



ELDERS' VOICE

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY

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News Bulletin of
Senior Citizens' Forum Kottayam

Editor
Pushpa Mathew

President's Message

Dr. Joseph Cherian

Following the Prime Minister's inauguration of the 5G services in India, Reliance Industries Limited announced that Reliance Jio will roll out its 5G services in four metros by Diwali. India is expected to have a billion smartphone users by 2026 as 5G services are rolled out, according to the India edition of Deloitte's 2022 report.

The wireless technology connecting them have been evolving. First Gen in 1980s, 2G in 90s, 3G in 2000s and 4G in 2010s. 2G was the first digital technology and had features such as text and digital voice. 3G provided high speed data up to 14 Mbps and more. With 4G, mobile Internet appeared. 3G and 4G operate in the frequency range 850–2500 MHz.

5G spectrum is likely to go beyond to 26 GHz, 31GHz, 47 GHz (mm waves). These signals are absorbed almost completely by obstacles and hence do not travel far. This means compact network of relay stations that transmit and receive the signals. Every square kilometre in urban areas would need more than 40 towers. With many transmitters, the power levels would be lower than that needed for 4G. Hence the radiation levels from 5G antennas will be lower.

What will 5G do? The first improvement is the improved speed. 4G has download speeds of typically 20Mbps. 5G will raise this to 500 to 1500 Mbps levels. 5G will not only interconnect mobiles, but also control devices and machines. 5G enables

real time transmission of information relevant to manufacturing, consumer durables and agriculture. 5G will enable inter-vehicle and vehicle-to-base contact, making driverless cars a reality.

5G's benefit for India may be even higher than in advanced nations because of the lower capacity in physical infrastructure enabling opportunities for leapfrogging.

In 2014 WHO said that "no adverse health effects have been established as being caused by mobile phone use". However the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has classified all radio frequency radiation as "possibly carcinogenic with no conclusive evidence that exposure may cause cancer in humans". The signals used for mobile phones are of low energy to affect DNA and cause cell damage.

China has already launched 5G. 5G is to be rolled out across all urban areas in Europe by 2025 aided by 84 operators as of January 2022. Within Europe, the Netherlands leads, followed by Cyprus and Bulgaria. Other European countries have already assigned 5G spectrum for private networks. There is a 3 way race for 5G leadership in the US between T-Mobile, Verizon and AT&T. The companies make competing claims for the number of clients, coverage area and service speeds.



Mrs Mathew presenting the bouquet



The President with Dr Parackal

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

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

Editor's Musings

Pushpa Mathew



Hello Everyone,

Our first meeting in October was dedicated to the felicitation of our Founder Member and second President of the Kottayam SCF, Dr Mathew Parackal, who was presented with a bouquet and a shawl on the occasion. Several of our members spoke about Dr Parackal's contribution to the Forum and to the society in Kottayam at large. They reminisced about the long association that they have had with him and some of the pictures taken on that day by our official photographer, Mrs. Minnu John, appear in this issue of Elders' Voice.

We have introduced two new columns in this issue. At the instance of Mr. M Gopinathan, it has been decided to have a column, "Letters to the Editor". Mr. Gopinathan has contributed the first letter, which appears in this issue. Members are

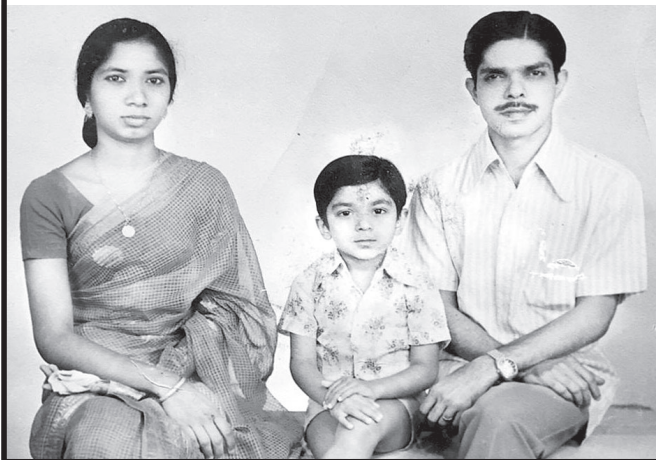
requested to send in their letters by WhatsApp to the Editor.

This time we also have a column – "Guess Who's this?" where we have put up a picture of one of our members with his wife and son. Can you guess who it is?

Everyone will enjoy seeing what our friends looked like decades ago. So I request each of you to delve into your old family albums and send me pictures of long ago. Wouldn't it be fun to see our senior citizen friends, as they were 40 or 50 years ago? Please send the pictures directly to my WhatsApp number 9895981623.

Until next time, then.

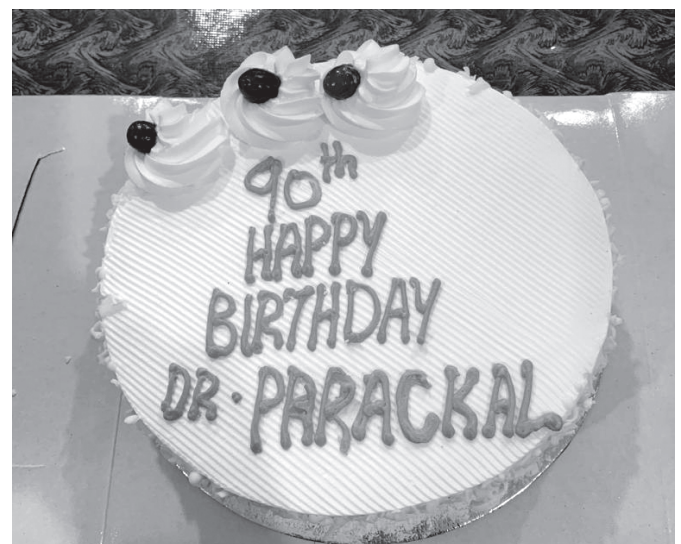
Guess who is this?

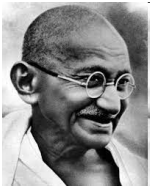


LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mr. John Kunnath's brief write up, giving the story of the famous novel, "Indulekha" by Chandu Menon is greatly appreciated. The simplicity of his language helped us, both to fully understand and enjoy his article. Hoping to see many more such articles in the Elders' Voice.

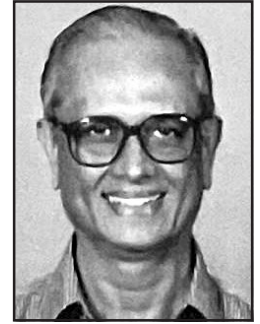
M. Gopinathan





MAHATMA GANDHI

M.Gopinathan



Mahatma Gandhi's birth, on 2nd October has come & gone. Hence it is good to remember him on this occasion. I have nothing more to write than what all of us know & do not wish to attempt to do so.

However I wish to give below, a few anecdotes which will bring out the personality of the Great Soul. These are from a book authored by Sri. Ravindra Varma, first published by Navjeevan Trust in 2001. It is very difficult to pick & choose but I will restrict myself to five anecdotes... I have abbreviated them, wherever possible, respecting the space constraints.

1) Time is precious

One day, Gandhiji had to be at Gujarat Vidyapeeth to attend a meeting of the Senate. As the vehicle sent to pick him up did not arrive on time, Gandhiji decided to start walking from the Sabarmati Ashram, which was quite a distance away.

As luck would have it, he saw a man coming on a bicycle. Stopping the man, Gandhiji lost no time explaining his predicament & requested the man to lend him his bicycle. The man readily agreed and Gandhiji promptly started pedaling.

When he arrived at the appointed time, the officials were taken aback to see their dhoti-clad bare-bodied Mahatma getting down from a bicycle.

2) Do it yourself

Once, when Gandhiji was in Calcutta, he was staying in a newly-built house of an educational society. A young associate had been deputed to look after him.

In the morning, when Gandhiji stepped out with a mug, soap & towel for his bath, the young man rushed to him & asked to be permitted to carry those items to the bathroom.

Gandhiji quietly told him that what he was carrying was not too heavy. The worker then requested that he be allowed to wash Gandhiji's soiled clothes. Gandhiji, declined saying, "I do it myself every day."

3) I am not a Mahatma

By 1920, it had become customary to refer to Gandhiji as 'Mahatma Gandhi'. At the National Congress, in 1920, while speaking on a Resolution, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, repeatedly referred to him as Mr. Gandhi.

This was not taken well by Muhammed Ali, a famous Divine & leader of the Kilafat movement. When he objected to this & requested Jinnah to refer to Gandhi as Mahatma, many delegates supported it & shouted that Jinnah should call him Mahatma Gandhi.

When things were getting out of control, Gandhiji stood up & said, "I am not a Mahatma. I am an ordinary man. By coercing Jinnah Sahib to a particular choice of word, you are not doing me an honour. We cannot win real freedom by forcing our views on others. There is nothing objectionable or derogatory in the man's words, he is at full liberty to choose his words."

This pacified the delegates.

4) Cleaning up is my profession

In Nokhali, in the early morning, Gandhiji & his party were walking with some people on the footpath. Suddenly the

Column stopped & others saw Gandhiji remove excreta from the footpath, with the help of some dry leaves.

Manu, his escort asked, "Why did you not let me do it? "Why do you put us to shame like this?"

Gandhiji replied, "You little know the joy it gives me to do such things"

Gandhiji said, "These people from the village, will themselves clean up the footpath tomorrow. Otherwise, I will clean it myself again & again.

Cleaning up, in the widest sense of the term is my profession."

5) Not all the majesty of the king could match his royalty

Gandhiji was attending a meeting with the British authorities in London. As he entered the hall in his loin cloth, the whole place fell silent.

An English reporter had this to say of his experience.

He said that he remembered the testimony of Mr. Berneys, a sensitive English journalist, who had said, "The moment you see Gandhi, you catch the atmosphere of Royalty. I had seen & talked with the man, who, for more than thirty years, had been the most brilliant monarch of his day. This man was nobly dressed, attended by his court, himself a fascinating, gracious & splendid figure. But not all the majesty of the king could match the Royal Air of Gandhi."

(There are many more such anecdotes, but I have to stop here.)

A POST COVID CALL FOR ACTION

The Rev. Dr. Koshy Mathews



What we have been through during these last two to three years was traumatic. Though no one was spared from the pandemic, the poor and the seniors bore the brunt of its ill effects. While the poor suffered mainly from a lack of access to health care, the seniors suffered mostly from isolation and loneliness. Personally, in the States, attending collegial gatherings twice a month and seeking monthly spiritual direction helped me cope with some of these challenges. To know that you're not alone in this struggle was very helpful. Though we often couldn't be at Senior Citizen's zoom gatherings due to being in different time zones, the fact that they were happening showed our human instinct for community and connection. Hats off to John Sir for his leadership in keeping the forum going during the pandemic.

John F. Kennedy famously said, "The Chinese use two brush strokes to write the word 'crisis.' One brush stroke stands for

danger; the other for opportunity. In a crisis, be aware of the danger—but recognize the opportunity". Now, having been in the belly of the beast for more than two years and come out alive, let us ask ourselves, what has our experience taught us? What new learning and knowledge have we gained in its wake? While our challenges, loss, uncertainty, and fear can be overwhelming, some parts of life still endure. Let us ask ourselves what we have discovered about life, ourselves, and humanity.

According to neuroscientists, the loneliness we suffered from social isolation, which we took as a protective measure during the pandemic, may have made us less resistant to it. People who too diligently followed the pandemic protocols subconsciously started to view others as potential threats and less as friends who could be an ally in overcoming their predicament. In the States, according to its Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy, people were already turned off and socially

disengaged even before the pandemic due to societal conditions. This could be true for us in India as well.

Given all that is going on right now in India, more specifically in Kerala—the corruption, communal strife, crime, opioid crisis, wretched conditions of infrastructure, public's disenchantment with the court and its sense of disempowerment, the spread of fake news, and the docility of the print media, to name just a few – it would be a surprise if people are not driven to opt for social isolation. By the way, the Maveli Skit at our Onam talent show skillfully and artistically highlighted some of what ails us today.

Kerala has a rich history of correcting itself from waywardness and corruption to a path toward progress and human development. We, as enlightened people, cannot let the present cynicism and distrust strangle our hearts and hold us back from envisioning a future of shared power and development. We cannot remain on the sidelines, stay silent, or isolate ourselves, indulging in self-pity. We, the seniors with years of experience in a broad range of fields, need to show up more and more and re-engage ourselves. By doing this, we acknowledge our connection with one another and our commitment to the common good.

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!



Joseph Mathew 16th Nov

Oommen C Vengal 26th Nov