

Lasting bond with students? This NIT puts a ring on it

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One's alma mater forever stays close to the heart and the ties and friendships that are forged in college often last a lifetime. But students of the National Institute of Technology at Surathkal in Karnataka take the relationship one step further: they go ahead and "marry" their college when it's time to move out of its portals. That is thanks to a unique ceremony it has of holding a "ring ceremony" to bid adieu to outgoing students, complete with a silver ring and an oath.

The 'ring ceremony' was a tradition unique to the Surathkal NIT, which has now been replicated at a few other institutions. The institute provides outgoing students with a 'silver ring' that has its logo and the year of passing engraved on it. The practice started about six decades back at the time of the inception of this NIT, formerly known as the Karnataka Regional Engineering College (KREC). Appa Saheb Adke, the first principal of KREC, started the custom in the 1960s, says Udaykumar R Yaragatti, former director of Malaviya National Institute of Technology (MNIT), Jaipur and NIT-Goa.

Yaragatti, who is also professor at the Surathkal NIT and has completed his KG to PG education on the campus, says that Adke was inspired by a similar practice at some foreign universities where outgoing students were presented with platinum rings. He decided to go with silver though, given budget constraints. There was no social media in those days and keeping in touch was hard, so the "ring served as a bond with the alma mater", he says.

The silver ring symbolises the marriage of the students with their institutes. Surathkal NIT was the first institution in the country to start such

a tradition and Yaragatti says he introduced the practice at MNIT-Jaipur and NIT-Goa when he became director in 2017. Alumni of Surathkal NIT who have gone on to fill major roles at other institutions, too, have started this custom at those places, says Yaragatti, citing the example of NIT-Agartala where Gopal Mugeraya, who is currently the director of NIT-Goa, introduced the 'ring ceremony'.

5 Grams Of Silver

Yaragatti said that every year a tender is floated by NIT-K for the rings. The final bidders take the ring size of every student and each ring is



A SIX-DECADE-OLD TRADITION: An NIT-K teacher puts the farewell ring (inset) on a student

THE RING PLEDGE

“I solemnly pledge that honesty, sincerity and hard work shall be the cherished values of my life. The motto of the National Institute of Technology-Surathkal, 'Work is Worship', shall be the guiding principle of my life. I shall endeavour to the best of my ability to be worthy of my institute and my profession, and I shall always place my country above self.”

made using 5 grams of silver. The 'ring ceremony' is held months before the final-year students leave campus. Faculty members personally present the rings to students as they wish them luck for the future.

Incidentally, it is not uncommon for old students who have lost their ring to request the college to provide them with a fresh one at alumni meets, says Yaragatti. He says that many former students have even got similar rings made in gold. "It is the love for their alma mater that makes them want to preserve and carry the ring forever with them," he says.

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