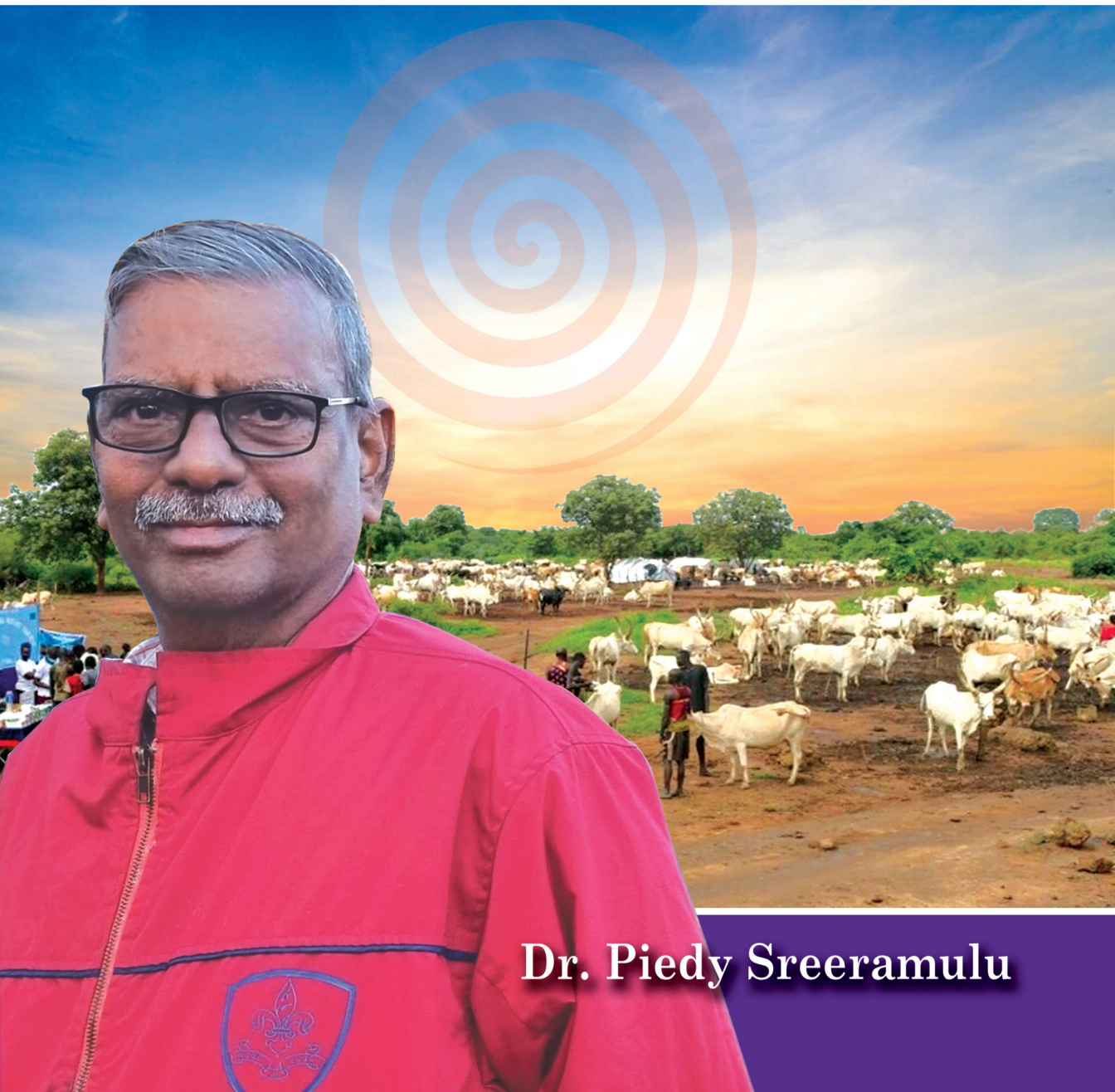
A Vet's Fleeting Moments & Lasting Memories

A Memoir



Dr. Piedy Sreeramulu

A Vet's Fleeting Moments & Lasting Memories

A Memoir

Dr. Piedy Sreeramulu

A Vet's Fleeting Moments & Lasting Memories

A Memoir

Dr. Piedy Sreeramulu

© Copyrights reserved

Copies : 1000

Pages : 298

Price : Precious

Printed & Published by:

Chepuri Creations
Gandhi Nagar, Hyderabad - 500 080,
Telangana, India
Cell: 9985459921, 9963480837

Dedicated

to

my loving wife

P.Santhakumari

my loving parents

P.Balakrishnayya & P.Neelavati

and

godly grandparents

P. Balayya Naidu & P.Chennamma

Acknowledgements

The original expectations in my memoir are probably too ambitious. There is an assumption that the experiences in my career can be recapped and just published. It was like a miner's dream. One could hit a gold bearing vein in all these cubic metres of memory files and then would readily refine it into a precious product. The reality is somewhat more complex.

Having an idea and turning it into a book is as hard as it sounds. The experience is both challenging and rewarding. I especially want to thank all those individuals who helped make this happen.

I tried to follow william Zinser, a versatile writer's advice about how to write a 'memoir' Be yourself, speak freely and think small.

I thank Dr. Manjuvani DAH, Dr. S. Ramchandar former DAH, Telangana and Dr. R. Amarendra Kumar DAH, AP for their support.

My sincere thanks to Dr. G. Raki Reddy, CEO Agri-Biotech Foundation, Hyderabad, Dr. P.V.K. Sasidhar of Indira Gandhi Open University, New Delhi, Dr. M. Ravi Kumar of Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University, Ms. P. Bhagyalakshmi for sharing their social research findings.

To Dr. Y. Simhachalam of SMILE, Dr. S. Jayachandra, Dr. S. Krishnamachari, Dr. Babu Beri and many more, I have had the opportunity to lead, be led by, or watch their leadership from afar, I want to say thank you all for being inspiration and foundation for the leadership manifesto.

My sincere thanks to all my family members especially my grand childred for their helpful suggestions and support.

My heartful thanks and appreciations to Mr. Chepuri Venkataramana and his team who poured their discerning intellect and magnanimous heart into line by line edit and the 'finish make-up' of this book.

For every reader who finds a piece of him / herself within these pages. I shall probably be too deaf to hear and too old to understand a word you say, but I shall still be your affectionate.

– Piedy Sreeramulu

Prologue

In 2022, my Seventy Fifth year, I completed reminiscing some of my fleeting moments and lasting memories of different phases of my life, and yet I feel it is incomplete. I tried to recapture some glimpses of my roots, my relationships, interactions with my peers, some unsavory moments with bureaucrats, persons in politics, learnings from livestock farmers both men and women, academicians, and researchers both in my work and post-retirement professional activities.

I feel exquisite pleasure in dwelling on the recollections of my experiences/encounters etc. Before you ask or wonder, this is not my autobiography but only enlightening experiences of my humble life… My goal is to make you aware some of those in your career,not awe you. From the bottom of my heart, I hope my experiences may help you live a more joyous, productive and meaningful life.

The seed of writing this book was laid by one, Dr. Padmayya, a Senior Scientist of Directorate of Oil Research, Hyderabad while we were travelling together for an evaluation of a field research project in 2014. Listening to my experiences he advised, "Dr. Sreeramulu! One should leave something useful for the next generation as some of them may get enthused or get a spark to initiate something new for the benefit of the society. Whether you publish it or not, at least note your experiences down. That is the only tangible way we can pass on our experiences and knowledge, not found in books, to the youngsters."

I started scribbling in 2015 but could not finish as my wife fell sick with Colon cancer in May 2016 and succumbed to it in November 2018. The sudden loss of her warmth and support was unbearable and it took some time for me to cope with. But with encouragement and support from my grandchildren I started writing seriously in 2020.

In the middle of writing I felt, things are not as bad as they could be and they are not as good as they should be, but, oh thank God they are not as bad as they were. The course of our lives is a mystery except in retrospect. The passage of time has provided me one of those rare scopes. But now I have got more miles on my odometer.

I am the beneficiary of the animal health revolution that fuelled many milestones like the eradication of Rinderpest disease, strengthening of Veterinary services and delivery systems supported by policy formulation.

I am one of the many who wandered the path of eternal quest for meaning, looking for answers to questions about why we are born, what purposefulness looks like. I believed strongly I could do things differently, smarter and more pragmatically within the framework and I did. Change starts with ordinary people. My slogan is, 'Doing Well And Doing Good'. My father always used to say, 'Do the best with what you have got'.

This book results from my participation, observations, concerns, disease outbreak investigations, studies and reserch on the issues. Each experience or encounter shaped my thinking; each has taught me a critical lesson about how we deal with each other. If there is any particular theme to my career, it has been connecting disparate dots of information and making them into comprehensive, understandable information for the future.

There are three kinds of people in the world. The first kind makes things happen. The other watches it happen and the third wonders what happened. I myself represent all the three types of people.

The old top-down approaches of technocrates telling local people what to do did not always have much support and the people on the ground have other things in their minds and thus had had enough of being told what to do. Therefore they should be treated as partners in the programme and not as beneficiaries of the programme. In my early career, I was looking at only my clients, the animals. However later I started looking at the people with these animals and and lately, with learnings from social scientists I attempted institulisation of livestock development activities

Recently, we heard from a learned high court judge that peacocks get impregnated by gulping the tears of males and from a responsible minister that cows inhale and exhale oxygen, bringing light to the problem of presenting myths as a reality. Talent without discipline is like an octopus on roller-skates. There is plenty of movement, but one never knows if it is going forwards, backwards or sidewards.

In this savage environment, in all these years of my dealing with farmers, seniors, peers, subordinates, media and political leaders, I have found that the easiest way to handle it is to be absolutely straight-forward, ruthlessly honest and to stick to the truth.

Though I had some hiccups, I got through successfully.

I have tried to describe these very experiences and the insights of mine. Read it and laugh. Read it and be sympathetic. Read it and be in awe!

Contents

1. My early years 13

a. My Roots 13

b. My grandmother and Me 15

c. My Marriage 18

d. Our students tour to Madras 22

e. Open House Day at Veterinary College 24

f. The episode of Dog and vultures 26

g. Initial Freaks 26

h. The First and the Last 27

i. The Selection Blues 29

2. My Quests… 31

a. My sojourn at Pathapatnam 31

i. My Hilarious Bus Journey 32

ii. The New Moon Day 33

b. My soiree in Srikakulam 34

i. Srikakulam District Clinical Laboratory 34

ii. Full Sleeves shirt and Me 35

iii. Director's visit to Laboratory 36

iv. The Tonic Powder Miracle 37

c. My quest at Vijayawada 39

i. The Ducks Malady 39

ii. The Mysterious crawls 41

iii. Demodectic dog and Ingratiating smile 44

d. My rove at VBRI 45

i. A Freaky caution 45

ii. Sarcasm and Smartness 46

e. My Ph.D programme 47

f. My career bound Tirupati sojourn 50

i. Popular Animal Health Camps 50

ii. Unique Bonding of a Vet and Livestock Farmers 55

g. My layover at Vizianagaram 56
i. My First District Officers Meeting 56
ii. The Existential Reality 59
iii. Smiles of gratitude 60
iv. Contradictions and Corrective measures 62
v. Dared to be Different 64
h. My sojourn in Nellore 65
i. The very first day…July 7th, 1992 65
ii. Animal Birth Control Programmes 65
i. My Tryst with Rinderpest Disease 66
j. Sojourn in Netherlands 68
k. My Ongole stopover 70
i. The Curse on the Village 70
ii. The Biggest-ever Sheep Vaccination Campaign 73
iii. Statue for the VAS 74
l. My stint with APSCCFC 75
i. The Complexity of Poultry Complex 75
ii. Reason for Season 76
iii. The Reason for the Lag 77
iv. The Pandora Box 78
m. My Tryst with Indo- Swiss Project 78
i. Dreaming beyond 81
ii. Budget for bribe 80
iii. Percepectives of developement & audit 82
iv. Bureaucratic arrogance 84
n. My Seven years with ABF 85

3. In witness box 89
a. A Case Meat fitness certification 89
b. As a witness in ACB Trap case 90
c. As an official witness in a homicide case 91

4. A Sneak Peek Into… 93
a. Bureaucratic Frolics 93
i. Lease Deed and VLDA 93
ii. The Life Certificate 94

iii. The Income Tax Return and Me 94
iv. Known knowns 95
v. The Farce of Seed vaccine Transfer 95
vi. Acrimonious Zilla Parishad meeting 98
vii. Listening versus Hearing 99
viii. English Lessons for Secretary 100
ix. Sweat and Sweets 102
x. Cell phones and we 103
xi. Galore of curses 105
xii. Bird brained programmes 106
xiii. Audit Blues 109
xiv. An Errant Office Attender 110
xv. The Review by Chief Minister 112
xvi. World Bank Review on HRD: My Embarrassment 114
xvii. Musings on Telugu language 115
xviii. Untying the knot 118

b. The Night Stay Frolics 120
i. Papireddygaripalli of Chittoor district 120
ii. Pedamanapuram of Vizianagaram district 120
iii. Nirmal of Adilabad district 121

5. Good Learnings- Vets 123
a. A tangled Knot… 123
b. My Radiant guides 125
c. A Humble Disease Investigation Officer 128
d. Good Samaritans 130

6. VIPs - Sartorial sensibilities 132
a. The holy cow and President's Consort 132
b. A Dilemma on milk for bed tea. 133
c. The Chief Minister's entourage and Colostrum 134
d. Lamb testicles and VIP 135

7. Fleeting moments with… 136
a. EMS-The Octogenarian 136
b. A Renowned Poultry Scientist 137

c. A Mentor and Guide 138
d. A Great Commoner 139

8. Known-Knowns: Livestock Development Programmes 141
a. A Flagship programme-Sheep Deworming 141
b. The Black Gold 143
c. Faint Glint-AI services 146
d. An exhilarating experience with Gopalamitra services 147
e. Good Practices from other States 148
f. Ongole Bull : The game changer 150
g. The Perish of Imported Bulls 151
h. The Herd Fertility programme 154
i. Cattle Breeding Frolics 158

9. Livestock and livelihoods 160
a. Kusumi village episode 160
b. Poultry and goats in tribal livelihoods 162
c. The Goat-Poor man's cow 163
d. The Chief Minister and the goats 165
e. Sheep, Shepherd and the Vet 166
f. Breeding policy for Sheep 169
g. Women and Livestock 171
h. Pioneers and the hidden Champions 172
i. Holy cow and Unholy pig 174
j. The Beast of Burden 175

10. Learnings from Social Research 178
a. Perceptions of Govt.Vets in A.P 178
b. The conundrum of perceptions of Vets in Disease Investigation 179
c. The Status of Service Providers & the Clients in AP 180
d. Mastitis Control, a jingoistic puzzle 182
e. Change makers and underdogs 183
f. Perceptions lore 185

11. Rollicking Laboratory Episodes 188
a. Microbiology Department and the Vice-Chancellor 188
b. A snapshot from… 188

12.Some Unpleasant Clinical Experiences 190

13. International Conferences 191
a. International Ethno-Veterinary Conference 191
b. Commonwealth Veterinary Conference,1998 191
c. International Poultry Conference, 1996 192

14. Snapshots on Fodder Development 193
a. Entrepreneurship and Fodder 193
b. A Dutch student and Paddy straw enrichment 194
c. Rounding of Revolving fund 195
d. Community Fodder Seed Production Initiatives 196
e. CM, NTR at Pusapatirega 197
f. Watershed development programmes 198
g. The Untold story 200

15. The Assorted Snapshots of Natural Calamities 202
a. Short reign- big impact-drought 2003 202
b. The Catclysmic Cyclone of 1977 203
c. The Fury of the Cyclonic storm 206
d. Dolour on the Dam 207
e. Honest exercise on 'Policy paper' 211
f. Green Patch in the Dark 212
g. The Sun and ... 213

16. Four (wives) and One (hubby) 215
a. The Anthrax scare 215
b. The Bullet That Never Fails 218
c. The Deceptive disease-a public health hazard 221
d. The Crippling Malady 225
e. Diamonds on pigs 227
f. Hot zone in the Heartland 228
g. Past continuous: 'Nasal schistosomiasis' 234

17. Selling Illusions.... 236
a. Champion Bull Starved… 236
b. Fictitious Unpleasant Lies 237

18. A Horizon of possibilities 239
a. Myths-The Beautiful Lies 239
b. My Wife and the Crow 240
c. The Musk and the Goat stench 242
d. The Love Hormone 244
e. The fascinating crow of Cockerel 245
f. The Captivating Wool capital of world - Goulburn 246
g. Why I am doing what I am doing 247
h. My Father, William Shakespeare and my Grand-daughter… 248
i. Mining for the Meaning 250
j. Myself and Computers 252
k. Warp and Weft 254
l. Movie films and roles as Veterinarians 255
m. Mirth and Moan 257
n. National spirit and emotional endurance 257
o. Indian Festivals, livestock and Society 259
p. The Mauryan Prime Minister-Present day Relevance 262
q. The Cloned buffalo and My excitement 263
r. Rain of doubts 264
s. Inspections then and now 265
t. As a Member of Study group on Rinderpest 267
u. Private Truth and a Public Lie 267

Epilogue 273

Abbreviations 275

Pictures 278

1. My early years

a. My Roots

My ancestors, as told by my grandmother, were from a humble middle-class background. My grandfather, Venkata Subbayya, was working for a lawyer in Srikalahasti, a well-known pilgrimage town, in then Madras Province of British era, presently in Andhra Pradesh. My grandfather had only two younger brothers, Sri. Balayya and Sri. Venkata Seshayya, the former working in government service as a clerk in sub-registrar's office while the latter was a teacher in a primary school. The first two brothers married two daughters of Sri. Palanati Krishna Swamy, a local village-elder working for the Raja of Karvetinagaram Samsthanam (a small province). My grandfather died when my father was a ten-months old baby and my last uncle was in my grandmother's womb. The brother next to him had no children and the youngest one died when his son, my uncle was fifteen years old, who lost his mother at his seventh year.

The second sibling of my grandfather took the responsibility of bringing up all the seven children of his older brother and the son of his younger brother, an unheard act in our family circles those days or even today.

During my teens I used to wonder how my grandmother was able to raise eight children and get them married (three of my paternal aunts and five of my uncles including my father) and see them settled. My grandmother narrated how she was able to bring them up with a meager salary of seventeen rupees per month and extra earning of half a rupee on working days from helping the clients by writing needy documents at the office by my grandfather.

As soon as the first two male siblings completed their schooling, they went to Madras in search of jobs and were fortunate enough to get employment in the Madras Municipal Corporation. Subsequently the entire family had shifted to Madras city and all the three paternal aunts got married and had their families elsewhere. After the first two male siblings got married, they lived together and supported their younger brothers, my father and two uncles.

My father was the first graduate (Bachelor of Arts), from Madras Presidency College, in our family in four generations. He could not continue his law degree, his cherished desire, when he got a government job. The veteran freedom fighter and social worker Smt. Durgabai Deshmukh was

his senior in Madras Law College. Those days all my family members were identified as BA gentleman's elder brother, sister etc. I remember while seeking marriage alliance for me, my brothers, sisters, my elderly cousins used to introduce me as BA uncle's son. Presently I am 75 years old and even now my cousins introduce us as our BA uncle's sons to their kith and kin unknown to us.

As recently as on 11th March 2019, I happened to meet my cousin's son in my niece's marriage ceremony at Chennai. He is the Professor of Electrical Engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology, Chennai, having guided twenty four Ph.Ds. He always introduced me to his colleagues as his BA grandfather's son. He refers to me as, "the first person to get a Ph.D in family circles and an inspiration for doing [his] Ph.D immediately after [his] M.Tech." I felt so happy to hear that he identified my father as the first BA and me as his inspirer.

I always wondered observing the respect and love my father and his siblings extend among themselves. I saw many times, in need of the hour, my father used to extend moral as well as monetary support to his siblings. Still I vividly remember an incident when I was at home for my annual break during my college days my father asked me to sit with him to help him in clearing his trunk boxes and suitcases. I was also going through some documents during clearing exercise; finding a promissory note for Rs.2000/- given by my elder-father to my father in 1956, I gave it to my father for scrutiny; reading the document at a glance, he tore it to pieces and thrown into waste paper basket.Looking into my surprised eyes, he revealed," My son, while doing my Bachelor's degree, I have to pay college fee; that month it was very tight monetarily in the house because of auspicious family events, the next day is the deadline for payment then my elder brother gave his ring to sell it and pay my college fee. Such was the love and affection shown to us. Regarding, promissory note, in spite of my reluctance, he gave it to me. But I forgot about the note long back. Today I saw this document after almost fifteen years. If I keep it further it may tempt me or you people to ask for repayment. I do not want it to happen". My eyes moistened with happiness at my father's warmth and respect towards his brother.

Still I remember my boyhood days spent with my elder-father at Madras. He always took me with him to music concerts, dance concerts and VIP visits in Madras. He was with me for a few months when I was at Tirupati in 1983 and I used to take him to music concerts and devotional discourses in 1983. He was about 80 years young then. He had high regard for well educated,

scholars and artistes. He breathed his last in 1989 while my father died early in 1986.

During my schooling and college days, my grandmother was getting letters regularly from her former acquaintances from Pakala town of Chittoor district even after their leaving that place fifty years back. During my stint at Tirupati, I used to travel via Pakala very often. One of my Assistant Professors in Veterinary College during one of our meetings told me," Dr.Sreeramulu, my grandmother wanted to see you when I told about you and your grandmother; I vaguely remember your grandmother when I was a young boy when her family lived in our neighbourhood". During one of my trips, I visited their house at Pakala and the elderly lady felt very happy seeing me and introduced me to their family members and other neighbours. She told me that my grandmother was their spiritual guru. I was overwhelmed looking at my grandmother's photograph in their 'puja room'(altar) along with photographs of other gods with decoration of flowers, vermilion, turmeric etc. I took a copy of photograph of my grandmother and it was a scintillating experience.

b. My grandmother and Me

With the family influence, more so of my paternal grandmother, I used to set apart sometime for studying spiritual books since my school days. I liked reading Bhagavad Gita in school days, college life, middle age, and continued to read even now. Discourses by Swami Chinmyananda of Chinmaya Mission and his books, Sri Vidya Prakasa Giri Swamy of Sri Kalahasti, Sri Sundara Chaitanyanada of Rajahmundry and other seers helped my understanding of spirituality over the years.

Bhagavad Gita is an amazing text full of wisdom and philosophical reason but also a call for action, an exhortation to fulfill one's duty with conviction and courage. It has probably inspired more commentaries per line of the text than any other text in the vast canons of Hinduism. A well acknowledged text, considered as one of the greatest practical 'Life Manual' for peaceful and happy living. The book have influenced me a lot. Joyous living may means achieving goals, having great family and friends, awesome-relationships, being successful and many more. But we have also found that they don't last very long. So what we do? How can we learn the art of happy and harmonious living. Last 18 verses of chapter 2 of Bhagavad Gita gave us a step by step approach for self-help and empowerment to overcome many of the challenges in life. Lord Sri Krishna describes the development of 'Stitha Prajna Tha' a perfection of human who is:

- A master of all circumstances
- Calm and equipoise in all actions
- Steady in success and failures
- Balanced in mind and more

Really the practice had helped me; my father at times used to comment, "How? My son, you have developed this balanced mind". Really, Bhagavad Gita was a good practical manual on management in the world.

My grandmother, a great visionary for me, was a rare personality. Narrating her childhood, she told me that she got admitted into a nearby school by her father. It appears, one day the teacher admonished her for not writing telugu alphabets in order: she came home weeping inconsolably and stopped attending school from the next day. Her father, Sri Palanati Krishna Swami Naidu, encouraged her to learn at home. After she got married, she was very proficient in Telugu, writing commentaries on Bhagavad Gita, Bhagavata and Ramayana which had surprised a Telugu Pundit in the village and he encouraged her to write Ramayana in prose in Telugu for common folk.Virtually myself and my siblings were brought up by my grandmother, my father and mother being bread earner and caretakers.

My grandmother was an orthodox disciplinarian with a kind loving heart as well. I had more of her influence in my character building. At times of stress during examinations in school, she used to make us relax by telling anecdotes, moral stories etc. She was an encyclopedia. She was well known, most sought after ayurvedic doctor in our family and friend's circle. Still I remember one incident when I was 5 or 6 years old: I uttered a foul word ignorant of the meaning and my grandmother thrashed me with bed rope, my father and mother were just spectators. Since then I never uttered a foul word. She used to narrate different scriptures, describe various characters which helped me in my character building.

At times I used to be confused by the contradictions in 'Ramayana' and Maha Bharata during my early teens. My grandma explained to me, 'Ramayana, the story of Rama is the cream of Vedas. The sage Valmiki has named each section of Ramayana epic as 'Kaanda' means a length of sugar cane. However crooked the cane may be, every slice is as sweet as every other. Rama has set the standard for every one entirely by the way he lived. So powerful it is, Rama's glory shines brilliantly even after all these centuries one talks of 'Ram Rajya' as a bench-mark for an ideal society". She continued…" In the next Avatar Lord Krishna taught divine message in His own way. Ramavatar was an early period with a little evolved society which

stood for law of principles(Dharma) and rules while in Maha Bharta period the society was more evolved as defined in present day context wherein many a time rules were interpreted to suit a particular context with no regard for the spirit of rule but to uphold Dharma (righteousness)".

Recently in May, 2014 I attended marriage of my cousin's son where all my cousins, their wives, their sons,daughters in-law and their college going grand children assembled and we were recollecting the memories of our grandmother. She took the burden of bringing up of her sister's children and co-sister's son totaling eight children as they had lost their parents when they were young kids. My grandfather was a clerk in a sub-registrar's office earning Rs.17/- per month as salary in 1920s. It was a wonder for us even to comprehend or to imagine a ten member family living on paltry salaries in those days; prior to moving to the then Madras, they were living in Sri Kalahasti,Pakala, and Madanapalli in Chittoor district.

At the marriage venue while the photographer was making arrangements for a group photo of our clan, I took the advantage of intervening period; pointing towards my eighty three years young uncle, the bridegroom's grandpa, I asked him," Chinnayana! (uncle), can you please tell the gathering, why you do not take 'pan' even during festive occasions though we everybody enjoy 'pan'?" He did not respond and my pinni,his wife (aunty, 78 year old) was looking at me with surprise. It appears that it never struck her mind. Everybody was looking at me inquisitively for the answer. I revealed to the gathering as told by my grandma to me. It appears that when my uncle was about seven years old he stealthily took the pan and enjoying chewing it on a festival day and suddenly he started coughing and spit on his new shirt spoiling it. Then grandma punished him severely for chewing pan at that young age. Since then he never touched pan even on his marriage day for one of the rituals to acquaint newly married youngsters. as in those days would be bride and groom were not allowed to talk to each other before marriage ceremony unlike present day dating or pre-wedding shoots. Hearing this my uncle as well as whole group was in splits.

Still I vividly remember my father's compulsive habit of cigarette smoking. I saw him smoking several times in his office but never at home in 1960s. Always he used to put on his coat(blazer) and hat to office. He used to throw away his cigarette packet and matchbox into a gutter at the corner of the street from his office jeep before entering in to home. That was the respect he had for my grandma. After some time I did not find him smoking even in the office or during his travels. I came to know about this when some of his colleagues offered him a pack of imported cigarettes, he politely declined

saying that he quit smoking. Later I understood that my grandma convinced him to quit smoking for the sake of his health and family.

c. My Marriage

My grandmother was a disciplinarian; even my father could never say 'no' to her anytime. As promised to my grandmother, I never smoked or touched any liquor anytime. My father suggested to me once or twice occasional social drinking or smoking should not be a taboo but I never agreed to his liberalised suggestion and he never raised the topic subsequently.

For the first time, I was out of family in 1964 when I got admission into Andhra Veterinary College, at Tirupati. I left my home with a promise to my grandmother that I would write a postcard to her every tenth day and I did this religiously all the five years of my stay at Tirupati. When I was back home in April,1969 after finishing my B.V.Sc course, my grandmother started pressurising me to get married often. Politely. I was saying no to her and pleaded with her about my desire to go for Master's degree. I told her," If I marry, do not expect that girl to take care of domestic chores as my mother and she may not be of any help to you". Looking at me, my wise grandmother said," You are still young, you have no understanding about the value of 'wedlock'; even if she happens to be the most innocent girl or a dullard, at least she can alert a family member if any intruder or stranger peeps into our home with a sense of ownership or responsibility or possessiveness of her family. But with my repeated persuasion and pleadings, she agreed to my request reluctantly. With her blessings, I left for Pantanagar in July,1969 and continued my letter writing to my grandmother every tenth day. To my misfortune, my grandmother left us for her heavenly abode in February,1971 without seeing my marriage function, her last wish.

In 1973, somewhere in July my father, on my visit to home at Visakhapatnam for two days on leave, enquired me," Do you know Dr.D.Subbarayudu, an Associate Professor in Veterinary College at Tirupati?" I said, "yes". He continued, "I visited their home along with my two older siblings on the suggestion of their friend at Tirupati that Dr.Subbarayudu is looking for an alliance for his first daughter. As soon as we three brothers are at the entrance gate of their house, we saw a middle- aged woman and a teenage girl trimming the rose plants in the front yard. She was so nice to us, invited us respectfully into their house with smiling face. We liked their family and bride to be girl is also very active. Her father is also nice but did not show much enthusiasm. We exchanged both your and girl's horoscopes

for further matching". My father further asked me,"Did you ever see their family members at any time?". In response, I told my father," I did not know about their family, but he is one of the popular faculty members among students, he is a NCC officer in my first year, later he left for his MS programme to USA and he returned only at the fag end of our course and he never took any classes for us in his subject of genetics which we have already completed in our third year during his stay in USA. So I did not know much about him."

A month later on an afternoon, I got up from my couch suddenly hearing a stranger's voice from window of my single room tenement at Srikakulam.I came out to find out who the stranger was?; that gentleman introduced himself as' works supervisor' in Public Works Department (Roads&Buildings) and told me that my father was with his Superintending Engineer at R&B guest house and wanted me to come to him. It was a surprise for me to know how my father was here all of a sudden?. Without saying a word, I accompanied him. At the guest house, I met my father and he introduced me to a gentleman, his wife and his sister, the wife of Dr.D.Subbarayudu. For twenty minutes, I was with them and I was dropped at my laboratory in their car and my father went back with them to Visakhapatnam. My father told me on my subsequent home visit that girl's mother liked me much and requested us to visit their home to see the girl.

The intention of visit was to give an opportunity to both boy and girl to see each other for acquaintance. At their home the girl was speaking all the ten minutes of our meeting while I spoke a few words. Her uncle and father had enquired about my job profile, salary etc. On nodding of our heads (boy and girl) in acceptance, there was consensus about the marriage alliance and three weeks later 'betrothal ceremony' was held at 'to be bride's house' and agreed to offer their daughter in marriage. In South Indian tradition, it was an important ritual and consider it very auspicious event signifying certainty of the 'wedlock'. Nobody would approach either the boy or the girl for fresh alliance negotiations. It was a taboo to go out of the agreement in the society.

The marriage was performed on 2nd November,1973 at Tirumala hills. The practice in our tradition was that both bride and bride-groom would be in yellow coloured clothing(white cloths soaked in water with turmeric powder and dried). In our family tradition only on two occasions, one at the time of marriage and second one on the day of last journey wearing yellow cloths was a must. I was told that my bride was resisting to wear yellow saree and blouse with an apprehension that marriage photographs would not be very

clear(those days only black and white). It appeared that she was convinced by my cousin sisters and her aunts to have yellow clothing as a tradition. At that time, I had no such reservations. On bride's agreement her cousins went to shop to get white cloths in the dead of the night and the soaked cloths did not dry up well on that rainy night in winter. Somehow, they managed to drape her in yellow dress just at 'muhurt'(auspicious) time. My young wife told me about these happenings while we were going through our marriage photo album. When I commented that she was dazzling in all the photographs, more dazzling outside the photographs, her smile and mouth twisting pose on such occasions, I enjoyed the most.

We had a practice of visiting temple immediately after marriage with our close accomplices. She was well endowed with information of the world famous Sri Venkateswara temple and she knew many of the priests and administrators in the temple. She was briskly walking into the precincts of temple and I was almost running after her; some of them fascinated with her brisk walk in bridal dress made fun of her saying, "Oh, young bride do not run like that leaving your husband behind." A month prior to our marriage she was a leader of student volunteers serving in the temple under National Social Service(NSS) group from, Sri Padmavathi Women's college, the biggest women's college in Andhra Pradesh state. Many of her college mate's kith and kin were employees in the temple. Many of them showered their blessings and best wishes on both of us in the temple. Very first day within a few hours of our wedlock, it was a mesmerising experience for me.

Three days of customary stay at bride's home and post marriage rituals, we both started for our home at Visakhapatnam. Those days, there were no direct trains from Tirupati to Visakhapatnam. We both travelled to Guduru town by bus and spent a few hours at the home of my wife's maternal uncle and boarded the train at Guduru for Visakhapatnam after lunch. Both of us settled in our reserved seats and I chanced to meet one of my colleagues working with me in Srikakulam district in the same train compartment a few seats away from ours. He was in new cloths with about half a dozen family members around him. I introduced my wife to him and his family members. He knows about my marriage as I had given him my marriage invitation.

The first question he asked me was," How come you are travelling back home after your marriage without any accomplices?"

I told him," Nobody to accompany us as everybody was busy; no problem for us, we wtll get down at Visakhapatnam next morning and go home."

He told,"I would get down at Naupada station". Suddenly looking at my wrist-watch, he enquired, "It appears to be old one, did you not get a new one from your in-law?". Boastingly displaying his new one he said, "It is Seiko watch presented by my parents-in-law". Continuing further "See my new Ambassador shoes, new umbrella, gold bracelet all presented by my parents-in law."

I did not respond but queried," When did you get married?, Oh surprising, you did not inform us,; is it a sudden happening?"

He simply said," Last Saturday, it is not sudden but planned marriage only". Meanwhile he got a call from his accompanying mother and he left.

I joined my wife; on seeing me she readied paper plates and served tamarind rice and curd rice; while eating, I told her, "See this funny fellow, he did not give anybody his marriage invitation card; for two years we were in the same room in the hostel, presently working in the same district and he did not show basic courtesy of informing any of us".

My wife smiled at me quipping, "What is that he is boasting of his presentations from his parents-in law?

"Do not take his words seriously. You are an invaluable gift to me by my parents-in-law" I said, looking into her face for her signature mouth twisting but she simply smiled at me.

Thirty three years later, during a stake-holders consultancy at Chittoor for the PPLPI(Pro-Poor Livestock Programme Initiative) of FAO in 2006, as a prelude, I was narrating this experience to the gathering and one of the participant farmers smiling at me commented," Sir, I understand what you want to infer". I giggled at him and concluded, "kindly do not expect everything from the government free or on subsidy. In our tradition, we feel inconvenient and do not like to depend for everything on our parents-in-law. Hope everybody agree with me. We have to consider government's help as that from our parents-in law".

My wife was very kind-hearted, ever helpful, loving, courageous, takes responsibilities with fore-thought, ever active with envious leadership skills. I had high appreciation for her analytical skills, mind reading, risk-taking abilities and innovative ideas. All-through our forty- five years of wedlock, I used to thank my stars for such a loving life partner. She took the responsibility of getting my sisters and brothers married and later some of their children also. My father on his last day told his brothers who were there to see him on his sick bed," I am not worried about my daughters and sons. My daughter-in-law will take care of them". Such was the faith she

developed in her father-in-law, my father. My father relied more on my wife rather than on me. She became an indispensable person in our family. My wife was a good Bhajan singer, choreographer, good speaker and a role model in the family. She served Sri Sathya Sai Seva organisations in different capacities for more than thirty years till her end in November,2018.

Once in a Public Awareness Programme on Agri-biotechnologies at Nellore, the schedule time was up and I was the last person to talk. Apologetically, the group leader looking at me requested," Dr.Sreeramulu, can you finish your presentation in fifteen minutes". Saying 'yes' to him, introducing myself to the participants I declared that I was the son-in law of the Nellore district and explained about my marriage correlating what 'Myth and Fact 'was. Elaborating the concept I told the gathering," My kith and kin discouraged my father to have an alliance of a girl belonging to Nellore district as they will not be very obedient laced with a little arrogance". I posed a question to the gathering of about 120 persons including twenty girls from Agricultural college and fifteen women scientists," Do you agree with the opinion of my kith and kin?." One of the elderly gentleman, a progressive farmer and a journalist raising his hand said, "yes sir, people from other districts have that impression about our girls from this place." while others were smiling with his observation. Then I emphasized, "My father insisted, "I want to have this particular girl only as my first daughter-in-law. After my marriage, in two years-time while looking for girls for their sons, my cousins and other kith and kin used to say that they would pray to God to show them a girl like Sreeramulu's wife, a role model". Looking at the audience, I stated, "The negative opinion about 'Nellore girls' is a myth, not the fact. The negative opinion about agri-biotechnologies, in particular, on GM cotton is a myth with unproven doubts. Be cautious" I concluded. There was standing ovation for a while and a few raised their hands for clarification of their doubts. Appreciating their enthusiasm, I requested them kindly to disburse for lunch as it was already very much delayed and assured them to clarify their doubts during lunch.

During the lunch, the journalist thanked me for creating interest in the subject, sought some clarifications. Politely, I told him, "I can clarify doubts on animal biotechnology and they can consult agriculture scientists for queries on agri-biotechnologies.

d. Our students sojourn at Madras

In 1967, as part of the Veterinary curriculum, we were at Madras for three days. Early morning by 4 a.m. we used to get up and be at slaughter-

house by 5 a.m. to see the slaughter-house operations. It was a ghastly scenario at slaughter- house, we had never seen such nasty, nauseating, obnoxious, inhuman grimly operations. That was our first exposure to a public slaughter house maintained by local Municipal corporation. I did not imagine a fellow, cutting the throat of cows and women milking the growling and dying animals on the other end. That day I could not take lunch in the Madras Veterinary College hostel where we were given accommodation.

That after-noon, I was in Madras Veterinary College (MVC) with my colleagues going round various departments. It was an amazing experience to see the college hospital with very advanced facilities for treatment of animals. With patronage of earlier British Governors and city elite, the college hospital was well endowed with all the facilities for vet care since British era. which was one of the oldest in our country and all my faculty members were graduates from MVC. Those days MVC was a nerve centre for researchers in veterinary science with good laboratory and library facilities and very well experienced research faculty. Dr.T.Vinayaka Mudaliyar of this college was the first in the world to bring out a "Text book of Anatomy of Elephant".

We visited the premier "Central Leather Research Institute (CLRI)" first of its kind in Asia. The institute was headed by a scientist Dr.Y.Nayudamma who earned the distinction of heading the research institute at a very young age of 36 years with his international credentials. He addressed our college students as a chief guest on our college Ännual Day Celebrations and his memorable address with scientific tenor, wit and humour on the occasion was still in my memory. Dr.Nayudamma started saying, "I am a farmer by birth and untouchable by profession… After finishing my degree in Industrial chemistry, joined in CLRI in Madras as a Demonstrator in chemistry department for paltry salary of Rupees Seventeen per month and after sometime I planned to go to London for training in leather technology in 1946. But my parents and relatives forced me to marry before going to London with fear of my return with an English wife and started looking for a girl for me. Nobody was prepared to give me a girl in marriage as I was working with skins, hides and leather. It took sometime to find a girl for me. Thank god it is not the case with you Vets. I felt happy to know that you Vets have good demand in the marriage market". The whole gathering was in splits for five minutes. Dr.Nayudamma suggested," To be happy in this world one shall possess an American bed room, a British bathroom, Chinese cuisine and a Japanese wife..," paused for a moment, he looked at his wife added," Instead of Japanese girl you can be happy with an Indian girl also". Whole auditorium went in to raptures.

On the last day, we were at Madras Race Course (MRC) in Guindy. This was turf where our senor student Mr.Ramana Reddy of Pre-final year(new regulations, four years course) won Rupees One Lakh on horse betting in 1966. My Associate Professor Dr.P.Rama Rao introduced Dr.C.G.Bhaskar, Chief Veterinarian of Race club to us who was a former Asst.Professor of Microbiology in our college. He took us around the facilities at Race Club. According to him, the Guindy race course was there since the year 1777, the oldest race course in India. Historically, Hyder Ali, the Mysore ruler was about to capture this province. Off and on, the race course was functioning with interruptions during world wars. Till 1952-53 the Madras race club was under Calcutta Turf Club. In 1966, it had become an independent turf club with patronage of Rajah of Venkatagiri, and Rajah of Bobbili.

We understood the significance of MRC equine hospital as the best in South Asia region with all the facilities. Talking about 'dope tests' at this laboratory he humorously commented, "Thank God, our mares are cooperating in collection of their urine samples without demanding services of only lady Vets." When one of our colleagues proudly told him that one of our seniors won betting in the previous year at this venue, Dr.C.G.Bhaskar, sarcastically said, "We rejoice at a few winners but we conveniently forget, thousands turning into paupers".

e. Open House Day at Veterinary College

On one Friday evening in January, 1967, I went with my friends to Bhima's centre in Tirupati to relax from the hostel environment for a while. At Bhima's centre, I observed a lot of crowds jostling into town buses shuttling to Sri Padmavathi Women's College (SPWC). I noticed banners on the buses displaying about "Home Science Exhibition" for three days ending on Saturday. Along with two of my friends, I went to the exhibition the next day; the gathering was huge even on the last day. The displays were very educative and the girl volunteers with very colourful dresses added grace to the venue. I could understand the reason for such a huge gathering at the place.

While going through the displays it struck my mind why not in my Veterinary College such an exhibition which had more things to display and educate both student community and the general public. The idea was working in my mind all through the night. Next day. I spoke to my colleagues of the student's union about organisation of such an exhibition to project Veterinary Science to students of other colleges and the general public from the town.

Appreciating my idea they too agreed to propose to the college authorities. That evening we sat together along with some more friends to discuss the matter threadbear. One of the major constraints was the distance of our college as it was far off from the town with a limited public transport facilities that too up to only entrance gate of our campus; one had to walk almost another kilometer to reach the college buildings. Apart from that many other issues related to organization of such an exhibition also came up. But I was insistent and convinced my colleagues, and waited for Monday to discuss this issue with concerned college authorities.

We discussed this issue with our students advisor. He also expressed his apprehension about transport. I told him that there was huge rush at SPWC. Usually serious faced Students' Advisor, Dr.A.Venkatarathnam, smiling at us, commented, "Definitely there must have been a huge gathering at SPWC because of colourfulness of the premises which we cannot afford on our campus, even then I appreciate your idea" and advised us to meet the Principal.

Dr.P.S.Rajulu, the Principal appreciating our idea suggested, "Let it be an 'Open House', don't say exhibition". He also assured," Boys, do not worry about transport. I will ask Agriculture college principal for his buses also to ply trips from town centre to our campus."

The Principal organized a meeting of all the faculty members, discussed on the organization of "open house" of all departments for general public for two full days from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. As it was the first of its kind in the annals of Veterinary College, the event attracted Science students, Medical students and a few of the general public.

Unlike rush of crowds to exhibition at women's college, our buses could carry only half full of people to the venue. Personally, I was a little bit disappointed by the public response though free transport was organised. Our principal congratulated us for the hard work we had put in and advised us not to feel disappointed at low turnout of visitors; he added," We could project science unlike the other exhibitions where the colours attracted the crowds". In the end he quipped with a smile, "We have only one faculty member and only one student to fall back to the one thousand crowd in women's college".

The finishing touch was that the college administration had advanced only Four hundred rupees towards expenditure for the show and as the General Secretary of Students Union, after the show when I tried to remit back the balance of Rs Seventy three and Paise sixty along with receipts, the office superintendent looked at me with a bit of sarcastic smile.

f. The episode of dog and vultures fight

It was a very cold winter morning in Pantnagar, Uttar Pradesh state (presently Utharakhand) in 1970 during my stay there for Master's degree. After my breakfast, I was moving towards the University Central Library around 9 a.m. through the road in between College of Basic Sciences and College of Veterinary Medicine from my hostel V(Gandhi Bhavan). At the rear of the Veterinary college building adjacent to autopsy room, I saw two vultures preying on autopsied birds and a dog was disturbing the vultures to snatch the bird carcases. The scenario was so fascinating, I stood at a corner for a while watching the dog and vultures embattlement and gimmicks. Somehow, the dog could snatch the carcases at last and moved a few feet away. The vultures were trying hard to overpower the dog. In a few moments later, I found a group of vultures numbering approximately ten joined their brethren and their coming itself was a very scary scenario for me. All the vultures rounded up the dog and the dog was barking at the top of its voice. The vultures zooming around over tore the dog into pieces. I was astonished to see the gruelling fight. I recollected one of the poems of 'Sumati Satakam'- a practical treatise with simple day to day analogies written in Telugu language in one hundred poems which says that the simple docile ants could kill a big cobra with united efforts when their ant-hill was occupied by the most fearful snake. During my elementary school days there used to be a lesson on Sumati Sathkam invariably. At school our teacher and at my home my grand mother forced us to learn these small four line poems by heart and we have to repeat the poem whenever we were asked to do either at school or at home.

One has to learn that "The unity is 'strength'. Similar real instances could be seen in story formats in' Panchatantra' also. I used to narrate this real time experience to young Veterinarians whenever they expressed that the Vets had become dumb and powerless, could not voice their dissent against any injustice meted out to them.

g. Initial Freaks

In my first assignment as Special Veterinary Assistant Surgeon(VAS), Rinderpest Eradication Scheme at Pathapatnam, a big village as taluk headquarters, bordering Parlakhemundi of Ganjam district of Orissa state was separated by a small seasonal river 'Mahendratanaya'.

I was fresh from the college and this assignment was tough to handle - 7 vety livestock inspectors, 14 vety vaccinators and 12 attenders under direct control.

During very first month of my joining, as scheduled, the salary bills were prepared and kept on my table for my signatures for authentication. Almost about 12 signatures for each bill in duplicate for 7 plus my own office bill totally 8 bills were to be sent to the DVO for his counter signature on format APTC Form 101, APTC Form 100 and main bill Forms; even if one signature was missed means at my level or at the level of District Veterinary Officer (DVO), the Sub-Treasury would not honour the bills. So we used to be extra cautious by checking and counter checking. My staff were used to wait for the bills anxiously from DVO's office; usually bills were received on date 2nd of the month, next day the bills were presented at concerned sub-treasuries.

On 5th July, 1971 I received a registered letter in my name from DVO; for a moment, I could not understand the contents at a first glance; my second reading made me to understand that the DVO instructed me to pay Rs one by challan into AH department account as a fine imposed for negligence on my part for signing on revenue stamp(25 paise) affixed on a salary bill 'upside down' as it was a derogatory act against state, intentional or unintentional and send compliance. The same day I paid a rupee by challan into sub-treasury and sent the compliance report enclosing the copy of the challan.

In another incident, I asked my vaccinator to send my 'casual leave letter' by post to DVO. He promptly informed me after posting the letter in post box. On 10th day I got an official memo advising me not to send personal letters like leave letter etc using government service postage. My vaccinator told me that earlier on many occasions he had sent like that and nothing happened. Later I understood that the new office superintendent at DVOs office was very smart. But I had good lessons. When I visited DVO's office for a monthly meeting, I was told that the personal letter could be sent along with other official correspondence using service postage but not any personal letters exclusively using government service postage.

I never repeated such things next 33 plus years of my service in Government.

h. The First and the Last

Everyone would be facing some crises in one's family life or professional career. While I was working at Animal Health Centre Vijayawada (from November,1975) suddenly in 1977, myself and my another colleague were transferred to Zone I districts ie Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam. As I was native of Visakhapatnam district, I was given posting to Kothur in a tribal area in Srikakulam district and other colleague was being from Srikakulam

district he was given posting at Clinical Laboratory, Visakhapatnam as per Central act as a consequence of an intense agitation for separate state for Telengana in 1969 and the retaliatory agitation against Mulki rules observed in Telengana districts and for separate Andhra state in 1972-73. The central government implemented 'zonal system' under Six-point formula in Andhra Pradesh state as a compromise to safeguard the interests and allay fears on employment opportunities in both the regions. Accordingly, the state was made into seven zones. The posts up to the cadre of Lower Division Clerks were restricted to district and cadres above that up to first gazetted posts were restricted to zonal level. The VAS post being the first gazetted post, both of us were shifted from Vijayawada as this comes under Zone II. I had applied for transfer to Veterinary Biolgical & Research Institute (VBRI), Hyderabad, a state institute where I was eligible for posting under six point formula. I was on leave after relief from the post in Feb,1977. There was inordinate delay in decision making at Directorate. At last the state govt had agreed for the Director's proposal to allocate me to VBRI in principle. I contacted one of my earlier colleagues, Dr.Maqdoom, in Srikakulam district presently working in Hyderabad and he confirmed the news. As advised I came to Hyderabad and he took me to the concerned Section officer's residential quarters in Malakpet in the evening. He introduced me to the Section officer and talked over the matter. The Section officer informed that the draft note to Director of Animal Husbandry(DAH) was ready and advised me to come to secretariat the next day to pick up a copy of the letter issued by Govt to DAH. We thanked him and about to leave, then my colleague signalled me to give something to the Section officer. First I could not understand what he was meant, again with second signal I understood. I had five Rs 10 notes and some change, I gave Rs 50/- to the person; he looked at me and my colleague with disgust and said, "Do you think that I am a clerk in a Tahsildar's Taluk office?" I could not decipher out what he was meant? My colleague impatiently looked at me and pleaded with him that he would get the balance the next day.

We came out and I told my colleague, "I have no idea how much to give to him and I did not come prepared and this is the first experience for me.".

Then my friend said, "Don't worry".

I told him," If you say yes, I have another Rs 50/- with me.If you don't mind, please handover this amount to him".

Asking me to stay outside, he went inside and gave him another Rs 50/- and pleaded with him to ignore my ignorance.

That was the first and the last with such an embarrassing experience in my job career.

i. The Selection Blues

Some of my peers in Animal Husbandry Department (AHD) often passed comments on me, "Dr.Sreeramulu, You could have been more successful as an academician with your temperament and attitude. You should be more forceful and tough in administrative affairs in government service". Always I kept calm with a smile at their comments with feeling of positive compliments.

True to be myself, since my college days I liked and dreamed about academic career but settled with contentment and conviction in Animal Husbandry Department (AHD). In 1972, responding to an advertisement for the posts of Assistant Professors in Veterinary Microbiology in AP.Agriculture University, I sent my application. I got a letter of intimation about date of interview at Hyderabad. I was at College of Home Science, Hyderabad, the venue for interviews. I found three more candidates at the interview room, two of them were my classmates at Tirupati veterinary college and the third candidate, a native of Andhra Pradesh but with B.V,Sc and M.V.Sc from Bhubaneswar Veterinary college.

All we four candidates were asked to sit side by side opposite to the interview committee with Vice-Chancellor(VC) sitting with Registrar of the university who was our former Professor of Dairy Science and an external 'Subject expert' on either side of him. Interview started with a question posed to first candidate by the subject expert. If it was not answered by the first candidate the same question was passed on to the second candidate. If it was answered, a new question was posed to the next candidate. Like that it went on for thirty minutes. One of my classmates and Bhubaneswar college candidate could give answers to most of the questions while I could answer all the questions except one while another candidate,my class mate did not answer most of the questions posed to him. The VC asked him, "Why you are not at all opening your mouth?". Then the Registrar, in support of that candidate, was found convincing the VC saying," Sir, he is the son of one of our very senior faculty members." Then we were asked to sit in ante-room for a while and wait till we were asked to go. I overheard the voice of the Registrar(always speaks with louder voice) pleading with the VC to select the faculty's son and the other two candidates. The VC asked him," What about this candidate(my name) academically he was on the top and answered

almost all the questions?". The Registrar explained," Sir, he did his Master's degree outside the state and already he is employed in government service whereas the other three are unemployed". Further, I could not hear anything. Fifteen minutes later a university official handed over back our certificates and advised us to go and wait for the results to be communicated to our residential address. I went back to my place, Srikakulam. Later, I came to know that three out of four placements were filled up with other three candidates.

For a long time it was a puzzle for me, "Why I was not selected? "

Again in 1973, in response to another advertisement from the same university I sent my application. There was only one post and we were only two candidates, the other was my junior in the college. Academically my record was better than him. The same Registrar was there but the VC was different. Both of us were sitting opposite the committee. No interview or no questions were asked. The Registrar emphatically advised the VC," Sir, Sreeramulu is already employed in government service and well settled. Why should we disturb him. It would be a great help to the other candidate who is with no employment." My certificates were given back to me and the other candidate was asked to wait for some time to take his appointment orders. A second bitter experience.

During my stay at Pantnagar, I noticed that for Asst.Professors' selection, the Head of the department has a final say in selection of the candidate in the selection committee. For Associate Professor and Professors, the Deans of the colleges sit in selection committee while for selection of the Dean post the VC and expert from outside university constitute the selection committee unlike in AP Agriculture University.

In 1975, AP.Service Commission of Government put an advertisement for recruitment for the posts of District Veterinary Officers in Animal Husbandry Department. The upper age limit was relaxed and raised to 37 years. Two days before the date of interview, my DVO was seriously ill and collapsed on me in the office room. Next day after attending to his cremation formalities, I went back to home, had bath and straight went to railway station to board the train for Hyderabad for next day's interview. I did well in the interview. For next six months rumours were afloat that so and so was selected but the results were out only in the first week of seventh month post-interview. More than half of the selected were aged about 35 years except two, one was my classmate and the other was two years junior to me. With this episode, I was convinced that only one's academic excellence or merit would not be sufficient to get selected.

2. My Quests...

a. My sojourn at Pathapatnam

I was back to my place, Elamanchili in the first week of June, 1971 after submission of my thesis for fulfilment of M.V.Sc degree in Govind Bhallabh Pant University of Agricultural Science & Technology, Pantnagar, U.P(presently Uttarakhand). On the advice of my father's colleague Sri Atchi Raju, the then Personal Assistant to DAH (presently Joint Director-Admin) I submitted an application for my posting orders. Apprehending delay, my father on an official visit to Hyderabad carried my application and in a fortnight I got posting orders as Veterinary Officer with an advice to meet the Regional Assistant Director (RAD) — regional officer for six districts) at Rajahmundry for allotment to a district in the region. My father accompanied me and requested RAD, if feasible to allot me to Visakhapatnam district. The RAD advised my father not to insist on that for the reason that gazetted posting could not be in one's own native district and counselled that for better experience one should work anywhere in the state and gain the world of experience. My father, then a Tahsildar in the Revenue Department, smiled and pleaded to give posting at least in the neighbouring district. I was allocated to Srikakulam district with an advice to report to the District Veterinary Officer for further posting orders.

My father advised me, when I was preparing to leave for my job first time, "One, always be in good looks of immediate boss, two, never apply for leave of any kind unless it is absolutely necessary, three, never take any advances because of the availability of facility, and four-always follow rules strictly with human touch. This was imprinted in my mind for ever

On 19th July, 1971, I proceeded to Srikakulam to meet the District Veterinary Officer (DVO) by 10.30 a.m. and the Office Superintendent advised me to come on 21st as the officer was on camp. I stayed back at Srikakulam for two nights in one of the existing three hotels, Brindavan Hotel. The single room tariff was Rs 10/- per day. The next day at around 6 a.m, I heard somebody knocking on the door, saying 'Mantri….Mantri'... I could not understand what he meant was (the literal meaning was a minister). When I opened the door, it was a barber with his typical toolbox of those days. People coming from outside, staying overnight in hotels, had the practice of having shaving and/ or massage of head/whole body for a rupee. Mantri was

a local slang for a barber in Srikakulam district. In the rural side also, it was a common practice, daily barber visits to homes. During my school days, every first Sunday the barber used to visit our house as we were five siblings plus my father, totally six hair cuttings, ably supervised by my grandmother at 25 paise for young boys and 50 paise for adults with shortest possible hair cut for all boys. Whenever I recollect those events, I smile at myself.

As advised, I met the DVO, a six feet tall with heavy built, in the office on the day and I showed my papers: on seeing my papers he expressed, "Wow, you are M.V.Sc, why have you decided to join the AH Department instead of university? I did not say anything. By the evening I got my posting orders as Special Veterinary Assistant Surgeon (Rinderpest Eradication Scheme) at Pathapatnam with the pay scale of Rs.300-Rs.20-Rs.600 per month(my first salary was Rs.480.50 (pay..Rs.300/-+DA..Rs.152/-+HRA..Rs.28=50). As it was already 5 p.m. I was advised to go by the first bus by 8 a.m the next day as the last bus had already left for Pathapatnam by 4 p.m.

i. My Hilarious Bus Journey

At the bus stand, while I was enquiring for the bus to Pathapatnam, somebody showed me a very crowded bus with a long snout sliding slightly on one side(private bus service only). The size of the crowd was frightful, looking at me a fellow asked me where to go. To my reply, he looked at my face, and enquired for what purpose. To my answer, he said politely, "Don't worry sir, come and sit in the front seat, there is enough space for two by the side of the driver". I felt relaxed and settled in the front seat of the bus. The Conductor blew his vigil and bus took two minutes to start, suddenly the conductor was shouting at the top of his voice asking the driver to stop the bus for a while; then a cycle rickshaw came by the side of the bus and the bus conductor came down running and paid his respects to the person getting down from the rikshaw and conducted him to the front seat. I understood that the person sharing another front seat was a Sub-Inspector of police. I smiled at him and we introduced ourselves to each other. After 30 minutes of travel, the sub inspector got down at the road- side police station: later I realized that he travels daily, and the front seat was meant for the privileged. I got a sense of elation. During passing over slightly steep roads the bus was moving like a full term pregnant woman with a lot of strain and sound. But at one point it refused to move: the cleaner of the bus got down hurriedly with an 'L' shaped iron rod to start the engine in the snout of the bus.

At last, I could reach the destination around 1.15 pm, almost 5 hours of journey for 60 km distance. (there was no RTC bus service those days). I got

down in the so-called 'village Centre' and enquired about the Veterinary Hospital. Those days there was only a Rural Veterinary Dispensary(RVD) located in a corner in the premises of Medical Dispensary. On my request a nurse put a word to a boy to take me to the office of the Special Veterinary Assistant Surgeon in 'Devangula street' very nearby: on reaching the place, locked doors of single room office smiled at me; already fatigued with the bus journey, standing in front of the office, I was looking around. One gentleman from the adjacent house came towards me and knowing that I was a new VAS to the office, took me to his house next door, offered me drinking water after settling down in a rickety chair. I understood that the gentleman had leased out a room for office: he sent a word to the Veterinary Livestock Inspector(VLI), Mr Saya Raju.

In another 15 minutes, I saw two persons coming towards me, one was Mr. Saya Raju, VLI, RP. Check-post and the other was Mr.Sambasiva Rao, VLI— 1/c of RVD. After preliminary introduction, they enquired about my lunch. On my saying 'no', they sent a fellow nearby to get some snacks. He brought two varieties of bajjis: hot bajjis were very tasty, probably I was very hungry. Excusing themselves they informed me, at that point of time, no food for lunch would be available as it was only a small hotel. I understood that one has to go to nearby Parlakhemundi for a good lunch or dinner.

Mr. Sayaraju sent a word to a vaccinator and asked him to get the VAS holding additional charge from Minor Veterinary Dispensary(MVD) Meliaputti, twelve km away from Pathapatnam. The vaccinator immediately responded saying, "Sir, today I can find the VAS at Parlakhemundi itself as there is a new film release today,he must be out for tea during interval time around 3.30 p.m." and left on his bicycle. Mr.Sayaraju was explaining to me that the VAS was very fond of films. Meanwhile, he opened the doors of the office, a reasonably big single room and started showing me the records, a rack and other office accessories. After 30 minutes suddenly Mr.Sayaraju said, "Sir,the VAS has arrived", on hearing the sound of the motorcycle: the next minute the VAS was in the office room. Greeting him I looked at my wrist- watch, it was 4 p.m: apologetically I expressed to him, "I am sorry for disturbing you from watching the new movie".

ii. The New Moon Day

The senior VAS with 15 years of service, Dr.Abdul Jabbar with unshaven beard and tired looks with a surprise in his eyes asked me, "Today is a Amavasya day(new moon day) and how is that you have decided to join on very inauspicious day that too, yours is first entry into Govt service. Why

don't you think once again and take a decision?; you can join duty day after tomorrow, a good day for such occasion". The landlord, a Brahmin gentleman, also suggested me not to join duty that day. For a moment, I looked at them, thanked them for their elderly advice and firmly said, "I strongly believe in the Almighty, with your good wishes I want to join today itself". Then, Dr.Jabbar said, "If you don't have any objection, I don't have a problem for handing over the charge". As I was new to the procedures, he himself organized the papers to be signed and told me, "Mr.Sayaraju knows all about the files, registers and he can assist you in day to day activities being at check-post at Pathapatnam."

Until some accommodation was found, I was advised to stay in the office room with no toilet facility. I used to get up very early by 5 a.m. to ease myself a little away on the side of the main road, walking for one kilometre. This served my purpose of morning walk also but at times I used to feel embarrassed at the 'guard of honour like' activity by women folk easing on either side of the road while returning. One had to imagine the scenario.

b. My Soiree in Srikakulam

Srikakulam is the land of rich history from 3rd century BC to early 18th century. It is also otherwise called as 'poor man's Ooty' because of the climate with the river Nagavali originating from Eastern Ghats, traversing through the town and merging with sea at Kallepalli about nine kilometers away. I enjoyed my evenings strolling along the bank of the river with my other colleagues regularly till I was a bachelor for two years and occasionally with my wife after marriage for another two years.

i. Srikakulam District Clinical Laboratory

After a short stay of five months at Pathapatnam, I was transferred to Srikakulam, the district head quarters. Then I was the only Vet with Post Graduate qualification in the district and posted in the District Clinical Laboratory with responsibility of maintenance of district animal vaccine depot, laboratory diagnosis work, assistance to field vets and para-vets in surveillance of livestock diseases. As I was the youngest and bachelor I used to travel a lot on my own and with the district officer to the nook and corner of the district.

Daily very religiously I used to attend meat inspection at the so called slaughterhouse, a small tin roofed shed virtually located in a place where people from adjacent slums used for easing them-self around the unit. The shed with the capacity for slaughter of twenty 20 sheep, was provided with a

water connection and some hanging hooks with no facility for disposal of offals. The scenario on rainy days were to be imagined rather than to be described. My colleagues as well as the butchers used to wonder about my regular attendance even on rainy days with an umbrella in an intolerable foul smell and wretchedness around. The municipality was paying me Rs 15/ - as meat inspection fee and Rs.4/- towards cycle allowance per month which I used to collect once in three months on repeated reminder phone calls from the municipal office. I used to get meat at half the price, a privilege.

About twelve of my batch mates were in the district and I had all the cooperation from all the quarters. I had one laboratory attender and one attendant to assist me and I had to rearrange the available basic laboratory equipment, chemicals, procure stains and taken up small studies with slaughter- house materials, field materials, organized small museum of specimens within the means.

Once in early 1973, the then Minister for Animal Husbandry Mr. Venkatrami Reddy visited the campus and rushing through. On my insistence, he peeped into my laboratory and showed interest in my narration of important diseases recorded in the district and the museum with a specimen of 'hydrocephalus calf' removed by caesarotomy unheard of in the district earlier by our team. He spent more time in the laboratory and told the accompanying state officers to encourage such young talent. He was impressed with my plan for prevention of vaccine preventable diseases in the district. While going out, he said looking at me, "I am impressed with your dress" when I was in white trousers, white shirt tucked in with striped blue necktie with spotless white apron on. I overheard his comments with my district officer, "So far I had not seen a well dressed veterinary doctor in other places".

ii. Full Sleeves shirt and Me

I was in search of a suitable residence at Srikakulam. Mr. Kalidas, one of the veterinary vaccinators, a native of Srikakulam town who was with me at Pathapatnam, volunteered to help me in hunting out a residential accommodation for me. One evening, we were out going round reasonably neat 'new colony' area in the town. Suddenly, we found a house with two separate entries side by side; one door locked and other opened with movement of some residents inside. Mr Kalidas advised me to stand aside and he went in to compound for enquiry. I found a teen-girl in half saree sitting in an easy chair reading a periodical seriously, shouting at Mr Kalidas and he was coming out gasping. I imagined probably she must had felt disturbed when she was seriously reading her interesting serial story. Meanwhile, an elderly

gentleman peeping through the window with a question mark on his face, looked at the intruder, Mr.Kalidas who in turn explaining to the old gentleman pointing at me," Sir, He is a Gazetted Officer, joined recently and looking for a vacant residential portion." The old man did not say anything but with hand gestures conveyed that there was no such residsaential portion 'to letout' and went inside. I heard a female voice saying to that elderly man, "I thought that those two youngsters are "bullying me". For a moment, I looked at Mr Kalidas and myself; we were in tight pants and half bush shirts with short sleeves, the fashion of youngsters those days and realized why she shouted at Mr Kalidas with suspicious looks at me.

I stopped 'house search' for that day saying good-bye to Mr Kalidas; went straight to a cloth store, purchased four full hand shirt pieces and two pant pieces, gave them to a tailor. The next week onwards, I started wearing loose pants and full sleeve shirts to appear not so young as students.

Since then I was wearing only full sleeves shirts and continued even after my retirement as after marriage my wife never allowed me to wear half sleeve shirts even in summer months with a contempt that I appeared leaner and younger than her as per my assumption but her complaint and fear was that I appear very weak with half sleeves shirts leading to misunderstanding by others that she was not taking care of me with good food. With great persuasion and pleadings, she permitted me to wear half hand shirts at home that too only at bedtime.

iii. Director's visit to Laboratory

Three months after my joining at the District Clinical Laboratory, Dr.B.A.Shirazi, the Director visited my laboratory. To his enquiry, I replied, "Sir, I examine dung samples,blood samples,milk samples and other clinical materials and communicating the lab.reports to field officers,apart from vaccine depot management and attending disease outbreaks and advising field staff in control of diseases…" Interrupting me, he expressed his displeasure saying,"You are a postgraduate, I expect quality work from you" and I promised that I would take up special activities.

During the subsequent visit. I explained that I had taken up epidemiological investigations on gastro-intestinal parasites, survey of nasal schistosomiasis, study on blood protozoan parasites, interrupting me, the Director said, "Yes, yes good work, carry on" and left the laboratory. The officers around, Dr.T.Rama Rao, Regional Assistant Director, Dr.G.Papayya, District Veterinary Officer,Dr.V.Kamalakara Rao Assistant Project Officer

(APO), Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), Dr.D.Raghavendra Rao, APO, Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA), Dr.Janadhana Singh,Livestock Officer looked at me with an amazement and appreciative expression. When all have left, all my colleagues admiringly congratulated me for the director's comments on my work.They inquisitively asked me, "What a magic spell it is? The director had left the campus with a great satisfaction without any adverse comments. I said, "Nothing new, what I have explained about my work is the same as explained during the last visit. I repeated the same with refined terminology which I could not do last time as I was very new to the department. I realised apart from all the good work, the presentation of the work is also important. Since that day I strived hard for doing appreciably good work and emphatic in presentation with available means.

iv. The Tonic Powder Miracle

Daily in morning hours, from 8.00 a.m to 12 noon, the District Veterinary hospital, Srikakulam would be brimming with activity. I used to sit with my microscope and tool kits during busy hours at the hospital itself for on the spot diagnostic work to avoid delay. My idea was to educate livestock owners/ attenders to understand the importance of gastrointestinal parasites and blood protozoan parasites in livestock health. I used to demonstrate these things to enthusiastic livestock attendants and owners at the hospital. My senior colleague in-charge of the hospital, Dr.C.R.Viswanadha Rao used to appreciate my gesture.

Some livestock owners from rural side whenever they come to town they make a trip to veterinary hospital for veterinarian's help and ask for medicines for their sick animals explaining some common symptoms they observed or sometimes ask for medicaments for improvement of appetite for their animals or for improving milk yield that is to say 'in absentia' diagnosis, prescription and door delivery of medicines with an advisory. Sometimes, a few brought letters from rich farmers or village leaders requesting for help to the client. I saw at times the VAS writing advisory slips to a few known persons from country side.

My colleague's father was a very popular medical practitioner in Dusi village and villages around Srikakulam. With that aquaintance more livestock farmers used to come for medition for their animals. When ever he was giving some veterinary medicines for 'in absentia cases' he used to spend a little extra time to explain how to administer the medicine to the animals

repeatedly. This intrigue enthused me to ask him why he tok long time to explain. He narrated an incident that had happened in his previous tenure at Primary Veterinary Dispensary, Sher Mohammadpuram village.

One day, it appeares that he was very busy with many cases to attend and in that rush, he advised his veterinary compounder to dispense four doses of tonic powder for a farmer's buffalo with an advice to use one packet once daily with adequate jaggery for four days and report back on fifth day about the response.

Sometime later the farmer came hurriedly into his room and fell down on his feet with expression of gratitude of highest degree. My senior colleague said that he was embarrassed and surprised at his act and failed to understand what the farmer was saying to him with all the praises showering on him excitedly. It appears, my senior colleague asked him to tell him what had happened and why the farmer was so excited. The veterinary compounder reminded my colleague that the farmer came to PVD and took four doses of tonic powder about a month back.

Interrupting him the farmer said," Doctor sir, before coming to you last month, I had consulted the local Primary Health Centre doctor, then I went to District Head Quarter Hospital, later on the advice of the doctors I went to King George Hospital (KGH), a regional hospital those days at Visakhapatnam with no good response except for transitory relief. On the dictate of my inner consciousness, I came to you and your medicine cured me completely and since two weeks, I have no pain at all in my stomach(means abdominal pain). I wanted to express my gratitude ten days back itself but I could not come to you as I had to go to the village of my father in law to attend his death rituals and settle issues with my brother in law regarding property share due to my wife.

My senior colleague said that for a moment he could not understand what he was saying and asked him to repeat the entire episode. At the end, he realized that those four doses of tonic powder intended for his buffalo was consumed by his client himself. My senior colleague exclaimed that still it was an unsolved puzzle for him that how that farmer could withstand that large dose of tonic powder religiously consumed for four days and still nothing happened to him instead he expresses his gratitude for providing relief from the malady with which he was suffering for the past two years.

My senior Colleague, further added that since that incident he was extra careful and spend more time to probe on such ' in absentia' therapy for the animals.

c. My Quest at Vijayawada

Vijayawada is an historical place for Buddhism and Hinduism ruled by Vishnukundin rulers in 5th and 6th century when they built caves in Moghalrajapuram a crow's distance from my residence. Every day I passed by on bicycle to my laboratory work at Labbipeta Veterinary hospital compound. Earlier it was called as Bezavada also and Blazewada in summer months because of scorching summers which I know during my trips to the place as young lad with my grandmother in my summer school holidays in late 1950s.

i. The Ducks Malady

Always cherished my work experience for about two years (1975-1977) at Animal Health Centre(AHC), Vijayawada, the first of its kind, livestock disease diagnostic facility, established in the country in 1971 under state govt. sector. With three specialist posts of Research Assistants (Microbiology, Parasitology, and Pathology) with one Assist Director to head the team with support staff of three lab technicians, three laboratory attenders and administrative support with one upper division clerk(UDC), lower division clerk (LDC), typist and two office attenders The AHC was unique in the state. Myself from Srikakulam, Dr.V.Sundara Rao from Visakhapatnam and Dr.P.Rama Vanamayya from East Godavari District were posted to Vijayawada Laboratory to handle Microbiology, Parasitology and Pathology laboratories respectively. We all three lived in Bank colony in opposite houses but worked together to strengthen the facilities during our stay.

On one rainy day, Dr.Jayarami Reddy, the VAS, Duck Extension Centre, Kaikaluru, had sent a few dead ducks for investigation to AHC Vijayawada in July, 1976. We, as a team did autopsy, collected materials for further investigation. As there was no clue, we wanted to see ourselves the diseased flock at the centre. The VAS informed that the disease was prevailing in villages around also. Visited the villages and examined many duck flocks and interacted with duck-rearers. Their complaint was that the deaths were happening since one month and not responding to any treatment even by veterinarians. The practice was that the duck keepers themselves inject antibiotics as they were mostly on move(a sort of migration) with no access to veterinary institutions. Our physical surveillance revealed a large scale mortality in duck population of all age groups in Kolleru area of Krishna and West godavari districts. In some of the villages, when we had asked for three or four diseased ducks for observation and experimentation, in desperation,

they used to say," Doctor! we lost most of our flock, a few are remaining and if needed, you can take all of them".

Meanwhile reports of large-scale deaths were pouring in from West Godavari district and Guntur district as well. We, three started visiting other districts also. Meanwhile, conflicting reports were coming about diagnosis from different district laboratories and VBRI as well, adding confusion to our disease investigation process at AHC. I briefed my Assistant director about the course of the disease, symptomatology, autopsy lesions; morbidity and mortality patterns and convinced him that the disease was not suggestive of the diagnosis made at different laboratories in the state. When my suspicion of disease entity was told, I was snubbed that there was no possibility of such disease in southern states so far. My enquiries with other state laboratories were futile with no response. I understood from duck egg dealers that their business was very dull and the situation was same in Tamilnadu and Kerala states also when they had attempted to negotiate for duck egg supply. Our experimentation was still continuing with substantiative conclusion that the disease was not definitely one of the existing duck diseases in the area.

Dr.Kanakamedala, my Assistant director had the habit of non-stop talking, relevant or irrelevant to the situation or the person. Especially it would be more intensive if he happens to see any foreigners, just that he was uncontrollable. Daily he used to shuttle between Tenali and Vijayawada for his work. During one such trip, he happened to come in contact with an European; it appears that he spoke to that European about the episode of duck mortality. That gentleman, a peace corps volunteer, gave him the address of a virology professor in Sweden, Prof Hoekstra with an advice to contact.

We sent a letter with all the details of epidemiological observations and our laboratory investigations seeking for his help by Air-mail. To our surprise, we received a parcel by air mail within three weeks from Prof. Hoekstra regretting that he did not receive any specimen materials from India nor he could send any live viral antigen to us for further investigation due to quarantine restrictions. But he could send Duck Plague antigen(killed antigen) safely to our laboratory with suggestion to inject apparently healthy ducks and challenge them with liver material from suspected ducks along with suitable healthy young ducks as controls. Prof.Hoekstra advised that if the experimentally vaccinated ducks resist the challenge and survive while unvaccinated controls succumb to the disease, assume the disease as duck plague.

In our experimentation, the apparently healthy ducks which received the shots of antigen, survived the challenge and control ducks succumbed to disease with typical symptomatology and autopsy findings observed in our local flocks confirming the disease as duck plague.

I was elated with the findings in our laboratory and same findings were flashed to state laboratory, VBRI and other laboratories in our state as well as other state laboratories with an alert.

At that time no duck plague vaccine was produced in state vaccine production centres except West Bengal state in our country.

Later I came to know from the Deputy director (Disease investigation) VBRI, that state vaccine production unit at Calcutta agreed to supply duck plague vaccine seed material for vaccine production at VBRI, Hyderabad and congratulated me for the successful investigation establishing duck plague disease in the state.

To may surprise, a few months later, I found an article on the incidence of duck plague in Andhra Pradesh published by West Bengal scientists in Indian Veterinary Journal. I understood that information was shared by the Deputy director from VBRI while negotiating for seed material for duck plague vaccine in our state.

I realized that we cannot blame others for their smartness and enthusiasm instead we have to blame ourselves for our inadequacy and apathy. But still I cherished the experience of investigation, both professional and social aspects of havoc caused by duck plague in Guntur, Krishna, West Godavari, East Godavari and adjoining districts like Nalgonda.

ii. The Mysterious crawls

One morning in 1976, I was busy with microbial culture work in my laboratory; somebody knocked on glass window panel of the cubicle. I signalled him that I would be out within 10 minutes on knowing that Dr B.Rajagopala Rao of Penamaluru, a senior and very popular veterinary practitioner, brought some samples and waiting for me at parasitology lab. By the time I reached the Laboratory my colleagues were examining the samples under microscope and I was also asked to look in to microscope. I looked the sample and I was clueless; it was explained to us, since one week the semen with coconut milk extender supplied from the Centralized Semen Collection Centre(CSCC), Gannavaram, (the first one and the largest in the state those days) when examined under microscope before insemination, extraneous small rod shaped, rapidly crawling objects were found. Second day more numbers were

found than the moving spermatozoa; subsequently more number of such reports were pouring into our laboratory from other centres too. When examined at periodic intervals of eight hours for 48 hours in turns, the mysterious crawls were found multiplying in geometric progression.

I was asked to attend an emergency meeting convened by Dr.S.S. Krishna Murthy, Deputy Director, ICDB(Intensive Cattle Development Block) covering whole of Krishna district, parts of Guntur and West Godavari districts. In the meeting, all were senior officers and I was the only junior most VAS with hardly 5 years of experience, sitting aloof in a corner. The Dy Director asked me to sit besides him and explain the investigation process taken up so far. All the senior officers were whispering among themselves, my eyes did not miss the scenario. I briefed the gathering about what was done till that day. Some of the officers opined that it could be leptospira etc. I did not say a word but requested the Dy.Director to visit the laboratory so that I could demonstrate what was going on.

I pleaded with Dy Director that it would be advisable to stop semen collection process and supply to AI Centres at least for two weeks from Gannavaram by making alternate arrangements for semen supply from other centres where CME was not used. Substantiating my suggestion, I informed that no such problem was found with semen diluted in egg yolk citrate extender and frozen semen obtained from semen station, Hesserghatta, Bangalore. Meanwhile, as per the suggestions of the senior officers, the Dy.Director also decided to seek guidance from the Principal, School of Animal Reproduction(SAR), Mandapeta, VBRI, Hyderabad, College of Veterinary Science, Tirupati.

As decided, in the afternoon I arranged demonstration at the laboratory with the support of my other colleagues and Assist Director AHC.

Again during live demonstration, some of the officers told the Dy. Director, “Sir it is definitely leptospira, see how they are moving”.

The Dy. director looked into microscope and then gazed at me.

I said,” No! Sir, it cannot be”.

One of the very senior officers caught hold of a text book and showed it to Dy. Director and said,” Sir, see this, these organisms also are looking just like these leptospira in the text book”. Other officers had a look in to microscope and expressed in unison, “Sir, it must be leptospira only”.

I was looking into face of my Assist Director and Dy Director, took courage and said, “Sir, now you all are observing these motile rod like live crawls under 10 X magnification in an ordinary microscope under ordinary lamp.

The fact is that leptospires are so small, we cannot see under low power magnification and under no circumstances under light microscope. It needs dark ground illumination condenser. The picture shown in the textbook was several times larger in magnification. Fortunately, I had the opportunity of seeing leptospires earlier."

And I added, "My eyes cannot deceive me". My Assistant Director Dr.Kanakamedala Venkateswara Rao smiled at me appreciatively.

Since that moment everybody stopped saying it was leptospira. Almost, I had spent more than 10 days at CSCC, Gannavaram though it was hardly 20 kms from my place of stay for detailed investigation.

Dr. Jagannatha Rao, School of Animal Reproduction(SAR), Mandapeta was supervising my investigation. Dr.Samba Murthy, Associate Professor (Microbiology), Dr. A.Venkatarathnam, Associate Professor (Parasitology) of College of Veterinary Science, Tirupati arrived and looked into my investigation reports and saw the samples; the Parasitology expert who was my teacher in the college said, "Sreeramulu,I cannot say exactly what it is but vaguely remember seeing such organisms earlier in some saline water samples. He hinted, "Why don't you consult some senior zoologist?"

Dr.A.Rama Mohan Rao, Professor of Gynaecology with a lot of experience in andrology(being Doctorate from Sweden) commented," I did not see such creatures earlier in semen samples." He called me aside and said, "Sreeramulu, I do appreciate your boldness in not succumbing to the pressure, resisting out rightly on the theory of Leptospires. I do know it cannot be, somehow, I could not say it out- rightly for obvious reasons",and added further One should be bold enough to say the facts in science."

That evening all the visiting experts, local officers assembled for discussion to find a way out for this problem. Dr K.L. Dutt, the Principal, SAR, Mandapeta was in the chair and being a very senior officer, he snubbed the people saying those organisms as 'leptospires' and sarcastically commented, it is foolish to believe these organisms are leptospires The experts suggested that these could be only contaminants but try to find out the source of contaminants.

Dr.K.L.Dutt looked at me and Dr.Jagannadha Rao from his institute. We informed the gathering that already the process was started and bull source was ruled out after microbiological examination of preputial washings, sheath surfaces as they did not yield any such organisms. All the visiting experts appreciated the investigation process and wished the best of luck. Dr.K.L.Dutt in the chair, thanked the visiting Scientists and put a full stop to the

propagandists of 'leptospires theory'. This meeting was followed by a dinner for all the visiting dignitaries at the guest house of Bacon factory well known for pork delicacies and hospitality.

My senior colleague, Dr.B.Rajagopala Rao, one day took me to a senior lecturer in Zoology department of Lyola College. We discussed in detail about the issue and gave samples for his opinion. He was very receptive and sought two days time. Later he suggested the organisms could be 'sporozoa' usually found in saline water. With that clue, I had started screening each ingredient that went in to 'CME diluent'(Coconut Milk Extender). I got excited when I could find the 'culprit' in coconut milk used in that particular batch. Subsequently prepared CME did not yield any such contaminants.

I submitted a '12 page' investigation report to authorities which was very well appreciated. Looking at me my peers used to say- here is the Hero— who made authorities to close the semen production activities at CSCC, Gannavaram for three weeks for the first time in the history of that unit which was supplying 'semen' to more than 300 AI centres uninterruptedly since its inception.

iii. Demodectic dog and Ingratiating smile

It was February,1976. As usual that year also Animal Husbandry Department (AHD) pitched its stalls in All India Annual Exhibition in exhibition grounds of Vijayawada. Evenings were abuzz with enthusiastic youth as well as others visiting various stalls of several government departments exhibiting their activities with models, charts, photographs etc. More people used to crowd at AHD stalls to watch live animals-bulls, exotic pigs, different breeds of cows. Added to this, charts on artificial insemination techniques, specimens of animal foetuses of different ages, apart from these the demonstration of bull semen samples under microscope was pulling more people. AHD stalls were very popular for ready to eat tasty pork and chicken delicious. Many youth used to throng our stalls to have a glimpse of bull spermatozoa under microscopes as well as gazing at colourfully dressed girls waiting in long queues. At times controlling of queue jumping made tough with heated arguments disturbing the serene atmosphere.

Apart from exhibition stalls we used to organise 'milk yield competition' for cows and buffaloes, bull competitions and dog shows. That year also along with my other colleagues with different allocated responsibilities took up my position at the ring for dog show. My responsibility was to check the details of the dog exhibit, the pet owner and general health status of the pet dog entering in to the ring.

Sometimes It was funny to recollect how the most unlikely things do happen. It did not seem a life and death matter whether the pet dog got into show or not but it was to the man who started to rave at me when I refused the entry of his pet dog with 'demodectic mange' with verbal threats. I was new to that place (joined duty at Animal health centre only on 15th November,1975) and there was a commotion when I stoutly refused entry into the ring. The Deputy Director in charge of the event and other colleagues came to my rescue. Meanwhile, the exhibition committee members and police also arrived at the spot. Pacified that gentleman and requested him to leave the ring with his pet. After clearing of crowd in the ring, the in charge officer, Dr.P.Chandrasekhar, looked at me with an undisguised admiration and ingratiating smile and congratulated me for my stubborn posture with genuine reason. Later I came to know that gentleman of arrogance was an aide of a very popular medical practitioner of Vijayawada.

The experience of Vijayawada dog show had stayed with me for a long time and sympathy for many of my Vets who had this type of tasks at such events and at their work-places. Of course, I had many trouble free occasions since then and I, sometimes presumed, it was my young age and less experience made me target that day.

d. My Rove at VBRI

i. A Freaky caution

On transfer from AHC Vijayawada, I joined at Veterinary Biologicals & Research Institute(VBRI, Hyderabad in April, 1978. I took the responsibility of Research Assistant in vaccine standardization Unit. We were three RAs with one Research Officer (In the cadre of Asist Director) supported by one laboratory technician and one lab attender each. My job was sndardisation of Rinderpest vaccines while the second one for poultry vaccines and the last one for all bacterial vaccines, sheep pox vaccine and rabies vaccine.

My predecessor Dr.T.Indira Devi, briefed me about protocols with practical demonstration and I picked up the procedures with ease. Two weeks after my taking responsibilities, one day while I was busyy doing serial dilution of test vaccine, I saw the Research Officer gently tapping on glass window of my cubicle in the laboratory: keeping aside my work I opened the door.

He came inside watching me doing serial dilutions started explaining, "Dr.Sreeramulu…be extra careful to avoid bacterial contamination...in case of contamination the bacteria multiply fast in large numbers and eat away

all the Rinderpest virus particles and vaccine testing becomes useless." Saying so he left my cabin.

For a moment I felt my vision was blurring, my body showed signs of fainting; immediately I came out of the cubicle discontinuing my work, settled in my office chair outside the cubicle. I gestured for a glass of water to drink, my other colleagues and technicians anxiously gathered around me to find out what had happened to me, I sighed to them not to worry and after 30 seconds, I recovered from my shock. Seeing the expressions on their faces to know what had happened, slowly I narrated the RO's sermon and my feeling of shock. My colleagues laughed it off saying, "Dr.Sreeramulu. it is only a sample, be prepared for many more such advices in future."

ii. Sarcasm and Smartness

Some people, what ever they talk or speak or comment would be sarcastic especially bosses, of course not all. They refuse to accept whatever their subordinates suggest especially when the subordinate was active, popular and smart.

Winter months especially November to January used to be very cold in Hyderabad that too in VBRI campus with high tree coverage in seventies. One day while I was recording rectal temperature of experimental animals in the sheds in the rear side of the institute, the watchman from the front gate came running towards me and told that a big officer came from directorate and he made him to sit in Joint Director's room and came to me when he enquired about presence of any responsible person in the campus. Instructing my assistant to complete the temperature recordings, I looked at my watch it was only 8.15 a.m. Wondering who the big officer could be at this early hour at VBRI, I proceeded to JD's chambers where the visitor was sitting.On entering the room, I found Dr.S.S.Krishna Murthy, the newly promoted Additional director (health) who joined at Hyderabad a few days back. I paid my respects to him. Responding to me, he said, "Oh' Sreeramulu...you are here! What is this? No officer could be seen here so far". Responding to him, I told, "Sir, now it is only 8.20 a.m. The office hours are from 10.30 a.m to 5 p.m. here unlike in districts" the officers and the other staff will start coming from 10.20 a.m. onwards only". Then he questioned me, "How come you are here at this hour?". I briefed him "Sir, I come early by 8 a.m as I have experimental calves and sheep in addition to laboratory animals. For truthful recordings, I come early and leave early with the permission of my unit head". Looking at his watch he said, "Okay, I will come on some other day, please inform your joint director" and left.

As Deputy Director, ICDB at Vijayawada he was a great inspiration to me as he always encouraged us to be the best in disease diagnosis and animal disease surveillance at Vijayawada citing his accomplishment of establishment of Bacon Factory and Pig breeding stations for pork production in the state in late 1960s attracting whole of India and South Asian countries as the model institute and often he used to exhort that he had fullest satisfaction that his efforts made pork production touring spot and every one should feel happy on one's achievement.He was my rolemodel in this aspect.

e. My Ph.D programme

A Ph.D programme can be daunting and difficult, yet also rewarding and intellectually stimulating. My ambition of a research career could not be fulfilled because of my domestic compulsions immediately after my Master's degree in 1971. Ten years later, with the willing consent of my wife I started applying for a Ph.D programme to Indian Veterinary Research Institute(IVRI) a premier research centre. In 1980 I went to IVRI for advanced training on Rinderpest disease. There I happened to meet my senior colleague and junior colleagues working in research projects and this had rekindled my desire for research career. My senior colleague advised me to apply for a Ph.D programme and assured me that he could help me in a research project, if I get admission. I was in a dilemma of how to take my wife and children, especially my son aged seven years who could not tolerate cold climate because of his bouts of tonsillitis. Meanwhile there was another advertisement seeking applications for the newly introduced Ph.D programme in Microbiology department at Tirupati campus of AP Agricultural University. As I was in state Government service it was mandatory to send my application through the Director of Animal Husbandry. Accordingly, I submitted my application to the directorate for onward submission to concerned universities with an endorsement. But to my surprise, after 30 days, my second application was sent back to me stating that already one of the applications was forwarded to Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Izatnagar, Uttar Pradesh with an advisory to reapply for next academic year in APAU. I did not understand the logic for such action. I kept quiet and waited for a call from IVRI. In the meantime I got an interview call letter from APAU, Hyderabad based on my application sent directly to the university to avoid delay. I got information from one of my friends from the university that both the seats in the subject were already allocated, one for an in-service candidate from the university and the second one for a candidate from outside the state. However, I did not relent and appeared for the interview at Hyderabad.

The very first question in the interview was whether I was serious for Ph.D programme to which I said an emphatic yes. Another query, "Already you are Assistant Director, how Ph.D will help you in furtherance of your career in the government department?". I was insistent that I was serious. The committee tried to convince me to wait for the next academic year as there were only two seats for the Ph.D programme. But I was reluctant and pleading and insisting. Later I understood that under compulsion of University rules, I was given admission and the extra third seat was allocated to candidate from outside the state.

I got relieved from the post of Asst.Rinderpest Officer, Kurnool to join in Ph.D programme in Microbiology at College of Veterinary Science, Tirupati, my 'Alma mater'.On the very first day (31/12/1981), I went round the college to pay my regards to some of my earlier teachers. I met Dr P.L.Narayana Rao, Professor of Veterinary Medicine and on seeing me, he informed me, "Dr Sreeramulu… you are at the right time here, please visit the college dairy unit with cows infected with suspected Rinderpest Disease".

After a little pause, I said, "Sir I got relieved from the post yesterday and today I am here to register for the Ph.D programme."

Taking a deep breath, he said, "Yeh.. gentleman', are you mad?, why Ph.D for you that too, on loss of pay? Already at an young age you are Asst Director, likely to go up in the ladder quickly".

I humbly replied, "Sir, it is my cherished ambition and I took my wife's nod".

"Congratulations, all the best," he blessed me with a smile.

"I am very much interested to work on Rinderpest virus", I requested my Professor, Dr.S. Krishna Swamy. He advised me," Already you are on loss of pay, no project on rinderpest here to extend fellowship to you. You work in an ICAR project "Perinatal lamb mortality" with reference to Mycoplasma pneumonia in sheep, an emerging disease." I accepted the challenge.

In one of the meetings in Veterinary college, when I made a courtesy call on the Director of Animal Husbandry department, he remarked, "Dr.Sreeramulu, at a crucial time you left midway from your assignment; but for your enthusiasm to go for Ph.D program, I would have not relieved you". He congratulated me for my persistence for the Ph.D programme. My well-wisher, Dr.Krishna Ashrit, the then Deputy Director said, "Dr.Sreeramulu… we felt your absence though we did not perceive much about your presence at VBRI". These comments had been an elixir for my hard work and meaningful output from my research work in my research programme.

I was in the first batch of Ph.D programme in Veterinary Microbiology in the university. We were three, two were from academics, one was Assistant Professor from Tirupati campus, the second one was an Associate Professor from Kerala and I was the youngest and from the field Veterinarian category. I have to struggle hard to get a grip on the subject in mandatory course work after a decade of gap with 'books and examinations' conundrum.

From the second day of my joining I started working for the ICAR project "Perinatal mortality in lambs" in the Department of Pathology along with course work. I had to do eight extra course credits due to a faux-pause in the course curriculum. I continued my research work till my professor asked me to stop further work, as the work done already was more than sufficient, according to him. He advised me to start writing the thesis. By then, my professor, Dr.S.Krishna Swamy went on long leave preparing for resignation to his position and left for his place,Madras. He used to come down to Tirupati more frequently for negotiations for disposal of his house at Tirupati. During his visits, he used to go through my thesis manuscript and make necessary changes, corrections etc.

During one such visit, I had to take a cycle- rickshaw (a tricycle which carry two adults plus the driver) to visit my professor's home, as my bicycle was in the cycle shop for overhauling. As it would take about 20 minutes to my professor's house, I was talking to the rickshaw puller. It appears that he had come to visit his sister at Tirupati from a village near Kakinada. Instead of keeping idle at home, he hired a rickshaw for half a day from a colleague of his brother-in-law who also lives on rickshaw pulling in Tirupati. I was wonderstruck at his attitude and approach which we usually spend our time idle during such occasions. This was a great lesson for me and since then I avoided wasting my leisure time.

Surprisingly, I was the first to complete my Ph.D programme and I was the first and last student to my guide, Prof.S. Krishna Swamy who left the University service.

Dr. Richard Masilamani, Dean, Madras Veterinary college was my external examiner.I was sitting facing the examiners committee in Dec,1984. My Professor advised me not to be tense, be at ease.

My external examiner remarked, "I don't have any questions on your research work and output but only one non-academic question, how could you do this voluminous work?"

In succession, he queried, "Did you take the help of your colleagues?.

Before my response my professor replied, "The other way has happened, Dr Sreeramulu has helped all his colleagues by standardising many of the techniques in serology, immunology, tissue culture, mycoplasma, Chlamydia isolation techniques and built up laboratory capacities."

I could fulfil my long cherished dream of Ph.D with encouragement and whole-hearted support of my wife who took up the challenge of running the family with two school going children with a very meagre fellowship amount for three years.

My Ph.D gave me lot of self-confidence and ability to help others in research activities in my subsequent career.

f. My career bound Tirupati sojourn

Tirupati is a well known pilgrimage centre with the presiding deity, Sri Venkareswara Swamy(Sri Balaji), the Lord of seven hills.The temple was said to be developed by Pallava kings of sixth century and became Vaishnava centre in 11th century by Ramanujacharya. The temple is thronged by fifty thousand devotees everyday and on festive days exceeding one hundred thousand. The town is a Vedic knowledge centre and education centre with two universities and many colleges. I had a hectic time apart from my job responsibilities, attending to VIP piligrims from the department, government and politicians visiting temples.

i. Popular Animal Health Camps

On one evening in September, 1984, I was going through the records of Veterinary Hospital at Chandragiri during a mandatory annual inspection. I had nearly finished my inspection work except for putting signatures. Meanwhile a group of five persons came in. Dr. A. Venkatramaiah, the senior VAS went out for a minute made them sit for a while and informed me that the persons from Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, want to meet me. At that point of time suddenly the lights went off. The veterinary compounder immediately lighted a kerosine lantern. I welcomed them, they greeted me 'Sairam' and introduced themselves. They requested my help to organise animal health camps in and around Chandragiri as Sri Sathya Sai Baba gives stress on 'seva'(service) that too in rural areas. They further said, "Sir, Sathya Sai Baba always says that 'Pasu seva' is Pasupathi Seva' means serving animals is serving Eswara". I was very much impressed with that quote and said, "Please go ahead, put a word to local VAS and if you feel like discussing with me you are always welcome to my office or my home at any time at Tirupati".

Subsequently the date for the health camp was fixed on 14th Nov 84, at a village Kesavareddypalle near Kothakota under the jurisdiction of Veterinary Dispensary, Pakala. In consultation with the local VAS and their para-vet staff it was planned to take up poultry vaccinations in villages around, the previous day evening apart from a "Rythu ghosti", (discussions with farmers) at about 7 p.m. followed by film shows on livestock disease control & fodder development and management, sourced from National Films Division. Meanwhile, I spoke to my professors in Veterinary college and they readily agreed to send 60 students and staff from surgery, gynaecology, medicine departments also. It was a festive mood in the village for two days with livestock and spiritual activities.

On the day of the health camp surprisingly the Joint director of Chittoor, on his way to Tirupati stopped for a while at the road-side camp site at about 6.30 a.m where my team was supervising final arrangements, informed me that he was proceeding to Tirupati to receive Dr C.Hanumantha Rao, the Director and asked me stay back at the venew. On his way back, the Director stopped at the camp site for a while and many farmers were in conversation with him as he was very popular in these parts during his stint as joint director in Chittoor district. He also paid his salutations at the altar of Sri Sathya Sai Baba erected in the premises where spiritual bhajan(prayer) was going on. He said' hello' to college staff and students, sai devotees and looking at me said, keep it up and appreciated my 'networking abilities'. In my memory probably it was the biggest ever Animal Health Camp organized at that time in the state.

On Dec 2nd some of the office bearers of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi of Chittoor district came to me after attending 15 days seva at Puttaparthy on the occasion of Baba's birthday on 23rd November, 1984, expressed to me their excitement on receiving blessings and advice from Baba to continue such "Animal Health" programmes" more frequently to extend helping hand to rural people in general and rural poor in particular. Next three years of my stay at Tirupati, they did not leave me and I too was attracted to Baba with his dictum" "Help ever Hurt never & Serve all, Love all" the essence of all religious scriptures.

Prior to organisation of this mega camp, still I remember during preparatory operations I was at the village discussing with the farmers about their role in the animal health camp in the afternoon around 4 pm on 31st October, 1984, Just then one of the farmers came running to us and informed that Mrs. Indira Gandhi, then prime Minister of India was assassinated according to a radio flash news. For a moment, I felt stunned with the tragic

news and immediately recovered hearing a query from a farmer, "Should we go for the camp in these circumstances?" I looked at my colleagues, VAS, VD—Pakala and his para-vets and they said, "Sir, still we have two weeks time, the service camp can be a small tribute to that great lady prime minister". The farmers of the village also agreed to their suggestion. I requested them to go ahead with the preparations.

Apart from department sponsored health camps, every month a minimum of one Animal Health camp was organized for two days, starting on Saturday evening and ending on Sunday afternoon with veterinary and medical camps under the banner of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. I had the greatest satisfaction that these camps were used to be people- owned programmes instead of Govt. departmental programmes. All we, veterinarians and staff used to stay in the village on Saturday night following the film show and Rythughosti. In rythughosti, in late evenings after spiritual activities, people used to feel piety in our meetings. I used to invite experts from the college, dairy, and officials from Agriculture department to offer their suggestions to farmers and educate about various programmes initiated to improve productivity and income to farmers. Many a time, we used to sort out certain issues without any financial commitments in the villages. This experiment was a great success.

One great privilege for me was that a message from Sathya Sai trust requesting to organise such Animal Health camps in & around Puttaparthi for three days on the eve of Baba's birthday every year from 1985 to 1992.

This model clicked throughout the state under district Sathya Sai Seva Samithi Banner in many of the districts. At Puttaparthy service camps, I used to feel humbled when my senior professors asking me to lead the group in service camps. It was all Baba's grace.

There were interesting experiences during animal health camps organised in the precincts of Sathya Sai Baba. Baba never allowed us to stay in the villages for night. We were advised to go for service, and organise all activities, finish by evening but come back to Nilayam premises for night stay. During one such camp a group of youth picked up an argument with one of our veterinary doctors doing registration of animal cases.

On hearing high pitched voices I rushed to that spot, asked them," Do you have any issue?". One of them said," We appreciate your sincere, devoted work but why only during this particular period?"

To them, I said, "There are no private practitioners in Veterinary Profession unlike Medical profession; taking the opportunity of this occasion

with devotion to Baba, we veterinarians gather from different districts, a few from other states also come here to organise such camps".

Immediately another youth shot back, "you travel on govt cost to come here and give government medicines".

I smiled at him and explained, "My young man! I appreciate your concern. We came here on our own by applying leave and the medicines we collect as donations from medical companies. Do you know we found a condition "Nasal Schistosomiasis (Mukku Pincha, Moga Banthi) in about 40 bullocks in villages around. Do you understand the consequences of this disease entity?"

They said, "'Yes sir, the affected animals feel distressed with difficulty in breathing with nasal bleeding at times and the value of the animal will be reduced drastically causing heavy loss to poor farmers in this area".

I added further, "No efficient and cheaper drug is available in the market. Out of experience and with the help of our senior professors, a formulation was made and one of the pharmaceutical companies from Machilipatnam prepared injections with that formulation. You will see the dramatic recovery by third or fourth injection; today we give first injection and to give subsequent injections, we designate one experienced veterinary doctor for your village as it cannot be given by anybody or everybody, This cannot be done every where as it is not available in the market."

Other two expressing regret said, "We are sorry doctor, leave it, can we do some service to help you".

I appreciated their gesture and requested them to organise farmers to bring their animals as and when their names are announced. I also requested them to see that all the animals affected with NS are brought to clinic on alternate day for next five injections. They volunteered to do it. Later I came to know that those youth were Naxalite sympathisers.

On another occasion, Baba deputed elderly person, Prof. Kasturi, the ardent devotee of Baba to oversee how those animal doctors are struggling to deliver services in the hot sun to dumb animals. His presence itself was electrifying.A great sage indeed; his words of appreciation were like "ambrosia"(Amruth- a divine drink).

In a similar gesture, Baba once gave special audience to both medical fraternity and veterinarians with their accompanying para staff. As soon as Baba came out with a radiant smile, looking at the huge gathering of about seven hundred professionals asked, "Where are the Animal Doctors?" We were about forty in number, a small number compared to medical fraternity, raised our hands from the last rows. Baba waved his hands at us to come

and sit in front row. Everybody was looking at us in surprise, Baba said, "Because they are in small number, they are pushed back, fortunately they did not show up their client's strength on you but rendered great service". Baba presented mementos to all veterinarians appreciating the services rendered to animals in villages.

In 1992, in a concluding event, all the medics and vets were asked to sit in rows facing each other to facilitate Baba to move in between; to our good fortune that day Baba himself distributed chocolates to us on men's side while on women's side both lady doctors and lady veterinary doctors were presented with sarees by 'Mahila sevadal members'. Walking through our row Baba, stood for a while and, asked one of the medicos sitting next to me, "Doctor what is the reason for increased heart attacks now a days?; that doctor started explaining, Baba interrupted him, "No it is because of hurry, worry and curry". Smiling at us Baba moved further. After Baba left, we have disbursed; while I was coming out, a lady vet from Ongole, came running towards me and requested me saying "sir take this saree for madam ie my wife and give me chocolate prasadam given by Baba with his divine hands. Smiling at her, I said keep the saree with you and gave her one chocolate with which she got excited and thanked me repeatedly.

I continued this wherever I worked in the state, apart from Chittoor district, Vizianagaram, Nellore districts and – neighbouring districts. I found it as a public mobilized event with spiritual fervour. Many of my colleagues enjoyed associating themselves in such service activities.

Baba used to say" Many others are also doing such good works but you are doing God's works; every time it was refreshing. District Collectors, police officials, elected representatives without any discrimination of caste, creed, religion used to participate, many a times they thanked me for the opportunity they got to attend such service camps with spiritual fervor with whole village participating in a 'Mela' like event along with spiritual activities, speeches, bhajans, bala vikas, Mahila vikas programmes in the vicinity by concerned Sathya Sai Seva Samithi.

There was an interesting episode in one such Animal Health Camps at Kalikiri village in Chittoor district. The preceding day of animal health camp, it was almost like a public meeting as it was a fairly big village and all the villagers were listening to spiritual speeches on that evening and I was waiting a little away behind the gathering with my team for 'Rythughosti' in the dark; just in front of me,two of my Junior Veterinary officers were found critisizing Dr Bhasha, a lecturer speaking on Baba on dais," What sort of

muslim this fellow is?" I did not disturb them and told my other colleagues to forget about it. After conclusion of spiritual speeches, my team ascended on to dais for 'Rythu ghosti' silently. After ninety minutes of the event the film show was on and I left for dinner with all my team members.

Two months later, a similar programme was organized in one village, 'Mahal' with a sizable muslim population. All the livestock farmers participated in the camp. At the conclusion of two days camp it was customary that one of the office bearers of Samithi extend thanks to all the doctors and support staff and farmers. At that point, the Junior veterinary officer, a muslim gentleman who was critical of spiritual speech by a muslim lecturer earlier, raised his hand seeking my permission to express his gratitude as a local organizer for three minutes to which I nodded my head. He started with thanks narrating Baba Quotes extensively from Mahabharata and Ramayana, praising Baba for motivating people to "serve all and love all" which went for 10 minutes making every one spellbound, particularly it was electrifying for me at his change, while the VAS who was with me listening to his comments at Kalikiri village two months back was looking at my face. I smiled at him for this very unusual experience.

Same format was followed even in animal health camps organised with govt funds or sponsored by Lion's clubs, Rotary clubs and other non-governmental organisations whereever I worked in the state. In the process I learnt about priorities of various stakeholders in livestock health and livestock production.

ii. Unique Bonding of a Vet and Livestock Farmers

In 1985, I had been to LSU-Pakala for a detailed annual inspection. That Veterinary Hospital was second busiest centre in my division(Tirupati). Without disturbing routine hospital work of VAS, I was going through records. As the afternoon session would be fairly not that busy, the VAS sat with me explaining details of medicine stocks, treasury & bank money drawls, contingency expenditure, fertility status, reproductive disorders, livestock disease status etc in the area and progress of performance by him and his satellite RL units. As I planned to visit RL units under Pakala jurisdiction, I stayed that night accommodating myself in VAS room. Dr.Sukumar, VAS, proposed to go for a movie-theate that evening after completion of inspection. Before leaving for cinema theatre, he whispered to me, "Excuse me sir, just a minute" and moved towards a pan-shop adjacent to the veterinary hospital, I saw my VAS saying something to him, in reply to him the shop man saying okay doctor. Swiftly coming to me the VAS said to me, "Sir I have put a word

to him about our going to the cinema theatre and the details of theatre for contact in case if somebody comes to dispensary with any emergency case". Such was the demand from farmers for the services in that area.

During NGOS strike of work, all the para staff were on strike for almost 38 days. Surprising thing was that no decrease in number of artificial inseminations done in Chittoor district for that strike period.The staff closed the hospital doors but worked outside the hospital premises to sustain the good-will and commitment to service to the farmers.

g. My Layover at Vizianagaram

A small historic town of North Coastal districts as the headquarters of Vizianagaram district formed in 1979. My longest stay at the place has developed acquantance with local artistes, literary men, philosophers and scholars. Apart from my professional work I had nice time with many cultural programmes. Learnt many things which honed my personal life skills.

i. My First District Officers Meeting

The Deputy director convened a meeting of all the Asist Directors(AH) in the district on 20th day of my taking charge. In the evening, just before conclusion of the meeting the office attender gave a chit to him, looking into the chit he told the attender to ask them to wait for ten minutes.

I was about to move out after the meeting after 10 minutes. The Deputy director(AH) asked me to stay back for a few more minutes. Meanwhile, three office bearers of the Para-Vet Association came inside and handed over a petition of grievances. The Deputy Director introduced me to them as the new Assistant Director, Vizianagaram recently joined.

After greeting me one of them gave me a paper saying it as a copy of the petition submitted to the Deputy Director. They were talking to the Deputy Director while I was going through the contents of the petition. I heard, Deputy Director telling them that he would attend to their grievances. They left the room, I asked the Deputy Director," Why this petition, this is all routine administrative issues which can be addressed routinely". To this he added," This is what they do every time, they are petition mongers, give petition even on petty things. Because you are new to this district, I caution you to be strict with these fellows and do not entertain them"; after a paus he added," The blue shirt fellow (Mr Prabhu Das) is a head- weight fellow and be careful with him". I nodded my head with a smile.

Over a period of time I found Mr.Prabhudas, but for his body language, he was honest in his work, good with local farmers and speaks what he feels without hesitation which might have not been liked by many of the officers.

During one of the District cattle shows organized at Vizianagaram in 1989 under my supervision, I noticed his organization skills, when there was sudden gales in the afternoon resulting in total collapse of temporary sheds and tents, in rescuing trapped people and animals in the show with his team.

During one of the district meetings of all the Veterinarians and Para-Vets, suddenly Mr Prabhu Das, started arguing with the Deputy Director. with high pitched tone, the Deputy Director was countering him. The scenario was found very embarrassing for me and I got up to pacify them to start with. I requested, "Mr Prabhu Das, stop arguments, say sorry to Deputy Director and take your seat". Then he said, "Sir, every time you try to cool us down and you are not aware how badly the Deputy director talks about us and about you also. You keep very quiet and you pacify us to keep cool. It is not possible for us, kindly do not cool us down". The Deputy director was also raising his voice at him. Then I went from dais to the middle of the meeting hall where Prabhu Das was arguing and I told him," It is not good behavior on your part. If you have any respect and regard for me, you stop your argument immediately". Then saying sorry, he sat down. After the meeting everybody told me that but for my intervention, the scene could have been ugly. Mr Prabhu Das came to me and sought apology explaining the inciting causes. I pacified him saying whatever the cause one should not argue with superior officer in such gathering. He never repeated it during succeeding three years of my stay at Vizianagaram.Ten years later when I was at Visakhapatnam on official visit, Mr.Prabhu Das came to see me. Looking at him I asked him," How are you, How is about your grown up children and your wife's health?" Prabhudas with tears in his eyes said,"Sir, I never came across with an officer like you sir,when you talk to us you talk like our family member.Presently I am working in this district.Hearing about your visit to this place,I came to see you to pay my regards for giving me lot of emotional support while working in your division.Thank you sir".

This episode brings back to my memory about such a person among my staff when I was at Tirupati as Assist Director(AH).

Two days after my joining in Nov 1984 at Tirupati, my administrative staff briefed about staff members in the field stations. I was given to understanding that except for one contagerous person, a Livestock assistant, all others were very obedient, hard working and sincere. During very first

meeting of all the field staff in Tirupati division. I told the gathering, "Do not hesitate to bring to my notice any problems during discharge of your legitimate duties and I am here to take care of your official issues at my level like sanction of increments, leave sanction, GPF withdrawl, Travelling allowance bills etc on time."

I asked," Mr Murugesan.. do you have any issues with Divisional office?"

For a moment he kept silent and said," Sir, this is the first time in my twenty three years of service any officer asking me like this".

I told him," This may be your first, but this is my normal practice wherever I work".

He outpoured all his anguish that he was ill treated in all aspects and how he was harassed all these years forcing him to argue, write petitions against and be indifferent and frustrated.

Then I told him, "Mr Murugesan, can you help me to help you?"

He looked at me with a surprise and all the staff were looking at both of us. I repeated what I said to him.

Amazing, he asked," What is this sir, what is that I can help you and as my superior officer you alone can help me".

Then I briefed him," You can help me by your performance like over reaching your targets of activities, helping farmers by ensuring your presence at your place and extending services and prompt reporting to your VAS, behaving well with a positive attitude".

To the surprise of everyone, he outperformed by the end of the year, As promised, I cleared what all I could do at my level and sent proposals with positive remarks to my superior officers for clearing his personal administrative issues. In the subsequent year also he proved himself as one of the best performers.

During one of his visits to Tirupati, the Director asked me," Dr.Sreeramulu…What is the trick you played on Mr Murugesan to bring such transformation in him in such a short period?"

I confessed to him, "Sir during my training you told me how you used to rate people. I followed the same principle, I rate everybody to be good to start with then add or subtract scores unlike many who take everybody as very bad and start grading."

The learning point is that irrespective of the cadre or status everybody is a human with emotion and one has to give respect to that then the outcome would be unimaginably positive.

ii. The Existential Reality

On the third day of my joining duty at Vizianagaram I was seriously going through Travelling Allowance (TA)claim bills of staff which were put up for my approval. I found a letter addressed by the President & Secretary of Para Veterinarians' Association on one of the bundles complaining about delay in sanction of TA bills with a request to hasten up the process. It was a surprise for me to see such a letter as I never come across with such a letter earlier. I was a little aghast when I was told by the concerned Senior Assistant of the office that it was a routine practice in Vizianagaram. I could not digest that sort of practice but I tried to answer myself that for the last seven months there was no regular Assistant Director at that plce and In addition, there was a delay in budget release. Usually the amount released doesn't cater to even 25 percent of the claimed amount. This was the common budget status in those years. In spite of that I was not convinced about such a letter from the association. Just then the office attender came inside and informed me that the Secretary of the Association was seeking permission to speak to me. I nodded my head: the next minute three persons were in front of me, greeted me, continued to stand and on my insistence, they took seats opposite to me. As a customary welcome, I was offered a flower bouquet and I thanked them. Then I enquired about their association activities. Then I picked up a bundle of TA bills with the Association letter and pushed the letter towards them with a question mark. They gazed at me for a moment and poured out their grievances.Keeping my cool I requested them to take back the letter and assured them that there was no need for such letters in future. They had obliged and thanked me for giving them due respect by asking them to sit and for listening to them patiently. During my stay of five years, I cleared the pending bills of previous three years. By the 4^{th} and 5^{th} year. the released budget was found adequate to clear the bills of claim till March of the current year.

My habit of scrutinising the TA bills as and when they were received by post, solved a few ticklish problems in office administration. In most of the administrative offices the practice was that whenever such TA bills were received, office stamp with date was put on the first page of the bill, bundled month-wise and year-wise, kept separately by the concerned office assistant. As and when the budget was released the bills were kept for scrutiny for approval of the sanctioning authority. When all the bills were kept at a time, it would be a boring and tiresome task for the officer.

I adopted a different approach for scrutiny and approval though it took extra time for me on routine basis. Many of my staff appreciated my approach with a few grumblings. I had to choose between being kind and being right. I had chosen to be kind to my workforce, and I had the satisfaction of being always right.

iii. Smiles of gratitude

A woman in her early forties with a gloomy face came to my office accompanied by her school-going dauhter. She appeared as though she was burdened with all the problems in the world and introduced herself as the wife of Mr.Viroji Rao (Veterinary Assistant) who was working in my jurisdiction. She was in tears and complained that her husband was a sick person and was drawing minimum salary in spite of 15 years of service and that she was unable to cope up with the burden of running her family with school- going daughters and one college going son. She was very sore that in spite of her repeated visits and pleadings to this office since last two years nobody was sympathetic to resolve the issue.

Meanwhile, I sent a word for the Senior Assistant and as he came in, I asked him about the issue. He started explaining that the case was hopeless and since 10 years nobody could do anything to resolve this case as the candidate had worked in other districts for some time, very irregular with unsatisfactory Annual Confidential Reports, nobody could fix his pay as "Service Register" was not updated and concluded that nobody can handle his case.

She was virtually in tears and in my presence she questioned the Senior Assistant, "You have promised me to do the needful in my husband's favour and for that I have also paid you Rs. 150/- after selling my 'Thali bottu'. While this conversation was going on I was looking at them rolling the glass paper weight on my work- table. I raised my hand to throw the paper weight at him in rage out of anguish. To my luck the glass paperweight slipped from my palm and fell down and nobody had noticed it. I thanked my stars, otherwise it could have become a big issue.

I calmed down myself. It was a great lesson for me and I never lost my cool since then. Politely, I requested her to give some more time with a promise that I would look into the matter seriously and do the needful. She left thanking me for my positive response, sobbing herself saying that earlier nobody had given her even a patient hearing.

I asked my Senior Assistant (establishment) Mrs. Prasadini to prepare a brief note on the missing service entries, places, concerned offices, districts

etc in two days' time to understand the case myself. On the third day the report was on my table. I left a word with the office staff not to disturb me for one hour with phone calls, visitors and files: while going through report, I found that Mr Viroji, absented himself from duty on a few occasions and those periods were not regularized: he was transferred to 4 or 5 places to different divisions in two districts. One more thing, I learnt about him was his unwelcome mannerisms and his reluctance to be sincere in work made his superior officers unsympathetic towards him. He was also not enthusiastic about his career and himself — his family members felt all the brunt.

Brushing aside his personal inadequacies, I looked at the plight of his family and asked the Senior Assistant, how much time he needs to settle this issue. He repeated that it was not possible. Narrating my experience in earlier stint at Tirupati, I explained to him about a unique case where there was no Service Register at all for one class IV employee, an attender, in a Veterinary Dispensary. The then Senior Assistant came to me one day with this peculiar situation seeking for advice: while going through the personal records for sanction of leave on Medical grounds, he found that this candidate was about to retire on super -annuation in six months time but his service register was not available even at his previous divisional office where from he was transferred to Tirupati division. The candidate was a Contingent Worker earlier and got into Class IV service five years back and it escaped the attention of administration inadvertently. Then I spoke to my counterparts in other divisions in Chittoor District and requested their help in building up the record of the individual from the date of entry into grade IV service. A clerk in my office was assigned with the task of going round the previous workplaces of the candidate and get entries into Service Register. It took almost four months to update his service register. By that time I got transfer to Vizianagaram.

Later I came to know that the person had retired and suffered a paralytic stroke but survived with crippled left hand and leg. When I was on an official visit to Tirupati at a later date, he came to me with all his disability to express his gratitude for helping him in building up his records and get his pay fixed and payment of substantial amount of pension benefits to him by constantly pursuing the issue with my successor even after my leaving the place.This experience had emboldened me to handle similar issues in my subsequent official career.

I asked the Senior Assistant again,"How much time do you need?". He was murmuring. Sternly I asked him," You fix a time frame for yourself to

complete this task and tell me, till then I do not ask you about Mr.Viroji's case". "Three months Sir", he spelt out. Of course it took about five months to fix Mr.Viroji's pay and his arrears of pay amounted to about Rs.80,000 and I sent the Senior Assistant to deposit that amount in the name of Mr.Viroji's wife with his consent by convincing him.

The smiles in their faces and expression of satisfaction and gratitude in their eyes gave me great energy and sense of happiness.

iv. Contradictions and Corrective measures

One day the spouse of a Livestock Assistant(LSA) came to my office and pleaded with me to save her family. She was complaining that her husband had developed extra-marital relations with an attender, recently widowed and employed on compassionate grounds, I know him, as a very sincere and hard working man but his immoral personal behaviour was unpardonable though I could pity at the man's weakness. I promised her to help her family and asked her to go back and keep quiet for some time. By the third day of her visit, a delegation of four local politicians from her village came to me demanding not to transfer the woman attender as she was innocent woman with a child staying with her aged mother. I did not say anything except for promise of doing justice to her. At the end of the week I called the LSA and another LSA from nearby rural dispensary; explaining the situation, I convinced them to help each other to avoid unpleasant ethical problems; obtained request letters for mutual transfers from both of them, without expenditure to public exchequer issued transfer orders, asked them to go to their new places next morning without any delay. The lady attender was also shifted to a nearby place in a leave vacancy on other duty leaving no opportunity to politicians to bring pressure on me simultaneously adhering to transfer guidelines.

In another instance, Mr.K.Demullu, one of my Livestock Assistants came to me and suddenly broke down and started weeping loudly. For a moment, I could not understand the reason for his sudden breakdown. He was a very humble and silent worker. I was aware that he lost his grown-up son knocked down by a bus on main road while coming from Junior college, two months back. I asked him to sit and offered him a glass of drinking water and allowed him to settle for some time. After calming down, I asked him how could I help him.

He told me that his wife was becoming hysterical whenever she goes to market road and happened to see the passing buses or even hearing honking

of buses after accidental death of their son. He pleaded with me to transfer him to any other place with a hope of some change for betterment in his wife. I had all sympathies with him. I asked him not to discuss with anybody and give me some time to help him. This issue was in my mind since then and talked to a few of his colleagues who could volunteer to help him. At last I found Mr.Rama Rao, a Junior Veterinary officer whose grown up children were away from him on employment and lives with his wife without any encumbrances. I requested him to help me to help Mr. Demullu, He volunteered on my request for mutual request transfer and they were there in their new places in a week. I felt happy on hearing from Mr Demullu that his wife was recovering slowly two months after shifting to the new place.

The Deputy Director, then the district head,Vizianagaram asked me to meet him in his office next door; promptly I went to his chambers, after greeting him I sat opposite to him; just then the office superintendent was standing by the side of his table with some files for briefing him.

Suddenly with a frowning face and high pitch of tone, he asked me, "How is that you gave some transfer orders ignoring Deputy director, the District Head against ban orders on transfers in the middle of the year. I will complain against you to the Director, if you do not cancel them immediately today itself".

I explained the circumstances and told him, "I did not flout any prevailing transfer rules and pleaded with him that one issue was ethical and the second was ill-health, very genuine issues. Almost, three months were over and all of them were happy and found improvement in work in their institutions also". Although he was impatient and interrupting me during my narration without listening to me and was insisting me to cancel the orders immediately.

Twenty minutes after my patient explanation, I told him," I have already submitted copies of transfer orders issued three months back and and now you are insisting me to cancel those orders. As my superior officer and head of the district you can cancel those orders if you are very particular but, I cannot and I will not".

Again he threatened me, "I will complain against you to the director."

Then I said, "Okay, sir, I cannot stop you from complaining against me. I am answerable to all the consequences that arise; once again I request you to go through the circumstances explained with cool and calm mind, more than this I have nothing to say any more". Saying this, I came out.

Next day the personal assistant to Director rang up and connected me to the Director. I explained in detail the happenings to him. Then the Director said "Okay, Dr. Sreeramulu, nothing to worry".

It was a great a lesson for me but I never stopped helping my team members in genuine cases and never hesitated to take action against errands.

v. Dared to be Different

I finished my Bachelor's course in College of Veterinary Science, Tirupati (formerly Andhra Veterinary College) under AP Agricultural University in 1969. I belong to first batch of BVSc under the Land Grant pattern of Veterinary education under newly formed AP Agricultural University in 1964. Trimester system, grading pattern (Four Point Scale) were new to faculty members and we students as well. We, 80 students got admitted at Tirupati campus and only sixty came out after 15 trimesters in 1969.

APAU was the largest agricultural university in the country at that time. My teachers used to say if the students were not performing well it reflected on the performance of the teachers according to the concept of Land Grant pattern of education. There was periodical teacher assessment by students which was a new experience to teachers and students as well.

The assessment process impressed me as a student and it occurred to me why not I try this type of assessment of me by my VASs and para-staff when I was in the govt. department service. I used to try the assessment process one month after my joining at the place and at the time of leaving the place.

I got higher scores with seniors above the age of forty years both Vets (91.5%) and para-vets (92.78%) while it was 87.01% with Vets and 87.96% with para-vets below 40 years of age in Tirupati division during the period 1984 to 1987. The overall score was 89.89%.

In a similar exercise in Vizianagaram division in 1988, the score was 89.11% with vets under 40 years group while it was 90% with Vets group above 40 years of age. With reference to para-vets it was 78.81% with youngsters while it was 79.16% with older age group(above 40 years age). In the last year of my stay it was 91.02% with Vets group and 89.96% with para-vets (June 1992). I was excited with my score in the last(fifth) year of my stay with higher scores from different categories of para-vets and Vets. I used these guidelines(results) to improve my performance in my subsequent assignment. Knowing this, some of my colleagues exclaimed at my daringness at getting evaluated by subordinates whom I used to address my teammates.

h. My sojourn in Nellore

i. The very first day... July 7th, 1992

I got down at Nellore railway station by Howrah- Madras mail in early hours(1.30 a.m) of 7th July,1992 along with my wife and children from Vizianagaram on promotion and took rest for a while. Finishing breakfast proceeded to the village fifty kilometers away where the District Fodder Week celebration was planned. Dr.S.Ramalinga Raju,Joint Director of Animal Husbandry, surprised on seeing me at the venue. In the meeting, he introduced me to the dignitaries on dais and farmers' gathering. After sometime my turn was to speak. Finding some youngsters looking at the exhibits a little away, to draw their attention I said," My young friends, 'koddiga.. face turning ichukondi'(turn your faces this side)" in Telugu,the oft repeated dialogue of the cine hero, Chiranjeevi in a film released a week back. This roused thunderous laugh at the venue and the gathering listened to me attentively till I finished in less than ten minutes. My professional colleagues felt happy with my presence making the programme interesting and lively.

ii. Animal Birth Control Programmes

My responsibility was implementation of sheep development programme under Centrally sponsored 'Special Livestock Breeding Programme (SLBP) in Nellore district. Going round the district, I collected data on sheep development programmes implemented by AH department and other rural development programmes for weaker sections. The results were very satisfying for me to know the SLBP was very successful compared to other sheep development programmes.The reasons were good monitoring, attitudes of the clientale with reference to social heirarchy.

My add on responsibility was Animal Welfar Programme with focus on reducing the number of dogs under ' Animal Birth Control Programme'. One of the very senior members of Animal Welfare Board of India and dedicated Animal welfare activist Mr.Dutt resident of Nellore residing six buildings away from my office was a frequent visitor to my office.He took genuine interest and with his persistent attitude and patience he used his good offices in getting extra allocation of funds to Nellore district. Enthused by his interest and encouragement, I took initiative to encourage Vets in the district especially youngsters in organising birth control programmes in surgical camps for spaying male dogs in large numbers drawing attention of the public, politicians and other government officials. My interest was prevention of

deaths by rabid dogs.The programme could not be sustained for long at our level.Unless it is a National programme with a policy, the efforts put by people like me, will not yield any perceptible impact on rabies control. Sometimes the effort is its own reward, no matter what the result is.

i. My Tryst with Rinderpest Disease

On July First 2011 while browsing the website of Office Internatinale Epizooties(World Organisation for Animal Health) and Food & Agriculture Organisation(FAO). I got excited reading the news of the "Global Declaration of Freedom from Rinderpest disease by FAO in its 37th Conference endorsed by two hundred member countries on 28th June, 2011, the 'sixth day' of the 'new moon day'. What a strange coincidence? Exactly forty years back on 22nd June, 1971, the 'new moon day' I joined in Govt. service as a Vet incharge of Rinderpest Eradication Scheme. My passion for rinderpest disease was ignited by my Professor of Veterinary Preventive Medicine, Dr.P.L.Narayana Rao, the first State Rinderpest Officer in Govt. who piloted National Rinderpest Eradication Programme(NREP) in 1950s, with his lectures on rinderpest disease.

The passion was continued as diagnostician, disease investigator, production incharge of rinderpest vaccine and standardisation, as regional rinderpest officer and state rinderpest officer during National Project on Rinderpest Eradication (NPRE) in the country and as state Animal Health officer (Additional Director) in the fag end of my government service. Forty years of my dream fulfilled with the announcement of global freedom of the rinderpest seize.

Human history is shaped by many factors, viruses being one among them. The ten thousand year old rinderpest virus devastated lives of cattle as well as people dependent on them worldover; the disease was a persistent problem in India also for centuries depite the availability of vaccines like Goat Tissue Rinderpest vaccine in 1930s developed by J.T. Edwards working at Mukteshwar Laboratory. The disease was endemic in our country in 1950s. Wth launching of NREP in 1950s(first launched in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra in 1956-57 and extended to other parts of the country) which could reduce the number of outbreaks from 8000 to 300 in less than ten years. It was a limited success. Again raging inferno of rinderpest disease raised its head in 1970s and 1980s. Some experts opined that it was a mere management problem rather than a vaccination problem.

However, the final thrust in 1992 with National Project on Rinderpest Eradication (NPRE) with international support system and global emergency-Global Rinderpest Eradication Program (GREP) brought home to all of us the importance of concerted international effort in combating this pandemic disease. The sharing of scientific information was an essential part of this. A policy of open and collaborative exchange was established and had been sustained ever since to a degree never seen before. This contrasts starkly with the events of history.

We were successful and our country was first declared as 'Free from Rinderpest disease' under the three stage protocol of OIE on 27th May,2006 on the ' new moon day' another coincidence. Our success in India was unique in the sense without any slaughter policy and looming threat of rinderpest disease in sheep and goats as well, we all kept working at the demise of rinderpest. Now rinderpest disease is a warp and woof of history.

I was Special Officer, Rinderpest Eradication Scheme in 1993 with the responsibility of implementation of NPRE in Andhra Pradesh. In my experience coordinating rinderpest vaccination campaign did not make me an infectious disease expert; but it did give me a battle field expertise in what works and what doesn't work in our governmental framework. All of the existing systems are without any concrete approach to accountability. My generation set out to change history; prove that right was greater than might. This assignment was one of the greatest gifts of my professional career. The job was tantalising and I was confident that I could do it well. I had been grappling for years with the challenges of rinderpest eradication. Many thought rinderpest eradication would be impossible. Their scepticism was not without reason because of enormity of our country and bovine numbers with no slaughter policy.

Success came not only through the provision of big resources but the wise and careful selection of problems and correctives also made difference. Above all what is required is hard sustained work and dedication. In the 21st century the goal of NPRE to put an end to the scourge was tantalisingly successful. We were an army of hundreds of Vets, hundreds of supporting para-Vets and thousands of farmers in this war against rinderpest disease.

I admire my brethren who had sacrificed their time with their families to work alongside with so much generosity, warmth and dedication. I was full of elan and a burning curiosity.

I don't claim to be the leader but I was an humble 'Fugleman' in the fight against rinderpest unmistakably and unapologitically.

It was a blessing for me to be part of eliminating suffering from this pandemic pest.

j. Sojourn in Netherlands

That was my first travel out of the country to the Netherlands on 26th January, 1995 for an eight-week International training course on 'Project management and Programme Administration in MDF(an International Management Training and Consultancy Bureau) at Ede-Wageningen. I had seven other colleagues from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia. I was the second person to arrive at the place a day before the start of the programme.The training was very interesting with participatory approach and role plays. Even very minute aspects were never ignored.

The Dutch people were very receptive, friendly and helpful. I used to share about Indian way of living, customs, literature and culture with my other colleagues. Looking at me fresh with daily bath practice every morning and 'Vibhuti'(sacred ash) mark on my forehead my colleagues used to ask probing questions. Especially my colleague from Pakisthan used to share his interactions with his grand-father about Indians and culture. We used to be very friendly and go out together at leisure time.

Two weeks after the start of training programme, the Course Director informed us that from the next day onwards every one of us had to work on desktop computer systems provided to each one of us independently for the rest of the next six weeks. Myself and my Sudanese colleague working with an NGO had some basic knowledge on usage of computers while other six had never touched the computers. One of the faculty members assured us," Don't get panicky, by the time you leave this place after the training course you will be conversant with computer usage". He cited his own example saying that he was actually a farmer and in two years time he had become faculty member. Actually that was a breakthrough encouragement to all of us.

The Course Director Mr.Bram told us that arrangements would be made with network facility to work from the next day. Seven of my colleagues went out for a stroll that evening while I stayed back in my hotel lobby and was going through that day's newspapers and magazines. I saw that our course director going upstairs to our classroom. As I did not notice him coming down even after fifteen minutes, I also went upstairs. To my utter surprise, I found him arranging desktop computers himself alone. I could not resist myself

and started helping in arranging them on the tables. He politely declined my helping hand saying, "Dr.Piedy, I can do myself alone". But I continued. At the end he thanked me saying," Thank God, I could finish it early with your help" and moved out hurriedly telling me that he had to take home groceries, otherwise his wife would be furious. For a moment it flashed in my mind' wife is wife any where in the world'.

Next day we were all inquisitively looking at our desktops on our individual tables with our names on them. The concerned faculty greeted us and enquired," Last night something very unusual happened; could you notice it?". We were looking at each other with no response from our side. He told us that for the first time in forty years, electricity power went off for thirty five seconds in his country. Some of my colleagues from African countries spelt out that in their countries sometimes for days together they live without electric power even in big cities. I kept silent as we experience such power cuts for a few hours in summer months but not for days in Hyderabad city where I lived.

In another incident, we with our Course Director were travelling to the Hague city, the governance centre of the Netherlands and International Court of Justice. We took a train at Ede-Wageningen and got down at a station to board another train to the destination. We were chit-chatting during the wait for the train. Suddenly there was an announcement in Dutch language about delay in arrival time of the train to the Hague. I looked at my Course Director with a smile by recollecting his boasting statement that the trains in his country were very punctual a few days back; he was about to say something to us about the cause for the delay, just then there was another announcement to the effect that an alternate train would be arriving in four minutes. Now it was our turn to be amazed at the quick response of railway company, My colleagues commented that they cannot guess when they would reach their destinations in their countries because of technical hitches, apathy and inefficiency of railway administration.

As per the schedule of our training calender we left for Brussels, the national capital of Belgium by road early in the morning by 5 a.m. in a van. It was pitch dark and I was dozing in my seat. The van driver after a while suddenly announced," Friends please watch one of the highest land areas in our Netherlands". As already the Sun rose I started watching on either side of the road. The driver with loud voice asked us to look on our right side. As I was sitting on right side of van interestingly I watched for it but could not see. Then the driver slowed down the vehicle and directed us to a spot at

which I wondered looking at its height and could not resist my temptation of commenting that the height of the land mass appeared far lower than our dumping yard in our city of Hyderabad at which everybody split in to laughter.

We had interactions with officials of European Union Commission for two days about development projects and EU experiences in project management and programme administration in Brussels. We also visited Antwerp city known for diamonds. I visited Amsterdam and the boat ride was very exciting. Van Ghog museum, which depicted ancient history of Netherlands from caveman period was exhilarating. It was very interesting to see Mahatma Gandhi and Indira Gandhi wax models along with Marlyn Manro and other Hollywood celebrities in Madam Tussad museum.I got the opportunity of visiting Rotterdam known for seaport in Europe.

The Management training with real work situation was very appreciative and it helped me in my professional work and post-retirement assignments.

k. My Ongole stopover

Ongole is a small developing town and head-quarters of Prakasam district formed in 1970 in memory of sri Tanguturi Prakasam Pantulu, a freedom fighter and the first Chief Minister of Andhra state.Town's history dates back to Mouryas, Sathavahanas, Pallavas, Cholas, Kakkatiyas and Krishnadevaraya dynasty of 16th century. Well known for 'Ongole breed of cattle'world over. When I accompanied a Brazilian delegation on visit to the breed tract on the request of the Vice-Chancellor of AP.Agricultural University in 1992, I startled to see the delegation chief sitting on the ground and kissing the land in a village, 'Karavadi' near Ongole town where from his grandfather purchased a Ongole bull which had become the beacon of cattle development in Brazil.

i. The Curse on the Village

During my short tenure as Joint-Director(AH) in 1995 in Prakasam district, a few mega Animal health camps were organized in a campaign mode. In one such campaign in Naguluppalapadu Mandal, on the preceding day late evening, a "Rythu-ghosti" was planned in the centre of the village under a big banyan tree. Myself, the Divisional Assistant director, the local VAS and his staff were squatting on the mats spread over on "Rachabanda"(a platform where villagers gather). Everybody was wondering what was this meeting with district officer and many Veterinary staff in the late evening as it was first of the experience in their village as well as to my departmental

officers in the district. But it was a regular activity for me in all the places wherever I worked earlier.

After explaining about the departmental activities to improve livestock productivity and briefing about our next day's agenda by local officers, I asked the gathered farmers to seek clarifications or any doubts or any other help they need. There was absolute silence for a while as it was the first time that they were asked to speak unlike in earlier occasions where they were tuned only to hear what the visiting officials say or speeches and leave hurriedly with no scope for interaction. Inspite of repeated asking there was stoic silence for some more time and I found impatience in the faces of my colleagues, but I was insisting the villagers to speak out. After a few minutes of silence, one of the farmers started explaining the problem they were facing in that village while some others tried to snub him shouting," Why do you raise such issues targeting the individuals?".

Pleading them not to interrupt him, I encouraged the farmer to speak out. He poured out his agony, "Sir, since one year, no new calf was born out of artificial insemination(AI) in this village." Slowly a few more expressed their anguish in support of their collague. One of them very specifically mentioned that since the present Junior veterinary officer(JVO) took charge of the rural dispensary in their village, no calves were produced and one or two farmers from nearby villages also expressed the same.

I took the opportunity of easing the situation and commented, "Somebody must have cursed your village envious of all other developments in your village."

And the whole gathering tenseness was in splits and laughed heartily for my hilarious comment and the was diffused. Then I asked my specialists to explain about reproductive cycles in buffaloes, reasons for failure of conception and corrective measures and management practices.This was followed with screening of films on reproduction, Rinderpest-vaccination campaign, fodder production and sheep management for one and half hours. I stayed back in the village in the house of village sarpanch for that night. My colleagues left for their homes as they came unprepared for night stay as Ongole town was only twenty kilometers away.

During such campaigns I used to experience festive mood in the villages with gathering of about 20 to 30 veterinary staff, farmers from the village and nearby villages with their animals, village leaders and big farmers taking pride in hosting such events. All this credit goes to the local VAS who maintains such good-will with the farming community. Always I was proud of my team members.

It was my usual practice to stand near the 'trevis' talking to farmers while the VAS or AD was examining the animals for reproductive status. That day to my astonishment only two of the inseminated buffaloes were found pregnant while most of the she-buffaloes inseminated by the present JVO were found negative for pregnancy. I did not say anything or express any unpleasantness on the local JVO though I could see some anxiety in his face.

At the end of each such camp, my habit was to sit with all my staff and review the case sheets for follow up. Discuss about interesting cases if any. In the middle of the discussion, the local JVO suddenly got up to say something. The local VAS impatiently said, "Why do you interrupt?, Why don't you wait till the end if you have something to say?". I looked at the VAS to allow him to speak and gestured at the JVO to speak.

With a sorry face he expressed, "Sir, all these years, I have been working in sheep section: on promotion I am posted here and I am not very conversant with AI technique, I feel extremely sorry. Since yesterday evening I am hesitant to talk to you looking into your eyes as I am feeling guilty and above all you did not say a word about my failure, I could not resist myself to express my inability and inefficiency".

I interjected, "No regrets, forget about it. It is not your fault. It is our failure to identify your training needs".

I looked at the VAS with a question mark. The VAS said,"'Sir, I will send him for refresher training".

Intervening him I said, "Doctor, sending him for training is nice idea but it will take some time to schedule it and organise by the regional training centre, meanwhile why don't you train him at your VD for ten days and in his place you ask your Veterinary Assistant to work for ten days here. The JVO is a very senior person, he must have undergone AI training but he did not get opportunity to practice". Then, I sked the Divisional Assistant Director to issue orders to that effect. Three months after this, at a farewell evening on my transfer to Hyderabad, the JVO thanked me for the gesture and told that now he was very confident of his AI technique.

At a later date during one such animal health camp in Kothapatnam village about 20 km away to Ongole town, I was at trevis' as usual talking to farmers. One newly married young woman from Harijan colony brought her buffalo for pregnancy diagnosis; to the question when it was inseminated, she said, "No sir,this animal is purchased by my father when it is supposed to be three months pregnant". To the next question, when it was purchased?,

she told with proudness in her eyes, "About four months back as a marriage gift for me." Then I told her, "You must have got it examined long back at the local veterinary hospital". She confidently asserted, "Sir! I am sure sir it is pregnant, see the animal sir, it has put lot of weight with shining skin". Then I asked her, "When do you expect it to give a calf?" Then she started narrating, "In next three months sir, I can sell the milk and I have to save money for my growing kid in me and to clear some of our hand loans."

During this conversation, I was watching my VAS examining the animal. I could guess the result and the young woman was looking at the VAS and me anxiously.

I told her, "It appears, your buffaloe is 14 months pregnant."

In her bewilderment, she looked at my VAS and me alternately for a few seconds. Then she could get it that her heifer was non pregnant with our facial expressions. In a fraction of a moment she started weeping unconsolably at a very high pitch cursing her stars and fate. I was taken aback at her sudden outburst of agony but allowed her to wail for a few minutes and consoled her saying "At least you brought it now, we will see that it comes to 'heat' early and get it impregnated so that in next twelve months you have a calf and milk. The blunder you made was believing a tradesman but in future if somebody says the animal is pregnant, get it examined by a veterinary doctor before you transact".

This incidence highlights how an unproductive animal shatters the livelihood of a family particularly poorest of the poor. It was a heart wrenching and touching incident for me and explained to my staff, try to be helpful with God's given opportunity.

ii. The Biggest-ever Sheep Vaccination Campaign

In 1995 an intense rinderpest vaccination campaign was on in Andhra Pradesh.

In Andhra Pradesh, Krishna, Guntur, Prakasam, Nalgonda and Warangal districts were designated as 'sentinel districts' where no cattle vaccinations(RP) were allowed to test the efficacy of the immune zone except in exceptional cases of outbreak of disease during vaccination phase. However,as there were incidences of disease among sheep and goats mass vaccination of small ruminants with rinderpest vaccine was allowed in these districts with great reluctance from national project authorities on the insistence of concerned state governments. This practice was allowed because of non availability of specific vaccine for "Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) those days in our country.

I took the initiative in Prakasam district to take up sheep vaccination campaign mobilising the support of Zilla Parishad, Mandal Parishats, Panchayat Raj officials, District Sheep Breeeder's Association and mass media.

A grand inaugural function was organized at 'Santhanuthalapadu' village. The ZPP Chairman, District collector, local MLA attended the event. That day more than eleven thousand sheep from neighbouring mandals gathered for vaccination. I understand that was the first time such a mega event was organised in the annals of Prakasam district. That credit goes to the local Veterinary Asst. Surgeon, Dr.Nageswara Rao who along with his para staff and his peers, mobilised the shepherds to the venue. Next day on seeing news in daily news papers my staff in other areas did not believe such an operation had happened at one place on a single day. Congratulating the concerned VASs, I made them realise about their strength, capabilities and energies.

Following weeks, there were number of requests for vaccination campaigns in their villages from shephard unions, MPP members in the district. The tempo continued even after my leaving the district in January, 1996. This campaign was organized with no extra budget support. I always admired the willingness of my peers for hard work, putting up with inconvenience to deliver services even in odd situations. That was the strength of veterinarians in such rural welfare activities.

iii. Statue for the VAS

During my short tenure at Ongole, one day the office attender came inside and informed me that a Mandal President and a few farmers of Konakanamitla village along with the local VAS wanted to see me. I got out of my files and said, "Yes send them in to my room". They entered into my office chambers and extended an invitation to attend an unveiling ceremony of statue of the former VAS who served their mandal to the great satisfaction of all the farmers. I felt very happy on hearing such a gesture from the farmers in recognition of his services, one of my professional colleagues. It was a great honour to the veterinarian. To my knowledge no such honour was extended to a departed soul of a field veterinarian, Dr Appa Rao anywhere in the state of AP or in the country.

I attended the event and startled listening to the good words spoken by the local leaders and farmers on that occasion about Dr Appa Rao, who served at VD,Konakanamitla for over seven years and won the hearts of farmers.

The farmers who spoke, narrated their association with the VAS. It appears that the VAS used to rebuke the farmers with abusive language whenever he noticed some negligence on the part of the farmer in bringing the case to his hospital or to his notice for house visit. On hearing his abuses, they used to feel that their animal would recover from near death illness by hundred per cent. If there was no abuses coming out of his mouth means that the animal was sure to die. That was their belief in that area on Dr.Appa Rao.

During dinner time I came to know moreabout him. It seems the livestock farmers from villages around took the responsibility of getting two of his daughters married and a house was constructed for his family. Still I ponder over, who is great? The farmers or the veterinary doctor.

l. My stint with APSCCFC

On first Jan 1996, I joined duty as Special Officer (Animal Husbandry) at AP Scheduled Castes Cooperative Finance Corporation (APSCCFC) on deputation at Hyderabad. APSCCFC was established to extend support to SC population by offering subsidy, margin money and assist to get loan from scheduled banks for the tailor made projects to improve their income and living status. It had district level units also. AP state was the first state in the country to establish the institution based at Hyderabad with district branches for its operations.

My responsibility as special officer was to extend technical counselling in livestock related projects by field visits, suggest corrective measures and monitor livestock based programmes by liaising with concerned government departments and assist the Managing Director in decision making prcess. In addition I was given the responsibility of Agriculture, Horticulture, fisheries projects also.

Poultry rearing was one of the niche programmes of the corporation since 10 years. It was fascinating to know some of the groups were very successful with 'poultry complex' projects; by and large the programme was successful but could not be sustained because of complex problems with all the stakeholders involved in poultry operations but always the blame was on the so called 'beneficiary' the poor chap.

i. The Complexity of Poultry Complex

Once I happened to visit a defunct poultry complex as per our records in Eleru village of East Godavari district. To my surprise, I found the units

were functioning, buzzing with sounds of brooding chicks, growers and layers. I was puzzled to know the existing persons names and the names of the beneficiaries supported by corporation five years back were the same. My curiosity increased to know more about the happenings.

I sat with the 'beneficiaries' for a leisurely chat to find out the facts. I found that the banks refused to extend further loans because of the failure of payment of outstanding amounts by the beneficiaries. With the result these persons hired out their sheds to local upper caste families for Rs. 250/- per month per shed and himself or his family members worked in these sheds on daily wages. The irony was that they stated that they were happy with such arrangement further adding that regularly they get monthly income with no vagaries. They said that they were comfortable as workers rather than owners.

This was the same case with pisci- culture, prawn culture programmes with majority of the beneficiaries. Ultimately the beneficiary was a scapegoat and blamed for the debacle. Many factors other than the financial resource crunch have contributed to these failures. Nothing explains everything. Human affairs have more features than any one vantage can survey. Resources are not everything but they are certainly somethings, inexplicable and non-maskable. Ultimately procrastination in decision making, inefficiency, callousness, non- seriousness, lack of motivation, added to that a little of undesirable practices on the part of many of the stakeholders had resulted in a total disaster of well intended, well designed and well planned projects, a hoax. A paradox indeed.

ii. Reason for Season

Once an elected representative from West Godavari district came straight into my office chambers and enquired about the status of sanction of dairy units to selected SC beneficiaries in his constituency; I informed him that in principle the Corporation was favourable to the proposals. He insisted me to tell about timeline for release of funds and grounding of the dairy units to which I informed him that the decision had to be taken by the Managing director. Then he suggested me to organise release of funds immediately to complete the purchase and distribution of dairy units to the selected persons in next two weeks. In reply, I told him that the usual practice was not to ground milch buffalo units in summer months as it was already February, however, the final decision has to be taken by the Managing director only. Then he started blaming, "You officials do not understand or know the ground realities, you do paperwork sitting under fans leisurely, you do not have concern for poor people."

I interrupted him politely and explained, "Already we are approaching month of March and you are fixing deadline date as 31st March. The corporation is looking at sustainability of the dairy programme with the poor in mind".

He was not convinced. My other colleague, an Executive Engineer advised me not to prolong the discussion; he left the room dissatisfied, in a huff.

One hour later, I got a call from the Managing Director and he asked me, "What the issue is ?" I explained him. Next question was "What shall we do?"

I told him, "Sir, 70 percent of buffaloes usually deliver calves in Oct-Nov-Dec period, from March onwards there will be problem of availability of quality animals. It is already February month end, so next three months it is difficult to get optimum production also. The ideal period will be Oct-Nov-Dec for grounding of milch animals to help the poor beneficiaries".

Then the MD advised me, "Be always true to facts and put a note accordingly without any hesitation in mind. It is for me to take decision".

Next day, I put up a note to him accordingly and sent it to his chambers. The following morning in the first hour of the day, I got the file back. It was very amusing to read his remarks in the approval note; the MD wrote in Telugu, 'there is a season for breeding of buffaloes unlike humans'. We have sufficient reason to ground the buffalo units during winter months, accordingly inform the Executive Director concerned".

Myself and other colleagues then only came to know that the MD, Mr Chellappa IAS can write Telugu also though his mother tongue is Tamil. It is the responsibility of expert to brief the facts to take appropriate decisions by the administrative heads.

iii. The Reason for the Lag

Once the MD advised me to take a minimum of 30 min to explain about livestock schemes to all the Executive directors during review meetings. I have sent a note for the permission to purchase an'overhead projector(OHP)'; the MD approving the note said, "Send somebody and get it immediately without waiting for sanction orders etc."

I put a word to the Accounts officer, a thorough gentleman and my VAS got it on the same day evening. Almost after a fortnight, my VAS told me that the payment was not yet made to the shop for the supply of OHP. He expressed his embarrassment as he got that item on his personal contacts with the owner at a considerable discount and payment was delayed.

On enquiry, the Accounts officer smiled and said that the file was with the General Manager(GM)-Admin. My engineer colleague commented, "Till the G.M gets his 'Dakshina' the file may not see the light", smiling at me. Looking at my face, he said, "Doctor why you express wonderment, it is not the quantum of money or amount matters, it is the habit of the G.M that he will not approve the bill".

Wondering myself, I exclaimed, "Do such high ranked official next to M.D in hierarchy, expect such petty amounts?."

"No answers for certain questions", commented, my colleague.

iv. The Pandora Box

One day the MD called me and discussed about the progress of on-going projects. After the discussion, I told him that I collected data on poultry complexes since inception and analysed in respect of investment, output, supply chain, market chain vis a vis status of SC beneficiaries, what were good points to take forward and what went wrong etc.

He heard me patiently till the end for about fifteen minutes, smiled at me and ended the discussion saying "I appreciate your efforts personally, let us not open the Pandora box which may embarrass many of our earlier friends, forget about it once for all."

For a moment I could not digest his advice, later I came to my senses, looking at M.D I said, "Okay sir" and came out of his chambers brooding over my impending repatriation to my parent department. On 26th May, 1997 I said good-bye to APSCCFC.

m. My Tryst with Indo-Swiss Project

The assignment of Project Director of Indo Swiss Project Andhra Pradesh(ISPA} from May 27, 1997 to 31st March 2000 was more scintillating and engaging for me. Prior to this assignment I was sent for an eight week International course on ' Project Management and Programme Administration at Management Development Foundation (MDF) at Ede Wageningen, the Netherlands in January,1995 sponsored by ISPA. As I was associated with some of the programmes promoted by ISPA in Vizianagaram and Nellore districts, the Chief Project Advisor (expatriate) requested the Director and the Principal secretary, AHD for my posting as Project Director, ISPA, after the retirement of Dr T.B.Suryaprakasam, my senior colleague.

My task was a balancing act of maintaining cordial, positive relations with the Animal Husbandry Department(AHD) and AP Dairy Development Cooperative Federation in implementation of the ISPA funded programmes

that promote knowledge and skill development, infrastructure development for improved livestock productivity.

The positive impact in Kerala state prompted Swiss government to extend its collaboration to Andhra Pradesh with major intervention in livestock sector.Initially the ISPA support was limited to three north-coastal districts with its office at Visakhapatnam in 1975.

ISPA introduced Frozen semen technology in Andhra Pradesh for the first time. During its existence of a quarter century, ISPA had taken up number of studies for identification of issues for policy formulations with reference to improved livestock productivity. Some of the important studies were:

- Bovine and Dairy development in AP
- Economics of bovine production in AP
- Development strategies for cattle and buffalo breeding in AP
- Appraisal of milk marketing and input services in dairy sector in AP
- Status report on development of small ruminants in AP and many other related studies on gender, extension etc.

I always felt proud to be associated with some of the studies which helped in policy formulations.

Hither to we in the AHD have been carrying out target oriented livestock development and health improvement activities. A gap between the perceptions and expectations of the farmers, pre-conceived and target driven approach, lack of accountability and farmers' participation, financial constraints and inadequate coordination among organisations and departments at grass root level were some of the major constraints which could be resolved to some extent with outputs from these studies.

AHD in AP was the first state in the country to come up with a HRD policy document in the country in 1999 in government sector and on several forums the then Chief Minister of the state used to exhort proudly that AHD became resource centre for other government departments in the state and outside the state.

"The commonly perceived view of many was that the activities of AHD moved a bit from the traditional approach to a more dynamic field oriented culture for sometime"-I was one among the many rejoiced with joy.

Good-will, cordial relations at personal level and official level assume a very important role in project implementation of certain of the concepts, which one cannot even think of in government programmes. Assessment of needs involving all possible stakeholders in the concerned programme,convincing

the top hierarchy about the importance of activities, make officers and workers of different levels of the ladder to understand, discuss, develop frameworks for implementation, was a tough task.

ISPA facilitated such exercises for AHD and APDDCF as direct partners in the project and a few other govt institutions, research institutions, NGOS and private companies were also involved in these processes.

Althrough the project period of 1975 to 1995 (5 year plan periods), the stress was on infrastructure development, like establishment of frozen semen bull stations, import of pedigree bulls, equipment needed for AI service delivery, strengthening of human resources with series of training modules, taking up of studies on AI service delivery systems, and extension development activities like 'woman extension cells' with APDDCF and 'Extension cells' with Animal husbandry department.

During the last phase of ISPA, the focus was on HRD, by strengthening of available livestock Assistant Training centres into Regional Training Centres, strengthening of School of Animal Reproduction(SAR) at Mandapeta into state level Training Institute and starting of district level training centres at veterinary polyclinics of each district likewise dairy training centres.

I was also associated with Institutional building of Visakhapatnam Livestock Development Agency(VLDA) with an objective of strengthening of institutions to develop as Livestock Farmers' organisation to take up cattle breeding services independent of government support in North Coastal districts and Mahbubnagar cattle development project with APDDCF.

Small-ruminants development project was initiated involving sheep Unions; facilitated strengthening of district sheep unions and state level Federation, facilitated training programmes in association with AHD and AP Sheep Federation in Anantapur, Nalgonda districts. Fodder seed processing unit at Guntur milk union was supported based on a market research study on fodder seed.

Supported software development project for APDDCF for monitoring milk procurement, processing, distribution etc, software monitoring training programmes for personnel in HRD wing of Animal husbandry department and APDDCF was unique.

i. Dreaming Beyond

As a Project director ISPA, I happened to visit a VD, at Mylavaram near Nuziveedu of Krishna district to oversee sheep development programme facilitated by ISPA. The local VAS took me around to show me some ongoing

activities like pasture development activity in mango orchards and ram lamb rearing units. Networking the owners of mango-orchards and ram lamb-rearers to mutually help each other by leasing the orchard land for growing pasture(Stylo hamata) and allowing the ram lamb-rearers to harvest the fodder. During interaction, it was given to understanding that the land owner could save about Rs 8000/-(Rupees eight thousand) on fertilizers on mango-orchard because of fertigation by growing pasture in his one acre of land; by feeding pasture to his buffaloes, he was getting premium price for his milk with higher fat content. On knowing about my visit to the mango orchards, a few farmers gathered at the orchard and requested me to organise the supply of Stylo hamata seeds as they were also interested to grow the pasture in their orchards.

Returning to VD after the field trip, I sat with the VAS going through the records and asked the VAS whether he needs any more support for the success of the lamb rearing project as ISPA was interested in promotion of successful systems and institutional building to improve livestock productivity. The VAS informed about inadequacy of medicines and sought for supply of medicines and vaccines to control lamb and sheep mortality.

Next asked for a refrigerator for storage of drugs and vaccines. I did not commit but promised to explore the feasibility to provide support. When I looked at him, with a pause, he pleaded for funding for construction of an extra room to VD to accommodate the refrigerator as his room was too much congested. For a moment I did not realize what he was asking for? I gained my consciousness and told him that would not be possible at the moment. This was an hilarious experience with a field functionary which took me to my English lesson in seventh class wherein the hero of the story, a poor young man, Mr.Alanasker dreams of marrying the princess of that country and so on…..

ii. Budget for bribe

In addition to earlier bulk LN2 transport container, ISPA supported AHD's LN2 grid by importing second bulk LN2 transport container(3000 litres) and fitting on to a truck to transport LN2 from supply sources to district LN2 depots and it was kept under the control of Dy. Director FSBS unit at Visakhapatnam where there was a small LN2 plant also to supplement to the grid. The bulk procurement of LN2 was from Visakha steel plant and distributed to all the districts. Everything was ready except for the formality of obtaining mandatory permission of Commissioner(Explosives) based at

Nagpur of Maharashtra state; one technician trained in Switzerland by ISPA was looking after such things.

One day the Swiss Project Advisor, Mr. Henk came to my chambers with a letter from Dy director FSBS(Frozen Semen Bull station),Visakhapatnam and showed it to me. After going through the letter, I told him that I would solve that issue; he said Okay and left my chambers.

Immediately I took the phone and spoke to the concerned Dy. director, "Dear doctor, I appreciate your truthfulness and frankness. The letter was a little embarrassing and ISPA will be helpless to help you in this regard".

Then he told me, "Sir, It is a fact, I don't have any contingency amount under budget. Unless ISPA extends support, I cannot put the LN2 transport container on road."

Then I suggested him," Doctor, please send me a modified letter requesting for sanction of an extra amount of Rs.6000/- to meet miscellaneous expenditure for obtaining permission orders from the concerned authority from Nagpur instead towards payment of bribe at the Commissioner office. ISPA can support for expenditure which is not permissible under normal govt. budget but ISPA cannot support if you ask for extra money for bribing; no doubt ISPA is a little liberal that does not mean for any activity; before sending such a letter you could have consulted one of us in the project. I appreciate you for reposing such faith and confidence in ISPA for support but not for giving bribe amounts. Please pay extra care while settling the accounts with ISPA."

iii. Perspectives of Development & Audit

I found one very interesting and unusual procedure with reference to style of functioning of the Inter Cooperation (IC)/Swiss Development Cooperation(SDC) in selection of persons for placement as Chief Project Advisor (CPA) to lead a project/programme in any country. At the time of my taking responsibilities of Project Director of ISPA, the CPA position was vacant consequent to shifting of the previous CPA, Mr.DeGroot to Pakisthan in the month of May,1997. One month after my joining, I received a parcel from SDC, Berne, Switzerland. I found a letter addressed to me along with biodata formats of six candidates for the position of CPA in our project seeking my opinion in ranking the candidates. I sat with some of my colleagues in the project, gave rankings based on candidates' experience in development projects and sent back. Three weeks after this, the project office got a message that one Mr. Henk op het Veld would be visiting the project to acquaint himself with project activities. Mr. Henk was with us for ten days and left

informing us that he would be taking the charge of CPA position from Mr. Thomas Streiff, an expatriate expert with us in two weeks time.

I found six weeks after his joining, three of the expatriate experts as well as experts from AHD and APDDCF working with the project were not very comfortable with the new CPA. One day, one of the executives in the project came to me and expressed his unhappiness and disgust with the attitude of the CPA. I pacified him and assured him that I would talk to the CPA and sort out the issue. Usually the expatriates would be nice, accommodative and very friendly irrespective of the status or cadre unlike Indian bureaucrats. We had all these twenty three years,very cordial atmosphere in the project. Subsequently also some more people in the project ventilated their inconvenience with the present CPA.

The CPA was soft spoken and courteous but unfortunately, what I found in him was his suspicious nature and the reason could be his professional experience. Althrough, he had experience in accountancy and auditing of projects but not with development perspective. It was understood that he used to ask probing questions on planned and actual expenditure and at times adamant to adjustments in planned expenditure with refence to different activities within the plan. Hitherto the expenditure was monitored as per plans only with need based minor adjustments for achieving expected results. Every executive was functioning very responsibly with accountability.

Audit managers would always be suspicious unlike development managers. I hinted the CPA about the issue and he laughed it off saying" Okay Dr. Piedy".

My colleagues in the project used to express their feeling," Sir, you are too soft and you should be a little more assertive". It was my turn to say okay with a smile. I felt the ambience in the project improved after sometime from unpleasantness to pleasantness.

Once there was a message from Swiss Development Cooperation(SDC) from Berne that the Swiss Consulate General from Bombay would be visiting ISPA project office on his trip to Hyderabad. Usually, the CPA takes the responsibility. As the CPA was on a holiday that week, I went to Hotel Taj to pick him up to the project office. I introduced all my team members in the project. He enquired about the nationality of the expatriates. All the three were from the Netherlands: I added "Mr.Counsel General!, our CPA is also a Dutch gentleman". He quipped, "Wonderful, all Dutch in a Swiss Project". Everybody was in splits.He was very jovial, went round the project office to acquaint himself with on going activities, thanked everybody and took leave of us. When I was getting into the vehicle, he said "No formality, Dr.Piedy,

Mr.James can drop me at the hotel, Have nice day". Thanking me he left. He did not follow the protocol frame of our Indian bureaucrats.

iv. Bureaucratic arrogance

The twenty five years of the Swiss collaboration was coming to close in March,2000. A a round table conference was planned to revisit ISPA with the caption 'ISPA-an introspection'. Myself and the CPA met the Principal Secretary and invited him to be the chief-guest on the occasion. To his question when? I told the date, time and venue; immediately the Secretary queried, "Almost three more months time is there, why you inform so early? "The CPA told, "Mr Secretary, some are expected from SDC office, Berne and a few international consultants are also expected for the occasion. To facilitate their trip, we take advance action". The PS said "Nice. But remind me well in advance at appropriate time".

The day had come. All the resource persons, experts were in time at the venue. It was 10 a.m. and I was perturbed as the chief guest did not turn up in spite our reminder in person,the previous day. No response for my phone calls when contacted. I spoke to my ISPA colleagues,Director, AHD and MD, APDDCF, an IAS officer. Nobody could say anything. Then I took courage to speak out my mind and suggested, "Let us start deliberations on time, as and when the Principal Secretary comes, the symbolic inauguration rituals can be done and after his inaugural address, we can continue the deliberations. That will save our time for completion of our agenda items of this day." My suggestion was welcomed and at 10.15 a.m. we could start instead of 10.a.m. Really I felt embarrassed at that august gathering.

The Secretary arrived at the venue by 11 a.m. and looking at my senior executive designated to receive him at the entrance of the hotel, he shouted at him, "Where is your Project director?".

Meanwhile knowing about his arrival, I went down in the middle of the session to extend welcome to him. Looking at me he frowned on me, "Don't you know the protocols?". I apologised politely and guided him to the meeting hall. As planned the 'lighting of the lamp' a symbolic ritual indicating inauguration of the event was done. After his inaugural address he interacted with the dignitaries for fifteen minutes during the coffee break and left the venue with a plea that he had another meeting by 12 noon. That day the event went well,

For many days, I could not reconcile to this incident, for no fault of mine though my CPA, DAH, MD, APDDCF advised me not to take the unpleasant episode with the Principal secretary to the heart.

n. My Seven years with ABF

Two years after my retirement from Government service, on one day my son, daughter and son-in-law were in serious discussion, seeing me entering into the room they stopped their discussion. Smiling at them, I went out for some time. Later, I understood that they were planning to celebrate my 60th birthday. Indians especially in the southern part of the country, 60th birthday was considered as an important milestone in one's journey of life. In traditional families; that day once again marriage would be performed for the couple with all rituals that were done at the time of wedlock earlier. All the elderly couples bless the 60th birthday boy and his consort in second wedlock and younger couples and unmarried boys and girls seek blessings. My brothers, sisters, cousins with their spouses and my uncles with their spouses and many other relatives were present on the occasion. In addition friends, my earlier colleagues from Hyderabad and other districts were also present for the event.

It was a big gathering. Padma Sri Dr. M.V.Rao, the former Vice-Chancellor of A.P. Agricultural University and a world renowned agriculture scientist was also the honoured guest on my birth day to bless us. At the venue after the lunch, he asked me, "Dr.Sreeramulu, please, call all your family members for a while, just I wanted to speak to them". All had assembled around. Looking at my wife,he said," I was requesting Dr.Sreeramulu, since two years to join us in Agri Biotech Foundation(ABF) and he is not responding to my request. Please send him to our organisation from tomorrow onwards". My wife promised him saying 'yes'. That was on third August, 2007. I was already in the organisation in the governing body as one of the founding members but he wanted me to be a faculty member also. As promised, on sixth, August 2007, I joined ABF as faculty member and continued till September 2014.

At that time there were some ongoing livestock related projects supported by AP.Netherlands Biotechnology project (APNLBP) that were transferred to ABF and I was monitoring those projects. Similarly, the agriculture biotechnology projects were looked after by a retired senior professor of agricultural sciences.

During my stint in ABF, I got the opportunity of interacting with reputed national and international scientists, academicians, international science delegations. By 2009, ABF had its new building designed and constructed with laboratories for advanced research in the field of agriculture biotechnology. Apart from research, other flagship programmes were on public awareness and stakeholder consultancy, and Training programmes for students, scientists and farmers as well on agriculture biotechnology.

There were lot of myths, disbeliefs, and apprehensions on biotechnology among general populace, contradictions among scientists and confusions among politicians. I remember one such incident in Hyderabad in 2010. Antagonistic NGOs did not allow the Union Minister to speak at the programme on 'public consultation on agriculture biotechnologies' a government of India initiative. That day in the absence of Prof.G.Pakki Reddy, Chief Executive Officer, I picked up Dr.C.R.Bhatia the former Secretary of Department of Biotechnology,Govt of India, presently Vice President of ABF from Bombay at the Hyderabad airport and proceeded to the venue. To our dismay, we found large number of protestors in front of the venue. We have to take police help to enter into the auditorium and with great difficulty we could get accommodation to sit in the second row opposite to the dais. NGOs in different garbs of brinjal, wheat etc. were not allowing the central minister to talk and in a firm tone the Central Minister told the protestors, "I came here to listen to the public voices and I do not leave this dais without interacting with them, if you have something to say you can also speak out but I do not allow you to prevent me from interacting with public here". He was very adamant and resolute. One hour after the delay, the programme started when the protestors left the venue. That day I saw about seventeen telecasting vans belonging to various TV channels covering the event. I could not understand such a show of vehemence with unfounded information.

Awareness based on authentic scientific data was a must for the successful propagation of any scientific innovation for the betterment of any society. When Thomas Alva Edison switched on his electric bulb initially rumours were afloat that electricity may burn cities. Any new discovery or invention or new innovation always had to face such wild rumours. Take the case of Bt.cotton, initially, the government had burnt down Bt cotton fields with apprehensions in Gujarat state. Scientifically uneducated, self- appointed protectors of public good were spreading doubts among targeted groups. Added to this, the lay press was full of articles demonising biotechnologies, mostly in an unjustified fashion. But after a short period of lull, Bt.cotton crop area increased to twenty million acres without anybody's efforts, or promotional activities; Ninety percent of cotton produced was of Bt.Cotton. When farmers wanted it, nobody on earth could stop the surge and development. Why do we accept some stories as 'true' when the details so obviously contradict the 'head-lines?.

With this background ABF planned 'Public awareness programmes on agriculture biotechnologies; Pros and cons' for school students, college students, university students, women, farmers, agriculture and veterinary

functionaries and lawyers, traders of agricultural commodities. A team of specialists from national research institutions participated in public awareness programmes organised at different universities. At district level and village level programmes experts from universities and ABF experts used to talk on the topic and always the programme used to be interactive. More than two hundred public awareness programmes were organised in a three years period in the undivided state of Andhra Pradesh.

Either the CEO of ABF or myself used to introduce the topic. I used to look at women group and state that they were the real biotechnologists giving a pause looking at men put a question, 'How', wait for a few seconds for response, rarely there used to be one or two responses if not, I used to explain, even curd making was a biotechnology process, of course, a simple biotechnology intervention. This made people looking at us for more information about the subject. Mostly, I used to enlighten them with day to day applications in livestock production and health like Artificial Insemination in cattle and buffaloes, embryo transfer technology, vaccine production etc.

Practising advocates/lawyers attending awareness programme on agriculture biotechnologies at the end of the sessions opined that they attended out of inquisitiveness not with an intention of understanding science part of it and now convinced that a new play ground of legal disputes on patents etc was opened for them to seek specialisation in the field.

Many of the farmers had doubts about 'toxic substance' in Bt.cotton and its effect on human populations.We used to explain in detail about the substance only affects the sucking insect and no effect on other living subjects and human population. The word toxin used to be described with scary word in Telugu as 'poison'.

Usually I used to speak at the end after three or four speakers; to avoid boredom I used to screen a video of a film song from 1950s and 2010s, both the elderly and youngsters used to enjoy those songs, immediately they used to pose a common question, "Sir, are you talking about animal biotechnology?" Explaining about the technology of cloning, in a lighter vein, I used to comment, "My dear young men! Be respectful to women folk otherwise, they would ignore menfolk for begetting the children. Without men, it would be possible to produce children with biotechnology. Already in animals it was successful, citing the examples of 'Dolly 'sheep in 1996 in Scotland and 'Samrupa' a buffalo calf in India in 2009".

In one such event at Sainik school at Korukonda whole school, 600 students and teachers were in the auditorium in rapt silence to listen to us.

During the interactive session, one ninth standard boy questioned, "Sir, Which is the first? The egg or the chick?". Everybody was looking at me, not only students, but also teachers, the principal and my colleagues; after a long pause I said, "I too do not know". After the session we joined the students for lunch. The questioner again came to me and said "Excuse me sir, probably I have embarrassed you with my question".

I said, "No, not at all. Really, good question and still scientists are pondering over that question".

Three years after this incident, there was an article in a research journal answering this as 'chick was the first'.

Any technology, it was for us how to make best use of it for the wellbeing of all living beings on the earth. Technology per se was not bad but it was the intention of technologist was more important. I have participated in about 120 public awareness programmes. It was all lively and I enjoyed sharing knowledge with all groups of people. We had concentrated more on students and farmers.

Another flagship activity was village level stake-holders consultancy in 2008, which gave me an opportunity to understand the real needs of farmers at village level. The team consisted of one or two agriculture scientists, an economist, a sociologist and a veterinary scientist with the assistance of a local NGOs and village institutions. The aim was to prioritise the biotechnology research agenda. Then based on this information research projects would be designed. For me, it was a new experience.



3. In witness box

Sometimes we the Vets in Government service being Gazetted officers will be called by the Crime Investigation Departments during surprise raids on hoarders, corrupt govt.officials as offical witnesses and the Judicial courts also summon the Vets as official witnesses in legal cases. A Govt.Vet cannot deny the calls or notices or summons.

a. A Case of Meat fitness Certification

In the first few months of my service at District Clinical Laboratory in 1972, I had to attend to a II class Magistrate court as an official witness in a case filed by Srikakulam Municipal Health authority against a 'Meat Vendor'. After questioning of Sanitary inspector, and Medical Officer, I was called into the witness box. To the questions of the magistrate, I gave a detailed description of what had happened and about how I sent necessary materials to Central Laboratory (VB&RI, Hyderabad) for confirmatory results.

The defence lawyer, Mr. Tangi Satyanarayana who later became an important politician, read out the certificate issued by me and asked me the meaning of each word. Then the Magistrate asked the Lawer, "Did you complete your questions?"The lawyer sought for permission to put a last question to me.

"Did you taste the meat?" the lawyer asked me.

I said, "No":

The Magistrate commented, "How he can taste the raw meat that too unfit meat?".

But the lawyer insisted on repeating the same question "Did you taste it".

Again and again I repeated, "No"

Then the lawyer submitted to the court," Your Honour, the witness did not taste the meat but certified that the seized meat as 'stale'. Without tasting it how can he state the meat is ' stale?" and he pleaded with the court that as the VAS did not taste it but still said it was 'stale' in his certificate the case against my client be dismissed. Then the Magistrate politely thanked me and told me that I can leave the witness box.

After going home I verified the dictionary for the meaning of the word 'stale' and realised that I should be more careful, use only limited words and

appropriate words. First time I realised how the lawyers can make their way.

Later I came to know that the case was dismissed for lack of clarity in "Fitness Certificate" issued by me. This was a harsh lesson in the very first year of my service.

b. As a witness in ACB Trap case

In 1989, during my tenure in Vizianagaram, Mr. D. Venkat Rao, a Senior Assist in my office, was on his way to the bus stand to board the bus to Visakhapatnam after office hours. He was arrested by Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) for accepting a bribe of Rs 150 in a trap and it was informed to me around 8 p.m. that day at my home. Almost after a lapse of five years I got court summons in 1994 as an official witness at ACB Court, Visakhapatnam when I was the Special Officer (Rinderpest Eradication Programme) at Hyderabad.

The defence lawyer enquired me about the profile of the complainant, one of my office attenders. I told the Court that he was a hard nut, insincere, irregular, always trouble making and was transferred from Bobbili division to my office. The defence lawyer showed me some documents and registers to clarify about the genuineness of my endorsements and signatures. He wanted me to explain about the register of "Run on Notes'. I briefed the the Court that as head of the office it was my responsibility to monitor the 'Files In' and 'Files Out' from each staff member in my office. In case of pendency, I seek the reason and if necessary, advise how to go about.On further questening I briefed the Court that the complainant had given me a letter explaining his grievance that in spite of his repeated requests the 'accused' was not taking any action to clear his issue. I have enquired the 'accused' to which he offered his explanation and the events were recorded and monitored regularly to hasten up settling the grievance of the 'complainant' and his accusation that the 'accused' did not take any action was not true.

I had the habit of going through 'Run on Notes' regularly and there was a statement of the 'accused' to my remarks to put up the Govt Order to initiate action on the plea of the 'Complainant, the office attender. The accused has stated that he was trying for the copy of the Govt order from other departments as it was not circulated to subordinate offices yet from Directorate of Animal Husbandry. The Complainant's grievance that no action was initiated by the administration was not true.

The proving of complainant's similar past record and my habit of systematic notings and actions in office administration has helped the acquittal of the accused from the bribery case.

c. As an official witness in a Homicide case

A week after Deepavali festival in 1991, I was in the office going through an important report to be submitted to the Directorate. A tall and hefty man came in and introduced himself as Head Constable from Tekkali of Srikakulam district. For a while I felt why a policeman from Srikakulam came to me and thought that he probably wanted some advice on dairy farming etc. Then he told me that he came to enquire about a person working in my office.

He asked me, "Sir, Is Mr. Dalibandhu working in your office?"

I said, "Yes, he is on leave for two days followed by Deepavali but is not turned up till today."

Then the Head Constable revealed that he was arrested on the late night preceding Deepavali day with the charge of murder that evening around 6:30 p.m.

It was a surprise for me as Mr. Dalibandhu was with me at around 5:30 p.m that evening at my home and handed over me two bundles of Travelling Allowance bills for my approval along with some files for my signatures. He also brought some important letters from Directorate which were opened in my presence. I wrote necessary instructions on the letters. He then requested for sanction of casual leave for two days following Deepavali to go to his native place. I sanctioned the leave and then enquired him why he was going so late and could have gone this afternoon itself. He told me that he wanted to complete the allotted task; then go to Ganta Sthambam Chowk (market area) to purchase Deepavali crackers for his children and take a bus by 6.30 p.m. so that he could reach his home by 10 p.m.

A decade after the incident in 2003, when I was Additional Director of AH at Hyderabad I got ' court summons' from Sessions Judge, Srikakulam to attend as an official witness in the murder case in which Mr. Dalibandhu was an accused. After formal oath taking and self-introduction, I had a volley of questions and I was asked to testify my signatures on TA Bill forms and official correspondence.

Then in cross examination, I was asked how I was so accurate in remembering the exact time of the presence of Mr.Dalibandhu with me on the day of the crime. I showed my signature with the date and time. I had the

habit of signing important office documents with the date and time. On further cross examination I was asked about the possibility of Mr Dali Bandhu reaching the spot of crime in less than two hours, I answered in the negative.

The lawyer asked," Why not? It is possible to reach the spot within two hours now".

I said, "Yes, as of now because of four-way bypass road, and a new bridge over Nagavali river on the outskirts of town. But it was impossible in 1991 as there was no such bridge or bypass road".

The defence lawyer insisted, and I replied, "It was a simple common sense".

The judge asked the lawyer "Do you have any more questions other than this?"

The lawyer said "No".

Then I was asked to leave the Witness Box. Two months after my statement in the court as a 'witness', I came to know that Mr Dalibandhu was acquitted with benefit of doubt while other accused were sentenced on murder charge.

I heaved a sigh of relief at Dalibhandhu's acquittal. My die-hard habit of signing important files with date and time has helped an innocent fellow from imprisonment.



4. A Sneak Peek Into...

a. Bureaucratic Frolics

Bureaucracy is a system of government in which decisions are taken by state officialdom. At times it would be funny, at times ridiculous or frustrating too.

i. Lease Deed and VLDA

One week after my assumption of the post of Additional Director on promotion in 2001, the phone on my table rang. I picked up by greeting, 'Good morning' and I heard the voice of Dr D.S.K.Kanaka Sundar Rao, my former director, presently Executive Director(ED) of Visakha Livestock Development Agency (VLDA), a brain child of consultative process assisted by ISPA with intellectual and financial support — a pilot model of farmers organisation for cattle breed improvement activities in north-coastal districts independent of government setup.

An agreement was signed for transfer of some of the government assets to VLDA on nominal price on lease for thirty years. The ED reminded me to hasten up the process of transfer of AHD assets at Visakhapatnam to VLDA at the earliest as it was lingering for more than a year. I assured him to take a positive action at the earliest.

I called my section head dealing with the subject and enquired about the status. After a brief, he told me that a report was pending from the Chief Engineer,(CE)Public Works Department(Roads & Buildings). I requested him to send the file to me for my acquaintance. In response a big bundle of files were on my table in fifteen minutes. on perusal of files. I found every third week religiously a reminder letter was being sent to CE(PWD) but no reply was forthcoming from the other side. I requested the section head to meet me after lunch.

I asked him, "Please draft the proposals to be sent to the government without waiting for the letter from PWD department as we are transferring the assets to government promoted farmers body that too, at a very nominal rate of rupee One only per year for thirty years. Do you think the CE is at leisure to look at such silly issues when he has to deal with several hundred crores worth activities."

Within a month, the state government gave approvals and the assets were transferred facilitating the activities of VLDA.

ii. The Life Certificate

In the government service, we have a practice that every year in the month of November and December, the pensioners have to submit 'life certificate' to the effect that he is alive for the year, in person or the certificate attested by a gazetted officer or a concerned bank officer.

Once in an informal get together a senior retired secretary of the government was narrating an incident where a very senior retired officer could not submit his 'life certificate' as he was out of the country and the following year, he submitted his 'life certificate' and waited for his pension amount to be deposited into his bank account. Waiting for another three months, not finding his pension amount deposited he went to the secretariat, the nerve centre of governance to find out.

The concerned officer with a great respect offered him a seat and coffee and sent a word to the concerned section officer. To his dismay, the section officer informed the senior pensioner that he had submitted his 'life certificate' for the current year but failed to submit the certificate for the previous years, so the pension was not sanctioned.

It seemed the senior retired officer asked, "When I am alive this year means I was alive the previous year also. Is it not?"

The section officer humbly said, "Yes sir but the previous year file doesn't say that."

The senior pensioner had no answer. The senior pensioner was none else other than Sri I.J.Naidu, a retired Chief Secretary of the government of Andhra Pradesh. That is how the bureaucratic setup functions at times.

iii. The Income Tax Return and Me

During the year 1997-98, I was at ISPA. As I was working with ISPA on other duty, I have to submit my income tax return through the Director of Animal Husbandry. I got my Income Tax Return(ITR) got ready and submitted it to DAH. On the third day, the concerned accounts officer sent my ITR back with a request to send the 'return' in the cyclostyled formats given by the Chief Accounts Officer.

As I was busy in discussions with my executives in the project, I requested my office secretary to verify it and make necessary corrections and put it into the formats sent by the DAH office.

After the meeting, the office secretary came to me and explained to me, "Sir, the format sent by the DAH is the same as you had given me, moreover your ITR is very neatly printed with laser printer in A4 size bond paper whereas the formats from DAH were shabby, not possible to print in lengthy poor quality paper."

When I conveyed the same to the accounts officer on the phone, he said, "Sir, I agree with you but please fill up in the cyclostyle formats only and send it to me for filing as IT office may not accept if it is in different print on different size of papers." What else can I do? That is how the bureaucracy was those days.

iv. Known knowns

The ISPA supported AHD in formulation of Human Resource Development (HRD) policy with eighteen months of consultations with various stakeholders at different levels hiring the services of experts and fulfilled the goal of Dr A.M.Khan, the then director before his retirement in 1999.

The policy document was the first of its kind for any government department in the country and submitted to the government for approval. I was monitoring the entire process from the beginning with the help of my executives in the project. More than three months had elapsed. I requested the concerned executive Dr.P.Venkataramayya, the lead person who toiled for more than six months for brining out the policy document to find out the status of the approval of the HRD policy document with the government.

To my utter surprise, it was found that the concerned section in the government did not know what to do with the document. Then I requested my executive who was the lead architect to sit with the concerned people and help them to prepare a draft order for the approval of the policy to usher in a new era in the department.

Many a times it happened with the government secretariat, the centre of governance.

v. The Farce of Seed vaccine Transfer

Andhra Pradesh state has the highest sheep population in the country.In 1980s large number of sheep were succumbing to a viral infection other than blue-tongue disease.At that time with available diagnostic facilities like Agar Gel Precipitation Test(AGPT) and Immuno- Peroxidase Test (IPT), the disease was diagnosed as rinderpest. Ring vaccinations and preventive vaccinations with Tissue culture Rinderpest vaccine (TCRP) in disease free flocks, saved the flocks against rinderpest disease. In 1979, the causative agent of

Rinderpest disease in sheep and goats was identified as a separate entity, Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) virus and disease was designated as PPR disease.

With NPRE support Tamil Nadu Veterinary University (TNVASU) and Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI),Izzatnagar, had taken up research on PPR vaccine and vaccine was under trial.

During vaccine trials, I convinced my Director to permit for trials of the vaccine in one of our sheep farms at Chintaladevi, Nellore district. Simultaneously there were negotiations to hand over the seed material to some commercial vaccine production units. I came to know about it when Dr.W.P.Taylor, Advisor to NPRE narrated to me in one of our personal discussions. But Government of India was keen on to transfer the technology to state vaccine production centres. With my personal contacts with concerned scientists, I understood that the vaccine trials were successful and waiting for nod from the central government for release of the vaccine. With this background, I requested the Director of Animal Husbandry to write to central government for allocation of PPR seed material to our state as VBRI had facilities for production of PPR vaccine and heavy demand for the vaccine. The vaccine production centre at Hyderabad(VBRI) had distinction of production of high quality vaccines and supplying to other states also.

Days, weeks and months had passed but no response from central government authorities. I understood that because of a tussle between two research organisations about the vaccine, the central government was delaying the decision of allocation of vaccine seed material to states.

At the end of the year 2004, I happened to attend a workshop organised by Andhra Pradesh Livestock Development Agency (APLDA) at Visakhapatnam. After the workshop, the next day I along with Dr.Nissar Hussain, CEO, APLDA accompanied the Joint Secretary AHD Govt. of India to Visakha Dairy at the request of Chairman of Visakha Dairy for showing the facilities and welfare activities-a high school, a college and hospital undertaken by Visakha Dairy for their members there.From there reached Visakhapatnam airport to see off the Joint Secretary. On knowing that the Delhi flight was further delayed by forty five minutes, the Joint Secretary was taken to VIP lounge.

The Joint Secretary asked me, “Dr.Sreeramulu.. Do you have anything to say?”.

I told her, “Madam, since five months we are frantic and requesting for allocation of PPR vaccine seed material as we have heavy toll of sheep from PPR disease and we do not have vaccine”.

Interrupting me, she took her cell phone and talked to somebody in her office at Delhi for a minute, asking the person to wait, she gave me her phone, asking me to talk to the Joint Commissioner.

I took the phone and greeted him and to his query I told him," We did not get any communication on the issue of government orders of allocation of PPR vaccine seed material to Andhra Pradesh state so far".

Intervening me, the Joint Secretary took the phone and told the Joint Commissioner, "I will be in the office by lunch time; get the letter ready for my signature and see that it is sent by this evening". Turning to me she asked me to talk to her directly on the fourth day leaving two weekend days about the progress. Meanwhile, there was a call for Delhi bound passengers to board the aircraft.

I thanked her for the swift action taken to help my state. Saying thanks to everybody she left for Delhi. It was 10.30 in the morning.

Next day on reaching my office, I found a copy of the letter allocating PPR vaccine seed material to the AP state addressed to West Bengal state authorities on my table. Immediately I spoke to the Joint Director, VBRI advising her to keep ready some responsible persons to go to Calcutta to pick up vaccine seed material. I requested the Director to speak to West Bengal Director. On contacting the West Bengal Director, he suggested to put a word to the AP Secretary to speak to West Bengal Secretary about this. My Director requested me to brief the Principal Secretary what all that happened and see that the Secretary speaks to West Bengal Secretary.

That day the Secretary was not available. Next day our Secretary spoke to West Bengal Secretary who responded positively. Four days elapsed with no response from AHD, West Bengal. Then I spoke to Joint Secretary, Govt of India directly, briefed her about the happenings. She was a little furious in her tone and told me "Dr.Sriram, don't worry, I will speak to the concerned in Calcutta". The next day, the West Bengal Director spoke to me in the absence of my Director and asked me to depute some officers directly to Vaccines laboratory to take delivery of the seed virus material to airlift.I thanked him for his good gesture. The Joint Director VBRI deputed two lady veterinarians from the institute.

The lady vets on their return came to me and briefed about the facilities available in West Bengal laboratory. According to them, at the time of boarding the aircraft, the security did not allow Liquid nitrogen container with all the pleadings. With all the hurdles, somehow, they could manage to get into train that evening to reach Hyderabad, next day. They thanked me

profusely for deputing them to Calcutta to bring seed material which gave them opportunity to interact with the scientists there.

Even fourteen years after retirement whenever the lady vets. happen to see me, they recollect the saga of obtaining PPR virus seed material which increased the reputation of VBRI with production and supply of PPR vaccine within the state and outside the state also.

Perseverance pays at the end.

vi. Acrimonious Zilla Parishad meeting

In 1973, the District Veterinary Officer (DVO) asked me to attend the General body meeting of Srikakulam Zilla Parishad in his place. The Collector, the Zilla Parishad Chairman, MLAS, Samithi presidents and departmental officers were in the meeting. The discussions were on several subjects. Suddenly one elected representative from Tekkali, sri Sattaru Lokanatham, MLA, complained to the Chairman that cattle were dying of Foot & Mouth Disease in his area and the Animal husbandry department was silent with no action.

The District Collector was looking for the six feet tall hefty District Veterinary officer, Dr.G.Papayya, in front rows for his response. From the back benches, I got up and conveyed that the District veterinary officer had left for Hyderabad to attend a meeting. Then the Collector told me that I was not visible and audible and asked me to come in front and explain.

I had briefed the forum that a very limited quantity of vaccine was available only for livestock in government farms and bull stations and no vaccine was available for the public. Further added that for large scale vaccination, vaccine was not available in the country which was very expensive those days.

Only killed vaccine(tongue epithelial cell) was available from IVRI and the dose was about 40 ml. Just then, BAIF had introduced an expensive F & M vaccine into the market and not yet to catch up the market. I explained about the epidemiology of the disease and measures to contain the disease. Dissatisfied with the reply,the MLA started abusing the department in terms of ineffectiveness, laxity and suggested to stop salaries of the staff and purchase vaccines.

I explained to the gathering that as of now vaccine was not availabe for large scale vaccination. The complainant raised his voice, the Collector intervened and pacified him promising to get it verified as soon as the DVO comes back.

The Personal Assistant of the Collector came to me and whispered that the Collector wants to speak to me after this meeting at his camp office. After the disbursal of the meeting when I met him the Collector said," You appear to be fresh in the department. I appreciate what you have explained but the unofficials do not. First you have to say yes we are taking action to get the vaccine from another place at the earliest and do the needful. Plain talking will not help.Okay do not worry about it. Put a word to your DVO to meet me as and when he is back". Nodding my head I came out. A starting lesson for me how to deal with public representatives.

vii.Listening versus Hearing

Somewhere in 1998 myself as Project Director ISPA, my colleagues Ms.Annette Kolf and Ms. Rebecca visited Anantapur with a prior appointment with a young newly recruited District Forest officer(DFO). Exactly at the appointed time we were in the office and we were invited into the chambers of the DFO.

After customary introduction, we felt happy, he remembered the agenda of our meeting with him that day. He ordered tea and snacks for all of us on to his office table. Meanwhile, one of his office attenders brought a big bundle of files, put before him for his signatures. The DFO immediately opened that bundle and looking into them asked us to speak about what all we wanted from his side and added that he can 'hear' and simultaneously can finish his urgent file work also.

Immediately, I said to him, "At times, I am also constrained to do as you suggested but my experience is that I can 'hear' what others are saying but never able to 'listen'."

For a moment, he had taken aback, asked his attender to remove those files for a while and started listening to us very attentively. He was very receptive and his response was very encouraging to proceed further. We finished our discussion very close to the allocated time. I thanked him profusely for his patient listening, He smiled at me. Coming out of the room, both of my colleagues looked at my face with puzzled faces.

Sensing their anxiety, I told them that the DFO smiled at me for stressing the word 'listening' while expressing our thanks. Further, I added "One must be a good listener. As an empathic listener you empower the speaker to greater self-esteem and self awareness simply through your willingness to hear them. Empathic listening is of the most valuable personal growth skill we can acquire".

The ability to listen and observe was very important in life in general. How do we solve a client's problem if we do not first understand the problem?. Let the client talk, let him/her talk some more, ask questions and listen. To fully engage with someone is not just to talk. To be a good listener is a valuable trait in a person and an invaluable quality in a person.

viii. English Lessons for Secretary

It was already 7 p.m. that evening and I got up from my office chair to go home. Just then the Director's attender came in a huff and told that Director wants me to speak to him on phone.

When I responded, the Director said, "Can you please come over to my chambers for five minutes". I know the meaning of five minutes in his vocabulary and as soon as I entered into his chambers, I found Mr Gurava Reddy, Local Manager of JK Trust sitting with him and some other office managers were in wait. I requested the Director to clear them off and I could wait for a while.

As suggested he cleared them in 15 minutes and looked at me. Before I attempted to ask, he said, "Dr Sreeramulu, we have to send proposals to the govt. to extend the JKT services to 50 more centres in Anantapur district urgently. For a few seconds, I kept silent as I could see the pressure and anxiety in his face.

For a while I hesitated to talk on the subject in the presence of JK trust Manager and said, "All the people in the section have left and we can see tomorrow morning".

Immediately the JKT Manager said," Sir I brought a note ready for you".

Thanking him, I said, "However, we have to put it into our official format".

Next three days I was away on tour and on the fourth day, I was back to office. On seeing me, the Director reminded about the proposals to be sent to govt.

I told him," Already I have gone through the draft proposals of Mr.Gurava Reddy". Seeing the Director very attentive, I told him, "Let us wait for completion of one year, evaluate the performance and then propose for some more units as per government order (G.O)".

He was impatient and with high pitch of voice blurted," You do not understand my problem, everyday the Principal Secretary is pressing me to hasten up the submission of proposals for 50 more units and I am feeling embarrassed to face him."

I bluntly said, "As your Additional Director, it is my responsibility to help you to take right decision though you can overrule my suggestion." With firmness I told him," I do not allow you to do this suicidal activity at this stage under pressure. You please throw the blame on me and I take the responsibility of explaining to Principal Secretary, if I am given opportunity".

Two days after this incident, there was a call from Principal Secretary to both of us for review of progress on JKT centres; definitely I knew that the Director might have not complained against me but I could guess about the complainant.

By the time Director and myself were in the chambers of the Secretary, already the manager, JKT was found sitting opposite to Secretary. The Secretary asked me "Dr Sreeramulu, I heard that you have organized a meeting recently on JKT matters. What is all that about?"

Politely, I replied, "Sir, in this programme it is envisaged to pay JKT, Rs 850/- per every confirmed pregnancy. We faced some practical difficulties in streamlining the pregnancy verifications and reporting system and payment mechanism. Based on the feedback from JKT, a meeting was organized with selected field Veterinarians, Assistant directors, Joint directors of both Chittoor and Anantapur districts and JKT personnel with an objective of improving our efficiency in pregnancy verifications by field veterinarians, test checking the verifications at two levels and minimize the delay in reporting and payment at our level. We sorted out all practical hurdles in the meeting with participatory approach and Mr.B.Gurava Reddy was also involved in the deliberations. Everything was transparent and the efficient mechanism is evolved with mutual consent".

Moving the copy of the G.O (Government Order) towards me, the Secretary said, "As per this G.O, it is so clear that we can extend the activity to some more units. Then what is the problem?" The Director was looking at me.

I told," Sir, yes, as per the G.O, we can extend to a few more centres but the clause is that after satisfactory performance followed by thorough evaluation".

At times the Secretary was inveterately immodest. He took the GO copy, read and looked at me said, with unbridled ego and arrogance, "So you are teaching me English at this stage".

Poltely I responded, "Sorry Sir, it is my responsibility to brief the head of my department, the facts. It is only six months since we launched this programme, results of pregnancy verifications are just now started trickling, still it would take another six months to cover all the allocated villages and

results of optimum number of pregnancy verifications will be available for assessment. Still Anantapur district has to catch up in coverage, under these circumstances if more number of centres are extended, we will be giving scope for criticism of govt. It will be against the spirit of G.O; this is what I felt about the programme sir, it is up to you sir to take decision."

The Secretary concluded the meeting abruptly without prolonging the discussion further.

Usually the government orders would be issued in the name of Governor of State. The draft would be prepared by the staff of concerned Secretary of the Department. The English language was such that every individual could interpret in his/her own way, if it was not written with appropriate words, meaningful and straight. Present day the standard of English is such that before the original GO is circulated, amended GO is released first at times. There was an incidence of misinterpretation of GO leading to embezzlement of several crores of rupees in a few districts in payment of arrear amounts to employees whose pay was refixed. Fortunately, in the present GO the instructions were very clear without any ambiguity.

Always, I strongly believed in Confucius dictum "under any circumstances do not give chance of despair and despondency. Do not have weak thoughts or negative attitude. Do your duty and face any situation with courage. Then the result is bound to be good."

ix. Sweat and Sweets

My Laboratory attender was busy assisting me in making smears of dung samples for examination under microscope that afternoon and I was seriously looking into microscope and noting the results. Hearing sounds of a new male voice, raising my eyes turned my head in the direction of the voice. Mr.Ramaswamy, the office attender of District Veterinary Officer, handed over me a letter addressed to DVO with an endorsement to me to attend to the task immediately. Saying 'okay' to him, I asked my laboratory attender to get ready with post-mortem kit and specimen bottles.

Meanwhile, I saw a police constable entering into my laboratory : looking at me in white doctor's apron, greeted me and told that a ghastly accident occurred at Peddapadu village on the main Grand Trunk road two hours back and six buffaloes were knocked down by the bus before crashing down on the other side of the road injuring many persons. I told him to go to the spot and I would join him in thirty minutes. By the time myself and my help reached the accident sight on our bicycles. I saw the police chasing the

onlookers on the road and a few policemen going into some of the houses to seize the belongings stealthily picked up by some of the villagers from the bus top and a few things snatched from the passengers trapped in the tumbled over bus.

One young newly recruited police officer of All India cadre came to me and said, "See doctor, these fellows, instead of extending help to the victims, are trying to snatch their belongings".Inquisitively asked me, "Doctor! What are you going to do with these fallen animals and animals escaped with some minor injuries.

I briefed him, "Post-mortem examination will be done on all these six fatal cases and my colleague has already given instructions to his assistants to attend to animals with minor injuries.".

The young IPS police officer left the venue to supervise searching of homes for recovery of stolen articles from the bus passengers. One sub-inspector of police was with me. One can imagine the gruelling task of autopsy of six carcases. By the time I finished my work in the open, the sun started setting down.

Again the trainee IPS officer came and asked me," Oh, you finished your work doctor, hope the report is ready".

I said, "No". Seeing the question mark in his face I told him, "The reports will be ready by tomorrow afternoon". Writing report was another excruciating task as I have to write the observed details, system wise and organ-wise for six pages in three copies".

Those days the brown paper supplied by the government stationery department was to be used. I used to make formats ready to be filled in by cyclostyle printing. Next day as promised a set of post-mortem reports was handed over to police department.

Ten days after the incident, I happened to meet the sub-inspector of police on the way to my home. He smiled and said,"Doctor! The case was settled". Saying that he left me in a hurry.

My senior colleague accompanying me in a hush commented, "Dr.Sreeramulu, you had lot of sweating that day at the accident site and police had sweets".

x. Cell phones and we

First I saw a telephone in my father's office when I was in tenth class (about fifteen years old) felt excited saying "hello" over the phone in 1961. One day in 1964, when I wanted to talk to one of my relatives visiting Tirupati

from hostel phone, the hostel clerk told me, "Now it is not possible as the Warden is keenly listening to radio commentary of test cricket match on the phone." For a moment, I did not understand; then he explained," The warden is enjoying radio cricket commentary from hostel through the extension phone receiver and the phone cannot be used till commentary is finished or the warden puts his extension receiver on to credle.

In Tirupati durig 1960s there was only manually operated telephone-exchange system. When somebody wants to speak to he/she had to give a ring to the exchange and the phone number to be contacted and the person at the exchange will connect and ask us to talk. We had a facility to enquire on phone about the cinema movies currently screened in various theatres in town. The person at the telephone exchange office, on request gives the information of films being screened in different cinema theatres in Tirupati town. Finding a lady on duty at the telephone exchange a few of my mischievous colleagues used to ring to exchange ask for the titttle of film screened in a particular theatre and enjoy listening to the lady operator saying 'Ninne Pelladuthaa…means 'I marry you only'.Those days some of the captions were embarrasigly funny.Such vagaries disappeared with the introduction of automated telephone exchange system.

First I saw use of 'cell phones' in 1995 in the Netherlands and was awe-struck.By 1996 I found cell phones with a few high profile politicians and rich people in Hyderabad. I saw one such cell with my estate builder Dr.Haranatha Reddy, a retired veterinarian who became business man. Whenever his cell phone rang, at jet speed he used to respond saying, "Put down the phone, I will speak from landline".Then he request me for the landline phone to talk to the caller. It happened many times at my flat. One day out of my curiosity I asked him, "Why do you become jittery whenever your cell phone rings?" He said, "Do you know sir, the outgoing call costs rupees sixteen and incoming call costs rupees eight for every minute ?".

By the year 2001, all the officers in my directorate and all joint directors in districts were provided with cell phones to facilitate speedier communication. The intention was laudable. Of late many applications were added facilitating data transfers, attending emergencies, video calls and with many more facilities.

At times, especially, during drought period of year 2002 and 2003 occasionally, I used to stay in the office till midnight monitoring the movement of fodder by railway rakes from distant places. My director used to stay in the office till eleven in the night as a routine. Many times, I saw him talking to field officers over cell phone at dead of the night.

I often advised him, "We can wait for the information next day. Why should we disturb them at the dead of the night?. The information sought for may not be readily available with him: he has to contact the concerned person to obtain the information we have asked for. If it is an emergency, yes, otherwise it will be disturbance only.

He used to retort, "When we are sitting in the office at this hour what is the problem for him to respond?".

It used to sound unpleasant for me. When subordinate officers were provided with cell phones, it did not mean that they should be available to answer us at odd hours. The line between work life and personal life was blurred. I read somewhere the narration of a professor of Work & organisational Psychology at Erasmus University, Rotterdam, the Netherlands, "the smartphone had become the Trojan horse through which work sneaks into the home. Even for those people who had solidly established professions constant connectivity and 24X7 availability had become norm and not the exception".

xi. Galore of curses

That busy day in 1973, at the veterinary hospital I was at microscope examining dung and faecal samples. At about 10.30 am, I saw the District Veterinary Officer(DVO) coming to office in a cycle-rikshwa passing through the main gate of veterinary hospital straight to his office-room behind the veterinary hospital. Ensuring that there were no more animal samples to be examined, I got up and walked in to DVO's room at about 11.45 am to appraise him the stock position of animal and poultry vaccines at my laboratory. As soon as I entered in to the room, I saw the office superintendent, the establishment clerk and the DVO in serious discussion and three of the office attenders standing silently with grim faces. After greeting the DVO, sensing something serious, I turned back towards my laboratory. The DVO asked me to sit opposite to him for a while and I settled in a chair opposite to him silently.

After a few minutes I could understand the reason for the tense situation in the room. All the three attenders had completed more than seven years of service at DVO's office. One person was to be shifted to some other place. It appeared that since two weeks none of the three was volunteering to go out on transfer. The office superintendent suggested the DVO, "Sir, as a controlling officer, you take the decision as they are not heeding to advice of anybody. The DVO said, "No, no let them make a decision, I don't want to be cursed by the aggrieved fellow." Seeing no response, the establishment clerk

then suggested, "Why not make a lottery by writing their names on small slips and pick up a slip and the person whose name is there on the picked up slip has to move out". All the three aggrieved agreed to the suggestion as a last resort. Then the clerk made three slips with name of each person written separately and asked one of them to pick up. None of them agreed to pick up a slip. The DVO was in quandary. The office superintendent suggested DVO to let the laboratory doctor pick up one slip. Nodding his head the DVO asked me to pick up a slip. On his instruction I picked up a slip and gave it DVO and he read out the name of the person to be transferred. It is Mr.Ramaswamy and the person started crying loudly and started cursing me. I was perplexed at his curses for no fault of mine. I tried to pacify him but he did not heed to my explanation. He continued to blame me whenever he happened to come to take delivery of vaccines for his veterinary dispensary from my laboratory.

Since that incident, I avoided such situations to be free from such awkward unpleasantness for no fault of mine in rest of my career.

xii.Bird brained programmes

We all think of our past. Everybody will agree to have a policy for implementation of any activity. As everybody agree to a policy document it had to be judged in terms of its original intention. It might later have all kinds of side effects, positive or negative but nevertheless the touchstone is its original intent. Rightly said, but if one looked at the establishment of a modern slaughter house with a cost of Rs.33 crores in eighty- three acres of land area at Chengicherla village a little away from Hyderabad city considered to be the largest one in public sector in the country, I always felt disheartened at the plight of such an asset which could not be put to use as envisaged in the policy document.

Based on a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) petition of city elite in the High court of Andhra Pradesh state to shift the existing four slaughter houses functioning amidst human dwellings posing a threat to public health, the High court took the issue seriously and directed the state government (govt.) to initiate tangible time-bound action on the issue. The govt. ordered the state Meat Development Corporation to come up with an action plan. Accordingly a decision was taken to construct a a modern slaughter house on the lines of Deonar slaughter house for Bombay Metropolis in 1970s. The responsibility of pulling the cart of project was vested with the A.P Meat corporation and pushing the cart responsibility to Municipal Corporation and Animal Husbandry dept.(AHD). I was one of the AHD officers coordinating the activities with a limited role.The things were going at the slowest snail's

pace. At one point the AP High court severely warned the Principal Secretary of AHD for inordinate delay in shifting the slaughter house operations away from the human dwellings.

At last the construction work was started which took about more than two years. Meanwhile resistance started showing up from the groups, Aarekatika and Qureshis involved in day to day slaughter house operations against closure of the existing slaughter houses in the city as they cannot move out to such long distances. Pressure was mounting on the govt. from the elected representatives as well. These two groups were important vote banks for politicians. There was some dilly dallying in operationalisation of slaughter house at Chengicherla.

Unfortunately in the whole process it did not strike anybody in govt. machinery to take all the stakeholders into confidence.Usually it did not happen in govt.sponsored programmes as the bureaucrats consider stakeholders as beneficiaries not as partners. The problem of important stakeholders, Aarekatikas and Qureshis, sheep and goat traders,meat vendors were never taken into consideration or never thought of leave alone consultations with them. Apart from the distance, the slaughter house operations start early in the morning by 4 a.m. and be over by around 11 a.m. and entire family wife, husband, boys and girls, grandpas and grandmas get involved in various activities at the slaughter house and it was a wage earning enterprise for whole family.The families cannot be moved out to a new place.

Another important aspect was the meat vendors—mostly small scale vendors, purchase the needed stock on daily basis for slaughter, take their dressed carcases and move to their vending points by 7 a.m. But in modern slaughter house, the individual vendors cannot identify their carcases and other edible organs, head, legs etc. Just we cannot copy Western models where it was a corporate business.So the stakeholders were very vehement to use modern slaughter house because of very genuine and very pertinent inadequacies threatening their very livelihoods.

At one point the AP High court summoned the Principal Secretary of the Animal Husbandry department and threatened to initiate legal action against him for contempt of court if slaughter operations were not shifted to the new one by first day of subsequent month in the year 2003.

The state government issued orders to close the slaughter operations in the existing slaughter houses in the city a day before deadline.The government organised shuttle bus services to new location to facilitate easy access. But

these ' band aid' attempts did not augur well for effective operationalisation of modern slaughter house.

I know the nightmares and the stress my colleagues had undergone in the Meat corporation during that critical period. Six months later, when I visited the modern slaughter house, I found that the installed machinery was not put to use. I saw many temporary sheds were erected besides the new building with temporary hangs and taps with long polythene tubes for water supply.The slaughter operations,as usual, unhygienic and ghastly for me.

I retired from govt.service on 31st August,2005. In subsequent years I understood, that the Govt. yielded to political pressures and permitted to take up slaughter operations in the city itself in earlier slaughter houses with some improvements to the slaughter operations and the modern slaughter house was leased out to a private organisation on a nominal amount of Rs.1.9 crores while the slaughter house at Amberpet was leased out for Rs.10.2 crores and New Bhoiguda for Rs.9.2 crores with lower slaughter capacities.

Non-seriousness, apathy, unscientific handling resulted in such an unwelcome end results.

Another episode which disturbed me a lot during my tenure was the purchase of 'baling machines' for paddy-straw to facilitate easy transport to longer distances by road or rail in larger quantities by weight. In the year 2003 we had to tackle the severest drought conditions in the last fifty years in many parts of Andhra Pradesh state. As I was busily involved in drought mitigation activities, one of my junior colleagues and a professor of Agricultural Engineering from the university were deputed to other states to study baling practices adopted for transport of paddy-straw and suggest suitable baling machines for our state. Three weeks after their study in other states baling machines were purchased and kept at Polyclinic campus at Kakinada, East Godavari district, a paddy rich area in the state.

By the time the baling machines were received the straw movement was completed giving no scope to assess the functional efficacy of the item in our situation.

Two years after their purchase, I happened to be at Kakinada on my private visit. That evening I was at Vety. Poly clinic to say hello to my earlier colleagues. They took me around the campus showing me the new facilities in surgery ward and diagnostic laboratory. At one point in a semi covered

open shed I stopped for a while. One of the officers told me," Sir, these are the baling machines procured at a cost of Rs.65 lakhs but unfortunately the packages are not yet opened as decision is not taken till now about the places of installation".

Transport of straw was not a regular AHD activity, Another thing was the places of procurement, places of loading would be varying according to availability of straw and tenderers. Certain activities were beyond the purview of AHD and cannot be handled by the department. Any thing related to animals the govt. ie senior bureaucrats presume it should be the responsibility of the AHD.

xiii. Audit Blues

During the year 2002-03 a total monsoon failure had resulted in severe drought situation throughout Andhra Pradesh resulting in fodder shortage impacting livelihoods of livestock holding families in general and dairy farmers in particular. The seriousness of drought was felt alarming in many villages of Chittoor, Anantapur and Mahabubnagar districts.

In 50 years time, this year, the drought was the severest necessitating large scale relief operations — transport of fodder by more than 200 fodder special rakes(trains) from distant coastal districts and hunddreds of truck loads from nearby districts, organisation of cattle camps, construction of drinking water troughs in scarcity villages, distribution of fodder seed on 75 percent subsidy to raise fodder by individual farmers with available water resources, in tank beds with available residual moisture, and cattle feed supply etc.

All these well planned and meticulous execution with enormous efforts could minimize the production losses and more than that, boost up the morale of the affected livestock holding families. Everybody in the department irrespective of the cadre strived hard in severe hot summer months. At times the local functionaries faced difficulties to mobilize the labour force that could not work under the scorching sun with temperatures hovering around 43 C.

In Anantapur, the district administration and district Animal Husbandry department with the inspiring leadership of Dr.K.V.Ramana mobilized farmers to take up fodder production with available residual moisture of many large tanks which deserved kudos.

In one such tank at Bukkarayasamundram, jowar fodder was raised by farmers from abutting two villages organising into common interest groups(CIG) and fodder was distributed among themselves for the year. In

the process seed was also produced as an off-shoot. The Joint director(AH), distributed the seed on 75% subsidy in the subsequent year with the consent of the District Cllector resulting in realisation of Rs.10 lakhs as sale proceeds.The Joint Director had sent a proposal to make use of Rs 10 lakh of sale proceeds of fodder seed in subsequent year.

I had a piquant situation and consulted my colleagues and sought the advice of our Chief Accounts officer, She briefed me," Sir, first to raise fodder in tank- beds the govt. have allocated free fodder seed. That is the end of the matter. The Joint Director should have not produced fodder seed.

I explained to her, "Madam.. the seed production was unintended but the fodder crop also yielded seed worth of Rs.10 lakhs which one cannot ignore because of the volume and value.The harvested fodder is given free to farmers. We have to help him by appreciating his hard work, sincerity and honesty".

She said," We cannot give any permission to the Joint Director as per the procedures and stipulated rules of state Finance Code".

Then I spoke to the Joint Director on telephone and advised him to utilise the amount for fodder development activity by taking approval from the District collector at district level itself.

It is an irony, at times it is difficult to find solutions in such honest and sincere activities under the government.

xiv. An Errant Office Attender

Soon after my settling in my chair in the office, the Senior Assistant(Establishment) came with a file and told me, "Sir there is some unpleasant news this morning". Puzzled, I looked at her and asked her to tell me what happened. She informed me," Sir, one contagarous fellow with all unpleasent virtues, regularly irregular, petition mongerer, liquor addict from Bobbili division is transfered to our office. Nobody could mend him in that division; till now we have a very good atmosphere in our office, he is waiting for permission to join duty".

Listening to her very patiently I told her, "We have to honour the district officer's orders. Get him to me".

She brought him inside; the very appearance of that fellow makes one believe about his negative attitude.

I told him politely, "Mend yourself, if you change yourself to my office culture you will be happy, everybody will be happy, if you do not, it will be very unpleasant for you. It is your responsibility, think well for whole of this day, come tomorrow to join in duty."

He told me," I promise that I will work here as per your office culture, Today is the last day for me to join at this "new place".

From second week onwards, the office staff started complaining about his late coming, not cleaning office, when sent out late return etc. I told the Senior assistant, "You mend him at your level, don't complain to me, wait for two more weeks then we see what to do."

On Monday afternoon, the office Accountant came to me and told, "Sir, the new attender appeared to be callous, negligent, it is difficult to get work done through him".

To my question what happened, he explained "Sir, last Saturday evening," I have sent a bundle of TA bills to your home for your scrutiny and signatures leisurely on Sunday."

I told him," That day I came late from camp and I did not find any pad with TA bills except for some office letters from the Directorate".

The Accountant added," Sir, this new attender left the bundle of TA bills in a tea shop on the way to your home. This morning an attender from our neighbouring office brought them and handed it over to me; according to him the tea shop owner kept the bundle safe when our fellow left it there."

This type of irresponsible behaviour I had never experienced earlier. It was a serious issue. I called the errant attender. He pleaded guilty with excuses and begged for mercy promising that he would never repeat such things in future. I asked the Accountant to take a letter to that effect from him. Later I understand that office staff were avoiding him for such work except for asking him to do cleaning work in the office.

Four months after this incident around 7 clock in the evening a policeman in civil dress came to my home and informed that Accountant was caught taking bribe of Rs 150/- from the office attender by ACB trap. Next day was Dasara Day. It was a shocking news for me. Immediately I sent a word to my VAS in my office to go to ACB office and find out the details.

An hour later, the VAS came to me, informed that the Accountant was going towards bus stand to go to his family at Visakhapatnam for Dasara holiday. The new attender, it appears was pestering the ACB officials with his complaints against the Accountant. Then they laid a trap and made the attender to give the tainted notes. It appears the Accountant refused the notes initially telling he was in a hurry to catch the bus to go and moved towards bus stand crossing the road. He could have got into bus in five minutes time but the fate tempted him to take the notes probably for Dasara celebration and landed him in trouble,.

The same attender, one day came to me in the office and requested for sanction of his claim for Leave Travel Concession.

I asked him, "Where did you go? and how many of your family members accompanied you on pilgrimage."

I got doubt that he was not speaking the truth. I told him to speak the truth and it was not difficult for me to find out the truth. During questioning the truth came out that he did not go to Tirupati or any other place.

Then I asked him," Still you want me to sanction the LTC bill? For this false claim very severe action can be taken against you. Looking at your family plight I am leaving you. But I don't want you in my office. You plead with the district officer to post you to any place nearer to your native place in Bobbili division". Subsequently, he went on leave and with the help of his local politicians got transfer to his place. Everybody in the office felt relieved.

xv. The Review by Chief Minister

Two months prior to my retirement (June, 2005), I was given an assignment to work with Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Andhra Pradesh Livestock Development Agency(APLDA) to evaluate cattle breed improvement since its inception in 1999 with a focus on reach of door-step Artificial Insemination services.

One day, Dr.Nissar Ahmad, the CEO asked me to accompany him for a review meeting by the then Chief Minister, Dr.Y.S.Rajasekhara Reddy. The Principal Secretary, Director of Animal Husbandry, Special Secretary to C.M were sitting around and I understood that the C.M was reviewing exclusively AH activities that day. After preliminary pleasantries and introduction of all the officers the C.M looked at the Principal Secretary; he started explaining about the progress and the activities of the APLDA and AH Departments with statistics.

To my surprise, I found the CM sitting leisurely and unusually very jovial that day. The C.M raised his hand inturrupting the narration of statistics of the Secretary; pickig up a note-pad and pen looking at the Director, asked," Dr. Mohan, what is the breedable population? What percentage is covered by AI? and what is the calf crop? Please brief me."

Earlier, I never saw the C.M taking a notepad and pen. Noting the figures narrated by the director and asking him to wait for a while and doing some calculations, the C.M looked at the director and said, "The percentage of coverage and calf crop is not satisfactory. What do you say? The director said," No sir, there has been a lot of improvement over the years". The C.M

with a smile, interrupted him, "Dr. Mohan! your father-in- law when he was director, he was saying the same thing exactly 30 years back. But I did not see much change in my area. In my small cattle farm itself I did not see a good calf taking birth. The livestock Assist. stationed at a near- by village comes and does AIs to some animals, says something which I do not understand most of the time.

Again,the director started explaining with figures. The C.M with impatience said, "Telling stories will not long last. I want perceptible results. This explanation almost went for 10 minutes and the C.M was not very much convinced with the defensive approach of the director..

I could not resist myself and raised my hand. Looking at me the CM asked, "Do you like to say something?".

Nodding my head, with his permission, I explained to him," Sir! C.M's observation is absolutely right, at the same time one cannot deny the progress made by our state in the country. Earlier very positive impact could be seen in selected areas where ICDBs(Intensive Cattle Development Blocks) and Regional Cattle Development Projects had operated in coastal districts, some parts of Kurnool, Chittoor, Ranga Reddy and Nalgonda districts. Nobody can deny the perceptible development which got appreciation at national level and these pockets had become success stories to watch. But after reorganization of the department in 1976, the AI activity had become routine activity unlike focused activity as in earlier ICDBs. Because of inadequate budget support, much perceptible impact could not be achieved but after launch of 'National Project on Cattle Breeding'(NPCB), a nation wide programme, ours was the first state to establish a separate APLDA and stabilised very efficient Liquid Nitrogen grid, with the best semen processing laboratories in the country and start of Gopalamitra—concept in 1999, perceptible impact could be seen in next three to four years".

Thus hearing me the C.M said," That is nice, never hesitate to tell the facts, I give priority to AH sector, do not worry about budget, this very first year I will allocate Rs 500 crores extra: show me the results. Sky is the limit if your department comes up with good projects; I believe, AH sector can show quick results in improving the rural farmer's economy." Saying this he concluded the meeting and left.

The C.M usually prefers brief presentations with statement of problem, budget requirement and possible positive impact with time frame and one has to present this in less than five minutes. Many a time it was very difficult

to draw his attention for a long time on a single subject but this day very unusually he spent about 40 minutes seeking clarifications..

The Principal Secretary congratulated me for making the meeting fruitful with timely intervention. I always believed that the honest admission of one's inadequacies and expression of sincere commitment for improvement, one can convince anybody for support.

xvi. World Bank Review on HRD: My Embarrassment

That was in 2002 around 11 a.m. a phone message from Secretariat to DAH informing him to attend a review meeting on HRD programme by World Bank(WB) team from Delhi in the chambers of Principal Secretary, Agriculture at 4 p.m. The DAH was a little restless with the message as he has to take flight to Delhi by 5 p.m. that day to attend a meeting with Animal Husbandry Commissioner, Government of India the next day at 10 a.m..Recovering from his restlessness he asked me to attend the HRD review meeting that evening. I said "Yes". And I was at the venue in time and surprised to find no technical officers at the meeting venue except for senior Secretaries and IAS cadre officers heading technical departments. So I made my self comfortable in the last row in a corner as I was well aware of the bureaucratic heirarchy.

The Principal Secretary, the convenor, welcoming the World Bank team introduced all the officers from different departments implementing the programme. While introducing me the convenor expressed his unhappiness for the absence of Principal Secretary of AH and Director of Animal Husbandry. I informed about DAH's meeting at Delhi and our Principal Secretary's sick leave.The Head of the WB team smiled at me.

The Agriculture Commissioner briefed that so many officers of the department were trained during the last two years and so many extra tonnes of various grains were produced. The Commissioner Horticulture explained about the number trained and so many extra tonnes of varieties of fruits were harvested increasing the income of state exchequer as well as horticulturist families. Like was it continued with sericulture, pisciculture departments. In the end, I was the only non-IAS cadre officer, asked to brief the team.

To begin with I said," Sir, we have trained so many Vets, paravets through our State Level Training centre, regional level and district level training institutes through development of a policy document, training needs assessment, by defining objectives, drawing action plans through training of trainers to start with. As other senior officers presented in terms of increased

productivity, I am afraid, I cannot explain the outputs in terms of increased productivity but I can explain in terms of improvement in skills and improved delivery of technical services… suddenly inturrpting me, taunting me the convenor shouted at me, "What nonsense you are talking? I will take action against you for insubordination…"

Mr.Principal Secretary please… the Head, World Bank team intervened and looking at me signalled to take my seat.

The Head continued," Day before yesterday our team visited AHD's HRD centre and yesterday morning we were in their regional training centre and interacted with the trainers and trainees. Our team was very much impressed with their work. We recommend such model to other departments also and to other states also. In fact it is an ideal model to follow. I feel like adding at this juncture, the trainings improve the skills of the trained persons and gradually improving the out-put after some gestation period in some sectors."

Two or three senior bureaucrats looked at me appreciatively.

xvii. Musings on Telugu language

In 2004, Sri Madugula Naga Phani Sarma,Chairman, Telugu Official Language Commission, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh visited our Directorate and addressed all the administrative and technical officers emphasizing the need for usage of Telugu language as official medium in administration. I explained my experiences at various places in the state and admitted that at Directorate level I could not do much except signing the papers 'íncoming and outgoing' in Telugu only as there was nothing to decipher out from signature.

Intervening, the Chairman spontaneously read a poem on me using my name and surname elaborating the meaning and appreciated my attempt and concern.

Wayback in 1986, the Joint Director, Chittoor, directed me on phone to attend a review meeting by Sri.C.Narayana Reddy, Chairman, Official Language Commission, Hyderabad at Tirumala-Tirupati Devasthanm Guest House at 4 p.m as he was unable to attend due to indisposition. Accordingly he arranged to send 'District Report' for briefing the chairman on his behalf.

The next day when entered the meeting hall I found the District Collector and other district officers were waiting for the Chairman. In a few minutes the Chairman was in his chair. Highlighting the need for extensive use of Telugu language in administration started reviewing the progress in different departments.

Lastly when my turn came, greeting the Chairman, I said, "Sir! My district officer asked me to convey his regrets for not personally to be present because of his indisposition. I have the report…"

Inturrupting me the Chairman asked, "Forget about the district report. Brief me about your performance in your jurisdiction".

I explained, "Sir, I saw to it that the entire office correspondence is in Telugu only in my division. I insisted even my Veterinary doctors to write patients's registers only in Telugu".

Then he asked, "How they write names of the diseases?."

Very simple Sir, English names in Telugu script". I Explained.

Then he asked me to come nearer to him from back row. Standing besides me patting on my back, the Chairman exhorted the gathering, "See this youngman, his passion for implementation of the Government orders. This is what I expect from you all."

Turning to me he asked, "What is the per centage of implementation in your office?" To my answer seventy per cent, again turning to the gathering he said, "The district average is far far below this young man's achievement. I request you all to pay your personal attention to implement the orders in letter and spirit."

Congratulating me once again he left the venue for railway station to board the train for Hyderabad at 6.40 p.m.

The very first day (2nd July, 1987) of my joining duty at Vizianagaram I requested my office staff that all the correspondence, office files and registers to be in Telugu only and even salary bills etc must be in Telugu only otherwise I am not going to sign the bills, I cautioned. Fortunately my asset was Mr.B.Narasinga Rao, excellent typist with higher speed in Telugu.

Our Regional Joint Director, Dr.Akhil Ali Shaw once wrote to me to send my office reports in English only expressing his inability to read my reports in Telugu. Politely I spoke to him and informed that I was folloing the govt. orders only but to draw his attention I used to send some reports with English translation also attached to report in Telugu.

The Accountant General of Andhra Pradesh once sent a letter requesting me to send 'replies to Audit paras in English only as they do not have facility to translate Telugu reports in to English. Since then I started sending an 'authorised' English version attached to my audit replies in Telugu. Such was my passion for Telugu usage and I made it to one hundred per cent in

the second year of my stay at Vizianagaram from seventy percent at Tirupati.

In 1991, the Chairman of AP.Offical Language Commission visited the office of the Dy. Director (AH) next door to mine in Disrict Offices complex in Vizianagaram. I peeped in to their office while the Chairman was going through their office files. Greeting the Chairman I introduced myself and said, "Sir as a courtesy I came to see you." and I got up to take leave of him. The Chairman thanking me for the courtesy call asked me to sit for a while to exchange some ideas for effective implementation of official language. Obligingly I sat while he was going through their office files.

After a while the Chairman disgustingly expressed his anguish at the Dy. Director saying, "What is this situation? I did not see anything in Telugu except for your Office Attendance Register, Casual Leave Register and a bunch of casual leave letters." Taken back the Dy. Director trying to pacify him said, "Sir, we speak to our clientale who bring animals to our hospitals in Telugu only…." Inturrupting him the Chairman with raised voice said, "Thank god, atleast you and your people are doing great favour. It appears you did not make any attempt at all. I am sorry, I did not see this type of ineptness, lethargy and callousness any where in the state".

He stopped for a while, looking at me he asked, "What about your office? Is it the same?"

Calmly I said, "Sir! If you give me five minutes time, probably you may appreciate my efforts. My office is next door. I will get you my office records".

On his nod, I went to my office and my office colleagues brought all the records within five minutes. Meanwhile I personally brought two of my files, that of the Accountant General and the Regional Joint Director and gave to the Chairman. He kept those two files with him and seen my office files and registers randomly. Getting up from his chair he shook my hands, congratulating me he asked, "Doctor! Can you come down to R&B Guest House at 6 p.m with some of your records. I want to discuss with you leisurely about how you could do this thing in detail".

I said, "Yes sir".

I could see the change of colours in the face of my Dy. Director. What can I do?

At dotted time I was with the Chairman and my office colleague was there by that time with the files and registers. Going through the records he expressed his admiration and asked my office colleague, "How could you do

all this?" In reply he told, "Sir on the very first day our officer told to cooperate with him to implement Telugu in office administration and also encouraged us, corrected us when something went wrong.

Then the Chairman said, "Dr.Sreeramulu... since taking my Chairmanship I toured fifteen districts. So far no where I found this type of passion and commitment with any of the officer. Keep it up. Your effort should be rewarded. If necessary I will take you to the Chief Minister personally and plead with him to reward you appropriately by out of turn promotion".

I said, "Sir thank you very much for your encouraging words. Such thing never happened earlier in my department".

He continued, "Doctor, who said that such thing did not happen? I know in govt. Especially in Police Department it is done. I will see to it is done in your case. I will not leave it", he asserted.

Later when I was at Hyderabad, my Director informed, "Dr.Sreeramulu.. the Chairman had sent proposals recommending out of turn promotion to you and we informed him that such thing is not done in the department, instead we proposed for sanction of two extra increments to you for the good job".

However, nothing moved subsequently with relinquishing of the Chairmanship on completion of his term.

Nobody to pursue at the highest level.

I never regretted for it but felt happy at the recognition of my achievement in implementation of Telugu as official language in the state.

xviii. Untying the knot

One day in 2004, I was seriously going through some important files. Finding my office atteneder standing with some files I asked him to put them into 'Inwards tray'. He told me that he was going for his lunch and left. I too got up and finished my lunch in my ante-room. Relaxing for ten minutes came back to my table and browsing through the lettters from the 'inwards tray'. At the bottom of the pile I saw the CAG report on AP government for the year 2001- 2002.

It is customary for the Comptroller & Auditor General of Govt. of India after the audit checking of Income and Expenditure of the State Govt.during the previous year, as per the Article 151 of Constitution of India, submits the Financial Report to the State Governor for laying before the the State Legislature. Then the report would be studied by the concerned State 'Public

Accounts Committee' usually under the Chairmanship of the Leader of the Opposition party with some members belonging to all parties to guide the Government in its finance management.

At a quick glance I was going through more than two-hundred pages of the report. In one of the pages seeing the caption 'Animal Husbandry' I stopped at the page. It was a half-a-page rport on purchase of 'Hand Chaffcutters'. The inference of the report was:

1. Total budget allocated for 2001-02 .. Rs.5.0 Lakhs
2. 50% of cost recovery amount .. Rs.2.5 Lakhs
3. Cumulative loss to state for not utilising 10% of Chaffcutters left unsold ..Rs.12.41 Lakhs
4. The loss in asset value .. Rs. 0.51 Lakhs
5. Total loss .. Rs. 12.92 Lakhs

To be very honest myself, for a while I could not understand how the figure under cumulative loss for not utilising ten percent of Hand Chaffcutters was arrived at.

I spoke to the concerned Section Superintendent on intercom to come to me with the concerned file. I showed the CAG report to him. Going through the paragraph, I saw him scratching his head for a while. Seeing his dilemma I took the file asking him to sit with me. From the file I understood that 1700 Hand Chaffcutters were purchased for Rs.5 lakhs by the department that means each chaffcutter costed Rs.300/- The hand chaffcutter was like a sword made of iron metal with one side sharpness to chaff the fodder grass by hand to minimise wastage of fodder by cows and buffaloes. Actually it was not popular with dairy farmers, moreover the department had to collect Rs.150/- the non-subsity component. The unsold chaffcutters costed Rs.51,000/-. To arrive at the 'cumulative loss' as stated by the CAG, we both had to struggle hard. Inspite of my going through the report more than twice, I could not get any clue.

In desperation I looked at the proposals we had sent to the Govt. I found a statement in the proposal which said that with use of the chaffcutter the farmer can save about twenty kgs. of fodder every day. That was the catch point. Had the 170 Hand chaffcutters been in utilisation, 117 x 20 Kgs grass per day could have been saved. In totalty, a sum of Rs.12.41 Lakhs (@ Rs.1/- per Kg of grass) could have been accrued to the farming community in a year. That was the cumulative loss(a presumptive loss) arrived at by CAG.To my knowledge these Hand Chaffcutters may not long last.

I understand that no comment was passed on the findings of the CAG by the Public Accounts Committee. This was nothing more than a 'Sisyphus myth'.

b. The Night Stay Frolics

During my entire official career, I loved to stay in villages during nights instead of guest houses in nearby towns. Staying in villages gave me an opportunity to understand better the issues of livestock farmers and the livestock. Apart from learning, I too had hilarious experiences in the process.

i. Papireddygaripalli of Chittoor district

That day in 1986 after visiting a few Veterinary institutions enroute I reached Papireddygaripalli for a night halt instead of staying at R&B guest house in Vayalpadu. My idea was to complete the inspection of Veterinary Dispensary, Papireddygaripalli in the forenoon and reach Tirupati, my HQ by evening visiting a few more veterinary institutions and villages enroute.

Dr.Nagaraja Pille, the Veterinary Assistant Surgeon, VD, Papireddyi garipalli, asked me whether I could stay in a guest house of a local landlord.

I said," No doctor, as usual I can stay in the hall of VD itself for the night".

He was with me till I finished my dinner at 8 p.m, meanwhile, the attender brought a cot and bed from the VAS residence nearby. Next day after interacting with farmers and completing the detailed inspection I proceeded to Tirupati on my return journey after three nights of stay outside.

A week later the attender from Papireddigaripalli visited my office for delivering some reports. He came to me and said, "Sir, in the after-noon of the day you left our place, the wooden beam (central) of the room came down with collapse of entire roof of our hospital. Sensing the cracking sound from above we moved out quickly. We thanked the God. To our fortune you are saved as it did not happen on the day of your stay for the night ". I smiled and thanked him.

ii. Pedamanapuram of Vizianagaram district

In 1989, I insisted on to stay in the village "Pedamanapuram" that night after farmer's meeting (Ryyhugoshti) and film show, the preceding night of Animal Health Camp, in spite of my VAS's pleading to stay at R&B guest house at Gajapatinagaram just 15 km away from the village.

Dr.M.Appa Rao, the VAS was feeling embarrassed as his room was stacked with fodder seed and feed bags and he used to keep his table in the open verandah and sit during working hours. Making him feel good I suggested him, "Dear doctor! Don't worry. I can sleep in open space opposite to our hospital building. Today it is very pleasant with nice breeze.

That night cots were arranged for night stay for me, my fodder expert and infertility expert and my office jeep driver in a row in an open front yard of the veterinary hospital with no compound wall. In the dead of night, when I woke up, I found two fellows sitting on either side a little away with torches. Everybody was asleep and somebody was snoring horribly. As we slept in the open field under the bluesky with sparkling stars it was very pleasant with nice breeze so I went into sleep quickly.

By 6 a.m, the VAS came to me and enquired about our sleep experience that night. I told him," We had a nice sleep". I asked him, "Why those torches with men on either side during the last night".

He clarified, "Sir, There is threat of wild bears from those hillocks moving around the the crop lands behind our hospital building and those torches are to scare away the wild bears which roam in the open fields for food."

For a moment, I was dumbstruck but after a pause, I thanked him for the precautionary measures.

iii. Nirmal of Adilabad district

By the time I reached the Veterinary Dispensary in Nirmal it was 5 pm in ; seeing the jeep, some people in chit chat nearby came to us when I got down from the jeep. One of them informed that he saw the Veterinary Assistant Surgeon going out in a bus lately after lunch. The Veterinary Assistant and attender had left the hospital only just ten minutes back and added that the veterinary compounder stays very nearby. On my request, he went to inform him. In 10 minutes, the VA came in his moped hurriedly and disclosed that the VAS went to Adilabad and would be back by dinner time. He said that they were not aware of my visit. I told him not to worry about that and inquired about accommodation for that night stay.

He informed that there is one forest guest house and usually it will be vacant and he can arrange it as he knows the local forest ranger. I asked him to take the jeep, meanwhile the attender came and opened the doors of Veterinary dispensary, put on the lights and chairs outside to sit.

In fifteen minutes, the VA came back and took me to guest house and I asked him to arrange for two chapattis and two bananas for my dinner and

asked the driver to take the VA, finish his dinner and bring dinner for me. By 7:30 p.m, I finished my dinner and laid down on the bed and started reading a novel.

By 9 p.m. somebody knocked on my room door and when I opened the door, I found the local VAS. He pleaded for execuse and requested me to vacate the guest house as he had arranged accommodation in Panchayat guest house in the midst of town. In Spite of my telling him that the guest room was comfortable and I can stay here for this night as I am leaving tomorrow morning, he did not succumb to me. With my nod, the attender quickly put all my belongings into my bag and vacated the forest guest house.

By the time I settled in the new accommodation, it was already 10 p.m, then VAS told me that the forest guest house being a little far away from habitation, there is a threat of naxal groups. To my query," What is that they get from AH Department?" The VAS said, "Sir, they look at a senior state officer as a prize catch, why should we take risk? Although the accommodation is a bit small with old furnishings, this is safe as it is located in the midst of habitations around with movement people. Next day after inspection of VD, thanking the VAS and his staff, I started my homeward journey.



5. Good Learnings- Vets

a. A tangled Knot...

Dr.Gabriel whom I used to refer as one of the nine jewels of 'Trainers group' of our Animal Husbandry Department(AHD), invited me to address a small group of newly recruited Veterinary Assistant Surgeons undergoing a one month Foundation course at Regional Animal Husbandry Training Centre (RAHTC) when I was at Kakinada on my private visit in 2006. I felt very happy at the invitation as I always loved talking to young vets whenever I got an opportunity. I told him, "Dr. Gabriel. I like to talk to them informally rather than giving some lecture please keep away all gadgets of presentation mode".

I introduced myself and asked them to express freely what they had felt during last few months of their working in the department. One by one narrated their personal experiences at their work places mostly unpleasant things.

To a query, I narrated one of the experiences shared with me by one of the professors with a personal car at Hyderabad Veterinary college. It appears that the professor happened to attend a marriage of his childhood friend's daughter in a village. His friend was a very popular Veterinarian in a village nearby Medak. According to the professor there was a big gathering at the marriage venue. The professor was very nostalgic with his days with his friend but not very enthusiastic with the gathering at the place as most of the fellows attending the marriage were Tonga wallahs, bullock cart fellows, rugged farmers and uncultured village folks according to him. I could not digest his comments on the gathering at the venue.

I said to him, "Sir" the clientele for a veterinary doctor in rural scenario will be like that only; one has to appreciate his popularity and goodwill with his clientele."

Before I completed my comment the professor expressed that since then he stopped attending such marriages.

I was visualizing the personality of that popular field Veterinarian while the professor was expressing his disgust at the type of gathered crowd, unlike the city bred gathering at Hyderabad. The professor to his luck got married to a rich city bred girl and he got the opportunity to further his education in USA and with Ph.D he got the opportunity of teaching career in the University.

I exhorted, "My young friends! You have chosen rural based services so you have to develop respect for rural clientele and rural climate. It is God's given opportunity to serve dumb animals. We should love our job. I have greatest satisfaction in my job and I loved my job.I could not earn much. But earned a lot of love from my bosses, peers and other colleagues in the department. You are the only highly qualified fellows, more learned in rural scenario and you can be more helpful to your less privileged fellow humans and animals as well.

I shared some of my experiences of harsh living atmosphere in 1970s along with reasonable respect from villagers and their contribution to our department in terms of fixed assets like hospital buildings land etc.One of the Vets expressed his anguish about the behaviour of some of elected representatives with him.I pacified him with tips on how to bring such people into his ring with examples of mine and my peers those days. My advice was to make him/herself indispensable at his/ her work place.

During my stint at Agri Biotech Foundation as one of the faculty members in 2012, I had leg fracture in a freak incident in one of my tours in Adilabad district. And I was on bed rest for six weeks at home. To complete my unfinished task my other colleague, a retired Professor of Agriculture university was sent and on his return, he refused to go to that place once again as he felt hurt at the behaviour of a local politician in that village.

Looking at the contrast of reaction of a young Vet and a senior, matured Professor who must have taught several hundreds of students in his career I felt something important, empathy was missing. We have to mask our superiority complex.

Most of the times district officers like District Collector etc used to complain that your Vets in the field were unable to express themselves and project themselves though they work hard in harsh rural climate necessitating the need for introspection.

With all these inadequacies, I strongly believed that livestock is one of the important panaceas for poverty alleviation among rural poor. My belief further strengthened over two decades when it was constantly being told about how Globalisation, Liberalisation, Privatisation and Livestock Revolution were the key aspects for poverty alleviation and would create opportunities for rural poor(livestock farmers).

As a fresh veterinary graduate I felt I was not sufficiently equipped with skills and techniques when I entered in to Animal Husbandry department in 1971.Those days the stress was mostly on veterinary knowledge but not much

on delivery of knowledge with skills and techniques of deliverance of services to rural poor livestock farmers. When I recollect my days of hospital practice for two years in the college I laugh at myself, at times I pity myself that I got the opportunity of giving intravenous injection to large ruminants thrice in spite of my pushing through attitude in my batch.

I was looking at animals only initially and on my thirteenth year of service I started looking at people with livestock and in the last decade of my career I was paying more attention on livelihoods of people with livestock and people delivering veterinary services.

I strongly feel, it is very important that the veterinary curriculum must emphasize and encourage a critical, analytical and questioning mind in students. Another vexing problem I observed that the attitude of veterinary graduates, 'we know all, we are right, the farmer is wrong' stop our learning process. Personally I learnt a lot from farmers which we do not find documented. Most of the times useful solutions to farmer's problems only arise in a context where we have a dialogue with him.The emotional ability to care and feel is as important as the ability to reason in this era of globalisation.

Diversities in attitudes and practices are natural and should be welcome. There is no need for one over-all, ironclad, hard faith.

b. My Radiant guides

That friday at 5.45 p.m. I got up from my chair to go home after finishing my work for that day. My intercom rang when I was at the door, came back to my table and picked up the phone. From other side the DAH asked me whether I was going out next day, since it was a holiday. To my reply, "No, I will be at home." He then requested me, "Dr Sreeramulu, please come down to the office tomorrow by 11 a.m. to discuss some important issues and we can disburse for home for lunch."

With the obsession of time-conciousness, I was in my chamber by 10.55 a.m. and waiting for the DAH. Then one of my office managers who was on 'turn duty' that day, seeing the lights on in my chamber, came in, greeted me and asked me "Why are you here sir on a holiday today?" I told him, "DAH wanted me to come by 11 a.m. and I am awaiting him." He smiled at me saying, "Sir, if he comes even by 2 p.m, you are lucky. Did you come with your lunch box?" Shaking my head confessed, "No, I will wait till 1 p.m. and go home. Please inform him that I will come back if he is very particular." The office manager told me, "Do not worry Sir, if necessary he will send the

office vehicle to pick you up, if not I will definitely suggest". At 5.15 p.m, I got a call from the office manager informing me that the DAH did not come to the office that day and he was also leaving for his home.

Later I understood that the DAH would never be punctual and I saw him missing his trains and flights many a time. I always used to travel alone and meet him at the venue. Many a time I observed that he could not adjust his time and even for meetings at the Secretariat. I used to go myself on time and tell them that the DAH was on his way. He usually have his breakfast at 11 a.m, lunch at 4 p.m and dinner at 11 p.m. Office staff often complained that they were unable to cope up with me and the DAH as we are both poles apart in punctuality. I frequently used to laugh it off.

Vividly I remember that day somewhere in 1961 when I was in my tenth class, exactly at 9 a.m. the main gate of our school was closed on the instructions of the new Headmaster, R.P.Sarma. Many students and a few teachers were stranded outside the gate. One of the senior teachers was calling the school office peon but he was helpless to open the gate without the permission of the Headmaster. We all had assembled for the school prayer session by that time. Headmaster was on the stage and signalled Mr Appanna, the peon, not to move The prayer session was over and we were moving to our classroom looking at the headmaster moving towards the main gate. That was the first time such a thing happened in my school since my entry into high school in 1956. All the teachers and students were watching the drama at the main gate from the windows of our classrooms. First the headmaster let two or three teachers in and spoke to them something we could not hear. Then the students were let in and they stood around him. He warned them to be punctual and asked them to run around the high school ground once as a punishment. Next day onwards there were no latecomers. Every class was given with only one 'token' to go out of the class in case of need with strict instructions. That means at any moment no extra student could be seen outside the class; except during interval period of fifteen minutes.

The Five feet two inches tall Headmaster was a strict person and was an excellent teacher and inspirational personality for pupils like me. Apart from history lessons, he used to talk on inspiring leaders of freedom struggle, like Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Pandit Nehru, Tilak, Gokhale etc. very particularly about Mahatma Gandhi for his scrupulous punctuality. This deeply went into my heart at that age.

Another inspirational personality was our Anatomy Professor, Dr. V.Panduranga Rao in Veterinary college. Rain or shine he used to be in the

class at the stroke of the wall clock and once he was inside the class room means no one else could enter as he closed the doors. A great human idealist was inspiring to many students. Still he's young at the age of 103 years in 2018. An ordinary extraordinary person.

Once I happened to attend a seven-day lecture series on Bhagvad Geeta in English by Sadguru Swami Chinmayananda, a world renowned spiritual leader. On the first day Sri Marri Chenna Reddy, the then Governor of Uttar Pradesh state was to attend a brief inaugural ceremony. He was late by 5 minutes but Swamiji started the discourse at dotted time. Seeing the start of the discourse, the Governor sat in the last row in the auditorium to avoid disturbance. Swamiji noticed him and requested him to come to the first row. The Governor expressed his regrets and offered his apologies for the delay. Swamiji smiled, waved his hand and requested him to sit comfortably. That was the power of punctuality.

Sri P.V.Narasimha Rao, the then Prime Minister of India was to attend the groundbreaking ceremony of a Rs 300 crore world-class multispecialty hospital at Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh in 1990. He was late by 10 minutes but exactly at the moment of auspicious time, world-renowned spiritual leader, Bhagvan Sathya Sai Baba started the program by breaking coconuts. The Prime Minister, an ardent devotee of Baba was apologetic but Baba patted him with usual smile.

Since my school days, I was very enthusiastic to listen to talks by learned people and well known politicians. On the last day of electioneering for the Lok Sabha elections in 1977, I happened to be at Visakhapatnam to visit my parents and siblings. That evening the meeting venue was near my home and Sri Morarji Desai was to address the public meeting. As there was not much time for others to speak, Mr.Desai was given microphone to address the gathering. He spoke in English elaborating circumstances that led to mid-term elections and appealed to the public to vote for the new political party and abruptly stopped exactly ten seconds before the specified time and got down from the dais.

Subsequently for the next three decades, I even saw a few prominent leaders stop speaking at 5 p.m and still on the dais and drawing the attention of the public with their theatrics and gestures to support their party to circumvent the stipulated code of no electioneering after 5 p.m on the penultimate day.

In my college hostel, I used to enter the dining hall at 7.30 p.m. The mess clerk used to appreciate my punctuality and used to comment, "Sir, I correct

the time on the wall clock seeing you entering the dining hall." My colleagues used to make fun of me about the plight of my would-be wife and married life. My obsession with punctuality brought me most of the times appreciation and adulation and a very few brickbats. In my sojourn with ISPA, in our project we had four Swiss experts. Seeing me in the seat a minute before the scheduled time, used to run upstairs to the meeting hall. Now and then they used to comment, "We were not running like this in other places."

Somewhere in 1990, Dr A.Y.Krishna DAH was on camp to Vijayanagaram. Joint director Visakhapatnam and myself from Vizianagaram, received him at Visakhapatnam airport. After a brief stopover at the guest house, I was getting into the car along with him he said, "Dr Sreeramulu, you are from this place is it? Stay back, come tomorrow. Vizianagaram is not a new place for me." For a minute, I did not understand what he meant. Recovering from my daze, I informed him, "Yes sir, Visakhapatnam is my native place and my siblings stay here but I stay at Vizianagaram only with my family, wherever I am posted, in two weeks time I used to be with my family at the place of work." Then he said, "That is nice come with me."

Next day, the DAH was visiting the veterinary polyclinic complex at around 9 o'clock. I accompanied the DAH with the district head to the polyclinic. At 9.55 a.m. I requested the DAH, "Sir kindly permit me for 15 minutes as I have divisional meeting of all my staff from 10 a.m. I will join you after initiating the meeting." Looking at me with disguised admiration, the DAH said, "Oh it is nearing 10 a.m, Okay Dr Sreeramulu, do not worry, you attend your meeting. I will be here inspecting VPC for next 1 hour."

I left for my meeting and joined him back by the time he finished his inspection and accompanied him to other places.

c. A Humble Disease Investigation Officer

My first contact with Dr.Zaheer Ahmad, Disease Investigation Officer (DIO-Cattle) VBRI was in 1973 at Srikakulam when he came to investigate the cause of large scale deaths in sheep in Kotabommali area. Dr.Tirupathi Rao Patnaik was the Veterinary Asst.Surgeon(VAS) at Primary Veterinary Dispensary(PVD),Kotabommali, the senior most veterinarian of first batch graduated from Andhra Veterinary college at Tirupati(1955-59) and I was youngest belonging to first batch of 5 year Integrated B.V.Sc course (1964-1969) working at District Clinical Laboratory. Dr.Patnaik was so nice to us and took us to affected sheep flocks and helped us in our interactions as the disease investigation officer was feeling difficulty in understanding the Telugu

slang spoken by shepherds of that area. For me it was a learning exercise in real field situation. After late lunch, the DIO wanted the local VAS to take him to any water tank or pond where the sheep take water. After reaching the water pond DIO wanted some snails to be collected. At the veterinary dispensary, the DIO dissected the snails and demonstrated the cercaria under microscope; just then somebody got down from a govt. Jeep and entered into doctor's room greeting him. He was introduced to us as the Block Development Officer and good friend of the VAS. The DIO asked him also to look into microscope and explained him about the structures and how they cause disease in sheep. I was a little bit uneasy with DIO's explanation to a non-professional. The DIO smiled at me. After the departure of the BDO, the DIO suggested me that whenever, wherever feasible and possible, we have to educate other officials and livestock holders also. This awareness in concerned stakeholders will help us in control of disease outbreaks. These first practical lessons helped me in my subsequent career.

Again in 1976 while working at Vijayawada, Dr.Zaheer Ahmad came from Hyderabad as Deputy director(Disease investigation) to investigate the cause of mortality among weaner pigs in Pig Breeding Station at Pedavegi and Gopannapalem near Eluru. I accompanied him to those places for investigation in a bus. The meticulous way of collection of materials after post-mortem for further laboratory examination was very educative. He used to say, "Dr.Sreeramulu, one should not miss even a minute thing in the process to avoid missing some clues in establishment of causative agent for such large scale mortality".

He narrated his own experience during early part of his career. He happened to go for an investigation of a severe drop in milk production in a few buffalo dairy farms around Hyderabad city. It seems that he could not get any clue for a long time. His concentration was on the possible reasons for drop in milk production. It seems, suddenly he happened to see some buffaloes violently moving their heads. With the help of animal attendants of the farm, he examined buffalo heads for anything unusual in their nostrils, eyes and ears". He continued..." I could find painful, erythematous inflammation inside of earlobes(pinna) in many of the buffaloes and some buffaloes it was purulent otitis; with further probing I could find a few worms which could be Stephanofilarial nematodes. As no facilities were available at our laboratory in Veterinary Biological and Research Institute, I have sent the samples to an expert outside the state for speciation. After a few days Dr.Singh to whom I have sent the samples informed me that he wanted to see the affected buffalo farms for further investigation. Dr.Singh came to

Hyderabad and he was taken around those farms and he collected some more samples for further probe as those worms though appeared like Stephanofilaria assamensis, they could be different which can be confirmed only after some more thorough examination".

Dr.Zaheer Ahmad told me that ten weeks after the visit, Dr.Singh, informed him that the nematode was different one and he wanted to name it as" Stephanofilaria Zaheeri Singh,1958" in their name with year of detection. Though there were some questions about separate speciation from Stephanofilaria assamensis, its uniqueness was established in subsequent years.

He spoke, "Dr.Sreeramulu, seeing my name associated with a new found parasite, I went into raptures of ecstasy. You are very young, long way to go, try to be meticulous in your disease investigation work. We do not know what is in store for you in future."

d. Good Samaritans

Three days prior to Sankranthi festival in 1980, I was fast asleep and somebody was knocking on the door of a small makeshift guest room in Animal Health Centre, at Kurnool around 6 a.m. I saw Dr. Mallikharjunayya, the VAS, Veterinary hospital, expressing 'sorry' for disturbing me and informed me that Joint director (fodder) from head office, Hyderabad came at about 11 p.m. to guest room; knowing that I was staying there temporarily as I had joined three days back, the gentleman in Joint director asked them not to disturb me and went to a hotel for that night though I was a very junior officer in the hierarchy.

In another bizarre incident, myself and the Joint Secretary (JS) of the Animal Husbandry Department were coming out after attending a meeting from another building of the Secretariate. Just then my Joint Director(AH)(JD) of Ranga Reddy district was getting down from his jeep in the portico of the building, seeing me, he greeted me and told that he had some work in the Secretariat for thirty minutes. He was about to move in. The JS walking a few steps behind chit chatting with his colleague came in between us and the driver of the jeep was about to move out for parking site. The JS asked my Joint director, "Is it your vehicle?" The JD nodded his head in affirmative. Looking into the interiors of the jeep the JS commented," Nice,you are maintaining your vehicle very nicely. Got into the jeep and said to my JD, "Doctor! my car is sent for reboring, till then I use your vehicle. Instruct your driver to be with me till my car comes back to me" and left the

place. I felt shocked at his demeanour and recovering from his shock the JD asked me,"What is this mean behaviour sir,how I have to manage tours in the district next ten days". I expressed regret for such an audacious behaviour of the JS, an all India cadre officer.

I told him, "Doctor, I will wait for you. On the way back I drop myself at the directorate and take my jeep to your office and send it back".

The JD thanking me for my gesture said, "No problem sir, if I have to take more time, it would be an inconvenience for you. Do not worry sir, I will make my own arrangement, You please proceed".



6. VIPs - Sartorial sensibilities

Earlier there were set protocols whenever the first citizen of Nation(President of India) or State (Governor of the State) visited places to follow their needs of food, courtesy etc according to the Blue Book. I vaguely remember that a Viceroy during British Raj when invited by an Indian Prince commenting, "Mr. Prince! I cannot eat what I like, as I have to eat what my Protocol Secretary tells me to eat". Things changed later.

a. The holy cow and President's Consort

Dr.K. Rama Mohan Rao, the senior Vet came to my laboratory and enquired about availability of 'Mastitis Kit'. Those days, in 1972, 'Mastaid solution' with cups came into market and I told him, "Yes". Added, "Strip cup Test' kit also.." Then he informed me that the President of India sri V.V. Giri was visiting Srikakulam with his wife for overnight stay". He also told me that he already arranged a black cow for Mrs. Giri as she had the habit of getting up early by 4.30 a.m, and do Puja to the cow, then the cow to be milked.

We were ready by 4 a.m. on the day with necessary equipment at the Veterinary hospital and a jeep of Revenue department picked us up to Government Guest House.; as soon as we reached the guest house 3 kms away, the local Tahsildar greeted us and seeing me with the kits, enquired, "What these things are all?" ; after knowing that the kits were meant for testing milk, he pleaded with us, "Please doctors, don't do all these things. I am afraid if the cow gets frightened with all these paraphernalia, it may not stand steady affecting the worship schedule of the President's Madam and subsequent milking. If there is no milk, means I will be fired as I can not find another black cow in the vicinity as an alternative; apart from milking, worship time is also important for the Madam."

The protocol (blue book) stipulates that the cow must be tested prior to milking and after milking. A big dilemma for us. My senior colleague looked at me, I told him," If you are confident that the innocent looking cow is healthy, we can leave the matter at this point'. The protocol Tahsildar heaved a sigh of relief and thanked us profusely for saving him from tension, anxiety and pressure.

I recollected an incident narrated by Mr.T.V.Rajeswar, the former Governor of West Bengal in his book 'India:The crucial years' (2015) that

when he accompanied the same President of India in 1971 to Thaskent in Russia(presently capital of Uzbekisthan) as the Security Chief, the President fell flat on his face while walking to his guest room after alighting from the car. The President asked them not to breathe a word about his fall to his wife or any member of his family as the old lady might take it as a bad omen and insist on returning to India right away.

I could guess the power of Madam. I could imagine the anxiety, the threat, the burden and consequences anticipated by the protocol Tahsildar way back in 1972 at Srikakulam on Indian soil.

b. A Dilemma on milk for bed tea

In 1986 when I was at Tirupati, the Joint Director(AH), Chittoor asked me to attend a meeting convened by the District Collector at Tirupati as he was going out on leave. The meeting was convened on the occasion of the visit of President of India, Mr. Giani Zail Singh to Tirupati and Tirumala. In the meeting of officers of all government departments, first there was an elaborate discussion on security by police and in the end, the role of the animal husbandry department came in. The Joint Collector in charge of protocol, wanted fresh buffalo milk to be supplied at Tirumala guest house by 3.30 a.m. I expressed my inability with the reason that milking of buffaloes at 2 a.m. was not practicable so as to reach the guest house by 3.30 a.m. For my query one of the Personal assistansts to the President in the advance team in the meeting informed, "The President relishes tea with thick creamy milk".

Taking cue from his observation I suggested," Sir! If it is the only thick creamy milk, I can organise relatively thick creamy milk from Red Sindhi cows if agreeable." They nodded agreed to the suggestion.

The question from my side was about entry at the tollgate by 2.30 a.m. which would be opened only at 4 a.m. in the normal course of time. The responsibility was given to a young IAS officer posted at Madanapalle as sub collector to coordinate for opening of toll-gate at 2.30 a.m with concerned security authorities.

I expressed my regret that I would not be in a position to arrange chicken at Tirumala as non- vegetarian food was prohibited there. To this the member from the President's team agreed to my plea and requested to arrange chicken the next day down the hills for lunch before his departure.

On the stipulated date I was in the office by 1.45 a.m, satisfied with the reply from the other side on the phone belonging to a rich farmer that already

the cows were prepared for milking and again by 2.15 a.m I got message that the jeep had started for Tirumala hills, satisfying myself went home and slept.

By 5 a.m. Dr.N.T.Krishna Murthy, my Veterinary Assistant Surgeon(VAS) was at my home on his way back to his residence to put a word about the happenings at that early hour. He said, "Though there was some delay at the toll gate, finally the milk could be delivered by 3.30 a.m. and the sub-collector conveyed his thanks for prompt supply".

To my enquiring face, the VAS explained, "Sir, the toll- gate in charge refused to open the gates for 10 min, then I threatened that the milk is for the President's team. If you do not allow me, the President of India will have no bed-tea".

The in- charge of the tollgate spoke to his boss, the boss spoke to security then the gate was opened. The milk was delivered just on time at the guest house". This could happen because of coordination of all the concerned and I thanked all my staff for their support.

c. The Chief Minister's entourage and Colostrum

In 1988, during my stay at Vizianagaram as Divisional Assistant Director(AH), the then Chief minister, N.T.Rama Rao was scheduled to visit Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts with a night stay at S.Kota, Vizianagaram district.

The Deputy director informed me that the Minister of Animal Husbandry wants adequate colostrum milk to be collected, kept ready,and cooked for the CM on the date of his visit. The practice was that the cook in CM entourage usually inform the protocol Tahsildar what he needs for early breakfast (around 5 a.m.) in turn the protocol Tahsildar sends word on behalf of the District Collector to the concerned departmental offices to get the item/s ready by the previous evening of the D-day. Our responsibility was to arrange tender roosters as the CM did not like broiler chicken and likes the cooked colostrum (only cow milk).

The fun is the chain— the District head entrusts the task to Divisional Head, then to the local Vet in turn to his RVD staff who go into village for procurement. Most of the times the cost would be borne by the concerned department, (rarely benevolence of local farmers) with fool proof monitoring mechanism till the live chicken reach the protocol cell (mostly direct to VIP kitchen.

d. Lamb testicles and VIP

An incident during my stay at Kurnool in 1980 had come as a flash into my mind. That morning the Asst.Director, Animal Health Centre Dr.P.Prabhakar appeared a little perturbed when I entered his laboratory. I saw him directing one of his Vets to go to Nandyal town to organise collection of minimum of ten pairs of lamb testicles for the next day morning as early as possible; simultaneously he was talking to somebody on phone (Trunk call) requesting the gentleman on the other side to ask his Vet to contact the butchers and sanitary inspector's help to instruct the butchers not to dispose off lamb testeticles as we need them for a VIP visit.

Turning to another Vet in his laboratory the AD asked him to collect as many as lamb testicles at Kurnool slaughter house also and organise to send at the earliest to Nandyal. Wiping his sweat on his face with kerchief Dr.Prabhakar with a deep breath explained that the President of India, sri Neelam Sanjiva Reddy would be visiting Srisailam temple the day after with an overnight stay at Nandyala the previous day visiting his close relatives in and around.

Looking at my face he smiled and told me," The President relishes lamb testicles curry. I got the message to arrange the same; apprehensive about availability here, for the safe side I organised a collection at Nandyal slaughter house also by talking to AD(AH) there. I laughed it off saying," I thought that these lamb testicles are intended for VBRI, Hyderabad for some investigation or research".

7. Fleeting moments with...

a. EMS-The Octogenarian

We had a study tour in our fourth year of B.V.Sc Course in southern part of the country. After visiting Bombay Veterinary College, Madras Veterinary College and Thrissur Veterinary College we were at Trivandrum(present Thiruvananthapuram), the capital city of Kerala state. One of my colleagues, Mr.K.Srihari Rao during a chit chat at the railway station(we used to stay in our special rail compartment itself kept at railway yard) said that he wanted to meet the then Chief Minister of Kerala state, sri E.M.S.Nambudripad. My colleague comes from the family of stalwarts of communist party in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh. I told him, that I am also interested to see the stalwart leader of those days. I expressed my doubt whether EMS would be accessible; my friend assured that no formalities with him, anybody could approach him without any hesitation. Other colleagues planned to roam around Trivandrum with an advisory to be at our rail coach if any of our group comes early. We enquired a railway employee in the station about the route and address: he advised, "Do not ask for chief minister's but ask the Auto-driver to take to EMS house. Accordingly, we took an autorickshaw, fifteen minutes later we were at the gate of minister's quarters. Got down from the auto and nobody was there at the gate. We went in. First two houses appeared to be two room tenements. We were looking for a bigger house of CM. We found a two storied building and felt very happy and reached to the front gate and we were looking for somebody to enquire. To our luck, we found an old gentleman, could be a gardener, looked at us with inriguing looks.

To our query, he surprised us informing that house belonged to Mr.Thomas and Mrs.Gouri Thomas, both cabinet ministers in the ministry of EMS and directed us to the second house from the entrance gate on left side. We turned back and reached a two- room tenement wherein we found a middle- aged lady in traditional attire hanging washed clothes for drying on a rope tied to poles on either side. For a moment, it occurred to me she could be a maid but looking at her glowing face with large size vermilion on her forehead in traditional attire, we greeted her with respect. The simple looking lady was consort of EMS made us awe My friend told her, "We are students from Tirupati, wanted to meet EMS sir" The lady was staring at us. I realised that

she could not understand what my friend asked her in English. Both of us did not know Malayalam language. I tried to explain her in Tamil. She could understand purpose of our visit. She conveyed us that EMS had been to Cochin and was likely to return only after Nine in the night in broken Tamil. She offered us coffee but politely declining we told her that we would come next day. She advised us to come early.

Next day by 8 a.m. we were at EMS's house. Seeing us he invited us to come inside. He was going through that day's news- papers in his usual attire of pure white lungi and a towel on his shoulders covering his chest sitting in a wooden chair. We did not see any sofa set except for wooden chairs. He was so kind to us, he talked to us about the importance of education, patriotism, egalitarian society and national integration for thirty minutes. He did not talk about politics. In our interaction, he told us that he began his political life as an ardent Gandhian. Throughout his life, adhering to the Marxist outlook, he practised Gandhian principles of simplicity and personal austerity.

EMS was the Chief minister of Kerala twice, first in 1957 to 59 and second time from 1967 to 69. We, ourselves were witnesses to the austerity of an ordinary extraordinary person.He was a genial genius and a versatile journalist and writer on an impressive, awesome range of subjects, politics, philosophy, economics, education, social movements, literature and cultural affairs. The learned EMS's stress was on spread of literacy and decentralisation of power and resources in Kerala. Kerala state was the first one to be declared as the state with cent percent literacy.

I always cherished my thirty minute acquaintance with EMS.

b. A Renowned Poultry Scientist

In 1996 I got an opportunity to attend a seven day "20th International Poultry Conference"(2nd sept- 8th Sept.) at New Delhi. I was fortunate to meet Prof. B.S. Pomeroy (Benjamin Sherwood Pomeroy) of University of Minnesota, USA at the venue. He was my Professor's (Dr V.B.Singh of Pantnagar University) guide in his Ph.D research programme in Minnesota. It was an exhilarating experience when I introduced myself to Prof. Pomeroy, as student of his student in India.

He addressed me, "Oh my grandson, nice to see you at this age of 86 years at this distant place". Dr.B.S.Pomeroy was one of the editors/authors of book on "Poultry Diseases" which we considered as an excellent treatise on poultry diseases during our undergraduate and graduate college days. He had innumerable honours and regarded as the face of veterinary medicine in

USA. To perpetuate the legacy of Prof. B.S.Pomeroy, a research centre was established. I could meet him when I was 48 years old. No barrier of age, colour, nationality and geography for love and goodwill. A wonderful experience.

c. A Mentor and Guide

Usually the government offices work from 10.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. with thirty minutes lunch break all the six days in Andhra Pradesh state except on public holidays. Indo-Swiss Project was functioning from 9.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. for five days in a week those days. But for executives like us, most of the times it would be more working hours sometimes even on public holidays. On one such Sunday, the Director of Animal Husbandry (DAH) sent a word to me to meet him at the office urgently through a driver with a vehicle to pick me up from my home.

In thirty- minutes I was in the office and the DAH pushed a letter towards me when I settled in a chair opposite to him. The letter was from Govt. of India addressed to DAH. The inference was that on Monday ie the next day, a meeting of nutrition experts was scheduled by 10.30 a.m. at Delhi with a request to attend personally, if not depute a senior official from the department. The communication had reached our office a week back but the DAH looked into it that Sunday morning only. Unless one travels by flight it was not possible to attend the said meeting.

The DAH requested me to attend the meeting as he had to attend a meeting at the AP.Secretariat at the same time in Hyderabad. I assured him that if I could get a ticket for morning flight I would make it. I spoke to the office Manager, ISPA on phone about flight ticket for Delhi and he replied that he would try and if confirmed, he would arrange to send the tickets to my residence. Luckily by evening I got my tickets ready and left for Delhi on 6 a.m. flight and reached the meeting venue in time.

I could meet many nutrition experts and colleagues from nearby states at the venue. Prof.Morris Jr. who had edited Text Book of Animal Nutrition which we followed during our graduate studies, was the guest- speaker and Dr.K.K.Iya, a Dairy nutrition specialist and a former Deputy Director General of Indian Council of Agriculture Research, New Delhi, was the moderator for the event.

After a brief session of welcome address and introduction of participants, Prof.Morris Jr. introducing himself shared his excitement on articulation of the free roaming cattle crossing roads in addition to dogs and pigs along with

people on Delhi city roads on his arrival and travel from his hotel to the venue. He said that he was in daze and never had such experience earlier as a globe trotter. Even during interactive session often he was in splits, repeating his bewilderment at the way the animals were manoeuvring the speeding motor vehicles in national capital.

Interrupting at one point, I said "Prof.Morris, we also wonder at times, the way our cows and buffaloes thrive on the unimaginable available vegetation during severe scarcity of fodder, pasture and agricultural wastes citing the example of a milk producing district where even kitchen waste like vegetable skins, discarded vegetables, water used for washing rice before cooking go into feeding system and maintaining the milk production.

Dr.K.K.Iya, intervened and expressing his apologies to Prof.Morris said that Prof.Morris's nutrition standards were meant for high producing cows but not for Indian cows or buffaloes, what all they like, the available edible nonsense was the standard.

Dr.Prof. Morris Jr. a graduate from Cornell University and Ph.D from Wisconsin following his father's (Prof. Morris Sr.) footsteps became a worldwide authority on Companion Animal Nutrition and his passion to improve the health and wellbeing of all animals through better nutrition led him to be mentor and guide to others in his field.

Prof.Morris also joined us stating in a lighter vein, "My nutrition standards do not apply to Indian cows and buffaloes". The whole gathering was in laughter.

d. A Moment with a Great Commoner

During my five years of stay, the longest, in my career I had exhilarating experiences with many well known artistes, writers, scholars, musicians in Vizianagaram, a cultural center. I was a more familiar face in gatherings at literary and cultural programmes regularly.

In one such literary event in 1990, veteran freedom fighter, social worker and a true Gandhian, Sri.Vavilala Gopala Krishnayya was the guest of honour. At the end of the event myself and some enthusiasts gathered around him to seek his blessings. The elderly man put his right hand on my shoulders for support and exhorted us saying," Now, it is your time. It is time for youngsters like you to take the country forward. We are all fading class.".

After a few seconds of gap of reminiscing he said," We fought for the freedom of our country. In the process many perished. One cannot forget their sacrifices. Work hard, be dutiful, help your brethren".

We knew he was a Member of Legslative Assembly. We saw him going to Assembly premises on bicycle with a small cotton bag hung on his left shoulder Such a simple man described how the meaning of governance and politics started morphing into pathetically low standards discouraging honest people with passion for service to the society. He, in brief, described present political scenario; during 1952 elections, freedom fighters,well lettered and popular leaders got elcted. Later along with these characteristics caste factor was added to win elctions. Then followed money power as a criterion and now muscle power became important in winning elections discouraging worthy people.He repeatedly pleaded with our group to take care of the country.

Really it was a heart touching experience with octogenarian of the Gandhian era.



8. Known-Knowns: Livestock Development Programmes

a. A Flagship programme-Sheep Deworming

One of the flagship programmes of Animal Husbandry Department during late 1990s was "Mass Deworming of sheep for three to four times a year in the state. It was a massive programme; handling of 120 lakh sheeep belonging to about more than 10 lakh shepards spread over in all villages of the state of Andhra Pradesh

Initially the programme started with a 50 percent subsidy for the deworming medicines. The toughest part was collection of non subsidy portion of the amount. One day the Director had sent a word to me to come to his chambers; as I entered his room, I found a team from the Accountant General of A.P with him. I explained to the team about the programme, the operationalization and positive results of the programme according to the third party evaluation.

The team leader sarcastically remarked that the department was finding it difficult to collect a paltry amount of non subsidy component, one crore rupees, from the shepard beneficiaries.

The Director and our Chief Accounts Officer (CAO) were silent. I could not resist myself to keep quiet. A moment later, I told him, kindly visualize this small amount has to be collected from more than ten lakh beneficiaries three times a year spread out all through the state. The AG party did not say anything further.

Subsequently the govt. took a decision to make it a free programme realizing the gains accrued to the shepherd community especially with small flocks. "Mass sheep deworming programme continued even in successive government regimes, Technical improvements like"monitoring of the worm burden pre and post deworming periods, change of deworming medicines in every cycle to avoid development of resistance, import of automatic drenchers for quickening the process of deworming were taken up.The political bosses including the Chief minister used to participate very regularly in mass sheep deworming campaigns, posing for photographs with drenching medicines and talking to shepherds.

During early years of my service, I never noticed shepards participating in mainstream development programmes; earlier they used to be aloof from

the mainstream of rural populace; they used to live in their own world isolating themselves.

I noticed a piquent attitude among field functionaries in Mass sheep deworming programmes. During one of my surprise visits to Pulla village of West Godavari district to oversee the mass deworming under Janmabhumi programme' in 2002, I found a few small sheep flocks along with a few accompanying goats within the compound of Veterinary Dispensary. As the VAS was busy, I asked him to continue and complete his work first. I sat in his room going through the registers and reports of work. The VAS came inside mopping his washed hands with a napkin. I asked him to sit opposite to me and he picked up the "Mass Sheep Deworming register" and made some latest entry and gave it to me for my remarks and signature.

Looking into the register and entry he made, raising my head, I asked him, "Doctor, why you did not make an entry of the number of goats dewormed accompanying the sheep, though I saw you drenching them? He said," No sir, this programme is meant for only sheep and my officers instructed me not to mention about goats de-wormed".

Then I posed a question," Did you ever see sheep flocks without a few goats? "He said," No sir"; I continued, "Then, why do you hesitate to record such dewormings? How the administration knows about the field reality unless you bring it to the notice of the administration? You are right, the programme is meant for sheep and not for exclusive goat herds. Unless you field functionaries record facts administration will not have any support data to plead with the government".

I pushed the register to him to record the goat dewormings also and I endorsed it. The reality is one cannot avoid accompanying goats for deworming. He agreed to my practical suggestion.

I recollect another hilarious incident that happened in the year 2000 at the venue of the inaugural function of Janmabhoomi programme in Krishnagiri village of Kurnool district. All government departments arranged stalls. The District Superintendent of police was going round the venue with his team of police officers overseeing the security arrangements.

AHD and APLDA, planned official launching of 'Gopala Mitra programme' by Chief-Minister on the occasion of inaugural function of Janmabhomi programme. The venue was agog with Self Help Group Women in thousands. Whole police force got alerted all over the venue on seeing the C.Ms helicopter in the sky at a distance.

Suddenly there was a commotion at one corner. The Superintendent of Police(SP) himself rushed to the corner which happened to be AHD venue. I also rushed to the spot where I found three of our para-vets trying to send a few goats out from a flock of a one thousand sheep kept for symbolic deworming by the CM. I assured the police that I will take care of the situation, Satisfied with my assurance the S.P rushed towards the alighting point of C.M's helicopter.

I noticed the Para-vets asking the shepherds to separate out goats as the C.M doesn't like to see goats among the sheep while deworming. The shepherds were pushing the goats out and the whole flock trying to go out with the goats. It was really a fun and anxiety, then I shouted at them not to disturb the flock and keep the goats there itself. The para-vets said, "Sir our Assistant director asked us not to keep goats with sheep", I told them," Already the helicopter has come down and the C.M is likely to come to our venue first and at this juncture do not disturb the flock". Meanwhile the local JD(AH) was rushing towards the flock in a hurry and I told him let it be like that, if it all C.M asks tell him the goats were meant for leading the flock and they would be always with the flock.

In another three minutes, the C.M was at our venue, spoke to shepherds a few words: asked for deworming medicine and administered it to two lambs,symbolically inaugurating the 'mass sheep deworming campaign' in Kurnool District.

b. The Black Gold

For summer holidays in my fourth standard I accompanied my grandma to Madras to my elder father's home in Triplicane, Madras. I was the youngest of all my cousins and used to get up late in mornings. I used to hear my 'Peddanayana'(paternal elder father) yelling at my cousins, "Hey! Dunnapotha (a male buffalo in Telugu), get up, get up, it is already six in the morning".

At that age I did not understand what buffalo was meant. That day I asked my grandmother, "Why does Peddanayana always shouts at my cousins as buffaloes and how a buffalo looks like?" That afternoon she showed me a pair of buffaloes pulling a heavily loaded cart on the street. For the first time I saw a pair of buffaloes that day with some visualisation. Earlier I watched often pulling of loaded carts by two men from the front and one or two persons pushing the cart based on the load from behind without footwear on black top roads in mid summer days in Madras in those days. My grandma also explained to me how to make out a male or female buffalo in a real situation.

In my highschool days many a time I heard some teachers admonishing some boys lagging behind in answering questions put by teacher as 'dunnapotha' (male buffalo). I could realise about significance of the word only when I was serving in animal husbandry department watching buffaloes. Normally buffaloes are very docile and very tolerant and usually do not react fast in addition to their non attractive appearance compared to bulls and cows. Since ages religiously and socially the buffaloes were not taken seriously by the society.

Of late buffaloes have been contributing to the rural economy in our country constituting seventy per cent of milk production. It appears that buffaloes were domesticated in India way back in 3000 to 2500 BCE. Mention about buffaloes can be noticed in a few ancient scriptures also. Even now since Puranic period, buffaloes are considered as demons in some of the Indian literature.

I recollect back an incident somewhere in 1989, when I was coming back to Vizianagram after inspection of a few veterinary institutions at about 12 noon at Gantyada village the road was found blocked by a small gathering of villagers. I saw two or three members standing on a makeshift dais. Recognising me one of the villagers greeted me and informed, "Sir, somebody from northern parts of our country are there on the dais and talking something about cows but the problem is that they do not know our language and we cannot understand Hindi."

Then I went to them and volunteered to translate his talk to the gathering after introducing myself. The elderly gentleman, Sri. Radhakrishan Bajaj, President of All India Gau Raksha Samithi, felt happy at my timely arrival to the spot. He started his address and I tried to translate more meaningfully. At one point he posed a question to gathering, "Please tell me the vehicle of Lord Siva?"; the audience responded, "Nandi "means bull. Appreciating their response another question was posed," What is the vehicle of Yama Dharmaraja?" means God of Death according to Hindu mythology. The gathering responded, "Buffalo-bull "

Then the speaker asserted," That means when we drink cow's milk we reach abode of Siva which every Hindu aspires to." Again he quizzed, "Then when we consume buffalo's milk where we will go?". For a few seconds there was an eeri silence.

I prompted, "To the hell ".They whole gathering was in splits and the speaker thundered," Encourage cows and consume cow's milk only".

But the irony is that seventy percent of the milk produced and marketed is only buffalo milk in our country. The wisdom of the farmer is beyond the imagination of economists or finance experts or religious leaders. Surprisingly, buffaloes are not venerable like cows in this country except in some tribal communities. I remember about the practice of sacrificing buffaloes every year in large numbers long back in some villages. Of course such practices came down substantially over the years with consistent campaigns by NGOs and government agencies wherein I also participated in our state.

During my career as diagnostician, disease investigator, researcher some questions were haunting me even after fifteen years of my retired life. The very nature of buffalo is a big puzzle for me.

My colleague in Doctoral research programme(1981-1985), Dr.P.C.James, an Associate Professor from Veterinary college, Mannuthy, Kerala was working on some immunology parameters and used to share his observations with us and he felt that the immune responses in buffaloes appear to be not as in cattle to the same agents(antigens). Agreeing to his observation I shared my observations in an annual screening of buffalo breeding bulls in semen production stations and buffalo farms to Tuberculin and Johnin antigens for seven years with a few false positive reactions.Similarly, in seromonitoring of vaccinations under National Project for Rinderpest Eradication programme during 1995-98 I had to defend my state when it was pin pointed by Dr.W.P.Taylor,the FAO consultant that the average protective titres were less in Andhra Pradesh compared to Karnataka; I took it seriously and suggested the need for investigation of low titres to rinderpest vaccination in buffalo areas compared to cattle areas in Karnataka.

In buffaloes I found another peculiarity of diurnal variation in rectal temperatures unlike cattle especially in winter months and I had to face uncharitable comments from my boss in early part of my professional career. Of course I could substantiate my observations with statistical correlations.

At times I wonder at my casual observations of the buffalo calves and calves of cows. The calves of cows are very active and I love to see them jumping and running fast with their tails raised while buffalo-calves are found not so active. I used to raise such issues in different forums formally and informally. Basically my personal feeling was that we are yet to understand buffalo fully. Mostly we apply all that knowledge of cattle to buffaloes. Unfortunately, the West predominantly studied the ubiquitous cow in their land but the countries with rich buffalo population are yet to focus more on buffaloes to understand it better to improve buffalo productivity to help farmers in their countries.

The revelation of my Telugu language teacher in my high school that Sage Viswamithra when his ardent devotee was denied entry into Heaven, he created another Heaven (Thrisanku) along with other flora and fauna including buffaloes in between earth and real Heaven. And so buffaloes behave differently. It could be a myth or fantasy. But still buffaloes need a focussed attention.

c. Faint Glint-AI services

A focused emphasis was given to increase milk production in the country in two five year plans and one of the strategies was crossbreeding the low yielding non-descript local cows with exotic proven bulls by the technique of artificial- insemination(AI).

During the 1960s and 1970s, the AI service was free through a few AI centres. During the 1980s, more AI service centres were opened and a very nominal cost of Rs 2/- was charged for the first service and next two services within three months for the same animal was free. In 1995, the AI service charge was enhanced to Rs 10/-; some farmers especially from very poor sections were grumbling and field veterinarians, para veterinary staff were opposing vehemently from the region where the off take of AI service was poor. I used to participate in such discussions to appraise the rationale behind such enhancement of fee for AI service. To understand the field reality, I made a small study by interacting with different categories of farmers in different regions.

In 1997, ISPA supported APDDCF to try with a model where a trained technician would extend AI service at the doorstep of the farmer and charge Rs.20 for each service in Kalwakurthy area of Mahbubnagar district. The farmers were happily paying Rs 20/- for every insemination and satisfactory success rate reflected in increased number of quality calf births. This was not so with some of the government AI service providers.

The argument from Service associations was the affordability of farmers and my counter argument was that when quality of service was maintained farmers were ready to pay willingly.

The critical flaw was fixation of illogical targets for AI work by the AHD. A few of the members of association had apprehension of achievement of their targeted number of AIs. There should be rationale in fixation of targets for AI at micro-level based on breedable population, marketability, dairy production potentiality with reference to livelihood opportunities in the area. This was rarely done.The barometer was only target and achievement.

In a quick appraisal study, it was noticed that when no service charges were collected, all the people achieved their targets; when Rs 2/- was collected, majority of them had fulfilled the target numbers but when it was raised to Rs 10/- not all the staff could achieve the target. Subsequently in 2000s, the AI service charge was enhanced to Rs 20/- in govt. institutions and private service providers (Gopalamitras) were allowed to charge Rs.40/-.Farmers were paying the fee willingly because of improved quality of services and service reach with uninterrupted supply chain of quality inputs.

The lesson learnt was that the majority of the farmers could afford to pay for quality services. Only the political and administrative machinery take decisions to please a few elements without much seriousness which may hamper or destroy the well- oiled smooth functioning systems at times.

d. An exhilarating experience with Gopalamitra services

Sometime in 2003, I accompanied the Principal Secretary to Tirupati to attend the Chittoor district Animal Husbandry officers review meeting and after the review meeting the Principal Secretary left the place, I stayed for that night at Tirupati as I have to board the train to Hyderabad the next day evening. As a practice in vogue, the joint director desired to stay back with me but I told him," Don't worry, you please go to your place, I go round some places in Tirupati division tomorrow and leave for Hyderabad".

Next day I visited some of the Veterinary institutions along with the Divisional Assistant Director. Seeing our jeep, the VAS at VD,Yerravaripalem tried to leave the case in the trevis and come to me. Getting down the vehicle, I told him, "No, doctor, attend to your work, clear all these cases. I will come back after two hours, please, carry on with your work".

I enquired about RLU, Nerabilu the corner most veterinary facility in Tirupati division during my days as Assistant director, adjacent to the famous Talakona forest area. The Assistant director informed me that the RLU centre had become very important for AI work. His information enthused me to see the villages around the RL unit, and we proceeded to two villages 4 to 5 k.m. away from Nerabilu.

While talking to farmers in those two villages and two other adjacent villages, I understood that there were about 400 CB cows costing –Rs.1.20 crores, supplying 3,500 litres of milk daily to two private dairies, earning about Rs 42,000/- every day. In addition these small villages possess about 80 heifer calves, the future assets in 12 to 18 months.

After discussing many issues, lastly I asked the farmers," How did you venture to invest such huge amount?". In reply they proudly emphasized," Reason one is availability of 'doorstep AI services' through a very sincere and, hardworking Gopalamitra, reason two is readily ever responding and guiding VAS at VD Yerravaripalem nearby (about 15 km) and the reason three was 'assured outlet for their milk through two private dairies with regular, genuine payment for their milk".

I was wonderstruck with their reasoning. What else we need for dairy development and for improvement of livelihoods? An Exhilarating experience for me indeed; networking of a govt department as a service provider, private enterprise for marketing of the product and collective approach of hard working farmers and their families created a wonderland where there was not much livestock activity earlier when I was Assistant director at Tirupati during late eighties.

Service delivery at doorstep concept in 1999 made all the trick and the outcome of that concept was very satisfying for me personally as I was one of the protagonists of that concept which was opposed initially by all the veterinary associations within the state and from outside the states also. Dr Sudhakar, Assist Director (AH) Tirupati accompanying me authenticated that the introduction of "Doorstep Service" concept with J K Trust made a perceptible impact since 2000 that too already sensitised dairy farmers since 1975 in the district caught up fast compared to many other districts in the state.

When I look back at the initial resistance from Veterinarians, I wonder at the speed that increased percentage of coverage in 10 years time from 15 to 50 of breedable population was a commendable achievement. AI service through Doorstep delivery system with three months trained(AI and primary health services) rural youth made all the difference. One had to appreciate the acceptance of farmers, support of field veterinarians who were sceptical in early days and planners at governance level deserve all the credit for this model to succeed facing many teething troubles.I heard from some political leaders and even the then Prime Minister of India, Atal Behari Vajpayee on hearing the word 'Gopala Mitra' commented" Oh that is Andhra Pradesh.``

e. Good Practices from other States

There was an interesting research finding from 'Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsberg, USA after a prologed study on 'success', that even in

profoundly technical profession like engineering, only fifteen percent of financial success stems from technological skills and a whopping eighty per cent was due to 'human engineering' or people skills.

Appreciating the efforts and performance of government machinery, the then CM always emphasized on the need for new learnings and implementation of 'good practices' in each sector from other states also.

The Director of Animal Husbandry (DAH) deputed three of us, Additional Directors to different states to find out some good practices adopted in those states. I was allocated Maharashtra and Gujarat states, but in addition I had an opportunity of visiting Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh states also with some of the ongoing projects with which I was involved. I observed that all the departments involved in rural development activities were under the administrative control of Panchayat Raj system in Gujarat state unlike in Andhra Pradesh. The dairy cooperative system had its deep roots in rural and semi urban areas. I found in all the states I visited, the Veterinary Asst.Surgeon was assisted by two para-vets and two attenders in vety.dispensary unlike in Andhra Pradesh where in the VAS was assisted by one para-vet and one attender only in most of the places and with no para-vet assistance in some places. In Maharashtra state the AHD was headed by the Commissioner, an Indian Administrative Service cadre person and he had little to share with me and asked his Additional Directors to interact with me and they had poured out their problems of incoherence between field VASs and para-vets. I could not find any unique good practice to be picked up from the state.

I went to Directorate of Animal Husbandry, Tamil Nadu state and found a lady veterinarian to be DAH. I interacted with her and she briefed about an unique thing, a corporation was established to procure and supply medicines and equipment both to veterinary and medical departments on the lines of earlier Medical Stores Department (MSD) in Andhra Pradesh which was a central govt.department organisation. We had inadequate supplies, sometimes no supply with devastating consequences in service delivery at field level. Unlike MSD, Tamil Nadu state had a corporation with independence in business. The DAH was very cooperative and gave me an introductory letter to the Managing Director of the Corporation. I met him and discussed about the nitty gritty of procedures and he informed that the corporation could supply medicines and equipment to other states also.

In Bihar, Chattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh states also the field vets were provided with more than adequate support staff with less work-load and in

our state VASs were overburdened with activities with less support staff. During a meeting with CM when I explained these things, the CM simply smiled and did not comment on my presentation.

f. Ongole Bull : The game changer

Three "Apples" changed the world; Adam's Apple, Apple's fall, and Apple's Software. The Ongole bull with its lion's stature, elephantine strength, and the smartness of a leopard was an iconic animal and pride of nation. A 'Second International Seminar on Ongole cattle' was held in Hyderabad from 26th to 27th October,2001 by AP. Animal Husbandry Department in collaboration with Acharya N.G.Ranga Agricultural University. I was actively involved in the organisation of the event. On the third day, Dr. I.V. Subba Rao, the Vice-chancellor of the University requested me to accompany the Brazil delegation along with a scientist from the university for tour of Ongole breed tract, Guntur and Prakasam districts to show them managemental practices of farmers rearing Ongole cattle in some villages and research activities and promotional activities by the university and government departments. We went round some villages and organised interactions with Ongole breed enthusiasts.

We were at 'Karavadi' a small village near Ongole township in Prakasam district in the after-noon. Immediately after getting down from the car, one of the Brazilian delegates, kneeled down and kissed the dusty earth excitedly. For a moment I was amazed seeing what he was doing, so my other colleague and farmers gathered around. He got up still with excitement, tears rolling down from his eyes on to his cheeks.

After a pause, settling down he narrated," My late grandfather purchased a bull from this village in 1960s and the bull changed not only our family fortune but also fortune of our country". That was the great sentiment expressed by a third generation Brazilian who was a qualified veterinarian and Ongole cattle breeder with business acumen. He further explained to the gathering that out of 220 million cattle in Brazil 165 million are Ongole(Nellore) breed and its hybrids. He expressed his dismay at the declining numbers of Ongole cattle in its home tract.

The farmers in their interaction narrated that earlier there were large numbers with rich landlords in these villages. Due to land reforms, the declining per household extent of agriculture lands, recurrent droughts in the area leading to fodder shortages coupled with switching over to commercial crops like chillies and tobacco, increased milk marketing led to shift to buffalo,

led to decline in Ongole cattle numbers. Added to these things, apathy on the part of government agencies in policy formulation and inactivity of service providers and urban migration added the fuel to the already neglected sphere. Now only a very few rich farmers were able to maintain Ongole bulls out of their passion. At the same time we cannot blame all the people as a few persons like Dr.V.Anjaneyulu, Retired Additional Director of Animal Husbandry department, Dr.A.Surya Prakasa Rao, Retired Milk Commissioner and Sri.Mullapudi Narendranath, Secretary, Ongole cattle improvement and a few farmers as well struggled hard but things did not move as envisaged. Unless there was a clear policy at national and state level, nothing would lead to bring back the past glory to Ongole cattle.

g. The Perish of Imported Bulls

A popular dictum 'any work started with good intention will succeed' but my faith in that dictum shattered with an unpleasant end of a well-meant initiative of Andhra Pradesh Livestock Development Agency(APLDA), the first of its kind institution established in the country under National Project on Cattle and Buffalo Breeding(NPCBB) in 1999-2000.

There were four bull semen processing units in the state with adequate bulls strength. To meet the future goal of increased coverage of state breedable cows and buffaloes to fifty per cent from the present coverage of thirty percent plans were afoot to build up infrastructure like Liquid nitrogen supply chain, frozen semen production,and human resource development.

One important initiative was to increase the number of exotic bulls of Holstein Friesian and Jersey breed by importing from Australia. One had to imagine the hurdles — technical, bureaucratic, and political at provincial (state), national (Central Government) and international level. The less, I elaborate, the more the better. Somehow, the enthusiastic Chief Executive Officer(CEO)of APLDA, Dr.S.Ramalinga Raju could successfully manoeuvre these hurdles. I knew what was happening at every step officially as I was associated with that subject at Animal Husbandry Directorate and at personal level as he was sharing his feelings with me because of our professional acquaintance and friendship from college days.

Everybody felt happy at the arrival of exotic bulls, a few cows and a few heifers numbering totally, two hundred and one, on 28th April,2002 at Chennai (Madras) International Airport from Australia by aircraft. All those prized animals were shifted to the quarantine station at Madras(present Chennai) as we did not have animal quarantine facilities at Hyderabad airport.

The very first day while transferring the animals from the airport to the quarantine station one young bull escaped from the group and people have to run for the bull and it took more than one hour to catch hold of the bull. A team of veterinarians, para-vets and animal attendants from Andhra Pradesh state were at the quarantine station to look after the animals. The teams were in attendance in turns till the end as there were no adequate veterinarians or other supporting personnel at the quarantine station.

I had a very unpleasant experience, a year back when forty Yorkshire boars and sows were imported from Australia by Central government for Andhra Pradesh. Then we were advised to take care of the imported pigs allocated to our state at the quarantine station Madras(Chennai).

At that time, I had to send a veterinarian, a para-vet and two pig attendants from our pig breeding station, Visakhapatnam. In a lighter vein, my Assistant Director from Visakhapatnam said, "My staff was the quarantine team at that place". When I told this to the CEO, with a deep breath, he said, "In fact still the situation is the same". There was no adequate accommodation for our imported animals and the CEO made makeshift arrangements in the existing sheds. He added that the more frustrating aspect was water tankers and truck loads of green fodder were being sent from Chittoor town and Kurnool district regularly to Chennai quarantine station for our animals in quarantine. I could imagine the plight of departmental officers engaged to supply daily needs of water and fodder from long distances.

The AP Government pleaded with the Central Government to permit to shift the animals to one of the isolated and secure places in Andhra Pradesh with an assurance to follow quarantine stipulations and cooperate in all aspects of Livestock Importation (Amendment) Act 2001.The Central government to be more specific, the Joint Secretary, was adamant and said," No".

The certification of health status of the bulls and calves issued by Australian authorities was accepted by Indian government facilitating the importation. The Joint Secretary, Animal Husbandry and Dairy, New Delhi insisted on screening of the imported animals under quarantine by the National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD) at Bhopal. This laboratory declared that a few imported animals showed the presence of antibodies against Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD). Based on this report the Indian Government issued orders to deport the animals. Meanwhile, twenty four cows and twenty two bulls imported died of exhaustion resulting from summer heat and inhospitable environment at the quarantine station.

The Andhra Pradesh Government was surprised at the Union Agriculture Ministry's order on deportation of 201 breeding cattle it had imported from Australia after much lobbying, and contested the claim that these animals were afflicted with Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) citing that the serum samples of all the animals sent by the Union Agriculture Ministry earlier to the internationally approved Office International Epizootics (OIE) Referral Laboratory in the United Kingdom were tested negative.

The CEO, APLDA was vociferous in his arguments and this had infuriated the Joint Secretary, AHD and bluntly refused to discuss about the way-out. The then Chief Minister of the state was briefed about the issue and a meeting was arranged at Delhi with the then Central Agriculture Minister and state CM met him to sort out the issue explaining about the disease free status certification of imported animals by International Referral laboratory. But the Joint Secretary AHD, stubbornly, briefed her minister giving a picture of a holocaust ignoring the pleadings of the state authorities. The Central Agriculture minister meekly said," How one can ignore the risks for nation and expressed his inability in this regard". Prior to the ministerial meeting, a delegation of Members of Parliament from the state met the concerned minister and the officials with no positive outcome.

Simultaneously scientists from various national institutes argued that mere detection of BVD viral antibodies (if at all sure of the presence) did not pose a threat to the country. In India, the presence of such BVD viral neutralising antibodies were reported in bovine serum samples way back in 1989 from the state of Gujarat. Subsequently. Bovine sera(439) from 327 cattle and 112 buffaloes from seventeen states confirmed negative for Rinderpest disease when screened,but many showed the presence of BVD viral antibodies at Animal Diseases Monitoring & Surveillance centre(ADMAS), Banglore in 1996 and this was published in 1999. The Project Director of ADMAS, a good friend of mine regretted that the Joint Secretary AHD, was shockingly insensitive to reality and refused to be convinced to the fact that the presence of BVD viral antibodies was not new to this country and do not pose any threat.

The Australian suppliers refused to take back the animals. With the elapse of time, a few more animals died. These imported bulls for breeding had been languishing since 18 months in quarantine because of bureaucratic tussle.

Ultimately a decision was taken to destroy the eighty seven imported animals suspected of having BVD viral antibodies leaving the remaining animals isolated. To execute the destruction of animals, the government

nominated a scientist from NIHSAD, Bhopal. It was a strange coincidence that day I was at Bhopal with a delegation of Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) from state for a visit to the institute in 2003. I took that opportunity to pay a visit to the residence of my old friend Dr.P.R.Vanamayya, a scientist at the institute. On reaching his home, his wife, welcomed me since we were family friends earlier. She informed me that her husband left for Chennai, as he was nominated by central government to oversee the euthanization of imported animals at Chennai quarantine station. After a brief interaction I left the place to join my team.

Later after my return to Hyderabad, I came to know that destruction of eighty seven animals was deferred at the intervention of the High court of Madras on the petition filed by animal welfare activists. Next few months we felt very unpleasant with the perishing of all the remaining animals.

My colleague Dr.P.R.Vanamaiah from NIHSAD after retirement settled at Hyderabad. Almost fourteen years after the incident, we happened to meet at a get together of alumni of Tirupati veterinary college. He lamented, "My stars had saved me from supervising the killing of eighty-seven innocent imported bulls and cows and guilty of that act of sin".

In the end, the dream of improvement of genetic quality of milch- animals in the state, went awry with the unbridled ego and arrogance of bureaucracy; in spite of positive science, political support and hard work of Veterinarians; monetarily, rupees two hundred sixty lakh plus maintenance cost of another fifty lakh rupees, the good initiative, went into ashes.

My optimism that a good start would lead to success was disproved, may not always be right.

h. The Herd Fertility programme

The Regional Joint Director cum Project officer, ISPA, Visakhapatnam convened a meeting of all the district officers and divisional Assistant Directors of three districts of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam in 1988 at his Project office in Visakhapatnam. Reviewed the progress of work and implementation of breeding policy in the area. To my knowledge, this was the only region where breeding policy implementation was monitored and errant officers were alerted and at times reprimanded. The policy was that on a non-discript (ND) cow, pure exotic bull semen(Jersey breed) was used for insemination. In case of a F1 crossbred cow a 50 per cent bul semenl (Jersey x Tharparkar or Jersey x Ongole) was used to maintain hybrid vigour to sustain milk production levels.

In other regions even with existence of breeding policy there was no religious implementation.They were going with forward crossing with the plea citing the farmer's demand. Over the years it was realised that with forward crossing not much perceptible increase in milk production could be achieved but breeding problems increased.

The Cattle Development Officer(CDO) explained us about 'herd fertility concept' as one of the promotional strategy in the pipeline. The CDO requested the gathering to volunteer to take up Herd fertility programme as a pilot programme at least in two villages in each division. Nobody responded positively.

Then the Swiss expert of the project explaining the details of operationalisation assured ISPA support in a limited way.The project officer was looking at us for response. I looked at my district officer, he was dozing. Then I raised my hand in acceptance first.Then the Project officer asked," What is the problem with Srikakulam division?.Why you are not volunteering?.Then the Joint director and Asst.Director Srikakulam division replied "yes".

Then the CDO explained, "It is envisaged to take up this programme in minimum of six villages and now we have four villages in two divisions. No problem. We will start the programme in these two divisions. Meanwhile we will get ready formats, monitoring sheets and related documents printed. Before starting this programme let us have a work shop with the vets. and paravets of the concerned villages.

I want somebody to volunteer for this workshop." Immediately I said." You can organise the workshop at Vizianagaram, central point to all the districts".

The Swiss Project Advisor, Mr.H.Mulder expressed his happiness and thanked me for agreeing for organisation of workshop at Vizianagaram.

One village each under Rural Veterinary Dispensary (RVD) at Raghumanda and Korukonda were selected.The selection criterion were, sincere and hard working paravets, the Vet. with passion, commitment, proficiency and accommodativeness and receptive to farmers in addition to other parameters like existence of milk collection centre etc. In this project main thrust was on reduction of inter-calving period, reducing the age at first calving, ante and post-parturient management, reduction of calf mortality and related activities with special focus on selected livestock householdings. Personally I was very much impressed with the concept of the project. Myself and my colleague Vet Dr.M. Ramadas seriously took the project. Practically

we do not need any huge funding for this project work. So I did not ask for any financial support for it at that moment.

We selected willing livestock farmers possessing breedable cows and buffaloes till we could get a total of one hundred breedable female stock in such households.

Three months later at about 8.30 a.m. I started from my home for field visits. Sitting in my jeep, I was going through that day's news paper. Suddenly jeep was stopped and my driver told me," Sir!,The ISPA car is in opposite direction and ISPA driver signalled me to stop the vehicle".Then I got down from the vehicle and walked back to the car, after greeting each other they also got down.

Then I said," Thank God, three minutes delay means, I must have missed you people as I have to take right turn to Kothavalsa. How come you are here so sudden? Usually you inform your trip well in advance".

Smiling at me Mr.Mulder told me," Sorry, Dr.Piedy, We assumed you will be at head quarters. Can we visit one of the centres selected for ' herd fertility ' programme?

I replied," Why not? On the way let us pick up Dr.Ramadas, the Vet. in charge". I got into their car and asked Mr.Lakhamana Rao, my driver, to follow the car to Korukonda village. On the way picked up Dr.Ramadas, and proceeded to Korukonda village.

Mr.Raja Rao, a senior para-vet (Livestock Assistant) working at the centre, seeing us getting down from our vehicles, sent two animal attendants to the Panchayat office on the other side of the road to get a few chairs and came to us and greeted us. Meanwhile chairs were arranged.

The Rural Veterinary centre was housed in a single room with one wooden almirah, one small table and a chair. We all five sat outside in the verandah.The ISPA team wanted to talk to Mr.Raja Rao. After a brief interaction, they had gone through the records. Meanwhile, tender coconuts were served to all of us by a livestock farmer. That was the minimum courtesy the livestock farmers extend to visitors.

One of the Swiss team members commented," You have so much furniture in the institution". With a smile, I replied," No, no, he has only one rickety wooden chair and all these chairs are brought from the Village Panchayat office". Then they spoke to the Vet about availability of medicine stock. He briefed them about non availability of medicines for infertility problems and never in supply chain especially for rural centres and the stocks provided to vets were not adequate even for ten problematic animals.

Listening to this, Mr.H.Mulder, took two thousand rupees from his wallet and gave it to me with a request to use it for needy medicines by prescription to individual cases and after complete utilisation to send a simple letter to that effect. He assured us that this matter would be discussed in the project committee meeting and take a decision to sort out this problem of medicines. I was surprised at his gesture which I never seen earlier and it was simply impossible in government set up as we require even for paltry amount of one rupee or less, we have to raise a bill and follow a lengthy procedure.

Still I vividly remember one incidence in 1973 at Visakhapatnam District Clinical Laboratory where I was called for a two day training programme in "Detection of rinderpest antibodies by Passive Haemagglutination Inhibition(PHI) Test". The UK project head Dr.S.Ramachandran going round the Asian countries was in Andhra Pradesh and had taken up this training programme. Summing up the programme I saw him requesting my senior colleague at the laboratory, Dr.K.V.Subba Rao to give him a chit noting the expenditure he had incurred for the programme and seeing the chit Dr.Ramachandran gave the cash to him and when my colleague prepared to give a receipt with revenue stamp signed on it, Dr.S.Ramachandran laughed at his gesture saying no need for such formalities for UK.

While travelling back the ISPA team appreciated the efforts put forth by our Vizianagaram team and promised all the support to the 'herd fertility programme. We took leave of them at the trijunction on the outskirts of Vizianagaram town, the ISPA team took right turn towards Visakhapatnam and I moved to town on left side dropping Dr.Ramadas at his Dispensary..

This programme went well with us for two years with some minor setbacks like sale of some pregnant cows and pregnant heifers which was unavoidable in rural situations.

As promised the ISPA team supported our programme with some basic infrastructure to store medicines and furniture and Twenty thousand rupees for purchase of needy medicines by prescription.The amount was sent to district officer by bank draft. I explained to the district officer about the purpose of the allocated amount and suggested him to keep the amount in his office account only and when ever we require we submit a letter with list of needy medicines and he can purchase and give it to us and we make a stock entry certificate and give utilisation certificate. I assured him that this expenditure was not under the purview of government accounting procedures and I assured all support to maintain separate account in his office only.

Unfortunately, he did not heed to my advice and as a routine, indented

medicines available in the rate contract lists and purchased a few antibiotics following the government accounting procedures. The main objective of allocation of reasonably adequate finance for the success of the 'Herd fertility programme' in two villages by ISPA was lost.

This was resultant of sheer shocking insensitivity and biological incapacity of accepting new ideas. We had no access for purchase of needy medicines for the project thus hampering the important activity.

Personally I felt that was an innovative strategy those days which fizzled out but for the shameless ignorance of the then district officer.

i. Cattle Breeding Frolics

Of late I heard in some forums veterinarians and veterinary scientists eulogising Indian breeds of cows for their A2(Alpha2) type milk. The Agriculture ministry had published reports and released a poster also suggesting that A1 (Alpha1) type milk from hump-less exotic cows and crossbred cows in India could induce diabetes and coronary heart diseases, while A2 type milk produced by Indian breeds did not cause such ailments.One should remember that people all over the world had been consuming A1 type milk for centuries without any documented ill effects.

More research is needed. With such inferences in published scientific papers, one should not get scary. With numerous chemical reactions going on in our body all the time, the exposure to thousands and thousands of chemicals, both natural and synthetic, it was a huge challenge to tease out the effects of single substance. Such baseless publicity by scientifically illiterate activists and endorsement by the government would only destabilise country's dairy development of all these years. This situation was further being exploited by greedy hucksters selling A2 milk of indigenous cows at 200 to 300 per cent higher price.

Currently about thirty million Indian farmers are rearing crossbred cows. Such adverse and baseless propaganda on the quality of milk from crossbred cows could destabilise the dairy farmers's income. The danger was that, in the absence of corrective action to counter such unsubstantiated information, the farmers would be compelled to replace their crossbred cows with animals upgraded with native breeds which might lead to output loss of about 1000 kg per cow annually which might bring down the country's annual milk production by about 40 million tonnes.

One cannot deny the fact that the phenomenal growth in milk production with the concerted efforts of farmers, scientists, political as well as the

bureaucratic setup since 1970s in achievement of number one position in the world should not go into drain with such blatant and unconfirmed scientific findings. Nobody can ignore the role of crossbreeding and crossbred cows in this great saga.

The benefits of crossbreeding had been demonstrated well in this country by organisations like BAIF (Bharathiya Agro Industry Foundation) a Gandhian organisation for over the past fifty years. A rural family could make a decent living even with two or three crossbred cows born to low yielding non-descript cows, yielding 2000 kg and more of milk per lactation according to BAIF.

My-self had experienced this phenomenon with several hundreds of crossbred cow rearing families last thirty years. My association with Chittoor district farmers was very thrilling. The undening fact was that crossbred cows saved the people in that district. As students, We used to visit villages for household surveys; those days I could see crossbred cow only in a rich farmer's house. By 1970s farmers started rearing crossbred cows especially women took lead. By 1980s, there was no household without one or two CB cows. I heard many families that during negotiations for girls or boys for wedlock, it had become a practice to ask how many CB cows they possessed?. If that particular household had no CB cows means, they used to say what that family could offer you in marriage?.

Farmers interested in indigenous cattle could opt for breeding their crossbred cows with the elite Indian breeds like Red Sindhi, Sahiwal etc. to maintain high milk output along with the positive traits of increased tolerance to heat and diseases. This was the strategy that Brazil adopted for the last hundred years. To improve the milk production of Indian Gir cows, this strategy helped that country to increase the milk yield of these cows to six thousand to eight thousand kilograms per lactation in their country.

Lobbies with no stake in dairy development are undermining the achievement of crossbreeding through false glorification of the Indian cow. One should not be carried away by slogans or unsubstantiated research findings in jumping to conclusions. Policies that look fair and just at first sight, often end up hurting the very people.



9. Livestock and livelihoods

a. Kusumi village episode

In one of the stakeholders consultation processes on Agriculture Biotechnology and allied sectors of Agri-Biotech Foundation(ABF), Hyderabad, I was with my team in Srikakulam district in 2008. Out of five villages selected in the district one village was a tribal village, Kusumi, inhabited by Savara community in Seethampeta Mandal. Our team consisting of two agriculture scientists, a sociologist, an economist and a veterinary expert stayed at Palakonda town, the previous night with an NGO working with tribals for their economic and social development by coordinating with organisations like Intensive Tribal Development Agency (ITDA)and other government departments.

Next day we reached the village at 8 a.m. and I started roaming around the small village while my colleagues were busy making preliminary arrangements for the occasion. Most of the households were with mud-walls and thatched roofs and green with plants, turmeric etc and rural poultry. I was fascinated with a hen foraging around a household with 12 to 14 chicks following it. I sat near that house watching the chicks picking up some grains along with mother hen.

Looking at me watching the birds. an aged tribal woman coming out of the house asked me, "Sir! What is that you are looking at these birds with such an awe". In reply I told her, "Avva! (grandmother) I am from Hyderabad city" which she could not grasp and I continued, "After a long gap, I am thrilled watching these chicks moving with their mother hen".

She said, "These birds are very important for our families as these supplement more than one fourth of our annual income from agriculture and labour work in nearby town. She continued, "If I am lucky to get more cockerels, I get more money as our cockerels are valued high in the weekly market". Her calculations were beyond my imagination. She said that yearly she gets three clutches per hen and about 12 to 15 eggs per clutch; if everything goes well she may get about 30 chicks minimum. Good income means Rs.4000/- to Rs.5000/- but never less than Rs.3000/- per bird. Their village cockerels are prized ones in these parts. Their fighting cocks may fetch them from Rs.500/- to Rs.1500/- at times of demand". She had spelt out another

interesting point that birds in a household were completely owned by women and controlled by women only. The wise tribal woman told some metaphors in Telugu language relevant to poultry and their culture;' Kodi thinnadi, Kodalu thinnadi lekkaku radu, ekkadiki podu' means 'What the chicken eats or what a daughter-in-law eats should never be counted as they both multiply wealth in one's home which remains with that family only." Poultry rearing was intimately blended with their culture.

To my question about poultry diseases she replied, "Sir, during summer months sometimes we lose most of our birds due to 'kunuku disease'(Ranikhet disease) affecting our livelihoods".

With a surprise, I asked her, "Don't you get your birds vaccinated against the disease?".

Then she lamented," Sir, we have a small veterinary doctor nearby {she means a veterinary compounder); he says that the big doctor told him, the drug has to come in aeroplane from a very distant place to Visakhapatnam, then to Srikakulam then to our mandal hospital with big doctor and then to our small doctor and that drug is to be kept in ice box (she means refrigerator) ;there is no ice box with our doctor. Whenever the drug comes, our small doctor informs our sarpanch, the previous day about his trip to our village for giving the drug by injection. We go for work by that time. Nobody will be in the house to take the birds to village centre for injections during our absence". Taking a deep breath with a small paus, she continued, "Instead why can't you provide that drug in grains so that we ourselves can feed them and avoid such losses affecting our livelihoods."

There was a catch in her suggestion. I got wonderstruck at her native wisdom; in fact she had suggested a biotechnology intervention. At that time I was with Agri Biotech Foundation, a non government organisation with a mandate of doing advanced research. Earlier, there were some attempts to introduce Ranikhet disease virus antigen in to grains as edible vaccine for birds in Australia but it did not click as a viable proposition for the vaccine production units across the world. According to some biotechnology experts whom I contacted for their intervention in Ranikhet disease control programmes, I understood that similar attempts to produce edible vaccine against Rabies also got stuck. The irony was that the technology was available but could not be passed on to needy end-users because of commercial interests. I posed this issue to the Director and young scientists of National Institute of Animal Biotechnology at Hyderabad.

b. Poultry and goats in tribal livelihoods

In June 2004, I was at a remote village Pandirimamidi of tribal area in East Godavari district while other members of Pro-Poor Livestock Programme Initiative (PPLPI-FAO) were busy at the venue for arrangements of the meeting(village level consultations with the stakeholders) in the afternoon at the auditorium in ITDA project office in Rampachodavaram.

During scouting through the village, I found many large sized goats almost in every household of 75 tribal inhabitants. I found some of the goats sick. On enquiry I understand that goats were dying since ten days in the village and also it was told that poultry were also dying due to RD; when asked about Veterinary aid, they expressed that they don't have any veterinary centre in 10 k.m. radius and the one which was about 15 k.m. away did not have any staff to look after. Mostly they depend on (tribal) traditional medication. It was also found that goats and poultry were very important for their livelihood as they provide more than forty per cent of their annual income. That was really a pathetic situation.

I took it to my heart and when I was back to Hyderabad, I convened a meeting of concerned officers and posed the problem. It was a real challenge to animal husbandry department. At the end of the meeting there was a consensus that vaccination programme should be on a 'Campaign mode' instead of a mere annual target oriented approach; mere the number of vaccinations were of not much help in control of any diseases.

We also reviewed the outcome of RD vaccination programme under "Janmabhumi programme". A third party assessment revealed that there was a good impact of RD vaccination programme in minimising losses in poultry in rural areas; the mortality reduced to five per cent from 35 to 40 per cent earlier. That was a good marker to redesign the plan of action with more focus on unreached areas.

Then another meeting was called for with a few selected joint directors, vaccine production units, vaccine distribution units to discuss implementation plan. The new feature this time was a detailed action plan for 'sero- monitoring' of vaccination response which was never attempted earlier. The District Collectors, Project Officers of different ITDAs (Intensive Tribal Development Agencies and Project Director, DRDAs (District Rural Development Agency) were requested to support the Animal Husbandry department in this onerous task of vaccination campaigns. The district joint directors were advised to pursue the concerned funding authorities at district level for the success of the programme. The concept was appreciated by other agencies also. Some

smart joint directors could tap extra financial support from rural development agencies.

I personally monitored the programme and visited randomly a few of the districts. In one such visit to Nidadavolu division of West Godavari district, the VAS of a mandal dispensary did not execute the RD vaccination programme in his jurisdiction during a spot review of the RD vaccination work. I could not resist my expression of unpleasantness at his very casual approach in taking up such programme.

Then I got up to move out from the veterinary dispensary and a few farmers hearing our conversation in VAS room, came in front of me and expressed "What the VAS can do sir when we farmers ourselves did not evince interest to get our birds vaccinated?" I explained the importance of it and the need for it, then they promised to extend all their support in taking up such vaccination programme in their villages.

Eventually I realised that I am not going to get anywhere when I have my expectations set so high. Rather than setting out to create a masterpiece… I just have to aim for 'done with fruitful results' and get satisfied with.

By and large the programme went well with perceptible impact. Unfortunately during review meeting at state level, it came to light that JD(AH), Warangal did not attempt this programme at all and the reason put forth was non release of extra budget for the purpose : to the question, "Did you approach the Rural Development Project" he said, "Yes". The meaning of 'Yes' was that a letter requesting for financial support was sent to the concerned, naturally no response would be forthcoming while all other joint directors could get very positive response while some project officers of ITDAs provided transport assistance also in RD vaccination campaign and Peste des Petits disease (PPR). It all depends on the seriousness of the officers in implementation of the programme.

c. The Goat-Poor man's cow

Personally, I felt that there was no publication of any in-depth study of the goat husbandry system in our country over the years. Goat husbandry had been a contentious issue for years in India, often fought over by environmentalists and animal scientists. There had not been a consistent framework with clear priorities for these important poor man's cows.

Unfortunately a report of National Commission on Agriculture (NCA) in 1970 generated a bias against small ruminants particularly goats branding them as the root cause for the degradation of forests. It was only in 1987, the'

Hanumantha Rao Commission' evaluated the true impact of small ruminants on the ecology of fragile zones and concluded that these poor goats did not pose any threat to ecology and cause negative effects, if any, had been grossly exaggerated.

The numbers of this wonderful, poor goats increased from forty lakhs in 1980s to one hundred lakhs by 2010 without any special projects from the State government or Central government. The reasons when probed, found out were — these goats sustain in odd climates and have higher disease resistance, The goat was a saviour of the poor. Economics of goat breeding in a study in Andhra Pradesh state in 2008, revealed the net return per doe per annum was Rs.397/-in herds of less than five goats while it was Rs.797/-in herds of 15 to 30 goats.

Sometime in 2006, in one of the stakeholders consultation process in Kosigi mandal of Mahabubnagar district, myself, B.Ramachandrudu and A.Ravindra of WASSAN, an NGO were interacting with a women's group of goat- rearers A middle-aged Dalit woman explained that their village resources would not suffice to feed extra number of goats. On my request, A.Ravindra, Secretary, WASSAN, explained to them," We are here to explore the possibilities of extending you help to improve the productivity of your goats but not to take names for distribution of goat units". When everybody kept silent and the way the Dalit woman explained enumerating tree cover, shrubs and the area and non- feasibility of increasing feed resources in village was so impressive and very enlightening to all of us. In technical terms, she explained to us the status of 'carrying capacity' of that village for goats. When asked what sort of support they expect?, while others kept quiet, the wise Dalit woman said," We do not have good breeding bucks". Further continuing she said, "Sirs, if you provide us five breeding bucks to replace existing bucks we will be in a position to improve our goat herd. You need not give us free but you have to give us some time to pay back the value of the breeding bucks in kind but not in cash. We use these bucks as capital investment to exchange with other groups of goat herders from neighbouring villages also". When questioned about feasibility and practicability all women in unison said, "This is not new to us and we are practising such things since a long time". For me, it was new experience which I never imagined while in government service looking after the subject of small ruminant development programmes. Of course, in government sector such innovative practices were not practicable but in broader perspective one had to visualise how such things can be done with an open mind and opening up the doors to new innovations in governance.

d. The Chief Minister and the goats

During one of the video conferences of the Chief Minister, the Collector of Adilabad while reviewing drought relief operations displayed a video clipping showing newly constructed water troughs where in cattle, buffaloes, calves were drinking water; still the video was on and the Collector was explaining how he could manage the water resource by convincing two farmers in the village to provide uninterrupted water supply. Suddenly the video showed goats drinking water while cattle and buffaloes were leaving. About 100 state level officers of various departments in video conference were watching goats drinking water in water troughs tensely looking at video clipping and the CM almost for about 20 seconds. Suddenly whole gathering burst into laughter when the CM commented," It appears we cannot control goats", with an unusual smile.

I realised how the official hierarchy take the unintended messages from a leader or boss when talk about something disparagingly. The Chief minister in every forum used to talk about goats discouragingly as he was briefed persistently over the years that goat was the enemy of the forest by forest department officials.

Taking this cue an young District Forest Officer, Anantapur, came up with a project report with an outlay of about Rs.300 crores. The project envisages, replacement of all goats possessed by all goat rearing families in the vicinity with two milch cows, village wise in forest fringes in 5 years time. The contention was that by removing goat population, the forests can be rejuvenated and provide livelihoods to people around the forest. On going through the project report I felt swooned.

I remembered a woman tethering goats saying "Everybody blames the goats for the disappearance of forests. The fact was that first the man enters the forest, fell some trees to make a house to live in, then cuts some more trees to till the land to raise food crop for his wife and children, then a greedy man comes into forest to have more trees for his business. In the end, the goat comes to eat stubbles and makes itself more visible and gets all the blame as a destroyer of the forest or enemy of the forest.

If one looks seriously into the past never there was a mention of goat destroying the forest. Moreover, these animals helped to propagate and sustain the forests. Even goat tethers never destroyed any trees. They were trimming the branches and this act was rejuvenating the plant or tree. The nature can satisfy the needs of these poor animals as well as the man but cannot satisfy the greed of man.

In one of my personal interactions with Dr.V.Narayana Rao, the former Director of Animal Husbandry Department who later dedicated to agriculture journalism after his retirement, I briefed him about the Chief minister's apathy on goats. He promised me that he would take an appointment with the Chief minister and brief him about the perils of discouraging goats. It appears after his meeting with the CM along with some senior journalists with relevant information, the CM mellowed down his tone against goats.

As per the 19th quinquennial livestock census, the total livestock population possessed by 280 million livestock holding families in the country was 512 millions out of which goats constitute 26.4 per cent next to cattle (37,28 per cent). In the state of Andhra Pradesh the numbers were not less. They also provide livelihood support to the poorest of the groups in the society.

e. Sheep, Shepherd and the Vet

Long back(1980), one day, when I was in my office room, I heard loud voices, some talking and some laughing from two rooms adjacent to mine. I came out of the room and moved in the direction of loud voices in the room of my colleague, Assistant Director looking after sheep development activities. The faces appeared familiar but I could not recollect. Looking at me, my colleague told me that they were shepherds from Vijayawada area. When I asked one of them, "How come you are here in Kurnool?" My colleague explained me that they were his clients earlier when he was at Vijayawada and come to him for advice where ever he was ;added that once they develop confidence in somebody they continue to go to him not minding the distance or expenditure, an unusual trait in shepherd community. My colleague sarcastically added that even if Lord Krishna himself appears before them and extend help, they doubt his credentials and question his intention to help them without asking for. To my knowledge, the shepherd community in villages was financially better than many other communities but socially live aloof with less education but with good values and strong commitment.

In one of our studies, we found that the other stakeholders in sheep production in order of ranking were 1.landlords (for allowing flocks to graze in their vacant fields), 2. veterinary doctors(flock health advisory), 3. butchers for marketting and short duration financial support in emergencies), 4. medical shops,(for supply of medicines),5. meat shop owners(marketing for small flockholders). They have strong bonding among community members with strong Kula Sangham (community welfare organisation).

During my tenure as Deputy Director at Nellore 1992, in-charge of centrally sponsored scheme of Special Livestock Breeding Programme(SLBP) with sheep, an analysis of the programme revealed that the shepherd community was very successful with the indicators of increased sheep numbers and repayment of loan amount to banks while it was dismal with other communities. On further analysis, it was found that the traditional experience, the attitude and moral values of the community played an important role.

Sometime in 2004, I was at Hyderabad airport (Begumpet) to receive some officers from Delhi. I found an elderly shepherd gentleman with a traditional attire, coarse wool blanket on his shoulders and a headgear and a long stick taking rest at a corner of airport entrance. For a moment I had a question in my mind why this gentleman was here? I wanted to interact with him. I smiled at him, he responded positively. I sat besides him. My driver was wondering at my act. I introduced myself and he told that he belonged to a village about fifty kilo-meters from Hyderabad in Ranga Reddy district. He had got about one hundred and fifty sheep to take care of. He told me,"I am here at the airport waiting for my son with his friends. My son is leaving for Dubai for work", he concluded. I felt immensely happy seeing the glow in his eyes.

One of the foremost problems faced by shepherds was inadequate common property resources forcing them to long distance migration of sheep flocks disturbing the family life. Larger flocks tend to be on migration. In Nellore district the migration was about nineteen per cent while it was ninety percent in Mahabubnagar district. Only small flocks remained in villages. With all the development activities, knowledge backwardness of shepherds was still an impediment. Still most of the shepherds were in the clutches of local traders.

There were some good intended initiatives in sheep development in pilot scale under Andhra Pradesh Drought Adaptation Initiative(APDAI), a World Bank assisted project implemented by WASSAN, and other programmes by CRIDA, Indo-Swiss Natural Resource Management Programme(ISNRM), 'Anthra' and some other NGO organisations with participatory approach in Andhra Pradesh with good implementable outcomes. I cherish my association with some of these projects while in government service and post retirement. I was tempted to share some of the important learnings.

- Sheep provided gainful employment of 184 to 437 days per annum depending upon the flock size.

- Irrespective of the flock size, women and children contributed niunety percent of the labour force.
- A person with a flock of 100-150 sheep leave for migration with four or five persons; eight to ten such flocks would go together on migration. The migration was highly evolved robust system in terms of flock management, grazing, ad hoc networking, housing, breeding, A cursory look at their dossiers revealed the precision of their movement, day-wise match perfectly over the years.
- The system had its economic value. Traditionally agricultural farmers in the rainfed areas would pay Rs.120/- to Rs.250/- per day for penning the sheep flock in their cropland. Each flock in one night approximately contribute 42 kilos of concentrated dung and 20 kilos of urine. Income also accrue through stubble grazing, lopping and sale of lambs.
- Preventive health care was an impediment because of jurisdiction issues with government institutions especially if the migration was outside the state but most often they were able to manage.
- sheep rearing can provide part time self- employment without affecting main occupation for small and marginal farmers.
- Meat focus was a reality and other products (dung,urine) also deserve attention.
- There was inherent exclusion of people dependent on sheep even in the process of protection of CPRs and related institutional arrangements.

Usually in government set up, the development process ends with distribution of some sheep units, their health care and a few training programmes. Mostly they were target oriented programmes.

My personal feeling was that there should be adequate assessment of local conditions and sufficient consideration to be given to institutional, economic, social and cultural constraints in planning of sheep development programmes. I understood that this could not be done by government agency alone because of "blueprint" approach (top down approach) would be only centralised with fixed packages and view the targeted people as beneficiaries but not as partners. Unless this basic approach was changed much could not be achieved in sheep development sector.

Still, I ponder over how a young lamb identifies its mother in a flock of hundred or more and suckles and the wisdom of the shepherd in identification of the missing lamb or its mother.

f. Breeding policy for Sheep

Way back in 1979, as a trainee Assistant Director of Animal Husbandry, I was allocated to Large Scale Sheep Breeding Farm(LSBF) at Mamidipally village a suburb of Hyderabad city for one week in December. To its name worth, the farm had about two thousand five hundred sheep and about three thousand acres of land for grazing abuzz with lot of activities with a Joint Director cadre officer heading the unit with two Assistant Directors and four Veterinary Assistant Surgeons and paravets and graziers. Under Indo-Australian collaboration two Australian experts were with the farm. For the first time, I saw such a big farm with Australian Corriedale breeding stock with special housing facilities. One of the Australians interacting with me told that in Australia these Corriedale studs move with the flocks unlike special housing here. One day demonstrating open castration in a weaner, he told no swabbing with antiseptic was needed, making a pun of vets of the farm putting a suture and application of swab of tincture of iodine.

Surprisingly by the year 2000 all that buzz in the farm disappeared; the number of sheep came down to less than four hundred, the area of grazing lands shrank as the lands were handed over to industries with a two sentence note from the Secretariat, surprisingly with no Government order(GO). One of the largest sheep farms for the Deccani breed went into antiquity in another two years.Whom to blame or curse?

In one of the interactions with Dr.Krishna Ashrit then the Joint Director, VB&RI, about large scale lamb mortalities in sheep dense districts of Telengana area, he narrated an incident of an old woman grazing her sheep on road side shrubs when an Australian consultant overseeing breeding operations with whom he was traveling, wanted to talk to her. Dr.Ashrit, told me that he translated the query by the consultant to the old woman: in reply to the query it seems, she told, “Sirs, these white sheep are good in size and lambs born to them are also larger than lambs born to our black coloured ewes and rams”. She continued saying,” White lambs (she means cross-bred) are heavy and our black coloured ewes are unable to give adequate milk resulting in more lamb deaths: moreover, our sheep are small sized and over the years accustomed to survive with available scarce fodder manoeuvring these bushes and shrubs while grazing with their rough and tough short wool coat unlike these bigger white sheep”. Looked at them smiling. Dr.Ashrit and the Australian were in surprise at her critical analysis and practical wisdom.

During my tenure as Additional Director, I used to interact with district sheep union leaders and with shepherd groups during my tours in the districts. In many of Telangana districts I found Nellore Rams were introduced into flocks over the years under various sheep development programmes and many rich shepherds on their own also introduced Nellore breed rams. Even field Veterinary Asst. Surgeons were complaining that they were getting complaints of high lamb mortality. Another issue highlighted by aged shepherds was that Nellore breed of sheep were close grazers and wherever they grazed, there would not be any regeneration and no fodder left for Deccani breed sheep which were slow grazers. Thus, opined that Nellore breed should not be encouraged on degraded lands. Unfortunately, no systematic studies were made till then.

This issue was screwing up my mind for many days. Spoke to my peers in districts and Indo-Swiss NRMPA colleagues about the issue. They have responded positively to fund this initiative. Meanwhile, in a two-day interactive session with Chief Minister of the state with field functionaries from Karimnagar, East Godavari and Anantapur districts, the subject of lamb mortality had emerged as a hot topic. In the afternoon session of first day, a casual reference to sheep breeding and a sarcasm on the animal husbandry department by a senior IAS officer of one of the districts led to heated argument between him and the Chief Executive Officer of APLDA in spite of the intervention by the Principal Secretary of our department. Watching that unpleasant scenario, I stood up and with loud voice and folded hands on my head confessed," Yes, we went wrong by allowing breeding of Deccani ewes with Nellore rams with good intention of improving birth weights of lambs and the economy of the shepherds. Now it is realised that it did not work as envisaged. Now animal husbandry department is planning corrective measures." With my admission, the emotional arguments subsided.

This episode in 2003 was a trigger for me to convince the Director of Animal Husbandry the need for a field research and revisit state breeding policy for sheep. I also spoke to my colleagues in the university who readily agreed to be partners in the process.

The first two stages, (i) Identification of the need for development of any policy (ii) Identification of the institution taking up lead and other partners were fulfilled. The next step, gathering of data was taken up in the last quarter of the year 2003 in the form of scouting the data and on field research with reference to body weights of lambs at various stages and ewes and rams of different breeds, crosses in different regions as programmed with the participation of University researchers and field officers for different seasons

for one year; shepherds and govt. farms and university farms were also made partners in this project. Another stage of consultations with stakeholders in four different regions were fulfilled. I retired from government service on 31st August,2005. Often, I used to remind my peers about status of draft policy. Finally, a draft policy was made ready and a workshop was organised at state level only in year 2008 with experts from national institutes and stakeholders and policy was accepted for state of Andhra Pradesh.

Further stages of approval of policy by the state government and designing of strategies for implementation never saw the light. At times personally, I used to regret at the apathy of my successors. Being serious about the breeding strategies at times I had to face unpleasant expressions of some former ministers during my tenure. Unless, somebody at the helm, was serious, nothing moves in government.

g. Women and Livestock

During my professional career, I found the rural women were more entrepreneurial in livestock production activities. With the needed extra skills they would prove to be the best. Without much schooling, they know mathematics and calculations well in day to day affairs which they usually accomplish with ease without calculators unlike our urban elite. Many a time, I scratched my head during my interactions with rural women in late evening 'Rythu Ghostis'(group interactive sessions). Rural women were more vociferous than menfolk who were more polite and hesitant in seeking clarifications. At times men used to restrain them but I used to encourage women to express their viewpoint. Many a time their suggestions were very logical and practicable.

Once when I took a group of milkproducers from buffalo predominant area of Vizianagaram district to crossbred cow dairy belt of Chittoor district, the way the women explained to one of the 'doubting Thomases' of the group was an eyeopener. To his question how she could repay the bank loan on the cow, her reply was that the cow's daughter would clear its mother's loan in thirty-two months. Seeing a question mark in his face, she emphasised that at least its second daughter would repay the loan amount on its mother. Unable to see any positive reaction, she concluded "go to hell", kept busy herself in collecting milk, weighing and taking milk samples.

According to a working group report, the women play a major role in milk production. The vibrant and rising livestock sector could be a boon in making Indian rural women more empowered. The composition of 'working

'person days' by gender indicates that among all agriculture activities animal husbandry was providing the largest share of self-employment to women in comparison to men in rural areas. Animal Husbandry was the only agricultural activity which was exceptionally making women more self-employed. The growth in this sector would help promote gender equity and empowerment of women in rural India.

I was associated with a study undertaken by Prof.S.N.Rao and his team from Department of Extension, Rajiv Gandhi Veterinary college, Pondicherry in 2002. Most of the women in this study were illiterates. Dairy cattle rearing was the important secondary occupation, the main occupation being agricultural labour. In Andhra Pradesh, mostly milch- buffaloes were reared in the study area while crossbred cows in other states like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Pondicherry. In unison all respondents affirmed the reasons for milch animal rearing: regular cash income, less tedious than agriculture, and flexibility in working hours.

The mean annual income from dairying ranged between Rs.14,822/- in Andhra Pradesh to a high of Rs.47,820/- in Kerala. One could see the satisfaction and proudness in their eyes when they affirmed that the income was totally controlled by them in other states while the control was both by man and woman in Andhra Pradesh. Most of the families asserted that the household income was spent on family needs, repayment of bank loan and children education.

Dairy cattle rearing (one or two milch animals) was the complex and multifaceted poverty alleviation tool for landless women in Southern states.

h. Pioneers and the hidden Champions

The Secretary, WASSAN, an NGO, requested me to attend a review meeting by World Bank(WB) authorities on the AP Drought Adaptation Initiative(APDAI) programme. After the customary welcome address and introductions, the Commissioner, Rural development, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh on the request of the Leader, World Bank team initiated the review of project activities.

Touching on livestock initiatives under APDAI implemented by WASSAN, the Commissioner, categorically told the gathering that she did not see anything new in AH sector activities other than the same poultry, sheep, goats and cattle in the programmes. I watched her looking at the Secretary, WASSAN and WB team members. For a few seconds nobody responded.

Looking at the Secretary, WASSAN, I raised my hand and everybody turned their heads towards me. Raising my voice I emphasised to the Commissioner, "Madam! for next few more centuries I don't see any prospect of new species of livestock taking the space of the existing which are playing vital role in sustaining rural livelihoods". I highlighted, "Madam, one has to appreciate the innovations tried in these programmes".

One of the World Bank members asked me,"Could you please, elaborate?".

I looked at the Commissioner, she nodded her head to brief. I explained in detail how the targeted population was made in to Common Interest Groups(CIGs) to handle fodder shortages and trained them in negotiation skills, data management, procurement & distribution among themselves which was never tried in any of the government programmes in the country. This was an empowerment process along with skill development to meet the objective of mitigation of fodder shortage in the hour of crisis themselves."

I continued, "Likewise, regarding poultry, it is not simply the distribution of a few birds. Apart from introduction of new breed of birds with high productivity 'chick rearing units' were started with tie up with the University for continuous supply of chicks, growers to adult hens to the new groups. Organised them into CIGs for feed compounding with locally available ingredients to reduce the cost of feed production, a critical input for success of the poultry units and marketing of eggs etc."

Further with reference to sheep development activity told the Committee, "I am of the opinion it is an unique try; organizing the rearers into CIGs, themselves negotiating with financial institutions, replacement of existing breeding males with elite Deccani breeding rams from Karnataka and Maharashtra states and production of ram lambs, then to ram lamb units both for production of breeding studs and meat marketing. An unique innovation in implemetation unheard of in our area".

I continued, "With reference to goats I want to share my unforgettable experience in this forum. In one of the villages in APDAI project area, we were holding a stake-holders consultation about how to improve income of goat herders. There were only a few Dalit women. One of the elderly poor Dalith woman informed that there was no scope for increasing the number of goats in the village and two of the neighbouring villages also because of inadequate carrying capacity of vegetation in the area and the vegetation available would suffice for the existing herds only. But one thing she emphasised was the need for 3 or 4 stud-goats for her village and similar number for other two villages also. She also surprised us by saying they

don't want these studs free instead they will be happy if they are provided with studs on cost which they can pay back in two years in the form of goats to us instead of cash.Further they can exchange these stud goats with neighbouring villages also. That is the adorable wisdom of a poor woman; frankly I admit that we never thought in those lines and never imagined in terms of carrying capacity in a particular geographic location. Such thinking and planning process is the contribution by WASSAN to APDAI programme".

I continued," The availability of bullocks for land ploughing and other agricultural operations was scarce especially for poor farming communities with small land holdings in rain dependent cropping areas. Bullock power is indispensable for such category. I know the incidences where the small peasants abandoned crop sowing because of non-availability of bullocks in time immediately after showers in small landholdings for rain dependent dry crops. They have asked for support to some among them to live on bullocks by hiring to needy peasants. Maintenance of bullocks for 365 days a year was a costly affair for hardly 100 days of work ; to this there were thought provoking alternatives to keep the bullocks hirable for other purposes so that the bullocks could be maintained as community assets by forming CIGS.

I concluded saying, "Of course all these initiatives are on pilot scale models, which I am very confident will ultimately multiply and the groups will be empowered with knowledge and skills" The WB team leader thanked me for elucidation of innovations under APDAI implemented by WASSAN"

My association with WASSAN as honorary consultant was a great challenge and very satisfying for me.

i. Holy cow and Unholy pig

The former Animal Husbandry Commissioner, Govt. of India Dr.C.Krishna Rao, a man with preternatural vision, photographic memory and keenest power of observation, all through his life thunderered on different platforms that 'the Holy cow and the Unholy pig' were pulling down the livestock development in India. In every forum, he used to pour out his agony on the neglect of livestock sector based on religious dogmas of the general public and maverick politicians.

He used to blast out his concern on severe protein-energy malnutrition among the Indian population in 1980s,1990s and 2000s in-spite of being endowed with robust livestock wealth. His speeches spice with statistics used to have a spellbound effect on keen listeners. Not limited to reeling out his

emotions, he used to meet politicians, senior bureaucrats and other persons involved in policy formulations and public with his suggestions.

His reason for inadequate livestock development in the country, at times reminds me of my history lesson on "Sepoy mutiny" in 1857 by my history teacher in 1960, still rings in my ears and mind. History was my most interesting subject those days because of my history teacher. He explained the lessons in such a way that the students could visualise the scenario as in present day Television shows. At that time I did not hear the word television itself. The Sepoy mutiny was also famously known as 'First war of Independence of India' which erupted on May,10th 1857 lead by Mangal Pandey of 34th Bengal Native Infantry (BNI) of British East India Company in Meerut cantonment and spread to other parts.The inciting factor for this mutiny was that the cartridges for newly introduced Enfield P53 rifles were smeared with cattle fat and pig fat.The sepoys (soldiers) had to bite off the fat layer on the cartridges to remove the cover to load their rifles. The holy cow for Hindu sepoys and the unholy pig for Muslim sepoys played havoc in their ranks leading to revolt resulting death of 2,392 Britishers and about one lakh sepoys in the fight and post incident reprisals of the British Government.

Now the Holy cow and Unholy pig are causing damage to the Indian economy imperceptibly and silently.

j. The Beast of Burden

On one Tuesday morning in 2009, I was deeply immersed in reading 'Hindu' news- paper after my breakfast, one of my irresistible hobby for the last thirty years. My wife came out hurriedly from kitchen and with a loud voice asked me," I was calling you for the last ten minutes and you are not responding to my calls. I know when you put your head into newspaper you forget this world". At that point I never say anything and keep quiet. She sat down besides me and advised me, "Though you are in the newspaper be attentive to outward happenings also. If something untoward thing happens to me near the gas stove if you are not attentive imagine the outcome". I interrupted her and asked her what she wants from me. She requested me to talk to the Joint Director of Medak district and Director of Animal Husbandry.

I asked her, "Please tell me exactly what you want me to talk to them.I retired from govt.service four years back and what obligation they will have with me now".

She insisted me to talk to them for their help in organising one or two health camps exclusively for donkeys in Narayankhed area. For a moment, I could not understand what she was asking for?. Looking at my face she repeated, "Health camp for donkeys" as she had planned for such camps through Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi of Medak district. I was in Animal Husbandry department service for almost 35 years but I never thought of a health camp or imagined about organisation of health camp exclusively for donkeys. At that time she was heading Medak district Sri Satya Sai Mahila Sevadal (women service volunteers). My wife explained me that last few years during her visits in that area, she saw many wounded donkeys working in brick making kilns and carry sand from distant places. According to some owners, the donkeys die suddenly occasionally. These donkeys were owned by a labour force of a particular community in that area. Appreciating her concern and determination, I said, "yes" and rang up to the Director's office. I was informed that the Director was at Delhi for a conference and expected after two days. Then, I spoke to Joint Director, Medak and he assured me that a team of veterinary doctors and para-vets would be sent on the day. I heard that even doctors were surprised at that idea of health camp for donkeys. After the camp the donkey-keepers felt immensely happy for addressing their concerns. Subsequently the idea was caught up in other states also.

Way-back in 1980, I was at Kurnool as Assistant Rinderpest officer. On my first visit, I wondered at the presence of large number of donkeys attending veterinary hospital at Kurnool. My senior in the college, Dr.Mallikharjunayya was the Veterinary Asst.Surgeon, explained to me that these were largely used for transport of stones, forest produce and smuggling of forest produce stealthily.

I vaguely remember that my grandmother used to insist for feeding donkey's milk to my brothers and sisters on the third day of their birth and give instructions to our washerman and his wife well in advance to get milk ready.Those days donkeys were prized possession of washerman (Chakali) community. They used to give milk free of cost those days to their masters. I used to make a dig at my grandmother whenever my younger siblings disobey her while she was serving food or at study hour, saying that because of feeding donkey milk they had become stubborn and insensitive.

My grandmother used to snub me saying," Don't consider that donkey is an animal of lower order; without caring exhaustion it carries larger loads maintaining equipoise all the time, shine or no shine without hesitation and always appears satisfied".

The donkey had centuries of history behind it. In the Bible, John had donkeys, Abraham had donkeys and all were female donkeys so must have been nurtured for milk which was consumed for health and used for beautification of women of those eras. It seems Egyptian queen Cleopatra took her baths in donkey milk regularly to preserve the vitality and beauty of her skin. It is said that about seven hundred donkeys were maintained to provide enough milk for her daily bath. Napoleon Bonaparte's sister, Pauline used donkey milk for her skin health care as well.

Recently to be exact in August, 2018, I happened to visit' Rural Innovators Start-up Conclave at National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Hyderabad on the request of some of my friends in that institute. There I happened to come across an entrepreneur promoting organic beauty cosmetics using donkey's milk. I was puzzled at the supply chain for donkey's milk. It seems, in rural areas near Pune some nomadic people rearing donkeys were made into groups and some urban slum-dwellers were also encouraged into groups. Each female donkey yields about five hundred to seven hundred millilitres of milk per day and two thousand rupees was paid for one litre of milk. This is technology development. We vets should ponder over how we can help donkeys and their poor owners.

Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey. People cried "The King came to us on a donkey. Donkey was synonymous with peace. In USA, donkey was the symbol of Democratic party. They feel proud and claim that the donkey is peaceful and stubborn.



10. Learnings from Social Research

Once I was reading a book on Bhagavad Gita in English entitled ' Conversation between God and Man' by G.N.Venkatraman a noted Physicist, vedic scholar and former Vice-Chancellor. He narrated that the Bhagavad Gita was delivered by Lord Krishna to the warrior prince Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra as an antidote to the dilemma that arose in him. It was not a choice between right and wrong rather it was a dilemma between the 'apparently right and absolutely right'. For many weeks I was pondering over interpretation of these statements. Another comment by the author 'Five thousand years later the wisdom of the Gita was still not lost, in fact it is more relevant and needed now than ever' is more appealing to me.

The train of government administration just goes on and only a few individuals make their presence felt with their interest or passion for a while during their tenure and disembark at their destination and the fellow passengers remember him for a while and forget while another person takes his berth and for a train it is a continuous journey but not for the individuals. During my journey, to my fortune I had opportunities to interact with many and learnt many things, a few things made me to explore and share, a few things made me to do certain things to improve my personality and a few things to improve the performance of my peers to make them to feel the thrill of joy from the positive outputs.

a. Perceptions of Govt.Vets in A.P

For a long time I had an idea to understand the perceptions of field veterinarians by a systemic research. One day it so happened that while passing through University road, Rajendra Nagar I saw Prof.Sudhakar waiting at Dairy Farm bus stop. I stopped my vehicle in front of him, greeted him and told him," I can drop you at your department as I am going that side". Thanking me, he got in to my vehicle. At his destination, I wanted some time to discuss with him. I put my idea to him about taking up a study on factors influencing field vets and corrective measures to improve their performance. The Professor agreed to my suggestion and assured me," Dr.Sreeramulu, I am also interested in such research study but it requires support from your department." Without a pause, I assured him of all the support from my department and promised my personal support also as it was one of my dream projects.The Professor emphatically assured me," Dr.Sreeramulu, by next semester one of my Ph.D students will be finishing

his course work. I will put him on this project for a detailed research. You can also be active participant as a member of research advisory committee.That was the most unexpected offer for me. I gladly agreed to his proposal. The Professor asked me,"Dr.Sreeramulu," You have to spare some time to attend periodic advisory committee meetings to guide the Ph.D scholar, Dr.P.V.K.Sasidhar, "Yes "I said.

This sort of research study was first of its kind in the state covering six districts of state of Andhra Pradesh, two in each region with a total of 180 respondents (field vets) in 2000.

The out-put was interesting with reference to job satisfaction, work motivation and persistence disposition. More than three fourths of the respondents perceived that organisational climate prevailing in the department was favourable. Leadership, team work and trust had significant contribution towards perception of organisational climate. Many of the respondents were least satisfied with motivation, decision making and goal setting components of organisational climate. Job stress had significant negative influence. Many respondents were experiencing intra-role conflict, inter-role conflict, and conflicting expectations in the department.This could be because of inadequate man- power support to field vets at their dispensaries and work pressure. This research output had a personal, social as well as organisational significance to Animal Husbandry Department.

Those days many Veterinary Dispensaries were with out any para-vet support except for only one hospital attender and the Vet had to cope up with the work pressure at times with unmanageable work pressure. At times, the Vet was entrusted with non veterinary activities at local level with the orders from the District collectors and political bosses of the rural set-up apart from mandated job chart. A few suggested corrective measures were tried to ease the field vets.

b. The conundrum of Perceptions of Vets in Disease Investigation

My daughter, a student of Roda Mistry College of Social Work & Research Institute, Hyderabad, told me that she has to take up a small research project for the fulfilment of her Master's degree in Social Work. I felt happy and took her to my Director and convinced him to give permission to her for a small research project. Initially he was hesitant as he did not like AHD to be exposed to outsiders. On my insistence and assurance, he agreed to it. I advised her to take up a focussed study on 'organisational commitment of employees at Veterinary & Biological Research Institute(VBRI) at Hyderabad.

The finding that the younger especially female Vets with pos-graduate qualification have higher organisational commitment' in the study was very interesting contrary to routine feedback from the Joint directors of VBRI to me and the suggestions made for improvement were pulsating. The study suggested to pay attention to bring change in management style in building systems around the people rather than making them to work with the existing systems and delegation of more responsibility by encouraging them in multiskills with focus on training programmes on behavioural dimensions and a counselling system to avoid job related problems.

I realised the fact and initiated some activities to build 'TOUCH conccept-Trust, Openness,Understanding, Completeness and Honesty in consultation with a group of VBRI personnel. A few suggested corrective measures like orientation programmes for young recruits, training programmes and strengthing of manpower were attempted to maximise satisfactory performance levels with some positive outcome.

c. The Status of Service Providers & the Clients in AP

Ten years after my retirement from government service, one day in 2015 I got a phone call from Dr.P.V.K. Sasidhar, Professor of Extension Studies,Indira Gandhi Open University, New Delhi seeking my support as member of the research advisory committee of one of his Ph.D scholars, an Assistant Professor from Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University, Dr. M.Ravikumar. I gladly agreed to his request as the subject ' Dynamics of Livestock Development in Andhra Pradesh: A Multi-Stakeholders Analysis' was of my interest. The bifurcation of state as Telangana and Andhra Pradesh in June 2014 necessitated rescheduling of the research project. The main objective was to analyse the status and effectiveness of livestock service delivery, identify constraints and elicit suggestions from the major stakeholders in the state-the Vets, Gopalamitras and Livestock farmers in two progressive districts- Chittoor and Godavari districts. The study revealed:

- Majority of the Vets in study area were in young age group with B.V.Sc & AH degree,had heavy work load with low experience and with a few in-service trainings.
- Majority of the Gopalamitras were middle aged, matriculates with ninety days basic training and only one refresher training in seven years. All were residing within five kilometers of their work place and were ever ready to render service on calls. Fifty per cen of them had job satisfaction and perceived that they had enough skills to perform their functions.

- Majority of livestock farmers belonged to low to medium categories in socio-economic profile.
- The occupancy rate of Vets was 86.5 per cent while the paravets was only 68.37 per cent in public institutions. Gopalamitras' occupancy was 90.5 percent but unfortunately the supervisory Vets of gopalamitras were only 4.85 per cent of the requirement in APLDA.
- Majority of the livestock farmers opined that the services provided were average in terms of satisfaction, availability and effectiveness. Large number of AHD vets had the medium positive perception about the effectiveness of livestock services delivered by them. The Vets also perceived the services such as major surgical treatment, laboratory diagnosis and radiography as poor or less effective.
- Another interesting output was that farmers' willingness to pay for the services like animal treatment, artificial insemination, pregnancy diagnosis, and gynaecological treatment. Non- remunerative milk price and inconsistent market for livestock products were the major areas of farmers' concerns.
- Insufficient staff, lack of transport facilities for the field work, more time spent in meetings were perceived as major problems by the Vets while Gopalamitras perceived nonavailability of trevis and low remuneration were impediments for them.

These findings gave clues for necessary policy changes and budgetary provisions for infrastructure improvement, human resource development with focus on training for improved service delivery and livestock productivity.

Personally I felt inadequate self esteem, pride of profession,empathy were the curse on an average Veterinarian. Whom to blame was a big question mark, Otherwise, a Vet professional was second to none. I always used to exhort field vets, "You are only the highly educated, well trained professional and a gazetted officer in government hierarchy in rural areas to feel proud of. You love your profession and enjoy your work, why do you compare with others? Be proactive and make your presence important to others by your humane acts."

I imbibed these attributes from some of my senior colleagues. In 1970s one of my seniors, Dr.K.Thalla Raju used to go to his dispensary from home with a stethoscope around his neck and spotless white apron on his left shoulder by walk in a not so big village, Sri Kurmam, a pilgrimage centre in Srikakulam district. Initially people used to make fun of him on his back and after some time started adoring him. Unless one respects himself, he/she cannot expect it from others.

d. Mastitis Controle, a jingoistic puzzle

Two years of post-retirement from public service I was with AgriBiotech Foundation,a research organisation at Hyderabad. A national level consultations were taken up with stakeholders in livestock production in 2013. The outcome was found very interesting and puzzling as well. Out of ten prioritised disease maladies in livestock, Mastitis(udder infection) in cattle and buffaloes was ranked as the number one problem by the farmers and field Vets. But the scientists and administrators of veterinary services looked at other direction.

It was a big question mark in my mind starting from my veterinary career in 1971. Just then 'Mastaid solution kit' was introduced for detection of mastitis as an advanced technique to simple 'strip cup test'. I was the proud possessor of that kit in my district clinical laboratory, Srikakulam. I saw many cases of mastitis attending the veterinary hospital. Mastalone-U, intramammary antibiotic infusion tube was introduced in the market by then and only a few farmers were able to purchase for their animals. For those farmers who could not afford, intramammary infusion of Lugol's iodine was the only drug of choice. Thank God, the hospital Vet. had the luxury of using metal distilled water produced at district clinical laboratory for preparation of Lugol's iodine solution. I leave it to the imagination of readers about 'Lugol's iodine solution' in rural veterinary institutions. I saw many cases of mastitis leading to maggot wounds and ultimate fibrosis. With no capacity for milk production in the udder, animals were ended up in slaughter- houses. Most of the farmers were good economists but could not be philanthropists.

When I was at Vijayawada in Animal Health Centre(AHC) in1975, I found farmers not allowing the Vet to touch their cow or buffalo's udder for intramammary infusion of antibiotics. The farmers insisted only for parenteral injection of new generation antibiotics. Many elite farmers insisted antibiotic sensitivity tests for their mastitis affected animals. I was wondering at the contrast of Srikakulam farmers and Krishna district farmers in their perception levels.

Dr. Kotayya, Principal, School of Animal Reproduction, Mandapeta during one of his official visits to Srikakulam district shared his experience of a peculiar cases of mastitis in Mandapeta area and other buffalo-dense areas since early 1970s. According to him the buffaloes especially majority of the first calvers (mostly graded Murrah heifers) showed sudden swelling of one or two teats within 36 to 48 hours of parturition(calving). If the treatment was delayed for more than 24 hours the swollen teat(s) just sloughs off as

though it was surgically removed at its base. He published his findings naming the condition as 'Allergic mammitis' in premier Indian Veterinary Journal in 1975. Since then I was monitoring such cases. At that time in Srikakulam district possessed mostly non-descript low yielding buffaloes only. Under poverty alleviation programmes, Graded Murrah buffaloes were introduced in the district and slowly the so called Allergic Mammitis cases were showed up sporadically when I was at Vizayawada. As I had access to tour from Kakinada to Nellore, I started probing for such cases in those districts where graded Murrah buffalo population was dense. Most of the field Vets sharing their experiences stated that within 24 hours of observing the swelling of teats, the treatment with antihistamines and antibiotics, affected buffaloes responded well. My epizootiological study involving more than three thousand cases revealed the incidence was less in second and third calvers compared to first calvers that too in graded Murrah buffaloes only. No such cases were observed in cows(non-descript or crossbred cows) or non-descript buffaloes. I posed this problem in several forums at regional and national level but no more light could be seen on this malady.

One of my colleagues, a field Vet. working for his Ph.D programme, in a casual chit-chat in 2005 said," Sir, I could find the etiological culprit of Allergic mammitis as a virus(herpes) and he could not continue further. The issue still haunts the dairy farmers even in 2019.

e. Change makers and underdogs

That was in 2005, one afternoon the telephone operator informed me, "Sir, there is a call from the Indo-Swiss Natural Resources Management Project(ISNRMPA) office, Madam Rupa Mukherji, wants to speak to you". On my 'yes' the phone was connected to me. After exchange of greetings, she requested me to attend a meeting convened to discuss on a proposed research project on "Traditional Milk Supply System(TMSS) at 3 p.m in their office On the dotted time I was at the venue and found personnel from different institutions, AP Dairy corporation, NRMPA, NGOs from Khammam district, CALPI, Delhi, two private research organisations from Bangalore city and NDDB(National Dairy Development Board). A "Research Resource Group was formulated and I was made a member representing AP. Animal Husbandry Department.

Could anyone believe, with all our significant progress in dairy production and marketing in the past fifty years, market access for smallholder milk producers still remained a major constraint in many parts of our state as

well as in our country?. An estimated seventy seven percent of milk marketed in our country reaches consumers through Traditional Milk Supply System(TMSS) and this had immense potential for stimulating growth in dairy impacting lives and livelihoods of resource poor farmers, consumers, vendors and other market intermediaries.

Still I remember my boyhood days in Elamanchili, a small town and a Taluk(Tehsil)headquarters in Visakhapatnam district, myself and my siblings used to get up from sleep at the call of our milk-maid at 5.30 a.m. and my grandmother arguing with that middle aged milk-maid about the quality of milk by putting her index finger in to the milk pail and assessing the quality and at times putting a few drops of milk on the clean smooth floor for quality assessment with thickness as criterion of milk. After finishing my dairy production subject in my B.V.Sc course, I purchased a lactometer and gave it to my grandmother. All these efforts had no effect on the attitude of our milk-maid and quality of milk. She was supplying milk to nine more houses only in morning hours. I experienced this routine for eight years(1956 to 1964) uninterruptedly during my stay at home and 1964 to 1971 intermittently during my college holidays at home for almost fifteen years of our bondage with our milk-maid till our family shifted to Visakhapatnam city. The goodwill from her side was an offer of colostrum milk whenever her buffaloes calved all those years.

My father had some aspersions about the processed milk. I dispelled his apprehensions about processed milk in spite of that he continued with milk supplied by producer cum vendor. There was a very interesting episode in one of my trips to my father at Visakhapatnam in 1980.That day the milk-man was not in time; waiting for him for more than one hour, my father requested my younger brother to go to milk-man's house and verify about milk supply. My brother was reluctant to go and my father himself went to milk-man's home and returned empty handed. Next day morning, hearing my younger brother's high pitched shouts, I came out hurriedly and saw my father pacifying my brother to calm down. I looked at my father and he narrated that Bhaskar, my younger sifting was shouting at the milk-man for not supplying the milk the previous day. My father tried to comfort him, briefed," Look my son, looking at milk-man's soiled cloths, you are taking him as a poor fellow. But yesterday, I saw his house which is bigger than our house and his son has a motor-cycle to go round for milk supply, we have only a bicycle. One should not lose one's cool. You should have asked him politely". I saw many milk vendors earning an income of Rs.500/- to Rs.1,000/- per day depending on the volume of the milk they supply to their customers.

In our Action research in Khammam district, it came to light in spite of existence of other two systems, a private organised dairy and Cooperative dairy systems, about sixty percent of total milk production marketed was through TMSS only. Encouraging finding was that about thirty percent of milk produced was consumed by producer's households. Another interesting feature that came to light was that eighty percent of milk produced in the morning and only forty five percent of evening milk was sold mainly by producers because the vendors did not procure milk in the evenings. Mostly three fourths of the vendors handle less than twenty litres of milk per day while full time vendors handle twenty to fifty litres. Large scale vendors go to "creamaries'.and there also(cream separating units)the quality parameter was thickness of milk but not fat testing.

Most of the milk under TMSS was found adulterated varying from 75%(costs Rs.10/-litre) to 10 to 20% the so called high quality milk sold at Rs.18/- to Rs.20/-per litre. The main reasons for preference of TMSS were very interesting: quality of milk(thickness and taste), availability at needy time and home delivery.

To me the TMSS was a robust system with scope to improve small scale, resource poor producers more particularly in inaccessible areas and it could thrive with other systems of milk production and marketing systems. An analysis of the macro-data at national level indicates that at the present rate of dairy development TMSS would take six to seven decades to reduce to ten percent of market share. Unfortunately, so far nobody thought of a policy towards this TMSS to support for quality milk supply and other measures for its sustenance.

TMSS would never be a competitor instead it could be a complementary system keeping the systems of production and producers and consumers at the centre of the development. A few practical strategies could be capacity building of all the players in this system and institution building of producers and consumers.

f. Perceptions lore

"Information is only useful as its quality and the skills of the person(s)wielding it". I happened to read this quote by a data scientist, Ms.Andrea Jones-Rooy. It triggered my memories of 2012 during my stay in Agri-Biotech Foundation, Hyderabad.

I was one of the facilitators for a series of workshops on 'Opportunities, Challenges and Strategies in Animal Biotechnology' organised by Agri Biotech

Foundation. This was an unique opportunity of consultation process with all the stakeholders- farmers, field Veterinarians, scientists from research institutes and universities and private industries like dairy, vaccine production, and administrators from State govts and Central govt.

The methodology and the process for organisation of "multi stake- holders consultations" when explained to authorities of National Institute of Animal Biotechnology (NIAB) and concerned govt. functionaries at the helm of affairs, they had many questions on feasibility, reliability and useful outcome to suggest newly formed NIAB in setting its research priorities. We had tough task but we were successful.Three such multi stakeholders workshops were organised at Hyderabad (AP), Kochi(Kerala) and Karnal(Haryana) in 2012 and 2013.

Globally, livestock production was growing faster than any other sector and it was predicted that by 2020 livestock would emerge as the most important in terms of added value with growing population. With the increasing urbanisation, raising income levels and changing food habits, the demand for animals and animal products was likely to grow very fast. On the other hand, the concern for more sustainable agriculture with least environmental damage was also growing worldwide bringing the importance of animals to the centre stage. Further there was increased activism on animal welfare and ethics with use of animals in food and pharmaceutical sector.

Against this backdrop, the newly established NIAB under the aegis of the Department of Biotechnology, GOI, aimed at addressing some of the challenges of animal health and productivity. Priority setting was essentially a consultative process involving all the stake-holders concerned. Research outputs would become meaningful, if only they address the needs of potential end-users of these results. A global study demonstrated that the priorities of the experts and political governance were influencing the 'demand' of farmers, masking the real priorities.

In the Indian situation, Project Directorate on Animal Disease Monitoring and Surveillance located at Bangalore identified the top five diseases as 1.Foot and Mouth Disease 2. Sheep and goat pox 3. Hemorrhagic Septicaemia 4.Footrot and 5.Black Quarter among livestock.

In Multi stake-holders consultations the top five prioritised disease conditions emerged were 1.Mastitis, 2.Foot and Mouth disease, 3.Brucellosis, 4.Hemorrhagic Septicaemia and 5.PPR disease in sheep and goats.

At the time of analysis, I along with my colleagues got surprised at the outcome but the reasons poured out by stakeholders appeared very genuine

in their context. There was near unanimity in the perception of disease problems by farmers, practising Vets and researchers with minor variations in scoring which did not alter overall perception. There was overwhelming demand for "pen side diagnostics" by all the stake-holders. Another demand that came out was "thermostable vaccines" for the prioritised diseases.

Apart from livestock diseases, an attempt was also made to identify problems and constraints in animal production in these consultation processes. The prioritised problems were: 1.Extension and Management of production, 2.Nutritional deficiencies, 3.Repeat breeding, 4.Heat detection, 5.Early Pregnancy diagnosis, and 6.Availability and accessibility of sexed semen.

One may perceive these findings as nothing new but the problems continued as there were no serious efforts to ease the situation at the farmer's end. Could be the technology? or the problems in technology transfer? or ignorance to make use of technology?

Apart from identification of problems and constraints, attempts were also made to identify priorities for livestock research and identification of specific biotechnological interventions and potential research institutions for collaboration.



11. Rollicking Laboratory Episodes

a. Microbiology Department and the Vice-Chancellor

That winter morning in December in 1970, as I entered into my Bacteriology department of College of Veterinary Medicine in Pantnagar during my Masters degree, I found Mr.Khajan Singh, the laboratory technician, unusually busy at his work bench. Dr.V.D.Sharma, the Assistant Professor was seen busy moving in and out of sterilisation room, walk-in incubator and work- bench of Mr.Khajan Singh. When I looked at him inquiringly to understand what was happening at this early hour of 7.30 a.m, he smiled at me indicating to wait for a few minutes,

Suddenly, the Assistant Professor came towards me and asked me whether I have a few tubes and petri-plates with selective and differential medium for isolation of enteric bacteria. When I nodded my head in affirmation, I saw in his face a sense of relaxation : he said, "Dr.Piedy, you have saved the situation". Patting on my shoulder he hurried with the material given to him saying that he had to send these to the Vice-Chancellor's bungalow to arrange for collection of stool samples of the dignitary as he was suffering with dysentery for the last two days.

That was the topic for the next three days in our laboratory recollecting hilarious events that took place that morning.

b. A snapshot from...

Dr.Ramesh Hari, my room partner in Nehru Bhavan hostel at Pantnagar was an in-service Vet employed in Uttar Pradesh government service, got admitted with our batch with Major in Veterinary Medicine. A nice gentleman, was sharing an hilarious incident in his department laboratory. His colleague in the Medicine department, a fresh graduate was complaining intense pruritis (intense itching sensation around his anal region) for sometime, at times the itching was so intense, he used to feel embarrassment.

Dr.Ramesh Hari being a senior vet suggested some antifungal ointment but with no relief. Then he suggested to his colleague to bring his stool sample suspecting for pinworm infestation. The next day my room partner was looking for microslides to examine his colleague's stool sample but he could not find a single slide in his laboratory; then his colleague went to adjacent lab and brought some microslides. Dr.Ramesh Hari, when prepared stool sample and

examined under microscope, he could see the unexpected, but could not see the expected. It seems that Dr.Ramesh Hari asked his colleague," Arey yaar! What is happening with you?". Meanwhile, his other three companions in the department forced their way to look into microscope; suddenly their Professor appeared in the laboratory and curiously looked into microscope and quizzed the sample man, "Yaar! kya ho raha hai?." (in native slang—Hindi; Hi, young man what is happening?) and asked him to look in to the microscope.

To his utter dismay, the sample man, found a few spermatozoa along with faecal matter. Everybody was looking at the sample man with probing eyes and sarcastic smile. The sample man emphatically denied any unnatural act on his side. Then suddenly the Professor asked them wherefrom the slides were brought. Dr.Ramesh Hari told the professor, "sir, I could not find slides in our laboratory." Interrupting him the sample man informed that he brought the slides from Gynaecology department. The professor concluded, "That is the catch probably the slides were not properly washed and cleaned after examining semen samples for artificial insemination". Everybody burst in to laughter and our sample man was in embarrassment.



12. Some Unpleasant Clinical Experiences

We vets in our practice may have very pleasant experiences and a few unpleasant experiences also. A bright day light always has a follow-up with dark nights.

If my remembrance is sharp enough, I think it was in 1972, an injectable parasiticide 'Ancylol' was introduced and one of my friends working for that pharmaceutical company gave me some physician samples and told me that the injection was found very effective against Ancylostomes in dogs.

A cute Pomeranian dog of one of my neighbours showed hosting of "Ancys" on faecal examination. On his request, I brought the sample from my work place in the evening and injected one dose as suggested in the enclosed pamphlet at my home; three days later, the neighbourhood friend on my enquiry told that one hour after the injection and reaching home, the dog died. For a moment, I did not realize what could have happened.

The next day on verification with my colleagues I came to know that the injection at times in cases with heavy infestation cause severe reactions leading to death. I realized that while trying any new drugs, one should be extra careful.

For a long time, I felt guilty at the death of a cute pup.

In another incident, at Veterinary Dispensary Chintaparthy of Chittoor District, on my inspection day the Veterinary Assistant Surgeon showed me a case of pregnant crossbred cow with a history of off feed for the last three days and he also told that on examination the foetus was found dead and the cow was not throwing out the dead foetus. I told him as I would be staying that night there itself, if necessary, we can attempt ceasarian operation late in the evening if the condition of the cow didn't improve. I requested the VAS to re-examine the status of the fetus and keep all the material ready for 'caesorotomy'. We spoke to the farmer and explained about the possible complications and risks; with his consent, the cow was prepared for caesorotomy, I opened the uterus and removed the calf. To my horror,I found the live calf which succumbed in a few minutes. That day I cursed myself for the unpleasant happening. I looked at the face of the VAS, he was silent ; the farmer said, "Okay sir leave it, that is my fate"

The cow survived and was conceived subsequently.



13. International Conferences

a. International Ethno-Veterinary Conference

I was one of the team members of the group from Andhra Pradesh to attend an "International Conference on 'Ethno Veterinary Medicine' at Pune in 1999 organised by Bharatiya Agro-Industries Foundation(BAIF). Persons working on promotion of indigenous Veterinary medicine from India and other countries, U.K, U.S, Netherlands, Switzerland,Zimbabwe, Madagascar participated in the conference. The group wise deliberations went on for three days. Our group consisted of Mr.Moulder Dr.Bachman from Berne, Switzerland, Ms Anneth Kolf, Dr.D.Venkateswarlu,Dr.Krishna Murthy and myself from ISPA and Dr.M.Ramadas Asst.Director from Animal husbandry department, AP.

I was given the opportunity of presentation of our group deliberations. One of my colleagues, Dr.Venkateswarlu had drawn a cartoon depicting a livestock farmer making a balancing act with a long stick in his hands, walking on a rope connecting two small hilltops representing modern veterinary medicine and other local system of Veterinary medicine very precariously. The audience appreciated the visual summing up of my presentation.

After giving clarifications to a few questions on my presentation, seeking the permission of the Chairman of the session I finished my talk with a small anecdote of Lord Siva family. I continued asking the participants to visualise for a moment the family of Lord Siva, Siva's vehicle is Nandi(a Bull), his consort is Durga Devi on a tiger, his elder son Ganesha on a rat, his other son Shanmukha(Kumara Swamy) on a peacock while Lord Siva is with snake around his neck; with all the contradictions, Nandi(Bull) and tiger, rat and snake, snake and peacock, yet Siva's was an ideal family.Why not we have different systems of medicare for well-being of the livestock more crucial for healthy world?". I concluded.

There was a thunderous standing ovation and many foreign delegates were seeking details about what I said at my conclusion when I came down the dais.

b. Commonwealth Veterinary Conference,1998

The Indo-Swiss Project sponsored a group of Veterinary professionals from the AP. State. to Commonwealth Veterinary Conference held at Banglore

in 1998 for three days. Dr.R.Mohan Rao, DAH, and Dr.M.V.Reddy from AHD and Dr.D.Venkateswarlu, Dr.P.Venkataramaiah and myselff from the project. I had the privilege of acting as rapporteur in the first technical session. Myself and each of my colleagues from the project had presented research papers generated by the project. Thre was a great demand for the paper presented by Dr.P.Venkataramaiah on Curriculum development process and outcomes for two years course for Paravets from many African and Asian countries.

My presentation on "Gender balance in Livestock production activities' attracted clarifications from many participant Vets working for Livelihood Development Projects by NGOs as well from rural development projects in Indian states. The conference was an unique opportunity for me to interact with Veterinarians from fifty plus six countries.

c. International Poultry Conference, 1996

I was busy going through a report I prepared for the perusal of the Managing Director(MD). Just then the Intercom phone rang. From other side the Personal secretary to the MD informed me to meet the MD as he wants to talk to me. Met the MD. He gave me a letter addressed to the MD by the Secretary, Rural Development, Govt of India requesting him to send some officers and poultry farmers supported by AP Scheduled Caste Development Finance Corporation to the International Poultry Conference.

Finishing reading the letter when I raised my head the MD said," Dr.Sreeramulu yourself and your VAS attend the conference. It is a rare opportunity to understand the world scenario of poultry development.You first go. Your VAS will join you with a group from well maintained poultry complexes financed by our corporation to the conference on the last day, let them go round Delhi city also."

I had the rare opportunity of attending and listening to the world renowned scientists and poultry industrialists as well as meeting my old friends from other states.

14. Snapshots on Fodder Development

a. Entrepreneurship and Fodder

I feel greatly amused at some of the experiences with fodder development activities during my tenure in govt service. To be frank, at times, it was like the story of four blind men describing an elephant. Somebody goes to the USA or Australia or Scandinavian countries for a visit or training, bring back the experiences and try to put into practice satisfying with a few sporadic success stories with no sustainable repeatability.

Often the historical and ground realities were always ignored blissfully. Basically our livestock production was thriving on common property resources. There were some good efforts, with not much of impact on improving overall fodder availability resulting from recurrent monsoon failures, shrinkage of land holding per household (scarce & valuable), change in cropping patterns, switching to commercial crops and discouraging government policies.

ISPA initiated a research study to understand fodder availability, accessibility, affordability with active involvement of agriculture, forest and, AH department and NGOs working with farmers and social scientists. Brought out a very comprehensive report in 1995(after 3 years of elaborate studies). I was sceptical that a very few could have seriously understood the research outputs and tried to initiate some activities. But when persons at the helm of affairs moved out on promotion, transfer or retirement, the institutional memory was lost for the simple reason there were never a well formulated policy and adequate integrated approach by various wings of governance.

Fodder means, majority of them understand that it was only the prerogative of the animal husbandry department. It was "next to impossible task" to make concerned senior secretaries of the government spare some time to discuss about it. In a nutshell one can say that fodder was given the least priority with nominal budgetary allocations as a routine. Unless there was a crisis, nobody talked about fodder improvement those days. Fodder had become an item of crisis management in time of failure of monsoon and agricultural crops.

During 1985, Dr.K.V. Ramana,the VAS of VD, Pudipatla near Tirupati, with great enthusiasm showed me a small fodder plot (0.5 acres) by the roadside (Tirupati to Chittoor) promoted by him. He introduced the owner of

the plot living on horse drawn cart (jatka). During interaction with him it was amazing to know that he earns a substantial income(about 30 percent of his monthly income) and saves cost of feeding on his horse. To my question about time spent on the plot every day by him, he said nothing as he leases out the grown fodder to someone who harvests and sells it in Tirupati town and his clients were mostly people with full time or part time occupations without any land base rearing milch cows.

Later I observed such market outlets in bigger towns and cities like Hyderabad, Chennai, Bangalore. Such models could not be replicated in smaller towns and never in villages in spite of scarcity.

b. A Dutch student and Paddy straw enrichment

A Dutch student working for his Ph.D programme was at Visakhapatnam for a case study at ISPA in 1988. One of the Expatriate expert came with the Researcher to Vizianagaram and requested me to take him around some villages on my tour for his acquaintance with rural scenario.The Dutch researcher accompanying me was wondering gazinging at the large stacks of paddy straw in rural side and inquisitively asked me whether there were any paper mills nearby.

To my reply he expressed his surprise on knowing that the paddy straw was the main course feed item apart from grazing for Indian cattle and buffaloes. He expressed that in their country all such straw material go for paper making. All the while he was under the impression that around there was a paper mill.

I explained to him, "Our livestock economy and agriculture economy were interdependent and Indian economy, GDP depend on rainfall. I tried to dispel his apprehensions about nutritive value etc. Just then, enrichment of paddy straw by ammoniation process was introduced in that area with the technical support of ISPA.

I was very much fascinated with the technique of enriching the quality of paddy straw with urea for cattle as the straw was an abundantly available staple diet in this area of coastal districts. I used to give wide publicity through news- papers and demonstrations and slides in Cinema theatres. I always used to carry some urea packets in my briefcase: wherever I found a small group of farmers, I used to stop, enter into conversation with them and demonstrate the process and explain. I requested my peers also to popularise this technique in their areas. While demonstrating, the livestock farmers always expressed many doubts narrating their bitter experiences with urea.

Usually the first question posed by many of them was, "How do you advise us feeding of urea to animals as they experienced death of the animals on consuming urea from the bags as it is".

Agreeing to their concern, I always confessed, "Yes it is very toxic when it is consumed as it is,but the way I have explained, if you do, the straw will be enriched with protein. The cost was also very negligible compared to the value of digestible protein available after urea treatment for our cattle.".

In the late 1980s one kilogram of urea costed only two rupees. "You have water, paddy straw and urea,everything. Only the thing one requires is 15 minutes of time every week" I used to assert.

Under various schemes some of the inputs like, construction of small structures to hold one hundred kgs of treated paddy straw and plastic sheets to cover these pits airtight for one week period were provided. Many of the farmers volunteered to adopt this technique without such inputs also. I have to come up with some small innovations to minimise the drudgery involved in the process. Some farmers themselves came up with a few more innovations with reference to structures to hold treated straw.

For farmers with more animals we encouraged them to treat larger volumes of straw and have their haystacks for longer periods, say four to five months. A few of the farmers adopted this technology in Prakasam district.

Under Indo-Swiss Project this technology was promoted in some more selected districts. This technology was evaluated for its spread and nutritional improvement after three years. The spread was very limited and more by farmers having one or two milch animals. Farmers with more milch animals and other work animals did not continue this technology. Adoption of technology increased the workload of woman-folk in rural as well as urban dwellings. This technology improved nutrient digestibility, rumen fermentation and digestible protein.

Personally, I felt disappointed at the lukewarm response from the farmers with all the possible awareness programmes. training programs and demonstrations for almost seven years. My Swiss and Dutch colleagues shared their experience that some of the technologies don't find acceptance by farmers in other developing and developed countries as well.

c. Rounding of Revolving fund

During my assignment as Project Director of the Indo Swiss Project, Mr.Henk, the Chief Project Advisor (CPA), suggested me to participate in the discussions on 'fodder revolving fund'. In animal husbandry department

those days (1990s)fodder related issues came up only in situations of severe fodder shortage resulting from longer dry spells or crop failure or severe floods resulting from severe cyclonic storms. Some of the activities include supply of fodder seed on subsidy to encourage livestock farmers to raise fodder crops to minimise the shortages and supply of fodder (hay) from distant places. Very meagre amount was being allotted by the government for name sake. The fodder seed supplied usually was of the jowar variety and farmers had no choice.

But to encourage interested farmers to raise fodder crop varieties of their choice, the project had allocated Rupees Fifty Thousand to Rupees One lakh fifty thousand as 'Fodder Revolving Fund' to each district in the state. The concept was that the fund be utilised to purchase and supply fodder seed or fodder slips of farmer's choice on cost to cost basis. The money recovered was added back to revolving fund to maintain the quantum of initial principal amount for reuse continuously. To be simple, a reserve of money set aside for fodder development.

During review of the status of Revolving fund in different districts, it was found that in some districts the fund was utilised for other than fodder development activities but with fund balance being maintained; in some districts the fund was used as savings bank account but with no reimbursement. In one district it was found that entire amount was utilised for fixing air conditioner to the government vehicle of the Joint Director.

Sometimes with the release of more budget from government for fodder development activities, the revolving fund was kept unutilised as the farmers were more interested in subsidised fodder seed from government programmes. It was difficult to convince majority of farmers to have their choice of fodder seed on full cost.

With the winding up of Indo-Swiss Project AP programmes in March,2000 the concept of Revolving Fund was rounded off with no system in place.

d. Community Fodder Seed Production Initiatives

Under ISPA 'Community fodder seed production was started in Vizianagaram division and during my time at the place I encouraged resumption of the initiative talking to farmer groups ably assisted by Dr.Gangadhara Rao, the Fodder expert with me in monitoring seed production and supply chain.

In this programme the cost of seed production was low by 20 percent and the quality of seed was improved. In spite of these positive factors marketing

became a hurdle with the monstrous attitude of traders dealing with tenders at governmental level.

The good initiative was given up with a heavy heart. But with ISPA support fodder seed production by farmer groups on contract with Dairy Milk Union at Sangam in Guntur district with large scale investment for seed processing and marketing went well. Dairy union could meet the demand of their dairy farmers for quality seeds at a lower cost. This model went well. Lot of market research went into before going for this Model for fodder seed production by farmer groups. As one of the team members in this model during my tenure as Project Director, ISPA was very satisfying initiative.

e. CM NTR at Pusapatiraga

At times, the ways of political big-wigs in authority attract the general public with their pronouncements driving the operating system and the people in the system to unpleasant embarrassment. I remember one such incident with the then Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Sri N.T.Rama Rao in 1988. during his tour of North-coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh to assess drought situation.

As the Deputy Director of Vizianagaram was on a training assignment in Thiruvananthapuram, the District Collector asked me to attend the CM's review meeting at Pusapatirega.

I was sitting in Veterinary Dispensary, Pusapatirega located just opposite the dry tank bed where a helipad was arranged for landing of the helicopter carrying the C.M. The tank used to be with sufficient water received during monsoon but this time it was completely dry for the first time in the last five years. Hearing the helicopter sound, I came out and reached the spot where a photo exhibition was arranged to brief the C.M in the tank bed area a little away from the helipad. The district Collector brought the C.M to the venue where all the officials from concerned departments gathered.

The C.M spent a few minutes looking at the photo exhibition and suddenly sat down on the carpet with his characteristic 'Padmasana' posture. We all sat down on the laid carpet. CM discussed the measures to be taken by different departments. I had little difficulty to sit as I was not habituated - to sit with my pants on the ground but it was amusing to look at most of the officers feeling difficulty to sit on the ground as many of them were above 50 years of age. It was really a very inconvenient situation, yet they sat.

The District Collector was briefing him about measures taken and concerned departmental officers were supplementing information when

sought for more details.. Briefing about Animal Husbandry Department, the Collector said that the fodder seed was being supplied to farmers to raise some fodder—with available water on 75 percent subsidy. Before the Collector completed his sentence, the C.M reacted, "What is this 75 percent subsidy when my govt is supplying rice at Rs 2/- only? Why charging for fodder seed, No, it is ridiculous". The C.M added, "Make it free".

The relief commissioner accompanying C.M from Hyderabad, explained to him, "Sir actually it is on 50 percent subsidy as per drought manual but we made it 75 percent in our state and Central govt. may not agree for free supply of fodder seed". The C.M said, "Nothing doing, our govt gives it free. Follow it up." After spending five more minutes, he left the venue waving his hands at the crowd around.

The next day onwards farmers were demanding free supply of fodder seed and the local VAS was in an embarrassing situation. The fodder seed had to move into soil at least by the month-end to get enough available moisture.

No govt orders were issued during that year for free supply of fodder seed to farmers. One has to imagine the plight of the field functionaries because of thoughtless spontaneous pronouncements by persons at the helm of governance.

f. Watershed development programmes

Watershed development programme envisages conservation, recharging and judicious use of available water resources like underground water, small seasonal rivers, rivulets, streams to the lands within the watershed area. This initiative had improved fertility of land supporting the growth of trees, plants and cultivation. Thus three important components of this programme were land management, water management and biomass management.

Livestock development was also one of the activities as many people in the area were poor peasants those days. Somewhere in later part of 1988, I was at Veterinary dispensary, Kothavalasa, a small town, bordering Visakhapatnam district, for inspection. Two hours after the inspection, the Veterinary Assistant Surgeon(VAS), Dr.P.Vasudava Rao reminded me about lunch time. Looking at my watch I told him, "Okay, after lunch I may take some more time for going through remaining records".

In the adjacent room we started our lunch and in a leisurely conversation I asked the VAS, "Do you need any clarifications?"; he said "Yes sir, I have a piquant situation here. Recently I happened to attend a meeting at Mandal

Praja Parishat and the project officer instructed me to identify all eligible male animals in two of the villages covered under watershed development programme nearer to town, castrate them and pay at the rate of Rupees fifteen per animal to the owner of the animals and money was provided for the purpose in the project". The VAS continued," Sir, earlier all those animals from these villages are brought to this hospital for castrations free of cost and some farmers used to pay tips to the attender in appreciation of his careful handling of their animals in the process; now instead, I am asked to pay from the project funds. Now, there are only very few male calves existing. If I start this practice I am afraid that I may be giving scope for undesirable practices in future. This approach is new to entire machinery involved in the project implementation".

For a moment, I also felt ridiculous based on ground realities. I assured the VAS, "I will try to find a way out for such ticklish issue, give me sometime". Finishing my task, I was on my way back to Vizianagaram. All the way I was brooding over this issue.

In the succeeding week I was at Hyderabad to attend a state level meeting convened by Director of Animal Husbandry. Explaining the situation, I sought for director's advice. Further I added, "Sir, general guidelines are important but without taking into the specific circumstances these guidelines sometimes can be misleading. Each situation requires detailed engagement with its nitty-gritty particulars". Everybody watching me talking to the Director in rapt silence. I continued," Sir, airy-fairy-ivory tower intellectuals must have designed this programme". Again requested for his guidance.

Looking at me the director said," Dr. Sreeramulu.. simply follow whatever the watershed development project officials say".

I said, "yes sir" recollecting my father's dictum at the time of my joining in the department, 'never say no to your superior officer' narrating his experience in his revenue department in 1950s. It appears that the district Collector asked the local Tahsildar to take him to a remote village to see personally the ongoing things there. The Tahsildar accompanied him. My father added that the Collector was very impatient as it was taking very long time.The Collector looked at the Tahsildar with disgust; fearing his fury the Tahsildar pleaded," Sir because of a big hillock on the way, we have to take longer route"...interrupting the Tahsildar, the Collector ordered him to remove the hillock coming in the way by his next visit to reach the village quickly. The Tahsildar said reverentially, "Yes sir". This was not the end of the story. My father continued... "After some time the Collector came again, finding the hillock at the same place, looked at the Tahsildar. The Tahsildar

apologetically with head down explained, "Sir, we tried our best but could not succeed to remove it, I beg for your pardon sir"; The Collector said, "Okay, you did your work, do not worry".

The inference is that never say to your boss 'no' at the first instance. Most of the times, I was successful in convincing my superior officers following my father's advice.

None can deny the facts of improvement in productivity resulting from increased moisture in the area of the project. Milk production also increased in project areas. More benefits went to people with land; more the land, more the benefit. The marginalised were more victimised especially the landless poor belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribe groups, shepherds and goat herders from loss of access to traditional grazing lands which were sealed off to promote regeneration.

Womenfolk had the grievance of reduced access to the common lands for collection of firewood and some marketable products like grass for brooms, medicinal plants and tamarind.

Such problems were well addressed in a very few projects with participatory apporach supported by non-governmental organisations well versed in human engineering.

g. The Untold story

In 1998 during my stint as Project Director, Indo-Swiss Project(ISPA) it was planned to visit Bihar state to acquaint with the activities of a private entrepreneur's initiative in Artificial insemination services in cattle and goats at' 'Doorstep'. A delegation comprising nine members of Mahbubnagar Cattle Breeders Association, one official from the anchoring organisation, APDDCF and three members (including me) from ISPA(the funding agency) left for Patna, the capital of Bihar state.

We visited the centres catering breeding services by trained private inseminators, interacted with service providers, farmers and other stakeholders. The surprising thing was that the AI services were discontinued in many government veterinary dispensaries wherever the private service providers were there. These people were charging Rs.25/- to Rs.75/- depending on the distance. All the infrastructure and frozen semen was supplied by the company on cost to AI workers. Farmers expressed satisfaction with their services in spite of the higher cost while it was very nominal in Govt. centres.

The irony was that during those four days of travel to different places around Patna, Jehanabad and Gaya, many villagers thronged to the place

wherever we were interacting with various stakeholders with whispers and sometimes directly asking us, "Are you from CBI?, Where from you are?".... ongoing investigations on notorious fodder scam in that state. We faced embarrassing situations at times as some of the Veterinarians of govt. institutions refused to interact and share their experiences with us about privatised artificial insemination services.

We specifically requested our tour organiser and local contact to arrange a mini bus, instead, the tour organiser arranged four Ambassador cars with the plea that a minibus was not available. This also added to suspicion of onlookers during our trips and it was a hilarious experience and at times embarrassing too.

The Fodder Scam was a corruption scandal that involved the misappropriation of several crores of rupees during the period between 1991 and 1994 in Bihar. The fodder scam was one of the biggest scams of that period in the country. The theft spanned for many years, and allegedly involved numerous Bihar state's administrative and elected individuals across multiple administrations of the governments led by different political parties.

The scam had tarnished the image to such an extent that when once, I was travelling from Hyderabad to Delhi by flight to attend an official meeting in the ministry, the gentleman sitting next to me expressed unsavoury gesture at me during chit chat on knowing that I was working with Animal Husbandry department.

Subsequently, Dr. L. Mohan my colleague shared his experience. That was an election year in Andhra Pradesh state and the state government had given my colleague the responsibility of accompanying and assisting a Secretary cadre official as a ' Central election observer' from Delhi. It seemed that my colleague received him at airport assisted by a protocol officer and introduced himself. As soon as my colleague told that he was Joint Director, Animal Husbandry Department at Hyderabad, the guest officer appeared a little bit uneasy and did not say anything.But the next day, my colleague was relieved of his extra responsibility and later he came to know that the election observer requested the concerned to replace my colleague with somebody else from some other department. Such was the aversion percolated into system. It was really a very unpleasant, awkward and disgraceful scenario those days. Life brings tears, smiles and memories. The tears dry, the smiles fade but the memories last forever.



15. The Assorted Snapshots of Natural Calamities

a. Short reign-big impact-drought, 2003

The drought in 2003 was one of the worst droughts in fifty years, that the state of Andhra Pradesh had endured; elaborate plans were made to tackle the situation and it was monitored on a daily basis.

On the scheduled day there were two meetings at the same hour, one convened by Principal Secretary AHD, another by Commissioner (Relief). The Principal Secretary asked me to attend the meeting with the Commissioner (Relief) and join the meeting with him later.

As directed, I attended the meeting with the Commissioner (Relief). Though I had briefed all the activities taken up by the department in detail, he expressed his unpleasantness on the absence of DAH. I explained the situation and I could convince him with all the finer details of drought relief measures taken up by AHD as I was in-charge of drought relief operations at that time. After the brief meeting I rushed to in the meeting of Principal Secretary. Seeing me entering into section, the personal secretary of the Principal secretary, asked me to go inside.

When I entered the room, the atmosphere was found very tense. The Principal Secretary was seeking some clarification from DAH, looking at me, the Principal Secretary, signalled me to sit besides DAH. For a minute, I could not understand what was happening as I found the DAH with very grim face sweating profusely in that air-conditioned room. I noticed the Secretary asking the DAH same question repeatedly. Anantham, Assistant Director, my other colleague was looking at me and DAH was blinking. I heard the question posed to DAH third time and the Secretary must have been repeating the same even prior to my coming inside.

I looked into eyes of the Principal Secretary trying to speak. He asked me, "Do you have anything to say on this?" I nodded my head as a sign of yes requested for two minutes to explain. The Secretary told, "Don't worry, take your own time".

Then I started explaining," Sir, we have one billion human population in our country; to feed all, we have to produce or procure enough food grains equivalent to energy of 2800 KCal. for each person multiplied by one billion each day that too in a short time. It is a gigantic task and because of time factor it is next to 'impossiblity to cater'. The blessing in disguise is that as a

consequence of natural phenomenon, the population gets adjusted to the situation to the tolerable deficit levels and this is what was happening over the years. In our case,even with all the possible best efforts, there is likely to be a gap in actual and projected estimate of fodder requirement and to fill up the gap it, is not practicable in real situation. I am confident that with effective monitoring of our drought relief activities we can minimize the suffering or damage". I stopped at that point.

Everybody was looking at me and the Secretary asked me to repeat verbatim what all I said while my DAH was looking at me with an anxiety in his face. I repeated what all I said; listening to me with rapt attention, the Secretary with a pause for a few seconds, asked me, "Do you want me to say the same thing to the Chief Minister?".

Without a pause, emphatically I said, "Yes sir.": he smiled at me, then I continued," Sir, we have to brief the Chief minister such factual information coupled with an assurance that we can manage the situation without any embarrassment to the government".

Then the Principal Secretary said, "Okay, Dr.Sreeramulu, stay for 30 minutes, prepare a half a page note, give it to me, finish your lunch and come back to me. Meanwhile I get an appointment with the Chief minister by 4 p.m."

I accompanied the Principal Secretary to Chief minister's chambers. The Principal secretary explained in detail the action plan and possible gap and repeated verbatim what all I said that morning; the CM said, "Go ahead but see that no serious situation arises".

I always strongly believed in the power of one's faith in the objective is greater than the object of faith itself. That is what 'Hanuman', the ardent, faithful follower of Lord Ram of epic Ramayana symbolised. A great lesson for humanity.

b. The Catclysmic Cyclone of 1977

Scenes of the burning of human corpses and animal carcasses on the same funeral pyre would never fade from the memory of those who survived the cyclone that hit Diviseema in Krishna district on the deadly night of November 19, 1977. The estimated death toll was about fifty thousand but the official toll was ten thousand people and several lakhs of poultry and thousands of cattle perished during and after the cyclone. Could any one imagine the force of steady wind speed of two hundred and fifty kilometers for three minutes followed by two hundred kilo meters speed for two minutes

made several hundreds of houses with tin roofs and thatched roofs blow away making several thousand people homeless in a matter of five minutes on that nightmarish day. The accompanying rain left hundreds of coastal villages marooned for weeks.

The worst affected areas were in the Krishna river delta region. The island of Diviseema which was hit by a six-metre-high (20 ft) storm surge experienced a loss of life running into the thousands. Hundreds of bodies were floating on the waters and bodies bloated beyond recognition were consigned to mass pyres. Landslides ripped off the railway lines in the Waltair-Kirandul route. About one hundred people who had left their homes to seek shelter in a church in Bapatla town were killed when the building collapsed. Fields of paddy and cash crops were submerged by the tidal waves. Thirteen sailing vessels, including some foreign ones, went missing in the storm.

About a hundred villages were marooned or washed away by the cyclonic storms and the ensuing floods and a total of 10,841 killed or missing, and 34 lakh rendered homeless. The large loss of life prompted the establishment of early warning meteorological stations on the coast of Andhra Pradesh. Construction of Cyclone shelters and other measures for disaster management were also taken up. A memorial was built at the point of furthest advance of the tidal wave near the town of Avanigadda was in commemoration of the deceased in the storm.

I vividly remember that the previous day myself and my colleague Dr.P.Ramavanamayya proceeded to bus station on bicycles by 5 a.m. to go to a village eight kilometers away from Jaggayyapeta town in Krishna district to reach the place by 8 a.m. On the way to bus stand, it was drizzling.Both of us got into bus to reach Jaggayyapeta. After reaching Jaggayyapeta the intensity of rain was very high and many passengers were stranded at bus station. One of our colleagues whom we met at the place informed us that because of the inclement weather the animal health camp was cancelled and we did not have information to that effect. To return to Vijayawada buses were not moving out. More than hundred passengers bound for Vijayawada agitated and at last the depot manager agreed to deploy two buses as the travel was on highway road. We could reach Vijayawada only by 4 p.m. skipping lunch. Still it was raining, however, we picked up our bicycles in knee-deep water at bus station and slowly moved towards our homes fully drenched.

My wife perturbed on seeing me fully drenched. I had my bath and change of dress and finished my dinner early and took to bed tired. I could get up only by six in the morning.

There was eerie silence in my house; I got down from my cot with sleepy eyes. I felt something peculiar on the floor, my legs were in three inches level rainwater in the bed room. Faintly, I heard my wife's voice near the front gate talking to my neighbours, my laboratory colleagues. Dr.P.Ramavanamayya and Dr.V.Sundara Rao with their wives. To my surprise, I found collapsed compound wall in the front yard and fallen trees all around. With a satirical look my wife commented, "Did you have nice sleep? continued.".Whole night, I could not sleep with the sounds of heavy downpour, lightenings and sounds of cat and dog fights in the sky". All were sharing their experiences all through the night. Other neighbours were also out and looking at the damages resulting from heavy downpour the previous night. Women-folk helped my wife in draining out the rainwater.

After breakfast, we all the three proceeded to our laboratory. To our horror, we found all the trees in the campus were on the ground with electricity wires hanging down from the fallen tree branches. We did not have electricity for about a week in our campus opposite the municipal stadium on Bandar road. This had resulted in spoilage of all bacteriological media and it took more than a week to come to normal stage. Our Assistant Director helped us each with rupees one thousand for our domestic expenditure as hand loan as the calamity happened in the middle of the month. He was very sympathetic towards us. We narrated our experience of travel to and back from Jaggayyapeta. We could visualise the impact of fury of cyclone at the coast and Diviseema area. Three days after the fury, we got the news of death of one of our senior colleagues with his family members from lightening and house collapse in Diviseema that fateful night.

We did not have electricity for almost one month in our residential colony, necessitating sharing the responsibility of night vigil by rotation till resumption of electricity to the colony as there were reports of robberies in the town.

Many volunteer groups worked day and night to dispose off dead both human and animals enmass. It was heart wrenching seeing affected people taking food in the presence of the corpses of their kith and kin in the core affected area. Railway stations were found overcrowded with people fleeing from affected areas for almost fifteen days.

The Animal Husbandry department had taken up preventive vaccination work in a campaign mode to prevent epidemics apart from organising mobile veterinary clinics to treat injured animals and sick animals. Milk procurement and distribution were severely affected.

Mr. A.V.S.Reddy was the District collector at that time and being from Indian army background with his extraordinary leadership mobilised people,resources to minimise the suffering of affected people. He was iconic in his handling such a calamity those days. That incidence paved the way for standardising systems to handle such disasters at state level. Andhra Pradesh state had become a training and learning centre for the whole country and people from other countries also used to come to the state for training in disaster management.

My wife refused to cook fish or any river or sea food items for more than a month with rumours of somebody found a human finger in fish when cut open, or some one found a gold ring in fish something like that. Never I dared to say no to my wife.

I was in The Netherlands to attend an eight weeks international course on Project Management and Programme administration in 1995. One day, we were taken to a place 'Delta works'. This unique structure was built to prevent North Sea floods which ravaged the area in 1953. The Dutch call it 'watersnoodramp' three kilo-meters long dam like structure across the sea, the construction of which was started in 1976 and completed in 1986. The works consist of dams, sluices, locks, dykes and levees. The estimated project's life was two hundred years.

The faculty who accompanied us told us that the worst North Sea flood occuring on Jan 31st and 1st February,1953 submerged four lakh acres of land with eighteen hundred human deaths and extensive damage to infrastructure: He added that the people for next four generations have to continue to pay taxes for this project.

One of my colleagues in the training programme a high ranked engineer from Bangladesh, lamented, "Every year we lose about twenty thousand people in cyclonic storms and floods in Bangladesh".

c. The Fury of the Cyclonic storm

During November, 1985, a severe cyclonic storm shattered south coastal districts, especially Nellore coastal area and adjacent areas like Sathyavedu, Kalahasti and Putturu areas of Chittoor district and I was in charge of cyclone relief operations with reference to livestock and I made Sri Kalahasti town as my temporary head- quarters as suggested by the Joint director(AH). Teams were made to go around villages to assess livestock losses and organized health camps and take up massive prophylactic vaccination programme to avert impending disease out- breaks in livestock.

During that period, one day at the dead of the night, a VAS, one of the team leaders came to me to inform that the Director, Dr.C.Hanumantha Rao had come to R & B guesthouse. I was amazing how could he come when every mode of transport facility was disrupted? When I met him at the guest house, I startled to know that he came all the way from Vijayawada by jeep with vaccines in jeep trailer. After satisfying himself with the relief activities, he left next day for Hyderabad by flight from Tirupati.

I was sharing this experience with other officers that evening in daily review meeting on work related to cyclone relief operations. One of the Revenue Divisional Officers was sarcastically commented that the Revenue Department could distribute relief to hundreds of affected people with several lakhs of rupees and AHD could vaccinate only 30,000 cattle so far. With a smile, politely I rebuffed, "AHD must have definitely shown more results if it is only money distribution, can we have role reversal?

The Joint collector with a smile said, "Doctor, do not be serious, I can appreciate your department work in the present odd circumstances. I saw your people trekking in knee deep water, slushy fields tackling animals".

Next day the local VAS came to me with signs of frustration on his face; I asked him to calm down and speak without any hesitation. He told that the local Mandal Revenue Officer informed that the following day the Chief Minister was visiting this area and it was planned to arrange lunch in a mango garden on the roadside. Seeing question mark in my face, the VAS said that the MRO was asking AHD to remove two buffalo carcases lying on the side of approach road to mango garden.

I told my VAS to ask the MRO, if human corpses were there instead of buffalo carcases who would take the responsibility of disposal? I also asked my VAS to inform the MRO that AHD have no facilities to take up animal carcase disposal.

Later I came to know that because of urgency, the MRO himself made alternative arrangements for disposal of the carcases. One has to face such audacious persons at times.

d. Dolour on the Dam

The Personal Assistant to the Director of Animal Husbandry informed me on the intercom that the Joint Director Kadapa wanted to speak to me and connected the phone call. The Joint Director asked me to go over to Kadapa to help him in handling the aftermath of flash floods in the district. I assured him to go over there by putting a word to the Director. He said that

already he spoke to the Director and he agreed to his request and informed that the Director would also join three days later. Meanwhile the Director sent a word for me. As soon as I entered into his chambers, he advised me, "Please start for Kadapa tomorrow morning as it is already late evening, go to Mahbubnagar in your vehicle, leave it there, and pick up another vehicle from Joint Director there, proceed to Kadapa and keep the vehicle till you complete your work".

I could reach Kadapa by 4 p.m and while entering into Kadapa town it was a ghastly scene to look at inundated roads with flood waters, shattered roadside small shops and clogged drainages with heaps of trash on either side of the roads. When I wanted to go into the veterinary hospital compound, it was all slush but fortunately JD's office was on a little higher elevation which prevented flood water gushing in. I found the JD busy with his officers and he briefed me what all that happened a day before yesterday. It was given to understanding that a delayed response from higher officials and slow action of last grade servant of Irrigation department caused the havoc of bursting of a medium sized irrigation tank all of a sudden resulting in heavy gushing of water and unprecedented damage in Kadapa town especially slums. The JD took me to the review meeting at the Collectorate by state minister in charge of the district. We briefed about the action plan of Animal Husbandry Department. During the meeting, information was pouring in from the areas where the Penna river passes through and severe flooding occurred in Badvel area villages. The minister ordered us to visit that area and take up remedial measures immediately. I advised the JD to stay at Kadapa and assured him that I would proceed to Badvel in the morning.

En-route I visited some veterinary institutions. In one VD on the road side, I got down and found the vet was in the process of doing AI to a buffalo; I signalled him not to get disturbed and complete his task and went into doctor's room, picked up a Telugu daily news- paper found on his table and I was about to sit in the chair. Suddenly I heard a loud voice of the Vet cautioning me not to sit in that chair. For a moment I was perturbed, and I saw a farmer rushing towards me with another chair from the neighbour's house. I did not visualise the sudden happenings. The Vet also came in a huff without washing his hands.

The Vet pleaded with me," Excuse me sir, I felt frightened observing you sitting in my chair, because one of the chair's leg is very loose and I am scared of your likely fall on to the ground and that is the reason for my disrespectful shout at high pitch of voice, once again excuse me sir for the inconvenience". I laughed it off saying do not worry. Then I looked at his

chair and found a wooden empty vaccine box kept under the chair adjacent to the loosened leg of the chair.

I could not resist my laughter and asked him,"Doctor! Why do you take risk of using such a chair? You may also inadvertently may sit in the same chair" and further added, "Only today, I realised the usefulness of this wooden box apart from transport of vaccine bottles, these can be used as support to useless chairs also". The Vet did not say anything and kept mum.

To my queries, he told that there would be no scope for inundations from flood waters in that place; he also stated that he had enough vaccine for preventive vaccinations in his area. Then I left for Badvel and visited a few more institutions in villages abetting river Penna on the way. At one place, I was told that concerned Vet, Dr.Subrahmanyam was away to supply food packets to the people marooned in flood waters from river Penna and was likely to return at any moment. The villagers gratefully acknowledged the help rendered by the Vet. They were also narrating that he was the first person to reach out to them. No revenue official or Mandal staff ventured to reach them.

While I was discussing with the farmers a stream of government vehicles arrived at the centre of the village. The Minister for health Dr.Sankkayala Aruna and the local MLA arrived with other officials. I introduced myself and she was at surprise when the villagers narrated about the help rendered by the local Vet out of compassion though it was not his responsibility. Meanwhile the Vet had come and the minister appreciated his efforts.. The minister asked me, "what Animal Husbandry department planned here?". I briefed her, "Madam,the department has already stocked sufficient quantity of vaccines and preventive vaccinations will be taken up once flood waters recede in a day or two, already first aid units are on the job". Then looking at Medical and Health department officials, she asked them their plans and issued some directions and left the village. I stayed that night at Badvel.

Next day I started my tour to some more places prone to flooding on my way back to Hyderabad. The driver suggested an alternate shorter roadway to Hyderabad. I nodded my head in agreement with his idea. Already, it was the fourth day of journey for both of us. Fortunately I did not find any flood threat areas on the way while visiting some of the veterinary institutions.

We reached Mylavaram village by 4 p.m. Dr.Nagraja Pillai,the Assistant Director of that area was also at Veterinary hospital. We discussed about the stock position of vaccines to tackle impending outbreaks erupting from current torrential rains in the area. We reached the Mylavaram dam sight. It was a

picturesque scenario. For a moment I enjoyed the scenic beuty. This dam was a medium irrigation project and constructed across Penna river with the intention of feeding Krishna river water from right bank canal of Srisailam reservoir to this Mylavaram reservoir. The dam was with 24 meters height of earthen bund, about 200 meters in length with thirteen gates providing irrigation to about 50,000 acres of ayacut.

I asked the Assist Director and his Vet to go back to their place when they insisted to see me off at the other end of the bridge. Seeing large number of vehicles in waiting to cross the dam on both the sides I told them, "it should not be a problem, why do you spend time unnecessarily in waiting, please start back to your place". At last they left us once our vehicle was in the que. Vehicles were allowed in groups in one file only as the road was narrow, alternately to either side. Ours was then fourth vehicle and after reaching halfway my driver said, "Sorry sir, I cannot drive further." For a moment I did not understand what he was saying. I looked at him and he repeated apologetically, "Sir, I cannot drive". I did not say anything to him. Meanwhile, drivers of other vehicles following us behind honking their horns repeatedly, shouting, move.. move.

My driver sat like a statue. I asked him," Any problem?. To which he said," No health problem". Two or three drivers came to our vehicle asking what had happened. Our driver said to one of them with shivering voice," Brother, I am unable to drive" and no extra word was coming out of his mouth. Then one of the drivers asked me," "Can I help you", I said, "Yes". Our driver went to back seat and in seven or eight minutes we reached the other end. Then my driver came to driver seat and we thanked that good samaritan profusely and when I offered money, he declined politely and got into his vehicle which followed us behind.

After reaching the other end my driver parking the vehicle at one corner requested me for two minutes time to freshen himself. I advised him to have a tea and something to eat, come leisurely.

I was enjoying the scenario of slow- moving vehicles above and fast-moving water underneath from a distance. In ten minutes, the driver was at the wheel. I did not say anything and kept enjoying scenic beauty of reservoir on the other side for some distance. He himself started saying," "Sir, during my teenage years I used to travel in trucks as assistant to a truck driver. At that time we were crossing this river on the causeway when water level was low. Once when we were crossing as usual there was a flash flood and our heavily loaded truck skidded and we were thrown out; though we were good

swimmers, we could reach the bank only with heavy struggle from the fast swirling flood waters. Luckily we could save ourselves. Half way on the dam, suddenly that scenario came into a mind as a flash after a long gap and with the result I could not muster courage to drive further. Quietly I heard his frightening experience and said calmly," Do not recollect it further, forget about it and drive cautiously".

e. Honest exercise on 'Policy paper'

The severe drought conditions in year 2003 in the state of Andhra pradesh triggered a series of drought mitigation activities during the period. The resultant pressure, the stress we had undergone in the department was a nightmarish experience. We used to go home late never before 10 p.m. Sometimes my team members advise me to go home with an assurance of looking to the the issue of departure of loaded rakes from the fodder resource centres to the designated destinations under the pressure of enquiries pouring in from the designated veterinary officers, revenue authorities, local leaders and the incharge Minister.

Still I remember an incident wherein the Animal Husbandry Minister expressing his disgust for the delays at times. I blurted out emotionally, "Sorry Sir! We cannot do more than this. For the last two months my team never back home before 10 p.m. sometimes spending whole night in the office monitoring the supplies from different places.Can you imagine even my lady vets standing in wagons pleading with labour for loading fodder in the hot sun blazing at 42 to 43 centigrade temperature when they were reluctant. My field vets were going round the farmers for donation of fodder in addition to purchase through tender system. Imagine the plight of my Vets in Cattle camps facing the odds with farmers, in distribution and maintenance.I am sorry Sir, more than this, I am afraid we will not be in a position to do.."

The Principal Secretary pacified me by saying," Dr.Sreeramulu Please don't get frustrated.The Honourable Minister just enquired you about the delay which did not happen earlier. He wanted to know the present status. Please cool down." My Director was looking at us silently.

The Minister said, "Dr.Sreeramulu, I am not complaining. I know but for your department no other department can manage this situation."

I expressed my regret for my emotional outburst. Usually I deal any situation calmly but that evening I bursted out for the first time. That was the first and last. I myself felt bad for my emotional outburst.

After the conclusion of relief operations I was remniscing about corrections to be made in future to handle such situation. So I sat with my team and we had SWOT analysis. Continued the discussions. One glaring difficulty we faced was that the weighed quantity of fodder at the loading point did not reach the destinations. The other thing the analysis made out was handling losses at loading point, unloading point (railheads at both ends) then losses during loading in to transport vehicles from railhead to destination point(the cattle camp site). We tried to make a manual and a policy paper for decision making and operationlisation of fodder supply. Accordingly, a document was made ready. It took a long time for finalisation at different levels of bureaucracy. By that time I retired from Government service. I pursued even after my retirement for sometime and given up, tired off due to lukewarm attitude of the administrative machinery.

f. Green Patch in the Dark

Whenever any State Government pleads with the Central Govt. for financial support for mitigating the affected populace resulting from paucity of rainfall with resultant crop loss and cyclonic storms, damaging the crops and extensive damage of infrastructure, usually a team will be visiting to assess the extent of damages and losses. For two decades I had interactions with such committees from New Delhi.

In 1986, a day before the scheduled visit of the Central Team to Rayalaseema districts, the Joint Director, Chittoor spoke to me on phone about the schedule of the Central Team and advised me to stay at Live Stock Supervisory Unit (LSU), Chintaparthy a roadside village, three kilometres from Voyalpadu town, to show the fodder plots raised by farmers under drought mitigation activity. As advised on the day, I reached Chintaparthy, visited the fodder plots to be shown to the Central Team, a little away our Veterinary institution.

It was already 3 p.m. Just then the Asst.Director, Voyalpadu sent a message that the team was likely to reach the place around 6 p.m. according to Police wireless message passed on to him from the adjacent police station.

In an hour, another message came that the Team was stuck up in Cuddapah district and likely to come by 10 p.m.

I felt tired of waiting, finished my dinner at the hospital itself and lied down on a cot with bed arranged by the Vet and slept for a while. No sign of the Central Team even at 10.30 p.m. Then I requested the VAS, “Dr.Azam! Let us wait near the site itself. They may come at any time.” Then he arranged

a long bench adjacent to the plot on the roadside bund to lie down. The farmer arranged two petromax lights to make the fodder plots visible. I slept on the bench with my briefcase under my head in place of a pillow.

Listening to the sound of a Police siren from a distance I got up and the time was 12.30 a.m. Rushed to the road point and guided the Central Team and other district officers to the fodder plots with Petromax lights and explained, "Sirs! These two fodder plots, ten cents each, are example of our efforts to mitigate the fodder shortage in partnership with dairy farmers with scarcely available residual moisture.This will not meet the entire demand but supplement a part of the requirement. Peculiarity of this district is that the landholdings are very small compared to Cuddapah district.You can see such green patches in the midst of large grey dried lands due to paucity of rain fall this season here."

The Team was listening to me patiently with interest.The accompanying state Relief Commissionerr standing besides me scratching my arms whispering to me to stop my explanation as the Team had to rush-up to Tirumala Hills for ' Suprabhat Darshan' after resting for a while.

The Team leader appreciating me, posed a few more questions before entering into his car. This midnight visit to the green patch under Petromax lights remained one of the lasting memories in my career.

g. The Sun and ...

Ever wonder why sunlight appears mostly in hues of red, yellow and orange?

By our human standards, the Sun is extremely old, large, and hot. This Sun accounts for about 99.9 percent of all of the mass in the solar system. Given, its role as the crucial source of energy for Earth, life, and determining the location and movements of everything else in the solar system the Sun is indispensable for the life forms. Almost, all the energy on earth ultimately comes from the sun. It was the sun that radiated energy that grew the organisms whose fossils we now burn. ln a sense the fossil fuels are congealed sun light. It is no accident that 'Book of Genesis' identifies light with creation and the 'Book of John' links it to life. More than 5000 years back, the 'Vedas' described several forms of energy linked to sun, human, animal and plants. It should not surprise us that more than a few cultures have regarded the Sun as a supernatural God worthy of worship.

Even today one can see many of the Indians especially Hindus worshipping the sun in the early morning and there is a scientific bearing in worshipping

the sun as he is the giver of food, energy, light, rains for all animals and living kingdom on earth. Without the Sun there is no life on earth. Modern physics admits that the Sun is source of all energy.

Saying this in my introductory presentation on" Indian livestock and livelihood improvement" to participants from 12 Asian countries at the National Institute of Agricultural Extension (MANAGE) Institute in Hyderabad in 2006, I posed a question to the participants, "Can you visualise the scenario of the world when all the cows and buffaloes go on strike for one day refusing to let down their milk?" I continued," kindly ponder over this question". Meanwhile with reference to my introductory "Sun", the question was" Can anyone visualise the scenario, if Sun goes on a holiday just for one day?".

The participants, for a while looked at me, seeing me smiling they looked at each other. It was one.. two minutes...nobody was opening his/her mouth. With loud voice I said, "catastrophe" with a pregnant pause I repeated 'catastrophe'.

In Indian scenario the milk production was by millions of farmers from rural areas dependant on agriculture as well, unlike industrialised production system in Western side of globe. Milk was the primary source of nutrition for the people here and secondary source of income for millions of rural families. The Sun and the milk were intertwined in our culture.

Explaining that India was once a sleeping giant with rich livestock resources with world rankings and natural resources, with robust infrastructure and human resources, now racing ahead in milk production, egg and meat production. Coming back to my earlier query,narrating my experience, I explained," Once the President of India was at Tirupati, a pilgrimage town; the personal secretary to the President of India cautioned me that the milk should be ready by 4 a.m by the time the President wakes up as he immediately sips bed tea and things move forward smoothly, otherwise whole day, we all would feel disturbed and nothing moves forward". This was the same thing with many of the senior bureaucrats with responsibility of governance with the habit of early morning sipping of coffee. Whole country would be standstill" I stopped and the whole gathering was in roar of laughter for a minute. I continued my presentation.



16. Four (wives) and One (hubby)

My Professor of Epidemiology was a little naughty and liked by all the students. On the very first day he told Four and One is very important in epidemiology. We students were looking at him pondering over what this 'Four' and One' was?. Then he explained 'four' is four wives and óne' is one husband. Now we were more confused. Our Professor disclosed," Four Wives means….What?, Where?, When? and Why? and the Husband is How?. These four Ws and one H are very important in epidemiological investigations by and large". We heaved a sigh of relief.

a. The Anthrax scare

After the episode of the collapse of twin towers in terrorist attack on 11th september, 2001' in USA, the scare of anthrax threat by loony Islamic jihadis was looming in USA and many European countries. There was just a mention of bioterrorism with microbes when I was a student of Veterinary medicine with stray historical incidents.

One day in 2002, my colleague, Dr. Nissar Hussain, Additional Director(Health) requested me to accompany him for a meeting with Health Directorate officials at AP. Secretariat, in the chambers of Health Minister, the next day.

I pleaded with him, "Dr.Nissar, I may not be in a position to attend as I have to attend a meeting at the same time on cyclone relief measures with the Animal Husbandry Minister at the Secretariat".

He insisted that I should attend the meeting as our AH Minister was also joining the same meeting with the Health minister.

After a brief meeting with the AH minister, I joined my colleague in the conference room of health minister. I greeted already assembled Director General of Health(DGH), Director of Health(communicable disease) and other health department officials whom I meet frequently during state level meetings. The health minister was still in her chambers and sent word that she was waiting for AH minister and join in ten minutes. My colleague was whispering to me seeking my opinion whether to show the album with photographs of human cases of anthrax in Chittoor district to the health minister; I told him, "Show them to her, why hesitation?"

I over heard the conversation of the DGH with his officers across the table.; he was asking "What is this anthrax?, Do we have record of any anthrax cases?". Politely, intervening in their discussion, I requested him, "Can I respond to your queries on Anthrax disease?" The DGH, said, "Yes please". My Director and other colleagues were looking at me.

And I told my medical colleagues, "Anthrax do occur in our state in animals sporadically in a few districts and my field VAS can easily diagnose the anthrax case tentatively by symptomatology and he can do confirmative diagnosis in ten minutes with blood smear examination from tip of the ear with Leishman's stain technique".

With a question mark in his face the DGH asked me, "Are you sure?" When I was about to speak, the health minister and AH minister came in to mini conference hall. The health minister said," I have interrupted you when something was being discussed please continue". I said, "No madam, just I was explaining how we deal with diagnosis of anthrax in animals?" Immediately the AH minister said, "Yes our Veterinary Department has tackled this issue in Chittoor, Anantapur and Nellore districts". Turning towards our Director, the AH minister asked, "Why don't you show the album with photographs of human anthrax cases in Chittoor district?". Then Dr.Nissar, Additional director passed on the album to the Health Minister.

After going through the album, the health minister looking at the DGH asked, "How is that animal husbandry department has got the record of human anthrax cases and the health department did not have any information on that". The DGH was looking at his Director(communicable diseases). The director was attempting to say something and the health minister interrupted him by asking them, "Do you have any record with your department". They kept mum; everybody was silent. The health minister was expressing her impatience and unpleasantness in her face. The AH minister did not say anything. I looked into all the ten faces gathered there and everybody was silent.

I raised my hand, looking at me the Health Minister asked, "Do you want to say something?"

Nodding my head I humbly replied, "Madam in our AH department, anthrax disease is a notifiable disease, so our field staff report the incidence and take up prophylactic measures as per the guidelines. I have no idea about the status of anthrax disease in medical department; with reference to record of human cases with our department, out of professional interest, as it was a public health hazard that too the incidence was in subjects associated

with carcase handling especially skins and hides, we maintained this record for publicity and awareness purpose. At this juncture, I should acknowledge the help rendered by the Microbiology department of both Veterinary college and S.V.Medical college and Ruia General Hospital authorities at Tirupati. Of late, every year cutaneous anthrax cases are being reported in Araku area of Visakhapatnam district both in humans and septicaemic anthrax in goats and sheep. This is established both by VBRI, Hyderabad and King George Hospital (KGH) and Microbiology dept of Visakhapatnam Medical College. Investigations are suggestive of handling of raw skins after slaughter and eating of meat of affected sheep and goats are the exciting causes."

I continued, "Madam! Tribals have the habit of eating dried meat.Even in Rayalaseema district dried meat is a delicacy. It is difficult to eliminate anthrax spores even in sun-dried marinated meat. Another risk is when the carcase is opened the organisms spread widely in the area and it is difficult to eliminate the anthrax spores from the environment. There are records to prove that the spores can remain in soil even for 70 to 80 years and more. In suspected cases of anthrax in animals postmortem examination is not permissible. There were a few incidences of dismissal of errant Veterinarians in British era. Unfortunately, the awareness status is ashamedly very low. Way back one hundred years ago (May,15,1919) itself England passed anthrax bill empowering prohibition of importation of goods infected with Anthrax, compulsory disinfection of wool, similar goods and establishment of State units for disinfection of goods at importer's cost. Those days the state disinfection station costed about forty thousand pounds. A process for effectively eliminating anthrax germs and spores without affecting quality of the material had been discovered".

Added further, "Madam, we should be happy that the cases recorded are only mild 'cutaneous form' which was amenable to narrow spectrum antibiotics probably that could be a reason for non-seriousness. As of now we do not have 'pneumonic form' cases in humans. if it is pneumonic form it will be a severe threat. But in animals it is mostly septicaemic and at times it is per-acute".

To the Health Minister's query about vaccination for the general population at risk, I repled, "Madam! To my knowledge till today, only American Army Personnel have Anthrax vaccine shots in the world. Nowhere else vaccine is used and it is not available for general public". Saying thanks to Minister I concluded.

Then the meeting went for another 45 minutes on tackling human and animal anthrax in the state. After the meeting we came out of the room. The

DGH, coming to my side said, "Thank you doctor for timely intervention and avoiding unpleasant situation". I smiled at him saying, "goodbye sir".

While reminiscing this incidence I felt that we do not always make rational distinction between what is likely to kill us or our animals and what is likely to hurt us, scare us or simply make us uncomfortable. As a result we don't make rational decisions about where to put our resources, where to direct our policy and frankly, where to direct our fear.

b. The Bullet That Never Fails

The so called 'street' dogs were a menace in semi-urban and urban areas and in villages sometimes play havoc in transmission of rabies disease. A rabid dog was a public health threat in any place. Still, vividly, I remember some of my friends succumbing to rabid dog bites during their return trip to their homes in nearby villages three to five kilo-meters distance from school in the evenings. With no medical aid coupled with blind faith in unproven non-medical rural practices like tying talisman, squeezing sap of bitter-gourd leaves, still worse thrashing the victim with leather shoes at the site of bite and other types of sorcery in 1950s.

It is difficult to get reliable picture on dog bites of either human or animals in our country. Most incidents of dogs biting people are from the dog's point of view understandable. The dog is responding to behavioural imperatives dictated by the human pack. In Indian rural scenario or even in some cities dogs act as police frightening the burglers away at night. Mostly children may become injured when they get in the way of dogs that are keyed up in fight or mate.

In our science text of sixth standard, we had a lesson on Louis Pasteur as the scientist who struggled hard and produced rabies vaccine which saved many lives. In his honour every year 'world zoonoses day' is celebrated on every July 6, the day on which Louis Pasteur administered first Anti-rabies vaccine in the year 1885 in Paris.

The Year 1995, exacItly in the centenary year of Pasteur's first anti-rabies shot, I felt elated visiting Pasteur's laboratory and his tomb in the campus of Pasteur Institute in Paris. The French had high regard for him; the underground metro railway station was named after 'Pasteur' and the road leading to the institute is 'Rue Pasteur' a great tribute to a scientist.

Even today I did not forget the statement of my Professor of Veterinary Preventive Medicine, Dr.G.Narasimha Murthy, the rabies virus, a bullet shaped virus never fails and no escape from death, either for an animal or a

human; the death is certain, he repeatedly asserted. For us students it was a fun watching our Professor examining dogs attending out-patient ward of our college clinic. He used to wear gloves, repeatedly question the pet-owner whether the dog was vaccinated or not. After repeated reassurance only our Professor start explaining us about the case. He always cautioned us to look at every dog as a rabid and then proceed with the case study. During Fourth year of our B.V.Sc course we visited Pasteur's Institute at Coonoor, then Madras state which was the only institute producing Anti-rabies vaccine in our country for both medical and veterinary use in 1968. Still I vividly remember seeing a dog suspected of carrier of rabies virus for the first time according to the scientists there.

As a District Diagnostic Laboratory in-charge, whenever I indented for anti-rabies vaccine(ARV) from my production unit in VBRI, Hyderabad I used to get hardly two or three course doses only. A post-exposure course for cattle was fourteen injections of 30 ml quantity and for dogs it was also fourteen injections but with 10 ml quantity. The vaccine was free as any other vaccine. This was Semple's vaccine from sheep brain tissue. The supply was very undependable in 1970s. So with the consent of the animal owners, we used to indent for ARV from Pasteur Institute, Coonoor in Tamil Nadu state with advance payment of the cost.

An incident that happened in 1973 was still fresh in my memory. That day an attender of a Minor Veterinary Dispensary(MVD)',Patharlapally of Srikaulam district came to my laboratory to take delivery of vaccines for use in the villages of MVD and was found in tears while taking the vaccines from my laboratory technician. Observing that, I asked him what had happened to him and reasons for his tears?. He started weeping at an high pitch with sudden outburst uncontrollably. Slowly consoling him, when I probed further, he came out that his nine year-old son was bitten by a rabid dog three days back. His VAS contacted medical officer of Primary Health Centre(PHC), in turn the medical officer contacted his colleagues in other centres and at district hospital and even regional hospital at Visakhapatnam for antirabies vaccine (ARV) and all the efforts proved futile. ARV was not available even in the market. I could understand his agony. I knew the consequences of rabid dog bite.

Suddenly it flashed in my mind why not try ARV intended for dogs from VBRI. Luckily, I had two courses of ARV with me. In the worst case what could happen in the face of grave prognosis lurking as of now? I thought for a while. Unexpectedly, the concerned VAS, Dr.A.Rama Rao came to me on his way back to his place. Looking at his attender he asked him about vaccines

delivery to which the attender said, "Got all the vaccines you have indented, sir, I will also accompany you."

Hesitantly, I suggested to my colleague about using ARV from VBRI as an alternative in 'no chance scenario' of ARV from Medical stores. He expressed his doubt. I explained to him about the process of production and convinced him to take a chance when all doors were closed and also advised him to take the advice of Medical officer at his place. Spoke to the attender (Mr.Somalingam) and he agreed to my suggestion. I gave him the vaccine.

Mr.Somalingam, the MVD attender informed me, on his subsequent visit to my laboratory," Sir, by the grace of the God, now my son is attending to school happily. I am grateful to you for your timely help and emotional support." I felt relieved.

Even today, I question myself whether I was right ethically in advising ARV intended for dogs to his son at that time.

I was organising 'zoonoses day' on every 6th July in a special way not as a routine ritual by conducting awareness campaigns targeting rural primary school boys and girls with slide shows and video shows and film shows on rabies in collaboration with some NGOs, print media and visual media. I made it a point to visit schools, colleges and talk to budding citizens with a focus on rabies.

Though my tenure was only one year at Nellore, with the support of NGOs and willing cooperation of district administration and field Vets organised Animal Birth Control programmes both with chemical and surgical techniques. In 1990s intratesticular injection of zinc gluconate solution was available in the market but the results were vexing as per the practising Vets and pet owners. My idea was to bring about awareness among general public about the need for control of rabies disease. In a hard way, I realised such isolated activities would not yield a perceptible impact.

It was a mind boggling figure of 20,000 plus deaths resulting from rabies in India every year. More than sixty percent of the victims were children. Every year eighteen million people were exposed to dog bites. A pathetic scenario even in 21st century.

During my short stay in Netherlands, I visited Animal Research facility at Lelystad. I was wonderstruck to see such a huge research facility in such a small country. Another surprising aspect for me was that the research faculty earn fifty percent of their annual salary from the patents and royalties from their research output, products and consultancies. way back in 1990s.

Earlier I never heard of such things in India. After going round two research departments, the Professor of Veterinary Public Health hosted me lunch.

During lunch time conversation, he asked me with a surprise," Dr.Piedy, I heard that still several people die of rabies in your country?" With his query, I looked at myself for a moment. I realised that I was in my suite and neck tie but not in the garb of primitive man in forest. I recovered from my daze, replied with very high sigh," Yes Professor, my country is so big in size with a high animal and human population in millions spread across wide area, we are struggling hard to contain the disease". He did not say anything further. Heart in heart, I felt terribly ashamed.

Unfortunately, in our country, rabies was not a notifiable disease; no mechanism for systematic surveillance was in place. Only a few diagnostic facilities were available in the country. Personally, I feel a total lack of ownership and leadership in rabies control in our country. Eliminating rabies is therefore key to sustainably preventing human rabies if we can cover seventy per cent of dogs with prophylactic vaccinations to stop transmission. Investing in rabies elimination saves and strengthen both human and veterinary health systems. Rabies disproportionately affects poor and rural communities.

During my tenure as Additional Director, I made a few earnest efforts to develop a system involving Animal Husbandry Department, Medical and Health department, Municipal administration and some NGOs. Unfortunately these attempts did not move forward except for a few meetings at top level. In one of the meetings, the Principal Secretary of Animal Husbandry department view point and a prominent active NGO involved in Animal birth control programmes ended in wordly dual when the Secretary commented," How do you understand the plight of children going to schools on foot and your children go to school in air-conditioned cars and 'Five star hotel' discussions would not yield any positive results.

My former Director, Dr.Krishn Ashrith often used to say, unless the daughter or son of Prime Minister or President of the India was the victim of rabid dog bite nothing moves in our country to put a check on rabies menace. I could understand that he did not mean what he stated but it was a statement out of frustration at the Indian scenario.

c. The Deceptive disease-a public health hazard

That was in 1980, the Joint Director, Deputy Directors and we Asst.Directors were chit-chatting waiting for Dr.V.Narayana Rao, the Director

of Animal Husbandry at state guest house in Kurnool. Sun was already set on the West and slowly darkness started spreading and a car appeared at the gate. We all got up and proceeded towards the car. The Managing Director of APSCCFC, Ms. Sujatha Rao came out of the car and the driver led her into her suite. After fifteen minutes she came out and sat alone in the lobby of the guest house. Watching her sitting alone, I went to her, greeted her and introduced myself. Reciprocating my greetings she requested me to sit and started enquiring about animal husbandry departmental programmes. She appreciated the performance of poultry complexes and dairy units which helped her clientele and was suggesting some measures to improve veterinary services. I explained her about paucity of budgetary allocations to the department from the government and department need financial support from corporation to improve the quality of services. She said, "Dr.Sreeramulu, put a word to your Director to send proposals to the corporation and I will always be ready to extend such support for improvement of livelihoods of my clientele." I was with her for about twenty minutes, meanwhile, the Executive Director and his team came in a hurry and expressed their apologies to her for their delayed arrival. She said, "Don't mind, Dr.Sreeramulu, gave me company and discussed about animal husbandry activities". I took leave of her saying, "Madam, we are awaiting our Director. She said" Nice, I will speak to him at dinner time about funding issues, thank you Dr.Sreeramulu."

I was back to my group, just then the DAH arrived. The DAH greeted the MD and reciprocating, the MD told the DAH," Dr.Sreeramulu briefed me about some tips for improving veterinary services to Scheduled Caste beneficiaries. As you are also here today, I will discuss with you at dinner time". Saying this she went to another hall to discuss with her officials. The DAH looked at me appreciatively.

The DAH expressing his regrets for the delay on the way, asked all the Farm officers to assemble in the conference hall in fifteen minutes.The DAH looking at me asked to join in the review meeting of cattle farms in the district. Reviewing the status of Govt. Livestock Farm at Mahanandi, the DAH asked the Asst.Director, Dr.B.Nagabhushana Rao about brucellosis disease status in the farm. The officer replied that it was under control. DAH, shot back," What do you mean by under control?"; the officer replied, "No incidence of abortion, sir", and added, "Proposals are already sent to Directorate for culling of positive animals." The DAH with a little impatience retorted," For twenty years, as a farm officer, I did the same thing"; all other officers in chorus said that was the only practice to be followed. Then the DAH questioned, "Do we have to continue the same practice? or do something different?"

I got up. "Dr.Sreeramulu, do you have something to say? Speak out", asked my DAH.

"Sir, if I am correct, all these years culling means, in case of bulls, we are castrating them and cows, we are treating them and getting rid off them from the farm by auction, releasing them in to public; but we are not serious about what is happening to these culled animals in free range livestock system. Personally, I feel it is an unscientific and unethical practice. Castration and clinical treatment do not eliminate all the brucella organisms because of possibility of intracellular parasitism; there is likelihood of relapse of the disease. Unfortunately, we do not have any largescale field-oriented research studies. The only practice in other countries is destruction of affected animals. We should have such policy, at least for farm animals and breeding stations. Unfortunately, we do not have a mass vaccination strategy for control of brucellosis. Our medical brethren do not know about human brucellosis at all. In our country bovine brucellosis data is limited to a few studies".

One of the senior Farm officers commented," It is difficult to get the value of the destroyed cattle 'written off' by the government".

I tried to convince the gathering, "For control of brucellosis, a public health hazard, it is scientific necessity to destroy the affected animals, if not the whole farm will be affected endangering the health of farm workers slowly posing a threat to public health also; 'writing off' the value of animals is an administrative procedure. We have to convince the administrators like Govt. Secretaries and if necessary political leadership also."

Everybody was looking at me in surprise at my insistence. The DAH interrupted,"Yes, Dr.Sreeramulu, I agree with your argument. So far nobody was serious about the issue and no attempt was made till now in that direction as far as I know. Now we will do it. The DAH asked the Farm Incharge "Keep all those affected and suspected cattle aloof in isolation. I will try to convince the concerned officers in the Government to this effect".

In December,1981, I left Kurnool for my Ph.D programme. My colleague, the farm in-charge wrote a letter informing me that twenty two culled animals were destroyed under his personal supervision soon after getting the orders to that effect. It had become a policy in govt. farms in Andhra Pradesh since then.

My Professor, M.S.Sethi at G.B.Pant University of Agriculture Technology, Pantnagar often reminded us to be extra careful while handling Brucella cultures during my post-graduate studies; he was a victim of Brucella infection and childless. I still remember during my stay at Pantnagar Prof.

M.S.Sethi in one of his visits to University General Hospital as officer in-charge of health services, advising the Medical Officer to send serum samples of a chronic patient to our laboratory. When tested the sample showed very high titres of brucella antibodies suggestive of high-grade infection. The Medical Officer had no idea of brucellosis and he was treating him with all sorts of antibiotics frequently since six months. Though brucellosis was one of the important zoonotic diseases not much was known about human brucellosis those days.

One of my senior colleague, Dr.Y.Sankar Rao, Asst.Director, succumbed to brucellosis. I know another Vet who worked with me and retired as Joint Director, Dr.Hyder Ali also succumbed to complications of brucellosis.

Another colleague of mine, Dr.P.V.Ramachandra Rao after his retirement worked with medical disease diagnostic laboratories; he continued his studies on human brucellosis apart from his field studies in animal brucellosis during his career in government service. He used to share his experiences with human brucellosis; peripheral joint ailments with one or other orthopaedic complications such as spondylitis, synovitis and arthritis cases were diagnosed as chronic brucellosis with in some epididymitis, orchitis with complaint of scrotal pain. I saw him advising people with back-ach or arthritis to go for brucellosis screening.

In our country eighty percent of people were in contact with domestic animals and wild-life; accidental risk factors for zoonotic disease transmission was more. Yet true incidence of human brucellosis was unknown in this country. A limited study by VBRI, Hyderabad revealed a sero-prevalence of 2.8 percent in Vets and para-vets numbering 3500 individuals in the department.

The tactics used to get rid of Brucellosis in livestock have been similar to Tuberculosis— with good vaccine, good enough not only to protect cows, but also inflict collateral damage to the Vets who accidentally injected themselves while trying to push the vaccine in to unhappy cattle. How important is brucellosis? It depends on what criteria we are using. Who gets sick is as important as how many.

I feel my younger colleagues should take the lead to innovative approaches to control bovine brucellosis. Due to India's governmental ban on cattle slaughter, compulsory notification of bovine abortions and mass vaccination campaigns within areas of high disease prevalence are very important.

One fact I have observed throughout my career is that what gets counted is what gets acted upon. Therefore I have always stressed disease surveillance,

the science of finding and counting cases. This is critical. If we don't know about a disease or outbreak, we can't do anything about it.

No vaccination for humans and high rate of initial treatment failures and relapse rates make clinical management particularly difficult. Brucellosis control in humans depends on movement of animal reservoirs. I feel, the dynamic process within zoonotic disease transmission demands "One Health" approach. Trans-disciplinary collaboration among the human, animal and environmental health sciences was critical in addressing the issue.

d. The Crippling Malady

During 1980s and 1990s the incidence of Japanese Encephalitis(JE) was more intense though it was sporadic in 1950s, In Andhra Pradesh state, I got the opportunity of participation in some of the technical meetings of both Medical and Veterinary Scientists and Practitioners at district and state levels and national forums as well. I also joined in some of the discussions in public forums. As the disease crippled the young children more than deaths, public were more agitated at the periodic outbreaks of the disease.

The natural culprits are the mosquito, pig and the migratory bird. The epidemiology suggests that the incidence was more in poorer sections of rural as well as urban areas. Municipal Department blames the pigs as the sole root cause for promotion of mosquito breeding. The health department complains against both mosquito and pigs. The Forest department looks at the sky. All put together blame the Animal Husbandry Department for not restraining the pigs. Animal Husbandry department shows it hands off as the issue is more complex. At every high level meeting more or less the discussions were in similar fashion except the figures of affected children, number died, number survived, number of districts affected, number of samples collected, varying.

That day Mr.Chandrababu Naidu, the then Chief minister(CM) was serious and said," We have to take some policy decisions and invited for some suggestions from the group". During suggestion session, suddenly the CM interrupted and asked the Secretary, social welfare department, "How many families live on pig rearing"? The answer he got was about five lakh families mostly in Rayalaseema and Coastal Andhra districts. The next query was "Why can't we eliminate pigs totally and help all the five lakh families with some alternate livelihoods in place of pig-rearing".

Everybody including Principal Secretary, Animal Husbandry and my Director said 'yes'. The Principal Conservator of Forests commented, "Very

"nice idea sir". The Secretary, Municipal Aminsstration lauded, "Great idea Sir". Personally I could not convince myself with the idea. Some more suggestions were made on control measures like import of vaccine, equipping the laboratories for sero-surveillance, sero-monitoring and diagnosis, drugs supply etc. That went on for another forty minutes. The CM looked around readying to conclude the meeting.

I could not resist my temptation to speak out and I raised my hand. My Pincipal Secretary pulled my shirt from behind to keep me stay quiet. The CM watched this, and told my Secretary, "No, no let him say what he wants to say". Everybody was looking at me.

The CM asked me," Doctor please speak out".

I requested, "Sir I need two minutes",

C.M said," Do not worry about time, you please carry on".

Then I said," Sir before taking the decision of elimination of pigs we should not forget about the 'survival strategy' of any species, microbes or viruses in nature. Thank God till now the JE virus has chosen pigs only as a host that too as a multiplier host. More than adult pigs, young pigs pose a greater threat. One has to understand this phenomenon. The virus multiplies in young pigs and carried to children by mosquito bites. Unfortunately we blame the poor big which cannot defend itself. Mostly mosquitoes cannot spread virus from adult pig because of thick fat layer under its skin Already in some districts like Kadapa and Anantapur the over enthusiastic Collectors issued orders to shoot down scavenging pigs asking AHD personnel to assist the police in identification of localities, a pathetic scenario where as the Karimnagar Collector took sympathetic but effective measures to keep pigs a little away from human dwellings. Continuing… I said, "Sir, we have to thank our stars that the JE virus takes temporary shelter in pigs, if such pigs are eliminated, the virus tries to adapt to some other species, say cattle, sheep or goats not immediately but after a few years or decades. We cannot create such situation for the future generations. I am saying about the possible potential risk, The natural history of these diseases tell us that our struggle is not a war or if it is a war, against ourselves. The microbes are all around us, in us, and in our animal companions on this planet. The biggest chink in our armour may be lack of clinical surveillance and rapid detection. Thank you sir for giving me this opportunity to speak out about the threat."

Listening patiently, after a pause, the CM said, "I have to thank you for the information. We politicians and people with responsibilities of governance,

how can we know about all these intricacies—unless professional experts like you brief us".

Thanking the CM, I informed, "Our state has unique feature of having an exclusive laboratory dedicated to sero-monitoring and serosurveillance of Japanese Encephalitis disease in Veterinary Biological Research Institute as a joint project with medical department with scientists from both the departments working together in this laboratory on deputation".

e. Diamonds on pigs

In June,1990, Dr.C.Rama Rao, Assistant Director of Pig Breeding Station (PBS) at Vizianagaram during a conversation on phone complained about a few deaths in pigs the farm and requested me to visit his farm when I happen to come that side. I promised him to visit his farm on my return journey from my camp that evening. That farm was a little away from the town at a trijunction, the main road leading to Visakhapatnam city and a smaller road leading to Thatipudi reservoir and Araku valley.

I could make it to his farm that evening and he briefed that since three days weaners(young pigs) were dying; I requested him to show if any fresh cases were there. The Vet. of the farm informed that about ten minutes back a weaner was found dead and there were many cases of fresh attacks. We all went into post-mortem room. Looking at the carcase, I told my colleague," Dear Dr.Rama Rao! you have diamonds on your weaner". He looked at me stary and I repeated," diamonds on the carcase". Observing his puzzled look, I explained to him showing the diamond shaped urticaria on the rumps, back and shoulders of the weaner, the condition could be 'Erysepelas infection'. I asked him to show me laboratory investigation reports. On verification of reports I could not see any attempt to look for Erysepelas infection. Washing my hands, I asked the Vet. not to open the carcase till the laboratory(AHC) Vet. comes. I requested my colleague to put a word to AHC to come immediately to collect post-mortem materials from the fresh carcase.

I was discussing with the Asst.Director in his room. On hearing sound of motor cycle I asked the farm Vet.to put a word to the AHC staff to see me for a while. The Vet from AHC came to me. I enquired him, "What he is suspecting about the cause of these fatalities since last three days?". The AHC Vet. told me, "Sir, we have examined skin scrapings also and we could not see anything". Smiling at him, I requested him to collect heart blood into nutrient broth tubes or blood Agar plates if available and look for any Gram positive rods(bacilli).

Next day on my way to railway station to board the train for Madras to attend a three week summer institute on 'Biotechnology applications in veterinary science' I stopped at the AHC (laboratory) and enquired about growth of bacterial culture of heart blood of weaner. The laboratory Vet. showed me stained smear of culture under microscope. Congratulating the laboratory Vet. for successful demonstration of pure culture showing gram positive, slightly bent thin bacilli, suggestive of Erysipelothrix sp. from heart blood culture advised him to send the cultures to VBRI, Hyderabad for confirmation. From the AHC (laboratory) I spoke to Asst.Director PBS and suggested him to start immediately injectable Penicillin to all the herd and follow strict sanitary measures and left for railway station.

Knowing that I was back home after three weeks, my colleague, Dr.C.Rama Rao was at my home that evening of the same day and profusely thanked me for my timely advice in saving the herd of PBS. He also narrated about the visit of Disease Investigation Officer from VBRI, Hyderabad and suggesting nothing.

One week later I sat leisurely with all the available data and other information to write a field research article on this episode. To my surprise, I found that there was only one publication in India in 1941 on the incidence of Erysepelosis in pigs. Ours was the second one in 1990. My experience at AHC Vijayawada for two years from 1975 to 1977 with piggery farms had helped me to solve this problem.

f. Hot zone in the Heartland

One day in 2016 during a google search about current status of FMD in India, I happened to see an online news item that Andhra Pradesh had become the first state in the country to be declared free from FMD with no reported new cases of FMD in the last two years. The source quoted that notification was issued to that effect under subsection (5) of section (6) of the Prevention and control of Infectious and contagious diseases in animals act, 2009. If Andhra Pradesh State continued to maintain this zero reporting for another five years the state would be declared free from FMD" I do not know how such important issue was published without following set protocols of World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

One of the major problems, I think, anybody who was working in government service now a days faces a piquant situation as to how to inform the public in a neutral way, particularly by tabloid papers that make their own headlines and had no real interest in the facts.

My tryst with FMD was way back in 1972. On complaints from adjacent villages of Srikakulam town I visited some villages on my bicycle along with another colleague. In Dusipeta village, some women were complaining that young suckling calves were dying suddenly with no sign of any disease symptoms. On door to door verification, it was found that most of the cows had mouth lesions and a few with foot lesions. On further probing the villagers said that this ailment, 'Gaali Kuntu'(means disease that spreads through wind in local slang) was not new to them but they were worried about death of suckling calves which they had never experienced earlier. Subsequently the field staff were sending reports about the incidence from several villages in the district. We were helpless as enough vaccine was not available except for palliative treatment to reduce severity of tongue and foot lesions. Advised to wean away suckling calves and feed alternatives or at least boiled milk to calves. To relieve the affected animals especially crossbred milch cows and costly work bullocks from panting, Eltroxin tablets was prescribed for those who could afford. FMD was playing havoc with farmers in terms of morbidity and in general farmers were never in panic because of negligible deaths among adult cattle and buffaloes in 1970s. But farmers with cross-bred cows and graded buffaloes experienced the pinch due to loss of milk production and farmers with bullocks also were at loss of work-hours.

Looking at my senior colleague Dr.C.Krishna Murthy, Veterinarian, Bull Semen station, Srikakulam, getting tired of injecting about 40 ml of FMD vaccine subcutaneously at brisket region of the breeding bulls numbering about twenty, I volunteered to assist him; he politely said, "No, Dr.Sreeramulu, these bulls have acquaintance with me, though the injection is painful because of large volume, they are cooperating with me; you are new to the bulls and they may get agitated and restless." He further added," I am more perturbed about quality and quantity of semen from the bulls on next semen collection day based on my earlier experience".

I was wondering why such a large quantity of vaccine (killed infected tongue vesicular and epithelial cells) from Indian Veterinary Research Institute. No other vaccine was available in market in early 1970s.

More than ten years of blood, sweat and tears involving much laboratory work and field trials in various countries, it was clearly understood that the inherent high rate of mutation in the FMD virus genome was an insurmountable obstacle in the development of reliable 'safe' (emphasize the word 'safe') and highly immunogenic vaccines. Even today this fact holds good. Subsequently in 1990s, the continuous cell line (BHK21) FMD

inactivated vaccine technology revolutionised the FMD control programme in France, Germany, Netherlands and other countries.

I recollect back my memory of watching a 16mm film on the worst FMD epidemic of the twentieth century in England(1967) when I was in Fifth and final year of my Bachelor of Veterinary Science course in 1969 at my alma mater,Tirupati. At that time it was a ghastly scene for us to watch more than 4,50,000 cattle being shot dead. My Professor of Medicine explained us that slaughter policy was the only choice to prevent spread of the epidemic those days as there was no enough stocks of vaccine for undertaking preventive vaccination campaign. The dynamics of livestock trade markedly changed since 1967 epidemic. Till then England was boasting itself that their island topography with strict quarantine regulations they could prevent import of diseases from outside.

The pride was shattered by 1967 epidemic from outside. After Thirty four years of gap, still worst catastrophe, FMD outbreaks shattered the economy of England in 2001. A mind-boggling number, six million cattle were destroyed.

In 2001, I was in state directorate and memorising my experiences with FMD in state of Andhra Pradesh. FMD was endemic in our country since 1864. No serious efforts were made to combat the disease though the country's estimated loss was about rupees twenty thousand crores annually resulting from FMD outbreaks. I was recollecting my experiences in Rinderpest eradication programme. Similar efforts might have helped at least to control FMD if not eradication. Of course, there was a lot of difference between these two diseases.

Actually, FMD control programme was launched only in 2003-04 with an aim of creating disease free zones (DFZ) through progressive control pathway (PCP). In the first stage, fifty four districts in eight states of India were selected during Tenth five year plan based on epidemiological data obtained from more than thirty five years covering population of thirty million cattle and buffaloes. In the second stage one hundred sixty districts were taken up. In areas where vaccination was taken up substantial drop in the disease incidence was observed. In our country and other FMD endemic nations, policies for management of quarantine zones after FMD outbreaks were often variable based on convention rather than scientific data.

In 2003, a delegation from Malaysia visited India exploring the possibility of importation of sheep and goat meat. The delegation visited Hyderabad also to acquaint themselves with the status of livestock diseases prevalent in

Andhra Pradesh province from our directorate of animal husbandry. My colleague had explained about disease status and the delegation had sought some clarifications about the monitoring mechanism.

Intervening, I clarified that this state had well set disease surveillance, sero-surveillance and sero-monitoring and laboratory diagnostic systems with able veterinarians and scientists handling these operations. The last query was about FMD prevalence. Confidently it was asserted that FMD do occur but well managed by containment ring vaccinations. I asked the delegation about FMD incidence in their country to which they said, FMD was endemic in their country; they import about forty five thousand tonnes of sheep and goat meat from Australia and live sheep from Indonesia every year.

Back to 1990s in Vizianagaram district visiting some veterinary hospitals, I was at Veterinary Dispensary, Garividi. The local veterinarian, Dr.K.B.Venkata Rao, informed me that five days back a few milch buffaloes were purchased from weekly market at Tuni town and distributed to farmers and requested me to visit the village. He took me to that village ten kilo-meters away from the place on his motorcycle, where I interacted with farmers and they were very much satisfied with the quality of animals. About fifteen animals were distributed in the village. I visited each of the fifteen households and found four animals with drooling saliva and rise of rectal temperatures. When mouths were examined vesicles were found leading to suspicion of FMD. The veterinarian explained that at the time of purchase and observation for two days, they were found apparently healthy and FMD vaccine was kept ready to vaccinate them in next two days.

I asked the Veterinarian not to vaccinate them as they were already showing symptoms and others may be under incubation; advised farmers on palliative measures to be taken up. The veterinarian requested me to visit another village. I said, "No, and requested him to drop me at Cheepurupalli bus stand to board the bus to Vizianagaram as I knew the outcome. I reached home by eight in the evening. After dinner, prepared a note of suggestion to be sent to field officers to stop going to cattle markets for purchase of animals for farmers under various programmes with bank linkage for next three weeks because of detection of FMD in milch buffaloes brought in to district the previous week to avoid further spread in Vizianagaram division.

The next day, I asked my office staff to send the note of suggestion to all the veterinary officers in the division. I also informed my district officer sitting next door about the episode. One week after this incident, the personal assistant to the District Collector informed me, "The collector wants to speak

to you. Please come down to collector's chamber"; when I was in his chamber, I saw my District officer, the Project Director(District Rural Development Agency) and Lead Bank Officer.

The Collector asked me, "What is the issue with milch buffaloes brought from Cattle markets? It appears you have asked your veterinarians not to ground the animals for next three weeks. The Lead Bank Officer feels bad for the hitch in their operations to fulfil their targeted loan disbursal activities".

Then I explained to the Collector, "Sr, this FMD is detected in some of the milch animals brought from the Tuni market, the symptoms are seen three days after grounding and I am afraid that the disease might spread fast to other animals also and it causes severe loss to the farmers. At the time of selection and purchase, these animals apparently appeared healthy. So, I suggested my officers not to get new animals into the district from cattle markets for some time so as to prevent further spread. I know it will be devastating for poor farmers".

Then my District officer intervened and said to the Collector," No sir, this is not a serious disease as he is stating, no adult animals die of this disease and I did not get any reports about the disease from other parts of the district; I will find out from the other district officer also and we need not stop this activity".

Looking at him and me,the Collector concluded, "We stop the grounding of milch animals for a while and resume the activity when FMD subsides". Gave instructions to Project Director and Lead Bank Officer to reschedule their programme.

My district officer repeated his standing, "Sir, that adult animals will not die sir", Interrupting him,the Collector quipped, "When milk production is seriously affected what is the use of grounding the milch buffaloes causing losses to poor beneficiary farmers. No problem, we can reschedule our development programmes".

I could convince the bureaucrats but failed to convince a very senior veterinary professional of the district.

I happened to read the comments of the iconic veterinary scientist, Lord Soulsby of UK while chairing a session of Veterinary scientists, practising veterinarians and enlightened farmers on FMD epidemic in 2001. He said, "I have an anecdotal comment about sources of the infection coming from overseas. I mentioned that I was on an Animal Committee of the National Science Foundation in the USA and we were concerned with the importation

of dangerous pathogens, both human and animal. We went round many institutions, including the US Customs. We got to Chicago, where of course there were many illegal importations of meat and meat products from central and eastern Europe. As you know as you go into the USA the customs declaration form says you can't import meat or meat products. So we asked the customs officials how many illegal importations they had and they said, 'Oh, we get lots and confiscate the whole lot'. Then we asked, 'What do you do with them?' They replied, 'We put them in the ice box and keep them there'. I asked, 'What do you do after that?' He said, *'Well, we get rid of them'. I said, 'Into an incinerator?' He replied, 'No, we put them in the garbage'. And the garbage goes to pigs. I think that merely points out* that the mystery is not that we get these highly infectious diseases, but that we don't get many more of them".

At times I wonder at the shocking insensitivity of such people, a qualified veterinarian like my district officer in India and the unprofessional but responsible US customs officer at Chicago. Often I ponder over at what makes perfect sense to us might seem illogical, incoherent and insensitive to someone else.

In the succeeding year, as I was getting ready to go to office I heard our door bell ringing. On opening the doors I found Dr.Mir Azad of "M/s Indian Immunologicals', Hyderabad". After greeting each other we sat for a while sipping hot coffee.Then he requested for my help to convince our District Joint Director to permit him for photography and videography of pigs in Pig Breeding Station at Vizianagaram. When I asked him what was that interesting thing at PBS, he spelt out," Dr.Sreeramulu! I have no idea whether it came to your notice or not but there is an outbreak of 'Foot and Mouth Disease'(FMD) with classical symptoms in pigs, a rare phenomenon in recent years. I am interested to record it for education purpose and I need samples also. When asked the Asst. Director PBS, suggested me to seek the permission of the Joint Director. I don't want to lose this opportunity." Assuring him, I said," Dr.Azad, "I appreciate your concern. I am also interested in what you said. I will organise a videographer also to help you. Please go to the PBS and sit with the officer there and plan rough script for shooting the video film. Meanwhile I will join you at the PBS as I am also interested in this.I will try to do what all l I can do. Rest assured."

I scribbled a small chit and asked my office Attender who just came with some message, to hand over the chit to Dr.M.Ramadas, my colleague. I went to office and spoke to the District officer and explained to him the need for

recording such outbreak and requested him to be there for video recording at the PBS. He agreed to my reasoning and we both were at the site. Whispering to Dr.Mir Azad I asked the videographer to take a few shots of the District officer and the incharge officer to start with. Then everything went well smoothly and Dr.Mir Azad was happy. After completion of the shoot myself and Dr.Mir Azad went to the residence of Mr.Sitaram, the videographer for edting the shoot. It took more than two hours with the inputs from both of us. During the process, listening to our loud voices the videographer's grandmother was expressing her disgust for the disturbance by peeping into room now and then. Later she became furious listening to the groaning sounds of suffering pigs and started rebuking her grandson with choicest words in her typical orthodox brahminical attire and loudly cursing herself for the sounds of pigs in her home at her last leg of journey stage for the first time because of her grandson's occupation. Mr.Sitaram apologetically pleading with his eyes althrough for the inconvenience. We did not mind the embarassment and we both were extremely happy for capturing a rare event for the profession. Indeed an hilarious incident whenever I recollect the scenario at Videographer's house that late evening, I laugh myself.

g. Past continuous: 'Nasal schistosomiasis'

During my student days in veterinary college we had hospital practice of three hours a day during the last six trimesters out of total fifteen trimester. Once in a week, we used to attend a mobile clinic in a nearby village, Thondavada. The attendance at college hospital was very low those days. In Medical ward most of the cases were nasal schistosomiasis in Hallikar bullocks and a few cases of mastitis and horn cancer apart from routine cases of inappetence and indigestion. We had excellent teachers explaining to us in detail about clinical cases. I remember very well, that I was the only fellow getting an opportunity of giving a few intravenous injections in my batch.

As a student I never realised the seriousness of nasal schistosomiasis in cattle. I could understand the suffering of cattle with nasal schistosomiasis and as well as that of farmers while in veterinary practice. In Uravakonda, Penukonda, Dharmavaram and Puttaparthi areas of Anantapur district, the farmers used to take this disease as a curse on the whole village. They used to say," No problem sir, when symptoms are severe and unable to work we sell them away and on the onset of monsoon we purchase new bullocks". Many awareness campaigns were taken up to bring awareness about the disease in endemic areas in 1980s and 1990s.

Seeing the plight of animals in the area, I thought of doing something to minimise the paradox departmentally. Contacted some scientists outside the country but the remedy suggested was not available in our country. Mega health camps were organised with the active support of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Trust, Puttaparthy and District level Samithis where minimum of fifty to sixty nasal schistosomiasis cases were treated on the day of camp and four to five doses of Antimony et Sodium tartarate injections (ampoules) for each case were handed over to nearest veterinary hospital with an advice to the concerned veterinarian for a follow up treatment. We used to take all the earnest precautions to avoid any eventuality in animals undergoing a course of treatment for nasal schistosomiasis. Earlier we were using twenty ml of two percent Antimony et potassium tartarate (Tartaremetic) solution as intravenous injections with very occasional mortality because of a little bit of negligence on the part of service provider but later switched over to sodium salt combination which was found safer comparatively. These injections were not available in the market but some of my colleagues with their contacts with pharmaceutical units used to get them produced and supply for mega camps. Inj. Anthiomaline was available in the market but it was costly those days, each bottle of 30 ml for two doses costed about Rs.40/-) and people were complaining about recurrence of the disease symptoms after three to four months.

Apart from chemotherapy, we were advising some management tips to avoid fresh or reinfestations with metacercaria (the infective forms) of the parasite, not to allow the animals directly into water tanks or ponds instead allow the animals to drink water only from the small water tanks filled up with water the previous evening so that if any cercarial contamination was there, it could be made safe because the cercaria cannot survive more than six hours outside the intermediate host, the snails (Indoplanorbis sp.).But the grazing practices in the area were not congenial, but the advice was not practicable also for large group of animals. At least, for valued animals, farmers can practice this approach to minimise the risk of nasal schistosomiasis. I understand that there is not much change in the disease status even in 2018s.

17. Selling Illusions....

a. Champion Bull Starved – a Travesty

Soon after, completion of my research work for fulfilment of Ph.D programme, I requested for my posting orders in place of Dr.Chengalraya Naidu who was retiring on 31st October, 1984 at Tirupati. To my luck, the Director obliged to my request and gave me posting orders to Tirupati. A week after my joining as Assistant director, I got a call from the then DAH, Dr.C.Hanumantha Rao and he told me," Dr.Sreeramulu, for the last six months, one file on organisation of regional cattle show in Chittoor district is pending with your office. Why don't you take up the issue? and send proposals within a week in consultation with your Joint director".

I consulted my colleagues and nobody was in favour because of very short time to make arrangements to host such an event with participation from six states. My consciousness was pushing me to take up the challenge even though my Joint director, who took responsibilities only three months back also discouraged me. Somehow with team work, the cattle show (18-21,January,1985) was organised well with good appreciation from participant states, general public, state and central government as a big show like a national level show in recent years. There was wide coverage in print media, TV and radio about the cattle show at Tirupati.

A day before the closure of the show around 12.30 noon most of my team members went for lunch and I was going round the stalls with the exhibits and talking to the participant farmers about the supply of rations to them as well as to their exhibits and their arrangements for return travel. Hearing a commotion near reception counters a little away, I rushed to the spot to know the things. By the time I reached there, I found one of the press reporter was arguing with one of my team members at reception counter with loud voice. Prior to that it seemed that there was a wordly dual. I saw my colleague, Dr. Murugappa Chetty, pacifying the reporter not to lose his temper and be polite and the 'press man' was not relenting. Talking to both of them, I understood that my colleague brought a brand new two wheeler and kept at the stand near reception counter. It so happened that the press reporter was meddling with the two wheeler and my colleague asked him not to touch it and he did not have any objection if the reporter wanted to look at the two wheeler without touching it.The arguments continued. On my persuasion the issue was resolved. Then, I requested the press reporter and his accomplice to join

for lunch and I requested one of my assistants to take them to the venue of the lunch.

Next day by 7 a.m. as usual I was going through that day's news- papers. I felt happy at the coverage of the previous day's activities with very positive reactions and appreciations with photographs. I shocked to read an exactly opposite and negative caption in bold letters in only one vernacular newspaper 'Eenadu', published at Tirupati. The ridiculous caption was that the show champion bull was depicted as the 'starved bull' of the show and criticising why such purposeless and useless shows in its writeup. Meanwhile some of my colleagues also gathered around me and wondering that when seven news papers had written in praise of the show and, how this particular daily using the same photographs reported absurdly?.

Suddenly my colleague who had wordly dual with the reporter the previous day inferred that it must have happened because of the yesterday's episode. Even the owner of the bull and the participant farmers expressed their dismay at the shameless reporting contrary to the reality. Meanwhile, the District Public Relations Officer, spoke to the resident editor and found that the reporter was the same fellow involved in wordly dual the previous day and the resident editor expressed regrets for the 'faux pas'. My senior officers advised me not to take it to heart and ignore the incident.

This was one example how print media behaved in reporting or highlighting or denigrating the happenings around, not only according to its owner's satisfaction or political lineage or at times even as per personal feelings of the concerned reporter.

b. Fictitious Unpleasant Lies

Dealing with extremely distressing events and having unhappy interludes make one frustrated. One day to my naive shock, I happened to read a very unpleasant as well as untruthful news in very bold letters on the first page of the main paper of a Telugu daily newspaper published from Hyderabad in 2003. For a moment I couldn't imagine what it means?. Next moment, I recollected the happenings of the previous day.

We had a State Animal Welfare Board meeting with the Animal Husbandry Minister in the chair with Principal Secretary of the department and members of the board both officials and non-officials for two hours at the Secretariat. The press reporters were also there in large numbers.

At the end of the meeting, the media persons posed a few questions to the minister and officials about animal welfare activities in the state and got satisfactory replies. Sensing that there were no more further questions, the

minister got up, saying goodbye and started moving out. Some of the reporters further probed the minister about prevailing drought conditions in the state and the measures taken up by the department and government to mitigate the situation of fodder shortage in the state while he was in a mood of going out hurriedly. The minister stayed back for a while explaining that drought this year was of the severe nature faced in the last 50 years and government had allocated ten crore of rupees for relief measures; added that rupees one crore worth fodder seed would be distributed to farmers on 75 percent subsidy to raise fodder crops in about 50,000 acres which would yield about 950,000 tonnes of fodder (green)worth about Rs.190 crores. The minister also told that concentrate feed, mineral mixture, and medicines also would be supplied for which the govt. had already released Rs.10 crores for the first time. The govt. would not hesitate to allocate some more funds if needed. After the briefing, the minister left the venue in a huff.

The front page published news was that the Animal Husbandry Department had misappropriated several crores of rupees with ridiculous and scandalous calculations which we could not decipher out. This was the first time such a grave charge was slapped on the department. Next day, a satirical slander story was published in the same paper making fun of the department that animals in the state were being fed with cashew nuts, honey, biryani dishes. Third day, a satirical cartoon was published on the first page in the cartoon corner with the visual depiction of the previous day's slander story.

The fact was that the minister had briefed only about the action plan for which Rs.10 crore was earmarked by the government and the department had initiated action and he did not mean that the released amount was already spent. The publication of allegation of imaginary misappropriation with indecipherable figures was the height of folly and absurdity of unimaginable proportions. A day after that publication of this misinformation with shocking insensitivity, a press meet was organised and the Animal Husbandry Minister and the Principal Secretary explained the facts and figures and nothing was published by any of the newspapers next day. The minister and the secretary asked me not to take it personally as such things do happen at times as I was feeling unpleasant with the episode as I was looking after the subject of drought relief operations in the department at that time.

Sometimes what we wish should not happen would happen. We had to open our hearts to this truth too. We do the best we could do and good enough was good enough according to Dr.D.W.Winnicott, a psychologist.

18. A Horizon of possibilities

The entire spectrum of our beliefs, faiths, practices and experiences that unfold before us given its ecological, technological and cultural limitations we have a horizon of possibilities. Each society and each individual like me usually traverses only a small fraction their/ one's horizon of possibilities.

a. Myths-The Beautiful Lies

Could we believe, animal droppings were used in medical treatment? Ancient people believed that animal droppings could be used to cure different diseases. Greeks believed that crocodile dung was a powerful contraceptive and inserted into their vagina. In ancient Egypt, warriors applied animal dung to their wounds. Why ancients?. I even saw many of my friends applying cow or buffalo dung to external abrasions while playing football in my school days in 1960s.

During those days we had only dry lavatories in our homes at a corner most place in the compound; daily a scavenger visited our house from the back door by giving a call, then myself or one of our brothers opened the back door, the scavenger collected the excreta into a big bamboo basket spread inside with jute gunny bag sheets with tree leaves, go out to collect excreta from the next house with the basket on his/her left side of the loin.One had to imagine the scenario if it was a rainy day or if the scavenger misses a day.

In my neighbourhood there was a farm-house with three pairs of bullocks; one day the farmer stopped our scavenger after coming out of my house, giving her a blade of palmyrah leaf for a small quantity of faecal matter collected from my backyard. I saw him applying it into eye of a bullock to treat reddened eye with swelling and sticky discharge oozing from the eye. As a school boy, out of curiosity when I asked him what for he was applying the faecal matter in to the eye, he said that it was applied to treat the eye injury. I was not satisfied with the answer. Almost ten years after that incident, during my B.V.Sc course, I learnt cow or buffalo dung contain lot of Clostridium tetani organisms that cause tetanus and human excreta contained billions of microorganisms that cause severe infections.

While reading a book on ancient European practices, it was fascinating to know that sheep droppings were used in Scotland for treating small- pox disease and pig dung to stop nose bleeding. I noticed during my boyhood days in villages, grandmothers advising small quantity of dung to be kept in

a small cloth tied and to be smelt with deep breath several times at a stretch to stop nose bleeding. For me no clues, though I was relentlessly curious.

b. My Wife and the Crow

Nine weeks after my marriage one morning I was back to home by 7.30 after attending a slaughterhouse for meat inspection. Getting down from my bicycle and leaving my shoes in the front room while entering the living room, I heard my wife inconsolably sobbing. For a moment, I could not visualise what was happening and I was stuck dumb literally. Recovering myself, I asked my young wife, "what has happened?"; with my query, she increased her pitch. Requesting her to keep calm for a while I went to wash my feet and hands and I took her hands into mine to pacify her and find out the reason for her grief.

Controlling her-self, she gave me a postcard (those days we were using postcards for written communications) to read it. The postcard was from her cousin (son of my mother's -in-law sister), a school going boy from Narsapur township about 375 km from my place. The inference of the letter was that his mother (my wife's aunt) was washed away by the force of waves while she was taking bath in the sea at 'Antarvedi' village on the auspicious day of festivity four days back.

Somehow, I could manage her to get up and refresh herself saying because the incident happened a week back and at this point nothing could be done right now. I pleaded with my wife to reconcile about the unfortunate incident and promised to take her to Narsapur for the 11th day memorial ceremony to pay respects to her aunt. With that word, my wife felt relieved.

Finishing my breakfast, I proceeded to my Laboratory. My wife requested me to find out what exactly happened from one of her very closely related elderly person on the way to my laboratory. When I narrated about the accidental death, the elderly relative expressed his surprise and told me that he did not get any communication to that effect. Two hours later, the elderly relative came to my laboratory and quipped, "What is this Sreeramulu, with your news you have perturbed all of us". I looked at him with despair and restated, "My wife got a postcard about the tragic incident and I conveyed the same to you as it was my responsibility". Interrupting me he said, "I contacted her younger brother-in-law residing at Visakhapatnam on phone; he too said that he did not get any communication and to be sure, in turn he spoke to his brother at Narsapur and it appears, his brother told him that no such incident happened. I came to inform you the fact and ask your wife not to worry", the elderly relative assured me and left.

At 12 noon, I was back to home for lunch and told my wife about the sequence of events and she heaved a sigh of relief and smiled. I told my wife to be ready to go out for a movie in the evening as soon as I come back from the laboratory.

The next day we got another letter written by her maternal aunt from Narsapur expressing her regrets for the previous letter about her accidental death. In the letter, it was elaborated that my wife's aunt accidentally happened to watch a pair of crows in the act of cohabitation. In southern part of the country elderly people believe that watching crows in cohabitation intentionally or unintentionally is a great sin and the person involved would die soon. The remedy suggested was, apart from doing some prayers, oblations, they believe if some closely related person weeps for the person involved in the act, saves him/her from the sin.

I took it as a fun but my wife felt unpleasant and wrote back a letter to her maternal aunt suggesting not to write such letters or inform with such unproven beliefs.

The old scriptures say that nothing was useless in this world. For a man or woman there was lot to learn even from animals and birds like lion, donkey, dog and crow, crane and rooster. But usually crow was considered as unimportant bird. People in India believe, the crows will have secret sex life unlike other birds or animals. Crows are very stubborn. They will stay always alert. Do not believe others easily. Crows are very meticulous and timely in procurement of their requirements. Apart from that, their unity is worth noting. Scriptures say 'crow' is also one of the 'preceptor or guru or teacher' for humanity.

In March,1995, after my return to Hyderabad from my 'International course on Project Management and Programme Administration' at Ede-Wageningen, Netherlands for 8 weeks, I was talking to my neighbours about my training and life in Netherlands. Casually I told that I could not see crows there. One of my orthodox neighbour shot," How is that people there perform final obsequies for departed souls?" I replied him that their practices are different and they do according to their religion. In south Indian families, in the event of anybody's death on 11th day or any convenient uneven date, after performing rituals, in the end, an important ritual called 'pinda pradhan' means offering food to departed souls would be a must. The food kept before the photograph of the departed person and his/her parents and grandparents would be fed to crows.If crows were not found taking the food,they believe that departed souls were not satisfied and feel it as a very bad omen. Apart

from that crow was considered as the vehicle of 'Sani'(Saturn), the most feared one as per astrological beliefs.

As an young boy I used to observe my grandmother, while sitting for lunch, she used to make a ball of fistful cooked rice, dal and vegetable curry from her bowl, go out to backyard and shout ka,ka,ka….. and keep the ball of the food items on the wall and in less than a minute group of crows used to come on to the wall and share the food. It was a fascinating scenario for me everyday at lunch time. My grandmother had explained that food was provided by the Almighty and we have to share with other creatures.

Presently in most of the urban areas rarely we find crows and sparrows, forget about parrots and parakeets because of reduced number of trees, increased radiation from communication towers and busy and restless humans with extreme stressfulness and reduced emotions for creatures around.

c. The Musk and the Goat stench

During our under-graduation days, in the evenings, I with some of my friends used to stroll in a big dairy farm belonging to Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams(TTD) situated opposite to our hostel on the other side of the road in Tirupati. Those days it was very lovely to watch many cows at one place along with a few elephants and horses in a serene atmosphere.

We used to enjoy going round a small enclosure with a few small sized male musk-deers moving around and rubbing their bottoms against a nicely polished wooden poll in the centre of the enclosure. The person looking after them explained that these musk-deers secrete a smelly mixture of compounds from the glands located near their anus; they rub the secretion to the pole and the rubbed secretions get dried. At frequent intervals the dried musk was collected and used in perfume for decorating the presiding deity at Tirumala temple.

Musk scent was very expensive because of the scarcity of its source. The musk-deer secrets the mixture of compounds to attract the female. In its concentrated form, the scent is not enticeable, but it will become seductive when diluted. How anyone ever discovered that the dried and then diluted secretions from this inconspicuous little abdominal sac of the musk deer charmed receptors in our nasal passage remains a mystery. What we did know, however, was that musk fragrance had been used by perfumers since antiquity. The word 'musk' itself was derived from the Sanskrit word for 'testicle'. The ancient Indians seemingly were better at perfume making than anatomy since the scent glands were quite distinct from the animal's testes.

Only once, the animal attender showed us the pinhead size quantity of the powder put into small quantity of sandalwood paste to demonstrate its fragrance; the wonderful fragrance, still, I could not forget even after fifty years.

I got married in November,1973 and I reached home hurriedly by 5.30 p.m. to keep up my word to my wife to take her to a film show. On hearing my bicycle bell my wife came out to open the front door. Already, she got ready and awaiting me. Saying sorry for the delay, I tried to go inside to change my dress to hurry up to go to film theatre but my wife said, blocking me from entering in to house,"Nothing doing, first go to bathroom straight away and have thorough wash, you and your cloths were smelling ghastly; meanwhile I would get your towel, underwear and dress there itself for changing. Leave your cloths there itself. No problem, we can reach film theatre in time by a cycle-rikshaw". Without saying a word I rushed to bathroom.

While undressing myself for bath I realised the stenchy smell on me. Then I recollected the events of handling of a goat herd of fifty heads for blood sample collection that afternoon in an adjacent village to Srikakulam to investigate a few deaths in that goat herd. The body smell of a buck (male breeding goat) would horrify any nose but not a castrated buck that means along with loss of manhood comes the loss of smell. The piercing odour sticks to clothes and skin and was very tough to eliminate. But does(female goats) produce no smell; it stands to reason that the smell of the goat had a connection to reproduction. When exposed to this aroma (for female goats) and for us, repulsive goat stench, the does become receptive to the advances of the buck. I explained all these things to my wife while moving in cycle-rikshaw looking into her eyes. Suddenly turning towards me, my wife commanded, "Please stop it, we have reached the theatre". Seeing longer que at men's side ticket counters, she rushed towards women's counter and brought tickets and rushed towards entry and I followed her as an humble spouse. I felt relieved seeing her happy with loud laughter at some comedy scenes of film.

The goat stench became so notorious to name some of the organic substances to compare with. Most of the scientists associated with would appreciate the stabling odour of the six-carbon Caproic acid, appropriately deriving its name from 'caper', the Latin word for goat. Two other acids, Caprylic and Capric acid also derive their names from 'caper' because they also contribute to the devastating smell of male goats. Staying away from randy old goats was a good idea.

d. The Love Hormone

That was in 1967, during my third year of B.V.Sc course, we had an important subject 'Veterinary Pathology'. We had only one Professor Ganti.A.Sastry in our college at that time and he was adored as 'walking encyclopedia of veterinary science' in those days. His lectures extend to several hours unless next lecture faculty was ready at the entrance of the lecture hall. His lectures were so interesting, either he or students were not able to track the time.One day he was talking on pathology of bovine genitalia. In that context he was describing a practice called 'phuka' adopted by unlettered dairymen in Calcutta (presently Kolkata).They push a smooth wooden rod into vagina of cows or buffaloes for milk let down.This practice was mutilating genitals leading to inflammation, infections and over a time rendering the milch animals permanently infertile.

But some smart farmers were injecting Oxytocin for letting down of milk.

Oxytocin, very important in human and veterinary practice, is a peptide hormone produced by hypothalamus and plays role in social bonding, sexual reproduction, childbirth and milk letdown. Since many years there were several myths about injection Oxytocin: make cattle barren, milk from oxytocin injected cows would cause cancer in human subjects and so on.

One day finding a news item about the decision of the Union Health Ministry, Government of India, imposing ban on the retail sale and private manufacture of Oxytocin from July First, 2018. I was perplexed. The reason for the ban was misuse of oxytocin on dairy animals like cows and buffaloes to increase milk production. Another amusing thing was the government's ban order referring to a judgement of Himachal Pradesh High Court of 2016 which said that daily oxytocin injections made cattle barren and reduced their lifespan. It also further quoted that consuming milk from oxytocin injected cows led to male impotency, early puberty among girls and cancers. Several studies in our country as well in western countries established that judicious use of oxytocin under the supervision of a veterinarian, no such conditions arose.

However, some milch animals got addicted to oxytocin injection and produce no milk when deprived of it. In such situations continuous use of the hormone becomes problematic. Again there was little evidence that milk of oxytocin injected cows contained more of oxytocin. The elimination ie half-life of oxytocin was one to six minutes in the body. Whatever a little oxytocin was in the milk did not survive intestinal digestion in human subjects. So, it was unlikely that men and women would experience effects like cancer.

One has to ponder over, when oxytocin doesn't hurt means why the ban? Conspiracy theorists see the hand of 'cow politics' in the oxytocin ban move. Some doctors call it 'historical blunder' and 'health demonetisation', while corporates call it a 'nationalisation move' of sorts.

e. The fascinating crow of Cockerel

During my summer school holidays I used to accompany my grandmother to my paternal aunt's village, Kadpakkam a small village a little inside to highway road from Madras(present Chennai) to Pondicherry(present Puducherry). I loved hearing the crow of cockerels in the early morning; seeing servants in the big house and womenfolk getting up from their beds hurriedly going into courtyard and starting their daily morning chores was really a fun time for me. Even during my professional career I loved to stay in villages to listen to sound of crow of cockerels avoiding stay in air-conditioned rooms in nearby townships or cities since 1980s to 2013s. Many in cities go to bed at night with curtains down to shut off light and wake up when the alarm sounds with varied musical nodes. There were no environmental signals to suggest us it was already morning as I know. But the wonderful cockerel was an alarm in countryside. The cockerel althrough the year punctual without any interruption was an alarm.

Authentic records suggest that this had been happening since the Indus Valley days(3500 BCE). Cockerels were symbol of protection, intelligence, wisdom and the divine, since they were the messengers between heaven and earth. In the West the cockerel (rooster) was assumed to be sacred. Cockerel, a solar symbol, emulates sexuality, observance and resurrection according to the Church. Ancient Indian teacher, philosopher, economist, jurist and royal advisor, Chanakya (371 -283 BC) in his 'Neeti Sastra' (moral science) suggested that every individual should imbibe the qualities of a cockerel—readiness to fight, fighting for its share for its flock even by force from others.

Coming back to, why cockerels crow in the morning at daybreak had been the research study by certain groups. Several theories had been debated and the answer found was the body clock(or circadian rhythm) of the cockerel. Chicken were social animals, living in groups. When one cockerel in the group crows at dawn, other cockerels in the group join the chorus, though weakly and a bit later. It appeared to some, this type of crowing was a means of establishing their territories. The behaviour of crowing by one cockerel followed by others was also a subject of research and it was found that the one to crow first was the highest ranking cockerel in the flock. It had the

priority to announce the break of dawn, the others being its subordinates. The hens in the pen do not crow. They only chatter a bit and that too among themselves in the flock.

I wondered about the sound intensity of crowing by a cockerel. The full blown crowing sound intensity of a 'King' cockerel could be as high as 143 decibels, (a measure of sound intensity) that of a jet engine; of course this was when we were about a foot away. This level of sound intensity could damage our eardrums and deafen us. Thankfully, it gets weakened in intensity as we move farther from it. Another big question mark was with such a loud crowing, why did our 'hero' itself not become deaf? It was difficult to visualise the reason for ordinary mortals. But with some intense research, the Belgian research group came out with a finding that cockerel ears were specially built. It was found that their ears were blocked when they crow; a quarter of their ear canals completely closed and soft tissue covered half of their eardrums; in fact the cockerels do not hear sound of their own crowing at full strength. The hens, with their inherent wisdom stay about a metre away to avoid the intensity of crowing sound; even if they did, their 'hair cells' in the inner ear apparently rapidly regenerate. Even today I enjoy the sound of crowing. The posture of the hero at the time of crowing on a treetop or rooftop and the glimpse of straightened feathers, the comb and the sense of achievement in its eyes is an exciting watch for me. I enjoyed such bouts of cockerels in the early morning.

f. The Captivating Wool capital of world - Goulburn

I was in Australia with my wife in November, 2010 on a holiday and moving round visiting places. On one such trip to Canberra, the federal capital of Australia, en-route, I was fascinated with scenic beauty of the locale and small flocks of sheep grazing all along the fenced farms on either side of the road. I came to know that place was called "Goulburn" in New South Wales state of Australia. Goulburn was the first inland township developed in Australia named after the British Secretary of State for Colonies in the year 1818.

It was an awesome spectacle to see the world's biggest Merino model. The unique big attraction was located just off Goulburn's southern exit and stood proud as the symbol of Goulburn. The model' is a three story structure of concrete and steel measuring 15.2 metres high and 18 metres long and weighs 100 tonnes. It was an impressive life-like model of 'Rambo', a stud ram from the local property 'Bullamalita'.

This was built in 1985 as a monument to Goulburn and surrounding districts for the fine wool industry. A gift shop located in the ground floor of the belly displays an eclectic range of gift wear featuring quality products made from the Australian Merino wool and other items. The first floor houses a permanent exhibition on 200 years of Australian Wool Innovation. The second floor comprises of some models of wool processing.

I was wonder struck when a middle aged sales woman in the gift shop, on knowing that I was from India and a veterinarian, took a few minutes to explain that Australia's wealth rode upon the sheep's back in 1800s. Goulburn as a centre for fine wool prospered giving rise to much of its grand architecture. I could see the glow in her eyes and pride in her body language for the fleece produced in that area was gorgeously soft, ultra fine, (10.0 microns) which has set a new world record. Australian Merino wool was regarded by many as the whitest and softest wool produced globally.

It all started with the first introduction of twenty Spanish Merino sheep in 1788 in Australia. The sheep could adopt themselves to an extraordinarily wide range of environment, climate, soil, herbage and terrain encountered.

The most notable feature of the Australian sheep flock was the overwhelming influence of the Australian Merino which was bred primarily for its heavy fleece of fine quality wool. More than 80 percent of all Australian sheep are pure Merino with most of the remainder being part Merino. Away from their native country Spain, the Merino changed due to the differing climatic conditions and selection pressure applied by breeders by different countries. The present day Merino is not a single homogenous breed but a number of strains all of which are uniquely Australian.

Presently, Australia is the world's largest producer of wool, producing 28 per cent of total greasy wool. There were 117.5 million sheep shorn in Australia producing 499 million kilograms of greasy wool. The Australian flock was composed of 85.1% Merino, 10.4% crossbred and 4.5% other breeds. Australia exports wool to 55 countries and China is one of the biggest purchasers of Australian wool showing the importance of these sheep.

g. Why I am doing what I am doing

During my visits to veterinary hospitals, I used to interact with the animal attendants and owners to understand their constraints in management of their animals for better productivity. During such interactions many a time I found some odd notions. The animal owner asking his attendant not to feed anything to the cow/buffalo except drinking water on the day of artificial

insemination(AI). I also noticed this type of counselling by some Vets and para-vets especially in Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts but nowhere else in other parts of the then Andhra Pradesh.

I could not understand the logic and I was not convinced with the arguments put forth by them. The argument was that if well fed after AI there was likelihood of the animal coming to heat again in case of failure of conception. In late evening farmer's meets, we used to argue that if the inseminated animal was well fed there was likelihood of settling with conception, if not, again it will come to heat to facilitate AI; If not fed well, the animal might not conceive, moreover, it might not come to heat again in three weeks time and the farmer would be at loss.

Another practice I observed was,pushing of two or three broken raw eggs in to the mouth of bull immediately after castration. I had answered myself and I did not pursue the issue further. These incidents reminded me of a story which I read long back. In the story, a little girl watching her mother to prepare a fish for dinner, cut the head and tail off the fish and placing into a baking pan. The little girl asked her mom, why she cut the head and tail off the fish, the mother thought for a while and said," I have always done that way-that's how grandma did it". Not satisfied with the answer the girl went to her grandma to find out why she cut head and tail off the fish before baking it. Grandma thought for a while and replied, "I do not know, my mother always did it that way". Then the little girl and her grandma went to great grandma to find an answer. The great grandma thought for a while and said, "Because, my grandma told once that the baking pan was too small for the whole fish to fit in".

In most cases we fail to question or challenge belief systems and assumptions. There were no real reasons to do certain things. Typical answers might be, 'my boss wants it that way or this was how I have always done it. One must be with scepticism and ability to think beyond rituals- ask "Why I am doing what I am doing".

h. My Father, William Shakespeare and my Grand-daughter…

With the demise of my beloved wife in November, 2018 at Hyderabad, after completion of death related rituals in December my son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren took me to Singapore to avoid loneliness for me. In March, 2019 I was at Chennai to attend a marriage function of my niece on 10th March and back to Singapore on the morning of 12th after three days of stay at Chennai. That evening after the return of my son from his work, I

heard my granddaughter pleading with her father to sign a letter of acceptance to be submitted to her school authorities.

I noticed my son not yielding to her pleas to sign the letter. Exhausted, Jahnavi, my granddaughter sat with a sad face at her study table. My daughter-in-law was watching both of them silently. I asked her about the issue. She explained," Uncle, Jahnavi is selected for a 12-day Literature study trip to England and requested her dad to sign the letter of acceptance and he is not interested to send her to such a far off place".

Then I took the issue to sort it out and told my son," We never got such a rare opportunity during our time. I tried to go to London and other places to visit Shakespeare's theatre, house etc when I was in Netherlands in 1995 but could not get a visa to England with advice to apply for a visa from my country of origin. Now she got an opportunity at a very young age in ninth standard, let her go". My son asked me, "Dad! Do you have any idea of the cost of the trip? It costs five thousand Singapore dollars." In reply, I retorted, "You know my financial status at your school age, I know my father's and my grandfather's financial status, moreover we never got such an opportunity those days**.** Now she got an opportunity; she is not going alone. She is going along with twenty six students with three accompanying lady teachers. We have to encourage her. Please send her. Through her eyes I want to see those places of literary importance. Please don't disappoint her. If so I would also feel disappointed". My son was convinced and my granddaughter left for London on 27th May, 2019.

My father was an English literature student in his degree, Bachelor of Arts (B.A) in Presidency College of Madras in 1936. I heard him many a time quoting from William Shakespeare, Williams Wordsworth, Tennyson, Milton and Charles Dickens, Keats etc.In my highschool studies, I had every year minimum of one or two lessons or poetry from these literary icons in English subject. My father was explaining those dramas, lessons or poetry in a very interesting and understandable way. In my eleventh standard in highschool my English teacher, Mr.Dharmeswara Rao encouraged us to try 'one act play' from Shakespeare's 'Merchant of Venice' for our school anniversary function that year. Myself in the role of Antonio, my classmate Sudhakar as Portio and other two friends as Bassanio and Shylock volunteered. Our teacher coached us well. In subsequent year, I participated in 'mono-action' competitions and I got first prize for my role as Augustus delivering the famous speech,'"My friends,Romans and my countrymen…"' on the death of Julius Caesar in a coup by his detractors. My father helped me in diction and delivery of the speech at home.

At that time I purchased a book 'complete works of Shakespeare' and my father used to explain about different roles in Shakespeare's plays.I felt wonderstruck going through the book 'The Genius of Shakespeare' by Jonathan Bate, the sanest and shrewd scholar of William Shakespeare purchased at Globe theatre, London and presented to me by my granddaughter after her return from the Literary trip. I closely followed my granddaughter in her literature tour for ten days through Whatsapp contact. My grandchild was so fortunate to watch two of Shakespeare's plays in Globe theatre, an open air theatre since the days of Shakespeare.

Another interesting thing I learnt from my Jahnavi was that in Globe theatre the spectators in the stands and the pit could watch the actors in any angle with 360 degrees view clearly. The student group had many workshops on poetry and dramas and interactive sessions with the actors and directors of plays.The group visited Stratford-upon-Avon the birth place of Shakespeare and his grave and church and his school and house where he lived.The students group had also watched two Shakespeare plays in Royal Shakespeare Theatre at Stratford. I was excited hearing about their experiences there.

My interest grew further when I understood that Shakespeare's birthplace was also a well known centre of wool trade in Elizabethan times which attracted John Shakespeare, father of William who migrated to this place and by the time the play-write was an adult the town was an important centre for trade and commerce.Now a popular tourist centre with relics of the Bard who enthralled the English literature with his lasting legacy of thirty seven plays and 154 Sonnets during his 52 years of age.

Apart from Shakespeare the group visited places associated with literary giants Lord Byron (Newsted Abbey), William Wordsworth, the romantic poet (Cockemouth, Lake district), Bromstoker, Dracula fame(Whitby Abbey), The Brontes sisters (Haworth), Howard Pyle, Robinhood fame (Nottingham) and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes fame(London).

My granddaughter briefed me with all details of her exciting tour. I felt satisfied myself as though I saw all those places. I recollected my oft repeated statement "grandparents or parents feel happy to see the achievements of their offsprings which they had dreamt to achieve".

i. Mining for the Meaning

One afternoon I was packing my dresses, some reading material into my small suitcase at my home for travel to Anand via Ahmedabad, Gujarat that day late evening. At that time my telephone rang, from other side one very

senior police officer from SVP Police Academy, Mr Naidu, son in law of my colleague, Dr.V.Sundara Rao, asked me whether I would be free next day at my residence to talk to me for a while leisurely.

I expressed my regret saying that late evening flight I am proceeding to Anand via Ahmedabad. The next question was whether I go out of state on my work. I have to explain that I am going to that place to attend a three day workshop on gender in development projects at the Institute of Rural Management along with two of my Swiss colleagues, then, next question very interesting one was, "Do Veterinarians also talk in terms of gender and gender sensitivity? He continued, "In our training programmes to I.P.S officers we also spend a few hours on gender issues with reference to criminals". He continued further about his experiences as a trainer in Police Academy for another five minutes and said that he would meet me after my return.

This conversation triggered me to recollect an incident that happened four months back. I attended a valedictory event of a 5- day training programme on "Role of gender in livestock development" organized by ISPA for practicing Veterinarians, Assistant directors of AHD and Dairy Managers of AP Dairy unions numbering 18 at the venue of MANAGE(National Institute of Agriculture Extension Management) in Hyderabad. In such programmes it was customary to take feedback from each of the trainees by the course Director. Incidentally I happened to attend the last session of the training programme 'in cognito' sitting in a corner from the group. I saw a lot of question marks on the face of majority of the participants.

In the plenary session, after a brief sum up it was my turn to say a few words in the valedictory. Instead I wanted to know what was their understanding of the topic of the training programme. Nobody had responded. As a mild provocation, I requested one of the trainees to brief what he could understand from the ' Five day training programme' about the usefulness of the principles to put into practice. He took some time and blurted," Sir, to be honest, it is not very clear for me". Others also expressed the same.

I could see the unpleasantness in the face of the Course Director. My Swiss Colleague felt embarrassed. To ease the atmosphere I spoke to the gathering, "My understanding of gender balance especially with reference to livestock development is that mostly we extend training support only to men folk though in reality the multitude of rearing activities either with milch animal rearing, sheep rearing, pig rearing, poultry rearing or management of sick animals, major role is played by women folk but they are never trained to upscale their skills with the result we are not improving the production or

quality of our livestock. Usually men do not share their knowledge or skills for that matter and apart from that all the skills are not transferable so easily. I observed this in poultry complexes supported under poverty alleviation programmes. One should study role clarity and identify the activities of women and men, then train them accordingly with more stress on gender balance'.

The Expert commented, "Sir you have explained it in simple understandable and practicable definition of gender balance". I concluded," Higher the level of technology entering into scenario, the gender balance gets more imbalanced.

Back to workshop at IRMA (Institute of Rural Management) at Anand myself, my colleagues from ISPA, Ms.Annette Kolf and Dr.D.Venkateswarlu participated actively in the workshop. The topic was "gender perception in forest development". Althrough the discussions, the workshop director, Dr.Sara Ahmad, was speaking with stress on only women. I was in a quandary. Even in the evening session of the second day it continued. During dinner that day I expressed my doubt about this aspect with my colleagues. Surprisingly, they were also of the same opinion. To test the genuinity of my doubt further, when I discussed with some of the younger participants from NGO organisations from different parts of the country, they too were of the same opinion. In the first session of the third and last day, I raised my hand and politely asked," Madam" I lost myself in understanding the concept of gender as your presentations were focussing only on the women as though the topic is "feminisation' of the forest development rather than gender role in forest development. Then everybody was on his/her feet expressing the same. Meanwhile another speaker was waiting for his turn and the discussion was stopped at that point.

Then I realised the difficulty in understanding the gender concepts by my colleagues, field veterinarians when there was no clarity in the so-called "gender experts" at state or national level.

j. Myself and Computers

I saw people using computer systems first in 1990 in the District Collectorate at Vizianagaram. I used to take their help for graphic data presentation. In May, 1993 I took the responsibility of Special Officer, Rinderpest Eradication Scheme(SO, RES) and was located in Directorate of Animal Husbandry Hyderabad and I got fascinated with the computer cell handled by a Veterinary Assistant Surgeon cadre person of Statistics section

of Directorate. I used to go to that cell whenever I found a little time free of files as it was located three rooms next to mine. The person in-charge used to show me, how to put on the computer, drafting of letters in the system etc. As I was already 48 years old, my learning of fundamentals was very slow.

Watching me frequenting the computer cell with some more persons, of course, my Asst.Director and Vety.Asst.Surgeon, one day the cell incharge while guiding me informed me, "Sir, you can come any time you like but don't bring other people along with you to avoid virus contamination of the system. At that time it was Greek and Latin for me and I nodded my head.

One day about 20 minutes before lunch time suddenly I entered the computer cell room to find the VAS incharge and his Assistant sharing lunch from their boxes as closely as newly married boy and girl. I stepped back without disturbing them as it was a very unexpected scene. Then only I could realize what the 'Virus into computer' means since then I felt embarrassed to go to computer cell.

Mostly I found the computer-ware being used as type-writer with print out facility. I used to take help to get my data in the form of histograms, pie charts etc for presentation in workshops, review meetings. Observing my interest, Mr.DeGroot, the Chief Project Advisor, ISPA, gave me a computer system, kept in computer cell for use to monitor the Rinderpest vaccination programme in the state and Mass sheep deworming programme as an add-on activity, to me.

Those days, we had only 'Floppy discs' to carry, and in another two years we got CDs, CD writers in our offices; while using "floppy discs" I always used to have an overhead projector also as a stand by with computer designed data sheets on transparent sheets to avoid embarrassment during presentations using floppy discs as they used to stuck up in the middle sometimes. When I recollect earlier experience of making use of blackboards, epidio-scopes, Over-Head Projector, slide projector, introduction of computers with windows and Microsoft Office systems, eased my job.

When I was back to Hyderabad as Project Director, Indo-Swiss Project, I was compelled to work with computer systems after a gap of three years in between.

I had hands on training with computer systems during my 8 week "International Course on Project Management and Project Administration" in Ede, Wageningen.

In 1997 as a Project Director ISPA, I visited Mulkanuru village of Karimnagar District to attend a valedictory session of a training programme

for Dairy Managers of A.P. That morning session all the trainees were taken around some of the societies. In one such society, the society president, a middle aged woman was explaining the recording system practised for daily milk collection in litres, fat testing results, payment dues etc in computer systems. She was very modest and humbly explained that she had only elementary school education but learnt computer handling". I was silently watching the events; one of the managers asked her, "What software you are using ?" She replied, "I do not know the details but I am told that it is "Foxpro". It was a stunning experience to all of us when she mentioned about it. I overheard the Dairy Managers murmuring within themselves about the fire in that lady president though the questioner wanted to make fun of her. It was a great lesson for me which ignited my interest in use of computer.

During 1999, there was a delegation from Malaysia to India which visited our Directorate also. I participated in the discussions on livestock disease incidence as the delegation was meant for import of meat from india. I was explaining about monitoring and surveillance methods, existing disease outbreak reporting system, existence of well established network of animal disease diagnostic laboratoratories in our state and a separate epidemiology cell etc with the help of slide projector.

Then the Malayasian delegation leader wanted to present their existing system in their country and took out a thumb size gadget and asked for computer system; that was the first time I saw a pen-drive but we did not have a computer system with thumb drive port those days in our office. My successors are more fortunate to use more advanced systems in their work.

k. Warp and Weft

In my state, for that matter, any where in the country especially in city general hospitals, it would be a nightmare for a patient and his/her accomplice to consult a physician or any specialist doctor. One should forget that he/she was a human, the way one would undergo all the insinuations, inconvenience of pushing, jostling, heated arguments, que jumping because of large gatherings. The doctor would not be in a position to spend enough time on each patient and at complaining stage itself starts writing a prescription or advice to the patient instantaneously to undergo some diagnostic test procedures.

During my school days, I used to visit my elder father(elder brother of my father) in a government general hospital in Madras along with my older

cousin and I observed my cousin pushing ' four anna coin in to the palm of ward boys and watchmen at three or four levels which I could not understand at that age in 1954s. In smaller hospitals, still, I remember dispensing carminative mixture, cough mixture, deworming tablets, sodium salicylate tablets for minor ailments like indigestion, cough, abdominal pain and PUO (pyrexia of unknown origin). My grandmother or my paternal aunt used to take us to Municipal Corporation dispensaries in Madras. And also used to take us to temples or nearby mosque during evening prayers for cure of illness.

Even now not much has changed especially with people who could not afford to spend money in private hospitals. Even in small private hospitals or corporate hospitals at times it would be difficult to consult certain of the specialists without prior appointment. This reminds me an adage in ancient Rome, Cicero said, "in nothing do men more nearly approach the Gods than in giving health to others". Truly said.

My memory goes to my visit to Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Utrecht University in the Netherlands in 1995. The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine was considered as one of the leading centres in Europe and was ranked among the top ten. This Veterinary school was accredited by European countries and Canada. The school was performing fundamental and strategic research in the fields of animal health, welfare and related aspects of Public Health.

I went round all the three university clinics, the Companion animal clinic, the Equine clinic and the Farm animal clinic. I was also informed that together these three clinics make up the largest animal hospital outside of United States. They claim that the patient care provided at these clinics was at least comparable to that provided by human clinics in range and quality. I thought that the claim was an exaggeration. But to my surprise, when I requested to peep into Companion animal in-patient ward, the in-charge Vet politely refused saying," Dr.Piedy, excuse me, we cannot disturb our patients." I never imagined such a scenario".

l. Movie films and roles as Veterinarians

In South India, movie films were the first in order of entertainment to the general public. Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu states possess more than fifty per cent of movie theatres in the country those days. I liked films since my primary school age, my high school period and usually I was not missing any Telugu movie. During my college education period every week I used to watch one or two movies in different languages Telugu, Tamil, Hindi

and English. I was a member of college film club. One day, my professor usually with serious face asked me with an unusual smile, "Sreeramulu! how many films you watch every week? Seeing his smiling face, un-hesitantly and very honestly, I replied, "On average a film a week sir,"; seriously he said, "No, limit your films one per month". I nodded my head obediently and left his chambers. In my subsequent career also I continued my hobby.

I always used to ponder- over a question? I watched several hundreds of films since 1950; most of the times in social dramas the hero would be passing out of university in distinction/honours in Bachelor of Arts degree course; in 1960s, in some films, heroes were portrayed as medical practitioners—which continued till 1990s; since then the film heroes were portrayed as police officers, business magnets, scientists, artists, engineers and very rarely Veterinary doctors. I could see in some films heros were portrayed as Agricultural Scientists but very rarely. To my knowledge in all these 75 years of Telugu films, none of the so called top heroes played the role of Veterinary doctor except Mr.Ghattamaneni Krishna in his early days of career in 'Kolleti Kapuram'(1976) in a few scenes; in the college as a veterinary student and after getting job a few scenes of treating animals. Then as usual heroic fights and love song sequences with the heroine. Another film in 1974 with an artiste by name Mr.Chandra Mohan, a character actor and small time hero acted as a veterinary doctor in more scenes in 'Adambaralu-Anuragalu' a social drama. Mr.Chandra Mohan's brother in law(sister's husband) was my senior Vet colleague in VBRI at Hyderabad. In a few films some comedians were portrayed as Vets with awkward fun and mockery scenes.

In 2014, I happened to watch a Hindi film 'Koila Raj' where a young District Collector, arrests a tyrant mafia don in the garb of pious, god- fearing politician under 'Prevention of Cruelty towards Animals Act" otherwise no film director or producer could find any material to produce a film on equally potential subject of livestock related issues and a veterinarian and his role in the society. I happened to watch an English film where one lady veterinarian, the main character, emasculates – her tyrant husband with her surgical skills.*(I do not remember the title of the film***)** Another English film in 2008 titled "Dr.John Dolittle with theme of concern for living creatures especially animals was a nice movie. Though he treats animals he was kind to people and during the course of the adventures he rescues number of them. He could speak with his clients, the animals. I hope the film industry may come across with themes with Vet professionals as role models to emulate by the public.

m. Mirth and Moan

Once Dr.M.V.Rao, former Vice-Chancellor of AP Agriculture University, Hyderabad and presently President, Governing body of Agri-Biotech Foundation was sharing his experiences with us. As narrated by Dr.M.V.Rao, noted scientist associated with green revolution and close associate of Nobel Laureate Dr.Norman Borlaug, got a letter from his Pakistani agriculture scientist seeking his help from ICAR(Indian Council of Agriculture Research) to provide one metric tonne of wheat seed as there was a looming threat of a severe food grain shortage in Pakistan. As, the then Additional Director General of ICAR, Dr.M.V.Rao approached the Union Agriculture minister with the plea of Pakistan, in turn the minister expressed his inability to take decision on the issue from his side and suggested to approach the Prime Minister.

Then the Director General of ICAR, M.S.Swaminathan and Dr.M.V.Rao sought time to meet the Prime Minister could apprise the Prime Minister about the dire need of Pakistan for at least one metric tonne of wheat breeder seed. The Prime Minister told them," Why one tonne? Send them ten tonnes of seed" without any pause. Dr.Rao told us that they were wondering at Prime Minister's generosity.

The Prime Minister then it seemed quipped," We cannot afford to have an hungry neighbour, could be a problem to us later?" demonstrating his political acumen.

n. National spirit and emotional endurance

Cricket world cup competitions were held in June, 2019 in England & Wales. On 16th June, I sat with my grandchildren to watch the match between India and Pakistan, first match in the world cup series at 5.30 p.m, local time in Singapore. The stadium at Manchester in England was packed with Indian and Pakistani enthusiasts. The previous week only my grand-daughter was in Manchester with her 9th class students on literary tour for fifteen days and she was explaining me excitedly that she could see the stadium from a distance. Meanwhile, winning the 'toss' Pakistan opted to bowl first. The match was in progress almost at the end '47th over' the match was interrupted by rain. It was already,10.45 p.m. at Singapore so I went to bed. When I got up next morning my grandchildren excitedly told me, "Tatayya(grandpa) we have won the match" and ran out to school hurriedly. After my morning rituals, while watching Indian news I felt unpleasant on

seeing the news scrolls in TV 'India mauled Pakistan, Pakistan bite the dust etc. After all it was only initial match, not the final cup winning duel. Surprisingly on the ground both the team members were very cordial and jovial during the play. For me, it was an unwarranted hype and derogatory against the principles of journalism.

This reminded me of an incident during my stay in the Netherlands. Every Wednesday afternoon our batch of nine trainees was taken to a club by one of our faculty members for a sports session. Once myself and my Pakistani colleague were playing 'shuttle badminton' very casually; one of our colleagues watching us playing very casually commented, "Oh, a match between India and Pakistan…. Interesting". Suddenly my Pakistani colleague. Mr.Khan, started playing seriously and won the game. We were good friends, sharing our experiences and moving together. But the very mention of the names of the countries and the tenor of comment made, my Pakishtani colleague became more emotional to win a very casually played game.

Back home, when I was the Special Officer (Rinderpest Eradication Scheme) at Hyderabad, accompanied Dr.W.P.Taylor, Consultant of European Commission for 'National Project on Rinderpest Eradication (NPRE)' to Mahbubnagar from Hyderabad to oversee the infrastructure facilities and interact with Vets. During our 90 minute travel we exchanged many interesting professional experiences for successful vaccination campaign, monitoring and efficient disease monitoring systems.

Narrating his experiences in African countries, Dr.Taylor commented looking into my face, "Dr.Piedy the trained village level private vaccinators played a very crucial role in control of rinderpest disease with primitive infrastructure. Can you do that in India with your government employed workers effectively?".

To be very honest, his comment, appeared to me a challenge and had hurt my ego. All the while I was feeling that I had no ego and my peers, subordinate officers were also under the same impression. Dr.W.P.Taylor was very simple, always with smiling face and very knowledgeable, practical and scientist of repute; but appreciating the work in relatively not endowed with poor infrastructure and basic facilities and the query 'can you do it in India?' the five word question raked my mind and I took it seriously, not in countering his argument but in organisation of the work-force and successful coverage of vast numbers(cattle and buffaloes) in the state as per the "OIE Pathway for control and eradication of Rinderpest disease. Andhra Pradesh had become a show piece of successful implementation of NPRE programme in the country. Probably that might be due to national spirit and emotional

endurance. Always, I cherished the memories of NPRE programme in our state.

o. Indian Festivals, livestock and Society

When I look back to festival days in my boyhood days, I enjoyed 'Sankranthi' festival of three days which falls on 13th,14th and 15th of every January.The first day my grandmother used to wake up us early in the morning for ' Bhogi mantalu' means 'Litting fire' to a heap of dung cakes collected for the occasion and other materials,trash from the home. Apart from this there used to be a bigger 'fire' organised by the village community also followed with oil bath at our homes and putting on new cloths.

We were seven siblings including two sisters and had the privilege of an unlimited number of 'dosas' with lamb curry or fish curry with lot of gravy for breakfast that day. Otherwise the number of 'dosas 'was restricted to only three in rest of the year. Such was the privilege we had in our home and that was the only festival day we had non-vegetarian dish otherwise all festival days were strictly vegetarian days. In certain of the families that day evening they perform a brief ritual(Bhogi pallu) for young babies wherein the elderly women bless the baby by showering 'Regu pallu'(Berries) on their head for healthy long life in many parts of Andhra Pradesh state.The second day was 'Sankranthi'. That day also families pray for the blessings of the departed souls and enjoy the most with their family and friends with variety of eatables in lunch and dinner. That day whole village would be agog with folk dances, cultural programmes, cock-fights, Ram fights, bull races, betting dens and so on. Presence of newly married daughters and sons-in-law is unique in this festival with all blood-relatives and friends in family 'get-together'.

With advent of movie theatres people crowd the theatres to watch newly released films in the evenings. Families enjoy a lot of decent fun with their sons-in- law by presenting new clothes and other presentations. In early mornings from 5 a.m. onwards the temples in the village would be overcrowded with people for blessings of the God for happy and prosperous life that year. The third day was 'Kanuma' exclusively for bulls,bullocks and cows. The 'Sankranti' festival is festival of farming communities as the harvested grains reach their homes. Earlier India was predominantly a Agricultural community.

The village would be abuzz with activities involving all communities in the village. Predominantly wages were paid in the shape of grains to agricultural-labour, rural artisans like carpenters, blacksmiths, goldsmiths,

washermen, barbers,cobblers, grave-yard keepers, animal carcass handlers etc belonging to various occupational groups. Of late such pratices are slowly disappearing from the village scenario. Otherwise every artisan had an important role in village social activities and they were recognised by the community and their welfare was taken care by the community.

During the first fortnight of January,very early morning(4 a.m.) we used to hear the voice of 'Jangama Devara' a person narrating the future prospects of the individual families going round the village at each house. Around 6 a.m,' Hari Dasu' singing in praise of the 'Lord' go round each of the house for 'alms'. After a while a group singing bhajans move from house to house and a small group with one or two decorated bulls followed with piped music visit every house in the village, blessing the head of the family and his family members with different gestures by the bulls attracting crowds around.

I always feel pity of my grand-children who are deprived of such interactions and lively fun which I enjoyed in my days as a school boy.

Every festival in Indian culture is indeed suffused with deep significance. They have been handed down by the ancient saints and seers who decoded the mysteries of the cosmos outside by meditating deeply on the cosmos within. Thanks to the intution and intense interest in the welfare of the mankind. These occasions of celebrations have stood the test of time to guide the humanity. 'Makara Sankranthi' is a Pan-Indian festival. It is called by different names, Pongal (Tamil Nadu), Maghi (Haryana and Himachal Pradesh), Kichidi (Uttar Pradesh and Bihar), and Bhogali Bihu(Assam). The festival of 'Sankranthi' signifies the beginning of 'Uttarayana' means Northward journey of the Sun. The belief is that it confers on us prosperity and helps us develop virtues and undertake sacred activities for betterment of society.

Since my school days I used to await holidays in every January for three day big festival, Sankranti. As far as I remember that the days were fixed, the first day on 13th, Bhogi festival, on 14th Sankaranthi festival and the third day, Kanuma festival (on 15th) till I attained sixty years of age in 2007. I vaguely remember my father saying the festivals were on 12th,13th and 14th of January when he was young.I was not serious about it then. In the year of my sixty first birth day, Sankranthi festival fell on 15th January. The Almanc experts opined that it was according to Tidhi on that day which I could not understand. On Sankaranthi day the 15th in the year 2020, I understood that as per Indian Almanc Time calculations, Sun enters the Zodiac sign of Makara Raasi(Capricorn) from Dhanu Raasi(Sagittarius) twenty minutes late every year as compared to World Time(Greenwich Mean Time). That means that

once in three years the Sun enters the Makara Raasi late by one hour that means in every cycle of seventy two years the Sun enters Makara Raasi late by one day, The Indian Almanac time is so accurate that Indian scholars could predict when exactly the Solar or Lunar eclipse will take place after five thousand years.That also means the Universe works strictly as per precision timings. I salute the ancient Indian wisdom.

Coming to third day of festivity, 'Kanuma' by and large, it is the festival of farm animals especially in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. During my tenure as Asst.Director at Tirupati I happened to watch the festival of farm animals in a village, by name Vallivedu near Pakala where one of our Rural Veterinary Dispensaries located, was very interesting.

On the day, at least one person from each household leave for nearby forest area with a knife and a big bag very early in the morning and collect tubers, some plant roots, leaves from medicinal plants and trees, bring home, cut into pieces mix them and pound them in traditional pounds and add lot of salt to the mix and feed the bulls,bullocks, cows individually by force with a belief that the mix has medicinal value and keep the 'fed' healthy throughout the year.

Every entrance door of the house in the village is decorated with 'paddy yarns' from the freshly harvested crop. All the cattle are driven to village tank or borewell or dugwell in their crop land, washed thoroughly, decorated with new belts, reins and with a paint on their horns. Every household cook 'pongal' in a new earthen pot in their front yard with installation of village deity 'Katamaraju'.The designated village 'washerman' performs 'puja' at every house. After the ritual the washeman sacrifices a country cock near the fire.He collects a part of pongal from each pot and mixes them in front of village deity of the community. By sunset all the cattle were driven to that point. The designated village washerman, after puja offers fifty percent of that mixed pongal to 'herd man' of the village. After this the villagers lit a big heap of firewood readied for the event. Looking at the razing fire the livestock run helter skelter to fields outside the village. Some villagers offer 'rams' in acknowledgement of their fulfilments. The remaining pongal after distribution to households was mixed with blood of sacrificed rams and the 'village gardener' was asked to sprinkle this 'poli' in their croplands with a belief of good crops in subsequent season. Through-out the month the women decorate their front yards with different designs of 'Rangoli'.On 'Kanuma day' they decorate with design of a chariot directed towards North indicating the change of direction of Sun as a ritual but this has the astronomical significance- a new learning for me.

p. The Mauryan Prime Minister-Present day Relevance

Till 1995, there were speculations among officers of AHD on career promotions because of partisan promotions based on categorisation in the department. Entry into government service was with a Bachelor's degree to start with. Later, after two years of service one had opportunity to opt for a special line like Key village section dealing with cattle and buffalo breeding services, livestock farm section, piggery section, disease investigation section and general veterinary hospital services. There were no strict guidelines(legally tenable) to accept and allocate different sections. Mostly option or acceptance went with whims and fancies of the officer heading that section. In certain sections especially in aforesaid first three sections because of introduction of new programmes for livestock development, the officers working in those sections got rank promotions earlier(in eight to ten-years) while it took two decades and plus years for officers working in general veterinary hospital services. I saw some of them retiring without any career promotion.

On prolonged and sustained legal battle, the system was put to an end with two streams, general line and disease investigation line as entry points at the time of getting into government service itself since 1996 onwards.

Since 1994 onwards the top post of department, the Director of Animal Husbandry got into legal duels between the aspirants of the post. Usually in such situations, the subordinate officers divide into two groups, one supporting the present incumbent and the other supporting the contesting officer and a minority group with neutral stance. For people like me, it was an embarrassing and unpleasant situation and I used to maintain equidistance with groups following them.

In 1996, one of the contenders, Dr.R.Panduranga Rao won his legal battle and got posted as Director of Animal Husbandry. The group supporting other officer fell silent and the group supporting the newly posted director was jubilant. Dr.R.Panduranga Rao was a direct recruit District Veterinary Officer and very popular officer wherever he worked. He never gave lenience to anybody and nobody could claim that he was close to him and can put a word to him.

First I happened to meet him when he was Joint Director at Anantapur to undergo training under him for three days as a young recruit(Assistant Director) in 1979. I observed his subordinate officers never took the liberty of talking first. I travelled with him on his field visits and found him talking to his subordinate officers with a commanding tone. He advised me, "Without

pleading, as a superior officer, you have to identify the needs of your subordinate officer and provide all that he deserves for successful results". He also said," You have to gauge his strengths and make best use of them by giving him the responsibility; if any weaknesses, help him to overcome them". He also added, "In my career, I never hurt anybody's career based on caste, creed or religion or group, always I used to see the brighter side of my officers". The three days acquaintance with him, laid in me a strong foundation in my professional career in the department. My personal feeling was that he was often misunderstood by his officers because of occasional intemperate body language in later part of his career and used to express the feeling of insult. But, never I had such a situation.

On evening of the day of his taking charge as the DAH, I went to his residence in VBRI campus, congratulating him I looked at him and said,"Sir, you know Chanakya, the mentor of Mauryan emperor, Chandragupta (321-297 BC.). Chanakya advised him to have Rakshasa the faithful Prime minister of his slain enemy, Dhananand of Nanda clan. Chandragupta surprised at the suggestion as Rakshasa himself plotted to kill Chandragupta.

Interrupting me, Dr.R.Panduranga Ranga Rao said," Dr.Sreeramulu, I understand what you mean?…

Thanking him, I left for my home.

q. The Cloned buffalo and My excitement

A team of scientists from Agri Biotech Foundation and National Institute of Animal Biotechnology(NIAB) were at National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI) Karnal, Haryana state to organise a workshop from 18th-20th, March, 2013. I was one of the facilitators of the workshop for multi stake-holders consultation for identification of research priorities for newly established NIAB to improve livestock productivity with specific biotechnological interventions.

On 19th during intersession break I seized the opportunity of visiting the Dairy unit of NDRI. I got excited looking at 'Garima II' nick named as 'Gamini one' the world's first 'cloned buffalo', and its calf from artificial insemination' 'Garima II' born on Aug 26th, 2010. Garima II was born from embryonic stem cell. Its calf was named 'Mahima', born out of artificial insemination from an elite bull proving the fertility status of cloned Garima II at the Institute.

NDRI which was established in 1923 at Bangalore as Imperial Dairy Research Institute later shifted to Karnal as NDRI in1947. This was a pioneer-

ing research Institute which produced the world's first IVF buffalo in 2009 which died five days after birth but the dedicated team continued the work.

On 9th March, 2012 world's first Pashmina goat 'Noori' was produced by nuclear transfer method at Srinagar in collaboration with Sher-a-Kashmir University of Agriculture science and technology. It was a wonderful experience talking to the team of scientists of department of biotechnology associated with this project at National Dairy Research Institute. This elite group of scientists were very simple with compassion and very strong commitment to the work with dedication. They lured me with a sensational announcement to be made next day.

The next day the announcement was made about the birth of another first, a clone of a female buffalo calf born from somatic cell of semen. The calf was named as 'Swarn' (20th March, 2013). Every Veterinarian should feel proud of such path breaking research outputs.

r. Rain of doubts

After my retirement from government service on completion of 58 years of age on 31-8-2005, I kept myself busy with some small assignments such as 'Capitalisation of Live stock Policy & Initiative (CALPI)' in 2006. Under that project a study on perception of field functionaries(veterinary assist surgeons) was envisaged. Our team was at Ongole town, AP after completing the process in districts of Adilabad, Mahabubnagar and Chittoor.

After the task at Ongole, our team had to return to Hyderabad and we were at Ongole railway station sitting in the waiting hall due to delay in arrival of the train by more than two hours though we were informed every time that the train's arrival was delayed by 30 min.

Unable to bear the delay, one of my young colleagues, Dr. Mamtha started working on her laptop intermittently seeking some clarification from me as I was in conversation with the joint director (AH), Ongole and a few VASs who were there to see us off. There were about 15 well dressed women in chit-chat behind us. Suddenly one of the talkative woman, enquired me, "Who are you all?" I introduced myself and other officials.

Next query was, pointing towards Dr.Mamta, "Did she belong to your group?" To my nod in affirmation, the next question was, "Do you use computers in your work?" For a moment, I did not catch what she meant? When repeated I gained my consciousness and said, "Yes". Taking the opportunity, I elaborated that Animal Husbandry Department have its own website which anybody could access for the detailed information.

To my explanation, every one of the womenfolk observing us was wonderstruck. Still one or two other women asked probing questions. Perceiving that there was enough time I asked the womenfolk," Do you have any idea about the importance of milch animals and rural poultry in ivelihoods of the rural poor?". One of them responded saying, "Yes, I know about it well, in my village many peasant families have all these livestock and poultry; my father and mother worked hard for crop cultivation; milch animals and poultry provided us supplemental income". Many of them, appeared to be urban bred women and had little idea about livestock rearing. When I said that one can get a minimum of Rs 1500/- and maximum of Rs 2500/- income from each country fowl they did not believe me. I found "how" question mark in their faces and I explained the how part, adding that many a time the rural poor were unable to reap that income because of ignorance, non- seriousness coupled with apathy of everybody in the community. Explained in-detail about how rural folks refuse to get their birds vaccinated at no cost and de- wormed with lowest cost with resultant heavy losses to themselves. It was for people like you to bring awareness and support the field functionaries of AHD.

Hearing the announcement that train to Hyderabad was arriving in ten minutes, they said, "Apart from publicising our political party policies, we also publicise this type of information to rural public in our future endeavours." The women folk were party workers from different parts of the state of Andhra Pradesh gathered at Ongole to attend a meeting of Bharateeya Janatha Party(BJP) Mahila Yuva Morcha. We also said bye-bye and boarded the train.

s. Inspections then and now

In 1981, during one of my visits to Mini Semen Bank at Madanapalle in Chittoor district, after my work that late evening, watching the lights on in Veterinary Hospital contiguous with Mini Semen Bank, peeped into the room. Finding the senior Dr. V. Rama Subba Reddy, VAS busy with his records, saying hello to him, I settled in one of the chairs opposite to him. Looking at crux in my face he said," Sir,I am updating all my hospital records to get ready for annual inspection by joint director".

I briefed him about my visit details with a word of caution not to allow any cattle attending Veterinary Hospital stray into the premises of bull sheds of mini semen bank to avoid cross infections.

Suddenly my looks fell on a fairly large register arousing my curiosity to look into it. The VAS said," It is old 'Inspection Register' of the British era since the inception of VH at Madanapalli (1916/17) under Madras province.

With his consent, I was going through the register. It was very interesting to note the inspection remarks, by a 'Veterinary Inspector' then designation of a Regional Officer who stayed for four days for inspection of the Veterinary Hospital.

The remarks on stock position at the hospital in 1938 was very amusing and puzzling one for me.

- Tr. gingiberis was short by 12 fluid drachms
- Pulvis. gingiberis was short by two ounces and 10 grains
- Magsulph was short by 4 pounds 2 ounces and so on……

At the fascinating count of 'all pin' sheets and hypodermic needles to individual numbers, I was wondering how scrupulous the officers of those days were with reference to accounting of stock of government property.

In the 1950s and early 1960s the stress was more on records as well. Late 60s onwards the sphere of activities of Veterinarian increased with stress on extension activities after introduction of Three tier Panchayat Raj system and programmes on augmentation of livestock production activities with focus on milk production and related activities. A stage has come that the VAS was constrained to spend less time in real veterinary work.

As inspection officers, we were focusing more on production activities, so called extension activities and public relations rather than on stock verification to the level of grams or ounces. As the volume of work involved in terms of number of institutions as well as activities, we were not in a position to do such leisurely, stock verification work; time was the constraint.

Once during my tour of Khammam district somewhere in 2003, I happened to visit a Veterinary Dispensary in a remote corner of the district. Recognising me, the young Vet came to me while I was getting down from my Jeep. I noticed that the Vet was feeling embarrassed as his sitting room was found congested with feed and fodder seed bags and deworming drugs.

Looking at the scenario I consoled VAS and asked him, "Doctor, do not worry about my sitting. We can sit under that tree shade. Please ask your attender to put two chairs there and tell your VA to bring your patient's register, OBR register, feed stock register, seed stock register and medicines stock register."

I asked for the details of stock entries in their respective registers and distribution registers. I spent about thirty minutes verifying and tallying the details and signed all the registers in token of my surprise visit.

Thanking him I got up to leave. The Vet was hesitating to ask something. Sensing his dilemma I asked him, "Doctor speak out. Do not hesitate".

The Vet asked me," Sir, without any fuss you have elicited out all the needed information from me. Don't you believe us, the field vets?.

To clear his doubt with a smile I continued," Doctor, I am satisfied with your record maintenance. This process is not to harass you. But only to support you. When an Additional Director cadre Officer from Directorate, visits and his certification is an authentication for you. I did this only to help you". The Vet felt happy and I left the place.

As inspection officers, we were looking to satisfy ourselves whether the stocks were genuinely utilized or not if not, suitable remedial measures were taken and necessary guidance was given to the 'inspected officer'. There was a sea of change in attitude of inspecting officers compared to earlier periods.

t. As a Member of Study group on Rinderpest

That was in 1996, I felt happy on hearing that I was nominated as one of the members of a study group from Dr.Azit Maru of National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), Anand representing the Technology Mission Dairy Development (TMDD) and Convenor of the Study Group.

The Study Group on 'Riderpest disease' was constituted by the National Advisory Committee on Control of Animal Diseases (NACCAD) of the TMDD in September 1995.

It was a great experience as a Member of the group along with other members, Dr.A.T.Venugopalan, Director of Centre for Animal Health, Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Dr.S.T.Pandya of Gujarat and Dr.Ajit Maru visiting Southern states and Gujarat and interacting with concerned scientists and officials of state governments and non-government organisations and obtaining information on vaccine production, diagnostic facilities and legislations on rinderpest disease and rinderpest like diseases.

Our study group finalised the report in April 1996. Indeed, it was an cheering experience.

u. Private Truth and a Public Lie

It was sometime in 1955 when I was in fifth standard in Chodavaram of Visakhapatnam district, one evening while I was playing with a few boys of my age group, I heard my friend's mother of my neighbourhood admonishing him for neglecting his studies and always playing; pointing her fingers at me

she scolded her boy saying, "Look at him though he is a 'Sudra' boy, he scores good marks always and you fellow having birth in 'Brahmin' family you never match with him in studies, behaviour and discipline". At that young age I could not understand what she meant.

The instructions from my grandmother were, before the evening lights were on I should be at home with my younger siblings. This would be followed with study hour. My grandmother used to sit with us and apart from class books, we used to study moral stories, Vemana Satakam, Sumati Satakam, Krishna Satakam poetry etc. My grandmother regularly used to narrate stories of Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavata etc, all these chores were audible to our neighbourhood separated by wooden sheets like a wall when we were in the corridor of our house.

When I asked my grandmother about what was meant by 'Sudra', she told me about the caste system evolved over the period which I could not understand well at that time. I recollected my early school days in Madras; we were residing in Triplicane area and in the evenings we played regularly in large open area within the compound of a temple nearby in our locality daily.

As soon as 'Kaimkaryam"(a ritual of offering food to presiding deity) the temple bells rang, and men, women, their boys and girls residing in temple street ran into main temple for 'Prasadam'; once all those people left after taking prasadam, we were allowed into 'que' for prasadam. Those days, I did not understand why this discrimination was?

In high school I still vaguely remember my Telugu language teacher explaining us a sloka in which a Muni Patni (wife of a sage) in a hermitage when asked about her off-springs, she narrated that she had two brahmin sons, one Kshatriya son and two Sudra sons and so on totalling twelve children. Many of us in the class room got stumbled at that narration and requested our teacher to elaborate as we could not understand what the wife of sage was saying, as our little minds with an already prefixed idea that the pious lady was from hermitage means she must be a Brahmin and her children must be Brahmins only. Smiling at our confused minds and our eagerness to know, our teacher elaborated that the wife of sage was meant that two Brahmans boys, craving for more knowledge, one kshatriya boy with an attitude of wielding authority and two Sudra boys with an inclination for hard work in gardening, carpentry, blacksmithy etc. Earlier there was nothing like any caste system in our society. Based on the attitudes, aptitudes and occupations people were grouped into several segments.

Our teacher also explained what Lord Sri Krishna said to desolate Arjuna, emphatically that the designated caste was not from birth but from the attitude and occupation in Bhagavad Gita. Unfortunately, over the period, the society adopted and made to believe that one's caste would be identified with his/her birth.

In the late 1950s and 60s we lived in Elamanchili, a small town in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. My residence was nearer and by the road side leading to the railway station. While I was about to finish my lunch in our residence, I heard loud noise of shoutings and counter shoutings by two groups of people near a small shop on roadside. Out of curiosity, myself and some more boys from neighbourhoods rushed towards the shop to watch what was happening there. Some elderly people are trying to pacify both the warning groups.

It appeared that a person asked for a pan from the shop owner and he was busy readying the pan. Meanwhile the other gentleman looking at the hung banana bunch was testing the ripeness by touching the bananas. The shop fellow told him not to touch the banana bunch otherwise 'pallu ralatai' in vernacular Telugu means, the bananas (pallu/fruits)would fall down(ralatai). But the customer misunderstood the shop-keeper was threatening him to hit his teeth to the ground. It appears that the shopfellow told him not to touch fruits repeatedly. That lead to heated arguments between them. Naturally it attracted the attention of the people passing by. Unfortunately in a strange coincidence the shop fellow belonged to 'Kapu community' of Dharmavaram area and the other fellow was from 'Gavara' community of Gavarapeta area. Ultimately it turned into a caste war and the local police could not control the clashes and additional forces were brought from neighbouring towns to quell the clashes. It was a simple misunderstanding which culminated into a clash, a preventable one.

During my college days, I saw students forming in to caste groups and fighting during students union elections with intention of domination and a few teachers extending silent support.

On the occasion of my marriage in 1973 at Tirumala,Tirupati, my father met some of his old friends almost after 40 years. One of my Professors, attending my marriage happened to meet my uncle and asked him "How is that though we are so closely related, Sreeramulu, never told me about our relationship". During my student career I had never approached anybody for any favour based on caste or relationship.

One day when I was travelling with my other colleagues from AHC Vijayawada and other VASs in a jeep with district level officers in the front seat, I overheard their conversation when the district officer was enquiring the Assistant director "How these three VASs were brought to AHC far from Srikakulam district? Did you not find our men in Krishna or Guntur district?

One day at AHC, I was busy updating my records while an attender from field unit while taking delivery of vaccines from my lab. technician, found murmuring himself, "My VAS came from another district and shows authoritarian behaviour, he doesn't understand our might here and so on". In spite of whispering from my lab technician, the attender was grumbling still. Intolerant to his behaviour, I raised my head and asked him to stop criticising his officer and do not show up his caste group pride and place of pride. He kept quiet then.

In 1985 at Tirupati, looking at class progress card of my daughter (second standard), I asked her why she had scored poor marks. Without a pause, she complained, "My teacher puts more marks to students of her caste". For a moment, I was stumbled at her explanation. When I had shared this shocking experience with one of my veterinary doctors, he said, "It is the order of the day, things are happening like that, we cannot blame her". I was pondering over how at that tender age she could say and this experience would work in her mind as she grow up..A sad experience for me.

Somewhere in 1986, I was with my Animal Husbandry Minister, Sri.Rajagopala Reddy to see him off at Tirupati railway station. We were on the platform waiting for the train for Hyderabad. Meanwhile, one Head constable in railway station came running to the minister and greeted him. The minister was talking to him very affectionately and enquiring about welfare of his family members. Silently I stood observing them..Just then a gentle man in the attire of a politician got down from the train just arrived opposite to us. Seeing the minister, that gentleman greeted him. The minister introducing the Head constable to him said, "I think, you know him, he is from our place and brother's son of Inspector Reddy who shot Alluri Seetha Rama Raju of Manyam revolt against British in Chintapalli area of Visakhapatnam district". The gentleman could not recognise the Head constable and asked him," Did you meet me any time in our place? I knew your uncle and his family members well. This time when I am at home you meet me". The Head constable nodded his head. During their conversation I understood that the gentleman was a Member of Parliament from Cuddapah, Sri.D.S.Reddy. It took long time for me just to understand the bondage of caste factor at the highest echelon.

To make governance and government machinery more accessible to the governed, the newly elected government lead by sri.N.T.Rama Rao introduced 'Mandal Praja Parishat system' at the fag end of the year 1986 and elections to elect Mandal Presidents were announced in April,1987.I was designated as Special Officer to Chandragiri Mandal and allocated the responsibility of conduct of election. Election was over and on designated day the counting was to be started by 10 a.m. but because of repolls in some villages in an adjacent mandal, we could start counting only at 5 p.m. after the polling process was completed. I was election officer with responsibility of counting and declaration of the winning candidate also. I started the counting process as per the rule book systematically and could finish only at 4 a.m. All the time I was sitting without moving out while my two Assistant election officers, a lady Block Development Officer and a male Tahsildar aged 50 years taking turns to take rest for a while. Even when election agents repeatedly requested me to relax for a while and let them also take some siesta, I did not budge.

There was noise outside the room for the delay among the two groups. Some of the election agents also started grumbling and started blaming me that I was intentionally delaying the process because of caste equations, while the other fellows commented that because of a phone call from an important person, it was being delayed. I did not respond. I continued my task and declared the winner and issued the' certificate' to the winner by 4 a.m. and lied down on the table for one hour and by 5.30 a.m. I reached my home and slept till 9.00 a.m.

My wife woke me up and informed that about ten persons came to meet me and waiting for on our terrace. I was surprised to see the election agents and party workers from both the parties. They pleaded with me,"Sir, you have done your work very systematically and impartially; kindly, do not take to heart the outbursts at you by some of our colleagues. We mistook you for your community based on your surname. Kindly forget about all those comments". I laughed it off and they left profusely thanking me.

My surname 'Piedy' was also found in a community with strong political lineage in Kadapa district. This led them to cast caste blemish on me on that day.

Once I had encountered with a peculiar scenario in 1996 when I visited Reddygudem village about fifty kilometers away from Guntur to findout the status of Poultry units supported by AP Scheduled castes development finance corporation. I went into a colony, a Harijanawada. It was in May month and one can imagine the atmospheric temperature of 41 degree centigrade at

noon. I requested for drinking water from an household and with some hesitation the lady gave me water in a big shining bronze tumbler and I felt relaxed drinking that cool water from an earthen pot and thanked her profusely. I enquired about her unit and she replied that none of the six households could continue the units for lack of assistance from bank because of long pending dues to bank.

One young man was assisting me during my discussions. When I asked him what about other units, he said that they were with people of Arundhatiwada nearby. I requested him to show me the way and he accompanied me for some distance and showed me a cluster of houses and pleaded that he could not follow me into the colony. I did not understand such a sudden change in his attitude. When I insisted him, he said," Sorry sir, I cannot come as it is Arundhati colony". I could not understand what he meant. On further probing, he said, "I do not enter into that colony as they belong to 'Madiga community' and I belong to 'Mala community'. Now it was my turn to stumble.

In this tide, I was also one of the victims of caste politics and I lost the opportunity of retiring from service as Director of Animal Husbandry in spite of my seniority, qualification, hard work, and good name.

I always believed in destiny.



Epilogue

When I look back, during the first ten years of my career I was with microscopes, test tubes, and animals in focus. Next decade and half, my focus was on animals and people with animals. In the last decade, my heart was with institution building and institutions working for the people with animals. In this self-evolutionary stages of my career, I am enriched by my seniors, my peers, professional colleagues, intellectuals, other people who worked with me, livestock farmers and animals as well.

I loved reading James Herriot, best known for writing series of books in the 1970s on Veterinary practice, animals and their owners. I surprised to learn from one of his books that he was paid only thirty shillings per week to assist a senior Veterinary practitioner after his graduation from Cambridge Veterinary School in late 1930s. Once, late Dr.C.Krishna Rao,the doyen of Veterinary profession, showed me his first appointment letter as Veterinary Assistant urgeon(VAS) in 1940. I startled seeing his pay scale as Rs.40/-Rs.5/- Rs.80/-. Thirty years later, my father expressed his excitement looking at my first appointment letter as VAS with pay scale of Rs.300/-Rs.30/-Rs.600/- In 1971 and said, "I am glad that you have started where I have ended my government career as Tahsildar."

We have to recognise that the livestock economy is gaining in importance with changing consumer tastes towards meat and dairy products. So one has to take a scientific and evidence based approach by employing consultations and diagnostic/scoping studies and draw on the rich research experience in India. One should keep in mind the location specific differences in livestock intensification progrmmes. In general poor are less able to increase their welfare through livestock than the rich and the poor would be pushed back into dependence on common property resources and traditional occupations, if sectoral interventions are not tailored carefully. The poor require support to better access to technology, capital and information.

Apart from my assigned job responsibilities I had the opportunity of association with institution building processes and operationalisation of activities in collaboration with Dairy Unions, Sheep Breeders' Associations, and some Non-Government Organisations actively involved in Livestock Development activities and Research.

In summing up my personal reflection I felt that livestock species are multifunctional ie they generate multiple outputs. Each of the output has

economic value, though its relative utility may vary over space and time. Added to this, there is poor awareness regarding importance of livestock in livelihoods. Many of us are astonishingly ignorant about these things as we are not adequately exposed or trained to perceive. A truth can walk naked… but a lie always needs to be dressed.

In our country livestock production as carried out by millions of small farmers varies across class, gender and caste and is differnt in various agro-ecological regions. We should promote facilitation of knowledge sharing platforms, value based changes for key service providers and increased women's participation in livestock rearing and production.

On the institutional front efforts should be on mobilizing rearers and organizing them into rearers groups/ associations/ co-operatives. Existing groups need to be strengthened. Pilots need to be developed to promote equity based representation of women in the rearer organizations. Other than governmental initiatives outside agencies like NGOs can be given proper space to facilitate bringing in synergies/convergence, thus empowering the rearers.

Keeping this in mind we should give adequate emphasis on cultivating logical and scientific habits of thought, clarity of expression, independence of judgement, ability to collect information and to correlate them to develop habits of self-education at graduate study level itself to shatter the myth ' we know it all, we are right' in our young veterinary brethern. Client communication skills and professional ethics need special attention.

Chanakya's 'Neetisaram' and Kandukuri Veeresalingam's "Jantu Swabhava Charitam'(The story of Animal behaviour) exhorts twenty qualities of wild(lion), dull and less valued animals and birds(crane, cockrel,crow',dog and donkey) to be imbibed for success and happiness in one's life. I strongly believed in it and followed.

Om Sairam

ABBREVIATIONS

– A –

ABF	Agri Biotech Foundation
ACB	Anti Corruption Bureau
AHC	Animal Health Centre
AHD	Animal Husbandry Department
APAU	Andhra Pradesh Agriculture University
APDAI	Andhra Pradesh Drought Adaptation Initiative
APDDCF	Andhra Pradesh Dairy Development Corporation
APLDA	Andhra Pradesh Livestock Development Agency
APNLBP	Andhra Pradesh Netherlands Biotechnology Programme
APSCFC	Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Castes Cooperative Federaton Corporation

– B –

BAIF	Bharatiy Agro Industries Foundation

– C –

CAG	Comptroller & Auditor General
CALPI	Capitalization of Livestock Experences in India
CD	Compact Disc
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CLRI	Central Leather Research Institute
CM	Chief Minister
CPA	Chief Project Advisor

– D –

DAH	Director of Animal Husbandry
DFZ	Disease Free Zone
DGH	Director General of Health
DVO	District Veterinary Officer

– E –

ED	Executive Director

– F–

FMD	Foot & Mouth Disease

– G –

GM	General Manager
GOI	Govt. of India
GTRP	Goat Tissue Rinderpest Vaccine

– I –

ICAR	Indian Council of Agriculture Research
IPS	Indian Police Service
ISNRMPA	Indo-Swiss Natural Resource Management Project Andhra Pradesh
ISPA	Indo-Swiss Project Andhra Pradesh
ITDA	Intensive Tribal Development Agemcy
IVRI	Indian Veterinary Research Institute

– J –

JVO	Junior Veterinary Officer

– M –

MD	Managing Director
MPP	Mandal Praja Parishat
MVC	Madras Veterinary College
MVD	Minor Veterinary Dispensary

– N –

NDDB	National Dairy Development Board
NDRI	National Dairy Research Institute
NIAB	National Institute of Animal Biotechnology
NIHSAD	National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases
NPCBB	National Project on Cattle & Buffaloe Breeding

– P –

PBS	Pig Breeding Station
PCP	Progressive Control Pathway
PHC	Primary Health Centre
PPLPI	Pro-Poor Livestock Policy Initiative
PPR	Peste des Petits Ruminants
PWD	Public Works Department

– R –

RA	Research Assistant
RPCP	Rinderpest Chck Post
RPIB	Rinderpest Immune Belt
RTC	Road Transport Corporation
RVD	Rural Veteriary Dispensary

– S –

SPWC	Sri Padmavati Women's College
SVPA	Sardar Vallabbhai Patel Police Academy
SWOT	Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats

– T –

TMSS	Traditional Milk Supply System

– V –

VA	Veterinary Assistant
VAS	Veterinary Assistant Surgeon
VBRI	Veterinary Biologicals & Research Institute
VD	Veterinary Dispensary
VLDA	Visakha Livestock Development Agency
VLI	Veterinary Livestock Inspector

– W –

WASSAN	Watershed Support Services Activities Network

– Z –

ZPP	Zilla Praja Parishad



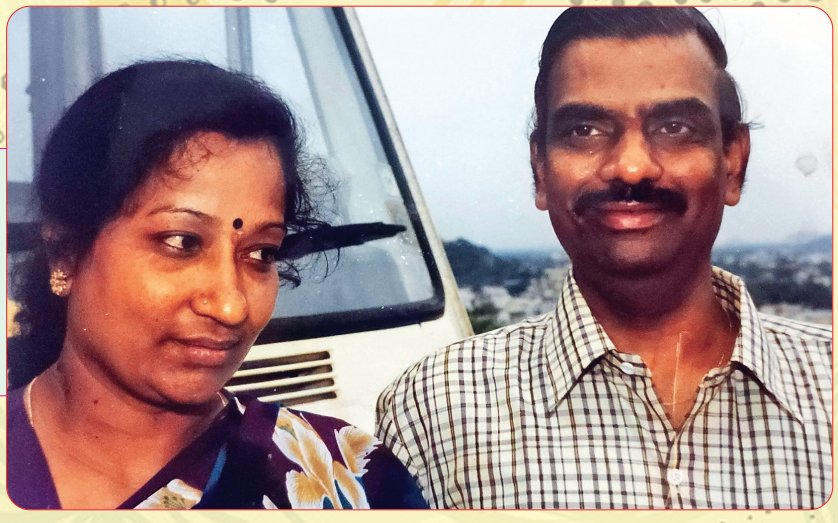
As a Toddler



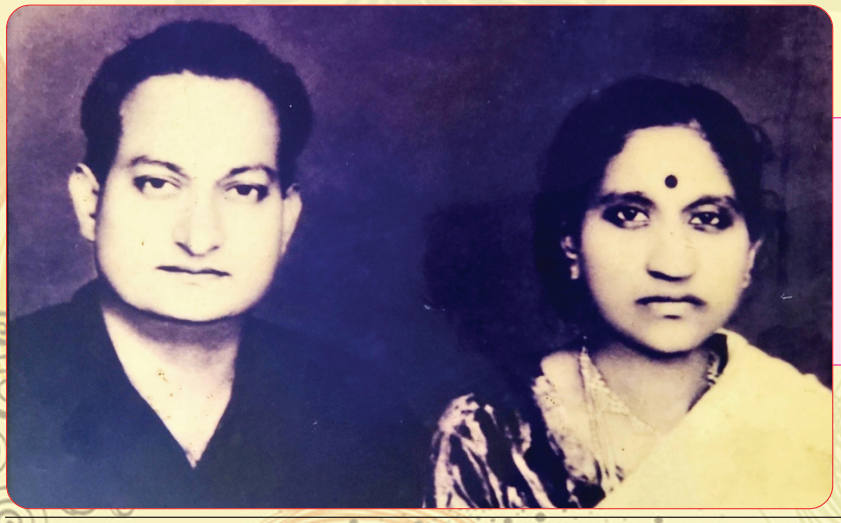
My Parents



My
Grandparents



With
my spouse



My
Parents-in-Law



In a fancy dress competition, 1965



In a play 'Dantavedantam' on College Anniversary,1967



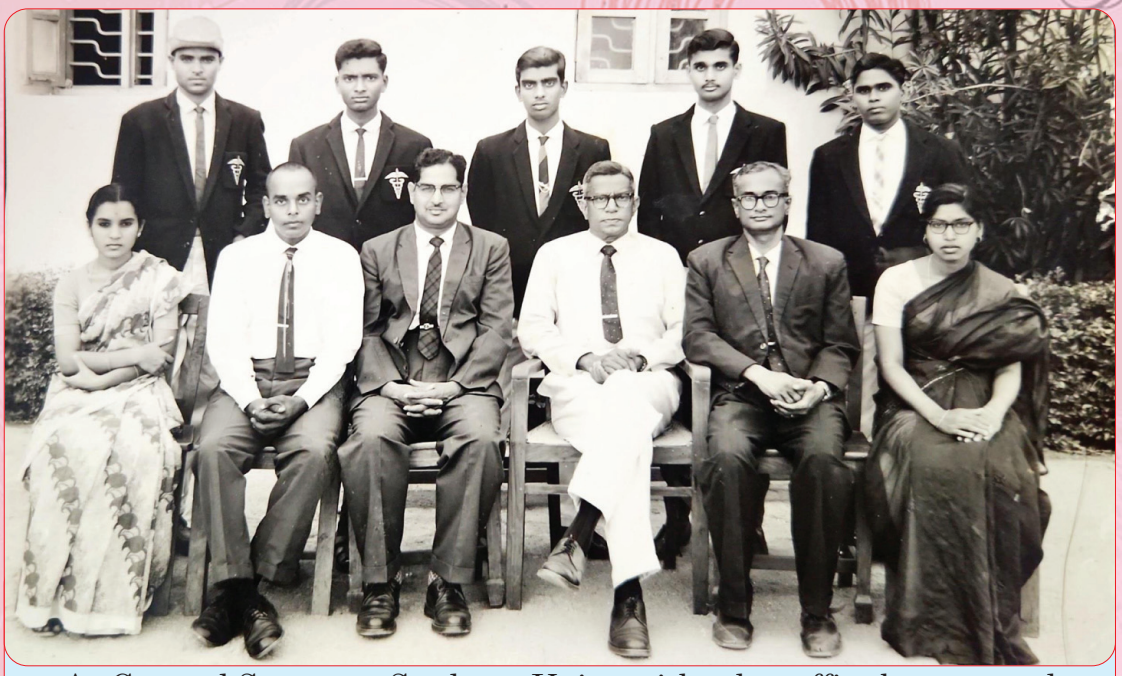
Prize for
Debate Competition
in 1965 from
Dr.C.Krishna Rao,
DAH

With Padma Sri.
A. Nageswara Rao
in our college
auditorium, 1968

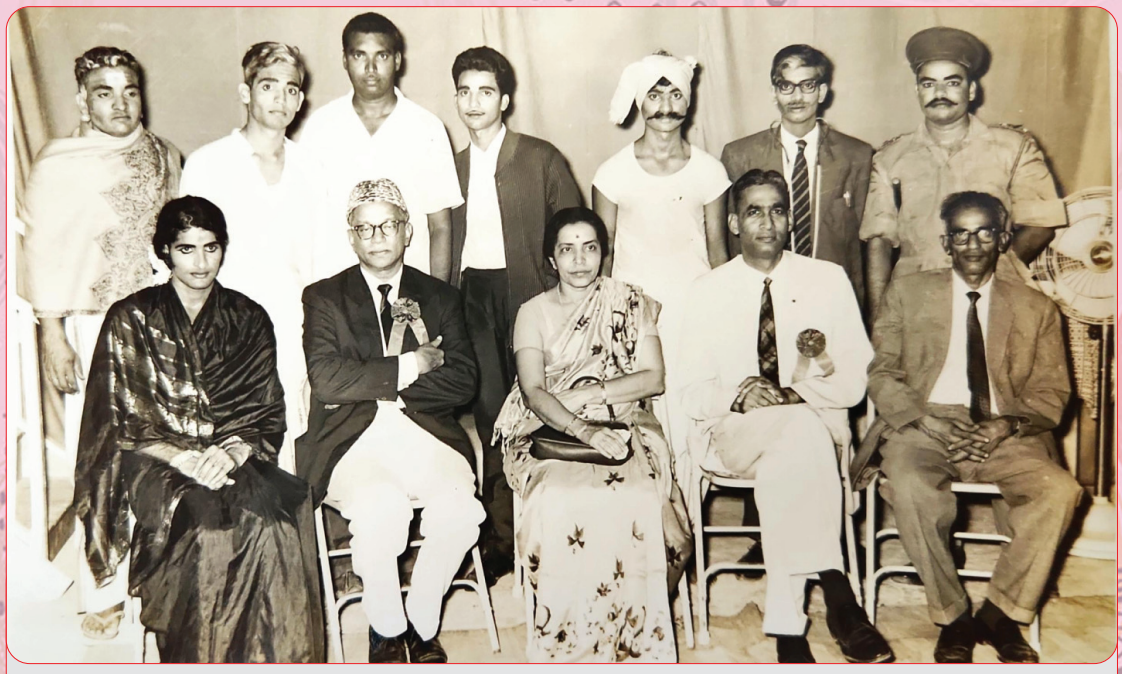




As Office bearer
of College Students
Union with
Vice-chancellor
Sri O. Pulla Reddy, APAU,
1967 and acting Principal
Dr.Ganti A.Sastry
flanking
Sri.Agarala Eswara
Reddy, Board
Member & MLA



As General Secretary Students Union with other office bearers and Dr.P.S.Rajulu, Principal, Ganti A.Sastry,Vice-Principal,Dr.P.Varadarajulu & Dr.K.Sathyanarayana Rao, Advisors,1967-1968



With Dr.Y.Nayudamma,Director,CLRI,Madras, Principal and Dr.A.Venkatarathnam,Advisor



As a Chief-guest
at a Literary Meet
at Vizianagaram,
1988

As a Judge
at a cattle show
in Bobbili, 1989





As the
Project Director
Indo-Swiss Project
AP (1997-2000)



At Vishwa Shanti Stupa in Rajgir (Bihar) with the Board of Directors of Mahbubnagar Cattle Breeders Association & my colleagues from ISPA on a study tour in Bihar state, 1998.



Steadfast attempts of popularisation of enrichment process of paddystraw 1980s & 1990s



Receiving K.S.Nair Memorial Gold Medal for
the best article published in Indian Veterinary Journal for the year 1989
in an Annual convention of Indian Veterinary Association at Mysore
from the Karnataka Minister sri Aziz Sait.



Speaking at a Farmers Meet at Hyderabad 1999.



With my Swiss colleagues, Mr.Henk opt Held, Chief Project Advisor & Ms.Annette Kolf, Advisor (1997-2000)

With my colleagues and Dr.R.Mohana Rao, DAH at the venue of Common Wealth Veterinary Conference in Bangalore, 1998





Briefing the leader of the committee of European Commission about research & development activities at AgriBiotech Foundation, Rajendranagar, 2012



With Swiss Project Colleagues, Dr.A.M.Khan, DAH, Faculty members of MANAGE, and Trainees at a Valedictory event.



At MDF, Ede-Wageningen, Netherlands,with my faculty and colleague participants at Valedictory event on 27/3/1995



Interacting with women participants of poultry complex,
Nizamabad district, 1996



With students from Agriculture College, Nepal
on a visit to AgriBiotech Foundation (2012).



As a participant of International workshop on Morals and Ethics in Biotechnology Research at AgriBiotech Foundation Hyd



With the Women Group for Rural Biotechnologies(NGO) in Nalgonda district and Prof.G.Pakki Reddy, CEO, ABF & a Scientist from Wageningen University, Netherlands



At the Valedictory of training in Advanced Biotechnologies for graduate students of Women's College, Koti.



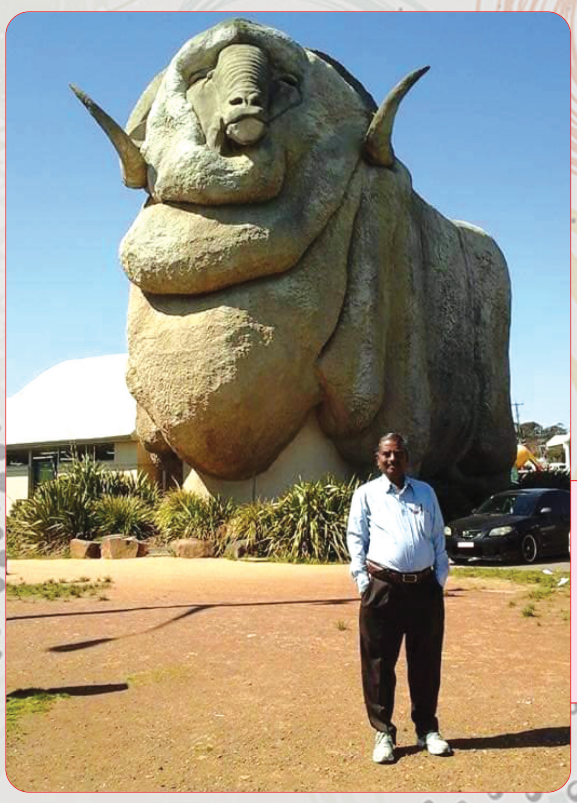
Briefing Mr. Bob Heinch, The Netherlands Ambassador at the Exhibition of "Applied rural biotechnologies" at Regional Agriculture Research Station, Palem, Mahbubnagar Dist., Dr. G. Pakki Reddy, CEO, ABF & Dr.S.Ramachander, JDAH TS looks on (2008)



Speaking to farmers on “Agribiotechnologies” in a Public Awareness Programme at Garladinne of Anantapur Dt(2009)



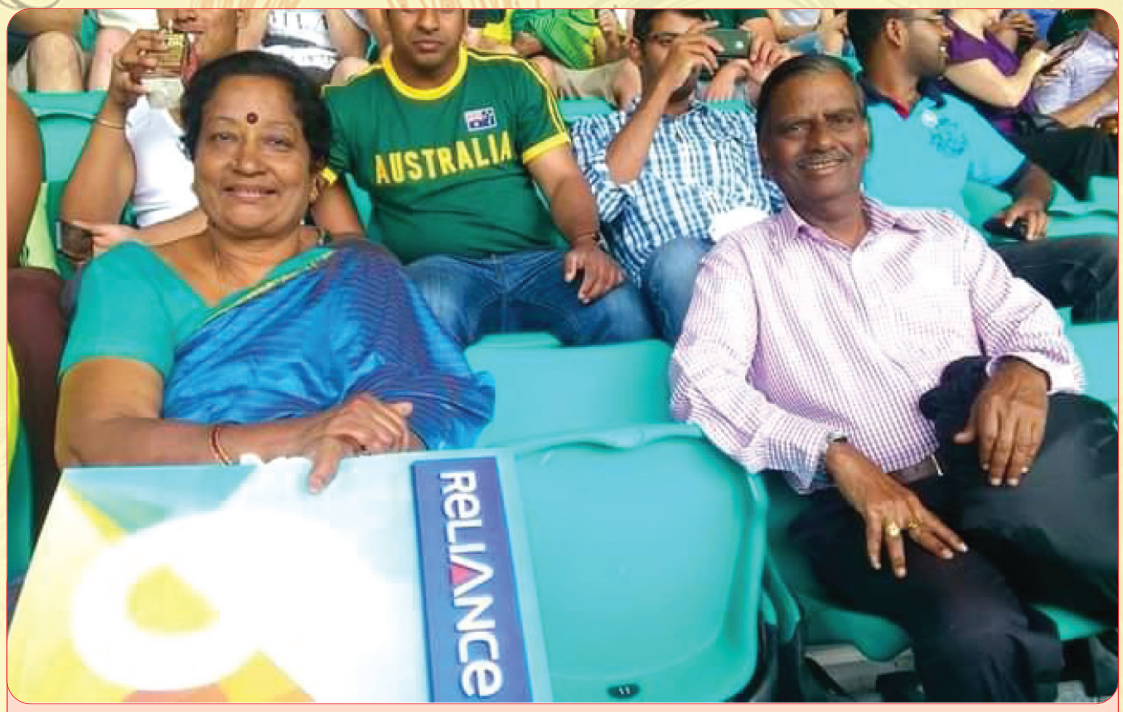
As one of the guests of honours at the 25th Anniversary of Nataraja(Laksmi) Dance School at Vizianagaram in 2013.



With the 100-tonne Merino Ram model at Goulburn, NSW, Australia (2015)



With Dr.M.S.Swaminathan, Dr.M.V.Rao, Faculty members and post-graduate research students at ABF Hyderabad (2010)



Watching cricket match in Sydney Cricket Ground with my wife (2015)



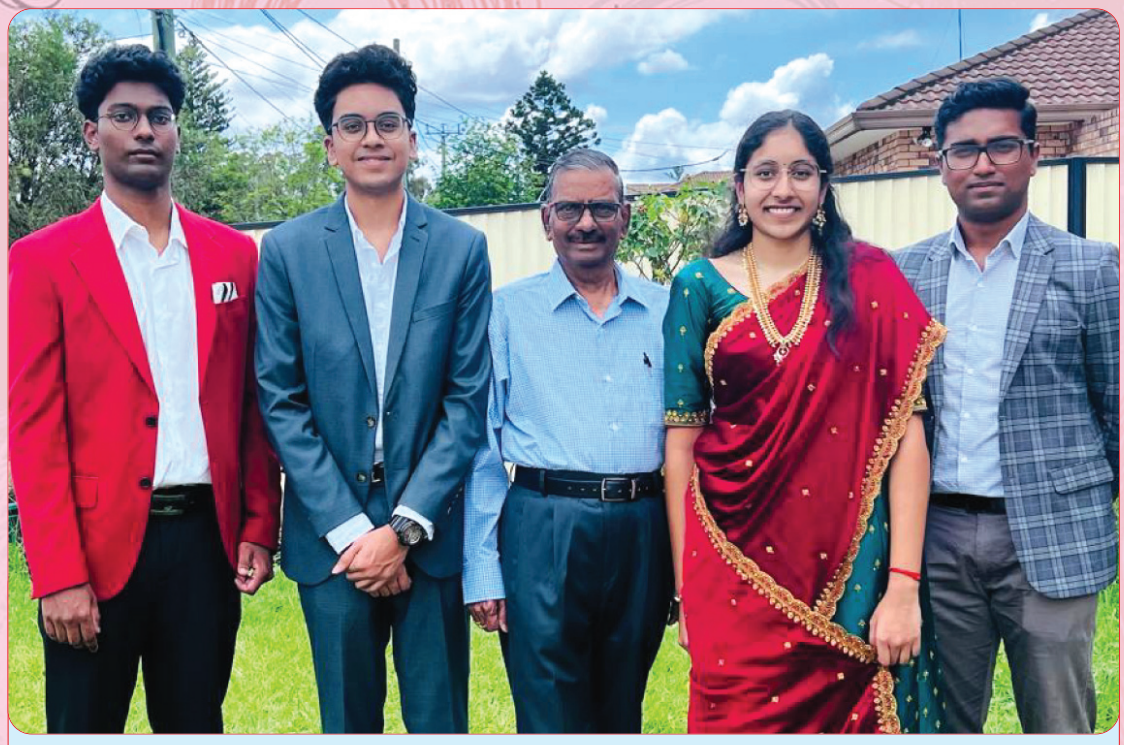
With family members on my 45th marriage anniversary on 2/11/2018



My siblings



My son and daughter with their families



With my grandchildren Dec, 2023



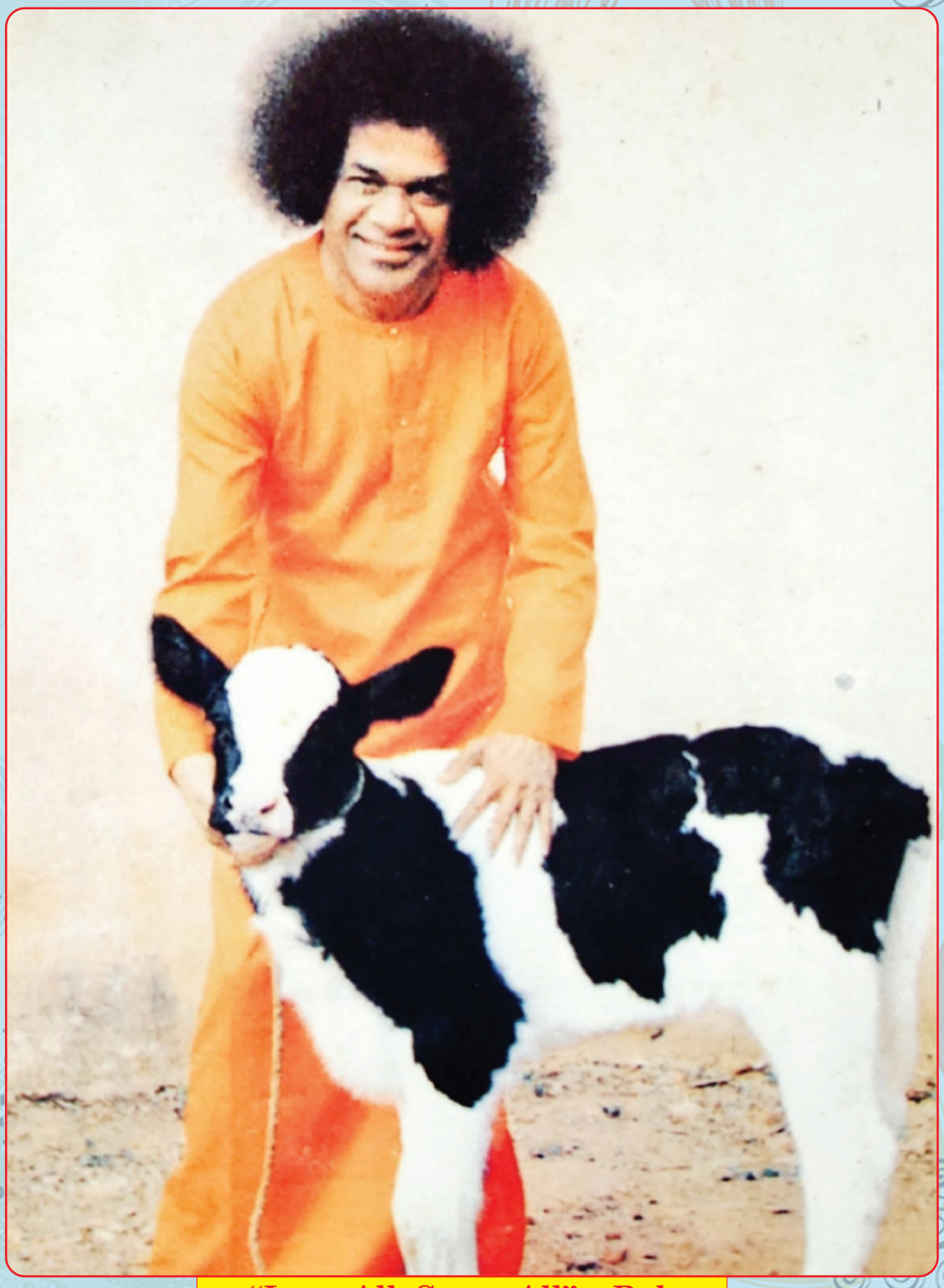
My 75th Birthday 2022



With members of my clan on 60th Birthday, Hyderabad



With children & grand children on 60th Birthday (03-8-2007)



"Love All, Serve All" – Baba

