

## **FRAUD IN DOCTORS HOUSING SOCIETY**

**I was in high spirits with abundant happiness after successfully completing five year neurosurgery post graduation. As the first student of the first batch of direct five year neurosurgery program that was started at the Institute of Neurology, Madras Medical college - University of Madras, in the year 1974. I completed the course in the month of March 1978, took the examination in May 1978, and successfully came out of the rigorous training program and stringent examination by senior and strict examiners from reputed medical colleges from CMC Vellore, AIIMS New Delhi and NIMS Hyderabad. I also availed one year exemption out of the five year program as I did one year training in MS General Surgery as a post graduate at Guntur Medical College, Guntur, before joining the MS neurosurgery program in the year's 1973-74. My God father was forced to retire from the government service of Tamil Nadu in the month of January 1974. Without my professor and well-wisher, I thought I would be left like an orphan in the department and my future training and existence would become a waste if I continued to work as a post graduate even after his pre-mature retirement and without any financial assistance in the form of stipend or scholarship from either the Tamil Nadu or Andhra Pradesh**

government. Also, there was no guarantee that the incoming new professor of neurosurgery would be as helpful as my former professor, Professor B.Ramamurthi garu. There was one more reason, that I was already selected as the civil assistant surgeon by the AP Public Service Commission in the year 1977. I would get a job and salary if I joined the AP government service even with my MBBS degree as a civil assistance surgeon. Till that time myself and my colleague Dr.A.Raja had been receiving financial assistance from the great man Professor B.Ramamurthi as both of us worked in his private clinic in the evening hours on alternate days after completing the scheduled work at the Institute of Neurology. Professor B.Ramamurthi was very kind, gracious and highly magnanimous in creating a new opportunity to work very close to him in his private clinic, see his vast clientele with wide variety of neurological problems and also provide us with sufficient funds to live independently without depending for financial assistance from our parents. In fact, it was very difficult for my parents at our village to support me financially even after completing my MBBS degree course. More over their fortunes were fluctuating due to the vagaries of the weather that forced them to reel under the repeated drought, cyclones, floods and the resultant crop failures. There was one more fearsome factor that lurked in my mind that both my Professor Dr.B.Ramamurthi and the incoming Professor

**Dr.P.Naredran not only didn't get on well together but also worked against each other's interests. With all those factors working behind my mind, I requested my former professor of neurosurgery to recommend for me one year training exemption to the University of Madras. My outgoing professor not only understood my predicament, but also recommended my name positively for the exemption, allowed me to complete and present the thesis work, to complete the deputation to CMC Vellore and also granted permission to appear for the final examination after duly paying the university fee. Alas! The decision to retire him was taken just before the last date of retirement without giving further extension of his service even after the intervention of the Prime Minister of India Mrs.Indira Gandhi and the President of India, Mr.Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy. My professor's retirement was forced upon him in the most undignified and uncharacteristic way by the government of Tamil Nadu and the then Chief Minister who favored Dr.P.Narendran. He had a grudge against the most respected neurosurgeon of our country and one of the four founders of neurosurgery of our country. It was a great loss to the public, Madras Medical College and its students, the state of Tamil Nadu, the country as a whole and the international neurosurgical community. It was quiet disgusting that he was unceremoniously sent out of the department of neurosurgery which he founded, and the**

**Institute of Neurology which he constructed with his own funds as the towering monument in the entire country, which was popularly known as Mecca of Neurology in India. For the great man who strived hard and relentlessly to bring the neurosurgery and neurology of India onto the world map, the government of Tamil Nadu insulted not just Professor B.Ramamurthi but the entire public and medical fraternity.**

**In the heart of the heart, I really wanted to work at the Institute of Neurology for the entire five year training period and if possible even beyond the training program as a faculty member. It was once in a life time opportunity for any doctor to have access to enter into the great monument called the Institute of Neurology and to dream of becoming a faculty member would be asking for the moon. In fact, I was the only second person who has worked with Professor B. Ramamurthi from the state of Andhra Pradesh. Dr.S.Balaparameswara Rao was the first ever trained neurosurgeon by Professor B.Ramamurthi. I can proudly claim not only as the second doctor from Andhra Pradesh but also the first student of the five year neurosurgery post graduate program started in India. Hence I became very close to Professor B.Ramamurthi , who liked and loved me not only as his student but also treated me like his foster son, all the time comparing me with his own son in all respects. That**

aspect itself was a cynosure to the rest of the staff members. In fact he tried his best to get me selected to the Tamil Nadu State Public Service Commission as a civil assistant surgeon, which he could not succeed for reasons best known to the higher ups in the government circles. Not only Professor B.Ramamurthi but also the rest of the faculty members in neurosurgery, neurology and the allied specialties liked me very much and gave me full opportunities for me to learn the entire neurosurgical skills. They treated me like a friend and encouraged me to reach the ultimate goal of a fully trained, self sufficient, confident and successful neurosurgeon. Without going further into the minute details that I went through when I ultimately took the final examination, which any how I have dealt with elsewhere in detail. I should confine myself with the subject what happened after the examination.

Having successfully passed the final examination in neurosurgery, I decided to leave Madras and join AP government service. Before that, I started debating what would be the best thing for me on a permanent basis. One was that most of my classmates who studied MBBS with me went to USA after passing the ECFMG examination. Somehow I never wanted to go to USA. Moreover for me to go to USA I did not appear for the

qualifying ECFMG examination along with most of my classmates immediately after the MBBS course. To appear for the ECFMG examination at that juncture was not feasible. I firmly determined to work in our state only. Next, where exactly in our state should I work? Honestly speaking I did not have any preference of my own. To help me, Professor B. Ramamurthi himself decided that I should go to Hyderabad and work with Dr.S.Balaparameswara Rao who was a very good teacher and administrator. In fact, Dr.S.Balaparameswara Rao was one of my four examiners in the final year who really wanted to train me further under his guidance at Hyderabad. Professor B.Ramamurthi tried his best to get me posted at Hyderabad to work under Dr.S.Balaparameswara Rao. Somehow both of them could not succeed in their efforts to help me. Ultimately I was posted as a tutor in neurosurgery at Andhra Medical College, Vishakhapatnam. Even after that Professor B. Ramamurthi continued to persuade Dr.S.Balaparameswara Rao to shift me to Hyderabad. Dr.S.Balaparameswara Rao pacified Professor B.Ramamurthi that if I worked at Vishakhapatnam for a few months or years, he would try and get me a posting at Hyderabad under his care. There was one more thought process that went through my mind whether I

should continue to work with Professor B.Ramamurthi even after his retirement at his newly started department of neurosurgery at the Voluntary Health Services center at Adayar, Madras. But that department was in its initial stages and without much financial resources to support. There was an undercurrent fourth process that I should work in other national institutes like NIMHANS, AIIMS or the PGI Chandigarh, but the job at Vishakhapatnam was there on hand for me to join immediately without any strain. Last but not the least direction I was looking for was to go to Japan to work under one of the leading neurosurgeons of Japan, Dr. Zero Suzuki who was well known for his aneurismal surgery. That was a farfetched and remote possibility. But the first priority was to report for duty at Andhra Medical College as early as possible. I was also keen to work as a qualified neurosurgeon to test my skills as soon as possible. As I was debating within myself all the openings that were available for me and also discussing and taking proper advice from my teachers, elders and friends I got a pleasantly surprising letter from my mentor Dr.M.V.Subrahmanian. He wrote a congratulatory letter and also invited me to join in the department of neurosurgery he was going to start at Kasturba Medical College at Manipal after his retirement

from the State Government Service at Guntur at the same time. He gave me time to decide about my future course of action. He encouraged me to visit his department and also to have a personal observation and experienced before deciding to join the department or not. That was an all of a sudden development for which I was not psychologically prepared. Moreover Professor B.Ramamurthi drilled in to my mind that the job in the Government Medical College and the hospital was more superior for the job satisfaction and also to continue my academic pursuit. Never did I realize that my loyalty to my mentor Dr.M.V.Subrahmanian would be put to a test so immediately after my qualifying examinations. Never did I imagine that I would take a decision against the fatherly advice and refuse to accept his invitation. It was a very hard decision to make and ultimately I had to go against the wishes of Dr.M.V.Subrahmanian. I really felt very sorry I helpless when Dr.M.V.Subrahmanian really needed me to assist him at his new department. I had a gut feeling that I really betrayed him. That thought process haunted me ever since till date. It also proved his own point of view that I had shifted my personal liking and preference to Professor B.Ramamurthi for his flamboyant and multifaceted personality which attracted many people in the world including me. Anyhow I

damaged my mentor's faith in me irrevocably. That my place at Manipal was taken up by my colleague Dr.A.Raja one year later and continued to work throughout his career for more than three decades successfully was altogether a different story.

Once I decided to leave Madras and go to Vishakhapatnam I wanted to meet all my professors, greet them and get their blessings and advice. In that direction, I met Professor B.Ramamurthi first. He was very happy that I could complete my training successfully without any remarks or failures. The five year direct neurosurgical post graduate training was after all his own "Dream Project". He was very happy for the sound knowledge and surgical techniques I acquired. It was heartening to know that one day he announced in the large group of doctors breakfast get together that I was having the latest and the best neurosurgical knowledge more than anybody else in that meeting. That did not make me proud but made me to shiver in my spine to work hard and also to live up to his expectations and standards. It was a big burden and responsibility that was thrust on me. That I did not disappoint on him was all to his credit. He wished me all success in my future career. More than Professor B.Ramamurthi Dr. (Mrs.) Indira Ramamurthi felt sad that I was leaving Professor

**B.Ramamurthi forever after years of bonding forever. The one word she uttered made me feel how much they liked me and what sort of affection they showered up on me as their foster son. She asked me who would help and assist Professor B.Ramamurthi after I leave him, in his professional work. Anyhow all good things should come to an end. As a parting advice Professor B.Ramamurthi told me four points to keep in my mind during the rest of my life. The first point was to do ethical neurosurgical practice. The second point was to not to antagonize the senior professor of neurosurgery in the department as long as his decisions did not harm the patient's life. The third point to get married soon and establish the family as early as possible. The fourth and the last point were to have enough money to live comfortably with a house and minimum needs of the life. I also met Dr.S.Kalyana Raman, one of the other three senior neurosurgeons in the department. He advised me to have a decent private practice and sufficient money as there was no respect for any doctor in the society without good practice and money.**

**When I left the Institute of Neurology, it was not just Professor B.Ramamurthi, Dr.P.Narendran or Dr.S.Kalyana Raman but a host of other persons. If I rarely narrate all names it would become totally a different topic but in a**

concise way I should acknowledge their influence on me day in and day out which had resulted in fructification of my knowledge and experience. There were four professors of neurosurgery, three other qualified neurosurgeons, eight post graduates in neurosurgery and two other senior house surgeons in the department of neurosurgery. There were four professors of neurology, two qualified senior assistant neurologists, four DM neurology post graduates; neuroradiology professor and assistant professors; neurochemistry professor, assistant professors, postgraduate students and research assistants; neuropathology professor and assistant professor; neuro-ophthalmology assistant surgeon; neuroanesthesiology professor and assistant professors; visiting neurophysiology professor; neuropsychologist; physiotherapist and the team of ten to fifteen trainees; thirty to forty all qualified and senior staff nurses headed by one nursing superintendant; operation theater assistance; radiography technicians, biochemistry and pathology technicians, neurophysiology technicians, optometrist, clinical photographer, social worker, telephone operators, lift operators, librarians, office staff consisting of a secretary and a half a dozen typists, the helpers in the dining hall tens of ward boys, ayahs and sweepers and hundred and twenty in-patients along with

hundreds of out patients and their attendance who knew me personally, recognized me by my name, worked with me, helped me at different stages and had many happy memories to share with, to remember and to cherish forever. That was the unending list of people involved in the day to day activities of the Institute of Neurology. What about the people I had long lasting association with in the Madras Medical College, the office of the principal, the staff in the library and the sister departments in the college. That was not the end of the list, but the famous GGH and the other departments like the causality, the outpatient block, the blood bank, the Barnard radiology and the radiotherapy department, general surgery and orthopedic departments, the general medicine departments where I had the lasting memories of my interactions with them and also the good, healthy and useful interdepartmental interactions. Even the wards, floors, special rooms, office, operation theaters, ICU, the head injury unit, the radiology department walls and that duty doctors room all had a lasting impression and imprint on my personality, not just as a student, postgraduate in neurosurgery but as a disciplined, dedicated, deserving and devoted human being with a humane touch. That was the peak of my life during my education. Last but not the least that my stay at the

hostel where I had good accommodation food and friends of many departments.

Coming to Vishakhapatnam in itself from Madras was not a straight journey. As usual I boarded the Circar express, stopped at Vijayawada, left safely all my luggage at Dr.B.Suryamohan Reddy and Dr. (Mrs.) Aruna Kumari residence at their railway quarters. I went home to my native place on 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1978, came back to Vijayawada on 2<sup>nd</sup> July, and boarded a train to Vizag which reached there in the early hours of 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 1978. I was relatively new to that place having visited only once before in the year 1972, when Dr.Thondapu Rama Krishna Reddy was studying at Andhra Medical College, that was all together a different story. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 1978, early hours of the day, there was no body at Vishakhapatnam whom I knew of and to take any help to stay or even talk to. I took a rickshaw puller's help to reach a lodge for that night's temporary stay at Anand lodge that was located at Jagadamba junction, a very popular cinema theatre at Vishakhapatnam; I took a room for rent for rupees twenty for the overnight stay. By the by, When I left Madras, I spent all the money that was given to me by Professor B.Ramamurthi towards my clinical assistance, at Madras itself. Hence I borrowed rupees hundred and twenty from my father when I took

leave of him from my village. The money cycle took a full circle when I looked back, that when I went to Madras in the year 1974. I took money from my father for my initial expenses. In fact I left a stipendiary course in MS General Surgery at Guntur, getting about rupees two hundred and fifty per month. Still I dared to join a non-stipendiary course at Madras Medical College, forcing again for financial support from my parents as I did during my under graduate MBBS training. So, I started spending at Vishakhapatnam with the money borrowed from my father. I spent the rupees twenty for the room rent and the remaining money for food and other expenses.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 1978 fore noon i.e. before 12A.M I reported at the office of the Principle of Andhra Medical College at the Panagal buildings with all my documents and certificates. On that day my joy knew no bounds. I was hoping and dreaming for that day to dawn in my life as there were high hopes on my future by my parents. In fact if I go back in to my memory lane when I was about to join the high school studies, precisely the sixth standard, my father was enquiring from other people whether I had any chance of becoming a teacher at least. For his totally unfamiliar educational background I becoming a teacher was the highest goal people use to aspire in those days. Those were the good old golden

days where teachers were highly respected and recognized in the society of almost illiterate village population. There was one more reason for my happiness that I was going to get a government doctors salary, a direct Gazetted officers post with my hard earned educational qualifications. In my father's point of view a person to be useful to the family he should start earning to prove his earning capabilities. In that way my father would get satisfied in more than one way. I was hilarious to go to the neurosurgery department and to take charge of the department in the capacity of assistant neurosurgeon. I was brimming with the latest knowledge and advanced neurosurgical skills. I was keen on teaching and training the junior doctors, students, house surgeons and post graduates, as it was my passion. Even when I joined at the Institute of Neurology at Madras, I was deeply involved in that teaching program. In fact all the professors working at the Institute of Neurology were great teachers by themselves with their past experience, with international training, knowledge and experience. The same thing I too wanted to follow suit at Vishakhapatnam. My obvious goals were to practice ethical neurosurgery help the poor and sick patients and teach the specialty of neurosurgery subject. My initial impressions and thoughts before going to the Andhra

Medical College were more positive than negative. When I was studying MBBS at Guntur Medical College, I looked upon at Andhra Medical College as one of the oldest and the best teaching hospitals in the state of Andhra Pradesh. I also thought that the teaching faculty, the number of super specialties and the environment where the Andhra Medical College and the King George Hospital were uniquely located. In the sense that they were ideally situated in one campus compared to our college at Guntur which was situated a little away from the general hospital. I also thought that the students getting admitted at the Andhra Medical College were bright and more superior as always the students with higher marks would get first preference for admission at the Andhra Medical College. Many of the gold medals and prizes were climbed by the Andhra Medical College students. Not just academics but in sports and cultural activities also the Andhra Medical College use to be the leader. Some of the faculty members went to foreign countries and acquired foreign degrees like FRCS, M.Ch that would motivate the students to choose their future course of career. Many of the teaching faculty members were students, post graduates and staff members of that college so much so there were doctors who had been associated with the college and the hospital for decades

together. Some of the professors like Dr.Brahmayya Shastri, formal professor of physiology; Dr.C.Vyaghreswarudu a former professor of orthopedic surgery author of a text book in orthopedics and also a champion of polio patient's surgical relief camps; Dr.C.Raja Rama Mohana Reddy former professor of pathology and former Director of Medical Education; Dr.Lingam Suryanarayana former professor of surgery and former Additional Director of Medical Education and also the vice chancellor of the Health University of Andhra Pradesh; Dr.S.S.Reddy former professor of surgery and a popular figure in the town and Dr.B.Swamy former professor of medicine and vice chancellor of the Nagarjuna University and many more stalwarts worked in those institutions. Last but not the least the department where I was going to work was established by the great founder of neurosurgery of Andhra Pradesh Professor S.Balaparameswara Rao. He had his formal training in neurosurgery at the department of neurosurgery at the Madras Medical College under the guidance of late Professor B.Ramamurthi at Madras, in the year 1956. That was the only neurosurgical unit available for the patients for many districts around Vishakhapatnam where the neurosurgical facilities were available. In fact that was one of the significant information I received

very early in my medical college clinical career when one young recently married doctor met with a scooter accident while going to report for duty at the rural PHC. Professor S.Balaparameswara Rao was requested to come and advise the further management of that unconscious doctor who was admitted in the surgical unit headed by Dr.Nutakki Venkateswara Rao. At that time I was posted as the first year clinical student in that unit. Only then, did I realize that there was a subspecialty in general surgery called neurosurgery. Hither to there were only General surgeons, orthopedic surgeons, ENT and Ophthalmology surgeons in our medical college at Guntur. Neurosurgery, thoracic surgery, plastic surgery, pediatric surgery and urology were unheard off during our initial training. With that in my mind, with the encouragement given by Dr.M.V.Subrahmanian who started the first neurosurgery department at Guntur Medical College in the year 1969 and many other factors that influenced me to take up direct neurosurgery training program under Professor B.Ramamurthi at madras. As a preparation to groom me to reach Professor B.Ramamurthi, Dr.M.V.Subrahmanian suggested that I should visit the department of neurosurgery at Andhra Medical College and King George Hospital at Vishakhapatnam efficiently and ably managed by

**Professor S.Balaparameswara Rao. In that connection I visited Andhra Medical College and the neurosurgery wards at King George Hospital with the help of my friend Dr.Thondapu Rama Krishna Reddy in the year 1972. In fact I stayed at his private rented room accommodation for a few days at Kiranmai Buildings located in Krishna Nagar, Maharanieta at Vishakhapatnam, a stone throw away from the King George Hospital. When I visited the Andhra Medical College library I was not only pleasantly surprised at the number of books and the journals that were available but was more than astonished at the interest and pains taking efforts made by Professor S.Balaparameswara Rao and his team of doctors. I was told Dr.K.V.Chalapathi Rao and Dr.I.Dinakar was his first qualified assistant neurosurgeons who worked with him. At that time I was very keen to visit the neurosurgical ward popularly known as M2 ward to personally experience the maintenance of the neurosurgical unit under the able and strict administration of Professor S.Balaparameswara Rao. Unfortunately I could not enter the ward as the gate was locked to prevent the entry of the unauthorized persons out of the visiting hours. Entering the ward without the prior permission of the unit chief was totally prohibited in conformity with the**

**strict discipline and the administration of Professor S.Balaparameswara Rao.**

**All those thoughts were bombarding my mind ever since I was posted to go to Vishakhapatnam and also after I finally decided to work at Vishakhapatnam. On the way to Vishakhapatnam I was trying to recollect and renew my old contacts if any and doctor friends either senior or junior at Vishakhapatnam. I could not remember any name immediately. My good old friend Dr.Thondapu Rama Krishna Reddy who hosted me during my 1972 visit had happily gone to USA in the year 1975, in fact he spent a few weeks of his time with me at the Institute of Neurology at Madras during his preparations for his imminent America visit. So, my mind was blank as far as the contacts were concerned. The only man whose name I knew and whom I met earlier at Madras was Dr.K.V.Chalapathi Rao. I was asked to receive Dr.K.V.Chalapathi Rao in the year 1975 by Professor B. Ramamurthi who was organizing the Middle East Asian Neurosurgical conference in the year 1975 as a part of the silver jubilee celebrations of the department of the neurosurgery that was established in the year 1950. I met Dr.KV.Chalapathi Rao and received him at the central railway station at Madras when he arrived by Howrah Madras mail from Vishakhapatnam as an invited guest, in**

the early hours and took him to the accommodation allotted for him. That was all that I knew about him before hand. When I reported for duty at the neurosurgery ward the handing over formalities were duly completed by the assistant general surgeon who was posted on deputation to neurosurgery ward, by name Dr.C. Pulla Reddy. He was assisting the unit chief even though he was not a qualified neurosurgeon. But he developed keen interest in learning surgical procedures with his long association with the department under the able guidance of Professor S.Balaparameswara Rao for several years. On that day my contacts were only those two people Dr.KV.Chalapathi Rao and Dr.C.Pullu Reddy and a few house surgeons who were coming in and going out. A few more doctors after knowing my arrival approached and identified with me about their earlier acquaintance with me. The first and four most was Dr.C.Ravi Chowdary a post graduate in MS general surgery working under Dr.K.Veerabhadraya. Later on he told he was a first year clinical student when I was the first year post graduate student in my MS general surgery course at the government general hospital at Guntur in the years 1973-74. That was our first meeting. That I could only vaguely recollect. But the most important fact was that when I was working as a neurosurgery post

graduate directly under the care of Professor B.Ramamurthi at the Institute of Neurology, madras I was part of the team who operated on his mother for a brain tumor called Oligodendroglioma. I was also in charge of his mother in the special wards. His mother late Dr. (Mrs.).Basavapurnamma was a very popular and successful practitioner in obstetrics and gynecology at Vijayawada in those days. Unfortunately she had a recurrence of the tumor. She was operated again within a gap of two years time. So much so, Dr.Ravi Chowdary and his father a famous former cardiologist, late Dr.Venkayya Chowdary stayed for a long period at the Institute of Neurology and were closely watching my activities, My involvement in the departments and also my hard work and enthusiasm in attending the neurosurgical patients directly under the supervision of Professor B.Ramamurthi.

Dr.Ravi Chowdary became an intimate friend. He worked in the neurosurgery department with me as a general surgery postgraduate on deputation for one month. He took me to the house surgeon and postgraduate hostel and fixed my accommodation and food. Later he showed interest in neurosurgery, assisted me in the ward operations and also for my surgeries done in private nursing homes. He was notorious giving trouble to

collogues, nurses and administrators and got a bad reputation. But still got the knack up learning daring surgical skills. That he was unpopular did not clash with my own work zeal and enthusiasm. I was made the deputy warden of the house surgeon and P.G Hostel and along with Dr.Chakra Rao. That was all together a different story. For nearly three years after joining the KGH, I did not have any transport of my own. I use to commute by walk to and fro to my hostel, to the ward, to begin with from the rented accommodation at the collectors office junction to the KGH on one side and the St.Joseph's hospital where I started operating my private cases on the other side. Between in the years 1978-80, Dr.Ravi Chowdary used to take care of my transport requirements on and off, as he was having his own motor bike in those days. The troubles with his motor bike and about himself I had dealt with elsewhere in detail.

There was one more person who was a very senior student to me at Guntur medical college working as a causality medical officer at the king George hospital. He spread the word to some of the staff members that I was his cousin. He did his MBBS at Guntur Medical College, MS general surgery at Andhra Medical College, worked as an assistant professor of general surgery and after completion of his mandatory teaching period he started

working as a casualty medical officer. Hence he became very popular in the hospital, with the consultants, with the patients, junior doctors, police department and the public. I did not know that he was working at KGH before I reached Vishakhapatnam. Nor did he meet me before to give any helping hand or advice. That, our family name "BODDU" was the only semblance of our relationship. Still I respected him as my senior at Guntur Medical College, as a qualified general surgeon and CMO. I was touched when he addressed me as tammudu (brother), since I did not have any brothers of my own. I was the only living male child for my parents.

One more doctor by name Dr.N.Venkatapathi Raju who working as an assistant professor of radiotherapy at King George Hospital came to me rushing. He congratulated me and complimented me for my successful training of direct neurosurgery at Madras Medical College under the able guidance of Professor B.Ramamurthi and also for my joining as an assistant neurosurgeon at King George Hospital at Vishakhapatnam. He helped me a lot as a room-mate when I was bed ridden with typhoid fever in general hospital at Madras. I would like to add a few more points about Dr.N.Venkatapati Raju in more detail at a later stage of this narration, suffice to say for the present that he was my senior at Guntur Medical College

by more than six years, he stayed in the same hostel before me , he worked in the state government service in some rural PHC'S and came to Madras Medical College to do his MD in radiotherapy in the year 1974. He took me as his roommate in the Madras Medical College men's hostel for some time. He was a great source of inspiration and disciplines both in the professional and personal life.

Without losing much time I got fully immersed in my duty at the M2 ward putting the rest of the things aside. I was aware and conscious of the curious looks from all the people around me. There were many people who were eager to find out my capabilities and work ethics as I was very new to that place. I found more distracters and very few admirers. But unmindful of others I proceeded with the new zeal and energy. There was only one goal on my mind that I should reproduce the high standards of neurosurgical practice. I wanted to impart the neurosurgical knowledge to the junior's as it was done at the Institute of Neurology. Very soon I learnt that the professor and head of the department, Dr.K.V.Chalapathi Rao who was the first MS neurosurgery trained degree holder from the Christian Medical College Vellore in the year 1962, was recovering from his illness, jaundices due to infective hepatitis. Hence he was not taking full load of ward work and was totally dependent on the outgoing

**assistant surgeon. Dr.C.Pulla Reddy was in fact a de facto in charge of the unit and was in total control of the day-to-day activities. So much so it was my first responsibility and un do the mindset of the staff, students and patients in handling the patient care in the most scientific and academic way reflecting that treating each patient as an academic exercise and not just a practical exercise. Many people started to raise their eye-browses at the sea change.**

**After day or two of acclimatization with the surroundings my responsibilities towards my parents and to attend to their needs took the next priority in the list of things. I should state that in fact somehow it was not in the list of priorities given to me during their sincere advice to me by Professor B.Ramamurthi or Dr.S.Kalyana Raman. I suddenly realize the amount of financial burden that my parents took up on themselves to make my education un interrupted for financial reasons. Knowing their commitments troubles and tribulations. I too worked hard to justify their efforts by successfully completing my studies from the first class in the elementary school till the final year examination in the MS neurosurgery course. To put it in the other way that I did not fail in any one of the examination I faced, fighting much against the many odds. It was frightening to know how I could**

manage that when so many other students in my classes at different levels dropped out for more than one reason at different stages. Suffice to state at the stage that only twenty seven MBBS students out of one hundred and fifty could complete the examinations in the first attempt itself. I knew the frightening fact that failing in one examination would mean a doom in the career of any student with the rural background which was equally applicable to me. The demands of agriculture and cultivation were offering an open invitation to join the men stream of the life in the villages. To me in that context there was no pressure on me to perform well in the examinations throughout the student days. That did not mean that it was a cake walk for me in all the examinations I phased. In other words there were many examinations that I could have failed, escaped from failure or just scrapped through with bear minimal marks. So much so the financial burden my parents hard to cope with was of Himalayan heights if somebody knows the truth that my father started cultivating only half acre of his agricultural land when I was a child before joining his school. Fortunately for my father his fortunes improved as I started going to school and colleges and financial needs increased. "There is a saying in Telugu that when there is the Saraswati Kataksham Lakshmi

**Devi also showers her blessings.” But that was only the superficial picture but if I go in to the depth and details my father and our family faced many financial losses due to natural and unnatural calamities like three fire accidents at different times ruining our limited fortunes starting from my preschool days till my house surgeon days- drought, floods and the famous divi seema cyclone and devastation in the year 1977. That gave telling blows on my parents tumbling financial fortunes. The credit goes to my parents that they never allowed these financial troubles to affect my studies at any stage. Not only that they took the most care in preventing even the pestering problems percolating towards me even in the midst of their misery. But the time had come to me to meet their needs even partially as a first financial responsibility from me.**

**I can't but go in to the reality, nor could I suppress the truth that I studied in the social welfare elementary school at my native place Varagani, ZP high school Peda Nandi Padu, Hindu College Guntur and Guntur Medical College Guntur. I did my house surgeon and one year general surgery post graduate training at the same college finally the MS neurosurgery at Madras Medical College Madras. I just want to have a glimpse of assistance monetary or otherwise I received during the**

career. During the elementary school day mid day meal scheme was introduced to attract the children to go to school and also to save their parents time who preferred to take the children to the fields as a time and money saving exercise. At high school during the lower firms that was from sixth to eighth class eighteen rupees and twenty five paisa was given as an annual scholarship, rupees thirty two as an annual scholarship from ninth to eleventh class studies. That money was dispersed at the end of the year of education that uses to be barely sufficient for the clothes, text books and note books. During my PUC study at Hindu College Guntur after a great struggle and help by many people I received the social welfare scholarship to the tune of seven hundred and fifty rupees that was sufficient for my college fees and the hostel mess bills. Again during my MBBS studies I use to get the social welfare scholarship, at the year ending as a onetime payment and my father had to support me with monthly payments and also for my pocket expenditures. Only during my house surgeon training period of twelve months that I did not receive any money from my father as the stipend of one hundred fifty rupees was just sufficient for every month, of that ten rupees went towards the average monthly mess bills and the remaining was spent as the pocket money. As

the figures would tell the story the one hundred and fifty rupees was barely sufficient for a house surgeon who was going to be a full-fledged doctor. That was the transession in the Medical career different house surgeons had different plans regarding their future career. ECFMG, post graduation and job were the top in the priorities. Of courses marriage was also a possibility. During the end phase of our house surgeon training period the AP Junior doctors went on an indefinite strike demanding enhancement of stipend for house surgeons and introduction of stipend for post graduation. The successful strikes for thirteen day yielded good and positive dividends. The house surgeon stipend was enhanced from one hundred and fifty to two hundred rupees. That was a very positive development that gave more pocket money to spend by the house surgeon. Unfortunately that also brought some evil habits up on some of the house surgeons who took to bad habits like smoking, drinking and gambling. The strike period was the best time for me during which time I went to Vishakhapatnam stayed with Dr. Rama Krishna Reddy, used the library facilities for collecting the references for my Maiden Scientific Medical Article writing and to know about the department of the neurosurgery at Andhra Medical College for the first time. Never did I realize that

one day I would get a degree in neurosurgery and also come and work in the same department which I could not enter because the doors were locked at the entrance itself.

Because of the strike by the strike junior doctors ably and successfully lead by Dr.K.Shankar Rao, a post graduate in orthopedic surgery department who later became my roommate also for few months when I did my first year MS general surgery post graduation. That was a very happy vacation for me. When I shared the room with long standing friends like Dr.S.Suryamohana Reddy, Dr.K.Shankar Rao and late Dr.Venkayya was doing his pediatrics post graduation. The post graduates were sanctioned the stipend of two hundred and fifty rupees for the first year, three hundred rupees for second year and finally three hundred and fifty rupees for the final year students. That was the best period during my education at Guntur Medical College that I did not need any financial assistants from my parents which was a great relief for them. I also breathed freely and concentrated on my studies and also explored ways to get in to the five year neurosurgical program as early as possible. After completing one year general surgery training I was fortunate to get the call from Professor B.Ramamurthi to join the five year neurosurgery program

at the Institute of Neurology Madras Medical College. When I was selected for the course I did not find anything else in the world that would stop me to discontinue my MS general surgery post graduation with stipend, to disagree for an early marriage and many more things in life. I jumped in to the Frey unmindfully of the consequences. The first was the financial dependence again on my parents and the second was that I was going to sale in to the unknown waters as the first ever direct neurosurgery post graduation. When many senior, fully qualified and experienced MS general surgeons, were frightened to hear the word neurosurgery itself, live alone the management of the neurosurgical patients. I need not emphasize the fact that I was joining a five year course at a far off place without any stipend or scholarship. Any how that did not surmount as a major hurdle. I did not even think of the predicament in which my parents would be placed. They were just and affirmative in whatever I did for my own betterment. After a few months of support from my parents Professor B.Ramamurthi was very generous to offer a part time clinical assistant duty in his private clinic and supported me and Dr.A.Raja with an initial monthly salary of two hundred rupees each was just sufficient for tuning around each month. He gradually increased our earning

each creating opportunities like neuroradiology investigations, assisting his private operating and also for me exclusive creating a junior clinical research officer and post in the ICMR with salary of rupees six hundred for month. So much so at the end of my training I was nearly drawing rupees one thousand six hundred and fifty all because of his vision and the helping hand given by him. That amount was more sufficient for my monthly expenditure, to attend conference, to buy new books and also to have a positive bank balance.

With that back ground in mind for the first time after joining duty and spending the money given by my father for the initial expenditure. I was curious to know the monthly salary that I would get. I came to know that my salary as assistant professor of neurosurgery was rupees six hundred with a DA of 50% which would become a total of nine hundred rupees per month. I decided under any circumstances that I should support my parents by sending some money out of my salary immediately. As I was thinking aloud one doctor Dr.M.Narasimha Rao suddenly barged in to my room which was a happy and pleasant surprise. In fact I knew him during our undergraduate studies at Guntur Medical College. He was one year junior to me and also he was very close to my roommate Dr.Vemula Venkata Narasimha Rao. He as

very fond of me because we were struggling to come up in studies much against the odds and the financial constraints. When I told him about my plans to send money to my parents immediately. He came up with a brilliant idea. Actually even though he was junior to me he joined in the government service and started working as the assistant professor of psychiatry at Andhra Medical College after getting his DPM from NIMHANS Bangalore. Actually both of us got selected in the APPSE in the year 1977. But he joined the service one year earlier to me because I did five year neurosurgery course in Madras and completed the course in 1978. In other words he was senior to me in government service and also at Andhra Medical College. He immediately arranged an interview with the manager of Andhra Bank Extension counter located within the KGH premises. He also promptly managed to get the salary certificate no objection certificate from the principal and also with my posting order submitted to the bank manager. The bank manager was very understanding and sanctioned me a lone of rupees five thousand to be paid back in ten installments of five hundred rupees each within one year. My salary was attached to the loan account. I was very happy to receive five thousand rupees in one stroke. And I was able to send the same amount to my father

immediately as yours in dire straits at that time. I did not want him to borrow money from our village land lords at exorbitant interest rates. I was also happy for the help rendered by Dr.M.Narasimha Rao, the staff of the principal's office and the Andhra Bank Manager. For their timely action and help. By the by that was the first time ever that I was in possession of a some of rupees five thousand which was a very big amount. Even my father could have seen rupees five thousand at a single point of time. In those days hundred rupees was fairly a good amount, thousand rupees was a luxury and five thousand rupees in hand was one of the greatest moments in our family. Am sure it must have helped my father to clear some of his debts, to save some amount for future needs and also to sleep comfortably without any financial worries. That I could clear the five thousand rupees bank loan much earlier than the time fixed by the bank manager as I was able to save more than five hundred rupees for month out of the nine hundred rupees salary. Actually I was staying in the house surgeon and post graduate students hostel as one of the deputy wardens, my monthly mess bills was one hundred and twenty rupees and bare minimum pocket money expenses. There was no roommate for the wardens. As a bachelor my needs were limited. More than anything else I spent

most of the twenty hours in a day time in the wards attending round the clock emergencies like brain tumor and head injuries. Hence my scope of spending outside the needs of the food and accommodation were little on the day when my bank loan was cleared completely, I was the most happiest, relieved and contented man with the satisfaction that I could earn some salary on my own. The reason was my father always doubted, even though I was doing well in studies whether I could convert my education in to financial earnings. The people at villages always equated the education with job opportunities and the consequent earning capabilities. I should stress one point that my father not only doubted my earning capacity but also had his own ego. That he always thought, even as an illiterate he could cultivate acres of land and produce enough of commercial crops that sustained our family and my studies. Alas! But for the vagaries of the weather and nature he could have succeeded more than me. That five thousand rupees was the only amount he received from me and told me boldly he would never ask me for money or help as long as he was hail and healthy and continued in his loved profession of cultivation. After all he was successful; he did not ask me for any financial help and lived up to his word and vow. Just not to forget a word or two about the

man who was responsible for getting the loan Dr.M.Narasimha Rao, we had some years of happy association even after that we met once in a week when he came to the KGH to run the outpatient clinic. He was basically working at the famous mental hospital, Waltair as an assistant professor of psychiatry. Not only that when I left the house surgeon hostel as warden and stayed in a private rented house very close to the King George Hospital and had my own private clinic in a corner room of a building he also started his private clinic in the same building. So much so we were meeting each other all most everyday and sharing our day to day experiences and also the experiences of our student days at Guntur Medical College. At some point of time he left the government job and went to Canada to settle there permanently. Beyond that we have no contacts.

Dr.R.Venkatapathi Raju was one of my well wishers, senior at Guntur Medical College, ex-service post graduate at Madras Medical College, my roommate in the year 1974 at MMC men's hostel was more than a friend and a colleague was responsible for spreading a few good things about me in the hospital circles he never minced any words in brazing me in the presence of other stock members. He himself was a very hard working student and propagated my name as the most hard

working and loud student of Professor B.Ramamurthi at the Institute of Neurology Madras. After seeing my work ethics, principled practice of neurosurgery and not getting corrupted in the hospital he did not hide his feeling at any time. He wanted to encourage me to settle down permanently at Vishakhapatnam. As my senior he was already a married and well settled man in life with wife and children so his outlook was to acquire housing property at Vishakhapatnam for himself and others. At that time the Vishakhapatnam town started expanding from the point of view of residential houses for doctors, engineers and many other government service organizations like LIC and P and T departments. So a board was formed in the name of Vishakhapatnam Urban Development Authority. Applications were invited for the allotment of the housing sites. One day Dr.Venkatapathi Raju came to my chamber and wanted me to part with a some of five hundred rupees to book my plot in the VUDA I was totally surprised and unprepared for that. I was not aware of the existence of VUDA at that time. I was also ignorant of the allotment of the housing site process. I was not rarely in need of a housing site to tell the truth I did not know that one has to buy a site to build a house still that time, during my child hood I stayed in the ancestral house at my village and the rest of

my study period I spent in the college hostels. I never concentrated on money or property matters. At our village for nearly fifty years we stayed in our own old house and my father never purchased a land site to build a new house. Just to make the matter clear even when the old house was demolished. We constructed a new house on the same site at our village and did not think of a new site. That a part I was totally immersed in my professional career, looking after 30 patients every day, running the outpatient department on alternate days, investigations once in a week and also doing neurosurgical operations twice in a week. I was also attending round the clock emergencies on all the days as my senior colleague Dr.K.V.Chalapathi Rao was too weak to take night calls. So much so my mind was not a buying a site, spending five hundred rupees at a time for an unknown piece of land whether it was worth the money or not. But Dr.N.Venkatapathi Raju was a worldly wise man with family responsibilities was very particular that I should invest five hundred rupees at any cost. The more he insisted the more I resisted and ultimately he went disappointed, I thought I save five hundred rupees on that day. I was not having that much spare money as I was already paying the bank installment and determined to clear the loan the due date.

