



# ELDERS' VOICE

DECEMBER 2019

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION

News Bulletin of The Senior Citizens' Forum, Kottayam

Editor: Dhanya Gopinath

## The President's Message

P. I. John



In studies on Technology development, there is a concept called the Inevitability Thesis. Sometimes this is also referred to as Technology Imperative. Stated simply, it says that once a technology is introduced into a culture, it shall inevitably grow into more and more complexity. This development occurs not because of technological determinism but because we are "able" to pursue it, and it seems like the right thing to do.

The first forms of writing, led to printing and the internet. The first forms of money, which were seashells, developed into electronic cash and now into Bitcoin. Telegraphy developed into Internet. Each advancement is amplified by the last, which is why we have exponential growth in technology.

Inevitability thesis has practical implications for technology driven industry sectors like manufacturing.

Some leading economists and leaders had believed more than a decade ago that India held the potential to emulate the growth model of East Asian countries such as South Korea. By doing what South Korea had done, they felt India could duplicate the tremendous economic success that South Korea had already attained by then.

Today's leaders also believe that it is the manufacturing sector and

not services that will provide jobs for millions of unemployed Indians. Young Indians need manufacturing jobs as not everyone can work as a software engineer or BPO executive. To take advantage of the countries' "demographic dividend", the government, it is felt, needs to create manufacturing jobs that pay well enough for young men and women to support their families.



Furthermore, it is also estimated that by 2025 India's manufacturing sector can grow to be a \$1 trillion dollar sector.

Conventional wisdom tells us that automation steals manufacturing jobs. Yet the industrial automation industry in India is expected to touch \$3.5 billion by 2020, and by then the manufacturing sector alone is expected to create 90 million new jobs. It is widely agreed that au-

tomation makes manufacturing processes more efficient and leads to fewer defects. It is this increase in efficiency that is leading many Indian manufacturers to automate processes. Demand for factory automation has given an impetus to the industrial automation industry in India. Industries in India like the automotive, chemicals, and mining industry are automating processes and making such processes more innovative.

A country as large as India, in 2018, can use automation in tandem with its huge demographic dividend to create a manufacturing base. This manufacturing base may produce goods made on production lines using human hands while also manufacturing increasingly more sophisticated products using automation.

Those who oppose automation should remember what happened to Kerala's Cashew Industry. A factor that is said to have contributed to the sudden slump was Vietnam's takeover of the global market. Vietnam's processing units are all mechanised, helping the country churn out the product in vast numbers. While the processing cost for 80 kg of raw nuts is the equivalent of Rs. 800 in Vietnam, it's around Rs. 2,500 to 3,000 in Kollam.

# Editor's Musings

## Dhanya Gopinath

Hello Friends!

In keeping with the spirit of Yuletide, the Kottayam Senior Citizens' Forum is celebrating Christmas on the 27th of the month.

As discussions were going on, there were plans to have a Santa Claus visit the seniors at the SEERI. After all, are seniors not passing through their second childhood & are they also not entitled to enjoy themselves with gay abandon?

Recently I came across an

article that explained how & when Santa started entertaining children. In the year 1890, James Edgar, who owned a department store in Brockton in the state of Massachusetts, USA, first started the tradition of dressing up as Santa Claus.

"You just can't imagine what it was like. I remember walking down an aisle and, all of a sudden, I saw Santa Claus, I couldn't believe my eyes, and then Santa Claus came up and started talking to me. It was a dream come true." This was

the reaction of one of the little boys several years later.



I am sure James Edgar would never have realized the enduring impact of his simple idea of entertaining the children of his town.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

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## November Meetings

The Kottayam Senior Citizens' Forum held its first meeting on the 8th of November. The President Dr P I John made a reference to some of the rumours about the hazards of 5G. He felt that 5G could be safer than 4G. He felt confident that India could leap frog to 5G technology.

Our member Mr P I Mani was the Chief Speaker. He spoke on the topic 'Sadacharam Nastapetta Rastram -Judiciary, Madhyamam'. As an activist, idealist & as a genuine well-wisher of our country, Mr Mani is pained by the recent developments, where everything from the media to the judiciary is buyable.

He gave the names of a few Rajya Sabha members, who had not attended a single meeting yet enjoyed all the perks that go with it. Judges who work sincerely & give correct judgements get transferred because the government of the day finds their judgments uncomfortable.

He quoted the salaries of the President, Governor, Members of Parliament etc and said that they were given far too many facilities.

There was good participation from the audience.

The second meeting of the Forum was held on the 22nd of No-

vember. The Chief Speaker was Mr P K Hormis Tharakan.

Prof Babu Joseph, who introduced Mr Tharakan, said that Mr Tharakan joined the Indian Police Service in 1968. He was allotted the Kerala cadre, and served in various capacities. He was the Director General of Police between the years 2003-2006. Mr Tharakan moved to Delhi, when he was asked to head India's external intelligence agency, the Research & Analysis Wing (RAW) of the Cabinet Secretariat, as Secretary.

Mr Tharakan chose to speak of retired life in his ancestral village, Olavipe, in the Alapuzha district. After many years of city life, he had to re-learn the farming process.

The retired IPS officer said that he had managed to implement a cost-effective method of farming by reaching out to the local administration. While experts helped him enhance his technical knowledge, he admits that the best inputs came from the villagers themselves.

He speaks very highly about the good work done by the government of India. Mr Tharakan availed of the 'One Paddy, one Fish' scheme promoted by the Aquaculture Development Agency. This innovative scheme promotes both shrimp & paddy cultivation. He emphasized that he is not into

agriculture for profit. It gives him great happiness to give the people of his village a dignified way of life.

In conclusion, the retired police officer spoke briefly about the Indian Police Force. He mentioned that the entry of women into the Police Force had had a positive impact.

Although many attempts had been made to reform the police, nothing much has changed. He blamed it on the politicization of the Police Force.



Thunberg began a global movement in August 2018, by camping out in front of the Swedish Parliament, holding a sign painted in black letters on a white background that read "School Strike for Climate." She has addressed heads of state at the U.N., met with the Pope, and inspired 4 million people to join the global climate strike.



## Neha's Three Day Trip to Maldives

Ten year old Neha Akhilesh gives a vivid description of her three day trip to Maldives during the Diwali holidays. Together with siblings, cousins, parents, aunts, uncles & maternal grand parents, she goes for a holiday to the Maldives.

In the travelogue, Neha describes her trip from Bangalore to Kochi & then the flight they took to reach Male, the capital of Maldives.

Seated by the window of the aircraft, Neha is able to enjoy the beauty of the light blue waters of the Indian Ocean. She describes in great detail the separation of the water into dark and blue colours. As she watches without batting an eyelid, she sees something that fascinates her. She is able to spot the Maldivian islands. The islands were of different sizes. From the top, it appeared as if the islands were floating in the waters.

After the one-hour flight they landed at Male. Then Neha & family get into a speed boat to reach Lankanfinolhu which is an island in the Maldives. As you must be knowing, Maldives is made up of 200 islands in the Indian Ocean.

Neha is excited as she tells us about her journey to the "Paradise Island Resort" in Lankanfinolhu. They reach the resort on a Speed Boat & Neha swears that she saw a Sting Ray in the waters. I am sure you have not forgotten how the famous Crocodile Hunter, Steve Irwin died after he was unexpectedly stung by this creature. The little girl is in raptures while describing the rooms allotted to them &

the taste of the sumptuous food that they order.

The next day they took a boat to reach the submarine dive site. All passengers wait on a floating platform before boarding the submarine. Once seated, the crew gives them a briefing about the safety equipment on board the submarine; the engine starts and the submarine cruises on the surface before it starts making a descent into the depths of the ocean. As the submarine goes deeper & deeper into the ocean they look through the glass panes. At last they manage to catch a glimpse of marine life.

Neha reels out the names of fish like the sergeant fish, emperor fish, the unicorn box fish, clown fish, parrot fish & the like. The resplendent colours of the fish leave them spell bound. Though expensive, the forty five-minute underwater ride, was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. What is even more,



they were greeted by the sight of jumping dolphins on reaching the surface.

Neha speaks about how the children got a chance to try their hand at the underwater sport called snorkelling. In great detail she describes the mask & oxygen tube which is used for snorkelling. They also tried participating in the game called the Crab Race, a betting game, where you are declared the winner, if the crab that you bet on emerges the winner.

On their third and last day in the Maldives they had a ride in the Sea Plane, This was another exciting part of their holiday. The sea plane takes off from the water, then comes up and flies in the air. Neha says that she was able to spot some of the small is-



lands of the Maldives and even recognize the capital called Male as the plane flew around before landing in the sea.

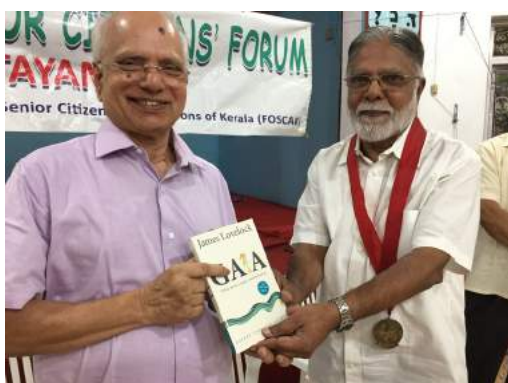
That evening they had a chance to get into the Fun-Tube, where an air-filled couch is tied to the jet ski. The jet-ski goes in full speed & pulls the air-filled chair along with it. Neha & the other children enjoyed sitting in the chair as the fun-tube charged ahead in full speed.

Neha & family enjoyed their holiday in the hot and sunny islands called the Maldives. She is sad to hear the prediction that the Maldives is likely to sink as a result of change in the global weather pattern.

(Neha Akhilesh is the grand daughter of Mrs. Marykutty Varghese & Prof K. M. Varghese)

"Consciously or unconsciously, the reader is dissatisfied with being told only what is not; the reader wishes to be told what is... If your every sentence admits a doubt, your writing will lack authority."

— William Strunk, Jr., **The Elements of Style**



Prof. S Sivadas, the chief guest on 13th Dec, 2019, spoke on Eco-Spirituality. He is being presented a copy of James Lovelock's book, Gaia.

## Brain Washing Away Dementia

The key to avoiding Alzheimer's disease is by quite literally brain-washing us. Scientists have found that our brains are rhythmically rinsed in a watery fluid after we drift off to sleep.

The process, which is thought to play a part in keeping cognitive functions sharp, could offer the best explanation of why we need to rest and why a broken night's sleep leaves one foggy-headed. It could also help to flush out the enigmatic association between sleep disorders and conditions such as Alzheimer's disease.

The latest study, published in the journal, 'Science on Friday', explains how, after monitoring 'eleven' sleeping volunteers, using MRI scans. The scientists found that the process began with brain cells reducing their 'electrical activity'. A few seconds later, blood flows from the head into the body, allowing a 'Watery Liquid' to wash through the brain in rhythmic, pulsing waves.

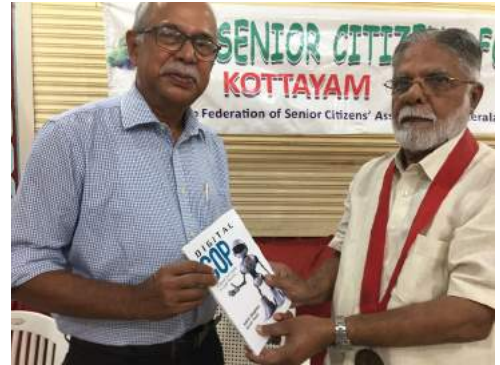
**Mr.A.M.Mathew**

## Obituary

Mr. K. C. Geevarghese left for the heavenly abode on the 22nd of November. He & his wife Saramma Varghese used to attend the meetings of the Forum on a fairly regular basis until the sad demise of Mrs. Varghese.

May the soul of Mr. Geevarghese rest in peace.

Shri Hormis Tharakan, ex-Chief of RAW was the Chief Guest on 22 November, 2019. He spoke about Police Reforms and his experiences as a farmer after retirement.



## Senior Citizen Savings Scheme (SCSS)

The Senior Citizens Savings Scheme (SCSS) is a retirement product that ensures regular income and offers the highest safety and tax savings benefits.

SCSS is an investment product that offers capital protection and a sovereign guarantee. The interest rates are set each quarter, but once invested, the rates remain fixed for the entire tenure. As per the latest revision, this scheme offers an 8.6 per cent interest rate on the deposit for October to December quarter. A senior citizen can invest in this scheme by opening either an individual or a joint account with a post office or a scheduled commercial bank.

The list of documents required for investing in this scheme are duly filled application form, Know your Customer (KYC), photographs of the applicant, Permanent Account Number (PAN), address proof, age proof and in case of retirees, a certificate from the employer, proof of date of

disbursal of the retirement benefits.

This account comes with a maturity period of 5 years which can be extended for three years. The investment in this scheme qualifies for tax benefits under Section 80C of the Income-Tax Act, 1961, and the scheme also allows premature withdrawals. It may be noted that only one deposit can be made in this account in the multiples of Rs 1,000 and maximum not exceeding Rs 15 lakh. In the case of SCSS accounts, quarterly interest is payable on 1st working day of April, July, October and January. It will be applicable at all CBS Post Offices.

The premature closure is allowed after one year on deduction of an amount equal to 1.5 per cent of the deposit and after 2 years 1 per cent of the deposit. Account holders can also avail of nomination facility and appoint a minor as his nominee as well.

**Source: ETNow, November 26, 2019**

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## 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!**

Mr. Mathew Kurien - 6th Dec

K. K. Mathew - 10th Dec

Mrs. Jo Chacko - 19th Dec