

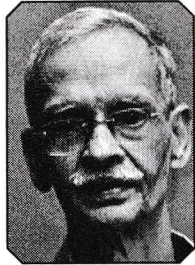
CET 63

Reflections of the
CET 1963
Engineers

ENGINEERING



3.38 A PHENOMENON



PRATHAPACHANDRAN P K

The College of Engineering, Trivandrum, the mother of Engineering Education in Kerala, has a long history of many years, from 1939 to date. The eminent array of old boys and girls from this prestigious Institution has occupied top echelons of excellent engineering projects, superb scientific teams, able and efficient administrative cadres and admirable academic arenas. Almost all Alumni of the Institution have proved their mettle in whatever field they had entered, which also project the eminence of the Institution.

Of all the above output from CET, one person qualifies to be a Phenomenon, according to me, Dr. P. Appukkuttan. Also, all of us in our Batch feel proud about this man's achievements. We are also glad that we had the opportunity to live with him for four years both in the College and the College Hostel.

Read just the comments by a few eminent personalities, which follows:

1. Former President Bill Clinton to NEF (The National Education Foundation/US) Chairman Dr.AppuKuttan: "You are helping to empower tomorrow's leaders. I salute you for your ongoing commitment for creating a better and stronger America."

2. Justice Krishna Iyer, the legend in jurisprudence, "To hear Dr.AppuKuttan speak, to talk with him and to read his writings is truly a process of enlightenment. He is no longer just an Indian or American, but a global citizen who can help every country change for the better. He is an inspiration and incarnation. I recommend him and his books to every nation's leaders. He will advance their status. This is global patriotism. He is a glory for Humanity on our Earth."

3. Kathy Johnson, Former Advisor to the Governor of Alabama to Dr.AppuKuttan, "Your generosity never ceases to amaze me. You are a blessing to

so many, and your friendship is a blessing to me. I am looking forward to getting a copy of your new Happy Executive book! I truly value our working relationship and friendship.”

Even before the above great souls expressed the above words, we, his classmates in CET from 1959-1963, were sure that he was likely to end up at such great heights. Though he was a normal student like all of us, he had streaks of the power of great men. He had an iron will, exemplary self-discipline, stunning schedules and planned life. Every minute of his life had some pre-assigned job and he would not falter even if the sky fell on him. He was frugal during his student life, would sleep only on wooden planks of cot, after spreading an ordinary towel. One can correct one's time by watching the time when Appukkuttan lay down to sleep or when he got up in the mornings. But nobody has seen him wake up, for he got up every day at 4 or 4.30AM, while everyone in the hostel was fast sleep.

Whether it is raining, shining or shivering cold he will start his daily schedule - cold water bath, his physical exercises, doing his class lessons, his schedule of running, his attendance for classes, his evening football play, followed by athletics practice etc and in between a few minutes for pep talk with us. He even had time to twist my slender limb, which I use to punch the keys now!

In Hostel everybody had his own ways, but none disturbed Appukkuttan and respected his schedules and priorities. When Appukkuttan slept other boys kept silence. We would wonder seeing his self-punishing schedule.

If he missed a Kulathoor Bus at Statue Junction, he would run to General Hospital Junction and catch the same bus, by the time the bus comes through Palayam stop! At his time he was the Kerala University Athletic Champion, University Football team player and at the same time an academic rank holder. You should have seen his muscular and energetic fine body.

After passing out from CET he went to Bombay and within a short time he migrated to US for better prospects and higher studies, with scholarship from Tata. Instead of wasting more words, I think it is prudent to copy some passages from Justice Krishna Iyer's introduction to Dr.Appukkuttan's latest book Happy Executive, which sheds more light on Appukkuttan, in the eminent jurist's clear words. The passages taken follow:

“Dr.Appukkuttan is an admirably able and inspirational adviser to all generations, especially the younger generation, a creative wonder and a gift from Kerala to the US, India and the world. Indian talent when freed from the inhibitions of colonial-feudal Indian social structure, luminates in full splendor, catalyzing the latent genius of our youth

to bloom into excellence. In this, Appukkuttan is an Indian gift and now a global asset. His book reveals how he began as an outstanding academic and athletic engineering graduate from Kerala University and then traveled to the US to become a developmental wonder.”

The next para explains his meeting with Appukkuttan over the past forty years, especially while Krishna Iyer was the Supreme Court Judge and when Appukkuttan had been to New Delhi to advise and mentor Rajiv Gandhi & other senior Government functionaries about Management By Systems (MBS), his proprietary systems approach of using resources effectively to achieve goals, objectives, missions and visions – helping them to become visionary administrators.

Dr.Appukkuttan’s this System had been imparted to many many leaders of innumerable countries and they had been benefitted. The tutor also was benefitted from his efforts and earned an enormous fortune. What is to be noted is that whatever he earned is now being given back to the societies in many countries. His mission is to give maximum benefit to the poor who have fewer chances for education. His attention is all the more for his concerns about the digital divide and his efforts are to reduce this gap. His time, energy and resources are now fully concentrated to this benevolent act. At an age when almost all his classmates have withdrawn

from active life, he is heading full steam ahead with his mission.

What pushes him ahead are the thoughts rooted in him at his formative years. Let us look at that: “I (Appukkuttan) was born the fourth of five children in Quilon, a town in the State of Kerala, India in 1941. Both my parents were self-starters who pulled themselves up by the bootstrap. My mother, orphaned at a very young age, built herself into an educated, teacher-turned physician. She taught me the mental and physical gains found through yoga and meditation. I remember reading with her by the light of a kerosene lamp in elementary school as she emphasized the importance of academic excellence. My father, a renowned soccer player and athletic champion, was a middle level officer in the forest department. He introduced me to a daily morning exercise routine and encouraged my participation in soccer and athletics, with focus on sprinting.”

“When I was six years old, Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated, and on that day I vividly remember going with my grandmother to the temple to offer prayers. When I turned 14, I developed a keen interest in Gandhi’s writings and spent a whole summer vacation reading every book I could find to teach me of his life, ideas and accomplishments. I was profoundly influenced by his thinking and his ability to develop and apply simple practical con-

cepts by generating the support of millions of Indians. His work taught me the importance of the Three P's: Passion, Patience and Perseverance, and his words 'A man is but the product of his thoughts; what he thinks he becomes,' and 'The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others', planted the seeds in me for the Happy Executive concept."

The above words explain the essence of the caption - A PHENOMENON. For, there might be better intellectuals who reached top positions, better business magnates who might have minted money. But it will be very rare to find someone who did follow the lofty principles of Gandhiji, aimed very high and achieved the enviable positions, in terms of intellectual as also monetary wealth, had full self-actualization and then be magnanimous and passionate to open wide his coffers to help the needy and underprivileged in society. Appukkuttan's greatness lies in the fact that he truly and firmly followed his master, when it is rare to find a true Gandhian in this age. We, the classmates of 1959-63 of CET, are really proud of our dear and great Appukkuttan.

Considering the advanced age of our group and considering the fact that as age increases more and more, people gradually get back to their childish self, innocence and laughter, let me report an incident reported to me by one of our classmates, before closing this little note. While Appukkut-

tan was on board the aircraft to US there arose a panic situation. Panic was neither due to the plane nor by the passengers. It was from the Airhostess, whose job was to pacify those who panic. But, she was shouting: Oh my God, what is happening? Just after the thundering take off and steep climb of the plane, when she unbuckled her seat belts, she saw a man in the aisle and this man's head was where his legs should have been. On rushing to the spot and enquiring what was happening Sir, the calm reply was: Oh, Nothing, it is my time for Seershaasanam. The man was Appukkuttan!

BOOKS by Dr. P. Appukkuttan: 1. From Digital Divide to Digital Opportunity, 2. Holistic Executive – Effective, Happy, Ethical, Sustainable and Win-Win, 3. The Happy Executive, Nurturing Body, Mind and Soul. Books can be obtained from: <http://www.amazon.com>

WEBSITES:

www.cyberlearning.org, www.nefuniversity.org, www.happyexecutive.org, www.appuji.com, www.cyberlearning.org/digitaldivide, www.cyberlearning.org/mbs, www.cyberlearning.org/tennis

