

# MILE HIGH KERALAM

Let's get creative....together!!



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## Foreword.

You are never too old to set another goal or  
dream a new dream! C. S Lewis

*Welcome to the first edition of Mile High  
Keralam. Our goal is to present a platform to the  
literary talents in our community to share their  
passion for Arts and Literature. This quarterly  
online magazine will be a venue for presenting  
articles, poems, drawings, cartoons and any  
literature to members of the Kerala Association of  
Colorado.*

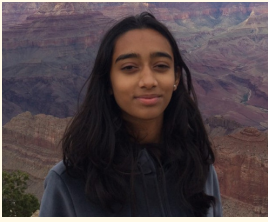
*Calling talents old and new.*

*Calling talents big and small.*

*Come reveal your hidden strength.*

*Colorado's Kerala is waiting for you...*





# Is Social Media a blessing or a curse to Society?

*A review by Teresa Benny Mundackal*

Are precious amounts of time children and teens spend on social media worth it? According to SMT, “The average person will spend 116 minutes (nearly two hours) on social media every day, which totals at 5 years and 4 months spent over a lifetime” (How much time do people spend on social media? A lot!). Social media allows people to connect with almost anyone anywhere in the world. Although social media can connect you to a larger community, it also has a downside.

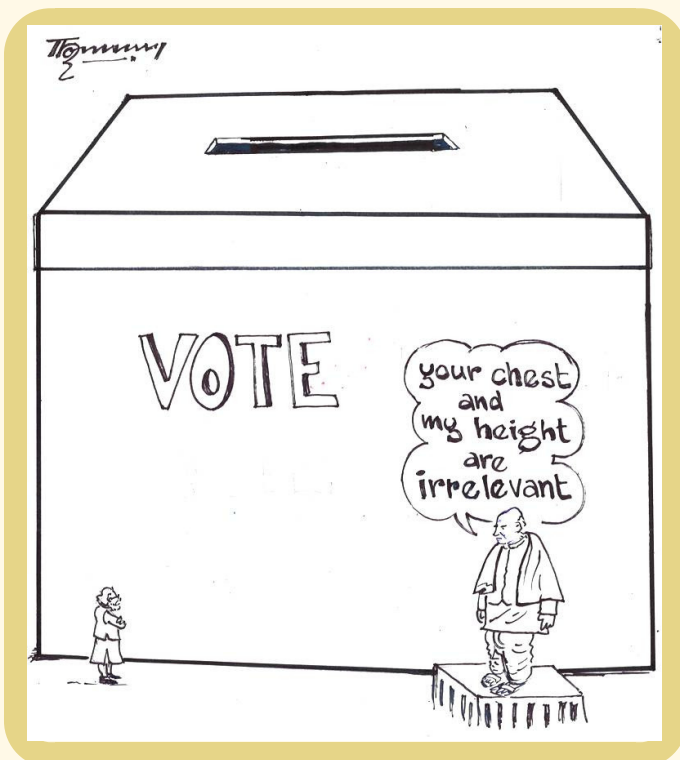
Excessive time and utilization of social media can be harmful to society as a whole.



Social media can make it strenuous to differentiate between our relationships. According to Brian Jung, “Social media sites can make it more difficult for us to distinguish between the meaningful relationships we foster in the real world, and the numerous causal relationships formed through social media” (Jung). Social media can cause you to confuse your real relationships with fake ones on the internet. Real world connections with others are a necessary part of healthy relationships because everybody needs physical support from friends they interact with in person. According to The New York Times, “The relationships we form are superficial at best, and the social comparison that these connections fosters can be psychologically damaging” (Csorba 2015). Without real-world relationships, we may mentally be harmed. If people spend too much time, talking to friends online rather than ‘in person’ the consequences can be extremely harmful to our mental health. Ultimately, real-world friendships are better than the friendships made online.

Cyberbullying can affect our mental health and can occur when using social media. Cyberbullying using social media is extremely common. According to Live Science, “...researchers found that a median of 23 percent of teens reporting being targeted. About 15 percent reported bullying someone online themselves” (Pappas 2015). Time spent looking at obnoxious messages or posts from bullies can be extremely harmful to teens especially. Cyberbullying can lead to depression or self-harm. Live Science states, “The research also found that the more cyberbullying a teen experienced, the more severe his or her symptoms of depression” (Pappas 2015). Most teens, who are victims of cyberbullying, are depressed or have anxiety issues. Thereafter, social media can expose you to the risk of cyberbullying and can harm your physiological health.

Social media can make people feel as if others' lives are better. Social media can be a popularity contest or a constant competition between people to show who has a better life. According to Social Media Examiner, "Another downside of our social media relationships can be that our successes feel diminished and our failures amplified" (Jain 2010). Social Media can make people feel as if their successes do not mean as much as their failures. Many social media sites can leave people frustrated. According to TIME, "The most common cause of Facebook frustration came from users comparing themselves socially to their peers, while the second most common source of dissatisfaction was "lack of attention" from having fewer comments, likes and general feedback compared to friends" (Sifferlin 2013).



Social media is a risk to your personal privacy. In the current time, there are many hackers trying to hack into your personal devices and accounts. Besides all the hackers, what people put on the web can be spread across the whole world. According to iCare Consulting, "Whenever a user writes a post, shares a photo or likes a product's page, that user is sending a very large amount of data to everyone who is on his/her friends' list, and to many agencies"(Administration 2011). When people share things on the web, they lose a lot of their personal information. Spending time on social media causes people to lose privacy.

On the other side, Social media can be beneficial to society. Social media makes it possible to contact family, make new friends and get help from people around the world in a matter of seconds. According to Agrawal, "Major news outlets, corporations, and persons of interest use social media to deliver messages to the masses. With items posting immediately, the public stays informed" (Agrawal 2016).

In conclusion, although social media can be beneficial in many ways, it can be extremely harmful as well. Spending too much time on social media is a nonessential and superfluous risk. This exposes us to the risks of cyberbullying, loss of privacy and even false friends. It can open up a completely new world where people can be bullied, have fake identities, and bring new good or bad relationships. So be beware to use social media in a mature and responsible way.



# The Deluge

by Madhu Purushothaman. [www.booksmp.com](http://www.booksmp.com)

It's December in Colorado and the last month of the calendar year brings with it low temperatures and the alabaster snow. The onset of frigid weather also means that we are getting ready for the concluding event of this year - the KAO Christmas celebration with its docket of songs, dances, carol, and the Christmas appooppa. Not to mention the fine food and the ambience that accompanies it, letting the expatriate Malayali populace of Colorado educe some old memories and spawn some new ones.



Despite the festivities, we are vividly reminded of the antecedent event we had missed a few months prior. The annual KAO Onam event with its gala of programs, thiruvathira and pookkalam competitions was starkly missed from the 2018 calendar of events. But Onam was not something we had on our minds during that festive season because our minds and hearts were firmly entrenched with a somber event happening halfway across the world - the deluge in our home state, Kerala. Mahabali had to take a break, for he wouldn't have found happiness or well-being among his subjects had he made a trip.

The devastation of the Kerala floods were triggered by late incessant rain from the annual monsoon. The rain was non-stop, sometimes pernicious and calamitous, thundering down from the imperceptible sky and at other times it was just pestiferous, drizzling away in all its glory, bearing itself down on to the idyll landscape as if there was a leak in the sky that needed mending. The eighth of August saw around 310 millimeters of rainfall over Kerala which was a grim presage of the events that would unfold. The Neyyar dam shutters were raised that day and up north, the Chalakudy River started to overflow. The Periyar River flowed with a virulent fury, emptying itself into the nearby villages, towns and cities way before it reached the sea. The suburbs of Aluva, Chengannur, Aranmula and a few places would be converted into small lakes, the water gobbling the populated land like a snake swallowing its prey. By the twentieth of August, about one million people thronged refugee camps and the death toll had risen to the hundreds. Beyond the personal suffering of the people and the loss of lives, the Kerala economy took a major hit. The destruction to Kerala's infrastructure, tourism, power and health sectors were to the tune of thousands of crores of rupees. These damages were so intense and exacerbated that scores of years from now, historians will look back and narrate very morose fables of the collective ordeal.





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All was not gloom and doom, however, as amidst this devastation would emanate many a hero who would step up to fight nature's fury. The main theme that emerged from the rescue, relief and recovery effort was the unity of the people of Kerala during the havoc. Society's fault-lines were buried under the overwhelming cooperation among the people and the outpouring of support. There were many types of heroes - the government and government officials like collectors and the police, donations that poured in from all over the world and rescue and relief volunteers who waded right to the midst of calamity. Yet, one set of heroes really stood out - the fishermen. The fishermen loaded their boats onto lorries, transported them from the beaches to the far away affected cities and rescued the stranded folks - denuded of all their belongings and egos - from rooftops. Keralites around the world, including KAO, organized donation drives that generated large contributions to the state government and individual relief efforts.

On its part, the Kerala government decentralized the rescue efforts by allowing local officers to make decisions. In the time of dire need, Kerala had risen as one, burying the differences. The unity and amity would subside as quickly as it was formed. After the floods came the Sabarimala verdict and it re-exposed some fault lines and created some new ones manifesting how quickly we can forget and move on. Despite that, the deluge of 2018 did teach us a few things and gives us a lot of optimism. It proved that despite our differences and inherent fissures, we, the children of Mahabali, can still quickly unite and rally together to rise up to the challenge in times of critical need. The floods did prevent Mahabali from making a sojourn but he sure must have leaned back in his Pathalam chair and smiled, thanks to the positive vibe from his erstwhile kingdom.



### **Cartoons by Thommy**

Thommy, is a Kerala  
 State Lalithakala  
 Academy Award  
 winning cartoonist

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