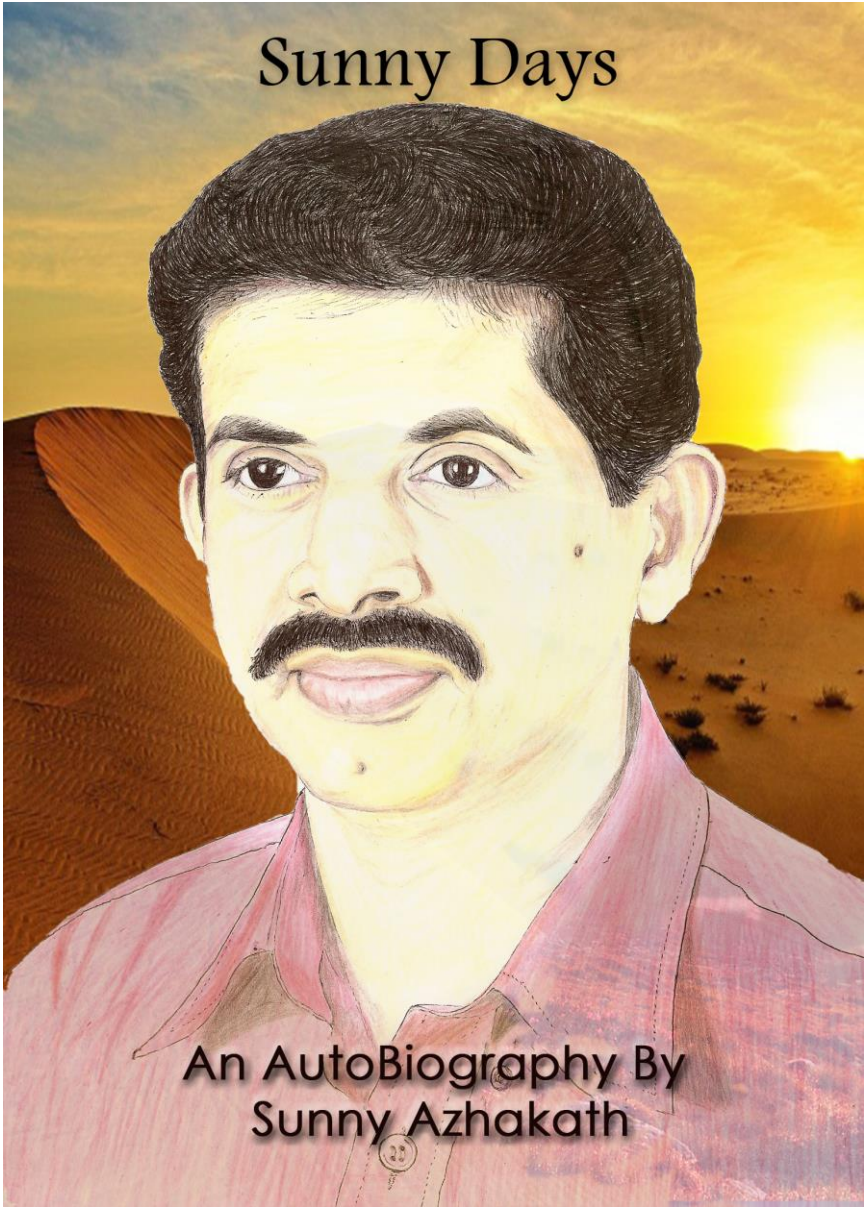


# Sunny Days



An AutoBiography By  
Sunny Azhakath

# **SUNNY DAYS**

An autobiography  
By  
**SUNNY AZHAKATH**

[www.sunnykutty.com](http://www.sunnykutty.com)

English Language

**SUNNY DAYS**

(Autobiography)

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## Dedication

To my loving wife Jolly, who was instrumental with her constructive criticisms in the fulfillment of one of my long-cherished desires of writing an Autobiography!

Moreover, my dedication goes to the "Computerjee", (As Amitabh Bachchan said) with out which I would not have tried for this type of silly and foolish attempts.

Last but not least, I dedicate this to our Computer Consultant Engineer & daughter Tanura for the necessary advises on design lay outs and other digital photography techniques for the production of this book in the printable format.

In the true sense, this is only an attempt from my side to find out whether a layman also can write something like an Autobiography or not.

**14/10/2022**

**Sunny Azhakath**

## **FOREWORD**

**“Sunny Days”** of Sunny Azhakath takes us to a generation of people he met and associated. It is always interesting to recollect how minor or major incidents happened in our life and how far it had its impact in shaping our life. A.G Sunnykutty through this book helps the reader to recollect his own experiences. Through the stories and life’s milestones he takes us through the social, cultural, religious family ways of life and that gives us a picture of our then society. The lines in this book also reveal historical facts of many personalities. As we read this book, we also agree with Sunnykutty that life is wonderful, exciting and interesting. Let us thank the God for this one life which we receive as a gift from God. Let us learn lessons from life’s experiences by evaluation, and let us to first seek His kingdom and His righteousness. God's blessings and my prayers to Sunnykutty, Jolly and their children Tanura & Ruwais families.

**Thiruvalla  
5-2-2008.**

**Rev Sunny Abraham  
Editor, Naveekaranam**

## **Sunny Days by A.G Sunnykutty**

This autobiographical account of one of my old colleagues Mr Sunnykutty is indeed inspiring. To be frank, I have read parts of the account several times with nostalgic feel. The narrative spread over a span of half a century during which tremendous changes have taken place in India as well as abroad. The writer closely associates all his family happenings and people as the thread which gives a sanguine touch and sensation to the reader.

It was during the early nineteen seventies that we all after graduating joined the services of FACT, a national public sector major and the mighty enterprise among the industries of those days in Kerala. The company was also ushering into a new growth and diversification trajectory with the installation of a state of art Ammonia and Urea complex with all attendant facilities making use of an Italian credit, at Ambalamedu by the side of the Cochin Refineries at Ambalamughal. Though the technology employed was of a new generation of design in the fertilizer making, it was not proven both in terms of process and equipment employed during that time. Those were the days of immense toil and struggle for Plant Operators with this unproven technology and unreliable equipment for both Ammonia and Urea Plants. Finally, we could overcome the design deficiencies with in-house expertise. Together with the committed efforts of people, the Plant achieved production at the rated capacities.

Those were also the years that the second Gulf oil boom was expanding in almost all countries in the Persian Gulf after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. During this time several countries in the Arab middle east were undertaking massive projects in the oil and gas industry. For trained manpower to operate and manage these projects, most of the multinational companies owning the facilities looked towards countries like India where such expertise was found readily available.

Situation in FACT was also not promising those days. As the country was coming out of the internal emergency imposed in 1975, Congress party was defeated and the Janatha party came to power at the centre. Public

sector industries all across the country were in turmoil and so also FACT. We all were struggling with Ammonia / Urea Plants and many among us thought of green pastures outside the country. The Gulf boom was a great relief for them. Sunny was among the first lot of people who left FACT to seek better opportunities in the Arab Gulf region, initially accepting the offer to move to Aramco. He later shifted to Banagas and thereafter settled down for long years with Gasco of the UAE. He was indeed a well-disciplined employee doing everything systematically with a methodical approach. This helped him to become acceptable to all among the supervisors very soon.

The book narrates the different experiences he had over the last three decades of service in these companies, people whom he met, and also the status of the industrial operations of the bygone days. Prosperous he became, as he could buy land and put up a house, rear two children and give them the right education, support family and move around the world.

The kind of exposure Gulf life provided expanded his outlook and made him build on his strength and personal traits. Indeed, he is a self-built person very friendly to his peers and colleagues and always enjoyed their support and affection. We are also happy to note that he has won several laurels and the Gasco management has appreciated and acknowledged his good performance with rewards and recognition.

The book also narrates the village life of those days around Keezhvaipur and Thiruvalla and its neighbourhood and his fond memories around people and institutions. It elaborately describes the incidents happening in the life of his friends and relatives. He always shared their joy and grief alike, enjoyed the times spent on tour and travel meeting people and taking part in occasions and events.

Apart from the personal narrative, the book also provides a glimpse of the transformation in the last five decades in the industry both in India and abroad. Reading through the book one's memories go back to the days of suffering, strife, struggle and development.

Back home Sunny now leads a healthy and happy retired life spending time with loving wife, children and extended family at Muttambalam near Kottayam.

Friend, here is the story of a person who with this determination and dedication ventured into a difficult terrain and brought success to his life. Most people engaged in technical assignments might have acquired many a success in their career but are reluctant to script them and they normally get into the annals of history as unknown and forgotten. Here, we have good friend among us, who through writing on his life and experiences take us to the decades past bygone days and excite us on the life those days. While reading the book one feels that we are taking a walk with Sunny.

Good luck to you

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Dated 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2021



Dr M.P Sukumaran Nair & family at Kakkanad on 16/12/2021

## Preface

### “MY LIFE” - SUNNY- AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

**"Mark Twain"** once wrote: **'If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.'** I read this when I was around 16 and haven't forgotten it since.

I have always been able to relate to the philosophy behind it. It holds true in my life because I believe that when you lie, you always have to remember two things- the truth and the lie. And, inadvertently, this complicates matters. When you speak the truth (at all times), life is so much simpler. You don't carry any luggage nor do you have to be wary of incidentals. If you speak the truth, your thoughts and actions will always coincide. Besides, lies get caught at some point of time. I know that choosing to speak the truth may not always be easy but it is rewarding- every time you begin a new day, you will be happy knowing that you have a clean slate! What more can you ask for?

The idea of writing an autobiography came to my mind by around 2003 and was haunting me for about 2 years until I start the write-up by 2005. The time also was favourable to me for the new endeavour as my work-related shift schedule was 4 days work and 4 days off with the 12 hours duty pattern. Write-ups continued for about three years and the initial Computer print-outs were submitted to our relative and friend Rev. Sunny Abraham, as Editor of "Naveekaranam" magazine, had suggested few omissions and additions to my work. Later the copies were given to few of the higher officials of our "Gasco", with the resultant encouragements and comments. Since then, the book is being constantly updated and am really indebted to all of my friends and relatives for their valuable suggestions and comments.

\*\*\*

## PART ONE

### IN THE BEGINNING

#### Chapter-1

#### Parents & birth- Life at Thiruvalla

**I was** born on 14<sup>th</sup> September 1950 at Mathilumkal house, Thiruvalla as the second child of Mr. Azhakath Mathai George (A.M George) and Mrs. Annamma George. (Usually, they were called as Georgekutty and Amminy respectively). It was one Thursday and the time was about 03 30 early morning and the Malayalam era being 1126 "Chinga massam" 28<sup>th</sup>. My birth star is "Atham nakshathram" which was considered to be bad omen for the parents especially the mother and her family. But nothing has happened except for some minor problems for the parents. But as a matter of fact, I was not in good health up to 12 years of my life. One by one lot of health problems has come up during this period to that much extent, which has compelled my mother Ammamma, and she has promised to choose me for the service of God by making me a Priest of the Mar Thoma Church. But God's Will was different and as per His wishes something else was planned for me.

\*\*\*

**As** my parents are not in this world, especially Ammamma, it is very difficult to get the details of my child hood and whatever I can recollect from my memory can be the authentic version of my early childhood days. Later my main sources have been the diaries that I have maintained right from my College Pre-degree level and at times due to various overwhelming aspects; I was not able to make daily entries into them, which has led to occasional gaps. Moreover, with the passage of time and fading memory, I am unable to recall certain aspects in full or pinpoint the exact dates of certain events. To the extent possible, I have tried to provide the relevant details. However, if any errors have crept in inadvertently or if any loopholes exist, I shall be grateful if the readers could point them out so that they can be corrected in further updates. My name "Sunnykutty" itself is something peculiar due to the presence of the "Kutty" (child) and through out my life period I will remain as a 'kutty' forever. I also couldn't get a clear picture as to why this name was chosen and instead my parents could have given the simple name "Sunny George" for me. This remains as a mystery and still I continue to be shy to express my name in front of others with the name "Kutty". Ever since I recognized this, I used to represent myself simply as "Sunny" only. Anyway "Sunnykutty" continues to be a rare name and so far, I could come across only 9 sunnykutties in my life and three of them I acquainted through the Obituary columns of the newspapers. The only prominent name in the list is that of one Mr.



'Sunnykutty Abraham' who is the special correspondent for the "Mathrubhumi" daily whom I have seen through TV debates etc.

\*\*\*

**My** early childhood recollections are very minor and whatever I do highlight through these columns are nothing but the narrations by Ammamma and others of which I have some vague memories only and the genuineness of the same cannot be questioned or verified at this stage. As stated earlier, I was born as the second child and my elder sister was "**Sallymol**" who could survive in this world only for about ten months. She succumbed to some sort of "**Diphtheria**" or "**Villanchuma**" (**whooping cough**) on **19/9/1948**. We are having a group photo taken at the time of her death and that is the only record to show that such a sweet baby ever in flesh and blood lived upon this world at least for a short duration. She was very cute and lovely as per Ammamma, and we were not fortunate enough to be blessed with a sister since then. If she had not passed away then our life would have taken an entirely different pattern or course of actions. Whatever it may be, all of us really missed our lovely sister "**Sallymol**" and in fact this has led to different consequences in my life also. Since childhood I have never been acquainted with any girls and being brought up in that atmosphere, I was really having certain apprehensions about the girls in my life also. Only some exemption to this feeling is regarding my stay with my auntie Kunjumamma (mother's younger sister) at Thiruvalla during 1958-60 periods.



Sallymol expired on 19/9/1948.

## Chapter-2

### Achachen & family

**Going** back to the history of our parents Achachen and Amamma, Achachen belonged to the noted "**Azhakath**" family of Keezhvaipur near Mallappally. He was the third child of Azhakath Manager Mr. A.A Mathai and Sosamma Mathai of the Vennikkulam "**Menamveetil**" family.

Achachen's date of birth was on 23/4/1925 or by the Malayalam calendar "**Medam**" 10<sup>th</sup> usually known as "**Pathamudeyam**" considered to be a very good day. Our grand father was known as "**Manager Mathai**" at that time as he was conducting some bank for which he was the Manager and was known like that even after the closure of the bank. As a reminiscent of the bank office, still we are having an old fashioned "**calling bell**" at Azhakath family house at Keezhvaipur. During the prime period of his life, Azhakath Appachen had purchased lot of lands at different areas of Keezhvaipur and was inherited to the children but the children by themselves didn't contribute much for the addition of the properties. An exception was our Achachen who had purchased some paddy fields at "**Mannar**" and about one and a half acres of land at "**Vadakkempuram**", Keezhvaipur. Azhakath Manager had six children, three girls and three boys.

Eldest was Kunjumariamamma who was the first one from Azhakath family to pass the ESLC exam at that time. Kunjumariamamma was married to the Military Engineering Service (MES) Engineer Mr. K.C Zachariah of the Vennikkulam Kacharackkal family. Everybody usually called Kunjumariamamma as "**Mummy**".

Second was Kunjunjachayan for which I am not sure about his educational qualifications but was engaged in agricultural jobs in the house. Kunjunjachayan's son Thampy is settled at Vengazha, Keezhvaipur and daughter Valsa married to Mr. Kunjumon and settled at Kaviyoor, Thiruvalla. Kunjunjachayan expired on 22/2/1977 at Keezhvaipur due to heart attack and he was the first among the Achachen's family who expired at the relatively younger stage. Azhakath Thampi (Mathew Sam), aged 71, expired at Keezhvaipur on 26/9/2019. Prior to that Thampi's wife Thankamma expired on 7/5/2017.

Third was Achachen or Georgekutty who failed in his ESLC exams and joined the Indian Military during the Second World War period with the Imperial Government.

Fourth was Thankachayan who was also engaged in the agricultural and other farming business. He was a subscriber of the yester years "**Kerala Karshakan**" agricultural magazine for long periods and I was also deeply interested in reading these magazines during my visits to Keezhvaipur. Later during my employment with FACT, Thankachayan used to seek advises from me for the effective utilisation of the chemical fertilisers. Thankachayan, after the death of his first wife "**Amminy**" Kochamma in 1961, married '**Kunjunjamma**' Kochamma in 1962.

He has two daughters Molly and Mercy from both of these marriages. Molly is married to Mr. Aniyam from Chengannur and got settled at Keezhvaipur Azhakath family house. Mercy also settled at Ranni after her marriage with Saji. Thankachayan expired on 4/11/1991 at Keezhvaipur.

Next is Santhammamma who was married to Mr. P.K John (Kunjuchayan) of the Mallappally Neduvelil family, retired from the Indian Air Force as Master Warrant Officer. Kunjuchayan expired at the age of 81 on 13/11/2008 at Mallappally. Both of Santhammamma's sons Monachen and Roy are in the Kerala Police Service. Monachen, retired as the Assistant Commissioner of Police at Kerala University, Thiruvananthapuram and Roy, retired as the **Regional Joint Excise Commissioner**. Elder daughter Sophy is married to Thampy who is working in Muscat and is settled at Kottayam.

And the sixth child Susammamma, who was extremely beautiful at that time and still the beauty is being maintained even in the old age to a good extent. I have very good reminiscences of the marriage of our aunty Susammamma (Achachen's youngest sister) with Panachamootil Babychayan (P.V Alexander) who was working in the Indian Air Force. I think, Ammamma was instrumental for that marriage proposal at that time and was finally agreed and settled. Susammamma was studying in her High School classes at that time and the marriage settlement resulted in the discontinuation of her studies at that level. Susammamma's marriage was on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1957. The marriage was conducted at Keezhvaipur and I have good memories of all the aspects of the feast, pandal and other celebrations etc. Panachamootil Babychayan retired from the Indian Air Force service as Flight Lieutenant and they are leading a retired and settled life at Thiruvalla. They have two daughters Suja and Sunu married and settled in S Arabia and Canada respectively.

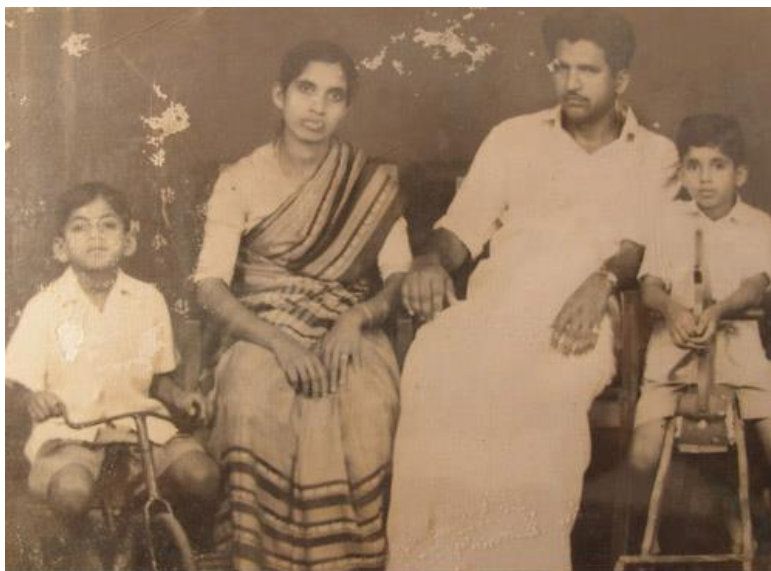
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**Azhakath Appachen, Ammachi & others 1970**



**Bangalore Mummy & Daddy**



**Achachen, Ammamma, Sunny & Vinod at Thiruvalla-1959**



**Thankachayan with Molly & Aniyam 1/9/1980**



**Sophy's marriage on 18/5/83**



**Babychayan, Susammamma, Suja & Sunu 23/6/1988.**



## Chapter-3

### Ammamma & family

**Ammamma** (DOB- 11/8/1929) belongs to the Mathilumkal family of Thiruvalla near the Railway Station. She was the eldest of the five children of the Mathilumkal Unni (M.P Varkey) and Kunjamma (Saramma Varkey) who was from the Kozhencherry Kidangalil family. Second is Lilly (Mary Varkey), third Kunjumon (M.V Pothan), fourth Kunjumol (Kunjumol Varkey) and the youngest Renjimon (Renji Varkey).



**Thiruvalla Mathilumkal family with Appachen, Ammachi & Ammamma-1936**

Lilly Pengal (we used to call our Lilly aunty as 'Lilly Pengal') and Kunjumamma completed their Nursing studies and Lilly Pengal worked as staff nurse at Military Hospital, Poona, Safdarjung Hospital, Delhi, Aramco Hospital, S Arabia and Muscat Hospital in Oman on different occasions. She was married to Mr. M.K George (Georgekutty) of the Keezhvaipur **Kampumkal** family and was working as Labour Officer of the MSERA Company at Bangalore. Later they got settled at Ernakulam and Georgekuttychayan was working as "Personnel Officer" of the "Kerala Government Potteries" Company at Chalakudy until his death by October 1979. Their daughter "Shobhamol" is married to "Kochumon" (Day George Philip) of Kottayam Kollad Kaithayil family and settled in Kuwait. (Later Shobhamol & Kochumon took Lilly Pengal to Kuwait and for quite long time she was there with

them and the grand children Steve & Stane. Owing to ill-health, Lilly Pengal returned to Ernakulam by June 2019 and finally succumbed to her ill-ness by 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2021 and the burial was conducted at the Elamkulam C S I church on 10/6/21)



**G K & Lillypengal with Shobhamol- 1978**

**Kunjumonachayan** joined the Central Government Service at Poona as an LDC by around 1961 and after marriage to Leelamma Kochamma from Puthuppally, Kottayam was transferred and settled at Madras by 1972. Kunjumonachachen retired from Central Government service by 2000. They have two children; elder son Gigimon is married to Blessy and settled in Dubai. Younger daughter Sujamol married to businessman Mr. Roy Abraham and settled in Ratnagiri, Maharashtra. Sujamol got her Doctorate degree in English Literature from Madras University by 2008. Unfortunately, Roy met with the sudden death at the relatively young age of 48 at Mumbai on 10/4/2019 and the body was buried at the ancestral family home at Kurianoor, Kerala. Kunjumonachachen expired on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2008 at Madras and the burial was carried out at Thiruvalla SCS Church premises on 19<sup>th</sup> August.





**Kunjumonachachen, Leelamma Kochamma during their visit to Ruwais, March 2006**

**Kunjummamma** completed her Nursing studies from St Stephen's Hospital, Delhi and worked in the same hospital as staff nurse for some time until her marriage on 25/1/1968 to Capt. K.M Mathew (Baby) of the Vadasserikkara **Kodoorazhath Valael** family. Actually, theirs was a love marriage and Babychayan and Kunjumamma were known to each other during his 3 months stay at Thiruvalla Manayil house in front of the Railway station for the completion of his B Sc. Degree at S.B College, Changanasserry. Later Babychayan joined as Fisheries Officer with Gujarat Fisheries and eventually joined the Indian Military on Short Service Commission during the Emergency China war in 1962. Babychayan retired as Captain from Short Service Commission to join back Gujarat Fisheries as Manager. Later in 1973 he joined MPEDA (Marine Products Export Development Authority) during its formation by Central Government as Assistant Director and finally retired from the Service as **Joint Director** by 1998. Two sons, Ajay married to Deepa and settled in Ernakulam and the younger son Bijoy married to Babie and settled in Dubai. Babychayan expired at the age of 81 on 11/7/2018 and the funeral was conducted at Jerusalem Mar Thoma church, Elamkulam on 13/7/2018.

As we pay our final farewell to Babychayan... remembering him and cherishing all our past memories of him, our daughter Tanura wrote in 'Whatsapp' as follows: -  
 "I still remember him as a very strong personality ... He was a real captain not only in his job but also in his life. He used to steal the show in every conversation

or activities... be it with friends or relatives. He had ideas, plans that really made him different from others. His life was a well planned one, well ordered and guided with great principles!! A smart captain!! Although we all miss him from now onwards... but he has left for us a beautiful chapter in our life for us to follow and perceive!! Love you appacha!!”

Kunjumamma also was not in good health after the death anniversary of Babychayan and finally she succumbed to her illness by 15/9/2019 and the burial was conducted at the Elamkulam Jerusalem Mar Thoma church on 16/9/19. Upon the demise of Kunjumamma, our daughter Tanura commented as follows: “Remembering Kunjumolammachi as a real great source of positive energy. Being the wife of a prominent person, having been exposed to different circles of society, she always was a great lady of cultured character with sensible thoughts. A strong pillar of support for Appachen always... like Jijcha said... he couldn't live be it on earth or above with out her...Surely, she was a person whom we all admire... as she has shown us living a remarkable life for us to follow in many phases of our life... She was the first one to call me Juhi... and she used to shorten that to Chawla... at a time when I had no idea of what Bollywood was all about. She was caring and a very loving person... led a well-organized life...one of the beautiful ladies of our family with beauty both inner and outer.”

**My son Ruwais wrote as follows: -**

Woods are lovely dark and deep...  
 But Kunjumol Ammachi has promises to keep...  
 Miles to go before she sleeps...  
 So, she is still with us...  
 She is still with all of us...  
 Kunjumol Ammachi is the mother for all of us...  
 A mother's love has no END...



**Capt K M Mathew & Kunjumol-1969**

**Our** younger uncle Renjimon passed the B.A degree from Mar Thoma College by 1972 and after short term employment at Bangalore, Bombay and Qatar had finally settled with the permanent service with Aramco of S Arabia since 1979. Renjimon married to Mercy and blessed with the children Rajini, Rubin and Reni. Renjimon also retired from Saudi Aramco upon completion of 28 years service by October 2007.



**Renjimon & Mercy 24/5/80**



**Mathilumkal family Sept 1968**



**Achachen, Amamma & Lilly pengal at Poona-1960**



**Amma, Amamma & others-1969**



*Family photo upon expiry of Sallymol on 19/9/1948.*



**Thiruvalla Mathilunkal family - 1925**



## Chapter - 4

### Life at Vengazha

**Ammamma** was only seventeen at the time of her marriage in 1946 with Achachen (Georgekutty) and was still studying in her “**fifth form**” or the present 9<sup>th</sup> standard at SCS High School, Thiruvalla. Achachen was in the Military Service as Havildar Clerk.



Achachen prior to marriage

As told by Ammamma, her dowry was Rs 2000/- which was a huge amount at that time and Mathilumkal Unnichayan could easily afford the same during the prime of his wholesale and retail provision shop business at Thiruvalla. Later some Police cases were involved for hoarding and black marketing of sugar etc and ultimately resulted in the down fall of his provision business. I still have vague memories of Appachen's provision shop in front of the present Thiruvalla KSRTC bus stand. Moreover, as a monument of his business, a big “**Sharkara thony**” was in the Mathilumkal house for quite a long time until dismantling by around 1965 period. Achachen was only 21 or 22 years of age at the time of his marriage and after the initial honeymoon etc he went back for the Military Service again but he was not in a position to concentrate in the job matters after leaving Ammamma in the house. Finally, he gave up his Military job and returned back, thinking that he can manage with the family property and other business etc. Later, he started a hotel business besides the provision shop of Appachen in front of the Thiruvalla Bus stand. In due course of time this business turned to be a flop and was forced to abandon the same. “**Sally mol**”, my elder sister was born somewhat this period and finally succumbed to “**villan chuma**” by 1948. Later I was born by September 1950, and I think up to 1954, Achachen and Ammamma were staying and

shuttling between Thiruvalla and Keezhvaipur and was looking after the agricultural properties at Keezhvaipur and the paddy field at "Mannar". The paddy field at "Mannar" was purchased by Achachen and was given to somebody from that locality for cultivation purposes. Later some disputes happened with the occupants and the property was sold out. Finally, may be with the military settlement money etc he built one house at "Vengazha" somewhat 3 Km away from the Azhakath family house at Keezhvaipur. We moved to this house at Vengazha and I think, I started my School 1<sup>st</sup> standard at Vengazha LP School and I continued up to the 3rd standard at the same school until we changed our abode from Vengazha to Thiruvalla. I don't have any remembrance of any of the school incidents during these 3 years except for the old Headmaster of the school. Even the location of the school cannot be recollected from my memory. Later, on many occasions I was planning to visit this school but till now I couldn't succeed. More over I am not quite sure whether this school is closed or not. Amamma used to say some stories about my school period at Vengazha. This Vengazha School Headmaster used to visit our house at times and to narrate my schooling details to Achachen and Amamma. Another Vengazha incident still in my memory is about one knife cut on my left-hand thumb. This scar is still evident on my thumb. Some of the Vengazha neighbours I can recollect are that of the "Pandicherryil" Achayan, Amma and their children viz. Thampi, Moani, Kunjumon and Thankamma. Thampi was employed with the "Reserve Bank of India" and retired as the Chief General Manager of RBI- Bombay. Kunjumon and Thankamma are in Abu Dhabi and once they visited our house at the Ruwais housing complex. Moani is presently settled in Keezhvaipur after few years' service in the Gulf. I have only vague memories about the eldest daughter Alice Amamma. Pandicherryil Achayan expired at the age of 96 on 27/2/2010.



At Vengazha with Amamma & Pandicherryil Thmpy



Sunny at Vengazha, Keezhvaipur with Vinod-1956

**In fact**, our life at Vengazha was somewhat miserable during that period. Achachen found it difficult to make both ends meet with the agricultural income alone to maintain the family with the two children. My younger brother Vinod also was very small during these days. Life became a difficult issue for Achachen and he decided to join back the Military for better prospects again and finally he could succeed in his attempt. He joined back the Military at the DSC (Defense Security Corps) wing by 1958 and we had to move our abode from Vengazha to Thiruvalla Mathilumkal Ammamma's house. By early 1958 we moved to Thiruvalla and I was actually tired of sickness at that time and on testing at Medical Mission hospital, I was found to be affected by the "round worms" symptoms and after the proper medication I could regain my health to the normal level. Upon arrival at Thiruvalla, my schooling was the real problem. We tried in vain to get admission in the SCS LP School and finally managed to get admission in the 4<sup>th</sup> standard of CMS LP School at Theepany, Thiruvalla. Two of my Theepany colleagues whom I can recollect are one "**Chella**", the daughter of butcher Mathai and another "**Samuel**". In fact, due to the acquaintance with Chella, I was fortunate enough to get the nickname "**Chella**" during those days! During childhood days, whenever we quarrel, Renjimon and Vinod used to call me by this name for quite long time.

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## Chapter-5

### Childhood at Thiruvalla

**Actually**, my early school days started at Thiruvalla and I started with my "Nilathezhuthu" (initiation into letters) with the teacher "Meenkaarathi Jaanaki" who used to sell dry fishes at the Thiruvalla Evening Market known as "Anthichanda" and in the morning she used to conduct one "Nilathezhuthu" class for some group of students in her house near Thiruvalla Kavala. Initially I was interested in going to the classes but later I was having some sort of aversion for the classes and quarrelling with Ammamma and others was very often on this issue and I remember, once I was running to jump into the open Well of the near by "Peshkar's" property. There was no compound wall at that time for their property and the entire area of 1.5 acres of land was kept as a barren land. A case was pending in the Court between the "Peshkar" and "Dr. Tharyan Verghese" families for the ownership of this property and the case was finalized by 1958 in favour of the "Peshkar" family. Mathilumkal Appachen was one of the "Sakshi" or "witness" for this case and because of his statements "Peshkar" could get the property and finally the "Tharyan Verghese" group was deadly against "Mathilumkal Unni". Appachen was known as "Mathilumkal Unnikunju" and he was one of the prominent three "Unnies" of the Thiruvalla locality at that time. "Peshkar's" family was staying besides the Mission Hospital behind the present Railway Station and at this 1.5 acres of land; the Peshkar constructed a huge compound wall and segregated their land from others. Some space was also provided for Mathilumkal Unni for use as walkable road through the entire length of the compound wall at the northern end but this road was used only very rarely during those periods because our actual walk-able road was an extension of the Railway Station Road starting from the "Manayil Mathilumkal" family. Most of the property from the Railway station to the "Pension-kunnu" belonged to the Diwan Bahadur Dr. V Verghese, I.C Chacko and I.C Kurian families. Tharyan Verghese, after loosing the property case, decided to teach a lesson or hurt Mathilumkal Unni in whatever possible ways. Their properties in front of the Mathilumkal family was given as "Kudikidappavakasam" (farm workers living in the landlords' farms) to different families as well as sold as small small units to different people and constituted one "colony" at that area. This had a real impact on our life through out the entire period of our stay in the Mathilumkal family. These are some of the stories or narrations by Thiruvalla Ammachi during our stay at Thiruvalla.

Another interesting story about this period is about my "car craze" at the age of about 4 or 5. Before the formation of the colony in front of our Mathilumkal house, all the areas including the "Pension-kunnu" road was very clear and could be easily viewed from our house. At that time, other than Dr. Tharyan Verghese, I.C Chacko and I Kurian from the "Pension-kunnu" were the only richest families in that locality and these personnel were having a retired life in that area. I think, both of them were retired Chief Engineers from the Kerala Government Service. These people were having the motor car and we could see the 'motor car'

regularly plying through these roads. When ever the car pass through, as per Amamma and Ammachi's narrations- I used to say "Chackoyuda vandi ponnae- Monum oru vandi vanghikkum" something like that. Even though I was not having any car craze, I was fortunate enough to buy one "Premier Padmini" car on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1980 after about 25 years of my childhood utterances.

**Another** notable point during these periods in my life is about breaking of my right hand twice. Earlier also when I was about 4 or 5 years old, I met with the same injury once during my play with the cycle rim, which was used as a wheel, and run behind that and finally met with the accident. Second time actually we were conducting some game at the mango field of our house. One coconut leaf stem (**madal**) was kept in between two mud walls (**Kayyala wall**) and I was walking on that bridge and finally fell down and broke my right hand in another location for the second time and the hand was kept in the plaster for about two months. This time, actually it was not fixed in the proper position and as such the hand was slightly in the awkward position and not exactly cured after the removal of the plaster. Anyway, after about two months, while carrying a mug of water along the steps for the watering of the courtyard garden plants, slipped through the steps and ended up with the fracture at the same point. Again, my hand was in the plaster for another two months and afterwards the hand was in the correct position and slowly got cured by itself in due course of time and later also I have not felt any deformity by virtue of this break down. Once it was our neighbour "**Pannikkathy Sumathy**" who took me to the Hospital immediately after the fall, for the medical treatment. And all these times the plastering was done by "**Georgekutty Apothecary**" of the Medical Mission Hospital or the "**Saayppinte Aasupathry**".

**Owing** to the frequent sickness that was haunting me from time to time, Amamma or Thiruvalla Ammachi decided to check my "**Jathakam**" to find out the actual future of my life. Accordingly, my "Jathakam" was written by one "**Kaniyan**" from Thiruvalla Kaviyoor and I think, Rs 5/- was the charges for the "Kaniyan" at that time. Mine was the first and the last "Jathakam" from the entire Azhakath and Mathilumkal family and I have not come across any other since then. Actually, whatever written in the "Jathakam" was having some impact in my real life? As per the write up I was supposed to pass through the utmost difficult situation in my life at the age of 46 but God's plan was something different, otherwise I would not have been here to write my memoirs at this moment.

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**My** recollections go back to the early period of 1958, during that time; I transferred my abode from Keezhvaipur to Thiruvalla along with Amamma and Vinod. Achachen joined the Military service again after a stay of 2-3 years at Keezhvaipur and upon his return to Military service we were forced to move from there to Thiruvalla. Achachen was in Poona at that time and later he took Amamma and Vinod to Poona Military quarters and I was forced to be alone under the care of Thiruvalla Ammachi, Appachen, Kunjumamma, Kunjumonachachen and Renjimon. Kunjumamma was in her sixth form or 10<sup>th</sup>

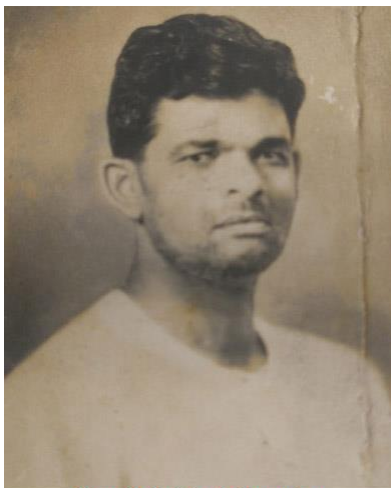
standard as we call now and moreover it was the time of the "Vimojanasamaram" of which I have very good memory of many strike incidents at the Thiruvalla main bus stand area. One important personality I can remember is that of Mr. Joy Thirumoolapuram, as described by Kunjammamma. (Noted Journalist and Writer, Joy Thirumoolapuram expired at the age of 73 on 23/7/2010). We used to visit the strike area very often or we can say participated in the strike activities. I think, at that time, Joy was a student of Thiruvalla Mar Thoma College who took active participation in the "Vimojanasamaram" against the EMS Namputhirippad's first Communist Government in Kerala. This strike was a real thrill for the young fellows like us at that time. We still remember certain slogans of that strike period.

"Thekku thekkoru desathu thiramaalalkalhide theerathe, Flory ennoru garbhiniye bharthaavilla nerathu, chuttu karichoru sarkkaarae- pakaram njangal chodikkum".  
"Angamally kallarayil Flory ennoru garbhiniye vedi vechillae sarkara, aah kallarrayaanae kattaayam, pakaram njangal chodikkum, MN ne njangal edutholaam"

etc were a few to recollect. Actually, this shoot of the pregnant Flory on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1959 at Vizhinjam, Trivandrum was a mistake by an ordinary Police constable and ended up with further fuelling to the on going "Vimojanasamaram" strike. Finally, the World's 2nd Communist Ministry, which came to power through ballot voting system, was dismissed by the Central Government on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1959. Main issue was the education reforms and other things introduced by Minister Joseph Mundassery for which the Nair Service Society (NSS) and the Christian Management Institutions were deadly against the Government. (Few of the Malayalam poems for the sixth form students were Changampuzha's famous "Vazhakkula" and Vyloppalli's "Mambazham" at that time and I have learned by heart these poems and the associated stories fully from Kunjammamma at the age of about eight itself.) Due to frequent strikes etc at that time, most of the Sixth form students were not able to continue with their studies. One of the victims was Kunjammamma who also failed in her 10<sup>th</sup> standard and was forced to go to the "Namboothiry's Tutorial College" at Thiruvalla, in order to continue and complete her SSLC exam. I think, this was the only one Tutorial College at Thiruvalla at that time and one Mr. VPP Namboothiry was the principal.

**Moreover,** I have many memories of my stay and other activities at Thiruvalla during 1958. Thiruvalla Appachen's earlier Provision store opposite to the Thiruvalla bus stand had failed and finally he started his wooden log business shop opposite to the SCS High School compound at the 'Thiruvalla Anthichanda' or the Evening market area. By about the third quarter of 1958, Achachen got the family quarters in the Military camps and he took Ammamma and Vinod to his quarters and I was forced to be in the company of others in the house like Kunjumonachachen, Kunjammamma and Renjimon. I don't remember anything about Lillypengal as she was already undergoing her Nursing studies at Mysore Hospital. Thiruvalla Appachen's business was in a dull state and was just managing his shop at the "Antichanda" kavala area. We have got very good memories of certain incidents at that time. Kunjammamma, Renjimon and I, used

to take the lantern (*raanthal villakku*) and the *Kampy vadi* (metallic spring rod for protection from snakes' etc) to Appachen for use at night during his return from the shop business. We used to take this regularly after the return from the school. Appachen used to give us "*masala dosa*" from the nearby '*Sasindra hotel*' on a regular basis and that was the main attraction at that time. More over, the daily purchase of the fish and vegetables were conducted during this trip. Often "*Mathi*" fish was available in abundant quantity for about one "*Anna*" or 10 "*Naya Paisa*" or something like that. The Indian Government has changed the "*Rupee*", "*Anna*" system to the "*Rupee*" and "*Paisa*" decimal system by 1<sup>st</sup> April 1957 and hundred "*Naya Paisa*" constituted one "*Rupee*". Prior to that the British System, 16 Annas constituted one "*Rupee*" and both the system were in simultaneous operation for quite a long time, I think up to 1960. Now the "*Annas*" and "*Naya paisa*" has become part of the Indian History. The two Annas full meals system and the famous "*oranna samaram*" has become the "*Nostalgia*" of the older generations. I do remember, certain incidents happened during our "*Antichanda*" trips. Certain "*Poovalans*" also used to trace Kunjumamma at that time and Renjimom and I were her bodyguards for some sort of protection as not being alone. One day, one man took me to one of the teashops at the '*Anthichanda*' and purchased some '*Uzhunuvada*' and gave to me. Out of my mere innocence I was very much happy and took it coolly to the house. Kunjumamma, upon seeing this, got angry and advised me not to take like this from others and finally I think we threw it out also.



Thiruvalla Mathilumkal Appachen

Kunjumonachachen, my elder uncle was also in the house during these years and I don't remember exactly whether he was studying anything at that time. After completing the SSLC, he was studying for the Civil Engineering Diploma course at Thiruvalla. As what I heard from many sources, Kunjumonachachen was very brilliant in his studies especially Mathematics and the circumstances were not

suitable for his higher studies after the death of Appachen on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1958.

Sudden death of Appachen changed everything. He was very healthy and at the age of about 50, on 26<sup>th</sup> or 27<sup>th</sup> of December he was admitted in the Medical Mission hospital due to severe chest pain and finally succumbed to the chest pain and this was the first time we were hearing about “heart attack” or “blood pressure” or such a disease. I can still recollect the scene at the extreme corner of the "C" General ward of Mission Hospital. Afterwards, Appachen's body was brought to the house of “Ummamma”, one of the eldest sisters of Appachen who was staying with her son Kunjunjachayan and family in front of the Railway Station. Kunjunjachayan decided to take the body to his house, as our Mathilumkal house was not having any proper road facilities for the visitors at that time, Ammachi had no option other than agreeing for Kunjunjachayan's plans in that difficult situation. Only Ammachi, Kunjumonachachen, Kunjumamma, Renjimom and I were in the house at that time and probably Achachen, Ammamma and Lilly Pengal might have been informed through letters only later. On 29<sup>th</sup> December Appachen's body was buried in the SCS church cemetery. Ammachi, at the prime time of her age ~ 46 years, suddenly became alone and all the children except Ammamma, at the studying level. Lilly Pengal, as we call our Ammamma's younger sister, who was studying for her final year of the Nursing course at one of the Mysore Hospitals, was not able to attend the funeral at that time. So also, was the case with Ammamma and Achachen. They were at Poona Military quarters at that time along with Vinod, my younger brother. All these people were not able to attend the funeral of Appachen. One group photo was taken at the time of Appachen's burial and I can be noticed as a small crying boy in the photo, dressed in a white "pavada" type trouser or 'kalchatta' or “knickers” and one baniyan with sleeves.



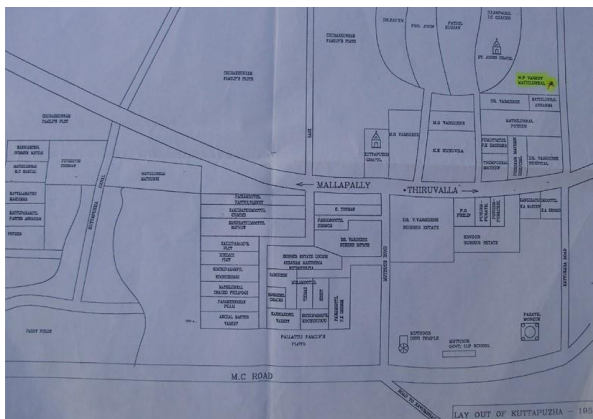
Thiruvalla Mathilumkal Appachen expired on 28/12/1958

After the expiry of Thiruvalla Appachen, life was bit difficult for Ammachi to manage with the agricultural income alone and actually Ammachi was in a predicament situation. Lilly pengal was in her final year of the nursing studies or may be at her service period after the studies at Mysore. Kunjumonachachen, Kunjumamma, Renjimon- all were at the school or the SSLC level with out any job or any other source of income. Only income was the agricultural income from the land of about 1.5 acres of land at Mathilumkal house. The land was divided into different sections, one area with full of Mango trees of different varieties, another section with about 33 coconut trees, and the border area constituting the Cashew nut trees and Jack fruit trees. The remaining areas nearer to the house was used for the cultivation of tapioca and other day today crops like [Vazha](#), [Chena](#), [Chembu](#), [Kachil](#) and Pepper etc. Pepper was having a good price at that time and the main income was from Pepper. Tapioca crop yielding was done usually as a big event or celebration. All the tapioca was dried up and kept in the 'chack' or gunny bags for the day to-day use for the next year. I don't remember whether anything was sold or not. But I remember we used to sell mangoes at that time to different neighbours. After the tapioca crop yield etc, the land was kept as barren land for about one or two months and that was the summer vacation period and we used to turn this land as foot ball ground for the vacation games. All the children from the locality used to gather in that area with football matches etc. and was a real past time for the mid summer vacationers.

During this period, surprisingly enough Ammachi used to get a Money Order of Rupees Fifteen from Kozhencherry Kidangalil Kunjunjachayan. Kunjunjachayan, the only son of one of the elder brothers of Ammachi, who was working at Kuwait Oil Company at that time and was in close touch with the Thiruvalla Mathilumkal family. He has made the arrangements with his Company to send Rs 15-00 M.O regularly to Thiruvalla Ammachi. Kunjunjachayan continued with this Money order payment till Lilly pengal's appointment as a Staff Nurse. At that time an old Postman was bringing the M.O and Ammachi used to give him 50 paise regularly for the money. After the death of Appachen, one or two auctioned Chitties were also due for payment and the interest also was accruing and finally the promoter of this Chitty fund filed the case in the Court and the Court verdict came for the payment of Rs 4000-00 or to face the Court forfeiture procedures. Ammachi had no option other than selling some of the property for the Court money payment. Finally, 40 cents of land from the front area of the house were sold for Rs 4000-00 by 1961 and the payment was made accordingly. This land was purchased by one Mr. Jacob Sir, from Nedumbram who was working in the Thiruvalla Main Post Office. His second son George C Jacob was my classmate in the sixth standard at SCS High School and there is an interesting story connected with my friend Georgee. This is being included in my 6<sup>th</sup> standard reminiscences. This Jacob Sir was planning to build a house at this property but some how it went on like that and finally gave up the building plan. By this time Lilly Pengal had gone to Saudi Arabia after getting appointment in Aramco and with the Gulf money back ground, deals were settled for the repurchase of these 40 cents of land for Rs 12000-00 by the third quarter of 1964. During this period Ammachi purchased this land in the name of Lilly Pengal with out her consent and it continues like that since then.

It was during 1956 the Kottayam- Ernakulam Railway line was commissioned and was inaugurated by Lal Bahadur Shastri, Union Railway Minister on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1956. And it took one more year to commission the Kottayam - Kollam Railway line by January 1958. It was a novel way of life for all the inhabitants of Thiruvalla with the new Railway system. Thiruvalla Station was provided with the Goods station also along with the main station. Actually, our Mathilumkal family house was behind the present Goods shed where our Appachen's younger brother 'Ammaachen' (uncle) was staying and after the land acquisition by Railway, Ammaachen and family moved to Muthoor area and was staying there since then. This 'Ammaachen' name was something special and he was known and called by everybody like that only. In fact, this came from his nephew Kunjunjachayan, son of 'Ummamma' or Appachen's elder sister and both of them were of the same age even though Uncle and Nephew. Kunjunjachayan used to call him "Ammaachen" and all the other people also followed like that. Even, the younger generations like us also used to call him like that. Collection of grease and molasses from the Goods shed was one of the past times for us at that time. And I don't remember what we were doing with those things at that time.

My Railway reminiscences cannot be concluded with out mentioning an interesting incident happened with us. Once one old man parked his car in front of the Goods Station opposite to the railway lines. Some of us including Renjimom were playing besides that. This old man parked his car at the higher elevation and went somewhere. After his departure, we pushed his car and to our surprise this car started rolling and ultimately hit some objects on the sand road and stopped some how. Upon return, the old man saw all our actions and ran after us and threw stones on us. All of us ran away and don't know what happened after that. I wonder now, how this car moved at that time! May be the car was on hand brake and was not on gear. More over, those days, the cars were started by cranking with the starting lever from the front side of the car and the battery-ignition start-up system was the latest advancement.



Thiruvalla Kuttapuzha Lay out- 1950s.



**One** of the sensational news or incidents during 1958 or 59 at Thiruvalla was that of the famous "**Ammaal Kolakkesu**". Ammaal belonged to the St. George Motors family at the Thiruvalla Central Kavala and was married to Prof Sunny of some Tutorial College in Changanacherry. I think, Ammaal was a class mate of Ammamma at SCS High School. Ammal was murdered under suspicious circumstances and Sunny was jailed and ultimately based on the story the famous "**Bhaarya**" (Wife) cinema was produced by Kunjhacko. Still, I do remember my visit to their house at Thiruvalla Kavala and I think Ammamma or Kunjumamma also was with us at that time.

Another tragic incident which happened those days was that of the suicide of "**Sharada**" in the north east side pump Well of the Tharyian Verghese family at our house locality. This Sharada belonged to the "**Panikkanmmar**" (Carpenter) family staying at the entrance road to the "**Pension Kunnu**" or IC Chacko / I Kurian family. Later this "**Panikkanmmar**" family sold their property to Madolil Rajan's family and went from there to somewhere else. For a very long time we were actually afraid to walk through this road during those days in the night.

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**Kunjumonachayan**, my elder uncle, spent more than one year with out any employment after his Civil Engineering Diploma and his main past time during this period was the "**Card play**" in one of the shops of Mr Karriachen near the "**Naushad Hotel**" at Thiruvalla Kavala. All his friends were relatively older and I think he was the only younger guy in that gang. Some times Renjimon and I, while coming back from School used to meet him and we were doing some sort of spy work on Kunjumonachachen. Kunjumonachachen started his "**smoking**" business during this period and for his peculiar habit of smoking, we are also responsible. Upon seeing us he will not put the cigarette puff outside his mouth and instead he will swallow the entire smoke and this practice was continued since then and no body has ever seen him putting the puff outside. Many people tried in vain to refrain him from this smoking habit and everybody gave up without any impact on him. Regarding his card play at that time, I think he was a good player and was making good money but we don't know whether he was losing or gaining any money out of the card's play. After getting the employment also, he was in the regular habit of playing cards and smoking for which he has never been able to abandon it. Kunjumonachachen later managed to get an LDC post in the "**Inspectorate of Armaments**" of the Military Civilian wing at Poona by 1960 and continued his job in the same wing for many years and was later transferred to Madras and got retired from this Government service at the age of sixty by 2000 and expired on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2008 at Madras and was buried at Thiruvalla.

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## Chapter - 6

### Theepany & E. H School days

**My** Theepany School was only a Primary School and after passing 4<sup>th</sup> standard, we tried our level best to get admission in SCS School but priority was given for SCS Primary School and Kindergarten School students only and as such I couldn't manage to get an admission at SCS School. At last, somehow, I got an admission in Government E.H Girls School, beside the Thiruvalla Government Hospital about 5 KM away from the house. This School used to admit boys also up to 5<sup>th</sup> standard at that time and I was lucky enough to get into that School otherwise I am not sure what would have happened to my studies during 1959-60 period. But this one-year also went like that some how. This entire five-KM distance to the school had to be walked upon and there was no option other than that at that time. Pity thing, I was alone through out this one-year up to the school and probably some company up to the SCS junction and beyond that only solo run. English was not a subject in any of the classes up to the 4<sup>th</sup> standard and I started learning my English a b c d, only at the 5<sup>th</sup> standard. But the SCS Kindergarten School was an exception where the students were also taught English from the beginning. My 5<sup>th</sup> standard remembrance is limited to only two of my classmates. One Rohini Samuel and the other Prasad Thomas Kodiat. This Rohini Samuel was an outstanding beauty at that time and probably that may be the reason I could recollect her in the later stage also. Later I have seen her in Mar Thoma College for her Pre degree and Botany degree classes along with my college studies. Prasad Thomas and I were bench mates and his house was situated about 2 furlongs away from the School and I had visited his house many times during lunch break etc. More over the "[Mindamadom](#)" or "[Bethany Ashram](#)" monastery also was in front of his house. Later I have seen Prasad in Mar Thoma College for his Zoology degree studies but one-year junior to me. Actually, I have seen him many times but not talked at all. After his M Sc degree, he joined Baselius College, Kottayam as Zoology lecturer and ultimately Zoology Professor and Head of the department at Catholicate College, Pathanamthitta. Later he became the Principal of the Catholicate College by April 2005. This Prasad Thomas, I could meet him again at Parumala while attending the marriage of Prof. K.J Alexander's daughter Anu during August 2002. Presently he is the Principal of St. Mary's Business College, Paliakara, Thiruvalla. Moreover, Prasad is now a prominent figure in the cultural community of Thiruvalla. Nothing is known about the other character Rohini since then.

## Chapter-7

### Keezhvaipur-Thiruvalla reminiscences

**Keezhvaipur** Mummy's elder daughter Jessyammamma and son Roy were in Keezhvaipur till completion of their SSLC exams and afterwards they also left for Bangalore to join Mummy, Daddy and younger brother Jolly and Sister Betty. Roy was very brilliant and was maintaining a charming personality through out his dealings with others. Moreover, he was a very good short story writer. During our frequent visits to Keezhvaipur, Roy was our good brother, friend and companion for many of our dealings on those days. It was with Roy, I had my first and the last VBS studies in 1961 at CMS High School, Mallappally. After Roy's departure for Bangalore, I could manage to get some of his short stories and few of them I sent to "Manorama" but they neither published nor sent any reply. I think, I have presented the same in my name after his death or vanishing on 5/12/1962. Still Roy's disappearance remains a tragic incident in the history of Mummy and their family. During Roy's College studies at Bangalore, had some quarrel with Mummy and has not returned back yet. All their searches were in vain and Roy vanished from history just like that. Had he been alive, I could anticipate one IAS personality from the Azhakath or the Kacharackkal family. During my acquaintance with Roy, I have learnt a lot of things from him. One funny thing was the making of the so-called '**Rubber Stamp**'. He taught me the technique "how to make wooden stamps" from the soft thorns of the "**Panji-maram**" and we have been using it from that time onwards. Another funny story he told me about one old scheduled caste lady from Keezhvaipur who went to Thiruvalla for the first time and after coming back, made the following narrations: -

"Pullhangale, pullhangale,  
Taminu kaanahnael thiruvalla ethi chellanham,  
Vandimael vandi, Puramael pura,  
Payaruvallhi pol ethaandocke,  
Athannonnu Enggottu,  
Enggottonnu Angottu,  
Athintae mandakkoru Kozhimutta puzhungi  
Polichu vechirikkunnu".

Actually, her narration was about buses, multistoried buildings, electric wires stretched like creeping plants and on the top of that white egg like ceramic blocks or bulbs of the electricity system prevailed in Thiruvalla at that time.



Roy at Keezhvaipur-1961

**During** our stay at Thiruvalla, 1960-70 periods, we used to visit Keezhvaipur on a regular basis and very often the journey was through the Thiruvalla- Mallappally bus via Vennikkulam and this “**Deluxe**” bus was operated by the former Mallappally Panchayath president Abraham Koshy’s father. Many occasions I was traveling alone and used to alight at “**Store mukku**” junction. Keezhvaipur Appachen used to provide all of the grand children with the new clothes “**Onakody**” regularly for the “**Onam**” celebrations and I think, this practice continued till his death on 1/9/1971. Again, during our stay at Thiruvalla, we children, our main source of income was from the Pepper and Cashew nuts collected from the fields. We were regularly collecting these items during the season and this earning was exclusively for us for the day-to-day expenses. Another seasonal income was from the Mangoes as we were having a variety of Mango trees of about 25. During those days at Thiruvalla, we were having about 33 Coconut trees of the medium height and I had climbed on all of those Coconut trees on many occasions. Thiruvalla Ammachi used to give us complete freedom on all these matters. Another interesting factor is that Ammachi was having good faith in me and I was actually her “**private secretary**” in all the money matters.

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## Chapter-8

### Secondary Schooling at SCS, Thiruvalla

**My** sixth standard studies were little bit significant. During this period between 1960 & 61, I could manage to get admission in SCS High School where I was admitted in 6<sup>th</sup> standard. Our class teacher was K.C Chacko Sir. "Navajeevodayam" Cheriachen's son George Cherian was also one among the classmates. He was there with me for about 2 months and later he has moved to MGM High School or Keezhilum Boarding School in order to join the English medium classes there. There were no English medium classes at that time in SCS and this was actually started in SCS by 1961 only and some of the students moved to the new medium effective 6<sup>th</sup> standard. As mentioned earlier, one of my classmates at 6<sup>th</sup> standard was George C Jacob. We used to call him by the nickname "Thirumeni", by virtue of his 'Thirumeni' like headscarf, which was worn by him for some time after some 'pneumonia' attack. One of our 6<sup>th</sup> standard classes were taken by the Drawing / Drill Master Ninan Sir, who was known as "Narappan" by all the students of SCS. Once during the class time Ninan Sir got angry for something and was angrily pressing his teeth and all the students were laughing. "Narappan" saw me uttering something to George C Jacob and suddenly laughing in front of him. And upon questioning he told the Sir about my uttering to him. What I told him was like this. "Narappan pallu kadikkunnathu kando" Immediately Narappan got angry and took me to the front and beat me with the stick for about 12 times until the stick broke. That was the maximum beatings I had ever received from a Schoolmaster. Afterwards I was planning to throw stones on "Narappan" many times but actually didn't ever get the chance. (George C Jacob (Renji) went to Nigeria in connection with the teaching profession and later on came back to Trivandrum and settled there. Recently I read one news paper report about his younger brother Alex C Jacob who became the first Malayalee parliament member of the African National Assembly of South Africa. He was also in the teaching profession at Cape Town, S Africa. Alex C Jacob expired at S Africa by August 2021 and the burial was conducted there due to Covid 19 restrictions.)

Again, the details of my 6<sup>th</sup> standard extra curricular activities cannot be concluded if I do not mention about one theft, I have conducted from the SCS Kindergarten School. One of our senior friends had forced me once to take part in his theft business. He had opened the Office window of Kindergarten School some how and grabbed what ever he could from that room and I was given one pair of scissors and some other small things, which I took home and was using for quite long time. Luckily no body has seen the theft incident and in fact I was very much afraid to use the Kindergarten School Road for the day-to-day schooling activities for some time. And in my sixth standard I was an average student. We started learning Hindi as the third language only at the 6th standard.

**My** 7<sup>th</sup> standard can be considered as one of the brightest periods of my school days. Samuel P Chacko Sir was our Class teacher and he was considered to be a strict teacher but I don't remember whether I received any scolding from him or not. I think, I had scored the maximum marks from our class for the final exams and cent percent marks for Mathematics for which I was awarded the "**Proficiency in Maths**" prize and was presented by the Kerala Health Minister Sri **M.P Govindan Nair** during 1962 School anniversary. Moreover, I was selected for the 7<sup>th</sup> standard scholarship exams from SCS School and I have attended the scholarship exams at Peringara P.M.V High School along with the SSLC exam students. The scholarship exams were very tough and I don't think I scored any good marks. Still, I remember about one of the Malayalam themes for which I was asked to write shortly about "**Payyaa thinnaal panayum thinnaam**" for which I wrote something peculiar taking into consideration the literal meaning of the saying. Still my wife Jolly is laughing at me at times quoting all these silly and innocent writings of the old times! Still, I don't think, majority of our masses are interpreting our old Malayalam sayings or "**Pazhamchollu**" or "**old talk**" in the proper perspective or not. For example, "**Kurangante kayyil poomaala kittiyapole**". (A garland in the hands of a monkey). Recently our Malayalam critic and writer late **Prof. M.N Vijayan** spoke about noted writer **Zacharia** during an award distribution function as follows: -

"Vakkukala aayudhamayie kanukayum athu ezhuthanullathalla, pryogikkaanullathanhu ennu theliekkukayum cheyunna ezhuthukaran anhu Zacharia. Vakkukal pareekshana vasthuvanu. Kurangantae kayyil poomala kittunnathu poleanu nalla ezhuthukaranu vakku kittunnathu. Kurangan poomala kazhuthil aniyanamennilla. Athinae apthgradhikkum. Sasthriyamayee visakalanam cheyyuum. Oduvil kazhuthil aniyaatha upekshichennu varum. Athupoleyanu Ezhuthukaaran. Vaakkukal kondu themmaaditham kaattunna Zacharia. Enthanu olhippichu vachittullathe ennanweshikkunna manassaanhu ezhuthukaranu venda upakaranham. Athu Zachariaykkundu."

In fact, **Zacharia** is deeply analysing the words in order to utilise it to the fullest extent. Like everybody else I was also thinking that the Monkey is actually spoiling the garland but the reality is that the Monkey is deeply analysing the inner secrets of the garland!

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**The** period between 1961 and 1962 was a little bit significant in my life. Because of a simple mistake of my younger brother Vinod, one of the major incidents of my life took place during this period. I was sitting on the half wall in front of the kitchen varandah with my back facing the courtyard and talking with others. In the mean time some quarrel arose with Vinod and to his utter foolishness, he pushed me outside the varandah and I had a fatal fall with the resultant injury on the back and suddenly I lost my breath for some time. Anyway, everybody took me to the bed and had some immediate massaging on the back and finally I could regain and recover from the fatal fall to a certain extent. "X" ray tests didn't reveal any abnormalities on my back but another massaging was done for about a week and

the health condition slowly became normal. After this fatal fall, I felt some type of a stunted growth and since then frequent problems like constipation happened to be a constant aftereffect. After this incident Vinod also fell down two times - once from a Jackfruit tree and the other time from a Mango tree and both caused injury on his head. Afterwards, very often he also confronted with headaches and other similar problems. Since then, I cannot afford sitting long hours and I am lucky that my job conditions also don't demand for the continuous sitting on the chair and that has proved to be good sigh of relief for me.

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**My** 8<sup>th</sup> standard is considered to be one of the weakest years of my school life. Once after the morning school assembly sessions I fell unconscious in the classroom for some time and could regain consciousness after some time with out any water or any other external methods. Maths was a difficult subject for me in the 8<sup>th</sup> standard due to the presence of Algebra and Geometry. Renjimon was also in 8<sup>th</sup> standard at that time but in another division. Our Maths teacher was Baby Sir or P.J Abraham Sir, who was the class teacher of Kunjumamma during earlier days. We both were getting only some minimum marks for the Maths class exams due to the presence of Algebra and Geometry for the first time in the Maths syllabus and finally both of us were lucky enough to get promotion to the 9<sup>th</sup> standard with out any difficulty. My class teacher in Std 8 was Mr. P Chacko Sir who was also the Thiruvalla MLA at that time and during the Legislative Assembly sessions; P Chacko Sir was not usually present for the school classes. The word "extra-curricular activities" I first learned from him and before that I had never even heard of it. We used to imitate his talk and conversation on these subjects and that was the reason for the familiarity and fondness for these particular words and phrases. This P Chacko Sir was the first scheduled caste MLA from the Christian denomination and during the Assembly sessions our P Chacko Sir was absent for the classes and we were forced to continue with our alternate learning processes. P Chacko Sir's wife Annamma Chacko teacher also was working in SCS School and his son Appu was also studying in SCS School and was the classmate of Vinod two years junior to me at that time. P Chacko Sir was the Congress MLA from Thiruvalla during 1961-65 periods.

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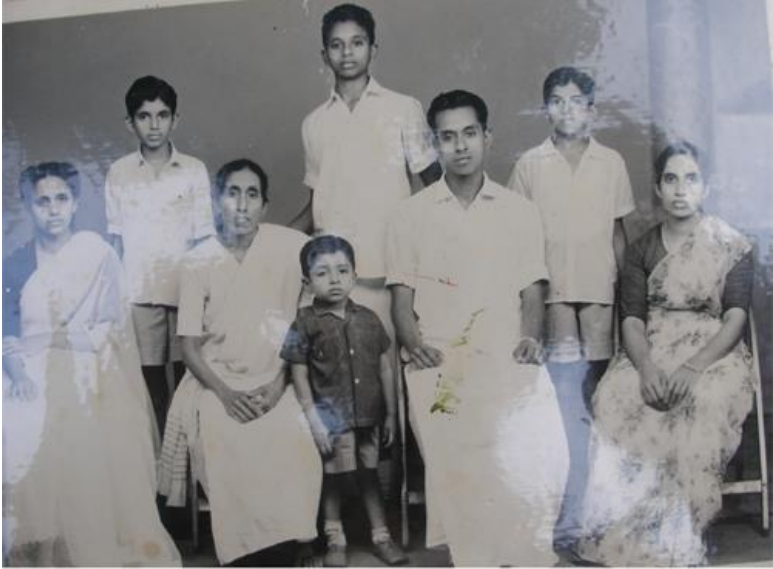
**We** started reading the "**Manorama**" news paper by about 1962 and afterwards; we couldn't afford with out reading the paper even for one day and were fortunate enough to go through it through out these years. One of my hobbies during 1962 was nothing but applying for all the advertisements in the '**Manorama**' paper for which once I had to pay a big price for my silly dealings through the paper columns. Once in 1962, I responded for an LIC agent's employment advertisement just by filling up the paper columns and sent it by post and ignored the whole thing. After three or four days, one giant personality with a cooling glass specs and pure white juba dress came to our Mathilumkal house on a Bullet bike and enquired about Sunnykutty and the poor Sunnykutty had no option other than exposing himself before the Thiruvalla LIC Development Officer. Somehow

after consultation with Ammachi, he advised me to “continue with my studies and later we can think about joining the LIC as an agent and make the money”. This giant personality was none other than our famous **K T Thomas Kunnuthara**. Kunnuthara was the LIC development Officer for Thiruvalla and also a prominent figure of Thiruvalla as the Custodian or patron of the Balajanasakhyam. Because of this incident, I was really keeping a safe distance with him, even though later he became the best friend and guide for many of the Balajana Sakhyam members like Vinod, Lalasen, Sunny Achen, Padmakumar and others. After Kunnuthara's death on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2004, (aged more than 90 years) these people organized the "**K. T Thomas Kunnuthara Charitable trust**" for the upkeep of his principles who was in the social, cultural and religious fields of the Thiruvalla locality for quite a long time of about six decades.

**In** the High School classes, School fees system existed during those periods and I think, Rs 16/- per month was the fees for Standard 9 and as Achachen was in the Military Service, I was eligible for fee exemption. The exemption was carried out with the help of the "Dependence Certificate" from the Tahasildar upon production of the Military Certificate. Thiruvalla Ammachi managed the Tahasildar Certificate through Mathilumkal Mathew Sir with out any difficulty. As such I didn't pay any tuition fees during my High School and College studies up to 18<sup>th</sup> year of my age.

**During** our School days at Thiruvalla we were having the rice and curry for the breakfast and the "**palahaaram**" items were limited to special occasions only. Very often the rice was consumed in the half-boiled condition due to lack of time before going to School and by regular habit it proved to be the best suited rice for me at that time. For three times a day we had only rice items. Actually, some change happened by 1963 or 64 because during that period Ammamma imported the "**Chappathy**" technology and know-how from the Military Service and we used to make the "**Chappathy**" and "**Sambar**" for the dinner. More over, the rice scarcity was there at that time which led the Kerala Government to introduce the "**Statutory Rationing**" system for the first time in 1964. The "**Chappathy- Sambar**" combination was very tasty at that time but actually I don't like it now.





**Sunny at Thiruvalla-1963**



**School period 1960-65 at SCS High School, Thiruvalla**



**Sunny with SSLC friends Raju & I Abraham on 7-5-2009**

**My** promotion to the 9<sup>th</sup> standard was in another way changing of the class to the next room as the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> classes were in the adjacent rooms only on one side of the main old building on the ground floor and in the upstairs classes were conducted for the girl students and the main building was exclusively for the high school classes at that time. I think, from 1961 onwards, when Mr. C Abraham Vydian became the Headmaster of SCS; separate classes were kept for boys and girls. As such, from my 7<sup>th</sup> standard onwards, I was forced to be in the boy's classes during my school days. Luckily or unluckily, this continued till my Pre degree classes in Mar Thoma College also. Thalavady Ommen Sir (M.O Ommen) was our class teacher for the 9<sup>th</sup> standard and he was our Mathematics teacher who was considered to be a professional Maths teacher and in fact I am very much indebted to him for scoring good marks at the 9<sup>th</sup> standard level unlike the previous 8<sup>th</sup> level. Actually, every body were really afraid of Ommen Sir and he was involved in Politics also in addition to his teaching profession. Later Thalavady Ommen Sir became the Kuttanadu MLA for two terms and retired as the Headmaster of SCS. For my SSLC also Ommen Sir was our Maths teacher. Another peculiar teacher of my 9<sup>th</sup> standard was Gheeverghese Achen who was our Social Studies master and I don't think anybody has gained anything from his teachings! During my 9<sup>th</sup> standard I went for two days English tutorial classes with "[Achen's Tutorial](#)" College and the "as soon as" and "no sooner" usage grasped from Alexander Kodiattu Achen cannot be forgotten. If I had continued with my English grammar studies with the "[Kodiatt Achen](#)", then I could have really gained some valuable grammar knowledge in my life. Still, I don't know why I discontinued my English tuition classes with Achen's Tutorial College.

**Up** to 9<sup>th</sup> standard I was going home from the school for taking the lunch during our interval and actually it was a tiresome job and later I started taking the lunch box and since then there was no problem. Renjimon purchased a new Raleigh cycle during this time and he was going to School by cycle and on many occasions, I was on his pillion or carrier seat and enjoyed the pleasant journey. After joining the College also many times I really enjoyed the cycle pillion ride with Renjimon.

**During** my 9<sup>th</sup> standard summer vacation, I went to Avadi, Madras along with Vinod or Ponnumon (Nickname for Vinod, my younger brother) where Achachen was working at that time. Achachen was working at the Avadi Cloth Factory, which was under the Defense section of the Indian Government. I think, this was my first journey outside Kerala. Achachen was with Amamma and our younger brother Shajimon at the Avadi Military quarters. One important incident which happened during our stay at Madras was the death of our first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1964. We were playing outside the quarters and suddenly we saw a group of people shouting at the shop owners to close down all the shops with the black flag. At that time actually we didn't understand as to what was happening and we all went inside the house. Later only we came to know that our Prime Minister Nehru had passed away. After our two months stay at Madras, I could join back my SSLC class only on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1964. The school opened on 1<sup>st</sup> June and since then I missed 3 days classes for the 10<sup>th</sup> standard. Our classroom was moved to the other wing of the SCS main High School block and I was in the "A" division. "A" & "B" divisions were exclusively for boys and the "C" division was only for girls. Renjimon and Bavachen, my cousin was in the "B" division and some of my close friends in our division were Mathew Sam Koruthu, Ipe Verghese, Verghese M Thomas, P.O George, T.V Cherian, Abraham Verghese (Raju), I Abraham etc. (Later I Abraham (Babu) joined the Administration department of Thuruthicad B.A.M College and married Panachamoottil Raju's sister Valsa). Ipe Verghese joined us only at standard 10 after his father's transfer to Thiruvalla and started their abode near the Kuttapuzha railway overbridge. Our class teacher for 10<sup>th</sup> standard was Jacob John Sir who was in charge of English and Social Studies, Maths by Ommen Sir, Malayalam by K George Sir, Hindi by Chacko Kuruvilla Sir and General Science by K.V Daniel Sir. Chacko Kuruvilla Sir was teaching me from my 8<sup>th</sup> standard and so also Daniel Sir. Chacko Kuruvilla Sir was a pious man and he used to conduct regular prayer meetings in the school. Daniel Sir was really a genius and made several small small inventions and formulated different theories at that time. Based on his inventions and theories, he wrote many books including the famous book **"What is nothing"**. He got patent for his invention **"Danywash"** washing machine which was having the reverse rotation as well as agitation techniques for washing the clothes at that time and later it was being applied every where in the latest machines. After retirement Daniel Sir started the **"Danywash"** production and marketing unit, which was thriving well for quite long time until his death on 27/6/2000 at the age of 75. Our School Headmaster at that time was Mr. K.C Cherian Sir, who happened to be the class teacher of Amamma also at her 8<sup>th</sup> standard at SCS.

**Interestingly** enough I was having a one-sided love affair during my SSLC classes and the story can be concluded somewhat like this. During one of our class intervals, while walking outside the classroom, one of the 10<sup>th</sup> standard girl students along with her friend called me **'Sunnykutty'** from the upstairs classroom corridor and was heard by some of my friends at the ground level. Still, I don't know how she got my name and the reason to call me at that time. Our Hindi teacher, Chacko Kuruville Sir conducted one Hindi extra class for the SSLC students including the girl students and that was the only occasion I saw her with our classmates. After this incident, my friends like Ipe Verghese and Panachamootil Raju were jokingly calling me by the name of that girl at times and this silly thing created some sort of affection or love in me for her. But nothing happened after that and even I didn't get a chance to talk with her at all. Later I saw her on few occasions during her paramedical studies at the Thiruvalla Medical Mission Hospital and there ends that story.

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In the School, my uncle Renjimon and I were in the same standard from 8<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> level and finally I could supersede him by one year in the academic matters. Renjimon didn't appear for his 1965 SSLC exams and instead he decided to continue in the school for one more year in order to score higher marks and finally appeared for the 1966 batch SSLC exams. But actually, I don't think whether he scored any additional marks by the mere wastage of one valuable year and in the real sense he became one-year junior to me in the academic level. That's all.

**I think**, I did the maximum hard work and studies during my SSLC period and afterwards I did not make that much effort for my college studies. I passed the SSLC with 347 marks out of 600 and that was considered to be a very good mark for any College admission with out any difficulty. Out of about 150 SSLC students from SCS, only four were fortunate enough to get the first class with 60% marks and next was myself at the high second-class level. At that time there were no second-class ranking and as such I was included in the pass category. Our 1965 batch SSLC rank holder was one Lalithambika with 480 marks and that was the maximum marks even the rank holder also could achieve at that time. I am not sure whether this Lalithambika is the J Lalithambika of the IAS cadre or not. But Lalithambika IAS is senior to me. One funny incident happened during the last day of my SSLC exam. SCS School was celebrating its Diamond Jubilee during 1965 and due to the preparatory jobs, the SSLC exams were held at the Titus II Teachers Training School campuses with in the SCS compound. Every student was provided with the individual table and chair for the exam. Last day after the morning session, we were preparing for the Math's second paper outside the open yard of the Exam Hall and during that time I could catch one small bird **"madathakunju"** and as I was not having any time to keep it in the safe custody and as such, I kept the **"madathakunju"** in my exam table drawer and continued with the exams. After some time after hearing the other **'madatha's** sound from outside, the **'madathakunju'** inside my desk drawer started crying and that diverted the attention of all the students and the examiner to my table and finally the examiner took out the **'madathakunju'** from my desk drawer and he scolded

me and then we continued with our exams. Luckily or unluckily, I scored two marks more than my 1<sup>st</sup> paper with a total of 72 marks out of 100 for Maths.

Diamond Jubilee celebrations and close out meeting of SCS High School was conducted during March 1965 and was presided over by Malayattoor Ramakrishnan IAS, who was a former student of SCS School during 1950's. Malayattoor gave a nice speech with all the reminiscences of his school days with special admiration and praises for his Class teacher and English master Idiculla Sir. As per his narrations, it was Idiculla Sir, who taught him how to refer and look at the English Dictionary and his English classes contributed tremendously for his future up coming to IAS and other high-level positions. This Idiculla Sir was the teacher of Ammamma also during her 8<sup>th</sup> standard or the Fourth class of the Old Kerala School Curriculum. But when I joined SCS, he was transferred from there and joined some other School as Headmaster. Later, one of Idiculla Sir's sons Mr. P.I Varghese was with us at Ruwais Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) who was working as Inspection Section Head since 1983 after resigning from Cochin Refineries Ltd as Senior Mechanical Engineer.

**"Nayaru Pidicha Pulivalu"**, the Malayalam film released during 1958 was the first film I have seen those days and that was at CVM theatre, Thiruvalla and I think all of us at Thiruvalla had seen the movie at that time. Probably, the CVM theatre also might have opened during that time only. Later my film viewing also was limited to a maximum of 5 or 6 only till completion of my college days. Kesava dev's **"Odayil Ninnu"** film was released during 1965 and at that time this book was our Malayalam Non- detailed text for my 1965 batch SSLC and I was really eager to see this film but I could view this film through Video cassette only in the later years. "Odayil Ninnu" was really a good book for non-detailed studies and certain quotations I learnt at that time from this book still remains fresh in my memory. Later I cultivated the film-viewing hobby by 1971 after getting the employment with FACT and away from home with friends. With respect to films, since 1971, I have not looked back and have seen most of the released Malayalam films with proper records. **"Puthiya Akasham Puthiya Bhoomi"** was the first stage drama I have seen and that was in 1962 or 63. This drama was staged at the football stadium behind the Thiruvalla Railway Station. One quotation still remains fresh in my memory from this drama i.e., **"Leprosy is curable if treatment is begun in time"**. We were having an English prose lesson also on the same subject at that time and that might have impressed me to learn the quotation by heart.

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## Chapter - 9

### College life at Thiruvalla Mar Thoma College

**I am** indebted to certain group of people in my life especially for the career development and I am very much thankful to these personnel and their contributions cannot be ignored in my entire life period. **Bavachen & Mohan** of the Thiruvalla Manayil family, **Raju (Mathew George)** of Pamela Estate and **Abreo** from Bombay - these personalities have played their good role directly or indirectly for my career development to the present position.

Bavachen and I were schoolmates for SSLC at SCS High School, Thiruvalla. I was in 'A' division and he was in 'B' division and both of us with the nearest marks also. Out of the total about 150 pupils who appeared for the SSLC, there were only 4 first classes and I was the 5<sup>th</sup> rank holder with 347 marks out of 600 or 58% high second class. Bavachen scored 345 marks and with these good marks, College admission for any of the groups was not at all a problem for both of us. Actually, Bavachen was in the previous batch of 1964 and in order to score higher marks, he didn't appear for the 1964 exams and instead he continued again at the 10<sup>th</sup> standard. He decided to join S.B College Changanassery for the Pre-degree course with Biology, Physics, & Chemistry as the Optional subjects in the second group. Bavachen's background was loud and clear for his college studies as his brother Mohan was also in the SB College and after completing his P.U.C course he joined the Vellayani Agricultural College for B Sc (Ag). But my case was entirely different; I was the first person to go for some College education from our family. Actually, I scored the highest mark of 77% for the Social Studies from SCS High School and out of my eagerness and thirst for Social Science, I opted for the 3<sup>rd</sup> group with Economics, History and Logic as the Optional subjects in Mar Thoma College, Thiruvalla. After submitting the application form, I had a casual talk with Bavachen and Mohan and they asked me what are you going to do with Economics and if at all you want to get any job then it is advisable to study some Science subjects. (With effect from 1964, Kerala Government abolished the Pre-University (PUC) one-year course and started the two-year Pre-degree course under the University or College level with different Optional subjects and 1965 was the second batch of the Pre-degree Course. The PDC system continued up to 2002 and my son Ruwais was in the last batch of the Pre-degree and finally segregated from the College with the introduction of the +2 system under Higher Secondary School level.) Any way through Bavachen I could realize the importance of the science groups. I was not having any body to go back to the College and change the group. Finally, I could manage to go with Angepurayil Georgekuttychayan (my mother's cousin) to Mar Thoma College and changed the application form to second group and finally I was admitted for the biology group for Pre-degree and later Chemistry for B Sc degree in the same College. Another interesting fact about my education was that I remained as a second-class student through out my academic studies and getting a first-class score was beyond my abilities and capabilities. So Bavachen



played the key role for the turning point in my life otherwise I would have joined some Kerala Government services after passing the B A degree and some other PSC tests. Really, I was having a good interest for the KSRTC conductor jobs. But Gods plan was different and Bavachen served as the real tool for the same. I am really indebted to Bavachen and Mohan for this career change in my life.

**I was** fortunate enough to be the first College student from the Mathilumkal and Azhakath family. By virtue of the good marks, College admission was not at all a problem and the second group was having maximum demand at that time. Mar Thoma College was having two batches of Biology groups, separate for boys and girls. The only mixed classes were for second language Malayalam and Hindi from the same group. I opted for Hindi as the second language hoping to score more marks. Being a biology student with out any Mathematics background, like everybody else I also felt little bit difficult in the follow up of Physics to a certain extent. For some time, I attended some tuition classes by one of the Tutors of the Physics Lab Mr. David Sir. Few of my classmates or benchmates were Rajan John, Thomas K Alexander etc and afterwards I haven't seen any of these people. The only information about Thomaskutty - working as a Chartered Accountant in Madras. Finally, I could contact Thomaskutty through Chandykunjachayan and I visited him along with Jolly on 15/8/2019 at their abode at Paippad, Thiruvalla and refreshed our memories after about 52 years. During their stay at Chennai, he was in contact with our friend Rajan John who was working in the Chennai Physical Education department and later lost all the contacts as he has moved to some other locations elsewhere.

**Up** to my second year Pre-degree I was wearing only shorts and shirts and it was at the second year, the shorts were changed over to "**Dhoti**" or "**Mundu**" with out any chappels at all. There was a small incident behind my wearing of chappels. Once a stone had made a small hole in my foot and upon looking at it, I fainted and after that as per the advice from Kunjumamma (who was on leave at that time) I started using the chappels regularly. Renjimon also joined Mar Thoma College for his 1<sup>st</sup> PDC in the third group by 1966. Renjimon was having the bicycle and very often we both were traveling overloaded in the Sen. Raleigh bicycle. I was having a colleague in Gasco who was my contemporary for the Pre-degree but in the 1<sup>st</sup> group along with Ipe Verghese. This Mathew Verghese was from Muthoor and after completing his Pre degree he went for Mechanical Diploma Course and by 1980 he also joined Gasco as Mechanical Technician at the Asab Unit and later became the Mechanical Supervisor in Gasco Asab. Mathew verghese retired from Gasco service by 2008 and later his service was further extended by Gasco indefinitely.

**My** Pre degree course went on like that with out any significances and I could come up with 56.9% marks in the second-class level as usual in the second-Pre-degree batch. Another significant aspect about this contemporary period was that of the "**Unemployment among the Engineering graduates**". Engineering Colleges in Kerala were with out any adequate students and the minimum marks required for entrance was only 45% and the Pre-degree marks was the only criteria for admission. But the Medical profession was in good demand at that time which



could be detected in the push and pull for the second group admissions. Out of our second group batch, I think some four or five people were fortunate enough to get admission in the Kerala Medical Colleges.

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**Another** important aspect about this 1965-67 period was that of the flying colours with which the Kerala Students Union (KSU) under the leadership of Mr. Ommen Chandy was leading the Kerala Students Union political activities through out the length and breadth of Kerala. Once in 1967, I could meet Mr. Ommen Chandy and Mr. M M Hassan during the election campaigns of the College Unions. At that time, itself, these KSU leaders were continuously exhibiting their oratorical skills through out Kerala and we can only wonder why the Chief Minister's position became elusive for Mr. Ommen Chandy till 2004, even though he proved his mettle on different Ministerial posts. Other prominent figures of the Mar Thoma College during this period were C.T Kuruvilla, M.C Cherian, Niranam Thomas, D Philip etc and later KSC State Vice President Rachel P Mathew, who was the class mate of Renjimon for the BA Economics and one-year junior to me. In fact, very often we were taken aback by the political and oratorical skills of Rachel P Mathew. Later she became a lawyer of the Thiruvalla Bar Council and is married to Adv. Thomas Mathew from Keezhvaipur and has taken a retirement from active politics. C.T Kuruvilla was from Kottayam Manganam and his elder brother C.T Titus Sir was also working as English Professor of the Mar Thoma College. C.T Kuruvilla also took an early retirement from politics at that time itself and joined with some other employment in Kuwait with the active participation in most of the cultural and social activities of the expatriates or "**Pravasi Malayalees**". I am not quite sure about the reasons for his exodus from the active politics at that time but later proved to be a prominent figure in all fields of the Expatriate Indian Community. D.Philip also proved himself as one of the best actors of the Malayalam drama and cinematic fields. M.C Cherian later became the Congress MLA from Ranny and has married one of my Pre degree class mates Mariamma and at that time itself their love affair was a major issue among the student community of the Mar Thoma College. Mariamma's sister Annamma Joy (Wife of Prof. K.P Joy, retired Principal of Baselius College, Kottayam) also was in our class and this Annamma Joy was the class teacher of our daughter Tanura at the 10<sup>th</sup> standard in their Girideepam Bethany School, Kalathippady.

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**Another** interesting incident about one of the Arts club day inaugurations still remains fresh in my memory. It seems it was in 1968, the Arts club inauguration was planned at the College auditorium and the chief guest was the film star Mr. **Kottayam Chellappan**. All the students, staff and other organizers were waiting for the chief guest. All of a sudden one gentleman with the resemblance of Kottayam Chellappan straight away walked into the auditorium with his "**P.G silk Juba**" dresses and the foreign cooling glass. Every body thought him to be the guest Kottayam Chellappan and welcomed him with applause and "**Kooval**" according to the student's standard. This gentleman with out any "**Chammal**"

walked straight into the front side of the auditorium and occupied one of the seats of the front row. This gentleman was none other than our "**Achachen**" (my father) who was on leave at that time and without informing us, suddenly decided to participate in the Arts club inauguration day of the Mar Thoma College. I think, myself, Renjimon and Madolil Rajan were the only three people known to this '**distinguished**' guest on that occasion. Afterwards we were calling '**Achachen**' as "**Kottayam Chellappan**". Actually, Achachen was having the real guts to act like this on different occasions. Once he acted like a Police Inspector. Any way it was really interesting.

**Another** interesting aspect, which grasped the entire Kerala region during 1960's, was that of the "**Cycle Yagnams**" at every nook and corner of Kerala. First one I could recollect was that of the Cycle Yagnam conducted by one "**Attingal Surendran**" at Thiruvalla **Andhichanda** area for about 4 or 5 days. Second one was conducted by "**Kidangara Surendran**" and party for about 10 days in front of the Thiruvalla Railway station, I think, at the time of my Pre degree exams during 1967. Actually, it was a nuisance for the exam students, but in reality, it was enjoyed by most of the inhabitants of the locality. This non-stop "cycle yagnam" was for about 10 days along with other programmes like drama skits, mimicry and other comedy programmes in addition to the continuous cycle yagnam and other cycle activities. Actually, the admiration for Kidangara Surendran is still haunting my memories. This was a major interesting event during those days and I still remember our Panachamootil Kunjaanachen family (Rev Sunny Abraham's father) also conducted a good feast for all the parties of this "Cycle Yagnam" towards the end of the programmes. Actually, their food was really sponsored by the local inhabitants on many occasions. These types of programmes were of real entertainment for most of the people during those days. But since 1970s, these events are not so common other than some isolated cases elsewhere.

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**During** 1967-68 periods, Prof T.V Mathew Sir of Mar Thoma College Malayalam department changed his abode from Kuttapuzha to our Railway Station area. T.V Mathew Sir proved himself to be an orator as well as a writer and poet. Later he obtained the Doctorate in Malayalam literature from Kerala University and was very much associated with the "**Balajanasakhyam**" activities. He decided to incorporate all the childrens of the locality in the "Balajanasakhyam" activities and accordingly he registered the "**Golden Hill Balajanasakhyam**" at the Railway Station area with the participation of all the children below 18 years. Actually, I was also very much eager to participate in those types of "balajanasakhyam" activities during those days. But during my period, there were nobody to take initiative and to organize such gatherings and by the time some thing was organized, it was too late as I have crossed my 18 years age barrier and was studying for my degree classes. Even though, not directly involved, I was closely following the "balajanasakhyam" activities through the "**Manorama Balajanasakhyam annual-special publications**" and was very much familiar with the leaders like Ommen Chandy, K.C Joseph etc as President and Secretary of the Kerala Unit for 1964 or 65.

Under the leadership of T.V Mathew sir, the “Golden Hill Balajanasakhyam” flourished nicely and lot of children took active participation in the “balajanasakhyam” activities. Among the leaders were Panachamoottil Sunny, Kappippodikkaran Kesavan’s son Thampi, Sasikumar, V.K Lalasen, Soman, T.V Mathew Sir’s sons Roy & Renjith, Vinod George etc. I think, Panachamoottil Sunny developed his leadership and oratorical skills through the “balajanasakhyam” and later ordained as Rev. Sunny Abraham of the Mar Thoma Church. His close association with the “balajanasakhyam” and the Thiruvalla Balajanasakhyam Patron **Mr. K.T Thomas Kunnuthara** was very much instrumental for his developments to the present position. One or two annual meetings of the “Golden Hill Balajanasakhyam” were conducted at our Mathilumkal house premises after the crop yield of the tapioca field. I think, the “balajanasakhyam” activities were continued for some more time and since I left from Thiruvalla by 1971, I am not quite sure about further activities or developments.

**After** passing the Pre-degree, I joined Mar Thoma College again for my B.Sc. degree course with Chemistry main and Mathematics & Physics as subsidiary subjects. This was the only option available in Mar Thoma College at that time. Some other Colleges were having Botany or Zoology also as the subsidiary subjects. Mathematics and Physics was again really tough for those who have not studied any Mathematics at the Pre-degree level. My B Sc degree class was the only mixed class in my academic life since Upper Primary School level. Really, I was having lot of apprehensions about the mixed classes and the pity fact is that I didn’t even talk with all the girl students of our class during the degree period.

Our Chemistry department was under the leadership of Prof. O.A Cherian, followed by K.C Chacko Sir, P.M Mathew Sir, K.A Verghese Sir, Alexander Sir, Abraham Mathew Sir, Andrews Pappachen Sir, Jacob Kurian Sir etc. Prof. O.A Cherian later became the Principal of St. Thomas College, Kozhencherry and Jacob Kurian Mathilumkal became the Principal of Mar Thoma College during 1998-2003 periods. Through out my five-year period in Mar Thoma College, Rev T.C Thomas was the Principal of our College and under Achen’s leadership; the College fared very well in all the fields to a good extent. B. Sc Chemistry and English Literature students were having joint classes for English and Hindi languages. One of my colleagues in the Literature B.A was John Mathew, who later became the Principal of Baselius College, Kottayam by 2001. Another student of the Literature department was one Mariam George, who was having a good resemblance with my facial outlook which led our colleagues to consider and call her as my sister and I was also really embarrassed to see her in my class. She was an extra ordinary slim beauty at that time and after leaving the College nothing is being heard about her. Few of the 1<sup>st</sup> year students like Thamaraserryil Joseph Verghese, George Cherian etc left our class and joined the M.B.B.S degree elsewhere. Two of my degree classmates Elamma Thomas retired as the principal of the “Balika Madom” Higher Secondary School, Thiruvalla and the other Dr Susan Abraham expired by January 2006 at Ernakulam. Elamma Thomas is a recipient of the Kerala and the National level Teachers Awards for 2004. Elamma has written one biography about the founder

and Principal of the Balika Madom School Miss Brooke Smith, "The Parijatham that never wilts". Another colleague Abraham John (Sunny) who was working as Textiles Manager in an Oman Company also expired by May 2006. Other batchmates Mathew M Alexander and Abraham Jacob also expired on 25/12/2016 and 8/3/2017 respectively. After a short illness Thomas Thomas expired on 4/8/2019 at Ernakulam and was buried at Kallooppara Orthodox church. Our A.C Chacko (Chackochen) expired on 12/1/2020 and was buried at Puramattom Orthodox church on 14/1/20. Thiruvalla Mathew Paul expired on 24/3/2020 during the Covid-19 lock-down period.

Mathematics was one of the subsidiary subjects for my degree classes, which proved to be a real burden for my entire course. Only credit goes to our Mathematics teacher **Pappukunjan Sir**, who took some tuition classes for the second group students and only by virtue of his teachings I could get some pass marks for my subsidiary Maths exams. One of the pathetic facts about my B. Sc degree final exams was that of the sleepless nights I spent during the exam periods, which was nothing but the exam phobia. All my B. Sc final exams I wrote after spending the sleepless nights in the house. There were occasions when I tried my level best to get some sleep with the "Military Rum" and some "Kanjav" which was brought by Achachen from Assam Military camps. None of these could help me in overcoming the "insomnia phobia" during this period! The funny thing was that I could get the normal sound sleep after the exams with out any problems and I completed my B. Sc degree in second class with 52.4% marks, which was the least minimum for any of my public exams.

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**During** the second and the final year of my B Sc. degree studies, I was engaged in the Sunday school teaching profession in the "Kumara Vakup" as per the advice and compulsion from the Headmaster **Ommen Sir** at the SCS Sunday School. This SCS Sunday school was having shortage of teachers and the classes were not conducted in the proper way during those periods. Students were not given any annual prizes and the only attraction was the only "Avalpothy" at the annual celebrations. And on that year, Ommen Sir gave me the option to buy enough books and to give as prizes for all the students. In this way I could make the Sunday school little attractive and afterwards I don't know what happened, as I had to leave for my employment with FACT. Even though I was a regular Sunday School student of the Medical Mission and the Kuttapuzha Jerusalem Mar Thoma church, I didn't not receive any Holy Communion through out those years. My first Holy Communion was on 19/4/1973 from Rev C.M Thomas and Rev T Thomas (Father of Thiruvalla MLA Mr Mathew T Thomas) at the SCS church, Thiruvalla. And my second Holy Communion, I was forced to take during the Holy Communion prayer meetings conducted in our Gasco Ruwais Quarters in 1993 by George Verghese Achen. These were the two occasions where I could receive the Holy "Qurbana" in my life till that time. Later I was forced to take one more "Qurbana" during our Jerusalem trip on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2006. But the story didn't end there and once again I was forced to take the fourth and fifth "Holy Qurbana" at our Ruwais Housing Complex house on 30<sup>th</sup> January

2009 and 9<sup>th</sup> April 2011 respectively. This time **Rev Thomas Kurian Achen** was the culprit. Ancheril Achen took charge as the Vicar of the Abu Dhabi Mar Thoma Church by 2008 and Achen was forcing us to conduct the prayer meetings in our house and finally we were not having any option other than yielding to the requirements of our Achen. Now I don't know what will be the next? One more Qurbana I have taken during our prayer meeting at our Ruwais house during 2015 and upon retirement I have started with my 7<sup>th</sup> Qurbana on the New Year Day at our St. Peter's Church, Manganam. Our Valia Metrapolita Philipose Mar Chrysostom's birth centenary celebration at Manganam St. Peters Church was conducted on 14/5/2017 along with the Church service and my 8<sup>th</sup> Holy Communion was taken from Rt Rev Abraham Mar Paulose Thirumeni on that occasion. Hope to participate in more prayer meetings in the near future. Owing to Covid-19 corona pandemic outbreak, first time in the history of the churches, Holy Qurbana and the other church services were stopped from 15<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and was resumed back partially with restricted entry by Sunday November 1<sup>st</sup> of 2020.

**After** the B. Sc degree, I was not having any intention to continue with my higher education programmes and instead I hoped for some type of employment in the Government or some Semi Government firms. Our results were declared by the second week of September 1970 and afterwards only I could jump into the employment field. As a first step, I started learning type-writing and short-hand at SCS Kavala with the "**Pitman's Institute**". It was at this period I was fortunate enough to get the employment notification from FACT through Raju, which changed all my career life and could bring good prospects in my entire life.

**Another** important person in my life who played a major role in obtaining an employment as graduate trainee with M/s FACT Ltd., Udyogamandal is nobody other than Mr. **Raju** or **Mathew George** of Pamela Estate, Kunnamthanam. Pamela Estate Manager George Sir's son Raju happened to be one of my best friends since 1964 while staying in "**Nettimedu**" house of Mrs. Thariyan Verghese and undergoing his PUC and B Sc degree course at Mar Thoma College, Thiruvalla. Raju was very much fond of studies and he used to sit on the compound wall of Thariyan Verghese and Peshkar etc for his studies and Renjimom and I happened to be close friends of Raju. He was studying for his 1<sup>st</sup> DC Chemistry and I was in my 1<sup>st</sup> PDC at Mar Thoma College. Indeed, Raju is a classic example of real friendship among the College students. Our friendship grew up nicely and Raju used to visit our house regularly, as he was feeling lonely in the big house of Mrs. Thariyan Verghese. Raju completed his B Sc degree and managed to get an employment with FACT, Udyogamandal as a graduate trainee and later absorbed as Operator of the FACT Ammonium Sulphate Plant. I also completed my B Sc degree in Chemistry with second class by April- May of 1970 and the result was out by September. During this period an internal advertisement appeared in the Notice boards of FACT, calling for the selection of the next batch of graduate trainees. Upon seeing the advertisement, Raju sent a letter to me with all the details in order to submit the application for the post of graduate trainees at the earliest. Hardly 3 days left for the closing date and I had to fulfill the application requirements with in 2-3 hours and send it

by post on the same day itself. Luckily, I could manage everything as stated by Raju and I succeeded in sending the application form on the same day from Thiruvalla RMS Post office and the application reached FACT Training Superintendent on the last due date. Also, Raju sent me some of the model questions FACT was using for their graduate Operator trainees. Again, Raju wrote to me about the way in which he got the admission in the graduate trainee group of the previous batch.

**Noted** Novelist and writer retired Session Judge **E.M Kovoov** from Kuttapuzha, Thiruvalla was in the Public Relations department of FACT at that time and there used to be one or two candidates from Thiruvalla in every batch of the graduate trainees by Mr. E.M Kovoov. As per Raju's instructions I contacted Mr. E.M Kovoov along with Thiruvalla Ammachi and Mathilumkal Kochukuttychayan who was well known to Mr. E.M Kovoov and with out any hesitation he gave one recommendation letter to Mr. S Sundaram, Training Superintendent of FACT and the letter was posted to him on the same day.

The letter was somewhat like this and is being quoted from my memory as follows: -

S Sundaram,  
CST, FACT,  
Udyogamandal.

I am writing this letter on behalf of one Mr. Sunnykutty A.G, Mathilumkal House, Near Railway Station, Thiruvalla, who has applied for selection as one of our "graduate apprentices". He is a neighbour of me and comes from a good stock. Kindly help him to be recruited.

Thanking You.  
Sincerely

Sd/-  
(Eipe Kovoov)



E.M Kovoov, Novelist & Retd Sessions Judge

On the following week I received the written test and interview card from Training Superintendent Mr. S Sundaram and everything was prepared for the test and interview. For the first time in my life, I prepared and got ready with my Pants & Shirt apparels and attended the test and interview. Interview was on 20/11/70 and I left for Eloor, Udyogamandal on the previous day itself and stayed with Raju at their "Lotus land" boarding room. Certain boarding mates of Raju also helped me with their experience and knowledge for the test and interview. After the test, Mr. S Sundaram conducted the interview and by the Grace of God I could manage to get selected as a Graduate Operator Trainee of FACT Ltd. Mr. Sundaram was an Executive in the real sense by his dress, outlook and knowledge. What ever he asked me during the interview is also kept as a record from my memory and the same is being kept as a valuable document for my reference. I think, this was my second interview and the first being an interview with the Federal Bank Manager of Thiruvalla for the Clerical post, preliminary interview and based on that report further selection procedures to be followed at that time from the main office at Alwaye. But by this time, I got the FACT selection and I opted for the graduate trainee post with M/s FACT. FACT sent the appointment order and they wanted to execute one bond for Rs. 3000-00 in order to continue with their service for five years after training. The bond was to be executed as a Solvency certificate from the Tahasildar. Ammachi and myself approached the Thiruvalla Tahasildar for the solvency certificate from our land and building property and we were told to get the "Badhyadha certificate" or 'No debt certificate' (Encumbrance certificate) for the last 15 years first and then only the Solvency certificate can be issued and normally it will take a minimum of one month to get the same and we were really in a predicament situation as I will have to execute the bond with FACT before the 25<sup>th</sup> December of 1970 in order to join the training on 7<sup>th</sup> January 1971. Again, somebody told us to contact Mr. E.M Kovoov and through his influence we can get the certificate easily from the Tahasildar. Accordingly, we approached Mr. E.M Kovoov again with Panachamoottil Kunjaanachen, (Panachamoottil P.V Abraham, father of Rev Sunny Abraham) who was also well known to Mr. E.M Kovoov and to our great surprise that distinguished personality Mr. E M Kovoov came with me to the Thiruvalla Tahasildar office in a taxi car and he talked with the Tahasildar and the certificate was issued with in a fraction of a second with out any "Badhyadha certificate" and other formalities. Mr. E.M Kovoov like personality I cannot forget in my lifetime at all. The bond was executed in the form of 'Solvency certificate' and I was fortunate enough to join FACT as an Operator Trainee on 7<sup>th</sup> January 1971 after the B Sc degree exam result gap of about three months. During this period, I just joined for my "Type writing" and "Short hand" studies at Thiruvalla Kurisu Kavala and the same was discontinued since then. So, this is the second destiny in my life for which Mr. Raju played the part.

**My friend Pamala Raju** (Mathew George) joined FACT as a graduate trainee and upon completion of training was absorbed as Process Operator in the Ammonium Sulphate Plant. But Raju was not prepared to stick on to that profession alone as the urge in him was compelling to go for more and more higher studies. Situation also was favourable to him. He was permitted to work in the night shift most of the time and was lucky enough to get admission for the M.S.W post graduation



course in the nearby “Rajagiri Institute of Social Sciences” at Kalamaserry as a regular student and passed the course in the first rank from the University of Kerala. His thesis for the course was “Multiplicity of Trade Unions in the Eloor Industrial area” and I could see his thesis in the printed format at that time. During his MSW period Raju was lucky enough to get his life partner also from Rajagiri. Leelamma was his class mate and both of them fell in love for the ultimate marriage on 22/10/1973. After completing MSW, both of them joined the Central Government’s “Workers Education Centre” as Education Officers and through subsequent promotions, elevated to the coveted position of the Regional Director of the Western Zone.



**Raju & Leelamma-2007**

Raju’s studies didn’t end up with MSW alone and in fact after retirement from Central Government service also continuing with his studies. LLB and MA degrees in two or three subjects are few of his accomplishments during these years. After retirement Raju enrolled as an Advocate of the Kerala Bar Council by April 2007 with his practice in the Cochin High Court along with other political activities. One of the long-cherished desires of Raju was that of the attainment of a Doctorate degree and with effect from April 2010, Raju was fortunate and proud enough to be called as **Dr. Mathew George**. Raju got the Ph. D for his research thesis “Impact of Training on job satisfaction among Managers – an evaluation of training programmes of selected Organisations in India.” from the “University of Mysore”. Presently Dr. Mathew George is working as the Director of the MBA wing of Mar Athanasius College of Engineering at Kothamangalam, Ernakulam. While looking back, this is really a remarkable achievement for a Plant Operator of FACT during 1968, became the Professor and Head of the

department of Management Studies in one of the most prestigious and oldest Colleges of Kerala!

<p>2010</p>  <p>മൈസൂർ സർവകലാശാലയിൽ നിന്നു മാനേജ്മെന്റിൽ ഡോക്ടറേറ്റ് ലഭിച്ച മാത്യു ജോർജ്ജ്. തിരുവല്ല കുന്നത്താനം മുണ്ടയ്ക്കമെണ്ണിൽ പരേതനായ ജോർജ്ജ് ഫിലിപ്പിന്റെ മകനാണ്.</p>	<p>2009</p>  <p>കേന്ദ്രതൊഴിൽ മന്ത്രാലയത്തിനു കീഴിലുള്ള കേന്ദ്ര തൊഴിലാളി വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ ബോർഡിന്റെ മുംബൈ റീജണൽ ഡയറക്ടറായി നിയമിതയായ സാറമ്മ ജേക്കബ്. കോഴഞ്ചേരി കീഴുകര വലിയകാലായിൽ വി. എ. ചാക്കോയുടെയും അന്നമ്മയുടെയും മകളും തിരുവല്ല കുന്നത്താനം മുണ്ടയ്ക്കമെണ്ണിൽ മാത്യുജോർജിന്റെ (ഡയറക്ടർ, ഇന്ത്യൻ ഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ട് ഓഫ് വർക്കേഴ്സ് എഡ്യൂക്കേഷൻ) ഭാര്യയുമാണ്.</p>
<p><b>Doctorate for Mathew George &amp; Regional Director appointment for Leelamma.</b></p>	

Raju was in London for few years in connection with his Scholarship studies as well as part time employment after his daughter Julie's marriage with Jerry. Julie was also working as a teacher in London and later she also moved to USA with her Computer Engineer husband. Let me take this opportunity to wish Raju and family all the success in their new endeavours. Raju expired after the short illness and heart attack on 11/5/2016 at Ernakulam and was buried on 14/5/2016. He was 69 at that time.

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## PART TWO

### LIFE AT FACT & ABROAD (1971-80)

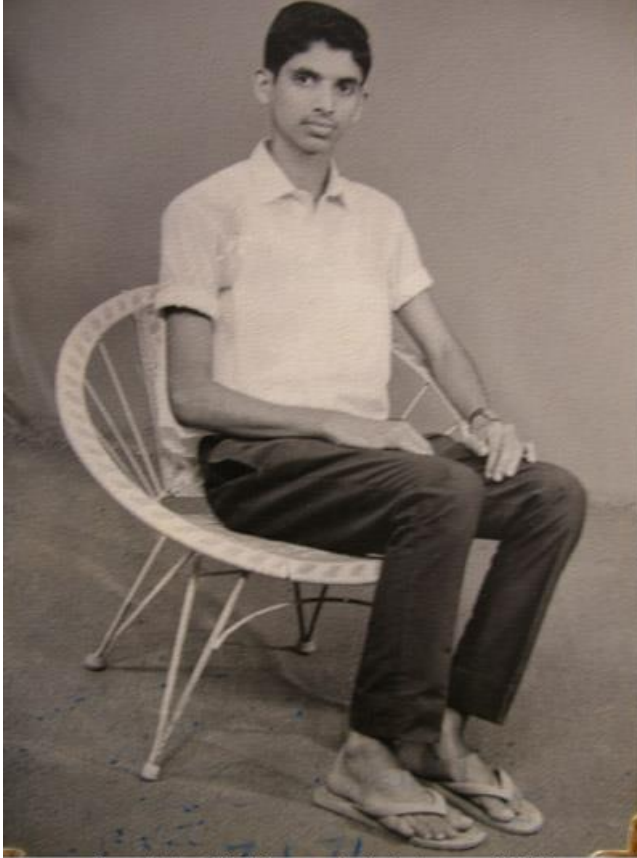
#### Chapter-10

#### Life at FACT

I was fortunate enough to join and start my career in one of the giant Fertilizer Companies of India, M/s **Fertilizers & Chemicals, Travancore Ltd (FACT) Cochin Division** as a graduate trainee for the eventual absorption as Process Technician on completion of 18 months stipulated training period. 'Sunday Standard' wrote once, "FACT is a legend of modern India and a triumph of the public sector. Sprawling on the banks of the Periyar River at Udyogamandal near Alwaye in Kerala, this gigantic public sector fertiliser complex has made a signal contribution to the agricultural economy and technical know-how of the nation."

**FACT** was founded in 1944 in Eloor on the banks of the River Periyar. It came into being at a time of critical food shortage and when chemical fertilisers were practically a novelty to the Indian farmers. The factory went into production in 1947 with an annual capacity of 50,000 tonnes of Ammonium Sulphate. As there was no coal or natural gas in the area, Ammonia production was based on gas generated by burning of firewood. The credit goes to FACT for the commercial utilisation of what was until then merely a laboratory pastime, the firewood gasification process, for the first time in history. Ammonium Sulphate was thus manufactured from Ammonia produced out of firewood and Gypsum mined from Tiruchi district in Madras State. (The Travancore Titanium Products Ltd in Thiruvananthapuram and the FACT in Udyogamandal at Aluva are two of the most important industrial projects of Sir C.P, which earned for the State a place, however small, in the industrial map of India)

**FACT Cochin Unit-** FACT has been entrusted with the responsibility of setting up a new fertiliser unit at **Ambalamedu**, close to the Cochin Refinery. This was one of a chain of major fertiliser projects set up in the country under the Fourth Plan. The first phase of the Cochin Unit involving a capital outlay of Rs.400 million was expected to turn out 160,000 tonnes of Nitrogenous fertilisers a year in the form of 330,000 tonnes of Urea. A unique feature of the Cochin unit was that it was designed, erected and commissioned by indigenous technical know-how developed and acquired by FACT Engineering and Design Organization, and the Planning and Development Division of the Fertiliser Corporation of India.



**Sunny joined FACT as a graduate trainee on 7/1/71**

**My** career with FACT was started on 7<sup>th</sup> January 1971 as a "**Graduate Operator Trainee**" of the Udyogamandal Unit. Before that I was able to execute the bond for Rs 3000-00 in the form of Solvency certificate to serve the Company for five years upon completion of training. After joining the apprenticeship, the trainees were provided with the Company trainee accommodation in the barracks at the Udyogamandal FACT housing colony. Our hostel warden was **Olympian Simon Sunder Raj** who was the Sports Officer of FACT at that time. Total of about 75 trainees were selected in the same batch and half of which was exclusively for the FACT Cochin Division at Ambalamedu. We underwent the 'Orientation training' in all the Udyogamandal Unit Plants for about two weeks and suddenly 42 people were asked to report to the FACT (CD) unit at Ambalamedu with effect from 25<sup>th</sup> January and that was the first time I heard about the Cochin Division, the latest and biggest division of FACT at that time. FACT (CD) at Ambalamedu with the production capacity of 600 metric tons of Ammonia and 1000 metric tons

of Urea per day in the 1<sup>st</sup> Phase and was at the pre-commissioning / commissioning stage at that time along with the Italian "**Montecatini Edison**" start-up group. All the set up in the Cochin Division was entirely different from the Head Office division. By early morning 5 'O' clock bus we left Eloor for reporting to the GM at Ambalamedu on 25<sup>th</sup> January and we all were in the CD office before eight 'O' clock itself and was waiting for the call from GM and as the meeting was delayed few of the trainees went to the Canteen to have the breakfast. I was also in that group of about 7-8 people and by the time we came back at about nine 'O' clock, all the trainees were having the meeting with the GM Mr. A.K Gopinatha Menon. Upon seeing us, the first response from AKG was that we all entered FACT (CD) with our left leg without any realization of our responsibilities etc. etc. But indirectly this scolding proved to be a good thing in my career with FACT and I was in their service only for about 6.5 years and had to join Saudi Aramco for better prospects!

**Initially** all the trainees were accommodated in the old construction camps in the midst of a jungle beside the Plant for about one month and later we were provided with accommodation in the Old Administrative Offices near the FACT junction of Ambalamedu. One block of these administrative offices was with the Estate Manager Mr. T Padmanabhan, the noted short story writer of the Malayalam language. These office premises were with full of "**Chembaka**" trees with the emission of fragrant smell from the flowers. We named the hostel as "**Chembaka Hostel**" dedicated for the graduate trainees. All of us continued our abode at this hostel till completion of our training period and later moved to "**Lake View**" hostel for Process Technicians in front of the Ambalamedu Lake. The Chembaka hostel was not having any mess facilities and we were having our food from the nearest "**Chithra Bhavan**" hostel. Normal meals rate was 75 paise at that time but actually 10 paise less was taken from me as per agreement with the Canteen Manager as I was not taking any vegetable items for the meals from this mess. We were selected for a monthly stipend of Rs 100-00 and the first salary I received on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1971 was Rs 47-00 for two weeks job during January after deduction of Rs 3-00 as hostel rent. During that time, out of Rs 100-00 stipend, actually Rs 50-00 was enough for all the food with special items like Beef, Fish, and Omlet etc. In fact, most of the time I couldn't afford the meals with out any of these special items.

We eight people were selected for training in Urea Plant for eventual absorption as "**Process Technician**". Others being Sreenivasan, P.G Rajagopal, R.K Murali, I.S Murali, T.V George, Nazim and Joseph Jacob. Assistant Plant Manager Mr. M.J Alexander was in charge of the Urea Plant trainees and we were having a good time as trainees along with the Senior Technicians. Mr. N.S Reddy was the Plant Manager, Mr. M Manoharan, Deputy Plant Manager followed by Assistant Plant Managers Mr. P.K Nair, M.J Alexander, K Krishnamurthy and V.S Aliyar as different Shift in Charges along with Process Engineers like Hemachandran, Kulathu Iyer, Narasimhan, Kuppuswamy, Hariharan, Jayadevan, Rajan, Devassy etc. My Urea Plant batch mate **R.K Murali** joined Abu Dhabi Ruwais Fertilizer Company "**FERTIL**" by 1983 along with other colleagues like Jayadevan, Narayanankutty, Narayanan, Rajaram, Varma etc during its start-up period and

upon completion of 25 years service, resigned from "FERTIL" by December 2007 and finally succumbed to 'heart attack' during his routine Tennis play at Guruvayoor, Kerala on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2008.



FACT Ambalamedu- "Lake view" hostel 8-10-71

**Our** training in the Urea Plant went on nicely and it was not actually training alone but to a certain extent an "on the job training" and every where I stood in my usual second-class level with respect to appraisal and other theory exams. But really an interesting thing happened on 13<sup>th</sup> April 1971. All the Cochin Division trainees were called for a meeting and discussion by the Training Superintendent Mr. Krishnan which was attended by all the Plant Managers. Based on the P&ID (Piping and Instrumentation diagram) drawing all the trainees were asked to explain the details followed by questions by the Plant Managers and by the Grace of God, I was able to do my presentation fairly well and the next day everybody received a warning letter from Urea Plant Manager mentioning about the poor performance by everybody except a few like Sunnykutty and Nazim. PM (U) memo is being quoted as follows: -

"On 13/4/71 there was a group discussion in which all apprentices, CST, PM (U), Strg (CD) and MPC took part. Essentially, they were asked to describe the process keeping the Engineering flow sheet in front of them. It was noticed that all Urea Plant apprentices except one or two like Mr. Sunnykutty and Mr. Nazimuddin fared very badly and did not even know the fundamentals of process as for example pressure of the third recycle system. It is highly regrettable that after nearly 2 1/2 months of training in Urea Plant the apprentices have not shown sufficient interest to pick up the barest essentials of Urea process.

All the apprentices are hereby asked to take more interest in the training and they are warned that unless their performance improves this would be brought to the notice of higher authorities for necessary action".

PM (U).

cc. Sunnykutty, Trg Officer, Strg (CD) / CST.

Luckily this warning memo was a real appreciation for Nazim and me. Our training period was actually for 18 months but for start up requirements we were absorbed as Trainee Technicians after 12 months and our stipend also was increased to Rs 200-00 per month. And finally, upon completion of the 18 months period we were appointed as "Process Technicians" of the Urea Plant on a basic pay scale of Rs 170--370 plus DA. And the total amounted to approximately Rs 350-00 per month since 7<sup>th</sup> July 1972. More over during manpower shortages etc we were forced to do over time also and actually at times most of the Technicians were fighting for overtime. Certain occasions many people used to continue for 32 hours also and the maximum I have continued was for 24 hours only and not more than that. One interesting aspect about the overtime job was that of one of the Senior Technicians who was very much fond of continuation for more than 24 hours. In view of his continuous overtime, some body prepared a "Stretcher" and kept ready for him for the eventual fall down in the Plant. Upon receiving the information this Senior Technician got angry and he jumped with his pocket knife to stab and finally pacified by others with out any apparent incidents.

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Out of our FACT Urea Plant batch mates, even after leaving FACT, we were in close contact with Rajagopal's family especially after the marriage of their daughter Resma with Giresh in Sharjah. Rajagopal took an early voluntary retirement from FACT service and during his peaceful retirement life had visited UAE few times and we were also fortunate enough to bring them to our Ruwais abode for the concrete bonding of our family relationships. Rajagopal also succumbed to his illness by 15<sup>th</sup> August 2012. Another batch mate Mr. Joseph Jacob after few years service in Aramco and Nigeria, finally retired from Adgas, Das Island, Abu Dhabi also visited us once at our Ruwais housing complex. His wife Lissy Jacob expired on 30/1/2014 after a short ill-ness.

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**Ever** since we started our stay in the "Chembaka hostel", a group of people started subscribing to the day- to-day periodicals and magazines like 'Manorama', 'Mathrubhumi', 'Kunkumam,' 'Janayugam', 'Malayala Nadu' etc along with Manorama and Hindu dailies. This group was actually fond of reading what ever available good periodicals and I was also lucky enough to be in that group and reading the periodicals was the only past time during that time other than watching the movies at different theatres. Actually, after joining FACT only I have become an addict for cinemas where as prior to that I have hardly seen some 10 cinemas only through out my 20 years of life period. In fact, still I am keeping a record of all the films I have seen since 1971 and is being followed by Jolly also after our marriage. Another way, actually it is a record of all the released Malayalam films from 1950 onwards. Our film viewing is limited to Malayalam only and certain other language movies I have seen only during my stay at Ambalamedu and some of the notable films includes Bengali "Seemabadha", Tamil "Passi", Hindi "Julie" and few of the English movies also. Bengali



"Seemabadha" really impressed me to a very good extent and I could comprehend the movie because of the story background through "Mathrubhumi" weekly, which was serialized during that time.



Sunny's friend Rajagopal & family at Ruwais on 5-7-2005



Sunny with FACT(CD) batchmate Joseph Jacob (Adgas) at Ruwais on 25-1-2007.

One of the sensational serials in "Malayala Nadu" weekly during 1972-73 periods was Madhavikutty's "Entae Katha" and all of us were very eager to read it as soon as it arrives every week. Other than reading the periodicals, I was having a transistor with me, which I got from Lillypengal and I was able to listen to the radio programmes regularly in order to update with the latest information in addition to the newspapers. After leaving the College, I was really in touch with the contemporary periodicals and I could continue with this reading habit until I moved from Gasco camps by 1988 for the Ruwais Housing complex on family status. Regarding the Malayalam daily, since 1962, I have been a regular reader of "Malayala Manorama" and except for few months in S Arabia I was fortunate enough to go through all the Manorama papers up to now. No matter, whatever newspapers you read the real pleasure of reading "Manorama" cannot be derived from any other.

**As** stated above, ever since my departure from India, I was really able to maintain my reading habits especially the Malayalam novels. To begin with, I was a member of the "Vidhyarthimithram" and NBS book clubs and later switched over to "D.C Book club" and is being continued until now. I was maintaining a Library as "M. S Library" during my School and College days at Thiruvalla and later "Azhakath Books" since 1972. Even though I was collecting books, but real reading could be carried out only during my Gasco camp life from 1980 to 1988 where I was on leave rotation 91/35, 75/29 and 60/30 etc and most of the DC books publications I read during this period. Afterwards, actually due to lack of time and availability of other entertainments like TV etc, this habit is being discontinued and even for newspapers also now a days I am having only a 'bird's-eyeview' with respect to deep reading. There is one interesting incident about my Novel reading habits. During 1999, Myself and Jolly were invited for the marriage of the daughter of late Lukos Sir (Regional Manager of SBT, Kottayam) and on way to "Kaduthuruthy" for the marriage, as our car was empty, two more ladies also got into our car at Kottayam who were not familiar to us. During the journey, they introduced themselves to us, one as a Physiotherapy student of the M.G University and the other lady as English lecturer of "Amalagiri" College. Since "Amalagiri" was her old College for Pre-degree, Jolly was very happy to have a deep-rooted conversation with her and I was only listening to their talks. She introduced herself as "Aniamma" of the English department. Suddenly I looked behind at her and asked, "Are you a writer?" Upon hearing this blunder question, Jolly got angry and she suddenly stared at me for the foolish question I uttered to her College lecturer. Immediately Aniamma replied to me that she is a writer and I was really taken aback and asked the second foolish question. "Are you the award winner of the DC Books? Yes. It was her answer and in fact she was "Aniamma Kuriakose" and "Eee Thuruthil Njan Thaniya" was her award novel. DC books introduced an award for the first published novels of the new and young Malayalam writers and Aniamma was the first recipient of this award a few years ago.



ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് സാഹിത്യത്തിൽ  
ഡോക്ടറേറ്റ് (എ.ജി.) നേടി  
യ അമ്മഗിരി ബി.കെ. കോള  
ജ് അധ്യാപിക ആനിയമ്മ കു  
ര്യാക്കോസ് പുത്തനങ്ങാടി ഇ  
ടവനത്ത് ഇ.സി. കുര്യാക്കോ  
സിന്റെ മകളും കോട്ടയം സി  
എ.എസ്.കോളജിലെ കള  
ത്തിപ്പിടികളത്തിൽ പ്രഫ. ജോ  
സഫ് കോശിയുടെ ഭാര്യയു  
മാണ്.

Novelist Aniamma Kuriakose

In fact, I read this novel few years ago and the description of the novelist was in my vague memory, which led to these blunders. Suddenly I felt as if I am elevated even above Aniamma Kuriakose in front of others. Jolly's anger turned to be a real admiration for her knowledgeable husband. Later we had a cordial discussion on many subjects until return from the marriage. In fact, Aniamma's husband Mr. Babu was known to Jolly and they also belonged to our St Peters Mar Thoma Church congregation with their abode at Kalathilpady, Kottayam. Later by about 2018, we have been to their house at Kalathilpady and had a good conversation with Joseph Sir, Aniamma and others. Presently Aniamma is busy with her literary works in Malayalam and English through her "Aksharasthree" women's literary congregation. Aniamma Joseph has published her autobiography "Symphonies over Hills & Dales" by September, 2022. Joseph Sir expired on 30/3/2022.

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**A similar** incident also has happened some years before and the noted Tamil, Malayalam writer Mr. **Neelapadmanabhan** was the culprit at that time but the extent was not that much. During one of our train journeys to Trivandrum, we met Mr. Neelapadmanabhan and I had a cordial talk with him in the train for more than an hour, which was witnessed by Jolly. I had already read many of his writings through "Kumkumam" etc and another controversial article about him somewhere else may be Manorama, I think at that time. That was the basis of our talk at that

time. The funny thing was that Jolly had never heard or seen the photo of a noted writer like Mr. Neelan at that time and that was the real surprise for Jolly.

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**Adoor** Gopalakrishnan had taken his first famous film “[Swayamvaram](#)” by 1972 and has formed the ‘[Chithralekha Film Society](#)’ and as a result of his efforts, lots of film societies were formed during this period along the length and breadth of Kerala for the viewing and the appreciation of good quality cinemas. Members of these film societies were mainly intellectual giants as well as art lovers. In FACT, Ambalamedu also there were a group of real film appreciators and they have formed the “[Ambalamedu Film Society](#)” for which I also became a member and was fortunate enough to view good and classic films from different languages. Accordingly, many good films were screened at the 16 mm Theatre of Cochin Refinery Club and the other 35 mm films at the Ambalamedu Theatre. Few of the Ambalamedu film society members were R Viswanathan Nair, K Viswanathan, TPS Nair, Jayadevan, Nedungady, Gopi Annan, M.K Krishnan, Rajagopal, Venugopala Kurup, M.K Abraham, OTS Nambiar, M P Sukumaran Nair, KGS Nair, Gopinatha Kurup, P.S Nair etc. More over many of our FACT colleagues were noted writers and novelists and out of these people Mr. T.M Abraham was in our batch and Mr. Thomas Thomas was in our senior batch. Later T M Abraham has become an Indian theatre director and playwright. He was the Vice Chairman of the Kerala Sangeetha Nadaka Academy and recipient of many awards for his plays, novels and best play direction. Thomas Thomas’s novel “[Visha bhoomiyil mayangunnavar](#)” was in fact a story of F.A.C.T and other Companies of the Eloor industrial area. Thomas Thomas received some awards for his novel at that time. Few intellectual giants like Mr. M.P Sukumaran Nair and OT Sivaraman Nambiar later became the MD of Travancore Cochin Chemicals, Eloor and Marketing Director of the Indian “Spices Board” respectively.

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## Chapter-11

### FACT Cochin division

**FACT** has done a yeoman service in popularising chemical fertilisers among the farmers all over South India. With a view to familiarise the farming community with the modern and scientific agriculture methods FACT built up an extensive network of sales-cum-service centres in Kerala and the neighbouring States. Cochin Division came into existence as a result of the farsighted vision of two of the fertiliser giants' viz. **Mr. M.K.K Nair** and **Mr. Paul Pothan**. MKK envisaged an Industrial city besides Cochin Refinery long before 1967 and acquired 1500 acres of land near the Ambalamugal Refinery and named it as "**Ambalamedu**". About 200 acres of Paddy field was converted into a beautiful lake after the construction of a small dam with the water supply canal extending from the **Neriamangalam / Bhoothathankettu** dam. This Ambalamedu Lake could easily meet all the water requirements of the entire Cochin Division Plant as well as the Ambalamedu FACT Housing colony. Moreover, this dam and lake is maintaining the scenic beauty of the Ambalamedu Township to a very good extent. The "**Ambalamedu House**" constructed at the centre of the lake is considered to be an architectural beauty with all the handicraft and the hand made furniture's, this Guest house was used as a meeting point for all important seminars, political as well as Industrial meetings and an important shooting location for many of the film works. Our "**Lake View**" hostel also was constructed at the dam entrance overlooking the lake and the forest beauties. The Architects and Engineers of the "**Ambalfact**" designed everything based on the natural beauty of the locality and in the up keeping of its standards, the FACT (CD) Management decided not to appoint any lady staff for the entire Ambalamedu unit and as such if at all any of the Employees wanted to see some feminine faces, had to go to Ernakulam or Tripunithura. The only exception was two of the Telephone Contract cleaners and the local lady bush cleaners and sand loading / unloading petty contract workers.

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**M.K.K Nair** was the CMD of FACT up to 1/7/1971 and afterwards, Indira Gandhi appointed Mr. B.K Khanna from Punjab as the CMD and that was the beginning of the downfall of FACT to a certain extent. In another way it was the downfall of MKK also from the "**Maharaja**" way of life. He was transferred to the Planning Ministry as Joint Secretary, which finally ended in his suspension from service due to the allegations raised against him during his service with FACT. Later he was freed from all the allegations but by the time everything was late and he paid himself for the misdeeds by his subordinates or co-workers. His autobiography– "**Aaroodum Paribhavamillathae**" (**Without Complaints about Anyone**) or "**Prejudice to None**" is in fact a true story of the fertiliser giant FACT and the Jhamshedpur Steel Plant. This "**Maharaja**" had the real pathetic downfall towards the end of his life. Had he been not with FACT service, the CD unit would have

been something elusive. FACT can be really proud of a distinguished personality like MKK as its CMD for quite a long time. His successor Mr. B.K Khanna was really a burden for the entire FACT and on completion of his three-year tenure; ruined the legendary FACT in the real sense. First time, the FACT (CD) employees had the one-month strike, which had to be withdrawn with out any benefits for the employees due to the proclamation of Emergency on 3/12/1971 by the Indian Government in view of the Indo-Pak war for the release of Bangladesh. Finally, Bangladesh obtained freedom from Pakistan by 16/12/1971 and a new nation was formed.

**In FACT**, we started our first shift duty on 25/8/1971 and continue with my shift duties in one form or the other since then. When I am writing these memories during January 2005, I have just been promoted to the "**Shift Controller**" position of one of the biggest Gas Plants of the World M/s **Gasco** of Abu Dhabi and had to maintain the shift duties in the new position also. Since I have opted for this type of operational jobs, there is no end for the shift job activities. As stated earlier, upon completion of our training we were absorbed as "**Process Technicians**" of the Urea Plant with effect from 7/7/1972 and our starting gross salary of Rs 350/- per month was a good salary by one of the Central Government firms where as the normal salary in the Kerala Government LDC or UDC was about Rs 200/- per month at that time. Once Mr. TPS Nair of FACT has made a sarcastic comment on our employment with FACT. "**By virtue of your employment in FACT, you can really get good marriage alliances from the Royal families**". May be this statement was true to a certain extent at that time. Still an employment with FACT is considered to be a real accomplishment at all times.

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**FACT** Cochin Division was in the pre-commissioning stage when we joined as trainees and in fact, we were the last batch of Company sponsored trainees and later the training was as per Government of India training scheme and on completion, they are not bound by any employment obligations. Cochin Division phase 1 was having a capacity to produce 1000 metric tons per day Urea out of 600 tons of Ammonia per day produced in the Ammonia Plant. The Urea Plant was constructed in two streams or trains with the capacity of 500 tons each. The first Urea prill was produced at about 2340 hrs on 27/4/1973 and I was also in the shift during those enchanting moments. Unlike Udyogamandal Units, FACT (CD) was operated by the limited manpower of about 500 people for the entire division and out of which the Urea Plant was managed by about 10 Process Technicians followed by two Process Engineers under the Assistant Plant Manager as Shift in Charge. But another notable point about the FACT plants is the poor consideration for the "**safety aspects**". When you compare with the safety standards of other multinational companies, FACT can be considered as a big zero. They have just installed one unit of the **Central Industrial Security Forces** (CISF) and all the safety and security of the Plant was entrusted to them, no matter, everybody can do away with all the "Unsafe practices" in the Plant. One important aspect was the usage of "personal protective equipment's" in the Plant. During my six and a half years service period with FACT, I never used "Helmet"

and "Shoes" in the Plant and instead only the "chappals" were used regularly for the shift use. After resignation from FACT, I took my "helmet" in the brand-new condition to the house and was kept as a monument for the sweet memories of my services with FACT! The only plus point was that we were using the "pants" in the Plant instead of the "mundu" or "dhothy". In fact, nobody was bothered about all these things. Another interesting aspect was the sleeping of employees in the night shifts. During shut down etc some people used to complain as if they got only six hours sleep during the entire eight-hour shift! This was the attitude for safety matters in FACT at that time. Later everything changed and I think, FACT is giving due respect for the safety aspects now a days.

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30-3-2000  
പ്രഫ. ഇ. ജോൺ മാത്യു  
**ബന്ധേലിയസിന് പൂതീയ സാരഥി**

കോട്ടയം ബന്ധേലിയസ് കോളേജ് പ്രിൻസിപ്പലായി പ്രഫ. ഇ. ജോൺ മാത്യു ഏപ്രിൽ ഒന്നിനു ചുമതലയേൽക്കും. പൗരത്തി എം.ഡി. കോളേജിന്റെ പ്രിൻസിപ്പലായി കഴിഞ്ഞ രണ്ടു വർഷമായി സേവനം അനുഷ്ഠിച്ചുവരികയായിരുന്നു. തിരുവല്ല മാർത്തോമ്മാ കോളേജിൽനിന്ന് മൂവ്വീഴ് സാംഹിത്യത്തിൽ ബിരുദാനന്തര ബിരുദവും മറ്റാതാഗാസ സർവ്വകലാശാലയുടെ സ്പെഷ്യൽ ഓഫീർ ലൈസൻസിൽനിന്ന് എം.ഫിലയും നേടിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. മാതൃപാഠന കൂടാതെതിൽ കെ.സി. മാത്യുവിന്റെ മകനാണ്. മാറ്റു മാറിയാൽ ജോൺ കോട്ടയം ട്രൈകോം. അസി. കോളേജ് മാതൃമാണ്. ടീന, രാജി (കോട്ടയം ബന്ധിപ്പാൽ കോളേജ് വിദ്യാർത്ഥി), അനൂ (മാൺ കാർൽ സ്പെഷ്യൽ) എന്നിവർ മക്കളാണ്.

പ്രഫ. പ്രസാദ് തോമസ്  
കോടിയോട്ട്  
കാതോലിക്കൻ കോളേജ്  
പ്രിൻസിപ്പൽ  
11-4-2000



പത്തനംതിട്ട കോതേലിക്കറ്റ് കോളേജ് പ്രിൻസിപ്പലായി പ്രഫ. പ്രസാദ് തോമസ് കോടിയോട്ട് ഇന്നു ചുമതലയേൽക്കും. കോളേജിലെ ഭജനശാസ്ത്രവിഭാഗം മേധാവിയായിരുന്നു. കൊച്ചിൻ യൂണിവേഴ്സിറ്റിയിൽനിന്നു റാങ്കോടെ ബിരുദാനന്തരബിരുദം പൂർത്തിയാക്കിയതരക്ഷ. 1975ൽ കോട്ടയം ബന്ധേലിയസ് കോളേജിൽ അധ്യാപകനായി. 2001ലാണ് കാതോലിക്കറ്റ് കോളേജിലേക്കു മാറിയിട്ടത്. മൈ. എ. എ. സി. എ. ഡയറക്ടർ ബോർഡ് അംഗം, തിരുവല്ല യൂണിയൻ ആർച്ച് സൊസൈറ്റി പ്രസിഡന്റ്, തിരുവല്ല ഹോർട്ടികൾച്ചർ ഡയറക്ടർ സൊസൈറ്റി പ്രസിഡന്റ്, ട്രാർജ്ഗ് ഗ്രൂപ്പ് സെക്രട്ടറി എന്നീ നിലകളിലും പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നു.



6-9-2004  
മനോരമ മാസിക അധ്യക്ഷക അവാർഡ് നേടിയ തിരുവല്ല ബാലികമാനസ്പെഷ്യൽ പ്രിൻസിപ്പൽ ഫ്രേഞ്ചൈസ് മനോമൗസ് സ്വപൻദീപിയിൽ രാജീവ് അസി. എ. പി. ജെ. അമ്പിളിയിൽ കലാമിമിട്ടിന്നു ബഹുമാനിക്കുന്ന ഏറ്റവും മികച്ച മാതൃമാണ്.



5-12-98  
സംബന്ധന ബോർഡ് മാർക്കറ്റിങ് വിഭാഗം ഡയറക്ടറായി സിറാജുമാർക്കറ്റിംഗ് മാനേജർ

Mrs. Annu - 6-6-2016  
**ഡോ. സുകുമാരൻ നായർ പുനരുകാരണ ബോർഡ് ചെയർമാൻ**



കൊച്ചി സംസ്ഥാന പൊതുവേലാലോ പുനരുകാരണ ബോർഡ് ചെയർമാനായി ട്രാമ്പൻ കൂറ് കൊച്ചിൻ കെമിക്കൽസ് (സിസിസി) യുടെ എം.ഡി. ഡോ. എം. പി. സുകുമാരൻ നായർ ഈ നിയമിച്ചു. വി. എസ്. അച്യുതാനന്ദൻ മുഖ്യമന്ത്രിയായിരിക്കെ അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ ശാസ്ത്രകാര്യ ഉപദേശകനായിരുന്നു സുകുമാരൻ നായർ. ലോതുവേലാലോ വ്യവസായങ്ങൾ ലാഭകരവും കാര്യക്ഷമമാക്കുന്നതിനുള്ള നിർദ്ദേശങ്ങൾ സമർപ്പിക്കലാണ് ബോർഡിന്റെ പ്രധാന ചുമതല. സംസ്ഥാനത്തു ഏതീയ വ്യവസായങ്ങൾ ആരംഭിക്കേണ്ടതു സംബന്ധിച്ച ശുപാർശകളും ബോർഡ് നൽകും. സംസ്ഥാന പൊതുവേലാലോ സിംഗിൾ നെഞ്ചുള്ള ട്രാഫിക് ലൈറ്റുകൾ നിയമനം സംബന്ധിച്ച ശുപാർശകൾ നിർദ്ദേശിക്കും ബോർഡിന്റെ ചുമതലയാണ്. ഡോ. കെ. എ. ഏബ്രഹാം, പി. എച്ച്. കുര്യൻ, രാജീവ് ഗോവിന്ദൻ, സെന്റർ ഫോർ റിസർച്ച് ആൻഡ് ടെക്നോളജി രജിസ്ട്രാർ ഡോ. അശോകൻ, റിയാൻ സെക്രട്ടറി ആർ. പത്മകുമാർ എന്നിവരാണ് പുനരുകാരണ ബോർഡ് അംഗങ്ങൾ.

24-5-1999

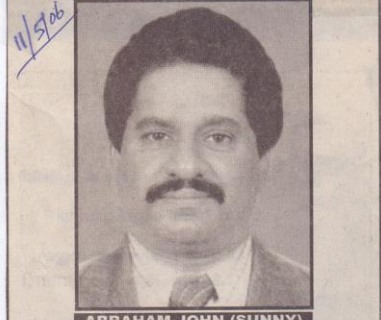


**സുകുമാരൻ നായർ ടി.സി.സി. എം.ഡി.**  
കൊച്ചി ടി.സി.സി. മാനേജിൽ ഡയറക്ടറായി എം. പി. സുകുമാരൻ നായർ നിയമിക്കാൻ കെമിക്കൽസ് (സിസിസി) കെമിക്കൽസ് എൻജിനീയറിംഗിലും ബിരുദമുള്ള ഉദ്യോഗാഹാർക്ക് എൻജിനീയറിംഗിൽ ഡിപ്ലോമയിൽ ബെച്ചുട്ടി ചീഫ് എഞ്ചിനീയറായിരുന്നു.

26-1-06



**ഡോ. സുമനസ്സ് റ്റീബിനീറോ**  
മികച്ചിട്ടി : പാലയാട്ടം സബ്ബാതിയൻ മിഷനിൽ കോമ്പ്യൂട്ടർ വിഭാഗത്തിൽ മാനേജർ കോമ്പ്യൂട്ടർ മാറ്റു ഡോ. സുമനസ്സ് ഏബ്രഹാം (55) നിയോഗിച്ചു. സംസ്കാരം ഇന്നു 2.30 ന് ഭവനത്തിലെ ശുശ്രൂഷകൾക്കു ശേഷം ശാരദാജി മാർത്തോമ്മാ പള്ളിയുടെ തെക്കോട്ടുള്ള സെമിത്തേരിയിൽ, തിരുവല്ല വാരിശൊട്ടു തോട്ടത്തിൽ കൂടുംബാംഗമാണ്. മകൻ: വിജയ്.



11/5/06  
**ABRAHAM JOHN (SUNNY)**  
27.01.1950 08.05.2006  
മാമല : മസ്കറ്റ് മോൻ ടെക്സ്റ്റൈൽ മിൽ സീനിയർ മാനേജർ ഏബ്രഹാം ജോൺ (സണ്ണി - 56) 08.05.2006 ൽ ന്യൂറോനെയി. ഇദ്ദേഹം മാമല മേത്തനാൽ (മല്ലൂർ) പുതുവേലിൽ മണ്ണിൽ കൂടുംബാംഗം പരാമർശം കിളി ജോൺ സാറിന്റെയും, മാമാമോൻ മുറ്റത്തുമുട്ടിൽ മരിച്ചുവെച്ചുവെച്ചു ഇളമകനാണ്. മര്യ : നീലി, പത്മമംഗലം കോളേജിൽ പാതകരായ കഴിയാതെക്കൊൻ കോർപ്പറേറ്റീവ് കോളേജിലും, അക്രൈനോ പാലാൽ മിമി കൂരൂരക്കോ സിന്റേഴ്സും കേളാണ്. മക്കൾ : ഡോ. മിഖായീൽ (മാമല), മിമിൻ ഏബ്രഹാം (M.B.S. Student, കോളേജിൽ മിമിൻ കോളേജ്) കോളേജ് : ഡോ. റാജീവ് അഷ്കർ ഫിസിയൻ (മാമല), സഹായകരങ്ങൾ : മര്യം, മീനാ മാത്യു (Rtd. Add. Director of Animal Husbandry), ജോൺ ഇന്നൂസ് (മാമല) Cynosure, Dubai.

## Chapter-12

### Associated activities of FACT era

**FACT (CD)** had its first major strike for 66 days with effect from 11/5/1974 and lasted till 15/7/1974 and as a result of the agreement our pay scale was revised to Rs 170-670 plus DA Rs 375/- and as such our basic pay was fixed at Rs 206/- with effect from 1/4/1973 but half of the arrears had to be deposited in the Compulsory Deposit Scheme as per Governmental orders. One rupee per day night shift allowance and subsidised meals for 45 paise were the other benefits as a result of the agreement.

**"Pullaanae pullaanae, police njangalkku pullaanae"** but this slogan is not true at least for the FACT (CD) employees. There is an interesting story about our 66 days strike at FACT (CD). During the peak strike period, once our leaders got the information that one truck load of material was due for arrival to the FACT gate in the night and accordingly one batch of people from the hostels were sent to the Kuzhikkad FACT junction in order to prevent the entry of the trucks into the Company premises. Being under probation, majority of our newly absorbed Technicians were not directly involved in the strike activities. During this strike, our gymnast Workshop Supervisor Chandran received an unusual slap on his face by a skeleton type Policeman with the ultimate hearing loss and other calamities. After this incident, the Police are really **"pullae alla"** at least for the Cochin division employees.

**Making** use of the loan facility from FACT, I purchased my first Sen Raleigh bicycle on 7/6/1973, which was my mode of conveyance, till I purchased my **"Vijai Deluxe"** scooter on 18/5/1976 for Rs 4900/- (Petrol price @ Rs 3/-per litre was considered to be very high even at that time). After learning to drive the Scooter by around 1973, I was really interested and eager to purchase a Scooter. At that time Scooter / Car bookings were very precious and normally we have to wait for more than five- six years in order to get the delivery. Actually, I made a booking for the Lambretta scooter by 1975 with the fixed deposit receipt for Rs. 500/- with M/s 'Carbon Dioxide Private Limited', Ernakulam. Prior to the formation of the National Scooter Company in U.P, the Indian customers had to be contented with only two scooter models in the entire Indian markets viz. **"Lambretta"** and the **"Vespa"** with a waiting period of about 4-5 years. It was **"Vijay Deluxe"** who flooded the Indian roads with the required number of scooters with in the reach of the common masses. **"Vijai Deluxe"** scooter booking on 18/8/1975 at Ernakulam was really an incident. We had taken a hotel room near the booking centre at Durbar Hall grounds on 17/8/1975 but the Police didn't allow us to start the queue in the night and it was allowed only at 0700 hours in the morning, I had to be contented with my 466-registration number. But when the allotment was made, I could exchange with Jacob George's booking which helped me to purchase the scooter on 18/5/1976. Jacob George was the proud owner of the prestigious Vespa scooter and as such he was planning to sell his allotment for a good

margin. (Our senior colleague Jacob George also left FACT and joined Saudi Arabian fertilizer Company SAFCO by 1977 and was continuing with the SAFCO service till retirement and finally had to succumb to his illness by 22/12/2000 at Chengannur.) Among our FACT batch of about 42 personnel, I was the second man fortunate enough to buy a scooter or bike and the first man being Joseph Jacob who purchased his Rajdoodh bike some time before in 1975. I could manage to get the Scooter driving license from Alwaye at the second attempt. While coming back to Ambalamedu from Alwaye after successfully completing the driving test, I had a small scooter accident in which I made a small hit on one old lady who was running and crossing the road to catch the stopped bus near Karimugal. She was given first aid for the small bruises at the nearby government clinic and finally I paid Rs 5/- and amicably settled the issue.

**In** the mean time my younger brother Vinod, managed to get selected as a Commercial graduate trainee with FACT and was transferred to Cochin Division with effect from 29/10/1975 and as such he was also staying with me in the "**Lake View**" hostel for about one year until return by 23/10/1976. This training was as per Government of India training scheme and there was no guarantee for employment afterwards and may be some of them got selected depending on their influence etc. Vinod could gather some experience in the Accounts Department of FACT (CD), which has proved to be beneficial for his future assignments also. Again, during this period on 4/10/1976, we met with a scooter accident at **Kuruppumthara**. We were returning from **Keezhvaipur** and from **Ettumanoor** onwards, Vinod was driving the scooter and at **Kuruppumthara** our scooter skidded on some oil and diesel on the road and fell down. To our good luck there were no vehicles behind us and we could manage to get out of the accident with minor injuries. Our scooter handle was somewhat in the 90-degree position and in that position, I could manage to ride the scooter up to **Thalayolaparampu** and had the first aid at a roadside clinic. Scooter handle also was turned to the normal position at one workshop and we continued our journey back to Ambalamedu. Even though there was no problem after the accident, I underwent some sort of massage or "**Thirummal**" at Keezhvaipur afterwards, which led to some sort of consequences for my marriage proposal with Jolly later. Indirectly this can be attributed as one of the reasons for my marriage with Jolly. This is to be dealt in detail in the succeeding pages.

**Achachen** took the voluntary retirement from the Military Service by 23/9/1973 after completing 21 years including the previous service period. Prior to his retirement he was in Madras and he was confident that he could manage with his Military pension along with my salary from FACT. After his retirement we transferred our abode from Thiruvalla to Keezhvaipur by 23/4/1974. Azhakath House at Keezhvaipur was built by 1965 and was kept empty since then. Ammamma was with Achachen in the Military quarters during this period and we were in Thiruvalla with Ammachi and were continuing our school and college studies. Ammamma also joined us at Thiruvalla when Achachen was transferred to Assam from Madras by 1969. One of our important and biggest accomplishments during 1968 is that of the marriage of Kunjumamma on 25/1/1968 and Lilly Pengal on 2/9/1968 not by money wise but conducted

successfully by our youngster gangs like Renjimon, Vinod and myself. As stated, earlier Lilly Pengal went to Saudi Aramco as staff nurse on 27/9/1964 and Kunjummamma was working as staff nurse in St. Stephen's Hospital, Delhi. But Kunjummamma's marriage was fixed earlier with Babychayan and was conducted at St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, Thiruvalla with out the presence of Lilly Pengal as she couldn't come from Saudi Arabia at that time. Later Lilly Pengal's marriage was fixed and conducted with Georgekuttychayan from Bangalore on 2/9/1968. Ammachi did all the arrangements with the help of the younger trios. Even the brides also came for the marriage just before one week. At that time normally the marriages were conducted at the bride's house and one can imagine the responsibilities for the marriage. All the arrangements were done in the house and nothing was arranged in any of the reception halls or by any of the Catering companies. Afterwards, the next marriage was that of Kunjumonachachen on 27/8/1970 with Leelamma Kochamma of Parayil house, Puthuppally. This marriage was held at Puthuppally and as such it was not that much botheration for us. I think, Kunjumonachachen was at Poona at the time of his marriage and later only transferred to Madras.

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**An** Industrial and Science exhibition was conducted at Ernakulam Maharaja's College grounds during February 1973, which had some consequences in my life since then. I went for the exhibition after completing the night shift duties and along with the FACT friends, I went for the "Abnormal delivery" film show at the medical college pavilion and due to the severe rush, I couldn't get a chair for the film show and was forced to stand and view the film show. After viewing the horrible bloodshed, I straight away collapsed. This was actually a turning point in my life and afterwards I did not go for any of these shows or conducted any Hospital visits. "If at all I marry any time, I will not produce any children" was the decision taken at that time. But later my attitudes had to be changed and I couldn't stick on to my pledges. Since then, I am trying my level best to avoid any of such Hospital visits or keep away from such situations.

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**During** the Ernakulam exhibition I purchased one "Hair trimmer" from "**Safico**" Company of Changanacherry for ten Rupees and the funny thing is that I have not at all gone to the Barbershop for hair cuts afterwards. My last haircut was done at the Ambalamedu barbershop on 27/3/1973. The only exception was my hair cut just prior to my marriage and during that process; the Barber did his level best to ruin my hairstyle and completely spoiled my facial outlook. Actually, this was the reason behind my hatred for the hair cut at the Barbershops. I think, this is the attitude of all the Barbers even now and once you give your head to them, they will not hesitate to do maximum service for your payments! But after my marriage, Jolly used to do minor trimming of my hairs at times. I think, Jolly has inherited this quality hair trimming techniques from their neighbour Barber Soman and associates!

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**Kerala** won the 30<sup>th</sup> Santhosh Trophy football tournament over the Railways for the first time in the history of the Kerala Football Association. The final was on 27/12/1973. This was indirectly an achievement for FACT. Majority of the players were from FACT including the **Captain Moni**. Others were **John J John**, **Jaffer**, **Williams's** etc. It was a real accomplishment for Kerala as well as FACT. Because of the presence of the FACT players, we were also very much interested in football at that time. I was not fortunate enough to see the football finals at that time and instead I could hear only the radio commentary. Our Mathilumkal house neighbour "**Thoma**" was also very much interested in football as well as the FACT team. John J John was from Thiruvalla and an old student of Mar Thoma College, which was the main attraction for **Thoma**. During my off or leave days at Thiruvalla, Thoma used to discuss with me all the details about the football and the FACT team. The pity fact was that I did not see any of these players except John J John and all my knowledge was from the football commentaries and other information from periodicals etc. The only game I was interested in those days was the football and nothing else. **John J John** retired as Sports Officer of FACT, expired on 3/8/2011 at the age of about 63.

**Aravindan's** famous movie "**Utharayanam**" released during 1974 is considered to be one of the best movies I saw during the Amalamedu period. One of the ideologies which Aravindan wanted to depict through the film created a lasting impression in my life. One important point I learned from Aravindan is nothing other than the real fact in our day-to-day life. "**Chodyangal chodikkuvanulla kazhivundakuka ennullathanu pradhanam - allathae utharungal nalkuka ennullathalla**". **It is necessary to ask questions rather than giving the answers - is the most important thing.** Even though the idea grasped my understanding and feelings at that time, it was only at the later stage I could comprehend the inner meaning of the statement in order to materialize the same in my day-to-day walks of life. Later after my elevation to the Shift Controller position in Gasco, during one of our casual talks, our Operations Manager Mr. Raghavan also emphasized the importance of the idea in a detailed way for my career developments in Gasco. Similar to this, Shashi Tharoor, the former United Nations diplomat and writer, while recollecting the memories of his Delhi St. Stephen's College days of the 1970s, wrote: - "**Elsewhere you learn to answer the questions. At St. Stephen's College you learn to question the answers. Some of us went further, and questioned the questions.**" Regarding the factionalism in the Congress party, Shashi Tharoor made a recent statement to "Indian Express" on 21/8/22 as follows: - "**You know Kofi Annan used to tell me that there are no stupid questions, there are only stupid answers. Let me not give a stupid answer.**"

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**1975-76** was considered to be the "**Parivarthanavadi**" or "Reformation" period for the Kerala unit of the Indian National Congress. Congress reformists under the leadership of Mr. **M.A John** were revolting against the Congress ideologies during this period for which Ernakulam was the centre point. At that time, wherever you go in Ernakulam, all the empty walls were occupied by the slogan "**M.A John Namma Nayikkum**" followed by another caption underneath "**Chorrikkum**



**puzhukkaddikkum- Jalim Lotion”** Whoever visited Ernakulam during this period cannot forget this **“Chuvarezhuthu”** or writing on the walls. This was one of the talks of the town among the intellectuals at that time. And the pity fact was that M.A John became a big zero in the Power politics of the Congress organization. Later after about 25 years only I could hear something about M.A John, the roaring of an old lion. Lately he became the Senior Vice President of the newly formed Democratic Indira Congress (Karunakaran) party by 1<sup>st</sup> May 2005 by the splitting of K Karunakaran and son Murali from the Congress party. Again, he couldn't stay in that party for long and was forced to quit and had formed some other faction of the same party. M.A John expired at the age of about 76 by December 2010.

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**On** 10<sup>th</sup> January 1974, I attended one written test and Interview for the post of Process Operator at IFFCO, Ahmedbad. Actually, the main attraction for the interview was that of the first-class train fare for which I had to produce the one-way actual fare for the reimbursement from IFFCO. Somehow, I made the booking and left for Ahmedbad by 6<sup>th</sup> January train. But I could get the ticket only in the waiting list and finally I travelled to Ahmedbad in the first-class compartment, sleeping in the corridor of the train at the night time. It was actually a miserable journey and the pity fact was that the day I reached Ahmedbad, i.e., on 9<sup>th</sup> January; the full Gujarat was under curfew due to the general strike and other agitations. Luckily the trains were operating and from Ahmedbad I could reach IFFCO, Kalol by train and managed to get one hotel accommodation at Kalol. After attending the written test and interview I left for Bombay by train on the same evening itself by Bombay express from Ahmedbad in the general compartment. This also was a horrible journey in my life as I was standing in the toilet through out the night journey and finally, I could reach Kunjumamma's house at Bombay and stayed there for one night and then only returned to Ernakulam. Total Rs. 416/- received from IFFCO, which was enough and more for my return journey including the hotel and other expenses. It was a real experience and cannot be forgotten at all. Actually, for a FACT man from Kerala to join the Gujarat Plant is something ridiculous to be at the vast sandy desert like atmosphere. Even the Gulf climate is little better than Gujarat! That was my feeling at that time after attending the interview and other sightseeing experience in Gujarat. After this bitter experience I did not make any application for any of the jobs in India. Afterwards by 1975 I have submitted an application for some suitable post in Aramco, Caltex as per Lilly Pengal's advice for which they replied that my application was being kept in active file and they will call me as per requirements but never bothered to call me later.

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## Chapter-13

### Marriage and after

**Achachen** was not having any special assignments or job after retirement from Military except for the pension and the collection of the Military quota. By 1975 itself, he started his search for a suitable proposal for me even without my consent at that time through the marriage brokers. One of the proposals was from a retired School Headmaster for one of his extra ordinary sized daughters. During one of my off days on 18/9/1975, this School Master visited me at Keezhvaipur along with the broker. After seeing me he decided that I will not be a matching pair for his daughter and accordingly my first “**Pennukaanal**” was abolished. After this incident and due to my objection for the marriage at that time, Achachen was searching a bride for me without my knowledge. Accordingly, one year passed with out any significance and again Achachen was very much active for my marriage from the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 1976 onwards but none of these proposals were suitable to my standards and specifications and as such the question didn’t arise for the unwanted “**Pennukaanal**” or other sorts of interviews. During this period, as a result of our scooter accident on 4/10/76, the entire process took a slow course and I was planning to take some rest and undergo some sort of massage or “**Ayurveda Thirummal**” at Keezhvaipur. During my stay at Keezhvaipur, one of the marriage brokers from Karukachal Mr. **Thomachen** saw me and he kept my bio-data in his active file. After one or two weeks this broker came up with a proposal from Nedungadappally Adimankal Mr. K John’s family for his daughter **Jolly**. After seeing Jolly, the broker told Achachen that he immediately thought of “**Sunnykutty**” who would be a suitable match for this Adimankal “**Jollykutty**”. During the first week of November 1976, I was on a short vacation at Keezhvaipur with a view to conduct the “**Ayurveda thirummal**” for the scooter accident and it’s after effects. After the detailed information from the broker and Achachen, I was also really interested in the proposal and decided to go for the “**Pennukaanal**” at Nedungadappally. As such, as per agreement with Jolly’s father Mr. K John and the broker, on 4/11/1976, myself and Achachen went to Mallappally by my Scooter and from there along with the broker, in a taxi to Nedungadappally by about 4-30 PM. The taxi could go up to the Nedungadappally Junction sub road only and from there we had to walk the distance of about a quarter kilometer to the Adimankal house. I was in the traditional “**pennukaanal**” dress of those days, the “**Mundu and shirt**”. (**Mundu is the traditional attire of Kerala and this Dhoti is a piece of unstitched fabric, wrapped around the waist and the legs and knotted at the waist.**) A cream-coloured handicraft double mundu and a white-coloured full sleeve shirt with brown star dots. More over, I was in my so-called full form with the “**Ray Ban**” U.S made cooling glass specs also. “**When in Rome do as Romans do**” was my thinking and many of my FACT colleagues were also in the “**mundu and shirt**” style of dresses for this type of ceremonial functions, which prompted me to use the same type of dress for my “**Pennukaanal**”. This had a negative impact on Jolly and their family. And this was the first and the last “**Pennukaanal**” in my life but I think it was the second for Jolly. Jolly, aged 20 was studying for

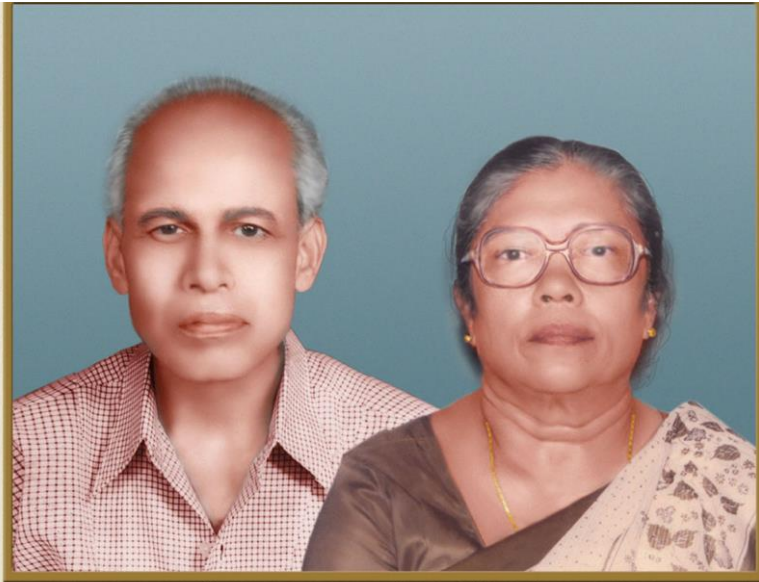


her BA English Literature at Baselius College, Kottayam. I think, it was a Sunday and they were waiting for our arrival. On our arrival to the house itself, everybody in the Adimankal house including Jolly had a clear glimpse of the bridegroom and all other associates came to the conclusion that this poor "Sunnykutty" will not be a suitable match for Jolly due to the thinking that Jolly is slightly taller than me. With this notion only I had my first interview with Jolly. Actually, Jolly didn't bring the coffee to us but she was standing besides the door and had answered our queries without giving any type of discomfort for any of us. I also could manage to ask some questions to her and was able to get the proper reply. Later, after the marriage Jolly told me that she liked my face but the actual worry was about my size and thought her to be slightly bigger than me. But our reaction was entirely different. At first sight itself both Achachen and I liked her and had the idea to proceed with the proposal. I was also having the feeling that she is slightly taller than me but she was extremely slim at that time and thought to be manageable. Still, I like very much one of her old photos in a black sari with an innocent looking face. Actually, in my heart of heart I was looking for a character innocent like Othello's Desdemona. This photo I could see only after our marriage but I consider this as one of the best snaps of Jolly at her teens.



**Jolly prior to marriage, Oct - 1976**

**Jolly's** father Mr. John (normally called as Yonachen) was working with SBT, Mallappally as Special Officer and as such they were looking for some Bank professional for their daughter. Moreover, Jolly being their only daughter, they were not prepared to give her to some “Persians” or Gulf employed personnel. My employment with FACT also was something attractive for them so also the proximity with the employment location. They were not happy with two-three previous proposals for Jolly. After my pennukaanal interview, one more FACT Udyogamandal man came with the proposal and was discarded due to the fact that the boy was the only son of a lone mother.



**Jolly's parents K John & Chinnakutty**

After my “Pennukaanal” interview itself, the Adimankal family expressed their displeasure for this marriage to the broker but he didn't disclose this to us and instead he went to Mallappally and told Jolly's father in the Bank that everybody was happy to proceed with the marriage and some more people from Azhakath will visit Jolly in their house on the following day. With out knowing the actual facts, the next day morning Achachen, Ammamma, Thankachayan and Vinod visited Jolly prior to her departure for college. All of our people liked her and decided to proceed with the proposal. But the actual condition was something different. Jolly and others were of the opinion that my physical structure was not suitable for her and decided not to proceed further and accordingly informed the broker to convey the message to us. The broker conveyed the message to us in a polished way and upon hearing the news, every body in our Azhakath house were upset and angry for the mere fact that those people did not like me. I told

Achachen to suspend all the marriage activities for the time being and as such we decided to have the "Thirummal" during the vacation period. Accordingly, "Thirummal" was started and on the third day morning, while I was taking rest after the 'Thirummal', the same broker came to our house and he had some talk with Achachen outside the house and left the scene. He told Achachen that Jolly's family had some misunderstanding and that was why they decided to discontinue with the proposal and now they want to proceed with the proposal again. Achachen actually agreed with the broker with out consulting us and the broker went back to them to convey our willingness again for further follow-up. I was deadly against Achachen's attitude for the marriage so also Amamma and suddenly I ran towards the broker to tell him that after the initial abandoning of the proposal, I am not interested again and doesn't like to have further proceedings etc. But after the 'Thirummal' my body was very delicate and Amamma didn't allow me to follow or run after the broker. Even the broker expected a negative reply from us but Achachen was having a different opinion. Achachen tried his level best to pacify us with the statement that they are very good people and that was why they changed their mind etc. But I told him that she might be having some problems and they want to keep her on somebody's shoulder and that was why they agreed again for the marriage etc. etc. Finally, we also yielded to Achachen's decisions and agreed to proceed further. Accordingly, the following Sunday on 11/11/76, six people came to our house to see the boy and they were Jolly's father Johannachen, Uncle Pappachayan, grand father Muthuthodath Appachen, Cheriachayan and Jolly's brother Joshy along with the Panchayath member Mr. Jawan in his tourist car. Even, Joshy had a special assignment from Jolly. She was very anxious to know whether I am wearing any pants or wearing only the "dhothi" for the job also. After seeing my pants in the house, Joshy gave an encouraging reply to Jolly and others also were not having any objection for further proceedings. Accordingly, the fixation ceremony was conducted at Adimankal house, Nedungadappally on 15/11/1976 for the marriage on 27/12/1976.

Even though everything was agreed for the marriage, I was also of the same opinion that Jolly is slightly oversized figure for me and in order to avoid the sudden surprises, I have told many of my FACT friends that I am going to marry an oversized girl and thereby suppressed my feelings to a certain extent. During this gap of about 40 days, lot of rumours also spread for the cancellation of the marriage from both sides. Luckily both of us didn't give that much importance to these aspects.

After the fixation of the marriage also, Jolly had been continuing her college studies and as such I wrote one letter to her in the College address, asking for one of her photos and was waiting in vain for a reply. Later I came to know from Jolly that she didn't receive my letter. In fact, she was waiting for my letter and in the absence of any letter from me she considered me as a 'good for nothing fellow'! Actually, telephones also were not so frequent on those days and the only mode of communication was the "Postal system". In the absence of any reply from Jolly, further attempts were not made from my side also.

The marriage dresses were taken from Thiruvalla “Seematty” textiles. On the way, the Adimankal family members were invited to the Thiruvalla Mathilumkal house and as such Thiruvalla Ammachi also was able to see Jolly before the marriage. When Jolly and others were in the Mathilumkal house, actually we made all the arrangements to have a clear view of the height of Jolly. Without their knowledge we could measure somewhat the height of Jolly. Surprisingly we could conclude that Jolly is only 5’ 3”, one inch less than my height. Even Jolly and others also could conclude to the mere fact that Jolly is certainly not more than Sunnykutty. It was actually a sigh of relief for everybody! The first hurdle is over. On that day I was riding my scooter and everybody saw my scooter and I was also happy that my efficiency was sufficiently proved in front of the would be and others! Afterwards, we had our meals from the “Pothirican’s” Hotel in front of the Thiruvalla bus stand and left for the respective houses at Keezhvaipur and Nedungadappally.

Actually, there was a gap of more than 40 days between the fixation and marriage and that was sufficient enough for all the arrangements. Arrangements were done in the Azhakath House for the marriage on Monday 27/12/1976. Marriage hall or auditoriums were not common during those days and the normal procedure was to arrange everything in the house and accordingly everything including the lunch had to be arranged in the house itself along with the ‘Pandal’ and other decorative items. Marriage was fixed at 11 am in the Church followed by the lunch at Azhakath house. One Cook was arranged for the lunch preparations and the “Pandal” contract was given to somebody else from Mallappally. 26<sup>th</sup> December night was really a horrible day for me. In addition to the marriage apprehensions, all the preparatory jobs were going on in the house and in that predicament situation, only a sleepless night was the only assurance and as such I went to Azhakath family house of Thankachayan for a comfortable sleep on the marriage day eve. I was forced to spend one sleepless night there at the “Thengakoodu” room of Azhakath. Finally, my marriage eve became a horrible one with out any sleep at all.

There was nothing remarkable in my marriage with Jolly on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1976. Just like any of the normal marriages it was conducted at the bridegroom’s church of Mallappally Mar Thoma Church, Keezhvaipur. Since Jolly belonged to the CSI Church group and our Mar Thoma Church is in close communion with the Church of South India, there was no problem at all from the Churches side, everything went on nicely. Our actual wedding time was 11-45 hrs. Approximately 100 people from Nedungadappally attended the marriage from Jolly’s side and afterwards for the reception and lunch at our residence at Keezhvaipur Azhakath House.

After the reception and lunch as per the usual practice we went to Nedungadappally Jolly’s house by evening on the same day. By the time all the people left from the house, it was already dark and I felt something strange in the new atmosphere. In fact, no body could feel my suffocation in the new atmosphere. We had the dinner as usual and afterwards Jolly gave me one cup of milk and we went to our bedroom, which was behind their portico at that time.

As per Jolly's usual practice, she had kept the light in the subdued condition and all the windows and doors were kept fully shut with out any air ventilation. Because of the cooler climatic conditions, I couldn't feel the ventilation effects but in the real sense I was having lot of apprehensions. After our normal chats she fell asleep without any problems. But my case was entirely different. Already the previous night also I didn't get any sleep and the first night also had the same fate due to my apprehensions. But this was not the case with Jolly. She had a good sleep in her homely atmosphere, may be not to her full satisfaction. As per the rules, we had to be in Nedungadappally house for three days and then only we could to go back to our house at Keezhvaipur and as such for my transportation requirements I had already instructed Vinod to bring my Scooter to Nedungadappally. All our routine jobs went on in the normal manner but another bad news was waiting for us. Next day at about 3 pm, Achachen came to Nedungadappally with some strange news. He didn't come to Adimankal house but instead he called me to the sub road behind the house and informed about some accident happened on the marriage day after our departure. Renjimon and Kunjumonachachen were returning back to Thiruvalla in the evening after the marriage. Renjimon was driving my scooter along with Kunjumonachachen at the pillion seat. At Kunnamthanam near the Pamala estate, one rubber tapper man crossed the road and was hit by the Scooter and all the three fell down on the road with some wounds and bruises for Renjimon and the rubber tapper. But Kunjumonachachen had only minor bruises. Finally, the rubber tapper man and Renjimon were admitted in the Medical Mission Hospital at Thiruvalla. Scooter was taken to some workshop and without any Police case that man was admitted in the hospital and was settled amicably with out any mishaps. After hearing the news, I went to Thiruvalla hospital and by that time Renjimon was released from the hospital and later I went to Mathilumkal house and returned back to Nedungadappally by night. Jolly also was planning to accompany me to the hospital but it was politely declined by everybody as it was not good to go to the hospital for the first time after the marriage for the new couple. My planning to visit Jolly's family houses by Scooter also had to be abolished. All my three nights stay at Adimankal house was somewhat the same and hardly with any sleep.



**Even** though Jolly was studying for her B.A degree during the marriage, she expressed her non-willingness to continue the studies on the first night itself. But my attitude was to continue with her studies to the possible extent. But for the name's sake she went to the College for some more days and later discontinued due to pregnancy and associated problems.

After three days stay at Nedungadappally we came back to Keezhvaipur by 30<sup>th</sup> Thursday and the next day we went to Thiruvalla and we had the year end midnight Service at SCS, St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, followed by 1977 New year celebrations at Thiruvalla Mathilumkal house and later returned back to Keezhvaipur by Scooter. My leave period for the marriage was up to 7<sup>th</sup> January 1977 and afterwards joined back for duty at FACT Ambalamedu. For about one month I was assigned in the general shift and as such it was not necessary to attend the shift duties with Saturday and Sunday as off days. Initially I took Jolly to our "**Lake View**" hostel and stayed in my room No. 105 for about 4 days and visited the Ambalamedu areas. During our stay in the "Lake View" hostel while taking food from the Mess, the Mess Supplier Mr. Ramachandran asked Jolly as to whether she was taking any "**Monday Vritham**" at the **Chottanikkara** temple or

not? The reason behind his question was that she was very fortunate enough to get a good husband like 'Sunnykutty' and for that she might have done some fasting or offering in the Temple or Church etc. Jolly's counter question to Ramachandran was that whether Sunny has paid any money to him or not for praising the poor Guy.!

Afterwards Jolly was continuing her college studies at Baselius College, Kottayam as a day scholar from Keezhvaipur. Once I came back from Ambalamedu by scooter and collected Jolly from the College and went for the film "**Hridayam Oru Kthethram**" at Kottayam "**Anupama**" theatre. This was the first film we saw together after our marriage and the recollections yet remain fresh in our memories. My FACT batch mate Mr. George Varghese's marriage on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1977 was the first marriage celebration we have attended after our marriage. That was at Puthencavu, Chengannur and we went from Keezhvaipur by scooter and attended the marriage. Next marriage party we attended was that of Mr. P.S Nair with Maya at Kottayam Thirunakkara temple on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1977. At that time, we were at "Lake View" hostel and for attending this marriage we came by scooter from Ambalamedu to Kottayam and after the marriage returned to Keezhvaipur. In the history of the "Lake View" hostel, I think, we were the only couple who stayed in a Men's hostel for the first time as well as quite a long time on few occasions.

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**Thiruvalla** Ammachi was not feeling well during these periods and the ill health was diagnosed to be 'Uterus Cancer' and was finally admitted in the Trivandrum Medical College on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1977 and had to undergo the radiation treatment at times at the Medical College Hospital. After the Cancer diagnosis, Ammachi was also very much upset and most of the time she was in the bed-ridden condition at Thiruvalla Mathilumkal house until her death on 7<sup>th</sup> January 1978.

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**On** 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1977, Keezhvaipur Kunjunjachayan (elder brother of Achachen) expired due to heart attack and I came from Ambalamedu and already Jolly was present at Keezhvaipur and after the burial and other formalities I took one week leave and was at Keezhvaipur house during this time. Certain strange incidents happened during this vacation, which was having a lot of consequences in our future life and was amicably settled in due course of time with out any major impact.

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## Chapter-14

### Abode at Ambalamedu & Aramco offer

**Prior** to our marriage, Jolly and their family were thinking that immediately after the marriage I would be entitled for the family quarters at Ambalamedu housing complex and actually they were not aware of the seniority and other formalities for the family quarter's policy existing in FACT at that time. Immediately after the marriage, I also registered my name for the family quarters and the allotment was not immediately certain and as such some other alternate arrangement was inevitable if at all any body want to bring their families to Ambalamedu or near by localities for the family abode. Even though Jolly was continuing her college studies from Keezhvaipur as a day scholar, she was doing it as a pastime and in fact she was urging me for the family quarters so as to discontinue her studies at the earliest. In this predicament situation I was also trying my level best to find out some sort of family abode for us at the Ambalamedu locality.

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**During** this time, contrary to our expectation and planning, Jolly became pregnant and actually we both were not at all prepared for an offspring in our family and after confirmation we were in a dilemma as to what is to be done at that time. Even after confirmation of the pregnancy we were traveling through all the gutter roads of Ernakulam and Tripunithura on the scooter and in spite of all these, Tanura was actually taking shape in the womb of Jolly. This might have happened some where between February and March of 1977.

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**One** of my batch mates at FACT Mr. T.M Chandy who had his marriage some time before and could manage to get an accommodation at Ambalamugal near the Cochin Refineries, was staying in this house and was planning to vacate the house temporarily for his wife Elcy's delivery and to our sudden surprise and luck, he offered the house to me for about two months. I readily accepted the offer and had made the arrangements for the transfer of abode effective 1st April 1977. This house annex belonged to one Padmavathy teacher who was the Headmistress of the FACT Ambalamedu High School at that time. Padmavathy teacher's husband, an ex. employee from Nigeria who was doing some Poultry farm business at Ambalamugal had died few years before and their farm office was converted to a one bed room house and was offered for rent and the same was occupied by Mr. Chandy for quite some time and luckily came to my possession for about two months.

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**During** 3<sup>rd</sup> week of March 1977, an advertisement by “**Caltex**”, Bombay appeared in “**Hindu**” for the selection of Operators for Saudi American Oil Company – **ARAMCO**. Along with my other colleagues I also submitted my application for the Operator post in Aramco, S Arabia. Later on, 28<sup>th</sup> March 1977, I brought Jolly to “**Lake View**” hostel for our stay in Ambalamugal house with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April. During this time some of the Aramco applicants got the interview call by telegram from Caltex in order to attend the interview at Bombay Caltex Office on 7<sup>th</sup> April and accordingly most of them booked their train tickets to Bombay from Ernakulam on 4<sup>th</sup> April. We conducted a small house warming ceremony at the new Ambalamugal house along with some of my friends and started our stay in that house since then. Since I didn't receive any interview call from Caltex, I abolished all my aspirations for the Aramco interview on 7<sup>th</sup>. Suddenly on 5<sup>th</sup> April in the morning shift I received one telegram from Caltex in order to attend the Aramco interview at Caltex office at Bombay on 7<sup>th</sup> April. Hardly some hours were only left for me to catch the Bombay train on the same day if at all I want to attend the interview on 7<sup>th</sup>. Decision was taken to try my luck for the Bombay Kerala Express from Ernakulam by 8-30 pm. All of a sudden everything was arranged to the possible extent. I sent Jolly to Kottayam for Nedungadappally by one KSRTC bus from Trippunithura at about 4 pm and I left for Ernakulam South Railway station with all the available preparations for the journey to Bombay. Jolly reached Nedungadappally safely by night but I couldn't get any information at all as there were no phone facilities during those periods.

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**I could** manage to get an unreserved ticket for Bombay from Ernakulam and as such I was forced to travel in the general compartment. After the tedious journey for three days I could reach Bombay Dader Railway station by 12-30 hrs on 7<sup>th</sup> April and suddenly rushed to the Caltex House at Dadabai Navaraji road by about 2-30 pm and exactly at 3-05 pm my name was called as per the alphabetic order and the interview has lasted for about half an hour and immediately after the interview the board declared that I have been selected for the “**LPG Operator**” post and was told to complete the other formalities with the Caltex office, if willing to accept the same. The interview was done by an Aramco representative from Dhahran and I think he was an Operations Foreman from one of the Aramco Plants. Basically, I was asked to describe about the Process and other parameters with which we were operating our Fertilizer Plant and based on my reply further questions were asked and finally I was asked to draw and explain the function and working of a pneumatic control valve and luckily, they were very much impressed by the interview and selected me on the spot without any hesitation and was told to continue with other formalities. I was not having any Passport at that time and the board Chairman assured me not to worry about the Passport and Visa formalities etc and those aspects will be expedited by the Caltex office with out any problem. Out of about 43 personnel interviewed on that day about 20 people were selected and I was the last lucky candidate. First class to and fro train fare was reimbursed from the Office and I was asked to stay there further for three days to complete the medical check up and other formalities. I telegraphed the glad news to Jolly at Nedungadappally or Keezhvaipur on the

same day itself and stayed at one of the hotels in Bombay and completed the medical check up formalities on 11<sup>th</sup> April. Upon completion of the medical examination everything was found ok as per Aramco specification and accordingly the formal appointment letter was issued to me on the 11<sup>th</sup> itself and afterwards, I left for Ernakulam. During my stay at Bombay, I purchased mainly two saris and some other items for Jolly out of the Aramco / Caltex reimbursement amount of Rs.732-00. Finally, I returned back to Keezhvaipur on 13<sup>th</sup> April and the day was actually the “Easter” or the Resurrection Day.

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**Again**, I returned back to Ambalamugal along with Jolly by 16<sup>th</sup> April and enquired many places for the easy availability and early procurement of the Passport for my travel to S Arabia. One travel agency at Ernakulam M/s ‘Hindustan Travel Agency’ promised to issue the Passport for me with in one month for a lump sum payment of Rs. 1000/- and as such the application was submitted to them by 22<sup>nd</sup> of April. They got the signature of some Social Services Director from Trivandrum and the passport was issued to me by 4<sup>th</sup> of June after a delay of about 10 days after the assured one-month period.

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**During** these days Jolly was passing through all the normal pregnancy problems and our Ambalamugal House owner **Padmavathy** teacher’s mother was providing all her possible help and supports for Jolly in these difficult situations. Actually, this Padmavathy teacher was a peculiar type and she was never in company or friendly with any of the other people like neighbours etc. She was living in their main house with her only daughter Jaya, who was doing her final MA at Ernakulam. Teacher’s mother and her sister’s two or three-year-old daughter also were living in that house at that time. Luckily, we could acquire and gain the friendship of all these people to such an extent that after our 3 months stay in Chandy’s house and upon arrival of Chandy’s wife Elcy after delivery, Padmavathy teacher offered one of her rooms from their house in order to continue with our stay there till departure for Aramco. This offer was really a great blessing for us and after living together for about 3 months, the agony of departure was really great and we were not having any option other than readily accepting the offer with great pleasure at that time. Accordingly, we moved to Padmavathy teacher’s house on 27<sup>th</sup> June 77.

**Another** interesting incident also happened during our stay in Padmavathy teacher’s house. For a very long time their Water pump from the Well was not pumping properly to the Overhead tank and without diagnosis they used to fill or prime the pump with additional water every time before start up which was really a nuisance and problem for everybody. After understanding the problem, I recommended replacing the passing foot valve or check valve at the suction of the pump in the Well and after replacement of the same, the pump was working miraculously since then without any problem and was really an accomplishment

for my technical know-how and expertise. They were really thankful to me for this valuable advice.

**During** our stay in **Padmavathy** teacher's house, their daughter Jaya's marriage was settled with one Advocate from Trivandrum and as per their invitation we also attended the marriage at Trivandrum by August 1977. After our departure from Ambalamedu also we were having good contacts with Padmavathy teacher's family and later she was transferred to Udyogamandal FACT School as Principal and we visited her at Udyogamandal during my vacation from Aramco. Again, she made a surprise visit to our Kottayam Azhakath house when she presented her School representatives for the State School Youth Festival at Kottayam during 1986. Afterwards, actually we don't have any contacts with her and the only information is that she moved to their family house at Trivandrum after retirement from the school.

**Upon** receipt of my Passport, it was submitted to **Caltex** office for the completion of other travel formalities and I expressed my willingness to travel to S Arabia by the last week of September 1977. My intention was to be with Jolly for the maximum possible extent during her pregnancy period but more particular to leave before the delivery, as I was not in a position to be with her at the delivery time. I was really afraid to face the adverse consequences, if any during the period and other than that no other intention was there from my part. Caltex Office completed all the Visa & Immigration formalities by the last week of August 77 and informed me for the due completion of the resignation formalities from my part from FACT. Accordingly, I submitted my resignation letter to FACT (CD) Management by 2<sup>nd</sup> September 77 and was accepted and finally relieved by 22<sup>nd</sup> September. Actually, all the resignations are certainly painful and those who have passed through this type of ordeal only can realize the agony of the situation and again I was forced to pass through the same ordeal twice in my future Career with Aramco and Banagas Companies. But by the Grace of God, all my resignations proved to be beneficial for the betterment of my Careers at the right moment. Final settlement amount from FACT was Rs 7221-00 including gratuity for about 5.5 years service with the Company. At the time of resignation, I was drawing a salary of Rs.562/- per month and including Overtime payments very often it has exceeded more than Rs. 900/- pm. On 23<sup>rd</sup> September we finally left for Keezhvaipur from Ambalamedu after about 6.5 years total service in FACT.

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## Chapter-15

### Life at Aramco, Ras Tanura

**It** was with deep sorrow only I started my journey to Bombay on 26<sup>th</sup> September 77 in order to take up the assignment with Aramco. Actually, I was worried about two main aspects- i.e., already resigned from a good job in Kerala and not so sure about the future job and its consequences and the other was to leave Jolly at the final stages of her pregnancy. Accordingly, my first air journey was from Cochin to Bombay by about 1-30 pm on 26<sup>th</sup> September in an Indian Airlines Dakota flight with a passenger capacity of about 48 personnel. I think, the charges were Rs 425-00. The flight reached Bombay after about 4 hours by 5-30 pm and I had spent that night in one hotel in Bombay and on the next day I signed my Contract with Aramco at the Caltex Office and enrolled myself in the Payrolls of Aramco with effect from 27<sup>th</sup> September 1977. My appointment was for the Ras Tanura Terminal Plant as “**LPG Operator**” on a basic salary of SR 1880-00 per month plus Shift allowance. At that time the Indian Rupee rate was about Rs. 2-00 per Saudi Riyal and was equivalent to more than 4000-00 Rupees per month, which was considered to be a very good amount at the prevailing Indian conditions. Everything was arranged by Caltex and I flew to Dhahran by Saudia flight at about 2030 hrs on 28<sup>th</sup> September and reached Dhahran by 00-30 hrs on 29<sup>th</sup>. Even at midnight itself I felt as if I had landed in to an “**Agnikundam**” or fire and was thinking about the survival in that place. This was the first impression I had about the climatic conditions of Saudi Arabia. But this impression slowly faded upon close encounter with the severe climatic conditions later. At Dhahran airport we were given some tablets for Cholera and some other diseases and the Aramco representative took us to the Dhahran “**Al Muneera**” Guest House camps. A total of seven people were there in our batch from Bombay including Alex Abraham, Antony Sankoorikkal etc who were with me for the medical check up at Bombay also.

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**We** were at the Dhahran camp for about four days and during this period we completed all our Orientation programmes and as per the previous allotments, we were directed to different Plants at different locations like **Ras Tanura, Abquaiq, Uthalyia, Shedgum, Jaumyah** etc. Accordingly, I was sent to **Ras Tanura** and upon completion of Police pass and other formalities I was taken to the Ras Tanura Terminal **NGL Plant 59** by the Butane Plant Foreman Mr. Ibrahim Wahabi. My allotment was for the Butane Plant and the Plant 59 Terminal plant was divided into Propane and Butane Plants under two different Foreman’s and the terminal division included three loading Jetty facilities also under the same Terminal Superintendent.

Our Butane Plant Foreman **Mr. Ibrahim Wahabi** was a local Saudi and was really a very good gentleman and was very favourable to Indians and Pakistanis. He introduced me to all the people in the Plant 59 Control room including the Pakistani Maintenance Facility Inspector Mr. Mohammed Akram who was in charge of all the Maintenance activities in the day shift. In front of the Facility Inspector, Foreman Ibrahim made a surprise statement to me. **“Whenever you want to do overtime, you tell this Facility Inspector and he will arrange the Overtime for you.”** What he meant was that due to lot of Maintenance hot job activities in the Plant, the necessary **“Fire Watch”** had to be provided by the Operators and the same was being carried out by Overtime utilization of the Operators due to manpower shortages etc.

**At** Ras Tanura, I was accommodated in the **“Radwa”** camp where all the inmates were forced to do their own cooking and all the facilities were provided by the Company. At Radwa Housing office I could notice some peculiar thing. An Indian man was doing the house allocation and other formalities and was assisted by another local elderly Saudi. During my one-hour stay in the office, I was closely watching the activities of this man and surprisingly enough he was doing only one job! Whenever some flies come to his side, he will take a fly-catcher to kill the flies. I could make out that he had nicely captured and killed two- three flies during that time and this was the only job he has done on that day! This incident still remains fresh in my memory especially the actions by this pretty old man.

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**An** accommodation rent of 100 Riyals was deducted from our salary and initially I was admitted in a double room with a local Saudi Operator trainee who used to visit the room on rare occasions only. At Radwa accommodation, kitchen and laundry facilities were common for all the residents of the block and only the expatriates were doing the cooking where as the locals were dining from the Restaurants etc. When I joined Aramco by October, the climatic condition also was slowly turning from the hot summer to the cold winter conditions. In fact, after a long gap of many years, we could experience some rain showers during October, which was really a surprise for many of the inhabitants.

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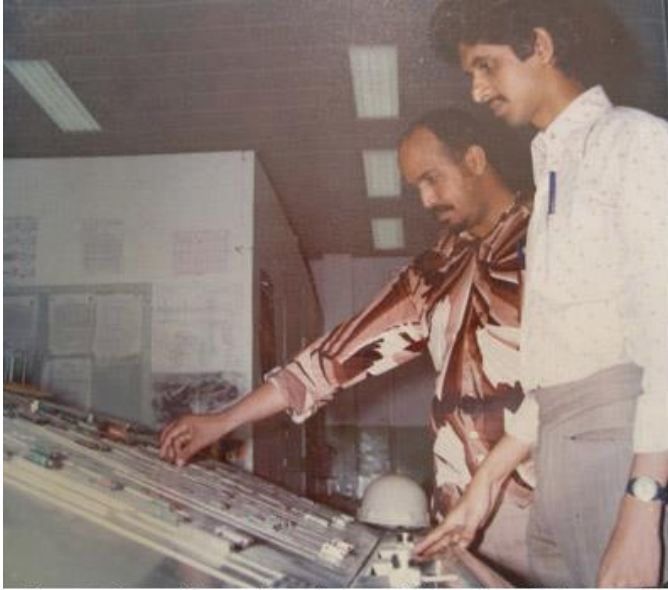
**At** our Ras Tanura Plant 59 Terminal Plant, two of the British Operators also joined with me during October 1977 and they were also assigned for 3 weeks training under the Sudanese trainer **Mr. Abdul Zakoar**. Since the British Operators were following the 21 / 21 days work / leave pattern under 12 hours duty schedule, I was also forced to undergo my training 12 hours daily for about 3 weeks with out any off and in fact my first salary from Aramco for October 1977 was the biggest amount of SR 3867-00, I received from my Aramco service of about 1.5 years. My first salary from Aramco was equivalent to about ten thousand Indian rupees as per the prevailing rates at that time. This was actually

due to my 12 hours working schedule with out any off for about one month. My British Operator trainee colleagues were [Mr. Andy and Arthur](#) for Butane Plants and [Allan and Peter](#) for the Propane Plants. After the training, I was assigned for the Operator jobs at the Field Compressors area for about two months initially, followed by other sections like tank farm Storage areas and Refrigeration and Loading facilities. Upon completion of the Field locations of the Butane Plant I was assigned for the Main Control room operations by about March 1978. Owing to manpower shortages etc, all the Plant 59 personnel were working in the shift with out any off days and I was forced to work continuously for about 105 days initially for my first off on 9<sup>th</sup> January 1978.

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**Everything** was going on smoothly with regards to our operational activities in Aramco. In the mean time another interesting incident happened in our shift due to some mistake and carelessness from our side mainly the Panel Operator [Mr. Abreo](#) and as per his instruction, I operated one Air Operated valve connected with one of the Butane Storage tanks which was actually under one Local Arab Operator. This Operator was actually new and as he was not fully familiar with the operation of the valve, I was also told to be with him for the opening of the valve in one of the night shifts on 18<sup>th</sup> March 1978. As per instruction, we opened the valve and kept as such and left the area for other routine jobs. This valve was having some problem and was repaired in the morning shift but was not tested. Finally, it was the responsibility of the night shift personnel to test and certify the availability. This was actually interlocked with another tank's valve for safety protection but the protection was already bypassed and Abreo was not aware of the protection or by pass system and with out any further checks he has instructed us to open the valve and from the same line another tank valve was already open. This was to be closed first and then only the other valve should be opened as per protection logic. Since both tank's valves were open, both the tank's level was tending to equalize and ultimately about one-foot level from the high-level tank was migrated to the low-level tank within less than an hour with the resultant transfer of about 20 thousand barrels of Butane to the low-level tank. Shift Supervisor [Mr. Muthluq](#), upon arrival in the Control room after about half an hour noticed the migration and immediately took the emergency shut down of that tank in order to close and stop all the operation of the tank. This incident was reported to the Plant Foreman and the next day we three were provided with the Warning letter for the mistake and to avoid recurrence in the future. [Mr. Al Yameni](#) was our Plant Foreman at that time and Mr. Ibrahim Wahabi was transferred to the Terminal division. Actually, in other shifts also these types of migrations took place on different occasions and were corrected in consultation with the Supervisors but our Supervisor Mr. Mutluq was so particular to report these types of mistakes with out any pump backs. In this case it was purely the mal-operation and ignorance by the Panel Operator Mr. Abreo for which others also were crucified for no fault of theirs.





Sunny at Aramco-Plant 59 Control room with Supervisor Mutluq 25-5-78

There is another interesting story about the Control room operation of Mr. Abreo. Abreo joined one month before my arrival to Aramco and when he was brought to Control room on the first day, as there were no Panel Operators for the Control room operation, Supervisor Mr. Mutluq instructed Abreo to take charge in the Control room with out even seeing the Plant for the first time. Due to man power shortages, later also he didn't get the chance to work and familiarize with the outside field operations which forced him to commit this type of blunders with out proper training and operation familiarization. After about six months of my working experience in the out-side field locations, I was also assigned for the Control room operations and then only Abreo could get a relief to work and familiarize with the outside operations. Afterwards we were working as Control room Operator and Outside "Lead Operator" on alternate months in the same shift group until our departure from Aramco for **Banagas**. As stated earlier, Abreo was my best friend and the important personality behind my future career's developments especially for the "**Banagas Control man**" post.

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**In** Aramco Radwa camp, I moved to an Indian locality area in another block after two months stay in the old room. Mr. Joseph was my roommate and about eight Malayalis from the same block were cooking together until our departure for another "**Delcrete accommodation**" facility in the same Radwa camp. During my stay in these camps, once Babychayan (Capt K.M Mathew) from Bombay and

Kozhencherry Kidangalil Kunjumonachayan visited me from Saudi Jauymah or Shedgum.

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**While** working in India, one of my long-cherished desires was to own one type writer which was not so easy to fulfill in the Indian conditions and in this context after getting salary from Aramco, the first thing I purchased was one Radio / tape recorder and the second was the '**Brother**' type writer. This typewriter I bought for SR 380/- by December 1977 and the first type written letter I wrote to Jolly. Still, I can recollect some of those typed versions of my letter. Two- three typed letters I sent to Jolly, hoping to get some sort of reply in the same language but her response was diametrically opposite to my expectations and as such I have discontinued my type written letters to her since then.

**I availed** my annual vacation from Aramco as soon as I completed my 11 months service with the Company and after completing 35 days leave, I was supposed to fly back to Saudi on 9<sup>th</sup> September 1978 from Bombay. But my Cochin – Bombay flight was slightly delayed and by the time I reached the Saudia Airline counter on 9<sup>th</sup> September, the counter was just closed and they didn't yield to my request and finally I couldn't travel on my scheduled date. Next Saudia flight I could get only on 13<sup>th</sup> September and as such I had to stay for 5 more days at Bombay with Kunjumamma and family. Actually, my second journey to Saudi was on 13<sup>th</sup> and really, I was having certain apprehensions about the 13<sup>th</sup> number and in fact this proved to be a lucky day for me in the real sense. The lucky thing was that I was selected for the "**Control man**" post with "**Bahrain National Gas Company**" and I had to leave Saudi Aramco after about 6 months from that date. Later, on many occasions, this 13<sup>th</sup> proved to be a lucky day for me contrary to the normal belief as a bad day or number. After coming back from vacation and upon completion of one-year service with Aramco, I was awarded with an increase in salary of SR 170/- per month which was equivalent to about 8% of the basic salary and accordingly the grade also went up to 28 from 27. Everything was going on smooth with Aramco service and at that time by January 1979, I was lucky enough to attend the interview for Banagas Control man post and got selected with 10% more than the gross salary from Aramco including the overtime wages. The man who played with my destiny in this respect was nobody other than **Mr. Densil D 'Abreo** from Bombay. As stated earlier, Mr. Abreo was my colleague in Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco) Saudi Arabia and we both were working in the same shift group and on one of the last nights shifts he told me that he got an interview call from Bahrain National Gas Company (**Banagas**), a new Bahrain Government gas company who were recruiting the operating staff from Gas Plant experienced personnel especially from Aramco LPG Plants. The interview was at Al Khobar '**Al Gusaibi Hotel**' and he told me to try my luck and being the off day, I also went along with Mr. Abreo and approached the Banagas authorities and they conducted an interview for me after filling up the application forms and got selected as "**Storage Plant Control man**" for a basic salary of Bahrain Dinar 300-00 per month, approximately more than 10% of my gross salary at Aramco. More over they offered us family status consideration also later,

for which we couldn't imagine at that time of our service with Aramco. The family status consideration was the main attraction and we decided to resign from the service of Aramco in order to join Banagas at Baharain. Mr. Abreo also got the same "Storage Control man" post with the same salary. We took our bold decision and resigned from Aramco and accordingly relieved from Aramco by 18<sup>th</sup> March 1979 after completing 1.5 year's service with Aramco LPG Plant at Ras Tanura. The importance of Mr. Abreo in my life is also a classic example of real friendship. Actually, many of my friends were also in receipt of the interview call and in fact no body want to disclose the secret to others and everybody kept mum on the interview aspect. In fact, everybody got surprised when they all met at the Interview hotel lounge and many people with the formal interview card were not selected and some others were selected for Operator post. Those who were fortunate to get the higher "Control man" post were **Abreo, George MG, Johnny Davis, K T Thomas and Sunny**. It is because of our employment with Banagas we were fortunate enough to get the selection as 'Panel Operators' at the newly formed 'Abu Dhabi Gas Industries Ltd ' (Gasco) NGL Plant at Abu Dhabi. Gasco selected their staff from different nationalities (32 nationalities to begin with) and the first batch was selected from Bahrain and out of that I was one among the **Panel Operators** of Gasco.

One of the basic reasons for accepting the Banagas employment offer was that of the assurances by the Banagas Management for the family Visa, for which we couldn't even dream off in Aramco at that stage. Banagas appointment offer was received on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1979 and they instructed us to submit the resignation from Aramco in order to complete other formalities and join them at Bahrain by April last. Accordingly, I submitted my resignation from Aramco on 16<sup>th</sup> February for the eventual relieving by 18<sup>th</sup> March 1979. After my resignation from Aramco, my uncle Renjimon joined Aramco on 3rd March 1979. In fact, Renjimon was trying to join Aramco for quite long time after resignation from Qatar - Doha Service and some how or other his appointment was delayed but at last he was able to join Aramco at the 28<sup>th</sup> grade as "Statistical Assistant" and was fortunate enough to continue with his service until retirement. Renjimon retired from Saudi Aramco upon completion of more than 28 years service by October 2007.

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**After** my marriage, quite for some time, I was forced to pass through one of the difficult situations in my life, I think, the problem was related to something psychological and still I can't explain the reason behind the issue. I was feeling some sort of vomiting sensation whenever I wanted to eat something. On many occasions I vomited with out any apparent reason and my mental agony was that of some Cancer symptoms. These symptoms were more evident in the morning times and more frequent during the meal's periods at Nedungadappally Jolly's house. There were many occasions, I couldn't swallow even one piece of rice and very often, I pretended and kept the meals in such a way that half of it was consumed, with out even giving any ill feelings to others. Actually, all the Nedungadappally people were thinking that I was consuming only very little food and that was the reason for my lean figure. Actually, these problems continued till

my first vacation from Aramco and has subsided and normalized slowly since then.

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**After** getting the appointment selection and prior to departure for Aramco, I tried my level best to get the car-driving license and went for test at Moovattupuzha but couldn't pass through. Again, during my first vacation from Aramco, I could manage to get car-driving license from Chengannur RTO Office by 1978. The Indian driving license was valid for conversion to Saudi license and after returning from leave, I could manage to get the Saudi license but was not in a position to buy any car at that time in Saudi. More over, driving of Aramco cars also was not possible, as it requires the passing of "**Defensive driving test**" from Aramco for driving any of the Company vehicles. As such I didn't get a chance to drive any of the vehicles in Saudi Arabia. In Bahrain also, the AGCC driving licenses were validated by March 1980 but I couldn't convert my Saudi license, as I was not having my passport in my possession. But I could really manage to get the Bahrain driving license on the last day of my departure. On completion of all the formalities from Banagas, they gave back my passport and immediately I rushed to the Licensing Directorate and submitted the necessary documents for the driving license. Later, the license was collected by Davis Johnny and was handed over to me at Gasco. But in Bahrain, I was driving the vehicle at times by virtue of my position as "**Field Control man**" and could gain some more experience in driving.

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## Chapter-16

### Birth of Children

**After** my departure for Aramco, Jolly suddenly became sick at her final stages of pregnancy with lot of problems and had to be admitted in the Kangazha hospital by the first week of October 1977. Since then and until delivery she was in the bed ridden condition under nursing care in the Hospital. Finally, Jolly delivered her first baby girl pre-maturely by about 3 weeks. Tanura was born at 0130 hours on Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1977. Actually, the delivery went on nicely in the normal way and there was no complication other than Tanura's slightly under weight problems. She was just 2.7 Kgs at the time of her birth but not considered as a major issue for any other extra ordinary pre-cautions. During those days, the telephones were not common at any of our localities and the normal mode of contact for any of the emergency communications was the telegram system for the majority of the masses and the telegrams were considered to be the last resort for major emergencies etc. Accordingly, upon my departure for S Arabia, I clearly instructed Jolly, not to send any Telegrams to me for the conveyance of the delivery or any other message, but to use the normal letter mode for the detailed conveyance of the messages. Accordingly, I think, Jolly wrote her first delivery newsletter to me from the hospital itself, which reached me by the 31<sup>st</sup> of October. On that day evening I have collected my letters from my Post box at Radwa camp and had come to my room and was reading the letter after lying on the bed. In the letter, Jolly mentioned that the delivery was normal and the child is a baby girl. Upon reading the letter and the baby girl news, suddenly the name Ras Tanura "**Tanura**" flashed through my mind and thought about naming her as "**Tanura**". Up to that time actually none of us did think about the child as boy or girl or any particular name for the child. Immediately I wrote the reply and suggested the name for Tanura. The name was accepted by majority of the people and eventually named as "**Tanura Sunny**". There was some initial objection from Achachen but later he also willingly accepted the name. This name "**Tanura**" still remains as a novel name and yet we didn't come across another "**Tanura**". Similarly, when our second child was born, Achachen was really more particular to put the name "**Ruwais**" even though it didn't appeal to me like "**Tanura**" but finally we followed the same pattern and established the name as "**Ruwais Sunny**". Both these names remain novel and unique and we are really proud of these names.

**Tanura's** baptism was conducted at Keezhvaipur on 7<sup>th</sup> January 1978. It was quite clear that I couldn't participate in the baptism ceremony and as such it was planned with out my presence other wise it was necessary to wait until August or September. Soon after the baptism, one sad incident happened in our family. Thiruvalla Mathilumkal Ammachi expired on the same day night and even though she was bed ridden, it was really sorrowful for everybody.



**Jolly with Tanura 20/8/78 at Emakulam**

**While** in Saudi Arabia, I did a few bolder but foolish actions but everything went on nicely with out any other implications. After the birth of Tanura, I had sent one 18 carrot gold chain of about 12 grams weight by Registered letter to Jolly and it reached safely and without any other complications which prompted me to send two more letters like that on a later stage. Very successfully I could send two more Registered letters from Saudi Arabia each one was having one gold sovereign of 8 grams weight and the first sovereign I brought from Saudi was for SR. 125/- by the end of 1977. Similarly, from Abu Dhabi also I sent a few letters with some Rs 500/- currency notes and luckily everything except one reached safely and since then I have decided to discontinue with these types of letters.

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## Chapter-17

### Banagas and life at Bahrain

**After** resignation from Aramco, I returned to Cochin via Bombay by 20<sup>th</sup> of March 1979 and started with the preparatory jobs for joining Banagas on new job assignments. Visa endorsement for Bahrain had to be done at the Bombay Bahrain Consulate and accordingly I came to Bombay by train along with Jolly on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1979 and completed the Visa formalities for Banagas and returned to Trivandrum on 11<sup>th</sup> by Indian Airlines flight. This was the first air travel for Jolly and during our stay at Bombay we visited Abreo also at his [Santa Cruz](#) residence. But finally, I could get the confirmation telegram from Banagas only on 26<sup>th</sup> April for the travel to Bahrain on 28<sup>th</sup>. I could reach Bombay by 27<sup>th</sup> April by Indian Air Lines flight from Cochin but unfortunately, we couldn't manage to get the reservation for Manama by Gulf Air flight on 28<sup>th</sup>. Finally, I got the booking for 5<sup>th</sup> May Gulf Air flight, along with M.G George and Abreo which was confirmed only on 30<sup>th</sup> April. There was a gap of about five days in between and as such we tried and managed to get flight booking to Trivandrum on 1<sup>st</sup> May along with the return booking on 4<sup>th</sup>. At that time, I was having enough money with me for the flight travel sufficient for the return journey also but George was not having enough money and I gave him Rs 500/- for the one-way ticket to Trivandrum. Unfortunately, George couldn't get the OK ticket for Bombay on 4<sup>th</sup> May and accordingly he was forced to abolish his travel to Bahrain on 5<sup>th</sup> May. Later he could get the ticket for Manama only on 13<sup>th</sup> May.

**After** missing my flight on 28<sup>th</sup> April to Bahrain, when I reached back Keezhvaipur by the night of 1<sup>st</sup> May, everybody actually thought that I lost my entire job and had to return back and really nobody could understand the importance of my travel just for two days. Anyway, all the surprises slowly subsided and again I left for Bombay on 4<sup>th</sup> May and the subsequent travel to Bahrain by '[Gulf Air](#)' on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1979 along with my friend Mr. Abreo from Bombay. Banagas representative was available at the airport and he took us to Manama and later to our residence at [East Riffa](#). Already the first batch personnel were available at Banagas who joined on 28<sup>th</sup> April including Mathew Daniel, K.T Thomas, M.P Kurian, P.J George etc. Later M.G George also joined us by 13<sup>th</sup> May. Banagas Plant was in the construction stages and as such Company was arranging the necessary training for all the Operating personnel including Supervisors. In-Plant training was arranged at [Kuwait Oil Company](#) for about 20 people from Banagas and we left for Kuwait on 18<sup>th</sup> May and came back on 14<sup>th</sup> June after attending the training at various Plants of [K.O.C.](#) Among the AGCC countries, Kuwait is having the maximum summer temperatures and our training was also at the peak summer period of June. We visited few of the oil wells at Kuwait along with our Production training programmes. We were actually subjected to go through severe ambient conditions like 51°C temperature and severe Shammal or sandy winds. Our visit to the "[Oil Wells](#)" in the vast sandy desert of Kuwait after the mid



day was really a horrible experience in the peak summer conditions which can never be forgotten.



**Sunny at K.O.C, Kuwait- May 1979**

**After** the Kuwait training programmes, back at Banagas, again one-month training was arranged for all the people under the Plant Supervisor Mr. K.V Raju, who was working earlier at Madras Refineries as Training Superintendent. Mr. Raju's training programmes and skills were extra ordinary and each and every one of us could really grasp a very good knowledge in the Refinery operational aspects. Actually Mr. Raju was on deputation from MRL and did not resign from there and as the conditions in Bahrain didn't appeal to him very much and at the 3 month's probation period itself he planned to go back to India but the Company didn't allow him and he was really subjected to severe troubles with the Immigration and other departments quite for some time and later he decided to continue with Banagas service and was felicitated with the **"Best Employee of Banagas"** award for his meritorious services for the Company. Later he was elevated to the Operations Superintendent position and left after about 5-6 years service with Banagas.

**At** Banagas, we started with the pre- commissioning and commissioning activities of the different sections of the Plant like **Field Compressor stations** and the **Storage & Loading** facilities. Actually, I was assigned for the '**Storage Control man**' position and '**Storage**' was the last unit to be commissioned and as such we were also associated with the commissioning of the Field Compressor Stations at the initial periods on 12 hours shift duty programmes.

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**One** of the basic assurances from Banagas was that of the family visa attractions but later they limited it to Supervisory levels only and as such most of the ex. Aramco personnel were really depressed and were searching for some better prospects elsewhere in the Gulf. During this time an advertisement appeared in the "**Gulf Mirror**" news paper calling for the Operations staff for the newly formed NGL Plants at Abu Dhabi for which the construction activities were on full swing at that time. The Company advertised for the selection of NGL / LPG experienced Operators from different Gulf Companies and Bahrain was chosen to be the first recruiting centre for which "**Lansdowne**" was selected as the Agents and we submitted our applications to them for the necessary screening formalities. **Lansdowne** called us for a written test and was successfully completed on 14/9/1979 (this was my birthday also) and I think, I scored about 49 marks out of 50. Again, Gasco conducted another IQ test, English Language test and Interview by a board of about six representatives from different wings on 24<sup>th</sup> September and they selected me directly for the **Panel man** post. Actually, at the time of interview only we came to know that the selection is for the biggest newly formed LPG Plant of Gasco and the status of the job will be single and at different sites with 91/35 rotation / leave schedule etc. Really everything looked very much attractive for all of us and everybody were anxiously waiting for some sort of reply from Gasco. To our greater surprise seven of the Banagas Operation and Maintenance people got the positive selection information as Grade 'A' Operator / Technician etc for a gross salary of Dh. 6000/- pm. But some of us like M.G George, K.T Thomas and I, didn't get any information and we were greatly depressed for not getting any information from Gasco. More over, during the interview, we were discussing for the Panel operator post and we thought that they didn't consider us because of our bargain for the Panel man post etc. But after about 10 days, by the Grace of God, I got the positive selection intimation from **Lansdowne** agents along with M.G George and K.T Thomas on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1979 as **Panel Operator** with a gross salary of Dh. 7000/- pm. Again, on 24<sup>th</sup> November I could get the Official appointment letter for Gasco which was readily accepted and accordingly medical examination for Gasco was conducted at Manama American Medical Mission Hospital and finally Okayed for the new appointment. Upon successful completion of the medical test, Gasco informed us to submit the resignation so as to join Gasco **Bu Hasa** Site training programmes by 10<sup>th</sup> January 1980.

**During** this period on 25<sup>th</sup> October 1979, another sad incident happened in our family. Georgekuttychayan (Lillypengal's husband) expired suddenly at the age of 44 at Ernakulam Lizy Hospital due to severe heart and liver problems. It was a

severe shock for everybody and the Doctors also couldn't do anything to safeguard his life. At that time, he was working as Personnel Officer in Chalakudy Government Potteries Company, leaving behind Lillypengal and the little daughter Shobhamol.

**With** out any regret I submitted my resignation from Banagas on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1979 and by the time all the 12 people who got the selection from Gasco has resigned and out of about 25 expatriates, the 50% resignation at the start up and commissioning period became a major issue and the Management started their own way to prevent the exodus of the experienced hands from Banagas. Management came to know that all the people were planning to join Gasco and Chairman Mr. Hassan Fakroo himself came to Abu Dhabi and discussed with Gasco and tried to stop the exodus at the Governmental level itself. They could succeed in their attempts to a certain extent and Gasco, "Lansdowne" instructed us to complete the contract period with Banagas and then only to join Gasco. Banagas Management didn't accept our resignation and instead they instructed us to complete the contract and then only to leave them otherwise we would have to face serious repercussions. We had no other option other than to continue with the completion of the contracted one-year period, which was 5/5/1980 in my case. K.T Thomas, K.J Cherian and Shamsir Singh could manage to leave the country as they were having their passports in their possession and could join Gasco on the stipulated date of 10<sup>th</sup> January 1980 as per the Bu Hasa requirements. Others were forced to continue with our job and most of the people tried in vain by their own ways to get some type of termination to leave the country. By this time, all the Banagas units were successfully commissioned and were able to make two shipments of Propane and Butane also.

**Most** of the Gasco Bu Hasa selections joined by 10<sup>th</sup> January 1980 and started their 2 months training programmes at Abu Dhabi Training Centre. In the mean time Gasco revised their Panel men selection policy and decided to abolish the direct selection of Panel Operators for the other Sites like **Ruwais, Asab and Bab**. Accordingly Ruwais training programmes were scheduled for 10<sup>th</sup> May 1980. As we couldn't join Bu Hasa on the stipulated date and as a result of the policy changes, Gasco cancelled our **Panel Operator** offer and instead offered us with the degraded "**Process / Utility Operator grade A**" at the reduced salary of Dh. 6000/- pm. Accordingly, other operators were also degraded to "Operator B" positions with a salary of Dh. 5400/- pm. Again, we were not having any option other than accepting the same at the reduced rate. I also readily accepted the offer and expressed my willingness to join Gasco on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1980 upon completion of the contract with Banagas.

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**During** these periods, some peculiar developments were taking place at Keezhvaipur and Nedungadappally. Most of this period Jolly was shuttling between Keezhvaipur and Nedungadappally along with Tanura and she expressed her desire through letters to me to buy some land for a house away

from both of our houses and in fact we were searching for some land nearer to the Kottayam area. As per Manorama advertisement, Jolly has seen one plot of 20 cents of land at Kottayam Muttambalam area and was communicated to me for my consent. From the details, it was evident that the plot was good and the price of Rs.2250/- per Cent was also reasonable at that area and as such I gave my consent to proceed with the purchase. Finally, 20.5 cents of land were purchased at Muttambalam from Thannikkal family for Rs. 50,000/- by 4<sup>th</sup> August 1979.

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**During** the Gasco selection process, even though the direct details were not immediately passed on to Jolly, I was giving some sort of indirect news about the test, interview and other offer details which was not immediately grasped by Jolly and others and suddenly when the resignation news from Banagas was conveyed, it was really a shocking news for everybody in Kerala but slowly every body accustomed to the situation. In fact, I was writing all the letters to Jolly on the copy of all my Gasco intimation letters but Jolly didn't even make any queries for the same and as such it went on un-noticed.

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**Upon** completion of my Banagas contract, it was not actually possible to go to India and then join Gasco for the scheduled training programmes by the middle of May 1980. Accordingly, my vacation from Banagas was abolished and planned for direct joining from Bahrain. After joining Gasco and upon completion of training programmes at Abu Dhabi for about 3 months and then only I could go for my first vacation from Gasco and that was the highest non- vacation gap of about 15 months in my whole career period in the Gulf.

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**As** stated earlier, all the clearance from Banagas was obtained by 4<sup>th</sup> May 1980 and with the passport, I could rush to the Bahrain Traffic department and submit the application for the conversion of the Saudi driving license to Bahrain license and eventually I could succeed in getting the same but unfortunately in spite of all my efforts to convert the same to UAE failed miserably and had to go through the normal testing procedures. While in Gasco camp up to 1988, few of my attempts for the UAE license also didn't materialize and upon getting the family accommodation at Ruwais Housing complex only I could go through the intensive learners driving programmes for the eventual receipt of the driving license by October 1993.

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**Another** interesting aspect about my life in Bahrain was that of the viewing of the first **"Concord"** flight from Paris to Manama Bahrain airport during 1979.

Similarly, in another accidental coincidence, I was fortunate enough to view the landing of the last British Airways "**Concord**" flight from New York to London at Heathrow airport on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2003. At that time, for about one month I was in "**Bechtel**" London office associated with the P& I D checks for the new Gasco Train-3 Project. British Airways "**Concord**" supersonic flights were in operation for about 27 years and since then these flights were phased out from passenger service and eventually this supersonic flight was transferred and kept in the museum at Edinburgh, Scotland.

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## PART THREE

### GASCO FAMILY IN ABU DHABI, U.A.E

#### Chapter 18

#### Employment with Gasco, Abu Dhabi

**On** 5<sup>th</sup> May 1980, in order to join Gasco, I traveled directly from Manama to Abu Dhabi by “**Gulf Air**” flight, where I was greeted by the Gasco representative with the necessary Visa formalities and was accommodated in the Training Centre at the Abu Dhabi Hamdan Street. Actually, Gasco requirement for Operations staff to join for training was on 10<sup>th</sup> May but as my contract completion with Banagas was little bit early and accordingly I was able to join on the 5<sup>th</sup> itself. In this context I was fortunate enough to join as the first and the senior most Operations employee of the Ruwais Plant. All other Operations employees joined only after 10<sup>th</sup> May. Accordingly, two batches of trainees could start the two months training programmes by 14<sup>th</sup> of May with 12 people each. But Ruwais Plant Engineering personnel were already undergoing training programmes at the training centre since April and the Operations were the last to join the group. I was in the second batch and the first batch training programmes were cut short to one month and were sent to Ruwais for the Utilities pre-commissioning requirements and the other batches were allowed to continue with the programme completion. M.G George was also with me in the same batch and upon completion of the training we went for our first vacation from Gasco, Abu Dhabi by August 1980 under the 91/35-rotation schedule. Others who were in our batch constituted mainly M.G George, Tawfik, Al Ali, Jegadeesan, Vijayakumar, Indran, Gopeeramanan, Raman, Sivakumar, Ramesh and Anil Kusoorkar. Our training centre also was very near to our Hostel. Our work / leave schedule was covered by free food and accommodation facilities along with the Air ticket facility till point of Origin which was at Trivandrum in our case. The training centre was managed by some of the Ruwais Shift Supervisors and General Shift Supervisors along with the other exclusive trainers in the Operations department. All were from different European Nationalities and upon completion of the training programmes, these Supervisors also joined back with us at Ruwais Plant by September 1980. Again, upon completion of our training programmes, the training was continued for the Asab and Bab Plant personnel at the Abu Dhabi training centre.

**While** at Abu Dhabi training centre for about 75 days, we were regular in viewing all the released Malayalam movies of those days and it took some more years for the normalization of the Video Cassette system for the regular viewing of all the Malayalam movies. I do remember the first Video cassette I could view was at Bahrain in one of my Bahraini friend's houses during early 1980's. Before our first vacation from Gasco, Abu Dhabi, we purchased and gathered a lot of items and set forth for the vacation. I left for my first vacation from Gasco by 13th August

1980 to Trivandrum via Bombay along with Mr. George. One of the sad incidents during our stay at the training centre was that of the tragic death of Indira Gandhi's second son Sanjay Gandhi at Delhi on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1980. The Indian Customs duty was also very high during those days and I think, the free allowance was Rs. 500/- only and a huge amount had to be paid to the Customs department during all our visits to India until some liberalization by the Vajpayee Government.

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## Chapter-19

### Gasco Ruwais Operations

**Upon** return from my first vacation from Gasco training centre, we directly joined Gasco Ruwais Operations Division, where the Plant Construction activities were in full swing and at the pre-commissioning level. Upon completion of our work period for three months at Ruwais, we went for our first 91/35 rotation leave by December 1980. During our first three months stay at Ruwais, actually we were all doing the follow up of the Plants with the participation in some of the pre-commissioning activities. Except a few, all of us were in day shift and engaged in the Plant familiarization and other commissioning activities. At Ruwais, other than the European and English Supervisors, few of the Operators only were in grade 9 Operator 'A' level and those people were Sunny, George, Shenoy, Kusoorkar, Ben Hallou and Ichu and all others out of the initial 66 Operators were in the Operator 'B' grade level. But later, contrary to our surprise, two more Panel Operators joined Ruwais viz Moh'd Abu Rube from Jordan and Bader from Algeria. As Operator grade 'A', I was drawing a salary of Dh. 6000/- per month, which was equivalent to Rs 15000/- Indian Rupees as per the prevailing rates at that time.

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**During** the second vacation from Gasco, by December 1980, for the first time in my life, I was fortunate enough to buy my first motor car which was actually the first car ever purchased by anybody from the Azhakath or Mathilumkal family. On 18<sup>th</sup> December 1980, I could purchase my first 1976 model Premier Padmini car from Thiruvalla Kaviyoor for Rs. 35,500-oo. At that time, itself, the ownership of a car was considered to be a big luxury and maintaining the car at a petrol price of Rs 3.50 per litre was not so easily affordable for the common people. Even, the scooters and motorcycles were considered to be a luxury among the common masses. Even among our Gasco friends also, the car ownership was considered to be a foolish thing and when I talked about my car purchase news to one of my Bombay friend Mr. Rodriguez, the very first thing he uttered to me was like this. **"You have got brain in your ass"**. Even though his statement was sarcastic, I had never ever regretted for the foolish deeds but in fact I was really proud to own a motorcar for the first time from the Gasco family constituting the Indian community.

**My** uncle Renjimon's marriage with Mercy was on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1980 and as I was undergoing my training programmes with Gasco at Abu Dhabi, I couldn't attend his marriage at that time. Since childhood days we were like brothers or like close friends and we had never imagined ourselves as Uncle and Nephew. In fact, it was my long-cherished desire to attend the marriage of Renjimon but my wishes couldn't be materialized. Even though Renjimon was two years older than me, I

was fortunate enough to have my marriage four years earlier than Renjimon. Actually, I was also eager to have his marriage first and then only to have mine. But God's planning was different and let us be happy with the saying- "Contentment is the very soul of life".

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**Even** though I joined Gasco as an Operator grade 'A', I was not fortunate enough to get some sort of promotions at the initial stages and for my actual promotion to the next Panel Operator; I had to wait till 1985. One of the reasons behind this was my selection to the exclusive "**Jetty Operations**" by few of the initial Gasco's European Supervisors. By virtue of my previous experience in the Storage and Jetty Operations of the LPG Plant, they allocated me to the start-up commissioning activities of the Jetty along with other 10 Operators. In fact, I was not having any previous experience in any "Jetty Operations" which I gained only later from Gasco. In this way actually I was stuck up in the exclusive **Storage & Jetty Operations** for about two years other wise I could have participated in the main Plant operations for some early promotions. But after the start up of the Plant, I was able to witness and participate in the first Shipment of the Pentane as well as the LPG ships by 30<sup>th</sup> June 81 and 6<sup>th</sup> August 81 respectively. By 1983, I was in the Plant from the Jetty including the Control room Panel operations. During this period of 5 years, many people could manage to get the promotion to the Panel Operator and a few luckiest ones to the Shift Supervisor positions. I was promoted to the Panel Operator position by 1985 and continued in that level up to 1993 until the next promotion as **Shift Supervisor** effective May 1993 at the 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

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**Up** to 1988, all the Gasco Junior staffs were in the camp and on rotation basis where as the Senior (Supervisors and above) staffs were given family accommodation in the ADNOC Ruwais Housing Complex. Whilst in the camp, on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1984, suddenly in the night, I was affected with severe back pain with out any apparent reason and the same continued up to 9<sup>th</sup> night. I had never gone through such an ordeal in my entire life and I was forced to under go the severe pains for about five days and for the first time in my Gasco life I was forced to take the Sick leave for 10 days. Back pain coupled with severe constipation for about five days was my problem and due to all these troubles, I couldn't go for the break fast etc in the camp restaurant. In this context it is worthwhile to mention one of the good deeds done by my friend **Mr. Bhaskaran** for me during this sickness period. The "**Uppumav**" he brought for me from the restaurant cannot be forgotten at all and I am very much grateful to him for his kind service to me during those sorrowful days. Finally, my back pain vanished suddenly at 10-30 pm on 9<sup>th</sup> January for which I am really thankful to my friend **Mr. Mathew Daniel**. On completion of my dinner, Mathew also accompanied me to my room and I requested him to exercise his entire body weight on my back and after this I went to the bed and suddenly at 10-30 pm all my pains vanished and still this remains

as a miracle and the reasons cannot be judged or identified. As I write this in June 2005, Bhaskaran retired from Gasco and has transferred his abode to Madras, India. ([Bhaskaran expired on 29/5/2019 at Chennai.](#))

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Out of our 1980 Gasco batch mates, Mathew Daniel could manage to get transfer to Asab unit by 1997 and has opted out from Ruwais family status for the ultimate enjoyment of 30/30 work – leave rotation schedule prevailing in other Gasco sites. M.G George has retired from Gasco upon completion of 26 years service by September 2006 followed by Davis Johnny and Elias Thomas. Davis retired by December 2009 and Elias has completed 30 years successfully in Gasco for the eventual retirement by May 2010. All these personnel are leading a peaceful retirement life in their respective abodes at Trivandrum, Ernakulam and Changanacherry.

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**1985 Gasco Ruwais Shift group 'A' personnel Rajan, Bala, Raghavan, Assad, Alvi, Ganesh, Saisunder, Hanoun, Vijayakumar, Mohan & Sunny - during the visit to RHC with the Shift Controller Izzat Murad.**



**Gasco Ruwais Operation pioneers during Will Jones's send-off on 24-9-1990**

## Chapter-20

### Family abode at Ruwais Housing Complex

In 1988, Gasco policy took a deviation and it was decided to stop the leave rotation and Camp facilities for the Junior staff and to accommodate all in the Ruwais Housing Complex with the yearly leave travel facilities for the family. Accordingly, family Visas were arranged for Jolly, Tanura and Ruwais by December 1988. Owing to the School education, Tanura and Ruwais were not in a position to come to Ruwais at that time. In the mean time Shajimon's (my youngest brother) marriage with Suja was conducted on 26<sup>th</sup> September 1988 and it was decided to accommodate them at the Kottayam Azhakath house so that Jolly can join me for the family accommodation at Ruwais. Tanura and Ruwais were with Shajimon during the 1988-89 academic year and after spending the 1989 vacation period at Ruwais, both were admitted in the Girideepam boarding school.

After completing my last Camp vacation by December 1988, I brought Jolly also along with me on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1988 for the family abode at Ruwais- first time after 11 years of my foreign career. Actually, it was our 12<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary also. UAE climatic condition was at the winter peak period and every body could feel the extreme weather conditions at that time. I think, during January- February 1989 only we could experience the severe cold winter conditions and the following years, the winter conditions were moderate and was not to that extent of 1989. Initially we were allotted with P-133 accommodation at the Ruwais Housing Complex and later after about 4 months we moved to the O-316 villas of the RHC. Upon completion of 1989 school year, Ruwais also was brought to Abu Dhabi and admitted in the 5<sup>th</sup> standard of the Indian School at Ruwais Housing complex by April 1990. But Tanura continued her studies at the hostel with occasional visit to Abu Dhabi during Onam, Christmas and Annual vacations. At our Ruwais housing complex locality, six of the Malayali families were staying together namely Mathew, Johnny, George, PMS, Sebastian and I. Most of us stayed there for about 4 years and after the death of Mr. Sebastian most of the people moved from that locality to different areas of the RHC.

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## Chapter-21

### European tour

**During** 1989, between 24<sup>th</sup> September and 13<sup>th</sup> October, Jolly and I went for a European tour for about 20 days. Initially we went to **London** and from there we traveled to **Belgium, Austria, Germany, Italy & France** by bus and finally back to London by the ferry. During this tour programme we traveled about 5000 KM by bus and covered almost all the tourist attractions of these countries. Owing to Visa restrictions we were forced to discontinue our tour programme with the tour party at **Brussels** and instead we traveled to **Austria** via **Germany** by train and joined the tour party again at **Vienna, Austria**. Due to this plan change we couldn't go to **Switzerland**, which was also in our original travel plans. By the time we reached **Austria**, it was after midnight and at the severe shivering winter conditions. Even though our accommodation was booked in one of the hotels at **Vienna**, we didn't go there in the night and instead we slept at the Vienna Railway Station and finally moved to the Hotel by taxi by about 6 in the morning. Hotel booking was there for us and after sleeping for some time we tried our level best in vain to get the "multiple entry" Visa for **Italy**. Finally, we made a tour of the **Vienna** area and joined with the tour party again and next day left for **Italy**. Actually, we traveled through the length and breadth of Italy for about three days including **Venice** and **Vatican**. At Vatican **St. Peters Basilica**, Pope appeared at the window and gave a glimpse at the tourists and other people and we also think that we saw the Pope from the far distance. Still, we are not sure whether it was Pope or not. **Another interesting aspect about Vatican was that we saw a lot of Bishops or Priests pedaling on the bicycle on the Vatican Streets!**



Cardinal Philippe Barbarin being surrounded by reporters after a cardinals' meeting, at the Vatican. – AP file

KT 8/3/13



The “gondola” trip in the water city of Venice was a remarkable experience that is still haunting our memories. From Italy we traveled to Paris in France and concluded the tour programme at Paris and after crossing the ferry returned back to London again. One more day was spent at London and the next day we left for Amsterdam, Holland by KLM flight. We spent about three days at Amsterdam and visited almost all the important places in Amsterdam. Holland is actually situated below the sea level and certain areas of Amsterdam resembled to me like our Alleppey. Amsterdam is very famous for its diamond business and during our tour programme we visited certain diamond factories and business centres, which forced us to buy some diamond ornaments for Jolly. About 2500 Dirhams worth diamonds we purchased from Amsterdam for which we paid through the MasterCard. In Amsterdam we could see a lot of tourist buses driven by women drivers, which was really a new experience for most of us. In fact, it was a pleasure to see for the first time in my life these women drivers easily manoeuvring the biggest tourist buses. From Amsterdam we returned back to Abu Dhabi by “Air Lanka” flight by 13<sup>th</sup> October 1989. ‘

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## Chapter-22

### Kuwaiti invasion and its after effects

**1990** was considered to be an eventful year not only in our life but also for all the Gulf inhabitants. Capture of Kuwait by Iraq on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1990 followed by the liberation of Kuwait by the American Allied Forces on 21<sup>st</sup> February 1991 has kept all the Gulf inhabitants and their families under severe tension for about 6 months.

1990 was an eventful year for our family also with lots of family and personal problems. One of my colleagues at FACT (CD) Mr. P.S Nair, who was working in Libyan Fertilizer Company, has succumbed to his illness on 18<sup>th</sup> March 1990 at Kottayam. After leaving from FACT, we were having close relationship with P.S Nair family and his untimely demise was sad news for all of us. P.S Nair's wife Maya is from Kottayam and Jolly was in close touch with her through out these years and still maintains our good old friendly relationships. Jolly gave a very good mental support to Maya during these years and Maya used to tell us very often about the great mental support given by Jolly during her difficult periods. In fact, P.S Nair's marriage was at Kottayam Thirunakkara temple on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1977 and that was the second marriage function we attended after our marriage. At that time Jolly was with me at Ambalamedu and we went by scooter to Kottayam and attended the marriage.

Another sad incident in our 1990 period was the "Meningitis" attack on our daughter Tanura. Tanura had spent her 8<sup>th</sup> standard annual vacation with us at Ruwais, Abu Dhabi and went back to her 9<sup>th</sup> standard studies in the hostel of her Girideepam School. Shajimon and Suja were staying in our house at Kottayam. Tanura was affected by severe fever and other symptoms and the hostel warden informed Shajimon and luckily, she was immediately admitted in the Kottayam Medical Centre hospital and was diagnosed in time for "Meningitis" on 21/6/1990. Had it been delayed for the diagnosis, the fate of Tanura would have been different. The immediate diagnosis and medication saved her life with out any adverse effects. The telephonic news about the Meningitis attack still remains fresh in our memories and the horrible scene cannot be forgotten. Immediately Jolly and Ruwais went to Kerala and by the time Tanura could recover from the attack and they stayed in the hospital for some more days. Actually, God played the miracle through Shajimon; otherwise, we couldn't imagine what would have happened to Tanura. Ruwais, who was studying in the Indian School of Ruwais, was also having annual vacation by last week of June 1990 and as such Jolly and Ruwais continued their stay in Kottayam. Since then, Tanura also discontinued her hostel studies and continued as the day scholar.

**Through** out these years, Achachen was very much active and suddenly he also fell sick due to diabetes and some sort of Ulcer attack in the stomach. Achachen was admitted in the Medical Centre hospital due to severe internal bleeding and

other symptoms on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1990 and from the Medical Centre, they referred him to the Kottayam Medical College and finally he was admitted there for the necessary emergency treatment. This was our first Medical College experience and the same turned to be a horrible one. They didn't do anything to safe guard his life and finally he succumbed to his internal bleeding on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1990 at 0605 hours in the morning. Jolly and Ruwais were supposed to return back to Abu Dhabi on the same day and without knowing anything I was waiting for their arrival by evening. Instead, I could get only the sad news about severe condition of Achachen at the early hours of 5th August and Jolly told me to come for the Emergency vacation as Achachen was in the coma stage. Somehow, I could manage to get the flight ticket on the same day itself to Trivandrum and finally reached Kottayam by about 9 pm on the same day. Jolly picked me from the Airport and on the way only she told me about the sad demise of Achachen. Owing to uncertainty about my arrival, the body was kept in the Medical College mortuary and finally the burial was carried out at the Mallappally Mar Thoma Church burial grounds on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1990.



**Sunny family with Achachen & Amamma- 1990**

Actually, Achachen didn't know about the Iraqi attack on Kuwait on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1990, as he was sick and in the Hospital during those days. America took the responsibility for the liberation of Kuwait from the Iraqi regime and all the people were flooding from the Kuwaiti area after loosing the entire valuables from their houses in Kuwait. India's 'Indian Air lines' arranged the massive evacuation

programme and transported the maximum number of Indians with the creditable mention in the "Guinness book of records". But that was not the end and the situation was worsening in the entire Gulf. The Allied American forces were preparing for the liberation of Kuwait by any means. Retaliation by Iraq was expected to end up with another world war. If at all any thing happens, our concern was about Tanura, who was alone at Kottayam from our side. Accordingly, we prepared a "Will" and sent to Kottayam for the necessary follow-up in case of any mishaps in the Gulf. But nothing has happened and finally the United Nation's dead line on Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait ended on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1991 and the Allied Forces started their attack on Kuwait and Iraq on 17<sup>th</sup> February and finally Kuwait was liberated from the Iraqi occupation and the Cease fire agreement with the Iraqi regime was signed on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1991 and was handed over to the Amir of Kuwait. Since then, the re-building of Kuwait from the ruins of the Iraqi occupation has commenced and once again the exodus of all the foreigners to this small country has started. Again, America had to wait for further 12 years to oust Saddam Hussain from the Iraqi regime by the proclamation of war against Iraq on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2003. But this doesn't have any severe consequences on the Gulf inhabitants and to a certain extent it has gone un-noticed.

Jolly and Ruwais also vacated from Ruwais, Abu Dhabi and Jolly took a mini "Transfer of Residence" and had moved to Kottayam house again by 24/5/1992. Ruwais was admitted in the 7<sup>th</sup> standard at **Kottayam Marian Junior School** under the CBSE scheme. Tanura completed and passed her SSLC by May 1993 from the Bethany School with distinction and scored 506 marks out of 600 with 84.3%. After wards she joined Kottayam BCM College for her Pre-degree course and completed the Pre-degree with distinction of 89% marks for the eventual joining at "**Karunya Institute of Technology**", Coimbatore for her B.E degree by August 1995.

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## Chapter-23

### Gasco reminiscences

In Gasco Ruwais, I was promoted to the Senior Panel Operator position by May 1985 with the salary grade 10 and continued in that level for about 8 years up to May 1993. During this period even though many of our colleagues could get promotion to the Supervisory cadre, I was one among the last to be promoted to the Supervisory position. In fact, those who got promotions earlier were given the post directly and with out any other “Acting” portfolios. But for the first time in the Operations department, Supervisory positions Acting policy was introduced by the Operations Superintendent Mr. Mohamed Sahoo as per his memorandum dated 21/3/1991 as follows: -

#### ACTING SHIFT SUPERVISOR

As part of staff development, it was decided that a Senior Operator will be made to act as a Shift Supervisor when deemed necessary by ORO (ORO/X) to cover certain leave schedule and / or any special activity. Till further notice, this does not include permit authority. To start with, Mr. Sunny Kutty will be in charge of the Process side in “D” group effective 17<sup>th</sup> March till 6<sup>th</sup> April 1991.

Your co-operation with the above gentleman is appreciated.

Moh'd Sahoo

ORO

As per the acting schedule, my first acting duty was on Night shift of 24/3/91 and everything went on nicely till 0440 hrs early morning at which a massive power dip was observed due to some trouble at ADNOC side resulting in the tripping of most of the equipments in both Trains. Contrary to our expectations, one of the Refrigeration compressors was running and ultimately, we could start back that train with in a short time and the tripped train was started back later. In fact, my first acting Shift Supervisor job was really a horrible nightmare and couldn't be forgotten at all. Thank God every thing was smooth since that time. Afterwards also I was in the “Acting” business on many occasions.

Mr. NCV Kurup and Sebastian Joseph were the first Malayali Supervisors in Gasco Ruwais and after the tragic death of Sebastian on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1992, the mantle has fallen on M.G George and he has become the Shift Supervisor in the void created by the death of Mr. Sebastian. During this time also I was continuing with my occasional acting business and I had to wait for another 10 months to get the position as the full-fledged Supervisor. Mr. Mohamed Sahoo was the Operations Superintendent at that time and on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1993, he gave me the promotion letter in the Main Control room and after the formal advises etc he gave me another important advice also like this. “Hereafter you insert your shirt and then only come to the Plant.” I have no option other than obeying my Boss.

Since I left India for S Arabia, I was in the habit of wearing the shirt over the pants and being accustomed to that style of dress, I was really hesitant to insert the shirt but forced to do so as per the instructions from my Boss. Even though it was slightly painful at that time later only I felt about my awkward dressing styles and in fact I am really indebted to Mr. Mohamed for his silly and serious advice. Now-a -days I am really ashamed of going back to the old style of my dress codes. Those days Mr. Mohamed Sahoo used to call me at times jokingly as **“Abu Gharsh”** in Arabic, meaning **“father of the big belly”** by virtue of my slightly bigger belly on those days. On certain other occasions he used to call me as **“Abu Ruwais”** also. Mr. Mohamed Sahoo began his Gasco career in 1984 as a Process Engineer developpee and has worked in all positions starting from Panel Operator, Supervisor, Shift Controller, Section Head, Operations Superintendent, and Ruwais Plant Manager and finally elevated to the coveted position of the General Manager of Gasco by 2002. All Ruwais people are really proud of the achievements of our former Plant Manager.



**Ganesh's sent off party 1988 with Moh'd Sahoo (later Gasco GM by 2002)**

In this context, I would like to recollect one of the accomplishments of Moh'd Sahoo during his tenure as Shift Supervisor. In fact, it was really a credit for Moh'd as a Supervisor for the safety and integrity of our Ruwais Plants. We are having two **“Low Pressure Flares”** for the Hydrocarbon release from the low-pressure Storage tanks. Usually, one will be kept on line with the necessary pilot and purge gas flows and the other one will be **“stand by”**. Until 1986, this stand by L.P Flare was just kept as a mere **“stand by”** with out the light up of the **“Pilot burners”**. In case of any eventuality, if we wanted to change over the L.P flare, the pilot igniter system may not be working and keeping it live is a tedious and difficult process. Moh'd has done his good efforts to light up the stand-by LP flare pilot igniter system and from 1986 onwards, this stand-by LP Flare pilot system

remains “on” in the true literal “stand- by” mode. As operations Shift Controller, Mohamed wrote my appraisal also during 1987 when I was working as Panel Operator.

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**Ever** since I joined the Arab Gulf area for employment, one of the best qualities I noticed in the Arab world is that of the non-existence of any class difference among the Arabs. Unlike the British or the English system, all the Arabs are considered to be equal irrespective of any caste, creed, colour, community, country, educational or professional supremacies. We, the Indians are very much fond of calling all the aged and the higher category people by the word ‘**SIR**’ in order to express our respect and considerations for the upper class which has been followed and practiced as per the British standards prevailed in India for centuries. Even though initially it was little bit painful for me to address all the people by the mere ‘Mr’ and intentionally trying to avoid the usage of ‘SIR’ in all the day-to-day dealings with others. I could grasp and understand the abbreviation and meaning of ‘SIR’ only on a later stage from one of the Malayalam movies as ‘**Stupid Idiot Rascal**’. After realising the real meaning, I have never ever called anybody by ‘SIR’ and in fact influenced others also not to use the word - SIR - as a matter of respect and other formalities.

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**Abu Dhabi Gas industries Limited (GASCO)** is the operating company responsible for the processing of natural and associated gas from onshore oil operations in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. GASCO was founded as a joint venture in 1978 between ADNOC, Shell, Total and Partex. In 1981, production began and the first commercial shipment was conducted in **June** 1981. The founders envisaged that Gasco can achieve its Vision and Mission through competent, motivated and productive staff. In the process they adapted the multinational system for recruitment of its staff. **To begin with, Gasco recruited 32 different Nationalities and one way or other all these nationalities are unique in different aspects. (At present Gasco is having more than 60 Nationalities into its staff strength).** Each of these Gasco staff has his own unique flaws. But it is the cracks and flaws we each in Gasco have, that make our lives together so interesting and rewarding. **You have just got to take each person for what they are and look for the good in them.** Gasco- Ruwais Operations started with the first division Manager **Mr. Walid Haffar**, a Lebanese national, was under deputation from the major share holder company “**ADNOC**”. Mr. Walid Haffar started his career with Gasco by 1979 and continued till 1986. Under the leadership of Mr. Walid Haffar, Ruwais division has done the pre-commissioning, commissioning and start-up of the Plant with the safe loading of the products into more than 800 ships during this period. Walid Haffar was basically a sportsman specialised in “**Tennis**”, “**Squash**” etc and he was so particular about the sports activities for all the employees of Gasco in order to keep them fit for the day-to-day jobs. Later after a gap of about 3-4 years, Walid Haffar came back to Ruwais as ADNOC Refinery

Manager and after retirement also he was continuing with his services as “Advisor” for some of the private petroleum companies.

Initially there were 12 European Supervisors and 6 General Shift Supervisors for Ruwais Operations including the Norwegian GSS, Mr. Thomsland who selected me as one of the Panel Operators. Even though I was selected for Bu Hasa, I could join only at Ruwais due to certain technical problems and as such I was fortunate enough to work with Thomsland for about two years. Thomsland was a gigantic figure and still I wonder how he selected a very small figure like me at that time. All these personnel were on deputation from the Share holder companies and one by one all these people left Gasco by around 1984-85, Len Hale, Will Jones, Regi Roberts, John Evans, John Isaacs, Peter Toy, Allen Roberts, Phil Taylor, Glen Williams etc were few of the English “Royal Shell” representatives. Out of that Will Jones continued up to 1990 and his mantle as Operations Superintendent fell on Mr. Mohamed Sahoo who eventually became the GM of Gasco by 2002 and finally brought back Mr. Will Jones after retirement as Projects Coordinator for the new Major Projects activities of Ruwais Gasco.

Kronenberg, Vander Wees, Schellenberg, Hans Keweit, Harry Vanos, Bredweld etc represented the Dutch or Holland start up team and among these Vander Wees played a major part in the up lifting of the Ruwais Operations at different levels like Commissioning in Charge and later as Operations Superintendent and Ruwais Plant Manager. Vander Wees was a peculiar personality very much fond of the house keeping and other strict disciplinary actions even for the minute issues of the Plant. During his normal and daily visit to Control room, he used to collect all the debris and deposit it in the Waste bins in order to exhibit his fondness for house keeping etc. Once, upon arrival in the Control room, he noticed one coffee cup and saucer on the control room panel and requested the Panel Operator Mr. Oza to put it in the Waste bin and the shrewd Oza upon hearing the command from Vander Wees simply put the cup and saucer in the waste bin. Vander Wees didn't expect such an act from the Operator and he simply vacated the Control room with out uttering anything! We used to call Vander Wees as “Headmaster” by virtue of his peculiar characteristics with respect to discipline and other administrative matters.

Mr. Bredweld was another peculiar old character and a jovial personality and I think, he was basically an Electrical Engineer and was involved in the operations and commissioning activities at that time. He took a few classes for our operators regarding the Power Generation & Electrical aspects which were a new field for most of our Operations staff at that time. He promised to make all of us good Electrical Engineers in due course of time in Gasco. He was a chain smoker and used to utter instantaneous jokes or what ever verses come out of his mouth was nothing other than ridiculing type of comments. Once one of our colleagues was boasting something about his previous job and the instantaneous silent comment from Bredweld “Ya Ya, among the blind, one eyed is the King.” Luckily, we only heard his comments. On another occasion, during one of the windy days, while going out of the Control room, Bredweld told me as follows: - “Hay man, it is windy out side, you put two-three stones in your pocket, other wise you will fly



off.” Mr. Bredweld upon completion of his two years service with Gasco left for his Parent Company ‘Shell International’ by 1982.

Felix Janson was Gasco’s Caribbean representative deputed for the Jetty commissioning activities. I don’t think he did any thing remarkable for Gasco other than doing some sort of fishing or angling jobs at the Jetty – Sea shore facilities. Upon his departure, Gasco duly rewarded him with a nice presentation of an “Angling set” for his future career developments!

Jergan Evers and Hellweig Wolfgang were our German representatives and among these two, Hellweig was with the peculiar German Military characteristics and behaviours etc. We used to call him as “German man-catcher” or GMC with all the German military techniques and other Nazi style activities. Once I enquired with our German Shift Controller Jergan Evers as to how many children he has etc during our casual talk in the Plant and he simply replied as follows: - “Oh -Oh, I am very lazy”.!

Our Phil Taylor also was a peculiar character and prior to joining “Shell” he was a bus conductor in England and probably this experience might have prompted him to write all the Plant daily information’s on his palm and other places of his hand. The entire hand was a scribbling pad and the reference for his daily log book. In this context, it reminds me of another Aramco English friend Mr. Andy with whom I started my operator training, once told me that his wife couldn’t get the sleep in the night with out the smell of some dry fish in the house. In England, over and above his Refinery shift duties, Andy was having the side business of selling dry fish and the resultant peculiar behavior of his wife!

Another peculiar aspect I felt from our European Supervisors was that of their concept of the “Engineers”. During the pre-commissioning stage of our Jetty operations in 1980 or 81, once, upon coming back from Lunch in the camp, our Supervisor Mr. John Evans told me to go urgently to the Jetty as some “Engineers” are working there. I thought that some German Company Vendors / Engineers from the “WIESE” Loading Arms Company might have come there and they may be in need of Operations support at Jetty. Contrary to my expectations, I could see only two Mechanical contractor fitters cleaning one of the loading lines filters at Jetty. As per my Indian concept, an “Engineer” is actually a real “Engineering graduate degree” holder which was entirely different from the European concepts.

Since Gasco Ruwais was under the control of “ADNOC” and “Royal Shell”, our French connection was practically nil during the start up periods where as all other Sites like Bu Hasa, Bab and Asab were dominated by the French share holder company CFP- TOTAL. I think, we got our first French connection by the transfer of Mr. Cardoso and Mr. Evan Coppenolle from Bab and Bu Hasa respectively by 1983 or 84. Purely for family reasons only these two gentlemen opted for Ruwais. Mr. Cardosa joined as Shift Supervisor and Mr. Coppenolle as Section Head. Mr. Cardoso was little bit crazy and by virtue of his ESP (extra sensory perception) powers, he was in the habit of driving the vehicles with

closed eyes and in fact all the people were really afraid to travel with him. This **ESP** power didn't help him from the car accident and resulted in the ultimate loss of his wife. Luckily Cardoso escaped unhurt and there ends his ESP story. Later he was transferred again back to Bab as "Operations Superintendent".

**Evan Coppenolle** was a perfect gentleman and one of his accomplishments for Gasco Ruwais was the utilisation of the start-up pressurisation line for the De-ethaniser pressure balancing between the process Trains. Still, we are using this "**Balance line**" for our start-up and stabilisation requirements and this helped us a lot in the stable operation of our De-ethaniser columns during the low feed conditions of the 1980s. Mr. Eve also returned back to Bu Hasa and since that Gasco Ruwais didn't have any French connections until 2003. Between 2003 and 2005, again we were under the leadership of our French Plant Manager Mr. **Guy Dumont**, also with some sort of peculiar characteristics.



**Gasco Ruwais Control room-1980s**



**UAE graduates Saif Ahmed & Moh'd Sahoo at Ruwais in 1985, later ADGAS & GASCO CEOs respectively**

In this context, it is worthwhile to mention about one of our Gasco Shift Controllers who was with us for about 18 years and finally left us by 1998 upon retirement. This peculiar character was none other than Mr. **Sayed Badawi** from **Egypt** who was considered to be one of the fixed assets of Gasco! Badawi joined Gasco directly from ADNOC Um Al Nar Refinery as Shift Supervisor by 1980 and was promoted to Shift Controller position by 1984. One way, Badawi was one among the luckiest men in Gasco. Through out his 18 years service with Gasco, no major incident or shut down has happened with him during the shift. In fact, minutes after the shift relieve, the Plant tripped on many occasions and Badawi escaped nicely without any Shut down impacts or troubles. Conversely certain miracles also happened in his shift that cannot be explained like that. Few occasions, Engineers were trying their level best to start the Refrigeration Compressor with out any success. Sayed came for duty in one of the Evening shifts and in front of everybody, he gave a small bang on the Compressor panel in the Control room and gave the start signal. Contrary to everybody's surprise, the machine started smoothly with out any trouble and was normalized later. Another occasion, Operator's attempts to start one of the Nitrogen units failed miserably. Sayed Badawi scolded the Operator through the radio and directly went to the field with out any Helmet or Safety shoes and in front of the operator banged again on the other unit Control panel. Operator was trying to correct him saying that the other unit only being started etc and ultimately, he started the Nitrogen unit and gone. All these incidents bear testimony to his magic touch and presence in the Plant.

**My** statements may not be exactly true if I omit one of the natural calamities which happened in one of our night shifts when **Sayed** was in charge of the Plant as Shift Controller. I think, it was on 31<sup>st</sup> March of 1988 or 89, suddenly by mid

night something like a hurricane, heavy wind and rain started and I don't know whether there was any Weather forecast at that time or not. As Operator, I was in charge of the vast Storage area and upon completion of the hurricane and rain, during my patrolling checks nearer to the Sea Cooling water basin area, I suddenly noticed that something was missing from the entire Cooling water pumps area and immediately located a huge mass of steel structures at the ground level about 10 metres away from all the Cooling water pumps. The mobile steel structures of the gigantic "Goliath" Cooling water basin pumps Gantry Crane was carried away from West to East through the rolling rails by the high velocity winds and was safely deposited at the open area. In fact, it was a miraculous escape for our Gasco Operations and if the Cooling water pumps were damaged, then it would have taken a different course of actions. The entire Plant had to be shut down! I do believe that due to the magic presence of Sayed and thanks God, nothing adverse happened to us.

**Sayed** used to write his logbook 2 hours well in advance and never bothered to change any thing from the logbook afterwards. But in adverse cases he will simply add one word "being" to his earlier statements and simply walk away by the verbal information and communications. Sayed's English communication also was of the typical Egyptian style. He was in the habit of using the past continuous tense in all of his conversations and never bothered for any corrections etc.

Sayed was a jovial personality and for everything, always he had an immediate and firm reply, no matter whatever response from others. For the happy memories of Sayed Badawi, few of the jokes being quoted as follows: -

**Once**, one of the Ship crews had a minor injury. He was sent to Hospital, treated and sent back to the ship. That day evening, Operations Section head Mr. **Govadia** called Sayed and asked about the incident and Sayed explained as follows. "Govadia, one of the ship crew developed a **pin hole leak** on his small finger. He was dispatched to the Hospital. The pinhole leak was **clamped**; X-rayed and sent back to ship. He is under observation".

**One** day in the morning shift, Mr. Govadia was calling Sayed from his room on telephone and asking him to come for one minute to his office and asking some minor things about the Plant conditions like,

What is the pH of Potable water?

After two minutes called again and asked

What is the loading tank?

After two minutes called again and asked

When the loading will finish?

Then after some time called again and asked

When is the next ship? And continued like that

After 4, 5 times Sayed got irritated and told Govadia as follows: - "Govadia, what is this? Calling me every two minutes and asking silly questions for one minute. Are you ratcheting me Govadia?"

(Ratcheting is the rotation of the turbine shaft by one third of the revolution once in every three minutes)

**One** of the night shifts, Govadia called Sayed from his home and asked Sayed as follows. “Sayed, tomorrow morning there will be a shut down meeting for Train-2. So, you please write in a **small paper about cooling water leaks** and leave it on my table so that I can discuss with Engineering”. Sayed said, “OK Govadia, don’t worry, I will do. You sleep well”. The next day morning, Govadia came and found nothing on his table. He called back Sayed and asked about the paper. Sayed said it was on Govadia’s table. Actually, Sayed took **a very small piece of paper and wrote “CW leak”** and left on Govadia’s table. Since the paper was so small it was simply carried away by wind to the dust bin. With difficulty Govadia found the small paper and noticed only **“CW leak”**. He called Sayed again and said, “Sayed I found your paper but nothing on it”. Sayed got angry and said, “Govadia, you told me to write C.W leak in a small paper and I did it. What else you want? You want me to explain everything? You take the paper and explain yourself to the Engineering”.

**One** day Fire & Safety Squad leader Mr. **Abdi** called control room and asked for Shift Controller. Shift Controller **Sayed** was outside. After some time, Sayed came back to Control room and the Panel Operator told him that Abdi called and he wanted to talk only to the Shift Controller. Sayed called back Abdi and asked what is the problem? Abdi said, “Sayed, there is no water in the Fire station toilet. Can you do something?” Sayed yelled to him as follows. “Abdi, you are a Squad leader and you don’t know what to do? **If no water, use foam**”.

**One-year** end midnight, Operations Superintendent Mr. **Will Jones** called Sayed Badawi in the Control room to say New Year greetings. Sayed was very serious and told Will as follows. “Will, if you please Will, don’t disturb us. In this moment we are taking manual dip of Pentane tanks for **month end and year-end calculations**. Don’t disturb in this moment, Will”  
Will Jones simply put down the phone?

**Once** one of our Operators Mr. **Krishnamurthy** was driving the bicycle with less air in the tyres and instant remarks from Sayed. “**Why Krishnamurthy- No wind in the wheel?**”

**Another** occasion, our **Mathew** came back from vacation and reported to Sayed in the Control room and the immediate sarcastic comment from Sayed to Mathew: - “**Oh Mathew, you delivered?**” Reason behind the comment was that his belly was slightly small after the vacation!

**Once**, one of the Instrument’s Technicians Mr. Naik asked for his pen to sign one Work Permit and the immediate reaction from Sayed “**I will not give my car key, wife and pen to any body else** “. Naik couldn’t talk any thing but simply went out.

We used to call Sayed Badawi as “**Veerappan**”, the noted Tamil actor of the yester years and our Veerappan has played a remarkable role in Gasco Ruwais history.

**Our** Pakistani representation in Ruwais was about 20 personnel at the initial stage including two of the limited staffs like **Abbas Rizvi** and **Alvi Hussain** at the operations department. Out of these two, Rizvi was from Saudi Aramco and has continued only for two years and later resigned and joined some where else in Pakistan. Alvi also continued for about six years and joined back at Pakistan Refinery. Later his son also joined Gasco Ruwais and after few years he also left Gasco for some other better prospects elsewhere in the Gulf. Later as per Gasco's expansion programmes, lot of Pakistanis again joined the Gasco workforce in different departments and continues with their services.

After the initial selection and recruitment, even though few of the employees left our organization on different occasions, we had to wait until 1987 for the second massive recruitment of few Indians and other Nationalities. Addition of the **Philipino** work force was by 1987 and I think the first recruitment was by Mr. Mohammed Sahoo as Operations Section Head from Ruwais. **Mr. Chitto** was the first Operations Philipino who was put, under the direct "Mentorship" of **Mr. Sur** of West Bengal, for the training and developments by Moh'd Sahoo himself. Mr. NCV Kurup was specially assigned for the training and co-ordination activities of these new recruits constituting different Nationalities for the eventual absorption into the operations of Gasco Ruwais. Chitto continued in Ruwais up to 2003 and finally migrated to U.S with the entire family. Later, lot of Philipinos joined our Operations and Engineering departments and many of them left Gasco for better prospects after the attainment of good experience in the Petroleum / Hydrocarbon field. Normally, the Philipinos are very small in size when compared to other Nationalities and our Egyptian colleague Mr. Tawfik used to say an interesting story about one of our Operations staff **Mr. Blay**. Blay was hardly five feet but his wife was unusually taller and they were having half a dozen children all hardly less than one-year age difference. One day all these small children were quarrelling and his wife was fed up and one by one she was catching and beating everybody. During the beating process she caught hold of Blay also for which the poor Blay cried as follows: - "**I am Blay, I am Blay- Don't beat me, I am Blay**". Our Blay also returned to Philipines after a few years service with Gasco Ruwais.

Again, for our **Bangladeshi** presence in our community we have had to wait until 1997 and **Mr. Golam Rasool** was our first Operations representative. Later few more Bangladeshi's like Saidul and Abdur Rouf etc also joined Gasco and finally we had to be contented with two Bangladeshis viz- Golam Rasool and Abdur Rouf in the Operations department.

**Among** the Indian community, unlike the UAE **Malayalis**, the **Tamilians** constituted the majority in Gasco followed by other ethnic classes like **Telugu, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Kannada, Rajasthani, Bihari, Delhi, Orrisa, Punjabi** etc. Our sole **Sardarji** representative was **Shamser Singh** who joined Bu Hasa as Mechanical Engineer by January 1980. He was also recruited from Bahrain and upon selection this intelligent Sardarji played his card nicely and could join Bu Hasa in the first batch itself and departed Gasco for the United States with in a short period. Among the Indians, the Sardarjis are considered to be a special class and lots of jokes have been told about these people. Even, the noted



journalist **Mr. Kushwant Singh** also was not prepared to spare his country men at any cost. I don't want to go deep into the common Sardarji jokes and instead I want to narrate one of the rare intelligent Sardarji jokes.

### Sometimes Sardarji also can think!

A **Sardarji** happened to participate in a competition, which was about writing the shortest story. The organizers had put a condition that the story must have four ingredients viz. religion, sex, suspense and mystery. Sardarji's turn came after many attempts by others. Sardarji gave a story, which was just one sentence and read:

**"Oh God, my wife is going to deliver a child"**.

Apparently amused, the organizers asked the Sardarji whether it contained all the four ingredients! Sardarji replied affirmatively and gave his explanation as follows:

**Oh God:** religion

**My wife:** sex

**Going to deliver a child:** suspense (whether a girl or a boy)

**"Okay.... but where is the mystery?"** Asked one of the organizers.

The Sardarji replied: **who is the father??**

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**Seshardhrinathan** from Madras and **Gopeeramanan** from Srilanka were two of the sincerest gentlemen whom I acquainted in my Gasco Service. Their sincerity for anything cannot be imagined or questioned at all. In fact, their sincerity was in two different directions. Seshardhrinathan felt as if he couldn't do justice to his family by the Gasco rotation scheme and decided to leave from Gasco service by 1986. Upon his departure, while boarding the bus from the Gasco camp, Seshan was crying like a child and I have never ever seen such a grown-up man crying like that. Actually, two drops of tears fell from my eyes also on that occasion. Gopee was so sincere that for any of the minute variations also he used to document it only after proper verification which was often mistook by others as if Gopee doesn't have any guts to perform even the smallest jobs with out any help or consultation with others. Gopee also left Gasco by 1998 for the eventual settlement in Canada due to LTTE revolt in his native country- Sri Lanka.

**Some** other peculiar characters of the Indian community were **Govadia, Nath** etc. Nath, originally a Bengali and by virtue of his employment with Madras Refineries Ltd in Tamilnadu for quite long time has helped him to attain fluency in majority of the Indian regional languages. In order to express his supremacy over these languages, he used to talk with all the Indian friends only in their respective regional languages but the pity fact is that no body could grasp any thing out of the conversation with Nath.

Govadia as Operations section head and Kurup as Shift Supervisor were very good friends and they continued to maintain their good relationship with each other. But Kurup was well versed in the peculiarities of Govadia. He used to ask



the silly as well as the serious questions in the same tone and Kurup was well aware of his characteristics. Once Govadia was about to come back from his vacation and Kurup, being in general day duties, was sure that upon his return, Govadia will take Kurup with him to know about the latest updates of the Plant etc. Accordingly, Kurup prepared everything and mastered all the details about the Plant and the latest updates. As expected, Govadia after the formal talks went for a visit to different areas of the Plant along with Kurup and Kurup could answer very well to his requirements. Finally, Govadia took him to the Pentane tanks storage area and asked some silly questions for which Kurup didn't have an answer. Suddenly Kurup could sense that he became a big zero in front of his best friend!

**Raman** and **Sivakumar**, two of our colleagues from Training Centre at Abu Dhabi were often cascaded like '**Master**' and '**Slave**' and there is an interesting story about Sivakumar's peculiar behaviour at the Bombay Indian Customs. During 1980's, direct flights were not available to Madras and every body had to go through the Bombay customs en-route to Madras. Even though Sivakumar is a Tamilian, he was having good knowledge of Hindi but the tactics he employed at the Bombay Customs was something peculiar. Indian Customs duties and other formalities were very tough during 1980's and the policy adapted by Sivakumar was a modified version of the "**lais-sez-faire**" theory of "**non-interference**" policy. He used to keep mum for all the questions in what ever languages by the Customs Officers and finally the Customs Officer used to release the poor deaf and dumb guy with out any Customs duty. I don't think, Sivakumar has paid any customs duty during his seven years service with Gasco.

**In** Gasco we were having a lot of **Subramoniams** and most of these personnel were originated from Madras of Tamil Nadu. Majority of Subramoniams working in Madras Refineries and other associated Companies were called by the short names constituting the initials and during the MRL exodus to Gasco in 1980, few of these Subramoniams joined Gasco and they themselves started calling them by the short names for easy identification. J.R Subramoniam of the Instrument department was known as **JRS**, R.V Subramoniam and P.M Subramoniam of the Operations department were known as **RVS** and **PMS** respectively. RVS as Operations Section Head and JRS as Instrument Section Head left Gasco by 2000 and 2010 respectively. PMS continued his service with Gasco as "Shift Superintendent" until retirement and service extension upto July 2011.

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**Another** important personality of our Ruwais Gasco Operations is none other than my Algerian best friend **Mr. Ben Halou**. Even though we both joined Gasco by 1980 as Operator grade "A", Ben was fortunate enough to get the promotion as Supervisor along with the first batch personnel like Govadia, Jegadeshnan and Ichu by 1982. Ben was a unique character in the entire Gasco community and irrespective of any other considerations; very often, he acquired a commanding position among all other nationalities. In fact, actually people were little bit afraid of him and for everything he would have the final word. Another plus point about

Ben was that as a sub-ordinate what ever may be your problem, he will look at it and see that it is done and sorted out at any cost. I was fortunate enough to work with Ben at different levels and the tactics I adopted was to tell the real truth about our mistakes prior to his find out of our follies. Seldom scolding or firing will not have that much intensity or severity in my case and we were very close friends except for the last few months of his departure by November 2004. Due to some sort of misunderstanding he was angry with me towards the end and still I don't know the reason behind the issue.

**Ben** was actually a good cook and during our casual talks, he used to narrate his cooking skills etc and an important aspect I learnt from Ben is that it doesn't need any water for cooking vegetables or non-vegetarian meat items and what required is - cooking at a very low flame. Even my wife also didn't disclose this type of cooking skills to me earlier. Any way afterwards I never ever made any cooking with water and seldom made delicious dishes.

**Our** Jordanian representative **Mr. Abdul Nabi Al Ali** also joined Gasco by May 1980 and I happened to be in his batch for our initial training programmes at Abu Dhabi Training Centre for about two months. Even though Al Ali was an experienced Operator, his English standard was very poor and in the real sense he couldn't speak or hardly understand anything in English. I used to help him for the Training centre examinations etc with the concurrence of the instructors in order to attain the understanding and training requirements. But in due course of time our Al Ali acquired a good command of English and in my entire Gasco Service history I never ever came across a unique personality like Al Ali with the vast development in the spoken English skills. But I do admit, like other Arab Nationalities, he is also not well versed in the written English standards. This reminds me of one of his narrations which happened in his native village. Al Ali is basically a good farmer and during our earlier 60/30 rotation periods, Al Ali used to sell his farm products beside the road side markets. During one of those occasions, one of the sophisticated Jordanian families with some of the teenagers had a good bargain with Al Ali and considering Al Ali to be an ordinary farmer with out any knowledge of English had commented something ill of Al Ali in English. But upon hearing the cool and fluent English reply from Al Ali, these teenagers were taken aback and ran away in their cars with out any further utterings!

**"Sudanese are the laziest people in the world"**- This statement is from a **Sudane** none other than our **Baderruddine** justified by his true story as follows. Two Sudanese were staying in one room. The only one light bulb available in their room has fused and they were waiting for somebody to replace the bulb for them but nothing has happened and they were sitting in utter darkness. Finally, both of them decided to change the fused bulb and brought one for replacement. There was no ladder in the room and finally they have decided to climb on one man's shoulder and replace the bulb. One of them climbed on the shoulder of the other and holding the lamp holder and the bulb in the hand instructed the bottom man to turn left in order to unscrew the fused bulb! What else you need for further evidence? Most of the Sudanese are gigantic fellows but our Baderrudine is an exception. He is the smallest Sudanee I have ever seen and we can say as

“Duplicate Sudanee” and we used to call him “Sudanee made in Tai wan”. Once few of the Gasco staff enacted one skit at one of the parties and the theme was that of the continuous “Acting” business at Gasco Ruwais” in which Baderrudine depicted himself as “Acting Ruwais Plant Manager”. Actually, it was really a good skit and impressed by the presentation, our erstwhile Plant Manager Mr. Hans Bish, whenever happens to meet Baderrudine in the Control room, he used to call him as his “Deputy”.

**Another** guy from our group was operated for “Piles” and even after the operation he was having lot of troubles like ‘continuous purging’ etc. In the mean time another Specialist Doctor from India visited the Hospital and our poor guy approached the Specialist and told him as follows: - “Doctor, I want all your experience in my ass”. In another extra ordinary incident, one guy drank the external application medicine for about one week with out any apparent cure for his ‘Piles’ symptoms.

**Egyptians** are naturally fun people. They like to joke and tell jokes in a wholesome way. Our colleague **Egyptian Tawfik** also was a jovial personality with lot of creative ideas. For each and every problem in the Plant or elsewhere, he would try to find out some or other remedial solutions. Certain solutions may be absurd, but he was least bothered and used to claim for the due accomplishments. Tawfik was having very good resemblance with the Egyptian Doddy Fayed of the Lady Diana fame and with out any hesitation always smiled at our remarks as “Doddy Fayed”. Tawfik retired from 27 years of Gasco Service by April 2007. During one of the Gasco Ruwais parties in December 2008, the Management brought few of the ex. employees of Ruwais and Tawfik also was one among the invitees. He was in good health at that time and later on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2009, Tawfik expired suddenly at the age of about 62.

**In** this context it reminds me of one of the good jokes by one of our colleagues Mr. Aref Sayari about the Egyptian style English. Actually, all of the Egyptians are really confused with the usage of “P” and “B” and he emphasized his stand by the true story as follows. Egyptian President Mr. Hosni Mubarak once visited U.S President Mr. Bush and during the visit he noticed the “PUSH” open sign board on the half doors of the American offices and mistook the same to be “President Bush’s” name on all the office entry doors. Upon return to Egypt, President Mubarak ordered for the implementation of the “MUBARAK” sign board on all the office doors of Egypt!

Another guy went to London for some visit and he couldn’t find any place to park his car and enquired with one of the English guys. “Why there is no barking place in London?” “Hay man, this is a free country, you can bark any where you want” was the instantaneous remark from the English man.

**We** were having a typical Somali as Squad Leader in our Fire & Safety department who was none other than **Mohamoud Abdi**. He was very famous among the Ruwais staff with his peculiar American style English.

All these **Sudanese**, **Somalis** and **Egyptians** are very jovial people and very often they used to entertain others with their good jokes etc.

**It** is worthwhile to mention about one of our **Palestinian** friends **Mr. Faris**, settled in **Lebanon** who was working as one of the Senior Panel Operators of Gasco Ruwais. Once he was writing his log book with some spelling mistake. I was beside him and pointed out the spelling mistake for correction. Immediately Faris looked at me seriously and asked **“When did they change the spelling”?** And started accusing the English people. **These English people are changing the spelling with out telling us and if they are doing like that what shall we do? These English people are bull-shit and they are not informing us properly whenever they change the spelling etc. etc.** I was not having any answer and finally he agreed for the correction!

There is one more interesting story about **Faris**. Once **Faris** and **Jamal Mohesen**, on way to Abu Dhabi met with the car accident and the car overturned many times and finally secured at the up-side-down condition and Jamal was hanging on the seat belt. All his efforts to come out of the car were in vain. Finally, Faris has managed to come out of the car and upon seeing Jamal in the up-side condition, Faris became crazy and he was applauding and laughing at Jamal on his pathetic condition!

This reminds me of another peculiar character Mr. **Shukri** from **Yemen** who belonged to our Fire & Safety department and was staying with us in the erstwhile Gasco camps at Ruwais. Shukri’s room in the Camp was fully packed with all the available **“Audio music systems”** and he used to play all the electronic gadgets at full volume and thanks God, the Video system was not so prominent at that time. He was a real fan and admirer of Michael Jackson. We used to call him as **“Michael Jackson, Made in Tai wan”**. Later this duplicate Michael Jackson was transferred to some other Gasco sites.

**Gasco’s** sole **Djibouti** representative was working as Squad Leader in our Ruwais Fire & Safety department who was transferred to some other Sites by 2001. He was simply known and called as **“Djibouti”** by everybody and in fact he was proud to be called by the country name. Still, I don’t think, whether any body in Ruwais knows about his real name!

**One** of our Gasco guys, upon hearing the news that golden teeth replacement was cheap in India, had approached one of the Dentists in Bombay and bargained for the golden teeth and finally settled with the second-hand golden teeth offer!

**Gasco’s** sole **Iraqi** representative was **Mohammed Akram** who joined Gasco from ADNOC Career Development Centre (CDC) by 1982 and later became the victim of Saddam Hussain’s invasion on Kuwait by 1990. Due to political reasons beyond comprehension, Akram was terminated from Gasco service by 1991 after the re-capture of Kuwait by the American Allied Forces and it was with deep rooted sorrow Akram departed from Gasco. His where about were not known

since that time. (Surprisingly Akram called Ruwais Control Room on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2007 from Amsterdam and after his departure from Gasco was fortunate enough to join one of the Chemical factories in Amsterdam, Holland and well settled there.)

**Syrian** massive exodus to Gasco workforce was started by around 2005 in order to meet the requirements of the vast expansion programmes by the qualified and experienced Syrians in different areas and Sites. The first and the lone Syrian with more than 30 years service in Ruwais is none other than our Imad Harb who is working in the Mechanical maintenance department with the execution of specially assigned jobs like Inspection Work sheets repair and replacement of pipelines, structures, supports etc.etc. There is an interesting joke in the operation department about the work of Imad which is as follows: - If you happened to be leaning on a pipeline or structure, no matter whether you are in the inert atmosphere or not Imad will come and weld you there!

Recently (January 2012) our Process Area Operations Superintendent Mr. Saif Al Hajeri during his casual talk with the Syrian Supervisor Mr. Riad in the Control room asked Riad, “What is the reason now a days you look very old and tired?”. “I am working for Gasco for the last 5 years and that is the only reason I can find” was the instantaneous answer from Mr. Riad. I was also besides him and replied, “I am working for Gasco for the last 32 years but still I look young and not so old”. Everybody laughed at my comment and there were no further utterings from any body.

**Gasco’s Indonesian** representation was limited to two viz- Hassan and Ahmed of the Fire & Safety department during 1980’s and both of these personnel are originally Yemanese whose forefathers were migrated to Indonesia long before. Hassan acquired the UAE citizenship by virtue of his marriage with a local National and is being continued since then. Later as per Gasco’s massive expansion and recruitment programmes, lots of experienced Indonesians were recruited by 2006. Generally, these Indonesians are very gentle and soft-hearted people and all our Gasco personnel are multi-multi billionaires as per Indonesian standards but they are all very poor in their English language communication techniques and most of the other nationalities find it very difficult to converse with them for the daily routine and other administrative matters. Few of the Indonesian-English stories are like this. Owing to Housing deficiencies, initially these new recruits were not given the family accommodation in the Ruwais Housing Complex and as such one of the guys decided that he wanted a house at the earliest and was discussing with his colleague who told him a proverb “Only crying babies get the milk”. Since he didn’t understand, his colleague tried to explain that if he makes lots of noise in the Administration then only he will get his house and for which this poor guy responded – “If I shout in Admin, I get milk?”

Another story is about an “e” mail from the Operations Superintendent for the inter-Site transfer to Bu Hasa for which the interested personnel were asked to submit the application as soon as possible (ASAP). Our Indonesian guys thought

that the transfer was to **ASAB** site and was really worried about the poor English standard of the Operations Superintendent and was forced to reconsider their interest for Bu Hasa site transfer. Gasco itself has identified the deficiencies and had sent few of the guys for advanced English training programmes at the Bab Training Centre of Gasco. After acquiring the advanced English training, one of these guys sent one “e” mail to the “**Operations Head**” and the strong rumour is that the “Operations Head” had collapsed after reading the “e” mail and had to be hospitalized!

**It** is worthwhile to write about one of the Gasco employee’s sons who made Glory to Gasco & UAE. Our Sudanese Operator **Mr. Kamal Abu Gasim’s** son **Amjad** has been the First in UAE’s history to achieve **100%** marks in Grade-12 of the Higher Secondary School level. Amjad’s achievement in June 2007 really made him a proud son of Gasco as well as the entire UAE. UAE Government, Sudanese Embassy and the Gasco Community were very delightful to congratulate and felicitate Mr. Amjad and his father Mr. Kamal on this historic and glorious achievement.



**Kamal's son Amjad receiving felicitations from Dubai Shaikh**

By virtue of my promotion as Operations Shift Supervisor, Gasco sent me to **Scotland, Montrose** Fire Training School for about 10 days intensive “**Fire fighting and Handling of Major emergencies**” training programmes by the first week of September 1994. This time also I could manage to get the Visa for Jolly through Gasco and as such she also accompanied me to **London and Scotland**. We left for London from Abu Dhabi on 2/9/1994 and after spending two days at London, we went to Scotland by train on 5<sup>th</sup> September. My training programme was from 6<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> September. During our train journey to Scotland, we could pass through different suburbs of England and Scotland and it was a pleasant journey in all respects. Most of the trains, we had to make the booking in advance and for the return journey also special reduced fares are available most of the time. One way as well as two-way fare for Scotland was about 100 Pounds. The train was to **Aberdeen** via **Edinburgh**. **Montrose** is a small city and from there we could reach the main city Aberdeen by about one-hour train journey. Unlike the fast moving and crowded London, Montrose looked like a calm, quite and pleasant country village. From Abu Dhabi itself we booked the “**Craijesk Guest House**” for our 10 days abode. Our double room was for 25 Pounds per day including the breakfast. Our training School was about 2.5 Pounds away from the guesthouse by taxi.

Fire fighting at Montrose Fire School was not an easy training. From our predecessors, it was very much evident that the training will be very tough and harder and as such I took about three months preparation by doing hard jobs like cutting the big trees and excavating its roots etc deep into the ground for about 3 feet and prepared the ground of our new house **N-231** premises at **Ruwais Housing complex** for the agricultural cultivation and other things. Actually, when we occupied our new Ruwais housing complex house, it was really looking like a jungle with about 10-12 big trees including two big “**Choola-maram**” and two big palm trees and the rest being other thorny desert trees. All these were cut little by little for about three months and finally about 10 cents of land was cleared for cultivation. That was my exercise during those days and that was of very much help for me in the execution of the fire fighting activities at Montrose.

**Montrose** Fire School was conducting exclusive training programmes through out the year for different Petroleum as well as offshore companies under “**Shell International**” as per requirements from different companies. They have installed a lot of old and condemned Plants at their school and the fire sessions were conducted as real incidents in the Plant with all its intensities and hardships and ultimately killing the fires and conducting different Casualty evacuation processes, handling of Major Emergency exercises etc. The only advantage for the training was that of the climatic conditions and for the severe shivering atmosphere, the fire was really good for the perfect warming-up! The major and the toughest exercise was on the last day of the training programme and upon completion we left for London on 14<sup>th</sup> itself and after two days for **Abu Dhabi** from **London** on 16<sup>th</sup> September.



**Gasco** Ruwais Operations Shift Senior staff namely two Shift Supervisors and one Shift Controller are provided with the “Toyota Land Cruiser” vehicle for the shift transportation facilities since the formation of the shift jobs in Gasco by 1981. As per unwritten norms and practices, the front seat shall be occupied by the duty Shift Controller and the back seats are reserved for the Shift Supervisors. Once **R.V Subramanian** (RVS) was the Shift Controller occupying the front seat of the car and I was occupying the rear seat as Shift Supervisor. Sarcastically I told my wife that this small man (**RVS**) is in charge of our 25,000 crores Plant for eight hours and all the activities being carried out in the Plant through the head of that small guy and afterwards Jolly used to call RVS as 25000 crores man! Later after my promotion as Shift Controller, my wife used to utter the same joke to me also as if I am also carrying the same 25000 crores on my head during the shift activities etc!

**7<sup>th</sup> June** 1992 was a sorrowful day for the inhabitants of the Ruwais housing complex especially the Malayali families of Gasco. One of our colleagues Mr. Sebastian Joseph succumbed to the tragic death at about 9-10 am on that day and the agony and the ordeals afterwards are still haunting our memories. Prior to the tragic end, Sebastian, Mathew, George and I, were in the night shift duties and we were having our normal sleep in our houses during this period. The mortal remains of Sebastian were taken to Kottayam on 24/6/1992 and were buried in their Church cemetery at Ettumanoor.

Another similar incident also happened after about three years at Dubai when Luna, wife of Mr. Shine George, met with the same tragic death on 7/7/1995. At that time, we were on vacation at Kottayam and happened to take part in the ordeals afterwards especially with the burial and other formalities on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1995. Later Shine has married Roopa on 4/1/1998 at Kottayam and took her to Dubai along with his son Joel.

**As** Operations Shift Supervisor, I was specially assigned for the commissioning activities of the “**New tankage**” and **Boil-off gas** system by May 1997 and the commissioning activities continued for about six months till November 1997. It was at the peak summer when the commissioning activities were started and most of this summer periods I was subjected to the severe hot and humid conditions and this was the only horrible job I ever did in Gasco. Most of these days I was forced to work for more than 12 hours daily with out any off and that too at the hot and humid peak summer conditions. These six months were considered to be the worse period, as never and ever I worked like this in my entire Gasco history. Being subjected to the severe hot and humid conditions, my colour has changed to black and the body also has become very thin and most of the people used to ask me whether I received any “**Somali**” passport or not. Really, I looked like a Somali personality during those days. And the only benefit I got for my sufferings was that of the long vacation for 3 months starting from December 97 to February 1998. Ultimately, we commissioned successfully the 100 million US Dollar Plant safely and with in the time schedule. Our Plant Manager wrote the appreciation letter on 29/11/97 as follows: -

“Dear colleagues,

I must admit and apologise at the same time that I almost forget that we have commissioned the new LPG tanks and already loaded two ships successfully from these tanks. This surely is the biggest compliment I can give you, as it went all so smooth that we hardly noticed. I know that hard work and very long hours went into it, from all Operations, but in particular the operations commissioning team. Apart from the ‘official’ festivities, I would like to thank you for the great achievements you have reached and --- so quietly. Well, done and thank you again.

Hans Bish,  
Ruweis Plant Manager.”

It seems, the only benefit I got from the above commissioning activities was that the Management considered me for the “Acting” position as ‘Shift Controller’ with effect from July 1998. I could continue in that occasional acting business for about 3 years and the subsequent permanent “Acting” for further three years until I received my promotion as “Shift Controller” with effect from 1/1/2005. Until 2003, the job grade of Shift Controller was 13 and since then the Gasco Management in conformity with the ADNOC policy has revised the Shift Controller job grade to 15 for which I am also entitled for the revision upon successful completion of one year each in the respective grades. Even though there were many Malayali Supervisors in Gasco, I was the first among the Malayalis in Ruweis to become a full-fledged Shift Controller of Gasco Ruweis. Let me take this opportunity to thank God for His Grace on me and pray for good health and abilities in the performance of my job in a safe and efficient manner.

The main impact of the promotion resulting in the added job responsibility is nothing but the mental stress and strain for which I have to have more dosage of my BP medicines. As duty Shift Controller, we are forced to conduct daily meetings with the Superiors as well as the Sub-ordinates and to exhibit the leadership qualities in maintaining the Shift activities. Even though I am confident in leading the meetings and conferences etc, I still have lot of apprehensions about some sort of “Public speaking” skills and this phobia continue to haunt me like a ‘mirage’ in my life to a good extent. I don’t think I can easily recover from these types of apprehensions in the near future also. In this respect, I can be considered as an “introvert” to a certain extent.

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**Year 2000** or “**Y2K**” was really a hoax in the computer field and lot of money was spent by all the Firms and Companies in order to overcome the glitches due to the clock change and other associated activities. This was very prominent for all the Air Lines Services and the pre-planning jobs were done well in advance. Lot of Plane crashes were expected and if all the flights were to be grounded, then it would create the worst parking problems through out the Airports in the World etc etc. Preparatory jobs to face the Y2K glitches in Gasco also were carried out with

the Mock drill for the Marine / Shipping Services etc. Another interesting aspect for Gasco Ruwais Operations was that of the “Acting” business by all the higher positions starting from Plant Manager, Operations Superintendent, Section Head and Shift Controller. Luckily or unluckily, I was in the Acting Shift Controller position on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 1999. Mr. **Sayed Hassan** was Acting Section Head, Mr. **Raghavan** was the Acting Operations Superintendent and Acting Plant Manager was Mr. **Theo Vander Meer**. All these higher officials assembled in the Main Control room by about 2200 hrs on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1999 and all the action plans were discussed for immediate corrective actions in case of any eventuality. Another lucky aspect was that of the different digital timings for most of the vital equipments like Power Generators, Refrigeration Compressors etc. Vast difference of more than an hour also existed on different clocks. That was really a blessing for us to reduce our tensions. The first-time change took place by about 2230 hrs and another by 2300 hrs etc and continued like that. One by one all the clocks entered the new Millennium and nothing happened for our Plant equipments or other Companies through out the World. Finally, the millennium cake was cut by the “Acting Plant Manager” and all the bosses left for their comfortable stay in their respective houses except for the Shift personnel.

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**By** virtue of my experience in the Operations, I have given few suggestions for the improvement of the Operations department of Gasco but none of these were considered worth enough for implementation by the Management. The only exception was the implementation of the “Authorized Gas Tester” (AGT) certification system for the Operations staff. My suggestion to conduct tests for the AGTs was accepted by the erstwhile Operations Head Mr. Vander Wees and was implemented by 1985 or 1986. But one of my suggestions, eventhough, rejected earlier, I could manage to get it implemented by 1996 during the regime of Mr. S Raghavan as Operations Section Head with an overall saving of about 50 thousand Dirhams per annum for the Company in addition to a clean environment around our Cooling water Stilling channel or Cathedral. Later my suggestion was submitted for the **ADNOC- Health, Safety & Environment (HSE)** award scheme of 1998 from Gasco Ruwais and has gone like that without any consideration from the major ADNOC HSE award committee. But I was selected as the “Safety man of the month” for February 1999 from Ruwais due to the submission of my entry for the HSE award scheme. Still, I am very much happy and proud of my achievement in this aspect. My entry for the HSE award scheme was as follows: -

### **GASCO RUWAIS COOLING WATER SYSTEM STILLING CHANNEL FOAMING**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

Gasco Ruwais uses seawater for its process cooling and fire water requirements. The water is pumped to the Plant after filtration and after use is returned to the sea through a Stilling channel of about 30-metres height, (Also called “Cathedral”

due to its appearance resembling a Cathedral) to maintain backpressure in case of the loss of the cooling water pumps. The normal flow of cooling water through this system is 25,000 cubic metres per hour.

### **FOAMING:**

Almost from start-up of the Plant, there has been foaming in the Stilling channel. The foam exits from the top of the channel box and was causing an environmental concern due to its foul smell and spreading over the walls of the channel, which resulted in poor housekeeping in the area.

### **ANTIFOAM:**

Several studies were conducted to find out the causes of the foaming. The results were not conclusive in identifying the cause. In order to control the foaming, continuous antifoam injection (Nalco anti foam agent) in to the cooling water return system upstream of the stilling channel was started. This controlled the foaming generally. However, even with continuous anti-foam injection, there were bouts of severe foaming, which resulted in the same environmental and housekeeping problems.

During the repair to the Cathedral in 1992-93, the concrete slabs that covered the top of the Cathedral were replaced with new ones and a new overflow from the top of the structure was routed to a ground level soak-away pit. This routed the foam and froth in to the pits but soon the pits were getting saturated and the liquid overflowed through the manways to the ground. This was in spite of anti-foam injection being continuous. Clearing of the pits became very frequent (almost once a week) which required difficult and uncomfortable work and disposal of such collection was troublesome.

During the de-bottlenecking of the trains, the sour water from the trains (about 1 cubic metre per hour), which was joining upstream of the Cathedral was routed to downstream, in the belief that this sour water contributed to the foaming. This modification did not improve the situation from environmental point of view, as anti-foam injection was required on a continuous basis with occasional severe foaming, frequent cleaning of the soak-away pits. Not only the foaming was not contained totally; the anti-foam injected (however small quantity it may be) into the seawater ended up in the sea, thus polluting the sea, which is one of the natural resources of the country. In June 1996, the issue was again studied and a decision was taken to plug the foam overflow pipes and seal the cover slabs on top of the Cathedral totally. By this, the foam generated inside the Cathedral was contained with in the structure and flowed out into the discharge system. As long as the sealing is tight, no foam is escaping to the outside and hence the anti-foam injection has been stopped since then.

**RESULT:**

The sustained efforts to control the foaming problem have resulted in the following:

- 1) A clean Cathedral and hence a healthy environment of the employees.
- 2) There is no more a need to remove the foam / water from the soak-away pits resulting in financial savings and end to an unpleasant job.
- 3) Approximately 12,000 US \$ savings in terms of anti-foam.
- 4) The sea is not polluted anymore by the anti-foam.

**CONCLUSION:**

The foaming problem was consistently studied and changes made to control. Now, not only the foam spreading out of the Cathedral has been stopped, anti-foam injection has also been stopped. This demonstrates the commitment of the Company to study every problem that is a challenge to the declared HSE policy of the ADNOC group and find a positive solution to it. The solution is not only effective but also innovative and efficient. Any group company that has similar problem can study our efforts and probably benefit if found suitable for application.

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In view of realizing its vision, **GASCO** launched its New Corporate Identity (Logo) by 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2003 symbolizing the start of a new chapter in Gasco's history upon completion of 25 years service in the Hydro-carbon field. The new logo design, where the Falcon symbolizes the UAE heritage of honour, respect, nobility and prestige. It also reflects the Company's commitment to protecting the environment and as such I also incorporated the new Gasco logo on our Kottayam house main new front door by July 2006.



**Gasco logo on our Kottayam house main door- incorporated by 2006**

As per Gasco's expansion programmes, Ruwais Train 3 development was approved and the necessary FEED (Front End Engineering & Design) formalities were started by 2003 and I was also fortunate enough to be at Bechtel / Gasco office at London for about one month in connection with the P&ID, HAZOP and SIL checks at the initial development stages of Gasco Ruwais Train 3 project during October-November 2003. One peculiar aspect I could notice in the London Offices especially Bechtel, was nothing other than the management of the Offices by a large number of elderly ladies. I think, the retirement age of the British system is at 65 and the resultant occupation of these Offices by the elderly in contrast with the young or middle-aged staff. During the lunch break, after food, most of these elderly ladies are busy with the computer games in their office rooms. It was really a strange experience for me at that time to watch and understand the peculiarities of these English office personnel.

As per the latest developments, Britain already announced plans to scrap the fixed retirement age and the new provision will enable employees to work beyond 65. Currently, employers can force staff to retire at the age of 65 regardless of their circumstances and without having to pay any financial compensation. The default retirement age would be phased out. The move was designed to give people more choice as they enjoyed longer and healthier lives. With more and more people wanting to extend their working lives we should not stop them just because they have reached a particular age. Older workers bring with them a wealth of talent and experience as employees and entrepreneurs.

This time also I could manage to get the necessary Visa formalities for Jolly and accordingly we went together for our third London trip. Again, the climatic condition in London was not at all suitable for all of us but we managed everything nicely. One of our weekends off days we visited Puthuppally Babychayan's son Riju and family at Manchester, about 300 Km away from London. Manchester climate was even worse than London and very often it was below zero. The business trip was completed without any problems and we were back in UAE by November end.



Sunny at Bechtel-Gasco London Oct 2003 for P&ID checks.

**Again,** everything looks like accidental coincidence. By the Grace of God, I am writing these chapters of my memories, exactly after completing 25 years Service with Gasco that is by 5<sup>th</sup> May 2005. Gasco has awarded us with the 25 years Long Service Cash Award of Dh 6000, to be followed by other gifts and Certificate presentation etc at one of the parties by Gasco.



Sunny with 25 years Gasco Service award on 5-5-2005



I was fortunate enough to be promoted to the operations “**Shift Controller**” position by the 25<sup>th</sup> year of my Service with Gasco. Even though I was working as Acting Shift Controller for about 6 years effective July 1998, for reasons beyond my control, I had to wait long for this achievement. As stated earlier, with effect from 1/5/2003, Gasco elevated the grade of Shift Controllers from 13 to 15 and eventually I am also entitled for this maximum grade of 15. Accordingly, I was promoted to the 14<sup>th</sup> grade with effect from 1/9/2007 with the special privileges like higher grade accommodation facilities and other amenities. Earlier, as per Company policy, we were provided with cash entitlements for the official transfer of residence to the new abode but have been discontinued for the last few years. As such, I have decided to stay in my existing abode in N-231 villa in order to avoid the huge burden of the furniture transfers etc. In this respect it is worthwhile to mention about my villa N-231 in which I am staying since October 1993 and continues to be the maximum utilized and long stayed abode in my entire life.



**Ruwais Housing Complex N-231, Sunny's longest stayed house for 24 years.**

**Later** in addition to the inflation and general salary increases, Gasco for the first time in its history has provided all the long serving employees with the performance increments with due weightage for the service period with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 and accordingly I was also fortunate enough to get an increment of 13% in the basic salary and this is the maximum percentage of increment I ever received from Gasco. Earlier increments were limited to 5-10%

of the basic salary and as a result of these increments our indebtedness for the Company has gone up considerably. When I started with my foreign assignments with Aramco in 1977, the Petroleum Crude oil price was only 8 US dollars per Barrel (158 litres) and later over a period of 30 years it has gone up more than 100 US dollars. One US Dollar was about 15 Rupees at that time and in due course of time it has climbed up to about 50 Rupees and finally settled at about 45 Rupees by 2008 due to the artificial appreciation of the Indian Rupee.

**Again**, as per the “[Improvement of ADNOC group Compensation package](#)” Abu Dhabi National Oil Company has completed a review of the compensation packages offered by the main companies to their national and expatriate staff in the Gulf area in order to regionally benchmark the ADNOC package against its competitors in the labour market. On the basis of the survey results, it was decided to enhance the compensation packages of both the UAE National and Expatriate staff of the ADNOC Group of Companies with effect from September 2008 in order to maintain the high level of attractiveness of the ADNOC group in the very competitive labour market currently experienced in the Gulf region and to secure the retention and motivation of the very skilled staff necessary to address the growth, the ADNOC group has to manage in all its business segments and to attract the best candidates for the Groups expansion and recruitment programmes. As a result of the package implementation, our Gasco staff basic salary also was enhanced by 20% with effect from September 2008. Again, this package was the highest offered basic salary enhancement in the 30 years history of Gasco. ADNOC’s revised promotion policy became effective by March 2008 and accordingly the employee’s promotion was restricted to a minimum of two years for the next grade of promotion and was applicable to all the ADNOC subsidiary companies. Accordingly, I was promoted to the 15<sup>th</sup> grade full-fledged “**Shift Controller**” with effect from 1/9/2009 and to continue with the same job pattern.

Again, Gasco has realized that the committed and dedicated efforts of its employees have been the key sources of Gasco’s strength that helped us manage the tests and challenges faced in a period of growth and expansion through out these years. Gasco’s leadership always strives to provide a professional work environment as an enabler for employees to support achieving the Organizations’s ambitious plans. Many initiatives implemented in the past addressed the need to ‘Motivate and Retain’ its employees, and to ‘Attract’ fresh talents into the Organization. An important element in this set of initiatives has been the commitment for maintaining a competitive salary structure in Gasco, while staying with in the policy frame work of ADNOC. A highly competitive employment market for skilled technical staff in the ‘Hydrocarbon’ industry in the recent times has made it necessary to offer higher levels of starting salaries for potential new recruits, ensuring due recognition for the performance and experience of the existing long service employees. Accordingly, a “[Salary Progression Matrix](#)” was implemented with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2010 in order to enhance the employee’s compensation levels and thus promoting “Motivation and Retention”. With the implementation of this system, I was fortunate enough to

get a basic salary enhancement of 10% with effect from 1/2/2010, for my performance and vast experience in the Company.

**Gasco** is a dynamic organization, constantly developing to stay ahead in a fast-changing world. The Company has recently gone through a structural re-organisation in order to enhance its organisational capabilities and competencies in accordance with the vast expansion programmes. The new organization became effective in May 2007 in view of the currently built 3<sup>rd</sup> Fractionation Train with the design feed liquid capacity of 24,400 metric tonnes per day which is double of the existing Plant capacity. Train 3 was successfully commissioned by October 2009 with the official feed “cut-in” at 1015 hrs on 19/10/2009. The start-up was done smoothly utilizing the Buhasa feed and achieved without any flaring or major leak. 19<sup>th</sup> October 2009 was a significant landmark in the history of GASCO Ruwais and was possible only by the hard work and teamwork spirit of all concerned and the excellent co-operation between the Contractors, End User and others. Also, the first shipment of Propane and Butane from the new Storage tanks into the Vessel “**Flanders Loyalty**” was carried out safely and successfully by 29<sup>th</sup> October 2009. Again, Gasco has achieved a historical milestone on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2009 by successfully commissioning the Ruwais Jetty loading Berth No-2. The new NGL Berth No-2 was safely and successfully commissioned and the first LPG Carrier “**Yuyo Berge**” was safely berthed and loaded. Berth No-3 also was commissioned later by 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2010 and the first ship loaded at Berth No-3 was the Indian vessel “**Maharshi Bhavatrey**”. With the commissioning of Train-3 and the integration of “**Sulphur Handling**” and other associated facilities, the entire Operations section also has undergone a major re-structure with the “**Shift Superintendent**” as the “Shift in Charge” of the entire Gasco Ruwais Operations with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010. The Shift Superintendent is to be assisted by three “Shift Controllers” and six “Assistant Shift Controllers” followed by various “Senior Panel Operators” and “Field Operators” in the execution of the day-to-day Operational Shift activities. **M/s Sultan Abdulla, Saif Al Hajri, Nabil Al Nahari, Abdul Bari and P.M Subramoniam** were the coveted first batch of “Shift Superintendents” who were promoted from the “Shift Controller” position.

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**Associated** with the start-up and commissioning activities of Train-3, our **CEO Mr Mohammed Sahoo Al-Suwaidi** along with the “Secretary General” of the Supreme Petroleum Council and **ADNOC CEO, H.E Yousef Omair bin Yousef** visited Gasco Ruwais Control Room on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2009. (With effect from 2009 Gasco’s GM’s designation was changed to Chief Executive Officer CEO). Every thing was prepared and all the Ruwais Senior Management teams were at the Control Room entrance parking bay in order to receive the VVIPs. As duty “Shift Controller” I was also in the reception gang for the VVIPs. Both the CEOs alighted from the car and shook hand with all the dignitaries and to every body’s surprise our Gasco **CEO Mr Mohammed Sahoo** turned at me and took my hand again with the saying – “**Abu Ruwais –Abu Tanura**” and surprisingly, I replied, “**Mohammed, you still remember my name.?**”. All the dignitaries were stunned and I also felt horripilated by the remarks of our CEO. After the tour and other discussions, the

CEOs had a photo session also with us in the Main Control Room. In fact, CEO's remarks about me were originated from one of the previous meetings at Habshan Division of Gasco in which some body stated that one of the Habshan employees has given the name "Habshan" for his new born boy and it was pointed out in the meeting that it was not the first time in Gasco as we have one "Ruwais Sunny" already existing in Ruwais. Probably this incident was fresh in the memory of our CEO for the subsequent remarks.

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In the mean time, preparatory jobs were started for the 4<sup>th</sup> Fractionation Plant also, with the expected completion and commissioning of the Plant by 2012 followed by further LPG production increase of about 24,400 tonnes for the eventual capacity enhancement to about 70,000 metric tonnes per day. With the EPC (Engineering, Procurement & Construction) of Train-4 already in progress, safe and timely construction and start-up of Train-4 will be the next major challenge for all of us in Gasco and we are sure it would be another success story like Train-3.

**Gasco** Ruwais got the ISO 9001:2000 accreditation by April 2008 and the entire credit goes to The Ruwais Division Plant Manager **Mr Abdul Nasser** and his dedicated team. I was also fortunate enough to play with my minor role of reviewing and updating of the "Operating Manuals" as well as reviewing of few "Operating Procedures" for the eventual entry in the Gasco Intranet system. Out of all the Gasco sites, Ruwais was the first site to receive the ISO accreditation honour.

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The Abu Dhabi government established the Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation (ENEC) in December 2009 which is responsible for the preparatory activities required to facilitate the deployment of Nuclear Power Plants in the UAE. UAE is seeking to meet the increasing domestic demand for electricity through Civilian Nuclear Energy Plants delivering Power to the Electricity grid by 2017. The BRAKA site near Ruwais was chosen on the basis of environmental, technical and business considerations and **Mr. Mohammed Al Hammadi** was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of ENEC. On 29<sup>th</sup> December 2010, Enec CEO Mr. Mohammed Al Hammadi along with Gasco CEO Mr. Mohammed Sahoo Al Suwaidi made a surprise visit to Gasco Ruwais Main Control Room and I was fortunate enough to meet and introduce my 'Autobiography' to these dignitaries. During our casual talk itself Mr. Mohammed Al Hammadi expressed his deep interest for my book and a copy was submitted to him later and was duly felicitated by his Appreciation and Gift. Mohammed Al Hammadi's felicitations also I have incorporated in the latest updates of my autobiography.

\*\*\*

In accordance with another step of improvement in Gasco's journey of Excellence, the Salary Progression Scheme was implemented effective June

2011, recognizing the performance of employees, years of service and special contributions made to Gasco, an increment of 4% of basic salary was awarded to the deserving employees in order to remain committed to ensuring that Gasco's compensation levels remain competitive and attractive. More over Gasco will continue to improve its policies so as to emerge as an 'Employer of first Choice' in the region.

\*\*\*

0920 hrs on Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> December 2010, was an auspicious moment in our life especially for me and Jolly. In the literal sense we had our re-birth at that moment. Thank God, we both had a miraculous escape from our car accident on that day. On our way from Ruwais to Dubai, our Honda Civic car severely crashed with the left side road barrier at the cruise speed of about 140 Km / hour. God has done the wonder to us through the Seat belt and the Air bag for the miraculous unhurt escape from the severe car accident.


\*\*\*

## Chapter-24

### Gasco Energy Award- 2010

**GASCO** is driving consciously & responsibly towards greener operations and hence supporting its sustainability drive & vision. Similar to other business objectives, Gasco's goals in the field of Energy Efficiency & Environmental performance are clear with the challenging responsibility to reduce its industry & personnel carbon foot prints demonstrated clearly through the several projects, campaigns & studies that aim in improving its Environmental performance. GASCO Energy Award was formulated in 2008, in order to encourage Gasco employees to contribute towards energy efficiency and emission reduction at Plants. It increases awareness at all levels of employees and promote healthy competition to achieve our ambitious objectives of being leaders in the fields of environment protection and energy conservation. The awards are open to employees of Gasco as well as Contractors providing services to GASCO through respective work sites. The Award entry works that has already been achieved and completed upto the end of February each year in the fields of energy efficiency and emissions reduction will be considered; not ideas or suggestions alone. Substantial Monetary Awards will be presented to the two best submissions (winner & runner up). Special Recognition Awards may also be presented at the discretion of the judges.

Few years ago, Mr. Abdul Rahman Awadhi (Senior Panel Operator at that time) and I had formulated and implemented the facility "**Efficient Flare Monitoring and Control through a DCS Single Window**" which has contributed to a certain extent in the energy efficiency and environmental emission reduction in the plant. Ruwais Management had submitted the idea for the ADNOC HSE Awards and GASCO Energy Awards scheme of 2010. Gasco is committed to achieving HSE Excellence by having a mindful Energy Management Culture and our contribution was very much effective in "**Efficient flare monitoring and Effective emission control**". Our submission had contributed to the total of 17 submissions received from all the Operating divisions for the GASCO Energy Award – 2010, reflecting a wide range of initiatives and constructive work to enhance energy efficiency at GASCO. As a token of appreciation, the Gasco Energy Award committee had presented us with the lumpsum payment of 25,000 Dirhams each in addition to the "Appreciation" letter from Gasco CEO by May 2011.

				
GASCO Energy Award Entries – Fuel Gas Savings & Capital Cost				
	Total Fuel Used 2010 Billion BTU/Year	Fuel Gas Saving Billion BTU/Year	Fuel Gas Saving % of Total Used	Capital Cost US\$
<b>Asab</b>	16,400			
New Anti-Fouling Solution Reduces Energy consumption and Improves Condensate Quality		100	0.6%	295,000
Asab-1 & 2 Steam Integration		1,600	9.8%	0
Power saving campaign by using CFL bulbs and automatic light switch on/off by sensor.		3	0.0%	2,924
Provision of positive isolation capability for ASAB-1 Re-injection compressors		9.6**	0.1%	500,000
Steam Trap condition monitoring program		12.5	0.1%	17,500
Vapour Recovery Compressor availability increased by reducing trips due to improvement in operating practices		0.1*	0.0%	194,000
<b>Bu Hassa</b>	10,100			
Identify and service leaking valves / PSV's using Ultrasonic Leak Detector and save ENERGY.		117.6*	1.2%	50,000
<b>Habshan &amp; Bab</b>	64,800			
Elimination of flaring during trip of vapour recovery compressor in Hab 1 Tr 3 Separation Unit		54.2*	0.1%	600,000
Reductions in Emission by Recovering the Flash Gas from Amine Flash drum (Bab)		441*	0.7%	105,000
Reduction in flaring due to implementation of modified warm up procedure in Habshan-1 Plant.		46.1*	0.1%	0
Emission reduction through energy conservation by stoppage of ERM propane refrigeration compressor		50.8	0.1%	0
Cleaning of amine for removal of heat stable salts and reuse in the system		0	0.0%	124,000
Reduction of emission from Habshan-0 hydrocarbon flare		263*	0.4%	200,000
<b>Ruwais</b>	19,350			
Efficient flare monitoring and Effective emission control		955*	4.9%	0
Replacement of Molesieves in Train III		***	-	-
Waste Heat steam generation in NGL fractionation trains I & II		***	-	-
The introduction of back-pressure steam turbines in Train III		***	-	-

\* Flared Gas Saving

\*\* Feed Gas Saving

\*\*\* Studies only (Not Implemented)

## Gasco Energy Award - Entries 2010





**Gasco -2010 Energy Award joint winner Abdul Rahman Awadhi as Senior Panel Operator & Shift Supervisor**



Ref. : SVP(T) – 11

Date : 02 MAY 2011

Mr. Sunnykuty Azhakath  
Shift Controller  
Ruwais Plant

**Subject: GASCO ENERGY Awards, 2010 “Appreciation”**

On behalf of the GASCO Leadership Team, I would like to express my appreciation for your work in contributing to the entries for the GASCO ENERGY Award, 2010 entitled:

❖ Efficient flare monitoring and Effective emission control

In GASCO we are committed to achieving HSE Excellence by having a mindful Energy Management Culture, and your contribution is very much effective.

Your submission had contributed to the total of 17 submissions received from all the operating divisions for the GASCO Energy Award (2010), reflecting a wide range of initiatives and constructive work to enhance energy efficiency at GASCO.

I look forward to your further contributions to our commitment to excellence in all we do, caring for our people, our community and our environment.

Yours sincerely,

محمد عبدالله بن ساحوه السويدي  
الرئيس التنفيذي

**Mohammed A. Sahoo Al Suwaidi**  
Chief Executive Officer

جائزة جاسكو  
 Gasco Energy  
 Award 2010  
 فئتي مجال الطاقة

المركز الأول  
**WINNER**

*Sunnykutti Azhakath*

In recognition of achievements towards Energy Conservation and Environment Preservation

**Ruwais Plant**

**Efficient flare monitoring and Effective emission control**



**Mohammed A. Sahoo Al Suwaidi**  
 Chief Executive Officer

الرئيس التنفيذي  
 عبد الله بن مسعود السويدي



In the mean time Sheikh Khalifa Excellence Award, or SKEA, the biggest business award given to companies in Abu Dhabi for their management and excellence, was presented to 11 companies on May 23, 2011 and GASCO was ranked as the best Company in the Emirate and clinched with the “Diamond Award” for SKEA 2010-11. Sheikh Khalifa Excellence Award has been designed to recognise the achievement of organisations that demonstrate high performance and a journey of continuous improvement. SKEA has completed a decade of recognising excellent organisations in the Emirate amongst different sectors and industries and is considered a prestigious award not only because it is granted to organisations with outstanding and sustainable levels of excellence but also because it carries the name of the President His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan.



## Chapter-25

### Gasco Service extension

**After** 30 years of Service, Gasco once again recognized that I am not a good actor and in order to qualify me for the best "Actor" position, I was authorized by the Operations Manager to Act as "**Shift Superintendent**" with effect from 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010, as and when required. One of the drawbacks for this type of acting is that these "poor actors" are often loaded with the double job burden where as the privileged classes can enjoy with their single portfolio with the necessary job delegation to the sub-ordinates. More over, there is no limit for these types of Actings. For example, I have already passed through these types of "**acting business**" for more than 12 years at different levels like Panel Operator, Shift Supervisor and Shift Contoller. Attainment of a real portfolio often looks like a 'mirage' even after normal retirement!

Thank God, I have successfully completed 30 years of service with Gasco on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2010 and as per the amended policy, Gasco has awarded me with two months salary to be followed by other felicitation functions at later stage. In the mean time, I am due for retirement by 14<sup>th</sup> September 2010 and Gasco has done their Service extension / end of service medical examination formalities by June 2010 and was qualified for service extension for one year as per the recommendation and support from Ruwais Management. Again, as per the latest developments, Gasco has once again renewed my service for one more year so that I can continue in Gasco upto 14/9/2012 for the eventual retirement at the age of 62.

Gasco Ruwais Management has considered and granted me with the new full-fledged Portfolio as '**Shift Superintendent**' effective January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012. But as per ADNOC - GASCO policy, Employee's salary status change will not be considered for individuals who are on Service extension after retirement. My entire 16 grade salary aspirations had to be curtailed due to this policy. Still, I am happy and least bothered about salary revision and very well prepared to shoulder the responsibilities in the new position with out any grade enhancement. But the Gasco Management has gone one step ahead and they changed my job designation as "Operations Co-ordinator" by October 2012, as both the Shift Controllers and the Operations Co-ordinators were of the same grade 15. The job evaluation studies were in progress to enhance the job grade of the Co-ordinators to grade 16 which is equivalent to the Shift Superintendents. Finally, the job grade for the Operations Co-ordinators were approved to 16<sup>th</sup> grade by April 2015 and again in accordance with the adherence of the ADNOC policy, I was forced to be contented with the original grade of 15 with the actual job as Shift Superintendent and designation wise Operations Co-ordinator.

It seems, Gasco has realized and recognized that I am **“Too young to retire”** and subject to medical fitness Gasco has taken all the necessary steps for the extension of my service once again with effect from 14<sup>th</sup> September 2012 upon completion of my earlier extension periods. In this context, it reminds me with one joke narrated by Mr. **Sultan Al Baloushi**, my UAE national colleague in the Operations department since 2000. Mr. Sultan and Mr. Jassim Al Hosani, graduates from the Adnoc Technical Institute (ATI) were the first batch of Operations trainees started with the Personal Development Plan – PDP system of Gasco by 2000. As Shift Supervisor and acting Shift Controller, I was in charge of training and development programmes of Mr. Sultan and Mr M.G George was in charge of Mr. Jassim. Sultan, upon completion of his training and proven competency as Field Operator, qualified himself and approached the Egyptian Operations Co-ordinator Mr. **Syed Hassan** for the DCS Panel operator position and the instantaneous reply from Syed Hassan – **“You are too young for the Panel”**. Mr. Sultan, afterwards through succeeding promotions like Panel Operator, Shift Supervisor, Shift Controller and was finally promoted to the **Shift Superintendent** position along with me by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012. The only difference is that the **‘high profile’** Sultan got the Shift Superintendent promotion after 12 years of his service where as the **‘low profile’** Sunny got the position after 32 years of his un-interrupted service in Gasco!

On many occasions and at different levels, I have written the **Appraisal** of Mr. Sultan and in response to the **“Very good”** and **“Outstanding”** reports, Sultan has promised to me that he will write **Very good** and **Outstanding** appraisal reports about me when he is getting promotion as my Boss in the near future. But the pity and unfortunate fact is that we both got the promotion as **“Shift Superintendents”** on the same date and as such I don’t think he can fulfill his promises to me in the immediate future also. But I am really proud of my student and I wish him luck and hope he continues to succeed all through life especially with his future career developments in Gasco.

\*\*\*

Gasco has awarded another ‘Salary Progression Matrix’ with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 and I was also fortunate enough to get an increment of 3% in the basic salary and accordingly my basic salary has reached the maximum of my 15<sup>th</sup> job grade. Another significant aspect of this increment is that of the final payment of my ‘end of service benefits’ which will be calculated on the last drawn salary of Basic and Supplementary allowances as per Gasco policy.

\*\*\*

**Gasco** Ruwais achieved a remarkable milestone on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2013, on that day Gasco has loaded 5000 ships from Ruwais since start-up of Gasco in 1980 and the fortunate Gas Carrier was **“RED RUM”**. In fact, we look back with pride that each of these vessels was loaded on time and with highest safety standards. The contribution by Ruwais and Production Planning staff at Abu Dhabi is very



significant in this milestone and this would not have been possible without the dedication and professionalism displayed by each of us over these years and Gasco will continue to be reliable supplier and safe loader of products. The newly formed ADNOC “**Gas Directorate**” Director Mr. **Mohammed Sahoo Al Suwaidi** commented- “This achievement is yet another testament to GASCO’s success and a result of hard work and sincere commitment from the Management Team and staff. On behalf of ADNOC, we would like to congratulate GASCO Management Team and staff for this outstanding accomplishment. Special thanks go to Ruwais Operations who throughout these years have shown tremendous professionalism executing this activity.”



**Biggest in UAE, Gasco Ruwais new Main Control Room commissioned by April 2013**

Gasco Ruwais Train-4, EPC contract was with the addition of new Main Control Room besides the new Process and Storage area and upon completion of the new MCR, the entire Ruwais operations were transferred and migrated to the NMCR by April 2013. The commissioning of the new Train-4 also will be carried out from the new Control Room for which Gasco Ruwais can be really proud to be the part and parcel of the biggest state of the art control room of the entire UAE.

\*\*\*

**Gasco** Ruwais Train-4 officially commissioned by 15<sup>th</sup> October 2013 that has coincided with the “**Bakrid- Eid**” Holidays and luckily it was on my Day shift and I was fortunate enough to make the official announcement with the concurrence from the Senior Management and my “E- Mail” to the Senior staffs of Gasco Ruwais was as follows: -



Gents,

Eid Mubarak to everybody and on this auspicious day with the Management consent, I would like to announce that @ 0730 hrs on 15/10/2013, we have successfully started our new Train-4 with the official cutting-in of the NGL feed followed by 'on-spec' products to the respective new Storage tanks and Ethane gas to Bourouge system. Millions and millions of manhours already utilized for the construction and commissioning of our new units for the last 5 years and all our people can be really proud of this achievement and hope with God's grace this success will continue forever.

On my personal behalf also, I am very much happy and lucky by the Grace of God, I could participate in the successful start-up and running of all our 4 trains for the last 33 years.

Thank you, very much and good luck, for everybody.

With warm regards,

Sunny

My "E- Mail" was duly responded by Gasco Ruwais Vice-President as follows: -

Dear all,

First of all, Eid Mubarak to all. This is a great news indeed to have feed Cut-In in the morning of first day of Eid. Well, done to all of you for achieving this milestone which is a result of great efforts behind.

You are a team that I am really proud of.

My best wishes and regards.

Mahmoud



Sunny's 30 years Long service certificate awarded on 14-3-2011



## Employee Profile

**Employee Name** Azhakath George Sunnykutty  
**Location** Ruwais  
**Organization Unit** Area 1and2 Unit - Train- 1and2  
**Department** Ruwais Operations Department  
**Division** Ruwais Plant Division  
**Last Promotion** 01/09/2009  
**Job Title** Shift Controller  
**D.O.E / Service** 05/05/1980 / 31.67  
**Last Performance Rating** 4 ( 2010 )  
**Personal Grade** 15

**Employee ID** 3302462  
**Gender** Male  
**Marital Status** Married  
**Children** 2  
**Qualification** Bachelors Degree  
**Age** 61  
**Nationality** India  
**Birth Date** 14/09/1950  
**Employee Type** Established  
**Job Grade** 15



## RATING FACTORS

1	Ensures all HSE policies & procedures are applied in their work unit and sets an example for peers & team mates regarding health, safety and protection of the environment.	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
2	Uses technical knowledge, experience and IT tools to complete job while following established procedures. Maintains competence by keeping up with new developments in the profession.	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Discusses work & performance targets with staff and delivers clear instructions regarding their assignments. Listens to staff concerns, provides feedback on their performance and provides counseling when needed. Uses IT tools to prepare clear and accurate memos, briefings, presentations and reports.	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
4	Promotes teamwork, cooperation and motivates staff. Provides guidance and makes suggestions on improving team's performance. Manages resources effectively, involves staff in all aspects of work, develops positive working relationships, treats staff equally, exercises discipline & resolves conflicts within the section, team or department.	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
5	Coaches and develops staff to ensure that they are competent in the assigned duties. Supports Emiratization process by developing and providing feedback to UAE National employees. Serves as a 'resource person' for staff by providing guidance and coaching.	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
6	Performs job assignments accurately, completely & on-time. Uses good judgment when investigating problems and identifying their causes. Obtains and evaluates information to determine problem solutions and then makes appropriate decisions that are consistent with the situation.	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
7	Makes decisions regarding the priorities of competing assignments. Establishes targets & work plans for themselves and the team. Balances short and long term goals when aligning work efforts and ensures tasks are completed on time and within budget.	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
8	Accepts and completes their assignments with commitment and enthusiasm. Displays self-confidence and a positive attitude towards the team, section and department. Works steadily toward completing their assignments as well as division's objectives.	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
9	Assists in the preparation of budgets, implements and monitors budget and exercises cost control to ensure that expenditures remain within projections and established time tables. Ensures tasks are completed on time, within budget and meets quality standards.	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>

**RATING LEGENDS****1 : Ineffective**

Individual does not have and/or display the skills, knowledge, or the skills, knowledge, or abilities needed to accomplish basic job requirements.

**2 : Adequate**

Job performance shows the individual has the skills, knowledge and/or has the skills, knowledge and/or abilities to perform most job requirements.

**3 : Solid Performer**

Individual displays skills, knowledge and abilities required to perform and abilities required to perform the job and all of the job requirements are met.

**4 : Very Effective**

Performance exceeds normal expectations for a competent employee with the same level of experience and training.

**5 : Outstanding**

Job requirements fully achieved and results exceed all and results exceed all performance expectations.

**ACHIEVEMENTS FOR CURRENT PERIOD**

One of his biggest contributions is his entry to ' Gasco Energy Award-2010 ' which was declared as joint Winners from Ruwais by May 2011 that felicitations awards were given by Gasco CEO as a valuable accomplishment. Some of his 'Idea Oasis' contributions, considered as a good contribution from HSE, cost saving and environmental point of view, as such to seal the top slabs of Train-3 Cooling water Cathedral similar to the Old Cathedral.

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

In the following block the supervisor will rate the overall effectiveness of the employee. This effectiveness rating is based on the entire appraisal period and not on isolated incidents or occurrences that took place during the period. **The overall effectiveness rating is not an average of individual rating factors.**

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

1  2  3  4  5

Performance discussed with Employee

[View 2010 Appraisal](#)

**TARGETS FOR NEXT PERIOD**

Individual's Tasks and Targets must be written in "SMART" manner. The appraiser must list out at least 5 agreed tasks & targets for the next year (Jan - Dec)

1. Conduct an interview to explore any issue with a minimum of 75% of your total manpower with report to ORO. 2. Administrating the shift in terms of leave/CDO clearance and training inline with the approved schedule with a maximum of 4 CDO carry over to the next month and 5 days leave carry over to next year. 3. Conduct a minimum of 8 Shift meetings including 4 HSE topics with MOM. 4. Ensure group fire training man-hours are achieved with clear improvement in competence.

**Career Potential**

Career Potential Present Level  Similar Position  Higher Level

Career Potential Comments Mr. Sunny remains with high potential which company is benefiting from his vast experience as he considered one our assets.

**Supervisor Comments****Supervisor's Feedback on Training received**

To what extent did the training Achieved its objective(s) and Impacted on the performance of the employee?

No Training Courses Data found

**Performance Gap/Improvement Areas of Performance Concern:** (Please identify the areas of deficiencies, weaknesses and / or gap)

**Recommendations for developments/ Improvements :** (Please recommend the areas for the personal development and performance improvement through On-Job/Off-Job training)

- On-Job Training

Check Spelling

- Off-Job Training (**TNA System**)

**Supervisor Comments**

He carried out his job as Shift Controller and Acting Shift Superintendent in the safe and efficient manner without hurting anybody's feeling for which I am quite sure, all his colleagues will bear testimony. His 'Autobiography' which is a true story of Gasco, Ruwais can be considered as a unique attempt among the Gasco staff for which I give him **FULL SUPPORT** to get it published for the wider audience through Gasco intranet system. Above all I request our management when time comes to extend his service in GASCO.

**Employee Comments**

Really I am very proud and fortunate enough to serve Gasco Ruwais for the last 32 years and I am sure, I have worked safely, sincerely and efficiently to the best of my knowledge and abilities. As per my consciousness and as stated by Mr. Nabil, I am very much happy that I have not hurt anybody's feelings during my career with Gasco and it is my pleasure to state that I received very good and overwhelming support from all of my colleagues, sub-ordinates and Superiors through out these years. Subject to good health and Management requirements and approval, I would like to continue with my service with Gasco and sincerely request the Management to consider my request favourably, if required. Thank you very much everybody.

Development needs as identified by the Employee  
Nothing specific.

What factors may have affected your performance during this appraisal period  
**Extension of service.**

**WORKSTEP HISTORY**

Date	Name	Action	Description	Remarks
14-Mar-2012 02:22:42 PM	Nabil Mahmoud Sharif Al Nahari	ENDORSE	Line Manager 1	Action Taken By Nabil Mahmoud Sharif Al Nahari
17-Mar-2012 08:36:43 PM	Azhakath George Sunnykutty	ENDORSE	Employee Comments	Action Taken By Azhakath George Sunnykutty
19-Mar-2012 05:14:47 PM	Saif Naser Mohamed Al Mudfari Al Hajeri	APPROVE	Line Manager 2	Action Taken By Saif Naser Mohamed Al Mudfari Al Hajeri, <b>Extension of service is highly recommended.</b>

As per the latest developments, Gasco Management has extended my Service till 14<sup>th</sup> September and finally to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 for which I am really indebted to our Ruwais Operations Management team under the leadership of Operations Manager **Mr. Hassan Moh'd Ali**. On 20/10/2014, with respect to our "Ruwais Operations Daily Management Report", I received one surprise "E- Mail" from Hassan which was as follows: -

Dear Sunny,

I like your way of reporting. We should reset your age and keep you for another 30 years.

Thanks,

Hassan

In fact, I was really waiting for some sort of comments from Hassan for the inclusion in the latest updates of my autobiography and for this golden opportunity I have duly reciprocated with my reply mail as follows: -

Dear Hassan,

Thank you very much for your compliments and I don't have any words to express my gratitude for all your supports and encouragements especially Hassan and Saif and I can only assure that I will continue with my sincere services without hurting anybody. As a matter of fact, when I am writing the report or log, I am so particular that it should be precise, realistic and authentic. I am very much indebted to our shift colleagues also for everything and really proud of all my colleagues for their overwhelming support and affectionate co-operation in the achievements of our tasks and targets.

Thank you very much once again.

With warm regards,

Sunny

\*\*\*



## Chapter-26

### Post retirement Gasco

**H.E UAE** Minister of State Dr. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber took charge as ADNOC's CEO wef March 2016. Petroleum Crude oil price was at the declining stage and has slowly subsided at the lowest price of ~ 50 Dollars per Barrel. Dr Sultan Al Jaber was forced to take the necessary strategic measures like 10% reduction of the staff from ADNOC and its subsidiary companies. All the employees service extensions above 60 years were stopped. Accordingly, 3 months retirement termination notice was given to me on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2016 by the Management for the eventual departure from service by 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2016. As per ADNOC policy the employees are not allowed to go for the job during the notice period. Gasco Ruwais Operations Management has arranged one sent-off party for me in the Control room on 9/5/2016 and afterwards we were allowed to stay in the Ruwais housing complex for the completion of all other formalities. Finally, we vacated our N-231 villa on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2016 and moved to Abu Dhabi "Sophia" hotel besides the Gasco office for the completion of all the settlements. As such I have completed an overall of 36 years service with Gasco, including 6 years on extension. Upon completion of all formalities my self and Jolly departed for Kochi by 'Air India Express' flight on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2016 from Dubai and that was the end of our 39 years old expatriate life in the Gulf.

On 15<sup>th</sup> October 2017, ADNOC brought together its people, resources, products and services together under a unified brand. Abu Dhabi Gas Industries Limited (GASCO) will now onwards trade as ADNOC Gas Processing. As part of this process ADNOC has also consolidated its digital presence into a single website. All information, updates, and e-services relating to ADNOC Gas Processing can now be found at [adnoc.ae/adnoc-gas-processing](http://adnoc.ae/adnoc-gas-processing). In other words, after our retirement and departure, the 39 years old Gasco itself had vanished and became the ADNOC Gas Processing Division. Now the GASCO entity cannot be seen any where in the UAE.

Ruwais Industrial area also has undergone drastic changes and in addition to the vast industrial and Housing expansion of the ADNOC group of Companies, the entire Ruwais was declared as Ruwais City. All the Housing complex restrictions were cleared and just like other cities of Abu Dhabi, all are free to go any where with out any security restrictions or permissions. Anyway, changes and advancements are for the betterment of the people, environment and establishments.





Expatriate life ends for Sunny & Jolly by 29/8/2016

## PART FOUR

### GENERAL

#### Chapter-27

#### Abode at Kottayam & birth of Ruwais

**As** stated earlier, while I was in Bahrain, we could purchase 20.5 cents of land at Kottayam by August 1979 but without the full consent of Azhakath family associates. Due to some misunderstanding, there were some problems and later everything changed for the better course of actions. We were planning to construct one house at the Kottayam plot but initially Achachen was reluctant to build it there and Amamma was very particular to have my house some where at Thiruvalla. Finally like a miracle everything has changed to the diametrically opposite direction. Achachen was entrusted with the task of the building construction and he could execute the job for the utmost satisfaction of everybody. Initially, the area was checked by a Carpenter for the construction and location of the house building and was certified to be unsuitable for the house construction and if the house is constructed there, some thing adverse only will be happening etc. Some way or other we didn't look at it seriously. Accordingly, everything was prepared and the Vicar of Mallappally Mar Thoma church Rev. K.M Verghese laid the foundation stone for the Kottayam **"Azhakath House"** on 10th September 1981. One of the scarce commodities for the construction activities at that time was the Cement for which we submitted an application directly to the Kottayam District Collector Mr. Mohandas for the sanction of some 500 bags of cement. Luckily, we got the allotment after about one year and by that time we were at the final stages of our construction activities. Whatever it may be, the house construction was really a good achievement at that time.

Kottayam Azhakath house ground floor constituting 3 bed rooms and other amenities were completed by December 1982 and the **"Koodassa"** and the **'house warm-up'** were conducted on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1983 and we transferred our abode to the new house since then. We spent about 1.1 lakh rupees for the Phase 1, construction activities at that time and the design were a modified version of Jolly's requirements executed by our Construction Engineer Kunjoottyachayan of Anamala, Pullad (cousin of Achachen) and was managed by Achachen under occasional guidance from Jolly and myself.

**Our** Kottayam House first floor extension jobs were started by 16/9/85 under the Supervision of Mathilumkal Georgekuttychayan (mother's cousin) and the jobs were completed by 31/3/1986. During this time actually there was not that much stress and strain for the construction activities as we all were staying in the house and the job was undertaken in our presence. Additionally, our Master bed room extension jobs were also carried out as per the Phase III expansion programme

and the eventual completion by 16/3/1993. More over, the Phase IV, expansion of the Kitchen after the purchase of 12.5 cents of land from Thannickal family also was carried out prior to Tanura's marriage by January 2002.

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**Jolly** was about five months pregnant during the start up of the house construction activities and all the major jobs were carried at this stage only. Even though, Jolly was having lot of problems during this pregnancy period, still she could manage well with all the difficulties to a certain extent. Our son Ruwais was born on Sunday the 24<sup>th</sup> January 1982, by 8-30 pm at Kangazha MGDH Hospital. I was also present at the Hospital during this time. Actually, she was admitted in the Hospital on the same day only as per the earlier planning and we went to the hospital after seeing the film "**Elakkangal**" at the Kottayam Anupama theatre. I was on leave rotation from 7<sup>th</sup> January onwards and upon my arrival; on the same day itself Jolly was admitted in the Hospital due to severe pain and other troubles and was finally discharged after two days observation. After this, actually there was no problem at all and everything went on smoothly for about two weeks until delivery on 24<sup>th</sup>. After seeing the small child, I went to Nedungadappally and Keezhvaipur and brought Achachen and Amamma to the Hospital by about 1-00 am on the same night. Achachen gave the ceremonial "**honey and gold**" to the newborn baby "**Ruwais**".

**Naming** of "**Ruwais**" also was something different. Following the footsteps of "**Tanura**", since I was working in Ruwais, it was decided and agreed by everybody to name the newborn baby as "**Ruwais**". Actually, I was little bit reluctant to put that name at that time but later I also felt it to be good and unique in all respects. Both these names continue to be unique in all respects. So far, we couldn't come across another "**Tanura**" or "**Ruwais**" through out these years.

In this context, actually we were wondering about another aspect. If one more child was born to us, what would have been the name? From Ruwais, we were not planning to go anywhere else for employment and as such we have decided to be contented with the two children only.

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**Regarding** the naming of Tanura and Ruwais, Tanura wrote an article in the Khaleej Times –**Young Times** weekly for which she got the "**Certificate of Excellence**" and the article was published in 19/5/1992 issue.

The article was as follows: -

[Pen pal of the week](#)

Tanura Sunny (14)  
P.O Box-665, Gasco, Ruwais, Abu Dhabi.  
(Typing, reading, stamp collecting)

I am an Indian studying in Kerala, India. My date of birth is 23-10-1977. I used to visit my parents and brother in Abu Dhabi during my school vacations. My hobbies are typing, reading and stamp collection. Collecting stamps is a hobby I have inherited from my father who is an ardent stamp collector. Making use of our collections, I could bag many prizes during stamp exhibitions etc.

Do you sense something Arabic in my name? My name Tanura is derived from Ras Tanura, S Arabia. I was born when my father was working in Ras Tanura. So, he chose the name "TANURA" for me. Similarly, my brother was born when my father was working in RUWAIS, Abu Dhabi and he was given the name "RUWAIS". Don't you think it is nice? I would love making friends all over the world and I am a regular writer.

Tanura Sunny wins a Certificate of Excellence.

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# Pen-a-Pal



## Penpal of the week

Tanura Sunny (14)  
P.O. Box 665, Gasco,  
Ruwais, Abu Dhabi  
(typing, reading,  
stamp-collecting)

I am an Indian studying in Kerala, India. My date of birth is 23-10-1977. I used to visit my parents and brother in Abu Dhabi during my school vacations. My hobbies are typing, reading and stamp collection. Collecting stamps is a hobby I have inherited from my father who is an ardent stamp collector. Making use of our collections, I could bag many prizes during stamp exhibitions etc.

Do you sense something Arabic in my name? My name Tanura is derived from Ras Tanura, S. Arabia. I was born when my father was working in Ras Tanura. So he chose the name 'TANURA' for me. Similarly my brother was born when my father was working in RUWAIIS, ABU DHABI and he was given the name 'RUWAIIS'. Don't you think it is nice? I would love making friends all over the world and I am a regular writer.

### Tanura Sunny wins a Certificate of Excellence

#### PEN-A-PAL FORM

Fill in this form, enclose your photograph and send it to Pen-A-Pal section, Young Times, PO Box 11243, Dubai.

The Penpal of the week gets an interesting prize. To be the selected one send a small write-up about yourself.

Name: .....

Age: .....

Address: .....

Hobbies: .....

Special Request: .....

The Otto Club membership number: .....



Kanchan Tripathi (12)  
P.O. Box 6664, Sharjah  
(reading stories,  
collecting stamps)

Naheed Sultana (11)  
P.O. box 4728, Ras Al  
Khaimah U.A.E.  
(singing, drawing,  
writing)



Nasreen Hisamuddin  
Rajpurkar (13)  
P.O. Box 47, Doha  
Qatar  
(stamp collecting,  
reading)

Rohit Kumar (11½)  
P.O. Box 494, Ajman  
U.A.E.  
(studying, playing  
football)



Sanjeev Shajahan (9)  
P.O. Box 2699, Sharjah  
(singing)

Syed Abdul Wahab  
(14)  
D-62, Block 7  
Gulshan-E-Iqbal,  
Karachi, Pakistan  
(stamp collecting,  
reading)



Syed Arif Shah (12)  
P.O. Box 1288, Sharjah  
(collecting stamps,  
badminton, painting)

Ghazala Sadiq Khan  
(15)  
P.O. box 7566, Doha  
Qatar  
(painting, gymnastics)



## Chapter 28

### School days - Tanura & Ruwais and Singapore trip.

**Tanura** started her LKG schooling by June 1981 at the newly formed LP School under the Management of the Mallappally Mar Thoma Church at Keezhvaipur under the auspicious of Rev. K.M Verghese who was the Vicar of the Church at that time. K.M Verghese Achen's daughter Susmitha also was of the same age of Tanura and the need for her education necessitated Achen to take the initiative to organize the English Medium School at the Church auditorium and office premises. Tanura completed her LKG and UKG studies at this Church School and later moved to Kottayam Girideepam Bethany School at the first standard. When we started living at Kottayam, Shajimon was also studying for his M.A degree during 1983-84 periods at Kottayam Ninan's College and he was also staying with us at Kottayam, which was of innumerable help to Jolly, and the Children. Afterwards he went for his LLB studies at Uduppi and continued with his bi-monthly visits. Again, upon completion of his LLB degree, he started his practice at the Bar Council of Kottayam and was staying in our Kottayam house since 1986.

**Our** son Ruwais directly started his School career with the Girideepam Bethany School by 1986 and upon completion of his 3<sup>rd</sup> standard, joined Abu Dhabi – Ruwais Asian International School at the 4<sup>th</sup> standard by 1990. Upon completion of Std VI, Ruwais again moved to Kottayam Marian Junior School till 9<sup>th</sup> standard and further changed to the Kerala SSLC board exams with the M.T Seminary School, Kottayam. He has passed the SSLC in first class and has joined the last batch of the Kerala Pre-degree system at Baselius College, Kottayam by 2000. Later Ruwais has completed his Mechanical Engineering graduation from Maharaja's Engineering College, Coimbatore and started with his private business profession in Dubai by 2006.

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**Dooradarshan** TV programmes were started all over Kerala by 1982-83 and the reception was somewhat clear and as such I purchased one JVC television set along with the portable VCR unit. During my May 1983 vacation I brought these two units to Kerala with the necessary Customs clearance at Bombay. At that time, I paid about Rs. 10,000/- towards customs duty @ 320% for the TV and escaped with the VCR. But the VCR technology was something new for all of us and was well accepted by everybody in viewing the film cassettes etc. Until installation of the Satellite dish antennas, the Dooradershan programmes were very feeble and we had no option other than to satisfy with the available reception. Actually, after the formation of "**Asianet**" and the Cable system by 1993, then only we could get some what good reception. At Kottayam, we could get the cable connection by 1995 and afterwards the reception was very clear with more channels and programmes.

In Gasco Ruwais, we junior staff were confined to Camp accommodation and other facilities like leave rotation 91/35, 75/29 and 60/30 etc as per the prevailing rules and regulations. But the senior staff like Supervisors and above were given Housing accommodation facilities at ADNOC's Ruwais Housing Complex. Up to 1988, we were not sure about any possible policy change or any promotion to the Senior cadre in order to aspire for the Housing family accommodation and every thing remained as a remote possibility. Jolly and children were very anxious to have some sort of foreign travel and they were ready with the passport and other formalities for quite long time. Singapore Visa was easily available through Travel Agents and we booked one visiting programme to Singapore. Accordingly, Jolly, Tanura, Ruwais and myself made a visit to Singapore from Madras for about one-week wef 13/10/1987. The day we left for Madras by train, another tragic incident happened at Nedungadappally Jolly's house. Jolly's aunty Ammukuttymmamma's husband Cheriachayan expired during his vacation train journey from Bombay and the children, who went for receiving Cheriayachayan, could get only his dead body at the Changanacherry Railway Station. Earlier, Jolly's father also expired on 6/5/1987 due to heart attack and I couldn't attend the funerals of these two personalities at that time. After returning from Singapore, Jolly met with some abdominal problems but everything was sorted out with out any complications by 15/11/87.

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## Chapter-29

### Brothers & family

**After** completing one-year training programmes at the Accounts department of FACT, my brother Vinod joined the Thiruvalla Kaveri Chemicals & Fertilizer Company as an Accountant for about 8 years and discontinued his service with them and started his own business career as “Sales tax Practitioner” dealing with the accounts of different firms at Thiruvalla. He married Shiny Thomas from Kidanganoor on 7/5/1981 and they continued their stay at Thiruvalla Mathilumkal house. Vinod & Shiny’s daughter Anu and son Arun were born on 12/2/1983 and 1/10/1985 respectively. In the mean time by about 1987 they purchased 10 cents of land from K.K Kuruvilla family and started the construction of a house at Thiruvalla near the Mar Thoma Academy by 9/6/1988 and for the ultimate completion and house warming up on 20/8/1989. Vinod & family moved to the new house and he started operating his Sales tax practicing from the new house along with some sub-ordinate employees. Transfer of Vinod & family to a good location near the main road inspired Renjimon also to look for some good location for a new house and he ended up with the purchase of about 30 cents of land from the same K.K Kuruvilla family next to Vinod’s house but with a higher price. Renjimon’s dealing also was a good offer and ultimately Renjimon also constructed their new house there and transferred to the new abode by 7/5/1990. Still the K.K Kuruvilla family is living there with the back of their property facing the Railway station road. Old childhood memories are haunting me whenever I pass through these areas. When Mr. K.K Kuruvilla was alive, we as small children used to steal some sort of fruits like “Chaambakka”, “Inrumpan Puli” etc from their premises, as stealing or encroaching was our regular hobby or pastime and to get fired by the landlords! Really Renjimon and Vinod were lucky enough to get a good location for their houses besides the main road.

Until recently, till I read about one article about the Indo-American Writer and Poetess **Meena Alexander**, the grand daughter of K.K Kuruvilla, I was thinking that he was some renowned personality of the Mar Thoma Sabha. Actually K.K Kuruvilla was the founder Headmaster of Kottayam M.T Seminary School and was the MLC of the erstwhile Travancore Assembly along with his wife. Their grand daughter Meena Alexander’s literary work “**Fault Line**” is actually the history of Thiruvalla and Kozhencherry with her childhood memoirs and observations depicted as a poem with all the diversifications of the life journey.



Vinod George & family-May 2006.



ഫിസിക്സിൽ പിഎച്ച്ഡി നേടിയ (ജയ്പൂർ നാഷണൽ ഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ട് ഓഫ് ടെക്നോളജി) അരുൺ വിനോദ്  
 (മാർത്തോമ്മാ കോളജ്, തിരുവല്ല). തിരുവല്ല അഴകത്ത് വിനോദ് ജോർജിന്റെയും ഷൈനിയുടെയും മകനാണ്. ഭാര്യ: ക്രിസ്റ്റീൻ സാറാ ഏബ്രഹാം (അധ്യാപിക, സിഎംഎസ് കോളജ്, കോട്ടയം).

Vinod & Shiny's daughter Anu was married to Liju from Thadiyoor on 22/7/2006 and they are blessed with their son Rohan and daughter Ruth. Vinod's son Arun Vinod has completed his M Sc degree in Physics from S B College, Changanacherry and has joined the National Institute of Technology, Jaipur as a Research Scholar and was awarded with the Ph. D on 10/7/2019 for his research work in Nano technology – "Synthesis & Characterization of Au Nano Crystals in various Di electric oxides for Non volatile Memory Application." Dr. Arun Vinod has become the first Scientist Doctor from the entire Azhakath family. Arun has married Milie from Trivandrum on 12/12/2015 and is continuing with her profession as Lecturer of Botany at CMS College, Kottayam. Arun & Milie's 1<sup>st</sup> offspring baby girl was born on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2021 and was named as "Joela Elza Arun".

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**My** youngest brother **Shaji George** was actually born as 10 years **younger** to my first brother **Vinod George** and due to the vast difference, we were very much fond of and affectionate with him. Shajimon was in Avadi, Madras along with Achachen and Amamma up to 1966 and later Amamma moved to Thiruvalla and Shaji George started his studies at Thiruvalla SCS School. Actually, he was fortunate enough to be admitted in the English Medium classes and he completed his entire schooling in SCS High School, Thiruvalla. Shaji George was having some artistic and literary talents during his High School and College periods and he took active participation in some of the items like drama, fancy dress competitions etc and his best contribution was in the Malayalam literary fields like Short Stories, Poems etc. in addition to his oratorical talents. By virtue of his talents in these fields, he opted for the LLB studies upon completion of his M.A degree. Shaji George completed his law graduation from Udappi Law College, Mangalore and enrolled as a lawyer of the Kerala Bar Council on 2/10/1987 and started practice under the Senior Lawyer Mr. Thomas Mathew at the Kottayam District Court. Shaji George married Suja on 26/9/1988. Suja, daughter of Mr. Mathew from Theeyadical, Ranny was a B Ed graduate at that time and owing to Jolly's departure for Abu Dhabi upon receipt of our family accommodation, entrusted with their abode at our Kottayam house. Tanura and Ruwais also couldn't come to Abu Dhabi at that time and the burden of looking after our children also fell on Shaji George and Suja. Later by 1990, Ruwais also joined us at Abu Dhabi Ruwais housing complex and started his studies in the Indian School at the 5<sup>th</sup> standard. Tanura continued with her studies at the Girideepam Bethany School hostel under the guardianship of Suja and Shaji George. Shaji George got a chance to work in Saudi Arabia for about two years and upon his return by 1993, Shaji George started his joint Practice with the erstwhile Thiruvalla MLA Advocate Mammen Mathai and Adv. M.V Mathew at Thiruvalla Magistrate Court. Shaji George and Suja's daughters Neenu and Mynu were born on 14/10/89 and 17/7/94 respectively and Suja is continuing with her teaching profession at the English Medium School of the Mallappally Mar Thoma Church. Neenu completed her MCA degree and is married to Sminju Sam from Keezhvaipur and they are blessed with their daughter Enliva. Shajimon's younger daughter Mynu completed her BE degree in Electronics & Communications and has worked as a trainee with the ISRO, Trivandrum unit for about one year.



Shaji George & family on 16-4-2007



ശ്യാമപ്രിയ ഗോപാലകൃഷ്ണൻ (ശ്യാമപ്രിയ  
സുധാ ഷാമ (സുലഭിപ്പു. സുധ.)

**Shaji George** participated actively in the Janatha party political activities to begin with during his college period and later moved to the Left Democratic Front, associated with the Marxist Communist Party of Kerala. He could synchronise the party work and the lawyer's profession to a certain extent. In the mean time during the Panchayath election of 2000, our Keezhvaipur house area panchayath ward # 8 became Women's Reservation seat and Suja was fortunate enough to get the Left Front seat as an independent candidate of the Marxist party. Suja won the Election from the 8<sup>th</sup> Ward of the Mallappally Panchayath with the ultimate majority for Left Democratic Front at the Mallappally Panchayath and Block levels. Mallappally Panchayath President's post also was reserved for the Women during that five-year period and as per the ruling Left Front Alliance agreement, Suja was sworn in as the Mallappally Panchayath President for three years on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2000.

Suja has successfully completed her 3 years period and as per agreement, the mantle fell on Kerala Congress (J) representative Mrs. Rohini Jose for the rest of the 2 years period. During the next 2005, Panchayath elections our Ward # 8 was in the General category and Shaji George has contested but no avail. Shaji George still continues with the unification of his party and professional career to a good extent.

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## Chapter- 30

### Jolly and family

**My** wife, Jolly belongs to the Adimankal family of Nedungadappally. Actually, her father Mr. K John was from the Kaniathara family of Paippadu and was married to Chinnakutty of the Muthuthottathu family and after marriage he bought the land and property of Adimankal family and settled at Nedungadappally. Initially Jonachen was working in the "**Forward Bank**" which was taken over by the State Bank of Travancore and subsequently all the Forward bank staff also were inducted into the SBT service by 1960s'. At the time of our marriage Jonachen was working as "**Special Officer**" of the Mallappally SBT branch and was continuing there till expiry due to heart attack on 7/5/1987.

Jonachen - Chinnakutty had three children. Jolly, the eldest, followed by two brothers Joshy and Sajimon. Joshy, after completing B. Com degree had worked in few firms in Kerala as an Accountant and later moved to Sultanate of Oman and after spending about 20 years in Muscat finally transferred to Al Ain branch of the Sohar Chips Company by 2008. Joshy married Daisy from Vazhoor and they have two children- Chinnu and Chikku- both are Engineering graduates with specialization in Electronics and Mechanical respectively. Chinnu after marriage with Abhy had moved to Dubai by 2007 and they got settled in Switzerland by 2012. They are blessed with 3 daughters. Chikku got married to Nayana by 30/12/2013 and after few years stay in Dubai, moved to Norway for permanent settlement by 2020. They are blessed with their son Taniv and daughter **Ithal**.

Jolly's mother Chinnakutty expired at the age of about 66 on 19/2/1998. Jolly's youngest brother Sajimon was not in good health since birth and finally succumbed to his illness on 1/2/2000.





**Joshy & family with grand daughter in Dubai-May 2010**



*Sunny brothers & family on 11-4-2007.*



“Vote for all the parties or alliances” is the strategy followed by Jolly for the Election campaigns and later her strategy couldn't be applied due to the electronic voting system. She was fortunate enough to vote for most of the Parliamentary / Assembly elections in India but it was not the case with me. So far in my entire life I could vote only twice and that was during the 70's and 80's and afterwards being a “Non-Resident Keralite” my name was not in the Election list and there after I didn't take any interest for the inclusion of my name in the Election list or the Ration cards. My sole identity in India was the possession of an Indian passport and nothing else. Upon retirement and return to India, my name also was included in the Election list by 2017 and was voted in the Parliament election of 2019, Panchayat / Municipal elections of 2020 and the Assembly election of 2021.

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## Chapter-31

### Literary skills and hobbies

**With** respect to my literary skills and talents, I can be considered as an average or we can say as second-class man in all the fields. Actually, all my autobiographic narrations are nothing but an attempt to know whether I can also write something like or nearer to that. Even though up to my SSLC level I came up through the Malayalam medium and later completed the degree studies in the English medium, my Malayalam cannot be considered as a good one but in fact little more fluency can be claimed in English language. Actually, it is little bit difficult for me to communicate in Malayalam and the complaint against my English communication by the foreigners especially the British is that I am very fast in my English communication skills and methods. During my college career, I had submitted a few letters in Malayalam to the Manorama "**Letters to the Editor**" columns but none of these were considered by the Publishers. Again, I was really mad with the 'literary puzzles' like "**LITQUIZ**" etc. that conquered the paper columns during 1967-70 periods and the "**LITQUIZ**" has published some of my queries in their magazines etc in English. Later while in U.A.E, the "**Khaleej Times**" published a few of my '**Letters to the editor**' regarding the AGCC driving licenses for the expatriates and another regarding the Asianet TV programmes in U.A.E. These are my published literary skills in addition to the normal business reports and various other correspondences by virtue of my job as "Shift Controller" and "Shift Superintendent" of Gasco.

Few of my "**Letters to the Editor**" as follows: -

Khaleej Times- Dated 16/11/1983.

#### AGCC driving licences.

I would like to draw your attention to a report which was published in the '**Khaleej Times**' last May saying that the traffic chiefs of the seven emirates of the UAE had decided to recognize the driving licences of the member- countries of the AGCC and to issue UAE licences in lieu of the licences of all member-states.

I have approached the traffic authorities in Abu Dhabi twice about this but have been told that they do not have any written information regarding the new rules.

Can one request a clarification from the traffic authorities? - **Sunnykutty A.G, Ruwais**

Khaleej Times- Dated 27/11/1983.

#### Driving licence

This has reference to the letter of Mr. Sunnykutty published on October 16. I read the news item in question in 'Khaleej Times' during my stay in Qatar and since I had to move to the UAE, I enquired from the Qatar Traffic Authority about the driving licence exchange system as I had to bring my car from Qatar.

I was told that Qatar is already exchanging valid driving licences of AGCC member-countries and that I shouldn't find it difficult to get my Qatar driving licence exchanged for a UAE driving licence. But I was politely informed by the Abu Dhabi Traffic Authority that they had no information about the exchange of AGCC driving licences.

My car at present lying in Qatar perhaps will have to be sold in the absence of a UAE licence unless the UAE driving licence authorities are kind enough to honour my Qatar driving licence- **Optimist**, Abu Dhabi.

Khaleej Times- Dated 20/12/1984.

### AGCC licences

Once again, the issue of driving licences in AGCC countries has come into the limelight. Your staff reporter (November 30) says that licences issued in other AGCC countries are valid for the UAE also and everyone, including expatriates, are entitled to the facility. Is this reiteration of the decision taken during 1983 or a new decree applicable to expatriates also besides AGCC citizens?

A clarification from the authorities would be welcome- **Sunnykutty, Ruwais.**

'Khaleej Times' carried a clarification on page 3 of the issue dated December 16 under which only nationals of AGCC countries are entitled to avail of this facility- Editor.

Khaleej Times- Dated 18/12/1995.

### Elusive Asianet

The programme schedule of Asianet Malayalam TV is being published by 'Khaleej Times' since January but most of the dish antennae operators seem to be unaware of the minimum requirements for its availability to viewers. Could anyone provide details for its reception as well as those for other South Indian language programmes? –

**Sunnykutty, Ruwais.**

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**Few** of my hobbies namely "Photography" and "Stamp collection" I could start only after getting the employment with FACT and that the stamp collections are being continued in an expanded manner with the purchase of all the reasonably available old and rare stamps from different parts of the world. Still, I am continuing with my philatelic membership with the "Indian" and the "Emirates Philatelic Bureau" and in receipt of all the new philatelic stamps since 1985. Even though, an ardent stamp collector, I could participate only in few exhibitions conducted at Ruwais, Abu Dhabi. But by making use of my collections, our daughter Tanura could bag many prizes during school exhibitions etc.

**Regarding** my reading habits, before the invasion by the new Malayalam TV channels, the only pastime was nothing other than reading periodicals, Novels etc. Most of my Novel readings were confined only to Malayalam and the only recently read English novel, other than my textbooks, was **Arundhathy Roy's "God Of small Things"**. Few of the Malayalam literary works with some lasting impression in my memory are Malayattoor Ramakrishnan's "**Yanthram**", S.K Pottakkad's "**Oru Desathintae Katha**", M.K.K Nair's "**Aarodum Paribhavam Illatha**" etc. In fact, MKK's "**Prejudice to None**" is one among the best autobiographies I have ever read and actually I was looking for its English translation before the commencement of my own autobiographical works. (MKK's autobiography English translation manuscript was prepared by Mr Gopakumar M Nair by November 2012 and at that time itself it has made a controversy about the rift between Nehru and Patel as blogged by Mr L.K Advani for which the basis was MKK's autobiography translation "**The Story of an Era, Told without Ill-will**". Finally, MKK Nair's autobiography English translation "**With Malice Towards None**"- The Chronicle of an Era- was published by Prism Books Kochi on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2017. Actually, the English translation was done by one of the subordinates of MKK in FACT Mr. Gopakumar M Nair who retired as Chief Engineer at FACT Corporate Office. Mr Gopakumar was interviewed and selected to FACT's Executive Cadre by MKK in 1970.) Still, I am going through the book reviews of all the autobiographies of the great personalities. My present Autobiography title "**My Life-Sunny**" is nothing but the literary stealing from Bill Clinton's autobiography "**My Life- Clinton**". Later I have decided to change the name of my autobiography as "**Sunny Days**" after hearing about the autobiographical works of the great Indian Cricketer "**Sunil Gavaskar**" alias "**Sunny**". Again, the possibility of some other naming option cannot be ruled out at this moment.

**Malayattoor** Ramakrishnan's **Yanthram's** opening paragraph I learnt by heart at that time and it is as follows: - "**Metcaff housilaa valiyya hallil Tharun Bose ICS aaveshabharithanayee IAS probationaranmmaordu samsarikkayayirunnu: "Oru Karyaam eappozhum ormmikkuka. Ningal entae seviceinta pinthudarchakkarannu. Ningaluda pachathalam vythestathammanannenikkariam. Njanganal kalicha nadakamalla ningal kalikkan pokunnathae. Arangu mariyirikkunnu. Njanganala 'steel frame' ennanu vilikkuka. Ningalkka- IAS karkku- orikkalum oru steel frame akanokkukayilla. Ennu vachu Ningal oru plastic frame aakano? Rastriyakkar vannum poyuum irikkum. Permanent civil serviceannu innum ee nadintae nilanilppinnadistanam. Athu Marakkaruthu"**

In fact, Malayattoor's "**Yanthram**" is considered to be an autobiographical novel to a certain extent.

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**Once** our former Indian President Mr. K.R Narayanan wrote: - "**I got more than what I aspired for. Some invisible hands might have worked for me from behind. I have never fought for any of my aspirations. Unexpectedly many doors were opening in front of me. Which one is to be accepted or rejected was my real**

dilemma?” Similar to this Dr. P.C Alexander also wrote in his autobiography-**Through the Corridors of Power-** “This book sums up the story of my life right from my childhood years to the present. I have been fortunate enough to occupy some senior positions that are not in normal reach of a civil servant. I did not possess the advantages bestowed by factors such as birth, caste or community; nor did I seek political backing for reaching these positions. I do admit that luck plays its role in everyone’s life and I had perhaps a larger share of it than many others. However, I have also had to face frustrations and disappointments in my career.”

**These** statements are partially true in my life also. I think, my elevation to the “**Shift Controller**” and later to the “**Shift Superintendent**” position in Gasco is also having similar resemblances to a certain extent. Shift Controller’s / Superintendent’s position in a multi billion and one of the largest Gas Plants of the world is really an accomplishment for an ordinary B. Sc graduate from India. Normally you don’t always get what you want, but you get what you need. Co-operation on the job is the key to success. Do your fair share and expect others to do so, as well- is the policy I am following in Gasco with all the merits and demerits. Contentment in the job aspects is the most important thing for which I am very much happy with my colleagues especially my sub-ordinates. I can only pray to God to give me health and wisdom in the execution of my job activities safely and courageously.

**Up** to December 2005, I could see about 2000 Malayalam films including Mohanlal’s film “**Thanmathra**” released on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2005. “**Thanmathra**” is one among the recent best films of Mohanlal and really Mohanlal and the Director Blessy deserves three cheers for their remarkable accomplishments and great achievements. Even though the film has got no traces of reality in the actual life, I could also feel the mist of tears in my eyes. Surely this film will have a lasting impact on our Malayalam film industry.

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**India** Post has started a revolution of sorts by allowing anyone to have their face printed on a stamp - on the spot. The customer’s photo can be printed on the famous perforated sheets alongside one of four beautiful flowers – the Pansy, the Dahlia, the Lily or the Cineraria to the right. “**My Stamp**”- Fancy your face on a Postage Stamp – Post Office’s new service was introduced in India by January 2014. Enthusiastic customers from all walks of life are eager to be a part of the ‘great revolution’ of putting their faces where one could previously only imagine the face of Mahatma Gandhi or Jawaharlal Nehru, or a grand monument. Accordingly, Jolly and I had printed the perforated stamps sheets of all the four varieties at Ernakulam Philatelic Bureau by June 2014.

D 049941

My Stamp

पैजी Pansy

India Postage- My Stamps- Sunny series.

B 060704

My Stamp

देहलिया Dahlia

India Post - My Stamp- series- Jolly-1

## Chapter-32

### Children's careers & marriage

**Our** daughter Tanura, upon completion of her Pre-degree from BCM College, Kottayam joined Karunya Engineering College, Coimbatore for her B.E degree in Computer Science & Engineering by 1995. Actually, from the beginning itself we injected some type of aversion towards the medical subjects into our children and both of them opted only for the Maths subject for their college studies. Tanura passed her Pre-degree with distinction from M.G University and was the best outgoing student of the 1995 batch of BCM College. By virtue of her good marks, she could manage to get admission in the “**Karunya Institute of Technology**”, **Coimbatore** under the Management quota. Initially we tried for her admission in some of the Colleges like “Hindustan Engineering College” and “Sathya-Bhama” Engineering Colleges at Madras but at the last moment after getting the Pre-degree exam mark list and then only we tried at Karunya. Actually, when the results were announced, I was at Ruwais, Abu Dhabi and Jolly alone was in Kerala at that time and suddenly when they were about to submit the application for Karunya, there was no body to accompany Jolly and Tanura to Coimbatore. Finally, Mathew Daniel also went along with them and submitted the application at Karunya. One way, Tanura is very much indebted to Mr. Mathew for getting her Engineering admission in Karunya. At that time Karunya was considered to be one of the best Colleges in Tamil Nadu and actually the admission was not that much difficult as we expected, due to her high marks for the Pre-degree subjects and had to pay only the fees at the Management rate of fifty thousand rupees per annum. But due to some sort of Management hanky-panky business we were forced to pay four years fees as a lump sum of two lakhs as one-time payment.

Everything was fine in “**Karunya**” for the first year. But for the first time in the history of Karunya, their second year started with some sort of ragging and other problems and finally wound up with utter disturbances like Police cases etc for lots of male students. Tanura was forced to undergo her second-year studies at certain tuition centres of Kottayam. But by the Grace of God, she could score good marks for her second-year exams also. After the strikes and other agitations, the Karunya atmosphere has changed drastically but the impact lasted for one more year and finally everything settled for good and Tanura has completed her B.E degree with distinction and one among the two first rank holders of Karunya. Upon completion of her Engineering degree, Tanura went for the **MCSE** studies at Ernakulam for about 5 months and completed all her studies by November 1999.





Tanura at Abu Dhabi - 2001

On 15<sup>th</sup> February 2000, Tanura, upon receiving the residence visa under my sponsorship, came to Ruwais, Abu Dhabi in order to find out some suitable placement somewhere in Abu Dhabi or Dubai. Actually, when I brought her to Abu Dhabi, I was not having any idea about her employment but I was thinking about some type of Computer studies at Abu Dhabi so that she can get some acquaintances with the computer firms and try for some sort of job prospects etc. Our place Ruwais being 250 Km away from Abu Dhabi, everything looked difficult but the course of action was different. After reaching Ruwais, she made some job applications through the Internet and the next day the **Cosmos Software** Company personnel had called her for an interview at Abu Dhabi as early as possible. Since I was on night shift we couldn't go to Abu Dhabi and finally the interview was fixed over telephone on 17<sup>th</sup> Thursday. To our great surprise, after the interview, the GM Mr. **Madani** selected Tanura as **Computer Engineer** for **Cosmos Software** Company for a gross salary of Dh 3000/- pm and asked us to join on the same day itself. But we were not prepared for these surprises and finally agreed to join on 21<sup>st</sup> Monday. Actually, everything happened like a miracle. Tanura arrived Ruwais on one Monday and by the next Monday she joined for duty at Cosmos Software, Abu Dhabi. In fact, upon her arrival at Ruwais I also promised her to do my cooking jobs for a monthly salary of Dh 500/- pm and she readily agreed for that also! Luckily, she didn't get the chance to do the cooking jobs. Next problem was that of getting an accommodation for Tanura at Abu Dhabi. Jolly's cousin Kunjuchayan's daughter Sincy and Husband Biju promised to give her an accommodation in their house at Abu Dhabi and that helped us a lot to solve the accommodation problem for her.

The job for Tanura was a challenging one and she could manage it very well with out any problems. Tanura's Company Secretary was a Philippine lady and she was staying with her family just opposite to their Office building and she offered her one room for her stay in the same flat with all the cooking facilities etc for Dh 900/- pm. This was really a good offer and she has accepted it and continued there for more than two years till her transfer to Dubai after marriage. Tanura liked her job with Cosmos Software and as such there was no need for looking for some other jobs elsewhere in UAE. Immediately after completing one-year service with them, they gave her an increment of Dh 1000/- and accordingly her gross salary became Dh 4050/- pm with effect from March 2001.

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**During** all these days we were actually searching for some suitable alliances for Tanura but nothing could be materialized at this period. On 3rd April 2001, suddenly our Amamma expired at Keezhvaipur and before itself she was not actually well and quite some time for two three occasions was in Thiruvalla Hospital. Tanura and I were outside India during that time and we both went to Kerala on emergency vacation and attended the burial and other formalities.

There is an interesting story about Amamma and her fondness for the TV serials. About one year prior to her expiry, she was in the serious condition at the Intensive Care Unit of the Thiruvalla Hospital and after removing the Oxygen tubes from her nose, the first enquiry from Amamma was about the happening in one of the Asianet serials playing in the TV at that time. Actually, she got the miraculous escape from the bed ridden condition due to the regular viewing of these TV serials and in fact after this incident she lived in this world for one more year and her death on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2001 was a real shock for everybody. In view of the baptism ceremony of Gigimon's (Kunjumonachachen's son) daughter, on 2<sup>nd</sup> April, Jolly was in Madras and after the death of Amamma at 0010 hrs on 3<sup>rd</sup>, she came back to Kerala by Indian Air Lines flight in the morning. Tanura and I could manage to get the Gulf Air flight to Cochin via Muscat to reach Kottayam by early morning on 4<sup>th</sup>. Amamma's burial was conducted at Mallappally Mar Thoma Church cemetery on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2001. She was just 71 at the time of her death.

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**Out** of many proposals for Tanura, only two or three were good and acceptable to every body and finally settled with Vittil from Ernakulam. Vittil, eldest son of Mr. T.M Thomas belongs to the Thannikottu family from Nedumbasserry. Mr. T.M Thomas was working as Panchayath Special Secretary at that time and later retired as Panchayath Auditor from Ernakulam. Vittil completed his SSLC from **Kalamasserry Rajagiri** High School and was the school captain and the best out going student of the whole School and gained a good reputation among the students and teachers. We could get good acclaim from many of his colleagues, junior students and others on many occasions with respect to his performance at

the Rajagiri High School, Kalamasserry. Afterwards he has completed his Pre-degree from **St. Paul's College** and got his B.A degree in English Literature from Hyderabad. Vittil was having an urge for the Aero planes Pilot's course and one way or other it couldn't be materialized and later he has concentrated in the IAS studies and was able to pass the "**I.A.S Preliminary Exams**". Later upon completion of his MCSE, joined the "**Global Shipping Company**", **Dubai** as Computer Engineer by May 2000. During his career with the Global Shipping Company, Vittil took his **MBA** degree from the Madura Kamaraj University by 2002. But Tanura's marriage with Vittil could be settled only by the third week of January 2002 and by that time we had a detailed discussion and understanding with Vittil and his family after the arrival of Jolly from Kerala to Ruwais on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2002. Afterwards, as per our understanding, Vinod, Shiny, Shajimon, Suja and Daisy visited the house of Vittil at Kanjoor and discussed with the settlement and other formalities. All the initial stumbling ice blocks melted out and the way was cleared for the marriage at the earliest opportunity. Other initial preparations were made at Abu Dhabi and Dubai and we decided to conduct the marriage fixation ceremony at Kottayam on 1<sup>st</sup> April and the marriage at Ernakulam on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2002.



Tanura's marriage with Vittil on 4-4-2002 at Ernakulam

**Jolly** left for Kottayam again on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2002 for the necessary arrangements and eventually Tanura and myself left for Kottayam by the third week of March and Vittil by 27<sup>th</sup> of March. Other ceremonial functions were conducted during this period and the Fixation ceremony was at **Windsor Castle Hotel**, Kodimatha, Kottayam on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2002, which was attended by about 300 personnel from Vittil and our side. Marriage was conducted on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2002 at **St. Francis Assisi Cathedral**, Ernakulam and afterwards the reception was conducted at the **Avenue Centre** of Panampilly Nagar, Ernakulam and was

attended by about 750 personnel from both sides. Few of the VIPs who attended the reception were Ministers K.V Thomas, T.M Jacob and MLAs like Johnny Nelloor, Domanic Presentation and the film star "Abhi" etc.

**Couple of the Week**  
**Vittil & Tanura**  
 Thannikottu House, Kanjoor, Kalady.

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**Alapatt Jeweller's couple of the week 10/4/2002**

Vittil & Tanura were selected as the “Couple of the week” by ‘Alapatt Jewellers’ of Ernakulam by 10/4/2002 and was rewarded accordingly. After the marriage, Tanura was fortunate enough to get transfer to her Company office at Dubai and ultimately moved to Dubai for family abode with Vittil by May 2002.

Our son, **Ruwais Sunny**, happened to be in the last batch of the Kerala Pre-degree system and upon completion of the PDC, joined the Maharaja Engineering College, Coimbatore and completed the Mechanical Engineering by 2006 and started his career in an entirely different field of the Shipping business. By September 2007, Vittil took the overall charge as Managing Director of “**Montana Shipping- LLC**” with the transfer of the partner ship from Ruwais Sunny to Vittil Thomas and the formation of the subsidiary company- “**Power Drive- LLC**” rent a car firm, registered in Sharjah, UAE and was in full swing operation under the Managing Director Ruwais Sunny. The Sharjah based “Power Drive”- rent a car firm was purchased by Ruwais Sunny with the eventual transfer of his operations from Dubai to Sharjah. ‘Power Drive’ company operations had to be stopped during the recession period of 2009 and Ruwais Sunny had to be satisfied with his new Career with “German Rent a Car” firm by 2010.



Ruwais Sunny's marriage with Anu Mariam Zachariah was conducted on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2007 at Kottayam. Anu, the second child of Kayamkulam "[Pallihottathu Medayil](#)" Thankachen and Molly, completed her B.E degree in Computer Engineering by that time and after the marriage, moved to the Dubai abode of Ruwais Sunny by July 2007.

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*Ruweis with Deputy Dubai Ruler Sheikh Maktoum & Emirates CEO Sheikh Ahmed at Arabian Travel Mart 5-5-2013*



*Tanura with E Commerce award from Chamber of Commerce, Dubai-2005*



Tanura Sunny, a computer engineer profession, is the project manager for many award-winning projects of Electronic Village such as 'Alwaraq' that won the Best E-content award and 'Ibn Battuta-Arab Centre of Geographic Literature' that won the Sheikh Zayed Award. Electronic Village, a software development company based in UAE, is the cultural partner of UNESCO in the Middle East.

Tanura is also heading the Ibn Battuta project in India which is in league with UNESCO's Silk Route project.





## Chapter-33

### Holy land tours

**After** three of our London trips, it was our desire to visit the **United States** and the “**Holy Lands**” of Jerusalem but one way or other it was delayed until “**Travel Corporation of India’s**” Jerusalem tour programmes by May 2006. Actually, the option was from Vittil’s father Thomachen who was blessed with the new ‘**Indian Passport**’ after his retirement from Kerala Government Service by February 2006. Thomachen’s offer to join the tour programme was readily accepted as it was coinciding with our Leave programmes during April-May 2006. Tanura was pregnant for the second time by early 2006 and leaving her at Dubai was also painful especially for Jolly.

Our **Jerusalem** tour programme by TCI was started from Trivandrum on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2006. Overall, 36 people constituted our tour party including Father Antony and TCI representative Mr. Augustine. Our initial destination was **Alexandria** in **Egypt** via Doha by Qatar Airways flight. From Alexandria onwards all our journey was in the tourist buses and the accommodation and food were all arranged by TCI at different places under the package and we didn’t have to pay anything additionally other than the “**tourist guide’s**” tips and other personal shopping expenses etc. From Alexandria we traveled for about 4 hours and reached **Cairo** by the same evening on 13<sup>th</sup>. We had a boat cruise with the dinner at **River Nile** on the same night and the next day we visited different Pyramids, Egyptian Sphinx and other Old Churches at Cairo and left for the **Sinai** area through the **Suez Canal** tunnel. En-route to Sinai we could visit “**Moses’ Marra Well**” of the Old Testament where Moses turned the sour water into sweet water during Israeli exodus. We stayed at the Sinai Hotel on that day and next day we had our visit to Sinai St Catherine Monastery and the Church at the Sinai Mountains of Egypt. “**Moses’ burning bush**” and “**Jacob’s Well**” are situated in this Monastery which is under the control of the Greek Priests. Afterwards, we traveled to the Egyptian boarder for the exit from Egypt and for the final entry into Israel at the Taba boarder.

After our check in at the Israel Taba boarder, we had to travel for about 6 hours in order to reach **Jerusalem** and our journey was through the coastal areas of the **Red Sea** and the **Dead Sea** under Israeli control and at the opposite we could clearly view the Jordan jurisdiction areas. On the way, besides the Dead Sea we could see the famous “**Loath’s wife’s salt statue**” partially with the salt and sandy outlooks. (The Lord in anger sent fire and brimstone to destroy the Biblical land of Sodom and Gomorrah. Loath and his wife escaped with their two daughters. But Loath’s wife looked back at the burning places of Sodom and Gomorrah and became a pillar of salt.) Out of our 10 days tour programme, the major portion of 5 days was scheduled entirely for Jerusalem Holy lands and the rest was programmed for Egypt and Jordan. Our 5 days stay in Jerusalem was in two

different hotels namely **Kibut Hotel** in the outskirts of Jerusalem and the other was **Shalom Plaza** hotel at the Galilee Lake area.

Our first day Jerusalem tour covered **New Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Olive Mountain** etc with the distant glimpse of the “**Dome of the Rock**” and the “**Al Aska Mosque**” under the control of the **Palestinians**. First, we visited the “**Basilica of Agony**” and tomb of St Mary at New Jerusalem and proceeded to Ein Karee, located in the hills next to a little spring. This was the city of Judah and birth place of John, the Baptist, son of Elizabeth & Zachariah and the Church of Visitation. Then on to **Bethlehem**, which is located in the Judah province under the control of the **Arabs** and the Israelis are not allowed to go inside but all the tourists are readily allowed. Our Israeli bus and tourist guide were not allowed to enter Bethlehem and accordingly another tourist bus with another guide was arranged by the TCI package. En-route to Bethlehem, our guide made some sarcastic comments about our Palestinian bus driver. He commented as if we were all very lucky to get the “**Second best driver of the Middle East**” for our short journey to Bethlehem. Suddenly everybody turned at the driver with all the admirations for which he was only smiling. I was sitting besides the guide and I raised the query to the guide – “**Who is the first best driver of the Middle East and where is he now?**” “**The first best driver of the Middle east is already dead due to car accident**”- was his instantaneous reply!

It was at **Bethlehem** where the Angel announced the birth of Jesus to the Shepherds of Bethlehem during the reign of King Herod. Also, here David tended his flocks until he was anointed King of Israel. We then visited the **Church of Nativity** – the birth place of Jesus and the city of David etc. Our guide in **Bethlehem** was a Christian and after our tour he requested us to pray for the lasting peace for their country Palestine. All the Palestinians in the **Gaza Strip, Jericho and Bethlehem** are living in a chaotic condition under constant threat from the Israeli's. The “**Dome of the Rock**” and “**Al Aska Mosque**” was built on the other side of the Jerusalem “**Wailing wall**” after the destruction of the Jerusalem Church by AD 70 and still continues to be under Palestinian's control.

We then visited the **Mount of Olives** and had the panoramic view of Jerusalem. We walked along the Palm Sunday Road down to the Chapel and the **Garden of Gethsemane**, where Jesus prayed while Judah betrayed Him to Romans. Then we continued our journey by foot to Dominos Flavit where Jesus wept over eminent destruction of Jerusalem and finally returned to the Hotel.

Next day we passed through the City of Emmaus and visited the Old Jerusalem city covered by the big wall on four sides with 8 doors. We visited the **Bethesda Pool** and Mary's parent's house where the Church was built by AD 900. Then we followed the **14 Stations of the Cross to Golgotha**, the place where Jesus was crucified marking significant events along the route. Also, we could see the Pilate's Judgment Hall and the place where the Roman soldiers scourged Jesus and placed a crown of thorns on His head. Early tradition held that Pontius Pilate stood here and presented Jesus to the crowd. The last 5 Stations of the Cross are inside the **Church of the Holy Sepulcher** visible from the distance with silver

domes. Then we went through Jewish quarter to the “Wailing Wall”, which is the Holiest place for the Jewish religion. Also “The Tomb” widely believed to be part of the stone that covered Jesus Tomb. Visited the St Mark Convent, the traditional site where Mary went to sleep after Cruzification, Last Supper Room, where we remembered the last supper and the descent of the Holy spirit upon the Apostles on Pentecost and finally the “Tomb of King David”.

Next day we went for the visit of “Dead Sea” where we stopped at the private beach and took the opportunity to float in the salty buoyant water, rich in minerals. The Dead Sea is situated at ~450 meters below sea level with the water depth of ~ 450 meters is the lowest point on the earth’s surface, is shrinking as its salty waters rapidly dry up. Every time you go there, the beach is further and further away. Too salty to sustain life, the Dead Sea is a draw for tourists who come to float in its greasy-feeling buoyant brine water. Devotees also believe its waters and the mud at the margins are good for the skin. You can only float in the Dead Sea waters and if you are at the “swimming position” surely you will go down!



A tourist covered with mud stands on Dead sea shore

The Dead Sea has been shrinking for decades as the inflow dwindles from its main source, the Jordan River. Israel, Jordan and Syria rely on the river and its tributaries to meet the needs of increasing populations and agriculture in the arid region, and diversions have slowed the biblical river to a muddy trickle. Mineral extraction industries also played a part by helping to accelerate evaporation. The

Dead Sea is not expected to disappear entirely because it is fed by underground water sources and winter rainfall. As it shrinks, it also gets saltier, which in turn makes it harder for the remaining water to evaporate. While sea water contains mostly Sodium salts, the Dead Sea has much more Magnesium and Potassium.



**Women relax while bathing & floating in Dead sea.**

From Dead Sea we went to **Nazareth** where Jesus' father and mother lived and could see the work shop of Joseph. We had a good view of the Joppa, Caesarea and Haifa cities and visited the **Mount Carmel** at the **Tabor Hills (Maruroopa mala)** where Prophet Elijah defeated the false prophets of Baal. We had a good view of the **Galiilee Sea** (lake) and stayed at the Shalom Plaza hotel at Tiberius.

Next day we visited the Israeli part of the Jordan River and actually the Jordan River is only a small river and can never be compared with any of our famous rivers in Kerala. The Israeli part what we saw looked like a small "Thodu" which was covered by lot of trees etc on either side. The Jordan River is very famous for the baptism and we could see the baptism of one of the European or Far Eastern region families. This Jordan River is one of the sources for the water replenishment of the Dead Sea in addition to the rare rains in these regions. (The once mighty Jordan River, where Christians believe Jesus was baptised, is now little more than a polluted stream that could die very soon unless the decay is halted. As per Friends of the Earth, Middle East- Environmentalist's report, the famed river "has been reduced to a trickle south of the Sea of Galilee, devastated by over-exploitation, pollution and lack of regional management." More than 98% of the river's flow has been diverted by Israel, Syria and Jordan over the years. The remaining flow consists primarily of sewage, fish pond water, agricultural run-off and saline water. With out concrete action, the Lower Jordan River is expected to run dry. The river- which runs 217 KM s from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea- and tributaries are shared by Israel, Jordan, Syria and West Bank. Today the Jordan River is a brackish stream barely a few metres wide. A couple of

kilometers south of the Sea of Galilee- which is actually a lake- a dam cuts off the flow of the river. Just south of the dam, raw sewage gushes from pipes and that is the source of Lower Jordan River today. No one can say this is holy water and no one can say this is an acceptable state for a worldwide famous river. Every year, thousands of pilgrims take the plunge in the biblical river despite alarmingly high pollution. Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian communities along the Lower Jordan River, dump raw sewage into the river. Ironically, if the sewage stops flowing into the river the damage could be even greater unless additional measures are taken to reduce the salinity of the water by releasing huge amounts of fresh water into the river. Improving the flow of the Jordan River would also go a long way towards saving the Dead Sea, which is in turn withering rapidly.) After the Jordan River visit, we traveled through the borders of Israel and Jordan in order to exit from Israel and the ultimate entry to our final itinerary- the **Jordan** areas of the Biblical periods. Crossing of the Israeli border to Jordan was delayed for hours due to certain mis-happening with our tour party. Two of our tour participants absconded at Jerusalem and all the efforts by TCI to locate them couldn't be materialized and ultimately, they had to deposit 2000 U.S Dollars for the exit of the remaining tour party members. Israel is considered to be good harvest place for the job seekers by virtue of the good Dollar money for any type of the miscellaneous jobs. One can survive there hardly for some time until caught by the Israeli police. May be these foolish people have no belief in the efficiency of the Israeli Police and they have forgotten the fact that one day or other they will be caught and after retention in the jail for some time they will be deported to their respective countries. In fact, the TCI personnel were also aware of such a situation and they were really doubtful about these two people and they were closely tracking their whereabouts. But to everybody's surprise these two gentlemen nicely escaped from our party during our visit at the crowded Old Jerusalem city and never turned back. In fact, this was our dilemma and the ultimate delay at the Israeli border for the necessary exit to Jordan. Except for Palestinians, the tourists with valid Visas have no hardships or problems at any of these borders.

As per Biblical writings, I was of the opinion that all these "**Holy Lands**" are very beautiful places especially the **Canaan** area with the flow of "**honey and milk**" but contrary to my belief, the visit to these Holy Places proved to be a mere hoax in the sense that I could see only the barren deserts in all these areas with the few vegetation at some of the coastal areas of River Nile, Jordan River and the Galilee Sea or lake. All these fights between the Jews and Arabs are merely for the occupation of these barren lands. But the Gulf countries' deserts proved to be very good exceptions with their rich oil resources and the resultant developments in the recent few decades. In this context only, the importance of "**Gods own country**" comes into picture. I don't know who gave this adjective for our country- Kerala. For the last few years only, we are hearing all these things in connection with the tourist advertisements and celebrations etc. It is firmly believed that some body from an Advertising firm might have created this adjective for Kerala but in the true sense it originated from New Zealand as per our "**Shashi Tharoor**" of the United Nations. Based on this a new word also has occupied the latest updates of the English dictionary – "**Godzone**" from the pronunciation of the word "God's

own". (In the real sense it was Mr. K Jayakumar IAS, as Kerala Tourism Secretary has conceived the idea 'Gods own country' and was formulated in the tourism related advertisements of Kerala by around 2005.) If you want to learn more about the glory of Kerala, then you have to go to different places and compare the beauty of our small state with others. I don't think we can see at least one acre of barren land with out any vegetation in the entire state of Kerala. Our neighbouring Tamil Nadu may be an exception. Recently, Karnataka Minister Mr. J Alexander made a sarcastic comment on the issue as follows: - "If Kerala is God's own Country; Karnataka is the Country where God's own people live."

Our travel itinerary included two days stay at Jordan also for the final departure from Jordan Amman airport to Trivandrum via Doha. At Jordan boarder, we were accompanied by the TCI representative and we traveled directly to the Mount Nebo of Jordan where Moses spent his days and finally came up with the Ten Commandments etc. Pope John Paul recently visited these mountains and another memorial also is erected at the entrance of Mount Nebo. After Mount Nebo visit, we returned to Amman, Capital of Jordan and stayed at the Plaza hotel. We were not having any other programmes in Amman and after the city visit, we boarded our Qatar Airways flight to Doha from Amman Queen Alia International airport. At Doha airport we were having a gap of about six hours for our next connecting flight to Trivandrum. Most of our tour members had their good buy with a good bye from the Doha duty free for the ultimate departure for Trivandrum. Finally, we landed in our "Gods own country" by about 9'O clock on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2006.

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## Chapter-34

### Grand children & Montana shipping

**While** Tanura's pregnancy news was announced, Jolly and I were in London and it was on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2003 and I was doing my P & ID checks for Gasco's Train-3 Projects at Bechtel London Office. It was really glad and long-awaited news for everybody. Tanura and Vittil's daughter Olive was born on Friday, 18th June 2004 at Dubai "**Al Baraha**" Hospital by 2030 hrs. She had her normal delivery and Jolly was with her at the time of her delivery and there after for about six months till our vacation to India for the Christmas season of 2004.

The baptism of Olive was conducted at Kanjoor St Mary's Catholic Church on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2004. Actually, after the baptism ceremony of Olive, we were planning to visit the Nagapattinam area of Tamil Nadu but all our planning was cancelled due to the disastrous **Tsunami** or the "**killer waves**" event of 26th December 2004 at Nagapattinam, Nagercoil, Andaman's and other costal regions of Kerala like Arattupuzha, Karuanagappally and Alappad areas resulting from the disastrous earthquake originated from the Indonesian islands of Sumatra. The Indian Tsunami made devastating damages to the coastal regions with the major impact at the Nagapattinam and the Andaman areas.



**Sunny & Jolly with grand children Olive & Vine on 14-10-2012 at Dubai.**



On 14<sup>th</sup> October 2006, we were blessed with our second grand child – **Vine**, who was born as the second child of Tanura and Vittil. They are also lucky enough to get unique names for both of their off-springs- **Olive & Vine**. We were also wondering very much on these novel names. Once again three cheers for our Tanura & Vittil. Actually, grandchildren are a source of great delight, you get all the joy but none of the responsibility and when they get tiresome, you just hand over them back to their parents. But this was not the case with our children and I think, it is a universal phenomenon also. During the upbringing process majority of the parents are not actually deriving any pleasure out of the deeds of their younger ones. In other words, the grand parents are just giving undue advantages to their grand children.

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**Vittil**, by virtue of his Shipping Company experience, formulated one joint venture company – “**Montana Shipping-LLC**” and it was registered as partnership firm with a local Arab and Ruwais Sunny in Dubai by March 2006. Vittil was working as General Manager of “**Carrier Connections Shipping Company**” during this period and every thing was suitable for the start-up of the new Shipping Company at Dubai. By the time Ruwais had just completed his Engineering studies and the time was ripe for him to start with an entirely different field. Registration and set up of the Office formalities were completed by July 2006 at Dubai – Karama area and the shipping operations- like Chartering of Ships, Freight containers, Ware Housing leasing etc were started by that time under the leadership of Mr. **Visnukanth**, the GM and **Ruwais Sunny**, the Sales Co-ordinator under overall control by the Managing Director Mr. **Vittil**. Later by September 2007, the Montana Shipping firm partnership deeds were transferred to Vittil Thomas with the purchase and registration of the Sharjah based rent a car company – **Power Drive** - as a subsidiary company under the control of the Managing Partner Ruwais Sunny and developed to the full swing operations.

March 19<sup>th</sup> 2008 was an auspicious day for Vittil Thomas and the Montana Shipping Company. Vittil became the proud owner of the ship “**AL DIYAR**”. 1976 model, 2800 metric tonnes summer dead weight “Al Diyar” was purchased by **Vittil** and **Sanjay Sharma** of Uttar Pradesh for US \$ 800,000-00 with the equal partnership deeds and was christened and registered as “**OCEAN PROJECT**” and was put into operation in the India-Gulf sector.

Vittil’s shipping business was thriving nicely for quite long time and unfortunately, they couldn’t withstand the Global Economic Recession of the 2009-10 periods and finally they were forced to give-up their equity for good in the shipping business. Later Vittil Thomas and Associates has purchased and established the “**Wellcare Shipping Company**” at Karama, Dubai by February 2015 and that business also had to be abolished due to heavy loss and other problems. Ruwais Sunny’s “Rent a Car” business also was discontinued and had to be contented with his new employment with “**German Rent-A-Car**” Company as ‘Sales Executive’. Upon completion of about 5 years in the ‘Rent A Car’ business, Ruwais Sunny has joined the ‘**Emirates- NBD**’ bank by April 2015 as

'Relationship Officer' and finally moved to **Al Futtaim Motors**, Dubai as 'Retail Sales Executive' by November 2015 and hope to continue with the new car business again.



Sunny family Kottayam 16/4/2008 L/R- Ruwais, Anu, Sunny, Jolly, Tanura & Olive, Vittil & Vine

**After** the long wait for about 10 years, our son Ruwais and wife Anu were blessed with the twin boy and girl off-springs by 10<sup>th</sup> March 2017 and was named as **Cayenne** and **Rayenne**. Their car craze father Ruwais was very much interested in the Porsche Cayenne model car and his long-cherished desire was to select that name, if at all any baby boy is born for them. These precious gifts from heaven were christened and joined as the junior members of our Manganam St. Peter's Mar Thoma church by 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2017.

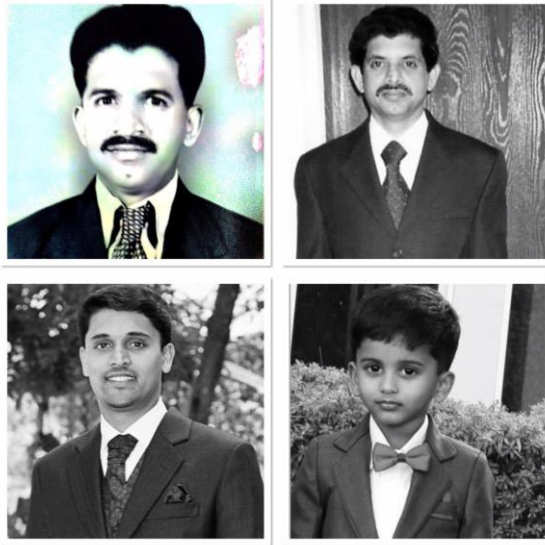
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Cayenne & Rayenne baptism on 16/9/2017



Cayenne & Rayenne under lock-down -28/4/2020



Four generations of Azhakath family



Cayenne & Rayenne 2-5-2020

## Chapter-35

### American tour – May 2009

**An** American tour programme was in our planning even before the “Holy Land” tour and actually the U.S tour could only be materialised by May 2009. Finally, everything was prepared for 2008 but we were fortunate enough to get the U.S Visa only by October 2008 and by that time the Tourist season ended in the U.S and everything had to be postponed for 2009. We got the multiple entries Visa from the Abu Dhabi U.S Consulate for 10 years and hereafter we can visit U.S as a tourist any time with in this 10-year period. Initially we planned with SOTC and later changed to “GnS Leisure Travels” tour programme from Kochi under the leadership of “GnS” Manager Mrs Nalina Pothuval for 20 days U.S visit inclusive of the luxury Ship Cruise to Bahamas with effect from 13<sup>th</sup> May 2009. (It was a mere coincidence that our Jerusalem tour also was on 13<sup>th</sup> May of 2006.) Over and above the tour programme, we extended our stay for 5 more days in order to visit our relatives at New York, Washington, Philadelphia, New Jersey etc. and returned to Dubai by 5<sup>th</sup> June 2009.

One of the stumbling blocks at the time of our American tour was that of the outbreak of the “Swine flu” from Mexico by March 2009 and the subsequent spreading of the “flu” to America and other European countries. But during our 25 days stay in America, we couldn't feel any of the “Swine flu” symptoms through out the American states and the real hoax was all in our Indian Airports.

Our tour party constituted 30 personnel from different walks of life and of different age groups including a few retired Senior citizens all hailing from different parts of Kerala. Senior most were Mr Prakasham, retired Syndicate Bank Manager from Kochi, Retired Professor Mr Govindan mash from Trivandrum; Mr Ravindran Achary - Retired Librarian from Trivandrum, Mr. & Mrs George- retired Bank Manager from Calicut and Mr M.A Ravi and Mrs Agnus Ravi. (Ravi is originally from FACT and was known to me during my Saudi Aramco career at Ras Tanura and his wife Professor Agnus has retired as Chemistry Head of the Department from St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam). Few others with out the family were Mr Divakaran Parasala- Film Producer, Script Writer and Businessman ([Mr. Parasala Divakaran expired on 7-2-2012 at Trivandrum](#)), Mr. Chandra Mohan- Advertising Company Manager from Trivandrum, Mr. Lakshmananan – Bank Secretary from Wayanad, Mr John- Proprietor of Jackson Medicals, Kottayam and his brother-in-law Mr. Anil Cherian - Businessman from Pathanamthitta. Others with the family were Mr. & Mrs Abraham Sir - Correspondant and Principal of St Joseph's School, Hyderabad, Dr. Eapen and Shanthy from Kurichy, Public Prosecutor Mr. Sreeshan and Dr. Reetha Sreeshan from Trivandrum, Dentist Dr. Suresh and Mrs Sreeja Suresh from Perumbavoor along with their daughter Architechural Engineering student Miss Suja, Mr Kunjachen Chettan and Licy Kunjachen- Rice Businessman from Angamaly, Mr Ramachandran Nair and Shyamala of ex. Reuter News Agency staff from Abu Dhabi and Chalakudy Tile Factory

Businessman Mr. Davis and Mrs. Reena Davis. Davis brought their mother also along with them and they actually joined our tour party only at Washington.

Our U.S journey started from Kochi by the Emirates flight to Dubai on 13/5/2009 and from Dubai to Washington DC by United American Airlines. The Dubai-Washington non-stop flight took about 13 hours for the journey to reach Washington DC by ~ 7 am on 14/5/2009. Actually, the Indian time is 9.5 hours ahead at the Atlantic east coast area and ~ 12.5 hours at the Pacific west coast area with the average time difference at the middle of the United States that can be considered as 11 hours ahead. We had our stay at the Spring Hill Suites of the **Marriot hotel resorts** at Washington DC for two days and visited most of the important places like White House, Watergate complex, Washington monument, Lincoln Memorial, Vietnam Memorial, Korean Memorial, Supreme Court building, World War-II memorial, FBI building and the famous Parliament building at the Capitol Hill. At the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum we could get the unique opportunity of viewing different aircraft models and displays like the Wright Brothers first aircraft and the piece of stone from the Moon.

Later we left for **New York** by United airlines flight and during our two days stay at New York; we had the cruise to the Liberty Island to see the famous American icon of freedom -**The Statue of Liberty**. Later we had our guided panoramic city tour of New York and the stroll through the streets of Central Manhattan and the wonderful sights of the United Nations building, Rockefeller Centre and the New York Stock Exchange in the Wall Street. At the "**Empire State building**" we enjoyed the panoramic aerial view of the New York City from the 88<sup>th</sup> floor. We also got an opportunity to pay homage to the hundreds of innocent lives lost at what was once the **World Trade Centre**, now more easily recognized as "**Ground Zero**" where the new monument is being constructed as a memorial to the 2001 September 11<sup>th</sup> attack and down fall of the "**Word Trade Centre**".

From New York, we went to **Niagara** by coach and had our good glimpse of the **Niagara water falls** at the U.S and the Canada sides. Our hotel was conveniently located at a walking distance from the Niagara Falls State Park. We had the "**Maid of the Mist**" boat ride followed by the '**Cave of the Winds**' walk into the heart of the mighty horse shoe falls and could experience the exhilarating force of the Niagara. It was a fantastic journey through crashing waters surrounded by massive rock formations. The Niagara Falls magistically lit-up in the night was an awe-inspiring sight.

From Niagara we went to **Las Vegas** – the gambling capital of the world - at the West coast via Washington on 20<sup>th</sup> May by the United Airlines flight and stayed at the Las Vegas "**Stratosphere**" hotel for two days. Las Vegas is actually a small valley city spread around 25 square kilo meters, surrounded by desert and mountains. Las Vegas is famous for its "**Casino**" and its impact we could feel even at the Airport. Airport itself is fully equipped with all the Casino centres and the passengers also can try their luck at one of the many casinos. Another peculiarity we could notice at the Las Vegas airport was the availability of the "**VIP**



limosine taxi sevice" and the airport is fully packed with the limousines and to locate one of the normal taxis was very difficult in fact. In the evening, we enjoyed an illumination tour of 'Las Vegas by Night', followed by the exciting and memorable experience of our life – the dazzling Helicopter ride over the famous Las Vegas strip. At the centre of the Las Vegas city, they have constructed the replica of all the Seven Wonders of the World like Eiffel tower, Statue of Liberty etc. and other exotic sights of the massive shopping complex - Caesar Palace Forum, New York Skyline, Bellagio fountains and the Venetion Clock Tower of St. Mark's Square.

Grand Canyon air tour- is the latest attraction of the Las Vegas to see the Nature's breathtaking master pieces closely as you fly above the rugged wilderness. As advance booking was needed for this Grand Canyon tour, no body from our group was fortunate enough to participate in this adventurous ride.

From Las Vegas we traveled by the long-distance Coach Service to Los Angeles and had our city tour on the first day including the magnificent Beverly Hills and the famous Oscar award arena of the Kodak Theatre. Recently the Kodak theatre was in the Indian TV shows due to the 2008 Oscar awards by **A.R Rahman** and **Rasool Pookutty** for their music and sound mixing performances in the Hollywood movie – "The Slumdog Millionaire". Next day we had our panoramic tour of the famous "Universal Studios"- "The Entertainment Capital of Los Angeles"- and could join with the work place of famous Hollywood stars, relaxed in the comforts of a tram car as it took us behind the scenes to show you how Hollywood makes movies. Actually, the Universal Studios tour was a spectacular one with the everlasting memories in our mind. Our journey to **San Franciso** from Los Angeles was by United Airlines flight and we spent only one day in San Francisco with the city tour including **the San Francisco Golden Gate Bridge** – the world's longest single span suspended bridge and the visit to The Twin Peaks – with a spectacular view of the entire San Francisco. We spent few hours at the Fisherman's Wharf, Pier 39 and enjoyed the fabulous views of the harbour including the sight of hundreds of sea lions resting on wooden platforms. The entire San Francisco city is built on the valley as well as the hilly areas and this particular type of city was a new experience for most of our people.

From San Francisco West coast, we had the longest flight for about 6 hours to the South-east **Orlando** where the climatic condition was little bit hot, humid and rainy at times. At **Florida / Orlando** area we stayed for three days and out of that, two days were spent exclusively for **the Walt Disney World of Entertainments**, the EPCOT and the Magic Kingdom. Finally, the long awaited luxury Ship Cruise from **Florida Miami** to **Bahamas** for three days by the "**Carnival Sensation**". Actually, after watching one of the TV shows by Cine actor **Lalu Alex**, the urge for the ship cruise was in our mind and during our initial discussion with the GnS Travel itself we insisted for the '**Ship Cruise**' at any cost. Out of our tour gang of 30, only 4 were opted out of the ship cruise and we can proudly conclude that this was one of the best items of our tour agenda. After completing the Imigration formalities at Port Carniveral, we started our cruise on "Carnivel Sensation" by ~ 4 pm on 28<sup>th</sup> May and reached Bahamas by ~ 12 noon on 29<sup>th</sup> after the sea cruise



for about 20 hrs at the cruise speed of about 18 nautical miles. During our stay at Bahamas, we had a city tour including the visit to the famous “[Atlantis Hotel](#)”. Pop Star [Michael Jackson](#) was having a permanent suite at the Bahamas Atlantis Hotel. (Later after about one-month Michael Jackson expired on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2009 at Los Angeles).

The “[Carnivel Sensation](#)” cruise was a thrilling experience with all the entertainments like spectacular stage shows, live music and orchestras, variety of clubs, bars and lounges, comedy acts and international singers, Spa and fitness programmes, Variety of Duty-free shopping centres, Casinos, bingos and other games, Variety of pools and 24 hours dining facilities at various restaurants. In fact, 24 hours free dining was a hobby for most of the passengers and we consumed the maximum food during those three days! The ship has the capacity to accommodate and cater to the needs of more than 2000 passengers in addition to more than 1000 of its employees. After a stay of about 18 hours at Bahamus port, the Cruise ship started from there by about 6 am on 30-5-2009 and reached back at Miami port by about 7 am on 31-5-2009 and back to Washington DC International airport by about 7 pm on the same day from Orlando on United Airlines flight. We have discontinued our journey at Washington along with others like Davis & family, Prakasham Sir and Anil Cherian. All others returned to Kochi by United Airlines and Emirates flight via Dubai from Washington.

**As** we were planning to visit few of our relatives in Philadelphia, New York and New Jersey, we also discontinued our package tour programme at Washington and we were taken by Keezhvaipur Azhakath Mannumpurath Sunny to their house at Philadelphia from Washington Airport. Azhakath Mannumpurath Appachen’s only son Kunjuchayan and Thankamma Kochamma’s eight children and their families are in America for the last 30-35 years and the entire family is scattered around 10-15 square Kilometers of the Philadelphia suburbs. After the expiry of Kunjuchayan on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2004, Thankamma Kochamma is making her regular shuttle services among the children and their families and in fact she is having more than 30 family members at Philadelphia including grand children and great grand children. Along with Thankamma Kochamma we visited all their children and their families and actually it was really a get together of the Azhakath family in America. One thing I could notice among our contemporary Azhakath family members is that of their metamorphosis of the Indian English to the American style English and the funniest thing was that we couldn’t grasp any of the utterances of the U.S born Indian children.

Philadelphia is considered as the city of liberty and freedom and the famous Liberty Bell is synonymous with the American Independence. Philadelphia was the old capital of America and it was at the Independence Hall where George Washington drafted the U.S constitution. During our four days stay at Philadelphia and New Jersey we could visit all the historic places of these districts including the National Safari Park of New Jersey. One of the cousins of Jolly from Mundathanam - Leelamony and her husband Georgekutty took us to New Jersey for one day and was brought back to Philadelphia by Panachamoottil Saji. Owing

to time limitations we couldn't go for our Panachamoottil family visits at New York but fortunate enough to meet Saji, who was on business tour to New Jersey and Philadelphia on that day. Saji is the younger brother of Panachamoottil Sunny Achen and his elder sisters Amminny Amamma, Shanthy and Sheela and their families are at New York. Finally, we were brought back to Washington DC airport by Thankamma Kochamma, Jose and Rajan and had our return journey to Dubai by United Airlines flight at 10 PM on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2009 and after the non-stop journey for 13 hours we reached back at Dubai by 8-30 PM on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2009.

**The** strange thing about the American life is that of the non-availability of a fixed retirement age and through out all the Government offices like Airports, Airlines, Immigration, Customs and even at the Security departments also we could see very old Senior citizens only. The pathetic thing was that through out our American Air travel of more than 10 internal and external flights with the United Airlines, we couldn't come across a single young Air Hostess or Flight Steward, neither Black nor White. Few of these "young" ladies were really striving hard to read even with the specs! In America, as long as you are healthy, you can continue your job with the regular payment of all the taxes etc. Again, it was interesting to note that Britain and U.S are the only few countries in the World following the old FPS system (Foot, poundal & seconds) where as all other Nations are following the CGS system (Centimeter, gram & seconds). Even in India also the Metric system was made compulsory by 1960. All the travel and transportation systems are being represented by the "mile" system and the weight or mass systems are represented by the "pounds" rather than our familiar kilometers and kilograms. But in America the "left hand drive" system is followed unlike the "right hand drive" system of Britain and India.



**Jolly dwarfed by an American couple**

Another interesting aspect about the Americans is that of their obesity and the extra ordinary physique. Compared to other Nationalities, Americans are gigantic and 45% of them are obese and they live 69 healthy years. But in Japan only 2% of its adults are obese and they live 75 healthy years. India also 2% adults are obese but we live only 53 healthy years. As per the latest statistics, two third of the Americans are now obese or overweight, and the Americans have been slow to take the obesity epidemic seriously.

Another important thing is that nothing is free in America and you have to pay for each and every thing. Classic example is the Airlines industry. What ever may be the duration of the flight; if you want to eat something during the journey then you will have to carry some food with you. But we were lucky enough to get some sort of Dinner and Breakfast for our 13 hours non-stop journey to and fro Dubai – Washington with the United Airlines. We, Indians were always complaining about the poor service by our National carriers like Air India and Indian Airlines but actually comparing with other American and European Airlines we are getting the best and the royal services from our Airlines. If you want to use the trolley at the Airport, then also you will have to pay 4 Dollars not as cash but only through Credit card.

**Our** American journey was at the apt time of the recession period of 2008 & 2009 and as such we could get a clear picture of the developments currently being undertaken in the U S and to compare it with the developments of the UAE and other Gulf countries. It was really surprising that we couldn't notice any developmental or constructional activities any where in the U.S except for the Monument development at the "Ground Zero" area of New York where the memorial is being built for the downfall of the "World Trade Centre" on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001. Maybe we will have to wait for few years for the completion of this monument and the common Masses are not aware of the final shape of this important Memorial. Already the U.S has constructed three tall and curved concrete structures in memory of the "Pentagon" terrorist attack of 9 Eleventh. (US President Barack Obama officially inaugurated the "9/11- Monument" in the form of two fountains representing the twin towers of the World trade centre on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its downfall on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2011.) With respect to the constructional developments, I think, the UAE especially Abu Dhabi and Dubai have out numbered all other Nations. Even at this crucial recession period also lot of constructional activities being under taken in the Gulf Countries with drastic changes in the day-to-day images of the Cities.

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## Chapter- 36

### China tour- May 2011

**Our** China tour, even though it was in our agenda, happened to be an unexpected tour as the GnS travel itinerary was not coinciding with our leave programme of May 2011. But finally, we could manage to participate in the 10 days tour programme with effect from 18<sup>th</sup> May 2011 and for the second time also with the GnS group. This time our batch constituted 36 personnel, representing the multi-professional with the majority from the business wing and I was the sole representative of the Petroleum or the Refinery group.

**Col. Prasannakumar** was with the full family constituting the son Mr. Surej, son in law Mr. Harish along with the grand children and was confined to their family matters to a certain extent through out the tour. Mr. Vishnu Nampoorthy, retired IPS officer, Dr Pramod, Mr. Pradeep, Mohmood, Ibrahimkutty, Udayamperoor Jose Appappan, Moovattupuzha Mathew Ancheril, Banker Dinesh, Air force retired Sugathan Varkala, Mr Jose Rajan from Trivandrum and Prof. Dr. Jose Chander from Ettumannur were the bachelors of our group. Other Family groups were Calicut Customs Superintendent Mr. Rasheed, Muthoot Motors GM Mr. Balakrishnan from Udyogamandal, Mr. MCK Nair, textile businessman from Calicut and Rice businessman from Kottayam Mr. Thomas kutty Eapen. Mr. Balakrishnan was with his daughter Priyanka, who entertained us with lot of songs during the bus journey. We could get the maximum enjoyment from Customs Superintendent Mr. Rasheed, Jose Appappan, Thomaskutty and with the full recitation of Madhusoodhanan Nair poems by Banker Dinesh. Shanthakumari from Ernakulam, Valsala teacher from Alleppey, Susan Verghese from Kozhencherry and Jaimol Joy from Edappally along with her son represented the lady bachelors and out of that Ms Shanthakumari was the eldest of our group who has visited almost all the countries after retirement from the Food Corporation of India. Mr. Sathishkumar from Calicut was our GnS team leader who could gain wide acclaim from all the tour members for his quality leadership and gentle behavior.

**Our** journey started from Kochi Nedumbasserry airport by Sri Lankan Airways and it was mandatory to go via Colombo for all the Air Lanka flights. Accordingly, we were on transit in Colombo for about 24 hours and was effectively utilised for the sight seeing of Colombo and its suburbs. Other than the language, Sri Lanka looked like a ditto of Kerala but was not appealing to me like the advertised version 'Paradise on earth'. We stayed in the Dolphin Beach Hotel which was seriously affected by the Tsunami of 2004 and the ruins still bear's testimony for the devastating killer Tsunami. Our 7 hours flight from Colombo to Hong Kong was via Bang-kok and for our two days Hong Kong tour programme we stayed in Newton Inn hotel and later went to Macao Island by ferry and visited Macao and Taipa cities. Macao is considered as 'Las Vegas of Asia' and most of our group tried our luck at the famous Las Vegas style casinos. Our tour member Mr.

Mathew's brother Rev Jojo Ancheril who is working as a Priest of the Catholic Church in Macao Island, also accompanied our tour party from Hong Kong and his presence was very helpful for the entire tour party. From Macao we traveled to the Shenzhai airport by coach and by flight to Shanghai. From Shanghai airport we traveled to the city centre by the famous Magnetic train @ 300 KM/hr speed. Shanghai is a new city established and built within about 20 years with all the modern technologies and arrangements and really China can be proud and very well boast for this new city. In addition to the sight seeing and shopping we had a visit to the famous Yu Yuan gardens and the river cruise. After two days tour in Shanghai, we had an overnight travel by train to the Capital Beijing. During our two days stay in Beijing, we had a nice tour of the famous **Tiananmen Square** – the largest Public Square in the world and the “Forbidden City” Palaces of the erstwhile Emperors of China. Our Beijing tour concluded with the visit to the ancient “**Great Wall of China**” and the famous acrobatic show at the Beijing theatre. Both in Shanghai and Beijing we were accommodated in the “Holiday Inn Express” hotels with the Indian food arrangements through out the tour programme at different places and finally concluded with the real and horrible Chinese lunch in the true sense. Finally, from Beijing we traveled back to Colombo and after the transit stay at Colombo, we returned back to Kochi by morning on 28<sup>th</sup> May. Since 28<sup>th</sup> May was my last day of the vacation leave, I was forced to travel back to Dubai on the same day itself for joining my night shift duty on 29<sup>th</sup>.



**China Tour Tiananmen Square 25-5-2011**

## Chapter-37

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Re-birth & Australia- New Zealand tours

**Friday**, 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2014 can be considered as the second re-birth for Sunny & Jolly for which we are thankful to God for the miraculous escape from our 2<sup>nd</sup> serious car accident in our life. This 16<sup>th</sup> May was a significant day for the Indians also with the official declaration of the 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha election results, swept by BJP under the leadership of Narendra Modi. My brother Shaji and family were on a visit to UAE since 8<sup>th</sup> of May and upon completion of Dubai and other areas of UAE, we went for our Abu Dhabi visit after proclamation of the election results. Our abode was in Crowne Plaza hotel and after our visit to Shaikh Zayed Grand Mosque and on way to Marina mall area, my Toyota Camry Company car met with the severe collision accident with another Mitsubishi Pajero car at one of the traffic signal junctions of the Muroor road. Actual hitting was on the right back side door of our car where Jolly was sitting and as a result of the collision impact, Jolly was unconscious for sometime and later while trying to take her out of the car, she was screaming and then only everybody could realize that she is not dead. Jolly and Suja were admitted in the Hospital and later upon their discharge only I was released from the Police station. Jolly had some injury on her forehead and some bruises on her right leg. 'X'-Ray & Scanning tests didn't reveal any fracture or other major problems at that time. Traffic Police case was charged against me for crossing the red signal and causing the accident and was referred to the Traffic Court for the hearing on 10<sup>th</sup> June. My son Ruwais Sunny's passport was kept as surety in the Court and I was released for our vacation travel to India for our pre-planned tour programme to Australia & New Zealand. Finally, the case was closed and released with the Judgement fine of 2000 Dhirhams.

As per previous planning we went to India on 19<sup>th</sup> May along with Shaji George, Suja and Mynu. As Jolly was not having any major health problems after the car accident, we have started with our scheduled 12 days tour programmes to New Zealand & Australia by 24<sup>th</sup> May. This was our third trip with the GnS group and under the leadership of M/s Nalina Pothuval we could conclude our tour safely and nicely with all the required sight seeing visits to different areas of these countries. We had only 20 personnel with our group and as usual to a certain extent, the majority was from the retired group. Retired Bank Manager Mr. Antony & Mary from Kaloar, Koothattukulam Sreedhareeyam Arveda group MD Dr. Namboothiri & family, Retired BSNL DGM Mr. N.M Mathew and Dr. Charles Thomas from Thodupuzha and prominent businessmen like James & Rosamma from Trichur, Mr. P.L Joy & family from Angamali, Biju Mathew from Manarucad, V.K Jose from Kannur, P Sukumaran from Trichur, Jose Thomas, Domanic, Jose K Mathew & Heji Cherian – all were from the Thodupuzha area.

New Zealand is an oceanian island situated in the southwestern Pacific Ocean comprises mainly the North & South islands. North islands are famous for the



volcanism and the south islands are dangerous with the sharp mountain peaks. Our Singapore Airlines flight from Kochi to Auckland via Singapore took about 13.5 hours travel time for the eventual arrival in Auckland by midnight on 25<sup>th</sup>. World's first sunrise is taking place in New Zealand and is being followed by other eastern countries. Our visits to Waitomo Glow worm caves and the Rotorua Volcano Geo-Thermal Plants site area were really tremendous. Our Jetstar flight from Auckland to Queens Town airport of South NZ was really adventurous through the Snow Mountains and the proximity with the Antarctica.

Our visits to Australia were limited to two main cities Melbourne and Sydney. Other than Melbourne Cricket Club, Olympic stadium and Sydney Opera House, I couldn't see anything peculiar for these two cities and both looked like the traditional American or European cities. Our return Singapore Airlines flight from Sydney to Kochi via Singapore stop-over of about 20 hours could be utilized for the Singapore city tour with the eventual arrival at Kochi by midnight of 4<sup>th</sup> June 2014.



**Australia - New Zealand GnS tour group 1-6-2014**



## Chapter-38

### Sunny Days in Gulf News

**Noted** Journalist and Writer Mr. **Abdul Hamid Ahmed** from U.A.E, is the Editor in Chief of the English news paper "**Gulf News**" published from Dubai, whose elder son Mr. **Talal Al Zarooni** is my Shift Controller colleague in our Gasco shift group. Eventhough, I don't have any direct contact with Mr. Abdul Hamid, I could grasp a very good impression about him through our casual talks with Talal and accordingly I submitted one printed copy of my "**Sunny Days**" to Mr. Abdul Hamid and he could attain a lasting impression about me and my uninterrupted long service with Gasco in UAE and other Gulf countries. Immediately Mr. Abdul Hamid telephoned the "Gulf News" office in Dubai and told them to arrange an interview with me for publishing in their news paper. The same day itself, the Gulf News office telephoned me and asked for permission and willingness to conduct the interview and meeting with the staff reporter of Abu Dhabi. Accordingly, the "Gulf News" Abu Dhabi Staff Reporter Ms **Sarvy Geranpayeh** had an interview and meeting with me in their Abu Dhabi office and collected all the necessary information for their news publication. My wife, Jolly also was with me for our discussion and meeting with the staff reporter Ms **Sarvy**.



**Jolly with 'Gulf News' Staff Reporter Ms Sarvy on 19/11/2015**

# Veteran expat's dedication to job and UAE knows no bounds

AZHAKATH NAMED HIS SON RUWAIS AFTER AREA HE SPENT MOST OF HIS LIFE WORKING IN

**ABU DHABI**  
By **SUNNY GERANPAYEH**  
Staff Reporter

**S**unny Azhakath, known to everyone as Sunny Kutty, is a 65-year-old from Thiruvalla, in Kerala, India, whose devotion to his employer and to the UAE have led him to take some unusual decisions in his life.

Kutty moved to Abu Dhabi's Ruwais in 1980 and fell in love with the area to the extent that in 1982 when his son was born, he named him Ruwais.

He said he loves Ruwais so much that he has never considered living anywhere else in the UAE. "I like Ruwais, I like the quiet life," he said and his wife Jolly agrees. His family joined him in Ruwais in 1988.

Kutty's employer Gasco, a major producer of natural gas, soon became another significant part of his life. His dedication to his company led him to have the company's logo carved on the front door of his home in Kerala in 2006.

The logo symbolised some of the UAE's strong values — heritage, honour and respect — and he wanted all the things that were important to him, the UAE and his company, to be a constant part of his life.

"I love the UAE and I love Gasco, I have had such a long commitment to both. Getting a job in Gasco alone was a blessing. I am 100 per cent blessed by God," said Kutty.

His dedication to his company, which he joined in 1980, is reflected in his autobiography, *Sunny Days*, which was published last year. The book is as much a description of his life as it is of Gasco's growth in Ruwais.

His hard work and commitment to his company — the only one he has worked for since he arrived in the UAE — has not gone unnoticed. Kutty was supposed to retire five years ago, but he was asked if he could delay his retirement by five years and they obliged.

That contract ended on December 31 and he has been advised in the last couple of weeks that his employment will be extended by another year if he wishes to continue.

Kutty can barely hide his joy. "I am so happy and excited to continue my service for one more year! Really happy... a majority of my life has been here at Gasco and in Ruwais."

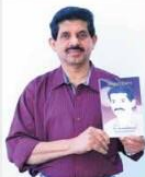
Kutty belongs to the small group of expatriates who have lived in the UAE for almost four decades. He has lived in the same house with his wife for 23 years and the pros-



Picture: Sunny Azhakath

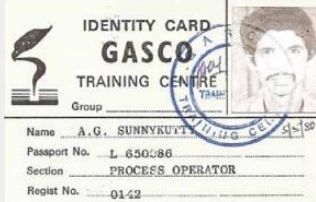
## Love at first sight

■ Sunny Azhakath and his wife Jolly with their children. He moved to Abu Dhabi's Ruwais in 1980 and fell in love with the area so much that he named his son Ruwais.



## Fond memories

■ Azhakath with his autobiography, *Sunny Days*, published last year.



## Early impressions

■ Azhakath's identity card at Gasco, which he joined in 1980.



## Close to the heart

■ Sunny Azhakath had his employer Gasco's logo carved on the front door when he built a house in Kerala in 2006.

pect of leaving everything he and his family have become familiar with over so many years to go back to India is enough to dampen his usually cheerful mood.

"I was preparing to go back

because I didn't know if my contract would be renewed. It was a painful time for me. Thank God... I am so grateful," he says.

His long stay in Ruwais has made him a chronicler of the

changes in the area. He recalls events with dates as if he was reading them out from an encyclopedia. "There was only a single-lane road to Ruwais then; the two-lane roads were constructed some time between 1986 to 1987," he said.

"Up to 1990s, we did not have public transportation facilities to the Western areas other than that of the petroleum companies. There was limited taxi service from Abu Dhabi city to the Western areas; now we have a bus every hour."

With his contract having been extended, Kutty looks forward to each day.

His long journey — from being a fertiliser plant operator in India to a shift superintendent in charge of full plant operation in one of the largest gas plant companies — is clearly a matter of pride for him, he says.

As per Ms Sarvy's promises, the article about Sunny Azhakath was published in Gulf News / Saturday, January 9, 2016 on Nation page A5 and the news write-up is quoted herewith as follows: -

### **Veteran expat's dedication to job and UAE knows no bounds**

AZHAKATH NAMED HIS SON RUWAIS AFTER AREA HE SPENT MOST OF HIS LIFE WORKING IN

ABU DHABI

By SARVY GERANPAYEH

Staff Reporter

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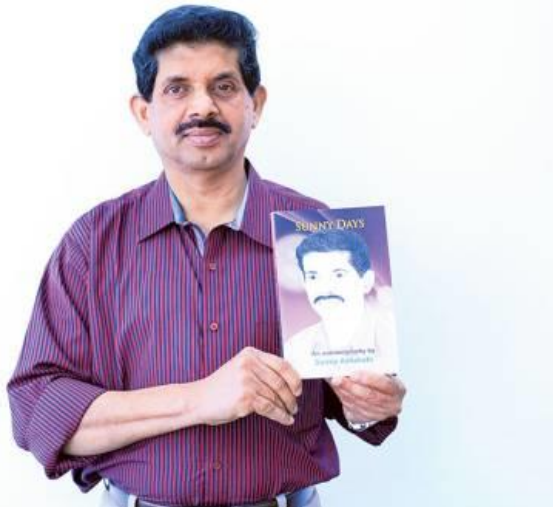
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- Fond memories – Azhakath with his autobiography, Sunny Days, published last year.

## Chapter 39

### Post retirement tours - India & Abroad

**Our** first post retirement trip was to Malayasia Kuala Lumpur which was started by 13<sup>th</sup> June 2018 for about 5 days. Actually, everything was planned by our Shajimon, my younger brother, who has arranged the trip through his travel agency friend Mr Sijo. Shajimon was with the entire family constituting Suja, Neenu and husband Sminju, daughter Enliva and younger daughter Mynu. So the whole trip was arranged by the travel Agency of Sijo whose father Georgekutty and mother who were conducting the private tours at Kuala Lumpur and they were accompanying us as real tourist guides. We stayed at the Cosmos hotel at Kuala Lumpur and visited the important places like Puthrajaya area, Giant Heights, Petronas twin Towers and other important places of Malayasia and returned back to Kochi by early morning of 18<sup>th</sup> June. On the same day itself Anu, along with the children Cayenne and Rayenne has reached Trivandrun from Dubai and we brought them to Kottayam on the next day. The short trip was really enjoyed by all the participants including the infant Enliva.

Our next trip was to Maldives (Male) which was actually the ship cruise by the Italian luxury ship Costa Victoria, starting from Kochin port on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020. Four days we spent in the ship and we returned back to Trivandrum on 8<sup>th</sup> February by Maldives Airline flight. This was our second ship cruise and by virtue of our cruise experience we were readily agreeing to the idea offered by Vinod and family. Our family group constituted Vinod & Shiny, Arun & Mile, Mile's parents Abraham & Beena. About 28 personnel were in the Thiruvalla group which was arranged by the Holiday Shop travel agency of Trivandrum. Actually, this Italian ship was having 3 months cruise programme for the Indian segments from January to March 2020 mainly from Mumbai, Mangalore, Columbo and Kochi ports to Maldives capital Male. Our Thiruvalla gang mainly constituted by Saji, Suja & children Allan & Avin, Bijoy & Sophy, Biju langagiri, Raji & daughter, Kochumon, Dolly & Tenil family, Gigy & Shirley, Thankachen & Daisy, Dr Ajith & Irene along with our Holiday Shop representative Mr Renjith. Another group also was with us from the Trivandrum area and most of our people really enjoyed the ship cruise to the fullest extent. One of the real attractions for this type of ship cruise is that we can eat & enjoy the food at all the restaurants of the ship starting from 7 am to 11 pm. Certain European & American families are enjoying the ship cruise for more than 3 or 4 months by touring different parts of the world mostly after retirement.

## Chapter 40

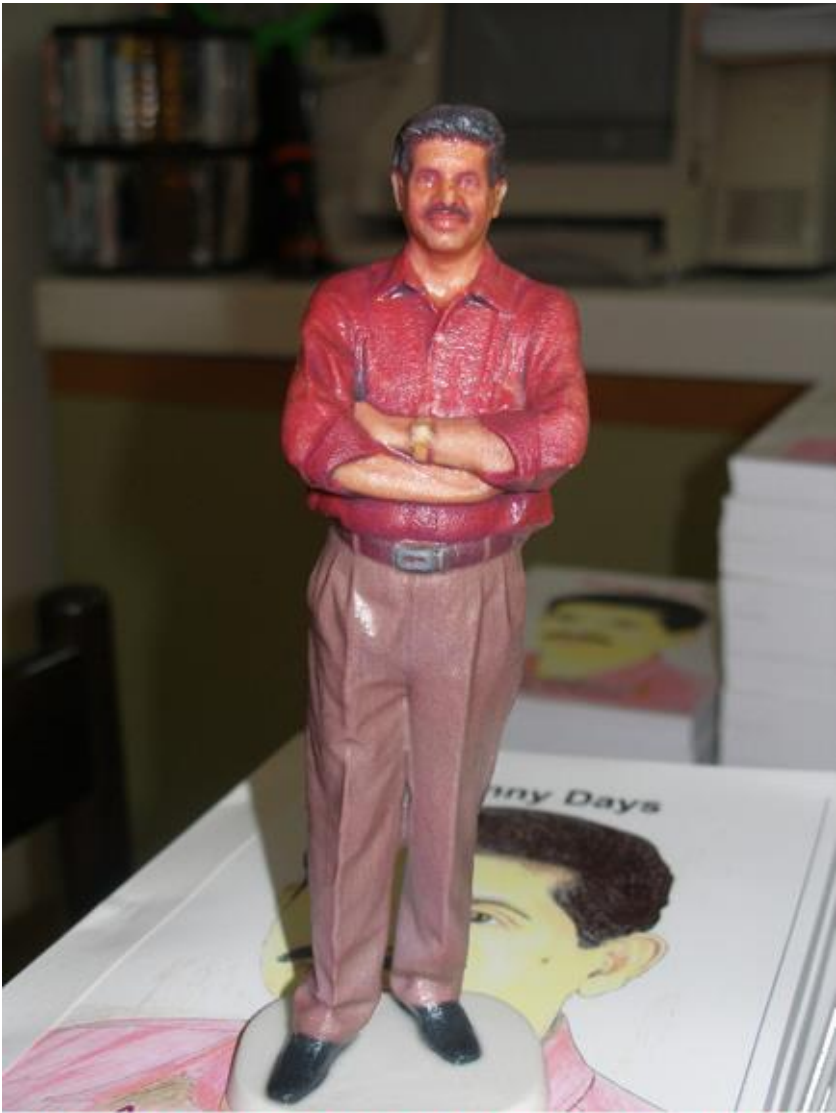
### Kerala Floods 2018 & COVID-19

**Kerala** experienced the worst flood in nearly a century due to unusually high rainfall during the monsoon season from 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> August 2018. Lot of people died and reported missing. About a million people were evacuated mainly from the central Travncore & Cochin area. Heavy rains in Wayanad and Idukki have caused severe landslides and have left the hilly districts isolated. All the 14 districts were placed on red alert. About, one-sixth of the total population of Kerala had been directly affected by the floods and related incidents. Thirty-four out of the fifty-five dams within the state were opened, for the first time in history. The rescue and relief operations by the Governmental and other organisations especially the Fishermen were very much commendable. As our family house is at a higher elevation, we were not directly affected by the devastating flood disaster. It was the worst flood in Kerala after the great flood of 99 that took place in 1924. Living centenarians like Philipose Mar Crysostem Valia-methrapolita and others could recollect their earlier experiences to a good extent. Year 2019 also experienced heavy rains in Kerala but the severity was little bit different.

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2020 is certainly a year that will not soon be forgotten. For most, if not all of us, it has brought about many unexpected changes. Changes to our daily routines, our work and even our relationships. Corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19), caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, outbreak was first noted in Wuhan, China in December 2019. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and recognized it as pandemic on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Millions of cases of COVID-19 have been reported throughout the world. Indian government declared full lockdown for about 100 days in different stages starting from 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 for the 1.3 billion Indians in the 1<sup>st</sup> phase and the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase during 2021. Schools and Colleges were closed for about 2 years, first time in our memory and with the massive vaccination programmes through out the world, the pandemic was brought under control to a good extent. And finally, the best Doctor in the world who ended the Corona Pandemic was Russian President Putin who attacked Ukraine on 24/2/2022 and that was the end of Covid-19 pandemic from the world.

(To be updated further)



**This is Me - Lilliputian Sunny - Made in Dubai - 18-4-2012**





**Lilliputian Sunny family - Made in Dubai**



**'Sunny Days' release by Rev Dr Daniel Mammen in Dubai on 5/7/2013**

## Epilogue

**When** I recollect my life hitherto, I can only thank God for the mercies and kindness that He showered on me through out these years. Born into a middle-class Kerala Christian family, I did not demonstrate or possess any intellectual brilliance during my School, College or Professional careers. Instead, I remained always as a Second-class man in all walks of my life. Attainment of a First-class position in any of the fields still remains like a mirage and with the limited aspirations I am perfectly happy with all the blessings from God. In fact, I have never asked or fought for any of the positions in my life but earnestly prayed for the good health in order to perform my duties and responsibilities to the full satisfaction of my superiors, colleagues and sub-ordinates. Professionally speaking, due to my gentle nature and behaviour, I was never in the good books of the Senior Management but very well respected and admired by colleagues and sub-ordinates. I do believe honesty, truthfulness, contentment and humility are the most important qualities required for all the ordinary human beings. I have never argued over my qualities, instead I am fully aware of my limitations and let others see my qualities for themselves. Ambition is good to a certain extent but never be greedy or over ambitious. The more you come up in life you should be more and more humble.

APJ Abdul Kalam said:

“The elders should do two things. Don’t drag their wealth to the deathbed. It will create trouble in the family. Die in harness. Without being on sick bed for long. Stand upright till the last breath. The farewell should be brief. Truly brief”. It is not possible for everyone to be like Abdul Kalam.

As stated earlier, my “**Jathakam**” was written at the age of about eight and as per the Astrologer, the most difficult or dangerous period in my life was at 46, but that period also crossed with out any remarkable incidents, other wise I would not have been here to write all these memoirs. In fact, I was very much worried especially at the prime period of my life but my destiny was something different and thank God for His Heavenly care and I can very well prove that the Astrological predictions are baseless and meaningless.

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Dear Sunny,

An unique attempt. Perhaps  
you will feel more trust  
about your girl friends in  
later updates!

With best regards

S. Raghavan 3117102

**S. RAGHAVAN**  
OPERATIONS MANAGER  
ORO  
Tel.: 02-8760117, 6033657



Sunny,

I am very impressed with your talents, obviously hidden until now, in assembling your memories over the years in the middle east.

The names and character of so many know to both of us here in Genco knowis and their ways of working, impressed me immensely. Keep it up, you have a lot more to tell, I'm sure

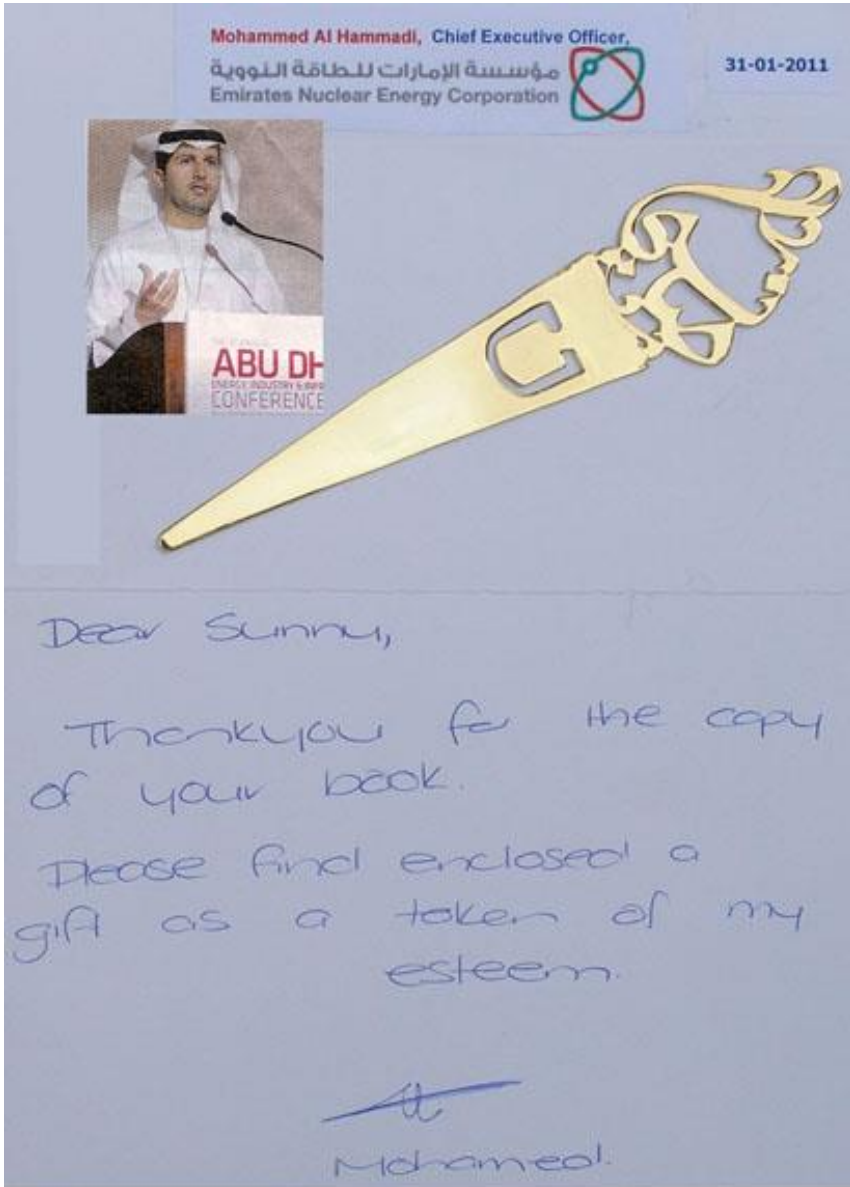
Fond Regards

**WILL JONES**  
OPERATIONS SUPDT.  
ORO / M  
Tel.: 02-6033504

*WJ*  
07/11/07.

Sunny  
very impressive  
I was pleased to  
have read it  
Thank you  
AN

Abdul Nasser, Gasco Ruwais Division Manager



**Felicitations from ENEC - CEO Mr. Mohamed Al Hammadi**

Sunny, a man of words, has a talent of jotting down life's experiences throughout his life with an able support from his better half. Jolly, in turn posts frequently pictures of the bygone era in the social media, taking us through our own memories lane.

With the result we have in our hands, the sunny days of sunnykuttly, an autobiography picturising the good old days in his own perception. Going through those pages is an experience in itself, a journey through our past.

Any of our friends on request to him directly can get a copy for themselves. When I read through the preface of Sunny Days I felt I am in front of a mirror. The philosophical strength expressed throughout the book exhibits an innocence that draws us more close to the jovial couple Sunny and Jolly. His writings underscore the truth that we are all of the same feather.

29.09.2019  
Trivandrum.

  
Ganesh.V.C

Comments from FACT/FERTIL colleague Ganesh V.C



**'Sunny Days'**

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(An autobiography)

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സണ്ണിക്കുട്ടിയുടെ ആത്മകഥ റുവൈസി ലായിരുന്നപ്പോൾ വായിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഒരു കോപ്പി എന്റെ കൈവശമുണ്ട്. ഇപ്പോൾ, ഇതിന്റെ pdf നമ്മുടെ ഗ്രൂപ്പിലിട്ടപ്പോൾ ഒന്നുകൂടി വായിച്ചു, കുറേ പേജുകൾ തീർത്തു.

ആത്മകഥ ധൈഷണികമായിരിക്കണം, എന്നാലേ അതിന് വായനക്കാരെ കിട്ടൂ എന്ന് ചിലർ അഭിപ്രായപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുണ്ട്. ആത്മകഥ തികച്ചും വ്യക്തിപരമാകാതെ ശ്രദ്ധിച്ചാൽ അത് കൂടുതൽ ആശ്കാരിലെത്തും.

ഒരാളുടെ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ കലാപരമായ ആവിഷ്കരണമാണ് നല്ല ആത്മകഥ. കലയോടു ബന്ധപ്പെടുത്തി തന്റെ ജീവിതത്തെ വിവരിക്കുകയും, നിരീക്ഷിക്കുകയും വേണം.

“മനുഷ്യൻ അവനവനോടുതന്നെ കള്ളം പറയുന്ന ജീവിയാണ്, അതുകൊണ്ട് ആത്മകഥ അസാധ്യമാണ്”- എന്ന് ജർമ്മൻ കവിയായ ഹെയ്നാ (Heine) പറഞ്ഞിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഒരു പടി കൂടിക്കടന്ന്, എഴുത്തുകാരി വിർജിനിയ വുൾഫ് ചോദിക്കുന്നു, “അവനവനെക്കുറിച്ച് സത്യം പറയാൻ കഴിയുന്നില്ലെങ്കിൽ, എങ്ങനെ മറ്റുള്ളവരെക്കുറിച്ച് സത്യം പറയും?”

സണ്ണിക്കുട്ടി ആമുഖത്തിൽ അമേരിക്കൻ എഴുത്തുകാരൻ **Mark Twain** - നെ ഉദ്ധരിക്കുന്നു:-

**"If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything."**

സണ്ണിക്കുട്ടി തുടരുന്നു :-

**....It holds true in my life because I believe that when you lie, you always have to remember two things - the truth and lie. And, inadvertently, this complicates matters. When you speak the truth (at all times), life is so much simpler."**

സത്യം നമ്മെ സ്വതന്ത്രരാക്കുന്നു, ജീവിതം ലളിതമാക്കുന്നു എന്ന യാഥാർഥ്യം ത്തിലേക്ക് സണ്ണിക്കുട്ടി എത്തിച്ചേരുന്നു. ആ കാഴ്ചപ്പാടിൽ, ഈ ആത്മകഥ സണ്ണിക്കുട്ടിയുടെ സത്യാന്വേഷണമാകുന്നു.

തുടർന്ന്, നാട്ടിലും വിദേശങ്ങളിലുമായി താൻ അനുഭവിച്ച ജീവിതത്തിലേക്ക് നോക്കുന്നു. വിന്യൂര ഭയത്താൽ, ആ ഭാഗത്തേപ്പറ്റി കൂടുതലൊഴുതുന്നില്ല, നമുക്ക് വായിച്ചറിയാവുന്നതാണ്.

(ലത്തീഫ്)

Comments from ex-Gasco colleague Mr. B. R Chander

Dear Sunny,

At the outset, my sincere appreciation and admiration for your extraordinary effort in penning your autobiography. Congratulations! Massive effort!

You have made your parents, ancestors and relatives proud of you. You have recorded your life history for posterity. Tanura and Ruwais have a treasure in their hands to tell stories of their grandpa and great grandpa to their children and grandchildren.

You have refreshed my memories of Gasco-Ruwais with all the names of our friends and colleagues. It was a pleasant walk down the memory lane.

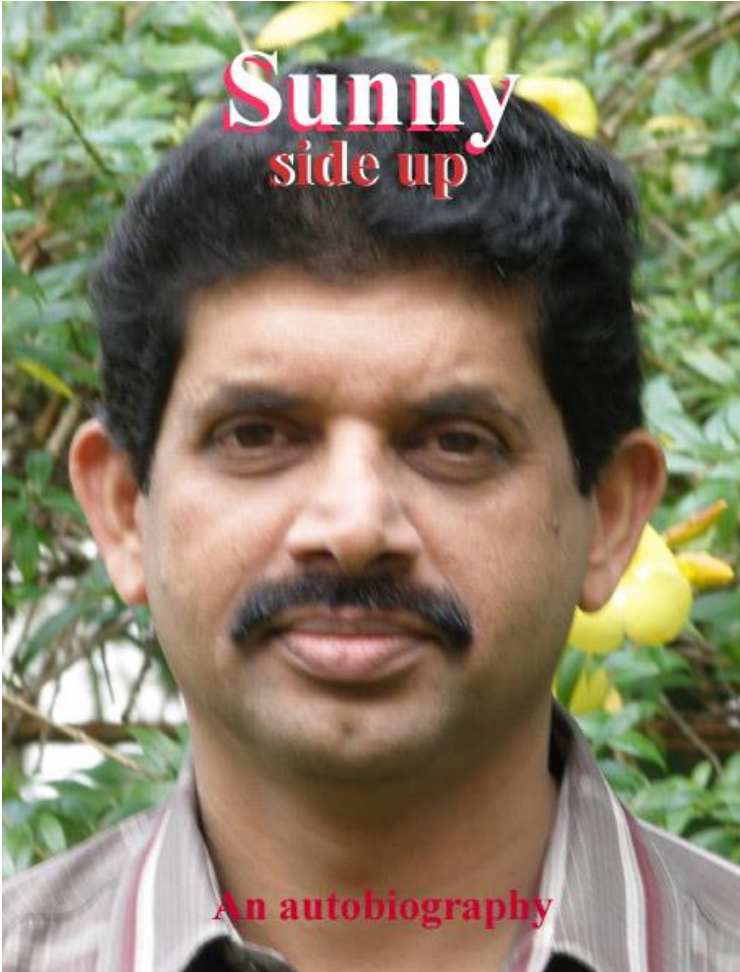
I have always remembered you as a soft-spoken, decent, cultured gentleman with compassion, mercy and friendliness in your eyes, and in your behaviour. You have retained and reflected the same humility throughout your professional and personal life. I could sense your simplicity and sincerity in your autobiography. This has been, and is, your greatest God-given asset. Never mind, certain things came your way a bit late because people took advantage of your nature. They knew you would not protest. But God knows. He never lets you down. He gave you inner peace, satisfaction and contentment which is much more valuable. He rewarded you ultimately for your patience, good nature and perseverance.

I am very happy to note that you are leading a peaceful, comfortable life with Jolly and children. A well-deserved result of all the sacrifice and hard work. Again, it was a great read! God Bless!

Indianapolis, USA. Dated 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2022



**B. R Chander, Indianapolis, U S A**



### **“Sunny Days” – Smartphone Mobile Application**

On September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013 the Smartphone Mobile Application for “Sunny Days” was accepted by Google and was published in the Google App Store with the name “**Sunnykutty**”. Now all Android Smartphone users can install the application for free and the autobiography can be read **Offline** at your ease. Below is the link for the mobile application.

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.sunny.sunnydays>

You can also find the application in the Google App store by searching for “Sunnykutty”

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## SUNNY AZHAKATH

Sunny Azhakath, born as the second child of Azhakath George and Amminny on 14-9-1950 at Thiruvalla, Kerala. Graduated from the University of Kerala and joined "Fertilizers and Chemicals, Travancore" Ltd, (FACT) Cochin Division at Ambalamedu as a 'Graduate trainee' of the Operations department. Served FACT (CD) for about five years as Process Technician and left for the foreign assignment with Saudi Aramco and Bahrain National Gas Company respectively and finally settled at GASCO, Abu Dhabi since 1980. Having worked for the Petroleum giant for more than 36 years, Sunny's autobiography is a true story of Gasco, especially the Ruwais Division. Retired from Gasco service as "Shift Superintendent" of the Operations department by August 2016. Worked for 39 years in the Gulf with an overall of more than 45 years experience in the Fertiliser/Petroleum fields.

Married to Jolly, two children Tanura and Ruwais settled in Dubai, UAE.



[www.sunnykutty.com](http://www.sunnykutty.com)

