



# ELDERS' VOICE

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY

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*News Bulletin of*  
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*Editor*  
Pushpa Mathew

## President's Message Dhanya Gopinath

Hi Friends!

A communique from our president, Dr. Joseph Cherian requesting me to give the message this month, prompts me to pen my thoughts.

A lot of interesting things are being discussed by world leaders both at Sharm-el-Sheikh in Egypt & at the G20 meeting at Bali, Indonesia.

The MAC (Mangrove Alliance For Climate) spear-headed by UAE & Indonesia & signed by five countries (India, Japan, Spain, Sri Lanka & Australia) at the COP27 in Egypt interested me a lot, as such an initiative will hopefully extend to Kerala, where mangroves are being destroyed at an extremely fast pace.

Mangroves or Kandal Kadu as they are called in Malayalam, are found in almost all districts of Kerala with the exception of Wayanad, Idukki, Pathanamthitta & Palakkad. Kumarakom, itself, is said to have many varieties of mangroves. (The Bird Sanctuary, that attracts migratory birds is located amidst the mangroves of the Vembanad Lake.)

The area of mangrove forests in Kerala in 1975 was around 700kms but has now reduced to around 17-20kms. The worst example of mangrove destruction is said to be around the estuarine network in & around the commercial city of Kochi. Here good mangrove stands have been destroyed for building roads bridges, & a container terminal.

There are exceptions, of course. The Kunjimalam panchayat in Kannur, is one such example.

Here, people living along the shorelines realized that, it was their 'Kandal Katu' that was instrumental in blunting the power of the tidal waves during the tsunami in 2004. There are stories of fisher men like Raja & Mukesan, who are desperately trying to protect mangroves from being destroyed for shrimp farming & special varieties of paddy cultivation in Kannur.

However individual efforts are totally insufficient, the Kerala government has to take the initiative to preserve & plant more mangroves.

Mangroves grow along coastlines & have roots in salty sediments. They can survive in extreme weather conditions, require low oxygen levels & can store carbon up to 400% faster than tropical forests. Another advantage is, they protect coasts from rising sea levels. Several organisms grow around mangroves, protect coastal sea erosion & provide livelihood to millions of people.

Recently, during the G20 meet in Bali, all the world leaders have taken the trouble of visiting the mangrove forests there, have listened to discussions on mangrove preservation & have planted mangrove saplings. The developing countries could use these sturdy trees to provide additional forest cover & achieve their Nationally Determined Contributions towards carbon emissions by the year 2030.

Can Kerala afford to neglect the MANGROVE CALL?



Dr P I John and Mrs Dhanya Gopinathan felicitating  
Mr Kesava Iyer



Felicitating Mr P K Philipose

<https://www.seniorcitizensktm.net/>

<http://www.scfktm.com/>

# Editor's Musings

Pushpa Mathew

Hello Everyone,

The year 2022 is drawing to a close. For 2 years the entire world had downed its shutters and covered all faces with masks. It almost seemed as if some disaster movie was playing itself out. That phase seems to be over although there is no official confirmation of it. The positives that came out of it was that people worked out ways to circumvent it - through online classes and "work from home" office routines. They also realized that they had to work out solutions themselves and help one another without waiting for the official machinery. Indian health infrastructure also improved vastly and our govt vaccinated 0.95 billion people, which is no mean feat. Based on the current stats, the pandemic seems to be over and we hope to ring out this year, without the fear of Covid.



At our meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> Oct we had the august presence of three nonagenarians in our midst. They had all completed 90 years of age earlier during the year, when we had not started meeting physically: Mr. Kesavalier, Mr. T M Phillip and Mr. P K Philipose. It was indeed appropriate that they were honoured at that meeting when Mr. Manoharan introduced each of them to the members and a cake was cut by each of them, accompanied by their respective spouses. We were all privileged to have the three of them in our midst.

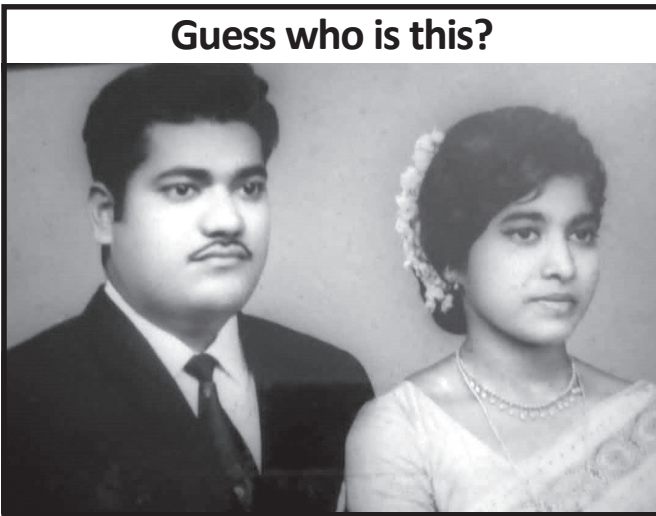
In this issue we have an article on "Ikigai" by Prof Santhakumari, who had written this article for our newsletter long before we had the talk on 25<sup>th</sup> Nov. We also have an interesting travelogue by Mrs. Rani Mathew, who visited the Seven Sisters of the North East. She has given an introductory article in this issue and proposes to give detailsof each of the seven states in subsequent issues.

Here is the answer to the picture "Guess Who's this?" in our last issue. It is none other than Dr. P I John, Minnu and their son! Couldn't recognize him minus his characteristic beard, isn't it? He seems to have had a PremNasir type of moustache instead! I invite members to send me similar pictures of themselves, so we can all have some fun guessing.

Here's wishing all our members a Merry Christmas with hearts overflowing with happiness and lives full of love and peace.

Until next time.

### Guess who is this?



Answer to last month's quiz "Guess who is this?":  
Dr. P I John, Minnu and their son



Felicitating Mr T M Philip



Cutting their cakes with the help of their family

# A JOURNEY TO SEE SEVEN SISTERS

Rani Mathew



Occasionally we travel abroad for sight-seeing and leisure. But this time, we chose a domestic center for the above. It is a famous destination called “Seven Sisters of the North East”. This time, we were very happy that we had a companion couple from Kottayam, Mr. John Kunnath and Lissie John, our very active SCF members.

We began our journey from Cochin airport. Our first destination was Guwahati, the largest city in Assam. To reach there, we had to fly via Chennai. The north eastern states called seven sisters are the following: Assam, Manipur, Tripura, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. The official languages of these states are Assamese, Manipuri, Mizo Tawng (Mizoram), KokBorok

(Tripura), English (Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh

Our tour group consisted of 26 members from various parts of Kerala. On reaching Guwahati airport, our special bus was ready to transfer us to the hotel where we slept peacefully after dinner. The next day the tour started by 8.30 in the morning. Our tour manager explained that the seven sisters are sharing international boundaries with Myanmar, Bangladesh, China and Bhutan.

The history of seven sisters of India is interesting and deep-rooted. During independence, there were only three states, Assam, Manipur and Tripura. Gradually other states were formed, viz. Nagaland in 1963, Meghalaya in 1972, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh in 1987. Seven

sisters of India make up the north eastern region of the country.

The seven sisters region is a most spectacular destination to travel with family. The places are blessed with dense forests, rocky hills and beautiful water falls. All the states are inhabited by different native tribes and each one has its own traditions, rituals and festivals practiced by the tribal communities for years and years. The people belong to different tribal and ethnic groups.

The region boasts of many scenic and spectacular places featuring lofty hills, fabulous landscapes, gorgeous valleys, sparkling lakes, rivers, waterfalls and dense forest.

The next day morning we all got ready to explore all the above.

**(To be continued)**



Cutting their cakes with the help of their family

# IKIGAI

Prof. N. C. Santhakumari



Ikigai is a Japanese word. 'Iki' means life and 'gai' means value. It is the Japanese life style and explains how we can live a longer, happier and meaningful life. It may also be equated with the Ayurvedic concept of "Aayur Aarogya Soukhyam". 'Aayur' means longevity, 'Aarogya' means healthy, 'Soukhyam' means wellness and happiness. It is also an 'Art of Living', especially at the advancing age.

The Okinawa island in Japan has the highest population of centenarians. In this place we cannot find a single grandpa sitting idle at home. In general, Japanese people never retire from work. They keep on doing what they love, for as long as their health allows.

Every individual has an in-born talent and passion which are hidden inside. These may not be fully exploited during early stages of life. This may be due to the pressure and demand from professional and family environ-

ments. Ikigai involves identifying the talent and passion and applying them in everyday life that make life vibrant and meaningful.

If we wish to be happy and live longer, we have to discover our Ikigai. For this we have to ask four questions to ourselves. The questions may be summarised:

1. What we are good at?  
[our strengths]
2. What do we love to do?  
[our passion]
3. What does the world need?  
[our mission]
4. What we can be paid for?  
[our professional expertise]

Take sufficient time to answer the questions and brainstorm new possibilities. Everyone's Ikigai is unique: it is based on his/her personality, talents, hobbies, values and beliefs. After answering the questions, one will learn so much about oneself!

While answering the first two questions, we will be considering

all the activities that we enjoy doing and that energise us. For example, if one is a good writer and loves to write, one can write, conveying one's thoughts and ideas. If a person is a good planner, he/she will find pleasure in making plans for everything, covering all the eventualities. Art in all forms is an Ikigai that can bring happiness and purpose to one's day.

The last two questions are activities bringing an income to the practitioner of Ikigai. Money is not really a part of original ikigai concept, but one needs to earn an income to support the life style one has chosen.

Every one may already have daily, weekly, monthly and annual activities that bring happiness and a sense of fulfilment. For example, a morning walk, writing for half an hour every day, a meditation for 10 minutes every day, growing vegetables or flowers, cooking, singing, meeting with friends and relatives etc. Also you may be going to places of worship every week, a treat every month, a one-day trip with friends etc. All such activities can be linked to ikigai. Also, hobbies like sewing, gardening, painting, photography, learning a new language, taking classes on craft, playing a musical instrument etc. will nurture one's ikigai.

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## WISH YOU ALL A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY

*May your birthday and every day ahead be filled with the warmth of love, the joy of good health and blessings in abundance!*



<b>Mathen Kurien</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> December</b>
<b>K K Mathew</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> December</b>