It was decided that this issue of Pathemari would focus on people.

A region’s colour and flavor is created by the people who inhabit it. In fact the fabric of society is woven by its inhabitants—the famous and the not so famous who contribute in their own way in providing character to an area.

This edition of Pathemari is about people who made Malabar and particularly Kozhikode what it is today. It is humanly not possible to tabulate the role played and contributions given by each and every one of these people. However the Pathemari team has endeavoured to showcase the contributions of at least a select few of them from different fields of life - business, medicine, arts, environment, cuisine, social work, so on and so forth. While some of those mentioned here have earned name and fame, others have not got their deserving recognition.

Our Convenor Prof Jaiprakash Raghaviah has highlighted the contributions of Dr Arthur Eugen Liebendorfe, a German medical missionary in the area of health care, and of Balarama Kurup in the field of business. Ms Athira’s article is on the legendary Kathakali maestro of our region Guru Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair while Ms K Chitralekha’s focus is on environmentalist T Shobeendran. Ms Chitralekha S charts the silent services that Shaji Kozhikode has been rendering in the field of social welfare.

The contributions of members of the Vattampoyil family as pioneer ayurvedic physicians and those of industrialist Sudarshan Velayudhan are highlighted by Mr K Mohan and Capt. Dinker Karunakar respectively. Co Convenor Ms Archana Kamath details the role played by Ganapath Rao as a philanthropist and how he opened the doors of education to people from all sections of society. The editor details the contributions of two women. V Parukutty Amma, a Gandhian, writer, translator and artiste besides that of Ummi Abdulla the doyen of Malabar Muslim cookery in conserving a particular genre of cuisine.

The information on the Young Challengers Youth Club which once was an emotion for the people of Kozhikode and how it had nurtured aspiring footballers, and the St. Vincent Industrials, the pioneering Industrial Training Institution both on their way out of the cityscape is provided by the Convenor.

During the course of its inquiry the Pathemari team found that in many cases there was little documentation of the valuable contributions made to the region by a number of persons. For instance very little data is available on Sait Nagjee Amarsee Purushothamdas an emigrant Gujarati entrepreneur who had ushered a sports culture in the region, and how football came to be the craze game of Malabar through the much popular Sait Nagjee Football tournaments regularly held in Kozhikode. Football is a craze in even the remotest rural locales in Malabar. Sait Nagjee was also a philanthropist who donated vast extents of land to social causes such as the property of the Government Orphanage at Vellimadukunnu.

We thank INTACH Delhi for its sustained support in publishing Pathemari which is into its 20th edition. We are also thankful to our well-wishers who have chipped in with contributions in bringing out our newsletter. The newsletter could not have been published but for the help and support of our very dear members.

Maleeha R
Maleeha Raghaviah
The Covid-19 pandemic appears to be around longer than we expected. Our monthly meetings continue to be on a virtual platform. It looks as though the line between the virtual and real is increasingly getting blurred. It was decided that during the monthly meetings members of our Chapter would make short presentations on heritage related areas. So far, we could organize three such meetings. K K Mohammed spoke on the renovation of temples in the Chambal Valley in which he as an archeologist played a pivotal role. Naveen Kumar who is a mural artist made a presentation on Kerala temple murals and M Pithambaran gave an exposition of the Thirayattom, a ritual art practiced in Kozhikode and Malappuram districts. Pithambaran himself is a Thirayattom performer. Prakash Manhapra gave a presentation on the art forms that flourished along the banks of Nila river.

Last month a team from our chapter visited the site of an NGO called ‘Theeram’ which has been working to protect the endangered Olive Ridley turtles. The activity of the NGO is centered on the coast at Payyoli near Vadakara. During the months of November to February the turtles come to the beach to lay the eggs. Human beings as well as dogs and other animals predate on these eggs. The issues that the NGO faces in protecting the turtles are considerable. The sand mining activity that is going on at the sandbanks nearby poses a threat to the breeding of the turtles. The newly hatched young turtles are kept by the NGO in a tank for a few months. These young ones need to be fed. The NGO is operating on the funds that it generates by issuing tickets to visitors to the site. That income now is diminishing due to the pandemic. Despite all these difficulties, ‘Theeram’ moves on, certainly with a lot of grit.

It was our first experience to conduct a quiz on a virtual platform. Heritage Awareness Quiz was conducted on December 4 and I would like to state that this was done entirely due to the unstinted labour of our tech-savvy Co Convenor Archana Kamath. Well done Archana! In the present issue of Pathemari we focus on people who gave silent contributions to the society in various fields. Some of them are living, while most of them are gone. Some became well-known still others are not particularly remembered. As Irish poet W B Yates wrote about such people:

“We know their dream; enough
To know they dreamed...”

Jaiprakash Raghaviah
Born to Kerala in the 16th century, India proudly considers Kathakali as a pure art form that gives equal significance to Nritham (dance), Abhinaya (acting), Vesham (dress and costume), Sahithyam (literature), Vadhyam (instruments), and Sangeetam (music). Pundits belonging to the upper castes were acclaimed for developing Kathakali from Ramanattam. This was because the words used in this art form were mainly from Sanskrit and Manipravalam. However, Guru Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair reduced the complexity of Kathakali and made it more graspable leading to its popularity among the common people. Guru Chemancheri is the last person to follow kalladikkodan style in Kathakali.

His strong aspiration to learn Kathakali compelled him to leave his home at the age of 15. Under the guidance of his Guru Karunakara Menon, he started to master the art to excellence. After years of preparation and hard work, Guru Chemancheri founded the Bharatiya Natyakalalayam (Kannur) in 1945, the first dance institution in North Kerala. Not satisfied, he started many other dance schools including the Pookkad Kalalayam (Kozhikode) in 1974. Later, in 1983 he established the Cheliya Kathakali Vidyalayam - A Kathakali learning centre with a full-fledged troupe in his village Cheliya, about 30 km from Kozhikode. He also supported Ashtapadi Atmom-dance-drama form based on the verses of Gitagovindam written by medieval poet Jayadeva. Later, he developed Kerala Nadanam, a lighter and less technical combination of Kathakali and Mohiniyat-tom with Guru Gopinath which is a government-recognized dance form in Kerala. He also established a ballet troupe, which during its active period had around 60 participants and was associated with many drama theatres in North Kerala.

Guru Chemancheri was active in the Salt Satyagraha during the 1940s. Later, he was invited by the Raja of Kadathanadu as a dance teacher at his residence. There he met Kaumudi teacher, freedom fighter known for donating her gold ornaments to Mahatma Gandhi. That meeting was a milestone in his life since she encouraged him to choreograph dances for school students.

Lord Krishna is the Guru’s most cherished role. He says every time he takes to the stage, a godly sensation overcomes him and he transmutes as Lord Krishna with perfect ease. The dress and costume for Kathakali weighs around 30 kg and with 64 tight knots all over the performer’s body it is no easy load even for an ordinary person. The Guru maintained the perfect facial expressions and grace in his movements carrying off the process of more than five hours of makeup and preparations even after becoming a centenarian (he performed when 103 years old!).

Guru Chemancheri attained reputation both as a noble performer and teacher of Kathakali. He received many awards and recognitions including the Padmashree (2017), Vayosreshta Puraskar of the Central Government (2018), Tagore Puraskar of Kendra Sangeeta-Natak Academi (2011), Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi Award (1979), and the Fellowship of the Academy (1999), Kerala KalamandalamVisishta Kala Seva Award (2002), Kalaratnam Award of Kerala (2009). INTACH also honoured him.

At 105 years Guru is perfectly fit except for failing eyesight. His daily routine starts at 5:30 a.m. After coffee, he gets an oil massage, exercises, takes a shower and is in prayer for an hour. He continues to attend functions, oversees classes conducted at the Kathakali Vidyalaya near his home, visits relatives, or others. After dinner he never misses his favourite TV shows and goes to bed at 11:30 p.m. He proves that Age is not a limitation. As Mahatmaji said, “My life is my message,” is apt for this maestro. His career and life are elucidated in his autobiography ‘Jeevitharasangal’ published in 2015. Probably, he is the oldest among performing artistes of our country, possibly the world over, yet contemporary in his attitude. “Guru” (Teacher) is what Malayalees would like to call him. He has not only taught Kathakali but he has taught the way of life that carries a passion for performing art as well as humanity in his persona, beyond physical or social boundaries.

“The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance.” – Aristotle, is true of the Guru.

Athira S B
Asst. Professor, MES College of Architecture, Kozhikode, Kerala.
Former Kathakali student of Guru Chemancheri)
“Nature should not be tied down, but left alone to its own pace,” says Prof. T. Shobeendran, well-known environmentalist, who has dedicated his life to serving Nature and protecting it from the threats of humankind. Since his retirement as the Head of the Department of Economics, Zamorin’s Guruvayurappan College Kozhikode in 2002, Prof Shobeendran is engaged full time in environment conservation and social activism. He has been in the field for more than 30 years.

Shobeendran was honoured with the Vana Mitra award of the Kerala Government in 2006, and the Vriksha Mitra award of Government of India in 2007 in recognition of his efforts in conserving trees. He was selected for an award instituted by the Bijapur-based Bharath Vikas Sangama for his contribution to environment protection. He received an International Environment Award of the Florida Environment Association and Mindtune Ecowave Award as part of the Global Environment Campaign in Qatar.

He is the chief coordinator of Green Community, a group of environmental organizations in the State and a driving force behind Operation Conolly Canal. He is a member of Kerala Forest Development Board, Kerala State Wildlife Board and National Afforestation and Eco Development Board Management Advisory Committee. He coordinates the activities of environment protection organizations across Kerala. His presence is there in all nature related campaigns, awareness classes, expert meetings, street protests, etc. Initially, he organized college students and worked towards the protection of wildlife. He organized nature study tours for school students in the Western Ghats for more than 10 years. INTACH honoured him in 2009.

With many such honours to his credit, his determined spirit and guidance provided to participatory projects on environment conservation, he is a leader of the masses. He was actively involved in planting trees along highways in Kozhikode District. Prof Shobeendran encouraged organic farming across the State. The initiative has also attracted the attention of people from outside the country who visit the farms and fields where he provides guidance.

His initiatives to protect the sacred mangroves and conventional water sources are well-known. Rain water harvesting has been made more intensive with the help of local bodies. “We should think about our coming generations. Without having fertile soil, fresh air and pure drinking water, the future will be at a loss. The crucial need of the hour is creating awareness at the grassroots,” says the Professor. In the name of development, humankind is marching towards destruction. Majority are ignorant of the matter.

Biodiversity of natural ecosystems, including flora, fauna, fungi and other life forms is the greatest wealth of planet Earth. But humans have destroyed much of this biodiversity. Hence human responsibility for the state of nature on planet Earth is high. The state of the environment is more alarming with each passing year: forest spaces are reduced, agricultural soils are degraded, the degree of pollution is higher, the ozone layer is getting thinner and many plant and animal species are endangered. Adverse effects of climate change in the form of drought, floods and others are becoming more frequent now.

“Our education should be oriented towards protecting the environment because life cannot be separated from the environment. Children should grow up with a set of values to care for Mother Earth,” says Shobeendran. Children should be made aware that they are also moving along with Mother Earth around the Sun, and they should grow up with a motivation and devotion to participate in maintaining the quality of Nature around them.

Our education system should be moulded in such a way that it can be one of the tools to deal with the environmental crisis caused by human behaviour. “Children must be able to see the link between their lives and the immediate environment. Environmental education helps learners see the inter linkage between social, ecological, economic, cultural, and political issues,” says the determined environmentalist.
This happened in the year 1882. A boat crowded with people was attempting to cross the Vadakara River about 40 km from Kozhikode. Suddenly, there was strong winds and rain. The boatman struggled to control the boat which hit a pillar and capsized. A few on board who knew swimming, swam to safety. Many drowned and many others were badly injured. One of those who swam to safety was a young German Missionary who had come to work with the Basel Mission in 1875. His name was Arthur Eugen Liebendorfer. As many as 60 people died in the accident.

What disturbed the young missionary Liebendorfer was the fact that there was no institutional system of care for the badly injured passengers who would naturally die from the wounds.

The young missionary decided at that point that he would go back to Germany and qualify himself to be a doctor and return to India as a medical missionary. He went to Germany in 1883 and returned to Kozhikode in 1886 with a degree in medicine.

During the 19th century, there was no institutional health care system in Malabar. Caste system was strong complete with polluting distances as a general criteria. Each caste had its own medical practitioners, some of whom combined medical practice with sorcery. Level of morbidity, infant mortality and death at childbirth was very high. There was a very small District Hospital at Kozhikode which catered to the entire Malabar District. Naturally, this hospital catered to the English and other European population living in and around Kozhikode and perhaps a few influential Indians.

On his return, Dr Liebendorfer established a hospital with 8 beds and an operation theatre. Basel Mission sent qualified nurses from Germany and Switzerland and together with the local young men and women trained by the doctor’s a small medical team started functioning. This hospital did not allow any caste-based discriminations.

Patients from the highest and lowest castes shared adjacent beds and were treated equally.

The common medical problems that this hospital addressed reflect the type of morbidity that was prevailing in the region. These were diarrhea, malnutrition, tuberculosis, food poisoning and of course some of the contagious diseases like typhoid, small pox and measles. Then there were treatments calling for surgical procedures. These included injuries due to fall from coconut trees, dog and fox bites, snake bites and broken limbs. The doctor and nurses attended difficult child deliveries and similar gynecological problems.

The hospital did not charge any fees, but welcomed donations. Donations came in the form of eggs, chicken, goats, vegetables and sometimes even paddy. Of course, there were a few coins too that the hospital received.

Liebendorfer himself was facing several health problems and he returned to Germany. He passed away in 1902, but the hospital that he had established flourished. In 1908 it was shifted to a new two storied building in the Mission Compound built for the purpose. This building now houses the Bethania Women's Hostel of the Malabar Diocese of the Church of South India.

This hospital was closed in 1930. The Mission did not have enough resources to run it. Meanwhile some young medical graduates from this region had started establishing their own nursing homes. Dr. Balakrishnan Nair started Karunakara Nursing Home in 1930. Dr Raman, a convert to Buddhism and physician trained in Vienna, Austria established the Asoka Hospital which was a modern hospital in every sense. This hospital continues to function now. Dr Ramanathan, a graduate from Madras Medical College started his own Ramanathan Nursing Home and Dr. Robert Hermon a priest turned physician too had established his clinic. They were all following the lead given by Dr Arthur Eugene Libendorfer.

Dr. Arthur Eugen Liebendorfer
Harbinger of modern medical care
Jaiprakash Raghaviah
V. Parukutty Amma
Gandhian, writer, painter

Maleeha Raghaviah

Parukutty Amma Gandhian, writer, painter and woman of strong political convictions is a trailblazer in her own right. She continues to be revered by her disciples and friends seven years after her passing away. Every time I visited Parukutty Amma, I was amazed by her keen sense of political consciousness despite the fact that she was confined to her home because of a disability in her legs. However, there was no dearth of visitors to her house. They came seeking Amma’s (she was so called by those who held her dear) guidance and advice or just to wish her well. Their visits made life pleasant for her till her last days.

An early morning call from Parukutty Amma meant that she had already scanned the day’s newspapers and was keen to discuss the hot news of the day, almost always a political issue. She would give her views.

V. Parukutty Amma (Vadakkumthani Parukutty Amma) grew up in a liberal household. Raja Ravi Varma’s paintings along with those of Hindu deities and Jesus Christ adorned the walls of her ancient Tharavad house located near the busy thoroughfare on Bank Road in Kozhikode city. Yet the house was sheltered in a canopy of greenery. Tree varieties and particularly an Asoka tree that put out orange blossoms and the call of the cuckoo that took shelter on its branches remained etched in the mind of those who visited Parukutty Amma, all adding to the ambience in which she lived.

The male members of Parukutty Amma’s family had been soldiers in the Zamorin’s army. She grew up hearing protests and slogans against the British rule. The well-stocked library of one of her uncles’ had provided her the opportunity to be familiar with world classics such as ‘Great Expectations’. All this had left an indelible impression in the mind of the young Parukutty.

She was always clad in a fresh white khadi mundu and neriyathu. She exuded confidence and one marveled at her indomitable spirit that kept disabilities at bay. “My love for khadi was kindled as a little girl. One of my uncles’ used to spin khadi at home,” she had said during a conversation.

Parukutty Amma completed her Intermediate from the Malabar Christian College and graduated in physics from the Women’s Christian College Chennai and completed her Teacher’s Training from Christopher Training College, Chennai. She was a science teacher at the BEM Girls High School for long years. Later, she joined the Mathrubhumi as a librarian and soon became an active participant of the freedom movement.

Parukutty Amma was an active member of the Congress Party and noted as a good orator. She also earned a name as an adept translator. She was acclaimed for her impromptu translation of speeches. She has translated the speeches of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, S Radhakrishnan and Indira Gandhi besides many political leaders from outside the State who came to address meetings in Kerala. She accompanied Nehru by train from Kozhikode to Thalassery and Kanhagad. She had many reminiscences of those whose speeches she had translated. “Panditji was a great orator. He was considerate and allowed translation after a few sentences,” she remembered. V K Krishna Menon also a good speaker rendered his speeches in English. She had high regard for K P Kesava Menon, founder editor and V M Nair, Managing Director of the Mathrubhumi and how the two had efficiently steered the newspaper to great heights.

Parukutty Amma has a number of writings to her credit including a book of poetry. As a painter, her works mirror her deep sense of spirituality. She wrote the biographies of K P Kesava Menon, K A Damodara Menon and G N Pillai. She also translated Indira Gandhi’s biography by K A Abbas ‘Return of the Red Rose’ to Malayalam ‘Chempanineerpoo veendum’, and R R Divakaran’s biography of Aurobindo. G N Pillai was her mentor and provided inspiration to her to carry forward her avocation.
Social worker Mr Shaji P Kozhikode, State secretary of the Child Protect Team says that the organization was formed in 2016 by Mr C K Nazer and general secretary Mr Sunil Malikkal of Kasaragod. The team helps in solving many problems related to children up to the age of 18. Cases such as missing of children, child labour, child abuse, emergency surgical operation, mental depression and similar problems are attended to by the organisation. The Kerala Government’s Child Protection Committee is similar to the Child protect Team which works as a Non Government organisation with branches in 14 districts of the State.

The Child Protect Team has its headquarters at Kasaragod. The organisation conducts awareness classes in schools and colleges relating to children’s problems. If there are urgent and critical cases they are referred to the respective authorities for treatment and advice. Mr Shaji conducts counseling sessions for both the child and the parents with the help of a child counselor. In cases when a child is in a critical stage, medical facilities are provided. This is done with the help of the police, fire force and ambulance.

Recently medicines urgently needed for a one- and -half year old child from Kasaragod were made available through Mr Shaji. He handed over the medicine to the fire force in Vellimadukunnu in Kozhikode who in turn reached the same swiftly to Kasaragod. Here the fire force, police, ambulance and the local administration allowed the medicines to pass through the busy streets of the three districts with great speed.

The blood donation camp was first conducted with the help of ‘Donate for life’ (DFL) and ‘Helping hands organisation’ (HHO) in 2016. It was inaugurated at the Engineering College, West Hill in Kozhikode. A large number of students attended the camp. This is a regular programme conducted by the Child Protect Team and is adding to its popularity. The blood has to be donated before noon. The Team keeps ready two to three blood donors in reserve for the three blood groups like A negative, O negative and AB negative each. Mr Shaji said the most common blood group was O positive but now there is a great demand for this group and they are unable to cope with the supply of common blood group because of the covid pandemic.

Mr Shaji was able to muster more than 100 persons to donate blood at the Women and Children Hospital. He was presented with an award for his exemplary service and commended by the hospital authorities. He used his own vehicle to provide transport to the donors in adverse conditions like heavy rain and covid 19. Some time back the organisation had an interaction with Orphanage and essentials and medicines were given to 43 girls.

When there was a sudden hartal and shops and hotels were closed Mr Shaji and his team provided food to hundreds of people. In 2019, during the heavy floods in Wayanad and Ernakulam the CPT collected and dispatched various emergency items to the affected.

Mr Shaji owns a two- wheeler workshop near Providence Girls High School, Kozhikode. He practices martial arts. His dream was to become a percussion instrumentalist and he had learnt both Western and Hindustani classical music. He is married to Anupama and has a son Adarsh who supports his father in his humanitarian venture.

When asked how he got into the Child Protect Team Mr Shaji said that as PTA President of the school while his son was in primary class he had noticed parents who did not provide proper care to their children. He understood that children faced many problems and took the initiative to solve them. It was then that he came across the Child Protect Team which had its headquarters at Kasaragod. He appeals to people to forgo a meal to help the inmates of an orphanage.

Chitralekha S
Faculty, St. Alphonsa College for Hotel Management, Calicut
Ganapath Rao

Educationist and social reformer

Ganapath Rao

Ganapath Rao is renowned for heralding changes in the educational system in the State. In addition to starting a chain of schools that opened its doors to all sections of society, he took charge of the Gowda Saraswat Educational Society that provided scholarships to poor students of his community.

Ganapath Rao had his schooling at the Kerala Vidya Sala which is the present day Zamorin’s High School. He graduated with a degree in Chemistry from the Madras Presidency College, Chennai. He was keen on pursuing a degree in Law. However, personal commitments made it difficult for him to do so. He joined the Zamorin’s High School as a teacher.

During those days education was the privilege of the upper castes and the rich. The caste system was extremely rigid and children from the backward castes could not even dream of attending school. Being very progressive in his thinking, he urged the school authorities to open the school to children from all sections of the society. His plea fell on deaf ears. It was then that he made the momentous decision of starting a school on his own and subsequently quit his job.

With the support from two of his former college-mates, he began the Native School, a non-profit educational institution in 1886 at his residence. He was the first headmaster of his school. Following the departure of one of his college mates and the death of the other, the entire burden of running the school fell on his shoulders. Times were difficult for him. Added to this was the ire of the upper orthodox class. He braved it all and with undivided attention, went about developing the school. His sincerity, grit and determination prompted citizens to volunteer assistance to him in his humanitarian pursuits. He was also the President of the Calicut District Cooperative Bank.

Ganapath Rao was born in 1864 as the eldest of three sons to Damodar Naik and Yamuna Bai. He married Satyabhama. The couple had seven children. After his wife’s death in 1920, Ganapath Rao adopted sanyasa at the Arya Samaj and took up the name Suvicharananda.

He handed over the entire charge of the school to his fourth son, Sarvottama Rao, who re-christened the school as Ganapath School in honour of his father. Many students of the Ganapath Schools grew up to become men of standing – politicians, litterateurs, freedom fighters, etc.

Soon, the Malabar Educational Society was formed. Ganapath schools were founded at Kallai, Feroke, Nalloor, etc. When Kerala State was formed in 1956, the State Government took over the Ganapath schools on June 14 1957.

In his later years, as a sanyasi, he proved to be a good orator and his classes on social and spiritual topics were well accepted and looked forward to. He left the world in 1944.
The Zamorin King while at the height of his power decided to rebuild the existing dilapidated Krishna temple of Guruvayoor. He completed the task around 1638. He was helped in this task by a team of people of the coastal village of Chavakkad, southern most part of Malabar district. These people came from a community called Thiyyas whose traditional occupation was as climbers of coconut tree and garden farmers. They were strong and healthy men. Some members of this community knew traditional medicinal practices. King Zamorin encouraged members of this community to migrate to Kozhikode to take up coconut cultivation. Side by side, they were also drafted into the army. In due course some members of this family also took up the role of traditional medicinal practitioners.

Over time, these migrant families became very influential, and they were appointed to important and high posts in the army. They had names such as Madathil, Edathil, Vattampoyil, Padiyeri and Pokkancherry. One of the members, Madathil Rarichan Moopan, though a Thiyya was one of the chief bodyguards of the King Zamorin. The members of the family also came to own vast areas of land in the heart of the city.

Over time, members from one of the emigrant families - the Vattampoyil family became ayurvedic physicians. A member, Chathukutty Vaidyar developed cures for some incurable diseases. During a cholera epidemic in Malabar in 1924, Chathukutty Vaidyar came out with a tablet named Pilco for cholera. This medicine was to be taken every six hours. This medicine was widely sought after when the disease was raging. Another medicine that was developed was for curing venereal disease. This medicine was in the form of oil. Yet another medicine which Chathukutty Vaidyar developed was for scorpion bite. This antidote of raw tobacco juice was to be administered through the ear. If the sting was on the left foot the potion was to be poured into the right ear and if it was on the right side, into the left ear. In the case of children it had to be poured in both ears.

One of the members of the family Chathukutty Vaidyar started a Charitable Dispensary from which treatment and medicines were provided free of cost. Chathukutty Vaidyar had three children of whom Choyi combined allopathy and ayurveda in his medicinal practice. His son Dr Indran had a clinic at the Palayam junction in Kozhikode.

A very special aspect of this family was that many of the members provided treatment free of cost. This was the inter war period (1914-1915) when Malabar was going through several social and economic travails. The treatment he provided free and available for everyone irrespective of caste or religion. The family was socially and politically conscious and aligned with the National Movement.
The period from the end of the First World War in 1918 to the attainment of Independence in 1947 was a vibrant period in the history of India as well as Malabar. Many socio-political movements supportive of National Movement flourished. ‘Swadeshi’ was the watchword. In pure economic terms Swadeshi referred to substitution of imported foreign products by local products. Many patriotic Indians were inspired to establish industrial ventures which produced replacement for imported products. At the national level the inspiration for B Acharya to establish National Chemical Industries in Kolkata and for Kirloskar to establish light engineering industry in Pune was the spirit to Swadeshi.

During this period in Kozhikode there were several shops which proudly announced selling only Swadeshi products. Products like Swadeshi Pen, Paper and Swadeshi Ink flooded the market. Kozhikode witnessed an entrepreneurial response to nationalism in the form of Techno Chemical Industries Ltd, a unit established in 1930 by an entrepreneur lovingly referred as ‘Techno Kurup’. His name was P Balarama Kurup. Longtime residents of Kozhikode still remember Techno Kurup. Always dressed in spotless white khadi shirt and mundu Balarama Kurup was always visible in Kozhikode market. Balarama Kurup had his background in chemistry. More than that, he was an industrial genius dedicated to the National Movement. His innovations were naturally in the area of chemistry and chemical based technologies also bio technology. The first products of Techno industries were soaps.

Fish oil was abundantly available in Kozhikode. Kurup developed the technology to manufacture soap from fish oil. Marketed as ‘Rosin Soap’ this product had insecticidal properties. He later made variations. He manufactured ‘flake soap’ for washing delicate cloths, and liquid soap for bathing. The next line of products of Techno Industries were inks of various types – for writing and for industrial purposes, this was followed by manufacture of glues. The next foray of Techno Chemical Industries was in the field of biotechnology. The Western Ghats region of Malabar was a fertile region for growing hill produce like ginger, cloves, and cinnamon. There were several plantations producing these crops. What Kurup attempted and succeeded was to produce oleoresins or concentrates of these products for exports.

Techno Kurup further tried backward integration. He bought some land on the foothills of Western Ghats, and took up cultivation of aromatic plants and concentrates from these plants were used as perfumes for soaps. These perfume concentrates were also exported. Thus every product that Techno Industries produced were import oriented substitutes. Techno Industries continue to function even now. After the passing away of Sri Balarama Kurup the industries are being managed by his family members. The trail blazed by ‘Techno’ Balarama Kurup will always be remembered as an entrepreneurial response to the National Movement.

Techno Kurup

Entrepreneurial response to National Movement
Ummi Abdulla
A distinctive culinary tradition

Ummi Abdulla’s contribution in popularizing an exclusive brand of ethnic cuisine is well-known

Cookery is inseparable from a culture and a society’s identity is also established by its food. Food is part of cultural and intangible heritage such as the Ramasseri idly of Palakkad or Thalassery biriyani. Ummi Abdulla is known as the prima donna of that special genus known as Malabar Muslim cookery, a culinary craft that has come to be a gourmand’s delight. The feather-light pathiris (a rumali roti like bread made of rice flour) that she rolls out, or that golden noodle-like egg strands coated with sugar syrup called mutta mala, puttu and bread varieties, sea food delicacies are among the many dishes that find a place in this cooking tradition.

Many cuisines in our country are centuries old but writing on them is not. The first archaeological reference to cooking from the subcontinent—from Harappa is only around 500 years old. Also, the interfaces of communities due to trade, migrations and invasions had its impact on the cuisine of the region. Ummi in this capacity is ahead of her times. Her latest coffee table book ‘A kitchen full of stories’, compiled by her granddaughter Nazaneen Jalaludheen is a treasure trove of time-tested delicacies. Try out a recipe from Ummi’s repertoire and you will come out with a perfect dish. Her first book ‘Malabar Muslim Cookery’, is a peek into her culinary adventures and continues to be a boon to cooks. She has as many as five publications on cookery to her credit.
When Ummi forayed into the food turf she would not have imagined the fame her brand of cooking would bring her. She started a pickle factory from the garage of her home in T. Nagar in Chennai. Soon her avakai and prawn pickles were much sought after. She experimented and innovated, a passion that led her to be christened an expert of Malabar Muslim cookery. Over the years she organized high profile cookery shows in star hotels in big cities in the country and abroad popularizing this category of Kerala's cuisine.

Ummi’s aromatic egg curry finds a slot in the ‘50 Great curries of India’, an international bestseller cookbook authored by hotelier Camelia Panjabi. Ummi has travelled around the world as a food consultant to high profile hotels. She is featured in the BBC Good Food Magazine, so on and so forth.

Her husband V. Abdulla who was the editor of a publishing enterprise in Chennai encouraged her to compile her recipes. Ummmi has her roots in rural Thikkodi near Kozhikode. Kitchen is Ummi’s favourite room in the house. It was her Ummama (grandmother) who first instilled in her the passion for cooking. “While a young girl I used to follow Ummama an accomplished cook to the kitchen. Ummama did not encourage anyone to be beside her while she prepared the dishes. But I had my way. I watched her using different ingredients in varying quantities while making a dish,” she remembers. All this had left an indelible impression in the young girl’s mind and which would later earn name and fame for her.

Now for a bit of history- Mappila Muslims are native to Malabar. They are essentially descendants of Arab traders or settlers who married local women who converted to Islam. The word ‘mapilla’ is believed to be a variant of ‘maha pillai’, meaning an honoured person in Malayalam. A more fanciful belief is that it stands for ‘bridegroom’ or husband a term also used in Tamil even now. The term fits for Arab traders who married local women. Tradition was that the ‘mapilla’ was treated to a sumptuous spread. Celebrations were an integral part of the community as was the food spread.

Kerala was at a vantage location on the trading map welcoming the Chinese, Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans and Arabs who came here to buy the much favoured merchandise like spices. It is believed that delicacies like biriyani and ‘alisa’, derived from the Arab world.
The life of Madathil Velayudhan whose name later earned the suffix ‘Sudarshan’ from his first enterprise Sudarshan Chit Funds is a ‘rags to riches’ story. Velayudhan started working as a salesperson in a small umbrella shop, Prabhulal Brothers opposite Kottaparamba Women and Children Hospital. The owner left the shop in charge of the young boy while he attended other work. People brought umbrellas for repair which the shopkeeper entrusted to Velayudhan as he knew the art of mending umbrellas also.

Velayudhan spent his spare time supplying milk to neighbours and doing odd jobs. He frequented Puthiyapalam where he found a lot of small jobs. It was his duty to deliver lunch to his father who was working in the then prestigious Standard Furniture Company at Kallai. He was not allowed inside the factory premises. The watchman collected the food and gave it to his father. The small boy had then resolved in his mind that if he got some money some day, the first thing he would do would be to acquire the factory. In Puthiyapalam there were saw mills that were lying idle. He got the permission to saw the wood whenever he got this work. He advertised in north Indian newspapers, especially in the Bombay area for any requirement for wooden planks for making packing cases. He got many orders. The rate was also competitive. He was now able to make some money.

At a particular point of time Velayudhan felt that lady luck would shine better if he left Kozhikode. He went to Chennai where he got a spacious place to start a Chits Fund unit the Sudarshan Chit Funds. He was pondering over a suitable name when he remembered the large house with the name, ‘Sudarshan’ near his home in Puthiyara. He kept that name for all his future ventures, earning him the name Sudarshan Velayudhan.

There was no looking back. He thought big and started big. He started the Sudarshan Trading Company with its registered office was at Kozhikode, with branches in Chennai and other parts of Kerala. It became a popular savings scheme as agents or collectors would come to the customer’s doorstep to collect the deposits regularly. As it is in the business of chit funds, names were selected by lot and winner was given the entire sum for which he had joined the fund. Branches sprang up due to the request of people who found the savings scheme easy and guaranteed. He constructed the huge Sudarshan Hotel, in a posh area in Chennai. He owned a bungalow and had all comforts of life. His contacts with the South Indian film stars made them also part of the savings scheme. He came to Kozhikode and bought the Standard Furniture Company an upper end furniture manufacturing unit established by a French man Revel and Feroke Tile Works which was the largest tile factory in South India.

During the 60’s and 70’s Sudarshan started a private charter flight from London to Bombay which was a busy route. The rates were competitive and he reaped quick profits. He owned a passenger ship that shuttled between Port Blair and Madras. During the 60s Sudarshan Velayudhan purchased a Dekota aircraft for his personal use. The aircraft was painted red and often when it was flying over Kozhikode, people of the city would look up and say “there goes Velayudhan.”

Once when he came to Kozhikode he visited his old school, the Sabha School run by the Church of South India. Though it was a Sunday some activities were going on there. He walked into a classroom and remembered the good old school days. Two teachers who did not know that he was an old student requested him to donate money for the school bus. On learning the total cost of the bus, he wrote a cheque for the whole amount and walked away.

He had a large number of employees, and he looked to their comforts always. He remembered his old friends when he came to Kozhikode. Even when he had to be on the latest electronics wheel chair, he had said “when I am gone you can give it to the needy otherwise it will be a waste lying in a corner.”

‘Sudarshan’ Velayudhan was a person often described as ‘zero to hero’ person. It is a pity that a great man as Velayudhan has not been honoured by the people of Kozhikode.
The period 1766-92 was a tumultuous period in the history of north Kerala. This was the period of Mysorean invasion, first by Hyder Ali and subsequently by his son Tipu Sultan. A few miles south of Kozhikode, at the estuary of Chaliyar River, at the top of a hill, Tipu decided to build a fort. This area, which Tipu renamed as Farookabad (now it is known as Feroke), and wanted it to be made as his capital. He forced the residents of Kozhikode to migrate to Feroke. Tipu could not complete building of the fort. The monsoon broke out and Tipu was forced to return to Mysore. Taking this opportunity, the people who had migrated to Feroke returned to Kozhikode. Tipu was defeated by the East India Company in the Third Anglo-Mysore War and the EIC converted the territories in north Kerala occupied by Tipu earlier into a district named Malabar.

The partly constructed fort at the estuary of the Chaliyar River went into private hands. In 1908, the Basel Mission, a Protestant Christian missionary organization which established the first modern tile factories in Kerala acquired the hillock and built a bungalow for its manager. The property changed hands and is at present in the hands of private individuals.

This area has since come into limelight from an archaeological perspective. Megalithic remains were discovered here. Department of Archaeology of Government of Kerala has initiated a project to excavate the area. Much of the credit for bringing the Tipu fort to the notice of general public goes to a voluntary organization of people from the locality. This organization called Feroke Monument Development Council has gone into litigation for preserving the fort as well as megalithic site.

The ongoing excavation at the site has invited media attention. A team from Calicut Chapter visited the site on October 28th. Apart from the Convenor, and Co Convenor, the team included the distinguished archaeologist Padma Sree K K Mohammed who is a member of the Calicut Chapter. The team explained the objectives of their visit with the media. Later, the Intach team had an interface with the representatives of Feroke Monument Development Council and also with representatives of Feroke Panchayat.

The ramparts of the fort area compound contain a huge well with steps to go down, remnants of watch towers and an underground area for storing ordnance. On one side of the compound is the megalithic structure - rock cut caves and at the top is the old bungalow in ruins. With the participation of Department of Archaeology and Culture, Government of Kerala, the Feroke Panchayat and Department of Tourism of Government of Kerala, this area can open site for heritage tourism.
The dilapidated two storied building on Pavamani Road built around 1920 was being demolished and when this writer visited the spot only the board ‘Young Challengers Club’ was remaining. Five years back the club itself had shifted to another location. The Young Challengers Club (Y C Club) was the best-known football team in Calicut.

Interestingly the club had come into existence in 1921 as a nationalistic challenge to British colonialism. The medium was sports - to be more specific football. The YC Club was started by a jutka (horse cart) owner/driver called Kuttan and was originally christened Kuttan’s Club. It was started as a hockey club and regularly challenged the white domination and began defeating these teams. Within a few years, under the leadership of Kottai Achuthan the club appropriately changed its name to Young Challengers Club. Hockey gave way to football and gradually the club started participating in national events. In 1940, the YC Club won the Dasara Cup in Mysore and in 1953 the Durant Cup in Ernakulam. In Kozhikode, for an aspiring football player, being invited to join the YC Club was a mark of having arrived in football.

The Young Challengers’ Club was started in 1921 as a nationalistic response to British domination in games. Football and hockey were games introduced to the people of the city by the British. British regiments located at West Hill barracks used to play these games. Europeans, mainly the British working in companies like M/S Pierce Leslie and Aspinwal had their teams. Gradually the Anglo-Indians also had theirs, for example the Slazenger’s Club.

Next to Kolkata, Kozhikode was best-known as a nurturing ground for football in India. There is an array of players who dribbled football first in the playgrounds in Kozhikode. To name a few Abdul Rahman who played in Sydney Olympics in 1956 was from Kozhikode. Players like Premnath Phillip, Prasannan, Sethumadhavan, Nataraj and Jiju Jacob who played for the Indian National Football Team at different periods made their debut as members of the YC Club. Sait Nagjee Amarsee Memorial Football Tournament used to be religiously conducted every year at Kozhikode, and this tournament was the proving ground for aspiring players. Apart from the national teams in India, teams from Pakistan also used to participate in this tournament.

Football is on the decline in Kozhikode. A dearth of suitable grounds for training is one reason. The other reason is the change in the character of the game. Now football has become big business and teams are financed by corporates. The nationalistic fervor is not there anymore. Yet the Young Challengers Club stands out as a nationalist response to the British hegemony. For the lovers of football in Kozhikode, the Young Challengers Club is not just a name; it is an emotion.

JR
Located at the heart of Kozhikode city very close to the Mother of God Cathedral, is the compound of St Vincent Industrials. Established by the Catholic Church in 1925, this conclave of industries has many 'firsts' to its credit. This was a pioneering training cum production centre for some of the nascent industrial skills like forging, machining, mechanical and electrical engineering and printing. The first automobile driving school was established here when cars themselves were very few. The mechanical and electrical skills imparted by this institution played a very important role in the industrial development of the Malabar region. From its inception, St Vincent Industrials had a foundry. Bells for churches all over south India and some neighbouring countries were produced from this foundry.

This foundry was the only institution in Malabar region that could custom cast mechanical components for the tile industries. When saw mills in Kallai started using diesel engines, the services of mechanics trained by St Vincents Industries were available for repair and maintenance. Another pioneering activity was the manufacture of bells for churches, schools etc. The Xavior Press established in this compound used advanced printing skills. These industries also manufactured dyes for the automobile tire rethreading industries.

These industries were run by Catholic priests who had technical background. The first director of St Vincents Industries was Rev Bro Spinelli S J who had background in engineering. Inhabitants of Calicut remember the engineer missionary Fr Vergottini S J who headed this institution for many years.

Following a prolonged strike, these industries faced closure in 1977. The Catholic Church established another unit, St Vincents Industries and Engineering Co (P) Ltd as a successor company. After long years of litigation, the Catholic Church decided to close this and demolish these buildings. The machinery is being sold. Records about the activities of the St Vincents Industrials are available in the Bishop’s House. Some photographs of the institution under demolition are attached here.

With the demolition of St Vincents Industries an important industrial heritage of Calicut moves into oblivion.

JR
29 JUNE 2020
CHAPTER MEETING NO.1: Held on Zoom meeting at 7 p.m. 22 members were present.

15 JULY
CHAPTER AGM 2020: Held on Google Meet at 6.30 p.m.

07 SEPTEMBER
TALK BY PADMASHRI K K MUHAMMED
The programme was jointly organised by INTACH-Calicut & the Inner Wheel Club of Calicut Central. It was held on Google Meet and attended by 98 people. The topic was - ‘How the Chambal Valley dacoits helped in the conservation of the Temples of Bateshwar at Morena, Madhya Pradesh.’ As then Chief of Archaeological Survey, Madhya Pradesh, Sri Muhammed was instrumental in restoring 80 of the 200 devastated temples. He explained the entire exercise very eloquently along with photographs taken at the time.

21 September
VISIT TO THEERAM
An INTACH team consisting of Convenor Jaiprakash Raghaviah, past convenor K.Mohan, Maleeha Raghaviah and Chitralekha S visited the site of Theeram an NGO working to protect the endangered Olive Ridley turtles. The objective was to shoot a documentary compered by Chitralekha S to highlight the activities of Theeram which is based at Payyoli near Vadakara and the difficulties organisers faced due to the covid pandemic.

02 OCTOBER
WHY CARE TO I CARE – Webinar on Good Citizenship
The webinar was held from 10 a.m to 1 p.m on Zoom meeting and was jointly organised by the six Chapters of INTACH in Kerala under the banner INTACH-Kerala. The aim was to inculcate a sense of good citizenship, love for heritage and voluntary involvement by citizens. The speakers were Adv. Harish Vasudevan, social activist (Topic: The Citizenship Ideal), Dr V Venu IAS, Addl. Chief Secretary, Cultural Affairs, Govt of Kerala (Topic: Why Culture Matters), P Vijayan IPS, Inspector General, Kerala Police (Topic: Taking the First Step), Shilo Shiv Suleman, contemporary artist (Topic: From Dreaming to Doing).
20 OCTOBER
CHAPTER MEETING NO.2: Held on Google Meet at 6.30 p.m. 15 members attended. There was an in-depth presentation by our member mural artist Naveen Kumar on the ancient mural art of Kerala.

28 OCTOBER
VISIT TO TIPU’S FORT AT FEROKE: Members of the Chapter (Conv. Jaiprakash Raghaviah, Co-Conv. Archana Kamath, K.K. Mohammed, Past Conv. K Mohan, and Chitralekha S) visited the Tipu’s Fort at Feroke.

17 NOVEMBER
CHAPTER MEETING NO.3: Held on Google Meet at 6.30 p.m. 16 members attended. There was a detailed presentation on thriryattom by our member thriryattom exponent M Pithambaran.

04 DECEMBER
INTACH HERITAGE QUIZ 2020 – PRE FINAL ROUND: Held on Google Meet at 10 a.m. 27 teams (54 students) from 8 schools in the city participated. Five teams qualified for the four slots in the finals. They were BEM Girls Higher Secondary School (2 teams), Bharatiya VidyaBhavan-Chevayur (2 teams) & Vidyatmika Public School (1 team). Two teams entered the Finals with the highest scores – BEM Girls HSS & Vidyatmika Public School. The remaining three teams got into a tie with the same score. A tie-breaker was scheduled for the 8th of December. The round was held in a multiple choice format in Google Forms.

08 DECEMBER
INTACH HERITAGE QUIZ 2020–PRE FINAL TIE-BREAKER ROUND : Held on Google Meet at 12 noon. The teams that took part in the Pre Final tie-breaker round were BEM Girls Higher Secondary School (1 team), Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan-Chevayur (2 teams). The team from BEM Girls HSS & one team from BVB-Chevayur qualified for the Finals. The round was held in a multiple choice format in Google Forms.

10 DECEMBER
INTACH HERITAGE QUIZ–FINAL ROUND: Held on Google Meet at 12 noon. The four teams that qualified for the Finals were from BEM Girls Higher Secondary School (2 teams), Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan-Chevayur (1 team) & Vidyatmika Public School (1 team). Two teams tied for the highest score and went in for a tie-breaker. They were BEM Girls HSS & BVB-Chevayur. The team from BVB-Chevayur won the tie and were declared Winners and qualified for the State Round of the competition. They were Adwaith N Anirudh (Class 8) & Nived S Kumar (Class 8). Both rounds in the Finals were held in the direct question format.

17 DECEMBER
Prakash Manhapra gave a presentation on the art forms that flourished along the banks of Nila river.
Like sugar in the milk

Tourist guides on the ‘Mumbai city tour’, a venture of the Maharashtra Tourism Corporation love to relate a story to the passengers: How a group of Parsis on a ship that had berthed off the Mumbai Coast sought permission of the local ruler for refuge in the port city, and to trade there. The ruler sent a small pot of milk conveying to the visitors the message that the place was already full. The visitors added a spoonful of sugar to the milk to convey that they would only add to the richness of the place by their presence. They lived up to the assurance.

This has been the narrative of the Parsi community in whichever part of the country they chose to settle, including the historic city of Kozhikode, adding to the prosperity of the place. And now about the Parsis in Kozhikode: an adventurous group comprising Jamshedji Marshall, Cooverji Dalal brothers and others came here in 1857 in search of business prospects. Spice trade was their main attraction in Kerala, and they set up estates in Wayanad. Initially they engaged in the timber, tiles and coir business. Phiroze Marshall started the first automobile spare parts shop in Kozhikode in 1920, at the location of present Bombay Restaurant. The first automobile workshop in Kozhikode was again set up by Phiroze Marshall in 1948. Erach Marshall managed it for quite some time. Darius Marshall joined the workshop in 1954, and there was no looking back. The state-of –art workshop had top category imported machines and earned fame for the excellent service provided.

The Parsis got support of the local communities to carry out business which flourished over time. They were catapulted to the upper echelons of society. Cooverji Dalal became Chairman of the Calicut Municipality, drove in a special six horse drawn carriage. The now residence of the Kozhikode Mayor was owned by Dr. Mugaseth a Parsi, one of the first doctors of the city who earned a medical degree from London. Dhanjibhai Maneckji Mugaseth built the Fire Temple on S M Street, a heritage site that has a more than a century old graveyard. He also founded the Calicut Cosmopolitan Club in July 1898. The only soda factory here, FN Heerjee and Co was owned by a Parsi.

Around the time of Independence there were about 300 Parsis in the Southern part of India with the head office of Parsi Anjuman located in Kozhikode. Now their number has dwindled. Parsis are engaged in philanthropic activities and endeared themselves to the local community.