INDIAN INSTITUTE
OF TECHNOLOGY
PALAKKAD

Sahyadri

TECHXPRESS

REFLECTIONS OF IIT PALAKKAD

GREETINGS FROM CHAIRMAN, BoG
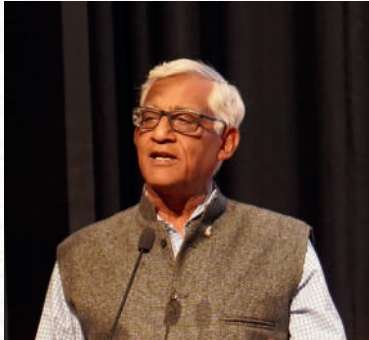
Prof. Ramesh Venkateswaran

DIRECTOR'S DESK

Prof. A. Seshadri Sekhar

It gives me great pleasure that this inaugural issue of the IIT Palakkad newsletter is being launched on the occasion of the Institute Day. It is fitting that this launch coincides with the move to our permanent campus from August last year. 2024 will truly be the beginning of a new chapter for us at IIT Palakkad.

In a short span of seven years IIT Palakkad has come a long way in being recognised in almost all spheres of activity - academics, industry collaborations, research, placements, co-curricular and extra curricular activities. I am sure in the years to come the IIT Palakkad community of students, faculty , staff and alumni will make their mark in their respective areas of competence and expertise.

This newsletter will serve as a platform to bring the internal community and all stakeholders together to share in the activities and happenings.

I wish the pioneering editorial board and all those to follow all the very best.

It fills me with immense pride to introduce the inaugural edition of our institute newsletter, "Sahyadri TechXpress". Though a young institute, IIT Palakkad has rapidly carved its niche and matched the standards set by older IITs. As we celebrate our Institute Day, we take pride in our swift progress, embracing accomplishments in academic excellence, cutting-edge facilities, diverse co-curricular activities, and extensive research opportunities. Our commitment to holistic development and knowledge expansion is complemented by our dedication to strengthening ties and industry relations.

Maintaining a document that highlights our innovations and research activities is essential for sharing our journey and accomplishments.

I am delighted to share that "Sahyadri TechXpress" will feature engaging sessions reflecting the core values of IIT Palakkad. I encourage each member of our community to read, support, and actively contribute to the success of our institute newsletter.
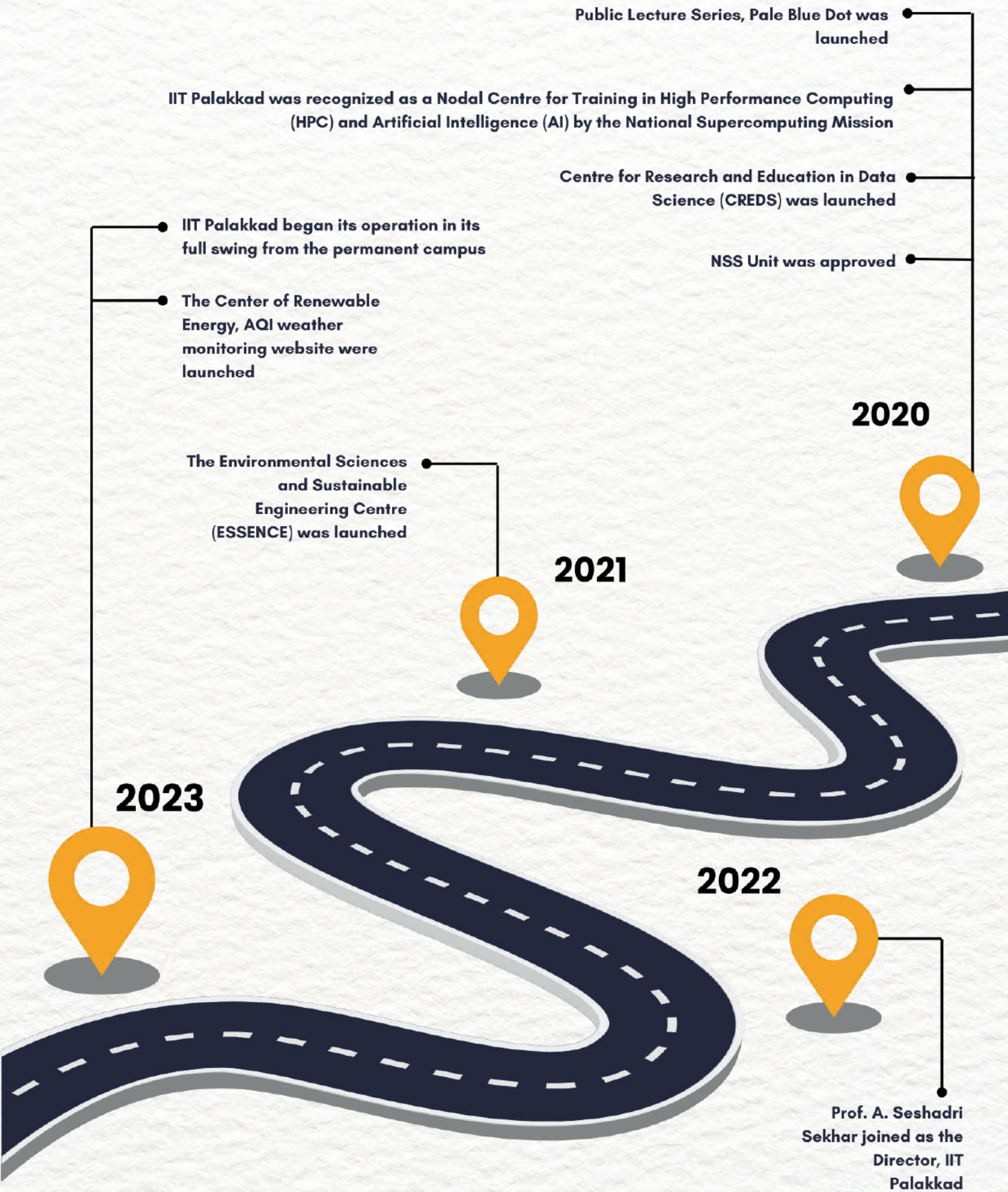
WHAT'S INSIDE

EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor: Ms. Shana Shihab
Associate Editors: Dr. Veena Venudharan and Dr. Debarati Chatterjee

Designs: Ms. Shana Shihab and Mr. Nakul Chandrasekharan
Photos: CET and Special arrangement

Public Lecture Series, Pale Blue Dot was launched

IIT Palakkad was recognized as a Nodal Centre for Training in High Performance Computing (HPC) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) by the National Supercomputing Mission

Centre for Research and Education in Data Science (CREDS) was launched

IIT Palakkad began its operation in its full swing from the permanent campus

NSS Unit was approved

The Center of Renewable Energy, AQI weather monitoring website were launched

2020

The Environmental Sciences and Sustainable Engineering Centre (ESSENCE) was launched

2021

2023

2022

Prof. A. Seshadri Sekhar joined as the Director, IIT Palakkad

MILESTONES

IIT Palakkad began its operations in Ahalia campus with 4 BTech Programmes i.e., Civil, Computer Science, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering

2015

2017

2018

Prof. P B Sunil Kumar joined as Founding Director of IIT Palakkad

Centre for Industry Collaboration and Sponsored Research (IC&SR) was established

2019

- Started MTech programs in Geotechnical Engineering and Manufacturing and Materials Engineering.
- The Alumni Cell of IIT Palakkad was inaugurated
- Operations began in Nila campus
- Industry-Academia Conclave was launched
- M.Sc programmes in Physics and Chemistry were commenced
- First Batch of BTech Students graduated

Prof. A. Seshadri Sekhar addressing Workshop on Hydrogen Valley held on 15th of February 2023 at Trivandrum.

IIT Palakkad joins hands with NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam for a greener Campus

IIT Palakkad signs MoU with DAAD Germany

PANIIT's Global Technology Summit 2023

Institute Day 2023

The GSCOE team with Mr Bill Gates

Inauguration of Institute Clinic

GLIM
OF 2

IIT Palakkad's Engineering Works Division receives Autodesk Imagine Awards 2023 for Sustainable Construction Innovation

IIT Palakkad hosts the team from Indobox Inc, Japan

Convocation 2023

IAC 5.0

Poster sessions at RSD 2023

Research Scholars' Day

STEM ON MOVE 2023 with IEEE

Petrichor '23

Math Circle

PSES 2023

Onam Celebration '23

IAC 5.0

BTech orientation programme

Science Quest and CRYSTAL Program 2023

'Can Do' Workshop co-organised by NSS and Ullas Trust in November 2023

Pale Blue Dot Lecture delivered by Dr. Ajith Parameshwaran

IIT Palakkad's First Open House

EBSB Flag off

IIT Palakkad awarded 5G Use Case Lab by Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Deep Scan

REFLECTING ON THE TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY: IIT PALAKKAD'S SMART AGRITECH CENTRE IS REVOLUTIONISING INDIAN FARMING

Pic: Team SATCARD experimenting in their farm field set up in the campus for testing and validating the innovations

In a groundbreaking initiative, IIT Palakkad's Smart AgriTech Centre for Advanced Research and Development (SATCARD) is poised to make a positive impact on over 5 million farmers in India by 2030. This farmer-centric tech research centre, a first of its kind in India, is addressing some of the country's most critical agricultural challenges through the development of cost-effective, AI-based agricultural technologies.

SATCARD seamlessly integrates data-driven technologies such as AI, sensors, and drones to enhance agricultural productivity. The centre's current focus revolves around several key areas:
1. Designing and developing a sophisticated smart sensor fusion system.
2. Establishing an artificial intelligence-based framework for early detection of plant diseases.
3. Developing and testing intelligent soil

sensors for precise estimation of crucial soil parameters.
4. Researching and experimenting with smart weather stations for comprehensive microclimate assessment and improved weather forecasting.

To support ongoing research and development activities, a dedicated farming field within the campus has been established to test and validate technologies. The centre has already innovated numerous sensors that provide intelligent decisions to farmers based on data-driven AI models.

Innovations such as smart soil moisture-conductivity sensors, indigenous multi-depth soil sensors measuring soil moisture, and remote sensing-based yield enhancement have been developed in collaboration with Revin Techno Solutions. A multi-spectral imaging-based device for early-stage pest

and disease detection aids farmers in identifying and monitoring healthy crop growth, providing timely recommendations for pesticide and water application.

The centre operates on the principle "Lab to Land: Land to Lab," seamlessly connecting digital farming ecosystems and showcasing tangible value on the farm through data. For that matter, smart weather stations have been deployed in more than 12 farmlands across the state including at IIT Campus, Thiruvananthapuram, Malampuzha, Kanjikode, Walayar, etc. These stations suggest to farmers the real-time amounts of water and pesticides needed for their plants.

Farmers who were initially hesitant about using this tech support are now excited about the high yield of their harvest. Mr. Azeez, a farmer from Kanjikode, expressed his satisfaction upon witnessing increased yields in the area after testing technologies developed at SATCARD. Initially skeptical about the smart weather station, he shared, "I cultivated chillies in two plots, one using traditional methods and the other incorporating SATCARD technology. The yield was notably higher in the SATCARD-supported plot."

"The centre aspires to foster an interest among youth in farming, encouraging them to explore the vast possibilities within agriculture, with the overarching goal of ushering in a new era of

Meet SATCARD Team

- Dr. Sreenath Vijayakumar: Head- SATCARD, Assistant Professor, Electrical Engineering
- Dr. Satyajit Das: Assistant Professor, Data Science and Computer Science Engineering
- Dr. Deepak Jaiswal: Head-ESSENCE
- Dr. Sneha Gajbhiye: Assistant Professor, Electrical Engineering
- Dr. Yugender Goud Kotagiri: Ramanujan Fellow, Chemistry

Awards and Recognition received for SATCARD

- Team SATCARD won **first prize** in the **Environmental Sensing Project** competition by University of Helsinki and FICORE.

- Team SATCARD mentored by Dr. Satyajit Das and Dr. Sreenath Vijayakumar got into the semi-finals of **Swadeshi Microprocessor challenge - Innovate Solutions** for #Atmanirbhar Bharat.

- Dr.Sreenath Vijayakumar, Head SATCARD was awarded **"Recognition on Emerging Research"** and **"2nd Prize at ICST'15 conference"** held at Macquarie University, Australia.

Impact

INDIA'S FIRST FARMER-CENTRIC TECH RESEARCH CENTRE

Greater Yield	**48%**
Water Saved	**56%**
Fertiliser saved	**22%**

Developing Efficient and Affordable Agri-Tech Solutions with In-House Testing Field

sustainable farming practices" expressed Prof. A Seshadri Sekhar, Director, IIT Palakkad.

"IIT Palakkad's SATCARD serves as a farmer-centric hub, fostering collaboration among agriculturists, industrialists, and technologists to collectively tackle the urgent challenges within the Indian farming ecosystem. We take pride in addressing problem statements identified directly by farmers, and our proposed solutions undergo rigorous validation from the farming community, ensuring the real-world effectiveness of our initiatives." Dr. Sreenath Vijayakumar, Head-SATCARD and Assistant Professor, IIT Palakkad.

Pic: (From the left), Intelligent-irrigation system, indigenous soil sensor and smart weather station

TECH THAT   MATTERS

COVID-19: IMMUNITY, PATHOLOGY, & THERAPY

The COVID-19 pandemic, caused by SARS-CoV-2, presented an unprecedented danger to global health systems. The infection caused a range of clinical manifestations, from asymptomatic infection to severe illness requiring hospital admission and intensive care management. Large number of recovered patients also experienced post-COVID-19 complications called long-COVID. Our group made several noteworthy contributions on the subject.

Prof. Jagadeesh Bayry

Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C): Though children were least affected by COVID-19 pandemic, a small section of children exposed to SARS-CoV-2 developed a novel multi-systemic disease condition MIS-C with overlapping symptoms of Kawasaki disease. We critically analysed reports from different parts of the world and have concluded that both are distinctly different diseases even though they share many symptoms and elicit somewhat similar immune response. The report brought much more clarity on the manifestations of both these syndromes, making it possible for clinicians to offer better clinical outcomes.

References: Nature Rev Rheumatol. 17:731-748 (2021) (highlighted as a highly cited paper, Top 1% by Clarivate Analytics); Cell Rep Med. 2:100431(2021)

Long-term effects of COVID-19: While the immediate consequences of COVID-19 have been well described, the long-term effects of COVID-19 were not yet elaborated. We created an international consortium to identify research priorities in order to understand the long-term sequelae of COVID-19 in the population with pre-existing and new onset airways diseases. The consortium has identified the prognosis scores as the main area of future investigation.

References: Lancet Respir Med. 9:1467-1478 (2021); Nature Rev Rheumatology 19:399-400 (2023) (received a huge response in social media with an Altmetric score of 3257 and 9821 X posts)

Bioinformatics analyses of therapeutic monoclonal antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 variants: Prior to the vaccination, various therapies including monoclonal antibodies (MAbs) to S protein of SARS-CoV-2 have been used to treat COVID-19. However, emergence of variant virus strains raised serious questions on the therapeutic benefits of these MAbs. To address this outstanding question, we performed bioinformatics analyses on the binding potential of therapeutic MAbs against SARS-CoV-2 variants and designed potent MAbs in silico that could neutralize the variants.

References: Front Immunol. 12:782506 (2022); Antibodies 12:17 (2023)

Human basophil response to SARS-CoV-2: Despite being one of the important regulators of immune responses, the cross-talk between SARS-COV-2 and human basophils has not yet been investigated. We reported that SARS-COV-2 induces key cytokines interleukin-4 and interleukin-13 in basophils that are known to enhance protective antibody responses to SARS-CoV-2 and in reducing the inflammation and tissue damage mediated by the cytokine storm in COVID-19 patients.

In this episode of **"Tech that Matters,"** Prof. Jagadeesh Bayry reflects on his team's investigations, which have significantly contributed to the global study of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19

**References:** *Front Immunol. 13:838448 (2022); Cells 11:801 (2022)*

Tocilizumab immunotherapy in COVID-19 patients: As interleukin-6 (IL-6) plays a major role in causing cytokine storm and respiratory failure in severe and critical COVID-19 patients, IL-6 targeting tocilizumab immunotherapy was extensively used during early phase of pandemic. We demonstrate that tocilizumab therapy does not alter plasma virus neutralization capacity for SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern including Delta and Omicron and that tocilizumab therapy does not alter the B and T cell subsets and SARS-CoV-2-specific IgG1 antibodies.

The future work will focus on the fine characterization of these antibodies. Our data provided a pointer towards short-term use of tocilizumab for cytokine-storm-associated infectious diseases in the future.

Reference: *iScience 26:106124 (2023)*

Prof. Bayry's article, "High Risk of Autoimmune Diseases after COVID-19," published in Nature Reviews Rheumatology, received significant attention from researchers worldwide. This article garnered substantial engagement on Twitter, with over 4,000 tweets in just three days!
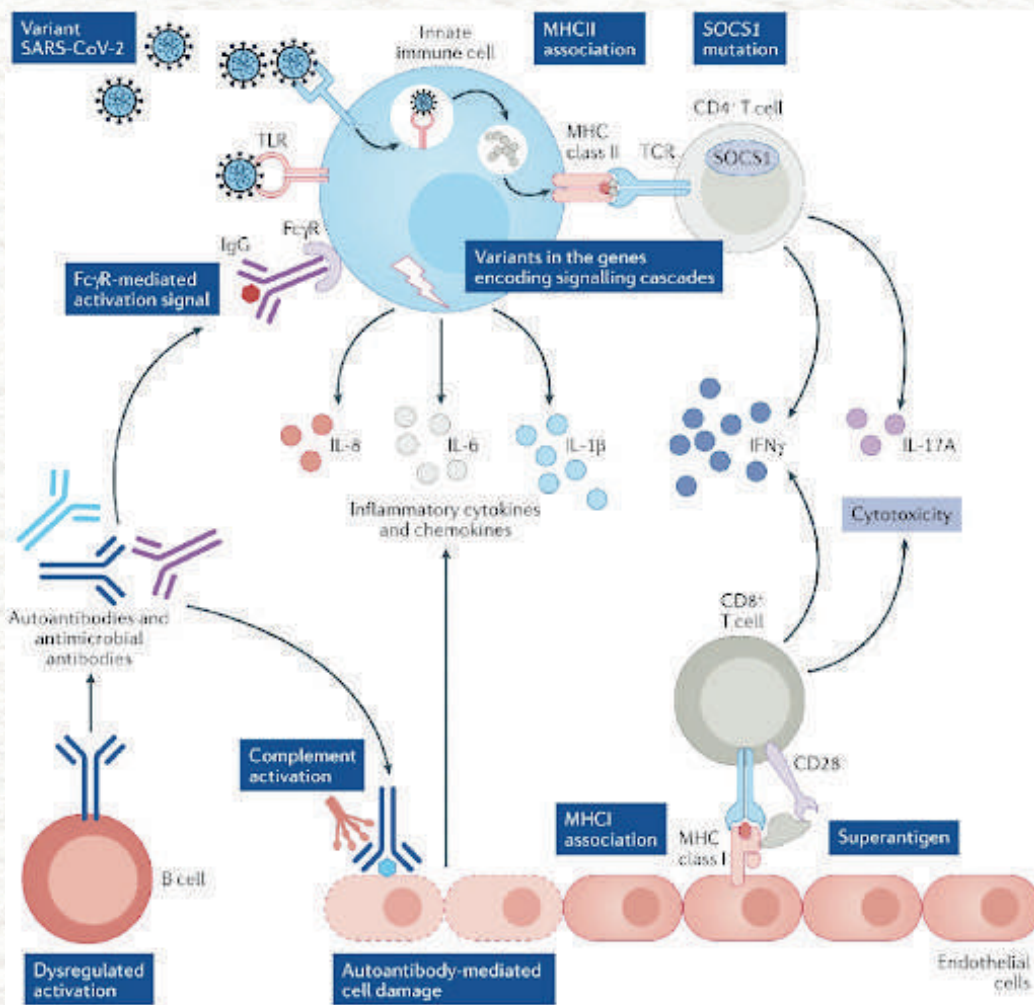
Pic: Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C)
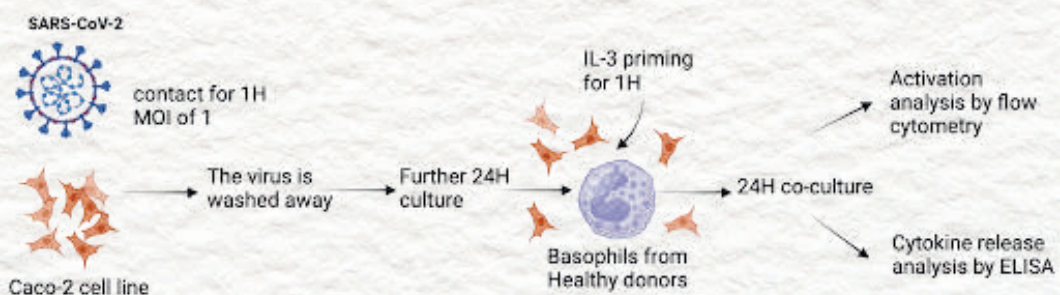
Pic: Illustration of Basophils and SARS-CoV-2

SahyaConnect

EMPOWERING THE YOUTH OF ATTAPADI: IIT PALAKKAD'S SKILL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

As a leading institute for higher education that believes in nurturing minds for a better world, IIT Palakkad is leading the way toward a journey of progress and empowerment in the tribal hamlets of Attapadi. Situated close to its proximity, the Institute prioritizes facilitating positive changes within the community. Hence, a series of outreach activities are being organized by IIT Palakkad aimed at providing extensive support to the local populace.

The outreach endeavors in Attapadi commenced with the arrival of a team led by Prof. A Seshadri Sekhar, joined by District Collector Dr. S Chitra IAS in May 2023. As they evaluated the prevailing conditions, the team recognized the need for enhancing employability skills among the youth. As a result of subsequent discussions, the idea for a skill development training program originated. To date, we have provided hands-on training in vocational skills to nearly 50 individuals through two phases.

The first-level training program, organised in July 2023, engaged 20 youths from Mele Aanavyi Ooru in Attapadi. The meticulously designed one-month residential training program included learning modules on basic carpentry, plumbing, welding techniques, computer networking, and IT proficiency. Participants of this program refined their skills in email communication and typing, and

gained confidence in operating computers and creating valid email IDs, a far cry from relying on email IDs provided by the local mobile phone shopkeepers.

The enthusiastic students undertook a project to construct a multi-level rack for bag storage. From hollow metallic bars to a finely crafted frame, they executed the entire process, involving measurement, cutting, fitting, and welding. Their satisfaction and pride were apparent as the final product materialized, providing tangible proof of their newly developed skills in action. This rack now proudly stands in Central workshop, Sahyadri Campus.

Throughout this training, participants had access to the state-of-the-art resources available at IIT Palakkad that ensured them an optimal learning experience. Additionally, transportation and accommodation were arranged within the campus premises, allowing the students to fully immerse themselves in the training.

As a next step, to enhance the employability skills of Attapadi natives, 22 enthusiastic men from the community were trained in January 2024 through the Plumbing Apprentice Programme (PAP) conducted by IIT Palakkad. This 21-day hands-on training program was held in collaboration with the Technology Innovation Foundation (TECHIN) of IIT Palakkad, Global Sanitation centre of Excellence, the

Pic: Participant collecting certificate from the Director, IITPKD

International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO), Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), and Petronet LNG.

This time, the program had representation from Pudur, Agali, and Sholayur sectors of Attappadi. These participants were comprehensively trained as professional plumbers and are now equipped to contribute to the focused mission programs on water and sanitation envisioned by state and central governments, such as Jal Jeevan Mission, Amruth 2.0, Swachh Bharath Abhiyan, etc. Each participant received a Do-It-Yourself Plumbing Tool Kit with essential tools to support their plumbing journey.

This curated training program, budgeted at Rs. 2.7 Lakhs per batch, was provided free of cost to the most deserving candidates of Attapadi through ongoing collaborations of IIT Palakkad with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and a CSR initiative of Petronet LNG Limited.

Another effort undertaken by IIT Palakkad includes its intervention to improve the water quality and waste management systems in Sholayur Panchayat. IIT Palakkad joined hands with the district administration to improve water quality and sanitation facilities in the place as a preventive measure against potential diarrhea outbreaks.

In August 2023, a team from IIT Palakkad, led by Dr. Praveena Gangadharan (Assistant Professor, Department of Civil Engineering), in collaboration with the district administration, including Dr. Geethu Maria Joseph (District Surveillance Officer, Palakkad), and others, visited the site to assess water supply and sanitation systems. The team conducted a preliminary investigation into the water quality and waste management systems in the migrant hamlets situated upstream of a natural stream. The turbidity level of the water was tested using a portable device. Recommendations were provided for implementing preventive measures against waterborne communicable diseases in the households. The team also suggested the establishment of a water distribution network compliant with set standards to deliver water to downstream settlements. Following the site investigation, the team engaged in extensive discussions with the District Surveillance Officer regarding the implementation of the proposed recommendations.

These initiatives have ignited a new spark of hope and possibility in Attapadi, a region that has faced its share of challenges. By collaborating with the district administration and investing in the education and skill development of the youth, IIT Palakkad demonstrates its commitment to sustainable progress and meaningful change.

Pic: (Left) Students from a first-level training program with the rack they built. (Right from top) 1. Participants engaging in their plumbing training 2. Dr. Praveena during the site visit in Sholayar, 3. Participants with the Director, 4. Glimpses from the first-level training program.

KAAPI K☕RNER

In this engaging conversation with Dr. Ganesh Natarajan, Dr. Debarati Chatterjee sits down with the Dean Administration and Registrar-In-Charge to delve into his academic and professional journey, providing insightful glimpses into his role and responsibilities

Dr. Debarati Chatterjee

Dr. Ganesh Natarajan

Could you give a glimpse of your academic journey so far? How did your academic path lead to administration?

My academic career started in 2011 with a very short two-month stint at NAL, Bangalore after which I joined IIT Guwahati in the Department of Mechanical Engg. in March 2011 and worked there until Dec 2018. I then moved to IIT Palakkad and since Jan 2019 have been an Associate Professor in the Department of Mech. Engg. I did not have any prior administrative experience but as Prof. Kurian who was the Professor-In-Charge (Admin) left on completion of his tenure and other Associate Professors were already holding an administrative post, I believe Prof. Sunil, our former director was left with only one remaining logical choice that led me to the post of Dean (Admin) starting Jan 2021.

As the Registrar-Director-Dean(Admin) is a troika in administration and Col. Chakraborty left the institute in Feb 2022, I had to take up the role of Registrar(I/C) as well with the workload in that regard shared by the Director too. In short, the administration roles were not through an academic path but largely due to chance and in that sense I am a circumstantial administrator

What do you enjoy the most? Could you arrange in order of preference: Teaching Research, Administration? Could you explain?

Teaching and Research do go hand-in-hand and are the primary responsibilities and while I enjoy both I would choose Research over Teaching if I had to

make a preference - even though it is only by a small margin. I believe that a lot of research inputs do also come from teaching which is why the latter is important, because it allows for newer ideas and perspectives which could change the way we view a problem. More smarter minds, greater the chance for a resolution.

Administration is a lower preference because none of us are really trained for it but then that also does not mean I do not enjoy it. If someone does not enjoy what he does, he would not be able to do a good job at it and the end result would be half-cooked. So with administration it is more about enjoying short-term doing the work, learning the rules and resolving the issues but with research/teaching the enjoyment is long-term. The difference is the latter brings satisfaction mostly, the former is mostly about relief in solving the problems in real time. More like a test match vs T20.

Which of the above is most challenging and why?

Administration. Research is what we train for in PhD and postdoc, teaching is something we have seen as students but requires time to polish the way we handle a subject and deliver lectures to an audience - but this can be done in a definite period of time with help from peers around.

Administration is a totally different world, where there is a need to bridge between the institute and the stakeholders (staff, faculty, students) and that cannot be taught but must be learnt from experience. It is like the movie Matrix - the matrix cannot be

explained, it can only be experienced. Moreover, there is no one correct solution available to most problems, there will be differing opinions and sometimes a decision needs to be made in a short period of time that we think is the best at the moment.

You are a part of the leadership under which IIT Palakkad is continuously witnessing huge growth, expansion, and transformation. What are your views in this context?

The institute is clearly at a stage where it is slowly turning from a kid-on-the-blocks to a teen, as we complete a decade in a couple of years time. My own take is that these times are both exciting and crucial - exciting because we have moved into a new permanent campus and slowly settling down and crucial because with all facilities in one place and the faculty/staff having gained experience of the system, the foundation for a culture of academic excellence needs to be laid.

It is important also to think of "long-term" benefits rather than "short-term" success and to keep doing what we are doing in a better way. As an institute, we should also be empathetic about local issues and see how best technological interventions can help and students must be encouraged to explore and enjoy learning, although I am not sure how that can really be achieved when most are burnt out after JEE coaching. Another important aspect is to evolve an administrative structure that is clear, robust and scalable so that while some flexibility that may be required in time can be built, there is a clear and defined pathway that is known to all on how the system works and operates.

Which are the areas that you think we need to focus on, to make a further impact?

I am sure that the focus points could differ among people, but my view is that we focus on imparting education that strengthens the fundamentals and improves their problem-solving skills. And inter-disciplinary research must be encouraged, but then again most work is now straddling across disciplines. Impact is a subjective concept, but good work will definitely find its destination - and impact can be in terms of good students, excellent papers or technological innovations, and we should strive to have a culture and ecosystem that promotes all of these.

Could you narrate some satisfying moments that you experienced as a researcher, a teacher, and an administrator?

The most satisfying moments as a researcher working in computational fluid dynamics is when a code runs as expected - and this has been happening for more than two decades now and when research scholars say that they have been fortunate to have worked with me (although it is possibly more true the other way round).

I think the satisfying moments as a teacher are if and when the students say that the classes made them love the subject that they really did not like or motivated them to pursue a career - and that is yet to really happen. On a lighter note, passing all students in a course does give me a lot of satisfaction. As an administrator, the smooth conduct of the convocation (as part of the Event Organisation Committee) and the more recent massive staff recruitment drive are two such instances. This would however only be possible because of some heroes in the background and a lot of team work - the staff recruitment in particular being one such situation. From a purely administrative viewpoint though, the approval to revised recruitment norms and staff promotion policy as well as their implementation for the very first time will be a memorable one.

How significant a role was played by the administration at IIT Palakkad during COVID time?

Quite significant, being a third generation IIT with limited manpower, we successfully navigated the situation, leveraging our full capabilities. While larger institutes had more students and bigger challenges, but then they had more manpower and experienced faculty to deal with it. Prof. Sunil, our former director was very hands-on during that time, and the academic shift was the larger immediate worry and Dr. Deepak and Prof. Sovan and their team did a very commendable job in ensuring that there were various options made available to the faculty to take their classes. Prof. Sunil encouraged and appreciated newer ideas, CET was dynamic and enterprising as always and Work-From-Home became the norm. Prof. Anand as

> **"As an institute, we should also be empathetic about local issues and see how best technological interventions can help and students must be encouraged to explore and enjoy learning"**

Dean (Students) also had a difficult job in hand - to ensure that research scholars could access research facilities and arrange for vaccination drives, and Prof. Bayry also made sure that there were no serious concerns during a two-year long period.

As a successful administrator, in a meeting with diverging opinions, what are your suggestions to arrive at a workable conclusion?

I believe it is important to hear everyone's views whether one agrees to it or not. Firstly, if one listens then the problem is half solved (most people feel happy to be heard even if the decision doesn't go their way) and secondly the issue needs to be clearly spelt out. The more views that come, there is more data to make informed decisions and one should make clear that disagreements are professional and issue-based and not personal. This leads to a final consensus and once arrived at everyone should also respect the decision even if it is not necessarily the one they wanted to have. The art of balancing the

"Remaining calm and being a good listener can help significantly in arriving at a balanced decision in 9/10 cases"

opinions and views into making a decision depends on the situation but clarity of the problem is important and the reasons for arriving at a decision need to be clarified as well. And our colleagues must be gently reminded that everyone is important and decisions may not be best or correct in hindsight - but there is a logic based on information that has led to the decision. And sometimes, very rarely, there might be situations where no real consensus happens when the person in that position may be forced to take a stronger stand - but again this is all meant for the system and there should be no personal interests/problems. Remaining calm and being a good listener can help significantly in arriving at a balanced decision in 9/10 cases.

What is your advice for your colleagues and successors in administration?

I think advice is a strong term, and I would only like to present my views which may be only considered as suggestions, if at all, for those who take up administrative roles. Stay calm even if you are tense, do not take decisions when angry and realise that captain is responsible for the failure of their team. Team work is important and everyone's role must be made clear, but support them (specifically staff) even

Pic: (Top) Dr. Ganesh addressing during a workshop on Viksit Bharat, (Bottom-left), National Constitution Day, (Bottom-right) from a MathCircle session
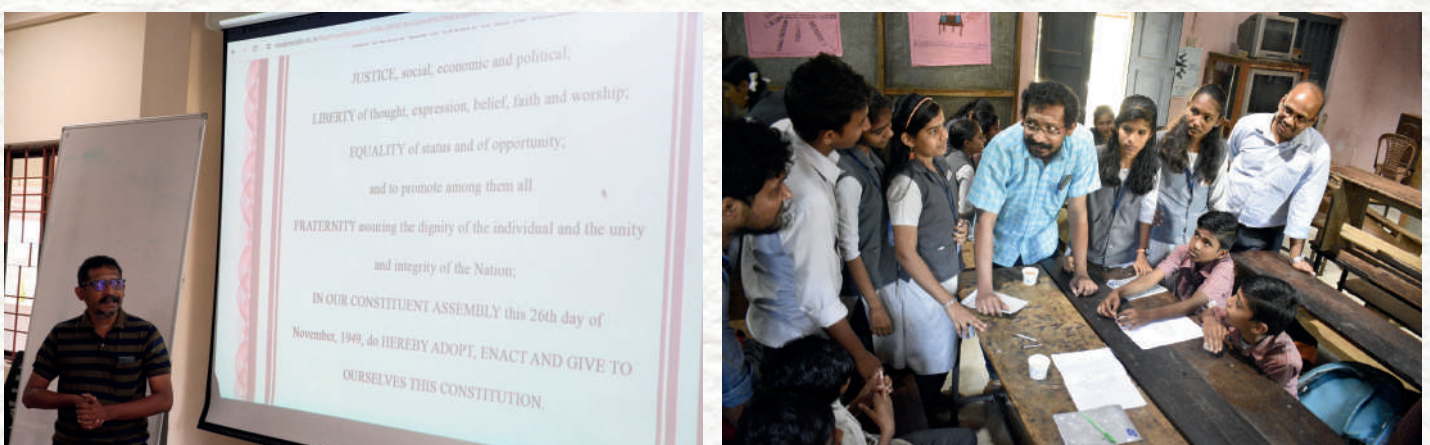
if they go wrong. One should take ownership or accountability and accept mistakes when it happens, rectify them and ensure that it does not recur. Never believe that a position in administration is a position of power, it is more of accountability. Importantly, listen to everyone and give them a fair hearing - even if the decision does not go their way finally. But then again, everyone should be their own and there is no template in administration and nobody should try filling the boots/shoes of their predecessor. There is a direction and it is upto the new Deans/Associate Deans to remove the hurdles, smoothen the path while being receptive to criticism paving way for easier times for their younger and prospective colleagues.

What is your advice for our students and researchers at IIT Palakkad?

Suggestions again - To learn rather than study, to enjoy the process rather than focussing on pre-defined goals (like papers, patents) and to interact with peers to learn about varied areas and different cultures. In the end, unless someone loves being in a campus and learning there will be no value addition. The institute, faculty/staff and infrastructure can only do so much, it is upto the students to exploit that arguably "best period" of their life to the maximum, because as wise men say - the journey is truly the reward.

You have been handling both the roles of Dean (Administration) and Registrar. Could you tell us about these two roles? (Are they complementary? Can you contrast them?)

Dean (Administration) is typically supposed to handle faculty matters only, and that is relatively an easier role with lesser issues popping up, particularly after the new departments have been formed. That does not mean it is an easy job - there is quite a lot on that front in terms of handling CPDA, leave, preparation of Annual Reports, APARs, faculty recruitment, pay fixation and several other responsibilities.

According to me, the Registrar has got a bigger role to play in the Institute- both technical and administrative staff come under the Registrar, salary disbursement, clearing the bills, dealing with promotion and staff concerns, answering RTIs, looking at aspects of purchase and finance, making the annual budget, and signing all certificates during the Convocation, handling BoG and FC meetings and so on.

While in terms of technical staff recruitment, the Dean (Admin) and Registrar work together (as I did with Col. Chakraborty) the role of a Registrar encompasses a large spectrum that Dean does not look into. Importantly, transitioning from a faculty to Dean that handles mostly faculty affairs is gradual, taking up a Registrar position is more of a abrupt jump for faculty, particularly when you are not experienced enough in a system (someone with twenty to twenty five years of experience has atleast seen a wide number of issues to appreciate and it is does not hamper their research work).

The Deans roles must be taken up by faculty, we must do for the system if we are expecting the system to do something for us - and actually "we" are the system. The Registrar has to be someone with an overall experience in an academic setting who can also handle staff and faculty with ease - being strict when needed, but not being the boss always, and who has had a background in purchase and finance matters - and soon enough I hope to see someone taking up that post. With a good team on ground across sections, I am sure the new Deans and Registrar will have adequate support and assistance in their work.

"There is a direction and it is upto the new Deans/Associate Deans to remove the hurdles, smoothen the path while being receptive to criticism paving way for easier times for their younger and prospective colleagues"

STUDENT'S ALCOVE

A RECAP OF IIT PALAKKAD'S STELLAR PERFORMANCE AT INTER IIT EVENTS

IIT Palakkad has truly made its mark in the recent Inter IIT meets at IIT Kharagpur, IIT Gandhinagar, IIT Bombay, and IIT Madras. Let's take a look at the victories that showcased IIT Palakkad's excellence in culture, sports, and technology.

Pic : Inter IIT Cultural contingent with the Director

Sports: Breaking Limits and Barriers

The Inter IIT Sports Meet, hosted by IIT Gandhinagar and IIT Bombay, showcased spirited competition among various IITs across sporting events like football, table tennis, basketball, cricket, chess, and athletics. Noteworthy achievements included IIT Palakkad's football and table tennis teams advancing to the pre-quarterfinals, while the cricket team fought admirably in the same stage. The chess team secured a commendable 10th position overall, displaying strategic acumen. The athletics contingent emerged as a standout, with IIT Palakkad's athletes excelling in sprinting, relay, throwing, and jumping events. In particular, Mr. Sainath Reddy secured a coveted silver medal in the Long Jump event, highlighting exceptional talent and rigorous training. The event underscored the dedication of IIT Palakkad towards fostering sporting excellence, unity, and discipline, promoting a culture of fitness and teamwork among students.

Pic : Inter IIT Technical contingent in Madras

Culture: A Showcase of Talent and Unity

IIT Palakkad marked its presence in the inter-IIT cultural meet hosted by IIT Kharagpur. The 150-member contingent left an everlasting impression on the event. From securing 3rd in the group dance to 5th in online modeling, 7th in fashion and debate, and making a mark in several other events, we proved to be a real competition to even the first-gen IITs. Our 5 day stay in the awe-inspiring campus was a memorable experience. It surely did bring everyone together as we supported each other in our respective events, being each other's biggest cheerleaders, and learning to win and lose with grace. From enjoying the arena with the food stalls and games to enjoying the musical nights, everyone is already looking forward to the next meet.

Pic : Inter IIT Sports contingent with Mr Alok Singh

Technology: Nurturing Innovators

IIT Palakkad showcased prowess at Inter IIT Tech Meet 12.0 in IIT Madras, led by Sarthak Garg and Aryan Mathur. The 54-member contingent excelled in Devrev's problem statement based on LLMs, securing 4th place under Syed Abdul Mateen's leadership. Strong performances in Adobe's Behavior Simulation and IGDC's Game Development were notable. We had a narrow miss in Quantum Computing; the team's projects at the Engineers Conclave and research papers at the Student Academia Conference displayed remarkable contributions.

All of our problem statement teams displayed remarkable efforts. Overall, securing the 18th position amid tough competition signifies the team's commendable effort and dedication.
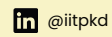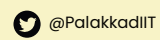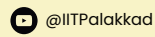
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