Things that renew humanity

The top-notch B-schools in the US were alleged to be largely responsible for the economic downturn in America. The allegation was that these B-schools were propagating an excessively analytical and detached style of management. Ethics was not a matter of concern for them. Corporate social responsibility was also not an issue.

While these reputed B-schools were cracking their heads to devise some efficient methods to initiate moral reasoning and social commitment into the business culture they were trying to cultivate among the students, here, in a remote village in Kerala, a young lady school teacher was demonstrating in her own style how teaching and learning could be made more inspirational and transformative.

The anecdote was reported by Shri. Ajit Balakrishnan, Chairman & CEO of Rediff.com and Chairman of Board of Governors of IM-CALcutta at a seminar.

The enterprising teacher had taken the liberty to go out of the prescribed course material to teach her students a short story by S.K. Pottekkatt titled “The story of how I became a writer.” S.K. Pottekkatt was an illustrious writer in Malayalam and a Jnanpith Award winner.

During his high school days one day while he was engaged in his studies at home a desolate old woman, who had been a domestic servant for many years, approached him seeking his help to write a letter to her son who was enjoying a happy life far away from her. She had married away her father’s money and leaving behind her almost blind and helpless mother alone. The poor mother had sacrificed everything for the sake of her son who was enjoying a happy life far away from her. She had no option other than to teach her son to long for his mother’s love.

He had been writing letters to her son, not just one but a series of letters. He narrated in these letters the miserable and agonies of the old woman adding a lot of imagination and drama in it.

Initially, there was no response from the heartless son. But, after a few letters, the son was moved. He started responding by sending some nominal amount to the woman, probably without his wife’s knowledge. He even visited the mother once and acquired as to how she helped her to write such touching letters.

Pottekkat was thrilled in being able to elicit a positive response through his letters to an unknown person. He gained confidence and felt pride in his narrative skill. That inspiration was so transformative that it became the launching pad for a Jnanpith Award writer to begin his literary career.

Instead of presenting this story straight away in the class the teacher first took the students to an old age home to give them a feel of the situation. She made them interact with the inmates for about three hours in order to develop a long-lasting impression of kindness and generosity towards the abandoned elderly citizens. Later on, the students were asked to reflect on their experiences and to present the feelings of concern and compassion they were exposed to during the whole exercise.

The purpose of education, in spite of the prevailing climate of extreme competitiveness, is to champion the cause of human values. It should involve love and respect for others.

“Teach this triple truth to all. A generous heart, kind speech, and a life of service and compassion are the things that renew humanity.”

— Lord Buddha
The plan is to convert Koratty into a waste-free Panchayat. It is free from dependence on the Kerala Water Authority, street lighting prepared the plan of action and are giving leadership for the project. The most advanced water and waste water treatment technologies. Dr. Fritsch is spearheading the activities of the Centre for the adoption of Technology and Management at SCMS School of Engineering and Technology, conservancy, and management. With the technical support from Dr. Fritsch, a renowned scientist and a specialist in Germany is a country way ahead of other nations in fields like water technology, conservancy, and management. With the technical support and guidance from Dr. Fritsch, a renowned scientist and a specialist in advanced membrane technology for water treatment, SCMS has set up an international project by name Indo German Centre for Water Technology and Management at SCMS School of Engineering and Technology (SSET) located at Karukutty near Koratty Grama Panchayat.

Dr. Fritsch is spearheading the activities of the Centre for the adoption of the most advanced water and waste water treatment technologies.

Dr. Fritsch and Dr. C.K. Rajan, a renowned scientist and specialist in climate and environment changes, and Professor and Chair for Climate and Environment Changes, and Risk Reduction at SCMS have jointly prepared the plan of action and are giving leadership for the project implementation at Koratty Grama Panchayat. The Panchayath had organised a number of workshops and seminars in this context during the last one year for mobilising people participation. A number of studies were also conducted as a preliminary step for assessing the available resources and the future requirements. The students of SCMS took part along with the members of the Panchayath in the bench mark study and for assessing the opportunities of development in addition to the needs and life styles of the people.

Dr. G.P.C. Nayar, second from right, Chairman, SCMS Group and National President, Federation of Associations of Unaided Professional Educational Institutions in India (FAMPEI) and Prof. C.I. Abdul Rahiman (extreme right), Secretary General of the Federation holding discussions with the authorities in University of Hyogo, Japan.

May 17 was inaugurated by Shri K.P. Dhanapalan MP, Shri B.D. Devassy MLA president. Dr. Johannes Fritsch, Dr. C.K. Rajan, Shri Manesh Sebastian, Panchayat, President, Smt. Mercy Sebastian, Panchayat Vice-president, and others spoke.

Community care project
This project is one among the several social outreach programmes taken up by SCMS Group for the benefit of the community around.

SCMS Spectrum
Faculty Development Programme on Academic Leadership and Inovative Educational Practices at Toc H Institute of Science & Technology, Arakkunnam, on May 27.

Dr. C. Sengottuvelu, Professor and Head-Consultancy, made a presentation on Career Guidance at the Panel Discussion on Career Guidance at St. Francis D’Assisi Senior Secondary School, Aakapuran, on May 25.

SIBB Scoop
New accurate diagnostic tool for Chikungunya virus developed at SIBB
Scientists of SCMS Institute of Biotechnology have developed a rapid and very sensitive diagnostic tool for detecting the Chik virus on the very first day of fever. The research team consisting of Dr. C. Mohankumar, Dr. Salini Bhasker and Smt. K. Mathews has identified a viral coat gene from the genome. The gene was cloned and expressed in bacteria for the production of recombinant protein. The bioinformatic analysis of the recombinant protein showed all the dominant antigen for the specific antigen identified by the scientists who also developed the antibodies of the antigen for the specific antigen. The advantage of this technique is that the viral antigen in the blood sample of Chik patients can be detected on the first day of fever using these antibodies. The molecular data of the study was published in the international immunological journal, Journal of Immunological Methods in 2013.

Genetic variations on Chikungunya virus have changed its virulence and increased the mortality rate due to the severity of viral infection. Consequently, the infection is now reported as fatal. Hence, a rapid and early detection of the virus in the blood sample of Chik patients has become inevitable for the effective clinical management of the disease in hospitals.

Earlier in 2007, when the Chikungunya epidemic broke out as a menace for the first time in Kerala, SCMS Institute of Biotechnology had come out with a diagnostic kit, the first of its kind, for the benefit of the community. Then, no satisfactory methods were available for diagnosis and evaluation of the virus in any of the major hospitals in the State. "Unlike the early kits of using the antibody of native antigen (antigen extraction protocol), the new method using the antibody of the recombinant antigen (antigen developed by genetic engineering method) is found as very specific, accurate and rapid," said Dr. Mohankumar, the project leader of the research group. “This improved molecular kit will be a boon for proper clinical therapy to the patients, since the Chik virus attack is found to be more severe during the recent infection in India,” he added.

Chik fever continues to be on an epidemic scale in the State with the onset of monsoon.

World Environment Day observed
World Environment Day 2013 was observed in the South Kalamassery campus of SCMS on July 5 for promoting awareness on the importance of preserving our biodiversity. The event was a concerted effort to identify problems relating to the environment and ways to take corrective action.

Dr. C.K. Rajan, Professor and Chair for Climate and Environment Changes, and Risk Reduction, and Director of Water Technology and Management, was the chief guest. He spoke on the means to tackle environment challenges that include climate change, global warming, disasters and conflicts, environmental governance, ecosystem management, and resource efficiency.

The students and the faculty in the biotechnology division and the B Com department participated.

Doctorate to Prof. Pradeep P. Thevannoor
Prof. Pradeep P. Thevannoor, Vice Chairman, SCMS Group, has been awarded PhD in Management by IMU University, Mehryala. The thesis was on the topic: ‘A study of knowledge management practices in the Indian Public Service and the effects of organisational culture on knowledge transfer.’

Farewell to Batch 9 MBA
An article titled ‘Impact of FDI on Corporate Dividend Policy in India,’ authored by Dr. Malayak K. C. Associate Professor, has been published in Indian Journal of Research, May 2013 issue.

Paper presented
An article titled ‘Impact of Flota on Corporate Dividend Policy in India,’ authored by Dr. Malayak K. C. Associate Professor, has been published in Indian Journal of Research, May 2013 issue.