

My Association with ICT for 7 Decades

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I migrated to Bombay from Mangalore in 1947 for higher studies and secured a BSc (Hons.) degree in Chemistry from Bombay University from St. Xavier's College. I was lucky to get admitted to the Oils Division, UDCT, as merit was the only consideration and total seats were limited to 80 in all the branches. The fee was only Rs. 200 per term

and I was staying with my relatives for free. My father had to pay my fees and pocket expenses only.

UDCT was unique in teaching & research as the teachers were qualified from reputed foreign universities. Some of my teachers were Dr J. G. Kane, Dr G. P. Kane, Dr R. D. Desai, Prof. N. R. Kamath, Dr S. M. Shah and Dr D. Rebello.

I became a committee member of the Technological Association in 1950 and that year the First volume of Bombay Technologist was published. It was a different experience then: collecting the materials, correcting the manuscript, contacting companies for advertisements, and printing. Today, it is easy to get a lot of work done through the computer, which I had not even dreamt of in those days; one had to depend on the typewriter, where one could correct the spelling mistakes only by erasing and then retyping the correct one and depending on typists. The present pupils of ICT are lucky as these things have become easy for them.

I joined for research for MSc. Tech. under the guidance of Dr. J. G. Kane on the topic "Studies on Inedible Oils." I had to survey the literature for nearly 2 months to find out what work has been done and what further useful research could be done. After discussing with the Dr. Kane, I started the experimental part. I had to make sure that all the chemicals were available, as one had to prepare his/her own reagents then, unlike today, where ready-made reagents are available.

Instruments can now give quick and accurate results. This was rare in the 1950s and research work took a long time. Only when the guide said the work was enough, one could start writing the thesis and ask the guide for suggestions and inputs to fill in any gaps. The thesis was divided into chapters like

'Introduction', 'Literature survey', 'Experimental', 'Conclusion' and 'Bibliography' and three copies of the same were to be submitted to the University. One had to depend on the typist who may not be aware of the technical words and feed him the information. Thesis typing was done on thin 'onionskin bond' paper, which was then imported and expensive. The University contacted external examiners selected by the Board of Studies and fixed the dates for the interview. The result was declared after all of this. In other words, the candidate had to wait for a long time to get the degree.

Nowadays, it is easy to correct spelling mistakes or print as many copies with the help of computers. The procedure has simplified a lot because of ICT becoming an autonomous institute.

Most UDCT students could not get placed after graduation and even after procuring their Masters except for the students from the Textile Section, which were absorbed by the Bombay & Ahmedabad Textile Mills. Petroleum refineries, fertilizer and other chemical factories were under construction. Hence, many of the students went abroad for higher studies. I had to take care of my elderly parents and had to register for Ph.D. Luckily, I secured a project under CSIR on Tamarind Seeds at Rs. 250 pm as stipend. After one year, I took up a temporary post of demonstrator in the Oils Section of UDCT which I held for 3 years and completed my Ph.D. (Tech.) degree in 1957. I was pleased to publish my research work in Indian and in foreign journals. (Molecular Distillation of Vegetable Oils in the J. A. O. C. S & Antibacterial activity of Undi Oil in the Journal of the American Pharmaceutical Assoc. in 1954.)

During my research work, I had the unique opportunity to work in the Textiles, Polymer and Foods laboratories in addition to the Oils laboratory, where my worktable was located. I am indebted to Prof. G. M. Nabar, Prof. N. R. Kamath, Prof. A. Sreenivasan and Prof. J. G. Kane for guiding me through my my PhD (Tech.) in less than 4 years.

During my 10 years in UDCT, I became a member of the Technological Association, the Indian Institute of Chemical Engineers (IICChE), The Colour Soc., the Oil Technologists Association of India, the Assoc. of Food Scientists & Technologists of India, and the Catalysts Soc. of India, keeping



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myself up to date with technical developments in various fields and came in contact with many technocrats.

I am proud to say that I attended the Silver and the Golden Jubilee and the subsequent Annual Celebrations since I retired from service in 1988. I had the unique advantage to be well associated because my Sion residence is close to ICT. I am proud to say that when I joined Dr K. Venkatraman was the Director, and I personally knew the subsequent Directors and the present Vice Chancellor, Dr G. D. Yadav, as were many of the HODs.

I retired 30 years ago after studying in ICT for 10 years, working as chief chemist in Caltex India Ltd., as production manager in Lakmé Ltd., and as an R&D executive in the erstwhile Tata Oils Mills Co. Ltd. for 20 years. I kept myself active as a consultant making use of the knowledge I procured

from my gurus at ICT and the experience I gathered in quality control, production and R&D.

I tried to help the needy in my own way, without any publicity. I am pleased to work for NGOs like the Consumer Guidance Society of India (CGSI), Mumbai, Shantikunj Sewashram - a home for the aged, and Ram Krishna Academy's English Medium School at Harigram, New Panvel, where rural children were admitted without any capitation fees. I am happy to be associated with the one and only Zoroastrian College in the World located in Sanjan – an NGO in Special Consultative Status with UNESCO, awarding postgraduate degrees on topics for the Universal Benefit of Humanity – for several years. I could serve the people of India in my own way and serve my motherland, which would not have been possible had I gone abroad and settled there by becoming a citizen of that country.