

KERALA CALLING

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November 01, 2021_VOL_42_No. 01

ERASE

THE EXTRA

CARBON



Climate change is directly linked with carbon emission.
The worst consequences of climate change can only be avoided by
achieving carbon neutrality.

Kerala's self reliance gets manifested at IITF-2021

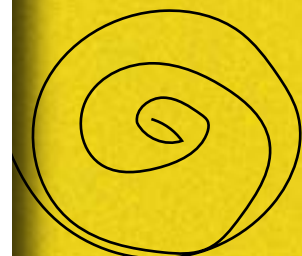
Bespaking the concept of a 'Self -Reliant Kerala through a knowledge-based society', the spectacular pavilion of the State, was set in motion by M.P.John Brittas on 14th November 2021 at Pragati maidan, Delh as part of India International Trade fair-2021. Fashioned in a par excellence manner, the pavillion displays Kerala's self-sufficiency in many an important sector.

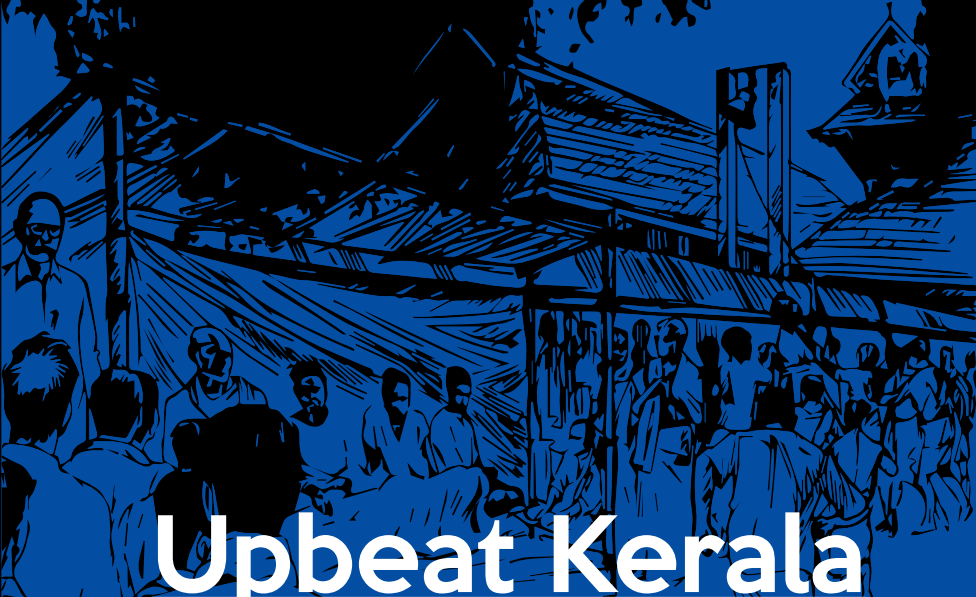


Snaps from Kerala Pavilion At IITF 2021



Photo Credit : Jayan, I&PRD





Upbeat Kerala



EDITORIAL

This issue of Kerala Calling is about unabashed celebration. It celebrates the state's notching of the topmost position in governance performance; it celebrates the 90th anniversary of the Guruvayoor Satyagraha, a struggle that sought to wipe out the taints of casteism and orthodoxy from the land; it celebrates its veteran writer P. Valsala's winning of the prestigious Ezhuthachan Award; and it celebrates the state's constant efforts to ensure its children's well-being as much through initiating and sustaining crime-prevention projects as through providing intellectual entertainment by promoting and propagating children's literature.

For the fifth consecutive year, Kerala has proven that it is unbeatable in its uncompromising commitment to the lofty aims of equity, growth and sustainability. This is evident in its garnering the first place among all the states in the country, according to the parameters set and analyzed by the Public Affairs Centre. The state government is applauded for its efforts to improve the life conditions of its people by rigorously monitoring and implementing the employment guarantee scheme, and taking care of health infrastructure, education and public affairs. The state is also doing commendably well in protecting its children from neglect, physical abuse and cybercrime, and adding teeth to their rights to education and justice.

Writers across the world are respected

not only for their creative imagination and linguistic prowess but also for their unique insights into the social malaises that are hidden from the world's eye. P. Valsala is one such litterateur that Kerala is blessed in having, and her works have exposed the dark and sinister sides of human nature. In recognition of 60 uninterrupted years of writing that have produced many literary gems, the grateful state has bestowed the highest literary award on her. Kerala Calling salutes this native genius!

While all these are enough causes for celebration, we have to acknowledge that more needs to be done. Even as we take pride in having cleansed our cultural atmosphere of the pollutants of casteist practices and retrograde thinking through the famous Guruvayoor Satrayagraha, we have to honestly admit that not enough has been done to cleanse our physical atmosphere of greenhouse gases. This has intensified the tragedies that have come in the wake of climate change, and demands more concerted thought and action to attain carbon neutrality. Kerala Calling wishes the state government good luck in renewing and fortifying all the required checks and balances so that Kerala can remain God's Own Country for all time.

Features, profiles, reports and interviews await your attention here. Happy Reading!

S. Harikishore I.A.S.

Editor



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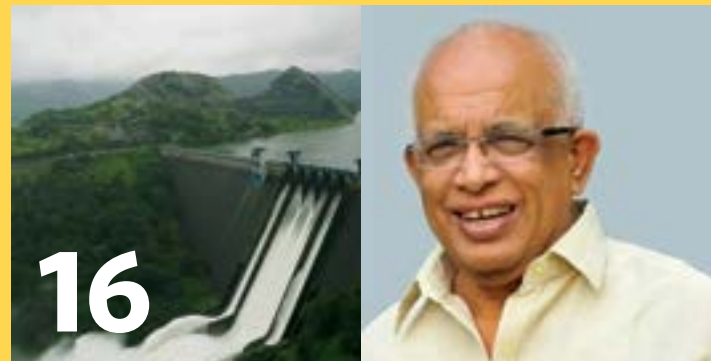
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GOVERNANCE



Kerala once again ranked number one

Kerala once again ranked number one in governance performance in India. Public Affairs Index published by the Public Affairs Centre analyses the quality and adequacy of governance in Indian states. This is the fifth consecutive year Kerala is receiving this award. Kerala has secured remarkable points with a huge margin in the index while compared to other states in second and third positions. The index analyses government performance using the three pillars of equity, growth and sustainability. Kerala also excelled in the top position in National Employment Guarantee Scheme, National Health Mission and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and other natural calamities,

Kerala topped in Public Affairs in 2021 as well.

With efficient governance and determined leadership, Kerala has emerged number one. Kerala has been sustaining the top rank from the first year of publishing the index. Tamil Nadu and Telangana are ranked just after Kerala on the list. In the overall performance, Kerala was ranked first among the large states. The equity pillar analyses inclusiveness in policymaking and the growth pillar ranks a state based on the availability and optimal use of resources. In the sustainability pillar, rankings are done based on access to and use of resources. This pillar is related to the environment, economy and humankind. The government of Kerala is successfully governing the state by tackling the pandemic and taking Kerala forward in the path of development.

Rank	Large States	PAI 2021 Index Score
1	Kerala	1.618
2	Tamilnadu	0.897
3	Telangana	0.891
4	Chhattisgarh	0.872
5	Gujarat	0.782
6	Punjab	0.643
7	Karnataka	0.121
8	Andhra Pradesh	0.077
9	Jharkhand	-0.071
10	Madhya Pradesh	-0.113
11	Rajasthan	-0.243
12	Maharashtra	-0.36
13	Haryana	-0.431
14	Assam	-0.459
15	West Bengal	-0.553
16	Odisha	-0.91
17	Bihar	-1.343





B'day forecast blues



C. Radhakrishnan
Writer

November 1 is celebrated as Kerala's b'day. We have been singing 'happy b'day' (to ourselves) on this day every year since 1956. Renowned litterateur C.Radhakrishnan explores the evolution of Kerala & Malayalam language in an informal yet serious tone

This year the latest generation, just 16, asked me: **'Grandpa, wasn't this land of ours here before that year?'**

'Yes, son, it was very much in place but not as a democratically ruled free unit.'

'But, hadn't we got freedom in 1947?'

'Yes but it took 9 years more for the Malayalam-speaking areas to come together - till the re-organisation of Indian States on the basis of

It was in the early 16th century. Ramanujan Ezhuthassan, a great teacher-poet, transformed an ancient dialect of umpteen local variations into its modern version by accepting terms and usages from Tamil, Kannada, Telugu and Sanskrit and divining a set of alphabets that could facilitate recording and pronouncement of any phoneme from any language.

languages. Luckily for us, a great soul had helped establish a uniform language over the entire area a few centuries before.'

'In that case, wasn't the Kerala we know today born when that was done? Who did it and when?'

'It was in the early 16th century. Ramanujan Ezhuthassan, a great teacher-poet, transformed an ancient dialect of umpteen local variations into its modern version by accepting terms and usages from Tamil, Kannada, Telugu and Sanskrit and divining a set of alphabets that could facilitate recording and pronouncement of any phoneme from any language. He also created the syllabus, texts and works for later reading. He is known as the father of Malayalam. He travelled on foot from Gokarnam in the north to the Cape at the southern tip, persuading every school to fall in line. Modern Kerala and its renaissance begins with him.'

'What was the picture before him, Grandpa?'

'This valley just about 50 miles wide and 500 miles long sloping west and striped by 44 rivers across it, free of natural calamities and blessed with year-round moderate climate and plenty of rains, happens to be one of the earliest human

settlements, becoming a rare crucible in which an endless stream of races, faiths, languages and traditions confluenced and got integrated into a holistic composite vision of the best cosmopolitan society - one the global village of tomorrow can and will have to use! Onam is a unique festival as it portrays and exalts in the basic tenets of that vision - universal equality, freedom, righteousness and justice.'

'But then what happened to it? It doesn't seem to be very much in evidence today, I am afraid.'

'It was eroded and corroded by petty local rulers and finally buried by waves of armed colonial intrusions from Europe.'

'What is the legacy you elders leave us, Grandpa?'

'We have enriched the language which itself is culture in other words. Culture in turn means both the fruit and the seed of one's world-view. And now we have a government that hopes to complete a second term for the first time ever in the history of the land. The man at the helm is strong enough too. He has proved his prowess to steer clear and do good if helped to gather funds and no-holds-bar support. Looks he is determined, among other things, to give the language its right place in the scheme of things. Let's hope the world situation too changes soon. It has to because the world is already way ahead on the road to a total biospherical catastrophe. So cheer up. I am sure you will certainly get the chance to rise to your level.'

'Thanks Grandpa,' smiled Junior, 'for the 3-D scan of the war field!'

'Best luck, son!' I said, 'You may share it with your pals.' ■

And now we have a government that hopes to complete a second term for the first time ever in the history of the land. The man at the helm is strong enough too. He has proved his prowess to steer clear and do good if helped to gather funds and no-holds-bar support.



Malayinkeezhu Gopalakrishnan
Historian

Kerala of yesteryears

Nestled between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea is a narrow strip of land, gifted with hills, rivers and lakes - that is the extremely beautiful state of Kerala. Long back, foreigners used to call it "Malabar". After India gained independence, when, in compliance with the report of the States Reorganization Commission, the regions of Malabar, Travancore and Cochin which spoke Malayalam were joined, the new state of Kerala was born on 1 November 1956.

The links that the state forged with foreign countries are centuries old. The cultivation of spices, like pepper, cardamom, ginger, clove and cinnamon attracted traders from many parts of the world

It was when the flow of spices from Kerala to Europe was interrupted that the Portuguese captain Vasco da Gama set out to find a sea route to India and arrived at Kozhikode in 1498. This event would change the course of world history.

from 3000 BCE onwards. The Arabs, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Romans, the Phoenicians, the Greeks, and the Chinese established commercial relations with Kerala.

Yet the ancient history of Kerala is steeped in darkness. The first historical reference to Kerala is found in the Edicts of Emperor Ashoka in 274-237 BCE, where the ruler of the land is described as “Keralaputra”. However, it is in the jottings of travellers and traders as well as the writings of litterateurs that details of the yester years of Kerala begin to emerge. Among them, the most significant ones were written during the Sangham Period, when Kerala was part of a huge province called Tamizhakam. The Cheras, the Cholas and the Pandyas were the main powers. According to Sangham literature, the rule of the south was then in

the hands of the Ay kings, the central regions were controlled by the Chera kings, and the north, by the Ezhimala kings.

In course of time, the Cheras defeated the rest and emerged powerful. However, after their fall, according to historians, Kerala history went into a spell of darkness. By 800 CE, the Cheras became dominant once again, and their capital was situated in Thiruvanchikulam or Mahodayapuram. Most historians argue that the whole of Kerala came under the sway of a ruler who was referred to as “Kulashekharaperumal” and that phase was known as the Perumal Period. By 1100 CE, the Cheras bit the dust under the combined attack of the Chola and Pandya powers. Kerala was fragmented into many states, big and small, that fought one another for supremacy. It was during this period of internecine wars that the Portuguese captain Vasco da Gama stepped foot on Kerala soil. He was followed by representatives of other European powers. From this point onwards, Kerala transitioned into a new phase of history.

Kerala - The Bone of European Contention

It was when the flow of spices from Kerala to Europe was interrupted that the Portuguese captain Vasco da Gama set out to find a sea route to India and arrived at Kozhikode in 1498. This event would change the course of world history. It put the Asian countries, including India, and the African countries under the yoke of European colonialism. When da Gama arrived, the major princely states were Travancore (Venad) in the south, Cochin in the middle, the Zamorin's kingdom in the north and the Kolathunaad at the northern tip, besides numerous smaller states.

Their lack of unity provoked and stoked political ambitions in the Portuguese. Taking sides and drawing up contracts, the Portuguese soon started interfering with the administrative matters of the land. First, they brought the King of Cochin to heel and began their reign. Not long afterwards, the Dutch (the Dutch East India Company), the British (the British East India Company), the French and the Danes followed suit. Kerala became a battleground where these European powers fought one another for dominance.

The Danes were the first to withdraw from Kerala. In 1663, the Dutch seized power from the Portuguese, captured their forts and commercial establishments, and began to rule Cochin. In 1741, the Maharaja of Travancore, Anizham Thirunal Marthanda Varma defeated the Dutch in the Battle of Colachel (now part of Tamil Nadu). That was the biggest setback the Dutch – the greatest maritime force during the time – suffered in India. Subsequently, the French were confined to north Kerala. They captured Mayyazhi, renamed it as Mahe, and began their rule.

Meanwhile, the East India Company was waiting for an opportunity. When Hyder Ali of Mysore and his son Tipu Sultan invaded Malabar, the kings of Kerala, including the Maharaja of Travancore Karthika Thirunal Rama Varma (1729-1758), began to feel that only the East India Company could resist the enemy. The Britishers did not waste the

golden opportunity. They sent an army to Srirangapattanam, the headquarters of Tipu Sultan, and defeated him in battle. In the Treaty of Srirangapattanam (1792), Tipu Sultan had to cede all the territories he had seized to the East India Company.

In 1793, after granting “Malikhan” (compensation), including tax waivers, land grants, gifts and official positions



< **Dr. Ramakrishna Rao,**
First Governor

to the local rulers, the company ruled it as a single district (“Malabar”) with Kozhikode as the capital. A “Supervisor” (later “Collector”) was put in charge of its administration. Next, the East India Company signed a contract with the King of Cochin and the Maharaja of Travancore. Now its dominion was acknowledged, and it received handsome tributes annually.

In Wayanad, however, the company faced opposition from Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja who eventually died a martyr’s death. Although Velu Thampi, the Dalawa of Travancore, and Paliath Achan, the Prime Minister of Cochin raised a rebellion against the company, they were suppressed. The administrative powers of the rulers of Cochin and Travancore were restricted with the installation of a Resident. Thus, the whole of Kerala came under the banner of the British.

Kerala >
Sangham
Period



<

The status continued till Indian gained independence.

Independence and the Demand for United Kerala

Even during the independence struggle, the Malayalam-speaking people of the region desired a unification of Kerala. When it became certain that the nation would become independent on 15 August 1947, Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, the Diwan of Travancore, attempted to make Travancore an independent state, unattached to either India or Pakistan. This move met with opposition all over India. Sir C. P. himself had to face an assassination attempt that year, and with that the argument for an independent Travancore subsided.

Soon Maharaja Sri Chitra Thirunal announced that Travancore would become part of the Indian Union. Cochin followed suit. Ministries were sworn to power in both regions, on the

basis of adult suffrage. Soon, committee of the United Kerala movement came into being. It held a meeting, presided over by K. P. Keshava Menon, at Cheruthuruthy in 1946. Prominent people like Mahakavi Vallathol attended it. Thereafter, several committees were formed, and many resolutions passed.

< When the Dhar Commission was constituted for the reorganization of the states of India on linguistic basis, a request was made by the United Kerala Committee seeking the inclusion of Malabar,



< **P. S. Rao**
First acting
Governor of
Kerala

Travancore, Cochin, Coorg, Nilgiris, Gudalur, South Canara, Mayyazhi and Lakshadweep. On 1 July 1949, the merger of Travancore and Cochin took place to form Tiru-Cochi.



< First Kerala Ministry

With that, the Maharaja of Travancore, Sri Chitra Thirunal became “Raja Pramukhan” of the new state. King Parikshit Thampuran of Cochin decided to become a private citizen. Thiruvananthapuram continued to be the capital. Five Chief Ministers who were elected to power ruled over the state. When the last Chief Minister Panampilly Govinda Menon resigned, the state came under President’s rule. The central government appointed P. S. Rao as advisor to the Raja Pramukhan. Elections were held in Malabar, but their assembly was in Madras state. Meanwhile, the States Reorganization Commission – with Syed Fazal Ali as Chairman and Pandit Hridaya Nath Kunzru and Sardar K. M. Paniker as members – submitted a report regarding United Kerala. When the central government gave its approval, steps were initiated to form the state. Kasaragod and Malabar, that were parts of South Canara, were brought into the state of Tiru-Cochi, and provinces of Tiru-Cochi – part of Chenkotta as well as the southern taluks of Thovalai, Agastheeswaram, Vilavancode and Kalkulam – were given away to Madras. P. S. Rao was the acting Governor the new state. The post of Raja Pramukhan became invalid, and monarchy

In Wayanad, however, the company faced opposition from Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja who eventually died a martyr’s death. Although Velu Thampi, the Dalawa of Travancore, and Paliath Achan, the Prime Minister of Cochin raised a rebellion against the company, they were suppressed.



that had existed for centuries vanished.

On 1 November 1956, the new state was inaugurated. Not long afterwards, Dr B. Ramakrishna Rao took charge as the new Governor. The first elections took place under his stewardship. On 5 April 1957, when E. M. Sankaran Namboodirippad became the head of a 15-member ministry, the first Communist government came to power in India. ■



< Travancore -Cochin Inauguration

Malayalam in governance



Dr. V.R. Prabodhachandran Nayar
Language Expert

The very first elected government of Kerala gave top priority to recognizing Malayalam as the official language or the language of governance at the earliest. This is because all the role players in the governments beginning with the veteran EMS were fully convinced of the common peoples' right to unhindered access to all aspects of the functioning of the bewilderingly gigantic system of governance. The illogicality and injustice in expecting that the common man would be able to find his way through the complex labyrinth of rules, regulations, acts and directions etc framed in English became unquestionably clear to all the concerned.

The first democratic Government in Kerala constituted immediately the Komattil Achyutha Menon Committee to study the issues involved in replacing English with Malayalam as the official language in the State. The Committee envisaged the change-over of seven years. Based on the proposals of a special officer appointed subsequently, the Government issued orders in 1965 prescribing Malayalam as the official language at the District, Taluk and Village levels in Departments involving interaction with common people. In the next year, the policy came to be in more Departments.

In 1969 the State Legislature enacted that the following official papers be either in Malayalam or English:

Ordinances issued by the Governor as per section 213 of the constitution, orders, rules and regulations issued by the State Government. In 1973 Tamil and Kannada were officially recognized as minority languages and assured due protection. By 31 December 2014 Malayalam was granted the status of official language in 77 departments and their administrative sections in the Secretariat. This became applicable to 96 quasi-governmental institutions in both the private and public sectors also. This policy was officially extended in 2015 to offices, sections and institutions which were to be established in future. Only Malayalam can now be used in all official proceedings unless in instances wherein the use of English, Tamil or Kannada is permitted by law.

English is employable in correspondence to foreign countries, the Central Government, other states, the Supreme Court, and the High Court, Central Government institutions in the State and institutions

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wherein the conversion to Malayalam has not taken place. But the note files relating to such correspondence shall be in Malayalam.

Subsequently, the use of Malayalam has been prescribed in other areas including the following:

Decisions are taken by and note on the proceedings of the cabinet; forms for day-to-day use in government offices, ensuring that the forms be prepared in the languages of the minorities also, wherever relevant; advertisements, tender-notices etc issued by various sections and institutions of the government to Malayalam print media; periodical report on progress submitted by various departments; name of the department exhibited

on government vehicles; seals of government offices and officers; marble, stone or metal plaques; invitations to events organized by the government; directions to the public including those indicating place names, routes, distances etc; inspection-notes on office records; travel diaries of officers; leave-applications; disciplinary procedures; all papers relating to the following: Program of training in official language for government employees, official language award, software and publications concerning official language, Centre in New Delhi for studying Malayalam, and the Malayalam Mission.

Above all, the special committee of the Legislature reports to the Government periodical reports on the progress of the use of Malayalam in all the concerned offices.

Judiciary

Adoption of Malayalam as the medium of proceedings of the judiciary at all levels has been accepted by the Government, but any significant progress in implementation of this policy remains a desideratum.

Publications

The Public Relations Department, the State Institute of Languages and the publication wing of the Department of Archeology have a commendable track record of spearheading various publications helping change of official language to Malayalam.

Systematic handling of technical terms

The dearth of technical terms in Malayalam equivalent to those available in plenty in English is often pointed out as the most outstanding obstacle in adopting Malayalam as the official language in Kerala. But from the viewpoint of planned development of languages, as per internationally accepted tenets of modern Linguistics, a language will readily welcome the use of loan words, if they

appropriately fit into the concerned contextual slot in the target language. Malayalam has a uniquely copious stock of sounds that can, as and when needed, comfortably accommodate any expression from English. We should therefore whole-heartedly welcome use in Malayalam sentences English expressions such as act, bill, code, order, rule, assistant, section officer, secretary, collector, statutory finance committee, collector, inspector, surveyor, professor, vice-chancellor, gun-man etc transliterating them into Malayalam script, as per a systematically compiled style book to be obligatorily followed by all the concerned. ■

These must be in Malayalam

Decisions are taken by and note on the proceedings of the cabinet; forms for day-to-day use in government offices, ensuring that the forms be prepared in the languages of the minorities also, wherever relevant; advertisements, tender-notices etc issued by various sections and institutions of the government to Malayalam print media; periodical report on progress submitted by various departments; name of the department exhibited on government vehicles; seals of government offices and officers; marble, stone or metal plaques; invitations to events organized by the government; directions to the public including those indicating place names, routes, distances etc; inspection-notes on office records; travel diaries of officers; leave-applications; disciplinary procedures; all papers relating to the following: Program of training in official language for government employees, official language award, software and publications concerning official language, Centre in New Delhi for studying Malayalam, and the Malayalam Mission.



K. Krishnankutty
Minister for Electricity

Displaying effective dam management

Learning from the 2018 centennial floods and its smaller edition repeated in 2019, Power Department and the Kerala State Electricity Board have refined their Dam management principles and practices to contain the risks from releasing surplus water into overflowing rivers while ensuring that the catchment rain is reasonably stored to optimize power production till the next monsoon.

Kerala receives rains in two spells of monsoons between June-July and October-November. There is a considerable shift in the phasing and intensity of the rainfall largely attributed to climate change impacting the Western Ghats. This has altered the water regime with intense rainfall

Similar dynamic protocols are effected at Idamalayar and Kakki, where temporary mismatches of dam and river capacity and sudden inflows were occasionally observed. This illustrates KSEBL's pro-active management of the intense rainfall in communication and consensus with the District Collectors, Irrigation Department, Disaster Management Authorities and the State level Rule Level Management Committees.

events wherein the State receives rainfall normally due for several weeks in a matter of hours.

Whether these are cloud bursts is still a matter of some scientific debate. But human lives are impacted in the meantime in scores due to landslides, building collapses, power supply disruption and hindrance to movement of goods and services. The October 2021 flooding experienced in the Periyar and Pamba basins is yet another example of low pressure system induced climatic phenomenon, deeply impacting human lives and property in the higher reaches due to landslides in the middles and lower stretches due to intense flooding.

Our experience of 2018 and 2019 often show that dams unduly get blamed for rainfall events that impact non catchment areas also. As and when the dam catchment predictions impact them, they need to be released as per their management protocol. For the releases made on rivers which have already swollen due to non dam catchment area rainfall, there is a natural tendency to blame the dam releases for that as well. Since 2018, the Dam Management Protocol of the State operated by the Power and Irrigation Departments have been refined radically with the adoption of Rule Curves as approved by the Central Water

Commission and Emergency Action Plans in the event of the dam being unable to contain its scheduled water load in place. The alert levels have been classified into high, middle and low range depending on how much more catchment rain the reservoir can contain at that point and colour codes provided.

As and when the stipulated rule level is exceeded, the water level is also lowered by spilling excess concomitantly for which the Disaster Management Authority at the districts or state level is alerted. Once a case for releasing the reservoir is established from the water level ratings and the ongoing rainfall in the upper reaches as desired from the catchment rain gauges, the State Level Rule level committee is convened at a very short notice. It often meets at midnight or early morning also. The committee consists of the Secretaries of Revenue, Disaster Management, Water Resources, Power and the Chief Executives of Irrigation Department and State Electricity Board and members of the Expert Advisory Group.

The committee examines the cases for raising the shutters of relevant reservoirs and authorize the release levels which are based factoring the catchment rainfall, recent reservoir level, river levels reported by the G&D Stations and the tidal position at that point of time. In the recent experiences the mega reservoirs in Kerala having capacity above 200 Million Cubic Meteres (Idukki, Kakki, Idamalayar and Sholayar) have been very effectively managed by monitoring the water levels at half an hourly intervals and comparing the information from the upstream rainfall gauges and downstream river gauges.

As a part of the dam rehabilitation and movement programme, all major reservoirs have received considerable investment in terms of instrumentation such as necessary seismic meters, accelerographs, deflectometers and laser based water level monitoring equipment which utilize the relevant data at each time step to Real Time Early Structural Health Monitoring and Interpretation of Data (RESHMI), a customized software employed at the Civil Divisions managing the dams. These real time data is available to the State Electricity Board's Engineers who in turn recommend appropriate release protocols. Of the 18 reservoirs managed by KSEBL, 16 have factored controlled spilling as stated in the Table given below.

	Reservoir	Capacity (Million Cubic Meter)	Full Reservoir level (ft/m)
1	Idukki	1459.49	2403 ft
2	Idamalayar	1017.80	169 m
3	Kakki	446.51	981.46 m
4	Banasurasagar	201	775.6 m
5	Sholayar	149	2663 ft
6	Mattupetty	54.77	1599.59m
7	Ponmudi	47.4	707.75 m
8	Kakkayam	33.98	758.04 m
9	Pamba	31.15	986.33 m
10	Poringalkuthu	30.30	(423.92 m) 419.41 m
11	Kundala	7.65	1758.59 m
12	Kallarkutty	6.43	456.69 m
13	Irattayar	5.29	754.38 m
14	Lower Periyar	4.55	253.00 m
15	Moozhiyar	1.16	192 m
16	Kallar	0.76	824.84 m

Each reservoir is managed by a Rule Level prescribed for a 10 days' time step. Between 16th October and 19th October, Idukki reservoir received 165 MCM additional water and 7 feet rains in just 3 days time. At higher levels, each feet rise corresponds to about 20 MCM of additional storage. As the IMD had predicted intense rainfall by 20/10/2021, to take advantage of the lower river levels, the State Level Rule Committee decided to spill 100 cumecs from 3 shutters of Idukki Dam on 18/10/2021. Accordingly at 11.00 am on 19/10/2021, the shutter releases were effected.

As a precautionary measure, the prescribed rule level between October 21st to October 31st was still reduced by 2 feet and the dam managed at Orange alert level avoiding the red alert level, keeping in view the extreme situation at the Mullaperiyar Dam managed by Tamilnadu and the potential in intense rainfall at short time intervals. However, as the predicted rainfall did not materialize, the gauges were further restricted and closed on 27/10/2021. The dam at that point was managed with additional 23 MCM capacity to store incoming flood waters. Another 63 MCM was further reserved for flood control and about 100 MCM set apart for possible Mullaperiyar inflows. Following rising water level, Mullaperiyar dam started releasing from 29/10/2021 at about 540 cusecs level which increased to 825 cusecs on 30/10/2021. At the point of releasing, the Idukki reservoir had a rule level of 2399.31 feet and the additional expected inflows are being managed on the real time basis with sufficient operational and precautionary principle.

Similar dynamic protocols are effected at Idamalayar and Kakki, where temporary mismatches of dam and river capacity and sudden

Authority and state level rule committee, KSEBL is a main stake holder having access to State of the art instrumentation and long experience in managing medium and larger reservoirs and also diverting the surplus spill waters for the purpose of hydro power generation. Kerala generally stores only about 10 percent of the precipitation levels it receives per annum. There is a strong case for enhancing the storage capacity in the high and mid ranges and diverting sufficient additional water for hydro power generation which is the need of the hour. The State's power requirement is scheduled to grow to at least 300 MW per annum and hence Kerala needs another 1000 MW of capacity to be immediately created in small, medium and mega hydro projects.

While about 200 MW of small hydel projects are currently under implementation with scheduled for operations in the next 3 years, Kerala needs to invest into the peaking power stations to replace the Idukki's 1976 commissioned powerhouse and create fresh additional capacity at Moozhiyar. These capital intensive mega projects have the capacity of utilizing another 10-15 million cubic meter water per day and also enhancing the State's power capacity in the place of the threat of recurrent floods suffered today. Apart from this, as a long term measure, we should have flood control dams to manage the flood situation in a balanced way, preventing the damages due to recurring floods and utilizing flood waters for power generation as well as expanding irrigation for agricultural purposes in a more scientific manner.

I am happy to say that the Government is working towards these in a consistent phased and planned manner. ■

Reverence to rivers and room for rivers:



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A post-flood analysis of Kerala

Rivers are the cradles of human civilisations, and river basins are 'living laboratories' for achieving sustainable development goals. Rivers are the primary source of drinking water, ensuring livelihood for millions,

besides supporting biodiversity and ecosystem services. Rivers deliver sediment that keeps deltas above rising seas, provide nutrients to fertilise floodplain fields, support coastal fisheries, and mitigate the impact of floods, storms and droughts. River ecosystems encompass river channels and floodplains, and form a diverse mosaic of habitats.

Despite their value and importance, many rivers and wetlands worldwide are declining at a fast rate, due to human activities. More than 20 percent of freshwater fish species have become extinct or imperilled in recent decades. Watersheds, which catch precipitation and channel it to streams and lakes, are highly modified due to habitat destruction, fragmentation, encroachment, over-exploitation of resources, pollution and climate change.

The report titled “Valuing Rivers”, by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), argues that we urgently need to stop regarding rivers as mere conduits, and reconnect with rivers before more of their ‘hidden’ benefits are lost or degraded. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 6, focuses on water, with sub-goals focusing on water quality, equitable access, improved governance, and the protection and restoration of water-related ecosystems. The UN SDGs are: (i) No poverty (ii) Zero hunger (iii) Clean water and sanitation (iv) Affordable and clean energy (v) Sustainable cities and communities (vi) Climate action (vii) Life on land and (viii) Life below water. Restoring the health of rivers is relevant in the context of the UN General Assembly declaring 2021–2030 as the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

Kerala – The Land of Rivers

Sandwiched between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea, Kerala has a unique geography. Its lifeline is the rivers and their complex interconnections with forests,

mountains and the ocean. The narrowness and natural inclination of the land towards the sea demand careful land-use planning. The environmental systems are very fragile, with the higher population density along coastal planes and river basins adding further stress.

The key economic activities, including agriculture and tourism, are linked with the health of the riverine ecosystems. Besides providing drinking water, clean air and food, rivers fulfil the state’s energy requirements. Despite this strategic relevance, reverence shown to rivers has eroded over the years.

Climate Change and Floods

The state’s geographical location, weather pattern and high population make it more prone to severe natural and human-induced disasters. The new report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) underscores the warming of the Arabian Sea (triggering marine heatwaves, low-pressure zones, cyclones and cloud bursts), rising sea levels and the possibility of extreme climatic events in the region.

Of late, Kerala has witnessed variations in monsoon patterns, extreme floods and cyclones, and high-intensity rainfall separated by extended dry periods. These impact the existing water management infrastructures and upset the agricultural practices that depend on monsoon cycles. While reduction in rainfall affects water storage, high-intensity rainfall will cause increased storm runoff, entry of flood waters into the rivers, loss of wetlands and channels in the flood plains.

The state experienced floods and landslides in 2018, 2019 and 2021. The summer rain in 2021 (750.9 mm so far) is the highest within 60 years. This is due to the changing climate in the region, causing cyclones like Tautae in the Arabian Sea, and Yaasin the Bay of Bengal. The Kerala State Planning Board appointed an expert committee to examine the causes of these disasters, and formulate appropriate policies. The committee recommended improvement in weather forecasting; review of indicators and methods to locate landslide-prone areas; study of current maps of flood prone areas; and suggested remedial measures.

River Restoration and Room for Rivers

Although flood prediction has improved in recent years, it is not as good as earthquake prediction. Since the casualties are primarily due to the settlements in flood plains or landslides, better management of flood plain and watershed should be prioritised.

What are the environmental benefits of rivers? They provide seasonal aquatic habitats, create corridors of native riparian forests, preserve shaded riverine and terrestrial habitats, help retain and slowly release discharge from water bodies, facilitate groundwater recharge and improve water quality. The infiltration capacity of soil has decreased in the recent past due to modifications in land use. River and floodplain restoration can contribute to improving hydrological regime and coping with climate change effects. River restoration and management of associated wetlands and feeder canals in lakes and areas situated below the sea level, such as Kuttanad, greening of watershed and creation of natural land features, including green belts, will provide protection from floods, sea-level rise and storm surges.

‘Room for rivers’ is a concept in river management, popularized by the Netherlands. It involves rehabilitation and restoration of river beds and floodplains to create more room for rivers. The activities include lowering flood plains, relocating dikes further inland, and creating more wetland in flood plains to receive floodwaters during peak discharges. In the dammed rivers of Kerala, periodic desilting of reservoirs and ensuring minimum flow in downstream areas will help maintain the health of riverine ecosystems.

While combating climate change, we also have to tackle drought,

by activating traditional water harvesting systems, implementing watershed management programmes, reconnecting old streams to rivers, creating artificial wetlands in river flood plains, and removing obstacles in the path of rivers. A better realisation of ecosystem services of the river (see box) and economic evaluation of ecosystem services of the rivers of Kerala is also required.

To ensure sustainability, frequent monitoring of rivers and river health should be systematised with the participation of academic institutions, civil society groups and citizen-scientists. In Kerala, rivers, estuaries, backwaters and the ocean should be integrated as a single unit as their functions are intricately linked.

A Database on Rivers

As most of our river conservation and restoration programmes follow Western models, there are practical difficulties in implementation. This can be circumvented only by strengthening the knowledge base on the ecology and ecosystem services of the rivers, with people's participation. Attention should be given to: (i) mapping seasonal and dynamic changes of our rivers, across longer periods; (ii) monitoring local

hydrological cycle and water flow into river basins and dams; (iii) conceptualising action plans for the ecosystem management of each river; (iv) creating knowledge base of river restoration; (v) developing alternatives to river sand and granite, and developing green building materials; (vi) prioritising rivers for eco-restoration, integrating and mainstreaming watershed-based developmental plans, and planning sequential action plans; (vii) developing awareness materials and ICT tools for creating awareness of river ecology among people, planners, and policy makers; and (viii) implementing river restoration plans.

Spatial Planning and Land Use Policy

Spatial planning using technologies like Geographic Information System (GIS) to demarcate forests, plantations and other areas under agriculture, wetlands, river flood plains, industrial belts, human settlements and zones for developmental activities is urgently required. Hazard zonation and mapping flood plains of rivers and ecologically fragile/sensitive areas are also needed. River water conservation and coastal zone

management should be prioritised. Rivers should be allowed to flow freely to the sea. Further, desilting should be done in order to store excess flood waters, and lateral connectivity of rivers ensured.

Integrated River Management Authority

The constitution of an Integrated River Management Authority to manage rivers and water resources and build resilience to face natural disasters, involving all stakeholders and communities, is another option for sustainably managing our rivers. Currently, river management involves interventions by multiple departments. An integration of activities is urgently required.

There are successful models of natural water retention measures but the natural properties of the floodplain and its connection to the river should be restored, through measures like structural changes to the river and floodplain, and better management of land within the floodplain. Using natural water retention measures and green infrastructure is a cost-effective alternative to structural measures. With growing urbanisation, we should realise the value of 'blue spaces' in restoring human health! ■

Ecosystem services of rivers

Supporting services (the basis for almost all other services)	Provisioning services (material/"tangible" outputs from ecosystems including food, water, and other resources)	Regulating services (services that ecosystems provide based on their regulating capacity)	Cultural services (nonmaterial benefits people obtain from ecosystems, including aesthetic, spiritual, and psychological benefits)
Living space of biodiversity	Water for non-consumptive use—generating power, transport, and navigation	Maintenance of water quality—natural filtration and water treatment	Recreation—Fishing, boating, boat race, etc
Nutrient cycling—maintenance of floodplain fertility	Water for non-consumptive use—generating power, transport, and navigation	Buffering of flood flows, erosion control through water/land interactions, and flood control infrastructure	Tourism—river viewing
Primary production	Aquatic organisms—food and medicines		Existence values—personal satisfaction from free-flowing rivers. Spiritual and cultural destinations along the river



Manoj P Samuel



K.V. Sruthi

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Chase the carbon to carbon neutrality

Before 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) on November 2021 in Glasgow, UK, it would be tactical to analyse the status of India in achieving carbon neutrality. It is need to highlight the India's role in climate action for key role in net zero discussions, alongside clean growth, and demonstrate how innovation can assist emerging climate action.

We need to understand that Climate change hasn't happened in a day and is the impact of historical emission over 100 years ago. US has 25% of historical emission; EU has 22% of historical emissions; China has 13% and India has only 3%. India



has a contribution of 6.8 % of global emissions with per capita emission of 1.9 tonnes.

The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report stipulates that without desperate measures to reduce carbon emissions and energy use as well as removing carbon existing in the atmosphere, we are “implausible” to meet the Paris Agreement goal of keeping global warming below 1.5°C. The worst consequences of climate change can only be avoided by reaching the global carbon emission peak by 2020 to 2030, then decline to zero by 2050 and gradual transition to a carbon negative by sequestering the atmospheric CO₂ beyond 2050. Because, atmospheric

concentration of greenhouse gases (GHGs) along with land cover changes, solar radiation can exacerbate the climate change drastically. Global observation pointed towards the increase in average temperature of atmosphere have significant correlation with increase in anthropogenic GHGs concentration. These GHGs can absorb and emit radiation within the thermal infrared range and increase the rate at which the atmosphere absorbs short-wave radiation from the Sun. This is the major process which cause the greenhouse effect which ultimately resulting into global warming of our planet. In the absence of anthropogenic GHGs, temperature of Earth’s atmosphere would be about 33°C (59 °F) colder than at present which is very normal for the existence of the Earth.

The three principal GHG are carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O), where CO₂ is the primary GHGs emitted through human activities. CO₂ is naturally present in the Earth’s atmosphere as part of carbon cycle (the natural circulation of carbon among different spheres of earth like atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere and biosphere). Anthropogenic interventions alter the carbon cycle through addition of excess CO₂ to the atmosphere which is responsible for increase in GHGs since the industrial revolution. The major anthropogenic activity which contributes to the CO₂ in the atmosphere is the combustion of fossil fuels (coal, natural gas, and oil) for energy and transportation, followed by certain industrial processes and land-use changes. In addition, it changes the ability of natural sinks to remove and store CO₂ from atmosphere by influencing the ability of natural sinks, like forests and soils. It is modelled that rise in CO₂ level in the atmosphere continues in the present rate and are allowed to double from the pre-industrial era, the Earth will face a global temperature rise of 3°C in this century. This will lead to climatic disaster / emergency such as frequent and intense extreme weather events and associated landslide, floods, droughts and risks, rise in sea levels, shifts in growing season.

The major processes controlling the CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere is carbon emission and sequestration. Carbon emission is as its name indicates the release of CO₂ and/or their precursors into the atmosphere over a specified area and period of time. The major sources of carbon emissions are explained above. Carbon sequestration is the process of capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide. It is one method of reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere with the goal of reducing global climate change. There are two types of carbon sequestration: geologic and biologic. Geologic sequestration involves through carbon dioxide mineralization, subsurface CO₂ storage which can significantly impact reduction of CO₂ emissions to the atmosphere, but the economics and potential risks associated with the practice must be understood before implementing extensive programs or regulations. And when the amount of carbon emission becomes equal to carbon sequestration, the state of the system is known to be

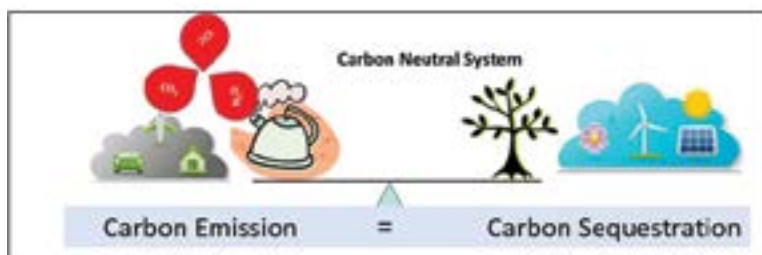


Figure 1. Diagram showing an ideal carbon neutral system with equal carbon emission and sequestration

carbon neutral. The carbon neutral system can vary from individual - local – regional - national – global scale. As well as the system can be a different socio- economic sectors such as energy, transport, tourism, agriculture etc.

After identifying the system to achieve carbon neutrality, need to quantify, measure, and monitor carbon sequestration and GHG fluxes using current science and available, suitable national / regional datasets.

The quantified net amount of carbon through emission and sequestration is known as carbon footprint. The carbon footprint is expressed in terms of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂-e). Carbon footprint is a measure of the impact your activities have on the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) produced and your contribution to process of global warming. Assessment of carbon neutral status of the Nation's/ State's ecosystems— terrestrial (forests, croplands, wetlands, and others) and aquatic (freshwater systems, estuaries, coastal waters)—has to be carried out by focusing on the evaluation of the following:

- A range of mitigation activities for a potential increase in carbon-sequestration capacity and reduction of GHG fluxes to inform policy analysis
- Climate-change effects and other controlling processes (including landslide related ecosystem loss) on carbon and GHG uptake and emissions from ecosystems

Existing national - state - regional scale greenhouse gas inventories scenario

Currently, ongoing national carbon inventories and

assessments are based on methodology of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2006 (IPCC, 2006). Here, the terms “inventory” and “assessment” are similar in that they both provide estimates of resource conditions; however, the inventory methods focus on measurements of present resource conditions rather than providing an estimate of future carbon-sequestration capacity and GHG fluxes.

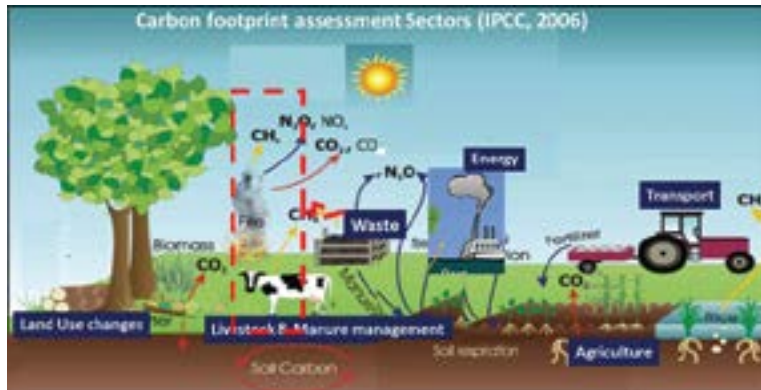


Figure 2. Diagram showing the terrestrial ecosystems covered in the assessment and the major carbon pools (in boxes).

Based on IPCC, 2006 assessment by GHG inventory platform India, India's total GHG emissions in 2015 were 2377.5 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO₂e). In India, 78 % percent of GHG emissions come from the energy sector, followed by agriculture (10 %), industrial processes (8.0 %), and waste (4.0 %) relatively to GHG emissions (Fig. 3). The major contribution of emissions in India were from the Energy sector followed by the Agriculture sector. Now turning towards Kerala Scenario, it has been observed that 41% of total CO₂ emissions of this state are released from energy sector. The remaining part is mainly due to industrial (3 %) and waste sector (7.0 %) (Fig. 3). Also, it can be noticed that AFOLU act as major sink for CO₂. As per the GHG platform India 2015 for State Kerala, 49 % of sequestration atmospheric CO₂ had been through AFOLU sector. According to the trend analysis of 2013, the states of Kerala and Jammu and Kashmir, had reduced their per capita emissions to become net removers of CO₂ per capita (GHG platform, India).

Recently, Kerala State Action Plan on Climate Change, 2018 had conducted the regional carbon footprint estimation for Meenangadi Panchayath, Wayanad, Kerala. In the case of Wayanad, major contribution of GHG was through transport sector followed by energy sector (Meenangadi carbon neutral assessment report., 2018). In this region, 13% of Agriculture, Forest, Other Land Uses (AFOLU) emission was observed. This points towards the region specific variation of emission and sequestration sectors as well as need of region – specific carbon neutral strategies. Moreover, KSCSTE – Centre for Water Resources Development and Management (CWRDM) conducted estimation of carbon neutrality of Kozhikode Block Panchayat as an initiative considering these regional variations in source and sink of CO₂ (Unpublished info, CWRDM).

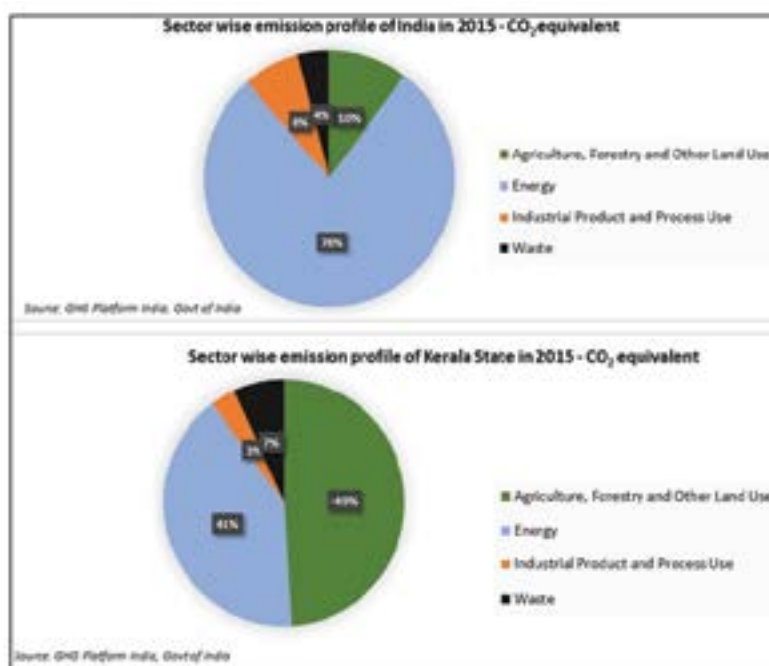
Reduction Opportunities & Challenges

Even though, we are on the track towards achieving carbon neutrality as per Paris Agreement, it is needed to focus more on scientific and research aspects of reduction of carbon in policy level. Above scenario points that there is a need for us (India) to address the gaps and improve the overall process to provide for a more transparent and detailed inventory on its GHG emissions on annual basis from

regional scales. One of the key ingredients for reduction strategy is **transparency in the framework** applied for carbon footprint estimation from micro-local level to a national scale. Doing this in a robust, granular and comprehensive manner, would definitely help improve the understanding on key priority areas to implement carbon neutrality strategies. In addition, this will assist to **channelize national Climate Budgets for effectively** and thus, improving the current measurement and tracking framework would be a critical/key starting point – both to meet the Paris commitments as well as for effective Climate Budgeting. As per the emission profile of India reported in 2018, the most effective way to reduce CO₂ emissions is to reduce fossil fuel consumption utilised for different key socio economic sectors such as energy and transport. Several strategies to reduce CO₂ emission are cross – cutting and apply to individual (home), industries, business and

transport. **Decarbonisation of key socio-economic sector** is the complete measure to reduce CO₂ from atmosphere. **New strategies and technologies with less Global Warming Potential (GWP)** like electric vehicles, CO₂ refrigeration systems, solar pumps, etc. have to be encouraged. Industries which use renewable energy based systems should be promoted by giving tax relief and subsidies. Green tax to be imposed on polluting

industries and local level infrastructure built for easy conversion from fossil fuels to electric and renewable power systems. Micro-level carbon neutralizing approaches should begin from the local bodies/ panchayaths by creating awareness among local public and farmers. Climate change and carbon neutral aspects to be brought into the academic syllabus from primary classes onwards. **Creating additional carbon sinks** is another strategy to increase the carbon sequestration and to reduce the level in the atmosphere. This can be through **geological carbon sequestration** through mineralization as well as **biological sequestration**. Geological sequestration is a hot research field to expand the potential sink of carbon in a stable form which is much complicated than biological sequestration. According to the India State of the Forest Report, between 2017 and 2019, forest carbon stock in the country increased by 42.6 million tonnes; the annual increase of carbon stock is estimated at 21.3 million tonnes which is 78.1 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent. This indicates that India is trying to be in track to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 which is commitment to Paris Agreement. Application of Carbon credit system to capture and offset the total remaining emissions within



◀ **Figure 3.**
Comparison of sector wise carbon emission profiles in State and national level

their operations and across entire supply chain of a system (Scopes 1, 2 and 3 of the GHG Protocol) through nature-based solutions which need the protection of biodiversity and forests around the world and help mitigate climate change. This approach needs support from stakeholders and climate experts. Take our commitment to achieve carbon neutral by 2050, as an opportunity to act urgently to tackle climate change and the loss of biodiversity. This solution responds to the scientific evidence that a decade is only available to arrest irreversible damage resulting from the climate and biodiversity crisis. Ultimately, on account of the fact / challenge that technology and solutions are not yet available to address these emissions in total, advocated that we need to still take responsibility for all the emissions right now to considering sustainable economy with resilient climate aspects. ■



A harbinger of global warming response in Kerala



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The onslaught of landslides induced by meso-scale "mini cloudburst" events are proliferating in Kerala as evident from back-to-back events during 2019, 2020 and 2021. Extreme weather events are taking place around the world and will only become more common as a result of climate change. Flash floods and landslides are the realizations of an accelerating pattern of extreme weather in Kerala in response to global warming.

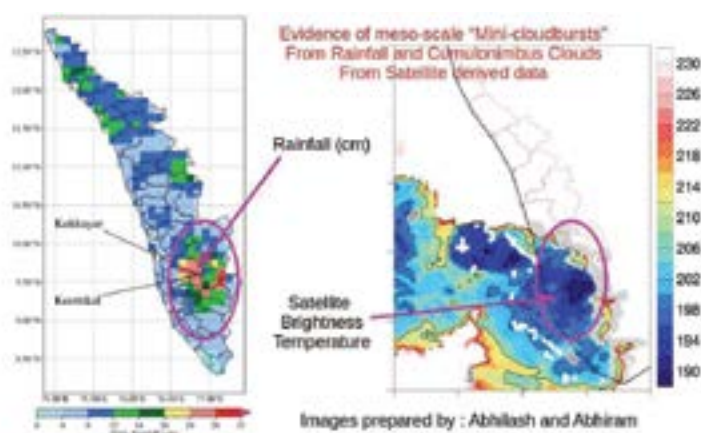
The recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC's) 6th assessment report (AR6) was released at a time when record-breaking extreme events are reported from most parts of globe. The planet's average surface temperature has risen by about 1.10 C compared to the pre-industrial baseline period of 1850-1900. With warmer temperatures, the atmosphere can accommodate more water vapor. With every 1 degree rise in temperature, the water availability in the atmosphere increases by 7%, leading to heavy rainfall and faster runoff.

The hydrological cycle will intensify with global warming, which likely increases the intensity

of extreme precipitation events and the risk of flooding, imposing heavy costs to aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, human societies, and the economy. The heavy rain received over a shorter period may lead to high runoff, erode soil and leach nutrients at a faster rate. Torrential rainfall exceeding 100 mm in 1 hour is classified a classical “cloudburst” (CB) by India Meteorological Department (IMD). However, other definitions of “cloudburst” classification are also available in science literature. The orographic forcing and strong convection leading to the formation of deep cumulonimbus clouds as high as 15 km are responsible for most of the CB events. An intense rainfall event that occurs in the Himalayan Mountain ranges that can produce flash floods, landslides, and loss of human life and properties is defined as category ‘a’ cloudburst (CBa), irrespective of the amount of rainfall. Category ‘b’ cloudbursts (CBb) are events where the hourly accumulated rainfall is 100 mm or above over a smaller geographical area. However, based on the destructive potential and place of occurrence, one more category is defined, the mini cloudbursts (MCB) which are events where two-hourly accumulated rainfall is 50 mm or above. Such events can also produce flash floods and catastrophes like the other two categories of cloudbursts.

An increase in rainfall intensity poses a rising probability for landslides in the high to mid-land slopes of Western Ghats in eastern Kerala during the monsoon seasons. Heavy precipitation in a short duration brings runoff water beyond the capacity of rivers and the sloping topography from highland Western Ghats to low-lying west coast accelerates the rush of floodwater.

By 13th October 2021, there was presence of an “offshore vortex” embedded in the offshore trough in the Arabian Sea, which is normally active during the southwest monsoon season. By 15th October, it became a well-marked low-pressure system around north of Lakshadweep area. On 16th, this slow-moving low-pressure system crept east and entered central Kerala. Associated large scale organization of deep



convective clouds covered Kerala coast as evident from Satellite Infrared observations. When the system intruded interior land, scattered clusters of thunderclouds began to pop up along the Kottayam-Idduki borders as the local terrain provided extra push to move the moist air upwards. As a result of this orographic lifting, deep cumulonimbus clouds reaching as high as 15 km above surface were formed, extending from Peerumadu down to Thodupuzha along the Kottayam-Idukki borders across the Kuttikkal-Kokkayar region. Some valley sections in this region are very narrow strips with steep slopes. As evident from the satellite images, organized meso-scale deep cloud clusters covering 500-800 Sq. km area resulted in heavy downpours in just 2 hours. “Months’ worth of rainfall (during October) fell in 2 to 4 hours around the Kottayam-Idukki district borders resulting in severe flooding, leading to dozens of casualties and huge economic losses. At the time of this heavy rainfall event, soils were in part already saturated. Water spread across more than 1000 Sq.km for a short duration caused the pre-saturated soils to slide down. Rainfall in the catchment areas of the Manimala river basin resulted in flash flood situations on the riverbanks running across Kottayam, Pathanamthitta to Alappuzha districts. Due to this flood water, Kuttanad region witnessed an increase in water levels. The lessons learned from 2018 floods, helped the authorities to keep Thrikkunnapuzha bunds open. With low tides, this allowed the Sea to take the flood water easily and the water level in Kuttanad region came down in two days.

As per the IPCC report, the rising sea level is expected to adversely affect the coastal regions of Kerala, and islands worldwide. However, the impacts will differ depending on the topography of the land and its susceptibility to flooding.

A probable increase in “compound” extreme events is foreseen, when one type of weather disaster feeds into and intensifies another. Tropical cyclones may form in places close to the Kerala coast more frequently where they hadn’t before. The rise in Sea Surface Temperature (SST) and ocean heat content makes the north Indian Ocean, especially the Arabian Sea, a potential breeding ground for frequent and intense cyclonic systems. The average system count over the Arabian Sea increased from 2 to 3 during recent decades. Evidently, along with cyclone count, the cyclonic systems’ intensities have also increased during recent decades. Latest studies suggest that the recent increase in frequency of extremely severe cyclonic storms over the Arabian sea during both the pre- and post-monsoon seasons is due to anthropogenic influence rather than natural variability.

Climate change is never the sole cause of an extreme weather event, but it can sometimes be a significant contributing factor. The coastal regions are expected to be hit hard by compound events such as sea level rise, cyclone induced storm surges, coastal erosion due to wind and wave activities combined with other development activities along coastal zones. This, combined with extreme rainfall events and higher river water runoff from land, makes most of the coastal regions in Kerala more vulnerable in future.

Plenty of weather information is available from public, private and open-source data platforms, only an integration of the multi-level information and region-specific customization of the early warning system is the need of the hour. ■



T V Anupama I.A.S.

Director,

Women and Child Development Department

Safety... growth... assured

The Department of Women and Child in Kerala has introduced a broad-spectrum of projects and programmes that ensure all round wellbeing of the children in the State

The government of Kerala is implementing all the schemes related to child protection as per Juvenile Justice Act and ICPS guidelines. Apart from these, the Department of Women and Child Development has introduced many innovative schemes.

The Department of Women and Child Development under the government of Kerala has introduced **Vijanadeepthi** a sponsorship scheme from State funds to overcome the insufficiency of funds under the Central Sponsorship Scheme. The State is committed to the deinstitutionalization concept and is making all efforts to retain children in their own homes. As part of this scheme Rs, 2000/- per month is disbursed per child and 828 children are benefitted under the scheme.

A systematic and structured methodology is developed in the state to support Children in Conflict with Law (CCL) and thereby reducing the potential danger of being labelled and isolated from society. This reduces the chances of the child being absorbed into antisocial gangs and causing potential harm to society.

This scheme is initiated in addition to the scheme operated through the financial assistance extended by the Government of India.

Our Responsibility to Children (ORC) is a problem-oriented, solution-focused partnership initiative of the **Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS)**, Kerala, under the Department of Women and Child Development, to identify and address deviancies and other vulnerabilities of children. ORC facilitates the integration of such children into the mainstream, through enhancing life skills, nurturing strengths, addressing vulnerabilities, and promoting mentoring and good parenting. It also implements the School Protections Group Program (SPG) to ensure the safety of children and curb tendency for juvenile delinquency as well as to protect children from becoming victims of illegal activities, by constructing an invisible wall of protection around every school.

Balanidhi was constituted under section 105 of the JJ Act, to mobilize funds from the public, to ensure better care and protection of children under the purview of the JJ Act. The department of women

and child development has created a web portal for facilitating online donations. There is a separate account with SBI and the donations are eligible for IT exemption also.

Kaval is an innovative program implemented by the Government of Kerala through the Department of Women and Child Development with technical support from the Department of Psychiatric Social Work, NIMHANS, Bengaluru. A systematic and structured methodology is developed in the state to support Children in Conflict with Law (CCL) and thereby reducing the potential danger of being labelled and isolated from society. This reduces the chances of the child being absorbed into antisocial gangs and causing potential harm to society. Identifying children at high risk at a young age and supporting them by providing holistic care through psychosocial intervention would help children keep away from unlawful activities. A multidisciplinary inter-sectoral approach through psychosocial intervention is needed to ensure holistic care and support for children.

Kaval is a community-based approach to reach out to children on bail and provide psychosocial interventions through trained social work professionals in NGOs by entering into a working partnership with Non-Governmental Organisations. The government of Kerala has made a sustained effort to address the exploitation of children, but serious challenges remain, and we have a long way to go if these lost childhoods are to be restored and children given the safeguards they are entitled to get.

The government of Kerala has made a sustained effort to address exploitation of children, but serious challenges remain, and we have a long way to go if these lost childhoods are to be restored and children given the safeguards they are entitled to get. In Kerala, the children engaged in child labour and begging are mostly from out of states. To meet this challenge, the Kerala Government, WCD, has begun the initiation of **Saranabalyam** Project, a project to ensure that state is free from child labour, child begging, trafficking, and children in street situation.

De-institutionalization, family, and community-based alternative care.

817 Child Care Institutions in the State have been registered under Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 and around 25,484 children were residing in those homes. But at present, there are only 404 CCI's and 5381 children. The State government has initiated many programmes for promoting de-institutionalization. The government is promoting the deinstitutionalization of these children with certain objectives and foster care is one of the main objectives. The State government has initiated **Foster Care** programme from the year 2015 onwards. As a measure of de-institutionalization

of children, a scheme named **Sanadhabalyam** has been introduced in the current year. **Kinship Foster Care** is an arrangement for full-time care by relatives such as grandparents, uncles, aunts, or others who are not the child's parents but have a family relationship with the child. This project is intended for providing financial assistance to the aforesaid relatives of the child, thereby making a situation that the child can live with the relatives and thus reducing the institutionalization.

Community-Based Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Children in Need of Care and Protection

Ninavu is a suicide prevention program under suicide prevention cell, ICPS for children in Kerala. Suicide prevention cell aims to conduct scientific studies and research, conducting trainings, working together for preventing suicide among children and creating awareness to the entire society about the importance of positive mental health among children

through psycho-Social approach is an innovative programme implemented by the State Government through the Women & Child Development Department in the State to support children in need of care and protection. There is a need to support these children through community-based supportive programs to reduce entering into conflict with the law as well as ensuring mainstreaming, to build up their potentials and lead a purposeful life. Identifying children at high risk at a young age and supporting them by

providing holistic care through psychosocial intervention would help children to keep away from unlawful activities.

With the help of UNICEF, the Women and Child Development Department has designed a website for Child Care Institutions to report the details of children on admission. Details thus collected can be used as a database and the same can be used for monitoring the CCIs also. In the first stage, training was conducted for all protection officers (IC) and data analysts in all District Child Protection Units in the state. Further training of the CCIs is being planned.

Against the backdrop of the pandemic situation, the WCCD has started an **e-Learning Portal** for the State to build capacities at State, district, and institutional level child protection functionaries. The portal is envisaged as one having video tutorials, assignments, notes, PowerPoint presentations, FAQs, and feedback for each module in similar lines of online courses conducted by colleges/ universities. This e-learning portal is developed with the support of UNICEF and IITMK. The steps to launch this portal is

in progress.

Suicide Prevention cell and Gate keepers support program has been initiated by the Department of Women and Child Development to prevent suicide among Children and Adolescents. **Ninavu** is a suicide prevention program under suicide prevention cell, ICPS for children in Kerala. Suicide prevention cell aims to conduct scientific studies and research, training, working together for preventing suicide among children and creating awareness to the entire society about the importance of positive mental health among children.

The Department of Women and Child Development has launched a **Parenting Clinic** - the first of its kind initiative in the State in Feb 2021. Parenting clinics are functioning using the facilities of established nutrition clinics. The centres are designed to give scientific guidance to parents on parenting and proper counselling are given to parents and children. The clinics are functioning on all Saturdays from 9.30 am to 1.30 pm in all 152 blocks and 6 Municipal Corporations across the State. The clinics are managed by trained school counsellors and DCPOs monitor and review the activities of the clinics.

The Department of Women and Child Development has launched **After Care** project with the support of the Hindustan Latex Family Planning Promotion Trust (HLFPPT) to prepare children for aftercare post 18 years of age. This pilot project is implemented in one children's home in Kozhikode and one aftercare home each in Kozhikode and Kannur. Detailed psychological and skill assessment, counselling, and psychotherapy to address behavioural issues are the highlight of this project. Special care is given and training for life skills and vocational Career placement training are given as part of this project. This project is supported by UNICEF. ■



^ P. Krishnapillai ringing the temple bell by braving the resistance from upper castes.

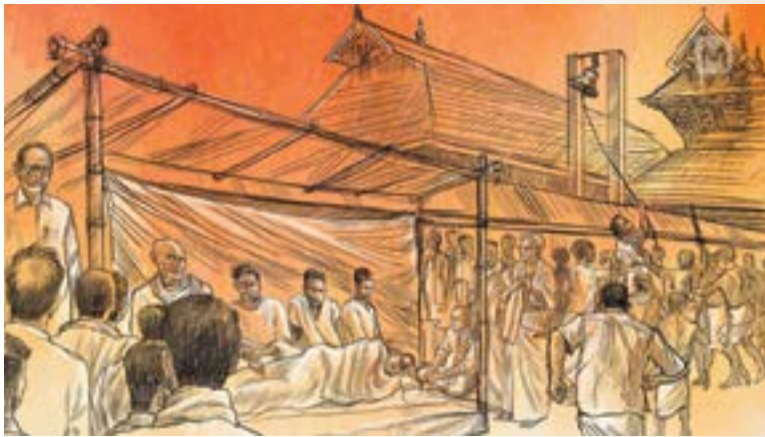


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Sounding the death knell of untouchability

The objective of the Guruvayoor Satyagraha was not limited to attaining the right of temple entry but had a much broader commitment -to eradicate the evils of casteism and orthodoxy. The multifaceted wave of the Guruvayoor Satyagraha was characterized by mass education and awareness programs apart from peaceful agitation. The clarion call for the Satyagraha was blown on November 1, 1931.

The Samuthiri of Kozhikkode was the custodian of the famed temple at Guruvayoor. The ill-treatment experienced by K Kelappan and his retinue at the hands of temple authorities, forbidding the former and untouchables to enter the temple prompted the Congress and the progressive-minded to fix the venue of the agitation as Guruvayoor. The Samuthiri was unwilling to



^ An illustration of the Guruvayoor Sathyagraha (Mathrubhoomi)

permit the entry of the majority class comprising of the subalterns to enter the temple and venerate the deity. These events culminated in a miraculous mass agitation despite its premature recall.



^ K. Kelappan

While K. Kelappan was the Chief Leader, A K Gopalan was the Volunteer Captain of the Satyagraha whose mass appeal and revolutionary thinking drew thousands to the movement. N.P.Damodaran was entrusted with publicity. A massive awareness campaign to enlighten the masses, both elite and the downtrodden was inaugurated on September 5, 1931. In fact, the initial surge for the movement against untouchability kicked off with an illuminating spark, with Kelappan, A.K.Gopalan, Madhavan Nair, Moyyarath Sankaran, P.Kesvan Nair,

P.Krishna Panicker on the lead.

An Unusual Meeting

The course of the Satyagraha is dotted with innumerable exciting episodes which portray its influence upon the laymen. A marriage stage of a reputed elite family at Andatode, en route to Ponnani, turned to be a venue for hosting a women's meeting. More than 75 women from various walks of life participated and were enlightened on purity, impurity, superstition and evil practices and the like.

The support of the progressive-minded savarna or elite class leaders and those of other religions were decisive. Muzhikunnath Brahmaddattan Namboothiri, V.T.Raman Bhattathirippad, K.M.Narayanan Namboodirippad, Moidu Maoulavi etc., were key speakers of the campaign held at Pattambi.

AKG was the heartthrob of the movement. His eloquent speech on temple entry, Satyagraha, untouchability, anti-liquor, picketing etc., won the hearts of the commoners. His oration in the language of the masses ensured massive enrolment of the downtrodden and the exploited in the movement.

September 21, 1931 was marked by the meeting of the Temple Entry Committee of the Congress at Alappuzha, which decided on holding extensive

awareness and volunteers campaign from Kanyakumari to Kasaragod. The awareness campaign exemplifying the objectives of the Satyagraha, fundraising, volunteer recruitment and the like was immensely a mass movement with the greatest social reformers and leaders of the time participating in it. Mannath Padmanabhan, C. Kuttan Nair, Kuroor Namboothirippad, V.T. Bhattathirippad, K. P. Kayyalakkal, K.N. Kunjikrishnan, P.Krishnapillai, K.P.Gopalan, V.M.Vishnubharateeyan and so on were active in the forefront.

The Making of a Revolutionary

October 21, 1931, marked the commencement of a march led by T.Subramanyan Thirumumbu, the progressive savarna leader in support of the Satyagraha. The captain of the march was A K Gopalan and was accompanied by other prominent leaders of the time. The march was diverse and secular with Namboodiri, Nair, Ezhava and other Harijans ensuring their participation.

AKG's oratory enthralled the gathering. The Malabar march was warmly welcomed, and resources poured in. November 1, 1931, marked a new dawn of liberation. The selected volunteers from the avarna communities set foot at the place



^ A. K.Gopalan

where they were forbidden to enter in front of the temple at Guruvayoor. The satyagrahis stood unmoved at the atrocities committed upon them with unwavering determination.

Assaults begin: Letting loose a drunken mammoth

Initial silence of the orthodox elites later turned to verbal and physical assaults, also conspiring to destroy the Satyagraha. AKG and his volunteers were brutally assaulted by the temple staff and the upper class. The temple authorities and the like-minded plotted all means to harm the satyagrahis. The satyagrahis had placed their life at stake. A breathtaking incident took place as the temple authorities let loose a drunken elephant that ran amuck upon the satyagrahis causing fear and anguish among the spectators. AKG and K Appukunjan were those bold men who sat unperturbed by the provocation. They were saved by hairline luck as an elephant passed by them.

Offerings to God offered to Satyagraha

The Satyagraha at its peak captured the attention of the lowest to the elite among the masses. While Gandhiji reviewed the progress, national leaders such as K.F.Nariman, C.Rajagopalachari, Kasturba Gandhi etc.; visited Guruvayoor. The Satyagraha received unflinching support from caste organizations-the NSS, SNDP, Unni Namboothiri Sabha and so on. Funds poured in from far and wide. Fascinatingly, watching the hardships faced by the satyagrahis, numerous considerate devotees donated their offerings or oblations brought for the deity to the Satyagraha camp. The Satyagraha camp was divinely revered by the devotees as the temple itself.

Role of Print Media

Mathrubhumi gave extensive coverage of daily events about the

Satyagraha since its conception, devoting a special column 'Lokavum Lokarum' in its pages. K.P.Kesava Menon was an indelible part of the Satyagraha. Mitavadi edited by Mitavadi Krishnan and Kaahalam by Vagbhadananda continuously published articles in support of temple entry and on the progress of the satyagraha .

Women in Satyagraha

The Satyagraha saw enthusiastic participation of women since its inception. Women leaders held a key role in the campaign and spread of Satyagraha across the state. Karthiyayani Amma, P.M. Kamalavathi, Dr.Rugmini Amma, C. Kunjikavu Amma, Madhavi were great leaders who stood for the cause of temple entry by organizing meetings, awareness campaigns and protests moving shoulder to shoulder with leaders. Kamalavathi, later on, became the Volunteer Captain of Satyagraha on the arrest of AKG. Unfortunately, the indelible part played by these revolutionary women who dared to break off caste restrictions and domestic boundaries were prone to oblivion.

Sounding the death knell of Untouchability

The Satyagraha was awakened by a sudden ringing of temple bells in December 1931. P.Krishna Pillai sensing the lethargy-imbibed camp entered the temple and daringly rang the temple bells at the sanctum sanctorum, the right solely reserved for caste Hindus. He repeated the act twice, which sounded the death knell of untouchability, awakening the weary Satyagraha to greater vigour. He was severely assaulted by the temple authorities. A K Gopalan received fatal blows on the 28th of December while addressing the people on the west of the temple and the premises turned to a war-like situation. The sympathizers of Satyagraha retorted and beat up the temple securities. These events forced



the temple to be closed for a month until 28 January 1932. The grave assault on AKG and Krishna Pillai however facilitated the awakening of the Satyagraha from falling into an impasse.

On reopening of the temple, K Kelappan began his fast unto death for temple entry on 21st September 1932, a day after Gandhi commenced his fast against the provisions of the 'Communal Award'. A K Gopalan also offered fast. Interestingly, in support of the fast, a Brahmin named K Krishna Bhatt offered Satyagraha at the doorstep of the Samuthiri's abode. The changing mindset of the savarna community in favour of temple entry to the avarnas was evident by acts of supportive meetings, campaigns and even offering abstinence inside the temple. However, when the wave of satyagraha was at the helm of affairs, Gandhiji instructed Kelappan to abstain from his Satyagraha leading the entire movement to an abrupt end.

The influence of the Satyagraha upon the various evils prevailing in the then Kerala society was manifold. Moreover, the movement saw the evolution and making of several hard-core revolutionaries of modern Kerala with AKG and Krishna Pillai as pioneers. Thus, the cherishing of an epochal Satyagraha once again provides to each Keralite an opportunity for self-purification and a reevaluation of their hard-earned democratic, socialist, and secular ambience. ■

Photo Credit :
Anil Kumar V. M., I&PRD



△ K. V. Manoj Kumar



Anchitha. A
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Children's rights are fully ensured in Kerala: K.V. Manoj Kumar

The Kerala State Commission for Protection of Child Rights is helping many imperilled children rise to the mainstream. K.V Manoj Kumar, the Chairperson of Kerala State Commission for Protection of Child Rights is talking about the objectives and functions of the Commission to Kerala Calling.

Child rights are recognized as human rights as children, irrespective of age, caste and gender deserve their own basic rights. How does the Kerala State Commission for Protection of Child Rights function to safeguard the rights of children?

The Kerala State Commission for Protection of Child Rights mainly strives to improve the lives of children and act as a monitoring authority of the State by ensuring the implementation of three laws viz Right to Education Act, Juvenile Justice Care and Protection Act, and the POCSO Act. The primary duty of the Child Rights Commission is to give a detailed study report of those children who are not getting the basic rights and to give special attention to the issues of children from vulnerable communities.

By identifying the reasons for the POCSO cases, as a monitoring authority, the Commission has the right to give proper instructions to make sure about the protection of these children. Along with that, the Commission keeps an eye on how far the children are getting primary education and how far the stakeholders are providing education for children.

When disasters happen in and around society or even in the family, children are the ones who are mostly affected. Even in the time of lockdown, some of them faced distressing situations also. In these circumstances how did the Commission extend helping hands to children?

During the Pettimudi landslide disaster, the Child Rights Commission went there and took effective measures to protect the children who lost their parents in the disaster. Also, during the COVID time, as the schools were conducting online classes, a lot of grievances were received regarding the hike in school fees. As these are adversely affecting the children, the Commission took immediate actions and issued orders to ward off the unnecessary hike in the school fees. The Kerala State Commission for Protection of Child Rights took initiative to discuss the stress faced by the children during the period of lockdown and their anxiety while attending the online classes. After discussing these issues with cyber, health, and mental health experts, we made a detailed study report.

How far Kerala is better than other states in India when it comes to the matter of providing safety and protection to the children?

Lack of understanding of the laws and inability to get to the bottom of these laws are problems faced by society, especially the children. To overcome this, a revised handbook of child laws is getting ready for publication. As the book gets released, the children, parents, and the public can easily understand and comprehend these laws. Once a POCSO case is registered or informed to the Commission, we will immediately take stringent actions which itself states that the Commission works systematically. As per the Juvenile Justice Act, in the matter of providing safety and protection to the children, the state of Kerala is far more ahead. Besides encouraging arts and sports interest for the children, we are trying to instil a light of hope in them. Kerala is the state which has schools in every panchayath. By taking these matters into account we can undoubtedly say that Kerala holds a high-level interest in the protection of child rights.

we can undoubtedly say that Kerala holds a high-level interest in the protection of child rights.

The Commission's projects and programs strive to reflect the voice of marginalized children and help to achieve a quality life. What are the main projects listed by the commission?

The State has introduced various programs to increase the happiness index of the children. Today students have a peaceful and friendly ambience in our education sector. 'Balasouhridam' project or Child-friendly Kerala project aims to ensure a safe, secure, and happy atmosphere in the society. By providing an optimal environment for the development of children, the project also helps enhance the smooth intermingling between children and society. The Commission is looking forward to the full stretched establishment of the 'Balasouhridam' project. The Department of Social Justice has launched several programs to nourish the quality of life of children and to enlighten them into the mainstream of society. Kaaval is a project which aims to save children from crimes and misfortunes and to give protection and aid to them. Chiri is another project launched with the help of the Kerala Police to ensure the well-being of children and to help them to overcome mental stress and anxiety. The commission is making sure that these programs are functioning smoothly. Hope is another project to give wings to the dreams of juvenile minor children in police custody for minor and major offences. The Commission has given more guidance and instructions to this project for the betterment of these children.

What are the various awareness programmes organized under the leadership of the Commission to counter the atrocities committed against children?

At present we are conducting many campaigns against the use of drugs and harassment against children. These are circulated among the public with the help of visual media. As part of the Children's Day programmes, the Commission is planning to conduct many art and cultural programs across the State by strictly adhering to COVID -19 protocols. In our society, some children face misfortunes. The Commission tries to give a helping hand to bring those marginalized children to the mainstream and wishes to bestow a better and quality life. ■



△ Photo credit: Kerala State Commission for Protection of Child Rights



Ajith Venniyoor
Writer

Lending a helping hand to children in distress

It was the first of its kind in the country. The Kerala State has the credit of having initiated several innovative programmes that have done proud to the country.' KAVAL' is one such project, initiated in 2016, with the aim of promoting the psycho-social wellbeing as well as social reintegration and rehabilitation of children in conflict with the law.

The KAVAL Project has been designed with the aim of addressing crucial issues concerning children and promoting the psycho-social wellbeing as well as reintegration and rehabilitation of children in conflict with the law.

Evolution of the Project

In December 2015 a Southern regional conference was conducted at the NIMHANS, Bengaluru on children requiring special attention and care. In the conference attended by delegates from different states discussions were held on the issues faced by children engaged in child labour, children working in hazardous workplaces, such as mines, children of migrant parents, children of victims of disasters, children in conflict with the law and so forth.

A concrete outcome of the meeting followed by a series of consultations was that NIMHANS was given the responsibility to facilitate technical support and conduct special training programs to build the capacity of multiple stakeholders who work with children in conflict with the law. NIMHANS designed an action-research project. The project was officially launched in 2016 and was christened KAVAL, which means 'protection'.

Third Phase

The KAVAL Project is currently in its third phase. With the initiation of this project, there has been a shift in the nature of interventions for the benefit of children in conflict with the law from a style of action based merely on the basis of the social investigation report submitted by the Legal cum Probation Officer/Probation Officer before the J.J.B. to a style of taking well-planned, time-bound, effective and precise action based on the total situation of the children, embracing biological, psychological, familial, social and educational conditions of the child.

KAVAL project has succeeded in addressing this issue to an extent and assisting the children returning home on bail. It has been possible to bring to the attention of the J.J. Board several physical, psychological, familial, social and educational issues, current problems and constraints

As per NIMHANS' data, the recidivism rate in the State has come down from 13.92% to 4% after the implementation of the project. The rate, in fact, has been a constant at 4% for the past year.

of the target children in the prevailing conditions. A distinctive success of the project is in the area of coordination among the various agencies and organizations which are engaged in activities related to the development and protection of children, such as judiciary, police, excise, health, DMHP, labour department, educational institutions, local self-government institutions, voluntary organizations, individuals and other agencies.

Rehabilitation and social re-integration

It is also encouraging that the project interventions often extend to also other agents, such as friends, companions, peers, and siblings of the child, thus rendering the KAVAL interventions also a preventive dimension. It is gratifying to note that the project has succeeded in effectively realizing the goals envisaged by the J.J. Act for the benefit of children in conflict with the law and also in lighting a lamp of hope in the life of a section stigmatized by society as 'criminals'. The project has also succeeded in overcoming several limitations to effective intervention resulting from an increase in the number of cases.

KAVAL interventions are aimed at ensuring rehabilitation and social re-integration without isolating the child from society. Towards this, social workers appointed in KAVAL maintain regular contact with the home of the child, the school in which he studies and his friends. If needed, the service of the police and J.J.B. is also sought.

As per NIMHANS' data, the recidivism rate in the State has come down from 13.92% to 4% after the implementation of the project. The rate, in fact, has been a constant at 4% for the past year. First piloted in three districts in 2016, Kaval has reached out to 2251 children till June 2021 this year. Psychosocial care services are being provided to 1,244 (84.63%) of the beneficiaries. Impressed by the project, states like Odisha, Chattisgarh and Tamil Nadu have expressed interest to emulate it.

KAVAL PLUS

Taking a nod from the achievement of the KAVAL project launched in 2016 to support children in distress, the WCD instigated 'KAVAL PLUS', another ambitious project for lending holistic support to children in need of care and protection and survivors of sexual abuse. This scheme was launched because 15 homes of Children in Kerala account for about 500 inmates and leave 96% of high-risk children in need of support unprotected in the community.

The project is being implemented with the help of NGOs experienced in working with children. Two NGOs each are selected in each district by a committee comprising the district child protection officer, CWC representative and protection officer (non-institutional care). The chosen NGOs, however, will not work in silos but closely in association with the child protection agencies. It covers both children at homes and childcare institutes. Vulnerable children in the community outside the purview of CWCs and other agencies would also be included. ■



Children's Literature was born way before the dawn of civilisation. During those times, stories and poems for tiny tots were passed on predominantly via word of mouth. Once these stories began travelling around, and got shared, they became popular under the term Children's Literature.

The "Chithramayanam" in Malayalam which comprises almost 318 colourful pictorial representations, is evidence that in Malayalam literature, the ancient grantha scripts had children's literature and graphic stories.

With the coming of the print medium, a radical change took place. It propagated children's literature in Malayalam. When Benjamin Bailey printed the first ever text in Malayalam with the help of

Church Mission Society (CMS) Press, he chose a set of children's stories, translated from English to Malayalam.

History shines light upon the fact that in 1855, CMS press printed a 24-page Children's Magazine (cited in Page 21 of the Christian Vernacular Literature of India; Madras 1870). However, no physical evidence of such a magazine has been found to support this citation.

According to literary scholars, the first children's magazine in Malayalam is "Balardeepam" which was a combined effort of the London Mission Society and the Church Mission Society. The magazine was published by the Christian Vernacular Education Society in 1976-77. The first and the last volumes of this magazine series have not yet been unearthed. The latest edition/volume of this magazine is the January 1877 hardbound edition of 16 pages.

The second children's magazine was "Nammude Maasika," [Our Magazine] published in 1911 by CMS Press, Kottayam. The magazine focused on religious morals and contained separate versions for girls and boys. This was published by A. V. George and E. J. Jose.

One of the first most popular children's magazines in Malayalam was "Balamithram" which began circulation in the 1920s. Shankaramangalath Thengumannil T. K. Kuruvilla, from Eraviperur, Pathanamthitta, was the editor and the publisher. The magazine is said to have been the Malayalam translation of the English magazine "Treasure Chest".

This magazine also was printed at the CMS Press. T. K. Kuruvilla continued to be the publisher for long 23 years, and it was later taken over by his descendants.

Another major name in children's literature in Malayalam is Mathew M. Kuzhiveli (1931-1947). He published the "School Master" (1936-1941) and a children's newspaper known as "Balan vaarika" (a few years since 1947).

Till the first half of the 20th century, the aim of children's magazines was to publish moral stories, and tales containing spiritual messages and tips on social etiquette.

The first magazine that purported to give entertainment to children, and also to increase their taste and curiosity in reading, was "Ambiliammavan". It had already made a mark in Tamil and Telugu, before stepping into Malayalam with its first edition in April 1952. The publishers, B. Nagappa Reddy and Chakrapani, had their publishing house in Chennai. The magazine came out in 13 different languages including English and was in the market

till recently (end of 2019). Even now, the previous volumes of the magazine are available in digital print.

"Balakeralam," which came out in 1954, was in circulation for almost three decades. In 1957, "Kuttikalude Deepika" started its circulation under the leadership of Deepika Newspapers, one of the leading newspapers at the time. Another children's magazine which attracted young readers was "Chilamboli," published by the artist V. M. Balan, in 1961. However, was short-lived.

One of the ancillary publications of Janayugam newspaper (1969) was a well-known children's

The "Chithraramayanam" in Malayalam which comprises almost 318 colourful pictorial representations, is evidence that in Malayalam literature, the ancient grantha scripts had children's literature and graphic stories.

magazine, known as "Balayugam". The editors of this magazine (which lasted for almost 12 years) were Kambissery Karunakaran and the cartoonist Yesudas.

It is during these times, that Malayalam language got introduced to children's science magazines, viz. "Shasthra Keralam" (1969) and "Eureka" (1970) for high school and upper primary school students respectively. The publisher was the Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad, and one of the most

sought-after editors of this magazine was Professor S. Shidas.

Two of the evergreen Malayalam children's magazines known to the current generation are "Balarama" and "Thalir" introduced in 1972 and 1971 respectively. "Thalir" started its journey in the publishing house of Jawahar Bal Bhavan in Thiruvananthapuram and was later taken over by the Bala Sahitya Institute. "Balarama" is a Malayalam Manorama publication. Its growth has been exponential, moving from being a bi-weekly, to weekly, and its popularity is still soaring. It stands topmost in the list of Malayalam children's magazines and is loved by children and grown-ups alike.

In the 1970s, there were numerous famous children's magazines in the market such as "Maalika" (1976) brought out by the poet Maali, "Laalu Leelayum" (1978) by Manorajyam publishing house and so on. One of the children's magazines created by the Yugarashmi magazine team, "Thathamma," was later taken over by Mathrubhumi and still continues to be in circulation.

A transformation in children's literature was initiated by "Poompatta" and it inspired Malayalam children's literature to grow like never before. Every publishing house started its

own children's magazine. Some of the top competitors during that time were "Malarvadi" (1980), "Balamangalam" (1981), "Muthasshi" (1981), "Kummatti" (1981), "Poonthen" (1982), "Baalakavitha," "Balloon" (1982), "Kaattumyna" (1986), "Unnikuttan" (1990), "Thaalolam" (1991), "Poonchola," "Kalikkudukka" (1994), "Baalachandrika" (1995), "Baalabhoomi" (1996), "Kingini," "Mutham," "Balaravam," and so on.

The major players among the above still continue to hold a major share of the children's magazine economy are

"Balabhoomi" by Mathrubhumi

Publishing House and "Kalikkudukka" by Balarama.

Alongside these, Malayalam comics too began to hit the market stands. "Achyuthan Comics" that began publishing in 1972, was hugely popular, and was maybe one of the first ever full-length comic books in Malayalam language. A similar venture by Kannadi Vishwanathan (drawing inspiration from its Tamil counterpart, Muthu comics) was "C. I. D, Moosa," and "Irumbu kai Maayavi". These comics also spread amongst the little readers like forest fire.

The world-famous Indian comic Amar Chitra Katha, started by Ananth Pai in 1967 (Indian Book House), had to wait long before entering the world of Malayalam literature. The circulation of the Malayalam versions began after the copyrights were bought by PAICO-Poompatta. Paico

Two of the evergreen Malayalam children's magazines known to the current generation are "Balarama" and "Thalir" introduced in 1972 and 1971 respectively.

published another by the name "Vivekanandan" in 1980 (April). This was followed by Paico Classics in April 1985 that focused on publishing comic versions of world classics. Following this trend, many other Malayalam publishing houses also began to publish Malayalam comics.

With the advent of full-fledged comics in Malayalam, children's magazines started creating their own characters, which gained legions of fans in no time. Some of the most favourite characters are "Kapeesh" from Poompatta, "Mayavi" from Balarama, "Dingan" from Balamangalam, "Poochapolice" from Malarvadi, "Shikari Shambu, Kaaliya and many more.

However, by the beginning of the 21st century, there has been a dip in the popularity as well



The fluttering of imagination

The most famous and highly popular children's magazine in Malayalam has been "Poompaatta" which began in 1964 from Thiruvananthapuram, by P. O. Warriar. Although the publishers have changed through the last fifty years, the magazine continues to be a trend-setter in content, graphics, and style. From 1978, the publishing of this magazine was taken over by PAICO, based in Ernakulam. The period under the PAICO management is said to be the highest point in the life of this magazine, as it reached the zenith, in terms of circulation, compared to those in other languages. The magazine even became a bi-weekly edition and was translated into Tamil as "Poonthalir". The brains behind the success of the magazine were S. V. Pai (Publisher), N. M. Mohan and R. Gopalakrishnan (editors).

as the circulation of children's magazines and comics. The trends have changed considerably and animation houses associated with various children's magazine publishers are struggling to hold their ground, and bring back glory to children's literature. Sadly, as the trends keep changing rapidly, it looks like an uphill struggle. ■



Spring season of Soviet stories

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The relevance of children’s literature of the Soviet lands in the history of children’s literature in Malayalam is considerable. The joy as well as gratification that a generation of countless Malayali readers savoured, from the 1960s to the end of the 1980s when a stream of Russian books flowed into their laps, cannot be convincingly described to those who have never experienced the spring season of Soviet stories.

The Russian Books carrying very heart-warming tales, accompanied by even more attractive pictures, were translated from Russian to Malayalam, and they redefined the reading culture of both adults and children. What one witnessed there was a success story scripted by books that bridged two far-flung lands whose similarity lay only in their leaning towards Communism. The Malayali reader in Kerala read and experienced life that throbbed in the Soviet land, and unconsciously fell in love with that region. The feeling intensified to such a degree that a poet even admitted: A place called Soviet Land is there To visit it, is luck beyond compare.



It was indeed an amazing phenomenon to see the river of Russian literature flowing into Kerala. Especially noteworthy was the fact that most of it had children as the targeted readers. All of us – adults and children – were ushered into cities and villages we had never heard of; saw dresses and costumes we had never worn. We heard new names, saw new vehicles, noticed new currencies, experienced new seasons, and enjoyed new lifestyles, all through those words and pictures. Although adult Soviet fiction, pure political treatises and scientific literature also appeared in Malayalam, they did not wield as much influence as

children's literature. Children's books were a source of entertainment for our kids, increased their knowledge, vivified their imagination and widened their horizon of scientific awareness.

The Malayali children came to

Russian books did not come in ones and two. It was virtually raining Russian books in Kerala during those decades!

The Malayali children came to know the cities of Moscow, Vladimir and St Petersburg as well as the interior villages of Russia like the back of their hand.



know the cities of Moscow, Vladimir and St Petersburg as well as the interior villages of Russia like the back of their hand. Plants and trees that they had never seen, like oak, birch, pine, fir, poppy and others were now within touching distance in their imagination. Their palates that had enjoyed only mangoes and jack fruits now tasted raspberries, oats, breads and apples. They wore fur coats and caps and slid down snowy slopes in sledges. Due to the influence of the Soviet books, the world of the Malayali children that had until then been confined to epics, moral fables, grandmother's tales and folk stories opened into a vaster universe. This magical transformation was evident even in their names. Ivan, Masha, Nikita, Vasilisa, Ivanushka, Alonushka, Andrei, Ilya, Vanka, Misha, Olya no longer appeared very foreign-sounding.

Russian books did not come in ones and two. It was virtually raining Russian books in Kerala during those decades! 'Moscow' Gopalakrishnan and Omana ensured that Russian story tellers spoke chaste Malayalam. Individually and jointly, they transferred many stories from their Russian original into Malayalam. The pictures were so imaginatively rich that they attracted the attention of all children, crossing the land boundaries. Publishers like Progress, Raduga and Mylish were ready to print the books systematically and bring them to us. And when a chain of outlets of Prabhat Book House got ready to sell these attractive books to waiting readers, a full generation of children experienced the joy of reading.

What make these books outlive time and changing tastes is the fact that the best writers and illustrators of Russia were lined up for the task of entertaining children. Leo Tolstoy, Anton Chekov, Maxim Gorky, Alexander Pushkin, V. Suthyeyev, Alexei Tolstoy, Olga Forsh, V. Mayakovsky, Valentine Kathayev, A. N. Tolstoy, E. Rachev, E. Charupin, V. Vatagin, I. Gogin were some of them. The folk tales for children gained as much popularity as the regular children's stories.

Tales from Russia, Kalmyk, Turkmen, Tajik, Altai, Georgia, Kyrgyz, Kazakh, Yakutia, Buryatia, Nenets, Chukchi, Estonia, Moldavia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bashkir, Latvian, Ukrain, Uzbek, Bylorussia, Karelia and Lithuania provided a varied and comprehensive fare to children.

The translators were Gopalakrishnan, Omana, A. Parakunnel, K. A. Kodungalloor, and the stories they rewrote into Malayalam mesmerized the children of those decades. The stories and the illustrations seemed to be in competition with each other in terms of quality.

Sadly, the dissolution of the USSR led to the crumbling of this dreamworld. Yet Russian children's stories, folk tales and their reinterpretations continue to make their appearance through other publishers. Children's magazines are also prepared to set apart space to accommodate them. That is because Malayali readers feel far greater closeness and experience a deeper sense of nostalgia towards Russian folk tales than any other. ■





^ Triggering a 'Kitchen revolution'



Jisha Surya
Freelance Journalist

Common kitchens reshape the idea of cooking

It came up as a suggestion during a meeting of a group of women in Balussery in 2012. They wanted to ease the burden of women. However, the idea got its shape and wings nine years later October 1, 2021, in the form of a common kitchen. Now seven families in a neighbourhood in Parambinte Mukal, in Balussery, Kozhikode district depend on the common kitchen for their daily food while it has become a source of income for another family.

From a task as simple as reading a newspaper to starting a workout, mornings turned surprisingly relaxing for a group of women, including retired and working teachers, beauticians, hospital staff etc, while another woman plans to earn income from cooking.

According to Girija Parvathi, retired teacher and district vice president of Shastra Sahitya Parishad, the group first enquired with a former cook Asiya, whether she would be able to cook for multiple families. "Most of the families are staying within half kilometres. Now Asiya prepares the food, including breakfast and curries for lunch, by 6.30 am. We cook rice at home. We also make dinner at home, considering the different preferences like gruel, chapati etc. We will get a better idea of expenses after a month," she said.

Asiya's story

Critics of the sexual division of labour often argue that the responsibilities of domestic work primarily fall on women or will be transferred to low-paid poorer women. However, Pennakam group members said the cooking in

We formed a women group titled 'Pennakam' where we staged dramas, discussed books, travelled and also engaged in creative discussions over various topics including the domestic work

charge of the common kitchen was a professional cook and they would ensure decent pay for her work.

V P Asiya, a native of Parambinte Mukal, used to work as a hotel staff for around 15 years. She had to stop work after her husband became bedridden following a stroke. Asiya, known among the women group as 'Asiyatta', is happy that her cooking is turning into a source of income.

"I have experience in cooking as hotel staff. Now with a bedridden husband at home, it was difficult for me to take up work even under the employment guarantee scheme. Now I am making some extra effort such as waking up around 4 am and completing the entire work by 6.30 am. But it is not an effort. I have two women to assist me. So apart from the 7 families



Asiya

opting for the common kitchen, a total of nine families, including mine and my assistants, are getting food from this common kitchen," she said.

The discussion began from the women library

Women library at Balussery was the first of its kind under a local body in Kerala. Established as part of the People's Plan movement by the Balussery Grampanchayat, the library turned into a venue for women to engage in discussions, conceive ideas and even practice art forms such as dramas. "We formed a women group titled 'Pennakam' where we staged dramas, discussed books, travelled and also engaged in creative discussions over various topics including the domestic work," said Girija

Inspired by the Ponnani-model kitchen

The 'Pennakam' team got the idea from the Ponnani-model kitchen, initiated by an advocate couple - PK Khaleemudeen and Majida Abdulmajeed. The community kitchen mooted by like-minded couples came into effect in January 2020 when another couple, Priya-Sundaran, agreed to cook for five families.

"As advocates, we have to attend to clients who reach home by 7 am. While I would meet the clients, Majida would be in a rush to prepare food and send off children to school. We wanted to end this and discuss with other couples the possibility of sharing the cooking responsibilities. When Priya and Sundaran agreed to cook, it was developed into the concept of the community kitchen. Our motto was 'Adukkala Ozhivakkoo, Adukkala Thozhilakkoo (Shun kitchen, turn kitchen a source of income)," said Khaleemudeen.

As the first community kitchen garnered more than 35 families, Khaleemudeen and family turned into a new concept that was more customer centric. "We decided to limit maximum customers to 10 families. We would supply groceries, vegetables etc. Each meal will be charged Rs 70. The total amount will be reduced from the expense of groceries. We estimate that each family will have to spend around Rs 10,000- 10,500 per month. Uma, who now runs the kitchen, would get around Rs 35,000," he said.

Questions on the sexual division of domestic labour

According to the book 'Seeing Like a Feminist' by writer Nivedita Menon, sexual division of labour, where women are given the primary responsibility of housework, was one of the key features of the institution of marriage. Social critics often cite sharing of responsibilities equally by men and women as a solution.

Girija said that she has seen discussions that even community kitchens are not a solution to women's burden. "In our concept, the person, whether it is a man or woman, in charge of cooking will get paid for their work. On the sexual division of domestic labour, I feel men in our house have realised the physical and emotional changes in women after they started getting some free time. In my case, my husband has started engaging in domestic work. The ultimate solution indeed lies in all members of families sharing their responsibilities," she said. ■

✓ Majida & Khaleemudeen





^ P. Valsala



Dr Jancy James
*Former Vice Chancellor,
 Mahatma Gandhi University &
 Central University of Kerala*

Recognition of craft, content and quantum

Writing emerged in Valsala's life as an inevitable reaction to experiences, characters and impressions that filled her mind through extensive reading. Her writings display her capacity to 'see into the life of things' and express her impressions in detail but with amazing brevity.

The 29th Ezhuthachan Award – the highest literary award given by the Government of Kerala – bestowed on P. Valsala is an assurance that unpretentious literary expression, charged with talent, and courageous disclosure of vision will eventually fetch

accolades. This comes at the end of 60 years of continuous writing which created 18 novels, 31 short story collections, 5 books of children's literature, 2 travelogues, a biography, and a book of autobiographical sketches. She has received the Padma Prabha Puraskar, Chandu Menon Award, Kunkumam Award, Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award, Katha Award and C.H. Muhammed Koya Award.

Writing emerged in Valsala's life as an inevitable reaction to experiences, characters and impressions that filled her mind through extensive reading. Her writings display her capacity to 'see into the life of things' and express her impressions in detail but with amazing brevity. She wrote to register her pain and protest when she saw Nature, the marginalised, the subalterns and women being exploited by human greed, selfishness, and pride.

Valsala wrote uninhibitedly about the insensitivity of individuals, the injustice and exploitation inherent in institutions and systems like the patriarchal family, the feudalistic agricultural scenario and other arbitrary structures of power. Her writing is a soulful expression of deep concern after gaining firsthand information through hazardous travels to the milieu and characters of her works. Marachuvattile Vailcheelukul (Sunny Splinters Under the Trees) is her autobiographical recounting of such travels and the chemistry of writing that evolved from them. "Can the subaltern speak?" Gayatri Spivak asked as she translated and analysed the stories of Mahasweta Devi. While the activist Bengali writer spoke overtly, Valsala chose a subdued tone.

Nellu (1972), Agneyam (1974) and Nizhalurangunna Vazhikal (1975) established Valsala as a novelist. She used the inaccessible hills of Wayanad and the Tirunelli forests as backdrops to present the life, love and frustrations of a poor folk, untainted by civilization. The socio-historic background of Wayanad was

My writing is my home. These stories are its doors. I seat myself inside that house each time I write a story. Then a secret window opens for me... Sometimes I may have to push it open.

presented with unprecedented poignancy and realism, as also the primeval urges that sustain the people, and the exploitation of the virgin soil and virgin female.

Valsala is an admirable scripiter of diverse and expansive stories that ring with a subdued yet melodious mix of melancholy, sympathy, and satire. The plots are small, but the characters have towering proportions whose inner lives are sensitively explored. Some of Valsala's short stories stand on a par with the best ones in the vernacular literatures of India. Chamundikkuzhi, Pemb, Pangurupushpathinte then (The Nectar of the Panguru Flower), Bheemanum Dushyanthanumillatha lokam (The World without Bheema and Dushyantha), Jarangal (The Tombs), etc. make deft use of metaphors and symbols.

Valsala says, "My writing is my home. These stories are its doors. I seat myself inside that house each time I write a story. Then a secret window opens for me... Sometimes I may have to push it open. Then, by some inherent clue the petals unfold quietly and then blossom fully. This is how each one of my stories is born" (quoted in P. Valsalayude Kathakal Sampooranam, 11).

While some stories have raw Nature as the milieu, others are in exploitative urban environment. They foreground women who are cowed down by the pressures of patriarchal domestic life and hectic professional career. The women escape the homescape and flee to a (sometimes imaginary) space of freedom, love, and peace. The ecofeminism of these stories speaks for the helpless woman distanced from the consolations of Nature. Sishirathile

urumbukal (The Ants of Winter), Adivarangelil ninnu vannavar (The Descendants of the Valley) and Jarangal expose the mind of the career woman slipping into sadomasochistic fantasies of escape from suffocating domesticity. Bheemanum Dushyanthanumillatha lokam is a revolutionary story on lesbianism and female sexuality. Arundhati Karayunnilla (Arundhati does not Cry) is a satire on the hypocritical underside of social status and mindless money-making of the business world, and the survival agonies of victims of loveless marriages.

Valsala does not figure as a feminist probably because "she presents life in a cool manner, without any proclamations, ostentatious statements or lectures ... even the protests are camouflaged sometimes as humane acts or generosity", as M. M. Basheer says in Malayala Cherukathasahitya Charithram - 1950 to 2007 (The History of Malayalam Short Story, 327). But she has subversive answers to patriarchy, "Our society perceives women as second sex. There is the urge to overcome this in my novels (Sampooranam, 5). Her sixty years of creativity have finally fetched her the highest award in the name of the father of Malayalam literature.

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Let her fly free

The first lessons on gender justice must begin at home.

Living in the times of the pandemic, with a brewing economic crisis, health infrastructures on the brink of a collapse and a record of domestic violence cases, the pandemic also seem to have wreaked havoc on the human mind. When crimes in India are considered, patriarchy seems to be a villain and a serial killer. The inability to accept a rejection and be democratic in one's relations inside and outside the family appears to be the crux of the problem. Women have aspirations and dreams just like their male counterparts and an equal right to exercise their choice – whether it relates to career or relationships. Rejection of romantic overtures or withdrawing from a relationship is perfectly within the purview of a woman as it is to a man.

Patriarchal notions are the norms inside families and boys grow up basking in its glory and believing that they are authorized to tame

It is the crisis of masculinity that drives violence against women. Violence between intimates is skewed towards men as the perpetrators.

the female gender and for them, gender justice is only a topic in textbooks and not something to be practised in real life. Moreover, nuclear families with few children fulfil their whims and fancies and they rarely hear a no. It is this masculinity that is wounded when a girl says no. Is it justifiable to put an end to a girl's life simply because she does not fulfil someone's romantic or other aspirations? Is the male super-ego, so flimsy and weak to wipe away every obstacle that comes in its way? Is it not weakness to destroy what you ought to love and protect? It is rather scary to find our boys armed with razor blades and knives instead of textbooks and pens. We seem to go one step forward and two steps backwards.

It is astonishing to note that 38% of

murders of women are committed by current or former partners (National Crime Records Bureau). Equally appalling is the fact that Indian women who make up less than 18% of the world's female population account for 36% of global female suicide deaths (Harvard School of Public Health). Violence against women is actually structured violence arising because of the gendered forms of injustice built into the system. Kerala has always been the land of the elite and the enlightened- the abode of tolerance and secularism- The shrinking gender gap in education is something every Malayali is proud of.

It is the crisis of masculinity that drives violence against women. The existence of a male code or the socially approved ways of being male breeds a rage when not lived up to. The famous psychoanalytic theory of Jacques Lacan [1901-1981] emphasizes the necessity of understanding masculinity and femininity independent of biology. Lacan's theory of sexualisation suggests a binary of masculinity and femininity as a conscious or unconscious response, independent of biological sex and influenced by the environment and cultural factors.

Understanding the void in interspaces among such dynamic factors like culture, language and power may hold the key to solving the issue.

The violence between intimates is skewed towards men as the perpetrators. One who breeds in the male code of social order faces an existential crisis and

predates upon the loved one without even a single trace of remorse. Leading in female education in the country, should we not ensure gender justice? Shouldn't our education ensure freedom to our girls- free from fear, and chauvinism?

Violence against women has been recognised as a human right and public health issue by the WHO. Attaining higher knowledge and skills may be necessary in this dynamic world but more important is the inculcation of the right values and attitudes-love, compassion and tolerance and a democratic bent of mind. The education system must equip children from a young age with skills to respect the dignity of others and is a base for peaceful and resilient societies. The first lessons on gender justice must begin at home. Do not let your sons believe that they are born to rule over the female gender. Teach them the importance of mutual respect and tell them they have no right to crush underfoot the dreams of another person, however dear they may be. Let us correct them before they land in jails and ruin their future.

We, modern human beings have a very short memory, let us not forget the issue until the next daughter is attacked- let us unite to remind our men that this world belongs to women too and that discrimination is never a sign of a civilised society. Let humanity remember that it is people who make culture. ■



ATM model ration cards with smart features launched in Kerala

The government of Kerala has launched ration cards with smart features. The Food and Civil Supplies Department has designed smart ration cards made of PVC comprise of QR and barcodes to obtain the details of the ration cardholders. The change will be convenient to people as this helps in the easy handling of ration cards. This can be used as an identity card also. The cards will be smart by converting them into the model of ATM cards. There will be QR codes and bar codes in the ration cards. It is important to note that there will be no issues with using present ration cards. The people who are



interested to have smart ration cards can apply online through Akshaya centres or citizen login of civil supplies. There will be no application fees for this. Beneficiaries need not go to supply offices to give applications or to collect the cards. A secret password will be sent to the beneficiaries' mobile number and using this one can take print of the card from anywhere. For creating an account on the citizen portal, Aadhaar number, ration card number, mobile number, and email id are required.

The PWD rest houses are now peoples rest houses.



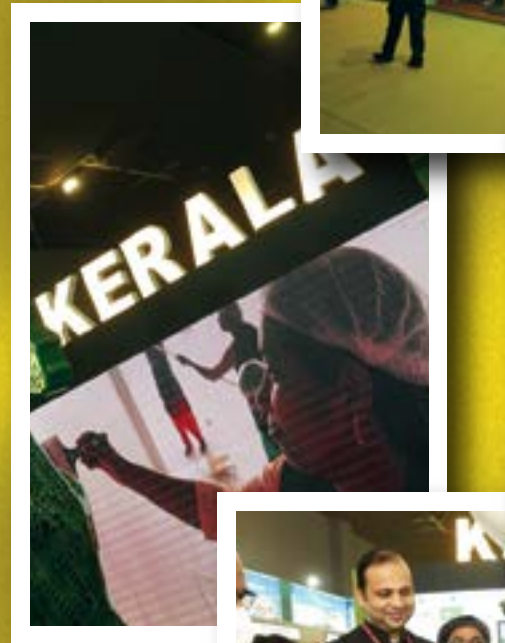
The PWD rest houses in the state have been made accessible to the public across the state of Kerala. The government

of Kerala took the initiative to renovate the rest houses in a time-bound manner. Rooms will be renovated, and furniture and other facilities will be upgraded as part of the renovation. Along with the renovation of the rest houses, the government is also planning to start restaurant facilities. The public can book rooms in rest houses as they are converted to 'people's rest houses' and the safety of travellers will be ensured by setting up CCTV surveillance around the premises and would be monitored through a centralized system. The department of public works is planning to go ahead with this initiative by considering suggestions and opinions from the public. A very good response is received from the public with the launch of the online booking system.

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Kerala's spectacular pavilion@IITF- 2021



Photo Credit : Jayan, I&PRD

