

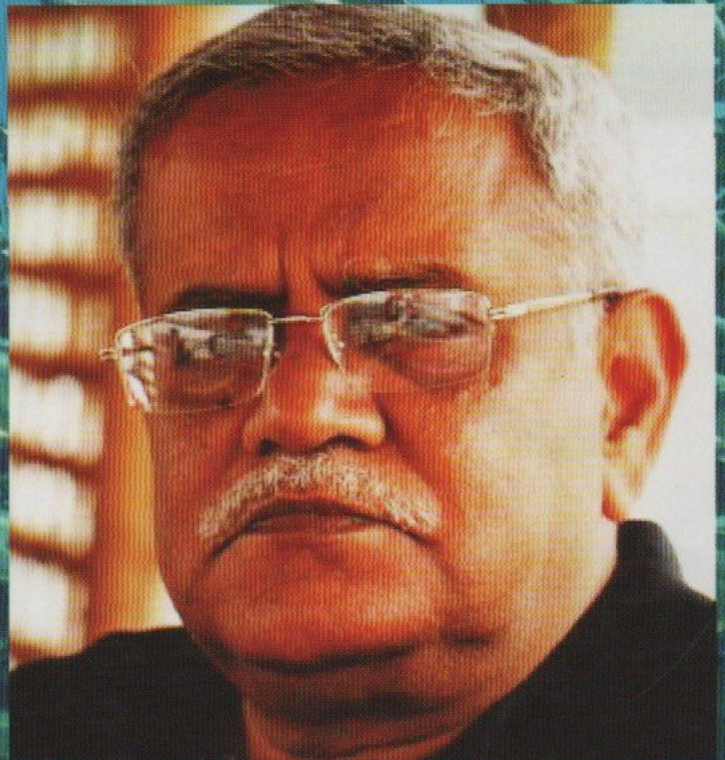
Global Spiritual Master

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Kerala in Mumbai

The Only English / Malayalam Monthly Magazine linking Mumbai Malayalees

**SCIENTIST
WRITER
OF MUMBAI**



**Upcoming
Singer**



**Award
Winning
Actress**



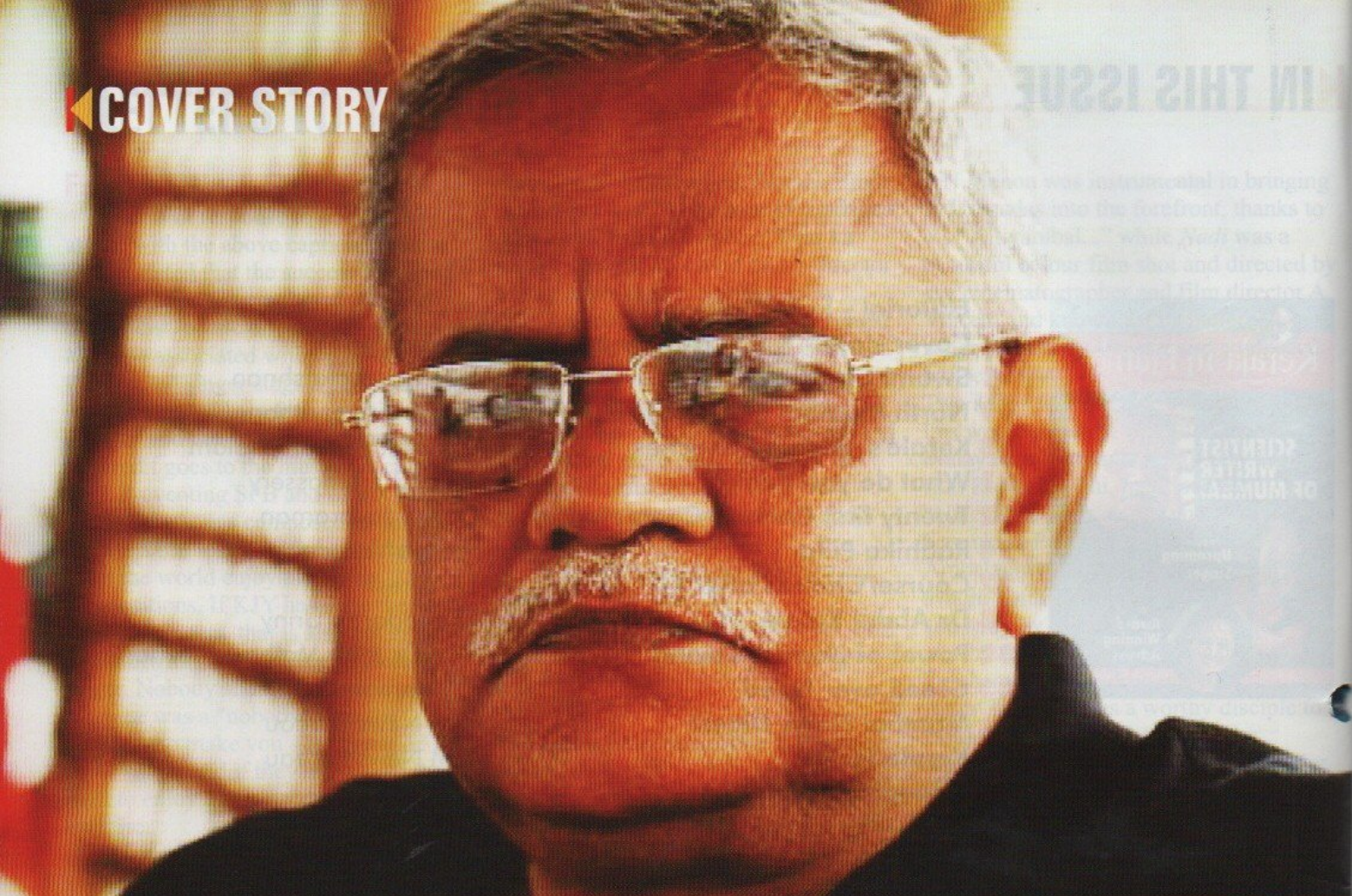
■ POSITIVE LOVING

■ KERALA'S BREATHTAKING BEACHES

...was instrumental in bringing ... into the forefront, thanks to ... while ... was a ... and directed by ...

SCIENTIST
WRITER
OF MUMBAI

...promoted ...



K R NARAYANAN

A Scientist - Writer Of Mumbai

Former Deputy Fisheries Director and a Fishery Environment Consultant for the Gujarat Government, K R Narayanan is also a well known and prolific writer Who has published several English and Malayalam short stories and articles of varied interests, including marine life.

Satyanath

It is very unusual that an unknown person from the distant town of Jamnagar in the Saurashtra region of Gujarat sends his maiden article in Malayalam to the then Editor of the prestigious *Mathrubhumi Weekly* of Calicut (Kozhikode) and the reputed writer -Editor quickly responds to him through a brief letter saying: "Received your article; liked it; will publish it in the magazine very shortly".

The Editor was none but the Jnanpith Award winner and the giant among the contemporary novelists in Malayalam, M T Vasudevan Nair. The article was on the pearls and the pearl oysters of the world, titled *Muthu*. To



K R Narayanan and wife Sita with Davinchi's sculptures

add to the surprise of the author, *Muthu* was rated as one of the best fifteen scientific articles in Malayalam published in 1969 and was republished in the "*Science-1969*" by the Institute of Languages, Trivandrum, edited by N V Krishna Warriar. The novice writer was a young marine biologist engaged in the studies on the Pearl Oysters of the Gulf of Kachchh, by name K R Narayanan. Later, when he met M T, as he is lovingly referred to, in Kozhikode, the latter asked him to continue writing science in Malayalam, as Malayalam had very limited science books and write-ups those days. Narayanan hesitated and feared that he did not have much command in Malayalam. M T encouraged him saying, "*You do write good Malayalam. However, if there is any difficulty, we are here to help you*". But the Editor did not forget to caution him: "*To be a good writer, one has to be a good reader as well*". The novice-writer followed these guidelines very religiously and, thereafter, *Mathrubhumi* carried many of his



Wedding photo

His interactions with the literary personnel and activities of Mumbai enabled him to rebuild his writing skills, which he had put on the back burner somewhere in the eighties on account of increased professional pressures.

articles on the seas and the marine animals till about 1980.

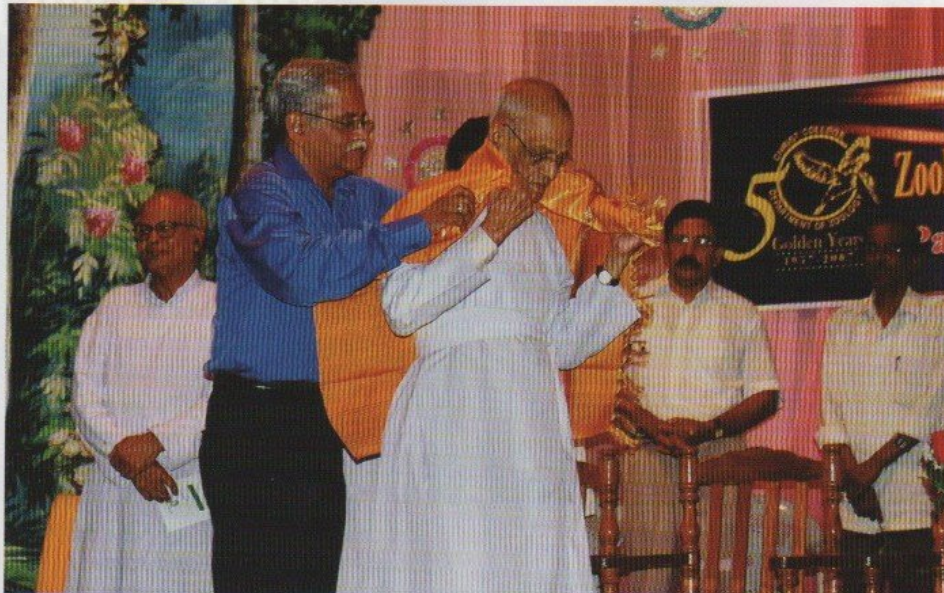
After about three and odd decades, (on the 26th of June, 2015), when "*Amchi Mumbai*", (a regular weekly programme of Kairali TV), interviewed Narayanan, he very gratefully remembered the kindness of the then editor of *Mathrubhumi* and these events of his early life. "Those were the days", recalled he, "*When very few people wrote science in the vernacular, excepting a few like Induchoodan (The birds of Kerala) and Prof K G Adiyodi*

(The Snakes of Kerala) and some teachers /professors/civil engineers, like Prof Achuthan, Vincent Paul and the like. Even Shasthra Sahithya Parishad itself was established only around 1963".

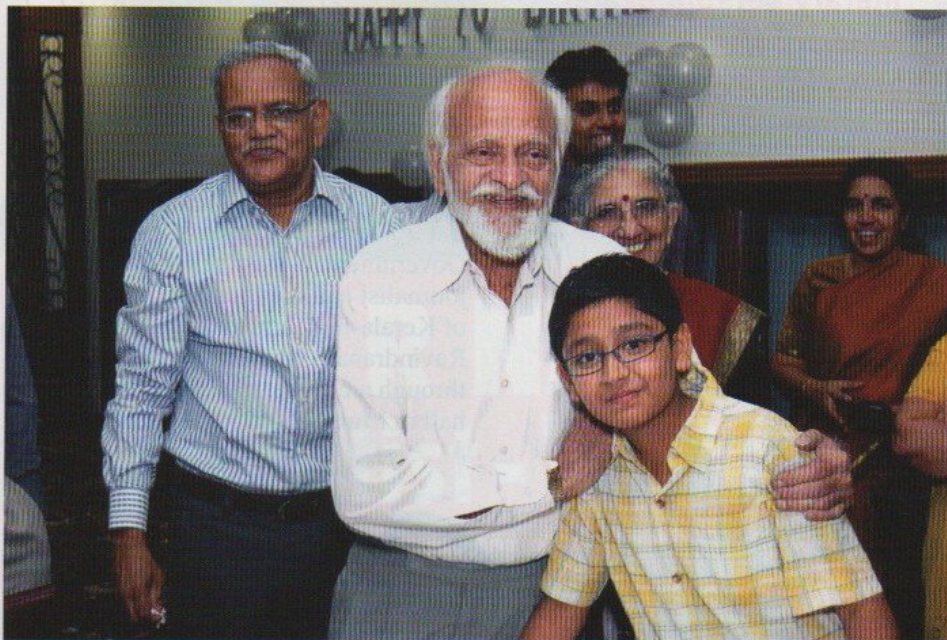
K R Narayanan, who had metamorphosed into a writer, both in English and Malayalam, was the former Deputy Fisheries Director and a Fishery Environment Consultant for the Gujarat Government. It was the reputed journalist and the founder-Chief Editor of Kerala-in-Mumbai, late Prof P K Ravindranath who discovered him through a chance meeting in a drama hall in Mumbai's Matunga and brought



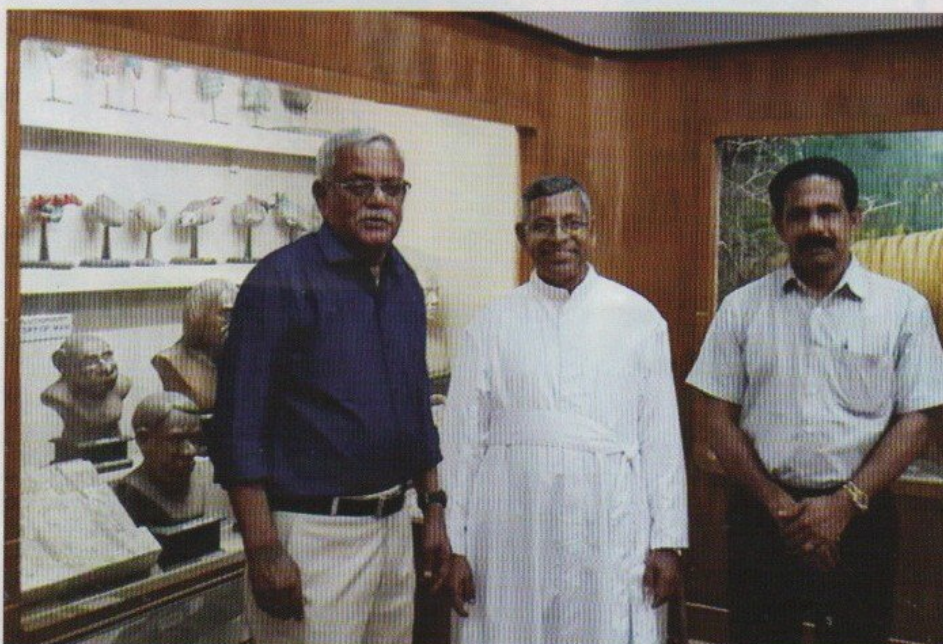
K R Narayanan with his Family



K R Narayanan felicitating his teacher Rev. Fr. Gabriel



K R Narayanan with late P K Ravindranath, Tara Ravindranath and his grandson



K R Narayanan with Principal Fr Jose Thekkan in Christ College

him to the KIM fold. And, since then, he has been with Kerala-in-Mumbai.

A Crush for the Seas

Though a native of Irinjalakuda, Thrissur District, Kerala, Narayanan had spent some of his early life in South Calcutta, as his parents were then living there. They returned to their home town, where he completed his school and college studies. Narayanan had the privilege of learning Marine Zoology under Padmabhushan Rev Fr Gabriel CMI, who was a doyen in this field. It was this Reverend Teacher who moulded him into a lover of the seas and marine life.

Again, he was destined to join the Fisheries Service of the then newly formed Gujarat State in 1960 and undergo many intensive trainings in marine fisheries, Navigation, Seamanship and research and development. He also learned designing and managing projects for the development of Agriculture and allied sectors from the prestigious Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.

He carried out intensive research on the ecology and the peculiarities of tidal coral and mangrove islands of the Gulf of Kachchh and the biology of the commercially important marine animals like the pearl oysters, shrimps and the like. He participated in the Ocean over Expeditions of the Hydrographer Surveyor India, UNDP Programmes for Small-scale Fisheries Promotion in South-Asia of the Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, and the like.

Back to Writing

Narayanan retired on superannuation, from the Government of Gujarat in 1999, but was continued as a Consultant, for fisheries and environment protection programmes in the Sardar Sarovar Narmada Project, the Kalpasar Project in the Gulf of Khambat and the like. After completing these assignments, he returned to Mumbai to settle down only in 2007.

His interactions with the literary personnel and activities of Mumbai enabled him to rebuild his writing skills, which he had put on the back burner somewhere in the eighties on account of increased professional pressures.

His earliest literary work in his second innings was a biography of his teacher, Rev Fr Gabriel CMI, titled "*The Preceptor*", who received great



K R Narayanan being felicitated by Kerala in Mumbai.



(L) Published works of K R Narayanan



Child K R Narayanan with his parents

appreciation in the academic field in Kerala. This was followed by a series of short stories and articles, based on the legends, mythology and history of his hometown and its people, in Malayalam. These write-ups were compiled and published under the title "*Kudayoor Kathakal*".

Kudayoor Kathakal received the attention of many established writers of Kerala and it had the privilege of being reviewed by the well-known novelist Sethu (A Sethumadhavan), who compared it with R K Narayan's *Malgudi Days*. The then stalwart Malayalam poet of Mumbai, late Krishnan Parappilly, described it as "Pazhamayilekku Puthumayude Yaathra".

Kudayoor Kathakal was followed by a vernacular book on the Indian seas and the sea animals titled "*Kadal Vismayangal*", written at the instance of his publishers The Green Books Publishers, Thrissur who had published all his early works. "We are at loss to

decipher, how could an orthodox Brahmin like Narayanan could grow to become a lover of the seas and the marine animals...even more than a fisherman or a seaman" wondered a literary personnel of Mumbai, when the *Kadal Vismayangal* was launched in Mumbai. And he expected a clarification of his doubts in the future works of Narayanan. Only my long association with the Indian seas and marine life thereof, can help me to answer this, said the author at that time. The answer came about two years later in the form of yet another user- friendly book in Malayalam, titled "*Kadal Anubhavangal*", which is

getting ready to be launched shortly in Mumbai.

Owing to his sound knowledge of the subject and issues he handles, Narayanan's fictional and scientific writings are not only authentic and informative, but also very easy to read and grasp. Some of his short stories in Malayalam take the reader to a world of intricate historical or mythical realms. And the language whether English or Malayalam -that he uses to narrate his stories or dwell on the scientific issues is very simple and can be understood and relished by the readers, without the help of a dictionary.

Narayanan is married to Smt. Sita, a native of Calicut and an alumnus of the Malabar Christian College, Calicut. The couple has two married sons (Sriram and Sridhar) and three grand children. It is worth remembering that his grandchildren Nishant and Jia too have a flair for English poetry and their poems have appeared in Kerala-in-Mumbai. The Narayanans live with their younger son in Worli and spend about five-six months in Singapore, with the elder son.

Even at seventy six, Narayanan is a curious student of marine sciences, history and literature. Language is no barrier to him, as he can read and understand English, Malayalam, Tamil and Gujarati. Whatever he reads or learns, he is ready to share with his readers in a very simple Malayalam or English. ■