

## Mesmerizing MyDLIS and Me

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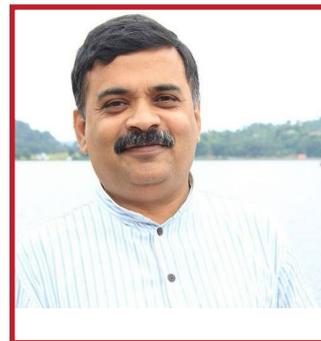
I am of the same age as MyDLIS. The year, the month and the place of birth are common to both of us. The Department is just 15 days younger to me. There stops the comparison! While MyDLIS has grown by leaps and bounds in its achievements; my achievements are miniscule in nature. The very thought of comparison came to my mind just because I happened to be born in the same year and month, and not for any other reason.

‘Library Science’ was a new word unheard of by me until my father suggested me to apply for the bachelor’s course in it. He probably had a premonition that I may not get the seat for post graduate degree in any of the science subjects. He was right. I missed maths by 1 mark, stats by 3 marks and physics by 1 mark. I was not good at languages. So I had to opt for other programs. Unwillingly, at the insistence of my father, I applied for BLISc program, and equally reluctantly joined the course when I got a seat under waiting list.

My friends joined science programmes and looked very proud about their achievement. I was ‘odd man out’ in that group. One of my friends even ridiculed me that I continue to be science student as the word ‘science’ was there in the program name! At that time, I had no answer for his taunt. I had no alternative and felt that I had to live with the ‘*unknown angel*’. I was so depressed and disappointed that for the first few days I used to take the far end staircase to enter the department

than the nearer one.

This behaviour of mine was not without reason. The far end staircase was deep-inside the library. I wanted to give an impression to my unsuspecting friends that I am going to the



library and avoid them from knowing that I have joined library science program!

I entered the class room on the first day and occupied detestable seat. The very first class was on cataloguing. The teacher was eloquently describing the Cutter’s objectives. This was followed by very stylish and scholarly exposition of the subject by another teacher on ‘Concept of classification’. I was shattered as I could not follow either the language or the content. I cursed my own past life. I thought that for the sins that I might have committed in those lives I am being punished by God in my present incarnation like this!

I wanted to drop the program. But, I did not have the courage to tell so to my parents. Fortunately for me I came to know that one classmate - by name Vigneshwar Bhat - who was from a known circle to my family also joined the program. I did not know him earlier. I somehow got myself befriended with him. I explained to him my predicament in



the classes and how I have got rattled by joining the program. To my pleasant surprise, he said even he was also in the same boat. This gave me a sigh of relief. He encouraged me to attend the classes just for fun and time pass until we get some other better things to do! I liked his idea. From then on we attended the classes together, sat in juxtaposition in classes, did the assignments jointly, and prepared for the exams arm-in-arm.

The first internal tests came in no time. I was nervous. Coming from a science stream, I did not know how to write long answers. I even lacked the acumen required for attending tricky questions, which were common in those days. My ability in English was pathetic and was highly inadequate for writing critical answers. I again became disillusioned. I told Vigneshwar Bhat that I will not take up the tests. He pounded onto me and literally dragged me to the tests. There were two tests a day. After the first one in the morning, Bhat and I used to go to open-air theatre to prepare for the next test in the afternoon. He was reading aloud for my sake. I was just listening to him. But for him, I would not have taken the first test at all. The test marks were announced. I got fairly good marks in all subjects except in Classification where I just got 2 marks out of 20. I couldn't accept the result. I went to the teacher and asked her - "is there any way that I could improve my marks?". I requested for a repeat test. She asked me "how do you know that you will get better marks in the next test?" For me the decision was quite simple. I thought any way I have reached the nadir of performance. The risk is only 2 marks! Hence, I said to her bravely that my next performance cannot be as bad as this. She just smiled and agreed to give me repeat test. I came to know later that the teacher had to face

the criticism for this student-friendly gesture! I take this opportunity to thank her and also offer my sincere apologies to her for having put her in such situation. This incidence taught me to face the failure as a step for subsequent success. In another anecdote, on looking at one of the assignments that I sincerely submitted, the teacher told me that I have the flavour for writing and asked me to develop that skill. She gave me confidence to write. I salute her. Needless to say that it is my

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teachers who nurtured me during the formative years of my career in LIS. I got the skills through their words and deeds. My *pranams* to each one of them.

What did I get from MyDLIS? In a nutshell, it gave me many qualities required for life time. Cataloguing classes taught me the importance of diligence and meticulousness in writing. The classification and indexing classes induced in me logical thinking. The 'Five laws of library science' helped me to realize the philosophy of service. The 'Prolegomena to library classification' has promoted my 'scientific temper'. The information resources classes gave confidence and increased my ability to search for 'information'. The classification schemes and subject heading lists gave an idea about not only the panoramic view of the knowledge but also these tools helped to increase my vocabulary. Surprisingly PRECIS and other indexing tools helped me to understand the intricacies in English grammar! The 'information retrieval' course quenched the mathematical thirst in me. The ICT skills earned at MyDLIS proved to

be the turning point in my life. What else can one expect out of one's Alma Mater? It has given me bread and butter.

I had the fortune of pursuing my Ph.D. degree under one of the most revered, critical thinker and disciplinarian teacher - Prof. H A Khan. I learnt ABC of writing skills from him. He taught me from writing a casual leave letter to research report. His analytical ability - a virtue which was envied to many - was inherited a bit by his students by virtue of being in his association. His perfectionist attitude induced in me the quality of having 'eye for details' in any work that I do. He made me independent and confident human being in my own way.

Being an introvert and not-so-socialising person, I never had any hilarious moments that are worth reporting. Or I do not recall any such incidence now.

I was at IGNOU, New Delhi for a short stint as practicing librarian. It is here I applied what

I learnt. I could convince my superiors there that we need to go for library automation. I am extremely lucky to be a part of teaching faculty of MyDLIS now. When I am teaching many of the concepts that I learnt from my teachers, their

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words would be lingering in my ears. It gives me great amount of satisfaction when I see the lustre in the eyes of the students when I was able to make them understand about a concept. MyDLIS has given me more than what I expected. I wish MyDLIS a great success.

Long live MyDLIS!

*"I received the fundamentals of my education in school, but that was not enough. My real education, the superstructure, the details, the true architecture, I got out of the public library. For an impoverished child whose family could not afford to buy books, the library was the open door to wonder and achievement, and I can never be sufficiently grateful that I had the wit to charge through that door and make the most of it. Now, when I read constantly about the way in which library funds are being cut and cut, I can only think that the door is closing and that American society has found one more way to destroy itself."*

Isaac Asimov,