

# **M.B.M. Engineering College - My Reminiscences**

**Professor S. C. Goyal**

I recall with pleasure the period of my association with the M.B.M. Engineering College, Jodhpur. I have been with the institution almost from its inception and have watched with satisfaction the phenomenal rise it achieved within a short period owing to the dedicated and devoted band of teachers on its staff from the beginning.

It was in 1952 that I made my first visit to Jodhpur, on a request from Principal V.G. Garde to conduct a practical examination. Jodhpur was on the air-map and there was a daily flight between Delhi and this place. I travelled by air. The college, at that time, was located in the old Ugamji's bungalow which now houses the Government Multi-purpose Higher Secondary School, near the city overbridge. The frequent passage of the rattling trains and the whistling engines was an amusing distraction to the students. The laboratories were located in the old Jodha Squadron which was later converted into a hostel for engineering college students. Now, it is a University Hostel. Although newly setup, the laboratories were well-organised. The city and suburbs were of course quite different from what they are now.

In 1952-53, on the recommendation of the Rajasthan Public Service Commission I was offered an appointment to join here as Professor & Head of the Department of Civil Engineering . I declined the offer but later, on being pressed by Principal V.G. Garde and after acceptance of certain terms by the Chief Secretary I joined as Professor and Head of the Department of Structural Engineering in October, 1954.

Soon after my joining here, a committee consisting of eminent engineers visited us. The Committee was appointed by the Institution of Engineers (India) for assessing the standard of instruction imparted in this college before according recognition to its Degree and Diplomas. By that time the college had been shifted to the Devali House, the present premises. Most of the teachers were very young and the Committee appeared to be doubtful regarding the quality of teaching. To dispel these misgivings, the Principal offered to take the team round and suggested to them that they should walk into any class room at random, to judge for themselves the quality of lectures delivered by the young teachers. The Committee did visit and listen to some of the lectures in the class rooms. They were more than satisfied and before they left they made no secret of it; in fact they were highly appreciative of the rapid growth which the College had made within a few years of its existence.

The College used to start its work with a non-sectarial prayer scheduled ten minutes before the commencement of classes. All the teachers including the Principal would arrive fifteen minutes earlier and take part in the prayer. This was also a very effective means to ensure that the teachers and the students were punctual. The campus gates were closed for ten minutes following the commencement of the first period to keep off the late-comers. Late-coming was, however, a rarity.

From the very beginning this Institution was planned on the model of the Old Thomson College of Civil Engineering, Roorkee. Some educationists even called it a miniature Roorkee College. The discipline in the College and the Hostels was of a very high standard and I remember receiving letters from high dignitaries in the country for grant of admission to their wards and children in the Engineering College Hostels. We had the privilege of receiving one such letter from the first Presidents of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

A certain number of seats were reserved for candidates from some of the neighbouring states including Jammu and Kashmir. In this connection an interesting incident comes to my mind. Shri M. L. Sukhadia who was the Chief Minister at that time made a commitment to the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir to admit a nominee of the latter against one of the reserved seats for the State. Normally the College used to advertise these reserved seats and grant admission on the basis of merit. The commitment was made by the Chief Minister to Shri Bakshi Gulam Mohammed the then Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir when there was a meeting of the various chief Ministers of Northern Region at Jaipur. The college session had already started and the student nominee was already about one and half months late. Principal V.G. Garde and myself happened to be with the Chief Minister when the Chief Secretary brought up this matter for discussion. Principal Garde told the Chief Minister that although as per the orders of the Chief Minister he was obliged to admit the nominee of Shri Bakshi Gulam Mohammed however, as the Principal of the College he could not condone the inevitable shortage of attendance at the end of the session and, consequently, the late admission would ultimately turn out to be void. Later the nomination of the student was withdrawn on a communication by the Chief Minister of Rajasthan.

Once I was attending one of the meetings at Jaipur on behalf of Principal Garde. At that time Dr. B. L. Rawat was the Education Secretary, Government of Rajasthan. While I was with the Education Secretary he received a telephone call from the Chief Minister informing him that the latter desired relaxation in the age limit of a candidate for admission to M.B.M. Engineering College. The candidate was underage by a few days but had a brilliant academic career. The Secretary talked to me about it and I pointed out to him that the admission circular approved by the Government did not provide for any relaxation of the type. I also indicated to the Education Secretary that any such precedent was bound to cause lot of botheration to college authorities in future with regard to admissions. Also, more and more people would approach political leaders and press them for favours. Furthermore the reputation of the college which was very high would be tarnished. I told the Education Secretary to convey to the Chief Minister that once relaxation was made it would open the flood gates of trouble in our admissions. The Education Secretary talked to the Chief Minister over the telephone in my presence and conveyed views. The Chief Minister then did not press for the admission of this student.

Once a meeting of the Scholarship and Loan Committee was being held under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Minister for Education, Government of Rajasthan in her Chamber at Jaipur to decide the grant for scholarships and loans to students. The meeting was attended by the Education Secretary, Finance Secretary, Director, College Education; Director, Sanskrit Education; Director, Technical Education; Principal, M.B.M. Engineering College, Principal, Medical College. I attended the meeting on behalf of the Principal. When the question of grant of scholarships and loans to the students in the Faculty of Engineering was considered I pointed out to the Chairman that the list of the deserving students had been prepared on the basis of weightage being given to (a) merit of the students, (b) financial conditions of the parents, and (c)

number of college going children dependent on the parents. This method, humorously named as the "Three-Dimensional Formula" by Shri Ram Singh, the then Finance Secretary, was readily accepted as a very rational basis, by all the members of the Committee. The list was accordingly checked on this basis. When some member pointed out that a student at serial number 28 was known to him and was very poor, I said that the student must be poor as the member had personal knowledge about him but he had no personal knowledge about the 27 others who were placed above that student and ultimately the loans were awarded to all the 28 students, although the initial proposal was to award financial assistance to a smaller number only.

Under the International Corporation Administration (ICA) program between India and USA, after selection by a joint board I joined the university of California, Berkely in Aug. 1960 for a Master's program in Civil Engineering. I completed M.S. (Civil Engineering) along with a research project in record time of two semesters and was awarded the Degree at the commencement held in June 1961. My Professors at Berkely, Some of them having International reputation wrote to the Govt. of India admiring my academic achievements and mentioned that my research work represented a contribution to the Mechanics of Solids. I returned to India in Aug 61, after visiting major universities in the United States of America. The government of Rajasthan granted me 'merit pay' for my research work and the Governor of Rajasthan honoured me at the Republic Day.

On my return to this college, I felt that the atmosphere was not so cordial, as before. MREC Jaipur was created and Principal V.G. Garde was appointed its first Principal and he continued to look after these duties from Jodhpur, in addition to his duties here. Principal Garde recommended some one from outside Jodhpur for the post of Principal here. The Chief Minister, however decided in my favour. In 1962, the university of Jodhpur was created and Principal Garde left as Principal at Jaipur in 1963, after the post of Principal was abolished at Jodhpur. This was the greatest misfortune and dis-service to this Institution. The country was passing through a period of economic depression and there was great turmoil in technical institutions, since the engineer graduates were not getting jobs. The Roorkee university graduates, for the first time in its history tore the Degrees at its convocation chanting 'we want jobs not the degrees'. MBM, also had its first student strike before principal Garde left for Jaipur.

The Deanship at this Institution was initially rotated between the two senior most professors. Later, under the university regulations it was decided to be rotated amongst all the senior most teachers. In Nov. 1966, on the request of the then Vice-Chancellor, Pant university of Agriculture and Technology, the Govt. of Rajasthan and the University of Jodhpur, agreed to loan my services as founder Dean, Pant College of Technology, Pant nagar for a period of two years. On the establishment of this college, and completion of my contract I returned back to Jodhpur in April 1969.

In May 1972, with my active efforts, the first computer was installed in the faculty (ECIL - 12). In Feb. 1974, the governor of Rajasthan appointed me as Vice-Chancellor Jodhpur University. In fact, on the request of Prof A.R. Kidwai, the then Chairman U.P.S.C., I was away to Delhi to assist the commission for the entire period of about 40 days. I was informed by the Governor Rajasthan to join immediately as Vice-Chancellor at Jodhpur. Later in July 1974, I was confirmed by the regular selection committee. Most of the building work, examination and administrative reforms in the university were done during this period. Engineering college had a two semester system, conforming to most of the universities in the world. In 1976, the university

convocation was held in the newly built open air theatre. D. Litt and LLD degrees to six dignitaries were awarded along with university graduates. It is unfortunate that convocations have not been held since then.

Dr. L.S. Rathore, V.C. JNV university has been responsible to get the recommendation and approval of the university Syndicate, for grant of autonomy to MBMEC. These have been forwarded to the government of Rajasthan. My special thanks are due to him for this important and decisive step, which can change the status of the college.

These are a few of the many interesting recollections of the past.

It was delightful indeed to work with the staff and students in an atmosphere of amity and good-will and to see disciplined students being taught by efficient and sincere teachers, producing brilliant results in the various examinations of the University. Not only have these students shone out later in the competitive examinations of the Union Public Service Commission and at the selection interview of the Rajasthan Public Service Commission but have also excelled at a number of foreign universities in U.S.A. and Britain, etc., and brought name and fame to themselves and to their alma mater.

The future of the country depends on our young engineers and scientists. May the institution continue its effort towards higher and nobler ideals and play its due part in the progress of the country, and attain IIT status.

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