

Regression to Good old days: Reminiscence of Wonder Years

Manjunath G K

Chief Librarian, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai. (gkm@igidr.ac.in)

Whenever I visit Manasagangotri campus, I am overpowered by nostalgia. The sweet and indelible memories of my four years study there come to my mind like waves. The beautiful campus, its serenity, library, open air theatre and Kukkarahalii tank are deeply etched in my memory forever. I can never ever forget the committed and devoted faculty members there, and concern they had for students and the vast knowledge they imparted to students.

After successfully completing my Masters in Botany in 1978, I was wary of my job prospects! Doing PhD meant toiling for another five years and even then I was not sure of getting a job in a very scarce job market in those days. Once, I discussed with my friend Maheshwarappa who is now a professor at Gulbarga University, and decided that we must opt for a degree in Library Science. The reason was simple - job opportunities it would offer, both at state and national level. One of our seniors too supported our idea. Even though we knew about the course Library Science, we were not fully aware of what this discipline would teach us for two years and its career development opportunities.

In late 70s, the admission process would start some time during September-October and classes would start in late October. I was quite used to the demands of semester scheme which was introduced in the year 1976 as I had already obtained one

Masters Degree. Once the classes began, there was a total change in my thinking and attitude towards Library Science. The training was so intense that there was no time to relax. Even the theoretical sessions were full of practical tips driving us to be very alert and on our toes everyday and in every class. I realized that each and every paper had lots of applications and thus day by day my alertness, interest and concentration increased. I fondly remember all my teachers who came to class fully prepared.

Those days, each class used to be a marathon session of about two hours; yet no one ever got bored with any of the classes. Even today I remember the story which Prof. Nagappa told us while explaining the '*Law of Parsimony*' in the cataloguing class. He was a down to earth person. He was very practical in his approach and all the cataloguing tips he gave us became very pertinent when I actually started working.

The five laws of library science, library and society, education for librarianship, etc., taught by Prof. H A Khan are ever fresh in my mind even today.

Informality was something unique in the library science department. Prof. Shalini Urs used to be much more informal with students. Her enthusiasm, seamless and impeccable teaching and willingness to share all her knowledge impressed all of us. We used to look

forward to her classes eagerly and kept our paper and pen ready even before she entered the class. Each and every reference sources she taught us in her marathon sessions were meticulously recorded by me which I preserved for more than 13 years, till I changed my first job. Surprisingly, some of the reference sources such as *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, *Asian Recorder*, *Data India*, etc., which I learnt in her classes are not known to most of the youngsters with whom I interact today. Prof. Shalini's approach towards PRECIS (Preserved Context Indexing System) was extraordinary and her problem solving method was exemplary. I wonder whether PRECIS still remains in the syllabus at our department. I am very proud and privileged to be a student of Prof. Shalini who has achieved so much in her professional life. I revere her as a noble human being and also for all her unique and quintessential accomplishments. She, in my humble opinion, is a perfect teacher.

Prof. Pangannayya pedagogic method was something unique. In addition to his classroom teaching he used to give each of us assignments after a brief introduction to a specific topic and we were asked to make presentation. This method of teaching not only made us search for literature extensively, but also paved way for self learning.

Our relationship with teachers was beyond student-teacher relationship. We were treated like friends and they looked at us as future library professionals and not as students. Informality in LIS department was something that most probably did not exist in other departments in Manasagangotri. Those days, teachers taking students to canteen and offering them coffee was not a practice existing

in any other department except in our department. The beautiful canteen next to the library building was one of the liveliest and popular places in the campus. It was not only a place for refreshments but also a place for students' bonding and for discussions. The informal discussion we had there with faculty members always cherish in my mind. I feel sorry to see that this canteen now has lost its resplendence, aura and ambience.

Our relationship with teachers was beyond student-teacher relationship. We were treated like friends and they looked at us as future library professionals and not as students. Informality in LIS department was something that most probably did not exist in other departments in Manasagangotri

Lastly, the extraordinary training, which I got in our department, helped me to be competitive and secure a good job at the Institute of Rural Management, Anand in the year 1980, and later at Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai, in 1994. I owe a lot to all my teachers and feel proud to be an alumnus of the University of Mysore and the Department of Library and Information Science. I am lucky and feel proud and fortunate to have had such teachers of par excellence who imparted quality education with sincerity and devotion. They are true and worthy teachers and excellent human beings and it was our good fortune to have them as our faculty members. I will ever remain grateful to them for their services and for the extra mile they walked for the student. They will always remain as my true role models. I thank all of them from the bottom of my heart and will never forget them.

"It becomes increasingly easy, as you get older, to drown in sweet and memorable nostalgia"