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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Latha and Janani for their unwavering support in bringing out this memoir.

I am fortunate to have a professional in Latha. She went through the text patiently, correcting the grammar, punctuations, spellings, typo and formatting. Thank you Latha.

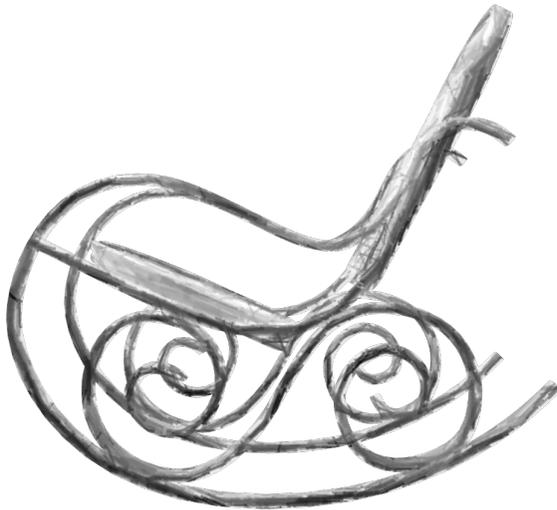
This memoir would not be the same without the exceptional cover design and the captivating illustrations by Janani. Hats off to her creativity!

I would also like to thank Kamala for reminding me some of the names and incidents which I had forgotten.

Finally thanks to Eshwar for encouraging me remotely and constantly enquiring about the progress.



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“Often when you think you’re at the end of something, you’re at the beginning of something else. – FRED ROGERS

# INTRODUCTION

I am Balu (Balasubramanian) S/o Echangudi, Ganapathy Agraharam, T. R. Narayanaswamy Iyer (Spencer Iyer) and N. Rajalakshmi (Lakshmi Amma) taking you through a mixed bag of events in my professional life. I have titled these events of my life as “Memoirs of a V E T square, meaning Memoirs of a VETERAN VETERINARIAN”

Google assures me that you don't have to be famous or infamous to write a memoir, and so I am qualified. But, how to and where from I should begin my memoir?

T.S. Eliot, Poet and Essayist advocates beginning a story at the end. He said: “What we call the beginning is often the end. And to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from” ஏதாவது புரியரதா? This reminds me of our yester year Vishu and the present Kamal Hasan.

After much deliberation I decided to begin my memoir on my own style seeking KANCHI MAHA PERIAVA'S blessings.

This memoir of mine represents only a slice of my life - events pertaining mostly to my profession right from joining the veterinary college until my retirement spanning a total of 38 years as detailed below.

- 1) August 1955 to December 1959 Veterinary Under graduate study- 4 years
- 2) January 1960 to July 1976 Field Veterinarian - 16 years
- 3) August 1976 to April 1978 Post graduate study - 2 years
- 4) May 1978 to April 1994 Administrative service - 16 years

Professionally I was very active till my 75<sup>th</sup> year or so and after that I gradually tailed off my client base which is nil since 2015.

My memoir is expected to find a limited audience – close family. I consider this as a gift (punishment?) to them and I have put down the events in the way I remember them.

What prompted me to write this memoir? As stated above, I became a qualified veterinarian in December 1955 and was in service till 30<sup>th</sup> April 1994. Even now 30 years after retirement it is interesting to note that I am the only veterinarian among all my relatives. Veterinary course, practice etc is still a field, majority has little or no knowledge. A few do not know the spelling of veterinary and even pronounce it as veterinity!

Medicine and veterinary medicine are both branches of healthcare, but they focus on different species. Medicine primarily deals with the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of diseases and injuries in humans. Medical professionals, such as doctors and nurses, work with human patients to promote health and well-being. Veterinary medicine, on the other hand, focuses on the health and well-being of animals. Veterinarians diagnose and treat illness and injuries in a wide variety of animal species, including pets, livestock, zoo animals, and wildlife.

Veterinary course / profession is really very tough and challenging. This is aptly quoted in Quiz Pedia which I happened to read. Here is the quote

“Being a vet is not an easy task. Congrats if you are a vet, because you have gone through all of these 5 1/2 years course and still some people don't know the meaning of veterinarian. Seventeen subjects with farm practices and clinic, remembering pharmacology and parasitology. One-year rotatory internship. Anxiety before practical, viva, angry owners, furious animals, encounter with zoonotic diseases but end up being the doctor of most species on earth.”



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Cows are social animals who form bonds with each other. In a herd of cows, many will form cliques together.  
Cows can recognize their names (though they may not come when called!).  
Cows have a memory of about three years

# A DIVINE EXPERIENCE

Hara hara sankara jaya jaya sankara.

Before starting my memoirs, I would first like to record my divine experience I had with the Kanchi Maha Periava.

This happened somewhere around early nineteen seventies. At that point of time I was the veterinary doctor at the Veterinary Hospital, Saidapet, Madras (now Chennai) I was a very popular vet then among the animal owners and had quite a large clientele also.

One morning I received a post card (no mobiles then) from one of the many devout disciples of Maha Periava – a bramachari and a distant relative of mine serving and living in the Kanchi madam itself.

Why this post card?

The Kanchipuram Sankara Madam besides maintaining a ghosala some milch cows are also left in the care of devotees. One such cow which had delivered a calf was with a devotee at Mahalingapuram, Chennai. This cow after recent delivery of her calf was indisposed and was being treated by a local vet. The treatment was not effective and on hearing the cow's plight Maha Periava beckoned his disciple, my brahmachari relative and enquired him about me.

When he blinked Periava said “டே, நீதானேடா சொன்னே, உன் சொந்தகார பையன் veterinary doctor ஆக இருக்கான்னு”. After tapping his forehead a few seconds, he blurted out “ஓ periyava, பாலுவெ சொல்றேலா, ஆமாம் அவன் மதராஸ்சில தான் இருக்கான்”. Periava immediately instructed him to post a card asking me to visit the house where the “sick” cow was. All this was as told by my brahmachary relative.

The post card which I received had the address and that afternoon itself I rushed to the house at Mahalingapuram. Even before I started to examine the cow there was a sound of lifting a bucket. The cow pricked up her ears and turned her face towards the direction of the sound. I do not know what struck me, but I was instinctively convinced that the cow was hungry and craving for food. I, then instructed the attender there to first give half a bucket of plain water which the cow gulped. Next, I asked the attender to fill up the bucket with a small quantity of cattle food. The house lady there was concerned and told me that the vet who was treating the cow has instructed not to give any food until he gives the green signal. The cow was receiving only saline/glucose drips. I told the lady not to worry and asked them to feed the cow as instructed

I assured the lady and the attender that I am here to see nothing untoward happens. They relented and half a bucket of food was placed before the cow. This time also the cow emptied the bucket at one go. THAT IS ALL, NO FURTHER TREATMENT!!! As instructed by me the quantum of food was gradually increased every day with the cow not showing any adverse symptoms and was genuinely very happy. The milk yield also significantly increased.

MY CONTRIBUTION AS A VET IN THE COW'S RECOVERY WAS ZERO.

See the sequence of events. It was all programmed by Maha Periava and I was fortunate and blessed to be selected by Him to be the tool to execute the same. Periava knows that the cow is not really sick and could have carried out the task which I undertook. Periava, the great man He is, made me to think and act by setting up the stage – sound of bucket, cow's reaction etc. I am grateful and blessed that He chose me.

Later I was asked to come to Kanchipuram with family to get Periava's blessings. The first thing He asked me was "Kamatchi எப்படி இருக்கா?" Though for a second wondering who Kamatchi was, fortunately it dawned on me that Kamatchi was the name of the Mahalingapuram cow. Such was his love for cows.



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Dogs sweat through their foot pads to help keep them cool. They also keep cool by panting.

Greyhounds are the world's fastest dogs with the ability to reach up to 45 mph.

Every dog has a unique nose print with no two alike.

A dog's sense of smell is 1000 times greater than a human!

Nine percent of dog owners will have a birthday party for their pet.

Dogs have 28 baby teeth and 42 permanent teeth.

# MY LOVE FOR DOGS

From my childhood I am a great lover of dogs, but getting admitted to the Madras Veterinary College was, I would say purely accidental. What led me to join Veterinary College is recorded separately.

In my school days itself I was thorough with almost all breeds of dogs. Google was not there then but visiting British Council Library and reading some relevant books made me knowledgeable of many breeds of dogs. My love and obsession to have a pup was such that I picked up a pup from the litter of a street dog. I named this female pup as Vasantha. Nobody else in my house was interested in dogs. My joy of having a pup was short lived as Vasantha was stolen by some person.

Though I was keen on owning a pedigree pup my parents and others were dead *against* my having any pup. My desperation was exploited by a neighbourhood slum person who told me in the presence of my bosom friend Sudheer that an Alsatian pup was available with him which he can sell it for Rs 15/-! AN ALSATIAN FOR SUCH A LOW PRICE – UNBELIEVABLE!!

With Sudheer I saw the pup – a brown furry pup with certain features of Alsatian. Sudheer also said it was an Alsatian and he was more interested in the pup than me. I immediately had the gut feeling that Sudheer will likely be my competitor in acquiring the pup. I, then rushed to my mom, Lakshmi Amma, requested her to give fifteen rupees. But she was not for any pup and that too, according to her for a HUGE SUM of Rs15/- I pleaded with her for hours, with Sudheer the rival at the back of my mind.

My mom finally relented. The cute pup was finally mine and she was named Brownie. I was on cloud nine – owner of a “pedigree” pup. In course of time she was accepted in the family and loved by all including the neighbours.

As Brownie started growing I slowly realized that she was not an Alsatian. Even the next door Palghat Thatha said “ஓ, அது ஆதிசேஷன் அல்ல” Alsatian or not, the beautiful mongrel that she has already established herself as one of our family.

After Brownie I had another mongrel Ravi. This Ravi was ever infested with ticks and in spite of all my efforts I was unable to completely get rid of the

ticks from Ravi. A big relief as one of my friends a pet lover took a fancy for Ravi (and also ticks?!) and I gladly gift-wrapped Ravi to him.

Then came Douche an adult female German Boxer fulfilling the dream of owning a pedigree dog. After some time when I was posted away from Madras I left Douche in the care of my colleague who was in charge of a farm. There, unfortunately Douche died of a snake bite. All my dreams of raising some Boxer pups through Douche and earning some money by selling the pups were shattered.

After douche came Rani a yellow Labrador She was with me for a few years. But circumstances forced me to gift her to a Gurkha watchman. After a few years an unexpected and unbelievable reunion with Rani came while I was the Vet at Saidapet Veterinary hospital. In this hospital about 70 to 80 small animals – dogs, cats, poultry etc. used to come for treatment daily. When the pet owners' names were called, they with their pets will come to the treatment hall.

On one such occasion an owner with his dog entered. The dog on seeing me started wagging her tail vigorously, emitting strange sounds and attempted to jump on me. WHAT A PLEASANT SURPRISE!!! She was none other than my Rani which was gifted to a Gurkha a few years back. “A dog is the only thing on earth that loves you more than he loves himself.” — Josh Billings

On my request, the not so well-off present owner gladly gave Rani to me. Rani was with me for the rest of her life, breathing her last due to old age on my lap. This incident made me to take a resolve not to rear any pet in future, as we out live them and the loss of a pet is inconsolable.

I have forgotten to record a couple of funny incidents. Those days dog food as such has not come to the market. Mutton has to be purchased and cooked with rice and some vegetables. My mother who was very understanding and cooperative permitted me to cook mutton at the backyard of our then Gopalapuram house.

Procuring mutton from a shop in the nearby slum was an embarrassing experience. The meat shop owner on seeing me will shout at his assistant “டேய ஐயருக்கு நல்லததா நெறையா கொடுடா” I do not know then

that the 'javvu' - a sort of membranous covering over the mutton, he used to give in large quantity was not a saleable / edible item and invariably discarded. But I prided myself of having procured a substantial quantity of 'mutton" Ignorance is bliss-

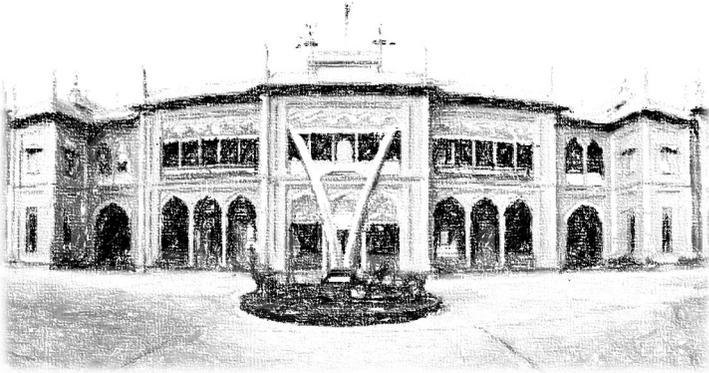
When I was undergoing veterinary course, every year end we have to go for farm training for one and a half months at Hosur, Pudukkottai or Orathanadu. On such occasions I used to leave instructions with my family members about feeding of dog. Only vegetarian food – rice with dhal and vegetables. Once, on the day I returned from farm training I carried the food on a plate to feed Ravi. When I knelt and was just about to place the plate, Ravi with a ferocious snarl pulled the plate with his fore legs. I was shocked to see this aggressive strange behaviour WHY? Soon I came to know. This was because my people afraid to go near Ravi used to push the food plate from a distance and Ravi developed the habit of dragging the plate towards him.





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“The veterinarian’s oath includes the promise ‘to protect animal health and welfare, prevent and relieve animal suffering.’ It is a noble profession that demands a selfless commitment to serving the needs of animals.” – AVMA President Tom Meyer

This quote highlights veterinarians’ dedication and compassion for animals’ well-being. It emphasizes that their work goes beyond treating animals; it’s about preventing and relieving their suffering.

## VETERINARY COLLEGE ADMISSION

Though I am an ardent dog lover from my childhood days, I never imagined that I will become a Veterinary Doctor. Yes, as I mentioned earlier, joining veterinary course was purely accidental. In 1955 after passing Intermediate (2 years after S.S.L.C. i.e. 11<sup>th</sup> standard) I was keen on pursuing medicine and was confident in securing admission having got good marks. I even applied for B.D.S (Dental) But alas, much to the disappointment of my dad and others I was denied admission-reason, marks not sufficient for a forward class. No fault of mine. Reluctantly I joined B.Sc. (Botany) in Madras Presidency College.

Two months later, my dad concerned about my future reminded me about the admission I got in Veterinary course. He rightly said that I have no future in getting a B.Sc. degree and only a professional degree will stand me in good stead. He also said that veterinary graduates get appointed the very next day after securing the degree. How right he was and that was what happened. Till now I am a very satisfied contented person and enjoyed my professional career. The monetary benefits after retirement (34 years' service from 1960 to 1994) are also beyond my expectations.

Okay, getting admitted to Veterinary College was an interesting episode worth recording here.

After passing intermediate, I applied for medicine, dental (as mentioned earlier) and also agriculture and veterinary. To our surprise interviews for agriculture and veterinary were held simultaneously at the Madras Veterinary College Vepery. At that time my first preference was agriculture.

My dad prepared me for the interview. As anticipated and predicted by him the interviewers asked me which course I want to join and study. I told them agriculture and they asked me why. Again, as tutored by my dad I told them that I was always fascinated by Botany and agriculture science is an extended study of botany. They then asked me how rice is produced – once again a question anticipated by my dad. I was prepared for this also and gave my reply. Thanks to my dad, being a city born person I was under the impression that rice was grown in trees!

My answers satisfied the interviewers and they informed me that I am selected for B.Sc. (Agri) course and am placed in waiting list for B.V.Sc. course. When the admission card came subsequently for agriculture I was shocked to note that the agriculture college was at Coimbatore. I thought it was in Madras (that was the level of my general knowledge then) The admission card also mentioned that the 3year course had to be completed staying in the college hostel at Coimbatore. This was beyond me, considering my peculiar food habits which only my mom knows and as such staying away from Madras was like a death warrant. The idea of joining B.Sc. (Agri) was dropped then and there and at that time veterinary course was also not in our agenda.

Then how come I joined veterinary course? I was a disinterested student studying B.Sc. Botany in Presidency College. My dad realizing the need for me to have a professional degree asked me to go to Veterinary College and find out if my wait listed B.V.Sc. seat is still available. A remote possibility. But I am destined to become a vet. Yes, to our surprise the seat was there and I was asked to join the very next day paying an annual fee of Rs 218/- Thanks to my dad.

Started my course in the Madras veterinary college somewhere around last week of August 1955. My dad was very happy for me and encouraging me and also with constant enquiries about my course. Once he asked me when I should purchase a stethoscope! But, alas in July 1956 after completing my first year my dad expired. He did not see me graduate. He never knew about my appointment the very next day of my graduation as stated by him. He never knew about my success and fame as a vet (of course stethoscope was also there!) He never knew about my attaining top position in the department. He never knew about my post-retirement benefits I am enjoying .....and so many other good things happened / happening.

But God had mercy on us. Thanks to my mother, Lakshmi Amma though not educated, a very practical loving mom, with meagre resources. She ensured that both Chinnu and myself complete our demanding professional education and also got Padma, my sister married. Our Lakshmi amma was a pillar of strength to all of us until her death in July 1994, the year I retired on superannuation (30<sup>th</sup> April 1994)

# VETERINARY COLLEGE - COURSE ANECDOTES

I was a confused person, not sure or right on my part joining the veterinary course. The excitement of joining the course was mingled with a certain apprehension.

The first-year subjects were Biology, Organic Chemistry, Anatomy and Physiology besides handling of animals. The other subjects taught during the course were Dairy Science, Parasitology, Animal Nutrition, Pathology, Micro Biology, Veterinary Medicine, Surgery, Genetics, Meat Hygiene and in addition six months farm training.

In all the subjects, horse (Equine) was the animal to learn about in detail in comparison with the bovine, canine and avian. It was really very challenging to remember the subtle/ major changes or differences in the anatomy or physiology of different species of animals and birds. Just a few examples – horses do not have gall bladder. Ruminant stomachs have four compartments: the rumen, the reticulum, the omasum and the abomasum. Birds have a glandular stomach, or proventriculus and muscular stomach or gizzard. I still remember the awkward situation one of my classmates faced during his Anatomy practicals. The examiner delivered a googly asking him to point out the gall bladder in the carcass of a horse. He searched and searched until he was made to realise that horses do not have gall bladder.

Yes, the course, as I said was very tough and challenging. Even now, 60+ years after graduation I get dreadful dreams of my facing the exams and viva - invariably not faring well. This is the reason I have recorded certain funny side of the incidents in college and professional field.

In the Anatomy lab hall, we get to dissect carcasses preserved in formalin. There were instances that a few students, unable to cope up with the sight of the carcasses and pungent smell of formalin have discontinued their studies. Though I did not have the courage to abandon the course, I told my mother that I will discontinue the course if I fail in Anatomy or Physiology. Luckily (or destiny) I managed to master the two subjects and got through comfortably and mom was a relieved person.

## VETERINARY COURSE – FUNNY INCIDENTS

Handling of animals: This subject taught us on handling of animals on all aspects, like how to approach an animal – horse, cow or dog, how to restrain them humanely, how to administer medicine etc. In horses we have to approach from on their left, termed as near side. Their right side is called off side. In one of the practicals we will be asked to lift the fore or hind limb (left or right) This was done to find out any injury on the underside of the hoof and also to ascertain whether the shoe (laadam) was shod properly with the right make of shoe.

This exercise is not at all that easy as horses by nature are nervous, excitable and aggressive. Luckily, during my study of handling course there was a horse named Chandur which was a gem of a horse – very understandable, intelligent, cooperative and docile. When we were asked to lift the fore or hind limb of Chandur, he will, on hearing the command and as we start approaching him and just by a gentle touch of our hand he will slowly lift the limb. Thus, he will make our task easy. There was yet another female horse which was quite opposite in nature. So, a few days prior to our practical examination we used to make sure that Chandur was well taken care of and was in his usual happy moods. We will visit Chandur's stable often and cajole his handler with small tips.

In handling class another tricky task was administering a pill to dog. For this we will have to open its mouth, with one hand using the thumb and index finger by pressing on either side of the dog's mouth. With the other hand we have to place the pill at the base of its tongue. After placing the pill, the mouth should be closed and kept it closed for a few seconds as by that time the dog would have swallowed the pill. But, alas most of the time when we release our grip the dog will spit the pill!

How to overcome this? Our seniors have taught us the trick. The dog can spit the pill only if it was placed in its mouth. But, as tutored by our seniors, we manage to conceal the pill in our rolled down shirt sleeves. The drama of administering the pill will be carried out in a perfect manner as if the (non-exciting) pill was placed in the mouth. We acquire this skill like a magician's sleight of hand.

Physiology: Here, one of the assignments was to record the heart beats of a dissected frog. The frog's heart is independent of the neurological system to excite itself and as a result it continues to beat for some time even after it has been removed from its body.

The different heart beat patterns in response to adding saline, potassium chloride etc were recorded on a black sheet of paper (charcoal treated) attached to a revolving drum. After the recordings were completed the sheet is removed and shown to the examiner. To ensure that we get the proper recording we have a prior arrangement with the experienced lab attender who will expertly draw the required pattern and give it to us stealthily which will be shown to the examiner.

Among the few subjects I hated was Parasitology – a volatile subject. But the irony was Parasitology was the main subject with Pathology and Microbiology I chose to pursue for my post graduate study! Why? There was a reason which is recorded separately.

In surgery 'soundness' was a subject. Soundness in horses is defined as the absence of lameness or illness. A sound horse is capable of performing the work required of it without risking injury. In terms of gait and movement, a horse that moves abnormally is considered unsound, even if they are not in pain. This is referred to as mechanical lameness. Horses were brought to the college for us to examine their soundness. We have to observe closely while the horse was trotted forward and backward. Invariably with our limited expertise on this aspect of our study, our diagnosis used to go wrong. For example, if after examination I say "Sir, the horse is limping on its right hind limb" the tutor will correct me saying that the lameness is on the left hind limb. So, I decided to give my diagnosis the opposite of what I honestly felt wrong with the horse's limbs. To my surprise in most of the cases my diagnosis was accepted!

#### PLEASE NOTE:

The tricks, shortcuts etc., recorded were resorted to by us as students, only for getting through the examination. After graduation as a professional it is not ethical to depend on these methods. The shortcuts were the things of the past.,

as before completing our studies, our focus was on proper animal handling skills, diagnostic testing, surgical knowledge, understanding common procedure including anaesthesia, blood sampling etc. For this we are ever grateful to the highly qualified and dedicated faculty of the Madras Veterinary College.



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**The eggs of humming bird are of the size of a pea.  
A penguin is the only bird that can walk straight  
Crows have the largest brain in relation to it of any avian family.**

## FIRST APPOINTMENT

I got my first appointment order as Veterinary Assistant Surgeon in the Animal Husbandry department. The order was got on the very next day after the last exam, practical and viva at the end of December 1959. The posting was in Chinglepet. Those days a raw graduate should undergo one-month training and guidance from a senior veterinary doctor. I was instructed to report to one Dr. Ramaswamy, a senior vet in charge of Veterinary Hospital, Chinglepet.

Qualifying as a veterinarian is entirely different from applying the acquired professional knowledge in the field. This was proved on the very first day of my entering the service. It was like “கண்ணை கட்டி காட்டுல விட்ட மாதிரி”

Dr. Ramaswamy, when I met him at the Veterinary Hospital, was busy attending on a cow performing a rectal examination. He welcomed me and asked me casually “Doctor, you are fresh from college. Can you please suggest the dose of Progesterone for this cow?” P r o g e s t e r o n e? Yes, I have read about this drug but I had no idea as to the dose – is it in milligram, kilogram, c.c., to be injected or to be given by mouth ? ? ? ? ? But then, I managed to ask him, what is the dose he was giving. He told me something in milligram to be injected. I told him that was about the same I remember seeing my Gynecology Professor in the college administering. அப்பாடா பிழைத்தேன்!!

On yet another occasion when we were busy attending to animals, my senior asked me to castrate a young bull. C A S T R A T E ? Was he crazy giving me - a novice, a surgical assignment. I straight away told him I am not confident in performing surgery. To my surprise and shock the senior beckoned the para vet (Stockman) to castrate the bull. He – his name was also Balasubramanian – immediately brought a sizeable appliance and in a jiffy finished the job on the casted animal. (casting refers to a technique using a rope to make cattle lie down or become recumbent)

Okay. What was that sizeable appliance? I came to know that it is called Burdizzo castrator which is used to crush both the spermatoc cords, stopping blood flow to the testicles – non-surgical castration. How come I did not know about this? This was because, I could have missed the practical class when this Burdizzo was shown to the students and demonstrated the technique of using the same.

After training for a month, I was posted as vet in independent charge of Veterinary Dispensary, Nellikuppam – not the well-known Parry's sugar factory Nellikuppam near Villupuram. This duplicate Nellikuppam was a tiny village without electricity, bus route or any other basic amenities like hotels, shops etc., during 1960. My kind boss, the District Veterinary Officer (D.V.O) almost pleaded with me to accept the posting promising a better place of posting after 3 months. I, obeyed. Of course, the D.V.O also kept up his promise.

My mom taught me how to cook rice and prepare rasam and also ensured adequate stock of 'karuvadam', coffee powder along with a kerosene stove, coffee filter and few vessels. Milk was purchased locally for coffee and making curd. The veterinary dispensary functioned from a small village house which was also my residential quarters! My staff consisted of two male attenders, one a dalit and the other a brahmin. With great difficulty I managed to stay in the village braving all odds. I used to visit mother in Madras once in two weeks. The D.V.O has permitted me to come to Chinglepet every evening to avail the luxury of hotel tiffin and occasional visit to the movie theatre there. At Chinglepet I will be staying for the night with my bachelor colleague and few others in a house rented by them. Every morning I will be returning to Nellikuppam by bus. This bus on route - Chinglepet to Tiruppur will drop me at a place called Kottamedu which was about 3 miles from Nellikuppam. After getting down from the bus I will be waiting to spot some cyclist heading to Nellikuppam. I will ride pillion to reach Nellikuppam. At times on prior arrangement one of my attendants with his cycle will be at Kottamedu. The same arrangement for my much-awaited evening trip to Chinglepet also will be followed.

Staying at Nellikuppam, cooking on my own, no electricity or any other basic comforts were getting on my nerves. For me, a person who was used to city life from birth this was a very, very testing period. Eager and desperate to escape from Nellikuppam, I was even contemplating quitting the government job and applying for a job in the Madras Corporation. The corporation had a separate veterinary wing consisting of 5 veterinary dispensaries- depots they were called and a veterinary doctor post in the zoo, Zoo was then under Madras corporation control. But my mom was dead against this. According to her corporation means cleaning and disposal of garbage, sewage etc., and she can't accept my decision of quitting a decent dignified and prestigious government job. No appeal, back to hell.

Mom and others were very happy that their Balu was a veterinary doctor holding a government job and drawing a “sizeable” salary – RS 199/- (Rs 150/- + D.A. Rs 49/-) per month. During 1960 this was considered a rather substantial amount. It was really so, as every month end I will be left with Rs 10 or 15 after expenses. There were also a few proud moments when I have given my mother Rs 25 or 50!!!

Peria attimber and Rukmani with their children and my mom paid a surprise visit to Nellikuppam one fine day by car to see their Balu functioning as a veterinary doctor.

During my stint at Nellikuppam I was really appalled at seeing the attitude of the people in Nellikuppam There, majority of them Naidus, have a strong dislike for Dalits. Caste discrimination was at the peak there. As I recorded earlier one of my assistants was a Dalit. This dalit person and the other forward class assistant were assigned the job of fetching water from the village common well. One of the village big shots requested me to see that my dalit assistant was restrained from drawing water from the village common well. This was a shocking revelation to me, as until then I had no knowledge that Dalits were untouchables and were subjected to discrimination and humiliation. In fact, being a city man, I came to know the existence of Dalits only then. Okay, the ill-informed administrator I was then, somehow managed the situation to everybody’s satisfaction.





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Cow does not know the difference between red and green.  
Cow's heart beats 60 to 70 times in a minute.  
Cow's hearing power is better than humans.

## DOUBLE DHAMAKA

My 3 months “jail term” at Nellikuppam came to an end when I was blessed with double dhamaka.!

First dhamaka: The government announcing a pay hike – from the then gross Rs 199/- p.m. raised to Rs 240/- effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1960. A real jackpot. My eligible bachelor status further enhanced.

Second dhamaka: My 3 months ordeal at Nellikuppam came to an end. Got transfer orders posting me as Vet in charge of Veterinary Dispensary Ladakaranai Endathur. A twin village – compared to Nellikuppam a heaven. This village near Uttiramerur has regular direct bus service from Madras, electricity (what a relief), a hotel(?) in a thatched premise run by a brahmin, a touring cinema talkie ..... and what more you want? Ladakaranai Endathur as the name implies is a twin village separated by a mud path. Because of my posting at Ladakaranai Endathur I earned the moniker “Ladakaran” from my colleagues. A newly constructed single bedroom house belonging to an affluent reddy was my rent-free residence.

Toilet facility in villages those days was a major problem. I had to go by walk or at times run in search of a secluded open field near some pond. For this purpose, I brought my cycle from Madras by bus.

A brahmin, who ran a thatched hotel(?), was kind enough to cook food to my taste and liking. The dispensary timings were from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. The breakfast, was invariably two poories and a Vada. Around 12 noon lunch will be kept in my house. After lunch I will be sleeping till 4 p.m. or so when one of my assistants will wake me up for me to go to Uttiramerur, 8 miles away, by the bus leaving at 5 p.m. After spending the night with my friend there I will be returning to Endathur in the morning. My close friend V. Visvanathan who was a vet at Uttiramerur was my classmate from Intermediate. (A bachelor then, Visvanathan later in life, became the father-in-law of the famous Carnatic musician Nithyasri Mahadevan) Both of us graduated in the same year and had our first posting in Chinglepet District.

There was a primary health centre functioning adjacent to my veterinary dispensary Ladakaranai Endathur. The centre was in charge of an L.M.P. (Licenced Medical Practitioner) who was about 50 years old then, was very popular and scores of patients from surrounding villages used to come to him for

treatment daily. This doctor was a bit eccentric and the local reddiars were in awe of him. His handling, examination and treatment of his patients sitting and without touching them was very peculiar.

Some 10 to 15 patients at a time and a handful of local reddiars will be standing or squatting around the doctor. The doctor besides enquiring about the ailments of his patients will simultaneously be talking with the reddiars (village gossip) Then all of a sudden, he will go to an adjoining room where medicines were stocked. He will emerge from the room after a few minutes holding in both palms about 10+ medicine loaded syringes. The patients then will receive their respective shots – God only knows how he picks the right patient for the right medicine. He will then direct the patients to place the fees in a wash basin filled with strong Dettol solution. The currencies and coins will be dried later in his house by his wife. The doctor will also be constantly washing and scrubbing his hands with strong Dettol solution. Why this obsessive behaviour on his part when he has not touched even a single patient? Again G.O.K.

A disquieting episode:

Dr Vadivelu was very friendly with me and I used to spend my spare time in his centre watching with amusement his antics. One late Saturday afternoon a local young man bitten by a snake was brought to the centre. The doctor who was not sure of his eye sight and true to his nature of not touching the patient requested me to make an incision on his ankle just above the snake bite site. I made the cut at the precise spot pointed out by him. After allowing bleeding for a few minutes and making sure of cessation of bleeding and formation of a clot the doctor instructed the nurse to suture the incised wound and dress it. That Saturday evening after this incident I boarded the bus to Madras as already planned and returned on Monday morning.

On my return I sensed certain hostility on the part of a few villagers towards me. I was informed by one of my assistants that the snake bite victim was ok when he came to the health centre on Sunday morning, though weak and exhausted. This was expected as snake bite victims are not allowed to sleep. The nurse removed the overnight bandage to clean and bandage again as per the instructions of the doctor. While removing the gauze over the incision site, the already formed clot was disrupted and the ensuing bleeding could not be stopped in spite of the doctor's valiant efforts. The patient was then rushed to Chinglepet Medical College hospital where after some anxious moments the bleeding was arrested and he was saved.

But what was the reason for the hostility I faced from a handful of villagers? According to them as a veterinarian I am not qualified to make that incision on a human. Dr Vadivelu convinced those disgruntled villagers that the incision which was a must was made perfectly by me and the patient was saved. The subsequent unfortunate happenings were unexpected and this has nothing to do with me.

A bitter lesson learnt.

My posting at Endathur was designated as Touring Veterinary Assistant Surgeon. One of my duties was to undertake tour in and around my headquarters, meet the cattle owners and convince them to get their adult genetically poor male calves castrated. This was to prevent unwanted breeding.

Look at the job I am performing! Only about 4 months back I came to know about the existence of an appliance called Burdizzo castrator. But now I have become an expert performing castration with this Burdizzo!!





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**Sheep have two toes on each foot.  
Cows can sense a storm coming and will lie down.  
Goats have rectangular pupils, allowing them to see well**

## MODEL VILLAGE

From Endathur after about 1+ years I was transferred to Kaliampoondi, about 5 miles from Uttiramerur. This village considered as a model village then with tar roads and regular bus routes a primary school, a sub post office, primary health centre and a Veterinary Dispensary with a small poultry unit. Two Kangeyam breed bulls and a Murrah breed buffalo bull were also stationed at the veterinary dispensary for natural insemination.

The village big shot – Sri O. Srinivasa Reddiar was the then sitting M.L.A. from the Congress party. This wealthy M.L.A. was famous for not wearing shirt and even attended assembly sessions and other functions shirtless. He was kind enough to provide me with one of his houses to stay rent free.

The veterinary dispensary I was in charge was in a sprawling land. Besides the routine hospital work I had to look after the bulls and maintain the small poultry demonstration unit with 10 Rhode Island breed hens and one cock. Eggs from this unit were distributed to farmers for hatching. The bulls are allowed to mate local indigenous cows with the aim to upgrade their progeny.

After joining at Kaliampoondi I brought my mom and sister Saraswathi with her infant Ram to stay with me. The purpose was twofold. One, I will get homely food. Secondly, Ram who was then crying non-stop without any reason was brought here in the hope that a change of place and environment will help. Miraculously it did and Ram ceased crying!

At this point of time the Deputy Director of Animal Husbandry (Key Village) came for inspection who was followed in a few days by the Special Officer, Artificial Insemination. If these two officers were satisfied and impressed with the work of the vet they will select that incumbent to undergo training in A.I. What? Artificial Intelligence way back in the year 1962!! No, not the A.I. talked much about now, but it was for the training in Artificial Insemination. Only this A.I. was popular then and even now among cattle owners. I was selected for the training. More than my work the tasty food prepared by my culinary expert mom and relished by them must have helped in my selection. After getting orders of my training Mom, Saras and cured smiling Ram returned to Madras.

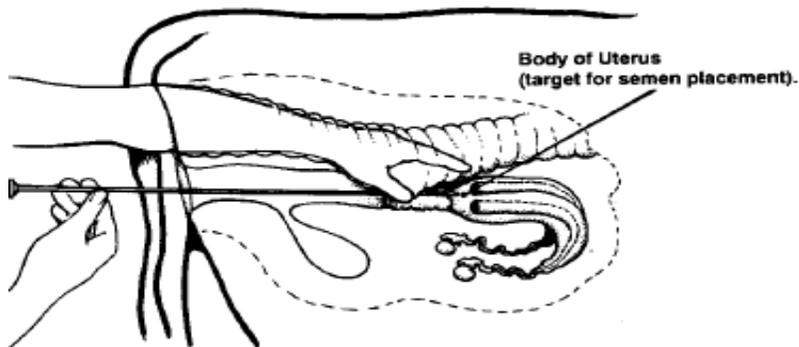
This A.I. training was for 10 days at Kangeyam, Tirupur District along with 7 or 8 vets selected. We were trained on how to collect semen from bulls, evaluation of semen, preparing diluent, storing and despatch of the diluted semen, insemination technique etc.

After training we will be invariably posted anywhere in the state to be in charge of Artificial insemination centre or Key Village centre. I was worried and awaiting the inevitable. But luckily, I was spared and got a posting to my liking in Chinglepet district itself. More about it follows.

What is Artificial insemination (AI) ?

As the name suggests, Artificial insemination (AI) is a technique in which semen is collected from the male/bulls, processed, stored and manually introduced into the female reproductive tract at appropriate time for the purpose of conception. AI has become one of the most imperative techniques for the genetic improvement of farm animals since the semen from genetically superior sires/males are used to inseminate the female animals artificially. It has been most extensively used for breeding dairy cattle and buffaloes. AI is the tool that possesses the potential of economic and rapid diffusion of elite males to a large number of females in a short duration of time over a large geographical area.

### Recto-vaginal Artificial Insemination





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**Pigs don't have sweat glands, so they must roll in mud to stay cool and prevent sunburns.**

**Goats and sheep don't have teeth on their upper jaw. They have a hard palate that helps them grind their food.**

## EAGLE TOWN

After Artificial Insemination training I was in suspense, fearing a posting in some place far away from Madras. But luckily, I was posted as vet in charge of Veterinary Dispensary cum Artificial Insemination Centre, Thirukazhukunndram, the famous Eagle Town. This was in late 1962. I was happy as I felt this posting was like a sort of promotion with my status elevated from village to town.

The veterinary dispensary cum A.I. centre building was in a sprawling land. Two Sindhi and two Murrah buffalo bulls were stationed for semen collection and dilution to be despatched to 3 sub centres in 3 villages. My staff consisted of 2 Stockmen (Para Vets), one Lab Assistant and 4 Attenders besides 3 Stockmen in the 3 sub centres. Quite a big staff with more professional and administrative responsibilities on my shoulders.

I was in a rented fairly spacious house overlooking the famous temple tank. My hospital was at a walkable distance, a few meters away.

Just a few days after assuming charges at Thirukazhukunndram, I was informed by my District Veterinary Officer that Dr. Pattabiraman, Director of Animal Husbandry was coming for inspection. இது என்னடா சோதனை? This Director, I was told by my colleagues, was a very short-tempered person, will not speak directly to the vets like me and everything was through the District Veterinary Officer (D.V.O) only. Luckily the DVO was very close to the Director. Since the DVO was close to me as well, he told me not to worry but he only wanted me to keep the institution clean and the records update.

On the morning of the Director's visit, just about an hour or so before, a cart carrying a very seriously sick cow was at the hospital entrance. In my anxiety to attend and treat the sick cow before the arrival of the Director, I rushed with my assistants to the gate itself and started examining the cow. I set up a saline drip. But to my horror the cow exhibited serious symptoms and collapsed within minutes.

The cow's owner and others present there started making a scene and a few among them stated that this hospital has the history of many such incidents due to inefficiency. I was unable to convince them that I have assumed charge only a few days back and was not guilty of any past lapses. Time was running short.

The Director was expected to arrive at any moment. Fortunately, one of my assistants, a local influential person, pacified the dead cow owner and others. The cart with the dead cow was just moving out of the hospital entrance and almost out of sight when the Director's car entered!

The Director and the D.V.O started slowly walking around the hospital compound. The Director, who was an authority on Sindhi breed first went towards the shed where the bulls were housed. Suddenly it dawned on me that in my anxiety to keep the hospital spick and span, I have dumped a huge assortment of unwanted items out of sight behind the shed. To my horror the Director after seeing the bulls slowly started to go around the shed. Thank God, true to his nature, with his walking stick in one hand and head held high, talking seriously with the D.V.O the offending dumped items escaped his attention! But the D.V.O did notice the dump with a smirk on his face.

After the rounds the Director entered the hospital building. Here again there was a blunder I had made. In every Veterinary Hospital cum A. I. centre where bulls are stationed, framed charts are hung in which the bulls' photographs with details of their branded numbers, their Dams' and Sires' numbers etc were to be furnished. The sindhi and murrah buffalo bulls under my care did not have these details. Only the bulls' numbers were there. My inexperience, unaware of the consequences and to avoid being reprimanded for not taking efforts to get these details I arranged to fill-up with fictitious numbers. When I boasted about this to my colleagues the day before the scheduled Director's visit they told me that my action was going to land me in deep trouble. It seems the Director is very knowledgeable on sindhi breeds and just by seeing the bulls number and also after physically seeing the bull he will know about the other details. AIYAYO, it was too late to undo what was already done. I could only pray to God that the Director will go without noticing the framed charts hung on the walls. My prayers were granted. This time, though his head held high it was not high enough for his eyes to focus on the charts. All said and done, the inspection was over much to the satisfaction of everyone – the D.V.O included. It was only later I learnt I that the inspection was only cursory. The Director's visit to Thirukazhukunram with his family was a pilgrimage. He was in a hurry to finish the inspection and to be on time to see the sacred eagles come and ate the prasdam on the hill top. Thanks to the eagles and the D.V.O.

This director after his retirement and when I was the vet at Said pet has become very close to me. Impressed by my work the mellowed retired director sought my services to attend on his cows at his residence. Tables turned. I felt I am the boss now.

During my tenure at Thirukazukundram, three incidents were worth mentioning.

First incident: About a month after assuming charge I happened to see a country cow with her new born calf grazing in the vast hospital garden. From a distance the cow appeared normal, but on close scrutiny it was pitiful to note that her right leg below the knee joint was just swinging. Closer examination revealed that the swinging portion of the leg was gangrenous and had to be amputated immediately as otherwise the ascending infection will prove fatal. Though an inexperienced surgeon I was then, I took a bold decision to perform the surgery banking on my theoretical knowledge and save the cow. By God's grace the surgery was a success and the post-surgery recovery also uneventful. Until my stay at T. Kundram I was grateful to the cow for her contribution of about half a litre of milk every day. The calf also had its full share.

Second incident: A few months after the visit of the Director my friendly District Veterinary Officer (D.V.O) was transferred and a new officer become my boss. A few days later this new officer came for inspection along with his 10-year-old son. We have arranged for their stay in the Government guest house.

My colleagues have informed me that this officer was a smoker and I should provide him with 2 packets of Berkley brand cigarettes every day – one packet for him and the other, he will reserve for his wife who was also a smoker!

As a routine the inspection by any officer will be only for a day but he stayed for 3 days. My attempts through his son to cut short his stay also did not work. But the officer was harmless and enjoying every minute of his stay with his son.

Third incident: A milestone. A significant event in my life. Yes, my marriage was fixed to be celebrated on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1963. Soon after his return with his son to Chinglepet the D.V.O., probably impressed by my work and hospitality which included 6 packets of Berkley and remembering my request, issued orders posting me to Veterinary Dispensary Villivakkam – a long awaited city job. This was in early 1964.

My happiness was short lived. After about 3 months stint at Villivakkam I was transferred. A posting somewhere far away from Madras. I went on medical leave and desperately tried to get a city posting. Meanwhile my wife Kamala went to Chidambaram for delivery. I was only hoping that my expected new born child will bring luck. IT DID. How?

Mr. K.R.S my brother-in-law's (Jayaraman) brother-in-law who was the Assistant Commissioner of Income Tax then, had a chance acquaintance with my department Deputy Director of Animal Husbandry Dr. I.D. Mantra Murti when they were staying in a government guest house. Fortunately, K.R.S remembered my struggle to get a posting at Madras and requested my Deputy Director (D.D) to help me. On the D. D's instructions conveyed to me by K.R. S I met the D.D.at his office in Madras. Somehow, after my replies to his probing questions he took a liking for me (it was because of the birth of Latha?) and forthwith issued posting orders as Veterinary Assistant Surgeon in charge of Artificial Insemination Centre, Saidapet, Chennai.

1963- 64– a very eventful period, real milestone events. Marriage and birth of Latha. City posting.

From August 1963 to May 1976. GOLDEN DAYS IN MY PROFESSIONAL CAREER. This was the period I became a full-fledged veterinary professional, attained fame and built up a wide circle of clients. I was also a favourite among VVIPs.



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Sheep make a bleating sound. A baby lamb can identify its mother by her bleat.

One mature ewe (female sheep) produces 7 to 10 pounds of newly shorn wool a year – enough make a man's suit

## THE GOLDEN DAYS – INTRODUCTION

I joined duty at Artificial Insemination Centre Saidapet immediately after receiving the posting order.

When I took charge at the centre, one of the very disturbing challenges was controlling half a dozen of unruly attenders. Within about 6 months with full support from my immediate boss and Dr. IDM some were transferred and others along with new incumbents were brought under control.

This prestigious job carries enormous responsibilities and unless you rise up to face the high professional challenges the job demands, it is like walking on a tight rope.

Though I was trained in Artificial Insemination technique and had theoretical knowledge on the subject, my practical execution of the same at that point of time was only at LKG level. It is imperative that unless I master this technique I cannot expect to retain this post. I took a resolve then. I involved myself mentally and physically in every aspect of the work viz– Maintenance of the bulls, preparation of semen diluent, collection of semen, evaluation of semen, labelling, storage and despatch of semen and performing recto vaginal insemination of cows and buffaloes attending the centre besides pregnancy diagnosis. In quick time by physically involving myself I gained much needed confidence and proficiency in all aspects of this work. Thanks to the exposure, as on an average about 70 to 80 animals used to attend the centre daily and the majority of them will be for A.I and a few for pregnancy diagnosis. As the saying goes practice makes one perfect and it proved so in my case. “Excellence is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort and intelligent execution”—Aristotle. How true was this in my case. The tenure as vet in charge of the A.I. centre lasted from August 1963 to 31st December 1969 and as vet at Veterinary Hospital, Saidapet from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1970 to May 1974. Because of this long stint at Saidapet I was called Saidhai Balu.

I would like to record in the ensuing pages instances galore, short and long, happy and unfortunate and also my genial association with ministers, and other dignitaries.





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Goats are great companions for other farm animals, including horses, cows, and chickens.  
Goats were the first animal to be domesticated, according to many historians.

# THE FIRST CHALLENGE

Hardly a week passed on my new post, I had to face a tough professional task. A cow was brought to the hospital with a history of the cow not feeding for 2 or 3 days and was very weak. On examination the rumen was found to be impacted. There are several factors that can contribute to rumen impaction, including inadequate water intake, a diet that is too low in fibre or too high in grains, changes in feed or grazing patterns, and stress.

Ruminal impaction can also occur due to the ingestion of foreign substances or the accumulation of ingested materials such as hair or plastic, causing the stomach to expand and the faeces to pass through little or not at all. My routine efforts to relieve the impaction involving a combination of fluid therapy, laxatives and dietary changes did not succeed. Luckily at that time one Dr. Richard a veterinary surgery post graduate, was there on a visit to the hospital. I apprised him about the case and my suspicion of foreign body in the rumen. Dr. Richard after examining the cow concurred with me and gratefully agreed to perform the surgery (rumenotomy)

The Saidapet hospital was well equipped then and the surgery by Dr Richard assisted by me and my team was started. What a surprise? First, we encountered a huge hair ball (called trichobezoar), the size of a football which was pulled out with difficulty. But this was not the end as eight more such balls of varying sizes, the smallest the size of a tennis ball were removed. Ensuring the best of treatment. the cow had a remarkable postoperative recovery. The hairballs were individually weighed labelled and show cased which was witnessed and admired by scores of visitors. In the absence of WhatsApp and other media exposure then, the publicity ended there.

## I.D.M.'s warning

Dr. I.D. Mantra Murti (I.D.M) while issuing my posting orders warned me that if I fail to live up to his expectations, no mercy will be shown. From day one of my assuming charge this warning was at the back of my mind. We all know IDM was a disciplinarian and have methods to check on the lapses of his subordinates. The centre's working hours were from 7am to 11am and 3 to 5 pm. I will be at the centre without fail daily at 6.45 am or even earlier daily. True to his cunning ways, IDM on most of the days will be on 'phone at around 6.45am, to check my presence. On a few occasions he will be physically present at the centre just

before 7 am. Luckily, I was never caught in this trap. It only helped in further strengthening of my bond with IDM.

IDM, in course of time trusted me fully and was openly appreciative of my work at the A.I. Centre. On one occasion he asked me to visit a top I.A.S officer's residence to examine his cow for pregnancy. This officer when I was at the gate of his house, was watering the plants and deliberately ignored my presence and did not attempt to even open the gate. I felt insulted and humiliated. I immediately rushed to IDM's house and apprised him. To my surprise he told me "Don't worry Balasubramanian, the IAS must be drunk in the morning itself and I will deal with him. You need not visit him again"

IDM was my god father until his retirement.

#### Efforts for survival

The A.I. Centre office and lab were functioning in a building at the entrance of the Saidapet Veterinary Hospital. The bull sheds and semen collection yard were at the rear end, some 500 meters from the office and lab. Every morning starting at 6.45 am (even on Sundays and other holidays) my routine was to prepare the semen diluent (diluent with egg yolk) and store it in fridge. By 7.45 I will be at the semen collection yard, collect the semen from the bulls, evaluate as to the quality of the collected semen, rush back with it to the front office lab, dilute it, label it and store it after packing and despatching a portion of the diluted semen to the sub centres. By 9 am or so I will start performing A.I. and pregnancy diagnosis on the waiting cows and buffaloes. Every day, including Sundays and holidays, this hectic schedule from 6.45 to 10.30 am will be strictly adhered to.

Though there was a second vet and a Stockman (paravet) in the roles of the centre, it was for selfish reasons on my part – mainly survival and for me to master the A.I. work, I volunteered to involve myself in all the chores without absenting. I used to jokingly say, that people, mainly my superiors should be made to believe that the work in the centre will suffer if I am not there.



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Cat whiskers are so sensitive they can detect the slightest change in air current.

Cats have 26 baby teeth and 30 permanent teeth.

## **THE V.I.Bs – VERY IMPORTANT BULLS**

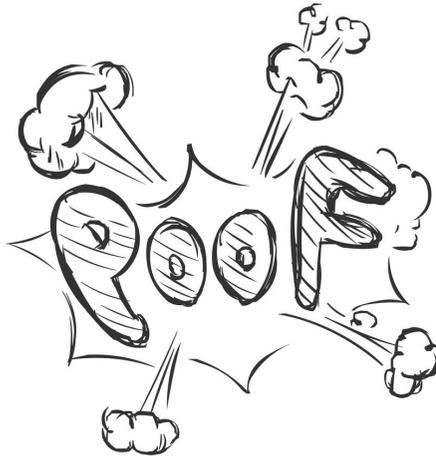
When I took charge at A.I. Centre Saidapet, there were 2 sindhi and 2 murrha bulls for semen collection. Shortly after, the department arranged to import two Jersey bulls from Australia to be stationed at my centre. At that point of time a series of meetings were held attended by subject matter specialists from the Madras Veterinary College and top officials from the department to decide on the precautions to be taken to protect the exotic bulls from hot and humid conditions which is common in Madras.

Initially there were suggestions to house the bulls in air-conditioned stalls. Subsequently this was dropped. Finally, it was decided to house the bulls in well ventilated stalls with pedestal fans, vetiver (camel grass) curtains at the entrance and ensuring adequate water supply for cold water spray to the bulls twice a day during day time. Thank God, the two jersey bulls adapted to the local conditions in quick time. The quality of semen collected from them was also excellent and in course of time the bulls became popular among the cow owners.





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Cats have no collarbone, which is one reason they are so flexible.  
Cats spend approximately 30% of their waking hours grooming themselves.

## VANISHING DRIVER AND VEHICLE

Four A.I. sub centres under my control in strategic places in the city were functioning where A.I. was done by para vets. Jersey, sindhi and murrah semen were despatched to these centres daily. For this purpose, a vehicle with a driver was there. The young driver, a new incumbent was interviewed and selected by me. Tested and labelled semen under cold storage (flask with ice) will be despatched well before 8 am daily. The driver with the vehicle will be back at the centre by one pm. One fateful afternoon when I returned to the centre after lunch I was informed that the vehicle with the driver did not return. There was no information as to the whereabouts of the driver with the vehicle. I informed my boss, the Special Officer A.I. whose office was in the same compound. On his advice no immediate action was taken and I was asked to wait till next morning.

Early next morning an elderly person introducing himself as the father of the absconding driver came to my house and fell prostrate on my feet crying, told me that his son, the driver who was waiting outside my house, has committed a great offence and pleaded with me to save him. I beckoned the driver to get his version.

The driver, it seems, after delivering the semen in the sub centres has on an impulse took one of his friends for company and drove to an Andhra Pradesh village adjoining Tamilnadu border. They indulged in a drinking spree and while returning in an inebriated state were involved in an accident hitting a roadside tree. Unable to retrieve the vehicle struck in the branches, they have returned to Madras by bus abandoning the vehicle at the accident spot.

The driver and his father were in tears and fearing police case and arrest wanted me to help. But who is going to help me? I was responsible for selecting and appointing this wonderful driver. This situation was new to me and I had my own fears of the consequences. I instructed them to come to the office when their case will be reported to my boss.

The Special Officer, my boss immediately placed the driver on suspension. On his consultation with the Deputy Director I was asked to go with the driver to the accident spot. The Deputy Director also arranged to get the services of a

technical officer from the Government Vehicles depot to accompany us. To cut a long story short, the damaged vehicle was towed and brought to Madras and after observing other formalities the driver who was already on probation and suspension was dismissed from service. I came unscathed out of this incident which was mainly due to the fact that the Deputy Director was none other than my favourite Dr, I.D. Mantramurti.

#### Vanishing buildings

In 1960s the Veterinary Hospital and the Artificial Insemination Centre at Saidapet were the only veterinary service facility available in the south of Madras city. For the north there was the Madras Veterinary college, Vepery. Though in the south there were in a few places Madras Corporation Veterinary Depots, they were not well equipped and were akin to first aid centres only.

The Saidapet campus which was very popular then, housed the Hospital, A.I. Centre, Poultry Unit, Piggery Unit, Semen Diluent Lab, Propaganda Unit and residential quarters for the Veterinary Assistant Surgeon and Veterinary Hospital Compounder. All these have gone now and only the Veterinary Hospital is there. It is very pathetic to see the once buzzing hospital in shambles with no evidence of any serious activity. Two huge buildings have come up in the sprawling campus which serves as the administrative offices for the Tamilnadu Directorates of Animal Husbandry and Fisheries, Treasuries and Accounts, Pension Pay Office etc.

#### Vanishing self and family

Incidentally I would like to mention here that after I took charge as vet in the hospital I was compelled to stay in the quarters. With my wife Kamala and infant daughter Latha I was residing in the quarters for a couple of months but was forced to abandon the quarters in the middle of one night on sighting a venomous snake in the kitchen.



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Cows can sense a storm coming and will lie down.

Goats have rectangular pupils, allowing them to see well in the dark.

## A FAVOURITE OF VVIPs

During my stint at the A.I. and Veterinary Hospital Saidapet, I was entrusted with the job of attending on the animals owned by the ministers and other VIPs at their home. For this purpose, the vehicle under my control was stocked with medicines and things required for artificial insemination. I also made it a point to keep a register in the vehicle for recording the date and time of visit, the details of the treatment, A.I. done, observations made, advice given etc. During my visits only on rare occasions I will have the opportunity to meet the VIPs in person or talk to them. But there were exceptions.

Invariably the then Congress party unassuming minister Hon. Nalla Senapathy Sakkarai Manradar whose family reputed for shaping the Kangeyam breed of cattle will be by my side whenever I visit his home for A.I. of his cow. Likewise, Mrs. Dhayalu Ammal w/o the then Hon. C.M. Dr Kalaingar Karunanidhi, Dr. Visalakshi w/o the then Hon. Minister V.R. Nedunchezian, Mrs. Mahadevan w/o the then I.G. of police R.M. Mahadevan, Mr. Pavazhavannan, the then Deputy Mayor to mention a few were real animal lovers and have always treated me with respect. In this context I would like to place on record certain anecdotes associated with some of the VIPs. In the annexure I have also listed the entire list of VVIPs, VIPs and celebrities who were my clients with whom I had the privilege of close association.

Dr. N. Rangabhashyam (NR)

Natesan Rangabhashyam (1933–2013), popularly known as NR, was an Indian surgical gastroenterologist and medical academic, known for his pioneering efforts in the fields of surgical gastroenterology and proctology in India. A former honorary surgeon to the President of India, he received B. C. Roy Award, the highest Indian award in the medical category twice. Government of India awarded him the third highest civilian honour of the Padma Bhushan, in 2002, for his contributions to medical science.

Dr. NR and his wife Smt. Chitra were one of my very valued clients since 1964.

Chitra's father Sri V.G. Saravanabhavanandham a great lover of cows was my first client in their family.

Dr, N.R would have a minimum of 4 dogs in his home at any given point of time and his favourite then was Great Danes. NR's family had a farm house on ECR near Mahabalipuram. The farm was like an open mini petting zoo featuring a combination of domesticated animals and birds --- two donkeys, half a dozen dogs and cats about a hundred number of assorted birds Emu, White Leg Horns, turkeys and ducks. NR, like a schoolboy will rush to the farm on weekends. Chitra will arrange special food for the animals and birds.

Dr NR was a very popular and successful practitioner running his own Sri Ramana Surgical Clinic with able assistance from Dr. Vijayan and Smt. Usha Sundararajan. Dr NR was a short-tempered person and will speak fast and in low tone only once to his clients about their condition and how to take the medicines prescribed and what test they have to undergo. Majority of the confused patients used to get all the clarifications and guidance only from the talented Usha who was capable of deciphering the prescription also.

Dr. NR passed away in his sleep on 13 July 2013, at the age of 79, survived by his wife, Chitralkha, son Dr. Om Prakash and daughter, Dr. Mahalakshmi. The copy of the tribute recorded by me is in the annexure.

Mr. R.M. Mahadevan I.P.S. I.G. of Police:

I was frequently called to attend on the cows and calves reared by him for A.I. and treatment. Mrs. Mahadevan, a pleasant Coorg lady will always be present during my visits. Once, after examining a cow for early pregnancy (about 35 to 40 days) I told her the cow was pregnant, most likely with twins. This was recorded by me in the register also. The cow ultimately delivered twins. This was a proud moment for me and the I.G. couple also appreciated and congratulated me.

At this point of time I was a working partner in setting up a dairy and starting a school for Ambi (Cho's brother) and his wife Shantha they owned(?) about 3 cars and I had free access to them for my personal use. None of the cars had tax token and on one occasion I was unfortunately held by a traffic inspector for

ignoring his signal to stop. I was served with a notice for not displaying the tax token. The inspector who was in a bad mood added in the notice several other violations and defects in the car. I immediately sensed that the charges were sure, to attract hefty fine and if not paid imprisonment also. Though I was in personal touch with the I.G of police family, I was hesitant and embarrassed to approach them. After worrying and spending a few sleepless nights I took courage and sought the help of I. G's wife. She forthwith called the I. G's P.A. and within seconds all the charges were dropped!

Mrs Visalakshi Nedunchezian

I was a frequent visitor to their Greenways Road minister's residence to attend on their cattle and a pet Pomeranian dog. Mrs Visalakshi a medical graduate was then in Government service also as Deputy Director. She was very unassuming and appreciative of my professional services. By mid-December 1969 all of a sudden, I was transferred from A.I. centre Saidapet to Veterinary Dispensary Sriperumbudur. With great effort on her part Mrs. Visalakshi got my transfer order cancelled and got me posted as Vet in charge of Veterinary Hospital Saidapet. I assumed charge on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1970.

A real New Year gift.

But at this point of time through Mrs Visalakshi I was shocked to learn that my transfer which I believed to be a routine administrative order was not so. The director, a staunch Periyar follower and at the instigation of some of my likeminded peers has gleefully effected my transfer. The story did not end here as the director was bidding time.

Mrs. Dayalu Ammal W/o Hon. C.M. Kalaignar Karunanidhi..

Almost every other day I will be visiting CM's or Murasoli Maran's houses. Though I did not have the opportunity or occasion to meet or speak to the C.M or Maran, I had good rapport with all the family members. I have also set up a small semi-intensive White Leghorn poultry unit in the back yard of the C. M's house.

Once when I was busy attending to the delivery of pups in C. M's house, I

heard a base voice sound from behind enquiring “இன்னும் எவ்வளவு குட்டி இருக்கு?” It was a pleasant surprise to me as the query was from none other than the C.M. I explained to him all about whelping (delivery of pups) and told him that the dog is about to deliver the last pup. On my request, he waited for a few minutes to witness the birth of that pup. Mrs Dayalu was very happy on the birth of 5 pups and doubly happy when I arranged to sell the puppies and for this she presented Latha with a saree. Mrs Dayalu also twice visited my house, about two streets further from her house to personally invite for the wedding of Alagiri and Stalin. Alagiri’s marriage was celebrated in Chennai. For Stalin’s wedding at Thiruvengadu I had the privilege to attend along with the C. M’s troupe.

My close contact with the C. M’s family and other VIPs, made me an object of envy from my peers. A few of my jealous colleagues who were close to the Director used to carry fabricated tales about me and I was constantly put under the lens. Only my popularity among the livestock owners and my VVIPs’ connections saved me.

Things reached a climax when one morning an attendant gave me a copy of a magazine and requested to read an article pointed out by him. This yellow magazine called ‘sigappu naada’ used to carry for cash consideration juicy reports of celebrities and others. In the article pointed out by my attendant I was the centre piece attributing several irregularities committed by me while discharging my duties in the hospital. I was convinced that it was the handiwork of my jealous colleagues orchestrated by the Director. Anticipating their follow-up sinister action, I rushed to C. M’s house after the hospital hours to apprise Mrs Dayalu about the magazine article and the consequences that may follow. She thoroughly enjoyed the contents of the article and assured me of full protection. I was surprised when the next edition of the yellow magazine carried certain irregularities purportedly committed by the director. I do not know who made this possible

But the episode did not end here. After a few days, one afternoon I was in receipt of a transfer order with instructions to leave the post immediately. After being relieved from the post, I rushed to the C. M’s house and told Mrs Dayalu that as suspected by me the Director has issued the orders on the strength of the

yellow magazine article. Mrs Dayalu was upset more than me and in spite of the assembly in session that day, spoke to the CM's personal secretary (Mr Nagarajan I.A.S)

I met the P.S. as instructed by him in CM's house the next day. He did not bother much to listen to my side of the story but told me not to worry and without reading the contents of my transfer order, tore it. When I informed him that a new incumbent has already occupied my post he said that it was not a problem as there was provision for creating a supernumerary post and the director will be instructed suitably. In a couple of days, I was reposted. Such was the political power.

Those days full time veterinary practice was unthinkable but an exception was Dr. Pangal Krishna Rao. He was a very popular private veterinary practitioner in the city, having his own clinic, Pangal's veterinary Institute at Wallajah road. He was also the doctor for race horses and was active in conducting annual Madras Kennel Club dog shows. I was fortunate in getting his acquaintance and he trusted me to visit and attend on his clients' animals during his absence or preoccupation. He was instrumental in my appointment on race days as the vet to inspect and certify the shoes shod as declared by the respective race horse trainers prior to racing. For this the Madras Race Club paid Rs50/- for every race day. Quite a sum then. Mostly races were held on Sundays and public holidays in the afternoon and as such my hospital work was not affected. On rare occasions if a race day was on the afternoon of a working day I made it a point to apply for leave.

The Director & Co were waiting only for this opportunity and I was served with a memo for not seeking permission prior to accepting the race course assignment. I replied stating that I am not attending the said job as a government servant. The animal Husbandry manual clearly states that qualified veterinarians are entitled to perform private practice as long as it is not affecting his government duties. No further action was taken on this issue by the Director. But the director who was still nursing the grudge against me issued a transfer order posting me to Sriperumbudur.

By this time Alagiri CM's son has become my very close friend. He said that I

need not trouble his mother and promised me to help. But it did not happen that easily. Alagiri by nature was a kind-hearted person with a short fuse acting on impulse and always eager to help his friends at all costs – a fine human being but a bad trait for a politician.

Alagiri first met my director in his office. After about half an hour or so a visibly upset Alagiri came rushing out. He blurted out saying that being a brahmin I can't expect any justice from this director. The then minister for Animal Husbandry was Hon. Anbalagan whom Alagiri contacted. Though the minister gave an assurance nothing happened for a while. Upset by the minister's inaction Alagiri forced me to accompany him one day to meet the minister in person in his chambers. True to his nature, Alagiri straight away asked the minister whether he will post his friend back to saidapet. Within a week I got my transfer back to Saidapet!

In this context it will be pertinent here to recount yet another incident. Before seeking Alagiri's help I approached a local staunch Dravida Kazhagam partyman who was also my client and admirer, for my reposting. On the partyman's request a DK party top brass sent one of his aides to speak to my director. The P.A to the director, it seems asked the aide whether the top brass knew that the person (that was me) he was representing, was an Iyer. This was conveyed by the aide to the top brass who in turn told my client that he can't proceed further in the matter. This has happened without the knowledge of the director.

Being a brahmin I was a constant victim of pin pricks from my top boss who was a D.K follower. But the irony was I was shielded by people who were all non-brahmins.



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Chickens have over 200 distinct noises they can make for communicating

Pigs are considered the 4th most intelligent animal (after chimpanzees, dolphins, and elephants).

## **T. N. EMERGENCY – FOR ME TOO**

Emergency was declared on 25th June 1975 and was lifted only in January 1977. On 31<sup>st</sup> January 1976 T. N. government was dismissed. The all India Cattle Show was held in the first week of January 1976. My department approached me to arrange for M.K. Muthu's music performance. Incidentally Muthu was close to me even before getting acquainted with other members in Kalaingar's family.

Much against the advice of Mrs. Dhayalu and others, due to pressure from my department, Muthu's music performance was fixed. On the day of the concert Muthu, who was drunk started rendering MGR's then popular numbers. The audience mostly DMK, started pelting stones at the stage and the programme was abandoned. Muthu was safely whisked away from the back of the stage. Later I apologised to Mrs. Dhayalu and others.

After the dismissal of the government I was expecting a transfer order any time. I was also subjected to a formal CBI enquiry to find out whether I was favoured with any monetary benefit from the dismissed government. They were convinced that I had only close friendship with the CM's family.

The anticipated transfer order was received in the first week of May 1976 posting me as Veterinary Assistant Surgeon in charge of Veterinary Dispensary Thali, a remote village near Hosur in Krishnagiri District. I was prepared for this.

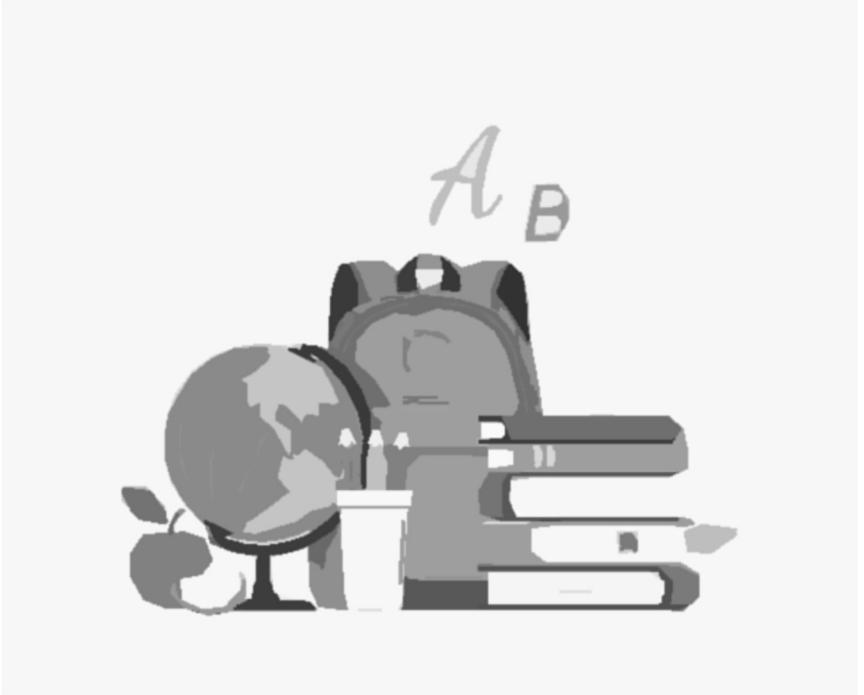
Even before receiving the orders I decided to take up post graduate studies in the Madras Veterinary College which had two-fold advantage. One – I can continue to stay in Chennai for two years as the course is for 2 years. I am also entitled for full pay and allowances as I had put in more than 16 years' service. The second advantage was my established private practice can be continued and running of the Pangal's Veterinary Institute also with assistance from my able associate Dr. Lakshmanan will not be difficult.

Before joining duty at Thali I sent my application for M.V. Sc course and I was assured of getting admitted. The course was scheduled to be started in August 1976. I reported myself at Thali in the second week of May 1976 and was there for 4 days. Horrible 4 days. Thali is identified as the backward block in

Krishnagiri district due to its hilly nature and poor infrastructure. It is known as Little England because of its cold climate. The inadequate facilities reminded me of Nellikuppam. I applied for medical leave and returned to Chennai.



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Cows can recognize their names (though they may not come when called!).

Cows have a memory of about three years.

## BACK TO SCHOOL

After my return from Thalli, I received the admission orders for joining the post graduate course – Parasitology main, Pathology and Microbiology subsidiaries as applied by me. Why this branch? The 3 subjects are non-clinical and as such the classes will start only at 10 am and this will give me some time to attend to one or two professional calls in the morning.

I am the only student in Parasitology main. Likewise, there were single student in Pathology main and Microbiology main. In the mornings we will have practicals and in the afternoons lecture classes. At age 40+, I was unable to listen to the lecture after lunch without sleeping.

My Post graduate study experience was similar to what I happened to read on this subject in Quora, the excerpts of which is recorded here.

“Studying in your 40s is hard. My memory used to be photographic, but now I wonder where I left it (back in 1950s, I think) Processing and under standing takes longer than it used to be.....”

In my case whatever I study, I could fully understand but alas I forgot every thing in about 24 hours. Also, when I start answering a question so many points come flooding to my mind and I end up writing pages and pages. Actually, when I took up the final examination in Parasitology, for the first question I wrote my answer with illustrations in about 20 pages which also consumed nearly one hour out of the allotted 3 hours! Later during the viva, the examiner jokingly remarked that I have written all that I have learnt in the first question itself.

By God’s grace I got my MVSc degree, but a few incidents during my study period is worth mentioning here.

The final examinations for the subsidiary subjects Pathology and Microbiology were at the end of first year. On the day and night prior to Pathology exam my mom who sustained a spinal fracture was on a straight jacket and lying on her back without any movement and had to be frequently attended to by us (myself and Kamala). This chore adversely impacted my study. A worried and helpless Lakshmiamma understood and told me “Don’t worry you will fare well” and I did.

For my Parasitology dissertation (thesis) the study was aimed at an assessment of the incidence of gastro-intestinal nematodes (worms) in sheep and goats. The complete entrails - oesophagus to rectum were collected from 25 sheep and 25 goats from the Madras Corporation Slaughter House, Perambur from 14/07/1977 to 13/11/1977. On reaching the lab at the college the different parts were separated and were subjected to detailed examination for worms under the microscope. Every working day for nearly 4 months this examination about 5 to 6 hours per day had probably contributed to an early cataract in both of my eyes.

In those days the P.G students will seek the help of a typist who was experienced and can type without error the scientific names like genes and species. Unfortunately, the typist engaged by me was indisposed and was unable to help me. In the absence of any other person to replace him, I took a bold decision to complete the task myself. Though I am not a qualified typist, I had the confidence to type with one finger and without error. Typist fixed but where was the typewriter? In a flash I remembered seeing an old Remington machine at my sister Saraswathi's house which was lent to me. The dissertation passed the scrutiny of the examiners with some words of appreciation.

During the final Parasitology practical examination, the external examiner gave me a slide out of his personal collection and asked me to identify the parasite. With all sincerity I placed the slide on the stage of the microscope and attempted to focus under the objective oil immersion lens ...kadak, kadak, the slide broke! (my degree also?). Hearing the sound, the examiner came running and lamented that one of his precious slides broken. Somehow the situation was managed by my professor who was the internal examiner. In a way it was good that the slide was broken as otherwise it would have been a real test for me to properly identify the parasite in the blessed slide.

In the afternoon, the gruelling 2-hour viva from 3 pm was a very testing period for me. Most of the questions were fired by the external examiner and by 5 pm both examiners shook hands with me and congratulated me that I have passed

At the end of my PG studies, I received my promotion orders from the department as Assistant Director of Animal Husbandry without prejudice to continue the PG course. This promotion in my career signals the end of my field vet job. Hitherto mainly administrative work only. On the day of getting the PG result I received orders of my posting as Assistant Director of Animal Husbandry in charge of a newly created Animal Diseases Intelligence Unit (ADIU), Cuddalore.

From school back to job.



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Chickens have over 200 distinct noises they can make for communicating. Pigs are considered the 4th most intelligent animal (after chimpanzees, dolphins, and elephants). Cats have over one hundred vocal sounds, while dogs have about ten!

## FIELD TO DESK

After 16 years as field veterinarian, 2 years post graduate studies and after my promotion as Assistant Director of Animal Husbandry my duties became mainly administrative. But, thanks to my private practice I was still in touch with the profession- in fact it continued till my 75<sup>th</sup> year.

The Cudallore posting lasted from May 1978 to November 1979. During this period, I underwent training in Animal Disease Investigation for a fortnight at the Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Izatnagar, Uttar Pradesh. My tenure at Cudallore was peaceful and happily spent as the Regional Joint Director of Animal Husbandry who was my boss was more a family friend and I could perform without any interference.

My constant attempts for a transfer to Chennai were partially fulfilled in my getting a posting as Farm Superintendent, in charge of Poultry Farm, Kaattangkulathur about 25 miles from Chennai. I took charge in December 1979. Commuting to this place daily from Chennai was not that easy as way back in 1979-80 the public transport facilities were poor. By bus, I will be getting down at Tambaram and wait for a local bus to take me to the farm. Daily I will leave at 6.30 am and return by 7 pm. This was not the Chennai posting I was longing for. A lucky break. I was a favourite of one of the Joint Directors in my head office who asked me whether I was willing to go on deputation to the State Land Development Bank (SLDB) at Alwarpet, Chennai as Assistant Director. "Kanna, Laddu thinna aasaiya."

I got the orders and joined at SLDB on 24<sup>th</sup> December 1980. The deputation period was for 4 years and the work was very light and routine. I was responsible for formulating schemes for the bank to disperse loans to farmers for purchasing milch cows. For this purpose, on the request of SLDB branch managers in the districts I was expected to visit them and present schemes according to the local conditions. The bank was publishing a magazine and a training centre. I have contributed some professional articles to the magazine. Once in a month staff members from the branches will come for training and I was a popular guest lecturer there. In my career I consider my stint at SLDB, my second golden days which came to an end on 24<sup>th</sup> December 1985.

I had to go on medical leave as after SLDB I was posted to a remote place in Pudukkottai District. After about a couple of months I accepted the revised

posting order to Arni in North Arcot District. My stay at Arni was from March 1986 to December 1987. By this time the post of Director of Animal Husbandry was filled by an IAS officer. This IAS officer heeding to some good words about me by my colleagues at head office issued orders for me to join at the head office.

I was in the head office from January 1988 to January 1990 and then on deputation to TAPCO (T.N. Poultry Development Corporation) as Senior Manager (Technical) Though there were some perks in this post the work load and responsibilities were too much that almost daily two trunk loads of files will accompany me back home. From February 1990 until May 1992 I had to work under 4 different Managing Directors (IAS) all great task masters. But one good thing happened when I was in TAPCO. I got promoted as Deputy Director.

Soon after my return to the parent department I was promoted as Joint Director of Animal Husbandry and posted to Nagapattinam. This was in February 1993. I was reluctant to go to Nagapattinam and went on medical leave. I was then seriously contemplating to go on voluntary retirement. But I was wise enough to listen to the advice of my seniors, cancelled my medical leave and joined as Regional Joint Director of Animal husbandry, Nagapattinam. At hindsight this was a life time decision in the right direction. My stay at Nagapattinam was only for 8 months until my retirement on 30th April 1994. The job required inspection of the offices of the 4 Assistant directors, one Deputy director of a farm and all the veterinary hospitals and dispensaries and the staff in the district. I also had the privilege of visiting temples in nook and corner of the district. During my stint I managed to resolve some of the long pending grievances of some categories of staff. In short, I had a very satisfying and fulfilling stay. On my retirement I was given a very grand send off.



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## POST RETIREMENT

I retired on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1994 at Nagapattinam as Regional Joint Director of Animal Husbandry.

Unlike most of the retirees who are often disoriented and anxious about their post-retirement lives, I consider myself very fortunate and blessed in this aspect. Even now about 3 decades after the end of my service I am mentally strong and enjoying the fruits of my retired life.

What is the secret? All because of our two grandchildren Eshwar and Janani.

Eshwar's birth on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1992 synchronized with my promotion as Joint Director. Janani's birth on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1995, gave me the much-needed mindset and purpose in life. One of the greatest joys of a grand parent's life comes from spending time with the grandchildren. Kamala, Latha and myself were the recipients of physical and mental health benefits through them. Both were gems, disciplined, very good at studies and extracurricular activities – Eshwar in cricket and shuttle and Janani in arts (self-taught)

By God's grace both of them are well settled with their spouses. The latest addition, RIHAAN is now 24 x 7 center of attraction to all of us.

Thanks readers for your patience Your ordeal is over.

I bid you all adieu





# A N N E X U R E S



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The normal temperature of a cow is 101.5°F. Cow chews about 40,000 times, it does not eat grass with teeth.

A bird's heart beats up to 1000 times per minute while flying

# ANNEXURE 1

## CLIENTS GALORE

After my initial service in Chinglepet district for 3 + years with great effort on my part and others I entered Saidapet campus in August 1963. In course of time, I slowly built up my practice and by late sixties and seventies I became a very popular and much sought-after vet in South Chennai. Unlike now, way back in sixties and seventies the fee received was not proportionate to the number of clients I had or visits made. But, I was a very contended person. Those days there were no private vet clinics and the few known exceptions were Dr. Krishna Rao's Pangals Veterinary Institute at Wallajah Road, Pasteur's Pet Clinic at Santhome and few others. Now the vet clinics have mushroomed and vet practice had flourished.

My practice started in the year 1963 and the client base slowly expanded and at one point of time I used to say that I would have visited at least once to a house where a dog or cow is reared in south Chennai.

Snippets of a few clients:

- Actress B. Saroja Devi - My first client. I have not met her. Only her P.A used to be present during my visits and pay the fees. GOK how much he has swindled.
- Director Sridhar - Not met him Only his wife will be present during my visits. A very decent educated lady.
- Actress Sowkar Janaki -Met and spoken to her. Very good command of English. Never failed to serve refreshments.
- Director Bhim Singh - Not met him. Only his wife will be present during my visits.
- Actor Nagesh - Met once. Other times his wife will be present during my visits.
- Actor M.N. Nambiar - Met him several times. Fine gentleman. Purchased 4 Alsatian pups from him. Loss for me in this deal as I could sell the pups only at throw away price.

- Actor S.V. Ranga Rao - Not met him. Only his wife will be present during my visits. On one or two occasions met his son.
- K.S. Narayanan . Film Producer - Their Pomeranian was very smart and intelligent.He will recognise the sound of my scooter from a distance. When I enter their house Mrs. Narayanan and others will search for him and ultimately pull him out from his hiding place under one of the cots.
- Singers Sulamangalam sisters - Rajalakshmi and Jayalakshi and their family members were deeply attached to their pet Pomeranian. There were occasions when their pet even with mild symptoms of sickness was brought to my house in the middle of the night.
- Amrutanjan - The owner's family's love for their pet is unfathomable and the proof of it was when their pet dog once fell sick. The treatment and care for the sick dog required close monitoring. They did not want the dog to be admitted in the Madras Veterinary College Hospital as suggested by me. On their pleading I accepted to take the dog to my house at Gopalapuram for treatment. The dog was brought to my house with all essential things like bed, flask, table fan etc. They also arranged for 24-hour attendants. When I wanted them give some tablet every 8 hours they immediately arranged for an alarm clock to make sure the tablets are administered as instructed. They profusely thanked me after their pet was saved and discharged
- Actress Lakshmi Rajam - This actress will give milk to her Pomeranian through paladai and while giving so other members of her family would be making sound on a bell and kilu kilappai (Baby rattle toy)
- Actor M.R. Radha -Had a mini buffalo farm in his Ramapuram land opposite to MGR's garden. On the fateful day MGR was shot I was in M.R. Radha's farm to attend on a sick buffalo. Luckily the shooting incident happened a few minutes after my leaving the farm which I heard was vandalised by MGR fans.
- Actor Sivaji Ganesan - Not met him. His sons Ram Kumar and Prabhu school boys then, have brought their dog for treatment to the Gopalapuram house. I have spoken to Sivaji's mother when I visited their house for attending on a cow.

- MGR - MGR's dogs (Harliquin Great Danes) were invariably brought to Saidapet Hospital. Only on 2 or 3 occasions I had been to his garden.
- Anbu, Pugazh - Wondering who they are! They are DMK M.P. Dhayanidhi Maran (Anbu) and Sun group Kalanidhi Maran (Pugazh) After my post-graduation the Pangals clinic had to be closed as the rented clinic building had to be handed over to its owners. In a few days I opened my clinic in the Gopalapuram out house. The then Don Bosco school boys, Anbu and Pugazh, both ardent dog lovers, will be present in the clinic almost every evening and will leave only at the closing hours.
- Kith and kin of Kalaingar- I was taking care of Amirtham's, Malliga's (Murasoli Maram), Selvi's (Murasoli Selvam) and Mu.Ka. Muthu's dogs and had to make frequent professional visits to their houses.
- T.R. Balu, M. P's wife- She, a quite unassuming lady was then residing near Besant Road and will be bringing her dog to the clinic for treatment.
- Kamadhenu Theatre owner - Resident of North Gopalapuram. Theatre passes for every film screened in their theatre received as fee for treating a couple of their dogs
- Dogra -Madras Race Course Secretary, had some 8 to 10 cows – a mini dairy farm run by his wife.
- Larson & Toubro - The company was rearing a cow in their land in Ramapuram. This cow was under my care.
- Chokalingam IAS , Ex Chief Secretary - Was having about 3 cows and calves. When one of his cows fell sick, on the instructions of my higher ups, a mini sort of vet hospital was set up in their cattle shed. I was asked to remain in their house to take care of the sick cow. This went on for 3 days until the treatment was over. Cowaa புறந்தாளும் VIP வீட்டிலே புறக்கனியும்.

- Mrs. Syed Basheer Ahamed SIET College - Had a few cows and calves. She, as the founder Correspondent of SIET college gave B. Com admission in the college for Usha (daughter of Ambi-Baby) and Rukmani's daughter Raji.
- Arunachalam Chettiar (AMM) – T.I. Group of companies. Mrs Arunachalam very efficient and disciplined lady. She had some 6 to 8 cows and calves. She would make me examine 3 or 4 cows during every visit. Through her I have become a veterinary doctor for the entire group of chettiar – M.V. Murugappan, Lakshmanan Chettiar, Meyyappan and others.
- Ambi-Shantha -The most unforgettable clients later friends of mine. Got acquainted with them when I was on duty at the race course on race days They were a remarkable made for each other couple in every aspect. Ambi, younger brother of Cho was super intelligent. The couple extended the race course friendship by visiting me almost every evening at the veterinary hospital, Saidapet. Ambi told me that he is interested in starting a dairy and poultry farm and suggested that as a veterinarian I should help him in setting up the farm. Shantha on the other hand was keen on starting a residential school on the lines of her father-in-law Srinivasa Iyer's Brindavan Residential school, Attur in Chinglepet district. In late 1969, Ambi and Shantha rented a palatial house with land for Rs 1500/- p.m at Nowroji Road, Chetpet. The farm, managed by me (honorary working partner) and the school christened as La Chatelain were started functioning (late 1970). The income generated through the farm was the main source for running the school. Latha was the first student and later teacher (Primary Head) in the same school for about 9+ years. The farm was dismantled after I disassociated with it and the school was shifted to the present location at Arcot Road, Valasravakkam .After the demise of both Ambi and Shantha the school is now ably run by Shantha's niece, Sujatha and her husband, Chartered Accountant Visvanathan.
- Pesum Padam Ramnath, D.C. Kothari, Dr. B.P. Rajan (Dental Surgeon), Dr. Mathias (Leading Gynaecologist), Dr. Vaidya Suresh Chaturvedi (famous Ayurveda practitioner), Kulandaiyan Chettiar, Hindu Rangarajan, L.R.Eswari (Play back singer), Justice Somasundaram, then sun theatre owner, Actor Arjun, Carnatic musician D.K. Pattamal, MRF Tyres Mammen Mappilai, R M. Seshadri, ICS (founder P.S.B.B Schools), Nilgiris and Nambisan owners were also my clients worthy of mentioning.

## ANNEXURE 2

Copy of the tribute paid to Dr. N. Rangabhashyam after his demise.

Dr. N. Balasubramanian, M.V.Sc  
Retd. Joint Director of Animal Husbandry

24<sup>th</sup> July 2013

### A TRIBUTE

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a veterinarian and a family friend of Dr. N. Rangabhashyam for over four decades, I would like to pay my tribute to him by highlighting a different dimension of his personality.

The whole world knows him as a preeminent gastroenterologist. But very few know that he was an ardent animal lover also. He loved a wide spectrum of animals. In a lighter vein I would say that he did not make any distinction, even among animals, of caste, creed, religion and gender high or low. At any given point of time there would be a minimum of five dogs at his residence and half a dozen cats, donkey, scores of poultry (turkeys, guinea fowls, ducks and even emu) at his farm. He would personally attend to them and spend time with them during his weekend visits to the farm. All these animals knew him very well and have developed an unusual bonding. They even knew his car and on hearing the car approaching the farm they would all make a beeline to greet him with their own language of friendly bark, bray, mew, quack, etc.

**His rapport with animals was unique which is comparable to the one Shri Ramana Maharishi had, whom he revered very much.**

He kind of talked to the animals. The normally aggressive cats have learned to co-exist with the birds and other pets in his farm. This was absolutely moving to watch especially in an age when humans are not safe even in places of worship. In a world where compassion has become a rare commodity even among human beings, here was a man who compassionate to animals.

There were occasions when he would call me even late in the night and ask me to find some pet or the other. He would not rest till I get him what he wanted. His favourite was ELSA a Great Dane. On the death of Elsa, he even erected a statue for her. On many occasions I have seen NR paying homage to ELSA before commencing work in his hospital. He was absolutely a very nice person who loved animals. He was never happier than when he was with his animals.

His desire to add more to his stock was always intense and left to himself NR would have left behind a vast animal farm but for the restraint imposed by Chitra inspite of she herself also being a lover of animals. But she was wisely aware of practical difficulties in giving good care to all of them.

I pay my tribute to this legend for his love and devotion to animals. This noble man and his pets send a strong message of love and compassion to the entire mankind. I have no doubt that this gentleman would be amply rewarded by God for his noble deeds both as a great surgeon and a passionate animal lover. We will all miss him very much but I am sure he is right now having more fun somewhere else.

May his soul rest in peace.