

KERALA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ACADEMY

PRESENTED AT THE GENERAL BODY MEETING ON JUNE 22.6.2013

FOR THE PERIOD 1ST OCT 2010 TO 31ST MAY 2013

Respected President, Distinguished Fellows and Esteemed members of the Academy:

On behalf of the Executive Council of the Academy, may I present the report of the activities of the Academy for the period of 1/10/2010 to 31/5/2013 for discussion and approval:

The General Body of the Academy in its meeting held on 25 Sept 2010 approved the Annual Report and the audited accounts for the period 01/03/2008 to 31/07/2010 and elected the six office bearers and the members of the executive council. The Elected General Secretary resigned and informed the President his inability to continue in the post due to personal reasons and subsequently the Executive Council held on 4th November 2011 decided to give the charge to Dr.K.G. Ajit kumar Joint Secretary as the General Secretary.

Condolences

During the period under consideration, the Academy had to bear the irreplaceable loss two of its Honorary Members, Dr. P. K. Iyengar and Dr. Varghese Kurien. The Academy has expressed its deep condolences at these losses and also at the demise of the Nobel Laureate Prof. Dr. Hargobind Khorana.

Membership and Chapter Formation

The Academy has added 73 new life members to its rolls since Sep 2010 and at present, the Life Member Roll of the Academy stands now at 299.

A new regional chapter was inaugurated at Kozhikode during a function held at Malabar Botanical Gardens by the Vice Chancellor, University of Calicut. Efforts were made to activate the existing regional Chapter at CUSAT.

Activities

I. Executive Council meetings

The Executive Council held 6 meetings for discussion and planning of the activities of the Academy.

II. Khorana Lecture Series.

The Academy with its stated objective of “creating an integrated approach towards popularization of science in the state of Kerala” has organized a series of lectures during Dec 2011-mar 2013 at different districts of Kerala with the generous financial support of Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment, KSCSTE. This series of lectures and scientist-interactive sessions were conducted with the intention of enthusing higher secondary school students to take up science as a career. The KLS were held at Sasthra Bhavan Thiruvananthapuram (30/12/2011; KLS1), Malabar Botanical Gardens, (KLS2; 27/6/2012), Regional Science Centre, Kozhikode (27/6/2012; KLS3), M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Kalpata, Wayanad (9/11/12; KLS4), St. Joseph H. S. School Thalassery (15/2/13; KLS.5), Govt. College Kasargod, (16/2/13; KLS.6), KFRI, Peechi (1/3/13; KLS.7) and H. S. School, Kottayam (9/3/13; KLS.8).

The Lectures were delivered by Dr. A. D. Damodaran, Prof. Dr. V. N. Rajasekhara Pillai Executive Vice President, KSCSTE, Prof. Dr. Jayakrishnan, Vice Chancellor, Kerala University, Prof. Dr. Abdul Salam, Vice chancellor University of Calicut, Dr. A. Ajaya Ghosh (NIIST), Prof. Oommen V. Oommen, Chairman, KSBB, Prof. K. N. Rajasekharan, Dr. C. Gauri, VSSC, Mr. Shaneeth, VSSC, Dr. N. Anil Kumar, MSSRF, Dr. Pradeep, TBGRI, Dr. Sabu, Kannur Univ, and Mr. V. S. Ramachandran, Dir., Regional Science Centre, Calicut, Prof. Dr. M. Haridas, Kannur Univ, Dr. Divya, CUK, Kasargod, Prof. Dr. P. V. Madhusudan, Malabar Botanic Garden, Dr. R. Prakashkumar, Malabar Botanic Garden, and Dr. James Jacob, Director, Rubber Research Institute of India, Kottayam.

The speakers were successful in conveying to the students that a career in science offers much personal satisfaction and an opportunity for a life long voyage of innovation, discovery, learning and hands-on experimentation.

As part of the series, an interactive session with the +1 students and the scientists was arranged which evoked much enthusiasm by the student participants and media attention. In addition, an essay competition was held at each of the venues for the participating 11th grade students and two of the best performers were selected from each venue based on the essays by an evaluating team which consisted of Dr P. R. Sudhakaran and Dr. K. N. Rajasekharan. These

students, designated as Khorana Young Scientists, have been invited, with guardian, for a visit to VSSC and RGCB and to attend the valedictory KLS function held on 22nd June 2013 forenoon.

These well attended, successful events highlights the enthusiastic acceptance of the Programme by the target student group. The Academy could also, in the course of KLS programme, add several Life Members and could carry the banner of KAS to several places in north Kerala.

III. Workshops, Symposia, Seminars and Lectures

Foundation Day Celebration 2011.

KAS organised Founders day in Hotel Pankaj. The day is celebrated with an event “Frontiers in Science”. The eminent speakers who addressed the KAS members included :Prof. Dr. C.G. Ramachandran Nair, Dr. K. N. Ninan, Prof. Oommaen V. Oommen and Mr. M. Shaneeth.

IV. Discussion with State Planning Board

KAS participated in the interaction meeting on the approach paper on 12th Five year Plan by Kerala State Planning Board with professional bodies. This was facilitated by Trivandrum Management Association and was held on 29th November 2011 in Mascot Hotel, Thiruvananthapuram. Dr. K .G. Ajit Kumar , General Secretary, Dr. Rajasekharan, K. N. and Shri Shaneeth M., EC member participated in the event and made a presentation on the status and plans for science education and career in the state. Later, on invitation from the board, a detailed document on the subject was prepared and submitted to Planning board, in a one-to-one meeting. Senior scientist of KAS and former presidents and secretaries were present along with the present Office bears.

V . Foundation Day Celebration 2012

KAS organised a seminar on “Traditional Knowledge , biodiversity and human welfare” as part of Foundation Day celebration, held on 14th November 2012. Dr. Radha Das, Vice President, welcomed the gathering. Prof. Dr. K. T. Augusti, Dr. C. S. P. Iyer, Prof. V. N. R. Pillai, Mrs. Dr. Radha Das, Prof. P. R. Sudhakaran, Dr. Anilkumar, Prof. Dr. Oommen V. Oommen President, Dr. K. N. Rajasekharan, Dr. K. K. Ramachandran Dr. K. G. Ajit Kumar, Dr. Sudha and Dr. Gouri were present. Research scholars, post graduate students from Kerala University departments and its affiliated colleges attended the programme. During this occasion, Dr. K. K. Ramachandran, Member-Secretary, KSCSTE, offered the Academy, an opportunity to

organize a special session in the 24th Kerala Science Congress at RRII, Kottayam. The meeting commemorated the contributions of Prof. Dr. Hargobind Khorana to science.

VI. Session at 24th Kerala Science Congress

The Academy organized a special session in the 24th Kerala Science Congress held at Kottayam. The News letter Scientia was released during the occasion.

VII. Organization of a Workshop on Project Formulation and Grant Utilization

Academy organized in association with KSCSTE on 15.02.2012 attended by over 100 PG students, researchers and research supervisors. Dr. Martha Kimball Cathcart, Dept of Cell Biology, Lerner Research, Institute, Cleveland Clinic Foundation, USA served as one of the resource persons.

VIII. Interactive session with Maharaja

KAS in association with British Council, organised an interactive session that included His Highness Marthanda Varma Maharaja, a representative from British Council and the Vice Chancellor of the University of Kerala. Prof. Dr. Oommen.V. Oommen, Dr. K. N. Rajasekharan and Dr.K.G.Ajit Kumar were present.

IX. International Seminar on climate change and sustainable development

In association with the British Council, the TKM management association and the Kerala Agricultural University, the Academy organized an “International seminar on climate change and sustainable development” at Kanakakuunnu Palace on 27 Feb 2012.

X. Technical talk on Ribosomes and their functions

KAS, in association with KSCSTE and the Dept. of Computational Biology & Bioinformatics, University of Kerala, organized an interactive session with Prof. Ada E. Yonath, Nobel Laureate in Chemistry on 7th February 2013.

XI. Technical talk on carbon nano tubes by Dr Ijima

A technical talk by Dr Ijima, Japan, of carbon nano-tube fame, was held on March 2nd, 2013. KAS was one of the co-organizers for the event. A number of academy members participated in the event and Prof. Oommen V Oommen, felicitated the speaker on behalf of the organiser. Dr.K. N. Rajasekharan, Dr. K. G. Ajit Kumar, Sri. Ravindran Pillai and Dr. Hari Narayanan attended.

XII. Workshop on Apprentice scientist programme

A nationwide programme for school children, termed as Apprentice Scientist, was conducted by French School, Pondicherry. KAS was one of the co-organizers for the zonal event held in Hassan Marikkar Hall, along with Rotary Club. Teams from different schools in and around the city participated in the event and they were made to exhibit their skills in conducting scientific experiments and analyzing the observations. Shri Shaneeth M, EC member worked with representatives from French School in conducting the session. Prof. Dr. Oommen V. Oommen, presided over the valedictory function in which Shri. Madhavan Nair, former chairman ISRO was the chief guest. Dr. K. G Ajit Kumar also participated in the function. The programme was coordinated by Mr. Balangadharan.

XIII. Discussion with Diplomats from UK

Dr. Oommen V. Oommen, Dr. Fazil Marickar and Dr. K. G. Ajit Kumar participated in a discussion with the diplomats of UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Mr. Greg Shapland, Ms. Heidi Minshall and Ms. Sarah Harper, about Kerala's long-standing historical, social, cultural and wider relationship with the Middle East at Hotel Taj Vivanta on Mar 18, 2013. The meeting was organized in association with the Association of British Scholars.

XIV. Major Achievements:

- The banner of the Academy could be taken to places such as Wayanad, Kasargod etc.
- The Khorana Lecture Series programme was well attended and the response from the students was remarkable.
- The membership enrollment has reached nearly 300 due to the exposure received during the KLS programme.
- The website is actively being maintained and all members are requested to update their email IDs by visiting the web site.

On this occasion, I wish to place on record with sincere gratitude the support given by KSCSTE very generously for the activities of the Academy including financial support and the use of the premises of KSCSTE including this auditorium. The above achievements are due to the untiring efforts of the President of the Academy working with his sincere involvement despite his other activities such as the Chairman of the Kerala State Biodiversity Board in addition to those of the other office bearers and the members of the Executive Council. In his

capacity as the Chairman of the KSBB, he was gracious enough to permit his office to serve as the venue of EC meetings. I thank all our esteemed fellows, life members and others at various locations in Kerala who have been of great help in the activities reported above. I use this occasion to welcome new members to our midst. I acknowledge that all shortcomings in my functioning as the general secretary are my responsibility and I am very thankful to all those who have pointed out these.

I now humbly place this report for discussion and the approval of the AGM.

Sd/-

Dr K.G.Ajit Kumar
General Secretary