



ELDERS' VOICE

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The President's Message

P. I. John

Kerala's unique, proactive response to the floods is sharply different from the abject passivity of most flood-affected people in the rest of India. The extended village that Kerala is, there is a village like social structure where everybody knows everyone else. The political empowerment of the people over generations has made people capable of forcing the government to deliver on education, healthcare and civic services. Unionisation of every segment of labour has transformed the society into an enmeshed, networked one.

One manifestation of this unique response was the decentralisation of resources and responsibilities. IAS officers were deputed to each district to coordinate rescue and relief measures. The district collectors were overall in charge for their districts, while superintendents of police led the rescue operations. K. Vasuki, District collector of Thiruvananthapuram, is a hero for her work in motivating College students to come together to collect funds, buy relief materials and send them to collection centres. Fire ser-

vice personnel coordinated with them.

Panchayats to municipal corporations were asked to work in rescue and relief operations. The NDRF and the armed forces that were later deployed coordinated their work through the district authorities.

Second is the incredible manner in which people united to organise rescue and relief work, led by trade unions, student-youth organisations, charitable organisations and other collective bodies.

Anbodu Kochi, a Facebook group, is contributing to the relief effort by collecting and delivering materials and resources to the flood affected. Close to 2000 tons of materials have been delivered to more than one lakh people.

Fishermen in their boats came in droves to save lives. When the government realized the dearth of boats, and the army's lack of local knowledge essential for navigation, the Latin Catholic Church mobilised 600 boats belonging to the fisher-

men to rescue over 100,000

marooned people. It appears that 750 fishermen will now be trained at the Mumbai maritime training institute to become disaster responders.

Within hours after the tragedy struck, volunteers from Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) and Kerala's IT cell, came together to build the online portal KeralaRescue.in to collect donations, enlist volunteers, record requests for help and other such needed services. It has been flooded with both donations and offers of volunteers whose names, addresses and phone numbers are listed. Reportedly, its visitor count is already over 10 million.

The deluge is over. Now is the time to plan and build a new, smart Kerala. I am sure that the uniqueness of the people of Kerala will manifest in new, creative ways in tackling this problem too!



india.gov.in
national portal of india

<https://www.india.gov.in/people-groups/life-cycle/senior-citizens>

is a page containing useful information of interest to Senior Citizens.

Editor's Musings

Dhanya Gopinath

Kindly permit me to hold the fort once again for one or two months. Your Editor is convalescing after a fall and will be back again with you, as soon as possible.

Firstly let me place on record my deepest condolences on the passing away of one of India's most beloved prime ministers, Atal Vihari Bajpai, who was Kashmir's favourite prime minister, too. Besides everything else, he was the daring leader who made Pokhran possible and gave India a new identity.

A lot has been written and said about the recent floods in Kerala. Whether it was a man-made disaster or a God-willed one, we must admire the co-ordinated rescue operations carried out to save lakhs of people caught in the ravaging waters.

Human interest stories like that of a pregnant woman in labour being air-lifted to have a safe delivery at a hospital in the naval base and young men and women in the civil services going

beyond the call of duty never cease to fascinate me.

By her quick-thinking, IAS officer, T.V.Anupama broke open the locks of two rooms of the Bar Association building at Thrissur, throwing open enough space for supplies to be stored in a dry place.

Under the watch of District Collector, T. Vasuki, the district administration in Thiruvananthapuram was able to collect 54 truckloads of material in two days, thereby reaching them to many parts of the district and beyond.

On August 13th, at around 9.30pm, when a truck loaded with rice sacks and other supplies arrived at a relief camp in Wayanad, most of the people in the camp were exhausted from the day's work and were unable to unload the trucks. Without a moment's hesitation, two IAS officers started unloading the truck and taking the rice sacks inside the camps.

They were G. Rajamanickyam, Special officer dealing with Disas-

ter management and Wayanad SubCollector K. Umesh.



Tech-savvy IAS officer, Prasanth, who has been nicknamed, 'Collector Bro', harnessed the scope of the social media in tracking, rescuing and rehabilitating people stranded by the destructive floods. His website www.compassionatekeralam is a platform to link compassionate souls with people in need of support.

Let me not forget to include the selfless labour of the fishers. The picture of one of them bending down in the waters near the boat and allowing people to use him as stepping board to enter the boat remains clearly etched in my mind. All this makes me feel that Kerala has a bright future.

Shall we call it God's Own Country With God's Own People?

Turning sunlight into Fuel

Photosynthesis is the process plants use to convert sunlight into energy. Oxygen is produced in photosynthesis when the water absorbed by plants is 'split'. It is one of the most important reactions on the planet because it is the source of nearly all of the earth's oxygen.

Hydrogen produced when the water is split could potentially be a green and unlimited source of renewable energy. Natural photosynthesis is not efficient: only 1-2 per cent of what could be the maximum yield is converted. Artificial photosynthesis is not viable to create renewable energy because it relies on the use of catalysts, which are often expensive and toxic.

A new study at Cambridge University has used natural sunlight to convert water into hydrogen and oxygen using enzymes. Their method also managed to achieve more efficient absorption of solar light than natural photosynthesis. The Cambridge research is part of the emerging field of semi-artificial photosynthesis which aims to overcome the limitations of fully artificial photosynthesis by using enzymes to create the desired reaction.

Arise, awake and do not stop until the goal is reached.

You have to grow from the inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your own soul.

We are what our thoughts have made us; so take care about what you think.

Words are secondary.

Thoughts live; they travel far.

Swami Vivekananda

Stray Thoughts

Mrs. Ann Jacob

(This is a continuation of the author's recollections of her teaching days. The first part appeared in the July 2018 issue).

In the next school in Raipur, the Inspection was held differently. In this school, the Principal usually enters the classroom without prior notice, carrying the teachers' log book, where the details of the lesson and the portion to be covered were entered. For newly appointed teachers and youngsters, the Principal would sit at the back of the class and observe the lesson being taught. For seniors and experienced hands, she would stand in the corridor and observe the teacher through the window, jotting down points in her diary or teachers' log book. In this school I was teaching English in class 12 as

by now I had completed my Post graduation and B.Ed. too.

As usual I went to class and once the students settled down, I wrote the title of the play - "Arms and the Man" by Bernard Shaw. I gave a brief description of Shaw's background and mentioned that Shaw, by nature, was an iconoclast and was well-known for his wit. He was a contemporary of Winston Churchill, who could match Shaw in any verbal duel. To invoke interest in the play, I told them a joke, which goes like this:

Shaw sent 2 tickets to Churchill with a note saying, "I am sending you 2 tickets for the first show of my play, 'Pygmalion'. Please do attend and bring along a friend ...if you have one"

Churchill promptly replied saying, "Thank you for the 2 tickets, which you have sent me for the first show of your play. I'm sorry I cannot attend the first show but I

shall definitely attend the second show ...if there is one".

There were peals of laughter from the class. I caught a glimpse of the Principal with my log book at the window. Later in the day, I was called to the office to read and sign the inspection report. I was wondering what her reaction would be but as she was an ardent lover of English Literature, I knew I was safe. She was beaming when I entered the office!

I read the report and signed it. Now I was beaming!



August Meetings

Dr. Mathew Parackal, was the main speaker at the meeting of the SCF on the 10th of August. He spoke about Geriatric Problems.

"The biggest challenge today, is an Ageing Population", said the doctor.

This increase in longevity is not an unmixed blessing.

Although medical science has by and large succeeded in controlling communicable diseases; non-communicable diseases like COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder), Psychiatric disorders and Cancer are now on the increase.

Dr. Mathew Parackal spoke about the four methods used to treat cancer. He advised the members of the Senior Citizens'

Forum to be aware but not afraid of Cancer, as it was a curable disease in his opinion.

Mrs. Molly Benjamin, conducted the Quiz programme, once again, after a brief hiatus. By bringing in non-current events along with current ones the Quiz Master forced the seniors to get into the thinking mode.

Mr. P. K. Philipose entertained us with his Malayalam poetry.

Elaborate plans were made for the 2nd meeting, which was to be the Onam Celebration of the SCF. It was planned for the 24th of August. Considering the devastation and consequent misery caused by the recent floods, the celebration was called-off.

Dhanya Gopinath

Senior Citizens' Forum Sponsors the SEERI Conference



Cheque being handed over to Fr. Jacob for the partial sponsorship of the 9th World Syriac Conference held at SEERI from 8 to 16.

Grow by Reading

A. M. Mathew

Mr. P.N. Panicker, who, like Prometheus, transferred the fire of knowledge across Kerala, championed the slogans, "Grow by Reading" and "Think and Earn Wisdom". Reading promotes growth of thought, ability for comprehension and development of communication skill. Panicker organised libraries all over Kerala.

My wife and I are members of the Australian Capital Territory Libraries. The membership card unlocks access to hundreds of thousands of print, digital and on-line resources. Free services offered to members include :

- Books in standard and large print,
- Access to free WIFI and library computers
- Downloadable magazines and music you can keep
- Downloadable books and au-

- dio books
- Language learning material through the Mango Learning App.
- Literary games and streaming stories
- In branch program and events for all ages
- In branch story time and Giggle & Wiggle for young children
- Home Library Service for the house-bound.
- Access to the Heritage Library.

We were lucky to watch the culmination of the Australian Library's Grand Gala 50th Anniversary Celebration on 12th August, 2018, at the National Library of Australia. Orderliness, volunteering and respectful behaviour are the hallmarks of Australian Library.

I asked a senior member who borrowed half a dozen fat books, through an automatic counter, how long he would take to finish reading "all" of them? " About a week ", he said. " I read for pleasure ", he added. " If you are curious about " Reading for Pleasure "

start reading with " Pride and Prejudice " by Jane Austin. "I'm sure you will love reading for pleasure", he advised with a smile !!



How many of us read for pleasure ?

While we are proud about the development of technology, which helps us to store knowledge and use it effectively, we should not degrade the importance of Book Reading! Books and Reading are complementary. We should be aware of the culture of Reading Rooms which is getting alienated

Proper use of a well-furnished and well-organised Library May induce you to dream. ! It is the possibility of having a dream comes true, that makes Life interesting !!!

WISH YOU 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!

Dr. K. R. Harilal - 7 September

Mrs. Rajalakshmi Nair - 9 September

Adv. P. C. Chandramohan - 10 September

Mrs. Sally Mathew - 16 September

Mr. Alex Mathew - 18 September

Mr. Dominic Mathew - 20 September

Mrs. Lizzy Mathew - 20 September

Prof. John Joseph - 20 September

Dr. Mathew Parackal - 27 September

Mr. P. V. Joseph - 28 September

Senior citizens celebrated Onam on 14 th September at the scenic Kollaparambil house by the Meenachil River.

