



ELDERS' VOICE

FEBRUARY 2019

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION

News Bulletin of The Senior Citizens' Forum, Kottayam

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The President's Message

P. I. John

Unemployment has become the biggest political theme of 2019, apart from farmer distress. Data from the official agencies like the CSO is being disowned by the Government. Private data banks like CMIE are also distrusted. I came across a report called State of Working India 2018, brought out by the Azim Premji University, Bangalore.

The disturbing highlights of this report are:

A 10 per cent increase in GDP now results in less than 1 per cent increase in employment. As a result the rate of unemployment among the youth and higher educated has reached 16 per cent.

Even in the organised manufacturing sector 90 per cent of the industries pay wages below the statutory minimum. The situation is worse in the unorganized sector.

There is a slowdown in the replacement of workers by machines

but work is becoming more precarious in the organized manufacturing sector.

Labour productivity in organized manufacturing increased by six times over the past three decades but wages increased by only 1.5 times.

Gender disparities are still high but are reducing in some cases.

I am sure that the employment situation is truly grim and shall be a determinant of the 2019 election results.

Another emerging theme is a minimum income guarantee for the poor. Across the world the idea of a Universal Basic Income is finding appeal. The left and liberals believe it can reduce poverty and inequality. The right wing sees it as a more efficient and less bureaucratic way of distributing welfare.

In the UK, unemployed couples get £ 114 per week (Rs 42,000 per

month) from the government. Unemployment benefits and food stamps are offered in the United States also.

Recently, Finland ended a two year experiment in which a large number of unemployed individuals between the ages of 28 and 58 were paid a monthly sum of €560 (Rs 45,000 per month).

In June 2016, voters in Switzerland rejected a proposal to introduce a guaranteed basic income for all.

Many experts are predicting mass unemployment in most advanced economies within the next decade and a half. This means more and more emphasis on the universal basic income.



In her book, **"Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict,"** Harvard Professor Erica Chenoweth explains why civil resistance campaigns attract more absolute numbers of people.

She had studied terrorism, civil war, and major revolutions and sus-

pected that only violent force had achieved major social and political change. For the next two years, Chenoweth and Stephan collected data on all violent and nonviolent campaigns from 1900 to 2006 that resulted in the overthrow of a government or in territorial liberation.

They created a data set of 323

mass actions. Chenoweth analyzed nearly 160 variables related to success criteria, participant categories, state capacity, and more. The results showed that in the aggregate, nonviolent civil resistance was far more effective in producing change.

Harvard Gazette, February 4, 2019

Editor's Musings

Dhanya Gopinath

Hello Friends,

At a recent meeting of the Senior Citizens' Forum, we had Fr. Sebastin Punnasery, a social-activist as our main speaker. He is the main person behind "Prathyasa".

Prathyasa is a movement, and is the initiative of Charity World, headquartered at Changanachery. It is a non-political people's movement and has become a catalyst in uniting diverse groups with a common goal.

While speaking about the good work done so far, Fr. Punnasery happened to mention how he had been in a position to collect a sum of eleven lakhs for the organ transplant expenses of a migrant worker, using the method called, Crowd Funding. I had heard about this method of funding used by a politician, who had collected money for a similar cause by passing around a bucket.

I must admit, that I had always been a bit sceptical of this method of collection.

However, when the father gave graphic details about the three stages in which Crowd Funding is carried out, my doubts were more

or less cleared. Fr. Sebastin Punnasery, had also mentioned that the money covering all hospital expenses would be paid directly to the hospital and the money for post-operative care would be given to the patient in stages.

Very often people hesitate to donate money as they suspect the motive behind the collection. They would like their hard-earned money to reach the needy person and not line the pockets of those in charge of the collection.

Just a few days after the father's talk, I saw a small news-item in the Malayala Manorama, saying that the Vijayapuram panchayath had informed seven of its wards about the need for Crowd Funding, to meet the Liver Transplant expenses of one Jayaraman, who belonged to their panchayath. A committee with a convenor and a Jt. convenor had been constituted and they were planning to collect thirty five lakhs within a time-span of five hours.

This once again proved what Fr. Sebastin had said about the Keralites and their commitment to worthy social causes.

The average Keralite has a

heart but would like their money to be utilized properly.



This issue of the Elders' Voice also speaks about the PhD degree awarded to the daughter-in-law of our past president, Prof. K. M. Varghese & Mrs. Marykutty Varghese. In the December 2018 issue of our newsletter, we had congratulated Mr. George Isaac & Mrs. Soosy Isaac, when their grandson, Aaron had been awarded a 100% scholarship by Eton College, the most prestigious and distinguished school in the world.

We invite all members to share news about happy events in their family.

Bye

Golden Thoughts of A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

"Every individual creature on this beautiful planet is created by God to fulfill a particular role. Whatever I have achieved in life is through His help, as an expression of His will. He showered His grace on me through some outstanding teachers and colleagues, and when I pay my tributes to these fine persons, I am merely singing His glory. All these rockets and missiles are His work through a small person called Kalam, in order to tell the several million mass of India, to not ever feel small or helpless.

We are all born with a Divine Fire in us. Our efforts should be to give wings to this fire and fill the world with the glow of its Goodness."

January Meetings

Dhanya Gopinath

Mr. K. K. Mathews, our member was the speaker at the meeting held on 11th January. He gave a video presentation of the forty day cruise to Antarctica that he had made with his wife Kochu Rani recently.

Their voyage in the luxury liner, Celebrity Infinity began from Buenos Aires in Argentina. The beautiful visuals of the interior of the gi-

gant ship plus the scenic beauty of the mountains, oceans, islands and ports covered on the way to the Antarctica left the audience spell bound.

The second meeting of the SCF was held on the 25th of January. The Chief Guest Fr. Sebastin Punnasery, a social activist, explained the concept behind 'Prathyasa.'

Prathyasa is a non-party people's movement at the panchayath level. The head quarters is at Changanachery.

Some scenes captured by Mr. K. K. Mathew and his wife, Mrs. Kochurani during their recent trip to Antarctica.



Programmes for the Welfare of Senior Citizens.

Integrated Program for Older Persons (IPOP) (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment)

Grants are given for running and maintenance Old Age Homes, Day Care Centres, Mobile Medicare Units, Multi Facility Care Centre. Implementing agencies are Panchayati Raj Institutions/Local Bodies, Non- Governmental Voluntary Organizations, etc. In the year 2016-17, a total of 396 old age homes were given grants of Rs 36.99 crore covering a total of 40200 beneficiaries.

Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY) (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment).

This is funded from the Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund, notified in 2016. All unclaimed amounts from small savings accounts, PPF & EPF are to be transferred to this fund. Aids and assistive living devices are provided to senior citizens belonging to BPL category who suffer from age related disabilities. The aids and assistive devices viz. walking sticks, elbow crutches, walkers/crutches, tripods/quadrupods, hearing aids, wheelchairs, artificial dentures and spectacles

are provided to eligible beneficiaries. The Scheme is being implemented by Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (AL-IMCO). The estimated outlay of the Scheme is Rs. 483.6 crore up to 2019-20. The Scheme will be implemented in 260 districts and benefit 5,20,000 beneficiaries up to 2019-20. Till date, the scheme has benefitted over 38000 beneficiaries against the target of 5,20,000 by 2019-20.

Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) (Ministry of Rural Development)

Financial assistance is provided to person of 60 years and above and belonging to family living below poverty line. Central assistance of Rs. 200/- per month is provided to person in the age group of 60-79 years and Rs. 500/- per month to persons of 80 years and above. Funds under the schemes of NSAP are released on the basis of reports submitted by States/UTs. A total of Rs 5901 crore was released under the scheme in 2016-

The Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PNVVY)

Launched in May 2017 to provide social security during old age. This will be implemented by the Life Insurance Corporation of India. Under the scheme, on pay-

ment of an initial lump sum amount ranging from Rs. 1,50,000 for a minimum pension of Rs. 1000 per month to a maximum of Rs. 7,50,000/- for a maximum pension of Rs. 5,000 per month, subscribers will get an assured pension based on a guaranteed rate of return of 8% per annum. The duration of the scheme will be for ten years and the scheme is opened for subscription for a period of one year i.e. from 4th May, 2017 to 3rd May, 2018. As on 30th November 2017, a total of number of 1,83,842 persons are being benefited under PMVVY.

National Program for the Health Care of Elderly (NPHCE) (Ministry of Health & Family Welfare)

The major objectives of NPHCE are to provide dedicated health facilities in District Hospitals, Community Health Centres (CHCs), Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and Sub-Centres (SCs) levels through State Health Society. The health care facilities, being provided under this program, are either free or highly subsidised. The Following facilities are being provided under the Program.

"Men give me some credit for genius. All the genius I have lies in this: When I have a subject in hand, I study it profoundly, Day and night it is before me. I explore it, in all its bearings. My mind becomes pervaded with it. Then the effort which I make is what people call the fruit of genius. It is the fruit of labour and thought." Alexander Hamilton

Family News

Our Past President, Prof. K. M. Varghese & Mrs. Marykutty Varghese are delighted to inform us that



their daughter-in-law, Neetha Mary Thomas has been awarded a Ph.D degree in Management from

the Bharathiyar University, Coimbatore.

Neetha is currently working as the Asst. Prof. in the Christ University at Bangalore.

Her parents are Thiruvalla Puthiadathu Prof. Thomas Koshy & Mrs. Alice Koshy.

Neetha is the wife of Manarcadu Kottarathil Avinesh Mathew Varghese, Delivery Manager, Infosys, Bangalore.

Their only son, Alan V. Avinesh is a plus one student.

Let us congratulate Mr. K. M. Varghese & Marykutty and wish Neetha a great future.

It is indeed a good mile stone

Casa Maria

Casa Maria is a centre for spirituality and culture, open to all who desire to grow in spirit and culture. This is administered by the Congregation of the Sons of the Immaculate Conception (C.F.I.C) founded by Blessed Luigi Maria Monti. CFIC has presence in over 20 countries.

The Centre at Kottayam is dedicated to the loving memory of Rev. Fr Mathew Chammarapally of CFIC.

This institution was blessed and Inaugurated by His Excellency Rev Dr. Sebastian Thekathetheril, Bishop of Vijayapuram on 27th December 2012.



Fr. Sebastian Punnaserry speaking about his work with 'PRATHYASHA' on bringing medical aid to the very poor.



Dr.Parackal presenting a copy of Amartya Sen's "Argumentative Indians" to Dr. Jose Joseph, Principal Medical College Kottayam, Chief Guest on 8th February. (Photos courtesy: Mrs. Minnu John)

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. Ipe Jacob – Feb 2nd

Mrs. Molly Ipe – Feb 4th

Dr. K. J. Mathew – Feb 5th

Mrs. MaryKutty Varghese – Feb 5th

Mr. M. Gopalakrishnan Nair – Feb 13th

Mr. P. C. John – Feb 19th

Mrs. Omana Abraham – Feb 20th

Mrs. Omana Alex – Feb 20th

Mr. K. S. Kesava Iyer – Feb 21st

Mrs. Lizzy Jacob – Feb 22nd

Mr. C. Bhaskaran Nayar – Feb 27th

Mr. John B. Kunnath – Feb 28th