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### MY DAYS WITH NCC

I still remember standing under the hot afternoon sun. All the memories came flooding back. After a one year break I was ready to join NCC for the second time as an SD cadet. The enrolment process had ended and I was informed that I was among the chosen few. Those chosen few who have the honour of being NCC cadets. Those chosen few who would go on to lead the nation towards a better tomorrow.

The last 2 years have been difficult because of the COVID-19 virus but we have carried on. No virus has the strength to stop us NCC cadets. When the lockdown was lifted we were back at it once more. The ground shook because of our marching boots and our deep voices once again cried out to the nation. We had 3 parades in January with social distancing and masks. I was a tough time but we never lost out courage and continued marching. We also took part in a statue cleaning group activity which was organised with social distancing in mind. It was on that very day I gave an interview to Doordarshan about our efforts to pay homage to our national heroes by cleaning their statues. I had a great experience that day. It reminded me of what NCC stood for. Even amidst the virus we were carrying out our duty and lending our services to the nation.

We did not do only field work though. We had many online sessions telling us about the role of NCC cadets and how we could help our nation combat COVID-19. We also attended many webinars which taught us numerous life skills. We learnt meditation, self help and concentration techniques as well. It was truly remarkable to see NCC running smoothly during a time when we couldn't even physically meet.



*Statue cleaning during COVID times*



*My interview with Doordarshan*

My years as a JD NCC cadet were memorable as well. This was when we had frequent parades and enjoyed the true experience of being an NCC cadet. The most memorable time of my life was when I attended the CATC camp during my second year. On our very first day our commanding officer addressed us and I still remember his words. He said, "For the next 10 days NCC camp will feel like hell for you but you will remember it for the rest of your lives. One day you will look back and smile, and thank God for giving you an opportunity to attend this camp."

We used to wake up at 0400hrs just for a chance to use the restroom and sleep at 2230hrs after finishing our debate practise. During the course of the day we had PT, parades, theory classes, sports and even firing. It was very exhausting. I thought of backing out many times but in the end I never gave up. With the company of my fellow cadets I made it through one of the toughest experiences of my life. It was only later that I realised the precious memories we had made together. I wouldn't have missed the camp for anything. The CATC camp played an important role in making me the person I am today. I would have eagerly gone to many camps this year as well but sadly it was not possible due to COVID-19.

NCC has been one of the most important part of my life and I am sure it will remain with me until the end. Joining NCC is a decision I will never regret. I have never learnt more in my life than what NCC has taught me. This organisation does not teach us maths and physics, rather it gives us something more important. We learn life skills. It teaches us how to handle ourselves once we are out in the real world. Moreover we learn to be a valuable resource for our beloved nation. NCC has been one of the most important factors in my life and I am grateful that I could contribute to such a great organisation.