

*Pravasa Lokam began as a phone-in programme in 2000, and has evolved over the years. It brings the missing person's relatives to the studio and lets them air their feelings. The photos and all available information about the person are telecast which are picked up by the scores of Keralite organisations in the Gulf. They voluntarily look out for the missing person, who very often has no money or travel papers to visit home, or is held captive in a labour camp or on farm by his employer/sponsor. He could also be in jail or is plainly unwilling to return for a variety of reasons such as unpaid loans.*

*"In the past 11 years, we have been able to trace hundreds of missing people and reunite them with their families," says Rafeeq Ravuther, Pravasa Lokam's producer. Every week, the programme gets 10-20 requests, but only two can be aired in an episode. Scores of people write in to seek help to get them out of foreign jails, labour camps or sex rackets. Complaints of unpaid wages are galore.*

*Mr. Ravuther feels it is the force of the personality of Mr. Kunhi Mohammed, which is the life of the programme. "My own experience of working in the Gulf for 12 years and my public life helped me a lot in smoothly interacting with these grieving people," Mr. Kunhi Mohammed says. "Anchoring the programme for 11 years has drastically changed my views about life and people."*

*With the help of philanthropic viewers, the programme is also paying for the education of many missing persons' children, including those of a housemaid who was later found to have been dead for years in a Gulf country.*

*Pravasa Lokam is now expanding its role to cover Singapore, Malaysia, the U.S., Britain and everywhere where the Keralite goes to find a job.*