

Balancing Sports and Studies: Memories of MyMLISc Days

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“There are moments when I wish I could roll back the clock and take all the sadness away, but I have the feeling that if I did, the joy would be gone as well.” – Nicholas Sparks, A Walk to Remember

At the outset, I must admit that I joined Master of Library and Information Science (MLISc) not by choice but by chance. I was more into sports (cricket) and even wanted to pursue my career in the game. But that did not happen. One of my cricket teammate’s elder brother was pursuing MLISc and he suggested the course to me and said that I can get a job very easily. I now realize that it was indeed really good to have friends who had experience in the field of Library Science.

During MLISc I was not studious but I was good at pretending to be very intelligent by sitting in the front row all the time and attempting to answer the questions asked by professors! But this did not last for long. When the Department conducted the first test for freshers after one month, I stood sixteenth out of twenty six students. It was quite disappointing since our seniors had told us that whoever comes first in this test will also go onto get the gold medal in the final exam. The result of this first test was quite strange also because the top 5 positions were all taken by girls! However, I did not give up hope and started concentrating as I already stopped fantasizing about a career in cricket.

But then how could I forget cricket as I got my seat through sports quota and so I had to represent the University and Post Graduate team. Well we had a very good college and university team and we always



ended up either as the winners or runners up in finals. So I was spending most of my PG days in the cricket field or travelling to play matches. Till today I think 1999 - 2000 batch holds the record of winning 5 inter-department tennis ball cricket tournaments in the history of our department. I hope our tennis ball cricket team photo is still there on the department class room wall.

What I am today is because of my teachers, my seniors and my classmates. They have always encouraged me to do well in sports. Even my teachers helped me to get a sports scholarship. Since I was representing PG and the University Team, attendance for classes was never an issue. However, I never missed my classes except during the match days. I still remember ours was the first batch to get a computer lab. We were so enthusiastic we used to sit next to each other and send greetings to one and all. In the year 2000, library automation was a very big thing.

Thanks to our University and Department they were able to provide us with computers so that we could be well versed in the science of library automation.

There were 25 students and we used to help each other in collecting and preparing notes. This warmth and togetherness was under threat when the time came for elections. There were lot of groups and inter-group rivalries and even violence. Luckily I was away playing cricket matches during that time! Thankfully, once the election got over we forgot everything and moved on as before.

I used to miss a lot of practical sessions, especially of classification and cataloguing in the first year. But my classmates were very helpful by not only in lending me their notes, but also taking time off to teach me some of these essential skills.

One of the biggest events of our Batch was the 15-day Study Tour. We are forever thankful to our Professor Malinath Kumbar who made this happen. I still remember everyone was so excited to go for that tour and many of my friends' parents came to the railway station to see them off since it was their first trip. I saw everyone carrying 3 to 4 pieces of baggage since it was a long trip. I used to travel a lot for cricket and had good experience of luggage one should carry. I actually carried 2 pairs of jeans and a few t-shirts. I still recall that everyone was worried about me because I reached the railway station just when the train was about to leave. When I reached the platform the whole group of parents started staring at me and started shooting questions. When the train was about to leave, a few of my class girls even asked me -- where is your luggage?! To their surprise I said it's

with me! To that they replied 'only 2 small bags'? I told them since we were going to New Delhi I would buy clothes there, as it would be cheaper! I believe they were quite impressed with my sense of budget shopping!!

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We went first to Hyderabad where we visited University of Hyderabad which was famous for library automation and then the International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) which was a special library. Then we travelled to Delhi. There we visited Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO), All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), British Library and American Central Library. Apart from the study tour we also visited few pilgrimage / tourist places like Haridwar, Rishikesh, Agra, Mathura etc. We had a wonderful time in New Delhi, especially while shopping as most of my classmates were weak in Hindi. I still remember one incident. One of the girls was asking a sweater vendor to pack 3 sweaters, and she managed to convey that by mixing Kannada, English and Hindi in one sentence - *Mure* (three in Kannada) *piece* (English) *dhe* (give in Hindi)! Someone has rightly said that women love shopping. Our class girls did so much shopping and finally they made the boys carry all their extra luggage! The tour ended with an amusing but a painful incident when our Professor got bitten by a monkey in Haridwar!

After the tour, we were soon preparing for our final exams. The dates got announced and the exam fees had to be paid. Our parents had



Class of MLISc 2000 in front of Taj Mahal during the Study Tour

already spent so much money on our study tour and many of us were scared to ask more. Luckily Prof. Kumbar asked us to assemble in our class and he announced that there was some money left from our study tour and he would distribute that among us equally. The amount was enough to pay our examination fees.

Before the exams, the first year students gave us a warm farewell since we had welcomed them to the Department. This is indeed a nice tradition and I hope it continues... The farewell was significant also because few of our class girls had got married even before the exams!! Exams were about to start but we were still busy writing autographs and exchanging our postal address and emails.

One sad thing which hurts me even today is that we had planned to give a warm farewell to one of our senior professors, but it could not be done. In fact

he invited us for dinner and wished us for our bright future. We reciprocated by presenting a memento, but I still regret that we did not organize a farewell.

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Finally exams got over, results came and not surprisingly all the gold medals went to girls. Some of us thought that we should have been more serious while taking the class tests in the beginning of the course. However, we have now realized that life has so much more to offer than just doing well in exams! Nothing matches the exuberance with which every day I look forward to learning something new in the Library!