

Sicily on sewing and embroidery.

My family were creative. My father, Dr Thomas, had an Ayurveda medical shop, with resorts and medicines. . **We didn't buy any Ayurveda medicines for the shop** - they were prepared in **our house under my father's responsibility**. There were lots of workers working there. Besides this he had many hobbies; he was an artist, making things to decorate halls, auditoriums, churches and temples. He painted, carved, and made clay sculptures of Jesus, Mary, Joseph and all other saints and colour them beautifully. I think even now we can see his creations in some churches there. He made all his own paints in his shop. He was a teacher of music in our church. He played piano, Veena, Thabla, flute, violin He played for weddings and family celebrations. At that time he was the only one in the village to make instruments like flute harmonium, piano, violin, thabla for his music classes. He was also a makeup man for our stage programmes.

He chose a person to marry me just before he died when I had just finished my degree course in maths so after 40 days I became a wife of Mr George K Raphael and left my home immediately. I have three children, Jilruet, Juliet, and Jerish. I was an accountant at a reputed firm.

My mother was a well-known head teacher of a reputed school. She had lots of responsibilities in school as well as house. But stitching, knitting, embroidery works were her hobbies. She was the only expert to make bridal dresses in our village that time. Muslim ladies, Christian ladies, Hindu ladies, all wear different patterned dresses at that time. My mother was the only expert to cut all the designs. She did all these works for them happily. Also she was an expert cook. At that time there was no such person and she taught lots of girls this. We three girls are her daughters. We also learnt all these from her. I began sewing at 3 years old. I made puppets, pillow covers etc. I was a lucky, girl when I was a child. When she was old she had some diseases and did not like to live lonely with our property. She **is unable to look after these things. So after my younger sister's marriage, she sold all our property and start to live with my elder sister**. That is a big incidence for us. I lost most of my valuable memories there. I have nothing of my mother's sewing and embroidery. I was not there at that time. A golden era ends. Within some years lots of things happen, including my **husband's sudden death. At the age of 38 I become a young widow with three children**. Before that I spent all my bank balance to buy a property, to build a house, and to start a new way of life. It is not easy for me to revert my future. I have no revenge to anybody. It is only my fate accomplice.

I divide my big house into small pieces. I give all portions for rent. We use a bedroom, a small kitchen and a big living room. I change my living room as a work place. I started a tuition centre, taught all my talents to earn money. There I start all my knit work, painting, making puppets, decoratives, saree painting. I record works for college students and teachers training students. I have some land with coconut trees. I start to grow plantain, leafy vegetables, etc. Lots of orchard help me well. Orchid flowers are costly that time. Saree is an attractive dress for our women at the time. Saree painting is costly. So I did it and earn money for my daily expenses. My children grown up. They become university students. All my children get these talents so they also help me sometimes. They work in three different places. One in UK, one in USA, the younger one in Canada. Now I am here. I had PR in USA. Here I am a pension credit holder. All my children living happily with their family. I am doing all my works as a hobby.

I came to the UK in 2000 to **help look after my daughter's children**. I am enjoying with my elders group in Malayalee Association, Manor Park. I have learnt new textile skills and ideas with Sonia and - lots. It is a new world for me. From there I learn more and I got lots of chance to do creative works. Once I joined with her to do a Manor Park Street scene in 2010. It is very interesting. She has lots of ideas. We old ladies very much enjoy her classes and modern thinking about textile arts. We always enjoy the exhibitions she conducted, and wandering through forest areas, her warmth welcome, coffee and biscuits with our colleagues, birthday parties, x-mas, **New Year's Gifts etc etc**

I have two books published and have written more than 1,000 stories. Now also I am writing in my language and some will come out in Amazon.

My children are all talented, but they are all working. They will do all these when they retire from their job. My daughter who lives in the USA is very much active now. She visited the space three years back. My son also have lots of talents like my father. He is an engineer in Canada. My elder daughter is a teacher now, also teaching mathematics.

I did all these things and am continuing now. I am an active member of the association – MAUK. This is my old age time. God bless me with all these talents. I am very happy now. All my three children are in a well place, living happily in three different countries.

God bless you.