

NC2 | May 2021



NITCONNECT



A T W E L F T H M I L E P R O D U C T I O N



*Shine on
you crazy diamond*

The Diamond Jubilee Issue

From the Editorial Desk



When we launched the first issue of NITConnect in January 2021, we did so with a burst of optimism, which not only reflected the momentous occasion for our alumni fraternity but also that of the wider community expecting that the pandemic was beginning to recede.

Unfortunately, and even as this editorial is being drafted, Covid-19's malevolent 2nd wave has well and truly gripped and shaken India, with some tragic consequences. Our hearts go out to all those, who have suffered irreparable loss and, to those battling the pandemic on the front lines. The Editorial team calls on all our alumni to do their solemn civic duty to keep our families, communities, and society at large safe.

Having started in this sombre note, we hope to bring a smile to all of your faces by presenting the 2nd issue of your magazine, NITConnect, focussed on the upcoming Diamond Jubilee of our Alma Mater scheduled later this year.

The 60th anniversary of the founding of NIT (REC) Calicut is a momentous occasion for all of us and through this issue, we bring forth the story of our institute as experienced by our Alumni through the decades, starting from the early days at West Hill till the current era. We have put together an eclectic collection of reminiscences, anecdotes, and experiences; some witty, some profound; which weaves together a colourful and rich tapestry of the history of the college.

We noted that the early batches were keener to tell their stories, which I suppose reflects the natural order of things. A point of concern for the Editorial Team was the lack of participation of our lady alumni in the exercise, which we will try to address in the subsequent issues with assistance of NITCAA Governing Council.

The 2nd issue of NITConnect will also be published in electronic form and distributed via the various alumni chapters, email groups & other social media. We hope to migrate soon to the NITCAA Digital Platform that is under development.

We again seek the support of the entire Alumni community with your contributions, suggestions and by spreading the word in your respective alumni circles. Please send in your feedback to hariborg@gmail.com. We hope you will have as much fun reading this issue as we had putting it together!

NITConnect EDITORIAL TEAM

/ Harikrishnan B, Chief Editor, Batch 2004 (EEE)

/ Ravi Ananthan, Creative Director, Batch 2007 (Architecture)

/ Dr Deepak Lawrence, Editor, Batch 2003 (Production)

/ Dr Shijo Thomas, Editor, PhD 2016 (Mechanical)

/ Abhijit Sreekumar, Alumni Affairs Secretary, Final Year (EEE)

Letters to the Editor



“

*A brilliant work! Heartiest Congratulations to the entire team behind this!
Wish all success for the future editions!*

This would definitely help to connect more alumni to the Institute.

Dr. P. S. Sathidevi
Director in Charge, NIT Calicut

This is an absolute superb effort! Great issue, well designed, very well laid out....

The inaugural issue looks very promising with professional touch.

My personal appreciation to each and every one who worked relentlessly behind the scene for the success of this issue!

Truly proud of the TEAM.

K S Sudhakaran
President, NITCAA

The First edition of NITCONNECT is fabulous and wonderful in all aspects, Hearty congratulations and appreciate the efforts your team achieved.

Radhakrishnan Nair
NITCAA Office

This new Mag is simply awesome. Congratulations to the entire team who put this out.

Ram

Great newsletter 🙌🙌🙌 kudos to the team

Vineet Payyappalli

Fabous efforts! Kudos to Hari and the entire editorial team! 👍👍👍

Sameer Abdul Azeez

Congratulations Hari and the editorial board for a great start.

Nityanand Kamath

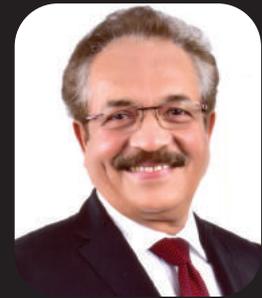
The newsletter is a real milestone for NITCAA. The editorial board has achieved a very good impression with first issue. The articles by past president, current president, Director in charge of NITC, previous Secretary of NITCAA are well informative to many alumni

Varghese John

I am Jayesh Joseph ECE 97 batch. I enjoyed reading the NIT connect a lot. Congratulations. Can we have some alumni profiles and any cutting edge research that our college is producing, I think that will be a great addition. Also you can do a survey asking folks for any topics that they like to be included in the newsletter.

Jayesh Joseph

”



K S Sudhakaran
Batch 1975
(Mechanical)
President NITCAA



Greetings

It is with mixed feelings that I address this issue of NITConnect. I am extremely happy to note the publication of second edition of our NITConnect, the theme being the Diamond Jubilee of our Alma Mater. It certainly is a matter of great pride and joy that we could celebrate this occasion, which obviously is a year-long celebration.





During one of the meetings of the General Council, it was suggested that we should get our newsletter to commemorate the first batch of REC Calicut. Brilliant idea that it was, the editorial team responded to this and within a short span of time they are here with the special edition.

Congratulations to the team led by Harikrishnan! It is not an easy task considering the current situation.

As indicated in the previous edition, NITCAA has successfully completed the delivery of 250 laptops to the needy and deserving students of our Alma Mater.

I take this opportunity to thank all the Alumni, Batches and Chapters across the globe who have supported NITCAA to execute such a mammoth project for the first time in the history of NITCAA. We thank the Dean Alumni Affairs for the extra-ordinary support extended. We also acknowledge with gratitude the support of DELL, who executed this project with great passion and precision in ensuring the deliveries of these laptops to the residences of each student without any glitch.

It gives me even more pleasure to note that there is considerable progress in the implementation of IoT project, LAB 8085, sponsored by the 1980-85 Batch. Their achievement is even more commendable considering the current pandemic situation wherein project execution is not easy.

I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate the efforts of the Digital Platform Committee Chairman Vijayaraj and his team consisting of Nitin Kamath, Dr Vinod Pathari and Dr Deepak Lawrence in developing an Alumni App for NITCAA along with the website for NITCAA. It is expected that this project will be launched by end of June 2021.

It has always been the efforts of NITCAA General Council to support the leadership endeavours of our Alumni. We put our best efforts to keep the communication channel open with rest of the Alumni and keep them updated on all the latest developments. NITConnect and The Alumni App will fulfil this objective.

On the other hand, we come across the dreaded news of the loss of lives of our Alumni due to the current pandemic practically every week, which is very disturbing. Never have we lost so many young budding lives. Never have I felt the helplessness of this magnitude.

Our prayers go to those families of our Alumni who have lost their loved ones to give them the strength to bear these irreparable losses.

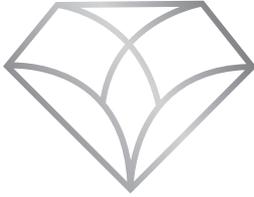
May their souls rest in peace.

I sincerely wish we as Engineers and Entrepreneurs could contribute to the wellbeing of humanity at large through NITCAA. We could take the support of the faculty at NITC, if found necessary, should any of our Alumni come forward with some suitable proposal(s).

I would look forward to your suggestions and proposals.

NITCAA - Of the Alumni, By the Alumni, For the Alumni.





“

*Memories may fade as the years
go by, but they won't
age a day*

”

Michelle C. Ustaszewski

It is indeed with much joy and satisfaction that I pen down this message for the NITConnect newsletter. I had the good fortune to associate with this amazing institution from the year 1980 onwards, when I joined the Calicut REC for my undergraduate degree programme. During those times, the number of girl students in each batch was less than 25 and the Ladies Hostel was a home away from home. The bonding and friendship among the inmates last to this day. Change is the only constant and, true to this quote, this Institute too has seen the winds of change blow fast.

From an institution with a student strength of around 200 students in the year 1961, to one having a student strength of over 6500 in 2021, the growth of the Institute has been spectacular. From offering 3 undergraduate programmes in Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Electrical Engineering at the time of its inception, the Institute today runs 11 undergraduate, 30 postgraduate and several doctoral programmes; this clearly showcases the academic growth of the Institution. I was fortunate to witness this growth at close quarters, under the stewardship of eminent Principals and Directors, with the able support



Dr. Sathidevi.P.S.
Director-in-Charge

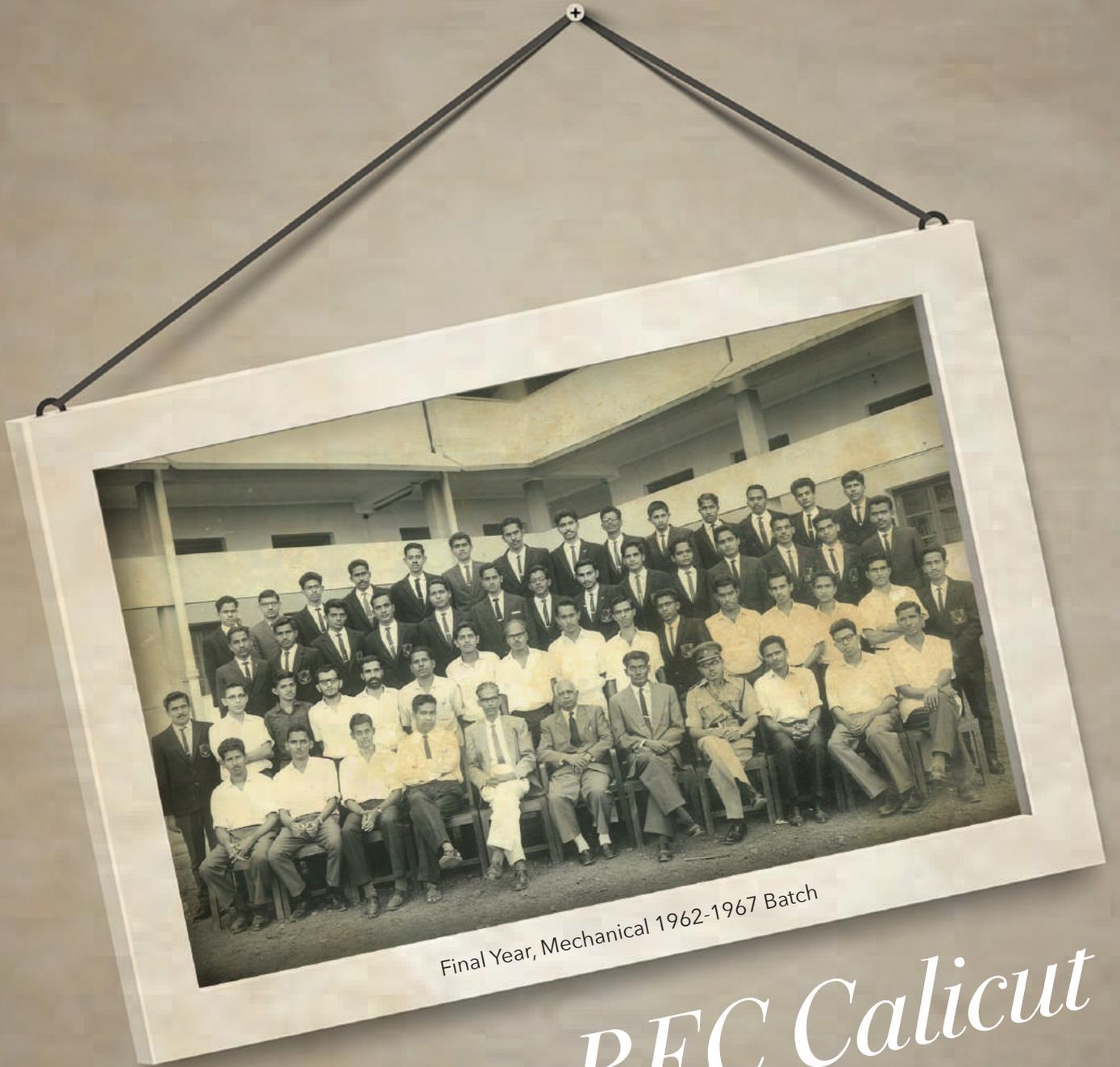
from dedicated faculty members and lot of other committed staff.

In fact, my association as Faculty member of the Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering and as a proud parent of an NITC graduate, gave me a much closer, yet realistic perspective on the quality of education imparted, skill sets inculcated and the level of preparedness with which the graduates leave this Institute. I am gladdened to note that our distinguished alumni have made a mark for themselves, both nationally and internationally. Alumni play a large role in determining the future and continued development of any institution. It would be sufficient to say that the Institute hold its alumni dear and in this Diamond Jubilee year, places on record the heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to the multitudes of alumni who have showered, their love and concern towards their alma mater in ways beyond imagination. Their unflinching support, criticism and love has, doubtless, contributed heavily to making this Institute, what it is today.

As a vibrant frontline organization of the alumni fraternity, NITCAA has done yeoman service to the Institute, by bringing together our alumni from across the globe and providing a platform to connect and support the institution. I sincerely hope that this newsletter would rekindle fond memories of the alumni and give an opportunity to reminisce about the good old days.

Wishing NITCAA all the very best.

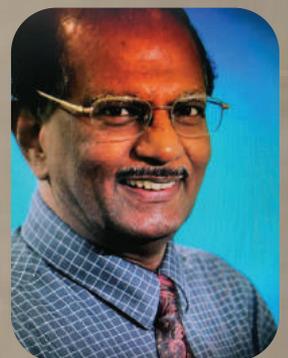




Final Year, Mechanical 1962-1967 Batch

Early Days of REC Calicut 1961-1968

Varghese John
1962-67 Batch,
Mechanical





ON SEPTEMBER 1st 1961, then Chief Minister of Kerala, (late) Sri Pattam Thanu Pillai, inaugurated the 5th Engineering College in Kerala and it was the first one during the third five-year plan of the central government. The inauguration was organized at the Government Polytechnic at West Hill, Kozhikode (Calicut). The Law minister K. Chandrasekharan and the first principal Dr. M.V. Kesava Rao were present along with several dignitaries. (ref. Mathrubumi 2nd September 1961).

Late Sri Pattam Thanu Pillai and late Sri K. P. Kesava Menon, a leading social activist and freedom fighter from Kerala, were instrumental in bringing this institute at that time to Kerala and Kozhikode.

A lot of enthusiasm was generated among many teenagers during the year 1961, with the news of the new engineering college being established at Kozhikode by a joint venture between central government and state government. It was under the scheme of extending professional education to more eligible students from all over India. There were only 4 other professional institutes catering to the needs of engineers in the state at that time. Admissions to RECs were based on all India basis with 50% of seats given to local state students (as per regulations for all RECs/NITs) and the remaining 50% was allotted to students from other states in India according to a pre-determined formula. It was the 9th institute of this category to be established in India.

The batches from 1961 to 1964 went through a 5-year integrated course. From 1965 onwards, the course duration was revised to 4 years due to the introduction of the two-year Pre-degree course after 10th standard in Kerala.

The land acquisition for the college was completed during first week of July 1961. (ref. Mathrubumi 6th July 1961). **By September 2021, the Institute will complete 60 years of excellence.**

Prof. Rajaraman took charge as Special Officer for the project of establishing the college from 14th of July 1961, (ref. Mathrubumi July 15th 1961). A 120 hectares of land was acquired at Chattamangalam (a rural village about 22 KM from the city center) to establish the college/ institute at a permanent location.

In the meantime, the college commenced operation at West Hill polytechnic from September 1961 since they had a few new buildings available for a short period. The first, second and third batches of students joined at the West Hill campus. The first and second admissions were only for 125 students from all over India. The third batch (1963) enrolled 180 students and they had also joined at West Hill initially. Competition for admission was at a very high level. During 1963, we had two campuses working parallelly. Then Defense Minister VK Krishna Menon visited the college at West Hill during 1962. In 1964 the full capacity of 250 students (as planned at that time) joined at Chattamangalam.

There was a Governing Board right from the beginning to administer the college in an efficient manner. The first admission to college commenced during the month of September 1961 and it continued till October 1961. The college at that time was affiliated to Kerala University.

We, the first three batches (most of us) have very fond memories of West Hill. It had a beautiful beach and was very close to the city. Access to public transportation was very good and there were plenty of places to have food outside for those who could afford it. We even had the annual sports meet at the beach with onlookers from the public, due to lack of big grounds for the purpose. West Hill is situated along the coastal road from Kozhikode to Thalasseri and only a short distance from the city. It was an easy trip to the city during the weekends for cinema or outings for those who could afford the extra expenditure.



We all used to look forward to have the Biryani from Hotel Everest at the city either on weekends or atleast once a month (even after moving to Chattamangalam). I am not sure whether this hotel, located close to Mithai Theruve, still exists. The students from the north and west enjoyed the Gujarati food available in the city.

But the space and facilities were not at all adequate for the College/ Institute and it was inevitable that it had to be moved to Chattamangalam to meet all the future requirements of a higher standard expected of the institute (as planned even at that time).

I made a very pleasant bus trip to Chattamangalam during 1962. Only seated passengers were allowed at that time except the last trip in the night at around 9 PM (bus route from Kozhikode bus terminal to Mukkam). While nearing the location, I could see the agricultural land which was sprawling on both sides of the road. The farmers had almost vacated the land which was acquired but for a few. I still remember the teenage girl standing in front of her thatched home, with a gloomy look on her face and staring to the horizon. She must have been very sad to leave the land, where she grew up. There was construction work going on at both side of the road at

the site (It was unfortunate that I did not own a camera at the time).

The foundation stone for the Main Building was laid by Prof. Humayun Kabir, the then Hon Central Minister of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, on Tuesday 11th September, 1962 at Chattamangalam.

It was not easy!

During our 2 nd year 1963, we were moved to Chattamangalam immediately after the Onam holidays. We were put up at the Heat Engine Lab, which was set up as a dormitory for all of us. By that time, the first batch (1961) was accommodated at the hostel (which was partially completed). Facilities were bare minimum. Toilets were temporary. We had to make our own devices to have some partitions between the



cots, such as screens made of bed sheets etc. The Main and Department buildings were yet to be completed and the campus did not have any prepared playing fields, even though we had almost 200 acres of land surrounding us. The students took the initiative in setting up the Basketball, Badminton, Volleyball courts and the playing field for Hockey & Football. The facilities were located nearer to current day canteen, near to hostel A and at a faraway field. There was tremendous help from some of the faculty members and the Engineer in charge for the construction of all the buildings, to lay out courts and athletic facilities. The construction of several buildings and staff quarters were in progress at that time. Only a few labs and few houses for staff were completed and the students & staff were accommodated in those building for classes, Labs, and accommodation.

We initially had 3 sessions of classes in a day and first session started at 7 am and it was not so good to say that a few just walked out of bed to the classroom.

Some of us has even stayed out of the dormitory, renting out rooms just outside the campus due to the crowding in the dormitory. After a few months, some felt that it is not a good idea Foundation Stone for Main Building laid by Prof. Humayun Kabir (former Central Minister of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs) and moved back to dormitory. The teaching staff also occupied the quarters one by one which were completed progressively from end of 1962 onwards.

We had an excellent team of teaching staff from the beginning. The Principal Dr. M.V. Kesava Rao (who served for five years as the first principal), and the first engineering Professor P. S. Subramaniam worked extremely hard to get the institute

going. We had Prof. Lonappan for Physics, Dr. Unnikrishnan for Chemistry, Dr. Padmini Nair for English and so on. Three postgraduates from IIT Madras (now Chennai), (three-year master's course) in three disciplines of engineering, joined the College along with our batch, and they were an asset during our period of five years there.

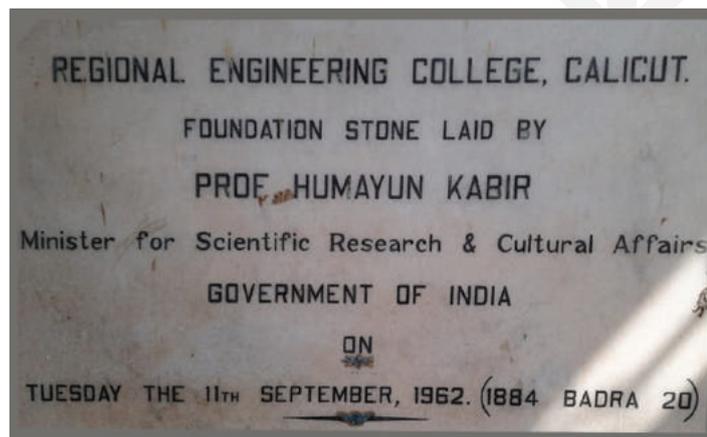
Subsequently a number of such academically brilliant lecturers joined the team. Prof (late) Vincent Paul was an excellent teacher and regular contributor to Mathrubumi weekly on reasonably planned and moderate-cost housing. Prof A. Achuthan, Prof. K. Achuthan Nair, Prof P.K. Charlu, Prof PS Moni, Prof K.M Bahaudhin, Prof Devasahayam, all were there to

formulate our academic curriculum. "Calculus" Mani, our Math's professor, was a real mathematician and his formula writing on the board kept us guessing about when

& where it will end. We cannot forget the able support and student advisory provided by our English lecturer late Mr. P.M. Jussey during our five years and later for other batches.

HON. V.V. Giri then Governor of Kerala visited the Chattamangalam campus during 1963.

The mess bill per month at Chattamangalam, during our second year, was Rs 60-65 per month. It went on to increase to 120-130 by our final year. The mess bill at the old hostel at West Hill during 1962 was Rs 35-45. (maybe we can get one good cup of coffee nowadays). There were two messes at Chattamangalam during 1963, one non-vegetarian and vegetarian each to start with.





Foundation stone for main building laid by Prof. Humayun kabir (Former central minister of scientific research and cultural affairs)

There were plenty of coconut trees with good yield in the campus. Some of our batchmates were good at plucking them by climbing. We had one expert who could drop tender coconut using his sling (catapult) or stones. There were quarrels between small group of students (as everywhere) and mostly forgotten very soon. Some quarrels were inter-year.

North Indian students made an attempt to learn Malayalam and the pronunciation had initially evoked some amusement. But a few made credible progress and achieved fairly good proficiency.

Hostel accommodation was available to our batch from the beginning of third year, 1964. But the capacity did not meet the complete requirement and hence a few were again allowed to stay outside the hostels.

Sports Powerhouse

With all difficulties stated above, we had strong teams in Basketball, Cricket and Football. We were winners in Basketball few times in north zone of Kerala University and the Cricket team won the all-Kerala championship during the period 1966-67 or 67-68. Mr. Kalyanasundaram, a thin chap of medium height and a strong chest was our fast bowler, who terrorized all the batsmen in Kerala. He played for Kerala state, Tamil Nadu and even South Zone Cricket team. I did talk to him thru phone during 2017. At one time 5 players from NITC represented the Kerala University Cricket team and was very successful in the All India meet. Mr. KC Cyriac was the first one from our college to be selected to Kerala University team in any sport (Basketball in 1964/65). Later, the Football team did very well during the period beyond 1968, I understand.

We had a very fierce rivalry with Calicut Medical college in Basketball, Hockey and Cricket.

Campus Life & Evolution

The journey from Chattamangalam to the city was an ordeal in the beginning of 1964, as the number of passengers increased every year. Especially by 1964, there was a big growth in passenger numbers as all first four batches and several of the staff and their families were staying at Chattamangalam. The need for a college bus was felt keenly and after some representations and discussions, the college bus was granted with regular trips for the students and staff.

As with any student community, there were certain grievances coming up as the college grew in size and numbers. Complaints about the Mess, trans-



REC (NIT) Calicut Basketball Team 1962-63

portation, facilities, and some administrative decisions boiled over and led to a long strike by the students and closure of the college for about more than a month during 1967. Some of us (including me) felt that it is going to affect all of us

academically & with job opportunities and hence, took the initiative to find a solution. It was a success and college opened after more than a month of wasted time (cannot remember the exact dates, though). The first batch of female students joined during the academic year 1965/66. These five pioneers were talk of the town for some time. They did very well in a predominantly male population.

Academically, our batch did very well at the end of our five-year course in Kerala University. We had industrial tours to various cities to understand how factories worked; how construction was done and, how electrical, mechanical, transport equipment was manufactured. A visit to the steel mill at Jamshedpur really taught us what heavy industry means. It was very eye opening for all of us.

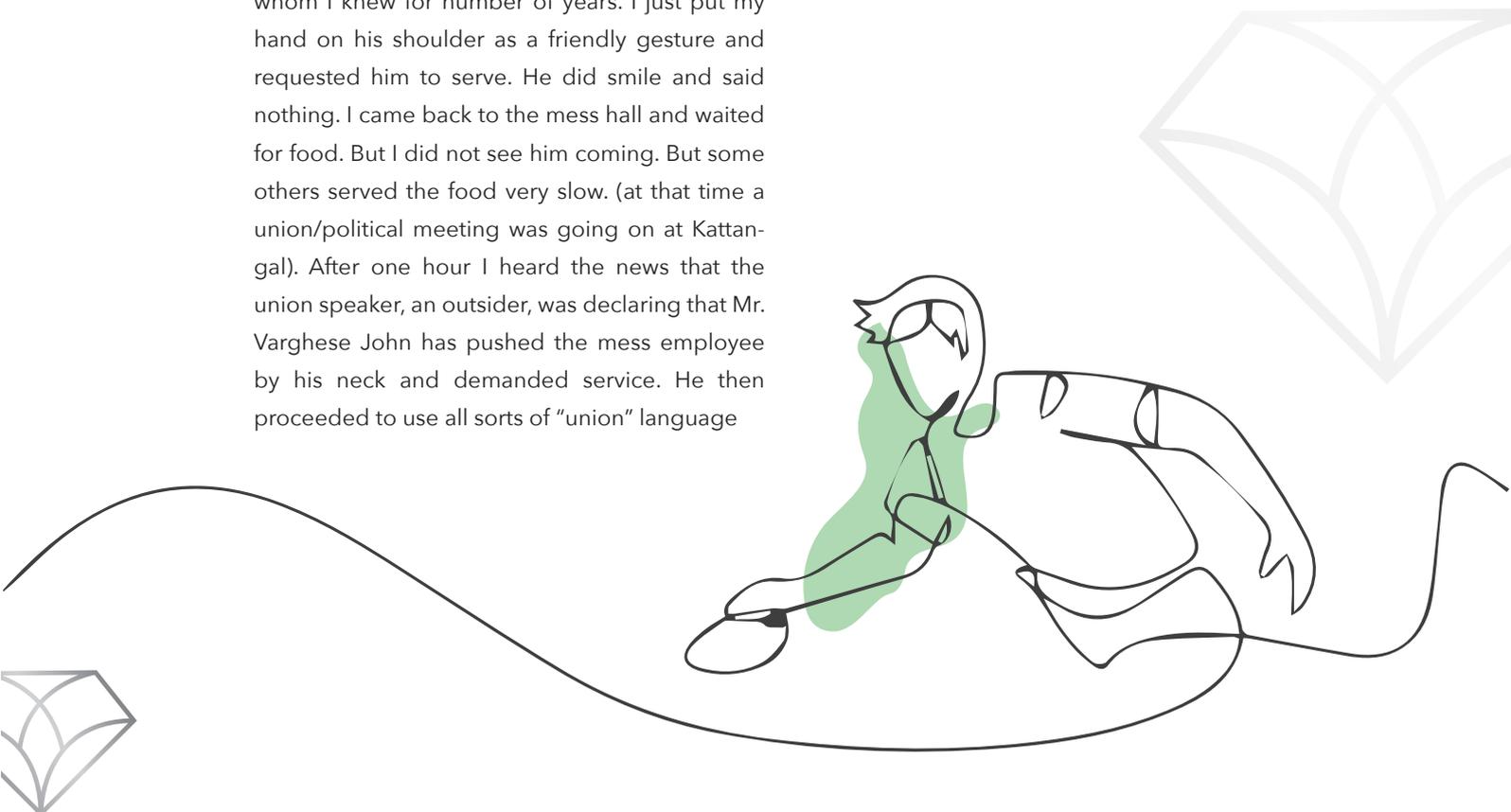
During 1967, I was the representative for one mess. It was not an easy job as known to all those who have done it. There were some demands by the employees of the mess and there was outside influence. As a result, one day the mess servers were not serving food for dinner. I went inside the kitchen and talked to one of the employees whom I knew for number of years. I just put my hand on his shoulder as a friendly gesture and requested him to serve. He did smile and said nothing. I came back to the mess hall and waited for food. But I did not see him coming. But some others served the food very slow. (at that time a union/political meeting was going on at Kattangal). After one hour I heard the news that the union speaker, an outsider, was declaring that Mr. Varghese John has pushed the mess employee by his neck and demanded service. He then proceeded to use all sorts of "union" language



The first batch of female students joined during the academic year 1965/66

against me. It was my first shock experience emanating from a distorted accusation. But it was a great life lesson on how to be very careful in future.

During our last days at campus, only very few were left at the campus for Practicals (whose names were starting with R/T/V/Y/Z). Three of us (myself, VA Thomas and M. Rajagopal) stayed two more days after Practical to enjoy the serenity of the vast campus. No one else was there. All other students had left, and the new students had another month or so before joining.





Our group visited the campus during 2017 (only 29 out of possible 90 / contactable 70 could gather), and it was an excellent experience. We went to nearby Thusharagiri waterfalls (25km away). During our college days we never knew about this place, which is as beautiful as New Zealand. We had the blessing of our professors visiting us at the guest house. You can see the aged Prof. A. Achuthan, Prof. Maheswaran and then workshop Supt. Mr. Thomas Mattom in the photo.

We could see how much the institute had grown and how green it is. But some areas were left unused even in 2017 and we felt that the hostels definitely need a face lift.

The following are the acknowledgements.

1. Mathrubumi daily archives for records of 1961 events. (Vinod Kumar K.K.)
2. Dr Deepak Lawrence for the MB foundation stone photo.
3. Sri MC George of first batch (1961)
4. Batch mates, Mr. Dr. Chandra Mohan, Dr. Job Kuruvilla, PJ Thomas, M.C. Nambiar and V.A. Thomas
5. Mr. I. Raman from 1963 batch
6. WhatsApp messages from various alumni



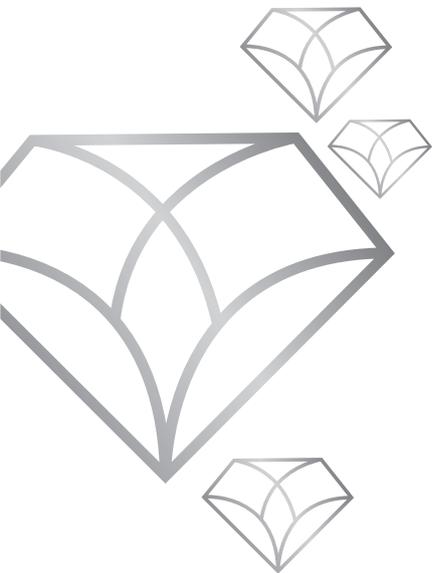
Teaching staff of REC (NIT) Calicut 1968/69



Students Association 1962/63



1962-67 Batch, Circa 2017



**Air Commodore
Thomas Job,
AVSM, VSM**
1962-67 Batch,
Mechanical

A Reminiscence

I got a call from REC Calicut in June 1962 for an interview for Mechanical Branch. I packed my bags and landed up at Calicut. I left my luggage at my uncle's shop near the Railway station and proceed to West Hill where the college had started at the Govt. Polytechnic. The interview was a mere formality of checking mark sheets and payment of the initial fees. We were told that college would open 2 weeks later. Leaving my luggage in my uncle's shop, I returned home.





Having studied at a residential public school with Military background, hostel life was not new for me. I landed up again 15 days later at Polytechnic New Hostel. This was one day before specified date so that I could have some choice in selecting a good room. There, I came to know that 2 juniors would be sharing a room with 2 seniors. The room had 2 cots plus 4 tables and chairs. My bed was to be in a corner of the room on the floor. So much for landing up early to select a good spot to stay in!!!

There were 120 seniors of the first batch plus me in the hostel that night. I was from the second batch. The seniors started ragging me one by one. It was amusing because none of them had a clue about ragging. I had faced much tougher ragging at my residential school. At the end of that night all the seniors knew my name. Ragging at REC started with me. By next evening, the hostel was full, and I was not ragged further. Instead, I was giving tips to the seniors on how to rag without physical contact! By the start of our second year (1963 / 64), the seniors had moved to Chathamangalam and our batch mates got cots at the polytechnic hostel. We moved to Chathamangalam by the middle of the same academic year. A 120 of us were to live at the Heat Engines lab. However, we had a full complement of furniture. Toilets were in makeshift shacks with water outside from a water bouser. If the water finished, dry cleaning of the body was the only choice. It was only by middle of the third year that we got rooms in the hostel.

The college had just one basketball and one volleyball court. Our gang of hockey players decided to make a hockey field by converting the paddy fields at 12th mile using crow bars and spades. It was made by 'shram dhan'. Calicut Medical College was the university champions in hockey then, but we had a lot of guys from the North including a Sardar. Our Sardar became the goalkeeper. We had a few

games on this uneven ground before facing the Medical college for a friendly match. Medical college guys were anxious seeing huge guys from the North and a Sardar in our team. The first 10 minutes we managed to apply some pressure on Medical college team. Then one of the wingers from Medical College managed take the ball to our half which was nearly empty. He easily managed to reach the D and gave a long shot which was going just outside our goal post. Our goalkeeper, in his anxiety to show off his powers, managed to deflect the ball into our own goal with his pads. Thus, we came to know that all Sardars are not born hockey players. Game ended 6-0, advantage Medical College. It took us 2 more years to catch up, however, the college did exceedingly well in Cricket, Basketball and Volleyball.

By the time we reached third year (1964 / 65), the students were restive. The basic facilities expected were not forthcoming. The Kerala group in the first batch wanted a fire brand general secretary to create agitations. They chose Madhavan Nair who was my roommate in my first year of college. Our class chose Aziz, a Malayalee but who had done schooling outside Kerala. I was standing for Student Editor. The first batch Keralites wanted me to canvass for Madhavan Nair, but I told them that my personal vote would go to Madhavan Nair, but I would only canvass for my classmate, Aziz. This was because I knew that if Madhavan Nair wins, he would bring in the youth wing of political parties into the college. Luckily, Aziz won, and political parties did not enter the campus for a long time to come. I became the Student Editor.

In my fourth year (1965 / 66) we had 5 hostels. I became Hostel Secretary and Mess member for C hostel. All the Mess secretaries worked closely, and we were able to fill the recreation rooms of all the hostels with many indoor games. Many magazines were also subscribed to. We decided to have a hostel day dinner for the first time. All the tables and chairs of students from every



hostel room was laid out in front of A hostel. It was a massive task done purely by students. The students had their first sit down grand dinner at college.

By my fifth year (1966 / 67), I got a single room in E hostel. I had been a keen aero modeler in my school. I had two personal aero engines and built few planes in my room, which I used to fly outside the hostel. I was able to convince the Principal of the requirement to start an aeromodelling club at college. At the end of first term, our class was going to Calcutta for a study tour. The Principal entrusted the money for buying model kits and engines to Mr Balasubramaniam, who in charge of the tour. Both of us went to India Hobby centre at Calcutta and purchased required items and brought it back to college. The amount sanctioned was Rs 2000/- and in 1966, it was a princely sum. Thus, started the first activity club at REC which is flourishing even now. Many of the initial aero modelers went on to join IAF, HAL and DRDO and did very well in their professions.

In our final year, the social service league of college, of which I was a part, conducted a two-day social service camp during the Christmas holidays. It was attended by students from

many colleges. It was the first residential inter college activity of REC. Food was served by the canteen. To accommodate all students, Mr Vijayan, the canteen contractor constructed a round gazebo in front of canteen made of bamboos and bamboo mats. After the event, it was used as an extension of the canteen. Since it was a temporary structure, the gazebo lasted only for a few years. In memory of the old days, batch of 1969 has constructed a permanent gazebo in the same location through NITCAA. It is called "Maitree".

Though the initial batches had to undergo a lot of difficulties in the early years, they all still have an affinity to REC/NIT as they were part of building the culture of the institute. It was because of this affinity; I had suggested in Bangalore Chapter of NITCAA that an office of NITCAA be set up inside the campus. The Bangalore chapter took this up with NITCAA Governing Council, who also agreed to the idea. I volunteered to do the spade work for setting up the office at NITC and see through the first project under NITCAA office which was the Gazebo project by batch of 1969. I got fantastic support from the office bearers of NITCAA as well as from college authorities.

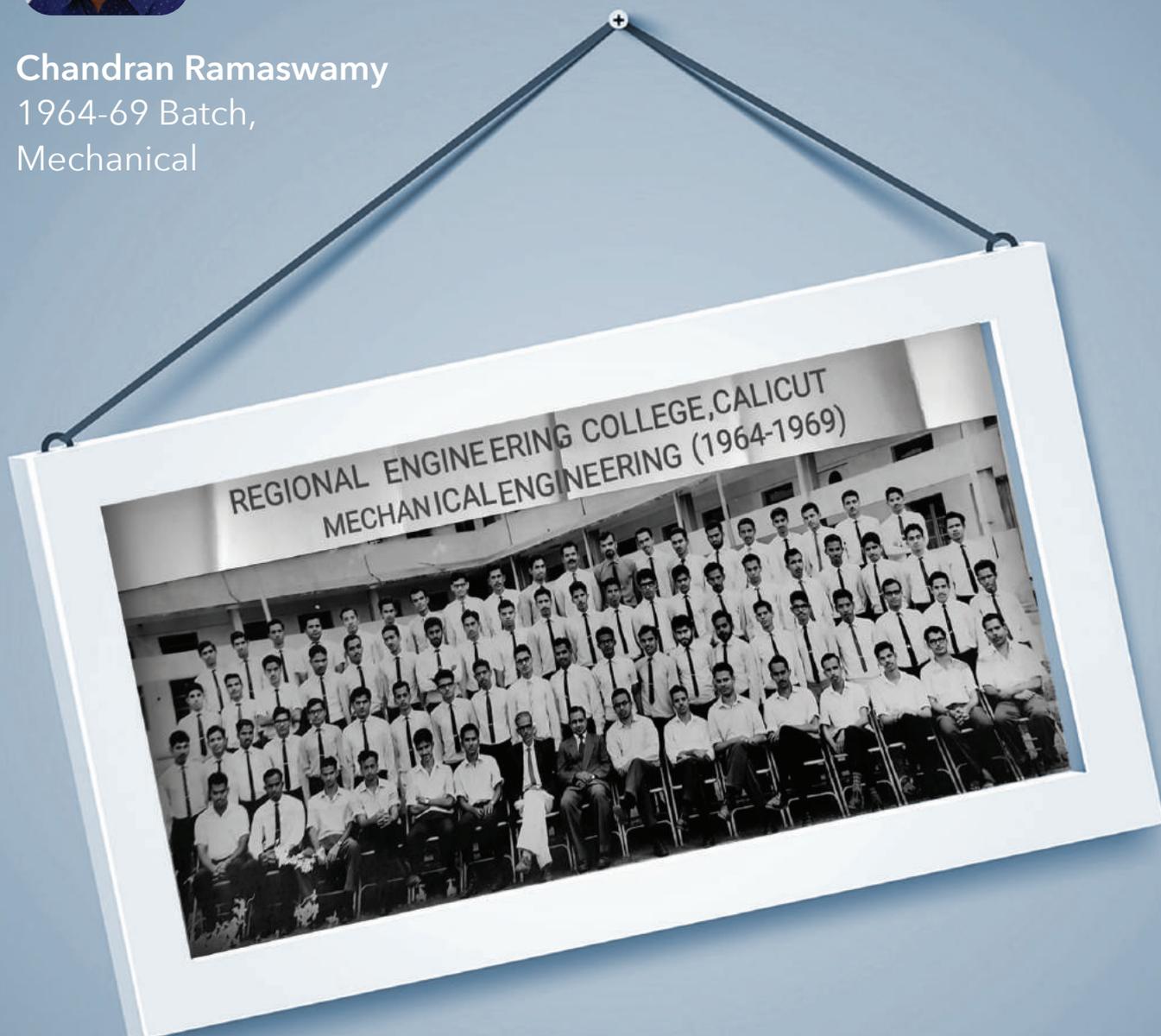
In summation, REC was a very satisfying part of my life.



1967 Batch 'Golden Jubilee' at Thusharagiri



Chandran Ramaswamy
1964-69 Batch,
Mechanical



Sweet Memories

Year 1964- Welcome Year! When all the classes including labs and workshops finally moved to the new Chathamangalam campus, from West Hill. Two hostels were ready, with a third one under construction. Main Building of the college with one floor was almost ready.

A beautiful location with hills & valleys, look-a-like forest area surrounded with mango, cashew, and rubber trees. Main road passing through the campus, connecting Kunnamangalam to Mukkam. At the famous 12th Mile Bus stop, narrow kutcha by lanes emerge, one leading to a local village area and another towards the river. During summer, there used to be temporary sheds put up for screening of films for the enjoyment of the locals.

All of us were subjected to ragging with funny oral and special acts of little vulgarity. There were no female admissions till 1966 and hence dating and romances were a distant dream.

Journeys from Ernakulam to Calicut and to the college campus were very interesting - by Malabar Express or morning passenger train taking long hours; almost 7-9 hrs.!! We had to board at the starting point (Harbour Terminus) to manage a seat on the top luggage plank in the compartment due to the heavy rush. Back to home journeys during the holidays and long weekends by bus were so memorable, sipping tea & buying special "Halwa" at Kozhikode bus stand and having midnight biriyani at Pattambi.

Lecturers and professors were friendly and helpful including the non-teaching staff. The Library was well maintained with lots of journals and study books and we could walk in any time.

It was during our second year, the the Principal Dr. M. Kesava Rao had to leave the campus after an agitated student protest and he was succeeded by Dr. Bahauddin.

Encounters between our collegians and Medical College students whenever both college teams met in Football or Cricket matches during intercollege tournaments regularly culminated in muscular fights.

Vijayan started his canteen under a thatched round shaped hut and managed with few chairs and folding tables around a tree. Hot tea

and potato bonda was very special; and was served even at nights. The State Bank opened a branch just near Vijayan's canteen.

Only one barber shop was available on the down-hill area and the Sunday rush was beyond his capacity to serve.

After 7 pm it is so dark and persons moving about used to carry torch or "Chootu" to help chase away snakes and dogs, which used to move freely those days. There were no walls built around the hostels till 1968. The howling of wolves was a frequent occurrence on nights, and one could see their bright eyes shining from a long distance in the darkness.

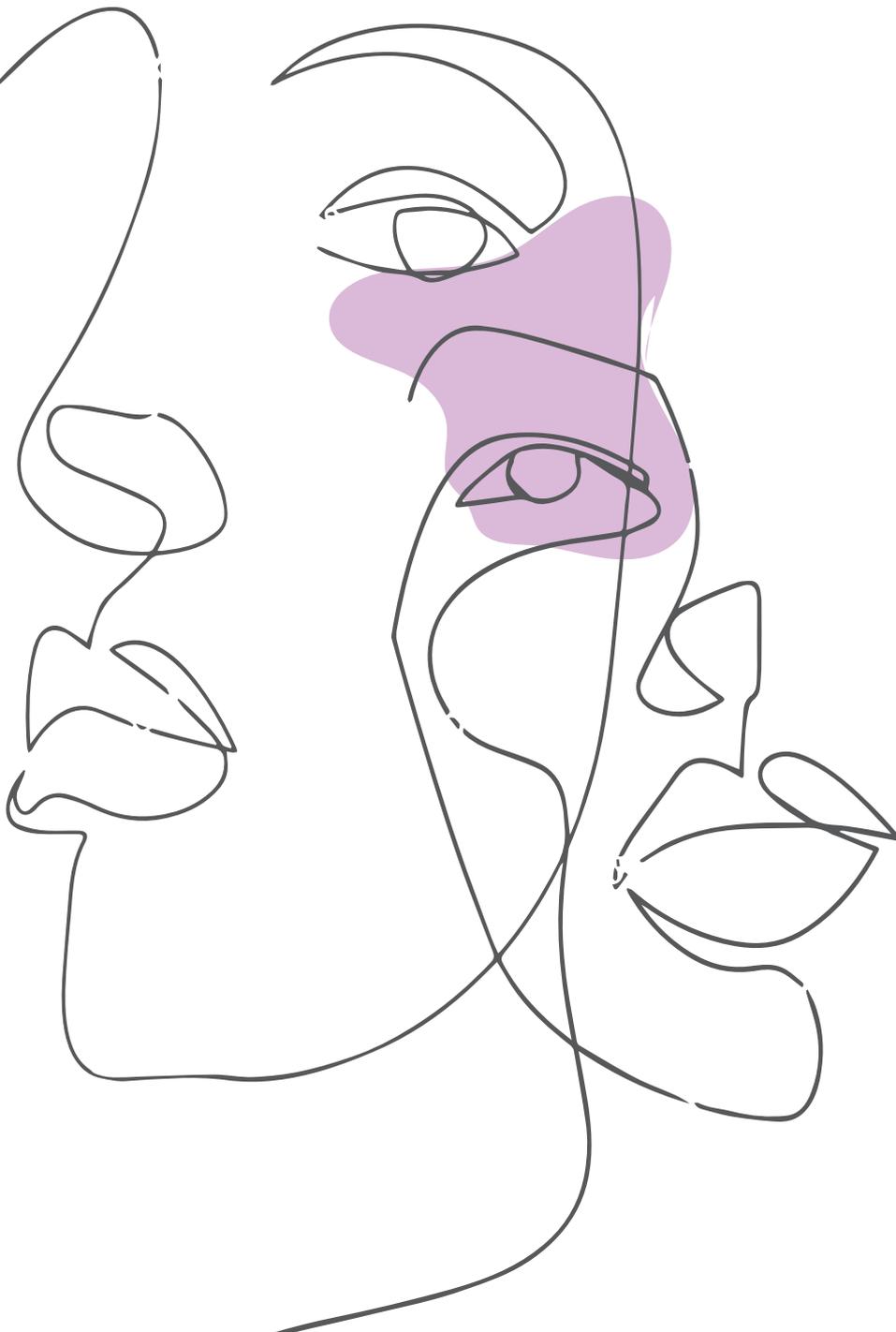
During weekends most of us would go to town to watch films. Many an evergreen Malayalam and Hindi films got released during this era.

College elections and canvassing for votes were so much fun. College Week was organised in January 1969 with exhibitions and daily musical evenings, technical seminars, which saw the participation of celebrities like Gemini Ganesan, Jayachandran etc. We had our programmes of variety entertainments.

Some of the lecturers of those days late Dr. P.S.Mony, Dr.K.S.S.Mani (nick named Calcumani), Dr. Ramakrishnan, Dr. Bharathan (Yesudas Duplicate), the two Balasubraaniam A and K, Abdul Salam, Balchandran (IAS), Damodaran Sir, Rajan Sir (IAS, the ex-Collector of Ernakulam District etc), Selvam Sir, Kolappan Sir, John Sir, Achuthan Sir, Professors Achuthan Nair, Bahauddin, Dr. Maheswaran Namboothiri, Mr. Nagarajam (the Strict NCC Officer), late Jussey Sir, Dr. V.K. Unny, Dr. Sitaraman, Mr. John, Mr. Kunjiraman Nair and many more.....are always remembered with reverence even today.

Those five years we spent at the campus are always so memorable and even today fresh in my mind, with lots of happiness, enjoyment, excitement and competition conflicts.





Mohan Rao
1961-66 Batch

Memories ... Memories

While it has been quite a while since my stint as a First Batch student at REC Calicut and many recollections are a bit hazy, thought I would pen some things that come to mind.





After a couple of months at West Hill, I remember the day we arrived at the new site at Chathamangalam in the middle of a recently cleared forest area. Unsurprisingly, many of the facilities were not yet ready and some of us slept on cot beds in the Electrical Lab amidst three phase electric motors and the like, which we also were expected to commission being the first users.

But soon things got up and running and we all settled down in the new environment.

We were very fortunate to have an excellent group of teachers who soon became our mentors ably led by Dr Keshava Rao and Dr Bahauddin, Professor P.K Charlu and the like. We owe them an immense debt of gratitude.

Our first batch was very cosmopolitan with students from Kozhikode all the way up to Ladakh, based on the then intake formula which was 50 % Kerala, 10% from each of the neighboring states and the remaining 20% from the rest of India. As the only NRI, I remember having had to get a personal dispensation from the University of Kerala which finally was granted in my second year!

Despite our being pretty isolated in the middle of a jungle, our batch performed well in sports and elocution competitions, often bagging the top prizes. I remember well many of us walking the 18 kms from Calicut after missing the last bus with some torch bearers in front leading the way in otherwise pitch darkness.

A big event during our five years was the construction of a new Gwalior Rayon factory at Mavoor, providing real life construction visibility to all us budding engineers.

It was in the maidan in front of one of the hostels that we heard over the radio about the

assassination of the US President, John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

Since then, all of us have gone our separate ways; I am in fact writing this note from the outskirts of Paris on a cold sunny spring day.

Sadly, while a number of us have passed away in the intervening years, thanks to the efforts of Dr. P.C Baby, the survivors still manage to keep in touch, and about 90 of us met up in December 2010 for the Golden Jubilee of REC/NITC along with a few of our Professors and Teachers. The place has certainly changed.

All in all, a very formative experience as alumni of the first batch which served us well over the years.



A Peep *into Our Calicut* *REC Life*



Mohan Prasaad
1962-67 Batch,
Electrical

Relationships and Friendships are 2 assets a human being can possess during his/her lifetime. These cannot be earned but must be developed. Relationship with parents, brothers and sisters and children develops when living together under one roof, while relationship with other family members develops due to the strength of the connecting links and the chain. Early friendship is something which develops during the lengthy school and college education. Engineering course is fairly long one among the various opportunities available to a student. Here comes the difference between family members and friends. Immediate family members live under one roof, whereas friends in an educational institution live separately except in hostels. Hence the bonds among family members and friends will naturally be different. Bonds of friendships among those who stay in hostels will be stronger compared to others. This is really the outcome of our engineering college life.





I happened to join REC (present NIT), Calicut more by chance and not by intention. I was a student of the Pre-University Course (PUC) in Maharajas College Ernakulam during 1961-62. In the College, Students Union Secretary was Sri. A.K. Antony who later became the Chief Minister of Kerala and subsequently Defense Minister of Government of India. He was a person who opened his mouth rarely during those days. We did not hear any loose talk from him even during friendly chats. He once enquired about the marks I got in various subjects and suggested me to join engineering course after PUC. Those days, there was a belief that one would not get salvation if he or she did not become an Engineer or Doctor. Even though I had no passion for any particular course, the seed was sown in my mind. Naturally after the PUC course I applied for the Engineering Course of Kerala, which had a centralized admission procedure. Since this was a time-consuming process, I joined the BSc Course in Maharajas College as a safety net.

On the very first day of BSc, I landed in front of Sri. A.K Antony who enquired about the reason for my joining this course. I told him this was only a safety net. He thought for a moment and recollected from his memory that the Govt of India had started an Engineering College in Calicut and asked me to apply there also. He did not have more details about the college. The advantage of joining Central Govt. College was that we need not execute a bond to serve the state government unlike in the state colleges. Without knowing the correct address of the college, I applied for an application form, which I got just one day prior to the last date for submission. I had not paid the fee for the application form. I applied for the course sitting overtime and posting the application by overnight mail thro Railway Mail Service. To my surprise, within a week I got the interview card. When I attended the interview, I came to know that there were around 2,000 applications from all over India for 125 seats. Even though I was

not hopeful of securing admission, I got selection and joined the college after about one week.

In Regional Engineering College, Calicut we got the privilege of staying together under one roof in the college hostel, with students from all over India, for a fairly long duration of the 5-year integrated course. We joined the college in the middle of 1962. I had my school classmate Sri. S Krishnamoorthy, PUC Classmates M/s. Chandramohan, Sathish Baboo, Nataraja Pillai, Late P. Rajagopal and Late Bhagavatheeswaran, if I recollect a few, with me to join REC.

Dr. A Achuthan took the first Engineering Class for us saying that Drawing is the Language of Engineers. Subsequently, the war with China started and there was acceleration of Engineering Courses for the final and pre final year students. As the college was started only in 1961, courses were not accelerated in REC.

During the first year of engineering and till the middle of 2nd year, we were at West Hill in the Calicut City and using Poly Technic Buildings for our study and stay as the permanent campus at Chathamangalam was not ready. Polytechnic grounds were used for our outdoor games and inter house tournaments. I used to participate in football matches for the college. During the annual sports meet, both the students and the staff members used to participate with equal enthusiasm. Late Pattom Thanu Pillai, the then Chairman of the college Governing Council (as the Education and Chief Minister of Kerala) visited the college and addressed us.

The initial stay was comfortable being in the City. During the 2nd year, we were shifted to the permanent campus, where the Workshop and Laboratory buildings were completed. Chathamangalam was around 13 miles from the city. Permanent classrooms and hostels were not ready. Portions of the lab and workshops were converted to classrooms and dormitory for stay. Permanent Non-Veg and Veg mess halls were available.



Toilets were temporary constructions. A well was dug for water supply. For permanent water supply there was a project with a pump house in the adjacent river, which was not ready. Soon it was found that there was no adequate supply of well water. Hence for washing purpose, water was brought from the river, in a tanker lorry owned by the college. During the Christmas vacation in 1963, of the 2nd year, we had an education tour to Cochin, Trichy, Coimbatore, Madurai and Nilgiris. This included visits to industries, Power houses etc.

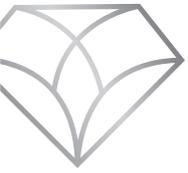
Inadequate water supply had its own contributions like water borne diseases. I got ulcers on both of my feet which had to be operated. During the 3rd term of the second year many of us fell ill due to jaundice. Climax was at the time of University Examinations of the 2nd Year in April 1964. 4 of us late George Joseph, M/s Balakrishnan G, Narendran and Myself were the casualties. Many others withdrew from examination. First hostel building was ready by that time and my roommates were M/s Job Kuruvila, KR Gopalakrishnan and Late Krishnan Surender. We the 4 jaundice patients were shifted to the recreation hall of the hostel, which became hospital room for us. Late Prof. Bahauddin was the Asst. Professor in Charge of the Campus and late Dr. PS Moni was the Hostel Warden at that time. They looked after well during the illness. College doctor visited us every day. Glucose injection was administered to us once during the examination hall, as we were very weak. Subsequently we took glucose injections before going to exam hall. One Doctor from the city was also brought for examining us. As we had vomiting during the exam, 4 of us were shifted to staff room for writing the exam, where wash basin was available. 3 of us finished the exam. But Sri. Narendran withdrew in the middle. Apart from my roommates, our senior's M/s Ramadas and Jacob Mathew who had exam in the afternoon and college attenders helped us during our illness. We had examinations in the forenoon.

After finishing the exam, we returned home and recovered well. We were not hopeful of the exam results. But to our surprise, all 3 of us came out successful and I got first class. This was the most memorable period of college life to 3 of us late George Joseph, Sri. G. Balakrishnan (now in Muscat) and Me. We were recollecting this event many times whenever we met after the college life. Actually, I learnt how to appear for the examinations without worrying for the result.

During our illness, there was a college Governing Council meeting at the campus which was presided over by late R. Sanker, who was Chief Minister of Kerala as well as Education Minister. He happened to come to Maharajas College Ernakulam also to inaugurate the College Union, while I was studying for the Pre-University Course.

As pointed out earlier, I used to play football and represented college team. The team members included Sri. Ratnadas of senior batch, Late K. Venkita Raman of my own batch and M/s Prabhakaran Paleri, Sekhar, Abraham and Damodaran of our junior batch. During one of the friendly matches with a local team at Mananchira maidan in the city, Sri. Prabhakaran Paleri fell and broke his arm. We had to take him to the hospital and to stay with him the whole night in the hospital as the bandaging of the broken arm could be done only next day. He was a day scholar and staying with his family in the city. During the first year of stay at Chathamangalam, our football ground was where most of the present main / department buildings and library building were located. When buildings came up, we shifted our playground to a place around 2 kms away from the hostel towards western boundary of the campus, near the present C-Dit building is located. The campus was full of Snakes and Jackals. Snake menace was frequent, and we had our classmate Ittyachan, who was able to kill snakes with a single throw of a stone. He was our sharp stone shooter.

When the college reopened for the 3rd year of our course, final allotment of our branches took place.

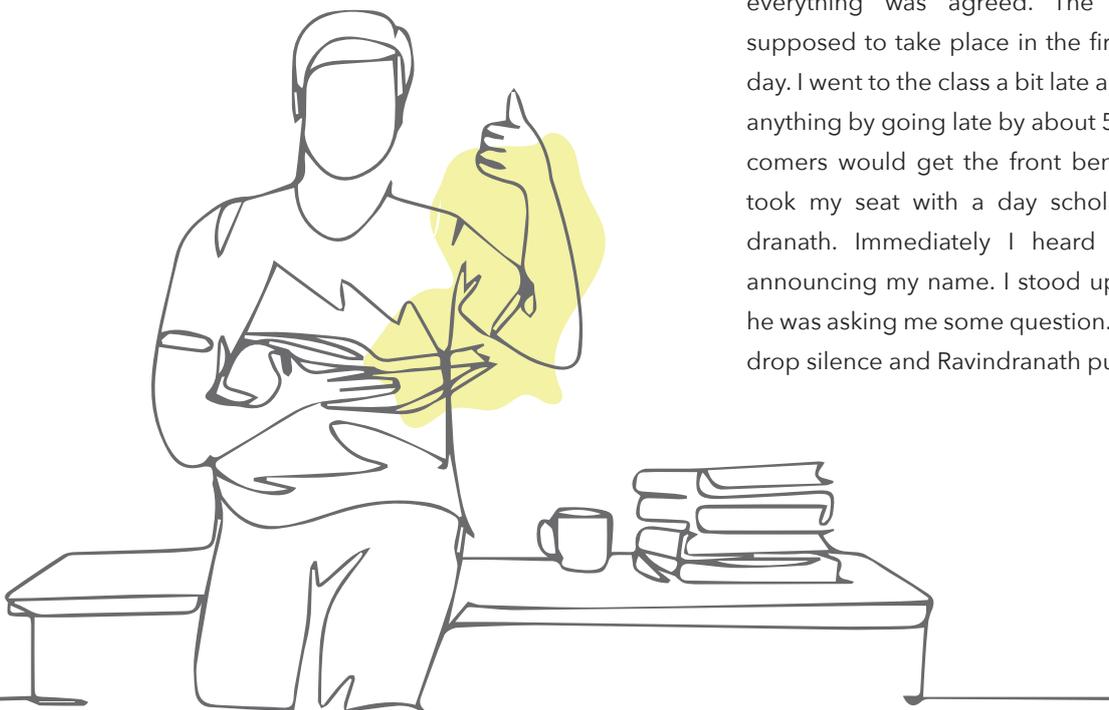


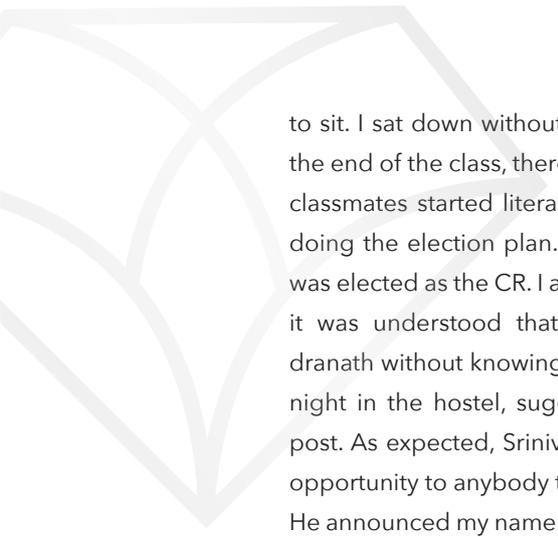
During the first year when we joined, I was allotted Electrical Branch. Change of branch was possible after the 2nd year depending on the marks scored in the university examination. I preferred Mechanical Branch, however the Principal Dr. MV Kesava Rao advised me to take Electrical Branch so that I could get College Merit Scholarship, which meant exemption from paying college fees and receiving monthly payment of Rs.75/- which was sufficient for payment of hostel fees and purchase of books. Since this was attractive, I accepted the Electrical Branch. I could maintain the scholarship during the 4th and 5th year of the course also, which depended on the performance in the university examination.

During the 3rd year of the course, we had a Survey Camp for about 10 days during the Christmas vacation. We had to prepare a contour map of about 4 to 5 acres of the land where the main buildings were located plus some area towards west. Intention of selecting this area was to assess the earth work required for building construction. We had survey classes during the 3rd and 4th year of our courses. Professor KM Bahauddin used to handle our Survey Classes. Principal Dr. MV Kesava Rao took Electrical Engineering Classes

for the Electrical Batch. Late V. V. Giri, the then Governor of Kerala came and addressed us at the college annual day. Later he became President of India. At the strength of materials lab one of my classmates Chellappa met with an accident by crushing his thumb during granite testing. We took him to Nirmala Hospital at Vellimadu Kunnu along with the staff member Sri. Ranganathan. He recovered in about 10 days.

We started the 4th year classes by June 1965. By that time, all the 3 branches of Civil, Electrical and Mechanical branches had Professors as Heads of the Departments. Class Representatives (Class leaders) used to be elected during the first month. Class Representative (CR) for Electrical Branch was to be elected during the lecture class of late Dr. Srinivasan who did not waste a single minute in the class while taking class. Smart students of our class decided that we should spend at least 15 minutes for election, by proposing 2 candidates so that time would be spent in balloting and counting. Hence in the previous night in the hostel gathering, it was decided who should be the CR and who should challenge him. The understanding was reached and communicated to all in the hostel. I was told as to whom I should vote, and everything was agreed. The election was supposed to take place in the first period next day. I went to the class a bit late as I did not lose anything by going late by about 5 minutes. Late comers would get the front bench only and I took my seat with a day scholar, late Ravindranath. Immediately I heard Srinivasan sir announcing my name. I stood up thinking that he was asking me some question. There was pin drop silence and Ravindranath pulled me down





to sit. I sat down without knowing anything. After the end of the class, there was commotion and my classmates started literally beating me for torpedoing the election plan. Some of them told me I was elected as the CR. I asked for the reason. Later it was understood that the day scholar Ravindranath without knowing the decision of previous night in the hostel, suggested my name for the post. As expected, Srinivasan sir did not give any opportunity to anybody to suggest another name. He announced my name as CR which I heard while entering the class late. As I did not know what was happening, I did not get an opportunity to decline. As a punishment I was asked to go to staff room and get the next period free. When I went there, staff members knew of my election and started congratulating me. I told them I was not interested in the post and requested them to conduct another election. This was refused and gave me the first assignment as CR to tell in the class that next period was free due to the leave of the staff member concerned. In fact, I was happy on this and forgot other issues. My announcement about the free period was greeted by the whole class and I got approval for my election as CR.

Electrical Engineering Association was started during this year along with the Associations of other branches. The first Secretary was Sri. Mohan Rao of the 1st batch and I was the Joint Secretary. Late Dr. K. Gopalan who was the head of the Electrical Dept of the NSS College, Palaghat came to inaugurate the Electrical Engineering Association. He was a student of Dr. MV Kesava Rao, the Principal and later became the Vice Chancellor of CUSAT, Kalamassery. He came with a broken leg in plaster which indicated his spirit. We received him at the Railway station.

The education tour during the Christmas vacation of 4th year was to Chennai, Hyderabad, and Bangalore. We had to get round tour concession train ticket from the railways. As CR, I was coordinating the tour programme along with my friends. There was some hitch in getting the concession

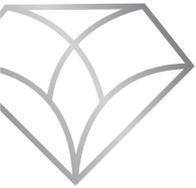
ticket from the railways. Ticket expenses were borne by the college. I had to go and meet the Southern Railway Officers at Chennai to sort out the issues. Our classmate Ramaswamy had his uncle working as Superintendent of Madras Central Station. I went to his house and got a letter from him to the Railways. Still there were some objections from the officers who wanted some clarifications from the Principal. Prof Bahauddin was in charge. I made a trunk call booking as STD was not available at that time. With difficulty and with the help of telephone exchange staff, I conveyed to him the requirement of the Railways. I got the letter from him next day in Madras, through our senior batch students who passed through Madras for their all-India Tour. With the letter I managed to get the concession ticket order. However, this would not be handed over to me but sent to the Station Master of Calicut. As we were scheduled to leave from Calicut next day, there was urgency. Somehow, we managed to get the ticket at the Calicut Railway station next day and we started on tour as per schedule. Sri. Ramaswamy was at the Calicut railway station to receive me and take over from me further work on the ticket, as I had to go to hostel and get ready with my packing for the tour. Sri. Sivagnanam, lecturer accompanied us in tour.

Towards the end of the 4th year, a campus selection team came from the Air Force and did some screening test at the college. Late Ananthanarayanan and I were selected for final interview and physical ability test at Mysore. We got higher class railway fare for travel and attended the test which lasted for about 1 week along with candidates from other places in India. Only Ananthanarayanan got selected. He got some monthly allowance from the air force during the final year.

We the 4th year students arranged a send-off meeting for the first batch, appearing for final examination in April 1966. Dr. Padmini Nayar,



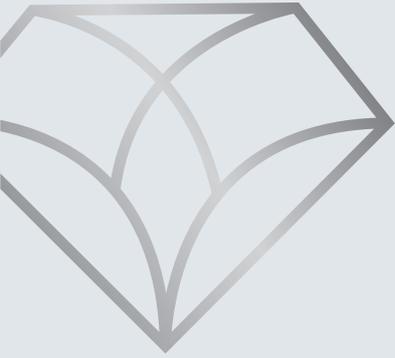
our Professor of English, was also retiring from service at the same time. Hence the send-off meeting was a combined one. The 4th year of the course was the toughest one with 5 practicals and 10 theory papers for the university examination. The Kerala University was the only university in Kerala at that time.



The 5-year integrated course for engineering was discontinued with the introduction of 2-year Pre-Degree Course (PDC_ after SSLC). However, those who did not attend the Pre-Degree Course had to attend a one-year Preparatory Course before the 4-year engineering course. One of my cousins G. Venugopal who had central school education had to attend the preparatory course of the college before starting his 4-year engineering course in REC. During the 3rd and 4th year of the course, Mathematics Classes for the Civil and Electrical branches were combined as the total strength was around 45 only.

Our 5th year classes were started without much fanfare. However there was students' unrest and the college was closed for about less than 2 months. Students demanded among other things more elective subjects in the final year. In electrical branch, High Voltage Engineering was introduced apart from Power System Analysis already offered, after the students' agitation. We were following the notes prepared by Dr. K. Gopalan of NSS Engineering College, Palaghat who had specialized in the subject. This helped me personally as I joined a High Voltage Transformer/ Switchgear manufacturing Company as Design Engineer on completing the course. Dr. Thiruvankidam handled our High Voltage Engineering Classes as a stop gap arrangement. We could arrange a visit to Moozhiyar Powerhouse of Sabarigiri Hydro Electrical Project for the Electrical batch. Most of the Electrical staff including Prof. Charlu came with us. During the 5th and final year Christmas vacation we had the usual education tour. We had visits to Bhopal, Bhilai, Mumbai, Pune etc. With previous experience in arranging tours, this was a smooth affair. Dr. Bharathan was the staff member who accompanied us. Late Bhagavatheswaran was our CR. After the tour, we started the 3rd term of the year with the preparations for leaving the college after the examinations in April / May 1967. We had a get together of all the branches after the classes were over. Practical examinations were after theory papers. Friends started departing turn by turn as and when their practicals were over. Even though we had alumni meetings subsequently with families, the college life could not be substituted but could only recollect the soft and hard memories.





Pradeep Kumar
1975-79 Batch,
Electrical

Vignettes from the 1970s

Dancing by the Bonfire

REC was a big crucible that changed the chemistry of any student who came in contact with it. The North Indians celebrated Diwali and Holi with gusto. All of us were lifted bodily and dipped in huge cauldrons containing coloured water. We, the Southies, were irritated to no end in the beginning but it slowly turned into a thing of exhilaration. I danced with my peers whenever a local band was belting out popular Hindi film tunes. Dancing together drew students much closer to each other. We made large bonfires during the arts festival - Camp Arts - and danced around it excitedly. Airborne on the wings of grass, we bawled like primitive tribes. There wasn't any need for language. The rock group from Bangalore with its lead singer in kurtha-pyjamas was playing "Hotel California" inside the auditorium.





A desert traveller finds the going tough and desperately seeks shelter after a long and tiresome journey. He is offered a well-lighted mansion, dream girls with wine and every other instrument of pleasure. He falls for them, but in reality he is being trapped and held captive. By the time he realizes of his imprisonment, there is no escape at all.

We crashed into the hall enmasse. The auditorium was filled with all kinds of smoke, coming from cigarette, cannabis, crackers etc., and mayhem. We contributed our bit to the chaos. After the rock group, a fat girl from Goa came to the stage. She was wearing a miniskirt and a bandeau with frills. Her oversized body gyrated in tune with pre-recorded music. As a fast number was being played, students rushed on to the stage and the dancing girl had to be rescued from her fans. She was locked inside the green room for safety, but a restless crowd surged against the door.

Anarchy too became addictive like music and dance.

The Turnaround

Kettangal had a cinema-house named Jaya Talkies which screened all kinds of potboilers. Once in a while, 'blue films' too made an appearance. The communication channels were so effective that news about them reached the campus at lightning speed. Sharp at ten, students would queue up at the counter buying tickets at four times the normal rate. Only the Iranian student Masood insisted on a free pass. The coffers would be full in no time and the crudely shot black and white film without an audio track had the run. One woman appeared from nowhere and started undressing herself. A man showed up, also from nowhere, and straightaway started copulating with her. The entire film ran into a couple of minutes. After the guarded screening, almost

all of us felt miserable and walked back to the hostels in disgust. However, we invariably turned up for the next screening too, as if performing a duty. The path to revulsion remained the same.

Satyajit Ray, Fellini, DeSica and the like were slowly descending onto this ground. The college had procured an expensive projector capable of screening even cinemascope movies. The natural fall-out was the formation of a film society. We didn't have any exposure to good cinema till then. The classics got us bowled over. We were stunned. After watching Bergman's "Virgin Spring", an usually harmless guy named Sankaranarayanan declared, "If anybody rapes a girl, I'd cut his balls."





Gita Ramachandran
1978 Batch,
Electrical



REC Memoires A Song and Dance

Where there is a will there's a way!

The four years in REC were so eventful that it is really difficult to pick my favorite memory. I am also the one of those who finds it very difficult to recollect things which happened four decades back, unlike some of my batchmates who have very vibrant recollections of our time at REC. However, there is one incident which I vividly remember even after so many years.



In the late 1970s, REC had a smattering handful of girls who joined the college, aspiring to be engineers. There were about six ladies in the senior batch, nine in ours, nine in the junior batch and may be ten to twelve in the next, from all disciplines put together! The strength of girls joining REC has increased over the years and the ratio is probably much higher today. During our final year at REC, in the year 1978, when the annual arts festival competitions came around, new categories in solo and group dance for women, were also announced as the numerical strength of the girls had started increasing.

Our batch comprising of some of the most versatile and talented youngsters wanted to win the Championship Trophy for the year. The "Year Spirit" was reaching its pinnacle and our batch already had the girls participating in the tableaux, drama, and group song events. Girls of our batch decided to participate in the solo and group dances, to increase the points for our batch. The only problem was that none of us were trained dancers or had even participated in dances elsewhere.

I happened to be a day scholar and had got many opportunities to organize cultural events outside REC and fortunately had some contacts too, which we decided to make use of. For the solo dance, I approached one of my friends who was also a versatile dancer and requested her to teach a solo number to one of my classmates. I accompanied her to my friend's house in Calicut on all week ends, to ensure that the solo item was ready in all respects and could turn out to be a worthy contender. All those who have witnessed the scintillating dance on the stage will never ever forget that performance.

Taking up the Group Dance was the next item on the Agenda. We decided, that eight out of the nine of us, will perform on the stage and the ninth person will sit through the rehearsals as a stand-by for the Group Dance. You can imagine the plight of the eight girls, who had never ever danced a day in their life, having no idea of rhythm, going on a public stage where they were likely to be welcomed with hoots and whistles. Putting up a group dance was a major challenge in those days, unlike today where you can easily refer to some visual media like TV or social media



Navaratnas of 1978 Batch

for songs and choreography as these had not come into being, forty years ago!



I approached another of my classmates, from my schooldays, who introduced me to her dance master. I met him and requested him to come to REC and teach us a group dance. He took one look at us, struggling to learn the first few simple steps he taught us, and shook his head, indicating that this may not work out. Forget grace, we could not even dance to a proper rhythm. Coordination and synchronization were out of the question. It was with great effort, that we were able to convince him to proceed with us. The long and short of it was that he taught us a few steps with gypsy (Tambourine), with just a few beats, where four of us enacted the female parts and the other four the male parts.

Without any music the dance held no promise. But we were not ready to give up so quickly! So, we approached the orchestra team of our batch, which was one of the best orchestra teams in REC that year. They agreed to put together a few tunes to go with the steps and took a few rehearsals with us. As the day of the competition drew close, we became a bundle of nerves. We could have literally fainted when we were called to perform, but once, we went on stage, all the adrenaline kicked in and we finished the dance, ignoring all the whistling and hooting. Even to this day, we do not know if we made any mistakes, or went out of synch, or missed any beats, as we did not have video recordings in those days. None of us had any cameras, but the boys were gracious enough to click few pictures and pass on to us.

It is no wonder, that we walked away with the first prize amidst all the cheering and support from our male batch mates who were all there, in the front cheering and rooting for us. Not even an India Pak cricket match could beat this fervor!

I also had the privilege of taking part in the English Drama, which won the second place. Moreover, I was also lucky enough to be selected as the best Actress in English drama, contributing to the points tally. Our batch had a considerable lead being placed first or second in most of the group items like drama, group songs (in all the 3 languages) and now the group dance as well. We won the Championship Trophy with a huge margin, a wee bit of which was contributed by the spirit of the 'Navaratnas' of our batch.

Three cheers to the 1978 batch of REC!!!





N V Krishna Kumar
1975-81 Batch,
Electrical



The Legendary Mini Canteen of yore!

Life at REC Calicut 1975-81

*How sad and bad and mad it was—
But then, how it was sweet!*

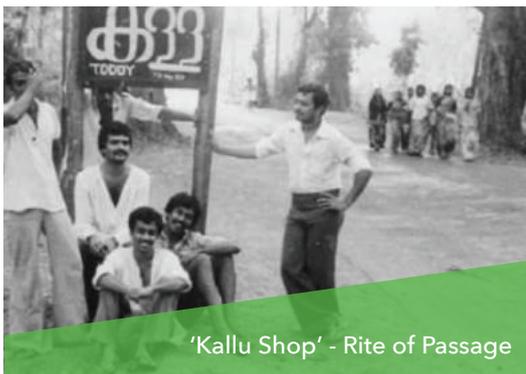
Robert Browning





REC Calicut (now, NIT Calicut) is my alma mater. I was there from 1975 to 1981. The 5-year course got extended close to six years because of strikes. It was the most 'freaked out' place to be in. It was a melting pot of people from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and Navsari to Nepal. I made friends for life at this institution. I saw my first cabaret - more of a strip-tease -- at Queens restaurant on SM Street. The audience comprised men undergoing mid-life crisis and high-testosterone collegians. I had my first taste of toddy at a 'kallu shop' near Jaya Talkies-- a ramshackle, rundown, bugs-infested, thatched apology for a cinema Fight. The locals cut off the electricity and water to the hostels for a couple of days. Those were tense times.

I discovered IG and Double Strong - hooch made in homes at the neighbouring village. One day, after imbibing this grog, I got 'pimbri' - drunk. A classmate, who is now in Canada, carried me over his shoulders and dropped me (with a thud, I presume!) on the ground on the way to E-hostel.



'Kallu Shop' - Rite of Passage

Hostel Day, College Day, Holi, etc after imbibing a cocktail of toddy and arrack - a heady mix by any standard.

The guys with whom I shared a Charminar (yellow packet; I quit smoking in 1984), went on to do their masters, double masters, Ph.Ds, etc. I joined the last refuge of the scoundrels - advertising. I admire all the girls in our batch; they

went on to great professional careers in India and abroad. I did have a crush on certain women lecturers.

I experienced my first heartbreak after joining college - my first love from my school days and I fell out, naturally, because of the distance.

I remember this song popping up in my head during those heady days:

***Vo paas rahein ya dur rahein
Nazon mein samaaye rahate hain
Itana to bata de koi hamein
kyaa pyaar isi ko kahate hain
She and I never met after I finished school.***

I found out the 'glass plate' method of copying engineering drawings to finish the assignments and got caught.

The time spent at the mini canteen (a thatched hut) at night with 'kattan' (black coffee) and 'ammaiyi' (sweet bun) in the company of the guys was my real education.

After catching a late-night show in 'town' (Calicut City - some 25 km from our college), I have spent the night in a state transport bus at the KSRTC bus stand with mosquitos for company. And caught the first bus back (in the morning) to the hostel.

I discovered Dostoyevsky, Henry Miller, Carlos Castaneda (later categorized in the fiction category!), William Carlos Williams, Denise Levertov, J D Salinger, Gunter Gras, Gunnar Myrdal, Kahlil Gibran, J Krishnamurti... and also Rasvanti, which used to be circulated in the hostel. I also wrote down the whole of The Rubaiyat - there were no photo copiers during those days.



Thanks to the film society I saw some classics by acclaimed directors: Vittorio de Sica, Ingmar Bergman, Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Ritwik Ghatak, Shyam Benegal, Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Aravindan, Shyam Benegal... and a 'blue print' or two at Jaya Talkies for double the princely sum of 60 paise.

It was big fun bringing out the news bulletin during the fine arts festival. Ah, those late nights spent cyclo-styling the copies (for the uninitiated cyclostyling was a way of making extra copies by typing out on a stencil).

What fun to sit sharing a cigarette and coffee with your buddies at Park Restaurant at Mananchira Maidan (the restaurant is now defunct, I think).

Pink Floyd, WHO, ELP, Mahavishnu, Uriah Heep, King Crimson, Mohammed Rafi, Kishore Kumar, Talat Mahmood, Yesudas ...were music to our ears.

Got charged up during those fights—UPites vs Biharis, Bengalis vs someone else, etc. Then, sooner or later, everyone smoked the peace pipe.

Election time was party time.

We were always broke.

I entered REC Calicut as a boy and came out a man. I also studied Electrical Engineering there.



*NOBODY COULD HAVE SCRIPTED A BETTER
ALL-ROUND TRAINING GROUND. THANK YOU,
REC CALICUT AKA NIT CALICUT –
PROFESSORS, ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF, MESS HANDS,
AND ALL MY CLASSMATES!*





Prashant Lodha
1988-92 Batch,
EEE

Recampus-92

*Memories are always special...
Sometimes we laugh by remembering
the days we cried, and we cry by
remembering the days
that we laughed.*





Although it has been 25 years, yet it seems like yesterday when I joined REC Calicut on 12.08.1988. Time flies so fast!! It is easy to move ahead leaving things behind but there are some moments that stay with us forever. I am proud to be a part of REC Calicut Family & the esteemed organisation. I am glad that I had the opportunity to learn and grow under the guidance of such eminent professors. They gave us the best possible foundation and tricks of engineering. I never thought I would get such an immense level of cooperation, guidance, and support from all the faculty.

REC Calicut blessed me with best of friends, from all over India, for a lifetime and I shall always cherish those memories. I still miss the hostel days, Ragging times, Dancing to the Bollywood tunes, Common room dhamaal, late night Coffee at Mini canteen, Dosa at REC Canteen, Hamsa's Omelette & Birthday's bumps at Kattangal, Juice at Mamu's shop, our favourite hanging zones where we had unlimited fun, Food at Papachan, Masti at Happy Valley, Prayers at Temple & Church on Sunday, Visit to LH, queuing at the Bank, Playing at playground. All these memories, I still carry in my mind.

The memories of the Weekend trip to Calic city, Movies at Dhanya, Crown, Kairali & Mokkal, Food at Wheat house, Faluda at Faluda house, get together at Paramount hotel, Masti at Calicut beach, travelling in the college bus, buying Hindi Songs Cassettes from Palayam Bus Stand etc. are precious and priceless.

All Kerala tour in Feb-1990 was one of the memorable trips of my life. Visit to Keltron & ut ISRO, Kochi Shipyard, Kanyakumari, Camp fire at Thekkaddy & Periyar, freaking out at Kovalam beach, Lush green paddy fields, all are the fondest memories still engraved in my heart & mind. The final year Ooty tour was also just awesome and a special one.

Never missing the classes of P. Layla B. Das ma'm & Paul Joseph Sir, Humour of Basha Sir, Eagerness to attend Fitting & Carpentry workshops, our whisperings at the library, those pretty scolding from the teachers after bunking classes!! A big salute to all the teachers & mentors - Suresh Sir, Nandkumar sir, Baby Sir, Saly Mam, ATM Sir, Ashok Sir, AK Sir etc.

Life at REC Calicut follows me relentlessly wherever I go. All those memories will forever remain as a beautiful nostalgia in my mind.





Rahna Kader
1991-95 Batch,
ECE



തളിരോർമകൾ നീലോഡഡ്

എവിടെയൊക്കെയോ തിരിഞ്ഞുപോയ ജീവിതങ്ങളെ പരതി കണ്ടെടുത്ത് വീണ്ടും ഒന്നിപ്പിക്കുന്നത് പഴയൊരു കമ്പ്യൂട്ടർ പ്രോഗ്രാം വിഭജിക്കുന്ന പോലെയാണ്. കാലം മാറി, പ്രോഗ്രാമുകൾ മാറി, പക്ഷെ, മനസ്സിനു മാത്രം മാറ്റമില്ല. കണക്കു കൂട്ടലുകളുടെ ആവേശത്തോടെ മനസ്സ് കാത്തിരുന്ന 2020 നെ പറ്റി സ്വാഭാവികമായും ഓർത്തുപോകുന്നു.





1995 ലാണ് ഞങ്ങൾ എൻജിനീയറിംഗ് പാസ്സായി ചാത്തമംഗലം എന്ന കൊച്ചു ഗ്രാമത്തിന്റെ പരിധികൾക്കുള്ളിൽ നിന്ന് വിശാലമായ ലോകത്തിന്റെ പല ഭാഗങ്ങളിലേക്ക് പരന്നൊഴുകിയത്. 25 നീണ്ട വർഷങ്ങൾ! അതിനിടയിൽ റീജിയണൽ എഞ്ചിനീയറിംഗ് കോളേജ് എന്ന ഞങ്ങളുടെ വിദ്യാലയം ജ്ഞാനസ്നാനം ചെയ്ത് നാഷണൽ ഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ട് ഓഫ് ടെക്നോളജി എന്ന പുതിയ പേര് സ്വീകരിക്കുക വരെ ചെയ്തു. കുട്ടികളായി കയറിച്ചെന്ന് യുവതീ യുവാക്കളായി പുറത്തിറങ്ങി ഇപ്പോൾ മധ്യവയസ്സിലെത്തി നിൽക്കുന്ന ഞങ്ങളുടെ കാര്യം പിന്നെ പറയാനുമില്ലല്ലോ. എല്ലാവർക്കും തിരക്കുള്ള ജോലികളായി, കുടുംബമായി, കുട്ടികളായി, രാഷ്ട്രീയമായി. അപൂർവ്വം ചിലർക്കെങ്കിലും മനസ്സിനകത്ത് തിങ്ങി നിറഞ്ഞ രാജ്യസ്നേഹം ജനിതകമാറ്റം സംഭവിച്ചതിനാൽ താൻ പോരിമയായും മറ്റുള്ളവരോടുള്ള വിഷലിപ്തമായ വാക്കുകളായും ശകാര വർഷങ്ങളായും പുറത്തേക്ക് വമിക്കുവാനും തുടങ്ങി. എന്നിരുന്നാലും കോഴിക്കോട് REC എന്ന പൊതു വികാരത്തിനു മുന്നിൽ മറ്റൊരാൾ നിഷ്പമമായി.

2016 ലെ ഒരു മഴ ദിവസമായിരുന്നു കോളേജിൽ അവസാനമായി പോയത്. ആഗസ്റ്റ് ഏഴാം തീയതി. ക്യാമ്പസ് ഇൻറർവ്യൂവിന് വേണ്ടി പോകുമ്പോൾ മറ്റൊന്നിനും സമയമുണ്ടാവില്ല. രാവിലെ എപ്പോൾ പരിപാടി തുടങ്ങിയാലും എല്ലാം കഴിഞ്ഞ് ലിസ്റ്റ് തയ്യാറാകുമ്പോൾ ഒരു സമയമാകും. തലേന്ന് നെടുമ്പാശേരി എയർപോർട്ടിൽ നിന്ന് കൂട്ടിക്കൊണ്ടു പോകുമ്പോൾ സഹോദരൻ ചോദിച്ചു, "നാളെ നമുക്കൊരു ടാക്സി വിളിച്ചു പോയാലോ ? എപ്പോൾ മുതൽ കോഴിക്കോട് വരെയുള്ള ഡ്രൈവിംഗ് ദുഷ്കരം. മുട്ടിനു മുട്ടിന് ട്രാഫിക് ബ്ലോക്കിൽ കുടുങ്ങും."

"വിത്ത് പ്ലേഴർ, അതും കമ്പനി ചെലവിൽ "

കപ്പർകാർക്കൊന്നും ബാവയുടെ ഡ്രൈവിങ്ങിനെ പറ്റി മതിപ്പില്ലാതിരിക്കില്ല. അംബാസിഡർ കാറിലും BMW വിൽ പോകുന്ന സൗഖ്യം. രാവിലെ നാലിന് തന്നെ സഹോദരന്റെ കുടുംബത്തോടൊപ്പം പുറപ്പെട്ടു. കുന്ദമംഗലം IIM നോട് ചേർന്നൊരു ഹോട്ടലിലായിരുന്നു ബ്രേക്ക് ഫാസ്റ്റ്. പട്ട് മുന്നിൽ തന്നെ വെച്ച് ചുട്ടു. നല്ല രുചി. കോഴിക്കോട്ടുകാരുടെ രുചി മഹിമ പിന്നെ പറയേണ്ടല്ലോ. വയർ മാത്രമല്ല, മനസ്സും നിറച്ചു അവർ ഞങ്ങളെ വിടുമല്ല.

ഏഴരയോടെ കോളേജിലെത്തി. ലേഡീസ് ഹോസ്റ്റലിലേക്കുള്ള കൈവഴി കടന്ന് പോയപ്പോൾ നാത്തൂന് (റഷി) ചൂണ്ടി കാണിച്ചു കൊടുത്തു, "ഇവിടെയാണ് ഹോസ്റ്റൽ". കോളേജിന്റെ ഗേറ്റ് പണ്ടത്തെ പോലെ എല്ലാവരെയും സ്വീകരിക്കാൻ പാകത്തിന് തുറന്നു മലർത്തിയിട്ടില്ല. ആരാണ്, എവിടുനാണ് തുടങ്ങിയ ചോദ്യങ്ങൾക്ക് കമ്പനിയുടെ ഐഡി കാർഡ് കാണിച്ച് ഉത്തരം കൊടുത്തു. ഇവിടെ പഠിച്ചതാണെന്നോ, മനസ്സ് കൊണ്ട് ഇപ്പോഴും ഇവിടെത്തന്നെ ആണെന്നോ പറയാൻ പോയില്ല.

ഞങ്ങളുടെ ടീമിലെ മറ്റുള്ളവർ തലേന്നു തന്നെ കോഴിക്കോട് വന്ന് താമസിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെങ്കിലും അവരാരും എത്തിയിട്ടില്ല. മഴ ചാറ്റുന്നുണ്ട് . അതുകൊണ്ട് കാറിൽ നിന്നിറങ്ങാനോ രാജ്പഥിലൂടെ നടക്കാനോ കഴിഞ്ഞില്ല. പണ്ടുണ്ടായിരുന്ന തുറസ്സായ ഗ്രൗണ്ടാക്കെ പുതിയ കെട്ടിടങ്ങളെ കൊണ്ട് നിറഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്നു . പുതിയ

ഓഡിറ്റോറിയത്തിലാണ് ഇന്റർവ്യൂവിന് മുൻപുള്ള ബ്രീഫിങ്ങിന് സൗകര്യമൊരുക്കിയിരിക്കുന്നത്. എങ്കിലും അങ്ങോട്ടു പോകാതെ കാറിൽ തന്നെ ആർക്കി ബ്ലോക്ക് വരെ പോയി. ഞായറാഴ്ച്ച ആയതിനാലും നേരം വെളുത്തതെ ഉള്ളൂ എന്നതിനാലുമാവണം മറ്റൊരു ജീവിയേയും അവിടെയെങ്ങും കണ്ടില്ല. ഞങ്ങളുടെ ക്ലാസ് മുറികൾ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്ന ഡിപ്പാർട്മെന്റ് ബിൽഡിംഗ് കണ്ടപ്പോൾ റഷിക്ക് അതുതോ , "ദിവസവും രണ്ടു നേരം ഹോസ്റ്റലിൽ നിന്ന് കോളേജ് വരെ നടക്കുമായിരുന്നോ ?"

"രണ്ടല്ല, നാലു നേരം. ഉച്ചക്ക് കഴിക്കാനും ഹോസ്റ്റലിൽ പോകുമായിരുന്നു."

ഒന്ന് ചുറ്റിക്കറങ്ങി ഓഡിറ്റോറിയത്തിന്റെ മുന്നിലിറങ്ങി. സഹോദരനും കുടുംബവും എന്നെക്കാൾ വലിയ പ്ലാനുകളുമായാണ് വന്നിട്ടുള്ളത്. അവരുടെ പ്രോഗ്രാം ചാർട്ട് അനുസരിച്ച് മെഡിക്കൽ കോളേജിന് അടുത്തുള്ള സുഹൃത്ത് ഡോക്ടർ അജീഷിന്റെ വീട്ടിൽ പതിനഞ്ചു മിനട്ടിനുള്ളിൽ എത്തണം. അതു കഴിഞ്ഞ് കോഴിക്കോട് സിറ്റിയിൽ കറക്കും, ബീച്ച്, ബീരിയാണി, സിനിമ എന്നിങ്ങനെ ലിസ്റ്റിൽ ഒരുപാടുണ്ട് കാര്യങ്ങൾ.

കറച്ചു കുട്ടികൾ അങ്ങിങ്ങു കൂട്ടം കൂടിയും ഒറ്റക്കും നിൽക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. ടെയിനിങ് & പ്ലേസ്മെന്റ് ഡിപ്പാർട്മെന്റിന്റെ ഹെഡ് സുരേഷ് ബാബു സർ ഓടിക്കിതച്ചെത്തി, മാഡം വന്നിട്ട് കറേ നേരമായോ എന്ന ക്ഷമാപണത്തോടെ.

"സർ, ഞാൻ ഇവിടെ പഠിച്ചതാണ്. എനിക്ക് സാറിനെ അറിയാം. എന്റെ പേര് രഹന, അങ്ങനെ വിളിച്ചാൽ മതി. മാഡമെനൊക്കെ സാറിന്റെ വായിൽ നിന്ന് കേൾക്കുമ്പോൾ എന്തോ ഒരിത്. അഭിലാഷ് സാറിന്റെ കൂടെയാണ് പ്രൊജക്ട് ചെയ്തത് ."

അഭിലാഷ് സർ ഒരുപക്ഷേ ഡിപ്പാർട്മെന്റിൽ വരുമായിരിക്കും. കറച്ചു കഴിയുമ്പോൾ നോക്കൂ എന്ന് സർ പറയുമ്പോഴേക്കും ഞങ്ങളുടെ ഗ്രൂപ്പിലെ മറ്റുള്ളവർ എത്തി. ഒരാക്കിളിന്റെ ഹൈദരാബാദ്, തിരുവനന്തപുരം, ബാംഗ്ലൂർ ശാഖകളിൽ നിന്നെല്ലാം പാകൽ മെമ്പർമാർ വന്നിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഒന്നിച്ചു പഠിച്ച ജോസഫിനെ മാത്രം നന്നായറിയാം, പലരെയും കേട്ടു പരിചയം മാത്രം. മിക്കവാറും എല്ലാവരും അവിടെ പഠിച്ചവർ.

ഇന്റർവ്യൂ നടത്തിയത് ടെയിനിങ് & പ്ലേസ്മെന്റ് ബിൽഡിങ്ങിൽ തന്നെയാണ്. ഒരേ സമയം രണ്ടോ മൂന്നോ കുട്ടികളെ ഇന്റർവ്യൂ ചെയ്യണം. മൂന്നു മുറികളിലായി ഇരിക്കുന്ന കുട്ടികൾക്ക് ഓരോരുത്തർക്കും ഓരോ ചോദ്യങ്ങൾ കൊടുത്തിട്ട് അവരത് ചെയ്യുമ്പോഴേക്കും അടുത്ത ആളുടെ അടുത്തേക്ക്. അങ്ങനെ ഓടിപ്പായുന്നതിനിടക്കാണ് താഴത്തെ നിലയിൽ നിന്ന് ഒരു കുട്ടി ഓടിവന്നു പറയുന്നത്, മാഡത്തിനെ കാണാൻ ഒരു സാർ കാത്തുനിൽക്കുന്നു.

താഴേക്കു ചെന്നപ്പോൾ കാണുന്നത് "ഓഹ് , രഹനയാണോ ആ മാഡം " എന്നു പറഞ്ഞു ചിരിച്ചു കൊണ്ട് നിൽക്കുന്ന അഭിലാഷ് സാറിനെയാണ് .

"സാറെങ്ങനെ ഇവിടെ" എനിക്ക് അതുതോ അടക്കാനായില്ല

"ഞാൻ ഡിപാർട്‌മെന്റിൽ വന്നതായിരുന്നു . ഇവിടെ ഞായറാഴ്ച ആളുകളെ കണ്ടപ്പോൾ നോക്കിയതാണ്, പരിചയമുള്ള കുട്ടികൾ ആരെങ്കിലും ഉണ്ടോ എന്നറിയാമല്ലോ എന്നു കരുതി. അപ്പോഴാണ് ഏതോ ഒരു മാഡം അന്വേഷിച്ചിരുന്നു എന്ന് സുരേഷ് ബാബു സർ പറഞ്ഞത്. രഹസ്യം പണി നടക്കട്ടെ. ഞാൻ റൂമിൽ ഉണ്ടാവും. ഹ്രീ ആവുമ്പോൾ അങ്ങോട്ട് വന്നാൽ മതി"

ഇടക്കിടക്ക് ജെല്ലി (എനിക്കി കോളേജിന്റെ ബി നിലവറ തുറന്നപ്പോൾ കിട്ടിയ അമൃത്യ രത്നങ്ങളിൽ ഒന്ന്) ബാംഗ്ലൂരിൽ നിന്ന് ഹോൺ ചെയ്തു കൊണ്ടിരുന്നു. ഞങ്ങളുടെ വീട്ടിൽ നിന്ന് ആരെങ്കിലും കോഴിക്കോട് ഭാഗത്തുണ്ടെന്ന് അറിഞ്ഞാൽ പിന്നെ അവർക്ക് ഇരിക്കപ്പൊറ്റിയില്ല. തിരിച്ചു പോകുമ്പോൾ പെരിങ്ങോളത്തുള്ള അവളുടെ വീട്ടിൽ കയറി അച്ഛനെയും അമ്മയെയും കണ്ടിട്ടേ പോകൂ എന്ന് വാക്ക് പറഞ്ഞിരുന്നതുമാണ്.

"നിനക്ക് വേറെ പണിയൊന്നുമില്ലേ" എന്ന് ദേഷ്യപ്പെട്ടു എന്നോട് "നീ ഇപ്പോ എന്താക്കോ? അവിടെ അച്ഛനും അമ്മയും മാത്രമല്ല, ചേച്ചിയും ജെസ്സിയും ഏട്ടനും മുരളിയും എല്ലാം നിന്നെ കാത്തിരിക്കുന്നുണ്ട് " എന്ന് ശാന്തമായി മൊഴിഞ്ഞു. അതോടെ ഒരു കാര്യം തീരുമാനമായി. കൈച്ചിലാവാനു കയ്യുല.

സമയം വൈകുമ്പോൾ സാറാവിടെ കാത്തിരിക്കുകയല്ലേ എന്ന വേവലാതിയായി എനിക്കു. വൈകുന്നേരം ആറു മണിയായി പുറത്തിറങ്ങിയപ്പോൾ. സാറിന്റെ റൂമിൽ നോക്കിയപ്പോൾ അദ്ദേഹം അവിടെത്തന്നെ ഇരിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. നമുക്കൊരു ചായ കുടിച്ചാലോ എന്നു പറഞ്ഞ് റൂമിൽ നിന്നിറങ്ങി, അപ്പോഴാണ് പുതിയൊരു മിനി കാന്റിൻ തുടങ്ങിയിട്ടുണ്ടെന്ന് കണ്ടത്. പഴയതിനേക്കാൾ സൗകര്യങ്ങളോടെ.

സർ, ഇലക്ട്രോണിക്സിലെ വേറെയും കുറച്ചു പേരുണ്ട് ഞങ്ങളുടെ കൂട്ടത്തിൽ എന്നു പറഞ്ഞ് അവരുടെ അടുത്തേക്ക് സാറിനെ കൊണ്ടു പോയി. അടിലാഷ് സർ മലയാളത്തിൽ സംസാരിക്കുകയോ എന്ന് അവർക്കെല്ലാം ആശ്ചര്യം.

കോളേജിലെ പച്ചപ്പം ഹരിതാഭയുമെല്ലാം കുറഞ്ഞു പോയല്ലോ എന്നതായിരുന്നു അന്നത്തെ ലഘു സന്ദർശനം തന്നെ ആദ്യ ധാരണ. ചെടികളെല്ലാം ക്രമാതീതമായി വളർന്നു നിൽക്കുന്നു. അതോ ഇതെല്ലാം തോന്നൽ മാത്രമോ? ഒരുപക്ഷേ കടുത്ത മഴയിൽ കണ്ടതു കൊണ്ടുണ്ടായ മതിഭ്രമവുമാവാം.

മഴ പിന്നെയും കനത്തു. കോളേജും ഹോസ്റ്റലുമൊക്കെ ഒന്ന് നന്നായി നടന്നു കാണണമെന്ന് മോഹമുണ്ടായിരുന്നെങ്കിലും ഒന്നും നടക്കാതെ തിരിച്ചു പോരേണ്ടി വന്നു. ജെല്ലിയുടെ വീട്ടിലേക്ക് പോലും മഴ നനഞ്ഞ് ഒട്ടിപ്പിടിച്ചാണ് എത്തിയത്. വീട്ടിലെത്തിയപ്പോൾ പുലർച്ചെ ഒരു മണി. സഹോദരൻ പറഞ്ഞു, "ഈ പരിപാടി കൊള്ളാം. അടുത്ത കൊല്ലവും അവസരം കിട്ടിയാൽ നീ വരണം "

പക്ഷേ അതിനടുത്ത കൊല്ലം മുതൽ കേരളത്തിലെ ക്യാമ്പസ് ഇന്റർവ്യൂ തിരുവനന്തപുരത്തെ ടിം മാനേജ് ചെയ്യാൻ തുടങ്ങി.

അന്നു ഞാൻ കോളേജിൽ ചെന്നപ്പോൾ 1991 ൽ ജയിച്ചു പോയ

ബാച്ചിന്റെ സിൽവർ ജൂബിലി സെലിബ്രേഷൻ നടക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. കോളേജിൽ നിന്ന് പുറത്തു വന്ന ശേഷം എല്ലാവരും ഒന്നിച്ചു കൂടുന്ന ആദ്യ അവസരമാണ് ഇരുപത്തഞ്ചു കൊല്ലങ്ങൾക്കു ശേഷം നടത്തപ്പെടുന്ന സിൽവർ ജൂബിലി ഗെറ്റ് ടുഗെതർ. ലോകത്തിന്റെ പലഭാഗങ്ങളിലായി ചിതറിയിരിക്കുന്ന എല്ലാവർക്കും സൗകര്യപ്പെടാൻ ആഗസ്റ്റിലെ ആദ്യത്തെ വാരാന്ത്യത്തിലാണ് ഈ പരിപാടി പൊതുവേ നടത്തപ്പെടുന്നത്. ക്യാമ്പസ് ഇന്റർവ്യൂവിന് പോകാൻ അവസരം കിട്ടുന്നില്ലെങ്കിലും 2020 ൽ റീയൂണിയൻ വരുന്നില്ലെല്ലോ എന്ന് അനുമതിൽ കാത്തിരിക്കുന്നതാണ്. നമ്മൾ ഇനിയെന്നു കാണാം എന്ന കൂട്ടുകാരുടെ ചോദ്യത്തിനും ഇതേ മറുപടി പറയാൻ തുടങ്ങിയിട്ടു രണ്ടോ മൂന്നോ കൊല്ലമായി.

കഴിഞ്ഞ രണ്ടു കൊല്ലങ്ങളായി ആഗസ്റ്റ് മാസത്തെ കേരളത്തിൽ പ്രളയം കൊണ്ടു പോയി. കഴിഞ്ഞ കൊല്ലം റീയൂണിയൻ വന്ന 1994 ബാച്ചിന് കോളേജിലേക്ക് പോകാൻ പോലും കഴിഞ്ഞില്ല. റോഡിൽ മുഴുവൻ മരങ്ങൾ വീണും മണ്ണിടിഞ്ഞും തടസ്സങ്ങളായിരുന്നു. അവർ കോഴിക്കോടുള്ള കടവ് റിസോർട്ടിൽ ഒന്നിച്ചു കൂടി സമയം ചെലവഴിച്ചു തിരിച്ചു പോയി.

സീനിയർ ബാച്ചിന്റെ റീയൂണിയൻ കഴിഞ്ഞ ഉടനെ ഞങ്ങളുടേതിനെ കുറിച്ചുള്ള ചർച്ചകൾ ആരംഭിച്ചു. ആദ്യം ഉണ്ടാക്കിയത് വാട്ട്സ്ആപ്പ് ഗ്രൂപ്പ് ആണ്. അടുത്ത ആഗസ്റ്റിലും പ്രളയം വന്നാലോ എന്ന ആശങ്കകളിൽ നിന്ന് കുറെയേറെ ചർച്ചകൾക്കും പരിഗണനകൾക്കും ശേഷം ഇക്കൊല്ലം ജൂലൈ മാസത്തിൽ 3, 4, 5 തീയതികളിൽ ഒത്തുകൂടാമെന്ന് തീരുമാനിച്ചു. ഫോർവേഡുകൾ നിരോധിച്ച വാട്ട്സ്ആപ്പ് ഗ്രൂപ്പിൽ ഇടക്കിടക്ക് പല കാരണങ്ങൾ കൊണ്ടും കശപിശകളും കൊഴിഞ്ഞു പോക്കും ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നെങ്കിലും രംഗം പൊതുവേ ശാന്തമായിരുന്നു.

പിന്നെയും ഓരോ ബ്രാഞ്ചിനും ഓരോന്ന് എന്ന നിലയിലും വാട്ട്സ്ആപ്പ് ഗ്രൂപ്പുകൾ ഉണ്ടാക്കി. കഴിയുന്നതും എല്ലാവരെയും കണ്ടെത്താനും ഗ്രൂപ്പുകളിൽ ചേർക്കാനും സംഘടിത ശ്രമം നടന്നു. ഏറ്റവും രസകരമായി തോന്നിയത് ബാച്ചിലെ പെൺകുട്ടികളെ മാത്രം ചേർത്തുള്ള ഒരു ഗ്രൂപ്പ് ആണ്.



ഞങ്ങളതിന് "ലേഡീസ് ഹോസ്റ്റൽ" എന്ന് പേരുമിട്ടു. സ്ത്രീകളുടെ സ്വതസിദ്ധമായ ക്ഷമാ ശീലം കൊണ്ടോ, പരസ്പരം പിണങ്ങാനോ പോരാടിക്കാനോ ഉള്ള ഒരു വേദിയല്ല എന്ന തിരിച്ചറിവിലോ, ഈ ഗ്രൂപ്പിൽ ഒരിക്കൽ പോലും ആരെങ്കിലും തമ്മിൽ ഒരു വാഗ്വാദം പോലും ഉണ്ടായിട്ടില്ലെന്ന് സന്തോഷം തരുന്ന ഒന്നാണ്.

റീയൂണിയൻ നടക്കുന്ന ദിവസം തീരുമാനിച്ചതോടെ എല്ലാവർക്കും ആവേശമായി. പാട്ടും ഡാൻസുമെല്ലാം ഓൺലൈൻ ആയി പ്രാക്ടീസ് ചെയ്യുന്നതു വരെ എത്തി കാര്യങ്ങൾ. എല്ലാവരും അവരവരുടെ ആൽബത്തിലുള്ള കോളേജ് ഫോട്ടോകൾ സ്റ്റാൻ ചെയ്ത് ഗ്രൂപ്പിൽ ഇടാൻ തുടങ്ങി. കുറെ കണ്ടു കഴിഞ്ഞപ്പോൾ ഒരു ദിവസം ബിന്ദു എന്നെ വിളിച്ചു. "നമ്മളും ഈ ബാച്ചിൽ തന്നെയല്ലേ പഠിച്ചതെന്ന് എനിക്കിപ്പോൾ സംശയം. ഇതുവരെ ഒരൊറ്റ ഫോട്ടോയിലും നിന്നെയോ എന്നെയോ കാണാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടില്ല".

കേരളത്തിന്റെ ഗ്രാമ പ്രദേശങ്ങളിലെ മലയാളം മീഡിയം സർക്കാർ സ്കൂളിൽ പഠിച്ച് REC യിലെത്തുന്ന ആർക്കും ഭാഷയെന്ന കീറാമുട്ടിയാണ് ആദ്യ തലവേദനയായി മാറുക. "പഠയണമെന്നുണ്ടെന്നാലതിനൊരു പദം വരുന്നില്ലല്ലോ" എന്ന ടാഗോറിന്റെ വരികളെ അനുസ്മരിപ്പിക്കുന്നതായിരുന്നു എന്റെയൊക്കെ അവസ്ഥ. ഭാഗ്യത്തിന് ഇതേ പ്രശ്നം നേരിടുന്ന കുറച്ചു പേരെങ്കിലും ഓരോ ബാച്ചിലും ഉണ്ടാവും. വീട്ടിൽ പോയി ലഹളയുണ്ടാക്കി, "എന്നെയൊരു ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് മീഡിയം സ്കൂളിൽ പഠിപ്പിക്കാമായിരുന്നില്ലേ, ഇതിപ്പോൾ ക്ലാസ്സിൽ പകുതി കുട്ടികൾ കേരളത്തിന് പുറത്തു നിന്നുള്ളവരാണ്. ഹോസ്റ്റലിലാണെങ്കിൽ പകുതിയിലധികം പേരും. ഒരാളോടും ആത്മവിശ്വാസത്തോടെ സംസാരിക്കാൻ കഴിയുന്നില്ല."

ഉപ്പു ഒരു പോംവഴി പറഞ്ഞു തന്നു, "ക്ലാസ്സിലെ ഏറ്റവും നന്നായി ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് പറയുന്ന കുട്ടിയുടെ കൂടെ കൂട്ടു കൂടുക. അവളുടെ കൂടെ തന്നെ കോളേജിലേക്ക് പോവുകയും വരികയും ചെയ്യുക. ഭാഷ കേട്ടും പറഞ്ഞും തന്നെ പഠിക്കണം."

അങ്ങനെ ഒരാളെ കണ്ടെത്തി. ആദ്യത്തെ സംഭാഷണം ആരംഭിച്ചപ്പോഴേ വന്നു വെള്ളിടി പോലെ ഒരു ചോദ്യം "യു ഡോണ്ട് നോ ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് ആറ് ആൾ?". ഉള്ള ഗ്യാസും പോയെന്നു പറഞ്ഞാൽ മതിയല്ലോ, പഴയ ഗ്രൂപ്പിലേക്ക് തന്നെ തിരിച്ചു പോന്നു.

പിന്നീട് അവിടുന്ന് ഭാഷ പഠിക്കാൻ ഞങ്ങൾ ഒരു ഭഗീരഥ ശ്രമം തന്നെ നടത്തി. പരസ്പരം ഒരു വാക്കു പോലും മലയാളത്തിൽ സംസാരിക്കില്ലെന്ന് തീരുമാനിച്ചു. ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് നന്നായി കൈകാര്യം ചെയ്തിരുന്ന ലിജി ക്ഷമയോടെ ഞങ്ങളോട് ഇംഗ്ലീഷിൽ സംസാരിച്ച് കോളേജ് വരെ നടക്കും. ഹോസ്റ്റലിലേക്ക് തിരിച്ചു വരുമ്പോഴും അങ്ങനെ തന്നെ. വൈകുന്നേരത്തെ അവലോകന യോഗത്തിലാണ് വെറും റെസ് എന്നോ നോ എന്നോ മാത്രം പറഞ്ഞാണ് ഞങ്ങൾ ആ ഒരു ദിവസം കഴിച്ചു കൂട്ടിയതെന്ന് തിരിച്ചറിയുക. ദിവസങ്ങൾ കഴിഞ്ഞപ്പോൾ പല ഇളവുകളും ഞങ്ങൾ സ്വയം പ്രഖ്യാപിച്ചു. പോകെപ്പോകെ ഇംഗ്ലീഷിനേയും ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് മാത്രം അറിയുന്നവരെയും ഞങ്ങൾ കണ്ടില്ലെന്നു നടിച്ചു. അപ്പോൾ പിന്നെ അവരുടെയൊക്കെ ഫോട്ടോകളിലൊന്നും ഞങ്ങളെ

കാണാത്തതിന് ആരെയാണ് പഴിക്കുക.

എങ്കിലും ഞങ്ങളും ഞങ്ങളുടേതായ ഒരു സ്വർഗ്ഗ ലോകം പണിതുയർത്തി. ലേഡീസ് ഹോസ്റ്റലിൽ പതിവായി വരുന്ന ചിത്രഭൂമിയിലെ സിനിമാ ഷൂട്ടിംഗ് വിവരങ്ങൾ വായിച്ച് ഓരോ സിനിമയും റിലീസ് ചെയ്യുന്ന ദിവസം തന്നെ കാണണോ അതോ നല്ലതാണെന്ന് ആരെങ്കിലും പറഞ്ഞതിനു ശേഷം കാണണോ, ഓരോ ആഴ്ചയും ശനിയാഴ്ച ദിവസങ്ങളിൽ വീഡിയോ കാസ്റ്റിംഗ് വാടകക്ക് എടുത്ത് ഏത് സിനിമ കാണണം തുടങ്ങിയ തീരുമാനങ്ങളിൽ സജീവ പങ്കാളികളായി. ദൂരദർശനിൽ ചിത്രഗീതം വരുന്ന വ്യാഴാഴ്ച ഏഴേമുക്കാലിന് മുൻപ് ടിവി റൂമിലെ മുൻനിര സീറ്റുകളെല്ലാം ഞങ്ങൾ തുണിവിരിച്ചും പുസ്തകം വെച്ചും ബുക്ക് ചെയ്തു. വല്ലപ്പോഴുമെങ്കിലും എന്തെങ്കിലും കാരണമുണ്ടാക്കി ഹോസ്റ്റൽ ഭക്ഷണം ഒഴിവാക്കി ക്ലാസ്സിലെ കൂട്ടുകാരോടൊപ്പം പാപ്പച്ചന്റേയും മാമ്മച്ചന്റേയും കടയിൽ പോയി ഭക്ഷണം കഴിച്ചു.

ആയിടക്കാണ് ലേഡീസ് ഹോസ്റ്റലിൽ ഒരു ലൈബ്രറി തുടങ്ങിയത്. അന്നു മുതൽ ഗടാകറിനും ബി എൽ തെരാജുക്കും ഒപ്പം എം.ടിയും മാധവിക്കുട്ടിയും എം.മുകുന്ദനുമെല്ലാം ഞങ്ങളോടൊപ്പം കോളേജിലേക്കുള്ള നടത്തത്തിൽ കൂട്ടിന വന്നു. മറ്റുള്ളവർ ആടിയും പാടിയും ജീവിതം ഉല്ലാസ ഭരിതമാക്കിയപ്പോൾ ഞങ്ങളുടെ ചെറിയ ലോകത്തിരുന്ന് ഞങ്ങളും പാട്ടു കേട്ടും അറിയാവുന്ന കാര്യങ്ങൾ പരസ്പരം പഠിപ്പിച്ചും വീട്ടിലെ വിശേഷങ്ങൾ പങ്കുവെച്ചും പരസ്പര ബന്ധത്തിന് ആഴവും പരപ്പും കൂട്ടി.

റീയൂണിയനെ കുറിച്ചുള്ള ചർച്ചകൾ പുരോഗമിക്കവേ, അതിനു വേണ്ടി രൂപം കൊടുത്ത കോർ കമ്മിറ്റി കടവ് റിസോർട്ട് സന്ദർശിക്കുകയും റൂമുകൾ അവിടെയും കോഴിക്കോടുള്ള മറ്റു ഹോട്ടലുകളിലുമായി ബുക്ക് ചെയ്യുകയും ചെയ്തു. മിക്കവാറും എല്ലാവരും കുടുംബത്തെ കൂട്ടാതെ ഒറ്റയ്ക്ക് വരാനാണ് പ്ലാൻ ചെയ്തിരുന്നത്, കൂട്ടുകാരുടെ കൂടെ അടിച്ചു പൊളിക്കുമ്പോൾ യാതൊരു തടസ്സങ്ങളും മുന്നിലുണ്ടാവരുത് എന്നൊരു ചിന്ത മാത്രമേ അതിനു പുറകിലുള്ളൂ. മൂന്നും നാലും പേർക്ക് കൂടി ഒരു റൂം, ഹോസ്റ്റലിലെ അതേ പോലെ നമുക്കാഘോഷിക്കണം. നമുക്ക് മാത്രം ഒരു റൂമിൽ കിടക്കണം, ഉറങ്ങാതെ വർത്തമാനം പറഞ്ഞിരുന്ന് നേരം വെളുപ്പിക്കണം, എല്ലാവരും ആടിപ്പാടുമ്പോൾ നമുക്ക് മാത്രം സിറ്റിയിൽ കറങ്ങണം, നമുക്ക് മാത്രമായി സിനിമക്ക് പോകണം, നമുക്ക് മാത്രം... എന്നിങ്ങനെ ഞങ്ങൾ മൂന്നു നാലു പേരെങ്കിലും ചെറിയ ആഗ്രഹങ്ങൾ പങ്കു വെച്ചിരുന്നു. ഇനിയിങ്ങനെ ഒരു അവസരം കിട്ടുമോ എന്ന് ആർക്കറിയാം...

സ്പീച്ച് സിന്തെസിസ് (Speech Synthesis) എന്ന എടുത്താൽ പൊങ്ങാത്ത പ്രൊജക്ട് അടിലാഷ് സർ ഞങ്ങളുടെ തലയിൽ വെച്ചു തന്നപ്പോഴാണ് അലഞ്ഞു തിരിഞ്ഞു നടക്കാൻ ഇഷ്ടപ്പെട്ടിരുന്ന ഞങ്ങളുടെ ജീവിതം കമ്പ്യൂട്ടർ ലാബിന്റെ നാലു ചുമരുകൾക്കുള്ളിലേക്ക് പഠിച്ചു നടപ്പെടുത്ത്. സത്യനും ബിജുവും ഹരിയുമെല്ലാം ചേർന്ന ബുജി ടീമും എന്നോ ചെറിയ വ്യത്യസ്തത്തോടെ ഇതേ പ്രൊജക്ട് തന്നെ സാറിന്റെ കീഴിൽ ചെയ്യുന്നുണ്ട്. അവരാണെങ്കിൽ ഞങ്ങളേക്കാൾ എല്ലാ കാര്യത്തിലും മുന്നിൽ. സാറിന്റെ അടുത്ത് പ്രൊജക്ട് റിവ്യൂ എന്നു പറഞ്ഞ് ചെല്ലുന്നതേ എങ്ങനെയെങ്കിലും ഒഴിവാക്കിയെടുക്കാനുള്ള ത്വരയാണ് ആ കാലത്ത് ഞങ്ങളെ

ഭരിച്ചിരുന്നത്. സാധാരണ ഇലക്ട്രിക്കൽ ഡിപ്പാർട്ട്മെന്റിന്റെ ഉള്ളിലൂടെ ക്ലാസ്സിലേക്ക് പൊയ്ക്കൊണ്ടിരുന്ന ഞങ്ങൾ റൂട്ട് മാറ്റി യാത്ര ലൈബ്രറിയുടെ മുന്നിലൂടെയാക്കി. C എന്ന കമ്പ്യൂട്ടർ ലാംഗ്വേജ് വേണ്ട കാലത്ത് വേണ്ട പോലെ പഠിച്ചില്ല. വലിയ വലിയ കാര്യങ്ങളൊക്കെ വായിച്ചു പഠിച്ച് ലാബിലെത്തുന്ന ഞങ്ങൾ അതെങ്ങനെ പ്രോഗ്രാം ചെയ്യണമെന്ന് അറിയാതെ കഴങ്ങി. ഗൂഗിൾ സെർച്ച് ഒന്നും ഇല്ലാത്ത കാരകൂർ മോഡ് കമ്പ്യൂട്ടറിന്റെ കാലമാണെന്നോർക്കണം. പ്രോഗ്രാം എങ്ങനെയെങ്കിലും എഴുതിയുണ്ടാക്കിയാലോ, ഉടനെ വരും ഒരു ആയിരത്തി അഞ്ഞൂറ് compilation errors & warnings. സത്യൻ ഇരിക്കുന്ന ടെർമിനലിന്റെ IP Address കണ്ടുപിടിച്ച് "സഹായിക്കണ്ണാ" എന്നൊരു മെസ്സേജ് അയക്കും. ടിയാൻ പ്രത്യക്ഷപ്പെട്ട് തന്റെ മാജിക് ദബ്ബ് ഒന്ന് ചുഴറ്റുമ്പോഴേക്കും errors ഉം warnings ഉം സ്ഥലം കാലിയാക്കും. വിജയികളെന്ന മട്ടിൽ ഞങ്ങൾ പ്രോഗ്രാം ടെസ്റ്റ് ചെയ്യാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നതും കമ്പ്യൂട്ടർ സ്ക്രീനിൽ Core Dump (Segmentation fault) എന്നെഴുതി കാണിച്ച് C ലാംഗ്വേജ് ഞങ്ങളെ നോക്കി പിന്നെയും പല്ലിളിക്കും. ആത്മരക്ഷക്കായി ചുറ്റും നോക്കുന്ന ഞങ്ങളുടെ അടുത്തേക്ക് "അടിയൻ ലച്ചിപ്പോ" എന്നു പ്രഖ്യാപിച്ച് ചാടി വന്നിരുന്ന ചാനാൻ ആയാണ് കമ്പ്യൂട്ടർ സയൻസിലെ ഇസ്യൂയിൽ ഓർമ്മയിൽ നിറഞ്ഞു നിൽക്കുന്നത്. ഭയഭക്തി ബഹുമാനത്തോടെ ഞങ്ങളിൽ ആരെങ്കിലും ഒഴിഞ്ഞു കൊടുക്കുന്ന കസേരയിൽ ഇരുന്ന് ഞങ്ങളുടെ കോഡിലെ എല്ലാ പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾക്കും പരിഹാരം കണ്ട് ആരോ തൊണ്ടയിൽ പിടിച്ച പോലൊരു ശബ്ദം കമ്പ്യൂട്ടറിന്റെ സ്പീക്കറിൽ നിന്ന് വന്നു

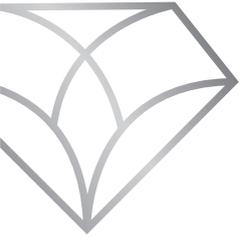
കേട്ടിട്ടേ രക്ഷകൻ പോകൂ.

പിന്നീട് ചെന്നൈയിൽ ജോലി ചെയ്തിരുന്ന സമയത്ത് എവിടെയൊക്കെയോ കറങ്ങി നടക്കുന്നതിനിടയിൽ ഇസ്യൂയിലിനെ ഞാൻ ഒന്നു രണ്ടു തവണ കണ്ടിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഒരു പുഞ്ചിരിയിൽ കൂടിയ പരിചയമൊന്നും കാണിച്ചിട്ടില്ല. പക്ഷേ സോഷ്യൽ മീഡിയ വന്നതിനു ശേഷം ബന്ധം കൂടുതൽ വളർന്നു. ഇപ്പോൾ വളരെ അടുത്ത കൂട്ടുകാരിൽ ഒരാളാണ്. ഹൈദരാബാദിൽ എപ്പോഴെങ്കിലും ഒഫീഷ്യൽ ആവശ്യങ്ങൾക്ക് വന്നാൽ കാണാതെ പോകില്ല. ഇസ്യൂയിലിന്റെ അറക്കൽ ബീവിയെയും മക്കളെയും ഈ റീയൂണിയനു നന്നായൊന്നു പരിചയപ്പെടണമെന്നതും എന്റെ സ്വകാര്യ മോഹമായിരുന്നു.

ഇപ്പോഴത്തെ സാഹചര്യത്തിൽ 2021 ഡിസംബറിൽ ജൂനിയർ ബാച്ചിന്റെ റീയൂണിയൻ കഴിഞ്ഞ ഉടനെ ഞങ്ങളുടേത് നടത്താൻ ആലോചിക്കുന്നു. പ്രോഗ്രാം കമ്മിറ്റി വീണ്ടും ഊർജ്ജസ്വലതയോടെ കാര്യങ്ങൾ നീക്കുന്നു. ഓൺലൈൻ പ്രാക്ടീസ് പലതും തുടങ്ങി കഴിഞ്ഞു. ഉറങ്ങിക്കിടന്ന വാട്ട്സ് ആപ്പ് ഗ്രൂപ്പുകൾ സജീവമായി തുടങ്ങി. പ്രതീക്ഷകളാണല്ലോ മനുഷ്യരെ മുന്നോട്ട് നയിക്കുന്നത്.

എന്തായാലും കോളേജ് തുടങ്ങിയതിനു ശേഷം സിൽവർ ജൂബിലി റീയൂണിയൻ നടത്താത്ത ആദ്യ ബാച്ച് ആയിരിക്കും ഞങ്ങളുടേത്; സംശയമില്ല.





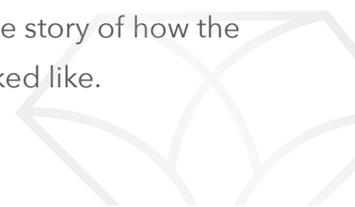
Shivam Gupta
2008-12 Batch,
Mechanical



The first one....what a beauty

The beginning of Team Unwired

For those who may not know, Team Unwired is an automotive club of NIT Calicut. The club was started in 2009 and made the first car on campus in 2010. This year marked the completion of 10 successful years of the club on campus during which time many accolades were won. Many students have worked for the club and have made over 10 cars or all-terrain vehicles and participated in multiple national and international competitions. So, I thought that it would be great to tell the story of how the club started and how the pioneers looked like.





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I was in my first year in 2008 and was the youngest member of the club. While I tell this story, I write from my experience as a young lad seeing an idea come to fruition.

It all started after Tathva (the tech fest). Everyone was making something for the tech fest, and I with little means wanted to participate in something which will not cost much money. I took some scrap and made a bot to participate in a balloon-powered vehicle competition. The aim was to make a bot that will run either with the air or the elasticity of balloon and traverse a straight path in the shortest time.

I assembled some old cola bottles and made wheels out of cardboard and put together a



bot. On the day of the competition, mine was the cheapest bot in the arena. People had designed all the greatest contraptions and had come from far off colleges. My bot ran and I missed the podium position by a few milliseconds.

I soon forgot it and then after a couple of days, a senior approached me and asked do you want to see some aeromodelling stuff. I was excited and joined in. That day, I went with him

to the new playground and saw some people trying to fly a Remote Controlled (RC) plane. The name of the plane was MBP (Man Bearing Pig). While on the way back to campus, he told me that they are planning to make a car for some competition and asked if I would be interested to join.

As a fresher with no laptop and nothing better to do, I said yes. I had never really sat in a car until then. We had a rickety scooter at home and the bus was our general mode of transport. I had no clue what I had signed up for. Soon a meeting was conducted and around 30 people assembled on the first floor of the mini canteen to discuss the road map. No one in the team had never made a car. They called the group Team Unwired. I was one of the 3 first-year students who were part of the team, which was majorly comprised of the second year and third-year students.

The next thing I knew, we were given small parts of a car and asked to search for presentations online about how they were designed and made. What started as a weekend hobby, soon became an obsession with the team working from 6 pm to 2 am in a lecture hall trying to understand how to build a car.

As time went by, the sessions became longer. We were soon told that we will spend the summer on campus that year designing the car. Our team also made a trip to Coimbatore to learn more about cars. The team had its highs and lows, but I was learning a lot. I still remember one senior saying when we were struggling to raise funds, "Even if I have to sell my underwear to make this car, I will still make it." Another one said "Once we make a decision, we are all accountable for it. We cannot go back and pinpoint a person that you made a wrong decision. You can debate at the time of making a decision, but once it is taken, everyone must own it." And another, "I have told my parents and all my relatives that I am building a car, I cannot fail now." These were really strong words and I was in awe of every person in that group.

As time went by, I saw how people could push all the boundaries. We got a small bus shed opposite the lecture hall complex to build the car. In no time, it was turned into a beautiful garage. The team would just not leave the space. People would sleep on the road in front of the garage.



Even during mid sems, team members took turns to stay at the workshop. And believe me not, we had all sorts of talent. Some guys were department toppers while there were also students who had nothing to do with mechanical engineering. Our core welding guy was from electrical engineering.

It took more than 14 months to make that first car. In January 2010, we did the first trial run. On the day of the trial run, I had gone to the city to get some spares. Soon, we shipped it for the competition. In the competition, ours was one of the most beautiful cars.

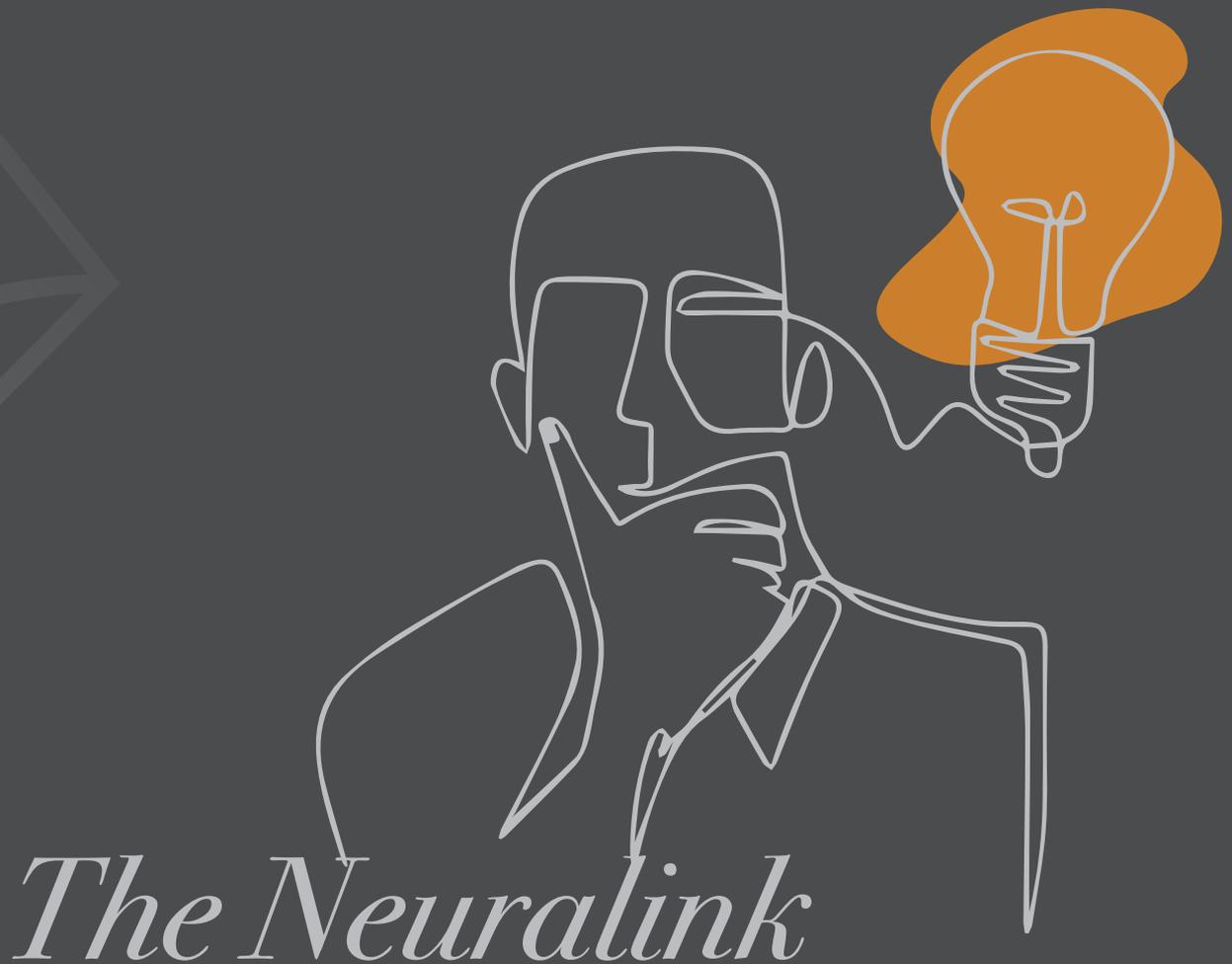
But we still failed abysmally!

We were 68th out of the 69 teams that participated. I was devastated and so were many others. The team lost moral and soon disintegrated. It took another semester to reconstitute the team again. This team went to bag podium finishes and accolades. The next team even went abroad and participated in international competitions.

Looking back, I realize that it was some of the finest years of my life. The first team is still in touch and we have a Whatsapp group called 'The First Unwireds'. We also have a Whatsapp group for all the Unwired alums so far.

P.S. Write to me shivam.nitc@gmail.com





The Neuralink

Elon Musk: the flame-thrower selling, meme loving, nerd-hero billionaire presented to the world another one of his far-out futuristic ideas in July 2019. A self-contained neural implant: that can wirelessly transmit detailed brain activity without the aid of external hardware, developed by his company Neuralink. Basically, a chip in your brain to enable Brain-Computer Interface.

Adikshith Ojha
4th Year,
Engineering
Physics





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The goal is for the neural implant, called 'The Link', to enable humans to control computers, prosthetics and other machines using just thoughts, enabled by AI. The technology is simple enough to understand conceptually. A disk that fits in the back of your skull and records electrical signals from the brain via numerous probes inserted by a robot. The probes each have a set number of electrodes, which allow for the transmission of a high volume of electrical signals.

The invasive nature of technology is necessary. The ability to finely control something like a prosthetic hand requires a very sensitive reading of the signals from individual neurons, and something like an EEG, which is non-invasive, cannot provide that. Now, this obviously is hard to accept without apprehension. How will the robot insert the chip? How safe is it to walk around with a literal chip in your skull?

What if it malfunctions? These, and similar concerns, only have academic assurances for now, which is understandable. The company is in no position to make any claims about safety when they have not even fully developed a model ready to hit the market. In fact, such claims at the moment would be short-sighted and come across as disingenuous. The only thing to talk about concretely is the concept and the implementation.

Initial signs look promising. Musk first demonstrated The Link using a pig, which had the chip in its brain. The device read the electrical brain activity coming from the pig and displayed it on a

screen during his first live presentation 2019. He has since followed it up with the claim that he has inserted one into a monkey allowing it to play videogames using its mind. It is easy to see how this can eventually extend to doing more complicated things. The hard part is accurately reading the signals, after all.

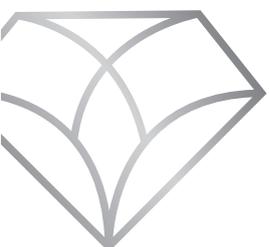
That said, is it massively impressive? Not really. Similar results have been recreated in labs by various neuroscientists, so the concept itself is nothing groundbreaking. The real challenge is to make it practical outside of the lab setting.

Which again brings up the concerns around the device. For instance, there is nothing yet to address the problem of possible infection by overheating. There are also practical concerns of how to charge it, protect it from damage if you slip and bang your head, or even when you take a shower. Lab experiments have also shown that the brain might recognize the probes as a foreign object and try to build tissue to force it out, so that needs working out. Of course, there is little sense in expecting answers for the myriad of possible problems in the future, for a technology that is so nascent. But they will have to be addressed eventually.

Other than the immediate, Musk also has very lofty future ambitions for it; even going as far as to say "human/AI symbiosis" for the long-term. It seems he believes the possibilities are truly boundless, given that he is talking about a "saved state" for human consciousness, wanting to solve depression, anxiety, etc. and whatnot. To be fair, it is easy to allow the imagination to run wild once you think of the device in an abstract sense. Ideas like this are just one among many in our collective consciousness, formed by the science-fiction / Cyberpunk genre in various media. Musk is an imaginative and daring innovator, so it is only natural that he would envision those things to be possible in the future.

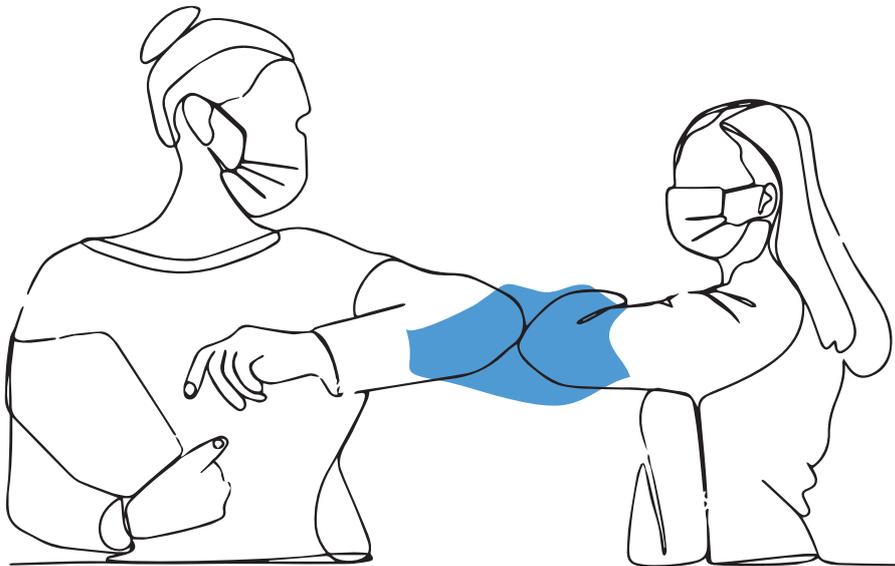
His innovator's naivety allows him to make such wild and hopeful claims; this is a man who wants to create a Martian colony, after all. But for now, it is not at all clear how he hopes to eventually achieve those goals. Some of the problems he hopes to solve are even beyond the scope of engineering. We do not currently know how electrical imbalances cause depression in the first place. No number of electrodes will help in solving that right now.

Understandably, there are detractors and critics. Some for the reasons mentioned above, some for others. Criticisms of his claims from neuroscientists have even famously appeared in the MIT Technology Review. Fans of his would perhaps be inclined to dismiss them without paying them too much mind, as such criticism has been a feature throughout his career. Only time will tell if he comes out triumphant once again. The human trials for it are supposedly at the end of this year. The best possible test awaits his device, and we should conceivably have an answer as to if and when it would become available to the general public. Heres' hoping this exceedingly creative visionary has got it right once again, and we have a chance to take another giant leap for humanity.





Anubhav Mishra
3rd Year,
Biotechnology



We Just Need to Click

The pandemic has profoundly disrupted some social circles. Perhaps you have moved on yourself, or maybe you are looking up after a year of social distancing to find your close friends are the ones who have changed. And the guidance of public health officials to keep your distance, to mask up, to limit gatherings and to remain six feet apart? None of these are helpful for meeting new people and nurturing new friendships.





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It is a difficult time to connect with new people. The first question you can ask yourself is, "Is there someone you want to reconnect with?" Rekindling "dormant ties," or those you have lost touch with, is often easier than making new friends, because the individuals already trust one another. Look through your phone to see who you were texting this time last year or reach out to a high school or college club you were affiliated with. Lean on existing networks of friends and acquaintances, too. Though chance meetings in corridors or cafeterias may be infrequent these days, you can still turn casual connections into friends, or reach out to new people through shared acquaintances.

Even if you feel as if your social muscles have atrophied, do not brace yourself for rejection. Approaching strangers in public places might not feel so welcome these days, but in general, people underestimate how much strangers like them. Does not matter if you are single or dating, you are no doubt facing special challenges during this horrid pandemic. But I have come to recognize that in some ways, Covid19 has given us a gift. Foremost, the virus has slowed things down. This pandemic has forced us to return to more traditional wooing; getting to know someone before actual intimacy starts. I am hopeful that these rediscovered and emerging modes of dating will give people additional time to select a truly appropriate mate as well as enable romance and attachment to develop slowly – even flourish long term.

There are some real advantages to seeing these

potential partners on FaceTime, Zoom or some other internet platform. We are walking billboards of who we are. Your haircut (or lack of one these days); your tattoo; your preppy shirt: all these and many more visible traits signal your background, education, and interests.

Indeed, specific brain regions respond almost instantly to assess two things about a likely partner: their personality and their physical appeal. We do this within seconds of seeing them. With this new trend of online meetups, money is off the table, too. On an in-person date, we must negotiate the specifics of the financial burden: Should we meet in a cheap cafe or an expensive bar? Must I offer to split the bill? In the age of corona, these money negotiations are history. With the lockdowns, many of us now have more time. We are not dressing in the morning, commuting to work or meeting pals after office hours. Many of us have more time to ponder. Moreover, we then have something important to talk about. Chit chat and small talk have become far less relevant. Instead, during this pandemic, people are likely to share far more meaningful thoughts of fear and hope – and get to know vital things about a potential partner faster. Psychologists report that this self-disclosure – the process of revealing one's innermost feelings, attitudes, and experiences – spurs intimacy, love, and commitment. These are the foundation stones of a sturdy partnership.

Before the pandemic, many abused the new technology of online dating. On and on, we dizzily tapped, swiped, clicked, and binged – seeking the perfect partner. But the human brain is not built to handle so many choices. All agree that when faced with too many alternatives, we choose none. So, after you have actually conversed with nine people who you think might be appropriate – stop your search. And get to know at least one of them better because the more we get to know someone, the more we are inclined to like them.

Another important note is to think of reasons to say “yes.” We have evolved a large brain region linked with the “negativity bias.” We are built to remember the negative – a knee-jerk response that was adaptive across our human past, as it is today. Hence, overlook that they like cats and you like dogs. Focus on what you do like about them. With already enough emotional insecurities on both sides, try to focus on the positives this time.

There is a long-term payoff to this current lockdown. It is extending the “getting to know you” process. In past centuries, marriage was the beginning of a relationship. Today, it tends to be the finale. No longer do most of us marry very young. And this quarantine is continuing this worldwide trend toward what we call slow love. From the evolutionary perspective, slow love is adaptive – because the human brain is soft-wired to attach to a partner slowly. Romantic love can be triggered rapidly, whereas feelings of deep attachment take time to develop. We were built for slow love – and this pandemic is continuing to draw out this courtship process.

Surely, we will get back to meeting in person when this pandemic subsides. We are mammals. We are built to court face to face. But today more individuals are talking via video chatting before they meet in person. A new stage in the courtship process is flourishing– saving many of us time and money as well as enabling to kiss fewer frogs. Bizarre as it sounds, this pandemic may lead to happier and more enduring partnerships in the post-corona age.



Alumni in the News

Dr. DHANARAJ KJ

Batch - 2003 ECE



Dr. Dhanaraj KJ of ECE department at NIT Calicut receiving Outstanding teacher of the year award from IEEE.

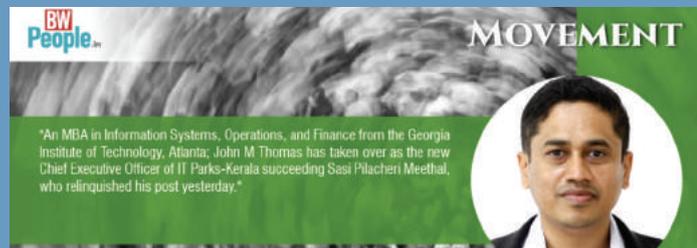


JOHN THOMAS

Batch - 1999 Mechanical

John M Thomas has taken over as the new Chief Executive Officer of IT Parks-Kerala in March 2021. He brings with him years of experience and expertise acquired while working with top global companies.

John also has an MBA in Information Systems, Operations and Finance from the Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta.



RAJEEV PANICKER

Batch - 1993 ECE



Rajeev Panicker, Head Technology - Kerala State IT Mission, was felicitated by Kerala State Finance Minister for conducting a virtual exhibition to sell off the coir products that had accumulated due to Covid. The demand is so high today that they need to ramp up production.

JAMES MATHEW

Batch - 1985 Civil



James Mathew completed TRIGGO Brevet de Randonneur Mondiaux (BRM) 600 KMS and became a Super Randonneur on 24th January 2021

BRMs are Long distance, Self-sufficient bicycle rides to be completed in allotted time through predetermined Control Points. The BRM 600 KM was the final instalment in the Super Randonneur (SR) series consisting of rides of 200, 300, 400 & 600 KMS to be completed in a calendar year

James Mathew is the Chief Town Planner of Town and Country Planning department, Goa



SHILEN SAGUNAN

Batch - 1988 Mechanical

Founder chairman of MiZone and Malabar Angels

Won TiE Kerala Award 2020 for creating a startup ecosystem in Kannur. Built a 300 seater technology incubator, created around 50+ Startups, and around 300+ jobs in a nondescript place. Educated and built a native Angel network of 40+ members to support the entrepreneurs.



SAMEER ABDUL AZEEZ

Batch - 2002 Mechanical



Scientist 'F' & Group Director (Technology Management) at NPOL, DRDO

Won the "Best Techno Managerial Services / Popular Science Communications Award" from Hon'ble Defence Minister in recognition of the successful completion of the first export of a defence system, HMS-X sonar to Myanmar and providing technical consultancy for establishment of test facilities at Vietnam through synergized partnership with industry besides garnering interests from many countries for DRDO-developed products.



THANKACHAN THOMAS

Batch - 1980 Civil

Sr. Vice President, Prestige Group

Won the 'Social Star Award for Corporate Citizenship' instituted by Prestige Group



GITA RAMACHANDRAN

Batch - 1978 Electrical



Former GM, BPCL



Her recently released book 'Skyrocket to New Heights' got the best seller tag in multiple categories in Amazon Featured on "Sip and Talk with Vikram" Talk Show

Chapter Round-up

Singapore Chapter



We organised an outing for our members on 17th April to one of the most popular walking/ jogging trails in Singapore, named MacRie reservoir. It is a natural / manmade water source surrounded by a secondary forest. It is maintained very well and very popular among the locals.

We had four couples and 5 individuals making a total of 13 persons. It was an excellent opportunity for some of us to meet physically (after several Zoom sessions) even though under strict COVID19 regulations. The group walked about 11 km from 7 am to 10.30 am.



Cochin Chapter

NITCAA Day is an annual affair for NITCAA Cochin chapter and observed every 26th of January with much pomp and gaiety. This year too, in spite of the constraints posed by the pandemic, the chapter observed the NITCAA Day 2021 with a slew of activities.

The event commenced at 5 pm with the inauguration of the NITCAA Tower by the President of the chapter, Shri. Thankachan Thomas, in the presence of Secretary Shri. Sameer Abdul Azeez, Chairman - Construction Subcommittee, Shri M.M. Mohandas, the members of the Executive Committee, senior alumni members, and other stakeholders in the project. The NITCAA Tower was conceived by NITCAA Cochin as an affordable but luxurious apartment project located near RECCAA club for the alumni, for offering a cosy living environment with all the modern conveniences required for a comfortable lifestyle. Because of the assurance of the affordable price with quality construction, the apartments were sold out in no time before the first metal was cut. After the inauguration of the NITCAA Tower, a conducted tour was organized for all attendees to show the various amenities and features of the apartment complex.

A formal function followed the inaugural ceremony, which was organized at the RECCA Club, one of the most prestigious clubs in Kochi, and the pride of NITCAA. During the formal function, the keys of the apartments and the associated documents were handed over to the respective allottees and all the contributors to the project were felicitated. In his welcome address, President, Shri. Thankachan Thomas appreciated the construction committee and the contractors for realizing this massive project of NITCAA Cochin, amidst the constraints posed by the pandemic. Shri, Sameer Abdul Azeez, Secretary presented the Annual Report and Shri. Ashok Kumar, Treasurer, presented the audited statement of accounts. As done every year, the association also gave away



Cochin Chapter



NITCAA Day and AGM

scholarships to needy engineering students in the state. An AGM was also organized on the day, during which the new executive committee was elected for the year 2021-22. The committee with Shri. Jacob Kurien E. as the President and Shri. Darryl Andrew as the Secretary will take charge with effect from 1st May 2021.

The event ended with a networking dinner on the illuminated sprawling campus of RECCA Club.



Welcome Address by President



Annual Report by Secretary



Networking Dinner



Handing Over Keys to Allotees



Felicitation of Contributors

Mumbai Chapter

January - April is normally a very busy time for Mumbai Chapter with various Charity related activities and a grand Holi celebration / outing being the norm. Unfortunately, these past few months have been quite muted with Mumbai being the epicentre of Covid19s 2nd wave in India.

However, the Chapter organized a fascinating Webinar on "Nuclear Reactors in India- Advances & Opportunities", conducted by our own alumni Mr. A.K. Balasubrahmanian, Director (Technical) of NPCIL. The key takeaway from the session was the Nuclear Energy is still a key component in the strategy to decarbonize India's Energy mix.



Chennai Chapter

NITCAA Chennai has been very active with virtual meets every month. In February, we started with a talk on Gardening by our secretary Ram (who is a garden enthusiast and specializes in miniature plants --- BONSAI). It was a very apt topic in these pandemic times when we have been indoors for almost a year (looks like another year will go by this way).

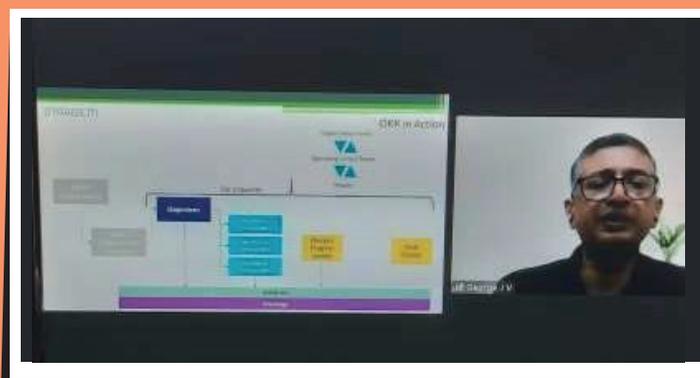
March 13

From the earthy environs, we moved to the stars that light up the night sky. On 13th March, we had an Engineer turned MBA turned serial entrepreneur, Mr P. Sridhar talking on the science behind astrology. A lively discussion followed the session extending to almost 2 hours.... it was still not enough to know our FUTURE!!!



April 3

Getting back to measurable and predictable analysis, our comfort zone as NITCAAites, on 3rd April we had one among us, George Vettah (1982-86 batch) - giving insights on how to keep work productive, efficient and quantifiable. The topic was "Leveraging OKR -- Objectives & Key Results - for executing Organisation Strategy".



ELECTED & NOMINATED MEMBERS

Sl	Post	Name	Chapter
1	President	K.S.Sudhakaran	Bangalore
2	Vice President	Dr Naseer M A	Institute
3	Secretary	Joseph Philip	Cochin
4	Jt Secretary	Vinod Kaumampoil	Mumbai
5	Treasurer	Dr Deepak Lawrence	Institute
6	Member	Venugopal.B	Chennai
7	Member	Vikash Thakur	Delhi & NCR
8	Member	Sushanth C.M	Calicut
9	Member	Anil Kumar V	UAE
10	Member	Vineet Payyampalli	USA
11	Member	Ranjith Vijayaraghavan	Singapore
12	Past President	John Joseph	Mumbai
13	Member	Vijayaraj	Chennai
14	Member	Air Cdr Job	Bangalore

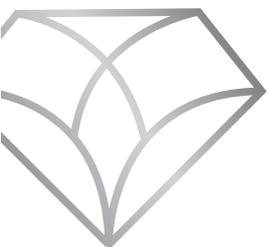
EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS (CHAPTER OFFICE BEARERS)

Sl	Post	Name	Chapter
1	President	Wgn. Cdr. N.Nandakumar	Trivandrum
2	Secretary	M.Sudheendran	Trivandrum
3	President	Vinod Ninan	Kottayam
4	Secretary	Joseph K J	Kottayam
5	President	Thankachan Thomas	Cochin
6	Secretary	Sameer Azees	Cochin
7	President	P.Sadeesh	Calicut
8	Secretary	Dijesh	Calicut
9	Nominated	Somasundharan P	Calicut
10	President	Suresh Babu	Kannur
11	Secretary	Sajeevan	Kannur
12	President	Amarjit Singh	Bangalore



EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS (CHAPTER OFFICE BEARERS)

Sl	Post	Name	Chapter
13	Secretary	Sreejith Nair	Bangalore
14	President	Sunil Kurian	Chennai
15	Secretary	M K Ramkumar	Chennai
16	President	Suresh KV	Pune
17	Secretary	Avinash Bhokare	Pune
18	President	Balbir Prasad	Mumbai
19	Secretary	Harikrishnan B	Mumbai
20	Nominated	Ranganathan Ramani	Mumbai
21	President	Prakash Shetty	Delhi & NCR
22	Secretary	Avinish Kumar	Delhi & NCR
23	President	Debabrata Ghosh	Eastern Region
24	Secretary	Ashish Kumar Sikder	Eastern Region
25	President	Thomas Joseph	USA
26	Secretary	Mathew Philip	USA
27	President	John K George	Muscat
28	Secretary	Harikumar Macheri	Muscat
29	President	Asif Bahauddin	UAE
30	Secretary	Sujith Menon	UAE
31	President	Revi K K	Qatar
32	Secretary	Asokan K	Qatar
33	President	Jayakumar Kallankara	Kuwait
34	Secretary	Neville George	Kuwait
35	President	John Varghese	Singapore
36	Secretary	Nagesh Madhwal	Singapore
37	President	Surendran Othayoth	Canada
38	Secretary	Linto Mathew	Canada





DIAMOND JUBILEE

60 YEARS

1961 - 2021

The tie that binds