

Lecture for Book Launch- Sh. R.K.VIR

Om Sahanavavtu Sahanou bhunaktu, Saha viryam karvavahai,
Tejasvinavadhutamustu, ma vidvisavahai.
Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti. (Kena Upanisad)

(May He project us both (i.e teacher and the student). May He nourish us both. May we both work together with great energy. May our study be enlightening and fruitful. May we not hate each other. Om Peace, Peace, Peace)

Retired Chairman Sri S.S Khurana senior Retired Members. The patron Shri Sudesh Kumar, IREEN office bearers and all members of the fraternity of Electrical engineers and their spouses.

I shall like to recall how the present Book came to be written or rather I would say edited by me from the material collected by me or given to me by various organizations connected with Railway Electrical Engineering. I would also say that the book came in to being as an accident.

I had prepared 4 chapters for the book “ Indian Engineering Heritage Railways” as Group Member for the same. I was given the responsibility to write 4 chapters connected with Electrical Engineering on Railways.

These were

1. AC Electrification
2. DC Electrification
3. Train Lighting
4. Air conditioning

The Chairman found Electrification chapters as written by me very lengthy. I was told to concise them and also he decided to issue one chapter for Train Lighting and Air Conditioning and concise the same as well.

The book was published by INAE (Indian National Academy of Engineering)

Since I had put in lot of effort and labour in writing the original chapters, I didn't want the same to be wasted. I therefore proposed to AML at that time Sri Shreni that these chapters could be issued by IRIEEN as their quarterly Bulletins. He had more ambitious plan in view. He had thought that it should form a book. In which a chapter on Rolling stock could also be included. The matter didn't move further and I had to request Sri Sudesh Kumar while he was AML to bell the cat. He however told me to also write this chapter. The chapter on Locos was not a serious problem since I had written 2nd edition of my book on CLW recently. But then when I sat at my computer for the book, lot of ideas got generated, I thought to my self that the book could be an Encyclopedia of Railway Electrical Engineering. It should therefore contain chapters like Metros Public sector

undertakings IRIEEN and most important how the IRSEE came into being and how it grew from 24 volts to 25 Kv and thus into a major Service with the creation of post of MEMBER ELECTRICAL.

However, the plan didn't move any headway. However when Sri Dutt took over, he tried his all the effort to get the book published by Railway Board. It was also felt by him that the book could be launched by Railway Minister at the Golden Jubilee of Commencement of AC Railway Electrification, which fell on 15th Dec.2009. The visit of Sri Reto Danusr, the Swiss Engineer, who was greatly instrumental in commissioning of Tata and Asansol Loco Sheds hastened the decision to have a special function for the Golden Jubilee of AC Electrification. It was already month of February, and giving enough time for tendering and issuing order for printing, proof reading and final printing, the manuscript had to be given by 15th June. I was able to hand over the same to AML on 31st May 2009. Any way Railway Minister, being occupied with West Bengal politics the matter was too minor for her to deserve the importance it required. The same in fact proved a boon in disguise. The book was finally published in July 2010. As a convention the function could still be held before 15th December 2010. That date has too come to pass.

The main purpose of the book was to update the activities as later the information already available could have been lost. It may be however be necessary to update the information periodically. I feel that all the new entrants it will be useful to read the book and how the dedication and commitment of workers staff and officers of railway electrical engineering fraternity with their toil and hard work have contributed to improve the quality of service of Indian Railways and its capacity and the financial viability. Some of them are no more with us. The efforts beyond the normal working hours and against many odds have manifested in the infusion of Electrical technology from the humble beginning to the honour and respect it now commands.

I can remind their successors that they should emulate them. To achieve you must be a dreamer and have a vision. It is the extra effort that separates winner from the 2nd place. You saw it happen in Wankhede Stadium last Saturday. I can quote the 1st lines of one of the poems of great English poet Tennyson.

“Lives of great men all remind us to make our lives sublime, Departing leave behind footprints on the sands of time”

They should follow the footsteps of those to whom the book is dedicated I retired in 1988 and am now having a ring side view of the strides which the Electrical Engineering has been making. It is now not progressing at arithmetical progression but at geometrical progression. There has been escalation in all spheres of activity. The common phrase to describe it would be snowballing. Sukhbir Singh was able to guide RDSO to design and build special pantograph

for Electric Locomotives for freight corridors trains and contribute immensely not only in savings not only of foreign exchange but contribute immensely to the environment.

I am quite certain that we are in a position to build a locomotive for a high speed train provided the planning commission approves Finance Minister opens the strings for the purpose. I am sanguine that if India is to export locomotives and other rolling stock, it should have a high speed corridor of its own, say between Delhi and Agra or Delhi and Kanpur. I would like to impress upon the present ML and the future ones that to be competitive and become a world class railway, such a corridor is absolutely necessary. One has to be optimistic in this regard that future will certainly see the same comes earlier than one imagines. Now I'll talk a few words for the young engineers who are going to be leaders of the future. I don't plan to sermonize. I know very well that no one likes a good advice. But a few words from my personal experience should do.

We should avoid the word department. I've not used the same any where in the book except where I had to quote from Railway Board reports. We are railwaymen Ist and Electrical Engineers later. It will help you in growth of your career. You are part of the great team. Try to be captain of the same.

Always keep yourselves updated. Regarding handling seniors and juniors, I would suggest that show compassion and forgiveness to both of them. I Don't like the word tolerance. When ever you find them unreasonable, feel sympathetic towards hem and try to put yourselves in their shoes. When boss is angry, maintain calmness. One should be above board while taking decisions and express one's opinion to the boss without any fear. Don't try to find what boss would like you to write. Poet Allama Iqbal's couplet adequately defines it.

“Khudi ko kar buland itna keh har tadbir se pehle Khuda bande se khud puchhe bata teri raza kya hai”.

I would suggest that one should also pursue some hobby. It should not just be a pastime but one should do it with zeal and passion with one's full potential will and skill. It will too be become a habit to induce the same passion in your day to day work Excellence is not irregular but a habit.

For your own progress and also progress of railways, one has to be innovative and workout non-conventional, lateral and eclectic solutions to problems. Thinking deeply with intense concentration and rumination about a solution to a problem is like deep meditation. I believe in serendipity. It is necessarily outcome of passion of discovery. I would say that Einstein, Newton and even Archimedes were meditating when they discovered the discoveries attributed to them. They were following Karma Yoga to the fullest.

I've heard lot about fears of audit and vigilance, while taking decisions, one should ask simple question “Is the decision going to get me any personal gains

or profit". That will enable you to take bold decisions and make you an outstanding officer.

I would like to say that while choosing a successor, competence should be most important consideration. A competent person gathers a team of competent persons and manages to create large numbers who could be succeed him or her, while an incompetent one is scared of better ones in the team, fearing that he or she may replace him.

For success in life one needs come luck as well. A supporting companion who stands by with you in all the ups and down in your life is a good piece of luck. I must say that I had a good supporting companion not only in my working life but after retirement as well.

Digressing from trend of my talk I'm going to pose 2 important questions one is whether Golden Jubilee is likely to be celebrated with a function at Calcutta and at Kendposi, where the pantograph was raised for the 1st time on 15th December 1950.

The 2nd is if we as electrical engineers are going to celebrate Electrical Engineers day once a year. While writing the book 4 dates struck me the most. These are:-

- 31st Jan. when 24 volt system came to be future of train lighting in India.
- 6th Feb. when 1st electric train moved from Bombay VT to Kurla via harbour branch
- 15th Dec. when the pantograph was raised at Kendposi on a 25 Kv. Locomotive.
- 28th Dec. the date of opening of IRIEEN

I feel such a day will ensure better spirit-de-corps, camaraderie, bonding to the same fraternity and School Tie feeling. At IRIEEN this feeling is automatic amongst the batches which are here at the same time, but on Electric Engineers' day old and new along with their families would mingle. It could be meting of minds of probably of 3 generations. It will intensify friendship and eliminate misunderstanding and hatred if any. Earlier Mechanical Engineers used to celebrate Jamalpur day on 13th Feb. (It was Saraswati Puja day, when Jamalpur school was actually founded.) Later one MM started calling it as Mechanical Engineers Day. An announcement in this regard could be made today.

I'll be failing in my duty if I don't thank IREE for appreciating my effort and publishing the book. I also must thank the Member Electrical for advancing this function ahead of Golden Jubilee of Commencement of AC Railway Electrification and office bearers of IRIEE to have organized a special; function for the book launch. I and my wife are deeply touched by this gesture.

May god bless you all. Namskar Om Shanti Shanti Shanti.