

The PP (Picnic & Party) Gang of 1981

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Why & How we joined Library Science...?

Meera: We were three close friends who were all set to join the Master's program in Mathematics at Manasa Gangotri. En route, I met my professor who taught mathematics to us in undergraduate course. He was happy to know that I had fared very well, but did not encourage my plan of joining PG in the same discipline. Those were the days, when engineering was booming and he was looking at mathematics

losing scope. He enquired about other options and I said Physics (my first interest) and Library Science (unknown subject). Professor immediately suggested that I opt for the latter. He did give couple of examples and the job opportunities in this unknown field of study. My sister also felt that Library Science would be a better option as she had seen Dr. L J Haravu's prosperous career at BHEL. That was the turning point... I decided to join Library Science. My friends were really upset and tried to dissuade me. But there was no looking back as I enrolled myself to our very own MyDLIS in June 1980.



(Studio pic of the PP gang, July 1981)

Prakash: My joining Library Science was due to some strange reasons. I had already done a PG in a (then) new age / hybrid subject, which should have straight away made us Assistant Directors in the State Government. But that did not happen and I had to do something else. Secondly, most of my close friends did double PGs and the PG hostel was our home away home. So I did not want to leave the campus so early! Lastly, during my first PG, I was subconsciously attracted to L&IS as I was helping a friend in translating his L&IS class notes



into Kannada. So all these put together landed me on the first floor of the library building for the next two years! (1980- 82)

Rama: My joining the course was an accident. I was interested in doing a PG course in Physics for which I did not get admission. I got Mathematics instead, in which I was not interested. When I got an admission letter for Library Science, I remembered that I had applied for it as it was a one year course. Mine was a late admission, and when I entered the class room everything -- subject, students, and teachers-- was alien to me. Others were already familiar with the subject and connected to each other. It took a little time to get used to the subject and classmates. The bonding developed just after the first test and with the PP gang simply grew bigger with each year.

Khan: Immediately after my Post Graduation, I was selected as Technical officer at Central Road Research Institute, New Delhi. Like all parents, mine too felt I was too young to take up a job at such a far-off place. They asked me to prepare for competitive exams. Most people do not like to leave the Gangotri campus - neither was I much interested in leaving the campus so early. Hence, I convinced my parents of my interest in doing a B.Lib.Sc. which later became the bread and butter of my life.

Madhu: My joining of LS Department was very weird but turned out to be wonderful. With a background in commerce I was looking at doing a PG in it, but I was not sure of getting admissions due to tough competition. One of my close friend's sister had done B.Lib.Sc. the previous year, so he suggested to me 'why not LS'? He cautioned me that it would be tough as most of the subjects are dry! However, he also told me that I would have plenty of job opportunities. The latter caught my imagination

as I was looking for a professional job with a PG. But it took some time to convince my parents!

The Anxious Beginning:

Manasagangotri, then the most beautiful campus for Post Graduate studies, welcomed all of us with love and warmth on 1st August, 1980. First day introduction ceremony was a mixed bag of joy, anxiety and apprehensions. The department

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comprised of five teachers then and they were all seated on the dais. A spacious class room with good lighting and breeze enthralled us. Despite sincere attempts by faculty, the introduction to the course was hardly understood. However, what made all of us happy was the announcement about compulsory study tour! We were about twenty students, including ten seniors who had already acquired their master's degree in other disciplines. So, they had a fairly good idea of campus life and were the guiding spirits to begin with.

During the first semester we were diligent in the new subjects and were curious about practical(s) where Cataloguing, Classification and Indexing were taught. Practical classes used to be more enjoyable as we used to freely move around, discussing things, making fun of each other etc. Initially all the subjects were difficult to comprehend. However, slowly, we all settled in. After completing a few tests, we gained comfort and confidence that helped in getting a foothold in the new environment. We gradually got familiarized with the subjects, friends, teachers and the fun associated with campus life. Preparing joint notes, common lunch hours, visiting the

canteen for by-two coffee/tea + snacks can never be forgotten. Often, teachers would also join us in the canteen and we are sure they enjoyed our company. We had one interesting teacher in Dr. Umapathy (possibly the first teacher in the Dept. with a PhD) who used to teach Bibliography and we still remember one of his catch phrases “If a student fails, hang the teacher”! So all of us were very sure that none of us would fail!

BharathYatra:

Yes, you can call it that as we covered three of the four metropolitan cities, namely Madras, Calcutta and Bombay. Possibly for the first time in the history of the Dept, a lady teacher (Madam Shalini) was leading this rather ambitious trip. For many of us this was the first ever trip outside the state and naturally parents were very anxious. The visits were fine but there were other challenges like heavy monsoon at Madras and many members serially getting infected by conjunctivitis (Madras Eye)! They had to be treated with eye drops and care had to be taken to stop it from spreading. The train journey from Madras to Calcutta had some anxious moments as there were some local goondas trying to occupy our seats midway!

Thanks to our meticulous planning, tour expenses turned out to be less than the amount collected. Each one of us were to get a refund of Rs.35/- or so! None of us were ready to take back the money and we planned for a 2-day bus trip to Ooty, which MLibSc students and teachers with their families also joined. Thanks to the royal connections, we had the privilege to stay at Hotel Fern Hill Imperial. This was totally a fun filled trip with all sorts of games, music and dance, boating etc. During all these trips, our bonding with friends and teachers became much stronger.

The Second year (M Lib Sc).

By the end of 2nd semester B.Lib.Sc. we had understood what Library Science is all about and the subject was no more alien to us. The potential of the course in the job market was clear. Some joined work after B.Lib.Sc. and some chose to continue to do the Master’s program. We had a few from the previous year’s batch, few externals and some deputed friends joining in and thus, the complexion of the team changed. We had to work much harder with assignments, tests, local library visits for practical training etc. Through Friday talks, by external professionals and achievers we were introduced to various topics of general interest

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and personal grooming. Dissertation was a big heroic exercise which we were supposed to do in the second semester and after a soft fight with HOD (Prof Khan) on extension of the date, we were forced to submit our dissertations directly to the Registrar!

As student volunteers, we had the opportunity of a lifetime to listen to Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the then PM, during her address to the 69th Indian Science Congress. One honest submission here is that our involvement in the extracurricular activities (sports, culture, fine arts, literary events, etc) of the campus during these two years brought good visibility to the department. Our batch took an active part in many campus activities and brought so many laurels and prizes to the department. It will not be an over statement to say that our batch helped making Library Science a popular and vibrant subject, among the student community.

The PP (Picnic& Party) Gang .. !

By the end of the 1st semester, some of us who were like minded were getting closer naturally. They say tours and trips do wonders and help attain better understanding of our surroundings and people. This is the occasion which turned around to form an inner circle called PP (Picnic & Party): a gang of ten including Geetha, Prem, Sheela, Ramesh and Venkatesh. We used to frequently visit each other's houses (seven were locals) and spend a lot of time eating and fighting and in the process all our parents & relatives knew all of us closely. We used to frequent all popular spots like Chamundi Hill, KRS, Ranganathittu, Balamuri, etc. and go to movies by default after every test or exam!

We would actively participate in sports, culture and other co-curricular activities in the campus and winning prizes had become a habit. Our teachers and seniors encouraged us during such programs and prize distribution ceremonies. We even made home wine in the Biochemistry lab (thanks to a PhD scholar there) and had a great wine party under the big peepul tree, near the PG hostel! The PP Gang had become one of the most popular (and mischievous) group of Gangotri in those days.

Only six from the PP's were back in the Department the following year (1981-82) for the MLibSc course. During this year it was more of academics and we enjoyed our stay in the department despite the assignments, tests, dissertation etc. We continued

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our social activities and were always game for fun and travel. Our visit to the canteen was more frequent than the previous year and some juniors added spice during the time. The PP Gang still continues to be in regular touch, active even after thirty five years and has grown to include our spouses, children and even the grand children!

The last word

Our dedicated teachers and their efforts have shaped our lives and helped us in becoming successful Librarians across prestigious institutions. We salute them!

Our kind remembrances to Prof. N B Pangannayya (late) who was an interesting teacher.



Some of us (the authors) during ICADL 2001