

*The Journey
Memory down the lane*

In the morning left the home with bag on my shoulder saying bye to my father. Boarded the train at Madurai Junction and reached Virudhunagar. Walked down Railway feeder road, I could identify many old buildings amongst new. No cycle renting shop available, took an auto in front of Apsara theatre. Reached Virudhunagar S.Vellaichamy Nadar Polytechnic College (VSVN), warmly welcomed by fully gray haired senior.



Which batch you belongs? he asked, I belongs to 1983-86 mechanical batch and returns first time after a gap of 33 years, I replied. President & Secretary of Old Students Association of VSVN welcomed me followed by a brief mutual introduction.

Before the alumni meeting I went around the hostels, Gurusamy Hostel where I stayed in 1st year and R.S.Hostel where I stayed in 2nd year. Couldn't go into Annamalai Hostel where I stayed in the beginning of 3rd year, it has been converted into Girls Hostel.

My memory went back 36years, when I got admitted in VSVN, majority of us are hostellers. We enjoyed our stay, not minding strict imposition of discipline. Kabadi, Ball badminton and cricket I used to play. During our batch VSVN had leading teams in Foot ball & Ball badminton.



After dinner we had to ground out study hours up to 11.00 p.m., our hostel warden used to visit every room atleast twice. We would be waiting for free nights on Saturdays; hostel boys were allowed to go out into the town. On free night either I visit home at Madurai or stay back to enjoy the movies on Saturday & Sunday along with friends. Super Star Rajini Kanth's movies were my most favorite & Apsara theatre I preferred. There used to be a rivalry between Rajini & Kamal fans.

Skipping study hours in hostel we used to go to Burma Kadai, hotel. I am yet to find the taste of parota & chicken curry of Burma Kadai. Enquiry started, when warden & Principal came to know some students were regularly going out of hostel in the night. I justified our action to my warden & HOD saying that when hostel mess food was not good enough & have no verities, we have no other way or else we have to be in bed on empty stomach, then management decided to include Parota & masala dosa in the menu list.

Sivan urani, a fresh water pond with big trees on its banks was another place we used to go often. I consider it as a sacred place since Gandhiji stayed here during his tour of South India.



Shared my memories with young boys staying in hostels. Boys asked about employment opportunities in Railways. I gave them confidence that one can clear competitive exams if preparation is focused & good. I told them I cleared four RRB exams when I started serious preparation and told them there were no coaching centers available on those days. One of the boy exclaimed "uncle hostel is very strict – was it

same in your days". I told him to concentrate on studies not minding some inconveniences.

Came back to Old Students Auditorium for alumni meeting. Many of our junior batches completed their studies after IT revolution are better connected and well organized. It was a wonderful occasion to witness even first batch student (1958-61) attending the meeting. On the stage I shared my memories with all my senior & junior batches, when I introduced myself, I am K.V.Ramesh belongs to 1983-86 Mechanical batch, Hai Ramesh we are here emerged out my class mates, many of them I am seeing first time after 1986, but able to recognize easily.



I thanked my Institution for importing sound basic technical knowledge for us. I said, our institution born out of late Chief Minister Kamaraj's style of PPP in education in late 1950s. In those golden years Government supported private organization to start schools & institutions which offered education at very lower cost affordable by poor. Golden rule is that, in those days education was viewed as a social service not as profit making business, even by the private owned institution. My Institution gave me the technical education at a nominal tuition fee of Rs.127 per semester, for which I remain ever grateful and will remain honest throughout my Government employment.

We met some of our faculties many of them retired from service. We took the blessings from all of them. I thanked my HOD Sri. Dhanasekaran for getting me out of trouble from suspension & other actions. I took a leading role in a strike, out of an issue with our hostel warden in third year, incidentally the warden is Principal now. My HOD gave very good opinion about me not only to the management, more specifically to my father who was very much worried and angry with me. I thanked my Civil HOD recalling his timely help. The strike haunted me, I was denied or delayed Hall Ticket to write final semester examinations. It was only my civil HOD helped me in getting the Hall ticket just half an hour before the examination.



After the meeting we went around the campus and happy to see many new buildings. We revisited our class rooms, drawing hall, labs, workshops, play ground, etc recollecting old memories. My friend shouted, Ramesh look at the role of honour board, yes it is strange, there are

names available for all years except for 1985-86 our pass out year.



We came to our hostel mess. Along with my friends I sat on the same old benches enjoyed the feast. Eat Biriayani full stomach after a long time. After saying goodbye to my friends, came back to Virudhunagar Railway Station to start my journey back, of course to Chennai, carrying sweet memories of olden days. The journey I enjoyed and wish to continue hopefully with

many of my friends

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