

How M.B.M. Engineering College came into existence

Shri Mathura Das Mathur

The Mugneeram Bangur Memorial Engineering College was conceived as early as 1948. The ex-ruler of Jodhpur, Late Shri Umed Singh had announced in the year 1947 on the occasion of the marriage of his son Late Shri Hanwant Singh his desire to carry out by his Government the development of higher and technical education in the State. He had also created a fund known as "Hanwant Benevolent Fund" in which he himself donated a few lakhs of rupees and further this fund was to be strengthened by donations from philanthropists, Marwari business-men in the State and outside. A committee for this purpose was also announced with Late Shri Wahidullah Khan, who was at that time Secretary to Government, as its Secretary.

In the year 1948 when the popular Government was formed in the erstwhile Jodhpur State with Late Shri Jai Narain Vyas as Pradhan Mantri, I had the opportunity of serving that Government as Education & Health Minister. I took the thread from the announcement of Late Shri Umed Singh about the development of technical education and immediately started working out the plan for establishing the Engineering College at Jodhpur. Shri A.D. Bohra, now working with the ALCOBEX Pvt. Ltd., Jodhpur, was appointed to work out the whole scheme and was later on to be appointed as the Principal of the College. But to my regrets before the College could start functioning, the formation of Rajasthan was announced in which the erstwhile State of Jodhpur was to be merged. The Ministry of State, Govt. of India, headed by Late Shri Sardar Patel simultaneously issued instructions to all the merging States not to make any fresh financial commitments or undertake any new scheme of development. Accordingly the scheme of the Engineering College was put in abeyance.

The State of the then Greater Rajasthan came into being on the 2nd April, 1949 and Late Shri Hira Lal Shastri was chosen to be the Chief Minister of the new State with Jaipur as its Capital and Late Shri Man Singh of Jaipur as the Raj Pramukh. With the formation of the new State of Rajasthan there was a change in the political climate and almost all political leaders of the erstwhile Jodhpur State and elsewhere headed by Late Shri Jai Narain Vyas fell out with the new Chief Minister. Consequently almost all the developmental schemes initiated by the erstwhile Government of Jodhpur headed by Late Shri Vyas were put into cold storage. Shri Hira Lal Shastri wanted the Engineering College at Banasthali near Jaipur while the then Education Minister Shri Prem Narain Mathur wanted it to be at Udaipur. None of them could succeed in establishing the Engineering College at either of the places due to paucity of funds available with the Govt. of Rajasthan. The time passed and in the year 1951, Shri Hira Lal Shastri had to leave the Government and Late Shri Jai Narain Vyas was again put in power as the Chief Minister. I had again the opportunity of serving his Government as Minister of Education and Health. I did not waste time on this occasion and immediately took up the matter for establishing an Engineering College at Jodhpur. The difficulty of lack of resources was the biggest hurdle before the Government. The cabinet discussed the scheme and decided to establish Engineering College at Jodhpur on the condition that all the capital expenditure required, which was calculated at about Rs. 8.00 lacs, is received by donation within a period of one month, failing which the scheme should be considered dropped atleast for the coming educational year. The whole responsibility of collecting Rs. 8.00 lacs as donation naturally fell

on me. My other colleagues in the cabinet representing different areas of Rajasthan agreed for establishing the Engineering College at Jodhpur with the expectation that this big amount of Rs. 8.00 lacs would not be collected by me in such a short time and the scheme will automatically collapse. I had taken this challenge and put whole prestige in it. I was fortunate enough to collect this amount in less than a week's time. The biggest donor of Rs. 6.00 Lacs was Late Shri Ramcoowar Bangur, younger brother of Late Shri Mugneeram Bangur, the head of the Bangur family of Didwana. The remaining Rs. 2.00 lacs were taken from the 'Hanwant Benevolent Fund'. The corpus of this fund was lying with the State government in a separate account. This fund, as I stated above, was created for the well-being of the people of erstwhile Jodhpur State, particularly in the field of education and health.

The main hurdle of capital expenditure of Rs. 8.00 lakhs having been resolved, I immediately set on working out the details so as see the functioning of the Engineering College within the minimum period of time since it has already become too late and the educational year had already started. Late Shri Kishore Lal Mathur, the then Chief Engineer, P.W.D., Govt. of Rajasthan was appointed ex-officio Principal of the Mugneeram Bangur Memorial Engineering College since the Government had accepted to name this College as desired by the main donor.

As there was no building available and it would have taken a long time to have the new building constructed, the Ugamji's Bungalow near the over-bridge at Jodhpur, where at present a Higher Secondary School is located, was finally selected to house the new Engineering College. Necessary modifications were taken in hand and were completed within a fortnight.

Since we were late the application to the Rajasthan University for recognition had become time barred. It was only because of the keen interest and active cooperation of the then Vice-Chancellor, Dr. G.C. Mahajani that the Government could receive recognition from the university. The recruitment of the necessary staff would have taken normally a long time. I, therefore, cannot forget to express my gratitude to the then Chairman of the Rajasthan Public Service Commission, Shri Devi Shankar Tiwari who agreed to issue short-time advertisement incorporating the condition that those selected would have to join immediately without loss of time. When all the formalities were completed, the new college was to be inaugurated by the President of India, Late Dr. Rajendra Prasad. I had personally requested him. He had agreed but later, he was advised otherwise by my colleagues (the names I do not like to mention) who did not relish the idea of coming up of the Engineering college at Jodhpur. The college was, therefore, given a green signal in a simple ceremony by me in the year 1951 at Ugamji's Bungalow.

My next task was to search for a very competent Principal for this prestigious Institution since Shri Kishore Lal, then Chief Engineer, was only an ex-officio Principal. It was naturally an interim arrangement. Shri V.G. Garde's name was suggested to me who was working at the Engineering College, Roorkee. He was requested to meet me at Delhi. He came down to Delhi and after having discussion with him for about fifteen minutes I handed over to him the appointment orders and requested him to report to Jodhpur without giving any joining time. I am grateful to Shri Garde who accepted my request and immediately proceeded to Jodhpur. Shri Garde's appointment was very much appreciated by all concerned.

Shri Garde had been a great asset to the Institution. He worked in a missionary spirit. He brought this College on the map of India as a leading Engineering Institution. As long as he continued, this College demonstrated exemplary discipline and high academic and technical standards.

This Institution after a couple of years, was shifted from Ugamji's Bungalow to the present site. The original investment of Rs. 10.00 Lakhs has now gone upto more than a crore of rupees. On every occasion when Shri Garde needed the financial assistance which otherwise he could not secure from the government, he would approach me. I would mention an occasion when he needed about rupees one lakh for library. Late Shri Rajendra Prasad, the then President of India had visited Jodhpur and he was gracious enough to visit this institution as well. Late Shri Ramcoowar Bangur the donor was also present. During the tour of the Campus when the President was at the Library building before the statue of Late Shri Mugneeram Bangur, the President opened his shoes and garlanded the statue and stood for few seconds with the folded hands. This visibly moved Late Shri Ramcoowar Bangur and he immediately on the spot handed over a cheque for rupees one lakh to the President for the expansion of the Library of the College.

This Institution has grown like a banyan tree. It has become a national institution with post-graduate studies and imparts education in a variety of engineering subjects. Thousands of deserving youngmen have been benefited by this institution and it can take pride that many students of this institution are placed in high positions not only in Rajasthan but outside as well.

Before I close, a word to the concerned authorities; **"Please do not keep this Institution in a glass-house. There should always be a living contact of the authorities with the people at large. Your activities, research and achievements should be known to the people. This will help you in receiving all cooperation from the people whenever, whatever and wherever you need."** Since this institution has now become the integral part of the Jodhpur University as a Faculty of Engineering, I would like to appeal to the Vice-Chancellor, the Dean and other Members of the staff to bring back to this Institution its old splendour. I wish all success in your endeavours.

(This article was written in 1976 and is being reproduced here from the Silver Jubilee Souvenir of MBM Engg. College.)