A photograph of two women celebrating. The woman on the left is wearing a light pink traditional Indian dress and is holding a trophy high in the air with her right hand. The woman on the right is wearing a bright yellow sequined top and is holding a trophy with both hands, looking up at it. The background is a soft, warm glow.

OCTOBER 2022 VOL_42_No.12

KERALA CALLING

₹ 12

the
transgender
people of Kerala
have already
carved their
niche in various
fields with the
overwhelming
support from
the government

PROUD & CONFIDENT

To revel in the innocence of forests
and the wisdom of ancient ways,
to find answers in the
mystery of mountains and
strength in free, soaring lives.

HUMAN *by* NATURE


kerala
God's Own Country
keralatourism.org

A MATTER OF PRIDE FOR THE STATE

In a society where stereotyped binary gender norms are ingrained in its blood, the niche for a hidden yet age-old identity is difficult to be carved out. But when the winds of change are gathering momentum, every outworn idea is destined to be blown away. The nature of Truth is that it shall manifest one day and under the power of its light, all the misconceptions will fade away. Such a transformation is happening in our society. The human race is not only masculine/feminine, but it goes beyond that.

In a sweeping judgment in 2014, the Supreme Court expanded the scope of 'sex' in Articles 15 and 16 and said the rights of the transgender community to equality be safeguarded. The judgment also directed the Centre and State governments to give the transgender community full recognition of their gender identity. The Kerala Government has understood the dynamics of integrating the transgender community into the mainstream. It takes not just a sense of social justice but political and administrative will.

Transgender Welfare Board and Transgender Cell were formed under the Department of Social Justice to create awareness among the public, and to provide counseling and support to every member of the transgender community.

The Transgender Cell, which is the first of its kind in the country, provides assistance and support to the functioning of the State Transgender Justice Board and District Transgender Justice Committees. The cell also formulates and coordinates the Transgender welfare initiatives of the Department. The government has also rolled out many welfare schemes and initiatives, including scholarships for students at various levels of their education.

Due to a lack of social support transgender persons are often subjected to atrocities that may require immediate medical assistance, treatment, food, shelter, clothing, and legal aid. The 'Karuthal' scheme assists needy transgender persons who require immediate support during crises or emergency situations.

Let's not turn a blind eye to the fact that transgender people are the most vulnerable community in our society now. But with all the pioneering efforts by the government, they are getting ingrained in social strata. Many of them have already marked their own space in life. That's why the groundbreaking initiatives by the Government of Kerala to make sure the transgender community is protected, provided for, and loved to deserve a pat on the back.

H. DINESHAN IAS

EDITOR



EDITOR

H.Dineshan IAS

ADDITIONAL EDITOR

K. Abdul Rasheed

DEPUTY EDITOR

V. P. Aswathy

EDITOR IN CHARGE

C. Rajesh

ASSISTANT EDITOR

A. Anchitha

ASSISTANT INFORMATION OFFICER

K.R Arathy

CIRCULATION OFFICER

K.B Sreekala

COVER DESIGN & LAYOUT

AMUSEUM

PRINTING

Orange Press

Thiruvananthapuram

PHOTO CREDITS

I & PRD Photography Division,

Department of Tourism,

V. V. BIJU

KERALA CALLING

OCTOBER 01, 2022_VOL_42_No. 12

Views expressed in the articles published in Kerala Calling are not, necessarily, those of the government. Kerala Calling welcomes free expression of divergent views and exchange of ideas through its pages.

ENQUIRIES

Editorial : 0471 251 8648

Subscription : 0471 251 7036

TO SUBSCRIBE

Send Rs. 120 as money order to

The Director, Information & Public Relations Department,

First Floor, Secretariat Annexe,

Thiruvananthapuram - 695 001.

The subscription amount will also be received at

the State Information Centre, Press Club Building,

Thiruvananthapuram. Phone: 0471 251 8471

and at all District Information Offices.

RESPONSES MAY BE SENT TO MAIL :

keralacalling@gmail.com

facebook.com/KeralaCalling

EDITORIAL MATERIALS

Articles/features appearing in this magazine are either

commissioned or assigned. Nevertheless, other articles

are also welcome. A maximum of 750 wordage is

appreciated. Such items should be addressed to The

Editor, Kerala Calling, First Floor, Secretariat Annexe,

Thiruvananthapuram Pin 695 001.

TOTAL NUMBER OF PAGES:

48 + Cover

Kerala A Rainbow of Hope

06

DR. R BINDU

Minister for Higher
Education and Social
Justice

The Non- 'Transient #Pride

13

JOMON P

Transgender Health care Challenges

16

DR. PRIYA V S

Interview with Dr. A.K Jayasree

18

ANCHITHA A

'We Are Among Us' Revival through Art

22

MALASREE V R



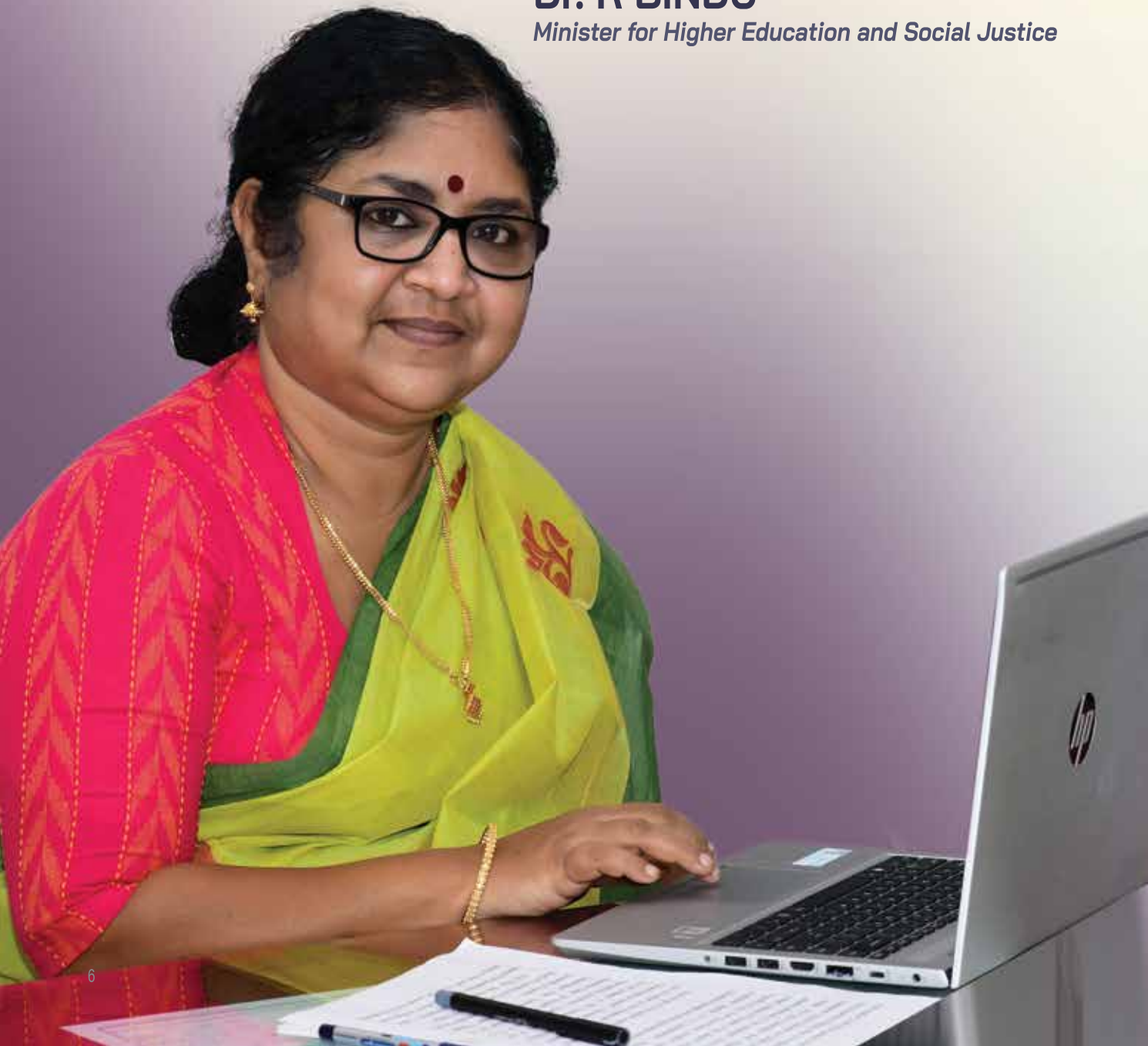
Transgressing Gender Concepts	28	PRAVEEN NATH DEEPA VASUDEVAN
Equitable quality School Education Exploring Pathways	30	DR. C RAMAKRISHNAN
Interview with UNICEF India Chief Ms. Soledad Herrero	32	ARATHY K R
Clean Kerala Company Limited A unique Initiative	36	G K SURESH KUMAR
The Violence in our bones	40	DR SHEEBA V T
K-FON to help speed up e-governance in Kerala	42	BIMAL SHIVAJI
Performance and Punditry	44	RAMESH GOPALAKRISHNAN
Kerala No 1 Ecotourism hotspot	46	JOBY BABY
Marivil Club	50	KERALA STATE YOUTH WELFARE BOARD

KERALA CALLING

KERALA A RAINBOW

Dr. R BINDU

Minister for Higher Education and Social Justice



OF HOPE

Kerala is the first state to formulate and implement a state policy for the transgender community. The policy supports the attainment of a just society where transgender persons have as much right to access developmental opportunities, resources and benefits as cisgender men and women.

Transgender persons often face several forms of discrimination in society. Often, they are even disowned by their own family members once they reveal their gender identity. A survey conducted in 2015 revealed that almost 51% of the transgender population in the State were estranged from their families.

Due to social discrimination, financial constraints and lack of family support, the rate of school and college dropouts among transgender persons was alarmingly high. In fact, up to 58% of transgender students dropped out before completing 10th grade (24% dropped out even before completion of 9th grade). Gender-related negative experiences at school and severe harassment made education impossible for them. Subsequently, they were denied jobs and struggled to earn a sustainable livelihood. The lack of support from family members added to their misery. This distressing scenario often forced them to take up socially unacceptable jobs. Lack of proper awareness and realisation of transgender issues at the ground level also caused several issues.

However, Kerala society has evolved a lot in the past few years. A conscious, yet subtle sensitisation regarding the



aspirations and pains of transgender persons has occurred. Society has now come to acknowledge that transgender persons share the same hopes and dreams as any other individual in our society, and that they have an equal right to a dignified life as every other citizen.

Earlier, the term 'sex' in Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution of India referred only to binary genders of male and female. The Supreme Court of India, however, has now expanded the scope of the term to include 'transgender'. The Honourable Supreme Court of India, in its judgment dated April 15, 2014, had asserted that the right to equality and equal protection for transgender persons will be safeguarded. The judgment also explained how Article 19 (1) of the Constitution states that all citizens shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression of their self-identified gender, besides directing the Union and State governments to grant transgender persons full recognition of their gender identity.

Taking into account the Supreme Court judgment, the Government of Kerala had formulated the Transgender Policy. Kerala is the first state to formulate and implement a state policy for the transgender community. The policy supports the attainment of a just society where transgender persons have as much right to access developmental opportunities, resources and benefits as cisgender men and women. It ensures their right to live with dignity, enjoy a life free from all forms of violence, and also their right to freedom of expression in all matters that affect them.

The Department of Social Justice under the Government of Kerala is the frontrunner in implementing various welfare programmes for the upliftment of transgender persons. The department is committed to taking measures to ensure the participation of transgender individuals in various walks of life. It is striving to take forward the vision of a people's government to handhold and bring forward a community that was hitherto marginalised and ostracised. Kerala is the first state in the country to form a transgender cell. The main objective of the cell is to provide assistance and support the functioning of the State Transgender Justice Board and the District Transgender Justice Committees. The cell also formulates and coordinates the transgender welfare initiatives of the Social Justice Department.

Society has now come to acknowledge that transgender persons share the same hopes and dreams as any other individual in our society. They have an equal right to a dignified life as every other citizen

Transgender Cell

Kerala is the first state in the country to form a transgender cell. The main objective of the cell is to provide assistance and support the functioning of the State Transgender Justice Board and the District Transgender Justice Committees. The cell also formulates and coordinates the transgender welfare initiatives of the Social Justice Department.

Intending to bring the transgender community into the mainstream and uphold their rights, the department has implemented several transgender-friendly welfare schemes in the State. With a view to coordinate the welfare activities of transgender persons, the department has prepared a detailed guideline. It has also developed several action plans and personalised benefit schemes in this regard.



24x7 Helpline for Transgender Community

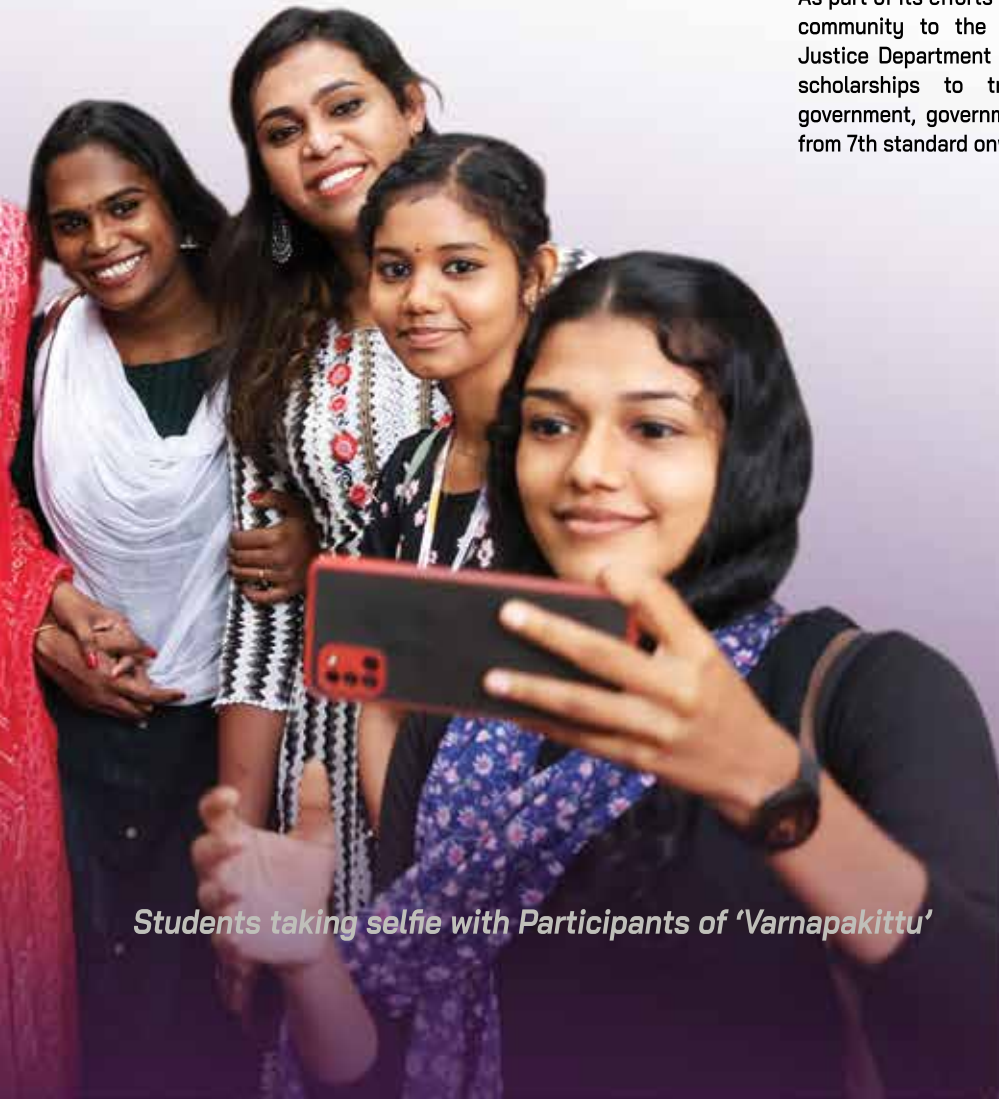
As a novel initiative, the Social Justice Department under the Government of Kerala has launched a 24x7 transgender helpline - 1800 425 2147. The objective is to provide necessary assistance to transgender persons who are in distress, enlighten them with an idea of their fundamental rights, and also provide counselling and legal assistance. This one-of-a-kind helpline also acts as a crisis management centre that ensures the service of community counsellors and legal advisers.

Karuthal scheme

Due to a lack of social support, transgender persons are often subjected to atrocities which may require immediate medical assistance, treatment, food, shelter, clothing and legal aid. The 'Karuthal' scheme assists transgender persons who require immediate support during crisis or emergency situations.

Scholarship for Transgender Students

As part of its efforts to bring the marginalised transgender community to the mainstream of society, the Social Justice Department has initiated a scheme for providing scholarships to transgender students studying in government, government aided, or self-financing schools from 7th standard onwards.



Students taking selfie with Participants of 'Varnapakittu'

Financial assistance is being provided to Transgender students on the following basis:

1. For transgender students from 7th std to 10th std – Rs. 1,000/- per month for 10 months
2. For transgender students studying in Plus one & Plus two – Rs. 1,500/- per month for 10 months
3. For transgender students pursuing a Diploma, Degree, Post-Graduation, or Professional courses – Rs. 2,000/- per month for 10 months

Varnam

'Varnam' scheme provides financial assistance to transgender students pursuing Degree/Diploma/ PG courses through distance education. A maximum amount of Rs. 24,000/- will be provided annually. For students pursuing PG courses, assistance will be provided for two years, and for Under-Graduate students assistance will be given for 3 years.

Intending to bring the transgender community to the mainstream and uphold their rights, Social Justice Department has implemented several transgender-friendly welfare schemes in the State.

Saphalam

'Saphalam' scheme provides financial assistance to transgender students pursuing Degree or Diploma-level professional courses. This scheme provides an opening to transgender students who possess high technical/professional competence.

Samanwaya Continuing Education Programme

The Kerala State Literacy Mission Authority (KSLMA), along with the Social Justice Department, has rolled out a continuing education programme called 'Samanwaya' for school/college dropouts.

Financial aid for the hostel facility

Transgender persons who are pursuing scholarship schemes are often forced to discontinue their studies for reasons such as lack of accommodation facilities. To address this issue, the Department of Social Justice has introduced a scheme that provides Rs 4,000/- as financial assistance to transgender persons as rent for finding hostel facility/accommodation.

Sakalyam

The Department of Social Justice has also formulated a new comprehensive scheme called 'Sakalyam' for imparting vocational training to transgender persons. The scheme aims to create employment opportunities for the deprived community through skill development. The scheme aims to create transgender inclusive work environments and support transgender persons to be self-reliant.

Self Employment Assistance Scheme

The Social Justice Department along with Kerala State Women's Development Corporation (KSWDC) provides financial assistance for transgender persons to help them launch self-employment ventures. KSWDC provides loans of up to Rs. 3 lakh to transgender persons for starting the self-employment initiatives.

Marriage Assistance for Legally Married Transgender Couples

The Special Marriage Act does not cover transgender individuals who are legally married after sex change surgery. Hence, the Social Justice Department has introduced a new scheme that provides marriage assistance for legally married transgender couples who have undergone Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS). The amount for marriage assistance has been fixed at Rs. 30,000/-.

Financial Aid for Gender Affirmation Surgery

Social Justice Department has formulated a scheme which provides financial assistance to transgender persons undergoing gender affirmation (aka sex reassignment or SRS) surgery. The maximum amount of financial assistance is up to Rs. 2 lakh.

Financial Aid for further treatment

Transgender persons who have undergone the aforementioned surgery have to continue proper medication throughout the recovery period. An amount of Rs. 3,000/- is provided as financial assistance by Social Justice Department for 12 months from the date of the surgery.

The government has taken several measures to uplift the dignity of transgender persons and make sure they are provided with their rightful space in society. The application forms used for various purposes in all departments of the state government have been revised to include transgender as a gender identity option. Now, all the government application forms include woman, man, transgender, transwoman, transman options.

The transgender policy of the Government of Kerala has been hailed for providing support to trans persons in employment, education, housing, health etc. Let's bequeath a society that sets aside all differences to oblivion and honours every individual for their true self.





JOMON P
Journalism Student, University of Kerala

THE NON- 'TRANS'IENT #PRIDE



The winds of change that we are witnessing in Kerala can be attributed to the fact that there is a paradigm shift in the perspective of society towards the transgender community. Though there are miles to go, for ensuring complete equality and justice for the transgender community, a sense of hope and optimism is on the horizon.

Kerala has been at the forefront when it comes to implementing policies and ensuring equal rights for the LGBTQIA+ community. These policies have ultimately helped the marginalized, to overcome the odds and come forward with their heads held high. It is quite an impressive feat to bring out new strategies to elevate the status of Transgender people in the state. Being the first state to implement the first-ever Transgender policy in 2015, Free sex-reassignment surgery, the first-ever beauty pageant for Trans-women, A pension plan for transgender people, a Justice board for the welfare of transgender people, etc were few of the many revolutionary achievements brought forward by the state.

It has been almost 7 years since the policy was implemented and a lot has changed and been achieved. Though there are miles to go, for ensuring complete equality and justice for the transgender community, a sense of hope and optimism is on the horizon. Kerala can further narrow the discrimination by continuing its implementation of inclusive policies which ultimately aim for equal opportunity for this Transgender people. The Social justice Department's "Mazhavillu" Umbrella scheme has implemented many schemes to support the community and has been actively promoting their growth and welfare. All these policies, schemes, and initiatives have helped many transgender persons from the state become the face of various inspiring success stories within the country.

Prides of Kerala

'Lead'ing the way

Indian cinema isn't much inclusive when it comes to Transgender actors. They are marginalized in the industry and are often portrayed stereotypically with little or no prominence. However, it all changed, and history was made, when Anjali Ameer, a transgender played the lead role in the movie "Peranbu". The movie brought her national recognition and many awards for her titular protagonist role. She was a household name when selected as a reality show contestant, which further catapulted her into fame. She was proud to represent the transgender community in the mainstream media and dedicated her success to the community.

Albeit, among all the fame and glory that Anjali has achieved, there was always a period of hardships and struggles in the past. Anjali wanted to transform herself into the woman she always was, but her family and the society that she lived in were against it. So, she left her home when she wanted to fully embrace the femininity in her. She went to Coimbatore and Bangalore in pursuit of her passion for becoming a model and in turn an actor. She was

featured on the cover of several popular magazines before finally getting noticed by Mammootty who suggested her for the role. Anjali's life is an inspiration to those who are in search of the silver lining, that glimmer of hope against all the hardships of life.

Touch of Elegance

A talent with a mix of beauty and determination, this is what we strike in our mind at the glance of Seema Vineeth. An Actor, model, make-up artist, and transgender activist are a few of the many titles under her name. She is an aspiring talent who has made her mark in various fields. Without a doubt, she is a pride of, not only the Transgender community but the entire of Kerala. She made her mini-screen debut with the hit comedy show on a Channel. The journey from Vineeth, a man, to Seema the woman she's now become, was taxing. Nonetheless, she overcame all the odds and is now living proudly as a working woman and an inspiration to many.



Seema Vineeth

Conquering the Corporate Sphere

Finding one's footing in the corporate world is a hard nut to crack, especially for women. This is even more demanding when it comes to trans persons. However, in a revolutionary turn, the world came to know about Zara Sheikha, the first transgender to work in a Multi-National Company (MNC) which is based outside Kerala. Zara works as an HR Consultant at UST Global and has many other achievements and recognitions under her belt. She is also a trained classical dancer and runner-up in several beauty pageants. Zara's story wasn't any different from others in her community. She too had to overcome immense struggles and hardships from her family and society as well. She had to hide her identity in front of the world to follow her passion and thereby conquer her fears. She did several jobs in Chennai and Abu Dhabi at the HR department and worked as a Quality Analyst before being hired at UST Global.



Anjali Ameer

All these policies, schemes, and initiatives have helped many transgender persons from the state become the face of various inspiring success stories within the country.



Zara Sheikha

To Learn and To Serve

Nadira Mehrin may seem like an ordinary student but in fact, she created history by being the first trans person to be elected as the vice president of the All India Students Federation (AISF). She was also the first trans-woman student at Kerala University. She is pursuing her second Post Graduation at Kalady University in M.A Theatre after completing her PG in Political Science at University College, Thiruvananthapuram, where her native place is. This also marked the first trans person in Kerala to have two master's degrees. She is also an activist, model, and actress, who recently starred in Jeo Baby's movie, Freedom Fight, in which she played the role of a transgender person. Nadira feels that nobody should go through the struggles and hardships that she had faced. She fought her way through the marginalized and ostracized views of society. She wishes for trans students to be given reservations in professional colleges and PSC which would help those who are struggling with various personal battles. Nadira wants to get a Ph.D. in a respective field and wishes to be active in politics, and dreams to become an MP (Member of Parliament), working for the betterment of the Trans community.



Nadira Mehrin

Winning hearts across the globe

Sruthy Sithara etched her name in the history books when she represented India and won the title of Miss Trans Global 2021. She is the first Indian to win the title in the history of the pageant, which was started to raise awareness of LGBTQIA+ issues around the world. Sruthi had a humble beginning just like everyone. She came across her effeminate traits when she was an adult and had a revelation about the transgender community through her interactions with them at Kochi, which prompted her transition to a Trans-woman. She worked as a project assistant in the transgender cell of the Social Justice department of the Kerala government and was involved with various activities and initiatives of the state, of which she was very much appreciative and proud.



Sruthy Sithara

The winds of change that we are witnessing in Kerala can be attributed to the fact that there is a paradigm shift in the perspective of society towards a transgender and his/her community. This is a prerequisite for embracing the liberal and Avant-garde advance towards the once ostracized and downtrodden transgender community in India. The plethora of initiatives and programmes being implemented by the government of Kerala should be a framework for national change. Gender is comprehended as a spectrum in the new paradigm. There should be a solution to the many problems of Transgender persons which includes fear, trauma, pain, etc. These problems can be eliminated by treating Transgender persons as part of society and having an inclusive attitude in all aspects of the public sphere.

Judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India on 15 April 2014

"Seldom, our society realizes or cares to realize the trauma, agony and pain which the members of Transgender community undergo, nor appreciates the innate feelings of the members of the Transgender community, especially of those whose mind and body disown their biological sex. Our society often ridicules and abuses the Transgender community and in public places like railway stations, bus stands, schools, workplaces, malls, theatres, hospitals, they are side-lined and treated as untouchables, forgetting the fact that the moral failure lies in the society's unwillingness to contain or embrace different gender identities and expressions, a mindset which we have to change."



DR. PRIYA V.S BAMS, MD

(First Transgender practicing Doctor from the state of Kerala), Consultant Ayurvedic Physician, Sitaram Ayurvedic Speciality Hospital, Thrissur

TRANSGENDER HEALTH CARE CHALLENGES



Dr. Priya V.S says that individuals who are belonging to the transgender spectrum are diverse from each other. The gender and sexuality of every individual are different and diverse. Transition is a very complex protocol that involves several procedures, therapies, surgeries, and treatments and is really time-consuming.

Transgenders are the most vulnerable community in a society like ours. They face challenges in almost every aspect of life, particularly regarding health care. People who decide to go for hormonal and surgical transitions face even more hardships. Psychiatric assessment is of utmost importance at the very beginning of the transition. Perhaps, it's very important that it decides whether the person requires transition itself. But unfortunately, it is given the least priority among both community members and healthcare professionals.



Determination, thy name is Priya!

The transition of Dr. Priya V.S is a bright and shining example that spreads rays of hope and confidence to society. The story of Dr. Priya V.S, Kerala's first transgender doctor is a beacon of hope and possibility. After school, she went on to join the Vaidyaratnam Ayurveda College, Ollur, Thrissur in 2009 where she completed her Bachelor of Ayurveda, Medicine and Surgery (BAMS) She later pursued Medicine Doctor (MD) in Mangaluru. Once this was over, she got an opportunity to work as a guest lecturer at Government Ayurveda Medical College, Tripunithura, and Government Ayurveda College, Kannur. Currently, she is working as a Consultant Ayurvedic Physician, at Sitaram Ayurvedic Speciality Hospital, Thrissur. She broke the stereotypical mould and now living her life on her own terms. With her parent's immense support she confidently stepped into her real identity.

Transgender is a basic term that is used to denote a diversity in the gender spectrum that signifies a variation in the psychological gender and biological sex. It's just diversity and not any aberration. Individuals who are belonging to the transgender spectrum are diverse from each other. The gender and sexuality of every individual are different and diverse. And hence the procedures involved in transition should be very much personalized to cater to the requirements of each and every individual.

It is a great concern that people who undergo hormone replacement therapy are already under constant mood swings. Add-on stress in this regard contributes to the increase in the trans suicide rates in our society.

The gender and sexuality of every individual are different and diverse. And hence the procedures involved in transition should be very much personalized to cater to the requirements of each and every individual.

Transition is a very complex protocol that involves several procedures, therapies, surgeries, and treatments and is really time-consuming. People who impulsively react without any proper research and confirmations might end up in wrong decisions. Most of the institutions and hospitals providing facilities for transition therapies and surgeries will have a generalised protocol. Hence individuals approaching these institutions will be treated alike, neglecting their personal concerns and situations.

Another issue regarding transgender healthcare is regarding the lack of knowledge and expertise among the medical fraternity. I, myself, being a transsexual woman had experienced several times insecure feelings, whenever seeking medical support for emergency health issues.

Conducting awareness programs and sensitising society is definitely the need of the hour. It should get more popularity and reach every layer of society.

Changes are definitely happening in our society but at a very slow pace. Let us hope this pace would make a decent leap in the coming years making awareness acceptance and survival a reality for this helpless community



ANCHITHA A
Assistant Editor, I&PRD

“THE GOVERNMENT OF KERALA IS PROVIDING EXTENSIVE SUPPORT AND MORE CHANGES ARE YET TO COME IN OUR SOCIETY”

DR. A.K JAYASREE



Dr. A.K Jayasree, Professor of Community Medicine Govt. Medical College Kannur, in an exclusive Interview with Kerala Calling, points out that change in the attitude of society is needed for the betterment of the life of transgender people. She speaks to Kerala Calling about the need for awareness programs, the welfare of transgender people, changes in the perception of society, etc.

Gender is a social construction where responsibilities are assigned by society. How far do you think that Kerala society is realizing the idea of gender identity in the case of transgender people?

Historically gender is constructed through stereotypes as per the social understanding of masculinity and femininity. It is based on sex which is biological, but the idea of womanhood and manhood is constructed culturally. So, it varies across societies and periods. In patriarchal societies, sex and gender are based on binaries ie. Male and female. Gender is something that society expects from males and females in the binary concept. This may be according to the need of the society where the reproductive labour of women is appropriated. Based on these expectations stereotypical

ideas like men are physically strong, mentally wise, and are breadwinners of the family are accepted. According to this, women are weak and only fit for childbearing. Society tends to live according to these preconceived notions.

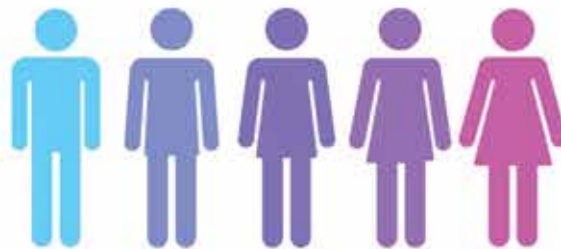
Now the binary paradigm is questioned by diverse gender and sexuality identities like transgender persons. Transgender people are those who identify their gender identity as opposed to what is assigned at birth. A male-assigned person could be a male to a female transgender person and a female-assigned person could be a female to male transgender person. Gender is understood as a spectrum in the new paradigm. Similarly, there are not only two sexes, as marked in the body externally. Body characteristics at birth show diversity at birth, beyond the binary of male and female. There are intersexed people who also place sex in a spectrum perspective. Our society is not sensitized to these issues. There is no gender training in school curricula. So, people follow what they understand

through our conventional wisdom. There is an effort from the government to conduct awareness programs for different sections of society on these aspects after the transgender policy (2015), Kerala state.

Visibility and activities of Queer organizations also take part in changing the old concept of gender and making society understand transgender identities and various gender and sexuality identities. Queer pride marches and programs organized by communities also penetrate society and the perspective has been changing, though slowly. We cannot impose gender on others. It is the onus of each individual to determine their gender identity. One cannot decide the gender of an individual based on their voice, hairstyle, dressing style, etc. One's own gender identity should be recognized by themselves. There is transphobia prevalent in our society, so that transgender persons are stigmatized and discriminated in all institutions of society including their own families.

Understanding gender identity by all, and overcoming these challenges will help to cater to all types of genders in our society from a rights perspective.

How do you think that the social and public spheres should deal with those who face gender identity crises?



may result in an identity crisis and gender dysphoria. In schools also they may face problems if teachers and other students do not have a proper understanding. They are deprived of an appropriate support system. Psychologists, counselors, and other mental health professionals also must be trained in gender and sexuality so that they can give proper support to transgender persons. Previously, transgender identity was considered a problem in medical practice. But it is no more considered as a problem, but accepted as transgender people. Since it is not included in the curriculum, even professionals may have outdated ideas about this. So, compulsory training should be given to teachers, health care providers, and various sections of people in society. It is seen that conversion therapy is given by some institutions and individuals. It is banned by professional organizations, but the practice is going on which is detrimental. Gender Affirmative procedure

is accepted internationally now and there should be a protocol based on this, endorsed by the government.

A change in the attitude of people is visible in our society after NALSA judgment in 2014 and the subsequent Kerala Transgender policy. Even though diverse cultural groups like Hijra existed in India, no legal rights were given to them. NALSA judgment stated that transgender people should be treated as marginalized sections and welfare

We cannot impose gender on others. It is the onus of each individual to determine their gender identity. One cannot decide the gender of an individual based on their voice, hairstyle, dressing style, etc. One's own gender identity should be recognized by themselves.

Society accepts only the binaries, i.e men and women. Transgender people are not recognized by society as people having equal rights as men and women. If persons identify themselves as belonging to another gender that is not assigned during birth, they should be accepted with the identity felt by them. They experience conflict during childhood and adolescent period because family members and other people in society do not accept it. This

schemes should be planned for them by the state. Society became aware of their rights only after this. Change in the attitude of society is needed for the betterment of the life of transgender people. Awareness programs should be continued till the end of any kind of discrimination. They can be given needed psychological support and therapy, as any other individual following the protocol and without any discrimination.

The state of Kerala is a pioneer in transgender rights and trying to establish right equality and perception. How do you see the support of the government of Kerala?

Following the NALSA judgment of 2014, the Government of Kerala has established a policy for transgender people. Even though states like Tamil Nadu have proposed some transgender welfare schemes before, it is the first of its kind in India that a state has enacted a policy for transgender people. Before implementing the policy, the Kerala government conducted a detailed study on the condition of transgender people, and based on that study report, the policy has been set up. The study threw light on the discrimination and trauma faced by transgender people and many of them could not even complete their primary education. 50-60% of transgender people were dropouts. Similarly, they have to face situations like unemployment, abuse, and discrimination from institutions including healthcare institutions. For this reason, they have to depend on other states for health services. The policy has been formulated by considering these factors with the idea to bring them to the mainstream. The policy essentially states that there should be no discrimination against transgender persons and people from all walks of life should be made aware of this. Transgender Welfare Board was formed by including representatives of transgender people at the state level. Along with that Transgender cells



are also formed. Both these come under the Social Justice Department. The responsibilities for the welfare of the transgender community have been taken up by the state government. Issuing Identity Card is of prime importance. The distribution of identity cards should not be based on the surgery but should rather be based on their felt gender identity. Continuing literacy Programs have been started by the government for those who wish to continue their education. The government has implemented various schemes for the welfare of transgender communities. The government had given a helping hand to Adam Harry to become India's first transgender pilot by bearing his pilot

of selected link workers from the community. A committee has been set up by the government in order to ratify the protocol for conducting surgery and health care services for transgender people. But its activities have yet to start.



training fees. But everyone in the community is not aware of the welfare programs and due to this, the majority have been keeping themselves silent. When compared to the past days, discrimination against transgender people in hospitals and health centers has decreased in the present situation. However, it remains to a certain extent. They are prone to uncomfortable gaze, eve-teasing, and abuse in society. Even though government reimburses money to people who undertake sex reassignment surgery in private health institutions, the community needs services from trained doctors and health professionals in the government sector to avail protocol-based Gender Affirmative Therapy and other health care services, which is lacking now. The government should take initiative in this and should bring protocols for health care so that they can get proper follow-up and post-surgical care. Transgender health care should be integrated with primary, secondary, and tertiary health care. Mental health care also is important for which training the professionals and a friendly atmosphere in the institutions are required. As part of Kerala National Health Mission, initiatives have been taken to transform the major hospitals into Queer-friendly ones in four districts and to give proper training for health workers with the support

There are significant transformations in the perception where we can see drastic changes in the acceptance of the transgender community positively. How do you feel about that? How can we bring them to the mainstream?

There have been many changes occurred in Kerala society, especially after the implementation of the new transgender policy and NALSA judgment. Transgender people began to come to the forefront, made themselves visible, and became articulate. A paradigm shift took place in society because of the legal sanction. Drastic changes are visible among youngsters. The Queer pride programs, Mazhvil campuses, etc. are conducted in arts and science colleges. Queer Pride March was launched in Kerala in 2010 and gained wide acceptance. It witnessed the participation of queer people and many other individuals. We can see positive changes among students also. But transgender communities are not completely accepted by the whole society. They still face people's suspicious gaze, abuse, and stigma in public transport, health centers, public institutions, etc. The families pressurise transgender children for Conversion Therapy which is absolutely unethical. This practice clearly indicates that a large section of society is not ready to accept transgender identity. On the other hand, we can see a few transgender marriages taking place in our society with the participation of their family members. Transgender people are raising their voices through media and publishing their autobiographies confidently these days. There are films and other media presentations representing their life. This helped society to change its perspective in a positive way. But more changes in perception are need of the hour. Gender awareness can be included in academic curricula also. The changes and transformative gender culture are being welcomed by society, though at a slow pace. The government of Kerala is providing extensive support and more changes are yet come to come in our society.



MALASREE V R
Journalism Student
Central University of Karnataka

'WE ARE AMONG US'

REVIVAL THROUGH ART

The trans-artistic pride of Kerala enhances the beauty of the yard of the most prestigious university in the state and the elegance of the capital city. The two-day transgender art festival named Varnapakittu with the slogan We Are Among Us was held in the capital city to give pride to Kerala, the state that implemented the first transgender policy in India.

The fete was organized by Social Justice Department. The cultural fest was heralded with a procession that was flagged off on the premises of the museum and started with a flash mob that proceeded to University College. The inaugural light of the transgender cultural festival was lit by Dr. R Bindhu, Minister for Social and Higher Education, at the Ayyankali Hall. M B Rajesh, Minister for Local Self-Governments and Excise, was the chief guest of the function presided over by V Sivankutty, Minister for General Education and Labour.

In the inaugural ceremony, awards were distributed by Minister R Bindhu, to eight transgender talents, who have demonstrated excellence in the fields of arts, sports, education, social work, and entrepreneurship in society. The award consisted of 10,000 rupees and a citation. The awards for contributions to Social Services were won by Sruthy Sitara from Kottayam and Suku from Trivandrum. Dr. Priya V S from Thrissur and Anand C Rajappan (Chinju Aswathy) from Ernakulam won the award for the



In the inaugural ceremony, awards were distributed by Minister Dr. R Bindu, to eight transgender talents, who have demonstrated excellence in the fields of arts, sports, education, social work, and entrepreneurship in society.



endowments in the Educational sector, Praveen Nath from Palakkad and Sanjana Chandran from Kozhikode attained the award for his benefices in the field of arts and sports. Seema Vineeth from Trivandrum and Varsha Nandini from Kozhikode won the prize for entrepreneurs. The festival was held in four venues, one was in Ayyankali Hall and the other three were in University College. More than 200 contestants from different districts vied for the honours for the different competitions. Thiruvananthapuram district won the overall title again by scoring the greatest number of points.

The department of Social Justice organizes an art festival every year since 2019 to nurture the creativity and artistic flair of transgender people. It helps in bringing them into

the limelight of society. The state government envisaged a wide range of programs with making the youth and students part of the art festival. R.Bindu, Minister for Higher Education and Social Justice, during the inaugural ceremony, announced a scheme to provide an opportunity for transgender persons to showcase their creative talents and arts in the tourism sector.

History shows that art is a powerful weapon that is capable to make a revolution. Art has the power to change the general misconceptions of society and bring the marginalised to the forefront. The organization of an art fest is an ideal concept that gives wings to transgender people to fly high. Art is also a source of income which will

The cultural fest was heralded with a procession that was flagged off on the premises of the museum and started with a flash mob that proceeded to University College.



help a prestigious and harmonious livelihood. Nowadays we can see a transition in the trans community that brings them to the forefront of society from a discriminated and oppressed state.

Pablo Picasso once said; "Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life." Art is something that rejuvenates the mind that is tired of the so-called contemporary social conditions. Setting up cultural fests is really helpful in creating a new wake in their everyday life. It creates recognition among them regarding their values and rights. The aim of such schemes is to motivate them to participate more in this democratic decision-making system of our country and make aware them of their rights as citizens.

There is still a vast majority of the trans community who are keeping their identity secret and living in silence. Such art and cultural fests are giving them to build up the courage for coming forefront and live their own life happily. Unlike other states of India, Kerala put forward many efforts in finding trans people and making so many schemes for resurrecting them. A transgender festival such as Varnappakittu is one of many examples of such a fest. Education and employment are fine ways to empower a marginalized community. Kerala provides a lot of opportunities and schemes for educating and keeping their jobs secured. There is no doubt that the announcement of new job opportunities for transgender artists in the tourism sector will become a new beam of light in the life of transgender people.



on cloud nine

Participants of Varnapakittu with Minister for Social Justice Dr. R. Bindu





PRAVEEN NATH
Advocacy Coordinator,
Sahayatrika, and
Trans Man Bodybuilder



DEEPA VASUDEVAN
(Translation)
Managing Trustee, Sahayatrika

TRANSGRESSING GENDER CONCEPTS



In accordance with 20-02-2018 GO (Rt) 86/2018/SJD, a Transgender Cell was formed under the Social Justice Directorate. The main objective of Transgender Cell is to assist and support the functioning of State Transgender Justice Board and District Transgender Justice Committees. The members of the transgender cell are from the community. Currently there are three posts namely Project Officer, Project Assistants and Office Assistant.

In the NALSA Judgement of April 15, 2014, the Honorable Supreme Court of India upheld the rights of transgender people to equality and equal protection under Article 14, 15, and 16 of the Constitution prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity. NALSA judgment was a milestone

in Indian history, and the Kerala Transgender Policy was based on its foundation.

The main rights recognized in the policy are:

1. Right to dignity & a life without freedom from violence
2. Right to expression
3. Right to Equality
4. Equal voice participation in development
5. Right to employment
6. Right to equal access of education service
7. Right to equal access to health service.

As a marginalized section, it is essential that transgender rights are also protected. Therefore, there are today many services and schemes under the auspices of the Kerala Department of Social Justice. The projects implemented by the Department are listed below:

1. Sakalyam project for transgender individuals.
2. Karuthal project for trans individuals.
3. Varnam- Distance Education Financial Assistance Scheme for Transgender Students.
4. Saphalam project to teach professional courses to transgender students.
5. Self-Employment Financing
6. Samanyaya Continuing Education Scheme.
7. Marriage subsidy for transgender persons.
8. Funding Scheme for Gender Affirming Surgery for Transgender Persons
9. Continuing Care Financing Scheme.
10. Hostel for transgender persons / Accommodation Financial Assistance Scheme
11. Sewing Machine Distribution Self Employment Project.
12. 24x7 Transgender Helpline
13. Skill Vocational Training Scheme.
14. Scholarship Financial Assistance Scheme
15. Distribution of Identity Cards (Under Kerala government & National government)
16. Formation of Transgender Cell

Kerala was the first state in India to implement a transgender policy, in 2015. The Social Justice Department in the state implemented many transgender- friendly welfare schemes with the intention of bringing the trans community into the mainstream and upholding their rights.

All these programs have been implemented on a project basis. Besides these, shelter homes have been run in Kerala for trans men and trans women communities. The shelters provide up to three months food and accommodation. The shelters are accessible for trans people who are recovering from surgery or for those who have come to the shelter in crisis.

Apart from this, as part of the Transgender Policy implemented by the Social Justice Department, a state-wide Transgender Art Festival was organized for the first time in 2018 to nurture the creativity and artistic flair of transgender individuals. Awards and cash awards are given to the transgender participants, giving them the recognition they deserve.

Within the last five years the trans community's way of life has changed. Many changes have taken place with the support of the Kerala government. And the visibility of

trans men is beginning to be addressed more. Although discrimination and marginalization has not been completely eradicated, transgender community individuals who have proved their talents in many fields have been recognized in the society today. And although interventions and implementations can be very slow, solutions are being found. In today's society there is a situation where one can live with self-respect.

In spite of this progress, much more work needs to be done. And there are things still to be addressed.

(Praveen Nath is a queer activist, the transgender Advocacy Coordinator for Sahayatrika, and Kerala's first transgender body builder. He won the category of Mr. Kerala in 2021 [special category] and is currently preparing for the Mr. India competition in Mumbai.)



DR. C. RAMAKRISHNAN
Education Expert

Equitable, Quality School Education

Exploring Pathways

Kerala has achieved universal access and retention in the educational sector. Almost all children of the school going age are enrolled in class one and almost all are reaching up to 12th standard. In other words, Kerala has already addressed the first generation issues.

The progressive movements all over the world consider equitable, quality education as a precondition for Sustainable Development. Education is viewed as a fundamental human right and a rights-based approach to education is strongly endorsed world over. Therefore, equitable participation in quality education especially by children must be at the centre of all planning and implementation process regarding education. A commitment to equity requires measures designed to ensure that the most marginalized children have access to education of the same quality.

Quality education provides people with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and creativity needed to solve problems locally and globally, and actively contributes to the sustainable and democratic development of societies. It also enable students to inculcate constitutional and democratic values and civic sense. Thus, our understanding regarding quality education must go beyond narrow learning outcomes. While literacy and numeracy are necessary and are part of the broader set of abilities that a quality education offers, they are far from sufficient. Limiting the outcomes of education to one or two easily measurable indicators may encourage teachers to teach to the test and restricts the transformative role and potential of education.

Now we have to address the second generation issues basically that of equity and quality. For that we have to address various aspects. Kerala is one among the states that stand in the top position in academic matters. We have to move forward or excel in the academic front to the extent possible by utilizing all favorable factors. The school system has to ensure proper confidence, competence, ability or skill to students who are moving towards higher education or to actual life or livelihood while completing 12 years of schooling.

Revamping the school curriculum and related materials to incorporate the latest trends of knowledge and pedagogy keeping in view a knowledge society

Providing age appropriate work integrated education so as to enable students to ave positive attitude and enhanced capability

Equipping teachers to cope up with the modern development in the world of knowledge and pedagogy

Fixing learning attributes at each stage so as to ensure quality aspects and ensure academic monitoring

Equipping the supporting structures and human resource within the system to address the emerging academic challenges

Strengthening the school resource group so as to ensure the development of proper action plans according to the school level master plan

Evolving a mechanism for proper monitoring,

Ensuring proper personal attention to each child

Strengthening the mentoring programme

Enhancing professionalism in teachers through a time bound teacher transformation programmes

There is much more to learn from Finland and other countries. The challenge of our exploration is how to conceive the system dynamics and experiences of each country and adapt or adopt these experiences suitable for Kerala's socio-cultural context.

We have to evolve a methodology in utilizing the modern technology possibilities in the classroom learning process and developing digital content. Proper methodology has to be developed for comprehensive programme planning system by integrating the financial resources available within the system. We have to address the enhancement of professionalism in teachers.

Through these, we have to move forward to achieve the basic objective of school education- ensuring equitable and quality education for all children, enabling them to actively and creatively engage in the national development process by upholding the constitutional values, by linking all possible agencies and resources within and out of the education department.

Through that we have to create a systemic environment to enable all students to achieve the objectives put forward by the curriculum, by making use of the full potential of the multiple agencies within the department and of teachers and other supporting structures and also by making use of the judicious and effective use of educational technology including digital technology.

To address the above said objectives the Government of Kerala invested huge amount for upgrading the infrastructure, converting classrooms to technology friendly, academic interventions and for ensuring creative social participation as part of Education mission.

It is high time to formulate pathways for ensuring equitable quality education to all children. This can be achieved by

These transformations are important in the wake of Kerala envisaging a knowledge society and also envisioning a society strengthening the local economy. Changes are needed in the school curriculum accordingly. Short term and long term programme for preparing the society to cope up with the curriculum changes shall be developed.

For having a leap forward we have to look at the experiences of educationally developed countries specially that of Finland, Singapore, Japan, UK etc. Finland is providing top priority for teacher professional development. They ensure quality teachers through an efficient Teacher recruitment process. They believe "There's no word for accountability in Finnish... Accountability is something that is left when responsibility has been subtracted." Teaching programs are the most rigorous.

Finland has no standardized tests. Their only exception is something called the National Matriculation Exam, which is a voluntary test for students at the end of an upper-secondary school. All children throughout Finland are graded on an individualized basis and grading system set by their teacher. While most countries see the educational system as one big competition, the Finnish believe that "real winners do not compete".

There is much more to learn from Finland and other countries. The challenge of our exploration is how to conceive the system dynamics and experiences of each country and adapt or adopt these experiences suitable for Kerala's socio-cultural context.



ARATHY K R
Assistant Information Officer, I&PRD

‘The model of
child-friendly
panchayats in Kerala is highly
commendable.’

UNICEF India Chief



How can you assert the importance of family in the development of children and why the trend of deinstitutionalisation is catching up across the world?

A loving and caring family is the best place for a child to grow up in. All children need to grow up in a nurturing family environment for their emotional, social, physical and cognitive well-being. Children growing up without family care demonstrate diminished cognitive and intellectual performance. Based on several studies conducted globally, it is seen that these children may also face challenges in interpersonal and lasting relationships and difficulties in adjusting to the social environment. A recent study from the Lancet Group Commission on Institutionalisation and Deinstitutionalisation of Children, for example, found that 80% of institutionalized children were below the mean of comparison groups in physical and cognitive development. Institutionalised children are at greater risk of attachment problems and are associated with long-term mental health problems. Rapid improvements are seen when children are removed from institutions and placed in family environments. The realisation of the damages of institutionalisation led the UN General Assembly to adopt a unanimous resolution that states very clearly, that all efforts should be made to ensure that children grow in a family environment. This is also UNICEF's commitment.

The right of a child to be raised in a family environment has been recognised by the United Nations Organization. The physical, neurobiological, psychological, and mental health costs of institutionalisation of child care are inexplicable.

In an exclusive interview with Arathy K.R, AIO, I&PRD for Kerala Calling, UNICEF India Chief of Child Protection Ms. Soledad Herrero says that the trend of deinstitutionalisation is catching up across the world. She had recently visited Kerala for a workshop on 'Deinstitutionalisation and family-based alternative care'.

Excerpts from the interview

What are the different avenues available for the deinstitutionalisation of child care?

Deinstitutionalisation can be accomplished in several ways. The first way is to support biological families as studies show that many children in institutions have one or even both parents. These families can be supported through financial means and linkages with essential care and support services to be able to take care of their children, such as psychosocial support, skill development, access to education etc. This will help in the prevention of family separation. Kinship Care is critical as in the absence of biological parents, extended family members like grandparents, uncles, aunts, or cousins can be supported to take care of children, instead of putting them in institutional care. Lastly by promoting Foster Care children can be placed in families that are not biologically related to them, but are willing and capable to take care of children whose biological families are not in a position to care for them.

Can you elaborate on the measures taken by UNICEF to promote the deinstitutionalisation of child care?

UNICEF builds on learnings from various examples from across the world on the transition process of children from institutions to family-based care. UNICEF also undertakes capacity enhancement of child protection functionaries on family-based alternative care and case management. We provide technical support to state governments to develop policies, guidelines, and action plans on family-based alternative care, and lastly, we support models of family-based alternative care that can be scaled up and replicated.

Where does India stand in comparison to the global practices of deinstitutionalisation?

India's policy and laws have emphasized the importance of children growing up in families or family-like care. There is a strong policy framework that emphasizes the importance of ensuring that children stay with their families. The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015 provides the overall framework for the care of children in India. Mission Vatsalya, the centrally sponsored scheme of the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) promotes family-based non-institutional care of children in difficult circumstances based on the principle of institutionalisation of children as a measure of last resort.

We must tread the path of deinstitutionalisation very carefully so as to safeguard the best interests of the child. What are the safety checks that can be incorporated to ensure that the child will be safer back at home or in foster care?

Safety is of utmost priority and an essential parameter to define what is in the best interest of the child. These should apply to both children in family-based care, also in institutions. The safety checks that are used are detailed home study reports to assess the situation of the child's biological family. A strong case management system is required and institutions must have appropriate individual care plans for each child. The transition process must follow all due diligence to ensure that it is in the best interest of the child. Secondly, thorough checks of potential foster families to judge their capacity to take on foster children based on the government guidelines and set criteria of selection are very important. Lastly, regular monitoring after the child has been sent to his/her family or placed in foster care to ensure the safety and well-being of the child.

At present, in Kerala, 200 children are living in foster care. How can society play a part in the process of deinstitutionalisation?

The role of the community or society is very important and significant in the process of deinstitutionalisation and preventing re-institutionalisation. Families can come forward to provide homes for children without parental care, both in cases where they are, or are not, linked biologically to the children. The State has a detailed plan to support all those 200 children in foster and kinship programmes. With a help of local community networks and parenting clinics programmes, the state has been able to ensure quality assurance and prevent re-institutionalisation which is commendable.

The state has been proactive and taken concrete steps towards ensuring that families keep in mind the best interest of children. There is political commitment to this agenda, backed by strong administrative and technically well-designed programmes, coordinated by the nodal Department of Women and Child Development.



The State has a detailed plan to support all those 200 children in foster and kinship programmes. With a help of local community networks and parenting clinics programmes, the state has been able to ensure quality assurance and prevent re-institutionalisation which is commendable.



How productive was the two-day workshop on 'Deinstitutionalisation and family-based alternative care' organised by the Women and Child Department of Kerala recently?

The workshop provided a good opportunity to learn from experiences across the states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. During the event, Kerala and other States reviewed their current plans, had the opportunity for cross-fertilization, and reflected on what are the key bottle-necks to bring about a bold care reform that embraces models of family-based care and lives up to the principle of institutionalisation as a measure of last resort. The workshop helped to set clear targets and identified milestones and ways in which States can take forward this agenda.

What are your thoughts about Kerala's contribution to the field of family-based care, and more broadly child care and justice?

The State has been proactive and has taken concrete steps towards ensuring that families keep in mind the best interest of children. There is political commitment to this agenda, backed by strong administrative and technically well-designed programmes, coordinated by the nodal Department of Women and Child Development. This is also supported by funding allocation, and strong monitoring systems, which have yielded important results. Kerala has strong grass root structures, which are essential to building a robust child protection system that tries to avoid family separation in the first place because of poverty, deprivation or other vulnerability factors; and that more broadly puts prevention and the best interest of the child at the core of the system. The model of child-friendly panchayats in Kerala is highly commendable.



G K SURESH KUMAR
Managing Director, Clean Kerala Company

CLEAN KERALA COMPANY LIMITED

A UNIQUE INITIATIVE

Clean Kerala Company Limited (CKCL) has been formed under the Government of Kerala in the year 2012-13 with an authorised share capital of 10 crores with 26% of State Government Shares and 74% share of Urban Local bodies with the objective of ensuring hygiene management of the State through the adoption of innovative and scientific methods and proven technology, adhering to the concept of active participation of the Public and Private Sectors. The Company aims to ensure comprehensive management of all harmful rejections in the State thereby ensuring that the hygiene of the State is never compromised.

The Clean Kerala Company started its operations primarily through the first two projects-plastic waste collection and E-waste collection. Subsequently Clean Kerala Company Limited expanded its operations to establish plastic processing units such as sorting and segregation units etc. Consequently, the Company continued to augment the plastic and E-waste processing capacities along with other projects such as the supply of shredded plastics for polymerised road construction. Clean Kerala Company Limited, over the years, has been growing into an organization capable of dealing with most of the

waste generated in the State and has set up a state-wide presence and infrastructure systems working closely with Local bodies. The waste management ecosystem of the State consists of 1040 MCF (Material Collection Facility)s and 183 RRF (Resource Recovery Facility)s, employing close to 30,000 Harithakarma Sena members.

Since 2016 the Company's Performance has been showing an upward graph. The Company works in conjunction with Haritha Keralam Mission, and Suchitwa Mission under LSG

Department of Kerala. All the Local Self Government bodies act as a support system for the disposal of inorganic waste. Harithakarma Sena members collect inorganic waste from households at their doorstep, which is delivered by Ward level MCF. Harithakarma Sena is collecting waste such as plastic, paper, glass, E-waste, hazardous waste, battery, clothes etc from door to door as per the approved calendar given by the Company. Calendar-wise non organic waste is collected every month from households and institutions by Harithakarma Sena members. For this, houses and institutions pay user fees correctly.

Based on the waste collection calendar Harithakarma Sena members collect waste including plastic from the houses paper and plastic covers collected every month. Shoes, bags, thermocols are collected in the months of January, April, July and October. Glass Waste bottles and mirrors are collected in the month of February, May, August and November. Electronic waste including tube light CFL and battery is collected in the month of June and December. Drugs strips are collected in the month of January, March, June, September and December. Textile waste is collected from households in the month of April and September.



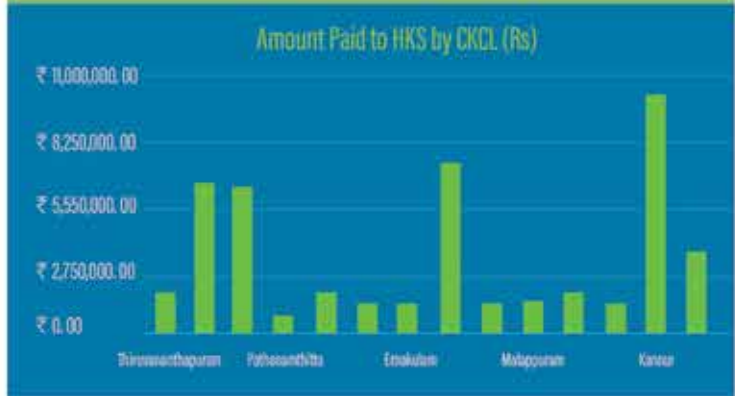
Statewide Inauguration of MCFs in Government Offices by former Minister for LSGD, MV Govindan Master

ENVIRONMENT

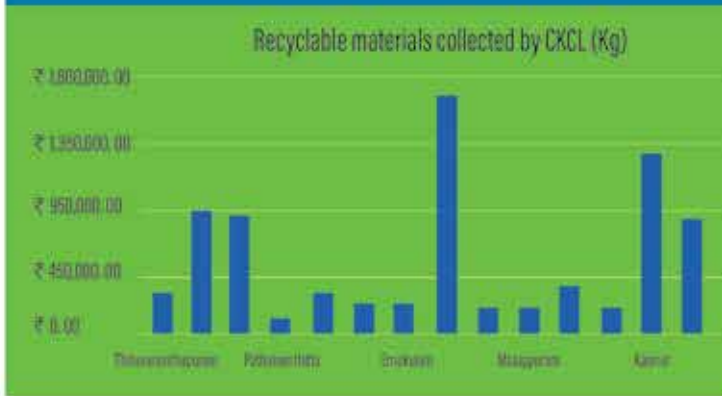
Each district is divided into four sectors and the Local Self Government bodies there appoint special duty officers of Clean Kerala Company Limited. Normally one week time is given for shifting of goods as per the calendar from Local Government bodies in each Sector. Clean Kerala Company removes the waste collected from the households by Haritha Karma Sena members as per the calendar from MCFs installed in Local bodies and sector-wise as per the district calendar.

Clean Kerala Company Limited has appointed resource persons, technical assistants, and district managers in each district to carry out this task efficiently. E-waste collection is a very important part of the Company's operations today. Clean Kerala Company Limited has been entrusted by the Kerala Government Institutions, Public sector Institutions, and other institutions in our State. We collect E-waste by paying a fixed amount fixed by the Government to these institutions. These are effectively passed on to agencies and are common to CKCLs operating profit. Haritha Karma Sena members are able to pay almost entirely for the plastic waste collected from the homes.

Graphical Representation of Amount paid to HKS by CKCL from 01.01.2021 to 15.09.2022 F



Graphical Representation of Quantity of materials Collected by CKCL from LSGs 01.01.2021 to 15.09.2022



friendly approach. A Conveyor belt, a bailing machine, and a weighing machine are required for the final sorting and storage. This can further help the work of Harithakarma Sena. It would be better if the Panchayat level MCF have a minimum of 1500 sq. feet area.

In all the 14 districts of Kerala, the process of collecting and disposing of inorganic waste materials is being carried out under the leadership of the District Managers of Clean Kerala Company Limited. There are also Technical Assistants and Resource Persons to assist the District Managers. The activities of each district are reviewed and action is taken under the leadership of the district level Co-ordination Committee. The Committee consists of District level officers of Suchitwa mission, Haritha Keralam Mission, Pollution Control Board, and District Managers Clean Kerala Company Limited, etc.

Handing out of Cheque by District Panchayat President, P Divya towards the Segregated Materials collected from HKS in Kannur



Clean Kerala Company Limited is adding to the waste management infrastructure of the State by setting up dry waste processing infrastructure ie District level sorting and segregation facilities, material collection facilities in Government office Complex and glass waste sorting units. We are now in the process of locating the necessary space in all 14 districts and making the integrated plastic waste recycling units operational with the help of the Government.

Ward-level MCF should have adequate facilities to carry out all the duties of segregation of materials. From there, it reaches the Panchayath level MCF further sorting and converting the Waste products into valuable goods. The sorted materials are baled and stored separately. It is handed over to Clean Kerala Company Limited and its price is paid to Harithakarma Sena. Non-reusable waste will be handed over to cement companies or scientific Landfills.

MCF should be built in a place with road facilities. Clean Kerala Company Limited will be the State level waste management company for the overall effective management and coordination of all activities beyond the MCF and Local body level, including Transportations, processing, and disposal of all types of sending wastes generated in the State, Marketing and Sales of recycled or reusable products. The construction of MCF must have a people-

It is fortunate that the construction work has already started in three Districts of the State.

We can achieve complete success only when people embrace the concept of "My Waste is My Responsibility" and adopt a culture of non-throw away and non-burning. The Company has taken concrete steps in ensuring comprehensive management of harmful rejections in the State in all walks of life. The Company has been successful in implementing various projects for the management of harmful rejections emanating from the State and for the enhancement of the beauty of the Urban Localities in the State.



DR. SHEEBA V T
HOD, PG& Research, Dept. of Economics,
NSS Hindu College, Changanacherry

THE VIOLENCE IN OUR BONES

Most people regard domestic violence as a family affair and one which has to be compromised on because the culprit is part of the family and in a majority of cases the sole breadwinner of the family.

One of the first incidents of domestic violence which shocked me was that of a housewife stabbed in the face by a drunken husband and the newspaper had a photograph of the woman with a knife piercing her face. It was almost 20 years ago and the photograph haunted me for a long time. The Protection of Women Against Domestic Violence Act had not been formulated then. Several incidents of violence are now reported and many others are hushed up or victims silenced by family members themselves.

The lockdown period saw a spike in domestic violence cases. The Covid pandemic has had social and economic impacts on all economies and people at large, but women in particular because of their exposure to abusive partners and limited access to services during the lockdown. Gender inequality and norms on the acceptability of violence against women are at the heart of the issue.. The irony is that women, especially from the low-income group often do not realise that it is a crime. Blows are believed to be a part of their destiny. Only the gravest of incidents make it to newspaper columns. For others, it is an age-old phenomenon- a silent saga of suffering and pain. Most women cling on to the relationship because they are anxious about what is ahead for them. Undoubtedly silent suffering is rooted in financial dependence.

Widespread and deeply ingrained in society, domestic violence assaults women physically, sexually, psychologically, financially and socially. Violence in India kills and disables as many women between the ages of 15 and 44 years as cancer and its toll on women's health surpasses that of traffic accidents and malaria combined. According to NCRB, domestic violence cases constituted 31.8% of the crimes against women in India in 2021. Patriarchal societies with socialized rigid gender roles are the prime reason for the gender imbalance in domestic violence. A woman faces cultural disarmament and is ill-equipped to face a violent partner. Socially deep-rooted, dominant cultural values and the shame of being identified as a victim prevent women from reporting the violence.

The cause and consequence of domestic violence is gender inequality. The Act takes care of the consequences of perpetrating the crime, but the root cause remains untouched and continues to prepare the ground for the crime. Gender inequality is the disease and domestic violence is just a major symptom. The social ingredients perpetrating the crime continue uninterrupted. Whereas the physical injuries leading to gynaecological problems or disabilities and depression and suicides can be accounted for, the mental trauma faced by victims and their children has a long-lasting impact and cannot be estimated

accurately. It plays havoc with the academic career limiting educational attainments and pushing them into poverty. What is most worrying about the crime is that trust in the institution of family is lost and interrupts the social order. Violence is the weapon of the vulgar. Much more than the immediate harm is the deeper impact on undermining women's security and self-confidence and the traumatic effect the violence has on children. It drains the children emotionally leaving them insecure and incapable in future life-the impacts are often imprinted on the minds casting a shadow on their psyche.

There are many theories which interpret the phenomenon of domestic violence. Social learning theory suggests that people learn from observing and modelling others' behaviour. Violence is a learned phenomenon and is transmitted from generation to generation in a cyclical manner. The culture of abuse persists. A socio-psychological perspective views domestic violence within a macro model of society where violence is seen as an extension of social factors. It examines the interaction of the individual with the social environment. The patterning of violence amongst adult children observing violence in their families of origin

(Kalmuss 1984) and the intergenerational transmission of family aggression (Cappell and Heiner 1990) is proof enough. Domestic violence and child abuse are directed by the principle of costs and benefits as per the Exchange theory. Abuse is resorted to when the rewards are greater than the costs. The private nature of the family, the reluctance of social institutions and agencies to intervene and the low risk of other interventions reduce the costs of abuse and violence. The most alluring reward is social control or power. Control theory states that threats, force, and violent behaviours are intended to condition the behaviour of less powerful members of the family. The use of drugs and liquor also contributes to crime. The fact is that a multiplicity of factors operate to perpetuate crime inside homes.

Home is the place where we belong, the safest haven, where we are the most secure, happy and contented-a place to nourish and cherish. Imagine the plight of the hapless victims who are hunted down inside homes by protectors who turn into executioners. We take pride in being the cradle of civilisation, and in the numerous achievements of development. Should we not be ashamed of our primitive attitudes- of the violence in our bones?





BIMAL SHIVAJI
Journalist

K-FON

to help speed up e-governance in Kerala

Kerala has been setting the benchmark for various development standards for the rest of India to follow. The State has been in the spotlight for development indicators, progress in the public health sector, cooperative sector, and people's initiatives like Literacy Mission and Kudumbashree. The State is now becoming one of the most favourable destinations in India and Asia for start-ups. In July 2022, the States' Startup Ranking, 2021, selected Kerala as the top performer for the third consecutive time. In another revolutionary move, to bridge the digital divide, the State has decided to make internet access a basic right to citizens and enable the state government's vision to provide free internet access to economically backward households.

“Kerala becomes the only State in the country with its own internet service. The Kerala Fiber Optic Network Ltd has received the ISP license from DoT. Now, our prestigious K-FON project can kick start its operations of providing internet as a basic right to our people”, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said in a tweet. The announcement followed the Department of Telecommunications' granting of an Internet Service Provider (ISP) license to the IT infrastructure project of the Kerala Fiber Optic Network Ltd, which aims to provide everyone in the state access to the internet. K-FON aims to create a core network infrastructure to provide free internet access to 20 lakh economically-backward households. The project also aims to connect all government offices, educational institutions, hospitals and partner with telecom service providers to augment their connectivity gap.

Akshaya project, set up in 2002 to address backwardness of Malappuram District in Kerala is the first e-Governance project in India and was instrumental in transforming the district into India's first e-literate district. With rising levels of e-literacy and availability of digital infrastructure, demand continues to grow for services that help citizens realize the potential of e-Governance. The state government responded by launching key e-Governance initiatives and by rolling out over 80 e-Governance applications for the people.

To help realize the potential of e-Governance, Kerala IT touches ordinary citizens with information, digital inclusion, and e-Governance systems and services. Information delivery takes place through knowledge dissemination centres, called “Akshaya Centres”, which are spread across the state and lie within easy reach of every household. The State Data Centres (SDCs), which form part of the core digital infrastructure, deliver e-Governance services.

Apart from reducing the digital gap, “K-FON will complement the existing telecom ecosystem in the state and will act as the perfect catalyst positioning Kerala as a Gigabit Economy”, the website noted. It is also said that TSPs/ISPs/Cable operators could leverage this network to provide affordable and better broadband connectivity to households. It is also expected to boost economic growth by supporting local small and medium-sized enterprises and businesses with digital infrastructure, as well as benefiting the IT and electronics industries. The government expects that K-FON will also play a significant role in sections such as delivering remote education, creating job opportunities, providing remote healthcare access, boosting infrastructure development, sharing information regarding e-governance and agriculture matters, as well as triggering innovations.

Additionally, as the net speeds necessary to catch up to 5G will likewise be much higher when it becomes popular in India, the authorities believe that K-FON will help the



All SDCs are connected to the Kerala State Wide Area Network (KSWAN), the network backbone that connects three Network Operating Centres (NOCs), 14 District Headquarters, 152 Block Headquarters, and 63 Mini Points of Presence (POPs). To support information delivery and interaction, the Citizens’ Call Centre functions as a single-window facility for providing assistance across government departments, organizations, projects, etc.

KFON will provide the necessary support to deploy e-Governance to further government departments. As part of the project, a pre-fabricated shelter housing communication equipment of KFON, known as PoP(Point of Presence), shall be placed at the premises of 378 KSEBL substations and the installation activities of the same has been started from September 2019.

state position itself to lead the race.“KFON will be able to connect to the nearly 8,000+ mobile towers in Kerala and significantly enhance the mobile call quality and also accelerate the 4G/5G transitions. Presently 80% of the towers are not fiberized and use radio, an issue for the 4G/5G rollout, which will also be solved by K-FON,” the website highlighted. For the ordinary citizens of Kerala, K-FON will speed up their application process for various schemes of the government as well as reduce their waiting period at Akshaya Centres. Students will be able to enhance their knowledge and speed up their projects for schools and colleges. Perhaps, this will provide them with the cutting-edge skills they always hoped for.

The Kerala State Electricity Board Limited, Bharat Electronics Limited, Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board, and KSITL are the stakeholders in this initiative.



RAMESH GOPALAKRISHNAN
Music Critic

SEAMLESS FUSION OF PERFORMANCE AND PUNDITRY

When Mavelikkara R. Prabhakara Varma (1928-2008) passed away at the age of 80, it inflicted an irreparable loss and marked the end of an era of pure South Indian classical music. His contributions to the field of Carnatic music as a singer, a teacher, and a scholar are inestimable, and his greatest specialty lay in a mature and seamless fusion of performance and punditry.



Born on 29 October 1928, Prabhakara Varma took his Ganabhooshanam degree from Swati Thirunal College of Music in Thiruvananthapuram before adding B. A. (Sanskrit) and M. A. (Music) degrees to his academic kitty. His mother was Chandraprabha Thampuratti, daughter of A. R. Rajaraja Varma who was famously known as "Kerala Panini". His father was Rama Varma, a member of the Kilimanoor kovilakam (palace). As Prabhakara Varma had contracted polio when he was in his mother's womb, his right leg remained weak throughout his life, but that disability was never an obstacle in his ardent pursuit of music. He joined Swati Thirunal College of Music as a teacher in 1957, and after completing 27 years of service, he retired in 1984 as Principal of RLV College of Music and Fine Arts, Thrippunithura.

Prabhakara Varma conducted countless recitals in India and abroad. He worked as a Visiting Professor at Louisiana College in 1992-94 and performed as a Top Grade artist at the All India Radio for more than 50 years. He also composed music for lyrics penned by Thulaseevanam R. Ramachandran Nair, the Malayalam poet, besides composing certain keerthanas of his own and setting them to music.

A true musician should have profound scholarship in music. His opinions contained a wealth of information that was difficult to comprehend completely and all at once – such was the uniqueness and profundity of the insights he had into the classical truths. His discoveries thus constitute a significant part of the history of our music.

Once, when he was asked to explain in detail the paths of growth traversed by South Indian classical music, he replied, "The growth and appreciation of music in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka were largely tradition-oriented. Libraries in Andhra Pradesh stock many authoritative books on music but the flowering of the musical genius of Tyagaraja, born into a Telugu brahmin household, took place in Tamil Nadu. Chennai is the headquarters of Carnatic music but the appellation "Grandsire of Carnatic Music" is reserved for Purandaradasa who was born in Karnataka. It was this great man who, living between the 14th and 15th centuries, systematized pedagogy of music (swaraavali, alankaram, geetham) that we follow even to this day. Kerala's contribution to the genre is unparalleled and unique in that it produced several prodigies in vocal as well as instrumental music".

One cannot but bow in reverence in front of this cornucopia of knowledge. Within a tiny scope of a few, crisp words, he encapsulated a great historical fact about a tradition spanning centuries – an incontrovertible sign of deep scholarship!

His explanation regarding the evolution of the musical discourse of improvisation of ragas in Carnatic music is also worth special attention. "The role of the nagaswaram in the structural growth of improvisational style in our classical music is both lofty and undebatable. In fact, the very concept of raga improvisation is inextricably connected with a wind instrument like the nagaswaram [which manipulates sound using finger holes]. The nagaswaram is an inevitable part of temple festivals in south India, in the daily ritual of ezhnullathu [when a template of a deity is taken out in a procession] and in various other celebratory functions. Besides, nagaswaram music has been a regular part of wedding celebrations from time immemorial. The tacit understanding on such occasions is that the nagaswaram should be played as long as the function lasts, and this condition expanded the possibilities of raga improvisation. Later on, all that was incorporated into Carnatic music, thus increasing the length and creative scale of improvisation in vocal as well as instrumental music. In this manner, the artistic value and aesthetic standards of classical music got amplified." What this argument signifies is Varma's skill in expounding new ideas that plays a significant role in building the history of our music.

Mavelikkara Prabhakara Varma was also successful in forging and chiseling many gifted students. Some of them are Neyyattinkara Vasudevan, M. G. Radhakrishnan, P. R. Kumara Kerala Varma, Ponkunnam Ramachandran, Mavelikkara P. Subramaniam, K. Omanakutty, Sankaran Namboodiri, Thamarakkad Govindan Namboodiri and Thamarakkad Krishnan Namboodiri.

An anecdote, described by the well-known Carnatic musician Parassala B. Ponnammal about a significant milestone in her professional life, is worth mentioning here. It was in 2006, that the royal family of Travancore took the revolutionary decision to permit women singers to participate in the annual musical festival during the Navaratri celebrations in Thiruvananthapuram. And Parassala B. Ponnammal was the unanimous choice. But when the royal invite reached her, she was overcome with fear. One day, as she continued to mull and dither, Mavelikkara Prabhakara Varma telephoned her to say that she should see the invitation as Goddess' blessing and therefore she should not turn it down. It was on hearing his encouraging words that Ponnammal conveyed her final decision to the royal family that she would sing at the festival. This incident speaks volumes for Mavelikkara Prabhakara Varma's generous spirit and his ability to look at classical music from a social angle.

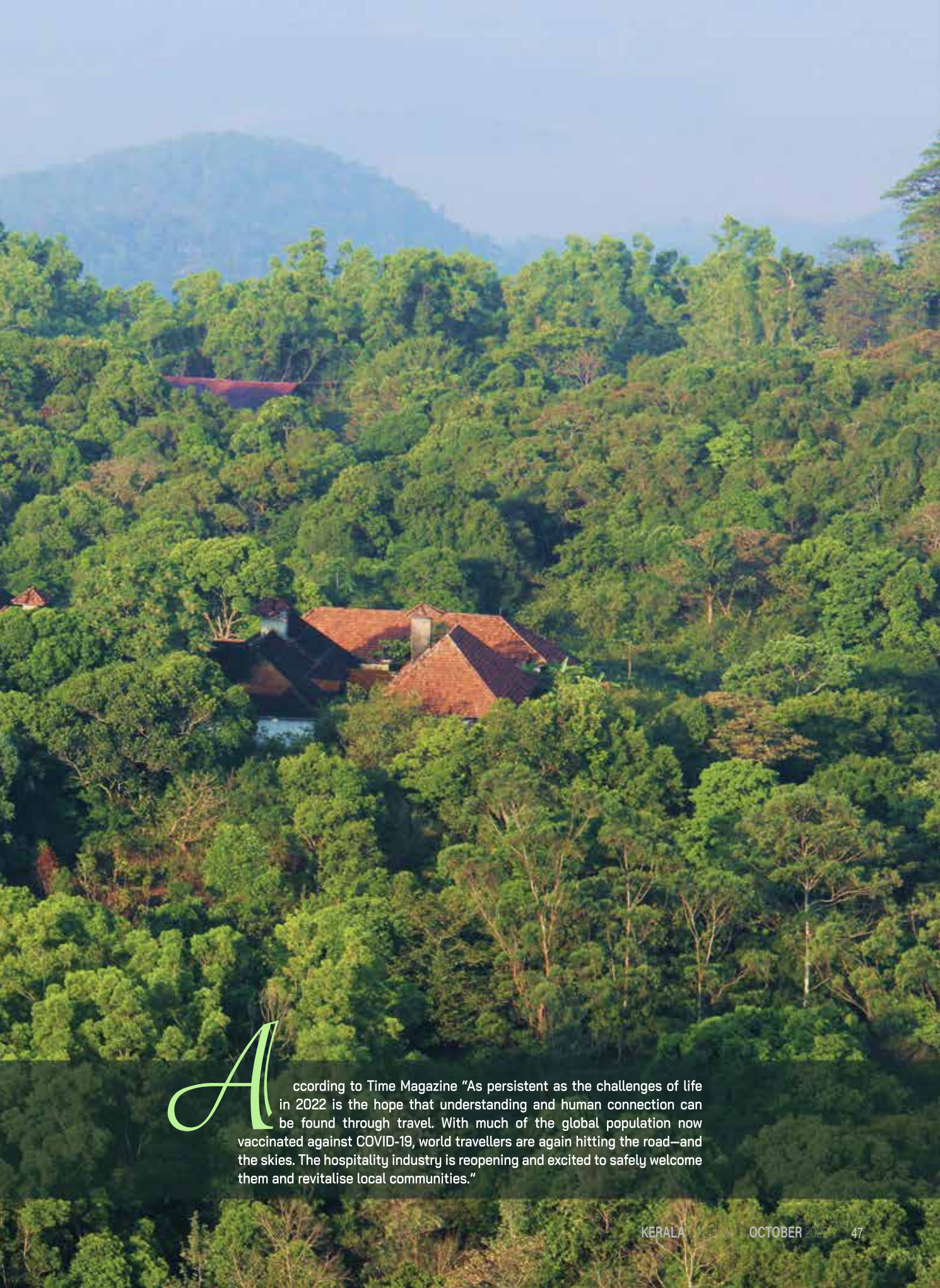
Many well-deserved honours and awards were bestowed on Prabhakara Varma. All of them paid due acknowledgement to his musical contributions to the Kerala society. They included Thulaseevanam Award (1983), Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi Award (1987), Travancore Devaswom Board Gana Kala Visharad (1996), Senior Fellowship from the central Department of Culture (2000) and Swati Sangeetha Award from the Government of Kerala (2006).



JOBY BABY

Kerala No1 Ecotourism hotspot

Kerala's efforts to put its pandemic-hit tourism back on track got a boost when the State got featured in the TIME magazine's 50 extraordinary destinations to explore in 2022.



According to Time Magazine “As persistent as the challenges of life in 2022 is the hope that understanding and human connection can be found through travel. With much of the global population now vaccinated against COVID-19, world travellers are again hitting the road—and the skies. The hospitality industry is reopening and excited to safely welcome them and revitalise local communities.”

Caravan and houseboat tourism

The Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC) introduces a special caravan tourism package that connects the Kumarakom-Vagamon-Thekkady routes. The trip has been designed to begin at KTDC's WaterScapes in Kumarakom and end at Aranya Nivas in Thekkady. Meanwhile, the travellers can enjoy the misty hillocks of Vagamon too; and spend a night in the caravan. Up to four people can travel in a caravan. Changes could be made in the caravan as per the requirements of the travellers. The charges would be Rs 3,999 plus 18% taxes per head. This includes a vegetarian breakfast too. There are special charges for the rest of the meals. Rs 40 per kilometre would be charged for the caravan. The KTDC said that the boarding and dropping points and the route could be arranged as per the travellers' wishes. The details about the package are available on KTDC's website. The first caravan park in the state was recently opened in Vagamon.

Lavishing praise on Kerala as one of India's most beautiful States with spectacular beaches, lush backwaters, temples, and palaces, TIME magazine noted: "This year, Kerala is boosting motor-home tourism in India to inspire a new pas de deux of exploration and accommodation. The State's first caravan park, Karavan Meadows, opened in Vagamon, a scenic hill station." While noting the success of the State's houseboat cruising, TIME said caravans were expected to follow suit with a similar promise of sustainable tourism as many campers were expected to traverse the land, giving a fresh and unique way to experience Kerala's beaches and verdant plantations.



TIME said that on the southwest coast of India, “Kerala is one of India’s most beautiful states. With spectacular beaches and lush backwaters, temples, and palaces, it’s known as “God’s own country” for good reason.”



Emphatic recognition

Kerala Tourism Minister P.A. Mohamed Riyas said: “This is an emphatic recognition of our new initiatives to promote tourism in tune with ecological imperatives and sustainability. We are also making earnest efforts to facilitate tourists to visit unexplored places that dot our scenic State.” To compile this year’s list of the World’s Greatest Places, TIME solicited nominations of places from its international network of correspondents and contributors with an eye towards those offering new and exciting experiences. Another Indian destination that has found an entry in the list is Ahmedabad city, which is India’s first UNESCO World Heritage City.

The list includes Ras Al Khaimah, UAE; Park City, Utah; Seoul; Great Barrier Reef, Australia; The Arctic; Valencia, Spain; Trans Bhutan Trail, Bhutan; International Space Station; Bogota; Lower Zambezi National Park, Zambia; Istanbul and Kigali, Rwanda.



Kerala government has taken several measures to bring the transgender community of Kerala into the mainstream of the society. Kerala is one state that has put forward many initiatives for the empowerment of transgender community, starting with the implementation of the transgender policy. Of the many such significant initiatives of the government, a very commendable one is the Marivil club.

MARIVIL CLUB

The clubs organize awareness camps, training programs in embroidery, fabric sari painting, fashion designing, graphic designing, ornament making, beautician course, choreography, seminars, arts and sports festivals etc.

Marivil Clubs are set up by Kerala State Youth Welfare Board. The schemes related to transgender empowerment, including job training programs has been carried out with the co-operation of Social Justice Department.

Transgender clubs have been established in every district across the state. These clubs have been set up for the youngsters belonging in Transgender Community. The government is providing financial aid for the smooth running of the clubs and implementing various schemes with the help of these clubs.

The Marivil Club has been conceptualized for bringing transgender community to the forefront of the society and encouraging their artistic talents and cultural activities. The clubs also strive to provide transgender persons with employment training and carry out various schemes benefiting them. The clubs organize awareness camps, training programs in embroidery, fabric sari painting, fashion designing, graphic designing, ornament making, beautician course, choreography, seminars, arts and sports festivals etc.

Marivil transgender clubs organize three job training camps in each district including people from the transgender community. One training program can be availed by 70 participants. The duration of the training is three days.

These clubs help to make trans people self-sufficient. The clubs also play a big part in exploring the talents of transgender persons and give them maximum encouragement. The clubs thus become platforms to showcase their talents and increase opportunities for the trans community.



നാളെക്ക് നല്ലതിന്!

വിമുക്തി



കേരള സംസ്ഥാന
എക്സൈസസ് വകുപ്പ്

മുഹൂർത്തം
NO
പറയാം



കരകയാറാൻ വഴിയുണ്ട്

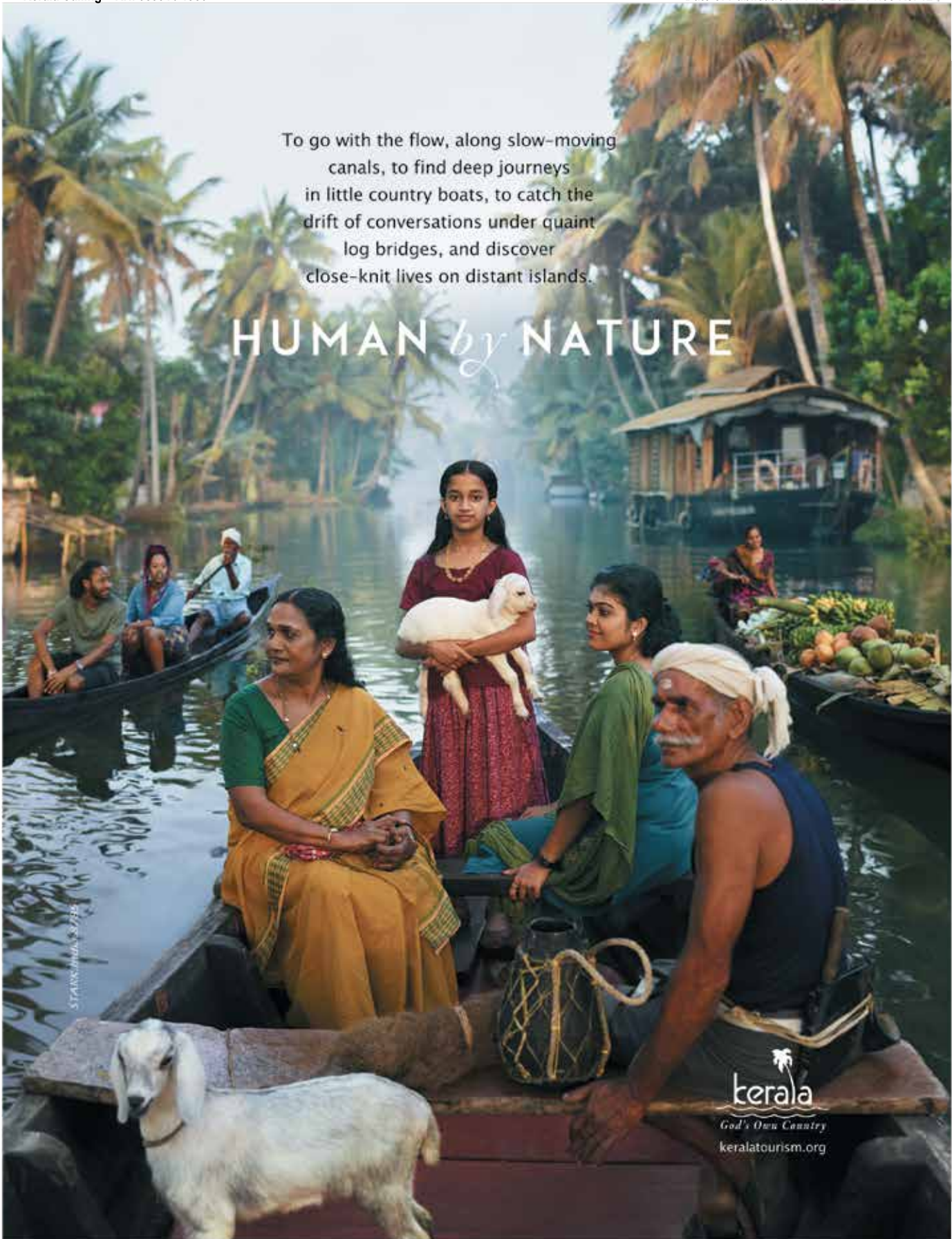
സൗജന്യ കൗൺസിലിംഗിന് വിളിക്കൂ
ടോൾഫ്രീ നമ്പർ

14405

• നാളത്തെ കേരളം ലഹരിമുക്ത നവകേരളം •

To go with the flow, along slow-moving
canals, to find deep journeys
in little country boats, to catch the
drift of conversations under quaint
log bridges, and discover
close-knit lives on distant islands.

HUMAN *by* NATURE



STANLEY/ANANDA S. S. 2022


kerala
God's Own Country
keralatourism.org