

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY FOR A CAUSE

by Siddhesh Chandran

Kattayam: It was when solid thoughts reached the pinnacle that John K Mangalam, former professor of Kerala Varma College, Thiruvananthapuram, decided to end his life, which was treated as alcohol withdrawal.

Though a drunkard, he loved his family and wished to transform his outside as a financial benefit to his wife Raji and their only son by taking an insurance policy, medicine approached a doctor for a brain certificate.

However, the meeting with Dr V J Paul changed his life. There, he was taught that alcoholism was a disease and there was no medicine for the recovery, except the true knowledge about the reason and means of recovery, its cause.

It was this self-realisation that prompted him to start *Thiruvananthapuram*, a de-addiction



John K Mangalam, (Right) The cover of the book 'Kattayam Kumbhakaran'



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centre, which ultimately paved way for making a literary form of his lifetime experiences as 'Kattayam Kumbhakaran' (Condition of a Drunkard), an autobiography of Dr John K Mangalam, which will be pub-

lished by DC Books on Saturday.

The book portrays an open account of his life as a drunkard. "Only self-realisation can change a drunkard's life, and that ultimately prompted me to disclose all my ex-

periences as a drunkard, in which I have indicated my bitter experiences too. No doctor in the world wants to be known as a drunkard. If you marginalise them, things would get worse. Consider alcoholism as a disease and support the patients to recover from it and bring them back to normal life. I hope this book can sow the seeds of realisation among the doctors," adds him.

Turning the pages of a 60-year-old life, which has an alcohol-soaked history, words triumphed over his prolonged disease, liver cirrhosis. He got the first taste of the dark liquid at the age of 11. John is the son of a teacher, who was a drunkard till his death. According to him, when his father died at the age of 68 the lump of alcoholism was passed over to his elder son John.

During childhood, his father's drinking habit stood as

an obstacle for his studies. As a result, he reportedly failed in his pre-degree examinations.

However, he recovered from the plight and came out with first rank in BA Philosophy from Sree Kerala Varma College, Thiruvananthapuram. He had his post-graduation in Philosophy from Calicut University Centre and once again won the first rank. Then he got UGC fellowship in 1967.

He had kept a belief that it was alcohol that played a crucial role in all his victories. till he realised his disease.

Later, his extraordinary escape made him to dedicate his life for those who have fallen prey to the habit of drinking.

It is his personal experience in life that made him the leader and philosopher more than his formal and academic education.