years of age, more than 10per cent have diabetes. Cognitive decline is nearly universal with advanced age and is considered normal ageing; however cognitive decline consistent with dementia, although common in late life, is considered a disease. Alzheimer's disease is a pathologic process distinct from normal ageing, a conclusion supported by analysis of brain tissue at autopsy.

Theories of Ageing

Ageing clearly occurs at different rates for different species and even within a species, ageing occurs at different rates among different individuals. The only reasonable conclusion among the various

theories, is that ageing must be genetically controlled, at-least to some extent. Both within and between species, life styles and exposures may alter the ageing process.

Loose Cannon theory

This theory posits that an entropy producing agent – free radicals or glucose – slowly disrupts cellular macro molecular constituents. Theoretically, free radicals generated during oxidative phosphorylation, can variously modify macro molecules primarily through oxidation. Considerable evidences suggests that oxidative damage increases with the age. For example, in older organisms, specific amino acids in specific proteins tend to be

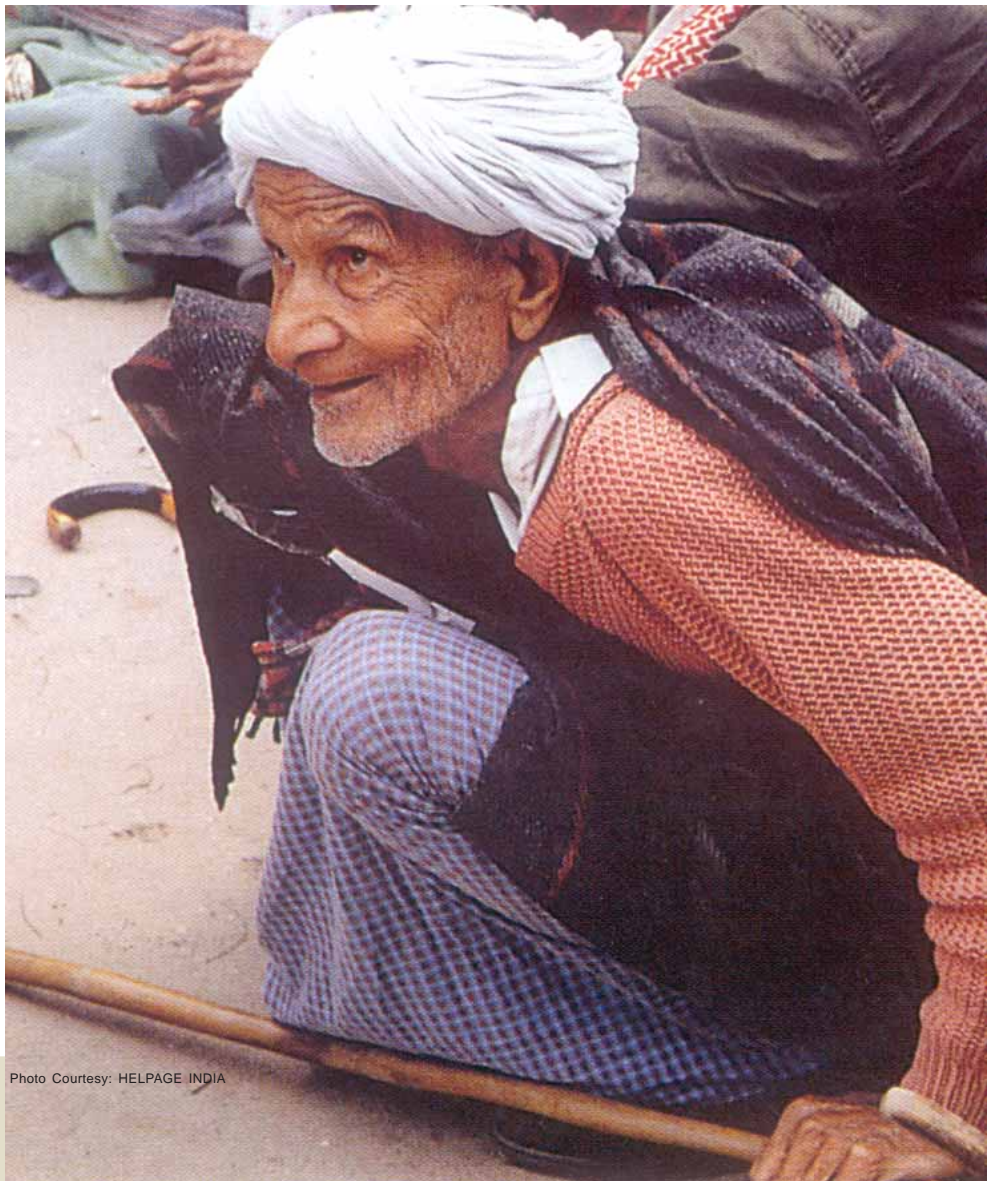


Photo Courtesy: HELPAGE INDIA

oxidized residues, leading to decreases in specific activity of these proteins. Additionally, specific oxidized derivatives of nucleotides from DNA increase in frequency. Experimentally induced simultaneous over expression of super oxide dismutase and catalase (enzymes that attenuate free-radical damage) increases the life span of fruit flies by about 30 per cent. Glucose is thought to promote senescence mainly through non enzymatic attachment to proteins and nucleic acids through the same process that produces glycated hemoglobin. Glycated protein level increase with age. Otherwise, there is little direct evidence that glycation has a major role in senescence. However because dietary restriction increases maximum life span and also reduces blood glucose and the rate of glycation, interest in glycation's role in senescence continues.

Rate of living theory

This theory posits that smaller mammals tend to have high metabolic rates and thus tend to die at an earlier age than larger mammals. Thus this theory is related to the idea that the free radicals and other metabolic by products play a role in senescence. However, the studies of metabolic rates have shown wide variation in the correlation between size and longevity, undermining the credibility of this theory.

Weak link theory

This theory posits that a specific physiologic system – usually the neuro endocrine or immune system is particularly vulnerable (presumably to entropic processes) during senescence. Failure of the weak system accelerates dysfunction of the whole organism. Failure of the neuroendocrine system would be expected to produce profound impairments in homeostatic systems, including loss of reproductive function and metabolic regulation, which occur with age. Failure of the immune system would be expected to produce an increased susceptibility to infection and a decreased ability to reject tumor cells. However there is little evidence that failure of either system directly contributes to age-related diseases or to mortality (in contrast, for example, to the direct contribution of a compromised immune system to

mortality in patients with AIDS)

Error catastrophe theory

This theory posits that errors in DNA transcription or RNA translation eventually lead to genetic errors that promote senescence. Although data suggest that older organisms have altered proteins reflective of such genetic changes, this theory does little to explain most observed age-related changes.

Master clock theory

This theory is one of the oldest theories of ageing and no longer has high credibility. It states that ageing is under direct genetic control.

Exactly what controls the rate of ageing is not known. It could be a gene that controls

telomere shortening or some other process of cell division. Or it could be genetic control of another cellular process not involved in division, such as DNA repair, thus resulting in apoptosis.

Normal ageing changes

Normal ageing changes are universal – they are changes that everyone will get to some degree as they grow older. Grey hair is a good example of a normal ageing change. These normal changes do not cause disease or disability.

Senility There is no such thing as senility from ageing. There are changes in the brain that include some loss of brain cells and a decrease in the amount of oxygen delivered to the brain. But changes in

Challenge of Geriatrics

Dr. G. Ganapathi Rao

Paediatrics and Geriatrics are two ends of the long journey of life. While first one gets maximum attention even extending up to 19 years as adolescent pediatrics, Geriatrics is coming up as a medical specialty only recently and that too not in a big way. Only few Doctors and hospitals take interest in Geriatric problems.

With advances in medical science, with better medical care both preventive and curative, life span of an individual is naturally getting prolonged.

Old age and its problems are inevitable as one lives longer. With changes in joint family system and children leaving for far away locations including foreign countries in search of better life, the old members of the family are left to look after themselves in a phase of their life where they require maximum physical and emotional support. No care in an old age home can substitute for the care and love of the family members. In a financially rich background the person who succeeded throughout life to reach the present stage, it is highly humiliating to find that he is slowly losing grip over life events due to advanced age. The feeling is, as if you are standing on the seashore with the waves washing away the sand from beneath your feet. This naturally

leads to severe depression, which may even lead to suicide which is common in this group of people. On the contrary for a financially poor old man poverty itself is a burden. Only support groups at this difficult time are either old friends, religious groups and most importantly the life partner – husband / wife. If one of the life partner dies, the other one is left completely devastated more so if the wife dies, the husband finds it so depressing, females being much more capable of withstanding losses in life.

For an old person, the last few years of life generally seem to be unending, feeling like a marathon runner seeing the finishing tape which often turns out to be a mirage. What she/ he requires is only some Care, Comfort and Compassion. As Norman Cousins wrote "Death is not the ultimate tragedy, what is tragic is what dies inside us when we are alive". When we were born only we cried, all the others rejoiced, let us live a life in such a way that when we die, let us rejoice and let others weep for us.

Ps: Well-equipped Geriatric clinics are working in Medical College Hospital, Trivandrum & Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences, Kochi.

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Prevention of disease and disability

For the elderly, prevention focuses mainly on disease, frailty, accidents (ie. unintentional injury), iatrogenic complications and psycho social problems. Not all elderly patients benefit from every preventive measure; effectiveness varies depending on the patient's physical health, functional ability and cognitive status.

In primary prevention disease is stopped before it starts, often by reducing or eliminating risk factors. For example immuno prophylaxis prevents disease through vaccination, chemo prophylaxis through drug therapy and counseling through behavioral change.

In secondary prevention, disease is detected and treated at an early stage, thereby minimizing morbidity and mortality.

Screening can be a primary or secondary preventive measures, it can be used to detect risk factors, which may be altered to prevent disease or to detect disease in asymptomatic persons who can be then treated early.

Screening can be done to detect various diseases like cholesterol and lipid disorders, hyper tension, breast cancer, colorectal cancer, cervical cancer, prostate cancer, ovarian cancer, thyroid disorders, diabetic mellitus and lung cancer.

Tertiary prevention In tertiary prevention, an existing, usually chronic, disease is appropriately managed to prevent further functional loss. Disease management is enhanced by

the use of disease-specific practice guidelines and protocols.

Osteoporosis Tests to measure bone density can detect osteoporosis before it leads to a fracture. Calcium supplementation, exercise, and avoidance of cigarette smoking can help prevent osteoporosis, and treatment can prevent new fractures.

Diabetes Hyperglycemia, especially when the glycosylated hemoglobin concentration is more than 7.9%, increases the risk of retinopathy, neuropathy, nephropathy, and heart disease. The goal of treatment is an glycosylated hemoglobin concentration of less than 8% for frail diabetic patients and even lower concentration less than 7% for patients who are not frail. Patient education and foot examinations at each visit can help prevent foot ulcers.

Vascular disease Elderly patients with a history of coronary artery disease, cerebrovascular disease, or peripheral vascular disease are at high risk of disabling events. Risk can be reduced by management of vascular risk factors (eg, hypertension, smoking, diabetes, atrial fibrillation, hyperlipoproteinemia).

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease Smoking cessation, appropriate use of inhalers and other drugs, and patient education regarding energy conserving behavioral techniques can decrease exacerbations of COPD leading to hospitalization.

memory that interfere with daily activities are caused by disease, not by ageing.

Need for Reading Glasses Far sightedness is normal as eye muscles weaken with age. The lens of the eye yellows, making it harder to distinguish shades of green and blue. The pupils may not let as much light into the eye, so people tend to need more light to see well as they get older.

Dry skin The number of sweat glands decreases with age, and this can lead to dry skin. The skin becomes less elastic with less supporting tissues causing wrinkles. Skin color tends to lighten and hair gets thinner.

Bladder trouble The kidneys do not filter blood as well as we grow older, and the bladder may not hold as much. This causes many older people to have to get up during the night to use the bathroom. But decrease in urine volume, discomfort, or other symptoms are not normal, and should be reported to doctor.

Joint pain It is normal to have a loss of cartilage in the joints that have been used a lot over a life time, like the knees and hips. For some, this leads to arthritis.

Need for less sleep Changes in sleep are common with age, but some people find they need less sleep then when they were younger, and other people notice no changes. Deep sleep decreases with age, so that older adults tend to wake up more during the night.

Hearing loss Some loss of high pitched sound is normal with ageing. Severe hearing loss is common, but not normal and should be checked out.

Hardening of the arteries As you age, the arteries do become less flexible. This leads to more resistance to blood flow and some rise in blood pressure.

Getting shorter Many people lose one to two inches in height as they get older. More than two inches may signify osteoporosis, a disease where the bones become thin and the vertebrae in the back collapse.

Loss of taste There is a decrease in the number of taste buds, and less saliva is produced. Older adults may need more spices to make up for this change.

Unable to learn While older adults

may take longer to learn new information, they retain what they learn.

The findings of an ICMR survey conducted in elderly persons over 60 years of age, attending geriatric clinics in rural areas is shown below.

Ailment	%
Visual impairment / complaint	40.0
Locomotive disorder, joint muscles	18.7
Neurological complaints	17.4
Cardiovascular disease	16.1
Respiratory disorder	13.3
Skin conditions	9.0
Gastro intestinal / abdominal disorder	8.5
Psychiatric problem	8.2
Hearing loss	3.5
Geneto urinary disorder	88.0

The ageing population is both a medical and sociological problem. The treating physicians, the care givers and the community must assist the aged to fight the evils of poverty, loneliness and ill health and enabling them to lead a healthy life.

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Dr. D. Dalus

Ageing is associated with biologic changes that increase the risk of morbidity, disability and death. The elderly people are far more likely than the young to experience health problems.

personal habits and psychosocial factors and age associated diseases. These changes occur in various organ systems, including connective tissue, immunology and memory.

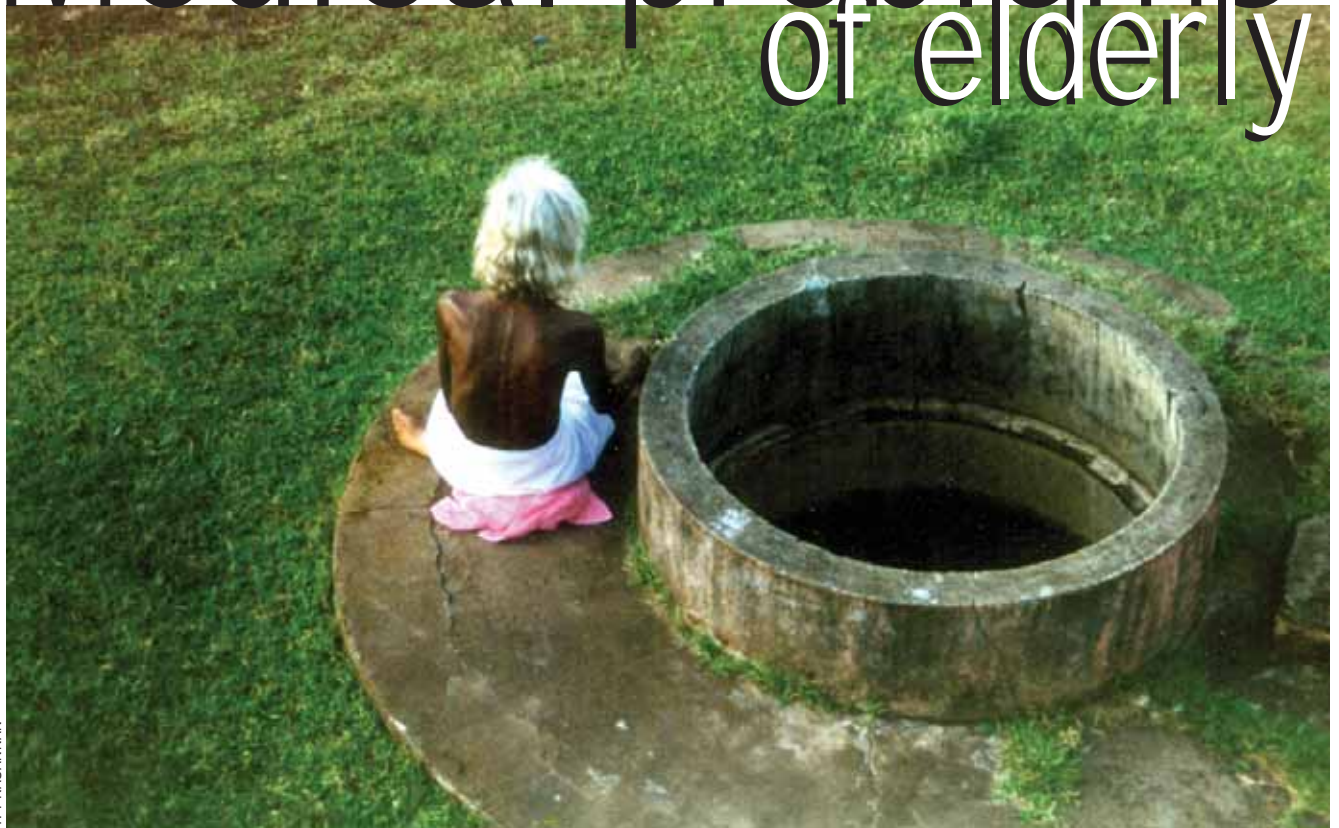
Immobility is an important cause of hospital-induced functional decline. Among hospitalised medical patients over 70, about 10per cent experience decline in their ability to perform activities of daily living. The hazards of bed rest in elderly are multiple serious, quick to develop and slow to reverse. Deconditioning of Cardio

breakdown rises rapidly.

Thirty per cent of elderly persons falls each year and one out of four of those who fall have serious injuries. About 5per cent of falls result in fracture. Falls were the sixth leading cause of death for older people. Resultant hip fractures and fear of falls are major causes of loss of independence. With age, balance becomes impaired and sway increases.

Unintended weight loss exceeding five per cent in one month or 10per cent in six months deserves evaluation. Causes of

Medical problems of elderly



T. PRASANAN

The use of medical and other services in elderly is high.

There is a majority of people who lead independent lives and a minority who do not. Those in the latter group are in need of help.

All organs and systems exhibit age associated physiologic deterioration, at least in a significant fraction of population. This is caused by damage resulting from intrinsic living processes, damage due to extrinsic factors such as diet, life style,

Vascular system occurs within days and involves fluid shifts decreased cardiac output and increased resting heart rate.

More striking changes occur in skeleton muscle with loss of contractile velocity and strength. Pressure sores are a third serious complication. Mechanical measure, moisture, friction and shearing forces all predispose to their development. Thrombo- phlebitis and pulmonary embolism are additional serious risks. The risk of postural hypotension falls skin

unintended weight loss include medical, psychosocial and drug related. The common medical causes are chronic heart disease chronic lung disease- dementia, dysphagia, cancer and diabetes. Psychosocial causes are alcoholism, depression and limited income. Drug related causes are anti inflammatory drugs, digoxin and SSRIs etc.

In wide range of articular (joint) and non-articular disorders affect the aged - like fibrositis, myositis, neuritis, gout,

osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. Osteoarthritis is the most common joint disease extremely common in elderly. Among the elderly, knee osteoarthritis is a leading cause of chronic disability. In elderly hip osteoarthritis is more common in men while OA of interphalangeal joints is more common in women. Osteoporosis, characterised by decrease d bone strength is a common problem among postmenopausal women and elderly men. Its chief clinical manifestations are vertebral and hip fractures. It occurs more frequently with increasing age as bone tissue is progressively lost.

A large number of elderly have unrecognised visual impairment. Impaired vision may contribute to accidental injury. So regular screening for visual acuity is recommended. Most common cause of visual impairment in elderly is due to senile cataract.

Common causes of vision loss in elderly can be classified into acute and chronic causes. Acute causes include retinal detachment, central retinal artery occlusion central retinal vein occlusion. Chronic causes include cataract, macular degeneration. Diabetic retinopathy & open angle glaucoma.

Hearing impairment is not often due to presbycusis, an age related degeneration of Cochlear cells. There is difficulty in discriminating words of background noise . Screening of elderly people for hearing is important as quality of life can be improved by correction with hearing aids.

Respiratory diseases such as chronic bronchitis, asthma and emphysema are common. With ageing, the elasticity of lungs declines. Kyphosis due to intervertebral disc degeneration and osteoporosis and calcification of costal cartilages make the chest wall more rigid and less expansible.

Age related structural and functional changes in the cardiovascular system account for an increase in blood pressure with increasing age. Heart valves especially Aortic valve can become less mobile exacerbated by atheromatous disease and calcification. Peripheral vascular disease is common in aged. A lipid material is deposited in the inner wall of arteries and this leads to narrowing of blood vessels or atherosclerosis. This leads to diminished

Diabetes mellitus, a common metabolic disorder, is common in geriatric population. Diabetes is one of the leading causes of end stage renal disease, non-traumatic lower extremity amputations and blindness in elderly.

blood supply, thrombus formation and high blood pressure.

Diabetes mellitus, a common metabolic disorder, is common in geriatric population. Diabetes is one of the leading causes of end stage renal disease, non-traumatic lower extremity amputations and blindness in elderly. Blood glucose level increases dramatically in response to acute illness, rendering them with more chance for going into diabetic ketoacidosis and hyperosmolar state.

Dementia, an acquired persistent and progressive impairment in intellectual function with compromise in multiple cognitive domains at least one of which is memory, is common in elderly. Alzheimer's disease accounts for most of the cases followed by vascular dementia according for the rest. Risk factors for Alzheimer's disease are old age, family history, atrial fibrillation diabetes and hyperlipidemia.

Geriatric patients with depression are more likely to have somatic complaints. Significant number of depressive syndromes may represent individuals with dementia. Recognizing and treating depression in the elderly is vital. Many drugs like benzodiazepine cimetidine, clonidine and digoxin can contribute to depression.

Delirium, seen in elderly, is the

pathophysiologic consequence of an underlying medical condition such as infection, ischaemic heart disease, hypoxemia or metabolic derangement. Enlargement of prostate, dysuria, frequent and urgency of micturition are common complaints in elderly. Loss of bladder control has a major psychologic and social impact. Transient causes of urinary incontinence include delirium, infection atrophic urethritis or vaginitis, severe depression, established incontinence occurs due to detrusor overactivity and urethral incompetence.

Gastrointestinal problems include eating difficulties, leukoplakia, hepatic dysfunction. Due to reduced gastric acidity in elderly, absorption of calcium ions are reduced leading to osteoporosis. Reduced colonic motility causes constipation and fecal impaction. Reduced anorectal sphincteric function can cause fecal incontinence.

Wrinkles, a sign of ageing are mainly due to part exposure to UV light. Senile purpura, skin cancers, leg ulcers and pressure ulcers are common in elderly.

The incidence of cancer rises rapidly among the age of 40. Cancer of prostate is common after the age of 65. Cancer of breast and uterine endometrium are common in elderly women.

Drug metabolism is impaired in elderly, due to decrease in GFR (Glomerular Filtration Rate) as well as reduced hepatic clearance. The volume of distribution of drugs is also affected. Water-soluble drugs become more concentrated and fat-soluble drugs have longer half-lives. Iatrogenic drug reactions are common in the elderly.

Accidents are common in elderly. Fragile bone due to decalcification is the main reason. Fracture neck of femur is every common geriatric problem.

From this, it is well understood that the decline in physical activities with increasing age poses important challenges to older people. The adoption of a life style that incorporates the necessary physical activities, therefore is potentially very important element of personal health promotion.

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Sixty and beyond

R. Prabhakaran

We are proud of our glorious culture in which aged parents and grand parents were loved and protected by their children and every body. They were respected and recognized. But that scenario has been changed. What has happened to our glorious tradition? Whether the government can take an active role in ameliorating the sufferings of older citizens?

Ageing is a worldwide phenomenon. It is more evident in developed countries but occurring more rapidly in developing countries. The statistic figures point out that 10 per cent of the world population is at the above age of sixty. By the year 2020 it will be 100 crores and 2030 one third of the population. In India also population of the aged is fast growing. Aged persons constituted 5.8per cent of the population in 1961 and 6.8per cent in 1991. In 2016 older persons will be 8.9per cent. By 2061 India would have one of the largest population of older persons in the world, it is estimated.

In Kerala olders constituted 7.5per cent of population in 1987 and 9per cent in 2001. One of the notable facts is the high population of widows among the aged. In 1991, the percentage of widowers in the age group of 60 to 69 was five, that of widows 53.82. Among the 70+ group these were 11.36 and 69.20 and among the 80+ group they were 22.34 and 83.38 respectively. The main areas of concern of the aged people are the protection health and nutrition and housing. The present

situation in Kerala is that the most of the aged people are left alone which are rising various socio-economic problems.

The peculiar situation of the aged is the by product of break up of joint families to modern nuclear families, shift of the population from the agriculture sector to industrial or service sector, migration of larger number of persons from their home villages to in and outside the state or other countries, attitude of the young generation to live independently with the spouse and children, leaving their parents, insistence on the part of aged not to leave their traditional households.

Older persons must have access to adequate and appropriate food, shelter, clothing and health systems. They should be given opportunities to work or to have access to other income generating opportunities. Aged persons who are destitute and disabled need financial support also.

They normally expect care and support from their own families. Unfortunately, many of them do not get family support because of various reasons. In that instance



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Photo Courtesy: HELPAGE INDIA

community should offer care and protection. Proper health care system should be evolved to help the aged to maintain or regain the optimum level of physical, mental and emotional well being. They should have access to legal services to protect their rights.

Older persons should be able to live in dignity and free from exploitation. They should be treated regardless of age, gender, racial background. Their contribution and service should be valued and recognized.

They prefer to remain integrated in society. They are ready to participate in social activities and share their knowledge and experience, skills with younger generation. Their potential should be tapped since it is beneficial to the community.

They should have access to educational, cultural, spiritual and recreational resources of the society. Opportunities may be given to aged for the full development of their potential.

Policy for the aged

Article 41 of the Indian Constitution, has directed the State to make effective provision for securing the right of the aged. The United Nations Principles for Older Persons and various other Resolutions encouraged Government to design their own policies and programmes for the aged.

Accordingly Government of India came out with a National Policy on Older persons in January, 1999. The Government of Kerala is also alert to the problem of its ageing population and the State policy for the aged is being formulated.

Old Age Homes

There is rising need for old age homes in Kerala for the kinless and the abandoned. Social Welfare Department has established 15 Old Age Homes in the State. All these are functioning quite well. Many aged people even from well off families, are waiting for admissions. The Department has



initiated various steps by providing all basic infrastructural facilities and necessary services in these institutions. The MGP has adopted Old Age Homes as one of its Service Delivery Area.

For mitigating the suffering of aged, participation of NGOs are also essential. Now Social Welfare Department is giving grant-in-aid to 150 Old Age Homes run by NGOs.

Snehatheeram

Government proposes to establish a village for the aged at Thavanoor on the banks of Nila in Malappuram. The village will be known as Snehatheeram, the proposed site near it is a comprehensive project catering the needs of aged under one roof especially for the support of aged couples who are leading solitary life. It will have certain academic functions also.

In spite of all these earnest and sincere efforts, the question still remain. Who is responsible for the care and protection of the aged? – family or government? No doubt, family has the primary responsibility for the protection of the elderly persons. Remember 'Tomorrow's elderly people are today's adults.'

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Facing old age the Ayurveda way

Dr. K. Jyoti Lal

Ayurveda terms senility as 'Vardhakya', which is estimated to begin, approximately, from 60 years of age.

Ayurveda, the science of life, is nowadays highly dedicated to the achievement of healthy senility.

According to the Tridosha concept of Ayurveda, the Vardhakyakala is the period in which the 'vata' dosha is highly aggravated.

Vata is the principle factor, which is necessary for the initiation of all functions in the body, viz, respiration, locomotion, postural equilibrium, excretion, digestion and metabolism, perception of sense organs, vigour etc.

Due to the aggravated vata, during Vardhakya, the normal functioning of the body gets impaired. Resultant is massive physiological, psychological and pathological variations in the body.

Nowadays, senility without the involvement of any major diseases is a "boon". Many of the senior citizens, are caught in the hands of graving diseases like diabetes, hypertension, cardiac problems, rheumatic complaints, hemiplegia, parkinsonism, Alzheimer's disease etc.

Aetiology of senile problems

The physiological changes of old age is the resultant of the aggravated vata, during that period, factors like excessive physical strain, untimely food habits, imbalanced and unwholesome diet etc. will boost-up the already-aggravated vata, during the vardhakyakala.

Main reason for the psychological problems of senility is the insecure feeling. In this modern era of nuclear families and speedy life, the senior ones of the family, get a feeling of being neglected, which results in an insecure feeling that they are

Well-balanced diet and anti-oxidants

A balanced diet, if followed during the old age, will surely prevent and cure many of the problems of senility, to an extent. Intake of more quantity of fruits, vegetables, milk and unpolished rice and reduced quantity of salt, oil, meat and egg, are highly recommended, during the old-age. It is better to decrease the quantity of food and increase the frequency of eating, so as to avoid digestive problems. Daily intake of almost three litres of water is advised, too.

Intake of food items and supplements containing anti-oxidants is quite essential during the ageing period. Vitamins C&E, Selenium, beta-carotene etc. contain antioxidants. Gooseberry, lemon, orange, carrot, apple, leafy vegetables etc. contains immense of antioxidants. So, the above things should also be included in the daily diet of the elder ones, with preference.

a burden for the family. The resultant is mental depression, anxiety etc.

Modern medical science, however, explains senility on the basis of the 'Free Radical Theory.' Free radicals are molecules that are missing one electron, thereby, having a tendency to steal off an electron from the neighbouring molecule. Hence the free radicals are of high-destructive nature, leading to catabolism, the resultant of which is senility. The most prevalent free-radicals in our body are "oxidants", which occurs in the body by burning of blood glucose, use of high levels of polysaturated fats, ultraviolet radiations, smoking etc.

Management of senile problems

Senile problems can be coped up through a well-designed four-step programme through Rasayana Therapy, Ayurvedic Kriyakramas, Care and counselling, Anti-oxidants and well balanced diet.

Rasayana therapy

'Rasayana Tantra', the seventh clinical discipline of Ashtangas, was the outcome of the health-conscious Ayurvedic physicians of the Vedic Era. The rasayana

or rejuvenation therapy aims at keeping the enzymes in the tissue cells, in their normal functioning condition.

This therapy revitalises the cells, promotes the tranquility of mind and soothes the nerves and bones. Explaining in Ayurvedic terms, the rasayana therapy is a comprehensive treatment acting at the levels of Rasa, Agni and Srotas, leading to the excellency of Sapta Dhatus, the resultant of which is the upliftment of immunity and thereby the maintenance of health. This prevents the process of ageing, or more clearly, the problems of ageing and makes the individual free from major pathological conditions, even during the advanced ages.

The Rasayana Therapy, according to Ayurvedic classics, can be administered in two methods - *Kutipravesika* method and *Vathathapika* method. In the former one, the person has to undergo the treatment, under strict restrictions, in a specially-made house called *Kuti*. The latter one is milder and can be undergone without any restrictions. In the present world of fast technologies, people are reluctant towards the strict Kutipravesika method and hence, now it remains only in the

literatures. However, the speedy population is now, more and more, attracted towards the Vatathapika method, as a ray of hope, in the preventive and curative aspects of ageing.

Ayurvedic kriyakramas

Since vardhakyakala is the period of aggravated vata, all therapies that can alleviate vata, can be advised during this period. Some of the suitable therapies are abhyanga (oil massage), kayaseka (oil-bath on body), Sirodhara (head bath), Vasti (enema therapy) etc. Medicines used for the above therapies, should strictly be vatahara, i.e., having the properties of alleviating vata.

Care counselling

Senility demands a lot of love, care and attention. Though we are living in a busy world, it is the duty of each and every young ones, to spend a little time for their elders. Patient listening, loving talks and careful attention can relieve many of the psychological problems of old age.

Through diet modifications, mental and physical regimens, the problems of ageing could be coped up, to an extent. Remember, senility is not statutory, it's an evolution. Today's younger ones are tomorrows elders. So, let us love, care and provide the best to our elders, for a better healthier senility.

Nithya rasayana

Ayurveda insists the 'code of right conducts' for the physiological well being, through out the life span. These are known as 'Nithya rasayana.'

A person who follows the following characters daily is sure to benefit all the effects of rasayana, the ultimatum

of which is a healthy old age.

- Always speaking truth
- Not getting angry
- Controlled mind and sense organs
- Peaceful
- Good mannered

Preventive triads

In this expensive world, administering all the panchakarmas along with their

Panchakarmas

The panchakarama specified in Ayurveda viz; vasti (2 types) vamana, virechana and nasya along with its prior therapies viz; sehana (Oileation) and swedana (sudation) if administered in the proper seasons and time, is sure to provide a better life, even during the advanced ages.

Ayurvedic science specifies three seasons for the administration of panchakarmas. They are collectively known as 'Sarhorana kala.' They are mentioned below, along with their corresponding months according to both English, Malayalam and Saka Varsha calendars.

Sakavarsha	English month (2004)	Kolla Varsham	Ritu (season)
Chaithram	March 22 to April 20	Meenam 8 to Medam 7	Vasantham
Shravanam	July 23 to August 22	Karkatakam 7 to Chingam 6	Varsham
Karthikam	October 23 to November 21	Thulam 6 to Vrischikam 5	Sarath

The beginning days of the above three seasons quite ideal for the panchakarmas.

prior-therapies (oilation and sudation – Elakkizhi, pizhichil and njavarakkizhi etc.

are coming under sudation), is 'out of reach' for the low-economy group in the society. So these whole therapies could be minimised to a capsulated form of 'seven days therapy' which can practice by the person himself as follows:-

First day – Abhyanga (massage) with sesame oil or with any other medicated oil.

Food – Intake of rice gruel mixed with ghee

Second day – Fomentation with towel dipped in hot water. Food – rice gruel without ghee

Third day – Vamana thanti, i.e. induced emesis by intake of lukewarm water at early morning, touching throat with fingers.

Fourth day – 1st day's regimen

Fifth day – Virechana (purgation) with milk. Prepare 90 ml milk adding 45 ml water boil and reduce to milk quantity and drink in empty stomach at early morning. Otherwise use medicated castor oil 30 ml. Food – Rice gruel without ghee

Sixth day - Food – Rice gruel without ghee

Seventh day – Nethi (Nasal medication) with lukewarm water

This 'capsulated therapy' if undergone annually in the 3 seasons said above, will expel all the impurities from the body and revitalise the cells and tissues for proper functioning. This comprehensive therapy in 3 seasons is known as the 'preventive triads', as it prevent the body from diseases, provides a healthier senility and consists only three process.

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Advisable Dinacharya

The problems of ageing can be prevented to an extent, by following the dinacharya (regimens during day-time) insisted in the Ayurvedic classics. They can be summarized as follows:-

- Waking up early in the morning, i.e., at Brahmamuhurtha (approximately between 3.30 am and 4.00 am)
- Washing the face
- Sprinkling water over the eyes
- Drinking a glass of water kept overnight
- Evacuation of bowels and urine
- Brushing the teeth
- Tongue scraping

- Use of nasal drops (3 drops of Amuthailam in each nostrils)
- Use of mouth fresheners (Triphala choornam mix into hot water and keep in mouth for 10 minutes daily)
- Gargling (with saline water)
- Application of oil on body, especially body, ears and feet
- Exercise
- Bathing
- Wearing clean dress and ornaments
- Care of hair and nails
- Use of footwears and umbrellas while going out
- Use of collyrium in eyes
- Intake of balanced diet



Old age in celluloid

Jayaraj's *Karunam* brings us close to the painful realities of old age through the lives of Chakochoan and Chechamma.

M.T. Vasudevan Nair's *Oru Cheru Punchiri* painted a different picture depicting more emotionally fulfilled life in old age.

S. Uma Maheswari

Films, we all know are meant to entertain and portray life's realities. The portrayals often are too close to make us comfortable. The film lingers on in our minds stirring the emotions and reminding us of the bitter truth. Carrying out such an exercise on the same theme very effectively are the two films '*Karunam*' and '*Oru Cheru Punchiri*' -depicting two sides of the same coin.

The contemporary relevance of such films in Kerala cannot be disputed. In fact Jayaraj's *Karunam* brings us close to the painful realities of old age through the lives of Chakochoan and Chechamma. The timeliness of this 77 minute-long film in Kerala where nuclear families with NRI offspring have become the order of the day,

alerts us to the dark clouds of loneliness and longing that fill the days of the aged.

The film begins on a happy note. The old couple is sprucing up their home because their son and his family are expected from the US. Rejection and disappointment take over when news comes of their decision to put off their trip to India and instead visit the Niagara Falls.

We realize that the old couple has had a hard life. They continue to live their simple uncomplicated lives despite the comfort provided by the prosperity of the next generation. The emptiness in their lives and the inability to control it becomes evident when the house is sold off and the parents move to an old age home. The couple is distraught. Chakochoan passes



A scene from *Ara Naazhika Neram*

away one day and the mother realizes that the children will not come for the funeral—all terms have been arranged and provided for in the new environment that the parents are sent to.

As the film unspools, sparse dialogues unveil the dilemmas of old age. Provided with everything that money can buy their days are spent looking forward to the short reunion with the children who live in distant lands. The sense of loss, the total lack of identity and a voice in the sunset years of life is what the director Jayaraj has successfully portrayed. The number of homes where lives are lived on this track are increasing, and the social problem of a healthy population of senior citizens starved of emotional support, the major ingredient in life at this stage is totally absent.

The director has just stated the truth and stoked a raw nerve. The choice Chechamma makes, of wandering out of the old age home and her finding space in a children's home is a reminder that once uprooted you're your moorings then where you find shelter makes no difference, life goes on, sans emotional bonding.

If *Karunam* is a painful revelation of the vulnerability of old age, painting a different picture is M T Vasudevan Nair's '*Orn Cheru Punchiri*'. Here Krishna Kurup (Oduvil Unnikrishnan) and Amaluamma (Nirmala Srinivasan) lead an enviable life. The days are filled with little joys - they are life's companions in the true sense of the word. Playing pranks on one another, getting on with life at a pace they

Loss of identity, the inability to make choices and loneliness haunt the elders. Some films give us touching insights into the lives and those films linger on our memories.



A scene from *Thinkalazhcha Nalla Divasam*

can manage the two of them lead a life that would be the envy of any person.

The perfect understanding between the two of them, their ability to vibe with the immediate neighbourhood and the pleasant life they lead makes the film a cheerful one. We also realize that they are fiercely

possessive of this life of theirs and unwilling to give this up for anything else. The tender emotions, the rapport between the old couple also tells that they derive their joys from the mutual understanding.

The parents are not willing to trade this uncomplicated life for anything else. As viewers we are distraught when Kurup passes away. But MT lends dignity to the existence of Amaluamma in a world without Krishna Kurup when she is shown as making the choice -to continue to live in the home they lived in, rather than join the children.

Growing old with dignity and grace is something that can be achieved, but sometimes circumstances overtake and we are swept with the tide. If *Karunam* brought us close to the dark side of old age, *Oru Cheru Punchiri* depicts a more emotionally fulfilled life.

As a theme films like *Aranazhikaneram*, *Thinkalazhcha Nalla Divasam*, *Oru Minnaminninte Nurungu Vettam* and more recently, *Manassinakkare* and *Ammakkilikkoodu* are films that fall in this

genre. Loss of identity, the inability to make choices and loneliness haunt the elders, but taking these and giving us touching insights into the lives are films like *Karunam* and *Oru Cheru Punchiri* which will linger on in our memories for the sensitive touches and realistic portrayals. ■

Our India, the epitome of democracy



Sandhya K. Mavelil

Almost six decades have elapsed since the tri-colour was proudly unfurled at the Red Fort in New Delhi for the first time and by human standards, India, as a nation has acquired maturity in every sense of the word. Be it Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, China, Soviet Union, Afghanistan or Pakistan, our immediate neighbours, no country can claim the consistency with which India maintained her democratic system. Think of Pakistan where military dictators, as a rule, oust elected leaders in the guise of protecting high democratic principles and then commandeer the masses to 'elect' the dictator as the head of the nation. And consider Sri Lanka where peace and democracy is just a dream amidst the never-ending fights between the Government and the LTTE. In the case of most of our other neighbours also, democracy is just a mirage. Then how come India alone was able to maintain the democratic system of government?

The answer lies in the greatness of our Constitution, that foresaw every contingency, every situation, every threat, and every pitfall that the Nation may have to face at some time in the unpredictable future. And every care has been taken by the great minds entrusted with the duty of framing the principles to ensure that the real power is with the people of India. The next man one meets on the road and the first citizen of India has only one vote. Think of our Presidents, from Rajendra Prasad to Mr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam. They came from different walks of life, different strata of society, some born in luxury, some in poverty: there were philosophers of international fame, with Dr. S. Radhakrishnan as the best example. And V. V. Giri was from the trade union front. While Sankar Dayal

Sharma's fame depended on his scholarship, Mr. K. R. Narayanan was a diplomat and Mr. Abdul Kalam a scientist. If all our presidents had one thing in common, it was the greatness they possessed and absolute faith in our Constitution. And remember, they became presidents of India not just because they happened to be the member of a particular family or religion or creed or sect or what every other parameter one can think of, but because the people of India had absolute trust in their greatness and desired that it should be so.

Constitution is nothing but a code of conduct instructing citizens how to act in situations just foreseen at the time of its drafting. And this was not imposed on us, but 'given to ourselves' and adopted by our own representatives. Amendments many have been adopted during the last five or six decades, but the basic spirit was never altered and most of the amendments were cosmetic in effect. This shows the flexibility of our constitution and ensures that we, the people, have the right to govern our lives according to our collective will, and not be imprisoned by the fetters of the thoughts of a generation that existed in the past.

When we celebrate our 58th Independence Day, let us, Indians, appreciate the real greatness of democracy where every citizen voluntarily, willingly, and enthusiastically subjugates himself to the dictates of the written code of conduct, the Constitution. Let us remember that the differences in language, habits, climate, dress, religion, caste, creed, customs, manners and what not seen within our polity is like the mosaic of colours on the feathers of our national bird, the peacock. It adds to the beauty, extols the greatness, contributes to the strength, and sustains the stability of India, our India, in centuries to come. ■



Onam Then and Now In and Outside Kerala

JOSHY MANJUMMEL

“My childhood memory is centered round the flower carpet, the lovely vegetarian food and ‘payasams’ in banana leaves and the new clothes. The flower carpet, starting with almost as a symbol on the first day, grows larger day by day, till the climax is reached on the last two days.”

Murkot Ramunni

Onam is celebrated wherever the Malayali lives. Considered the national festival of Kerala, which takes place during the harvest season, it has a traditional legendary background. In Kerala the festivities are centered round the family, details of which differ in different places.

My childhood memory is centered round the flower carpet, the lovely vegetarian food and ‘payasams’ in banana leaves and the new clothes. The flower carpet, starting with almost as a symbol on the first day, grows larger day by day, till the climax is reached on the last two days. Every member of the family joins in, some with suggestions, welcome and not so welcome, to the youngsters actively involved in drawing the patterns and filling them with flowers. The designs, which were traditional in olden days have changed,

and more and more ideas have come in encroached by modernity and global village. Significant changes have taken place in the traditional gathering of flowers. In childhood we went round the fields where harvest was over, the hill slopes, the fencing round houses or fields, and collected wild flowers, particularly the tiny ones, which easily fitted in the various patterns drawn on the ground. We all carried, ‘komma’ as they were known in our place, small baskets made out of weeds, hung round the necks. Children from neighbourhood joined us, as we in group moved from field to field. We sang, we frolicked, enjoying the evening breeze of the post monsoon days. Long before dusk we got home. The flowers were kept outside in the cool of the night, to be taken out in the morning by the bigger brothers and sisters who handled the drawing of the patterns and

filling them with flowers. This was the scene long ago in the northern part of Malabar where I was born and grew up.

Years later, returning home for Onam holidays from College, we found that changes were taking place. Fields were dwindling, slopes were being built up. Little children did not go out in groups to collect the lovely little flowers which nature’s bounty had bestowed on them. Now it were the days of bigger boys, who stealthily encroached the private garden that had come up around bungalows and huge buildings. Flowers were literally stolen, and in the hurry, pots were broken, in some cases deliberately. We had entered a modern era. No more small flowers that fitted into the various pattern, but large petals of potted plants had to be cut into small pieces.

Years passed. We too had grown up;

somehow we managed to get leave to go home for Onam. In our little town the entire scene had changed. The roadsides were lined up with flower vendors, from neighbouring states. Flowers were very different, but of various hues; sales were brisk. The buyers were mothers and sisters accompanied by the smaller boys. Our aspect of the world of Onam had changed completely. The flower carpets continued, but with different shapes, patterns and colours. The same old vegetarian food with payasam in banana leaves continued. New clothes were welcome. But they had changed from the original traditional ones. Onam sales were all over the town. Their wares, a mixture of the old and the new.

We had to spend many an Onam outside Kerala and even outside our country. Wherever the Malayali lived there was Onam celebration. The atmosphere was entirely different. According to the state or even country, there were differences in the celebrations. It was no longer a family festivity.

All the Malayalis, of every caste and religion gathered together weeks and months earlier to chalk out the programme. Everywhere it was Kerala's national festival. A little bit of Kerala was uprooted and transplanted in Bengal, Maharashtra, Nepal, Germany and U.S.A. There are Kerala clubs, Malayali associations and even Indian associations that took the initiative to organise, take part and celebrate Onam. Some items, unavailable, were ordered all the way from Kerala. I remember some young men who could get leave, proceeding to Kerala earlier, to get some items for Onam lunch. Every man, woman and child managed to dress as they would in Kerala. Old clothes would be brought out, new ones bought or sent for and some even borrowed, on that day. The Malayali took pride in his identity.

The chosen place, a huge hall, a hotel or a club would be decorated with tender coconut leaves, where available, or from where it could be obtained from neighbouring places. Close initiations were allowed. The giant flower carpet would have consumed hours to take shape. The experts in calnery, the artists who decorated the place, the dancers and music experts who laboured hard to

initiate the movie into Malayali art, woke up to a new dawn of joy, happiness, unity and equality, that was Onam.

Wherever there is a Malayali there would be Onam, I said. Be it the Indian Embassy, the headquarters of armed forces, universities, industrial enterprises, men and women of Kerala, the rich and not so rich, the senior and junior all formed to organise Onam.

People of other states and countries are all invited. The Malayali exhibits his wares, his culture, his identity and unity to the world. At lunch, the women are asked to sit on mats on the floor and men serve them. Later the men take their seat and women serve them. Unusual to many

non Malayalis, but a common custom at Onam celebration. Every one feels proud of being a Malayali.

In the words of Sree Narayana Guru

“Without difference in caste

or rancour of religion

This is an ideal place

Where all live in brotherhood”

In the evening of my life, I sit under a tree in a corner of Kerala, surrounded by greenery all round, the beautiful birds singing their own songs and blue sky above, the western breeze blowing, as I count the days for Onam. ■

JOSHY MANJUMMEL





Lending
Athach
Ernakulam
Day heralding
myths
JOSHY
of the
'Pulikali', 'Arj
Mahab





colours to legends
amayam at Thrippunithura in
n district, which falls on the Atham
g Onam festival, is a colourful mix of
s and legends. Photographer
MANJUMMEL captures some
e moments from the pageant.
'junanrutham', 'Velakali', group dance,
ali and Vamana are the major
shows seen here.



The desolateness of old age has been the subject matter of many literary works, the world over. In Malayalam literature too, the social evil of ageism has found meaningful expressions. Among them, some of C.V. Sreeraman's stories stand foremost core to the theme, as exemplified by his *Anayasena Maranam* (Dying an Easy Death), *Railway Palangal* (The Rails) etc. Read here in translation a story by him titled *Verukal Vilpanakku*, on the same theme.



C.V. Sreeraman

Translation: Rajendran. N.P

After a bath in the spring, he undertook a journey covering more than two hundred miles and reached the city just in the evening. Yet, he did not avoid the rest of his routine things. He went for a walk and, as usual, walked upto Palayam and then returned. He had his supper before 9'0 clock and then strolled on the veranda. He listened to the news in English, still strolling. When the news was over, he went to bed after turning off the lights.

But, one routine thing didn't happen – sleep.

There was light still in the room. The flames of the lights glowing elsewhere outside might have pushed their ways into the room.

I am still to get some sleep. Well, he consoled himself, I could watch the world with the wakeful eyes.

When have I explored the outside world? I have never been to any holy places. Yet, I have a healthy body and unburdened mind even at seventy. To those who advised him to go to Kasi or Rameswaram to perform the after-death rituals for his forefathers, he would reply,

“What trouble did they cause to me so that I should take them to such distant places?”

But, he did not fail to keep on doing one thing –

Every year, on the day of new moon in the month of *Thulam*, he would go to

Roots for Sale



his native place and perform obsequies for his forefathers, clad in wet clothes, in a squatting position, after taking a bath in the spring Panchavadi.

Have I ever failed them in that? Perhaps... sometimes when I was working? He could not recall clearly.

But, I am sure that I have never failed to perform the rituals after retirement. In the morning, he had returned to this place accompanied by his son after a prolonged performance of the annual obsequies in the village.

He never wanted to be 'somebody' in this city, because his days in the city were numbered. Neither did he want to own anything in the city. He was living in a rented house owned by Nalla Pillai, hailing from Nagarcovil. Nalla Pillai was working as an accountant in the Swami temple. He had lent a lot of money to Nalla Pillai when his wife was ill. When his wife died Nalla Pillai went to Shucheendram to do penance. He wrote from there:

"Dear brother, I may not be able to repay your debts. You can take my home in return."

In fact, the title deed of the house was the letter itself.

Still, he went to Shucheendram many times, in search of Nalla Pillai, but in vain. The search has been on for the past thirty years. That's how he came to possess a house in the city.

At that time, the whole area was a low land. There was only this house in the area. Gradually, new settlers came. They were employees from the institution where he was working. While settling down, they took that fact too into consideration –

"the area where our '*superand*' lives."

The plot made by reclaiming the low lands spread and then got extended. Buses began to ply grabbing thoroughfares. When the buses halted there, the crew would announce loudly:

"*Superand*junction... *Superand* junction."

But, he was not happy with all these. How many people will know us, the commons, in the city?

Conversely, in the countryside, the fame of a good family will reach at least

twenty villages.

He would always advise his son,

"I could not live in our countryside because the public office I worked in had branches only here. But, your job is transferable. You should get a transfer to northern districts and interact with our native place."

His son would reply obediently,

"Dad, I am trying. Once the kids are grown up, I will get them into our country school."

He didn't regret the sliding sleep. For, bygones are waiting for remembrance.

He opened his eyes wide. What he saw now was not the white walls around him;

Instead, the village.

How many of my play-mates still remain? Now, let me move into the village. When one steps out of the paddy field onto the bank, the first house one sees was mine. Then the image of Ayyappu, the rabbit-hunter. He was bitten by snakes two or three times. But, he survived the bites. Eventually, he aged and 'overaged.' He lied under the earth and dusted like a ripe, fallen leaf drying up into disappearance. Next to

mine was the house of areca palm climber What was his name? Oh, it's on the tip of my tongue. But it eluded him. He died from a fall when the crown of the areca palm he was climbing broke off.

At that time, there were not many houses nearby, unlike today. But the occupants of the new houses are unknown to me.

Reaching the top of the village steep brings back memories of a now gone house... the veranda of the house walled by woven coconut leaves and then a figure standing on it.

'Meenakshi!'

Wiping the tear drops from her lips, she laments.

"We can make a further wish only in the other world."

Abruptly, he closed his eyes. Shame on me! Why should I, who am supposed to spend the time meditating on God's image at this age, be seeing such things?

But, with eyes closed, the figure of Meenakshi thickened more and more. He gazed into her face and asked,

"Other world?" "Is there such a thing?"

She bowed an 'yes' and then



vaporized out of memory.

His old mind inclines to say no to the other world. No need for another world. A sacred verse came surfing into his mind:

Evalokamparam vidhyath

Naswaram karmanirmitham.

An 'other world' like this? Then, isn't that too ephemeral?

It was my father who taught me those lines. Then, he looked at his father's photograph on the wall.

One of the last wishes of my father was to have his picture taken. "Why should I who spent all my time on the farm and paddy fields have my photo taken in a suit?" His father queried. During those times, the photographer Gul Muhamed Saiv used to bring along with his camera things like suit, hat, bulky book, for picturisation. Just before taking the photos, Gul Muhamed Saiv would don a black coat and, after positioning the people, would say loudly;

"Smile....Smile...."

After the photo session, Gul Mohamed Saiv would bow his head in English fashion and say,

"Thank you, thank you."

Those memories do not look funny today – they are a cold sorrow now. In those days, it took nine rupees for a full-size photo including the rental of the cart in which the photographer came. How much did a sovereign of gold cost then? He tried to remember. At any rate, it was less than twenty rupees. It was hard for him to pay for a photograph at that time.

Today, how many photos of mine have been taken by my son! His son will enlarge one of them and hang it over the upper frame of an ornate door in the parlour of my ancestral home, engarlanded.

How precise is my son about everything! His precision is the result of my good deeds in the past lives. I myself

was a 'precise' son to my parents.

In the morning just before leaving the ancestral home for the city, he had beckoned his son to the courtyard and said,

"This is my last place. I do not want things like tomb raised over my grave. I want just a short squire brick structure housing a holy basil built for me. If possible, you can have it tiled with white marble.

Then he pointed out to the sandalwood tree planted by him.

"Do not cut down the whole tree for burning my body – its branches will do."

Though with a sorrowful face, his son heard everything carefully. He consented silently to obey the directions with reverence.

Oh! has sleep deserted me? This has never occurred before. Just a while ago, the clock struck once. Was it tolling 12.30 or 1'o clock?

Hearing footsteps on the verandah, he looked in that direction. His son is



standing near the window and he is smoking a cigarette. He has never smoked near this window. May be, he is unaware that I haven't slept yet. Let him think that I am asleep!!

Then the sound of telephone being dialled. Who is he telephoning at this hour? Is he calling his wife? No, that's not possible. On our return journey from the native place today, we had dropped in at their house. Is he calling his mother? His mother is on a few days visit to the house of his daughter living down town. So, it

may not be his mom, either.... that too at this odd hour.

"What? Can't you hear me?"

"OK, can you now?"

His son is speaking very loudly. To whom? He couldn't make it out though he was all ears.

"What...?, You say haven't I brought with me the old man too? Why have you thought that I would 'install' the old man there?...What?... Is he sleeping? Yea, he is fast asleep. May be travel-fatigued... Oh, the reason for our late coming today? It took sometime to get settlement deed registered... You say countryman have no masks. They not only have false faces but also false hearts and false stomachs too. They dupe people with those. You want to know my decision? There is no harm in being either somewhat practical or far-sighted. Isn't it definite that living even for a day in that countryside is difficult? So there was no alternative but to sell off the property. About his last wish? That's fine, but you see... that compound has only a

small frontage... a bit of a land... If we build a damned tomb-like thing there, will anybody buy it?..... the solution?... I have found a solution for it. If he dies here, I will tell the people that thousands of his friends are waiting here to get a glimpse of him for the last time. Unhurriedly, I'll hire an ambulance and bring the body here. He will be taken to the electric cemetery where will all be a matter of a few seconds..."

He lay sleepless with millions of twisted electric flames passing through his body. His ears both melted away. Now everything has gained better visibility. A suspending plank of wood – a plank of wood above my ancestral home built in the architectural tastes of two or three generations. On the plank, a message:

'Home for Sale'

When he was trying to paraphrase the message into his mother tongue, his mind repeated thus again and again:

'Roots for Sale'. ■

D. Pradeep Kumar

How could the statue of a veteran freedom fighter be an object of a sculptor's impression on his inner self?

The bust of the freedom fighter and Gandhian, the late legendary K. Kelappan, sculpted by Jeevan Thomas, was unveiled on the premises of the Municipal Office at Koilandy in October last by Rtd. Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer. It depicts the late Kelappan, the septuagenarian, in the medium of cement. It is asymmetrical in shape.

That makes all the difference. The sculpture and the sculptor stand apart from the rest. One side represents his inner self, the other, his outer (communicative) self", explains Jeevan Thomas.

Beauty lies in the symmetrical face. It

off the intellectual haloes."

That was a great lesson taught by the masses. "They hate the art of incommunicado and the impostors." This has had a reflection on his works, which were oil paintings and sculptures in the earlier period. He was adjudged as the best sculptor in 1976 by the Kerala State Lalitha Kala Academy.

"Sculptors and painters are always at the receiving end in Kerala. With no fixed income or means of livelihood, they have to bear the brunt of an unsympathetic society." Some of them have committed suicide. Some others preferred to leave the State. "I have been in the doldrums for not succumbing to the lure of the commercial entices." He refuses to sculpt nudes for bar hotels or tourist homes. "I have to pay heavily for this", Jeevan explains.

He is critical of the 'Yakshi' – type sculptures of Kanayi Kunjuraman. Though these are extremely popular they send wrong signals to the society, says Jeevan, despite Kanayi being his 'guru'. "A sculpture or painting should be de rigueur at a public place. Since it is not screened, before display, artists need to ensure that it is in tune with our cultural ethos. A bare knee is an anathema in public. 'Yakshi' would deprave the young ones in such a society. It is sacrilegious to install another nude sculpture in Kochi backwaters in the name of tourism promotion. This seems to have a domino-effect."

Jeevan Thomas believes that an artist should reflect in his (her) works the heart beats of the period. A true artist should be uncompromising – both in art and life. The late John Abraham, with whom he had worked as an art director, stands apart from others. Jeevan holds him in high esteem as he lived, true to his convictions.

Jeevan Thomas has tried to capture John Abraham, the rebel, in a sculpture. The task still remains unfinished. ■

Sculpting the inner self

is physical. Everybody has a metaphysical face too. An artist explores this. Thus the two halves, dissimilar in nature, represents the late leader's physical and metaphysical self.

Perhaps that differentiates a statue from a sculpture. It is the prerogative of the artist, termed freedom of expression.

The sculptor, Jeevan Thomas, has taken such freedom earlier too. S.K. Pottakkad's sculpture facing the S.M. Street in Kozhikode is a unique one. The bronze sculptures of M.N. Govindan Nair in Kollam and Herman Gundert in Talassery and that of Ranji in Kochi illustrate the artist, who has carved a niche for himself.

An alumnus of the College of Fine Arts, Thiruvananthapuram, he belongs to the generation of angry young artists of 1970's, who tread a different path. They gave vent to the fear stalking the society and the raging anger through their drawings, paintings and sculptures during the Emergency. "The common people, who paid scant attention to our works when immersed in obscurity, began to communicate with us the moment we shed



M. Smithy

Vanilla farmers in the southern states earned millions of rupees during last few seasons. Now they are curiously waiting for the outcome of Indian Cardamom Research Institute's (ICRI) studies on Vanilla. The farmers are aware of the positive impact in their life with the possible success of this study.

This is the nature of relation between the Indian Cardamom Research Institute and farmers. 'Research with a practical mind' - that's the speciality, which differs ICRI from other academic research institutes. This institute situated at Myladumpara, Kerala paves the way for the profitable cultivation of spices in the southern states through its research findings. Now the spice farming community is hopefully waiting for the results of its efforts to develop tissue culture vanilla with an ability of natural pollination. Cultivation of the million-dollar vanilla is mainly a labour intensive one as artificial pollination is a must for it. But the spice farming community believes that the scientists of ICRI could develop methods to bypass artificial pollination.

The scientists of ICRI are trying to impart the ability of self-pollination to vanilla with the help of tissue culture technology. As most of the people are aware, vanilla planifolia is the one, which is cultivated by farmers. The cultivation of vanilla planifolia will be practically possible and commercially viable only when it is artificially pollinated. At the same time the character of natural pollination is found in a wild variety called vanilla whitiana. But this wild variety is not having any commercial value as the vanillin content in it is below one per cent. The scientists hope that if they could impart the ability of natural pollination of wild variety and aroma of vanilla plantifolia into one plant, it will be a revolution in the cash crop cultivation. The scientists are aware of the practical difficulties in this effort. They hope that back crossing may be helpful in maintaining useful specialities of parent varieties. As it is a perennial crop, difficulty increases in back crossing, as it may take years to confirm



results of each test. It may be possible to overcome this problem upto certain extent by developing the vine using fused cells through tissue culture.

Vanilla farmers in the southern states remember that it was with the help of ICRI's tissue culture experiment, they got sufficient number of vanilla seeding materials in past. Raw vanilla beans itself attracted more than Rs. 10,000 per Kg during the last few years. And collection of cuttings from vanilla in the farms as seeding material was not practically possible.

The contributions of ICRI are not limited to vanilla only. As the name indicates, ICRI's primary mandate was to conduct research on cardamom. The institute constituted under the erstwhile Cardamom Board in 1978 came under the Spices Board of the Union Commerce

25 Years of Indi Spice

Ministry in 1986. The institute has released four high yielding cardamom selections and a couple of hybrid lines with improved productivity ready for release to the farming community. It is having the credit of developing micro propagation techniques and transferring the technology to commercial laboratories for large-scale multiplication and distribution of plantlets to growers. It is concentrating in the field of controlling plant diseases also. The plant pathology division of the institute has developed detection techniques and control measures for 26 different types of plant diseases. The entomology division has listed 52 types of pests in cardamom and developed control measures for most of them. It has achieved success in the biocontrol of pests and diseases. Other achievements of ICRI spreads in the fields of post harvesting technologies for cardamom, black pepper, vanilla, ginger, turmeric etc.



farming community needs to impart novel methods to avoid chemicals. Attack of pest is the biggest problem faced by the spice farmers. At the same time they cannot use chemical pesticides if they want to continue exports. The integrated pest control method developed by ICRI and its regional centres are capable of helping farmers in this regard.

Scientist-farmer interface is another important programme conducted here during frequent intervals. The scientists used to visit selected farmers also. Exploring the human resource of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and NGOs is also experimented here to promote organic farming and modern agricultural practices. Tricoderma, an eco friendly protectant against several soil borne diseases and tissue cultured plant materials were distributed through the network of NGOs and SHGs. Another initiative taken by ICRI to provide 'good farming practice' training to educated youngsters from agricultural families created a new wave among new generation. These new generation farmers view agriculture as a highly knowledge based field and ready

an Cardamom Research Institute s made easy

Studies in this institute are not limited in the laboratory or research papers. The results of the studies are often transferred to the farming community. In addition to the usual procedures for transfer of technology, ICRI gives training to the planters and conducts meetings and demonstrations. The regional research stations of ICRI situated at Gangtok (Sikkim), Sakelpur (Karnataka) and Thadiyankudissi (Tamil Nadu) also provide assistance to the farming community in commercial cultivation of spices and conduct studies to increase productivity.

The significance of this research centre has increased in recent past due to the increasing interest towards organic products in the western countries. Most of the developed countries prefer spices produced without using chemical pesticides and fertilizers. The norms regarding this will be tightened in the coming years. Considering these, the spice

for high investments. They used to watch the global scenario and decide which crops should be cultivated. And definitely, it will attract high returns. Vanilla cultivation is the best example for it. Many farmers earned millions of rupees each year from that crop only. But they are not ready to stay with just vanilla cultivation. They are thinking of other options too. In this regard farmers are resorting the help of experts from ICRI and similar institutions. No doubt, the importance of ICRI will increase in the coming days. ICRI has planned many other training programmes also in connection with its ongoing silver jubilee celebrations. The stiff competition faced by the Indian spice exporters in the international market also increases the significance of ICRI. In the post GATT era, we could take an advantage in the international market only through strong and practical oriented research support.

■ The writer is Information Assistant, Press Information Bureau, Kochi.

Babu Jacob is Chief Secretary



Mr. Babu Jacob is the new Chief Secretary to the Government of Kerala. He is the 24th Chief Secretary. He succeeded Mr.N.Chandrasekharan Nair, who retired from the service on July 31,2004. The 1968 batch IAS officer Mr. Jacob entered into the Civil Service as Assistant Collector at Kannur. Later he became Sub Collector of Adoor. While serving as District Collector, Kollam he organized the popular Kanakkala People's Movement. He served as Registrar of Department of Co-operation and Managing Director of Kerala State Financial Corporation. Mr. Jacob played a significant role in modernizing of KSFC.

He was Joint Secretary of Personnel and Agricultural, Government of India for 10 years.

Mr. Jacob became Secretary in the Departments of Revenue, Public Works and Irrigation, Kerala. He was elevated to the post of Additional Chief Secretary in charge of Public Works on September 29, 2002. He played a major role in Rs.1600 crore World Bank Aided Road Development Scheme, which is underway in the state.

His wife Mrs. Lizzie Jacob is the Principal Secretary in Department of Power. Their children, Mr.Sooraj Jacob, Mrs.Neerada Jacob, Mrs. Anjana Jacob are doing research in Medical Science in the USA.

Remembering the eminent

Priyamvada

ORMA – the documentary video festival organized by the Information and Public Relations Department on July 27, 28, 29 in Thiruvananthapuram was unusual in many respects. Contrary to the general perception, it proved that there is considerable audience for the documentaries. Second, the festival proved to be another way of dissemination other than the main channels of communication. Third, documentaries detailing at length as the biography and contribution of eminent people is proudly and seriously viewed by the new generation.

The Information and Public Relations Department is producing video documentary series on eminent Malayalis who have contributed to the shaping of modern secular Kerala. Seventeen of the productions in the series are completed. The creative execution of the production was jointly done by C-Dit and KSFD. Mr. M.M. Hassan, Minister for Information and Parliamentary Affairs inaugurated the festival. The renowned poet, lyricist and film maker, Mr. P. Bhaskaran presided over the function.

'EMS' was the first video screened in the festival. Directed by Mr. K.S. Ranjith, the narrative of EMS unfolded through the interspersion of history and biography. The personality of EMS cannot be delineated from the history of modern Kerala. The visuals of independence and anti-land lord movement in Kerala is brilliantly shot.

If EMS challenged the Brahmin orthodoxy through the symbolic acts of burning sacred thread, C.J. Thomas, the playwright and one of the original thinkers in Malayalam upturned the christian orthodoxy through tearing away the sacred dress. The video documentary titled 'Malayalathinte Priya CJ' brilliantly portrayed the life of an eminent genius of Malayalam. The interview with CJ's wife Mrs. Rosi Thomas is really moving. The video is directed by Mr. A.V. Thampan.

Directed by Mr. Satheesh Poduval, the documentary on K. Kelappan, Kerala Gandhi attempted to capture the glorious moments of independence movement through the biographical narrative of Kelappan.

'Njeralath Rama Poduval – the Fakir' among Malayalam artists, the 'sopanam' music maestro is another video documentary presented in the first day of the festival. Mr. Satheesh Venganoor, who directed this video has brilliantly used the Sopana Sangeetham to evoke the enduring legacy of Njeralath.

Directed by Mr. Kannan, the video on "Ayyankali" – the social revolutionary who fought

against all forms of social oppression and envisioned the formation of secular modern Kerala enlivened the audience.

'Vaikkam Abdul Khader' by Mr. K. Satheesh and 'Pattam Thanu Pillai' by Mr. B.S. Ratheesh gave insights into the political values of Kerala during the independence movement. The importance of these two documentaries is that it evokes in us a supreme respect for the great statesmen who led us to the modern democratic Kerala.

'Aravindan' – by Mr. K.K. Chandran moves us beyond the realm of biographical documentary. Perhaps, a film on a filmmaker is the most challenging and interesting work to be done. Mr. K.K. Chandran has done this exceedingly well.

Directed by Mr. Majid Gulisthan, the video documentary on 'Sahodaran Ayyappan' is narrated through many recreated events. Nevertheless, this makes the documentary interesting and watchful. 'Sahodaran Ayyappan' – the great organizer of Sree Narayana Movement is accurately represented in this cinematically brilliant documentary.

Mr. K. Rajgopal's video documentary on Malayalam's dear 'SK', the best travelogue writer, has attempted to depict the life and times of S.K. Pottekkad. "Sri Narayana Guru", directed by Mr. P. Baburaj, portrays the different facets of Sri Narayana Guru – spiritual reformer, renaissance intellectual and social organizer.

'Goda Varma Raja' by Ms. Indira and Mr. Ajith, 'Akkamma Cheriyan' by Ms. Sreebala K. Menon, 'Pattikkamthodi Ravunni Menon' by Mr. N.P. Gopinath were meaningful attempts to truthfully represent the great lives of modern Kerala.

Directed by Mr. Krishnanunni, four times national award winning sound recordist, on the great ayurvedic physician of Kerala 'Vaidyaratnam P.S. Warriar' makes an interesting viewing. The elements of sound represented in the documentary makes it unusual in terms of narrative. The video documentary on 'Arnoos Pathiri', directed by Mr. Ravidran excellently captures the polyphonic trends of cultural formation of modern Kerala. The best insight that this documentary provides is on the secularization of modern Kerala through the contributions of non-Malayali writers and intellectuals.

The last documentary screened in the ORMA festival was on 'K.C.S. Panicker.' Titled, 'Varna Bhedangal', directed by Mr. Damodar Prasad, the video focuses on the intellectual and creative evolution of one of the greatest Malayalam painters, K.C.S. His contribution to the emergence of modernist sensibility in art is aptly presented through the narrative. ■



Dances for perusal

Bhawani Cheerath

Dances have always been associated with the lifestyle and tradition of a people and are vital in the evolution of a cultural identity of an area. Kerala is known the world over for its Kathakali, Koodiyattam and Mohiniattam. But to limit the range to three of these styles would mean overlooking the forms that are practiced by the tribals and those associated with the folk tradition.

Going beyond the presentational aspect of any dance we find that it is not merely a performing art form but is rooted in religion as part of the ritualistic practices, and is also an integral part of the socio-cultural practices. Harvest festivals, marriages, births, war, victory, offering to the gods - all these have its geographical area-specific dances. It is against such a background that we must assess the relevance of the book.

Clearly categorized under five heads - Tribal, Folk, Classical, Neo-Classical and Modern Dance the slender volume has a thumb-nail sketch of all the dances practiced in state. The tribal communities spread over the Travancore, Kochi and Malabar regions have remained untouched by urbanization and therefore their dances are an expression of the distinct primitive tradition. Body movements to the rhythmic beats of drums are the common to most of these dances.

From the Elakkaradi practiced by the Irular of Attapadi to the Gadhika, the ritual dance of the Adiyas find a place in the book. Details on the Gadhika provide interesting information like, the strong influence of the Kannada dialect, and that it is performed to appease the angry gods as well as to thank Him for the safe delivery of a newborn.

Coming to folk dances the nuggets of information are extremely valuable particularly for a society that is distancing itself from its agrarian roots and moving closer to an IT-friendly one. The details regarding the type of people who participate in the dances, are a yardstick of the strong bonds that existed

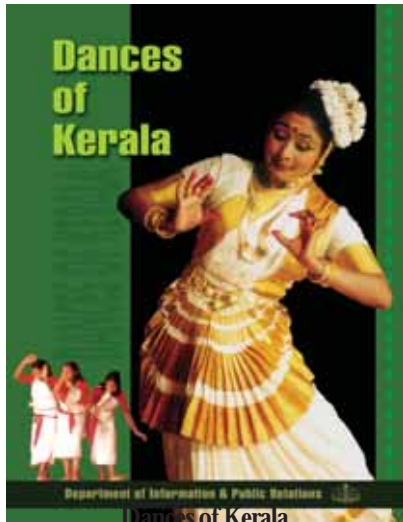
between the communities within the rural hierarchy. An example of such a dance is the 'Aivar Kali' a combined performance of the five communities -the *Asari*, *Moosari*, *Karuvan*, *Thattan* and the *Kallasari*. The *Ezhamathu* Kali is yet another folk style that was a form of 'domestic entertainment' by the *Variar* and *Pishorody* communities and took on the role of social satire.

The section on Classical dances covers well-known forms like *Koothu*, *Kathakali*, *Ramanattom*, *Mohiniattam* and *Koodiyattom* (to mention a

few) which we are familiar with. However, though briefly spelt out, attention has been given to include the details of the musical accompaniments, costumes, and special features of the forms, which make each of these forms unique.

The inclusion of a list of the musical instruments generally used in the dances is an useful content of the book, as also, the listing of all the dances mentioned in the book under three heads -performed by 'Men', 'Women', 'Men and Women'. This assumes importance particularly at a time when people are experimenting with the traditional forms and trying to blend with contemporary styles.

The colour photographs endow the book with a visual appeal and clarity which is essential to aid the visualization of many movements mentioned in the text. As a handbook on the dances of the state the book will prove useful. ■

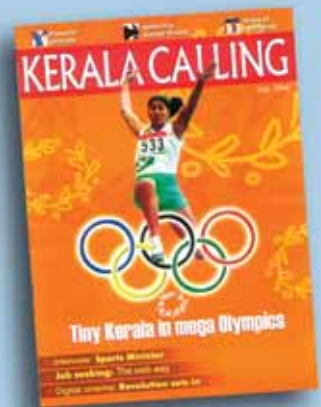


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K.M. Beenmol

Do we lose the grip in 400 metres?

Sanil P. Thomas

It happened exactly a decade ago. The venue was Big Arch Stadium, Hiroshima, Japan. The mega event was Asian Games. K. Sosamma ran past Shiney Wilson to win the bronze in the one lap event. Later both of them teamed up with P.T. Usha and Dhanalakshmi of Andhra Pradesh to win the silver in 1600 m. relay.

Sosamma's amazing performance raised many an eyebrow. But the indication was clear, the trend was set – after Usha, it was Shiney and then Saramma. The Kerala girls didn't allow anyone else to have the hegemony in the one lap event.

Shall we go back further. Yes, it was in 1984. The Indian women relay squad (4 x 400 m) entered the finals at the Los Angeles Olympics. And the team consisted of M.D. Valsamma, Vandana Rao, Shiney Wilson and P.T. Usha. Yes, there was only one from outside Kerala. The story was repeated at Seoul in 1988. There it was Mercy Mathew Kuttan who teamed with Usha and Shiney.

Later in 1996 at the Atlanta Olympics and in 2000 at Sydney Olympics the Kerala domination continued. In Atlanta when Usha was ignored Beenamol got the nod. In Sydney it was Beenamol, Rosakutty and Jinzy Philip. Manjima Kuriakose was in the reserve bench.

In between, in Bangkok, in 1998, P.T. Usha was shown the door. But Jinzy Philip got in to team up with Beenamol and Rosakutty.

And, shall I ask the question now. What happened to the Kerala women athletes nowadays? Why we are losing the grip in the one lap – the 400 m. event?

Of late, only Chithra K. Soman, a 21 year old, hails from Kottayam has a podium finish even at the national level. Beenamol has already decided to call it a day once the Athens Olympics gets over. The gutsy girl from Idukki who served the nation for over a decade deserves a rest. She, still is not at the end of the road. But we cannot insist her to continue. The semi-finalist in 400 m in Sydney, later won the Asiad gold in 800 m at Busan, an event which brought her to limelight in early 90s during the Asian Junior Meet at New Delhi.

Chithra did win a silver in the SAF Games, Islamabad, her first international medal. That too with her best time (52.43). Here also Andhra's S. Geetha was the winner with 52.25 seconds.

Aspiring talents like Manjit Kaur and Rajinder Kaur are marching ahead. The recently held interstate meet at Chennai was classic example. Tamil Nadu team (Ilavarasi, Tharani, Roselin and Shanthi) won the gold

in 4x400 m relay. Kerala finished second. In the individual race, where S. Geetha won the gold, there was no Malayalee on the podium.

Of course, the National Record in 400 m. stands with K.M. Beenamol with her 51.21 second performance at Kiev in 2000. Beena shattered P.T. Usha's 15 years old record. Now it's four years since Beena chocked the record time. She couldn't even match it anymore. So do others from her state.

Again, we must understand, even the Asian Junior record stand better. Li Jing of China had a time of 50.01 seconds. The Asian Games record is 51.13 seconds by Damayanthi K. Pharsa of Sri Lanka in Bangkok, 1998. And the Asian continental record is much ahead. Ma Yugni of China chocked 49.81 seconds in 1993.

One lap event gave much scope for athletes, especially women as it was easy to qualify for a relay team. Still we were losing the grip. Next time, will it be Chithra alone?

Of course, Jinzy and Manjima got the entry from outside. But they were born and brought up in Kerala. It is about time our coaches and authorities paid attention to groom a new lot in the 400 metres. Better late than never. ■

The real rebel

N. V. Ravindranathan Nair

Ponkunnam Varkey is no more. His unconquerable spirit and uncompromising conflict against injustice is now part of history. Life was always hostile to him and he took it as a war to be waged against odds till the last moment. His childhood joys of playing in the muddled waters, humming away time in taking a trip with his father on a country boat through the canals of Kuttanad and enjoying the richness of picturesque paddy fields were all destined to evaporate like a reverie. Everything came to an end as he lost his father at an early age.

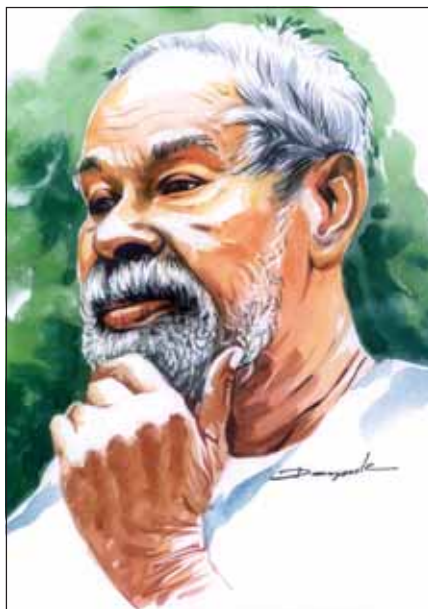
Born to an agrarian family in 1908 at Edathua, and having lost his father Varkey had no choice but to go with his mother. Mother had to move her ancestral home at Ponkunnam, a hilly tract with her children. From the vastness of the paddy fields he was uprooted and planted at a different terrain. His schooling, quite naturally, was a challenge and he fought it out to become a teacher. But to be a teacher at a school under the Catholicate management near Ponkunnam by no means an easy affair. His utterances against the church and clergy forced him to leave his job. By this time he had attained a name as a writer. His writings got rave reviews among stalwarts of time.

Ponkunnam Varkey was synonymous with protest and used his literary prowess to launch an uncompromising struggle against social injustice. His silent plough ploughed through the socio political fields which has been witnessing a great churning. Varkey's works had irked the Diwan of Travancore who took serious exception to his works like Manthrikettu and Model. For the first time in the history of the state, on May 11, 1946 a writer was arrested and put in jail for his literary work and Varkey lost his school teacher's job in the Government school.

Varkey's message was that the writers, thinkers and social reformers should remain unafraid. The sparks of freedom of thought and protest was always there in his heart till he breathed his last. He never

had any reluctance to speak out his mind. From the very beginning of his life he was observing the world around him and the occurrences in the socio-political surroundings. His relentless fight went on. He criticized the king and aggression of the foreigners. His high pitched utterances were always annoying the church and political leaders. He questioned the vices in his own community. When it was time to express his wrath he never minced words.

Literary talent to him was for the attainment of certain social causes. His works were not only the vehicles of his thought



Ponkunnam Varkey
1908 – 2004

but instances of artistic beauty that endeared them to the masses. Varkey's writing expedited the evolution of a congenial atmosphere for social change in the first half of the 20th century. The collection of poems 'Thirumulkazcha' in 1939 was justifying the hopes of his admirers. Later on it was the spring time for Malayalam literature and his contributions added its splendour and fragrance.

The focus of his works was on human relationships and man's relationship with nature.

He got infatuated over the countryside

life, villagers and farmers. "Sabdikkunna Kalappa" has always been considered as one of the best short stories in Malayalam literature. His dramas were noted not only for its social criticism but with its artistic beauty. Sterling and stern style of writing always enthralled the readers in to the works and they cherished it in their hearts. The dramas when staged his messages were bringing closer to the masses. His left oriented philosophy and relentless fight against feudalism, its decadent values and institutionalised church made him darling of the downtrodden and, simultaneously a thorn in the eye of the powerful.

Varkey was one of the pioneers of the progressive writers forum and literary writers' co operative. He was the president of Sahitya Academy and Sahitya Pravartaka Sahakarana Sangham. He had been awarded with almost all major literary awards in the state. The Government had awarded him with the Ezhuthachan Puraskaram.

Varkey's protests always contained the renaissance values that have polished his life. He realised that writers resistance is the morrow's social resistance. Later he felt sad when the society went back from the aggressive stances. His stories heightened the values of freedom and democracy. He believed that the writer should understand the day-to-day activities of the society and analyse it and use this energy to write his stories. In the last days he was complaining that the writers who have the talent to feel the pulse of the society is on the decline. When his long cherished ideals got defiled with the change of time he never thought about changing his stances but kept mum. He knew the sharpness and strength of silence. He used to say religion, society, Government and all refused him. But he consoled himself. The end to the great chapter of Kerala's literary and social life came at 10 am on the 2nd of July the very next day of his 94th birth day at his Perumcharil house at Pampady. But his imprints will remain in the hearts of all those who love progressive thinking and a distinct and uncompromising way of life. ■

Unbeaten glory

Sanil Abraham

Geojit Financial Services needs no introduction to the business circles of the country. It has created its own space in the stock market of the country. Geojit has got lot of *numero uno* positions to its credit. Though the stock markets have not released any official facts and figures, unofficially it is known as the largest retailer company and it is the market leader in futures trade. To add icing to the cake, the company is the only Indian stock broking firm, which has put giant strides in the global market scene. It is the only Indian company, which is permitted to do global transactions in UAE.

In the cut-throat competition dominating the world of stocks and shares, success is reserved for sloggers. C J George, the brain behind this institution is an example for such perseverance. C J George hails from Paingottur near Muvattupuzha in Ernakulam district. He is born in an agricultural family (Chennaiyappillil) as the fifth son of Mathew John and Annamma. After completing his graduation in Commerce from Muvattupuzha Nirmala College he switched over to Delhi for his further studies.

George was a confused man after finishing his M.com course from Delhi University at the beginning of 1980s. He joined the LLB course of the same university without any clarity on his career. But, confusion established victory over George and he ended up in a stock broking firm as he decided not to complete the course. As an employee of that firm, he got transfer to Kochi. It was during that time that Cochin Stock Exchange was being established. George borrowed Rs. 2000 and became one of the members of the Stock Exchange. In 1987, with a partner, he began – Geojit Securities. Later, he bought the entire firm. Rest is history.

The name of the company was later

changed into Geojit Financial Services. Now, it is a joint venture with KSIDC. More than two lakh persons are doing transactions through Geojit. The turnover is Rs. 35,000 crore. Number of employees itself is around 1000. Geojit has got 160 branches across India.

Internet-based trading has the potential to really benefit the investor, with its ability to offer great speed and transparency, at a much lower cost. The visionary in George can be identified in the very move of launching the online trade in the country for the first time. Now, all the depository transactions are fully online here. His broking house also began an integrated trading system in cash and delivery.

BBC asks his opinion on the value of rupee and gold along with questions of the growth rate of a third world country like India. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) often ask him why they should invest in India?



C. J. George

Such sort of track record may lead one individual go overboard. But, George is the same humble, simple and idealistic man from Paingottur. Even after a hectic schedule from US, Europe or

Gulf trip he immediately returns to his native place as the farmer in his mind is anxious on what happened to his crops back home.

When we ask the secret behind his success, the entrepreneur with his inimitable smile says, "The first and foremost thing in Geojit is that there is no secrets. Anybody can approach me for anything. I treat my employees in high esteem. Second thing is that – I don't know whether you believe it or not, I have not bought a single share of any company from the stock market till date. While, some companies engaged in malpractices through their own buying-selling games – Geojit earned trust. Trust of people. Trust of ordinary people along with higher and lower strata of society". ■



Courses Institute



Electronics and Electrical Equipment Servicing

Khadi Village Industries commission conducts a course on servicing of Electronics and Electrical Equipment at Multi disciplinary training centre, Thrissur.

Duration: 4 months; Age: 18-35; Free accommodation; Stipend provided.

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Electronics and Communication Department of Engineering College, Thiruvananthapuram conducts Electronic design and automation course.

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Application form available at above centres.

Electronics and Telephone Technology Training

Applications are invited for Electronics and Telephone technology course in Kerala Vocational Training Centre, Thrissur.

Duration: 6 months; Eligibility: SSLC, Plus-2, VHSE, ITI, degree/diploma. Age 15-40. Application form available at Programme Coordinator, Kerala Vocational Training Centre, Karthika Building, West Nada, Kodungallur, Thrissur. Also available by money order for Rs. 20.

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Science and Technology Entrepreneurship development (STED) under Central Government's Science and Technology Department invites application for Digital Video Film Making Training in Thiruvananthapuram.

Eligibility: SSLC; Contact: District Coordinator, STED sub centre, Narayana Bhavan, Kurup's Line, Sasthamangalam; Ph : 0471-2725356. Last date October 31.

AutoCAD level-1

LBS Centre for Science and Technology conducts AutoCAD Level -I course

Eligibility: ITI/ KGTE Civil Engg / Dip. Engg. Exemption in qualification for those who have experience. Application form can be had from the Director, LBS Centre for Science and Technology, Palayam, Nandavanam, Thiruvananthapuram, for Rs. 30. Ph: 0471-2324396, 2324148, 2324364



Sabith and Hashim

They sat together on the bench of a Government school and together they won

They are friends – Sabith Muhammad and Hashim. They schooled together from their 8th standard onwards in a government school. Both studied at home during their high school days without opting for private tuition. Their school classes were enough for them. But the similarity ends there. Because Sabith is outspoken and tempered; Hashim is silent and shy.

Again they meet together on another similarity. They perform well at exams. In the medical / engineering entrance examination of 2004 Sabith got the first rank when Hashim grabbed the fifth. But when the result of the All Indian Entrance test came Hashim got it though Sabith was pulled back.

Sabith is not merely a classroom boy. He always took interest in extra-curricular activities like writing and publishing. He says that he used to avoid some 'boring' classes. But what the government school offered him was enough for him.

Hashim is a 'quizzical kid' from his early

school days itself. He used to participate as much quiz competitions as he could. Born and brought up in a traditional Muslim family at Manappally in Kollam district he got chance to tune up his talents in appearing for quizzical tests. Hashim is the elder son of Ismail and Rehumath. Ismail is a postmaster and Rehumath, a teacher.

Sabith is the son of Thajudheen and Jameela Beevi, residing at 'Baithul Amal' near Karunagappally. Thajudheen is a teacher and Jameela a housewife. Thajudheen says, "I have never compelled my son to study. I never said him to do this or don't do that."

The result of the Medical Entrance of this year was a celebration of a government school too. The duo from Government HSS Karunagappally carried the prestige of the school to soaring heights.

Their success is the celebration of a Taluk too. Children from among the rural folk studied in a government school are really achievers. ■

The result of the Medical Entrance of this year was a celebration of a government school too. The duo from Government HSS Karunagappally carried the prestige of the school to soaring heights.



Hormis Tharakan DGP

Like Master, like disciple

HORMIS THARAKAN, the Director General of Police, donned the police cap on November, 12, 1968. The then police chief was none other than the great I.G. Gopalan. I.G. Gopalan was the man who shaped and strengthened the police force in Kerala. He endeavoured to streamline the activities of the police and to bring in a general standard in their service. The first police manual which came out in 1969 was part of this task. The predecessors of this Police Manual were Travancore-Cochin Police Manual and Madras Police Manual. The Manual contains the lessons for discharging official duties.

Three and a half decades' time told on the usefulness of the Manual. The force had to delineate its role in tune with the changing circumstances.

The police work had to be adapted to increasing traffic cases, goondaism, harassment of women etc. On account of development in forensic science, investigation methods have also changed. Human rights aspects are also a key factor now. Hence an updated version of the **Police Manual** in seven volumes, is under preparation. Instructed by Hormis Tharakan, Jacob Punnoos, the Additional DGP is executing the revision. Jacob Punnoos says, "The initiative is part of the total revamp aimed at good policing."

Hormis Tharakan is the last among the officers who worked with I.G. Gopalan, now in service. In a sense, the present chief is saluting his first chief by revising a meaningful deed initiated by his former boss. Is it a *Gurudakshina*? ■

Bhavanasree for Kudumba Sthree

NARAYANI, Kamalakshi, Karthyayani, Madhavi are members of the Kudumbasree unit in Mangattidam Panchayat of Kannur district. An occasion came for them- also many women like them- to be jubilant about their ever-cherished dream of constructing a small home. State Bank of Travancore is extending the helping hand to make their wish come true.

Koothuparamba witnessed



the inauguration of the help scheme named Kudumbasree on **July, 24**. The inaugural event brought in focus the role of commercial banks in a developing society. The role is meaningful when those banks work for the needy.

The SBT General Manager (Operation) **Rama Mohana Rao** handed over the sanction papers to the beneficiaries. ■



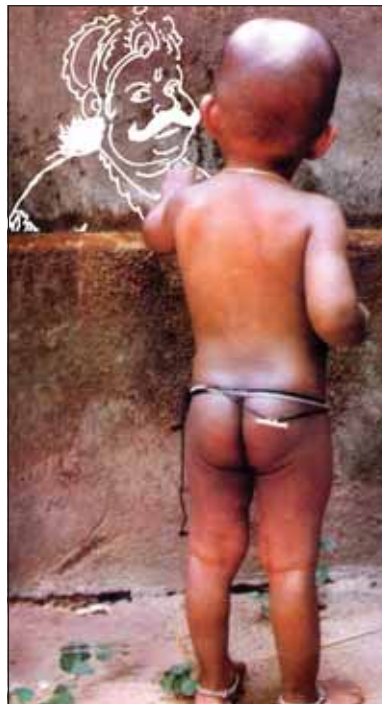
Chief Minister A.K. Antony giving away Ezhuthachan Puraskaram to T. Padmanabhan

Padmanabhan glitters sans long prose fiction

"A LONG work of prose fiction containing characters and action in the form of a plot" – So is the definition of a novel. The writer **T. Padmanabhan** says he is disinterested in writing a novel. He opted for only brief pieces of prose fiction, i.e., short story. Padmanabhan's stories are wonderful artistic pieces of work in terms of craft and narration. He received the prestigious **Ezhuthachan Puraskaram** for the year 2003,

from the **Chief Minister A.K. Antony** at a function held in the Durbar Hall of the Secretariat on July, 31. While receiving the award, the eminent writer said that such an award eluded him for 45 years for he had not written a novel. But he wanted to become a great writer without a novel to his credit, like Kumaran Asan who became a Mahakavi without writing an epic poem. ■

Children's Onam



"WHEN did a little Maveli visit the children – the children only – in Kerala? "Twenty seven days prior to the real – call it big – Onam." The Q&A belongs to a distant past in Kerala. Today the children's Onam is becoming only a memory.

The Onam for little ones fell on the Onam Day in the month of Karkkidakam. Pookkalam and feast were part of it. The pageants like Pulikali, Kaduva kali, were also part of the little Onam.

It is believed that the 'short' Vamana was commemorated in this Onam, which is chiefly celebrated by Brahmins. ■

Wheels for dreams

ALL PLACES are different from a heaven alike. But not Kerala – feels a team from the luxury car maker **BMW**. Kochi may be chosen by BMW to put up their third manufacturing base in Asia. The four day long discussions between officials from the Government of Kerala and the BMW team led by **Wolfram Rehm** concluded in Kochi on July,27. Industries Principal Secretary

K. Mohandas, who led the officials said that the efforts of the Government will become fruitful. A final decision will come out after the company's board of directors' meet in November. Anyway, the initiative will provide the thrust that makes our industrial dreams move on. ■



A scene from the drama 'Napoleon' staged by Sreerangakala, Thiruvananthapuram

Of nose, beauty and infidelity

IF JOSEPHINE had not been so beautiful and Cleopatra's nose had not been so much attractive, the world's history would have been different. Beauty accompanied by infidelity changes the course of history! In war or love, it is easy to begin; uneasy to cease.

Napoleon's heart for Josephine had been the theme of

many books and plays. Numerous crucial moments from the life of Napoleon Bonapart, were brought into Malayalam stage by a novice director **Meenambalam Suresh** in his drama **Napoleon**. The drama was adjudged the best drama for the year 2003. Suresh has got Special Jury Award for his creative look into the life of

Napoleon.

Four state awards went to the drama including those for song, costumes and setting. It was staged by the theatre group, **Sreerangakala, Thiruvananthapuram**.

Pramod Payyannur was adjudged the best director for his drama 'Dravida nritham' staged by KPAC. ■

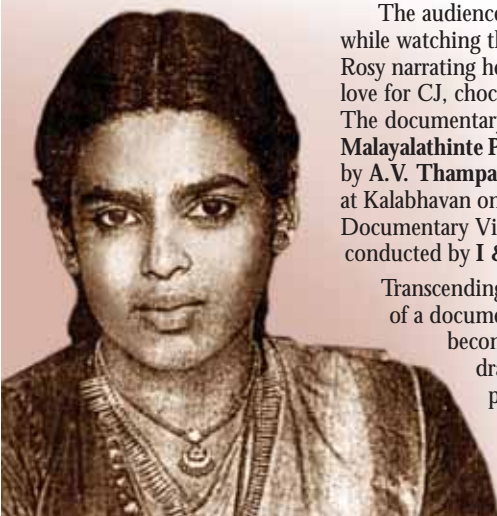
Documenting tears

WHY Rosy Thomas did shed woeful tears while she recalled her life and love with C.J. Thomas? Especially before a camera which captured the

materials for a documentary on her husband? One might doubt, if he is not aware of the intense passion the couple had in their short life together.

The audience was moved while watching the sequence of Rosy narrating her unrelenting love for CJ, choked in tears. The documentary titled **Malayalathinte Priya CJ** directed by **A.V. Thampan** was screened at Kalabhavan on 27th July in the Documentary Video Festival conducted by **I & PRD**.

Transcending the limitations of a documentary it becomes a docu-drama for portraying the man and visionary that is C.J. ■



Halo for Keralites



words, 'cause those are uttered by **Jagadish Tytler** the Minister for NRI Affairs. Participants in first Investors Global Meet held at **Thiruvalla** on **31 July**, were joyful to hear Tytler saying so. Speaking in terms of economics too, around half of the NRI remittance of Rs.55000 crores - comes from 2.5 million emigrants from Kerala. Also Keralites have collectively brightened India's image abroad. So the Central Government is keen and sensitive to the total welfare of the non-resident Keralites. Setting up of a NRI City with the support of the State Government is in the offing. ■

"NO OTHER people in India rose to great success stories abroad like Keralites". People of Kerala can take pride of the

By T. Prasanna

Passive smoking

This is in reference to the article, 'Why stubb out lives?' (July 2004). The shocking news that at least one or two women arriving at the lung cancer clinic at RCC every week are victims of passive smoking should be an eye-opener to smokers. As in the case of any other addictions, here too, women are at the receiving end. It is high time to take decisive steps to ban all kinds of intoxicants, including liquor to save our women as well as our future generation. Let the minister's words herald meaningful action.

Dr. Renuka,
Edappally, Kochi.

Yeoman service

There exists a preconception on environmentalism that it is a delicacy of the so-called refined western society and they are trying to impose such utopian ideas on the third world people. The article 'Vanishing sacred groves' is a reply to this assumption. The kavus stand as living proof of our heritage on environmentalism. But it seems that the vanishing of groves occurs mainly of our change of attitude on en-

vironmental issues. By publishing this article Kerala Calling does yeoman service to protect such niceties of our society.

Vamanan Namboodiri
Olanavattom, Kollam.

Education important

Your July issue is capable of arresting the attention and igniting the imagination of the readers. The issue gives paramount importance to

sports and games. We can really be proud of our athletic stars like P.T. Usha, Anju, M.D. Valsamma, C.K. Lekshmanan, S.S. Narayanan, Shiny Wilson and others. Among the major items of Kerala Calling, education, art and literature of Kerala may be given due importance.

Prof. M. SathyaPrakasham
Mangad, Kollam.

Ancient myths

Dr. Vishnu Namboodiri's article, 'The ancient myths of the aborigines, gives light to the dynamic world of imagination of the aborigines. This once again underlines the fact that aborigines have culture as rich as ours. The article well informs us about the mythical world of different communities in a vivid and narrative prose. The effort of the author is really admirable.

S.K. Govindan,
Pulpally, Wayanad.

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