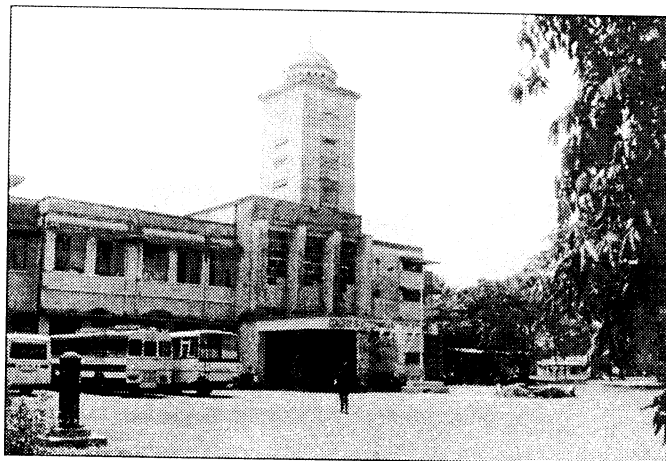


Veterinary College Revisited

We were young, fresh, and eager. It was pretty years back.... The elegant college towered over lush green play fields, and flowering Flame of the Forest trees made the backdrop. A neatly paved tarred road led to the porch, water lilies smiled at the inquisitive visitors, a well groomed Sergeant oversaw the flurry of activities. The tiny garden in the courtyard was a spectacular sight with a beautiful lawn. Cuphea plants made the rich borders of the garden in front of the Animal Science Block. The teachers strolled the corridors, acknowledging the greetings of the students. They patted, they cheered, and occasionally scolded their students. It was oneness, that was reflected



*Veterinary College,
Mannuthy, Thrissur*

to the visitors. Even the corridors and classrooms enjoyed the spirit. The students came in large groups, they exchanged their little thrills, and shared their blunders, and hushed up at the sight of some teacher. The campus bustled with activity by evenings, with almost all the students playing in different playgrounds, playing amidst cheers from teachers and fellow students. The hostel mess exuding joy and festive spirit, served the most nutritious food, prepared by excellent cooks. At nightfall, the hostel was thrilled by the different orchestra groups getting together for their evening performances. When the clocks struck midnight, low bass voices of Epran and Thanappan filled the air, reminding us of

the good and the bad, the poor and the rich, the old and the new, of yesterdays and tomorrows.

Years have gone by. The winds from the Ghats have brushed past the campus umpteen times. Our revered teachers have become old, the freshers have become graduates, new students have poured in.... Now we have come for a second sojourn. A foolish looking name board mocks all that was at the main entrance, another on the very face of the main building. The water tank, once filled with water lilies is partly damaged. The very entrance is engaged by employees of the University, their arguments about their most secure rights, or their agitations and their criticism of rival organizations lingering in the air. The porch wears an ugly look tattooed with flags and cheap decorations. The tarred premises are dug again and again to erect masts to hoist the flags of service organizations. While flags were unfurled or later brought down, the one flag, black in colour remained at half mast for weeks following the demise of EMS. Nobody to remove it, even after the entire state has come back to normalcy. Instead of the ever smiling but serious Sergeant, security personnels, clad in deep blue unstarched uniforms and with hungry unsatisfied faces looked wryly at all passers by. Students come in one by one. Teachers, most of them very young still strolled the verandas. Neither the students, nor the teachers seem to know each other and the students never bothered to greet any teacher. A white Ambassador car comes to a halt at the porch and some of those sitting on the steps, reluctantly get up to acknowledge her presence, while others look into the sky, their eyes glued onto a yet unidentified planet. A scooter shed that looks like a scare crow, accommodates a few vehicles. The once neatly kept area between the main road and the hostel looks wilderness and nobody dares to cross the area even in broad daylight. Both sides of the paved road have a deserted look and the University buses are parked there. What used to be a little garden in the

Veterinary College Revisited

courtyard, now has two bushes of Bougainvillea keeping each other company and the area is covered with used paper cups and plates. The garden in front of the Animal Sciences Block, look brown in color as the plants are dying without water, a few of them have even succumbed to an irate fire. The remnants are still there. Enter the main building, and the nostrils are assaulted by the smell of of urine. The walls have turned gray, the paint and plaster peeling off. The roof shows signs of aging, and neglect, and come monsoon, the rooms will be filled with rainwater.

Dr S Sulochana, the Dean-in-charge, sees nothing uncommon. Usually the buildings of the Kerala Agricultural University are subjected to repair and maintenance works every three to four years only, and this year definitely the works will be carried out. The allotment of funds for such works is coming down every year. For campus development Rs.50,000/- could be spent. But the labour problems pose the greatest hazard. The labour unions insist that labourers from the list alone should be employed and the list is yet to be finalized, court verdicts pending.

There are no more scavengers, gardeners or sweepers but class IV employees; and they could not be asked to do the aforementioned jobs. There is often stiff resistance from the class IV employees worrying over imaginary excess workload and the Pet animal clinic could start functioning only many months after the completion of the works. Very few labourers are now employed in the college, and they work for certain schemes and projects. When asked to water the gardens, the labour groups demanded exorbitant rates, and now student volunteers have agreed to take up the assignment. A few years back, a Campus Development Officer looked after these things and some beautification programmes were carried out. But, he had to abandon his efforts owing to problems from the Trade Unions. Almost all the teachers cite the same reasons for the present state of the campus. A young Assistant Professor of the Department of Anatomy confessed that he himself cleans his office room everyday.

The College Library is generally overcrowded. It is very difficult to find a seat. The books are dumped in every



Dr. S. Sulochana

As the Dean, what are your impressions on the current scenario of veterinary college?

There is qualitative improvement in the recent years. The teachers are taking pains to upgrade their knowledge and skill. The students have to undergo a syllabus instituted by Veterinary Council of India which assures minimum basic standards. The research works are oriented at alleviating the problems faced by the farming community.

But, the appearance of the campus, and labs do not give such an impression. It looks like a place without proper governance. What may be the reason?

The appearance of the campus, and buildings relates to another area of the administration. Earlier, there was a Campus Development Officer in charge of beautification of the campus, and during his period there were some positive changes. But after his quitting the job, there is no proper set up to look

after these things. The condition of the buildings is now not good. They are badly in need of maintenance works. We are expecting it to be done this year. Scarcity of funds also is a problem. There should be more allocation of funds from the university to the veterinary faculty.

The number of proposals for projects are very less from our faculty. While other faculties are putting up proposals and receive huge quantities of funds. What is the reason?

Timely submission of project proposals is a must. At present there is no concerted effort from the faculty in this regard. There is no concentrated effort from the faculty in this regard. There is a visible lack of interest among the teachers of our faculty to prepare and submit the proposals for projects, the exact causes are yet to be studied. At present we have a Professor in charge of Research Co-ordination and with his efforts, things may change in the future.

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available space, the journals are bound in ancient, worn out calico covers, the same covers as we saw them clothed in, during our college days. Remember the times when we could flip through even foreign periodicals like *Newsweek*, *Time*, *Life* etc and the racks displayed the latest Indian and International scientific journals. Now there are no more light reading materials, no more current issues of Indian or International journals. Some of those in the racks are even two years old. What happened to the prestigious library? The post of the Librarian has been vacant for the last fifteen years. The duration of the BVSc & AH course and the number of seats have been increased and a new Dairy Science college has been established, there has been an unwelcome decrease in manpower available to the library. In the place of one Librarian, one Assistant Librarian, five Reference Assistants, one Assistant, two Attendants, three Peons, and one permanent labourer in 1982, now there are only one Assistant Librarian, two Library attendants and two class IV employees. The present Library building which was initially intended for the

Anatomy Museum is now more than overloaded. The search for a new building reached one of the new Men's hostel building but because of the engineering inadequacies, the plan has been dropped. Then came the proposal to construct a building near the Veterinary hospital. Suddenly someone at the University had a strange revelation- why bother about a big library at the veterinary college, when there is a very big one at Vellanikkara? The traditional wisdom of having the Classes, Labs and the Library side by side has been conveniently forgotten. Promises of bus services every 15 minutes to the KAU campus also have been broken. Its summoned that even a rope way from Mannuthy to Vellanikkara was once promised. Those who want to browse CD-ROMs have to reserve dates well in advance at the University and lucky are those who get a date within three months of booking. The University boasts of Internet connection, but till date the University library is not equipped with that facility. The journals are ordered by the University Librarian, and the arrangement agreed

Our library is overcrowded. No improvements to the amenities of Veterinary Hospital. Labs are inadequate to meet the requirements of the present student strength. No new developments seen in the recent years. Why is it so?

Proposal for a new building exclusively for a Library is now shelved. Since the University Library is more than enough to meet the requirements of the students and teachers of the Veterinary Faculty. But we have to admit that there are many handicaps in the actual practice of this theory. Funds remain the biggest problem in the acquisition of the journals and texts for our library. The entire students of one batch can't attend the practical sessions at a time and this situation may lead to the degradation of the quality in the long run. The present amenities can't meet the requirements of the current student strength. Regarding the development, there are a few things happening. We are setting up a computer centre for the use of entire faculty, with Internet connections. A new clinical block is under construction.

It is often heard that the interdepartmental and interpersonal relations are poor among teachers. What led to this situation?

There is nothing special about the veterinary faculty. Problems are there in every walk of human life. But such minor issues never affect the quality of work of the teachers.

Did the influx of politics affect the campus life of the students adversely? Did it improve the product quality so as to face the challenges of the present times?

The present campus life can't be compared with the earlier times. Now the students can't spare time for extra curricular activities. At the same time there is a visible lack of interest also, among the students. The politics didn't contribute much to the harmonious campus life, nor did it help the students to equip themselves to face the present challenges.

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upon, was to keep them at the University Library for two weeks and then to be passed on to the Veterinary College Library. Its claimed that this year about seventy three journals have been subscribed for, and even at the end of the financial year no journals have reached the Veterinary College Library. The escalation of the subscription rates and cuts in funds add to the woe. There are no proper journal display racks with pigeon holes or filing cabinets. The Assistant librarian claimed that not even a single rupee is allowed to lapse so far. The current year's allotment for the Library is around Rs. 5 lakhs which is very insufficient. Even though the actual need is 5 copies of a text, only two copies each are procured because of deficiency of finance. The Dean told us that at present there is a book bank scheme exclusively for SC/ST students. The reprography services in the library started functioning after a break of a few months. There is no video library, and no facilities for Micro filming, Bio Informatics, CD-ROM search and Internet services etc. The Dean has brought the inadequacies of the Library in terms of space, funds and other facilities to the notice of the higher authorities. In this context we should note that the budget for Madras Veterinary College Library for the academic year 1995-96 was Rs.58.5 lakhs and Rs.63.7 lakhs for 1996-97.

The departments of Pathology, Microbiology and Veterinary Public Health use the Library to a certain extent. Even though most of the teachers claim that they use the library to update their knowledge, our study reveals that only around 5% of the teachers frequent the library for reference. While some teachers insist that Departmental libraries should be established, some think that a well equipped college library is sufficient for those who actually want to read. While the Agricultural College, Vellayani boasts of a very good library in an exclusive building with Info Tech facilities, our college is denied even the bare minimum of facilities. Dean, Dr Sulochana has drawn the attention of the authorities to these matters several times.

Dr Alikkuty, now reminisced about his efforts to procure an Endoscope for the Veterinary Hospital. He had given his proposals five years prior to his retirement, and has run from pillar to post, but his requests were turned out. The Clinical Block which can accommodate the departments of Surgery, Gynaecology, Preventive Medicine and Clinical Medicine is not completed so far. The veterinary college hospitals lack modern facilities and the students have only heard of such well established veterinary hospitals existing elsewhere in the country. But, some facilities already established are not utilized fully. The Electron Microscope was commissioned years back and the very neighbours don't know the current status. As in the Krackjack ad, some say it is functioning, some say it is out of order, but everyone agrees it is under utilized. The PG students of one department are often denied access to the facilities of another department, the excuse cited being the non availability of trained operators. Some of the departments, it is alleged, consider themselves islands, and deny entry to outsiders. It is high time that the authorities stepped into ensure that some common minimum facilities are accessible to every researcher or PG student.

Undue preferences given to some sections are making the others disgruntled. A good number of beloved teachers vehemently criticize Livestock Products Technology Department being honoured with a Centre of Excellence. They argue that it was acquired through special blessings from higher ups. Animal Genetics, Poultry Science, and Pathology were given Centres of Excellence after the establishment of the Centre of Excellence in Disease Investigation. Proposals for awarding the same to the departments of Microbiology, and Animal Production have been pending for the last six years, although they have the necessary approvals from the Board of Studies and the Academic Council. But sailing has been very smooth for the Livestock Products Technology Department. The department is of a much later origin than the others. The rapport between Dr J

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Abraham and Dr Michael, the then Vice Chancellor, worked wonders. Even a formal application from the Dean was not there. Those who criticize the Livestock Products Technology issue hold that they are not against any department being honoured, their objection is to the waiving of norms. There are persons who still can't digest the idea of investing a huge quantum of money in the carcase utilization plant. Its neither a teaching centre, nor a research establishment but a commercial venture which is purportedly intended to add to the glamour and glory of the person concerned.

There are no clear cut answers to the question- why did the Centre of Excellence in Disease Investigation die prematurely? The Dean claims that it still exists, but it is not functioning and the posts are kept vacant. What did actually happen? The centre began with Dr Kalyanasundaram as the Director. There were many aspirants to that post at that time, but Mr Madhava Menon, the then VC, preferred Dr Sundaram. As could be expected, there was not much cooperation from other departments, and the centre stopped functioning when Dr Kalyanasundaram retired. Absence of such a centre, reflect adversely upon the professional stature and the standards of the Veterinary College. Recently, the tigers of Thrissur zoo, were brought for necropsy. Different departments approached the problems with out any coordination, and naturally different diagnoses came up, and the scenario in the Newspapers and Television was critique of the institution. The District Collector of Thrissur criticized the whole affair, and questioned the integrity and competence of the veterinary faculty in a television interview which has severely damaged our reputation. Yet no efforts are made by the faculty at an introspection. Some feel that the mishap was the result of the inaction of the Dean while to some others it was the result of ego clashes and inter departmental rivalry. Some blame even the local veterinary surgeon who didn't approach the Dean, but contacted certain persons of his choice. Some attribute the incident to the cheap

tactics of some teachers whose main concern is building up of private practice. All agree that if we had a single agency like a centre of excellence in disease investigation, or a unit for Animal Health studies, the expertise of the different departments can be effectively utilized for managing crises from the field. They are equally vociferous about the lack of clinical amenities like a centralized clinical laboratory, cardiac monitor, defibrillator, gastroscope, bronchoscope, haemo dialysis units etc.

But Sirs, are you confident that you are competent enough to meet the growing challenges? How many of you are attending seminars, or training programmes, or refresher sessions? How many of you will voluntarily agree to the concept of periodical evaluation or appraisal of your performance by your students?

So, should we believe that there are no interpersonal and inter departmental rivalries? Naturally, there may be some, as are seen in every part of the globe, assert many of the faculty members. Did it exceed all limits? We have heard of the staff members of Gynaecology Department in constant agony, fear and tension just because of an over ambitious teacher.

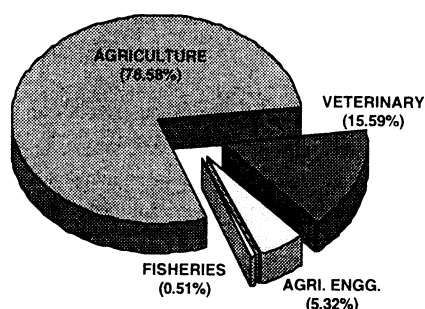
Allegations are there about the denial of access to facilities to students and teachers of other departments. The junior faculty members complain about the denial of opportunities in the field of research and absence of help in the preparation of projects. Why should we have a Professor for Research Coordination, they dare to ask. "Should we spoon feed them?" asks a senior scientist. If they actually want to prepare projects, there are ever so many means to do that. No senior will deny help or dissuade them. There are many funding agencies as ICAR, departments of Atomic Energy, Bio-Technology, State Council for Science and technology, IRDP, Animal Welfare Board, Department of Animal Husbandry etc. But how many of the faculty members try putting proposals for projects which will naturally bring funds from external agencies? Not many, is the answer. Around 25 projects are on the go now. Some faculty

*Why did the
Centre of Excellence
in Disease
Investigation die
prematurely?*

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members confide that those who are taking up research projects and those who are not doing any work at all, are treated equally in terms of salaries, perks, and career progression. Moreover, those who take up projects have to run around and even beg to non technical people for amenities. The funds for such work come earmarked from the funding agencies to the university. But the Comptroller divert these to meet the day to day expenditure of the University. Even if the researcher succeeds in pressurizing the clerks for release of funds, they get only paltry sums. But there are influential persons like Dr Sosamma Iype who sees to it that the amount earmarked for projects are received in full and in time. Some junior teachers complain that there is inordinate delay owing to indifference on the part of the university authorities in submitting the project proposals before the funding agencies. Those who are hardy enough to overcome these hurdles, usually succumb to the discriminations that follow. Queried about the insufficient allotment of funds for research in veterinary science, the Professor in charge of research Coordination said that ICAR is not showing much interest in projects in Animal Health Studies, especially projects in species other than cattle.

Budget for Research (KAU) for 1998-99



ICAR is not showing much interest in projects in Animal Health Studies.

A few field veterinarians have a different question to ask. How many projects or researches have been carried out to find solutions to the various problems faced by the field veterinarians and farming community?

The interpersonal and interdepartmental rivalries have gained the enormous

magnitude with the recent agitations. The strike and related incidents added fuel to the fire. But this is not a new phenomenon, the leaders among the teachers argue. The problems have been there from the very inception of the college. It was evident from the period of Dr K S Nair who sidelined Dr Chandra, and Dr M N Menon who sidelined Dr C T Peter. There have always been caucuses and groups. They say it was not a surprise for many, when Dr P P Balakrishnan, Dr Valsala, Dr Abraham and Dr Namboothiri got advantages by effective interpretation of court orders and timely help from patrons. While some argue that the promotions of these teachers are not in order, those benefited argue that they received the advantages legitimately. Dr A Rajan, our revered teacher, and the then Dean had to face criticism for alleged partisan actions. But those who leveled allegations against Dr Rajan agree in confidence that there was nothing much that he could do, and if he had shown a little more transparency in his actions, these allegations would not have come up. All the teachers are still pained that Dr Rajan went out unceremoniously even rejecting the farewell party.

Some of the teachers reminded us of the period when the Dean and the Vice Chancellor acted hand in glove for the betterment of the entire faculty. As Dr P G Nair and Mr Kaleeswaran had high regard for each other, the entire faculty benefited. There had been a good rapport between Dr Rajan and Dr Michael but it is only the department of Pathology that benefited. A sizeable number of teachers refute this criticism, and they questioned the intentions behind such remarks. Leaving all these things apart, all the teachers agree that they have lost morale. Since 1984, there had been no selection to the various posts. Some received time bound promotions or non cadre promotions. The posts of Junior Assistant Professors have been dispensed with; while promoting those already in these posts as Assistant Professors, those in the cadre of Assistant Professors have not been given any advantage. Denial of career

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*Allegations and counter
allegations regarding fire
in the cattle sheds,
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profession.*

advancement and promotions will naturally affect the morale of the teachers. The special favours conferred upon a lucky few, absence of incentives and perks for those engaged in research work etc also add to the frustration. A few very young faculty members say they are miserably frustrated, and that is why they do not want to take up fresh agreements. "Why should we?" they ask. Yes. There are no motivating elements, yet, shouldn't there be a personal conviction and commitment? Are you not part of the society? May be, they agree. They confide that they do not believe in commitments with out returns. Personal gains are the prime factor for commitment and motivation. Though shocked by the stray revelation, one is much relieved to hear the old guns, who reveal their utmost faith in human values, and act on their commitment to the profession in spite of all the setbacks. They perceive the changes philosophically and even sportively. They say that this small group is a cross section of the present society, and erosion of ethics, principles and values have crept into our profession also quite naturally. They are also optimistic and expect a positive change in the years to come.

Almost all the teachers agree that the absence a common forum is one reason for the gradual decline in the collective bargaining power and also inter personal relations. Had there been a common forum, that comprises all the faculty members, the discrimination meted out to the veterinary faculty by KAU, the inadequacies of the different departments, the plans for the coming decades and so on could be discussed. At present there are no Teachers' Day celebrations, family meetings, tours, or any other similar functions, wherein all the faculty members and their families assemble and meet. Some members of the faculty meet some of their colleagues in their respective organizations as KAUTA, VFTA, or TOKAU. There are many who do not subscribe to these views and do not attribute the present state to trade unionism. But everyone feels that the image of the veterinary profession has been tarnished by the recent agitation. What always appeared

in the media are the 'atrocities' of the Veterinary faculty teachers and never a single incident or issue of any other profession came to the scrutiny of the media or public. Allegations and counter allegations regarding fire in the cattle sheds, poisoning of animals, vigilance cases against teachers, and physical assault on teachers and so on badly affected the social standing of our profession. The teachers now seem worried and concerned about the turn the events took during the agitation. Was it a covert, planned operation stage managed by some kindred profession? They seem uncertain. They pledge their loyalty to our profession. The influential leaders remained silent spectators and it is known through grapevine that a clerk in the office of the veterinary college often gave directions to the leaders of the teachers' organizations. A question seems relevant now. Hasn't everyone conveniently forsaken the demand for a veterinary University? In the midst of agitation and chaos and the fight for existence, they have settled this most important issue, they confess. They are eager for a revival of the efforts and thankfully acknowledge the efforts of the Indian Veterinary association. But how many of the faculty members know where the last convention of the IVA was held or who the present President and General Secretary are? Some feel that revitalizing the veterinary college unit of IVA will be a positive move, for, it can act as a common forum for the members who have different views, aspirations, and even political bosses. Dr P C Alex proudly claim that the teachers have not lost the fighting spirit. The entire faculty members will rise to the occasion whenever the need arises. The teachers' organizations have not undermined the interests of the faculty. But Sir, on umpteen occasions our faculty has been ignored, discriminated against, and humiliated. Did you ever notice that the picture of the three cows in the University Emblem have been replaced by the pictures of a bandicoot, and two other strange creatures?

The Nutrition Lab has been converted into Dairy science College. The campus has

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*Did you ever notice that
the picture of the three
cows in the University
Emblem have been
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of a hand, a foot and two
other strange creatures?*



been allotted for the Police station. The Dean's quarters is permanently occupied by some one else. The budgetary allotment shows clear disparity. The faculty is denied of even the basic amenities and there are no modernisation plans for the faculty. Did you ever think of the possible fall out of the beginning of a new Veterinary College or the transformation of the University Emblem? Do the changing attitudes reflect the changing scenario?

A college with a student strength of around 600 UG students and PG students suffer from overcrowding. Additional class rooms have been constructed. But the practical sessions are rather difficult to handle. No more than 30 students can do practicals at a time and it calls for four repetitions for a teacher to complete a single practical and naturally the interest and enthusiasm slowly give way to lethargy. Do the increase in the number of students lead to the deterioration in student – teacher relations? Students are often identified by their roll numbers, and not by their names. The students lack the courtesy to greet the teachers, neither do the teachers expect it. The teachers attribute these changes to the family backgrounds of the new generation of students. Almost all of them come from nuclear families, especially from urban areas. They are concerned only about themselves and they spend every minute of their lives for studies. There are trimester/semester/VCI syllabi but is this the only reason for their passive attitude to the teachers? Haven't they seen and heard their teachers shouting vulgar slogans and forsaking discipline during agitations? Aren't they aware that the teachers have been fighting for their own

wellbeing and monetary benefits rather than for a common cause? Haven't the students realized that the teachers tried to use them for their ends as in the strike for additional two increments? Haven't the students lost faith in the teachers since they called off the strike after prompting the students to show their solidarity? Aren't there at least a few teachers who consistently try to woo the students to join organizations of their political ally? Let us not go deep into these issues. These are questions that call for introspection on the part of teachers.

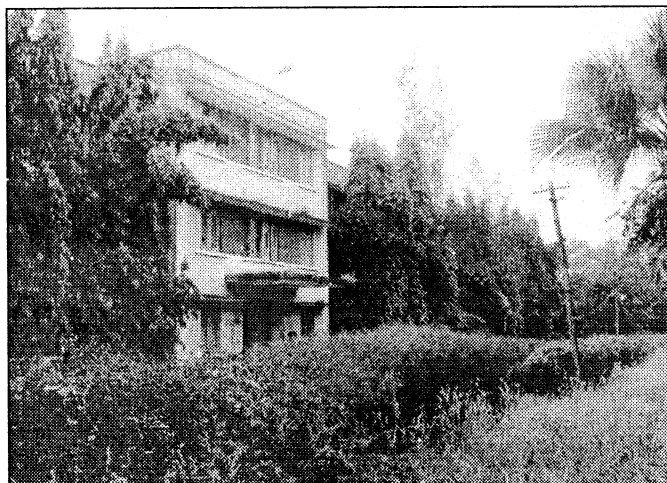
The teachers alone can't be blamed. The students, as many pointed out, are very self centred; their social, cultural, and financial back ground having moulded them thus. The picture may not be different in other campuses also. But what happened to their talents? They are brainy, outspoken, uninhibited daredevils, but their potentials do not come out through co-curricular activities. They do not protest against discriminations. Now our college, the student-teacher strength of which is around 900 has an auditorium which has barely 152 chairs, broken and unbroken and a little gallery. But why bother about the capacity of the auditorium, asks a young teacher, when no one comes to attend the function? If the Students' Union is ruled by the SFI, a few SFI students may attend the functions, and if it's a KSU union, their followers only attend the function, and that phenomenon also is declining. The College Union activities start with the inauguration, which is followed by a few programmes, the involvement of students in either is very poor. The academic work load is the excuse, that is heard from the UG students. We have heard about those PG students who never bothered about submitting their thesis, and about those who having completed their courses, submitted their thesis, got their examinations conducted, results declared, received their certificates in record time, in order to make themselves eligible to apply for the post of Assistant Professors.

The land marks of the Students' Union activities are the Photostat centre leased out to a private agency, "Thanal" the cafeteria,

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and 'Ithal' the wall magazine. Though Notice Board of the Students' Union rarely exhibit any information of their activity, photographs of the RVC cadets attending the Republic Day parade have been exhibited. A painting cum mural exhibition, the 'Padmarajan Film Festival', and a Photographic exhibition have been organized by the Students' Union. But the College Magazine has been hibernating in the printing press for years.

Only 5% of the boys and just 2% of the girls participate in Sports and Games. Play grounds are utilized by the local public. The students do not seem to be aware that our College athletic teams were the overall champions of the erstwhile Kerala University, and later, of Calicut University.



*"If there is a paradise
on Earth it is this, it
is this, it is this..."
Once this was written
in the Hostel.*

Nor are they aware that we used to win championships in almost all the games for years and the records set by our good old seniors remained unbroken for years. But times have changed, they argue. They don't have time even for their personal needs, then why bother about other things?

The TV in the College hostel has been out of order for the past one year. The Common Hall and the Indoor Games Hall are now deserted. The corridors, bathrooms, common room, indoor games hall are in total darkness at night. The garden and the backyard are abandoned. The mess servants dictate terms, fix the menu, and the students have no say in deciding what they eat and how they lodge.

Even the permission to apply for a telephone connection to the UG Hostel Annexe is denied by the KAU inspite of the assurance that the entire expenses will be borne by students. Whither have fled their drive and their fighting spirit? The seniors insinuate that it is their Big Brothers who take decisions on their behalf. Recently there were severe provocations from the C & B students occupying our hostel, inspite of the fact that a new, furnished hostel is waiting for them. There was a move to pressurize them to leave the campus and occupy their hostels, and then came the orders from the Party Bosses to student leaders asking them not to press the demand and promptly they obliged. One can't help wondering if they aren't losing their self esteem. Why do they let outsiders dictate terms to them?

Their stance is that they do not want heritage for their identity. From day 1 in the college, they look out for life partners, a Marthomite boy for a Marthomite girl, a Nair boy for a Nair girl, a Catholic girl for a Catholic boy, a Muslim boy for a Muslim girl, and that too after ensuring that the financial and social statuses are compatible. They are practical to the core, idle romance is not any leaf of their book of life.

Gone are the days when we dreamt of that little girl coming into the campus, with that blue skirt, blue eyes and that little birthmark below her right eye. We spent hours and days just thinking about her, wondering how rainbows and deep blue seas reflected in her eyes but never dared to divulge that little secret we carried in our hearts. Those were the moments when all the world converging into one person. We still remember the thrill of the magic moments when she spoke a word or two. An occasional glance, a rare meet, and when she finally said I Too Love You, the whole world danced with us. We celebrated that. We dared to face the consequences together. We wove a thousand dreams. We never bothered about the religion we were born , or the status of our families. You may dismiss it as silly platonic love. But we are proud, we had it.

