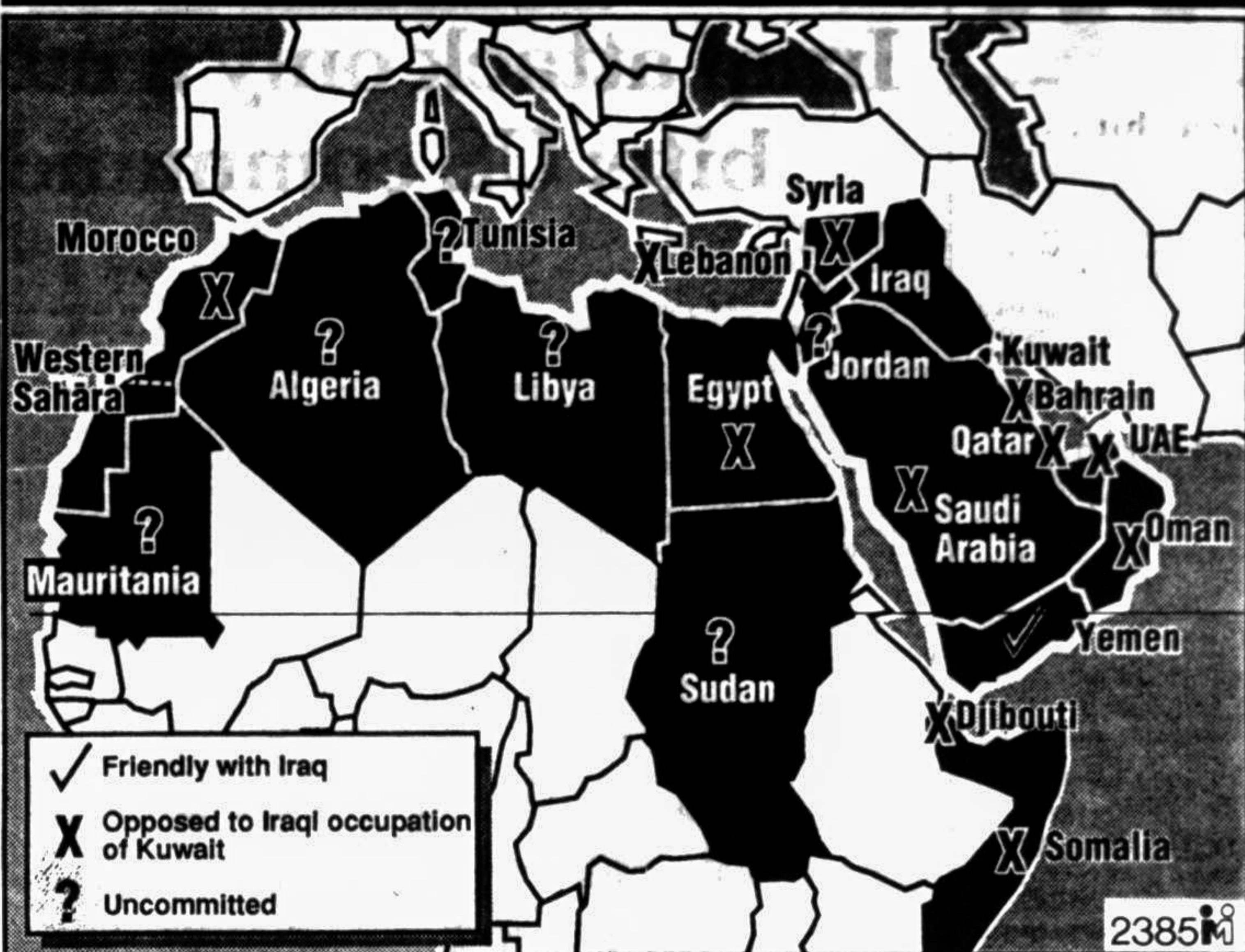


Gulf crisis

Arab states: friend or foe?



Mortars fired at US Embassy in Peru 70 terrorist attacks on Allied installations

WASHINGTON, Feb 1: About 70 terrorist attacks have been committed against nations in the coalition against Iraq since the Gulf war began January 17, the state department said Thursday, reports AFP.

Most of the attacks have caused material damage only, and were launched by isolated groups with no known links to Iraq, department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said.

But in some cases those

claiming responsibility said they had acted out of solidarity with Iraq or opposition to the United States.

The casualties so far have been a bank security guard who was shot and killed in Lebanon January 23 and an Iraqi national who was killed January 19 when a bomb he was carrying near a US cultural center in Manila blew up. Another Iraqi was injured in that blast.

Three incidents have been

repeated over the past 24 hours in Yemen, a backer of Iraq. Bursts of automatic weapons fire hit the compound of the US Embassy in the capital city Sanaa, a grenade was thrown at the residence of the Turkish Ambassador, leaving one person injured, and there was an explosion outside the residence of the Japanese ambassador.

In the Peruvian capital Lima, a pair of bombs destroyed a monument to the late US President John F. Kennedy while a weaker explosive shook a US cultural center. The US State Department said it suspected Pro-Cuban rebels of the Tupac Amaru revolutionary front.

Elsewhere, the French cultural center in Amman was practically destroyed by a fire set by arsonists.

In the Philippines, police defused two bombs at a relay station belonging to the Voice of America, and a small explosion rattled a building housing the Saudi Embassy.

In Santiago, Chile, an incendiary bomb damaged a branch of the Chase Manhattan Bank. In Beirut, a stick of dynamite blew up near the Embassy of Qatar.

The State Department said it could not confirm that Wednesday's killing in Ankara of a security official for the Turkish Prime Minister was linked to the Gulf war.

Another report says: Suspected rebels fired three mortar rounds at the US Embassy Thursday in an attack police linked to the Gulf war, police said. No injuries were reported.

It came a day after rebels hurled home made bombs at a monument to the late US President John F. Kennedy, a US-Peruvian cultural centre and the Italian embassy to protest the Gulf war.

The mortar rounds in Thursday's incident were fired from a distance of 60 meters (yards) and hit the embassy's parking lot, police said.

Officials blamed the Pro-Cuban Tupac Amaru Revolutionary movement, one of Peru's two main Guerilla organisations.

US women soldiers closer to frontlines for non-combat roles

NEW YORK, Feb 1: Iraq's claim Thursday that it captured U.S. women soldiers in Saudi Arabia was a chilling reminder of the dangers faced by female soldiers despite their non-combat jobs, reports AP.

Baghdad radio said a "number of male and female U.S. conscripts were captured along with others from the forces who are allied with them in civil."

The Gulf also include hundreds of support units where women could be assigned.

Military authorities have said women make up about 8 percent of U.S. troops in and around Saudi Arabia. That means about 40,000 American women are in uniform in the Gulf region.

"In a war zone, the line between combat and non-combat units is a gray one," Navy Lt. Cmdr Michael Pandzik, a U.S. Defense Department spokesman in Washington said Thursday.

"If you are looking for a safe area, there doesn't appear to be one if you are operating in an area within reach of ballistic missiles," he added.

Women are not assigned to artillery, infantry or armor units in the Army or on Navy aircraft carriers, destroyers or cruisers, Pandzik said.

But non-combat roles include being in the military police, or on support ships bringing "bullets, beans and black oil," a Navy phrase for ammunition, food and fuel—to combat ships.

In the Air Force, women can be fighter pilots in training commands or ferry aircraft he said. They can also fly a whole range of cargo planes, helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft.

Women in the U.S. military are barred from serving in units whose primary mission is combat, but the more than 500,000 U.S. troops now in

Overture to ceasefire or simple repeat of policy?

WASHINGTON- Feb 1: The White House brushed it off, insisting the U.S.-Soviet statements on the Gulf wasn't even worth mentioning in President George Bush's State of the Union address. But between the lines, one might read a fresh effort to find Middle East peace, reports AP.

Assuming that Iraq's Saddam Hussein is willing to give up Kuwait.

And assuming that no one, neither in Washington or Jerusalem, will make a fuss over "linkage".

In the statement, the United States and the Soviet Union spelled out conditions for a possible ceasefire in the 2-week old war. They declared one would be possible if Iraq made "an unequivocal commitment" to remove all its occupation forces from Kuwait and "take concrete steps" in that direction.

At the most, the diplomat statement, opened the door just a crack -- toward a new peace overture. At the least, it was a useful recitation of U.S. policy in the effort to keep

Moscow satisfied with the Gulf war.

Many were puzzling over the U.S.-Soviet statement from Secretary of State James A. Baker II and Foreign Minister Alexander A. Bessmertnykh even as Bush was winning congressional applause for his Gulf policy.

In the past, Bush had insisted there would be "no pause" in the war. And U.S. policy had always insisted upon a complete Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.

But the President made no

mention in his nearly hour-long State of the Union address of any possible new compromises, in which he declared: "we will prevail".

U.S. policy also had always argued against linking the Gulf conflict with the Palestinian issue. Yet, Tuesday's Baker-Bessmertnykh statement marked a point of stressing that the Arab-Israeli dispute had been a source of conflict in the Middle East.

And the statement continued, it would be "especially important" to try to resolve this older dispute.

Feature

Education

Children and Books

Dr. Halima Khatun

Juvenile literature offers unending source of pleasure to the young readers. Writers should be aware of the interest and the needs of the children while writing books for them.

ABOUT children and play it is said that play is their existence. They play as they grow. Play contributes to their growth and makes them healthy. So also do books. Books contribute immensely towards the healthy growth of the children. This growth is of course mental, emotional and social, along with intellectual. Nobody can deny the fact that children need variety of books to satisfy their hunger for information, fancy or imagination, adventure and experimentation. They need books to improve and enrich their reading skill, and power of assimilation.

Love of reading is a precious gift. Infantile literature offers unending source of pleasure to the young readers. The power of imagination is shaped, built and nourished by profuse reading on a variety of subjects. Children should be exposed to the world of books as they learn to read. Selection of books for children should be made in consideration with their age ability and interest. Through reading children can find the answers of many of their queries about places and things and peoples if not the whole world or beyond it.

Teachers are the best of guides in this respect. They can very easily allure and invite the children to the land of fantasy and imagination, information and experimentation. From the very beginning the children should be given plenty of colourful and easy to read books. The class teacher can read about some section or portion to them, then ask them to read the rest. Book covers may be displayed on the display board to attract the attention of the young readers. Some stories can be dramatized and acted by the students. All these activities can make the children interested in reading books.

Teachers should also realize that just like adults children change their purpose for reading according to changing needs. Teachers should be ready to cope with the situa-

tion by arranging reading programmes accordingly. Very often teachers try to impose their own interest upon their young wards by inducing them to read books which they may not like. This may cause serious affects on some. Others may easily digest the bait and proceed on their journey to the book land emotionally unhurt.

Writers should be aware of the interest, ability and needs of the children while writing books for them. This is because children seek the truth about the world and its people, they want to know themselves and where they belong. To see their own lives clearly children need to look into the contrasting experiences of others. Even before they learn to read the children want to know what is just and right. Because he is always for the right and good the story of film communicates a sense of values to the readers. For this reason the writers should handle the subject with care as it affects the tender mind of the young freshers who is not yet acquainted with unwanted and crooked ways around. The teachers of juvenile literature should be conscious and vigilant about the unwanted elements in the pages to be supplied to the young. The literature produced for children may at first pass through the censorship of able teachers and parents. This consciousness in handling juvenile writings is necessary for better nourishment of the young students.

Children are explorers. Their mind is filled with inquisitiveness about the world and its people. They try to discover the common elements in the lives of men and children is other parts of the world. Books for children should give careful attention to this need. The successful writers of juveniles should also be explorers and in a sense world tourists. They invite children from all over the world with their everyday activities and games. Through the colourful and



lively illustration children can associate themselves with the friends living in far away countries. This type of writing is sure to fill the minds of the children with a sense of unity of mankind and universal brotherhood. Favourite writers of children know the likes and dislikes, of the age group they take care to cater. Teachers and guardians should join hands to make to best use of printed materials for their wards.

Children's interest is an important factor regarding juvenile literature. There have been many research investigations on children's interests in western countries. Unfortunately research in this area is almost non-existent in our country. Factors in literature which appeal to children have been carefully identified in those studies. It was found that surprise, repetition, animals, and narratives appeal to primary school children most.

Another study revealed that girls enjoy books in which boys or men are main characters, but boys do not enjoy books in which girls or women are predominant.

Rhymes play a very prominent part in books for chil-

dren. The rhythmic sound of poems make the young readers spellbound. The subject matter may lack consistency but the beat to the rhymes attract children immensely. Many studies show that children prefer poetry with humour and comic element. Poems about animals are also liked by children irrespective of language and place of residence. Universal truths make children's literature acceptable all over the world.

Another study reports that adventure, action, mysy, childlike, animal life and sports appeal to children. Gradually with advancing age, boys turn to realistic narratives or adventure, while girls continue to favour themes of home life and begin to read romantic stories.

Parents and teachers who are responsible for children's reading need to be aware of the guide from studies about child development, learning theory and children's interest. They should recognize characteristic needs of children at different ages and stages of development. We all know that

children live in two worlds—the real, and the one that exists in their imagination. So an understanding of the inner world of childhood is essential for the teachers and parents.

It is also known that literature makes the reader see, feel, and understand and take delight in the world around. Through literature children could be exposed to the basic facts relating to anything. This is because the field of literature is inter related to the fabric of all subject matter such as science and social science even mathematics and of course language arts. From the very beginning the children should be shown the easy way to reading which should contain easy meanings for the children to grasp. Comprehensive meaning from the reading motivate children to read more.

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INDIA'S FIRST FULLY LITERATE TOWN

A small district town in India's southern state of Kerala has managed to do what many thought impossible: stamp out illiteracy among its population. In a country where one out of two adults can not read or write, Kottayam has shown that it is possible to give every citizen the right to master the written word, despite reluctant political leaders, initial suspicion among learners and overriding differences of caste, religion, language and political affiliation. Latika Padgaonkar reports:

KERALA has always been several steps ahead of the rest of the country. The 1981 census showed its literacy level to be almost 64 per cent; little Kottayam had then already reached an impressive 86 per cent rate of literacy. In June last year, it reached its goal of becoming India's first "illiteracy-free" town.

But literacy is not the only feature the town can be proud of. With a relatively small population of 68,000 it has also achieved a low birth rate, low infant mortality, and conditions of health and hygiene far superior to anywhere else in India, according to K.J. Alphonse, the dynamic District Collector who organised the literacy campaign with urgency, joy and dedication.

What lies behind this dramatic success? Principally a groundswell of popular participation, says Alphonse. The story goes back to 1988, when the National Service Scheme of the Mahatma Gandhi University in Kottayam presented a proposal to the Ministry of Human Resources Development to make Kottayam India's first fully literate town. The campaign planners agreed that reading, writing and arithmetic simply weren't enough: the drive would also include the broader goal of education for all and an improvement of the overall qual-

ity of life. In fact, the campaign for literacy included themes such as: read more books, green the city, consumer guidance, physical fitness, savings, traffic sense, immunisation, anti-smoking, drug and alcohol campaign, cancer education, etc.

Launched with a fanfare (flag hoisting, a literacy run, and public pledge), the Kottayam drive had a dual objective: 100 per cent literacy in a record of 100 days targeted at the 6-60 age group, and a better quality of life through a series of fifteen one-month campaigns.

Once the literacy drive's various facets—including resources (mostly in the form of sponsorship), training, and experience-sharing sessions—were well on their way, the people of Kottayam responded with overwhelming enthusi-

asm. So much so that they virtually took the campaign into their own hands.

It became a feverish race against time for the organisers whose aim was simple: break the psychological barrier and have people be able to sign their names, write letters, read news papers and calculate. In short, provide them with the basics for an independent existence.

"If people can write their names instead of offering their thumbprints," says Alphonse, "the psychological difference is tremendous." And, quoting a professor from Kottayam, he adds, "the written word makes a great qualitative change in a person's life".

The neighbourhood teachers turned to the willing learners first. The reluctant

ones were visited by volunteers who used friendly persuasion. No medium was left uncovered: dance, drama, song, folk art, mini camps and newspapers, all had their share in mobilization for this people's programme.

Owing to the extremely uneven levels of literacy, the method adopted was "Each one, Teaches one". This meant bringing literacy to over 2210 illiterate persons of Kottayam. The campaign had its share of problems. Repeated visits were often necessary before the initial suspicion of unwilling learners could be overcome. Provision had to be made for the linguistic minorities, in particular the Tamil population,

part of which voiced its preference for literacy in Tamil rather than Malayalam, the language of Kerala.

When the drive ended in June last year, its impact surpassed all expectation. To start with, a few key issues were resolved: Could all the illiterates be identified? Was all this fuss necessary in a town which already had a relatively high literacy rate? Would the crusade work in the prevailing political situation? The answers were Yes. Then came the enormous pride of the town people, who, for once, were both actors and directors in this campaign. The community became more cohesive and concerned with the well-being and behaviour of its members. The indications of progress were numerous, including reduced liquor consumption and domestic violence, and what Alphonse calls the "triumph of womanhood".

Kottayam's achievement is a unique one which could not have happened elsewhere in exactly the same manner. But it demonstrates the potential force of voluntary work and popular participation.

Courtesy: UNESCO

